

David Irving

GOREING
— Not Enlarged

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GÖRING

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—Hitler's predatory Mephistoph-
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 nash all resistance.

ADOLF HITLER

1945. Russian troops had already
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BORMANN

ightmare might be ending, an ordeal
 n air raids, and nearly every family
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 urtin Bormann the entire battle had
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 piring, hoping that the fat air-force
 so many—and now he had, and the
 desk to prove it.
 directive, this time to Paul Giesler,

est of Reichsmarschall Göring
 of planned high treason. Smash
 etc., airfields immediately to

prevent his flight. Advise all neighboring gauleiters, SS, and
 police at once.

BORMANN

Bormann's own days might be numbered, but at least he would have cooked
 Göring's goose as well.

Berlin was dying, Hitler and Bormann were trapped there, and Göring was
 doing nothing at all about it. With his plump wife, Emmy, and their little
 daughter, Edda, he was in his lavishly appointed mountain villa on the
 Obersalzberg, three hundred miles to the south. It was April 23, three days
 since he'd seen either the Führer or his once all-powerful secretary. Sucking
 a cigar, he motioned to his valet, Robert, to pour out another cognac. Then
 he kicked off his boots, revealing ankles clad in exquisite red silk stockings,
 leaned back, and reflected.

At first he had half-expected Hitler to join him down here, but late the
 day before, his adjutant had woken him with a garbled message from Berlin:
 General Karl Koller, chief of air staff, had just phoned from Kurfürst, air-
 force headquarters, to report that the Führer had "collapsed" and planned
 to stay put. "Collapsed"—might that not mean that Hitler was already dead?
 That possibility had brought Göring wide awake. "Phone Koller," he ordered
 his adjutant. "Tell him to fly down here at once."

The Reichsmarschall knew that Hitler had always regarded him as his
 successor. Now was the time to make it happen.

Koller strode into the Obersalzberg villa at noon the next day, saluted,
 and at his commander in chief's behest read out his shorthand notes of the
 previous day. Air Force General Eckhard Christian, he said, had phoned
 him from the bunker with the cryptic message, "Historic events. I'm coming
 straight over to tell you in person." When Christian arrived, he told Koller,
 "The Führer has collapsed and says it's pointless to fight on. . . . He's
 staying on in the bunker, will defend Berlin to the last and then do the
 obvious." General Alfred Jodl, chief of the armed forces' operations staff,
 had confirmed all this to Koller at midnight. Hitler had turned down Jodl's
 suggestion that they swing all the western armies around against the
 Russians—"The Reichsmarschall will have to do that!" was all he had said.
 Somebody had suggested that there wasn't one German who would fight
 for Göring. "There's not much fighting left to be done," Hitler had said
 bitterly, "and if it's a matter of dealing, the Reichsmarschall is better at that
 than I am."

Göring whistled, then acted with a decisiveness that he had not displayed
 for years. He sent for balding, pettifogging Dr. Hans Lammers, the chief
 servant of the Reich; Lammers always carried around with him a dossier of
 the constitutional documents relating to the succession. Göring also sent for
 his close friend Philipp Bouhler; Bouhler, former head of Hitler's Chancellery,

Glimpsing Speer, his face bright with intrigue even at this desperate moment—he had been flown in by a sergeant pilot in a light aircraft that had landed him near the Brandenburg gate—Bormann added another radio message to the Obersalzberg:

Speer has meantime arrived here.

These were the pages that would be found ten weeks later, still on Bormann's darkened desk in the bunker ruins. Among them was a copy of a letter dated April 24, which Bormann had sent to "my dear Heinrich"—Himmler—describing Göring's "treachery":

In the Führer's opinion he must have been plotting to do this for some time. On the afternoon of April 20—the day he drove down south—G[öring] told Ambassador [Walther] Hewel [Ribbentrop's liaison officer to Hitler], "Something's got to be done and now. We've got to negotiate—and I am the only one who can do it. I, Göring, am not blackened by the sins of the Nazi party, by its persecution of the churches, by its concentration camps . . ."

He said that obviously our enemies can't deal with somebody unless he's totally blameless and has even, as Göring has himself, condemned many of these things right from the start.

The wording of the messages he sent summoning the others [to the Obersalzberg] show clearly enough, in the Führer's view, what he has been working up to. *He* [Göring] issued an ultimatum giving him liberty to act in internal and foreign affairs; he even sent for a mobile broadcasting truck. Our detailed investigations are continuing. It's significant that since quitting Berlin our former Reichsmarschall has not taken one step to help the battle for Berlin, but has devoted his entire time to preparing his little act of treachery.

In our opinion, anybody else in his situation would have done his level best to prove his loyalty to the Führer by rendering swift help. Not so Göring! It doesn't take much to imagine how his broadcast would have run; quite apart from anything else it would have led to an immediate and total collapse of our eastern front.

At 10:25 P.M. that evening Bormann phoned Dönitz to repeat Hitler's orders that no government elements were to be allowed to fly south to join Göring. "It's got to be prevented at all costs," he said. Speer sent a similar message to General Adolf Galland, commander of Germany's elite Me 262 jet-fighter squadron. "I ask you and your comrades to do everything as discussed to prevent Göring from flying anywhere."

Not that Göring was leaving across the mountainside, a bridge over the sloughs around Göring's villa, who were quietly drawing and had a chilling response to his 29, 1941, takes effect only when "There can be no talk of freedom in the direction you indicate."

So Hitler was still alive! Pan to Ribbentrop, Himmler, and the messages he had sent out at the telephone lines went dead. By the villa, and at ten o'clock SS C in, saluted, and announced, "I

Göring's 264-pound frame qu that it was the word *negotiation*. "Hitler always hated that word feared I might be negotiating v

The Reichsmarschall spent a with another telegram from the Göring of betrayal but promised to resign for reasons of ill health relief, not because his life was to have stripped him of any official still Reichsmarschall, or so he removed, and his troubles were

Twenty-four hours later, with windows beginning to vibrate—tude. A deafening roar swept Plates fell off shelves, a closet heave. "The English!" cried or

There had been no radar waves were still cut. A hundred yards d into action as the four-engined generators belatedly pumped ou mountainside as thick as a San F fumes came shattering explosio

His face chalk white, Göring l around him, he shouted, "Into back at gunpoint.

As a second wave approach bundled Göring and his family i limestone beneath the villa, rudd down the 288 steps into the sul

ground trembled, and Göring shuddered too. It was symbolic of the powerlessness of his air force that enemy bombers could parade over southern Germany like this.

As the massed Russian artillery began slapping armor-piercing shells and high explosives into the Reich Chancellery Building above his bunker, Hitler was still counting on his "trusty Heinrich" Himmler to relieve Berlin. Bormann, meanwhile, continued to indulge in sweet revenge. "Kicked Göring out of the party!" he sneered in his diary on April 25. And when General Hans Krebs, the last chief of the general staff, notified Keitel, chief of the high command, by radiophone that Hitler had stripped the Reichsmarschall of all his offices, Bormann grabbed the phone and shouted, "And that includes Reich chief gamekeeper too!"

If Berlin now fell, Bormann wrote to Himmler, Germany would have to accept peace terms. "The Führer could never do that, while a Göring no doubt would find it quite easy. At any rate, we stay put and hold out here as long as possible. If you rescue us in time, it's going to be one of the war's major turning points: because the differences between our enemies are widening every day. I, for one, am persuaded that once again the Führer has made the right decision. Others are less convinced or choose to offer comfortable advice from a safe distance. There's not much of a rush to come into Berlin to see the Führer now."

A few hours later, however, the bunker's teleprinter rattled out the stunning news that Himmler had offered peace talks to the British through Stockholm.

"Obviously," fulminated Bormann in his notes on the twenty-seventh. "H.H. is wholly out of touch. If the Führer dies, how does he plan to survive?! Again and again, as the hours tick past, the Führer stresses how tired he is of living now with all the treachery he has had to endure!"

Four days later Bormann's writings would be entombed in the deserted bunker and he, like Hitler, would be dead.

The British bombers had lifted Göring's luxurious villa off the mountainside. Among the ruins lay the torn envelope with shattered seals that had contained the Führer's testament. In the tunnels one hundred feet beneath the cratered landscape languished Göring with his staff and family—still held at gunpoint by the SS. "By the guttering light of a candle," recalled his personal aide, Fritz Gömnert, a few days later, "they threw him into one of the tunnels and left him there. Nothing was brought to eat, nobody was allowed out."

His wife and daughter shivered in their night attire. Göring tried to send a telegram to Berlin setting the record straight, but his captors refused even to touch it. He was now a nobody, like the thousands of politicians, trade-union leaders, and newspapermen whom he had himself incarcerated over the last twelve years. Hungry and unwashed, and craving opiates to kill the

pain of ancient injuries, he was "Creature" Martin Bormann was come to this," he wailed to Göring too big for his boots and try to

As the days passed, however, they quietly among themselves. The real soldier still exuded was something Standartenführer (Colonel) Ernst rived. He promised to send off Göring unnering. "Nobody could contact were dreadful scenes, with every whole thing was downright sharr

Late on April 26, a new SS unit military staff. As they parted, Göring to the men as mementos, suggested Himmler had decided to take the Chief of The Reichsführer SS undoubtedly Reichsmarschall was a more read

Whatever the reason, the escape he would like to be confined. He was forty miles beyond Salzburg. He was guard with a "God be with you" of his armor-plated Maybach limousine the front, and waved grandly to the later, escorted by an SS platoon Mauterndorf drawbridge and into

He had spent part of his childhood to his Jewish godfather. He promptly thing of the old Göring bonhomie cigars were brought up from the Brausse. Emmy made only one appearance and on that occasion she spent the everything they had lost. Once Brausse he had written as a boy; and once showed Brausse how he could trace emperors as well as Bismarck and

There was, of course, an animal to establish rapport with his captor. Visiting General Koller accompanied him, "You know, Göring's a splendid

All the time Göring kept his ear to the radio he heard Berlin announce mention of his losing the Führer sent him a new signal from the bunker

It was symbolic of the powers could parade over southern

dropping armor-piercing shells and building above his bunker, Hitler Himmler to relieve Berlin. Bormann's sweet revenge. "Kicked Göring on April 25. And when General Staff, notified Keitel, chief of the staff, had stripped the Reichsmarschall of his rank and shouted, "And that in-

Himmler, Germany would have to never do that, while a Göring no longer stay put and hold out here. Time, it's going to be one of the differences between our enemies are decided that once again the Führer has convinced or choose to offer comfort. It's not much of a rush to come

as a teleprinter rattled out the stunning news to the British through Stock-

his notes on the twenty-seventh. When the Führer dies, how does he plan to look past, the Führer stresses how very he has had to endure!" He would be entombed in the deserted

luxurious villa off the mountainside. Shattered seals that had contained hundreds of feet beneath the cratered earth and family—still held at gunpoint. "He recalled his personal aide, threw him into one of the tunnels to eat, nobody was allowed out." He might attire. Göring tried to send a message, but his captors refused even to let thousands of politicians, trade-unionists, and he had himself incarcerated over a year, and craving opiates to kill the

pain of ancient injuries, he wallowed in self-pity. He had no doubt that "Creature" Martin Bormann was behind all this—"I always knew it would come to this," he wailed to Gömnert. "I always knew Bormann would grow too big for his boots and try to destroy me."

As the days passed, however, he saw the guards fidgeting uneasily, arguing quietly among themselves. The residual authority that Germany's top-ranking soldier still exuded was something not to be trifled with. On April 25, SS Standartenführer (Colonel) Ernst Brausse, one of Himmler's legal staff, arrived. He promised to send off Göring's signal, but the atmosphere was still unnerving. "Nobody could contact anybody else," said Gömnert later. "There were dreadful scenes, with everybody crying—even the men. At the end the whole thing was downright shameful."

Late on April 26, a new SS unit took over and removed Göring from his military staff. As they parted, Göring, tugging off some of his rings to give to the men as mementos, suggested that evil was afoot. It seems likelier that Himmler had decided to take the Görings out of Bormann's personal domain. The Reichsführer SS undoubtedly realized that, in the final *Endkampf*, a live Reichsmarschall was a more readily negotiable trump than a dead one. Hil

Whatever the reason, the escort relaxed. Göring was even asked where he would like to be confined. He affably mentioned Mauterndorf Castle, forty miles beyond Salzburg. Early on April 28, he took leave of his bodyguard with a "God be with you until we meet again," climbed in the back of his armor-plated Maybach limousine with little Edda while Emmy sat in the front, and waved grandly to the chauffeur to drive off. A short while later, escorted by an SS platoon in trucks, the cavalcade rattled over the Mauterndorf drawbridge and into the castle yard.

He had spent part of his childhood here at Mauterndorf. It had belonged to his Jewish godfather. He promptly resumed his pasha life-style, and something of the old Göring bonhomie returned. Fine wines and a case of Dutch cigars were brought up from the cellars for Göring to share with Colonel Brausse. Emmy made only one appearance in the great halls of the castle, and on that occasion she spent the whole evening weeping to Hermann about everything they had lost. Once Brausse saw Göring flicking through a diary he had written as a boy; and once Göring fetched his family genealogy and showed Brausse how he could trace his bloodline back to most of the country's emperors as well as Bismarck and Goethe.

There was, of course, an animal cunning in all this. The prisoner wanted to establish rapport with his captor. In this he at first seemed to have succeeded. Visiting General Koller a day or two after the arrival, Brausse assured him, "You know, Göring's a splendid fellow. I won't do him any harm."

All the time Göring kept his ears and his pale blue eyes wide open. On the radio he heard Berlin announce his "retirement"—but still there was no mention of his losing the Führer succession. On April 30, Brausse showed him a new signal from the bunker: "Shoot the traitors of April 23 if we

should die." Göring murmured dismissively, "Bormann's handiwork again!" and saw Brause nodding in sage agreement.

But on May 1, when the radio announced Hitler's death, the SS colonel did, in fact, telephone Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, commander in chief in the south, to inquire if he should now execute Göring. Kesselring advised him not to—but nobody wanted to order the Reichsmarschall's release, either.

Humiliated, Göring sent his doctor to plead with General Koller. Koller passed the buck to Kesselring, and Kesselring passed it on to Grand Admiral Dönitz, who vouchsafed no reply. Dönitz, no friend of the once-haughty Hermann Göring, probably relished his humiliation now.

That afternoon, May 4, an air-force general drove past Mauterndorf with an air-signals regiment and saw the unmistakable shape of Göring strolling along the fence with his SS captors.

Göring beckoned him over. "Tell Koller to act now!" he hissed angrily. "Tell him that I, as Germany's most senior general, must be sent to meet Eisenhower. Tell him I am the most popular of our generals, particularly in the United States." Koller still did nothing.

On the sixth, Kesselring finally ordered the Reichsmarschall's release. Characteristically, Göring romanticized this most undignified end to his custody into a more heroic version: His own air-force troops, pulling back in exhaustion from Italy, had routed the SS unit and freed their beloved commander in chief. "While he was standing there," said a British interrogator a few days later, reporting Göring's account, "surrounded by SS men, members of Number 12 Air Signals regiment passed by. Upon seeing him, they ran forward to greet and cheer their beloved commander. Göring, swiftly sizing up the situation and finding that the Luftwaffe men outnumbered the SS, ordered them to charge. . . . 'It was one of the most beautiful moments of my life [Göring said to the interrogator] to see them present arms to their commander in chief again.' "

Once freed of the SS, Göring sent a radiogram up to Admiral Dönitz, offering to handle the negotiations with the enemy.

Grand Admiral!

Are you fully aware of the deadly intrigue hatched by Reichsleiter Bormann to eliminate me? . . . Bormann waged his campaign against me entirely by means of anonymous radiograms . . . to SS Obersturmbannführer Frank on the Obersalzberg. . . . Reichsführer Himmler will confirm to you the outlandish scale of this intrigue.

I have just learned that you are planning to send Jodl to Eisenhower for talks. I consider it absolutely vital . . . that parallel to Jodl's negotiations I approach Eisenhower unofficially as one marshal to another . . . I might create a suitably personal at-

mosphere for Jodl's talks. I am sure the Americans have displayed a more realistic attitude than our other political leaders.

The fighting had all but ended. Göring, still in the hands of the Americans, bearing a laissez-faire attitude toward "Marshal" Eisenhower and U.S. forces at Mauterndorf.

The letter to Eisenhower, verb-

Your Excellency!

On April 23, I decided as a first step to contact you, Excellency, to discuss a basis for preventing my capture. I was arrested with my family by the SS. An order for us to be taken to captors. I was simultaneously taken to a party. The public was informed as air-force commander in chief. . . . Under the decree of the law on my side. I have circumstances and the approach to regain my liberty . . .

Despite everything that has happened, I request you, Excellency, to receive me on your part and let me know what request that you grant me safe passage for my family and entourage into Germany for technical reasons I would propose. . . .

My request may perhaps appear bold as I make so bold as to state to the venerable marshal of France, meeting at an hour of similar importance. Your Excellency will understand the most painful hour, and how very difficult by arrest from doing all I could to avoid bloodshed in a hopeless situation.

The accompanying letter asked Devens to be immediately. It is unlikely that Eisenhower would accept.

Göring then sent Eisenhower a note from Zell am See, fifty miles away, near Mauterndorf, claiming to

to leave this castle—childhood memories of his parents and of games of knights in armor clung to its walls. Besides, Russian troops, Austrian Communists, or Bormann's assassins might be lurking beyond the castle keep.

At midday on May 7, an irate Koller phoned and told him that a top American general, the deputy commander of the 36th (Texas) Division, had put on all his medals and finery and driven through the lines to Fischhorn Castle. "You asked for that rendezvous," said Koller. "Now keep it." Grumbling and hesitant, Göring climbed into the twelve-cylinder Maybach and set off with his family and what remained of his staff. He was uniformed in pearl gray, with a tentlike greatcoat that flapped open over his fat paunch to reveal a small Mauser pistol on his belt.

Some thirty miles short of Salzburg they encountered the American posse. Tired of waiting, the American officers had set out to fetch him. Both convoys stopped, facing each other. Brigadier General Robert I. Stack, a burly, white-haired Texan, met Göring, saluted smartly. Göring returned the courtesy, using the old-fashioned army salute, not the Hitler one.

"Do you speak English?" asked Stack.

The Reichsmarschall smiled wearily. His face was flabby and lined, the famous John Barrymore profile betraying a hint of his eagerness to meet Eisenhower, mingled with sorrow that a long adventure was over.

"I understand it better than I speak," he apologized.

He apologized again, for not being better dressed. The G.I.'s pealed with laughter at his vanity.

Emmy began to cry. Her husband chuckled her under the chin and said that everything was going to be all right now—these were Americans.

Stack motioned toward his American sedan. As Hermann Göring clambered in, he muttered something under his breath. "Twelve years," he growled. "I've had a good run for my money."

P A
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I A TRIANGULAR AFFAIR

Hermann Göring—the Führer's chosen successor; last commander of the legendary Richt-hofen Squadron; commander of the storm troopers and of the German Air Force; speaker of the German Parliament, prime minister of Prussia, president of the Prussian State Council; Reich master of forestry and game; the Führer's special commissioner for the Four-Year Plan; chairman of the Reich Defense Council; Reichsmarschall of the Greater German Reich; chairman of the Scientific Research Council—Hermann Wilhelm Göring, holder of all these titles, styles and dignities, architect of the Gestapo, the concentration camp, and the giant industrial conglomerate bearing his name, was born in Bavaria on January 12, 1893.

His father was a haughty German colonial official, his mother a simple peasant girl, his godfather a Jew. Dutiful researchers would trace his ancestral line back to one Michael Christian Gering, who in 1659 was appointed economic controller (*commissarius loci*) to His Majesty, Frederick the Great, king of Prussia, and to Andreas Gering, who had been a pastor near Berlin a hundred years before that.

His parents had married in London in May 1885. For Dr. Heinrich Ernst Göring, then age fifty-six, it was the second marriage. For Franziska ("Fanny")

Tiefenbrunn—Catholic, open-faced, flirtatious, and over twenty years his junior—it was the first. Dr. Göring, Protestant, grave, tedious, was a former judge like his father, Wilhelm. He already had five children by his first marriage and he would have five more by Fanny, with Hermann the second of her two sons.

Under Prince Otto von Bismarck, Heinrich had become a colonial governor. In 1884 the Iron Chancellor had launched Germany on a brief era of colonization in Africa, northern China, and the South Pacific. Bismarck had sent Dr. Göring to London to study the problems of colonial empire, then to German Southwest Africa (today's Namibia) as minister resident, or governor. He rendered the mineral-rich, beautiful colony safe for traders—there is a Göring Strasse in its German-speaking capital, Windhoek, to this day—struck up a friendship with Cecil Rhodes, the British imperial pioneer, then left with Fanny to a new posting as consul general in the disease-ridden former French colony of Haiti. Fanny produced their first child, Karl-Ernst, in 1885 and bore two daughters, Olga and Paula, before returning to Bavaria carrying Hermann in her womb.

It was in the Marienbad Sanatorium at Rosenheim that the remarkable subject of our story entered the world in January 1893. Six weeks later his mother returned to the Caribbean, leaving him to spend his infancy in the care of a friend of hers at Fürth near Nuremberg; this friend, Frau Graf, had two daughters, Erna and Fanny, some three years older than Hermann.

Three years later Dr. Göring brought Fanny back to Germany to retire. Hermann told one psychiatrist some months before his death that this was his earliest memory—as the lady introduced to him as his mother stooped to hug him, he pounded this stranger's face with both tiny fists.

In March 1895 a younger brother, Albert, had been born at Rosenheim. Albert remained the black sheep of the family. He became a thermodynamics engineer, fell out with Hermann as the Nazis came to power, and moved to Austria, where he applied for citizenship in the hope that this would put a safe frontier between himself and his domineering brother.

In 1896 Hermann's father retired from government service and they moved to Berlin. Göring told Nuremberg psychiatrist Paul L. Schroeder fifty years later that he recalled riding in a horse-drawn coach to Berlin—a passing farm cart broke one window, and he remembered seeing a man badly cut, with trickling blood. Three years old by then, he had only the vaguest memories of life in the pleasant Berlin suburb of Friedenau. His older sisters spoiled him, and his father indulged his whims as though he were the favorite; Hermann venerated rather than loved the old gentleman—there were sixty-four years between them, and his father was as old as the grandfathers of his friends.

As he grew up, Hermann noticed something else. In Africa Dr. Göring had befriended the corpulent, dark-haired doctor who attended Fanny's first confinement, Hermann von Epenstein; he had probably named Hermann after

this Austrian Jew. Epenstein had u favors, and prestige. He became may have imprinted on the young always wholesome—the conclusi everything, and a contempt for m

But it was Epenstein's castle Nuremberg—that left its most p towering jumble of castellated w years on the site of an old fortress. Castle had begun to decay during t crumbled on to four houses beneathman Johann Stahl, decided to chaser. "Army physician Dr. Hermann owner of Berlin," bought it for t 1897; over the next forty years, until Hermann Göring on Christmas Eve, pour one and a half million marks its keep, its roof timbers, its inner a was the romantic setting for Hermann had provided it to the Göring family former colonial governor, Dr. Göring openly as his mistress.

This bizarre triangle would pers With the approach of manhood was not without carnal purpose th for himself the finest of the cast Göring's comfortably appointed b cuckolded Papa, who was consigne

It was altogether a rare experience of spirit would not have thrilled to dramatic mountain slopes and forearm at age eight, Hermann would have visions of Roman chariots a valley. "You must come and see V tell people in later years. "Then y

When he was five, his father had his father's military friends came to with their caps and swords in his be and buckler, jousting, crusading, tri

He was a robust child who suffered a young man he developed arthritis after his 1923 groin injury. The ex continued at Fürth in 1898; his collection Private Boys' School dated March

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this Austrian Jew. Epenstein had used his wealth to purchase his title, sexual
favors, and prestige. He became godfather to all the Göring children and
may have imprinted on the young Hermann's character traits that were not
always wholesome—the conclusion, for instance, that money could buy
everything, and a contempt for morality.

But it was Epenstein's castle in Franconia—the countryside around
Nuremberg—that left its most powerful mark on Göring's childhood. A
towering jumble of castellated walls, built and rebuilt over nine hundred
years on the site of an old fortress fifteen miles from the city, Veldenstein
Castle had begun to decay during the nineteenth century. In 1889 stones had
crumbled on to four houses beneath, and the then-owner, Nuremberg busi-
nessman Johann Stahl, decided to unload it onto some unsuspecting pur-
chaser. "Army physician Dr. Hermann Epenstein" (no von then), "property
owner of Berlin," bought it for twenty thousand marks on November 29,
1897; over the next forty years, until it was formally deeded to Field Marshal
Hermann Göring on Christmas Eve, 1938, this philanthropic gentleman would
pour one and a half million marks into the renovation and reconstruction of
its keep, its roof timbers, its inner and outer fortifications. Veldenstein Castle
was the romantic setting for Hermann's boyhood. Undoubtedly Epenstein
had provided it to the Göring family out of a sense of obligation to the elderly
former colonial governor, Dr. Göring, whose young wife he had taken quite
openly as his mistress.

This bizarre triangle would persist for fifteen years.

With the approach of manhood it dawned on the young Hermann that it
was not without carnal purpose that his godfather, Epenstein, had retained
for himself the finest of the castle's twenty-four rooms, close to Fanny
Göring's comfortably appointed bedroom—forbidden territory now to his
cuckolded Papa, who was consigned to meaner quarters on the ground floor.

It was altogether a rare experience, growing up at Veldenstein. What boy
of spirit would not have thrilled to live in this ancient pile, surrounded by
dramatic mountain slopes and forests of dark conifers? Playing knights-in-
armor at age eight, Hermann would look down from the battlements and
have visions of Roman chariots and of plumed warriors galloping in the
valley. "You must come and see Veldenstein Castle," his sister Olga would
tell people in later years. "Then you will understand him better."

When he was five, his father had given him a Hussar's uniform. And when
his father's military friends came to stay at the castle, Hermann would play
with their caps and swords in his bedroom at night. He saw himself in sword
and buckler, jousting, crusading, triumphing—always triumphing in the end.

He was a robust child who suffered only tonsillitis and scarlet fever. As
a young man he developed arthritis, but this would vanish never to return
after his 1923 groin injury. The education begun in his parental home was
continued at Furth in 1898; his collected papers included reports from Furth
Private Boys' School dated March 21 and July 12, 1902. It was a Catholic

school, (he was born and confirmed, in 1908, as a Protestant), but it was the closest to the castle. He did not take easily to formal education, became something of a malingerer, and mentioned later that he was taught by a private governess after leaving Furth. Packed off to boarding school at Ansbach in 1905, he stood it for three distasteful years, then absconded back to Veldenstein. School's only lasting legacy was an abiding dislike of intellectual pursuits, which inspired his scathing witticism, "When I hear the word *culture* I reach for my Browning!"

Years later a psychiatrist would note that he played no team sports and preferred singles matches in tennis, and that he preferred too the lonelier masculine pursuits like mountaineering. In his youth he was known to lord it over the farmhands' sons, and became their natural ringleader.

A change came over him when his father entered him at one of Germany's best officer-cadet schools, at Karlsruhe. He flourished like a failing plant newly placed in a window. He wore a crisp uniform, and when he visited the Graf sisters and his own sister Paula, who were attending finishing school nearby, he clicked his heels, presented their headmistress with flowers, and invited the girls to a local pastry shop, where he found he had no funds to pay.

In 1910 Hermann Göring progressed to the military academy at Gross-Lichterfelde, outside Berlin. It was Germany's West Point. He luxuriated in the social life of the Prussian officer, imagined his manly breast already ornamented with medals, and willingly submitted to the disciplinary strait-jacket that was the price for what he coveted—power over the destinies of others.

He sailed easily through his finals in March 1911. Although at loggerheads with the civilian teacher of academic subjects, he had got on famously with the military instructors and scored 232 points (or so he later claimed), one hundred more than needed and the highest in the history of the academy. The surviving record shows that he gained a "quite good" in Latin, French, and English, a "good" in map reading, a "very good" in German, history, math, and physics, and an "excellent" in geography. On May 13, 1911, his forty-four-year-old company commander at the academy signed this report to Hermann's proud father:

I beg to inform Your Excellency that your son Hermann recently passed the ensign examination with the grade *summa cum laude*.
Baron [Richard] Von Keiser

After the examination Göring joined his pals on a sightseeing trip to Italy. He kept a careful diary in a gray quarto-sized notebook, illustrating it with picture postcards of the art and architecture. The little group hit Milan on April 1. Hermann chuckled over the way the cathedral clergy cadged for tips, he sought and found Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper" ("it has been

well repaired," the eighteen-year-old beauty"), and he remarked gazed, on the following day, upon Raphael, Titian, and Bellini, the appreciation that would make him discerning collectors. He noted

For two hours we went further even began. There were pictures on display as well. At the cathedral, taking in the overlooked yesterday.

A train journey that was first class in Lombardy ("interesting," he collected fields"), brought the little group

APRIL 3, 1911 (SUNDAY).
had our baggage closely checked with a camera is a spy. We entered the arena. It made a colossal impression in these immense walls that threatened the sheer scale of the amphitheater. Roman age . . .

In a German restaurant we had beer, then turned in at eleven. We could get any sleep as a lot of men and women right out with authentic Italian vigor.

This youthful diary is in a U.S. Army diary, written by Göring four months after he took in the Bavarian Alps, is not

The diary, inscribed "Hermann von Saltsburg," describes an eight-hour climb up Watzmann Rock and mountaineering his pioneering ascent of the twin Watzmann peaks with two friends Barth and Rigele, probably who married Olga Göring. Several pages are featured in this diary's pages—Berchtesgaden, and the Hotel Geige for him, at Veldenstein:

JULY 16, 1911. At exactly midnight I was out of my splendid dreams

allied forth from the old castle
 upon it. Everybody was
 this lovely Sunday morning.
 station] just before five A.M.
 mountains toward Nurem-
 Munich. I made my way to the
 in a mug of Munich beer. . . .
 boots rang on the paving, well-
 back, in short you could see this
 bers.

through Salzburg—Alpine Club
 Irons, etc., had to be obtained,
 trailing. . . .

try A.M. Straight to window to
 and the Watzmann and its "chil-
 splendor that they kindled great
 means certain we'd get to the
 part us at any moment. At four-
 Geiger. . . . The path climbed
 hut, mostly through forest. In
 grazing peacefully without paying
 two and a half hours we reached
 the steeper meadows began. The
 ing bends. A couple with a nine-
 Mitterkaser, dressed from head
 minded Saxons clambered straight
 out of course making any faster

reached the Watzmann's summit. As
 in the view of the König See, sur-
 sunset's glow and crisscrossed by the
 when he set off for the main climbing
 the Italian frontier:

in Lienz and purchased what we
 used as a starting point for the
 and Kals; a pretty little town in
 in the southern Tyrol it is a
 (Kaiserjäger). . . .

Karlsbad Hut at 2,252 meters (7,500

JULY 20. We had a lively talk about mountains, Alpine Club,
 guides, huts and the Bohemian question. . . . A wonderful sight:
 The little hut nestles between two dark green lakes in the middle
 of the Laserzkar, framed by the sheer rockfaces of the Lienz
 dolomites. A desolate mountain wilderness extended beyond it,
 with the proud twin peaks of the "Wild Sander." . . . Tomorrow
 we plan to climb it. As the two peaks are joined by a narrow
 ridge, we want if possible to climb both.

The next day they struggled onward to the ninety-three-hundred-foot summit.

JULY 21 After half an hour's rest we put on the forty-
 meter rope and began the traverse of the south face of the Seekofel.
 This is endless, as it goes round the whole mountain. The ledge
 we were on was very good and relatively wide, but very long.

Finally we found ourselves in a fissure. . . . The first bit of
 chimney was all right but then overhanging rocks blocked the
 way and forced Barth to work round them. We crossed over into
 the left branch of the chimney, but this was considerably narrower,
 wetter and more difficult. I left my rucksack here, tucked some
 cramps and pitons into my pockets and climbed up to Barth, who
 was inside a fissure and trying vainly to get out; the crack was
 extremely narrow, overhanging, and lacked any handhold. As we
 wormed up it we had the unpleasant feeling that it was squeezing
 us out. Barth tried again and again without any luck.

So we did it like this: We hammered in two pitons to which
 Barth tied himself and then climbed on up as far as he could; I
 climbed up after him inside the fissure and wedged myself in so
 that my hands were free to give Barth a leg up. With this kind
 of human ladder Barth managed to get past the smooth bit. His
 left hand found a hole he could use as a handhold after clearing
 out the pebbles. Then he doubled around (very difficult) and thus
 got into the main chimney. I wasn't too well placed, as the entire
 rubble Barth was clearing out landed on my head and he was
 standing on my hands. I then climbed back down to the bottom
 of the fissure, releasing the rope from the fastening and climbed
 after him. After hard work and a lot of exertion I too overcame
 the fissure, and was gratified to find myself in the broad chimney,
 as I felt suffocated in the narrow crack. This was probably the
 reason why this route had never been climbed before. . . .

We had to step out onto a ledge barely a hand's breadth, with
 a sheer drop down into Laserzkar. The hut and lakes seemed tiny
 down there—boy, it was windy up here! Straddling the knife-
 edge ridge like a horse, I crossed between the two peaks.

port that engaged me from
 that he kept recovering and
 down at Moorstedt, where he
 might had been watched by
 from the ground or from the
 of any other plane claiming
 expended.

others. On July 7 he engaged a
 to his face, then believed he saw
 led the credit. Nine days later he
 and shot one down on the second

on a second hostile, which
 set, but my engine had caught
 face; it just spun in its mount-
 a spin. I put the plane down
 and flipped over. The second
 [signed] Göring.

de destroyed south of Paschendaale
 ten. On August 5 he downed his

y force of nine single-seaters
 planes. I dived on the leading
 at 150 feet and opened fire.
 belched out of the plane and
 cloud. I plunged in after him,
 clouds as there was a lot of
 y seen the plane on fire. Fired

itor's uniform still lacked the highest
 oss of the Pour le Mérite, the "Blue
 way down the "league table." On
 s the "Red Baron," Manfred von
 and Loerzer had scored fifteen each.
 Thirty years later, Loerzer would
 Lieutenant Göring had inflated his
 ver claimed Göring had urged him,
 C general health caused more problems

than his war injuries. In February 1918 he was hospitalized with a throat infection for several weeks. In his absence, the Germans began stitching their fighter units into larger formations, using four squadrons in a wing (*Geschwader*). Von Richthofen was given No. 1 Wing, and Loerzer No. 2. Göring was consumed by an envy that was only partly allayed by the kaiser's award, at last, of the Pour le Mérite on June 2, 1918.

Richthofen had been shot down and killed on April 21, but Göring was passed over as his successor. He now had eighteen official kills. On June 5, he gunned down a biplane near Villers and four days later, flying a Fokker distinguished by white engine cowling and white tail, he poured two hundred rounds into a Spad prowling at low level along the front lines—"He plunged vertically like a rock from thirteen hundred feet and impacted at the north-western corner of the horseshoe wood south of Coroy behind our front lines. I circled several times over the crash site."

That was number twenty. On June 17, he destroyed another Spad near Ambleny.

A few days later Richthofen's successor was killed, and the squadron's adjutant, Lieutenant Karl Bodenschatz, formally handed to Hermann Göring the wooden cane that symbolized command of the famous fighter unit at a parade on July 14. (Bodenschatz, a burly, talkative twenty-seven-year-old, had been injured four times already in the Boelcke Fighter Staffel; he would remain Göring's chief aide until 1945.) The days of easy kills were now over. On the day after taking over, Göring attacked a Caudron at point-blank range, and saw the bullets just bouncing off the armor. On the sixteenth, he claimed his twenty-second victory, sending another Spad spiraling down into woods near Bandry. After that—perhaps prefiguring his later career, in which dazzling bursts of activity would give way to a deadly lethargy—Göring awarded himself ten days' leave and departed, assigning temporary command to Lothar von Richthofen, Manfred's brother.

When the world war ended the morale of these German aviators was high. Lieutenant Göring refused to turn his equipment over to the victors. Ignoring the armistice terms, he evacuated his planes to Darmstadt and demobilized his men on the premises of a paper factory at Aschaffenburg. At a farewell binge in the town's beer hall he spoke about Germany's bitter lot with an eloquence that surprised him. "Our time," he declared, "will come again!"

He was uncertain about his future. For a while he stayed with fellow fighter ace Ernst Udet in Berlin, then returned to his widowed mother, Fanny Göring, in Munich. A British air-force officer, Frank Beaumont, had been charged with the local enforcement of the armistice terms. As luck would have it, Göring had ensured that this officer was treated with more than customary chivalry when he had been shot down, and Beaumont now returned that kindness in various ways; this softened the transition from the unreal wartime world of heroism and adventure to the harsher reality of postwar Munich.

he sought his fortune in Scandinavia to demonstrate their latest plane. He could keep the plane as payment if he asked him to recommend his reputation as the Richthofen. His life had an undeniable aim—with four former Richthofen Danish pilots paid him twenty-five he could drink" for two days and a third portion of the honorarium, he left his shoes outside their rooms and the ladies about in a wheelbarrow and on from the local police station. He now broke his. At Mainz in 1918, a young actress appearing on a stage like creature would become his, although she would remain rather than for any conventional courted her, and when she and Harry Liedtke, Göring swore with his bare hands. Käthe's car, and in the subsequent sad end of Arc would often turn to a persecution. He returned to Sweden. At Malmö, a Swedish airline Svenska referred war veterans as pilots and a Swedish license to fly passenger aircraft—Göring's prized possessions. At the end of September the German Emperor appointed Lieutenant Hermann Göring to the post of Reich president. He and he soon learned that even society. Writing from Stockholm, he was released from the army with the rank of major in the air-corps uniform; if he lost his rights to any pension and I for my further station in life," a few days later, "that my request is granted." In a further letter on April 1919, explaining now that the end of his military career. He was later. Göring, distinguished German

aviator and knight of the Order of Pour le Mérite, might spend the rest of his life in Sweden. He bought Langenscheidt's dictionary of Swedish, and started to learn the language.

With his dazzling good looks and his courtly manner he was a killer in Swedish society, but he found no woman who could fill the gap left by Käthe Dorsch until February 20, 1920—the night that a young and wealthy Swedish explorer, Count Eric von Rosen, chartered Göring's plane for a flight up to his castle, Rockelstad. After a bumpy, stomach-pitching flight through gathering blizzards, Göring landed expertly on the frozen lake next to the castle and accepted the count's invitation to spend the night. He had always liked castles. Balloons of cognac in their hands, Hermann and Eric strolled through the great structure, pausing once before a giant stuffed bear—the rugged beast reached out stiffly at the Norseman who had slain it with his spear. By coincidence there were several swastika emblems embellishing the castle. The swastika had yet to appear on the flags and armbands in drum-beating parades across Nazi Europe, and Hermann had never seen one before; Count Eric had discovered the swastika emblem on rune stones in Gotland, and had incorporated this harmless Nordic symbol of the rising sun everywhere at Rockelstad—embossed on the hearth and iron firedogs and on one wall of his shooting box in the grounds.

As Göring puzzled at the emblem, he was distracted by a rustling sound, as a statuesque, auburn-haired lady glided down the stairs. This was Carin, Countess von Fock; her sister was Eric's wife. Upright, round-faced, and tenderhearted, Carin was the thirty-one-year-old daughter of a Swedish officer and his Irish wife. She was bored with life in general and her officer husband, Nils von Kantzow, in particular. She was eager for adventure and hungered for romance. It is not impossible that having noticed a prominently featured interview of Göring published in the *Svenska Dagbladet* two weeks before—he had commented on a recent airplane crash—she and Eric had actually plotted to arrange the aviator's enforced sojourn at their castle.

Whatever the origins of their meeting, Göring fell deeply in love with Carin von Fock. She was nearly five years older; she was different from any other woman he had set eyes on. She showed him the tiny chapel of the family's private Edelweiss Order nestled behind the castle, and Hermann detected in her something of the maternal feeling that he had always missed in his own mother. Before flying back to Stockholm the next morning, he wrote in the guest book: "Hermann Göring, Kommandeur, Jagdgeschwader 1, Freiherr von Richthofen, February 21, 1920."

Afterward, he penned these emotional lines, betraying a depth of feeling found scarcely anywhere else in his writings:

I would like to thank you from my heart for the beautiful moment that I was allowed to spend in the Edelweiss chapel. You have no idea how I felt in this wonderful atmosphere. It was so

earthly noise, all my worries,
... I was like a swimmer
new strength before he throws
of life. . . .

er (he had died on the battlefield),
and to marry a German officer too.
von Fock in Stockholm or at the
existence piloting air taxis for Sven-
he wrote in March 1920: "When
there were more requests for round-
ing these on Sundays." He added
on "There is much confusion about
akes responsibility."

Svenska Dagbladet reported that
months been one of Stockholm's
off his white-cowled wartime Fok-
er BMW engine at an aerobatics

married Swedish countess grew into a
anything at all sanctified it then, it
elt for the other. This becomes clear
have surfaced in the United States.
precious documents, stored in an
at "Carinhall" in February 1944, it
letters to him, as well as his diaries;
in his private train in Berchtesgaden
ing hint at the mounting opposition
ant-German aviator had aroused in
father would last until her death.

Carin traveled to Germany. (Nils was
Cyr Military Academy.) Hermann's
the Munich railroad station. Carin
they were both "German to their
ed her hotel room with roses, and he
oring (whom the Swedish countess
scolded Hermann like a small boy
d and from her seven-year-old son,
out his jaw, turned on his heel, and
with him. They spent a few idyllic
the Bavarian mountains. The photo-
towering over her young lover, with
in the background.

Kantzow showed a heroic stoicism,

and even a generosity that Carin surely ill deserved. He wrote to her parents
saying that he still loved her; when he met her briefly in Berlin on August
4, she assured him that all she wanted from life was her mother, husband,
and little Thomas, but when she returned to Sweden she added Hermann to
that list and made it plain she wanted her German lover to come and live
with her, even though it meant losing her husband. To her uncomprehending
sorrow, Nils declined to let her salvage Thomas from the family collapse
along with the other jointly owned property at No. 5, Karlavägen.

She wrote to Göring from that address on December 20, 1920, thanking
him for two letters and telegrams from Berlin and Munich:

Darling! You really need not have any concern for me. Nils is
so nice to me, and no one else is angry with me. It is so terrible
for me without you, my only eternally beloved. I feel more and
more how deeply and warmly and sincerely I love you. I don't
forget you for a minute. Thomas is my consolation. He is so
sweet and dear and loves me so faithfully and deeply. He has
gotten so big, and he laughs and kisses me every time he sees
me. Today was his last day at school and he got the highest marks
in every subject. He was so happy, he had two sweet tears in his
blue eyes!

Her mother-in-law, she continued, "that old witch," had phoned Nils two
days ago to ask for her address; Nils had said she was back in his home in
Karlavägen, and his mother had congratulated him and written Carin a cloying
letter reproaching her, which evoked from her only a scornful comment,
written to her distant lover, "Isn't she a conceited, idiotic old monkey???"

You asked me [wrote Carin to Hermann] about writing from
Bayrischzell. Yes, darling, always write me at Karlavägen. It is
after all better to be open about it. I told Nils the whole truth the
first day I was back. I told him you were with me at Bayrischzell
and that you had rented our house for me. He took it all very
calmly and even said he was glad to know I was happy and hadn't
been all by myself.

On the following day she wrote more, lamenting that Nils and her own family
never left her alone—"Nils always wants to talk to me and in spite of the
fact that he is nice and friendly, I am bored to death!" She went on:

Darling, oh, how I long for you! . . .

Moreover Nils still hasn't given me a cent. What a nerve! He
knows I don't have anything. Today I told him, "You'll have to

give me a little money, I want to give Mama and my sisters something for Christmas!"

"No, Carin dear," says he, "no need for you to do that: I'll give presents to your relatives and friends!

"Have you ever heard anything so dumb? . . . This ignorance makes him seem like a scoundrel, but at the same time like an angel or a child. I get so nervous I can hardly stay in the same room or house with him.

More and more I realize how much you mean to me. I love you so much. You are everything to me. There is no other like you. To me you are really my ideal in everything. You do everything so sweetly . . . You remember me with so many little things and that makes my life so happy. Now, for the first time I realize how accustomed I have become to you. It is difficult for me to say it . . . I want you to feel it in your dear beloved heart! If I could only say that with kisses and embraces, darling! I would like to kiss you from one end to the other without stopping for an hour. Do you really love me as much as you say? Is that possible??

My thoughts are with you. You must feel my love everywhere, in every little corner, table and chair; in my thoughts I kiss everything that is near you—that dear ugly old floor in the kitchen, your bed, your chair. I am crying, I love you so much. I think only of you, and I am true to you in everything.

The remainder of this letter makes plain that her disapproving sister Fanny had chaperoned them in Bavaria. Fanny was scornful. "Look how he's compromised Carin!" she exploded over one meal. "In Germany it's a scandal for a woman to live the way she did and to do the things she did. He was placing her in an impossible position in German eyes, and as a German officer he must have known it."

"Carin is the one you should be angry with," their mother retorted. "Not Göring."

Her cuckolded husband, Nils, continued to support her, but their curly-haired boy, Thomas, was often crying, sleepless, and worried. "Nils could not live without Thomas now," Fanny reproached her sister Carin. "Oh, Nils . . . He is one of the noblest men I know."

Deaf to this reproach, Carin invited Göring to live with her in Stockholm quite openly. He obeyed her call. Heedless of her parents' protests, they took a small apartment in Östermalm. Uneasy at this irregular union, which may have reminded him of his mother's liaison with Von Epenstein in his own childhood, Göring pleaded with her to divorce Nils but she refused, fearful of losing her son. Thomas lived with his father, torn between the two ménages. He slipped off after school to visit his mama and "Uncle Göring."

Nils pleaded with her to ret lunch; young Thomas listen with tales of the "Red Baron his mother never took his ey

Unable to take the waggin and his mistress left for Gei little hunting lodge at Hochkn ich. He registered at the uni money with painting and han a painted cupboard door sign for a retired army captain in h they were penniless, and wh pay the doctor's bill (Nils he coat—and buy a ticket back home by offering the family' reply, inviting her mama to M surance: "Mama would not b

"Bavaria," she wrote in th tryside, so rich, so warm and of Germany. I am very happy feel homesick for Sweden, it little boy, and those I love. B I am nearly always melancholy have such powerful love with

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sit his mama and "Uncle Göring."

Nils pleaded with her to return. Once he invited her to bring Hermann to lunch; young Thomas listened round-eyed as Göring dominated the table with tales of the "Red Baron" and aerial combat. The little boy noticed that his mother never took his eyes off the handsome aviator.

Unable to take the wagging tongues in Stockholm any longer, Hermann and his mistress left for Germany. They began a romantic existence in a little hunting lodge at Hochkreuth, near Bayrischzell, some miles from Munich. He registered at the university to study economic history, she earned money with painting and handicrafts. (There exists in the village to this day a painted cupboard door signed with her initials.) He found it was not easy for a retired army captain in his thirtieth year to embark on higher education; they were penniless, and when she fell ill he had to pawn her fur coat to pay the doctor's bill (Nils heroically cabled her the money to redeem the coat—and buy a ticket back to Stockholm.) Her mother tried to lure her home by offering the family's summer house near Drottningholm; in her reply, inviting her mama to Munich instead, Carin added the eloquent assurance: "Mama would not have to see Göring—even at a distance."

"Bavaria," she wrote in this letter, of May 11, 1922, "is a lovely countryside, so rich, so warm and so intellectual and strong—so unlike the rest of Germany. I am very happy here and feel very much at home. When I feel homesick for Sweden, it is really only a longing for Mama, Nils, the little boy, and those I love. But just that painful, insane longing means that I am nearly always melancholy. Oh, my own dear Mama, if only one didn't have such powerful love within one."

2

STORM TROOP
COMMANDER

Two planets pass, so close that each is fractionally deflected by the other's course. So it is, sometimes, with humans too.

For Hermann Göring this celestial episode came late in 1922. The orbit of this out-of-work war hero intersected briefly with that of Adolf Hitler, unknown demagogue, one Saturday in October or November of that year, in Munich's Königsplatz. A demonstration had been called to protest the latest Allied demands on defeated Germany. Göring, who was himself trying to raise a small political party of ex-officers, heard shouts for a Herr Hitler to speak; people standing around told him that this Hitler headed a small National Socialist German Workers' party. Hitler, standing a few yards away from him, declined to speak, but something about this callow, slightly built man in his early thirties must have fascinated Göring, because he visited Hitler's regular Monday evening political at the Café Neumann two days later.

The topic was "The Versailles Peace Treaty and the Extradition of the German Army Commanders." Göring was much impressed by what Hitler said. Hitler explained that no Frenchman was likely to lose much sleep over the kind of language talked by the other speakers at the Königsplatz

demonstration—"You've got exclaimed. 'Down with Versailles! Goddammit, thought Göring party the next day.

Hitler told him he need decorated—in the party. For G he had at last found a replacement for the kaiser.

The attraction between them that Captain Göring delivered honor first in any conflict of interest. "He'd been to those evening parties with him. I made him commander."

At that time the Sturmabteilung was the first to admit, just a "mottled roughnecks had the job of street fights"—but he had military experience.

The SA was only one of several groups that came up in the aftermath of Versailles but colluded with them to three thousand closely typed pages. The successful Nazi coup of November 8, 1923. Since German army officers in Berlin and Munich sent in their armies to order Ernst Röhm—itched to take action against political armies a reservoir of soldiers after the invasion of the Ruhr, the SA army commander in Bavaria, Göring's SA "army" was by now a

Göring took Carin along to the SA on January 28, 1923.

He had moved with her into a villa just outside the boundary of Munich. He gave him command of the SA. It was the first home they could call their own.

Nils, whose munificence surpassed that of his father, to furnish this villa. One room was painted white, and sunlight played across a bow of white. The bedroom had pink curtains and a bed in white lace. There was nothing else in the room—his room was heavy with carved

* The fire had so little to offer, but the crowd had such a high opinion of him that G was carried

demonstration—"You've got to have bayonets to back up any threats!" he exclaimed. "Down with Versailles!" he shouted.

Goddammit, thought Göring, that's the stuff, he enlisted in Hitler's new party the next day.

Hitler told him he needed people just like him—famous, highly decorated—in the party. For Göring, Hitler also filled a need. Meeting Hitler, he had at last found a replacement for his dead father, his godfather, and the kaiser.

The attraction between them was mutual. Impressed by the fiery speech that Captain Göring delivered at the Café Neumann—about how officers put honor first in any conflict of interests—Hitler recalled twenty years afterward, "He'd been to those evenings of mine several times, and I found I liked him. I made him commander of my SA."

At that time the Sturmabteilung, or storm detachment, was, as Hitler was the first to admit, just a "motley rabble." These two thousand unemployed roughnecks had the job of stewarding Hitler's meetings and disrupting his rivals—but he had military ambitions for the SA that went far beyond this.

The SA was only one of several semi-legal private armies that had sprung up in the aftermath of Versailles. The Bavarian authorities not only tolerated this but colluded with them to a degree that becomes clear only from the three thousand closely typed pages of the Hitler trial that followed the unsuccessful Nazi coup of November 1923. This bloody fiasco had its origins in January 1923. Since Germany was unable to pay reparations, France and Belgium sent in their armies to occupy the rich Ruhr industrial region. Regular army officers in Berlin and Munich—men like the scar-faced army captain Ernst Röhm—itched to take action against the French and saw in the private political armies a reservoir of semi-trained military personnel. Fifteen days after the invasion of the Ruhr, Lieutenant General Otto von Lossow, the new army commander in Bavaria, granted Hitler his first interview, because Hitler's SA "army" was by now one of the largest.

Göring took Carin along to the SA's first big rally two days later, on January 28, 1923.

He had moved with her into a villa in Reginwald Strasse at Obermenzing, just outside the boundary of Munich, in November 1922, soon after Hitler gave him command of the SA. Carin had at once set about furnishing this, the first home they could call their own.

Nils, whose munificence surpasses comprehension, had sent her the money to furnish this villa. One room was lit by a tinted pink window—the rose-hued sunlight played across a bowl of red roses to where her white harmonium stood amid the pink and white fur rugs beneath her mother's portrait. Her bedroom had pink curtains and a bed canopied in blue brocade and veiled in white lace. There was nothing of this femininity in Hermann's quarters—his room was heavy with carved oak furniture and lit by a window painted

ROOP
NDER

planets pass, so close that each fractionally deflected by the other's too.

ode came late in 1922. The orbit briefly with that of Adolf Hitler, October or November of that year, on had been called to protest the Göring, who was himself trying heard shouts for a Herr Hitler that this Hitler headed a small Hitler, standing a few yards away about this callow, slightly built Götting, because he visited at the Café Neumann two days

Treaty and the Extradition of the much impressed by what Hitler was likely to lose much sleep over our speakers at the Königsplatz

to offer but the
expression of him
curious

with knights in armor. A concealed cellar had an open fireplace and oak cupboards around the walls.

They married in February—probably under pressure from the prudish Adolf Hitler. Although Hermann Göring would later encourage biographers to believe that they had married one year earlier, the family papers show that her divorce had only become absolute in December 1922, and the registry at Munich's city hall confirms that the marriage was solemnized at Obermenzing on February 3, 1923. His private papers contained proof of a civil ceremony in Stockholm on January 25; the marriage certificate, which was looted along with his other papers in 1945, has now been donated anonymously to the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich, and shows the date February 3, 1923. His comrades of the old Richthofen Squadron formed the guard of honor.

This second marriage changed Carin's life. "God!" she enthused to a friend. "How wonderful it is to have a husband who doesn't take two days to see the point of a joke." Nils now had little to laugh about; years later he would still refer to Carin as his "lost treasure." Carin did not care.

Aunt Mary [she wrote to her little boy Thomas that spring of 1923] will have told you that I am now married to Captain Göring . . . You know, the raw climate in Sweden was none too good for my health . . . We have known Captain Göring since that time in Stockholm, you will remember, and he was so kind . . . to your mama when she was lonely in a foreign country.

And then I found that I was beginning to like him so much that I wanted to marry him. You see, sweetheart, he has made your mama very happy. And you mustn't be upset about it, and it won't interfere with our love for each other, dearest Thomas.

You see, I love you best of all . . .

Deepening his ties with the private armies in Bavaria, General von Lossow agreed to Hitler's request that the SA troops should be given clandestine army training. "Hitler's well-known powers of charm, persuasion, and eloquence," the general would wanly admit, "were not without effect on me."

Göring had armed and enlarged the SA far beyond the boundaries of Munich. Four years younger than Hitler, he was still more of a drifter and adventurer than political agitator. He would later recall the first pitched battle with the Communists in Munich (on March 1, 1923) only for the beerhall bruises given and received. "Boy, how those beer mugs flew!" he reminisced twenty years later to American historian George Shuster, without a trace of apology. "One nearly laid me out!"

A few days previously Berlin had advised General von Lossow that in May the army would begin operations against the French occupying the Ruhr. Lossow made preparations under the code name *Spring Training* and in-

& That night, she would say as
made to Goering.

formed Göring that the SA and for the campaign.

Hitler was uneasy. He argued point," he told the general, before the domestic political is disposing of the feeble, "Jew

Von Lossow paid no heed. cut an unimpressive figure at the outing Göring was seen giving new wife sank much of their inseparable, however; on April review of his troops, he stood in Mercedes-Benz 16, with his, a of SA men trooped past in uniform with swastika armbands).

"Today," wrote Carin proudly after watching this thrilling, o-

the Beloved One paraded his Führer, and I saw his by. The Beloved One has so much of his own brain was once a rabble—and rather terrifying one—has of Light, a band of eager orders to render this unh-

After it was over, he told me that if he said what the Beloved One would

I said that my own head he kissed my hand and so ever be swollen."

The Bavarians were ready for all Worse, when Hitler and Göring hand by holding a provocative north of Munich, General von he had previously allowed the general to the judges one year country? . . . This first trial of had nothing more to do with or

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formed Göring that the SA and other "patriotic bodies" would be recruited for the campaign.

Hitler was uneasy. He argued that this sequence was wrong. "There's a point," he told the general, "in staging an attack on the external enemy before the domestic political issue has been dealt with"—by which he meant disposing of the feeble, "Jew-ridden" central government in Berlin.

Von Lossow paid no heed. To the aristocrats who ruled Bavaria, Hitler cut an unimpressive figure at this time. He was so poor that during one Easter outing Göring was seen giving him pocket money—in fact, Göring and his new wife sank much of their own money into the party. The two men were inseparable, however; on April 15, when Hitler took the salute at the big review of his troops, he stood in Göring's new car, a twenty-five-horsepower Mercedes-Benz 16, with his arm outstretched for an hour as the thousands of SA men trooped past in uniform (field-gray ski caps and windbreakers with swastika armbands).

"Today," wrote Carin proudly to little Thomas von Kantzow in Stockholm after watching this thrilling, ominous spectacle:

the Beloved One paraded his army of true young Germans before his Führer, and I saw his face light up as he watched them pass by. The Beloved One has worked so hard with them, has instilled so much of his own bravery and heroism into them, that what was once a rabble—and I must confess sometimes a rough and rather terrifying one—has been transformed into a veritable Army of Light, a band of eager crusaders ready to march at the Führer's orders to render this unhappy country free once more . . .

After it was over, the Führer embraced the Beloved One and told me that if he said what he really thought of his achievement the Beloved One would get a swollen head.

I said that my own head was already swollen with pride, and he kissed my hand and said, "No head so pretty as yours could ever be swollen."

The Bavarians were ready for action against France, but Berlin had cold feet. Worse, when Hitler and Göring tried to force the Bavarian government's hand by holding a provocative anti-Communist May Day parade in an arena north of Munich, General von Lossow called in all the army weapons that he had previously allowed the SA to carry. "What mattered," explained the general to the judges one year later, "was this: Who was in charge in this country? . . . This first trial of strength ended with Hitler's defeat, and we had nothing more to do with one another."

It was a serious loss of face for Hitler, Göring, and the SA.

"An officer never breaks his word!" Göring told Hitler, perplexed.

In August 1923 his widowed mother died. This was a watershed in his

career, and he committed himself recklessly from this time on to the Nazi movement. On August 24, Hitler issued to him his first Vollmacht, or supreme authority to act in his behalf. The work was hard, but Göring thrived on it. "Often," he bragged a year later to an Italian correspondent, "I was on the go until four A.M. and was back at the office at seven A.M. the next day. I didn't have a moment's respite all day. One visitor followed the other . . . You know we Germans are great beavers for work. Out of twenty-four hours we will work twenty-three! Believe me, I have often—very often—come home dead tired at eleven P.M., spent fifteen minutes grabbing some tea or supper with my wife and then, instead of going to bed, reviewed the day's activities for two or three hours; the next morning at seven A.M. the first adjutant would come to report."

Hitler became a frequent visitor to the Göring household, and Carin heard them endlessly discussing the same old topics—Chancellor Gustav Stresemann, his "Jew government" in Berlin, and the economic crisis since Versailles. Robbed of the Ruhr industries, the economy had toppled into an abyss. In the Ruhr, the French occupation troops sent to the firing squad any Germans who offered resistance. Currency had become virtually valueless: On August 1, one American dollar equaled three million German Reichsmarks; by late September it would buy 142 million Reichsmarks—people had to pay even the smallest bills with suitcases of overprinted and double-overprinted paper money.

Hitler and Göring, the SA, and the other private armies were restless for action—any kind of action. But Berlin refused now to act; *Spring Training* was off.

Envious of Benito Mussolini's recent March on Rome, Hitler and Göring hatched grandiose plans to raise all Bavaria for a March on Berlin. But time was running out. Feeding on the economic chaos, Communist revolutions had broken out in Saxony and Thuringia, to the north of Bavaria. Hitler urged Bavaria to act and offered his "troops" in support.

Göring, however, had, other preoccupations now. Carin had contracted a lung infection at his mother's funeral and returned to Stockholm, where heart problems forced her into the Vita Kors Nursing Home at Brunkeberstorg.

Göring remained in Germany at Hitler's side. Early in October 1923 he wrote to Carin's mother, adopting the ornate style customary in her family. "I sense your gentle aura, and kiss your sweet hands!" he wrote. "Then a profound stillness comes over me and I sense your helping prayers."

"Over here," he continued, turning to the political crisis in Bavaria, "life is like a seething volcano whose destructive lava may at any moment spew forth across the country . . . We are working feverishly and stand by our aim: the liberation and revival of Germany." He concluded by begging the countess to take care of his Carin—"She is everything to me."

Countess von Fock replied sending Göring twenty gold crowns ("from Carin") and a food parcel containing rarities like coffee and butter.

Still ailing, Carin returned to slight cold," she wrote to Thor bed, where the Beloved insists I these days and great events are that I mustn't bother myself with sleep, and he wears himself out moments."

They were both homesick for 5 in Bavaria. "Times are grim here 23. "Strife and deprivation raw when we must take responsibility

At a Nuremberg rally early in S. a few weeks the dice will roll!" A organization had set up the "Co mann Kriebel, who had served o von Ludendorff, took military Richter, a pharmacist, was secret private armies in Bavaria—Göring flagge) headed by Ernst Röhm, 3 by the end of September 1923 the of the SA and Adolf Hitler.

On September 26, in the rising minister had appointed a General and, like Hitler, this man, Dr. force to install a right-wing dictatorship initially dubious. But neither the Nazis—Hitler's National Socialists ordered Lossow to prepare to send uprising in Saxony, Kahr instructed previous fruitful contacts with them in his army.

Lossow eventually went further *Spring Training* and gave it a new became clear that the enemy was Ruhr nor the Communists in Sax Kahr's deputy made this plain in on October 20: "We don't say 'La not separatists. What we say is, Berlin has spouted one lie after another a gang of Jews? Fall in behind Kahr marching side by side with Hitler

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Still ailing, Carin returned to her Hermann a few days later. "I have a slight cold," she wrote to Thomas from Munich, "and am writing this in bed, where the Beloved insists I must stay until I am better. He is very busy these days and great events are in the offing, but until I am better he insists that I mustn't bother myself with them. He looks tired and doesn't get enough sleep, and he wears himself out traveling miles just to see me for a few moments."

They were both homesick for Sweden, but a sense of destiny kept Hermann in Bavaria. "Times are grim here," he wrote to Carin's mother on October 23. "Strife and deprivation ravage the country, and the hour is not far off when we must take responsibility for the future."

At a Nuremberg rally early in September 1923 Hitler had pronounced, "In a few weeks the dice will roll!" At this rally he and the right-wing paramilitary organization had set up the "Combat League" (*Kampfbund*): Colonel Hermann Kriebel, who had served on the staff of the redoubtable General Erich von Ludendorff, took military command, and Dr. Max von Scheubner-Richter, a pharmacist, was secretary general. The Combat League united the private armies in Bavaria—Göring's SA, the Reich War Flag (*Reichskriegsflagge*) headed by Ernst Röhm, and the Highland League (*Bund Oberland*); by the end of September 1923 the latter two had agreed to obey the directives of the SA and Adolf Hitler.

On September 26, in the rising economic emergency, the Bavarian prime minister had appointed a General-Staatskommissar with dictatorial power, and, like Hitler, this man, Dr. Gustav von Kahr, began talking of using force to install a right-wing dictatorship in Berlin. General von Lossow was initially dubious. But neither the general nor Kahr could afford to hold the Nazis—Hitler's National Socialists—at arm's length for long. When Berlin ordered Lossow to prepare to send Bavarian battalions to quell the Communist uprising in Saxony, Kahr instructed General von Lossow to resume his previous fruitful contacts with the right-wing organizations to fill the gaps in his army.

Lossow eventually went further. He updated the operational plan called *Spring Training* and gave it a new code name, *Autumn Training*. It shortly became clear that the enemy was neither the French occupation force in the Ruhr nor the Communists in Saxony, but Stresemann's regime in Berlin. Kahr's deputy made this plain in a rabble-raising speech to right-wingers on October 20: "We don't say 'Let's Dump Berlin!' " he declared. "We're not separatists. What we say is, 'Let's March on Berlin!' For two months Berlin has spouted one lie after another. What else can you expect from such a gang of Jews? Fall in behind Kahr!" he appealed. "As from today we're marching side by side with Hitler."

All of this came out at the later trial. "The authorities," Hitler testified there, "the state policy, and the army, now resumed the training of our

* What did happen in Berlin is not clear. Whatever it was, after Seisser returned to Munich on the morning of November 4, he and the other two triumvirate members cold-shouldered Hitler and the Combat League. Summoning the latter's officers and those of the Highland League to his own headquarters on the sixth, Gustav von Kahr advised them not to indulge in flights of fancy. "We are all agreed on the need for a new nationalist government," he said. "But we must all stand shoulder to shoulder. We must proceed to a well-thought-out, adequately prepared, and uniform plan."

General von Lossow took the same negative line. He promised to stand by Kahr and to back any scheme that promised success. "But," he sniffed, referring to two recent revolutionary fiascos, "don't expect me to join in, if it's going to be just another Kapp Putsch or Kustrin Uprising." He pulled a notebook out of his pocket and wagged it at Colonel Kriebel (Combat League) and Dr. Weber (Oberland). "Believe me," he intoned, as the secret conference ended, "I want to march too. But I won't do it until my little notebook tells me we've got at least a fifty-one percent chance of pulling it off."

One week before, Hitler had threatened not to tolerate any further procrastination by the triumvirate. Now, on the evening of November 6, he called his men together and set the ball rolling. They would march on Sunday the eleventh. The next morning, meeting with Göring and Kriebel, Hitler sketched out the broad outline of the planned coup: Their "troops" would seize the major towns, railroad stations, telecommunications buildings, and city halls throughout Bavaria. It sounded so easy that they brought forward the zero hour. Why not strike the very next day, November 8, 1923?

The odor of revolution, faint but unmistakable, drifted into Lossow's office at the Army Headquarters Building in Schönfeld Strasse that afternoon, November 7. There were telephone intercepts and police agents' reports too.

The general's chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Baron von Berchem, told his assembled officers that Kahr was talking of acting in fourteen days' time, but that Lossow believed Hitler no longer intended to wait, in which case they, the army, would have to stop him. "He has yet to prove," interrupted Lossow, "that he is the German Mussolini he seems to think he is."

The Nazi coup began to roll. That evening Kahr received an unscheduled invitation. "On the night of November 7," he would testify:

I learned to my surprise that the right-wing patriotic organizations were planning a major demonstration at the Bürgerbräu beer cellar on the eighth, and that they were expecting me to come and make a speech.

I was a bit queasy about this and made some inquiries. They told me that demand had been enormous—they had tried to book an even bigger hall, they said, but only the Bürgerbräu was available. So really I had no alternative but to comply.

* D.T. The "Gengs" must have talked
person to Seisser

Seduced and blinded by this ur
to provide free beer for the th
Had he known that the reason t
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"I'll have a machine gun set up

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ur, Lossow, and Seisser—leaving
n of six hundred men surrounding
lling around the foyer and a dozen
nd. The former air-force captain
veal the blue enamel of his Pour

t into!" Kahr snapped to Seisser.
Lossow, sotto voce.

p them: When the commander of
the hall had appealed to Göring
vatch and said with a broad grin,
" (Wilhelm Frick, chief of Mun-
supporter for some time.) At that
Delivered, was being telephoned
ay-phone at the Löwenbräu beer
his Reichskriegsflagge men. The
sper to him, then Röhm took the
had been overthrown and that a
his "troops" to form up outside
the Bürgerbräu.

's captive audience was growing
irate dragged on. There were loud
America!" (in mocking reference
is). Colonel Kriebel ordered Gör-
met, drew his gun, and waded in
ce, the young man who mounted
later of an officer, an aviator, an
rust forward, he glared at the five
en he too loosed off a pistol shot
voice, he promised that no harm
—the ones who were going to be
red Jews (*elende Judenschaft*) in
s.) "At this very moment," he
ipolizei are marching out of their
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ernous hall.

d leave the building.
ve all got your beer!"

It was going to be a long night. Colonel Kriebel instructed Göring to use his SA men to supervise the feeding of these five thousand, and sent a motor cyclist to head off Röhm's troops and send them to Lossow's headquarters, where they were to greet the general with a guard of honor on his return from the Bürgerbräu. "I reported first to Herr Hitler," testified Lieutenant Brückner at the later trial, "then to my superior officer, Captain Göring. He told me to march my troops into the Bürgerbräu, where everybody was to rest and be victualled. That took up most of the night."

Hitler himself was making little progress in his attempts to win over the angry triumvirate. Göring left General von Lossow in little doubt of his private opinion of him. "What does an old general have to do, anyway?" he sneered. "Just sign a few orders . . . I can do anything he can. I can be a division commander too—let's sack him here and now."

The threat of dismissal had little effect. As Hitler pleaded and cajoled with Kahr, Seisser, and Lossow, the angry hubbub from the hall arose again. Leaving Göring to continue the argument, Hitler pushed through to the front of the hall again, mounted the rostrum, and delivered a speech that was described by historian Alexander von Müller, who witnessed it, as a masterpiece of rhetoric. "It turned that vast assemblage inside out," said Professor von Müller, "smoothly as a glove."

The triumvirate, Hitler announced, were all but won over. He proposed that General von Ludendorff become the "reorganizer" of the national army, and that Lossow and Seisser take command of the Reich's army and police. Hitler pronounced the dismissal of the Bavarian government, and loftily threw in the dismissal of Reich President Ebert and Chancellor Stresemann for good measure. "I therefore propose," he concluded, "that I take over political leadership of this provisional national government." He appealed to them all to fall in behind Kahr, Lossow, and Seisser if they backed the revolution.

This did the trick. Frenzied cheers greeted the announcement. Hitler had the three men brought back in—to renewed frenetic applause—as though they were a vaudeville act.

Their faces were a picture. Professor Müller described Kahr's as like a mask, Seisser's as agitated and pale, Lossow's as "mocking and foxy." Kahr spoke a few brave words of acceptance, stuttered something—to more storms of applause—about taking over the destiny of Bavaria as regent for the monarchy that "disloyal hands" had struck down five years before. Seisser also spoke a few words, and then Lossow—nudged into reluctant oratory by Hitler.

By this time war-hero Ludendorff had arrived, fetched by Scheubner-Richter in Hitler's Mercedes. The audience rose to its feet to cheer the general. Up on the stage, Hitler shook each man's hand—as he clasped Gustav von Kahr's right hand the latter dramatically placed his left hand on top, to seal their bargain. As if conducted by an unseen baton, five thousand throats

stood at attention, ramrod
Ludendorff joined him and

announced the arrival of one
in the infantry school with
Hoff and Hitler went out to
on and telegraph office were
Ludendorff's army district was firmly
phoric: The revolution seemed
triumph to Carin on her sickbed

word of Kahr, Lossow, and
ministries while Hitler and
Kahr seemed to have been won
word was surely not in doubt;
pilot Rudolf Hess had taken
from the audience in the beer
ed off to a safe house in the

revolutionary intent that night. But
arming in which men lose faith
apart. Kahr and Seisser joined
th Infantry Regiment barracks
led at midnight by Röhm), and
they had given to Hitler. They
e Munich newspaper appeared,
l German radio stations under
Kahr, General von Lossow and
"The opinions expressed by
etlin explained, "were extracted
misuse of above names."

radio bulletin: "Barracks and
spolizei hands. Reinforcements

Lossow to arrive at army district
or to stand down. By 6:00 A.M.
been double-crossed. Hitler and
g triumvirate, while over at the
easily to his lieutenant, Brück-
hed." Guessing that this meant
the bridges across the River Isar.
visiting Röhm, they saw bill-
up, on Kahr's orders, placards

repudiating the Hitler putsch as "senseless," banning the Nazi party, and
promising ruthless punishment of the guilty.

Something had clearly gone wrong. Back at the Bürgerbräu beer hall Hitler
and Ludendorff conferred with Göring, as the Nazi storm troopers mingled
with the infantry cadets and party men, all hungry and unshaven. General
von Ludendorff faced a dilemma: He told an intimate friend later that day,
"It was clear that the Nazi movement was to all intents and purposes finished.
It was quite plain to me where my duty lay. I would have been a cowardly
dog if I had left Hitler in the lurch now."

Göring urged Hitler to retreat to Rosenheim, south of Munich, and regroup
there. Ludendorff would not even hear of it. "Now is the time to show what
we're made of," he stoutly declared. "Let's show we're worthy of leading
the nationalist movement."

Thus Adolf Hitler, revolutionary and would-be statesman, prepared on
this dull, overcast, chilly November 9 to meet his destiny. He, Ludendorff,
and Göring decided to march their men into the city center to prove that
they were not finished. They were sure of the people's backing. Hitler had
the infantry cadets lined up outside the beer hall and delivered a powerful
speech to them. They swore allegiance to him. He felt immortal. His hour
had come. He sent armed men into the city to requisition funds; they took
14,605,000 billion Reichsmarks from the Jewish bank-note printers Parvus
& Company, and gave a Nazi receipt in exchange. Meanwhile, Hitler acted
to maintain order. Learning that one Nazi squad had ransacked a kosher
grocery store during the night, he sent for the ex-army lieutenant who had
led the raid.

"We took off our Nazi insignia first!" expostulated the officer—to no
avail, as Hitler dismissed him from the party on the spot. "I shall see that
no other nationalist unit allows you to join either!" Göring goggled at this
exchange, as did a police sergeant who testified to it at the Hitler trial a few
weeks later.

The march into the city center would begin at noon. Göring meanwhile
sent shock troops to pick up still more hostages. They burst into the city-
council chamber at 11:00 A.M., singled out the Burgomaster and nine terrified
Socialist councillors and frog-marched them outside. "They had it coming
to them," said Hitler later, without a trace of remorse. "In that same town
hall a few months earlier we had heard them say that Bismarck was the
biggest swine and gangster in Germany's history." The hostages were not
treated gently. "We ran the gauntlet of punches, oaths, and human spittle,"
protested Socialist majority leader Albert Nussbaum at the trial, "all the way
across the square until we were tossed into a truck and driven off to the
Bürgerbräu."

Hitler ran his eye over Göring's ten new hostages without enthusiasm. He
said nothing, but ordered a lame hostage released.

storm troopers formed up into
 took his place in the front
 leaders went out in front,"
 not cast from the same mold
 nit, while somebody else goes

to the storm troopers guarding
 "If the army opens fire on
 skulls with your rifle butts!"
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 tarchers were led by two flag-
 and the Bund Oberland, each
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 right, the column of SA and
 was on the left. Göring was
 no clear plan of action, nobody
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 ing a thin cordon across the
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 nd, there were shouts of Heil,
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Marchers instantly. Dr. Weber
 guard, bound forward. "Don't
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 lexes of a trained infantryman.
 by the dying Kampfbund leader
 ugh the heart. Police swarmed
 sh off the injured. "I saw one
 he trial, "put a round at three
 it was either Ludendorff's vault

or Hitler's bodyguard. Then he reloaded and fired another bullet into him so
 that the body kicked into the air."

As the rattle of rifle fire ended, Hitler picked himself up. Fourteen of his
 men, and four policemen, were dead. As for Hermann Göring, Carin's sister
 Fanny glimpsed him lying motionless in a widening pool of blood and thought
 that he too had been killed.

It was a tragic and senseless outcome. Cursing themselves for their own
 folly, Hitler and Ludendorff realized in retrospect how weak their allies had
 been. "The hopes that inspired us all on the evening of November 8," said
 the general, "hopes that we could save our fatherland and restore the nation's
 will, were dashed because Messrs. Kahr, Lossow, and Seisser lost sight of
 the main objective: because the Big Moment found only little men within
 them."

What had become of Göring?

A police marksman's bullet had pierced his groin, only millimeters from
 an artery. Some of his own men found him and carried him to the first door
 showing a doctor's nameplate in the nearby Residenz Strasse. Years later
 his adjutant Karl Bodenschatz would reveal, "The people on the ground
 floor threw him out, but there was an elderly Jewish couple upstairs, and
 they took him in." Ilse Ballin, wife of a Jewish furniture dealer,* gave
 Göring first aid, then, helped by her sister, carried him round to the clinic
 of a friend, Professor Alwin Ritter von Ach. He found the entry and exit
 wounds still foul with mud and gravel, and did what he could to ease the
 pain.

Friends took word of Hermann's misfortune to Carin who bravely came
 to hold his hand and plan his escape. She took him by car down to Parten-
 kirchen, seventy miles south of Munich, where he was hidden in the villa
 of a wealthy Dutch sympathizer, Major Schuler van Krieken. Clearly he
 could not stay long, and plans were laid to smuggle the Görings out of the
 country. Kriebel published two obituary lists, including the name of "Göhr-
 ing," to draw the heat off him, but the police authorities were not deceived
 and issued a warrant for his arrest on the morning of November 10. A
 Lieutenant Maier of the Garmisch-Partenkirchen police station telephoned
 orders to the frontier post at Mittenwald ordering Göring's apprehension if
 he showed up there.

Göring shortly did. In his personnel file is a contemporary account by the
 driver who tried to smuggle him across the frontier, Nazi storm trooper Franz
 Thanner:

Around ten P.M. I drove off by car to the frontier post at Griesen
 with Göring, his wife, a doctor Maier of the Wiggers Sanatorium

*"When they [the Ballins] were due to be arrested by the Gestapo," recalled Bodenschatz,
 "Göring told me: 'No, Bodenschatz, we'll get them out of the country despite Himmler.' I took
 care of that myself."

of her new marriage. But as the days went by, she noticed that her family maintained an icy silence in Stockholm; only her mother continued to send food parcels to them—the parcels were smuggled across the mountains by the courier who carried the secret letters that were now being exchanged between Göring and Hitler, who had been committed to Landsberg Prison pending his trial for treason.

Harassed by Communists, who stoned her in the street, breaking a bone in one foot, Carin moved into the hospital to be with Hermann. His condition fluctuated badly. On November 26, just as the wound had closed, it broke open again. To muffle the searing pain, the doctors began injecting morphine twice a day. "Hermann is in a terrible state," Carin wrote to her mother on the last day of the month. "His leg hurts so much he can hardly bear it."

They operated on him under a general anesthetic, and for the past three days he's been running a high temperature. His mind wanders, he weeps, he has nightmares of street fighting, and all the time he is in indescribable pain. His whole leg is a mass of rubber tubes to drain off the pus.

As Hermann Göring bit his pillow and groaned incessantly, Carin sat helplessly at his side. "I have to watch him suffer in body and soul," she wrote one month after the shooting, "and there's hardly anything I can do to help . . . His pain is as bad as ever, despite his being dosed with morphine every day."

A stream of visitors and well-wishers came to the hospital, including Hitler's sister Paula ("a charming, ethereal creature with great soulful eyes set in a white face, quivering with love for her brother"), Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Siegfried Wagner, son of the composer. Wagner had tried to buy Hermann's photograph in Munich—the famous one with a helmet—but the photographers had sold out the entire stock of forty thousand they had printed the week before. Through the Nazi underground, meanwhile, they received clothes and other necessities, and then more friends like Ernst "Putzi" Hanfstaengl and Karl Bodenschatz came to bring him news of the coming trial.

Göring sent a message to General Ludendorff, asking whether he should surrender to Kahr's police in the interests of the party. Ludendorff advised him not to, since Göring was more useful at large.

Here in Austria [Carin wrote, starry-eyed, to her mother on December 20] National Socialism is especially strong, and I am sure that when Hermann is well again he will find something to do here. A party of a million members and "storm troops" of 100,000 armed men cannot be put down at one stroke.

Hitler's methods have thus far only been for decency and chiv-

alry. That is why he is so of the masses behind him and faith now, after the refused to eat . . .

It was Carin's tenderness that before Christmas of 1923. Early and opened his eyes he saw her. Eve he was allowed back into local SA troops had sent over a in red, white, and black, but Carin trembling like a leaf.

"Dead tired," wrote Carin around on crutches." The hotel elsewhere, except for a Scrooge dining room, and two young profession. Seemingly star-crossed the Görings shared this, their even Carin's party dress could

In her thoughts she was far from young Thomas, with gifts and found stand it no longer—she threw in some fresh air. It was blowing at once she heard the sounds of above their own hotel apartment, she wrote her father afterward, mind again. I went back in to again. Two hours later we were

She expressed a vague alarm coming over her husband. "I have the same letter to her father. "The word utters a word—so utterly depressed thought Hermann could get so late

In Munich the Bavarian government could only watch impotently from torian George Shuster, "that if they directly to the German public by

In the weeks before the trial

Yesterday and the day before Hitler's lawyer was here. He Hitler is held, full of the trial him. The lawyer visits him be any trial. If there is, it

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of the masses behind him. . . . Hitler is calm, he is full of life
and faith now, after the first few days when he was apathetic,
refused to eat . . .

It was Carin's tenderness that kept Göring going through those painful weeks
before Christmas of 1923. Each time he lifted his head on the hospital bed
and opened his eyes he saw her radiating peace and affection. On Christmas
Eve he was allowed back into the hotel, but it was a ghastly Christmas. The
local SA troops had sent over a small Christmas tree with candles beribboned
in red, white, and black, but Göring was still a sick man, deathly white and
trembling like a leaf.

"Dead tired," wrote Carin a few days later, "he tried to drag himself
around on crutches." The hotel was empty—all the guests were celebrating
elsewhere, except for a Scroogelike character who sat at the far end of the
dining room, and two young men in the company of females of dubious
profession. Seemingly star-crossed lovers, like Wagner's Tristan and Isolde,
the Görings shared this, their first married Christmas, in a gloom that not
even Carin's party dress could lighten.

In her thoughts she was far away: At her parent's home in Sweden, with
young Thomas, with gifts and feast and open fire. At eight o'clock she could
stand it no longer—she threw a coat over her shoulders and went out to get
some fresh air. It was blowing hard outside, but she scarcely noticed. All
at once she heard the sounds of an organ and violin from an open window
above their own hotel apartment, playing "Silent Night." "I cried, of course,"
she wrote her father afterward, "but recovered my confidence and peace of
mind again. I went back in to Hermann, and I was able to cheer him up
again. Two hours later we were both fast asleep."

She expressed a vague alarm at the metamorphosis that seemed to be
coming over her husband. "I hardly recognize him now," she wrote in the
same letter to her father. "The whole man seems to have changed. He barely
utters a word—so utterly depressed at this betrayal, so miserable. I never
thought Hermann could get so low."

In Munich the Bavarian government prepared to put Hitler on trial. Göring
could only watch impotently from afar. "I threatened," he claimed to his-
torian George Shuster, "that if they held the trial in camera I would appeal
directly to the German public by newspaper articles."

In the weeks before the trial Hitler remained in close touch with him.

Yesterday and the day before [wrote Carin on January 2] Hit-
ler's lawyer was here. He came direct from the fortress where
Hitler is held, full of the latest news and bringing letters from
him. The lawyer visits Hitler every day. Perhaps there won't
be any trial. If there is, it won't be to Kahr's liking, because

he'll be in the dock with the other two scoundrels [Seisser and Lossow] . . .

Money was becoming a real problem, although the hotel was proud to have them as guests; they gave Göring a 30 percent discount on everything and allowed him to run up a bill. "The waiters are nearly all storm troopers," said Carin in a letter dated February 20, 1924. "They worship Hermann." The Görings hated being thrown on the charity of their friends. Their poverty fed their anti-Semitism. "I would rather die a thousand times of hunger," Carin wrote, "than serve a Jew." And Hermann, writing to her mother on the twenty-second, explained their plans thus: "I want to stay here until the [Hitler] trial is over; but if there is then no prospect of us returning home [to Munich], we should like to go to Sweden." There he hoped to find work—"Because I only want to go home to a strongly nationalistic Germany, not to the present Jew-ridden Republic."

The trial of Adolf Hitler et al. began four days later. The Görings could not put Hitler and the other defendants out of their thoughts.

While I am writing this [noted Carin that morning, February 26] my Hermann is stalking up and down the room, occasionally leafing through a book, jotting something down, glancing at the clock, looking at the ceiling, sighing out loud, laughing, tossing a smile at me . . . but beneath all that I can feel so keenly how he is shaking within, trembling for Hitler!!!

The Munich trial ended with short prison sentences. In Innsbruck the Görings lunched that day with Paula Hitler and tried to look on the bright side.

The more we think about Hitler's sentence [wrote Carin on April 1] the better it looks to us . . . When he is released, he can pick up where he left off, but with hundreds of thousands of new followers who came to him during the trial because of his wonderful, noble character and intellect! . . . He received a brand-new automobile yesterday as a gift from Director Bechstein—you know, the piano and airplane manufacturer. It is a Benz eight-seater, one-hundred horsepower, specially ordered and built for Hitler; and when the amnesty comes there will be another exactly the same waiting for Hermann, a six-seater presented by Bechstein.

On March 5, the Innsbruck authorities had issued a passport to Göring. But then Carin, who had been disturbed by his increasing depression resulting from the injury and his inglorious role as a voiceless exile during the trial, took a step that was again to change their lives. After paying a farewell visit

to Hermann's empty villa in Munich, he wrote a letter to himself in jail. Afterward, he wrote a letter to Carin in memory of her. "In memory of you," he wrote to Carin Göring important instructions: "He was to establish contact with the Fascist movement had come to."

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to Hermann's empty villa in Munich on April 5, she decided to see Hitler
himself in jail. Afterward, the incarcerated Führer would inscribe a photo-
graph to her "in memory of your visit to Fortress Landsberg." Hitler gave
to Carin Göring important instructions to take back to her husband in Inns-
bruck: He was to establish contact immediately with Benito Mussolini, whose
Fascist movement had come to power in Italy two years before.

4

FAILURE OF A MISSION

The ten months that Hermann and Carin Göring spent in Italy from the first days of May 1924 have been widely misinterpreted by historians. It is plain that Hitler had appointed Göring to act as his plenipotentiary in Italy, with the special mission of raising a 2-million lire loan from Mussolini to help the Nazi party to regain its lost momentum. It is equally plain, however, that Göring did not see the Italian dictator.

Göring embarked on this task all too naïvely. He established immediate contacts with the up-and-coming Fascist diplomat Giuseppe Bastianini and with the former Munich correspondent of the newspaper *Corriere d'Italia*, Dr. Leo Negrelli, who a few weeks later joined Mussolini's personal staff. The many biographers who have accepted that the young German aviator actually secured the audience he desired with Mussolini are wrong, as Negrelli's private papers make quite clear; and if Carin's unpublished letters give the impression that he did see Mussolini, this is in fact a tragic reflection on the relationship that existed between them as this, the most harrowing period of their life, began. Injured in his vanity, Göring evidently concealed his failure from her: In her letters home, she described in touching detail his (nonexistent) visits to the Italian dictator. It is worth noting that when Göring

sanctioned the publication of embarrassing embroideries on

In fact, his 1924 mission to origin of his barely concealed decision to slink away from the and of his slide into the total

The mission had started from the hotel waived his bill as a cost to them the Hotel Britannia,

For a week they vacationed "in Venice," as she put it, "the canals in a gondola while the ancient buildings.

The whole canal (she) gondolas, each decked there was singing every romantic it all was! On and virtually all of the something as beautiful this?"

For a few days he browsed around years before, admiring the Florence before moving on to confidently into the expensive Carin was still puttering around

"Hermann," Carin wrote hour already. He's going to time to meet M. himself."

Göring wanted a quick deal longed to fold little Thomas Mussolini with his Pour le Nazi party, then leave Italy. Denmark back to Sweden. C her that Göring would never Nils, her former husband, wife of the Görings in Stockholm did not care and said so. "C mother, "must have its limit this, and we see completely

But her husband's trouble with a personal letter from her negotiate—both documents

In fact, his 1924 mission to Italy was an ignominious failure—the certain origin of his barely concealed later contempt for the Italian Fascists, of his decision to slink away from the political scene for the following three years, and of his slide into the total oblivion offered by morphine.

For a week they vacationed there. Carin was in transports of joy at being "in Venice," as she put it, "en route for Rome." She found herself cruising the canals in a gondola while silken threads of romantic music drifted around the ancient buildings.

For a few days he browsed around the art galleries as he had as a boy thirteen years before, admiring the paintings at Sienna and ogling the sculptures in Florence before moving on to Rome late on Sunday, May 11. They booked confidently into the expensive Hotel Eden, and the very next morning, while Carin was still puttering around in pajamas, Göring set about his mission.

Göring wanted a quick decision. He knew his wife was homesick and longed to fold little Thomas into her arms again. His intent was to dazzle Mussolini with his *Pour le Mérite*, charm the big loan out of him for the Nazi party, then leave Italy for good, sailing via England and Norway or Denmark back to Sweden. Carin's father tried to dissuade them, cautioning her that Göring would never find a job, and her mother warned her too about Niels, her former husband, who was showing signs of dementia: The presence of the Görings in Stockholm would not make things any easier for him. Carin did not care and said so. "Consideration for him," she expostulated to her mother, "must have its limits! Hermann and I have had a long talk about this, and we see completely eye to eye."

But her husband's troubles in Italy were just beginning. Although armed with a personal letter from Hitler and a signed authorization (*Vollmacht*) to negotiate—both documents now, unfortunately, lost—he found that Mus-

A MISSION

The ten months that Hermann and Carin Göring spent in Italy from the first days of May 1924 have been so plain that Hitler had appointed Göring to Italy, with the special mission of helping the Nazi party to regain power. However, that Göring did not see the

naively. He established immediate contact with the diplomat Giuseppe Bastianini and the editor of the newspaper *Corriere d'Italia*, and joined Mussolini's personal staff. He stated that the young German aviator was not at all as bad as the Germans depicted him, and that Carin's unpublished letters to his mother, which he had seen, were not as bad as those of Mussolini, this is in fact a tragic reflection on them as this, the most harrowing of the German war crimes, was so easily and so easily vanquished. Göring evidently concealed his feelings, but he described in touching detail his own feelings.

It is worth noting that when Göring

solini showed no inclination whatever to receive him. Why, indeed, should he enter into talks with a defeated German political movement whose plenipotentiary was himself a fugitive from justice? The only useful contact that Göring made was with Giuseppe Bastianini, to whom Negrelli introduced him during May.

As funds ran low, the Görings had to move out of the Eden into a cheaper hotel. "I took up residence in the Hotel de Russie," he reminisced candidly in 1945, "and as a hotel guest I saw the Fascists celebrating their great [election] victory with a banquet there. That's where I first set eyes on Mussolini, though I didn't speak to him. Later, down in the bar, I got to know quite a lot of the Fascist party's leaders."

As the new Italian Parliament opened on May 24, 1924, all that his doting wife saw was the panoply and pomp of Mussolini and the royal courtiers in ceremonial dress.

"Right here in the hotel there was a state banquet for eight hundred people," Carin wrote to her mother the next day, "—all the royalty, Mussolini, all the ministers with their wives etc. . . . I hardly believe that we can get away from here yet, because Hermann has to work with Mussolini himself on all the agreements and negotiations between Mussolini and Hitler . . . This is a huge responsibility for him. But I believe it's all going far better than even Hitler imagined in his boldest dreams."

She obviously had not the faintest idea that Hermann had lied to her—that Mussolini was refusing to see him. "Mussolini," she gushed in the same letter, "is a strong personality but in my opinion a bit theatrical and very spoiled in his manner. That may be explained by the nauseating flattery that surrounds him. The merest word he utters is regarded by this disgusting crowd as if it had emanated from God Almighty!!!! To me, Hitler is the more genuine; above all he is a genius, full of the love of truth and a burning faith." She referred to the similarities between their two political movements, and concluded, "Sympathy here for Hitler and his work is tremendous. You cannot imagine how enthusiastically the entire Fascist party here receives Hermann as Hitler's representative."

For Carin Göring, as a letter written a few weeks later shows, Adolf Hitler was Germany's last hope of a place in the sun. "We have not had such a man in the world in one hundred years, I believe. I worship him totally . . . His time will come."

Mussolini told Hermann [so Carin reassured her worried mother on July 27] that he had had to overcome many more difficulties than Hitler . . . The Fascists here had many dead and thousands wounded before they pulled it off, but Hitler has had only thirty dead. Mussolini has absolute faith in Hitler alone in Germany, and will not sign one single treaty, or meet with anyone, or in

particular deal with an head.

All this was not even near preliminary negotiations with them certainly vexatious to from the start. The part-own were staying in Venice, was Venice was a German nation had declared his share of the Walther's case for exemption he had no option but to sing nor Negrelli would humor him

Throughout the early summer Bastianini and Negrelli about party, and about the terms of and Hitler, the extraordinary letter by Bastianini to Mussolini

In May [1924] I established a member of the Reich alter ego, introduced to strong wish of his Führer with the P.N.F. [Fascist] need for a close co-existence one hand, and between the other.

Bastianini continued that Göring secret agreements, which they Excellency," Bastianini would them in substance but reject

Unfortunately for his larger about the Walther hotel case, politician who had the power Bastianini fobbed him off with even more importunate, written and the Banca Commerciale, possess the unfortunate Walther to Mussolini, "Göring . . . where he is at the present time

If Göring recognized this

The skies above Venice had opened and the rains lashed down on gray lagoons and canals as far as the eye could see. Life in this hotel was not dull, she reflected—among the guests was composer Franz Léhar, and they got all the opera tickets they could use. When tenor Rafaelli Giuseppe sang, they both wept like children, and returned to their hotel existence to listen to an American, a Mrs. Steel, loudly boasting of her life in Chicago and of the automobiles owned by her husband, herself, her daughter and her son. "We never walk a step," she exclaimed. Another guest was the former queen of Spain, a frail, pale-skinned creature with jet-black hair; surrounded by her fawning exiled retinue. She had had to pawn her pearls, and she handed out signed photographs in return for little favors.

But Carin too was living a fantasy herself, here in the Grand Hotel Britannia. "Have I told you about our meetings with Mussolini?" she wrote wistfully to her mother. "It is a wonderful thing to be with him . . . Hermann has two important conferences today."

On that same day Göring was complaining in a handwritten letter to Leo Negrelli once again about the Fascists' failure to respond, and his letter mentions nothing about any "importance conferences" that day.

