

Craven Memoirs

1 copy

FELIX KERSTEN

THE KERSTEN
MEMOIRS

1940-1945

With an Introduction by
H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

Translated from the German by
CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON
and
JAMES OLIVER

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HOWARD FERTIG

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without much conscience indeed but without any positive desire for blood—took advantage of it: Himmler's secretary, Rudolf Brandt for instance, and his chief of intelligence, Walter Schellenberg. These men continually referred the cases of condemned men to Kersten as the only man who could cause a sentence to be reversed or suspended. Others, of course, held the opposite view—particularly Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the Austrian thug who controlled, under Himmler, all security in the Reich. Kaltenbrunner would gladly have seen Kersten liquidated; but Kersten's position with Himmler was too strong. As Himmler once said to Kaltenbrunner, "if Kersten is bumped off, you will not survive him by twenty-four hours". So the loophole continued to leak; the gas-chambers and the firing-squads were quietly cheated; and Himmler himself saw perfectly well what was happening, but could do nothing: "Kersten massages a life out of me," he once said, "with every rub."¹

By 1943 Kersten's empire over the mind of Himmler was so complete that he decided to emancipate himself from that too exclusive dependence upon him to which the war had condemned him. Since Holland no longer existed, he sought for another neutral state in Northern Europe and told Himmler that he now wished to move his home and family to Sweden. Himmler was dissatisfied: he did not wish to lose Kersten. But by now it was not Himmler who could threaten: the personal relationship between the two men had changed since 1940; and when Kersten gave Himmler the choice of never being visited by Kersten again or of being visited occasionally from Sweden, Himmler resigned himself reluctantly to the second alternative. In 1943 therefore Kersten, while keeping the German property, Gut Hartzwalde, which he had recently bought with his blocked German earnings, moved his base to Stockholm. This move marked another important stage in his career: it made him the agent of the Swedish Government in its humanitarian work at the close of the war, and, indirectly, it led to the attempts which have since been made to transfer to others the credit for his work.

Kersten's first important work for Sweden² consisted in his long and ultimately successful battle to save the lives of seven Swedish business men, representatives of the Swedish Match Syndicate, who had been arrested by the Germans in Warsaw on a charge of espionage. It was the Berlin lawyer, Dr. Langbehn—afterwards executed as an anti-Nazi—who first suggested to the company's representatives in Berlin

¹ Interrogation of Fräi. Schienke (Schellenberg's secretary) in England, 19th December, 1945.

² The first approach by Sweden to Kersten had already been made by the Swedish Ambassador in Berlin, Herr Richert, in the summer of 1942.

that Kersten 'would probably contrive sure enough, in the end, Kersten see including four who had been condemned 1944 he was allowed to take the last with him as a personal 'Christmas present: stages of these negotiations Kersten with the then Swedish Minister for Günther, and from that time he b Swedish humanitarian work in Gen when the defeat of Germany seemed intervention became of international

For what, in the last convulsions fate of occupied Scandinavia—of De ordered the German armies to fight Sweden, the only neutral Scandinavian thus uselessly destroyed? And what v of thousands of prisoners—including German concentration camps? Hitler approach of the Allied armies all blown up and their inmates slaughter required that Sweden intervene to p such insensate murder. But where c Where indeed but at the court of Hi court of Hitler. Hitler ordered, but it stayed the execution; and to the ear direct private line in the person of Fe

Thus the plan was made, in St Kersten and, after long preparation, Himmler in Germany to see whether heed the voice of prudence and pers allow all Scandinavian prisoners to b there? No, said Himmler, that was t Kersten, allow all Scandinavian pris camp from which, if necessary, they To this Himmler agreed—provided responsible for supplying the transpo allow into Germany—secretly of co omnibuses to transport the prison

¹ The best, because reluctant, testimony to F the record of the trial at Nuremberg of Walte that it was he who had saved the men, but as t (as the Court observed) that their rescue was Kersten.

Masonic Museum. Altogether it was a very clever method of presenting the alleged menace of this 'super-national power'.

Finally I was shown an enormous library, which contains everything written about Masonic activities, whether by Masons themselves or their enemies. It has been assembled from the wealth of volumes in the Masonic temples which had been closed down, brought together to form one great Masonic library. To the bibliophile it is certainly a unique collection; it also includes material on occult healing methods, particularly those of the Chinese and the Indians, which to me were of very great interest. I talked with one of the specialists, an intelligent young scientist who had the idea that he was engaged in a bitter struggle with those who—after the Jews—were the world's most dangerous enemy; and he meant to play his part in achieving victory over this 'scourge of mankind'.

I learnt that the idea of arranging a Masonic Museum of this kind came from Heydrich, head of the Security police. At the same time he had set up an information centre for all governmental and Party offices. When it was decided that a man was a Mason, that also decided his fate as a Party member, Government employee or Army officer. A number of important people had already lost their posts for this reason. In particular Heydrich had led the campaign against Dr. Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, on the grounds that he was a 'high-ranking Mason'.

I took my departure with the firm resolve to get fuller and more comprehensive information from Himmler.

2. HIMMLER'S IDEAS ON MASONRY

*Friedenau, Berlin
15th February, 1940*

The chance came today when I told Himmler that I had made full use of his offer and had visited the Masonic Department.

"Now what's your impression of the Masons?" he asked.

I replied that I had come away with the idea that all outstanding men of the last two centuries had been Masons. I had never known that before: there must be some great intellectual force behind Masonry for it to possess such powers of attraction. Unfortunately nothing had been said about that in the lecture, which only depicted a terrible super-national secret society, spreading its net over the nations, while in the centre, like a spider, sat a small number of men who issued orders.

According to this exposition the
at the head of the Jewish world

"So you have come as far as
there is a definite idea behind it
with its demands for Liberty, E
ideals and the rights of man. Bu
broad masses of the Masons, w
least neutralize them. It's a di
Masons bring thousands under
worthy and respectable, wheth
professions, in management or i
believe they are serving a great
how they are being abused. This i
who are always ready to be take

How exactly similar was this,
National Socialism by its enen
times had I not heard similar as
would you say, Herr Reichsfüh
this on National Socialist Gern
Adolf Hitler, Himmler, Göring,
others, are making use of Nation
and pan-German doctrine, in or
masses to their own plans for v
National Socialist credulously a
great ideal, whereas being a Ger
by any ideological swindle, he is

"You're a Jesuit, Herr Ker
you can't seriously compare ou
logical fantasies of the Masons
are concerned with entirely con
and which every man can easily

"Supporters of the French
Then there were entirely concre
few: the freeing of the peasants
the artisans and merchants from
tions; freedom of the person
warrants for arrest which were
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Furthermore it was a question
freedom of conscience from the
All these were extremely real a
French Revolution its driving f

as. You don't seriously think, an had any enthusiasm for the Fraternity, unless they had a r the peasants liberty meant an mercial towns free business xercise of scientific research, ent of life.

ou combat so strongly in the outspoken supporters today in these people talk of freedom and opinion, they don't confine ave no need to tell you whom No wonder they see Masonry n to it. Among the supporters its of psychological interest." e masses support us? Perhaps ch about it?"

t take it in bad part if I give think that the masses follow r National Socialist ideology? get something out of it. The ws who compare the pensions s war, come to the conclusion The industrialists make huge ey can get on very well with out clever children, for the n the 'Napolas', is grateful if y or the Waffen SS and lets very pleasant for the parents. unger sons of farmers, who labourers. They take a deep ide to the East."

ow, Herr Kersten, isn't that alism—and that again shows 3y."

"but I assure you that the eologically. If you maintain ve the support of the masses as. You only need to change at the National Socialists, as w precisely how to win over throw them a sop, lull them,

fool them, sway them—and here we are back again at your version of the Masonic ideology.

"But what interests me most is something very different. Do you really believe, Herr Himmler, that there is a small group of high-grade Masons behind every political and economic event, regularly holding their secret meetings at which they make decisions involving peace and war, decisions affecting the history of peoples and governments? Your men in the Masonic Department said something like that to me and even seemed to believe it."

"I not only believe it, Herr Kersten," Himmler answered, "I know it. You forgot to add that these high-grade Masons are identical with the inner circle of the Elders of Zion. Thus the Jewish rulers of the world have used Masonry as a camouflage for their own international power. With Masonic help the Elders of Zion mean to break the resistance of the intellectual and spiritual ruling class of the Germanic world. For they only approach and convert the intellectuals, lawyers, doctors, evangelical parsons, industrialists and politicians, not artisans and tradesmen, especially not the workers. There's another super-national power to send the workers to sleep, the International Trades Union, which is directed by the Masons and their Jewish leaders."

"But, Herr Reichsführer, this is fantastic," I objected; "the Masons surround themselves with secrecy in order to exert a certain special influence on their supporters. It's natural that much is falsely urged against them on this account, but where are any real proofs of your assertions?"

"Herr Kersten, of course I can't put the criminal's confession on the table before you with his own signature to it. To get a clear picture you must examine the activities of the Masons in the last two centuries under the microscope. Then you can confirm this: leading Masons had a part in the overthrow of every government. They had a hand in every severe financial crisis which has brought the economy of a country to the edge of the abyss. Masons occupy the important positions in the economic and intellectual life of a country and draw other Masons after them. The decisive men who waged the First World War against us were Masons. The Second World War again finds World Masonry united against us. In some Anglo-Saxon countries it's quite impossible to achieve any position in industry or politics unless you're a Mason. Aren't these proofs enough, Herr Kersten?"

"Not for me, Herr Reichsführer," I replied. "Masonry attracts many owing to its humanitarian programme and the help and support which it gives to its members. They know that they will have opportunities for advancement, for making useful friends and bettering their

initiative make use of this source of son because his headmaster is one, is director is one. It is human and touch with those they know. It's which makes people become Masons. I should turn up again in economic roof of your theory and are triumphs had a part in any economic or as further conclusion that this is a h are responsible for almost every-rove that lawyers are behind every n only surprised that with your haven't done that before now."

asked me.
"You only need to find out what is n anywhere and you'll be able to nt of them are lawyers. You, Herr ver to draw your conclusions about y d against them as you have already t be short of arguments. You could t e same training, speak their own ls are kept jealously to themselves; c rejoices when he finds someone on n come to an understanding. They n particular guard themselves against knowledge; they have international another by means of a language and ional. That's enough for you to draw u Herr Himmler, that you have become

ST ALL ANONYMOUS POWERS

how Himmler would answer this. re talk, as he was called away. But I k and intelligent member of his staff a primitive thought-process it was, id every political or economic event al powers.

r to the Reichsführer," was his reply,

"he is firmly convinced. Extremely primitive is what he calls the opposite school of thought, which sees certain immanent laws behind political or economic events; he says this is only a camouflage of the real motives, evolved by the wire-pullers to deceive intellectuals who, having lost the use of their instincts, promptly fall for it. He hates every form of anonymity. He's like those peasants who never speak of the Government, but treat such and such an official, Meyer or Müller, as their personal friend or enemy. For instance if the Reichsführer is told, 'The Ministry of the Interior has arranged it,' he asks, 'Which Ministry of the Interior?' meaning who is the official behind it. You have to know that, if you're going to speak to him on such matters. He is always looking for the controlling power.

"For him there is no such thing as 'The Economy'. He begins to rave if anyone speaks to him of the immutable laws of economics. For him 'economics' is Herr Flick, Herr Stinnes, Herr Krupp or Herr Thyssen. His immediate answer is always, 'Very well, what does Herr Krupp or Herr Stinnes want?' He thinks that almost every important man is controlled by anonymous forces behind him and is the exponent of these forces. His mind and his conduct is wholly set on finding out who handles those controls. He puts his information service on to this, making them draw great charts to depict the various influences graphically. He can stand for hours on end before these charts with Heydrich, discussing and pondering. The sphere of industry, with all its ramifications and market agreements, offers great opportunities for this.

"Heydrich encourages this basic trait of the Reichsführer's. His Industrial Department has its own draughtsmen, who follow up these intricacies with the greatest exactitude. By this means he exercises great influence over the Reichsführer, who always listens to him when he expounds the system of controlling influences in his skilful manner. The Reichsführer nowadays only sees industry and the leading industrialists from this point of view. 'De-camouflaging' is Heydrich's name for this method and he considers it a masterpiece of his information service.

"Moreover the Reichsführer has adapted what he regards as his enemies' method and the basis of their power and has turned it to logical use as the basis of the dominant position occupied in the state by the SS. From this point of view the SS is nothing but an anti-Masonry—though the Reichsführer does not admit it—with whose help, and without attracting attention, he is trying to occupy the leading positions in the Government and the Party. The whole system of conferring uniforms and ranks on the so-called 'honorary leaders' can only be grasped from this standpoint."



"And how do these SS lodges work?" I interrupted.

"On the whole astonishingly well," came the answer. "This fact confirms the Reichsführer in his attitude. Recently he expressed it in this way: 'Since we have been so fortunate as to see this system transform the little dinghy which was the SS into the great armed cruiser that it is today, we have a glimpse of what our enemies could and did achieve while our people slept. At the same time this is a great stimulus for us to advance, with logic and method, along the path we have been following.'"

This struck me as a first-class explanation. Now I could understand much more clearly Himmler's blind and uncomprehending attitude to Masonry and to all associations which were at all like it. My visit to the Masonic Museum had shown me how he persecuted every association of this sort, even the so-called 'Teutonic Order' and the 'German League', generally regarded as harmless, but I had not before been able to fit this into the general problem.

4. NATIONAL MASONRY REJECTED

*Friedenau, Berlin
20th February, 1940*

Today I spoke to Himmler about this while I was treating him and asked the real reason why he even forbade national Masonic lodges. He answered at once: "Every lodge has secret masters to direct the leaders who appear openly. When some worthy doctor is chairman, how am I to know who's really behind him? One has to be logical in this and ruthlessly eliminate every weak spot where the enemy might break in. For this reason we have not let ourselves weaken by raising the ban on the three so-called national Grand Lodges of Prussia nor by offering alternative arrangements to their members, even though they could claim Prussian kings and princes of the blood royal among their members. This too is an outstanding example of the subtle methods employed by the leaders of the Masons. National lodges are founded, given far-reaching independence, suffered to have principles quite opposed to those generally demanded of Masons, with the result that kings and princes, who are not usually blessed with great vision, join them, hold high ranks and show themselves in Masonic aprons."

"And what do the Masons gain by that?" I asked.

"Are you still in the dark?" Himmler retorted. "First of all it's wonderful propaganda for the Masonic idea. If the royal house belongs

to a lodge, then it is respected property and the educated. The Masons no longer need the king, their brother Mason clever than his king? Such men whom the Masons particularly Without any need for further political and industrial figure becomes the centre of social life for the king's or prince's birth social club; cheap winning and official unblessed with this way

"Meanwhile however the extending their influence; let prominent scientists are won and the desired result is achieved. World Masonry. It will perhaps grades of this lodge are duplicated as an advertisement, there is far higher position in World Masonry' in a masterly way.

"Only one power has not a Church. She is the inexorable known to you that any Catholic moment he becomes a Mason. so inexorable. She herself we Orders, in particular the Jesuit powerful lodges of the Catholic herself achieved with this system using every means to prevent cannot be misled by the experienced Masons because they pay homage have made such progress even in the face of laws and prohibitions on that stand of the Catholic Church. accurately we have summoned parsons have still not realized without realizing that they are

"But aren't your SS really führer?" I now asked Himmler.

"How can you say such unknown leaders or a system

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came the answer. "This fact recently he expressed it in order to see this system transform the great armed cruiser that it is enemies could and did achieve this is a great stimulus for us along the path we have been

nation. Now I could understand and uncomprehending ones which were at all like it. shown me how he persecuted so-called 'Teutonic Order' and as harmless, but I had not a problem.

to a lodge, then it is respectable in the eyes of the broad masses, the propertied and the educated classes. All doubts are at once silenced. The Masons no longer need to defend themselves, but only point to the king, their brother Mason. Is any individual going to be more clever than his king? Such membership automatically attracts all those whom the Masons particularly want, influential officials and politicians. Without any need for further action they have won over leading political and industrial figures to Masonry. The Masonic lodge now becomes the centre of social life with riotous banquets and celebrations for the king's or prince's birthday. It all seems like a great national and social club; cheap wining and dining offer no small attraction to the official unblest with this world's goods.

"Meanwhile however the Masons are quietly and systematically extending their influence; lectures are given on themes dear to Masons; prominent scientists are won over; links are forged with other lodges and the desired result is achieved; at first neutrality, then union with World Masonry. It will perhaps surprise you to learn that the higher grades of this lodge are duplicated. Beside the Grand Master, needed as an advertisement, there is a man never seen who really occupies a far higher position in World Masonry, using and directing this 'shadow system' in a masterly way.

"Only one power has not allowed itself to be deceived, the Catholic Church. She is the inexorable enemy of all Masonry. It is certainly known to you that any Catholic is automatically excommunicated the moment he becomes a Mason. The Church knows very well why she is so inexorable. She herself works on Masonic principles; her religious Orders, in particular the Jesuits, are nothing more nor less than powerful lodges of the Catholic Church. She knows what she has herself achieved with this system and will suffer no opposition lodge, using every means to prevent her sheep from straying into it. One cannot be misled by the explanation that the Church is against the Masons because they pay homage to liberal ideas. By now these ideas have made such progress even inside the Catholic Church that warnings and prohibitions on that account are out of place. The inexorable stand of the Catholic Church against Masonry is the best proof of how accurately we have summed it up. Only the foolish Evangelical parsons have still not realized what is at stake. They join the Masons without realizing that they are digging their own graves."

"But aren't your SS really a sort of Masonic lodge, Herr Reichsführer?" I now asked Himmler.

"How can you say such a thing?" came the answer. "Have we unknown leaders or a system of Masonic grades? The SS is an Order

Friedenau, Berlin
20th February, 1940

while I was treating him and made national Masonic lodges. secret masters to direct the worthy doctor is chairman, him? One has to be logical in spot where the enemy might ourselves weaken by raising and Lodges of Prussia nor by members, even though they the blood royal among their temple of the subtle methods National lodges are founded, and to have principles quite Masons, with the result that fessed with great vision, join ves in Masonic aprons."

at?" I asked.

er retorted. "First of all it's a. If the royal house belongs

with leaders who are known and objectives that are openly stated. It is the Germanic form of association for men who are pledging themselves to high aims. If you must make a comparison, then make it with the Germanic knights whose objective was defence against the East. But no real comparison is possible. The SS is a special creation of the National Socialist state, with aims proper to that alone, and can no more be transferred to other states than National Socialism itself."

"I don't quite understand that, Herr Himmler," I answered. "Then why are you setting up Germanic SS formations which are composed of Norwegians, Danes, Dutch and Flemish?"

"That's something very different. They are fighting units with a single task, to assure living room for Germanic peoples in the East. They have nothing to do with the other sphere in which the SS operates."

"If all that you and your people have told me about Masonry really represents your firm convictions," I went on, bringing the conversation to a close, "there's one thing I don't understand. Why have you at one and the same time made implacable enemies of the Jews and Masons on the one side, and their professed enemy, the Catholic Church, on the other, instead of at least treating with one side and playing it off against the other? Why have you been drawn into the Second World War with both enemies in your rear?"

"Unhappily, my dear Herr Kersten, I can give you no answer to that," said Himmler, tight-lipped, "that is a thing which the Führer alone had to decide. To talk about it, now that the die has been cast, is quite pointless."

"You honour Frederick the Great and regard him as a shining example?" I asked at the end of the treatment.

"Certainly," Himmler replied.

"But he was a Mason and allowed nobody to deceive him."

"That was a special case," said Himmler.

IT HAPPENED that I never understood another stimulus in almost all percentage of elements take care not to make easy to assert that 'all simply because a few c

Then Himmler started business. There's little such, but a great deal: a nation and the indifference to the J a network of con country."

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II

TALKS ON THE JEWS

Berlin
3rd March, 1940

IT HAPPENED that I had occasion to remark to Himmler that I had never understood Anti-Semitism; the Jews had at least been a great stimulus in almost all departments of life. Every people had a certain percentage of elements they had no reason to be proud of—one had to take care not to make sweeping generalizations. It would be equally easy to assert that 'all Germans are pedants, fanatics and imperialists', simply because a few could be so described.

Then Himmler started: "Wherever the Jew appears, he tries to do business. There's little to be said against the acquisitive instinct as such, but a great deal against the Jewish version of it. The frontiers of a nation and the industrial interests they enclose are a matter of indifference to the Jews, provided trade flourishes. They weave a network of connections with their fellow-Jews in every country."

Everyone wants business, I answered. Non-Jewish business people also worked for their own prosperity.

Himmler said: "Of course the Germans should trade with the whole world, but for the benefit of Germany as a whole, not only for their personal enrichment without considering the community." There were leaders of industry who acted in this sense. One need only think of such a man as Röchling. The so-called German Jew doesn't work for Germany, but only for the Jews. Scattered over the whole world, they were international in their outlook. Himmler emphasized: "The Jewish Empire (*das Judenreich*) comes before all others, draining them of their materials, their strength, their riches, their influence, in order to transfer everything to their own Jewish Empire."

My answer was: "These are fantastic ideas springing from anti-Semitic writings. There are many examples of Jews staking their lives, again and again, on behalf of the country in which they have made their home."

There were rare exceptions, Himmler said. There were also cases of treachery among non-Jews, when the overwhelming mass of the people remained decent. Those Jews who fought for the land in which they lived were, from the Jewish point of view, outsiders or traitors, cut off from Jewry. Agents of the Jewish Empire were often to be found among those Jews who were entrusted with war-work at home or behind the front.

I objected that I could not conceive such a Cloud Cuckoo Land as a Jewish Empire.

"This Cloud Cuckoo Land is based," Himmler retorted, "on the entire Jewish people. The Jew can stand any climate. In places where non-Jews can't live, the Jew manages, conducts a flourishing business and lives happily. This question of climate is also the reason why Jewish blood and Jewish traits always dominate in racial mixtures.

"The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and Masonry give the Jewish Empire an outstanding executive. It's a sort of intellectual Ghetto—but so transformed that even non-Jews can give their services to it without realizing. The Old Testament, the creed constructed centuries ago to suit the Jewish race, gives it a basis and a code. It's partly instructions in good behaviour, but only towards other Jews, partly inflated mysticism, partly cruelty and revenge, all with a good percentage of sexual obscenity. Thus the book offers something to everybody and has a continual appeal."

I replied that I knew a number of Jews who had become Christians. To him such a union between the two might seem impossible.

Himmler retorted that he knew a number of Germans who were either Catholics or Protestants or Mohammedans or nothing at all, but still remained good Germans. "If you want another proof, think of the Balkan peoples, who have lived for centuries under the Turks, often becoming Mohammedans, yet after all that time have not forfeited the least element of their national character. A Jew may become a Christian, but he remains a Jew and is spoken of by other Jews as one of themselves. He cannot escape from the circle which has left its mark on him. He will even become a particularly useful pawn in their game, because he is half-camouflaged and the people among whom he lives accept him as one of their own number."

"But Bismarck himself said that a dash of Jewish blood would be

useful to the German nation.

"Can you imagine my answer. 'I can't. That is, that Germans should. Germany's position is in a disposition to the Jew at once abandon the land, read, moreover, what judgment could be shown."

After a pause he said: "Pope Gregory VII was by them. His son, a Jew again, was also called Holy Church. He gave orders to the Pope and emperors; God himself release subjects from the fellow did and a German in the snow doing penance what confusion to the brought into the world Bismarck's own words."

"But that happened. You can draw no conclusion."

Himmler replied: "Achieved then is still. Jews of today are pure Sion. Then it was the even better camouflage to this: when after the came streaming into the loyal Jews of Germany. What did those East Germans and prosperous. By the of the so-called loyal German suicide cause these loyal Jews helped not to ours. The drama turned topsy-turvy and rotted everything."

I declared to Himmler

useful to the German people, or something to that effect," I interjected.

"Can you imagine Bismarck married to a Jewess?" was Himmler's answer. "I can't. That phrase of his was used figuratively. He meant that Germans should be greater realists in the sense of advancing Germany's position in the world. They have exactly the opposite disposition to the Jews; they make a footing for themselves abroad but at once abandon their nationality and their fatherland. You should read, moreover, what Luther said and wrote about the Jews. No judgment could be sharper."

After a pause he added: "And while we're on the subject of history, Pope Gregory VII was a friend of the Jews. His election was financed by them. His son also became Pope. The grandson of this Pope, Jewish again, was also a Pope. That was the state of affairs in the so-called Holy Church. This Gregory VII announced that nobody could give orders to the Pope, for he was sacred; he was able to depose princes and emperors; God had put all power into his hands; he could even release subjects from their allegiance. For that's what this Jewish fellow did and a German emperor had to stand for three days barefoot in the snow doing penance to him. What blasphemous arrogance and what confusion to the Germanic conception of loyalty this man brought into the world! That took place in the year 1077 and, in Bismarck's own words, it still sears the soul."

"But that happened a long time ago. Much has changed since then. You can draw no consequences from it for the present."

Himmler replied: "Nothing has altered. What the Jew-Pope achieved then is still having its effect centuries afterwards, and the Jews of today are pursuing exactly the same policy with their Elders of Sion. Then it was the papal throne, now it's an industrial throne, an even better camouflage. But often the curtain is drawn aside. Listen to this: when after the First World War the East European Jews came streaming into Germany, who received them? The so-called loyal Jews of Germany. Their feelings were with them, not with us. What did those East European Jews not achieve? They all became rich and prosperous. By the help of our own people? No, only by the help of the so-called loyal Jews. They assisted them while the figures of German suicide caused by hunger climbed to new heights. Why did these loyal Jews help them? Because they belonged to their community, not to ours. The drama, music, the cinema, art, journalism, all were turned topsy-turvy to serve Jewish ends. Their Old Testament spirit rotted everything."

I declared to Himmler that his proofs were invented. It was not

possible to assert that all Germans were poets or thinkers, because at certain times there had been a few more poets or thinkers than at others.

Himmler still brought his proofs out of the dim and distant past: the Germanic people with their decisive force had always erected states; he called this "the heroism of the sword" and "the heroism of toil". They had not been able to do otherwise; it was simply the quality of their race, formed over the centuries by special circumstances and influences. The Jews on the other hand had been formed by quite other circumstances into a quite different race, which did not live by the sword nor by hard work, but by a particular type of business dealing. Even in what was called its respectable aspect, there was something of haggling and the oriental bazaar in its methods. This haggling never respected a nation's intellectual values or culture. Everything was bartered, cheapened and internationalized. "The Jewish Empire got its working capital and its material substance out of the bankruptcy of national character. That is its strength. Ours lies in our national, cultural and social structure. The Jew in himself is neither better nor worse than any other people. But each must be bounded by its own form of existence and culture. Otherwise there can only be a struggle of life and death. Do we germanize the Jews? No, but they turn us into Jews."

I answered: "You take your arguments from a time which lies seven centuries away. Science and world commerce have long ago transformed your field of ideas into something quite different. Living reality has already given the lie to all scientific dogmatism."

Himmler said: "I'll answer you very simply. In spite of world science and commerce it disgusts me when I see a Jew strolling on the Bavarian mountains in *Lederhosen* (leather shorts). I don't go about in a caftan and ringlets. There, in terms of racial feeling, are two different worlds."

"You're also annoyed," I replied, laughing, "if a so-called typical Prussian goes about in *Lederhosen*. That is Bavarian regionalism which cannot be abolished even in Greater Germany and now has even attached itself to the Jews. And how can you, as a man knowing history, make use of the Elders of Sion as arguments for your case against the Jews! You must surely know that they have been condemned as an indisputable forgery."

"They've only been condemned by the Jews or by Jewish bribery. You should know that."

My only answer was that with such methods one could reject all historical evidence and cut the ground from under one's feet. Discussion

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became quite impossible if you thought that all evidence was invented to state a case and that all documents were false. Such weapons were dangerous and could be turned against oneself. What would he say if all National Socialist history was regarded from that point of view?

Himmler was silent. But I felt that I had given him something to think about.

III

MEDICINE AND HEALING

BESIDES history, Himmler was extremely interested in the art of healing. This often happens with men in poor health who are unable to find the right medical treatment. They give themselves up to the search for help in their sufferings, entering an entirely new field, discovering widespread interests and sympathies. With Himmler it was not quite like that, although it played its part. He was pre-endowed, one might almost say, with an interest in medicine by his family. He enjoyed recalling that his great-grandfather had been much respected on account of the herbal mixtures and juices with which he used to help his neighbours; his grandmother also knew the secrets of herbs. He was proud of these ancestors and only regretted that they had taken their knowledge with them to the grave, without handing it on.

His own experiences in hospitals and with doctors, his outstanding gift of keen observation and a sure instinct, had convinced him of the need for reform in medical treatment. The schoolmaster side of his character, which was always urging him to teach and to reform, came into action here and early made him a sharp critic of doctors and their affairs. But here too he added positive proposals to his criticisms. Surgery alone received his unqualified respect.

His work as a farmer had made him keenly aware of the problem of nutrition and its importance. He considered its human application, saw how often a knowledge of proper food was lacking, how little planning there was, and busied himself with this question, the solving of which was of decisive importance to him. He was also concerned with the reform of therapy. He was violently opposed to 'injections' and 'patent medicines'; he stood for the return to simple remedies and those offered by nature herself. Herbs and their juices he regarded as an inexhaustible treasure. He called them 'the Lord's remedies' which God had placed immediately before our doors. That people neglected

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1. SURGERY

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these herbs, which grew on the mountains of his Bavarian homeland, was to him clear proof of how far the slow death of civilization had already gone.

Himmeler knew the most important herbal works of the Middle Ages. He often talked to me about Hildegard of Bingen and the successful cures she achieved by immersion in straw, and about Albertus Magnus, the outstanding botanist of the Middle Ages. Himmeler himself possessed the significant herbal work of the sixteenth-century Hieronymus Bock and was proud that Theophrastus of Hohenheim, the famous Paracelsus, was a South German. Kneipp he saw as a reincarnation of Paracelsus. "Isn't it extraordinary," I often heard him say, "that this area has produced two such important men, one of whom"—meaning Kneipp—"has renewed the work of the other, which had already been forgotten?"

Himmeler was very well read on medical subjects. Naturally he was interested in 'preventive medicine' as it is called today. But he had a good general knowledge which he got through the reports of his offices, particularly the Security Service and later the Ministry of the Interior, which he read in great detail. When I once asked him why he went so deeply into these questions, he explained: "In all the departments of life which concern me the doctor has his share and I have to see that he is pulling his weight." On another occasion: "Doctors are entrusted with many departments of life which particularly lend themselves to a guidance which would be followed readily enough. Quite apart from restoring people to health, the doctor should guide them towards an ever increasing mastery of life. But, with a few exceptions, he only tries to patch people up and repair their injuries. Why? Because he has only learnt how to patch people up, not how to guide them. So we have to undertake that ourselves." Here too he wanted first to try out his methods within the framework of the SS before they were applied more generally.

I had numberless talks with Himmeler on medical questions. I quote a few which seem specially important to me and characteristic of him.

1. SURGERY AND NATURE-CURES ACKNOWLEDGED

Friedenau, Berlin

15th August, 1940

Today Professor Gebhard from Hohenlychen was with Himmeler. He values Gebhard, whom he knew from his school-days, as much for

impressed me most was how he arrived at the water-cure. When he was still a shepherd's boy he had observed how a roebuck, which had been shot in a hunt, cured its lame leg by going daily to a spring and putting it under cold water. Priessnitz was able to confirm how from week to week the leg healed and after a time the animal was completely cured. Priessnitz copied this. That's a true nature-cure. It's a great joy to me to know that the place where this man made his first cures in the most primitive surroundings, what is now the Priessnitz Sanatorium on the Gräfenberg near Freiwaldau, once again belongs to the German Reich. Few people know about Priessnitz because he had nobody like the Catholic Church to advertise him. She regarded him as a competitor. For the Catholic Church there's only one water-saint, and that's Kneipp. She can't tolerate an Evangelical and keeps quiet about him; some even declare, as I have often heard seriously maintained, that Priessnitz took it all from Kneipp, although he lived before Kneipp."

Himmler took his departure, still smirking as he went and saying: "You should read that book about Priessnitz. Remind me to give it to you. I would be interested to have your opinion on it, and a few cold immersions wouldn't do your corpulence any harm."

I also talked about this subject with Brandt and asked him whether Himmler had really read these books in detail. "Certainly," Brandt answered, "he often takes himself for something of a Kneipp and gives advice to this man or that. For instance he ordered a wet, cold stocking as the only possible remedy against my headaches. I tried it once, in order not to have to keep on lying to him. A horrible business, very much against the grain, but it really helped. Yet in spite of that I prefer headache tablets; it's simpler and it helps too."

"Now, my dear Brandt," I said to him, "I have you in my power, for I'll tell Himmler."

"Don't do that or I'll have to sign an undertaking every day that I've used the cold poultices. He can't bear them himself; that's his great worry. If it wasn't for that, the whole of the SS would be 'Kneipped' and 'Priessnized' and a successful cure at Wörishofen would be the first step towards promotion. You laugh, but Heydrich has already started in his department; he's opened a campaign against fat men. They are forbidden in the SS. It's lucky that you're not in it, Herr Kersten, you wouldn't have much of a time. Under the charge of a Berlin doctor each man's capabilities were tested in detail, then it was prescribed what he might and what he might not eat, then there was weighing and more tests. At the head of it were Heydrich and Himmler benevolently watching over the whole thing. Certainly this

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the water-cure. When he saw a roebuck, which had been lying daily to a spring and used to confirm how from the animal was completely cured. It's a great joy to make his first cures in the Wiesnitzer Sanatorium. He belongs to the German people because he had nobody like who regarded him as a common one water-saint, and he keeps quiet about it and seriously maintained, though he lived before

as he went and saying: "Remind me to give it to you on it, and a few of the farm."

He asked him whether he liked. "Certainly," Brandt said of a Kneipp and gives him a wet, cold stocking. "I tried it once, it's a horrible business, very much in spite of that I prefer

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undertaking every day to do it himself; that's his idea of the SS would be the cure at Wörishofen. You laugh, but Heydrich had a campaign against it, saying that you're not to do it. Under the charge of it, tested in detail, then it might not eat, then there of it were Heydrich and the whole thing. Certainly this

would have become a general practice in the SS if the war had not intervened and food rationing started. A little while ago I jokingly asked the diet doctor what his attitude to rationing was. He very seriously informed me that it had fulfilled his life's work: the rations made necessary by war contained exactly those quantities which he considered correct and suitable to a healthy man. You see, even war is good for something."

2. IGNORANCE IN DOCTORS. STRUGGLE OVER FOOD INDUSTRIES

*Friedenau, Berlin
20th August, 1940*

"What do you really think, Herr Kersten," so Himmler briefly greeted me, "is real honey better than artificial? You and any sensible man will naturally decide in favour of real honey. But read this: the exact chemical constituents of real honey are known, so that it can be produced synthetically, with a proportionate admixture which makes it much better than anything the foolish bees can contrive. You need only to go to such and such a factory which has brought about this miracle. The certified food chemist Müller confirms it and the chief doctors in certain hospitals describe the favourable results they have obtained with the use of artificial honey. Now it is only necessary for the Press to spread the news, and the public which has lost its instincts will feel that it is doing something special for its health when it eats artificial honey instead of real which has the further advantage of being cheaper. You see, that's how money is made, and my own SS doctors, whom at least I thought had more sense, fall for it. One of them seriously proposed to me that, on the basis of these discoveries, I should order large quantities of artificial honey for the Waffen SS. The artificial is everywhere, everywhere food is adulterated, provided with ingredients which are said to make it last longer or look better or enrich it or anything else that the advertisers of the food industries care to say."

"The reason for that," I put in, "is that the cake which has to be shared out won't go round, so people try to enlarge it."

"That may be true in war-time, but not in peace. The root of the matter is that we are in the hands of the food industries, which by means of their large capital and the advertising it makes possible prescribe for us what we may and what we may not eat. Men in cities,

who live largely on tinned food, are already at their mercy, but are attacking the countryside by refined flour and sugar and. The war has made a break in these proceedings; we shall take very energetic measures to prevent the ruin of our country simply for the benefit of the food industries."

"Will you do that? You can't prescribe for men what they shall drink, nor forbid them the enjoyment of white bread, or tinned foods. That would please nobody."

"We need to act so impetuously. First of all much can be done in the direction from the Government. For instance we can declare that bread must contain a fixed percentage of wheat, which is already of basic importance to the diet of the German people, especially for growing children. We're giving them bread which is not robbed of its most valuable constituents, as results from the new processes of milling."

"And if men prefer white bread, as is the case in England and France?"

"We must influence them by propaganda to show the damage done by refined foods. There's no lack of examples. The wrong diet has played a decisive part in all the troubles of civilization, from the teeth to chronic constipation and digestive ailments, or stimulating food, bad nerves, and defective circulation."

I asked him where he had obtained this detailed knowledge, and he replied that diet was part of a farmer's work. If everywhere in the stables and the cattle still did not thrive, then he knew that something was wrong with their fodder. He paid attention to that because it directly affected his earnings; but as for men, he followed the beaten track, indifferent to the best modern science on diet. He mentioned Bircher-Benner, a Ragnar Berg or a Hündede had provided an exemplary way. He had read the wealth of material in the writings of Bircher-Benner and Ragnar Berg's writings among others most carefully and had learned from them. They had confirmed truths which had been known by intuition. Parts, especially in Bircher-Benner, were in the fundamentals were certainly correct and had to be accepted. If one was oneself neither a vegetarian nor a believer in theosophy, after the war he would see to it that knowledge of this kind was spread. The first approach must be to housewives and to show them with all its consequences. He was certain that their hands lay a gigantic responsibility, which only through education could thus be achieved. Folly and ignorance were the greatest damage to public health. He intended to do away with the wrong and the right diet, in which their

results would be could not be Waffeln SS men under the public."

"And will Himmler, as efforts for the public."

"That is frankness. It is influence; the hearts. I don't should conceal simply avoid didn't learn advance step doctors. Isn't the least idea fat; they only has quite a also ignore it can be achieved."

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Without standpoint of a hospital patients is not be our medical rheumatic and pickled gherkin for whom to receive the of Paris on the

who in winter live largely on tinned food, are already at their mercy, but now they are attacking the countryside by refined flour and sugar and white bread. The war has made a break in these proceedings; after the war we shall take very energetic measures to prevent the ruin of our people simply for the benefit of the food industries."

"And how will you do that? You can't prescribe for men what they shall eat and drink, nor forbid them the enjoyment of white bread, special flour or tinned foods. That would please nobody."

"There's no need to act so impetuously. First of all much can be achieved by skilful direction from the Government. For instance we have only to declare that bread must contain a fixed percentage of wholemeal. That is already of basic importance to the diet of the German people, especially for growing children. We're giving them bread which is not robbed of its most valuable constituents, as results from the refining processes of milling."

"And what if men prefer white bread, as is the case in England and France?"

"Then we must influence them by propaganda to show the damage caused by refined foods. There's no lack of examples. The wrong diet always plays a decisive part in all the troubles of civilization, from the general loss of teeth to chronic constipation and digestive ailments, or difficulties in assimilating food, bad nerves, and defective circulation."

I asked Himmler where he had obtained this detailed knowledge, to which he replied that diet was part of a farmer's work. If everything was in order in the stables and the cattle still did not thrive, then the farmer knew that something was wrong with their fodder. He paid attention to it because it directly affected his earnings; but as for men, they stuck to the beaten track, indifferent to the best modern science on diet, such as a Bircher-Benner, a Ragnar Berg or a Hindede had provided in the most exemplary way. He had read the wealth of material in Bircher-Benner and Ragnar Berg's writings among others most carefully and learnt much from them. They had confirmed truths which had come to him by intuition. Parts, especially in Bircher-Benner, were exaggerated, but the fundamentals were certainly correct and had to be admitted, even if one was oneself neither a vegetarian nor a believer in raw foods. After the war he would see to it that knowledge of this kind was widely spread. The first approach must be to housewives and mothers. In their hands lay a gigantic responsibility, which only needed to be shown them with all its consequences. He was certain that extraordinary success could thus be achieved. Folly and ignorance always caused the greatest damage to public health. He intended to have films produced on the wrong and the right diet, in which their

results would be vividly could not be won. "I wi Waffen SS with different men under them. The res public."

"And what do your Himmler, as I knew that efforts for reform."

"That is a real diff frankness. "They grew i influence; they are more hearts. I don't take that i should concern themselves simply avoid it because v didn't learn at their univ advance step by step. I w doctors. Isn't it madness the least idea of diet? Fe fat; they only consider cal has quite a different effect also ignore the fact that f can be achieved by fasting."

"They let patients ke asking, 'What is your die should be our diet and o doctor of antiquity. You are injections and our diet accept that without think directions for my Waffen ledge of this subject ha however good his genera is far too important."

Without waiting for standpoint the next to tac a hospital may have a kit patients is never carried c be our medicine. They rheumatic cases; heart ca pickled gherkins and bla for whom a diet based o receive the same diet as an of Paris on account of a b

is based on financial economy. These poor patients are so mistreated; if their bowels are not working, they're given an aperient which completely ruins their health; others are similarly treated. How much the hospitals could save, if their sick bays were really turned into health centres! I know what I'm talking about, I've been in hospitals. And today it's just the same. This is where we will begin, by building model hospitals, whose importance will lie not in the amount of their equipment, but in the high standard of their diet."

"But you can't do without equipment in modern hospitals," I intervened.

"Naturally there must be a certain amount of equipment, but do you really think that with all this equipment we treat more patients and cure them better than the doctors of the past, a Paracelsus or a Hippocrates, a Kneipp or a Priessnitz? I only know that the number of sick is increasing, the hospitals make still greater claims, specialists grow like mushrooms and results decline. Something must be wrong. We must think it over and go back to nature-cures, which are based on the right diet.

3. MEDICINE AND THE MANUFACTURING CHEMIST

3rd February, 1941

For a few days Himmler had been suffering from headaches and lack of blood in the brain; his eyesight was impaired and his work interrupted. I was able to bring him relief. At the beginning of today's treatment he fetched a box from his safe and handed it to me. "Look, these are all the headache cures which I used to take before you came. As the headaches got worse in spite of them, I had stronger doses prescribed. When they no longer had any effect, the doctors shook their heads and declared that there was nothing more they could do. Nobody had the idea of taking me in hand and treating me with manual therapy as you do, Herr Kersten. And here's another collection of headache remedies."

Himmler showed me a second much larger box, in which there were some thirty different sorts of remedy, which he had received as samples for the health centres of the Waffen SS. "See what a good thing headaches are for the manufacturing chemist. It's the same with remedies for digestive troubles, rheumatism or gout. You would have to laugh, if the matter wasn't so serious. With our diet we're in the hands of the food industries, and our medicines are decided by the

pharmaceutical manufacture salesman for these industries of honour with chemists in ti prescription for each patient But today only a few doctors chemists have taken over answer.

"Can you blame the bu easier way, instead of writing the patient has become a fai examination? The doctor ha two for hearing the patient there's no need for the doct the telephone, wait for a cal the chemist, where the patie much time which it would be

I laughed and said that w could recognize even in the l was assumed or serious, in w specialist. It was the general p

"Sifting is the right w general practitioner sifts to treats turn their backs on realize how much trust they have discredited their profes doctor fulfils a very importa have the medical profession c of highly various circumstan

"But how will you alter have already heard from H war?"

"What are you thinking foolish thing we could do. something like that in min collectivism, which we're improve the least thing. It w making the doctor a civil ser of the medical profession, th positive, creative elements v struction of medicine as a w this, you can quietly tell him

"I'm very glad to hear it,

Ley with pleasure, but I still don't know what your plans for reform are."

We were interrupted and Himmler invited me to dinner for one evening that week. I was curious to hear what proposals he would have to make.

4. HIMMLER'S PLANS FOR REFORM

7th February, 1941

It was a most interesting evening. We had hardly finished the meal before Himmler returned to the subject of our previous talks. "It's no use producing new schemes for university training, Herr Kersten—they're already being mass-produced. One generation of doctors after another have amused themselves with such schemes but nothing has been done, because men of the old school are entrenched everywhere and they're cunning enough to sabotage even the best of plans. It would be a labour of Sisyphus to do battle with them. But if we appoint a few men to take our side in this controversy—men who share our ideas—then the forces of reform can gather around them.

"Here as elsewhere it's much better to begin from the bottom. Because numbers of ignorant men credulously accept whatever he prescribes, the doctor never thinks twice about ordering manufactured remedies. We must shake this credulity of theirs. Once we make it clear to people, especially to mothers, that these medicines can at best allay symptoms, but not cure the sick person, that the simple remedies which Nature offers, the Lord's remedies, are the best and most helpful, then they will ask their doctor for them. I would like to see the mother who doesn't want what's best for her children. Now the poor woman believes that the most expensive chemicals are the best; in another twenty years she'll think differently. The doctor will swing over of his own accord, once he sees that otherwise he'll lose his livelihood.

"Why are there already such numbers of homeopathic doctors? Because there exists a nature-cure movement which demands such treatment. Why do you find, over and above Wörishofen and the Kneipp baths, so-called Kneipp doctors? Because the Kneipp Association stands behind them. I once got the figures for membership of the Biochemical Association from the health department of the Security Service. It's astonishing how many belong and demand biochemical treatment, quite apart from whether one believes in it or not.

The law of supply and demand. We'll do our best to awake methods; and then the doctor satisfying it."

Smirking, Himmler went on: "You may be sure. We'll induct doctors in the SS and thus we soon as they've got their degenerate cures and then we'll take account. It's almost incredible that a young doctor has. If I was a doctor, I would practise on human beings in the SS today is stuffed with theoretical diagnosis, but he is unable to use his own eyes to see eczema or rheumatism. Any of our old doctors with her herbs. Paracelsus has said: 'The man who understands the man who cures it is a doctor'."

