

Keegan First World War

1914-1919

Keegan & others

1914-1919

To be reconstituted
when preparing War. Lib. I.

1914-1919

171-172

110, 225, 230
179-192 112-120, 271-2

585-Even
etc. many
clear

The Life and Death of ^{thorn} Adolf Hitler ⁵⁹¹ ^{Last} Testament ^{of A.H.}

456

Geli Raubal's
suicide
suicidal
after fall
of Hitler

Robert Payne

For Sale

592-598

Important
Chronology

also see 591-598
568-574,

Praeger Publishers

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Hitler

A Study in Tyranny

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

p102
Talk to
the industrial
the let's
his own
brilliantly

D. T. says
even the
other is
interesting,
why?

because
he doesn't
know how
it's all
going to
turn out.
(Gang)

THE DEVIL

D.T.
An
immense
balloon

better off avoided. It is arguably risky to steer one's course toward the dark side voluntarily, for one only has to mention the Devil and he manifests himself in one way or another—we were chaperoned during the writing of this book by a leering, cackling flock of ravens that roosted outside our window. We persevered, however, determined that it is better to know what one is up against after all, and besides, it is infinitely more fun to play with the bad guys.

But it is not easy to tread lightly on the subject of evil and its mythology. In writing this book, one thing became clear: the nature of wickedness and its incarnate representation, the Devil, are as slippery as a serpent in one's intellectual grasp. Great religious thinkers from Enoch to Saint Thomas Aquinas to more contemporary writers have struggled valiantly to construct workable theories to rationalize the existence of a benevolent God in light of the overwhelming suffering, maliciousness, and unjustifiable misery in the world. It would take several volumes larger than this to go into these individual theories in the depth they deserve, but we encourage anyone who is interested in the subject to pursue this study. It is riveting social history, philosophy, and prophecy, as relevant today as it ever has been. The thread that remains consistent in these ideas, however, is the acceptance that, at least for now, the Devil and his minions appear to have the upper hand in the dealings with mortals and the physical world they inhabit (because, most of these theoreticians would argue, God wants it that way).

*The devil tempts all,
but the idle man
tempts the devil.*



Seal of Lucifer

D.T.
Absolutely
entire

*The Devil in repose,
15th century*

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his Jewish policy only if he might apply his war policy. So he gave the German policy top public billing from the Landsberg jail to the Berlin bunker, from near start to near finish. And he traced it solely according to German traumatic needs even if his nursling's libido did lend it a personal motive force along with its special rhetorical form.

Into Hitler's anti-Semitism went, then, his traumatic thrust aligned on Germany's; into his expansionism went Germany's traumatic thrust steeped in his nursling's libido. The premises beneath the two policies—Germany's Jewish cancer and poison, the feeding ground won and lost by Germany in 1917–1918—were as different as the drives behind them. He gradually coordinated the two in theory and later in practice. Psychologically they remained quite separate: few nursling's motives came into his Jewish politics, few 1907 motives into his program for world power.⁵ And yet he did the coordinating for himself rather than for his public, for he kept its high points secret—his book of 1928 and later the parallelism of Barbarossa and the Final Solution. In practice, his programmed misplay for world power complemented his designs on Jewry and Germany even before any coordinating. Only in conditions of war could Germany's Jews be transported and liquidated. To go after Jewry outside Germany called for military action outside Germany. And mother Germany could be destroyed only through a new defeat carried to a full finish, as *Mein Kampf* already provided: "Germany will be a world power or will cease to be."⁶ He could at least have publicized the confluence of his two courses in the direction of Moscow, whereas he held his side of the Moscow run secret before Barbarossa. In any case he needed, in order to coordinate his two courses in theory, not just a confluence between them but a common doctrinal source from which they would flow.

He was out to devise such a unitary doctrine before he plotted that second course in public during his incarceration for the failed Putsch—possibly even before he indicated it in private to Cuno's confidant in late December 1922, during the seventeen months he took to project into the future the feeding ground Germany gained at Brest-Litovsk and lost at Compiègne.⁷ That

enclosing Alpha and Omega of
his relations 87-10 woman

1916

1916 + ^{early} 1920s

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voice. I had the peculiar feeling that its excitement was his doing and yet was prompting his words at the same time."⁵ The hate and pain that sounded in Hitler's oratory of 1919 and after, its shrill pitch and brutal inflections, were foreign to the prewar artist and wartime dispatch bearer. New too after 1918 was his compelling sense of purpose manifest on the rostrum and off. Earlier he was inward and awkward, bookish and prankish, unassuming and undemanding. "Hitler was then . . . just about the opposite of what he was later," declared his regimental adjutant of World War I, Fritz Wiedemann, in 1948.⁶ Wiedemann well remembered the perennial private first class as "a particularly quiet, modest, dutiful subordinate" with no capacity whatever for leadership.⁷ Encountering Hitler at a regimental reunion in the early 1920s, Wiedemann "could tell at a glance that he had become another man."⁸ Of all his features not in evidence before the postwar period, the most arresting was his hypnotic gaze.⁹

The change in Hitler had an ideological aspect that seemed to govern the rest. Apparently he was not an anti-Semite until the end of World War I despite his subsequent claim to have become one earlier in Vienna.¹⁰ His boyhood friend from Linz, August Kubizek, later described him converting to anti-Semitism when they roomed together in Vienna in the spring of 1908. But Kubizek's account, loosely aligned on Hitler's own in *Mein Kampf*,¹¹ is at odds with the best evidence on the decade that followed. Fritz Wiedemann and Hitler's fellow dispatch bearers Ernst Schmidt and Ignaz Westenkirchner flatly denied his anti-Semitism for 1914-1918.¹² Anti-Semitism is conspicuously unmentioned in the four relevant memoirs on him in the Nazi Archive (one by a cotenant of a men's hostel in Vienna and three by regimental comrades)¹³ and is absent from all his known correspondence predating the 1918 defeat. He had positive relations with a whole run of Jews, from the doctor who treated his mother in Linz until her death in December 1907 to his battalion and, briefly, regimental adjutant who obtained the Iron Cross First Class for him in August 1918.¹⁴ The pretended firsthand accounts besides Kubizek's that accord with Hitler's own dating of his anti-Semitism back to 1908 or 1909 are no evidence. One

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 to the emergence of an Al³ plus or
 an Omega.

1914 - 1917

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1914 - 1917

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634 HITLER 1889-1936

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NOTES T

100. Joachimsthaler, 120-21, 124.
101. *Monologe*, 71 (25-6 September 1941).
102. Joachimsthaler, 159-60.
103. Wiedemann, 26.
104. Joachimsthaler, 159-60.
105. Joachimsthaler, 126-7, 135, 277 n.339; Heinz, 65.
106. MK, 181-2; see Joachimsthaler, 129.
107. Examples cited in Joachimsthaler, 125, 128, 152-3, 155-6.
108. The regimental command post at Fromelles, from where military operations were directed, was about three kilometres behind the front. The regimental staff, forming the administrative support, were based an hour's walk away at Fournes. Hitler and the other dispatch runners worked in shifts of three days at Fromelles followed by three rest days at Fournes. (For Hitler's time there, see Joachimsthaler, 123, 126-7, 135-40.) Hitler claimed in 1944 that he had carried around with him throughout the entire First World War the five volumes of Schopenhauer's work (*Monologe*, 411 (19 May 1944)). Hans Frank remembered him saying much the same thing (Frank, 46).
109. Wiedemann, 24-5.
110. Balthasar Brandmayer, *Meldegänger Hitler 1914-18*, 2nd edn, Munich/Kolbermoor, 1933, 51-2. Brandmayer remained one of the few people allowed to address Hitler with the familiar 'Du'. This did not prevent him receiving a warning in 1939, passed on by the Kanzlei des Führers, to avoid meddling in Party matters and 'sowing discontent among the people' through his complaints about the closure of a Catholic Kindergarten in his home town of Bruckmühl in Bavaria. Two years earlier, the Munich branch of the Reichsschrifttumskammer had sought permission to drop any reference to Hitler in the title of Brandmayer's book (BDC, Personal File of Balthasar Brandmayer, letters of Kanzlei des Führers, 18 October 1939, and Reichsschrifttumskammer München-Oberbayern, 12 November 1937).
111. JK, 68; Joachimsthaler, 130-31. The British journalist Ward Price much later recorded Hitler's characteristic embellishment of the story, claiming that he followed an inner voice as clear as a military command, telling him to leave the trench immediately (G. Ward Price, *I Know These Dictators*, London, 1937, 38).
112. JK, 60.
113. JK, 68.
114. JK, 61.
115. Wiedemann, 25-6; Brandmayer, 61, 68; Joachimsthaler, 140-44, 155-6. Two of those who knew Hitler during the war - Hans Mend and Korbinian Rutz - and subsequently published less than flattering recollections of him landed after 1933 in Dachau. See Joachimsthaler, 113, 143, 152-4, 271 n.193, 284 n.430. Rutz was dismissed from his teaching post after Hitler had been consulted but had declined to intervene on behalf of his former wartime comrade, declaring him to be 'inferior' (*minderwertig*) (BDC, Personal File, Korbinian Rutz, Hans-Heinrich Lammers to the Reich Governor of Bavaria, 17 March 1934).

116. Brandmayer, 105. Fe Loret, during his time in Sohnes', *Zeitgeschichte*, 5 emphasized by Joachimsthaler to produce (in collaboration with Hitler, Paris, 1981). They i her relationship with Hitler German historian Werner himself, in correspondence authenticity of a number o works of Hitler (IfZ, ZS 3
117. Joachimsthaler, 144-made major careers for th that. Amann's property in not in that league, Wiedem Mercedes, and 'loans' and Third Reich (Joachimstha
118. Brandmayer, 72, 105;
119. See Joachimsthaler, 12
120. Brandmayer, 52-6.
121. Brandmayer, 43-4.
122. Brandmayer, 102.
123. *Monologe*, 219 (22-3
124. Hitler told Albert Spe friends, Fraulein Braun at remarked in his diary: 'The has become a true compani living being who is constant
125. *Monologe*, 129.
126. Heinrich Lugaer tes Joachimsthaler, 134.
127. Brandmayer, 66-8.
128. JK, 69; Maser, *Hitlers*
129. But see the comment of admittedly rosy-coloured t politics.'
130. MK, 182 (trans., MK
131. Joachimsthaler, 159. E later remarked: 'He didn't t time' (Heinz, 98).
132. Toland, 66.
133. Brandmayer, 115. See things seemed to get his goa

* D.T. I want that voice. We have
such a ability and can
employ it, provided we do not
the principle

It is one of our most expensive tools.

PSYCOGRAPHIC

OD: ADOLF HITLER

ld annex Austria and
"Magyars, Czechs and
" and that Polish Jews
distinguished sociolo-
icized the government's
ent on human rights.
hanks to us that Poles
(*Menschen gemacht*)⁹⁵
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eptive to Hitler: it was
and sought to justify
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otan and Siegfried and
ch as Barbarossa. In
d all become national
n myth, mystery, and
d the mystical powers

attraction to Germans,
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1914-1918

1800s

1908

The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

just as the motion of the winds keeps the sea from the foulness which a constant calm would produce—so war prevents the corruption of nations which a perpetual . . . peace would produce."⁹⁸

One of Julius Langbehn's favorite arguments was that war was creative and necessary for cultural advance. Treitschke, too, in dozens of impassioned lectures, glorified war with a fanaticism worthy of Hitler: "War is political science par excellence . . . only in war does a Volk become in very deed a Volk. . . . The idea of perpetual peace is not only impossible, but immoral as well. . . . War is the very sphere in which we can most clearly trace the triumph of human reason. . . . The army, not parliament, is the most valuable institution of the State."⁹⁹ Oswald Spengler was equally enthusiastic about the benefits of battle, finding it "the eternal form of higher existence" and concluding that "states exist for the purpose of waging war."¹⁰⁰

The elder von Moltke (1800-1891), the famous chief of the Prussian General Staff, was not interested in politics. Yet he influenced political developments by placing his enormous prestige behind the doctrine that war was both inevitable and beneficial. His words were remembered and widely quoted: "Eternal peace is a dream and not even a very pleasant one, and war is a part of God's creation. It has enfolded the noblest virtues [*Tugenden*] of man: courage and self-renunciation, loyalty to duty and willingness to sacrifice with one's life. Without war the world would sink into materialism."¹⁰¹

One of the most influential books published in Germany during the immediate prewar years was prophetically entitled *Germany and the Next War*. It first appeared in 1911 and quickly went through seven huge printings. The author—who had been a student of Treitschke's—set forth a simple thesis: "War is a biological necessity of the first importance. . . . The efforts directed toward the abolition of war must not only be termed foolish, but absolutely immoral, . . . unworthy of the human race. . . ." He closed his first chapter, entitled "The Right to Make War," with Goethe's "manly words":

Dreams of a peaceful day?
Let him dream who may!
"War" is our rallying cry,
Onward to victory!¹⁰²

The emperor himself made notable contributions to the cult of force. No head of state in any other country reveled in such brutal exhortations. Indeed, his speeches on the eve of battle served as remarkable precedents to the orders later given by Hitler. For example, in launching the Polish campaign which started World War II, the Führer told his commanders to "close your hearts to pity . . . act brutally." Decades before, in sending German troops to China to put down the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, William II had issued orders which were to give the name of "Hun" to German soldiers during World War I:

Heget
Adolf
in
A. H.
inquiry
of
Rehm

1923
before
the
Rothsch

in
1944
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preedy 138

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The Past As Prologue: Hitler

Frederick William as set forth in army regulations of 1726 was a preview:

When one takes the oath to the flag one renounces oneself and surrenders entirely even one's life and everything to the monarch. . . . Through this blind obedience one receives the grace and confirmation of the title of soldier.

The king's bureaucracy, less well remembered in popular history, had at least as much historical importance as the army. Indeed, the two institutions were related in spirit and form. The civil service was operated like the army, with the same bristling discipline, absolute subordination, and complete centralization. Both institutions were calculated to eliminate all personal opinion and initiative and to make officials subordinate to the king alone.¹⁴

The king's control over the private lives of his subjects often seemed to fulfill the royal boast that "salvation is God's affair; everything else belongs to me." His chief means for enforcing that claim was his formidable and ubiquitous army of state officials who "wore the king's coat." They spread his autocratic system into every hamlet of the realm. Along with army veterans and elementary school teachers (who were usually army veterans), they inculcated the "correct attitudes" associated with what have become known as the "Prussian virtues" of obedience, discipline, industry, and thrift.

Frederick William's influence was felt by generations of his countrymen. Writing in 1914, a leading historian said that Germany "still carries the . . . ineradicable stamp of his personality." In 1933, Oswald

* The monarch practiced the virtues he preached. His marginalia on requests for money, for example, bear witness to the royal frugality—as well as his penchant for writing doggerel and thinking about excrement. On one occasion, he noted that he could not fulfill a petitioner's request because he had to feed 100,000 men, and not even the king of Prussia was able to shit gold:

Eure Bitte kann ich nicht gewähren
Ich habe hunderttausend Mann zu ernähren
Gold kann ich nicht scheissen
Friedrich Wilhelm, König in Preussen.

The royal concern about feces and flatulence was shared by other famous Germans. Hitler's anal fixation has been noted (see Chapter 3, p. 148), and Martin Luther believed that the products of the anus provided the best defense against the Devil. He could render the Devil helpless, he firmly believed, if he could but "fart into his nostrils." He wrote a message personally addressed to the Devil saying, "Note this down: I have shit in my pants, and you can hang them around your neck and wipe your mouth with it" (Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 61, 245). One of Frederick William's descendants, Emperor William II, wrote in a marginal note on a state paper that the best thing to do with the suggestions of the Hague Conference of 1899 with regard to restrictions on the conduct of war was to "shit on their resolutions"; see *Die grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette* (Berlin, 1924), 4: 306.

Spengler called the king t him and his son as their conscience" of National So Frederick II, called F greater impact than his f Hitler. Certainly no one i Austrian—was hailed with (Frederick the Unique), w many but the greatest m place in the German valha and Bismarck." Neubauer through many editions be to honor him as the ideal solitary height above his philosopher and historian, and complete devotion to th The reign of the fam cation of attitudes and in Frederick the Great, the z creased in social importan like his father, the son ex a document giving the "sac not invade young Maria man barely in his grave, unprovoked assault on a r

Let the ignorant and compass by which I s am more enamoured tl

This "rape of Silesia" war that would give Frede commander. His brilliant v would be studied in the p examples of superb genera "masterpiece . . . which w immortal." Popular history as the intrepid national he surrounded by "those dan Russia, and Madame de Poi though half the world oppos

This is the memory t perate days in the Berlin a of 1945, as he sat before t frantically reading the Germ raphy hoping to find inspir.

254

It was but one of Martin Luther's most important works. It was the D. K. which was back in disarray for the

but is poisonous to living man
but fartsmanship itself. To love
the smell of farts is to approach
the Devil's most subtle concern
for salvation - which is to
use everything of value which
has been discarded.

Scum
Hitler
in
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1914

D. K.
on
similarity
of D.K.'s
fixation

D. K.
the
devil's
fixation.

1944 Hitler's little
song

In 1938
to Spengler

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

Semite: if a Jew lies, he
or know that he is always

Semites was so great it
er letter to his sister, who
k:

test stupidities—for your
an anti-Semitic chief ex
f life which fills me again
is a matter of honor with
ocal in relation to anti-
in my writings. . . . That
y *Anti-Semitic Corresponden-*
eral times. . . .⁶⁶

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eative purposes; he was
nitment to self-awareness
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nd constitutions; the con-
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o build new forms in the
was more potent than the

he coming of Nazism was
f the century, his call for

The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

1915-1916 1888

"triumphant negation" was being listened to by thousands of young Germans. It is noteworthy that when Adolf Hitler and his generation went to war in 1914 they took Nietzsche with them in their knapsacks—along with Luther's translation of the New Testament, a book Nietzsche so thoroughly despised. A wartime edition of *Also sprach Zarathustra* was specially printed, bound in durable field-gray, and sold to tens of thousands of German soldiers.* How many young volunteers, including Adolf Hitler, read and remembered Nietzsche's lines hailing negation and announcing the coming of "the last man . . . the most despicable man [*der verächtlichste Mensch*]"?

Alas! The most despicable man is coming,
he who can no longer despise himself.
Behold! I show you the last man.

What is love? What is creation? What is longing?
What is the star?—
Thus asks the last man and blinks.

How many young minds responded to Nietzsche's defiant rejection of traditional ethical values, his exaltation of brutality and destruction, his sneering references to pity and the teachings of Jesus?

You say a good cause can even sanctify war?
I say unto you: it is a good war that sanctifies
any cause.

You shall love peace as a means to new wars,
And the short peace more than the long!

For a sword wants to drink blood
And glistens with desire [*funkelt vor Begierde*].

I sing and I mock all pity . . .
God is dead . . .

"Man is evil," so spoke all the wisest to
comfort me . . .
"Man must become better and more evil," so I teach.

The greatest evil is necessary for the Superman's
best
[*Das Böseste ist nötig zu des Übermenschen Bestem*].

It may have been good for that Preacher of the
little people

* The title page of the copy before me as I write reads: 141-150 Tausend, *Kriegsausgabe*.

1888

1914-16

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

That He suffered and bore the sins of man.
But I rejoice over great sin as my great comfort . . .

Thus spake Zarathustra.⁶⁹

Nietzsche's emphasis on negation fit the mood of disillusionment which swept postwar Germany. His slashing attacks on all systems of politics and morality continued to make him far and away the most widely read philosopher among the youth of Germany during the decade prior to Hitler's accession to power. Nietzsche did as much as any single writer to destroy a moderate alternative to political extremism. For he would tolerate no half-measures; he demanded totality—total destruction and total creation. He despised Heinrich Heine's "subduing talisman of the Cross"; he rejected Goethe's sense of restraint and limitation; he ridiculed political moderation; he trumpeted "the magic power of extremes." His invitation to live dangerously—"Build your cities under Vesuvius! . . . Live at war! . . . Be robbers and conquerors!"—was taken up with enthusiasm by those who would come of age in 1933.

Nietzsche also made a positive contribution to Hitler's receptibility. His most persuasive call had been the power of the will and the Will to Power—a will that was self-justifying, with no reference to any recognizable external standard. The last sentences of his notes, collected as *Will to Power*, took on an ominous sound as they reverberated in the Third Reich. After talking of his "mystery world of . . . voluptuous delight," of a world "beyond good and evil . . . without goal," Nietzsche concludes:

Do you want a name for this world? A solution for all its riddles? A light for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men?—*This world is the will to power—and nothing besides!* And you yourself are also this will to power—and nothing besides!⁷⁰

The single principle to which he reduced life was the irrational Will to Power, a slogan he did not mean politically but one which was easily distorted and appropriated by Hitler's brutalizing politics. So was the final commandment Zarathustra gave to his followers: "This new tablet oh my brothers, I place over you: *become hard!*"⁷¹

There can be no doubt that, using the same words, Nietzsche and Hitler meant quite different things. But the words were the same. On occasion, Nietzsche could seem to glory in brutality with the relish of an SS officer. Again, it may be said that he did not really mean what he wrote. But if he was misinterpreted by the Nazis, he had no one but himself to blame:

To witness suffering is pleasant, to inflict it even more so. . . .
There is no festivity without cruelty; so teaches the longest, oldest

280

*A. H. compels himself to this
vehicle-masturbating.*

* Dr. K. was appalled by the waste of the great world. He was aware of how profoundly we had perverted the wells and captured the compass of society. He was desperate. He was looking for large solutions. He believed in a dystopia, he believed in the power, he believed in the power of the state and the power of the state in the machine. He believed in all this.

the idea that the D.O. had done his best to support 500 years ago.

The Past As Prologue: Hitler and

est history of mankind
very festive!

Nietzsche, like the Nazis, systems of morality and morality was thinking in neither racial "inferiors" would not have Nietzsche's Superman had perspective, the inferior bel up to his standards. They felt the same way about Pole

There is one arresting, mously published, which Nietzsche must find the thought these words mean that this thought in patterns not dictator. In contemplating a

The Great Politics [Diogy the mistress over: strong enough to breed form of humanity v Härte] against the deg which corrupts, poisons in the annihilation of soul.⁷²

Predictably, the Nazi "philosophers" to demonstrate his thesis to brothers."⁷³

It cannot be emphasized Nietzsche sought was to be that his enemy was not the mean racist biology. Never terminology in setting forth demanded that his follower of people he considered to accused of conspiring to higher breed of men.

The greatest irony of Nietzsche of his most distinguished essays, entitled "Nietzsche's story," Mann summarized Nietzsche first recalled how the people held their traditions in asked,

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16 1944

ian.
comfort...

est history of mankind. Even in punishment there is something very festive!

Nietzsche, like the Nazis, talked of two "species" of men with two systems of morality and modes of conduct: masters and slaves. True, he was thinking in neither racial nor social terms, but his attitude toward "inferiors" would not have seemed strange to a guard at Auschwitz. Nietzsche's Superman had elitist contempt for "Undermen." From his perspective, the inferior beings were simply those who did not measure up to his standards. They were to be treated like chattel.⁷² Hitler felt the same way about Poles, Russians, Gypsies, and Jews.

There is one arresting paragraph in Nietzsche's notebooks, posthumously published, which demands commentary. Anyone who admires Nietzsche must find the thought appalling, but if words mean anything, these words mean that this sensitive poet and philosopher sometimes thought in patterns not dissimilar from the brutal demagogue and dictator. In contemplating a new order of society Nietzsche wrote:

The Great Politics [Die grosse Politik] intends to make physiology the mistress over all other questions. She will create a power strong enough to breed [züchten] a more complete and higher form of humanity with merciless hardness [schonungsloser Härte] against the degenerate and parasitic in life—against that which corrupts, poisons, defames, and destroys... and which sees in the annihilation of life the mark of a higher form of the soul.⁷³

Quoted by Rosenberg in a speech in 1944 *

Predictably, the Nazi "philosopher" Alfred Rosenberg quoted this passage to demonstrate his thesis that the Nazis and Nietzsche were "spiritual brothers."⁷⁴

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the "New Order" which Nietzsche sought was to be directed by a philosopher, not a demagogue; that his enemy was not the Jewish people; that by physiology he did not mean racist biology. Nevertheless, Hitler would use *precisely the same terminology* in setting forth his ideology for the Third Reich: he too demanded that his followers be "mercilessly hard" in crushing a group of people he considered to be "degenerate and parasitic"—those he accused of conspiring to "corrupt, poison, defame, and destroy" a higher breed of men.

D.T.2

The greatest irony of Nietzsche's life and thought was noted by one of his most distinguished admirers, Thomas Mann. In one of his last essays, entitled "Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Recent History," Mann summarized Nietzsche's contribution to Hitler's Germany. He first recalled how the philosopher had criticized his fellow Germans and held their traditions in contempt. "But who, in the end," Mann then asked,

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* P.T.: Rosenberg - he never gave up! Now he was

advocating death as victory.
P.T.2: Nietzsche was the voice of the D.K. and he had all the vices of the D.K. - large thoughts, impatience, a hatred of the mediocre. * He, like the D.K., sensed that the mediocre were the ones who accomplished less in life than they were capable of. *
* For only thus mediocrity could exist and come to an end. *
* To be ruled by a mediocrity is a disaster and a curse and was in the course of its quite capable of turning Nietzsche on his head.

ler's grasp of how to create a mass-movement and secure power on the basis of these ideas.

The three parties which interested Hitler were the Austrian Social Democrats, Georg von Schönerer's Pan-German Nationalists, and Karl Lueger's Christian Social Party.

From the Social Democrats Hitler derived the idea of a mass party and mass propaganda. Studying the Social Democratic Press and Party speeches, Hitler reached the conclusion that: 'the psyche of the broad masses is accessible only to what is strong and uncompromising. . . . The masses of the people prefer the ruler to the suppliant and are filled with a stronger sense of mental security by a teaching that brooks no rival than by a teaching which offers them a liberal choice. They have very little idea of how to make such a choice and thus are prone to feel that they have been abandoned. Whereas they feel very little shame at being terrorized intellectually and are scarcely conscious of the fact that their freedom as human beings is impudently abused. . . . I also came to understand that physical intimidation has its significance for the mass as well as the individual. . . . For the successes which are thus obtained are taken by the adherents as a triumphant symbol of the righteousness of their own cause; while the beaten opponent very often loses faith in the effectiveness of any further resistance.'

From Schönerer Hitler took his extreme German Nationalism, his anti-Socialism, his anti-Semitism, his hatred of the Hapsburgs and his programme of reunion with Germany. But he learned as much from what he believed were the three cardinal errors committed by Schönerer and the Nationalists in their political tactics: The Nationalists failed to grasp the importance of the social problem, directing their attention to the middle classes and neglecting the masses. They wasted their energy in a parliamentary

struggle and failed to est leaders of a great movement mistake of attacking the (their forces instead of com of leadership,' Hitler wrote, the attention of the people and taking care that nothing. . . . The leader of ge to make different opponen longed to one category.'

It was in the third party and their remarkable leader found brilliantly displayed tics, the lack of which han Nationalists. Lueger had m of Vienna—in many ways tive post in Austria—and l cialists under his leadership party in the Austrian parlia criticize in Lueger's progr was based on religious and grounds ('I decide who is a and he rejected the intran: Pan-Germans, seeking to pr Hapsburg State with its But Hitler was prepared to admiration for Lueger's lea

The strength of Lueger's middle class of Vienna, the ness men and artisans, the ipal employees. 'He devoted political activity,' Hitler nc ning over those sections existence was in danger.'

Finally, instead of quar: Lueger made it his ally and ditional loyalty to crown which again points forward

ck to adopt all available
ort of long-established in-
o derive the greatest pos-
ovement from those old

on to suppose that at this
formulated clearly the
mpf in the middle of the
reater part of the experi-
s already complete when
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eft Vienna for good and
ontier to Munich. He was
awkward, moody and re-
on of hatred and fanati-
ne broke out in a torrent
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eaks of leaving Vienna in
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had come to detest.

on is that Hitler was anx-
vice, for which he had
ince 1910. Inquiries were
nd he may have found it
ontier. Eventually he was
ed to present himself for

examination at Linz. Hitler denied that he had left
Vienna to avoid conscription, and asked, on account
of his lack of means, to be allowed to report at Salz-
burg, which was nearer to Munich than Linz. His re-
quest was agreed to, and he duly presented himself
for examination at Salzburg on 5 February 1914. He
was rejected for military or auxiliary service on the
grounds of poor health.

In Munich he found lodgings with a tailor's family,
by the name of Popp, which lived in a poor quarter
near the barracks. In retrospect, Hitler described
this as 'by far the happiest time of my life. . . . I
came to love that city more than any other place
known to me. A German city. How different from Vi-
enna.'

It may be doubted if this represented Hitler's feel-
ings at the time. His life followed much the same
pattern as before. His dislike of hard work and regu-
lar employment had by now hardened into a habit.
He made a precarious living by drawing advertise-
ments and posters, or peddling sketches to dealers.
He was perpetually short of money.

The shadowy picture that emerges from the remi-
niscences of the few people who knew him in Munich
is once again of a man living in his own world of
fantasy. He gives the same impression of eccentricity
and lack of balance, brooding and muttering to him-
self over his extravagant theories of race, anti-Semi-
tism, and anti-Marxism, then bursting out in wild,
sarcastic diatribes. He spent much time in cafés and
beer-cellars, devouring the newspapers and arguing
about politics.

Frau Popp, his landlady, speaks of him as a vor-
acious reader, an impression Hitler more than once
tries to create in *Mein Kampf*. Yet nowhere is there
any indication of the works he read. Hitler's own
comment on reading is illuminating: 'Reading is not
an end in itself, but a means to an end. . . . One who

erty Leader, 1889-1933

ding will instantly dis-
amphlet, what ought to
ets one's personal needs
vledge.'

with a closed mind, read-
already believes, ignor-
is preconceived scheme.

ignorance and indiffer-
the situation of the Ger-
the two states, the Ger-
rg Monarchy, had been
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alliance of Germany and
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of disintegration.

as assassinated by Ser-
28 June 1914, Hitler's
For, in his eyes, it was
o the Hapsburg throne,
ole than anyone else for
the Slav peoples which
nan nationalists. But, as
tbreak of a general Eu-
side his doubts. At least
to fight, and could not,
say her ally Germany. 'I
se of Austria fighting to

The Formative Years, 1889-1918

Aug 1914

28

get satisfaction from Serbia, but rather a case of
Germany fighting for her own existence . . . for its
freedom and for its future. . . For me, as for every
other German, the most memorable period of my
life now began. Face to face with that mighty strug-
gle all the past fell away into oblivion.'

There were other, deeper and more personal rea-
sons for his satisfaction. War meant to Hitler the
opportunity to slough off the frustration, failure, and
resentment of the past six years. Here was an escape
from the tension and dissatisfaction of a lonely in-
dividuality into the excitement and warmth of a
close, disciplined, collective life, in which he could
identify himself with the power and purpose of a
great organization.

On 1 August Hitler was in the cheering, singing
crowd which gathered on the Odeonsplatz to listen
to the proclamation declaring war. In a chance photo-
graph that has been preserved his face is clearly
recognizable, his eyes excited and exultant; it is the
face of a man who has come home at last. Two days
later he addressed a formal petition to King Ludwig
III of Bavaria, asking to be allowed to volunteer, al-
though of Austrian nationality, for a Bavarian regi-
ment. The reply granted his request. 'I opened the
document with trembling hands; no words of mine
can describe the satisfaction I felt. . . Within a
few days I was wearing that uniform which I was
not to put off again for nearly six years.'

Together with a large number of other volunteers
he was enrolled in the 1st Company of the 16th Ba-
varian Reserve Infantry Regiment, known from its
original commander as the List Regiment. Another
volunteer in the same regiment was Rudolf Hess;
the regimental clerk was a Sergeant-major Max
Amann, later to become business manager of the
Nazi Party's paper and of the Party publishing

* He is thinking of the rejection by
the art Academy in Vienna. On
learning that the army has accepted

him, he takes now never to return.
By our nearness to him, we presumed
the commander to be not to the army
and that we could, if necessary, meet
the power of the now into it of force.

him, he takes now never to return. see p 90 Kershaw.

Do in fact, I
was in error.
His memory of the
time was not the
was a policy which
was designed to be
but it was not
to be that even
believed to until I received it out further. see p 90 Kershaw.

sent back to a military hospital at Pasewalk, not far from Stettin. He was still there, recovering from the injury to his eyes, when the war ended with the capitulation of 11 November.

What sort of a soldier was Hitler? As early as December 1914, he had been awarded the Iron Cross, Second Class, and when Hitler, in March 1932, brought a lawsuit against a newspaper which had accused him of cowardice, his former commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Engelhardt, testified to his bravery in the fighting of November 1914, when the regiment had first gone into action. Much more interesting is the Iron Cross, First Class, an uncommon decoration for a corporal, which Hitler was awarded in 1918. The most varied and improbable accounts have been given of the action for which he won this. The official history of the List Regiment says nothing at all. Whatever the occasion, it was certainly a decoration of which Hitler was proud and which he habitually wore after he had become Chancellor.

In view of his long service and the shortage of officers in the German Army in the last months of the war, the fact that Hitler never rose above the rank of corporal aroused curiosity and was much discussed in the German Press before 1933. There is no evidence that Hitler ever applied or was eager for promotion to the rank of non-commissioned officer, leave alone a commission. Probably the impression of eccentricity which he continued to give was no recommendation.

While not unpopular with his comrades, they felt that he did not share their interests or attitude to the war. He did not care about leave or women. He was silent when the others grumbled about the time they had to spend in the trenches or the hardships. Konrad Heiden, in his book *Der Führer*, says, 'We all cursed him and found him intolerable. There was

look up p26
in Heiden

al training in Munich, Lechfeld, and then, on or the Front.

into the line as reinforcement Division of the Baucht's VIth Army. Hitting was in one of the engagements of the war, in the British succeeded by the Germans to the coast. For four days was in the thick of the sh round Becelaere and a regiment from three hundred men.

served as a *Meldegänger* to carry messages between H.Q. Although he was here is little doubt that job, and for the greater the Front or not far in

took part in the heavy near Bapaume on 7 October the leg. He was sent time in two years. Afnitz, near Berlin, and at station of his regiment, the beginning of March corporal. He was in time of the Battle of Arras in the summer. With er went forward in the in the spring of 1918.

4 October the British was caught on a hill as were affected. By the he could no longer see. or he collapsed and was

18 Jan 1914
to Feb

for military service, and promptly took him under arrest prior to handing him over to the Austrian authorities.⁶⁸ The Munich police had for some reason delayed delivery of the summons for several days before the Sunday, leaving Hitler as a consequence extremely short notice to comply with its demand to be in Linz by the Tuesday. That, together with Hitler's run-down appearance, lack of ready money, apologetic demeanour, and somewhat pathetic explanation, influenced the Austrian consulate in Munich to look with some sympathy on his position. Hitler's request by telegram on Monday, 19 January to delay the summons to the subsequent mustering in Linz on 5 February was rejected by the Linz magistracy. But the telegram from Linz arrived in Munich only much later that day, after the consulate was closed. The consulate handled it the following morning with customary bureaucratic sluggishness so that Hitler received it only at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, 21 January, the day after he had been due to appear in Linz. Luck was again on Hitler's side. But he was left in no doubt about the seriousness of the situation. In some agitation, he now wrote a three-and-a-half-page letter humbly accepting his fault in failing to register in autumn 1909, at a very bitter time for him, when he had hit rock-bottom, but claiming he had done so retrospectively in February 1910, and heard nothing thereafter even though he had been registered throughout with the police in Vienna.⁶⁹ He impressed the consular officials, who thought him 'worthy of consideration', and the Linz magistracy now granted him permission to appear, as he had requested, on 5 February, in Salzburg instead of Linz. No fine or imprisonment was imposed; his travel expenses were paid by the consulate. And, in the event, on duly attending at Salzburg he was found to be too weak to undertake military service.⁷⁰ Hitler had escaped with shock and embarrassment, but little else, from the difficulties he had created for himself. He still had to cope at a later date with the capital his political enemies would draw from the affair.⁷¹ And his frantic efforts to recover the files immediately after the Anschluss were doomed to failure: before the Gestapo could get its hands on them, they had already been removed into safe keeping, from which they could be retrieved for publication in the 1950s.⁷²

Hitler returned to his mundane life as a small-time artist; but not for long. The storm-clouds were gathering over Europe. Hitler described, in a rare and apposite lyrical passage of *Mein Kampf*, an atmosphere that 'lay on the chests of men like a heavy nightmare, sultry as feverish tropic heat'. He spoke of 'constant anxiety' and 'the sense of approaching catastrophe' turning into a longing for action, for the cleansing and freshness that the storm brings.⁷³ His first reaction on hearing, on Sunday, 28 June 1914, the

sensational news of the assassinating throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand perpetrated by German student pro-Slav policies, this was a not a relief at the identity of the perpetrator had been set rolling whose course war would be inevitable'.⁷⁴ By t Europe, as Lloyd George put it, the boiling cauldron'.⁷⁵ The conti

For Hitler, the war was a godsend 1907, he had vegetated, resigned great artist, now cherishing a pipe a notable architect – though with this ambition. Seven years after th in Munich, remained a drop-out : which had rejected him. He was st qualifications or any expectation o forging close and lasting friendship terms with himself – or with a soci war offered him his way out. At th first time in his life a cause, a c discipline, a sort of regular employ than that – a sense of belonging. Hi he was wounded in 1916 his first v not so bad, Herr Oberleutnant, ei regiment.⁷⁷ Later in the war, the pr have influenced his wish not to be end of the war, he had good pract long as possible: the army had by th he had no other job to go back to o his life – certainly the first time si mummy's boy in Upper Austria – t the war. He referred later to the unforgettable time of my earthly ex

* D. II I was obliged to use a few
males. The consular official at
employed on the war than a few
volunt with the good wine, the good
food, and the deliciously welcoming
women we presented him, all of a
that level just intelligible in
natural desires.

and disharmony could be the unity of a national community. Internal dissension and feelings of nationalist feeling in the unity that Bismarck had laid upon a highly fragmented and encouraged the deliberate manufacture of a sense against those who did not. 1. Treitschke, a prominent consciousness, an integral is one of many well-known when such ideas among the 'me' was among the influential name.¹⁰ Poles and Jews, are all targeted 'outsiders' session backfired. The *Kultur*, institutions and clergy gathered Catholicism, while imposed bans on socialist and a greatly enlarged Social programme. By the eve of the election, the SPD was easily arm and deepening hatred largest socialist movement the demolition of the existing general nationalism aiming to

unification of a number of nationhood which had gained an attaching itself to and unitary state as in the case of definition of nationhood means always did so) into in Germany as elsewhere in and was directed aggressively shrill demands for a colonial

se, a powerful one was the

'Reich myth'.¹¹ The very name of the new nation-state, 'German Reich', evoked for many the mystical claim to reinstate the first Reich of Frederick Barbarossa – sleeping, according to the saga, in his holy mountain beneath the Kyffhäuser in Thuringia until the rebirth of his medieval Reich. The new aesthetics of nationalism called for the continuity to be symbolized in the gigantic monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I, mainly funded by veterans' associations, erected on the Kyffhäuser in 1896.¹² The 'Reich myth' linked national unity and the ending of division to heroic deeds and individual greatness, interpreting previous German history as the prelude to the ultimate attainment of national unity. Schoolbooks glorified the exploits of a pantheon of national heroes, filled with warriors reaching back to the legendary Hermann the Cherusker, the name attached to Arminius, the Germanic leader who inflicted a crushing defeat on three Roman legions in 9 A.D. His colossal monument in the Teutoburger Wald, and that of Germania on the Niederwald Monument near Rüdesheim on the Rhine, which so impressed Hitler when he saw it for the first time in 1914, en route for the battlefields of Flanders,¹³ gave granite expression to the 'Reich myth'. And once the foundation of the German Reich itself passed from current politics into history, and its architect's contentious career had been peremptorily ended by the new Kaiser, Bismarck himself became the focal point of a cult which eulogized him as the greatest hero of all, statesman and warrior combined. Hundreds of 'Bismarck Towers', initiated by student bodies and erected the length and breadth of the country, represented the national hero as the intended symbol of nation, state and people.¹⁴ And the more, after Bismarck's departure, the Reichstag – initially, together with the monarchy, the embodiment of national unity – came to be seen as the barometer of national division, a house of squabbling politicians and competing parties, the more there appeared to be the need for a new Bismarck, a new national hero.

A claim to such a role was initially advanced by no less than the Kaiser himself. The caesaristic tendencies, increasingly a feature of German nationalism towards the end of the nineteenth century, were deliberately furthered after 1890 by the promotion of a Hohenzollern cult, focused on the new and ambitious Kaiser, Wilhelm II, and intended to represent in his person 'the two images of the governing statesman and the sleeping Hero-Kaiser'.¹⁵ The new Kaiser, it was implied, would lead Germany to external greatness and eliminate divisions within. Increasingly shrill voices on the nationalist Right demanded nothing less. However, the gap between words and deeds was too great. Disappointment and disillusionment in the Kaiser both helped promote the Bismarck cult and led to increasingly vociferous nationalist

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han any other single person to d, he reminisced incessantly – experiences in the First World time', he commented on one clothing, and accommodation sionately glad to be a soldier'.⁸¹ ter Vienna, it was the second rsonality.

had been gripped by war fever on. On the very evening of the d smashed up the well-known and entertaining the customers triotic unofficial anthem, 'Die ngry mob in the same part of ing French who, faces bleeding he police.'⁸³ The 'spirit of 1914' presumed, and, despite such e than outrightly aggressive in from the heady atmosphere of ernationalists and left-wing nsive patriotism, weak though inism, was markedly different ist circles, where war-euphoria th, and especially in student l to an optimism that it would ecadent and sterile bourgeois ire for the world,' the Italian 7 years earlier.⁸⁵ The sentiment nly not all – of the younger ust 1914. Among Germany's n Europe, there was a feeling tary as a liberation from the vious years.⁸⁶ Strangest of all was, most prominent among ous experience, as redemption al unity to overcome discord ational community. 'What we , ran the florid outpouring of

is a resurrection, a rebirth of the nation. Suddenly shocked out of the troubles and pleasures of everyday life, Germany stands united in the strength of moral duty, ready for the highest sacrifice. The Kaiser, today truly a People's Kaiser, proclaimed: 'I know no parties any longer, I know only Germans' . . . And the Reichstag, unanimous and united, a true herald of the nation, swore by its deeds to go with the Kaiser 'through thick and thin, through suffering and death'. These first days of August are undying, incomparable days of glory. Whatever had arisen over four decades of peace by way of strife and discord of parties, confessions, classes, and races has been totally consumed by the breath of flame of national fervour.'⁸⁷

Many prepared to fight with a heavy heart and from a sense of duty.⁸⁸ Others could hardly wait for action. Hitler was among the tens of thousands in Munich in the thrall of emotional delirium, passionately enthused by the prospect of war. As for so many others, his elation would later turn to deep embitterment. With Hitler, the emotional pendulum set moving by the onset of war swung more violently than for most. 'Overpowered by stormy enthusiasm,' he wrote, 'I fell down on my knees and thanked Heaven from an overflowing heart for granting me the good fortune of being permitted to live at this time.'⁸⁹ That on this occasion his words were true cannot be doubted. Years later, noticing a photograph taken by Heinrich Hoffmann (who was to become his court photographer) of the huge patriotic demonstration in front of the Feldherrnhalle on Munich's Odeonsplatz on 2 August 1914, the day after the German declaration of war on Russia, Hitler pointed out that he had been among the emotional crowd that day, carried away with nationalist fervour, hoarse with singing 'Die Wacht am Rhein' and 'Deutschland über alles'. Hoffmann immediately set to work on enlargements, and discovered the face of the twenty-five-year-old Hitler in the centre of the photograph, gripped and enraptured by the war hysteria. The subsequent mass reproduction of the photograph helped contribute to the establishment of the Führer myth – and to Hoffmann's immense profits.⁹⁰

It was doubtless under the impact of the same elation swaying tens of thousands of young men in Munich and many other cities in Europe during those days to rush to join up that, according to his own account, on 3 August, the day following the mass demonstration at the Feldherrnhalle, Hitler submitted his request – a personal petition to King Ludwig III of Bavaria – to serve as an Austrian in the Bavarian army. The granting of his request by the cabinet office, he went on, arrived, to his unbounded joy, the very next day.⁹¹ Though this version has been accepted in most accounts,

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it is scarcely credible. In the confusion of those days, it would have required truly remarkable bureaucratic efficiency for Hitler's request to have been approved overnight. In any case, not the cabinet office but the war ministry was alone empowered to accept foreigners (including Austrians) as volunteers.⁹² In reality, Hitler owed his service in the Bavarian army not to bureaucratic efficiency, but to bureaucratic oversight.⁹³ Detailed inquiries carried out by the Bavarian authorities in 1924 were unable to clarify precisely how, instead of being returned to Austria in August 1914 as should have happened, he came to serve in the Bavarian army. It was presumed that he was among the flood of volunteers who rushed to their nearest place of recruitment in the first days of August, leading, the report added, to not unnatural inconsistencies and breaches of the strict letter of the law. 'In all probability,' commented the report, 'the question of Hitler's nationality (*Staatsangehörigkeit*) was never even raised.' Hitler, it was concluded, almost certainly entered the Bavarian army by error.⁹⁴

Probably, as Hitler wrote in a brief autobiographical sketch in 1921, he volunteered on 5 August 1914 for service in the First Bavarian Infantry Regiment. Like many others in these first chaotic days, he was initially sent away again since there was no immediate use for him.⁹⁵ On 16 August he was summoned to report at Recruiting Depot VI in Munich for kitting out by the Second Reserve Battalion of the Second Infantry Regiment. By the beginning of September he had been assigned to the newly formed Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment 16 (known from the name of its first commander as the 'List Regiment'), largely comprising raw recruits. Together with his fellow soldiers, he then underwent a period of training and drilling in Munich followed by exercises at Lechfeld near Augsburg that lasted until 20 October.⁹⁶ On that day, Hitler dropped a note to the Popps, telling them his unit was about to leave for the front, probably Belgium, how much he was looking forward to it, and that he hoped they would get to England.⁹⁷ In the early hours of the next morning, the troop train carrying Hitler left for the battlefields of Flanders.⁹⁸

On 29 October, within six days of arriving in Lille, Hitler's battalion had its baptism of fire on the Menin Road near Ypres. In letters from the front to Joseph Popp and to a Munich acquaintance, Ernst Hepp, Hitler wrote that after four days of fighting, the List Regiment's fighting force had been reduced from 3,600 to 611 men.⁹⁹ The initial losses have indeed been estimated at around 70 per cent, partly even incurred through 'friendly fire' as Württemberg and Saxon regiments mistook the Bavarians, in the gloom, for English soldiers.¹⁰⁰ Colonel List himself was among the fallen. Hitler's initial idealism,

he said later, gave way on seeing realization 'that life is a constant

On 3 November 1914 (with effect) to corporal. It was his last promotion. He had been expected to advance to officer (*Unteroffizier*). Later in promotion by Max Amann, then a baron, and the regimental staff colonel Wiedemann, the regimental adjutant one of the Führer's adjutants, that Hitler's superiors had thought. However, both Amann and Wiedemann because he would have been the actually refused to be considered:

Hitler had been assigned on 9 orderly (*Ordonnanz*) - one of a (*Meldegänger*) whose task was to bicycle from the regimental commanders at the front, three kilometers account, Hitler omitted to mention that he actually spent the war in political enemies in the early 1930s duties of the dispatch runner and of shirking and cowardice, were mis- the front was relatively quiet, there runners could laze around at staff greatly better than in the trenches. headquarters in Fournes, near Froy where Hitler spent nearly half of his time to paint pictures and read (if works of Schopenhauer that he claimed so, the dangers faced by the dispatch messages to the front through the front among dispatch runners were relatively would be sent with a message to the happened to be killed.¹⁰⁰ Three of the staff were killed and another one was troops on 15 November. Hitler himself had luck on his side two days later

3 Nov 1914

those days, it would have required for Hitler's request to have been in cabinet office but the war ministry (including Austrians) as volunteers in the Bavarian army not to take oversight.⁹³ Detailed inquiries in 1924 were unable to clarify to Austria in August 1914 as should the Bavarian army. It was presumed that those who rushed to their nearest place of refuge, the report added, to not of the strict letter of the law. 'In all the question of Hitler's nationality decided.' Hitler, it was concluded, almost error.⁹⁴

In his autobiographical sketch in 1921, he wrote of his time in the First Bavarian Infantry during those chaotic days, he was initially sent to use for him.⁹⁵ On 16 August he joined the newly formed Bavarian Second Infantry Regiment. By the time he was assigned to the newly formed Bavarian Infantry in the name of its first commander to train raw recruits. Together with his period of training and drilling in the field near Augsburg that lasted until he wrote a note to the Popp, telling them that he was, probably Belgium, how much he hoped they would get to England.⁹⁷ The troop train carrying Hitler left

for Lille, Hitler's battalion had arrived at Ypres. In letters from the front, Ernst Hepp, Hitler wrote that the regiment's fighting force had been reduced by losses have indeed been estimated through 'friendly fire' as Württembergers, in the gloom, for English soldiers the fallen. Hitler's initial idealism,

he said later, gave way on seeing the thousands killed and injured, to the realization 'that life is a constant horrible struggle'.¹⁰¹

On 3 November 1914 (with effect from 1 November), Hitler was promoted to corporal. It was his last promotion of the war, though he could certainly have been expected to advance further, as least as far as non-commissioned officer (*Unteroffizier*). Later in the war, he was in fact nominated for promotion by Max Amann, then a staff sergeant, subsequently Hitler's press baron, and the regimental staff considered making him *Unteroffizier*.¹⁰² Fritz Wiedemann, the regimental adjutant who in the 1930s became for a time one of the Führer's adjutants, testified after the end of the Third Reich that Hitler's superiors had thought him lacking in leadership qualities.¹⁰³ However, both Amann and Wiedemann made clear that Hitler, probably because he would have been then transferred from the regimental staff, actually refused to be considered for promotion.¹⁰⁴

Hitler had been assigned on 9 November to the regimental staff as an orderly (*Ordonnanz*) – one of a group of eight to ten dispatch runners (*Meldegänger*) whose task was to carry orders, on foot or sometimes by bicycle, from the regimental command post to the battalion and company leaders at the front, three kilometres away.¹⁰⁵ Strikingly, in his *Mein Kampf* account, Hitler omitted to mention that he was a dispatch runner, implying that he actually spent the war in the trenches.¹⁰⁶ But the attempts of his political enemies in the early 1930s to belittle the dangers involved in the duties of the dispatch runner and deny Hitler's war service, accusing him of shirking and cowardice, were misplaced.¹⁰⁷ When, as was not uncommon, the front was relatively quiet, there were certainly times when the dispatch runners could laze around at staff headquarters, where conditions were greatly better than in the trenches. It was in such conditions at regimental headquarters in Fournes, near Fromelles in the Ypres region of Flanders, where Hitler spent nearly half of his wartime service, that he could find the time to paint pictures and read (if his own account can be believed) the works of Schopenhauer that he claimed he carried around with him.¹⁰⁸ Even so, the dangers faced by the dispatch runners during battles, carrying messages to the front through the firing line, were real enough. The losses among dispatch runners were relatively high.¹⁰⁹ If at all possible, two runners would be sent with a message to ensure that it would get through if one happened to be killed.¹¹⁰ Three of the eight runners attached to the regimental staff were killed and another one wounded in a confrontation with French troops on 15 November. Hitler himself – not for the only time in his life – had luck on his side two days later when a French shell exploded in the

~~Hitler did not intend to be a dispatch runner from the forward command post.~~
see p 22.