They did not spend that Christmas of 1924 together, because Hitler had now been released from prison and Göring had sent his wife posthaste to Munich to lay bare their plight to him and extort what funds she could from him or the other Nazi potentates.

Göring himself had now abandoned all hope of any secret agreement with the Italians despite Hitler's public sacrifice of the South Tyrol. Carin repeated this gloomy prognosis to the Führer. Hitler was evidently more understanding than Göring's erstwhile Nazi comrades. Ernst Röhm had languidly sought contact with Göring soon after Röhm's release from prison, but Carin warned Hermann in a letter on January 13, 1925, against having anything to do with this flabby homosexual. "Please don't put too much trust in him!!!!" she wrote. "Now he's only seeking contact with you because he's feeling rather alone."

As for the other Nazis, Max Amann, who was to publish Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in three months' time, had only words of censure for Göring; the Hanfstaengl's "only talked of their own money troubles"; and Hitler was still waiting for funds to arrive from a man (either an Italian or millionaire piano manufacturer Bechstein) whom Carin's letter of the seventeenth identified only as "Bimbaschi":

They [the Hanfstaengl's] told me that Bimbaschi was supposed to have given Hitler a firm promise of a sizable donation . . . Bimb. had told H. that he wanted nothing more to do with the party, and that this sum was for Hitler personally! In addition Bimb. is said to have complained a lot about you, saying you had written

him "harsh letters" and Hitler is expecting the money positively, time after time when the money

In the rest of this letter from B on how to approach Hitler with which people in the party might like the Führer a concise letter ("above all gloss over the failure be too pessimistic about Italy :

"At our first meeting here I about your talks with the gentle actions were about an alliance South Tyrol question."

If, she continued, Hermann were refusing even to see him : "muddle-headed." She had me could see how hard her husband think you were incompetent," "I adhered strictly to the truth j to Hitler should explain that the fact that the Nazi party had re that there was nothing to be gain

I would indeed advise you to Hitler the treaty propos. see for himself the trouble expenses you incurred . . . very well with the gentlem

If you were to begin no impossibilities in Italy and native country), he might e prompted by purely person Sweden at any price and an understanding with the Fasc anything . . .

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 ut too much trust in him!!!!" she
 ith you because he's feeling rather

who was to publish Hitler's *Mein*
 words of censure for Göring; the
 money troubles"; and Hitler was
 an (either an Italian or millionaire
 in's letter of the seventeenth iden-

t Bimbaschi was supposed to
 a sizable donation . . . Bimb.
 g more to do with the party,
 sonally! In addition Bimb. is
 t you, saying you had written

him "harsh letters" and he had sent you over four thousand . . .
 Hitler is expecting the money any moment and he has promised
 me positively, time after time, that he will let me know imme-
 diately when the money is there.

In the rest of this letter from Bavaria, Carin gave her exiled husband advice
 on how to approach Hitler with his idea of transferring operations to Sweden,
 which people in the party might well find hard to swallow. He should write
 the Führer a concise letter ("because he has so very much to do"), and
 above all gloss over the failure in Italy. "Please," she cajoled him, "don't
 be too pessimistic about Italy and his plans there."

"At our first meeting here before Christmas [Carin wrote] I told Hitler
 about your talks with the gentlemen in Rome. He knows also that the trans-
 actions were about an alliance, about the two million lire, and about the
 South Tyrol question."

If, she continued, Hermann now admitted to Hitler that Mussolini's men
 were refusing even to see him anymore, Hitler would surely dismiss her as
 "muddle-headed." She had mentioned the negotiations only so that Hitler
 could see how hard her husband had slaved for him—"So that he wouldn't
 think you were incompetent," she told Hermann candidly, adding hastily,
 "I adhered strictly to the truth just as you told me." Thus Hermann's letter
 to Hitler should explain that while at the time the loan had seemed feasible,
 the fact that the Nazi party had recently suffered an electoral setback suggested
 that there was nothing to be gained from any kind of deal with the Fascists.

I would indeed advise you [Carin wrote] to include in your letter
 to Hitler the treaty proposals drafted at the time so that he can
 see for himself the trouble you went to and will readily pay the
 expenses you incurred . . . Emphasize that personally you stand
 very well with the gentlemen [in Rome]! . . .

If you were to begin now suddenly telling Hitler only of the
 impossibilities in Italy and of your own plans in Sweden (my
 native country), he might easily get the impression that you are
 prompted by purely personal motives, that you mean to go to
 Sweden at any price and are abandoning all hope of securing an
 understanding with the Fascists . . . In that case he won't pay us
 anything . . .

Hitler is our only salvation now (with the exception of the sale
 of the villa). Everyone is waiting impatiently for the funds from
 Bimbaschi. You can be certain I am watching out for them too!
 They want to get the better of you and certainly don't want you
 to get any of the money, because they want it all for themselves.
 I don't believe that we have one single unselfish friend!

in Rome the newspaper
 but he had not bothered
 to Göring mentioning the
 to send back his most
 have nothing to do with
 [Mussolini] will be very
 run-around. . . . Either
 in which case you could
 me in a hideous position
 if be duped—because on
 elived nothing in return."
 with Negrelli to secure for
 ping to be writing a book
 all both earn a reputation
 and no action." He con-
 ventional adventure that he
 at was more threat than
 e, and we shall not forget
 postscript: "My wife has

Göring was a disappointed
 ed to send back the press
 ived word from Hitler,"
 He says you should have
 "He gave Negrelli "one
 f—"Otherwise," he con-
 id that H. will send other
 ll leave me looking pretty

etter to Mussolini. Inspired
 ooks on Hitler for Negrelli
 f," he wrote, "I shall be
 age the interview rapidly.
 tant for me to have spoken
 : book about him and the
 dumb then if I have never

lumsy capitals—evidently
 want Carin to see it, with
 g the great Italian dictator.
 the inroads already made
 ght and, of course, by the
 now getting several times

This lowering darkness was now pierced by one ray of light. A telegram came from Negrelli: Its text is lost but Göring replied with alacrity to him at Mussolini's Press Office: VENICE FEB 13 2315 + THANKS FOR TELEGRAM EVERYTHING ALLRIGHT (the last word was in English).

Negrelli marked the telegram: "Duce."

At last the indolent mandarins in Rome seemed to be stirring, probably aroused by the unexpected revival in Nazi fortunes in Germany: Hitler had firmly resumed control of the party and had ousted all usurpers and pretenders to his throne like General von Ludendorff. On February 16, 1925, the Nazi party was again legalized (though the SA was still banned). On that day Carin paid Hitler a secret visit in Munich, and reported to Venice the next morning what the Führer had said:

1. He is of course ready to go to Mussolini and he's already having his papers (passport, etc.) put in order . . . However he will come only if he can deal personally with Mussolini himself. He does not want to speak with any of the underlings . . . 2. With regard to the South Tyrol question he takes exactly the same stand as ever—that for him there is no problem; 3. He wants to confer with M. only after he has sufficient backing . . . At present his authority does not extend beyond the four walls of his little apartment at No. 41, Thiersch Strasse [in Munich]. In a few days he will have himself acclaimed Führer again . . . [and] he will represent two million people, in a people's movement.

"He leaves it to your judgment," continued Carin, "to size up the situation with Mussolini. He asks you to make clear to M. that this is a populist movement and not a parliamentary setup . . . He was very cordial," she wrote, "kissed my hand again and again, sends you his best wishes, etc."

Göring sent Carin's report straight to Bastianini, who forwarded it to Mussolini with the eight-month dossier of letters from Göring, the press clippings, and the tedious memoranda on the Walther hotel affair. He guiltily reminded Mussolini that, acting on the Duce's instructions, he had clearly given Göring to understand that the Fascists accepted the spirit of his proposals, though not without reservations.

Since then [Bastianini advised his prime minister] the situation in Germany has undergone remarkable changes. Once persecuted and unrecognized, the Nazis have now recovered their material and political rights; their capo, Adolf Hitler, has been restored to freedom and to the Führership of his movement. Göring has now stated in a letter to Negrelli that they are no longer thinking in terms of an agreement . . .

It ended, "I've seen the Reichsmarschall nod off in midconference—for instance, if the conferences went on too long and the morphine wore off. That was the commander in chief of our air force!"

In Stockholm the Görings had moved into a modest apartment in the neighborhood where Carin had once lived with Nils. If she was startled to find Thomas, now thirteen, almost as tall as herself, her family was shocked at the change in her once lithe and handsome husband, now in steep physical and mental decline, his body consumed by the vital opiate that he craved. He was listless, overweight, and short-tempered to the point of physical violence.

Carin sent him out alone to make friends with her own old circle, an odd experience that Stockholm lawyer Carl Ossbahr would still recall nearly sixty years later:

A rather stout gentleman turned up, wearing a white suit that looked somewhat out of place on him. It didn't go with his physique at all, and I wondered who he could be. He introduced himself as Hermann Göring, and then I knew that he had got the Pour le Mérite—and you didn't get that for nothing. I suppose he did the same with Carin's other friends.

Ossbahr had them to dinner several times. The German visitor talked politics most of the time, but not in the manner of an agitator at all. He left Ossbahr some books to read, including *Mein Kampf*, but the lawyer never got around to reading it. On one occasion Göring admitted that he was addicted to morphine, but he said he was fighting back. "I have such great tasks ahead of me," he said, "that I simply have to be cured."

Ossbahr found Carin a changed woman. She was now "a bit peculiar, something of a mystic." He was mildly taken aback when she insisted on reading his palm. The atmosphere around the couple left this lawyer with a feeling of "something somehow unreal"—it was hard to describe. "Her wish was his command. He wasn't her slave, but almost. Göring was clearly even more deeply in love than she." After 1925 Ossbahr lost sight of the couple, never dreaming then that Captain Göring of No. 23 Ödengatan would one day become the great Hermann Göring of Germany.

For months the ingratitude of the party gnawed at Göring's mind. He had written to Hitler about resuming command of the SA once the ban on it was lifted, but Hitler had tartly responded that the SA was his own business and that Göring should keep his nose out of it. Göring then reminded Hitler of the party's indebtedness to him, and "carefully filed away" this correspondence, as he disclosed in an embittered letter to Captain Lahr, the veteran who had bought the Obermenzing villa. The letter, written from Stockholm on June 26, 1925, seethed at the hypocritical "nationalist [*völkische*] circles"

and "party hacks" around Hitler ruined him by its "utter brutality," "not one spark of profit from his own experience for the Führer, Adolf Hitler." "Words of consolation. To date either Ludendorff or Hitler—no signed 'in deepest loyalty.'"

Göring took a job as a pilot operating between Stockholm—perhaps his drug addiction was the funds that Carin had brought hospitalized with heart trouble—her sister Lily sold her piano morphine for Hermann. He and his girl friends would later recall that he was anxious to lose weight and odd; then he disappeared and talking freely.

His decline steepened. On one occasion and Thomas that she fled to him threatened to kill himself. "Let me with fear. The family physician should enter a drug-withdrawal unitarily at the Aspudde's Nursing Home."

For a while all went well. On vacationing in Norway, looking walks:

I want to regain my fort mountains, since the cure has eliminated the main cause and coquettish about this—

But this is merely an excuse my trusty old ice pick will see me. I also believe that my What is it like in the even one have to wear a dinner

He never found out. Ten days later herself would sign the necessary asylum.

The extraordinary Swedish me

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and "party hacks" around Hitler; the Nazi party, grumbled Göring, had
ruined him by its "utter brutality and ruthlessness." "It has shown," he
added, "not one spark of conscience or comradeship." He advised Lahr to
profit from his own experience. Gone was his previous "blazing admiration"
for the Führer, Adolf Hitler. "I wrote to the Führer but got back just empty
words of consolation. To date I have still not received one pfennig from
either Ludendorff or Hitler—nothing but a load of promises and photographs
signed 'in deepest loyalty.' "

Göring took a job as a pilot with a new company, Nordiska Flygrederiet,
operating between Stockholm and Danzig. But it lasted only a few weeks
—perhaps his drug addiction was found out. It was an expensive habit, and
the funds that Carin had brought from Germany ran out. She had to be
hospitalized with heart trouble and tuberculosis. They pawned furniture, and
her sister Lily sold her piano to pay the medical expenses and buy more
morphine for Hermann. He made no secret of his addiction. One of Carin's
girl friends would later recall walking with them in the hills outside Stockholm
(he was anxious to lose weight). For a while, she noticed, Hermann looked
taut and odd; then he disappeared briefly and returned looking visibly better
and talking freely.

His decline steepened. On occasions he became so violent toward Carin
and Thomas that she fled to her parents. Once, he opened a window and
threatened to kill himself. "Let him jump, Mama!" screamed Thomas, white
with fear. The family physician, Dr. Fröderström, recommended that he
should enter a drug-withdrawal clinic for a month, and he registered vol-
untarily at the Aspuddens Nursing Home on August 6, 1925.

For a while all went well. On the twentieth, he wrote to Carin's girl friend,
vacationing in Norway, looking forward to joining her for some long stiff
walks:

I want to regain my former health and trim figure by climbing
mountains, since the cure that I am successfully undergoing here
has eliminated the main causes of my unnatural bulk. I am vain
and coquettish about this—usually a female prerogative.

But this is merely an excuse. I go quite wild when I think that
my trusty old ice pick will soon be clattering on Norwegian glacier
ice. I also believe that my old energy and zest for life will return.
What is it like in the evening at your hotel, by the way? Does
one have to wear a dinner jacket?

He never found out. Ten days later he suffered a violent relapse, and Carin
herself would sign the necessary papers for him to be committed to a lunatic
asylum.

The extraordinary Swedish medical dossier recording Hermann Göring's

committal to Långbro Asylum tells a desperate tale. Nurse Anna Tornquist reported how the behavior of "Captain von [sic] Göring" during the last two days of his stay at the clinic left no choice but to commit him:

Until then things had gone calmly although he was easily irritated and insisted on his doses. On Sunday, August 30, Captain Göring's craving for Eukodal* became much greater, and he insisted on getting the quantity he himself determined. At about 5:00 P.M. he broke open the medicine cupboard and took two shots of the two percent Eukodal solution himself. Six nurses could do nothing to stop him, and he behaved in a very threatening manner. Captain Göring's wife was afraid that he might even kill someone in his frenzy.

By Monday he had quieted down. The medical superintendent, Dr. Hjalmar Eneström, ordered him given a sedative and a shot of morphine. Göring told him he was willing to adhere to the prescribed doses.

At about 10:00 A.M. on Tuesday [September 1, 1925] however, the patient became troublesome and again demanded medication. He jumped out of bed, got dressed and shouted that he wanted to go out and meet death somehow, since somebody who had killed forty-five people had no other choice now than to take his own life. As the street door was locked, he could not get out; so he ran up to his room and armed himself with a cane, which turned out to contain some sort of sword. The patient was given the additional injections, and remained in bed demanding still more.

When police and firemen arrived at about 6:00 P.M. he refused to go along with them. He tried to resist but soon found it futile.

Wrapped in a straitjacket he was taken by ambulance to another hospital, the Katarina. They opened a case-history file:

Göring, Hermann Wilhelm: German Air Force lieutenant. Cause of illness: abuse of Morphine and Eukodal; severe withdrawal symptoms. Was removed by governor's office from Aspuddens Nursing Home on certificates issued by Drs. G. Elander and Hjalmar Eneström.

The patient holds a prominent position in the "Hitler party" in Germany, took part in the Hitler putsch, during which he was

*Eukodal, a controlled substance under the Reich Narcotics Act, was the synthetic morphine derivative *dihydro-hydroxy-codeinan hydrochloride*, to be injected intravenously.

injured and hospitalized was given morphine by he became addicted to patient manifested violent nurse allowing him to threaten and so violent. Threatened to take his threatened to commit h

Compulsorily committed here [at the Katarina Hospital] he was sedated with Hy hours he woke and became freedom, said he intended and demanded to be given

On coming to, he was of his faculties; considered. No violence as yet.

September 2 [1925]: rounds today about the which he was brought believes he will be certified. Expressed broad [a notorious scandal sh

Committed to Långbro Asylum about him enough to know that very blackness might spell fire to outsiders simply as The S to the floor and no other fun he saw, "I am not insane, I was in jeopardy, he refused. The doctors had seen it a recorded his maniacal ordeal

September 2-October depressed, groaning, very demanding, irritable and relieved the pain; delirious, "malevolent delirium," [says] E. bribed himself is a "a dead r gets out in Germany; emotional tendencies, egocentric

desperate tale. Nurse Anna Tornquist in von [sic] Göring" during the last choice but to commit him:

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injured and hospitalized; says he escaped from there to Austria,
was given morphine by the doctors at the hospital, after which
he became addicted to morphine. Admitted to Aspuddens, the
patient manifested violent withdrawal symptoms (in spite of his
nurse allowing him more morphine), during which he became
threatening and so violent that he could no longer be kept there.
Threatened to take his own life, wanted to "die like a man,"
threatened to commit hara-kiri, and so on.

Compulsorily committed, with his wife's consent. Upon arrival
here [at the Katarina Hospital] on September 11 in the evening
he was sedated with Hyoscin and soon fell asleep, but after a few
hours he woke and became quite restless. He protested at his loss
of freedom, said he intended to send for his lawyer, and so on,
and demanded to be given sufficient Eukodal "for the pain."

On coming to, he was talkative, lucid, and in full possession
of his faculties; considered himself badly wronged.

No violence as yet.

September 2 [1925]: Indignant conversation with Dr. E. on his
rounds today about the illegal manner—according to him—in
which he was brought here. Refuses to take Hyoscin, as he be-
lieves he will be certified insane while in an anesthetized con-
dition. Expressed broad sympathy with opinions of *Fäderneslandet*
[a notorious scandal sheet] on psychiatrists.

Committed to Långbro Asylum later that day, Hermann Göring had his wits
about him enough to know that his life was now entering into a tunnel whose
very blackness might spell finality. He found himself in a small ward known
to outsiders simply as The Storm—he was alone in a cell with a bed bolted
to the floor and no other furniture. Panicking, he shouted at the first doctor
he saw, "I am not insane, I am not insane!" Realizing that his whole future
was in jeopardy, he refused to be photographed for the asylum's dossier.

The doctors had seen it all before. For the next five weeks they calmly
recorded his maniacal ordeal:

September 2–October 7, 1925: [The patient was] troublesome,
depressed, groaning, weeping, anguished, tiresome, constantly
demanding, irritable and easily affected (i.e., NaCl [common salt]
relieved the pain); dejected, talkative, target of a "Jewish con-
spiracy," malevolent toward Dr. Eneström because of his com-
mittal, [says] E. bribed by the Jews; thoughts of suicide; says he
himself is a "a dead man politically" if word of his commital
gets out in Germany; exaggerates withdrawal symptoms; hyster-
ical tendencies, egocentric, inflated self-esteem; hater of the Jews,

has devoted his life to the struggle against the Jews, was Hitler's right-hand man. Hallucinations—saw Abraham and Paul, "the most dangerous Jew who ever existed": Abraham offered him a promissory note and guaranteed him three camels if he would give up the fight against the Jews; onset of visual hallucinations, screamed out loud; Abraham was driving a red-hot nail into his back, a Jewish doctor wanted to cut out his heart; suicide attempt (by hanging and strangulation); threatening, smuggled an iron weight in as a weapon; visions, voices, self-contempt.

The doctors' confidential reports spoke of his weak character—"One never knew how he would react," wrote one. "But since he had been a German officer he found it easy to obey." Another qualified him as a "sentimental person, lacking in fundamental moral courage."

Then, on October 7, 1925, his ordeal was over. He was discharged from Långbro with a certificate that he had obviously begged the professor in charge to sign:

I hereby affirm that Captain H. von [sic] Göring was admitted into Långbro hospital at his own request; that neither upon admission nor later did he show signs of mental illness; and that upon discharge now he also does not show any symptoms of an illness of this kind.

Långbro Hospital
October 7, 1925
OLOF KINBERG,
PROFESSOR

Won almost at a greater cost than his famous war decoration, though not a prize that he was so anxious to display, this vital certificate of sanity would be among his most precious possessions for the next twenty years.

His return to Carin's little apartment triggered fresh troubles. Since his crazed outbursts were now a thing of the past, Thomas often came over from school at Östermalm. Nils warned Carin that the lad was playing truant, and his schoolwork was suffering. Overreacting, she sued Nils for legal custody. His defense lawyers hired a private detective, and he dug up evidence of Göring's drug addiction. On April 16, 1926, Dr. Karl Lundberg, a court-appointed doctor, certified that neither Hermann nor Carin—who was, he said, an epileptic—was fit to provide a home for Thomas, and on the twenty-second the court dismissed her petition.

Planning to appeal, she persuaded Hermann to return to Långbro and complete the withdrawal cure. He gloomily reentered the asylum on May 22. The hospital's dossier on him states only, "Subdued, fluctuating moods,

egocentric, easily affected, bas
sistant medical superintendent.

Captain Hermann Göb
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On August 23, he wrote a pa
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 sistant medical superintendent, issued this new certificate:

Captain Hermann Göhring [sic] of No. 23 Ödengatan, Stock-
 holm, was admitted to Långbro Hospital in May 1926 at his own
 request and treated there by the undersigned. During his stay there
 he underwent a detoxification cure from the use of Eukodal, and
 when he left the hospital at the beginning of June, he was com-
 pletely cured from the use of the above and free from the use of
 all types of opium derivatives, which fact is herewith certified on
 my honor and conscience.

On August 23, he wrote a pathetic letter to the court stressing his former
 status and acts of wartime heroism, and declaring his willingness to submit
 to medical and psychiatric examination. The court still refused to grant Carin
 custody of Thomas.

Göring's movements after this are something of a mystery. Unlike Hitler,
 he seldom reminisced about the more barren years of his existence. He clearly
 intended to regain high office in the Nazi party, but three years had passed
 since his inglorious exile, and the party now had no time for him. His name
 was scratched from the membership register, and he had difficulty later in
 reclaiming an early number (his party file shows that his "second member-
 ship" was grudgingly backdated only to April 1, 1928).

Eventually the BMW motor works gave him a job in Sweden, selling its
 airplane engines in Scandinavia. But he knew that his political fortune lay
 in Germany. In January 1927 he returned therefore to the land of his birth,
 holding a concession from the Swedish automatic parachute company
 Tornblad.

Carin was to stay behind in Sweden. As his train pulled out of Stockholm's
 central station, she collapsed into her sister Fanny's arms. Her heart gradually
 fading, she was taken to the Vita Kors Nursing Home at No. 11 Brunke-
 bergstorg.

Each of them was half convinced they would never see the other again.

hard times that neither of them would ever forget, and the old craving gradually overwhelmed Göring again.

Occasionally a thin, pathetic voice came from the Stockholm sanatorium where Carin had piously placed herself in God's hands. The doctors had now told her that her condition was hopeless, and she wrote and told Göring that on January 26, 1927, soon after he left. "You have a right to know the truth," she wrote, "because you love me and have always done everything for me."

I have no fear of death . . . I want only that His will be done, because I know that what He wills is for the best for everyone. And, darling, if there is no God, then death is only rest, like an eternal sleep—one knows no more of anything. But I firmly believe that there is a God, and then we shall see each other once more up there.

Naturally I should like to live so that you have no sorrow and for Thomas's sake, and because I love you and Thomas above everything else and want—yes, I want it terribly—to stay with both of you.

Without her rapturous love, sensed by Göring from afar, he would probably have foundered forever in the twilight Berlin world of addicts and down-and-outs. But she threw her fragile weight into the battle for his survival, writing letters that are among the most moving documents in the Hermann Göring story.

My darling's health is my greatest concern [she pleaded]. It is in far, far greater danger than my own. Darling, darling, I think of you all the time! You are all I have, and I beg you, make a really mighty effort to liberate yourself before it is too late. I understand full well that you can't break free all at once, particularly now when everything depends on you and you are hounded and harassed from all sides. But set yourself limits. Abstain from taking it for just as long as you can stand it.

Make the interval as long as possible. You must suffer, you must be uncomfortable—but for my sake, because I love you so endlessly.

I want so much to be with you when the time comes that you quit altogether . . . And after that, place your trust in me. This time tell me if you feel the craving coming back. Don't keep it from me. This time tell me, "I can't hold out—I want to take it again."

Then we can talk with the doctor or go away for a few days or you can go alone to the mountains so that you escape the urge.

AND
DY

and penniless, Hermann Göring did not find it easy to rebuild his career in Germany. The Richters—himself and his wife—had been about his war record. For Cardinal Hans Streck to give the Görings settled down on the Streck's' each morning to put on his black figure his hands, and then sally y. hising. The Führer coldly accomplishment would be if he could obediently rented a room in a ck up a friendship with Paul become like a son to him: a dot bow tie and single-medal nself to Göring as unpaid sec- hip—he had some money but s own Mercedes, Körner drove There were, Körner later said,

You are a great spirit and fine man, you dare not succumb. I love you so strongly, with my whole body and soul, that I could not bear to lose you: to be a morphinist is to commit suicide—day after day you lose a small part of your body and soul. . . . You are ruled by an evil spirit or force, and your body gradually wastes away. . . .

Save yourself and with you, me!

Despite all his efforts, Göring was again losing the battle. Under interrogation eighteen years later he would hint at otherwise unexplained excursions he made to Turkey in 1927 and to Britain in the same year or the next. It is fair to comment that Turkey was one of the leading opium-producing nations. The Swedish record shows that from September 7 to 26, 1927, Göring was again admitted to Långbro Mental Hospital for "abuse of morphine, dosage of 40 to 50 cgm per diem."

The story of Göring's struggle to overcome his accidental morphine addiction remained a closed book for some years. Then, in June 1933, at a wedding dinner at Rockelstad Castle, Göring, by then a powerful German minister, boasted to Count Eric von Rosen's new son-in-law, Dr. Nils Silfverskjöld, that the Nazis would "gradually destroy" (*vernichten*) the Communists in Germany. Silfverskjöld, himself a Communist, laid hands on the Långbro dossier and publicized it in the Communist newspaper *Folkets Dagblad* on November 18, 1933; the left-wing newspaper *Social-Demokraten* also published references to Göring's hospital treatments. The war between Göring and the Communists was by then one in which neither side gave quarter.

Göring spent Christmas with Carin in Sweden but left her still on her sickbed in January 1928 to return to Berlin. He now shared an office in Geisberg Strasse with Fritz Siebel, who was also in the aviation business. Parachute sales were slow, but Göring had his eye on bigger game. On May 20, the all-important elections to the Reichstag (Parliament) would be held. With the recklessness of a man with little more to lose, Göring blackmailed the Nazi leadership into including him among their candidates. Secret backers had provided the funds that enabled Hitler to enlarge his party to a membership of millions. Göring bluntly threatened to sue the party otherwise for every pfennig it had owed him since 1922. Hitler capitulated, promising him a seat if more than seven Nazis were elected. Göring rushed around to his friend "Putzi" Hanfstaengl, whooping with glee. To be a Nazi candidate under these circumstances was like money in the bank.

Suddenly Göring was no longer a pariah. He brashly looked around for a more imposing apartment, and begged Carin to travel to Berlin in time for the elections. She arrived in mid-May, a few days before the poll. By that time he had rented a little apartment at No. 16, Berchtesgadener Strasse. On the seventeenth, three days before the election, he carried Carin into the

large corner room he had prepared smothered with white lilac. Siebel with him again.

"I had a bath," she wrote to me, "I rested an hour, then three of us to a fine, stylish luncheon with

They dined at sunset on the revolting Jews!" They lunched with "slant-eyed" waitresses in kimono excitedly about Sunday's polling

They've already begun : communists parade with their Star of David . . . and meet them with swastikas (but with a pitched battle, with dead as for Hermann, we would have just think!!!

She followed this letter with a telegram

HERMANN ELECTED YESTERDAY

Hitler's party had attracted enough to be returned to the Reichstag. So much influence—and friends. "It is awfully to see how all those who kept away and assure him that they always be he was in difficulties?"

He was overwhelmed with commissions to earn five hundred Reichsmarks per month more as a party orator—and that was finally at an end: They could begin to buy bills, redeem the things they had little white harmonium and all the hocked was carried up to their third indulgently. He was looking forward around.

"In the Reichstag," he told her Twelve Black Sheep."

He took Carin along to the ceremony

"It was quite uncanny," she wrote gang. They throw their weight all uniforms adorned with the Star of

man, you dare not succumb. I
 body and soul, that I could
 minist is to commit suicide—
 of your body and soul. . . .
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 No. 16, Berchtesgader Strasse. On
 the election, he carried Carin into the

large corner room he had prepared for her, with its sun-drenched balcony
 smothered with white lilac. Sick though she was, she was in ecstasy to be
 with him again.

"I had a bath," she wrote to her mother, "and Hermann unpacked for
 me, I rested an hour, then three of Hermann's best friends came and invited
 us to a fine, stylish luncheon with champagne and *Schwedische platte*."

They dined at sunset on the shores of a Berlin lake, "amid the most
 revolting Jews!" They lunched with chopsticks at a Chinese restaurant where
 "slant-eyed" waitresses in kimonos served strawberries, and they talked
 excitedly about Sunday's polling day:

They've already begun shooting it out. Every day the Com-
 munists parade with their crooked noses and red flags with the
 Star of David . . . and meet Hitler's men carrying their red ban-
 ners with swastikas (but without the crooked noses). Then there's
 a pitched battle, with dead and injured. Oh, if only things go well
 for Hermann, we would have some peace for a long time . . .
 just think!!!

She followed this letter with a telegram on the twenty-first:

HERMANN ELECTED YESTERDAY: MOTHER, YOU UNDERSTAND.

Hitler's party had attracted enough votes nationwide for twelve deputies to
 be returned to the Reichstag. So Göring was in, with a guaranteed income,
 influence—and friends. "It is awful," Carin wrote on the twenty-third, "to
 see how all those who kept away while he was having a hard time now come
 and assure him that they always believed in him, and why didn't he tell them
 he was in difficulties?"

He was overwhelmed with commissions for newspaper articles: He would
 earn five hundred Reichsmarks per month as a deputy, and eight hundred
 more as a party orator—and that was just the beginning. Their poverty was
 finally at an end: They could begin to pay off ancient debts, settle doctors'
 bills, redeem the things they had pledged at the pawnbrokers. As Carin's
 little white harmonium and all the other furniture that had been discreetly
 hocked was carried up to their third-floor apartment again, Hermann smiled
 indulgently. He was looking forward to a general settling of accounts all
 around.

"In the Reichstag," he told historian George Shuster, "we were the
 Twelve Black Sheep."

He took Carin along to the ceremonial opening on June 13, 1928.

"It was quite uncanny," she wrote the next day, "to see the Red Guard
 gang. They throw their weight about colossally. They were all wearing
 uniforms adorned with the Star of David—that is, the Soviet star—red

armbands, etc. Young, most of them, and just raring for a fight. And some of them downright criminal types. How many in all these parties except Hitler's are Jews!"

Göring immediately claimed the Nazi party's transport "portfolio." It was no secret that since 1924 the general staff had been nurturing an embryonic aviation effort despite Versailles, and that the government's subsidies to the Lufthansa Airline played no small part in this. Captain Ernst Brandenburg, the ex-bomber pilot who was looking after this concealed army aviation effort, advised Lufthansa's director, Erhard Milch, as the subsidies came under increasing Communist attack, to "fix" a few gentlemen in the Reichstag. "They're all wide open to bribery," said Brandenburg. "Send for one man from every leading party, give them some cash, and they'll authorize the full subsidy the next time."

Milch evidently acted immediately, because Carin Göring was already mentioning "a contract with the Reich Transport Ministry" (i.e., Brandenburg) in a letter dated June 17, adding in the same letter that Hermann had already received the first payment under it and the thirty-four hundred marks that he wanted as a down payment on an even grander apartment in a new building at No. 7, Badensche Strasse, in Berlin's select Schöneberg district. Milch confirmed (to this author) that Lufthansa was bribing Göring and a handful of other deputies (Cremer, Quatz, and Keil) with one thousand marks per month; only the Communists refused to accept Lufthansa money. It became common knowledge. "Milch," suggested one lieutenant colonel later, "had Göring in his pocket because he could have blown the whistle on him at any time." The record shows that in the next two years Göring addressed the Reichstag only once—and then it was to demand higher subsidies for civil aviation, and to ask why Germany had no aviation minister, a post that he clearly coveted for himself.

After the election Hermann and Carin flew to Zurich, Switzerland, to lecture and demonstrate parachutes. But he now had far better sources of income. The funds were beginning to flow to him from German industry. He was shortly retained as a "consultant" by BMW and by Heinkel, and the records of young Willi Messerschmitt's Bavarian aircraft company would show at least one payment by a director, Fritz Hiller, entered as "one-time dispensation to G." Steel magnate Fritz Thyssen donated to him the decor and furnishings for the new apartment.

Greedy for more, Göring shortly asked Lufthansa for funds to set up an office, to pay Pili Körner's wages, and to hire a first-rate secretary too. Soon the airline found it was paying him fifty thousand Reichsmarks a year.

I hardly ever see Hermann [lamented Carin that summer]. He goes to the office [on the corner of Friedrich Strasse and Tauben Strasse] early each morning and we usually lunch together, but mostly with a lot of other people who are invited or invite them-

selves. Then Hermann [Hermann Fair] or committees, and

He is rarely ever home! starts at eight in the morning and his interest in everything tag session hasn't even begun.

He has an excellent steady help. Today he got seventy And yet he always has tired

Hitler is coming here on old days [1925]. I'm ago

She became an excellent society health only with difficulty. In 1921 in Badensche Strasse was ready the carpet wine red. The building influential could be transported in a motor car. Among their regular guests who now studiously entered Göring's diaries. By December Milch was one of the swank Kaiserhof Hotel garage, bringing the money Göring present," he has told this author see that at heart he was a soft bluster."

Relieved momentarily of financial the party's recruiting campaign. 21, 1929, "he's speaking to students than half of them are Nazis and the rest. Tomorrow he's speaking ten-day, twelve-lecture tour of politicians . . ."

He learned a lot about parliamentarism was dominated by the Social Democrats to Germany grew, Göring found industrialists willingly paid it with their heart. It was coal magnate Wilhelm to the steel king Thyssen, to the

This new source of funds was begun to squirm. The Deutsche Bank mark check in Göring's favor in the bank explaining, "As far as the deal before the election was one of a consultant in the American sense.

1929, Milch chose as his first action to tackle Göring about the whole "unseemly" bribery business. "You can't carry on like this," he pointed out, "if you have any hopes of rising to important positions in public life later." He suggested that they pay him one hundred thousand marks now as an advance on his services as a consultant until the present Reichstag session was over. "Milch," exclaimed Göring, who was a year his junior, "I'm very grateful. That is far more acceptable to me, and besides, my freedom of action is now greater. Thyssen," he explained with childlike openness, as Milch recalled in 1945, "has opened an account of fifty thousand Reichsmarks on my behalf. I can draw as much as I like. . . . It will always be replenished."

Covering all bases, the Lufthansa director indicated that he wanted to join the Nazi party. Hitler asked him—and other key aviation figures like Göring's old flying comrade Bruno Loerzer—to lie low. To "come out" as Nazis now would vitiate their usefulness. "Accordingly," noted party chief Rudolf Hess five years later, "both [Milch and Loerzer] agreed not to join until the party came to power . . . and they handed their [secret] applications in to Göring."

Göring held no Nazi party office, and never would, but Hitler now shifted him onto the stage of high politics in his behalf, ordering him to win over Berlin's high society while Joseph Goebbels fought the battle for the streets. Aided by his Swedish countess wife, Göring drew easily on his blue-blooded wartime contacts, and the Nazi movement snowballed. The crown prince had been his army commander; the prince's younger brother, Prince August-Wilhelm ("Auwi"), fell for Carin and joined the party after Göring introduced him to Hitler; dressed in the uniform of an SA colonel, Auwi would stomp the election platforms at Göring's side. Soon the portly figure of Prince Eitel-Friedrich was also decked out in party uniform.

Carin described the social whirl in name-dropping letters to her mother. "Neither of us," she wrote loftily on the last day of February 1930, "would bear common parties today. The Wieds"—Prince Viktor and Princess Marie-Elisabeth zu Wied—"want to get their whole circle of friends interested in the Hitler movement and Hermann is absolutely bombarded with questions, opinions, and comments. Everybody tries to spot flaws in Hitler and criticize his program. Poor Hermann has to talk, talk, talk and answer questions until he's fit to drop. But all the time I can see that the circle around us is expanding, and that we've won over a lot of them to Hitler and his cause"—and she went on to mention one prince who was forty, chairbound, and paralyzed, "the poor fellow," but always got wheeled in to the meetings that Göring addressed.

Sometimes, those audiences were twenty thousand or even thirty thousand strong. Göring's style was demagogic rather than analytical, but, with unemployment touching four million, audiences found style less important than content now. "We shall flatten our opponents!" he would roar, and sit down

to thunderous applause. He took shirt, with his blue Pour le Mérit leather necktie. Ploughing his furrow he spoke at Magdeburg, Frankfurt together so as not to crack up. His mother had urged to join him. He collapses like a wounded man after.

Later that summer she fell ill at Bad Kreuth, on Lake Tegernsee, and climbing with him in the mountains.

The rival parties were now fighting's speeches took on a more colorful reported that speaking at the Kronen the Weimar Constitution and the president of the interior a bottom-spanker [?] ized police official. "He referred to as 'that guy Curtius,' " he added; Wilhelm Groener, Göring had so far had been to advance from despatches mass audience, the police report said the salute at the Constitution Day 1 hat on his head and a peacock's feather anatomy." For this lèse majesté the one of the richest men in Europe—

The Nazi campaign paid off. On won 107 of the seats. It was a landslide.

Taking Thomas von Kantzow with Hitler at Jena the next day. In his lively amusing vignette of his stepfather's

Hitler is here. Hermann speaks is so enthusiastic that they could feet of Hitler and Hermann, speak out.

Hitler is very busy, so it is to him. "Wait, watch this!" says a tall, pretty blond actress from Hitler. She is tickled pink and in relaxation . . . They chat for so finds it easier to approach Hitler he has.

During those exhilarating weeks Göring ridden the political tide, but had left it

* J. T. Fram Deep
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to thunderous applause. He took to wearing the party's now-universal brown
 shirt, with his blue Pour le Mérite slung nonchalantly over a dark brown
 leather necktie. Ploughing his furrow across the German election landscape,
 he spoke at Magdeburg, Frankfurt, Plauen, and Mannheim, pulling himself
 together so as not to crack up during each speech, as Carin—whom her
 mother had urged to join him in Germany—wrote on June 2. "But he
 collapses like a wounded man afterward."

Later that summer she fell ill again. He transported her to the hospital at
 Bad Kreuth, on Lake Tegernsee, and took her son under his wing, walking
 and climbing with him in the mountains.

The rival parties were now fighting over 577 seats in the Reichstag. Gör-
 ing's speeches took on a more combative style. On August 8, police agents
 reported that speaking at the Krone Circus in Munich Göring had defamed
 the Weimar Constitution and the present government. "He called the minister
 of the interior a bottom-spanker [Steiss-Trommler]," reported one scandal-
 ized police official. "He referred to the foreign minister [Dr. Julius Curtius]
 as 'that guy Curtius,' " he added; and as for the defense minister, General
 Wilhelm Groener, Göring had scoffed that his only combat experience so
 far had been to advance from desk to desk. To hoots of laughter from his
 mass audience, the police report said, Göring had advised Groener to take
 the salute at the Constitution Day parade in two days' time "with a slouch
 hat on his head and a peacock's feather sticking out of a certain part of his
 anatomy." For this lèse majesté the courts fined Göring—soon to become
 one of the richest men in Europe—three hundred marks.

The Nazi campaign paid off. On election day, September 14, 1930, they
 won 107 of the seats. It was a landslide.

Taking Thomas von Kantzow with him, Hermann went to congratulate
 Hitler at Jena the next day. In his little green pocket diary the lad wrote an
 amusing vignette of his stepfather's sly tactics:

Hitler is here. Hermann speaks from a balcony and everybody
 is so enthusiastic that they could have thrown themselves at the
 feet of Hitler and Hermann, so the police have their work cut
 out.

Hitler is very busy, so it is difficult for Hermann to speak to
 him. "Wait, watch this!" says Hermann and goes chasing after
 a tall, pretty blond actress from Munich, whom he takes over to
 Hitler. She is tickled pink and Hitler gets a delightful moment of
 relaxation . . . They chat for some time, after which Hermann
 finds it easier to approach Hitler about the important questions
 he has.

During those exhilarating weeks Göring had not seen much of Carin. He had
 ridden the political tide, but had left her more or less stranded in her sana-

* D.T. Framed out of each storm
 professed the color state to day
 depicts of that in symbolic unlabors.

torium. Later that summer, the doctors let her go home, though with strict reservations (to which she paid little heed).

As the second-largest faction in the Reichstag now, in the autumn of 1930 the Nazi party was entitled to the office of deputy speaker (*Vizepräsident*). Hitler gave this plum job to Göring, which betokened his growing importance to the movement in Berlin. He appointed Göring his political trustee in the capital—which was, as Göring later pointed out, a very important post, enabling him to exploit his contacts there. "I was on the best of terms with Hindenburg, the armed forces, big industry, and the Catholic Church," he claimed; Hitler had authorized him to begin "wheeling and dealing," because the party now meant to win power by legitimate means: "Precisely how was irrelevant—whether with the help of the left or the right."

When the new Reichstag opened on October 13, 1930, he marched in at the head of the 107 Nazi deputies, all wearing brown shirts, and took his seat in the deputy speaker's chair. Afterward, the party's leadership and financial backers celebrated in the Göring apartment. "Reichstag opening," wrote airline-director Erhard Milch in his pocket diary. "Tumult. Evening at the Görings' with Hitler, Goebbels, August-Wilhelm of Prussia, Prince zu Wied and wife, the Niemanns, [chief photographer Heinrich] Hoffmann and daughter [Henrietta], the Hesses, Körner, Frick and Epp."

The only blight on Hermann's blossoming political career now was the failing health of Carin, the all-important hostess at these gatherings. On Christmas Eve she fainted as the presents were being unwrapped and rolled off the sofa onto the floor. For days after that she languished in bed with a fever, but she managed to struggle to her feet, waxy-featured and frail body trembling, for a dinner party on January 5, 1931, in honor of Hitler, Thyssen, and steel King Alfred Krupp, together with the country's leading men of finance. Banker Hjalmar Schacht, knowing nothing of her illness, was struck at the bareness of the repast—pea soup with pork, followed by Swedish apple pie. She retired to a sofa afterward, listening apathetically to their conversation.

Göring steeled himself against her physical decline. The political battle remained paramount to the Nazis, and they took support from whatever quarter they could get it. The harassed chancellor, Dr. Heinrich Brüning, later alleged (in a letter to Winston Churchill) that he found out that the Nazis were being financed by the Jewish general managers of two big Berlin banks, "one of them the leader of Zionism in Germany." On January 16, 1931, Göring joined Hitler's discussions with Brüning, who was vainly trying to hammer out a deal with the Nazis; then he and Carin left to visit the former kaiser at his place of exile, Doorn in Holland.

"Hermann and Mama have just left," wrote Thomas, who was visiting Germany again, in his green pocket diary. "It is eleven P.M. I went to the [Berlin] Zoo station with them and waved good-bye. We hope to profit by winning the kaiser over to the party, the kind of thing Hermann is adept at."

The former empress was who could hardly climb the stairs envelope for her to recuperate seventy-year-old kaiser sprightly Göring. "They flew at each other. Both are excitable and so lively probably never heard anybody was a bit too much for him so the kaiser toasted the "coming Re the "coming king," he was several contenders.

A week later Carin seemed to neither pulse nor heartbeat. He stimulants. Lying at peace (she hear them announcing to her h pryng open her eyelids. She was lustrous and beautiful. "My so one short instant of time." Ther Hermann's sorrowing gaze agai

If Mama had died [com would have broken down c know how he would have dangerous given his smold stronger . . . and that we r leading a healthier, more r

Goebbels, Hitler's gauleiter (loc: at Göring's flamboyant method: February 18, 1931, Goebbels ma of an optimist—"He banks too i get results by consistent hard w many levels in Berlin. Behind th with the Italian ambassador, Ba intercepted one telegram from the revealing that Göring had apparent tag's foreign-affairs committee (o embassy.

Göring airily denied the allegation 1931—instructed by Hitler to assu pagan in intent—he had no difficu It was all very different from his b years before.

Hermann had a wonderful time in Italy [wrote Carin on May 30]. For three weeks he was the guest of the king!!! He met Mussolini several times, and [air-force general Italo] Balbo too, and Sarfatti, Mussolini's "girl friend," who still has a great political influence.

He saw the pope and almost all the influential Vatican scoundrels as well. He had Mussolini's or the king's box every evening at the opera, a motor car was permanently at his disposal.

On this occasion he was not lying about seeing Mussolini, because he brought back a signed photograph for the Führer (which Mussolini only gave in person). But Göring had not seen the pope, or even Pacelli, the cardinal whom Hitler had specified. The Vatican had let him see only Giuseppe Pizzaro, a somewhat humbler functionary.

Göring had left Carin at the Altheide Sanatorium, and sometimes even put her out of his mind. For one last time she wrote to her mother in mid-July 1931, a long letter expressing cautious hope for her own eventual recovery:

But great news! Hitler has given us a wonderful car. Hermann only has to go and collect it himself. It will be a splendid specimen that was exhibited at the last Automobile Show in Berlin—a Mercedes, gray outside, red leather inside, long, elegant, and stylish! They made only one car of its kind. . . .

Hitler told us he always felt bad about the way the Bavarian authorities took away our car (you remember, 1923) and he has always wanted to give us a new one. He has done it from the royalties of his book, so it is an entirely personal gift!

Göring felt they both needed a vacation. He was drained. He spoke that month to an audience of thirty thousand farmers. "He was so moved to see all these people in need," wrote Carin. "There they all stood, singing 'Deutschland Deutschland über Alles,' most of them with tears streaming down their faces. . . . How his nerves stand it beats me."

Her life was coming prematurely to its end, while her husband's, as though he had been born again, was just beginning. Carin von Fock would love Hermann Göring to her dying day, which was not many months away, and he would never forget the debt that he still owed her: Thanks to her, he had beaten off the fateful addiction long enough to reach the very threshold of absolute power.

Knowing perhaps that she had not long to live, he packed her at the end of that August 1931 into the swanky new Mercedes, and they set off with swastikas fluttering from each fender to tour Germany and then Austria, where his sister, now Paula Hueber, was christening a daughter. He and Pili

Körner took turns at the whe coat, her face as pale as de leather. She watched Hermann but she was so weak that m

Suddenly and unexpectedly the warnings of her doctors, newly hired, beige-liveried out in the Mercedes from B swept, bleak churchyard at L in the ground. It was the last von Fock, would ever seen l

lowing night, at the Grand F Once more Hermann was will to live on, now that h lingered, while Göring sat at or crept away to shave or s whispered, "I did so hope I

Occasionally Hermann tur corner of the room, and tear

And then the telegram carr now topping five million, th Brüning had become too loud to see the Nazi leadership al was required to return at onc

For five more days he st between duty and desire. Th later that his hands were soft head bowed and long hair ha The couple barely spoke. On could look across the water t court in 1909 and had dance

"I am so tired," she whisp room. "I want to follow Man So long as Hermann is here,

Guilelessly Thomas told h on the fourth, and when Herm close to her lips and whisper

Her sister Fanny came in. "Hermann has been called him to pack."

Hitler and Göring were show October 10, 1931. The ex-co lecture on Germany. This fail

Italy [wrote Carin on May
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Körner took turns at the wheel, while Carin sat in front wearing a light gray coat, her face as pale as death but framed in a rakish motoring helmet of leather. She watched Hermann triumphantly signing autographs everywhere, but she was so weak that meals had to be carried out to her.

Suddenly and unexpectedly Carin's mother died on September 25. Ignoring the warnings of her doctors, she returned to Stockholm for the funeral: with newly hired, beige-liveried chauffeur Wilhelm Schulz driving, they all set out in the Mercedes from Berlin, but by the time they arrived at the wind-swept, bleak churchyard at Lövö near Drottningholm, the coffin was already in the ground. It was the last time that Carin's embittered father, Baron Carl von Fock, would ever seen his five daughters together, because on the following night, at the Grand Hotel, Carin collapsed with a heart attack.

Once more Hermann was told that these were her last hours. She had no will to live on, now that her mother had gone, but for several days she lingered, while Göring sat at her bedside clad in a red silk dressing gown, or crept away to shave or snatch a meal. Once her eyes fluttered and she whispered, "I did so hope I was going to join Mama."

Occasionally Hermann turned to Thomas, sitting bleakly in a darkened corner of the room, and tears were glistening in his eyes.

And then the telegram came recalling him to Berlin. With unemployment now topping five million, the Nazi clamor to take over from the hapless Brüning had become too loud for President Hindenburg to ignore. He wanted to see the Nazi leadership about forming a new government. Herr Göring was required to return at once.

For five more days he stayed at Carin's bedside, his conscience torn between duty and desire. The nurse, Märta Magnuson, would recall years later that his hands were soft and feminine—on first glimpsing him with his head bowed and long hair hanging down she had thought it was a woman. The couple barely spoke. Once Carin asked for the bed to be moved so she could look across the water to the palace where she had been presented at court in 1909 and had danced at the royal balls.

"I am so tired," she whispered to her son when Hermann was out of the room. "I want to follow Mama. She keeps calling for me. But I cannot go. So long as Hermann is here, I cannot go."

Guilelessly Thomas told her of the telegram that had come from Berlin on the fourth, and when Hermann came back in she took the big man's head close to her lips and whispered faintly but urgently to him.

Her sister Fanny came in.

"Hermann has been called back to Berlin," Carin said. "You must help him to pack."

Hitler and Göring were shown into President Hindenburg's presence on October 10, 1931. The ex-corporal subjected the great field marshal to a lecture on Germany. This failed to impress, and nothing came of the inter-

Reichstag as he was no longer

Papen furiously wrote accusing
Papen by preventing him from
letter of that same day claimed.
vote, both of them actions that
his letter, Göring sued him
te, and the episode left feathers

Göring's parliamentary prank. Over-
ed, by presidential decree, with

had mastered the intricacies of
d for one instant," he bragged
fopped. As it was, Papen was

reveling in both of them—the
society of 1932. He became a
for dinners and hunting parties.
o invited him to hunt that autumn
g, noticed that the dichotomy in
the blustering and rowdy revo-
—between the SA's brown shirt
jacket at night."

ber 6, 1932. A real electoral
Hitler lost two million voters,
hstag was trimmed accordingly
y to see Mussolini, possibly to
ers; the Bavarian frontier police
tioned casually at the currency
y much cash, as they had been
" included former Reichsbank
ured Hitler in a secret letter on
The news of Papen's resignation
g when he was actually dining
the Führer's personal delegate
g. Hindenburg sent for both the
ver the next few days. ("Herr
our ideas are!") The politicking
Göring backing Hitler all the way
office of chancellor, and Hin-
as the Nazis did not command

er, who had assured the aged

president that he could split the Nazis, offered Hitler the vice-chancellorship. Again Hitler refused. The final lineup was that on December 1, 1932, Hindenburg appointed Schleicher as chancellor with Papen as vice-chancellor. This regime would survive only two months. Göring called it the most wretched that Germany had ever suffered. It was a testing time for the Nazi rank and file: They were on the threshold of power, and many could not understand why Hitler and Göring would not accept the half-loaf that Schleicher had cunningly offered to them. Gregor Strasser, the leader of a rival leftist faction within the Nazi party, had played an unfortunate and destabilizing role in those weeks, and neither Hitler nor Göring could forgive him for that: Strasser would eventually die on the same day as Schleicher, and in the same way. "A movement like ours," wrote Göring that year, "can pardon many things, but not disloyalty toward a leader."

Göring in these days was nagged by insomnia, and he found himself occasionally yearning for more tranquil times. His soul was now torn between two women—one cozy, warm-blooded, and alive, the other intellectually vastly her superior, but dead. He spent that Christmas of 1932 with the former, Emmy Sonnemann, then left to commune with the other, spending the New Year with Carin's relatives at Rockelstad. The letter that he wrote to Emmy from the Swedish castle, penned that New Year's Eve by the light of candles and an oil lamp as he sat before an open fire, betrays a certain fondness; but there was no trace of the intensity of the devotion he had felt for Carin:

My darling!

I'm listening to songs on the Swedish radio. . . . What pleasure the radio set you gave is giving me. I had a concert all the way from Berlin to the Sassnitz ferry despite the rattling of the train. I can pick up thirty or forty stations here. Yesterday I was able to get Stuttgart for a while. . . .

For hours every day I go for long walks by myself in the most beautiful forest you've ever seen. I'm sleeping eight or ten hours a day; I just hope I can stay on a bit longer. They all speak so charmingly of you here, they're all very nice to me.

My dear, I want to thank you from my heart for all your love and unselfish sacrifice and for everything you've done for me. Let's hope the New Year is just as kind to us.

A few hours later, the new year, 1933, began: Göring's year of destiny, and Europe's too. He was obsessed with Gregor Strasser and his treachery. "At midnight," wrote Goebbels, campaigning with Göring in an important election at Lippe on January 13, "Göring came. Strasser is the eternal subject of our discussions." But then, just when it seemed impossible that anything productive would emerge from the weeks of grubby intrigue, the Nazis began

assembled there—Hitler (on
; Frick; Göring; Papen [vice-
omberg; Neurath [likewise re-
e Old Man welcomed us with
action that the nationalist right
d out the list of ministers.

step to consolidate the Nazi seizure
e chancellor's prerogative, the new
mann Göring. In the first instance,
ist protest demonstration threatened
it would provide the means to make
mpregnable. At the very first Cabinet
ary 30, 1933, while crowds swayed
the national anthem up to the Cabinet
the existing laws and police forces
ivings that he now voiced about the
Prussian ministry, it is obvious that
too.

nd Göring adopted a more moderate
the possibility of banning the Com-
Hitler felt, as Schwerin von Krosigk
Cabinet ought not to begin with im-
d to bloody fighting, and probably a
s." The Cabinet minutes show that
suggested that they call a new general
two-thirds majority that would grant
ower to pass an enabling act making

at the Chancellery windows and took
nations staged a drum-beating, blaring,

to protect herself that night against
e was worn out, but asked her before
or him the next morning. "Buy the
will like that."

on March 5, 1933. That did not leave
, and sleeping in the Ministry of the
-knuckles purge, determined to cleanse
sidents and replace them with men who
cause. On the very next day Schwerin
"With his ruthless hiring and firing,
the Danger Man."

But Hitler was a man in a hurry, and relied on Göring's nerve. Ten years
later he would still describe him admiringly as "ice cold in times of crisis,"
and add: "I've always said that when it comes to the crunch he's a man of
steel—unscrupulous."

Neither of them had any intention of losing office. "No living force,"
Hitler told his cronies, "will get me out alive."

Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen, formally vested by Hindenburg with
the powers of chancellor of Prussia, still hoped to exert some checks on
Hitler and Göring. "As Prussian police minister," the German press was
reassured in a confidential circular on February 2, "Herr Göring is also
subordinated to Papen."

But Göring saw things differently and crowed to Papen, echoing Hitler's
boast, "You will only get me out of this room flat on my back!"

Throughout February, while the election battle warmed up, Göring plotted,
planned, and purged. Foreign Minister von Neurath called him "a dreadful
man," and told Britain's bibulous ambassador Sir Horace Rumbold that
Papen was quite unable to control him. "Göring," advised Neurath, "is
regarded as the real Fascist in the Hitler party."

In broad outline Hitler's eventual plan, if he won the coming election,
was to restore Germany's economic health, rebuild her armed forces in
defiance of Versailles, and then start making history.

Göring would have a key part in this too. On February 2 Hindenburg had
appointed him Reich commissar for aviation. Göring appointed Lufthansa's
bustling chief executive, Erhard Milch, as his deputy. On the sixth the two
men explained to a dubious Defense Minister von Blomberg that they intended
to build up a military air force under cover of expanding Germany's civil
aviation. Hitler hinted at this to his Cabinet on the eighth—this project would
provide work for the unemployed. "Everything for the armed forces!"—
that was the paramount principle that Hitler suggested to this Cabinet session,
and on the next day they voted an initial 40 million Reichsmarks for the
aviation budget. A week later they voted to increase that figure, and when
the finance minister stoutly objected, Hitler advised him that what they were
doing was to help the German people, "by camouflaged means," to acquire
the air force that Versailles had denied them.

That much is in the Cabinet minutes (which, like the Swedish hospital
dossiers, routinely spelled Göring's name wrong). The military records bear
it out. "Our air-force officer corps," Hitler told Blomberg, "is to be an
elite. The other services will have to lump it." By November 7, 1933, as
Milch's private diary shows, Göring would have secured a 1.1 billion-Reichs-
mark budget for the coming year. The aim was to create a "risk air force"
by late 1935, that is, a force strong enough to burn the fingers of any neighbor
who interfered with Hitler's intentions.

As uncrowned king of Prussia, Göring commanded the largest police force

the ministry, he traded heavily an official and demanded that of thirty-two city police chiefs but ten. He fired hundreds of filled their desks with trusty d Heinrich Himmler's SS.

n State Parliament. (He would ked with political cronies and pacify President Hindenburg.) diary entry on the thirteenth, rms the cockles of your heart. idical things." He banned the s terrorized the other parties'

"My actions," he told police cted by legal considerations. I am not in office to dispense Shoot first and ask questions officers read. "Any mistakes olicemen at Dortmund, "are lets."

pasha!" Papen gasped to him. (that Dr. Erich Gritzbach, his g's pay as well as his. ti reported to Rome from Ber- et and is waging a merciless

have recognized her husband. I desk wearing a somber suit, adventures, convinced of the Vith Emmy hovering in the ing with another man's legal ising functions in his Kaiser- sidence. On February 20, he to meet Hitler and make one ion. Banker Hjalmar Schacht r-old Gustav Krupp, head of : big names like Kauert, Winc top I.G. Farben executives r were also definitely present. nce at the head of the table, he record in Krupp's files—

We've got [Hitler said] to seize the instruments of power first of all if we are to floor the enemy permanently. . . . You must never strike until you are at the summit of your might—until you are sure that you are at the peak of your power growth.

He described the coming election fight as stage 2 in his attack on the Communists. "There will be no turning back for us," he promised these men of money, "even if there's no clear election result. It's a case of either/or: Either the result is cut-and-dried, or we shall force a showdown some other way.

"I have only one wish for the economy," he continued, "that it enter upon a peaceful future, in parallel with our reconstruction at home. The question," Hitler added, "whether we raise a Wehrmacht [armed forces] or not will be decided, not at Geneva, but in Germany. But first we shall proceed through domestic peace to domestic strength—and there can be no peace at home until Marxism is finished."

Handsome and urbane, Göring spoke a few words, assuring them that the German economy would recover rapidly once political peace was restored. "There will be no experiments," Hitler's right-hand man promised.

"Göring," the Krupp transcript states, "led his argument adroitly on to the need for those circles not engaged in the political arena at least to make some financial sacrifice."

"Industry," he concluded, with a brazenness that suggests that he knew his remarks would be well received, "will I am sure be happy to make this sacrifice once they realize that the coming election of March 5 will be Germany's last for ten years—and perhaps for one hundred!"

Twenty-five pairs of heavily ringed, manicured hands applauded. Krupp thanked the forty-three-year-old Hitler for "having given us such a vivid insight into the way your mind is working." The Führer left Göring's apartment amid the rustle of checkbooks (Schacht had indicated that three million Reichsmarks was the kind of campaign fund they had in mind).

Stepping up the fight against their opponents, four days later Göring's police officials swooped on the Communist party headquarters in Berlin. He claimed that they had found incriminating documents in what he picturesquely called its "catacombs." "I was told," he later recalled, "that the Communists were winding up for a major coup. I had lists of all the Communists drawn up so that we could arrest them immediately when the balloon went up." For the moment these lists were kept on ice, since President Hindenburg had already proven unreceptive to the Nazis' radical measures, like a new law proclaiming their swastika to be Germany's national flag.

All such reservations were dramatically dispelled a few days later. At 9:30 P.M. on February 27, 1933, as Göring was toiling at his desk, reports reached him that his Reichstag Building was ablaze. He threw on a voluminous camel-hair coat and jumped into his car. He pulled up outside his official residence,

across the street from the Reichstag. He could see flames already shooting up through the building's glass cupola, and the first fire engines were on the scene. His first thought was for the heirlooms that he had inherited from his father—some of them were hanging in the Speaker's Office. He was also heard to shout, "We must save the tapestries!" as he dashed into the tunnel that connected the speaker's residence with the blazing Reichstag Building. He came up inside the latter to find the big session-chamber already a furnace—sucking in air from outside so violently that, although not of negligible bulk, he found himself being dragged forward into the flames.

It is now generally accepted by reputable historians that the Nazis were not the instigators of this blaze—fortuitous though it proved for their campaign and cause. Göring, toppling helplessly toward the flames, would certainly have cursed his own misfortune if they had been. "As I opened the door," he told George Shuster years later:

I was all but drawn into the flames by the hot draught. Fortunately my belt snagged in the door [of a phone booth] and that stopped me from toppling forward. Just at that moment the huge cupola came crashing down . . . I saw self-igniting firefighters on the benches and chairs in the chamber that had eaten through the leather upholstery and set them on fire.

His office was still intact. He met Hitler and Goebbels there, joined shortly by Rudolf Diels, chief of his political police, and Vice-Chancellor von Papen, who had been dining over in the cliquish Herrenklub with President Hindenburg when the shocking news of the fire came. One of the security men told Hitler that the last person he had seen leaving the chamber was Ernst Torgler, the senior Communist deputy. In fact, Torgler had left over an hour previously, which did not prevent Göring from claiming mischievously in his conversation with George Shuster, "I saw Togler there, carrying a briefcase."

Shortly, a more convincing suspect was apprehended, trying to get away through the south door. Naked to the waist and streaming with sweat, this young man of twenty-four made no attempt to conceal that he had started the blaze, using his own clothes and four packets of firefighters for the purpose. A burly, stooping bricklayer with tousled hair and vacant eyes, he was identified as Marinus van der Lubbe, a member of a Dutch Communist splinter organization. In a crazy one-man protest against the new government for "oppressing the workers," this Dutch youth had already tried unsuccessfully to burn down three other buildings, including Berlin's City Hall, castle, and a welfare office.

For Göring, who had hoped for proof of an immense Communist conspiracy, Van der Lubbe, "a halfwitted Communist pyromaniac," was a poor exhibit. Discussing it at the Chancellery later, however, that same evening,

Hitler and Goebbels saw it of publicity from this "godse away with the March 5 elect "Now we'll show them," body who stands in our way

In a further meeting at Gt make immediate use of the a up during the past few days.

A draft presidential decree of its file, ready for Hindenbu

Small wonder that when h before Göring his draft comr and police beliefs that "a hun used, he exploded with frustra telegrams and police reports, & One hundredweight? Ten—no

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Hitler and Goebbels saw it very differently. If they extracted every ounce of publicity from this "godsent beacon," as Hitler called it, they could walk away with the March 5 election.

"Now we'll show them," cried Hitler, purpling with excitement. "Anybody who stands in our way now will get mown down!"

In a further meeting at Göring's own ministry, Hitler instructed him to make immediate use of the arrest lists that they had so fortuitously drawn up during the past few days.

A draft presidential decree suspending civil liberties was also taken out of its file, ready for Hindenburg to sign.

Small wonder that when his ministry's press chief now diffidently laid before Göring his draft communiqué, announcing Van der Lubbe's arrest and police beliefs that "a hundredweight" of incendiary materials had been used, he exploded with frustration, swept his desk clear of the accumulating telegrams and police reports, grabbed a blue pencil, and shouted, "Rubbish! One hundredweight? Ten—no, one hundred!"

The official stammered that Van der Lubbe could hardly have carried in all that alone.

"Nothing is impossible!" cried Göring. "There were ten—no, twenty men!"

He dictated a new communiqué to his secretary, Fräulein Grundtmann, scrawling his own outsized "G" at its foot.

He adhered to the same standards of accuracy in reporting to the quailing Cabinet ministers the next morning:

Admittedly the man arrested [Van der Lubbe] was maintaining that he had perpetrated the outrage on his own, [said Göring according to the Cabinet minutes], but this statement was not to be credited. He, Reich Minister Göring, was assuming that there had been at least six or seven attackers. The arsonist was definitely observed some time before the fire consorting with the Communist Reichstag deputy Torgler; both are reported to have walked around inside the building.

All of this was quite untrue, as was the rest of Göring's report to the Cabinet, about the seizure of Communist plans to set up terror squads, burn down public buildings, poison communal soup kitchens, and kidnap the wives and children of leading ministers.

Playing the role to the full, Göring announced that he had closed every museum and castle, had banned every Communist and Social Democrat newspaper in Germany, and had arrested the Communist officials. The world press was already indignantly proclaiming that the Nazis themselves had torched the Reichstag. Göring was privately facetious about the allegation. "The next thing we know," he sniffed, "they'll be claiming I stood and

watched the blaze wearing a blue toga and playing the violin!" Not least among the administrative problems that the fire had caused him was that he now had to relinquish Prussia's best theater, the Kroll Opera House, to provide a home for future Reichstag sessions.

Perhaps some Cabinet ministers still voiced misgivings about the evidence, because on March 2, Göring would assure them that further documents had been seized during the night, proving this time that Moscow had given the Communists in Berlin a mid-March deadline to take action or forfeit their Soviet cash subsidies in consequence. Suffice it to say that never in later years, and least of all to subsequent interrogators, did Göring repeat these claims; nor did he ever produce the documents—"captured maps" locating the electric-power installations, subway, and transformer stations that were to be blitzed. ("One map," he had convincingly claimed, "was found at [Communist] party headquarters, the other had been cut up and distributed to the individual hit squads.")

The Reichstag fire was the first occasion on which he resorted to such truly monumental falsehoods. But the lies served their purpose, because they enabled him to lock up three thousand political opponents before election day. Among the Communists to be apprehended were three Bulgarians—Vassil Tanev, Blagoi Popov, and Georgi Dimitrov. Together with Torgler and the luckless Van der Lubbe, they were accused of responsibility for the Reichstag fire and committed for trial. Göring reserved his venom particularly for Dimitrov, who was a leading member of the Comintern (the Soviet directorate of international subversion). "Dimitrov," he snorted years later, "was a murky figure. Wherever he turned up, you could be sure there was dirty work afoot."

When the Reichstag fire trial began at Leipzig late in September 1933, Göring attempted to turn it into a crusade against the Communists and was humiliated. He appeared in person as a prosecution witness, clad in brown tunic, riding breeches, and polished jackboots. He would never forget the resulting confrontation with Dimitrov on November 4.

"My opinion is different," retorted the Bulgarian at one stage.

"Logical," conceded Göring. "But mine's the one that counts!"

"I continue," said Dimitrov. "Is it known to Mr. Göring that the party with what he calls this 'criminal ideology' is a party that rules one-sixth of the earth's surface? Namely, the Soviet Union?"

"What they do in Russia," Göring broke in after a further lecture by the defendant, "is a matter of indifference to me. I am concerned only with the Communist party in Germany and with the alien Communist scoundrels who come here and set our Reichstag on fire."

There were shouts of "bravo" from the public benches.

"This bravo-bravo," mimicked Dimitrov. "Of course. Say bravo. To wage war on Communist party in Germany is your good right. Like right of

Communist party in Germany fighting!"

"Dimitrov," snapped the judge to make Communist propagandist

"He is making Nazi propaganda."

Once Göring snapped, "The people is aware of. It's aware — 'it's aware that you're acting over here to set our Reichstag arrant nonsense to the German level charges at me! In my eye strung up on the gallows long"

The judge murmured a rebuke quite content," he said, "with

Cool and sovereign in the kn turned to Hermann Göring. "A

Beet red, Göring screamed: across you outside this courtroom

All four hard-line Communists found guilty and submitted to the flicker of remorse. Remorse, if stiff a sentence for Van der Lubbe did not deserve so much notoriety

Two days after the Reichstag fire Göring's advertisement for a general the blue folder of testimonials. K and a sailor for eight. Göring fire Handle a launch?" (Göring had do most of the driving myself," "But you can take over the wheel

Kropp asked for 140 marks a of more. "Four weeks' notice, you, then you're out on your ear Get it?"

"Yes," stammered Kropp. "I

Göring softened. "You start a hand at his own cramped quarters

"We'll be moving into the prison

d turned the project over to Göring, make no use of agents, but to rely on signals intelligence (wiretapping and codebreaking) and of the trust that he reposed in Göring: Göring must have in his guide dog. Funded by the government, the harmless-sounding Forschungsamt, expanded to twenty by July 1933, and was, more, operating throughout Germany for the next twelve years. Its senior officials included an employee—Oberregierungsrat Hartmann—the former adjutant of Freikorps leader Ernst Röhm (he was shot). Göring handed over general supervision of the Forschungsamt approved its budget and staff appointments. It was its first cryptanalytical workshop, in the heart of the government district, the FA was headed by a lieutenant commander who had until then headed the code office.

During the war, but after the surrender they were Nazi agents. They volunteered little information. Scattered around the world, they betrayed FA provenance, and they showed most efficient and accurate intelligence-gathering integrity guaranteed by the rigid discipline and by the extraordinary character of the FA.

the elite Reich monopoly on wiretapping. Only a big "G." scrawled at the foot of the tap, in Kömer, would suffice for the tap to be sily attained, and he gave Himmler's "G." recalled one FA official, "as was the implications, the reason given for the tap [Göring] simply disallowed it; and the results to be forwarded [to the Gestapo] in each case."

uation section, who had joined straight after August 1936, would recall that Reinhard Himmler, hated having to submit every document without that "G." on it I wasn't allowed to and Himmler would advance every document to the Forschungsamt. The Führer merely

ily two years. A cheerful womanizer, a lady in Breslau; he solved the matter

by shooting her and then (being a gentleman) himself on April 10, 1935. Göring appointed Prince Christoph of Hesse,* and he retained this top Nazi intelligence job for the next eight years.

During Göring's regime, the Forschungsamt moved into magnificent new premises in Berlin's Charlottenburg district; housed in a sprawling complex of former residential buildings set discreetly back from Schiller Strasse, near what Berliners call "the Knee," the hundreds of specially sworn officials and language specialists sat at their equipment in halls patrolled by armed guards and subject to the most stringent security regulations. Every scrap of paper, from the duplicate pads used by the telephone monitors to the brown paper of the "research results," was number-stamped and logged. Recipients of the Brown Pages signed oaths of secrecy subjecting them to the death penalty in the event of violation. The Brown Pages were conveyed only in red double-thickness envelopes inside locked pouches or pneumatic-mail canisters; handled only by special FA couriers; signed for in triplicate by their authorized recipients. (Milch signed for his new pouch key on April 27, 1936, promising "in the event of loss to notify the FA immediately and pay all costs for the replacement of the pouch.")

"The work of the FA," warned Prince Christoph, who had the rank of Ministerialdirektor in Göring's Prussian Ministry, "will have both point and profit only if its secrecy is safeguarded by every possible means. Inadequate security will result in the enemy," whom these February 1938 security regulations did not identify, "taking precautions, and our sources drying up." Thus the "results" were never to be explicitly referred to in documents, nor discussed by phone except on the special secure-telephone network installed by the FA throughout the government district, or on the secure teleprinter system. Recipients, regardless of rank, had to return each and every Brown Page intact to the FA. Even Hitler had to toe this line. FA chief Gottfried Schapper wrote to Hitler's adjutant Paul Wernicke in May 1938 peremptorily demanding the return of seven numbered "results" delivered to the Führer on the day that German troops entered Austria.

By 1937 the FA had grown so costly that Göring switched it to the budget of his Air Ministry, where secrecy was easier. As camouflage, all FA officials now wore air-force uniforms. The FA maintained five hundred wiretaps around the clock in Berlin alone, primarily on foreign embassies, legations, journalists, and suspected enemies of the Reich. The Charlottenburg rooms were divided into "regions" (*Bereiche*)—one each for English, American, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, Polish, Czech, and the other languages of the moment. Dr. Gerhard Neuenhoff, one linguist who was assigned to the French (and Belgian) "region" on September 15, 1936, found himself just one of a thousand other specialists, strictly limited in their mobility in the FA

*Born in 1901, he had married Sophie Battenberg, one of the six German sisters of the present duke of Edinburgh (who fought against the Germans in WWII).

the top floor, where Section IV's code-
with punched-card computers and the
set in front of a standard hotel-type
inding the Belgian legation, the French
ndents in Berlin. He soon learned to
rench ambassador André François-
ation, or the French journalist Madame

FA monitors were incorruptible civil
the motive to falsify "results." They
ated duplicate pads, in longhand, or
the completed note, already headed
onto a conveyor belt; within minutes
ed, and issued—either by FA dispatch
the bullet through Berlin's pneumatic-
the authorized minister or his Staats-
dress code on it—three narrow rings
ich's private office at the secret Air

edge over every rival contender for
nal cable crossed Reich territory or its
by the FA. There were FA field units
thronous teleprinters installed in the
churned out "results" twenty-four
is "looped into" the great Indo-Cable
traffic with India. ("At first," recalled
as quite bountiful.") The cable from
ated the Baltic Sea; Göring's frogmen
s between Vienna, Prague, Moscow,
d Reich territory.

Pages were Hitler's new Propaganda
tics. An intercept of any story being
Germany enabled Goebbels to plant an
papers overnight. The FA could also
in a speed and reliability that assisted
"kills." Seifert's evaluation section
objects; his subsection 12-C kept tabs
ce to vital raw materials like rubber,
ut. Göring's secret agency made him
onal egg prices to the yield of low-

as to be supplied automatically with
cepts of his conversations were to be
o check his own phone security. Sur-

viving data shows that he used the system well, as a routine check on the
Reich's ponderous and inefficient bureaucracy. Two typical Brown Pages
that came rattling through the pneumatic tube in December 1944 were number
N400,611 about German explosives manufacture, entitled, "Managing Di-
rector Dr. Müller complaining about lack of official cooperation from Ber-
lin"; and N400,784 about aircraft production: "Ernst Heinkel Aircraft Works,
Vienna, having serious problems getting raw materials for He 219 construc-
tion."

There were those who considered such eavesdropping not *korrekt*—some-
how ungentelemanly. And often there was a prurient element. When Mussolini
paid his first state visit to Berlin in September 1937, an FA team manning
the switchboard at Castle Belvedere monitored his calls to his mistress, Clara
Petacci. When the duke of Windsor came to Salzburg with his American
duchess a month later, Hitler ordered Göring to tap their phones as well.

Such tidbits lightened the darker watches of the night at Charlottenburg.
A monitor would cry out "*Staatsgespräch!*" ("State talks!") and throw the
switch that poured the intimate conversation into every switchboard in the
room. Down the tube came transcripts of the titillating conversations between
one of the most eminent Catholic prelates in Berlin and a nun—"Compared
with him," Milch snickered, "Casanova was a wimp!" Göring had ordered
General von Schleicher's phone tapped, of course. "What is it?" the gen-
eral's wife was heard teasing a friend. "With an *i* everybody wants to be
it. Without an *i*, nobody!" "Give up? *Arisch!*" she triumphed. "Aryan!"

Göring read it out to Gestapo Chief Rudolf Diels, roaring with laughter,
and ordered the wiretap continued.

His Forschungsamt gave to Hitler and his experts a certain deftness, a
sureness of touch when they played their diplomatic poker. A French trade
mission arrived: An FA "flying squad" took over the switchboard at the
Hotel Bristol, monitored even their room-to-room calls, a Brown Page re-
porting the rock-bottom price they had instructions from home to accept was
blow-piped across Berlin to the Ministry of Economics in time for the af-
ternoon's vital conference. After Germany remilitarized the Rhineland in
1936, Chief Evaluator Seifert took to Hitler the Brown Pages (numbered
around N34,500 now) reporting the hysterical foreign-press reaction; Hitler
said calmly, "They'll settle down again." In 1938 the FA intercepts (num-
bered around N83,000) would tell him that Britain was not coming to the
aid of Austria in March, nor Czechoslovakia in September.

The sense of sovereign power that this quiet agency gave to Göring cannot
be underestimated. It put him a cut above the rest of Hitler's henchmen.
Noiseless taps were put on the phones of Gauleiter Julius Streicher, the
widely disliked gauleiter of Franconia; on Hitler's female English admirer
Unity Mitford; on his talkative adjutant Fritz Wiedemann, and Wiedemann's
globe-trotting girl friend Princess Stefanie von Hohenlohe; and on Goebbels's
bedmate, the lovely Czech actress Lida Baarova. After obtaining clear proof

from the FA of the intrigues of Roosevelt's ambassadors in Warsaw, Brussels, and Paris, Göring instructed the Forschungsamt department chief Dr. W. Kurzbach to publish a stinging but anonymous exposé in Berlin's authoritative newspaper, *Börsenzeitung*.

Seifert, who often had to deliver the Brown Pages to Göring in person, found him a hard but not unfeeling employer. On the one hand, he had no sense of time or place. He might summon Seifert at dawn to Budapest, then leave him waiting for hours without any breakfast. But, Seifert found, the minister sometimes gained as much pleasure from distributing his growing wealth as from accumulating it. One FA courier could not afford the treatment needed for his child's infantile paralysis. Seifert wrote a message for Göring on that day's FA summary, and it came back that night with a scrawled reply: "Of course I shall pick up all the bills."

Once, Seifert took the locked pouch in person to Göring's new domain, "Carinhall," in the forests outside Berlin. Göring left him standing in front of the mammoth desk for longer, perhaps, than was polite. As Seifert waited patiently to begin the FA briefing, he felt something nibbling at his leg: It was a lion cub, its fangs still fortunately petite.

"Proceed!" roared Göring, enjoying the situation.

The lion was a pet that he could openly display; the Forschungsamt, however, was a pet that he could not.

1 RENAISSA

close to tears, had repeated to his fellow pilots that he had made on disbanding that the German Air Force's time would come. He kept his word in both respects. He would inform him that Germany now stood powerful in the world.

Creating it in the face of all the interferences, the kind of German military aviation had been. The Republic had already laid some foundation far from prying eyes, bases and proving grounds, and even submarines. The young man selected a primitive airfield at Lipetsk, an experimental site: Another officer, Heinz Knieß, tactics nearby, and many later famous pilots. Hermann Ploch passed through this secret. As recently as September 26, 1

on Research Institute's secret

a small, well-camouflaged air civil aviation, and then, from 1938, rapidly build a full-scale air force. But Göring could have raised the Führer's trust, and the Führer gave no other politician. Through- out the war, "Money is no object!" was Göring's approach. When General Milch said, "It's not your money, is it!" on March 11, 1933, in the offices of the Prussian prime minister's staff, Milch, whom Göring was then visiting the experimental station, on March 29, but when they left it to Milch to confer with the himself concentrated on the fact that he had explained to Balbo on building bombers at first,

"Do as you think best." On May 6, 1933, Blomberg agreed to their and not a branch of either the May 6, Milch issued contracts —the purpose of businessman Balbo's enviously called him, was a matter, regardless of the quality of aircraft workers above all else. Fifty-five hundred workers, and there were only eighteen Junkers 52

to be the happiest year of his life. Forty-two, commissioner for our flying clubs (sport flying): is of the Luftwaffe's uniform. Appointments could scarcely have been selected one of the army's and agreed to the transfer, la- tely had been the next com- mand another army colonel, Albert Kesselring, to run the admin- istration of these men had ever flown,

nor had the officer Göring appointed on July 1, 1933, as chief of air-force personnel, Colonel Hans-Jürgen Stumpff.

Stumpff, never one of Göring's critics, found him "packing a colossal punch" in those days. "He was bursting with ideas," the colonel later recalled. On Hitler's orders, the other services had to release their best material to Göring's new air force. During the first year Stumpff recruited 182 officers from the army and 42 from naval aviation. A rapid-training program began. When Stumpff proudly reported the training of the thousandth pilot, Göring congratulated him: "Now on to the next thousand!" he bel- lowed.

"You left every conference with him," said Stumpff afterward, "boosted to an extra thousand rpm."

The real architect of the secret air force was Milch. A year senior to his minister, he was ambitious, loud-mouthed, and every bit as ruthless. Milch had trampled many of his business rivals in his climb to power, and he never enjoyed Göring's perennial, inexplicable popularity. Göring could hardly overlook Milch's naked ambition. Several times in May and June 1933 it was Milch and his minister who had attended the Cabinet meetings, and Göring heard that his Staatssekretär was saying, "The real minister is me!" Milch suspected that Göring had succumbed to morphine again, and tackled him about it. It was a strained, rambunctious relationship, not made easier for Göring by the knowledge that Milch was indispensable to him. Once he telephoned Milch, sitting in that first secret ministry building in Behren Strasse: Milch listened only briefly to Göring's ill-tempered outburst before hanging up on him.

Göring phoned again. "We were cut off," he said.

"No," snapped Milch. "I put the phone down on you. I don't want our switchboard to get the impression that our minister has no manners."

What Göring never took into account, Milch explained to this author, was time: "That was beyond him." Milch methodically pulled together all the strands that, entwined, go to make an air force—civil aviation, meteorolog- ical services, aeronautical laboratories, flying schools, ground organization. In mid-August he signed the orders setting up *Fliegerwaffen* schools for specialist training in navigation, air-to-air combat, gunnery, flight engineer- ing, and naval aviation. When he took the dates and deadlines in to his minister, Göring just roared with laughter. "You're planning to do all this over the next five years?" he bellowed. "You've got six months."

Among the very highest air-force officers, there were powerful and often unusual forces of cohesion. Each had something on the other.

But deadliest of all was the file being built up on Milch by rivals like SA Brigadier (*Oberführer*) Theo Croneiss in Bavaria. Milch had bankrupted his little airline in the twenties, and now Croneiss put it about that the Staats- sekretär's father, Anton Milch, was really a Jew. The words flew around the Nazi hierarchy. Gauleiter Joseph Terboven told his friend Göring, who tackled

Milch that August as they were driving back from the Obersalzberg, where they had just inspected the site for Göring's new luxury villa. Milch was shocked and investigated his own blood ancestry. By October 4, when they met again to inspect the secret uniform being designed for the new air force, he had established the truth—which Milch saw as a vindication. Milch handed to Göring a letter written by his mother, establishing beyond doubt that his biological father was not Anton Milch, but in fact her own uncle. That he was the product of incest was not a pleasant discovery, but for a Staatssekretär in Nazi Germany, it was preferable to being a half-Jew. On October 14, Göring reprimanded Croneiss for the slander. Two weeks later he discussed the letter with Hitler, Blomberg, and Hess. "It's all okay," Milch noted in his diary on November 1.

Versions of the story percolated around the air force for the next twelve years. Lieutenant Colonel Erich Killinger told fellow officers that Milch's brother was still a Jew. "Milch," added Killinger, "proved—or claimed—and his mother, who's still alive has confirmed it, that she had had an affair with a Christian and that Erhard [Milch] was the product. So Milch," guffawed Killinger, unaware of the awful truth, "branded his own mother a whore so as to become a Christian."

Göring shielded Milch against the slander and never revealed what he knew, even years afterward under interrogation in the shadow of the gallows.

Sovereign, unimpeachable, arrogant: Some idea of the breathtaking scope of Göring's ambitions in 1933 is given by a letter to the minister of culture, Bernard Rust, expressing indignation at the appointment of a "Reich bishop" without consulting him.

I was astonished [Göring wrote] to find that the appointment is a fait accompli.

In my view, so long as we have only regional [Protestant] churches and not one Reich Church, no Reich bishop can be appointed. Until the [1918] revolution, the King of Prussia was the summus episcopus of the Church of Prussia. In my opinion these prerogatives now devolve upon the Prussian State Ministry, i.e., upon the Prussian prime minister . . .

The Prussian prime minister was, of course, Hermann Göring himself. This open letter, in which he neatly claimed to be legal successor to the king of Prussia and head of the Protestant (Evangelische) Church as well, was published in the first edition of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on June 27 but expunged from all later editions.

The dispute over the Reich bishop had a Forschungsamt sequel that illustrates how Göring did not hesitate to use the Brown Pages to manipulate his Führer.

The background was this. Protestantism, Hitler had tried subversion, setting up a new c Horse operation. At an April 1 cal for a united Reich Church a Reich bishop as their leader. Ludwig Müller of Königsberg

Thousands of disaffected Protestant opposition candidate to Müller, the leader of this opposition clergyman, Martin Niemöller, a zealous Nazi until this Müller

After initially sharing their desire it more useful to back him, he the spiritual conniving of the assembling a police dossier on Emergency Pastors' League (Pf) uary 19, Göring found him still c President Hindenburg on this is dozen of the clergymen in person and Göring ordered wiretaps placed

At 1:00 P.M. on the appointed in two lines facing the desk in Hitler to argue their case ("with mealy many quotations from the Scriptures brandishing a red file, from which "Mein Führer," he cried, "province, I request permission to be conducted by"—and here he pointed Emergency League."

Niemöller, crew cut and lean-faced as his name was mentioned.

"Read it out," invited Hitler.

"We've done our 'mine-laying' Niemöller's words. "We've subordinated. We've fixed him good and proper affairs, the chancellor's going to have a comeuppance—the last rites!"

Hitler glared at Niemöller. "Do you can drive a wedge between the very foundations of the Reich."

Niemöller attempted to reply—his "cares for the Church, for Jesus your German people."

for Carinhall on a bluff overlooking one of the lakes, Dolln See, and sent an architect to Sweden to make drawings of a timber-hunting lodge that he had admired on the von Rosen estate. In her memory, he intended to make the new building the center of a wildlife sanctuary for endangered species—species like the elk and buffalo, the deer and wild horse and, indeed, himself.

He wanted Carinhall to have the best of everything. He called in two Prussian court architects, Hetzelt and Tuch, and gave them ten months to have the main lodge complete. Eventually Carinhall would cost the taxpayer 15 million Reichsmarks, borne equally by the Air Ministry and Prussian government budgets. It would become over the next twelve years an extraordinary, baroque palace—oversized, vulgar, and faintly ludicrous, in the image of its builder. He approved every detail of its design down to the lavish door handles. He selected the furniture, designed the green-and-gold livery for the foresters and footmen, brought back gaudy bric-à-brac from his later forays into occupied Europe. The buildings spread and multiplied around the center courtyard, with steep thatched roofs, fountains, statues, and avenues of trees. The rooms were embellished with the costliest crystal chandeliers, Flemish tapestries, and priceless Old Masters. "Magnificent," he would later exclaim to Heinz Guderian, by then a Panzer general, showing him the works of art at Carinhall. "I really am a Renaissance man. How I love opulence!" Whereupon he took the visitor by the arm and led him to the drawing room, flanked by two anterooms called the Gold and Silver rooms, where the gifts made to General Göring by the judicious, the wise, and the ambitious were on permanent display.

Throughout those early years the rumors, abetted by Communist propaganda, that Göring was back on narcotics would not go away. Prussian lawyer Count Rüdiger von der Goltz observed him as though in a trance during one speech at Stettin. Morphine intake might explain the speed with which Göring abandoned the norms of honesty and solicited both gifts and bribes. Making amends for his property confiscated in 1923, the state of Bavaria had allowed him to buy a prime site on the Obersalzberg mountain, right next to Hitler's famous chalet. Among his papers in 1945 was the deed of another plot of land at Hochkreuth, near Bayrischzell, given him by Consul Sachs on Bavaria's behalf on March 3, 1935. The speed of his transformation from Goebbels's "upright, childlike soldier" of January 1933 to the murderous, grasping Göring of 1934 took even his friends' breaths away. Whatever the occasion, paintings, sculptures, vases, embroidery, and furniture poured in for him—bronze lions, trinkets of gold and ivory, silver, and amber.

His staff rapidly perfected and systematized the bribery. Fräulein Grundtmann meticulously listed all gifts—donors, dates, and occasion. Some were innocuous, like the gifts from his childhood friends Erna and Fanny Graf; others were heavy with unspoken intent—presents from future allies and enemies, from ambassadors and agents (the British colonel Malcolm Christie gave him *Sporting Anecdotes*), from aristocrats and Reich ministers (for

Christmas 1937 Rudolf Hess though collected speeches). The Grundtmann directors, publishing moguls, included like C. & A. Brenninkmeyer, I.G. Farben, and minor ones like Ufa and Fox movie companies. At sea voyages. The Phillip Reemtsma painting of "The Sunday Hunts Führer"). Into the early Grundtmann Swedish businessman Birger F. giving him a dishwasher as early as prominently in Göring's life and donated a flower basket, followed

Every municipality in Germany Dören, and Düsseldorf through them. There were presents from friends Carin's and Emmy's families—appropriately in his family at all—in 191 and his wife gave him two small small bronze vase. The German coat of arms doorplate inscribed with his father's widow) gave him a do

Invited to Göring's birthday on brought along a modest painting of to Göring, however, he found a shooting brake with four horses.

Soon the first stage of Carinhall. Out here among the dark Satanic felt like a Teutonic knight of old. Robert to dress him in red top boots in floor-length coats like a French e.

Emmy or no Emmy, his waking morbid memory of Carin. Her gift the workmen were constructing Carinhall shore, he ordered them to excavate thick walls of Brandenburg granite. to receive the pewter sarcophagus.

One day he expected to lie in it eternally with her beneath these mo

Their gift paid off. Göring's office files in Leipzig department store despite the local gaudy small traders.

of the lakes, Dolln See, and sent an of a timber-hunting lodge that he had memory, he intended to make the new for endangered species—species like orse and, indeed, himself.

est of everything. He called in two Tsch, and gave them ten months to lly Carinhall would cost the taxpayer y by the Air Ministry and Prussian e over the next twelve years an ex- , vulgar, and faintly ludicrous, in the ery detail of its design down to the urniture, designed the green-and-gold rought back gaudy bric-à-brac from The buildings spread and multiplied p thatched roofs, fountains, statues, embellished with the costliest crystal iceless Old Masters. "Magnificent," an, by then a Panzer general, showing really am a Renaissance man. How I he visitor by the arm and led him to nderooms called the Gold and Silver al Göring by the judicious, the wise, display.

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Christmas 1937 Rudolf Hess thoughtfully gave him a volume of Hess's own collected speeches). The Grundtmann lists record the donations of generals, directors, publishing moguls, industrialists; there were major corporations like C. & A. Brenninkmeyer,* Lufthansa, the Hamburg-Amerika Line, and I.G. Farben, and minor ones like the Fritz Siebel Aircraft Works, and the Ufa and Fox movie companies. North German Lloyd would give him three sea voyages. The Phillip Reemtsma Tobacco Company gave him a Spitzweg painting of "The Sunday Huntsman" (Göring marked it "Keep for the Führer"). Into the early Grundtmann lists crept names of future note—the Swedish businessman Birger F. Dahlerus, boss of Electrolux, is glimpsed giving him a dishwasher as early as 1936 (the name of Dahlerus would figure prominently in Göring's life and trial). In 1937 one Albert Speer, architect, donated a flower basket, followed in 1938 by a brass goblet.

Every municipality in Germany, from Aachen, Altena, Berlin, Cologne, Düren, and Düsseldorf through the alphabet to Zossen made regular gifts to him. There were presents from friends and relatives and in-laws—from both Carin's and Emmy's families—and from people Hermann did not regard as properly in his family at all—in 1937 his unwanted cousin, Herbert Göring, and his wife gave him two small Meissen hunting figurines and in 1938 a small bronze vase. The German Colonial Veterans League gave him a marble doorplate inscribed with his father's name. Baroness von Epenstein (his godfather's widow) gave him a door from Veldenstein, his childhood castle.

Invited to Göring's birthday on January 12, 1934, the banker Schacht had brought along a modest painting of a buffalo for him. In pride of place next to Göring, however, he found a publisher who had donated a complete shooting brake with four horses.

Soon the first stage of Carinhall would be ready, a simple timber lodge. Out here among the dark Satanic forests of pine, beech, and oak, Göring felt like a Teutonic knight of old. He would carry a spear, and command Robert to dress him in red top boots of Russian leather with golden spurs, in floor-length coats like a French emperor, in silk blouses with puffy sleeves.

Emmy or no Emmy, his waking thoughts were still overshadowed by the morbid memory of Carin. Her ghost haunted him more than ever now that the workmen were constructing Carinhall. Down by the lakeside, on the far shore, he ordered them to excavate a macabre mausoleum, with five-foot-thick walls of Brandenburg granite. In a few months' time it would be ready to receive the pewter sarcophagus from Sweden.

One day he expected to lie in it by his devoted Carin's side—to spend all eternity with her beneath these moaning pines.

* Their gift paid off. Göring's office files reveal that he authorized C. & A. to set up their big Leipzig department store despite the local gauleiter's protests that this violated Nazi vows to protect small traders.

11

MURDER MANAGER

What were the factors that propelled Göring into the sink of criminality from which he would emerge, on the middle day of 1934, with the blood and gore of political murder clinging to his bejeweled hands? Self-preservation? Cowardice? Or the fatal arrogance inspired in leading National Socialists by the belief that their movement's undoubted achievements in the revival of Germany somehow put them above common law?

Like all bullies, and despite his *Pour le Mérite*, Göring was physically a coward. But Professor Hugo Blaschke, the Philadelphia-trained dentist who treated Göring, was struck by the general's quivering fear of pain. "You got the feeling," Blaschke recalled years later, "that you were dealing with a megalomaniac. Your own life was worth nothing."

There is also no doubt of Göring's belief in Nazi righteousness. On February 26, 1933, he had visited Dortmund to speak to fifty thousand working men in the election campaign and had seen the starving children with his own eyes. Returning now, a year later, on March 17, 1934, to the same steel towns in his luxuriously appointed railroad coach, he saw children with pink in their cheeks and laughter in their eyes. The Nazis were succeeding

where Weimar had failed—prosperity, and employme

Nobody was celebrated Herbert Backe, the level-t his wife after touring easter at Breslau wearing a white cheers gave Göring the fe the law. The increasingly of them designed for him b at heart almost a transvest Backe wrote in her diary, "hall] he always has a spear

A few weeks later, on Jun friends and comrades, now along with scores of other re power in Germany.