"We'll supply this need; we believe these doctors will be given training in those simple remedies. They'll also learn how the old doctors did it. They'll share in all those valuable medicines, in its arrogance and heedlessly aside. They'll learn to do without an operation, how to deal with gout properly, how to handle modern medicine is more or less lost to them. Besides the teaching of first-class specialists to teach the magnificent results they bring. It's a town after the war; and as our countrymen's marvellous effects, people will be satisfied."

"I'll gladly pay for this special group these men in the SS and at the same time make it a part of the cure associations and recommend the movement we shall inspire! I hope who is very understanding about the matter. Very soon the doctor will adapt itself to the changed demands. Out any fuss; nobody will be a

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REFORM

7th February, 1941

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The law of supply and demand does not only apply to economics.
We'll do our best to awaken the demand for treatment by natural
methods; and then the doctors themselves will also find means of
satisfying it."

Smirking, Himmler went on: "We'll do something else to help,
you may be sure. We'll incorporate the most open-minded young
doctors in the SS and thus we'll institute a genuine, general reform; as
soon as they've got their degree we'll give them special training in
nature-cures and then we'll teach them how to turn this to practical
account. It's almost incredible how little knowledge of therapy a
young doctor has. If I was a doctor it would upset me to set out and
practise on human beings in such circumstances as that. The doctor of
today is stuffed with theoretical knowledge and the niceties of clinical
diagnosis, but he is unable to use simple remedies for curing a sore leg,
eczema or rheumatism. Any old woman in the country can do better
with her herbs. Paracelsus made the point clearly enough when he
said: 'The man who understands disease is a philosopher of medicine,
but the man who cures it is a doctor.'

"We'll supply this need and—once they come to practise—I
believe these doctors will be grateful to us for having given them a solid
training in those simple remedies which often produce the best results.
They'll also learn how the old doctors treated and cured their patients.
They'll share in all those valuable therapeutical arts that modern
medicine, in its arrogance and defective sense of history, has thrust
heedlessly aside. They'll learn how to remove kidney and gall-stones
without an operation, how to deal with goitre, how to cure rheumatism
and gout properly, how to handle arterio-sclerosis—matters in which
modern medicine is more or less helpless—but the old doctors under-
stood them. Besides the teaching of Kneipp and Priessnitz, we'll get
first-class specialists to teach them about the Finnish 'Saunas' and the
magnificent results they bring. We'll have these baths in every small
town after the war; and as our soldiers will already have experienced
their marvellous effects, people will take to them all the more easily.

"I'll gladly pay for this special training out of SS funds. Then we'll
cleverly group these men in strategic positions throughout the Reich
and at the same time make it a part of their duty to set up local nature-
cure associations and recommend special baths. You'll see what a
movement we shall inspire! I have gone into all this with Gebhard,
who is very understanding about the plan. Once the war is over, we'll
make a start. Very soon the chemical industry will swing over and
adapt itself to the changed demand. This will all happen quietly with-
out any fuss; nobody will be able to stand in our way. We'll leave

IV

CIVIL SERVANTS AND HONOURS

*Friedenau, Berlin
23rd August, 1940*

As I was going to treat Himmler this morning, Heydrich came to the door with a document which he gave Himmler to read. "Now what else could you expect from such a fellow?" said Himmler. "Don't worry about that. I don't take it in bad part—after all, he's a civil servant and can't change his nature. I'll talk to Frick about the whole affair." With that he gave the paper back to the disconcerted Heydrich.

But he had not got the matter off his mind. He walked up and down, then, standing before me, he started one of his instructive monologues. They are always most informative and it is only necessary for me to put in a word from time to time in order to learn his innermost thoughts.

"This is a fine mess," he said. "Heydrich had got hold of an official in the Ministry of the Interior who seemed a good racial type—and trustworthy. He talked to him for hours, introduced him to our way of thinking and wanted him to be a reliable informant, as we must know what's happening in the offices over there. The official agreed, Heydrich arranged for me to receive him—and what happens? The official reports the whole business in an elegant memo to his minister and now I must suffer the consequences. With Frick there's nothing much to fear—he hardly ever gets to the Führer, but just imagine if it had been Goebbels!

"These things arise through not taking the mentality of civil servants into account. How could a civil servant understand the ideals of the SS? He only considers what is going to help his career or bring him promotion and honours. The civil servant is always servile; he humbly accepts everything that is passed down to him from above—

why not?—he simply passes do everything in his power depends how loyal, honoura conscientious. He behaves in it but for the sake of his care have been a bit more subtle: and could have done so by asked to do would be a simj his career. But see what w fellow on the next list for the had only told him that he we arrange for his promotion t would have become a willing

"But then have you no l The Prussian civil service ha: put in.

"Certainly—so long as th servants direct orders, satisfy them on the rails. The Kin William I, knew the mentalit as they must be treated. Read so-called civil servants wer referred to them with scant human weakness too for hi state when it doesn't need t instead hangs a ribbon ro nothing, what a saving! Hov a civil servant which will stir in another five years he can first class! What a contest order with, the other witho of underpayment simply be entitled to call himself privy

"I once found the greates lists of civil servants in the Bavaria. What a wealth of struggle for power, when the knew how, I used to swear moment we came to power. I state, I think quite differentl you need to understand thei use of it.

Friedenau, Berlin
23rd August, 1940

morning, Heydrich came to give Himmler to read. "Now follow?" said Himmler. "Don't part—after all, he's a civil servant." He walked to the desk to talk to Frick about the whole matter to the disconcerted Heydrich. He walked up and down the stairs, and he started to change his mind. He walked up and started one of his instructive conversations and it is only necessary to read the minutes of the meeting in order to learn his innermost thoughts.

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why not?—he simply passes it on to the fellow below. Meanwhile he'll do everything in his power to show the boss on whose goodwill he depends how loyal, honourable and decent he is, how industrious and conscientious. He behaves in this fashion not because he approves of it but for the sake of his career. Now if Heydrich had realized this, he'd have been a bit more subtle: he'd have tried to win the fellow's heart and could have done so by persuading him that what he was being asked to do would be a simple and comfortable means of forwarding his career. But see what will happen now. You'll find this honest fellow on the next list for the Führer's Birthday Honours. If Heydrich had only told him that he would get him into the Reich's Chancery or arrange for his promotion to the presidency of some committee, he would have become a willing tool."

"But then have you no high opinion of the civil servant's code? The Prussian civil service has a great reputation all over the world," I put in.

"Certainly—so long as there was a monarchy, which gave its civil servants direct orders, satisfying their desire for a career while keeping them on the rails. The Kings of Prussia, such a man as Frederick William I, knew the mentality of their civil servants and treated them as they must be treated. Read their history and you'll learn a lot. These so-called civil servants were simply servants of their prince, who referred to them with scant respect. He cleverly made use of their human weakness too for his own plans. What an advantage to the state when it doesn't need to pay its civil servants a large salary and instead hangs a ribbon round their necks which costs practically nothing, what a saving! How clever to confer a third-class honour on a civil servant which will stimulate him to work day and night so that in another five years he can achieve the second or perhaps even the first class! What a contest between competitors when one has the order with, the other without, the clasp. A man will accept a lifetime of underpayment simply because at the end of it he will be fully entitled to call himself privy councillor.

"I once found the greatest pleasure in contemplating the seniority lists of civil servants in the old states of Prussia and of my own Bavaria. What a wealth of statecraft lay hidden there! During our struggle for power, when the civil servants oppressed us as only they knew how, I used to swear to make an end of the whole system the moment we came to power. Now, knowing the history of the Prussian state, I think quite differently. The civil servants are a necessity. But you need to understand their mentality exactly before you can make use of it.



"The means of doing this is by honours, titles, promotions and documents giving recognition to five, fifteen or twenty years of faithful service, which the lower ranks of civil servants can hang in their rooms—as indeed the higher ones too would like to do in their heart of hearts. It was very foolish of the Weimar Government to abolish honours and thus rob itself of a cheap and very important weapon.

"On the other hand just consider the industrialist's scorn for such honours. He sees what's really behind them. After the war we'll have an entirely new system of honours and titles; we'll do our best to cope with the vanity and inferiority complexes of civil servants, until we've trained a new type of man who'll no longer need such concessions to human vanity. He'll embody the motto of the SS: 'Being is more than seeming.' But that will take time."

"Then you condemn all honours as worthless?"

"By no means," Himmler answered. "There's a real value for instance in the life-saving medal or the Iron Cross—though these also inspire a lot of scoundrels. The Mothers' Cross is the best of all; one day it'll be the greatest honour in Greater Germany. Sentries will have to present arms to a woman with the Mothers' Cross in gold; she will have a right to an audience with the Führer and she'll enjoy boundless honour throughout the land. You smile, Herr Kersten, and perhaps think that I have a romantic imagination. But you'll find that a delegation of women with the Mothers' Cross will have precedence on parade over the Führer's bodyguard—and just consider the effect of that!"

"And what if mothers bring ten children into the world simply in order to win the Mothers' Cross in gold?"

Himmler laughed. "You're not going to compare mothers with civil servants, Kersten. I would welcome such ambition, for the women would undertake it at the risk of their lives. God grant us plenty of such mothers."

I've thought a great deal about this talk today. What sort of a man is Himmler? A crass rationalist coldly taking account of human instincts and using them for his own ends? Yet at the same time a romantic? He spoke with deep emotion when he told me about the Germanic woman with the Mothers' Cross in gold taking precedence over the household troops; and he plans to make the SS salute every woman who has the Mothers' Cross, even the ordinary one. But all his utterances fluctuate between these two poles and cloud his vision of reality.

When I have a chance I'll ask Himmler what his criterion is for

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1940-1945

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CIVIL SERVANTS AND HONOURS

promotion in the SS. As far as I can see he plays on human nature no less here than in the case of those civil servants he so much despises. He has openly admitted to me that men like a smart and flattering uniform and that it makes them comply with his wishes; this view is expressed in the uniforms he confers on his so-called honorary leaders, who are granted a rank suited to their administrative post.

V

HOMOSEXUALS

Gut Harzwalde
10th November, 1940

AT THE end of the treatment today Himmler related to me the following case, which was greatly troubling him: about a year ago he had learnt that one of his SS leaders, a man with a good record, was homosexually inclined, at times actively. He had had the case examined and the facts were confirmed. The man was reduced to the rank of private in the SS and gave his word of honour that he would renounce this inclination; he was offered the opportunity of rehabilitating his good name on active service at the front.

I couldn't help laughing, so grotesque did the situation appear to me. Himmler noticed and angrily demanded: "Why are you laughing? For me the matter is deadly serious. It concerns the existence of one of my leaders."

"What amused me," I replied, "was that you and your men believe that homosexuals can be cured by giving their word of honour. What a truly simple method that would be! Just try to change the sexual life of a man of thirty by means of his word of honour: you will discover that nature is far stronger than any word of honour."

"That is quite different, Herr Kersten," replied Himmler, "that is normal sex. This case is an abnormal one."

"From your point of view, Herr Himmler, but not from the homosexual's. According to his psychology he is normal and we are abnormal. I can imagine what happened in this case of yours. The man naturally broke his word of honour and now you're casting that at him as a further reproach. But it's you who are to blame, Herr Himmler, for you had no right to exact a promise from such a man."

Himmler admitted the facts and told me that the man had distinguished himself highly in the meantime and had been advanced to an

even higher rank, but now the behaviour. There was only one from the SS, a prison sentence was terrible for him to have it be logical. He asked me whether that he could make one more

I replied that I could only and examined the man himself gone into the whole problem claim. But I was generally acquainted with comprehensive literature on times related to abnormal glaucoma question was simply a case of always a disturbance of the sexuality was overwhelmingly questionable whether the state want to have homosexuals in less easy to understand, in the why the man in question should concentration camp.

"I can tell you why, He because we mean to get rid of a danger to the national health never be born because of this nerve and spirit when such a affair with his pretty secretary over him, but she won't affect stances there will be a child. In the SS or in the Government abandons the normal order of homosexuals. Such a man always he can't survive. We can't permit homosexuals must be entirely

"Our forefathers knew what own homosexuals drowned conquered peoples, the Romans encouraged them. Politically which we should do well to root out own people and must be rooted out

"And if he has children?" who have both sexual tendencies quantities of children."

even higher rank, but now there was fresh proof of his abnormal sexual behaviour. There was only one answer: further degradation, expulsion from the SS, a prison sentence and finally the concentration camp. It was terrible for him to have to do this, but it was no good; he had to be logical. He asked me whether a doctor could not do something, so that he could make one more attempt.

I replied that I could only give an answer to that when I had seen and examined the man himself. Pathologists and psychotherapists had gone into the whole problem with a skill to which I could make no claim. But I was generally acquainted with their researches; there was a comprehensive literature on the question. Homosexuality was sometimes related to abnormal glandular development; but if the person in question was simply a case of arrested development, still there was always a disturbance of the whole personality. The problem of homosexuality was overwhelmingly medical, not moral in nature. It was very questionable whether the state should punish it. That he should not want to have homosexuals in the SS was understandable; but it was less easy to understand, in the light of the researches I had mentioned, why the man in question should have to repent of his disposition in a concentration camp.

"I can tell you why, Herr Kersten," Himmler responded; "it's because we mean to get rid of homosexuals root and branch. They're a danger to the national health. Just think how many children will never be born because of this, and how a people can be broken in nerve and spirit when such a plague gets hold of it. If a man has an affair with his pretty secretary, at most she will exert some influence over him, but she won't affect his ability to work. In certain circumstances there will be a child. But when a man in the Security Service, in the SS or in the Government has homosexual tendencies, then he abandons the normal order of things for the perverted world of the homosexuals. Such a man always drags ten others after him, otherwise he can't survive. We can't permit such a danger to the country; the homosexuals must be entirely eliminated.

"Our forefathers knew what they were doing when they had their own homosexuals drowned in a bog, but let those belonging to conquered peoples, the Romans for instance, go unpunished and even encouraged them. Politically speaking, these were wise measures which we should do well to copy. The homosexual is a traitor to his own people and must be rooted out."

"And if he has children?" I objected. "There are a number of men who have both sexual tendencies, live a normal married life and have quantities of children."

Gut Harzwalde

10th November, 1940

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"So much the worse," was Himmler's answer, "for then the homosexual tendency will be inherited. I have long been considering whether it would not be to the point to castrate every homosexual at once. That would help him and us."

"That would only involve you in fresh trouble," I retorted, "and fundamentally wreck the man's whole character. It would also prevent his ever finding his way back to a normal life. Yet there are a number of cases in which this can happen, by renewing the development which has been arrested. A clever psychiatrist can treat the root causes which have disturbed the personality."

Apparently this was news to Himmler. He only answered: "You're not going to tell me that psychiatrists can cure homosexuality. They're a trade union for pulling people's souls to pieces, headed by Freud, their Jewish honorary president—though they may quietly disown or supersede him for their own ends."

Here too, as so often, Himmler stuck to his own prejudices without seeing and reflecting on the problem from all sides. The way his Germanic forefathers treated homosexuals played a great part in his own psychological attitude. I pointed out to him that the problem of homosexuality in a modern state had to be looked at, judged and treated in a very different manner from that of Germanic barbarians 2,000 years ago. There were often outstanding intellects, too, among homosexuals. It would mean considerable bloodshed to imprison and liquidate the lot. If he wanted to get the matter into a proper perspective he would have to consider homosexuality from a medical standpoint.

"I am convinced," I emphasized, "that a homosexual's homosexuality appeals as little to the doctor investigating it as it does to me. But you can't reproach a sow's ear for not being a silk purse. You must consider the basic causes and circumstances. Only then can you find a solution or at least form a right judgment. You simply see the symptoms and want to take action against them, without knowing or weighing the causes."

"That's quite enough, Herr Kersten," retorted Himmler, irritated, "I don't want to know anything about these men and their alleged virtues. They're repugnant to me with their womanish attitudes and behaviour; you had better be on your guard too! Just talk with women about them. They keep a very sharp eye on these rivals of theirs and hate them so much that they would gladly burn the lot."

Himmler was no doubt right about the attitude of women towards homosexuality in men.

Today Himmler asked me researches you mentioned me

"That's a tall order," I answered, "points as they occur to me. I those who bring up the you matters. Keep them on the alert chance of using their influence. Don't limit boys to the company of adolescence. Encourage men should mix with girls of the friendships, 'crushes', increase man's underlying need for women boys are getting along and with sexuality. These require special

"That's splendid, Herr Kersten, nominate you as my adviser or has already taken up something done for a fundamental solution

"For heaven's sake, Herr Kersten, answered, frightened by the effect such a thing in any circumstances against Herr Heydrich and against him? That would suit Heydrich ever say that such an idea had occurred

"But why do you hesitate, Kersten?"

"I can soon tell you that," I answered, "ever since it was known how homosexuals, it has become a source of In earlier days if you wanted to witch or in league with the devil sexuality and proceedings are connected with it, not even as a doctor."

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11th November, 1940

Today Himmler asked me: "Now what do you propose? These researches you mentioned must have some bearing on the matter."

"That's a tall order," I answered; "I will only put forward a few points as they occur to me. First of all let parents and teachers and those who bring up the young be well informed on homosexual matters. Keep them on the alert for these tendencies and give them the chance of using their influence and understanding while they supervise. Don't limit boys to the companionship of their own sex in the period of adolescence. Encourage mixed schools; it's important that boys should mix with girls of their own age. These produce youthful friendships, 'crushes', increase of individuality and the development of man's underlying need for woman. At the same time you can see how boys are getting along and which of them are in danger of homosexuality. These require special treatment."

"That's splendid, Herr Kersten," Himmler broke in, "I will nominate you as my adviser on homosexual matters. The Hitler Youth has already taken up something like that, but nothing has yet been done for a fundamental solution to the problem."

"For heaven's sake, Herr Himmler, don't do that to me," I answered, frightened by the effect of my proposals. "I would avoid such a thing in any circumstances. Do you think I would set myself up against Herr Heydrich and always champion the homosexuals against him? That would suit Heydrich! No, Herr Himmler, please don't ever say that such an idea had even been considered."

"But why do you hesitate, Herr Kersten?" Himmler asked me.

"I can soon tell you that," I answered. "You know yourself that, ever since it was known how severely you were dealing with homosexuals, it has become a source of the most malicious denunciations. In earlier days if you wanted to get rid of anyone you said they were a witch or in league with the devil. Today you accuse them of homosexuality and proceedings are set in motion. I will have nothing to do with it, not even as a doctor."

"But at least you'll still see the SS leader of whom we spoke?"

"That I'll gladly do and give you a report, but certainly nothing more."

Gut Hartzwalde

17th November, 1940

Today I carried out Himmler's wishes. The man had a good appearance, the blond blue-eyed type: I could not help thinking how

upset Himmler must be to have anything of this kind happen with such an outstanding representative of the Nordic race. He would have suspected an inferior dark-haired type in advance and drowned him in a bog without thinking twice about it.

When he was eighteen this man still knew nothing of the opposite sex; his first sexual experience was masturbation. Then he read some hackneyed phrases about dirty habits which made him pause. He recognized himself as a terrible sinner. He experienced all the consequences of which he had read, from weak-mindedness to pains in the back, which he put down as the beginning of spinal disease. But how should he escape from this condition? He could not find his way to a woman; his behaviour seemed to him so disgraceful that he did not dare approach one. But as this was advocated as the only way of overcoming the masturbation habit, he went to a prostitute, which ended in a fiasco and gave him such a shock that it caused an unconquerable repugnance to women.

Next he was seduced by a very clever intellectual, who first of all induced him to consider homosexuality from the intellectual angle, read Plato's *Symposium* with him and showed him that many important men were homosexuals. He had soon convinced him that, while the embraces of women were good enough for the mass of men who were primitive in their outlook, homosexuality was better suited to their intellectual superiors; it was to be viewed as a higher form of development. So he found an ideological background for his own resistance to women. He became an enthusiastic supporter of the idea of men's clubs to form a community pledged in 'body and soul'. He devoured contemporary writings on the significance of men's clubs in political reconstruction. But if these clubs were to fulfil the functions of an exclusive governing class they had to avoid any interference from women. He dedicated himself to this idea. It seemed a logical step for him to pass from the Homoerotic to the Homosexual. In all seriousness he informed me that if the SS were to fulfil its task and become 'an order dedicated to sacrifice', it had to follow the same path; this was not for the majority, but only for a chosen inner circle.

When I remarked that the Reichsführer of the SS had set himself against that and made it his principal aim to increase the number of children, even to the point of advocating bigamy and bastards, he only gave a superior smile and observed that the Reichsführer could do nothing against the movement's immanent laws. When I wanted to know why he had given his word of honour to renounce his homosexual inclinations, he was at first evasive. Then he admitted that there was an element of cowardice in this; he had known beforehand

that he would not be able women and any man who: he would give his word of He said he would refuse an his creed.

It was clear to me that fundamental disturbance in refusal to accept normal sex compensating himself in sexuality was a superior way men's clubs, it was necessary that the champion of these dulled type of homosexual towards homosexuality, on Even in his errors he was not

In other ways he had shown and daring soldier and office superiors. He wore with pride

The problem of how to deal from the automatic sequence ranks again, a sentence and described to me. It would be might be automatically removed under observation. With this care for work in a mission abroad it. He beamed with joy as he the event of a trial, he would had to me, but simply make the prosecution.

During today's treatment about the case. It would have really lay; it would only have been by no means fundamentally cautious and adroit.

Himmler at once asked me: he curable? Can I give him and put him in charge of a particular himself afresh. What do you think

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that he would not be able to keep his word of honour; he despised women and any man who associated with them. I asked him whether he would give his word of honour again, should Himmler demand it. He said he would refuse and was quite ready to suffer as a martyr for his creed.

It was clear to me that no doctor could do anything for him. A fundamental disturbance in his development when still young, a refusal to accept normal sexual experience, had resulted in his over-compensating himself in two ways. One was the idea that homosexuality was a superior way of life; the other was that, in the form of men's clubs, it was necessary to a governing class. So it came about that the champion of these ideas was by no means the ordinary instinct-dulled type of homosexual; his was more an accentuated tendency towards homosexuality, only occasionally and decreasingly active. Even in his errors he was not wholehearted.

In other ways he had shown himself to be an extraordinarily brave and daring soldier and officer, as had been expressly recognized by his superiors. He wore with pride the honours they had bestowed on him.

The problem of how to help the man remained, how to keep him from the automatic sequence of events: arrest, being reduced to the ranks again, a sentence and the concentration camp, as Himmler had described to me. It would be best if he was to go abroad, so that he might be automatically removed from a circle where he was always under observation. With this in mind I asked him whether he would care for work in a mission abroad, as I might be able to help him to get it. He beamed with joy as he said 'yes'. I got him to promise that, in the event of a trial, he would give no far-reaching explanations as he had to me, but simply make light of the matter and leave the facts to the prosecution.

*Gut Hartzwalde
20th November, 1940*

During today's treatment I had a chance to speak to Himmler about the case. It would have been quite useless to tell him how things really lay; it would only have meant the certain downfall of a man who was by no means fundamentally bad. Therefore I had to be very cautious and adroit.

Himmler at once asked me: "Now then, what did you find out? Is he curable? Can I give him another chance? I already had it in mind to put him in charge of a particularly difficult unit where he can prove himself afresh. What do you think of him on the whole?"

"He has already proved himself quite enough, Herr Himmler," I replied. "You should get the man out of it, so that he can breathe a different air and no longer live in a circle where he is always being watched, where his every word and act is regarded from a certain angle. Anyhow you won't get at the facts in this case and that's certain. Your own police inspectors with their, psychologically ignorant methods surely won't succeed in producing any better suggestions than mine. I would advise you, as the final court of appeal in the SS, to make the arrangements I suggest. I am quite ready to provide minutes of my interrogation on which you can base your decision."

I saw that Himmler was visibly relieved. He immediately asked for the minutes, rang and dictated his decision. I had certainly had no idea that I would achieve my aim so rapidly.

Hartzwalde

21st November, 1940

I made use of his favourable mood and proposed to Himmler that he should send this man who was loyally devoted to him abroad on some mission or other. "Under no circumstances, Herr Kersten," Himmler answered. "Don't you know that the enemy Intelligence make great use of homosexuals and go systematically to work when they think they have found a good subject? I would only expose the man to new dangers, and the Reich to measureless damage, if he should fail."

I laughed out loud and asked Himmler who had told him that: in future he should only employ eunuchs in the foreign services, for it was certainly proved that every intelligence service made particular use of women and how successful they had been was not unknown to history.

Himmler informed me in all seriousness that Heydrich had considerable evidence of the political consequences of homosexuality. Since then officials of the foreign service and all those whose work took them abroad were specially watched and tested with this in view.

I couldn't help laughing, for it was really such a convenient way of exercising control over Ribbentrop's department and demanding the removal of anybody undesirable on the grounds that he was a homosexual. I saw that I could not do much here and wanted to leave the matter, but Himmler—who was really glad that a way had been found to save him an unpleasant decision—returned to it and told me that he would give the man a position on his Norwegian staff; if that proved

successful, there would still be a field.

So the case had a practical saying to Himmler: "Would it that our *protégé* has modelled it

"What are you implying by trying to suggest that the great those dirty Jews who assert themselves from us and drag them done wonders for his people at best demented. But with impossible to assert that Frederick of homosexuality. Only mediocre it produces no greatness and is 'safe'. To portray Frederick's malice of a sick mind. I know brought forward as evidence, creature; it's no wonder that he to live with her. Why can't it be live with his lawful wife, he gave which fitted him for his great a slung and homosexual tendency was, moreover, no foundation find indications, no clear and inc

"It might be difficult, Herr objected.

"Then people should keep in silence before his greatness. I a dozen so-called proofs were put and assert that they had been feelings tell me that a man with sun could not have had any of weaklings."

This talk stayed in my mind nizes gods and devils. His heroic men with all too human traits—greater effect when not conventional foreign to him which would see Himmler it was an obvious pattern assertions about his heroes. At it remarked that this was the way which he attached great importance

"He has already proved himself quite enough, Herr Himmler," I replied. "You should get the man out of it, so that he can breathe a different air and no longer live in a circle where he is always being watched, where his every word and act is regarded from a certain angle. Anyhow you won't get at the facts in this case and that's certain. Your own police inspectors with their psychologically ignorant methods surely won't succeed in producing any better suggestions than mine. I would advise you, as the final court of appeal in the SS, to make the arrangements I suggest. I am quite ready to provide minutes of my interrogation on which you can base your decision."

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I made use of his favourable mood and proposed to Himmler that he should send this man who was loyally devoted to him abroad on some mission or other. "Under no circumstances, Herr Kersten," Himmler answered. "Don't you know that the enemy Intelligence make great use of homosexuals and go systematically to work when they think they have found a good subject? I would only expose the man to new dangers, and the Reich to measureless damage, if he should fail."

I laughed out loud and asked Himmler who had told him that: in future he should only employ eunuchs in the foreign services, for it was certainly proved that every intelligence service made particular use of women and how successful they had been was not unknown to history.

Himmler informed me in all seriousness that Heydrich had considerable evidence of the political consequences of homosexuality. Since then officials of the foreign service and all those whose work took them abroad were specially watched and tested with this in view.

I couldn't help laughing, for it was really such a convenient way of exercising control over Ribbentrop's department and demanding the removal of anybody undesirable on the grounds that he was a homosexual. I saw that I could not do much here and wanted to leave the matter, but Himmler—who was really glad that a way had been found to save him an unpleasant decision—returned to it and told me that he would give the man a position on his Norwegian staff; if that proved

successful, there was a field.

So the case had saying to Himmler that our *protégé* had

"What are you trying to suggest to those dirty Jews' heroes from us are done wonders for at best demented impossible to assert of homosexuality. it produces no great 'safe'. To portray malice of a sick nature brought forward creature; it's no way to live with her. We live with his lawfulness which fitted him for slung and homose was, moreover, no find indications, no

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Hartswalde

21st November, 1940

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So the case had a practical solution. But I could not prevent myself
saying to Himmler: "Would it interest you, Herr Himmler, to know
that our *protégé* has modelled himself on Frederick II?"

"What are you implying by that?" Himmler retorted. "You're not
trying to suggest that the great king had abnormal tendencies? I know
those dirty Jews who assert things of the kind in order to take our
heroes from us and drag them in the mud. Any great man who has
done wonders for his people must somehow or other be abnormal, or
at best demented. But with the best will in the world it's quite
impossible to assert that Frederick the Great should be even suspected
of homosexuality. Only mediocrity is normal and conventional because
it produces no greatness and is therefore politically and economically
'safe'. To portray Frederick the Great as abnormal is the obvious
malice of a sick mind. I know that his coldness towards his wife is
brought forward as evidence. But just consider that poor-spirited
creature; it's no wonder that he viewed her as a holy terror and refused
to live with her. Why can't it be looked at in this way: as he could not
live with his lawful wife, he gave himself up to an ascetic life as king,
which fitted him for his great achievements. Instead of that, mud was
slung and homosexual tendencies attributed to him—for which there
was, moreover, no foundation in fact. If you looked you could only
find indications, no clear and indisputable proof."

"It might be difficult, Herr Himmler, to prove such a thing," I
objected.

"Then people should keep quiet," Himmler answered, "and bow
in silence before his greatness. I would only say one thing to them: if
a dozen so-called proofs were put before me, I would brush them aside
and assert that they had been made up after the event, because my
feelings tell me that a man who won for Prussia her place in the
sun could not have had any of the tendencies of these homosexual
weaklings."

This talk stayed in my mind for some time. Himmler only recog-
nizes gods and devils. His heroes are like the gods. That they can be
men with all too human traits—and for that very reason have a much
greater effect when not conventionally portrayed—is a thought quite
foreign to him which would seem like an insult to his heroes. To
Himmler it was an obvious patriotic duty to support all propaganda
assertions about his heroes. At first he did not understand me when I
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 remarked that this was the way to abolish free scientific research, to
 which he attached great importance; it was also the way to create a

science more or less controlled by the police, as every scientist knew what he might and might not write and proceeded accordingly. Anything taken from his picture of his heroes was either the work of small minds, too inferior to grasp such greatness, or came from the malice of enemies—Jews, Masons or priests. In the end he admitted that it was possible for even a National Socialist scholar, unexceptionable to his view, to reach the wrong conclusions. Then he must sacrifice them, Himmler said. The Church, too, asked that of her adherents, for the need of the people to keep their heroes and their respect for them came before all truth.

RENEWAL OF

1. THE BASIC BIOLOGICAL

HIMMLER had seldom been out of surprise at this and asked the reason.

"Look here, Herr Kersten," of winter when Nature draws right the same. He has to unburden himself of Nature, so that he can experience the winter solstice, after which it begins again. I always pause at this time. Countrymen understand that perfectly, as the townsman calls it. I am not about all that—to them one day is the same on their pursuits, indifferent whether Nature has surrendered to her winter sleep or laziness; it is rather a summons to work. The reason why he is able to work so hard in the fields at dawn and not lying down is that the same laws apply to other achievements is to work and relax.

These words made me think of the burden of work under which his life there was little question of relaxing. "A fine theory, Herr Himmler, but not the ruling class in Germany: That's why Germans seem so unceasingly busy."

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VI

RENEWAL OF THE RULING CLASS

1. THE BASIC BIOLOGICAL LAW

Hartzwalde

18th December, 1940

HIMMLER had seldom been out in the last few days. I expressed my surprise at this and asked the reason.

"Look here, Herr Kersten," he said, "it's like this: in these weeks of winter when Nature draws right back into herself, man has to do the same. He has to unburden himself and relax, share in the rhythm of Nature, so that he can experience in his own person the great event of the winter solstice, after which the rise of sap and strength begins again. I always pause at this time and breathe in its benediction. Countrymen understand that perfectly; they lie behind the stove and 'laze', as the townsman calls it. For people in towns know nothing about all that—to them one day is the same as another and they carry on their pursuits, indifferent whether Nature is in blossom or fruit or has surrendered to her winter sleep. Yet this countryman's rest is no laziness; it is rather a summons to new strength. This is the only reason why he is able to work so astonishingly in the summer, already in the fields at dawn and not lying down again until late in the evening. The same laws apply to other lives. The preliminary to all great achievements is to work and relax in the rhythm of biological laws."

These words made me think of Himmler's piles of documents which he went through every day, of his industriousness, and of the burden of work under which his secretary Brandt laboured, in which there was little question of relaxing and the rhythm of life. So I replied: "A fine theory, Herr Himmler, but neither you nor those around you, nor the ruling class in Germany as a whole, follow it, nor ever have. That's why Germans seem so uncomfortable to foreigners. You should

make what you have just told me a rule of your own life and take a long week-end off every week, or—as the Swedes do—go into the country on Friday evening and not return until Monday. You would see what an effect that had on your decisions and on your thoughts.”

“Obviously such things can’t be done in war-time,” Himmler replied, “even the Führer can enjoy no rest. But afterwards we will come to serious decisions in this matter. A long week-end is relatively easy to fix, as everyone is ready to fall in with it. Another scheme will also command general agreement: the Führer has it in view to set up conference places in the most attractive spots in the four quarters of the Reich. Here the leaders of the Reich will meet for important decisions, so that they can come to properly balanced conclusions, in peace and quiet, far from the daily grind. Every ministry will have a place of this sort within easy reach. The success of the undertaking will more than defray its costs. Leaders too are used to keeping things going when they’re not there; they arrange for deputies to take their place.

“But we have a much greater problem to solve. The same laws as affect Nature and the individual are also true for the nation as a whole and for its ruling class. Look at the leading families: they come to power, keep going for a few generations and die out because they are completely used up. That can’t have been in the plan of the Creator.”

“On the contrary, that seems to me a law of life, Herr Reichsführer,” I answered. “The man who attains leadership engages in a struggle in which there is no looking back. This consumes his life-substance. Moreover it is the same with peoples as with forests, as you are so fond of remarking. The old trees are still standing, but new ones are always springing up out of the measureless wealth and resurgence of the woods. A nation must have the chance to infuse fresh blood into its leaders.”

“You’re right there, but that’s only one side of the problem,” Himmler answered. “I admire too the way the English have solved it. They have arranged matters so that their upper class is always recruited from a rising class. Specially deserving and outstanding men are raised to the peerage, so that the old aristocracy of birth is reinforced and transformed by a new aristocracy of action.”

I spoilt this pretty picture by remarking that deserving Jews were honoured in this way in England, so that a Benjamin Disraeli became a Lord Beaconsfield, a Rufus Isaacs a Lord Reading, an Alfred Mond a Lord Melchett; and they were a boon to England. Himmler naturally did not like this and said that it could only be understood in the light of England’s mistaken indifference to racial laws. “The English don’t

know the Jews, they only get them straight from the East.”

2. THE ENGLISH UPPER C

Today Himmler returned to it and said: “We should have made reinforcing their nobility; then degenerate a nobility today.”

The example of England was whereby only a proportion of the turn become leaders in it; the rem were left open to the proven best ally produce a new aristocracy o had made a very strong impression son inherited the title and possession were reabsorbed into the national l into it. You could call that conscie the other hand every fifth or sixth baron, which meant nothing, so t swarmed; they usually had no mon tried to coin money out of their ti advertisements for insurance comp The public was foolish enough to f have at their disposal a Count von Tannenfels.

After the war energetic measur owner of an estate would in future would be judged by its reliability a during the war. Moreover the eldes conditions as were already in forc Members of the aristocracy who ad would be dispossessed in the same w next in succession would become t be shared out to other descendants. Count von Tannenfels, to keep up Other branches of the family woul but they might take the name of t farmers in Eastern Germany. A fo

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2. THE ENGLISH UPPER CLASS AS A MODEL

21st December, 1940

Today Himmler returned to the topic of the English upper class and said: “We should have made discreet use of the English system of reinforcing their nobility; then we would certainly have had less degenerate a nobility today.”

The example of England was responsible for the Führer's decree whereby only a proportion of the sons of SS leaders might in their turn become leaders in it; the remaining positions in the upper ranks were left open to the proven best of the nation; this would systematically produce a new aristocracy of action. Another English measure had made a very strong impression on him. In England only the eldest son inherited the title and possessions; the remaining sons and daughters were reabsorbed into the national life and transmitted their good blood into it. You could call that conscious racial breeding. In Germany on the other hand every fifth or sixth person you met was a count or a baron, which meant nothing, so that counts and barons and princes swarmed; they usually had no money and so little self-respect that they tried to coin money out of their titles and made use of them as cheap advertisements for insurance companies, banks or court dressmakers. The public was foolish enough to fall for such frauds and preferred to have at their disposal a Count von Tannenfels than a plain Mr. Fritz Tannenfels.

After the war energetic measures would be taken. Only the actual owner of an estate would in future have a title. The former upper class would be judged by its reliability and the proofs it had given of itself during the war. Moreover the eldest son would inherit under the same conditions as were already in force for the inheritance of property. Members of the aristocracy who administered their estates inefficiently would be dispossessed in the same way as incompetent farmers and the next in succession would become the ground landlord. Farms would be shared out to other descendants. In future there would only be one Count von Tannenfels, to keep up the tradition of the family name. Other branches of the family would be plain and simple, Tannenfels; but they might take the name of their estate as was the custom with farmers in Eastern Germany. A former Count von Tannenfels who

happened to occupy an estate in Blumenau would become Fritz Tannenfels zu Blumenau. "That's something; it sounds well and above all people know what it means."

"Then you want to set up a new upper class in the East, Herr Reichsführer?" I put in.

"Exactly, my dear Herr Kersten, a real farming aristocracy in which the old nobility will take its place beside our farmers there. They can prove themselves there, get new blood and take things quietly for a few generations, before they're called upon to serve again. Until now the nobility has decayed as soon as it lost touch with the soil from which it sprang. For the same rhythm of achievement and relaxation holds good for families as for individuals and the seasons of the year. We must regulate ourselves by the laws of Nature."

3. STATE FARMS

23rd December, 1940

We continued the talk. Himmler said: "This principle also holds good for the ruling class of a people. Our scholars and industrialists usually come from the country, from families of small farmers or artisans. They get on, flourish for two or three generations, then become exhausted and die out. If a family lasts longer, you'll usually find when you investigate that specially favourable circumstances have intervened. For instance, Evangelical parsonages are, biologically speaking, fountains of youth. Although I don't want to have anything to do with the narrow-minded clergy, I must confess that they have achieved marvels in this field: they have leisure, usually they choose the wives they need for their round of duties and they reside in their country rectories like the lesser gentry.

"We can't afford the dying out of valuable blood after a relatively short period of activity. Imagine," said Himmler, "what would happen if all the leading men in politics and industry died in their thirties. What an outcry there would be! The whole medical profession would be mobilized to find the reason and remedy the state of affairs; but no heed is paid when almost the same thing is happening, simply because it is spread over two or three generations and doesn't leap to the eye in the same way."

"Then do you want to put the ruling class back on the land every second or third generation?" I asked Himmler. "That seems a purely mechanical process."

"Not like that, of course," obvious to me that they must sor the soil again, to renew themse strength. It's only a question of endow the intellectual, industrial which they will not be allowed to services, so as to restore their con: scholar has a farm, he will natural: children will pass their holidays country as a horse to pasture; th will last throughout their lives.

"But we'll do more than that. cannot be handed over as private as 'state farms' to members of t automatically carry with them the i will be a special 'state tenure'. The place where the man works, so that If his work takes him to a different this farm and receive another. The: employment. By these means we'll men back into direct contact with t

In order to make clear to Himmler his thought-process I started off: men are no farmers? In a short tim so mismanaged that you will no long man will indulge his hobbies and m the contempt and laughter of real far has worn off and he sees what he w will be so sick of his farm that he v eyes on it."

"Naturally we've considered the: urbanized civil servant obviously k ment of a farm. These farms will be state property by a manager appoin see to a number of farms, something

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"Not like that, of course," was Himmler's answer, "but it's obvious to me that they must somehow be brought into contact with the soil again, to renew themselves from that permanent source of strength. It's only a question of the means. The first step will be to endow the intellectual, industrial and political ruling class with farms which they will not be allowed to sell, of an area proportionate to their services, so as to restore their contact with the land. If a politician or a scholar has a farm, he will naturally make it his home and his wife and children will pass their holidays there. The children will go to the country as a horse to pasture; this wonderful experience of the soil will last throughout their lives.

"But we'll do more than that. We will see to it that, when farms cannot be handed over as private property, smaller farms will be lent as 'state farms' to members of the ruling class. Certain posts will automatically carry with them the right to such a farm, for which there will be a special 'state tenure'. The farm must not be too far from the place where the man works, so that he can reach it by car conveniently. If his work takes him to a different part of Germany, he will surrender this farm and receive another. The farm mustn't stand in the way of his employment. By these means we'll get another considerable group of men back into direct contact with the soil."

23rd December, 1940
in the evening

In order to make clear to Himmler the psychological fallacy behind his thought-process I started off: "Have you considered that these men are no farmers? In a short time your 'state farms' will have been so mismanaged that you will no longer be able to recognize them. Each man will indulge his hobbies and make experiments which will arouse the contempt and laughter of real farmers. After the first fine enthusiasm has worn off and he sees what he has let himself in for, the townsman will be so sick of his farm that he will curse the hour that he ever set eyes on it."

"Naturally we've considered that," was Himmler's answer. "The urbanized civil servant obviously knows nothing about the management of a farm. These farms will be looked after and administered as state property by a manager appointed by the Government, who will see to a number of farms, something like a local bailiff."

"Then you're simply providing your ruling class with a country house on the cheap, Herr Himmler. The bailiff, not receiving orders from the so-called owner, will not think much of him; and the owner,

ally superfluous. There find these constant stays npany her husband into r time in Lower Pomer in staying in the country ances with his superiors; urden. So you will have ed. It is certain that in a t instinctive desire and o most people living in

Herr Kersten, and we n. But what else should s farm to a man who is of it; responsibility and s are chiefly to see who rejected."

CIVILIZATION

28th December, 1940

was resumed. Himmler, til he had reached the ns you made have not on't hold water. You iff has to play. He will ly have to superintend arm in hand and intro- n management and to illiffs will be wounded as the tenants of the task and give them where there's a feeling will be in a position to opriate measures. The adviser and the tenant

and goodwill, but it's g one son or daughter for the simple reason

that he or she has been bred on it, we have already achieved an immense amount. Then we'll give them a complete training in our agricultural colleges and assign them farms in the East. So we will have enabled our leading families to escape from the 'evils of civilization' in the city; healthily bred in contact with mother earth, they will present new families to the nation.

"Favourable living conditions for the ruling class, links with the country, the return of some sons and daughters to the land, that is the way to renewal. What do the initial difficulties count against that! One day it will be assumed that every leading man is at the same time a farmer. Then men will no longer waste their time in idle gossip, but like farmers they'll discuss the care of their estates, and solid country thinking will dominate all our political and economic decisions."

Enthusiastically Himmler continued: "Then the Germanic race will begin to flourish anew and its existence will be assured for a thousand years. We must lay the foundations for that and not allow ourselves to be put off by the difficulties which are to be encountered at the commencement of every great undertaking. Above all we must, in this as in other matters, make a start first and then see how things are going, advance step by step, do what we must, correct our mistakes and not move on to new objectives until we are quite convinced that we have found the right way."

5th January, 1941

Today the talk continued. I remarked: "But, Herr Himmler, you can't ask the industrialist to think like a countryman and to overlook the fact that Germany is first and foremost an industrial power and that her strength lies precisely there."

"You're forgetting that our captains of industry—I need only mention Robert Bosch—often have more of a country outlook than our urbanized upper class. These industrialists usually have their own estates and know the worries that go with them. I'm only too glad of it. From a political point of view it's of the first importance. Country ways of thought go far beyond what is usually expressed by the phrase. They mean that your thoughts and decisions draw their strength from the roots of the earth and the inner reserves of the nation. Unhappily our ruling class has lost these ways of thought."

"But what's going to happen to the great majority of your civil servants and officials? Will you abandon them to the 'evils of civilization'? What about the workers?" I asked Himmler.

"That is a problem of quite a different sort," was his answer. "In

the country as in small and medium-sized towns it is correspondingly easy to solve. Here we only need to strengthen the movement towards allotments and ownership of property. They'll bring about revolutions in health which will extend in ever-widening circles. We have a model for this too in Württemberg. It's the healthiest region of the Reich and entirely free from economic troubles owing to its special mixture of industry with small farming properties."

"In the city," Himmler went on, "it's a matter of far-reaching changes and new accommodation, which the Führer will tackle with all his energy after the war. Plans have already been worked out. Instead of huge workers' tenements there will be houses able to accommodate at least four children, so constructed that the housewife will be relieved of many of her burdens. They will of course have bathrooms and lavatories. Each of these houses will possess an extensive garden.

"Wherever possible official posts will entail the possession of land on a scale commensurate with the official's salary, as used to be the case with teachers. This will have a special importance in the choice of a wife, as the civil servant who knows that he has to manage a farm will not select a girl or woman so urbanized that she is unable to cope with it. Children will no longer be a burden but a necessity. You can't explain to a civil servant that he must have plenty of children, when the basic facts of his life, the smallness of his salary, poor accommodation and confined circumstances are all against it. We must create conditions to suit human needs, otherwise we're only moving in the realm of utopias. And you're always trying to charge me with being utopian in my plans," concluded Himmler with an ironical smile.

5th January, 1941
in the evening

This evening I was with a small group of Himmler's colleagues and, to complete my picture, I raised the same topics which I had recently had the opportunity to discuss with Himmler on several days. I explained what I had heard from him. On all sides there was agreement and confirmation, given joyfully and devoutly. Hard-headed men spoke with enthusiasm on this subject, their eyes shining, using almost the same expressions.