3 km behind the front.
Dae 1914

* regimental forward command post minutes after he had gone out, leaving almost the entire staff there dead or wounded.¹¹¹ Among the seriously wounded was the regimental commander, Oberstleutnant Philipp Engelhardt, who had been about to propose Hitler for the Iron Cross for his part, assisted by a colleague, in protecting the commander's life under fire a few days earlier.¹¹² On 2 December, Hitler was finally presented with the Iron Cross, Second Class, one of four dispatch runners among the sixty men from his regiment to receive the honour.¹¹³ It was, he said, 'the happiest day of my life'.¹¹⁴

From all indications, Hitler was a committed, rather than simply conscientious and dutiful, soldier, and did not lack physical courage. His superiors held him in high regard. His immediate comrades, mainly the group of dispatch runners, respected him and, it seems, even quite liked him, though he could also plainly irritate as well as puzzle them.¹¹⁵ His lack of a sense of fun made him an easy target for good-natured ribbing. 'What about looking around for a Mamsell?' suggested a telephonist one day. 'I'd die of shame looking for sex with a French girl,' interjected Hitler, to a burst of laughter from the others. 'Look at the monk,' one said. Hitler's retort was: 'Have you no German sense of honour left at all?'¹¹⁶ Though his quirkiness singled him out from the rest of his group, Hitler's relations with his immediate comrades were generally good. Most of them later became members of the NSDAP, and, when, as usually happened, they reminded Reich Chancellor Hitler of the time that they had been his comrades in arms, he made sure they were catered for with cash donations and positions as minor functionaries.¹¹⁷ For all that they got on well with him, they thought 'Adi', as they called him, was distinctly odd. They referred to him as 'the artist' and were struck by the fact that he received no mail or parcels (even at Christmas) after about mid-1915, never spoke of family or friends, neither smoked nor drank, showed no interest in visits to brothels, and used to sit for hours in a corner of the dug-out, brooding or reading.¹¹⁸ Photographs of him during the war show a thin, gaunt face dominated by a thick, dark, bushy moustache. He was usually on the edge of his group, expressionless where others were smiling.¹¹⁹ One of his closest comrades, Balthasar Brandmayer, a stonemason from Bruckmühl in the Bad Aibling district of Upper Bavaria, later described his first impressions of Hitler at the end of May 1915: almost skeletal in appearance, dark eyes hooded in a sallow complexion, untrimmed moustache, sitting in a corner buried in a newspaper, occasionally taking a sip of tea, seldom joining in the banter of the group.¹²⁰ He seemed an oddity, shaking his head disapprovingly at silly, light-hearted remarks,

the good ones left
were how all the time
valuable.
* A.H. I am meant to be.

D.T. ~~that~~ In the budgetary phase the O.D. was being lavished (these days) - at least in my case. My anticipated success had become a reality - an expensive intensification of one's capacities and so I knew that Adolf had to get on the road. My dread had been immense. I had known that a heavy bombardment was coming. H.H.

not even joining in the usual soldierly conversation about a girl? Brandmay the straight-faced reply, 'I've never never get round to it.'¹²² His only dog, Foxl, a white terrier that had taught it tricks, revelling in how to see him when he returned from when his unit had to move on and who took him from me doesn't know many years later.¹²³ He felt as if humans he saw slaughtered about Hitler showed throughout his life absent in the feeling he had for his the Second World War, his closest nearest thing he could find to friendship human being he came into contact subordination to his mastery. 'I liked obeyed me.'¹²⁵

About the war itself, Hitler was not allowed to interfere with his interests. He vehemently disapproved at Christmas 1914, when Gerland, shaking hands and singing carols of something like that during war, they could always provoke Hitler with. All they had to do was to claim the off at the deep end. 'For us the war words.'¹²⁷ The lengthy letter he sent acquaintance, Assessor Ernst Hepp (typical Hitler prose-style) into his view that had been consuming him since

I think so often of Munich, and each come to the final reckoning with the gods what it will, and that those of us who have will find it purer and cleansed of alien sacrifices and suffering that so many through the stream of blood that flows world of enemies, not only will Germany

H.H. Perhaps some of this budgetary excess comes from our own class. Very, too, long, long and elegant all over the front. H.H.

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The consul-general himself transmitted this letter on 23 January, along with a personal note endorsing Hitler's petition. He wrote that he was convinced that "Hitler [sic] . . . was suffering from a complaint which renders him unfit for military service and at the same time removes all motive for evading it. . . . He seems very deserving of considerate treatment."

Hitler's important letter of apology and explanation to the Linz authorities covered three and one-half pages of foolscap. He first expressed surprise and shock that he should be arrested and ordered to report so soon that "I would barely have had time even for the most basic bodily cleansing, such as taking a bath." He noted that he was correctly described in the summons as an artist, yet "though this title is mine by right, it is nevertheless only in a limited sense correct." He went on to say that he was barely able to support himself by painting and would have great difficulty raising money for his transportation back to Linz. "Now certainly in all this there is some fault of mine. I omitted to report in the autumn of 1909." He then went on to lament his miserable existence in Vienna and to cite his alleged poverty as the reason for this "sin of omission."

There can be little doubt that Hitler had experienced difficult months in Vienna during 1909. But the claim that he suffered abject poverty "for two years" is fiction. He was not too proud to blik his young sister out of a share of her orphan's pension or to persuade a crippled Aunt Johanna to give him money and leave him her life savings.¹⁸⁰

One of the interesting things about the incident is the remarkable leniency of those Austrian bureaucrats whom Hitler so thoroughly despised. He received sympathetic help from the consul-general in Munich; the officials in Linz granted his request to appear in Salzburg rather than requiring him to return to Linz; and he was allowed to go as a regular recruit, not as an apprehended deserter. Most significantly, he received no fine or punishment of any kind. On 5 February 1914 he reported to the Standing Military Commission in Salzburg. The commission found him "unfit for combatant and auxiliary duties, too weak, Unable to bear arms." He returned to Munich a free man.

We get only brief glimpses of Hitler's life in Munich from the fall of 1913 to August 1914 when he went away to war. What evidence we have suggests that this year was pretty much a continuation of the life-style he had developed in Vienna. He continued to enjoy relative ease and comfort. He himself called this period one of "the happiest and most contented" of his life.¹⁸⁰

Hitler's room in the Schleissheimerstrasse had the sentimental advantage of being in Schwabing, the artistic center of Munich. The street was only barely within the district, but that was enough to provide an address that gave his artist's pose a pleasantly authentic touch.

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* D.T. It also caused much uneasiness about whether he was really gifted and/or ready for the life. The artist models

* I had been given orders to make him such. What is that if the province of the D.K. and his agents, his guardian angels, the foremost D.K. are fairly sleek and such matters. All can exert enough tension to allow a G.A. to be used as a model to decide "Yes, better for him to be a model." Expatiate on the topic of union.

The Child As Father to the M

Hitler lived on the extreme the Dachauerstrasse—the

Materially he seemed Linz authorities reported each month, and he later than 80 marks a month."

The room, which he 20 marks a month. It was entrance from the street the Popp had no objection, Hitler never once room. Popp had been a master tailor of modish f saw to it that his tenants' business. Hitler was supposed Popp children, Josef Jr.: upstairs. But he always talk about his family back interview in 1967, "what recalled especially that his body clean."¹⁸²

Hitler was also befriended corner, on the Gabelsberg and cakes for a few pennies a 1952 interview that "He appeared clean and neatly

The baker also said marks each and that he had of sales. A certain Doctor war," as he sat sipping a summer evening, "a neighbor if he would be interested the small oil Hitler was one of two favorite postcards of commission within the war paid Hitler 25 marks for a

As in Vienna, Hitler were free for general cultivation, or he could go to 15-minute walk from his story shows that he must museums within easy walk Pinakothek, the Glyptothek, the Glass Palace. In the seen, again and again, : Spirit of the Waves, Mak

* D.T. What most was for his eyes, the middle class

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The Child As Father to the Man

1914

after on 23 January, along on. He wrote that he was suffering from a complaint and at the same time re- seems very deserving of

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e had the sentimental ad- center of Munich. The t that was enough to pro- leasantly authentic touch.

Hitler lived on the extreme western fringe of Schwabing not far from the Dachauerstrasse—the road that leads to Dachau.

Materially he seemed to be quite comfortable. His letter to the Linz authorities reported an income from his paintings of 100 marks each month, and he later told an associate that "I never needed more than 80 marks a month."¹⁰¹

The room, which he rented from a tailor, Josef Popp, cost him only 20 marks a month. It was pleasant, well furnished, and had a private entrance from the street. Hitler could easily have entertained, since the Popp had no objections. Yet as they both recalled with some surprise, Hitler never once invited either a male or female guest to his room. Popp had been trained in Paris and prided himself on being a master tailor of modish fashions. Since he was also a kindly man, he saw to it that his tenants' clothes did not cast adverse reflections on his business. Hitler was supplied with well-cut suits and an overcoat. The Popp children, Josef Jr. and Elisabeth, liked the nice man who lived upstairs. But he always remained a little aloof and never wanted to talk about his family background. "We never knew," they said in an interview in 1967, "what he was really like." The younger Popp later recalled especially that their tenant "spent a lot of time in keeping his body clean."¹⁰²

Hitler was also befriended by a kindly baker just around the corner, on the Gabelsbergerstrasse 66, who sold him slightly stale rolls and cakes for a few pennies. This baker, Herr Heilmann, reported in a 1952 interview that "Hitler never did any manual work" and always appeared clean and neatly dressed.¹⁰³

The baker also said that Hitler sold his paintings for 10 to 20 marks each and that he himself purchased two. We have other evidence of sales. A certain Doctor Schirmer recalled that "sometime before the war," as he sat sipping a beer in the garden of the Hofbräuhaus one summer evening, "a neatly dressed young man" politely asked him if he would be interested in purchasing a painting. The doctor bought the small oil Hitler was carrying and asked him to copy in watercolor two favorite postcards of Bavarian mountain lakes. Hitler fulfilled his commission within the week. A Herr Würsler remembered that he had paid Hitler 25 marks for a small painting in oil.¹⁰⁴

As in Vienna, Hitler spent his mornings in bed. His afternoons were free for general cultural activities. He could stay at home and paint, or he could go to read in the Bavarian State Library, about a 15-minute walk from his room. His impressive knowledge of art history shows that he must have spent many hours in the excellent art museums within easy walking distance: the Alte Pinakothek and Neue Pinakothek, the Glyptothek, and the collection of modern paintings at the Glass Palace. In the Neue Pinakothek in 1914 he would have seen, again and again, some of his favorites: Böcklin's voluptuous *Spirit of the Waves*, Makart's *Abundantia*, and von Stuck's sensuously

from or have lost their family to be loyal to my little except their own eyes.

ch unearseous gifted, and in the artist models

* D.O.T. what I liked about him 199 most was exactly how middle class he was & there is a certain away middle class people—once they are away

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

daring Sin. It was an easy if lonely life, but Hitler had always been a loner.¹⁰⁶

These were, as he said, happy days. But one suspects that he felt stirrings of uneasiness tinged with guilt. For while the world throbbed with excitement and exhilarating portents of change, during that summer of 1914, there was Adolf Hitler living his placid and aimless life. He was doing nothing to fulfill the great mission presaged to him the night of *Rienzi* in Linz, nothing to carry out those magnificent plans for a new Reich he had formulated in Vienna. He felt deeply the need for "deliverance" or "redemption" from the frivolous and vexatious feelings of youth. He needed some great catalytic force to give him the sense of identity, direction, and purpose that had so far eluded him.

Then suddenly, in August 1914, like a bolt from heaven, like a gift from his Goddess of Destiny, came the declaration of war. It was the call he needed. Thousands upon thousands of patriotic young men in Europe cheered the coming of the war, but few with such a sense of *personal* need. For the war meant two things to young Hitler: a destiny-directed solution to the problem of his personal identity and a chance to defend his beloved Motherland. No wonder he welcomed the war with such great expectations. We have the famous picture of the fashionably dressed young man in the Odeonsplatz, his eyes shining, doffing his hat and hailing the war. We also have the revealing personal confessions of his memoirs:

To me personally those hours appeared like a *deliverance* from the vexatious moods of my youth. I am not ashamed even today to say that, overwhelmed by impassioned enthusiasm, I had fallen on my knees and thanked Heaven out of my overflowing heart that it had been granted to me the good fortune of being allowed to live in these times.¹⁰⁰

He had been a deserter from the army of his father's Austria, that "racial cesspool." But to fight for his German Motherland, in this "struggle for her existence," was very different. He was overwhelmed with gratitude at the chance to defend her personally from the evil forces that sought to attack and abuse her.

Hitler As War Hero, 1914-1918

The war on the Western Front was everything Hitler had hoped for. Here was escape from failure and frustration in a philistine world that refused to recognize genius and had called him "inadequate." Here he could enjoy a moratorium from its asinine demands. No longer was he a miscast failure. Now he belonged. He was an integral part of the most powerful war machine in the history of the world. In it he found the direction, purpose, and power that he lacked in himself. He felt

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* He felt more than that. I was never closer to him than on that moment and in his own I told him, "You are entering upon a glorious war!"

Smashford
The Child As Father to
the exhilaration of
society.

His job in the ar for he was assigned (patch runner). As su pany headquarters. I highest rank he atta first class in the Am ing" for a noncommis job. Living condition mental headquarters. feeling that he was "The orders he carri rages, or sent furthe of losses."¹⁰⁷

In the archives marked "Hitler as Front." The most str: iniscences of men w about what kind of For at the front he co a soldier who neither women, who said h home, who loved the at Christmastime, w brations.¹⁰⁸ When the package, he got a sti no circumstances" w to be left alone.¹⁰⁹

Generally Hitler postcards, two long le nich, and one to a ce seem contrived to rev ings of the writer. Tl depersonalized Germa writer is a dutiful pat trusts Austria, and gl He describes in excess Hitler is deferential to lord, with whom he h dressed as "Honored S greetings to your hig respectful and gratefu

A soldier who lat was none too popular patriotism and devoti set for them: "Alway

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GOD: ADOLF HITLER

Hitler had always been a

But one suspects that he felt. For while the world portents of change, during his living his placid and the great mission presaged to carry out those magnified in Vienna. He felt "option" from the frivolous some great catalytic force and purpose that had so

bolt from heaven, like a declaration of war. It was the of patriotic young men out few with such a sense things to young Hitler: a his personal identity and a wonder he welcomed the the famous picture of the amplatz, his eyes shining, to have the revealing per-

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everything Hitler had hoped ration in a philistine world led him "inadequate." Here demands. No longer was was an integral part of the of the world. In it he found lacked in himself. He felt

was never must maintain centering upon

The Child As Father to the Man

the exhilaration of being militarized; he would, one day, militarize a society.

His job in the army increased the feeling of participating in power, for he was assigned to regimental headquarters as a *Meldegänger* (dispatch runner). As such, he carried messages from regimental to company headquarters. He remained a runner throughout the war. The highest rank he attained was *Gefreiter*—roughly equivalent to private first class in the American Army. There is no evidence of his "bucking" for a noncommissioned officer grade or for a transfer. He liked his job. Living conditions were relatively comfortable and clean at regimental headquarters. But, more important, the position gave him a feeling that he was helping to make significant military decisions.

"The orders he carried set battalions in motion, started artillery barages, or sent further orders down the line to hold ground regardless of losses." 107

In the archives of the National Socialist Party there is a folder marked "Hitler as Soldier—Letters about Him, Experiences at the Front." The most striking thing about all these letters and later reminiscences of men who were in his regiment is that they say so little about what kind of person this soldier was. No one really knew him. For at the front he continued to be a loner and something of an oddball: a soldier who neither drank nor smoked, who didn't like to talk about women, who said he wasn't interested in letters or packages from home, who loved the army and gladly took on extra duty—particularly at Christmastime, when he didn't want to go home or join in celebrations.¹⁰⁸ When the Munich baker Franz Heilmann sent him a food package, he got a stiff note back thanking him but saying that "under no circumstances" was he to send any more packages. Adolf wanted to be left alone.¹⁰⁹

Generally Hitler left his mail unanswered. But we do have a few postcards, two long letters he wrote to Josef Popp, his landlord in Munich, and one to a certain Assessor Ernst Hepp. These letters, however, seem contrived to reveal as little as possible about the personal feelings of the writer. They are curiously wooden set pieces written by a depersonalized German soldier commenting on "life at the front." The writer is a dutiful patriot who warns against "a world of enemies," distrusts Austria, and glories in the battle to save the German Motherland. He describes in excessive detail the slaughter of men and horses. Soldier Hitler is deferential to authority and very proper and formal. His landlord, with whom he had spent many an evening talking politics, is addressed as "Honored Sir." The letter to Hepp ends "with most respectful greetings to your highly esteemed Mother and Wife from your very respectful and grateful Adolf Hitler." 200

A soldier who later became a Franciscan monk reported that Hitler was none too popular with his comrades. He let it be known that their patriotism and devotion to duty did not measure up to the standards he set for them: "Always deadly serious, he never laughed or joked." He

a glorious destiny. "Of course, I had no idea if they were really true or that at all. Since war was on, I was indiscriminately. Even we, as soldiers,

* He was building forces of concentration within himself. I was working on what could be a wasted job if he were killed. But I was building upon his early gift of speech-making, an arduous task made easier by his desire to concentrate upon himself and have nothing to do with others.

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THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

answered the usual soldier's gripes with furious fulminations about patriotism and a soldier's responsibilities. "We all cursed him and found him intolerable," another comrade recalled. "There was this white crow among us that didn't go along . . . when we damned the war to hell." ²⁰¹ Hitler had no use for women. When a buddy, Hans Mend, made out rather well with a pretty French girl, Hitler preached him a homily on the evils of interracial liaisons and the importance of keeping German blood pure and undefiled. He was known in the regiment as "the woman hater" (*der Weiberfeind*). His one indulgence continued to be a desire to suck on sweets. It became another joke of his outfit: "If he found a tin of artificial honey, nothing could get him away from it, shells or no shells." ~~Hitler~~

There was something else Hitler was remembered for in his regiment: he lived a charmed life. Time after time he seemed to court death, but when bullets claimed a comrade, he escaped unscathed. After one notable attack which left the regiment decimated, someone turned to Hitler and said, "*Mensch für dich gibt es keine Kugel*" ("Man, there's no bullet made with your name on it!") Successive letters to the Poppis read: "It is an absolute miracle that I was not injured . . . I myself am, through a miracle, still alright . . . Through a miracle I remain well and healthy." ²⁰² Thus was reinforced Hitler's conviction that he had been miraculously spared—unlike his brothers and sister and so many comrades in arms—for a special mission.

Though he spent most of his time in lonely, brooding silence, he could be drawn into excited barrack-room orations in which he held forth on the sinister conspiracies he knew about from reading Lanz-Liebenfels, List, and Fritsch: the menace of Freemasons, Catholics, and Marxists. But now, as later, he pointed to the Jews as the archenemy of the Motherland. When his comrades laughed, Hitler furiously promised that one day he would show them! When he came to power, he would rule over them all and get rid of the Jews.

Hitler's humor ran to Schadenfreude and mockery. For security reasons, dispatch runners went in pairs. Hitler's colleague for over 32 months, Hans Mend, had been a riding instructor in civilian life. Mend recalled that Hitler enjoyed embarrassing him by affecting mock formalism and humility: "Is it permissible to wish the Immortal Horseman a Happy New Year?" ²⁰³

His comrades exaggerate slightly when they testify that Hitler "never once took a furlough." ²⁰⁴ There is evidence of at least one furlough as testified by a postcard (with typical misspellings) sent from Berlin 6 October 1917 to one Ernst Schmidt in Wurzbach, Thuringia:

Dear Schmidt:

Got here first on Tuesday. The Arendt family is very nice. I will not have wished for anything better. The city is great. . . . I now

P. 202 * I do not wish to get into technical details of our power (NFYE) (Not for your eyes). I will contact myself with remaining

Hitler that was the price exacted for the stern conditioning of his isolation, like had to permit it. All the functions of life he declared as his discipline had to find some manifest in it was sweets.

The Child As Father to the

have finally opportunity I am missing
Es gruss [sic] c

All Hitler's comrade exemplary soldier. Testify the Führer, an officer really somehow managed always

Hitler had been available as December 1914. In Munich after it wrote that his commanding officer at regiment hardt, convincingly testified

He was wounded for near Le Bargué, when hospitalized in Beelitz-Berlin so that he could spend Christmas

Hitler was one of the to be awarded the Iron improbable accounts of things seem clear. First, enormously important to the Iron Cross constant was the "unknown hero" that once again he had mandating officer has with honor had it not been for Gutmann, a Jew. ²⁰⁹

Hitler was wounded was gassed on the south the military hospital of simply say that he was official biographies—always. That he exaggerated from the army records by

* It has been said that seven Englishmen, or 12 (of destruction; or "for general schoolchildren of the Third Führer: he had studied so he could command 20 French Führer: ein Jungen- und Mädchenbuch official Nazi newspaper Völkischer heroic exploit: 4 August 1918 an Regiment is silent about Hitler's

that I can power of came down on slightly
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and hold endless lectures; and a certain precision and clarity were apparent in his style. He loved to prophesy and predict political developments; he was convinced of the impending downfall of Austria. His new Austrian roommate made the same observation as Hanisch had made: as soon as there was any mention of politics, Hitler abandoned any work, however urgent. He sat in the 'Schwemme,' the low-price room in the Hofbräuhaus, made speeches to anyone available and soon had many listeners.

An eccentric, screaming in taverns, a hermit among six hundred thousand people; without wife, friend, family, or home. In Austria, for a time, the military authorities regarded him as a deserter; for three years he simply did not report for the prescribed supplementary examinations; he was entered in the list as 'illegal' and 'address unknown.' Then he seems to have become aware of the dangerous and ambiguous aspect of this conduct; on February 5, 1914, he went to the Austrian border city of Salzburg and had himself examined. To his relief the doctor's findings were: 'Too weak for armed or auxiliary service, unfit to bear arms.' 'Not fit for service' was the verdict of the commission. Now he was through with Austria.

Now he had achieved what had been his unconscious goal through all the years of misery in Vienna: obscurity. He had disappeared from his family, shunned close friendships, shyly avoided the eyes of people he spoke with; then he had left the hated land of his fathers and dissolved his last relations with it. Now he was living in Germany, the land of his longing, yet only tolerated, not actually belonging to it. He went about his beloved city of Munich like a visitor in a museum on Sunday when the admission is free. He was a stranger in his world and his time; and even if he had asked himself honestly, he would always have had to answer: this alien condition was the only one in which he felt secure against life. It was the haven of his failure. Since he could not have been great, the only tolerable thing for him was to be nothing. The greatness of the historical phenomenon which was one day to step forth from this human shadow cannot be contested; but human nonentity is actually the premise and one of the explanations for the superhuman power of the phenomenon. It

HE IS BOTH TERRIBLE AND

was not lack of success and resultant poverty such an overpowering nonentity. He might the contempt of outward success; instead he paid it. Success in his eyes is the ultimate standard yet what a minute particle he is, vegetating beside. And as a nonentity he is by no means modest; he has been filled with an exuberant megalomania but he pays dearly for these hours with the feel in himself which attacks him again and again strange people. He is not modest—that is, content and therefore not insisting on it; no, left alone finds everything within him, but in the present himself to be nothing. And thus he moves amid security which has become a mask; and except in excitement, this obscurity expresses itself in his physical aspect. In good times it is his aims, but that give him life and energy; but people are exertion to him; every new face is in a sense something that must be conquered and subjugated his terrible failure in youth, he does not feel equal for his finer feelings—tenderness, affection, favors them chiefly to himself.

Here, be it noted, we are speaking of a young and his private aspect; this private aspect has a that robs his relations to men of all color and character had written that the study of history must be kind, and in exactly this sense Hitler, even in his only as a fragment of current history. The living is for him nothing, consequently he is nothing shadow of hostile nothingness about him, rendered invisible. Hence his unconscious demand for a new as he himself expressed it, he would be permitted but 'respect his superior, contradict no one, blind!

Heaven sent this new world to him and me August, 1914. In Berlin, Vienna, Paris, St. Peter masses, filled with a sense of happiness mysteriously marched through the streets, singing *Die Wäc*

1914

→ D. Ti. How intelligent people

saw his days of foolishness
and how little they understood the intensity
of his preparation.

For while the list of those proposed for the 'Cross' was being discussed, four company commanders came into the tent, or dugout. Due to lack of space, the four of us had to step out. We hadn't been outside for five minutes when a grenade struck the tent, gravely wounded Lieutenant-Colonel Engelhardt and killed or wounded all the rest of the staff. It was the most terrible moment of my life. We worshipped Lieutenant-Colonel Engelhardt.

I am sorry, I have to close now. . . . Day after day we are under the heaviest artillery fire from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon. In time, that shatters even the strongest nerves. I often think of Munich, and every man of us has the single wish that the gang out here will soon have their hash settled once and for all. We want an all-out fight, at any cost, and we hope that those of us who have the good fortune to see their homeland again will find it purer and more purified of foreignism. That through the sacrifices and sufferings which hundreds of us go through every day, that through the stream of blood that flows here day after day against an international world of enemies, not only Germany's enemies abroad will be crushed, but that our internal internationalism will also be broken. That would be worth more than any territorial gains. With Austria it will come as I have always said.

Again I express my heartfelt thanks and remain your most devoted and grateful

ADOLF HITLER.

1915?
Entirely
D.T.?

This is the letter of an impassioned warrior. In it there is not the slightest soft spot. He sees only the enemy whom he hates, and strikes down in a true frenzy. He is brave and attaches no value to his life, as his regimental commander later attested. But there is also, clearly expressed, the belief that he owes his own life to a miracle or rather to a chain of miracles; that the bursting shells spared him, time and again; that, while three quarters of his regiment were sacrificed, he really enjoyed the special protection of Providence.

In March, 1932, Hitler brought a lawsuit in the Hamburg provincial court, as plaintiff against a newspaper which had accused him of cowardice as a soldier. His attorney submitted a number of written affidavits, attesting the contrary. Lieutenant-Colonel Engelhardt, mentioned in Hitler's letter, wrote:

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As commander of the 16th Regiment of Bavarian Battle of Ypres in the period from November 11 1914, I came to know Adolf Hitler as an executive and conscientious soldier. I must emphasize. As our men were storming the wedge-shaped forest (as Bayer-Wald), I stepped out of the woods near a better view of developments. Hitler and the whole of another battle orderly belonging to the 16th Regiment before me to protect me with their bodies from fire to which I was exposed. . . . Munich, February, Engelhardt, Major General (retired).

The Iron Cross referred to in Hitler's letter was class, but on August 4, 1918, he was awarded first class, one of the highest distinctions to which a man in the German army could aspire. He is supposed to have done it for an astounding feat; a witness described it at the above-mentioned trial:

On his way to the battalion staff, Adolf Hitler, was caught in a barrage. He thought that behind a hill, ran over the top and fell into a shell by Englishmen, who at once demanded his surrender armed only with a pistol. He drew it out and the Englishmen at bay, but took them prisoner and regimental staff. An officer, a sergeant and thirteen

A comrade named Schmidt, it is true, described somewhat differently:

. . . In the spring or summer of 1918, Hitler received for his extraordinary accomplishments as a dispatch big offensive of 1918, especially for having personally a French officer and about fifteen men, who ran into while carrying dispatches, and who, as a result of his decision and presence of mind, laid down their

In this version they are Frenchmen instead of Englishmen. This contradiction does not necessarily disprove the story, which seems strange that none of his superiors had apparently noticed the dramatic exploit. The official history of the List Regiment

During combat, D.T. made him to himself. D.T.

Feb 1915

tes after he had gone out, leaving
ok wounded.¹¹¹ Among the seriously
er, Oberstleutnant Philipp Engel-
ns for the Iron Cross for his part,
me commander's life under fire a few
The as finally presented with the Iron
pol ch runners among the sixty men
Aus? It was, he said, 'the happiest day
idle
he uttered, rather than simply conscien-
tious physical courage. His superiors
at d: comrades, mainly the group of
mc ems, even quite liked him, though
it puzzle them.¹¹⁵ His lack of a sense
ue of ad-natured ribbing. 'What about
o c'd a telephonist one day. 'I'd die of
w.', interjected Hitler, to a burst of
to ynk,' one said. Hitler's retort was:
ack ft at all.¹¹⁶ Though his quirkiness
a group, Hitler's relations with his
gnc od. Most of them later became
ho usually happened, they reminded
ed t they had been his comrades in
alz with cash donations and positions
le gor on well with him, they thought
at add. They referred to him as 'the
F received no mail or parcels (even
ad spoke of family or friends, neither
wii visits to brothels, and used to sit
ais nodding or reading.¹¹⁸ Photographs
do : face dominated by a thick, dark,
ha edge of his group, expressionless
tri lost comrades, Balthasar Brand-
fe the Bad Aibling district of Upper
ig is of Hitler at the end of May 1915:
Me hooded in a sallow complexion,
tri buried in a newspaper, occasionally
the banter of the group.¹²⁰ He seemed
t ly at silly, light-hearted remarks,
ic:

not even joining in the usual soldiers' moans, gripes, and jibes.¹²¹ 'Haven't
you ever loved a girl?' Brandmayer asked Hitler. 'Look, Brandmayer,' was
the straight-faced reply. 'I've never had time for anything like that, and I'll
never get round to it.'¹²² His only real affection seems to have been for his
dog, Foxl, a white terrier that had strayed across from enemy lines. Hitler
taught it tricks, revelling in how attached it was to him and how glad it was
to see him when he returned from duty. He was distraught late in the war
when his unit had to move on and Foxl could not be found. 'The swine
who took him from me doesn't know what he did to me,' was his comment
many years later.¹²³ He felt as strongly about none of the thousands of
humans he saw slaughtered about him. The emptiness and coldness that
Hitler showed throughout his life in his dealings with human beings were
absent in the feeling he had for his dog. In the Führer Headquarters during
the Second World War, his alsatian, Blondi, would again offer him the
nearest thing he could find to friendship.¹²⁴ But with his dogs, as with every
human being he came into contact with, any relationship was based upon
subordination to his mastery. 'I liked [Foxl] so much,' he recalled; 'he only
obeyed me.'¹²⁵

About the war itself, Hitler was utterly fanatical. No humanitarian feelings
could be allowed to interfere with the ruthless prosecution of German
interests. He vehemently disapproved of the spontaneous gestures of friend-
ship at Christmas 1914, when German and British troops met in no man's
land, shaking hands and singing carols together. 'There should be no question
of something like that during war,' he protested.¹²⁶ His comrades knew that
they could always provoke Hitler with defeatist comments, real or contrived.
All they had to do was to claim the war would be lost and Hitler would go
off at the deep end. 'For us the war can't be lost' were invariably his last
words.¹²⁷ The lengthy letter he sent on 5 February 1915 to his Munich
acquaintance, Assessor Ernst Hepp, concluded with an insight (written in
typical Hitler prose-style) into his view of the war redolent of the prejudices
that had been consuming him since his Vienna days:

I think so often of Munich, and each of us has only one wish, that it may soon
come to the final reckoning with the gang, to the showdown (*Daraufgehen*), cost
what it will, and that those of us who have the fortune to see their homeland again
will find it purer and cleansed of alien influence (*Fremdländeren*), that through the
sacrifices and suffering that so many hundred thousand of us make daily, that
through the stream of blood that flows here day for day against an international
world of enemies, not only will Germany's external enemies be smashed, but that

* D.T. - Even in our most committed
clients, there was still ~~more~~ - it
must be admitted - some ~~unadaptable~~
~~lack~~ ^{inability} to adapt, called ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~creation~~ ^{creation} of the D.K. In
Adi's case, it was his love for this
dog, Foxl, who indeed loved him back.

1916

ok him under arrest prior to handing
 68 The Munich police had for some
 ns for several days before the Sunday,
 mely short notice to comply with its
 That, together with Hitler's run-down
 pologetic demeanour, and somewhat
 Austrian consulate in Munich to look
 idler's request by telegram on Monday,
 he subsequent mustering in Linz on 5
 gistracy. But the telegram from Linz
 at day, after the consulate was closed.
 morning with customary bureaucratic
 it only at 9a.m. on Wednesday, 21
 ue to appear in Linz. Luck was again
 o doubt about the seriousness of the
 wrote a three-and-a-half-page letter
 to register in autumn 1909, at a very
 ck-bottom, but claiming he had done
 and heard nothing thereafter even
 ghout with the police in Vienna.⁶⁹ He
 thought him 'worthy of consideration',
 ed him permission to appear, as he
 alzburg instead of Linz. No fine or
 xpenses were paid by the consulate.
 at Salzburg he was found to be too
 7 Hitler had escaped with shock and
 e difficulties he had created for himself.
 with the capital his political enemies
 is frantic efforts to recover the files
 doomed to failure: before the Gestapo
 had already been removed into safe
 rieved for publication in the 1950s.⁷²
 fe as a small-time artist; but not for
 ig over Europe. Hitler described, in a
Mein Kampf, an atmosphere that 'lay
 tmare, sultry as feverish tropic heat'.
 he sense of approaching catastrophe'
 r the cleansing and freshness that the
 rearing, on Sunday, 28 June 1914, the

sensational news of the assassination in Sarajevo of the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife was to fear that it had been perpetrated by German students. Given Franz Ferdinand's support for pro-Slav policies, this was a not unreasonable assumption, and a more likely eventuality than his murder at the hands of Serbian nationalists. Hitler's relief at the identity of the perpetrators mingled with his sense 'that a stone had been set rolling whose course could no longer be arrested', that 'at last war would be inevitable'.⁷⁴ By the beginning of August, the countries of Europe, as Lloyd George put it, had indeed 'slithered over the brink into the boiling cauldron'.⁷⁵ The continent was at war.

III

For Hitler, the war was a godsend. Since his failure in the Art Academy in 1907, he had vegetated, resigned to the fact that he would not become a great artist, now cherishing a pipe-dream that he would somehow become a notable architect – though with no plans for or realistic hope of fulfilling this ambition. Seven years after that failure, the 'nobody of Vienna',⁷⁶ now in Munich, remained a drop-out and nonentity, futilely angry at a world which had rejected him. He was still without any career prospects, without qualifications or any expectation of gaining them, without any capacity for forging close and lasting friendships, and without real hope of coming to terms with himself – or with a society he despised for his own failure. The war offered him his way out. At the age of twenty-five, it gave him for the first time in his life a cause, a commitment, comradeship, an external discipline, a sort of regular employment, a sense of well-being, and – more than that – a sense of belonging. His regiment became home for him. When he was wounded in 1916 his first words to his superior officer were: 'It's not so bad, Herr Oberleutnant, eh? I can stay with you, stay with the regiment.'⁷⁷ Later in the war, the prospect of leaving the regiment may well have influenced his wish not to be considered for promotion.⁷⁸ And at the end of the war, he had good practical reasons for staying in the army as long as possible: the army had by then been his 'career' for four years, and he had no other job to go back to or look forward to. For the first time in his life – certainly the first time since the carefree childhood days as a mummy's boy in Upper Austria – Hitler felt truly at ease with himself in the war. He referred later to the war years as 'the greatest and most unforgettable time of my earthly existence'.⁷⁹ Later still, in the midst of a

That would be worth more to me concerned, things will happen as I

sentiments throughout the war. Long description of military events appears to have spoken little to the fact that his comrades giving voice to his strong opinions. 'to talk about politics,' he himself added that he often expressed his comrades.¹³⁰ During his interrogation is adamant that Hitler had not the war.¹³¹ He appears, too, to former comrades claimed after off-hand though commonplace, but that they had no inkling of visible after 1918.¹³² Balthasar his reminiscences, first published of understood Adolf Hitler when all misfortune'.¹³³ According to lly involved in the latter years of on what he saw as the Social Germany.¹³⁴ Such comments, like prominence and, as in this case, have to be treated with caution. hand. It indeed does seem very pf claims, that Hitler's political he war, during and after his first

1916, the List Regiment fought a two-kilometre stretch of the British were fought in May 1915 the front barely moved a few months after heavy fighting in the offensive was staved off with from Flanders and by 2 October s, Hitler was wounded in the left ch runners' dug-out, killing and

wounding several of them.¹³⁸ After treatment in a field hospital, he spent almost two months, from 9 October until 1 December 1916, in the Red Cross hospital at Beelitz, near Berlin. He had not been in Germany for two years. He soon noticed how different the mood was from the heady days of August 1914. He was appalled to hear men in the hospital bragging about their malingering or how they had managed to inflict minor injuries on themselves to make sure they could escape from the front. He encountered much the same low morale and widespread discontent in Berlin during the period of his recuperation. It was his first time in the city, and allowed him to pay a visit to the Nationalgalerie. But Munich shocked him most of all. He scarcely recognized the city: 'Anger, discontent, cursing, wherever you went!' Morale was poor; people were dispirited; conditions were miserable; and, as was traditional in Bavaria, the blame was placed on the Prussians. Hitler himself, according to his own account written about eight years later, recognized in all this only the work of the Jews. He was struck too, so he said, by the number of Jews in clerical positions – 'nearly every clerk was a Jew and nearly every Jew was a clerk' – compared with how few of them were serving at the front.¹³⁹ (In fact, this was a base calumny: there was as good as no difference between the proportion of Jews and non-Jews in the German army, relative to their numbers in the total population, and many served – some in the List Regiment – with great distinction.¹⁴⁰) There is no reason to presume, as has sometimes been the case, that this account of his anti-Jewish feelings in 1916 was a backwards projection of feelings that in reality only existed from 1918–19 onwards.¹⁴¹ Though, as we have noted, Hitler did not stand out for his antisemitism in the recollections of some of his former wartime comrades, two of them, Brandmayer and Westenkirchner, did refer to his negative comments about the Jews.¹⁴² And Hitler would have been voicing sentiments that were increasingly to be heard in the streets of Munich as anti-Jewish prejudice became more widespread and more ferocious in the second half of the war.¹⁴³

Hitler wanted to get back to the front as soon as possible, and above all to rejoin his old regiment.¹⁴⁴ He eventually returned to it on 5 March 1917 in its new position a few miles to the north of Vimy.¹⁴⁵ In the summer it was back to the same ground near Ypres that the regiment had fought over almost three years earlier, to counter the major Flanders offensive launched by the British in mid-July 1917.¹⁴⁶ Battered by the heavy fighting, the regiment was relieved at the beginning of August and transported to Alsace. At the end of September, Hitler took normal leave for the first time. He had no wish to go back to Munich, which had dispirited him so much, and went

4/MD.

by a fifth of the population, served in million of them in the field. Around were wounded. A third of those killed and friends.¹⁶⁰ Such losses could not be the searing mark on mentalities. But out of such experiences, were in reality injury, and on the 'home front' hunger, those at the fighting front, the fatalism and suffering, the anxieties and man and material – in the man-made interdependence for survival of the inescapable impressions.

is an arch-glorifier of war converted Ernst Toller into a pacifist and Hitler, the defeat was betrayal, for 'The war itself had turned me into at the land I loved had been betrayed these betrayers.'¹⁶¹ Experience of the front line against the 'shirkers' in against the 'home front'; above all, failures in the war effort against those enemies. The 'national community' enches was largely a myth. Even the fate' of a 'front generation', was in zation.¹⁶² When the soldiers returned heroes of a revolution, it was not to the 'classless community' of the aged out of all recognition, a militar-enter the Freikorps, and from there to play upon such sentiments. But Reich Association of War Disabled, joined the Freikorps.¹⁶³ The soldiers es of the front that were to fuel the t-war German society.

es at the front, those at home had ely worsening material conditions, men, drafted into industry, driving d a main occupation in queuing for ing in towns and cities, knew what

hunger was during the war. Though there was not starvation, there was massive malnutrition: three-quarters of a million died of it. As food-prices soared, quality deteriorated, and supplies both diminished and were badly distributed, scarcities became acute – most notoriously in the 'turnip winter' of 1916–17. By 1917, rations had fallen to a level of under 1,000 calories a day – less than half of what ought to be a minimum for a working person, and of the average calorie intake before the war.¹⁶⁴ Shortages were not confined to food. Most seriously, lack of coal meant people could not keep warm. Almost everyone, other than the very rich, was worse off during the war.¹⁶⁵ In all walks of life, apart from those of the privileged, people were miserable, demoralized, and becoming by the day more intensely angry at a state which had taken them into war, interfered more and more in their daily lives, inflicted countless petty regulations on them, and had proved incapable of attaining victory. Food riots and strikes were only the most overt manifestation of a mood that, in the second half of the war, was ever more menacing for the authorities. Sharpened social tensions and heightened resentments were inevitable. Townspeople blamed farmers for holding back food; the rural population castigated those from the cities who descended like locusts on the countryside and ravaged it for scarce food supplies.

Germans south of the Main, Bavarians naturally in the front line, attributed the war and all its ills to the Prussians, who in turn thought Bavarians to be living off the fat of the land while others starved, doing little for the war effort. Old middle-class resentments about unpatriotic workers, after the interlude of the civil truce, were drastically revived in the later war years by strikes, demonstrations, and expressions of anti-war – and increasingly anti-Kaiser – feelings. If anything, the mood was worst of all among the lower-middle class – craftsmen and white-collar workers – who, in some parts of Germany at least, were more heavily represented than blue-collar workers in the most openly revolutionary party, the USPD.¹⁶⁶

Amid the social division, there were certain common targets of aggression. War profiteering – a theme on which Hitler was able to play so effectively in the Munich beerhalls in 1920 – rankled deeply. The 'big-shots', dressed in fur-lined coats and top hats, fat cigars in their mouths, ferried around in limousines, appeared the very epitome of privilege, corruption, and exploitation at a time that most of humanity was suffering grievously. Closely related was the bitter resentment at those running the black market. Petty officialdom, with its unrelenting and intensified bureaucratic intervention into every sphere of everyday life, was a further target. But the fury did not confine itself to the interference and incompetence of petty

bureaucrats. These were merely the face of a state whose authority was crumbling visibly, a state in terminal disarray and disintegration.

Not least, in the search for scapegoats, Jews increasingly became the focus of intensified hatred and aggression from the middle of the war onwards. The sentiments had all been heard before. What was new was the extent to which radical antisemitism was now being propagated, and the degree to which it was evidently falling on fertile ground. Like every other sector of society, Jews had been carried away by 'the spirit of 1914' - at last, they thought, at one with their fellow Germans. By 1916 such presumed unity had been destroyed for ever. A new wave of vicious, increasingly radical *volksisch* antisemitism was blatantly fostered by the annexationist lobby, and found more ready support than at any time before the war. Jews were now attacked as racially inferior immigrants flooding Germany, as war profiteers thriving on the nation's suffering, and as shirkers avoiding service at the front. That the numbers of *Ostjuden* entering Germany were insignificant, that four or five times more non-Jews than Jews were directors of armaments companies, and that the proportions of Jews and non-Jews serving at the front scarcely differed could not, of course, prevent the spread of such a slander.¹⁶⁷ Groundless allegations were kept alive by a statistical inquiry, carried out in late 1916, into the number of Jews at the front and in the rear, followed by an investigation by the Reichstag into the numbers of Jews employed in the offices and agencies of the war economy.¹⁶⁸ Though the results were not published, the allegations underlying the military survey were not repudiated, and Jews were thereafter not made officers (at least in the Prussian army).¹⁶⁹ The backlash, articulated by Claß's Pan-Germans and by the newly created, massive Fatherland Party, of the pro-war lobby to the anti-annexationist peace resolution accepted in the Reichstag on 19 July 1917 linked the Jews to defeatism. There was a proliferation of antisemitic publications, and Claß could report to the Pan-German leadership in October 1917 that antisemitism had 'already reached enormous proportions' and that 'the struggle for survival was now beginning for the Jews'.¹⁷⁰ Events in Russia in 1917 further stirred the pot of simmering hatred, adding the vital ingredient - to become thereafter the keystone of antisemitic agitation - of the Jews portrayed as running secret international organizations directed at fomenting world revolution.¹⁷¹ As it was realized that the war was lost, antisemitic hysteria, whipped up by the Pan-Germanists, reached fever-pitch. Claß used the notorious words of Heinrich von Kleist, aimed at the French in 1813, when a 'Jewish Committee' with the purpose of 'exploiting the situation to sound the clarion call against Judaism and to use the Jews as

lightning rods for all injustices' was 1918: 'Kill them; the world court is

The atmosphere of disintegration political and ideological radicalization but make the deepest impression on so rapturously, had supported German the outset condemned all defeatism repelled by many attitudes he encountered, it was during the three period months, that he spent in Germany in the last two war years that he experienced running of the war which was new been shocked at the atmosphere in 1916.¹⁷⁴ As the war dragged on, he became and incandescent at news of the war without annexations which had spread from Berlin to other major industrial on munitions supplies).¹⁷⁵ Brandmayer that if he had been war minister the against a wall within twenty-four hours Friedrich Ebert responsible.¹⁷⁶ It is, of simply paraphrasing Hitler's own words there seems no obvious reason to doubt was already associating the unrest leadership who, in his view, were 'ripping and disintegration intensified at the soldiers became more politicized. of disintegration' in August and September engaged in political arguments as did effect.¹⁷⁹ Brandmayer's remark that elements within Germany and involved plausible.¹⁸⁰

The last two years of the war, between October 1916 and his hospitalization, probably be seen as a vital staging-post

~~Constitutional~~

~~Constitutional~~

~~Constitution~~

Lukacs - Hitler of Hitler
Heiden - Dr. Fuehrer

This folder is all material
— by national data + secret
up inside.

(and injustice.)

24 1960 ~~1961~~ 1962
Wednesday - 1:00
Turn 1:00 - David
246-3747

conclude this introductory sub-
 nchant statement by Haffner:
 er state would probably have
 [Possibly.] And there probably
 without Hitler. [Perhaps.] But
 [Yes.]

phobia remain a mystery. More
 able extent—are his *purposes*.†
 ssary—and seldom observed—
 poses, some other distinctions

"problem" was Hitler's funda-
 chapter 5, more fundamental
 ce of Lebensraum.** At a cer-
 d himself that the presence of
 n of Germany and of Europe,
 e key to history, so to speak. I
 an "became convinced," since
 sts the result of outside influ-

ously there exist a great number of
 . . . but a comprehensive survey that
 cludes all of the most recent single

it, p. 46): "It can be ruled out that a
 tion was divided into several phases
 ctims. We must therefore assume a
 ng over a period of several months."

ose to suggesting that Hitler's anti-
 es, which is very debatable. He cites
 ychologically wrong to establish a
 select but one enemy that everyone
 "And this enemy is the Jews."

of Zitelmann, who in an interview
 November 1992 stated that the cre-
 der's "central aim" and that it is at
 Jews was his aim, surely not for a

O

Little of History - L. V. K. H. F. ^{World War I}
 1914-18

The Jews: Tragedy and Mystery 183

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

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

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

* P.T. It was the only road to power
 as events would prove. It did not

matter that anti-Semitism for the
 majority of Germans was often lukewarm
 — what counted was the simplicity
 and force of the idea. It could prove
 even better than the one powerful idea
 of Marxism that the rich were the source
 of all injustice.

World
 War I

①

~~1899~~
1899

1914-18

~~1899~~

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

with Napoleon," so, lis-
I heard that Winston
ise of Commons, only to
upon the comparison all
and so it is with me. It is
the resemblances are too
state this with unmistak-
contrasts, are such that,
hated the dictator in
ce of Hitler began dark-
if one should ask the
this name in one breath
want to say that French
stuff than German: the
rench civilization, albeit
ompanied the conquest,
that it has been the lot of
patible with any civiliza-
Napoleon—indeed, when
on that score, I sud-
[his] "detractors" with
on quite friendly terms.

ing up Napoleon's tyranny

The worst that our
parallel in Napoleon's

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

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

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

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

1898
family
floor
for
family
Heller

* D. I. I did not have to do a
thing here. He believed that the
spiritual power of Napoleon had been
left to him. One of his most
private secrets. Was it all done
the war. 1914-18

1915

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

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

* D. to combine fatherland and mother to love the fatherland like a mother — was the aim of some intimate work by me.

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

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

But my main question is not but whether it was Vienna or I question but, rather, an and sides—evidence to be considered exclude the other, and as long may mean.

*One man who understood the sea and saw in it a turning point of his into his memoirs of the Second World. description of Hitler in that hospital. summary description. I wrote in DL, 1 ter, which he dictated walking up and described Hitler's career and his per quality of those passages was not only erary mastery. It was the result of his decisive element in the formation of came in 1918–19, and not before the. *Mein Kampf* had insisted—and most while his life took a sudden turn in lat ology had already crystallized in Vi nating in their airless circles, tend to in these pages Churchill's understandi

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

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

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

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

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* P. 5. It takes one to know one.

By that, I don't mean that they were in any way similar—indeed, they were exactly different except for one element—they were both political leaders at a very high level, and Churchill knew what it took to get there, and what the origins might be.

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

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

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

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ect; and, in another, were years of cons of historians have was seldom beset by erlining his penniless nderstanding of and , there is little left to ns of the Viennese ion is the extent and 1 and there.† Of that i" was "the most fun- ult school," where "I repeated that phrase ter actions." He left d himself very much

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itte Hamann, *Hitlers Wien*. e completion of my manu-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* D.T. The event pushed great momentum in the Reich

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

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

*Fest's statement (F, p. 56) that he knew

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

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

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

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

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

an statesman gets the best of a compromise

their instinctive pessimism was toxic to him. What

they saw as impossible for them opened his eyes to the real possibility.

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

One—perhaps the most diplomatic and strategic had an ability—mostly, nize the weaknesses of those of his actual, or always know with certainty confident (and often they were loath to do. I sides of human nature c greatest failures when b and therefore failed to standing of human natu not only a statesman but knew this when he quip where an amateur is of prostitution and the othe

In Hitler's case we may Napoleon's contemporarian of war.‡ His famous politics by other means, truism: even a tyrant pre than fights.) But Clausev many dynastic wars of the

*Churchill, for example. Also the worst from his enemies. This

†Schramm (SCH, p. 32, note reliable of Hitler's doctors’): “I brief impression was sufficient man was and how he could best l

‡Görlitz-Quint cite a Hitler science. It is the application of a Grundformen] may be studied a bodies.” This corresponds to H human being writ large, a “Macro

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

his Judeophobia crystallize—*Mein Kampf*, he wrote that his of Jews meant occurred in of his life; that he was no come to Vienna; and that in realization of the influence of struggle. Only after months of victory began to favor reason. ved reason, and from then on tchman."‡ (It is interesting to catching up with reason, not others found no anti-Semitic st year of his life, in Munich. Munich question, we saw that where Hitler, probably con- facts about his early life. We

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OF THE FOUR—POSSIBLY 1919 in Munich was the one about the others, we must a turning point is not in person's life—a milestone takes place in a person's Hitler's life, however, it but perhaps equally important the importance—by which ideas. There is a very wise Allen, in his *Sixteenth-Century* about, and used, often: "A whole highly successful, effective and also in an effort, very stances to their ideas."* Pe ment was his ability to achieve heroes and villains), it was but the reverse (which is re It was most probably in Munich his principal ideas: They be By and large: because, after the same things—or, rather (Behind Hitler's discovery least partly unanswerable questions not spin this out further. life was his coming to Vienna Munich, in 1919. The third was released from prison: Hitler, had failed, but had been

*To which I would like to add: "large, ignored by Dostoyevsky and Heiden's startling generalization genius (HD, p. 44): The former fit transforms the world in accordance

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

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

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

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

ble (p. 60) that Hitler had met the na (cf. p. 60-61; also p. 1051), or

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ed M/A, p. 194, where the reference time comrade of Hitler more than

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

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

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

1919

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

‡SP, p. 134.