Ernst Röhm, the pallid, staff—against whom Carin years earlier—had become Hitler revolution and with t million Brownshirts. Hitler: his thugs during the last m refused to go back into the the constitutional forces of) He wanted to become defe Göring later, discussing this to Hindenburg, as Röhm's p known." Röhm had no int cronies began muttering abo General von Schleicher wou air minister, and the SA as a

Initially, Göring and Hitler 1933 Göring had allowed the *trachte*) to his various offices appointed Röhm a Reich miu using the familiar *Du*—expre comrades." But then Röhm ca ministry, and it became comm from abroad, although Hitler the Reichswehr, would be all coalition began to take shap assistant General von Reiche

where Weimar had failed—they had brought back national unity, economic prosperity, and employment, and they were feted everywhere they went.

Nobody was celebrated with greater enthusiasm than Göring. "Göring," Herbert Backe, the level-headed deputy to the minister of agriculture, told his wife after touring eastern Germany with the general in mid-May, "arrived at Breslau wearing a white air-force uniform. The citizenry went wild." The cheers gave Göring the feeling of immortality: He was Germany—he was the law. The increasingly odd, sometimes even effeminate garments (many of them designed for him by Carin) were a part of his public image. He was at heart almost a transvestite, certainly an exhibitionist. "Herbert," Frau Backe wrote in her diary, "says that out in the Schorf Heath [around Carin-hall] he always has a spear with him."

A few weeks later, on June 30, Hitler and Göring liquidated their former friends and comrades, now deadly rivals, Ernst Röhm and Gregor Strasser, along with scores of other real or imagined obstacles to their retaining absolute power in Germany.

Ernst Röhm, the pallid, paunchy, scar-faced homosexual SA chief of staff—against whom Carin had so astutely warned Hermann Göring nine years earlier—had become increasingly dissatisfied with the character of the Hitler revolution and with the role assigned within it to himself and his two million Brownshirts. Hitler and Göring had willingly made use of Röhm and his thugs during the last months of the struggle, but now the violent genie refused to go back into the lamp. Röhm, with more men under arms than the constitutional forces of law and order, made no secret of his ambitions. He wanted to become defense minister himself. "It was obvious," said Göring later, discussing this, "that we could not have suggested his name to Hindenburg, as Röhm's private life and sordid proclivities were too well known." Röhm had no intention of taking this lying down. He and his cronies began muttering about staging a "second revolution"—after which General von Schleicher would replace Hitler, Theo Croneiss would become air minister, and the SA as a whole would replace the army.

Initially, Göring and Hitler saw no option but to appease Röhm. In October 1933 Göring had allowed the SA to attach "special agents" (*Sonderbeauftragte*) to his various offices and agencies; and on December 1, Hitler had appointed Röhm a Reich minister, and published a fulsome letter to him—using the familiar *Du*—expressing his gratitude to the SA, "my friends and comrades." But then Röhm casually posted an SA guard unit outside Göring's ministry, and it became common knowledge that the SA was buying up arms from abroad, although Hitler had ruled definitely that only the regular army, the Reichswehr, would be allowed to bear arms. At this point the anti-Röhm coalition began to take shape. General von Blomberg, his chief military assistant General von Reichenau, and the commander in chief of the army,

MANAGER

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know that they took a dim view of the coalition against Röhm. In his exquisite ruthlessness, his gaze fell on the offensive-looking chief of the SS, personally sworn to Hitler's pro-Himmler, ten years younger than the provincial schoolmaster. Ten years had carried Ernst Röhm's standard had left Göring with such a painful record every police force in Germany. So each man needed the other, and Göring wanted Himmler. He said doubtfully to Richard Walther Darratz: "You know Himmler," he said.

When we get together he just talks about our peasant stock. I can't see

of 1934, hesitated to join forces with him in the new Gestapo chief, Heinrich Himmler. Until 1934 the Gestapo was in the hands of Hermann Göring. Now Diels was running it, and he seemed more and more to favor the SA. In September 1933 he had accompanied the Communist murderer of a Nazi, but later he had failed to uncover a plot—fortunately for the latter, Reinhard Heydrich, thwarted the

an paranoid. Believing his life in danger, he returned only when Göring obtained evidence that Diels was in cahoots with him. "You're in cahoots with him?"

the oily civil servant, "has his finger

minutes later, however, he rose to go to lunch without him. "I'm losing my attention," he explained. The *Berliner Zeitung* announced that the new position offered to him by the (tenant) of Cologne.

Hermann Göring's nieces. Later he

divorced her. Later still, he swore a stack of annihilating affidavits against Göring for the war-crimes tribunal, most of which must be read with the utmost caution, given the vulnerable position in which the first chief of Göring's Gestapo must have fancied himself. In one, he claimed that he and Göring took a dossier on SA atrocities down to Hitler on the Obersalzberg early in January 1934. "Herr Göring," exclaimed Hitler, "these are common knowledge. This entire clique around Röhm is rotten to the core. The SA has become a haven for riffraff and scumbags." Hitler, said Diels, had then instructed Göring to see that certain "traitors"—and he mentioned Schleicher and Strasser by name—vanished from the scene.

Oblivious of the closing ranks against him, Ernst Röhm tossed off during February 1934 several arrogant statements that alarmed the army and clearly explained why their top generals were conniving with Göring behind clubhouse doors. Röhm declared to Blomberg that Germany's defense was purely the SA's concern, and he lectured Fritsch that the future army would be restricted to training the SA for that job. Uneasy now, Hitler ordered Röhm to sign a document, dictated by the army, agreeing to restrict his SA to purely political tasks. Röhm signed but made scathing remarks in private, which Viktor Lutze, his sworn enemy within the SA, promptly repeated to Hitler. On March 22, Göring was among party leaders who heard Hitler vow never to let a "second revolution" occur, of the sort that Röhm had in mind.

Thus the alliance between Himmler and Göring was consummated on April 20, 1934: Göring put on the blue-gray uniform that he had designed for his secret air force, marched into the Prussian Ministry Building with saber at flank at his side, and ceremonially handed over his Gestapo to Heinrich Himmler and the SS. No dullard in power politics, however, Göring retained one special unit of the green-uniformed *Landespolizei* for his own protection. From this tiny seed, in time, would grow the crack "Hermann Göring" Division and Panzer Corps.

It was going to be a long, sultry summer. Göring lingered at Carinhall, perspiring profusely in the Central European heat, bathing frequently in the marble baths, or submerging himself in the cool waters of Carin's lake.

On June 10, he invited forty foreign diplomats out to envy him. Their motorcade drove the fifty miles from Berlin along the Prenzlau highway until they reached the checkpoint that guarded access to his domains. The landscape was dotted with ponds and lakes, around which wound the eight miles of new tarmac road leading to Carinhall itself.

He met them at the southern edge of the Heath at the wheel of his two-seater sports car. He was dressed, according to British ambassador Sir Eric Phipps, in aviator's garb of India rubber, with high boots and a large hunting knife stuck in his belt. Oblivious of the snickering asides, he took a megaphone and launched into a lecture on the elks and other fauna that he had imported from East Prussia and elsewhere. He was particularly proud of his

new bison reservation and attempted to persuade one bison to mate with another, but the bull took one glance at the cow, had reservations of his own, and fled the forty pairs of invited eyes.

Göring met them all again at Carinhall itself, dressed now casually in white with a green leather jerkin. When curious eyes alighted on the shapely blonde, Emmy Sonnemann, he introduced her to them as "my private secretary"—one of his less harmful inexactitudes.

Maneuvering for greater status, Göring had begun acting as Hitler's alternate foreign minister. His three missions to Rome in 1933 had not been wholly successful. Talking to the British ambassador on October 11, 1933, Mussolini had unkindly apostrophized the German general as "a former inmate of an asylum." On November 6 and 7, Göring conducted what proved to be his last talks with the Italian dictator for three years. He had brought a private letter from Hitler and again assured Mussolini that the Reich was willing to declare in writing that Germany did not desire to annex Austria. Mussolini, however, went one stage further, and in March 1934 he signed the Roman Protocols with Austria and her neighbor Hungary, effectively guaranteeing Austria's independence. This was not what Hitler had wanted at all, and he thereafter put Rudolf Hess in sole charge of developing the Austrian affair.

Outflanked here, Göring swiveled his attention to Poland and, later, southeastern Europe (the Balkans), and in both regions he scored personal successes.

The new Polish ambassador in Berlin, Józef Lipski, was a passionate huntsman like himself, and through him Göring cadged an invitation to the Polish State Hunting Ground at Białowieża in March 1934. Enlarging the contacts he made there, he used his dictatorial powers in Prussia to do the Poles little favors, as when a Ukrainian nationalist killed the Polish minister of the interior and fled to Germany in mid-June. Göring arbitrarily loaded the wretched assailant onto the next plane back to Warsaw, an act of dubious legality that won him immediate acclaim from the Poles (and an annual spring visit to Białowieża thereafter until 1938).

He extended this unorthodox diplomatic style to the mineral-rich Balkans, hitherto neglected by both Hitler and the foreign ministry, undertaking in the spring of 1934 the first of a series of spectacular swings through the southeast. He often noised it around that he was conveying special handwritten messages from Hitler, or that he was traveling on Hitler's personal instructions—which flattered these smaller, half-forgotten nations but only dismayed Italy the more, since she regarded the Balkans as an Italian preserve.

Regardless of Italian feelings, on May 15, 1934, General Göring set out with Milch, Korner, Kerl, and Prince Philipp of Hesse on a ten-day "vacation" tour of the southeast. Rather tactlessly, he took along his (still-married) lady friend Emmy Sonnemann, causing scandalized comment that

Goebbels was not slow to call to had announced that the tour was just before takeoff that they were affront that left the Italian welcom Mussolini spluttering with anger.

To the delight of the Hung instead, allegedly for technical reasons" caused him to dally like to see the king (who was Göring succeeded in convincing and the Aegean Sea that Nazi (mann Göring) would not abandon

It was altogether an odd episode state visit to Rome in three weeks on Germany, and he confidential that Herr Göring would not be the trip. It was a calculated affair Duce's personal emissary to the hardest since 1924 at German certainly not easy, and attracting

Göring, anxious to demonstrate number-two man in the Reich, a macabre ceremony at Carinhall

It was June 20, 1934, the day of Carin's remains in the lakeside pharaohs' wives can have been buried on train bore the pewter sarcophagus ferry to the railroad station where awaited her arrival. At Göring's command whole route were cast into deep mud at attention on their local railroad the bridges, saluting and showering slowly passed, and thousands of homage to their prime minister's

The scene at Carinhall itself was the thin summer mists steaming slowly ranks of soldiers standing in motion funeral music throbbed and droned

Göring had invited Carin's relatives and politicians, to witness this memorial was to her memory. To the blare answering bellows of Hermann's dozen strong men groaned and strided into the granite mausoleum. After

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Goebbels was not slow to call to Hitler's attention. Even less tactfully, Göring had announced that the tour was to begin with Rome, then smugly announced just before takeoff that they would not be calling there after all, a calculated affront that left the Italian welcoming party empty-handed at the airport and Mussolini spluttering with anger.

To the delight of the Hungarians, Göring stopped briefly at Budapest instead, allegedly for technical reasons. On the sixteenth, further "technical reasons" caused him to dally in Belgrade, where he hinted that he would like to see the king (who was, however, genuinely absent). In ten days Göring succeeded in convincing all of southeastern Europe as far as Greece and the Aegean Sea that Nazi Germany (highly visibly personified by Hermann Göring) would not abandon them to Mussolini's Italy.

It was altogether an odd episode, for Hitler was due to pay his own first state visit to Rome in three weeks' time. Mussolini unleashed his newspapers on Germany, and he confidentially indicated to the Foreign Ministry in Berlin that Herr Göring would not be made welcome if he accompanied Hitler on the trip. It was a calculated affront, since Göring had, as Dr. Renzetti, the Duce's personal emissary to the Nazis, pointed out on the fourteenth, labored hardest since 1924 at German-Italian relations, "in conditions that were certainly not easy, and attracting the fury of many politicians."

Göring, anxious to demonstrate that his position had not slipped as the number-two man in the Reich, secured the Führer's personal attendance at a macabre ceremony at Carinhall immediately upon his return from Italy.

It was June 20, 1934, the day that Göring had appointed for the reburial of Carin's remains in the lakeside mausoleum he had built for her. Few pharaohs' wives can have been buried with more solemn ceremony. A special train bore the pewter sarcophagus across northern Prussia from the Swedish ferry to the railroad station where Göring and Hitler, both hatless and somber, awaited her arrival. At Göring's command, towns and cities along the train's whole route were cast into deep mourning. Teenage Hitler Youth units stood at attention on their local railroad platforms, the League of Maidens lined the bridges, saluting and showering flowers; flags were dipped as the train slowly passed, and thousands of women lined the railroad tracks to pay homage to their prime minister's long-dead wife.

The scene at Carinhall itself was like the setting for a Bayreuth opera—the thin summer mists steaming slowly off the still waters of the lake, the ranks of soldiers standing in motionless array, while Richard Wagner's rich funeral music throbbed and droned among the hazed conifers.

Göring had invited Carin's relatives, along with hundreds of diplomats and politicians, to witness this moving evidence of how beholden he still was to her memory. To the blare of hunting horns and trumpets and the answering bellows of Hermann's future trophies grazing in the forests, a dozen strong men groaned and strained to manhandle the sarcophagus down into the granite mausoleum. Afterward, Göring led Hitler down the steps

alone. Both men had known Carin well, both were saddened that she had not lived to see the National Socialists triumphant. Göring's most intimate accomplices—Himmler and Körner—looked on. With him these two men were to become, in Darré's compelling phrase, the "managers" of the coming Night of the Long Knives.

In a secret meeting in the great hall of Carinhall, surrounded by the hunting trophies and Gothic furniture that he had already begun to assemble, Göring now persuaded Hitler to act against Ernst Röhm and the SA before it was too late. As a thousand hands slapped rifle butts in chiseled unison outside, and heels slammed together in salute, Göring escorted the Führer to his car. "The first revolution," he declared at the Prussian State Council's meeting the next day, June 21, "was begun by the Führer. If the Führer desires a second revolution, he will find us ready and waiting. If not, then we are equally ready and willing to act against any man who dares lift his hand against the Führer's will."

Scene
The confrontation with Röhm and the SA had drawn steadily closer. Heinrich Himmler was now a regular caller at Göring's villa in Leipziger Strasse. Göring applied Körner and the Forschungsamt to keeping Röhm under close surveillance. Meanwhile he drew up his own "hit list" for the day of reckoning, and he gave that to Körner for safekeeping. In his red linen-bound pocket diary Göring jotted sinister reminders: "Krausser [SA Gruppenführer Fritz von Krausser] on Röhm's staff. Extreme caution. Agitating particularly against me."

He had ordered the FA to tap the phones of other SA leaders, rebellious figures on the staff of Franz von Papen (still, in name, Hitler's vice-chancellor) and the former chancellor General von Schleicher. The FA, already routinely wiretapping French diplomats, had evidently found them conniving with Schleicher and his former military assistant Major General Ferdinand von Bredow, because Joachim von Ribbentrop, head of the party's private "Foreign Office," remarked to an aide as they visited Paris at this time, "The time has come to deal with them." (The aide was an anti-Nazi. He tipped off his friend, Deputy Foreign Minister Bernhard von Bülow, that Bredow and Schleicher were under Göring's surveillance. The naïve von Bülow immediately telephoned to warn them—and thus von Bülow's name too went onto a "hit list.")

For several more days the Berlin ministries and clubs crackled with the static electricity of rumor and counter-rumor. On June 23, the army instructed lower echelons to provide guns and transport to the SS for any coming operation against the SA. Göring, Himmler, and Heydrich instructed their police forces to go onto the alert.

Göring went about his affairs seemingly unconcerned. His private photo album shows him with Bodenschatz and Julius Streicher at a children's party at Dinkelsbühl on June 24, then holidaying briefly on the island of Sylt, where Emmy had a summer house, on the twenty-sixth. On the twenty-

seventh, a photographer snap the twenty-eighth, through the who had flown to Essen to a Terboven, the gauleiter and Viktor Lutze, who he intended to "pelled" Röhm from it. By then he knew of people who had seen good. Hitler decided on one deputy, SA-Gruppenführer Fri to try and dispose of all these

Then the evidence against a telephone call from Himmler room taking Göring and Lutze into the room, having just found evidence that seemed to clinch Milch that the evidence consisted and from surviving members of called Rudolf Popp later disclosed provided the Brown Pages, into commanders to meet him at a "I've seen enough," announce an example of them."

He flew to Munich that same Berlin with Körner immediately strike in Prussia, as soon as "hummingbird"—to strike again

Not without prudent forethought posing Berlin villa in the center "You go in through the entrance" and after being marched by so sentries find yourself in a garden his house stands." Here Göring prepare the massacre that was the Night of the Long Knives. It was like Oscar Night prizes in their gift.

The lists were taken out of the made—here an additional "non one list to a senior Gestapo office with a letter ordering SS-Gruppenführer, southeast" and one of the sheathed thugs—to stand by to

On Göring's orders Milch will secret air-force training at Jüterbo to guard the three airports and the

What happened on the morning of June 30, 1934, in Bavaria is history. Hitler had moved the SS Leibstandarte "Adolf Hitler," an elite unit of thirteen hundred men, to Bavaria, planning to rush them in the trucks provided by the regular army to Bad Wiessee, where Röhm and his henchmen were understood to have converged on an inn. From Berlin, Göring and Himmler prodded and cajoled their irresolute Führer along, by telephone, telegram, and courier. Wilhelm Brückner, Hitler's slow-witted but devoted adjutant, recalled later that their messages painted the crisis in "increasingly dark hues." By the time Hitler's plane landed at Munich, around 3:30 A.M., the word was that hundreds of Röhm's men had spent the early hours rampaging mindlessly around the city. Hitler decided to go on ahead to Bad Wiessee and have it out with Röhm then and there.

In Berlin, the whole area around Göring's villa had been barricaded and sandbagged by his troops. His personal Landespolizei-Gruppe "General Göring" were manning machine-gun positions in the streets.

At 8:00 A.M. Goebbels phoned from Munich with the code word, "*Kolibri*." For a moment Göring's actions were guided by compassion. He sent for his trusty henchmen, the "murder managers," but he also offered sanctuary to a little cluster of old friends and foes toward whom he bore no ill will. Wilhelm Frick was one—now Reich minister of the interior; he slunk into the villa that morning, "as pale as a vomited-up pea," as Göring uncharitably recalled. He also feared for Franz von Papen's safety; he had crossed the vice-chancellor's name off one "hit list," but sensing ill omens Göring ordered Karl Bodenschatz to summon Papen "on a matter of extreme state urgency." Failing to grasp the very real danger he was in, Papen dawdled at his office, and at 8:45 A.M. Göring had to phone him himself, telling him to come to the villa at once.

In his room [related Papen to a British officer in 1945] I meet him and Himmler. "Something very grave is happening in Munich," he says. "A revolution has broken out. The Führer has left me in complete charge here in Berlin."

"Herr Göring, I want to know what's going on—what counter-measures we're taking."

"I can't go into detail. Fighting has broken out."

"Then mobilize the army!"

"That has been done."

Papen snapped to Göring that he was Hitler's deputy, and not Göring.

"You'll have to leave me alone now," said Göring, indicating that their interview was at an end. "My head's bursting. We've got to see how we can crush this thing."

He whispered something to Himmler, who got up and left. As a *Landes-*

polizei officer came in to escort [him] shouting over a phone somewhere

All over Prussia, Göring's men that raided Berlin's SA headquarters

"I asked," he would relate, "was denied it, but then I glanced out our trucks being loaded with machine guns. He never tired of relating this."

I went to that SA captain on?" "Why no, Herr Politz? He kept the pistol for which you kept an arsenal in the cellar big Prussian police force!"

"In a case like that," Göring boomed, "the thing to do: Execute!"

And execute they did. All day long he was big enough to stage an Indian durbar with a massive chunk of oak four inches thick upholstered in cerise velvet, Göring's enemies. He kept President Hindenburg on the phone that there had been a problem with Schleicher's chancellor. Thronging through the unashamed relief at the destruction of the generals Frisch and Reichenau; the and Körner, and Staatssekretär Müller. Airfield, where he was taking a flying visit, Blomberg himself appeared, handsomely assured him that Röhm and Schleicher were

General von Schleicher was, how the *Landespolizei* to deal with the general five assassins in plain clothes had burst into the general's office. They had burst to death in a hail of bullets—five cartridge cases. They had then bashed, Göring instructed his staff to take the tube into his private office, how scotched that plan. Using the dead general's FA was tapping) an overzealous desire for justice (which was still in non-Nazi) Schleicher has been shot in a political stride for an instant, Göring could

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t, who got up and left. As a Landes-

polizei officer came in to escort Papen home, Papen heard Himmler's voice shouting over a phone somewhere nearby, "You can go in now!"

All over Prussia, Göring's men were "going in." He himself led the party that raided Berlin's SA headquarters in Wilhelm Strasse.

"I asked," he would relate, "whether they had got arms. Their commander denied it, but then I glanced out of the window and saw with my own eyes our trucks being loaded with machine guns."

He never tired of relating this episode, although the details varied:

I went to that SA captain and said, "Do you have any weapons?" "Why no, *Herr Polizeichef*," the swine says. "None except the pistol for which you gave me a permit!" Then I found an arsenal in the cellar bigger than the whole armament of the Prussian police force!

"In a case like that," Göring boasted, smiling broadly, "there was only thing to do: Execute!"

And execute they did. All day long from his office at his villa—a chamber, big enough to stage an Indian durbar—lolling behind a fifteen-foot table, a massive chunk of oak four inches thick, in an outside gold-trimmed chair upholstered in cerise velvet, Göring presided over the liquidation of his enemies. He kept President Hindenburg *au courant* all day, shouting into the phone that there had been a plot to make Röhm defense minister and Schleicher chancellor. Thronging through Göring's palatial salons, displaying unashamed relief at the destruction of the SA, were the monocled army generals Fritsch and Reichenau; the air-force chief of staff, Wever; Himmler and Körner, and Staatssekretär Milch, who had hurried over from Staaken Airfield, where he was taking a flying lesson. Once or twice Defense Minister Blomberg himself appeared, handsome, upright, but unsmiling. Göring assured him that Röhm and Schleicher were to be arrested and tried for treason.

General von Schleicher was, however, already dead. Göring had sent his *Landespolizei* to deal with the general—but an unidentified "hit squad" of five assassins in plain clothes had beaten the green-uniformed police to it. They had burst into the general's Babelsberg villa at midday and shot the general to death in a hail of bullets—seven bullet wounds were found, and five cartridge cases. They had then slain the general's wife as well. Unabashed, Göring instructed his staff to describe the killing as a suicide. Down the tube into his private office, however, there rattled an FA intercept that scotched that plan. Using the dead general's own desk telephone (which the FA was tapping) an overzealous detective had reported to the ministry of justice (which was still in non-Nazi hands): "Former Reich Chancellor von Schleicher has been shot in a political assassination." Without faltering in his stride for an instant, Göring coolly phoned Franz Gürtner, the justice

minister, and advised him that he planned to issue a wholly different official version—that General von Schleicher had been “shot resisting arrest.” Having propagated this fiction, Göring characteristically came to believe it, and would repeat it with wide-eyed innocence until the end of his life (although the truth is clear from the ministry files, beyond peradventure).

Throughout that Saturday, June 30, 1934, the lists shortened, the killings went on. Thirty men headed by three of Heydrich's Gestapo officers burst into the absent Papen's offices looking for his press chief, Herbert von Bose (who had been overheard, probably by the FA, plotting against the regime). They led him into an empty conference room, and his appalled colleagues heard ten shots fired in rapid succession, followed by an eleventh some moments later.

What does the board meeting of a Nazi “Murder, Inc.” look like? Milch saw it in session that afternoon and described it to this author: Himmler was slowly reeling off names from sweaty and tattered lists. Göring and Reichenau, the army's deputy chief of staff, were nodding or shaking their heads. Körner was carrying their duly considered “nominations” outside—with the addition of one ominous word, *Vollzugsmeldung* (“Report back!”). Rudolf Diels: Göring shook his head; Bernhard von Bülow: He vetoed that name as well. Somebody in this all-male company jested that they should nominate Baroness Viktoria von Dirksen while they could. At the mention of this, one of the more tedious females around the Führer, everybody heaved with nervous laughter.

It is not hard to recognize the “Oscars” that Göring himself awarded, or at least nodded to. Who else had any score to settle with Erich Klausener, whom Göring had sacked as head of the Prussian Police Department in February 1933? Who, other than Göring, would have ordered the pickax murder of seventy-one-year-old ex-dictator Gustav von Kahr and Munich journalist Fritz Gerlich? Kahr had betrayed the 1923 beer hall putsch; Gerlich had claimed that Göring broke his word of honor to escape: Göring had sued him for libel and lost. Now both those old scores were settled, permanently.

At 10:00 P.M. the day's bloody business came to an end. Himmler nonchalantly ordered all SS documents relating to the purge destroyed. Göring took Milch and Körner out to Tempelhof Airport in his black Mercedes saloon, to await Hitler's return from Bavaria. As they waited, a Junkers 52 from Bremen touched down, and Karl Ernst, the Berlin SA commander, was led in manacles out of its corrugated fuselage. He had been aboard a ship about to sail from Bremen. Years later, still incorrigible, Göring would continue to maintain that Ernst had been “trying to abscond with eighty thousand Reichsmarks.” In truth, the unfortunate man had just set out on a belated honeymoon voyage with his wife. Now the baffled SA Gruppenführer was hustled away to a brief and merciless ceremony at Göring's old military academy at Lichtenfelde. Facing an SS firing squad was not a good start to anybody's honeymoon.

Hitler's plane landed, and nervously complimented Göring picked air-force troops draw Luftwaffe uniform. “The me

At the Chancellery he told all Röhm's senior henchmen for old times' sake. Göring Sunday, July 1, he and Himmler to its ruthless and logical conclusion that Sunday afternoon, he four Once, Hitler insisted on being Krausser (he had consulted the fore). Too late—on Göring's Lichtenfelde a few hours earlier from a leisurely sporting after the argument was over and Röhm in prison cell.

Eighty-four people were known course,” Göring airily conceals mistakes were made.” There gunned down in mistake for Walter Le Mérite holder Daniel Gerth, lieutenant was driven off, like up before the SS firing squad shot an hour later.

Tabula rasa, a clean sweep. It dawned only slowly on their duped their Führer completely was present as Himmler read a grief at some of the victims' names.

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Hitler's plane landed, and he emerged, deathly pale and grim-faced. He
nervously complimented Göring on the honor guard, of four hundred hand-
picked air-force troops drawn up on the tarmac, wearing their still-secret
Luftwaffe uniform. "The men are a good racial selection," he commented.

At the Chancellery he told Göring that he had ordered the execution of
all Röhm's senior henchmen but proposed to spare his longtime friend Röhm,
for old times' sake. Göring gagged on this sentimentality. All the next day,
Sunday, July 1, he and Himmler badgered Hitler to carry through the purge
to its ruthless and logical conclusion. When Darré arrived at Göring's ministry
that Sunday afternoon, he found Göring and Himmler still arguing with Hitler.
Once, Hitler insisted on being put through by phone to Röhm's former deputy,
Krausser (he had consulted this distinguished cavalry officer two nights be-
fore). Too late—on Göring's orders, Krausser had received his "Oscar" at
Lichterfelde a few hours earlier. By the time Milch arrived at the ministry,
from a leisurely sporting afternoon spent at Berlin's Karlsruh racetrack,
the argument was over and Röhm too had been shot to death in his Munich
prison cell.

Eighty-four people were known to have been liquidated in the purge. "Of
course," Göring airily conceded later, "in the general excitement some
mistakes were made." There was the unknown musician Willi Schmidt,
gunned down in mistake for Willi Schmid. And there was the air-force Pour
le Mérite holder Daniel Gerth, on whom Göring took compassion. This SA
lieutenant was driven off, like all the others, to Lichterfelde . . . propped
up before the SS firing squad . . . reprieved on Göring's orders . . . then
shot an hour later.

Tabula rasa, a clean sweep. Hitler was out of his league in such company.
It dawned only slowly on their private staffs that Göring and Himmler had
duped their Führer completely, in order to settle private scores. Brückner
was present as Himmler read out the final tally. Hitler was speechless with
grief at some of the victims' names.

With his accumulated enemies thus largely neutralized, Göring recom-
mended that the killings should stop. He would later suggest that he had to
plead with Hitler all that Sunday:

Finally I hurried around to the Führer and begged him to put an
end to the shootings, as there was a danger of the thing getting
out of hand. The executions then halted, even though this meant
that two of the Führer's worst enemies—[Werner] von Alvens-
leben and [Dr. Leon Count] von Moulin-Eckart [Röhm's adjutant]
escaped with their lives.

A remorseful Hitler, bilious after the bloodletting, ordered compensation
paid for the "mistakes" and pensions for all next-of-kin. As for Göring, his
gargantuan appetite was unaffected. On Monday evening he organized a

He had developed the ego of a
requiring no less. ~~about the~~ Developed
spectrum of snobbery. sub hant

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After that each was afraid
of the other

7 plan

celebratory crab feast and invited his fellow "managers" Blomberg, Himmler, Körner, and Milch to crack claws with him. A telegram came from the aged president, Hindenburg, congratulating him on his "energetic and victorious action," while a more chastened letter arrived from Franz von Papen, still believing himself under house arrest. Göring had quite forgotten him, and telephoned effusive apologies. "So sorry," he said. "Big misunderstanding. I only meant you to be given a guard for Saturday evening, until you were out of danger." (In Bucharest nine years later Papen would chance upon the Gestapo man assigned to assassinate him in 1934—"Göring prevented it," the man grumbled.)

By that odd inversion of public ethics that characterized the decade, the National Socialist regime emerged from the Night of Long Knives with its domestic popularity enhanced. Göring and Himmler would henceforth collaborate with a verve born of prudence and mutual respect.

By way of reward Göring invited the Gestapo to celebrate at his expense at the Hubertusstock, the old imperial hunting lodge around which Carinhall was taking shape, on July 7. A whole page of photographs in his private album shows him surrounded by Heydrich's staff, signing autographs for eager hands. Busloads of informers, jailers, and lawyers, with their female secretaries and girl friends frisking at their sides, debauched into the special beer garden that Göring jovially erected for them at Carinhall. But this was not Otto Horcher's gourmet restaurant, nor were these the dignified, middle-aged veterans of the Richthofen Squadron. The celebration deteriorated into an orgy. Across the lake, to Carin's silent mausoleum, drifted drunken cheers and the sound of breaking glass and furniture.

Göring may well have feared what Carin would have thought of his new friends—at any rate he discouraged future sightseeing excursions by Himmler's Gestapo to his hallowed heath. When he rewarded the Gestapo in the future—for instance, after what he called "an exceptionally important investigation" in 1942—he would send over an envelope containing one hundred thousand marks to be distributed to "particularly meritorious" officials.

OPEN I TREASI

four murders committed in the J as day. . . . After all, there ha whole point was to act fast, as

He resumed his posture of fe of the Malign. When Austrian N down Chancellor Engelbert Dol persuaded Hitler to dismiss the von Papen to Vienna as his pers one stone.

Then he sent for Theo Cronen slunk in, with a pistol conceale father deposited in a safe place :

Göring rose to his feet. "I mig a mocking bow. "You were to b allowed to return to his job wi November 1942.)

Those who knew Göring believ

von der Goltz met him one evening in Pomerania and tackled Göring—who had a farcical look—about the notorious lawyer Wilhelm

“Out!” (That is, he was about

Koch was the notorious gauleiter of

“Actually, the Führer wanted to do business... but others spoke up

Joseph
bumped off? Too? Göring drove him could not extract one coherent word. Sonnemann was waiting for them.

bed, to reappear swathed in silence without a word toward his beloved throughout the drive back from Pomerania, coming in Carin's lake, had been obnoxious somehow hurting for this mel-

August 1934, one hundred of Göring's Ministry. Göring marched into a little and announced that the armed forces, as Hindenburg's designated successor to the Constitution, but nobody was given forward and slapped his hand onto the table and read out the words of the new oath,

he went over the defense budget with a total of 10.5 billion marks for it going to the air force. He gave it to Dr. Hjalmar Schacht. “We're complete our armament,” he disclosed and tell Schacht that. He would have

Hitler, Göring decided to attend the of Yugoslavia, as representative of the He played his hand well. Knowing that the Italian Fascists had been behind the made a public declaration that no German favorable comment in Belgrade—and

dismay in Rome. Göring arrived at Belgrade's airport in Lufthansa's imposing new airliner the Hindenburg, and allowed all Yugoslavia to learn that the wreath he brought from the German armed forces was inscribed to the king as “their heroic former enemy.” The local German minister conceded enviously that Göring had stolen the whole show, while his British colleague, Neville Henderson, agreed that Göring had converted Belgrade to the German cause simply by being the only foreign dignitary to use an open car in the funeral procession.

The professional diplomats in the Wilhelm Strasse, who had never valued the Balkans highly, looked down their noses at Göring's methods, but Hitler didn't. By a secret law he now appointed Hermann Göring the second man in the Reich, signing two decrees to this effect on December 7, 1934: One nominated Göring his deputy “in the event that I am impeded in the execution of the offices of Reich president and Reich chancellor combined in my person”; the other specified Göring as his successor.

After this, Göring's megalomania knew few bounds. Thomas von Kantzow, his stepson, visiting him that Christmas at the Reichstag speaker's palace, heard about all the new buildings Göring was planning and warned him he was well on the way to becoming another King Ludwig II of Bavaria—“the mad king who had the idea,” as Thomas noted in his diary on December 23, “of building one castle after another.”

Hermann [he added] has already rebuilt the speaker's palace. The hall we were in before is now completely different. He went to the window and pointed to the Reichstag Building, and said he intends to build an Air Ministry five times as big, where airplanes can land and take off from the roof.

In January 1935 he laid the cornerstone of the new Air Ministry. It would occupy a four-hundred-thousand-square-foot site off the Leipziger Strasse. Hitler personally checked each façade in plaster miniature. Its central longitudinal block and side wings would house four thousand bureaucrats and officers in its twenty-eight hundred rooms. Throughout 1935 the country's finest architects and sculptors chiseled at heroic reliefs with motifs like “Flag Company,” designed by Professor Arnold Waldschmidt of the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts. The Berliners made smug comments about this extravagance—“Pure and simple, and hang the expense!” was one; “just humble gold” was another.

Göring also became the leader in high society. His annual ball became the event of the winter season. But when the first was held, on January 11, 1935, in his State Opera House on Unter den Linden, Nazi purists wrinkled their noses. “Göring's Opera Ball,” sneered Darré in his diary. “Wrong. The old Court Ball—do we have to put on airs like this?”

Those were the days when the Nazis were riding high. In Berlin Leni

* *Hindenburg was a master of the flamboyant*

Riefenstahl's spine-chilling film of the party rally, *Triumph of the Will*, was packing movie theaters. A thrill of military awakening was surging through the Reich. "We have a vital task before us," Blomberg told fellow generals one day after Göring's winter ball. "For the moment we are just erecting the scaffolding." Everybody understood that. Milch's papers show him building aircraft factories and aircraft-engine factories, expanding pilot training; commissioning synthetic-rubber and gasoline plants, and planning smoke-screens for the Ruhr. Addressing gauleiters early in 1935, Göring bragged that in two years he had turned a once-defenseless country into a major power. "Germany," he concluded, "will possess by this coming autumn the most powerful air fleet in the world." Soon they could start doing deals with their neighbors. Milch learned the planning figures and jotted them in his diary: "[German] navy: thirty-five percent of the British. Air: one hundred percent, assuming British Air Force equals French. We are banking on British—against Russia."

That was Hitler's ultimate intention, to expand northeastward, with Poland's connivance, into Soviet territories. He gave to Göring the job of wooing the Polish government. When Marshal Józef Piłsudski, the Polish dictator, invited Göring to hunt wolves at Białowieża later that January, Hitler briefed him in secret on the twenty-fifth to tell his hosts that Germany was

willing to recognize by treaty that the [Polish] Corridor question was not a bone of contention between our two countries. . . . Germany can expand, in collusion with Poland, to the east: Poland would have the Ukraine as its sphere of interest, and Germany the northeast.

In quiet intervals during the four days of strenuous hunting in Poland, Göring outlined this cynical German offer. Praising Poland's "strength and dynamic force," he scoffed at any notion that Hitler might ever do a deal with Stalin at Poland's expense. "A common German-Russian frontier," he assured the Poles, "would be highly dangerous to Germany."

Piłsudski, however, demanded a German guarantee of noninterference with Danzig—which he did not get—before he would agree to any summit meeting with Hitler.

Neither Hitler nor Göring would ever abandon these long-term strategic aims. After one internal conference in the Behren Strasse Air Ministry Building, ex-naval aviator Friedrich Christiansen confided to his fellow officers, raking one hand across the map of Central Europe, that Hitler had plans to expand in 1938 eastward into Galicia and the Ukraine. "We must be so powerful by then," said Christiansen, "that nobody dares to oppose us. We'll square things with Britain—they'll give us a free hand in the east, and in return we'll drop our claim to our former colonies." Russia would just disintegrate, Hitler had said. "And then," Christiansen continued, his

hand sweeping over all the court of all of these too."

The new secret German Air Force nobleman brought to him by the that yes, he had built an air force should call little." A few days later Group Captain Frank Don: By "I bombers. It was a shameless exchange chair.

"There will be calls for an in

"I should welcome any increase to the interpreter's recollection. by side to save Europe from cor

He bade the attaché a court Captain!" he said.

At about the same time Hitler drew to make an honest woman of Emmy come through. One day in February in Weimar, and sent her on ahead to open before getting there. He said: The Führer will be our witness."

He announced her change of schedule for a dinner party on March 15, held in villa. Sir Eric Phipps was among were the Joseph Goebbels and diplomatic corps. "I am only my Lady Phipps, "at the behest of bachelors among us Nazi high-up bachelor commander in chief, Baw with his monocle palely reflecting ing above the invisible string orchestra travagances in the villa, like the 15 and after dinner he showed off the the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum to grin, "but I threatened to take over here first thing in the morning watch two "stag movies"—the film Göring briefly discovered by the camera and brandishing a harpoon in the

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hand sweeping over all the countries north of the Black Sea, "we'll inherit all of these too."

The new secret German Air Force was cautiously unveiled. To an English nobleman brought to him by the British air attaché, Göring blandly admitted that yes, he had built an air force. "One," he added flirtatiously, "that I should call little." A few days later he enlarged on that concept to the attaché, Group Captain Frank Don: By "little," he meant a first line of fifteen hundred bombers. It was a shameless exaggeration, but the officer nearly fell off his chair.

"There will be calls for an increase in the RAF," he said.

"I should welcome any increase," responded Göring evenly, according to the interpreter's recollection. "In the next war we shall be fighting side by side to save Europe from communism."

He bade the attaché a courteous good-bye. "Mark my words, Group Captain!" he said.

At about the same time Hitler dropped broad hints that it was time for Göring to make an honest woman of Emmy Sonnemann, whose divorce had now come through. One day in February 1935 Göring suggested a quiet weekend in Weimar, and sent her on ahead with a note, which he instructed her not to open before getting there. He had written: "Will you marry me at Easter? The Führer will be our witness."

He announced her change of status from "private secretary" at a "little" dinner party on March 15, held in the white marble dining hall of his rebuilt villa. Sir Eric Phipps was among the forty guests Göring had invited, as were the Joseph Goebbelses and the Heinrich Himmlers and most of the diplomatic corps. "I am only marrying her," he explained disarmingly to Lady Phipps, "at the behest of the Führer. He feels there are too many bachelors among us Nazi high-ups"—and he glanced across at the army's bachelor commander in chief, Baron von Fritsch, standing alone and frigid with his monocle palely reflecting the illuminated tapestries. His voice booming above the invisible string orchestra, Göring mentioned some of the extravagances in the villa, like the 150-foot swimming pool that he was building; and after dinner he showed off the Old Masters that he had prevailed upon the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum to lend him—"The director did object," he grinned, "but I threatened to take twice as many if these were not brought over here first thing in the morning." After that he invited the guests to watch two "stag movies"—the films showed only stags, apart from a General Göring briefly discovered by the cameras at Carinhall, wearing a leather suit and brandishing a harpoon in the Wotan-style living room.

What he felt for Emmy was probably not physical attraction. At the end of 1935 he would reveal to Staatssekretär Milch his belief that the groin injury had left him impotent. Probably he regarded his blond fiancée as merely another dazzling bauble for his collection.

His lust for precious stones and metals was notorious, and he had begun to adorn himself liberally with jewel-encrusted artifacts. Darré once witnessed him preparing to receive a Balkan minister. The valet brought in a cushion on which twelve rings were arrayed—four red, four blue, four green. "Today," the great man mused, "I am displeased. So we shall wear a deeper hue. But we also desire to show that we are not beyond hope. So we shall wear the green."

His private staff turned a blind eye on these eccentricities, but not those whom he affronted. Schacht would regale friends with the image of Göring in thigh-length boots, leather jerkin, and billowing white sleeves, with a Robin Hood hat and a man-sized spear. "His greed was boundless," he testified, "his lust for jewelry, gold, and silver plate unimaginable." One lady invited to tea found him wearing a toga and jewel-studded sandals, while his fingers were heavy with rings and precious stones, and his lips seemed to have been rouged.

The palace at No. 11a Leipziger Platz in Berlin was a dramatic example of his extravagance. He had purchased from former Crown Prince Wilhelm a large, valuable rug and had to order one of the rooms enlarged to fit it. As this work progressed, he decided on still more modifications until the final bill came to seven hundred thousand Reichsmarks (in addition to the 1933 renovation). The Prussian minister of finance, Johannes Popitz, approved without demur—not for nothing had Göring ordered the Finance Ministry alone preserved after the laws unifying the rest of the Reich. The building was later destroyed, but the architect's plans have survived and show the palace to be a rambling edifice with drinking and smoking rooms, several suites of kitchens, and a den for his pet lions at mezzanine level, while circular dining rooms, conservatories, drawing rooms, ambassadorial reception rooms, and hunting-trophy rooms took up the ground floor, along with Göring's cavernous, colonnaded study.

The same extravagance was evident in his expanding collection of medals. It was Göring who had proposed in the Cabinet (on April 7, 1933) the reintroduction of honors and distinctions: "The Weimar Republic," he argued, "went under precisely because of its dearth of honors and medals." At the time, Hitler agreed with him; but as Germany's misfortunes grew, the Führer's patience would wear thin. Ten years later he would ask Göring's heavy, brilliantined adjutant Dr. Ramon von Ondarza to remove himself from the bunker, loudly calling him "a perfumed sink of corruption"—while fastening his glare on Göring. It was like accusing the house dog of flatulence, while glaring at a guest. But that was a decade hence, and in 1935 the silent-hated phase between the two men had yet to begin.

For the new air force Göring had designed a uniform that was almost as baroque as his palaces. Deciding upon the trinkets of rank, his imagination had run wild, and he ordained that the ceremonial parade uniform of air-

force officers would include two ingly, of much use in modern new general a fine sword, signc corrupt in his own image. Ribal of two starving jungle lions: On and returned to the forest, pair to hang around the Air Ministry got yourself a fine fat-Arsch of

Most dazzling of all the sword to commemorate his marriage Solingen steel was engraved wit ITS COMMANDER on one side, a REICH on the other. The pommel crest; the scabbard was covered

He was a rare bird in the Ber Hitler. He did not even have an ticularly interested in the party, to attain position in the other. At "did not really fit into the party,

On the morning of April 10, 1935 and all Berlin was halted to cele Thirty thousand troops lined the r with narcissus and tulips. Associ wrote to his daughter: "You had t "A visitor to Berlin," echoed the l gallery facing the floodlit marble he had stumbled upon preparator

Insensible to Nazi party feeling mony (although he granted the Re his sermon). The wedding album him in the cathedral, his postman beside him, his hands clasped in th Göring's hair was neatly smoothe saucer-sized medals covering his cl cathedral, two hundred planes flew by an irreverent Richthofen Squad

At the modest wedding breakfast reporters glimpsed among the 320 and German relatives, princes and gauleiters and manservants. There v fellow "managers" had yearned v before. There was Fritz Thyssen, v

* a take-off on Huxman

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ingly, of much use in modern air-to-air combat. Göring presented to each
new general a fine sword, signed by himself. The generals became rich and
corrupt in his own image. Ribald fighter pilots would tell each other the tale
of two starving jungle lions: One left to seek his fortune in the Reich capital
and returned to the forest, paunchy and licking his chops. "You just have
to hang around the Air Ministry," he growled. "It isn't long before you've
got yourself a fine fat-Arsch of a general to sink your teeth into."

Most dazzling of all the swords was the one that his generals commissioned
to commemorate his marriage to Emmy Sonnemann. The blade of finest
Solingen steel was engraved with the words FROM THE REICH AIR FORCE TO
ITS COMMANDER ON ONE SIDE, AND FAITHFUL TO THE FÜHRER PEOPLE, AND
REICH ON THE OTHER. The pommel featured his Pour le Mérite and the Göring
crest; the scabbard was covered with sharkskin of air-force blue.

He was a rare bird in the Berlin of 1935, and this was his real value to
Hitler. He did not even have any function in the party. "I was never par-
ticularly interested in the party," he said, "just in the state. I used the one
to attain position in the other. A person of my upbringing," he added loftily,
"did not really fit into the party."

On the morning of April 10, 1935, massed bands serenaded the Göring villa,
and all Berlin was halted to celebrate his wedding to Emmy Sonnemann.
Thirty thousand troops lined the route as he drove past in an open car awash
with narcissus and tulips. Associated Press correspondent Louis P. Lochner
wrote to his daughter: "You had the feeling that an emperor was marrying."
"A visitor to Berlin," echoed the British ambassador, sitting in the diplomatic
gallery facing the floodlit marble altar, "might well have thought . . . that
he had stumbled upon preparations for a royal wedding."

Insensible to Nazi party feelings, Göring had insisted on a religious cere-
mony (although he granted the Reich bishop, Müller, only five minutes for
his sermon). The wedding album shows Hitler standing bareheaded behind
him in the cathedral, his postman's hat nonchalantly upended on the floor
beside him, his hands clasped in their familiar station below his belt-buckle.
Göring's hair was neatly smoothed back, a broad sash dividing the areas of
saucer-sized medals covering his chest. As the newlyweds emerged from the
cathedral, two hundred planes flew overhead, followed by two storks released
by an irreverent Richthofen Squadron veteran.

At the modest wedding breakfast at the Kaiserhof Hotel the world's society
reporters glimpsed among the 320 friends and supplicants, Swedish in-laws
and German relatives, princes and princesses, field marshals and lieutenants,
gauleiters and manservants. There was Viktoria von Dirksen, whom Göring's
fellow "managers" had yearned to nominate for extermination ten months
before. There was Fritz Thyssen, whom he would shortly commit to prison

for high treason, and Rudolf Hess, who would enter upon forty-six years of incarceration just as Thyssen was leaving it in 1941. After the feast Göring drove out to Carinhall and vanished into the lakeside mausoleum for an hour.

The climax [wrote correspondent Lochner to his daughter] was yet in store for me. When I arrived at the palace of the Minister-Präsident [Göring, the next day], I found, in the first place, that this attractive building had once again been rebuilt to suit Hermann's by no means cheap taste. . . . He has had a modern Wurlitzer organ built in so that he can have his own talks at his home and have an organist play for the overture. . . .

Then Hermann himself turned up. "Gentlemen," he said, "I have asked you to come here in order that I may show you the gifts my people have given me."

They filled two rooms, including a Lenbach portrait of Bismarck from Hitler and a solid-silver schooner from the City of Hamburg, which Emmy had often ogled on school trips to the City Hall. Göring was unlikely to be troubled by the ethics of it all. He was forty-two, and the treasure-houses of the Reich were opening to him. The Reichsbank had given him the famous Breslau Castle dining service in Royal porcelain (Göring's office had the effrontery to ask later for two candelabra missing from the inventory). The Reich Board of Guilds had furnished an exquisite drawing room for the Görings. Czar Boris of Bulgaria had given a medal to Hermann and a sapphire bracelet to Emmy. Kings and emperors, ambassadors and ministers, the Labor Front and chambers of commerce—all had deemed it prudent to bestow gifts on him.

In Germany his popularity was zooming. "Göring," reflected Louis Lochner, "is a type of fellow whom one cannot be mad at. His vanity is so obvious and his love of pomp so naïve that one simply laughs, and lets it go at that." Göring had easily won over the ambassadors who found the more radical Nazis unpalatable: André François-Poncet, the papal nuncio, and Phipps all found him a good conversationalist and approachable in matters that went against the Nazi grain. The Polish ambassador, Lipski, and Göring were now as thick as thieves. (Göring, charged by Hitler to take special care of German-Polish affairs as from April 20, had invited Lipski to a shoot that month and once more hinted that Poland should join an alliance against the Soviet Union.) Roosevelt's urbane roving ambassador, William C. Bullitt, took a strong dislike to the general, however, calling him "quite the most unpleasant representative of a nation that I have ever laid eyes on."

Unofficial British visitors came to the same conclusion. Learning that the Prince of Wales—shortly to become King Edward VIII—had urged closer links between the British Legion and comparable German ex-servicemen's organizations, Göring cabled him from Berchtesgaden: "As a front-line sol-

dier I thank Your Royal Highness and chivalrous words . . . Withmann Göring." He received the Legion delegation did come to N impressed by Adolf Hitler and talked to them only about himself Hawes, RN, who had been naval and pomposity."

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and chivalrous words . . . With humble duty to Your Royal Highness, Her-
mann Göring." He received the prince's "warm thanks," but when a British
Legion delegation did come to Nazi Germany that July, they were profoundly
impressed by Adolf Hitler and not at all by Göring. Out at Carinhall he
talked to them only about himself. "He can be described," reported Captain
Hawes, RN, who had been naval attaché in Berlin, "as a mountain of egotism
and pomposity."

*D.T. The greed was equal to
a toxin that could enter
the ego and produce
prodigious swelling.*

13

GETTING READY IN
FOUR YEARS

By the mid-thirties the authority of Hermann Göring was universally respected within the Reich. The gauleiters—Hitler's personal lieutenants throughout the Reich—and middle-ranking party officials saw him as a force to be reckoned with—as the “Man of Iron” (*der Eiserne*) upon whom their Führer relied. The people called him “Hermann,” and were indifferent to the murderous aura about him. His Falstaffian corpulence, his gold braid, his stylish airs, enhanced his popularity. When the Reich adopted the swastika as its official flag, General Göring brought forth his own personal standard—what the British embassy loftily termed “an heraldic salad” with only the tiniest Nazi swastika visible in each corner, and the main field dominated by the Prussian eagle with wings spread and his own Pour le Mérite. The public loved it. “Out front,” ran one popular jingle, “he’s tinsel and medals aflutter. At bottom he’s fatter and fatter and fatter.”

There were, of course, some critics. There was the Protestant Vicar Schulze of Beiersdorf, who publicly scoffed at “this dandy” having his wedding solemnized by the “parson in chief” Müller. Foolishly, as it turned out, Göring had the vicar prosecuted. The defense called Martin Niemöller, who testified that Göring himself had called Müller the “parson in chief” in

December 1934, and found it his beliefs, moreover, Göring had a superstition about Jesus of Nazareth and abandoned the case against the vicar.

His wedding to Emmy aroused a storm of protest at the cost of the nuptials “other than true Aryan.” But Hitler insisted and required that she be addressed as “the ruthless prosecution” of every enemy. Göring warned assize judges in the state were systematically spurned the minister's wife and untrue alleys from a previous marriage to a non-Aryan interior, and Göring on November 1934 had got off with a five-month prison term. “five years would have been more”

It does seem that he was covered by Milch that Emmy's past was not photographs. The official genealogy published in 1936 would reveal Carl mention whatever of Emmy's. So all of them untrue. “Since the day I was shot,” Sir Eric Phipps informed me, I am told, unable to have children.

Göring accepted that this was telling Madame François-Poncet a godsend in troubled times. What might become of his children, care for.

Fueled by the hormone imbalance induced, his body had become a caricature. Commissioning a home for Göring's then-forthcoming first order the weavers to allow at least

This manicured mountain of power for the state funeral of Marshal Foch. Roosevelt's roving ambassador did German tenor playing Siegfried.”

He is [added Bullitt] at least a fly. . . . In an attempt to get he wears two inches of padding carry with him a personal bear are almost as thick as they are

3 READY IN YEARS

By the mid-thirties the authority of Hermann Göring was universally respected within the Reich. The arts throughout the Reich—and middle-class to be reckoned with—as the “Man of the Hour” relied. The people called to the murderous aura about him. His looks, his stylish airs, enhanced his popularity as its official flag, General of the Reich—what the British embassy called the tiniest Nazi swastika visible in the Prussian eagle with its wings. The public loved it. “Out front,” he wore medals a-platter. At bottom he’s fatter

There was the Protestant Vicar Schulze at “this dandy” having his wedding with Müller. Foolishly, as it turned out, he called Martin Niemöller, who called Müller the “parson in chief” in

December 1934, and found it hard to take him seriously; scorning Christian beliefs, moreover, Göring had told Niemöller, “This two-thousand-year-old superstition about Jesus of Nazareth—it’s going to have to go!” Göring abandoned the case against the vicar, and decided to go for Niemöller instead.

His wedding to Emmy aroused a few snide remarks. Joseph Goebbels totted up the cost of the nuptials and brooded over evidence that she was “other than true Aryan.” But Hermann demanded absolute respect for her and required that she be addressed as *Hohe Frau* (My Lady). He insisted on “ruthless prosecution” of every libel on her person. Justice Minister Franz Gürtner warned assize judges in a September 1935 circular that enemies of the state were systematically spreading “spiteful remarks about the prime minister’s wife and untrue allegations about her non-Aryan origin and a previous marriage to a non-Aryan.” Talking with Frick, minister of the interior, and Gürtner on November 15, Göring complained that one offender had got off with a five-month prison sentence. “In my view,” he grumbled, “five years would have been more appropriate.”

It does seem that he was covering something. Years later he confided to Milch that Emmy’s past was not entirely flawless, and he mentioned certain photographs. The official genealogical brochure on Hermann Göring published in 1936 would reveal Carin’s first marriage and divorce, but make no mention whatever of Emmy’s. Salacious stories continued to circulate, not all of them untrue. “Since the abortive putsch in 1923 when he [Göring] was shot,” Sir Eric Phipps informed London in February 1936, “he is, so I am told, unable to have children.”

Göring accepted that this was true but put a good face on his incapacity, telling Madame François-Poncet philosophically that being childless was a godsend in troubled times. While a Goebbels must worry all along what might become of his children, he and Emmy had only themselves to care for.

Fueled by the hormone imbalances that his injury and the morphine had induced, his body had become bloated to a size that invited but defied caricature. Commissioning a homespun woolen garment in September 1942 for Göring’s then-forthcoming fiftieth birthday, Heinrich Himmler would order the weavers to allow at least three times the normal weight of wool.

This manicured mountain of perfumed flab swept into Warsaw’s cathedral for the state funeral of Marshal Pilsudski on May 17, 1935—“late,” as Roosevelt’s roving ambassador described the entrance, “as if he were a German tenor playing Siegfried.”

He is [added Bullitt] at least a yard across the bottom as the crow flies. . . . In an attempt to get his shoulders out as far as his hips he wears two inches of padding extending each one. . . . He must carry with him a personal beauty attendant, as his fingers, which are almost as thick as they are short, carry long, pointed, carefully

on shows every sign of daily

the general's eyes were "popping." "A general ceremony.

to Hitler's plans, because when with Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck at Russia's expense was gone. comparative military weakness, and a Cabinet-level staff conference on

problem at this moment. The are determined by the extents instance, this is our restoration tion of our rearmament is in

sword, one that both Hitler and he the end of 1935 he would have on of these were of a type or quality French or the Polish air forces. If y as a vehicle for Göring's personal e dropped broad hints that he wanted a blank all around and had to wait tion, to (four-star) Colonel General. as started filling, his bluster became e Phipps that although Germany was not want war. "If," he added, "our time to be unobtainable by peaceful late, war seems inevitable." Among suggested a plebiscite be held among oppression of the German minority in the first time on the Nazi strategic now ratified an alliance with Moscow, which also bound Hitler not to station 2, speaking again with Phipps, Göring ch 7, Hitler reciprocated by sending oan Rhineland. This act of temerity caused even Göring, as he admitted at the British embassy, moments of a brilliant coup, but it reinforced a g during the Röhm purge—that his

This was probably the last occasion on which his neighbors could have cheaply forestalled Hitler, but the bluff came off. "I don't think," Milch later wrote, "that either Hitler or Göring were fully aware of just how weak we were, particularly in the Luftwaffe." The air force had three squadrons (*Gruppen*) of fighters—I /JG2 commanded by Major Wieck at Döberitz; II/JG2 at Jüterbog under Major Raitzel (operating the obsolete Arado 65 and Heinkel 51 planes respectively); and Bruno Loerzer's III /JG2, flying Arado 68 biplanes at Bernburg-an-der-Saale. Only one of these squadrons was actually operational, and its guns had not been calibrated. Göring ordered these ancient biplanes to be flown in a circus around the Rhineland airfields, painting fresh insignia on them between each showing to create an illusion of armadas.

Göring knew that a war of imperial conquest in the east would have to be prefaced by years of solid rearmament. Recognizing that imported raw materials like oil, rubber, and iron ore would be the strategic bottlenecks, he had signed a synthetic-gasoline contract with Dr. Carl Krauch of I.G. Farben as early as December 14, 1933, and in the spring of 1935 Hitler gave him control of both the gasoline and the synthetic-rubber production efforts. His profile as the Reich's leading political economist was further enhanced by the specific task that Hitler gave him in August 1935, to arbitrate between Darré and Schacht and the competing interests of agriculture and industry. In the spring of 1936 Göring adopted the title of Hitler's "fuel commissioner," and then went all out to become the Reich's economic overlord.

Ironically, both Blomberg and Schacht gave him the final boost into this impregnable position. On April 3, the defense minister invited Göring to become "inspector general of the German petroleum economy," and on the same date Schacht, anxious to harness Göring's prestige in the party, asked him to accept responsibility for the Reich's foreign-exchange reserves. The result was a secret decree, which Hitler signed the next day, appointing Göring "commissioner for foreign exchange and raw materials."

In this we can see the embryo of the future monolithic Reich agency known as the Four-Year Plan. Both Blomberg and Schacht had ingenuously seen the general as some kind of buxom, popular figurehead to adorn their own offices. But no sooner had Hitler signed that secret decree than the figurehead came alive, clambered on board, and seized the helm. Secret though the decree might be, Göring had it published and, to the chagrin of the other ministries concerned, he set up a new agency called "Prime Minister General Göring's Raw Materials and Foreign Currency Unit." It will be noted that he had subtly dropped the words "of Prussia" after "Prime Minister."

There is no doubt that if he had the choice, he would have elected to be remembered as the executor of Hitler's Four-Year Plan. Flattered by American financial interrogator Herbert Dubois in 1945, who told him that the plan was regarded as a "very interesting institution," Göring beamed.

"I have never been a businessman," he avowed nostalgically. "And this was something completely new to me. My job was to organize the German economy, and my energy was harnessed to get things started. Over the years I learned a lot. My main task was to safeguard the food supply . . . and to make Germany self-sufficient. The most important items were iron, petroleum, and rubber."

He was innocent of any formal training in economics, but he soon got the hang of things and shortly bragged to Hitler that Dr. Schacht's preserve was not the holy mystery he had made out. Schacht found his sacred economic theories overridden and ignored, and a wall of hostility arose between the two men. In the first of a series of "foreign-exchange" conferences called during May and June of 1936, Göring pushed and inveigled. Schacht, his vanity affronted, refused even to attend the first one, held on the morning of May 12, and forbade any of his departments to help the new "dictator." Schacht, however, found few allies, and he condescended to put in an appearance that afternoon at Göring's "Little Cabinet"—as the Prussian Council of Ministers was becoming known—where he brandished a new Führer directive, which, he claimed, superseded Göring's. But Schacht had to listen impassively (and silently) as his rival preached his new economic gospel—putting exports first to earn foreign currency, then projects designed to meet the Reich's raw-materials needs from its own native resources. The implication was obvious. Göring was hatching a siege economy for a future war, and Schacht did not like it.

The raw-materials bottlenecks would have to be tackled now. On May 26, Göring harangued the biggest names in industry—Flick, Thyssen, and Vöglér among them—about the raw materials likely to prove scarce in wartime. He listed flax, jute, copper, metal scrap, and manganese among them, but identified particularly oil and rubber. "When war comes," he hammered into them, "we won't get a drop of oil from abroad." The same held true for rubber, so they had to expand synthetic-production capacity now. Using arguments of unmistakable bellicosity at a conference on the last day of June, he referred to two major tasks facing them, one being to feed the nation and the other to arm it for when it would be forced to "sally forth for freedom's last fight."

It must have been a novel, even distasteful, experience to be lectured by former Air Force Captain Hermann Göring on basic economics. But these industrialists had no choice. "The special powers given me by the Führer," he importantly explained, "have coerced me into this totally new field of endeavor. It has only recently dawned on me that this is vastly more important than those that the Führer has entrusted to me hitherto."

There were those in later years who called him lazy, and he hated the epithet. His diary would meticulously record the hours at which he rose, worked, relaxed, and retired to bed. While Schacht's civil servants went on summer

furlough, Göring stayed in I rounded himself with his own unobtrusively usurping broad Reich Cabinet now rarely in Bormann specifically remarked Prussian Cabinet in its place, ministers to meetings as he sat

By July 1936 his staff was Air Ministry, and his Prussian agencies regardless of party called Göring the task of reviving Germany. He selected the pragmatic Heinrich Brüning, saying, "I have to handle foreign exchange, Will Löb was temporarily shifted from

Göring's methods were introduction by tax incentives, the products like gasoline and margarine for farmers. He negotiated ten-year trade agreements with Yugoslavia, bartering his (already scarce) foodstuffs; he would negotiate with Finland for tungsten, chromium

The Four-Year Plan idea was summering as usual on the rebuilt villa, had just been heard of his economists, Wilhelm Keppler, controversial divisions of responsibility. Hitler's sanction for a "cautious" rally in September, warning of exchange, and stockpile raw materials. The Führer's ten-day visit to the end of July.

There was one minor interlude consequences for the Luftwaffe on 25, bringing a letter from Spa planes to ferry his insurgent Luftwaffe to enable him to overthrow the far left. Göring concurred, and the next day—was put in charge. The first eighty-six Luftwaffe were the Junkers 52 transport planes.

Upon his return from Bayreuth, most famous aviator, Charles Lindbergh to see anything he wanted and

Still thwarted by Hitler and cheated of that rank, he decided to become Germany's greatest statesman since Bismarck anyway; and when his rivals' botched diplomacy finally resulted in war, Göring began reading for his most difficult role yet—the multiple role of Mightiest Warlord cum Most Honest Broker in All German History.

He was not lazy—this was a popular and hurtful misconception. He just could not be everywhere at once. Inevitably, as he discovered his hidden entrepreneurial skills, his devotion to the new air force declined. After the new Air Ministry Building opened in 1936, he rarely set foot in this imperious structure of concrete, glass, and marble. It was ruled by his stocky, rubicund, businesslike Staatssekretär, Erhard Milch. No lions roamed through Milch's purposefully furnished Berlin apartment, no jewels glittered on his fingers, but it was Milch who signed the orders and made the major decisions—which planes to build, where to erect the factories. Göring was content with the walk-on roles so long as they gave him adequate occasion to wear the full-dress uniform, buckle on the swords, and deliver great orations.

Occasionally Milch perambulated Göring around Rechlin Field to see the latest bomber or fighter prototypes, and it did not escape his watchful master's eye that Milch was the complete master of this domain. Göring began, that spring of 1936, to dismantle some of Milch's sub-empire. When General Wever was killed in a plane crash at Dresden on June 3, Göring overrode Milch's judgment to appoint Kesselring as the new chief of air staff, and he put his old Richthofen Squadron comrade Ernst Udet in charge of the all-important Technical Office as part of the same reshuffle. A balding, high-spirited stunt pilot, Udet was to become the Luftwaffe's nemesis; already heavily dependent on narcotics and alcohol, he was heading for the mental collapse that would kill him five years later. Milch soldiered on, although downright suspicious now of the morals of his master. It had not escaped him that a young nephew, Friedrich Karl Göring, born in 1908, had become a Luftwaffe officer despite examination failures; nor, as he had scrupulously noted in his diary in December 1935, that Göring was boasting that he had not paid the craftsmen who had built his Obersalzberg villa.

How Göring envied Benito Mussolini's marble-columned study at the Palazzo Venezia in Rome—the immense raised desk from behind which the Duce advanced with measured stride to meet him. On first seeing Schacht's poky office late in 1936, upon his resignation as minister of economics, Göring involuntarily cried out, "How can any man have great thoughts sitting in a cubbyhole like this?"

He had converted his Berlin villa into a Renaissance palazzo, knocking four already spacious rooms together to make an office even larger than Mussolini's, so that four sets of French windows opened onto the terrace and gardens outside. The ottomans were elephantine, the carpets were lavish, the hunting trophies that protruded from the walls were beyond compare. Each new visitor was bowled over in turn. The League of Nations high

GE AT
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...ring that pompous wedding,
British ambassador had com-
mented that Hermann Göring
a inglorious career. "I see for
to London, "no higher goal,
scaffold."

s. When Hitler asked Emmy
rtune could fulfill, she replied,
just an actor."

eries of first nights, each more
ain lifted, or so it seemed, it
another costume. With Göring
is one snag, the length of the
one role than he was already
next. He did not consider that
cused by an American in June
t, he would reply, "The jobs
se to get things done. I didn't

old title of Reich chancellor.

Professor Carl J. Burckhardt, entered plans to introduce the anti-Jewish slining upon a Madame Recamier adorned with decorations, his fingers brought in ice packs to apply to ed by a horse. Through the French tionless air-force sentry pacing the immed lawns.

captain who marched in one month tler's new air-force adjutant, found geously large framed photographs ame room in November U.S. Am- ched "like some sort of animated irs so big, he reported to President looked less than his size, "and, as d end of an elephant."

Visited by Sir Robert Vansittart in his popularity, they drive together "I'll wager," he boasted, jabbing hing happens to either of us." ainst certainties," replied Vansittart

or the wittiest jokes about himself, ng one at his expense. After he was aboard the battle cruiser *Deutsch- im* "Reich feeder of the fishes" and string vest to him. Göring told the st. However, a motorist accused of ng's car had been coming the other p his decorations; he was acquitted. ghter pilot would be heard asking if t medal, the Mammutkreuz—"It's our final victory. The Mammoth nds, mounted on self-propelled gun

monds was well known. "I want a e commanded his favorite jeweler. e told his goggling staff, "to learn

adjutant had to carry the pot around dden urge to play with them. It was ic meeting in December 1936 Backe mb along the side of a favorite dagger e, was speaking. His brother-in-law ty, inscribed: "A knife from Eric to

to Hellert & Semat.
with Geschadsmann
Wetter + Low People

Hermann." Count Eric also sent him a dagger specially made for him, with its crossguard and pommel encrusted with jewels, its hilt fluted with ivory, its scabbard richly engraved with hunting scenes (it is now a prized item in an American collection).

The pet lions were a carefully calculated part of this playful, primitive image. Once, while Italy's *crème-de-la-crème* sipped afternoon tea at Carinhall during the 1936 Olympics, he had bounced in with a full-grown lion frisking at his side. The Italian princesses Maria and Mafalda—the latter the wife of Prince Philipp of Hesse—shrieked; the Mussolini sons Vittorio and Bruno displayed pale-faced aplomb; Emmy clucked her tongue and shoed the beast outside.

The fighting in Spain intensified that winter as Russian, German, and Italian reinforcements and weapons poured in. "The situation is very grim," said Göring in conference with his officers early in December 1936. "Russia wants war, Britain is rearming." Germany, he said, had banked on getting four more years of peace, but she might find herself drawn in before then. "In fact, we're in a war already," he pointed out, "though not a shooting one."

The first Luftwaffe operational squadrons had left Greifswald Air Base for Spain in December—Milch had taken the salute. Göring was now seriously worried about the slender strength of his air force. With Udet—not, it will be noticed, Milch—he toured the aircraft factories and delivered a pep talk to their bosses on February 20, 1937. That month Göring thoughtlessly scrapped Germany's only big bomber projects to make way for more smaller planes. "The Führer," said Göring, when Milch found out in April, "does not ask how big my bombers are but how many I have."

"Göring," remarked Milch later, "took only sporadic interest."

During conferences, the general was seen to take copious notes. Some of these notebooks have been preserved, and while some (from 1938 to 1942, and one for 1943) do contain businesslike memoranda of meetings, many are filled just with his handwritten lists of gifts, donors, and recipients, ranging from the most important ("1. ego; 2. Emmy; 3. Lily [possibly Lily Martin, the widowed sister of Carin] . . .") down to the cigars and gratuities for his foresters, flunkies, porters, and telephonists at the Reichstag. Such Göring notebooks often reveal his centimeter-precise measurements of the tapestries he coveted, and notes on furnishings for Carinhall:

two mirrors for vestibule . . . elk-hide for chairs and writing desk
... consider tapestry in Reichstag as curtain in front of movie
screen, or for reception hall . . . locations and proper sequence
for my letters of esteem (check library layout) . . . Have silver
lamp made as per sample for writing desk . . . Look for big
standard lamp for library . . . bust of self and bust of Carin . . .

was essential for his diplomatic
 setting he spoke with often
 visiting aristocrats, and hunting
 as, as he assured Marshal Rydz-
 37, that Germany had no designs
 to Mussolini about Austria,
 the British about Hitler's ultimate
 1936 that Germany would even-
 d in October he had laid bare his
 with Lady Maureen Stanley, who
 "You know, of course, what
 ship, with eyes twinkling. "First
 Danzig. And then we shall fight
 why you British should object?"
 1937, the record shows, Göring
 "empress of the entire world," and
 establish ties with Britain's con-
 has to be borne in mind that the
 [dwin] is not conservative at all,
 amiable gentleman, the English-
 said Göring; but not the British
 Mussolini about the pervasive
 out the British Empire.
 Germany for the next two years.
 agents, the left-wing Republicans
 g the Nationalist insurgents, the
 gunned and bombed Republican-
 les.
 —three flights of three Junkers
 a to cut the road junction north-
 ess against the enemy personnel
 commanding the air-force con-
 unish ground commander] agrees
 of Guernica. If we pull this off,
 hough the bomb load was—the
 and 114 of fifty kilos—the little
 ived," wrote Richthofen in some
 . . . nobody could see any roads
 ey just dumped their bombs on
 artially explained, when towns-
 sturian miners had liberally dy-
 the Nationalist advance. "The
 e damaged town, "torched min-
 simply by tossing gasoline cans

into the ground floors." Most of Guernica's five thousand inhabitants had already left, but, the Luftwaffe colonel learned, "a few were killed." This author carried out investigations in the town records that revealed that some ninety people had been killed, most of them in two incidents as bombs hit a primitive shelter and a mental hospital. The Communists' own newspaper published a list of the injured, totaling thirty-two names. Since "Guernica"—symbolized by the Pablo Picasso painting—would ever after be chalked up as an atrocity against Göring's name, these figures are worth reporting.*

The propaganda echo of Guernica was immediate. Left-wing intellectuals around the world touted their versions of the air raid as typical Nazi *Schrecklichkeit*. Nowhere was the outrage louder than in Britain, where the opposition Labour party and the Communist party had begun whipping up feelings against Göring, claiming that he was angling for an invitation to the coronation of King George VI in May. Lord Londonderry did diffidently suggest Göring might come for the coronation, but the British ambassador, Phipps, warned the Foreign Office that there was "quite a good risk of his being shot in England," and no invitation was ever issued. During February 1937 Communist party branches and "left book-club study groups" published resolutions insulting him, and one notoriously far-left Labour member of Parliament, Ellen Wilkinson, talked of his "bloodstained boots." Göring felt deeply wounded by the campaign. "The man in the street," he told Lord Lothian on May 4, referring to the less amiable German of that species, "is now beginning to sense that Germany's real enemy is Great Britain."

"Other countries have colonies," complained General Göring in the same private conversation, "but Germany is to have nothing. The fact is that if a German hand so much as tries to pluck a feather from a goose, the Anglo-American boot appears and kicks our hand away." He reminded the British peer that his air force was now superior to Britain's RAF—and then dangled before him the very tempting prospect of a world-embracing Anglo-German alliance. "It is Germany's primary interest," he explained, dismissing with a flabby wave of one hand the adjutant who insistently reminded him, after two hours talking, that he was already late for lunch with the Führer, "not to see any weakening of the British Empire. In fact," he added, mentioning for the first time an idea that he had obviously cleared with Hitler, "I would go so far as to say that if the British Empire were gravely menaced, it would be to our interest to come to its support."

Replacing Baldwin in May 1937, Britain's new prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, sincerely desired to improve relations with Germany. He replaced the loose-tongued, sarcastic Phipps as ambassador with Sir Neville Henderson. Henderson had admired Göring ever since his *coup de théâtre*

*Picasso's art notebooks show that he had begun sketches for the painting—depicting in fact a bullfight—months before the air raid.

* There was no lunch with the Führer, arranged in advance.

at the Belgrade funeral ceremonies, and he had a leaning towards the new Germany. He had recently crossed the Atlantic aboard Germany's majestic liner *Cap Arcona*, to brush up his spoken German. Once, the giant Zeppelin-built airship *Hindenburg* hovered overhead, exchanging greetings, until its 2,750-horsepower engines propelled it over the horizon. Both ships became symbols of the violence of world feeling against Hitler: Sabotaged by anti-Nazis, the airship would crumble in flames at Lakehurst, New Jersey, a few days later, killing thirty-five passengers and crew; and eight years later the *Cap Arcona* would be sunk by a single British airplane in the Baltic with the loss of seventy-three hundred civilian lives—five times as many as died aboard the *Titanic*.

The mutual attraction that ripened between Henderson and Göring was of the kind that does sometimes flourish between gentleman and gangster. Whatever his timetable, each would always make time to receive the other. Henderson found the general's questions shrewd, his humor irresistible, his frankness disarming. At their first meeting on May 24, 1937, Göring repeated what he had told Phipps and the former air minister Lord Lothian. "Germany can't even pick a flower," he grumbled, "without Britain saying *es ist verboten*." He emphasized that the Führer was besotted with Britain—hence the naval agreement; and he himself, he added, had forbidden his Luftwaffe to designate Britain as an "enemy" in war games. (This was true.) When he mentioned the irksome Anglo-French alliance at a further meeting, on July 20, the ambassador responded with a critical allusion to the axis between Berlin and Rome. "That's just the point," sighed Göring. "If it weren't for your London-Paris axis, we in Germany would never have taken up with those Italian s.o.b.'s—we don't trust them an inch!"

In September he would confess to Henderson that he admired Sir Francis Drake precisely because he was a pirate. It was a pity, he added, that the British had now gone soft (or been "debrutalized," as he put it).

Henderson was bedazzled by this astute ex-aviator. In September 1937, in a letter to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, he would call Göring "the frankest and most sincere of these Nazi leaders with the exception of Hitler." Eden must have choked on his porridge at this line—he himself classed the Führer at that time as only marginally less frank and sincere than Machiavelli. Four years later, composing his memoirs in wartime retirement, Henderson would still confess to unrepentant admiration for Hermann Göring and everything that he had done for Germany.

The Four-Year Plan revolutionized Nazi Germany's economy. Resisting the temptation to set up a special ministry, Göring had used instead his own Prussian Ministry staff as a kind of matrix, to which he appointed extra civil servants—one thousand of them—and co-opted the *Staatssekretär* (roughly, deputy minister) from each Reich ministry to attend plan meetings. Iron ore was crucial to the plan's success.

Göring's seminal interest in local ironmaster Hermann Röchlir had warned him not to rely on startled Göring with the remark of low grade, in Germany to co-around fourteen million tons of and the Ruhr steelmakers scorn contained only 25 percent iron, and Lorraine ores; besides, the smelt.

For a year Göring had done 26, 1936, he had casually asked, the output of iron ores from our Year Plan, Göring had the authcourage by coal-baron Paul Ple "scrap-metal merchants"—and t mann Alexander Brassert, (of H. undertook to design for the new capable of reducing these difficu frontation with the Ruhr steel ind exploit the ores," he recalled. Th in one report to Göring, an exper whereupon Göring compulsorily p United Steel Works, paying a price

Throughout the spring of 1937, steelmaking empire were being laid Hjalmar Schacht, the economics in the nation's long-term strategic ind ustry had any inkling of Göring's publicly announced on July 15, 193 to H. G. Brassert & Company. He l steel industry at a meeting in Berlin c going to put up the biggest steelwo gitter." Talking of the steel bottlene rival nations' rearmament programs people that the Third Reich is bett countries with their parliamentary g

The "Reichswerke AG für Erzberg (Incorporated Reich Works for Ore Göring")—or the Hermann Göring ' one year later—rapidly developed i combines. The Ruhr industrialists wh now confronted by a powerful outside if need be to lay hands on the ore fie

makers, united under the leadership of Krupp von Bohlen in the Steel Association (*Stahlverein*) of Düsseldorf, declared war on Göring; encouraged by Schacht, they signed a protest to the government. Schacht himself sent a twelve-page letter to Göring protesting the cost of the new steelworks. "In a totalitarian state," he argued, "it is wholly impossible to conduct a split-level economic policy." He appealed to Hitler, but the economically illiterate Führer left it to Göring to fight this battle. On August 22, Göring sent a stinging twenty-four-page reply to the minister, full of rhetoric but totally ignoring the arguments. He had brute force on his side, and was well aware of it. Replying to the Steel Association's protest in a telegram two days later, he accused them of barefaced "egotism," and of sabotaging the interests of the Reich. He hinted at prosecution. Schacht went on leave with his tail between his legs and eventually resigned.

The H.G.W. remained solely Göring's concern. It was not state controlled, no ministry supervised its rambling affairs. He appointed his stooge Pili Körner chairman of the board. As late as July 1944, the Ministry of Economics would complain that no agency could tell who was on H.G.W.'s board or how it ran its affairs. The answer was one word: autocratically. H.G.W. spread stealthy tentacles across Germany and Austria into the Balkans and southeastern Europe, swallowing strategically interesting companies in interlocking financial deals behind a veil of military secrecy, deals that would have made Göring a hard man to beat on Wall Street. H.G.W. took over iron-ore mines in the Palatinate belonging to Flick; bought up Austria's iron-ore fields in Styria, and eventually built a new steelworks at Linz to process these ores; erected entire cities at Salzgitter and Linz to house the workers; secured basic limestone and coal requirements by swallowing the Walhalla Kaliwerke AG at Regensburg and the Deutsche Kohlenzeche and by forcing Ruhr coal mining companies to sign long-term contracts for supplies. (H.G.W. would eventually control ten major coal mines.)

In Germany, H.G.W. then purchased 53 percent of the Rheinmetall Borsig Arms Company in the Ruhr, with affiliated companies in Essen (Eisen & Metallgesellschaft AG) and Duisburg (Hydraulisch GmbH); in Austria, 78 percent of the auto manufacturers Steyr-Daimler-Puch AG, 100 percent of Steyr Guss-Stahlwerke (which in turn controlled a Swiss arms factory), 51 percent of Maschine und Waggonbau AG at Simmering, 50 percent of the Paukersche Werke AG and the Fanto oil refinery. Ultimately H.G.W. would also purchase controlling stock in the First Danube Navigation Corporation (Ersten Donaudampfschiffahrt AG), thereby gaining important commercial rights and assets in Hungary and Romania. Austria, in fact, was the economic gateway to the Balkans, which was one more reason why Göring wanted to bring Austria under German control.

A few days after he signed the contract for Brassert to build the Hermann Göring Works, the new, enlarged Carinhall was handed over to Göring for permanent occupation. The Görings dispatched a fulsome telegram to Hitler

at Berchtesgaden thanking him as with everything else, we owe beautiful house today." There lived in forest-green plush, w up behind in eighteenth-century

Their very first guest on July challenged Göring—now that h clean about Nazi Germany's ul

"Germany," replied Göring Europe. She has to be militaril all idea of expanding in the west not try to recoup Alsace and Lo

Henderson urged Göring to be to appreciate the great qualities employment in four years from s of its social program was highly tinued, "that Herr Hitler desires

An encouraging smile spread mind at ease," he said. "There

There was one surprise for all (nounced that she was pregnant. : Mussolini at Carinhall on Septer retär Milch in his diary, "is expa his astonishment, clearly recalli impotent.) Irreverent witticisms s baby's to be called Hamlet if it' stuttering comedian. "Sein oder translates equally in German as ' wisecrack that Hermann Göring r in the concentration camp at Ester

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percent of the Rheinmetall Borsig
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at Berchtesgaden thanking him for the keys. "We know," this said, "that,
 as with everything else, we owe it to you that we are able to move into this
 beautiful house today." There was no other home like it. The footmen were
 liveried in forest-green plush, with sleeve cuffs reversed and coattails caught
 up behind in eighteenth-century fashion.

Their very first guest on July 20, 1937, was Ambassador Henderson. He
 challenged Göring—now that he was out here in his own domain—to come
 clean about Nazi Germany's ultimate ambitions.

"Germany," replied Göring, "has been placed by fate in the heart of
 Europe. She has to be militarily strong, and now that we have abandoned
 all idea of expanding in the west"—a renewed promise that Germany would
 not try to recoup Alsace and Lorraine—"we have to look to the east."

Henderson urged Göring to be patient. He was able, he assured the general,
 to appreciate the great qualities of Hitler's government. It had reduced un-
 employment in four years from six million to six hundred thousand and much
 of its social program was highly progressive. "I can not believe," he con-
 tinued, "that Herr Hitler desires to risk all his work on the chance of war."

An encouraging smile spread across Göring's face. "You can set your
 mind at ease," he said. "There'll be no more surprises for several years."

There was one surprise for all Germany that autumn—Emmy Göring an-
 nounced that she was pregnant. She boasted of it at a farewell luncheon for
 Mussolini at Carinhall on September 28. "Mrs. Göring," wrote Staatssek-
 retär Milch in his diary, "is expecting a baby in eight months." (He stifled
 his astonishment, clearly recalling that Göring had told him that he was
 impotent.) Irreverent witticisms swept Berlin's nightclubs and cabarets. "The
 baby's to be called Hamlet if it's a b-b-boy," exclaimed Werner Finck, a
 stuttering comedian. "*Sein oder n-n-nicht sein!*" (To be or not to be—it
 translates equally in German as "His, or not his?") It was not the kind of
 wisecrack that Hermann Göring rewarded, and Finck was rehoused abruptly
 in the concentration camp at Esterwegen.

15

THE VERY PRIVATE KINGDOM

Only those who saw General Göring with his lions could sense the fondness that each felt for the other: So wrote his chief forester, Ulrich Scherping, in 1937. "And," he added, "these lions were not just cubs—the kind that society ladies might like to be photographed with in the Berlin Zoo. They were great hulking brutes. Many a voice was raised at his temerity in trifling with being slashed by tooth or claw."

There was an unsuspected empathy between this man, Hermann Göring, and the animal kingdom, and there was no phoniness about it. An animal can smell fear, but it also seems to sense the true animal lover. Scherping, an honest woodsman whose great-great-grandfather had served three kings of Prussia as a forester, knew the acuity of a wild animal's perception and marveled at the manner in which Göring controlled man and beast alike.

Of all Göring's works during that grim period known as the Third Reich only one has survived to this day: the enlightened Game Laws that he introduced. The animal world remained his own private kingdom. He was an impassioned huntsman—from a fraternity that has always deemed itself a cut above the rest. Hitler actually called the clannish hunting fraternity "that green Freemasonry." He detested huntsmen, but even he found it useful to

indulge Göring's passion. Göring portrayed a cavalcade of foreign his invitations to Prussia's hu Czar Boris of Bulgaria, or the Romania, and the prince rege

This was all to the good, huntsmen had the inside track shots found the going difficult promotion in the Luftwaffe as those who did not praise Göring. Invited to a shoot during the shot a magnificent twenty-poi do better on his father-in-law Sibylla). "Things didn't go so Thomas von Kantzow in his d to Carinhall in a hurry."

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indulge Göring's passion. Göring's hunting diaries—which are preserved—portray a cavalcade of foreign diplomats and martial gentlemen accepting his invitations to Prussia's hunting grounds. There he could meet as equals Czar Boris of Bulgaria, or the regent of Hungary, the kings of Greece and Romania, and the prince regent of Yugoslavia.

This was all to the good, but it went beyond that. With Göring, the huntsmen had the inside track. Senior air-force officers who were not good shots found the going difficult. Hunting was as indispensable an asset to promotion in the Luftwaffe as polo was in the British Army. And woe betide those who did not praise Göring's hunting hospitality or criticized his game. Invited to a shoot during the Olympics, the Swedish prince Gustaf Adolf shot a magnificent twenty-point stag but remarked loftily that he hoped to do better on his father-in-law's estate (he had married the German-born Sibylla). "Things didn't go so well between him and Hermann . . ." wrote Thomas von Kantzow in his diary. "Hermann won't be inviting him back to Carinhall in a hurry."

It had all begun rather unpromisingly. When he had become speaker of the Reichstag in 1932, Göring had declined the rather unprepossessing hunting ground assigned to him by the then-reigning establishment. He prophesied confidently that within a year he would be prime minister, with the pick of all Prussia's state forests at his disposal. In 1933 he found the hunting scene to be a microcosm of Germany itself—plagued by petty rivalries and self-interest. Each humble parish or great estate seemed to have its own hunting laws and taxes. Wildlife could be hunted down at will. Conservation and breeding of the dwindling species were impossible. In Germany, the eagle, bear, bison, and wild horse were almost extinct.

Göring had directed Scherping to set up a uniform nationwide hunting association (*Deutsche Jägerschaft*) to regulate the sport, restock the lakes, tend the forests, and protect the dying species. The association would levy taxes on huntsmen to pay for the upkeep of the forests and game parks. "I want a new hunting law for Prussia," he had briefed Scherping on that day, May 9, 1933, "one that can later serve for the entire Reich."

With one stroke of the pen he made it a criminal offense to kill an eagle, or hunt with poisons, artificial light, or the steel trap ("that medieval instrument of torture"). When the professional bodies bleated protests, Göring waved them augustly aside. His Prussian Game Law, passed on January 18, 1934, was envied far beyond Germany's frontiers. He insisted that the new game officials must be animal lovers, dedicated National Socialists, and unafraid of speaking their minds. In practice these desiderata proved unworkable. The best foresters were not always Nazis, and when it came to the test he did not encourage independent minds. In May 1937 Professor Burckhardt, sitting in that cavernous office in Berlin, witnessed him take a phone call from a forester asking for permission for local farmers to take their own action against a plague of wild boars. "One more word," bellowed

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Göring, after listening with mounting anger, "and I'll blast a shotgun up your snout!" Turning to the Swiss diplomat he apologized. "That's how revolutions begin," he said, "letting people take the law into their own hands!"

Keen to pioneer new techniques, he established nature reserves on Darss, a Pomeranian peninsula, and at Rominten in East Prussia. His proudest achievement was the Schorf Heath, on Berlin's doorstep. It was here, on June 10, 1934, that he had inaugurated his new bison sanctuary—oblivious of the snickers of the Berlin diplomatic corps—with two pure bulls and seven hybrid cows. He introduced elk as well. Successions of Prussian kings had tried and failed to restore this noble, ungainly beast to the Schorf Heath; he consulted zoologists, foresters, biologists and—interestingly—experts on artificial insemination, and succeeded, though not without experiencing his own initial disappointments. Neither Swedish elk nor Canadian moose prospered, so he had finally brought in elk calves from East Prussia: seventeen in the fall of 1934, ten a year later, and eleven in 1936. His first native elks would calve in the Schorf Heath sanctuary in May 1937, by which time he had also reared forty-seven local bison.

The whole Schorf Heath experiment worked. From its Werbellin Lake Game Research Laboratory he reintroduced the rarer fauna into the heath, like night owl, wood grouse, heathcock, gray goose, raven, beaver, and otter. During 1936, 140,000 townsfolk forked out 20 pfennigs apiece to tour the wildlife sanctuary. It became a forerunner of the great national parks in other countries.

"For us," he would tell huntsmen assembled for their Saint-Hubert's Day festival that November, "the forest is God's cathedral."

There were those who found the rifle and the huntsman's knife an incongruous way of serving the Creator. But there was a scientific logic in what Göring called "conservation by rifle." Game populations had to be culled to avoid starvation or epidemics, and he and his fraternity pursued this pseudoreligious duty with grisly relish and high ritual.

This animal-loving side of Göring's nature produced strange contrasts. He was capable of unparalleled callousness toward the human species; yet history shows that he introduced a tough antivivisection law through Prussia, preceded by a broadcast warning that he would throw each and every violator into a concentration camp even before the law passed through all its stages of enactment. While in Britain defense scientists contented themselves with testing blast bombs on goats and chimpanzees, in 1942 Göring's high-altitude aviation experts would show no qualms in conducting lethal low-temperature and low-pressure experiments on human beings (criminals under sentence of death supplied by Himmler's concentration camps).

Both facets of Göring's character—the protector of the animal kingdom and the ruthless persecutor of his human enemies—occasionally intersected. At one and the same Reich Cabinet meeting on July 3, 1934, Hitler reported

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Göring's alter ego had manag
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to one wise man, Hermann G
huntsman (*Reichsjägermeister*)
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At that same Cabinet session,
resigned as vice-chancellor.

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He made no bones about it. H
thwarted Austria's own attempt
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There will not be the slightest merely beamed, and Schmidt, the German general had dis- least it was possible to talk

Nazi hierarchy, on January 29, had a year-long correspondence with Austria. Göring replied with kind of German-Austrian," he turning to both of them.

When British newspaper on March 3, 1937, he touched might stage a restoration toward Anschluss. "Dann bring. "Then the cannon will percent of Austrians would vote hiscite. As for the rest of the would make voluntary concessions added, had no quarrel with foreign policies were driving ly," promised Göring, his eyes and every guarantee in the west Belgium and Holland as well as Eastern Europe."

Interference when the benign, Mackenzie King came to see him as something of a mystic—he equal measure the Holy Scriptures eye had lighted upon a verse d the dragon shalt Thou trample villa at ten-thirty, the startled General Göring's cheek as he interview rambled on for ninety ng's appointment card; Göring then inquired whether Britain and raw materials to Germany. worked—how its very strength ring, his mind roaming, asked tain in everything—"For in- any and Austria wished to unite, ould Canada back Britain?" out," replied Mackenzie King,

"is the danger of Germany taking some precipitate action that might set all of Europe aflame."

Göring reverted to his bullying of the Austrians. At a banquet with visiting Austrian industrialists a few days later, to celebrate the anniversary of Papen's "gentleman's agreement" with their country, he said with a leer that Anschluss was inevitable. He recalled to them how at Geneva in 1931 the casting vote of one obscure South American delegate had wrecked the first Customs Union proposal of their two governments. "We can't forever be dependent on the vote of one jungle savage," he lectured these pained visitors to Berlin. "So why don't we present the world with a fait accompli? Why not!"

The Austrian envoy, Stefan Tauschitz, picked up a telephone and angrily recommended his superiors in Vienna to cancel the rest of the official visit in protest. The Forschungsamt intercept reached Göring only minutes after he returned to his villa. He telephoned a startled Tauschitz to assure him that he had been misquoted. "I had the distinct impression," the incredulous diplomat would testify, "that Göring's office had listened in to my conversation." As for Göring, he was unrepentant and recalled years later the pleasure it had given him to "put the wind up those gentlemen."

That summer of 1937 Guido Schmidt of Austria hinted, again via the lawyer Friedrich Rigele, that he would welcome another meeting with Göring. Göring suggested Carinhall—"where we would be completely undisturbed"—and offered to send his private plane down to Vienna. (During August, he explained, he would be away cruising aboard his latest toy, the diesel yacht *Carin II*, which the Motor Manufacturers' Association had donated to him.) Schmidt, venturing literally into the lion's den, arrived at Carinhall on September 7, and stayed for several days.

Göring again found him amiable and boisterous—perhaps a type not often met in northern Germany. Schmidt killed a stag called Hermann.

"You've done me in, have you!" exclaimed Göring playfully.

"Wish I had," replied the Austrian minister.

"Not very nice of you," retorted Göring, and he had a lion brought in when they returned to Carinhall. The furry beast lay under the table, licking Guido Schmidt's feet.

"Next time," faltered the Austrian, "I shall bring an animal of my own, a lamb."

"Good," roared Göring. "And a black sheep too. Yourself and Dr. Schuschnigg!"

It was September and time for the annual party rally again. This time London instructed the British ambassador to attend, and Henderson saw for himself the spectacle of aggregate manpower as hundreds of thousands of brown-shirted party automatons paraded at Nuremberg. Hitler arrived after dark,

Goering - It's bad enough to face, but when the clouds wind is driven upon them from without, then one gets

an idea of what one is dealing with.

the arrival of the "messiah" announced by the simultaneous uplifting of three hundred searchlight beams to intersect thousands of feet up, leaving the hushed and darkened stadium inside what Sir Nevile called "a cathedral of ice." The thousands of standard-bearers marched up the main lanes carrying red or gold lights that formed five flowing rivers of color in the darkness. The dour Henderson involuntarily thrilled to this pageant as much as if it had been His Majesty's birthday parade.

General Göring joined Henderson in Nuremburg on the eleventh, mentioning oh-so-casually that he had just told Guido Schmidt that the sooner Austria bowed to the inevitable, the better. He assured Henderson once again that Germany's strategic objectives would astonish Britain by their moderation: first, Austria; after that, the oppressed Sudeten-German minority in Czechoslovakia; Poland would then come into line automatically. And this big Robin Hood lookalike with the polished, rouged complexion repeated to the ambassador what he had first said on his arrival in Berlin: "We have no desire to lay hands on anything at all that Britain possesses. We want to be friends with the British Empire. We are prepared to fight for its survival and would, if need be, lend half of our army for that purpose. All that we ask in return is that Britain guard our rear and that the British Navy keep our communications open, if we are attacked in the east."