I asked myself what was this extraordinary manifestation that I had encountered. Apparently I had touched on their holy of holies. Certain words had the effect of magical formulae upon them: 'Back To The Land', 'The New Farmer', 'Own Your Land as a Free Man', 'Really Getting Down To It', 'A New Ruling Class', 'A Better Future', 'Racial

Breeding'—and above all the Everything'.

"Yes, Doctor," said one of them, "we know what we're fighting for. The next generation Germany will already no longer be possible to recognize as a paradise of the Germanic race."

I wondered whether it was that I took all this so quietly. I see the strong impulses which I get one? It is much more important to crusade against city life and the roots from which their conviction

Perhaps it's simply due to the terrible sense of confinement and antagonism to city life bears witness that the country as the city, a spirit in opposition to the city, a spirit of death. Himmler appeals to these the power of the SS which can re to do their duty, use all the strength them a little nearer to what they spoke already saw himself as a Germanic family of at least seven

They regarded their 'King He paradise and the man who would trying to copy Mohammed, who promising his valiant men a place of hours?

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5th January, 1941
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mulae upon them: 'Back To
Land as a Free Man', 'Really
ss', 'A Better Future', 'Racial

Breeding'—and above all the thought of 'The SS which Arranges Everything'.

"Yes, Doctor," said one of these gentlemen with great seriousness, "we know what we're fighting for without rest day or night. In a single generation Germany will already look very different and in two it will no longer be possible to recognize the Germany of today. It will be the paradise of the Germanic race."

I wondered whether it was because I had become so urbanized that I took all this so quietly. One can call it romanticism when one sees the strong impulses which move those men, but where does that get one? It is much more important to be clear about the cause of this crusade against city life and the 'evils of civilization', to discover the roots from which their convictions draw their strength.

Perhaps it's simply due to a number of different circumstances: the terrible sense of confinement in which Germans live, to which this antagonism to city life bears witness, coupled with German romanticism which regards the country as the fulfilment of all its dreams, a paradise in opposition to the city, a spring of youth in contrast to age and death. Himmler appeals to these basic feelings and shows his people the power of the SS which can realize their longings. They only need to do their duty, use all the strength they have, and each day will bring them a little nearer to what they long for. Each of those to whom I spoke already saw himself as a gentleman farmer in the East with a Germanic family of at least seven children.

They regarded their 'King Henry' as at once the guarantor of this paradise and the man who would lead them to it. Was Himmler here trying to copy Mohammed, whom he so liked to praise? Was he promising his valiant men a paradise—with land tenure to take the place of hours?

VII

THE CHOSEN WOMEN

Friedenau, Berlin
15th-17th January, 1941

TODAY I had to wait an hour before I could give Himmler his treatment. Heydrich was making his report to Himmler and the red light was on all the time; nobody might interrupt. Finally at noon I was able to begin. Himmler was in the best of humours and very talkative. He told me that entirely new marriage laws were being prepared; he had just been talking over the details with Heydrich. As the war would soon be over, they wanted everything to be ready for it.

Among other things these new marriage laws included new conditions for divorce. This would be legal if the marriage had gone for five years without children. Such a marriage could and must be broken up, for the state required as many children as possible and could not have the slightest interest in a childless marriage.

I objected that it was not only a matter for the state but for the feelings of the married couple themselves. I knew a number of childless marriages which were extremely happy. Such people would regard it as a tragedy if the state compelled them to separate.

Himmler would not listen to such objections. The good of the Reich came before the happiness of the individual. It was of small importance whether Herr and Frau Müller were happy; what counted was whether they had children. If they had none they must be given the chance of another marriage which might produce children. A proper family, in Himmler's opinion, only really started with three children; the state could not be expected to countenance a childless marriage. Existing marriage laws were controlled by the Church and needed reform. They must be replaced by a marriage law which breathed the Germanic spirit and opened the way to a new intellectual and spiritual rebirth for the German people.

Himmler was at the moment of this marriage law-
'Chosen Women'.

"What are they?" I enquired, trying to provide something women' to be advisers to the

"That's an idea that's considered," but the Chosen Women Herr Kersten, what we lack is that the Romans had in their women, whom you have just disappeared, yet she filled a course there's no lack of fine immersed in their daily tasks are quite unsuited to them. They in the state for them; there is them to great deeds."

I was still not very clear why you want to give women more state, as the women's emancipation would certainly regard that as a clever political move to win the

"We're certainly not going to want to start in a small way with problems which lies very close to Women's Academies for Wisd specially selected German women reliability in politics and whole ideas conditions for admission mind and body, and an entirely C

"You mean that only blondes admitted to these schools?" I put

"Naturally," said Himmler. "have outstanding intellectual qualifications to make a logical start and we will receive the best possible education in history; they will learn training as officials in the foreign and know how to think and at games of chess will be part of that and all kinds of sports, especially exercise, as it demands an instanta

* Himmler -
a mediator

Himmler was at the moment concerned with a very important aspect of this marriage law—the question of the 'Hohen Frauen', or 'Chosen Women'.

"What are they?" I enquired, when he used these words. "Are you trying to provide something on the lines of the old German 'wise women' to be advisers to the Reich?"

"That's an idea that's worth thinking about," Himmler considered, "but the Chosen Women are quite another matter. You know, Herr Kersten, what we lack is that strong, purposeful type of woman that the Romans had in their vestals or the old Germans in their wise women, whom you have just mentioned. This type of woman has disappeared, yet she filled a definite place in the life of the state. Of course there's no lack of fine racial types among women, but they are immersed in their daily tasks or have to slave miserably at jobs which are quite unsuited to them. There are no longer any obvious positions in the state for them; there is nothing to attract them and stimulate them to great deeds."

I was still not very clear what Himmler had in mind and said: "Do you want to give women more rights and a proper position in the state, as the women's emancipation movement has demanded? Women would certainly regard that as a great step forward. It would also be a clever political move to win the women over to your side."

"We're certainly not going as far as that," Himmler replied. "We want to start in a small way from below and thus solve one of the problems which lies very close to our hearts. We're going to set up 'Women's Academies for Wisdom and Culture', in which a number of specially selected German women will be educated. Besides complete reliability in politics and wholehearted acceptance of National Socialist ideas conditions for admission will be: high intellectual gifts, grace of mind and body, and an entirely Germanic appearance."

"You mean that only blonde-haired and blue-eyed women will be admitted to these schools?" I put in.

"Naturally," said Himmler. "Of course I know that some brunettes have outstanding intellectual qualities and great charm, but we have to make a logical start and we will do so here. These Chosen Women will receive the best possible education. They will have a good grounding in history; they will learn languages and have the same basic training as officials in the foreign service; they must be quick-witted and know how to think and act swiftly in delicate situations. Daily games of chess will be part of the curriculum to develop their minds; and all kinds of sports, especially fencing, which is also an intellectual exercise, as it demands an instant reaction to every move of your

* Himmler might have
a meditation on this

MEN

Friedenau, Berlin

15th-17th January, 1941

give Himmler his treatment and the red light finally at noon I was able to see him and very talkative. He was being prepared; he had been rich. As the war would be ready for it.

new laws included new provisions for the marriage had gone wrong and must be dissolved as possible and as marriage.

for the state but for the new number of children which people would regard as separate.

visions. The good of the individual. It was of small importance they must be given to produce children. A family started with three children, countenance a childless woman, led by the Church and a marriage law which lay to a new intellectual

opponent: there will be riding, driving, swimming and pistol practice. Naturally there will also be special courses in cookery and house-keeping. After passing a thorough examination these women will receive the title of 'Chosen Women'. This will be the highest distinction which a woman can reach in the Greater German Reich. The Chosen Women will stand beside those who have won the Mothers' Cross in silver and gold."

"By the time a woman has learnt all this," I objected to Himmler, "she will have aged a little. And what will you do with these elderly women when they have finally achieved the title of Chosen Women?"

"Elderly women!" replied Himmler, laughing. "What are you thinking about, Herr Kersten? These women must have finished their education by the time they are twenty-six or twenty-eight."

I imagined that these Chosen Women would go as advisers in the foreign service or to embassies and represent the Reich in a particularly impressive fashion. Their training on lines similar to diplomats and members of the intelligence service indicated this. I asked Himmler about it.

"It's true," Himmler replied, "that that is also work for which they are being considered. I'm convinced that they could be exceptionally useful there. It's a great mistake that women are so seldom employed in the foreign service; their gifts of intuition and sympathy would make them more effective than men, who only rely on their reason."

"The same holds good for their efficiency in intelligence work, ~~and their training, which will make it easy for them to~~ score outstanding success. But such duties are reserved for later generations. They must first be used in quite different ways; we need them urgently to put right what is happening in our own ranks. Just look, Herr Kersten, at many of our National Socialist leaders' wives! They are good and worthy housewives, adequate during the struggle for power, but being unable to rise in the world, they're no longer suited to their husbands. They quarrel all the time. The husbands find other women; the wives feel that they and their husbands are drifting apart. On public occasions they make a poor showing. We must do something about the malicious gossip which persists in maligning our leaders' private lives, for these men are not private citizens and they're always in the public eye. The Führer has faced this and wants the situation altered fundamentally."

"We must find a way then to separate men from their wives honourably, when the men are so much needed by their country. The wives will receive a pension on which they can live quite respectably."

But their husbands must look who will be fitted to his future model for all National Socialist. Führer is determined to be unworthy of marriage with a Party. I will myself direct proce

Here are other remarks of I are at present, women differ money than others on such tarts. But the truly capable women great qualities except within he can be counted on the fingers of of the past: Elizabeth of England Theresa in Austria, only to a womanly feelings with diplomat and in this pleasing combination able to that of the most outstanding Women who don't inherit a royal to the country. The way will be while still at her most attractive intelligence, delicacy of feeling women will have all that. Their qualities will counterbalance the

Before I could comment, Himmler see why I attach so much importance types as Chosen Women. They will nation; others will watch them must also embody the ideal physique here."

Yesterday we were interrupted Chosen Women. During today's the threads. I had had time to re prepared a few questions.

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But their husbands must look for a wife among the Chosen Women
who will be fitted to his future position. Such a marriage must be a
model for all National Socialist marriages. In the event of scandal, the
Führer is determined to be ruthless; the guilty man will be declared
unworthy of marriage with a Chosen Woman and expelled from the
Party. I will myself direct proceedings in the SS."

Here are other remarks of Himmler's on this subject: "As things
are at present, women differ chiefly in that some can spend more
money than others on such things as dress and appreciation of the
arts. But the truly capable woman has no means of developing her
great qualities except within her family. Such exceptions as there are
can be counted on the fingers of two hands. Just consider the women
of the past: Elizabeth of England, the Pompadour in France, Maria
Theresa in Austria, only to name a few. They united charm and
womanly feelings with diplomatic skill and a great capacity for action;
and in this pleasing combination they showed a superiority compar-
able to that of the most outstanding men. We want to give the Chosen
Women who don't inherit a royal status a chance to use gifts essential
to the country. The way will be open to every woman who is suitable,
while still at her most attractive age. Athletic grace and cultured
intelligence, delicacy of feeling and subtlety of expression—these
women will have all that. They will fill a gap in our leadership; their
qualities will counterbalance the dullness of men."

Before I could comment, Himmler went straight on: "Now you'll
see why I attach so much importance to having only blonde, blue-eyed
types as Chosen Women. They will be a permanent ideal for the whole
nation; others will watch them and follow their example. So they
must also embody the ideal physical traits: no compromise is possible
here."

Berlin

18th-19th January, 1941

Yesterday we were interrupted in our interesting discussion of the
Chosen Women. During today's treatment Himmler at once picked up
the threads. I had had time to reflect on the whole problem and had
prepared a few questions.

My first was: "Then are the Chosen Women obliged to take the
man who asks for them?"

"In principle, yes. You must realize that this is the fulfilment of the
great vocation for which they have been trained. Personal preferences
have to take a back place, as was customary with royal marriages. Yet

the women have a certain right to refuse. This is permissible if the Chosen Woman has herself selected a suitable husband from the circle in question; she will have the chance to make her own choice there. But there will be a time limit to her choice, after which the right of selection returns to the men. The Führer has decided that the final decision will rest with the Reichsführer of the SS, who must not delegate it but exercise it himself. *

"At first it will only be a narrow circle among whom the Chosen Women may marry, but in time this will be enlarged. It will depend on how many of these women can be trained. The ultimate aim is that it should become a matter of course for the leaders of the Party and the SS to marry this type of woman, so that we'll never again suffer from conflicts of the sort that are troubling us now. At the same time—without making any fuss—we will be creating a new upper class to replace the present one, which is often thoroughly degenerate. This will come about simply through guiding the choice of wives instead of leaving it to chance. It's a unique opportunity and can lead to a complete rebirth of the Germanic race.

"In the SS these measures will take effect in one simple decree making marriage to a Chosen Woman a condition for promotion to the higher ranks. Imagine what that will be like, when in future our leading men will only marry women who are both gifted and charming, noble in soul and body! A generation will arise which will be a spring of youth and renewal both for the German people and the Germanic race as a whole! I regard it as a great honour that the Führer has entrusted this task to the Reichsführer of the SS—a special recognition of the policy I have followed within the SS."

Himmler was highly enthusiastic, as always happened when he spoke about his Nordic ideas. Here indeed they had found expression in a complete system and could be seriously put into practice. It was always a cause of grief to him that his SS leaders still continued to marry brunettes, in spite of all the propaganda for the blonde, blue-eyed type. But he himself had to countenance such marriages, if he was to avoid making his Settlement and Racial Head Office a storm centre; every SS man had to seek permission there before he married. Only in the case of a Jewish or coloured woman was permission refused. With the realization of his plan for the Chosen Women, Himmler had his first chance of rejecting a certain type of woman and going in for racial breeding, which was one of his pet ideas.

He always maintained the theory that men could be bred just as successfully as animals and that a race of men could be created possessing the highest spiritual, intellectual and physical qualities. It was only

* Perhaps Himmler's masterstroke
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necessary to face the problem seriously, above all to make a start
without being put off by the violent prejudices which men had in-
grained in them from their upbringing and in particular from the
teaching of the Church. The Church had a great interest in preventing
the formation of a fine Germanic type, for she had need of the inferior
racial type, the only one ready to accept her teaching. The real hundred-
per-cent German on the other hand was the born enemy of clerical
doctrine.

Himmler never tired of talking about this theory. He had special-
ized knowledge at his disposal and made use of the most recent
experiments in the rearing of animals and plants. On the one hand he
gave the effect of a preacher, presenting his ideas with the faith of a
fanatic; on the other hand a scholar who developed the Mendelian
laws in detail and considered their application to the breeding of men.
Through breeding he meant to produce Nietzsche's Superman. He was
firmly convinced that definite intellectual and spiritual traits were
inherited no less than physical ones; and he regarded anyone who
denied this as an enemy of the Germanic race, a personal enemy whom
he would have liked to throw into jail, before such fallacies could do
further damage.

When he saw blond children, boys or girls, he became pale with
emotion. It has often happened, when I was out driving with him,
that he would stop the car, take children in his arms, talk to them,
write down the name and address of their parents, give them a present,
and say to me: "Look, Herr Kersten, what a marvellous child—that's
what all our people should look like. One day I'll have him for my
SS."

Sometimes this got Himmler into trouble. Brandt told me that one
day when he was visiting a seaport he came upon a large, good-
looking blond docker, went up to him and said: "You're going to join
my Waffen SS. Have you seen service?" The man said he had and
Himmler next asked: "What rank? Private, of course. It's always the
same. People like this are never promoted in the army. Make a note of
this, Brandt: from now on this man is a corporal in the SS." To the
man he said: "You will report at once as personally promoted by me to
be SS Unterscharführer in Adolf Hitler's bodyguard. The details will
be arranged."

The man duly reported; his papers were looked over and he had
his medical. Meanwhile the first anonymous letters came in denouncing
him. Who was the man Himmler had picked? A man engaged in the
bawdy trade, who had often been to prison! When the Reichsführer
heard it, he was overwhelmed; he would never have believed such a

*Her master's child
how he will choose*

thing of a blond man. It upset him very much to give the man up, cancel his promotion and send him home again.

I thought of such moments when I listened to Himmler talking about the Chosen Women. He looked at me and realized how sceptical I was. "I see," he said, "once more you are full of doubts. But just question me—it's always healthy and informative. The Socratic method is based on questioning."

I answered, laughing: "So you regard me as a disciple of Socrates? But don't forget that Socrates' aim was to use his questions to convince his listeners how wrong they were. Well, first of all, Herr Reichsführer, I don't believe that you will find enough suitable women for your scheme. What woman is going to be willing to surrender her own freedom of choice and accept a man who's forced on her? Particularly not after an education the whole point of which is to develop her personality."

"There you're making a great mistake, my dear Herr Kersten," was the answer. "The greater the task, the greater is its attraction. We have been able to confirm that again and again when forming our picked units. The hardest tasks attract a definite type of man, who can and must live dangerously. We'll find the same thing here. Some women will be only too glad to have at their side a man highly placed in the Party and the Government, glad to help and advise him—women who like this sort of life and don't want to be bothered with housekeeping and small daily chores. It's generally hard to find them and to put their abilities to the best use in the state; but it's of the first importance and the tasks assigned them will attract the right ones and repel the others. You may be sure of that."

"I doubt whether this sort of political Amazon will give you much satisfaction," I answered, "and to create a happy family life for your leaders will also require a lot of doing. Do you really think a man enjoys having constantly at his side a woman who knows everything about his affairs, trained to criticize his decisions and who will be ready to do so? Just consider the type of women men really prefer. Not those trained to a man's own image and quite capable of doing his job in politics or industry—but the opposite type, the woman who understands nothing of these things, yet has her own peculiarly feminine qualities and acts accordingly."

"There are sure to be certain difficulties," Himmler responded, "but they will settle themselves. The great thing is to get it all going on the right lines and make an end of the present system, where hardly anybody bothers about who the chief leaders of the Greater German Reich marry. Once that is done improvements are always possible. If

marriage with a Chosen Woman another separation. However, should not come before the specially appointed. The Führer of any decisions reached. We Naturally, here as elsewhere

"What exactly will happen to Himmler today, to confer special treatment?"

"I'm glad you asked the forgotten an essential part: educated at the state's expense Party and in the Government. leaders in the Waffen SS. But and made regulations to provide out of touch with the health portion of the leaders are to come with the Führer's general inheritance. Only recently he set a fixed percentage of my SS leaders. The remainder are to come particularly from among farmers. healthy interplay of forces must the country to the highest position, then there must be a return to maintain the healthy balance. recognized the great significance of instructions on the subject long

"I had understood," I replied, "country estates as part of the system be tied to the soil."

"That's true," Himmler answered, "different problem. The reason for the leaders is to assure them a certain way the feeling that they must have their families would be in difficulty and the upbringing of their daughter position of such a man. He can't

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1940-1945

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stened to Himmler talking and realized how sceptical he was full of doubts. But just informative. The Socratic

as a disciple of Socrates? He asked his questions to convince the first of all, Herr Reichs-leader, that enough suitable women for the Führer were willing to surrender her life to be forced on her? Particular of which is to develop her

my dear Herr Kersten," the greater is its attraction. We must again when forming our finite type of man, who can do the same thing here. Some side a man highly placed to help and advise him—we don't want to be bothered with a man generally hard to find them in the state; but it's of the first importance to attract the right ones and

amazon will give you much of a happy family life for your part. Do you really think a man can be a man who knows everything about decisions and who will be a woman men really prefer. I'm quite capable of doing his job, site type, the woman who has her own peculiarly

ies," Himmler responded, the thing is to get it all going in the present system, where hardly any of the Greater German states are always possible. If

THE CHOSEN WOMEN

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marriage with a Chosen Woman doesn't work out, there can always be another separation. However the Führer has expressly desired that this should not come before the ordinary courts, but only before one specially appointed. The Führer has reserved to himself the confirming of any decisions reached. We'll see to it that everything goes properly. Naturally, here as elsewhere we shall have to buy our experience."

Friedenau, Berlin
21st January, 1941

"What exactly will happen to the Chosen Women's children?" I asked Himmler today, to complete the picture. "Will they also receive special treatment?"

"I'm glad you asked that," Himmler answered, "I had almost forgotten an essential part of the scheme. Their children will be educated at the state's expense; they are to be the future leaders in the Party and in the Government. In particular I will draw on them for my leaders in the Waffen SS. But here too the Führer has looked ahead and made regulations to provide against the forming of a narrow class out of touch with the healthy elements of the nation. Only a proportion of the leaders are to come from that source. That's in accord with the Führer's general instructions on recruiting from the rising generation. Only recently he stipulated that in future no more than a fixed percentage of my SS leaders' children were to succeed them as leaders. The remainder are to be brought in from other professions, particularly from among farmers, where possible from the East. The healthy interplay of forces must be preserved—men must come from the country to the highest positions in the Party and in the Government, then there must be a return to the country to recruit strength and maintain the healthy balance of family life. The Führer has clearly recognized the great significance of this rule and gave me proper instructions on the subject long ago."

"I had understood," I replied, "that the SS leaders were to receive country estates as part of the system by which the Party leaders were to be tied to the soil."

"That's true," Himmler answered, "but that belongs to quite a different problem. The reason for endowing Party and Government leaders is to assure them a certain independence of mind and take away the feeling that they must keep their post at all costs, otherwise their families would be in difficulties, their sons' studies interrupted and the upbringing of their daughters jeopardized. Put yourself in the position of such a man. He can't help becoming a civil servant, clinging

* This can also be seen from the letter between Himmler & Hitler.

describing the possibilities

to his post and the pension which goes with it. That must be avoided at all costs. Against that, if he has a farm to which he can retire and lead an independent existence, then we acquire leaders much stronger in character, who can say 'No' and even throw up their posts without worrying unduly."

So ended our talks on the Chosen Women, which had filled me with a mixture of distaste, doubt and amazement. I had long to ponder on this curious blend of cold political rationalism, Germanic romanticism and racial fanaticism—and on Himmler's firm resolve to transform this effort of the imagination into reality. For there was no doubt of the sheer will-power which proposed to shape and develop the scheme. Himmler would have been best pleased if he could start at once on this task which lay so close to his heart; he only bewailed that the war was not yet over and that his plan was thus delayed.

V FOREIGN POLICY W

WHEN I went to Himmler yesterday a heap of reports which he had typed in pencil. He picked out one of them—the marked passages are enough to show the marked gentry on the military strategy before the campaign in France. Moreover we would be permanently held up by the Maginot Line. Meanwhile a powerful army would encircle our flanks and our reports are very well written in a form—based on unimpeachable sources.

Himmler handed over the papers to a diplomat on the comparative strategy of the powers and on the dangers threatening Germany. Apparently the man knew his subject from foreign service abroad, lost his position through deep concern for the welfare of the country, perils which would beset it, military perils with the West. From the military point of view the reports were refuted by the German victory in Poland.

Himmler informed me that the reports produced again and been put out the significant parts and handed over to the general picture of German diplomacy. They showed up not only the military but also the diplomatic of diplomats in such a way that the

the diplomatic system entirely with the ultimate intention of abolishing it altogether.

"But how are you going to manage relations between two countries," I enquired, "if there are going to be no diplomats in future?"

Himmler said: "It's very simple; you only need an efficient consul, who will control commercial affairs, passports and visas; that will be his total field of activity. He will be absolutely forbidden to concern himself with what has hitherto been the realm of diplomacy. If nations have matters to adjust with one another, in the sphere of foreign relations, then they will send a special mission provided with the most detailed instructions. In future anyhow there will no longer be career diplomats, who believe that it's for them alone to give an opinion on all matters which affect other countries and who treat everybody else who dares to express an opinion as a complete fool. It wasn't so in earlier times; then nations sent missions to each other. The missions drew up treaties and then went home again.

"That is a far healthier way of doing things than setting up permanent diplomatic missions, which I resent all the more because they are the licensed agents of the enemy intelligence. They take your breath away; you can't tolerate them, once you have really understood them. I agree with the Russians, who make short work of these gentlemen and so restrict the field of their activities that they can hardly stir. With us too it's only the other side which profits from this licensed spying, because our own diplomats are so foolish that they are children at the game."

I countered by saying that I had got to know, both in Germany and abroad, very many highly able diplomats, who knew their subject thoroughly and had rendered great services to their country. Everyone made mistakes at times, but you could not condemn the profession as a whole simply because here and there a diplomat made a mistake. Göring's anti-aircraft guns were not judged by the planes they missed.

"No, Herr Kersten," said Himmler, "that's not the way to look at it. You must view it quite differently. The diplomat is first of all a civil servant with all the weaknesses of a civil servant. We have already discussed that subject. As a civil servant he is chiefly concerned with his career, his ambition for promotion and honours. The attaché wants to become secretary, then first counsellor of an embassy; later he dreams of being an envoy, then a full ambassador on an equal footing with a minister. But that can only be brought about by making himself agreeable to his superiors. While the ordinary civil servant tries to earn success by really hard work, these gentlemen give proof of their

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accredited. If these reports are to be useful to the writer's career, they
must correspond with the views of his superiors.

"I have myself some people working with me who simply can't
bear it if I heard nothing of them for a few days; their whole object is
to put some exciting event before me at least every other day, or to
cable me for a decision on some matter or other. I began by taking it
all seriously, but gradually I realized that they were always the same
people, who simply wanted to make themselves important. When they
get up in the morning they're already thinking of what special infor-
mation they can send their boss. They seize on every item of news for
that purpose—they make it seem reliable, whether it is or not. Do you
think it's any different with these gentry of the foreign service? They
live on news and trade on it just like professional news agencies. A
character who is absolutely selfless and excels in summing up a situation
can respect himself and his employers and rise above human weak-
nesses. But where will you find such a man? I even catch myself at it,
when I'm making a report for the Führer, underlining more heavily
than I need things which I know he will be glad to hear, taking into
account his cast of mind, which is perfectly known to me. Yet such
things should never be done, for they destroy the objective value of
any report.

"I've noticed the same methods in the reports which are put before
Göring or Goebbels. They're suited to the bosses' cast of mind, but
the bosses never know how rotten they are, nor how dangerous are
their results."

29th January, 1941

"You were saying the other day, Herr Himmler, that diplomats
were civil servants and took their colour from their superiors. Then it
must be quite easy to change them round at any time as the need
arises."

"You're confusing two separate human traits," Himmler corrected
me. "There is the impulse to rise and make a career, and also the
impulse to defend what you've won, even though by so doing you
bring harm to yourself. Wounded vanity has its place here. A man
wants what he has said and advised to be considered true and irrefut-
able. I have yet to meet a diplomat who won't use his special knowledge
to show that any policy adopted against his advice must be wrong, and
that the real situation is quite different from what the Government
thinks. The ambassador has a way of feeling that he is a great man in

his own right and that everyone, even his own Government, has to bow before his knowledge and experience.

"In Germany it's particularly bad because so few Germans get abroad—the Führer and most of the leading men have never travelled—and on the basis of their so-called foreign experience the diplomats think that they can treat the rest of us with the superiority of specialists; it's a thing you always come across when the so-called specialist talks with a layman on his subject. Anyhow their position has been shaken as never before owing to their being so utterly wrong about the consequences of marching into the demilitarized zones in Austria, the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia and about the war in Poland and France. Yet in spite of this the same people who have been proved so flagrantly wrong, and had their lack of judgment so clearly exposed, still have the impertinence to send memoranda to the Führer and lay down what our foreign policy should be.

"In no other walk of life would you find anything comparable. A defeated general is quite content to keep quiet; but the strategists in foreign affairs, the defeated ambassadors, still go on talking. Instead of keeping their false assumptions to themselves and thinking them over, they go further and assure us that the next step will certainly lead to catastrophe, as they have long prophesied; and secretly they hope for disaster, so that they will be proved right in the end. In Russia they make short work of such people: they accuse them of sabotage and have them liquidated. Life is more dangerous for these gentry over there." After a short pause, Himmler added: "I am thoroughly convinced that the Führer's plan to do away with career diplomats is the correct one; I've really come to the conclusion that he's right.

"We would have got further in this matter if Ribbentrop had not persistently intervened and influenced the Führer to postpone the whole matter until after the war, privately thinking that he would have reorganized his own department in the meantime. The old school of diplomacy is quite repugnant to him because they don't take him seriously—a fact of which he is well aware and which he repays with outbursts of hatred—yet he has a terrible fear that the ground will be cut from under his feet. It's simply for this reason that he tries to keep the old system going—in particular the diplomatic intelligence—and attempts to infuse fresh blood into it. Since basically he does not understand a thing about diplomacy, he has to let the old school have its way, with the result that everything goes wrong. On the other hand we have both the personnel and the experience in intelligence matters; what couldn't we do, if only Ribbentrop had a little more sense! As it is I have to limit my activities and only intervene at

decisive moments with my 1 because I can't let it come to an I have to bring it to the Führer me a chance; my hour will come

Himmler realized that he had broke off with the words: "But old school of diplomacy, I'm co

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decisive moments with my reports. Valuable material is wasted because I can't let it come to an open conflict with Ribbentrop, or else I have to bring it to the Führer's notice by other means. But just give me a chance; my hour will come yet!"

Himmler realized that he had exposed his cards too openly and broke off with the words: "But on the real point, the battle against the old school of diplomacy, I'm completely at one with Ribbentrop."

*Himmler is absolutely
 preparing himself to take
 over from Hitler. He
 works at the Enghelshausen
 with just this in mind
 — to win the Führer's
 outright admiration.*

IX

HESS

Bad Godesberg on Rhine

24th June, 1940

I'VE been here for more than a week with Rudolf Hess in the Hotel Dresden. Hess is very busy and excited about recent events—the French armistice—and suffering in consequence from severe stomach pains. Meanwhile he was in the Forest of Compiègne and came back yesterday.

During the treatment, still charged with tension, he sketched to me the course of recent events, and spoke of the future, which he envisaged as an era of fruitful Franco-German co-operation.

"You forget England," I told him. "Her whole history, the laws of her political life, her very nature will never suffer her to leave things as you imagine. She will be going against her own existence if she does not take appropriate counter-measures. You're also forgetting the toughness of England. The English haven't such a Utopian cast of mind as the Germans."

Hess replied: "We'll make peace with England in the same way as with France. Only a few weeks back the Führer again spoke of the great value of the British Empire in the world order. Germany and France must stand together with England against the enemy of Europe, Bolshevism. That was the reason why the Führer allowed the English Army to escape at Dunkirk. He did not want to upset the possibility of an understanding. The English must see that and seize their chance. I can't imagine that cool, calculating England will run her neck into the Soviet noose, instead of saving it by coming to an understanding with us."

15th May, 1941

Yesterday I was arrested for five hours and was personally interrogated by Heydrich. He asked me in the form of a direct question

whether I had encouraged Hess in England. I replied that I had not special matters. Heydrich laughed and said, for I know that you're not. When you will tell us the truth for

After an interrogation lasting five go. I've just heard that all doctors who have been arrested. I also learnt from Heydrich's interrogation Himmler's release. That must be right, for I was called from the room and I was left returned and said that the Reichsführer should hold myself at their disposal.

It was a year ago that Himmler

I have treated him too. I established in the gall-bladder and stomach man who was quiet, friendly and gentle in Egypt, for which he longed to be happiest if he could retire to mountains. But he emphasized even to meet a hero's death while flying. I to fly, so that he was condemned to:

Hess was a good and helpful person. He was a vegetarian, surrounded by astrologers and despised official medicine, saying that he could not go on unless he resolved to stake his life on a great

Once, when headquarters were in Berlin. In the interview with Hitler, he asked me through towns and villages which had heavy fighting. Later Hess said to me horrible to see these once flourishing should not last any longer. The world was unconquerable. And he, Hess, had about a reconciliation between Germany

Another time he told me that he had hardened himself—he needed all he would secure the salvation of Germany by this 'salvation', Hess replied that he preparing for an act of historic importance.

Bad Godesberg on Rhine
24th June, 1940

with Rudolf Hess in the Hotel about recent events—the French once from severe stomach pains. With tension, he sketched to me of the future, which he envisaged o-operation.
“Her whole history, the laws of never suffer her to leave things as her own existence if she does res. You’re also forgetting the haven’t such a Utopian cast of

with England in the same way as the Führer again spoke of the the world order. Germany and England against the enemy of ason why the Führer allowed the. He did not want to upset the “English must see that and seize pol, calculating England will run ad of saving it by coming to an

15th May, 1941

hours and was personally interro- n the form of a direct question

whether I had encouraged Hess in his friendly feelings towards England. I replied that I had not spoken with him on political, only on medical, matters. Heydrich laughed and said: “I don’t believe a word you say, for I know that you’re not on our side. But the day is coming when you will tell us the truth for once.”

After an interrogation lasting five hours, Heydrich had to let me go. I’ve just heard that all doctors who had treated Hess in recent years have been arrested. I also learnt from a trustworthy source that during Heydrich’s interrogation Himmler rang up and ordered my immediate release. That must be right, for towards the end of it Heydrich was called from the room and I was left alone for ten minutes. Then he returned and said that the Reichsführer had guaranteed me but that I should hold myself at their disposal.

It was a year ago that Himmler asked me to examine Hess; since then I have treated him too. I established that he was suffering from trouble in the gall-bladder and stomach pains. In Hess I encountered a man who was quiet, friendly and grateful. He frequently spoke of his home in Egypt, for which he longed. He often said too that he would be happiest if he could retire to the loneliness of the Bavarian mountains. But he emphasized even more that he had only one wish: to meet a hero’s death while flying. But the Führer had forbidden him to fly, so that he was condemned to sit at his desk.

Hess was a good and helpful person, very modest in his way of life. He was a vegetarian, surrounded himself with clairvoyants and astrologers and despised official medical views. He was constantly saying that he could not go on with this existence. He was firmly resolved to stake his life on a great deed in the service of Germany. Once, when headquarters were in Belgium and Hess had to go to an interview with Hitler, he asked me to accompany him. We drove through towns and villages which had been shelled during the recent heavy fighting. Later Hess said to me with tears in his eyes that it was horrible to see these once flourishing areas so laid waste. The war should not last any longer. The world must come to see that Germany was unconquerable. And he, Hess, had to stretch out his hand, to bring about a reconciliation between Germany and the other nations.

Another time he told me that he had to concentrate all his powers and harden himself—he needed all his strength for the deed which would secure the salvation of Germany. When I asked what he meant by this ‘salvation’, Hess replied that he could not tell me, but he was preparing for an act of historic importance.

X

ENCOUNTERS WITH HEYDRICH

1. HEYDRICH THE MAN

Gut Hartzwalde
10th February, 1941

ONE of the most interesting men in Himmler's circle is the Head of the Security Police, the SS Oberguppenführer Reinhard Heydrich. I often had occasion to observe him at first hand. He had the right of admission to Himmler at any time and sometimes put in an appearance in the middle of a treatment, to give him some urgent papers. He is a very striking person, tall, slim, blond, an extremely Nordic type, a brilliant speaker in the concise military style. In contrast to Himmler, who is often rather stiff, he expresses himself incisively and with polish.

I have often been able to listen to the arguments with which Heydrich supported various proposals of his own. They were at times masterpieces of exposition: a short sketch of the person or subject, then his arguments, effectively built up to the decisive trump card which he played last of all, then his conclusion, which Himmler could hardly resist. Sometimes I had the impression that after one of these expositions Himmler was quite overwhelmed. For he often went to the telephone a little later and had Heydrich told that the measures they had discussed could not be put into effect at once—he would have to talk the matter over with the Führer first. Then later he would send him his countermand in the form of what purported to be an order from the Führer.

On the other hand Heydrich behaves towards Himmler, who always treats him with the most open friendliness, with quite inexplicable servility. He addresses Himmler as 'Herr Reichsführer'—a thing absolutely forbidden throughout the whole SS—instead of simply

'Reichsführer'. Heydrich's side of like this: "Certainly, Herr Reichsführer's wish I will have the need report back to the Herr Reichsführer. Doubtless as a political personality Himmler. He knows that and his arguments; Himmler just isn't in opposition or puts forward a difficulty to possess some sort of secret. Heydrich submits unconditionally."

Himmler's people haven't a very narrow circle, where Heydrich's stantly meeting and the staffs have body learns everything about the them, so that all are in a position the bosses.

In general the adjutants play Socialist state. If they were to get Third Reich. Outwardly Heydrich Himmler's personal staff. Gruppenkommandant learnt how intense is the antagonism between his rival as the Reichsführer get rid of him, he tries to be friendly.

Yesterday Brandt was again to give, thus expressing his master's judgment on Heydrich the man to it had been formed in a varied experience seems, has no friends of his own; motive and he gives them up on Friends from his naval days turn the

Himmler's staff is not ill-disposed himself regards them with respect. he can help a woman in trouble, but influence in this is that he has really ancestors—how often have I heard Germanic peoples women were so but the fact remains. Never have I nor would anyone dare to use any Heydrich however is outspokenly towards women; they feel this and that this very fine-looking man has

HEYDRICH

Gut Hartzwalde
10th February, 1941

mler's circle is the Head of the Führer Reinhard Heydrich. In his hand. He had the right of sometimes put in an appearance some urgent papers. He is an extremely Nordic type, a style. In contrast to Himmler, himself incisively and with

the arguments with which his own. They were at times both of the person or subject, to the decisive trump card decision, which Himmler could see that after one of these had been told that the measures they had at once—he would have to do. Then later he would send it purported to be an order

as towards Himmler, who friendliness, with quite inexpressive as 'Herr Reichsführer'—a whole SS—instead of simply

Reichsführer'. Heydrich's side of the conversation between them goes like this: "Certainly, Herr Reichsführer, if that is the Herr Reichsführer's wish I will have the necessary arrangements made at once and report back to the Herr Reichsführer. Yes, certainly; yes, yes, indeed!" Doubtless as a political personality Heydrich is far more dynamic than Himmler. He knows that and shows his superiority in mustering his arguments; Himmler just isn't in the same class. On the other hand Heydrich draws back at once the moment Himmler manifests any opposition or puts forward a different point of view. Himmler seems to possess some sort of secret power over Heydrich, before which Heydrich submits unconditionally.

Himmler's people haven't a great opinion of Heydrich. In such a narrow circle, where Heydrich's and Himmler's adjutants are constantly meeting and the staffs have known each other for years, everybody learns everything about the bosses' characters. Nothing escapes them, so that all are in a position to form a reasonably true picture of the bosses.

In general the adjutants play a very curious part in the National Socialist state. If they were to get together they could almost rule the Third Reich. Outwardly Heydrich is on friendly terms with the head of Himmler's personal staff, Gruppenführer Wolff; but from Brandt I learnt how intense is the antagonism between them. Heydrich sees in Wolff his rival as the Reichsführer's eventual successor. As he can't get rid of him, he tries to be friendly.

Yesterday Brandt was again talking of Heydrich's great political gifts, thus expressing his master's opinion, but he added a very harsh judgment on Heydrich the man to which I attached great weight, as it had been formed in a varied experience over the years. Heydrich, it seems, has no friends of his own; his friendships all have a political motive and he gives them up once they have served their purpose. Friends from his naval days turn their backs on him.

Himmler's staff is not ill-disposed towards women; Himmler himself regards them with respect. He is even markedly chivalrous. If he can help a woman in trouble, he will. It may be that the decisive influence in this is that he has really modelled himself on his Germanic ancestors—how often have I heard the phrase on his lips: 'To the Germanic peoples women were sacred, and sacred was the hearth.' But the fact remains. Never have I heard an obscene word on his lips, nor would anyone dare to use any such expression in his company. Heydrich however is outspokenly cynical and brutal in his attitude towards women; they feel this and avoid him. Thus it comes about that this very fine-looking man hasn't much success with women,

though you'd think they would flock to him. If he has occasion to go out in civilian clothes with his adjutants, it's they who make the running, which often leads to great complications—and Heydrich reacts strongly against the poor wretch who has bested him and walked off with the woman. Heydrich can never come second. Wherever he is invited the question of rank is always a problem; he can never be a good loser.

His fencing master is always in terror when he has to act as referee. He has of course been taken into the ranks of the SS, so that he is under Heydrich's orders. He has nothing to laugh about if Heydrich loses. This is regarded as disloyalty at the very least, if not a crime against the service. Heydrich much enjoys shooting, less from any love of the open air or the excitement of the chase than because he *must* make a kill. If he doesn't succeed, the day is wasted for him. If he doesn't get a shot in, he takes it as personal malice on the part of the keeper—who can do nothing about this.

Heydrich used to practise daily with a pistol; he wanted to be the best shot in the SS. He gave up simply because he can't bear failure. He admitted himself that he was constantly at his desk, while the others competed outside. Again, he wanted to face issues of life and death, so that he could look death in the eye and give proof of his courage. He succeeded in being nominated an officer in the Luftwaffe by Göring and after sixty operational flights in a fighter he received the Iron Cross, first class. Then his military ambition was at last appeased.

Brandt laughingly told me that what Heydrich would like best would be to send his whole staff into the field and have them killed so that he could report to the Führer: "The entire staff of the Security Police has fallen on the field of honour"—and be able to say, as against the Wehrmacht: "The Wehrmacht should just try to emulate us."

It was Heydrich who encouraged Himmler in the idea of letting the Waffen SS take part in an exercise using live cartridges against each other; a couple of dead or wounded were of no consequence. Himmler had occasion to mention this to Göring, who replied with a deadly serious face: "My dear Himmler, I already do that with my Luftwaffe. The 'Courage Test' is a part of their training." Very interested, Himmler asked him what it comprised. Göring replied: "It's quite simple, just a little parachute jumping test. Twice with the parachute, the third time without." Since then there has been no more talk of a Courage Test for the SS.

Himmler's people are really afraid of Heydrich. Brandt told me that they never knew what means he would employ, what traps he would lay. Recently he has aroused much mistrust because he has found

a way to Hitler. This is how Heydrich made an urgent report attempt on his life. He produced distrust: at a conference a man sights was going to shoot him and Heydrich's summary of the press on Hitler. Heydrich was not there. One day Himmler. But there was no satisfaction. Heydrich always knew of it and took measures.

2. HEYDRICH'S OFFER

A few days ago Brandt told opinion of me; he had told his an enemy agent, or at least an act and that I was using my position one day he would produce his evidence the fact that there should be any under his control, whose influence reckon with Heydrich's making a

I was not surprised, therefore today Heydrich expressed a desire ready at any time, today if he like appointment for the evening in his began, he pressed a button—a call—and his microphone became live guard about this. Quietly I said you want us to talk undisturbed Hartzwalde."

"Why? We can chat just as we

"But it's I who would press the

Heydrich did not take it in but said with a smirk to emphasize the acquainted with listening devices

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a way to Hitler. This is how it happened. In Himmler's absence Heydrich made an urgent report to Hitler with exact details of an attempt on his life. He produced evidence which overcame Hitler's distrust: at a conference a man with a rifle equipped with telescopic sights was going to shoot him from a building across the street. This and Heydrich's summary of the affair must have made a great impression on Hitler. Heydrich was summoned to him at times when Himmler was not there. One day he might have got the better of Himmler. But there was no satisfaction in this for Heydrich, since Himmler always knew of it and was able to take the necessary counter-measures.

2. HEYDRICH'S OFFER

Gut Hartzwalde
25th February, 1941

A few days ago Brandt told me that Heydrich had a very poor opinion of me; he had told his people that he suspected me of being an enemy agent, or at least an active sympathizer with foreign powers, and that I was using my position with Himmler to prejudice the Party; one day he would produce his evidence. The cause of his hostility was the fact that there should be anyone close to Himmler who was not under his control, whose influence he could not watch. I had to reckon with Heydrich's making a move some time or other.

I was not surprised, therefore, when after I had treated Himmler today Heydrich expressed a desire to talk with me. I replied that I was ready at any time, today if he liked. Heydrich agreed and we made an appointment for the evening in his official quarters. As the conversation began, he pressed a button—a casual visitor would not have noticed it—and his microphone became live. Brandt had already put me on my guard about this. Quietly I said to him: "My dear Herr Heydrich, if you want us to talk undisturbed, I would rather invite you to Hartzwalde."

"Why? We can chat just as well here," was his answer.

"But it's I who would press the button there," I answered, laughing.

Heydrich did not take it in bad part; he turned the thing off and said with a smirk to emphasize the allusion: "You seem to be very well acquainted with listening devices and well versed in political matters."

"Anyone who has business in this building," I said, "must be prepared—and incidentally I've no political knowledge whatever."

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Do you know, Herr Kersten,
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g the necessary facts; we'll
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ir. In return I only ask you,
to tell the Reichsführer that I
feeling that I am loyally co-
"

ery illuminating. I at once
ed this in order to learn the
lp, so that he could take the

necessary counter-measures, prepare Himmler beforehand, and thus
prevent me from being of any use. I replied that I was extremely
grateful. An open refusal would have made an open enemy of
Heydrich. Then I would have lost any chance of helping my *protégés*;
furthermore I could only suppose that—as it was known that all
measures were being intensified—appeals for my help would also
increase. I was firmly resolved to allow Heydrich no glimpse of such
matters, but I hoped that my answer—that I was extremely grateful—
would be answer enough for a man who was used to immediate
compliance. He seemed to take my remark as being to the point,
showed pleasure, and offered me any other help of which I might stand
in need. Then he asked me to supper.