1919-1920

Reu

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

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

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

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

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

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

*D.T. When I would attempt to comprehend the C.O.'s intentions,

it came across to me that we were guiding Adolf into a new terrain for which there were no historical rules of thumb. He was against both left and right, yet he was also both. At the time I did not think that an C.O. might be developing himself as a new political force that could eventually balance out left and right.

1919

the Spanish civil war (1936) has been called a fifth column. The conspiracy was discovered, a number of Thulists arrested; according to martial law, they were liable to the death penalty, but the Red government could not make up its mind to sentence them. In the last hours of the collapsing régime, news came that the White troops were shooting prisoners. Munich was embittered. In vain the army commander, the poet Ernst Toller, intervened. A fanatical subordinate, to whom the prisoners were entrusted, had a number of them shot, among them a woman; with them a few others who had nothing to do with the Thule Society and who had been arrested for tearing down government posters and other trifling offenses. Those shot included — in view of the subsequent legend, this is not unimportant — a Jew; all in all, ten persons. It remains a hideous deed, but the fifth-columnists of Thule were only bearing the consequences of their conspiracy; it is not true, as Rightist propaganda later claimed, that any hostages were murdered. In the courtyard of the Munich slaughterhouse hundreds of victims paid with their lives for the shooting of the Thulists. Many, if not most of them, were innocent. The drunken soldiery arrested, by mistake, Catholic workers, loyalists, enemies of the revolution and the republic; they murdered twenty-one persons in a cellar by order, or at least with the connivance, of their captain. 'The soldiers,' an eye-witness said later in court, 'many in a drunken condition, tramped around on the prisoners, struck them down indiscriminately with their side-arms, and thrust about so wildly that one of the bayonets bent and the victim's brain splattered all over. In this way they killed fourteen more people and then looted the corpses. Five prisoners were severely wounded. The corpses looked ghastly. The nose of one had been bashed into his face, half of another's skull was missing. If one of the wounded still showed sign of life, the soldiers beat him and stabbed him. Two soldiers grasped one another around the waist and carried on an Indian dance beside the corpses, screaming and howling.'

When the White troops entered Munich, they went to the Nineteenth Infantry barracks and found a body of soldiers which an eye-witness later called 'a wild Red rabble.' Every tenth man, chosen at random, was stood up against the wall and shot. Only one was

set aside from the very first to be spared. His too clear. When the high officers of the Muni before the radical uprising, they had left this man and report. A dangerous commission, requiring a few months previous, this man had attracted officers in a strange way. 'They all noticed him, recollected, 'because his salutes were so punctilious' in those revolutionary months when he defiantly refrained from saluting at all. When troops stormed Munich, his comrades wanted to city; he made a speech dissuading them. His expected him of being a spy, and during the soviet escaped arrest. Now he became the executioner examining commission sent hundreds of men to wall. This man soon came to the attention of the used him as an informer. He delivered his report later boasted of them. 'When he was ordered before commission,' wrote one of his friends, 'his indistinct less clarity upon the unspeakable disgrace of the practiced by the Jewish dictatorship of Munich's rank this stool-pigeon was a corporal; by nationality an Austrian. His stated profession was painter a name was Adolf Hitler.

For these men the World War was not at all to recognize defeat. In any case, they said, we were back. But we do not accept this peace, we shall ourselves to this revolution. The German army fights Every period has its methods. The thing for you to at an inn, watch the people, listen to them, get them and win their confidence. It is a strange period war. Two armies are fighting one another, almost public; they are building up secret arsenals, and the war of position is to steal the enemy's arms by the greatest danger is that the Allied victors of Versailles out what is going on, for then the weapons will in their hands. Hence we must sound the people out, know anything about hidden arms; and if they do

1919
Needs development. A chapter perhaps. It is his first major triumph. It can't be done w/o further collaboration.

) has been called a fifth column. The number of Thulists arrested; according to the death penalty, but the make up its mind to sentence them. In the régime, news came that the White Russians. Munich was embittered. In vain yet Ernst Toller, intervened. A fanatical prisoners were entrusted, had a number a woman; with them a few others who he Thule Society and who had been government posters and other trifling — in view of the subsequent legend, Jew; all in all, ten persons. It remains columnists of Thule were only bearing conspiracy; it is not true, as Rightist propaganda hostages were murdered. In the slaughterhouse hundreds of victims paid nothing of the Thulists. Many, if not most of the drunken soldiery arrested, by mistake, enemies of the revolution and the twenty-one persons in a cellar by order, once, of their captain. 'The soldiers,' an court, 'many in a drunken condition, prisoners, struck them down indiscriminately, and thrust about so wildly that one of victim's brain splattered all over. In this more people and then looted the corpses. y wounded. The corpses looked ghastly.ashed into his face, half of another's skull e wounded still showed sign of life, the bed him. Two soldiers grasped one and carried on an Indian dance beside the vling.'

entered Munich, they went to the Nine- and found a body of soldiers which an wild Red rabble.' Every tenth man, chosen against the wall and shot. Only one was

set aside from the very first to be spared. His position was only too clear. When the high officers of the Munich Reichswehr fled before the radical uprising, they had left this man behind, to observe and report. A dangerous commission, requiring courage — but ugly. A few months previous, this man had attracted the attention of his officers in a strange way. 'They all noticed him,' one of them later recollected, 'because his salutes were so punctilious as to be provocative' in those revolutionary months when most of the soldiers defiantly refrained from saluting at all. When the government troops stormed Munich, his comrades wanted to help defend the city; he made a speech dissuading them. His comrades had suspected him of being a spy, and during the soviet régime he barely escaped arrest. Now he became the executioner. After May 2 an examining commission sent hundreds of men to the slaughterhouse wall. This man soon came to the attention of the commission, which used him as an informer. He delivered his reports in writing and later boasted of them. 'When he was ordered before the examining commission,' wrote one of his friends, 'his indictments cast a merciless clarity upon the unspeakable disgrace of the military treason practiced by the Jewish dictatorship of Munich's soviet period.' By rank this stool-pigeon was a corporal; by nationality, strange to say, an Austrian. His stated profession was painter and architect. His name was Adolf Hitler.

For these men the World War was not at an end. They did not recognize defeat. In any case, they said, we were stabbed in the back. But we do not accept this peace, we shall not reconcile ourselves to this revolution. The German army fights on in Germany. Every period has its methods. The thing for you to do is to sit down at an inn, watch the people, listen to them, get acquainted with them and win their confidence. It is a strange period of silent civil war. Two armies are fighting one another, almost unseen by the public; they are building up secret arsenals, and the problem in this war of position is to steal the enemy's arms by bold forays. The greatest danger is that the Allied victors of Versailles should find out what is going on, for then the weapons will inevitably fall into their hands. Hence we must sound the people out, find out if they know anything about hidden arms; and if they do know, whether

1917

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1917 -

*The date should be 1920 or 1921.
Alfred Rosenberg meets
Hitler & tells him this story.*

Hidden

THE PROTOCOLS OF THE WISE MEN OF ZION

ONE DAY IN THE SUMMER OF 1917 A STUDENT was reading in his room in Moscow. A stranger entered, laid a book on the table, and silently vanished. The cover of the book bore in Russian the words from the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew: 'He is near, he is hard by the door.'

The student sensed the masterful irony of higher powers in this strange happening. They had sent him a silent message. He opened the book, and the voice of a demon spoke to him.

It was a message concerning the Antichrist, who would come at the end of days. The Antichrist is no mythical being, no monkish medieval fantasy. It is the portrait of a type of man who comes to the fore when an epoch is dying. He is a man with a white skin, in everyday clothes, dangerously contemporary, and a mighty demagogue. He will talk with the masses, and at his word the masses will rise up and turn a culture to ashes, a culture which has deserved no better, since it has borne the Antichrist in its own image and for its own destruction. The great Russian philosopher Soloviev described him. The Antichrist 'does not look like what he is' and therein precisely lies the danger. He is a young man with a strong personality and seductive power of speech and writing. He is an ascetic and a vegetarian. He will win fame first by a book in which 'respect of the ancient traditions and symbols stands side by

** The student is Alfred Rosenberg.
See p. 4 for continuation.*

side with a bold and thorough radicalism in social and political problems . . . absolute individualism with an ardent fidelity to the common weal. . . . Then, in Berlin, he will become ruler of the 'United States of Europe'; he will conquer Asia and North Africa; America will submit to him voluntarily. He is an absolute genius, and he may, says Soloviev, wear a small mustache.

This is the demon who speaks out of the book.

'We shall talk with the people on the streets and squares,' says the demon, 'and teach them to take the view of political questions which at the moment we require. For what the ruler says to the people spreads through the whole country like wildfire, the voice of the people carries it to all four winds.'

'We'—the demon always says 'We'—'shall create unrest, struggle, and hate in the whole of Europe and thence in other continents. We shall at all times be in a position to call forth new disturbances at will, or to restore the old order.'

'Unremittingly we shall poison the relations between the peoples and states of all countries. By envy and hatred, by struggle and warfare, even by spreading hunger, destitution, and plagues, we shall bring all peoples to such a pass that their only escape will lie in total submission to our domination.'

'We shall stultify, seduce, ruin the youth.'

'We shall not stick at bribery, treachery, treason, as long as they serve the realization of our plans. Our watchword is: force and hypocrisy!'

'In our arsenal we carry a boundless ambition, burning avidity, a ruthless thirst for revenge, relentless hatred. From us emanates the specter of fear, all-embracing terror.'

A gabbling demon, and self-conceited, too:

'We are the chosen, we are the true men. Our minds give off the true power of the spirit; the intelligence of the rest is instinctive and animal. They can see, but they cannot foresee; their inventions are purely corporeal. Does it not follow clearly that Nature herself has predestined us to dominate the whole world?'

'We shall not submit the unique greatness of our ultimate plan, the context of its particular parts, the consequences of each separate point, the secret meaning of which remains hidden, to the judgment

and decision of the many, even, of those who shall not cast the gleaming thoughts of our and even in more intimate circles we shall carp at.

'We shall paint the misdeeds of foreign garish colors and create such an ill-feeling peoples would a thousand times rather bear than peace and order than enjoy the. The peoples will tolerate any servitude we only to avoid a return to the horrors of war principles and methods will take on their sent them in sharp contrast to the putrid ol

'Outwardly, however, in our "official" utter an opposite procedure and always do our best and co-operative. A statesman's words do his acts. If we pursue these principles, the good which we have thus prepared will take out day they will accept us as the benefactors at race.

'If any state dares to resist us; if its need cause with it against us, we shall unleash a

And then the demon spreads his wings, over the world:

'By all these methods we shall so wear them they will be forced to offer us world dominion out our arms like pincers in all directions, of such violence that all peoples will bow to

Who is this 'we'? Who is it that brags

To the student it is not absurd. It sounds a mere tissue of lies. He turns back the pages all this accursed wisdom, all these diabolic out by a group of old Jews, who met together Basel, Switzerland, in the year 1897. The document the world is a Jewish club. It stands there scribed at length, with place and date. Twenty before this knowledge found the right man

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and decision of the many, even, of those who share our thoughts; we shall not cast the gleaming thoughts of our leader before the swine, and even in more intimate circles we shall not permit them to be carped at.

'We shall paint the misdeeds of foreign governments in the most garish colors and create such an ill-feeling toward them that the peoples would a thousand times rather bear a slavery which guarantees them peace and order than enjoy their much-touted freedom. The peoples will tolerate any servitude we may impose on them, if only to avoid a return to the horrors of wars and insurrection. Our principles and methods will take on their full force when we present them in sharp contrast to the putrid old social order.

'Outwardly, however, in our "official" utterances, we shall adopt an opposite procedure and always do our best to appear honorable and co-operative. A statesman's words do not have to agree with his acts. If we pursue these principles, the governments and peoples which we have thus prepared will take our IOU's for cash. One day they will accept us as the benefactors and saviors of the human race.

'If any state dares to resist us; if its neighbors make common cause with it against us, we shall unleash a world war.'

And then the demon spreads his wings, conceals the sky, darkens the world:

'By all these methods we shall so wear down the nations that they will be forced to offer us world domination. We shall stretch out our arms like pincers in all directions, and introduce an order of such violence that all peoples will bow to our domination.'

Who is this 'we'? Who is it that brags so absurdly?

To the student it is not absurd. It sounds fantastic, but it is not a mere tissue of lies. He turns back the pages and discovers that all this accursed wisdom, all these diabolical plans, were hatched out by a group of old Jews, who met together in a back room in Basel, Switzerland, in the year 1897. The demon aiming to devour the world is a Jewish club. It stands there in black and white, described at length, with place and date. Twenty years had passed before this knowledge found the right man. And thus *The Proto-*

1917

cols of the Wise Men of Zion, since become so famous, fell into the hands of Alfred Rosenberg.

A mysterious occurrence. Rosenberg himself has often told how the unknown suddenly stepped into the room, laid down the book, and silently departed. To Rosenberg it was a sign from heaven. Both the place and the hour were significant. Moscow, 1917. Far to the west, the German-Russian phase of the First World War was drawing to an end in crumbling trenches; in the streets of the capital, the Russian Revolution was ebbing and flowing. Alfred Rosenberg, the son of a shoemaker, born in Reval (Tallinn) on the Baltic, was then twenty-four years old; he was of German descent but as an Estonian, he was a subject of the Russian tsar. He had been raised in the German and Russian languages; he had first studied engineering and architecture at Riga, also on the Baltic; then, when the German army occupied Riga, he had fled. Now he was studying in Moscow.

The globe was afire. The tsar's empire was crumbling. Perhaps there would never again be peace. Perhaps this book would tell him why. The demon, who had incited the nations against each other, had spoken. Perhaps he, Alfred Rosenberg, understood him better than others; for in his own soul he could feel more strongly than others the mesh woven by hatred and love between the nations. He came from the tsar's Baltic, German provinces. He could scarcely say whether he was more Russian or more German. But today there were greater things concerning which he must achieve clarity. Here in Russia's holy city, in Russia's language, he had received a message. Judah, a book has brought forth thine innermost thoughts! He, the student, would close his eyes and believe it all his life, as firm as a rock. Was a new epoch of world history beginning in Moscow at that hour? Surely one of the most astounding, far-reaching, and bloody conspiracies of all time was bound to that hour. He who could read would go far. *

'The nations,' says the demon, 'love and honor audacity in statesmen. Faced with an act of violence, they say: that was vile but clever! A scoundrel's trick, but wonderfully executed! With what insolence! Our leaders must move toward their goal with unparalleled boldness. Then we shall break all resistance in our path.'

The vision sends forth an icy chill and a breath

The demon of world domination has spoken the great secret: the world can be dominated. ness, the peoples demand subjection. And tho tamed by terrible blows and sufferings. Mode with a magical current which in all men creatu The masses expect great things of their rulers. great things are easy.

This is the true sense of the secret writings w as *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion* them develops from the basic idea that world d in our time: with sovereign contempt it is sh tive ease it can be achieved. Later, at third, fo these profound thoughts were woven togethe forgeries and purposeful lies which confuse whole document to the point of unintelligibil that condition it could be swallowed witho millions of readers, and this gave it its great ef

Today we are in a position to re-create the o document. Its content is how to establish d help—and abuse—of democratic methods. T ism is described. We are told that democracy treme conclusion, provides the usurper with hi thermore, democracy, in the international fic dictator, who has firmly entrenched himself possibility of world domination. This is the famous *Protocols*.

Three generations ago a brilliant thinker w ula for the achievement of world domination. cerning his life. He was a French lawyer n He was, at the time he wrote his little book, : mist and monarchist. He had no thought of w ment; on the contrary, he had in mind a sati III, then emperor of the French. Whether he he was leaving behind him the prophecies of a he ever guessed that his book embraced a politic shaking force, we do not know.

* His intensity, his vision for himself, his readiness to follow Hitler exactly. He now has a younger brother of the same mind.

me so famous, fell into the

himself has often told how room, laid down the book, it was a sign from heaven. Moscow, 1917. Far from the First World War was; in the streets of the ebullient and flowing. Alfred Dreyfus in Reval (Tallinn) on the old; he was of German subject of the Russian tsar. Russian languages; he had been at Riga, also on the Baltic; in Riga, he had fled. Now

was crumbling. Perhaps perhaps this book would tell of the nations against each other. Rosenberg, understood him; he could feel more strongly hatred and love between the German provinces. He was Russian or more German. Concerning which he must say, in Russia's language, he has brought forth thine; he would close his eyes and be- as a new epoch of world war? Surely one of the most conspiracies of all time was it would go far.

honor audacity in states- they say: that was vile but fully executed! With what hard their goal with un- all resistance in our path.

The vision sends forth an icy chill and a breath of deadly truth.

The demon of world domination has spoken. He has proclaimed the great secret: the world can be dominated. Bowed with weariness, the peoples demand subjection. And those who resist will be tamed by terrible blows and sufferings. Modern society is charged with a magical current which in all men creates the same thoughts. The masses expect great things of their rulers. And for that reason great things are easy.

This is the true sense of the secret writings which we today know as *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*. Everything else in them develops from the basic idea that world domination is possible in our time: with sovereign contempt it is shown with what relative ease it can be achieved. Later, at third, fourth, and fifth hand, these profound thoughts were woven together with a figment of forgeries and purposeful lies which confused and obscured the whole document to the point of unintelligibility. But precisely in that condition it could be swallowed without understanding by millions of readers, and this gave it its great effect.

Today we are in a position to re-create the original content of the document. Its content is how to establish dictatorship with the help—and abuse—of democratic methods. The genesis of Caesarism is described. We are told that democracy, if carried to its extreme conclusion, provides the usurper with his best weapons. Furthermore, democracy, in the international field actually offers a dictator, who has firmly entrenched himself in one country, the possibility of world domination. This is the true content of the famous *Protocols*.

Three generations ago a brilliant thinker wrote this secret formula for the achievement of world domination. We know little concerning his life. He was a French lawyer named Maurice Joly. He was, at the time he wrote his little book, a conservative, legitimist and monarchist. He had no thought of writing a secret document; on the contrary, he had in mind a satire against Napoleon III, then emperor of the French. Whether he ever perceived that he was leaving behind him the prophecies of a great seer; whether he ever guessed that his book embraced a political doctrine of world-shaking force, we do not know.

1917-18

p. 100?

of a state whose authority was
ray and disintegration.

Jews increasingly became the
a from the middle of the war
d before. What was new was the
now being propagated, and the
fertile ground. Like every other
way by 'the spirit of 1914' - at
ermans. By 1916 such presumed
wave of vicious, increasingly
fostered by the annexationist
at any time before the war. Jews
nigrants flooding Germany, as
ering, and as shirkers avoiding
stjuden entering Germany were
n-Jews than Jews were directors
portions of Jews and non-Jews
ot, of course, prevent the spread
were kept alive by a statistical
umber of Jews at the front and
the Reichstag into the numbers
of the war economy.¹⁶⁸ Though
s underlying the military survey
fter not made officers (at least
ulated by Claß's Pan-Germans
nd Party, of the pro-war lobby
ccepted in the Reichstag on 19
was a proliferation of antisem-
the Pan-German leadership in
reached enormous proportions'
ginning for the Jews'.¹⁷⁰ Events
simmering hatred, adding the
ystone of antisemitic agitation
national organizations directed
realized that the war was lost,
ermanists, reached fever-pitch.
on Kleist, aimed at the French
the purpose of 'exploiting the
udaism and to use the Jews as

lightning rods for all injustices' was set up by the Pan-Germans in September
1918: 'Kill them; the world court is not asking you for your reasons!'¹⁷²

V

The atmosphere of disintegration and collapsing morale, the climate of political and ideological radicalization, in the last two war years could not but make the deepest impression on a Hitler who had welcomed the war so rapturously, had supported German aims so fanatically, and had from the outset condemned all defeatist suggestions so vehemently. He was repelled by many attitudes he encountered at the front.¹⁷¹ But, as we have seen, it was during the three periods, amounting in total to over three months, that he spent in Germany either on leave or recovering from injury in the last two war years that he experienced a level of disaffection at the running of the war which was new and deeply appalling to him. He had been shocked at the atmosphere in Berlin and, even more so, Munich in 1916.¹⁷⁴ As the war dragged on, he became incensed by the talk of revolution, and incandescent at news of the munitions strike in favour of early peace without annexations which had spread briefly at the end of January 1918 from Berlin to other major industrial cities (though with little actual effect on munitions supplies).¹⁷⁵ Brandmayer recalled Hitler's enraged comments that if he had been war minister the strike leaders would have been stood against a wall within twenty-four hours. According to Brandmayer, he held Friedrich Ebert responsible.¹⁷⁶ It is, of course, possible that Brandmayer was simply paraphrasing Hitler's own account in *Mein Kampf*.¹⁷⁷ However, there seems no obvious reason to disbelieve Hitler when he wrote that he was already associating the unrest at home with the Social Democratic leadership who, in his view, were 'ripe for hanging'.¹⁷⁸ As signs of demoralization and disintegration intensified at the front, as well as within Germany, the soldiers became more politicized. Hitler commented on the 'symptoms of disintegration' in August and September 1918 and that the troops now engaged in political arguments as the 'poison from the homeland' took effect.¹⁷⁹ Brandmayer's remark that Hitler took a keen interest in developments within Germany and involved himself in such discussions sounds plausible.¹⁸⁰

The last two years of the war, between his convalescence in Beelitz in October 1916 and his hospitalization in Pasewalk in October 1918, can probably be seen as a vital staging-post in Hitler's ideological development.

1917-18

The prejudices and phobias carried over from the Vienna years were now plainly evident in his embittered rage about the collapse of the war effort – a cause to which, for the first time in his life, he had totally bound himself. The summation of all that he had believed in. But they had not yet been fully rationalized into the component parts of a political ideology. That would only emerge fully during Hitler's own 'political training' in the Reichswehr in the course of 1919.

What part the hospitalization in Pasewalk played in the shaping of Hitler's ideology, what significance it had for the shaping of the future party leader and dictator, has been much disputed and, in truth, is not easy to evaluate. In Hitler's own account it has a pivotal place. Recovering from his temporary blindness, but unable to read newspapers, so he wrote, Hitler heard rumours of pending revolution but did not fully comprehend them. The arrival of some mutineering sailors was the first tangible sign of serious disturbance, but Hitler and fellow-patients from Bavaria presumed the unrest would be crushed within a few days. However, it became clear – 'the most terrible certainty of my life' – that a general revolution had taken place.¹⁸¹ On 10 November, a pastor addressed the patients in sorrowful terms about the end of the monarchy and informed them that Germany was now a republic, that the war was lost and that Germans had to place themselves at the mercy of the victors, whose magnanimity could be expected.¹⁸² At this, Hitler wrote:

I could stand it no longer. It became impossible for me to sit still one minute more. Again everything went black before my eyes; I tottered and groped my way back to the dormitory, threw myself on my bunk, and dug my burning head into my blanket and pillow.

Since the day when I had stood at my mother's grave, I had not wept . . . But now I could not help it . . .

And so it had all been in vain . . . Did all this happen only so that a gang of wretched criminals could lay hands on the fatherland? . . .

The more I tried to achieve clarity on the monstrous event in this hour, the more the shame of indignation and disgrace burned my brow. What was all the pain in my eyes compared to this misery?

There followed terrible days and even worse nights – I knew that all was lost . . . In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed.

In the days that followed, my own fate became known to me.

I could not help but laugh at the thought of my own future which only a short time before had given me such bitter concern . . .

He drew, according to his own making pacts with Jews; there came the decision that changed his life:

Hitler referred to his Pasewa the early 1920s. There were even appear in *Mein Kampf*. He told in Pasewalk he received a type the German people and make G purported quasi-religious exper own person which Hitler enco myth that was already embryon in the two years leading up to t Hitler played down the vision st stated only that hearing in Pasew to enter politics.¹⁸⁵ A year and offered another gloss on his rea thought over all his experiences; for a severe injury and came to t the German people's worst enem a certainty for him that where nation, a Jew is the culprit behi

Some have been tempted to interpret Pasewalk's experience as an hallucinatory ideological obsession; his 'missed' German people themselves testified to this.¹⁸⁷ Still recovering from the traumatic shock of hearing of the gasings – was subliminally associated in his mind with the hands of his mother at the hands of the Gestapo – the sudden dominance of a present before and for the ever-present gasings, since he saw the gasings. Apart from seemingly reducing the gasings to the mass murder of the Jews, the trauma of a single person in the gasings and lacks persuasion. The balance of ideological development

Whatever Hitler's state of s
partial blinding (from which h

This again was an occasion to stir him seriously. For, unlike most others, who have lived from vision and can it collapse, would not crumble with it, but to the contrary believed in what he believed more passionately than ever that we of great meta-^{er}. We can develop the most subtle and incremental strengths in someone who has power.

that didn't go along with

his time seem to bear this
ematurely old, with star-
eriously, identifying him-
cess of German arms.

Hitler would still refer to
produced upon me by the
periences. For that indi-
of one's own ego—could
nmon interest—that the
r people demonstrated in
y Germans regarded the
excitement of life at the
ctive than the obscurity,
ty of peace, but this was
or he had neither family,
ich to return: there was
friendliness in the order-
wn since he left Linz. In
was from ex-servicemen
settle down into monoto-
ikorps (post-war illegal
and a score of extremist
nbers. The war, and the
e individual lives of mil-
mong the essential condi-
and the Nazi Party.

of his later pretensions as
World War, that Hitler
Kampf about the conduct
At the time he wrote his
s to secure the favour of
e in the attitude of con-
ards the generals. In any
conventional Nationalist
an Army had never been
lost by the treachery and

cowardice of the leaders at home, the capitulation of
November 1918 was a failure of political not military
leadership.

At the time of his stay in hospital at Beelitz and
his visit to Munich (October 1916-March 1917) Hit-
ler became indignant at the contrast between the
spirit of the Army at the Front and the poor morale
and lack of discipline at home. There he encountered
shirkers who boasted of dodging military service,
grumbling, profiteering, the black market, and other
familiar accompaniments of wartime civilian life; it
was with relief that he returned to the Front. Hitler
had no use for a government which tolerated political
discussion, covert anti-war propaganda and strikes in
time of war. In *Mein Kampf* his contempt for par-
liamentary deputies and journalists is lavish: 'All
decent men who had anything to say, said it point-
blank in the enemy's face; or, failing this, kept their
mouths shut and did their duty elsewhere. Un-
compromising military measures should have been
adopted to root out the evil. Parties should have been
abolished and the Reichstag brought to its senses at
the point of the bayonet, if necessary. It would have
been still better if the Reichstag had been dissolved
immediately.'

This is no more than the common talk of any one
of the ex-servicemen's (*Frontkämpfer*) associations
which sprang up after the war and comforted their
wounded pride by blaming Socialist agitators, Jews,
profiteers, and democratic politicians for the 'shame-
ful treachery' of the 'Stab in the Back.' But Hitler
adds a characteristic twist which shows once more
the originality of his ideas as soon as he was faced
with a question of political leadership. It was not
enough, he concluded, to use force to suppress the
Socialist and anti-national agitation to which he at-
tributed the sapping of Germany's will to go on
fighting. 'If force be used to combat a spiritual
power, that force remains a defensive measure only,

1916-17

so long as the wielders of it are not the standard bearers and apostles of a new spiritual doctrine . . . It is only in the struggle between *Weltanschauungen* [world views] that physical force, consistently and ruthlessly applied, will eventually turn the scale in its own favour.' This was the reason for the failure of every attempt to combat Marxism hitherto, including the failure of Bismarck's anti-socialist legislation — 'it lacked the basis of a new *Weltanschauung*.'

Out of this grew the idea of creating a new movement which would fight Social Democracy with its own weapons. For power lay with the masses, and if the hold of the Jew-ridden Marxist parties on their allegiance was to be broken, a substitute had to be found. The key, Hitler became convinced, lay in propaganda, and the lesson Hitler had already drawn from the Social Democrats and Lueger's Christian Socialists in Vienna was completed by his observation of the success of English propaganda during the war, by contrast with the failure of German attempts.

There were two themes on which Hitler constantly played in the years that followed the war: Man of the People, and Unknown Soldier of the First World War. When he spoke to the first Congress of German Workers in Berlin on 10 May 1933, he assured them: 'Fate, in a moment of caprice or perhaps fulfilling the designs of Providence, cast me into the great mass of the people, amongst common folk. I myself was a labouring man for years in the building trade and had to earn my own bread. And for a second time I took my place once again as an ordinary soldier amongst the masses.' These were the twin foundations of his demagoguery and, in however garbled a fashion, they correspond to the two formative experiences of his life, the years in Vienna and Munich, and the years at the Front.

Those years between the end of 1908 and the end of 1918 had hardened him, taught him to be self-

The Formative Years, 1889
reliant, confirmed his belief in the power of his will. From a stock of fixed ideas and he altered little in the rest of his contempt for the ideals of liberalism, equality, and peace; totalitarian forms of government; a rooted belief in the individuals; and faith in the future. Most important of all, in the years he had already hit upon, political power was to be won, which, when fully developed, was a career without parallel in the past. He had learned remained to be won on his own mind, and had still to make the decision to become a politician. A sudden shock to precipitate his decision was supplied by the end of the war, the loss of many, and the overthrow of

* As a putative architect who conceived of buildings, he could without the quiver of an internal quiver, declare that he had labored for years in the building trade. Hear! Hear!

THE FIRST WORLD WAR



JOHN KEEGAN



ALFRED A. KNOPF NEW YORK

1999

*Maple Grove Press
Mar 1914
1915
1916
1917
1918
After*

Oct '14

CB
 A. H.
 @ will
 Oct 1914



The German advance, 1914

the opportunity given the warning to his right before and decisiveness army drift reacted the morning of south of the Marne. The German advance was stopped by the British Expeditionary Force on 9 September. The German advance was stopped by the British Expeditionary Force on 9 September. The German advance was stopped by the British Expeditionary Force on 9 September.

* Summary
1917
D.H. at
Ypres



H.H.
A.H.
at Somme
Oct 1916
wounded

In late
autumn
after
Ypres
in July '17
to Nov '17
outfit
was sent
to Bulchou
in Alsace
A month
later to
Oise-Meuse
sector

On Oct 13, 1918,
A.H. injured
at war trench
near Ypres

In March the
unit required
went against
Hindenburg

ent in outline, 1914-18



The Western Front in outline, 1914-18



1914-18

*On Oct 13, 1918
A.H. injured
at Wavre
near Ypres*

*In March the
last regiment
went against
Roubaix*

*In late
autumn
after
D. Ypres
in July '17
to Nov '17
outfit
was sent
to Mulhouse
in Alsace
A month
later to
Oise-Aisne
sector*

insured the *Stavka*, the majority over the German made to match the forty it should have, had Ren-ve together and keep respectively to face west-ards Graudenz, should, side those two fortress at surrounded Eighth its precipitate flight to sia to a deeper Russian

et of the Russian com- dity and incompetence s repeated the mistake, oying an incontestable the Spartans at Leuctra, cellorsville, of exposing ing a weaker enemy to then against the other, y worked to favour the sily explained. Though y level path of advance s that feeds the River are ways through, par- in 1914. As a result, a o south confronted the ng to drive them apart. orth and south of the ally, and that was what General Y. Zhilinsky, ro do.¹³

paration offered to the for the protection of his en enlarged the danger, his flank on the Baltic detach troops to protect ened, while arranging le in the gap separating as a diversion of effort

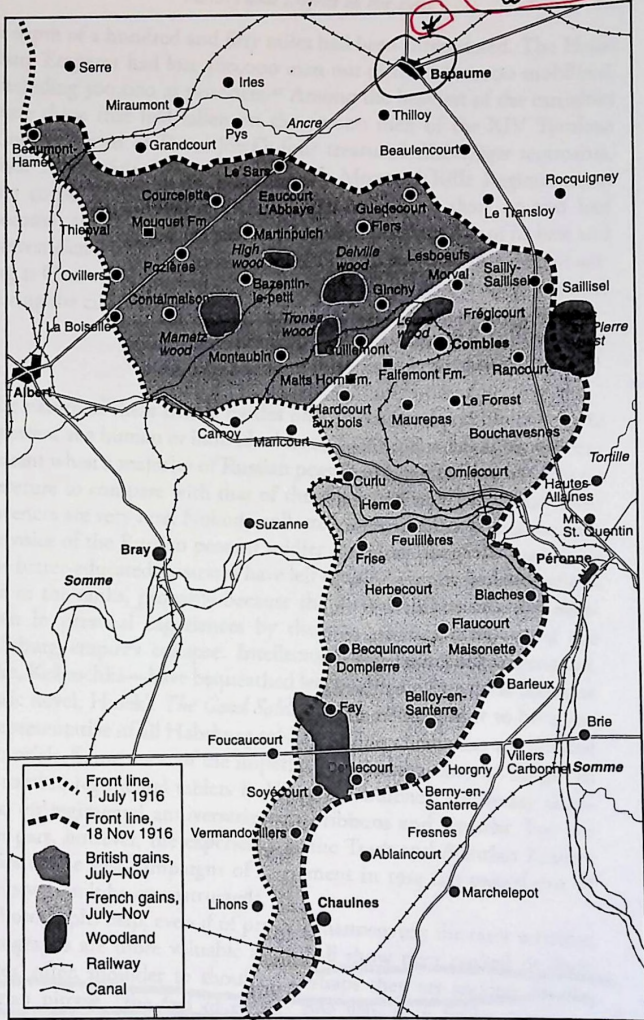


The Eastern Front in outline, 1914-18

operation to "bleed
sword" out of her
months to run, it had
Hayn's credibility as
he was in person-
assured to the point
and Minister of War,
the popular mind,
of the failure of
the plan's defects—
ough it properly lay
in practice to him
the Eastern Front,
movement of Hin-
Hayn's confederality
endorf, landed him
Austro-Hungarian
entry of Italy into
Austrian. The only
might have taken
summer; was palpa-
ment that would
game had opened,
ing, the star of his
man, Hindenburg,

pendant general,
all who had taken
tion of his beloved

Wounded
Holloway
seen on Oct 287



The battle of the Somme

1914



enberg. The Third and the Wereszyca position, Russian encirclement which was becoming September Alexeyev an effort to break our as in paralysis. The at hand."⁴⁰ Conrad marched on until, at on 6 September into Third Army and was

a depth of a hundred and fifty miles had been surrendered. The Habsburg Emperor had lost 400,000 men out of the 1,800,000 mobilised, including 300,000 as prisoners.⁴² Among the heaviest of the casualties were those that had fallen on the 50,000 men of the XIV Tyrolean Corps, formed of Franz Josef's four treasured *Kaiserjäger* regiments, their *Kaiserschützen* reservists, the 6th Mounted Rifle Regiment and the corps mountain artillery batteries.⁴³ No less than 40,000 had become casualties, a loss that deprived the Austrian army of its best and bravest element, never to be replaced.⁴⁴ They had paid the price of acting as Conrad's task force in the crucial effort to hold its front together during the climactic battle around Lemberg.

WARFARE IN THE EAST

The nature of these titanic battles on the Eastern Front is difficult to represent at a human or individual level. The Russian army, 80 per cent peasant when a majority of Russian peasants were still illiterate, left no literature to compare with that of the Western Front. "Personal reminiscences are very rare. Nobody collected them"; without amanuenses, the voice of the Russian peasant soldier could not speak to posterity.⁴⁵ The better-educated Austrians have left equally few recollections of service in the ranks, probably because the disaster of the war was overtaken in personal experiences by the even greater upheaval of the Habsburg empire's collapse. Intellectuals and artists—Wittgenstein, Rilke, Kokoschka—have bequeathed letters and diaries and at least one classic novel, Hasek's *The Good Soldier Svejk*, which is not to be taken as representative of all Habsburg soldiers' attitude; but they are isolated memorials. Some sense of the imperial army's ordeal may be caught in the sombre regimental tablets in Viennese churches, still today decorated on regimental anniversaries with ribbons and wreaths. For the most part, however, the experience of the Tsar's and Austrian Kaiser's armies in the vast campaigns of movement in 1914 has passed out of memory. Can it be reconstructed?

Photographs help, even if of pre-war manoeuvres; the rarer wartime photographs are more valuable still.⁴⁶ All show men ranked in deep masses, often shoulder to shoulder. Perhaps they are seeking, in the German phrase, "the feel of cloth," one way men find courage in the face of fire. Long bayonets are fixed to rifles, pouches and accoutrements encumber their movements, thick clothing bulks out their bodies. To bullets it offers no protection. Within a few months, most

→ whereas adi had to be alone.

162

armies will have adopted the steel helmet, the first reversion to the use of armour since its disappearance in the seventeenth century. The opening months of the First World War marked the termination of two hundred years of a style of infantry fighting which, with decreasing logic, taught that drill and discipline was the best defence against missile weapons, however much improved. Such photographs demonstrate large-scale disobedience of tactical regulations, which in all armies laid down rules of dispersion. In the Russian army, the regulations of 1912 laid down that the lowest unit, the platoon of fifty men, should extend over a hundred paces, that is, with a yard between each soldier.⁴⁷ At the same time, it prescribed a front of attack for a battalion of 500 yards, which meant that the commander should rank it in four lines of four platoons each. Since those forward would then mask the fire of those behind, it is understandable that regulations should have been discarded and the bulk of the battalion massed in the front line. Such practice obeyed, if not the letter, then the spirit of regulations, which required attacking infantry to build up a "superiority of fire" with an advanced skirmishing line, and its supports then to rush the enemy from a distance of a hundred yards or so. The Austrian army had a similar doctrine.⁴⁸ The regulations of 1911 insisted that the riflemen of the infantry could "without the support of the other arms, even in inferior numbers, gain victory as long as [they] were tough and brave." This was a view common to the continental armies, German, Austrian and Russian as well as French, the most ideological exponent of the "spirit of the offensive," and was based not merely on affirmation but on an analysis of the nature of recent combat in, particularly, the Russo-Japanese War. It was accepted that high levels of firepower entailed high casualty rates; it was still believed that a determination to accept heavy casualties would bring victory.⁴⁹

At Tannenberg and Lemberg, therefore, we must imagine the attacking infantry moving, in dense masses, to assault enemy positions held by infantry also densely massed, if behind improvised defences, with the field artillery, deployed in the open at close range behind the firing line, delivering salvos in direct support. In the Russian army, the 1912 regulations "prescribed that fire be delivered in short, rapid bursts, with field guns firing over the heads of advancing infantry."⁵⁰ No army had procedures, or indeed the equipment, to correct aim. Telephones were few (Samsonov's whole army had only twenty-five) and telephone lines were almost automatically broken as soon as combat commenced;

* And the A.C.'s thought

communication was by flag or artillery fire was most often effective.

The 1914 battles in the East those fought by Napoleon at the Marne campaign, with rather than stood up to fire and to widths a hundred times greater also, from a day to a week or gruesomely similar: huge accumulation of numbers engaged, at 1812, a battle of almost unprecedented advanced a hundred miles to a hundred and fifty miles to the

THE BATTLE

The Austrian collapse on the first great strategic crises of the Austrian empire, beyond invasion—the Russian general themselves the capture of Bucharest of heartland Germany sent into Silesia, towards the great was not out of danger, while Brusilov, best of the Russian passes. Even Moltke, worn down by the Schlieffen Plan, could find time to the Aisne to the affairs of the Staff, before his supersession: telephoned Ludendorff to the army, southern because it would fill the gap between the victorious Austrians. Ludendorff, who, in situation, made the countermost of Eighth Army's troops energy to take. His successor was imposing in appearance, that most of Eighth Army army, numbered the Ninth

1914



Victor

Hindenburg as commander; Hoffman, their operations officer during the Tannenberg battle, would join in that post. On 18 September Ludendorff motored to meet Conrad and agree with him a new plan to avert the danger under which the Austro-German front lay. The Ninth Army, instead of standing to await a Russian offensive into Silesia, would attack across the upper Vistula and drive towards Warsaw, the Russian centre of operations on the Polish front.¹²

The Russians, however, had plans of their own. During September, in fact, they had too many plans, the supreme command, the *Stavka*, having one, and the North-Western and South-Western Fronts others. The Russian General Staff reports record "dissension between [them], resulting in different directives."¹³ The North-Western Front, now commanded by Ruzski, was, by his estimation, dangerously exposed as a result of the German successes in East Prussia and must retreat a long way, perhaps as far as the River Niemen, a hundred miles east of the Masurian Lakes; if necessary, Warsaw itself must be abandoned. The South-Western Front, by contrast, wanted to press its victorious pursuit of the Austrians westward towards Cracow. The *Stavka* had a radical alternative: the bulk of the Russian force on the Eastern Front would disengage, concentrate around Warsaw and the great fortress of Ivangorod, upstream on the Vistula, and then launch a concerted offensive towards Silesia, with the purpose of taking the war directly into Germany.

All these plans, though particularly those of Ruzski and the *Stavka*, characterise a distinctively Russian style of warmaking, that of using space rather than force as a medium of strategy. No French general would have proposed surrendering the cherished soil of his country to gain military advantage; the German generals in East Prussia had taken the defence of its frontier to be a sacred duty. To the Russians, by contrast, inhabitants of an empire that stretched nearly 6,000 miles from the ploughland of western Poland to the ice of the Bering Straits, a hundred miles here or there was a trifle of military manoeuvre. In their wars with the Turks, the Swedes, above all with Napoleon, whole provinces had been lost, only to be regained when distance and the durability of the peasant soldier defeated the invader. As in 1812, so in 1914; to give ground now would be to repossess it later, and all to the enemy's disadvantage. By 23 September, the *Stavka* had acquired clear intelligence that the German Ninth Army was concentrated in Silesia and was advancing towards Warsaw. The Grand Duke Nicholas, who had now taken control of the *Stavka*, accordingly decided to withdraw

most of his forces from the Tenth Army would be in East Prussia. When Hindenburg appeared in the centre, the advance from Warsaw to the strategic mass. Second, Fildarsky would take it in flank.

This was war on a titanic scale, the west and larger by far than in any of the operations of the Russo-Japanese War. The Russians, who were men from distant Siberia, had most of their units engaged in late September, without a finding their front had been a tactical disadvantage. All the garrison of Przemyśl on 9 October they paid the penalty of a conceived offensive towards a faction of watching the East Prussian frontier. The October, its attack was a Ludendorff considerable glory of Tannenberg, had the Russians achieved success checked.

By early October there to south, a German-Russian front on the San; and a Russian front on the Vistula. The whole extent, 1 nearly 500 miles, though Warsaw and East Prussia were, however, where the Warsaw that the drama seen in Europe since the two complementary outman Ninth Army was in Hindenburg and Ludendorff.

* A. H. argued this point of view in the trenches.
"We are not dealing with decent honourable opponents in the East but with sub-grade humans who do not honor their own land."

"But if you were a Russian, what would you do?"
"I would fight as they fight."
A rare moment of candor between them.

1915

thousand five hundred officers and 117,000 soldiers passed into Russian captivity.⁶⁹ The officers, whom the British observer described as having "a prosperous and well-fed look," at first suffered little thereby; an artist of the *Illustrated London News* depicted them sharing the cafés of the city with the conquerors, sitting at separate tables but exchanging salutes on entry and departure as if by the protocols of eighteenth-century warfare.⁶⁹

In Masuria neither the Russians nor the Germans were in a mood for civilities. There the Russian Tenth Army still occupied the strip of East Prussia taken in the battle of Augustow at the end of September and the Germans were determined to retake it. There was more to their plan, however, than a hope of local success. It had two larger objects. The first was an encirclement of the Russian Tenth Army between Masuria and the forest of Augustow, last of Europe's primeval wildernesses; the second was a wider encirclement of the whole Russian position in Poland, in concert with the Austrians' offensive in the Carpathians. Falkenhayn had wanted neither operation, since both required reinforcements he preferred to husband for his continued effort in the west, but he was overborne by Hindenburg who, though his subordinate, enjoyed direct access to the Kaiser since his Tannenberg triumph. The troops were found, largely because of the German army's superior ability to create new formations from its existing structures. While the Russians and the Austrians merely made good losses as best they could with often untrained recruits, the Germans subdivided first-line divisions, upgraded second-line formations and organised new divisions out of reserves and fresh classes of conscripts. In this way, during November 1914, it created eight new divisions for the Eastern Front from the replacement battalions of the military districts, numbered 75-82; though they had a strength of only nine rather than the standard twelve infantry battalions, these new divisions were as strong in artillery as the old and actually anticipated the nine-battalion organisation which would become the norm throughout the army later in the war.⁷⁰

The "Winter Battle in Masuria," with the 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th and 80th Divisions in the vanguard, opened on 9 February 1915. Two armies, the old Eighth which had won Tannenberg and a new Tenth, attacked from north and south of the lake belt, broke through in terrible weather—snow, fog and bitter cold—and quickly threatened the Russians with encirclement. The Russian infantry, whose

entrenchments were poorly supported by artillery guns than stand by progressively encircling and underestimating the enemy which had provided them with a recently assured Sievers, south, would solve it broke, that "nothing could have the same fate as [Rennenkampf's] his superiors, so that, I threaten. Bulgakov's XX constricted sector of the principal casualty was a bison."⁷¹ The German surrendered with 12,000 the majority of Tenth fighting had in fact escaped second Tannenberg but of Russian invasion.

The winter battle is the result. There, in continuing and in the Beskid mountains man loan troops renewed Russians respond with uneasiness. Staff, began the offensive the surrounded Przemyśl deter Italy, increasingly war on the Allies' side. inflicted setbacks and they and starved amid the conditions, which included a Europe, were less affected with a counter-offensive the arrival of three German Reserve, to the Austria April, the Russians dominated throughout their army break, were again content

* A. H. means of this and speaks as
contempt of the Austrians,
"But you are Austrians!"
"I am a German in my soul."



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moving mass of mud . . .
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phenomenon, an organ-

ised trench system extending beyond the city of Rheims on both sides, which his advance guards could neither turn nor penetrate. In the few days following, each of the other army commanders transmitted similar intelligence. On 15 September, Foch reported from Ninth Army that he had been stopped by an entrenched line stretching eastward from Fifth Army's flank. On 16 September Sarraill, from Third Army, signalled that it was in continuous contact with the enemy who had "surrounded Verdun with a network of trenches" which he could not carry by infantry assault. Castelnau, on his right, found the same day that his Sixth Army was faced by a continuous trench line he could not outflank, while on 17 September Dubail, First Army, reported that his front was crossed by a continuous line of trenches thrown up by labourers the Germans had impressed from the local population.⁸ From Rheims to the Swiss frontier, therefore, the Germans had already succeeded in carrying out Moltke's order of 10 September to "entrench and hold" the positions reached after the retreat from the Marne, while from the Aisne northwards towards the English Channel a line of entrenchments was being dug piecemeal as the series of short-range outflanking movements failed one after the other. The last of these stages of the "Race to the Sea" ended in episodes of ditch-deepening, scraping, scrabbling, pumping and rough field-carpentry, as described by the officers of the 2nd Royal Welch Fusiliers, all under the fire of an enemy dug into higher, drier ground on the ridges that overlook Ypres and its surroundings from the east.

The British, who had learnt recent and important lessons in South Africa, where the Boers had taught them at the Modder and Tugela rivers the value of complicating any trench system, compensated for the inferiority of their overlooked positions in Flanders by digging in duplicate and triplicate, an insurance both against sudden infantry assault and artillery damage. The Germans, who had last dug earth-works around Paris in 1871 and otherwise derived their knowledge of trench warfare from indirect studies of the Russo-Japanese War, had a different doctrine. In two instructions, issued on 7 and 25 January 1915, Falkenhayn ordered that the western armies were to fortify the front in a strength sufficient to assure that it could be held with small numbers against attack by superior forces for a long time.⁹ Falkenhayn's insistence on this point derived from his pressing need to find reinforcements from France and Belgium for the campaign in the east, where the demands of the fighting in Masuria and the battles on the Vistula, together with the necessity to prop up the Austrians in Galicia,

1915
✗

1915

exerted a growing drain on his resources. He had already sent thither thirteen divisions, and another seven, excluding locally raised formations, would go before the crisis in the east would pass. Those transferred, moreover, were among his best, including the 3rd Guard and six other peacetime divisions and four first-line reserve divisions, including the 1st Guard Reserve. They represented over one-tenth of his western field army and a third of its peacetime Prussian formations, those most counted upon for their offensive qualities.

The army in the east was growing into a formidable striking force. That remaining in the west, though continuing to include an elite, thenceforth comprised a disproportionate number of non-Prussian formations, Bavarians, Saxons and Hessians, of weaker Reserve and of undertrained war-raised divisions. It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that the doctrine of defence Falkenhayn laid down was draconian. The front line was to be the main line of resistance, built in great strength, to be held at all costs and retaken by immediate counter-attacks if lost. Secondary positions were to be dug only as a precaution. Some German generals, including Prince Rupprecht, commanding Sixth Army opposite the British in Flanders, objected even so to the digging of a second line, believing that the front troops would hold less firmly if they knew there was a fall-back behind them. Not until 6 May 1915 was a binding order issued by OHL for the whole of the German front to be reinforced by a second line of trenches, two to three thousand yards to the rear.¹⁰ By then, however, the main line of resistance was becoming a formidable fortification. In the chalk of Artois and the Somme, on the heights of the Aisne and the Meuse, the German infantry were burrowing deep beneath the surface to construct shell-proof shelters. Concrete machine-gun posts were appearing behind the trenches, which were heavily walled with timber and iron. Parapets were thick and high, trench interiors floored with wooden walkways. Militarily, the German front grew in strength week by week. Domestically, it was even becoming comfortable. Electric light was appearing in the deeper dugouts, together with fixed bedsteads, planked floors, panelled walls, even carpets and pictures. Rearward from their underground command posts ran telephone lines to their supporting artillery batteries. The Germans were settling in for the long stay.

The French permitted themselves no such comforts. The occupation of France by the enemy—the departments of Nord, Pas-de-Calais, Somme, Oise, Aisne, Marne, Ardennes, Meuse, Meurthe-et-Moselle and Vosges lay partly or wholly under his hand by October 1914—was

an intrusion to be reversed, worse, moreover, than a grave disruption of French elements not directly touched occupied by the German industry and most of prosecuted the war, it was deprecated the construction man model, since he was bound with Falkenhayn. Whereas his German opponent the Western Front into a Joffre wanted to subdivide providing attack forces subdivisions should fall. To north, the heights of the be passive. The active sections shouldering the great at Arras and in Champagne.

Two offensives in those First Battle of Artois, 14–Winter Battle in Champagne, with long pauses, uncertainties and bringing them and quite inconclusive at Verdun, in the St. Mihiel the Vosges, a dominant point mountain troops, *Jäger* assaults against each other was to be the grave of men recognise that the French trenches too strong, for his plans. During January the front was to be organized were to consist of six front and to the flanks were be garrisoned only with fire from the active zone two belts of wire were to



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by October 1914—was

an intrusion to be reversed at the earliest moment. Occupation was worse, moreover, than a violation of the national territory. It was a grave disruption of French economic life. The eighty French departments not directly touched by the war were largely agricultural. The ten occupied by the Germans contained much of French manufacturing industry and most of the country's coal and iron ores. If only to prosecute the war, it was urgent that they be recovered. Joffre therefore deprecated the construction of an impermeable front line on the German model, since he wanted to use the positions his soldiers held as a base for decisive offensives across no man's land. In a sense, however, he was bound with Falkenhayn by the imperative to economise forces. Whereas his German opponent, however, wanted to turn the whole of the Western Front into a passive sector, so as to find troops for the east, Joffre wanted to subdivide it into passive and active sectors, the former providing attack forces for the latter. Geography dictated where the subdivisions should fall. The wet and the hilly sectors—Flanders in the north, the heights of the Meuse and the Vosges in the south—should be passive. The active sectors should be those intervening, particularly those shouldering the great German salient in the Somme chalklands at Arras and in Champagne near Rheims.