When Henderson voiced a lame protest about the concentration camps, Göring produced an encyclopedia. "First used by the British," he read out, "in the South African war." Knowing that Sir Nevile was one more member of that international "green Freemasonry," he invited him to come and shoot a stag at Rominten, East Prussia, that October.

All along it had seemed likely to Göring that Italy would object most to any Austrian Anschluss with Germany. Mussolini had no desire to see Hitler's troops on his northern frontier. "It's intolerable," Göring had told one Austrian, banging his fist on the table, on November 20, 1936, "that Italy has to play policeman and keep us apart. I am going down to see Mussolini shortly," he added, "and I intend to tell him quite clearly that Anschluss is coming—like it or not!"

Göring visited Rome in January 1937, and told the Italian government that for six million Germans to live outside Germany's door was "against all morality." Mussolini, who had believed Göring was coming only to talk about Spain, was taken aback by Göring's unexpected approach on Austria. He left no doubt that Italy regarded the German-Austrian agreement of 1936 as inviolate. According to the Italian foreign minister Count Ciano, Göring undertook not to indulge in any surprises—"Whatever decision Germany makes on questions so vital to her as Austria, Danzig, or Memel will be preceded by consultations with Italy." Afterward, however, Göring told his friend the ambassador in Rome, Ulrich von Hassell, that Italy was going to

his face in the morning.

have to accept that Austria was a brief vacation in Capri, Göring on January 23, in which—as he adopted a more restrained position on Vienna to adhere to the 1936 could reassure him—and he assured were to be no surprises over Austria to the Austrian ambassador in Rome . . . a rather more modest one.

General Göring had not, however, visited Berlin in September 1937 one wall of Carinhall a medieval city designated by its "trademark" and Austria erased. He paraded eventually had to direct his attention Göring recalled later, "to talk to

To Hitler, Austria was but a teatime. "We're going to tackle the Austrian experts Darré and Backe on the lifting one corner of the veil that Göring was probably long privy according to Darré, who recorded the Baltic and in the open space: million men in war, if this will.

In East Prussia, Germany's eastern than in the west. Its hardy front anesthetized that suffering with a They hunted across wildernesses known to them by names like M Osiris—this latter would become of 1937. The very finest beasts (reserved for Göring himself to state *raison d'état* required, deliver to regent Miklos Horthy or some Ba

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Afterward, however, Göring told his
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have to accept that Austria was in the German sphere of interest. Following
a brief vacation in Capri, Göring returned for a pointed talk with Mussolini
on January 23, in which—as the transcript in Göring's papers shows—he
adopted a more restrained position. He now merely asked Mussolini to prevail
on Vienna to adhere to the 1936 agreement. "In Germany's name he [Göring]
could reassure him—and he assumed the same held true for Italy—that there
were to be no surprises over Austria." "Yes," triumphed Ciano afterward
to the Austrian ambassador in Rome, "a highly inflated Göring arrived here
... a rather more modest one left."

General Göring had not, however, given up over Austria. Before the Duce
visited Berlin in September 1937, Göring commissioned an artist to paint on
one wall of Carinhall a medieval-style fresco, a map of the Reich with each
city designated by its "trademark"—and with the frontier between Germany
and Austria erased. He paraded the Italian dictator past it several times but
eventually had to direct his attention to the map. "That gave me an excuse,"
Göring recalled later, "to talk bluntly about the two countries uniting."

To Hitler, Austria was but a tedious foreplay to his own grandiose strategy.
"We're going to tackle the Austria question first," he told his agriculture
experts Darré and Backe on the last day of that month, September 1937,
lifting one corner of the veil that concealed his innermost thoughts—to which
Göring was probably long privy. "But our real future," Hitler continued,
according to Darré, who recorded these words in his private diary, "lies on
the Baltic and in the open spaces of Russia. Better to sacrifice another two
million men in war, if this will give us the room to breathe."

In East Prussia, Germany's easternmost province, dawn came an hour earlier
than in the west. Its hardy frontier breed had suffered in each war but
anesthetized that suffering with a grog made of much rum and little water.
They hunted across wildernesses dominated by the cry of rutting stags, beasts
known to them by names like Matador or Chandelier, Robber Chieftain or
Osiris—this latter would become the Neu-Sternberg preserve's "royal stag"
of 1937. The very finest beasts (later called "Reichsmarschall stags") were
reserved for Göring himself to stalk for days, then slay exultantly or, when
raison d'état required, deliver to the "gun-guest of honor"—Hungarian
regent Miklos Horthy or some Balkan king.

Of course, not every statesman succumbed to Göring's allures. The dip-
lomatic archives record that after seeing Hitler, Britain's Great War leader
David Lloyd George said gruffly, when told that Göring was awaiting the
pleasure of his company at a shooting box in southern Germany, "I am
going back to the Hoek [of Holland], and Göring can go to the devil!"

Göring was for all that a fine shot and true sportsman. He preferred the
breathless pursuit of his quarry through moor and bog and fen, from tree to
tree, to sitting passively in a blind. Up at 4:00 A.M., he would stalk for six

Memel, and the Polish Corridor. On the morning of the fourth, Göring noted, "Thick fog, sun partly coming through. Discussion in the morning with Henderson." He again outlined to the Englishman his broad vision of a partnership between Britain and Germany—with Britain recognizing Nazi Germany's hegemony in the continent of Europe. He concluded his diary:

Henderson this A.M. shot another fine stag, 14-pointer . . . 3:00 P.M., stalked alone in Jodupp. On bare ground to right of Wollner pasture watched a scene of activity just like rutting at its peak, about ten stags were there crying in full voice, several combats. Kept a right royal 20- or 22-pointer under observation for some time, only six years old but a magnificent future. He had a harem, but was beaten off by an older 14- or 16-pointer. A most engrossing spectacle.

Henderson would never forget those two days at Rominten. As dusk fell, the chief forester ceremonially called the bag. Göring thanked all the huntsmen, and they sounded the hallali (death of the stag) on their hunting horns. "In the starlit night in the depths of the great forest," wrote Henderson, "with the notes of the horns echoing back from the tall fir trees in the distances, the effect was extremely beautiful."

There was an intimacy, transcending all frontiers and enmities, between these hunting men; nor has it been without purpose to dwell upon it here. We shall see that as the final curtain descends upon the caged Hermann Göring, and he casts about him like an injured animal caught in "that medieval instrument of torture," a steel-jawed trap, for a friend to deliver the releasing coup de grâce, his eye lights upon an officer—and huntsman, like himself.

With proper panoply and flourish, with shouts of *Heil* and the roll of drums, with the rattle and slap of a guard of honor from his "Hermann Göring" Regiment presenting arms, Göring opened the International Hunting Exhibition in Berlin in November 1937. Once again money had been no object, and there were sections in the spacious galleries devoted to each country, to the history of hunting, and to the most famous paintings on this ancient lore.

Britain was well represented. Carl-Maria von Weber's opera about Marksmanship, *Der Freischütz* (*The Sharpshooter*), was staged on November 2, as an overture to the exhibition, and during the intermission Göring walked over to Sir Nevile Henderson and thanked him for the friendly reception just accorded to his top generals Milch, Stumpff, and Udet during their recent tour of RAF squadrons and establishments. "It is inconceivable," Göring beamed to the ambassador, "that there should ever be war between men who get on so well together and respect each other so much as the British and German airmen."

The exhibition was a big people thronged the halls, weeks. For those three weeks in his baroque hunting coat Berlin Castle on November 4 on the fourth, he presided at Chasse on the fifth.

At 4:00 P.M. that day he to reappear at the Reich Ch Hitler had summoned a second. He had returned to the capital ideas. Since his return von B in the glass-fronted winter garden Rudolf Hess, or strolling up hours or more.

Originally, the army had resolve the conflicting demands to bring home to the army's that he had certain plans. As it was time to "raise steam"

After the others—War Minister von Neurath, and N assembled in the winter garden curtains across the glass door his thoughts on future strategy his officers, Colonel Alfred J

Colonel Friedrich Hossbach longhand a full summary of] way of solving Germany's problem force. There is no risk-free wait, he added, because in six them again. They were going to he might order a lightning attack propitious.

Hitler's speech met with a contribution was to suggest that the in Spain now.

At 8:30 P.M. the little international grand reception that he had organized at the Aviators' Building (the old Prussian Parliament). Here the Austrian minister in Berlin treat," he boomed, "Austria!"

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The exhibition was a box-office triumph. On some days forty thousand people thronged the halls, and Göring ordered the run extended to three weeks. For those three weeks he was in his element. He besported himself in his baroque hunting costume, he banqueted as Reich chief huntsman in Berlin Castle on November 3, he dined with the world's leading huntsmen on the fourth, he presided congenially over the Conseil Internationale de la Chasse on the fifth.

At 4:00 P.M. that day he mysteriously melted away from the festivities, to reappear at the Reich Chancellery, in full uniform, an hour or two later: Hitler had summoned a secret conference that was to go down in history. He had returned to the capital a few days before, brimming with dangerous ideas. Since his return von Below, had glimpsed him pacing the broad carpet in the glass-fronted winter garden sunk in thought, or speaking quietly with Rudolf Hess, or strolling up and down with Göring, sometimes for three hours or more.

Originally, the army had called for this conference on November 5 to resolve the conflicting demands for steel allocations. But Hitler had decided to bring home to the army's recalcitrant commander, Werner von Fritsch, that he had certain plans. As he told Göring shortly before the others arrived, it was time to "raise steam" in his generals.

After the others—War Minister Field Marshal von Blomberg, Foreign Minister von Neurath, and Navy Commander Admiral Erich Raeder—had assembled in the winter garden, Hitler motioned to a servant to draw the curtains across the glass doors and began, reading from notes, to "set out his thoughts on future strategic objectives" (as Blomberg dictated to one of his officers, Colonel Alfred Jodl, afterward).

Colonel Friedrich Hossbach, Blomberg's adjutant, shortly wrote out in longhand a full summary of Hitler's remarks. "There is only one possible way of solving Germany's problem," Hitler declared, "and that is to use force. There is no risk-free way of solving it." Nor could they afford to wait, he added, because in six years the balance of power would tilt against them again. They were going to fight for Lebensraum—but even before then he might order a lightning attack on Czechoslovakia if circumstances were propitious.

Hitler's speech met with a muted response. Göring's only recorded contribution was to suggest that they ought, therefore, to wind up their operations in Spain now.

At 8:30 P.M. the little intermezzo was over. Göring hurried back to the grand reception that he had organized for the visiting huntsmen of Europe at the Aviators' Building (the Haus der Flieger, which had previously been the Prussian Parliament). Here he playfully buttonholed Stefan Tauschitz, the Austrian minister in Berlin. "The Führer still owes us one breakfast treat," he boomed, "Austria!"

The next evening Guido Schmidt came to the "lion's den" again. Göring

invited him out to Carinhall on the seventh and nonchalantly walked him past the map fresco, which Göring had left in place since Mussolini's visit. "It's such a fine map," he apologized to the Austrian, "and I didn't want to have to keep changing it. So I have had it drawn in keeping with the way that things are shaping anyway."

Hermann Göring's hunting exhibition acted as a honeypot to all the big bears of European field sports. On November 17, his brother-in-law Franz Hueber tipped him off that the head of Austrian security, Paul Revertera, was privately visiting the halls. He sent a chauffeur to fetch the visitor from the Hotel Eden at 5:00 P.M., and the well-tailored, gray-haired Austrian was piloted by an SS man through the marble labyrinth into Göring's villa soon after. Their two-hour conversation started in the safe preserves of the new hunting laws, but then Göring guided his guest out into more rugged terrain. He criticized the fortifications that Austria was now building on her frontier with Germany, and accused Vienna of violating the 1936 agreement. He said that "people" were pressing for a solution. "Our Seventh Army, they say, would go through Austria like butter." He advised the Austrian not to bank on Paris or London; France was exhausted, he claimed, and the British dominions would discourage any intervention by London. This left only Prague, he suggested, adding with a grin, "And we'd take her on too!"

Sweetening these inhospitable remarks, Göring flattered Revertera by saying that Austria had the better leader types and would therefore provide the Reich with a reservoir of fine commanders; and he also drew a benign picture of Austria as the future cultural center of the Reich. The Austrian official returned to the Hotel Eden aghast at the general's crude bluster.

A far more significant exhibition visitor came to see General Göring three days later. Lord Halifax, traveling to Berlin as "master of Middleton hounds" rather than as a British Cabinet member, toured the halls round-eyed, conferred with Hitler, and returned to Berlin on November 20 to meet Göring. Göring telephoned Hitler at Berchtesgaden to ask if he might speak frankly with the Englishman, and toward midday sent his most luxurious limousine down the new autobahn to bring Lord Halifax out to the Schorf Heath.

Summarizing their meeting in his diary, Lord Halifax admitted he was "immensely entertained." "Göring," he recorded, "met me on the way dressed in brown breeches and boots all in one, with green leather jerkin and fur-collared short coat on top. . . . Altogether a very picturesque and arresting figure, completed by green hat and large chamois tuft!" After paying the obligatory homage to Göring's elk and bison, he found himself being driven off to see the tree-planting operations in a shooting phaeton drawn by a pair of high-stepping Hanoverian chestnuts, then on to Carinhall itself—"a large house," wrote Halifax, "built between two lakes in pine woods, stone with deep thatched roof and latticed dormer windows out of it. It occupies three sides of a courtyard, with a colonnade across the end."



By the end of World War I Hermann Göring was one of the top scoring fighter aces. NATIONAL ARCHIVES



Hermann Göring (far right) with his Iron Cross. He had already earned his Iron Cross 1st Class and the Pour le Mérite. COLLECTIONS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

As Colonel General Göring, master of all these domains, led his guests through the long entrance gallery and rooms already filling with treasures, Carinhall began to work the familiar magic on this High Church Yorkshire viscount. His nostrils flared, picking up the mansion's pervasive, unmistakable atmosphere of aristocratic pretensions; it was like an alcoholic getting a whiff of his first tot of the day. His voyeur's eye missed no detail: the hunting trophies, the devotional garden doorframe carved somewhere in Bavaria depicting an Assumption of Our Lady, the great hall with its remote-controlled wall of glass overlooking the lake at one end, the dining room lined with a parchment that looked to Halifax's approving eye rather like mother-of-pearl.

After luncheon [he noted in his diary], which included some of the rawest beef I have ever seen, Göring took me off with [chief interpreter Paul] Schmidt to talk. I repeated to him what I had said to Hitler, namely that we did not wish and had never wished to stand strictly on the present state of the world, but that we were concerned to see reasonable settlements reached.

"It would be a disaster," agreed Göring, "if the two finest races of the world were ever to be so mad as to fight." The British Empire was, he suggested, a great influence for peace—but Germany too was entitled to her 'special spheres of influence.' "

Afterward, Lord Halifax found himself wondering how many assassinations his host had commanded, "for good cause or bad." He had to confess that the general's personality was attractive—"like a great schoolboy, full of life and pride in all he was doing, showing off his forest and animals, and then talking high politics out of the setting of green jerkin and red dagger."



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Göring's life, making him
AL ARCHIVES

(*Blutorden*) for their part in the 1923 putsch, for example—but not close enough. Several times since 1935 Karl Bodenschatz had overheard Göring and Hitler discuss the possibility that the top army generals might be plotting against the regime, and in the autumn of 1937 Göring asked Blomberg outright whether his generals would follow Hitler into a war.

It is clear that by December 1937 Göring had begun to indulge in fantasies of taking supreme command of the armed forces himself in place of Blomberg. The only other candidate would be General von Fritsch. At fifty-eight, Fritsch was not much younger than Blomberg, and Göring felt it unlikely that Hitler would feel comfortable with him. Promoted to colonel-general on April 20, 1936, Fritsch came from a puritan Protestant family. His upright bearing suggested he might even be wearing a lace-up corset. With a monocle screwed into his left eye to help his face remain sinister and motionless, he was an old-fashioned bachelor who loved horses and hated Jews with equal passion. "We are in the midst of three battles," he wrote to a baroness in 1938, "and the one against the Jews is the most difficult." For the time being, however, he had left the Berlin stage, vacationing in Egypt—unaware that Himmler (perhaps at Göring's instigation) was having him tailed by the Gestapo. Nor, as yet, did Blomberg provide Göring with an inch of leverage although (as Admiral Raeder later gathered from a chance remark) Fritsch had ordered that Blomberg be shadowed, and Himmler's Gestapo was later found to have concealed a microphone in Blomberg's office.

Göring could find no way to fault Blomberg until mid-December. Then, suddenly, the tip of a promising scandal began to surface in the War Ministry. The sixty-year-old widowed field marshal announced that he too was going on leave. Those who knew spread the word that he too was taking a twenty-four-year-old secretary with him. "The field marshal is inexplicably agitated," Colonel Jodl carefully recorded on the fifteenth, adding, "Apparently a personal matter; going away for eight days, destination unknown." His agitation was explicable: The secretary had just informed him (quite untruthfully) that she was pregnant by him (so the field marshal's family informed this author). Less than a week later Hitler ordered him to attend the state funeral of Ludendorff in Munich—to be held on December 22 in the shadow of the Feldhermhalle where Hitler, Göring, and Ludendorff had confronted the blazing carbines of the Bavarian *Landespolizei* fourteen years before. As the ceremony ended, Blomberg walked across the snow-covered square to Hitler, asked to see him in private, and formally asked his permission to marry the girl; he added no more than that she was of "humble means"—a secretary in a government agency. To complete his folly, Blomberg approached Göring, of all people, a few days later and asked him to use his powers as head of the Four-Year Plan to see that an alleged "rival" for the young lady's attentions was spirited out of Germany. "It's an unusual request," growled Göring, "but I'll see what I can do."

On January 12, 1938, guests at Hermann Göring's forty-fifth birthday

6 THE BLOMBERG-FRITSCH AFFAIR

In December 1937 Göring issued instructions—in line with Hitler's command at the winter-garden in a lightning operation primarily against

Blomberg, circulated an urgent corrective measure that might lead headquarters units early before the end of 1938."

By one of the architectural defects that characterized Göring's now wholly anomalous hierarchy—the three highest tiers of the German command in chief, Göring was subordinate to whom Hitler had appointed field marshal, but equal to the army's commander in chief. As a Reich minister, however—of equal rank. And as the Führer's chosen successor, Blomberg's superior.

More than Göring—he had passed through the infant. Since 1933 he had grown closer to Hitler to accept the Nazi "blood medal"

celebration were perplexed to see him rise from the table and depart. "I'm off to a wedding," he told Milch—and chuckled out loud as he said it.

Most of what has been written hitherto about what now became the Blomberg-Fritsch affair has been based on the narratives left by embittered adjutants like Friedrich Hossbach, Fritz Wiedemann, and Gerhard Engel. The availability of more reliable materials, like Milch's private diaries, Blomberg's own manuscripts, the verbatim Gestapo grilling of General von Fritsch, and the secret letters and manuscripts that he wrote in 1938 and 1939 (now in private hands in Moscow) enables us to dispense with these narratives.

Both Blomberg and Fritsch were relics of an older generation, representative of the generals who had never really swallowed the National Socialist revolution of 1933. The career generals under their command refused to accept that an air force created and directed by two former lieutenants, Göring and Milch, could be of any real value. Fritsch in particular resented the recent interpolation of a Wehrmacht high command under Blomberg as supreme commander. When he returned from his Egyptian vacation—he had taken only a young adjutant, Captain Joachim von Both, as companion—on January 2, Fritsch had done nothing to discourage mounting criticism of Blomberg by the army generals. Looking bronzed and fit, Fritsch was among the guests at the luncheon in honor of Göring's birthday on the twelfth, and he too must have wondered why Göring left early.

Any doubts that Göring may have entertained about Blomberg's chosen bride were dispelled as he attended the wedding, held behind closed doors of the great hall of the War Ministry that afternoon. As the girl came mincing in, heavily veiled, Göring and Hitler exchanged mute glances. She was slim and blonde, and her genre was quite unmistakable. Blindly content, Blomberg left to honeymoon in Capri. General von Fritsch's papers record a two-hour meeting with Hitler three days later, on January 15, at which the Führer "spoke in great agitation of his concern about the spreading of anarchist propaganda in the army." Fritsch asked for proof, but Hitler declined to show it. (Probably it was Forschungsamt evidence, which a general could not be shown.) Six days later, Hitler delivered a three-hour dissertation to hundreds of senior generals in Blomberg's ministry, lecturing them on history, race, and nation—and on Germany's need for Lebensraum, "which we are going to have to seize by force."

That same day, January 21, the bubble burst in Berlin. An anonymous caller, impersonating a general, telephoned the army high command and demanded to be put through to General von Fritsch. When this was refused, the caller shouted, "Tell the general that Field Marshal von Blomberg has married a whore!"

Hitler had left Berlin for the Obersalzberg; Blomberg had been called to his mother's funeral. The Brown Page reporting the anonymous phone call to Fritsch rocketed across Berlin into Göring's villa. Everything began hap-

pening at once. At 4:15 p.m. brought into the War Ministry chief of staff, General Wilhelm Blomberg's bride? Keitel her—perhaps the police cl

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pening at once. At 4:15 P.M. Count Wolf von Helldorf, Berlin's police chief, brought into the War Ministry a police index card and asked Blomberg's chief of staff, General Wilhelm Keitel, if he recognized the photo: Was this Blomberg's bride? Keitel replied uneasily that he had not yet set eyes on her—perhaps the police chief ought to try General Göring instead?

Late the next morning Helldorf drove up the autobahn to Carinhall. Perhaps the photograph came as no surprise to Göring. More than one person suspected that he might even have engineered Blomberg's meeting with this particular woman. (He denied it.) Others (Fritsch, Göring himself, and Keitel among them) suspected the SS had rigged it. "They exploited Blomberg's vulnerability to railroad him into this marriage," Fritsch recorded at the time "The ink was hardly dry on the marriage papers when mountains of docu-
ments began to turn up about the Blomberg woman's past."

A couple of days later Keitel brought over to Göring the complete police file on her—a buff vice-squad folder with fingerprints, "mug shots," and pornographic photographs of the woman who had just married the field marshal with Hitler and Göring as witnesses. It was a Sunday, he recalled years later. "For three hours I sat at the table [overwhelmed] by the contents. It was not necessary to add anything." Göring appears to have done the decent thing, because as soon as Blomberg returned from the funeral he sent Bodenschatz over with "documents" to Milch, which Milch was to take over to Blomberg—"documents about F.B.," as Milch's diary records (probably referring to Frau Blomberg).

Göring was waiting on the steps of the Reich Chancellery as Hitler arrived back in Berlin. The buff folder was in his hands. Hossbach, Blomberg's ADC, also showed up, hoping to secure an immediate appointment for the field marshal with Hitler. Göring waylaid him, tapped the folder, and said, "It always falls to my lot to bring particularly unpleasant matters to the Führer's attention." He paced the floor like an angry lion, waiting for Hitler.

"What I have witnessed today," he snarled at Wiedemann, Hitler's ADC, waiting with him, "knocks the bottom out of the barrel!"

The prim, prudish Hitler winced as Göring showed him the file and photographs. As Göring hastened to point out, Blomberg had made fools of both of them, he had flouted the officers' code in marrying this woman, and he had brought ridicule on the Wehrmacht. Hitler sent Göring over to speak with Blomberg. The frosty interview lasted less than five minutes. Göring told the white-faced field marshal that the Führer insisted he resign.

Göring must already have been certain that Fritsch was out of the running. He hoped that Fritsch's opposition to Hitler's planned military adventures ruled Fritsch out. "What would your prime minister have done," he rhetorically asked Sir Neville Henderson a few days later, "if the chief of the imperial general staff [the British equivalent to Fritsch] had come to him and not only demanded the resignation of the war minister but also expressed dissatisfaction with the government's foreign policy and other measures?"

** Perhaps the man Blomberg wants to get rid of might have remembered von Göring.*

Göring immediately began extensive canvassing to be awarded the War Ministry. He sent over Bodenschatz to brief Wiedemann; he briefed von Below himself. But Hitler hesitated to give him the supreme command. His own solution, which he would disclose to Blomberg a few days later, was to become supreme commander himself, making use of Blomberg's staff, the Wehrmachtsamt, for the time being.

Unaware that Hitler had decided to award himself the prize, Göring took furtive steps to disqualify the only other runner, General von Fritsch. He recalled that the general had apparently once been accused of a peccadillo and sent for the police file to refresh his memory. Two years earlier a young convicted blackmailer, one Otto Schmidt, had claimed that in November 1933 he had witnessed a male prostitute, one Sepp Weingärtner, engaged in a homosexual act with a man who identified himself as "General Fritsch"; Schmidt had extorted twenty-five hundred marks from the man afterward. Among other homosexual victims Schmidt had named were Walter Funk and other leading Nazis. The authorities had notified Hitler and Göring. Hitler had ordered the investigations discontinued, because the Rhineland crisis was brewing. But evidently the investigations continued nonetheless, because early in July 1936 Schmidt was turned over to the Gestapo for higher interrogation, and this time the chief of the Homosexual Crimes Squad, Josef Meisinger, showed the blackmailer a photograph of General von Fritsch. From the general's private papers we know that at the end of 1937—perhaps coincidentally, some days after Blomberg had invited a wide-eyed Göring to ship his rival out of Germany—the Gestapo not only suddenly resumed its interrogations of the blackmailer but also located and began to question the male prostitute involved, Weingärtner.

"I do not know," wrote Fritsch in his own hand a few days later, "from whom the actual initiative came, be it from Hitler, from Göring or Himmler. Whoever it was, the crown witness, who was currently serving time in the Papenburg camp, was immediately produced."

It seems upon deeper analysis unlikely that Göring had initiated the whole fiasco. For him to have started the move against Fritsch as early as December 1937 would imply that he had realized that the Blomberg fiancée was indeed "a whore," and that he had nonetheless allowed himself and Hitler to be made ridiculous by attending her wedding in January.

Overimpetuous this time, Göring jumped bum-deep into this juicy scandal—not suspecting that he would shortly sink in almost up to his neck. He brought the dossier on the "homosexual Fritsch" to Hitler's attention at the same time as that on the Blomberg bride. Hitler told him to question the blackmailer, Schmidt, in person.

Age thirty-one now, the felon was brought into the Göring villa. He had been sentenced to seven years on December 28, 1936, on multiple counts of blackmail, impersonating a police officer, and a variety of homosexual

offenses. General Göring that the dark-haired, salt physiognomy of a criminal and Schmidt easily picked the accused general, saidified him from pictures; convincing enough. "It is quite do them the honor of so a believed that the available sexual acts."

Such, at any rate, was the history of the German Wehrmacht adjutant. The general stormed around it was left to cool his heels where Hitler and Göring

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Greedy for a quick decision. There could be no doubt, the truth in over a hundred

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Back in the library, General von Fritsch protested his innocence. "My word of honor," he recalled, with burning indignation, "was cast aside in

favor of the allegation of a scoundrel with a criminal record . . . I returned home deeply shaken by the wounding attitude shown by the Führer and Göring."

On Hitler's instructions, still protesting his innocence, the general was questioned by the Gestapo officers Werner Best and Franz Josef Huber the next day. Göring obtained the verbatim transcript and, with Himmler and Huber at his side, personally questioned not only Schmidt but Weingärtner too. Huber would never forget the incredulous contempt on Göring's face as he set eyes on the latter, the homosexual prostitute. Schmidt stuck to his story, but his pal was by no means so positive about Fritsch.

Shortly Göring had more cause for misgivings. He and the minister of justice jointly grilled Weingärtner alone, and the man again said that he "could not swear" that the army general had been his client.

Himmler's discomfiture was only beginning. At Gestapo headquarters Detective Franz Huber glimpsed on a colleague's desk a seized bankbook belonging to a certain cavalry captain, Achim von Frisch—and there were withdrawals in it that tallied exactly with the twenty-five hundred marks that Otto Schmidt claimed to have extorted from Fritsch. Huber warned his superiors, Heydrich and then Himmler: Neither told Hitler or Göring, nor did Göring have the moral courage to report his misgivings about Weingärtner, because in the meantime Hitler had bowed to army pressure and appointed a court of honor to try the Fritsch case, and—callously preempting its findings—he had already begun searching for a new commander in chief for the army.

Hitler dismissed without a second thought Göring's own greedy application to be given command of the army as well as the air force. His choice of successor eventually narrowed down to General Walther von Brauchitsch, father of one of Göring's adjutants. True, Brauchitsch was also involved in delicate matters: divorce negotiations revealing that he had spent years in an adulterous relationship. But he was the only army general who seemed to measure up to Hitler's requirements.

Over the last three days of January 1938 Göring negotiated with this general and his wife; she turned out to be demanding a large cash settlement before agreeing to a divorce. The cash was forked out by a philosophical Hitler, who had long ago learned that everything, from Carinhall to Eva Braun, had to be paid for. That obstacle out of the way, on the afternoon of February 3, 1938, he ordered Colonel General von Fritsch to resign.

Hitler camouflaged the whole nauseating scandal by a sweeping purge at the highest level. Dozens of generals learned literally from their morning *Völkischer Beobachter* that they had been axed. Over at the Foreign Ministry Neurath was replaced by the haughty Joachim von Ribbentrop, while the Ministry of Economics—currently though inconspicuously held by Göring himself—went to Walter Funk, who was indeed a well-known homosexual.

Hitler consoled Göring with Blomberg's old rank, field marshal—no mean

consolation, of course, sin Reich. For two hours on February last weeks, while his senior around him and Göring, C baton. (It was probably the bog of intrigue, the army's spared no sordid detail of nouncement that really mat commander of the Wehrma

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consolation, of course, since he thus outranked every other officer in the Reich. For two hours on February 5, Hitler offered his own account of these last weeks, while his senior generals and admirals clustered in a semicircle around him and Göring. Göring had appeared carrying a field marshal's baton. (It was probably the only such baton to be fished out of a stinking bog of intrigue, the army's illustrious Erich von Manstein reflected.) Hitler spared no sordid detail of Fritsch's felonies before making the only announcement that really mattered—that he had appointed himself supreme commander of the Wehrmacht.

A few days later, brooding upon the circumstances of his dismissal, General von Fritsch would surmise, "Above all, somebody must have system-atically and deliberately poisoned the Führer's confidence in me." He suspected Himmler, and even Blomberg. "For the last four years," he meditated, "he [Blomberg] has not been honest with me. But there must be some special reason—otherwise this lack of trust of the Führer and betrayal by Göring defy comprehension."

Field Marshal Hermann Göring—how grand that sounded!—would have to preside over the court of honor now convened to hear the Fritsch case. Raeder, Brauchitsch, and two legal assessors would assist him. But now his position was markedly different from two weeks earlier. No longer in the running for either Blomberg's or Fritsch's posts, he had no personal interest in the outcome other than a very urgent concern to protect his own reputation.

Fritsch had instructed an attorney well known to Göring to defend him, Count Rüdiger von der Goltz. By coincidence, Otto Schmidt had also claimed to have blackmailed this lawyer once. It soon turned out to have been a totally different lawyer, Herbert Goltz. This misidentification prompted the count to begin intensive house-to-house inquiries in the area around the scene of General von Fritsch's alleged homosexual encounter. On the second day of March he found what he had been looking for, a retired cavalry captain, Achim von Frisch. This officer not only admitted that it was he whom Schmidt had blackmailed, but even produced the actual receipt that the obliging blackmailer had given him for the twenty-five hundred marks. It was signed "Detective Kröger," the identity Schmidt had already admitted impersonating. It was an open-and-shut case.

The discovery threatened to put Göring, the general's arch accuser, in a hideous position. Count von der Goltz alerted Erich Neumann, the Staatssekretär in Göring's Four-Year Plan office. Neumann, seeing only the horrid implications for his chief's reputation, blurted out, "But this is ghastly!" Hitler, however, suspected immediately that this was just a clever cover-up by the army, and insisted that the court of honor go ahead. The Gestapo prevailed on Otto Schmidt to swear an affidavit that the Frisch episode was quite distinct from the Fritsch affair.

The court's first session thus threatened to become a day of reckoning for

"cropped up," obliging a wildly excited Field Marshal Göring, the next morning, to adjourn the court of honor against Fritsch sine die. Delighted that Ribbentrop was momentarily in London, he seized control in Berlin.

That morning, March 10, 1938, he found the Chancellery already teeming with ministers, generals, and brown-uniformed party officials. General Keitel had sent off for the *Case Otto* file. Hitler summoned General Ludwig Beck, the unenthusiastic chief of general staff, and directed him in a five-minute interview to have two army corps standing by to cross into Austria on Saturday the twelfth. At 5:00 P.M. Milch arrived back in Berlin and went straight into an operational conference with Göring and Stumpff. Ribbentrop's Staatssekretär Baron von Weizsäcker suggested they cloak their invasion in a semblance of legality by getting an "appeal" from the Austrian government for German troops to come in and "restore order." Göring did not at first see the point of such a stunt—"We don't need it," he told Hitler. "We're going in anyway, come hell or high water!"

At the back of his mind were the five Italian divisions that Mussolini had mobilized once before on the Brenner frontier, in 1934, after the Nazis murdered his friend Dollfuss. "I wanted," Göring later explained, "to make things quite plain [to Mussolini] and discourage any intentions he might have." German troops pouring into Austria would not only deter the Italians from laying greedy hands on the eastern Tyrol, but they would prevent the Hungarians and Czechs from seizing other border provinces of Austria. By nine P.M. Göring had drafted a letter to Dr. Schuschnigg, calling on him to resign in favor of Seyss-Inquart, since he had violated the Berghof Agreement, and a suitable telegram for Berlin to receive from Seyss-Inquart. Göring sent the documents down to Seyss-Inquart in Vienna by courier that same night.

Friday March 11, 1938—D-Day minus one—found Göring "the busiest man in Berlin," as he unashamedly boasted during his trial. At 10:00 A.M. he called a further military conference with Brauchitsch, Beck, and Milch. He wedged his bulk into a phone booth in the Reich Chancellery and began dictating orders down the line to his agents seven hundred miles away in Vienna. He sent Keppler down with a list of Austrians he had selected to form Seyss-Inquart's first Cabinet. Among them were Ernst Kaltenbrunner, a soft-spoken thirty-four-year-old lawyer defaced by dueling scars, to control the secret police; Major Alexander Löhr, an Austrian Air-Force officer, for defense; the lawyer Hans Fischböck for trade and industry, and Paula Göring's husband Franz Hueber to take over justice and foreign affairs.

Schuschnigg stalled for time. At 2:45, Seyss-Inquart phoned Göring from Vienna saying that the chancellor had agreed to postpone his plebiscite. It was not enough. After consulting Hitler, Göring phoned Seyss-Inquart back an hour later. "You must send off that prearranged telegram to the Führer,"

Göring demanded, and at 4 o'clock to dictate an ultimatum to Miklas.

Göring kept his patience. Vienna cut him off. (In retrospect, the line completely severed.) He had appointed. "God knows what the embassy were," he said later. Dombrowski—in fact, it was Dombrowski, later an SS mass-murderer to report that he was making Miklas, the constitutional officer.

Göring extended the deadline. SA and SS units were now in Vienna. Göring told Globocnik to go. If he were to be replaced, he said, the ministers were to be—"Just that."

GLOBOCNIK: Ja, ja!

GÖRING: Well, say the

GLOBOCNIK: Ja, your b

GÖRING: Right.

At five-thirty he received a call from Vienna's Herrengasse. He realized that he really was phoning Seyss-Inquart that he was taking the German military time. "If our demands are not met, Austria's existence will be on the line," Miklas hadn't grasped that in time to grasp it now. He tossed back to wait.

That evening he was staging his ceremonial uniform. He had sent their excuse already arriving at the ornate palace and the beautiful people in the time liveried footmen slipshod as the final orders went out to air crews.

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Göring demanded, and at 4:00 P.M. he phoned Seyss-Inquart again, this time
to dictate an ultimatum to Schuschnigg to resign by 5:30.

Göring kept his patience only poorly. Several times during phone calls,
Vienna cut him off. (In retrospect, it is a mystery why the Austrians did not
sever the line completely.) The clock was ticking on toward the deadline he
had appointed. "God knows who half the people rattling around in that
embassy were," he said later. Once, he understood he was speaking with a
Dombrowski—in fact, it was the Trieste-born Austrian Nazi Odilo Globoc-
nig, later an SS mass-murderer, whom Seyss-Inquart had sent to the embassy
to report that he was making only slow headway with the Austrian president
Miklas, the constitutional obstacle to any Nazi takeover.

Göring extended the deadline by two hours. The formerly banned Austrian
SA and SS units were now blatantly patrolling Vienna's streets in uniform.
Göring told Globocnig to get rid of the country's newspaper chiefs: They
were to be replaced, he said, by "our men." He spelled out who the new
ministers were to be—"Justice, that's straightforward. You know who gets
that."

GLOBOCNIG: *Ja, ja!*

GÖRING: Well, say the name.

GLOBOCNIG: *Ja, your brother-in-law, right?*

GÖRING: Right.

At five-thirty he received a call from the staff in Seyss-Inquart's chambers
in Vienna's Herrengasse. He could hear the panic in their voices as they
realized that he really was planning to invade. He shouted down the line to
Seyss-Inquart that he was to march right back to the president's palace,
taking the German military attaché General Wolfgang Muff with him this
time. "If our demands are not accepted, our troops will invade tonight, and
Austria's existence will be over! . . . Tell him we're not kidding now. If
Miklas hasn't grasped that in four hours, then tell him he's got four minutes
to grasp it now." He tossed the receiver back onto its cradle, and settled
back to wait.

That evening he was staging his Winter Ball, and it was time to change
into his ceremonial uniform. He found that the Austrian envoy and his military
attaché had sent their excuses, but over one thousand other guests were
already arriving at the ornate Aviators' Building. The air-force band oom-
pahed and the beautiful people of Berlin waltzed around the floor—and all
the time liveried footmen slipped in and out with messages and telegrams
as the final orders went out to one hundred thousand troops and hundreds of
air crews.

The big question mark was Italy. Dour-faced Italian diplomats cluttered
the floor, stiff-lipped and saying nothing. Together Hitler and Göring had

drafted a long letter during the day to Benito Mussolini, justifying their coming action in Austria. The complete typescript text, found years later in Göring's papers also made plain to the Duce that Germany intended to act against Czechoslovakia next. Göring had sent his friend Prince Philipp down to Italy with this new epistle to the Romans.

Göring waited at the Chancellery for word from Vienna and Rome. The seven-thirty deadline came and went. Just before eight Seyss-Inquart phoned again: Schuschnigg had merely "withdrawn," leaving everything in suspense. "Okay," replied Göring, "I'm going to order the invasion. . . . Tell those in charge that anybody resisting us will be turned over to our drumhead courts-martial. Is that clear?"

As they pensively trooped back to the conference room, Hitler slapped his thigh. "All right," he announced. "We go in!"

Hitler signed the executive order at eight-thirty. Back at the ball, an invisible tension, taut as a bandsman's drumskin, held the building as Göring returned to the floor. He took General Milch aside and murmured, "We go in at dawn."

It was not a secret that could be kept. In whispers and asides the news rippled across the floor. Göring reassured Massimo Magisrati that no German troops would advance south of Innsbruck; the diplomat's response was glacial. Then the surface tension eased, as droplets of good news arrived. At 8:48 P.M. Wilhelm Keppler phoned from Vienna—President Miklas was ordering Austrian troops not to resist. As the Prussian State Opera corps de ballet began to pirouette and whirl around the floor, Göring, sitting at the center table of the guests, tore a blank page from his program and penciled a note to Sir Neville Henderson:

As soon as the music is over I should like to talk to you, and will explain everything to you.

They met in his private room. The British ambassador said, "Even if Schuschnigg has acted with precipitate folly, that is no excuse for Germany to be a bully."

Two hours later Mussolini gave his assent to Hitler's action. He had told Prince Philipp frankly that he had written off Austria as soon as Schuschnigg had committed the plebiscite "*Dummheit*."

"I always knew we could bank on Mussolini," Hitler congratulated Göring. "This is the happiest moment of my life. Not for one second did I doubt the greatness of the Duce."

Encased on three sides by hostile German forces, Czechoslovakia realized that its future strategic position would be impossible. At 11:00 P.M. the Czech minister Vojtěch Mastný scurried over to Göring and presented his compliments. The field marshal rose to his feet and solemnly gave his word

that Prague had no grounds for to the Czech president, Dr. Ed mobilize Czech forces. "Good am now able to repeat my und me in supreme charge—he's g

Elsewhere was Austria. Lear already flown there, Göring o instructions to the exhausted S you to take over their wiretap not want Himmler getting his h

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Göring's vague plan now was allow Hitler to be voted in a Saturday—it was now March 1 special mission, to reassure the pension rights if he retired. "W guffawed the day before, "you

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that Prague had no grounds for concern. Mastný passed this reassurance on to the Czech president, Dr. Edvard Beneš, who promised for his part not to mobilize Czech forces. "Good," said Göring, told of this at midnight. "I am now able to repeat my undertaking officially because the Führer has put me in supreme charge—he's going elsewhere for a short time."

Elsewhere was Austria. Learning at 2:30 A.M. that Heinrich Himmler had already flown there, Göring ordered one of his minions to phone urgent instructions to the exhausted Seyss-Inquart in Vienna: "He [Göring] wants you to take over their wiretapping agencies right away, okay?" Göring did not want Himmler getting his hands on these.

From first light onward three hundred Luftwaffe transport planes began ferrying troops into Austria. Acting head of state for the first time in his life, Göring remained in Berlin, relishing every moment of this brief taste of power. He phoned Mastný, this time to promise that no troops would come within ten miles of the Czech frontier. He sent for Tauschitz and mockingly remarked that he had missed him at last night's ball.

The Austrian envoy asked only, "Where is the Führer?"

"He's gone," roared Göring, laying it on thick and rotten. "He's gone where he's not been allowed to go for twenty years: to visit his parents' grave in Austria."

Göring's vague plan now was that President Miklas should step down, to allow Hitler to be voted in as president of Austria. At midday that Saturday—it was now March 12—he sent Milch down by plane with a special mission, to reassure the president that Germany would respect his pension rights if he retired. "With fourteen children to support," he had guffawed the day before, "you can't just do as you please!"

That Saturday evening he settled back at Carinhall and tuned in to the radio commentaries coming from all the world. He was unquestionably proud of what he had done for his Führer. Hitler was being given the Austrian equivalent of a ticker-tape parade as his automobile plowed slowly through cheering crowds into the first big town, Linz. Hysterical Austrians mobbed the car, strewing flowers in his path. "People are weeping and sobbing with joy," Göring related to one caller. "It's so unnerving that even our men can't hold back their tears. . . . Just one great outburst of joy from everybody, give or take a few panicky Jews and other guilt-stricken gentlemen."

Soon the airwaves carried the voice of Hitler himself, broadcasting from a balcony in Linz, while half a million Austrians packed into the square below. Göring heard Hitler, an orator like few others, tongue-tied with emotion.

Some hours later the phone rang, and it was Hitler calling, still choked with pent-up feelings. "Göring," he said, "you just can not imagine. I had completely forgotten how beautiful my country is."

"Yes," reported the field marshal, glowing, to Ribbentrop the next morning. "The Führer was just about all in when he spoke to me last night."

British might well figure among his enemies after all in some future war. He summoned his high command to a briefing in Berlin four days later.

Shortly before he addressed these generals, he broke it to Göring that he was going ahead with *Green* in the fall—that a purely political settlement was no longer acceptable. Göring clutched at straws. He argued that the army generals had made barely any progress on the vital West Wall, the line of bunkers defending Germany's frontier against France. Hitler was unmoved. "We'll deal with Czechoslovakia using these old generals," he said mockingly, "then we've got four or five years."

Göring's awe of Hitler was absolute, and this was his gravest impediment. "I try so hard," he once admitted to Hjalmar Schacht, "but every time I stand before the Führer, my heart drops into the seat of my pants." His heart wallowing around those nether regions now, he buttonholed Hitler's personal adjutant just before Hitler's conference of May 28 began. "Wiedemann," he pleaded, "does the Führer really imagine the French won't do anything if we light into the Czechs? Doesn't he read the Forschungsamt intercepts I send over?"

Hitler paid no heed to Göring's misgivings. "It is my unshakable resolve," he said to the generals, "that Czechoslovakia shall vanish from the map of Europe."

He gave them until September to be ready.

And then one day late that spring, five days after the Hitler conference, one of the telephones on his desk rang. "Congratulations!"—he recognized Emmy's voice—"from tiny Edda and me!"

A father at forty-five, the field marshal jumped into his sports car and hurtled over to the West Sanatorium clutching a bouquet of roses, while diplomatic Berlin heaved a sigh of relief: Göring, the ambassadors hoped, the complete family man, must now become a man of peace and conciliator in the councils of war.

Emmy settled into motherhood. "Hermann likes women who are fat," she told Sir Nevile Henderson, and comfortably complied.

Troubled by his heart, Hermann himself made token forays in the opposite direction. Along with the other amusements at Carinhall (which included a dentist's chair to "bore" his guests) he had installed an Elizabeth Arden reducing machine, and for the benefit of the visiting duchess of Windsor he forced himself between its rollers in full-dress uniform. The duke gave him a signed portrait photograph, which Göring later displayed next to the Führer's; he had had the latter specially enlarged and framed by his master silversmith, Professor Herbert Zeitner.

He had all the happiness that money could buy and more money than was proper to buy it. Tax declarations found in his files show that in fiscal 1936 he had paid only 2,832 marks tax on his 28,160-mark salary as air minister, and only 190 marks on his 15,795 marks pay as prime minister of Prussia.

But his emoluments from oil for him to fork out 120,000 marks for a Greek gold bangle and smuggled bag ("I am delighted," wrote sending him this Christmas "won for Germany. Of course, comes from"); Göring's fortune buying two or three ancient barossa, which his friend the "God's own island," Capri.

Most of all he liked to cruise *Carin II*, a pleasure that cost dear. The AEG company had machinery alone, while Prussia rebuilding the bridges over the boat's superstructure was too

In June 1938 he cruised up Emmy was nursing Edda at "out of her earnings as a film actress to see *Hamlet* at Castle Elsinore to purchase twenty-one dozers Bach bakery. He had fallen for ing," recalled pastry-cook Hermann in the shop had to pack the shuttle service out to the short-lived. On the following bakery—everybody wanted to Hermannsson, "he ordered me which we had to send him by

His favorite cruising routes Berlin into the Elbe and down Germans lined the banks and past. Arrayed in a white uniform up applause and sunshine while like "Blame It on Napoleon." and he settled down to a beer: very idea of losing was unthink at the thought of accidentally stuff a pajama pocket with lavish, mahogany-paneled be

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But his emoluments from other sources were already substantial—enough for him to fork out 120,000 marks (about \$40,000 1936 dollars) for an ancient Greek gold bangle and smuggle it out of Italy in the ambassador's diplomatic bag ("I am delighted," wrote the ambassador, Ulrich von Hassell, to Göring, sending him this Christmas "gift" on December 23, 1937, "that it has been won for Germany. Of course, there must be no mention of which country it comes from"); Göring's fortune was also large enough for him to contemplate buying two or three ancient towers in Italy, including the Castello di Barbarossa, which his friend the Swedish author Axel Munthe offered him on "God's own island," Capri.

Most of all he liked to cruise in his—or more strictly, Emmy's—yacht, *Carin II*, a pleasure that cost both the Prussian purse and his benefactors dear. The AEG company had to pay thirty thousand marks for the electrical machinery alone, while Prussia had to bear the cost of demolishing and rebuilding the bridges over the rivers and inlets around Carinhall, since the boat's superstructure was too high.

In June 1938 he cruised up to the North Sea pleasure island of Sylt, where Emmy was nursing Edda at "Min Lütten," the dunes cottage she had bought out of her earnings as a film actress. Early in July he cruised up to Copenhagen to see *Hamlet* at Castle Elsinore, meet Crown Prince Fredrik, and above all to purchase twenty-one dozen *skrubbar*—Danish pastries—at the Christian Bach bakery. He had fallen for them while visiting Denmark in 1919. "Göring," recalled pastry-cook Hermansson, "drove up in three cars. The girls in the shop had to pack the pastries into cardboard boxes and carry them in a shuttle service out to the cars." His reducing efforts had evidently been short-lived. On the following Sunday the Danish townsfolk crowded into the bakery—everybody wanted to sample the Göring *skrubbar*. "Later," said Hermansson, "he ordered more pastries and *kranskaka* [a ring-shaped cake], which we had to send him by train."

His favorite cruising routes took *Carin II* along the inland waterways from Berlin into the Elbe and down the canals to the Rhine. Proud, contented Germans lined the banks and waved as their chubby field marshal chugged past. Arrayed in a white uniform, he sprawled in a deck chair and lapped up applause and sunshine while the boat's loudspeakers boomed gaudy songs like "Blame It on Napoleon." At dusk they made fast at some village quay and he settled down to a beer and a game of skat at a pfennig a point. The very idea of losing was unthinkable, and his adjutants sat with faces bleached at the thought of accidentally winning. Game over, the field marshal would stuff a pajama pocket with bonbons scooped up from a jar and retire to his lavish, mahogany-paneled bedroom.

At 6:00 A.M. his valet, Robert, often found him up on deck, swathed in blankets and contemplating the rising sun. Göring would motion to the valet to switch on the phonograph down below, and then the chosen riverside village would be awakened by an entire Wagner opera blaring from the boat's

loudspeakers. When, toward midday, the final golden chords had enveloped the countryside, Göring would send for Robert. "Again!" he might command; or, more mercifully, "Let it run through again as far as 'Behold the golden pommel's gleam in the sun's bright rays.'"

"I wouldn't have your job for a thousand marks a month!" whispered the chief adjutant, Major Conrath, to the valet once. Robert showed him a glittering new air-force dagger, and asked him to get Göring's name engraved on the hilt.

The major was a pessimist. "Nobody'll give you anything for it," he sniffed, "—afterward!"

These summer weeks of 1938, which should have been golden-hued after the birth of his daughter, Edda, were overclouded for Göring by Hitler's planning against Czechoslovakia. President Beneš was proving less tractable than Schuschnigg—he relied on his country's Maginot-style frontier fortifications, and on his alliance with France. Britain, however, though treaty-bound to help the French, was not eager to assist Beneš. "There can be no doubt that Britain doesn't want war," Göring assured his aircraft industrialists in a secret speech at Carinhall on July 8. "Nor does France, for that matter. With America," he added, "you can't be certain."

The aircraft manufacturers in his audience, including the big names like Claude Dornier, Ernst Heinkel, Willi Messerschmitt, and the directors of Hugo Junkers, heard him again predict a Czech "provocation."

Don't any of you gentlemen imagine that if Germany yet again fights and loses a war, you'll be able to crawl away and say, 'I never did want this war—I was always dead against it and the system—I never had any truck with them.' They'll just laugh you down. You are Germans, and they won't care two hoots whether you were part of it or not.

To encourage them, he dropped a broad hint about Germany's bright future if and when they won: "Germany will be the greatest power on earth. The world's markets will belong to Germany . . . But we must venture something for this. We have to make the initial investment." He assured his listeners at this Carinhall conference that he conferred at least once a week with General Udet, his chief technical officer. "Nothing important is ordered—nothing whatever—without first being discussed down to the very last detail and approved by me." He reminded them of the new generation of aircraft engines coming along, including the air-cooled radial BMW engine and the Junkers Jumo 211, but pleaded for forward thinking by these aviation experts:

I still don't have [complained Göring] a strato-bomber capable of flying at eighty [thousand] or one hundred thousand feet . . .

I still miss the rocket attitude. And I still see five tons of bombs to be to get such a bomb back down their throats

As that summer wore on forest glades, coddled the in through the newspapers. T another sword, handmade b its cross guard encrusted wi zoned on the blade: TO THE F FIELD MARSHAL HERMANN G heavy weapon in both hands

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Göring] a strato-bomber capable of one hundred thousand feet . . .

I still miss the rocket engines that would enable us to fly at that attitude. And I still see no sign at all of a bomber that can carry five tons of bombs to New York and get back. How happy I'd be to get such a bomber and ram some of their arrogance right back down their throats.

As that summer wore on, he lazed in the sunshine, strolled around the forest glades, coddled the infant Edda, devoured adventure books, and leafed through the newspapers. They carried photographs of him accepting yet another sword, handmade by Paul Müller of Solingen, four feet long with its cross guard encrusted with twenty-five rubies and gold lettering emblazoned on the blade: TO THE HONORARY MASTER OF THE GERMAN CRAFTSMEN, FIELD MARSHAL HERMANN GÖRING. "With this sword," he said, raising the heavy weapon in both hands, "I shall smite all the enemies of Germany!"

He wondered who they would ultimately be. Would Hitler really order *Case Green*? What would Italy do this time? On July 9 he entertained the Italian chief of staff, General Alberto Pariani, at Carinhall. He boasted about his air force and claimed that Britain and France had no intention of helping the Czechs. Pariani disagreed, and warned the field marshal that Germany must finish Czechoslovakia with one thrust.

"We must hang together," Göring cautioned him, "for better or for worse."

That summer's entries in Göring's thick, leather-bound diary—lettered in gilt, "*Besprechungen*" ("Conferences")—reflected his energy in mobilizing the aircraft industry for war. The diary opened with a July 11, 1938, conference on securing the requisite manpower, including women, for the aircraft factories, training new apprentices and converting unskilled workers into specialists. On the same day he conferred with a building contractor about proposals to use Reich autobahns for aircraft runways and hangars, and he discussed the construction of new air-raid shelters and underground factories, while the same diary reveals him on the fifteenth and sixteenth in secret talks with Four-Year Plan agents, Neuhausen and Bernhardt, on ways of extending Nazi influence in Yugoslavia and Spain, and on obtaining foodstuffs and raw materials from Spain in return for arms deliveries to General Franco. ("Caution," Göring noted, "because of Nonintervention.")

The Luftwaffe's plans for *Green* were now complete. Four hundred fighters, six hundred bombers, and two hundred dive-bombers and ground-attack planes would operate against Czechoslovakia, while 250 Junkers 52 transports would drop paratroops into the heart of the fortifications. Simultaneously General Helmuth Felmy's Second Air Fleet (*Luftflotte*) would stand by to operate from airfields in northwestern Germany against Britain as soon as *Green* was over.

As fall approached, Göring became restive. He had a lot more to lose in

a war than his Führer. On July 14, he approved Milch's suggestion that a British fighter squadron be invited over to Germany for a friendly visit to the Luftwaffe. Using Wiedemann's girl friend, Princess Stephanie von Hohenlohe, he had inquiries made in London whether he himself might fly over to see Lord Halifax. On July 18, the latter, now foreign secretary, received Wiedemann in secret in London and provided the one assurance that the field marshal had asked for, that he would not be exposed to public insult. But then, when Wiedemann reported this outcome to Hitler the next day on the Obersalzberg, Hitler said that it was "out of the question" for Göring to go to London now.

Hitler had begun waging an ultramodern war of nerves on Prague—what he called in a secret speech in August "whetting the blade." Göring played an active part in this, and his Forschungsamt closely monitored its results.

This psychological warfare reached its climax when the French air-force commander, General Joseph Vuillemin, visited Germany in mid-August 1938. Göring allowed him to see the beer gardens, swimming pools, and saunas that he had provided for aircraft-industry workers; as Vuillemin's gaping aides counted the brand-new Me 109 fighter planes lined up on Döberitz Airfield—twenty-seven—a four-engine Focke-Wulf Condor touched down. At Oranienburg, where only cows had grazed twelve months earlier, an Ernst Heinkel factory was now producing seventy He 111 bombers a month—more than the entire French aircraft industry in a year. In a remarkable new hedgehopping Fieseler Storch, Ernst Udet flew the French Commander in Chief at a lazy eighty miles an hour over the local concentration camp (Vuillemin noted that it was visibly "well attended"—"*très habité*."') As the Storch fluttered down onto an airfield, it rocked in the slipstream of the new record-breaking He 100 zooming a few feet overhead at full throttle. It was purely a laboratory-test vehicle, but Milch blandly asked about "production plans," and Udet grinned and said, "The second mass-production line is just starting and the third in three weeks' time."

And so the amiable bullying went on. At Messerschmitt's Augsburg works airfield a twin-engined Me 110 heavy fighter prototype, jacked up in the butts, blasted away with a twenty-millimeter cannon, and another was looped and stunted with one engine shut down. At Junkers' Magdeburg plant officials bragged that the 1,250-horsepower Jumo 211 would replace the standard 210 from November (it would still not be in squadron service five years later).

In his final report General Vuillemin warned Paris that the German Air Force was one of "truly devastating power," and this undoubtedly helped the vacillating French to make up their minds when the time came.

Whatever his own misgivings, Göring cooperated with the OKW on the tactical planning of *Green* and heaped criticism on the army generals and their plans. He insisted that the all-important "provocation" be timed to ensure the right flying weather for his air force. On August 23, he summoned his commanding generals to Carinhall, and two days later his air staff issued

a directive for *Enlarged Case*. Countries would come to Cz. Hitler's SS adjutant Max Wünn on the Obersalzberg on the la

Although we have no record incident that suggests that Göring's economic adviser, Helmut W. rendezvous in Basel with Edg him to put a very oddly worded Department on behalf of some. If war broke out, this question Washington intervene with Lo even more draconian Versailles highly placed" Berlin gentlemen decided that at the present junct

In London the Foreign Office was the first feeler to have co

Of course, Göring's "feeble psychological warfare. But he derided too. Hitler, he said on Sunday, had asked him to inform him to settle the Sudeten problem the moderation of his other suggestions out of the drum-thumping peace and quiet of Castle Velde of a Czech "incident"—for example, man leader Konrad Henlein. He "Chamberlain and Hitler ought

Chamberlain had in fact been fourteenth, Henderson phoned Berg to Carinhall suffering from bypassing Ribbentrop to secure prime minister. "Of course!" at Berchtesgaden, at once. Chamberlain some headway and agreed to make a record of the Berghof meeting.

On the morning of the seventh Carinhall and found Göring, still in an hour-long talk the ambassador closeted alone with Hitler on the same precipitate military action meeting. Göring put his mind at of his toughest language yet. "make war on Germany, one thi

The religious christening irked the party as much as the Göring church wedding had. (Rudolf Hess, also a first-time father, opted for the party's own pagan "naming ceremony" six days later.) Martin Bormann, Hess's powerful chief of staff, found out that Göring's nanny was not a party member. Emmy confessed sweetly, "I am not either!" To protect her from further reproof, Hitler would give her a golden party membership badge as a Christmas gift, engraved with a low number—744,606—borrowed from a member who had passed on to a place where, no doubt, party membership no longer counted.

A few days after the christening Göring took the sleeper back to Berlin. As the train passed through Halle, an adjutant shook him awake and raised the blind. The clouds were lit by a distant conflagration. He thought no more about it until driving through Berlin to his ministry—he found his car slithering across broken glass, and there were smoldering ruins where Jewish stores and synagogues had been. It was the first he knew of the nationwide pogrom organized by Dr. Joseph Goebbels.

Göring had fallen out with the "little doctor" over Goebbels's unconventional life-style. During October Magda Goebbels had come over to Carinhall to weep on Emmy's shoulder about the "devil incarnate" whom she had married. She admitted that she was herself entangled with her husband's handsome secretary, Karl Hanke, but everybody in Berlin knew that Goebbels was shamelessly coercing young actresses for sexual favors. The latest was the elegant Czech actress Lida Baarova. Göring authorized a security wiretap on her phone, and ruthlessly broadcast the scandal around Nazi high society. The Gestapo joined the hue-and-cry. "There are literally dozens of cases," Heinrich Himmler, no paragon of virtue himself, chuckled to Alfred Rosenberg. "The women are standing in line to swear affidavits on how he coerced them. I've turned over the choicest statements to the Führer."

Goebbels justified himself to Göring by saying that his wife was "frigid as an iceberg." Pacing up and down his study, puffing a Virginia cigarette, Göring solemnly listened then sent the couple down to see Hitler. The Führer patched things up.

The pogrom of November 9 was Goebbels misguided way of saying thank you.

Göring had no time at all for pogroms. Since the Nazis had come to power, his speeches had betrayed a dutiful anti-Semitism that met the mood of the moment in Central Europe. Ethnic imbalances have always provided ammunition for nationalists, and nowhere more so than in Germany. In 1933 its half million Jews made up less than one percent of the population, but they crowded the more lucrative and influential professions. Berlin's 160,000 Jews provided 27 percent of the doctors, 48 percent of the attorneys, and fifty-six percent of the notaries. Vienna had even more. "Vienna," declared

IRL AND NIGHT

princess might have envied the infant Edda Göring her beauty as a child. Her parents called her a betrayed a trace of her father's were sold of him enfolding her in at her christening on November 4, father. The wiser men of Germany Cranach, the burghers of Cologne men subscribed to build a very at Carinhall—a miniature Sans ms, and dolls to scale. Her fourth s red uniform manufactured by the fifth, learning the piano; her sixth, of a trainload of grimy evacuees Ruhr.

By. For the last wartime Christmas, nightdresses made of heavy bridal By that time the refugees were rection.

Göring, speaking there on March 26, 1938, "can no longer rightfully be called a German city. Where there are three hundred thousand Jews, you cannot speak of a German city."

He made liberal use of Nazi solecisms about the Jews. Telephoning Ribbentrop after the Anschluss, the FA heard him say, "The fact is that apart from the Jews clogging up Vienna, there's nobody at all who's against us." Why should a Hermann Göring use different language when even the British ambassador was warning of "Jewish troublemaking" and lobbying in favor of a preventive war against Hitler?

The Göring attitude toward Jews was beset by inconsistencies. He dealt with them when purchasing fine artifacts and precious stones; through his valet, Robert, he would purchase in Paris a recording of Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*, although Offenbach's works were proscribed in Nazi Germany. The Nuremberg Laws on race, drafted by the Ministry of the Interior in September 1935, came as a surprise to him. ("I am still wondering," he would say in an overheard May 1945 conversation, "where they could have originated.") He moderated where he could. When the fervent Nazi galleiter of Danzig, Albert Forster, wanted to introduce the laws there in 1937, it was Göring who prevented it. He shielded individual Jews, like Arthur Imhausen, the Jewish co-inventor of synthetic edible fats. "At my suggestion," he wrote to the Ruhr chemist on June 23, 1937, "in view of your services, the Führer has authorized your recognition as a full Aryan." He allowed Gustav Gründgens the (homosexual) artistic director of his Prussian State Theater, to hire actors with Jewish wives, and he encouraged Emmy to intervene with the authorities on behalf of Jewish stage colleagues (until a personal letter came from Hitler urging her to desist).

While the doctrinaire Nazis fought the Jews at every level of their existence, Göring fought only certain Jews, and on a much narrower front. The economic factor underlay all his directives against them. On May 15, 1936, soon after being appointed "currency dictator," he had remarked, "Scandinavian importers want German motor vehicles but are being put off by bad representation of our interests, mostly by Jews." "It's a fallacy," he argued on the same occasion, "to believe that Jews are going to work exceptionally hard to please us. There are exceptions, but these just prove the rule."

In this economic battle he would be quite ruthless. A few days after the November 1938 pogrom he referred to an earlier conference "at which we discussed this problem for the first time and took the decision to Aryanize the German economy, to throw the Jews out of our business life and into the debtors' register." The concept had been sound, he said, but he complained that the execution had been only mediocre.

All that would change during 1938. As chief of the Four-Year Plan he gave warning in his Vienna speech of March 26 that Jewish businesses were to be compulsorily purchased and sold off to non-Jews—"systematically and carefully, legally but inexorably."

The remaining Jews in up with two streetwise E certificates to two thousand caught. Göring then issue Jewish-owned businesses. "Exclusion of Jews from comed the new impetus th it "the beginning of a def

All over the world [s at Carinhall on July it's clear why: Anti-S a logical consequen them.

The Jew sees only world on fire. And praying for war—bec of the world's press :

Göring's little-publicized c life was as carefully plann fight over Corinth or Crete tions, some of which had se corporations designed to c anti-Semitic countries in w no distinction between Jew different nationalities "just Sudeten territories," he w who're becoming Englishn cut any ice with us."

Under his chief econom of official bloodhounds spe strip off their Aryan camo name of the Reich. This e ample, the ruthless liquidat Central and Eastern Europe l In 1934 Ignaz had bequeath to his four sons—all of w immediately begun to divest th "front men" of unchalleng the Reich. The assets were to "insoluble difficulties" v (entjuden) both Petschek en Göring suggested he mop

partly American) stockholders were for the major offensive against the Germany's lignite-brickette producers. Wohlthat directed his attack on illigence from the Gestapo and Forbeks clung to their property with a before Munich they vanished and citizenship and, incidentally, over government fund set up to aid Czech personal "promise of safe-conduct," or questioning.

erman offices, Göring and Wohlthat rmans, English, and Swiss bankers. in the financial swamp and claimed that the Petscheks had thought of radical decision that brought victory on of the Petschek conglomerate, a man Coal Trading, Inc., to be a he Reich Citizenship Act of June 14, be deemed Jewish if under predom in the Petschek defenses, because ntly named corporation was in fact late bank. One after the other, the s were proclaimed Jewish and turned

the financial problem of buying out olders were paid off in full when the er 1939; as a bonus for Göring the e deposits to exchange for urgently awhile, as the Germans had occupied had confiscated crates filled with cor could be freighted to neutral Swit the family had defrauded the Reich of the penalties and tax arrears would far due to the German "front men," so Wohlthat and his team would report to egle tax-fraud and currency-violation

blem" most evenings as he motored all. He tried to put it out of his mind entered his own domain, with its herds a But as he chewed contentedly on his y nurse their infant daughter by the

roaring fire, those moose reminded him of the problem again. "We'll give the Jews a forest of their own," he cruelly jested when Goebbels asked in November for an ordinance banning Jews from public parks, "and [Undersecretary] Alpers will see to it that all the animals that look like Jews—the moose has that same hook nose—are put in there and allowed to apply for naturalization."

Nobody wanted Europe's Jews. When Jews who had emigrated from Poland began to flood back there in alarm, their own Warsaw government passed a law designed to keep them out. A furious Polish Jew stormed the German embassy in Paris and pumped bullets into the ambassador's deputy, an impulsive action that was the beginning of the Jews' long journey into darkness, because a vengeful speech by Goebbels triggered a pogrom throughout Germany and Austria—a dusk of agonizing screams, of arson, and of shattered shop windows that would go down in history as "Crystal Night."

Unquestionably, Göring approved of punishing the whole Jewish community in some way for the diplomat's murder. "The swine will think twice," he said, "before they inflict a second murder on us." But the unthinking and needlessly destructive mode of revenge that Goebbels had selected outraged him. As his limousine made its way through the shards in Berlin the next morning, November 10, he got fighting mad and called a terse meeting of the Nazi party leaders at the Air Ministry Building. Walther Darré heard Göring call the pogrom "a bloody outrage." The field marshal lectured them all on their "lack of discipline." He reserved his most pained language for Dr. Joseph Goebbels. "I buy most of my works of art from Jewish dealers," he cried.

Goebbels rushed yelping to the Führer's lunch table but found little sympathy. Hitler had spent the night in Munich issuing orders to stop the outrages and sending out his adjutants to protect Jewish businesses like Bernheimer's, the antique dealers. Himmler was also furious with Goebbels for having made free with the local SS units to stage the pogrom. Over at the Chancellery that afternoon, November 10, Göring waded into Goebbels. "This is going to cost us a bloody fortune abroad," he shouted, "and I'm the one who's got to earn it all!"

Hitler did not take sides but expressed concern to Göring over the undisciplined approach to "the Jewish problem" and ordered him to draw up stringent laws immediately. Later that day he telephoned Göring to make the point: "All the key measures must be in one central hand." Lest he be misunderstood, he instructed Bormann to send Göring a letter emphasizing that the Führer wanted a uniform attack on the whole problem.

On Hitler's instructions, Göring called a Cabinet-level conference on November 12. "I am sick and tired of these demonstrations," he bellowed. "They don't harm the Jews but they do end up hurting me, because I am the one who has to hold the economy together."

Most of Crystal Night's appalling results were now in. Nazi-directed mobs

had wrecked seventy-five hundred Jewish stores and a hundred synagogues, often setting fire to neighboring non-Jewish property. A single Berlin jeweler's like Margraf's had been looted of 1,700,000 Reichsmarks (\$375,000) of stock. The total loss—provisionally assessed at 25 million Reichsmarks (\$5.6 million)—would fall squarely on the (non-Jewish) German insurance market. Meanwhile the government would lose all tax revenue from the seventy-five hundred wrecked stores. It was a massive "own goal" that Goebbels, the Nazi "minister for public enlightenment," had scored. "It seems," snapped Göring at the conference, "that our own public could do with some enlightenment!"

The chief of the Insurance Companies' Association, Eduard Hilgard, assessed the glass damage alone at 6 million Reichsmarks. He confirmed that the major loss would fall on non-Jews, since the Jewish businessmen mainly just rented their stores.

GÖRING: "That's just what we were saying."

GOEBBELS: "Then the Jew must pay for the damage."

GÖRING: "That's not the point. We haven't got the raw materials. It's all foreign plate glass [a Belgian monopoly], and it's going to cost a fortune in hard currency! It's enough to drive you up the wall!"

While Göring had some expectation of picking up foreign currency if the German insurers had reinsured abroad, his hope that they might even refuse to pay out on claims submitted by Jews was frustrated.

HILGARD: "If we refuse to honor clear and binding obligations, it would be a blot on the honor of the German insurance market."

GÖRING: "But not if I intervene with a statutory order!"

HILGARD: "I was about to come to that."

HEYDRICH: "You could cough up on the insurance all right, and then we could confiscate it at the point of payout. That way you save face."

Hilgard was still uneasy and thought that would "not be a good thing" in the long run.

"I beg your pardon!" exclaimed Göring. "If you're legally obliged to pay out six millions and all at once an angel descends from on high, in the form of my somewhat corpulent self, and tells you that you're let off paying a million of that—the hell you can't say it's a good thing!"

The verbatim record of this discussion provides an unsavory picture of Hermann Göring. Told that even the looted merchandise was often German-owned and sold by the Jews only on a commission basis, Göring wailed, "I wish you'd done in two hundred Jews and not destroyed such assets."

"Thirty-five," corrected stapo. "It's thirty-five dead."

The upshot was two law Jews from the economy and of one billion Reichsmarks that Hitler and Göring had bridging Germany's growth at a meeting of the Reich penalty and the sale of Jew the budgetary shortfall.

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"Thirty-five," corrected Reinhard Heydrich, the ice-cool head of the Gestapo. "It's thirty-five dead."

The upshot was two laws, co-signed by Göring, purporting to eliminate Jews from the economy and to levy a collective fine on the Jewish community of one billion Reichsmarks for the diplomat's murder. There is little doubt that Hitler and Göring had jointly hit on this cynical idea as one way of bridging Germany's growing currency deficit. As Göring frankly explained at a meeting of the Reich Defense Council on November 18, 1938, this penalty and the sale of Jewish businesses provided an "interim remedy" for the budgetary shortfall.

There remained some loose ends after the pogrom. He signed a fistful of decrees over the coming weeks providing the legal framework that Hitler had been demanding for an orderly, regularized solution of "the Jewish problem."

Undoubtedly his purpose was to prevent any recurrence of such pogroms. In his eyes Heydrich was the real villain, after Goebbels. "The rest of them," his sister Ilse Göring told a friend, quoting Hermann, "are tolerable. Himmler himself is quite unimportant and basically harmless."

Heydrich had a clever legal mind and had thought the whole "Jewish problem" logically through. "The problem [is]," he had explained at the November 12 meeting, "not how to get the rich Jews out but the Jewish mob." He foresaw a ten-year plague of rootless, unemployed Jews in the Reich and demanded that they wear distinguishing badges.

"My dear Heydrich," said Göring, "you're not going to get anywhere without the large-scale erection of ghettos in the cities."

In some instances he moderated the anti-Jewish ordinances. At the end of November he ordered the release of any World War I combat veterans found among the twenty thousand Jews detained during the "reprisal action" after the diplomat's murder. To avoid excesses, in mid-December 1938 he issued a circular stating, "To ensure uniformity in dealing with the Jewish problem, which is of vital concern for our overall economic interests, I request that all regulations and other important directives bearing upon it be submitted to me for sanction before being issued."

Irritated by the continuing arbitrary actions by officials against Jews, he secured clear guidelines from Hitler later that month. "I have sought the Führer's pleasure on these matters," Göring announced, "and in the future this, his will, is to be considered the sole guiding principle." In the future, no Jews were to be deprived of protected tenancies (that is, tenancies from which they could not legally be evicted); Hitler merely suggested that they be brought under one roof. The expropriation of Jewish-owned housing was to be halted. "Most pressing," defined Göring, "is the Aryanization of factories and businesses, agricultural real estate and forests." While Jews were no longer to use railroad sleeping cars or dining cars, a petty discrimination for which Goebbels had agitated in November, Göring ruled out the

introduction of "Jews Only" compartments or any total ban on using public transport. Finally he said, Hitler had ordained that Jewish civil servants would not forfeit their pensions.

In one respect Hitler, Göring, Ribbentrop, and Himmler all saw eye to eye. All three saw Jewish emigration—to Tanganyika, to Madagascar, or to Palestine, as the only realistic solution. On January 24, 1939, Göring set up within the Ministry of the Interior a Central Reich Office for Jewish Emigration, and ordered Heydrich to organize a suitable Jewish agency to process applications, raise funds for the poorer Jews, and agree on destinations. Göring insisted on being kept informed. "My decision," he ruled, "is to be obtained before taking any fundamental actions."

With Göring's inauguration of this central office, the expulsion of Jews from the German-controlled area of Europe gained momentum. Two thirds thus escaped before the war obliged Heinrich Müller, of the Gestapo, to order a halt on October 23, 1939: Three hundred thousand Jews had left Germany, 130,000 Austria, and 30,000 Bohemia and Moravia; seventy thousand of these had found their way to Palestine.

Emigration was only one possibility that Göring foresaw. "The second is as follows," he said in November 1938, selecting his words with uncharacteristic care. "If at any foreseeable time in the future the German Reich finds itself in a foreign political conflict, then it is self-evident that we in Germany will address ourselves first and foremost to effecting a grand settling of scores against the Jews."

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LOSING WEIGHT

When he turned forty-six on January 12, 1939, the gift that would please him the most was a scale model of the sprawling Hermann Göring Works. He was not interested in war—he wanted to exploit the economic potential of southeastern Europe. Politically he was increasingly at odds with Hitler. As he heard the Führer unveil his plans for world domination in a series of secret speeches that January and February 1939, he would feel the gulf between them growing wider. In the coming year Göring would repeatedly appear on the side of the moderates. But he was cautious even then, not wanting to forfeit his hard-earned status as Hitler's principal lieutenant.

Little was left of their earlier intimacy. Leaving Germany for San Francisco in February 1939, Hitler's adjutant Fritz Wiedemann would reflect that in recent months he had seen Goebbels, Hess, Bormann, and other Nazi notables among the late-night guests at Hitler's table, "but rarely Göring."

From the field marshal's diary it is evident, however, that he continued to have "his pudgy fingers in every pie," as his later prosecutors at Nuremberg would put it.

Considering his later reputation for indolence, his 1938 diary entries are often of a surprising intricacy and length. October 3, three days after the

Still tinkering with his Grand Solution, on October 21 he invited the Polish ambassador out to Carinhall. His diary shows that he again hinted at a deal with Poland. Józef Lipski, who confirmed the date from his own diary, was later astonished to hear that Göring had kept such a detailed record.

Lipski, October 21. Discussion of Poland's intentions. [We must] maintain contact, avoid misunderstandings. Obstacle is the Carpatho-Ukraine [the eastern tip of Czecho-Slovakia, bordering on Poland, Romania, and Hungary]. Poland interested but not as a territorial matter. Poland is afraid that Communist troubles might take root there. The region inclines toward Hungary. Should be a bridge for settlement of the Greater Ukraine issue. There was and is a Communist center established there for subverting the Balkans and Poland. Such a hotbed of Ukrainian intransigence is very disturbing for Poland; it might exacerbate the Ukrainian problem in Poland. Poland's wish is therefore that this region go to Hungary, so that it can be brought under control.

It is worth quoting such diary entries if only because they show both the extraordinary complexities induced by Europe's ill-fitting frontiers in the winter of 1938/39 and the far-flung interests of Field Marshal Göring. "I protested," he records on one page, "about the treatment of Germans in Poland [and insisted on a] strict warning from Warsaw that Germans are to be well treated." And on another page he shows his economic interest in the German film industry as an export earner. "Great shortfall in Italy," he writes. "Political considerations there, as Italian film industry would otherwise collapse. It's costing us foreign currency. . . . Losses in France through joint film venture. . . . Poland—nothing doing. Yugoslavia refusal. . . . Balkans must be conquered. In the north we are definitely catching up."

Simultaneously with the consolidation of Germany's political gains after Munich, the diary shows Göring acting to force the pace of rearmament. On October 14, he summoned arms industrialists to the Air Ministry. "The Führer," he revealed to them, "has directed me to execute a gigantic program beside which all our achievements hitherto pale into insignificance." Specifically, Hitler had ordered an immediate fivefold increase in the air force. Discussing priorities with the OKW's General Keitel at Carinhall six days later, Göring said that food supplies must come first, followed by exports—but then, "Major expansion of air force for attack, including reserves."

The target now under discussion was Britain, and Milch's own notes for October 26 portray Göring discussing with Udet and him a bizarre plan to set up a private air-force navy under Kessler, officially to be designated "commander of security ships." It would operate fast patrol boats of upward of one thousand tons armed with flak guns and torpedo tubes, capable of

circling two or three times "faster than any warship."

On Hitler's instructions body consisting of every military commander in chief, at the Air Ministry on November 1, address on the need to attend to attendant problems: lack of currency.

As the new year, 1939, began, his normally cherubic features advice he was trying to lose.

By the time that Sir Nevill had shed forty pounds and hoped

Something of the old Henderson when Henderson told him of St. Michael and St. George's eyes; indeed, as Henderson the splendid ermine-lined robes "Such orders are never best"

This powerful awe of the with Foreign Minister Joachim Ribbentrop in foreign diplomacy. the sedate and gentlemanly mutual respect: Neurath's activity—but not Ribbentrop's samt's Brown Pages to find he himself had greeted the president that Ribbentrop had done the his credentials in 1936. "Me undismayed, "suppose Moscow came and greeted you with" "Long live the Communist r

"I understand," remarked February 18, "that Ribbentrop has into his own hands."

Göring rewarded him with Poland and Yugoslavia," he the foreign minister has instructed at all times."

The two men, now firm firm mongers" in London and Berlin

Libya in 1940. For three days
 at Leptis Magna, visited
 Misurata, and exposed acres of
 . He took in a military parade
 n watched "desert battles" at
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 aken to invade Czechoslovakia
 informed," another lie. Confi-
 Germany's preparedness for war,
 ying with the Junkers 88 bomber
 sition in the air was unlikely to
 to persuade Britain to reverse

any. Hitler would soon be fifty,
 icular birthday parade. His train
 8. Press photographers snapped
 own and fit, in a light summer
 a gold-knobbed walking cane.
 h Hitler that evening. Hitler told
 of Danzig by military action if
 nt German city had been placed
 (the war.) It was the first that
 to prepare *Case White*, covering
 is Ribbentrop's revenge: Göring
 ite visit" to Rome—indeed, he
 trop had telegraphed to Libya.
 ring. Poland was his preserve.
 ped.
 ," was Hitler's measured retort.
 ambassador. Henderson learned

that the field marshal had returned from Italy with "counsels of moderation" but that Hitler had scolded him about being so *weibisch*, such an "old woman."

Europe seemed to be heading for another war. At 10:00 A.M. on the morning of his fiftieth birthday, April 20, Hitler called his commanders in chief into his study and sobered them with a brief, blunt discourse on the need to seize the initiative. His first half-century, he said, was now over. "I am at the summit of my powers," he added, without emotion. "So I have decided to strike now, while we still possess the arms lead that we do." As the Reich capital shook to the thud and blare of the five-hour military parade that day, Göring decided not to stay in Berlin one day longer than necessary. Göring's aide Karl Bodenschatz hinted to the French air attaché that Göring's health was "beyond repair" and that Ribbentrop had completely eclipsed him.

For two more weeks Göring performed official functions, such as laying a wreath on Baron von Richthofen's tomb on April 21. On the twenty-fifth he instructed Milch to take up the staff talks with Italy and was briefed by his new chief of air staff, the young Colonel Jeschonnek, on the planning for *White*. Then, on May 3, 1939, he absconded to San Remo yet again.

Göring's esteem was at its lowest ebb. A few days later he suffered his most humiliating reverse and again saw Ribbentrop as being behind it. He had instructed his Four-Year Plan agent in Spain, Johannes Bernhard, to arrange a meeting between Göring and the now-victorious General Franco but had forbidden him to notify the German ambassador about it, citing its "military character." Initially Franco agreed to the meeting, but then postponed it for "political reasons." Göring declared that he would come anyway, and days of excruciating haggling began. Ribbentrop, alerted by the ever-garrulous Bodenschatz on May 1, instructed his ambassador to intervene. Franco still refused, but on May 9, Göring received a telegram notifying him that the new dictator had after all agreed to see him at Saragossa. Göring objected to the location. He demanded that Franco meet him near Valencia, boarded the Hamburg-Amerika liner *Huascaran* on the tenth, and weighed anchor for Valencia escorted by four destroyers, with the intention of proceeding thus to Hamburg after the meeting.

The little armada dropped anchor off Castellón to news that Franco adamantly refused to come to Valencia. Hitler signaled, forbidding Göring to go ashore. Thwarted and outraged, the field marshal stalked the liner's decks, as Beppo Schmid later testified, using the obvious and by now much-overworked simile, "snarling like a caged lion."

Suspecting that Ribbentrop was behind this humiliation, Göring ordered the liner's course reversed to Livorno, Italy, and charged back overland to Berlin. Here, he was handed a stinging six-page rebuke dictated by the foreign minister on May 16, expressing "profound concern" at Göring's unauthorized "state visit" to Rome and his appalling Spanish diplomatic fiasco.

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nity in German government

erg.

complained Göring, refer-
it enemies. He writes me
l.' I've a good mind to show
ready taken that precaution

"But with all the arrogance

Göring groused. "When we
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of friendship to the British Empire had been deliberately ignored. To Sir Neville Henderson on May 27, 1939, Göring spoke with tears in his injured eyes about the silence with which Britain's press and Parliament had blan-keted this offer. By his reply, the ambassador showed that the two countries had drifted helplessly apart since Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia: His Majesty's government, he intoned, would not shrink from declaring war if Germany once more resorted to force.

At Carinhall later that day Göring showed him colored sketches of some tapestries that he was buying from William Randolph Hearst, the American newspaper magnate. The tapestries portrayed a bevy of toothsome ladies identified by names like Mercy and Purity. "I can't see one called Patience," Henderson dryly observed.

Göring had no more authority than a circus ringmaster that summer—a master of ceremonies. When the slim, slightly built Prince Paul of Yugoslavia paid his first state visit to Berlin early in June, Hitler permitted the field marshal to stage a thundering air display across the city's rooftops and to entertain the royal couple at Carinhall, but it was clear to Henderson, who was among the invited guests, that Göring no longer had the special responsibility for Yugoslavia (and Poland) about which he had bragged four months before.

"I wish I could see how to put a stop to the present situation," Henderson ventured to Göring. "It's getting very dangerous. We British don't want war. You may think we do, but we don't. But we shall certainly go to war if you attack the Poles." He added, "If Herr Hitler could now give us an indication that he's prepared to abandon the policy of coups and aggression, Mr. Chamberlain might give a not-unfriendly reply."

Göring shrugged. He spelled out once more Germany's "final demands," and reminded Henderson that there existed an influential clique in London who wanted "war at any price."

While not denying it, Henderson countered with Ribbentrop's name.

"People can say what they like," replied Göring, thrown onto the defensive. "But when a decision is called for, none of us counts for more than the gravel on which we are standing. It is the Führer alone who makes the decisions."

Henderson climbed into his limousine.

"Do you think that I want war?" appealed Göring, waving a hand toward the luxuries of Carinhall. "I was against war last September, as you know. And I would be again."

His influence on foreign affairs was diminishing each day. Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop boasted to the Italian ambassador in June 1939 that he had buried the hatchet with Göring—on condition that the latter stopped meddling in diplomacy. Göring kept a baleful eye on him nonetheless through the wiretaps on foreign embassies, and he opened private lines of communication to Prime Minister Chamberlain.

Göring nodded. Dahlerus busily put the idea to three English company directors visiting Berlin, Messrs A. Holden, Stanley Rawson, and Charles Spencer. They welcomed the initiative, but now Göring got cold feet. When Dahlerus came out to Carinhall again on July 8, Göring merely suggested they meet again in Hamburg in two weeks' time; but he did send Dahlerus to ask fellow Swede Axel Wenner-Gren whether he would lend his luxury yacht *Southern Cross* for the conference. On July 19, he received a discouraging reply from Wenner-Gren: Mr. Chamberlain, he said, had confided to him that the revelation of any high-level secret conference might well bring down his government; in his letter Chamberlain had, however, agreed that Field Marshal Göring did appear to be out of step with Hitler.

The mere thought of this sent shudders down Göring's spine, and over the next months he seldom tired of protesting that he would "never, never" go behind Hitler's back.

For a few days he lazed along the waterways in *Carin II*, ostensibly inspecting them on behalf of the Four-Year Plan. Dahlerus did not give up. Visiting London, he obtained Foreign Office approval for the proposed informal Anglo-German meeting. Late on July 22, he came to Göring's luxury suite at the Hotel Atlantic in Hamburg and tackled the field marshal again. Although involved in costuming himself in his whitest uniform preparatory to addressing a mass rally, Göring talked to him for two hours, then agreed to meet seven selected English businessmen. He anxiously stressed that he proposed to ask Hitler's permission for the meeting.

Carin II conveyed him onward through choppy seas to the island of Sylt. At Westerland he conferred on July 25 with his generals, ordering them to crank up the newly acquired Czech factories for war production. "Now that we've got them," Körner heard him protest, "none of you *Scheisskerle* has the faintest idea of what to do with them!" Significantly, he ordered an immediate halt to warplane exports. "Germany," he said, "must now come first." By way of explanation he added, "The political situation has changed quite a lot." On the following day he underlined this by receiving Colonel Beppo Schmid for a secret intelligence report on *Blue*, Britain, which seemed a probable consequence of war against *White*, Poland. "Contrary to his usual custom," recalled Schmid afterward, "Göring listened for several hours and expressed complete agreement."

On Friday, August 4, Göring began another weekend cruise on the *Carin II*. He was still ambivalent about the prospects of war. Nervous and apprehensive, he kept asking Beppo Schmid the one question that the intelligence officer felt least qualified to answer: "What will the British do?"

Göring had informed only his closest colleagues—Körner, Bodenschatz, and Gömnert—about the coming top-secret meeting with the seven English businessmen. He and Dahlerus had selected the remote farmhouse belonging to the Swede's wife at Sönkenissen-Coog, on the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein in Germany's far north. On the pretext of joining Emmy and Edda

at their beach house on the island of Bredstedt, the last station. It was at Bredstedt that Dahlerus had taken unprecedented precautions: multitudes lined the station platform, printed a vivid report of the scene, and specially selected from his Havana cigar, Göring stepped off the Swede and drove off in a slow, dense crowd to the Dahlerus from its flagpole to offer a pre-

Dahlerus introduced the seven British Mountain, Sir Robert Ren had come over with Holden, Sp. After three hours (during which would be synthesizing 12 million. He proposed a toast to peace, but uneasy—the impression that Spe to take part in very important conference 15." How Spencer arrived at this now in British Foreign Office file.

He was due to see Hitler on the telephoning Dahlerus, that he had been in Britain.

The days passed, and there was a bulk on the beach at Kampen and North Sea winds by a sandcastle and by notices warning of the perils. Dahlerus had not gone too far with these ideas.

There was one move in this dead, a hopeless position—if Stalin was the Soviets, like the Germans, had seen since January, Hitler had been probably knew of this, because he spoke of restoring Germany's trading relations. He discussed the merits of such a deal had then begun dropping dark hints. "Germany and Russia," Henderson in June, "will not allow issued further such warnings that negotiate with Russia," he told Dahlerus on August 7. "We still have many friends."

Even so, his heart was not in the

ys had second place in Hitler's motor

hile underwent grave changes as he
ty and despairing infatuation. Prince
mark by Hitler: "I am not a lonely
world, I have Göring!" Hearst-group
ially testified to the FBI in 1940 that
lay in his determination not to forfeit
he suggested, "is why Göring is so
other man would take. He knows that
just by the scratch of a pen."

was revived during *White and Yellow*
(olland) thanks to the achievements of
each subsequent reverse, reaching a
from which it never recovered. With
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ous war than his enemies, as befitted
Squadron. He employed the tactical
1939 Polish campaign; although the
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air attaché in Warsaw, later published
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nted his "farewell conversation" with
1939: "Whatever happens," the field
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many; he emphasized, would take no
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the British ambassador later that day.
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him on the back, "I shall send a special
al. Marmes
as still living amid the fantasies of the
ators did that sort of thing.

to open his assault on Britain with an
ish Fleet anchored at Scapa Flow, its
der forbade it. Each side still hoped to
so remained initially inactive, as did the

French. The Deutsche Reichsbahn's crack "Rheingold" express train shut-
tled unscathed the length of the French front each day, from Amsterdam to
Basel.

For all his bombast and bellicose utterances, Göring detested the senseless
destruction of war, as he was about to demonstrate, and this increased the
mutual contempt between him and the career soldiers like Manstein, Rommel,
and Halder.

While Hitler toured the front, Göring remained in Berlin. When Hitler
returned, Göring transferred his own "headquarters" to the state hunting
lodge at Rominten in East Prussia. He invited the crown prince to join him
hunting stags there, but received the frosty answer that the prince would
accept only when hostilities were over. Once, when Ribbentrop was away
negotiating the future Nazi-Soviet demarcation line in Poland, Göring tele-
phoned Hitler's command train to plead for the inclusion of the Bialystok
forests in the German zone because of their valuable timber. "He says
timber," scoffed Hitler, "and means big game." A photograph taken on
September 29 showed the field marshal inspecting front-line units in a rain-
soaked leather coat, while Kesselring looked on. By that time Göring had
dictated to Beppo Schmid the ultimatum ordering Warsaw to surrender, and
when this was refused he ordered the saturation bombardment that brought
the Polish war to an end. Hitler rewarded him with the unique Grand Cross
decoration to the Iron Cross.

During those first few weeks Göring's Ministerial Defense Council restored
a semblance of Cabinet government to the Reich. "The Defense Council,"
wrote Schwerin von Krosigk, the fifty-two-year-old Oxford-educated minister
of finance, "sat several times a week and he co-opted onto it any outside
ministers he needed. I regularly attended these first sessions. At its meetings
Göring not only allowed but actively insisted on a completely frank discussion
of the matters on the agenda. So at long last we had what we had been urging
for years." But, wrote this minister, their pleasure was short-lived. Hitler
returned to Berlin after the victory parade in Warsaw, and Hans Lammers,
the senior civil servant who had headed the now-defunct Reich Cabinet, took
charge again. Turning down Göring's request for a Defense Council session
to discuss amendments to the penal code, Lammers indicated that Hitler
would now be resuming regular Cabinet meetings. Probably it was a ma-
neuver by Lammers to regain his own lost authority; the damage to the
political direction of the war was permanent, because Hitler never convened
the Cabinet again. "Moreover," lamented Krosigk later, "when Hitler shifted
his headquarters back out of Berlin again, Göring never resumed the customs
he had adopted during those first weeks of the war."

The earlier meetings of the Defense Council are portrayed in the private
records kept by participants like Goebbels, Darré, Backe, and the OKW arma-
ments specialist, Georg Thomas. "Göring," noted Darré on September 4,
the day after Britain and France had declared war, "looked fresh and

every inch a soldier. What a guy! Hess sends his stooge as usual; what a zero, he can't stand up to Göring. Thus the dwindling party is gradually frozen out."

"Britain," ruminated Göring at this session, "has nothing to gain in this war. But we might inherit the British Empire."

At their council's session on the sixth, Goebbels objected to Göring's plan to print the party emblem on food-ration cards, arguing that it would hardly advance the party's popularity. "I'm afraid, dear Dr. Goebbels," retorted Darré, "that this is not a war that can be won by popularity." Göring nodded vigorously.

Thomas's files show the Defense Council allocating oil and steel between the U-boat, Ju 88, explosives, and ammunition production programs. "The Führer," Thomas heard Göring say on September 11, in one of the few indications that Hitler consulted him on the harsh Nazi occupation policies, "intends to establish great Reich domains in Poland, and to endow particularly deserving [German] personages with farms and large estates." Hinting at the bloody purges just beginning in Poland, Göring claimed that the Polish clergy were directing a protracted guerrilla warfare against the Nazi invaders.

After this meeting, Darré noted with some disbelief the field marshal's optimism that Hitler would yet make a deal with Britain. "All the indications are," commented the minister in his diary, "that the Führer is facing a war lasting years."

By the end of the year 1939 the Defense Council had fallen into disuse. "Why does Adolf Hitler just let domestic affairs drift?" complained Darré in his private chronicle on December 4. "We ministers can't get through to him anymore. . . . In civil matters he deals with Göring alone now."

Astonishingly—because they are not even hinted at in British official histories—Hermann Göring maintained his secret channels of communication to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain during these nervous months of what was later called the "phony war." He also entered into a round of talks with emissaries of President Franklin D. Roosevelt through contacts established by Dr. Joachim Hertslet, the Four-Year Plan's agent in Mexico. Göring talked in Berlin with the influential Swedish banker Marcus Wallenberg, and urged him to press the British to accept the German peace plan; and he sent his anglophile friend, Prince Max Egon zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, to initiate secret talks with British diplomats in Switzerland.