At the meal he was very open, told me of his shooting experiences
and the number of his trophies, showed himself an accomplished talker
and host. In the middle of the conversation Heydrich asked me with an
innocent expression whether it would amuse me to pay a visit to his
newly established 'House of Gallantry' in Giesebrechtstrasse. It had
been opened in agreement with Ribbentrop specially to offer something
to foreigners in Berlin. For the moment, it was true, it had still to be
subsidized, but he hoped that it would soon be self-supporting. I
laughed out loud. He smirked and told me that since the house had been
opened Ciano was a more frequent visitor to Berlin; it also had a
certain attraction for prominent Germans. It had been necessary to
establish this house, as otherwise foreigners in Berlin fell into the hands
of the worst type of prostitute.

"How attentive you are," I said, laughing, "to care so much for
the health of your guests."

For the rest I had already been told how interested Heydrich was
in this house simply from its value as an intelligence service and also
on personal grounds; and that he had already had successes with its
'ladies'. Beyond that it gave him particular pleasure to have records
made of the intimate talks of these important gentlemen, and on
suitable occasions, when they crossed his own plans, to make use of
such material. He was without scruple in these matters.

"I have been advised to open a similar house for homosexuals.
What do you think about it, Doctor?" Heydrich suddenly asked
towards the end of our conversation, clearly in the hope that I would
supply medical arguments for it.

"What attentiveness!" I answered with irony. "That would be the
finest monument to your warm heart."

He grasped the point at once. "And so you know nothing about
diplomacy and politics? You're more than the simple medical man you

ed; it seemed to amuse him to

Well, Herr Kersten," he returned
we had discussed, "if you would
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hat he was beginning to lose his
e, thanking him for a pleasant
nself, the sentry saluted and he
'amused as I sat in the car.

Gut Hartzwalde
20th August, 1942

s, suffering from exceptional pain.
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"There's a rumour that Heydrich was not entirely Aryan. That can
hardly be true, can it?" I asked.

"Yes, it's true enough."

"Did you know that before, or have you only learnt it since his
death? Does Herr Hitler know it?" I replied, astounded.

"I already knew it when I was still head of the Bavarian political
police. I discussed the matter with the Führer at the time; he had
Heydrich brought before him, talked to him for a long time and
received a very favourable impression. Later the Führer informed me
that Heydrich was a highly gifted but also very dangerous man, whose
gifts the movement had to retain. Such people could still be used so
long as they were kept well in hand and for that purpose his non-Aryan
origins were extremely useful; for he would be eternally grateful to
us that we had kept him and not expelled him and would obey blindly.
That was in fact the case."

While Himmler talked, I remembered the servile way in which
Heydrich had always approached him and my eyes were opened.

Himmler went on: "The Führer could confidently impose anything
on Heydrich—even action against the Jews—which no one else would
care to do and rest assured that it would be carried out perfectly."

I could not keep myself from saying: "Then you have made use
of one of their own people, whom you had under your thumb, to
exterminate the Jews. That's a really devilish trick!"

"What do you mean?" Himmler replied. "Just you read Machia-
velli and his teaching on *raison d'état*; you'll find something very
different there. Do you think that times have changed? Methods have
only become more refined. Machiavelli wouldn't have behaved a jot
differently if it was a question of saving the state and employing force
which he could keep permanently under control."

I was silent at that. Himmler ended the conversation by asking me
specifically to keep quiet about what he had just told me.

4. HIMMLER ON HEYDRICH

Gut Hartzwalde
25th August, 1942

Today I brought the talk round to Heydrich again and told Himmler
the opinions about him that I used to hear in the rank of the SS. Himmler
agreed that there was much truth in them. Heydrich had at bottom
been an unhappy man, completely divided against himself, as often

happened with those of mixed race. Such people suffered from persistent inferiority complexes and tried to react in one way or another. Then such phenomena appeared as had become increasingly noticeable in Heydrich.

"You know, my dear Herr Kersten, Heydrich constantly suffered from the fact that he was not racially pure. He wanted to prove that the Germanic elements in his blood were dominant, by distinguishing himself, particularly in the field of sport, in which Jews do not play any part. He had a childish pleasure in winning the Silver Sport Badge and the Riding Badge, in being the victor in fencing bouts, in shooting well or in bringing home fine hunting trophies, or in getting the Iron Cross First Class. But in all that he was only pursuing a purpose, he found no real pleasure in it, even though he pretended to himself that he did so.

"I've been able to watch him closely over the years and I know what I'm talking about. How sorry I was for him, when he proposed men for the SS drawing particular attention to their excellent racial origins. I knew then what was going on inside him. He never really found peace; something was always upsetting him. Often I've talked to him and tried to help him, even against my own convictions, pointing out the possibility of overcoming Jewish elements by the admixture of better Germanic blood, citing himself as a case in point. How pleased he was when this attitude to those who were a quarter Jewish found expression in the racial laws; though this sprang only from political reasons, in order finally to regulate the Jewish question. For the time being, it is true, he was very grateful to me for such help and seemed as if liberated, but nothing was any use in the long run."

Himmler stopped talking, carefully lighted a cigar and, gazing at the blue rings of smoke, went on as if talking to himself: "In one respect he was irreplaceable. He possessed an infallible nose for men. That again was based on his own inner conflict. Because he was himself divided, he was sure to sense such divisions in others. He saw the ways which friend or foe would take with a clarity which was absolutely amazing. His colleagues hardly dared to lie to him; he could always tell. He could read their motives like an open book. He was certainly not an easy boss to have; they were right to fear him. He imparted his own restlessness to them and drove them as he himself was ceaselessly driven. Altogether he was the embodiment of distrust—the 'hypersuspicious', as people called him—nobody could endure it for long.

"If, disdainfully curling his lip, he declared, 'Herr Reichsführer, the man is a scoundrel,' then there was something in it and in a rela-

tively short time he had triumphed. Of the reports brought before him, opinion there would appear to be a rumour—a wild invention. He investigated the report in question simply his feeling. He was usually right; they had cropped up; his gift was a living card-index, a brain that put them all together. Taken all in all, he was the ideal head of the Security Service.

Himmler went on: "He was the struggle against the Jews, by purely intellectual means as he was convinced that the Jewish race hated the blood which had really have picked no better way against the Jews. For them he had no other way."

"Yet he also had positive regard for those who denounced the Jews when he himself made use of the intrigue inside the SS arouse scientific impartiality for SS ends. Then of course he made he got for his own purposes. He was neither himself nor others.

"For the rest it will interest you as a good violinist. He once played a piece excellent—a pity that he did not play it more often."

"Is it true," I put in, "that he was a Jew?"

"I have never been quite sure. He wounded he grasped his pistol of courage too he had the same character, and he had no hesitations. His colleagues who did not seem to be so sure."

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tively short time he had triumphantly produced the proofs. On many
of the reports brought before me which I handed over to him for his
opinion there would appear the inscription—'Don't believe it—simply
a rumour—a wild invention.' When I asked him whether he had
investigated the report in question, he told me not yet, that this was
simply his feeling. He was usually right. He never forgot names once
they had cropped up; his gift for correlation surpassed everything, he
was a living card-index, a brain which held all the threads and wove
them all together. Taken all in all, he was a born intelligence officer
and the ideal head of the Security Police."

Himmler went on: "He was extremely useful in another way, in
the struggle against the Jews. He had overcome the Jew in himself
by purely intellectual means and had swung over to the other side. He
was convinced that the Jewish elements in his blood were damnable;
he hated the blood which had played him so false. The Führer could
really have picked no better man than Heydrich for the campaign
against the Jews. For them he was without mercy or pity.

"Yet he also had positive traits. He despised every flatterer and
regarded those who denounced others as morally defective, even
when he himself made use of them. Anyone who attempted to organize
intrigue inside the SS aroused his hatred. He demanded the strictest
scientific impartiality for SS enquiries in all the fields under his super-
vision. Then of course he made Machiavellian use of the information
he got for his own purposes. And when he tackled a task, he spared
neither himself nor others.

"For the rest it will interest you to know that Heydrich was a very
good violinist. He once played a serenade in my honour; it was really
excellent—a pity that he did not do more in this field."

"Is it true," I put in, "that he was in fact no hero?"

"I have never been quite clear about that. Yet when mortally
wounded he grasped his pistol and shot at his assassin. In the matter
of courage too he had the same infallible nose for the weak side of a
character, and he had no hesitation in putting to the test any of his
colleagues who did not seem to him free from cowardice."

be spent. When that's done a new one is demanded; it's extortion without end.

"However, I've closed one door on their doings in the war. None of these Lord's Day bandits will be exempt from service; I've given strict orders to take in all those who are at all fit for service. I've made the same arrangement for tax-consultants, who do nothing but make the state lose the taxes due to it, working out day and night how this can best be done and getting fat fees for it. That is another anti-social profession which will disappear once we have won the war. Can you understand how a state can recognize a calling whose sole aim is to do that same state out of its well-earned money? Imagine a man sitting in a private firm, doing nothing but advise its debtors how best they can escape paying. What would happen to him? He would be flung out of the window, and that's what we're going to do with these tax-consultants. I'm taking care to do my bit towards it now by seeing that all tax-consultants shall be called up regardless; that's already a step nearer the final goal."

"But, Herr Himmler," I responded, "you can't simply get rid of all lawyers. You at least need some to become judges in a civilized modern state."

"You're very wide of the mark, my dear man," was his answer. "These legal gentry have already made it beautifully clear to us that we couldn't live without them and that everything would go topsyturvy. We will produce evidence to the contrary. We only need to alter the laws. After the war they will be entirely remade and become clear, straightforward and generally comprehensible to everybody, so that the legal arts of exposition will no longer be needed to find out what the law means. For don't you realize that the laws have only been turned into a sort of arcane wisdom—incomprehensible and stuffed with clauses—so that the lawyer can make a living and the training of ever new generations of lawyers appear justified?"

"Just take the trouble to consult one of these famous commentaries—as they call them—to their law-books. You will shudder to find pages of explanations in the commentary over a single phrase used by the lawgiver; and there are considerations set down about what he meant or might have meant by it, what he certainly did not or perhaps might not have intended. Lawyers are a lodge just like the Masons; the same men who make the laws give expositions of them and gaze with immense arrogance at any man so intellectually limited in their eyes as to dare to offer his opinion on any of these so-called 'legal questions'. These questions are the private preserve of this caste and of its priests! Woe to him who pokes his nose into it all!"

OF LAWYERS

16th July, 1941

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be made to live again in the nation. His only worry is that this can't be done at once, but is stopped by the war, which at bottom he hates as it also prevents his dearest wish, the internal construction of a Germanic state.

With a sigh he turned to the adjutant who, having waited impatiently, at last came in: "My God, Herr Kersten, it's already an hour over the time; we are always being disturbed, but I must go. Today of all days the representative of the Minister of Justice is waiting for me upstairs. If only he had heard our talk about lawyers! But come to supper this evening, and I will show you some exceptionally fine things which I have at home."

17th July, 1941

Yesterday evening I went to supper with Himmler as arranged. He at once received me with the words: "Now, have you thought over what I said to you yesterday morning about these legal gentry? I know what your objections will be, that in a modern state it's no longer possible to give a new lease of life to Germanic ideas on law. But look at Switzerland where the 'Thing' still meets; just get someone to tell you how the English have managed to protect themselves against Roman law; then you will see that neither the modern state nor its economy need stand in our way. If there is only the will, some courageous steps in this direction can be taken.

"Think of it, Herr Kersten: Roman law and the lawyers it brought with it who suppressed the old Germanic people's law are like a mortal cancer menacing the German people and the Germanic race as a whole. If we want to build a new Germanic Reich, our task is to cut this cancer out of the body politic. We'll not suffer any outcry from the lawyers, and it will be a matter of indifference to us whether other states—swayed by their legal caste—describe us as having no culture. Before another century has passed there will be a new Germanic people's law, in which the general Germanic feeling for law, based on the ideas of our forefathers, will triumph anew. Then the ages dominated by Roman law and the lawyers formed by it will be seen as an evil dream, a monstrous mistake; and all will admire the clarity and the inexorable nature of the measures taken by the Führer."

Himmler seized one of the books lying beside him in which he had himself made notes and after a few pages read me the following phrases:

"I, the judge, enquire about the law; I ask the free men, who tell me, the judge, what the law is."

"See, Herr Kersten, that's how our forefathers thought. They

asked the free men about the law and the free men told them. Where then were our learned legal gentry? We did wonders without them; the Germanic race flourished and prospered."

He glanced at me in triumph and went on: "We must once again make it clear to Germanic man where his real strength and greatness lie; we must appeal to the presiding genius, of the race and we must methodically eliminate every superfluous element. There will be a response. I see it daily in my SS. External circumstances must be suitable and men must be led away from the narrow limits of great cities to surroundings in keeping with their nature; and they will develop a new life in body, mind and spirit. The Roman lawyer is closely bound up with the town where everything is atomized. The countryside has offered the longest and most obstinate resistance to the compulsion of Roman law, and tried to defend its old common law and habits. Just read your history! We must renew links with the past."

"But you yourself make use of lawyers in your organizations! You have a supreme judge in the SS and another in the Party and everywhere I look I'm coming up against lawyers," I retorted.

"Supreme judges—whether in the Party or the SS—are no lawyers and never will be. And SS and Party justice must be quite differently constituted," Himmler answered. "Here there is already a tendency towards a new justice, which rests on the Germanic feeling for law and has freed itself from Roman legal notions. Just read the chief paragraphs of the code I've instituted for the SS. *In the past we needed lawyers on our staff to protect us against bureaucratic measures, whose strength—which seemed invulnerable—rested on a network of paragraphs. We fought lawyers with lawyers. This was a matter of necessity.*

"We try to train our lawyers by putting them in the SS and infusing them with our own spirit. But I must say it's a hard task and one which is constantly making me rack my brains. You're always catching them at it, breaking out and falling back into their old ways. Yet training has a strong influence, I can see that now. At the start it was particularly bad. Before I got it right it was the lawyers, not I, who controlled my staff. I had first to consult my legal gentry about all my measures to find out whether they were correct and corresponded with accepted legal ideas, the same ideas which we were bitterly fighting, which had put every possible obstacle in our way to power.

"I really can't tell you how grotesque the beginning was. Everywhere I was knocking up against people in SS uniform, in themselves dear, nice, decent people, who saw their task as that of supplying all

my orders with a kind of legalism at what points my measures could therefore not binding in law. The order to save me, as they express claims, never seeing that they themselves I had to undertake a vast training; I tried to infuse the others with up against the legal line, tried to; as they could accept with a good realization of our ideas.

"It always particularly amusing came from some poor pudding-heap he could grasp, and how he would legal paragraphs to make our measures you have to come to terms with intellectually deformed in some things—they're a kind of legalistic guarantee security on this side, or fine life is once you've grasped the out the lot of them."

"And how about lawyers in the to get rid of them?" I asked Himmler, because I myself possessed and patients who occupied important

"Proceedings are already well answer. "First of all we have broken principle and demolished the superstition can only be occupied by skilfully attacked by the lawyers; hold them to be in the right and the places go to engineers, outstanding building experts, economists and pronounce judgment that a postman."

"But there must be a reason, I falls back on lawyers and regards posts," I objected.

"Certainly, I can tell you the essence consists in the fact that people take

the free men told them. Where we did wonders without them; where."

went on: "We must once again show his real strength and greatness of the race and we must show the element. There will be a eternal circumstances must be from the narrow limits of great in their nature; and they will have spirit. The Roman lawyer is everything is atomized. The most obstinate resistance to defend its old common. We must renew links with

ers in your organizations! You another in the Party and every- lawyers," I retorted. Party or the SS—are no lawyers justice must be quite differently there is already a tendency the Germanic feeling for law notions. Just read the chief of the SS. In the past we needed bureaucratic measures, whose rested on a network of para- lawyers. This was a matter of

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my orders with a kind of legal respectability and pointing out to me at what points my measures contradicted existing enactments and were therefore not binding in law. They did that from the best motives, in order to save me, as they expressed it, from damages and recourse to claims, never seeing that they themselves were the prisoners of a system. I had to undertake a vast training programme. I got rid of the unteach- able; I tried to infuse the others with my ways of thought and set them up against the legal line, tried to goad them into drawing up such laws as they could accept with a good legal conscience, to help forward the realization of our ideas.

"It always particularly amused me to see what a sigh of relief came from some poor pudding-head when a law was substituted which he could grasp, and how he would puff himself out and juggle with the legal paragraphs to make our measures legally unobjectionable. But you have to come to terms with the devil as they say; all lawyers are intellectually deformed in some way or other—it's in the nature of things—they're a kind of lay clergyman. Some set themselves up to guarantee security on this side, others to protect it on that—and how fine life is once you've grasped that you can get along splendidly with- out the lot of them."

18th July, 1941

"And how about lawyers in the administration? Do you also want to get rid of them?" I asked Himmler today, and was eager for his answer, because I myself possessed a number of friends, acquaintances and patients who occupied important positions in the administration.

"Proceedings are already well on their way," came the surprising answer. "First of all we have broken the lawyers' monopoly in prin- ciple and demolished the superstition that leading places in the admini- stration can only be occupied by lawyers. But our notion has been skilfully attacked by the lawyers; unfortunately many educated men hold them to be in the right and take it as a mortal offence when such places go to engineers, outstanding organizers from other professions, building experts, economists and others. Then they think they can pronounce judgment that a post is not occupied by a professional man."

"But there must be a reason, Herr Reichsführer, why one always falls back on lawyers and regards them as specially suited for such posts," I objected.

"Certainly, I can tell you the exact reason," Himmler replied. "It consists in the fact that people take for granted that the whole nature

of administration lies in the application of laws and that the lawyer who has been trained to apply and interpret the law should understand this best. But that is a fundamental error. The nature of administration lies in mastery of vast planning tasks, especially an administration such as the National Socialist state, urged forward by its great work of settlement in the east. To apply and interpret law embraces only a very trifling part of the matter. The lawyer is entirely out of place in the work of planning, which a good administrator or the president of a board should carry out, a man who from the nature of the tasks assigned him must have plenty of imagination. The lawyer has learnt to think in an extremely one-sided fashion and in his daily work the application of law plays only a very small part.

"Really able administrators, who have long outgrown their legal training, with whom I have talked and gone into this question, have always confirmed this. A well-trained engineer or economist is much better placed here and does work of far more value to the state. Certainly he can take a lawyer on to his staff, if he thinks it proper—I've no objection to that; but we must make an end with the idea that the lawyer is the born administrator on account of his training. We have had excellent results too in choosing our administrative heads with the needs of present-day administration in mind."

"Why then does industry attach so much importance to lawyers, whom you regard as quite unnecessary to administration, and why do I find them everywhere holding important positions, ranking second or third, on your staff and in the government?" I retorted. "Simply because the administrative heads whom you had taken from other professions were quite prepared for the tasks they had to fulfil, and had to call on experienced lawyers, whose minds are trained to grasp the essential facts, to help them bring order into chaos."

"You must have a lot of lawyer friends, that you bring such stuff forward on their behalf?" Himmler enquired. "I see too that you have come well briefed. You bring me all the objections against which I have to contend daily; they're constantly being brought against me by lawyers in the administration, by state secretaries in the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Justice. Such objections can't move me, but I'll gladly give you my opinion of them."

"What you assert about industry is entirely false. You don't really think that lawyers get the important posts there? Just look at the leaders of industry: are any of them lawyers? Not one. Experienced big business men and engineers occupy these posts. But they have their lawyers for the permanent struggle against competition and the government, to bring in the largest profits. Their lawyers are certainly

trained for that. They don't help themselves in vast enterprises in most convenient, but meanings into contracts with employers; or in other difficult themselves in their struggle government.

"The lawyer here, it is very he is not valued on account of to use Frank's term, but because of what is illegal. In undertaking employee working for his employers in a manner pleasing to a thought.

"Recently Frank wanted to 'Defenders of Justice' as an incentive for my co-operation with the F complained bitterly. I laughed and explain to me the position of Justice in industry. He still holds

"The lawyer whom we find Roman lawyer, obviously needed type of industrial lawyer to the something, have some notion of only means one thing: they advocate vested interests. Their aim is to gain for themselves and their families the megalomania of the ordinary they have studied law, they can do

So ended the conversation which came in with urgent papers and time I had a chance to talk to Himmler about lawyers and was so well acquainted with all this immediately to hand.

"You've touched on one of continually being compelled to fight administration, against the Ministry everywhere, often holding the high marshalling their arguments and forcing him. So he has to be very much headway. There's no limit to his

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trained for that. They don't head any big undertakings, they don't busy themselves in vast enterprises—but advise how to get round regulations most conveniently, how to insert conditions with double meanings into contracts which are particularly useful to their employers; or in other difficulties advise them how to do best for themselves in their struggle against competition and against the government.

“The lawyer here, it is very true, takes the second or third place; he is not valued on account of his position as a ‘Defender of Justice’, to use Frank’s term, but because he is quite prepared to be a defender of what is illegal. In undertaking this the lawyer is nothing but an employee working for his employer. Woe to him if he doesn’t arrange things in a manner pleasing to his master. He will be sacked without a thought.

“Recently Frank wanted to explain to me the significance of his ‘Defenders of Justice’ as an independent legal profession and asked for my co-operation with the Führer, of whose anti-legal attitude he complained bitterly. I laughed at him and told him that he should just explain to me the position of lawyers as independent Defenders of Justice in industry. He still holds this remark against me.

“The lawyer whom we find in industry is the prototype of the Roman lawyer, obviously needed for that sort of job. Yet I prefer this type of industrial lawyer to the others. They are at least capable of something, have some notion of the industrial set-up. For them this only means one thing: they admit that they are the representatives of vested interests. Their aim is a good salary—they want to do what they can for themselves and their families. That I can understand, but not the megalomania of the ordinary lawyers who boast that, just because they have studied law, they can and must have a share in everything.”

So ended the conversation which had lasted over an hour. Brandt came in with urgent papers and Himmler returned to work. After a time I had a chance to talk to Brandt, told him of my conversation with Himmler about lawyers and expressed my astonishment that he was so well acquainted with all these matters and had all his arguments immediately to hand.

“You’ve touched on one of the fields where the Reichsführer is continually being compelled to fight—in his own organization, in the administration, against the Ministry of Justice—the lawyers are dug in everywhere, often holding the highest ranks in the Party and the SS, marshalling their arguments and forming a quietly united front against him. So he has to be very much on his guard, if he is to make any headway. There’s no limit to his distrust of lawyers. How often it

happens that he reads some paper which goes against all his ideas or upsets him in some way or other. Then he calls me and says: 'Brandt, just make certain what this fellow's profession is.' Then I know that the Reichsführer had smelled out another lawyer and wanted to know whether his nose was right. If it is, then he declares in triumph: 'Now then, didn't I smell it out again?' If it's something else, then the phrase is: 'But he could have been one and certainly is one at heart.'"

I pointed out to Brandt that Himmler had not answered my question why lawyers everywhere occupied the second and third most important places on the staff and in the administration.

"Yes," Brandt observed, "that is a very ticklish question which the Reichsführer prefers to avoid. He doesn't really believe it's a fact and remarks that it only comes from the exaggerated statements of lawyers themselves, with a position in the world, who exalt themselves without having to adduce any evidence for it. He has therefore ordered statistics to be compiled; finally to shed some light on the matter. But he is uneasy about the whole business."

XI

RIBBENTROP

A FEW days ago Himmler asked me the Minister, von Ribbentrop. At first I drew upon myself the hostility of the Minister, who wished to preserve my incognito. I then spoke to Ribbentrop about me and said that I was suffering from rheumatism. I was not to tell the Minister of Himmler's stomach pains, which Ribbentrop had to think that Himmler knew that Himmler was ill and undervalued him even more than at present.

Ribbentrop then sent for me. He was suffering from giddiness, partial loss of vision and was worried about the case.

Today I treated Ribbentrop again. I asked whether I was a member of the Party. He was astounded that this should be possible. I had been in Germany for three years. I told him that I had only considered a man's suffering from rheumatism as a monarchist or a democrat. He asked me if I was a political training course? And what

1940-1945

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XII

RIBBENTROP

29th January, 1940

A FEW days ago Himmler asked me to examine the Reich's Foreign Minister, von Ribbentrop. At first I was against this, not wanting to draw upon myself the hostility of the doctors who treated him. I also wished to preserve my incognito. But Himmler had already spoken to Ribbentrop about me and said that I had treated him for his rheumatism. I was not to tell the Foreign Minister anything about Himmler's stomach pains, which were to be kept a close secret. Ribbentrop had to think that Himmler was perfectly strong. Once he knew that Himmler was ill and unfit, he would intrigue and snipe at him even more than at present.

Ribbentrop then sent for me. He is suffering from severe headaches, giddiness, partial loss of vision and stomach pains. I have taken on the case.

10th March, 1943

Today I treated Ribbentrop again. On this occasion he asked me whether I was a member of the Party. When I said 'no', he was astounded that this should be possible when I had already been in Germany for three years. I told him that I was a doctor and that I only considered a man's sufferings, quite regardless of whether he was a monarchist or a democrat. I was only interested in helping him. Ribbentrop found my attitude devastating. Had I attended no political training course? And what did Himmler say to all this?

12th March, 1943

Ribbentrop has complained to Himmler about me. As I was treating Himmler today the latter said: "I'm aware that you're no National Socialist. But I had thought you were more discreet. For with men like Ribbentrop you must keep your mouth shut and not give your real opinion. You know yourself that you have to be doubly cautious with such people. Apart from that, you have no idea how often you are denounced to me in the course of each month."

Today Ribbentrop said that he had talked to Himmler about me and told him what an excellent doctor I was. But he had not been able to ignore my recent remarks on politics. Himmler had given him a firm assurance that after the war I would be one of the first to attend a political training course. With that he, Ribbentrop, had been satisfied.

Then we came to talk about England and I asked Ribbentrop whether it was true that he had greeted the King of England with 'Heil Hitler'. Ribbentrop declared that this was absolutely true. He had wanted to make clear to the King that a new period in the history of mankind had commenced. But the King had not grasped this. If England had then taken Hitler's outstretched hand, she could have gone peacefully about her business and survived under the powerful protection of the Greater German Reich. Hitler had assigned 'a definite living space' to England. But now she would lose everything, Ribbentrop concluded.

21st September, 1943

Today I asked Himmler to free me from the obligation of treating Ribbentrop. I could do no more for him. Himmler was very shocked and begged me to make another attempt, whatever the circumstances. Ribbentrop was irreplaceable. He, Himmler, had long reflected on the question of a substitute, but there was no real successor for Ribbentrop in Germany. For Hitler trusted no one so much as him. No one could explain foreign politics to him so well as the Foreign Minister. Ribbentrop's art of exposition was unique and it was entirely suited to Hitler's ways of thought. From my knowledge of Ribbentrop's attitude I remarked that what he could explain to Hitler could only be figments of his own imagination. Himmler said that didn't matter so much, as this war was not being won by diplomats, but by the Waffen SS, the Party and the Army. Diplomacy was quite beside the point. Basically it was quite unimportant what Ribbentrop said to the Führer. The

great thing was that Ribbentrop kept him in the good humor of the war. After the war the state, could start on the peace.

I still wanted to finish agreed, since I was no longer

12th March, 1943

Himmler about me. As I was said: "I'm aware that you're not at all more discreet. For with your mouth shut and not give yourself that you have to be doubly sure that you have no idea how often you curse of each month."

I had talked to Himmler about me as doctor I was. But he had not been into politics. Himmler had given him a job. He would be one of the first to attend to that he, Ribbentrop, had been

England and I asked Ribbentrop to greet the King of England with the message that this was absolutely true. He thought that a new period in the history of the King had not grasped this. If she had stretched her hand, she could have survived under the powerful German Reich. Hitler had assigned 'a job' but now she would lose everything,

21st September, 1943

me from the obligation of treating him. Himmler was very shocked at the attempt, whatever the circumstances. Himmler, had long reflected on the fact that there was no real successor for Ribbentrop as much as him. No one could do so well as the Foreign Minister. Ribbentrop was unique and it was entirely suited to his knowledge of Ribbentrop's attitude towards Hitler could only be fragments. Ribbentrop said that didn't matter so much, as long as the diplomats, but by the Waffen SS, the situation was quite beside the point. Basically Ribbentrop said to the Führer. The

great thing was that Ribbentrop's expositions pleased Hitler and kept him in the good humour he needed for the great military decisions of the war. After the war the diplomats, the most stupid people in any state, could start on the peace treaties; that would be a job for them.

I still wanted to finish with Ribbentrop and in the end Himmler agreed, since I was no longer able to help him.

would never have come to this shooting party if the Führer had not expressly wished me to do so."

Suddenly a new drive of pheasants went up, most of them flying over Ciano's stand. Only two flew over Himmler's. He fired, but missed. He forgot that he didn't want to shoot any pheasants and said angrily: "It's just as if they were bewitched, they all fly to Ciano!" I couldn't help laughing to myself.

At the next drive I was with Ribbentrop. He was very pleased and said: "Isn't this shoot symbolic? As we combine to shoot down the pheasants, so we'll also combine to down the enemies of Germany! As the host I'm delighted that Ciano has such luck. He ought to have regular shooting practice; perhaps he may yet need it in Italy."

I enquired: "Do you mean that in a political sense?"

"Yes, of course," Ribbentrop answered, "I always think politics—even here, out shooting." While we had to wait a few minutes for the beaters, Ribbentrop added: "The Royal Family in Italy is preparing a stab in the back against Mussolini and us. There must be a drive there too—to sweep them all away. Then we'll be appreciably nearer to victory. The sooner the monarchy disappears in Italy, the better for the Axis powers." At this moment we heard the beaters and had to keep quiet. Ribbentrop shot two pheasants, then said to me: "It's not that I'm a bad shot either. But what's the matter with Himmler? He keeps on missing them. He ought to show what he can do. But probably his humanitarian feelings stand in his way."

At the next drive I stood behind Ciano. He was beaming. "Wonderful this shoot. Long time since I took part in such a good shoot. Fantastic beaters. Lots of pheasants. Why, Herr Kersten, not shooting? Everything well organized here. But women not pretty in Germany. Comic hens but no golden pheasants. No grace."

I said that he would soon be back in Rome with his Italian golden pheasants.

Ciano smiled. "Wonderful." Then his lip curled. "But these *Tedeschi* always look so angry. Why not laugh a bit? Even here out shooting. Otherwise all right. But no joy."

Ciano considered that when Germans hold important posts, then they look angry, and when they have minor jobs their faces are pursed up and expressionless. "Strange people!"

At three in the afternoon the shoot was over. There'll be more tomorrow. At five there was a large meal. Afterwards we all sat round the fireplace in the drawing-room. Strange to relate the conversation was not political. Probably Ribbentrop thinks of politics while out shooting and of shooting while at politics. He talked about horse-

AT SCHÖNHOF

26th October, 1941

Schönhof, at the hunting lodge trop. Today the whole day was bag comprised 2,400 pheasants, ck. Count Ciano alone shot 620 trop shot 410 pheasants, Himmler penführer of the Waffen SS) 16. he rest, among them the Reich's Krosigk. Altogether there were ans. Ribbentrop asked whether I with them. The beaters consisted The soldiers are glad to do this, and are well looked after. They

different shoots in turn, mostly no had fantastic luck; pheasants he beamed and was in a radiant hind Himmler, he uttered a kind t luck that Ciano has. I wish the d shots. In Albania they've scat- re Ciano does fine! Where there's

o bitter. Don't begrudge him the

a the pheasants," said Himmler. by himself. Personally I find no res to bits. Defenceless birds. I

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racing in England and Ciano about bull-fighting in Mexico. Ribbentrop said that after the war he would see to it that Germany led the world in horse-racing. I suppose German race-horses will be bred in a Party brown or an SS black. Himmler played little part in the conversation. At eleven he took his leave and went to his room giving as a reason that he had some papers to work on. He asked me to come with him and give him more treatment. In his room he said that he couldn't listen any longer to the silly chatter of those two fools and preferred to go to bed.

When I returned to the drawing-room, Ribbentrop said that he had a headache and asked me for treatment. He took his leave from his guests and we went to his bedroom. He said that it had been a magnificent day. He had proved to Ciano that in Germany they could arrange splendid shoots even in war-time. "Did you notice what an impression it made on Ciano? It's no longer possible in England, I believe."

After the treatment Ribbentrop felt better. I again returned to the drawing-room. Ciano received me with a beaming face and said: "Now all patients ill from a little bit of shooting?" I replied that the gentlemen were only somewhat fatigued. Ciano said: "I'm not!" He took his glass and drank my health. The others were busy at the cold buffet and I sat alone with Ciano. Suddenly he said quietly to me: "War will last a long time." I agreed and Ciano remarked that we were the only ones to share this opinion. Here at Schönhof everyone is saying that the war will soon be over.

Then he asked me to tell him about Finland; he was a great admirer of the Finns and loved this vigorous nation. They were an heroic people, only to be compared with the Romans—and the Italians were certainly Romans. I talked of Finland and the great difficulties it was having with National Socialist Germany. Ciano said he could understand that; the National Socialists had to stick their noses into everything. "They are just the same barbarians that they were two thousand years ago."

At one o'clock everyone went to bed. Ribbentrop had had a basket of very fine apples put in my room, and a bottle of apple juice. I found this very thoughtful, as I supposed that the apples and the juice had come from the celebrated Tree of Knowledge.

27th October, 1941

This morning at ten o'clock the shooting began again. There were only three drives. Ciano again had great luck. At three o'clock there

was a shooting lunch. After that I gave treatment to Himmler, Ciano spoke to Himmler about regularly to Rome, as my treat said very amiably: "Of course then he should apply to Himmler Rome immediately. But he should that would mean delay. Ciano about it."

At half past seven dinner—huge pyramid of ice cream. Then all he thanked the guests for the shoot so admirably, then friend Ciano, I am happy that time is not far distant when harmony, as we did during the shooting will be still better many pheasants be reared. Next that she can no longer conquer will have reached our goal. A first peace-time shoot will take will then be more powerful than.

Next Ribbentrop invited to the castle steps in order to inspect with torches; the whole uniform sounded the retreat.

Early in the morning we Shooting days are over.

At the end of the Schönhof treatment and we went into loved it and never felt so well quite a different person when hours on end, and continued hunting for a considerable time.

Himmler replied that that but the real aim of deer-stalking went against the grain with Herr Kersten, in shooting

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27th October, 1941

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I gave treatment to Himmler, Ribbentrop and Ciano. In the evening
Ciano spoke to Himmler about me. He asked him to let me travel
regularly to Rome, as my treatment did him a lot of good. Himmler
said very amiably: "Of course, any time." If Ciano should need me,
then he should apply to Himmler personally, who would let me go to
Rome immediately. But he should not direct his request to Ribbentrop;
that would mean delay. Ciano thanked him and was very pleased
about it.

At half past seven dinner—it was excellent. At the end there was a
huge pyramid of ice cream. Then Ribbentrop made a speech. First of
all he thanked the guests for coming, next all those who had arranged
the shoot so admirably, then he turned to Ciano and said: "My dear
friend Ciano, I am happy that you have enjoyed yourself with us. The
time is not far distant when our two peoples will live in peace and
harmony, as we did during these days at Schönhof. In another year
the shooting will be still better, as I have given orders that twice as
many pheasants be reared. Next year too England will be convinced
that she can no longer conquer the Greater German Reich. Then we
will have reached our goal. And in the year 1943, I promise you, the
first peace-time shoot will take place at Schönhof. The German Reich
will then be more powerful than ever!"

Next Ribbentrop invited all the guests to come out with him to
the castle steps in order to inspect the bag. The courtyard was brightly
lit with torches; the whole bag lay before us. Eight huntsmen in
uniform sounded the retreat. It was solemn and moving.

Early in the morning we go back to Salzburg, Ciano to Rome.
Shooting days are over.

Salzburg

28th-29th October, 1941

At the end of the Schönhof shoot I talked with Himmler during the
treatment and we went into the question of shooting. I said that I
loved it and never felt so well as when out deer-stalking. I became
quite a different person when I was in the open air stalking deer for
hours on end, and continued to reap the benefit of those days out
hunting for a considerable time afterwards.

Himmler replied that that was certainly the best part of hunting,
but the real aim of deer-stalking, to have a shot at a wretched deer,
went against the grain with him. "How can you find any pleasure,
Herr Kersten, in shooting from behind cover at poor creatures

browsing on the edge of a wood, innocent, defenceless and unsuspecting? Properly considered, it's pure murder. I've often bagged a deer, but I must tell you that I've had a bad conscience each time I've looked into its dead eyes."

Himmler had intimated this sort of thing to me before. Those who knew him, to whom I talked about it, told me that he had once been a keen sportsman, but after much reflection and under Hitler's influence he had changed his point of view. Nowadays he was very soft-hearted on the matter. Whenever he was invited into the country to shoot, he soon left the others. When they met him again, hours later, he had not once fired a shot. He had passed the time in contemplating the trees or deep in intellectual conversation with the huntsmen about nature and Germanic mythology. Quite recently it had again happened that he refused to shoot, giving as his reason that he didn't want to disturb the beauty of nature and the peace of the woods. He preferred to do his shooting with a camera.

I reflected on these points and resumed the conversation saying: "Men have gone hunting in every age, Herr Himmler. What would happen to the game if it were not kept within bounds? Hunting is also truly Germanic—it's in our blood somehow."

"You can't catch me with such arguments, Herr Kersten," Himmler answered. "If our forefathers went hunting, they did it because they urgently needed game to eat. I approve of this sort of hunting and would also take part in it myself. It was really dangerous too, and they didn't shoot with repeating rifles and telescopic sights from behind cover. That was a proper occupation for men. But what happens today? Fat men theatrically clad in hunting costume, armed with the most up-to-date guns, drive up in their large cars to the hunting lodges. Here they are met by the huntsmen and taken on proper stalking paths, from which every twig has been carefully removed, to shoot some poor roebuck or deer, which has been selected and marked down by the huntsman weeks before. That has just as little to do with the basic Germanic hunting instincts as the banquet which follows, with its quantities of wine and schnaps, has to do with the Germanic drinking party after the chase.

"I often ask myself, what does all this really amount to? Why does a business man, usually so careful of his time, spend three hours to drive at sixty miles an hour to his place in the country, hold a shoot, have a good meal and rush back home again? He could use the time far better on business. It's simply a fashion, the effort to appear other than one really is, dressing oneself up in sporting rig or just going out with a weapon in one's hand and working off one's inferiority com-

plexes. The only one to pang."

"But how can you get
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ll this really amount to? Why does of his time, spend three hours to place in the country, hold a shoot, ome again? He could use the time fashion, the effort to appear other up in sporting rig or just going out working off one's inferiority com-

plexes. The only one to suffer is the deer, blown to bits without a pang."

"But how can you generalize like that, Herr Himmler?" I objected. "Göring for instance seems to me to be a dyed-in-the-wool sportsman."

"That's certainly what he thinks himself," Himmler answered, "for he shoots everything that comes the way of his gun and can be very unpleasant if his luck is out. The result is that his people regularly pull the wool over his eyes. He thinks that he's deer-stalking in the approved style and selecting his own deer. But the deer has really been marked down a dozen times and it's Göring who is guided to the deer. Or he thinks he has a special gift for boar-hunting, but the boars are driven in front of the guns from an enclosed thicket where they have been well guarded for days. You have to know these tricks."

"No, Herr Kersten, don't talk to me about this sort of hunting. I just don't care for so crude a sport. Nature is so marvellously beautiful and every animal too has a right to live. It's just this point of view that I admire so much in our forefathers. They, for instance, formally declared war on rats and mice, which were required to stop their depredations and leave a fixed area within a definite time limit, before beginning a war of annihilation against them. You will find this respect for animals in all Indo-Germanic peoples. It was of extraordinary interest to me to hear recently that even today Buddhist monks, when they pass through a wood in the evening, carry a bell with them, to make any woodland animals they might meet keep away, so that no harm will come to them."

"But with us every slug is trampled on, every worm destroyed; there are even rewards for killing sparrows, and children are urged to slaughter harmless animals. Naturally I can't make any real change now in war-time. It might be misunderstood. But after the war I will issue the strictest regulations for protecting animals. Children at school will be methodically brought up to love animals, and I will give special police powers to societies for the protection of animals."

"I already see the day coming," I answered, "when hunting too will be forbidden. So I will make good use of the time that remains. But I must seriously consider whether you will still find me here, Herr Himmler, once you forbid hunting and shooting—which certainly won't be difficult for you, as your Führer is also set against it."

"That certainly won't happen to you, Herr Kersten," said Himmler. "You are a foreigner and foreigners will still be free to hunt and shoot. You can go shooting in peace; I won't stop you if it gives you pleasure. The main thing is that you should keep fit. But you will understand my point of view."

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in the slaughter-yard with its
truck dead. You were born a
ready have had experience in

Himmler answered, "you could
e that you could beat me with
a spite of that you won't make
imals. I'm ready at any time,
ough in contrast to the Führer
ld in any way help to stop the
g, too, permits eating the flesh
d by oneself."
Herr Himmler," I answered,
can really eat your cutlet with

t the same man who pities the
e fate of men?

XIV

BEGINNING OF THE TRAGEDY

Berlin
11th November, 1941

TODAY Himmler is very depressed. He has just come from the
Führer's Chancery. I gave him treatment. After much pressure and
questions as to what's the matter with him he told me that the
destruction of the Jews is being planned.

I know his opinions on that subject and that they have not changed
at all. He wanted to expel the Jews, but that did not succeed; in spite
of initial success the scheme finally broke down owing to the refusal
of other countries to accept them. Now the destruction of the Jews is
imminent. I was horrified and replied that it was fearful cruelty to want
to destroy men simply because they were Jews. They had a heart as
he and I had; hadn't every man a right to live?

After a longer pause Himmler said: "These are the points to
consider: the Jews are constantly overturning every system of govern-
ment by means of wars and revolutions. Not only political, but
economic and intellectual revolutions. It's only necessary to reflect on
the destruction of commercial honour, the break-up of artistic codes,
in short of all those standards which lend stability to a state. This leads
to nations being robbed of their material and intellectual heritage and
to a general proletarianization. But as the proletariat can't direct a state,
leadership comes into the hands of the opposite kind of Jews who are
against the proletariat. The Jews cause the rottenness on which they
thrive. They dominate the entire world through the centres of news,
the press, the cinema, art and practically everything else. The damage
which the Jews have been doing for centuries—and the future would
only be worse—is of a kind so comprehensive that it can only be met
by eliminating them entirely.

"It's the destructive Jewish spirit which has caused the lack of unity in Europe; it's the same with all wars and all want. It's a blood-guilt of the Jews which has swallowed up countless millions of victims and will consume more. You can only meet the Jews with their own methods and their own words: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The millions of dead for whom the Jews have been responsible over the centuries must be held against them. These interrelated facts have already led to the partial extermination of the Jews by other peoples in the past. Only when the last Jew has disappeared from the world will there also be an end to the destruction of nations—and to war waged as a business concern worth millions; and countless future generations will be saved from mutual slaughter on behalf of the invisible Jewish Empire."

Filled with horror I emphatically conjured Himmler to give up this idea and the plan to be discerned behind it. The suffering and counter-suffering were not to be contemplated. To this Himmler answered that he knew it would mean much suffering for the Jews. But what had the Americans done earlier? They had exterminated the Indians—who only wanted to go on living in their native land—in the most abominable way. "It is the curse of greatness that it must step over dead bodies to create new life. Yet we must create new life, we must cleanse the soil or it will never bear fruit. It will be a great burden for me to bear."

Himmler then quoted the phrase: "Retaliation strides remorseless through the history of the world." It was an historical fact that the Jewish Empire had cost millions of dead, far more millions since the Jews lived all over the world. These dead demanded atonement. Even the old Jewish saying, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, spoke of this atonement.

"Earlier I had other things in mind," said Himmler, "but the urge to atonement and self-defence overwhelmed me. It's the old tragic conflict between will and obligation. At this moment I'm learning how terrible it can be. Please leave me alone now."

16th November, 1941

In these last few days with Himmler I have been constantly trying to return to the fate of the Jews. Contrary to all his habits he only listens to me in silence. Once he briefly asserted: "You're right, the extermination of peoples is unGermanic. You can demand everything from me, even pity. But you cannot demand protection for organized nihilism. That would be suicide."

Since I labour in a
Himmler is committed,
as many special interests
Himmler will grant as
that the Jews should not
'only' is quite horrible
be won over to make a

Above all I feel in
throughout the world
 dangers in every possible

RS, 1940-1945

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Since I labour in vain against the atrocious principle to which Himmler is committed, I have promised myself that I will undertake as many special interventions as possible to rescue Jews, hoping that Himmler will grant a number of exceptions. For if his basic attitude, that the Jews should not be destroyed, but 'only' evacuated (the word 'only' is quite horrible enough), still holds good fundamentally, he must be won over to make as many exceptions as possible.

Above all I feel myself of one mind with the millions of men throughout the world who must hope to prevent or mitigate the coming dangers in every possible way.

XV

HIMMLER'S CARD INDEX OF PRESENTS

*Hartzwalde**20th December, 1941*

HIMMLER told me an interesting thing today. He possesses a card index of presents. An exact entry is made of every present he gives. He has a reason for keeping a register of his gifts. "First you always have to know whom you have given a present to, so as not to give the same thing twice, and secondly you ought not to give too much, or people become acquisitive." Besides, the character of the recipient can be studied in detail. "Just from the way the letter of thanks is written, you can establish what sort of a person the writer is." Collecting the hand-writings and signatures of the recipients as source material for graphology also had its value to him.

I asked Himmler whether I might have a look at this card index. He told me that I should get in touch with Fräulein Lorenz; she was the 'Auntie for Presents' in the SS.