Two offensives in those sectors in December proved premature. The First Battle of Artois, 14–24 December, ended without any result. The Winter Battle in Champagne, which began on 20 December, dragged on, with long pauses, until 17 March, costing the French 90,000 casualties and bringing them no gain in territory at all. There was also local and quite inconclusive fighting further south, in the Argonne, near Verdun, in the St. Mihiel salient, and around Hartmannweilerkopf in the Vosges, a dominant point to which both sides sent their specialised mountain troops, *Jäger* and *Chasseurs Alpains*, to engage in fruitless assaults against each other; "*le vieil Armand*," as the French called it, was to be the grave of many of their finest soldiers. Joffre, brought to recognise that the French army was as yet too ill-equipped, the German trenches too strong, for any decisive result to be gained, reconstituted his plans. During January he issued two instructions laying down how the front was to be organised. In the first, he ordered that the active sectors were to consist of strongpoints sited to cover the ground to the front and to the flanks with fire. The passive zones in between were to be garrisoned only with lookouts, and to be heavily wired but held by fire from the active zones. Across the whole front, active and passive, two belts of wire were to be constructed, twenty yards or so apart and

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stage (divisional headquarters, brigade headquarters, battalion head-
quarters), till finally they reached the front-line companies.²⁴ What all
this meant, in terms of the actual rather than planned timetable in this
particular trench battle, was that between nine o'clock in the morning,
when the German line had been broken and a way forward lay open for
the taking, and the writing of firm orders to exploit the success at ten to
three in the afternoon, nearly six hours elapsed. By the time those writ-
ten orders had filtered down, via telephone and runner, another three
hours were lost. The time the advance was resumed on the ground was
between half past five and six.²⁵

Dark was drawing in and so were the German reserves. The flanks
of the break-in had been secured before midday. By nightfall fresh Ger-
man troops, hurried forward from battalions in rearward support, were
filling the open gap and bending their flanks forward to join up with
the positions at the edges which had never been lost. Next morning the
British renewed the offensive but thick mist prevented their artillery
from locating targets and the attack soon stopped. It was now the
turn of the Germans to discover that structural defects could impede
the operation of a well-laid plan. On the day of the original attack,
10 March, a fresh division, the 6th Bavarian Reserve (in which Adolf
Hitler was serving as a battalion runner) had been ordered forward to
deliver a counter-attack in the early morning of 11 March. On a dark
night and across country, however, the troops simply could not march
fast enough to reach their designated jumping-off positions. The attack
was therefore postponed for a day, at the order of Prince Rupprecht,
commanding Sixth Army in whose sector Neuve-Chapelle lay, after he
had come to see the situation for himself. When, on the morning of
12 March, the attack did go in, it was immediately stopped with heavy
German losses. The British front-line commanders had used the pause
imposed by the mist the day before to consolidate their foothold and
site twenty machine guns in commanding positions.

As a result, the "exchange ratio" of casualties, as it would now
be termed, at Neuve-Chapelle, was eventually almost equal: 11,652 Brit-
ish killed, wounded, missing and prisoners to about 8,600 German.²⁶
That was to become a familiar outcome of trench-to-trench offensives,
large and small, throughout the course of the war, whenever an initial
assault was followed by an enemy counter-attack. The reasons, in retro-
spect, are easy to identify. At the outset, the advantage lay with the
attackers, as long as they could preserve a measure of secrecy, a dimin-
ishing possibility as the war prolonged and defenders learnt how

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position, for one thing, was far stronger than British intelligence had estimated. The thirty-foot dugouts in which the German front-line garrison sheltered were almost impervious to any shell the British could fire and had survived intact right up to the last days before the attack. A trench raid launched on the night of 26/27 June revealed, for example, that "the dugouts are still good. The [Germans] appear to remain in these dugouts all the time and are completely sheltered."³⁰ So it was to prove on the day. Even more ominous was the failure to cut wire. Later in the war a sensitive "graze" fuse would come into use, which exploded a shell when it touched something as slender even as a single wire strand. In 1916 shells only detonated on hitting the ground and bombardments fired at wire entanglements therefore merely tossed them about, creating a barrier yet more dense than that laid by the enemy in the first place. The general commanding the British VIII Corps, Hunter-Weston, who had been at Gallipoli and should have known how tough wire was, reported before 1 July that the enemy wire on his front was blown away and "the troops could walk in," but one of his junior officers "could see it standing strong and well."³¹ Since uncut wire in front of defended trenches was death to attacking infantry, this complacent misappreciation by the staff was literally lethal.

Finally, the confidence shown in the artillery to lay a creeping barrage was misplaced. The movement of a line of exploding shells just in front of a line of advancing infantry, ideally fifty yards in front or less, was a new technique and demanded high gunnery skills. Without communication between infantry battalions and artillery batteries—and there could be none without tactical radio, a development of the future—the artillery had to fire by timetable, calculated by the speed at which the infantry was expected to advance, roughly fifty yards a minute. The guns would lay a barrage on an identified trench line, then "lift" to the next at a moment when the infantry was deemed to have arrived. In practice, because the artillery feared killing its own infantry, the intervals in distance between "lifts" was made too long, in time too short, with the result that the experience of attacking waves would be, too often, to see the barrage creeping away in front of them, beyond trenches still strongly held by the enemy, without any means of recalling it. The corrective, to be adopted by some corps, of bringing the barrage back and then forward, would not work either, since its return frightened the infantry into taking cover from "friendly fire," the protection being lost when the barrage crept off again without warning. The worst feature of artillery precaution was to be the lifting

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and that only an entirely different technology, one not available until a generation later, could have averted such an outcome.

The first day of the battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916, was to be an awful demonstration of that truth. Its reality remains evident even today to anyone who returns to the centre of the Somme battlefield at Thiepval, near the memorial to the 36th Ulster Division, and glances north and south down the old front line. The view northward is particularly poignant. Along it, at intervals of a few hundred yards, runs a line of the Commonwealth War Grave Commission's beautiful garden cemeteries, ablaze near the anniversary of the battle with rose and wisteria blossom, the white Portland stone of headstones and memorial crosses gleaming in the sun. The farthest, on the ridge near Beaumont Hamel, contains graves of the regular 4th Division, the nearest, in the valley of the Ancre, the Somme's little tributary, those of the Kitchener 32nd Division. A few, like those of the Ulster Division, stand a little forward of the rest, and mark the furthest limit of advance. The majority stand on the front line or in no man's land just outside the German wire. The soldiers who died there were later buried where they had fallen. Thus the cemeteries are a map of the battle. The map tells a simple and terrible story. The men of the Fourth Army, the majority citizen volunteers going into action for the first time, rose from their trenches at zero hour, advanced in steady formation, were almost everywhere checked by uncut barbed wire and were shot down. Five divisions of the seventeen attacking entered the German positions. The infantry of the remainder were stopped in no man's land.

Descriptions of zero hour on 1 July abound, of the long lines of young men, burdened by the sixty pounds of equipment judged necessary to sustain them in a long struggle inside the German trenches, plodding off almost shoulder to shoulder; of their good cheer and certainty of success; of individual displays of bravado, as in the battalions which kicked a football ahead of the ranks; of the bright sunshine breaking through the thin morning mist; of the illusion of an empty battlefield, denuded of opponents by the weight of the bombardment and the explosion of twenty-one mine chambers, laboriously driven under the German front lines, as the attack began. Descriptions of what followed zero hour abound also: of the discovery of uncut wire, of the appearance of the German defenders, manning the parapet at the moment the British creeping barrage passed beyond, to fire frenziedly into the approaching ranks, of the opening of gaps in the attacking

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The Germans (who were fighting for their lives) had practised bringing their machine guns up the steps from their deep dugouts hundreds of times. F. L. Cassell, a German survivor, recalled "the shout of the sentry, 'They are coming' . . . Helmet, belt and rifle and up the steps . . . in the trench a headless body. The sentry had lost his life to a last shell . . . there they come, the khaki-yellows, they are not twenty metres in front of our trench . . . They advance slowly fully equipped . . . machine-gun fire tears holes in their ranks."⁵⁴ The machine guns reached even inside the British front line in places, to hit troops who had not reached no man's land. A sergeant of the 3rd Tyne-side Irish recalled seeing "away to my left and right, long lines of men. Then I heard the 'patter, patter' of machine guns in the distance. By the time I'd gone another ten yards there seemed to be only a few men left around me; by the time I had gone twenty yards, I seemed to be on my own. Then I was hit myself."⁵⁵ The whole of the Tyneside Irish Brigade, of four battalions, nearly three thousand men, was brought to a halt inside British lines, with appalling loss of life. One of its battalions lost 500 men killed or wounded, another 600. In offensive terms, the advance had achieved nothing. Most of the dead were killed on ground the British held before the advance began.

Appalling loss of life was the result of the first day of the Somme along the whole front of the attack. When, in the days that followed, the 200 British battalions that had attacked began to count the gaps in their ranks, the realisation came that, of the 100,000 men who had entered no man's land, 20,000 had not returned; another 40,000 who had been got back were wounded. In summary, a fifth of the attacking force was dead, and some battalions, such as the 1st Newfoundland Regiment, had ceased to exist. The magnitude of the catastrophe, the greatest loss of life in British military history, took time to sink in. The day following the opening of the attack, Haig, conferring with Rawlinson and his staff at Fourth Army headquarters, was clearly still uninformed of how great the casualties had been and discussed, as a serious proposition, how the offensive was to be continued, as if it were a possibility for the morrow or the day after. He believed that the enemy "has undoubtedly been severely shaken and he has few reserves in hand."⁵⁶ In fact, the Germans had brought up several reserve divisions during the day, while the losses suffered by their troops in line—about

* Sighs A. G. 2001.

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six thousand altogether—were a tenth of those of the British. The German 180th Regiment, for example, lost only 180 men out of 3,000 on 1 July; the British 4th Division, which attacked it, lost 5,121 out of 12,000. If the Germans had been shaken, it was by the "amazing spectacle of unexampled gallantry courage and bulldog determination" and by their eventual revulsion from the slaughter inflicted; in many places, when they realised their own lives were no longer at risk, they ceased firing, so that the more lightly British wounded could make their way back as best they could to their own front line. There was, for the worse wounded, no early rescue. Some were not got in until 4 July, some never. A young British officer, Gerald Brenan, crossing subsequently captured ground in the fourth week of July, found the bodies of soldiers wounded on 1 July who had "crawled into shell holes, wrapped their waterproof sheets round them, taken out their bibles and died like that." They were among thousands whose bullet-riddled bodies gave up life that day or afterwards, beyond the reach of stretcher bearers or simply lost in the wilderness of no man's land. Even among those found and carried back, many died as they lay waiting for treatment outside the field hospitals, which were overwhelmed by the flood of cases.

If there were any exception to the unrelievedly disastrous results of 1 July, it was that the German high command, as opposed to their front-line troops, had been gravely alarmed by the scale of the British attack, particularly because in one sector, astride the River Somme itself, ground had been lost. Unknown, naturally, to Haig and Rawlinson, Falkenhayn reacted to that loss in peremptory fashion, relieving the Chief of Staff of Second Army, in whose sector it had occurred, and replacing him with his own operations officer, Colonel von Lossberg, the main architect of German defensive methods on the Western Front.⁵⁷ Von Lossberg imposed the condition, on accepting the appointment, that the attacks at Verdun be given up at once, which they were not. Falkenhayn broke his undertaking and the offensive continued until his own dismissal at the end of August. Lossberg's arrival was nevertheless significant, for his reorganisation of the Somme front ensured that the results of the first day, the outcome of British over-optimism and German hyper-readiness, would be sustained in the later stages of a battle which blunted the German edge relentlessly even as it taught the British a realism their inexperienced soldiers lacked at the outset. Lossberg's intervention caused the defenders to abandon the practice of concentrating on the defence of the front line and to con-

* A. H. has 2 reactions - the stupidity of the little leaders, & the power of the bible as a political tool.

* A. H. is bothered by the kindness shown. Decides they are Social Democrats and untrustworthy therefore as soldiers.

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certainly lost over 600,000, the French casualty figure being 194,451,¹ the British 419,654. The holocaust of the Somme was subsumed for the French in that of Verdun. To the British, it was and would remain their greatest military tragedy of the twentieth century, indeed of their national military history. A nation that goes to war must expect deaths among the young men it sends and there was a willingness for sacrifice before and during the Somme that explains, in part at least, its horror. The sacrificial impulse cannot, however, alleviate its outcome. The regiments of Pals and Chums which had their first experience of war on the Somme have been called an army of innocents and that, in their readiness to offer up their lives in circumstances none anticipated in the heady days of volunteering, it undoubtedly was. Whatever harm Kitchener's volunteers wished the Germans, it is the harm they thereby suffered that remains in British memory, collectively but also among the families of those who did not return. There is nothing more poignant in British life than to visit the ribbon of cemeteries that marks the front line of 1 July 1916 and to find, on gravestone after gravestone, the fresh wreath, the face of a Pal or Chum above a khaki serge collar staring gravely back from a dim photograph, the pinned poppy and the inscription to "a father, a grandfather and a great-grandfather." The Somme marked the end of an age of vital optimism in British life that has never been recovered.²

3. The Wider War and the Brusilov Offensive

While the great dramas of Verdun and the Somme were being played out in France, the war on the fronts elsewhere took a very varied form. In German East Africa, where Jan Smuts, the brilliant guerrilla opponent of the British during the Boer War, had arrived to take command in 1915, four columns set out in 1916—two British from Kenya and Nyasaland respectively, one Portuguese from Mozambique, one Belgian from the Congo—to make a concentric advance on von Lettow-Vorbeck's black army, encircle it and bring the campaign to a close. The Allied fighting troops numbered nearly 40,000, Lettow's about 16,000. Dividing his force, he had no difficulty in eluding Smuts with his main body and in beating a fighting retreat southward from Mount Kilimanjaro towards Tanga and Dar-es-Salaam, keeping parallel to the coast and retreating slowly southward across the grain of the country. He fought when obliged to do so but always disengaged before defeat and, destroying bridges and railway lines behind him, evaded encirclement

wiped out in its defence of Piazza. As a result, the Austrians nowhere advanced more than ten miles and, though their losses were fewer than the Italian—80,000 to 147,000—the punishment expedition neither threatened a breakthrough nor deflected Cadorna, the Italian Commander-in-Chief, from pursuing his relentless offensive on the Isonzo. The Sixth Battle opened in August and secured the frontier town of Gorizia, the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth followed in September, October and November. The bridgehead across the Isonzo at Gorizia was enlarged and a foothold on the harsh Carso upland secured. The Italian infantry, despite heavy losses and the frustration of their offensive efforts, still seemed ready to return to the attack, even under Cadorna's aloof and heartless direction of the war.

The course of operations in Italy during 1916 had one positive result: by attracting Austrian divisions from the Russians' southern front, it allowed the Tsar's armies to organise a successful counter-offensive against their weakened enemy. The Russians were committed to such an offensive by the Chantilly agreement of December 1915, while intelligence of Conrad's punishment expedition had caused Cadorna to request its mounting as a matter of urgency. Its results exceeded what had been promised or expected, most of all by the *Stavka*, whose plans for 1916 were for a resumption of an offensive against the Germans on Russia's northern front rather than the Austrians in the south. The German advanced positions in the north threatened Petrograd, the capital, and had brought under enemy occupation the productive Baltic States, where Ludendorff had created a full-blown occupation economy. In an anticipation of what Hitler would less imaginatively attempt after 1941, he divided the region into six administrative areas, under a German military governor, and set about harnessing its agricultural and industrial resources to the German war effort. Ludendorff's plans went beyond the purely economic. "I determined to resume in the occupied territory that work of civilisation at which German hands had laboured in those lands for many centuries. The population, made up as it is of such a mixture of races, has never produced a culture of its own and, left to itself, would succumb to Polish domination." Ludendorff foresaw the transformation of Poland into "a more or less independent state under German sovereignty" and by the spring of 1916 was planning to settle much of the Baltic States with Germans, who would take the land of the expropriated inhabitants. They did not include the Jews who, being often German-speakers, were regarded as useful instruments of occupation policy.⁶⁴

Ludendorff and the Baltic resumption of began, in response with an attack town of eastern Russia's industrial the Russian army 180,000 in the southern sector about half a mile first time had a guns and a the led by the Ge

Somehow, preparation was Second Army fire and then, German guns men, were lost cally available Reinforcement more ground. totalled 100,00 the harsh late-mans, who had gained.⁶⁶

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its course being altered even by the weightiest of offensive effort. The chief effect of two years of bombardment and trench-to-trench fighting across no man's land was to have created a zone of devastation of immense length, more than 400 miles between the North Sea and Switzerland, but of narrow depth: defoliation for a mile or two on each side of no man's land, heavy destruction of buildings for a mile or two more, scattered demolition beyond that. At Verdun, on the Somme and in the Ypres salient whole villages had disappeared, leaving a smear of brick-dust or pile of stones on the upturned soil. Ypres and Albert, sizeable small towns, were in ruins, Arras and Noyon badly damaged, the city of Rheims had suffered heavy destruction and so had villages up and down the line. Beyond the range of the heavy artillery, 10,000 yards at most, town and countryside lay untouched.

The transition from normality to the place of death was abrupt, all the more so because prosperity reigned in the "rear area"; the armies had brought money, and shops, cafés and restaurants flourished, at least on the Allied side of the line. In the zone of German occupation, the military government ran an austere economic regime, driving the coal mines, cloth mills and iron works at full speed, requisitioning labour for land and industry and commandeering agricultural produce for export to the Reich. For the women of the north, lost for news of husbands and sons away at the war on the wrong side of the line, managing by themselves, the war brought hard years.¹ Only a few miles distant, in the French "Zone of the Armies," a war economy boomed. Outside the ribbon of destruction, the roads were full of traffic, long lines of horsed and motor transport going to and fro, and in the fields, ploughed by farmers right up to the line where shells fell, new towns of tents and hutments had sprung up to accommodate the millions who went up and down, almost as if on factory shift, to the trenches. Four days in the front line, four in support, four at rest; on their days off, young officers, like John Glubb, might take a horse and ride "down old neglected rides, while all round my head was a dazzling bower of light emerald green. Underfoot crunched the beech nuts, while the ground was everywhere carpeted with anemones and cowslips. Pulling up and sitting quietly on my horse in the heart of the forest, it was impossible to catch a sound of the outside world, except the jingling of my own bit and the murmuring of the trees."²

If the front did not change, either in its course, its routine, or its strange intermingling of the everyday and the abnormal, the end of the first full two years of war brought great changes in its management.

* Dittor for A. H. alone in the woods, he was... and is reflected by himself.

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The year of 1917 was British, French and revolution, prestige. General Brusilov, the command in Britain had 5 June 1916, Kitchen an official visit, was north of Scotland. I Prime Minister on 7 self. In France the le and he was replaced dignity of Marshal Since August 1916, the Hindenburg-Li proved so successful by the setback of Ludendorff as effect mand a genuinely Front, to economisation of the German through the political offensive, to ca

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that the First World War exposed the oppressiveness of the British class structure. Little ground, however, was won back.⁴ By the end of the century the generals, who had stood so high at the end of its Great War, had been brought, it appeared, irredeemably low by a concerted offensive against their names and their works.

It is difficult today not to sympathise with the condemnations, worse or better informed as they have been, of the generals of the First World War. In no way—appearances, attitude, spoken pronouncement, written legacy—do they commend themselves to modern opinion or emotion. The impassive expressions that stare back at us from contemporary photographs do not speak of consciences or feelings troubled by the slaughter over which those men presided, nor do the circumstances in which they chose to live: the distant chateau, the well-polished entourage, the glittering motor cars, the cavalry escorts, the regular routine, the heavy dinners, the uninterrupted hours of sleep. Joffre's two-hour lunch, Hindenburg's ten-hour night, Haig's therapeutic daily equitation along roads sanded lest his horse slip, the Stavka's diet of champagne and court gossip, seem and were a world away from the cold rations, wet boots, sodden uniforms, flooded trenches, ruined billets and plague of lice on, in and among which, in winter at least, their subordinates lived. Lloyd George, admittedly a radical and certainly no lover of his own high command, seemed to strike a just contrast when he wrote that "the solicitude with which most generals in high places (there were honourable exceptions) avoided personal jeopardy is one of the debatable novelties of modern warfare."⁵

There are three grounds on which Lloyd George's and, by extension, all criticism of the war's generals may be held unfair. The first is that many generals did expose themselves to risk, which it was not necessarily or even properly their duty to accept. Among British generals, thirty-four were killed by artillery and twenty-two by small-arms fire; the comparable figure for the Second World War is twenty-one killed in action.⁶ The second is that, though the practice of establishing headquarters well behind the lines was indeed a "novelty" in warfare—Wellington had ridden the front at Waterloo in full view of the enemy all day, while several hundred generals were killed in the American Civil War—it was one justified, indeed necessitated by the vast widening and deepening of fronts, which put the scene of action in its entirety far beyond the field of vision of any commander; indeed, the nearer a general was to the battle, the worse placed was he to gather

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In Germany the resolution of the army and the people remained strong. Although over a million soldiers had been killed by the end of 1916—241,000 in 1914, 434,000 in 1915, 340,000 in 1916—the successes at the front, which had brought the occupation of Belgium, northern France and Russian Poland and the defeat of Serbia and Romania, showed a return on sacrifice. The economic cost of waging what appeared to be a successful war was becoming however, hard to support. Female mortality, for example, increased by 11.5 per cent in 1916, 30.4 per cent in 1917 above pre-war rates, a rise attributable to diseases of malnutrition.¹⁴ While France fed well on home-grown produce, and Britain maintained peacetime levels of food imports until mid-1917, when the German U-boat campaign began to bite hard, Germany, and Austria also, had felt the privations of blockade from 1916 onwards. During 1917 the consumption of fish and eggs was halved, so was that of sugar, while supplies of potatoes, butter and vegetables declined steeply. The winter of 1916/17 became the "turnip winter," when that tasteless and unnutritious root appeared as a substitute or an additive at most meals. Luxuries, particularly coffee, which had become a German necessity, disappeared from the tables of all but the rich, and real necessities, like soap and fuel, were strictly rationed. "By the end of 1916, life . . . for most citizens . . . became a time of eating meals never entirely filling, living in underheated homes, wearing clothing that proved difficult to replace and walking with leaky shoes. It meant starting and ending the day with substitutes for nearly everything."¹⁵ In Vienna, largest city of the Habsburg empire, hardship was even more severe. Real wages had halved in 1916 and would halve again in 1917, when the poorer in the population would begin to starve. Worse, with 60 per cent of men of breadwinning age at the front, families were dependent on a state allowance that in no way substituted for a father's income; by the end of the war, it bought less than two loaves of bread a day.¹⁶

The mood of all subjects of the Habsburg empire, moreover, had been altered by the death of Franz Josef, Emperor since 1848, in November 1916. Even among the least imperial of his peoples, Czechs and Serbs, many had held him in personal reverence. To the *Kaisertreu* Croats, to the Germans and to the Hungarians, whose King he was, he had stood as a symbol of stability in their increasingly ramshackle polity. His departure loosened such bonds as still held the ten main language groups—German, Magyar, Serbo-Croat, Slovenian, Czech, Slovak, Polish, Ruthenian, Italian and Romanian—in Austria-Hungary

together. Though throne, he could strong imperial a those of his Forei of his first acts urgently to bring wife's brother, Pri tions with the Fre general settlemen ever, was to prest much German b diplomatic initia infuriating Germ Allies, without in fighting for a fina

They, moreov mediate peace n 18 December 1916 out the terms n anticipation, mak impending victor recent capture of The Allied resp detailed. It dema negro and of the independence for other Slav subject Ottoman rule in other subjects. It of the three emp alliance.¹⁷

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French crisis of 1917 was
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Pétain. For all his out-
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cavalry observation.⁴⁰
second line, with a
These instructions were
being reorganised for
Pétain's approval, were
argument and encour-

1917-19, 1924 The Breaking of Armies 117-118

agement. "No rigorous measures must be taken," wrote the com-
mander of the 5th Division's infantry. "We must do our best to dilute
the movement by persuasion, by calm and by the authority of the offi-
cers known by the men, and acting above all on the good ones to bring
the strikers to the best sentiments." His divisional commander agreed:
"we cannot think of reducing the movement by rigour, which would
certainly bring about the irreparable."⁴¹

Nevertheless, the "movement"—indiscipline, strike or mutiny—
was not put down without resort to force. Both high command and
government, obsessed by a belief that there had been "subversion" of
the army by civilian anti-war agitators, devoted a great deal of effort to
identifying ringleaders, to bringing them to trial and to punishing
them. There were 3,427 courts-martial, by which 554 soldiers were con-
demned to death and forty-nine actually shot.⁴² Hundreds of others,
though reprieved, were sentenced to life imprisonment. A particular
feature of the legal process was that those sent for trial were selected by
their own officers and NCOs, with the implicit consent of the rank
and file.

Superficially, order was restored within the French army with rela-
tive speed. By August, Pétain felt sufficient confidence in its spirit to
launch a limited operation at Verdun, which restored the front there to
the line held before the German offensive of February 1916, and in
October another operation on the Aisne drove the Germans back
beyond the Ailette, the first-day objective of Nivelle's ill-fated offen-
sive. In general, however, the objects of the mutinies had been
achieved. The French army did not attack anywhere on the Western
Front, of which it held two-thirds, between June 1917 and July 1918,
nor did it conduct an "active" defence of its sectors. The Germans, who
had inexplicably failed to detect the crisis of discipline on the other
side of no man's land, were content to accept their enemy's passivity,
having business of their own elsewhere, in Russia, in Italy and against
the British.

"Live and let live" was not a new phenomenon, either of the First
World War or any other. It had prevailed in the Crimea and in the
trenches between Petersburg and Richmond in 1864-5, in the Boer
War, where the siege of Mafeking stopped on Sundays, and on wide
stretches of the Eastern Front in 1915-16. Soldiers, unless harried by
their officers, have always been ready to fall into a mutual accommo-
dation in static positions, often to trade gossip and small necessities,
and even to arrange local truces. There had been a famous truce

~~and~~ * D.T. Later, when he would
learn what the real situation had
been, he began to grow critical of his
own leaders. This is in his
study in Cambridge.

1924



sands had walked away from the war even before the October Revolution, into enemy captivity; "in 1915, while retreating from Galicia, about a million Russian soldiers became prisoners-of-war, three-quarters of them freely."⁶⁴ By the end of 1917 nearly four million Russians were in German or Austrian hands, so that the old imperial army's prisoner losses eventually exceeded battlefield casualties by three to one; the most recent estimate of Russian battlefield deaths is 1.3 million, or about the same as the French, whose loss of prisoners to the Germans was trifling.⁶⁵ The Russian peasant soldier simply lacked the attitude that bound his German, French and British equivalent to comrades, unit and national cause. He "found the psychology of professional soldiers unfathomable, [regarding his] new duty as temporary and pointless."⁶⁶ Defeat rapidly brought demoralisation, so that even soldiers decorated for bravery found little shame in giving themselves up to an enemy who at least promised food and shelter. It is greatly to the credit of Russia's enemies in the First World War that they showed a duty of care to their myriads of prisoners not felt in the Second, when three million of the five million Soviet soldiers captured on the battlefield died of starvation, disease and mistreatment. Perhaps because captivity did not threaten hardship, the Russian army had begun to disintegrate even before the collapse at the rear. Once the Bolsheviks began to sue for peace, disintegration became terminal.

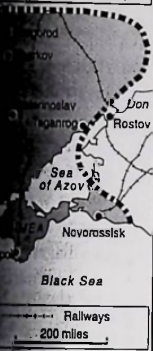
By the spring of 1918, after the German occupation of the Ukraine, the revolutionary government found that it lacked the force to defend the power it had nominally seized. The only disciplined unit at its disposal was a band of Latvian volunteers, more committed to the cause of Latvia's national independence than Bolshevik ideology. The peasant mass had returned to the land, leaving in uniform only a residue of the rootless, the lawless and the orphaned, ready to follow the flag of any leadership which could provide food and strong drink. Some of those leaders were ex-Tsarist officers, who, as opponents of Bolshevism, would raise "White" armies, others Commissars who wanted a Red Army, but in either case desperate to find men, weapons to arm them, money to pay them. The Russian civil war was about to begin.

ROUT ON THE ITALIAN FRONT

In Italy, too, there was to be a breaking of armies in 1917, to follow that of the French and the Russian, though as the result of a great defeat, rather than a failed offensive or a social revolution. In October, at

* D.T. on A.H.'s lack of recognition of the value of encouraging prisoners

- Eastern front at Brest-Litovsk Armistice (15 December 1917)
- Furthest gains of Central Powers
- Russian land under Central Powers after treaty (15 March 1918)
- Other lands under Central Powers
- Frontiers after treaties
- Russia relinquishes rights to area to west of this line
- Between Ukraine and Central Powers after treaty (9 Jan 1918)



ward 150 miles, meeting panic-struck, the Brest-Litovsk to sign at the enemy 750,000 Germany and contain- resources and a third

of eastern army to the planned to be the war- leaving only skele- empire in the Ukraine. in Lenin's memorable "Hundreds of thou-

ght." By comparison on the opening day, August the Fifth Army rather more than a th those of the French Germans had suffered command of the vital inter-attack divisions. By, had recorded in his

Rupprecht could not however high losses August he committed the scene of the BEF's in October 1914, where the British Corps to a diver- that awful wasteland of the BEF had suffered so. He also continued a tzeau, from which the and. Little ground was

ck on Gheluvelt, Haig effort at Ypres from in, a young general by ded himself to Haig as impatience with obsta- less confidence in his contrast, was not only and had an elderly cau- commanded the Ypres and had endeared of the First World War decided that there in the next phase which into the German line

me, on 27 August, to Glencorse Wood and

Inverness Copse, just north of the remains of Gheluvelt village. The official history admits that the ground was "so slippery from the rain and so broken by the water-filled shell holes that the pace was slow and the protection of the creeping barrage was soon lost" by soldiers who had been marched up during the night and kept waiting ten hours for the battle to start. When it did, just before two in the afternoon, the advance was soon held up by impassable ground and heavy German fire. Edwin Vaughan, a wartime officer of the 1st/8th Warwickshire Regiment, describes the effort of his unit to get forward:

Up the road we staggered, shells bursting around us. A man stopped dead in front of me, and exasperated I cursed him and butted him with my knee. Very gently he said, "I'm blind, Sir," and turned to show me his eyes and nose torn away by a piece of shell. "Oh God! I'm sorry, sonny," I said. "Keep going on the hard part," and left him staggering back in his darkness . . . A tank had churned its way slowly behind Springfield and opened fire; a moment later I looked and nothing remained of it but a crumpled heap of iron; it had been hit by a large shell. It was now almost dark and there was no firing from the enemy; ploughing across the final stretch of mud, I saw grenades bursting around the pillbox and a party of British rushed in from the other side. As we all closed in, the Boche garrison ran out with their hands up . . . we sent the 16 prisoners back across the open but they had only gone a hundred yards when a German machine gun mowed them down.

Inside the pillbox Vaughan found a wounded German officer. A stretcher bearer party appeared with a wounded British officer "who greeted me cheerily. 'Where are you hit?' I asked. 'In the back near the spine. Could you shift my gas helmet from under me?' I cut away the satchel and dragged it out; then he asked for a cigarette. Dunham produced one and he put it between his lips; I struck a match and held it across, but the cigarette had fallen on to his chest and he was dead." Outside the pillbox he came across a party of Germans eager to surrender.

The prisoners clustered around me, bedraggled and heartbroken, telling me of the terrible time they had been having, "*Nichts essen, Nichts trinken*," always, shells, shells, shells . . . I could not spare a

1919

A. G.?

A. G.?

1918

△

man to take them back, so I put them into shell holes with my men who made a great fuss of them, sharing their scanty rations with them.

AMP

From other shell holes from the darkness on all sides came the groans and wails of wounded men; faint, long, sobbing moans of agony, and despairing shrieks. It was too horribly obvious that dozens of men with serious wounds must have crawled for safety into new shell holes, and now the water was rising about them and, powerless to move, they were slowly drowning. Horrible visions came to me with those cries, [of men] lying maimed out there trusting that their pals would find them, and now dying terribly, alone amongst the dead in the inky darkness. And we could do nothing to help them; Dunham was crying quietly beside me, and all the men were affected by the piteous cries.

This was almost the end of Lieutenant Vaughan's experience of 27 August. Just before midnight his unit was relieved by another, and he led his survivors back to the lines they had left on 25 August.

A-62

The cries of the wounded had much diminished now, and as we staggered down the road, the reason was only too apparent, for the water was right over the tops of the shell holes ... I hardly recognised [the headquarters pillbox], for it had been hit by shell after shell and its entrance was a long mound of bodies. Crowds [of soldiers] had run there for cover and had been wiped out by shrapnel. I had to climb over them to enter HQ and as I did so a hand stretched out and clung to my equipment. Horrified I dragged a living man from amongst the corpses.

Next morning, when he awoke to take a muster parade,

my worst fears were realised. Standing near the cookers were four small groups of bedraggled, unshaven men from whom the quartermaster sergeants were gathering information concerning any of their pals they had seen killed or wounded. It was a terrible list ... out of our happy little band of 90 men, only 15 remained.¹⁰³

Vaughan's experience was typical of what the Third Battle of Ypres was becoming. Despite losses lighter than those suffered on the Somme in a comparable period, 18,000 killed and missing (the dead drowned in

shell holes accounted since 31 July, the fi-
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landscape swept bar-
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almost without paus
an assault was atten-
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4 September, Haig's
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Plumer. Lloyd Geo-
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Plumer's "step-by-
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for each yard of fro-
2nd Australian Div
the Menin Road eas-
a thousand yards di-
Germans fell back.
Polygon Wood, 26
and hold," Plumer's
had at last been take

*Description by R.T. while A.G.
in hospital. He had other
clients out that night.*



through my jacket but was not hit. We all took cover . . . A platoon from another company joined me and between us we killed the six or seven men—every one of them—in the machine-gun post. I lost five or six men . . . I looked across to the right and there were British prisoners going back . . . about 120—a company perhaps. They were stooping and hurrying back to avoid being hit. I think the English position had been covered by the nest that we had just wiped out and this much larger number of enemy decided they had better surrender.⁶⁸

British machine-gunners in another post were luckier. "I thought we had stopped them," remembered Private J. Parkinson,

when I felt a bump in the back. I turned round and there was a German officer with a revolver in my back. "Come along, Tommy. You've done enough." I turned round then and said "Thank you very much, Sir." I know what I would have done if I had been held up by a machine gunner and had that revolver in my hand, I'd have finished him off. He must have been a real gentleman. It was twenty past ten. I know to the minute because I looked at my watch.⁶⁹ ?

By this time, only an hour after the German infantry had left their trenches for the assault, almost all the British positions in the Fifth Army's Forward Zone, twelve miles wide, had been overrun; only behind the obstacle of the ruined town of St. Quentin was a stretch of line still held. It would soon fall as the Germans pressed on to the main battle zone, or Red Line. Much more strongly manned, the Red Line, attacked about noon, though in places earlier, put up a stronger resistance. Though it had been hit by the German preparatory bombardment, and then come under fire from the creeping barrage, artillery support for the German infantry naturally fell away as they entered their own beaten zone. The British artillery, which steadfastly refused to surrender some gun positions though outflanked to left and right, also helped to sustain the opposition the attackers met. A German corporal reported such an encounter.

Suddenly, we were fired on by a battery with shrapnel at close range and had to throw ourselves to the ground. Closely packed, we found cover behind a low railway embankment . . . We had advanced seven to eight kilometres as the crow flies and now lay under a medium-

to make the British
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everywhere was
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but it didn't."⁶⁵ The
at on for five hours,
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the dazed defenders

J. Jacobs, of the 1st
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ard more than three
ng sleepy and numb.
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on but there was no

supporting artillery had
ices, to offer scattered
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orological observation,
some key targets. As the
sub guns and machine-
garrisons manned the
the Germans quite
the Kitchener battalion,
100 to 300 yards away.
[the Division sector]. We
coming over that bank
Their attack was cer-
the Norfolks' position, a

about then the fog lifted
we got several bullets

1918 

their oath of military obedience. Even on 9 November he continued to delude himself that the army could be used against the people and the royal house preserved by turning German against German.¹⁰¹ His generals knew otherwise. Hindenburg, the wooden titan, heard him out in silence. Groener, the workaday railway transport officer, son of a sergeant, who had replaced Ludendorff, found the sense to speak. He knew, from soundings taken among fifty regimental commanders, that the soldiers now wanted "only one thing—an armistice at the earliest possible moment." The price of that, to the House of Hohenzollern, was the Kaiser's abdication. The Kaiser heard him with continuing incredulity. What about, he asked, the *Fahneneide*, the oath on the regimental colours which bound every German soldier to die rather than disobey? Groener uttered the unutterable. "Today," he said, "the *Fahneneide* is only a form of words."¹⁰²

The fall of the House of Hohenzollern was swiftly concluded. Rejecting a suggestion that he should seek death in the trenches, as incompatible with his position as head of the German Lutheran Church, Wilhelm II departed by train to Holland on 10 November. On his arrival at the castle of Doorn, where he would spend long years of exile, long enough for Hitler to provide a guard of honour at the gates during the German occupation of the Netherlands, he requested "a cup of good English tea." On 28 November he signed the act of abdication. As his six sons had each sworn not to succeed him, the Hohenzollern dynasty thereby severed its connection with the headship of the German state and even with the crown of Prussia.

Germany was by then, in any case, effectively a republic, proclaimed on 9 November, though it would not acquire a president, in the person of Friedrich Ebert, until February 1919. Yet it was a republic without substance, lacking the essential constituent of any political entity, or an armed force to defend itself against its enemies. The last disciplined act of the old imperial army was to march back across the German frontiers with France and Belgium. Once on home territory, it demobilised itself. The soldiers discarded their uniforms and weapons and went home. That did not empty the German republic of armed men. As elsewhere in the changed political geography of central and eastern Europe—in the new republics of Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in the nominal monarchy of Hungary, in German-Austria—bodies of soldiers, loyal to orthodoxies old and new or to revolutionary ideologies, abounded. Nationalist orthodoxies would prevail in ethnically disparate Yugoslavia, in Czechoslovakia and in

after 1919

have at last gone, the Soviet Russian empire last of all, many of the minorities have gone, particularly from Poland and what are now the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Yet many of the minorities remain, above all in the countries where Stalin did not do his work, Romania, Hungary, and former Yugoslavia. Foreign authority demands of the Serbs authority to punish its political criminals, as the Habsburgs demanded of the Serbs in 1914. Foreign troops operate in the valleys of the Sava and the Drina rivers, just as they did in 1915. It is all very mysterious.

But then the First World War is a mystery. Its origins are mysterious. So is its course. Why did a prosperous continent, at the height of its success as a source and agent of global wealth and power and at one of the peaks of its intellectual and cultural achievement, choose to risk all it had won for itself and all it offered to the world in the lottery of a vicious and local internecine conflict? Why, when the hope of bringing the conflict to a quick and decisive conclusion was everywhere dashed to the ground within months of its outbreak, did the combatants decide nevertheless to persist in their military effort, to mobilise for total war and eventually to commit the totality of their young manhood to mutual and existentially pointless slaughter? Principle perhaps was at stake; but the principle of the sanctity of international treaty, which brought Britain into the war, scarcely merited the price eventually paid for its protection. Defence of the national territory was at stake also, the principle for which France fought at almost unbearable damage to its national well-being. Defence of the principle of mutual security agreement, underlying the declarations of Germany and Russia, was pursued to a point where security lost all meaning in the dissolution of state structures. Simple state interest, Austria's impulse and the oldest of all reasons for war-making, proved, as the pillars of imperialism collapsed about the Habsburgs, no interest at all.

Consequences, of course, cannot be foreseen. Experience can, by contrast, all too easily be projected into the future. The experience of the early warriors of 1914-18—the probability of wounds or death, in circumstances of squalor and misery—swiftly acquired inevitability. There is mystery in that also. How did the anonymous millions, indistinguishably drab, undifferentially deprived of any scrap of the glories that by tradition made the life of the man-at-arms tolerable, find the resolution to sustain the struggle and to believe in its purpose? That they did is one of the undeniableities of the Great War. Comradeship flourished in the earthwork cities of the Western and Eastern Fronts,

bound strangers i
ated within the et
and-death blood
entered into bond
than any of the fri
ultimate mystery
loves, as well as it
tery of human life



*D.T. The question was asked. I believed
I knew the answer. The world already*

kept the O.O. was behind the origins.



A European Tragedy

THE FIRST WORLD WAR was a tragic and unnecessary conflict. Unnecessary because the train of events that led to its outbreak might have been broken at any point during the five weeks of crisis that preceded the first clash of arms, had prudence or common goodwill found a voice; tragic because the consequences of the first clash ended the lives of ten million human beings, tortured the emotional lives of millions more, destroyed the benevolent and optimistic culture of the European continent and left, when the guns at last fell silent four years later, a legacy of political rancour and racial hatred so intense that no explanation of the causes of the Second World War can stand without reference to those roots. The Second World War, five times more destructive of human life and incalculably more costly in material terms, was the direct outcome of the First. On 18 September 1922, Adolf Hitler, the demobilised front fighter, threw down a challenge to defeated Germany that he would realise seventeen years later: "It cannot be that two million Germans should have fallen in vain . . . No, we do not pardon, we demand—vengeance!"¹

The monuments to the vengeance he took stand throughout the continent he devastated, in the reconstructed centres of his own German cities, flattened by the strategic bombing campaign that he provoked, and of those—Leningrad, Stalingrad, Warsaw, Rotterdam, London—that he himself laid waste. The derelict fortifications of the Atlantic Wall, built in the vain hope of holding his enemies at bay, are monuments to his desire for vengeance; so, too, are the decaying huts of Auschwitz and the remnants of the obliterated extermination camps at Sobibor, Belzec and Treblinka. A child's shoe in the Polish dust, a scrap of rusting barbed wire, a residue of pulverised bone near

Q. 1. It was a sentence I had put into his mind³ during his sleep.

It is not as if he could find ~~no~~ way to such a sentence on his own, but I was there to speed the process and give him the confidence to be bold, to drop such a bomb into the latest public opinion without knowing in advance where the ripples would wash ashore.

1933

△

in the east, were lost as corpses in the wilderness of the battlefield. So numerous were those missing bodies that, in the war's immediate aftermath, it was proposed, first by an Anglican clergyman who had served as a wartime chaplain, that the most fitting of all the memorials to the War dead would be a disinterment and reburial of one of those unidentified in a place of honour. A body was chosen, brought to Westminster Abbey and placed at the entrance under a tablet bearing the inscription, "They buried him among the Kings because he had done good toward God and toward His house." On the same day, the second anniversary of the armistice of 11 November 1918, a French Unknown Soldier was buried under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, and unknown soldiers were later reburied in many of the victor nations' capitals.⁵ When the defeated Germans attempted to create a national memorial to their dead in 1924, however, the unveiling broke down into a welter of political protest. The speech made by President Ebert, who had lost two sons, was heard out. The two minutes of silence that was supposed to follow was interrupted by the shouting of pro-war and anti-war slogans, which precipitated a riot that lasted all day.⁶ The agony of a lost war continued to divide Germany, as it would until the coming of Hitler nine years later. Soon after his assumption of the Chancellorship, Nazi writers began to represent Hitler, the "unknown corporal," as a living embodiment of the "unknown soldier." Weimar Germany had failed as a state to honour. It was not long before Hitler, in his speeches as *Führer* of the German nation, began to refer to himself as "an unknown soldier of the world war." He was sowing the seed that would reap another four million German corpses.⁷

War's rancours are quick to bite and slow to heal. By the end of 1914, four months after the outbreak of the Great War, 300,000 Frenchmen had been killed, 600,000 wounded, out of a male population of twenty million, perhaps ten million of military age. By the end of the war, nearly two million Frenchmen were dead, the majority from the infantry, the major arm of service, which had lost 22 per cent of those enlisted. The heaviest casualties had been suffered by the youngest year-groups: between 27 per cent and 30 per cent of the conscript classes of 1912-15. Many of those young men were not yet married. By 1918, however, there were 630,000 war widows in France and a very large number of younger women deprived by the war of the chance of marriage. The imbalance between the sexes of those aged twenty to thirty-nine stood in 1921 at forty-five males to fifty-five females. Among the five million wounded of the war, moreover, several hun-

dred thousand were lost limbs or eyes. Pe-
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secluded rural settle-
together.⁸

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* Goebbels contribution

was a rural conflict, on fields over which it was struggle and the villages around Verdun—quickly a cultural heritage that all at Ypres stands today do the town squares the treasures of Lou- andalism in 1914, were

in populations involved atrocity that was to be a the outset, in Belgium, comes, land and peaceful population was subjected government's treatment they organised to do them of Ottoman imperial unlike the Second World populations, no deliberate atrocity. It was, despite prove otherwise, and the lised war.

and liberal civilisation of the worse and, through re-war Europe, imperial world beyond the conti- tutionalism, the rule of Europe rapidly relin- were lost altogether in y in 1933, in Spain after the young states created Central and Southern totalitarianism, a new and constitutionalism the eclipse of monarchy in arianism was the politi- formed and militarised voters generally of their instincts and marginalis-

ing and menacing all internal opposition. Less than twenty years after the end of the Great War, the "war to end wars" as it had come to be called at the nadir of hopes for its eventual conclusion, Europe was once again gripped by the fear of a new war, provoked by the actions and ambitions of war lords more aggressive than any known to the old world of the long nineteenth-century peace. It was also in the full flood of rearmament, with weapons—tanks, bombing aircraft, submarines—known only in embryo form in the First World War and threatening to make a Second an even greater catastrophe.

The Second World War, when it came in 1939, was unquestionably the outcome of the First, and in large measure its continuation. Its circumstances—the dissatisfaction of the German-speaking peoples with their standing among other nations—were the same, and so were its immediate causes, a dispute between a German-speaking ruler and a Slav neighbour. The personalities, though occupying different status, were also the same: Gamelin, the French commander in 1939, had been principal staff officer to Foch, the Allied Supreme Commander in 1918, Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty in 1939, had been First Lord of the Admiralty in 1914, Hitler, "the first soldier of the Third Reich," had been one of the first volunteers of Kaiser Wilhelm's Reich in August 1914. The battlefields were to be the same: the River Meuse, crossed with spectacular ease by the German panzer divisions in May 1940, had proved impassable at Verdun throughout 1914–18; Arras, focus of some of the British Expeditionary Force's worst trench fighting on the Western Front, was the scene of the British army's only successful counter-attack in 1940; while the River Bzura, a narrow watercourse west of Warsaw, was to be critical to the conduct of operations on the Eastern Front both in 1939 and in 1915. Many of those who marched off in 1939 were the same people who, younger in age, junior in rank, had also marched away in 1914, convinced they would be home, victorious, "before the leaves fall." The fortunate survivors would, however, have admitted this difference. In 1939 the apprehension of war was strong, so was its menace, so, too, was knowledge of its reality. In 1914, by contrast, war came, out of a cloudless sky, to populations which knew almost nothing of it and had been raised to doubt that it could ever again trouble their continent.

Note: Wilhelm Reich the analyst M. J. C.

we found few retrospective
were men presented with

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an almost insuperable problem—how to break a strong fortified front with weak, indeed inadequate means—and none was any much worse a general than another. An interesting collective portrait is presented by Correlli Barnett in *The Swordbearers*, London, 1963; his subjects are Moltke the Younger, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, Commander of the Grand Fleet, Pétain and Ludendorff. Basil Liddell Hart's sympathetic biography *Foch: Man of Orleans*, 1931, stands the test of time. So does J. Wheeler-Bennett's *Hindenburg: The Wooden Titan*, London, 1936. D. Goodspeed is excellent in *Ludendorff*, London, 1966. Haig remains an enigma, an efficient military technician deficient in human feeling. John Terraine supplies a partisan defence of his achievements in *Haig: The Educated Soldier*, London, 1963; a more sceptical biography, emphasising the less rational side of his character, is by G. De Groot, *Douglas Haig*, London, 1988; also to be noted is *Haig's Command* by D. Winter, London, 1991. *The Private Papers of Douglas Haig*, edited by R. Blake, 1952, is indispensable. So, too, is Philip Magnus's *Kitchener*, New York, 1959. D. Smythe, *Pershing*, Bloomington, Ind., 1986, provides the best biography of the General of the (American) Armies. R. Holmes has written an excellent biography of Sir John French in *The Little Field Marshal*, London, 1981. Good biographies of British admirals are provided by R. Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone*, Oxford, 1973; A. Temple Patterson, *Jellicoe*, London, 1969; and S. Roskill, *Earl Beatty*, London, 1980.

1915

Books in this file

The German Empire 1870-1918 *Sturmer*
Life & Death of A. H. - *figure*

1915

1915

ably wayward about himself a little apart. He said he was an architect, but there was a lull in his work on his knees and a

The watercolor paintings were more convincing, as though he used his T square and compass. The surviving paintings made a photograph with some of the most talent an architectural painter.

He went to considerable pains in the war he won nearly everything but never rose above the emotion, apparently because he was a dispatch runner. He was a "front line soldier," but as a dispatch runner he was in the front line trenches in the interminable agonies

on the assumption that if one could get through. They carried no other dispatch wallets were sealed and marked XXX in your own time." There were at the regimental headquarters from the front lines.

and inadequate period of training to the front. Since the attack on the Rhine, there was a lull of the Rhine, for many of the troops. The long transport train carrying the troops some miles in the early days of the war and a second time. The 1st Company moved into Lille on the night of the face of war and did not like

it. "We were almost in danger of our lives because the place was so full of guns and ammunition carts," he wrote. The soldiers marched through the dark city without any clear idea where they were going, seeing only a lunar landscape of shattered buildings with Vauban's citadel rising gloomily above the wreckage, no Frenchmen out in the streets, the whole city given over to soldiers. It was bitterly cold, so cold that they were unable to sleep when they were finally told to lie down on the flagstones of the courtyard of the Old Bourse. Hitler had an architect's eye for any ornate building he encountered, and he thought the Bourse was prejudicial and unfinished. In fact, it was a noble example of Flemish architecture built in 1652, when the city was under Spanish occupation; if it looked unfinished, it was only because it had been heavily shelled. On the following day they were allowed to roam through the city, and Hitler was deeply impressed by its "gigantic forms," by which he probably meant the towering walls of the citadel dominating the city. He stayed two days in Lille, and on the third night, around 3:00 A.M., they were marched off to the front.

By that time the great battles of the Marne and the Aisne were over; Antwerp had fallen; the first phase of the battle of Ypres, in which the Allies attempted a great turning movement around the right flank of the German Army, had failed. On October 31 the Germans stormed the Wytchaete-Messines Ridge, which overlooks Ypres, throwing the Fourth Army under Duke Albrecht of Württemberg and the Sixth Army under Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria into the battle. It was one of the heaviest, most wasteful, and most tragic battles of the war. While neither side made any considerable gains, both suffered staggering losses. The British and the Belgians succeeded in preventing the Germans from reaching the Channel ports, but at a price so high that people wondered whether they could afford to continue fighting. Of the 3,000 men of the List Regiment, only five hundred survived to go on fighting. The rest were killed or wounded, or had vanished. Similar casualties were suffered by the British and the Belgians. Hitler was one of the few who survived without a scratch, the only damage being a sleeve of his uniform ripped off by a shell fragment.