The most startling feature of Göring's diplomatic activities that winter of 1939/40 was that he hinted to the British that he was willing to take over the real power in Germany from Hitler, and that he would halt the persecution of Jews and pull out of the "non-German" parts of Poland; Hitler would be shunted off into "some sort of presidential role."

His peace offensive began on September 8. On that day he phoned Dahlerus in Stockholm with the triumphant news that two-thirds of the Polish Army

was now surrounded. He re-bombing Britain first—"In 1 Britain to act first in every workers on the following day willing to make what he call

Simultaneously he directed—to send a message in code William Rhodes Davis. The t Davis in New York: ALL WE later a second code message SEPTEMBER 26 ROME TO MEET (The FBI, who decoded these Göring from other items.) On with Roosevelt (as the presiden directed Hertslet to cable a furt at a Göring-controlled Reich g MENT AFTER POLAND WAR IF N TRAL U.S.A. GOVERNMENT.

In Washington the labor-union showed this extraordinary mes by code to Berlin the next day, CUSSUED WITH FRANKLIN D. RO THIS SIDE READY PROVIDING FLE American code message to Her twentieth, announcing that Dav he would actually be in Berlin, for history, nothing came of Gt

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was now surrounded. He repeated that his Luftwaffe would refrain from
bombing Britain first—"In fact," he volunteered, "Germany will wait for
Britain to act first in everything else too." Addressing Berlin munitions
workers on the following day, he stated explicitly that Germany was still
willing to make what he called "an honest peace."

Simultaneously he directed Hertslet—who was currently visiting Berlin
—to send a message in code to a high-level contact in the United States,
William Rhodes Davis. The telegram, dated September 8, was addressed to
Davis in New York: ALL WELL NOW, WAR IN EAST SUCCESS. Three days
later a second code message followed: NECESSARY FOR DAVIS TO COME
SEPTEMBER 26 ROME TO MEET DOCTOR. DOCTOR READY TO BE BOSS HERE.
(The FBI, who decoded these messages, had already identified "Doctor" as
Göring from other items.) On the fifteenth, Davis was allowed an audience
with Roosevelt (as the presidential diary shows). Three days after that, Göring
directed Hertslet to cable a further code message to Davis, evidently hinting
at a Göring-controlled Reich government: CAN ASSURE ABSOLUTE APPEASE-
MENT AFTER POLAND WAR IF NEW COMBINATION HERE IS ASSISTED BY NEU-
TRAL U.S.A. GOVERNMENT.

In Washington the labor-union boss John L. Lewis, a close friend of Davis,
showed this extraordinary message to President Roosevelt. Davis reported
by code to Berlin the next day, September 19: CONTENTS YOUR CABLE DIS-
CUSSED WITH FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT WHO IN PERFECT AGREEMENT . . .
THIS SIDE READY PROVIDING FLEXIBILITY WITH YOU. The upshot was a further
American code message to Hertslet in Berlin, for Hermann Göring, on the
twentieth, announcing that Davis had now left for Europe. (Ten days later
he would actually be in Berlin, negotiating with the field marshal.) Sadly
for history, nothing came of Göring's remarkable initiatives.

Equally circumspectly, though with even less success, Göring pursued his
other contacts with London throughout September 1939. When two RAF
airmen were shot down in Germany he phoned Dahlerus on the tenth, and
sent their letters to London with a personal message to say that they were
alive and well. (The indignant Foreign Office requested the Swedes not to
forward any more such letters, since the Red Cross was the proper channel.)

After the Soviet Union sprang its armies on eastern Poland on September
17, Göring telephoned Dahlerus in Sweden. "What are you going to do
about it?" he asked.

"I am remaining *here*," Dahlerus replied emphatically; but he related this
renewed approach to the British legation the next day. "The field marshal
is willing to do all he can to arrange a truce," he said, "provided he gets
the credit." If Göring could meet somebody like General Ironside on neutral
ground, this would give him the necessary leverage to persuade Hitler. Ar-
riving back in Berlin on the twenty-first, however, Dahlerus had to tell Göring
that the British were refusing to state terms—it was for him to find out first
what Göring had to offer, they said. Three days later Dahlerus met Sir George

field marshal's esteem, not least in surprised him practicing Napoleonic. But to mock his elephantine vanity tribulation to both Norway and *Yellow*, pe. In a string of secret conferences ed and planned the all-important sur-Belgian fortifications that would open a the archives that Göring had either campaign.

re days of perfect flying weather. For that weather, Hitler postponed zero piers could hear the bafflement and gendered among the still-unidentified calling from Luxembourg was heard en't they?" In Holland, all leave was ards of strategic bridges doubled. On telegram from the Belgian envoy at the rman traitor* had arrived from Berlin cels in the Vatican" (as Göring always deadline.

uls. They were losing the element of still too uncertain to begin.

25

VICTORY IN THE WEST

Placing Göring briefly in command in Berlin, Adolf Hitler departed for the new western front on May 9, 1940. As the next dawn's clear spring sun lifted on the eastern horizon, nearly 4,000 Nazi warplanes—including 1,482 bombers and 248 twin-engined and 1,016 single-engined fighter planes—scythed unannounced into France and across the neutral Low Countries, hammering the enemy's air defenses and providing close battlefield support for the advancing tanks and infantry.

Dressed in summer whites and sporting some of his most optimistic rings, Field Marshal Hermann Göring set out in his special train from Carinhall to join his generals at Kurfürst, the air staff's permanent headquarters just outside Berlin. Waiting with the other exuberant Luftwaffe generals there, Milch wrote in his pocket diary, "Afternoon, the field marshal arrives in train. Huge victories, great [enemy] losses! Eben Emael [the most important Belgian fortress] captured by air force."

For five days the air-force commander would live aboard his train at Kurfürst while his generals fawned on him. His new special train, code-named *Asia*, was adorned with velvet upholstery, tapestries, rich paneling, and an outsized bath that would not have been out of place in his other

* the soul of the stone

mansions in Berlin and Carinhall. Since the Nazi party was above all a *motoring* party, the train boasted of not only the usual two freight cars bristling with flak guns, but also a string of flat tops on which he had ordered an assortment of his finest automobiles to be loaded, including command cars built by Buick and La Salle, two Ford Mercuries, a Citroën, a Ford pickup, and two other Mercedes vehicles (a six-wheeled cross-country car and a shooting brake). This train also provided a fully equipped darkroom for Sonderführer Eitel Lange, his personal photographer; a mobile hospital with six beds, and an operating theater; and Göring's personal barber shop, whose surviving inventory shows that he was not accustomed to travel without hand mirrors, compacts and powder puffs, perfume atomizers with rubber bulbs, jars of cream, bottles of hair cologne, and sun lamps.

From the comfort and safety of this train he followed the triumphs of the German armies. Each day General Milch climbed aboard with darkroom-damp aerial photographs that he had personally taken of the fighting at Dinant and Charleville. On May 11, 1940, he told Göring that they had already obliterated a thousand enemy planes. At Sedan, France, the German troops threw a bridgehead across the River Meuse, and Bruno Loerzer's II Air Corps was giving good support to General Heinz Guderian's armor as it rammed into France. Göring rushed the euphoric reports to Hitler's headquarters with a swiftness that the army could not match. His name was written there in letters of gold. The Luftwaffe's operations had gone without a hitch. Later interrogators would find it hard to stop Hermann Göring talking endlessly of these glorious exploits of May 1940. He prattled happily about one Dutch Army lieutenant who called up his supreme commander, General Winkelmann, to ask permission to blow the vital bridge over the Albert Canal. "There are paratroops coming down all around!" The general had refused, stating that blowing the bridge would cut off two of his divisions. "No paratroops," he exclaimed, "would dare to drop so far behind our lines." Minutes later the lieutenant had phoned him again: "General," he said, "I am about to be taken prisoner."

Air supremacy was once again decisive, as it had proven in Norway. Göring's air force had displayed its now-familiar power on May 14 against Rotterdam: Thirty-six bombers were dispatched to silence a Dutch artillery position in the old port city. Soon after they took off, the Dutch fortress commander capitulated, and Göring's paratroop general, Student, fired red signal flares to halt the bombing attack. One wave, however, missed the flares and completed its bombing run. The resulting fires got out of hand and ravaged the old city, killing nine hundred people.

Göring was unrepentant. "I'll tell you what happened," he said heatedly under interrogation. "The fire brigades were so scared to death that they refused to move out and do anything about the fires. You can ask the burgomaster of Rotterdam about that and he will tell you the same thing. All those stories of 'thousands of dead' "—Churchill had repeatedly talked of

"thirty thousand" killed at offensive—"are pure invent

Late on May 15, 1940, Herma to the western front.

Hitched to the train now w general staff," a unit that wo air staff housed in its own cor himself with a number of sma some but unencumbered with officers serving under Jescho cartographers and teleprinter a Bernd von Brauchitsch (son He briefed Göring on the da against Germany, he would u reassure his chief.

Göring's extra-long comma on May 16, close to a tunn country. A special wooden pl enable the portly field marsh and his closer cronies partool the No. 1 dining car, while t the less comfortably appointed on for Brauchitsch's young tea with the sewer inlets beneath. Göring claimed for himself tl ordered all other lavatories se

Once Göring ordered Fritz, dummy air-raid alert. The re sent it plunging into the tunn from their railside sockets. Tra the sheltering tunnel and emer ing's handsome adjutants pulk field marshal screamed, red-fa

He soon forgave Gömnert a breakthrough at Sedan on May later Göring sent for the Swed he invite the French to sue for "to grant reasonable conditio ordered his chief of air staff t nek," he boomed grandly, "le he handed out the first eight Ki day the British expeditionary fc Channel ports, abandoning the

up the phone and bragged to Hitler that his bombers would set those ports ablaze, then wipe out the enemy troops trapped in northern France. VIII Air Corps commander Richthofen noted Göring's orders in his diary: "Destroy the British in the pocket."

Hitler indulged his air-force commander, ordering his tank forces on May 24 to hold back. "The air-force," wrote General Franz Halder, chief of the general staff, in his diary that evening, "is to finish off the encircled army!" "Our air-force," Göring announced, beaming, to his deputy, "is to mop up the British. I've persuaded the Führer to hold the army back." The halt order was controversial, but it made sense to the generals at the time: There was a belief that the campaign was all but over; there was no question of "going easy" on the British. "The Führer wants us to give them a lesson they'll never forget," Göring told Milch.

As his squadrons geared up for this task, Göring shifted his train *Asia* forward once more, to Polch, then flew off in a Junkers 52 to gloat over the destruction at Rotterdam. Taking just Loerzer and Udet with him he continued by road to Amsterdam, treasure city of the world of art and antiques. His growing lust for costly baubles temporarily satisfied with well-timed purchases, he flew in a Storch light plane back to Hitler's headquarters to report on the "mopping up" at Dunkirk. "Only fishing boats are coming over for the British," he scoffed. "Let's hope that the Tommies can swim!"

As he left France on May 30 and returned to Potsdam, he was unaware that three hundred thousand British and French troops were slipping away from the beaches of Dunkirk. Three hundred German bombers stood impatiently by, grounded by ten-tenths cloud. Milch broke the bad news about the completed evacuation to Göring when *Asia* returned to France on June 5. "I saw six or seven dead Negroes," Milch told him, "and perhaps twenty or thirty other dead. The rest have got clean away. They abandoned their equipment and fled." He suggested that they throw airborne troops straight over to seize a beachhead and capture airfields in southern England, just as they had in Norway.

Göring dismissed the idea. "It can't be done," he said. He had only one airborne division, he would later explain. "If I had had four, I would have gone straight over to Britain."

The worst of the fighting in France over, he resumed his direction of the war economy, summoning Cabinet-style meetings aboard his train. Looking not unlike Prince Danilo in *The Merry Widow*, he appeared afterward in his dining car resplendent in white uniform, sash, and sparkling brooches, his belly held in by a belt inlaid with jeweled golden plates. First Lieutenant Göring, his nephew, went off on scavenging expeditions across occupied France. From a clothing store at Rheims he "liberated" a truckload of shirts, stockings, and other booty, which was duly parceled out among the officers on the field marshal's staff with a note, "A gift of field Marshal Göring." His charisma was undeniable. One Luftwaffe officer said that for all his fancy

uniforms Göring was still a "Pity he's so fat." "He's got whom Göring had recently a knobbed cane and an outsize cap—a bit ridiculous, to tell Göring tell fighter pilots no behind. "I wanted the ground commander. "Donnerwetter even hear your own machine

Attempting to stay inform squadron-commander level. 'down over Britain, "listens to Adolf Galland in preference us and kept asking, 'What do 'First, broadcasting should to squadron commanders, not m home all our best men as ins

Once he ordered a forester for him to shoot. Donning his Jeschonnek, and other staff m him. Milch finished not only dessert as well. Göring returned his stand and missed the dex and dinner over, he spluttered to an aide. "Take down this ceremony by dinner. All officers are to

Hermann Göring believed the an armistice. "All this planning four-engined bomber project :

Göring had begun one of art collection from the gallery notepaper of the Amstel Hotel delivered to Carinhall on 11 paintings by Rubens and other and seven more bought from Rembrandt, Pieter Breughel the Elder.

When, one week later, on written on the basis of his front its specifications as a bomber, just around the corner to him a ceremony at Compiègne on June dering," wrote Lieutenant Ge

* at odds with other explanation
See Shirer

When, one week later, on June 18, Milch warned Göring in a report written on the basis of his front-line inspections that the Ju 88 was not meeting its specifications as a bomber, Göring turned a deaf ear. Final victory seemed just around the corner to him as he took his generals to the pompous armistice ceremony at Compiègne on June 23. "The town of Compiègne is still smoldering," wrote Lieutenant General Hoffmann von Waldau in his diary:

explanations
See Shires

Barely any population left, houses sliced open to display their shattered contents, stray dogs roaming the streets. Huge applause from the soldiers, Labor Front, and auxiliary services. Our "Hermann" really is immensely popular. Drive through the fine forest and broad avenues to the dining car of [Marshal] Foch. [The car of France's famous World War I commander was a static exhibit in the forest.] An avenue leads to a large clearing surrounded by pine trees; the dining car is at its center.

At 3:20 P.M. the French appear . . . Their airman displays a studied nonchalance. After the Preamble has been read, the Führer departs. It was an uplifting hour.

Hitler's commanders followed him in a carefully prescribed order, with Göring immediately behind, then Ribbentrop, Hess, and Raeder. Squeezing his bulk behind the long dining table in *Asia* afterward, Göring declared happily, "You know, even as a boy I always knew that one day I should become a *Feldherr* [warlord]!"

Through a man whom Beppo Schmid would identify in his papers simply as a "third party," Göring learned that Hitler was proposing only to *simulate* invasion preparations against Britain under the code name *Sea Lion*, a "gigantic bluff" to bring the British into line. This suited the field marshal down to the ground. He did not want to invade Britain; talking in private with Milch, he dismissed the notion of an invasion as superfluous. Schmid was not surprised when the air staff made no call for the targeting preparations that a real invasion operation would have required. On June 22, Waldau recorded that regrouping had begun, but after attending a command conference called by Göring on the following day he recorded, "Nothing of military significance [is planned] before [Hitler's] Reichstag speech"—which would not be for two or three weeks.

On June 25, Jeschonnek frankly told the major liaising between the air staff and the high command (OKW), Baron Sigismund von Falkenstein, "There isn't going to be any *Sea Lion*. And I haven't got time to bother about it." Expanding this remark in a postscript that day to Waldau about the air force's possible role in an invasion, Falkenstein wrote that Jeschonnek had refused any comment "since in his opinion the Führer has not the slightest intention of crossing the [English] Channel."

Hitler and Göring both believed that air attacks on Britain's shipping lifeline would suffice to force Churchill to see things their way. Göring ordered his squadrons to begin small-scale raids on British ports and harbors—but attacks on inland towns were explicitly forbidden.

Göring himself had been drawn back to Amsterdam to run a greedy eye over the amazing art collection of a bankrupt Dutch dealer, J. Goudstikker.

His absence on these curious shopping expeditions was a relief for the air

force. On June 27, his chie diary, "Field marshal is a later he returned in *Asia* September—which testifie *Sea Lion* operation. Idlin acquisitions, and consider the war. He rewarded his Cross on July 5, although involved hardly any heroiz

Hitler told Göring that offer to Britain in his majo the British would insist on west—though they *might*. Polish Corridor. Hitler qui to promote him at the same star general. There had onl of Savoy. Göring swelled for the new uniform imme Reichsmarschall of all the plumped for a soft pearl gr fabric. "If I wear it," his

Before delivering his sp real contempt for Göring's advance. He delivered his that Göring realized at onc in the fire."

As Reichsmarschall, hov rope, indeed the world. G before a mirror, then parad handed him the parchment signed casket encrusted wit describe as the most preci "Göring," wrote General "was radiant, full of the F his paintings, of his daugh

The new Reichsmarscha that day to hear his plans f. For most of those entering commander's accumulating tents, compiled a few weeks two green leather-topped t and chairs, with their gree crest—a mailed fist clutchin two of baroque pewter style

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force. On June 27, his chief of operations, Waldau, commented in his private diary, "Field marshal is away on his travels, a blessing for us." Two days later he returned in Asia to Berlin, and here he would stay until early September—which testified to his complete lack of interest in the "phony" *Sea Lion* operation. Idling out at Carinhall, he drooled over his new art acquisitions, and considered which of his generals to ennoble at the end of the war. He rewarded his friend Ernst Udet immediately with the Knight's Cross on July 5, although Udet's desk job as director of air armament had involved hardly any heroism at all.

Hitler told Göring that he was planning to make a magnanimous peace offer to Britain in his major Reichstag speech. The field marshal warned that the British would insist on a total withdrawal from Norway, Poland, and the west—though they *might* allow Germany to retain Alsace-Lorraine and the Polish Corridor. Hitler quieted Göring with the disclosure that he was going to promote him at the same Reichstag session to "Reichsmarschall," or six-star general. There had only been one other in German history, Prince Eugen of Savoy. Göring swelled with pride and began poring over suitable fabrics for the new uniform immediately—a color that would establish that he was Reichsmarschall of all three services, and not just of the Luftwaffe. He finally plumped for a soft pearl gray. Valet Robert murmured that it was a woman's fabric. "If I wear it," hissed Göring, "then it's for men."

Before delivering his speech on July 19, Hitler once again displayed his real contempt for Göring's authority by refusing to let him see his speech in advance. He delivered his peace offer to the British in such clumsy terms that Göring realized at once, as he told interrogators later, that "the fat was in the fire."

As Reichsmarschall, however, he was the highest-ranking officer in Europe, indeed the world. Göring hurried home and tried on the new uniform before a mirror, then paraded it for Hitler's benefit in the Chancellery. Hitler handed him the parchment title deed as Reichsmarschall in a specially designed casket encrusted with diamonds and emeralds that Göring would later describe as the most precious gift he had ever received from the Führer. "Göring," wrote General von Richthofen, visiting Carinhall on July 21, "was radiant, full of the Führer's acclamation of him, full of his house, of his paintings, of his daughter—in short, full of everything."

The new Reichsmarschall had invited the generals over to Carinhall on that day to hear his plans for the next weeks of the air war against Britain. For most of those entering his large study it was their first glimpse of their commander's accumulating wealth. A detailed inventory of this room's contents, compiled a few weeks earlier, survives: four long marble-topped tables, two green leather-topped tables, six smaller round tables; an outsize desk and chairs, with their green leather upholstery embossed with the Göring crest—a mailed fist clutching at a ring. Six chandeliers illuminated the room, two of baroque pewter style, two of gilt (gifts from the city of Aachen), and

two of silver and crystal (gifts of the Reich Handicrafts Association on his most recent birthday). Fourteen wood carvings, including three medieval Madonnas (one donated by the publisher Brockhaus at Christmas) stood in niches between the twenty-two paintings that Göring's experts had selected for him—some of them literally beyond price, like Leonardo da Vinci's "Leda," while others were dictated by a sense of history, like Lenbach's 1888 portrait of Bismarck, and Knirr's painting of the Führer.

This naked display of wealth had its purpose, of course. It was an implicit statement by Göring that his piratical authority was absolute—and an unspoken promise that similar riches awaited all those who followed him.

Looking around this sumptuous chamber, Göring made out the faces of Kesselring, Sperrle, and Milch—all three had been promoted to field marshal. He told them that the *Endkampf* against Britain would begin in about one week, since Britain was refusing to throw in the sponge. Meanwhile he directed them to attack Britain's merchant shipping, promising to follow with "violent attacks" (he did not say on what) "to unsettle the whole country." Ten days later Hitler told his army generals that he intended to await the results of the first ten days of this "intensified air warfare." His purpose was to bully Britain into accepting his peace offer. In secret, Göring resumed his clandestine contacts with London, inviting, on July 24, the Dutch airline director Albert Plesman to Carinhall to act as an intermediary.

But the air war did not produce the results Hitler had expected. He himself had applied such irksome restrictions to it—prohibiting attacks by night or on civilian targets, and upholding a total embargo on bombing London—that Göring was prevented from unfolding his real air power against the enemy. It was a strategic error, particular since the fine summer months were already upon them. He now had about 230 twin-engined Me 110's available, but they were proving too cumbersome for combat: he had some 760 Me 109's, but these could not reach London with enough fuel for combat. The British Air Force was, moreover, showing unwelcome signs of resilience. With each day that passed it was recovering, yet Hitler was still pussyfooting. Directing Göring on August 1 to "eliminate the British Air Force in combat," he still expressly forbade "terror air raids."

With a feeling of hopelessness Göring called his field marshals back to Carinhall on August 6 and outlined the details of *Eagle Day*—the opening strike of a three-day grand slam against the British airfields and radar stations, designed to force the remaining British squadrons up into lethal air combat. Several days passed while he awaited the right three days, and when he launched *Eagle Day* on the thirteenth, it went off half-cocked. As the weather worsened that day, Kesselring recalled his force, Luftflotte 2, and the next two days would see only halfhearted skirmishing. On the fourteenth, Göring heard Hitler say while briefing the newly promoted field marshals at the Chancellery that *Sea Lion*, the invasion, was purely a threat—"a last resort, if other pressures [on Britain] fail." Later that day the Reichsmarschall

angrily summoned Milch and Carinhall to express his displeasure.

Air-crew morale was spiraling tailplane shot away. The Luftwaffe in his own skies. The Me 110 Mass fire raids on London went to the Luftwaffe that day, August 19, 1940, look. Milch notes "angry lion" look. Milch notes leather diary: "Still not cities in

At Carinhall Göring continued. Berchtesgaden Hitler began to blast the British into submission. He stated Hitler's absolute prohibition later, however, Churchill took center of Berlin. Three nights killing eight people. Outraged, by to retaliate against London at even now, and on the fourth the still forbidding raids on London, had by now occurred. When two embargo, it was Göring who he would crush once and for all his Göring's reluctance, as did the wrote on September 6, "This affords Let's hope the Reichsmarschall state

Göring departed unhappily for personal command of the Battle of Britain on to La Boissière le Déluge, as Flanked by Field Marshal Kesselring (Air Corps) he stood that afternoon as his bombers thundered. That night 380 Londoners were killed in a new form of air war, for which responsibility.

Provoked by the August 1940 raid on London, the meticulous staff planners had done so at the very instant of premacy by gouging out the radar depended. As the Battle of Britain from a chivalrous dueling in the raids, Göring again lost interest. General Jeschonnek, one of the few who did not think that Germany would

* D.O. Now he wanted to be seen as humane. Once again conquered the world, you could see him as good and kind.

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ich Handicrafts Association on his carvings, including three medieval (Brockhaus at Christmas) stood in that Göring's experts had selected the price, like Leonardo da Vinci's sense of history, like Lenbach's painting of the Führer.

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angrily summoned Milch and the two other Luftwaffe field marshals out to Carinhall to express his displeasure at the air offensive's failure.

Air-crew morale was spiraling downward like an He 111 bomber with its tailplane shot away. The Luftwaffe was now fighting a determined enemy in his own skies. The Me 110 was being mauled. The Ju 88 was defective. Mass fire raids on London were still denied them. Repeating Hitler's words to the Luftwaffe that day, August 15, Göring's face adopted the familiar "angry lion" look. Milch noted Hitler's bombing embargoes in his green leather diary: "Still not cities in general, and in particular not London."

At Carinhall Göring continued to sweat that summer out. Down at Berchtesgaden Hitler began to seek scapegoats. Göring anxiously offered to blast the British into submission, but on August 24 the high command again stated Hitler's absolute prohibition on terror raids on London. Two nights later, however, Churchill took the initiative, ordering the first raids on the center of Berlin. Three nights later the RAF bombers returned to Berlin, killing eight people. Outraged, Hitler directed the Reichsmarschall to stand by to retaliate against London at the end of the month. He hated the decision even now, and on the fourth the high command recorded that the Führer was still forbidding raids on London, although half a dozen British raids on Berlin had by now occurred. When two days later Hitler finally lifted the year-long embargo, it was Göring who hesitated, aware that the first bombs on London would crush once and for all his hopes of peace. Beppo Schmid observed Göring's reluctance, as did the hard-bitten General von Richthofen, who wrote on September 6, "This afternoon the decision comes to raid London. Let's hope the Reichsmarschall stands firm. I've got my doubts on that score."

Göring departed unhappily for Holland, announcing that he was taking personal command of the Battle of Britain. On the seventh, his train moved on to La Boissière le Déluge, a little rail station near the Channel coast. Flanked by Field Marshal Kesselring (Luftflotte 2) and General Loerzer (II Air Corps) he stood that afternoon on the cliffs, swelling with newfound pride as his bombers thundered overhead to raid London for the first time. That night 380 Londoners were killed—it was the beginning of a murderous new form of air war, for which Hitler and Churchill would bear equal responsibility.

Provoked by the August 1940 raids on Berlin, Hitler and Göring had thus trashed the meticulous staff planning in Schmid's target-dossier *Blue*. They had done so at the very instant when the Luftwaffe had almost gained supremacy by gouging out the radar stations on which Britain's fighter defenses depended. As the Battle of Britain underwent this fateful metamorphosis from a chivalrous dueling in the skies to a brutal exchanging of bombing raids, Göring again lost interest. Once, seated in *Asia's* dining car, he asked General Jeschonnek, one of the foremost advocates of this terror bombing, "Do you think that Germany would cave in if Berlin was wiped out?"

To be seen as humane.
the world you count
as good and kind

like Jehovah, yes, but the can't
of Dunsinon spirit these days.

"Of course not!" retorted Jeschonnek stoutly, then smiled thinly as he realized what he had said. "British morale," he then suggested, "is more brittle than our own."

"That's where you are wrong," said Göring.

By the end of September 1940 his bombers had killed seven thousand Londoners, but he saw no sign of a political collapse. As the glamor of command-train life faded, he moved to Paris, took over a floor at the Ritz, had an especially large bath installed, wolfed down caviar, and began to live in a fantasy world of his own. Once his signals officer had to put him through on the phone, using "command flash" priority, to Emmy and Edda at Carinhall. "Can you hear, Emmy?" he shouted, seated on his hotel bed in a green silk kimono. "I'm standing on Cap Gris Nez at this very moment, while my magnificent airplanes are thundering overhead to England!"

Clanking with brand-new medals, his commanders watched his antics with more amusement than anger. Burdened on September 12 with the Golden Flying Badge with Diamonds, Richthofen mused sardonically in his diary, "One gets to look more and more like an ox in the Whit [Sunday] Parade."

Aware that his air force was meeting its match in the skies over southern England, Göring was mentally and physically drained. He returned briefly to Berlin early that October, but did not enjoy it as the sirens now often wailed there, forcing four million Berliners to seek shelter—many of them muttering incantations about "Meier the Broom": To his earlier promise to change his name to Meier, Göring had foolishly added another, to eat a broomstick, if one enemy bomber should reach the Reich capital. On October 3, he had to preside over a ministerial conference on providing flak defenses and air-raid shelters for the city. Two days later he saw Hitler briefly—the Führer directed him not to concern himself with food shortages in France and Belgium, but to treat the "Nordic" countries Norway, Denmark, and Holland well "for political reasons"—and then returned unenthusiastically to France. The diary of the later-famous Hermann Göring Regiment records that his train *Asia* arrived back at headquarters at 8:00 P.M. on October 10, 1940.

While losing the initiative in the Battle of Britain, Hitler had taken the first steps to seize an historic initiative in the east. He was preparing for the coming Nazi assault on the Soviet Union. Göring had remained at Carinhall while Hitler and his army generals brooded over these momentous decisions in Bavaria, and he had not been consulted. At the August 14 Chancellery conference he had not paid much attention to Hitler's apparent afterthought, that he would attack the Russians if they deviated from their present pro-Nazi policies or if they turned against Finland or Romania. Those "ifs" probably occluded Göring's perception of danger; besides, Hitler undertook not to make up his mind until May 1941 which way to turn next—whether against Britain or the Soviet Union. Talking to munitions expert Georg

Thomas that day, Göring men their war supplies to Russia predicted, according to the not interest in meeting Russian re evidence that the obese and ind about what the army might be diary registered that the air fo organization for *Eastern Build* under which the army was cur if left in "ignorance of the 'br sured that the buildup was purel twenty-ninth, arms chief Thoma concern was to prevent any furth

The Reichsmarschall would n unaware of the planning in Berli he loitered at the Casino de Pa Friedrich Karl von Hanesse, the c of the Reichsmarschall's compa diary on October 22 that he ha himself and the "Big Chief." " "to have to keep somebody con

Five days later Göring took A. railroad network, inspecting Ger at Le Havre before trundling on west of Deauville, the fashionab tablished VIII Air Corps headqua languidly around the airfields o where the peasants were already h he were in East Prussia, and the rest and recuperation; his heart w in-law Count Eric von Rosen he day of October, attending a wel training at Deauville, the Reichs tended to go on leave "for a mor

He began the long return jour at La Boissière in pouring rain o day or two in Paris, and on the fo capital of Occupied France he w commander in chief of a now-stru noted art connoisseur. Indeed, the of France's fleeing Jews were abo

seven Camille Corots, three Honoré Daumiers, four Claude Monets, five Renoirs, a Vincent van Gogh, an Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and assorted sketches and watercolors, all from the collection of "the Jew Paul Rosenberg" and all "eminently suitable for swapping." Since Beltrand had valued them *above* their original asking price, Hofer had insisted on paying the latter. Currency agents, he further reported to Göring, had impounded Georges Braque's personal art collection at Bordeaux, but here there was a snag: Braque was not a Jew, so they would have to release his collection. "I have dealt with him in person about his Cranach of a girl," wrote Hofer, knowing of Göring's weakness for this painter. "And I have hinted that the collection may be restituted to him more quickly if he agrees to part with the Cranach to us!!!" Nazi agents had also discovered in Paris a Rubens and an Anthony Van Dyck. "I am having inquiries made whether the owner is a Jew," Hofer notified Göring. "Meanwhile the paintings remain in the bank's safekeeping."

By October 20, 1942, no fewer than 596 paintings, sculptures, tapestries, and articles of furniture would have found their way from the Jeu de Paume into Göring's possession.

Italy rivaled France and Holland as the sources of Göring's fabulous art collection. In October 1938 General Italo Balbo had transported to Carinhall an antique marble copy of the Venus of Praxiteles, excavated at Leptis Magna near Tripoli. As Mussolini's own military misfortunes began, at the end of 1940, he became eager to ingratiate himself with the Germans. In January 1941 Hofer arranged for him to give to Göring eight large Vipiteno paintings for his birthday. "I can imagine how surprised and pleased Hermann must have been," wrote Frau Hofer, congratulating her husband on the deal. "Without you he would never have got those paintings. What kind of lunch did you get [from Göring]? It was Hot-Pot Sunday. I'm surprised that Goebbels was there too—they must have buried the hatchet."

To evade customs duties, his agents routinely underdeclared the values, with the connivance of Mussolini himself. In November 1941 the export office at Rome was shown a manifest of thirty-four sealed crates of art bound for Carinhall, allegedly worth a mere two hundred thousand lire (or roughly \$1,000 in 1941). In fact, the crates contained two Canaletto landscapes, works by Spanish, Venetian, and Florentine masters, furniture, and a marble relief of the Madonna and Child; the fifteen largest of these items had been purchased by Hofer from a Florentine antiquary on May 29 and October 20, 1941, for 12.5 million lire. In July 1942 this kind of customs fraud would be repeated with sixty-seven crates packed with antique sculptures and bas-reliefs.

To his harassed secretary Gisela Limberger would fall the job of keeping track and creating inventories of her boss's objects d'art and of the palaces and villas where they were currently displayed or stored. But the fate of the Paul Rosenberg collection shows the kind of problem she faced. Wanting to

send his wife to safety in Switzerland instead. Hofer allowed Miedl to tra paintings to Miedl for 750, Fraulein Grundtmann paid M Rosenberg pictures reached 1. Fraulein Limberger's task schall's exchange transaction: ings from the Renders collect Paintings by Jan Vermeer V previously handled only one, offered to him, and Bruno L him on July 18 to travel to Hc examine it. Back through Hof Then a third "Vermeer" sur hesitated to meet the very stiff him by comparison a color pho "The Road to Emmaus," whic had cleaned it, showed the sa Vermeer, as the one on offer to urgent word that the noted Dutc one. Thus reassured, Göring c lesser works including 54 milks for the coveted "Vermeer."

Years later, with less than si had acquired was a forgery, one the master forger Hans Van M maus" shown to Göring as a c pained Hermann Göring, "that museum in Amsterdam had acqu. You say it isn't? I regard it as told the embarrassing truth. "It v I paid most of all for that one!" revealed to him now that that fo you up," the Americans told hir fact that there were only two suc and a "Rembrandt." "That was a very stiff price for the Rembra added, becoming visibly pensive. He added, "I think my own expe careful when you associate wi themselves—I noticed that mysel As works of art were acquired rowed, loaned out, traded, transfer

* He has images of himself in lastly history reflected as the founder the Goering Museum

This capitulation was typical of the Hitler-Göring relationship. Although Major von Below, Hitler's air-force adjutant, had noticed an estrangement during the Battle of Britain, he observed that Hitler continued to consult his air-force chief on any major initiative for three more years. Not that he felt bound to heed Göring's advice: As Ribbentrop would write in August 1945, once Hitler had made up his mind, nobody—"not even Göring with his overbearing influence"—could change it for him.

Göring hated the developing Nazi plan to attack Russia. In vain he canvassed his own strategy, for a concerted action by German, Italian, and Spanish forces to seize the British Empire's fortress at Gibraltar and capture the Suez Canal, thus sealing off the Mediterranean. After that he proposed they occupy the Balkans and North Africa. Hitler would not listen, and invited the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, to Berlin for one final parley before making up his mind. Göring and Ribbentrop entertained the Soviet potentate at the Kaiserhof Hotel on November 12, but the price that the stocky little Russian shortly stated for further Soviet collaboration took Ribbentrop's breath away: The U.S.S.R. now demanded Finland, Romania, and Bulgaria, control of the Dardanelles Straits—and more, because when British bombers arrived over Berlin after dark that night, Molotov confidentially stated to Ribbentrop in the air-raid shelter beneath the Reich Chancellery a demand that made the Nazi leaders tumble out of their seats, as Göring later put it. Moscow now insisted on being awarded naval bases on the North Sea outlets of the Baltic. "I told them," Ribbentrop haughtily assured the Reichsmarschall, "that there could be no talk of that."

By the next day, November 13, Hitler's decision had hardened. The high command's diary shows that Russia was among the three topics that he discussed with Göring. One was raising an airborne corps, a second was whether or not to capture Cap Verde, the Canaries, and the Azores, and the third was the mounting of an assault on Gibraltar under General von Richthofen's command, prior to an "eastern campaign" that might begin thereafter on May 1, 1941.

It must be said that Göring's motives for opposing Hitler's Russian campaign were economic rather than moral. Nazi Germany was dependent on Soviet deliveries of grain and oil, and on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. He urged Hitler to concede all of Molotov's demands except for the outrageous claims in the western Baltic, pointing out slyly that these Soviet advances would bring Moscow into open and direct conflict with London. The Wehrmacht, he argued, could hardly march all the way to Vladivostok. Besides, Hitler himself had argued in his *Mein Kampf* against fighting a war on two fronts. "There is only one front," Hitler retorted stolidly. "That is in the east." Göring disagreed, but Hitler steamrolled his arguments aside. "Listen," Bodenschatz heard him say. "I'll only need your bombers in the east for three or four weeks. Then you'll get them back. When we've finished

off Russia, the army will be mechanized divisions, and the air force. It's going to be tri

Göring allowed himself to parroted the Führer's argument Adolf Galland that that "in ten weeks" that can come. When General Thoma base beyond the Ural mountains too. My airborne troops will our links to the Far East." "marschall, describing Hitler's 1945, and added, "as always

Four years later Bodenschatz became "infected" with the general, Göring's longtime friend in him."

On November 14, 1940—the the air force that Göring built Coventry, pathfinding by the Luftwaffe's high command had no sequent autumn and winter air for Britain. But Göring was still fetched the young chief of air staff Sperrle, and Stumpff were at the and Milch was deputizing for them a lot that needs doing," cursed in a private diary entry on November schall we have to act on our own

It seemed a bizarre way to run Galland found themselves getting nurse, Christa Gormanns, cancel attacks on others. The Reichsmarschall one of Fräulein Limberger's gift retained nine different doctors as was playing up, and licentious Luftwaffe exhaustion is clear from a long letter by a princely courier (Victor, prior after his departure for East Prussia

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Hitler-Göring relationship. Although Ribbentrop had noticed an estrangement in that Hitler continued to consult his for three more years. Not that he felt Ribbentrop would write in August 1945, nobody—"not even Göring with his" it for him.

plan to attack Russia. In vain he cancelled action by German, Italian, and France's fortress at Gibraltar and capture of the Mediterranean. After that he proposed Africa. Hitler would not listen, and Vyacheslav Molotov, to Berlin for one. Hitler and Ribbentrop entertained Molotov on November 12, but the price stated for further Soviet collaboration (U.S.S.R. now demanded Finland, the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles Straits—and more, because Berlin after dark that night, Molotov the air-raid shelter beneath the Reich Chancellery. Nazi leaders tumble out of their seats, insisted on being awarded naval bases. "I told them," Ribbentrop haughtily there could be no talk of that."

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off Russia, the army will be cut back to thirty Panzer divisions and twenty mechanized divisions, and the remaining manpower will be packed into your air force. It's going to be tripled, quadrupled. . . ."

Göring allowed himself to be persuaded. Over the next few weeks he parroted the Führer's arguments to Pili Körner, he revealed to Fighter Commander Adolf Galland that the Luftwaffe was to attack Russia shortly, but that "in ten weeks" that campaign would be over and Britain's turn would come. When General Thomas reminded him of Stalin's growing industrial base beyond the Ural mountains, he replied, "My air force will smash that too. My airborne troops will seize the Trans-Siberian Railroad and restore our links to the Far East." "He got me to help him," recalled the Reichsmarschall, describing Hitler's persuasiveness with a thin smile in August 1945, and added, "as always."

Four years later Bodenschatz would suggest that men like Göring had become "infected" with their own life-style. "He has Carinhall," the general, Göring's longtime friend, observed. "And that's the cancer within him."

On November 14, 1940—the night that he handed over power to Milch—the air force that Göring built fire-bombed the British industrial city of Coventry, pathfinding by the new electronic beams. Perhaps, if the Luftwaffe's high command had not been so geographically far flung, the subsequent autumn and winter air offensive might have been really dangerous for Britain. But Göring was sulking at Rominten in East Prussia. He had fetched the young chief of air staff, Hans Jeschonnek, to his side. Kesselring, Sperrle, and Stumpff were at their widely dispersed Luftflotte headquarters, and Milch was deputizing for the Reichsmarschall at la Boissière. "There's a lot that needs doing," cursed Jeschonnek's deputy Hoffmann von Waldau in a private diary entry on November 16, "and for want of the Reichsmarschall we have to act on our own."

It seemed a bizarre way to run a modern air force. Milch, Waldau, and Galland found themselves getting orders dictated by phone from Göring's nurse, Christa Gormanns, canceling night raids on one town and ordering attacks on others. The Reichsmarschall's health was clearly indifferent. From one of Fräulein Limberger's gift lists it seems that at one time or another he retained nine different doctors and physicians to minister to him. His heart was playing up, and licentious living had debased the human tissues. His exhaustion is clear from a long letter that he sent to Count Eric von Rosen by a princely courier (Victor, prince zu Wied) on November 21, a week after his departure for East Prussia:

I am currently taking several weeks' convalescent leave as I was at the very end of my tether. I'm spending it with Emmy and

Edda here at my hunting lodge at Rominten, getting away from everything that's going on and summoning up strength for the year to come.

Göring's letter also leveled a thinly veiled warning at the Swedes, whose newspapers were reporting Berlin's air-raid damage in grotesquely exaggerated language. "Coventry," he gloated, "has been completely and literally razed to the ground. London has suffered immense damage, and entire districts look like they've been hit by an earthquake." By November 1, he claimed, his Luftwaffe had dropped 15,872 tons of bombs on London; but the British had succeeded in dropping only 31 tons on Berlin. Criticizing Stockholm's "bourgeois press," he added, "If Sweden believes that the freedom of her press is more important than her own future, so be it. But Sweden must not be surprised later on if, one day, Germany draws the appropriate conclusions."

In a paragraph marked "Confidential" he dropped a hint about Russia that he asked Count von Rosen to pass on to Finland: "Your Finnish friends," he wrote, "can rest assured about the future—even after Molotov's visit to us." He had sent an agent to Field Marshal Mannerheim several weeks earlier about this, and the same agent would visit him again, in a few days' time. Meanwhile Göring said that he welcomed the signs that the Finns had been shrewd enough to abandon their former policies and move closer to the German line.

Göring allowed little to disturb his East Prussian vacation. Once, he languidly directed Jeschonnek to phone orders through to Milch to bomb Liverpool and Manchester at once, whatever the moon, and to deliver "a heavy blow at London" in between.

On December 3, Milch and Waldau brought out to Rominten the plans that they had drafted on Hitler's instructions for a Luftwaffe Air Corps to be moved to southern Italy to help extricate Mussolini from his own military quagmires in North Africa and Greece. Göring still loathed the Italians in general and Mussolini in particular. "If I were a Frenchman," he had sneered when Mussolini belatedly entered the war in June, "I should spit on the ground every time I saw an Italian." But every Italian setback now just boosted British morale, so Göring had to approve the rescue plan.

"Wet autumn day," wrote General von Waldau in his diary. "A very nice heart-to-heart with the Reichsmarschall, most of it in the shooting brake that conveyed us to the feeding place of the world-record stag, Matador."

For a while the raids on Britain continued—against London, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Sheffield. Over Christmas, however, Hitler, of all people, ordered a festive lull in the mutual killing match. The British, not to be outdone, did the same. From his East Prussian retreat Göring was inspired by the Christmas spirit to send bank books to the children of airmen killed in action, each with a deposit of one thousand marks from his own bulging

account. By the end of it *Barbarossa*, a possible attempt to force a "brisk conclusion."

As a military band sent New Year arrived at Rom Celsius. Göring's red-leath notes neatly entered in blue moment of his day. Typical twice for an hour with Edda on sleigh rides, inspecting supervising Fräulein Limbe in his private cinema or play, through the forests with Pat his physician, Dr. von Ono against the British Isles and Air Corps against the British.

He savored the approach the arrangements with Göring to express surprise at all the and obsequious Dino Alfieri early fifteenth-century altar of Swabian master Hans Mults wood carvings.

The birthday itself passed: ment paraded in drifting snow Göring's favorite gourmet res staged the comedy *Cherries for* mystery did, however, mar the Emmy had given him vanished entered grimly in his diary. "In Arrayed in a red silk dressing the piles of packages, his face He changed into a pure white complexion was flushed with air that she had telephoned a claim it's still in the building!"—Göring

His diary outlined the events P.M., "Conference with Körner, diary shows that he warned of a "Detective finds stolen cigarette stuffed it down a sofa." "2:00 P.M. my birthday presents. 3:30 P.M., advisers Jeschonnek, Milch, and with the Führer, operational matters

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account. By the end of that year Hitler had issued the formal directive for
Barbarossa, a possible attack on the Soviet Union. Göring's task would be
to force a "brisk conclusion" in the east.

As a military band serenaded the Reichsmarschall's hunting lodge, the
New Year arrived at Rominten. The first days were clear but cold at -20°
Celsius. Göring's red-leather pocket diary for 1941 has survived, with daily
notes neatly entered in blue or green crayon, tabulating his activities for each
moment of his day. Typical pages record him rising at eight-thirty, playing
twice for an hour with Edda, conferring with foresters, taking his latest guests
on sleigh rides, inspecting pedigreed Trakehn horses, drinking coffee, and
supervising Fräulein Limberger's filing work before taking in a late movie
in his private cinema or playing a hand of bridge. Sometimes he went skiing
through the forests with Paula or hunted wild boar with Olga. It was left to
his physician, Dr. von Ondarza, to brief him on the war—the night raids
against the British Isles and the harassing attacks by General Geissler's X
Air Corps against the British naval base of Malta.

He savored the approach of his birthday like a small boy, reviewing
the arrangements with Gömnert two days beforehand but still managing
to express surprise at all the gifts. The Italian ambassador, the smirking
and obsequious Dino Alfieri, displayed to him Mussolini's own gift—the
early fifteenth-century altar from Sterzing in the South Tyrol. Built by the
Swabian master Hans Multscher, it consisted of eight great paintings and
wood carvings.

The birthday itself passed almost flawlessly. The Hermann Göring Regi-
ment paraded in drifting snow. A luncheon was provided by Horcher's,
Göring's favorite gourmet restaurant. Afterward, the Prussian State Theater
staged the comedy *Cherries for Rome* in the Air Ministry's largest hall. One
mystery did, however, mar the day. The diamond-studded cigarette box that
Emmy had given him vanished from the gift-laden tables. "Six P.M.," Göring
entered grimly in his diary. "Investigation into the theft of Emmy's present."
Arrayed in a red silk dressing gown and furry slippers, he elbowed through
the piles of packages, his face trancelike, looking for the missing trinket.
He changed into a pure white uniform for dinner, but his smooth, glossy
complexion was flushed with anger at the theft, and when Emmy announced
that she had telephoned a clairvoyant friend, a doctor in Kassel—"He says
it's still in the building!"—Göring just harrumphed.

His diary outlined the events of the next day, January 13, 1941: At 12:30
P.M., "Conference with Körner, Neumann, and Backe on nutrition." (Backe's
diary shows that he warned of a food crisis looming in Europe.) 1:30 P.M.,
"Detective finds stolen cigarette case!" (A Horcher waiter had evidently
stuffed it down a sofa.) 2:00 P.M., lunch with guests. 3:00 P.M., packed
my birthday presents. 3:30 P.M., rested in bed." At five o'clock his air-force
advisers Jeschonnek, Milch, and Bodenschatz came to "report on conference
with the Führer, operational matters," joined an hour later by General Udet.

Milch summed up this secret conference in one word in his own notebook: "Ost" [East]. And Jeschonnek informed his staff at La Boissière that Hitler had resolved to "sever the head of the danger menacing us in the east."

Göring still hankered after peace with Britain. On January 14, the Swedish Count Bonde, who had visited Lord Halifax quite recently, was brought in. Göring was crestfallen to learn that Bonde had brought no particular message from the British. "We have offered Britain peace twice," said Göring wistfully. "If I send any message now, they will take it as a sign of weakness." He resumed his art pursuits. The diary glimpses him at Carinhall on the eighteenth, haggling with his art agents Miedl and Hofer. He swam and sauna'd often, but his health had worsened perceptibly, and after addressing air-force officers on the nineteenth he suffered a midnight heart attack. Clearly it was not his first, since his diary treats it almost routinely. Professor Siebert took an electrocardiogram, and on the twenty-second Göring was fit enough to meet Kesselring, Jeschonnek, and other generals again.

The coming war with Russia overshadowed all else. His differences with Hitler over forward strategy became more marked as the shaping of *Barbarossa* now began. For some weeks Göring found that he was getting phone calls discouraging him from attending Hitler's daily war conference, the *Führerlage*. "I don't know what's up," Emmy heard her husband remark. "The Führer stops me going over. Something's going on." The diary confirms this. Between November 14 and mid-March he met Hitler only four times, and they telephoned each other only rarely—e.g., on January 16, when he reported that X Air Corps had sunk the British cruisers *Southampton* and *York* and the aircraft carrier *Illustrious*.

General Kurt Student, the Parachute Division's commander, came out to Carinhall with Jeschonnek on January 24 and stayed aboard Göring's train when it left for Berchtesgaden. As they talked that evening, Student found the Reichsmarschall bitterly opposed to *Barbarossa*. Arriving at Berchtesgaden, Göring tackled Hitler at midday, lunched with him, and stayed with him alone until 8:00 P.M. They were probably arguing, because General Student would recall four years later that Hitler left afterward "sunk deep in thought." According to Student, Göring was already thinking he had succeeded—"Thank God, no war with Russia!"—when Hitler phoned two days later: "Göring," he said, "I have changed my mind. We shall attack in the east."

By that time Hermann Göring was back in Berlin, immersed in three days of Cabinet-level conferences on raw materials and the coming campaign in the Balkans. On January 28, 1941, he was again summoned to the Führer's presence, this time in the Reich Chancellery. On the following day the Reichsmarschall revealed in a three-hour conference with his arms experts and economics advisers, according to Körner's later testimony, that war with Russia was definite. He asked each of those seated around the table for his

view. Fritz Todt, Friedrich Krauch, and Fritz Fromm unthinkable," citing precise vexed Göring. The except himself, pointed out pensive Germany's chronic grain shortage. Thomas to set up a

Visibly agitated, he took that Hitler had decided to ir Gastein to take the cure for the only political conversational marschall. How unlike Carinhall you for weeks?" she asked. very political animal," he said. He now told her that Hitler loved Göring, because I knew you

Disconsolate at his failure, 30, 1941—the party's anniversary member staff. He parked his Hague and Amsterdam with Jew and Gentile as he traded. Arriving back at La Boissière first day of February amid snarls from Milch but stayed in bed with Alfred Rosenberg and his half-brother. an art raid on Paris that would last days, from February 4 to February 10 he pursued the barely legal art

His thieving friend General Hanesse had housed his office in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, the former residence of the Rothschilds. Luftwaffe hostel complete with and cutlery. Göring liked that fine tapestries and carpets from

Here in Paris, Göring and Günther Prien, who had sunk in around fine jewelers like Perle. word shopping in his diary, shows that he was visited after the Army's "art-protection officer, bullying official whose high rank, that of a *Feldführer* in R

* after the praise comes more criticism
Hitler, who knows nothing about
air war is criticizing an airman who

→ knows very
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view. Fritz Todt, Friedrich Syrup, Erich Neumann, Georg Thomas, Carl Krauch, and Fritz Fromm all declared that such a war was "economically unthinkable," citing precisely the same raw-material considerations that had vexed Göring. The exception was Herbert Backe. Backe, born in Russia himself, pointed out pensively that the conquest of the Ukraine would solve Germany's chronic grain shortages. Unconvinced, unhappy too, Göring directed Thomas to set up a special economic unit to study the problem.

Visibly agitated, he took Emmy for a walk afterward and confided to her that Hitler had decided to invade Russia. Emmy was about to leave for Bad Gastein to take the cure for her rheumatism. This, Emmy later testified, was the only political conversation that she ever had with her husband the Reichsmarschall. How unlike Carin she was! "Is that why the Führer wouldn't see you for weeks?" she asked. Göring laughed out loud. "You may not be a very political animal," he said, "but you've got your head screwed on." He now told her that Hitler had confirmed it himself. "I refused to see you, Göring, because I knew you would do all you could to talk me out of it."

Disconsolate at his failure, the Reichsmarschall left for Holland on January 30, 1941—the party's anniversary—taking his sisters and a one-hundred member staff. He parked his train and strolled around the art dealers at The Hague and Amsterdam with Miedl and Hofer, dealing indiscriminately with Jew and Gentile as he traded guilders and Reichsmarks for gilt and canvas. Arriving back at La Boissière, the air staff's forward headquarters, on the first day of February amid snow and slush, he resumed operational command from Milch but stayed in bed with a headache until, brightening, he recalled Alfred Rosenberg and his haul of "ownerless" Jewish treasures. He executed an art raid on Paris that would exceed anything else to date, last for three days, from February 4 to February 6, and demonstrate his ruthlessness as he pursued the barely legal enrichment of his art hoard.

His thieving friend General Hanesse collected him from the Gare du Nord. Hanesse had housed his offices in the gallery of Roger & Gallet, at 62 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré; this was just down the street from the opulent former residence of the Rothschilds, which Hanesse had converted into a Luftwaffe hostel complete with priceless Persian carpets and crested plates and cutlery. Göring liked that: He had developed something of a taste for fine tapestries and carpets himself.

Here in Paris, Göring and Hanesse lunched with Submarine Commander Günther Prien, who had sunk the British battleship *Royal Oak*, then strolled around fine jewelers like Perugia, Magnet, and Hermès. He jotted the one word *shopping* in his diary, and that said it all. The same little notebook shows that he was visited after tea by Dr. Hermann Bunjes, the German Army's "art-protection officer," and Colonel Kurt von Behr, an unpleasant, bullying official whose high-ranking Red Cross uniform concealed his true rank, that of a *Feldführer* in Rosenberg's task force in Paris.

→ know very little about
modern art, Baroque + war flowers

28

WARNING BRITAIN
ABOUT BARBAROSSA

Throughout the spring of 1941 Hitler's planned conquest of eastern territories cast its nightmarish shadow over his principal lieutenant. Along every ministerial corridor in Berlin could be heard the echo as *Barbarossa* approached with ponderous tread, and none dared stand up to the Führer long enough to talk him and his eager army out of it. The coming operation intruded on Hermann Göring's contentment as he cruised the galleries of Amsterdam, as he unpacked the crates of artworks at Carinhall, and as he briefed his agents to scout the treasure-filled bazaars of Switzerland and Italy, of France and the Low Countries, for anything that he might have missed himself. But for Hitler's *Barbarossa* plan, Göring would have had few cares: His air force was operating with merciless precision against its English targets; his own wife and infant daughter were safe at Rominten in East Prussia; and out there the stags and wild boar awaited with ill-concealed impatience the arrival of the quaintly clad Reich master huntsman.

But the nightmare remained. And one fact, as the actual day approached, would demonstrate the depths of his despair at Hitler's deliberate opening of a second front. Hermann Göring would leak to the British both the fact

and the actual date of *Barbarossa*—of which Hitler was surely not aware.

The German Army high command, and Göring could not count on either. Relations with the navy's warships were having to operate over, when Raeder now complained vacationed in Paris—that the British German coast with impunity, Hitler control of the Luftwaffe's KG40, or exploded with fury and summoned Karl Dönitz, from his Paris headquarters heaped upon the admiral remarks "distinctly unfriendly." "You can't resign," "As long as I live, or until I resign get a fleet air arm." Pointing out the state," he threatened that even if on KG40 he would not be likely to planes. "I need FW 200's too," he

After leaving France on February 9 to soothe his tattered nerves by cruising of days, those at The Hague and Amsterdam loot from the Jeu de Paume loaded to Berlin. Here, on February 11, he Hitler out of attacking Russia; asking the renewal of the Soviet trade economic disadvantages of fighting both grain and petroleum.

Without waiting for the result, Göring next days hunting stags, stalking elk,

In the second half of February 1941 necessary evil. Riding his train south to fully discussed Germany's alternative to his principal expert on Romanian oil. advocate the benefits of capturing the S on February 19 he lunched at Hitler's in private conclave with Hitler and General Hitler robustly stated that if anybody el drawbacks of *Barbarossa*, he was going the point of attacking Germany," he "then economics don't come into it."

Still uncomfortable, Göring reminded

and the actual date of *Barbarossa*—an extraordinary act bordering on treason, of which Hitler was surely not aware.

The German Army high command backed Hitler solidly in his historic intent, and Göring could not count on the support of Grand Admiral Raeder, either. Relations with the navy's commander in chief were strained. Raeder's warships were having to operate virtually without air reconnaissance. Moreover, when Raeder now complained to Hitler on February 4—as Göring vacationed in Paris—that the British bombers had begun raiding the North German coast with impunity, Hitler agreed that the navy should take over control of the Luftwaffe's KG40, one of Göring's proudest squadrons. Göring exploded with fury and summoned the nearest admiral, U-boat Commander Karl Dönitz, from his Paris headquarters to La Boissière. Over coffee he heaped upon the admiral remarks that Dönitz described in his report as "distinctly unfriendly." "You can be sure of one thing," Göring snapped. "As long as I live, or until I resign, your Grand Admiral Raeder will never get a fleet air arm." Pointing out that he, Göring, was "the second man in the state," he threatened that even if Dönitz should somehow get his hands on KG40 he would not be likely to find replacements for its long-range planes. "I need FW 200's too," he shouted. "And it'll serve you right!"

After leaving France on February 9, 1941, Göring found that he still needed to soothe his tattered nerves by cruising around more art galleries for a couple of days, those at The Hague and Amsterdam. With his sisters and the latest loot from the Jeu de Paume loaded safely aboard, his train took him back to Berlin. Here, on February 11, he made one of his last attempts to talk Hitler out of attacking Russia, asking Schnurre, the German diplomat handling the renewal of the Soviet trade agreement, to put to him the serious economic disadvantages of fighting Nazi Germany's principal supplier of both grain and petroleum.

Without waiting for the result, Göring left for East Prussia and spent the next days hunting stags, stalking elk, and sleigh-riding.

In the second half of February 1941 he began to accept *Barbarossa* as a necessary evil. Riding his train south to Bavaria on February 18, he thoughtfully discussed Germany's alternative petroleum supplies with a Dr. Fischer, his principal expert on Romanian oil. Soon after, Göring began actually to advocate the benefits of capturing the Soviet oil fields. His diary shows that on February 19 he lunched at Hitler's Berghof and spent the next six hours in private conclave with Hitler and General Jeschonnek, the chief of air staff. Hitler robustly stated that if anybody else talked to him about the economic drawbacks of *Barbarossa*, he was going to block his ears. "If Russia is on the point of attacking Germany," he reasoned with the Reichsmarschall, "then economics don't come into it."

Still uncomfortable, Göring reminded him of Napoleon's defeat in Russia.

8 BRITAIN BARBAROSSA

Throughout the spring of 1941 Hitler's planned conquest of eastern territories cast its nightmarish shadow over the ministerial corridor in Berlin could be reached with ponderous tread, and none dared go to talk him and his eager army out of Hermann Göring's contentment as he unpacked the crates of artworks sent to scout the treasure-filled bazaars of the Low Countries, for anything that might reveal Hitler's *Barbarossa* plan, Göring was operating with merciless precision. His wife and infant daughter were safe here where the stags and wild boar awaited the arrival of the quaintly clad Reich master. In fact, as the actual day approached, despair at Hitler's deliberate opening could leak to the British both the fact

Hitler would not heed him, and Göring, characteristically, saw no choice but to fall into line. When the Reich minister of finance, Count Schwerin von Krosigk, wrote to him pleading against *Barbarossa*, Göring instructed Paul Körner to reply orally that the planned campaign was preventive, and hence necessary. On February 22, the Reichsmarschall wrote two eloquent, perhaps even fatalistic, words in his diary. "East: deadlines."

The change in his posture was apparent when he discussed the long-term economic effects of *Barbarossa* with General Thomas of the OKW on the twenty-sixth. He agreed that there was little point in occupying just the Ukraine. "At all costs," said Göring, "we must get the petroleum fields around Baku too."

He shares the Führer's opinion [noted Thomas immediately afterward] that when the German troops march into Russia the whole Bolshevik state will collapse and that in consequence we have no cause to anticipate the large-scale destruction of supplies or demolition of railroads that I fear.

"What matters most," said Göring, "is to finish off the Bolshevik leaders, fast, first, and foremost."

Visiting Vienna on March 5, he casually asked the visiting right-wing dictator of Romania, General Ion Antonescu, whether his country could increase its petroleum output—"Since our other oil supplier [Russia] might one day drop out." He asked equally casually, "How many of your Romanians live on Russian soil?" and when Antonescu told him, the Reichsmarschall made a silent scooping gesture with one hand.

To dupe the British into believing they were next on his menu, Hitler sent the gaudy Luftwaffe commander back to the west for two weeks later that month. Göring bore this banishment with fortitude, happily hobnobbing with his shady art-dealer acquaintances in The Hague and Amsterdam—where Nathan Katz, the Jew who had sold him three paintings, including Van Dyck's "Family Portrait" (for eighty thousand dollars), was now wangling exit visas to Switzerland—and in Paris, where he made further raids on the Jeu de Paume on the eleventh and twelfth.

Göring no longer tried to talk Hitler out of *Barbarossa*. On March 19, 1941, as his train had returned from The Hague to Berlin, General Thomas had come aboard to brief him on the organization for *Barbarossa* and on the strategic stockpiling of fuel and rubber. Six days later Göring talked for an hour with Birger Dahlerus and, according to the Swede's wife, told him for the first time of the coming campaign in Russia. When Field Marshal Milch came out to lunch at Carinhall the next day, spluttering protests that *Barbarossa* was bound to drag on into the coming winter, Göring calmed him down. "Russia," he said, "will collapse like a house of cards." Hitler

himself had assured him so—"The rest of us can only fall in."

When the new Japanese ambassador courtesy visit that day, Göring did too. "First we shall defeat Britain," he said, "and next the United States." Later by Hitler for the Japanese of Goebbels on the awesome event in Greece" (due at the end of the assistance to Mussolini).

The big project [noted Goebbels] is coming later: aggressive camouflage and only a hard begin with extensive troop in suspicion to all sorts of places is in preparation. . . .

Not entirely capable of suppressing that the campaign had "parallels" mentally troubled the Reichsmarschall.

Hitler's plan to aid Mussolini in a pro-British coup in Yugoslavia tête-à-tête with Dahlerus at midday from Hitler to attend, along with chief, a briefing at the Reich Chancellery, P.M., Führer briefing (Yugoslavia) mood, because he had made one of that he had resolved to "smash Yugoslavia" as invading Greece. Equipped with army swiftly pulled together the army would require. After a late lunch Udet, Waldau, Schmid, and Quart Waldau noted in his own diary: "the Reichsmarschall at the Führer has created a new situation in the military operation as rapidly as possible."

Göring reported back to the Führer would be to destroy the Yugoslav flattening Belgrade itself by saturation night switching air-force squadrons: bomber wing would move to Wildenflug dive bombers of Stuka 77, the fighter

* The metaphorical belief in a God

Göring, characteristically, saw no choice. Reich minister of finance, Count Schwerin, siding against *Barbarossa*, Göring instructed that the planned campaign was preventive, and on March 22, the Reichsmarschall wrote two eloquent, laudatory entries in his diary. "East: deadlines." It was apparent when he discussed the long-term strategy with General Thomas of the OKW on the 23rd that there was little point in occupying just the Balkans. Göring, "we must get the petroleum fields

in our opinion [noted Thomas immediately after the German troops march into Russia the whole campaign and that in consequence we have no large-scale destruction of supplies or demoralization fear.

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On March 5, he casually asked the visiting right-wing Romanian Ion Antonescu, whether his country could not do so. "Since our other oil supplier [Russia] might be taken away from us equally casually, 'How many of your Romanian troops?' and when Antonescu told him, the Reichsmarschall gestured with one hand.

Believing they were next on his menu, Hitler sent Göring back to the west for two weeks later that he returned with fortitude, happily hobnobbing with the Dutch in The Hague and Amsterdam—where he sold him three paintings, including Van Dyck's *Portrait of a Man* (worth a thousand dollars), was now wangling exit visas for his family, where he made further raids on the Jeu de Paquet.

He talked Hitler out of *Barbarossa*. On March 19, he returned from The Hague to Berlin, General Thomas of the organization for *Barbarossa* and on the 20th he sold him rubber. Six days later Göring talked for an hour with the Swede's wife, told him for the campaign in Russia. When Field Marshal Milch called him the next day, spluttering protests that *Barbarossa* was coming into the coming winter, Göring calmed him by saying "it will collapse like a house of cards." Hitler

himself had assured him so—"The Führer is a unique leader, a gift of God. The rest of us can only fall in behind."

When the new Japanese ambassador, General Hiroshi Oshima, paid a courtesy visit that day, Göring dropped a broad hint to him about *Barbarossa* too. "First we shall defeat Britain," he boasted, following the official deception strategy, "and next the Soviets." Over a banquet thrown two days later by Hitler for the Japanese foreign minister, Göring talked briefly with Goebbels on the awesome event that was to follow the "long-prepared assault on Greece" (due at the end of the first week in April, as an urgent measure of assistance to Mussolini).

The big project [noted Goebbels, after discussing *Barbarossa* with Göring] is coming later: against "R." It is being very carefully camouflaged and only a handful of people know about it. It will begin with extensive troop movements to the west. We shall divert suspicion to all sorts of places. . . . A mock invasion of England is in preparation. . . .

Not entirely capable of suppressing his own apprehensions, Goebbels noted that the campaign had "parallels with Napoleon," and that these had momentarily troubled the Reichsmarschall too.

Hitler's plan to aid Mussolini in Greece was dramatically complicated by a pro-British coup in Yugoslavia on March 27. He was enjoying a farewell tête-à-tête with Dahlerus at midday when he received the sudden summons from Hitler to attend, along with Ribbentrop and the other commanders in chief, a briefing at the Reich Chancellery. Göring noted merely, "1:00-3:00 P.M., Führer briefing (Yugoslavia)." Hitler was in an ominously buoyant mood, because he had made one of his sudden snap decisions: He announced that he had resolved to "smash Yugoslavia" immediately, at the same time as invading Greece. Equipped with Hitler's simple order, the air force and army swiftly pulled together the additional forces that a Yugoslav campaign would require. After a late lunch, Göring had a two-hour conference with Udet, Waldau, Schmid, and Quartermaster General von Seidel. General von Waldau noted in his own diary: "In the afternoon I am summoned to see the Reichsmarschall at the Führer's official residence. The Yugoslav putsch has created a new situation in the Balkans. The decision is made to mount a military operation as rapidly as possible.

Göring reported back to the Führer at 7:30 P.M. The Luftwaffe's task would be to destroy the Yugoslav and Greek ground organization, after flattening Belgrade itself by saturation bombing. Waldau worked far into the night switching air-force squadrons from the west to the southeast: the KG51 bomber wing would move to Wiener-Neustadt; the bombers of KG2, the dive bombers of Stuka 77, the fighters of JG54 would leapfrog across Europe

* The metaphysics of Goering's belief in a God. Use Grimm.

to new bases in the same region. "What is politically absolutely essential," commented Walldau after conferring with Göring, "is for the punch to be hurled at Yugoslavia with merciless force and for the military smash (*Zerschlagung*) to follow like lightning." Göring's diary shows him galvanized into action over the next days, recording appointments with Austrian-born General Alexander Löhr (commanding Luftflotte 4, Vienna), with Franz Neuhausen, who was handling the economic exploitation of the Balkans, and with a kaleidoscopic cast of other generals, ambassadors, art agents, goldsmiths, air-force lawyers, sculptors, and test pilots (one of whom, Hanna Reitsch, he accompanied to receive her Iron Cross from Hitler on March 28). The name of Professor Siebert again figures in the diary, because Göring's cardiovascular system was still causing alarm.

On March 30, three days after the Belgrade coup, Göring attended a three-hour secret speech by Hitler to his generals in the Chancellery's paneled Cabinet Room. Trying to explain why Britain was stubbornly fighting on, Hitler accused "the warmonger Winston Churchill and the Jews around him," and he blamed the Italians and their "accursed military incompetence." But, he argued, Germany must defeat the Soviet Union first, and he mentioned particularly the growing strength of the Russian Air Force. According to the notes taken by the chief of general staff, Franz Halder, Hitler expressed approval during this speech of their plan to liquidate the Soviet political commissars found among Russian prisoners. Hitler explained to his high-ranking secret audience that *Barbarossa* would see two conflicting ideologies locked in mortal combat—"We must abandon the notion of soldierly camaraderie. The Communist," he said, "has not an ounce of comradeship in him." He directed, "Communists and GPU [Soviet secret police] men are criminals and are to be dealt with as such."

None of this gave Hermann Göring any sleepless nights. Innocent of any feelings of guilt, he joined Emmy briefly at Bad Gastein, then took his train on to Austria on April 4. He would remain there languidly directing air-force operations from a tourist hotel on the Semmering until the Balkan campaign ended three weeks later. It opened with a vicious VIII Air Corps raid by three hundred bombers on Belgrade at 7:20 A.M. on the sixth (the Yugoslavs claimed that the raid left seventeen thousand dead). Hitler had, however, forbidden Göring to bomb Athens, and during the remaining fighting there was little for Göring's squadrons to do other than harry the transport ships that eventually evacuated the British expeditionary force.

On the Semmering he walked and swam, trying to strengthen his heart, but the mountain air was heavy with the sleet and drizzle of early spring. For company he took Pili Kömer and Milch, or Udet and Jeschonnek, but these Luftwaffe generals were vain and immiscible. Jeschonnek, his chief of air staff, was sensitive, withdrawn, and unimaginative—the very opposite of the flamboyant and corrupt Reichsmarschall. Every two or three days Göring drove over to Hitler's command train, which was halted between two

tunnels at Mönnichkirchen. He re Coventry, Glasgow, Bristol, and London against Berlin. Göring's State Of boasted that three thousand Berlin was eleven). Göring retaliated with

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At the beginning of May 1941, v Göring traveled to Paris, taking his Establishing a pretext for the trip, Gö "Major conference on full-moon at: Luftflotte," with "many participants night of May 10–11.)

His diary, as he arrived in Paris, s acquisitive zeal:

May 1, 1941, Paris.

8:00, rose; 9:00, newspapers.

10:20 arrive at Paris Gare de l'Est

11:00 briefing by Hanesse and [U Drees

11:15 [art dealer] Bernheim and

12:00 [Feldführer] von Behr.

Behr, chief of Rosenberg's Paris task important document:

THE REICHSMARSCHALL OF
THE GREATER GERMAN REICH

The struggle against Jews, Free logical and hostile forces allied with National Socialism during this war

I therefore welcome Reichsleiter

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tunnels at Mönnichkirchen. He reported that his bombers had again raided Coventry, Glasgow, Bristol, and Liverpool. On April 9, the British retaliated against Berlin. Göring's State Opera was gutted. The British newspapers boasted that three thousand Berliners had died in the fires (the true figure was eleven). Göring retaliated with a violent attack on London a week later.

A few days after the London raid an air-force technical mission returned from Moscow. The air-force experts brought disturbing news of the Soviet Union's industrial mobilization. They had been allowed to tour half a dozen huge factories manufacturing equipment from ball bearings and special alloys to warplanes and aero-engines. Over dinner on the eighth, Soviet aircraft designer Mikoyan had blustered, "You have now seen the mighty technology of this Soviet nation. We shall bravely shatter any aggression, no matter where it comes from!" Colonel Dietrich Schwenke, head of the Luftwaffe mission, warned Göring that just one aircraft engine plant at Kuibyshev was bigger than all of the six biggest German factories together.

Göring dismissed Schwenke's report as defeatist. But Hitler became very pensive when told, and afterward mentioned Schwenke's report as having clinched the decision for him.

At the beginning of May 1941, with the Balkan campaign all but over, Göring traveled to Paris, taking his art curator Walter Hofer with him. Establishing a pretext for the trip, Göring entered in his diary for the second, "Major conference on full-moon attack [on London] by Second and Third Luftflotte," with "many participants." (The attack would take place on the night of May 10–11.)

His diary, as he arrived in Paris, shows that nothing had diminished his acquisitive zeal:

May 1, 1941, Paris.

Spring sunshine.

8:00, rose; 9:00, newspapers.

10:20 arrive at Paris Gare de l'Est station.

11:00 briefing by Hanesse and [the general's adjutant, Major] Drees

11:15 [art dealer] Bernheim and Hofer

12:00 [Feldführer] von Behr.

Behr, chief of Rosenberg's Paris task force, persuaded him to sign this important document:

THE REICHSMARSCHALL OF
THE GREATER GERMAN REICH

Headquarters, May 1, 1941

The struggle against Jews, Freemasons, and the diverse ideological and hostile forces allied with them is an urgent duty for National Socialism during this war.

I therefore welcome Reichsleiter Rosenberg's decision to set

up task forces in all occupied territories with the mission of securing all research material and cultural assets of the above-designated groups and transporting them to Germany.

The Göring document ordered all party, government, and military agencies to afford Feldführer von Behr "every conceivable support and assistance." He resumed his diary:

- 12:15 P.M., Angerer (long talk!)
- 1:45 Staffelt [head of Currency Protection Unit]
- 2:00 war briefing by [chief adjutant Major von] Brauchitsch
- 2:30 lunch at Cremaillère
- 3:45 Bernheim at Grand Hotel
- 4:15 Jeu de Paume (paintings)
- 5:30 Napoleon's crypt at Invalides Cathedral
- 6:00 return to Palais and read
- 7:30 report by [Hitler's air-force adjutant Major Nicolaus] von Below
- 9:25 situation [conference with] chief of air staff
- 10:00 dinner with guests at Maxim's, back at 11:00.

The next two days passed in the same sort of whirl—conferences with fighter aces Werner Mölders and Adolf Galland, sumptuous meals at Maxim's, erotic evenings at the Bal Tabarin, "shopping for furniture for Veldenstein," another finger-licking trip to the Jeu de Paume, and then back to his train—but not before he had negotiated with Bernheim the purchase of the priceless "Bagatelle Ceiling." ("The Russians have it," he would say sardonically when asked by the Americans what had happened to this fabulous painted ceiling in 1945.)

He had to be back in Berlin for Hitler's grandiloquent, triumphant, sarcastic speech to the Reichstag on the Balkan campaign. His train pulled in at 4:00 P.M. on May 4, he spoke with Hitler privately a few minutes later, and took his seat on the dais behind the Führer and his deputy, Rudolf Hess, at six. Nothing in the latter's demeanor betrayed that he was planning a spectacular adventure a few days later. The next day Göring inspected architect Albert Speer's latest dazzling models for the reconstruction of Berlin—an immense monument to Hitler's thousand-year Reich, with triumphal arch, broad ceremonial boulevards, and a great domed assembly hall. "I have the same admiration for your architectural ability," he flattered the young Nazi architect, "as I have for the Führer's political and military talents!"

His heart still molesting him, he went on brief leave to Bad Gastein, rejoining Emmy, before returning on May 9 to Veldenstein Castle in Franconia, to discuss plans for its interior renovation.

Hermann Göring had again left May 10, 1941, it flew the me attack so far, causing immense ment Building. On Sunday Dr. castle. The Reichsmarschall ha the telephone rang—a comman Hitler on the Obersalzberg. G "The Führer wants to see you!" with Hitler in Munich on Frid voice replaced the general's: "G Panic replaced puzzlement. G P.M. by the time it reached M on to the Berghof. There he s hovering around grinning unple bentrop. Walther Hewel, Ribb wrote in his diary: "Göring get Bodenschatz told me he's also v the hall between F., foreign min of speculation."

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The next day, Monday, May discuss with Hitler the vital ques difficult Messerschmitt 110 aircr not have disappeared silently into terrified that Britain might announ might blow the already strained A Hitler and Göring debated this di

"A very disturbed day," wrote . . . Neither Göring nor Udet belie flight to Glasgow. . . . But the F announcement at eight P.M.

Soon after Göring returned to h broadcast from London that Rud P.M. Göring telephoned Hitler with

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Hermann Göring had again left Milch in charge of the air force. On Saturday May 10, 1941, it flew the moonlight attack on London—its most severe attack so far, causing immense damage to the city and wrecking the Parliament Building. On Sunday Dr. von Ondarza brought the first reports to the castle. The Reichsmarschall had just settled down for lunch after that when the telephone rang—a command-flash call (*Führungs-Blitz-Gespräch*) from Hitler on the Obersalzberg. Göring recognized Bodenschatz's voice first: "The Führer wants to see you!" Since Göring had just spent two hours alone with Hitler in Munich on Friday, he involuntarily groaned. Hitler's gruff voice replaced the general's: "Göring! You are to come down here. *At once!*"

Panic replaced puzzlement. Göring fled to his special train, but it was 7:00 P.M. by the time it reached Munich, and it took two more hours to drive on to the Berghof. There he saw Martin Bormann, Hess's chief of staff, hovering around grinning unpleasantly, and a white-faced Joachim von Ribbentrop. Walther Hewel, Ribbentrop's ambassador on the Führer's staff, wrote in his diary: "Göring gets here after supper at nine P.M. From what Bodenschatz told me he's also very agitated. Long discussion downstairs in the hall between F., foreign minister, Göring, Bormann. Very heated, a lot of speculation."

Hitler thrust several pages of paper into Göring's hands. "Reichsminister Hess has flown to England!" he burst out. "He left this letter." In the document Hess declared himself willing to risk his life to make peace with Britain and end the bloodshed. Göring was contemptuous. He dismissed Hess as insane. ("Do you think," he would ask rhetorically in October 1945, "Hitler would really have sent the third man in the Reich on such a lone mission to Britain without the slightest preparation? . . . If he really wanted to deal with the British, there were reliable semidiplomatic channels through neutral countries. My own connections with Britain were such that I could have arranged it within forty-eight hours.")

The next day, Monday, May 12, Göring returned with General Udet to discuss with Hitler the vital question whether Hess could have handled the difficult Messerschmitt 110 aircraft alone and landed in Scotland. Might he not have disappeared silently into the North Sea? Ribbentrop, however, was terrified that Britain might announce Hess's arrival at any moment—and that might blow the already strained Axis alliance wide open. All that afternoon Hitler and Göring debated this dilemma.

"A very disturbed day," wrote Hewel. "Investigations into Hess's flight . . . Neither Göring nor Udet believes Hess capable of pulling off the difficult flight to Glasgow. . . . But the Führer thinks Hess has the skill. We make announcement at eight P.M."

Soon after Göring returned to his train, down at Berchtesgaden, the BBC broadcast from London that Rudolf Hess had landed in Scotland. At 9:00 P.M. Göring telephoned Hitler with the news. His own investigations began.

Bodenschatz found out that Hess had made complex, level-headed flight plans, including the use of a blind-navigation radio beam. Bodenschatz was not surprised by the deputy Führer's flight. "Hess," he would say in captivity, "was the exception. He had *nothing*—no castles, just a simple apartment. He could bring himself to part with his possessions."

The next morning, May 13, Göring tackled Professor Messerschmitt. "I see that anybody can fly at your airfield, despite the regulations," he thundered at the aircraft designer.

"Hess," retorted the aircraft designer, "was not just anybody. He was one of the most important ministers."

"Well, you knew Hess was crazy!"

From all over the Reich the gauleiters and ministers were assembling at the Berghof that afternoon to hear Hitler's report on the background to the Hess affair. Göring drove up there at three-thirty and spent an hour alone with Hitler first, discussing who would succeed Hess as "party minister." There was no talk of reviving the hollow title of deputy Führer. The Reichsmarschall spoke bluntly against promoting Martin Bormann to the job. Hitler assured him he was thinking of Bormann more in terms of becoming party treasurer.

"You're way out if you think Bormann will be satisfied with that," retorted Göring.

"Bormann's ambitions," said Hitler, "are a matter of indifference to me."

Hitler went down into the hall followed by a grim-faced Göring, and directed Bormann to read out the letters that Hess had left behind. The sixty or seventy Nazi leaders clustered round in a silent semicircle. Hans Frank had not seen Hitler so grief-stricken since the suicide of his niece Geli, ten years before. It was obvious that Hess's venture had taken him by surprise.

Pausing only briefly at the showrooms of United Handicrafts (Vereinigte Werkstätten) in Munich to select more furniture for his castle, Göring resumed his interrupted vacation at Veldenstein. A few days later his morning newspaper told him that Hitler had opted for Bormann after all, appointing him "director of the party chancellery." This hundredfold increase in the powers and status of Hess's ruthless red-neck chief of staff was a real setback for Göring. He had never got on well with Bormann. "Bormann," he would subsequently lament, "was a glutton for hard work and thus he consolidated his position . . . He matched his daily routine to the Führer's. He was always on hand when the Führer needed him." Bormann was far more radical in his anti-clerical and anti-Jewish campaign than Göring. From now on, a chance lunchtime remark by Hitler would be converted instantly by Bormann into a written Führer decree. Clean-living and not susceptible to bribery, he loathed the Reichsmarschall and the style of life that he led. As the troubles of the air force began to multiply, Bormann undertook a personal vendetta against its commander that Göring would reciprocate beyond the grave.

"Do you think Bormann is dead?" he would be asked in October 1945.

"If I had any say in it," he hope he's frying in hell."

In the air force his own prestige officers showed by their private said one officer in June 1941, "money in Germany. But there's really earns it!" They admired on the West Wall," said one Mess. "Some officers with only two Cross Second Class while rookies paid them a visit . . . he had dishd them out to these men him have a temper! Driving off, his men he tipped the generals out."

Air-force morale was high, and like the parachute assault on Crete having planned this coup, but it had refused to agree whether the force or army control, which division for the assault. What was insecure machine ciphers the British zones of the paratroops, and for wave. "We had the impression," think I'm mistaken, that the British which we were coming, because this, the air force never investigated been broken. There is indirect evidence were insecure, because in June 1941 his bomber forces target priorities: which was, in fact, just part of the prior to *Barbarossa*. On June 8, Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle's division part of the same grand deception ring's Luftflotte 2, with twenty-five transferred to the eastern front.

During May 1941 Göring had a theater of war. After an Arab rebellion in Iraq, he had despatched a small force to aid the rebels. But it was to Hitler and Foreign Minister Ribbentrop don't know anything about aviation been pointless and costly."

Thus he glossed over his own

"If I had any say in it," he spat out, tossing both hands in the air, "I hope he's frying in hell."

In the air force his own prestige was still high. Even in enemy hands his officers showed by their private remarks that they admired him. "Hermann," said one officer in June 1941, "is definitely the man who rakes in the most money in Germany. But there's not a man who begrudges it, because he really earns it!" They admired his even-handedness. "There was this unit on the West Wall," said one Messerschmitt 109F pilot shot down over Malta. "Some officers with only two sorties to their name already had the Iron Cross Second Class while rookies with ten sorties had nothing. Then Hermann paid them a visit . . . he had some Iron Crosses brought in at once and dished them out to these men himself. The CO was sacked—boy did Hermann have a temper! Driving off, his car got stuck in the mud. In front of all the men he tipped the generals out and made them push it free."

Air-force morale was high, and this carried it through its bloodier episodes, like the parachute assault on Crete on May 20. Göring prided himself on having planned this coup, but it stood under an ill omen. He and Brauchitsch had refused to agree whether the airborne division should come under air-force or army control, which left only General Student's one parachute division for the assault. What was far worse was that through the Luftwaffe's insecure machine ciphers the British learned the precise hour and dropping zones of the paratroops, and four thousand were killed in the first assault wave. "We had the impression," said General Rudolf Meister, "and I don't think I'm mistaken, that the British knew the exact time and the morning on which we were coming, because full preparations had been made." Despite this, the air force never investigated the possibility that their ciphers had been broken. There is indirect evidence that Göring knew that *some* ciphers were insecure, because in June British code-breakers heard him issuing to his bomber forces target priorities for a "new blitz" against British cities—which was, in fact, just part of the high command's strategic deception plan prior to *Barbarossa*. On June 8, Göring phoned Milch to order him to tour Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle's dwindling Luftflotte 3 in the west; this was part of the same grand deception, designed to conceal the fact that Kesselring's Luftflotte 2, with twenty-five hundred warplanes, had already been transferred to the eastern front.

During May 1941 Göring had committed the air force to one other minor theater of war. After an Arab rebellion against the British forces in oil-rich Iraq, he had despatched a small force of Messerschmitt planes under General Felmy to aid the rebels. But it was too little and too late, as Göring explained to Hitler and Foreign Minister Ribbentrop on the last day of May. "They don't know anything about aviation out there, and airlifting fuel would have been pointless and costly."

Thus he glossed over his own inadequacies while emphasizing those of

his colleagues. Unfeeling and scheming to maintain position, Göring used the sinking of Germany's newest battleship, *Bismarck*, four days before, with the loss of twenty-three hundred sailors, to generate bad feeling against Admiral Raeder. His own prestige was high. On May 31, he was able to deliver a victory report on Crete to Hitler (although the Luftwaffe had lost 150 Junkers 52 transport planes in the assault).

Air force is overextended [wrote Hewel after Göring's visit to the Berghof]. Had no respite since this war began. Based on Crete, a determined struggle will now begin against the British Fleet and Tobruk [the main obstacle to Rommel's advance across Libya] . . . Göring and F. use harsh language about *Bismarck* and the navy.

By now they had received secret reports of a speech that Stalin had delivered at a Kremlin banquet one month before, announcing his intention of invading Western Europe sooner or later. Göring had to admit that once again Hitler was proving to be right. Hitler planned in three weeks' time to launch the mightiest onslaught in history on Russia, and for this he would approach almost every one of Russia's western neighbors for assistance. Only the Swedes would not be invited—"Their ruling class is basically pro-British," Hitler explained to Julius Schnurre in mid-May. "Even the Reichsmarschall has been cured of his infatuation for Sweden."

Göring spent five hours with him and Jeschonnek on June 1. The new campaign was going to be some party, and it was time to start sending out invitations. On June 2, Hitler dropped a broad hint to Mussolini. On the third, after again consulting all afternoon with Göring, he tipped off the Japanese ambassador. The RSVPs trickled in: Hungary and Romania, eager to assist; the Finns, glad to join in. A few days later the high command sent out invitations to forty of Hitler's top commanders to attend a meeting at the Berlin Chancellery on the fourteenth. Almost at the same time, Birger Dahlerus received in Stockholm what he described immediately, on June 9, to the British envoy there as "a rather cryptic message . . . which seems to indicate Germany will attack Russia by about June 15." The message, Dahlerus said, had been telephoned to him by a mutual acquaintance who had just arrived in Stockholm from Berlin. From American files it is plain that Dahlerus had also notified the American legation—"Dahlerus . . . had it first hand from Göring that Germany meant to attack Russia almost at once."

The historic briefing session began at 11:00 A.M. Göring wrote in his diary, "Führer briefing. Rehearse attack on Russia with high command (OKW), War Dept., Admiralty, all army groups, Luftflotten and staffs present." After lunch, the "discussions continued." Hitler explained more or less convincingly why Germany had no option but to strike at Russia. Deputy Chief of Staff von Waldau recorded a summary in his diary:

Hitler's after-luncheon speech to the British will fight on as long as possible. But Britain's fight only matters if that American aid will take effect on the Continent. This expects the Russians will intervene. It is to come early, however. It is not to forfeit the favor.

"The bulk of the Russian forces are on the frontier, so we have a great task. At 6:00 P.M., Göring briefed Hitler. He committed twenty-seven hundred pictures showed four thousand Soviet and radio intelligence had located them. It was hard to divine—Waldau then the Reichsmarschall assembled his commanders at Carinhall the next day. After a long stroll around the grounds, turned to Berlin, talked for over an hour and Hofer, and boarded his train. materializing from thin air, the private cabin.

Five days later the Polish prime minister, ambassador Tony Biddle. Biddle wrote a letter to President Roosevelt: "I told a close Swedish friend that we would attack against Russia on Sunday."

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), *Bismarck*, four days before,
 , to generate bad feeling against
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Hitler's after-luncheon speech. The main enemy is still Britain.
 Britain will fight on as long as the fight has any purpose. . . .
 But Britain's fight only makes sense as long as they can hope
 that American aid will take effect and that they may find support
 on the Continent. This explains why they have high hopes that
 the Russians will intervene. . . . We want this conflict with Russia
 to come early, however. Indeed, it is absolutely essential, if we
 are not to forfeit the favorable conditions that now prevail.

"The bulk of the Russian forces," continued Waldau's note, "are standing
 on the frontier, so we have a good chance of defeating them right there."
 At 6:00 P.M., Göring briefed Hitler alone on the Luftwaffe's plans. He would
 commit twenty-seven hundred warplanes on the first day. Reconnaissance
 pictures showed four thousand Soviet planes just across the demarcation line,
 and radio intelligence had located a thousand more. Göring's own attitude
 was hard to divine—Waldau remarked on his "meager interest," and when
 the Reichsmarschall assembled his Luftflotte, air zone (Luftgau), and corps
 commanders at Carinhall the next day, Milch too thought him "depressed."
 After a long stroll around the garden at Carinhall, that evening Göring re-
 turned to Berlin, talked for over an hour with his art dealers Behr, Lohse,
 and Hofer, and boarded his train. At eight-thirty it moved off, and as though
 materializing from thin air, the mysterious Swede, Dahlerus, entered his
 private cabin.

Five days later the Polish prime minister, an exile in London, met American
 ambassador Tony Biddle. Biddle reported his conversation that same day in
 a letter to President Roosevelt: The Pole had revealed that Göring had now
 told a close Swedish friend that "he might expect Germany to launch an
 attack against Russia on Sunday June 22."

SIGNING HIS OWN
DEATH WARRANT

“At last a proper war!” exclaimed General Jeschonnek as the German armies uncoiled into Russia on June 22, 1941. The chief of air staff had good cause for satisfaction. The Luftwaffe enjoyed total technological supremacy on the eastern front. Milch’s diary records 1,800 Russian warplanes destroyed on that first Sunday, 800 on Monday, 557 on Tuesday, 351 on Wednesday, and 300 on the fifth day, June 26.

Nobody expected the war to last more than a few weeks longer, and jostling for power and position had already begun. Alarmed by Bormann’s elevation to the full dignity of Reich minister two weeks earlier, Göring arrived at the Wolf’s Lair, the new Führer headquarters, on the twenty-eighth. He wanted reassurances from Hitler, and got them. On the next day Hitler signed a secret decree confirming Göring as his exclusive successor in the event of his own death, and as his “deputy in all offices.” This by no means eliminated the rivals. Himmler also had ambitions, but as SS Obergruppenführer Gottlob Berger, one of his principal aides, commented, Göring was still the more powerful of the two. “However,” added Berger, under interrogation in May 1945, “Himmler had a thing or two on Göring even then.” The SS chief at The Hague, Wilhelm von Rauter, had discovered, for instance, that the

Reichsmarschall was quietly bsterdam; Himmler began fillin chief, Reinhard Heydrich, also Protection Unit because of its rency, but he trod very warily. later, “was much too clever t to keep Göring’s power intact— under its gaudy, all-embracing

Göring established his head Spirding in East Prussia, and p hour’s drive from the Wolf’s L mobile headquarters, *Robinson*. climate that summer affected Gt ups by his cardiologist, Profess Göring’s diary on July 20, 22 (“stomach upset, headaches”) 24, and 25, and again in Septem would record, “heart pains, ba enough to enjoy the fruits of p daily swims, walks, horseback-r He telephoned Emmy and Edd them; but not once that summer was bored with the war. When Luftflotte 5 in Norway) came t “Enough! Now let’s take a look kept nodding off.

By mid-July 1941 it was clear th soon, and had in fact underestin East, the Germans discovered th tanks and eight thousand warpl Red Army’s equipment staggers “In their Lemberg [Lvov] salien two runways and still incomple tions.”

On the following day, July 16, how to consolidate Nazi rule in diary, “7:30 A.M. rose. Party c patches and swimming, was brie and Udet at midday, before settin p.m., conference with Führer; I appointed Rosenberg minister wi territories.)

Both Otto Bräutigam, Rosenbe

HIS OWN ARRANT

at last a proper war!" exclaimed General Jeschonnek as the German armies uncoiled into Russia. He had good cause for satisfaction. The supremacy on the eastern front. Milch's army destroyed on that first Sunday, 800 on Wednesday, and 300 on the fifth day, more than a few weeks longer, and jostling the Luftwaffe. Alarmed by Bormann's elevation to weeks earlier, Göring arrived at the Wolf's Lair, on the twenty-eighth. He wanted to see Hitler. On the next day Hitler signed a decree appointing him as his exclusive successor in the event of his death. "This by no means eliminated Göring, but as SS Obergruppenführer Gottlob Berger commented, Göring was still the more important man. Under interrogation in May 1945, Göring even then." The SS chief at the Wolf's Lair discovered, for instance, that the

Reichsmarschall was quietly buying up uncut diamonds from Jews in Amsterdam; Himmler began filling dossiers with data like this. His Gestapo chief, Reinhard Heydrich, also had ambitions. He coveted Göring's Currency Protection Unit because of its mouth-watering harvest of seized foreign currency, but he trod very warily. "Heydrich," Göring would smugly comment later, "was much too clever to pick a fight with me." Heydrich preferred to keep Göring's power intact—so that he might pursue his own evil causes under its gaudy, all-embracing cloak.

Göring established his headquarters east at Rostken, just south of Lake Spirding in East Prussia, and parked his luxurious train *Asia* here, about an hour's drive from the Wolf's Lair. Jeschonnek had established the air staff's mobile headquarters, *Robinson*, at the neighboring Lake Goldap. The humid climate that summer affected Göring's health. There were almost daily check-ups by his cardiologist, Professor Heinrich Zahler. Zahler's name figures in Göring's diary on July 20, 22, 23, 24, 26 ("bed rest, headaches"), 27 ("stomach upset, headaches"), and on August 23 ("heart palpitations"), 24, and 25, and again in September—on the twenty-third the Reichsmarschall would record, "heart pains, bad night." Determined to hang on to life long enough to enjoy the fruits of power, Göring began a strenuous program of daily swims, walks, horseback-riding, and even an occasional game of tennis. He telephoned Emmy and Edda daily, arranged occasional flying visits to them; but not once that summer did he visit a front-line Luftwaffe unit. He was bored with the war. When General Hans-Jürgen Stumpff (commanding Luftflotte 5 in Norway) came to see him, Göring interrupted the briefing: "Enough! Now let's take a look around Carinhall!" Stumpff noticed that he kept nodding off.