*Hartzwalde**21st December, 1941*

Today I had a look at the card index. A really fine piece of book-keeping. In it is noted when the recipient was born, what rank he holds in the service, what are his position, rank and number in the Party, how many children he has, the maiden name of his wife, where he lives and how he should be addressed: whether intimately (*Du*), or 'Dear Party-member', or simply 'Party-member', or 'My Dear Party-member' or 'Herr'. In the same way every present which the Reichsführer receives is also recorded.

I was able to look through the card index a little and establish that

most of the presents were of candlesticks and plates, SS canteen factory, which is SS property. Chocolate or a pound of coffee. Christmas Himmler often bestows.

When time permits, Himmler gives these presents, which often amuses him delivering one present personally: he himself packs the present. He has worked for twenty years of her parents, in order to show her personally.

Fräulein Lorenz also showed me the Christmas present assigned to me.

Now I am at Hartzwalde and it is beautiful it is here in the lonely 'Finnish island'.

May the coming year bring no nightmare.

against her position in the world, Jewish Bolsheviks. The United area between the River Lena,

ould the Japanese get?"

North China as it is, as well as possessions."

truelty to take their colonies away ch, who had built them up in an ustry over three hundred years.

ey should have thought about Führer's outstretched hand and er would have guaranteed their if this might have been very ing to independence. But why sacrifices on ourselves for so

t always speak of Holland with rt me.

ust be hard. War is a matter of sentiment."

might let himself be moved to owed that he had a good heart. right. Perhaps one is often too

le moment to put before him a 6 Germans and 4 Norwegians, sicion of a crime for which the please. Himmler glanced through do that!" I replied: "I know, but sign a release for these men." To e. But the people don't deserve and in my presence gave orders e on the list.

NTIAL FOR SS LEADERS

Field Headquarters
21st December, 1942

pessimistic. The fighting round to his satisfaction. He was very

abusive of his SS Leaders. They were too soft and too much affected by the spirit of the Army. Most of them came from the old Army, where they had begun their military careers as officers or N.C.O.s. Himmler thought that his Leaders were more of a burden than a help to the Party. It would be best, he believed, if they were all to meet a hero's death at the front. Then he would be rid of them altogether. After that he could fill the vacant places from the rising generation, which was tough as steel, and he could form and train them in the spirit of Adolf Hitler.

I told Himmler that I found it very interesting to learn his attitude towards men who served Hitler and himself so loyally.

Himmler answered: "Ach, they're not in the least loyal; they only want their reward and see the Führer as the man who'll help them to get it. I'm convinced that after our victory my SS Leaders will put in the most fantastic claims. But I shan't bother about them then." Every SS Führer should have been so devotedly loyal to Hitler, he maintained, that at any moment he would have given his life for his Führer without hesitation.

I asked whether he would hang himself, if Hitler ordered it. Himmler looked at me for a moment, shocked, then said: "Yes, certainly! At once! For if the Führer orders anything like that, he has his reasons. And it's not for me as an obedient soldier to question those reasons. I only recognize unconditional obedience."

I told him that I would not do such a thing if the President of Finland ordered me.

Today I was fortunate enough, after a long treatment of Himmler, to secure the release of 7 Belgians, 6 Luxemburgers, 18 Frenchmen, 12 Frenchwomen, 3 Dutchmen, 2 Norwegians and an Estonian. They were all to have been sentenced to death for sabotage.

5. POST-WAR RUSSIA

Field Headquarters
15th January, 1944

On the 10th of January Himmler suddenly called me back to headquarters, as his health was not good. After the strenuous weeks I had been through, I should really have liked to pass a few days in comfort in Hartzwalde, where I had arrived with coffee and chocolate from Sweden, luxuries I had long gone without.

Himmler was depressed in mind as well as in health. The state of

XVIII

THE SOLDIER-PEASANTS

1. CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGES TO BE INHABITED BY SOLDIER-PEASANTS ('WEHRBAUERN')

Field Headquarters, Ukraine
16th July, 1942

IT WAS not possible for me to treat Himmler this morning, as he could not achieve that relaxed state which is the preliminary to a successful treatment. He was still entirely under the influence of a talk with Hitler, to whom he had had an opportunity of exposing his ideas on military peasant settlements.

"You won't understand how happy I am, Herr Kersten." These were Himmler's opening words. "The Führer not only listened to me, he even refrained from constant interruptions, as is his usual habit—a habit, incidentally, which completely destroys one's train of thought, so that one ends by listening to the Führer's views on the subject in question, instead of presenting one's own case. No, today he went so far as to approve of my proposals, asking questions and drawing my attention to important details which I had not considered and which need additional study on my part. This is the happiest day of my life. Everything I have been considering and planning on a small scale can now be realized. I shall set to at once on a large scale—and with all the vigour I can muster. You know me: once I start anything I see it through to the end, no matter how great the difficulties may be."

I asked Himmler to lie down so that I could begin the treatment. He did not even listen to me, but continued: "The Germans were once a farming people and must essentially become one again. The East will help to strengthen this agricultural side of the German nation—it will become the everlasting fountain of youth for the life-blood of Germany, from which it will in its turn be constantly renewed. These

phrases opened me to the idea of defence close to the Führer will form the basis of its defence, a defensive wall, which of the war. Germany filling a belt several what a sublime idea!

"It's the greatest I have seen, linked protection of the West has accomplished in Germanic history task." Here Himmler the SS will always which will stretch behind it."

Himmler fetches villages and settles forests, but also streets, which were stretching across the 'Model of a *Wehrbauern* explained it in detail a Germanic *Wehrbauern* a village will embrace receives up to 300 of the soil. In any farmers will develop aristocracy will co-ordinated phallic estates."

Himmler runs scheme for the erection some specially striking plans of the settlement combined centre for a meeting place for The entertainment here is the village of agricultural questions manor house and

phrases opened my remarks to the Führer and I linked them with the idea of defending Europe's living space, which I knew lay very close to the Führer's heart. Villages inhabited by an armed peasantry will form the basis of the settlement in the East—and will simultaneously be its defence; they will be the kernel of Europe's great defensive wall, which the Führer is to build at the victorious conclusion of the war. Germanic villages inhabited by a military peasantry and filling a belt several hundred miles wide—just imagine, Herr Kersten, what a sublime idea!

"It's the greatest piece of colonization which the world will ever have seen, linked too with a most noble and essential task, the protection of the Western world against an irruption from Asia. When he has accomplished that, the name of Adolf Hitler will be the greatest in Germanic history—and he has commissioned me to carry out the task." Here Himmler amended: "That is to say, the Reichsführer of the SS will always supervise the achievement of this gigantic work, which will stretch over decades, and he will be the intellectual force behind it."

Himmler fetched out his papers, maps and plans, on which I saw villages and settlements marked everywhere, small and large farms, forests, but also sites for industry, traversed by a mighty network of streets, which were again linked up with a number of arterial roads stretching across the entire country. Next to it lay a plan marked 'Model of a *Wehrbauern* Settlement'. He put this before me and explained it in detail: "Look, Herr Kersten, here is the ground-plan of a Germanic *Wehrbauern* village, as it will be laid out in the East. Such a village will embrace between thirty and forty farms. Each farmer receives up to 300 acres of land, more or less according to the quality of the soil. In any case a class of financially powerful and independent farmers will develop. Slaves won't till this soil; rather, a farming aristocracy will come into being, such as you still find on the Westphalian estates."

Himmler rummaged anew among his papers and fetched out a scheme for the erection of a training college in the East and read out some specially striking passages. Then he went back to explaining the plans of the settlement: "Here you see the Party headquarters, the combined centre for general intellectual training and instruction, also a meeting place for the farmers where they can relax and find recreation. The entertainment centres of the village are at Party headquarters; here is the village cinema; here is the source of instruction on important agricultural questions; here is the home of the community nurse. The manor house and the Party headquarters will be closely linked. An

PEASANTS

ES TO BE INHABITED
(EHRBAUERN')

Field Headquarters, Ukraine
16th July, 1942

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I could begin the treatment. inued: "The Germans were ally become one again. The al side of the German nation of youth for the life-blood of e constantly renewed. These

the manor house, specially as a man and as a soldier in farming community; on the other, on the Party side the complete fusion of the Party and fusion that exists at present, more criticism to make. The same time be the military

unit?" I put in. Important tasks entrusted to Himmler replied. "The order. Each village with its forty men will be roughly the battle commander will occupy the

farms and their own hearths; taken have not been ordered to possess farms, belonging to as those they administer. The to democratic men will come. state, based on settlements

17th July, 1942

being put into effect," was statement about the *Wehrbauern*, problem seems to me fantastic. of Gustavus Adolphus, who for whom the most primitive with tanks, flame-throwers, seems to me to be no more

to be more clever than the importance to science and its achievements. He immediately calls. He has stipulated that with him, together with his

steel helmet and other equipment. The smallest unit will possess machine-guns, automatic weapons and grenades; there will be tanks at battalion level."

"Will men enjoy always having to go on playing at soldiers?" I put in. "Young men like it well enough for a couple of years, and will even gladly take part in a training exercise, but they certainly won't enjoy being permanently under military discipline."

"Leave us to worry about that," Himmler replied, "we'll soon fix that by psychological methods. It's merely a question of training—which is just what we understand. The greatest interests of the state depend on this question which simply must be solved. An army recruited from a military peasantry is the only one which is really patriotic and ready to fight and die for its fatherland. The civilized townee only considers how best he can wriggle out of the army. Can you really blame him for this? Military training is a laborious attempt to crush the poor devil's individuality; much time and effort are devoted to this. The military peasant, on the other hand, knows what he has to lose and what he's fighting for. Cowards are born in towns, heroes in the country. We only need to create the conditions and a new nation of heroes will arise in the East."

Himmler had again forgotten all the people who were waiting to see him—and also his treatment; I therefore proposed to postpone this until the evening.

"My God, you've given the Reichsführer a long treatment today," Brandt said to me, as I came out of the room.

"Not at all," I answered, "today he gave me a treatment. My head is still swimming with all the talk about military peasantries, sniper units, tank-hunting and anti-parachute formations and so on."

"Don't you think it's a good idea then?" Brandt asked me. "The Führer is taken with it too."

"I won't express any judgment on it," I answered, "but the Reichsführer does not know farmers. He paints himself an ideal picture of a Germanic military peasantry which cannot exist in reality. The farmer is primarily an egoist; he will certainly be glad to take a farm in the East, but if he has to wage war constantly, the Reichsführer will soon find how much opposition he has brought on himself and what resistance will grow up against him. The farmer is wholly occupied with his job of farming, regarding everything apart from that as a waste of time. He will gladly ride and shoot a bit on Sundays, in the way of social activity, but not under military compulsion. What farmers are ready to ruin their own fields by running tanks over them? These ideologies will bring the Reichsführer little joy."

3. HOLY PLACES

19th July, 1942

Yesterday evening I was with Himmler to give him the treatment which had once more been postponed. He began talking about the *Wehrbauern* again. I proposed that he should first have the treatment. That followed. Then he took me back to his map-table.

"There is one question I should like to ask you," I said, "which is much on my mind. I don't see any churches in your peasant settlements. Yet a church is a part of any village—or at least several villages should have one between them. Do you intend to set up parishes?"

"What are you thinking of, Herr Kersten?" answered Himmler. "Spending our good money on churches! We aren't mad yet. Our military peasantry will need no churches."

"How about churches and clergy which care for the peasants now, and what will happen when they want their children baptized? What will you do then?" I argued.

"Then the clergy should find the money themselves and build themselves a church at their own expense. We won't stop them, and apart from that these buildings will later come in useful for us. The more our training takes root and men become infused with our spirit, the less will they depend on the churches—and one day they will be empty. Then we will see to it that the churches remain the property of the permanent farming community. It will be a particular satisfaction to me when we take over these churches and turn them into Germanic holy places. Our training will beat the clergy. You may be sure of that."

4. TRANSFORMATION OF LAND AND CLIMATE

21st July, 1942

Today we continued the conversation about the armed peasantry. I questioned Himmler: "You've even provided space for industry on your plans. Do you then want to establish industrial sites? I thought there was only to be an agricultural population living in the East."

"Yes, Herr Kersten, I had been dreaming of that, but the Führer has other ideas; he wants certain types of industry—reserving the choice to himself—to be installed there. This is a blemish with which we'll just have to put up. The great thing is that the Führer has accepted the master-plan."

Himmler showed
were being considered
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"You don't believe
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will also play its part
countryside in the Ea
time. It's a work of
new Germanic race
construct a living spa

5. LIVING SPACE
AN EASTERN

"Have you enough
plans?" I asked Himmler.

These remarkable

"The prime requis
and possess the streng

19th July, 1942

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"I said, 'which is
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Himmler showed me some waste areas of land on the map which were being considered for industry. Then I chanced to notice an expanse which was marked 'eventual forest site'. I asked Himmler about this and let loose a new outburst of enthusiasm on his part: "Think of that, I almost forgot to tell you. We're going to alter the climate in the East completely."

I must have looked rather blank at this, for Himmler went on: "You don't believe it, but it will come about. That is one of the Führer's great strokes of genius. Germanic man can only live in a climate suited to his needs and in a country adapted to his character, where he will feel at home and not be tormented by home-sickness. The great expanses of the East don't attract him; they inspire him with a sort of horror. We can't set up mountains in these areas, but we can plant trees; and that's what we'll do with the part which is of no agricultural value."

"That's the first step. At the same time we'll create a countryside something like that of Schleswig-Holstein. We will in fact erect wind-breaks everywhere, thus breaking up the landscape, and in this way we'll create the kind of living space which suits our character. I have already given exact instructions to my planning offices. They are ready to work out plans for me; the first drafts, which show that it's possible, are already to hand. With wind-breaks the climate alters of its own accord. As you know, completely new climatic conditions arise under the protection of these wind-breaks, in which the rearing of cattle and agriculture thrive extremely well. The protection given by the forests will also play its part. The force of the east wind will be broken. The countryside in the East will not be recognizable in a hundred years' time. It's a work of vast proportions which is coming into being. A new Germanic race will overcome the unfavourable climate and construct a living space adapted to its character."

IND CLIMATE

21st July, 1942

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5. LIVING SPACE IN THE EAST INSTEAD OF COLONIES. AN EASTERN WALL AGAINST ASIA

22nd July, 1942

"Have you enough men for your really super-Faustian *Wehrbauern* plans?" I asked Himmler.

These remarkable statements were his answer:

"The prime requisite is naturally that our people should multiply and possess the strength to colonize this area. But we won't limit

ourselves to Germans only, we'll call on the Germanic race in all countries, the Norwegians and the Swedes, the Dutch and the Danes. Wherever we find young and enterprising elements we'll offer them our land in the East under the best conditions and with full protection for their property. And men will come quite voluntarily. This new living space will be the meeting place for all the capable and energetic men of Europe—the greatest concentration of forces for a new European peasantry. Our former colonies will then play a quite unimportant rôle. Our colonies are at our own front door; we no longer need the old ones and we'll let others enjoy our former colonial possessions in peace. We're creating a new colonial empire for the motherland in the heart of Europe, in which all Europe's Germanic blood will share a new colonial task. At the same time it's the most effective measure of security, for only in this way can we call a halt to the threatening assault of Asia. If we succeed in this task, then this violent fighting and all its sacrifices make sense, for in the end they'll create security for the Germanic race, even if the English refuse to realize this."

"Will you really let the English and the Americans settle there then?"

"Of course, and gladly," Himmler answered, "if they have the right racial qualifications. The Germanic race is international in character. Then we'll at last attain security, once the entire world recognizes the common basic values of the whole Germanic race; and we'll construct a great Germanic International, to set against the Jewish and Communist one. Today the Germanic peoples are engaged in a long and internecine mutual struggle. In the East there is room for the Germanic peoples of the world to engage in a more noble contest in which they can all realize the special traits of their race; for they will all stand face to face with the common enemy; there will be constant fighting on the frontiers. That is good: it will keep their strength up and prevent them from stagnating or becoming dissolute in prosperity. The assault of Asia will break against the Germanic armed peasantry, who will simultaneously drive the plough and shoulder the musket."

6. HOW ABOUT THE NATIVE POPULATION?

Through Brandt I got a glimpse at a draft of Himmler's order for the treatment of foreign peoples, first drawn up for the Poles, but then extended to all the Eastern territories. As far as I can summarize

*Himmler has been
struggling America*

it, these people different local administration. and kept them of the population their names mandement higher education for ever.

The rest of their own Europe. The tragic, but nations, which kindest method live on than

I spoke interruption of for 700 years expected to

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Himmler Europe had Asia, and, but only be four means alone be altered. But success dangerous or be kept in education. These people being worse

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the Germanic race in all the Dutch and the Danes. We'll offer them our aid and with full protection voluntarily. This new force of the capable and energetic forces for a new Europe play a quite unimportant role; we no longer need the colonies or colonial possessions in the motherland in the Germanic blood will share a most effective measure of halt to the threatening this violent fighting and I'll create security for the realize this."

Americans settle there

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RELATION?

of Himmler's order for in up for the Poles, but as far as I can summarize

it, these points were made: Recognition should be given to as many different peoples as possible, which should be placed under their own local administration, in order to stop their uniting against German domination. Good racial types should be assimilated into Germany and kept there. There would only be fourth-rate schools for the rest of the population, where they would be taught to add up and to write their names, to be hard-working and honourable; and the first commandment would be to obey the Germans. Anyone who wanted a higher education for his child would have to send him to Germany for ever.

The rest of the population would provide workers without leaders of their own for great undertakings in the Eastern territories and Europe. The whole procedure might in some cases be cruel and tragic, but in contrast to the Bolshevik extermination of entire nations, which had to be avoided as unGermanic, this was the best and kindest method; at least these people would have more to eat and to live on than before.

23rd July, 1942

I spoke to Himmler about this draft. He explained: Since the irruption of the Mongols in the thirteenth century these peoples had for 700 years been trained to an Asian outlook. They could not be expected to think in a European or Germanic way.

I replied that this was just the reason why these peoples should now at last be allowed to lead their own lives.

Himmler then described the position of Germany and of Europe. Europe had to be united in order to be able to assert itself against Asia, and, besides that, food and living space were needed, which could only be found in the East. But the defence of this territory by military means alone was inadequate; to achieve this, its whole structure had to be altered. The armed peasantry villages would be the means of this. But success depended on the removal of all unruly elements and dangerous obstacles; that was why the foreign peoples would have to be kept in subjection. One guarantee of this was a low standard of education. This would correspond to the standard of education which these peoples had under the Soviets, so there was no question of their being worse off than before.

I replied that they certainly expected something different from the Germans and would be bitterly disappointed.

Himmler answered: "Good racial types and those who show promise of achievement will receive their education here in Germany

according to our high cultural standards. But any who are not worth it will have to stay where they are. I'll give you a biblical answer: once a slave always a slave. What are the needs of primitive man? Food and certain kinds of pleasure. These people will have enough work and therefore adequate food and livelihood. Their local habits and customs will be preserved; so that there will be sustenance both for their bodies and their souls. There will be plenty of work—the building programme for the Greater German Reich, arterial roads from the Atlantic to the Urals and the Black Sea, the construction of canals and the regulation of rivers in the Eastern territories, sites for settlements and great building projects in Germany herself.

"All original creation is hard. A man must be tough if he is to charge a decadent Europe with new vitality. If there is anything wrong with our methods, they will be altered. For centuries, incidentally, the English have shown us by their example that you mustn't go too far with the native population if you want to dominate them for the general good of all parties."

HIMMLER'S

TODAY it was decided that we to talk over the Jewish question with Minister Witting. Bread stockpiles were low. Himmler again openly between hunger and deliver humanity and to the brotherhood.

Himmler replied: "There we wish."

I answered: "We're still like in our own country. An Russia."

Himmler closed one eye at Kersten. Your independence was the Führer's purpose. Germany is power on earth can overcome

"That may be," I answered.

Himmler retorted: "It not Prime Minister Chamberlain is and begged for peace. You do not have travelled to Godesberg strength and greatness of National Socialists those two visits of our history. When we saw that the Führer realized that the English were only to give the English

clearly shown him what perils had to be faced in dealing with National Socialist Germany.

5. HIMMLER'S OPINION OF PRESIDENT RYTI

Shitomin

7th August, 1942

On the flight back from Finland Himmler expressed his opinion on Ryti as follows: "Ryti is an English gentleman; he went to school in England; besides that, he's a Mason. He will never become a friend to National Socialism; he is definitely anti-German. I even consider him a very dangerous man!"

"Why?" I enquired. "I know Ryti to be a very honourable man and a great Finnish patriot."

Himmler laughed. "The word 'patriot' is proof enough that he doesn't understand the Führer. We don't want any local patriots on our side, only men who think and feel in a Greater Germanic manner." In another fifty years the narrow territorial ideals, to be encountered in Finland, would be as adversely judged as those of the small states which had once predominated in Germany; and such petty nationalism soon showed its weakness when faced with antagonists constantly increasing in strength. He had always been very distrustful too of such Masons as Ryti and Mannerheim; now it was clear to him how right he had been.

8th August, 1942

Following his trip to Finland Himmler said this at table today:

In the long run it was impossible to draw the new map of Europe without making plans for the great Swedish people. They would be freed from their isolation and stagnation to form part of the Greater German Reich. "You'll see what forces will be released in Sweden then. The Swedes can play an important part. The fundamental ideals of Gustavus Adolphus, by which Sweden should be brought on to the European stage, will take on new life. If his death in battle had not broken off his plans, he would probably have founded a Germanic Reich from the North Cape to the Thuringian Forest, from the Baltic to the Low Countries; and that would have spared us a great deal."

All great new achievements in history had been accomplished in the midst of violent revolutions and disorders; only then could a new

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XX

HIMMLER ON RELIGION

1. HIMMLER'S VIEWS ON SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH

*Field Headquarters
8th August, 1942*

AN SS Leader told me this a little while ago. In the course of his duties he was Himmler's guest at Tegernsee. Himmler's small daughter said grace before lunch in his presence. He had gazed at the Reichsführer in astonishment, not being able to understand how he—so hostile to the Church—could allow prayers to be said in his own house. It argued some discrepancy in Himmler's outlook. He asked me whether I had come across any signs of religion in him in the course of my medical duties. I answered evasively and said I might find occasion to talk to Himmler about it; I promised myself that I would do this.

My own observations had revealed one or two things which may be significant. I know for instance that Himmler is extremely superstitious: he believes in good and evil spirits. He takes an interest in astrology, though he does not really believe it to be true; he takes advice from at least two astrologers, so that he can ponder on what they say—even if he remains somewhat sceptical. Besides that, he is always afraid of an invisible power to which he will one day have to give an account of himself. When he is in poor health, this becomes very marked. Then he can't get rid of certain inherent fears. He is particularly afraid of dying in agony.

Himmler is an outspoken antagonist of the Christian and especially the Catholic religion. This hostility towards Christianity has led him to take a systematic interest in other religions. He has particular faith in Germanic religious conceptions, the Indo-Germanic no less than those of the North. There are not many men in the SS with whom he can seriously discuss such matters. They take for gospel truth what

their 'King Henry' has to tell the by his knowledge and by his wide University professors, Germanic studies for hours on end, putting faith in them to be contradicted—at such manner. Brandt assured me that it used to happen as a regular event such talks that he would not have made him very reflective.

The tale about his daughter say and in trying to get to the bottom Leader, who expressed Himmler's is still in a state of flux. We're in belief. You can expect mature men share the dangers of having no fix children up from their familiar world of faith before they're fully grown long as the old order survives; then they're playing with their friends, decide for themselves. Faith has to only clear the way for it, not dictate.

I had learnt something from about Mohammedanism and from Church; but to get a true picture of to master the chief books on which argue with him. So I asked Brandt. He mentioned the Bhagavad for its 'great Aryan qualities', the E the sayings of Buddha, the Visuddhi astrological works. I procured those through them. After that I felt better.

Today the chance came of its own a visit to Rome to see Mussolini. The Pope arose in the course of the treatment how the Catholic Church did not wait for an answer but decided from which the chief shareholders—two thousand years—draw a hundred give nothing in return. Insurance is not in the contract whenever you are art of deception compared with the these profits so masterly is that it

their 'King Henry' has to tell them in this sphere and are astounded by his knowledge and by his wide reading. Sometimes he entertains University professors, Germanic scholars of repute; he will argue with them for hours on end, putting forward his own ideas and allowing them to be contradicted—at such times he quite loses his overbearing manner. Brandt assured me that up to the outbreak of the war this used to happen as a regular event. Himmler learnt a great deal from such talks that he would not have heard anywhere else and they often made him very reflective.

The tale about his daughter saying grace frequently recurred to me, and in trying to get to the bottom of it I learnt something from an SS Leader, who expressed Himmler's attitude on these lines: "Everything is still in a state of flux. We're struggling towards a final form of belief. You can expect mature men to take part in this struggle and to share the dangers of having no fixed creed. But it's not right to root children up from their familiar world and make them face the problems of faith before they're fully grown. Let them keep to the old ways so long as the old order survives; they'll come across it every day when they're playing with their friends. Once they're grown up, they can decide for themselves. Faith has to grow of its own accord; you can only clear the way for it, not dictate it."

I had learnt something from occasional remarks of Himmler's about Mohammedanism and from his caustic criticism of the Catholic Church; but to get a true picture of his attitude towards religion I had to master the chief books on which he based it, if I was to be able to argue with him. So I asked Brandt what Himmler had read in this field. He mentioned the Bhagavad-Gita, which he particularly prized for its 'great Aryan qualities', the Eddas, the Vedas and the Rig-Vedas, the sayings of Buddha, the Visudi-Magga, the Book of Purity and some astrological works. I procured those I could from a library and looked through them. After that I felt better prepared.

Today the chance came of its own accord. Himmler is considering a visit to Rome to see Mussolini. Questions of faith, the Church and the Pope arose in the course of our talk. Himmler asked me during the treatment how the Catholic Church might best be described. He did not wait for an answer but declared: "As a joint-stock company from which the chief shareholders—since its foundation and for nearly two thousand years—draw a hundred or a thousand per cent profit and give nothing in return. Insurance companies which always say that it's not in the contract whenever you make a claim are mere novices in the art of deception compared with this gigantic swindle. What makes these profits so masterly is that the capital of the company always

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VAL AFTER DEATH

*Field Headquarters
8th August, 1942*

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remains in the hands of the chief shareholders and is never touched; because the small shareholders, the ordinary run of priests, have no heirs, so that the Church automatically retains the entire fortune."

I asked Himmler, when he spoke so violently against Christianity, which was the predominant factor in Western civilization, whether he felt the same about all religious concepts.

"What do you mean, Herr Kersten?" was his answer. "Surely common sense must tell you that some higher Being—whether you call it God or Providence or anything else you like—is behind nature and the marvellous order which exists in the world of men and animals and plants. If we refused to recognize that we should be no better than the Marxists. It's no pretence, nor concession, as is often alleged against me, but a very serious matter, when I insist that members of the SS must believe in God. I'm not going to have men around me who refuse to recognize any higher Being or Providence or whatever you like to call it."

"Then you do believe in survival after death?" I asked Himmler.

"That's a very delicate question," he replied. "Obviously everything does not end with death, as the materialists assert. But it's very hard to imagine what form such survival will take. Certainly I don't believe what the Catholic Church teaches, either that we go to Hell or rejoice with the angels in Heaven once we've passed through Purgatory. That's a very primitive outlook, not worth discussing. I've often wondered how a modern man can believe anything of that sort, but never been able to understand it. Least of all can I grasp how the fate of a man should be decided for all eternity after a brief life on this earth where so much happens by accident. Only a cruel god could make such a decision. Why did he create men in the first place? In his omniscience why place them in the middle of the immense dangers which they daily have to face—simply in order to damn them for all eternity if they're not strong enough to endure it?"

"You're no Catholic, but Catholicism does take Christianity seriously and does think out all its consequences. You can't avoid the impression, however impartial you are, that the whole system has only been invented to secure the power of the Church and of those who hold office in it. You're bound to go in fear and trembling for the salvation of your soul, once you accept its teaching seriously and base your life on it. That's what the Church wants. Get this clear: what you do or don't do in a life which, measured against eternity, only lasts a few seconds, decides your eternal destiny. Viewed from a common-sense standpoint, that's monstrous—but very much to the point when viewed as a prop to the Church's power."

"What form will survival after death take?" Himmler.

"We should rather enquire how peoples envisaged this question, some progress in the matter. I have some information. The Indo-Germans doesn't come to an end with one deed which man does on this earth, but his Karma, which is not an inheritance, but the knowledge that we control and alter. The Germanic grace, but the knowledge that we witness for you or against you, it alters your fate by your own effort."

With these words Himmler gave a collection of memoranda for his private use, containing a long quotation from one of the Indo-Germans.

"As his wife, children and I have been long away from home, so on this earth he has finished with this one, his last and most welcoming a dear friend."

"And what about his evil deeds? When they are to be reckoned up in detail, they are a great grace seems to me preferable to this life."

"In this life you have to pay for your deeds. You will be presented with a bill in this life, which you can settle up, even if you need it."

"But aren't you often frightened by your reflection on the things you sometimes do? You must be debited against you?"

He replied with great seriousness: "Things from such a limited and narrow point of view consider the Germanic world as a whole. A man has to sacrifice himself, even his life; he oughtn't to think of himself. He must concern himself with flower-bed refuse-dumps, but flowers themselves are seen to. I try to reach a common sense, people and do good, relieve them wherever I can. Do you think it is to be done simply from reasons of expediency? The Minister for Religious Matters must be myself to positive achievements."

and is never touched; in of priests, have no the entire fortune."

his answer. "Surely: Being—whether you like—is behind nature of men and animals could be no better than is often alleged against members of the SS men around me who ence or whatever you

"I asked Himmler. d. "Obviously every- ts assert. But it's very ake. Certainly I don't r that we go to Hell e've passed through worth discussing. I've anything of that sort, I can I grasp how the fter a brief life on this cruel god could make e first place? In his the immense dangers to damn them for all ?

es take Christianity es. You can't avoid he whole system has rch and of those who d trembling for the ag seriously and base t this clear: what you eternity, only lasts a ed from a common- h to the point when

"What form will survival after death take, do you think?" I asked Himmler.

"We should rather enquire how the Germanic and Indo-Germanic peoples envisaged this question," Himmler replied, "then we'll make some progress in the matter. Here I can give you some accurate information. The Indo-Germanic peoples believe in rebirth. Life doesn't come to an end with one experience of it. The good and evil deeds which man does on this earth affect his next life in the form of his Karma, which is not an inexorable fate, but one which he can control and alter. The Germanic belief entails no surrender to divine grace, but the knowledge that what you have done on this earth will witness for you or against you, inescapably. But you have a chance to alter your fate by your own efforts in a new life."

With these words Himmler seized his 'Vade-mecum', a little collection of memoranda for his guidance, and read me out the following quotation from one of the Indian books:

"As his wife, children and friends welcome a man who has been long away from home, so on the threshold of another life, when he has finished with this one, his good deeds await him like friends welcoming a dear friend."

"And what about his evil deeds?" I enquired. "For if they are all to be reckoned up in detail, they can cause him great anguish. Divine grace seems to me preferable to this sort of reckoning."

"In this life you have to pay for everything, so why shouldn't you be presented with a bill in this field too?" Himmler answered. "You can settle up, even if you need one or two more lives to do so."

"But aren't you often frightened yourself, Herr Reichsführer, when you reflect on the things you sometimes have to do, which one day will be debited against you?"

He replied with great seriousness: "You oughtn't to look at things from such a limited and egotistical point of view; you have to consider the Germanic world as a whole—which also has its Karma. A man has to sacrifice himself, even though it is often very hard for him; he oughtn't to think of himself. Of course it's pleasanter to concern yourself with flower-beds rather than political dust-heaps and refuse-dumps, but flowers themselves won't thrive unless these things are seen to. I try to reach a compromise in my own life; I try to help people and do good, relieve the oppressed and remove injustices wherever I can. Do you think my heart's in all the things which have to be done simply from reasons of state? What wouldn't I give to be Minister for Religious Matters like Rust and be able to dedicate myself to positive achievements only! I've often considered whether

I won't suggest to the Führer after the war that he should separate the post of Reichsführer SS from that of Chief of Police. The Führer's already moving in that direction, since he has appointed the Reichsführer SS to take charge of the Armed Peasantry settlements and all colonization in the Eastern territories. Perhaps this post could be amalgamated with that of Minister for Religious Matters. That wouldn't be a bad solution; I should be able to devote myself entirely to positive achievements. But the present state of things both at home and abroad demands the fusion of Reichsführer SS and Chief of Police—that too is a Karma, which I must come to terms with and turn to my own use."

I was astonished to hear Himmler so frankly admit how close was the connection between his religious conceptions and his personal destiny; and I wanted to put more questions to him. But Himmler shook his head. "Wait, I've got something else to read you first." He took the Bhagavad-Gita, of which he was particularly fond, saying that he never moved without it, and quoted the following passage, which I asked leave to copy down: 'It is decreed that whenever men lose their respect for law and truth, and the world is given over to injustice, I will be born anew. I have no desire for gain. . . .'

"This passage is absolutely made for the Führer," Himmler declared. "He rose up out of our deepest need, when the German people had come to a dead end. He is one of those brilliant figures which always appear in the Germanic world when it has reached a final crisis in body, mind and soul. Goethe was one such figure in the intellectual sphere, Bismarck in the political—the Führer in the political, cultural and military combined. It has been ordained by the Karma of the Germanic world that he should wage war against the East and save the Germanic peoples—a figure of the greatest brilliance has become incarnate in his person."

Himmler uttered these words with great solemnity and effect. Now it became clear to me why Himmler had sometimes pointed to Hitler as a person whom men would regard in centuries to come with the same reverence that they had accorded to Christ. Himmler saw in him not simply a figure who had to be surrounded with the aura of religious myth because this was useful in the struggle against the Church—but rather a figure from another world of the sort that always rose up to bring help in times of crisis. It all fitted in with the legends of the Holy Grail and the story of Parsifal. If Himmler dwelt in this world of the imagination he must also have regarded himself as the reincarnation of some great figure in Germanic history.

I asked him about that and he put me off with the answer: "One is

reluctant to discuss one's reflected on it. But I've not

Today I had a long talk informed me that he knew himself as a reincarnation of life than almost anyone else one of the great achievements aware and by no means disp or 'The Black Duke' among very impressive speech at celebrations to honour his name a man should model himself better if he went so far as to

2. REBIRTH IN THE F

The following incident religion: An important SS Lieutenant the Christian conception of a man's funeral. He declared that the only form of survival was as our ancestors only lived again us. One of the SS Leaders present it and I asked Himmler whether SS correctly.

"By no means," he replied issue with such statements is yet ready for the sort of religion only confuse them. Besides, it that, as it will encourage them as possible—because nobody very human weakness, but you such beliefs are childish. Just man would find in living again be worthless or even criminal. linked up with reincarnation, so a greater family, as the German

"Do you yourself believe in Himmler.

In the course of further conversation Himmler declared that the Allied landings in Africa had temporarily delayed progress on the Eastern Front, since the position in Africa was still obscure. The Führer considered that he would have the African campaign under control within three or four months. Then he would be able to concentrate all his available forces on dealing the Bolshevik hordes a death-blow.

Since the landings in Africa the Führer had given orders for proceeding ruthlessly against the Jews. I said that I couldn't understand this inhuman campaign against the Jews, who were all entirely defenceless, being shut up in concentration camps. Himmler replied: "I've got to do it." I retorted: "History will condemn you as the greatest Jew-baiter of all time."

A few minutes later Himmler said in a tired voice: "Ach, Kersten, I never wanted to destroy the Jews. I had quite different ideas. But Goebbels has it all on his conscience."

I gazed at Himmler in astonishment. "Tell me what you mean."

"Some years ago the Führer gave me orders to get rid of the Jews. They were to be allowed to take their fortunes and property with them. I made a start and even punished excesses committed by my people which were reported to me. But I was inexorable on one point: the Jews had to leave Germany. In 1938 Roosevelt had enquiries made about our intentions with regard to the Jews. We let him know what our intentions were: to remove all Jews from Germany, allowing them to take all their property with them; foreign investments were to take the place of industrial property in Germany. We even set up an emigration office for Jews and a committee to arrange the economic issues involved, presided over by a high official in the Ministry of Commerce. The Jews could have led an exactly similar life abroad. We asked for Roosevelt's support in executing the entire project. We never received an answer to this request. Shortly afterwards the Counsellor of our Paris Embassy, vom Rath, was murdered by one Grünspar, a Jew. In spite of that I went on helping the Jews to get away. But our magnanimity was ignored and the world started an infamous campaign against us. Underground political forces were set in motion to start a war, and they succeeded. Our economic and political troubles increased. Jews were behind them all. Up to the spring of 1940 Jews could still leave Germany without any trouble—then Goebbels got the upper hand."

"Why Goebbels?"

Himmler replied: "Goebbels' attitude was that the Jewish question could only be solved by the total extermination of the Jews. While a

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Munich

10th November, 1942

would make a separate the Allies. It was only the Allied landings in you may be sure, Herr Führer will have Ciano ad a recurrence of his nce more in a bad way. ired blow in the belly. d land in Africa?" he politics. Then Himmler n English and American ave come to an under- the enemy of mankind. port, dominate America derstanding while they

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Jew remained alive, he would always be an enemy to National Socialist Germany. Therefore any kindness shown them was out of place. My view was that it would be enough to expel the Jews. In 1934 I had proposed to the Führer that he should give the Jews a large piece of territory and let them set up an independent state in it. I wanted to help them. We made enquiries in a number of different quarters, but no one wanted to have the Jews."

I asked whether he had been thinking of Palestine.

"No, Madagascar. It's an island which has good soil and a climate which suits the Jews."

"But Madagascar's a French possession."

"We could have had an international conference and arranged matters with France. But things turned out differently. Then finally the war came and brought with it circumstances which sealed the fate of the Jews."

*Field Headquarters
9th June, 1944*

Today I had a very long talk about the Jews with Himmler. I said that the world would no longer tolerate the extermination of the Jews; it was high time that he put a stop to it. Himmler said that was beyond his power; he was not the Führer and Adolf Hitler had expressly ordered it. I asked him whether he was aware that history would one day point to him as one of the greatest murderers on record, because of the way in which he had exterminated the Jews. He should think of his reputation, not sully it with that reproach. Himmler replied that he had done nothing wrong and only carried out Adolf Hitler's orders.

Then I asked him what were his personal feelings on the matter. He replied that he would give a great deal to avoid having to carry out these orders. He would also employ special units, not the Waffen SS. In this connection Himmler regretted that his Madagascar plan had not come into operation before the war. An independent Jewish state would have been the proper solution. It would have been a home for Jews from every land and Germany would have finished with them for ever. But unfortunately foreign powers, agreeing for once with Goebbels, Bormann and their followers, had put a stop to this programme.

I told Himmler that he still had a chance to stand well with history by showing humanity to the Jews and other victims of the concentration camp—if he really disagreed with Hitler's orders to exterminate

them. He could simply for carry them out.

"Perhaps you're right," also added that the Führer immediately have him hang

I looked at him in astonishment as weak as all that? If so, I get them to join in company the Jews is sending Gerr Ages."

Himmler replied that he on his conscience. But he was subject, it was too dangerous. He parted he said: "We'll discuss

I made use of this opportunity been condemned to death Luxemburg, four Norwegians Himmler to pardon them as

Today I had another long talk with Himmler about the gypsies, in which I urged the termination and let them go. It was impossible, I begged him to the end he agreed to this: that certain categories of Jews as a neutral country, provided Hitler had come to regard since Goebbels and Bormann him over.

I asked Himmler to inform me of his magnanimous decision, be able to help carry out his plan in conference at Field Headquarters was coming to receive treaty proposal and said he would be for me to bring the three of them were bitter against the people, so it would be a sound scheme, as there was no danger

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*Field Headquarters
9th June, 1944*

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HIMMLER'S ORIGINAL PLAN

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them. He could simply forget certain of the Führer's orders and not carry them out.

"Perhaps you're right, Herr Kersten," Himmler responded, but he also added that the Führer would never forgive him and would immediately have him hanged.

I looked at him in astonishment and enquired: "Is your position as weak as all that? If so, I would seek out colleagues in the Party and get them to join in convincing Hitler that the extermination of the Jews is sending Germany back to the horrors of the Middle Ages."

Himmler replied that he had nothing to reproach himself, nothing on his conscience. But he would not be able to talk to anybody on this subject, it was too dangerous; there was no one he could trust. As we parted he said: "We'll discuss this again in a few days' time."

I made use of this opportunity to give him a list of men who had been condemned to death for sabotage: six Dutchmen, three from Luxemburg, four Norwegians, three Danes and two Belgians. I asked Himmler to pardon them and he consented.

*Field Headquarters
16th June, 1944*

Today I had another long talk with Himmler about the Jews and the gypsies, in which I urged him to abandon the policy of extermination and let them go to a neutral country. If that proved impossible, I begged him to grant them better treatment at least. In the end he agreed to this and said that he was also prepared to let certain categories of Jews and others in concentration camps go to a neutral country, provided this was done in complete secrecy. For Hitler had come to regard the extermination policy as his own idea, since Goebbels and Bormann, who really originated it, had so talked him over.

I asked Himmler to inform Berger, Brandt and Schellenberg of his magnanimous decision, as they were all three reliable and would be able to help carry out his humane ideas. Luckily Berger was already in conference at Field Headquarters and in another hour Schellenberg was coming to receive treatment from me. Himmler agreed to my proposal and said he would lunch with us on the following day. It would be for me to bring the talk discreetly round to the subject. All three of them were bitter antagonists of Goebbels, Bormann and their people, so it would be sound strategy to let them take part in the scheme, as there was no danger of their trying to thwart it. I expressed

my pleasure by telling Himmler that now he was really behaving like a great Germanic Leader. . . .

*Field Headquarters
Sunday Evening, 17th June, 1944*

Berger, Brandt, Schellenberg and I were invited to lunch with Himmler today.

Himmler declared that the Reich and the world would have been spared a great deal if only his Madagascar plan had been taken up. Unfortunately in 1941 the Führer had made the fateful decision to exterminate the Jews, misled by Goebbels, Bormann and their followers. But he, Himmler, had recently given much thought to the matter and decided on a different Jewish policy. He was also prepared to let the Jews go abroad: I, who had made certain proposals to him, believed that Sweden would be ready to open her frontiers to them.

When Schellenberg enquired whether he could inform interested parties in Switzerland of this change in policy, Himmler agreed provided that his own name was kept out of it. These talks had to be kept extremely secret, as they were in direct contradiction to the Party programme.

Himmler added that he had two reasons for this change of policy. Firstly, extermination was a dirty business; and secondly it aroused a good deal of ill-will, as innocent people abroad were too stupid and too ignorant to realize the necessity for it.

REPORT

THIS was the most exciting thing that had happened to Himmler. He was very something on his mind to ask me: "Can you tell me about your symptoms and insomnia?"

"Of course, but I must give you my opinion," I answered. "I have certain symptoms."

Himmler replied: "Tell me, but tell nobody about it and keep it secret."

My answer was that, as I was entrusted to me; it was a part of my duty.

Himmler then fetched a blue manuscript from his desk and handed it to me with the report on my symptoms.

The report comprised a list of symptoms which he realized that it had drawn up during the days when he lay blinded in the hospital. The report went on to establish that he had fallen a victim to poisoning and that for a time he was in danger of death. The symptoms associated with syphilis were apparently cured. In 1941, syphilis was evidently cured.

have done untold harm to my people and got rid of the Reich's greatest man, who is still capable of the most grandiose ideas—and all because of a doctor's suspicions."

"Something more than mere suspicion," I replied, "according to that report. It states factually that the syphilis was contracted over twenty years ago and that the symptoms only disappeared after the acknowledged treatment for that particular disease."

"Perhaps," Himmler answered, "but you have overlooked spontaneous cures, admitted by medical science even in the case of cancer. Syphilis *need not* lead to progressive paralysis; the body can triumph over the infection. There's more likelihood of that in the Führer's case, for he neither smokes nor drinks, is a vegetarian and leads an entirely regular life. It's only because the Führer once suffered from syphilis that the doctors want to relate his symptoms to paralysis. The idea would probably never have occurred to them if they hadn't known that. But the possibility remains that the body has overcome the infection and that this is really no more than sheer exhaustion—not to be wondered at in view of the Führer's more than human labours. In these circumstances I cannot decide to take so drastic a step."

"But what will you do then?" I asked Himmler. "Will you simply let the matter alone and wait for Hitler's condition to get worse and worse? Can you endure the idea that the German people have at their head a man who is very probably suffering from progressive paralysis?"

Himmler reflected for a moment and then replied: "It has still not gone far enough; I'll watch carefully and it will be time enough to act once it's established that the report is correct."

That's how the talk concluded. I received the impression that Himmler really meant what he said; I only doubt whether he's capable of being objective in his observation. He regards Hitler as the greatest figure in the history of Germany, and depends so intimately on him, being used to executing his orders without question. I told Brandt that we had again discussed the report on Hitler's illness and made no bones about letting him know my views. He agreed with me and pointed out that Himmler could not attend to the matter, because Bormann had recently come between him and the Führer. The best of plans were meaningless unless Himmler could win over Bormann. But Himmler was much too weak with Bormann; his worst mistake was that he never used the power which he really possessed. Himmler was always at pains to live on the best of terms—at least outwardly—with those who were close to the Führer and able to influence him. He would never let it come to an open conflict with Bormann, nor

give the latter a chance to had to recognize that clea

I had a long conversation with Berger on the charge of the SS Head of Hitler was suffering from syphilis. I wanted to know whether he had been on trips abroad. I replied that I did not recollect anything. Berger said that he had heard nothing about it, such as extreme fatigue, loss of weight, etc. Berger was well known to me, having observed me in the past. I had not been able to notice anything about the gas he had been infected with. Anyhow it was syphilis.