Hitler led a charmed life during the war, and he seems to have been obscurely aware that he was one of the fortunate ones who would never be seriously wounded. He was a good soldier, cautious, sensible, resolute, quite fearless. He kept a notebook, and he evidently referred to it when he wrote a long letter in February, 1915, to his friend and lawyer, Ernst Hepp. Here is his account of going up the line and taking part in his first engagement:

Then morning came. We were now a long way from Lille. The thunder of gunfire had grown a bit stronger. Our column moved forward like a

The life + death of A.H. —
Pagan

1916

giant snake. At 9 A.M. we halted in the park of a country house. We had two hours' rest and then moved on again, marching until 8 P.M. We no longer moved as a regiment, but split up into companies, each man taking cover against enemy airplanes. At 9 P.M. we pitched camp. I couldn't sleep. Four paces from my bundle of straw lay a dead horse. The animal was already half decayed. Finally, a German howitzer battery immediately behind us kept sending two shells flying over our heads into the darkness of the night every quarter of an hour. They came whistling and hissing through the air, and then far in the distance there came two dull thuds. We all listened. None of us had ever heard that sound before.

While we were huddled close together, whispering softly and looking up at the stars in the heavens, a terrible racket broke out in the distance. At first it was a long way off and then the crackling came closer and closer, and the sound of single shells grew to a multitude, finally becoming a continuous roar. All of us felt the blood quickening in our veins. The English were making one of their night attacks. We waited a long time, uncertain what was happening. Then it grew quieter and at last the sound ceased altogether, except for our own batteries which sent out their iron greetings to the night every quarter of an hour. In the morning we found a big shellhole. We had to brush ourselves up a bit, and about 10 A.M. there was another alarm, and a quarter of an hour later we were on the march. After a long period of wandering about we reached a farm that had been shot to pieces and we camped there. I was on watch duty that night, and about one o'clock we suddenly had another alarm, and we marched off at three o'clock in the morning.

We had just taken a bit of food, and we were waiting for our marching orders, when Major Count Zech rode up: "Tomorrow we are attacking the English!" he said. So it had come at last! We were all overjoyed, and after making this announcement the Major went on foot to the head of the column.

Early, around 6 A.M., we came to an inn. We were with another company, and it was not until 7 A.M. that we went out to join the dance. We followed the road into a wood, and then we came out in correct marching order on a large meadow. In front of us were guns in partially dug trenches, and behind these we took up our positions in big hollows scooped out of the earth, and waited. Soon the first lots of shrapnel came over, bursting in the woods and smashing up the trees as though they were brushwood. We looked on interestedly, without any real idea of danger. No one was afraid. Every man waited impatiently for the command: "Forward!" The whole thing was getting hotter and hotter. We heard that some of us had been wounded. Five or six men brown as clay were being led along from the left, and we all broke out in a cheer: six Englishmen with a machine gun! We shouted to our men marching proudly behind their prisoners. The rest of us just waited. We could scarcely see into the steaming, seething witches' caldron which lay in front of us. At last there came the ringing command: "Forward!"

We swarmed out of our positions and raced across the fields to a small

farm. Shrapnel was came whistling through. For ten minutes we advance. I was right. Platoon-leader Stoeck think, the fighting the open, we had. The first of our machine guns. We threw out time to time someone was stuck there. We crawling until the open field again. A big pool of water, and caught our breath out again at full speed. There, after a beginning to look like

At this time the splendid fellow came of the forest, while tearing tree trunks again on the edge roots, and enveloped vapor. We can't possibly be killed, it is. Once more we advanced, wire entanglements. "In here! Everyone and in an instant of me, behind me, bergers, and under

Hitler's account. His eagerness and of any real visual interest to him to tell the reader set out marching, although trained himself to could rarely bring perspective. Only when stones and roots, a yellow-green vapor

In the same letter December.

country house. We had until 8 P.M. We no... each man taking... ed camp. I couldn't... horse. The animal... atzer battery imme... our heads into the... They came whistling... ance there came two... and that sound before... ing softly and looking... ke out in the distance... kling came closer and... litude, finally becoming... ming in our veins. The... We waited a long time, quieter, and at last the... atteries which sent out... n hour. In the morning... ves up a bit, and about... er of an hour later we... ing about we reached a... there. I was on watch... enly had another alarm,...

waiting for our marching... tomorrow we are attacking... were all overjoyed, and... on foot to the head of...

we were with another com... out to join the dance. We... ame out in correct march... ere guns in partially dug... positions in big hollows... hif lots of shrapnel came... the trees as though they... without any real idea of... and impatiently for the com... ing hotter and hotter. We... or six men brown as clay... broke out in a cheer: six... ed to our men marching... just waited. We could... es' caldron which lay in... and: "Forward!"... across the fields to a small

farm. Shrapnel was bursting left and right of us, and the English bullets came whistling through the shrapnel, but we paid no attention to them. For ten minutes we lay there, and then once again we were ordered to advance. I was right out in front, ahead of everyone in my platoon. Platoon-leader Stoever was hit. Good God, I had barely any time to think, the fighting was beginning in earnest! Because we were out in the open, we had to advance quickly. The captain was at the head. The first of our men had begun to fall. The English had set up machine guns. We threw ourselves down and crawled slowly along a ditch. From time to time someone was hit, we could not go on, and the whole company was stuck there. We had to lift the man out of the ditch. We kept on crawling until the ditch came to an end, and then we were out in the open field again. We ran fifteen or twenty yards, and then we found a big pool of water. One after another we splashed through it, took cover, and caught our breath. But it was no place for lying low. We dashed out again at full speed into a forest that lay a hundred yards ahead of us. There, after a while, we all found each other. But the forest was, beginning to look terribly thin.

At this time there was only a second sergeant in command, a big tall splendid fellow called Schmidt. We crawled on our bellies to the edge of the forest, while the shells came whistling and whining over us, tearing tree trunks and branches to shreds. Then the shells came down again on the edge of the forest, flinging up clouds of earth, stones, and roots, and enveloping everything in a disgusting, sickening yellow-green vapor. We can't possibly lie here forever, we thought, and if we are going to be killed, it is better to die in the open. Then the Major came up. Once more we advanced. I jumped up and ran as fast as I could across meadows and beet fields, jumping over trenches, hedgerows, and barbed wire entanglements, and then I heard someone shouting ahead of me: "In here! Everyone in here!" There was a long trench in front of me, and in an instant I had jumped into it, and there were others in front of me, behind me, and left and right of me. Next to me were Württembergers, and under me were dead and wounded Englishmen.

Hitler's account of his first engagement tells us a good deal about him. His eagerness and excitement, his deep respect for his officers, his lack of any real visual imagination, his curious feeling for time, which leads him to tell the reader the exact time of day when they came to an inn or set out marching, all these throw light on his character. Although he had trained himself to sketch and paint in watercolors with some skill, he could rarely bring shape or color to a scene or give it depth and perspective. Only when he speaks of the shells "flinging up clouds of earth, stones and roots, and enveloping everything in a disgusting, sickening yellow-green vapor" do we see the scene vividly.

In the same letter we learn that Hitler received the Iron Cross in December.

1916

I was proposed for the Iron Cross, the first time in Messines, then again at Wytshaete by Lieutenant Colonel Engelhardt, who was our regimental commander. Four other soldiers were proposed for the Iron Cross at the same time. Finally, on December 2, I received the medal.

My job now is to carry dispatches for the staff. As for the mud, things are a bit better here, but also more dangerous. In Wytshaete during the first day of the attack three of us eight dispatch runners were killed, and one was badly wounded. The four of us survivors and the man who was wounded were cited for their distinguished conduct. While they were deciding which of us should be awarded the Iron Cross, four company commanders came to the dugout. That meant that the four of us had to step out. We were standing some distance away about five minutes later when a shell slammed into the dugout, wounding Lieutenant Colonel Engelhardt and killing or wounding the rest of his staff. This was the most terrible moment of my life. We worshiped Lieutenant Colonel Engelhardt.

Lieutenant Colonel Engelhardt survived his wounds and went on to become a major general. Many years later, when a journalist wrote in a Hamburg newspaper that Hitler had not shown any particular courage during the war and had not earned his Iron Cross, the retired major general wrote an affidavit testifying to Hitler's courage. He wrote that during the fighting near Wytshaete he stepped out of the woods for a clear view of what was happening, and suddenly Hitler and another orderly called Bachmann had stood in front of him "to protect me with their bodies from the machine gun fire to which I was exposed."

Hitler received the Iron Cross, second class. Before the war ended, he collected four more medals. In September, 1917, he received the Cross of Military Merit, third class, with swords. In May, 1918, he received the regimental diploma. In August, 1918, he received the Iron Cross, first class, and a few days later the Medal of Military Service, third class. He is supposed to have received the Iron Cross, first class, for an outstanding feat of arms—singlehandedly capturing fifteen English or French soldiers encountered when he slipped into an enemy trench while acting as a dispatch runner. Four or five separate versions of the incident were published in official books and newspapers after Hitler came to power, and it was generally believed that an incident of this kind had happened. On the rare occasions when he was asked about it, Hitler was mildly reticent. In fact, the incident never took place and there were excellent reasons for his reticence.

When talking about his experiences in World War I, Hitler was often extremely discursive. He had a vivid memory of the war and in retrospect relished every moment of it. His reticence when confronted with his most memorable achievement would be puzzling if we did not know the cause.

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D.T. Since I was not protecting him, I began to think that preferences other than military were not without interest in -

He received the Iron Cross, first class, in 1918. First Lieutenant Hugo Disch, who was our regimental commander, was proposed for the Iron Cross at the same time. Finally, on December 2, I received the medal. My job now is to carry dispatches for the staff. As for the mud, things are a bit better here, but also more dangerous. In Wytshaete during the first day of the attack three of us eight dispatch runners were killed, and one was badly wounded. The four of us survivors and the man who was wounded were cited for their distinguished conduct. While they were deciding which of us should be awarded the Iron Cross, four company commanders came to the dugout. That meant that the four of us had to step out. We were standing some distance away about five minutes later when a shell slammed into the dugout, wounding Lieutenant Colonel Engelhardt and killing or wounding the rest of his staff. This was the most terrible moment of my life. We worshiped Lieutenant Colonel Engelhardt.

As a dispatch runner, boldness both in position and at the risk of the communication line. Hitler made it possible.

The Iron Cross, first class, was pinned on his chest. The circumstances leading to the dark mystery was attached to the Iron Cross, first class, it is known that he was a Jewish officer.

Hitler's letter to Heineke of war. He was opened up to him, the knowledge that he was his life and gave him profound cynicism and most of the soldiers in front. If he resembled Haie, who announced life. "You must be answered: 'Have you a laborer earning a living liked to think of himself regular food, with free. A noncommissioned

plain, and rather it a were than a betterment

Messines, then again
was our regimental
the Iron Cross at the
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War I, Hitler was often
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He received the Iron Cross, first class, on the recommendation of
First Lieutenant Hugo Gutmann, who had ordered him to carry urgent
dispatches to the rear commanding the artillerymen to stop shelling the
German forward trenches. There had been a breakdown in communi-
cations, the artillerymen did not know there had been a slight German
advance, and many German soldiers had already been killed by German
shells. The patch of ground between Lieutenant Gutmann's dugout and
the base artillery was under heavy English machine gun fire, and the dis-
patch runner who crossed that patch of ground would have to be a very
courageous man indeed. Lieutenant Gutmann promised Hitler the Iron
Cross, first class, if he succeeded. Hitler accomplished his almost suicidal
mission, and Lieutenant Gutmann kept his promise. The citation, dated
July 31, 1918, was signed by Baron von Godin, the regimental com-
mander, and read as follows:

As a dispatch runner, he has shown cold-blooded courage and exemplary
boldness both in positional warfare and in the war of movement, and
he has always volunteered to carry messages in the most difficult situa-
tions and at the risk of his life. Under conditions of great peril, when all
the communication lines were cut, the untiring and fearless activity of
Hitler made it possible for important messages to go through.

The Iron Cross, first class, was well deserved. Four days later the
medal was pinned on his jacket. When Hitler came to power all the
circumstances leading to the award were discreetly veiled as though some
dark mystery was attached to it. The mystery was very simple. First Lieu-
tenant Hugo Gutmann was a Jew, and by then Hitler preferred not to let
it be known that he owed his Iron Cross, first class, to the recommenda-
tion of a Jewish officer in the German Army.

Hitler's letter to Hepp showed him thoroughly enjoying the experi-
ence of war. He was excited beyond measure by the new life that
opened up to him, the comradeship of arms, the sense of urgency, the
knowledge that he was no longer alone. The war filled the emptiness of
his life and gave him a sense of purpose. He possessed none of the
profound cynicism and appalled contempt for the war that characterizes
most of the soldiers in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western
Front*. If he resembled anyone in the novel, it was the soldier called
Haie, who announced to his amused comrades that he rather liked army
life. "You must be absolutely out of your head!" they said, and he
answered: "Have you ever tried digging peat?" In peace time Haie was
a laborer earning a living by digging peat from morning to night, and he
liked to think of himself as a noncommissioned officer in the army, get-
ting regular food, with new underwear every week, and all his evenings
free. A noncommissioned officer, he explained, "earned respect," and

Don could imagine of my mind to choose him,
he was on occasion, he was really surprised with his
feelings, and therefore perfect for my purposes, but he was

interesting) I
was rather than
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skin, and this annoyed me, not
rather it annoyed me no end.
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is rather comfortable as were the
admirals

1915

after his term of duty he would find a job as a village policeman and eventually retire on a pension.

As a dispatch runner Hitler knew war under a very special aspect. Neither an officer nor a common soldier, he was continually moving between them. The small group of dispatch runners were regarded as privileged beings who could do very much as they pleased until the order went out for new dispatches to be sent up the line. They were chosen from those who were somewhat more educated than the rest, and they were well aware of their privileges.

Ignaz Westenkirchner, another dispatch runner and a close friend, remembered Hitler as a man who seemed unusually serious and almost pedantic. Everything had to be done according to the rules. He attended church parade regularly at a time when most of the German soldiers found good excuses for not attending. It was clear that Hitler attended because "it was in the regulations." He was not especially interested in meals, though he had a liking for bread heaped with mountains of jam. Westenkirchner said that Hitler received no letters from home. The statement is not quite true, for we know that he continued his correspondence with Ernst Hepp and with his landlady, but letters arrived infrequently and no parcels came. One day Westenkirchner said: "Haven't you got anyone back home? Isn't there anyone to send you things?" Hitler answered: "No, only a sister, and heaven knows where she is by this time."

In the summer of 1915 the English began to drop leaflets into the trenches and behind the lines. They were propaganda leaflets, designed to sow doubts in the minds of the German soldiers, and they succeeded almost beyond the hopes of the men who wrote them. Hitler read and pondered the leaflets, and though he was not in the least moved by their appeals to surrender, he was deeply impressed by them. "He seemed to think the English understood propaganda better than we did," wrote Westenkirchner. "He expected headquarters would contradict the leaflets, but they never did. Nothing was done to counteract the bad effects of these enemy leaflets."

There was another kind of propaganda which Hitler studied in some detail. German comic papers represented the English and the French as the most stupid creatures under the sun. They were depicted as outlandish beings from another world, contemptible and absurd, running away at the first sign of danger. Hitler had fought them and knew them as formidable fighters who never relinquished a position until they were completely overwhelmed. According to Westenkirchner, he spoke furiously against those national stereotypes, saying that they were not only mistaken but appallingly dangerous.

Hitler was developing a sharply critical attitude toward the German

high command and possessed the will power that during the whole read it again and again, and agitates that perplexed Will and Idea, which romantic isolation, death is illusion. Nevertheless, and the only asceticism, in the end and his belief in his Schopenhauer, whose the miseries of the war

Throughout the war battle honors with color Somme, that "weedy" battle went on from July had scarcely changed count. The Germans constructing a labyrinthine at some time early in was sitting in a dugout shell made a direct hit on the ground, Hitler kirchner miraculously

A few days later, or time more seriously. When the British were no place was safe, as measured in hours rather than monplace to send out would probably be very dangerous that the lie of his close friend Ernst Kirchner man who enjoyed the fragments deliberately Hitler was wounded by bearers found him when his way back to Germany continually for two years

The wound was serious hospital at Beelitz near later he was well enough

* He was so
surrendered to
aesthetic

1914

s land; it was also the rain, mud, verminousness and despair.

Neues—*All Quiet on the Western Front*—arque, the protagonist is shot by an idiot and otherwise unremarkable day. The literary post-war spectrum, Ernst Jünger—*Storm of Steel*—trying to make and heroism in the blood-soaked mud. *Remin des Dames*, from Verdun to the sieges, two winding systems of trenches opposing troops often within earshot, in the trenches not much more than a cat-and-mouse game, snipers putting a deadly pressure move.

German grand strategy failed, as it did not achieve victory within six weeks, but in the defense worked better than expected. Had to bypass the fortifications of Poznań only during the last few years, to the East. There they met units composed of among vast marshes, lakes and water-logging and country as for farm and farmland use of their treacherous terrain to defeat the advancing Russians, who in numbers but inferior in technology. Hundreds of thousands of Russians were killed. Hindenburg and Ludendorff, his chief tactical heroes. Farther south, the Russians were successful, advancing in Galicia of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They devoured tens of thousands from both

1915

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sides. After a few months, war in the east also became static. Austrian regiments had to be bolstered by German reinforcements before they were able to withstand pressure or take back the initiative. The horrible losses in the east, the destructive impact of the war on a multinational empire and the fact that Germans and Austrians were forever unable to coordinate their grand strategy caused second thoughts in Vienna, leading to mutual distrust and a mood of impending doom.

In spite of all the blood and fortune spent, or more likely because of them, neither the *Entente* powers nor the central powers tried to limit the war, let alone sue for peace. Instead, every effort was made to widen the scope of weaponry used. Concentrated artillery and greatly increased numbers of machine guns, trench mortars, flame-throwers, poison gas and ultimately tanks were designed to break through enemy trenches, mostly in vain. Strategic widening of the war took place at sea. The German battle fleet, once the centerpiece of Germany's global aspirations, was reduced to lingering in port except for a few valiant singlehanded actions and the battle of Jutland. The Royal Navy was outgunned and left with a bloody nose, but the German fleet remained in harbor thereafter. Effort was transferred to submarine war. German U-boats attacked Allied shipping plying the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean very effectively until Lloyd George forced the Admiralty to adopt the convoy system.

The British naval blockade, way out in the Atlantic, cut off German supplies. But submarines firing their torpedoes from under water had difficulty identifying targets through their periscopes. When a German commander sank the British liner *Lusitania* with hundreds of Americans on board in 1915, it brought the United States closer

officer, and altogether well known

1915

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regimental forward command post minutes after he had gone out, leaving almost the entire staff there dead or wounded.¹¹¹ Among the seriously wounded was the regimental commander, Oberstleutnant Philipp Engelhardt, who had been about to propose Hitler for the Iron Cross for his part, assisted by a colleague, in protecting the commander's life under fire a few days earlier.¹¹² On 2 December, Hitler was finally presented with the Iron Cross, Second Class, one of four dispatch runners among the sixty men from his regiment to receive the honour.¹¹³ It was, he said, 'the happiest day of my life'.¹¹⁴

From all indications, Hitler was a committed, rather than simply conscientious and dutiful, soldier, and did not lack physical courage. His superiors held him in high regard. His immediate comrades, mainly the group of dispatch runners, respected him and, it seems, even quite liked him, though he could also plainly irritate as well as puzzle them.¹¹⁵ His lack of a sense of fun made him an easy target for good-natured ribbing. 'What about looking around for a Mamsell?' suggested a telephonist one day. 'I'd die of shame looking for sex with a French girl,' interjected Hitler, to a burst of laughter from the others. 'Look at the monk,' one said. Hitler's retort was: 'Have you no German sense of honour left at all?'¹¹⁶ Though his quirkiness singled him out from the rest of his group, Hitler's relations with his immediate comrades were generally good. Most of them later became members of the NSDAP, and, when, as usually happened, they reminded Reich Chancellor Hitler of the time that they had been his comrades in arms, he made sure they were catered for with cash donations and positions as minor functionaries.¹¹⁷ For all that they got on well with him, they thought 'Adi', as they called him, was distinctly odd. They referred to him as 'the artist' and were struck by the fact that he received no mail or parcels (even at Christmas) after about mid-1915, never spoke of family or friends, neither smoked nor drank, showed no interest in visits to brothels, and used to sit for hours in a corner of the dug-out, brooding or reading.¹¹⁸ Photographs of him during the war show a thin, gaunt face dominated by a thick, dark, bushy moustache. He was usually on the edge of his group, expressionless where others were smiling.¹¹⁹ One of his closest comrades, Balthasar Brandmayer, a stonemason from Bruckmühl in the Bad Aibling district of Upper Bavaria, later described his first impressions of Hitler at the end of May 1915: almost skeletal in appearance, dark eyes hooded in a sallow complexion, untrimmed moustache, sitting in a corner buried in a newspaper, occasionally taking a sip of tea, seldom joining in the banter of the group.¹²⁰ He seemed an oddity, shaking his head disapprovingly at silly, light-hearted remarks,

not even joining in the usual sold you ever loved a girl?' Brandmay the straight-faced reply, 'I've never get round to it.'¹²² His only dog, Fockl, a white terrier that ha taught it tricks, revelling in how a to see him when he returned from when his unit had to move on a who took him from me doesn't kn many years later.¹²³ He felt as st humans he saw slaughtered abou Hitler showed throughout his life absent in the feeling he had for his the Second World War, his alsat nearest thing he could find to frien human being he came into contact subordination to his mastery. 'I lik obeyed me.'¹²⁵

About the war itself, Hitler was u could be allowed to interfere wit interests. He vehemently disapprov ship at Christmas 1914, when Geri land, shaking hands and singing car of something like that during war,' they could always provoke Hitler wi All they had to do was to claim the off at the deep end. 'For us the wa words.'¹²⁷ The lengthy letter he se acquaintance, Assessor Ernst Hepp typical Hitler prose-style) into his vi that had been consuming him since

I think so often of Munich, and each come to the final reckoning with the g what it will, and that those of us who h will find it purer and cleansed of alien i sacrifices and suffering that so many through the stream of blood that flows world of enemies, not only will Germai

* It was a notion alien to infantrymen. Honor plus mere equality of opinion about the color of uniform. But in spirit, they were all in high place.

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1915

tes after he had gone out, leaving wounded.¹¹¹ Among the seriously injured, Oberstleutnant Philipp Engelder for the Iron Cross for his part, commander's life under fire a few as finally presented with the Iron Cross runners among the sixty men.¹¹² It was, he said, 'the happiest day

uttered, rather than simply conscientious physical courage. His superiors and comrades, mainly the group of Germans, even quite liked him, though puzzled them.¹¹³ His lack of a sense of nature ribbing. 'What about the telephonist one day. 'I'd die of it,' interjected Hitler, to a burst of laughter, one said. Hitler's retort was: 'I'd die of it at all!'¹¹⁴ Though his quirkiness in group, Hitler's relations with his comrades. Most of them later became usually happened, they reminded him they had been his comrades in the front with cash donations and positions. He got on well with him, they thought odd. They referred to him as 'the one who received no mail or parcels (even if he spoke of family or friends, neither visits to brothels, and used to sit reading or reading.'¹¹⁸ Photographs of his face dominated by a thick, dark, edge of his group, expressionless. The closest comrades, Balthasar Brandt of the Bad Aibling district of Upper Bavaria, of Hitler at the end of May 1915: hooded in a sallow complexion, buried in a newspaper, occasionally banter of the group.¹²⁰ He seemed almost silly, light-hearted remarks,

not even joining in the usual soldiers' moans, gripes, and jibes.¹²¹ 'Haven't you ever loved a girl?' Brandmayer asked Hitler. 'Look, Brandmoirer,' was the straight-faced reply, 'I've never had time for anything like that, and I'll never get round to it.'¹²² His only real affection seems to have been for his dog, Fockl, a white terrier that had strayed across from enemy lines. Hitler taught it tricks, revelling in how attached it was to him and how glad it was to see him when he returned from duty. He was distraught late in the war when his unit had to move on and Fockl could not be found. 'The swine who took him from me doesn't know what he did to me,' was his comment many years later.¹²³ He felt as strongly about none of the thousands of humans he saw slaughtered about him. The emptiness and coldness that Hitler showed throughout his life in his dealings with human beings were absent in the feeling he had for his dog. In the Führer Headquarters during the Second World War, his alsatian, Blondi, would again offer him the nearest thing he could find to friendship.¹²⁴ But with his dogs, as with every human being he came into contact with, any relationship was based upon subordination to his mastery. 'I liked [Fockl] so much,' he recalled; 'he only obeyed me.'¹²⁵

About the war itself, Hitler was utterly fanatical. No humanitarian feelings could be allowed to interfere with the ruthless prosecution of German interests. He vehemently disapproved of the spontaneous gestures of friendship at Christmas 1914, when German and British troops met in no man's land, shaking hands and singing carols together. 'There should be no question of something like that during war,' he protested.¹²⁶ His comrades knew that they could always provoke Hitler with defeatist comments, real or contrived. All they had to do was to claim the war would be lost and Hitler would go off at the deep end. 'For us the war can't be lost' were invariably his last words.¹²⁷ The lengthy letter he sent on 5 February 1915 to his Munich acquaintance, Assessor Ernst Hepp, concluded with an insight (written in typical Hitler prose-style) into his view of the war redolent of the prejudices that had been consuming him since his Vienna days:

I think so often of Munich, and each of us has only one wish, that it may soon come to the final reckoning with the gang, to the showdown (*Daraufgehen*), cost what it will, and that those of us who have the fortune to see their homeland again will find it purer and cleansed of alien influence (*Fremdländerei*), that through the sacrifices and suffering that so many hundred thousand of us make daily, that through the stream of blood that flows here day for day against an international world of enemies, not only will Germany's external enemies be smashed, but that

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our inner internationalism will also be broken. That would be worth more to me than all territorial gains. As far as Austria is concerned, things will happen as I always said.¹²⁸

Hitler evidently carried such deep-seated sentiments throughout the war. But this political outburst, tagged on to a long description of military events and wartime conditions, was unusual. He appears to have spoken little to his comrades on political matters.¹²⁹ Perhaps the fact that his comrades thought him peculiar hindered him from giving voice to his strong opinions. 'I was a soldier then, and I didn't want to talk about politics,' he himself stated; though in direct contradiction he added that he often expressed his views on Social Democracy to his closer comrades.¹³⁰ During his interrogation in Nuremberg in 1947, Max Amann was adamant that Hitler had not harangued his comrades on politics during the war.¹³¹ He appears, too, to have scarcely mentioned the Jews. Several former comrades claimed after 1945 that Hitler had at most made a few off-hand though commonplace comments about the Jews in those years, but that they had no inkling then of the unbounded hatred that was so visible after 1918.¹³² Balthasar Brandmayer recalled on the other hand in his reminiscences, first published in 1932, that during the war he had 'often not understood Adolf Hitler when he called the Jew the wire-puller behind all misfortune'.¹³³ According to Brandmayer, Hitler became more politically involved in the latter years of the war and made no secret of his feelings on what he saw as the Social Democrat instigators of growing unrest in Germany.¹³⁴ Such comments, like all sources that postdate Hitler's rise to prominence and, as in this case, glorify the prescience of the future leader, have to be treated with caution. But it is difficult to dismiss them out of hand. It indeed does seem very likely, as his own account in *Mein Kampf* claims, that Hitler's political prejudices sharpened in the latter part of the war, during and after his first period of leave in Germany in 1916.¹³⁵

Between March 1915 and September 1916, the List Regiment fought in the trenches near Fromelles, defending a two-kilometre stretch of the stalemated front. Heavy battles with the British were fought in May 1915 and July 1916, but in one and a half years the front barely moved a few metres.¹³⁶ On 27 September 1916, two months after heavy fighting in the second battle of Fromelles, when a British offensive was staved off with difficulty, the regiment moved southwards from Flanders and by 2 October was engaged on the Somme.¹³⁷ Within days, Hitler was wounded in the left thigh when a shell exploded in the dispatch runners' dug-out, killing and

wounding several of them.¹³⁸ After almost two months, from 9 October Cross hospital at Beelitz, near Berlin. He soon noticed how different the malingering or how they had themselves to make sure they could much the same low morale and wide period of his recuperation. It was his to pay a visit to the Nationalgalerie. He scarcely recognized the city: 'A went!' Morale was poor; people were and, as was traditional in Bavaria, Hitler himself, according to his own recognized in all this only the world said, by the number of Jews in clerical a Jew and nearly every Jew was a cleric were serving at the front.¹³⁹ (In fact good as no difference between the German army, relative to their number served – some in the List Regiment reason to presume, as has sometime anti-Jewish feelings in 1916 was a reality only existed from 1918–1919.) Hitler did not stand out for his anti-Jewish former wartime comrades, though kirchner, did refer to his negative comments would have been voicing sentiment the streets of Munich as anti-Jewish more ferocious in the second half of

Hitler wanted to get back to the front to rejoin his old regiment.¹⁴⁴ He even moved to its new position a few miles to the north back to the same ground near Ypres almost three years earlier, to counter-attack by the British in mid-July 1917.¹⁴⁶ But was relieved at the beginning of August. At the end of September, Hitler took normal wish to go back to Munich, which

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recorded descriptions of their minor illnesses. When his paternal grandmother died in 1916, he seems to have been deeply affected and noted the exact time of her death. As he grew older his devotion to the church did not diminish; if anything, it grew stronger. Perhaps under the impact of the war, the family's church attendance became even more frequent, and the boy often accompanied his parents and brothers to service three or four times a week. His diary makes careful note of events of importance to the church—for example, the selection of a new Pope. During the summer of 1915 the family went on an extended pilgrimage of local churches in fulfillment of a vow made two years earlier when Gebhard was seriously ill.²²

Heinrich had a number of friends his own age, but his closest companion continued to be Falk Zipperer. Both collected stamps, liked war games, and, as the years passed, became increasingly interested in writing. In addition to keeping his diary, Heinrich also tried his hand at stories and poems. Falk was even more deeply concerned with writing and was often called upon to compose and present poems at school. The boys spent many hours examining each other's work and exchanging opinions. In writing, Heinrich was the junior partner. But when it came to collecting, his achievements stood out, and Falk served as audience. In addition to stamps and perhaps picture postcards, Heinrich collected coins, and pressed wildflowers, a hobby he had learned from his mother. From his father he had acquired an interest in stones and artifacts from the Middle Ages and especially during the summer vacations he endeavored to uncover traces of the Germanic past. The romantic, often ludicrous, enthusiasm for medieval Germany which he was to manifest in later years probably stemmed from these early efforts.²³

Although the mode of his life remained within the limits set by his parents, he showed signs of developing some independent judgement. The diary entries not only give free rein to his scorn for the timidity and narrowness of the local petty bourgeoisie but sometimes also record the fact that he was unimpressed by people whom his parents esteemed. He was particularly hard on the wife of the *Rektor*, an exhibition of *lèse-majesté* which would have been unthinkable for him a few years earlier. His status as a "mere child" irritated him, and he was deeply offended when he

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* D.T. *the masterpiece of adolescence*

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discovered in the summer of 1915 that at his age he was considered so unimportant that he could enter Austria without a passport. Among his peers also he was anxious to be taken seriously; when one of his sick classmates was not sufficiently appreciative of a visit from him, Heinrich refused to see him again.²⁴

The *Gymnasium* continued to be the central focus of his life. Curriculum requirements grew more taxing, and in order to maintain his high ranking in the class he had to spend much of his time studying. He apparently succeeded in remaining consistently second in his class. His father continued to supervise his studies and drill him in his lessons, especially those for his language classes. At the same time, however, the boy's enthusiasm for school was somewhat dampened, and certain subjects, mathematics in particular, became sheer drudgery. He had difficulty in algebra and some other subjects, and noted early in 1915 that a special examination had "not gone especially well."²⁵ His ability to please and maintain close relations with his teachers also fell off. In September 1914 he was deeply troubled by what he termed a "misunderstanding" with one of his professors; he tried to resolve the problem by a personal visit but he was unable to convince the professor of his innocence. Apparently Heinrich had been somewhat obstructive while making classroom reports and answering questions. A few days later he noted lamely in his diary that some of his other teachers had also complained of his conduct. A year later when it seemed likely that he would again be assigned to this professor, he was deeply concerned; though conceding that on this occasion the professor was "very nice" to him, he heaved a sigh of relief on learning that he had been assigned to another class. As his ability to charm his teachers diminished, he became critical of other students who tried to improve their positions by using schoolboy blandishments. On one occasion he even tried to dissuade Falk from trying to curry favor with a teacher.²⁶

Part of Heinrich's difficulty in maintaining his position near the top of the class arose from his carelessness. This, together with his lapses in responsibility both in and out of school, bothered him. When, as often happened, he fell behind in writing his diary, he would reproach himself. "I must admit that I was really very bad," he writes in late September, "because I neglected my diary the whole time

DiT. as would lecture for him in later years.

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[two and a half weeks]."²⁷ Actually, compared with most boys of his age he was a model of conscientiousness and responsibility; but his family's rigid system and his own sense of duty made every failing seem heinous. *abschleichen*

The tasks ahead of him and his remorse about his failings made the family's annual vacations especially important for young Heinrich. Though these trips offered no escape from close parental supervision, they did at any rate give him a change and a chance to unwind. The vacations, whether at Burghausen near Tittmoning (in 1915) or at Kellberg north of Passau (in 1916) provided a round of activities that varied little from year to year. Interspersed among the countless strolls in the countryside were family trips, opportunities for swimming, and visits to the churches in the area. When left to his own devices, Heinrich read, paddled a canoe, and now and then played croquet or some other quiet game with other children vacationing in the area.

On the surface the amusements and way of living might seem unchanged from earlier summers, but even here the changes brought by the war were felt. Describing the trip to Burghausen in 1915 Heinrich wrote: "I remember clearly last summer when we stood on the train platform and exercised at approximately this time. It was then the 6th of August as we came home from Tittmoning. A few days later they all went off to war cheerful and happy. How many are alive today?"²⁸ The war colored the happy diversions of the vacation time. In August 1915 the Himmlers held a fireworks display as they had done in earlier years, but this time it was to celebrate the fall of Warsaw to German troops.²⁹ By 1916 good food was becoming more difficult to obtain and was more readily available in the country districts than at home in Landshut, although the wartime controls on consumption and purchasing were supposed to apply everywhere. Heinrich carefully kept a clipping from the *Passauer Zeitung* of August 1916 which denounced a "blonde Saxon lady" who while visiting near Passau had hoarded food and sent it home. On the side of the clipping Heinrich noted: "Bad Kellberg near Passau. These blonde Saxons are Frau Fabrikdirektor [factory manager] Weitzer and her daughter. . . . They sent food home almost every day. They told us how badly it went with them. A half pound of frozen meat for each person since May 1915. Milk only with a doctor's certificate. Potatoes are the chief food, and sometimes they are

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Whether incident, i more self-adulthood. adolescenc shyness w there durib that every made him secrecy. H and there curiosity. I Luisa Hage well since time, and Hagers' so shared each did nothin daughter o the boy w friend. He taller, he l them wan he has cha have retu Landshut, promised t from her, i

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wanting." This comment reflects the increasingly serious impact of the war on daily life; it also suggests the possibility that the Himmmlers—perhaps Heinrich himself—were directly involved in the denunciation of the hoarders. The boy's wealth of information on the incident certainly suggests that he played some part in its exposure.³⁰

Whether or not Heinrich took any initiative in this incident, it is clear that during these years he was becoming more self-assertive and more conscious of approaching adulthood. His attitude toward sex during puberty and early adolescence has a certain significance. The prudery and shyness which he later manifested were probably already there during this period, and this, combined with the fact that everything he wrote was subject to parental scrutiny, made him conceal his sexual awareness under a cloak of secrecy. His diaries do not include a single reference to sex, and there is no hint of any typically adolescent humor or curiosity. They do however show him taking a new interest in Luisa Hager, the one girl of his own age whom he had known well since early childhood. He wrote to her from time to time, and when the Hagers came to visit, Gebhard and the Hagers' son Edi paired together, while Luisa and Heinrich shared each other's company. The Himmler parents of course did nothing to discourage a closer friendship with the daughter of a senior government official, and by early 1916 the boy was becoming more interested in his rediscovered friend. He notes that although Edi had grown very much taller, he himself is the same height as Luisa. As the two of them wander through Landshut, she confides to him that he has changed a good deal. In early May, when the Hagers have returned home after one of their short visits to Landshut, Heinrich wonders if Luisa will write to him "as she promised to do." When on the next day he receives a card from her, it pleases him "very, very much."³¹

In normal times Heinrich's interest in Luisa would probably have evolved into one of those long, platonic courtships common among the well-to-do classes in prewar Germany. But the year 1916 was far from normal, and Heinrich's first stirrings of interest in the opposite sex were submerged in the rising tempo of the war. It was in 1916 that the forces of total warfare which had been gradually accelerating since the opening of hostilities reached their climax. During this year the great battles of Verdun and the

1916

Books in this file

The German Empire 1870-1918 Sturmer

The Ailing Empire - Haffner

men must die - Beech

1916

1916

purposely contrived a special plan to make bees completely and inextricably interdependent.

THIRTY



Cooperation is programmed into a bee's genes. Each colony functions less like a group of integrated individuals than a multitude of cells making up a single organism. This interlocking structure is the most distinguishing characteristic of social bees, just as competitiveness dominates most other forms of life. Almost from the moment she emerges from her crib, a bee plays a community role.

Because life is so brief, with so much to do, little time can be wasted becoming acclimated. After spending the first day gaining strength and learning her way around the hive, she goes immediately to work. Her life is divided roughly into two phases, first as house bee, and then, in maturity, at about the halfway mark, as forager. She will continue to work the fields into her dotage and until early death.

On the second day of life, now stronger and her orientation completed, she dips eagerly into the stored honey for her first meal and begins her first job, as if trained for it. For a couple of days she performs menial tasks, cleaning and polishing empty brood cells, "sweeping the floor," and so on. She then becomes a nurse, making the numerous trips to feed newly hatched larvae, alert to provide the proper formulas to embryo workers, drones, and queens. The frequent feedings in tiny amounts are necessary to keep the food from drying out so it can be absorbed through the grubs' transparent skins.

After about a week as a nurse, our young worker makes way for new nurse bees and starts performing more demanding hive

chores, among them receiving and storing nectar brought in by field bees, fanning honey, attending to the queen, capping cells, or anything else that needs doing. During the second week of life she is able to produce tiny wax flakes on her abdomen, providing the material of which honeycomb is made, functioning as architect, builder, and artist. As the glands that produced royal jelly dry up, the wax glands become active.

By the end of the second week she has matured and lost that soft, downy appearance. She is now an adult bee approaching her prime, ready to assume greater responsibilities. She begins taking her turn as a guard at the hive entrance, charged with repelling invaders or sounding the alarm in case of attack, ready to give up her life in defense of the hive. At this time she also prepares for the second phase of her life, as a fielder, joining in the "play flights" in front of the hive, making short excursions to get acquainted with the area and developing those powerful wings for the demanding and hazardous job ahead; she is a journeyman in every sense of the word.

The transition from house bee to forager marks a time to begin her life's work. Now those valiant wings come into use, so quickly to wear out. The job of a fielder is the most strenuous and dangerous in the hive; she must travel long distances for provender, up to nine miles if necessary but rarely more than two or three. She and her kind are prey for birds and other predators; they may be ambushed by enemies lurking in flowers, or killed or injured by storms, mishaps, or insecticides.

Most field bees die outside the hive, with their boots on, as it were. The worker must fly low to avoid winds, burdened by her heavy load of nectar or pollen. The powerful but fragile wings are torn while dodging through shrubs and brambles and worn by constant friction entering and backing out of the flowers she raids and the constant beating in flight and fanning at the hive entrance at night to evaporate moisture from honey.

There we have the chronology of the bee. I have seen her

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16 • WILLIAM LONGGOOD

responsible? Is it due to an abiding animus that dwells secretly in the hive, invisible and indecipherable, and provides this ability, this profound intelligence, that we observe without comprehending?

The mystery is compounded because each phase of a bee's development occurs on a fairly predictable timetable. One thing we know, as observers, is that from the moment of a bee's "birth" she is destined to work until she no longer can do so, but no one has the least notion what dictates this pattern of behavior. The queen and drones are equally condemned by the same invisible forces, although their roles differ. We watch the miracle that unfolds from their various labors with wonder but with little or no understanding of the origins or imperatives.

* The colony, as noted, is ruled by one fixed law: those who do not or cannot work cannot remain in the hive and be a drain on its resources. There is no charity, no exception, no compassion. If a bee is born deformed, too weak, or not willing to work, it is ruthlessly killed or thrown out of the hive. The same fate awaits those who become too old or infirm to work.
It also applies to victims of mishaps and heroines maimed in combat while guarding the hive against invaders.

There is, for the worker bee, no honorable retirement, no pension, no welfare program or reward for service to the community, no compromising of hive values. The individual bee means nothing. Only the continuing life of the colony counts. This is the first commandment of the hive—a manifestation of that mysterious and dispassionate force that guides all bee life. It is called, with little understanding of what it means, "the spirit of the hive."

The primary rule is inflexible: work or die.

1897 Alois impart this
to Adolph in order to
try to get him to
understand the need for
work.

T W O



I have, at this writing, been keeping bees for more than ten years, and in that time have observed and read about them extensively. Like most beekeepers, I understand bees only superficially, and then on the terms they set. Any deeper understanding eludes me. Bees are complex creatures and over the centuries they have worked out many successful strategies that are unique in nature. Much has been learned through observation about what they do but little about why they do it. Like most species, bees tend to protect their secrets from those who would invade their privacy. Only slowly and grudgingly have bees let us learn anything about their private lives, but they reveal nothing about their inner councils; theirs is one of nature's most effective conspiracies of silence and secrecy.

I am not sure how most people get into beekeeping. Interest is kindled in one way or another: possibly they had a friend or relative who kept bees, read an article that interested them, or saw something on television. Bees and men are closely enough related, as fellow members of a life community, that there should be an atavistic interest in some degree, unless this mechanistic human society has smothered such human inclinations as remain to us. Most of us have been trained to ignore or distrust our instincts and feelings unless they can be scientifically substantiated.

My own introduction to beekeeping was accidental. My son, who grew up in the sixties, had left home and was raising his consciousness in a commune-like house in New Jersey. As part of the great experiment in natural living and self-sufficiency, my son and his friends decided to keep bees and bought a

village policeman and

a very special aspect. He was continually moving and was regarded as they pleased until the line. They were hated than the rest, and

and a close friend, very serious and almost the rules. He attended the German soldiers that Hitler attended especially interested in with mountains of letters from home. The continued his correspondence, but letters arrived Westenkirchner said: "Are anyone to send you and heaven knows where

to drop leaflets into the propaganda leaflets, designed for them, they succeeded in them. Hitler read and the least moved by their by them. "He seemed to more than we did," wrote could contradict the leaflets counteract the bad effects

Hitler studied in some English and the French as they were depicted as out of the line and absurd, running through them and knew them in position until they were Westenkirchner, he spoke furiously that they were not only

attitude toward the German

high command and sometimes found himself wondering whether they possessed the will power and the determination to succeed. He said later that during the whole course of the war he read only one book, but he read it again and again, finding in it the solutions to many of the problems that perplexed him. The book was Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, which celebrates the primacy of the will, seeing it in romantic isolation, detached and inviolable. The will alone rules; all else is illusion. Nevertheless, the assertive will finds itself endlessly frustrated, and the only salvation lies in renunciation through art and asceticism, in the contemplation of the eternal ideas. Hitler's asceticism and his belief in himself as an artist found powerful justification in Schopenhauer, whose extravagant romanticism helped him to endure the miseries of the war.

Throughout the war the List Regiment went on fighting and collecting battle honors with commendable regularity. It fought in the battle of the Somme, that "weedy little river" which thirsted for so much blood. The battle went on from July until autumn, and when it was over the lines had scarcely changed, but there were more widows than anyone could count. The Germans had dug themselves into the low chalk hills, constructing a labyrinthine maze of trenches, dugouts, and traverses. There, at some time early in October, 1916, Hitler received his first wound. He was sitting in a dugout with a dozen other soldiers when an English shell made a direct hit. Four men were killed, six lay hideously wounded on the ground, Hitler received a shell splinter in the face, and Westenkirchner miraculously came out unscathed.

A few days later, on October 7, 1916, Hitler was wounded again, this time more seriously. He was carrying messages near Bapaume at a time when the British were mounting rolling barrages of artillery fire, when no place was safe, and when the life of a dispatch runner could be measured in hours rather than days. In those days it had become commonplace to send out six dispatch runners on the assumption that five would probably be wounded or killed. One particular mission was so dangerous that the lieutenant called for volunteers, but only Hitler and his close friend Ernst Schmidt responded. Schmidt was a tall, saturnine man who enjoyed the same reputation as Hitler: bullets and shell fragments deliberately avoided him. This time Schmidt got through, but Hitler was wounded by a shell fragment in the left thigh. The stretcher bearers found him where he had fallen, and three days later he was on his way back to Germany in a hospital train. He had been fighting continually for two years.

The wound was serious, but under proper treatment in the army hospital at Beelitz near Berlin he recovered quickly, and two months later he was well enough to join the reserve battalion of the 2nd Bavarian

* He was made at this point to surrender his will to a post-war aesthetic.

Life & Death A.H.
Payne Book

1916

Haffner

1916
A.H.
redon

majority was not all that firm in its opposition to the continuing war effort and the dogged determination to hold out to the end.

In 1916-17 two major internal changes took place in Germany. In August 1916 the Second Supreme Army Command, which had already informed the chancellor in November 1914 that the war could not be won by purely military methods, was cashiered. The Supreme Command had conducted the war like an accountant: cautious deployment of manpower and matériel in the eventuality of a drawn-out war; limited military operations to keep going until the situation would allow a settlement on favorable terms. This command was dismissed in 1916 and replaced by the Third Supreme Command under Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff, two men with close political ties to the rightists who wanted total victory, with all the potential benefits of such a victory, and who were prepared to do whatever was necessary to win this victory. The unlimited U-boat war was one of the strategies pushed through by this new command, and they also supported the revolutionizing of Russia.

The second major upheaval occurred in July 1917: the surprising cooperation of the rightist Supreme Command and the leftist Reichstag majority in the ouster of Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg. Both wanted him out, though for entirely different reasons—the Supreme Command because they did not think he was sufficiently militant, and the

Reichstag group sufficiently peaceable. The successor waiting for an interim parliamentary conference was the official of the Bavarian majority, Georg Meißner, a forgotten leader of the Reichstag who had been chancellor.

In the meantime Meißner was completely passive. His role in the peace movement was of little consequence to the Reichstag. He was like the supreme leader, not as a known leader.

In 1917 the new Reichstag became much more active. The constitution gave it no real power in practice; it no longer had any policy. The new Reichstag was a new hostile power. For the first time the Supreme Command had to face a general mobilization (World War II), which was a service for all German.

1916

in his *Decline of the Bismarckian Order* had a different story: he saw French and Russian policies converging, ever since the 1880s, to undo the status quo, revise the settlement of 1871 and destroy the Habsburg monarchy. The *Entente Cordiale* finally tipped the balance of Europe against the central powers, and thereby the European system became menacingly unstable. In addition, among the central powers Austria-Hungary was seen as a sick man, while the *Entente* could not count on revolution-torn Russia. Both sides therefore had a strange incentive to go to war sooner rather than later, for fear that a member might easily collapse before it could enter the fray.

If the European concert was used to being conducted by the Great Powers, and the Franco-Russian alliance was incompatible with this, so too was German naval ambition. Given Britain's development of the Dreadnought type of battleship, the game on the naval chessboard would have been all but lost for Germany, had it not been for the torpedo boat and the U-boat. The German Admiralty henceforth concentrated on such new types of warship, which offered the chance of victory for the weak over the strong. In 1912 Lord Haldane, then the British Secretary for War, hoped that, given the new correlation of forces, Germany might be willing to sign a naval agreement to limit numbers. In Berlin, however, Haldane met with stiff resistance from Tirpitz and the Kaiser: too much prestige and funds had been invested to retreat and acknowledge defeat. There was to be no arms control. A chance to avoid disaster, perhaps the best chance in decades, was wasted.

German strategy, running into a dead end in naval affairs, could have opted for confidence and security building, returning to Bismarckian wisdom. That would

have included limiting arms expenditure on a contractual basis with Britain or unilaterally maneuvering the *Entente Cordiale*. Even had the good sense to cultivate his friendship with the United States, he might have met to exchange uniforms and to discuss the "Admiral of the Atlantic" and the "Admiral of the Pacific". Pre-1914 Europe was not on a one-way street to doom and gloom. The German system was not only managed jointly to contain the Wars of 1912-13, through a London conference, but also came to an agreement to carve up the Portuguese colonies in Africa. Portugal could not service its foreign debts, and the Turks over Turkey were brought under British control. The latter was adopted to keep the Russian naval matters to the British and the Germans. The latter included the strategic alliance with the Persian Gulf and the Bosphorus with the Persian Gulf and the remnants, in many places blown up and left to silent decay, can still be seen to this day.

It was an age of strategic ambiguity. In the collective walk down the infernal path of encirclement, the Grosser General was unnerved and reacted in a profoundly undiplomatic and ultimately fatal way. German unification under the leadership of Count Moltke, a legend in his own time, recognized France as the foremost power. Specially, Russia was an ally even if the Prussians dropped their eastern guard. But the co-

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to intervention on the *Entente* side. The German High Command was forced into a strategic gamble as unrestricted U-boat warfare would sooner or later bring the United States into the war. But in the spring of 1917 the German Admiralty, ignorant of North American industrial power and political resolve, promised victory and carried on regardless.

AB Most moving of guns and ammunition was still done by horses, but there was no more role for cavalry except in eastern Europe. Aircraft were used first to direct artillery fire against enemy positions, then to drop bombs. Inevitably, dogfights began, and young cavalry officers like Manfred von Richthofen—later the legendary “Red Baron” at the head of his “circus”—found a new and irresistible challenge in the air. But air power was never really integrated with ground action until August 1918.

A few months into the war, German industry had run out of its stocks of saltpeter. Without the Haber-Bosch process for producing nitrogen from the air, the production of ordnance would have ceased some time in 1915, and with it the war. The Allies were in no better shape, with British artillery on the Western Front reduced to an allowance of ten rounds a day in 1915 because of a shortage of shells from the factories. Walther Rathenau, formerly a vocal critic of the Kaiser's strategy, became the chief organizer of Germany's war industries.

Under the impact of war, Germany changed from a constitutional monarchy into a thinly disguised military dictatorship, with the Kaiser reduced to protocol functions and the Reichstag to rubber-stamping one bill after another for the issuing of war loans. The loans could only be redeemed if and when Germany finally won the war. On the western side, taxes were raised, but much of the

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financing of the war came from the Allies, too, were caught in a dilemma. One of the reasons why the war went on was that it was financed on both sides. The war devoured all material resources, gave power to the military as a class, inflated the currency beyond any reasonable chance of recovery, killed small businesses, and unprecedented economic dislocation involved.

In Germany, politics fell sidetracked and total mobilization prevailed. Four hundred German university professors and luminaries in their respective fields signed an indictment of the western powers for barbarism, and having no religion, many were seen as fighting a desperate battle, encircled, and was now entitled to be proclaimed throughout Europe by proclamation. These had not driven the course of the war, produced the war aims, giving the war a new meaning, been absent before, and by implication indefinitely, to the bitter end.