By mid-July 1941 it was clear that Hitler had launched *Barbarossa* none too soon, and had in fact underestimated the Russian strength. As they marched East, the Germans discovered that the Russians had massed twelve thousand tanks and eight thousand warplanes for strategic plans of their own. "The Red Army's equipment staggers us," wrote Jeschonnek's deputy on July 15. "In their Lemberg [Lvov] salient alone, sixty-three huge airfields, each with two runways and still incomplete, bear witness to Russian attack preparations."

On the following day, July 16, Hitler called his ministers together to discuss how to consolidate Nazi rule in these new territories. Göring wrote in his diary, "7:30 A.M., rose. Party cloudy, sultry." He spent an hour on dispatches and swimming, was briefed at 11:00 by Jeschonnek, and met Milch and Udet at midday, before setting out for the Wolf's Lair at 1:30 P.M. "3:15 p.m., conference with Führer: Rosenberg, Milch, Lammers." (Hitler had appointed Rosenberg minister with overall responsibility for the new eastern territories.)

Both Otto Bräutigam, Rosenberg's ADC, and Bormann wrote full accounts

"wrote Bräutigam in his diary, 'proceedings began.'" "Let there be no more war," Hitler said. "Never again shall there be any war. We have to fight one hundred years of peace. We apportion responsibility for these years to the Four-Year Plan (Göring), the party (Hitler). 'Toward 6:00 P.M.,' we took a coffee break. During this time we were given the high honor he had accorded to the Diamonds (the Diamonds to the Oak Leaves). The Reichsmarschall was accordingly in high honor. The Swedes for their meager contribution to the Reichsmarschall also termed the

turning to Göring, "I had serious doubts whether I would have made the overall strength of the Soviet Army weaker. Then again, it's become clear. Next year might already have the division of territories. At 8:30 P.M. he said and told him the details:

[wrote the aide] with the Reichsmarschall, the economy of the occupied territories. Staff East, and with the Reichsmarschall, he fully intends to direct the operations from Berlin.

ing had set up a commercial monopoly, destroyed the wells and removed all water. He reported to Göring on July 17, then a rapid investigation of ways of increasing production (b) the Caucasus."

lapse. Hitler ordered the Luftwaffe to Göring called in Jeschonnek on July 18. Experts Galland and Werner Baumbach said, "The signs are multiplying," intelligence staff that day, however, "that this war is a prelude of Bolshevism that we had anticipated." Göring evidently felt the same misgivings with the mysterious Swede, Dahlerus, for a similar secret talk five days later.

The air force meanwhile bombed Moscow on July 21 and 22; Stalin showed no signs of yielding.

At the end of July Emmy Göring came back from Bavaria to meet her husband in Berlin. The Reich capital was dampened by summer rains. Late the following afternoon, July 31, as the drizzle cleared, Göring called in briefly at his ministry. Here, at 6:15 P.M., he had a visitor—Gestapo Chief Reinhard Heydrich wanted the favor of the Reichsmarschall's signature on a document. The SS officer had drafted it himself, he had even typed Göring's letterhead. Göring obliged the young Obergruppenführer, then hurried off to the station a few minutes later to meet Emmy, unaware that he had just signed the document that would be used to condemn him to the gallows five years later: a paper empowering Heydrich to "make all necessary preparations . . . for an overall unraveling (*Lösung*) of the Jewish problem within Germany's sphere of influence in Europe."

He was tired of the war, and awarded himself several weeks' leave at Carinhall. His mind strayed far from the battlefields. Judge-Advocate General von Hammerstein briefed him on August 1 on court-martial cases in Crete, and described the sprawling Palace of Minos. Göring interrupted with his familiar scooping gesture. "That's coming to Carinhall too," he bragged.

"Do you know how big the palace is?" gasped Hammerstein.

"Have you any idea," countered Göring, "how big Carinhall's going to be?"

Several times he was awakened by air-raid alerts, and the Russians actually raided Berlin on August 7, an impertinence that caused Göring to summon General Hubert Weise, the Luftwaffe's commander in chief center, to discuss their air defenses in the east. His diary two days later records two visits by Sepp Angerer, who unrolled a dozen Italian tapestries for his approval. Göring purchased six, including a battle scene and two Renaissance works richly embroidered with gold and silver thread. Two of the larger Gothic tapestries were, Angerer reported, jointly owned by a Princess Rospiljosi with her English sister and American brother—the tapestry expert suggested persuading Mussolini to sequester the Englishwoman's share, while a future war with the United States would enable Italy to seize the brother's share too. Göring approved. He did not hesitate to exploit Mussolini, as his papers show. After the Fascist dictator visited his train at Rostken on the twenty-sixth, he was able to acquire the tapestry.

In mid-August Göring left Carinhall to vacation in Bavaria. He rummaged around art galleries in Munich, then took his train on to Paris ostensibly for an air-force conference at the Quai d'Orsay but in fact in order to cast covetous eyes once more over the Jeu de Paume and the diamonds at Cartiers. A naval signals unit billeted in a château in the Bois de Boulogne had just found a strong room concealing another Rothschild cache, of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Dutch and French paintings. Göring grasped these treasures too, and returned contentedly to the sweltering heat of Berlin.

nt were slowing down Luftwaffe
multiple sorties, Luftflotte 4 alone
the east, but the global tasks
the British bombing of northern
ish-held Malta was a constant
win Rommel's armies, fighting
Axis conference with the Italian
at Rominten on October 2, but
Rommel supply convoys were
gifts and medals" at 2:25 P.M.,
been practical," he unhelpfully
ared war by seizing Malta!" On
sfer of Luftflotte 2 (Kesselring)
front to Italy.

oscow resumed, but Göring re-
manian air-force general—Göring
illustrious decorations for me."
German armies, aided by their
Vyazma and Bryansk. Millions
into captivity. "We have finally
triumphed General Jodl on the
je, set, and match. He went to
He phoned Emmy every day.
ussian front, but on October 12
Strolled around the house [Car-
er inspecting the new art trea-
red the news that his nineteen-
fighter-pilot in France.

October 15, the air staff issued a
u Moskau. But Göring returned
once more deteriorating. "Our
staff von Waldau that same day,
Everything is bogged down
drops to -8°C [11°F], eight
of that."

e and snow grounded the Luft-
broke out anew. General von
"I know that the Russians are
ur [army] commands right down
pers frayed. That day, Vice-
Hitler's headquarters, to report
fields. When he mentioned that
eld Marshal Keitel (chief of the
arschall," he shrieked, "is the

uncrowned chief of the OKW as it is! He goes behind my back all the time." Bursting into tears, according to Canaris's diary, Keitel predicted, "Any proposals or successes you tell him about, Göring will turn them to his own advantage—he'll report them to the Führer as though they were his own, without so much as mentioning me as chief of the OKW!"

Canaris arrived at Rominten on the twenty-fourth, but it is plain from the archives that Göring's mind was once again focused elsewhere. That day he was poring over yet more paintings—a Stefan Lochner and Cranach's "Adoration of the Three Kings"—and a 1550 Flemish tapestry that several Swiss dealers had brought to him.

Nobody at any Luftwaffe headquarters believed that the Russians could hold out much longer. "General Jeschonnek," wrote Richthofen to General Rudolf Meister at air-staff headquarters on October 26, "is assuming we shall be staying here until about November 6." But that day came and went, and the snow that began drifting down onto East Prussia, enveloping both Göring's train at Rostken and the Wolf's Lair at Rastenburg, no longer melted away.

He had spent the last half of October 1941 and the first half of November on these freezing, fog-enveloped moors, grilling generals about flak production and radar production, receiving the medal-bearing Slovak leaders Tiso and Tuka, and entertaining his family and in-laws (the relatives of both wives), although Emmy herself had made her excuses and migrated to the warmer climes of southern Germany. He had seen Udet only twice, he realized—the last time on November 1. Göring had returned to Berlin and forgotten the general completely in the press of events—renewed sessions with his cardiologist, and a conference on ways of injecting one million Russian prisoners into Germany's labor-starved war industries. One evening as he was meeting Emmy at the Anhalter Station, the air-raid sirens forced them to shelter in the Kroll Opera's bunker until nearly 5:00 A.M. (Four hundred RAF planes were raiding Mannheim and Berlin.)

At midday on November 17, his personnel chief telephoned to say that Udet was dead. Lying on his bed, the general had phoned his mistress that morning, cried, "They're after me!" and had shot himself while still holding the phone so she could hear. In the suicide's room Körner found empty cognac bottles and crazed farewell messages scrawled across a wall. "Man of Iron," said one, using Göring's nickname from earlier times, "you deserted me!"

Grim-faced, Göring drove straight over to Hitler and stayed with him five hours. Hitler's verdict was harsh. "He took the easy way out," he would remark a year later. Göring was more understanding. "When he saw the chaos," said Göring in 1943, "[Udet] did something which one obviously cannot endorse but which I understand better today than I did at the time."

*The death of Udet
Der Tod von Ernst Udet*

ny rate a big Jewish exodus will
ws? Do you imagine they're going
provinces? In Berlin they tell us:
for them either, liquidate them

er, let alone Göring: The Führer
toric rearguard action against the
marshall's presence in the capital
y focused on a two-week jaunt to
more likely meant the party—or

signed that relatively innocuous
In full, it read:

by [my] decree of January
blem as rapidly and as con-
or evacuation, I herewith
preparations in an organiza-
xt for an overall unraveling
in Germany's sphere of in-

urveys of other government
ed.

me shortly a comprehensive
, and material advance prep-
final solution of the Jewish

had signed anything but a routine
ich's existing powers to the more
worth bearing in mind as his defense
cy on October 4, 1946, that while
nomic sanctions against the Jews,
known of their "biological exter-
had been dated January 24, 1939,
ng extermination as a "solution."
tion" would become synonymous
then only in Himmler's intimate

öring from blame. Anxious not to
—one stroke of the pen would have
o deeply into Himmler's methods.

Thirty miles from Carinhall, recalled Dr. von Ondarza, was the Oranienburg concentration camp. "Göring never once set foot in one," said Ondarza. "He just didn't have the guts. It was characteristic of him," Göring's aide added, "that when the going got rough he just scuttled off to Paris or Italy." No, Göring carefully eschewed any criticism of the SS. "Whoever attacked Himmler," he would explain evasively in May 1945, when taxed with these atrocities, "was eliminated. Besides, he lied to me." Prudence replaced propriety in Göring's demeanor: In August 1942 Himmler wrote to the Air Ministry soliciting assistance with unspecified low-pressure and low-temperature experiments on condemned prisoners at the Dachau concentration camp. Neither Göring nor his Staatssekretär inquired into what kind of experiments were involved. "I *did* tell Göring," Milch confided to his private diary four years later. "Göring was against any collaboration but insisted on a very polite tone toward Himmler."

In fact, Göring went out of his way to cultivate the Reichsführer's friendship. The records show Himmler writing to Chief Forester Scherping on September 12, 1942, thanking him for Göring's invitation to shoot a "very fine Rominten stag." When Herbert Göring—by now manager of the Berlin office of United Steel—incurred Hermann's wrath in 1943, the Reichsmarschall would write asking Himmler to strip Herbert of his rank as honorary SS Obersturmbannführer, and invite Hitler to pass a law depriving "unworthy" people of their famous names. And when Göring's brother Albert (who picturesquely insisted under American interrogation, "I am the *real* brother of Hermann Göring!") reported rumors from a Dr. Max Winkler about the machine-gunning of Jews in Poland, the Reichsmarschall ingeniously forwarded the letter to the SS to attend to.

In the winter of 1941–42 he did send a senior Forschungsamt official, Ernst-Friedrich Scholer, to investigate a rumor of atrocities in the Ukraine. Scholer returned with snapshots of men pointing rifles downward into large pits. In such disturbing instances, Göring regularly allowed himself to be fobbed off, as he related three years later.

I heard, for example, that a large load of Jews left for Poland during the winter and that some of them froze to death in their vehicles. I heard of these things mostly from the ranks of my employees and from the people. When I made inquiries, I was told that such things would not happen again—it was claimed that the trains had been misrouted.

Then there was some talk about *Vernichtungstruppen* [destruction squads]. What I was told was this—that there were many diseased people in these camps, and that many died of epidemics. These squads had the job of taking the corpses to a crematorium where they would be cremated.

*Oldets' suicide terrified Göring
reduced his courage. It may also
have disoriented him as a Nazi. He
no longer had the same stomach for
pursuing the Jews*

documentation is clear. Since 1939, as chief of the Four-Year Plan, Heydrich was in charge. By mid-1940 some two million Jews were under the most harrowing and inhumane conditions. Heydrich was willing to accept them, and all of Europe's Jews eventually would be crowded upon their neighbors, either. In 1940 had brought three million Jews to Europe. On June 24, 1940, to Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, Heydrich adopted what he termed "a new solution"—shipping the millions of Jews to the necessary territories, and Göring had drafted that rainy evening in Halifax would have described as Heydrich made liberal use of it. Issuing Ribbentrop was to be held—as Hans Frank said, Heydrich had prefaced each of the Reichsmarschall of the Greater German Reich and he attached a photocopy of the

and other bureaus there is no doubt of their ultimate intentions. At the Wannsee Conference, Heydrich could be represented by the sharp-tongued Neumann, of the Four-Year Plan, more than might be supposed from his position. Gruppenführer Heydrich told the representative, the arrestingly named Hermann Göring's Auftrag to him had been that Heydrich had now approved evacuating Jews as a solution." What was actually discussed at the meeting.

Measures specifically within their own jurisdiction. Göring's Stabsamt notified the SS, and to the proposal by [Heydrich] to which himself was studiously vague. The personnel office to take cognizance of the preparatory measures have been in the Göring document in February, and proposals that the Reichsmarschall

had called for until further discussions. In any case, Heydrich would be assassinated a few weeks later, before any such document could be drafted.

The documentary record shows that the initiative for specific atrocities came from Nazi officials in the field. Even Hitler's own role is thrown into question by recently discovered documents, and verbatim conference transcripts show Göring to have been aware of the Führer's less rigid attitude. Two days after visiting Hitler on July 4, 1942, he presided over the first session of the new Reich Research Council. Here Göring expressed anger that although the Führer had expressly forbidden it, Jewish scientists were being taken off vital research:

I've just briefed the Führer about this. We have exploited one Jew in Vienna for two years, and another in the field of photography, because they've got things we need of the utmost value to us at this time. It would be madness to say, "He'll have to go! Of course he's a great researcher, a fantastic brain, but he's got a Jewish wife and can't be at the university, and so on."

The Führer has made similar exceptions all the way down to operetta level.

rec p 34

A month later Göring could have heard Rosenberg telling the assembled gauleiters this, according to the stenographic record: "The solution of the Jewish problem continues apace . . . It can only be solved by rigorous and ruthless force. [*Storms of applause.*] We ought not to rest content with Jews being shipped from one state to another, leaving Jewish ghettos here and there. Our aim must be the old one: the Jewish problem in Europe and in Germany will not be solved until there is not one Jew left on the European continent. [*Lively applause.*]"

Such harsh words were not, of course, uttered in a vacuum. The whole trend was toward illegal and brutal modes of war—toward innocenticide on a grand scale. Violent air raids had resumed. The partisan warfare developing in Russia was barbarous beyond belief. Millions were starving too. At the same conference Göring evidently asked what food the Jews in Riga were getting, because the local Nazi official there, Reich Commissar Hinrich Lohse, corrected him: "Only a small fraction of the Jews [of Riga] still live." He continued, no less ambiguously, "Tens of thousands are gone."

"All cruelty," protested Hermann Göring, first confronted with evidence of the Nazis' atrocities, "was abhorrent to me. I can name many people whom I have helped, even Communists and Jews. My wife was so kind—I really have to be grateful for that. I often thought, if only the Führer had a sensible wife who would have said to him, 'Here's a case where you can do some

good, and here's another, and this one—"That would have been better for everyone. It was very depressing for me."

Göring's policy on the Jewish relocation program after Hitler's invasion of Poland is only rarely glimpsed in the archives. His brother Albert had asked him over dinner once during those months, and Hermann had replied that he favored awarding a large area of Poland (with Warsaw as its capital) to the Jews, who would be collected there from all over Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia—a huge, autonomous ghetto. No other Final Solution ultimately evolving in the east is even hinted at in the thousands of pages of Görnert's files as Göring's office chief, let alone in the Air Ministry or Four-Year Plan files. Görnert's files reflect the Reichsmarschall, albeit often cautiously, investigating every instance of Nazi heavyhandedness reported to him. He forwarded the grosser cases of excess to Philipp Bouhler for review. Bouhler's staff, however, usually rejected the complaints. In one case, when the Ministry of the Interior classified Baroness Elisabeth von Stengl as a Jew, Göring's staff redirected her indignant protest to the bureau. In vain—she was "relocated" (*umgesiedelt*). Göring again protested on her behalf, which drew a reply from Adolf Eichmann himself, dated October 7, 1942: "As her manner appeared to have become intolerable," it coldly explained, "the instruction was issued for her to be relocated as soon as possible to the Old Age Ghetto at Theresienstadt, regardless of her case pending at the Reich Genealogical Bureau (*Reichssippenamt*)." (The Baroness, born June 6, 1900, was only forty-two.)

Göring appears not to have suspected the character of Theresienstadt, as a showpiece "clearing station" through which elderly Jews passed on their final journey to "the east." On May 22, 1942, the Gestapo's chief (Heinrich Müller himself) had written him about a Jew, Hans Martin Manasse, and his wife, Rosa Cohn. Görnert replied on June 17, "May I draw your attention to the Reichsmarschall's handwritten comments and request a brief word from you before any further steps are taken re Manasse/Cohn to enable the Reichsmarschall to pronounce finally on this case." On September 17, Görnert brought Müller's decision to Göring, who directed his aide to notify the Gestapo official "that the Reichsmarschall requests that this couple should be deported together to Theresienstadt (*Judenstadt*)." The Reichsmarschall, Görnert continued, had notified Himmler, and he added, "The deportation to Theresienstadt is to be carried out as soon as possible and the Jewish couple are to be enabled to stay there as long as this town is made available for this. The Reichsmarschall asks to be informed as soon as they have been deported." Göring appears to have known of Auschwitz only as the gigantic new synthetic rubber plant built there by Albert Speer. At a central-planning session on July 2, 1943, Pili Körner would mention the current plans to expand Auschwitz's output to twenty-eight thousand tons of rubber.

There is one clue that by 1942 Göring had learned of Hitler's systematic "mercy killing" of the population of Germany's mental institutions, because

on May 6, he instructed Görnert: "The Reichsmarschall desires that—adopting Obergruppenführer soldiers who are in the future shall be placed in institutions e said institution attains the chara

Besides Philipp Bouhler, who ation, it was Martin Bormann who paigns. "Bormann," testified Göring in September 1945, "would much to please [Hitler] . . . Bormann with notepaper. He used to take was never intended to be taken be fighting tooth and nail to keep one document on economic poli—through Bormann—Göring until now have been solely in my that unless I am informed and it to be requested on any domain

But the fanatics no longer he mers," recorded the Staatssekretär 1942, "told me the Führer has the solution of the Jewish problem "solution" had already begun, and would be called to account for it

That would have been better for the program after Hitler's invasion of Poland. His brother Albert had been in the archives for months, and Hermann had replied to him from all over Germany, Austria, and the ghettos. No other Final Solution was mentioned in the thousands of pages of reports, let alone in the Air Ministry or the Reichsmarschall, albeit often by the Nazi heavyhandedness reported to excess to Philipp Bouhler for his rejection of the complaints. In one of his classified Baroness Elisabeth von Theresienstadt, her indignant protest to the bureau. (The Reichsmarschall himself, dated October 7, 1942, "have become intolerable," it coldly replied to her for her to be relocated as soon as possible in Theresienstadt, regardless of her case as a Jew (*Reichssippenamt*).") (The Baroness, two.)

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on May 6, he instructed Görnert to write a letter in these terms to Heydrich: "The Reichsmarschall desires that the high command be required to order that—adopting Oberguppenführer Heydrich's own proposal—Wehrmacht soldiers who are in the future committed to institutions for the mentally ill shall be placed in institutions exclusively reserved for soldiers, so that the said institution attains the character of a military hospital."

Besides Philipp Bouhler, who ran the euthanasia "mercy killing" operation, it was Martin Bormann who forced through these less merciful campaigns. "Bormann," testified Göring, squirming under American interrogation in September 1945, "would make everything three times as bad, in order to please [Hitler] . . . Bormann used to walk around with his pockets stuffed with notepaper. He used to take down everything the Führer said, even if it was never intended to be taken seriously." By March 1942 Göring would be fighting tooth and nail to keep Bormann out of his own operations. Across one document on economic policy that Dr. Robert Ley submitted to Hitler—through Bormann—Göring scrawled, "This is an area where decisions until now have been solely in my hands. I recently mentioned to the Führer that unless I am informed and in agreement then no 'Führer decisions' are to be requested on any domain of mine except by me in person."

But the fanatics no longer heeded Hitler either. "Reichsminister Lammerers," recorded the Staatssekretär to the minister of justice in the spring of 1942, "told me the Führer has repeatedly declared to him he wants to see the solution of the Jewish problem postponed until after the war." But the "solution" had already begun, and Göring, as Hitler's surviving successor, would be called to account for it.

"The Reichsmarschall," Heinrich Himmler would later recall, "had the utmost difficulty in getting his fellow judges—all [army] generals—to agree to sentence this coward to death." In this instance even Hitler felt Göring had gone too far, and commuted the death sentence to fortress arrest.

Göring's merciless stance—more Catholic, it seemed, than the pope—strengthened Waldau's resolve to get out. "For three years," he wrote privately on January 3, "I have held down this job with almost total self-denial. I have labored to the best of my conscience and ability. I have gladly borne the burden that meticulous devotion to duty and permanent mental servitude have thrust upon me, but in the long run that burden, coupled with the knowledge that I bear the ultimate responsibility for events without the slightest means of influencing them, entitles me to the view that three years is enough."

Göring continued his vendetta against the army. Meeting Hitler again on the ninth, he criticized the army's feeble winter preparations. He had had to turn over three million sets of winter clothing to the army. Warning that the war was going to last into yet another winter, Göring recommended stockpiling fur hats and goggles now. "Göring told me," Hitler told his staff, impressed, "that when he goes hunting he always takes heat packs with him like the ones we've been finding on Soviet soldiers."

As the war's problems became more intractable, Göring took refuge in trivia and minor postwar problems. British code-breakers intercepted his instruction, passed to troops on the Russian front, that all air-force personnel summoned to his or the Führer's presence "must be free of lice." His leather-bound diary shows him at Carinhall on January 23, 1942, discussing with Nazi labor leader Robert Ley plans for postwar pensions that would embrace even the lowest income groups, and a "suggestion for a luncheon where party veterans can meet and talk to me." Another diary note, "Assistance for evacuees," reflects, however, the one nightmare that would not go away with the dawn: the RAF's bombing offensive. Nor did it escape his attention that when he now left East Prussia for Berlin, one after another, sixteen locomotives pulling his train broke down in the cold. For his next conference with Hitler he dictated this reminder: "Responsibility for provision of sufficient locomotives in good time for winter 1942–43, capable of trouble-free operation at temperatures below -40°C."

Hitler sent him down to see Benito Mussolini and reassure him about Germany's will to fight on. After taking explicit instructions from Hitler on what to say in Rome, Göring departed aboard *Asia* taking valet, nurse, doctor, and a multitude of staff officers, including his nephew Lieutenant Göring, Görnert, and Bodenschatz with him. The hapless Hoffmann von Waldau, scandalized by this new extravagance, cynically recorded that Göring made "considerable preparations, mainly of a sartorial nature" for the jaunt. He added, "How I hate to go swanning off at times like these!" Waldau's tender

THOUSAND-BOMBER RAID

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gaze was spared the more scandalous displays of opulence. Becoming restless once during the journey Göring sent for the pot of diamonds, tipped them out and counted them, then paraded them across the table, mixed them up, and calmed down completely.

In Rome the Reichsmarschall made no attempt to consult with Italy's foreign minister, Ciano (who learned of this diamonds-fetish episode)—"In fact," wrote Ciano in his diary, "ever since we bestowed that [diamond] Collar on von Ribbentrop, [Göring] has adopted an aloof air toward me." "We are having a hard time," Göring had whispered to Mussolini at the station, alluding to the army's difficulties in Russia. Meeting again more formally, he blamed this crisis on the sub-Napoleonic temperatures. "Such difficulties will not recur," he promised. "Whatever happens in the coming year, the Führer will halt and take up winter quarters in good time."

As for North Africa, the main problem was that of supplies. Göring loftily suggested that Italian submarines transport forty thousand tons of supplies a month to Rommel. The "bloated and overbearing" Reichsmarschall got on Ciano's nerves. Dining at the Excelsior on February 4, Göring talked to Ciano only of his rings and jewelry. Accompanying him to the station, Ciano—who appears to have known about such things—reflected that Göring's full-length sable coat was what a high-grade call girl might wear to the opera.

A serious challenge to the Reichsmarschall's authority confronted him soon after his return to East Prussia. On Sunday morning, February 9, the munitions minister, Fritz Todt, perished in a plane crash at the Wolf's Lair. With barely a flicker of grief, Göring hastened over to demand Todt's ministry for himself, only to learn that Hitler had already selected his thirty-six-year-old chief architect, Albert Speer, for the job. In terms of blind ambition and pathological zest for intrigue, Göring had now met his match. When Milch brought Speer to him, Göring blandly emphasized that his new job was merely the production of *army* munitions. Milch, he continued, would make a better munitions minister and would shortly call a big conference of arms industrialists at the Air Ministry. "The Ministry of Munitions," he reminded Speer some weeks later, "was set up at my own suggestion purely to offset the shortcomings of the Army Weapons Office." Todt had agreed not to trespass on the Reichsmarschall's Four-Year Plan, and now Göring invited Speer to sign a similar agreement. Realizing immediately what Göring was up to, Speer raced back to the Wolf's Lair and persuaded Hitler to endorse him personally as the new minister. Hitler complied in a two-hour speech delivered to the arms industrialists in the Reich Cabinet room—Göring was informed that his own presence was not necessary.

For years afterward, Göring seethed over his humiliation at Speer's hands. No slouch in the art of power politics, Speer initially flattered and fawned upon Göring, inviting Göring to appoint him as "general plenipotentiary for arms production in the Four-Year Plan" (to enable him to draw upon Göring's

still considerable residual author stiff-necked, bureaucratic General small body of men gathered around planning policy." Sitting on this it would allocate all raw materials. Year Plan. That agency now became Planning only by the witless Pili. manpower allocation, through La Göring freely interfered. When workers, drew attention to the unit. Göring objected: Some women, he were not. It was like plough horse. Himmler was informed, "also, culture should not be exposed to womenfolk." Oblivious of Germany would allow his own private office in September 1942.

Again visiting Paris during Milch's paintings, a terra-cotta figurine of He toured the Left Bank dealers, the list to Fräulein Limberger about

During his absence abroad, Milch many was now producing 850 aircraft fighters. The air staff's current figure was discouragingly low. "Herr Reich at Rominten on March 21, 'if you then I should be bound to state that that figure is still too few!'"

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still considerable residual authority). He also won Keitel's arms chief, the stiff-necked, bureaucratic General Georg Thomas, to the idea of creating "a small body of men gathered around the Reichsmarschall to direct central planning policy." Sitting on this new central-planning body, Speer and Milch would allocate all raw materials. It effectively spelled the end of the Four-Year Plan. That agency now became a hollow shell, represented in Central Planning only by the witless Pili Körner. The Plan retained control only over manpower allocation, through Labor Commissioner Fritz Sauckel, and here Göring freely interfered. When Sauckel, searching for two million more workers, drew attention to the untapped reserves of female labor in the Reich, Göring objected: Some women, he averred, were born to work, while others were not. It was like plough horse and racehorse. "Reichsmarschall Göring," Himmler was informed, "also says that ladies who are the bearers of our culture should not be exposed to the silly talk and insolence of the simpler womenfolk." Oblivious of Germany's crucial manpower shortages, Göring would allow his own private office and personal staff to grow to 104 people in September 1942.

Again visiting Paris during March 1942, Göring bought half a dozen paintings, a terra-cotta figurine of Madame du Barry as Diana, and a vase. He toured the Left Bank dealers. Hofer totted up the purchases and handed the list to Fräulein Limberger aboard Göring's train on March 15.

During his absence abroad, Milch had drawn up tables showing that Germany was now producing 850 airplanes per month, of which only 314 were fighters. The air staff's current requirement was 360 fighters—itsself a ludicrously low figure. "Herr Reichsmarschall," Milch said, tackling Göring at Rominten on March 21, "if you were to say *thirty-six hundred* fighters, then I should be bound to state that against America and Britain combined that figure is still too few!"

"I shouldn't know what to do with more than three hundred sixty," retorted General Jeschonnek, baffled.

Milch suggested they double the figure to 720. Göring paused, agonizing as ever whenever a firm decision was called for. Outside, the temperature was 26 degrees below freezing. In mid-discussion, so the minutes record, "the Reichsmarschall went for a sleigh ride at 5:25 P.M. Conference resumed at 6:55 P.M. . . ." He told Milch to go ahead. Two years later Milch would be manufacturing three thousand fighter planes a month.

As though on the devil's cue, a few days later the British fire-bombing of Europe's ancient cities began in mortal earnest. RAF Bomber Command now had orders to attack the population centers rather than the Nazi factories. Earlier in March 1942 they had bombed Paris, killing eight hundred Frenchmen. Hitler's first instinct had been to demand reprisals against London—"That's what counts," he raged at Göring. "The maximum shock and terror—not the economic damage inflicted." By March 21, however, he had

changed his mind, and when Göring inquired after the reason, Jeschonnek could only explain, "The Führer doesn't want to provoke attack on Germany's cities so long as the British keep to their present small scale and we aren't able to deliver annihilating blows in the west."

The German hesitation went unrewarded. One night a week later, 230 British bombers burned the heart out of medieval Lübeck, killing three hundred people. On the morning of that raid, March 28, Göring had again met his sleazy art "curator" Walter Hofer at Carinhall. The day's typed agenda was crowded with items remote from the terrors of mass fire raids—the acquisition of paintings of Stefan Lochner, Italian art treasures from Count Contini, Alois Miedl, and his three Cézanne watercolors and a Cézanne landscape, and notes about "two little figurines from Brussels," and "[Emil] Renders still has some sculptures." The day's agenda also mentions the Dutch Jew Nathan Katz (whom Göring was smuggling across to Switzerland with his wife and children in return for valuable paintings deposited with the Swiss consul at The Hague) and Katz's paintings by Van Gogh and Van Dyck.

While the cities of Hitler's new empire began to burn, the Reichsmarschall indulged his caprices. He regarded himself as above and beyond the law. When Milch celebrated his fiftieth birthday at the end of March 1942, Göring gave him a valuable tapestry and ordered the media to give prominence to "photographs portraying the Reichsmarschall and Field Marshal Milch." Milch was tactless enough to ask, "Where was the tapestry snatched?" Adopting the double standard that comes so easily to those in power, Göring was ruthless in campaigning against corruption among others. He forbade Professor Messerschmitt to set aside scarce aluminum for postwar ventures; he prohibited Daimler-Benz from manufacturing twelve-cylinder limousines for other Nazi leaders. But Görnert's files bear witness to the substantial orders that Göring placed for personal radio sets, refrigerators, and deep freezers—all virtually unobtainable in wartime Germany—for his family and benefactors. SS Gruppenführer Otto Ohlendorf learned of the priceless trinkets showered on Göring by Felix Schüler, head of the Reich Association (*Reichsgruppe*) of Handicrafts; when the Ministry of Economics opened an investigation, Göring's office impounded its dossier.

"Göring," Hitler chided him that March, worried about the top soldier's image, "do you think it looks good to be photographed with a pipe? What would you say to a statue with a cigar in your mouth?" More caustic comments were sometimes heard from the public at large. The Gestapo reported that cinema audiences also grumbled about Göring's chunky cigars at a time when by contrast, they themselves were fobbed off with noxious tobacco substitutes like lime-blossom leaves. The newsreel audiences remarked too upon his uniforms—always spotless white at a time when they could not buy soap powder—and criticized his obesity at a time when "the Russians were having to eat grass." On April 2, one SS Gruppenführer complained

to Himmler that Emmy Göring had "and the table fairly groaned un-

He was able to entertain so la market operation allegedly desig victims. Through the Four-Year l and Kurt Kadgien he had already and jewels. Now he set up an Ex bulk-buy artifacts, wine, and foo throughout the occupied west. Hi J. Veltjens, a Richthofen Squad neering spirit.

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to Himmler that Emmy Göring had invited eighty generals' wives to coffee,
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He was able to entertain so lavishly in part because of a colossal black-
market operation allegedly designed to procure consumer goods for blitz
victims. Through the Four-Year Plan's senior economists Friedrich Gramsch
and Kurt Kadgien he had already plundered the west's gold, foreign currency,
and jewels. Now he set up an External Agency West (*Aussenstelle West*) to
bulk-buy artifacts, wine, and foodstuffs—for his own use and disposition—
throughout the occupied west. His senior purchasing agent here was Colonel
J. Veltjens, a Richthofen Squadron veteran possessed of the right bucca-
neering spirit.

It is plain that Göring had a large stake in several business enterprises.
He had a pecuniary interest in the near-worthless "vitamin pills" dispensed
by the billion to the German armed forces by Hitler's doctor Theo Morell,
because when the Luftwaffe's chief surgeon, Professor Erich Hippke, pro-
tested that the pills were useless, Morell complained in a letter to Göring
dated July 31, and the Reichsmarschall sacked the professor without a hear-
ing. Questioned whether he had a stake in Otto Horcher's famous, leather-
walled gourmet restaurant in Berlin, he would deny it ("I am not that
versatile!"), but the archives show that he had ordered Horcher's key staff
to be exempted from the military draft, had tripled the gas allocation to
Horcher vehicles, and had exempted the restaurant from Goebbels's "total
war" decrees. Learning that Otto Horcher knew how to lay hands on seventy
thousand bottles of port wine for the air force, Göring sanctioned the deal
"provided that a small quantity is diverted for his personal use" and "ten
thousand bottles are set aside for Horcher's."

After the fire raid on Lübeck Hitler reversed his decision about retaliation,
and ordered Göring to carry out "terror attacks" on British cities other than
London—like the ancient and beautiful towns of Bath and Exeter—until the
British lost what he called their "appetite for terror." Göring complied. The
British responded by setting fire to Rostock on the Baltic. Unhappy at this
rising tide of barbarism, on April 19 the Reichsmarschall nonetheless lectured
his Luftflotte commanders at Rominten about the need to show no quarter
to the Soviets: "The Russian," he said, "is an enemy of barbarous methods.
They ought not to be initiated by us, but we've got to show a sterner face."
As the war slithered down its toboggan route of terror and counter-terror,
Göring for the most part took refuge from taking responsibility for atrocities
in the excuse of "superior orders."

In Paris it was spring. On May 14, the Reichsmarschall once more climbed
aboard *Asia* with assorted Görings and Sonnemanns and headed back to
France. But each visit now left him angrier than the last. "The people there

are eating off the fat of the land," he would grumble, speaking to gauleiters three months later. "It's a disgrace. I've seen villages where armies of them parade around with their long baguette loaves under their arms . . . and with baskets of oranges and fresh dates from North Africa." Dining at Maxim's in Paris the Reichsmarschall found himself surrounded by bloated French tricksters and wealthy black marketeers. "They're richer than ever," he fumed in the same speech, "because they charge us lunatic prices."

Train journeys like these brought home to him the gradual collapse of the wartime railroad system. French express trains still ran daily between Brussels and Paris, but the German railroads did not unload freight on Sundays or at night; fully laden trains choked the eastbound lines as Hitler's armies wound up for his spring offensive into Russia, and there were 165,000 empty freight cars waiting to return. The immense distances now covered effectively halved the available rolling stock. The result was a gradual breakdown of the railroad system that was starving the arms industry of coal and steel.

Reluctant to harm Reich Transport Minister Julius Dorpmüller—a personal friend and benefactor—Göring persuaded Hitler that the minister's sixty-five-year-old Staatssekretär, Wilhelm Kleinmann, was to blame for the railway chaos. Acting on Göring's advice, on May 24 Hitler told Speer and Milch to take charge of the transport system. Addressing these two men, he significantly reaffirmed his own esteem for Göring—"That's why I have appointed my best man," said Hitler, "who is somewhat younger than myself, as my successor."

Göring needed this kind of reassurance. He suspected that the Führer had begun to go behind his back. Hitler had spent several hours eating alone with Göring's subordinate, General von Richthofen, on May 21, discussing the Crimean campaign. He had even scoffed at the hunting fraternity. "I wonder why," mocked Hitler, "our soldiers don't hang up the jawbones of dead Russians in their rooms!" A few days later Richthofen dictated this smug note into his diary: "Göring has bawled out Jeschonnek [chief of air staff] because I was with the Führer!"

Far worse was to come for Göring. Late on May 30, 1942, as he was entertaining Speer and Milch, the new "transport overlords," at Veldenstein Castle, the phone rang. It was the Nazi gauleiter of Cologne, Josef Grohé. A violent British air raid had begun, he screamed. After a further exchange during which Göring claimed that it could only be a small-scale attack the guests heard him bellow, "Are you calling me a liar?" and slam the phone down. The phone rang again, and Göring snatched it. This time he fell silent—and it was obvious who was calling now. Hitler, telephoning from his special train in East Prussia, told him the gauleiter was talking of "hundreds" of British bombers attacking. There had never been a British raid in such numbers before. But Göring assured him that the gauleiter's figures were wrong—seventy planes, at most, had attacked. As daybreak came, he learned that his defenses had shot down forty bombers. It looked like a big victory,

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Julius Dormmüller—a personal Hitler that the minister's sixty-year-old brother-in-law, Hermann, was to blame for the rail crash. On May 24 Hitler told Speer and Goebbels. Addressing these two men, he said to Goebbels—“That’s why I have Goebbels who is somewhat younger than

He suspected that the Führer had spent several hours eating alone in the Reichshof, on May 21, discussing the situation at the hunting fraternity. "I don't hang up the jawbones of the dead," he said. Five days later Richthofen dictated this letter to his aide, Major Paul Jeschonnek [chief of air staff].

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even though five hundred people had died in the raid. But the wire services brought the sensational news that Churchill had solemnly announced in London that over one thousand bombers had taken part. White-faced, Göring bleated that this was just a lie. Jeschonnek nervously agreed, but Hitler refused to be deceived. "It is out of the question," he told his own staff, "that only seventy or eighty bombers attacked [Cologne]. I never capitulate to an unpleasant truth. I must see clearly if I am to draw the proper conclusions."

This first thousand-bomber raid marked a perceptible watershed in their relations. "The British have learned it all from us," the Reichsmarschall lamented months later. "That's the most depressing thing about it. Except for their electronic warfare they have learned it all from us—the how and the why of delivering concentrated air raids. They have cribbed the lot. They were botching things up so beautifully to start with!"

THE ROAD TO STALINGRAD

where are the wells?

"H" Hitler had told me," Göring reminisced later, "that he proposed to consider the Russian war at an

end when his armies were established on the Volga. Thereafter he would contain the Russians by occasional punitive expeditions while turning the bulk of his forces against the west."

Early that summer of 1942 the Germans seemed on the point of realizing these aims, as Göring's pilots pounded the far-flung enemies of the Reich from Leningrad and Voronezh to Tobruk, as they bombed towns in southern England and freighters of Allied convoys in the Arctic bound for North Russia.

Göring's stock soared with the successes of the Luftwaffe, and he often ate with Hitler at the Wolf's Lair. A lunch guest that July 4 found the calmness that the Reichsmarschall radiated "impressive," and remarked upon his "good-naturedness" and his "air of honest, unconditional loyalty." When their table conversation turned to procuring vegetable oils from North Africa, Göring affably launched into a discourse on how he was stockpiling food by worldwide black-market operations—"often without letting his right hand know what his left hand was up to."

This allusion to oil procurement was a first hint of problems to come. The

* *he loves to talk too much!*

shortage of refined aviation spirit and operations. Russian petroleum lion tons, would provide the only according to the figures shown to G6 Mountains—had reserves of 613 million, and Groznyy with 120 m Russians had comprehensively sal lacked the expertise and drilling e need at least 120 rigs, and Göring steel to make them.

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shortage of refined aviation spirit was already setting back Luftwaffe training and operations. Russian petroleum reserves, estimated at two thousand million tons, would provide the only long-term solution to Hitler's needs. According to the figures shown to Göring, the Baku Field—beyond the Caucasus Mountains—had reserves of 613 million tons, followed by Maykop with 137 million, and Grozny with 120 million. But there was a snag: The retreating Russians had comprehensively sabotaged the wells, and the German invaders lacked the expertise and drilling equipment to restore production. They would need at least 120 rigs, and Göring now found that he had not set aside enough steel to make them.

On July 10, he called in the oil experts to discuss how to bring Maykop back into production once this field was captured. "Are we clear," he asked, "how we are going to tackle the demolitions? My own hope is that in the circumstances they will have had no time to carry out demolitions, because the wells are kept pumping until the last minute."

The experts dispelled his optimism. "I think," said one, "that once they've been prepared, demolitions are feasible in a very few hours."

At Kherson in the Ukraine the Germans were reassembling a refinery seized and dismantled in France. This would be able to produce four hundred thousand tons a year, but it would take until May 1943 to erect. "Does it have to take so long?" asked Göring.

"The Russians have wrecked everything," was the explanation. "So we have to rebuild from scratch."

"Getting oil wells working in winter," one expert lectured him, "is exceptionally tough."

"That's not the point," rasped Göring. "Even if it's tough, it's still got to be done."

As the armies hammered their way southward and southeastward into Russia, Göring reviewed his art collections yet again. The Dutch art dealer Hubert Menten offered him Adriaen Ysenbrant's "Madonna and Child"; Göring paid him thirty thousand Swiss francs for it. Deals in less valuable currencies ran less smoothly. After buying a series of Flemish tapestries depicting the life of the emperor Charlemagne for 4 million French francs from the Galerie Charpentier in Paris, Göring learned that the delighted vendors had only recently purchased them for one tenth of that price. The furious Reichsmarschall resorted to the usual offices of Dr. Helmuth Knochen, chief of the Paris Gestapo, but recovered only eight hundred thousand francs.

The most lurid example of his Byzantine purchasing methods came when he learned of two magnificent Flemish hunting tapestries in the Château de Bort, near Limoges. Owned jointly by the Marquis de Sèze and his estranged wife, each was thirty feet long and over fifteen feet high, woven over four hundred years before but with colors as fresh as yesterday. "If my uncle sees those," Lieutenant Göring had gasped, "they'll be packed up and taken

AD TO GRAD

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He indulged his muses. In the first British Mosquito bomber. Its sleek, fast and virtually invisible design in 1940 he too had ordered the production of "such garbage." However, that he, Göring, could not afford jaunts to Paris, Amsterdam, or the ministry. "According to both getting from Britain," he jeered to his more bombers and more fighters

He suggested one typically cynical way of procuring consumer-goods from the occupied territories. "We must first buy up all that pink junk and those frightful alabaster things and trashy jewelry in Venice—there's not a country on earth that can match Italy for kitsch. . . . The [Ukrainian] peasants won't part with anything for money, but they do barter. . . . For face powder you can get butter or anything you want. So let's buy up kitsch. Let's open kitsch factories!"

What was happening behind the eastern front now was no joking matter.

The summer offensive was no longer making such rapid progress, and the high Caucasus Mountains were looming ahead of Field Marshal Wilhelm List's army group. Months earlier, Göring had asked secretly for data on the Caucasus. His staff had supplied eight library books including Karl Egger's *Conquest of the Caucasus*, the journal of the Austrian Alpine Association, and a pocket guide to the U.S.S.R. He had read the books by June 25 and returned them, satisfied that he was now an expert on the Caucasus. When the army's chief of staff, Franz Halder, now reminded Hitler of this mountain barrier, Göring swept his bejeweled, sausagelike fingers across the map and declared, "The Caucasus? It's no different really from Berlin's Grünewald."

Out of the forests and marshes behind the advancing German armies there now rose hordes of Soviet partisans. Göring suggested releasing convicted poachers and smugglers into special units of desperadoes to combat partisans with their own irregular methods—they could "burn and ravish," as he put it, in their assigned operational zones. To this suggestion he then added the idea of conscripting Dutchmen willy-nilly into two antipartisan regiments. When a police general at his conference on August 6 remarked that previous attempts at recruiting the Dutch had failed, Göring rounded on him angrily. "Then shanghai them! Dump them in the partisan territories, and don't give them any guns until they get there! 'Root, hog—or die!' " Gauleiter Lohse stated that the partisans were appearing in military formations equipped with better weapons than the police units.

GÖRING: You'd make a great fiction writer, Mr. Lohse—

LOHSE: They're reports from the police and Wehrmacht!

GÖRING:—If they're from our Wehrmacht then I'd say, *best-selling* fiction. . . . If ten partisans turn up with muskets, then the Wehrmacht afterward talks about whole divisions of them!

In the far south General von Richthofen decided that Stalin's armies were beaten, and dictated this observation into his diary. Beppo Schmid, Göring's Chief Intelligence officer, assessed the Soviet air strength at less than one thousand planes. But Theo Rowehl's reconnaissance squadron brought back photographs of thousands of planes concealed on airfields up to six hundred miles behind the enemy lines. Schmid decided that the planes were dummies; he decided too that on balance it would be prudent to withhold the more awkward photographs from the air staff. Jeschonnek was worried enough about the future. Schmid overheard him telling his staff, "If we haven't won by December, then there's no chance."

As General von Hoth's Fourth Panzer Army slowed to a virtual standstill outside Stalingrad that August, Göring's criticisms of the army generals became more trenchant. Armed by Richthofen with specific details, he accused the generals of cowardice and of exaggerating the Soviet strength. On August 27, Richthofen's operations officer, Colonel Karl-Heinz Schulz,

came to report on the defense commander, Friedrich Paulus, these complaints on to Hitler's forces," he insisted—"Reinforce had its work cut out terrain."

Hitler was in no mood to listen to the allegations. The sweltering, oppressive heat, the ill temper. Oppressed soon start to devastate Muni Göring to start building flat staff of Hitler's gloomy prospect of his own: "We'll probably never see the Caucasus." But distant than ever; Field Marshal Halder maps showing that he could not cross narrow mountain passes. Field Marshal Halder, refused to shake hands with another. Göring fled from the Caucasus. Lohse engulfed him too. Milch, over List, Göring already had more books on the Caucasus.

But the real fulcrum of the campaign was the Caucasus. The city was a grimy, grimy, the Volga River. Each side retook the city. On September 10, the city of Stalingrad gets slower and slower. The airfield only ten miles from the city demanded that one single army not mean Paulus, whom he re-

The Americans had now brought in B-17 Flying Fortress squadrons, armored and equipped with engines, settled on Göring's fighter command.

Göring concealed the bad news. "The Americans are bragging," he thundered to a Beppo Schmid. "He won't be making any threat equally cheerily. 'In the end, this is spelled in capital letters: B-17' "

But one of the formidable B-17s was out of formation—and when a week after the speech, he brought the word against underestimating

ing such rapid progress, and the head of Field Marshal Wilhelm had asked secretly for data on the many books including Karl Egger's on the Austrian Alpine Association, and read the books by June 25 and an expert on the Caucasus. When reminded Hitler of this mountain angelike fingers across the map and really from Berlin's Grünewald." The advancing German armies there suggested releasing convicted desperadoes to combat partisans could "burn and ravish," as he put this suggestion he then added the into two antipartisan regiments. On August 6 remarked that previous Göring rounded on him angrily. partisan territories, and don't give bog—or die!" Gauleiter Lohse military formations equipped with

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came to report on the defeatism and feeble leadership of the Sixth Army's commander, Friedrich Paulus, and his corps commanders. Göring passed these complaints on to Hitler. There could be no talk of "strong enemy forces," he insisted—"Reconnoitering northward," he continued, "my air force had its work cut out to find any enemy troops at all, in wide-open terrain."

Hitler was in no mood to listen to the army's defense against Göring's allegations. The sweltering, mosquito-laden climate of Vinnitsa contributed to the ill temper. Oppressed by fear that the British bomber squadrons would soon start to devastate Munich, Vienna, Linz, and Nuremberg, he instructed Göring to start building flak towers in those cities at once. Göring told his staff of Hitler's gloomy prognosis on September 1, and added a prediction of his own: "We'll probably get these [raids] once our troops are standing south of the Caucasus." But that triumphant moment suddenly seemed more distant than ever; Field Marshal List arrived at Hitler's headquarters with maps showing that he could make no further progress through the tortuous, narrow mountain passes. Feeling cheated and betrayed, Hitler flew into a tantrum, refused to shake hands with one general and erupted like a volcano over another. Göring fled from the headquarters before the glowing lava engulfed him too. Milch, who arrived at midday, noted afterward: "Row over List, Göring already left." The Reichsmarschall sent off for twenty more books on the Caucasus.

But the real fulcrum of the fighting now became Stalingrad, not the Caucasus. The city was a grimy, sprawling sea of houses and factories straddling the Volga River. Each side realized that Stalingrad was the key to the Russian campaign. On September 10, Richthofen wrote, exasperated, "The throttling of Stalingrad gets slower and slower." From his base headquarters at a fighter airfield only ten miles from the city he phoned Göring on the thirteenth to demand that one single army commander take over that sector—and he did not mean Paulus, whom he regarded as "worthy but uninspiring."

The Americans had now begun raiding German targets with their famous B-17 Flying Fortress squadrons. The bomber flew fast and high. It was heavily armored and equipped with eleven heavy machine guns. A gloomy overcast settled on Göring's fighter commanders.

Göring concealed the bad news from the German public. "If Mr. Churchill brags," he thundered to a Berlin audience on October 4, "that he is going to have thousand-bomber jaunts over Germany every night, let me just reply this: He won't be making any at all." He dismissed the American bomber threat equally cheerily. "In the American language," he scoffed, "one word is spelled in capital letters: Bluff!"

But one of the formidable B-17's had now been shot down—it had drifted out of formation—and when Milch came out to see Göring at Kalinovka a week after the speech, he brought the dossier on it. The field marshal solemnly warned against underestimating this plane.

"How come they tell me one thing," Göring challenged, uneasily alluding to the air staff, "and you another? Whom do I believe?"

His experts had now spotted what looked like turbochargers on photographs of an American B-24 Liberator bomber. That meant that they might soon be flying into German airspace at thirty thousand feet. Göring shrugged it off. "The Reichsmarschall," Milch reported to his staff in Berlin a few days later, "told me that there is no cause for anxiety about the American planes and that four-engined though they be, we can can contemplate the future with equanimity. I told him that I do not agree—I think the Flying Fortress and B-24 are remarkable planes."

Facing allegations of the hoarding of labor in his bloated Luftwaffe, in September 1942 Göring was ordered by Hitler to release two hundred thousand of his troops to the depleted army. It was a bitter blow. He offered to set up twenty Luftwaffe "field divisions" instead, and Hitler relented.

It was a controversial decision, even in the air force. General von Richthofen feared (rightly, as it turned out) that the Luftwaffe divisions would prove "a colossal blunder," and noted this belief in his diary after flying over to see the Reichsmarschall on October 15, bringing photographs of the ravages of Stalingrad:

[Göring] curses List, Kleist, and Ruoff [the army's commanders in the Caucasus] dreadfully. I stoutly defend the latter two, but there's no reasoning with the Reichsmarschall. Drags me off with Jeschonnek to make an unannounced call on the Führer and lets fly there [against the army generals].

Helmuth Greiner, the high command chronicler, wrote in his own private diary that day, "The witch hunt by the air-force brass against the army goes on. Ghastly ass-licking." Back aboard the train *Asia* Richthofen tried to curry favor with Göring over dinner. "I praise his really very good [Berlin] speech. He swallows the flattery hook, line, and sinker. Hints at an early field marshal's baton for me. . . . I protest at having to lug a baton around."

As the exhausted German infantry slogged into Stalingrad and the rumors of a huge Red Army counteroffensive multiplied, Göring left for a week in Rome. The German diplomats there did not relish his coming, and the chortling German ambassador phoned the Palazzo Venezia on October 19 that Göring had been suddenly stricken with dysentery, and was "unable to leave his throne even for ten minutes." When Göring finally limped in to the palace four days later, Mussolini harped on Rommel's oil crisis and the troublesome British base on Malta. Four days after their meeting, the British launched their triumphant offensive against Rommel at Alamein. On November 2, British code-breakers heard Göring's headquarters frantically diverting bomber squadrons from Norway to the Mediterranean. Richthofen's Luftflotte 4—

already pushed to its limits by night fighters to Greece.

Disobeying Hitler's orders armies back to a line that he b another army debacle, ordere Kesselring, who was the high c to Rome late on November 5

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GÖRING: According to ou
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KESSELRING: More likely
GÖRING: Yes but not Fr

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*Italian intelligence wiretapped this

the supreme sacrifice. The convoy is to be attacked without pause, day and night, wave after wave.

When the airmen load their bombs, tell them their job is to attack the aircraft carriers so that the planes can't land or take off. Next, hit the troop transports: matériel without men is worthless.

No other operations are to take place beside those against this convoy. It is the most important convoy. It is Number One. You are to direct the operations against it in person.

KESSELRING: Yes, sir.

GÖRING: I wish you all the best and am with you constantly in my thoughts.

British code-breakers heard Kesselring issue the order precisely as Göring had specified, but nothing could halt the great Allied invasion (Operation *Torch*). On November 8, the British and American forces landed in French North Africa (precisely where Göring had not expected them). Reacting swiftly, Hitler ordered a new bridgehead established in Tunis. Meeting their Italian allies in Munich the next day, Göring silently accompanied Hitler to the Führer Building, then told Count Ciano candidly that this invasion of North Africa was the first real point the Allies had scored in this war.

With the final collapse of List's Caucasus offensive the Stalingrad catastrophe began. Hitler was faced with doleful decisions. On October 29, British code-breakers had already heard Göring instructing Richthofen's Luftflotte 4 to destroy the coveted oil installations at Groznyy. A week later he ordered Baku bombed as well.

As the focus of military events shifted back to Stalingrad, the Nazi leaders were widely dispersed. Hitler was in Bavaria, the air-force and army staffs were in East Prussia, and Göring in Berlin. The Reichsmarschall was fulfilling mundane duties there—appointing professors in his capacity as prime minister of Prussia, recruiting experts to the new Reich Research Council, supervising guided-missile developments, and selecting Nazi "commissioners" (*Beauftragte*) for high-frequency physics and nuclear-physics research. And he refused to accept that the Four-Year Plan was dead. "For the sake of historical truth," he admonished Albert Speer in a letter on November 5, "I should like to make it absolutely plain that I have not relaxed my grip on the essentials of the Four-Year Plan for one instant. A glance at the dates of the conferences and sessions, at their minutes, at the decrees, laws, and ordinances that I have issued throughout this war, should satisfy you immediately that I continue to shape the crucial affairs of the Four-Year Plan despite my preoccupation with the air force."

He was still in Berlin two weeks later as the Red Army counteroffensive at Stalingrad began, across the River Don. On the next day, November 20, the Russians established a second breach in the German lines. Göring, tel-

ephoned about these developments. Nothing shows that he really was beginning, and about twenty German divisions, the Division. He remained at C that the young chief of air staff in Berchtesgaden bringing a fateful offer to Hitler: Jescel airlift enough supplies into it even if the Sixth Army was

At 3:25 P.M. on November 19, General Paulus, on temporary encirclement. It was possible; an airlift would force Göring on the line, then the Reichsmarschall agreed to

The Stalingrad airlift—or with Göring's name. Yet for him three months later, Hitler the airlift to Paulus "without

At the time of Hitler's phone call was presiding over an oil conference at the Maykop oil field that sunken the wells and dropped unremediated each borehole. Göring was faced with the vast oil reserves. "I'm since we captured the first oil field. The steel mushrooms baffled. The thing like a gigantic corkscrew

The experts shook their heads. He left behind faked "oil-field conference" command, who had been running. "Before we even went into it, that the entire economic setup line troops. I didn't just have it at my service." ("Wirtschaft" is scandalous of this Mr. Thomas to Georg Thomas of the high command had signed this. . . . Now I am make myself clear. If the otherwise, we shall have to resort

His experts hastened to so one, "we'll manage somehow

and we have to send oil down a lot of you. Because let me say

mburg in charge of the Petroleum That's what this general is there to tell the army commanders, Do hundred miles away from Maykop,"

in Maykop." ably farther from the oil fields than failed to find oil soon: He would

conversations logged in a register, all.

ould have answered several outstanding crisis. By now Richthofen was that the Luftwaffe lacked the lift to get in Berlin, he signaled to General Prussia, he warned the army group on the Don front. Ex-Lufthansa chief idently among those who assured As the Reichsmarschall's white-tinner off silver salvers in *Asia* that her staff and ordered every available including his own courier flight. yaria.

ithful Paladin," at midnight Hitler ordering him to stand fast.

commander replied: His army, he ans; his food and ammunition were

he same time as this signal, late on ling its now-familiar rolling stock, Reichsmarschall's personal armored Mercedes, a 3.4-liter Mercedes, a d assorted baggage trucks and mo-e that included valet Robert, nurse inrich Zahler, Göring was impatient several long-standing appointments want to miss.

Obersalzberg, he barely discussed pped there. "Hitler," he explained

guiltily to Pili Körner a few days later, "already had [Jeschonnek's airlift] plan before I set eyes on it. I could only say, Mein Führer, you have the figures. If these figures are right, then I am at your disposal."

But the figures were not right at all. Jeschonnek only now realized that the standard "250-kilo" airlift container on which he had based them in fact held far less than that load—its name derived solely from the 250-kilo bomb position it occupied on the bomb racks. Göring winced when the general confessed this to him, but forbade him to tell Hitler. "I cannot do this to the Führer—not now!" he said. Telephoning Hitler himself, he repeated that the Luftwaffe airlift would go ahead, and he invited him to phone Milch if he still harbored any doubts.

For Hitler the fatal decision was the product of political pride. He had committed himself publicly to capturing the city, and he could not go back on that pledge. Later, Göring mentioned operational factors that influenced him. There was, he said, no reason to believe that the army's main front line would fall back as far and as fast as it did, and it was the increasing distances that ultimately thwarted the airlift.

Down in the Berchtesgaden valley that night, November 22–23, 1942, Göring's train *Asia* slid off toward Paris.

At 10:00 P.M. Hitler's train also departed, in the other direction—returning to East Prussia. He would arrive at the Wolf's Lair twenty-four hours later. At 5:40 A.M. on November 24 he sent yet another grim signal to the embattled General Paulus at Stalingrad: The Sixth Army, this stated, was to stand fast. "Airlift operation by one hundred more Junkers is starting up."

33

FALL FROM GRACE

A quarter of a million of Hitler's troops were encircled in Stalingrad; they would become Stalin's hostages, and very few would ever be seen alive again. Göring would soon suspect that, given the simultaneous failure to prevent the Allied landings in northwest Africa, only a deal with Stalin would offer Nazi Germany any chance of survival. But, as he admitted to interrogators three years later, whenever he tried to speak frankly to Hitler, his heart sank to the seat of his pants.

At first he did not realize the scale of the Stalingrad tragedy, but that did not make his personal movements any less scandalous or unforgivable.

He arrived in Paris on November 23, 1942, and on the next day—even as Field Marshal von Manstein was signaling to Paulus, "We shall hack you free!"—Göring continued his Paris spree with a visit to the Jeu de Paume. It was to be his last visit to this treasure-house. He was in an ill humor, which he worked off by abusing Hanesse loudly as they toured the little gallery. Archival documents dated that day number among them valuations by Göring's tame assessor, Professor Bertrand, on fifty-eight items, including Van Goghs, a Corot, and (at ten thousand francs) Utrillo's "Suburban Street,"

which latter the Reichsmarschall's "The Rock Chapel." It included a bill of lading type of following items were loaded today"—listing seventy-seven purchased paintings, tapestries, bric-a-brac, including a carved oak ancient sarcophagus, bronze, and Rosenberg list dated this same less carpets and silk rugs that aboard *Asia* on the twenty-five 2.8 million francs, a Salomon and a Cranach for which he Stalingrad, it seems, had been

The Utrillo purchase illuminated a passion for art dealings had passed dealer Allan Löbl, an Austro-Hungarian art library of the Kleinberger Gallery to a Jew by accepting a *gift*, the Utrillo in *exchange*. Suspicious forever, Löbl then suggested that as stool pigeons for Göring in France to the Reichsmarschall that he make "the Jewish brothers Löbl but Fräulein Limberger noted that he doesn't do it in any way that Jews! If possible, do it clandestinely.

By late November 24, 1942, if he not in Paris, that his air force Stalingrad. In theory, five or six tons of supplies a day. But given would in practice call for 12 to 15: 52 transport planes. Göring had only 750 Ju 52's left, and Hitler the supply of Rommel's armies along, but what could he now do and Zeitzler to *tell* the Führer my he dictated to his diary on November

*This diary entry, and the Rosenberg's Gerhard Engel "diary" published by Prof. in Munich, which has Engel "witnessing" same day!

GRACE

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which latter the Reichsmarschall proposed to exchange for Jodocus de Momper's "The Rock Chapel." Further documents surviving from this jaunt included a bill of lading typed by the Rosenberg task force and headed: "The following items were loaded aboard the Reichsmarschall's special train today"—listing seventy-seven crates of confiscated, bartered, or privately purchased paintings, tapestries, floor- and wall-coverings, and other bric-à-brac, including a carved oak-and-pewter washstand, seven fragments of an ancient sarcophagus, bronze and marble statuary, and silver plate. A further Rosenberg list dated this same November 24, 1942, described thirteen price-less carpets and silk rugs that he had bought. Among the other items loaded aboard *Asia* on the twenty-fifth were five Scipio tapestries, purchased for 2.8 million francs, a Salomon Koninck portrait of an old man in a red beret, and a Cranach for which he had forked out fifty thousand Swiss francs. Stalingrad, it seems, had been forgotten.

The Utrillo purchase illuminated the unsavory demimonde into which his passion for art dealings had propelled him. Seeking high protectors, the Paris dealer Allan Löbl, an Austro-Hungarian Jew, offered Göring the priceless art library of the Kleinberger Gallery as a gift. Not wanting to obligate himself to a Jew by accepting a *gift*, Göring instructed Bruno Lohse to give Löbl the Utrillo in *exchange*. Suspecting that his charmed existence might not last forever, Löbl then suggested that he and his brother Manon Löbl should act as stool pigeons for Göring in Paris. On June 15, 1943, Lohse would suggest to the Reichsmarschall that he formally request the Gestapo to continue to make "the Jewish brothers Löbl" available as informers. Göring approved, but Fräulein Limberger noted the caveat he uttered thus: "Lohse must see he doesn't do it in any way that might link the Reichsmarschall's name with Jews! If possible, do it clandestinely."

By late November 24, 1942, it would have become plain to Göring, were he not in Paris, that his air force had bitten off more than it could chew at Stalingrad. In theory, five or six transport squadrons could airlift five hundred tons of supplies a day. But given the worsening weather conditions, the lift would in practice call for 12 to 15 squadrons, or between 630 and 795 Junkers 52 transport planes. Göring had lost hundreds of them at Crete. They had only 750 Ju 52's left, and Hitler had recently committed most of these to the supply of Rommel's armies in Africa. Richthofen had predicted this all along, but what could he now do to discourage the airlift? "I urge Jeschonnek and Zeitzler to *tell* the Führer my view, and to harness the Reichsmarschall," he dictated to his diary on November 25, "but he's in Paris."*

*This diary entry, and the Rosenberg documents cited above, render most suspect the General Gerhard Engel "diary" published by Professor Martin Broszat's Institute of Contemporary History in Munich, which has Engel "witnessing" a row between Hitler and Göring at East Prussia this same day!

Prussia, the Stalingrad situation
enstein," recorded Richthofen on
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seemed with Stalingrad than with
—to everybody's astonishment—
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that night, Rommel dictated, "Five
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early on the thirtieth, as their train
was recording that Göring now fully
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guns rushed to Rommel's forces,
mediately to Rome to step up Italian

arshal Kesselring. Kesselring pointed
ng the enemy air force within close
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on no account abandon Tripoli.

Mussolini that evening. In a three-hour
anned Duce made plain that he too
d not ignore Kesselring's arguments.
depression. At a joint session the
ing repeat that Tripoli must be held.
ordered on the insufferable. For once,
the first time we are not far removed
s spring! Therefore, we have every
into Tunisia." He promised to pack
Tunis bridgehead—the 10th Panzer
Göring, and Deutschland. "We must
in, and then head for Morocco," he

He proposed laying two immense minefields across the narrow Straits of Sicily, with a safe channel to sluice their transport ships through to North Africa. Germany would supply the necessary mines. "I realize that this is a vast undertaking," he conceded, "but we should think along such lines." Answering the angry comments of the Italian Fleet commander, Admiral Raffaele Riccardi, and German Admiral Eberhard Weichold, the Reichsmarschall jeered, "The navy's prejudices and opinions are out of date."

He cabled Hitler afterward, reporting that the Italians agreed that Rommel's next line should be at Buerat and speaking of Rommel's loss of nerve. He handled the field marshal so tactlessly over lunch that Milch, arriving from Berlin as it ended, found Rommel upstairs weeping with rage at Göring.

After that Göring traveled in arrogant luxury aboard *Asia* down to Naples, where he talked with the dockhands and inspected port defenses. Disregarding Rome completely, he ordered the youthful local Fascist chieftain to take charge of the transport ships to Africa. "Göring," wrote the indignant Ciano on the fifth, "continues to preside over meetings to which he invites civilians, [Guido] Buffarini [Fascist minister of the interior], technical ministers, and so forth. . . . Yesterday, when Göring arrived at the supreme command's headquarters, he was received in the courtyard by our military chiefs!" Ciano put it around that Göring evidently saw himself as a future *Reichsprotektor* of Italy.

On December 11, 1942, the Reichsmarschall reported back at the Führer's headquarters. "[Göring] says," Hitler reported to his staff the next day, "that Rommel has completely lost his nerve."

In private Göring told Hitler that Mussolini was advising them to call off their now-pointless war against Russia. A few days later the despondent Italian foreign minister Ciano and Marshal Ugo Cavallero, chief of the supreme command, came to East Prussia to repeat this advice. Göring and Ribbentrop nodded approval, but Hitler responded with an encouraging catalog of his victories since 1938. The matter was not mentioned again.

His airlift to Stalingrad struggled lamely on. A typical day was December 19: His planes flew only seventy tons into the "fortress." Göring scoffed during Hitler's main war conference that day that the food situation probably was not as bad as General Paulus made out. From the front line a thousand miles away Field Marshal von Manstein sarcastically suggested that the Reichsmarschall himself take over. "Let the 'confident' commander," he declared, "take charge of the sector that he's so confident about!"

On the thirtieth, Richthofen telephoned Carinhall. The distant Reichsmarschall replied with what Richthofen referred to only as "words of fire." "I would have preferred more forces," observed the Luftflotte commander.

* * *

Göring's own diary opened in 1943 to reveal him still at Carinhall, seeing the New Year in. He made only occasional forays into Berlin. He proudly watched little Edda at ballet school, listened to Rosita Serrano sing, went for drives in the snow, hunted wild boar; he canceled a conference with Galland and Dietrich Pelz, his bomber commander, and in general refused to see what was bearing down on Germany's skies. On January 4, Milch and his technical chief Colonel Wolfgang Vorwald brought out to Carinhall the red top-secret volume of enemy production statistics: Britain, the United States, and Canada, this showed, had been producing 1,378 bombers and 1,959 fighters per month during 1942, while German industry had averaged only 349 and 247 respectively. "Milch," thundered the Reichsmarschall, comfortably seated behind his great desk, "have you joined the dreamers too? Do you really believe all this?"

The next day Milch confessed to his staff, "The Reichsmarschall doesn't quite see eye to eye with me on these figures."

"Even if they are making these numbers," he quoted Göring as saying, "they're no use whatever to their forces in Africa if they can't back them up with the necessary shipping space."

In a few days' time Göring would complete his half-century. Late on January 6, 1943, he left for East Prussia, spent seven hours the next day with Hitler, jotted into his diary a jumble of notes on discussions with Speer, Rosenberg, Bormann, and Milch; then waddled back to Carinhall. The preparations for his fiftieth birthday helped to deaden the ever-fainter cries coming from Stalingrad, and the hollering from North Africa. He had one talk with Kesselring about "the case of Rommel," but his birthday overshadowed all else. Pandering to his eager mood, the Italians awarded him the first Gold Star of the Roman Eagle at their embassy. The Berlin theaters were closed, but he ordered one reopened and bused his staff in from Carinhall to hear music by Handel and an aria from a Glück opera ("O that I were never born"), followed by scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a play by Kleist. Two of the actors had Jewish wives, but Göring had extended to them his personal protection.

The birthday gifts might seem to have borne witness to the enduring strength of his political position in Germany. Mussolini had sent a golden sword originally destined for General Franco. (As Ciano observed, "Times have changed.") Ciano himself gave him the Star of San Maurizio (once earmarked for King Zog of Albania, but also reassigned.) Three leading German businessmen gave a twenty-four-hundred piece Sèvres porcelain service of a hunting design. Kurt Schmitt, the Allianz Insurance Company's chief, had swiftly complied when Gritzbach of Göring's staff phoned to suggest giving three medieval statues at seventeen thousand marks apiece. Paul Pleiger had given one million marks (one hundred thousand from H.G.W., the rest from a political fund controlled by the Reich coal owners' lobby).

Hitler had sent a personal haul among Göring's most prized, as is the solid-gold jewel-encrusted designer, Gerdi Troost, and his parchment authority as Reichsmarschall.

Hitler had ordered public acclamations and later described his fortunes. Overwhelmed by delight on the thirteenth the words "ill and on the fourteenth, again, Zahler was sent for."

In part the heart problems were part the malaise was probably partly openly dismantled. On January (Dreierausschuss) to control matters, bypassing Göring, Hitler him to take over—even at this time.

On the night of January 16-17, "buster" bombs. After inspecting headquarters on the eighteenth, from Paulus about the airlift. (at the front line. "The most frightful," Goring complained.

In fact Göring had provided commanders were letting him wait, waiting air crews warm, the cold-start procedures, and moral ports, only 15 were operational. 111's only 41, of 20 FW 200's and eleven Heinkels were actually Milch at once sacked the incomplete parachuted radio beacons and five weeks passed, the airfields retreated so far that the Heinkels

Hitler ordered Milch to fly the out of the fortress. "Why not kill him, pointing out that there was Stalingrad. Hitler passed the scorching markable," sneered Göring to Milch immediately loses his clear view.

*Göring was now taking Cardiazol, Pergolide, a heart stimulant of relatively short action, had ordered from Siemens a portable electrocardiograph, and endorsed the order as "very urgent."

Hitler had sent a personal handwritten letter dated January 11, 1943; it was among Göring's most prized papers in 1945, but was looted and is now lost, as is the solid-gold jewel-encrusted cassette handcrafted by Hitler's favorite designer, Gerdi Troost, and handed by Keitel to Göring to house his white parchment authority as Reichsmarschall.

Hitler had ordered public celebration, but Göring saw through the phony acclamations and later described this birthday as the final watershed in his fortunes. Overwhelmed by depression, he retired to bed, entering in his diary on the thirteenth the words "ill" and "bed rest because of heart palpitations," and on the fourteenth, again, "Bed rest all day, ill! (Heart)." Professor Zahler was sent for.*

In part the heart problems were a consequence of his massive obesity; in part the malaise was probably psychological. He could see his authority being openly dismantled. On January 13, Hitler created a "Commission of Three" (*Dreierausschuss*) to control manpower. Göring was excluded. On the fourteenth, bypassing Göring, Hitler sent for Staatssekretär Milch and instructed him to take over—even at this eleventh hour—the vital Stalingrad airlift.

On the night of January 16–17, the RAF attacked Berlin using new "blockbuster" bombs. After inspecting the damage, Göring lunched at Hitler's headquarters on the eighteenth. Hitler showed him the latest hysterical signals from Paulus about the airlift. Göring phoned them through to Milch, now at the front line. "The most frightful signals are coming from the fortress," Göring complained.

In fact Göring had provided the planes he promised, but the squadron commanders were letting him down. They had done nothing to keep the waiting air crews warm, the crews themselves were ignorant of standard cold-start procedures, and morale was rock-bottom. Of 140 Junkers 52 transports, only 15 were operational on the day Milch arrived; of 140 Heinkel 111's only 41, of 20 FW 200's only 1. Of these planes only seven Junkers and eleven Heinkels were actually scheduled to make the round trip that day. Milch at once sacked the incompetent generals, organized new landing grounds, parachuted radio beacons and flare-path equipment into the fortress. But as the weeks passed, the airfields in Stalingrad were lost, and the front line retreated so far that the Heinkels could no longer make the return flight.

Hitler ordered Milch to fly the highly esteemed Panzer general Hans Hube out of the fortress. "Why not kill an air-force general or two!" Hube told him, pointing out that there was not one Luftwaffe general now left inside Stalingrad. Hitler passed the scathing remark on to Göring. "Isn't it remarkable," sneered Göring to Milch, "how anybody who goes to the front immediately loses his clear view of the front!" Richthofen, listening on the

*Göring was now taking Cardiazol, Pentamethylene-Tetrazol, manufactured by Knoll of Ludwigshafen, a heart stimulant of relatively short-lived effect. Back in November 1941 Göring's staff had ordered from Siemens a portable electrocardiograph for Professor Zahler, and Gömmert had endorsed the order as "very urgent."

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to run up," as he admitted in his diary again on the twentieth, Milch described the Sixth Army's plight as hopeless. On the twenty-third, "Telephoned Führer's headquarters for endless telegrams." Displaying for five hours with Hitler that day, about a new crisis developing at the main conferences on the twenty-

gliders, ground crew, preheating tankers bearing down on the StG-109G fighter planes was also on its vicious criticism of the Luftwaffe. He described in his diary the sense of the "unfulfilled promises" of an August at the fiasco of the vaunted

an B-17 bombers delivered their payload; attacking Wilhelmshaven Naval Air Base followed on the thirtieth. It was a sure of power." Göring was due at a radio station; but with sublime Mosquito bombers scudding right underground at that precise hour. He went to tend specifically to the air base at Kassel. On the twentieth Göring ordered General Hans Kammhuber, to extend his command into southern Germany, he ordered under to come to Carinhall at the base intercepted this signal.) Colonel Galland who lunched and conferred with Göring on ways of defeating this two-pronged attack, described his plans to strengthen the force. He spoke about the expanding force of Galland referred to the Reich's new 163 rocket-powered interceptor. It covered revolutionary new electronic down that very night, January 24, 1945, a screen designed to give a picture of darkness and cloud cover. Göring's army generals, including Paulus,

chose Soviet captivity to death and glory on the battlefield. The army's General Erwin Jaenecke, flown injured out of Stalingrad on one of the last planes, urged Hitler to punish the guilty men—"Even," he spat out, "if that means the Reichsmarschall himself!" But Göring was not to be seen. His diary shows that he spent much of the next week at Emmy's hospital bedside—she had been operated on by Professor Gohrbandt for sinus problems on February 1—and he manifested no urgent desire to face his Führer. Hitler vented his rage on Jeschonnek instead—then clapped the unhappy general on the shoulder after the conference and reassured him, "It wasn't you I meant!" "I alone bear responsibility for Stalingrad," he frankly admitted to Field Marshal von Manstein on February 6—but then devalued that acceptance of the blame by adding, "I could pin the blame onto Göring . . . but he is my designated successor. So I can not."

Reassured by General Bodenschatz that Hitler was not disposed to blame him, Göring slunk back in to the Wolf's Lair later in February. Hitler avoided puncturing his pride. Göring's posture at this time is described in an insightful entry of Richthofen's diary—the Luftflotte 4 commander had arrived at Rominten on the tenth, to find Göring just setting out to hunt wild boar. They dined alone together, and commiserated about the soldier's hard lot. "As you know," said Göring, carving juicy chunks off a leg of veal served to him as a third course, "the only luxury I allow myself is to have fresh flowers sent in from time to time." He admitted having approved of the Stalingrad airlift, but only because he expected the encirclement to be temporary. Then the Italian Army had collapsed, and this had triggered the catastrophe.

Richthofen ventured the remark that Göring ought to have risked going in person to the Stalingrad battlefield. "If you can't trust in your own lucky star," he said, "then you have no right to believe in your destiny in larger things. None of our army commanders is a Caesar or an Alexander," he continued. "But they all know their job and do their duty. They just need to be given tasks they understand." He praised Manstein in particular.

The next morning, February 11, they went to see Hitler. Richthofen repeated his comments. "If I didn't straitjacket my commanders," Hitler told Richthofen tersely, "they would all be fighting on German soil by now."

Göring nodded tame approval. He did attempt one diffident interpolation, but Hitler deftly deflected the conversation to the Old Burg Theater in Vienna. "Now that," chortled Hitler, aware of Göring's pride in his Prussian State Theater, "was *really* art, of a kind you don't find too often nowadays."

Assembling all the Luftwaffe's top generals at Rominten for three days of confidential consultations ("to go over everything, issue guidelines, and deliver a pep talk for the coming months," as he put it in his diary) Göring was frank about the gravity of the crisis that now faced Nazi Germany. General Karl Koller, chief of staff of Luftflotte 3, took this shorthand note:

did grow on him to revive the Little Cabinet of the first war weeks—the Reich Defense Committee. Milch took it up with Speer; Speer got Goebbels's backing for the idea, and came down to the mountainside villa on the last day of February. Göring talked with him for several hours. The minister was fascinated by the apparently rouged cheeks and lacquered fingernails of the Reichsmarschall. Before bringing Goebbels back with him the next afternoon, Speer warned the propaganda minister that Göring was "rather resigned." Göring was wearing what Goebbels dryly described as "a somewhat baroque costume, which would look rather grotesque if one did not know him so well." Both ministers tried to restore the Reichsmarschall's waning self-confidence; he turned down the Little Cabinet idea. "I gained the impression," wrote Milch in his memoirs, "he was afraid of Hitler."

That night, March 1–2, the British weakened his bargaining position still further by blitzing Berlin. The raid gashed the Air Ministry, started six hundred fires, wrecked twenty thousand buildings, and killed seven hundred Berliners. Hitler ordered massive retaliation against London, but only a dozen planes even found the empire's sprawling capital. "When is the Reichsmarschall coming back?" asked Hitler irritably of his staff at midday on the fifth. (Stenographers recorded his words.) "This can't go on! We'll never cut the British down to size like this!"

Göring, however, had fled to Rome, to see Mussolini and—no doubt, incidentally—his art-dealer friends. From the letter that the Fascist dictator wrote to Hitler a few days later, it is clear that the Italians were again begging Nazi Germany to make peace with Stalin on whatever terms they could get.

The papers of Walter Hofer reveal how Göring comforted himself after the meeting with Mussolini. Visiting the country estate of art dealer Eugenio Ventura in Florence on March 8, he decided to acquire various objets d'art, including four Italian and Tyrolean paintings and triptychs, and four wood carvings of garlands. Greedy to lay hands on them, he instructed his staff to load them aboard his train immediately. "It's getting late already," he remarked suavely, "so I'd better take the things with me right away."

In exchange, he offered nine nineteenth-century works confiscated in France, including three Monets and works by Sisley, Cézanne, Degas, Renoir, and Van Gogh, which Hofer had removed to Florence in December for "restoration."

Further crates were loaded aboard, of objects bought from Count Contini, including a sixteenth-century walnut bench, a table, a large medicine cabinet, a prayer stool, and religious and hunting sculptures, a marble "Aphrodite After the Bath" purchased from Iandolo in Rome, and ten items bought from Grassi in Florence, including a bust of the Emperor Hadrian. Lost in the familiar art collector's trance, Göring had put the war behind him.

Scathing about the absentee Reichsmarschall, Hitler discussed the new violent RAF raids with Goebbels and Speer at the Wolf's Lair. That afternoon, March 8, 1943, he described Göring as being oblivious of the war in the

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ing's air force had airlifted into Leningrad 8,350 tons of supplies, a daily average of 116 tons. 65 Heinkel 111 bombers, and 1000 troops. "I always believed in the American aviation after the war ended. "My beautiful munitions and supplies to the Russian campaign." by Milch when he received January 22, 1943, he bleated the even for 1946. four-engined bomber project field marshal felt that Göring's his day.

retired to his villa on the Ob- him into approaching Hitler any or the other while he still during February the pressure

air, and totally misinformed by his ex-Richthofen Squadron cronies like Bodenschatz. "While I brood day and night on how to stop these air raids," an adjutant heard him say, "the Reichsmarschall leads his carefree life."

That night the RAF dropped eight hundred tons of bombs on medieval Nuremberg. Hitler had Bodenschatz fetched out of bed and raged at him.

Twenty-four hours later Munich was the British bombers' target. The fear of German retaliation was evidently no deterrent at all. Hitler blamed this on Göring's portly friend Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle, who had set up his Luftflotte 3 headquarters in a French château. "He has about as much interest in bombing Britain as in wolfing down a gourmet dinner," said Hitler, and ordered Göring back from Italy.

To his adjutant Jeschonnek remarked emptily that perhaps he ought to commit suicide—then Göring might mend his ways. The remark revealed how much the general was being pulverized between these heaving millstones of the high command. Later that spring the adjutant managed to wrest a revolver out of Jeschonnek's hand—he heard the general muttering about wanting to be buried in East Prussia on the shores of Lake Goldap.

He arrived back at the Wolf's Lair at 4:00 P.M. on March 11, 1943, chatted for a while with Rommel, who had relinquished command of his army in Tunisia the previous day, and slunk in to see Hitler at 9:30.

Hitler gave Göring one more chance to redeem himself.

Göring put pressure on to his plane manufacturers. Assembling them for a ninety-minute tirade at Carinhall a week later, he ladled vitriol over them—the Professors Messerschmitt, Heinkel, and Dornier—for Germany's "total failure" in aviation technology. "I have been deceived," he roared, "on a scale to which I was hitherto accustomed only in the variety acts of magicians and conjurers." "There are some things, which were reported to me before the war as completely ready, but which are *still* not even ready today!" To which remark he significantly added, "I am not talking of the eastern theater at all. When I speak of the 'enemy' now, I am referring only to the enemy in the west."

"The most modest requirement," he shrieked at Messerschmitt, "is that your aircraft must take off and land without their pilots risking every bone in their body." He glared at Heinkel: "I was promised a heavy bomber. The Heinkel 177. After calamity upon calamity they tell me, 'If only the plane didn't have to *dive*, it would be the finest bird in the world—it could go into service at once. At once!' I declare at once, 'It doesn't *have* to dive!' But now that it's been tried in operations there have been catastrophic losses, none caused by enemy action. So, Mr. Heinkel, what do you say today! And how many will go up in flames? Half of them! . . . How *amused* we all were about the enemy's backwardness, their 'plodding four-engined crates,' and so on. Gentlemen, I'd be delighted if you'd just copy one of their four-engined crates, double-quick! Then at least I'd have a plane to brag about!"

So he raged on. (The transcript covered one hundred pages.) "That's what

gets under my skin," he said through cloud cover into a pick 'can't quite find London.' "I ment was limitless. "I have lo the British do not have. What it without so much as a by-yo God's will, and when I get ste the workers. . . . Gentlemen, power." The British H2S rada at Rotterdam—was a fine exan German bomber was big enoug built those 'old four-engined cr could lay out a dance floor in t

He rounded on General Wolf Luftwaffe signals. "I refuse to b "The enemy can actually see w the clouds. We cannot jam him and in the same breath you add,

Later that month Göring retre mind. The catastrophic air raids violence, and now the America lost fifteen thousand dead in air killed 229 Frenchmen in Paris a U.S. bomber squadrons killed 2 phoning Goebbels in Berlin on the would courier reports of his sca obloquy on the Reichsmarschall."

Intervening in Luftwaffe operatio to the Russian front. "It's out of th to Jeschonnek. "It's about time Swamped in the east, run out of air force struggled to survive. Trou and threats of cuts in the meat rat shows April 1943 ending with vis his own doctor Ondarza, who help

Göring still found time for less Limberger "whether the amethysts from Perugia for little Edda's bir Emmy to buy expensive china. Ric berg, and noted in his diary on Apr the latest North Africa debacle had

In Tunisia 250,000 more German now took refuge in his childhood c stay until the end of May 1943. Mil

Richthofen Squadron cronies like to brag on how to stop these air raids," the Reichsmarschall leads his carefree life." Hundred tons of bombs on medieval cities got out of bed and raged at him. The British bombers' target. The fear was deterrent at all. Hitler blamed this on Hugo Sperrle, who had set up his command. "He has about as much interest in a gourmet dinner," said Hitler, and

he implicitly that perhaps he ought to lead his ways. The remark revealed the gap between these heaving millstones and the adjutant managed to wrest a word from the general muttering about the shores of Lake Goldap.

At 10 P.M. on March 11, 1943, chatted with the victorious command of his army in Berlin to see Hitler at 9:30.

to redeem himself.

Manufacturers. Assembling them for weeks later, he ladled vitriol over Ginkel, and Dornier—for Germany's "I have been deceived," he roared, accustomed only in the variety acts of the things, which were reported to him but which are still not even ready to be added, "I am not talking of the enemy now, I am referring only

to the fact that at Messerschmitt, "is that about their pilots risking every bone was promised a heavy bomber. The day they tell me, 'If only the plane I had in the world—it could go into the sky.' It doesn't have to dive!" But there have been catastrophic losses, Ginkel, what do you say today! And then! . . . How amused we all were at the plodding four-engined crates, and would just copy one of their four-engineers I'd have a plane to brag about!" (one hundred pages.) "That's what

gets under my skin," he said at one stage. "They can drop their bombs through cloud cover into a pickle barrel in a railroad station, but our gentlemen 'can't quite find London.'" His admiration of the British electronic equipment was limitless. "I have long been aware," he said, "that there is nothing the British do not have. Whatever equipment we have, the enemy can jam it without so much as a by-your-leave. We accept all this as though it were God's will, and when I get steamed up about it, the story is we haven't got the workers. . . . Gentlemen, it isn't manpower you're short of, it's brainpower." The British H2S radar set—first recovered from the RAF bomber at Rotterdam—was a fine example. It filled half a dozen steel cabinets. No German bomber was big enough to carry them. "That's because they have built those 'old four-engined crates,'" he mimicked. "Aircraft so big you could lay out a dance floor in them!"

He rounded on General Wolfgang Martini, the shy and academic chief of Luftwaffe signals. "I refuse to be led a song and dance like this," he declared. "The enemy can actually see whether he is over a city or not, right through the clouds. We cannot jam him. You tell me that we also have something, and in the same breath you add, 'But it can all be jammed by the enemy!'"

Later that month Göring retreated to Berchtesgaden, and tried to clear his mind. The catastrophic air raids on Berlin and the Ruhr were increasing in violence, and now the American bombers were joining in. The Reich had lost fifteen thousand dead in air raids. On April 4, American daylight raids killed 229 Frenchmen in Paris and 221 Italians in Naples; on the fifth, the U.S. bomber squadrons killed 2,130 Belgian civilians in Antwerp. Telephoning Goebbels in Berlin on the sixth—fully aware that the Forschungsamt would courier reports of his scathing language to Göring—Milch heaped obloquy on the Reichsmarschall's name.

Intervening in Luftwaffe operations, Hitler ordered fighter squadrons switched to the Russian front. "It's out of the question," Göring ranted over the phone to Jeschonnek. "It's about time you learned to stand up to the Führer." Swamped in the east, run out of Africa, almost nonexistent in the west, his air force struggled to survive. Troubled by the Reich's growing food shortage and threats of cuts in the meat ration, Göring took refuge in bed. His diary shows April 1943 ending with visits from Hitler's surgeon Karl Brandt and his own doctor Ondarza, who helpfully prescribed still more bed rest.

Göring still found time for less martial pursuits—he inquired of Fräulein Limberger "whether the amethysts were ready," he ordered designer shoes from Perugia for little Edda's birthday, and drove down to Munich with Emmy to buy expensive china. Richthofen turned up once on the Obersalzberg, and noted in his diary on April 26 that he feared that Stalingrad and the latest North Africa debacle had "put the skids" under Göring for good.

In Tunisia 250,000 more German troops went into enemy captivity. Göring now took refuge in his childhood castle at Veldenstein, and here he would stay until the end of May 1943. Milch came down on the thirteenth to tender

prototypes had functioned perfectly. Field Marshal Milch was planning, said Ulrich, to mass produce five thousand a month. Greedy for revenge, Göring added a zero to the figure on the document: *fifty* thousand; and ordered construction work to begin immediately on the first one hundred catapult-launching sites along the French coast. "The enemy air force will be obliged to attack these launching sites," predicted Milch in a letter to Göring a few days later, "and our fighter planes and flak will have wonderful opportunities to inflict annihilating damage on them." Göring began to savor the moment when he could not only launch these flying bombs against London but against General Dwight D. Eisenhower's supply ports in North Africa and—from the decks of U-boats cruising off the American coast—even against the skyscrapers of New York too.

All this lay some time in the future. Meanwhile a number of urgent personnel problems had to be faced. Smoldering over Göring's insensitive recourse to his own "little air staff" of Brauchitsch, Dising, and Ondarza, the chief of air staff, Hans Jeschonnek, reported "sick"—or so his deputy General Rudolf Meister told Göring on June 21, 1943. Probably the illness was more psychological than real, because the cure that Göring contemplated was giving Jeschonnek command of a Luftflotte (the Fourth) and sending Richthofen up to *Robinson*, the Luftwaffe's forward headquarters, to supplant him. Had Göring not always accused Jeschonnek of being too pliable at the Wolf's Lair? "You just stand at attention to the Führer, with your thumbs on your pant seams!" he had jeered. The job switch looked like the ideal solution, but Göring hesitated to appoint such a forceful, blunt-spoken character as Richthofen to Hitler's conference table. So the decision was postponed, not once but several times.

Göring's own stock was too low at present. People in the Ruhr were bitter that he did not show his face there. "This," wrote Goebbels after seeing Hitler on June 22, "is why Göring's failure oppresses [Hitler] so much: because he's the only man capable of taking over if anything should happen to him."

Summoned to the Führer's presence the next day, Göring penciled into his notebook reminders that betray an apprehensive state of mind:

Situation in the south! In the southeast! In the north! My own position as commander in chief. Jeschonnek (on leave)—Milch (Udet) controversy. My own activities (stenographic record, produce my appointment diary). Influencing subordinates, consulting with them. Troops' confidence in me.

Worst will be over this autumn. Inspection visits by me. Examples, Vienna airplane-engine works!

My present task: Overhauling the air force. Clear technological objectives. Revive flagging spirits.

"Please," he intended to tell wishes, complaints, or orders." at Martin Bormann's suggestion—Hitler called in all the aircraft not to breathe a word of this to industry.

Göring had more immediate preers most nights now, the RAF every Ruhr city, dumping two tons on Mülheim and Oberhausen. The American bombers now join the RAF at Huls on June 22, Milch half of their entire synthetic-fuel within easy bombing range. Milch divert June's entire fighter production this were not enough, Göring's estimate that the British could at any time aluminium foil; there was, warn yet no antidote. Frightened of giving device, Göring halted all German mentions.

Instead, he continued to search of air defense. On the day that 1 aircraft designers, Göring was his experts, the buccaneering major Hermann had recently taken a silhouette bombing techniques for himself—flares. He had not needed clearly silhouetted against clouds from beneath. His proposal was planes at the British, crewed by German pilots.

Again Göring followed closely.

Free-lance single-engined night bomber bat over target area using sea with flak. In the Ruhr often searchlights—forty during the night.

Our present system does not [bomber] point of penetration centimeter [searchlight] with will be sighted even in haze Best thing is to shoot down and then send in our own fighters.

this," an SS Obergruppenführer wrote to Himmler on July 30. "Someone's got to speak to the German people. They won't listen to the Reichsmarschall now. Not just because of the obvious supremacy of the enemy air force, but because he has failed to go into the blitzed areas and talk with the people." On August 2, Hamburg was again the RAF target. Milch sent a frantic telegram to Göring, demanding that fighter squadrons be brought back from Russia and even Italy. "It's not the front line that is battered and fighting for life," this telegram said. "It is the fatherland that is under grave attack, and fighting a desperate battle."

Göring cast Hans Jeschonnek, chief of the air staff, as the scapegoat for Hamburg. Jeschonnek crumpled. Beppo Schmid saw it happening, and so did Kurt Student, whom Göring fetched back from Italy to plot ways of liberating Mussolini as soon as his whereabouts could be found. The destruction at Hamburg propelled Jeschonnek into a terminal, three-week-long bout of depression. He had recently lost his father, and his brother and brother-in-law had been killed in action. His frail efforts to escape from the stifling atmosphere of *Robinson* and the Wolf's Lair had been thwarted. As recently as the end of July he had told General von Seidel that he was being given a Luftflotte, but Göring quailed at the idea, and Hitler talked him out of it. After an "all-field-marshal" luncheon with Hitler on July 28, as Richthofen recorded, Göring had touched on possible replacements for Jeschonnek—"I agree a reshuffle is necessary," Richthofen delicately recorded afterward, "but who? He names [Günther] Korten and myself. I recoil in horror, but have to admit I don't think Korten is up to much." Göring, however, abandoned all idea of replacing Jeschonnek. On August 5, Major Werner Leuchtenberg, Jeschonnek's adjutant, broke it to Field Marshal Richthofen in Rome that the Reichsmarschall had used "distinctly pejorative" language about him and had warned his staff, "We've got to make damn sure that the Führer never gets to hear of Richthofen's views!"

Jeschonnek phoned Seidel that same day. "It's all off," he said gloomily. "I've got to stay put."