"Yes, and very dangerous," I said that I had never examined him closely, and had no opinion.

"Himmler's hint gave me the impression that he had been taken in by Or...?" Berger ended very subjectively—and very obscurely if we had never raised the

3, 1940-1945

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REPORT ON HITLER'S ILLNESS

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give the latter a chance to shake Hitler's confidence in his loyalty. One
had to recognize that clearly and not build up any false hopes.

Hartzwalde
4th February, 1943

I had a long conversation today with SS General Berger, who's in
charge of the SS Head Office. He referred to rumours abroad that
Hitler was suffering from syphilis and progressive paralysis; and he
wanted to know whether I had heard anything of the sort during my
trips abroad. I replied that I was reluctant to discuss the subject, but
did recollect something of the kind. Berger said that Himmler's
hints had been so obscure that he was still in doubt of the truth. He
only knew for certain that Hitler had been gassed in the first war; he
had heard nothing about the syphilis. There were some signs to in-
dicate it, such as extreme irritability, but they might have a different
origin. Berger was well enough aware of the disease's effect on varying
age-groups, having observed numbers of men in his own unit. He had
not been able to notice any of the typical symptoms in Hitler. It was
possible that the gas had brought out some hereditary syphilitic
infection. Anyhow it was risky even to allege that Hitler had
syphilis.

"Yes, and very dangerous!" I replied. "Better not talk about it."
I said that I had never examined Hitler, had never even seen him from
close to, and had no opinion on the matter.

"Himmler's hint gave me a lot to think about," Berger answered.
"Has he been taken in by some malicious rumour? Or is it really so?
Or . . .?" Berger ended very seriously: "You're right. It's a dangerous
subject—and very obscure. We'll keep our mouths shut and behave as
if we had never raised the matter."

XXIV

THE DUTCH RESETTLEMENT PLAN

Berlin

1st March, 1941

AT SIX o'clock this afternoon Dr. Brandt let me have a look at secret documents about resettling the Dutch in eastern Poland. They comprised forty-three typewritten sheets in a yellow cover; they were signed by Hitler, countersigned by Bormann, and marked secret.

Their contents may be summarized as follows: The whole population of Holland, estimated at eight and a half million, was to be resettled by stages in eastern Poland. The first to go would be three million 'irreconcilables'—an expression which embraced all those who were likely to remain hostile to Germany even after she had won the war, together with their families.

The resettlement plan was a closely guarded secret, known only to very few. Details had not yet been worked out. But it was generally known that certain Dutch trade groups would be transferred to the East, farmers, market gardeners and others. The larger plan existed, however, for it was on paper and I had read it myself. The more limited scheme for transferring farmers and others has then to be regarded as the first stage of a more comprehensive resettlement. It served to camouflage the real plan which had to be kept secret for the time being, so as not to provoke world opinion against it prematurely.

Himmler alleged that a sudden impulse of Hitler's had produced this idea of resettling the entire Dutch population. There had been riots in Amsterdam in February 1941. Himmler was with Hitler when the news came through and told him, whereupon Hitler fell into a rage

THE DUTCH

and broke out: "I'll resettle parasites." There and then

I'm putting up a fight if doom upset me so much the last few days Himmler has circumstance when trying I've repeatedly told him severely, and that he can't see the Dutch without suffering impossible strain on the Reich of over eight million men and women. They would block the line of movement of troops. The flight of something that would happen, especially as the Dutch are Germans.

Himmler retorted that different argument and said a man as highly intelligent as this one of resettling the Dutch warn him against the risk of more than his weakened influence him in this direct

Departure from Berlin: der Mur in Styria. Himmler Dutch resettlement question

Himmler has been very me a great deal. My treatment Himmler is reduced to desperate success of my treatment is begging me to do everything would be such a terrible burden must obey my orders if he

and broke out: "I'll resettle the lot of them. I'll make an end of these parasites." There and then he dictated the order for the resettlement.

10th March, 1941

I'm putting up a fight for Holland. The Dutch people's impending doom upset me so much that I couldn't sleep at all last night. In the last few days Himmler has been very unwell—always a favourable circumstance when trying to get him to do something. All this time I've repeatedly told him that he is trying his nervous system too severely, and that he can't expect to assume responsibility for resettling the Dutch without suffering for it. And surely it was an almost impossible strain on the Reich's transport system to attempt the transfer of over eight million men right across Germany in the middle of the war? They would block the lines of communication and impede the movement of troops. The flight of civilians in France had shown the sort of thing that would happen. It might occur just as easily in Germany, especially as the Dutch were not so highly disciplined as the Germans.

Himmler retorted that they would soon learn. So then I tried a different argument and said that it was beyond my comprehension how a man as highly intelligent as he could embark on so rash a proceeding as this one of resettling the Dutch. As his doctor it was my duty to warn him against the risk of undertaking so much extra work—it was more than his weakened physique could stand. I will continue to influence him in this direction.

6th April, 1941

Departure from Berlin for the Führer's headquarters at Bruck an der Mur in Styria. Himmler is beginning to give way a little on the Dutch resettlement question.

Himmler has been very ill in the last few weeks and he depends on me a great deal. My treatment is not proving as effective as before and Himmler is reduced to despair. I keep on telling him that he's putting too much strain on his nervous system and that I can't guarantee the success of my treatment unless he will take more rest. Himmler is begging me to do everything in my power, as he can't give up now. It would be such a terrible blow for Hitler. I go on retorting that he must obey my orders if he wants me to make him fit for work. Above

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Berlin

1st March, 1941

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all he mustn't take more responsibility on himself. The end of the war would be time enough to resettle the Dutch. Then it could be done without any trouble. Today I told him that if you put ten amps on a circuit made for six you're bound to blow a fuse.

16th April, 1941

At last Himmler is willing to postpone resettling the Dutch until after the war. His stomach cramps have grown so much worse that I was summoned to him three times today to treat them. The last time was at ten o'clock at night. He lay exhausted and twisted with pain on his chaise-longue. When I came into the room he just said: "Please help me, I can't bear any more pain."

"Yes, I'll help you," I replied, "but you must also listen to me and do what I consider best for your health. If you refuse, however, I'm afraid the day is coming when I'll no longer be able to help. I have a unique knowledge of your nervous system and of what you can stand and what you can't."

"I'll do anything you like," Himmler cried, "only stop these stomach-aches."

The pains yielded to a brief treatment and Himmler was visibly relieved. I made him see that the cramps had been provoked by overwork. That couldn't go on. He ought to leave the inessential and concentrate only on his most important tasks. He would have to postpone resettling the Dutch until he was better. Such a vast scheme was best put off until after the war. If he went on like that, he would have a breakdown one of these days. And then what would history say of him? That Himmler was one of those fools who let their work get on top of them.

"No, history shan't say that of me," said Himmler. "But what then do you advise?"

"Go straight to Hitler," I replied, "and tell him that it's not possible to resettle the Dutch at this time; that it must be put off until after the war. Both on account of the strain on rail transport and the regrouping of the Waffen SS which it would entail." (The Russian campaign was already planned and Himmler had to reorganize his Waffen SS.) Himmler replied that he would talk to Hitler the next day; he already had an appointment with him about another matter. But it was essential that he should be free of his stomach pains, otherwise he would not be able to go to the Führer. I've promised him that he'll have no pains tomorrow.

This morning I was back with slept well and was free of pain. I me. The treatment over, I once resettling the Dutch until after th

Today Himmler informed me and in writing, that the Dutch res until after the war. Himmler's wishes and got your Dutch a repri that I should reserve my health fo that, we've no transport to spare f to make a start on it as soon as the

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THE DUTCH RESETTLEMENT PLAN

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17th April, 1941

This morning I was back with Himmler by ten o'clock. He had
slept well and was free of pain. He said that he was very grateful to
me. The treatment over, I once more exhorted him to postpone
resettling the Dutch until after the war. Now he has gone to Hitler.

18th April, 1941

Today Himmler informed me that Hitler had stated, both verbally
and in writing, that the Dutch resettlement plan should be postponed
until after the war. Himmler's words were: "Now I've carried out your
wishes and got your Dutch a reprieve from the Führer. It's quite right
that I should reserve my health for more important tasks. Apart from
that, we've no transport to spare for the resettlement. But I will have
to make a start on it as soon as the war is over."

I'm back at Hartzwalde at last. I gathered a bunch of snowdrops
and crocuses in the garden and placed them in front of the picture of
the Queen of Holland and Prince Henry on my writing table—a silent
greeting to Holland.

XXV

THE NEW BIGAMY

1. THE EXPERIMENTAL STAGE

*Salzburg
4th May, 1943*

MOUNTING losses on the Eastern Front were causing Hitler great anxiety, Himmler told me. For they were consuming Germany's manpower and it was evident that they had to be replaced if the German people were to control the areas they had conquered. Therefore the Führer had decided, the moment the war was over, to make comprehensive changes in the existing marriage laws and to introduce bigamy.

In its first stage this would not mean the general abolition of monogamy, but the right to contract a second marriage would be granted to holders of the German Cross in gold and holders of the Knights' Cross, as a special tribute to heroism in battle. This right would next be extended to holders of the Iron Cross First Class and to those who held the silver and gold clasps awarded for service in front-line fighting. This would embrace the majority of those with proven fighting qualities: it was of the utmost importance to the Reich that they should transmit these to their children. At the same time this would provide an opportunity to gather information on the practical results of bigamy. Then it could be decided whether to abolish monogamy entirely or to reserve bigamy only for those already mentioned, so that bigamy would come to an end when those entitled to it died out.

2. EXISTING MARRIAGE LAWS IMMORAL?

"My personal opinion," Himmler added, "is that it would be a natural development for us to break with monogamy. Marriage in its

existing form is the laws are in themselves often show up the trouble with my appearance, status, which my husband care for him or not, remain the woman or would act as a stimulus husband's dream-world. Their models, which of beauty projected by

"The fact that a wife drives him first to crime as he tries to co-partners. They avoid is that they don't pro-children are never born the other hand the husband with whom he is carried simply because middle which loses, for it gets

3. ILLEGITIMATE

Himmler declared went on: "This doubt the status which middle of such affairs, whom relation of their own father a bastard and his father her rights simply in society. The father he world: treat the child ing. It's not his child connection with him not allowed to marry married. The law call police have to intervene Information of this people.

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BIGAMY

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*Salzburg**4th May, 1943*

Front were causing Hitler great trouble were consuming Germany's man- had to be replaced if the German hey had conquered. Therefore the ie war was over, to make compre- iage laws and to introduce bigamy. ot mean the general abolition of ract a second marriage would be Cross in gold and holders of the e to heroism in battle. This right of the Iron Cross First Class and gold clasps awarded for service in brace the majority of those with the utmost importance to the Reich heir children. At the same time this gather information on the practical decided whether to abolish mono- only for those already mentioned, so when those entitled to it died out.

AWS IMMORAL?

ler added, "is that it would be a k with monogamy. Marriage in its

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existing form is the Catholic Church's satanic achievement; marriage laws are in themselves immoral. The case-histories of monogamy so often show up the woman as thinking: 'Why should I take as much trouble with my appearance as before I was married? I've still got my status, which my husband can't alter, whether I indulge his whims and care for him or not, whether I dress to please him or not, whether I remain the woman of his dreams or not.' But with bigamy each wife would act as a stimulus to the other so that both would try to be their husband's dream-woman—no more untidy hair, no more sloveliness. Their models, which will intensify these reflections, will be the ideals of beauty projected by art and the cinema.

"The fact that a man has to spend his entire existence with one wife drives him first of all to deceive her and then makes him a hypocrite as he tries to cover it up. The result is indifference between the partners. They avoid each other's embraces and the final consequence is that they don't produce children. This is the reason why millions of children are never born, children whom the state urgently requires. On the other hand the husband never dares to have children by the woman with whom he is carrying on an affair, much though he would like to, simply because middle-class morality forbids it. Again it's the state which loses, for it gets no children from the second woman either."

3. ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN

Himmler declared that there were many sides to this problem and went on: "This double standard expresses itself characteristically in the status which middle-class convention accords to the children born of such affairs, whom it calls illegitimate. It stipulates that they are no relation of their own father and his family. That in fact is the law—that a bastard and his father do not count as relations. Nature is robbed of her rights simply in order to keep up appearances in middle-class society. The father has no chance to do the most natural thing in the world: treat the child as his own and occupy himself with its upbringing. It's not his child in law, but the child of a woman who has no connection with him except for the fact that he gives her money. He's not allowed to marry the child's mother either, seeing that he's already married. The law calls it 'concubinage' if he lives with her and the police have to intervene in the disturbances caused by open scandal. Information of this kind is constantly being laid against my own people.

M

be quick to see bigamy as a social necessity, simply in order to legalize their own intrigues."

Himmler seemed vastly amused. "I've never heard you talk like this before, my dear Herr Kersten. You sound just like a suffragette. Have you been listening to an apostle of women's rights? Of course there's something in what you say, but you don't understand how much can be done in this field by the power of education and a propaganda that's really to the point. Consider this: only a few years ago a bastard was still regarded as a disgrace. A man was afraid to admit that he had an illegitimate child. In the SS I've systematically gone about defying existing laws and explaining to my men that children are always a great blessing, legitimate or not. What's been the result? Now my men tell me with shining eyes that they have just had an illegitimate child. Their girls regard it as an honour, not a disgrace, in defiance of the law's present attitude. You can read announcements of these births any day in the *Schwarze Korps*. Aren't these the results of education?"

6. THE 'LEBENSBOHN' (MATERNITY HOME FOR UNMARRIED MOTHERS)

Himmler continued: "Here's another case in point. My first aim in setting up the *Lebensborn* was to meet a crying need and to give unmarried women, who were racially pure, the chance to have their children free of cost. There they could pass the weeks before the birth of their child in agreeable surroundings and quietly await the great event. You can hardly realize how much it means to a woman, who used to be cold-shouldered and insulted because her child was illegitimate, to enter a home where she can relax spiritually and physically, receive medical attention and feel that everybody is glad about the child she's going to have. At first the *Lebensborn* was regarded with middle-class disapproval and distrust. Now it enjoys the greatest respect. It accords protection and spiritual succour to those who give birth to illegitimate children. Even married women have their children in the *Lebensborn*; nowadays they account for fifty per cent of the confinements. But no difference is made between married and unmarried women—they're all addressed by their Christian names, without any *Fräulein* or *Frau* tacked on. So none of them knows who is married and who isn't. This is genuine love of one's neighbour. It ought to be brought home to those clerics who go on about unmarried mothers in the pulpit and quite ignore how they are turning people against the

unfortunate women. Even women brunettes, they're all taken in, inferior specimens are refused admitting-in hospitals."

7. 'CONCEPTION-ASSISTANCE'

We continued our recent talk explained that he had gone even let it be known that any unmarried world but longed for a child might confidence. The Reichsführung SS for its education. I was well aware. According to the existing middle-class no right to long for a child. She comes along who'll grant her desire simply accept her fate. Generally unable to marry on account of her I realized this and I've given such child they want. The woman receives the chance of being a mother and for the life of the community, while the the nation. For you can imagine racially pure men as 'Conception-

"I waited eagerly to see how service. At first of course nothing improvement—and you'll see when the war is over. Our propaganda highly effective: it will become a duty and her duty to the Reich, if she to have children in this way. That Things will have reached such a stage will object when we make it no longer a law. Anyhow our initiative has succeeded that used to exist. That's why I'm successful with bigamy and overcome that stands in the way. There is no bigamy, assisting the birth of illegitimate children, consequence putting them on the

nessity, simply in order to legalize

"I've never heard you talk like you sound just like a suffragette. Of course you don't understand how much of education and a propaganda is: only a few years ago a bastard was afraid to admit that he had systematically gone about defying men that children are always a bit's been the result? Now my men have just had an illegitimate child. It's a disgrace, in defiance of the announcements of these births these the results of education?"

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her case in point. My first aim is at a crying need and to give unpure, the chance to have their days pass the weeks before the birthings and quietly await the great such it means to a woman, who elted because her child was illegitimate relax spiritually and physically, that everybody is glad about the *Lebensborn* was regarded with it. Now it enjoys the greatest ritual succour to those who give married women have their children account for fifty per cent of the between married and unmarried in Christian names, without any of them knows who is married and one's neighbour. It ought to be on about unmarried mothers in are turning people against the

unfortunate women. Even women who don't belong to the Party, even brunettes, they're all taken in, not just the blondes. Only thoroughly inferior specimens are refused admittance and left to the old-fashioned lying-in hospitals."

7. 'CONCEPTION-ASSISTANTS'

9th May, 1943

We continued our recent talks and, to my astonishment, Himmler explained that he had gone even further in this matter. "Privately I let it be known that any unmarried woman who was alone in the world but longed for a child might turn to the *Lebensborn* with perfect confidence. The Reichsführung SS would sponsor the child and provide for its education. I was well aware that this was a revolutionary step. According to the existing middle-class code an unmarried woman has no right to long for a child. She has to wait respectfully until the man comes along who'll grant her desire. If he fails to appear, she must simply accept her fate. Generally she doesn't find the right man or is unable to marry on account of her work, but she still wants a child. I realized this and I've given such women the opportunity to have the child they want. The woman receives assistance, has the happy experience of being a mother and for the first time plays her full part in the life of the community, while the state receives a valuable addition to the nation. For you can imagine that we only employ valuable and racially pure men as 'Conception-assistants'.

"I waited eagerly to see how much use would be made of this service. At first of course nothing happened, but each year brings some improvement—and you'll see what we shall make of the scheme once the war is over. Our propaganda will be subtle and unobtrusive, but highly effective: it will become a point of honour with every woman, and her duty to the Reich, if she's still childless at the age of thirty, to have children in this way. That will be the *Lebensborn's* finest hour! Things will have reached such a pitch one of these days that nobody will object when we make it no longer voluntary but compulsory by law. Anyhow our initiative has already broken down the prejudices that used to exist. That's why I'm confident that we'll have the same success with bigamy and overcome every sort of psychological difficulty that stands in the way. There is one purpose behind all these measures, bigamy, assisting the birth of illegitimate children and as a necessary consequence putting them on the same legal footing as those born in

wedlock. This purpose is to safeguard and improve the racial qualities of the Greater German Reich, so that it can accomplish its great tasks both in the centre of Europe and against the increasing avalanche of Asian peoples."

11th May, 1943

When I watch Himmler expounding, I constantly have the impression of a scholar, yet also of a prophet deeply convinced of what he says. He paces up and down the room, then when he comes to some very important point halts in front of me and fixes me with a compelling stare through his glasses, in order to give more effect to what he's saying. At such moments it is easy to understand the great influence he exerts over his staff of Leaders, awkward and hesitant though he often appears. An outsider, only noting his extremely donnish and bespectacled appearance, would find this hard to believe.

8. HISTORICAL INSTANCES

As so often, Himmler went back into history for instances and declared: "Every country in Europe can show examples of rulers who have had a second wife whose children have been respected and placed on the same footing as those of the first wife. Charlemagne was a case in point. The Emperor Arnulf was an illegitimate child, as was Dunois, the famous Bastard of Orleans, and even William the Conqueror of England. It was the habit with princes, simply because they could afford it. Nor was it the practice only for a brief period; it endured from the rise of the Germanic states to well past the Renaissance, until it finally became the accepted thing in royal families. Many who can afford it still do the same thing today, but in the old days it all happened quite naturally without any attempt at concealment, while nowadays it's all hushed up.

"What bitter deceptions await the girls and women who are disposed to do the same thing in all honesty nowadays! Once this instinct is accepted as natural, all that can be avoided. Didn't Goethe say: 'Man is polygamous by nature, woman monogamous.' Why? Because a man's real sexual instincts extend over a wide field, whereas a woman's protective instincts for her children incline her to monogamy. There are often material grounds for this, but where none

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idea is the surest way of ov

A mirage, startling in i
group of talks on 'Bigamy
and an ideology no less on
Himmler's great-grandfath

this and asked me to do what I could to quieten the authorities in Germany when I went back there. I told him that I would proceed in this matter exactly as before.

I spent two hours over coffee with President Ryti on the 16th of October. He's very worried. German pressure on Finland is still strong. He knows that Finland needs peace, but can't see how to get it. Thank God we're not at war with America. That's his great hope.

Stockholm

1st November, 1943

Peace talks with Hewitt and Graffman are progressing well. Both of them see the danger threatening in the East. Graffman said: "Once Europe's economy is shattered it will be at the mercy of Communist Russia."

A few days ago I wrote to Himmler about my meeting with Hewitt and asked him to send Schellenberg to Stockholm. It's of the first importance that he should see Hewitt. I can't intervene in peace talks between America and Germany, since I'm a Finn. I am in a state of tension, wondering whether Schellenberg will come.

I've been twice with Hewitt to see Gripenberg. Hewitt has great sympathy for Finland's difficult position.

Stockholm

9th November, 1943

Schellenberg has arrived in Stockholm. I've introduced him to Hewitt and they get on well together. It's my sincere wish that this contact will lead to peace.

Hochwald

4th December, 1943

This morning I tried to make Himmler realize that it was time for him to come to a decision about my negotiations in Stockholm with Hewitt and Graffman. I told him: "No country in Europe is getting anything out of this war; it's time it was stopped." The moment had come for him to decide.

Himmler replied: "Ach, don't torment me, give me time. I can't get rid of the Führer, to whom I owe everything." Then he went on: "It was he who gave me the position I now hold—and am I now to use my position as Reichsführer to overthrow the Führer? It's quite beyond

me, Herr Kersten. I have taken as my traitor? For heaven

My reply was: "people and Europe make it. Don't hesitate if you really want to. In Stockholm Mr. I take it to Roosevelt time."

Himmler replied are hardly acceptable Kersten. Are they afraid for that when faced

"You will have they will have cease of peace, you will Europe's."

"I've carefully said Himmler. "The discuss them if the condition is quite unfavorable for certain war-crimes that's been done is carried out with a decision

Even the annihilation

"Certainly, that "Because the Führer 1941. And the Führer

After a time Him initiative, I've only can accept any re

"Then who in your

"Certainly," Him

If anybody must be a legal question and I in our discussing the

I said that I never with him. Himmler Stockholm outlining occupied territories, should reflect that it

Germany's best blood, Herr Kersten. But if it has to be, I might be able to agree to it. Then, for instance, you've put here—recognition of the 1914 frontiers. Mr. Hewitt is not going to leave us with very much. For security's sake we must extend a hundred miles or so further east than that.

"Democratic elections in Germany," Himmler went on, "under American and English supervision. I've no objection to that. Removal of the Führer and abolition of the Party? What am I to do about that?"

"It's your affair what you do about it," I replied, "but it's got to be done. For the Allies will never come to terms with the Party nor with the Führer."

"Yes, that's the bit that's hardest to swallow," Himmler retorted. "It means cutting the ground from under my own feet." He reflected. "And then this piece of nonsense," he cried, very much upset: "I'm to include in the peace terms the Allies' right to hold Germans responsible for what they're pleased to call war-crimes. That's complete madness, Herr Kersten. We Germans aren't criminals, we've committed no war-crimes. We're a decent people who have fought honourably. Perhaps it's not a crime that the Allies in the last few years have been reducing our towns to ruins. Can't you realize that in the event of a German defeat Russia—and possibly ten years later America—will dominate Europe?"

"Next on your list comes reduction of the German Army to a size which will make aggression impossible. What does Mr. Hewitt mean by that? Are we to go back to an army of a hundred thousand? We could offer no resistance to the Russians with that. Germany needs an army of at least three millions if she is to protect Europe from the East."

A few minutes later Himmler said in a tired voice: "I can't come to a decision today. Hewitt will be in Stockholm for a few days longer. Your proposals aren't unacceptable to me, except for the one about responsibility for alleged war-crimes."

I asked Himmler whether I might let Hewitt and Graffman know that he, Himmler, was agreed in principle.

"Ach, wait a few more days," Himmler replied. "I've got to think it over. I realize that this war is a disaster for everybody. And if I can do anything to stop it, I will. But America must also show some signs of goodwill."

This talk between the Reichsführer SS, Heinrich Himmler, and myself took place on the 4th of December, 1943, at Hochwald, the Field Headquarters in East Prussia. The talk began early in the morning at a quarter past nine and finished at ten minutes to eleven.

I've been trying ha has become a real battl argument: "I can't bet him. I was nothing bef I'm to leave him in the

Gradually Himmler to be done. This mornin the end of his inner cc for peace on the basis c stood that Germany wa that her military streng take this step in consid he demanded that An Germany and should sh

Himmler commissic essential that the utmo negotiations.

When I returned to moment had come to br "Have you already forg you still concern yourse

"Ach yes, you're qui on my mind. And I've take the constant burde there is a man who co behaves like a bull in a c

"And who is now d war out of hand," I add

"You're mistaken," discussed that with me; spoke to me about it—it

"And don't you reali issue from a sick mind?"

"I've no right to con: "You've got to cons

words—they're traitors. And after the war traitors will have no right to live. The Führer's patience is at last exhausted."

I protested that I could only regard it as a monstrous crime if men of this sort, who could be counted by the million, were to be struck down simply because they thought differently from Hitler, but were in other respects Germans and men of honour. Himmler only replied that the Führer never committed a crime. He, Himmler, and the best elements in the nation were convinced National Socialists and daily gave thanks to Providence that it had accorded them the great good fortune to be allowed to serve Adolf Hitler, who was the greatest German of all time. He would be happy to sacrifice his life for him at any moment—hundreds of thousands had already given their lives for this ideal.

"Now just take a look at these diehards: all over the place they're quietly carrying out sabotage and crimes against the nation. You need only consider one case: an industrialist had invented a brilliant new means of transport which would ensure a safe passage to Africa without any danger from torpedoes. He constructed one of these transports at his own expense—tens of thousands of marks—and offered the prototype to the appropriate committee. But there were diehards ready for sabotage sitting on this committee and they had a similar transport constructed at a different shipyard, ostensibly according to this same design. But the speciality of their design was that it included a fault in construction. This second ship was sent on its trial trip and was naturally a failure. Then the committee announced that the whole system of construction was unsound, so that there was no need to try out the prototype, as that too would be unpracticable. The result was to abandon the construction of these transports. With the further result that the Africa Corps was never provided with the right transports, the African campaign was lost, and thousands of German soldiers perished in consequence. The diehards are responsible for their death. Thousands of these diehards are engaged in sabotage all over the place.

"They sabotage the production of new weapons and aircraft; they draw up grandiose designs for wooden barracks without shelters which are destroyed by bombs; they misdirect trains carrying munitions and machinery, so that in one place munitions pile up and go to waste while in another there are neither munitions nor fuel, with the result that our tanks can neither move nor use their guns and the front can only be held by throwing away more lives. These diehards are responsible for the deaths of untold thousands."

"I just can't believe it," I replied. "These are either products of the

DIEHARDS

Hochwald
20th June, 1944

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imagination or items invented by interested parties, police spies who have got to say something to earn their pay."

"Interested parties?" said Himmler. "I've got evidence, some of it evidence from people who don't even belong to the Party, let alone the Gestapo—men who are simply horrified at the fate that has befallen their own sons and brothers. If the diehards were to kill one of us who're at the head of affairs, that wouldn't be nearly so bad as these cowardly and insidious methods of theirs. They are killing tens and hundreds of thousands of men who are young and trusting, simply in order to get at us, to do us harm and undermine our position. They're climbing over the heaped-up bodies of men who've died fighting for Germany."

"Are they fools enough to think that the Soviets are so humane that they should contribute to their victory? I'm praying for the day when I have the chance to settle accounts with these murderous and reactionary swine. And I'll avenge every murdered man a thousand times over. I refuse to discuss this subject. Not even with you, Herr Kersten."

HIMMLER AT

DURING the treatment of the Americans were at present. Serious conflicts were going to eventually have a decisive effect.

In the morning I also had to go to work. I went to rest. Suddenly the driver, Lukas, Himmler's driver, brought me on the Führer's life! Attempted assassination. Nothing has happened to him. Reichsführer from the *Wolf*.

I at once put on my shirt. The guard on his quarters. I was able to get through. I saw him. He was standing by his desk. That he was arranging and sending him: "What's really the matter?"

Himmler answered me very calmly at the Führer. But Providence.

I enquired whether he had heard. "The attempt was made," he replied. "Now my hour has come and have already given me."

"Whom do you propose to kill?" I hope you won't get hold of Himmler further consulted.

¹ The Wolf's Lair, the name of the Führer's headquarters.

-1945

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XXIX

HIMMLER AND THE 20TH OF JULY

Hochwald
20th July, 1944

DURING the treatment this morning Himmler told me that the Americans were at present having great trouble with the Russians. Serious conflicts were going to arise between them which would eventually have a decisive effect on the future course of the war.

In the morning I also had time for quite a long walk and after lunch I went to rest. Suddenly there were shouts of alarm. Sturmbannführer Lukas, Himmler's driver, burst into my sleeping car crying: "Attempt on the Führer's life! Attempt on the Führer! But the Führer still lives, nothing has happened to him, he's safe! We have just come with the Reichsführer from the *Wolfsschanze*."¹

I at once put on my shoes and overcoat and went to the Reichsführer. The guard on his quarters had been doubled, but with my pass I was able to get through. I entered Himmler's office without knocking. He was standing by his desk; I looked at him for a moment and saw that he was arranging and destroying certain papers. Then I asked him: "What's really the matter, Herr Reichsführer?"

Himmler answered me without looking up: "A bomb was thrown at the Führer. But Providence has saved him."

I enquired whether he had any further information.

"The attempt was made by a Colonel in the Wehrmacht," he replied. "Now my hour has come. I will round up all the reactionary gang and have already given orders for the traitors' arrest."

"Whom do you propose to arrest? Are you so sure of who they are? I hope you won't get hold of the wrong people, Herr Reichsführer." Himmler further consulted his papers. "How was it really possible

¹ The Wolf's Lair, the name of Hitler's secret headquarters in East Prussia. Tr.

for such an attempt to have been made, Herr Himmler," I asked, "without your intelligence network and your secret service knowing anything about it? Won't they be greatly blamed? Isn't there a special small organization whose sole task is to guard Hitler—how can they have failed?"

Himmler made no answer, only burrowing more deeply into his papers, but I questioned him again: "Do you remember, Herr Reichsführer, that some eighteen months ago you showed me a report about the Führer's illness? In view of that, wouldn't it have been better if he had been killed? At that time you assured me that you would see to it that nothing went wrong. Yet in the meantime you were unable to prevent things happening which were obviously wrong. You should have acted then. Now another has acted for you. Look at the matter in this light before you set in motion the machinery which will destroy men whom you call traitors."

Himmler had stopped rummaging among his papers and he regarded me with a horror in which anxiety was also visible. "What's that you are saying, Kersten? Is that your real opinion? You oughtn't to think that, still less say it. By preserving the Führer Providence has given us a sign. The Führer lives, invulnerable—Providence has spared him to us so that we may bring the war to a triumphant conclusion under his leadership. My place is now at the Führer's side where I will be relentless in executing his orders. I am flying immediately to Berlin. You had better wait at Hartzwalde until I summon you."

Himmler took up the last of his papers and went.

I stood alone in his office gazing at the desk which had been emptied of its secrets.

SWISS ACTIVITY

I RECEIVED a visit to I. of St. Gallen. She is joining with the International League of the twenty thousand Jews of Switzerland and send them to be interned under Swiss law. I asked me to intervene

Today I got into a room aware of Frau I.'s activities attempted both with him frustrated because Himmler strongly urged me not to see him, however, to see the Federal Councillor. We thus wreck the Swiss: words: "It's beyond reach much on the Jews' behalf will thank you. One day

Shortly after my arrival in November, 1944, I received

as head of the intelligence service is the proper person to do so, doesn't dare to lay my reports before the Führer, even when he believes they're true."

I couldn't help smiling, so fantastic did the whole situation appear to me. "You smile incredulously," Ohlendorf retorted, "but it's the truth. His behaviour is dictated by purely tactical considerations. He would of course make bitter enemies of some important people whose support he needs in other fields. His whole character is against doing that—I know him well. He prefers to give way and try other methods of dealing with difficulties, but he's only partially successful. Such tactics mean that necessary decisions on important matters are postponed and finally forgotten owing to the pressure of other great events."

"Apart from that, the Reichsführer considers that the Führer ought not to be troubled with matters which might interfere with his lofty conceptions and arouse his displeasure. You surely know how everybody close to the Führer is constantly striving to keep any unpleasant news from reaching him. The Reichsführer is no exception. *De facto*, he holds the power in Germany, but he makes no use of it. It's a drama, a real drama. I'm worried to death as I see what might be done—and nothing happens. I'm convinced that if the true situation was revealed to the Führer, then measures would be taken. What wouldn't I give to be able to put before the Führer the overwhelming mass of material which we possess about the situation on the home front."

Berlin

15th September, 1943

Ohlendorf visited me today, once more asking me to intervene with Himmler. I expressed my astonishment that he should be so frank with me, when I was a foreigner; I had never before encountered such frankness from a person in his position. Ohlendorf answered me in his disarming way: "Why shouldn't I be frank with you? Even if you were a member of the enemy intelligence, a thing one never knows, I would be telling you nothing new. You're already well aware of the weak points in our system. You're always among the Reichsführer's people too and have been able to form your own impressions. Frankness is the best kind of discretion, and as you already know how matters stand, this is the right way of going about it."

"And what am I supposed to do for you, Herr Ohlendorf?"

"Really it's very little, but it may prove very important. Just tell the Reichsführer that you have become acquainted with me. Tell him

what you think of me that I'm a pessimist and with my work, especially from all sides. I'm qu professional duties. Bu brick wall, unable even work becomes impos convinced—I don't lik grain and I'm only ma I'm fighting."

Ohlendorf rose to gentleman in all our ta What mistakes one car Service as a vast org extension of himself, heard from the head difficulties he had wit instrument placed at h

3. HIMMLER ON

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"To be quite fran man," Himmler resp of those unbearable p Party-badge and being himself as the Galahac when things happen w master watching ove hasn't the slightest id

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do for you, Herr Ohlendorf?" may prove very important. Just tell come acquainted with me. Tell him

what you think of me and above all talk him out of that idea of his that I'm a pessimist and a defeatist. To have such a reputation interferes with my work, especially in my position, where I'm being sniped at from all sides. I'm quite prepared for him on my own ground—my professional duties. But when you're constantly coming up against a brick wall, unable even to approach the Reichsführer, then professional work becomes impossible. But only do it of course if you're really convinced—I don't like this way of doing things. It goes against the grain and I'm only making this move on behalf of the cause for which I'm fighting."

Ohlendorf rose to his feet and took his leave. He behaved like a gentleman in all our talks and gave a very good impression of himself. What mistakes one can make—for I had always regarded the Security Service as a vast organization which Himmler directed himself, an extension of himself, an invisible counsellor. Instead of that I had heard from the head of this intelligence service himself what great difficulties he had with his own chief, who refused to make use of the instrument placed at his disposal.

3. HIMMLER ON OHLENDORF

Field Headquarters

18th September, 1943

I told Himmler today that an interesting colleague of his, Brigadeführer Ohlendorf, had become a patient of mine.

"I'm glad of that," he replied. "I hope you'll be able to help him; he has trouble with his liver and gall-bladder. His reports are always gloomy; he has the pessimistic outlook which goes with physical suffering. Liver and gall troubles always have that effect on the mind."

I replied that this surely arose from the work he had to do; there was nothing wrong with his liver, nor his gall. He was simply overworked and his nervous system upset by constant worry.

"To be quite frank, my dear Herr Kersten, I don't care for the man," Himmler responded. "He has no sense of humour, he's one of those unbearable people who always know better. Having his gold Party-badge and being one of the first recruits to the SS, he regards himself as the Galahad of National Socialism and thinks that all is lost when things happen which conflict with its ideology. He's like a school-master watching over me to see that I do things properly. Yet he hasn't the slightest idea of tactics. If I were to listen to him, I would

have to take official action over every one of his reports and make bitter enemies on all sides. His pet idea is that I should let the Führer see his reports. But they're usually so pessimistic that this is quite out of the question; they would only impair the Führer's capacity for action."

"Supposing they are true?" I suggested.

"That doesn't matter," Himmler replied. "Details which are unhelpful must be kept from the Führer, however important they may appear. His task is to lead us to victory; I must keep from him anything which might interfere with this task, even if Herr Ohlendorf does not share this view. But if you'll only restore Ohlendorf to health and strengthen his nervous system, he'll soon be looking at the world through different eyes. Tell him that I consider it a very good idea of his to take treatment from you."

4. OHLENDORF ON HIMMLER

Hartzwalde

24th September, 1943

"We've made some progress, if the Reichsführer believes I've done something sensible," Ohlendorf laughed when I told him about my talk with Himmler. "More than that, the Reichsführer has perfectly expressed to you his opinion of me. I always provoke the anti-Prussian sentiments of the Bavarian in him, though he may not be aware of it and in his speeches even commends Prussian toughness and discipline, Frederick the Great and the 'Soldier King'. It's true that I'm a Prussian and it's for the Prussian sort of order that I'm striving. I'll grant that the real cause of the persistent differences between us lies, as the Reichsführer says, in the fact that I have no gift for tactics. Unless it has clearly defined institutions with definite tasks assigned them, no state can function properly. New tasks should be handed over to the appropriate body as they arise. If the right men are not in the right jobs, then the men must be moved. The Reichsführer has different ideas. He frequently entrusts new tasks as they arise, to individuals, instead of giving them to bodies which already exist for them: often several men will be given the same job. He calls that tactics. This leads to every sort of confusion and contradiction, abilities are wasted and respect for authority destroyed.

"In doing this, he's really copying the Führer, who inherits from his early struggles a preference for these personal appointments and

distrusts government to unify the state's; he's really organizing that while power sees ship, in reality it is asserts that he's the time, nor the ability control all the task divided authorities powers quite lose th

"In my reports this principle clear its devastating effect he thinks I'm improving my lack of tactical skill person with tasks within institutions, then I consider, though for point. What I'm trying

"I'm horrified created, which can only can alone provide; painful reflections against it which show when I reflect on the results of such misorganizing methods policy. You couldn't principles, let alone a state understand my work in the Reich."

I was unable to already heard from me, though I had not I realized that the Führer made him one of the. Now at least I could intelligence service schoolmaster always.

I asked Ohlendorf mine. "Yes, I'm quite Reichsführer that you

S, 1940-1945

THE SECURITY SERVICE (SD)

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Führer, who inherits from ersonal appointments and

distrusts government institutions. It should be the Reichsführer's job to unify the state's powers and so guarantee its internal order. In fact he's really organizing disorder. The logical result of this principle is that while power seems to be concentrated in an authoritative dictatorship, in reality it is dispersed over a host of people, each one of whom asserts that he's the only responsible authority. But he has neither the time, nor the ability, nor the knowledge required to supervise and control all the tasks assigned him. So numbers of independent and divided authorities come into being. The government's dictatorial powers quite lose their value.

"In my reports I'm always trying to make the consequences of this principle clear to the Reichsführer, especially to point out to him its devastating effects in war-time. When I call things by their names, he thinks I'm improperly criticizing the Führer's methods or showing my lack of tactical sense. When the Reichsführer entrusts an unsuitable person with tasks which would be much better performed by existing institutions, then it's not the immediate tactical situation which I consider, though from such an angle this solution might have some point. What I'm trying to do is to foresee its future consequences.

"I'm horrified when I reflect that one more new post has been created, which can only be an obstacle to the efficiency which specialists can alone provide; it prevents any effective leadership; it gives rise to painful reflections and questionings, moreover, and arouses forces against it which should really be helping, not hindering it. I'm horrified when I reflect on the time that has to be devoted to correcting the results of such mistaken decisions. I'm quite unable to regard such organizing methods from the standpoint of the Reichsführer's personal policy. You couldn't run a real business on the Reichsführer's principles, let alone a state. You own an estate, Herr Kersten. You would understand my worries if you were to run it on the same lines as we run the Reich."

I was unable to say much by way of answer to all that. I had already heard from other sources the things that Ohlendorf had told me, though I had never seen them in quite such a vivid light. Nor had I realized that the portrayal of this disorganization in his reports had made him one of the sharpest critics of the government's inefficiency. Now at least I could understand the universal outcry against such an intelligence service and realize why Himmler regarded him as a schoolmaster always at his elbow.

I asked Ohlendorf whether he still wanted to become a patient of mine. "Yes, I'm quite decided on that," he replied. "But tell the Reichsführer that your treatment is having its effect, my nerves are

improving and my pessimism vanishing. Then perhaps he will take my reports more seriously."

After that we had supper together. Ohlendorf drank a great deal of coffee. My enjoyment of our conversation was disturbed by the fact that he used the phrase 'Isn't that so?' at least once in every sentence. It got on my nerves and I began to count the times he used it. I counted seventy-three in the course of half an hour. He also made very frequent use of the phrase 'I must explain that to you'.

Hartswalde

14th June, 1944

While I was waiting for Himmler yesterday, I met Ohlendorf once again. He came across to me at once, greeting me with a smile. He looked very unwell. I asked whether he was worried and on what sort of terms he was with Himmler. He told me that so far he had been able to wangle things, but at the moment he was faced with another critical situation. Ley had already forbidden officials of the German Workers' Front to co-operate with the Security Service. That had not been too much of a blow, as he had been expecting it, but now Bormann had turned against him. Bormann had threatened once before to checkmate him by telling the Führer how pessimistic his reports were. Now Bormann had forbidden all Party officials, together with all those they appointed, to co-operate with the Security Service. That was a severe blow. Apart from the fact that it meant losing important sources of information, he was now in open conflict with Bormann and had constantly to expect further attacks against himself. He stood in great need of support from Himmler.

I enquired whether his reports were still not allowed to circulate. "You can judge of that," he replied, "from the fact that Bormann prevents any report from reaching the Führer, and you already know what Himmler's attitude is. Since so many have been forbidden to co-operate, I have had to cut down my weekly reports on the situation to some extent, while I find out what in fact the situation really is. I still manage to get some information from various sources and my own position as deputy Secretary of State in the Ministry of Commerce is very helpful. But now my hands are more or less tied and there is not much that I can do."

I could not help smiling when I reflected that this intelligence service was being thwarted and prohibited in Germany, though the country was engaged in a struggle for its very existence. Yet this service was giving the facts about the war's effects and offering the

Leaders a true account of every means was being taken by the men at the top. I ask give up in face of such a

He told me that he had a conscience. He was doing into Himmler's waste-paper to make the Reichsführer might develop in such a person who was best informed for that.

I next enquired why, the Führer with his reports seriousness: "I have my department's reports go on. I am appointed is responsible for have always stood for discipline and behave in a

It is the truth that Ohlendorf man to act on his own initiative

5. THE CREATION OF

As a sequel to my talk with colleagues how it was that they were working with the Security Service;

He informed me that he had been in the Security Service in 1933. He expounded his ideas on biological grounds, two types of Europe. First of all there was the British Secret Service. Even the Secret Service, regarding it as a special obligation. British police

Then perhaps he will take my

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Hartzwalde

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Leaders a true account of the reaction to their own measures; but every means was being used to prevent these reports from reaching the men at the top. I asked Ohlendorf whether he wouldn't prefer to give up in face of such a hopeless position.

He told me that he was not able to reconcile that with his own conscience. He was doing his duty. Even if most of his work went into Himmler's waste-paper basket, perhaps enough would penetrate to make the Reichsführer reflect. He hoped too that the situation might develop in such a way that people would turn to him as the person who was best informed, and he had to hold himself in readiness for that.

I next enquired why, with his conviction, he did not go direct to the Führer with his reports in person. He answered me with great seriousness: "I have my place in the hierarchy. That means that my department's reports go to the man above me; the person properly appointed is responsible for their reaching the Führer. How can I, who have always stood for discipline and against arbitrary behaviour, break discipline and behave in an arbitrary way myself?"

It is the truth that Ohlendorf is a Prussian, and certainly not the man to act on his own initiative.

5. THE CREATION OF THE SECURITY SERVICE

Gut Hartzwalde

18th June, 1944

As a sequel to my talks with Ohlendorf I asked one of his closest colleagues how it was that so many men in good positions co-operated with the Security Service; for so I had been told.

He informed me that Heydrich had laid the foundations of the Security Service in 1933. Heydrich had a special gift for persuading outstanding personalities to help with his intelligence service. He had expounded his ideas on building up an intelligence service to some ten or twenty men of this type. What he argued was that, apart from the Bolshevik intelligence system, which had to be rejected on ideological grounds, two types of intelligence service were possible in Europe. First of all there was the French system, named after Fouché, which made use of police spies and paid agents. Then there was the British Secret Service. Every decent Englishman is ready to aid the Secret Service, regarding it as his obvious duty, without requiring any special obligation. British power was really based on the Secret Service,

n told me how enthusiastically in Esthonia. Every Esthonian them as liberators. This lasted der ship forcibly changed the turning friends into enemies. it was possible."

nothing to say in the matter. loner for the Eastern Territories which is more foolish than the it all comes back on to me and ority there, the Leader of the ermands all my orders and gets often feel that these people are ighish and the Americans. I'm ne I think of Esthonia. The gnity and honour, and they're d have made them the best of ith humanity and intelligence. onia for a year, I submitted to l worked out in which I under- d policy in Esthonia. My pro-

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one harsher than the last. The
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carries them a stage further; the next day they're made still harsher and the day after that they're revoked. The SS and police chief in Reval enacts quite arbitrary measures which, if I complain enough about them, are revoked by the Reich Commissioner. A fortnight later Himmler will promulgate them in a still harsher form. The Esthonians are saying now: 'The Germans are just as bad as the Russians.' "

Hochwald
11th September, 1944

Himmler is feeling better again today and he gave me a lecture on wealth and morals. Wealth was the greatest of evils; comfort made men lazy, covetous and cowardly. It was not the homes of the rich, but those of the poor, which fostered the spirit of heroism. That was why he was glad to have been born poor and to have no great possessions. He had only one ambition: to die poor. History should never say of him that he had enriched himself with this world's goods. It was the most disgraceful thing to use one's position to enrich oneself. "I admire the way they dealt with thieves in the Middle Ages—by cutting their hands off."