While the German war aims called for the domination of central Europe under German domination, the annexation of the port of Antwerp, the deposits of Lorraine and Belgium, and no less ambitious in reserving for Germany. The nations making no secret of their intentions were seen as potential allies, but Austria-Hungary had to be desisted from seeking the final dismemberment of the

1916 - 1917

of parliament added to the leaden atmosphere. The hope was to utilize military victory as a surrogate for constitutional reform, and glory as a tonic for the nation. In 1916 when the military authorities tightened their control over production and consumption, a bargain was struck between the generals and the trade unions called *Vaterländisches Hilfsdienstgesetz* (Patriotic Support Bill). The military could from now on draft everybody, men and women, into production. Private ownership even of major companies became subject to military orders. The trade unions, in turn, were offered a massive say in the running of companies. Workers' councils (*Betriebsräte*) were set up, which as well as supervising matters of management had to be consulted on working conditions.

After the first Russian revolution in February 1917, the Kaiser announced the German equivalent of "a land fit for heroes," promising that once the war was won, there would be far-reaching constitutional reform and a revision of the three-class franchise in Prussia that ever since the constitution of 1849 made sure that voting power was organized according to the amount of direct tax paid. In mid-July 1917 the Reichstag seriously debated the worsening situation at the fronts for the first time, and even dared, though in closed session, to criticize the Admiralty's great gamble of unrestricted U-boat warfare, which risked American intervention. The issuing of new war bonds was made conditional on the government's accepting a "peace resolution" for a settlement "without annexations and reparations." Bethmann Hollweg, having lasted as Chancellor since 1909, was ousted, but the center-left majority now finding its voice was unable to produce from its own ranks a convincing leader, thus leaving the powers that be, the Military High Command, unchallenged.

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It was the Western Front, however, that collapsed first. Ludendorff drove the Allies back 40 miles on the first time since 1914, but reserves of troops, supplies and morale consolidated and exploited the gains. In early summer 1918, of many German soldiers east at the Western Front, the overwhelming majority was moving inexorably against massive offensives of the summer. They threw more troops into the battle one stage they got within 40 miles of the Allies. They were worn out, hungry, badly equipped, morale was low, and there was a sharp increase in desertions.

The Germans had no weapons were suddenly making their appearance through lines thought to be impenetrable. Allies had 800 of them—the Germans appeared in large numbers at the front. By the end of September, the situation was still deep in enemy territory. Bad news from the Austrian fronts increased the gloom. It was time to begin the end of still a chance of a negotiated peace between the victors and the vanquished. The equilibrium and stability throughout the war on the ability of the German armies was based on the enlightened statecraft of the Kaiser.

A government composed of the Kaiser and the Reichstag was formed, but even now the Kaiser was still a princely house, Max von Baden, with no parliamentary experience and was in

1916

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military training programs, starting with the *Jugendwehr** and going on to membership in the *Landsturm* in 1915.¹³

During the first months of the war Heinrich's role was restricted to watching, cheering, and playing war games with his friend Falk. So eager were these games that in Heinrich's diary it is often difficult to separate them from battle reports: "29 [August 1914] Saturday. Studied until 10:00. Played shield and sword with Falk. This time with 40 Army Corps and Russia, France, and Belgium against Germany and Austria. The play is very interesting. Victory over the Russians in East Prussia."¹⁴ The young diarist was delighted with wartime innovations such as the daylight-saving time introduced in 1916 which enabled him to sit in the garden in the evening and write his entries.¹⁵

In early 1915 it was Heinrich's turn to begin military training by enrollment in the *Jugendwehr*. The boys were issued weapons and received close-order drill in addition to lectures on military organization, fortification, and tactics. Occasionally they participated in small-scale field exercises under the direction of regular officers, and they frequently appeared at patriotic ceremonies held by the *Gymnasium*. Heinrich was somewhat ambivalent about these *Jugendwehr* activities. The lectures and field exercises he usually found interesting, and sometimes he thought the unit performed well; but the amateurish tone of the organization offended him. In 1916 he describes it as "something of a joke."¹⁶

Heinrich's involvement in the *Jugendwehr* and his dreams of one day entering the war led him to pay more attention to his physique and the need to build up his strength. Although of normal height, he was already self-conscious about his soft, pudgy appearance and general lack of stamina. At one point he decided on a program of exercises, but apparently his resolve did not last long.¹⁷ He was often ill with colds or flu which forced him to be absent from school and did nothing to lessen his mother's protectiveness. In 1915 he complained of stomach trouble, a problem that was to plague him for the rest of his life. His attitude toward his illnesses alternated between self-pity and a resentment against a weak constitution which might limit participation in the military. "In the afternoon to training," he writes on September 25,

*A program which had been started in the 1890s to give secondary school students some preparatory training for the army.

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1915. "The exercise was pretty poor. I lay in a rather wet field for a quarter of an hour; however, it didn't hurt me at all."¹⁸ E

This sensitivity about his health and unsoldierly appearance was evidence of the fact that Heinrich was still a young boy. His military dreams were only an aspect of the overall process of growing up, and, despite his fascination with the war and his military training, he had to progress gradually into maturity in a conservative and protected environment dominated by his parents, his teachers, and his middle-class peers. Professor Himmler and his wife were not about to relax their system of training because of the war. The boy was kept as much as possible within the narrow confines of his class and the activities appropriate to it. The family continued the long walks it had always taken, and the boys sometimes accompanied their parents on social calls to such people as the *Rektor* of the *Gymnasium* or a local baron. From time to time Heinrich was invited to participate in polite amusements, including magic-lantern shows with groups of children from the professional middle class and the nobility. His diary continues to include the correct titles of important persons and to make careful note of friendly receptions by such people as Falk's mother. "Gebhard, Ernst, and I were invited over by Falk and Ina [Ina Pracher, Falk's half-sister]," he writes on August 24, 1914. "We played with a steam engine. Then drank tea with Frau *Präsident*, who was very nice [*sehr liebenswürdig*]."¹⁹

At home Heinrich followed a quiet routine, practicing the piano, arranging his stamp collection, and playing with toy soldiers. Occasionally he played chess with his brother Gebhard or joined him in a four-hand piano concert for the family. Once his parents took him to a concert, which he found "very long, but also very beautiful."²⁰ His diary makes no mention of any rough-and-tumble games with other boys. His only strenuous play was at school, in the organized program of the *Jugendwehr* or the gymnastic club which he joined in early 1917. After his parents had given him a bicycle early in 1916 his brother Gebhard took him along on bicycle outings. These, however, were not an overwhelming success, because Heinrich had a penchant for falling off his machine, tearing his clothes, and suffering other mishaps.²¹ *

Family and church ties remained strong. Heinrich was sincerely devoted to his parents and brothers, and carefully

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baby was only four weeks old.³³

In November 1916 word reached the Himmlers of another tragedy which went far beyond anything they had so far experienced in bringing the horror of the war into their family circle. Prince Heinrich had been slightly wounded early in the conflict and had later served at Verdun. In 1916 he was transferred to Romania where he immediately established himself as a heroic and competent officer. After a very short period of service there, however, he died of wounds. Only thirty-two years old at the time of his death, he had been a dashing commander, repeatedly decorated for bravery under fire. The only member of the House of Wittelsbach to be killed in action, he was deeply and sincerely mourned throughout Bavaria.³⁴ But it may well be imagined that nowhere, not even among his own family, was the prince's death felt more keenly than in the Himmler household. Despite the family's acute sense of status, it was not the loss of their chief patron that mattered most to them in 1916. Professor Himmler had been very fond of his former student and had sincerely lived the conservative ideal of love and devotion to his "Prince and Lord." Even so, the impact of Prince Heinrich's death went yet deeper than the personal loss. To the Himmlers he had been the symbol of the very best in the old tradition and had embodied in his person those vistas of "bright sunlit uplands" which they hoped would come again after the war. His death brought home to them the horror of the war with all its waste and suffering and showed clearly that their way of life would never again be the same. In extending his condolences to Professor Himmler on Prince Heinrich's death, one old friend of the family, Professor Dicknether, wrote, "How much bitter sorrow has been brought by this war! When will it ever end!"³⁵

For young Heinrich Himmler the prince's death had a special significance. Prince Heinrich had not only given his godchild a unique status within the Himmler family; he had also symbolized for him the security and prospects which he would enjoy as a favored member of the established order. His death, coming on the eve of his godchild's attainment of eligibility for war service, eased the transfer of young Himmler's hopes and aspirations from the old order to the new. Even though the traditional values and mores had been firmly stamped upon him, many of his boyish dreams came

1917

Books in this File

The German Empire 1876-1916 - Sturmer

The Life & Death of A.H. - Payne

1917

HIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

sought their social norms outside their own class; they emulated the Army and the Junker aristocracy.

The Imperial Army's influence over German life went beyond social values to include foreign policy. Military leaders simply assumed that "they alone had the right to determine the foreign policy of the Empire."¹¹⁴ The military elite became the effective rulers of Germany in 1917 when Generals Ludendorff and Hindenburg established a virtual military dictatorship. Ludendorff in particular got that thirst for political power he would later try to slake when he marched in 1923 with Hitler in their effort to seize the government of Germany. Now, in 1917, he determined foreign policy—dictating draconian terms of peace with the Soviet Union; he dismissed and replaced chancellors and judges; he determined wages and hours; he chose the emperor's personal entourage. In short, "the Army, hitherto a State within a State, had become the State."¹¹⁵ But the Army's contribution to Hitler went beyond setting a general precedent for authoritarian government. Members of the High Command wanted a particular kind of dictatorship. Their thinking was so distinctly proto-Fascist that it made Hitler's ideology seem familiar to important segments of German society.*

This military dictatorship of the war years marked the effective end of Bismarck's Second Reich and, in important ways, prepared the way for the more vicious militarism of the Third.

Family Life and Education of the Hitler Generation

The Germans have always sought a father, indeed . . . [their] conception of the State is generally patterned after the model of the family.
—Wolfgang Sauer

Family life and public education were of obvious importance in shaping the attitudes of mind of Hitler's generation. These Germans, born and raised at the zenith of the Second Reich, would suffer defeat in the Great War and form a large cadre of Hitler's movement, for it appealed particularly to those whom Konrad Heiden would call "the generation of the uprooted and disinherited."

The family experience of that generation was strikingly similar to Adolf Hitler's. An authoritarian father dominated the family; the mother, like Klara Hitler, was confined to *Küche, Kirche, and Kinder*, often trying ineffectively to shield her children from the demands and punishments of the awe-inspiring "Herr Vater."

* Specifically, leaders of the High Command endorsed racial anti-Semitism, primitive nationalism, and leadership as an end in itself. They demanded a totalitarian state in the name of *Volksgemeinschaft*—a perverted socialism which appealed to the masses but preserved the power of the industrial, military and agrarian elite. (See especially Martin Kitchen, "Militarism and the Development of Fascist Ideology; The Political Ideas of Colonel Max Bauer, 1916–1918," *Central European History*, 8 (September 1975), 216–219)

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was running dispatches he always carefully studied the maps to discover
the safest way to reach his objective. He was brave but never foolhardy,
and those long, careful studies of all the available maps set him apart
from the other dispatch runners, who were more inclined to trust to luck.

Strangely, neither Westenkirchner nor Mend refers to Hitler's sketches
and watercolors. During the first two years of the war Hitler sketched
and painted continually, but he appears to have lost interest in these
pursuits after he was wounded. About forty of his wartime watercolors
have survived. The best is probably the earliest, *The Sunken Road at*
Wytschaete, which he painted with thick, heavy strokes in the autumn
of 1914. He knew this road well, for he had traveled along it often when
it was under heavy enemy fire. On a single day 192 German soldiers
were killed or wounded while marching down this small country road.
Hitler, no longer under the necessity of creating architectural forms,
has suggested the stark horror and menace of the landscape with a min-
imum of means.

In the following year he drew the farmhouse at Fournes where he was
billeted, and the drawing has all the marks of a student's architectural
drawing. Every window pane, every tile has been drawn in; a bicycle
leans properly against the wall; all the odds and ends of the farmyard
are in their proper places. It is an unimaginative drawing, flat and
monotonous, a world away from the fierce, impressionistic sketch of the
sunken road.

He delighted in painting buildings shattered by the war, the roofs
caving in, the walls crumbling, the roads littered with rubble. He was
not showing a predilection for ruins; he was simply painting what he
saw in front of him. A church near Fromelles was sketched and painted
several times, but whether drawing with meticulous care or painting
impressionistically he rarely succeeded in anchoring his designs in
space. As always, except when he was copying photographs, his sense of
perspective was faulty; and for Hitler it was all the more difficult to
maintain a strong sense of perspective when the building itself was
ruined and shapeless. He liked to throw his pictures off balance, or at
least he gives every impression of enjoying that curious tortured effect
that comes when something essential to the composition is missing. He
rode roughshod over perspective. The walls of his ruined buildings
remain standing by an act of will.

The best of his war drawings was a caricature showing eight German
soldiers marching jauntily through the Flanders mud, with a ruined
church and some trees sketched in lazily in the background. The draw-
ing, which is reproduced in this book, is entitled *Auf nach Cannes* (*On*
the Way to Cannes). Hitler depicts himself in the foreground with an
umbrella instead of a rifle over his shoulder, and he is clearly the leader

The life & Death of A. H. -

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of the expedition. The youthful, round-faced Bachmann has opened his umbrella, while the saturnine Schmidt hovers behind him, and the small, sturdy Jakob brings up the rear, the very picture of the plodding warrior. Bachmann and Schmidt were Hitler's close friends, and he therefore gave them an especially comic appearance. The caricature is gay and impudent, full of life and movement, and Hitler's self-portrait—the only self-portrait known to have been drawn by him—admirably conveys the jaunty, irascible, somewhat aloof quality of the man as he was known by his fellow soldiers.

The time for jauntiness came to an end on the night of October 13, 1918. The men in Hitler's company were in trenches dug out of a low hill near Werwick, just south of Ypres. All that day the hill had been suffering a heavy bombardment intended to make it totally uninhabitable, but the Germans somehow succeeded in holding their positions. Then, toward evening, came a drumfire of gas shells which lasted until midnight. Chlorine gas flowed into the trenches, penetrating the primitive gas masks worn by the soldiers. Toward morning Hitler was overcome by the gas, and at seven o'clock he began to stumble slowly to the rear, carrying the last dispatch he would ever deliver to his battalion headquarters. He was nearly blind, his eyes, as he wrote later, felt "like burning coals," and he was at the end of his strength.

Two days later he was lying in a hospital bed at Pasewalk near Stettin, totally blind. He had spent just over four years in the line, and now his war was over.

On November 11 the war known as the "Great War" came to an end with the surrender of the German armed forces. The Kaiser fled to Holland, and the new German Republic came into existence. Almost immediately a new war for the possession of Germany broke out.

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War and Revolution
 an Infantry Regiment in Munich for light duty. A photograph taken at the Beelitz hospital shows him looking surprisingly well, though painfully thin. The forelock is falling across his forehead, and the heavy, drooping mustache he wore throughout the war has been clipped a little so that his features bear a close resemblance to those that would become familiar later. Germans rarely wore a small, square mustache, which was common among the English, especially among English officers. It has been suggested that Hitler came to wear the characteristic English mustache in unconscious imitation of an enemy he learned to respect.

According to Westenkirchner, Hitler was a restless patient in the hospital. He wanted to get back to the front lines as soon as possible. He was also thoroughly disenchanted by the mood of some of the soldiers at the hospital who had maimed themselves to avoid returning to the front. Many cursed the war and asked why it was necessary to go on fighting, when the battle lines had scarcely changed for two long years. Toward the end of his convalescence Hitler was given a pass to visit Berlin, where poverty, hunger, and anxiety were stamped on every face. The Berliners were demoralized, and people were speaking openly of the necessity of bringing the war to an end. Hitler, with his inflexible belief in his nationalist principles, regarded such talk as treacherous. "Hitler could hardly believe his ears," wrote Westenkirchner. "What they said might be true, but it was unworthy and unsoldierly."

It was the same in Munich, where people were tired of rationing and only too eager to resume their prewar ways. Here Hitler's dark suspicions about the Jews revived. He believed that they were busy fomenting rebellion against the Central Government, and setting the Bavarians against the Prussians. In his eyes all criticism of the central government was treason, and there was an unholy alliance between the Jews and the English.

He volunteered to return to the front, where a man could go about his work without paying any attention to defeatists. On March 1, 1917, he was back again with his own regiment. Westenkirchner says the company cook celebrated his return with a special meal of potato pancakes, bread, jam, and tea. Hitler was in good spirits, but not yet accustomed to dealing with the rats that infested the trenches and dugouts. "Long after the rest of us had turned in, Hitler was still fooling around with a flashlight in the dark and spitting the rats on his bayonet," Westenkirchner reports. "Finally someone chucked a boot at his head, and we got a little peace." #

Three days after Hitler's return his regiment moved up the line. The war had not changed. It was still trench warfare, with its intricate mazes of trenches cut into a landscape of water-logged shell holes and endless stretches of mud. It rained heavily during the spring, the mud

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ple were speaking openly of
and Hitler, with his inflexible
such talk as treacherous.
rote Westenkirchner. "What
why and unsoldierly."

ple were tired of rationing and
ways. Here Hitler's dark sus-
believed that they were busy
Government, and setting the
eyes all criticism of the central
an unholy alliance between the

where a man could go about
defeatists. On March 1, 1917,
ment. Westenkirchner says the
a special meal of potato pan-
in good spirits, but not yet accus-
fested the trenches and dugouts.
to Hitler was still fooling around
the rats on his bayonet," West-
chucked a boot at his head, and

ment moved up the line. The
rench warfare, with its intricate
of water-logged shell holes and
heavily during the spring, the mud

giving to him,
that the
that only he -

I have painted out the expression
on one rat's face, and gave
him this idea
The Dispatch Runner 117

turned into lakes, soldiers floundered along the trenches up to their
knees in muddy water. The rain cut into their faces like knives, the
English attacked with gas, and soon it seemed that all of Flanders and
Picardy would become one howling, deafening marsh in which everyone
would drown under a cloud of poisoned gas.

In the summer the List Regiment was back in the neighborhood of
Ypres. The villages were unrecognizable, so flattened that it was impos-
sible to make out the configurations of the streets in the masses of rubble.
The soldiers wore gas masks, sometimes for twenty-four hours at a
trench. English bombers came over, and even worse than the bombers
were the tanks, which advanced along a broad front on July 31, 1917,
through seas of mud. For a few days the regiment was pulled out of the
line to rest and recuperate. Then, the faceless men in gas masks were
sent back to confront the English again. During most of his war service
Hitler was fighting either the English or the Australians.

Once, for a brief period, the List Regiment went into the rest billets
at Dadizeele. Later, in the autumn, it was withdrawn from Flanders and
sent into camp near Mulhouse in Alsace for a badly needed rest cure,
which lasted for two months. It was like a foretaste of paradise, for
Mulhouse was far away from the battle front. Here, for a few weeks, it
was possible to believe that no war was being fought and that they were
living in the best of all possible worlds. Here they received the news
that the Russian front had collapsed and that Lenin had almost single-
handedly brought into existence a new kind of revolutionary state.
Hitler's first reaction to the news was immense hopefulness, now that it
was no longer necessary to fight a two-front war. The Italian defeats also
uplifted his spirits, which sank when he learned of the strike of the
German munitions workers. He regarded this strike as an act of unpar-
alleled treachery brought about by an unholy alliance of the Kaiser, the
Jews, and the Marxists. Gradually the victory that had seemed so close,
almost within reach, disappeared from sight. The List Regiment was sent
up the line again to fight the same interminable war it had fought from
the beginning. In March, 1918, it was pulled out of its position on the
Oise-Aisne sector and thrown against Montdidier, which was being held
by the French.

This time all the orderly procedures of the German Army failed dis-
astrously. The ammunition carts and field kitchens were lost somewhere
along the road, and the soldiers were in danger of dying of starvation
and running out of bullets. They were under heavy bombardment and
could move neither forward nor backward. Westenkirchner tells how he
crawled out of his trench one dark night, accompanied by Hitler, in
search of something to eat and drink. Westenkirchner carried a knife,
Hitler an empty gasoline can. After stumbling among the shell holes,

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→ and solves
* the idea had
come to him while
killing the rats

1917 on 1918

Westenkirchner at last found a dead horse that did not have an overpowering smell and with his knife he carved out a large portion of its quarters, while Hitler filled his can with water from a shell hole. Then they carried the meat and water to the cook.

Westenkirchner depicts a resourceful, abstemious, somewhat fastidious Hitler, who cared deeply for Germany and was obsessed with the thought that the German Government and the high command were both inept. Hans Mend, an orderly in the List Regiment, who published his war memoirs in 1931, saw a somewhat different Hitler, sardonic and crafty and of a coarser texture, given to long silences and sudden rages.

He describes Hitler sitting listlessly in the corner of a dugout with his head in his hands, sunk in thought, unreachable, and then quite suddenly leaping up and running about excitedly, saying that in spite of the big guns victory would be denied to them for the invisible foes of the

German people were a greater danger than the biggest cannon of the enemy. Then, having delivered his harangue, he would return quietly to his place. This is exactly how Hitler had behaved when living in the Männerheim in Vienna. "He always stood apart from us," wrote Mend, "and never troubled himself with our conversations." Mend relates that when the mail arrived men often offered him some of the delicacies they received, but he always declined with thanks. He liked his bread and jam, washed down with flasks of hot tea. Mend, puzzled when he learned that Hitler received no parcels at Christmas, made inquiries. He was told: "Hitler won't get any Christmas presents, because he won't let anyone send them."

According to Mend, Hitler cordially disliked Hugo Gutmann and refused to salute him. One day Mend and Hitler met in the street and began talking. Gutmann strode past, expecting to be saluted, but Hitler paid no attention to him. The adjutant was annoyed and threatened him with punishment. Hitler simply shrugged his shoulders and resumed his conversation with Mend, saying: "I recognize these Jews as officers only in the firing line." The war fed his bitterness against the Jews, for he believed they always got the "cushy jobs."

At various times Hitler announced his ideas on most subjects, and Mend remembered them vividly because they were so very different from anyone else's. He was oddly puritanical, cordially disliked women, had no high opinion of his officers and fellow soldiers, hated Jews and Masons, despised the creature comforts, and was completely self-sufficient. His sardonic humor took strange forms, and he sometimes bowed low with mock courtesy to someone he disliked, or even to Mend, with whom he would sometimes pass the time of day. Once, when Mend rode by on horseback, Hitler bowed and said: "May I wish the immortal knight of Messines a happy New Year." Mend tells us that when Hitler

* Thoughts came to him like explosions - full, complete, a whole change in the atmosphere of his mind, -

was running d the safest way and those long from the other

Strangely, n and watercolo and painted c pursuits after have survived. Wyttschaete, w of 1914. He kr it was under l were killed or Hitler, no lon has suggested i imum of mean:

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ually led to a split in the party.
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um. But by 1916 debate could
off. Two factions formed in
at wing with rather extreme
ts and annexations, an ex-

pansive colonial empire, and substantial repara-
tions—and a center-left wing which held that
Germany would be lucky to get out of the war
unscathed and therefore ought to grasp any op-
portunity for a peace and forget about annexations
and reparations.

In 1917, this latter group, composed of the
Social Democrats, left Liberals, and the Center,
formed a new Reichstag majority. They became
involved in a running public debate about war
aims with the rightists—the right Liberals, the
Conservatives, and the extraparlimentary Right
Opposition, who now joined together to form the
German Fatherland party. The debate, however,
was purely academic. Before the wide-ranging
goals of the rightists could become reality the war
had to be won. On the other hand, a peace based
on the boundaries of 1914, the goal of the new
Reichstag majority, required an adversary ready to
conclude such a peace, but no such willingness
was to be found.

Still, or perhaps for that very reason, the de-
bate about the war aims exacerbated the internal
conflict in Germany. It was a very acrimonious
debate. The one side acted as though postulating
ambitious war objectives was tantamount to vic-
tory, and the other side as though a willingness
to compromise automatically meant peace. Ger-
many was a deeply divided country, although the
full force of that division did not make itself felt
until after the war. In point of fact, the Reichstag

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that firm in its opposition to effort and the dogged determination to the end.

major internal changes took place in August 1916 the Second Supreme Command, which had already in effect in November 1914 that the army was run by purely military methods, the Supreme Command had chosen an accountant: cautious, deliberate, powerful and matériel in the long-run war, limited military action going until the situation would change on favorable terms. This command was replaced in 1916 and replaced by the Third Supreme Command under Paul von Hindenburg, two men with close ties to the rightists who wanted total victory and the potential benefits of such a victory were prepared to do whatever was necessary in this victory. The unlimited nature of the strategies pushed the Supreme Command, and they also supplanting of Russia.

For upheaval occurred in July 1916 the cooperation of the rightist Supreme Command and the leftist Reichstag majority Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg, but, though for entirely different reasons, the Supreme Command because they were not sufficiently militant, and the

1917

Reichstag group because they did not think he was sufficiently peace-minded. Neither of them had a successor waiting in the wings. After the brief tenure of an interim appointee, the first more-or-less parliamentary chancellor—Count Hertling, an official of the Bavarian Center party—took office in December 1917. In concert with the Reichstag majority, Georg von Hertling appointed a member of the Reichstag, Friedrich von Payer, a now-forgotten leader of the Liberal party, as his vice chancellor.

In the meantime the kaiser had become completely passive. He no longer played anything like his role in the past. He vacillated between acquiescence to the Supreme Command and acquiescence to the Reichstag majority. He acted neither like the supreme commander of the armed forces nor as a knowledgeable, energetic political leader.

In 1917 the constitutional situation in Germany became muddled. At first glance nothing in the constitution appeared to have changed, but in practice it no longer worked. In the area of foreign policy the country was ruled largely by the Supreme Command, and in internal affairs by the new Reichstag majority. These two divergent, even hostile power centers cooperated on a number of issues. For example, at the end of 1916 the Supreme Command won Reichstag approval for a general mobilization (similar to the "total war" of World War II), which instituted compulsory labor service for all German males between the ages of

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seventeen and sixty, and potentially for women as well, and the change from industrial production to war production. The Reichstag majority voted for these measures, but at the same time it undermined them by attaching various reformist riders. The so-called Voluntary Service Law passed by the Reichstag provided for labor and management to have an equal voice in wage negotiations, and for union participation in the operation of plants. The Supreme Command reluctantly accepted these revolutionary provisions as the price for passage of its military program.

This, then, was the situation in Germany at the end of 1917: Domestically the kaiser and chancellor ceased to be in control of the country; power shifted to the Supreme Command and the Reichstag majority, respectively. By and large the two worked together, though not harmoniously. As far as the external situation was concerned, the war in the West was bogged down and the U-boat war was lost when America entered the war. On the other hand, Russia to all intents and purposes had dropped out of the picture. That being the situation at the turn of 1917-18, an exhausted, battered Reich once more, briefly, thought that victory might still be in the offing.

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Entente side. The German High
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esolve, promised victory and car-

and ammunition was still done
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ift were used first to direct artil-
positions, then to drop bombs.
gan, and young cavalry officers
often—later the legendary "Red
"circus"—found a new and irre-
ir. But air power was never really
ction until August 1918.

e war, German industry had run
peter. Without the Haber-Bosch
itrogen from the air, the produc-
have ceased some time in 1915,
e Allies were in no better shape,
the Western Front reduced to an
a day in 1915 because of a short-
factories. Walther Rathenau, for-
the Kaiser's strategy, became the
any's war industries.

f war, Germany changed from a
/ into a thinly disguised military
user reduced to protocol functions
rubber-stamping one bill after
if war loans. The loans could only
en Germany finally won the war.
xes were raised, but much of the

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financing of the war came from the United States. So the
Allies, too, were caught in a debt trap. There were many
reasons why the war went on as long as it did: the way it
was financed on both sides played a large part. The Great
War devoured all material resources, ruined civilian life,
gave power to the military as never before, stifled public
discourse, inflated the currency, expanded the public debt
beyond any reasonable chance of repayment, mortgaged
foreign holdings, killed small enterprises and effected an
unprecedented economic dictatorship in the countries
involved.

In Germany, politics fell silent, diplomacy was para-
lyzed and total mobilization produced its own momentum.
Four hundred German university professors, most of them
luminaries in their respective fields, launched a passionate
indictment of the western powers for siding with Russian
barbarism, and having no religion but materialism. Ger-
many was seen as fighting a defensive war, having been
encircled, and was now entitled to safeguard its interests
throughout Europe by proclaiming strategic war aims.
These had not driven the countries into war; rather war
produced the war aims, giving itself a meaning that had
been absent before, and by implication fueling the furore
indefinitely, to the bitter end.

While the German war aims comprised placing eastern-
central Europe under German domination and, in the west,
annexation of the port of Antwerp and the iron ore
deposits of Lorraine and Belgium, the western allies were
no less ambitious in reserving for themselves large pieces of
Germany. The nations making up the Danube monarchy
were seen as potential allies, hence the propaganda that
Austria-Hungary had to be destroyed. Russia, as well as
seeking the final dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian

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nd France, who could

also promise Adriatic islands and the southern provinces of Imperial Austria as a reward. On top of all this, a number of palms were greased and no questions asked. When Italy entered the war, the Austrians had to defend on two fronts, enabled to do so only by massive German help. Brusilov's offensive against the Austrians in June 1916, in which the Russians captured a quarter of a million men, finally persuaded Romania to join the *Entente*.

After three terrible winters, in early 1917 the war hung in the balance. Russia's February revolution brought a new elite to power who, however, made the fatal mistake of continuing the war. The German High Command, when approached by Lenin from his exile in Zurich, not only promised him and his entire entourage a safe passage through Germany; the generals also furnished the enemy's enemy with plenty of gold to carry out his nefarious designs and overthrow the Provisional Government, which had succeeded the Tsarist regime. Little did Germany's cunning soldiers know that they had entered into a pact with the Devil and that they, after the German workers' uprising that the Bolshevik leader was sure to foment, were next on Lenin's list.

Lenin's Bolshevik coup in St. Petersburg finally took Russia out of the war, after the Russian armies had fallen apart and the German troops had gone as far as they could without overstretching their supply lines. Lenin's logic was that, whatever the Germans might gain at the conference table at Brest-Litovsk, they would lose once the revolution cut the ground from under their feet. So on paper Germany was, once the peace treaty was signed, the master of eastern-central Europe, from the German border to Russia, with nothing but a chessboard of weak states to be overseen and directed from Berlin. Most important, the

At arguing in the circles

1917-1918
breakdown of Russia in the east allowed the German High Command to transport over one million soldiers to Flanders to secure victory in the west.

Things would not have looked bad for the central powers, had it not been for the looming American intervention. But the German High Command, like the Wilhelmstrasse, was inclined to underrate its impact. They still believed the Admiralty's bragging that most American troop ships would be sunk before they ever reached European waters.

The High Command was confident of securing final victory through one last overpowering thrust before the Americans were able to deploy in any numbers. Instead of translating victory in the east into a realistic and timely peace offer to the western allies, the German leaders carried on regardless, victims of their own war aims, the war's finances and war propaganda.

Almost as potent as the fresh, well-fed and well-equipped American troops were the combined germs of nationalism and socialism broadcast by the Russian Revolution to the armies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and into German industrial cities. Moreover, President Woodrow Wilson, a political science professor from Princeton University, knew that nothing less than a crusade and a world vision would do if he were to send American soldiers to die in Europe. That was the birth of the "Fourteen Points," also meant to be a democratic challenge to Lenin's communist vision and to limit the Allies' war aims in Europe, while at the same time holding out hope to the Germans that after the war there would be a future. Only to the overstretched empires of the Ottomans and the Habsburgs were the Fourteen Points a death sentence, since their constituent parts would become nation-states, following the principle of self-determination. Without the Germans—or, for that matter,

1919
the *Entente* powers—realizing, Lenin's vision had changed the overall Great War of Europe had turned war of the nations into the war of

Daily life in Germany had been recognition by the trials and tribulations could remember so much cold, but the great influenza epidemic of 1918 had reduced the numbers of thousands weakened the nation. Although prices were frozen, inflation had increased and incomes lagged far behind. Money had lost about two-thirds of its value. The public debt had risen to mena-
the middle classes had signed up that in the case of defeat, were redeemed. There was nothing to pay for the daily rations. Hunger drove the trade for food whatever could be obtained. Conditions were severe. Farmers hoarded and hid from the authorities. Exploitation and social unrest, which from time to time led to strikes and demonstrations, in spite of the fact that structures were crumbling in the countryside and women had been working, the war inadvertently gave
cause of female emancipation. The wrong were crumbling. The state and blood in quantities that no tyrant ever have dared to extract.

In the early days of the war, Burg and the Home Front, had been pronounced by the German people behind their leaders and criticism. Censorship of news

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Hitler and Providence

The French front, 1917 . . .

Corporal Hitler is asleep in a trench. His dream becomes a nightmare: he is being buried under a pile of melting snow and ice. Unable to breathe, he can feel blood on his chest. He is suddenly awake and trembling. . . .

For once it is quiet on the Western front. Even so, anyone who ventures from the trenches runs the risk of death from a sniper. Despite this Hitler feels the nightmare is a warning to him to get clear of the trench, to flee.

Fully awake now, he throws back his blankets, scrambles clear of the shelter, climbs the banks of the trench, and, dragging the fresh night air into his lungs, begins running.

Without warning a shock wave throws him to the ground. An Allied shell, mysteriously just the one, has been fired, breaking the silence of the night.

Face down on the ground Hitler realizes that, apart from being winded, he is uninjured. As he picks himself up, he catches his breath, then staggers back to the trench. The shell has done its gruesome damage. The foxhole has received a direct hit. All his comrades have been killed. Hitler looks up at the black sky. He thanks Providence for bringing him the vision that saved him.

The above is based on various versions of the story, most

of them meant to show that Hitler was one of those people who are guided by a mysterious inner voice.¹

What appears to be the original version by Hitler is, as with so many other stories about him, far more prosaic, although just as odd:

I was eating my dinner in a trench with several comrades. Suddenly a voice seemed to be saying to me "get up and go over there." It was so clear and insistent that I obeyed automatically, as if it had been a military order. I rose at once to my feet and walked twenty meters along the trench carrying my dinner in its tin can with me. Then I sat down to go on eating, my mind being once more at rest. Hardly had I done so when a flash and a deafening report came from the part of the trench I had just left. A stray shell had burst over the group in which I had been sitting, and every member of it was killed.²

The only consistency in the two versions of the story is the talk of the mysterious "inner voice."

Hitler did claim openly that he was being driven by an inner voice. This is often seen as a sure sign of psychic awareness.³ The psychic term for it is *clairauditory*: a voice no one else can hear, that guides and advises its receiver; a voice that comes at any time, often in waking moments but also in dreams or a trance. In general terms, a multitude of messages are delivered, but in particular, the most persistent message involves ordering a certain course of action that must be followed. Joan of Arc was afflicted, or possessed, depending on how you look at it, since "hearing voices" is also a sign of mental illness. In medical terms it is a psychosis and the accompanying symptoms include disorders of thought, delusions, and abnormalities of mood, which are, as we have seen, traits that can be attributed to Hitler even at an early age.

While ruling out some of the more fanciful and grotesque claims, King says the occult was a general source of much of the ideology of Hitler and his followers, both the leaders and rank-

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Chapter IV

A Young Man's War

In the first months of 1917 the pressure that the departure of more and more young people headed for war exerted on Heinrich continued to mount. From Gebhard, who was undergoing training with the Sixteenth Bavarian Infantry Regiment in Passau, the family received a steady stream of letters reflecting the excitement and adventure of a soldier's life. The fact that the family's attention focused on Gebhard, though chiefly due to parental apprehension, did nothing to lessen Heinrich's impatience with his role as the small boy on the sidelines. Then in April, Falk Zipperer dropped out of *Gymnasium* and entered the officer-training program of the Second Bavarian Infantry Regiment whose training camp was in the Oberpfalz. Thus the two young men closest to him were now in military service. The boy pleaded with his parents to be allowed to quit school and join too.¹

In early June Heinrich's father finally yielded to his badgering and agreed to initiate the process of application for his acceptance as an officer candidate. Professor Himmmler knew that, even though the war had gnawed away at the traditional system, the selection of officer candidates still rested on the old foundations of privilege and influence. Although the requirements for an officer candidate had been relaxed to meet the demands of war, the successful middle-class aspirant still needed substantial help from persons of privilege. On June 7 Herr Himmmler wrote Princess Arnulf's chamberlain requesting assistance in preregistering Heinrich as an officer candidate in the First or Second Infantry Regiment. He stressed the fact that without the "favorable assistance" of the princess he "would never succeed" in this endeavor. His letter shows clearly that he was not altogether enthusiastic about his son's military plans. He emphasized that he did not wish him to enter training before his seventeenth birthday (October 7, 1917); if by chance the war had ended by then, he did not wish him to enter the service until he had completed *Gymnasium*.²

Despite this somewhat qualified petition, the princess' response was generous. On June 11 her chamberlain replied that he had written the commander of the First Regiment

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urging Heinrich's preregistration as an officer candidate and was sending Heinrich 1,000 marks in German war bonds to pay the acceptance fee, as a gift "of his late godparent, his Royal Highness Prince Heinrich of Bavaria."³ A few days later he wrote again to make certain that the First Regiment was acceptable to the Himmler family, a rather ironic question as it was a crack regiment and a coveted assignment for officer candidates. Professor Himmler replied that the First Regiment would be fine because "many students from our *Gymnasium* are already in it."⁴ On June 23 the application blank arrived, and the professor filled it out in a manner that balanced his own reservations with Heinrich's eagerness to join. He again stressed that he would rather see the boy finish *Gymnasium* first, but, if that was impossible, he wished him to enter training as an officer candidate after he had reached the age of seventeen. He appended an impressive list of references, including a minister of state, Princess Arnulf's chamberlain, and Generalarzt Patin, who was Frau Himmler's uncle. In answer to the last question, which asked if the applicant "had chosen an officer's career as a *life's work*,"* he acceded to the boy's hopes, and replied, "My son Heinrich has the urgent desire to be an infantry officer for life."⁵

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By all the established rules of influence and patronage Professor Himmler's application should have done the trick. But in fact it did not. Heinrich's preregistration for the First Regiment was turned down because the regiment already had a long back list of similar applicants possessing the same kind of support from on high. What the army needed in 1917 was men in the ranks, not lists of potential officer candidates. The rebuff was hard on the boy, for it came at a time when he had finished his seventh year of *Gymnasium* and was drifting through another summer vacation in Bad Tölz. He had been sick again, and since he had not yet had an army physical this was especially disturbing; it raised the possibility that, even if he found a regiment that would accept his application, he might be rejected on health grounds. Through it all the letters he was receiving from Gebhard and Falk exuded excitement and enthusiasm about life in the army and must have compounded his sense of frustration.⁶

Perhaps because his abilities as a courtier had been brought

*Words in italics are underlined in the original.

D.T. all that lost⁴⁸ middle class
sense of morals where a lie
that serves a most practical purpose is
not truly a lie

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1917-1918

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analogy with 'the National Socialist rampage' is incontestable."¹⁴ Another historian, stressing Ludendorff's idea "that only expansion can bring full security and that without full security Germany would be unable to survive and develop," observes: "But this conception was not gained from a rational analysis of political reality; it was part of a pregiven political outlook, one not rationally grounded, which so absolutized the conflicts of interest between peoples that conquering and surviving became one."¹⁵ This outlook was the typical Wilhelmian one blindly intensified, the ultimate in proud power politics: pure, and hence unrealistic, realpolitik.¹⁶ "Germany should simply strive for what she needs to live" was Ludendorff's rule covering annexations on all sides.¹⁷ Eschewing mere treaties with future German satellites, he prescribed for Germany in Belgium: "Here too only real power! This we must have. All else is illusion."¹⁸ Hitler preferred to ideologize, yet those same power-political terms of reference for the war he later refought came as if naturally to him after he adopted them on 31 May 1921 to deplore the loss of Ludendorff's eastern conquest.¹⁹

It was while he was assuming Ludendorff's succession beginning at their Putsch trial that Hitler elaborated his program for German expansion and fitted his anti-Semitism to it for German consumption. To achieve this congruence he generalized his animus against the Jew into an ethnic imperialism continuous with the German supremacism practiced in Eastern Europe in 1917-1918. This supremacism was thereby more radicalized than his other World War I originals except perhaps military aggression. The subjugation of non-Germans in conquered eastern territories under Ludendorff reappeared under Hitler as their spoliation, degradation, extermination. Germany itself was Germanized besides as, with the Polish conquest, Hitler ordered German Jews deported to a "General Government" in Poland (another Ludendorff original²⁰) pending worse. The martyrdom of the Jews contributed to validating the moral verdict of 1918 the second time around. And it was central to Hitler's system of false correctives for the 1918 defeat that were suited to fool Germans consciously at most. Once Hitler had subordinated his Jew-baiting to his

* It was the C.D. who insisted upon the
gradualism of the Jews.¹¹⁶ Why? Because
they were an anti-dynastic principle
an equalizer who leveled the

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THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

and military and diplomatic insignias employing six-pointed stars as parts of their devices. He even collected several pairs of galoshes—presumably because a Triangle Rubber Company had emblazoned its ominous trademark on the soles of its products. The picture of Nilus apprehensively tracking down old Jews who were making subversive footprints in the snow as they sloshed about hatching nefarious schemes for world domination is—as an English investigator has noted—delightful.¹⁰⁵

The results of Nilus's publication of the forgery, however, were less amusing. The *Protocols* as used by the Okhrana were instrumental in fomenting pogroms which murdered thousands of Jews. A 1905 edition prepared by Nilus was published by the Imperial State Printing Shop at Tsarskoye Selo. When the forgery left Russia in 1918 it was extraordinarily successful in promoting worldwide anti-Semitism. During the 1920s, Nilus's edition was translated into 16 languages. The bishop of Warsaw officially endorsed it; in Great Britain the penny-awfuls took it up, and even the *Times* was tempted to believe in it. On 8 May 1920 the *Times* asked some worried questions:

What are these *Protocols*? Are they authentic? If so, what malevolent assembly concocted these plans, and gloated over their exposition? Are they a forgery? If so, whence comes the uncanny note of prophecy. . . ? Have we been struggling these tragic years to blow up and extirpate the secret organization of German world dominion only to find beneath it another, more dangerous because more secret? . . . The "Elders of Zion" as represented in their *Protocols*, are by no means kinder task masters than William II and his henchmen have been.

A year later, however, in August 1921, the *Times* published the first positive proof that the *Protocols* were in fact a forgery and, in hopes of finally burying the matter, an editorial entitled "The End of the *Protocols*." But the *Times*'s expectations were premature. Throughout the 1920s the virulent message of the *Protocols* continued to spread throughout the world.¹⁰⁶

In America, Henry Ford's publishing company accepted the *Protocols* as genuine and incorporated them in a widely disseminated volume, *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*, some 3 million copies of which were sold or given away as a public service to high school, municipal, and college libraries. Mr. Ford later regretted publicly that he had been duped by the forgery. But the book he sponsored "probably did more than any other work to make the *Protocols* world famous."¹⁰⁷

The actual courier who brought the forgery from Moscow to Munich and Hitler after World War I seems to have been Alfred Rosenberg, the man who later had some importance in formulating Nazi ideas.

1917

The Intellectual World of Adolf

But Walter Laqueur gives him chief ideologist of National and Hitler alone.

In 1917, Rosenberg had never not in politics but in the Reich Minister for the Occupation that the design he submitted was one for a tremendous. Shortly after fleeing Russia Thule Society, and from the directly to Hitler. The *Protocols* politics and as documentary treason. They would serve of Germany. Two years after *Elders of Zion* became required.

Later, Adolf Hitler would cruel than even the author *Protocols* is the Old Jewish Chthonic diabolical "Elders of Zion" the world. Some 40 years after Hitler occupied the city; on from the 15th century, with anonymous tombstones, because could go for their walks and parks and playgrounds were they crowded in among the deaths. From time to time St. Dr. Tobias Jakobovic, and element of the Nazis. Next to gogue. After the Holocaust, meticulous and tender care in men, women, and children of the man who had adopted them.

Other Influences

Other racist writers supplied and embroidered the basic ideas. He must surely have read, for example, the letters of Adolf Harpf, who so much of Hagen, and was a co-worker 1905-1910, Harpf, like his father and demanded that Germany dominate all Europe. What was the Aryan super race (*Führer*) and the Teutonic battle against the Jews.

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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The Intellectual World of Adolf Hitler

But Walter Laqueur gives him far too much credit in calling him "the chief ideologist of National Socialism."¹⁰⁸ That title belongs to Hitler and Hitler alone.

In 1917, Rosenberg had been studying in Moscow, bent on a career not in politics but in architecture. Given his later historic role as Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, it is not inappropriate that the design he submitted in 1917 for a diploma in engineering was one for a tremendous crematorium with adjacent graveyard.¹⁰⁹ Shortly after fleeing Russia and arriving in Munich, he joined the Thule Society, and from there the *Protocols* came via Dietrich Eckart directly to Hitler. The *Protocols* served Hitler both as a primer for his politics and as documentary proof of Jewish conspiracy, perfidy, and treason. They would serve the same purpose for the schoolchildren of Germany. Two years after Hitler came to power, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* became required reading in all German schools.

Later, Adolf Hitler would add an irony to the story more bitter and cruel than even the author could have imagined. The setting for the *Protocols* is the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague, where the author has the diabolical "Elders of Zion" meet at midnight to plot the conquest of the world. Some 40 years after the story was written, in 1939, Adolf Hitler occupied the city; on his orders, the tiny burying ground dating from the 15th century, with its 12 layers of graves and hundreds of anonymous tombstones, became the only place in Prague where old Jews could go for their walks and where Jewish children could play since all parks and playgrounds were denied to them. Here in the Old Cemetery they crowded in among the graves of their ancestors to await their own deaths. From time to time SS guards brought in an old Jewish scholar, Dr. Tobias Jakobovic, and ordered him to blow the shofar for the amusement of the Nazis. Next to the cemetery stands the old Pinkas Synagogue. After the Holocaust, surviving Jews inscribed on its walls with meticulous and tender care in tiny letters the names of 77,290 Jewish men, women, and children of Bohemia and Moravia killed by orders of the man who had adopted the ideas of the bogus *Protocols* as his own.

Other Influences

Other racist writers supplied arguments with which Hitler padded and embroidered the basic ideas he had picked up in Vienna as a youth. He must surely have read, for example, the thin volumes and pamphlets of Adolf Harpf, who sometimes wrote under the name of Adolf Hagen, and was a co-worker with Lanz-Liebenfels. In his pamphlets of 1905-1910, Harpf, like his colleague Lanz, extolled Aryan superiority and demanded that Germany establish a new Reich which would dominate all Europe. What was needed was one powerful Leader of the Aryan super race [*Führer des Übervolkes*] who would guide them in Teutonic battle against the forces of racial degradation. Specifically he

ADOLF HITLER

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The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

the glorious—but guilty—experience of drinking, ever so slowly, a whole glass of milk all by herself.²¹²

Hunger increased after the armistice, as the Allies continued the blockade until Germany accepted the Versailles Treaty. The birth-weights of babies went down alarmingly. Mothers were unable to nurse, and cow's milk—when available—was lacking in fats and vitamins. Schoolchildren of those years showed a marked increase in bed-wetting and "nervous disorders." A hardened British war correspondent reported from Cologne in 1919: "Although I have seen many horrible things in the world, I have seen nothing so pitiful as these rows of babies feverish from want of food, exhausted by privation to the point that their little limbs are like slender wands, their expression hopeless and their faces full of pain."²¹³ An American historian who was a student in Germany in 1921 recalls being asked over and over, "How could you, a civilized human being, withhold food from us after the fighting had stopped?"²¹⁴ Hunger, coupled with anxiety and fear, produced in these children—as it had in the infant Hitler—feelings of hostility, hatred, and aggression. Normally, society requires that children repress such feelings, but the war atmosphere actually encouraged destructive impulses.

Children tend to reflect the attitudes of the society in which they live. The sales of toy bombing planes and machine guns, for example, declined in America each Christmas between 1971 and 1973 while the United States was committing what parents increasingly came to believe were outrages against the people of Vietnam and Cambodia. On the other hand, in Northern Ireland sales of war games and guns increased during the same years. In Germany during World War I, children learned a kind of "primitive idealization": the world was either all good (German) or all bad (the Enemy). The Enemy was to be hated, feared, and killed. Thus, instead of repressing destructive impulses and turning away from horror and hatred, children turned "toward them with primitive excitement."²¹⁵

The Nazi Youth Cohort, during their wartime infancy, must have felt abandoned when their mothers, by the thousands, left their traditional roles in nursery, kitchen, and church to work in armament factories. One of the most remarkable social facts in German history is the statistic that in Prussia by 1917 there were 500 percent more women working in industry than in 1913, and 1,000 percent more serving as railway workers.

As children, members of the Cohort tended to have an ambivalent attitude toward their absent fathers. They were idolized as heroes who would certainly save the Fatherland and return in glory. But there must also have been resentment and hostility toward a father who had left his children alone for so long with their mother. Child psychologists have demonstrated that when fathers are absent for protracted periods, Oedipal desires increase, along with guilt feelings and hostility toward the absent father. Such feelings of guilt, mixed with separation

Party Leader, 1889-1933

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lost by the treachery and

cowardice of the leaders at home, the capitulation of
November 1918 was a failure of political not military
leadership.

At the time of his stay in hospital at Beelitz and
his visit to Munich (October 1916-March 1917) Hit-
ler became indignant at the contrast between the
spirit of the Army at the Front and the poor morale
and lack of discipline at home. There he encountered
shirkers who boasted of dodging military service,
grumbling, profiteering, the black market, and other
familiar accompaniments of wartime civilian life; it
was with relief that he returned to the Front. Hitler
had no use for a government which tolerated political
discussion, covert anti-war propaganda and strikes in
time of war. In *Mein Kampf* his contempt for par-
liamentary deputies and journalists is lavish: 'All
decent men who had anything to say, said it point-
blank in the enemy's face; or, failing this, kept their
mouths shut and did their duty elsewhere. Un-
compromising military measures should have been
adopted to root out the evil. Parties should have been
abolished and the Reichstag brought to its senses at
the point of the bayonet, if necessary. It would have
been still better if the Reichstag had been dissolved
immediately.'

This is no more than the common talk of any one
of the ex-servicemen's (*Frontkämpfer*) associations
which sprang up after the war and comforted their
wounded pride by blaming Socialist agitators, Jews,
profiteers, and democratic politicians for the 'shame-
ful treachery' of the 'Stab in the Back.' But Hitler
adds a characteristic twist which shows once more
the originality of his ideas as soon as he was faced
with a question of political leadership. It was not
enough, he concluded, to use force to suppress the
Socialist and anti-national agitation to which he at-
tributed the sapping of Germany's will to go on
fighting. 'If force be used to combat a spiritual
power, that force remains a defensive measure only,

Books in this file

The German Empire 1870-1918 - Sturmer

The Ailing Empire - Haffner

The life & Death of A.H. - Pagan

1918

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1918

ADOLF HITLER

The Child As Father to the Man

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Klara tried to imbue
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doubts and feelings of guilt—indeed, because of them. As a German psychiatrist has noted, by loving Adolf so thoroughly, Klara could combat resentments she may have unconsciously felt toward a child who "enslaved her, sucked her dry and crippled her with never-ending demands." Through Adolf, she could numb her feelings of shame and guilt for having yielded to her "Uncle's" sexual demands at the very time his wife was living and dying in the same house. Constant expressions of love for her little boy could also assuage the fear of God's wrath; she must have felt had been visited upon her by the early deaths of her first three children. "No wonder that Klara not only over-
fed Adolf, but anxiously hovered over him, desperately negging him as living proof of her being a good, giving, non-destructive mother whom God still loved." 33a *not a more complex character. She hopes but never certain that she is forgiven.*

Throughout his life, Hitler proclaimed his love for his mother. Indeed, the family doctor reported that many of the neighbors believed his love for her "verged on the pathological." While the doctor personally did not believe that the relationship was "abnormal, he did say that, in a long practice, "I have never witnessed a closer attachment between mother and son." 34 All his life Hitler carried his mother's picture in his pocket. In all his bedrooms—in Munich, the Berlin Chancellery, the Obersalzberg—her portrait hung over the head of his bed. 35

Hitler always prided himself on being as "hard as steel" and "cold as ice," a person who showed no emotion in adversity. He confessed, however, to having wept twice in his life: once when he stood at the grave of his mother in December 1907, the other time at the death of his Motherland during the defeat of 1918. 36 On the evening that his mother died, during Christmas week of 1907, a neighbor reported that Adolf sat in the twilight, staring at her dead body. He lingered in the death room a long time, carefully drawing a picture of his beloved mother as she appeared in death, ravaged by cancer. 37

A curious poem he wrote in 1923 testifies to one aspect of his love — and to the limits of his literary talent. After he came to power in 1933 he was able to have it published in an edition of a Nazi paper largely devoted to extolling motherhood.