At the Wolf's Lair the jostling for position began, with Göring reduced to the role of occasional onlooker. He hung around East Prussia until mid-August 1943, observing the comings and goings of the new strongmen. The balance of power there was tilting against him. To Göring it was clear that Hitler was opting for the proponents of brute force. Bormann regularly attended Hitler's main conferences. So did Himmler, who now became minister of the interior. "From now on," Göring would recall, "Bormann had Himmler to contend with as well: because as far as the succession was concerned, Himmler came right after me."

Hitler promised Rommel that he would soon be marching into Italy to restore the Fascist regime. Down in Rome, Richthofen wrote uneasily: "[I

definitely hope I can superin any decisions they take up t

All that summer, in the s bombers continued to blast s bombers flew all the way up works at Wiener Neustadt. I air staff for four hours after the Reichsmarschall?" whin

The answer was that Gör escape the glare of his fell tongue. Holing up in Bavaria Professor Ludwig Peiner abo Peiner told him with regret th ("Autumn," a nude lady v Limberger to see that the pre the draft and paint a new "A August 17, the Americans j gensburg and the ball-bearing to North Africa. Four hund the chaotic structure of the was not surprising. The def Prussia, by Göring in Bava Fighter Corps at Arnheim. Ev had a finger in the pie. "It w summer's evening." It was had penetrated so deep into (

Hitler [said Ondarza] to and Göring then put th chonnek. I didn't listen r the open window said he

A bright moon came up that out into the middle of Lake G flight of wild duck. Later he daughter's birthday. At 11:00 setting out flares and target r mass attack. All fifty of Herr Berlin. Göring, alerted by phc of fire to eighteen thousand f fighters to *Bear* [Berlin]." Bu over the city were the Mosquit nightfighters on whom these t two hours the slam-bang barr

At 6:00 A.M. the next morning Luftwaffe headquarters learned that the night's real RAF target had been Peenemünde, the top-secret army-missile establishment where the A-4 long-range rocket was being built and tested. It was in flames, and seven hundred rocket scientists and engineers were dead. Jeschonnek was awakened with this awful news at Goldap at 8:00 A.M. Hitler phoned soon after from the Wolf's Lair. "You know what to do!" he snapped. Jeschonnek did—there was precedent enough.

Later that morning a teleprinter message arrived on the Obersalzberg from General Meister. It informed Göring that Jeschonnek had shot himself dead. Betraying no emotions, Göring notified Richthofen in Rome. The laconic telegram merely said that Jeschonnek had died suddenly of a "stomach hemorrhage." Equally stone-faced, Richthofen dictated his own diary comment: "Lost a good comrade and friend. Who will succeed him?"

Göring, of course, had to fly up to East Prussia immediately. Major von Below, Hitler's air-force adjutant, and Meister met him at Rastenburg Airfield. "Jeschonnek promised me he would never do this," said Göring helplessly.

At air-force headquarters Jeschonnek's mortal remains were lying in his little wooden hut. Göring went in alone, and emerged shaking his head. "Some saint!" he sniffed. He ordered Meister to open the general's safe. It contained two envelopes addressed to von Below. The major scanned their content briefly, said simply that they were private, and made no effort to hand them over.

The safe also contained a ten-page memorandum dictated by Jeschonnek to his secretary, Lotte Kersten. Göring read it, his face reddening, then exclaimed, "I forbid staff officers to write down their personal opinions!" (The document recommended that Göring appoint a capable deputy commander in chief.) "Look at this," he cried, brandishing the sheets of paper at Meister. "The man was working against me all along!"

Meister shook his head. "General Jeschonnek was loyal to you to the very end."

Two revealing notes were also found in the desk. One read, "I can't work anymore with the Reichsmarschall! Long live the Führer!" The other cursed the glossy officers of Göring's little air staff. "Diesing and Brauchitsch," it stipulated, "are not to attend my funeral."

As it happened, Kesselring was the only field marshal to attend. Richthofen decided, on balance, not to face the Reichsmarschall right now. Göring admitted to Ondarza that the memorandum had shaken him. "He had no option but to shoot himself," he murmured. "He blamed me and the Luftwaffe for everything." "I am endlessly sorry," he admitted to Pili Körner. "How he must have struggled with himself! I never really knew him before I read that document."

He submitted Jeschonnek's staff to cross-examination. Leuchtenberg told him straight out that Jeschonnek had lost faith in him. Göring adopted an expression of pained innocence. The major reminded him of certain violent

episodes aboard Göring's train with clenched fists.

"Herr Reichsmarschall!" said yourself together!"

Göring skidded to a halt, and "How many of you," he remembered who had watched this scene, "this young man has today!"

He placed both hands on the

"I'd like you on the air staff

He had appointed his crony as chief of personnel. A few days to the remotest corner of the Crimea.

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the top-secret army-missile
rocket was being built and tested.
scientists and engineers were
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episodes aboard Göring's train. Infuriated, Göring pounded across the room
with clenched fists.

"*Herr Reichsmarschall!*" screamed the junior officer, alarmed. "Pull
yourself together!"

Göring skidded to a halt, and slumped into a chair.

"How many of you," he roared eventually to the high-ranking officers
who had watched this scene, "would have had the courage to tell me what
this young man has today!"

He placed both hands on the major's shoulders.

"I'd like you on the air staff. Have a word with Loerzer about it."

He had appointed his crony Loerzer—disgraced by the fiascos in Italy—
as chief of personnel. A few days later Leuchtenberg found himself posted
to the remotest corner of the eastern front, attached to I Air Corps in the
Crimea.

"No doubt about it, though, Hermann is very popular, particularly in Berlin." At Hitler's headquarters his arrival was greeted each time with less enthusiasm. On October 27, 1943, as Hitler's distant armies in Russia began to fall back, he reminded the Reichsmarschall that the defense of Western Europe was of paramount importance: because there he could not afford to lose one inch of territory.

The Luftwaffe had lost the initiative, with little prospect of regaining it until the new mass-produced jet airplanes entered service. Thus Göring became the most plausible scapegoat for each Nazi defeat. Speer felt safe in expressing pronounced hostility. On November 8, Rommel too would tell anybody who would listen at the high command that Göring had been to blame for his defeat at El Alamein in 1942—"He just refused to believe the British had air supremacy." On November 20, Milch noted that he had "poured out his heart" to SS Reichsführer Himmler about the Reichsmarschall.

Perspiring freely, the Reichsmarschall had no option but to swallow the insults that Hitler hurled at him, often in front of junior officers. "The Führer's estrangement from me grew," he recalled two years later, speaking with George Shuster. "I could see his impatience when I briefed him. He often cut me off in midsentence, and began to intervene more and more in Luftwaffe affairs."

"Do you think there's a squadron left in your air force with the guts to fly to Moscow?" Hitler would challenge. Ordering him to intervene in Leningrad, he would sneer—"Always assuming that you still have bombers able to fly that far!" Luftwaffe liaison officer Karl Bodenschatz, no more eager than Göring to sweat it out round the clock at the Wolf's Lair, rented overnight rooms at the Park Hotel at Königsberg, and took to fleeing there by Storch each night until Göring found him out. "Your job is to be with the Führer," he snapped.

The Korten era began at 2:00 P.M. on August 20, 1943, when Göring introduced him to Hitler as Jeschonnek's successor as chief of air staff. Over the eleven months until his untimely death in July 1944 General Günther Korten would give the air force a new sense of strategic purpose. Backed by his new deputy, the ponderous, Bavarian-born Lieutenant General Karl Koller, Korten pulled fighter squadrons out of Russia and Italy and transferred them to the defense of the Reich. General Rudolf Meister was given command of the new IV Air Corps, which would bomb the seven main power stations along the Upper Volga, in Moscow, and in Leningrad, on which Soviet tank and aircraft-engine production depended.

The nights were soon long enough for the British to reach Berlin again. The first RAF raid on August 23 killed 765 people. Hitler wanted to strike back, but he knew that reprisals were going to have to wait. Meanwhile British code-breakers heard Korten ordering Luftflotte 4 on August 26 to transfer elements of KG51 bomber wing to Illersheim for conversion to the

NFURT

For the rest of 1943 the tide of the war in the air would ebb and flow dramatically. Aided by new tactics it would have temporarily crippled the winter of 1943/44; but simultaneous precision raids by day deeper into

and stationed 8,876 of the formidable 88 mm light flak guns. The flak gunners had no less than 12,774 enemy planes, and a hundred thousand German civilians, however, and there was an air of desperation. A glider pilot who had survived a suicide squadron of men willing to die with high explosives into the midst of it all if they could at the last moment, Jeschonnek's successor, put the idea to rest.

diminished. "Göring swears like a sailor, shot down in February 1944.

arrel, and then came whining to me
y, but we haven't the fuel!" I gave
e find they have sixty-five thousand

Göring to bomb an Italian city like
had time to organize air defenses.
rasped Göring, passing on Hitler's
centrals and our other indolent allies,
u're not out of the war!" Told that
their equipment over to the Germans,
achine-gun fire and ripped up the
hunted down. "I would have them
leave the bodies dangling for three

Italians ever since 1924.
S. General Carl F. Spaatz on May
n Italy. If they had only been our
have won the war."

"said Göring that October, 1943,
ly so." For a few days that month
an uglier turn. Spaatz's bombers
laden on the second were clearly
uld bomb through ten-tenths cloud.
ent. By day Galland's fighter squad-
s fighters have arrived," the people
over!" The Luftwaffe sent a mere
harass RAF bases one night. Hitler
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sunny and agents had actually told
kurt-Hedderheim—Galland's pi-
dly mauled. Hitler phoned Göring
ring found out subsequently that the
ed by bad weather." "The German
ur fighter losses," he snapped at
impression your fighter losses that
re out of your mind—look at our
the sake of our Luftwaffe prestige,
ps you can take it. I can't!"
day and cursed for ninety minutes,
ogram, number 224. It featured the

in the tunnels at La Spezia; the Germans

262 jet for the first time, but Hitler's eagle eye detected what Göring's had not—that bomber production virtually vanished in the spring of 1944 although he was calling for a strike force by May 1944 capable of defeating the expected Allied invasion in the west.

Göring transmitted Hitler's anger vocally to his staff. "I was told I just had to hold tight for a year," he raged, "and then everything would come out right in mid-1944. But that's not true. This month the program shows 410 bombers, and next October only 266. . . . What on earth is the field marshal [Milch] thinking of? I want an end to this swindling, once and for all," he shouted, losing his temper. "This is worse than under Udet. Where's the 'production increase'?" He learned only now that the He 177 would have no rear gun turret at all. Göring suddenly snapped. Face glistening, he ordered the arrest of Udet's erstwhile chief engineer Reidenbach by the Gestapo, along with his "fellow bunglers." "There's to be no court-martial . . . If they're at fault they'll be executed. Just watch—if we announce in a week's time that the former heads of development and planning and the chief of staff of air armament have all been shot—that'll make the whole herd of swine sit up and take notice!" His staff listened in bemused silence. Göring reddened. "The field marshal is always talking about shooting people," he screamed. "When I say it, it will be done without mercy. I am not all mouth!"

Shaken by the increasing daring of the American raids, Göring flew down to the Obersalzberg—although he was now understandably reluctant to commit his valuable person to the unfriendly skies. As his Focke-Wulf 200 droned south for four hours, his colorful imagination came into play as vividly as though he were once again on the battlements of Veldenstein. Now he imagined himself an American air gunner, trapped in a Flying Fortress while hundreds of Nazi fighter planes zeroed in and hammered away relentlessly from every quarter. After an hour he realized that *his ammunition belts were empty*. Around him (in his imaginary scenario) the other guns were jammed or the gunners were dead or dying. By the time his plane landed near the Obersalzberg, he knew how to defeat the Americans: attack and attack and attack. "There's not one squadron that could take that," he told Galland and the generals at his villa on the seventh.

Galland blinked skeptically and lit a cigar.

"How long can you fire—from every buttonhole?" persisted Göring.

"Seven minutes," replied the fighter force commander.

"Right," said Göring, and did the calculation for him. "That means you can make three sorties to engage the enemy during each four-hour raid—if you really wade into them!"

Galland hesitated to commit himself.

"Three times," said Göring flatly. "I insist!"

Thus he became the architect of the Luftwaffe's biggest victory over the American bombers one week later.

ber 7, 8, and 9, 1943, he held a none of its edge. "Our Luftwaffe," h, "is at the bottom of an abyss. the armed forces. . . . The people and trail along behind while the big cities for hours on end in 'Nurem- phrase now."

Göring, however, these youngsters to close the enemy to four hundred ave to bring down eighty instead of ore, and I will doff my hat to them. and yards, my attitude is this: *Götz*

October 9, a message was handed in orthern Germany involving German he American bombers had wrecked plant at Marienburg in East Prussia. ger," announced Göring. "Orders ould six underground factories for

bombers that day. They took revenge d lost thirty more. At midday on the of aircraft-industry bosses at Berch- urs, with Professor Messerschmitt's gh on the agenda. "If only," said t—dropping a few bombs over there ckout on them too!" More rational n the 264 would delay the Me 262 as the cure to all his strategic prob- mber," agreed Göring with a sigh,

e had begun. It was the day that the cy. Their target was once more the ord reached Göring of the drama as tzberg villa. As the American escort closed in, hurling bombs, rockets, hundred heavy bombers. This time, landing all over southern Germany h big gaps already torn in their tight t. First Air Division hit Schweinfurt ighters thundered in simultaneously or only 14 losses that day Galland

would claim to have destroyed 121 of the Americans. Proud and happy at this very real victory, Göring telephoned Hitler at 9:00 P.M.

As bad luck would have it, his rival and enemy Albert Speer was sitting next to Hitler at the precise moment that phone call came through. Putting down his knife and fork, the young minister slipped out to phone one of the ball-bearing factories. The foreman told him that the whole town was devastated. Speer hurried back to report this to Hitler in his own triumphant way. Speer's report at least temporarily diminished the impact of Göring's. In fact, not one tank or plane was lost to the Nazi production in consequence of this raid. The Americans made no further attempt to penetrate deep into the Reich until they obtained proper long-range fighter cover in early 1944.

After Schweinfurt, Göring decided it was safe to go out and tour the ravaged cities of the Rhineland. He had already decided to inspect the fighter, flak, and radar organizations. Surprisingly, wherever his bulletproof limousine halted—whether in Cologne, Wuppertal, Krefeld, or Bochum—he was mobbed by cheering civilians. He took in all the unfamiliar sights of the blitz—people reopening stores amid the rubble; messages chalked on broken walls from relatives seeking next of kin; signboards pointing to shelters; and broad arrows indicating safe escape routes if the whole city should catch fire. True, when Göring appeared, there were ironic shouts of "Call me Meier!" but there were mothers holding out babies to him as well. "I'm human too," he said a few days later, "and I would have understood it if these people who had just ruins all around them—just rubble to the left and right of them—upon seeing a brass hat go by (and the one responsible for the whole mess at that, or at least responsible for their defense)—might, well, not exactly toss rotten eggs at me, but at least throw the odd scowl or shout 'You fat old lump!'" He turned to the generals who had witnessed these scenes with him. "You saw how the people all streamed over to me. What a welcome! I could have cried. And in the fifth year of the war at that! That's when I knew," he continued, "that provided we, their leaders, don't perpetrate any really serious blunders, we can't lose this war!"

In a similarly optimistic vein he addressed bomber pilots of the hard hit KG2 on an air base in Holland. "How he cursed the Dutch," recalled one listener, radio operator Corporal Schürgers, shot down soon after:

He said, "I noticed this morning as I was driving here through Holland, how the mob of women was loafing around with rucksacks and picnicking in the woods of a Sunday morning, instead of working for a living like any decent German woman. *She* is standing at a lathe right now, while these lazy beggars gallivant around and gape at me as I drive past."

"Gentlemen," says he, "I'll soon put a stop to that. I want all Dutchmen who are too idle to work locked up."

heart of the enemy without regard
"pilots who are absolutely de-
them rather than land without a

to win the war by obliterating
their attempt, launching a raid
serious damage on the ministries
"pet," his Forschungsamt. On
Milch, and their bleary-eyed pro-
routine problems of jet-aircraft
industrial manpower. Milch pleaded
the army's reserves of manpower—
million German soldiers now on the
fighting. "Two million soldiers,"
line proper in three weeks." But
Göring was cowed into adopting pre-
minal Dönitz's record, Göring de-
ber of new front-line soldiers could
reas, never mentioning the army's.
n, killing twelve hundred civilians
ous Kaiserhof Hotel, and the entire
en the flak to open fire since 193
on this occasion the fighters arrived

Göring ordered an impromptu
He directed his engineers to
the Hs 293 and Fritz antishipping
bomb at Insterburg airbase, which
Lair—on November 26. With the
engineers of, Göring even ordered
to be shown, like the Junkers 388
two double-row radial BMW 801's.
and pleaded to them on the twenty-

day was a disaster for Göring.
and, the Reichsmarschall read out
past the rank of parked planes and
03 flying bomb Hitler asked when
staff engineer from Peenemünde,
44." Hitler's face darkened, and
ing of New Year's Eve, winced.
paused. "I'm not interested in this
as it carry bombs?"

Messerschmitt bounded forward, saluted, and announced that the 262 could carry one ton.

Hitler announced, "I order this plane built as a bomber!"

He took only Milch onto the roof of the control tower to watch the 262 fly past. "The Reichsmarschall," he said, "is too fat to get up through the trapdoor."

Göring returned to the hunting lodge at Rominten. At Carinhall, gangs of laborers had completed installing twenty-millimeter flak positions and bunkers across the surrounding Schorf Heath. Scores of soldiers were sweeping the leaves of autumn off the estate's asphalt roads, in case the Reichsmarschall returned. But although he had two well-equipped air-raid shelters at Carinhall—one for family and one for staff—Göring decided to remain in East Prussia, far from the howl of the sirens and the blast of the bombs.

On the night of the Insterburg display the RAF sent 450 planes to Berlin and 178 on a diversionary raid to Stuttgart.

Hitler ordered Göring to exact violent retribution against London. The Reichsmarschall called Koller and Pelz aboard his train and directed them to scrape together every available Ju 188, Ju 88, Me 410, and He 177 for Operation Capricorn—planning to saturate the city's air defenses by sending in first 300 bombers, then 200 of them returning that same night, and 150 more the following morning. Pelz suggested sending the ten He 177's to drop two 2500-kilo bombs each, filled with Trialen, on Parliament.

Göring greedily approved. "Just imagine the effect," he chuckled, "of twenty Bix Maxes thumping down with this super explosive in them!"

On December 3, he issued the formal order for a general new blitz on Britain's industrial centers and ports, and directed that the German bombers were, like the British, to carry 70 percent incendiary loads and the biggest blast bombs available. Leaving written instructions with Field Marshal Milch that the Me 262 was "only to be regarded as a jet bomber" as Hitler had ordained, Göring departed for Paris on the sixth, to supervise Capricorn the Blitz on London.

In Paris, surrounded by the familiar cosmopolitan sights and aromas, he reverted to his old haunts and habits. He had been trying for some time to prise out of the Musée de Cluny a fabulous example of German goldsmiths' craft—the Basel altar known as the Antependium of Emperor Otto II. He proposed a swap, acquired title to the three objects offered in exchange, and on December 11, 1943, had the magnificent, ornate Antependium brought around to the Quai d'Orsay. But the French had now grown crafty: They sensed which way the war was turning, and wanted to make a gift of it in recognition of the Reichsmarschall's "services in protecting the national treasures." A gift, in their view, could be subsequently recovered. Out-smarted, Göring gave up this particular quest. Deciding to examine the altar anyway, he knelt artlessly down to scrutinize the pedestal's workmanship.

The museum directors chuckled silently at the image of the paunchy, be-medaled Reichsmarschall groveling before their ancient altar.

Capricorn was delayed, first by weather, then by equipment shortages. Wanting to spend Christmas with his family, Göring returned to Carinhall.

The British night raids on Berlin had not diminished. On typical nights high-powered British transmitters flooded the fighter-controller's radio channels with bell sounds and snatches of Adolf Hitler's speeches. On December 16, Hitler instructed Göring to speed up the Me 262 bomber—although Hitler was thinking now less of reprisals than of the coming Allied invasion. "With every month," he confided to his staff two days later still, "the probability grows that we'll get at least one squadron of jet planes. The vital thing is to rain bombs down on the enemy the moment they invade. . . . Even if there's only one plane up, they'll have to take cover and they'll lose hour after hour! Within half a day we'll be bringing up our reserves. Even if they're pinned down on the beach only six or eight hours, you can figure what that'll mean for them."

That Christmas his troops in Italy presented Göring with something of a cuckoo's egg. His aides Brauchitsch, Gritzach, and Hofer unpacked from sixteen crates at Carinhall some of the rarest art treasures Göring had ever seen—a prebirthday surprise from the paratroops in Italy. Even Göring became uneasy at theft on such a grand scale. His inquiries revealed that the Italians had evacuated 187 such crates from Naples galleries to the mountaintop abbey at Monte Cassino. With the connivance of the new Nazi "Art Protection Commission" in Rome, the Hermann Göring Division had offered to transport them to the Vatican—but only 172 crates would eventually arrive there (on January 4). The contents of the other sixteen now lay spread out for the Reichsmarschall's delectation—lifesize bronze statues of Hermes Resting, a female dancer, an Apollo from Pompeii, two stags from the Herculanum, antique gold and silver, and a stack of paintings too: two Titians ("Danse" and "Portrait of Lavinia"), a Claude Lorrain landscape, a Raphael, a Tiepolo, a Palma Vecchio, and Pieter Breughel the Elder's famous painting of "The Blind Leading the Blind." His barely used conscience sorely troubled, Göring put them on "temporary" display at Carinhall and asked Hitler for a ruling on this booty. Hitler told him to remove them immediately to the safety of the flak bunker at *Kurfürst*, air-force headquarters outside Berlin.

Ironically it was thus Göring and Hitler who rescued these famous treasures for posterity. American officers afterward solemnly accused the Reichsmarschall of having "stolen" the Monte Cassino treasures: In view of the depredations visited by their strategic bombers upon the historic abbey just a few weeks later, in February 1944, they were, however, in no position to press their point.

The year 1944 would see the first cities, but also the beginning of propelled aircraft leading the way that he attached top priority now and to these jet planes. "If I get off the invasion." It had become evening, Göring sent a telegram even more aircraft types to boost Hitler's help he now planned to put in its Ju 88 jet engine under the Harz Mountains. There was no newspapers revealed that they too

Göring's fifty-first birthday, a success.

Any last vestiges of festive mood from Hitler about the heavy Me 4 cannon, one of the planes displayed Göring testily cabled to Milch that these planes are in operation. Since that virtually no such planes are in been equipped with the cannon, it displays in the same light as the first

On January 20, 1944, the RAF did on Berlin, an extraordinary effort to Luftwaffe's difficulties one year earlier the short range to Stalingrad. On much-delayed Operation Capricorn hundred bombers had attacked London number arriving at about thirty. General Korten. "Find out!" Göring of the raids on Berlin to the hidden

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Brauchitsch apologized that Göring dispute with Milch the day before. He art dealers to haggle with. It was 7:00 the lavishly appointed, sixty-foot-long and precious books. "Lieutenant General "Commander of the Second Paratroop service." (He had broken an arm.) light.

* * *

The year 1944 would see the final ruin of Germany's most beautiful cities, but also the beginning of a painful Luftwaffe revival, with the jet-propelled aircraft leading the way. On January 3, 1944, Hitler told Göring that he attached top priority now to the new U-boat types XXI and XXIII, and to these jet planes. "If I get them in time," he reiterated, "I can ward off the invasion." It had become an obsession for him. From Asia that evening, Göring sent a telegram to Milch to ask whether they could scrap even more aircraft types to boost the jet's production. With Heinrich Himmler's help he now planned to put mass-production lines for both the 262 and its Jumo 004 jet engine underground, in a cavernous factory beneath the Harz Mountains. There was no time to be lost: On the seventh, British newspapers revealed that they too were working on jet propulsion.

Göring's fifty-first birthday, a few days later, was a shadow of its predecessors.

Any last vestiges of festive mood were spoiled by a demanding inquiry from Hitler about the heavy Me 410 fighter armed with the fifty-millimeter cannon, one of the planes displayed to him at Insterburg. "Again and again," Göring testily cabled to Milch that day, "the Führer inquires how many of these planes are in operation. Since I unfortunately have to tell the Führer that virtually no such planes are in operation, and that only two or three have been equipped with the cannon, the Führer has begun to look upon such displays in the same light as the famous Rechlin one [of July 1939]."

On January 20, 1944, the RAF dropped twenty-four hundred tons of bombs on Berlin, an extraordinary effort considering the range, and considering the Luftwaffe's difficulties one year earlier in lifting just one hundred tons over the short range to Stalingrad. On the following night Göring launched the much-delayed Operation Capricorn. He believed that three hundred or four hundred bombers had attacked London, but the British mockingly put the number arriving at about thirty. "You've got agents," snorted Hitler at General Korten. "Find out!" Göring fled to Carinhall, preferring the thunder of the raids on Berlin to the hidden tones of menace in Hitler's voice.

That winter the paratroop general Bernard Ramcke came to see the Reichsmarschall in this, his natural habitat. For Ramcke it was an unforgettable experience.

Brauchitsch apologized that Göring was sleeping late after a five-hour dispute with Milch the day before. Upon awakening, Göring had a posse of art dealers to haggle with. It was 7:00 P.M. by the time Ramcke strutted into the lavishly appointed, sixty-foot-long library lined with priceless furniture and precious books. "Lieutenant General Ramcke," he announced, saluting. "Commander of the Second Paratroop Division, reporting fit and at your service." (He had broken an arm.) His steel front teeth glinted in the pink light.

of the image of the paunchy, bearded man in their ancient altar.

then by equipment shortages. Finally, Göring returned to Carinhall. The image was not diminished. On typical nights the fighter-controller's radio channel carried Hitler's speeches. On December 18, 1943, he Me 262 bomber—although Hitler was not sure of the coming Allied invasion. "With two days later still, 'the probability of jet planes. The vital thing is to not let them invade. . . . Even if there's a loss of reserves. Even if they're pinned down, you can figure what that'll mean

entertained Göring with something of a feast, and Hofer unpacked from the Carinhall art treasures Göring had ever collected in Italy. Even Göring beamed. His inquiries revealed that the Germans had looted the Naples galleries to the mountaineous. The connivance of the new Nazi "Art Collection" Göring Division had offered 172 crates would eventually arrive at Carinhall. The other sixteen now lay spread out in the Carinhall. Life-size bronze statues of Hermes from Pompeii, two stags from the Carinhall, and a stack of paintings too: two by Titian, a Claude Lorrain landscape, and Pieter Breughel the Elder's "The Blind." His barely used collection was a "temporary" display at Carinhall. Hitler told him to remove them to the Carinhall, air-force headquarters.

who rescued these famous treasures from the Carinhall. He solemnly accused the Reichsmarschall of looting the Carinhall treasures: In view of the dangers upon the historic abbey just a few miles away, however, in no position to

Göring was sitting in a finely crafted armchair reading a red leather-bound book with gold lettering. He rose to his feet, the sleeves of his gold-brocaded robe of green silk plush uncoiling down his arms. Ramcke took note of the silk plush—it looked familiar—and of the lacquered slippers, the golden belt, hem, and tassels, and noticed the well-permed hair and well-oiled rosy features. ("A cloud of the finest Oriental aromas wafted from his outsize cheekbones toward me," chuckled Ramcke afterward, relating the episode to fellow generals.) "Well, Ramcke," said Göring, nonchalantly laying aside the book. "How have you been getting on?"

The emeralds in his gold and platinum rings matched the silk robe, noticed Ramcke. As he began chiding Göring for never visiting one of his paratroop units—let alone seeing the men jump—Edda came gamboling in. "Papa, Papa! My pearl necklace broke all over the floor, and look, Papa, I found them all!"

The Reichsmarschall gathered the child up in his arms. "Oh, your lovely necklace!"

He began threading it for her. A kiss was planted on her. "And now one for Papa!"

Ramcke, tiring of the display of domesticity, realized where he had seen the robe's green silk plush before—on a new lampshade in his own home. Down in Italy Bruno Loerzer's headquarters had been at Taormina, and the locals had produced textile goods as tourist souvenirs. Ramcke had bought a lampshade, and Göring evidently this robe.

By night the fighter squadrons turned the war in the air Göring's way, and decisively.

On February 19–20 the RAF dispatched 816 bombers to Leipzig. Schmid's experts plotted the bomber stream's radar emissions perfectly. Although the defense radar was again jammed and voice communications swamped by the familiar bell sounds and Hitler speeches, the weather was fine enough to detect the enemy route changes, and 294 German fighters made contact, bringing down 78 of the RAF planes. No bomber force could sustain this loss rate for long.

By day it was a different story. On the morning of February 20, one thousand American bombers opened "Big Week"—the attempt to throttle Göring's air force once and for all. Over the next five days they set down ten thousand tons of bombs accurately on every important target of Göring's aircraft industry.

For an instant it appeared that the Luftwaffe was defeated. The week-long offensive left thousands of Göring's skilled aircraft workers in mass graves and the gutted, useless skeletons of hundreds of half-built planes on wrecked production lines. But Göring gave Field Marshal Milch permission to set up an interministerial, troubleshooting Fighter Staff (*Jägerstab*), and even agreed to allow it to be placed under the control of Karl-Otto Saur, Speer's loud-

mouthed, dynamic right-hander evade final responsibility for rose to the challenge and machine tools; aircraft production.

On February 24, Göring paid he was taking three weeks leave.

The next day the new fighting ministry. It was a further sign rivals.

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mouthed, dynamic right-hand man. That way, Albert Speer could no longer evade final responsibility for the Reich's air defenses. The Speer ministry rose to the challenge and released the vitally needed raw materials and machine tools; aircraft production began to pick up again.

On February 24, Göring packed his suitcase aboard *Asia* and told his staff he was taking three weeks leave at Veldenstein Castle.

The next day the new fighter staff met for the first time—at Speer's ministry. It was a further significant abdication of power by Göring to his rivals.

38

IMMINENT DANGER
WEST

While the new fighter staff—Milch, Saur, and their principal lieutenants—toured the ravaged aircraft factories in a special train in the days after the fires and carnage of Big Week, Hermann Göring and his “little air staff” relaxed in their Franconian castle at Veldenstein. A seventy-two-hour week was introduced throughout the aircraft industry. Driven—whether by the desire for victory or the thirst for revenge—the men, working often in factory buildings stripped of roofs and windows, achieved a production miracle. Their factory delegates came with Milch and Saur to the castle to report to Göring and his chief of staff Günther Korten on March 4, 1944. Göring passed on to them the word that the Führer was ordering work begun at once on two big bomb-proof aircraft factories. Milch noted maliciously in his pocket diary afterward, “He was lacquering his fingernails!”

That same day the American bombers made their deepest daylight thrust into Germany yet, to targets near Berlin. On the seventh, after they bombed Berlin itself, Hitler assigned top priority to aircraft production—putting Göring’s factories even above those producing the tanks and submarines on which victory must ultimately depend. On the eighth, Milch and Galland stood outside the 1st Fighter Division operations room at Döberitz watching

the glittering procession of capital yet again—“An exti Milch entered thoughtfully

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made their deepest daylight thrust. On the seventh, after they bombed aircraft production—putting Göring's tanks and submarines on. On the eighth, Milch and Galland's operations room at Döberitz watching

the glittering procession of hundreds of American bombers high above the capital yet again—"An extraordinary picture with their condensation trails," Milch entered thoughtfully in his pocket notebook.

Despite these raids, morale in Berlin remained high. The Japanese ambassador cabled to Tokyo that he had seen people crowding the streets to watch the spectacle "with scarcely any signs of cringing on their faces." He attributed this "excellent morale" to the Nazi party's prompt relief measures like the "Göring Relief Train" (which distributed the food and black-market luxuries bought by Colonel Veltjens in the occupied west.) The Allies' saturation-bombing raids were in short, producing, an unintended result—people felt that they had no alternative but to fight on to the bitter end.

This trend was reflected in the ascendancy of radicals like Himmler and Bormann. Himmler came to Veldenstein for the afternoon on March 9, to report to the Reichsmarschall on the use of slave labor. He had already supplied thirty-six thousand convicts to Göring, and promised over fifty thousand more for the mass-production lines, as well as one hundred thousand additional convicts to labor on the underground and bunker excavations.

Later that month Hitler arrived in Bavaria. Fearing an increase in Bormann's influence—the Obersalzberg was Bormann's domain—Göring moved from Veldenstein to his villa, to be closer to Hitler's. He did not attend many conferences, however, while Bormann and Himmler rarely missed them. On March 25, Himmler reported to the Führer that eighty RAF airmen had tunneled their way out of a prison camp in Silesia and that millions of man-hours would be wasted in hunting them down. Hitler ordered Himmler to take control of any airmen who were recaptured, and Göring later heard disquieting rumors that they had been shot by the SS for "resisting arrest." "With what were they supposed to have offered resistance?" he indignantly asked an interrogator years later. His only orders at the time were for the commandant, a Colonel von Lindeiner, to be court-martialed for negligence: Stalag Luft III, like other camps, had been equipped with the most sensitive cathode-ray display devices to detect tunneling sounds.

Göring's prestige was in steep decline. After General Gerd von Schwerin reported to Hitler from the Russian front that spring, General Schmudt accompanied him out to his car and laughed out loud at the mention of Göring's name. "Nobody," he said, "takes the Reichsmarschall seriously anymore!"

Göring had quiet hopes of recovering his political authority by defeating the Allied invasion in the west. He had issued his first order to prepare for the invasion on July 23, 1943; further orders had followed on December 6 and 15, followed on February 27, 1944, by the basic directive for defeating what he code-named *Imminent Danger West*. His fighter forces were now largely concentrated in the Reich: Here, he had eleven squadrons of single-engined and seven of twin-engined day fighters, and twenty-six squadrons

of night fighters. His plan was to reinforce Luftflotte 3, in France, from these squadrons defending the Reich the moment an invasion operation began. While certain units like ZG26, ZG76, and the "bad-weather squadrons" of JG300 and JG301 would remain with Luftflotte Reich, he would rush nineteen fighter squadrons (the entire I Air Corps) to France along with a number of bomber squadrons and reconnaissance flights; eight of the fighter squadrons would be converted there to fighter-bombers and placed under II Air Corps (General Buelowius) as a ground-attack command. That was the plan, and Göring hammered it in with a number of orders that spring. "Invasion, invasion, invasion," one captured Ju 188 pilot was heard whispering to another in April. "You'd better believe it. That is going to be the clincher!" He recited two orders issued by Göring to be read out on the invasion front—one assigning specific altitudes to bomber squadrons for daylight formation attacks on the Allied invasion fleet, and the other saying verbatim: "This invasion *must* be defeated even if there's no German Air Force left at the end of it. . . . What Eisenhower asks of his troops I expect from my Luftwaffe, but more so."

Even before this exhortation, the fanatical Nazi woman aviator Hanna Reitsch had begun dreaming of a suicide force to attack the Allied invasion fleet—"piloted," as she put it under interrogation, "by healthy young men who believe that through their deaths thousands of soldiers and civilians can be saved." She was thinking in terms of one thousand volunteers. She took the project to Hitler on February 28, 1944, at the Berghof. Hitler scoffed at the idea of a kamikaze force. "It is not in keeping with the German character," he told her, but authorized her to develop the plan. Himmler welcomed it as a useful employment for condemned criminals. A suitable explosive chariot was selected—initially Reitsch picked the still-experimental Me 328 flying bomb: The pilot would guide it into the sea just short of the target; its two-thousand-pound warhead would explode beneath the hull. An aviation doctor at Rechlin was asked to investigate how close to suicide man could go and still function logically.

At the top Luftwaffe level Hanna Reitsch found little enthusiasm, however. Korten was lukewarm, and instructed Colonel Heigl of KG200, the special weapons Geschwader, to take the project up. Göring showed no enthusiasm at all for the scheme. "We needed strong leadership," Reitsch later said, criticizing the spirit with which the Reichsmarschall had imbued the Luftwaffe. "Leadership, tempered with an idealism to match our own."

Such thinking was not German exclusively. There was also fanaticism among the stoical British bomber crews, who kept doggedly coming back for more despite punishing losses. A Junkers 88 attacked an RAF heavy bomber over Stuttgart on March 15, raking it from underneath with a long burst from its "sloping music" (*schräge Musik*), a cannon set at an angle in the Junkers' roof. "We pulled up and opened fire," the sergeant-navigator Kugler said ruefully later. "We raked them from stem to stern. . . . They

were dropping and on fire, but was going down in flames, but missed me, but my plane was

Two weeks later, on the night of a defense victory of the war. The Despite deafening jamming an difficulty in sighting their prey densation trails across the clear once more by their radar emis the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 7th Figh south of Bonn onward," his wa route was marked by crashes," heavy bombers that night; the over Germany, and a dozen mo After this catastrophe the RAF six months.

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were dropping and on fire, but their rear gunner still opened fire on us! He was going down in flames, but he killed my radio operator and 'coachman'; missed me, but my plane was on fire and I had to bail out."

Two weeks later, on the night of March 30-31, Göring scored his biggest defense victory of the war. The RAF bombers' night target was Nuremberg. Despite deafening jamming and clever feint operations, the fighters had no difficulty in sighting their prey as the eight hundred bombers scraped condensation trails across the clear moonlit sky, betraying their general position once more by their radar emissions. Schmid fed a total of 246 fighters of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 7th Fighter Divisions into the bomber stream. "From south of Bonn onward," his war diary grimly records, "the bomber stream's route was marked by crashes." The fighters claimed to have destroyed 107 heavy bombers that night; the RAF's own records concede the loss of 94 over Germany, and a dozen more that crashed after limping back to Britain. After this catastrophe the RAF virtually called off their night offensive for six months.

A few hours later Milch was on the phone from Berlin with the March 1944 production figures.

"Tell him I got them already from Saur," said Göring at the Obersalzberg. Despite the crippling losses of Big Week, their factories had manufactured more planes that month than ever before—turning out 1,670 new fighter aircraft and repairing 530 more. It was in its way a victory over the Americans as satisfactory as the one just inflicted on the British.

As April 1944 began, Albert Speer was convalescing—or as some cynics put it, malingering—in the Tyrol. Walking on the mountainside with Speer's forceful deputy Karl-Otto Saur on the seventh, Hitler revealed his production strategy for the coming year. They could reconquer the Soviet Union and win the war only by increasing tank production. "But the prerequisite for that," he said, "is the one hundred percent fulfillment of the air-force program, to clear the skies over Germany this year." He said the same to Göring himself six days later. "I need tanks and assault guns in deadly earnest. But first of all we've got to have a fighter umbrella over the Reich. That is the alpha and the omega of it all."

Hitler considered that Speer had let him down badly. He had begun building a bunker for Me 262 jet production near Landsberg, but progress was slow. Now he told Göring to get on with the job, with or without Speer.

The next day Göring sent for Xavier Dorsch, chief of the Todt Organization that had built the autobahns before the war. Dorsch was on Speer's payroll, and loyally explained that Speer would not allow the OT to operate inside the Reich territories now. However, he did send for his own blueprints for bombproof aircraft factories, and Göring took the civil engineer up to see Hitler that evening. The Führer told them both to go ahead, regardless of what Speer might say. Walking on the seventeenth with Göring, on the

sunny slopes of the Obersalzberg, Hitler told him that he would brook no further delay—he had to have a multistory underground factory to manufacture five hundred 262s per month, working around the clock. “First and foremost,” Hitler explained, wearily spelling it out to the Reichsmarschall yet again, “I’ve got to be able to put a fighter ‘dome’ over anything I can’t get under cover immediately. If I’ve got two thousand fighters on hand in the Reich, then the raids are going to cost the enemy too much . . . This ‘cheese dome’ of fighter planes constantly overhead—that’s our top priority.”

Göring passed this unchallengeable wisdom on two days later to Milch, Korten, Saur, Dorsch, and his own ubiquitous “little air staff.” Blaming Speer for the delays, Göring recalled that he had asked for such a bombproof factory eight months before—“We could have had it long ago already.”

Speer learned of this. From his place of “convalescence” he sent a long, paranoid letter to Hitler accusing everybody of plotting against him. Hitler ignored him, issued a formal decree to Dorsch to get on with the job, and ordered Göring to call a conference of civil engineers—“And do it without Herr Speer,” he said, “so it is tackled with some gusto!”

Words like these were music to Göring’s ears as he fought to maintain position on the slippery power slopes of the Obersalzberg. Fate had so far been exceptionally kind to him. He congratulated himself that the Allied strategic air forces had still not realized the real Achilles’ heel of the Reich—the synthetic-oil plants. “I have heard,” he speculated on April 19, “that the enemy isn’t attacking them because he wants them for his own use. He thinks it’s enough to pulverize our airplanes.”

He was under no illusions about the coming of the Allied invasion. Against the opinion of most of the army generals, he and Hitler agreed that the invasion was likely to hit Normandy or the Cherbourg Peninsula. On April 25, his bombers executed their first attack on the invasion forces assembling at Portsmouth and Southampton. The returning planes reported sighting 264 probable tank-landing craft—enough to lift three divisions—and enough shipping for six more divisions dispersed along the south coast. The Luftwaffe photographs also revealed the prefabricated “Mulberry Harbor” caissons, each 68 meters by 20 meters, identified as “jetties for major landings.” Coverage of the entire British coastline confirmed to Göring that this was the *only* invasion force. He transferred two of his best divisions, the 91st Airborne and the 5th Paratroop, to the Cherbourg Peninsula.

Another month had passed. Late on April 30, Saur phoned. They had now produced 1,859 new fighter planes and repaired 654. But on May 12, the Luftwaffe’s terminal nightmare began. The Americans suddenly opened an offensive against the Reich’s synthetic-oil refineries. The next day Allied code-breakers heard Göring ordering flak defenses switched from the already denuded Russian front and the aircraft factories at Oschersleben and Wiener Neustadt to the synthetic-oil plants. It was clear proof that the Germans were

giving the defense of their oil manufacture,” and the British

In the weeks before the invasion that was to turn up again at his planes had begun machine-gunning. The public responded with indignation. More than one German pilot and shotguns in the resulting carnage were greeted more often than German! Göring had to issue orders. The high command deliberated. Göring wanted the Allied machine-gunning squad, preferably held ‘as his staff were told on May 1 culprits, as he pointed out to recorded that Hitler had decided be executed on the spot, e.g. airmen or public transport or historian George Shuster that it to the Geneva Convention.

At one Hitler conference his marshal refused the Führer’s Luftwaffe officer who had resided in Munich. A few weeks later, Himmler, Göring again argued on June 19: “We have to do all against enemy airmen *not* invasion can always be dealt with by the enemy has forbidden his aviation for the time being.

The respite on the Obersalzberg, Göring waited in his mountain. Fifteenth Air Force flew overhead while the U.S. Eighth Air Force the RAF passed overhead by the Austria.

May 1944 was almost over, Göring, however, was satisfied with it. On the twenty-fourth, his pilot of Bourmemouth, Poole, Portland and English ports were now crammed that Normandy, rather than the

The Allies were beginning their final push toward Rome. On May 23, Korten brought Richthofen in to report on the Italian theater. "Reichsmarschall," wrote the field marshal later, "was very sensible. Gets the point of everything. Knows most of it, but unable to make decisions without the Führer. . . . Reichsmarschall looking good, and really sensible. . . . Reichsmarschall is optimistic."

The day began with an aircraft production conference held in the SS barracks on the Obersalzberg, chaired by Göring. Richthofen, who attended, was struck by the contrast between the Air Ministry veterans like Milch and the upcoming radicals clustered around the new "fighter-aircraft dictator," Saur. "Milch and his people were still in their old rut," wrote Richthofen in his diary afterward. "I said so to the Reichsmarschall afterward, and he basically agrees and wants changes."

"From the moment that America's entry into this war became inevitable," said Göring, according to the shorthand transcript, "it should have been clear to all of us that one day the enemy's numerical superiority would be colossal." The Allies had produced an armada of heavy bombers with devastating effect. The Germans had none even worth manufacturing now. General Korten warned that if Saur cut production of the remaining bomber types to 284 per month, the air force could not maintain more than twenty-four bomber squadrons. Göring paused, agonized, and left the crucial decision to the afternoon's session with Hitler himself.

It began at 3:00 P.M. As usual, Hitler's famous villa was outlandishly cold. He gazed absently across the valley while Milch began reading out the future aircraft-production figures until the field marshal reached the 262, listed under *fighters*. "I thought that was coming as a bomber!" Hitler barked, interrupting sharply.

The others exchanged uncomfortable glances. Milch had made the decision to build them only as jet fighters, it turned out. "Is there anybody at all," snapped Hitler, "who obeys my orders?" He reminded them that at the Insterburg display he had ordered the 262 built only as a high-speed bomber—with its one ton of armorplate and armament replaced by bomb gear instead.

Milch could not remain silent. "Mein Führer," he exclaimed. "The smallest infant can see that this is a fighter, not a bomber aircraft!"

The next morning Göring confronted his generals—Korten, Koller, and Galland—with this new situation. They all agreed glumly that there was one obvious design problem: the one ton of armorplate was all *forward* of the jet's center of gravity, while any bomb gear would necessarily be *on* it. It was a major redesign that Hitler now called for.

"You gentlemen all seem to be deaf," said Göring. "I have kept repeating the Führer's perfectly clear order, again and again. He doesn't give a hoot for the Me 262 as a fighter. He just wants it initially as a fighter-bomber, a *Jadbomber*."

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a wild guess. "Around thr

Göring thumped his fist
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Asked when the plane could be operational as a bomber, Petersen made a wild guess. "Around three months," he said.

Göring thumped his fist on the table. The invasion was not going to wait for the 262. "You gentlemen dare to do what no civilian would ever dare—quite simply, to disregard orders! The most ill-disciplined bunch in Germany: our Wehrmacht, and our officer corps."

Hitler persisted over the coming weeks that the Me 262 was to be produced purely as a bomber. Perspiration glistening on his brow, Göring swore on his own life to comply. On May 27, 1944, he cabled to his generals, "The Führer has ordered the Me 262 to be operated exclusively as a high-speed bomber. There is until further notice no question of it as a fighter plane." Two days later he told General Galland that "to avoid misunderstandings" he was removing the 262 from Galland's jet-fighter specialist (Colonel Gordon Mac Gollob) and transferring it to Colonel Marienfeld as general of bombers.

Four days after this conference Göring saw Hitler strolling down the hill. He had come to pay his respects to little Edda on her sixth birthday. The child's mother detected a trace of irony in the "Frau Reichsmarschall" with which Hitler addressed her as he kissed her hand.

to send him to Germany for another three weeks to assemble the parts. This sculptor can then also retouch the Diana as the Reichsmarschall desires.") Rommel's troops were still containing the Allied beachhead in Normandy, but Göring did not expect them to do so much longer. In mid-July he had an urgent consignment shipped from France, including forty crates of "porcelain and liquors" for himself and Loerzer.

Strategically speaking, Hitler too had seen the truth but was drawing more positive conclusions. "Everything depends on our fighter program now," Hitler explained to Korten and Koller, revealing his interim strategic thinking. "We must keep this program strictly secret and conserve our strength meanwhile. The enemy will be astonished when the balance of air power begins to tilt against them four months from now."

With the Red Army now pouring through Poland toward the German frontiers, Hitler demonstratively returned to East Prussia on July 14, 1944. Soon, the Russian spearheads were only forty miles from Rominten.

Göring opted for Carinhall. Here, he received visitors in plain clothes—if plain is the word for silk pantaloons, red slippers, diamond-studded belt, green silk shirt, and violet-hued stockings that were an ill match for his peroxidized hair and seemingly rouged cheeks. This chameleon existence was shattered a few days later, July 20. It was a stifling morning in East Prussia. The windows were open at the Wolf's Lair, where Göring, not far from Hitler's bunker, was grumpily discussing with Colonel Friedrich Kless, Greim's chief of staff, the reasons that Luftflotte 6 still felt unable to send its few He 177's to bomb Soviet power stations as far away as the Urals. "Our private discussion took place," Kless now recalls, "in a very heated atmosphere. Suddenly an alarm was telephoned to Göring. An attempt had been made on Hitler's life a few hundred yards away." The call came from Hitler's adjutant. Colonel von Below's voice sounded odd and shaken. He shouted that a bomb had gone off under the Führer's conference table—the Führer was alive, but the Luftwaffe generals Bodenschatz and Korten were both injured (the latter fatally, as it turned out). After going with Hitler to the local railroad station to meet Mussolini, whom he could not abide, Göring went over to the bomb-shattered conference hut. He marveled how Hitler could have survived the blast that ripped the heavy oaken table apart. "Today," he would tell his men the next day, "I believe more than ever that an Almighty Providence will favor us with victory."

A kind of euphoria anesthetized both Göring and Hitler. He heard Hitler assure Mussolini that fighter production would soon top five thousand, and that twelve hundred of the "new jet fighters" were going to mop up the enemy in Normandy. Their less euphoric henchmen spent the afternoon bitching and backbiting. "I am still foreign minister," Ribbentrop was heard to snap at the Reichsmarschall, who flourished his heavy baton in mock menace at him, "and my name is *von* Ribbentrop!"

Some of the instigators of the attempt to kill the Führer, notably the army's

* D.T. Almighty Providence happened to be myself!

ex-chief of staff General L as a wimpish "drawing-room evening. "The whole cree afterward, "has come from with the elimination of these the ranks of the entire Wehr than Göring felt obligatory, historian Shuster, "more p In a secret speech to air assassination attempt "the i

GÖRING: Ignoring for I let me mention one, g now viewed the Prussi: forth?

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The army plotters had intend Hitler. Despite their failure lame approach to Stumpff's I time Göring had already issi squadrons, and flights readin "All Luftwaffe units in Reich Stumpff. Orders of army regic to be obeyed."

Göring refused to allow H involvement. "No officer of m a hand in such a thing." The Lieutenant Colonel Caesar vo general staff in Paris. Hofacl reconnaissance, General von I Barsewisch had thereupon tip thereupon tactfully stayed awa settled. According both to Gei Rudolf Diels, the Reichsmarsc had actually attended plotting s civilian head; and of course, as finance minister Johannes Popi It certainly seems incredibl

moved by now to Breslau, had remained unaware of the conspiratorial ferment, given the plot's vast ramifications. ("Who would have thought," commented Heydrich's father-in-law in a letter, "that an entire clique of generals right next to the Führer could have practiced treachery unob-served!") Was Göring's absence from the hut more than fortuitous? "When I saw the room yesterday in which the contemptible assassination was at-tempted," he said, "I marveled that any man came out alive. The lethal device exploded violently barely a yard from the Führer . . . yet by a miracle the Führer was unscathed. By chance I was not present myself, but arrived half an hour later." However, Göring certainly had been present at the Hitler conference five days earlier when the same plotters had first hoped to set off their bomb. Nor had they at any time seriously considered recruiting him. Even his friend Count von Helldorf, the turncoat police president of Berlin, had dismissed the idea as ludicrous. "It was hoped at one time to include Göring," recalled Helldorf's son two weeks later, in British captivity, "but my father, after several visits to Carinhall, was opposed to this on the grounds that there was no evidence that he [Göring] would be sympathetic to the plotters and that in any event his physical condition—the consequence of addiction to drugs—would make him a doubtful asset."

The Reichsmarschall was fortunate enough to figure only on their hit lists. In their draft press communiqué, which the Gestapo seized from a hotel safe, Goerdeler had written, "The completely corrupt Göring—the 'Reichsmar-schall' who can't grovel deep enough to his so-called 'Führer'—has the impertinence to tell us that the structure and responsibilities of the general staff are all wrong. . . ."

Thus he escaped both bomb and purge. However it would not have escaped Göring's attention that when Hitler broadcast to the world late on the twen-tieth, to prove he had survived, he invited Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz to speak next, *before* the Reichsmarschall.

For reasons of power politics Göring decided that the division bearing his name, the Hermann Göring Division, must become the savior of East Prussia. He had recalled it from Italy, and it was now assigned to defend the Rominten Heath. In a fighting speech on July 21, 1944, to his Escort Regiment—its elite unit—he made plain his belief that a blessed Providence had intervened to save Hitler. He assured them that the new bazooka (*Panzerfaust*) issued to them made each man superior to a Russian tank. "You should see what a rabble the Russian infantry is!" he encouraged them. "For brave men even tanks hold no fears, because now a staunch man can defend himself even at close quarters against tanks." But he also said, "Any soldier who throws away his arms, even a pistol, in order to retreat faster, puts himself beyond the pale of honor and obligation: each and every one of you, whether NCO or soldier, has the duty to shoot cowards like that on the spot."

GÖRING: Just as the Führer
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GÖRING: Just as the British and Americans in Italy now speak of your division with awe, the Russians must learn to fear you too. . . . Comrades, you must make this pledge: You may give ground in Russia—that is not decisive—but never in Germany. Not one German woman or German child must fall into their bestial hands. And if fate should be against us, if the Russians should come into this province, then that must only be possible when no soldiers of the Hermann Göring Division are left alive.

The total subservience of this superstitious, God-fearing man to Hitler had been reborn by the bomb blast. On the following day one of Hitler's stenographers wrote in his diary:

Before today's midday conference the Reichsmarschall addressed a brief speech to the Führer and proposed that as a visible token of the Wehrmacht's gratitude for his miraculous escape the Hitler salute be introduced immediately throughout the armed forces. The Führer signed this document, whereupon all those present spontaneously saluted.

It was Goebbels, not Göring, whom Hitler now appointed his plenipotentiary for total war. On the train back to Berlin the little propaganda minister poured out his heart about their enfeebled Reichsmarschall to bomber ace Werner Baumbach. Baumbach decided to join forces in the campaign against Göring.

Mortified by Hitler's new snub to him, the Reichsmarschall withdrew from the Wolf's Lair to Rominten, and for the next five weeks he would ignore every hint that he should return.

At first his "illness" appears to have been just a pretext. He was not too ill to receive Herbert Backe for lunch at Rominten one day (although he did introduce Ondarza to the Staatssekretär as "the doctor who is treating me"). They went for a coach ride through the sunlit woods, and Backe told him he was finished with Reichminister Darré. "The Führer," Göring warned him, "won't let a minister go while there's a war on."

This was Göring's protection too. Hitler might show gross disrespect for him, referring to him behind his back as "what's his name," but he would be loath to let him go. Powerful bonds of party history still linked their destinies.

After Korten's painful death, the appointment of a successor showed neither Göring nor Loerzer in a favorable light. Karl Koller, the stubborn Bavarian general now running the Luftwaffe from Goldap, was the obvious man to take over as chief of air staff. On July 24, however, Göring summoned instead the mild-mannered and academic chief of flying training Lieutenant

40

WITCH HUNT

By the late summer of 1944 Hermann Göring's air force was in worsening disarray. In August 1944, British code-breakers intercepted Luftwaffe orders limiting reconnaissance operations over Egypt and Cyprus to one flight per month, banning courier flights over the Reich during morning hours because of Allied fighter harassment, and forbidding ground crews to leave fuel in parked planes "to avoid losses."

As his star sank toward the horizon, Göring's circle of friends shrank. He remained loyal to Philipp Bouhler, who was himself in semidisgrace, and considered appointing him or even Bruno Loerzer to replace Milch, whom he had dismissed in June, as Staatssekretär; but Hitler flatly rejected them both as unsuitable. Fritz Sauckel was the only gauleiter toward whom Göring still felt any warmth. Friendship with Göring was no longer enough to avoid Gestapo arrest. Franz Neuhausen was arrested for misappropriating labor and transport to build a private estate near Belgrade and for smuggling foreign currency into Hungary and gold into Switzerland; Göring managed to secure his release but could not prevent his being exiled. Martin Bormann gathered evidence against Luftwaffe generals wherever he could. Party officials whis-

pered scandalous allegations about in Italy, and Pohl's female dietitian spent hours swimming or sunbathing.

In France Göring's ground troops Luftwaffe Field Division made a 88's emplaced by III Flak Corps gomery's advance at Falaise. But Göring was more concerned about August 13, he ordered Alfred R from the Nazi repositories in Paris delay."

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Himmler and Bormann reported rage, Göring pleaded with Hitler telephoning his chief judge advocate. "Where are they!" He realized it we were winning," he would remain got worked up if our units took over or womanized. But now the times are Yes, when we were winning, per whorehouses out to the men."

While Pohl in Italy and the Luft truck transport and gasoline to look hear II Fighter Corps in France advanced vehicles" if they could; and 200 liters of J-2 fuel taxiing for fuel use oxen to pull the jet planes around

Sensing his powers of intercession up the escape of his remaining Jew. The Hague, the Gestapo had detained Jew. Bachstitz had the good fortune Jewish) sister. Hofer wrote to SS in Holland, "The Reichsmarschal and the case held over until I report that the case be dropped. "Bachst September 1943 the dealer divorce her, thereby protecting it from seizure

pered scandalous allegations about General von Pohl, Göring's representative in Italy, and Pohl's female dietician; Party officials alleged too that his officers spent hours swimming or sunbathing with their secretaries.

In France Göring's ground troops fought well—the badly mauled 16th Luftwaffe Field Division made a heroic defense of northern Caën, while the 88's emplaced by III Flak Corps did a lot to halt General Bernard Montgomery's advance at Falaise. But even at that murderous climax in France, Göring was more concerned about extricating his last treasures to safety. On August 13, he ordered Alfred Rosenberg to evacuate all the works of art from the Nazi repositories in Paris and ship them back to the Reich "without delay."

The collapse in France was utter and complete. Luftwaffe officers, taking their cue from Göring, loaded trucks with fancy women, chaises longues, and other booty, and headed for the German frontier, stampeding into the Reich past disenchanted party officials, women, and children slaving to dig antitank defenses. As Göring's troops poured into Germany, the people said that the WL prefix on Luftwaffe number plates stood for "We're Leaving!" Hundreds of brand-new radar sets fell into American hands in Paris.

Himmler and Bormann reported all this to their Führer. Weeping with rage, Göring pleaded with Hitler to let him deal with the sinners. He began telephoning his chief judge advocate to demand, "I want death sentences! Where are they!" He realized it was hypocrisy and hated it. "So long as we were winning," he would remark ironically a few weeks later, "nobody got worked up if our units took over the finest châteaux in France or caroused or womanized. But now the times are rougher, everybody's glaring at us. . . . Yes, when we were winning, people told me straight out I ought to fly whorehouses out to the men."

While Pohl in Italy and the Luftwaffe in France brazenly used precious truck transport and gasoline to loot and pillage, Allied code-breakers could hear II Fighter Corps in France advising its squadrons to "get hold of horse-drawn vehicles" if they could; and in Germany, since each Me 262 used up 200 liters of J-2 fuel taxiing for five minutes, the squadrons were forced to use oxen to pull the jet planes around the airfields to save fuel.

Sensing his powers of intercession waning, in August 1944 Göring speeded up the escape of his remaining Jewish business friends. A year before, in The Hague, the Gestapo had detained art dealer Kurt Walter Bachstitz, a Jew. Bachstitz had the good fortune to be married to Walter Hofer's (non-Jewish) sister. Hofer wrote to SS Brigadeführer Harster, the Gestapo chief in Holland, "The Reichsmarschall wants Bachstitz permitted to emigrate, and the case held over until I report to him on the matter." Göring instructed that the case be dropped. "Bachstitz," he ruled, "is to be left alone." In September 1943 the dealer divorced his wife and transferred his property to her, thereby protecting it from seizure. And now, on August 14, 1944, he

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was escorted by Göring's private detective to Basel, Switzerland, leaving behind, of course, valuable paintings to express his gratitude to Hermann Göring.

In the Reichsmarschall's absence Koller had continued to sweat out Hitler's tantrums at the Wolf's Lair. "At every conference the Führer rants on for hours about the Luftwaffe," Koller wrote on August 8, 1944, in a shorthand note that verged on the hysterical. "He levels the meanest accusations about our meager aircraft figures, our technical blunders, our noncompletion of the replenishment squadrons in the Reich, the Me 262, and so on. The Führer says that he is given figures that turn out to be wrong. How can I know what the Reichsmarschall and General Korten were telling him—how can I help the mistakes made from 1939 to 1942!"

Since Göring was still acting "sick," Kreipe attended his first Hitler conference on August 11. "The Führer has become very stooped," he observed in his diary. "Cotton wool in his ears. He trembles violently, you can only shake hands with him gently." Hitler blamed the air-force "collapse" on Udet, Jeschonnek, and Milch. They had made premature promises on which he had based fateful strategic decisions. He asked Kreipe to ensure that "truth and clarity" once more supervened.

Significantly, Kreipe paid courtesy visits to Himmler and Bormann before returning to Bartenstein.

Bormann continued to load Göring's dossier with telegrams from party officials substantiating the Reichsmarschall's ineptitude and laziness. "Everybody curses the air force," recorded Kreipe unhappily on the fifteenth. "The Führer orders the gauleiters' reports investigated."

On the next day Kreipe noted that the Reichsmarschall was "still acting sick," and went to see him at Carinhall three mornings later. They haggled for four hours. Lunching with Bouhler and Körner that day, Kreipe found the Reichsmarschall more approachable—Emmy's feminine charm was keeping up his morale. "Hermann must take better care of himself," she chided the general.

Hitler did not agree. "How much longer," he asked Kreipe on the twentieth, "is Göring's illness likely to last?"

The fighting evacuation of France continued, but the Me 262 was still not ready for combat. "Boundless reproaches against the air force," wrote Kreipe after Hitler's conference on August 22, 1944. The next day Hitler apologized to him. "It wasn't you I was getting at!" he said, unconsciously repeating almost verbatim his remarks to Jeschonnek the year before.

Four evenings later Hermann Göring, wheezing and pale-faced, ventured back into the Wolf's Lair. He reemerged smugly after three hours. Hitler, he said, had not even raised the subject of the Me 262.

Kreipe was not so fortunate when he asked Hitler on the thirtieth to lift

the veto on the Me 262 as a him down. "None of you," the Me 262. I forbid any further

The next evening Kreipe caved in. The strategic effect forfeit its radar outfield, without transmitters for precision-bombing smaller towns like Bonn. But Kreipe grumbling about Göring's setbacks attaining quite unparliamentary reached the Reichsmarschall. Göring hurried over on the prolonged absence, and threat this record of their joint conference

Just abuse of the Luftwaffe over the years, he has been reduction and performance ground organization and . . . instead of joining the Then back to discussion arguments . . . Then, in manufacturing no more planes the Flak artillery.

"Sat for a long time afterward, who purred with contentment, the idea of dissolving the air force. Hanging around the air staff tired of this war, in fact, but no assistant Fritz Gömmert ventured to be possible to make Adolf Hitler him away to the Zugspitze Mountain funeral, and Hitler is 'dead'!" Göring changed the subject.

On September 16 he learned extraordinary counteroffensive against out of the Ardennes." "In bad enemy air force won't be flying through the weakest part of the, thus "Dunkirk" the British Army defeated in the election; Germany for this was November 1, 1944. It was perhaps foolish for Göring

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 ngrily after three hours. Hitler,
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ed Hitler on the thirtieth to lift

the veto on the Me 262 as a fighter. After ten minutes the Führer shouted him down. "None of you," he snapped, "has the faintest idea how to use the Me 262. I forbid any further discussion of it."

The next evening Kreipe phoned Göring to report that France had now caved in. The strategic effects would be disastrous. The Luftwaffe would forfeit its radar outfield, while the enemy would obtain bases for beam transmitters for precision-bombing raids on synthetic-rubber plants and the smaller towns like Bonn. But everybody blamed the Luftwaffe. "The general grumbling about Göring's setup," wrote Martin Bormann privately, "is attaining quite unparliamentary forms of expression." On September 3, word reached the Reichsmarschall that Hitler was again complaining about his prolonged absence, and threatening to wind up the air force altogether.

Göring hurried over on the fifth, and Kreipe, who went with him, wrote this record of their joint confrontation with Hitler:

Just abuse of the Luftwaffe—it does nothing, it has gone down over the years, he has been constantly deceived over both production and performance figures. Total failure in France, the ground organization and signals troops just took to their heels . . . instead of joining the army in battle.

Then back to discussion of Me 262 operations. Same old arguments . . . Then, in modified form, he developed his idea of manufacturing no more planes apart from the Me 262 and tripling the Flak artillery.

"Sat for a long time afterward with Göring," the general's diary continued, "who purred with contentment, congratulated me, and said we'd killed off the idea of dissolving the air force."

Hanging around the air-staff headquarters, Göring tired easily: He was tired of this war, in fact, but not yet tired of life itself. Once his personal assistant Fritz Gömnert ventured to remark, "Herr Reichsmarschall—it ought to be possible to make Adolf Hitler disappear. Not liquidate him, just spirit him away to the Zugspitze Mountain and lock him away. Then a big state funeral, and Hitler is 'dead'!"

Göring changed the subject.

On September 16 he learned from Kreipe that Hitler was devising an extraordinary counteroffensive against the British and American armies "from out of the Ardennes." "In bad weather," Hitler had said pointedly, "the enemy air force won't be flying either!" He intended to punch three armies through the weakest part of the Allied line and seize Antwerp. He would thus "Dunkirk" the British Army for a second time; Roosevelt would be defeated in the election; Germany would have won the war. His target date for this was November 1, 1944.

It was perhaps foolish for Göring now to have left the Wolf's Lair for his

own domains at Carinhall, because it gave his rivals a clear field of fire. Hitler even regarded the Battle of Arnhem that began on September 17 as a major Luftwaffe defeat, although Göring had operated 650 planes against the Allied armadas of troop transports and gliders both that day and the next, shooting down hundreds of them.

"New reports about fresh landings in Holland," noted Kreipe after Hitler's conference on the eighteenth.

Führer rages about Luftwaffe's failure. Wants immediate information which fighter forces were scrambled in Holland. Führer violently abuses me. . . . Says the air force is incompetent, cowardly, and letting him down. He has further reports of air-force units streaming back across the Rhine. . . .

I ask for concrete details.

Führer replies, "I refuse to speak with you further. I want to speak to the Reichsmarschall tomorrow. No doubt you are capable of arranging that?"

Kreipe had by now shifted the air-staff headquarters to the rear, a forest location at Rosengarten in East Prussia. When Göring now arrived here at *Robinson VII*, Kreipe warned him that the witch hunt was against *him*, the Reichsmarschall, alone. Göring just laughed.

The laughter faded after they went over together to the Wolf's Lair on the nineteenth. The mood was icy, and Hitler asked to see Göring alone. He instructed him to disband the air staff and its academy and get rid of Kreipe—a scheming, cold-blooded general staff officer, "defeatist and unreliable."

When Göring emerged hours later, "broken up and dismayed," Kreipe challenged him. "Now do you believe me? The whole vendetta is against *you*."

"The Führer," Göring retorted stiffly, "has again expressed complete confidence in me."

Told of Hitler's *Diktat* about the air staff, Kreipe shrewdly rejoined that this would give great comfort to the Allies, since dissolving the general staff had been one of the original dictates of Versailles. Back at Rosengarten that night Kreipe was notified formally by SS Gruppenführer Hermann Fegelein that he was not to set foot in the Wolf's Lair ever again.

Fegelein, *Himmler's liaison officer* to Hitler, had married Eva Braun's sister, Gretl; his influence was rising. "Together with Fegelein," Göring would growl to interrogators, "Bormann kept dishing up to Hitler the most unfortunate reports about the air force. Bormann naturally saw them as a magnificent opportunity to incite the Führer against me." The dossier kept by the indefatigable Bormann posed a real threat. "Never once," Göring would tell a Soviet interrogator, "not even at the height of my powers, did I have the influence that Bormann enjoyed in those last years. We called him the Little Secretary, the Big Intriguer—and the Filthy Swine!"

Göring knew that the man whose air force was General von Greim ever to take him up and the general arrived, on intercepted by an order from the Wolf's Lair the Führer's manifold "sins" and offenses.

Swallowing this fresh humiliation, but found his anger.

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Like Kreipe's in July, G.

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Von Greim had seen the seething. Afterward, I was shattered, said people were a traitor. Says he is and him, Greim is finished. I

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off. Kreipe shrewdly rejoined that since dissolving the general staff he has been back at Rosengarten that Gruppenführer Hermann Fegelein will be in the air ever again.

Hitler, had married Eva Braun's daughter together with Fegelein," Göring kept dishing up to Hitler the most vicious rumors. Bormann naturally saw them as a threat against me." The dossier kept coming. "Never once," Göring said, "even at the height of my powers, I have enjoyed in those last years. We are the traitor—and the Filthy Swine!"

Göring knew that the man Hitler secretly hankered after to be the head of his air force was General von Greim—the oldest living fighter pilot, the first airman ever to take him up in a plane. He had sent for Greim after Arnhem, and the general arrived, on September 21, at Rosengarten where he was intercepted by an order from Hitler to go straight over to see him first. At the Wolf's Lair the Führer lectured the Luftflotte 6 commander on Göring's manifold "sins" and offered him the post of "deputy commander in chief."

Swallowing this fresh humiliation, Göring asked Greim to draw up proposals, but found his anger hard to suppress. "Greim," recalled Hanna Reitsch, the general's mistress, "met with a terrific outburst from him."

Like Kreipe's in July, Greim's first act now was to discuss his future position with Himmler, Bormann, and Fegelein.

The growing estrangement from Göring tore at Hitler's physical well-being, already fragile from his bomb-blast injuries. Stricken with jaundice and bedridden for two weeks, he blamed it on his anger at the Reichsmarschall, and began to press for courts-martial of Luftwaffe officers. Göring hastened to comply. On September 22, Luftflotte 3 was heard signaling, "The Reichsmarschall . . . has empowered Luftflotte Reich to set up instant courts-martial to try offenders on the spot, and where cowardice is proved to shoot them in front of the assembled personnel."

The possibility of delivering a fighter grand slam was drawing closer. Hermann Göring summoned squadron commanders to Luftflotte Reich headquarters and promised, "From now on things are going to be different." He revealed that large numbers of fighter planes were becoming available. Luftflotte Reich commander General Stumpff rendered what Kreipe—still acting as chief of air staff—cynically terms in his diary "a Byzantine pledge of loyalty." It was swiftly rewarded when Göring donated a house to him that same day. Kreipe—who had to make do with a more humble silver-framed photograph of Göring—came out to Carinhall on October 3:

Von Greim had seen the Reichsmarschall before me. Göring was seething. Afterward, I was called in alone. Göring was completely shattered, said people were trying to get rid of him, Greim was a traitor. Says he is and will remain commander in chief. For him, Greim is finished. He's to return to his Luftflotte at once.

Kreipe reiterated his warning that the whole witch hunt was directed against the Reichsmarschall.

The Red Army now began its final assault on East Prussia. Hitler demonstratively remained at the Wolf's Lair not far from the battle zone. He was confident that if Nazi Germany could only hold on, the new submarines, missiles, tanks, and jet planes would arrive in time to restore supremacy. Swift and invulnerable, the Ar 234 jet was effortlessly photographing the Allied supply beaches and battlefields in the west. And now the much-

ons were screaming into action
first Me 262 jet bombers were
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45," morbidly depicting a Reich
Göring sent for Kreipe on the
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I'm sorely disappointed in you.
You've lost faith in victory. Aren't
the general staff ever to assess our
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life and death over their men.

Russian Front attacked East
visions and two armored corps.
an divisions and a brigade of

cavalry. Göring returned to East Prussia and turned up at Rosengarten wearing the clay-brown uniform of the "Hermann Göring" Panzer Corps, which was to defend this region. He ventured briefly over to the Wolf's Lair—now very much the domain of Bormann and Himmler—that day, then went hunting on Rominten Heath for one last time. Afterward, he signed some documents that General Kreipe brought over. "Very friendly reception," observed the latter after a stroll with the Reichsmarschall. "He commiserates with me, remarks for the first time that he now intends to stay on here permanently—he has to keep an eye on what Himmler and Bormann are up to. Himmler, he says, has just asked for air squadrons for the SS!"

Göring feared Himmler more than Bormann now. He knew that if Hitler died, Bormann would probably try to arrest him before he could be sworn in as legal successor; he intended to grab Bormann first and put him on trial. With Himmler, however, he would have to tread more softly. "I couldn't just have him liquidated," he reflected later to George Shuster. "He had the whole police force under him (while Bormann just drew on the Führer's authority). I would have had to undermine Himmler's position bit by bit."

On October 22, the first battle for East Prussia had been won—a significant German victory. The Hermann Göring Corps had counterattacked and thrown the Russians out of Gumbinnen and Goldap. There was terrible evidence of the Russian presence everywhere. Kreipe himself saw the scenes at Nemendorf and recorded in his diary afterward, "Women shot and children nailed to barndoors." He ordered photographs taken for posterity.

On the twenty-third, Göring attended Hitler's conference, then went forward past long columns of panic-stricken East Prussians fleeing westward. Göring accompanied a regimental commander whose men were engaging Russian tanks at Trakehnen.

Still dissatisfied with his fighter-squadron commanders, he harangued them for three hours at Luftflotte Reich headquarters on the twenty-sixth. One FW 190 pilot recalled later that much of what he said was true, "But the rot [of doubt] had already set in." He adopted an unfortunate tone, mingling truculent remarks about the fighter pilots' "cowardice" with bluster: "If you don't shoot down five hundred B-17's the next time," he said, "you're all transferring to the infantry!" At one stage he dramatically ripped his medals off and slammed them down, declaring that he would put them on again only when his pilots starting shooting down planes. "That really nettled Galland," said one Heinkel pilot. "They all took off their Knight's Crosses then." Much of the sermon was vintage Göring—he forbade any aviator to abort a mission because of defective "water thermometers" or "speedometers." Adding insult to injury, he also ordered excerpts of his speech broadcast by loudspeaker at every fighter airfield.

Göring returned to East Prussia after that, fearing Bormann's vendetta more than Stalin's military rabble.

Hitler had meanwhile sent yet again for General von Greim. Torn between

sentiment and pragmatism, he once more abandoned the idea of dispossessing the Reichsmarschall, however. "I think that Hitler still felt too close to Göring from the years of struggle," his air-force adjutant von Below said afterward. Bormann, thwarted once again, poured out his irritation in a letter on the last day of October. "People refer," he wrote, "to the constant failure of the Luftwaffe high command ever since Stalingrad and North Africa."

A few days later Kreipe's tenure of office was over. In a farewell conversation with him on November 2, Göring candidly referred to the general's somber memorandum, and advised him never again to commit such dark thoughts to paper. "I am sure," he prophesied, "that there is going to be a 'Nibelungen' struggle, but we shall fight it out—on the Vistula, on the Oder, and on the Wesel." Since these latter rivers were in the heart of Germany, it was not a joyous prospect.

Kreipe pleaded with him to persuade Hitler to revert to diplomacy.

After a long silence Göring responded, "That I cannot do, because then the Führer would lose faith in himself." "Since 1938," he added, taking both of Kreipe's hands in his in a parting gesture, "I have felt that the Führer does not discuss everything with me. Ribbentrop's appointment [on February 4, 1938] took me by surprise, and I have been excluded from several important political decisions since then."

Even as Hermann Göring, his broad chest still voluntarily shorn of medals, was coming under assault at the Wolf's Lair, the resurgent German fighter force was spreading profound alarm among the Western Allies. On October 21, 1944, General Carl F. Spaatz, commander of the strategic air forces in Europe, warned General Omar Bradley that maintaining air supremacy was going to cost the lives of at least forty thousand more Allied airmen. "Our daylight bombing is going to become very expensive." On November 2, nearly 700 of his bombers escorted by 750 fighter planes attacked the Leuna synthetic-oil plant. General Galland raised a record seven hundred fighter sorties against them, and the new Me 262's shot down three bombers without loss.

Ultimately Hitler overruled Göring and forced him to appoint Karl Koller as chief of air staff. For five hours Göring wrangled with the Bavarian general on November 5. After their third meeting that day Koller entered this account in his shorthand diary:

RM describes his entire life, his work, and achievements in rebuilding the German Air Force. Spoke in utter dejection about the campaign being waged against him from every side—the army, SS, and party. Says he is fed up to the back teeth and the war situation doesn't interest him anymore; wishes he were dead. He'd join the paratroop army and fight with them in the front line but the Führer won't let him go, has told him that only he can rebuild the air force yet again.

Koller reminded him of the insult the job, under the proviso that he that of course I could, and took piness." "How long will this last

Two days after that, Göring's hospital in Berlin. To Reichsmarschall, Göring looked oddly naked self-satisfied" nonetheless. "The nurses told Darré. "Pale as a ghost going to last more than a few weeks."

Through party channels still met Lieutenant Colonel von Klossinski in the air force. Göring seethed, and him to take charge of purging the colonels.

Klossinski balked at the job. "I'll shut myself away here and more unsavory officers of your caliber." "Before Dunkirk," the colonel heard you say Bruno is my laziness. "I need somebody I can drink said Göring truculently.

To the chagrin of Galland and former bomber commander, to me 10, he asked Pelz to take the chief of Berlin's Gatow Air Staff Academy and bomber aces. Göring told them the air force, and their job was to do on whatever topic they liked, except the Me 262. The meeting brought officers like Pelz, Hermann, and E. Schmid, Trautloft, and Galland; and Nazi fanatics like Klossinski, Staut

Baumbach reported to Göring at transcript. Asked about personnel, that Loerzer, Brauchitsch, and Dietrich and bristled. Göring soothed his ruler Air Leader's Gold Medal with Diamonds

With unbridled hypocrisy Göring criticizing Luftwaffe commanders abandoned without order, troops abandoned as though his own frantic salvaging, he continued, "Private goods have destroyed in panic." He added,

abandoned the idea of dispossessing Hitler still felt too close to the force adjutant von Below said poured out his irritation in a letter he wrote, "to the constant failure at Stalingrad and North Africa." The war was over. In a farewell conference candidly referred to the general's never again to commit such dark deeds, "that there is going to be no light it out—on the Vistula, on the latter rivers were in the heart of Hitler to revert to diplomacy.

"That I cannot do, because then 'Since 1938,' he added, taking gesture, 'I have felt that the Führer's appointment [on February] have been excluded from several

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Koller reminded him of the insults he had heaped on the air staff; but he took the job, under the proviso that he could speak his mind. "Reichsmarschall said that of course I could, and took my hands in both of his, beaming with happiness." "How long will this last?" noted Koller in a wise afterthought.

Two days after that, Göring was visiting Bodenschatz at the flak bunker hospital in Berlin. To Reichsminister Walter Darré, lying in a neighboring bed, Göring looked oddly naked without his medals, but "very well and self-satisfied" nonetheless. "You should have seen him eight weeks ago," the nurses told Darré. "Pale as death he looked then. We thought he wasn't going to last more than a few weeks."

Through party channels still more criticism reached Hitler—this time from Lieutenant Colonel von Klosinski, the party's NSFO (indoctrination officer) in the air force. Göring seethed, but asked Klosinski to Carinhall and invited him to take charge of purging the air force of its superannuated generals and colonels.

Klosinski balked at the job. "Herr Reichsmarschall," he lectured Göring. "You shut yourself away here at Carinhall. . . . You must get rid of the more unsavory officers of your entourage, like Brauchitsch and Loerzer." "Before Dunkirk," the colonel continued remorselessly, "I myself once heard you say Bruno is my laziest general!"

"I need somebody I can drink a bottle of cognac with in the evenings," said Göring truculently.

To the chagrin of Galland and the fighter force he now invited Pelz, the former bomber commander, to move into Carinhall with him. On November 10, he asked Pelz to take the chair at a "Luftwaffe Parliament" held at Berlin's Gatow Air Staff Academy with thirty or more top-scoring fighter and bomber aces. Göring told them that Hitler had commanded him to rebuild the air force, and their job was to comment and advise without fear or favor on whatever topic they liked, except, naturally, his own illustrious person and the Me 262. The meeting broke up in chaos as the feuding bomber officers like Pelz, Hermann, and Baumbach tore into the fighter commanders Schmid, Trautloft, and Galland; and all of them rounded savagely on the Nazi fanatics like Klosinski, Staub, and Gollob.

Baumbach reported to Göring at Carinhall, and handed over the shorthand transcript. Asked about personnel changes, Baumbach said that they all felt that Loerzer, Brauchitsch, and Diesing should go. Brauchitsch heard this and bristled. Göring soothed his ruffled feelings by decorating him with the Air Leader's Gold Medal with Diamonds immediately afterward.

With unbridled hypocrisy Göring issued on November 10 an order severely criticizing Luftwaffe commanders in east and west. "Fortresses have been abandoned without order, troops abandoned without cause," he began. Then, as though his own frantic salvaging of works of art from Paris were forgotten, he continued, "Private goods have been brought to safety, air-force dumps destroyed in panic." He added, "I have already pronounced exemplary

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Allied air forces. Speculating on the chance of catching the enemy aviators with their pants down, Göring had authorized a swoop on their airbases in the Low Countries at first light on New Year's Day 1945. Reconnaissance planes had brought back tempting photographs of their quarry—for example, of 149 P-47 fighters and 8 heavy bombers neatly parked at Saint Trond in Belgium, literally begging to be attacked. Göring brought in every available pilot, including instructors, pupils, and even veteran Geschwader commanders like Major Michalski, who would personally lead the fifty-five Me 109-G14's and FW 190-A8's of his Jagdgeschwader 4, and Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Ihlefeld of JG1.

Again the code-breakers did not realize what Göring was up to—even though at 6:30 P.M. on New Year's Eve his 3rd Fighter Division had been heard forecasting fine weather at zero hour and at 11:30 P.M. instructing the four Geschwader of fighter planes, "Zero hour for Hermann 0820 hrs."

At 9:15 A.M.—with zero hour delayed an hour by ground fog—Bodenplatte began, with the hundreds of FW 190's and Me 109's suddenly screaming across the Allied lines, firing rockets and cannon, and bombing every targeted airfield simultaneously. It was a more spectacular triumph than Poltava. The devastation caused, particularly to the British-occupied airfields in Belgium, was colossal though never officially admitted at the time. Göring claimed to have used twenty-three hundred planes, which may well have been true. Photographic reconnaissance planes brought back pictures of nine of the many airfields targeted, showing on these alone 389 Allied warplanes definitely destroyed and 117 damaged. But as the day wore on, it became clear that his own fighters had taken an unexpected hammering. "What we did not allow for," said Göring later, not without a degree of perverse pride, "was the intense concentration of [Allied] anti-aircraft guns set up against our V-1 [flying bombs]." Probably two-thirds of his own losses of about 227 planes were caused by his own trigger-happy flak gunners. (The German naval flak in Holland alone admitted having shot down twenty German fighter planes.) Both Göring and Koller defended the operation at Hitler's main conference, commenting that at least it had given his fighter crews a chance to take off. But Hitler forbade any repetition—he wanted the air battles to be in German skies, where his revenge-hungry public could see them.

Göring attended every conference at the Eagle's Nest until January 10, but they were increasingly joyless occasions. As Hitler's Ardennes gamble faltered and finally failed, his attitude toward Göring congealed to ice. With evident malice Martin Bormann wrote in his diary on the fifth, "Reichsmarschall summoned to the Führer on account of the air-war situation." Attending these conferences, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt noticed that Hitler allowed him to sit, but always obliged the Reichsmarschall to stand. "Things got so crazy," confessed Göring to American historian Shuster, "that I said to myself: Let's hope it's all over quickly so I can get out of this lunatic asylum." He barricaded himself in his special train, read cheap

detective novels—sometimes devouring the same pulp book three times over—and smoked his favorite cigars, very slowly. "Three quarters of my shattered nerves are due—not to the war," he shouted to Bodenschatz, deaf ever since the bomb blast, "but to the Führer! I've been under massive attack for a whole year now." On January 11, having served his penance long enough, he fled the Eagle's Nest and returned to the uxorious comforts of Carinhall.

Indignant at the Bodenplatte casualties, and egged on by Koller and Greim, three fighter aces formed a deputation, with Oak Leaves-holder Günther Lützow at their head, to protest to the Reichsmarschall his exclusion of Galland. Göring listened soberly, then summoned all the Geschwader commanders to the sumptuous Aviators' Building in Berlin. Lützow again headed the deputation; he had tabulated their complaints, which included the undue influence of former bomber commanders like Pelz and Herrmann, the misuse of the Me 262, the Reichsmarschall's slurs on his fighter pilots, and his humiliation of Galland. Göring, his knuckles turning white with anger, shouted that this was a "mutiny without parallel in history," and threatened them all with the firing squad. Two days later he pronounced the banishment of Lützow to Italy; Galland was placed under house arrest, forbidden to return to Berlin.

Göring spent his last wartime birthday skulking at Carinhall, surrounded by his camarilla, and entertaining at luncheon the few remaining Axis attachés still accredited to Berlin. The Japanese attaché's report to Tokyo portrays a Göring in a chastened, introspective mood, candidly admitting that he himself had believed that for large enemy bomber formations to operate over Germany for any length of time was "a complete impossibility."

Without appreciating it yet, however, he was already regaining air supremacy for Germany. A week earlier, on January 5, 1945, the U.S. Air Force generals Carl F. Spaatz and Jimmy Doolittle had frankly warned Eisenhower that they were going to have to attack the jet-fighter production very soon. They estimated that ten thousand tons of well-aimed bombs might set the Me 262 back by three months. Eisenhower agreed, and on this very day, January 12, Spaatz issued a new directive establishing the German jet aircraft as the "principal objective for attack." If Hitler could prolong the war beyond the summer, Spaatz warned, he would have "jets of such superior performance and such numbers as to challenge our aerial supremacy over not only Germany but all of Western Europe."

The Soviet winter offensive that began that same day was going to be hard to stop. To halt the masses of tanks and infantry, Göring transferred twenty squadrons of single-engined fighters from the Reich defenses. Hitler left the Eagle's Nest and returned to Berlin. Göring showed his face only briefly in the Chancellery, then hurried back to Carinhall. As the Russian tank columns plowed on, literally flattening the refugee columns into the bloodstained

snows, Göring found something announced a string of death sentences bolting under enemy mortar fire on plain clothes and hiding with him. He ordered the Luftwaffe's German to the Balkans, as Göring announced port "extraordinary quantities: Breslau: forty-one thousand cigarettes, spirits, and sixty kilograms of opium there. "From one private house Göring's announcement continued two vases."

Over the next days it seemed before Berlin. At night he heard the rumble of the tank engines. "There's nothing left between us to the West Wall and the Vistula possible—but not now. "People heard him exclaim, "that we've

Hitler, however, believed that would change the whole picture and so did Grand Admiral Dönitz agreed to give Galland's vacation don't know him myself," said I of him.") That Göring was not the cold language of his Reich's the new man to the Luftwaffe, the organization nor the man, regaining mastery of Germany?

Under house arrest in the Hitler the increasingly influential Goebbels him—on his private use of Lütjens. Galland lost his nerve as about his alleged defeatism and like Udet and Jeschonnek. Action and Speer forced the Gestapo into a suicide scandal. Milch threatened Göring. "Just one percent of it von Below, "will suffice to bribe

The solution that Göring held in an uncharacteristically neat one Carinhall, ordered him to form jets, and to take the other "mutiny given the crushing American day

the same pulp book three times slowly. "Three quarters of my life," he shouted to Bodenschatz, deafened by the massive attack having served his penance long enough to the uxorious comforts of

and egged on by Koller and Greim, with Oak Leaves-holder Günther Reichsmarschall his exclusion of summoned all the Geschwader commander in Berlin. Lützow again headed complaints, which included the undue influence of Pelz and Herrmann, the misuse of funds on his fighter pilots, and his face turning white with anger, shouted "in history," and threatened them. He pronounced the banishment of his house arrest, forbidden to return

talking at Carinhall, surrounded by the few remaining Axis attachés. The attaché's report to Tokyo portrays a candidly admitting that he himself was unable to operate over Germany because of impossibility."

He was already regaining air superiority on January 5, 1945, the U.S. Air Force. Doolittle had frankly warned Eisenhower to attack the jet-fighter production and tons of well-aimed bombs might have been agreed, and on this very day effective establishing the German jet fighter. "If Hitler could prolong the war, he would have 'jets of such superior performance' to challenge our aerial supremacy over Europe."

That same day was going to be hard for the infantry, Göring transferred twenty divisions to the Reich defenses. Hitler left the general showed his face only briefly in Carinhall. As the Russian tank columns rolled into the bloodstained

snows, Göring found something of his old ruthlessness. On January 16, he announced a string of death sentences against junior officers and NCOs: for bolting under enemy mortar fire, for abandoning a flak battery, for putting on plain clothes and hiding with the French, for swapping gasoline for liquor. He ordered the Luftwaffe's General Waber shot for using military trucks in the Balkans, as Göring announced with well-simulated indignation, to transport "extraordinary quantities" of consumer goods back to Bavaria and Breslau: forty-one thousand cigarettes, a thousand bottles of champagne and spirits, and sixty kilograms of coffee had been found in Waber's houses there. "From one private house in Serbia he stole valuable works of art," Göring's announcement continued, itemizing: "A watercolor, a carpet, and two vases."

Over the next days it seemed that nothing would halt the Soviet invasion before Berlin. At night he heard the windows rattling to the gunfire and rumble of the tank engines. "Emmy," he said, padding into her bedroom, "there's nothing left between us and the Russians." Had the Nazis held on to the West Wall and the Vistula line, a compromise might have been possible—but not now. "People still won't see," his personal detectives heard him exclaim, "that we've lost the war!"

Hitler, however, believed that after the summer the new jets and U-boats would change the whole picture. Bormann and other fanatics backed him, and so did Grand Admiral Dönitz and Himmler. Göring now reluctantly agreed to give Galland's vacant office to Colonel Gordon Mac Gollob. ("I don't know him myself," said Hitler, "but the Reichsführer SS speaks highly of him.") That Göring was not behind Gollob's appointment was plain from the cold language of his Reichsmarschall Order of January 23, commending the new man to the Luftwaffe. "What matters," he suggested, "is neither the organization nor the man, only the aim that is common to us all—regaining mastery of Germany's air space."

Under house arrest in the Harz Mountains General Galland learned that the increasingly influential Colonel Gollob was building up a dossier on him—on his private use of Luftwaffe cars, his gambling, and his philandering. Galland lost his nerve as his private staff were called in for questioning about his alleged defeatism and disloyalty, and he talked of shooting himself like Udet and Jeschonnek. Acting through Hitler's adjutant von Below, Milch and Speer forced the Gestapo to drop the witch hunt to avoid yet another suicide scandal. Milch threatened to reveal to the Führer what he knew against Göring. "Just one percent of it," the stocky field marshal assured Colonel von Below, "will suffice to bring him a court-martial!"

The solution that Göring hereupon devised for the Galland problem was an uncharacteristically neat one: He summoned the general once more to Carinhall, ordered him to form an elite fighter squadron using only Me 262 jets, and to take the other "mutineers" like Steinhoff with him. In effect, given the crushing American daylight-fighter supremacy, Göring was making

terranean labyrinth of tunnels and cramped cells, lavishly carpeted and walled with priceless paintings rescued from above-ground galleries.

Here, on February 2, 1945, he ordered Göring to move 123 heavy flak batteries from the cities into an antitank line along the frozen Oder. Holding the Russians here was more vital now than defending the ruins of ancient cities.

The next morning nine hundred American bombers launched a "terror raid" on Berlin. Huge new holes gaped in the Chancellery's façade. "During this morning's heavy raid on Berlin," recorded the Luftwaffe war diary, "the Reichsmarschall asks the chief of operations [General Christian] why not one of our own fighters was scrambled." The answer was that every available fighter was out counterattacking the Russians on the Oder. Göring decided to go out there too. With Emmy and the child gone, something of the old soldier stirred in his blood. After a hot bath and breakfast he now took to driving the sixty miles out to the front line and speaking with Skorzeny and the other officers defending the Frankfurt-on-Oder bridgehead. To this huntsman and forest spirit, the freezing plains were a welcome relief from the fetid, airless atmosphere of Hitler's bunker. ("He [Hitler] would scream about the uselessness of the Luftwaffe with such contempt and viciousness," recalled Göring later, "that I actually went red and squirmed. I preferred to go to the front to avoid these scenes.") Once, or so he would later claim, his car came under fire; and another time, sensing himself outflanked in the darkness by Russian tanks, Göring palmed a lethal cyanide capsule that Philipp Bouhler had obtained for him. The press ignored Göring's front-line visits, while those made by Admiral Dönitz were widely acclaimed. Hitler sneered at what he called Göring's "ridiculous excursions." "He ordered me to attend his war conferences," recalled Göring, "as though to say, 'Stand there and take it, damn you!'"

By February 6, his air force had emplaced 327 heavy flak batteries along the eastern front. Evidently none too sanguine about the battle's outcome, on the seventh the Reichsmarschall quietly called in Walter Hofer and chief architect Hetzelt to discuss evacuating the Carinhall treasures to Veldenstein—where to distribute the various items around the structure of this Franconian castle, and what modifications would be necessary to house the sculptures, paintings, tapestries, and furniture in its towers, tunnels, keeps, and stables.

The Russians launched a dangerous attack from their bridgehead at Steinau on the Oder. That day, February 8, Göring was—briefly—glimpsed down in Hitler's bunker with Field Marshal von Richthofen, now retired and terminally ill. That day too the American bombers were wrecking his synthetic-oil plant at Pölit. With stocks of only six thousand tons of aviation fuel left, the air force would get only four hundred more tons in February. Inevitably, flying operations virtually halted.

** all the mix of a love affair in which hatred was becoming more and more pronounced*

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Each time the Reichsmarschall eased his bulk into Hitler's bunker wearing the familiar uniform of soft, pearl-gray cloth, the diehard Nazis swooned with rage. Goebbels protested to Hitler. "Medal-jangling asses and vain, perfumed dandies don't belong in the high command," he wrote. "They must be eliminated."

Hitler agreed. "I am glad," he remarked, "that his wife at least has moved down to the Obersalzberg. She was the rotten influence on him."

Göring gloomily wrote his last will and testament on February 12, and drove in to Berlin for the afternoon conference. A thaw was breaking up the ice along the Oder, so the immediate danger there was lessening. But his fighter defenses were virtually immobilized by the lack of fuel.

Late on the thirteenth, radar reported enemy bombers penetrating deep into Germany behind a screen of electronic jamming. The night's real target was Dresden, Germany's "Florence of the Elbe."