I answered, laughing: "A good many men would lose their hands nowadays."

"Why not?" said Himmler. "After the war I'm going to do all I can to restore German standards of honour. I grant you that morals have declined as a result of the war, but that's the same everywhere."

Then I brought it to Himmler's notice that Litzmann had been waiting for days to be received by him.

"That's true," said Himmler; "I'll receive him at once. Things are very bad in Esthonia; the Russians are driving hard for Reval."

Litzmann was received by Himmler at eleven o'clock. He parted from me with these words: "The Reichsführer is placing a special aircraft at my disposal and I'm flying to Reval immediately. The Russians are outside the town. Himmler has given me orders to mobilize everybody available, men, women and children, to keep the Russians off until the German relieving forces arrive. I can rest assured that the Führer will not abandon Esthonia to its fate. The Reichsführer has also made me a present of an automatic, the latest design—it takes a thousand rounds. I'm afraid I'll arrive too late. Good luck! Perhaps we'll meet again. Of course I'll go to the front and fight in the ranks. The Esthonians will never be able to say that a Litzmann was a coward."

Litzmann flew from the Rastenburg airfield at a quarter to three.

Himmler's co-operation over such
look after all those whose release
effort to intervene with Himmler

half of the French interned in
when I wrote to Himmler as

27th September, 1944

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sations we had recently about
f you to speak with such venom
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ours. Finland had reached the
ike peace; she could not go on
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fought with a heroism which
dy superior forces. But three
t go on fighting against two

hundred million Russians. As a reasonable human being you must
realize that. In my opinion my Finnish homeland did the right
thing. And I am quite convinced that she will come to an under-
standing with the Russians.

There are between two and three hundred Finns living in
Germany, professional men. I beg of you to protect them and see
that they are properly treated.

I will be back in Germany in November to give you treatment.
I very much hope that you will grant my request for the release of
the French, Belgians and Dutch.

Yours respectfully,
Felix Kersten.

Triberg, in the Black Forest
8th December, 1944

The last few days have been very exciting and strenuous ones for
me. Himmler is constantly saying that he is in great difficulties with
Hitler and that Bormann is preparing to stab him in the back. It is
treason to the Führer to release men just now. These people in con-
centration camps, on whose behalf I—Kersten—would intervene,
were criminals and enemies of the state, people with whom he had
nothing in common. In recent years he had unfortunately released far
too many men from concentration camps at my request; I ought not
to bother him any more now. Quite apart from that, he had so little
time at his disposal, for he had to concentrate on final victory and the
use of the latest weapons which would astonish the world. Secret
weapons would spell victory for National Socialist Germany.

Himmler told me to return to him in another hour. In the restaurant
car I encountered Berger, who was foaming with rage because Himmler
had passed to him Hitler's orders to have English and American officers
shot. Berger said that he refused to do that under any circumstances,
even if it meant the sacrifice of his own life: he would rather shoot
himself than prisoners of war. Hitler ought to do the shooting himself,
if he had the courage.

Gut Hartzwalde
8th December, 1944

The German offensive against the West is going successfully.
Himmler explained the situation to me: "Our offensive has been
worked out in detail by the Führer in person. We have only to maintain
this rate of advance and by the 26th of January we'll have reached the

could not see that England the National Socialist Reich. Himmler is convinced that a of these days, and when he with the idea of forcing this andly trying to find out the those who serve him in no

10th December, 1944

reatment that it was now i brothers had to be fought id triumphed; England had the general revolt against ould Europe be today if reakwater against the East? years' time just like that of immed the hordes from the

England's traditional policy. not judge the facts of the r ahead and for the moment ither we were also wrong is the aim of English policy on the Continent, England ith America, she is on the l every day that passes must ry day English Continental is the natural partner in its

was trying to do; he was e Continent with his old l Germany. I replied that, rinciple, fighting was still e in a moment. The other g to say.

cularly by way of neutral ome to the English how of this kind. He would very important matter of ion in England that such

a suggestion should emanate from him, who represented with his SS the factor which contributed most to order in Europe. It was generally known that his SS could not only fight, but obey. Nor would there be any psychological obstacles in the way of such a change.

Himmler looked at me, expecting an answer. It was obvious to me that he was still swayed by ideology and was quite unaware that his reputation abroad was not that of a factor making for order, but rather that of a hangman, a murderer on a vast scale and above all else the man responsible for the abominable campaign against the Jews. No government would dare to treat with him, even if it wanted to. I hesitated a moment before telling him the brutal truth, then let him have it, holding nothing back.

It was with something more than astonishment that I heard Himmler assert that these 'calumnies' spread about by enemy propaganda would have to be rectified. "The West has accepted a man like Stalin as an ally, and worse things could be said against him." Himmler put an end to the conversation, because he did not like to hear things which would not fit in with his theory, one which has been almost an obsession with him recently—understandably, in view of the increasingly desperate situation.

* * * * *

This was the last time I talked to Himmler about England. He never gave up his attempts to get England to listen to him. It quite accorded with his attitude that later, when faced with the Dönitz government and the German collapse, he continued to regard himself as the one man whom the West would recognize as a factor making for order—and therefore the proper man with whom to negotiate.

accompanied by Himmler, I also enlighten me on these matters. I give Berger treatment, which he had an excellent constitution. I am severely wounded in the forehead more of a prophylactic treatment with him. I came to see more clearly, because he needed me but not on humanitarian questions but on justice.

I have a head which rather recalled with the features Germanized, bearing and movements, very serious. As he came from Suabia as 'the Duke of Suabia'. From insight both into the European situation for Europe under Nationalism and of Berger's remarks in my

THE SELECTION OF

*Field Headquarters
2nd August, 1941*

about the heroic struggle that held its position for sixteen days it smashed thirteen Russian divisions or three Soviet armies to

it has played the essential part in the Russians caught in the details of the action? I have the Group [platoon] which the men in dispatches. By throwing a semi-circle of enemy dead in front of his hand on the pin of his belt, his runner and his driver. The first section-leader still still had his hand on the case

which contained the last dispatch. That's how they were when they were found."

Himmler was silent a few moments, then went on: "That's the way my Waffen SS fights. Here you see the effect of a knowledge of what we are fighting for joined to the finest military tradition. The Commander of the Wehrmacht and the soldiers of the army, who have fought side by side with these units, speak with the greatest respect of the heroism which these men display. Those are the sort of men who will provide the *elite* that we need. Even in peace-time we must so arrange matters that bravery and courage of this kind guide us in the selection of men."

Himmler told me in the course of the treatment that he had decided that in peace-time any man who wanted to become an SS officer would be obliged to make a parachute jump. "Otherwise the reputation that these young men have won for us by shedding their blood and the fine uniform that we wear in peace-time will bring into the ranks of the SS young men about town and intellectuals who will only join because it helps them in their career." The heat of battle showed who were the right men for the SS. Special methods of selection would have to be adopted in peace-time. One way would be to make any man who wanted to become an SS officer prove his practical abilities for at least a year before he was appointed, and that in some really strenuous and dangerous calling, such as a mountaineer's or a sailor's. Future SS officers would only acquire the right attitude to the men under them and their own self-respect by working among other workers. Then there would never again be N.C.O.s and officers of the old sort.

17th August, 1941

Himmler told me yesterday that officers in the SS had to take a special oath to ensure that SS principles would govern the choice of future recruits, and to avoid any kind of corruption. They had to swear not to favour their own sons, nor those of friends or relatives; they had to be incorruptible, uninfluenced by ties of blood or friendship. Only character, achievement and the decisions of the racial examiner should guide the choice of recruits.

I replied that his officers were only men and could not escape from their own limitations. Since he so emphasized the importance that the closest ties of blood and kinship had in other fields, he could hardly view the introduction of a man's own family connections with such abhorrence here.

"Families sacrifice their sons and relatives for the good of the

Reich," Himmler answered, "so they can make this much smaller sacrifice for the good of the SS, which will one day have to shoulder the Reich's burdens. I'm referring here to the toughness within a man and to the categorical imperative of duty. In times of war selection is relatively easy. Merits are obvious now; the Iron Cross and other decorations guide one's decision. Only in times of peace will selection be a matter of conscience. Then it will depend on the moral character of the man responsible for choosing, and he must decide on grounds of race, achievement and character, and must be free of all other considerations."

18th September, 1941

"The leadership of the SS," Himmler declared, "must be subject to very careful selection; its basis is unwavering courage; there can be no more cowards. With this as a basis, we can proceed to the second principle governing our choice—training in knowledge and ability. The first quality, courage, must be equally great in all the men; the second is an individual matter, but one that must be developed to the maximum."

29th October, 1941

Today Himmler discussed the significance of poverty and said this: "My ideal for all members of the SS is the poverty proper to dedicated men. The SS will give them security, for it must be rich enough to give them house and home and to provide for their old age. Every member of the SS, besides carrying out his duty, should be able to follow his own inclinations in the way of sport, scholarship and art. Senseless private wealth and capitalistic activities are unworthy of an SS man. Wealth of knowledge is the best thing, that and real ability—with plenty of children, a few acres of ground and some trees. To die poor is the ideal I have set before myself. I regard the SS as a tree which I have planted, which has roots deep enough to defy all weathers."

I expressed a hope to Himmler that he would succeed in bringing his ideal of 'dedicated poverty' to the notice of certain high officials in the Party, who clearly showed no signs of sharing it.

14th November, 1941

I was talking a few days ago with a high Leader in the SS who told me that he had been an officer in the First World War, had joined

the SS in 1933 and had then his reasons. He told me that had invited a number of serf men of property and industry these lines:

Every state required a constructive political force: only come about if its merit of the present day the good outlook, bearing and breeding ability and creative efficiency of German scholarship, on a time these qualities had not had tended to become a nation; the scholar quickly restrained and monopolistic industrialist, while the society what the degenerate form of

In their struggle against it was easy to understand how Socialist press came to emphasize, they had strongly a 'high-brow' form. Such attitudes would die down in time. His values which all these types of the channel of the SS while the

It was a matter of linking with tradition and effecting had survived from the past and future. Then the SS would be all the better adapted to fulfill

This explanation made a understood before. I am going and will learn more from him

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13, 1940-1945

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14th November, 1941

High Leader in the SS who told: First World War, had joined

the SS in 1933 and had then transferred to the Waffen SS. I asked him his reasons. He told me that after the Nazis had seized power, Himmler had invited a number of senior officers from the World War, scholars, men of property and industrialists to Munich and addressed them on these lines:

Every state required an *élite*. The SS was to provide the *élite*, the constructive political force in the National Socialist state. That could only come about if its members brought to the social requirements of the present day the genuine military tradition, the distinctive outlook, bearing and breeding of the German nobility, the knowledge, ability and creative efficiency of the industrialists and the profundity of German scholarship, on a basis of racial selection. In the course of time these qualities had manifested certain weaknesses. The soldier had tended to become a mere automaton without opinions of his own; the scholar quickly degenerated into the intellectual; an unrestrained and monopolistic capitalism was the caricature of the industrialist, while the society papers gave a clear enough picture of what the degenerate form of the nobility was like.

In their struggle against the former order and its representatives, it was easy to understand how speakers and writers in the National Socialist press came to emphasize only the negative side; thus, for instance, they had strongly attacked the intellect in its degenerate and 'high-brow' form. Such attacks still continued at present, but they would die down in time. His own idea was to make use of the positive values which all these types of men embodied and to direct them into the channel of the SS while this was still in its formative period.

It was a matter of linking up the National Socialist revolution with tradition and effecting the union of everything genuine which had survived from the past and shown itself capable of confronting the future. Then the SS would have a properly established basis and be all the better adapted to fulfilling its tasks.

This explanation made a great deal clear to me that I had never understood before. I am going to meet my informant again this evening and will learn more from him.

15th November, 1941

As a sequel to our last talk I heard this yesterday:

Himmler's address evoked general astonishment, for it had been assumed that Himmler had called this circle together in order to explain to them all the wrongs of which they had been guilty in the past.

Himmler had further declared that this union of the various



traditions required a long and organic process. This process could be shortened if the representatives of the different groups assembled there would place themselves at his disposal. The officer class and the nobility should contribute the finest elements of their tradition, industrialists their knowledge and experience, in particular of affairs in other countries; scholars should place at his disposal, in practical outline and pregnant formulas, the products of their knowledge. Everybody should bring something to the formation of the Reich's new *elite*; every person could find an opportunity to apply his knowledge and abilities. The formation of a responsible *elite* as a basis for the state was the best way of preventing the abuses which had accompanied the French Revolution from manifesting themselves in their own revolution.

The psychology of Himmler's address was very skilful. In talking to members of this class, Goebbels in particular constantly adopted a bullying attitude; instead of that, Himmler had accorded them full recognition and dwelt on the significance of their previous achievements. At the same time the invitation to take part in forming this *elite* was regarded as an honour. Under the influence of this speech the majority of those present had decided to join the SS and their example had been followed by more representatives from these same classes, especially as membership of the Party was not a prerequisite of entry into the SS.

The man who told me this had himself joined the ordinary SS and since he had previously been an officer he had soon become an SS Obersturmbannführer. In consequence of Himmler's attitude the SS secured a considerable number of men who helped, advised or trained, playing a part, either directly or indirectly, in the formation of this *elite*. They felt that co-operation offered the best means of counteracting the chaotic forces within the Party; and their black uniform seemed to them a sure protection against pressure from the Party. A number transferred to the Security and Intelligence Services. My man had preferred a purely military rôle. When the creation of combat formations of SS troops began, he had decided to join them.

2. SERVICE UNDER HIMMLER

Himmler was strict with his SS men, but always considerate, at least indirectly, for he wished each of them to share in the responsibility for the SS principles which he proclaimed. He was very polite,

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friendly and likable in he made great demands he had taught himself worries and needs, he flowers when their wishes.

When a young ar he privately gave ord mother in a Würtemb that the woman was son.

When he visited staff officers were as first question was wh was told that a large allowed to have their he declared that this whether these wives w look back with deep spend together. He p with the Ministry of by their wives.

3. THE WEHRMACHT

I asked Himmler dependent army. He SS formations were re Wehrmacht as a whole. which in turn had dev Adolf Hitler's bodygu was, these young troop everything to raise the and equipment.

I asked why it was the Wehrmacht. Here reply to this:

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MLER

SS men, but always considerate, at ch of them to share in the responsi- he proclaimed. He was very polite,

friendly and likable in his behaviour towards his SS Leaders, on whom he made great demands. This seemed to be his natural manner, not one he had taught himself. He constantly took great trouble over their worries and needs, helped them when they were in difficulties, sent flowers when their wives had a child, writing personally to express his good wishes.

When a young and highly decorated SS Leader reported to him, he privately gave orders for a call to be put through to the man's old mother in a Württemberg village. He beamed when the orderly reported that the woman was on the 'phone and handed the instrument to her son.

When he visited the Hirschberg military academy, where young staff officers were assembled for two years' advanced training, his first question was whether these officers were all married. When he was told that a large proportion of them were married, but were not allowed to have their wives with them owing to service regulations, he declared that this ban should at once be lifted. Who could know whether these wives would ever see their husbands again? They would look back with deep emotion on the two years they had been able to spend together. He promised to raise the matter of accommodation with the Ministry of the Interior. Soon the young officers were joined by their wives.

3. THE WEHRMACHT AND THE WAFFEN SS

*Friedenau, Berlin
28th June, 1940*

I asked Himmler whether the Waffen SS was to become an independent army. He said that this was not intended and that the SS formations were relatively small in numbers compared with the Wehrmacht as a whole. They had developed out of the first SS troops, which in turn had developed from a few hundred men who formed Adolf Hitler's bodyguard. Considering how recent this development was, these young troops already had a great reputation. He would do everything to raise their status and provide them with the best arms and equipment.

I asked why it was necessary to have special SS troops apart from the Wehrmacht. Here follows a summary of Himmler's remarks in reply to this:

"Every revolution tries to control the army and infuse the men



with its own spirit. Only when that has been achieved is a revolution finally triumphant. The French Revolution made a success of this, to which it owed the rapidity with which it spread and the power which brought it victory. The Weimar Republic failed in this, never solving the problem of the army. One anguished question hung over every decision it made: 'What is the Reichswehr going to do?' There are two ways of forming a Wehrmacht which would meet the demands of National Socialism. The Führer could have scrapped the old officer corps entirely; for it's the officers who create morale. It would have been possible to rebuild a Wehrmacht in which the officers were reliable National Socialists, men who not only had technical ability but were also entirely acceptable in their general attitude and bearing. That would have been the proper way, the organic one, but it would have taken far too long. The Führer could not endanger the Reich's security by renouncing the older officers' experience and technical ability. Yet he took into account the fact that these men were largely out of sympathy with National Socialism. This was why he recruited troops for special duties and then in the Waffen SS created an armed force to embody the views which National Socialism had to introduce into the Wehrmacht.

"The Waffen SS is the protagonist of the National Socialist revolution in the military field. To our basic requirements it adds the old military tradition and a high degree of military efficiency. These men know what they are fighting for—the Waffen SS is not simply a mindless force obeying orders. Merit is the only way to promotion in it. Comradeship and the recognition of merit rather than social status govern relations between officers and men. These dedicated comrades-in-arms have quite a different attitude to life, and to fighting, from the old army's. That is already apparent and this attitude is constantly being reinforced. I shall take great pains to turn Waffen SS officers into men with firm convictions and views. Then we will have the cadres we need for a new-model army."

This all seemed to me very confused and wholly ideological. So I asked Himmler what he imagined would be the effect of the Waffen SS on the Wehrmacht; would Waffen SS officers be posted to the Wehrmacht and given important commands, in order to influence the Wehrmacht's morale? How otherwise would the two branches of the army grow together?

"At the moment there can be no question of organic growth between them," Himmler replied. "The Waffen SS must first develop according to its own laws. The Polish and French campaigns have already earned it a great reputation. This is very significant, for an

army's respect is not gained success in the field—the fights. The reformer has come down to the last detail; or

"In future the Wehr side, shoulder to shoulder tation already achieved b Wherever the Waffen SS the question of why victo will soon be ready to acc men who know what they that the conviction in the strength, giving them a capable of these great de young German to serve i very great honour to be in the 'Leibstandarte'. T principles and mutual org mistake to foster this atti

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4. THE GESTAPO AND

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army's respect is not gained by lectures on an attitude to life, only by success in the field—the same field on which the Wehrmacht also fights. The reformer has to be efficient and master the existing system down to the last detail; otherwise he loses any right to demand reform.

"In future the Wehrmacht and the Waffen SS will fight side by side, shoulder to shoulder. The whole Waffen SS must win the reputation already achieved by the 'Leibstandarte' and 'Reich' divisions. Wherever the Waffen SS appears, success will attend our arms. Then the question of why victory follows its flag will naturally arise. People will soon be ready to accept the answer: 'Because these are dedicated men who know what they are fighting for, who show by their example that the conviction in the justice of their cause doubles their fighting strength, giving them a force that nothing can resist, making them capable of these great deeds.' It will become the desire of every true young German to serve in this corps *d'elite*; it will be regarded as a very great honour to be a Waffen SS officer, as is already the case in the 'Leibstandarte'. Then the Wehrmacht will adopt Waffen SS principles and mutual organic development will follow. It would be a mistake to foster this artificially."

"I thought we stood on the threshold of peace," I said. "But despite this you are busy creating first- and second-class troops, splitting and weakening the unity and spirit of the armed forces as a whole. That is shown by the reproaches of responsible Wehrmacht officers, that your Waffen SS is robbing the army of thousands and thousands of the best N.C.O.s."

"I'm well aware of that," Himmler replied, "but we've got to take the men we need from somewhere."

4. THE GESTAPO AND THE WAFEN SS

Shitomir

9th August, 1942

I saw yesterday a member of the Gestapo whom I had met previously at Field Headquarters when he was reporting to Himmler; this time he was wearing the uniform of an Untersturmführer in the Waffen SS. I asked Himmler whether he was now planning to incorporate the Gestapo in the Waffen SS.

"How could you have such an idea?" Himmler replied. "The Waffen SS has absolutely no connection with the Gestapo; their work is quite distinct. The Gestapo is fighting against the enemy at home;

the Waffen SS is directed against the enemy beyond the frontier. The Gestapo is the national charwoman who does the dirty work which must be done. But it's only natural that Gestapo officials should do their military service in the Waffen SS. They only serve their time in the Waffen SS. They do their military service there instead of in the Wehrmacht.

"I attach the greatest importance to the complete separation of these two branches. It's entirely forbidden for members of the Gestapo to tell their comrades, when they are serving in the Waffen SS, about the tasks they have to perform, which are often unpleasant. This is also forbidden by the terms of their oath and by the Führer's orders that each man may only be told what is absolutely necessary for his work. I don't want to burden men and officers of the Waffen SS with matters which they are unable to judge or understand. On the other hand it's a relief for men in the Gestapo to breathe the fresh air of the Waffen SS and to feel that it's a job worth doing to protect the rear of their fighting comrades."

In that case, I replied, I was unable to grasp why he had concentration camps guarded by men of the Waffen SS.

"That never happens," Himmler replied. "Concentration camp guards have nothing to do with the Waffen SS. They are a quite separate formation; they wear SS uniform but they have distinctive badges. These young men have only been taken into the Waffen SS because they have to belong to some establishment."

I drew Himmler's attention to the fact that my friends generally assumed that the Waffen SS, the Gestapo and the concentration camp guards were one and the same, and that it was very difficult to tell the difference.

He replied that I should get the details from Pohl; he would tell him when he saw him in a few days' time. He added that he had the further intention of uniting the police, the security service, the administration and the SS into a single corps for the defence of the realm, but that this could only take place after the war; and even then he was by no means certain that he would include the Waffen SS. It depended on future relations between the Waffen SS and the Wehrmacht.

I told Himmler that this odd mixture was bound to be destructive in its effects, instead of constructive, and was really a caricature of the arrangements usually adopted in these matters. As a Finnish Army officer I had realized that a simple system of organization was the best, instead of this complicated system which could only end by confusing every man's identity.

A few days ago had told me. I also guards came from Reich, who had joined active service. Pohl gained from sharing. They were all of a Himmler's attention of money and trou a recognized position put them beyond the (Sicherheitsdienst), their men had a Wa

I told Pohl that security with this p reproach him bitterly

5. THE EUROPE EUROPE

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There was the 'Vi countries), the 'Neth and Danes from the Then came the 'Flar divisions. Charles, 'd —how times change— An SS division of honour. The Volksde alone twelve per cent the SS divisions and a Eastern European p

Shitomir

22nd August, 1942

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A few days ago I spoke to Pohl, who confirmed what Himmler had told me. I also learnt that the majority of concentration camp guards came from Volksdeutschen and volunteers from outside the Reich, who had joined the Waffen SS, but been rejected as unfit for active service. Pohl told me of the advantages which these guards gained from sharing a common establishment with the Waffen SS. They were all of an economic nature. It had fallen to him to draw Himmler's attention to the possibilities of this. It saved a great deal of money and trouble, satisfied the men themselves and gave them a recognized position when confronted with the authorities. It also put them beyond the reach of the Wehrmacht. The Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst) was now adopting this system. The majority of their men had a Waffen SS pay-book.

I told Pohl that he was arousing opposition, confusion and insecurity with this procedure and that one day the Waffen SS would reproach him bitterly for it.

5. THE EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER FORMATIONS AND EUROPE

The European volunteer SS formations played a significant part inside the Waffen SS according to Himmler's way of thinking. He saw in them the protagonists of a Greater Germanic Reich directed against the East, to become, when the war was over, Europe's defence against the hordes of Asia. The names of these formations, regiments and divisions were chosen to emphasize the tradition of which they had to be made aware.

There was the 'Viking' division (volunteers from all the Germanic countries), the 'Netherland' (Dutch), 'Northland' (chiefly Norwegians and Danes from the 'Norway' and 'Denmark' corps of volunteers). Then came the 'Flanders' and 'Wallonia' (Flemings and Walloons) divisions. Charles, 'the Slayer of the Saxons', had to alter his name—how times change—to Charlemagne as a symbol of European unity. An SS division of Frenchmen was named 'Charlemagne' in his honour. The Volksdeutschen of south-eastern Europe (in Transylvania alone twelve per cent of the population were recruited) fought in all the SS divisions and also composed the 'Prince Eugene' division. The Eastern European peoples provided an Esthonian division, two

Communists thus becomes for
different from the West Euro-
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Triberg

6th December, 1944

of the SS volunteer brigade
Cherkassy pocket, under their
ights' Cross; they were return-
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he local population gave the
1. In these pictures you can see
children. And why are they
ey regard these men as *their*
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o. They were overwhelmed by
ith Belgian, Dutch and French
is forgotten, for we have given
nst Bolshevism. We hold out a
him a place among our picked
entrusted with commands, our
ten SS volunteer divisions you

can hear French and Norwegian and other words of command. Not
one of my men would take it amiss to fight beneath the white banner of
the 'Wallonia' brigade with its device '*Dur et pur*' (firm and true).
These are no Foreign Legions, but European divisions in which we
are proud to see our own sons serve. Have you considered what it
means that we Germans let our own sons serve under the enemy we
recently conquered? This is a sure pledge of European unity."

"You're placing on this," I replied, "an interpretation which it
simply will not bear. If these men are really received with rejoicings on
their return home, it's because they are fighting against Bolshevism,
not because they're fighting for your Greater Germanic Reich."

6. A THIRTY YEARS' WAR AGAINST RUSSIA

Hochwald

18th December, 1942

When I came upon Himmler today, he was pacing up and down,
very upset, apparently overwhelmed by some great event. I waited
patiently. At last he said that the Führer had spoken to him very
seriously and assured him that the war against Russia would not be
over in a year or two; it would last at least ten years, possibly thirty.

Hitler had declared: "Behind Russia stand the numberless hordes
of Asia. Russia is training and arming them, to send wave after wave of
them against Europe and conquer the whole vast area between the
Atlantic and the Pacific. Germany is only the advance guard of the
West in the struggle against Bolshevism. America and England will
have to take part in this struggle, if they do not want to be destroyed
themselves. I have put the whole resources of the German people into
armaments. The whole weight of them and all our man-power has
been staked in the war against Russia. If German equipment is
exhausted, then America and England will have to replace it, for the
German people cannot produce another supply. America and England
have not yet grasped this, but the time is coming when they will."

Himmler told me that he had asked Hitler why he let it be generally
announced that the war would soon be over. Hitler had replied that if
the Russians had allowed us to wait another ten years before making
war, then he would have dared to talk openly about a long war,
because the German people would have been so much stronger by
then. But at the moment their nerves were not strong enough to
endure such news. So he had to behave like a doctor who keeps on

φ

telling his patient that he will soon be better, though he knows that it will take time to save the man if he is to avoid a nervous collapse. It was hard, but there it was. And the Waffen SS were the spearhead in the fight.

7. CRITICISM OF CORRUPTION AND MEGALOMANIA

Hartzwalde
1st July, 1944

I drew Berger's attention today to the situation at home, which was constantly getting worse, to the gradual changes and signs of corruption, to the behaviour of Koch, Reich Commissioner for the Ukraine; the way he and others were trying to carve out a little kingdom for themselves must surely cause much heart-searching among the European volunteers. I also enquired whether Himmler was not going to do anything about it.

"Do you really think that I would be the man to make the mistake that was made in the First World War," said Berger with emphasis, "when thrones were provided for every other German princeling? Our young men in the Waffen SS, let alone the European volunteers, have not shed their blood for the sake of the Gauleiters of Flanders, Wallonia, Holland, nor of any other territories in the West or the North or the East. We are not covering up any misdeeds or corruption, not even in high places, nor some which pass under the name of police regulations. Wait until the Waffen SS comes home again after the war, then things will begin to hum. I brought this to the Führer's notice and he did not turn it down. Until then unfortunately we have to leave things as they are."

"It's a pity that this too must remain only a theory," I said. "But I'll speak my thoughts out loud: why aren't you the Reichsführer SS?"

"I did not hear you say that," Berger replied, becoming very military.

8. DECLINE OF THE WAFFEN SS

Hartzwalde
19th March, 1945

Himmler was very gloomy today, discussing the losses suffered by the Waffen SS. Considerably over a quarter of a million dead and

100,000 severely made such sacrifice this figure included "Their sacrifices of the 6,000 Danes; 15,000 Walloons; every third man among the men from and the Galicians. 1 more flows. Where is shed.

"I'm horrified Europe refuse to a fearful assault that us in our rear and refusing to see that

I pointed out to no longer be in doubt throw in our new moment, everything us, then in this collision the last man, as these men do in a way

Impressed by the Reichsführer SS chief of the Waffen the last king of the

...though he knows that it
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AND MEGALOMANIA

Hartzwalde

1st July, 1944

...the situation at home, which
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...Reich Commissioner for the
...trying to carve out a little
...much heart-searching among
...whether Himmler was not

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...said Berger with emphasis,
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SS

Hartzwalde

19th March, 1945

...scussing the losses suffered by
...quarter of a million dead and

100,000 severely wounded, an unheard-of percentage; no army has made such sacrifices in the whole history of war. I asked whether this figure included the European volunteers. Himmler replied: "Their sacrifices are equally great. A similar proportion have fallen of the 6,000 Danes, 10,000 Norwegians, 75,000 Dutch, 25,000 Flemings, 15,000 Walloons, 22,000 French and the dauntless Mohammedans; every third man among them is dead. And the figure is relatively high for the men from the Baltic provinces, the Ukrainians, the Cossacks and the Galicians. Blood has certainly not been spared—and every day more flows. Wherever fighting rages, the best blood of the Waffen SS is shed.

"I'm horrified when I think of still more dead. Does the rest of Europe refuse to recognize that we are saving them from the most fearful assault that Asia has ever made? But the Western powers attack us in our rear and dispatch their weapons to Asia to be used against us, refusing to see that they are also being used against them."

I pointed out to Himmler that the outcome of the struggle could no longer be in doubt. "Don't say that," he replied. "We still have to throw in our new weapons. Although the outlook is dark at the moment, everything may yet turn out well. But if another fate awaits us, then in this collapse of an entire world the Waffen SS will fight to the last man, as the Ostrogoths fought at Vesuvius. For what should these men do in a world abandoned to despair?"

Impressed by this fearful and shattering event, I pointed out to the Reichsführer SS what his own final rôle would be: "I take it that as chief of the Waffen SS you will fall at the head of your men, as Tēias, the last king of the Ostrogoths, fell in the battle you mentioned."

the Waffen SS had triumphed. The English were planning something, six days before the English information about it. So I was able to position round Arnhem and give us we were more wily than they

said that if he had not got wind certainly have been a severe setback no German troops stationed

practically denuded of troops. all their own way. But, you see, who have a feeling for Greater Dutch staff and he warned us. I wish officer for this." possible to get a warning through

Himmler answered, laughing. "I

Hartzwalde
8th March, 1945

order of Hitler's this morning, out of withdrawal from Holland, mistress of Clingendael, the city of dings and the Zuyder Zee dam. as I was. I said at once: "That whether I would succeed in pre- o give the order to Himmler in

tate during the treatment and I round to Holland; perhaps I will only discussion today concerned camps with white flags on the way on this.

Hartzwalde
10th March, 1945

today and enquired whether the ended, in the event of an Allied

advance on the town. Himmler at once answered sharply: "Defended? No. I have orders to blow the town up." Himmler answered my protest that the town's civil population were all there by saying: "The Führer has given me the order to destroy The Hague and I have got to do it. The Dutch have betrayed the Germanic mission for which our best men have given their lives. There can be no pity for these low-down Dutchmen. We have enough V2s to do it."

I told Himmler, in reply to this, that we had no common ground for discussion. I regarded The Hague as my second home. Quite apart from that, its destruction would be an immense blow to the whole civilized world. He could never answer to history for it. At a moment when the war was obviously lost, it was an act of complete madness which could only have issued from an unbalanced mind. He should consider whether he was to go down to history as the man who had carried out such an order without a moment's reflection. My words did not fail to have effect. But Himmler came to no decision.

Hartzwalde
14th March, 1945

I had another long talk this morning with Himmler on the fate of The Hague, Clingendael and the Dam. I put my point of view to him again and appealed to him in the name of humanity not to carry out Hitler's secret order. Then I went straight to the point and asked Himmler whether it was not possible to give a direct order to the responsible authorities that nothing be blown up.

Himmler replied that Germany's military position had so deteriorated that first place had to be given to military considerations. I pointed out to him that military considerations did not arise here. The blowing up of Clingendael would not affect the course of the war one way or another. But it could not be a matter of indifference whether thousands and thousands of innocent men, women and children were destroyed; he could not answer to history for such a crime. Such an order would be viewed as the ravings of a madman, which he had only obeyed because he had himself lost the use of his reason.

It was obvious to me that Himmler was hesitating; he seemed to be wondering whether he dared to countermand Hitler's direct order. Therefore I started on him again and showed him once more how the order could have no effect on the military issue. I urged him to consult his conscience and heed his own humanitarian feelings. I would have been able to understand his attitude if such measures could have the

loyalty! At the same time a preservation of loyalty, when the mind has become disloyal, but

the belief in the necessity of the order on the part of the German people.

in the U.S.A. after the war, which would leave Europe to England and Russia. But England would be busy with troubles in her Commonwealth, India, Burma and the Middle East, so that the Soviets would remain the chief factor in Europe. They could only be kept away from the Atlantic if the Germans avoided fighting in Norway.

Then Himmler decided to put this point of view to Hitler.

Hartzwalde

20th March, 1945

Himmler told me about his conversation with Hitler, who had been extremely irritated and had concluded with these words: "If we lose the war, the enemy will only enter Norway when it's in utter ruins. I owe that to the German soldiers who have fallen there."

My heart sank at these words, for I saw the whole of Scandinavia going up in flames. Himmler paced up and down in agitation. Then he said: "You've convinced me. Europe must never fall into the hands of the Soviets; that's what matters. War in the North must be averted, even if we have to make the sacrifice. I will order the SS formations to avoid opening a new theatre of war in the North and I will make preparations for a surrender in Norway, should that become necessary. I hope to bring the Führer round to agree to this in the next few days."

Stockholm

25th March, 1945

On the 23rd of March I let Günther know of the results achieved by my talks with Himmler. Today Brandt called me up to say that Himmler's orders to the SS had gone through and to add that Himmler said I could rest assured that there would be no fighting in Scandinavia. The former Dutch ambassador in Stockholm, Baron E. van Nagell, heard this conversation on an auxiliary line. Today I reported it to Günther.

2. HIMMLER'S PEACE OFFER TO EISENHOWER

Hartzwalde

21st April, 1945

In the course of talks between ourselves over the negotiations with Masur (see pages 286 ff.) Himmler suddenly asked me: "Have

you any access to Ge I answered 'no', he from Sweden to Ei with him about the waiting for my answer ready to continue th will agree to an armistice with Bolshevism worthless, as Russia r save Europe from th driven back. Make ev enemy of mankind is position to fight agai concede victory to the to throw back Russia do it."

I answered Himmler this job, as I had no c myself with politics, with Günther and to e desired contact. Then quicker way. I propo Folke Bernadotte, wh Cross transport colum tration camps release Himmler and myself. direct access to Eisen was seeing Bernadotte matter with him.

3. SURRENDER OF DENMARK

I spoke to Himmler of the German troops and emphasized my pre of Swedish intervention no prospect of success

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f these camps.

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d their removal abroad, chiefly
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nd this attempt and shares the
opinion that the blowing up of
out as a gesture of desperation,
ads more people will meet their
to Himmler tomorrow and shall

be World Jewish Congress with
ame questions, which concludes
our deep humanitarian feelings
s achieved in this direction; and
d now in aiding us in this very

JEW AMONG THE JEWISH

Hartzwalde
11th March, 1945

s there occurred, most unfortu-
Bergen-Belsen camp, for whose
was so concerned, and this was
I remonstrated with him and
cumstances permit this camp to
imperil all Germany; he had to
s towards the camp's occupants.
umler's agreement to immediate
had from Brandt today, he made
3 measures against the plague.

VITY

Hartzwalde
12th March, 1945

n the 5th of March. He was in a
s were difficult and stormy. He

put forward the following argument: "If National Socialist Germany is going to be destroyed, then her enemies and the criminals in concentration camps shall not have the satisfaction of emerging from our ruin as triumphant conquerors. They shall share in the downfall. Those are the Führer's direct orders and I must see to it that they are carried out down to the last detail."

After discussions which were very exhausting, as they lasted for days and had their dramatic moments, I succeeded in convincing Himmler that this final outburst of large-scale slaughter was quite senseless, and, in the name of humanity, persuaded him that he should fail to carry out the order in question. Today I reached the following agreement with Himmler:

1. Himmler will not pass on Hitler's order to blow up concentration camps on the Allies' approach; none is to be blown up and no prisoners killed.
2. On the Allies' approach concentration camps are to show a white flag and be handed over in an orderly manner.
3. Further killing of Jews is suspended and prohibited. Jews are to receive the same treatment as other prisoners.
4. Concentration camps will not be evacuated. Prisoners are to be left where they are at present and may receive food parcels.

Himmler signed this agreement 'Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer SS'. I countersigned 'In the name of humanity, Felix Kersten'.

That was the first decisive step which averted danger from the Jewish prisoners and at the same time saved the lives of thousands of prisoners of various nationalities. Never in my life have I been so sublimely happy as at the moment when I put my name to this document below Himmler's. I felt as though I were the representative of an invisible power, above all the powers of the earth. When I took up the pen to sign, I was still unaware of the form of words I was going to use. But as I watched Himmler's slow and stilted writing appear on the document, it became evident to me that in negotiating with Himmler I was representing a great power—humanity itself. I expressed this by signing 'in the name of humanity'. Himmler stared at me thunderstruck, nodded, folded the paper, and gave me my copy without adding a word. I pocketed it and got up to take my leave.

I had not the time to set down in detail the phases of these negotiations with Himmler which preceded the signing, as I had done in earlier talks with him. New problems and difficulties were constantly cropping up; I sat for hours at the telephone and made use of every



contact available to me. Brandt helped me, sounded Himmler and prepared the ground for the next deal. Though it is obvious to any outsider that the end is near, Himmler, in a way that is quite inexplicable to me, still lives in constant fear of Hitler and those around him, especially Goebbels and Bormann. I noticed it again and again when I broached other points agreed between myself and Storch. Left to himself Himmler would make far-reaching concessions, if only he was not possessed by this constant fear. Obviously there is always on his mind the possibility that at the very last moment the situation may radically alter—and then how would he stand with his Führer?

It is quite evident to me now how powerful is the hypnotic influence which Hitler has exercised over Himmler. He is still subject to this hypnotic power, even though it is obvious that the end is at hand. He is constantly swearing me to the strictest secrecy; his worst worry is that the document will fall into the hands of 'the jackals of the Press'. I must promise him on my word of honour not to show the document to a living soul; no copies must be made; it may not be photographed. I took this memorable document with me to Sweden.

4. THE QUESTION OF RELEASING THE PRISONERS

Hartzwalde

13th March, 1945

I asked Himmler today for the release of the French women in the Ravensbrück camp, which he had already promised me in December 1944. I pointed out to him that there was no reason for holding them any longer, as France was no longer under German occupation; the purpose of their arrest had lost all meaning. I thought that this request of mine would be a comparatively easy one, but to my astonishment I found that Himmler was not inclined to accede to it. Apparently some of the prisoners were held on higher orders and Himmler was fearful of complications. After much delay and some stormy discussions, Himmler finally agreed to the release of 800 French women and their removal to Sweden. At the same time he declared that he wanted to keep some in order to have a hold over France. It seems that he will select women whose release involves no danger. I am to get in touch with Brandt at once as to measures to secure the women's immediate liberation.

* The hypnotic power! Let me
remember that March 13th was the
last day of the war.

5. THE TRE

I went with the Bergen-Bels passports and pe to the removal Congress attache gave him Storch fully. He gave it

On another I well disposed to tration camps; ti instance, whether Belgians or Nor they were to be sl so that in any eve

Himmler told into the question Sweden and Switz the matter. He als

At the same ti days previously I any more half-Je question of rele consideration. A attention. He was him how unreas would be bound t My arguments cle presence, he gav against half-Jews

I took this o of all Jews in sp which would also Himmler was ver

kept his the clear to the

1940-1945

and me, sounded Himmler and . Though it is obvious to any in a way that is quite inexplicable Hitler and those around him, noticed it again and again when I mentioned myself and Storch. Left to making concessions, if only he was obviously there is always on his very last moment the situation would he stand with his

powerful is the hypnotic influence of Himmler. He is still subject to this illusion that the end is at hand. His greatest secret; his worst worry is the words of 'the jackals of the Press'. I am not to show the document to him; it may not be photographed. I am not to go to Sweden.

MEETING THE PRISONERS

Hartzwalde

13th March, 1945

use of the French women in the camp was promised me in December 1944 as no reason for holding them under German occupation; the only thing I thought that this request was one, but to my astonishment I did not accede to it. Apparently some orders and Himmler was fearful and some stormy discussions, of 800 French women and their release he declared that he wanted to go to France. It seems that he will be in danger. I am to get in touch with the women's immediate

5. THE TREATMENT OF JEWISH PRISONERS

Hartzwalde

14th March, 1945

I went with Himmler today into the question of releasing Jews in the Bergen-Belsen camp. They are all to receive South American passports and permission to enter Sweden. I asked Himmler to consent to the removal of these Jews. I observed that the World Jewish Congress attached great importance to the release of these Jews and gave him Storch's memorandum, which he read through very carefully. He gave it back to me without defining his attitude.

On another point I had more success. Himmler showed himself well disposed towards the dispatch of food and medicines to concentration camps; these were to be addressed to individuals in the first instance, whether Jews, Dutch, Norwegians, Danes, French, English, Belgians or North Americans. If the individuals could not be found, they were to be shared out equally among other occupants of the camp, so that in any event the prisoners would benefit.

15th March, 1945

Himmler told me during today's treatment that he would go fully into the question of releasing definite categories of Jewish prisoners to Sweden and Switzerland, and would let me have further information on the matter. He also promised to discuss it with Count Bernadotte.

At the same time Himmler raised the question of half-Jews. A few days previously I had told Brandt that there was no sense in sending any more half-Jews into the concentration camps at a time when the question of releasing a number of full-blooded Jews was under consideration. Apparently Brandt had brought this to Himmler's attention. He was remarkably reluctant to yield on this point. I showed him how unreasonable this attitude was and how persistence in it would be bound to affect civilized opinion in Europe towards Germany. My arguments clearly impressed Himmler, with the result that, in my presence, he gave Brandt the order to put a stop to proceedings against half-Jews and those of mixed blood.

I took this opportunity to propose to Himmler the assembling of all Jews in special camps under the control of the Red Cross, which would also be responsible for looking after and feeding them. Himmler was very well disposed towards this suggestion. He showed

I was as much startled as a first.

seen! but one who I was that should be provided

but both the need to make him clear to the spirit of the law that he and the Council of the

considerable appreciation. I was very pleased to have made progress on all the matters discussed with Storch.

Hartswalde
16th March, 1945

I again discussed with Himmler today the release of certain categories of Jews to go to Sweden and Switzerland; I had gone through with him the lists given me which concerned the release of various individuals. Himmler was very open with me and promised to go thoroughly into the question of releases. I had the impression that he was prepared to make more concessions. He raised the matter of transport himself and remarked that Sweden or Switzerland would have to be responsible for this.

I took advantage of this favourable moment to talk to Himmler again about the treatment of Jews in concentration camps. He drew up a special order in my presence which forbade any sort of cruelty to Jewish prisoners and prohibited the killing of Jews. Later, on the 24th of March, he sent detailed instructions to all camp commandants ordering humane treatment of Jews. From that date every camp commandant would be held responsible for every Jewish prisoner's death and would be obliged to make an exact report on the circumstances.

Himmler emphasized that all these concessions would be withdrawn if they became the subject of comment in the world Press and were interpreted as a sign of weakness on Germany's part.

6. RELEASE OF JEWISH AND SCANDINAVIAN PRISONERS

Hartswalde
17th March, 1945

Having once more raised the question of releasing certain categories of Jewish prisoners with Himmler, I got from him today the assurance that he would let 5,000 of them go; they could be removed either to Sweden or Switzerland. Some urgent telephone calls interrupted our discussions. I took the opportunity to tell Brandt how far I had got and to ask him whether it was not possible, once the principle had been accepted, to raise the figure of those to be released. Brandt agreed and said that with time and discretion it should not be difficult at least to double it.

When I was summoned to releasing Scandinavians had asked Himmler at for this purpose. Himmler postponed his final decision.

7. PLAN FOR NEGOTIATING THE WORLD

I took advantage of a plan which had occurred to me of securing more meetings between Himmler and the Jewish Congress. It was an attempt which would have accepted an attempt to make very great the sincerity of all his previous events, the day when the Jewish Congress sat down. I was very curious to see if he promptly refused to hear of it, he expected that—always the sign, for he said nothing.

I seized hold of this, already agreed to it; as German police responsibility for preserving complete country. If he gave the Bormann, nor Hitler would

This was apparent to me at the time. It took place at Hartswalde. Himmler could be considered. I asked whether I might attend the World Jewish Congress personally. Himmler was said: "Yes, Herr Kersten."