You measured me away, etc.
BE REMINDED!

- 1 When your mother has grown old
And you have older grown,
When things she once did e'er so lightly,
Are now a burden, heavy borne,
When her eyes so dear and trusting
No more, as once, look forward brightly,
When her weary, falt'ring feet
No longer carry her step lightly—
Then give to her a helping hand.
- 10 Accompany her with gladsome smile—

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*shameless when it
came to indulging himself
in this
manner.*

*Xerox p 142 Copy B of white
At the birth of Adolf, Klara believed
that God was very good to her, and that
from her prayers provided she will have
nothing to do with Cain -*

max told
1918

D

blinded and muted, this—how does his form read?—"... private first class, disabled in enemy gas attack. 'Yellow cross gas' poisoning..." She knows no more about him. Yet she sees the ineffable suffering of this semicorpse whose facial expressions and whose gestures into the distance indicate more and more distinctly from day to day that he knows that something frightful has broken upon Germany! None of the degrading news from Kiel, Munich, and now from red Berlin has penetrated this solitary ward. And yet—the sister reads it from the martyred countenance: "Not my own suffering, the catastrophe that felled me, not that I am never again to behold the sun or starry heavens or—my homeland, but what is happening out there that I hear, feel—see! That is insufferable torment! My Germany!"

*

✠

The nurse holds the twitching, feverish soldier of the betrayed army in her arms. And a higher constraint brings good words to her lips, words of faith in Germany's resurrection. And a miracle comes to pass. He who was consecrated to eternal night, who had suffered through his Golgotha in this hour, spiritual and bodily crucifixion, pitiless death as on the cross, with senses keen, one of the lowliest out of the mighty host of broken heroes—he becomes seeing! The spasms of his features subside. And in an ecstasy peculiar to the dying seer, new light fills his dead eyes, new radiance, new life!

A disarmed warrior was brought, mute and blinded, to the infirmary in the Pomeranian village. An upstanding fighter strides out into the alienized German world. He is armed to the teeth with faith, will, and confidence in victory! Invincible weapons!⁸

In a biography of 1935 Rudolf Olden cited the interrogations of Hitler preliminary to the Putsch trial, which are no longer on record, in recounting that in Pasewalk

He lives
from
the
cross

Hitler certainly seems to have been nervously deranged, disturbed.... He heard "voices," and the voices called upon him to become Germany's deliverer.⁹

At the Putsch trial itself, however, Hitler related only that in the night following the revolution in Berlin

my decision emerged. The great vacillation of my life, whether I should enter politics or remain [sic!] an architect, came to an end. That night I resolved that, if I recovered my eyesight, I would enter politics.¹⁰

This time he had censored the miracle for good. But he had not forgotten it, as can be seen from his shouting at Richard Breiting in 1931:

Do you know I was once blind? When the Reds were devastating Germany in November 1918 I lay blind in the infirmary. I became seeing then. I go my way to the end.¹¹

B. Klara Hitler's Death

The basic document for Klara Hitler's medical treatment (1907) is the record kept by Dr. Eduard Bloch (see illustration, p. 140). Her first

* a major visit by D.T. on orders from O.G. - "He is to be well up. He will certainly find no reason not to

D.T. "I was that nurse on that occasion."
Believe that it is God, God alone, who is visiting him."

1917 119

did not have an over-
large portion of its
in a shell hole. Then

was running dispatches he always carefully studied the maps to discover
the safest way to reach his objective. He was brave but never foolhardy,
and those long, careful studies of all the available maps set him apart
from the other dispatch runners, who were more inclined to trust to luck.

Strangely, neither Westenkirchner nor Mend refers to Hitler's sketches
and watercolors. During the first two years of the war Hitler sketched
and painted continually, but he appears to have lost interest in these
pursuits after he was wounded. About forty of his wartime watercolors
have survived. The best is probably the earliest, *The Sunken Road at*
Wytschaete, which he painted with thick, heavy strokes in the autumn
of 1914. He knew this road well, for he had traveled along it often when
it was under heavy enemy fire. On a single day 192 German soldiers
were killed or wounded while marching down this small country road.
Hitler, no longer under the necessity of creating architectural forms,
has suggested the stark horror and menace of the landscape with a min-
imum of means.

In the following year he drew the farmhouse at Fournes where he was
billeted, and the drawing has all the marks of a student's architectural
drawing. Every window pane, every tile has been drawn in; a bicycle
leans properly against the wall; all the odds and ends of the farmyard
are in their proper places. It is an unimaginative drawing, flat and
monotonous, a world away from the fierce, impressionistic sketch of the
sunken road.

He delighted in painting buildings shattered by the war, the roofs
caving in, the walls crumbling, the roads littered with rubble. He was
not showing a predilection for ruins; he was simply painting what he
saw in front of him. A church near Fromelles was sketched and painted
several times, but whether drawing with meticulous care or painting
impressionistically he rarely succeeded in anchoring his designs in
space. As always, except when he was copying photographs, his sense of
perspective was faulty; and for Hitler it was all the more difficult to
maintain a strong sense of perspective when the building itself was
ruined and shapeless. He liked to throw his pictures off balance, or at
least he gives every impression of enjoying that curious tortured effect
that comes when something essential to the composition is missing. He
rode roughshod over perspective. The walls of his ruined buildings
remain standing by an act of will.

The best of his war drawings was a caricature showing eight German
soldiers marching jauntily through the Flanders mud, with a ruined
church and some trees sketched in lazily in the background. The draw-
ing, which is reproduced in this book, is entitled *Auf nach Cannes* (*On*
the Way to Cannes). Hitler depicts himself in the foreground with an
umbrella instead of a rifle over his shoulder, and he is clearly the leader

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Hugo Gutmann and
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May I wish the immortal
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The Life & Death of A. H. -
Pagan

1918

of the expedition. The youthful, round-faced Bachmann has opened his umbrella, while the saturnine Schmidt hovers behind him, and the small, sturdy Jakob brings up the rear, the very picture of the plodding warrior. Bachmann and Schmidt were Hitler's close friends, and he therefore gave them an especially comic appearance. The caricature is gay and impudent, full of life and movement, and Hitler's self-portrait—the only self-portrait known to have been drawn by him—admirably conveys the jaunty, irascible, somewhat aloof quality of the man as he was known by his fellow soldiers.

The time for jauntiness came to an end on the night of October 13, 1918. The men in Hitler's company were in trenches dug out of a low hill near Werwick, just south of Ypres. All that day the hill had been suffering a heavy bombardment intended to make it totally uninhabitable, but the Germans somehow succeeded in holding their positions. Then, toward evening, came a drumfire of gas shells which lasted until midnight. Chlorine gas flowed into the trenches, penetrating the primitive gas masks worn by the soldiers. Toward morning Hitler was overcome by the gas, and at seven o'clock he began to stumble slowly to the rear, carrying the last dispatch he would ever deliver to his battalion headquarters. He was nearly blind, his eyes, as he wrote later, felt "like burning coals," and he was at the end of his strength.

Two days later he was lying in a hospital bed at Pasewalk near Stettin, totally blind. He had spent just over four years in the line, and now his war was over.

On November 11 the war known as the "Great War" came to an end with the surrender of the German armed forces. The Kaiser fled to Holland, and the new German Republic came into existence. Almost immediately a new war for the possession of Germany broke out.

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but at the same time it un-
taching various reformist ri-
voluntary Service Law passed
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1918

PP 107-136

Xerox all
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NINETEEN EIGHTEEN IS
the turning point in the history of the German
Reich. Up to then the Reich, both structurally and
as perceived by the people, had not changed since
its founding—it was the same monarchic federa-
tion of states under Prussian hegemony with a
semiparliamentary constitution. In 1918 every-
thing changed, and Germany has been in turmoil
ever since. The events of 1918 were contradictory,
compressed, precipitous, and to this day they have

not been completely assimilated by the German people. I shall try to shed some light on the significance of these developments.

As far as the war itself is concerned, the situation in 1918 seemed more promising than at any time since September 1914 and the collapse of the Schlieffen Plan. Nineteen eighteen was ushered in by a major peace agreement—the treaty of Brest-Litovsk between Germany and Bolshevik Russia. That got Russia out of the war in the East and freed the Germans to pursue their objective—to establish their military superiority in the West, even if it turned out to be merely temporary. Moreover, Germany had achieved almost all its objectives in the East.

1918
Hit

In September 1914 Bethmann outlined his war aims in the East: to push Russia back from the German borders and liberate the Russian vassal states. And that is exactly what the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, an extraordinarily harsh German victorious peace, accomplished. Although a large area formerly in the possession of Russia—the Baltic states, Poland, and the Ukraine—won nominal independence, it was occupied by, and more or less dependent on, Germany. Russia had been driven back from the German borders and Germany had won from Russia a huge empire in Eastern Europe over which it could exercise direct or indirect control. Furthermore, and even more importantly, except for the requisite occupation forces in the new

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territories, the German eastern army was now free
for deployment elsewhere.

At this point let me mention something that
did not take on importance until later. In the con-
fusion of the early days of the Russian civil war
against the Bolsheviks, certain circles in the Ger-
man government were eager to use the peace of
Brest-Litovsk to bring all of Russia under German
control. Large contingents of German troops
crossed the borders established by Brest-Litovsk.
In the summer of 1918 German troops occupied a
line running from Narva in the north across the
Dnieper River to Rostov-on-Don. That is to say,
they penetrated almost as deeply as Hitler would
in World War II, brought vast areas of Russia under
German control, and began to toy with the idea
of building a German empire on the ruins of the
Bolshevik revolution. In a manner of speaking,
Hitler's dream of an eastern empire already was
within reach back then, as many Germans—and
Hitler—knew only too well. In 1918 there was a
widespread feeling that Russia could be defeated,
that despite its size and vast population it was a
weak country that could be vanquished and sub-
jugated. A new idea, one not yet formulated in
1914, began to enter into German policy planning,
but it did not become important until sometime
later. In 1918 this notion of a German eastern
empire was still nothing but a phantom vision,
leaving behind only an inkling of inherent

1918

possibilities. None of this was sensed or, more accurately, known in 1918. Still the situation seemed very promising, since it was now possible to shift large numbers of crack German regiments from the East to the West. Ludendorff, the real head of the High Command under Hindenburg, had already decided on this course shortly after the Bolshevik victory in November 1917. For the first time since 1914 the prospects for military superiority in the West and for launching a successful offensive in the spring of 1918 seemed auspicious.

However, a variety of factors that should have been known to informed German circles in early 1918, when hopes for victory resurfaced once again, spoke against such a course. For one, Germany was completely exhausted. Not only the civilian population but the army as well was ill-nourished. And the situation among Germany's allies was even worse. By 1917, when Austria made a feeble effort to get out of the war, conditions there had become almost untenable. Only the hope of a German victory in 1918 persuaded Austria to remain in the alliance. The same was true of the Turks and Bulgarians. They did not want to be left out if there was a chance that the Germans might still pull it off and win the war. But all of them were ready to jump ship if things did not turn out right. If the Germans failed to score a victory in the spring and summer of 1918

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they had to count on the prompt defection of their
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The German western offensive of 1918 was
crucially important for still another reason. When
America entered the war in the spring of 1917 it
was not yet well prepared. Its army had to be set
up and trained before it could be sent to France.
With minor exceptions, American assistance was
not a significant factor in 1917, but now, in 1918,
the machinery was beginning to work. The first
American troops arrived in France that spring,
even though they still played a comparatively
modest active role in the summer and fall of 1918.
However, they were certain to become stronger,
and by 1919 vast American armies were sure to
be combat-ready. If the war in the West was not
won before then it clearly could not be won at all.

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The Germans thus did not have a great deal
of time in which to turn things around, and if they
missed this opportunity they were facing certain
defeat. That was the highly dramatic situation in
the beginning of 1918.

Ludendorff gambled that he would be able to
penetrate the British front lines in the spring of
1918, before the Americans were ready to inter-
vene massively. His plan for the western offensive
of 1918 was not unlike a later, successful strategy:
the Manstein Plan of 1940. All power was to be
concentrated at the junction of the British and
French forces, to break through the British front

1918

at the southern flank, and then push the isolated British troops north of the junction into the sea. Once that was done, France could be attacked head-on.

Everything hinged on the success of the first major offensive, on whether the German army would manage to penetrate all the way to the sea and drive a wedge through the British and French armies. It was a major offensive in an area that had seen much heavy fighting. In an extremely well-planned operation, three German armies were now massed against two British armies. On March 21, 1918, they attacked. From an operational standpoint, this attack was more successful than any of the Allied offensives in the West. The Germans inflicted a major defeat on one of the two British armies under attack, the southern one, regained much territory, and for a few days caused major problems for the Allies. However, the Allies were able to deal with that crisis. Once again we find that technical considerations imposed radical limits on strategy in World War I. Even as successful an offensive as this one could not guarantee a breakthrough, because the defending forces were able to bring in reinforcements and fend off the attack more rapidly than the attacker could bring in replacements.

It is important to keep in mind that World War I, the war in the West at any rate, even in this phase, was an infantry war. No army could advance more quickly than its soldiers could

march. However, to move in a war. That is exactly what the German offensive brought. By the end of the day, bulletins of prisoners, of things began to a halt. By the end of the day, the German had failed strategy reaching its strategy. Germany had for parent or real, in

Still Ludendorff, toward, in April, weaker offensive at British front, and offensive in an effort against the French the Germans at the once again advance the Marne. This was as an uncontrolled directions. It, too, met with the same initial successes it without having actually a fourth offensive at Reims, which, like previous year, was derway. And with the story in 1918 collapse

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march. However, the defender had railroads in the
rear to move in reserves from other theaters of
war. That is exactly what happened here. The Ger-
man offensive began on March 23, and for a few
days bulletins of victorious battles, of countless
prisoners, of territorial gains, poured in; then
things began to slow down and finally ground to
a halt. By the end of March, the German offensive
had failed strategically; it got bogged down before
reaching its strategic goal. It is fair to say that
Germany had forfeited any chance for victory, ap-
parent or real, in the West.

Still Ludendorff did not give up. Shortly af-
terward, in April, he launched a second, somewhat
weaker offensive against the northern sector of the
British front, and after a brief pause, still another
offensive in an entirely different area, this one
against the French front. In the course of this foray
the Germans at the end of May and in early June
once again advanced to that fateful river of 1914,
the Marne. This offensive was nothing so much
as an uncontrolled, desperate hitting out in all
directions. It, too, scored a tactical victory, but it
met with the same fate as the first one. After great
initial successes it was stopped by fresh reserves
without having achieved a real breakthrough. Fi-
nally a fourth offensive was launched in mid-July
at Reims, which, like the Allied offensives of the
previous year, was cut off before it really got un-
derway. And with that, Germany's chances for vic-
tory in 1918 collapsed.

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The reason I emphasize this point so strongly is my belief that it holds the key to the subsequent dramatic course of events of 1918. The German leadership, the German army, and to some extent the German people, insofar as they were informed, knew after mid-July that the war could not be won, that the last chance for victory had vanished. Now the Americans were coming in and making their presence felt. And once the moment of lethal danger had passed, the French and English also pulled themselves together for a great counteroffensive. It was launched on the French front on July 18, immediately following the last failed German offensive, and on August 8 on the British front, which had been reinforced by Canadian and Australian troops. August 8 is a memorable date. Ludendorff called it the "blackest day of the German army."

For the first time the Allies succeeded in something they had never managed before, something the Germans had done in the spring of 1918: win an operational victory in the initial stage of an offensive. Although they too failed to make a strategic breakthrough, it nonetheless was an unexpected and traumatic experience for the Germans. The British, Canadians, and Australians, reinforced by tanks, which for the first time played a significant role in this war, broke through the German positions, forced them into headlong retreat, and, also for the first time, took numerous prisoners.

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In his memoirs, Ludendorff contends that he was told that advancing German units were greeted by shouts of "Scabs" by the retreating frontline troops. Whether or not that actually happened or is pure myth, it obviously made a profound impression on Ludendorff. He writes that the instrument with which he had waged the war, the German army, was no longer reliable: "The war had to be ended."

What had happened to the German army between March and August? In March, exhausted, ill-fed, with dwindling strength, it had once more attacked with spirit and with fleeting success, but in August it obviously was no longer ready to give its all, even defensively. During the long retreats of August and November 1918, it became clear that the morale of the German army was crumbling. Some of the troops fought as hard as ever; the imminent defeat seemed to make them even more fanatical. Heroic defensive battles were fought, but only by a segment of the troops. The morale of the others—and they were in the majority—was shattered. In effect, they had given up. What they saw was not victory but inevitable defeat, and they simply were no longer willing to risk their lives in the final chapter of a lost cause. The military naturally prefers desperate willingness to fight, but in all fairness, those who were no longer ready to give their all were neither cowards nor deserters, but the thoughtful members of the army. The mass armies of World War I were

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thinking armies, unlike the old professional armies, which were machines, drilled in order and obedience. There was a saying that thinking should be left to horses because they had bigger heads. Toward the end of the war the army leadership could no longer count on the blind obedience of the old standing army. This new army was made up of thinking citizens. In order to fight at top efficiency they needed not only military discipline but also what nowadays is called motivation. They had to feel that they were fighting for something worthwhile. I am not talking of ideals but simply of the chance of victory.

Objectively speaking, this possibility no longer existed after July, or perhaps even after April 1918. The Germans had shot the last arrow in their quiver and failed to hit the target. After that they fought to postpone the inevitable. The idea of sacrifice without the prospect of victory is bound to produce psychological and physical exhaustion.

Ludendorff was absolutely right when he said that the collapse of the fighting spirit took place in the army itself, not among the civilians in the hinterland, who, misled by unduly optimistic army bulletins, still clung to a blind belief in the possibility of victory. It was the army that, in the spring and summer of 1918, suffered a setback that does not show up on any war maps because it was a matter of morale. The enthusiastic German army of 1914 was no more. Even if some of the

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But how! If ers had become the critical barrier without their surprise, the attack was successful, army, still fighting zeal, continued the other. By 1 reached the so-called defensive line far where the Allies full force of their were threatening Line, and that in front.

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troops continued to fight with fervor, the morale
of the army on the whole was, if not completely
shattered, badly impaired. Ludendorff was un-
questionably right in August 1918 when he con-
cluded that the war had to be ended.

But how? In the meantime the Western pow-
ers had become convinced that they had crossed
the critical barrier and that they could risk an of-
fensive without waiting for the Americans. To
their surprise, they discovered that their counter-
attack was successful. After August the German
army, still fighting, though not with its customary
zeal, continued to fall back from one position to
the other. By the end of September they had
reached the so-called Hindenburg Line, the last
defensive line far behind the old front, and that is
where the Allies, after a brief pause, unleashed the
full force of their counteroffensive. Now the Allies
were threatening to break through the Hindenburg
Line, and that meant the collapse of the western
front.

In this situation Ludendorff decided to throw
in the towel. On September 28 he and Hindenburg
agreed to ask for a cease-fire based on President
Wilson's Fourteen Points. If Hindenburg and Lu-
dendorff had really read the Fourteen Points they
would have known that they were predicated on
the unconditional defeat of Germany. They called
not only for the return of Alsace-Lorraine to
France, but also for the restoration of Poland, in-
cluding the Prussian-Polish area and Poland's ac-

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cess to the sea—that is, the future Polish Corridor. I doubt that Ludendorff had really studied the Fourteen Points closely. He just tossed them into the ring to make it difficult for the Americans to reject Germany's cease-fire and peace offer.

The next day, Sunday, September 29, something else happened that was bound to have crucial consequences. Ludendorff had asked two senior members of the civilian government, Chancellor Count Hertling and Foreign Minister Paul von Hintze, to meet with him at his headquarters. They arrived separately. Hintze, the younger of the two, traveled overnight and met with Ludendorff that Sunday morning; Hertling traveled by day and did not arrive at headquarters until late in the afternoon. Hintze took advantage of Hertling's absence to present Ludendorff with a new plan. He thought that the cease-fire would stand a better chance of acceptance by Wilson if a parliamentary-democratic government were formed in Germany to persuade the Americans that it was a new, democratic Germany that was suing for peace—and moreover a peace based on Wilson's own peace program. This meant that they would have to ask the Reichstag majority to form a government and to revise the constitution, making the Reich a constitutional monarchy in which the Reichstag would have the power to depose the government by a vote of no confidence. Moreover, it was necessary to create the impression that Germany was seeking peace not because of the threat

of military collapse or reorganization.

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of military collapse but because of this democratic reorganization.

Ludendorff liked Hintze's plan, not least because he probably had his own agenda as well. I am convinced that he understood the psychological-diplomatic considerations underlying Hintze's proposal, but beyond that he also realized that if he went along with Hintze's plan he would be spared the onus of personally raising the white flag. He could put the burden on the shoulders of his domestic foes, the Reichstag majority.

Thus on September 29, in the presence of the kaiser—who had remained passive through all of this—the headquarters meeting decided to form a parliamentary government composed of ministers of the Reichstag majority and to instruct this government to seek an immediate cease-fire. The Supreme Command was not to play any official role in this, for according to Ludendorff the collapse of the western front appeared to be imminent. In return for its help, the new government was to be allowed to revise the constitution and to transform the Reich into a parliamentary government.

On October 2, the leaders of the Reichstag in Berlin learned about this plan from an emissary of Ludendorff. They were bewildered. The news that the war in the West was lost and that the collapse of the military was imminent came as a shock to all of them, including the members of the Reichstag majority. And linked to this shocking news was the request that they take over the

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bankrupt store, announce the bankruptcy, and accept responsibility for something they had had no hand in.

In these dark hours it was the Social Democrats who jumped into the breach. They had been preparing for such an unlikely turn of events since before the war. Their decision was to prove crucial in the coming weeks and months. The Social Democrats, the majority wing at any rate, were ready to assume greater responsibility than any of the other parties. If we are now given responsibility, said their chairman, Friedrich Ebert, we have no choice but to jump in and salvage what can still be salvaged, particularly if we are asked to negotiate the cease-fire and are also granted something we have been advocating for decades: a parliamentary government and the power to dismiss the government by a vote of no confidence, and beyond that the abolition of the Prussian three-tier suffrage. These were the last important demands still open on the Social Democratic agenda. Now these demands were being met. Led by Ebert, the Social Democrats after some debate accepted the offer.

The significance of this move cannot be overestimated. Bismarck's enemies of the state, the outsiders, the still ostracized "unpatriotic band" of William II, were about to become the governing party of the Reich and of the empire (at the time there was still no talk of abdication); they even

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of this move cannot be overestimated. The enemies of the state, the ostracized "unpatriotic band" about to become the governing body of the empire (at the time of abdication); they even

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stood ready to shoulder responsibility for the defeat. It was an epic turn of events.

Prince Max von Baden, a liberal aristocrat and member of the ruling Badense family, formed a government composed of Social Democrats, left Liberals, and Centrists. On October 3 this government, without reference to either the military situation or the role of the Supreme Command, submitted a cease-fire and peace offer to President Wilson. The emperor himself persuaded a reluctant Prince Max to do so.

The military collapse of the western front, which Ludendorff had expected on September 28 and 29, did not occur. The German army, even though in helpless retreat, continued to fight up to the day of the armistice, November 11. In those final days of the war, 250,000 Germans were taken prisoner. A cohesive force continued to fight on Belgian and French soil to the very last day of the war. But on the other hand, now, and only now, the home front began to crumble. The mass of Germans, particularly the starving, dissatisfied workers, the traditional backbone of the leftist parties, suddenly, in the face of all those proclaimed victories, were told that the war was lost, or at least was presumed to be lost. No wonder the people lost all confidence in the leaders who had brought them to this pass. A revolution was brewing in Germany's cities. True, it was only brewing, it had not yet erupted; but the domestic

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political landscape in Germany was changing radically in October 1918.

And something else was happening that October. Wilson did not immediately accept Germany's proffered cease-fire. He sent a note in which, not entirely without reason, he questioned the genuineness of Germany's sudden democratization (the emperor and the princes were after all still in place), and in a series of notes he demanded further changes: true democratization and the removal of the kaiser.

With Wilson's demands on the table, a debate about the future of the monarchy began in Germany. The question was whether, since no turning back was possible, Wilson's demands should be met: whether the kaiser should be forced to abdicate. A new government party was formed, one that advocated sacrificing the emperor as a figurehead, even if not the monarchy itself. Others, particularly circles with links to the army and navy, were opposed to this.

Ludendorff underwent a strange transformation in October. He had staged his coup—for that is what his September 29 meeting amounted to—while in a state of panic over the imminent collapse of the western front. But when that collapse did not occur, and the western front continued to fight, Ludendorff once again changed his mind and decided to hold out and fight to the last. From a purely military perspective it might perhaps have been possible to hold out in the West until the

winter. Even though it was not possible to press on, it was made. And negotiations would perhaps be possible on the western front. It might perhaps be possible to negotiate a ceasefire in the summer. It was expected that the war would be over by the summer. It appeared utterly certain that the war had resulted in a decisive German victory.

However, by the time the war ended, the German resistance had collapsed. The German government had fled to the end of the world. The German army was only held on in the East, in a desperate, defensive, and finally not coming to pass. The German army was disintegrated. It was not possible to stir. The Austrians were the only ones who remained. The first of the German army was the Bulgarian army. The collapse in Italy. Even though it was not possible to hold the western front, the new southern front was not possible and there German

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demands on the table, a debate about the monarchy began in Germany. Was whether, since no turning back, Wilson's demands should be accepted or the kaiser should be forced to abdicate. When a new government party was formed, one seeing the emperor as a figurehead of the monarchy itself. Others, particularly those with links to the army and navy, were more conservative.

Germany underwent a strange transformation. The kaiser had staged his coup—for that October 29 meeting amounted to a revolution—over the imminent collapse of the western front. But when that collapse came, the kaiser again changed his mind and decided to fight to the last. From a position of strength he wrote: From now on, we must expect it might perhaps have to be fought out in the West until the

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winter. Even though the Allied offensives continued to press on, no real breakthrough was being made. And now it was October. By winter, operations would probably have to be halted; on the western front the Antwerp-Maas Line might perhaps be consolidated once more for a new spring and summer offensive. However, given the expected massive American power, the situation appeared utterly hopeless and would most likely have resulted in the occupation of Germany.

However, what happened now made any further resistance in the West illusory. The Central Powers collapsed. Actually they had already come to the end of the rope earlier that year, and had only held on in the hope of one last big German offensive, a final German triumph. When that did not come to pass, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey disintegrated. In Austria the nationalities began to stir. The Austrian army became almost irrelevant. The first front to fall apart was the Austro-Bulgarian Balkan front, followed by Austria's collapse in Italy. Even if the Germans had been able to hold the western front through the winter, a new southern front now threatened to open up, and there Germany stood defenseless.

These were the complex conditions under which German domestic policy now had to be conducted. As I mentioned earlier, by the end of October the old adversarial divisions resurfaced in Germany: on the one side were the proponents of one final desperate stand; on the other, the pro-

1918

ponents of an end to the war whatever the cost. In early November this conflict culminated in a revolution no one could have predicted.

The German revolution was sparked by a decision of the Naval High Command—reached without either the knowledge or concurrence of the government—to launch a major assault on the British fleet. A portion of the German fleet refused to carry out the orders for this engagement, and in the end the plan had to be scuttled. The mutinying sailors were arrested and threatened with court-martial and execution. This brought many who had not joined in the mutiny over to the side of their jailed comrades, and on November 4 the sailors at the Kiel naval base, the home port of the western fleet, revolted. They took over the ships, hoisted the red flag, formed sailors' councils, and took over the city of Kiel.

This revolt, which coincided with the debate over the fate of the emperor, had no clearly articulated political goals. But once the sailors took over the fleet and the city of Kiel, they realized that they had to see things through if they wished to avoid court-martial and execution. They fanned out from Kiel and within a week, beginning on November 4, the revolution spread like wildfire across northern Germany, then westward, and ultimately through most of Germany. In addition, there were spontaneous uprisings in a number of German cities, among them the November 7 revolution in Munich.

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It was a leaderless yet unstoppable process, a spontaneous mass movement. Soldiers' councils formed in the home army, and workers' councils in the plants. These workers' and soldiers' councils played a sort of administrative role in the big cities. The October government was not all that firmly established, and it did not welcome the revolution.

In his memoirs Prince Max von Baden tells of a meeting he had with Ebert on November 7:

I met with Ebert in the early morning in the garden. I told him of my planned trip: "You know what I have in mind. If I manage to persuade the emperor to step down will you then support me in my fight against the social revolution?" Ebert answered promptly and unambiguously: "If the emperor does not abdicate, the social revolution is inevitable. But I do not want it. Yes, I hate it like sin."

That was Ebert's subjective truth. In October he and his party had reached all their domestic goals. Now they wanted to put an end to the war as quickly as possible and, together with the progressive and centrist parties of the Reich, continue to govern as regents, as a kind of constitutional monarchy. Therefore a revolution was the very last thing they wanted at this point. But the revolution was apparently unstoppable. On Saturday, November 9, it spread to Berlin. A general strike

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was called. The workers took to the streets and marched to the Reichstag without making any specific demands other than the end of the war. But Philip Scheidemann, the co-leader of the Social Democrats, thought he had to offer them something more, and stepping out on the balcony to address the crowd he proclaimed the German republic. That was not what Ebert had had in mind, and the two had a public argument in the Reichstag restaurant. Ebert said that whatever the future shape of the German Reich, whether monarchy or republic, the decision was not theirs to make but was up to a constituent assembly.

Ebert for his part was willing to preserve the monarchy. That is why, that same afternoon—an intriguing footnote to German history—he tried to reverse Scheidemann's proclamation. He received Prince Max von Baden, who in the interim had announced the emperor's abdication and in violation of the constitution had handed over the chancellorship to Ebert. Ebert asked Prince Max in his capacity of regent to keep open the possibility of saving the monarchy. But the prince declined. He had had enough. He wanted to return to private life. Ebert was forced to accept the German republic as a fait accompli.

The republic became reality not only because of Scheidemann's proclamation. A great deal else was going on. The emperor had not actually abdicated, although he had fled to Holland the night of November 9. However, almost all the other Ger-

man nobles of Württemberg and other German states, some of whom were none of the emperors' favorites, simply got on and they continued.

Amidst these days this situation, the monarchies, the question of the Strangely explained by the explanation abdicated since of Saxony to to step down of the mess the whole a

The German government. The very comfort of French and French revolutions, alone executed be called the earthquake t

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workers took to the streets and Reichstag without making any other than the end of the war. Ebert, the co-leader of the Social Democrats, thought he had to offer them a stepping out on the balcony and he proclaimed the German Republic. Not what Ebert had had in mind had a public argument in the Reichstag. Ebert said that whatever the German Reich, whether monarchic or republican, the decision was not theirs to make by a constituent assembly. Ebert was willing to preserve the monarchy, that same afternoon—and that was his contribution to German history—he tried to annul Ebert's proclamation. He resigned from Baden, who in the interim had accepted the emperor's abdication and in the Reichstag had handed over the decision to Ebert. Ebert asked Prince Max to remain in Germany to keep open the possibility of a monarchy. But the prince declined. He wanted to return to his home. He was forced to accept the German Republic.

It came reality not only because of the proclamation. A great deal else had happened. Emperor had not actually abdicated. He had fled to Holland the night before, almost all the other Ger-

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man nobles, the kings of Bavaria, Saxony, and Württemberg, and the archdukes and dukes of the other German states, did abdicate in early November, some sooner than others. It was strange, since none of them had been physically threatened. Delegates of the workers' and soldiers' councils had simply gone to them and asked them to abdicate, and they complied without resistance.

Amidst the confusion of those November days this silent disappearance of all German monarchies, those hitherto esteemed, unopposed, unquestioned institutions, went *almost* unnoted. Strangely enough, it has also been practically ignored by German historiography; no convincing explanation has been offered. Some of those who abdicated seemed almost relieved. Thus the king of Saxony told the delegation that came to ask him to step down: "Well, all right, you can take care of the mess yourselves," an apt summing up of the whole affair.

The German monarchs no longer wanted to govern. They wanted to return to their generally very comfortable private lives. Unlike their French and British counterparts in their respective revolutions, not a single one was arrested, let alone executed. The German revolution, if it can be called that, was easygoing. Still, it was like an earthquake that could not be checked.

To get back to the emperor: On October 29 he had gone to the headquarters in Spa. At first he was quite willing to accept the parliamentary

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reforms and to continue to rule as a constitutional monarch. He ignored the plea of a Prussian minister who came to see him at Spa and asked him to abdicate. The revolution took him by surprise, yet he still hoped to put it down with the help of the returning army. But the events of November 9 put an end to that hope.

The failure of the major German offensive affected the morale of the German army. Nor did the offer of a cease-fire and Germany's internal upheavals improve matters. On November 9 the Supreme Command ordered thirty-nine frontline commanders, mostly divisional officers, to headquarters to find out whether the army, in the event of a cease-fire, would be willing to fight for the monarchy, for the emperor, against the revolution. The unanimous response of the assembled officers was a resounding no. The army, they said, was prepared to escort His Majesty back to Germany if he so desired, but the men did not want to continue fighting, either outside or inside the country.

Thereupon Hindenburg and Ludendorff's successor, General Wilhelm Groener, decided to advise the emperor to abdicate, or at least to go into exile. On November 9 the emperor acceded to their advice—again, oddly enough, without resistance. He sought exile in Holland, and with that put an end not only to his personal reign but, as it turned out, to any chance for a future restoration of the monarchy. His formal abdication, which

came only too meaningless.

Two decisions on November 9th: the regency and the republic. The regency was left to the army, though not necessarily to Ebert as the government was left with the task of negotiating.

The cease-fire was agreed. The Allied camp in Europe, Germany, and the Germans had behind them a cease-fire behind the Rhine. President Roosevelt unconditional.

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On November 9th, the German government sent a delegation to the conditions of the peace. The Center party did

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came only later that month, was practically
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Two decisions put an end to the German mon-
archy on November 9: the emperor's flight to Hol-
land and Prince Max von Baden's refusal to accept
the regency and preserve the German monarchy,
though not necessarily a Hohenzollern monarchy.
Ebert as the new chancellor and head of govern-
ment was left to deal with the revolution and the
task of negotiating the cease-fire.

The cease-fire was a controversial issue in the
Allied camp as well. The American commander
in Europe, General Pershing, did not want it. The
Germans had been defeated, he said, so why grant
them a cease-fire that would allow them to dig in
behind the Rhine and continue fighting? Like Pres-
ident Roosevelt in World War II, Pershing wanted
unconditional surrender.

The French and British high commands were
more receptive to the idea of a cease-fire. Their
armies, like those of the Germans, had been bled
white. Unlike the Americans, they were not in-
terested in any major future offensives. It was fi-
nally agreed to accept the German offer of a truce
under conditions that would preclude any re-
sumption of hostilities.

On November 6, the Germans were asked to
send a delegation to Allied headquarters to receive
the conditions for a cease-fire. Mathias Erzberger,
a Center party deputy and a minister in the cabinet

of Max von Baden, headed the delegation. It is worth noting that the man chosen to sign a military truce was not a general but a civilian government official.

The conditions of the cease-fire were extremely harsh. They sealed the defeat of the Reich and ruled out any further resistance. The Allies demanded the prompt evacuation of the still occupied territories and of all German territories on the left bank of the Rhine as well as of three bridgeheads. The Allied armies were to follow in the footsteps of the departing German troops and occupy the territories on the left bank and the three bridgeheads on the right bank. In addition, the German fleet and vast quantities of matériel were to be handed over to the victors. Those were the principal conditions. They made it unmistakably clear to the Germans that they had lost the war, and put the stamp on Germany's defeat, for they ruled out any possibility of future resistance beyond the Rhine.

On November 6, while the revolution was spreading throughout Germany, Erzberger went to Compiègne to meet with Marshal Foch, was handed the conditions for the cease-fire, negotiated about some details, and submitted them to his government, which in turn submitted them to the Supreme Command. The Supreme Command stated that they had no choice but to accept them even if no further concessions were forthcoming, since they were in no position to continue the war.

Erzberger signed November 11.

How did it come that on August 11, 1918, many were told that the cease-fire was the government's premeditated move. Then, on November 11, it became the nation's principal and the prince's prerogative to abdicate.

What did it mean? It was particularly well known thus: Just as those characters of peace took over the towel. Then came an armistice treaty.

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6, while the revolution was at Germany, Erzberger went to meet with Marshal Foch, was plans for the cease-fire, negotiations, and submitted them to which in turn submitted them to and. The Supreme Command no choice but to accept them concessions were forthcoming, position to continue the war.

Erzberger signed. The armistice took effect on November 11.

How did the German people react to this? Until August they had been led to believe that Germany was winning. Only in October, when a cease-fire was first mentioned, did they learn that the government—though not necessarily the Supreme Command—considered the situation hopeless. Then, on November 9, the Social Democrats became the ruling party, there was a revolution, and the princes abdicated; presumably the emperor abdicated as well. At any rate, he fled.

What did all this mean? The mass of not particularly well-informed Germans saw the situation thus: Just as we were about to win the war those characters who always wanted a negotiated peace took over the government and threw in the towel. Then came the revolution and they signed an armistice that made us powerless.

That was the basis for the later "stab-in-the-back" myth, first openly proclaimed by Ludendorff, although Ebert of all people had already paved the way for it. Ebert's main domestic concern was to salvage whatever could still be salvaged: to carry on either with a constitutional monarchy, or with a republic if need be, and to suppress the revolution. To begin with, Ebert concluded a pseudo-armistice with the revolution. On November 10, at a meeting of the Berlin workers' and soldiers' councils, he got himself appointed as head of a six-man Council of People's Delegates,

and for the second time became head of the government. But in fact he made a pact with remnants of the Supreme Command, or rather with its de facto chief, General Groener.

That same evening the two had a critical, by now famous, telephone conversation. Ebert, even though not the legitimate chancellor (although he had dual legitimacy—through appointment by Prince Max von Baden and through his post with the revolutionary Berlin workers' and soldiers' councils) tried to resurrect the October agreement with the Supreme Command. He wanted to use the returning army units to suppress the revolution in the hope of winning the support of the Supreme Command for the new government and the new constitution. Groener agreed, and to underscore his support he staged a counterrevolution in which he used the army to suppress the left revolution led by the Council of People's Delegates (headed, ironically, by Ebert himself).

In the so-called stab-in-the-back trial of 1925, Groener under oath told of his conversation with Ebert:

To begin with the issue was—and that was my thinking and the immediate goal—to take power away from the workers' and soldiers' councils in Berlin. With that in mind an undertaking was planned involving the military entry of ten divisions into Berlin. An officer was dispatched to Berlin to discuss the

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time became head of the government he made a pact with remnants of the old command, or rather with its de facto head, Groener.

Knowing the two had a critical, by no means honest conversation. Ebert, even though a legitimate chancellor (although he was not), came to power through appointment by the Reichstag and through his post with the Berlin workers' and soldiers' councils to resurrect the October agreement with the Command. He wanted to use the army units to suppress the revolution, of winning the support of the Reichstag for the new government and so on. Groener agreed, and to undo what he staged a counterrevolution with the army to suppress the left wing of the Council of People's Delegates, by Ebert himself]. The stab-in-the-back trial of 1925, Ebert told of his conversation with

with the issue was—and that was the immediate goal—to get the army away from the workers' and soldiers in Berlin. With that in mind, the plan was planned involving the withdrawal of ten divisions into Berlin. Attached to Berlin to discuss the

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details also with the Prussian minister of war, who naturally could not be left out. There were some problems. As I recall, the independent members of the government, the so-called people's delegates, but I think also the soldiers' councils—I cannot give the details offhand—demanded that the troops move into Berlin without live ammunition. We of course opposed this, and Mr. Ebert naturally promptly agreed that the troops come to Berlin with live ammunition.

We worked out a plan for the troops moving into Berlin. One of their tasks was to help establish a stable government. This plan had a day-by-day schedule: the disarming of Berlin, the cleaning out of the Spartacists from Berlin, etc. All that was provided for, a day-by-day plan for the individual divisions. That was also discussed with Mr. Ebert by the officer I had sent to Berlin. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Ebert for that and for his unswerving love of country and complete dedication to the cause, and have defended him against all who attacked him. Our plan was drawn up in cooperation with and with the concurrence of Mr. Ebert.

The detailed Ebert-Groener agreement coincided with the army's withdrawal from the occupied areas and return home. Ebert greeted the returning soldiers in Berlin in early December

1918

with words that anticipated the stab-in-the-back legend: "You were not beaten by any enemy. Only when the opponent's superiority of men and matériel became more pressing did we give up the fight. . . . You can return with head held high."

To begin with, the Ebert-Groener agreement failed. On December 16 an All-German Workers' and Soldiers' Council congress was scheduled to be held in Berlin. The plan was for the returning ten divisions to stage a counter coup to prevent this meeting. According to Groener's sworn testimony, the soldiers could no longer be counted on. This was not the old German army of the four war years. Once they got to Berlin, the soldiers dispersed and went home; their units practically dissolved. When the All-German congress met on December 16, the ten divisions had dwindled to a total of eight hundred men. Ever since the summer, a silent revolution in morale had been underway, a very different revolution than the one that later swept the country, though of course they were not entirely unrelated. The army at any rate could no longer be counted on in a domestic political power struggle.

Consequently, the Supreme Command meeting at Kassel decided to remove all obstacles to the demobilization of the army and instead to recruit a volunteer force, the Free Corps, made up of soldiers who had not taken part in the army's internal revolution, who had continued to fight fanatically to the very end, who opposed what was

happening at home and to Ludendorff the events of November, and perhaps, Gustav agreement with

The year 1918 street battles in People's Naval 1 the old army. I called Spartacus Free Corps brutal upsurge.

We have now like to add that December and January. Similar events were many in the first insidious civil war the full protection and later, after Scheidemann-National down the last soldiers' councils in Reichstag majority union with the old army effective November 1918. Or remained unchanged.

Let me mention of the German people

anticipated the stab-in-the-back not beaten by any enemy. Only its superiority of men and material pressing did we give up the return with head held high."

At the Ebert-Groener agreement of April 16 an All-German Workers' Council congress was scheduled to meet. The plan was for the returning army to stage a counter-coup to prevent according to Groener's sworn promises. The soldiers could no longer be counted on. The old German army of the four divisions got to Berlin, the soldiers at home; their units practically all. The All-German congress met on April 16. The divisions had dwindled to a few hundred men. Ever since the sum of the revolution in morale had been unfavourable, the revolution than the one in the country, though of course they were unrelated. The army at any rate was counted on in a domestic struggle.

At the Supreme Command meeting, it was decided to remove all obstacles to the army and instead to reinforce it. The Free Corps, made up of men not taken part in the army's fight, who had continued to fight for the old regime, who opposed what was

happening at home, who were loyal to the emperor and to Ludendorff, and who stood ready to reverse the events of November by force. The Ebert government, and particularly the new minister of defence, Gustav Noske, now entered into an agreement with this volunteer army.

The year 1918 ended with the first pitched street battles in Berlin, in which the revolutionary People's Naval Division defeated the remnants of the old army. The new year began with the so-called Spartacus Week in Berlin, in which the first Free Corps brutally put down a new revolutionary upsurge.

We have now come to the end of 1918. I would like to add that what happened in Berlin in December and January was not limited to that city. Similar events were taking place throughout Germany in the first half of 1919. It was a sort of insidious civil war in which the Free Corps, with the full protection of the Ebert-Noske government and later, after Ebert became president, of the Scheidemann-Noske government, brutally put down the last remnants of the workers' and soldiers' councils in numerous German cities. The Reichstag majority led by the Social Democrats in union with the counterrevolutionary forces of the old army effectively nullified the revolution of November 1918. Only one result of that revolution remained unchanged: the end of the monarchy.

Let me mention yet another point. The mood of the German people mirrored the events of 1918.

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Among those affected by these events was a failed artist, an Austrian who had been a volunteer in the German army. He had been gassed and was hospitalized in Pomerania when news of the end of the war reached him. It was there that he decided to become politically active to undo all those terrible things he thought had been allowed to happen in 1918—the seeming loss of nerve of the homefront, the seeming failure to grasp a victory apparently within reach. The name of that man whom no one knew was Adolf Hitler, and in the next ten years he gradually evolved into a key figure of German political life.

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breakdown of Russia in the east allowed the German High Command to transport over one million soldiers to Flanders to secure victory in the west.

Things would not have looked bad for the central powers, had it not been for the looming American intervention. But the German High Command, like the Wilhelmstrasse, was inclined to underrate its impact. They still believed the Admiralty's bragging that most American troop ships would be sunk before they ever reached European waters. The High Command was confident of securing final victory through one last overpowering thrust before the Americans were able to deploy in any numbers. Instead of translating victory in the east into a realistic and timely peace offer to the western allies, the German leaders carried on regardless, victims of their own war aims, the war's finances and war propaganda.

Almost as potent as the fresh, well-fed and well-equipped American troops were the combined germs of nationalism and socialism broadcast by the Russian Revolution to the armies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and into German industrial cities. Moreover, President Woodrow Wilson, a political science professor from Princeton University, knew that nothing less than a crusade and a world vision would do if he were to send American soldiers to die in Europe. That was the birth of the "Fourteen Points," also meant to be a democratic challenge to Lenin's communist vision and to limit the Allies' war aims in Europe, while at the same time holding out hope to the Germans that after the war there would be a future. Only to the overstretched empires of the Ottomans and the Habsburgs were the Fourteen Points a death sentence, since their constituent parts would become nation-states, following the principle of self-determination. Without the Germans—or, for that matter,

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the *Entente* powers—realizing, *Leis* son's vision had changed the overa Great War of Europe had turned war of the nations into the war of i

Daily life in Germany had be recognition by the trials and tribi could remember so much cold, hu great influenza epidemic of 1918 reds of thousands weakened thr tion Although prices were froz inflated and incomes lagged far bel increases. Money had lost about tw the public debt had risen to mena the middle classes had signed up char in the case of defeat, wer redeemed. There was nothing to p the daily rations. Hunger drove t trade for food whatever could be t rations were severe. Farmers hoarde hide from the authorities. Exploita social unrest, which from time to t and demonstrations, in spite of structures were crumbling in the countryside and women had bee work, the war inadvertently givin cause of female emancipation. The wrong were crumbling. The state and blood in quantities that no ty ever have dared to extract.

In the early days of the war, *Burg* Home Front, had been pronounced German people behind their leader and criticism. Censorship of news :

The German Empire 1918-1918

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the *Entente* powers—realizing, Lenin's battle cry and Wil-
son's vision had changed the overall nature of the war. The
Great War of Europe had turned into world war, and the
war of the nations into the war of ideologies.

Daily life in Germany had been transformed beyond
recognition by the trials and tribulations of war. No one
could remember so much cold, hunger and misery, and the
great influenza epidemic of 1918 was to take away hun-
dreds of thousands weakened through years of depriv-
ation. Although prices were frozen, the currency was
inflated and incomes lagged far behind in spite of nominal
increases. Money had lost about two-thirds of its value and
the public debt had risen to menacing proportions, while
the middle classes had signed up for government bonds
that in the case of defeat, were unlikely ever to be
redeemed. There was nothing to purchase anyway beyond
the daily rations. Hunger drove the urban population to
trade for food whatever could be traded—although sanc-
tions were severe. Farmers hoarded whatever they could
hide from the authorities. Exploitation and misery fueled
social unrest, which from time to time flared up in strikes
and demonstrations, in spite of the official ban. Class
structures were crumbling in the cities much as in the
countryside and women had been drafted to do men's
work, the war inadvertently giving a cruel push to the
cause of female emancipation. The standards of right and
wrong were crumbling. The state was claiming treasure
and blood in quantities that no tyrant of the past would
ever have dared to extract.

In the early days of the war, *Burgfrieden*, harmony on the
Home Front, had been pronounced in an effort to unite the
German people behind their leaders and silence all doubt
and criticism. Censorship of news and the self-censorship

1916-1917

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It was the Western Front, however, not the Home Front, that collapsed first. Ludendorff's spring 1918 offensive drove the Allies back 40 miles and reached the Marne for the first time since 1914, but there were insufficient reserves of troops, supplies and means of transportation to consolidate and exploit the gains. Even with the advent, in early summer 1918, of many German divisions from the east at the Western Front, the overall correlation of forces was moving inexorably against the central powers. The massive offensives of the summer and autumn of 1918 threw more troops into the battle than ever before and at one stage they got within 40 miles of Paris. But the soldiers were worn out, hungry, badly equipped and shaken in their morale, and there was a sharp increase in the numbers of them surrendering.

The Germans had no weapons to fight the tanks that were suddenly making their appearance and breaking through lines thought to be impregnable. By 1918 the Allies had 800 of them—the Germans, twenty. The Americans appeared in large numbers and made their weapons felt. By the end of September, most German divisions, though still deep in enemy territory, were in a poor state. Bad news from the Austrian fronts added to the doom and gloom. It was time to begin the endgame while there was still a chance of a negotiated peace instead of one dictated by the victors to the vanquished. The long-term chances of equilibrium and stability throughout Europe hinged more on the ability of the German armies to hold the front line than on the enlightened statescraft of the *Entente* powers.

A government composed of the center-left in the Reichstag was formed, but even now it was under a Chancellor from a princely house, Max von Baden, who had no parliamentary experience and was in bad health. On paper,

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within weeks, Germany was transformed into a parliamentary monarchy on the Westminster model, with a strong dose of traditional federalism also incorporated. But all of this was too little, too late. The western allies simply failed to recognize that the German political scenery had changed decisively. Precious days and weeks were lost in October before the government in Berlin followed the orders of the High Command situated in Spa on the Belgian border, to sue for an armistice in order to save a negotiating position instead of facing wholesale breakdown.

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The armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. But even before, mutiny had broken out in the German battle fleet, preventing it from sailing for the last bloody engagement that the Admiralty had planned, in order to go down with colors flying and guns blazing. The magic of military discipline was broken as armed sailors set up workers' and soldiers' councils, tore the insignia from their officers' uniforms and set out, mostly by train, to spread the word that the war was over and that revolution was the answer to all the suffering of the past. Within days there were the red flags of communism all over German cities, revolutionary councils formed and radical slogans displayed, all inspired by the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

Was this a revolution? Yes and no: it was, as it turned out, above all the outcry of a nation that had suffered too much, that had lost its confidence in its leaders, that was physically exhausted and sunk in despair. It was not an attempt, carefully prepared, to create a new Germany, a new society or a new millennium. It was not even an attempt to take bloody revenge for all the futile suffering of the last four years, but rather the breakdown of a worn-out nation, its gods fallen, its ideals shattered, its self-respect broken. The war had destroyed not only the future, but also the past. The chiefs of the General Staff had told the Kaiser that only a hero's death in battle would offer a chance to save the Hohenzollern dynasty. True or not, William II preferred a comfortable train ride to neutral Holland where the government had offered him exile. Arriving at the Dutch border, his first request was for a good cup of

1918

English tea. The disaster that he had helped to bring about he left behind without wasting a second glance. The memoirs he set out to write were of utter banality. The German drama had long bypassed him.