One of Europe's most beautiful historic cities, Dresden had no air-raid shelters, and its streets were crowded with a million refugees from the east when the first three hundred RAF heavy bombers unloaded their fire bombs at 10:15 P.M. Three hours later, with the city's heart already a raging inferno visible 200 miles away, 529 more Lancaster bombers completed the destruction. Dresden, reported the Luftwaffe war diary, was "critically damaged, its inner city virtually destroyed, with immense casualties." On the following midday, the record book continued, twelve hundred American bombers attacked with "grave terror effect." Dresden had been engulfed during the night by a fire storm. The horrific scenes were without parallel in history—far worse than in Hamburg, Kassel, or Berlin. All telegraph lines were down, and British code-breakers heard Heinrich Himmler radioing to SS Obergruppenführer Ludolf von Alvensleben, the Dresden police chief, a message that showed how little Berlin was aware of the true horror. "I have received your report. The attacks were obviously very severe, yet every first air raid always gives the impression that the town has been completely destroyed. Take all necessary steps at once. . . . All the best." Göring, sensing disaster, sent Bodenschatz to report. The general returned to Carinhall ashen-faced, with word that fifty-one thousand dead had already been counted in Dresden. The death toll of that night's massacre would rise to over one hundred thousand.

As troops began to cremate Dresden's air-raid victims on makeshift pyres, five hundred at a time, Hitler swore revenge. His scientists had perfected the nerve gases *tabun* and *sabun*, which would have penetrated any Allied gas mask. Hitherto he had forbidden their use, as violating the Geneva Convention. Now he pondered whether it was not time to fight dirty too. Goebbels cackled approval, but Göring, Ribbentrop, and Dönitz were united in opposing any such late departure from the conventions and rules of war.

For Göring the setbacks now came thick and fast. One February morning French men and women agents were loaded aboard one of the Luftwaffe's

two remaining captured B-17 Echterdingen Airbase. Two bright-colored Flying Fortress with the entire economy. At ten-thirty orders from the Reichsmarschall tiny swastika barely visible on exploded. "One of those idiots who witnessed the drama. . . . crawling with generals. . . . From the Führer for that one!"

Bad luck completed the disaster, the Luftwaffe lost its only cargo and nine agents behind its fighter shot it down, mistaking

On the day after this incident the Reichsmarschall. Hitler had to reply to his successor. He also refused Staatssekretär—"He'd freeze!" said. "The Reichsmarschall said

Listening to the guns along the might stand down and allow into a negotiated peace. He added but he cautiously ventilated the Great," Hitler admonished his Goebbels on the eleventh that he called "a new atmosphere" "he'd do better to occupy him air." He could see the Reich retort. "I just couldn't take it later. "I finally worked myself

Hitler instructed him to lay Day. This was probably how he as a figurehead once more, while Himmler's ruthless engineer chief over the Me 262 deliveries to the

On March 13, 1945, Göring sent a second cargo of art treasures, sculpture, and 50 tapestries. He sent paintings and eleven crates of c to the party Chancellery for se Berlin late on the fourteenth. It to notify his staff in Bavaria, v

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two remaining captured B-17's in the high-security enclosure of Stuttgart's Echterdingen Airbase. Two billion French francs were stowed in the khaki-colored Flying Fortress with them. Their mission—the sabotage of France's entire economy. At ten-thirty all other flying operations were halted—"on orders from the Reichsmarschall"—while the plane took off, its obligatory tiny swastika barely visible on its tailplane. At three hundred feet the plane exploded. "One of those idiot bitches blew herself up," said a Heinkel pilot who witnessed the drama. "Eighteen dead! The next day the place was crawling with generals. . . . Hermann was furious. He got one hell of a cigar from the Führer for that one!"

Bad luck completed the disaster that poor security had begun. On March 2, the Luftwaffe lost its only other B-17: The plane had managed to set down its cargo and nine agents behind Allied lines. As it returned, an Allied night fighter shot it down, mistaking it for a German FW 200.

On the day after this incident Goebbels urged Hitler to replace the Reichsmarschall. Hitler had to reply that the air force had not produced one suitable successor. He also refused to force Göring to appoint an efficient Staatssekretär—"He'd freeze him out the moment he was appointed," Hitler said. "The Reichsmarschall can't abide strong personalities around him!"

Listening to the guns along the Oder, Göring dreamed that even now Hitler might stand down and allow him, the Reichsmarschall, to steer Germany into a negotiated peace. He admitted to Gömmert that this seemed unlikely, but he cautiously ventilated the subject of a deal to Hitler. "Frederick the Great," Hitler admonished him, "never struck bargains." He related to Goebbels on the eleventh that Göring had recommended they generate what he called "a new atmosphere" toward the enemy. "I told him," said Hitler, "he'd do better to occupy himself with generating a new atmosphere in the air." He could see the Reichsmarschall was completely shattered by his retort. "I just couldn't take it any longer," admitted Göring four months later. "I finally worked myself up into a state of nerves."

Hitler instructed him to lay the wreath at that year's Heroes Memorial Day. This was probably how he planned to employ Göring in the future—as a figurehead once more, while real men ran the war in the air. He engaged Himmler's ruthless engineer chief, SS Gruppenführer Hans Kammler, to take over the Me 262 deliveries to the squadrons.

On March 13, 1945, Göring sent his train to southern Germany loaded with a second cargo of art treasures from Carinhall—739 paintings, 60 pieces of sculpture, and 50 tapestries. He also turned over the seventeen priceless paintings and eleven crates of other relics "rescued from Monte Cassino" to the party Chancellery for separate shipment south, in a truck that left Berlin late on the fourteenth. It was loaded, as Martin Bormann was careful to notify his staff in Bavaria, with "the most valuable paintings from the

Reichsmarschall," and arrived at its destination, a disused mineshaft at Alt Aussee in Austria, two days later.

Göring now remained at Carinhall, although the walls were bare and the bookshelves empty. He descended into Hitler's bunker only infrequently. On March 18, a thousand American bombers again blasted Berlin, escorted by seven hundred fighter planes. Galland sent twenty-eight of his Me 262's into action against them. Hitler had now ordered every captured bomber aviator turned over to the Gestapo for liquidation. "Listen," shouted Göring to his chief of air staff, "has that man gone stark raving mad?"

Not caring what impression he made, Göring wheeled out of his Führer permission to travel down to Berchtesgaden briefly to "inspect the flak." More probably he wanted to check that his trainload of art had arrived safely at Veldenstein. He was living in a deranged world of his own. Hearing of the starvation among the refugees, he ordered one of his rare Schorf Heath bison shot and the carcass distributed to them. Choking upon a newspaper report of this, Goebbels recalled Marie Antoinette and her haughty advice to her own paupered subjects. His field offices reported an "unbridled hatred" of the Reichsmarschall—"Not a trace remains," rejoiced Goebbels, "of his former popularity."

In Göring's absence there emerged a crippling indecisiveness about certain secret Luftwaffe projects. Back in February, acting on the advice of Speer and Baumbach, Hitler had agreed to go ahead with Project Mistletoe, which the air force had long been planning: 120 piggy-backed planes—Ju 88's coupled with Me 109's—were standing by in East Prussia to bomb the principal Soviet power stations at last. Göring too approved, and the fuel was set aside. But in mid-March Hitler decided to hurl these planes at the bridges across the Oder and Neisse rivers the moment the major Russian offensive began. Then he changed his mind—he would use twenty-six of them against the bridges across the Vistula, in the Russians' rear. General Koller objected that the project had originally been designed to wipe out Stalin's power supplies, and that the remaining Mistletoes would not suffice for this project. Hitler hesitated, and was lost—torn between the immediate tactical needs of battle and his long-term strategic objectives: between inevitable defeat, and possible ultimate victory. "Imagine," he told Koller on March 26, "if the enemy had bombed all our power stations simultaneously! I'll forego the Vistula bridges—we can deal with them later."

"Ribbentrop," Hitler told his foreign minister, who was also anxious to end the war by diplomacy, "we're going to win this one by a nose." He mentioned the jet planes—in March 1945 Himmler's underground factory at Nordhausen would in fact assemble five hundred Me 262's and in April twice as many. The first Type XXI submarines were about to enter service—capable of cruising to Japan underwater and at high speed. By late 1945 bombproof underground refineries would be turning out three hundred thousand tons of synthetic gasoline per month. "If only," he remarked to Goeb-

bels on March 21, "Göring b And he added bitterly, "He's j two trains, to see his wife."

Göring returned to Berlin k civil servant Hans Lammers March 27, he found the Führ attempting to start negotiations wi hints to Görnert, who stayed thinking of contacting the Ame was sure that the Americans kne airmen parachuted into the Sci brought to Carinhall. Perhaps h links to the Americans. But th Hollywood, and Göring lost in General Koller's diary estab bloodshed now that Germany a thing," Koller complained to (tives from top level."

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* He believes that the closer the enemy comes the more tired they will be and the more determined his people will be

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though the walls were bare and the Hitler's bunker only infrequently. bombers again blasted Berlin, escorted sent twenty-eight of his Me 262's. He ordered every captured bomber to be destroyed. "Listen," shouted Göring, "one stark raving mad?"

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applying indecisiveness about certain matters, acting on the advice of Speer's head with Project Mistletoe, which 120 piggy-backed planes—Ju 88's—were by in East Prussia to bomb the Göring too approved, and the fuel decided to hurl these planes at the moment the major Russian mind—he would use twenty-six of them, in the Russians' rear. General Mistletoe had been designed to wipe out the Mistletoes would not suffice. Lost—torn between the immediate strategic objectives: between industry. "Imagine," he told Koller on our power stations simultaneously! deal with them later."

minister, who was also anxious to win this one by a nose." He 45 Himmler's underground factory would use hundred Me 262's and in April bombers were about to enter service and at high speed. By late 1945 he was turning out three hundred thousand. "If only," he remarked to Goeb-

*Even the enemy
than we and we
and his people will be*

bels on March 21, "Göring had done more to rush the jets into service!" And he added bitterly, "He's just gone down to the Obersalzberg again with two trains, to see his wife."

Göring returned to Berlin keener on peacemaking than ever. When top civil servant Hans Lammers visited the Chancellery for the last time on March 27, he found the Führer very upset about the Reichsmarschall "attempting to start negotiations with the Allies." Emmy Göring certainly dropped hints to Görnert, who stayed behind with the train, that her husband was thinking of contacting the Americans, and Göring confided to Speer that he was sure that the Americans knew he was on their side. One day five American airmen parachuted into the Schorf Heath, and Göring ordered their captain brought to Carinhall. Perhaps he was thinking ahead, to ways of establishing links to the Americans. But this officer had only been a movie director in Hollywood, and Göring lost interest in him.

General Koller's diary establishes how concerned Göring was to end the bloodshed now that Germany appeared to have lost. "Nobody tells us anything," Koller complained to Göring on March 28. "We badly need directives from top level."

The Reichsmarschall agreed. He too is in the dark. F. [Führer] tells him nothing, won't permit the slightest political step. For instance, a British diplomat tried to enter into talks with us in Sweden, but this was flatly forbidden by Hitler.

F. has prohibited Reichsmarschall to use his own extensive contacts. . . . F. has also rejected every opening that the foreign minister has reported to him.

Hitler ordered Göring to attend every war conference at 4:00 P.M., but he dealt preferentially with SS Gruppenführer Kammler. "Göring," wrote Goebbels on April 3, "has to listen day after day without being able to offer the slightest excuse."

Under pressure from every side, Göring made the decision to authorize Luftwaffe suicide missions. Volunteer pilots would ram the Luftwaffe's few remaining Me 109's into Allied bombers. In mid-March British code-breakers had already intercepted the message that Göring ordered all Geschwader commanders to read out secretly to pilots who had completed fighter training:

The fateful struggle for the Reich, our people, and our native soil is at its climax. Virtually the whole world is fighting against us and is resolved to destroy us and, in blind hatred, to exterminate us. With our last and utmost strength we are standing up to this menacing onslaught. Now as never before in the history of the German fatherland we are threatened with final annihilation from

which there can be no revival. This danger can be arrested only by the utmost preparedness of the supreme German warrior spirit.

Therefore, I turn to you at this decisive moment. By consciously staking your own lives, save the nation from extinction! *I summon you for an operation from which you will have only the slenderest chance of returning.* Those of you who respond will be sent back at once for pilot training. Comrades, you will take the place of honor beside your most glorious Luftwaffe warriors. In the hour of supreme danger, you will give the whole German people hope of victory, and set an example for all time. GÖRING.

The first mission, code-named *Werewolf*, ran into pragmatic objections. General Koller pointed out that if the Me 109's were used up on this, all reconnaissance and conventional-fighter operations would collapse until Focke-Wulf's new Ta 152 and the Me 262 became available in large numbers. But Hitler gave the go-ahead. Several hundred volunteers were given ten days of ideological training at Stendal, and on April 4, General Pelz, whose IX Air Corps would control the mission, reported all ready for *Werewolf*. "For psychological reasons," Pelz told the Luftwaffe high command, "we should not delay too long with the actual operation." Three days later *Werewolf* was executed—one of the most desperate Luftwaffe operations of the war. The Luftwaffe war diary confirms that 180 suicide crews took part, escorted into battle by their less-exalted comrades from JG7 and the first squadron of KG54(J). Astonished Allied radio monitors heard patriotic marches flooding the fighter-control wavelength and a female choir singing the German national anthem, while anonymous voices exhorted these 180 pilots to die—now—for the Führer and for Germany. Seventy of them did.

Such was the heroism of which Göring's young airmen were capable even on the threshold of national defeat. But there were also acts of a different hue. On March 30, Messerschmitt ferry-pilot Henry Fay picked up a brand new Me 262 jet to fly to Neuburg Airbase on the Danube. He deserted to the Americans and handed the top-secret plane over in return for a promise of immediate release to his mother. Fay also revealed to the Americans where the Me 262 and its fuel were manufactured, and described its most vulnerable points. "Aim for the engines," he recommended, "as they catch fire easily."

At 5:00 A.M. on April 16, 1945, the final Soviet push across the Oder began. Sixty more suicide pilots crash-bombed their planes onto the Oder bridges in a desperate attempt to save Berlin.

But the decay of defeat had already reached the highest levels in the capital. Learning that even Speer had disobeyed orders to destroy bridges within Berlin, Hitler challenged him to say whether he still believed in victory.

"I cannot say that I do," the minister replied. But he agreed without enthusiasm that he still *wished* that the war could be won.

"I thank you for saying the say only this"—and Göring, with his brow—"We must hold on. Donner and Blitzen! I know we

Göring intended to come through leaving one thousand air-force litigation charges laced the beautiful evacuate were being buried by and their position marked on a dame de Pompadour," and the fountain and two Cladion caryatids

On April 19, he signed letters half a million marks to his personal Wechsel Bank in Berchtesg account that he had opened in arrived there with Carin in 1921

As midnight approached, the bunker and waited to go in, to returns hardly seemed appropriate to serve the Reich better at a distance

Hitler merely nodded toward Göring took that as yes, but that he would expect the Reich's

It was not a restful night, when next morning Göring plodded on by the lake, to say farewell to Caesar's salvation. As he eased his bulk, he could hear the rippling sound of eastern outskirts of Berlin. He cold granite tomb where once he

He drove along the deserted avenue with Ramon von Ondarza with him. senior officers standing shoulder to table. Hitler announced that he would command in the next as he himself arrived from Berlin trembled violently.

Not keen to be trapped like a his thick Bavarian brogue that he and that the Russians might cut it emptied rapidly.

Göring lingered behind. "We have no objection to my leaving

danger can be arrested only by the German warrior spirit. In this moment. By consciously facing extinction! *I summon you. You will have only the slenderest chance. Who respond will be sent back to the front. You will take the place of the Luftwaffe warriors. In the hour of the whole German people hope will come. GÖRING.*

...man into pragmatic objections. The Me 109's were used up on this, all other operations would collapse until the Me 262 became available in large numbers. Several hundred volunteers were at Stendal, and on April 4, General Goring, the mission, reported all ready for the actual operation. Pelz told the Luftwaffe high command the actual operation. Three days of the most desperate Luftwaffe operations confirms that 180 suicide crews took off in small comradely from JG7 and the Allied radio monitors heard patriotic speeches and a female choir singing anonymous voices exhorted these 180 for Germany. Seventy of them died. The young airmen were capable even if there were also acts of a different kind. Pilot Henry Fay picked up a brand new plane on the Danube. He deserted to the Soviet plane over in return for a promise also revealed to the Americans where it was, and described its most vulnerable points, "as they catch fire easily."

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...ached the highest levels in the capital. He gave orders to destroy bridges within the city. He still believed in victory. Goring replied. But he agreed without doubt that the war could be won.

"I thank you for saying the best you could," replied Hitler. "But I can say only this"—and Goring, watching, saw the perspiration standing out on his brow—"We must hold on until the last hour! No matter how much the Donner and Blitzen! I know we shall come through."

Goring intended to come through. He was packed and ready to go. He was leaving one thousand air-force troops to guard his Carinhall estate. Demolition charges laced the beautiful structure. The art treasures too bulky to evacuate were being buried by troops of the Hermann Goring Panzer Corps and their position marked on a map—Houdon's "Bather," Pigalle's "Madame de Pompadour," and the famous Venus given to him by Italy. A costly fountain and two Cladion caryatids were carried out into the heath and hidden.

On April 19, he signed letters directing the August-Thyssen Bank to cable half a million marks to his personal account at the Bayerische Hypotheken und Wechsel Bank in Berchtesgaden, and closing out the old Deutsche Bank account that he had opened in Berlin's Schöneberg suburb when he first arrived there with Carin in 1928.

As midnight approached, he stationed his portly person outside Hitler's bunker and waited to go in, to present his birthday wishes. Many happy returns hardly seemed appropriate—he inquired whether he might be able to serve the Reich better at a distance from Berlin, Berchtesgaden perhaps?

Hitler merely nodded toward the door.

Goring took that as yes, but to his dismay Hitler phoned soon after to say that he would expect the Reichsmarschall at the midday conference as usual.

It was not a restful night, what with the Russian troops so close by. The next morning Goring plodded off through the pine woods to the mausoleum by the lake, to say farewell to Carin—the wife to whom he owed his personal salvation. As he eased his bulk down the narrow, moss-covered stone steps, he could hear the rippling sound of Russian artillery lobbing shells into the eastern outskirts of Berlin. He knelt briefly, then straightened and left the cold granite tomb where once he had planned to join her.

He drove along the deserted autobahn into the city, taking only his doctor Ramon von Ondarza with him. At the noon conference he found twenty senior officers standing shoulder to shoulder around the cramped briefing table. Hitler announced that he was splitting up the high command—Admiral Dönitz would command in the north and Goring in the south until such time as he himself arrived from Berlin. As he signed the orders, his right hand trembled violently.

Not keen to be trapped like a rat in Berlin, General Koller pointed out in his thick Bavarian brogue that nobody should bank on being able to fly out, and that the Russians might cut off Berlin at any moment. The bunker room emptied rapidly.

Goring lingered behind. "Mein Führer," he ventured. "I presume you have no objection to my leaving for the Obersalzberg right away?"

"Do what you want," said Hitler curtly. "But then Koller stays here." It was an ignominious parting for two men who had been each other's fortune and misfortune for over twenty years. But even Koller found it hard to condemn Göring for turning his back on the clique around Hitler. He had not a single friend there now—there remained just ambitious men who had fought tooth and claw for power, while millions of ordinary citizens had perished.

It must have been now that a curious private discussion took place between Göring and Himmler. Göring touched on it only once in later months, saying it was the last time he saw Himmler (and Hitler's secretary Gerda Christian specifically recalled seeing Himmler and Göring talking this day). For "two or three hours," Göring recalled, they talked on the delicate topic of how to make contact with the enemy. Himmler smugly revealed that the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte had recently visited him, and was actually returning for a further meeting that evening at Hohenlychen, the SS clinic. "You know," boasted Himmler, "he must be the man sent by Eisenhower to negotiate."

Göring felt sick. "I can't believe that," he said woodenly. "Don't take offense, but I doubt that they'll find you acceptable as a negotiating partner."

"Sorry to contradict," smiled Himmler. "But I have incontrovertible proof that I am considered abroad to be the only person capable of maintaining order."

At this, Göring shut up. Perhaps Himmler knew more than he. As they parted, the Reichsführer asked him rather too insistently whether he, Göring, would appoint him chancellor in the event that anything now happened to the Führer. Göring mumbled that that would not be possible since constitutionally both offices were now combined.

"Herr Reichsmarschall," persisted Himmler delicately. "If anything should prevent you from succeeding the Führer—say you are eliminated (*augeschaltet*)—can I have the job?"

Göring gulped. Eliminated? He recalled that after the July 1944 bomb plot Popitz had testified under interrogation that Himmler was planning to replace Göring in the line of succession, and that upon reading this he had asked permission to interrogate the condemned man himself: But the Gestapo hangman had got to Popitz first. "My dear Himmler," he replied uneasily. "We shall have to wait and see. That will depend upon circumstances. I can't see for the life of me what might prevent me from taking up the office."

Darkness fell on the Reich capital. RAF Mosquito bombers had begun pummeling Berlin. On an impulse Göring decided to visit the air-raid shelters—although he would have been better advised to depart before the one remaining road to the south was overrun.

It is clear that he wanted to test his own popularity. Wisecracking his way from one bunker to another, he said farewell to the stoical Berliners. Word

spread ahead, and messengers wanted to see "Herr Meier" would have greeted the Reich words later, "We headed for

It was 2:20 A.M. before the armor-plated limousine, chartered out of the courtyard Philipp Bouhler. In Göring's and nurse Christa, who had that night the convoy drove south American armies. Once, surrounded by a fiery haze lit eclipsed all other emotions. From there he intended to see Churchill. He would end the war, it, and he would not allow it.

The route passed through the city, but he had been evacuated here, but he was at a mobile flak unit to refuse

He arrived on the Obersalzberg. Edda, Emmy, her sister, nephew was here too—the Russians surrounded by the females of his into the tranquil mountain sky. The phones jangled they did so often.

Dismissing from his mind the art collection down at Berchtesgaden, he fell into a long and

schhorn Castle near Zell am

Göring glimpsed a G.I. and of the gateway. Rather alarm- S cavalry division.* "Guard Luftwaffe major noticed that Heli Bouhler fell into each

ed Göring.

med to the interpreter. "Ask ear a pistol or my ceremonial

ral. located to him to take a bath um and a dozen medals, and in front of the Lone Star flag he asked whether he might [After talking it over with the onel] Waldemar Fegelein, the

Göring told Emmy privately. many."

nds before switching on the minded her, and withdrew into for herself and little Edda— ose his thoughts for the next floorboards creak as he paced dialogue with General Eisen-

ext morning. He had chosen a ring or two and bejeweled foppery. "It's not farewell," twelve-cylinder Maybach for quarters. "Things are looking

u still have what Ango gave

his eyes off the matching blue an cars. They parted. It would or daughter again.

containing the private diaries of Hitler's at she and Adolf had exchanged. Found ments are now sadly missing.

The Texas Division had its headquarters in the five-star Grand Hotel at Kitzbühl. G.I.'s and reporters mobbed the little convoy as it arrived. The division commander, Major General John E. Dahlquist, saluted Göring, shook hands, and invited him to share his lunch of chicken, potatoes, and peas eaten out of a mess tin. Afterwards, the Reichsmarschall—for such was still his rank—went out onto the hotel balcony so that the American and German troops milling around the Maybach could take snapshots. One report even said he had a champagne glass in his hand.

Dahlquist asked his opinion of the other Nazi leaders. Still angry at the Führer's all too recent death sentence on him, Göring described Hitler as narrow-minded and ignorant, adding that Ribbentrop was a scoundrel and Hess an eccentric. Dahlquist perceived an underlying irritation at his captors' tardiness in bringing him together with Eisenhower.

As the days wore on, such a meeting seemed increasingly unlikely. A tiny Piper Cub flew him on May 10 across to U.S. Seventh Army headquarters at Augsburg. His composure was unshaken until Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch asked him why Nazi Germany had not overrun Spain and Gibraltar in 1940, thus bottling up the British Fleet in the Mediterranean. "That was always my advice!" screamed Göring. "Always, always, always! And it was never, never taken."

At 5:00 P.M. he was brought face to face with his principal American adversary, General Spaatz, commanding general of the U.S. strategic air forces. Göring saluted, and Spaatz gave the correct salute in response (nor did he have the slightest misgivings about doing so, as he told Colonel Lindbergh five days later). Bruce Hopper, Spaatz's chief historian, took in the heavy silver ring on the Reichsmarschall's third finger, the clear blue eyes, the ruddy but not unpleasant features, the outsize thighs, and the tan-colored boots. Göring responded to questions with a good humor that belied his growing concern.

"In the Battle of Britain," asked Spaatz, "why did you maintain such rigid formations of fighters and bombers?"

"It was necessary to escort the bombers because their firepower was low (not like your bombers)."

"Was the Junkers 88 designed for the Battle of Britain?"

"We had nothing else," explained Göring. "I was not in favor of engaging in the Battle of Britain at that time. It was too early."

He asked Spaatz if a bottle of whiskey could be produced, and General Patch rather grudgingly obliged. Spaatz asked the Luftwaffe chief whether the jet airplane ever really had a chance of winning the war.

"Yes," said Göring, "I am convinced—if only we had had four or five months more. Our underground installations were practically ready. The factory in the Harz had a capacity of a thousand to twelve hundred jet airplanes a month. Now with five to six thousand jets, the outcome would have been very different!"

Lieutenant General Hoyt Vandenberg, of the Ninth Air Force, chipped in, "But could you have trained sufficient jet pilots given your shortage of oil?"

"Oh, yes," replied Göring. "We would have had underground oil plants producing a sufficient quantity for the jets. The pilot's conversion to the jets was very easy. Output of jet pilots was always a month ahead of jet-aircraft production."

Spaatz leaned forward. He inquired intently which had contributed more to the defeat of Nazi Germany—precision bombing or area bombing? It was a question of patriotic importance, and Göring knew it. "Your precision bombing," he flattered Spaatz, "because that was decisive. A ruined industry was difficult to replace. . . . I myself planned to carry out only precision bombing at the beginning. I wanted to lay a barrier of contact mines around Britain and seal off her ports, but again I was forced to do otherwise by political *Diktat*."

Recalling this unusual dialogue years later in an oral interview, Brigadier General Glenn O. Barcus remembered that Spaatz asked Göring whether he had any recommendations as to the improvement of American airpower. "Göring kind of smiled, and said, 'I should be telling *you* about how to use air power!'" The verbatim record in Spaatz's papers shows that he asked, "If you had to design the Luftwaffe again, what would be the first airplane you would develop?" "The jet fighter," said Göring, "and then the jet bomber. The problem of speed has been solved. It is now a question of fuel. The jet fighter consumes too much. The Me 264 jet bomber, designed to fly to America and back, awaited only the final solution of this problem."

"Did you have a three-inch gun for the jet?" asked Spaatz.

"The fifty-five-millimeter cannon, which is only now going into production, would have made a great difference in the jet. While waiting for that, we were using the fifty-five-millimeter rocket. You might find some jet airplanes around Germany equipped with [55mm] antitank guns. Don't blame me for such monstrosities. This was done on the explicit orders of the Führer. Hitler knew nothing about the air . . . absolutely nothing. He even considered the Me 262 to be a bomber, and he insisted it should be called a bomber!"

After this talk they took him into the kitchen of the camp office, and stripped him of all his medals and insignia except for his Reichsmarschall's epaulets. On the following day, May 11, 1945, he was taken out of the back door of the two-story suburban house in Augsburg to meet fifty Allied newspapermen. Gripping a pair of matching gray suede gloves, he slumped into an easy chair and mopped at his brow as the shutters clicked. After five minutes they allowed him to move into the thin shade of a willow tree. The questioning resumed. Heaping blame for the first time in public on Martin Bormann, he insisted that it must have been Bormann and not Hitler who had nominated Dönitz as the new Führer. "Hitler," rasped Göring, "did not leave a thing in writing saying that Dönitz was to take his place!"

He publicly revealed that he had opposed Hitler's attack on Russia. "I

pointed out to him," said Göring, "a two-front war. . . . But I bring Russia to her knees." I moment of the war. "The g range fighter bomber that co return to its home base. I re was lost shortly after the [Jur breakthrough."

Asked inevitably about the missive. "I was never so close on this subject," he said "merely propaganda. Hitler, hand signing the documents, time I saw him."

Göring was removed to the Villa Pagenstecher in Wiesbaden. He tried hard to make a case for himself after interviewing him, "and mentally deranged. In fact he was a great actor and professional observations, trying to keep what order to have some bargaining know my speeches," Göring said of them have I attacked for sincerity he even claimed never sent anybody to a concentration course," he remarked as an necessity and expediency!"

He still sidestepped all known thought that they were places said. Shown grim pictures taken up with this answer: "Those pictures depict things that happened in suddenly derived a fiendish pleasure efforts to disclaim any responsibility atrocity stories spread after World War II."

Hidden microphones heard his "fraudulent" claim by Dönitz know about it," Göring reminded. Anybody might turn up tomorrow after Dönitz got his—now I am Lammers listened intently. "You produce documentary proof."

The two men reexamined the

then reconsidered the last signal Bormann had transmitted from the bunker: "In the place of Reichsmarschall Göring, the Führer appoints you, Grand Admiral, as his successor." "Is there anything," shouted Göring, "more fantastic than this fraud committed by Bormann? . . . Well, I must say those damn crooks have pulled a fast one. It beats everything. . . . I always knew that if anything happened to the Führer, my life would be in the gravest danger for the next forty-eight hours. After that I would have been sworn in and it would have taken legal effect. Whatever happened, I would have arrested Bormann in forty-eight hours—and he knew it, too!—and sacked Ribbentrop. Those two were the thorns in my flesh."

Talking with interrogators again, he willingly blamed Hitler but denied that they had seriously planned to use chemical warfare or nerve gas. "None of your gas masks would have afforded any protection," he added. "This gas was so dangerous that I would not permit another demonstration. I knew that the gas would have had to be transported to the rear when the Americans came, and the result of an air attack on the train might have been catastrophic. . . . We knew we were the more advanced in chemical warfare and that we had the more deadly gases." Talking of the fire storms in Hamburg and Dresden, he dabbed at his eyes. "It was terrible," he said. "The people of Dresden could not believe that you would bomb their city, because they thought that Dresden was too well known as a cultural center." Then he changed the subject. "The people," he boasted to chief interrogator Major Paul Kubala, "never called me anything but Hermann! Just Hermann! Never anything but Hermann! To be called by one's first name—that is the height of popularity."

His evacuated Carinhall art collection had now been found. The special train had carried on from Veldenstein to Berchtesgaden on April 13. Göring's troops had carried the most spectacular items into a secret cavern walled into a tunnel beneath his staff quarters on the Unsterstein Mountain. As the French Moroccan troops invaded Berchtesgaden, Hofer and Göring's secretary Fräulein Limberger fled the train. "Jewel cases were opened," said Göring later, "and the gems taken, the settings were scattered all around."

After the French came the Americans, the famous 101st Airborne Division. Questioning Göring's household staff, Lieutenant Raymond F. Newkirk heard the first rumors of the walled-up cavern. The tunnel's engineer was located, and he led Newkirk to the second level of a series of underground tunnels. A platoon of U.S. Army engineers broke into the hidden room. It took four days to empty the cavern. It was very damp, and the priceless contents were protected from the water dripping from the ceiling only by costly tapestries that had been hastily flung over them. The paintings were stacked up outside—works by Rubens, Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Boucher, and Botticelli. There was the "Infanta Margareta" by Velázquez, which Göring had bought from a seized Rothschild collection in 1941; and there was a "Rembrandt"

head of an old man with bought from a Paris dealer

Göring never let his blue his magnificently crafted to talcum powder to make sur

"Where are your private I would like to know th

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*The "Rembrandt" was a fake.

head of an old man with marvelous nuances of gray, which Göring had bought from a Paris dealer in 1940.*

Göring never let his blue luggage out of his sight. Occasionally he checked his magnificently crafted toilet case with all the colognes, hand cream, and talcum powder to make sure that nothing was missing.

"Where are your private jewels?" he was asked by one interrogator.

"I would like to know that myself," was his wan reply.

On May 14, his valet Robert had been sent back to Fischhorn Castle to collect a Rothschild painting. Göring handed it over to Major Kubala and the French liaison officer, Captain Albert Zoller, on the fifteenth—a fifteenth-century painting called "The Madonna of Memling." His bejeweled Reichsmarschall's baton was at that very moment in a parcel being mailed home by a G.I.; intercepted by U.S. Customs, it is now on display at West Point. His 1935 Wedding Sword, stolen by an American platoon sergeant, dwells in a bank safe in Indiana—its value enhanced by the legends about its owner, as though it were Siegfried's sword itself.

Göring had several conversations with the Frenchman Zoller. "Little things," he philosophized, "can have big results. All our cities were devastated, one after the other, and those damned aluminum strips were to blame!"

Several more times the hidden microphones overheard him talking to Lammers about what he would have done if Hitler had died earlier. "I told some gauleiters who were close to me," he remarked on May 19, "about a year and a half ago . . . that if Fate ever destined me to succeed Hitler, I would place a supreme court above me. I told myself that no man ought to assume the responsibility of being answerable to nobody. A dictatorship," he wheezed, "must never come again. It does not work. We see it now. In the beginning everything is wonderful, but then it all gets out of hand."

He complained several times about the humiliating treatment by the Americans. "It is usual," he told Major Kubala, "for a marshal to have a house of his own to live in." Kubala reported that Göring was claiming to have asked Eisenhower for safe-conduct when he "gave himself up," and was indignant now to find himself a prisoner of war. "He is worried," added Kubala on May 23, "about his private possessions."

Göring kept a huntsman's weather eye open for officers whom he could use. He blatantly flattered the Americans. "Without the American Air Force," he assured Lieutenant Colonel Eric M. Warburg, a former Hamburg banker who had served in the Prussian artillery in World War I, "the war would still be going on—but assuredly not on German soil!" He pitted his brains particularly against "Major Evans,"—in real life the Wall Street financier Ernst Englander. Englander was motivated by a thirst for revenge. "I should like to see those boys hang and sweat," he wrote in one private letter at this

*The "Rembrandt" was a fake.

transmitted from the bunker:
"Führer appoints you, Grand
"ing," shouted Göring, "more
"ain? . . . Well, I must say those
"everything. . . . I always knew
"my life would be in the gravest
"that I would have been sworn
"never happened, I would have
"he knew it, too!—and sacked
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azquez, which Göring had bought
; and there was a "Rembrandt"

time, "rather than to make themselves out as heroes and martyrs." For several days they sparred. "I found it easier," Englander wrote, "to deal with them by getting reasonably chummy, and as a result Göring asked me to do a favor and see his wife for him."

A tattered snapshot of Emmy and Edda was Göring's most cherished possession. On the back he now penned these words to Emmy: "Major Evans has my confidence. Hermann Göring." To remunerate the officer he also gave him a portrait, signed to "Major Evans, in grateful memory, Hermann Göring." Englander thanked him effusively. It did not escape the prisoner that some American officers would do almost anything in return for a personal souvenir.

On May 20, 1945, they flew him in a small six-seater plane—he had to enter through the cargo hatch—to Luxembourg. With him went a written report from Major Kubala, warning against regarding the captive as a comical figure. Göring was cool and calculating, and "able to grasp the fundamental issues under discussion quickly. He is certainly not a man to be underrated."

They held him in Luxembourg for three months. It was plain that there was to be a major trial. Among the fifty fellow Nazis interned here in the Grand Hotel of the little spa town of Mondorf-les-Bains he found Hans Frank, his wrists still bandaged from a suicide attempt, as well as Böhle, Brandt, Daluge, Darré, Frick, Funk, Jodl, Keitel, Ley, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, and Streicher. He registered with quiet satisfaction that Dönitz, his rival as "Hitler's successor," had also been unceremoniously dumped here too. They agreed on an uneasy truce. "I have always been the second man in the state," Göring told the admiral's adjutant Walther Lüdde-Neurath. "And you can be quite certain that if we're for the high jump, mine will be the first head into the noose!"

There was little luxury about his fourth-floor room. To prevent suicides, the Americans had removed all power supplies and light bulbs and had replaced sixteen hundred window panes with Perspex sheets. After General Greim, his successor as commander in chief, swallowed poison on May 24, the Americans suddenly seized Göring's luggage, to his dismay, and a triumphant G.I. immediately found the brass cyanide cartridge that he had concealed in a tin of American coffee. The Americans now looked no further.

This unusual hotel was commanded by Burton C. Andrus, a pompous and unimaginative colonel in the U.S. Cavalry who moved about majestically, his plump figure impeccably garbed in a uniform and highly polished helmet. Andrus had not been anxious for the job. He knew, as he told his family a year later, that this was one job where he could not win: Like a tightrope walker crossing Niagara Falls, he knew that if he slipped it would be his neck; while if he didn't, the box-office receipts went to the stockholders. Göring gave him sleepless nights to the end of his life. Minutes before Colonel

Andrus died, years later, he stooped moaning: "I've got to get to Göring."

The hatred was mutual between the two men. The hatred of the "chief" because of that helmet, which he had sequestered all his treasures, in the Andrus papers:

one gold Luftwaffe badge; one gold desk watch; one gold personal toilet case, * one gold and monogrammed by Prin and box; one gold and velvet cigarette set with diamonds; one gold keys; one emerald ring; one semi-precious buttons; one diamond Luftwaffe brooch; fr one gold pin (evergreen twig with swastika of diamond cl stones, diamond, inlaid Luft silver); one small watch set Pour le Mérite; one Iron Cro one gold cigarette-lighter, or buckles; one brass compass: mann Göring"; one silver watch; one set of lapis lazuli shaped; one platinum Iron C Swiss wristwatch; 81,268 Re

It is worth noting what became of the "case" italicized above was back in how. After Göring's death, Emmy's papers—for 750 Reichsmarks, two bags, and other listed items that did, earlier, nor the fountain pen or la. Evidently he had given these away were later seen in the possession of Army second lieutenant whom he had been seen.

Andrus was a meticulous keeper of these men alive, and his security me

*Italics here and below are the author's.

meals were eaten off plain

growled Göring.

soldiers," shouted a German
Andrus, as he later testified
on these Germans not to give

He began to worry incessantly:
about how to get into his blue

FAT STUFF

"**T**he cause for which Göring stood," the Seventh Army interrogation center had reported on May 23, 1945, "is lost. But the canny Hermann even now thinks only what he can do to salvage some of his personal fortune, and to create an advantageous position for himself. He condemns the once-beloved Führer without hesitation. Up to now he has not made a plea in favor of his former henchmen, alive or dead. Yet behind his spirited and often witty conversation is a constant watchfulness for the opportunity to place himself in a favorable light."

Göring's treatment at Mondorf had undoubtedly shaken him. His valet Robert had been taken away from him. His room was barely furnished and unlit. Of his toilet articles he had been left only a sponge, soap, and toothbrush—nothing else, not even a comb. He wrote to protest to Eisenhower at this illegal treatment. "I cannot believe that Your Excellency wishes and knows about the humiliating effect this treatment has upon me." He requested permission to return briefly by plane to his family so that he could at least make the most essential arrangements for them and take proper leave of them. He received no reply.

To while away that time, Admiral Hans von Friedeburg's adjutant taught the fifty imprisoned men how to play Battleships. Göring sank Dönitz's

been real, but he did not like to
mann's cheating! If he doesn't
them in on different squares!"

weighed in at 264 pounds, which
only 186 pounds at the end.) His
profusely, short of breath but not
extra contractions (systoles). "His
and sallow except his face, which
color of both hands and he appears
found no diseases, and remarked
obese, flaccid, and generally in
and the doctors that over the past
frequent heart attacks "manifested
perspiration, and nervousness."

and mysterious white pills in his
each day, night and morning. "My
Supreme Headquarters, Allied
," "reports that if we suddenly
become totally demented." SHAEF
prisoner remain coherent for some
things we wish to ask him," they
one's missing art treasures, "before
him."

surgeon, Captain (M.C.) Clint L.
as rapidly as possible without
one of the pills had meanwhile been
"It was found," reported the FBI
itself, "that the tablets contain 10
codeine." Dr. Nathan B. Eddy of
this as "not approaching morphine
ing only about one-fifth as strong
abrupt withdrawal would evoke the

Americans here called him, were
Gans, a SHAEF financial expert,
Reichsmarschall's monetary dealings.

"You can have that too!"
that you robbed from everyone else,
stored."

Göring corrected him. In his view he had acquired his art collection quite legally.

"Most of these things were bought, yes," conceded Gans, who had evidently done his homework. "But at a price fixed by you!"

Subtly playing on underlying American fears, Göring spoke of the seductive Russian propaganda methods and reminded Gans that once before Germany and Russia had collaborated for a century. "At first," he continued, referring to most recent history, "the Germans were very afraid of the Russians. . . . Immediately after the collapse, the Russians did a skillful job over the radio: they proclaimed that Germany must not be partitioned again, and they started to reopen the German theaters. In this zone you have adopted the opposite approach."

The Americans found it hard to undermine his morale although he was now deeply concerned about Emmy and Edda. On June 25 Lieutenant Herbert Dubois took over the grilling. "Do you know that Hitler, Himmler, and Goebbels are dead? . . . You are the last great Nazi. How did you manage to survive? Why haven't you died?"

"It was an accident," responded Göring. Dubois discomfited him by asking about the billion Reichsmark fine that he had levied on the Jewish community in November 1938. "Is a German field marshal never ashamed?" he challenged.

At first the Reichsmarschall was evasive—"I don't have to answer that question under the Geneva Convention"—but he immediately afterward softened enough to utter one of his rare expressions of personal remorse. "I regret it. You have to take the times into account."

On May 10, 1945, Dr. Robert Kempner, a former Prussian civil servant who had emigrated to Pennsylvania, wrote to the Pentagon pointing out that during Göring's jurisdiction over police matters in 1933 many people had been tortured and killed. "Such cases," Kempner continued, "were brought to his personal attention. At that time bribery was one of the chief means of obtaining release from concentration camps. The money, jewelry, or gold cigarette cases were turned over to his fiancée, now Mrs. Emmy Sonnemann Göring, who has also been captured." Little of this was true, but to break down Göring's "staged self-assurance" Kempner pleaded for Göring to be brought to the United States for interrogation on his morphine addiction, on Emmy's "former intimate friendship with a Jewish theatrical man" and Hermann's "relationship to the late Austrian Jewish landowner Baron Hermann von Epenstein." The suggestion was disregarded. Instead Kempner, himself a Jew, would be taken onto the prosecution staff at Nuremberg.

Evidence against Göring was raked together from the most eclectic sources. British intelligence intercepted a letter in June 1945 from Stockholm to London in which a Mrs. Anna Morck wrote that Göring had given jewelry

to Carin's sister Lily Martin—"Things stolen from Poland and other places, which ought to be given back." Hidden microphones installed in a special prison camp outside London recorded Göring's generals in, as they thought, private conversation. Bodenschatz was heard telling Milch that Göring was "the most ungrateful man in the world!" "Always was," agreed Milch. "A rotten character." When he described the Reichsmarschall's mauve-painted fingernails Galland corrected him: "It wasn't paint, it was a transparent varnish." "Bodenschatz," said Milch, "you say the Führer gave Göring a monthly allowance of thirty thousand Reichsmarks. Do you imagine he met all his expenses out of *that*? . . . The three hundred and sixty thousand marks he received each year wouldn't last him even a month!" Each scrap of conversation was transcribed and sent secretly to brief Göring's interrogators.

Now calling himself "Major Emery," Ernst Engländer visited this camp on June 5 and told Milch, Koller, and Galland that Göring was blackening their names. The angry generals exchanged more scuttlebutt about him. In his private diary Milch jotted down what the others told him of Göring's sleazy dealings with Heinkel, Siebel, Koppenberg, and aluminum factories in Norway. Told of Göring's apparent interest in Professor Morell's pharmaceutical empire, General Kreipe chimed in that the Reichsmarschall had also been the majority shareholder in a certain brand of contraceptives. "Do you know," replied Milch, capping that tidbit, "that our commander in chief received money personally for each picture hanging in a barracks?!" He banged his first on the table. "Do you know that our commander in chief pocketed a fine of fourteen million Dutch guilders imposed for a rebellion somewhere in Holland and transferred them to Switzerland for his personal use?" The SS told me all this, and backed it up with evidence. But there is such a thing as poetic justice, gentlemen! . . . Göring's chauffeur made off with a case containing all Mrs. Göring's jewelry."

Emmy Göring had been allowed to return to a little cottage near Veldenstein. One day an American army sergeant arrived and told her in confidence that her husband had been secretly tried and acquitted, and would be released the next day. Emmy had never been noted for political acuity. She happily gave the messenger a precious emerald ring, scraped together some victuals for a welcoming feast, and waited for several days before she could accept that the man had been a trickster.

Confined at Mondorf still, Göring paced his cage like a trapped lion. For a man born and bred in the mountains, who had spent his youth in the skies

*General Christiansen, military commander of the Netherlands, had imposed a 14-million-guilder levy on a Dutch community. The British informed Allied officials at Nuremberg of the overheard allegation, namely that Göring had given 1 million guilders of this fine to Christiansen and transferred the remainder as Swiss francs to Switzerland. Challenged about this on December 22, 1945, Göring dismissed it as "nonsense" and pointed out that "Krischan" came directly under the high command, not the air force.

and his manhood at the wheel moment of this confinement in mugshots taken on June 22 show similar photographs show the was a young lieutenant in the R "Except for a considerable loss seeing him on the seventh, "C visibly. He is . . . very wary. him of something, but he is no

The commandant, Colonel , duced. On July 19, Göring cour and complained, "Each day le been introduced to the prisone urologist of the type that Göri complained of headaches, and a lems, applied heat therapy inst

"Send up Fat Stuff!" The cr Mondorf, and Göring would a interview room between two gu Army historians came to talk wi had no axe to grind and allowe Hitler and Bormann. "Once," thousand phone calls to answer still called Hitler that—"about was Martin Bormann. "I can' evil genius, and I couldn't wi down myself. I haven't the sli reconciliation between the Führ in the air again."

To Kenneth W. Hechler, onc like reeling in a big fish—pla eventually. "*Morgen, Herr Rei* tiatingly, and listen with appare iations he was suffering and his Once Hechler tried to ask abot offensive, but Göring began by c through Sedan in 1940 and neve

"Göring," the interrogators v of believing his own fabrication more plausible to him." Hechle about to tell a whopper. His smil his hands swept fractionally wid as though to throw dust in his in

"If we had not invaded Normandy," he asked, "do you think you could have beaten Russia?"

Göring leaned forward and whispered in mock confidence that if Eisenhower had given his *personal* guarantee, the Germans would have socked the Soviets so hard that they would have seen the sun (he jabbed one finger skyward), the moon (another jab), and the stars (a whole galaxy of jabs). Hechler roared with laughter.

That Monday, July 23, a Soviet officers' commission arrived. Bellowing, "The Russians are coming!" Göring vanished into his cell. The next day he saw them nonetheless, and Hechler heard the Russians screaming at him.

Suddenly [wrote Hechler four years later in a private memoir] I heard Göring starting to answer the interrogators. I couldn't distinguish what he was saying, but it was interrupted repeatedly by chuckles from the Russians. Soon Göring's voice rose, and the chuckles swelled to roars of laughter. For two hours the noise of guffaws echoed down the halls, and then the Russians came out slapping each other on the back.

Afterward, Göring came in to see the major and hitched up his baggy pants with a swagger. "I really had those Russkies rolling in the aisles, didn't I!"

Undoubtedly Fat Stuff was coming back fighting, and the Americans only had themselves to blame. On July 23, 1945, Colonel Andrus recorded a further cut in the paracodeine dosage. "He looks very good, is losing much weight [and] has apparently no other ill effects—except that he would like to get larger doses."

He still worked off his old grievances. He told Ribbentrop impolitely where he could file an eighty-five-page memorandum he had just composed. He still insisted that *he* was Hitler's surrogate, and nobody else. "Dönitz," he complained once more to Shuster on the twenty-third, "just took command on the basis of a radio message that was never confirmed in writing. Bormann signed it 'p.p. the Führer.'"

He had shed seventeen pounds already and was still losing weight. By July 26, his dosage had been cut to fifteen pills. Andrus noticed his disgust at "being short-changed," but that was all. On August 4, the colonel reported, "Göring states that his health is better now than it has been for years." He explained to his superiors, "It is our purpose not only to keep Göring well, but to eliminate any possible bar to trial or punishment."

Göring had already made the simple decision that eluded his co-defendants in the coming trial: to die like a man. He had never been afraid of death. As a lad, he had stood his ground when an Austrian avalanche had crashed around him. "The true German," he had sermonized to his staff on November 25, 1944, "faces up to the ultimate sacrifice with a certain sovereignty and peace of mind. . . . For me, life on this planet has just been an intermission

during which I have had to perform. The devil take it, before I allow myself to grovel just to cling on to this life."

On August 5, the U.S. Army announced that prisoners of war were to be turned over to the name headed the list. He had the last. Five days later his paraca-

Unwell once again, he remained with old heart trouble, while his mind wandered and left. All came to say their goodbyes, but Göring churlishly refused. Dönitz's adjutant stood at the head of his bed, and he converted into a kind of throne. The naval officer could see his old form and vitality, but he found his old form and vitality promised him, with the glint of steel on me. There're one or two things.

That afternoon, August 12, he flew from Luxembourg to Nuremberg on his last airplane journey of his life. He was keenly about the flight. "His last flight," an American officer three days later found in his dressing gown, "was a heart attack and . . . bronchitis."

Nuremberg was a landscape of its adjoining detention block. It was thirteen feet by seven. Göring sat along the left wall. Just to the right of the bowl was set in an alcove to the fresh plaster patches when the lack of electric wiring, and the windows high up the end wall of ducking out of this last battle on the little table—so flimsy it could stand on it—with pride. "Daddy," she had written on the wall, "such longing for you. Many thanks."

Tight security precautions projected daily Vitamin B and provided the harsh new jail regime. To occasionally allowed one aspirin to be given.

Colonel Andrus had ordered

during which I have had to perform as best I could. No more, and no less. . . . The devil take it, before I allow any man to drag me down and make me grovel just to cling on to this tattered thing called life!"

On August 5, the U.S. Army sent to SHAEF headquarters the formal list of prisoners to be turned over to the control of prosecuting counsel. Göring's name headed the list. He had become number-one man in Nazi Germany at last. Five days later his paracodeine medication was stopped for good.

Unwell once again, he remained upstairs in the Grand Hotel, suffering the old heart trouble, while his more fortunate fellow prisoners were mustered and left. All came to say their farewells except for two Staatssekretäre who churlishly refused. Dönitz's adjutant was the last to come up. Göring received him esconced at the head of his bed in a heap of blankets that he had contrived to convert into a kind of throne, as though sitting in the high chair at Carinhall. The naval officer could see he was in a brilliant mood, having obviously found his old form and vitality. "Whatever happens," the Reichsmarschall promised him, with the glint of coming battle in his eye, "you can count on me. There're one or two things I'm going to say at the coming trial."

That afternoon, August 12, 1945, an American C-47 transport plane flew him from Luxembourg to Nuremberg. Perhaps unaware that it was to be the last airplane journey of his life, he thoroughly enjoyed the trip and chattered keenly about the flight. "His health is probably not very good," warned an American officer three days later, "and on two recent occasions he was to be found in his dressing gown and pajamas in bed, as a result first of a slight heart attack and . . . bronchitis."

Nuremberg was a landscape of ruins surrounding the Palace of Justice and its adjoining detention block. The cells were low-ceilinged cubicles barely thirteen feet by seven. Göring would sleep on a metal cot bolted to the floor along the left wall. Just to the right of the narrow doorway a porcelain toilet bowl was set in an alcove to afford minimal privacy. As his eyes took in the fresh plaster patches where iron hooks had been ripped out of the wall, the lack of electric wiring, and the Perspex freshly installed in the tiny windows high up the end wall, he must have smiled. He had no intention of ducking out of this last battle prematurely. He placed his few possessions on the little table—so flimsy that no prisoner, let alone a Hermann Göring, could stand on it—with pride of place going to a snapshot of Edda. "Dear Daddy," she had written on the back, "come back to me again soon. I have such longing for you. Many thousand kisses from your Edda!!!!"

Tight security precautions were also taken with medication. Pflücker injected daily Vitamin B and provided Seconal tablets to help him sleep despite the harsh new jail regime. Tormented by rheumatism, Göring was also occasionally allowed one aspirin, but he was watched to ensure that he swallowed it.

Colonel Andrus had ordered pencils and paper provided so that the pris-

oners could write private letters. These, Andrus reported, were "promptly sent to the chief of interrogation," Colonel John H. Amen.

One of Göring's first letters was to Helga Bouhler:

Dear Heli!

As I don't know where Emmy and Edda are, please tell me their address if you know it. Are they still at Fischhorn? How are things with you? Where is Angelo? Not very much I can tell you, we've all just got to grin and bear it. But I wish you all the best from the bottom of my heart.

Andrus could not have forwarded this letter even had he wanted to. "Ango" Bouhler had taken cyanide in U.S. captivity, and Helga had leaped to her death from a high window at Fischhorn.

The Americans pocketed these early letters and sold them off privately years later.

Of course, the prisoners were puzzled about the lack of any response. "We've been permitted to write letters and postcards for two months," wrote Keitel on October 10, "but no replies have been received.

Göring's blue luggage had been stowed in a baggage room to which only a few named officers held the key. "There was one item," Andrus would insist later, "that belonged to Göring which he was never allowed to go into, and that was a vanity case containing bottles, jars, nail file, scissors, etc. To the best of my knowledge this vanity case was never opened until it was searched for some salve"—a search that was a consequence, in fact, of the last posthumous shaft that Göring would loose off at the colonel, his detested jailer.

At the end of August 1945 Andrus asked Pflücker why the prisoners' condition was deteriorating, and the doctor pointed to the poor food and lack of human contact (so he testified to the later board of inquiry): "The colonel ordered better food. I was permitted to speak to the prisoners more."

He testified further that Göring suffered frequent heart attacks.

"I am not a heart specialist," he warned the colonel. "I have no heart instruments to make a proper examination."

The daily routine began at 7:00 A.M. with a prison trusty handing breakfast and a spoon through the Judas hole in Göring's cell door. A barber came and shaved him while a truncheon-wielding sentry ensured that no words were exchanged. "Sentinels moving back and forth on the catwalks," Andrus reassured Justice Robert H. Jackson, the chief American prosecutor, "view the prisoners every half minute." By five-thirty it was dark. At 6:00 P.M. he was given supper. His eyeglasses, pen, and wristwatch were taken away, and the cell light turned off at 9:30 P.M.; a spotlight then beamed through the hole in the door onto his face all night.

There was one episode on August 28, 1945, when the American officers performed the (wholly unnecessary) heart attack after he was short of breath and exhausted and complained of heart pains. His pulse became irregular, his pulse increased, a cardiac drug and phenobarbital crisis to the exertion as well as a charade, the American doctor said. He confidentially warned allowed thirty minutes of exercise might be Göring's last.

The interrogations resumed, and a week armed sentries handcuffed along the covered catwalks to the Palace of Justice. Meeting face to face across an open table insipid, prim former patent and assigned to him), he was taken bar any physical contact. Document sentinel had sniffed them to malice.

On August 28, Colonel Amer against Austria, Czechoslovakia years ago," Göring said, playing to pin down what the Führer transcripts, thereby rendering the allegations that the German Aviation 5 million Reichsmarks for information laughed incredulously. The Americans pointed out. "I would probably give him all the intelligence he has, the humorless Amen on the eig Forestry Administration and played Göring retorted with a grin that I done with my trees." Five days and claimed that both Diels and Reichstag fire. Göring called his two supposed witnesses. Kempner

Göring was worried about the On October 12, Dr. Douglas M. a letter to Emmy at Neuhaus, near

was. "As firm as a rock in a raging sea," was the kind reply. She wrote him on the thirteenth and fourteenth, but the letters were not delivered.

To turn the psychological screw on the defendants, their families were now arrested. Even Göring's indignant brother Albert, whom American Special Intelligence had only recently contemplated using as an agent, was incarcerated. At 11:30 A.M. on October 15, Paul H. Goldenberg of the CIC arrested Emmy together with her niece, sister, and the nurse Christa Gormanns. The women were imprisoned in Straubing Jail, and Edda was put in an orphanage.

On October 19, Colonel Amen served the formal indictment on Göring. The transcript shows that he asked only for a trustworthy interpreter and an interview with his old lawyer, Hans Frank. But Frank was in the same boat as Göring now. Others proved more fragile, under this mounting pressure. Ley went insane and strangled himself with a wet towel on October 25. Göring expressed heartless satisfaction. "It's just as well," he told the psychiatrist, "because I had my doubts about how he would behave at the trial." He detected signs that Ribbentrop was cracking up too. "I'm not afraid of the soldiers," Göring remarked. "They'll behave themselves."

After Ley's suicide, Andrus redoubled the security precautions. Göring was repeatedly strip-searched, his private effects were picked through zealously, and he was often moved without warning to a different cell. Asked by Andrus to report, the new psychiatrist Dr. Gustave M. Gilbert assured the commandant that Göring was a very low suicide risk. At 138 Göring's I.Q. was inferior only to Hjalmar Schacht's (143) and Arthur Seyss-Inquart's (141). In fact, Göring's morale was so high that he was likely to prove their most troublesome defendant. When Gilbert remarked that the German public now openly regretted that the attempt on Hitler's life had failed, Göring roared at him. "Never mind what the people say *now*! I know what they said before! I know how they cheered when the going was good."

He looked forward to the trial with undisguised relish. "I can answer for anything I have done," he told Gilbert on November 11, but he added uneasily, "I can't answer for anything I haven't done." And he concluded, "I know what is in store for me."

That day he wrote a farewell letter to Emmy—just in case—and signed a new will. He handed the will to Otto Stahmer. The attorney revealed now that Emmy was being held in prison. Tears in his eyes, the Reichsmarschall told the other prisoners, "You see, the Americans are just as bad as the Gestapo. What have women and children got to do with this?"

On the nineteenth, he wrote Emmy a letter:

My dearest,

Major Kelley still has the last letter I wrote you. If you've got back to Edda at Neuhaus, he'll drive out to give you the letter. . . .

If you're not back at the [Straubing prison]

The Nuremberg Trial began. Quietly regretting that he had arrested criminals, Hermann Göring from his baggage. He wanted

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The Nuremberg Trial began
Quietly regretting that he
criminals, Hermann Göring
from his baggage. He wanted

he held one key to the baggage showing him a sheaf of papers; he dedicated it to "The Great Wheelis."

S. Army lieutenant? Perhaps it carry letters to Emmy and little Jail on November 24. Göring presenting to Wheelis the solid wristwatch engraved with his signature had given him, and the gray show Göring retrieved from the gold epaulets and a swastika them to reward other American

minuscule scale, and each side Germany before the war, the of medical ethics to submit to had overheard. Then prosecutor Washington, as his papers show. Atlantic islands for war against Göring will testify to statements William C. Bullitt and Joseph session against Germany."

ered to Gilbert that the victors drums into the others the idea sovereign ruler, and the court charge of waging "aggressive America, and Russia had all done the crime—because we lost!" Central Norway and Sweden, which captured in 1940, defense challenged the British government caused acute embarrassment Bevin, in London. Sir Norman that the defense's allegation against allowing the production ally when we do not know pre- other side may have."

only supporters were Rosen- leader Baldur von Schirach was Marshal Keitel was "afraid to talk concentrate on winning over banker minister Albert Speer, using two

chinks in the Reichsmarschall's armor—the Nazi atrocities, and his acquisition of art treasures. "They spoil his pose as a hero-patriot and model officer."

The damning evidence of the concentration-camp atrocities flabbergasted Göring. "I still can't grasp all those things," he admitted. "Do you suppose I'd have believed it if somebody came to me and said they were making freezing experiments on human guinea pigs, or that people were forced to dig their own graves and be mowed down by the thousands? I would have just said, 'Get the hell out of here with that fantastic nonsense.'"

The Nazi newsreel film of people's court judge Roland Freisler screaming at once-respectable general staff plotters turned Göring's stomach. But when the psychiatrist mentioned Röhm, Göring erupted about the "dirty homosexual swine" and angrily paced his tiny cell in shirt sleeves and slippers. "It was a damned good thing I wiped them out," he roared. "Or they would have wiped us out!"

Two days before Christmas Gilbert found him brooding on the future. What was his own fate compared to such a tide of history? "If I have to die," he pondered out loud, "then I'd rather die as a martyr than a traitor." He brightened, and said, "Don't forget that the great conquerors of history are not seen as murderers—Ghenghis Khan, Peter the Great, Frederick the Great!" Five years hence, he predicted, Hitler would be the idol of Germany again, and with a rueful laugh he invited Gilbert to mark his prophecy.

The new year, 1946, began with fresh unpleasantness for Göring. SS General Otto Ohlendorf testified on January 3 with apparent sincerity about mass liquidations that he had himself directed; worse, that afternoon Speer's defense attorney calmly invited the SS officer to testify whether he was aware that Speer had plotted to kill Hitler.

Göring choked. A major breach was appearing in the defense front line. He flounced over to the ex-minister as the session ended, but Speer pointily ignored him.

"*Gott im Himmel!*" Göring exclaimed to Gilbert that evening. "I nearly died of shame. To think that a German could be so rotten, just to prolong his wretched life—to put it crudely, to piss in front and crap behind a little longer. *Herrgott! Donnerwetter!* For myself," he barked, "I don't care if I get executed. . . . But there is still such a thing as honor."

A few days later, on January 12, Colonel Andrus heard from Gilbert of the uproar among the prisoners caused by the arrest of their next of kin by the CIC. Andrus had little sympathy for the CIC officers, most of whom had only recently been German citizens themselves. "Göring's wife," he protested in a secret letter to the tribunal, "was reported to have been arrested and the child taken from her. . . . She has not written to him and it may be that she is not permitted to do so." Fearing that the defendants might bring this painful matter up in open court, "which would place the Americans on the defensive," Andrus demanded that the womenfolk be released at once.

complained to the tribunal, writing that he received only three letters from the tribunal to order the audience again.

An American custody [he expected] Eisenhower to take care of my headquarters (General Patch) request would be honored. My family of kin were taken to Veldenstein of Nuremberg, and interned around the castle freely, though which was very satisfactory to me.

He complained, neither his wife nor himself. The American chaplain, a Lutheran from Wisconsin who was in Straubing. Afterward, Göring wrote

from visiting you and brought me happy they made me, thank

custody—just because you are the No. 1 principal war criminal, and the thirst for revenge boundless. . . . But I am not

thoughts and try to imagine the enough books? My treasure, I you. You and Edda have always with gratitude to you both. and faithful [nurse] Christa. sta?

luck. It was removed before Göring the same. "Luck—ours has run out and him to write one letter and one

s [he wrote] to know that you, all of this because of me! Just

because you are my wife you have to suffer this persecution. You only did good to people, but what does that matter? You are my wife, and that's enough.

I wanted to bring you happiness forever, but I brought you misfortune. And yet you know how immense is my love for you and how much I long for you. I am keeping my chin up although things are looking grim. Greetings to Else and everybody. Kiss my little Edda. A big hug and kisses, and endless love, from your Hermann.

"Day and night," he wrote in another letter, "two eyes stare at me through the porthole in the cell door. A spotlight shines on me all night. . . . Your letters are the only sunshine in my life."

On the last day of February 1946, Emmy and Edda left Straubing Jail. They were permitted to move into a cottage deep in the forest at Sackdilling, near Veldenstein. The cottage had neither water nor electricity, but it was home. Once or twice Jackson's oily ex-German aide Kempner called on them out there. Edda, grave and unsmiling, declined the oranges that he offered.

"You will see," Göring predicted to Dr. Gilbert that month. "This trial will be a disgrace in fifteen years' time." A few days later Field Marshal Paulus took the witness stand. Acting now as a witness for the Russian prosecution team, the former Stalingrad commander testified that Hitler had begun planning *Barbarossa* in 1940. "Ask that dirty swine if he knows he's a traitor," shouted Göring to his defense attorney, Stahmer. But it was Himmler's murder operations that still haunted Göring. "Anybody can make an atrocity film," he sniffed on February 15, "if they take corpses out of their graves and then show a tractor shoving them back in again."

Over lunch he scurried to repair the breaches torn in their front line by Speer's self-serving "treachery," bullying the other defendants like a sheepdog chasing errant sheep. He urged the craven homosexual Walter Funk to stop worrying about death—in fifty years' time Germany would recognize them all as martyrs and heroes, and they would put his (Göring's) cadaver into a marble mausoleum like Napoleon's. Alerted by Gilbert to Göring's intensive canvassing, Jackson persuaded Sir David Maxwell-Fyfe, the British prosecutor, to agree to Göring's being isolated over lunch. Dr. Gilbert himself drafted the new seating plan: Göring would sit in a cold, dim room for lunch alone, separated from the other twenty defendants. The order went into force at lunchtime on February 18. Speer crowded, Gilbert found Göring dejected and tremulous like a rejected child. In the even greater solitude of his cell, later that day the Reichsmarschall came close to contrition. "Don't think," he pleaded to Gilbert, "that I don't reproach myself in the

loneliness of this cell for not having lived my life differently, instead of coming to this end."

"Effect of separating defendants & isolating Göring marked," reported Gilbert to Jackson, "and on the whole favorable for trial."

On the twentieth, the court was shown a Soviet-made atrocity film. As the images of torture instruments, mutilated bodies, guillotines, and baskets of decapitated heads flickered and danced across the movie screen on the far wall to their left, Göring yawned demonstratively. "They could just as easily have killed a few hundred German prisoners of war and put them into Russian uniforms for the atrocity picture," he scoffed to Kelley's successor, Major Leo N. Goldensohn, that evening. "You don't know the Russians the way I do!" He shrewdly pointed out that the corpses had obviously been filmed before rigor mortis had had time to set in. "It is not that atrocity films leave me stone cold," he felt compelled to explain to Dr. Gilbert a few days afterward. "But I have seen so much already . . . women and children burned alive in air raids." Embroidering on the facts, he continued, "All that [Hans Fritzsche] had to do was *broadcast* that Berlin or Dresden had suffered another terror raid. But I went and *saw* the corpses—sometimes still burning—because I was air minister." When a woman who claimed to be an Auschwitz survivor started a moving testimony (the American judge Francis Biddle wrote, "This I doubt," in his diary), Göring took off his earphones in disgust. "The higher up you were," he explained to Dönitz's attorney as they rose for the adjournment, "the less you saw of what was going on."

Göring was now back in his physical prime. On March 6, 1946, as he passed Field Marshal Milch in a corridor, they exchanged illicit salutes, and Milch noted in his diary that the Reichsmarschall was fitter and slimmer than he had ever seen him before. It boded ill for Jackson and the prosecution.

On Friday the eighth, the defense called Bodenschatz into the box. Jackson made mincemeat of the servile, elderly general, and Göring felt sorry for him. "Wait till he starts on *me*," he boasted, as he accepted a cigarette from Dr. Gilbert with trembling fingers. Milch followed Bodenschatz to the microphone that afternoon, and Göring murmured to his counsel, "Now I'm for it—we weren't on the best of terms." But the field marshal, despite a clumsy attempt at blackmail by Major Englander in November, did his best for Göring.

Sworn in [Milch recorded in his diary], everybody wearing ear-phones; then examination by attorney Stahmer. . . . When I was asked about Göring's attitude to prisoners of war Jackson interrupted, "We've shown enough patience, but this is going too far. I object!"

The Tribunal sustained his objection and poor Stahmer, somewhat confused, asked me one more short question and sat down. . . .

An hour later the court adjourned mostly very crushed," Milch said. His eyes were filled with tears.

That Saturday morning Göring said what I know now," he concluded. "I wish I could have Himmler here to tell the earth he was up to out there."

For a few more days he was in the box. Jackson cross-examined Milch of Göring—whom he had known for years in his diary as "this idiot . . . this idiot" of London, reporting on his trip to Germany he was engaged in a battle of at such pains to discredit his enemy. "Göring, was the accused in his diary, "I must have known that means is found," warned the point, the Nuremberg defendants' lies and false trails." Displeased, the American Army tossed him into the concentration camp a few days later to testify.

On March 13, 1946, the five-day trial was not an empty seat in the courtroom to control his trembling hands; he was a failure. Jackson knew that the need of them—perhaps both. He anticipated over the heads of the tribunal. The trial might even fuel renewed hatred.

The tall, red-faced British judge read the manuscript on the trial that day. He proceeded. He had followed the evidence required it, and had reflected Birkett, seemed to have the ability and knowledge, or for his documents.

Göring was stripped of his position some in feature once again. As he sat out there in the depths of the listening to his voice—he gave an answer. Even Speer was moved back. He began to pump out the last of this last arbitrary tribunal of men.

"Göring is being permitted to preach," objected Jackson. "He is becoming constantly more arrogant, and if this goes on it will do our countries more harm than good."

Maxwell-Fyfe agreed. "We must tell the court that we are dealing with an experienced politician. He will make the proceedings ridiculous unless the tribunal cooperates. The result will be that the trial is a disaster."

He recommended that they unofficially convey this to "our own judges." "The Allied Control Council, for instance," he continued, "is apprehensive lest Göring's examination-in-chief do a great deal of harm in restoring Nazi prestige."

"This," agreed Jackson, "is a critical point of the trial as far as achieving its objective is concerned." If this remark did not unmask the true, political face of the trial, Jackson's subsequent outburst did. "Göring is permitted to become a hero of the Nazis because he dares talk back to the United States. This wins him admiration from all the Nazis who remain in Germany, and he will influence the other defendants to do likewise. I almost felt this afternoon that it would have been wiser to have shot these men out of hand."

The British prosecutors were more fortunate than Jackson. Maxwell-Fyfe, an incisive, bullying barrister who would rise to the very pinnacles of the British legal establishment, brought beads of perspiration to Göring's brow over the Gestapo's execution of the escaped British aviators. When the Englishman asked if he was still loyal to Hitler despite the atrocities that had now come to light, Göring hesitated, recognizing the lethal burden of the question, then answered true to form—he believed in being loyal in times of hardship as well as in the more golden years. Most likely, he pointed out, the Führer had known as little of the atrocities as he himself had.

After that, the show ended rapidly. The Russian naïvely inquired why Göring had not refused to obey Hitler. "If I had," replied Göring with easy humor, "I certainly should not have had to worry about my health."

"If you handle yourselves half as well as I did," Göring bragged to the other defendants, resuming his place in the dock, "you'll be doing all right." It had thrilled him to see his own ability to withstand the taunt and thrust of his prosecutors without crumpling. "Don't forget," he reminded Dr. Gilbert in his cell some days afterward, "I had the best legal brains of Britain, America, Russia, and France arrayed against me. And there I was—alone!"

His bearing in the witness box had impressed friend and foe alike. Fan mail from Germany and abroad poured into the prison for Göring—letters reading, "Keep your chin up, Hermann," and "Good for you!" (He was not allowed to get them, of course.) "Göring had nothing to lose," Keitel's veteran attorney said in private, shortly before the final act. "That's why he played the part to the very end—with élan and shrewdness, and dialectically adept. He won round after round against Jackson, much to the glee of the other Americans. But he's as self-centered, vain, and pompous as ever."

Dr. Gilbert went out to see Emmy at Sackdilling, and returned on March

24—her birthday—with a left letters to Emmy show, howe were preying upon his natur out there, bringing those wor Sackdilling. "You can imagi I long to walk through this av Edda and you all! Although and longing for you have nev another card to Emmy, "hea you're getting on and keeping big and small. Today my cow him implicitly. Talk about ev at the cottage. You know ho my love for you. I hug you a

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24—her birthday—with a letter from her and a postcard from Edda. Göring's letters to Emmy show, however, how the continued restraints and captivity were preying upon his nature. "I keep thinking about the onset of spring out there, bringing those wonderful woods alive," he wrote in one letter to Sackdilling. "You can imagine how I am seized by yearning for you—how I long to walk through this awakening forest with you. God protect you and Edda and you all! Although we have to be apart, believe me that my love and longing for you have never been greater." "My dearest," he wrote on another card to Emmy, "heartfelt thanks for yesterday's dear lines. I hope you're getting on and keeping together at Sackdilling—you, Edda, and Elses big and small. Today my counsel Dr. Stahmer is allowed to visit you. I trust him implicitly. Talk about everything with him. Best wishes to everybody at the cottage. You know how endless is my yearning, and how powerful my love for you. I hug you and kiss you all fondly. Your Hermann."

Then Wilhelm Frick's defense witness, the Abwehr/OSS double-agent Hans Bernd Gisevius, took the stand. Through his purposeful distortions, he did far more harm to Göring's case than good to Frick's. "In ten or twelve years," snorted Göring on April 25, "history will take an entirely different view of these traitors." Jackson was delighted, however, and thanked OSS chief Allen Dulles three days later for making Gisevius available. "[Gisevius] fulfilled the expectations stated in your letters," he added. "Göring is in a badly depressed state."

Despite threats from Göring, loudly uttered to Schacht's attorney, to get even, Schacht testified on May 3 that Göring used to appear dressed as the emperor Nero, wearing lipstick, rouge, and nail polish. (Göring hotly denied the lipstick, talking that evening with Dr. Gilbert.) Schacht was fighting to save his skin; but then Grand Admiral Dönitz testified, and he was fighting for Germany. "Now I am ready to listen to some more treason," said Göring, relieved, during the recess afterward. Schirach followed, and "sold out" like Speer; and these, Göring commented ironically, were both men whom their Führer had favored to the very end. "Rather die like a lion," he philosophized to Werner Bross, Stahmer's deputy, "than survive to scamper like a rabbit."

Die, yes—but not by the hangman's hand. Göring let it be known to Jackson that if *guaranteed* a firing squad he would give the prosecution some *real* dirt on Schacht. Jackson, foolishly as it turned out, did not heed him. Göring then intensified his contacts with the American Army's Lieutenant Wheelis. To make doubly sure, he evidently removed one wafer-thin metal diaphragm surreptitiously from his earphones in the courtroom. The loss was discovered and his cell minutely searched, but the sliver of metal was never found.

"My darling," he now wrote to Emmy. "Today the birthday letter for Edda goes off. So this week I can only send you a postcard. Heartfelt thanks for [letter] No. 19. What the newspapers are writing is a matter of supreme

indifference to us. Never let it get you down! I've been in bed for three days, sciatica in my right leg. Now I can understand what you must have been through. In passionate love, I hug and kiss you. Your Hermann."

The "birthday letter" to Edda has survived:

My darling, sweet child! My golden treasure!

Now's the second time that your birthday has come around and I can't be there. And yet, my darling, today I'm especially close to you, and send you my warmest and most heartfelt greetings.

I pray to Almighty God from the bottom of my heart to look after you and help you. I can't send you any gift, but my boundless love and longing is all around you and always shall be!

You know, my little sparrow, how fond I am of you! You are always so sweet and tender. You'll always be our happiness and joy.

Mama has told me what a brave little helper you are everywhere and how good you are being. I'm proud of you.

I hope the weather's fine so you can spend your birthday outside in the wonderful forest. My little sweetheart, once more all my warmest wishes for today and always: fondest hugs and kisses from your Papa.

The letters from them, he wrote to Emmy a few days later, in June 1946, were the "only ray of sunshine in my solitude." He went on:

So the darling child's birthday went off well after all. I thought it was going to be almost impossible for you to get hold of any present for Edda.

Just imagine: Ronny [probably his adjutant Ondarza] is in Hamburg but refusing to have anything at all to do with me, even a written statement. He hasn't even replied to Stahmer. There's gratitude! . . . I am in better health again. . . . In the prison yard three jasmine bushes are in blossom. You've realized my yearning to be out in the forest and breathe free air again. But even greater is my longing for you and Edda, and greater still my love. . . . Is Teske [Major Werner Teske, another adjutant] a free man?

He wondered if he would ever see Edda's golden curls again.

RE

31, 1946, "The German people direction of the state, they had no of which we know today, the per and courage, and they have suff which they were arbitrarily thru "are free from blame."

Fighting here on their behalf, and thereby rendered his last us execution—by firing squad, he c piate all crimes.

He expected no earthly reprob to Hitler, the prosecution had at of every crime in Nazi Germany. staff, had alleged that Göring had ordered Allied airmen shot. To his war conferences, Göring argu showed how inaccurate such tran

This letter is not as long as the one to Emmy.

crimes of the Nazi forces in occupied Europe, Göring scoffed that these were no more criminal than those of the victors now—in suspending the Geneva Convention, dismantling industry, confiscating property, and enslaving millions of Germans.

A letter arrived from Edda, stamped CENSORED & PASSED—CENSOR, IMT. She had enclosed a pressed flower plucked from their forest.

My darling Daddy!

How happy I was when the chaplain visited us, he was kind and nice but sadly he couldn't stay long. Aunt Fanny [Carin's sister] and Aunt Erna were here too and brought me crayons and a coloring book and I was very happy. . . . Aunt Else brought me a few pictures, including one of you, that was the most beautiful present! . . . If only you could come here quickly and walk through the forest with me, how beautiful it would be!!! The forester's puppy is much bigger, I play with it all the time, it's so sweet.

Mama was sad she didn't hear you on the radio. I would have given up all my toys just to hear your voice. Mommy has told me she's going to be allowed to see you. I'd like to see you frightfully too. Can't I come as well? I'm *sooooo* fond of you and it's so awfully long since I saw you. Oh, Papa, if only I could come too!

Mommy has taught me almost the whole of [Friedrich Schiller's ballad] "The Bell," and I learned the rest by myself and recited it to Mommy and she was very pleased.

Aunt Thea sent us a packet with a bar of soap, two little candles, some cotton, four buttons, and a washcloth, we were very happy about that.

I promise you, Papa, that I always try to comfort Mommy and I'll always protect her. How much nicer it would be if you were there to protect us!!!

I pray every evening to dear God that Mommy and I can see you soon and give you a big hug.

Darling Papa, in my heart you are always right next to me and whenever I'm doing anything I tell myself you're looking on and that way I only do nice and good things.

Now I throw my little arms around your neck and give you a big kiss. Your Edda.

Emmy Göring implored the tribunal to let her see the imprisoned Reichsmarschall for a few minutes. "I haven't seen my husband for a year and a quarter," she wrote, "and I am longing so terribly for him that I don't see any way out. I need strength to carry on without my husband. A few minutes

when I could see him and hold husband is very much worried about protection and help."

Softened by her solicitous fe But for several more weeks C thinner, she was finally allowed 1946. Hermann sat on the other cuffed to a guard. He told her "Otherwise we will forget too

Five days later little Edda was years old now. "Stand on a chair so I can see how you've grown learned, and a famous poem continued and true / And never, lips, be softly interrupted, "Yes, remember

"Papa," she squeaked, "when your rubber medals in the bath

He never saw Edda again. When the poison, later, she clasped her once upon the ceiling of his cell, heaven and gave it to him."

Since sentencing was postponed So near and yet, with the glass pl once what she did all day long (s smiled. "For twenty-three and a forward to seeing you." On Sept Nuremberg. "Don't you believe "that we three shall, one day, be "I beg of you," Göring replied "give up hope."

As the sentinel led him away anymore. I shan't either."

Judgment day, Tuesday, October generals—had demanded privilege Jackson primly refused, arguing there be no death sentences whatever. published photographs of the ch Woods, fingering his heavy hemp hang Hermann Göring.

Fifteen miles away, out at Sac girls out to play in a forest glade radio set that an American girl had

There, the president summed up

Probably
written
by
Emmy

She shook her head.

"They won't hang me," he assured her, choosing his words carefully. "Not that. It's *the Bullet* for me. They won't hang a Hermann Göring."

She was feeling faint. "Shouldn't I go now?" she asked. He smiled. "I'm quite calm, Emmy."*

He left, thinking most probably about that bullet. Since cameramen were waiting out front to film her sorrowing departure, the chaplain opened the back door and let her through behind the partition. She stroked the chairback where Hermann had been sitting, as they walked past—it was still warm.

Hermann had returned to his cell, in mental turmoil. As Dr. Pflücker came in with a sedative, the prisoner said, "I've just seen my wife for the last time, my dear doctor. Now I am *dead*. It was a difficult hour, but she wanted it. She bore up magnificently. She only faltered toward the end."

He looked at the sedative pills. Once, during the summer, he had casually asked Pflücker how many of these might be dangerous. The doctor had replied that even twenty or thirty would only induce a deeper sleep. "It isn't easy to die from sleeping pills," he said, reading the prisoner's mind.

They shook hands—the first time that the normally taciturn Reichsmarschall had done so with him. "If you had been with this man for fifteen months," the doctor reproached the Board of Inquiry, "you would understand."

Now Hermann Göring was isolated, except for his friendship with the Texas lieutenant. For a few days he waited to learn the outcome of Stahmer's unauthorized plea for clemency.

That outcome was not in any doubt. Fearing that the Allied Control Council in Berlin might make the wrong use of the powers granted under Section 29 of the London Charter of August 8, 1945, to "reduce or otherwise alter the sentences," the British Labour Cabinet decided late on October 7 to instruct the British member, Air Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas, that "from a political point of view it would be an advantage if there were no alterations of the [Nuremberg] sentences." And so it came to pass. The Control Council met in Berlin on the ninth; they heard that Raeder, Göring, and Jodl had all asked for execution by firing squad. The American member briefly favored Jodl's petition, but in the end all were denied.

Göring somehow learned that newspapermen and photographers would be invited to watch the hangings; and it did not take an Albert Einstein to calculate that the hangings would probably take place on the sixteenth. These two pieces of information were vital to his plan.

There are certain extraordinary documents that suggest that somehow Gö-

*After a period of internment Emmy Göring was cleared by the denazification courts in Bavaria and her remaining property was restored to her; she died in 1974. Edda married a dentist and lives in Munich.

ring had by now reassured him was still in his baggage—an promise from a third party to cell. These documents consist October 11, that he wrote, he would have risked leaving the their premature discovery would his locked-away belongings a a reasonable deduction that they were also designed to n who would see that they were the last moment—two men w bullet from the baggage room that the American officer was the trusted hand was that of I

The letters still survive, in published here for the first tin pocket or very small envelope pompous little colonel's secur

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The *third* capsule is s pot with the skin cream (this twice at Mondorf if

None of those entrusted would have been almost have been pure chance.*

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ring had by now reassured himself that at least one lethal cyanide "bullet" was still in his baggage—and that somehow too, he had obtained a firm promise from a third party to smuggle one of these brass capsules into his cell. These documents consist principally of three taunting letters, all dated October 11, that he wrote, perhaps as a final prank. It is improbable that he would have risked leaving these letters lying around his cell for five days—their premature discovery would have resulted in the immediate search of his locked-away belongings and the painful frustration of his plan. So it is a reasonable deduction that he entrusted the letters to some officer whom they were also designed to reassure and protect: an American, no doubt, who would see that they were restored by trusted hand to the cell at literally the last moment—two men who would between them extricate the cyanide bullet from the baggage room, and smuggle it in to the prisoner. It is likely that the American officer was Lieutenant Wheelis (he died in 1954), and that the trusted hand was that of Doctor Pflücker (who is also now dead).

The letters still survive, in an American army safe in Berlin, and are published here for the first time. The first, cross-folded to fit into an upper pocket or very small envelope, was clearly intended to attract ridicule to the pompous little colonel's security measures:

Nuremberg, October 11, 1946

To the Commandant

I have always had the poison capsule with me, ever since my delivery into imprisonment. On delivery into Mondorf I had *three* capsules. I left the *first* in my clothing so it would be found upon inspection. I put the *second* under the clothes rack when undressing and retrieved it when dressing. I concealed it so well at Mondorf and here in the cell that despite *frequent* and *very thorough* inspections it could not be found. During the court hearings I kept it with me in my high riding boots.

The *third* capsule is *still* in my little toilet case, in the round pot with the skin cream (hidden in the cream). I could have taken this twice at Mondorf if I had needed it.

None of those entrusted with the inspections is to blame, as it would have been almost *impossible* to find the capsule. It would have been pure chance.*

*Andrus erroneously claimed in his memoirs that Göring admitted in this suicide note that he had concealed the brass capsule "in his anus and in his flabby navel." Since the capsule and enclosed phial subsequently found in the hand cream were identical to the capsule and phial found on his corpse, the latter clearly came from his baggage (and not from outside the prison). Laboratory inspection tentatively found fecal traces on the brass capsule taken from the corpse. This suggests that he may have placed it briefly in his anus—perhaps to confuse the investigation—but given its size (35mm long, 9mm caliber) he could not comfortably have retained it there for long. Postmortem examination showed his fingernails to be clean and free of odor.

for Göring to have secreted
 claimed. The cell was liable
 searched without warning. He
 carelessly. Besides, without
 revealed the *precise* hiding
 told me the Control Council
 firing squad!"
 with the heading "The Reichs-
 fully dated this one too—

Council

Further ado! But it is not
 Reichsmarschall! I cannot permit
 have no moral obligation to
 have therefore chosen the
 Hermann Göring.

the back:

in sentence would be pro-
 regarded the trial as a
 I wanted to see this trial
 at least expect that I should
 God, my country, and my
 name that an enemy tribunal

and enclosed it in an envelope with

Nuremberg, October 11, 1946

for this for political reasons. I
 feel that I am doing the right
 (me.) Please comfort my wife
 my suicide, and that she can
 be me up in his great mercy.

Yours Hermann Göring.

My only sweetheart!

Upon mature consideration and after profound prayers to my
God, I have decided to take my own life and thus not allow my
 enemies to execute me. I would always have accepted death by
 firing squad. But the Reichsmarschall of Greater Germany can
 not allow himself to be hanged. Moreover, the killings were to
 be carried out like a spectacle with the press and film cameras
 there (I assume for the newsreel pictures). Sensation is all that
 matters.

I however want to die quietly and out of the public eye. My
 life came to an end the moment I said my last farewell to you.
 Since then I am filled with a wondrous peace and I regard death
 as the final release.

I take it as a sign from God that throughout the months of my
 imprisonment He allowed me the means to free myself from this
 mortal coil, and that this means was never discovered. In His
 charity, God thus spared me the bitter end.

All my thoughts are with you, with Edda, and all my beloved
 friends! The last beats of my heart will mark our great and eternal
 love. Your Hermann.

When the American prison surgeon, Lieutenant Roska, came to his cell and
 talked about literature, for want of any other topic, he remarked that Göring
 seemed remarkably cheerful. Referring to the coming event, Göring remarked
 that his father had once told him to do anything he wanted—but to do it
 with a smile.

The psychiatrist Dr. Gilbert made his last visit to the condemned men on
 the thirteenth. "Only Göring seemed to be deliberately holding out," he
 reported to Andrus, "because he did not want to admit any more guilt than
 had already been proven by the prosecution." The Reichsmarschall had
 mentioned somewhat bitterly "that the Control Council might at least have
 given them another method of execution."

That night, October 13–14, the condemned men heard heavy trucks back-
 ing into the prison yard less than a hundred feet away—the gallows equipment
 had arrived. Göring heard former Reich manpower commissioner Fritz Sauckel
 screaming loudly, but there was nothing he could do to help. First Lieutenant
 John W. West searched his cell, ransacked his belongings, and removed and
 shook all the bedding while Göring talked volubly and "seemed very happy,"
 as West later testified. He found nothing. Late on the fourteenth, as the
 hammering from the gymnasium filled the cellblock two hundred feet away,
 the chaplain came into the cell. Göring asked Gerecke if he knew the exe-
 cution hour—Gerecke said he did not, and to Göring's distress also refused
 him Holy Communion. "I refused him the Lord's Supper," the pastor tes-

tified a few days later, "because he denied the divinity of Christ who instituted this sacrament. . . . He became more discouraged because I insisted he couldn't meet Edda, his daughter, in heaven if he refused the Lord's way of salvation."

Thus the different men faced up to the last day in different ways. An enterprising American officer at Nuremberg issued a philatelic "first day cover" to mark the coming executions. Andrus ordered tanks and anti-aircraft units to guard the prison against last-minute liberation attempts. It was now October 15, 1946. At 8:30 A.M. Dr. Pfückner slipped into Göring's cell, checked his pulse while an American private looked on, and talked for ten minutes. Göring was seen reading out some papers to the doctor in German, and the two men laughed. An hour later the prison barber came, again escorted by a private. At 3:15 P.M., prison trusty Otto Streng brought Göring a book from the library—*With the Birds of Passage to Africa*. Göring also asked Streng to fetch some writing materials. At three-thirty, while he was writing, a white-garbed kitchen attendant came in with a mug of tea.

What was he writing? Among the letters found in the cell afterward was one undated item that appears to fit the bill:

*Taste,
like
justice,
lives
only
in the
eyes
of
the
viewer.*

I find it tasteless in the extreme to stage our deaths as a show for sensation-hungry reporters, photographers, and the curious. This grand finale is typical of the abysmal depths plumbed by court and prosecution. Pure theater, from start to finish! All rotten comedy!

I understand perfectly well that our enemies want to get rid of us—whether out of fear or hatred. But it would serve their reputation better to do the deed in a soldierly manner.

I myself shall be dying without all this sensation and publicity.

Let me stress once more that I feel not the slightest moral or other obligation to submit to a death sentence or execution by my enemies and those of Germany.

I proceed to the hereafter with joy, and regard death as a release.

I shall hope for my God's mercy! I deeply regret that I cannot help my comrades (particularly Field Marshal Keitel and Colonel General Jodl) to escape this public death spectacle as well.

The entire effort to stop us from doing harm to ourselves was never motivated by concern for our welfare, but purely to make sure that all would be ready for the big sensation.

But *ohne mich* [count me out]! Hermann Göring.

That afternoon Pfückner returned—he had just been told that the condemned men were to be awakened at 11:45 P.M. and notified that their execution was imminent. He was seen to give Göring a white pill—the usual sedative—and place a small white envelope on the table. Göring felt inside the envelope,

then poured some white powder looking for was not inside it. (At dead hands. One, marked with his brass capsule and had had a corn existence—did it spell his name?)

A few minutes before 6:00 P.M. one of the eight newspapermen picked up his editor in London: "Eight reps taken into prison whence I unpen

The prison block was now a bit was the big night. When the chap Reichsmarschall complained that Sauckel, to help him through the hanging, there was a silence. "I complete surrender of heart and s he was a Christian, but couldn't see the hope that he could rest during

At 8:30 P.M. the guard changed. up his station at the peephole and wearing his boots, pants, and coat the prisoner got up, urinated, and times he went over to the table as he tidied the cell, moved his writing pajamas—pale blue jacket and blue the cot, pulled the khaki blankets

He had arranged his clothing in sleeveless woolen sweater, breeches robe were folded under his pillow, on the floor.

The sentinel could see both arms scribed: his left arm stroking the back of his forehead. At five past nine Dr. him later," he said, indicating No

First Lieutenant James H. Dow back, seemingly asleep. The eight a final peep at the condemned man reported an hour later to his newsy small iron cot, his heavy shoulder wall, reading a well-thumbed book looking at Göring over shoulder of observe Göring constantly. . . . We watching him like a cat watches a Ley's act [i.e., suicide], even if he by the prisoner's "criminal feature

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the big sensation.

Hermann Göring.

just been told that the condemned
and notified that their execution was
a white pill—the usual sedative—
table. Göring felt inside the envelope,

then poured some white powder from it into his tea. Perhaps what he was
looking for was not inside it. (At least two envelopes would be found in his
dead hands. One, marked with his first initial and name, contained the empty
brass capsule and had had a corner torn off; it is unfortunately no longer in
existence—did it spell his name "Goering," the American way?)

A few minutes before 6:00 P.M. *Daily Express* reporter R. Selkirk Panton,
one of the eight newspapermen privileged to watch the hangings, cabled to
his editor in London: "Eight reporters to witness hangings. Am now being
taken into prison whence I unpermitted file anything until hangings over."

The prison block was now a blaze of light; it was obvious that tonight
was the big night. When the chaplain came at seven-thirty that evening, the
Reichsmarschall complained that he had not been allowed to see poor Fritz
Sauckel, to help him through these days. After talking of the dishonor of
hanging, there was a silence. "I broke in to ask him once more about his
complete surrender of heart and soul to his Savior. [Göring] again claimed
he was a Christian, but couldn't accept the teachings of Christ." He expressed
the hope that he could rest during the evening—"Said he felt at ease."

At 8:30 P.M. the guard changed. Private First Class Gordon Bingham took
up his station at the peephole and noticed that Göring was lying on his cot,
wearing his boots, pants, and coat, reading the book. Twenty minutes later
the prisoner got up, urinated, and changed into his slippers. Two or three
times he went over to the table and looked inside the eyeglass case. Then
he tidied the cell, moved his writing materials to the chair, and changed into
pajamas—pale blue jacket and black silk pants. After that he lay back on
the cot, pulled the khaki blankets up to his waist, and appeared to doze.

He had arranged his clothing into neat heaps—the silken undershorts,
sleeveless woolen sweater, breeches, coat, and cap. His overcoat and silk
robe were folded under his pillow, his bedroom slippers and high dress boots
on the floor.

The sentinel could see both arms outside the blanket, as regulations pre-
scribed: his left arm stroking the wall, while his right hand once massaged
his forehead. At five past nine Dr. Pflücker made his third round. "I'll see
him later," he said, indicating No. 5—Göring's cell.

First Lieutenant James H. Dowd, passing by, saw Göring lying on his
back, seemingly asleep. The eight newspaper correspondents were allowed
a final peep at the condemned men. Kingsbury Smith, the only American,
reported an hour later to his newspaper that he saw Göring slumped on his
small iron cot, his heavy shoulders sagging against the bare whitewashed
wall, reading a well-thumbed book about the birds of Africa. "[I] stood
looking at Göring over shoulder of the prison sentinel whose duty it was to
observe Göring constantly. . . . With the eyes of an American security guard
watching him like a cat watches a rat, Göring had little hope of emulating
Ley's act [i.e., suicide], even if he had entertained such an idea." Struck
by the prisoner's "criminal features, the mean and mad face, the lips with