When I was summoned to Himmler again, I tackled the problem of releasing Scandinavian prisoners and all those for whose release I had asked Himmler at an earlier date. I had ready a comprehensive list for this purpose. Himmler promised greater concessions, but postponed his final decision until he had examined the matter.

7. PLAN FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN HIMMLER AND THE WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

17th March, 1945

I took advantage of the favourable prospects to put before Himmler a plan which had occurred to me today as I was considering the best way of securing more releases. The idea came to me of arranging a meeting between Himmler and the representative of the World Jewish Congress. It was an attractive proposition. If it succeeded Himmler would have accepted an atmosphere of agreement in which he might be ready to make very great concessions; it would also serve as a test for the sincerity of all his promises. It would moreover be a great historic event, the day when Himmler and the representative of the World Jewish Congress sat down at the same table to discuss matters with each other. I was very curious to see Himmler's reaction to the proposal. At first he promptly refused. "I can never receive a Jew. If the Führer were to hear of it, he would have me shot dead on the spot." I had expected that—always this fear of the Führer; yet it was an encouraging sign, for he said nothing about refusing on his own account.

I seized hold of this, therefore, and acted as though he had himself already agreed to it; and I asserted that his position as head of the German police responsible for frontier control gave him every facility for preserving complete secrecy about flights into and out of the country. If he gave the proper instructions, neither Goebbels, nor Bormann, nor Hitler would hear a thing about it.

This was apparent to Himmler. I proposed that the talks should take place at Hartzwalde. It would be for him to decide who was to take part in them. Himmler said that only Brandt and Schellenberg could be considered. I replied that I was entirely agreeable to this and asked whether I might inform Herr Storch, the representative of the World Jewish Congress, that he was prepared to discuss things personally. Himmler waited a moment before giving his answer, then said: "Yes, Herr Kersten, you may."

Hartzwalde

16th March, 1945

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Hartzwalde

17th March, 1945

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Brandt how far I had got

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Hartzwalde
18th March, 1945

I returned to the question of a tentative of the World Jewish whether Himmler had gone back to the case. Next I informed him safe conduct would surely arise, me assurances on this point. en to Herr Storch; I pledge my enough for me. I was intensely elop.

Sweden to report. Before going our agreement, which I shall anything that might happen. I at of all those points on which posed, but has not yet given a ordinary help to me as well as a

21st March, 1945

saying that Himmler had shown made to him. At the same time d meanwhile also granted some unable to come to an immediate

a personal letter from Himmler l satisfaction. Himmler informed ow taken place, those for whom the Swiss initiative to rescue in also take with me to Sweden ures were being taken to combat Bergen-Belsen camp.

er and the assurance that other Sweden. The letter came before l summarized our agreements, so express his reactions to all the in recent weeks 'in the name of

Does Himmler realize that all is lost? So that he no longer feels himself obliged to carry out his fearful task of annihilating the Jews and feels that he can now revert to his original ideas? For he had often before said that he had other ideas for solving the Jewish problem in Germany.

9. NEGOTIATIONS IN STOCKHOLM

Stockholm
22nd March, 1945

I arrived safely in Stockholm and went at once to Günther to report to him on the results of my trip. He was very satisfied with the agreement obtained. The concentration camp rescues particularly impressed him—he called this 'a political event of global importance'. Günther wanted to know the approximate number of prisoners to be transported to Sweden. I said there would be between twenty and twenty-five thousand: between a thousand and fifteen hundred Dutch and the same number of French, between five and six hundred Belgians, five hundred Poles, seven thousand Norwegians, five thousand Danes and between five and six thousand Jews. The figures to which Himmler had agreed were somewhat lower than this, but Dr. Brandt and Schellenberg had given me a firm promise that they would be exceeded when the transport arrived.

Günther thanked me and said: "These people will all be heartily welcome in Sweden." Sweden would spare no efforts and no expense in fetching them. Finally he asked me whether I was prepared, if it should prove necessary, to fly to Germany again to help in case of still greater difficulties arose. I agreed. Günther thought that it would be a great step if Himmler and Storch should meet. But he did not think that it would come off, as there had been repeated efforts to make similar arrangements in recent years, but always without success.

I replied: "I am convinced that it will come off. I hope to be able to fly with Storch to Berlin next week." I am expecting Storch tomorrow morning.

Stockholm
23rd March, 1945

Today I had a letter from Himmler telling me that my intervention on behalf of the former Austrian Chancellor Seitz had met with success and that he had been released.

ichellenberg and Dr. Brandt. I
e the house.

able but magnanimous towards
n considering Masur's requests
h had been so disgusted by the
Reich's political enemies, that
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BETWEEN HIMMLER TIVE OF THE WORLD

we went into the house and
ined us a little later. Himmler
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se were peacefully seated the
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Jews were an alien element in
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olve the Jewish question once
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the Jews. But not one of the
ndly towards the Jews would

accept them." The English had demanded that every Jew should take
at least a thousand pounds out of the country with him.

Masur, who was outwardly very calm and conducted the conver-
sation with Himmler very cleverly and with expert knowledge,
objected that it had never been in accordance with international law to
drive men from a country in which they and their ancestors had lived
for generations.

Himmler made no answer but began to talk about the problem of
Eastern Jewry. "These Eastern Jews aid the partisans and help the
underground movements; they also fire on us from their ghettos and
are the carriers of epidemics such as typhus. In order to control these
epidemics, crematoriums were built for the countless corpses of the
victims. And now we are threatened with hanging for that!" Masur
kept silent.

Himmler at once went on to speak of the ferocity of the war with
Russia. Among other things he said: "The Russians are no ordinary
enemies. Their mentality is impossible for us Europeans to understand.
We must conquer or perish. The war in the East is subjecting our
soldiers to the most brutal test. If the Jewish people have also suffered
from the ferocity of war, it must not be forgotten that the German
people have not been spared anything either."

Himmler went on to defend the concentration camps: "They should
have been called training camps, for criminal elements were lodged
there besides Jews and political prisoners. Thanks to their erection,
Germany, in 1941, had the lowest criminal rate for many years. The
prisoners had to work hard, but all Germans had to do that. The
treatment was always just."

Masur, who was now obviously upset, interrupted him here to say
that it was impossible to deny that crimes had been committed in the
camps.

"I concede that it has happened occasionally," Himmler replied,
"but I have also punished the persons responsible." He had in mind
SS Standartenführer Koch, commandant of the Buchenwald camp,
whom he had had shot for corruption and ill-treatment of prisoners.

The conversation seemed now to have taken a dangerous turn. I
intervened therefore and said: "We don't want to discuss the past; we
can't alter that and we'll only create the wrong atmosphere. We're far
more concerned in discussing how much can still be saved."

Thereupon Masur said: "At least all Jews who still remain in
Germany must be assured of their lives, if we want to build a bridge
between our peoples for the future." Then he asked for the release of
all Jews.



Himmler again made no answer, but began to talk about the handing over of the camps on the Allies' arrival. He had arranged for the Bergen-Belsen camp to be handed over as agreed, the same as with Buchenwald. But he had been very poorly repaid for this. In Bergen-Belsen one of the guards had been tied up and photographed with some prisoners who were already dead. These pictures had received publicity all over the world. Similar things had occurred at Buchenwald. "The advancing American tanks suddenly opened fire and set the camp hospital aflame. As this was made of wood it was soon in full blaze. The corpses were then photographed and more material for atrocity propaganda against us provided."

Himmler went on: "When I let 2,700 Jews go into Switzerland, this was made the subject of a personal campaign against me in the Press, asserting that I had only released these men in order to construct an alibi for myself. But I have no need of an alibi! I have always done only what I considered just, what was essential for my people. I will also answer for that. Nobody has had so much mud slung at him in the last ten years as I have. I have never bothered myself about that. Even in Germany any man can say about me what he pleases. Newspapers abroad have started a campaign against me which is no encouragement to me to continue handing over the camps."

Masur protested that it was impossible to tell newspapers throughout the world what they should write; the Jews had not been responsible for the articles he quoted. The release of the Theresienstadt Jews had received a good Press and that was a reason for extending the same process. Not only the Jews themselves but other countries were interested in the rescuing of those Jews who survived and it would have a good effect even on the Allies.

Talking of the Theresienstadt camp, Himmler said that it was one of a special type set up by himself and Heydrich. "It was a kind of town inhabited exclusively by Jews, who also administered it themselves and managed all the work. We had hoped that one day all the camps would be like that."

Then we went thoroughly into the subject of releasing occupants of the Ravensbrück camp, which Himmler had promised, and their transport to Sweden. Masur pressed for detailed agreements. Himmler hesitated. When I realized that the talks were coming to a standstill, I asked Himmler to go with me through the lists which I had received from the Swedish Foreign Office indicating the names of those to whose release special importance was attached. Masur and Schellenberg left the room, as Himmler did not want to go through the lists in Masur's presence.

When I was alone with Himmler that he had to stand by our March agreement, more magnanimous than he had been when he was confronted with the World Jewish Congress at a thousand. But there of the persons designated.

When Masur re-entered, he kept his word and released the prisoners. But he stipulated that not Jewesses, in order to release of Jewish prisoners the arrival of these Jews.

Himmler then discussed the German occupation, which had been well administered; everybody had had enough of Germany's struggle against the National Socialist state. The bulwark of political organization should fall, the bulwark should fall, the contaminated with Bolshevik unrest. The German matter, the Russians as brothers and But the Americans wanted to get rid of German control. This had been achieved this by aiding own graves."

The talks lasted for morning. Himmler made something which at one time I

I negotiated, in Masur with Dr. Brandt. Conviction principle to the release of securing Schellenberg's a

1. The number of Jews
 2. The strict observance
- relieve the lot of the Jews

¹ Masur commented on this: go free under their correct designation. Himmler's hands, he still did not

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to go through the lists in

When I was alone with Himmler and Brandt, I impressed upon Himmler that he had to be absolutely definite in his attitude. He had to stand by our March agreement; it would not do for him to be less magnanimous than he had always been with me at the very moment when he was confronted for the first time with a representative of the World Jewish Congress. Himmler replied: "Then I will fix the figure at a thousand. But there will be more." Then he granted me the release of the persons designated on the Swedish Foreign Office lists.

When Masur re-entered the room with Schellenberg, Himmler kept his word and released the thousand Jewish women from Ravensbrück. But he stipulated that they should be described as Polish women, not Jewesses, in order to get round Hitler's express orders against the release of Jewish prisoners. To Masur Himmler emphasized: "Even the arrival of these Jewesses in Sweden must be kept secret."¹

Himmler then discussed general political questions. He turned to the German occupation of France and declared that the country had been well administered; unemployment had been almost abolished; everybody had had enough to eat. Himmler laid strong emphasis on Germany's struggle against Bolshevism in these words: "With the National Socialist state Hitler has revealed the only conceivable form of political organization capable of calling a halt to Bolshevism. If this bulwark should fall, then American and English soldiers will be contaminated with Bolshevism and their countries given over to social unrest. The German masses, forced to look to the Left, will hail the Russians as brothers and the chaos in the world will be indescribable. But the Americans wanted it like that; they have won the war now and got rid of German competition for ten years. But they have only achieved this by aiding the victory of Bolshevism and digging their own graves."

The talks lasted for two and a half hours, ending at five in the morning. Himmler made no demands concerning his personal future, a thing which at one time had seemed probable.

I negotiated, in Masur's presence, partly with Schellenberg, partly with Dr. Brandt. Convinced as I was of Himmler's agreement in principle to the release of a number of Jews, I succeeded in these talks in securing Schellenberg's and Brandt's firm support for these two points:

1. The number of Jews to be released.
2. The strict observance of the agreements already achieved to relieve the lot of the Jews.

¹ Masur commented on this: "It was typical of Himmler, his fear of letting the Jewesses go free under their correct designation. Although power at this time was certainly in Himmler's hands, he still did not want to have any trouble on the Jews' account."



But it is too late. We wanted greatness and security for Germany and we are leaving behind us a pile of ruins, a falling world. Yet it remains true that Europe must rally to a new standard, else all is lost. I always wanted what was best, but very often I had to act against my real convictions. Believe me, Kersten, that went very much against the grain and it was bitter to me. But the Führer decreed that it should be so, and Goebbels and Bormann were a bad influence on him. As a loyal soldier I had to obey, for no state can survive without obedience and discipline. It rests for me alone to decide how long I have still to live, since my life has now become meaningless. And what will history say of me? Petty minds, bent on revenge, will hand down to posterity a false and perverted account of the great and good things which I, looking further ahead, have accomplished for Germany. The blame for many things which others have done will be heaped on me. The finest elements of the German people perish with the National Socialists; that is the real tragedy. Those who are left, those who will govern Germany, hold no interest for us. The Allies can do what they like with Germany."

We went to Himmler's car. He got in, sat down and stretched out his hand to me, saying: "Kersten, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the years in which you have given me the benefit of your medical skill. My last thoughts are for my poor family. Farewell!"

Himmler had tears in his eyes as he spoke.

The car drove off. . . .

1. REPORT TO

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At Stockholm
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2. HIMMLER'S

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XLII

HEINRICH HIMMLER

1. THE DOGMATIST AND THE ROMANTIC

WHEN I was summoned to Himmler for the first time in 1939 I found myself face to face with a man whose appearance corresponded not at all with the image one usually formed of a Reichsführer SS and head of the 'Secret Police'. It was a little man who gave me an alert glance from under his pince-nez; one would almost say that there was something oriental in his broad cheekbones and round face. He was far from being an athletic type, cramped, instead of being loose and elastic.

His health was in a very bad way. He was very worried about the severe pains he had in the region of the stomach, which sometimes lasted as long as five days and left him so exhausted that he felt afterwards as if he were convalescing after a severe illness. It took him a long time to recover from these attacks. He was afraid that these cramps meant some severe and incurable disease; he had a terror of cancer (his father had had cancer of the saliva glands in the stomach). As a child Himmler had twice suffered from paratyphus, and twice from dysentery; apart from that his stomach had never been sound. When he asked for my help he was also only just recovering from acute fish poisoning and had great difficulty in getting over it. In the course of a fortnight I was able to get rid of his cramps and I went back to Holland.

When my friends enquired how Himmler had struck me, I said that if I had met him in the street or in a public house without knowing who he was, I would have taken him for some respectable city clerk or a schoolteacher, or even a headmaster.

Soon I got to know Himmler better and learnt that there really had been teachers in his family; I noticed too that his real character was

that of a teacher. He to explain his Führer also had to teach and instruct, which also. If we discussed political doctrine; if we talked the consequences of what ought and what medical topic, then opinion and wanted a degree in agricultural knowledge thus acquired.

Yet he was not so amiable and not so showed, however, but of what Himmler could people and the German knowledge by studying him without a book he always took a book.

That brings me to His whole attitude nature which rested his study of history Germanic man; and all to the SS as their all his pronouncements people on the same.

This cult for his There were no exceptions done was right and difficulty he encountered present requirement with the present. I been found once he reject this was to say have heard him say some other ruler] was.

It was always a directing Germanic showed itself inside every SS man before

that of a teacher. His position and the tasks assigned him forced him to explain his Führer's ideas and their detailed development—but he also had to teach them. This encouraged his natural disposition to instruct, which also received a fresh stimulus in many other directions. If we discussed politics, then he developed his views into a body of doctrine; if we talked on some historical subject, he at once deduced the consequences and applied them to the present day, laying down what ought and what ought not to be done. If we approached some medical topic, then here again it was Himmler who had his own opinion and wanted to give a lecture on it. He had studied and obtained a degree in agricultural economy, and he never tired of turning the knowledge thus acquired to good account in advising others.

Yet he was not at all overbearing in these lectures of his, but quite amiable and not without a touch of humour. A deadly seriousness showed, however, behind this humour whenever it came to a question of what Himmler considered beneficial or dangerous to the German people and the Germanic race. He was always trying to extend his knowledge by studying the latest literature. One could not imagine him without a book or a document in his hand. However tired he was, he always took a book with him to bed.

That brings me to the second essential trait in Himmler's character. His whole attitude of mind was governed by an image of human nature which rested on historical models. Himmler had drawn from his study of history an idea of the achievements and behaviour of Germanic man; and it was this Germanic man whom he offered first of all to the SS as their absolute ideal; he outlined this Germanic man in all his pronouncements and wanted one day to set the whole German people on the same track.

This cult for his Germanic ancestors was an obsession with him. There were no exceptions to the rule that whatever these ancestors had done was right and proper. He looked for historical examples in every difficulty he encountered, instead of using a sure instinct to meet present requirements. For him history was the only means of dealing with the present. The right solution to any immediate problem had been found once he had a model drawn from Germanic history; to reject this was to sin against the spirit of his ancestors. How often I have heard him say: "In these circumstances Frederick the Great [or some other ruler] would have done such and such a thing. . . ."

It was always a question of education with him, a question of directing Germanic life into the proper channels. This tendency showed itself inside the framework of the SS, when he directed that every SS man before his marriage should receive permission from the

SS Racial and Settlement Head Office; it showed no less in his general attitude towards the marriage sacrament. Officer cadets at the military academies had to write essay after essay and make a thorough study of characters whom Himmler regarded as specially important, such as Henry the First, Frederick the Great or even Ghenghis Khan. He lived so much in the world of his imagination that he even regarded himself as a great Germanic leader, to whom Providence had assigned the task of developing new Germanic institutions at the side of his Führer. His belief in reincarnation led him to see himself as the re-embodiment of Duke Henry the Lion, while Hitler was the return of a brilliant Aryan figure such as is only granted to a people once in a thousand years. When Himmler stood before Henry the First's grave in Quedlinburg Cathedral he must have congratulated himself on finally accomplishing that mission in the East which this king had begun and which Henry the Lion had taken a stage further. He did whatever he could to promote research into the lives of both these rulers; he had all the material at his finger-tips. Henry the First was his silent counsellor; when he made the effort he even believed that he could hear his voice deep within himself. Symbols exercised a strong influence on him. His large round dining-table in Berlin was celebrated. Twelve was the maximum number allowed to sit round it, as was the case with the legendary King Arthur.

But it was not enough for the Germanic ideal to dominate the German people's mind and soul once more; Himmler wanted it to appear in their physical traits and revert to the original Germanic type with blonde hair and blue eyes, according to the Mendelian law. The whole SS was to be of this blond type; he wanted to have only tall, blonde and blue-eyed people about him. Secretaries in SS offices were selected from this standpoint, with the further object of encouraging marriage with suitable partners. After the final victory, he intended to have only blonde people in all important posts; then too his SS men would only get permission to marry if they had chosen a blonde and blue-eyed wife. He told me that he had calculated, on the basis of the Mendelian law, that this policy pursued for 120 years would result in the German people once more becoming authentically Germanic in appearance; history would be grateful to him and in a thousand years his life's work would be regarded in the same way as King Henry the First's was now. In Himmler's view the Greater Germanic Reich could only last for ever if all lesser elements had been purged from its blood. To him dark eyes and hair were simply the outward signs of inferiority; blue eyes on the other hand were always to be trusted. Himmler viewed the history of Europe as the eternal struggle

between the inferior Herrenvolk.

This theory encouraged hair of the Bavarians. shown themselves so struggle for power the feelings and attitude of all in the SS and intern tion perhaps the Bavar

Himmler sometime: eyed person could ney eyes; he was never able his SS so severely as the of the man concerned question of showing n deciding which prison would select a blond as showed great skill in ex

This attitude and t Himmler in constant bat racial type, yet his own He was all for sport ar was stiff and inflexible. himself to the rules he h me what efforts Himml trials for the mile race, h skiing, which he tried maintained that German he suffered all the more they almost reduced him SS man should exercise could not prevent him: the neck or from being Hohenlychen from an in

Although a Bavarian, kings, especially Freder: Soldier King, who want not obey him as a soldier to this Prussian austerity he was to overlook mist gave were always ruthless made Koch, commandar

between the inferior dark races and the light-haired Germanic Herrenvolk.

This theory encountered great difficulties with the dark eyes and hair of the Bavarians. Himmler got over this by saying that they had shown themselves so wholeheartedly on the side of Hitler in his struggle for power that they had given proof of their Germanic feelings and attitude of mind. Besides, the best of the Bavarians were all in the SS and intermarried with blonde women. In another generation perhaps the Bavarians would look as Germanic as the rest.

Himmler sometimes quite seriously asserted that a blonde and blue-eyed person could never behave as badly as one with dark hair and eyes; he was never able to punish the blond and blue-eyed members of his SS so severely as the dark ones. In such cases he always had a photo of the man concerned brought to him; it was the same when the question of showing mercy to prisoners arose. If it was a matter of deciding which prisoner to release, you could always be sure that he would select a blond and blue-eyed type. Blond and blue-eyed rascals showed great skill in exploiting this weakness of his.

This attitude and the consequences springing from it involved Himmler in constant battles with himself. He championed the Germanic racial type, yet his own round skull was very far from being nordic. He was all for sport and athletic accomplishments, but in person he was stiff and inflexible. It was really funny to see him try to adapt himself to the rules he had himself invented. Brandt laughed as he told me what efforts Himmler had made to get through the Sports-badge trials for the mile race, his attempts to swim and the figure he cut when skiing, which he tried hard to learn in later years. Himmler further maintained that Germanic man was always healthy and consequently he suffered all the more when his stomach-cramps were so severe that they almost reduced him to unconsciousness. He demanded that every SS man should exercise the greatest severity towards himself, but he could not prevent himself from being thoroughly upset by a boil on the neck or from being driven out of his headquarters to recover at Hohenlychen from an influenza germ.

Although a Bavarian, he was an enthusiastic admirer of the Prussian kings, especially Frederick the Great and Frederick William I, the Soldier King, who wanted to have his own son shot because he did not obey him as a soldier should. He constantly referred in his speeches to this Prussian austerity as an example to be followed. However ready he was to overlook mistakes in everyday matters, the punishments he gave were always ruthless when definite orders were in question. He made Koch, commandant of the Buchenwald camp, suffer the death

penalty for corruption and mistreatment of prisoners, although the man was an SS Standartenführer and held the gold badge of the Party. "Anybody who puts himself outside the community by causing unnecessary suffering has to be ruthlessly punished." He even had his own nephew shot, after he had been repeatedly and urgently warned and finally punished, yet still reverted to homosexual offences which, according to Himmler's outlook, undermined the country's morality.

He maintained that a Waffen SS officer should combine in his person iron discipline and the greatest degree of military efficiency with comprehensive education and exclusive racial qualities; and his achievements should surpass those of an officer in the Wehrmacht. He would have liked to be supreme commander of the Waffen SS, but in fact he indoctrinated them and was their ordnance chief, an excellent supervisor of their arms, equipment and supplies. Himmler was not without military ambitions of his own: why should not he manage to do on a smaller scale the things which his Führer accomplished? Friends who had been at school with him said that he had always had two hobbies, warfare and crime. Although he disputed this, he was really delighted when he was appointed supreme commander of the Reserve Army after the attempt on Hitler's life. He was given command of the Vistula army group, no doubt following an intrigue by Bormann and his set in order to show up his incompetence and bring him into disgrace with Hitler; but he would certainly never have undertaken this if his military dreams had not unconsciously worked on him.

2. HIMMLER AND HIS FÜHRER

Hitler's word was law to Himmler, supreme above all the ideals and directives he issued himself; when Hitler had spoken, his own convictions were at once laid aside. He regarded Hitler's orders as the binding decisions of the Germanic race's Führer, pronouncements from a world transcending this one. They even possessed a divine power. It was obvious to him that Hitler was on intimate terms with that other world, being directed by it and having a special gift for interpreting its messages. The phrase 'The Führer is always right' had a mystical significance for Himmler. Himmler would have had his own brother shot, or even shot himself without hesitation, if the Führer had ordered it. For Hitler, being the Führer of the Greater Germanic Reich, had to know why he made the decisions he did, even if Himmler could not

understand them or if only be put down to Führer's mystical instrument of orders.

The belts of the SS Loyalty'. This expressed Adolf Hitler, for the G personal bodyguard. T during the struggle for loyalty was simply loyalty which involved man which had been states whose history Hitler had spoken an Himmler, then Himmler to put the whole matter though he clearly saw was able to relate to the principle of 'Dicta to resist was quite lacking involving important qu

Himmler had asserted problem in Germany to opposite idea gained policy in spite of all the repugnant to him in order —also of course in order and Bormann, who also

The same thing happened in the Eastern territories. them in his own doctrine have diverted the next What possibilities open scheme to pick out the Nordic blood and then worked out and ready through from Hitler. T foreign peoples were to Himmler once again dream, even though his serving under him in nothing except res

prisoners, although the gold badge of the Party. community by causing... He even had his... and urgently warned... offences which, the country's morality. should combine in his... of military efficiency... racial qualities; and his... in the Wehrmacht. He... of the Waffen SS, but in... chance chief, an excellent... Himmler was not... should not he manage to... the Führer accomplished?... that he had always had... he disputed this, he was... supreme commander of the... life. He was given com... following an intrigue by... his incompetence and bring... could certainly never have... not unconsciously worked

supreme above all the ideals... Hitler had spoken, his own... regarded Hitler's orders as the... Führer, pronouncements from... possessed a divine power. It... in terms with that other... a special gift for interpreting... always right' had a mystical... had his own brother... if the Führer had ordered... Greater Germanic Reich, had to... even if Himmler could not

understand them or thought they were wrong—in this case it could only be put down to Himmler's own lack of vision. Himmler was the mystical instrument of a higher authority which issued the Führer's orders.

The belts of the SS had these words on them: 'My Honour is my Loyalty'. This expressed his followers' absolute loyalty to their Führer, Adolf Hitler, for the Guard formation (SS) regarded themselves as his personal bodyguard. This oath which had originated in his bodyguard during the struggle for power became the motto of the SS. But this loyalty was simply loyalty to a man. Himmler had no conception of a loyalty which involved both parties, that trust between master and man which had been the very essence of the old Germanic feudal states whose history has left us such striking examples of it. Once Hitler had spoken and decided against one of the Leaders under Himmler, then Himmler yielded and lacked the strength of character to put the whole matter before the SS Leader whose boss he was, even though he clearly saw that he was doing the man an injustice. Brandt was able to relate to me many shattering cases of this. He called this the principle of 'Dictatorship modified by discipleship'. The capacity to resist was quite lacking in Himmler, even in technical discussions involving important questions of home policy.

Himmler had asserted that it was never his idea to solve the Jewish problem in Germany by actually annihilating the Jews. But when the opposite idea gained currency, Himmler toed the line, applied the policy in spite of all the harshness it involved and did what was really repugnant to him in order to furnish proof that he was no 'backslider'—also of course in order to take the wind out of the sails of Goebbels and Bormann, who always kept a close eye on Himmler's actions.

The same thing happened over the treatment of foreign peoples in the Eastern territories. How Himmler would have enjoyed training them in his own doctrine; if he could not manage it at once, he would have diverted the next generation into the proper nordic channels. What possibilities opened before him in the conquered territories! His scheme to pick out the best and bravest of these peoples, mix them with nordic blood and then transplant them to the old Reich was already worked out and ready to go into action when contrary orders came through from Hitler. These orders scrapped any idea of education: the foreign peoples were to be left to vegetate in a primitive way of life. Himmler once again submitted without a struggle and buried his dream, even though his heart was heavy. He once more drove the men serving under him into actions whose accomplishment could bring him nothing except responsibility for suffering.

Himmler soon saw how catastrophic was Hitler's policy when he had before his eyes their devastating effects as carried out by Erich Koch, Reich Commissioner for the Ukraine. The reports of his security service gave Himmler an opportunity to inform Hitler of these effects and he should have staked everything on altering the course prescribed by going thoroughly into the matter with Hitler. But he did this only in the rarest cases, and even then with the greatest caution and reserve. He never wanted to put himself in the position with Hitler where he would be making use of his reports to criticize orders which emanated from the Führer. I so often found Brandt in despair because Himmler was filing away the Security Service's reports, which he read most attentively, instead of taking them with him to discuss with Hitler.

I have often asked myself the reason for Himmler's behaviour. Why did he never dare to speak his mind freely to Hitler, when he himself was quite ready to be contradicted and indeed despised those of the Leaders under him who did not dare to open their mouths? He knew how to listen patiently when a man enlarged on his own opinions, provided the proper forms were observed. First of all I thought that he was not very sure of his own position and avoided putting himself forward more for tactical reasons. But matters were no different when Himmler stood at the height of his power. My next idea was that he was deliberately letting events take their course in order to take advantage of them and assume Hitler's mantle when the right moment came. I was confirmed in this idea when Himmler made no move, though he had read the report on Hitler's illness. It was conceivable that Himmler was waiting for striking proofs of the illness in its political effects. But I soon learnt to think differently when I answered the telephone during one of the treatments and Himmler turned to me with his eyes shining and said: "You know who that was? You have been listening to the voice of the Führer—you're a very lucky man."

When one has witnessed such an incident as this with one's own eyes, it is quite possible to realize Himmler's complete subservience to Hitler. An unfavourable comment by Hitler on one of his measures was enough to upset him thoroughly and produce violent reactions which took the form of severe stomach-pains. Simply an indication that Hitler might have a different opinion sufficed to make Himmler hesitate and postpone a decision until he had been able to make sure of Hitler's attitude. However much Himmler disliked a man, once he heard that the man was *persona grata* with Hitler he tried to get on the right side of him, took him into his SS and had him promoted. Nobody

who had not witnessed at his disposal as Himmler was summoned to Hitler rejoiced if he came out received a word of praise afraid he was of bringing how a frown would do nothing in him to convince. Reliable observers have Hitler could brush him to make a remark.

This weakness of his to strengthen his position he thought over any possible hand and went very through ordeal of an interview. him, for in that he did convince. In these circumstances means anxious to report summoned, though it was government to see Hitler views which were often the fullest information. not get reported; the Führer Himmler at last came to begin.

He tried to conceal relation to Hitler by a title commander—although he was a military nature. Rather where such standards could 'Foremost paladin of the the Führer the feeling loyalty was unreserved. of a man in command politician. Both the organization consequences of the war But his attitude to the became his task to advise Leader in a guard form engaged in their struggle

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who had not witnessed it would believe that a man with as much power at his disposal as Himmler had would be in such a state of fear when he was summoned to Hitler; nor would anybody believe how Himmler rejoiced if he came out of the interview successfully or, better still, received a word of praise. But in the light of this one may realize how afraid he was of bringing anything disagreeable to Hitler's notice and how a frown would make him draw back in panic. Himmler had nothing in him to counterbalance the effect of Hitler's personality. Reliable observers have informed me that a word or gesture from Hitler could brush him aside or so finish him that he no longer dared to make a remark.

This weakness of his made Himmler suffer indescribably. He tried to strengthen his position by making the most detailed preparations; he thought over any possible objections that Hitler might make before hand and went very thoroughly into everything before facing the ordeal of an interview. It was his specialized knowledge which saved him, for in that he did not have to use his personality in order to convince. In these circumstances it is understandable that he was by no means anxious to report to Hitler and was glad when he was not summoned, though it would have been his duty as a member of the government to see Hitler as often as possible and to put before him views which were often in complete conflict with his and grounded on the fullest information. In this state of affairs important matters did not get reported; the 'Führer's file' grew larger and larger, and when Himmler at last came to make his report he was at a loss to know how to begin.

He tried to conceal from himself and others this most unfortunate relation to Hitler by a theory of the soldier's obedience to his supreme commander—although he himself was no soldier, nor were his tasks of a military nature. Rather had fate placed him in a key political office where such standards did not apply. He also referred to himself as 'Foremost paladin of the Führer', whose greatest ambition was to give the Führer the feeling that he could rely on him absolutely, as his loyalty was unreserved. In this Himmler was confusing the position of a man in command of a bodyguard with that of a statesman or politician. Both the organizing of measures on the home front and the consequences of the war led to a constant increase in Himmler's power. But his attitude to the man whose policy inside the country it thus became his task to administer or oppose always remained that of Leader in a guard formation (SS) dating from days when they were engaged in their struggle for power.



3. HIMMLER THE MAN

Perhaps his ancestry, of which he was conscious, may help to throw light on the various elements which went to make up his character. Himmler's great-grandfather was a guardsman in the service of Prince Otto of Bavaria, who in 1830 was chosen as King of Greece. After his return this Himmler became a police official at Lindau on the Lake of Constance. Himmler's father was tutor to Prince Henry of Bavaria, who was killed in 1916 while commanding a regiment in Roumania. The name 'Henry' was chosen in honour of him. Himmler's father then became a private schoolteacher in Munich. Heinrich Himmler, as he grew up, was surrounded by an atmosphere of officialdom, police-work and teaching; and he also received the impact of old Germanic ideals and gods which were being revived round about 1900. In his blood there were not only teaching and the meticulous exactitude of officials, but also the love of police and military affairs. From these officials came something of the subservience towards his superiors, which was so marked in him, but which showed most clearly in his relations with Hitler.

Himmler was extremely industrious in trying to do justice to his many different tasks. To the horror of his staff he worked almost every day up to two or three in the morning. A number of his interviews with members of his staff took place at night. He declared: "History will not enquire how well Heinrich Himmler slept, but how much he achieved. It will be time enough to sleep when the war has been won. There is always too much talk and not enough action with us in Germany. The Führer must have at least one man on whom he can implicitly rely, and I want to be that man."

From this arose the impression that he was concerned far too much with the details of his work, was far too apt to consider that he had to go painfully through every line of his orders and enactments, instead of limiting himself to controlling them in broad outline. He was drowned in a sea of documents. Brandt tried to organize matters in such a way that he was able to deal with lesser affairs himself, but he got into serious trouble if among them was something that Himmler regarded as important. In his colleagues' opinion Himmler lacked a proper administrative routine. When Brandt had repeatedly urged me to make his boss realize that, in the interests of his health, he should cease to concern himself with matters of secondary importance, Himmler's reply was to ask me whether I had never read how thoroughly Frederick the Great had examined matters which appeared to us as

trivial nowadays. The secret he took with the least affairs so that he had as much to do as personal attention to any paper would happen if widows, or refused by his adjutant?

Himmler was personally luxury, and declared that his received a relatively small salary¹ a year, which he managed to watch with me from Sweden marks he was concerned, took all that he had at his disposal, remain outstanding until the punctually paid the sum. In the with public money or expenses He would have liked best to fit off the offender's hands. He never but employed the profits from undertakings to extend the power increase the SS capital and to aid and orphans of his SS men and Himmler despised Göring for harsh in his condemnation of personal ends. Any sort of dis against it the motto of the SS: 'tired of saying that the whole' by those two phrases: 'Honor appear'.

This plainness and simplicity of life. He was extremely moderate: midday meal consisted of soup, lemon juice; he smoked a cigar not allowed to last more than ten minutes with his conferences until his consisted either of a hot meat and salted rolls. Himmler drank after which he lit his second cigar back to work. During meals senior was there any small talk. subjects on these occasions—the

¹ Approximately £2,000.

trivial nowadays. The secret of his success had resided in the trouble he took with the least affair of state. Surely I was not going to tell him that he had as much to do as Frederick the Great. He had to give his personal attention to any papers which were addressed to him; what would happen if widows, orphans and those who sought help were refused by his adjutant?

Himmler was personally incorruptible; he despised riches and luxury, and declared that his greatest ambition was to die poor. He received a relatively small salary in the region of twenty-four thousand marks¹ a year, which he managed economically. When I brought him a watch with me from Sweden and told him that the price was 160 marks he was concerned, took out his purse and paid me fifty marks, all that he had at his disposal, and asked whether I could let the rest remain outstanding until the first of the month, on which day he punctually paid the sum. In the SS he punished any sort of peculating with public money or expense accounts no less severely than theft. He would have liked best to follow the old Germanic custom and cut off the offender's hands. He never used SS property to enrich himself, but employed the profits from their woods, forests and industrial undertakings to extend the powers of the SS, to finance research, to increase the SS capital and to aid the *Lebensborn*, to support the widows and orphans of his SS men and to build up his intelligence service. Himmler despised Göring for the luxury in which he lived and was harsh in his condemnation of those who diverted public money to personal ends. Any sort of display was repugnant to him and he set against it the motto of the SS: 'Be more than you appear'. He was never tired of saying that the whole texture of a state could be determined by those two phrases: 'Honour is Loyalty' and 'Be more than you appear'.

This plainness and simplicity were reflected in his own manner of life. He was extremely moderate in matters of eating and drinking. His midday meal consisted of soup, then a fish or meat dish, with apple or lemon juice; he smoked a cigar with his coffee. After lunch, which was not allowed to last more than threequarters of an hour, he carried on with his conferences until his evening meal at eight o'clock. This consisted either of a hot meat dish or a pea soup followed by cheese and salted rolls. Himmler drank a glass of red wine with his supper, after which he lit his second cigar of the day. Then he went straight back to work. During meals service matters were not discussed, but nor was there any small talk. Himmler liked to discuss historical subjects on these occasions—the kingdoms of the Goths, the Vandals,

¹ Approximately £2,000.

the Vikings, the Vorangians and the Normans; the transformation of Europe by the three great movements of Germanic tribes; the settlement policy of King Henry the First; Ghenghis Khan and his methods of government; the great founders of states, etc. It was not at all the case with him that he liked to keep all the talking to himself; on the contrary, he liked his colleagues or guests to contribute to the discussion. But he reserved to himself the deducing of a practical application from such discussions. When he had guests, the food put on the table was very much the same as at other times. They had to be aware that there was a war on and that the table set before them was very much superior to anything that came the way of the fighting troops.

During the war the greater part of Himmler's life was passed at what was known as Field Headquarters, far from his own headquarters, which had the code name of 'Hochwald'. It was close to the village of Posseserm in the Angerburg district of East Prussia. Himmler lived in a barracks two hundred feet long, where he possessed an office eighteen by twenty-five with four windows. The furnishing showed taste but it was simple and suited to its purpose.

I was able to observe Himmler very closely in his personal dealings with various groups of people. Unless he had special reasons for being angry, he was always polite and formal, yet very often friendly.

Himmler was a married man. His wife, a nurse who had looked after him in hospital, was older than he. The marriage did not appear to be a specially happy one, but he always spoke of her in the most respectful way. He had a daughter whose photograph stood on his desk. Himmler was always extremely respectful towards women and he detested any sort of double meanings or obscenity, seeing in this an insult to his own mother. He was very fond of children. Widows and orphans, especially victims of the war, received his whole attention, and when they wanted to talk to him it was strictly forbidden to turn them away with the excuse that the Reichsführer had too much work or could not spare the time.

"Compared with their sacrifice," he liked to say, "the half hour which I sacrifice to them is such a small matter that I would be ashamed if I failed to listen to them or to give them the feeling that there was somebody to whom they could turn." He went out of his way to become extremely unpleasant if some official took too long to carry out their proposals or desires. He always got the official responsible on the telephone and made his own position clear to the man with some severity.

Himmler detested any sort of pettiness. He thought that in the SS

he had an organization of whom he hoped to regenerate the little Party hordes. Those them 'village soviets'. He had any qualification. Here too obvious that every man in the plainly and simply. For all that taught them something, they very clearly. They laughed —especially if they were of unmilitary appearance and parades. But on the other hand and valued him as their best

They usually appeared to the concentration camps and was no concern of theirs. picked corps definitely milit They had a great respect for considered him an authority striking and enduring effect

His political colleagues personal manner of life and they did not regard his as romantic. They suffered greatly Hitler and his hesitations at solved problems at home while the war itself posed many problems of his power.

Brandt once summed up "The Reichsführer SS has what he has to do; the proper reform the existing situation would have the greatest significance at the very moment when they We all talk about far-reaching; a practical problem we work things which at any rate the Reichsführer has comprehended the really decisive question next year."

As the bailiff of an estate some higher position in the

he had an organization of men who were decent and honest, with whom he hoped to regenerate both the state and the Party. He hated the little Party bosses. Those round Himmler made no secret of calling them 'village soviets'. He trusted the word of his SS Leaders without any qualification. Here too he remained a theorist and accepted it as obvious that every man in the SS was honest and unself-seeking, living plainly and simply. For all that, he did possess influence as a man who taught them something, though his SS Leaders saw his weaknesses very clearly. They laughed about his military efforts and were amused—especially if they were officers in the Waffen SS—by his utterly unmilitary appearance and the unfortunate figure he cut at Hitler's parades. But on the other hand they respected his simple way of living and valued him as their best advocate against the bureaucrats.

They usually appeared to have no inkling of what went on inside the concentration camps and regarded them as a political matter which was no concern of theirs. They regarded themselves as soldiers, a picked corps definitely military in character, the 'Reich's fire-brigade'. They had a great respect for Himmler's excursions into history and considered him an authority on the subject. His discourses had a striking and enduring effect on them.

His political colleagues were completely acquainted with his personal manner of life and forgave him his Germanic mysticism. But they did not regard his plans for the Eastern territories as at all romantic. They suffered greatly from his deficiencies with regard to Hitler and his hesitations and refusals to act when faced with unresolved problems at home which had been aggravated by the war; and the war itself posed many problems for a man in his position and with his power.

Brandt once summed up the whole situation for me in these words: "The Reichsführer SS has very able colleagues; he knows exactly what he has to do; the proposals which have been put before him to reform the existing situation have been thought out in detail and would have the greatest significance. But what is the use of all that if, at the very moment when the word should be given, nothing happens? We all talk about far-reaching plans, but when we get down to tackling a practical problem we work without any plan and simply tinker with things which at any rate have got to be patched up somehow. The Reichsführer has comprehensive ideas and plans for the future. But the really decisive question is how we are going to get through the next year."

As the bailiff of an estate, as the mayor of a small town, even in some higher position in the Ministry of Public Worship and Instruction,

Himmler, with his interest in scientific research, would perhaps have done valuable work. Fate gave him a position which he was not able to manage. There was something spasmodic in everything he did. I have already drawn attention to the division in his nature; it was fundamental; his own character was weak and he preached toughness; he carried out actions which were quite foreign to his nature simply because his Führer ordered them—even the actual annihilation of human beings.

This Himmler who had the mind of an ordinary civilian was dominated by another Himmler whose imagination was controlled by such phrases as 'The preservation of the Germanic race justifies cruelty', or 'Unqualified obedience to the Führer'. This other Himmler entered realms which transcended the merely human and ventured into another world. Thus it was possible for such things as this to happen: Himmler, towards the end of the war, explained to one of his officials in my presence that he should make it clear to the wife of a man who had been executed that this was indeed a severe blow that fate had dealt her—it was only natural for her to be upset—but that the needs of the state transcended any human destiny.

His severe stomach-convulsions were not, as he supposed, simply due to a poor constitution or to overwork; they were rather the expression of this psychic division which extended over his whole life. I soon realized that while I could bring him momentary relief and even help over longer periods, I could never achieve a fundamental cure. The basic cause of these convulsions was not removed, was indeed constantly being aggravated. It was inevitable that in times of psychic stress his physical pains should also increase.

Thus the reader who has some acquaintance with psychology is already in a position to answer the question which is constantly being put me: how was it possible that I was repeatedly able to influence Himmler in directions which were flagrantly opposed to the orders of his Führer, beginning with the release of individual Jews and going on to the reception of the World Jewish Congress representative and the great campaigns to release prisoners in the years 1944 and 1945? Strange though it may sound, this was essentially a medical problem. I might almost say that it was Himmler's stomach-cramps which enabled me to rescue my *protégés*—but not in the superficial sense that the release of prisoners was my price for treating Himmler; it was far more that when he was ill I first came into contact with the human side of Himmler's character. When he was in good health, this was so overlaid with the rules and regulations which he invented or which were imposed upon him that nobody, not even his closest relations, could

have got anything out of him which of any conflict arising he would relations, exactly as the law deep rooted in a part of his character were emotions.

As this obedience to law and something quite different, namely feelings, it was possible for anyone these feelings to come to an understanding of negotiating agreements with his orders. Because he was utterly cut off from anybody on whom to lean, he was who had no connection with the world simply a human being. At such times successfully.

It is also evident that disasters of this stamp achieved a position of a striking figure; he had something in common with Robespierre. He was accorded both the terror inspired by overwork and the plans of a Faust and the head of a Janus, for one side of the head revealed nothing but a skull.

To give a complete picture of rules and regulations is beyond the scope of this book, a considerable part of which is a contribution to a full presentation of the sequences can be drawn from the power. Whatever is taken into account overlook the fact that for countless was death and destruction.

have got anything out of him which ran counter to them. In the event of any conflict arising he would have behaved, even to his own relations, exactly as the law demanded. His blind obedience was rooted in a part of his character which was quite inaccessible to other emotions.

As this obedience to law and order was, however, really based on something quite different, namely on Himmler's ordinary middle-class feelings, it was possible for anybody who knew how to penetrate to these feelings to come to an understanding with him—even to the point of negotiating agreements with him which ran counter to the Führer's orders. Because he was utterly cut off from his natural roots and needed somebody on whom to lean, he was happy to have a man beside him who had no connection with the Party hierarchy, somebody who was simply a human being. At such moments I was able to appeal to him successfully.

It is also evident that disasters could only ensue when a character of this stamp achieved a position of supreme power. His was a vacillating figure; he had something in him of a Wallenstein, something of a Robespierre. He was accorded both the respect which controls armies and the terror inspired by overwhelming power. His head contained both the plans of a Faust and the schemes of a Mephistopheles; it was the head of a Janus, for one side showed traits of loyalty, while the other revealed nothing but a skull.

To give a complete picture of Himmler or reveal his innumerable rules and regulations is beyond the scope of this book. My notebooks, a considerable part of which is reproduced here, are only a contribution to a full presentation of Himmler. I know what consequences can be drawn from these notes and what is beyond their power. Whatever is taken into account, no absolution of Himmler can overlook the fact that for countless human beings his sole significance was death and destruction.