The General Staff tried to organize the orderly retreat of millions of German soldiers from Russia, Ukraine, northern Italy, France and Belgium. The government in Berlin had all but lost control. Reich-Chancellor Prince Max von Baden was happy to formally transfer power—or what was left of it—into the hands of Friedrich Ebert, leader of the social democrats in the Reichstag, a trade unionist and a man of order. When the Prince told him that the fate of the Reich now rested in his hands, Ebert replied that he had lost two sons for Germany. But it was by no means clear who would emerge in control, out of the chaos arising from the absence of duly constituted authority. A race ensued between communists and social democrats to proclaim the German Republic: Karl Liebknecht inaugurated the socialist republic from the balcony of the Hohenzollerns' town palace, while social democrat Philipp Scheidemann replied in the Reichstag by stating that parliamentary democracy was dawning. Liebknecht was a communist firebrand, Scheidemann a middle-of-the-road working class leader. These symbolic acts merely outlined the ideological rifts that were now to embroil the entire country in civil war, except in the west where Allied troops made their appearance, welcomed by the middle classes, who tended to prefer enemy order to German disorder.

Ebert immediately established the Council of People's Deputies. While its name sounded revolutionary enough, the six members were moderate socialists and social democrats. The country thus had a transitional source of authority until elections were held and the resulting

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national assembly could create a new one. The General Staff in Kassel, now led by quartermaster-general Wilhelm Groener, retained its bureaucratic authority; the Berlin-based Social Democrats needed effective military support that was about to be initiated by the Kaiser's army, the latter soon transformed itself into a new party, and relied for its successes on the Kaiser's army and their weapons, on the radical old Social Democratic union establishment, support from the Kaiser's army, and a general state of exhaustion throughout the country.

Four factors helped the transition to a new republic and the avoidance of civil war. First, the trade union leaders were united with the Social Democrats in rejecting all attempts at a return to the Kaiser's army. Second, the employers and the trade unions, their wartime alliance, established a new order—Central Working Committee—where they did all in their power to transform the old order into a movement for high wages and working conditions. The eight-hour day was established, workers' councils were created, a minimum wage was introduced, although meaningless by the eroding effects of inflation. Third, the generals forged a *quid pro quo* with the Social Democrats in Berlin, securing their support in offering, in turn, security to the political situation that no expropriations of big companies would take place, while the immediate demands of the collar workers would be met. Finally, the western allies refused to negotiate with anyone other than the Ebert-Groener axis. In Kassel: the victors needed an authority

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national assembly could create a new constitutional order. The General Staff in Kassel, now led by Hindenburg's new quartermaster-general Wilhelm Groener, needed democratic authority; the Berlin-based Council of People's Deputies needed effective military power for the civil war that was about to be initiated by the Spartakus group. The latter soon transformed itself into Germany's Communist Party, and relied for its successes on revolutionary soldiers and their weapons, on the radical opposition to the trade union establishment, support from Soviet Russia and the general state of exhaustion throughout the country.

Four factors helped the transition from empire to republic and the avoidance of communism. First of all, the trade union leaders were united with Ebert and his military allies in rejecting all attempts at Bolshevik revolution. Second, the employers and the trade unions, building on their wartime alliance, established the Zentralarbeitsgemeinschaft—Central Working Committee—and together they did all in their power to transform the revolutionary upheaval into a movement for higher wages and better working conditions. The eight-hour working day was established, workers' councils were confirmed and a minimum wage was introduced, although it was soon made meaningless by the eroding effects of inflation. Third, the generals forged a *quid pro quo* with Ebert and the People's Deputies in Berlin, securing their own authority while offering, in turn, security to the politicians. All this meant that no expropriations of big companies or landed estates would take place, while the immediate demands of blue-collar workers would be met. Finally, it helped that the western allies refused to negotiate with any authority other than the Ebert-Groener axis between Berlin and Kassel: the victors needed an authority in Germany to sign

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to Berlin instead, to stay with the parents of one of his comrades.¹⁴⁷ His postcards to friends in the regiment spoke of how much he enjoyed his eighteen-day leave, and how thrilled he was by Berlin and its museums.¹⁴⁸ In mid-October, he returned to his regiment, which had just moved from Alsace to Champagne. Bitter fighting in April 1918 brought huge losses, and during the last two weeks of July the regiment was involved in the second battle of the Marne.¹⁴⁹ It was the last major German offensive of the war. By early August, when it collapsed in the face of a tenacious Allied counter-offensive, German losses in the previous four months of savage combat had amounted to around 800,000 men. The failure of the offensive marked the point where, with reserves depleted and morale plummeting, Germany's military leadership was compelled to recognize that the war was lost.

On 4 August 1918, Hitler received the Iron Cross, First Class – a rare achievement for a corporal – from the regimental commander, Major von Tubeuf. By a stroke of irony, he had a Jewish officer, Leutnant Hugo Gutmann, to thank for the nomination.¹⁵⁰ The story was later to be found in all school books that the Führer had received the EK I for single-handedly capturing fifteen French soldiers.¹⁵¹ The truth, as usual, was somewhat more prosaic. From the available evidence, including the recommendation of the List Regiment's Deputy Commander Freiherr von Godin on 31 July 1918, the award was made – as it was also to a fellow dispatch runner – for bravery shown in delivering an important dispatch, following a breakdown in telephone communications, from command headquarters to the front through heavy fire. Gutmann, from what he subsequently said, had promised both dispatch runners the EK I if they succeeded in delivering the message. But since the action was, though certainly courageous, not strikingly exceptional, it was only after several weeks of his belabouring the divisional commander that permission for the award was granted.¹⁵²

By mid-August 1918, the List Regiment had moved to Cambrai to help combat a British offensive near Bapaume, and a month later was back in action once more in the vicinity of Wyzschaete and Messines, where Hitler had received his EK II almost four years earlier. This time Hitler was away from the battlefields. In late August he had been sent for a week to Nuremberg for telephone communications training, and on 10 September he began his second period of eighteen days' leave, again in Berlin.¹⁵³ Immediately on his return, at the end of September, his unit was put under pressure from British assaults near Comines. Gas was now in extensive use in offensives, and protection against it was minimal and primitive. The List Regiment, like others, suffered badly. On the night of 13-14 October, Hitler himself fell

victim to mustard gas on the high front near Ypres.¹⁵⁴ He and several during a gas attack, were partially to safety only by clinging on to a was slightly less badly afflicted.¹⁵⁵ was transported on 21 October 19 near Stettin, in Pomerania.

The war was over for him. And, Command was already manoeuvring it accepted was lost and a peace which was in Pasewalk, recovering from it to learn the shattering news of defeat, the greatest villainy of the century'.¹⁵⁷

In reality, of course, there had been: was a pure invention of the Right, a element of their propaganda armour not a cause, of military failure. Germany was close to the end of its tether – the capitulation. In fact, triumphalist High Command in late October 1918 and in the previous four months had time during the war.¹⁵⁸ In addition, ill German soldiers had fallen victim to and July, and around 750,000 were little wonder that the medical service drastically, and that desertions and (estimated at close on a million men rose dramatically.¹⁵⁹ At home, the men embittered, angry, and increasingly fabricated by Bolshevik sympathizers grew out of the profound disillusionment in even as early as 1915 and from 1916 became a torrent of disaffection. The war in total patriotic unity ended by the experience.

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1918

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victim to mustard gas on the heights south of Wervick, part of the southern
front near Ypres.¹⁵⁴ He and several comrades, retreating from their dug-out
during a gas attack, were partially blinded by the gas and found their way
to safety only by clinging on to each other and following a comrade who
was slightly less badly afflicted.¹⁵⁵ After initial treatment in Flanders, Hitler
was transported on 21 October 1918 to the military hospital in Pasewalk,
near Stettin, in Pomerania.

The war was over for him. And, little though he knew it, the Army High
Command was already manoeuvring to extricate itself from blame for a war
it accepted was lost and a peace which would soon have to be negotiated.¹⁵⁶ It
was in Pasewalk, recovering from his temporary blindness, that Hitler was
to learn the shattering news of defeat and revolution – what he called 'the
greatest villainy of the century'.¹⁵⁷

IV

In reality, of course, there had been no treachery, no stab-in-the-back. This
was a pure invention of the Right, a legend the Nazis would use as a central
element of their propaganda armoury. Unrest at home was a consequence,
not a cause, of military failure. Germany had been militarily defeated and
was close to the end of its tether – though nothing had prepared people for
capitulation. In fact, triumphalist propaganda was still coming from the
High Command in late October 1918. The army was by then exhausted,
and in the previous four months had suffered heavier losses than at any
time during the war.¹⁵⁸ In addition, illness took its toll. Around 1.75 million
German soldiers had fallen victim to an influenza epidemic between March
and July, and around 750,000 were wounded in the same period. It was
little wonder that the medical service could not cope, that discipline sagged
drastically, and that desertions and 'shirking' – deliberately ducking duty
(estimated at close on a million men in the last months of the war) –
rose dramatically.¹⁵⁹ At home, the mood was one of mounting protest –
embittered, angry, and increasingly rebellious. The revolution was not
fabricated by Bolshevik sympathizers and unpatriotic troublemakers, but
grew out of the profound disillusionment and rising unrest, which had set
in even as early as 1915 and from 1916 onwards had flowed into what finally
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Over 13 million Germans, just below a fifth of the population, served in the army during the war, over 10.5 million of them in the field. Around 2 million were killed; almost 5 million were wounded. A third of those killed had wives; almost all had families and friends.¹⁶⁰ Such losses could not be experienced without leaving the most searing mark on mentalities. But experiences of the war, and the impact of such experiences, were in reality far from uniform. Certainly, death, injury, and on the 'home front' hunger, were omnipresent. Certainly, too, for those at the fighting front, the fatalism of existence in the trenches, the dangers and suffering, the anxieties and fears, the immensity of the losses – human and material – in the man-made wasteland of industrialized warfare, the interdependence for survival of the wholly male trench 'community', were inescapable impressions.

But the experience that left Hitler as an arch-glorifier of war converted the expressionist playwright and writer Ernst Toller into a pacifist and left-wing revolutionary. Where, for Hitler, the defeat was betrayal, for Toller the betrayal was the war itself. 'The war itself had turned me into an opponent of war,' he wrote; 'I felt that the land I loved had been betrayed and sold. It was for us to overthrow these betrayers.'¹⁶¹ Experience of the war divided far more than it united: the front line against the 'shirkers' in the rear; men against officers; the front against the 'home front'; above all, annexationists, imperialists, ardent believers in the war effort against those who derested it, disparaged it, and condemned it. The 'national community' which intellectuals saw forged in the trenches was largely a myth. Even the trench camaraderie, the 'community of fate' of a 'front generation', was in some measure a later literary mythologization.¹⁶² When the soldiers returned to the turmoil of a homeland in the throes of a revolution, it was not to form a unified 'front generation' pitting the 'classless community' of the trenches against a divided society changed out of all recognition, a militaristic, disillusioned mass ready-made to enter the Freikorps, and from there the SA. Certainly, Hitler was later able to play upon such sentiments. But twice as many men entered the anti-war Reich Association of War Disabled, War Veterans, and War Dependents as joined the Freikorps.¹⁶³ The soldiers took back with them divided experiences of the front that were to fuel the enormous divisions and tensions of post-war German society.

Aside from worrying about loved ones at the front, those at home had to cope as best they could with massively worsening material conditions, leading often to extreme hardship. Women, drafted into industry, driving trams, running farms, increasingly found a main occupation in queuing for food. Most Germans, certainly those living in towns and cities, knew what

hunger was during the war. The massive malnutrition: three-quarters soared, quality deteriorated, and distributed, scarcities became acute of 1916-17. By 1917, rations had day – less than half of what ought and of the average calorie intake confined to food. Most seriously, warm. Almost everyone, other than war.¹⁶⁵ In all walks of life, apart from miserable, demoralized, and become a state which had taken them into daily lives, inflicted countless petty incapable of attaining victory. For overt manifestation of a mood that more menacing for the authorities. Such resentments were inevitable. Towns food; the rural population castigated like locusts on the countryside and Germans south of the Main, Bavaria the war and all its ills to the Prussians be living off the fat of the land while effort. Old middle-class resentment interlude of the civil truce, were drawn by strikes, demonstrations, and explicit anti-Kaiser – feelings. If anything, the lower-middle class – craftsmen and parts of Germany at least, were more workers in the most openly revolutionary. Amid the social division, there were War profiteering – a theme on which in the Munich beerhalls in 1920 – ran in fur-lined coats and top hats, fat and in limousines, appeared the very epitome of exploitation at a time that most of closely related was the bitter resentment. Petty officialdom, with its unremitting attention into every sphere of everyday life, did not confine itself to the intense

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over a fifth of the population, served in a million of them in the field. Around were wounded. A third of those killed and friends.¹⁶⁰ Such losses could not be without searing mark on mentalities. But out of such experiences, were in reality injury, and on the 'home front' hunger, those at the fighting front, the fatalism and suffering, the anxieties and man and material – in the man-made interdependence for survival of the inescapable impressions.

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hunger was during the war. Though there was not starvation, there was massive malnutrition: three-quarters of a million died of it. As food-prices soared, quality deteriorated, and supplies both diminished and were badly distributed, scarcities became acute – most notoriously in the 'turnip winter' of 1916–17. By 1917, rations had fallen to a level of under 1,000 calories a day – less than half of what ought to be a minimum for a working person, and of the average calorie intake before the war.¹⁶⁴ Shortages were not confined to food. Most seriously, lack of coal meant people could not keep warm. Almost everyone, other than the very rich, was worse off during the war.¹⁶⁵ In all walks of life, apart from those of the privileged, people were miserable, demoralized, and becoming by the day more intensely angry at a state which had taken them into war, interfered more and more in their daily lives, inflicted countless petty regulations on them, and had proved incapable of attaining victory. Food riots and strikes were only the most overt manifestation of a mood that, in the second half of the war, was ever more menacing for the authorities. Sharpened social tensions and heightened resentments were inevitable. Townspeople blamed farmers for holding back food; the rural population castigated those from the cities who descended like locusts on the countryside and ravaged it for scarce food supplies. Germans south of the Main, Bavarians naturally in the front line, attributed the war and all its ills to the Prussians, who in turn thought Bavarians to be living off the fat of the land while others starved, doing little for the war effort. Old middle-class resentments about unpatriotic workers, after the interlude of the civil truce, were drastically revived in the later war years by strikes, demonstrations, and expressions of anti-war – and increasingly anti-Kaiser – feelings. If anything, the mood was worst of all among the lower-middle class – craftsmen and white-collar workers – who, in some parts of Germany at least, were more heavily represented than blue-collar workers in the most openly revolutionary party, the USPD.¹⁶⁶

Amid the social division, there were certain common targets of aggression. War profiteering – a theme on which Hitler was able to play so effectively in the Munich beerhalls in 1920 – rankled deeply. The 'big-shots', dressed in fur-lined coats and top hats, fat cigars in their mouths, ferried around in limousines, appeared the very epitome of privilege, corruption, and exploitation at a time that most of humanity was suffering grievously. Closely related was the bitter resentment at those running the black market. Petty officialdom, with its unremitting and intensified bureaucratic intervention into every sphere of everyday life, was a further target. But the fury did not confine itself to the interference and incompetence of petty

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bureaucrats. These were merely the face of a state whose authority was crumbling visibly, a state in terminal disarray and disintegration.

Not least, in the search for scapegoats, Jews increasingly became the focus of intensified hatred and aggression from the middle of the war onwards. The sentiments had all been heard before. What was new was the extent to which radical antisemitism was now being propagated, and the degree to which it was evidently falling on fertile ground. Like every other sector of society, Jews had been carried away by 'the spirit of 1914' – at last, they thought, at one with their fellow Germans. By 1916 such presumed unity had been destroyed for ever. A new wave of vicious, increasingly radical *völkisch* antisemitism was blatantly fostered by the annexationist lobby, and found more ready support than at any time before the war. Jews were now attacked as racially inferior immigrants flooding Germany, as war profiteers thriving on the nation's suffering, and as shirkers avoiding service at the front. That the numbers of *Ostjuden* entering Germany were insignificant, that four or five times more non-Jews than Jews were directors of armaments companies, and that the proportions of Jews and non-Jews serving at the front scarcely differed could not, of course, prevent the spread of such a slander.¹⁶⁷ Groundless allegations were kept alive by a statistical inquiry, carried out in late 1916, into the number of Jews at the front and in the rear, followed by an investigation by the Reichstag into the numbers of Jews employed in the offices and agencies of the war economy.¹⁶⁸ Though the results were not published, the allegations underlying the military survey were not repudiated, and Jews were thereafter not made officers (at least in the Prussian army).¹⁶⁹ The backlash, articulated by Claß's Pan-Germans and by the newly created, massive Fatherland Party, of the pro-war lobby to the anti-annexationist peace resolution accepted in the Reichstag on 19 July 1917 linked the Jews to defeatism. There was a proliferation of antisemitic publications, and Claß could report to the Pan-German leadership in October 1917 that antisemitism had 'already reached enormous proportions' and that 'the struggle for survival was now beginning for the Jews'.¹⁷⁰ Events in Russia in 1917 further stirred the pot of simmering hatred, adding the vital ingredient – to become thereafter the keystone of antisemitic agitation – of the Jews portrayed as running secret international organizations directed at fomenting world revolution.¹⁷¹ As it was realized that the war was lost, antisemitic hysteria, whipped up by the Pan-Germanists, reached fever-pitch. Claß used the notorious words of Heinrich von Kleist, aimed at the French in 1813, when a 'Jewish Committee' with the purpose of 'exploiting the situation to sound the clarion call against Judaism and to use the Jews as

lightning rods for all injustices' was 1918: 'Kill them; the world court is

The atmosphere of disintegration political and ideological radicalizat but make the deepest impression o so rapturously, had supported Ger the outset condemned all defeatis repelled by many attitudes he encoun seen, it was during the three peric months, that he spent in Germany ei in the last two war years that he ex running of the war which was new been shocked at the atmosphere in 1916.¹⁷⁴ As the war dragged on, he be and incandescent at news of the mu without annexations which had spr from Berlin to other major industria on munitions supplies).¹⁷⁵ Brandmay that if he had been war minister the against a wall within twenty-four ho Friedrich Ebert responsible.¹⁷⁶ It is, of simply paraphrasing Hitler's own a there seems no obvious reason to di: was already associating the unrest leadership who, in his view, were 'ripe ation and disintegration intensified at the soldiers became more politicized. of disintegration' in August and Sep engaged in political arguments as t effect.¹⁷⁹ Brandmayer's remark that f ments within Germany and involve plausible.¹⁸⁰

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1918: 'Kill them; the world court is not asking you for your reasons!'¹⁷²

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The atmosphere of disintegration and collapsing morale, the climate of political and ideological radicalization, in the last two war years could not but make the deepest impression on a Hitler who had welcomed the war so rapturously, had supported German aims so fanatically, and had from the outset condemned all defeatist suggestions so vehemently. He was repelled by many attitudes he encountered at the front.¹⁷³ But, as we have seen, it was during the three periods, amounting in total to over three months, that he spent in Germany either on leave or recovering from injury in the last two war years that he experienced a level of disaffection at the running of the war which was new and deeply appalling to him. He had been shocked at the atmosphere in Berlin and, even more so, Munich in 1916.¹⁷⁴ As the war dragged on, he became incensed by the talk of revolution, and incandescent at news of the munitions strike in favour of early peace without annexations which had spread briefly at the end of January 1918 from Berlin to other major industrial cities (though with little actual effect on munitions supplies).¹⁷⁵ Brandmayer recalled Hitler's enraged comments that if he had been war minister the strike leaders would have been stood against a wall within twenty-four hours. According to Brandmayer, he held Friedrich Ebert responsible.¹⁷⁶ It is, of course, possible that Brandmayer was simply paraphrasing Hitler's own account in *Mein Kampf*.¹⁷⁷ However, there seems no obvious reason to disbelieve Hitler when he wrote that he was already associating the unrest at home with the Social Democratic leadership who, in his view, were 'ripe for hanging'.¹⁷⁸ As signs of demoralization and disintegration intensified at the front, as well as within Germany, the soldiers became more politicized. Hitler commented on the 'symptoms of disintegration' in August and September 1918 and that the troops now engaged in political arguments as the 'poison from the homeland' took effect.¹⁷⁹ Brandmayer's remark that Hitler took a keen interest in developments within Germany and involved himself in such discussions sounds plausible.¹⁸⁰

The last two years of the war, between his convalescence in Beelitz in October 1916 and his hospitalization in Pasewalk in October 1918, can probably be seen as a vital staging-post in Hitler's ideological development.

1916

1918

The prejudices and phobias carried over from the Vienna years were now plainly evident in his embittered rage about the collapse of the war effort – a cause to which, for the first time in his life, he had totally bound himself, the summation of all that he had believed in. But they had not yet been fully rationalized into the component parts of a political ideology. That would only emerge fully during Hitler's own 'political training' in the Reichswehr in the course of 1919.

What part the hospitalization in Pasewalk played in the shaping of Hitler's ideology, what significance it had for the shaping of the future party leader and dictator, has been much disputed and, in truth, is not easy to evaluate. In Hitler's own account it has a pivotal place. Recovering from his temporary blindness, but unable to read newspapers, so he wrote, Hitler heard rumours of pending revolution but did not fully comprehend them. The arrival of some mutineering sailors was the first tangible sign of serious disturbance, but Hitler and fellow-patients from Bavaria presumed the unrest would be crushed within a few days. However, it became clear – 'the most terrible certainty of my life' – that a general revolution had taken place.¹⁸¹ On 10 November, a pastor addressed the patients in sorrowful terms about the end of the monarchy and informed them that Germany was now a republic, that the war was lost and that Germans had to place themselves at the mercy of the victors, whose magnanimity could be expected.¹⁸² At this, Hitler wrote:

I could stand it no longer. It became impossible for me to sit still one minute more. Again everything went black before my eyes; I tottered and groped my way back to the dormitory, threw myself on my bunk, and dug my burning head into my blanket and pillow.

Since the day when I had stood at my mother's grave, I had not wept . . . But now I could not help it . . .

And so it had all been in vain . . . Did all this happen only so that a gang of wretched criminals could lay hands on the fatherland? . . .

The more I tried to achieve clarity on the monstrous event in this hour, the more the shame of indignation and disgrace burned my brow. What was all the pain in my eyes compared to this misery?

There followed terrible days and even worse nights – I knew that all was lost . . . In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed.

In the days that followed, my own fate became known to me.

I could not help but laugh at the thought of my own future which only a short time before had given me such bitter concern . . .

He drew, according to his own making pacts with Jews; there came the decision that changed his life:

Hitler referred to his Pasewalk the early 1920s. There were even appear in *Mein Kampf*. He told in Pasewalk he received a type of the German people and make Germany purported quasi-religious experience own person which Hitler encountered myth that was already embryonic in the two years leading up to it. Hitler played down the vision stated only that hearing in Pasewalk to enter politics.¹⁸⁵ A year and offered another gloss on his real thought over all his experiences: for a severe injury and came to the German people's worst enemy a certainty for him that wherever nation, a Jew is the culprit behind

Some have been tempted to see the Pasewalk experience an hallucination ideological obsessions, his 'miss a German people themselves to nation.'¹⁸⁷ Still recovering from the traumatic shock of hearing of death – was subliminally associated in of his mother at the hands of the sudden dominance of a power present before and for the evening gassing them, since he saw the Apart from seemingly reducing to the mass murder of the Jews trauma of a single person in it and lacks persuasion. The balance process of ideological development

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1918

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He drew, according to his own account, the conclusion that: 'There is no
 making pacts with Jews; there can only be the hard: either-or.' And he made
 the decision that changed his life: 'I, for my part, decided to go into politics.'¹⁸³

Hitler referred to his Pasewalk experience on a number of occasions in
 the early 1920s. There were even embellishments to the story which was to
 appear in *Mein Kampf*. He told a variety of associates that as he lay blinded
 in Pasewalk he received a type of vision, message, or inspiration to liberate
 the German people and make Germany great again.¹⁸⁴ This highly unlikely,
 purported quasi-religious experience was part of the mystification of his
 own person which Hitler encouraged as a key component of the Führer
 myth that was already embryonically present among many of his followers
 in the two years leading up to the putsch attempt. At his subsequent trial,
 Hitler played down the vision story, which would have invited ridicule, and
 stated only that hearing in Pasewalk of the revolution had made him resolve
 to enter politics.¹⁸⁵ A year and a half earlier, in December 1922, he had
 offered another gloss on his reactions in Pasewalk: 'By his own account, he
 thought over all his experiences at the front and in the rear while hospitalized
 for a severe injury and came to the conclusion that Marxism and Jewry are
 the German people's worst enemies. From personal experience it has become
 a certainty for him that wherever misfortune or harm befalls the German
 nation, a Jew is the culprit behind it.'¹⁸⁶

Some have been tempted to read into Hitler's colourful accounts of his
 Pasewalk experience an hallucination, which holds the key to his manic
 ideological obsessions, his 'mission' to save Germany, and his rapport with
 a German people themselves traumatized by defeat and national humili-
 ation.¹⁸⁷ Still recovering from being blinded by mustard gas poisoning, the
 traumatic shock of hearing of defeat and revolution – it has been suggested
 – was subliminally associated in Hitler's mind with the idioform 'poisoning'
 of his mother at the hands of the Jewish Dr Bloch in 1907, accounting for
 the sudden dominance of a pathological antisemitism that had not been
 present before and for the ever-present drive to poison the Jews through
 gassing them, since he saw them as responsible for his mother's death.¹⁸⁸
 Apart from seemingly reducing the complex developments that were to lead
 to the mass murder of the Jews during the Second World War to the alleged
 trauma of a single person in 1918, the interpretation remains speculative
 and lacks persuasion. The balance of probabilities suggests a less dramatic
 process of ideological development and political awareness.

Whatever Hitler's state of shock and anxiety over his temporary and
 partial blinding (from which he was beginning to recover), it is unlikely

scinatory, blinding took place in
not damage the eye itself, and
ever conjunctivitis and swelling
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of the revolution, may well have

Hitler was more than just deeply
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— aimed at expunging the defeat
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estion we have put forward that
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acy. Even so, it was still only the
l fusion of his antisemitism and
o authentic evidence that Hitler,
a word about Bolshevism. Nor
peeches in Munich, before 1920.
nal hate-figures, its incorporation
s 'world-view', came only during
of 1919. And later still came the
emerging into a dominant theme
n 1924.¹⁹¹ Pasewalk was a crucial
of his prejudices. But even more

important, in all probability, was the time he spent in the Reichswehr in 1919.

The last implausible point of Hitler's Pasewalk story is that he resolved there and then to enter politics.¹⁹² In none of his speeches before the Putsch in November 1923 did Hitler say a word about deciding in autumn 1918 to enter politics.¹⁹³ In fact, Hitler was in no position in Pasewalk to 'decide' to enter politics — or anything else. The end of the war meant that, like most other soldiers, he faced demobilization.¹⁹⁴ The army had been his home for four years. But now once more his future was uncertain.

When he left Pasewalk on 19 November 1918, eight days after the Armistice, to return, via Berlin, to Munich, he had savings totalling only 15 Marks 30 Pfennige in his Munich account.¹⁹⁵ No career awaited him. Nor did he make any effort to enter politics. Indeed, it is not easy to see how he could have done so. Neither family nor 'connections' were available to gain him some minor patronage in a political party. A 'decision' to enter politics, should Hitler have made one in Pasewalk, would have been empty of meaning. Only staying in the army offered him the hope of avoiding the evil day when he would once more have to face up to the fact that, four turbulent years on, he was no nearer his chosen career as an architect than he had been in 1914, and was without any prospects whatsoever. The future looked bleak. A return to the lonely existence of the pre-war small-time painter had no appeal. But little else beckoned. The army gave him his chance. He was able to stave off demobilization longer than almost all his former comrades, and to keep on the payroll, until 31 March 1920.¹⁹⁶

It was in the army in 1919 that his ideology finally took shape. Above all, the army, in the extraordinary circumstances of 1919, turned Hitler into a propagandist — the most talented demagogue of his day. Not a deliberate choice, but making the most of the conditions in which he found himself provided Hitler with his entry into politics. Opportunism — and a good slice of luck — were more instrumental than strength of will.

1909, 1918, 1934, 1938

gling quackery."¹³⁰ Consciously Hitler bore Bloch no grudges, quite the contrary, from the hand-painted card he sent Bloch from Vienna with "the most cordial New Year's wishes"—presumably for 1909—"from your ever grateful Adolf Hitler"¹³¹ to the request, after the Anschluss of 1938, for Bloch to be photographed in his consulting room in Linz¹³² and a decree granting Bloch "all possible alleviations, including monetary."¹³³ Even unconsciously he exonerated Bloch again and again from his own unconscious charges against him. Thus he answered for a political bloodbath of 1934 by telling Germany: "I . . . gave the order to burn out the abscesses of our inner well-poisoning and of the foreign poisoning down to the raw flesh."¹³⁴ Decoded, this cleared Bloch in respect of the breast cancer ("inner well-poisoning") and the iodoform treatment ("I . . . gave the order") while also blaming him for them through a dissymmetrical phrase covering both at once ("of the foreign poisoning").¹³⁵ Abusing "the Jew" was for Hitler a means of abusing Bloch while knowing better. This supercharged conceptual device, "the Jew," shaped up and developed latently with Hitler over the decade before it surfaced in October 1918. For in those years he was motivated against a run of evils and evildoers that were disconnected except in having been linked to Jewry in the Austrian and German anti-Semitism of the time. In the men's hostel in Vienna in early 1913 his two cues for fury were "ever and again . . . the Reds and the Jesuits";¹³⁶ in a letter of 5 February 1915 to an acquaintance in Munich he looked ahead to a victorious Germany rid of "foreignism" and "internal internationalism";¹³⁷ in his last days at the front he would scream like crazy against "pacifists and shirkers."¹³⁸ Again, he conspicuously avoided naming Jews when, in his first years in his regiment, he "would rail against the Dual Monarchy, in which every Czech, every Hungarian, every Pole, Croat, and Bosnian, counted for more than a German."¹³⁹ The anti-Semitic subliterature that proliferated in Hitler's Vienna must have prompted his choice of "the Jew" as a fall guy for Bloch, what with its big themes of parasitism, poison, and concealed malevolence.¹⁴⁰ This was the truth to his untruth that he left Vienna "as an

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his recollection in an anticipation of the coming of death
 19
 ++ it was there along w. ~~the~~ opposite sentiments.

1918, 1919

D

stall a debacle when German strength was exhausted in the face of practically unlimited Allied resources being mobilized. To the German people this final outcome was unacceptable after four years of overstraining, starving, and bloodletting in supposed self-defense combined with expectations of gain, unbelievable after four years of victories in the east and victory bulletins from the west.⁵ Discouragement did mount earlier as the all-out spring and summer offensives of 1918, launched by the Reich's warrior chief Erich Ludendorff, ended in so-called strategic retreats.⁶ But the worst expectation was that occupied Flanders, and the very worst that Alsace-Lorraine as well, would have to be surrendered in a negotiated settlement that would leave the Reich's eastern gains untouched. Because the Reich had been born of military victories, military victories were felt to be its birthright.⁷ As Ludendorff's frantic disclosure of 29 September 1918—that the army was on its last legs and the front could crack momentarily—filtered down, the Reich did not rally;⁸ it panicked as if it were all at once laid open to savage depredation. An archaic terror sounds through the insistent, shrill silliness with which for years afterwards Germans right, left, and center called the lost war a struggle for national survival and charged the victors with intent to enslave and annihilate. The shock effect of the defeat was truly pervasive: no Reich German escaped it (not even Ludendorff himself)—least of all on the extreme left, where the fear had been rather that German soldiery might subdue all Europe.⁹ That effect was largely drained in the first instance by domestic turmoil and turbulence. Sailors and soldiers, workers and even peasants, set up "councils" styled after the Russian soviets, which had snatched revolutionary victory from military defeat.¹⁰ At the other extreme, Freikorps formed that refused to be done with the lost war.¹¹ The republic arose at Wilson's bidding—unresisted,¹² and in the put-on mood of a reconciliation of peoples.¹³ Its institutions were then fashioned in the perfected image of those on the victors' side. The theory was that the onus of defeat was on the Empire, so that with the Empire disavowed, Germany was out from under.¹⁴ When the victors shattered this theory, the republic was thrown on the defensive, and defended

1918,
1919

1918

D

army ... struck by a sneak attack" from behind in November 1918.²³ "The German front would have held fast," he affirmed, "had not the front of pimps and deserters stabbed Germany from the rear."²⁴ Or again: "Not from the fighting front but from the rear" they "plunged the dagger and brought the front down."²⁵ And he pronounced Wilson "a conscious, systematic deceiver" and "thorough scoundrel who with his fine promises tricked our people in the foulest way."²⁶ "We Germans," he claimed, "... believed Wilson's promises of a conciliatory peace and were so bitterly deceived."²⁷ He also combined the stab and Wilson legends with his own in varying proportions. Once he maintained that the poisoners had promoted Wilson's Fourteen Points, whereupon "the 'glorious' revolution broke out, and on 12 November 1918 the enemy, exploiting Germany's inner distress, posed fundamentally different demands."²⁸ And another time: "How could a people that waged such heroic battles lose its national spirit all at once? Through moral contamination by the Jews. Their systematic undermining of the front and the rear made it possible for the nation to cast aside its tried and proven leaders and throw itself into the arms of a trickster like Wilson."²⁹ But his own legend predominated, and with good cause, for it alone was cogent as legends go. It entailed a simple, practical measure—to rid Germany of Jews—with treaty revision to follow from the strength of a Germany thus purified. And he never said "revision" but that he meant revocation. Even in raising a demand for "revision of the peace treaty," he declared: "The Treaty of Versailles must go."³⁰ More pointed was his call for: "Not revision, but smashing, of the Treaty of Versailles."³¹ But to revoke the treaty was to revoke the defeat, with the implication—undrawn, but unavoidable—of putting all of eastern Europe back under Germany's control or at Germany's mercy as in 1917–1918. This undrawn, unavoidable conclusion would be reached by force of arms: "The German yoke must be broken by German iron," he stipulated.³²

1918

Fully as primitive as Hitler's proposed proceeding against the Jews was his logic of a resultant racial regeneration retrieving the victory lost in 1918. Even in a Germany with its constitutive

1918

→ France, believes an
opposition paper.

→ Frankfurt Zeitung
Hitler reads it, learns
is convinced

values destroyed by defeat, revolution, inflation, and the war guilt clause, such a message was too crude and fantastic by common standards to resonate beyond the beer halls and stadia where Hitler delivered it. It enabled him to gain a fanaticized following of some tens of thousands in the Munich area, with its concentration of ideological cranks and its memories of Jews leading a half year of tragifarcical revolutionism in Bavaria following the defeat.³³ "What were Eisner, Levien, Toller, and consorts?" asked Hitler. "Purely Jews!"³⁴ For what little difference it made, Max Levien was purely German Lutheran.³⁵ That rhetorical line led Hitler not to Berlin—where, at his Putsch in Munich's Bürgerbräu beer hall, he announced he was headed—but only to the Odeonsplatz across the Isar River and to jail in nearby Landsberg. His Putsch fiasco was like a last mad fling in Germany's postwar political free-for-all. Therafter quiescence set in overnight, and Hitler, who had been widely dismissed before then as a fringe agitator or political psychopath,³⁶ was discounted by all, himself included until further notice.

Hitler's first formula for delivering Germany from defeat—to poison the international poisoner—pointed beyond mere revisionism as did that intended deliverance itself. His second formula, worked out between his post-Putsch imprisonment of 1923–1924 and his unpublished book of 1928, left revisionism behind.³⁷ It was a program, complete with an excuse, for Germany to seize the world power that had eluded her under the Empire and, to top it off, world rule. The excuse was that peoples do each seek world rule anyhow in an ongoing contest among them for feeding ground, and that this fundamental law of life is its own justification even with its provisions for victors to enslave or annihilate the vanquished on pain of decadence. The program was meant to correct Germany's hapless play for world power of 1914–1918 by replaying it in installments.³⁸ Germany would first subjugate the European continent and transform it into an autarkic, blockade-proof arsenal.³⁹ British acquiescence, which was indispensable, and perhaps even British cooperation could be gained in return for a temporary renunciation of German naval,

1918

Hitler's focus in articulating his second, expansionist message was "the conquest of new living space in the east and its ruthless Germanization,"⁵⁹ it being considered only natural for a great people hemmed in to expand along the path of least resistance. Premise and conclusion here were distinct from those of his Jewish politics if also compatible with them.⁶⁰ Despite this logical distinctness, his second political course connected directly back to his Pasewalk mission just like his first, for it too was aimed at reversing the 1918 defeat. And it was plainly as hopeless as the first. Killing Jews would not win the lost war: this Hitler himself now acknowledged by implication in denouncing the pursuit of world power simultaneously by land and sea as Imperial Germany's fatal error. But neither could Britain be expected to let Germany conquer the Continent in return for Germany's forswearing, or rather deferring, a threat to British naval supremacy if Germany could not pose that threat until after that conquest. Worse, that conquest could be undertaken only after a forced revision of the victors' peace on Germany's terms that itself already required British compliance.⁶¹ As it was, Hitler went astoundingly far in his programmatic direction, yet did not even reach phase one proper before England declared war. This killed his chances of correcting World War I, and not just by the terms of his unrealistic program. He was not equipped to defeat England any more than he was minded to. Even weakening England would, he knew, only benefit Soviet imperialism in Asia, just as his efforts to force England out of the fight would only increase American involvement with England and his own dependence on the Soviets for supplies.⁶² Nor could he beat Russia militarily while engaged even defensively against England.⁶³ And time was working against him on both sides.⁶⁴ He moved his armies into Poland nonetheless, then Scandinavia, the Low Countries, France, the Balkans, and Russia. "Let no one doubt my determination to carry out preconceived plans one way or another," he had once warned the world.⁶⁵ But his game was up before it ever began.⁶⁶ That was the preconceived plan beneath all his farflung planning. In Golo Mann's formulation: "Seriously speaking, there was no attempt that failed to the regret of the attempter; there was only an insane enterprise that was bound to

Palace until the fire of 1931. It was later transferred to the Lenbach House. It is also known that Hitler was a habitué of art galleries, that he was in Munich during this period, and that he was an avid admirer of Stuck. He was also a person who took coincidence of dates as more than coincidental, seeing in them some secret meaning.

Is it not possible that Hitler, sometime in the 1920s, saw the picture and was immensely excited by it; that he pictured himself, very literally, as the Wild Huntsman, and adopted von Stuck's figure as his own self-image? It seems likely that he adjusted his personal appearance—forelock, mustache, and the red cape he affected at Nuremberg party rallies—to conform to this image of the hard-riding apotheosis of brutality, power, and destruction.

Literary Imagination

I should like to write. . . . Wars pass by. The only things that exist are the works of human genius.

—Adolf Hitler

As a youth, Hitler toyed with the idea of becoming a dramatist. Night after night in his walk-up room in the Stumpergasse of Vienna he stayed up long after midnight working over plays and operas under a smoking kerosene lamp. His grandiose projects required elaborate settings ranging from Hell to Heaven, with forests, mountains, and lakes in between. He was furious when his roommate suggested that he might begin his career with more modest productions. He never seems to have finished any of his projects, but we do have a prospectus for one of his plays:

Holy Mountain in the background, before it the mighty sacrificial block surrounded by huge oaks; two powerful warriors hold the black bull which is to be sacrificed, firmly by the horns, and press the beast's mighty head against the hollow in the sacrificial block. Behind them, erect in light-colored robes, stands the priest. He holds the sword with which he will slaughter the bull. All around solemn, bearded men leaning on their shields, their lances ready, are watching the ceremony intently.

When his roommate asked what it was all supposed to mean, Adolf replied tersely that it was a play set in the Bavarian Mountains at the time of the coming of Christianity. The men who lived in the mountains did not accept the new faith and had bound themselves by a sacred oath to kill the Christian missionaries. The central conflict of the drama was between Bavarian Mountain men and Christianity.³⁹ Given Hitler's relationship with his father, it seems likely that there may have been quite another "central conflict" in this drama (see below, Chapter 3, p. 134ff).

"Die Sirene" (The Siren)



1918

1918

of us lucky enough to see our homeland again to find it cleaner and more cleansed of foreignism, and through the sacrifices and sufferings so many hundreds of thousands of us now endure every day, through the stream of blood that flows here day by day against an international world of enemies, not just for Germany's outside enemies to be smashed, but for our internal internationalism to crumble too."¹⁵⁰ He had begun assimilating the outer foe to an inner infection (inverting his unconscious procedure of blaming Klara's cancer on Bloch) even as once again "he forgot himself entirely and lived only in self-sacrificial concern for his mother."¹⁵¹

It was at the climax of that "life-and-death struggle" that Hitler suffered his mother's martyrdom in his own flesh (to adapt his remark about the gas fired his way: "its effects were not yet known to us as far as experiencing them in our own flesh was concerned"¹⁵²). His Jew-hate thereupon erupted amid that medley of symptoms, reminiscent of iodoformism, which Forster diagnosed as psychopathic.¹⁵³ Perhaps it breached consciousness on the train to Pasewalk when, as he later put it under oath, "one could hear nothing except about trade and barter."¹⁵⁴ Once it did surface he saw Germany's fatal enfeeblement as due to the Jewish cancer, the Jewish poison, the Jewish profiteer. At the news of the revolution, which sealed Germany's fate, he staggered and reeled, blinded, his "head burning," as if hit by mustard gas again.¹⁵⁵ He also shed tears of self-pity that he had held back since his gas poisoning—or so he himself put it, adding that they were his first since those shed on his mother's grave.¹⁵⁶ His hysterical relapse may have been prompted by the diagnosis of hysteria that governed his treatment.¹⁵⁷ In any event his hallucination fast restored him.¹⁵⁸ To his unconscious mind the summons to revive and avenge Germany came as a summons to revive and avenge his dying mother. More, it came as a summons from her: this is graphic in the authorized version, with the words from on high mediated by a motherly nurse "who holds the twitching, feverish soldier . . . in her arms."¹⁵⁹ Coming from his dying mother, that summons could not itself blame the Jew. Even so, it was uncannily well suited to enable him to take

See
note
p153

(p. 21 →) note p. 153

7

h Poison"

1. Hitler once substituted tubercu-
lited pp. 16-17 and nn. 116, 117,
ing around the edges of Germany's
28 II 26). And in Viereck 237 he
le need violent correctives, strong
is: "We must cut out every cancer
is in VB 31 I 23 (29 I 23): "Nation-
against infectious germs and anti-
a pestilence that has befallen the
struggle for was "the cure of the
the convalescence of the German
3 (letter of 11 V 29), HStA ASIA

ick 238 quoting Hitler: "One dis-

ality of Marxists and Marxism for
tler in VB 25 I 23, 3 VIII 29 (1 VIII
trial Hitler declared characteristi-
and left an absolute anti-Semite, a
ilosophy": BAK NS26/1927-1/35.
; Schott 158-87; Thies 29, 42, 45;
ubert 28-29; Calic 107-08.
f. Bloch 69-70.
1 24 IX 71 and Gertrude Kren 4 X

of Childhood Quarterly II (1974)
of Bloch as a noble Jew (Bloch 70)
always the one he took in 1923
l: "But there are so many decent
y, the so-called decent... Jews are
ther, Hitler in VB 25 22

iefe 101: see pp. 20-21.

9-30; Jenks 125-42 and passim;
notion of Jews as poisoners goes
additional determinant was the
reported by Arends 186.
tler's autobiographical letter of 29
Semitic literature then available").

#65/95. Kurth "Jew" 23 n. 35: "The
ment between mother and son was
ory and was again and again re-
ith him."

Notes for I The "Jewish Poison"

147. BAK NS26/54/178 (9 XI 27): "... the source of all life is not the state, but the people in itself. ... The best and greatest in particular ... are not children of the state, but children of the all-mother, their own nationhood." "Mutter" and "das deutsche Volk" are outright synonyms in Preiss 91 (8 XII 28). The German people is termed "the Germanic mother" in Hitler Kampf 742.
148. Vondung 173 (2 XI 32). Similarly, VB 7 VIII 29 (5 VIII 29: "the people as a body of flesh and blood and bone and spiritual powers").
149. It may also matter that he spent his sixth year with his mother on the German side of the border before they followed his father to Linz.
150. Hitler to Ernst Hepp 5 II 15 in Maser Briefe 101.
151. See p. 17.
152. Hitler Kampf 228
153. See pp. 5, 17, and 129-30. The German name for the gas—"yellow cross gas"—may have helped the eruption along by association with the yellowness of iodoform or the yellow star of David.
154. BAK NS26/1927-1/36 (Putsch trial).
155. Hitler Kampf 223 re-echoing 221.
156. Ibid. 223.
157. Further, Fest Hitler 115 and n. 125.
158. Except that he came away from Pasewalk with bags under the eyes: Wagner 30.
159. See p. 138.
160. Picker 493-94 (30 V 42).
161. His architectural ambitions, now overridden, had previously bound up the destructive energy unloosed by his 1907 trauma. Later he chose architects—Fritz Todt, then Albert Speer—for his ministers of munitions.
162. Kubizek 72-84 and passim.
163. Ibid. 50; Schirach Hitler 4; Brandmayer 81-82.
164. DNA "Book" 903. Similarly, Hoffmann Friend 141; HSW Hoffmann "Be-richt Maraun" 2; Kempner 70 (Walter Buch 16 V 47 quoting Hitler summer 1923: "I can't marry, my wife will be Germania"). Compare Hitler in VB 14 III 25 ("I am so wedded to politics that I cannot think of betrothing myself as well").
165. Krause 35.
166. Picker 193. But see also Tyrell Führer 59, 'Trommler' 40.
167. Perhaps by hard words: see Heiber Logebesprechungen 124, 130, 134 (130 n. 3 notwithstanding).
168. Rosalia Hörl in BAK NS26/17a. His father was twenty-three years older than his mother, he nineteen years older than Geli. The blood relationship would have been the same had Johann Nepomuk Hiedler been Alois's natural father as Adolf may have imagined: see pp. 53, 133-34. Hugo Blaschke in DNA "Picture" 3: Hitler's conduct toward Eva Braun was strictly avuncular.
169. HSW Hoffmann. But DNA "Picture" 28 (Hasselbach): she gave up her job after meeting Hitler.
170. HSW Hoffmann. But Hoffmann Friend 163: "That Eva became his mistress some time or other before the end is certain."
171. BAK Schramm 65-66 (Karl Brandt); Speer 117-20. But see Müllern-Schön-hausen 195.
172. Meyers 609; Schramm Führer 109; Speer 117; Deuerlein Hitler 130, 163-64.

1918

1918

that revenge against the Jews was what would right the historic wrong of 1918. He enjoined his following to "think of revenge and again of revenge."¹⁹² In cold print he declared in 1921: "If the word justice is not to be empty sound and smoke on this earth, then a judgment must come down upon the race of corrupters such as the earth has not yet known" and again: "Let us pour hate, burning hate, into the souls of our millions of compatriots until at length a flame of anger flares up in Germany to wreak vengeance upon our people's ruiners."¹⁹³ The following year he called for "a bloodiest tribunal to punish our people's poisoners"¹⁹⁴ and announced: "From this Germany a people will arise to punish its betrayers as never before."¹⁹⁵ For the tenth anniversary of the November revolution he told the Nazi old guard: "Millions in Germany . . . talk about faith in the future and yet have all failed to grasp one thing, which is that there is also a law in this world that states 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,' and that this is the most fundamental law, the most fundamental concept of right, and that a people that goes to ruin from such a crime as the 1918 revolution may not hope to recover if this crime goes unpunished. Here too is a higher right than man conceives. Believe me, if someone asks when Germany will revive, I can answer him: Not until the ninth of November 1918 has been avenged. There is no right so long as this wrong has not been avenged." And he pursued, in heavy prophetic accents: "I believe in my people's resurrection. I believe in the day when the November criminals will be brought to reckoning one way or another. And I have but a single plea to make of heaven: may it grant that our movement be the avenger of the German people, may it make of this movement its arm, and let us promise it that this arm will fall hard and heavy upon the betrayers of our country in its hour of greatest need. And it will be on that day, and through that deed, that the German people recovers its honor. Only then, when that crime is expiated, can the German people venture forth again into the world. Then only will they be Germans again and can expect that heaven will not let them go under again."¹⁹⁶ To the high court in Leipzig he swore in 1930: "November 1918 will be expiated."¹⁹⁷ Retaliation was an old familiar refrain when he

D

* and all the while was clearing him up

* Dr. H. Halft the place made to God and
 heaven are inspired by us. But who was
 25
 even as good as Adolf for raising his arms
 to witness a response from the Dummhoff.

1918

Germany's claim to more "land and soil" as its rationale and with the goal of reversing Germany's defeat explicit. He soon came to treat of the "core problem" less and less, and then obliquely and (as in 1913-1918, when his anti-Semitism was latent) through cover terms, particularly "Marxism" and "Bolshevism." Thus the retribution called for in his speech of November 1928 to the Nazi old guard was against the "November criminals," identified with Jewry only deviously through one mention of "our Hebrew poisoners," one of enemy propaganda by "the German Jews," and one each of "the Jewess Rosa Luxemburg" and "the Jew Kurt Eisner" as arch culprits.²³⁸ "From him who cared to hear," Albert Speer affirmed long afterward, "Hitler had never concealed even his intention to exterminate the Jewish people."²³⁹ Even on those who did not care to hear, the message was not lost in being conveyed by hints after *Mein Kampf* of the mid-1920s. On the contrary, it found its own psychic level below that of clear consciousness, as it did formerly through his speeches that had muted it. Besides, his speeches that had not muted it were remembered and reprinted—uncensored in the latter case. And brutal *Mein Kampf* sold over 50,000 copies a year in Germany beginning in 1930 and close to a million a year beginning in 1933.²⁴⁰

The message retained its outward fuzziness for some years after Hitler established his dictatorship—even when he told Nazi district leaders in April 1937, by way of refusing to quicken his moves against the Jews: "The final aim of our whole policy is perfectly clear to all of us."²⁴¹ Joseph Goebbels mistook that final aim when he launched the *Reichskristallnacht*, a huge pogrom of late 9 November 1938 that proved "devastating" for all concerned.²⁴² Reichsbank chief Hjalmar Schacht mistook that aim his own way and a month later began negotiating in London for Jewish emigration from Germany to be financed by an international loan on Jewish properties in Germany. When Schacht came close to succeeding, Hitler fired him from the Reichsbank on 20 January 1939. The conflict between them had broken over Hitler's alternative of a currency issue to be based on those Jewish properties—one of his pre-Putsch schemes.²⁴³ "You don't

1930

1933

D

20th
anniversary
of
1918
revolution

Author - ?

26

1918 → 1924

Party Leader, 1889-1933

this white crow among us that didn't go along with us when we damned the war.'

The few photographs of this time seem to bear this out—a solemn pale face, prematurely old, with staring eyes. He took the war seriously, identifying himself with the failure or success of German arms.

Many years afterwards Hitler would still refer to 'the stupendous impression produced upon me by the war—the greatest of all experiences. For that individual interest—the interest of one's own ego—could be subordinated to the common interest—that the great, heroic struggle of our people demonstrated in overwhelming fashion.' Many Germans regarded the comradeship, discipline and excitement of life at the Front as vastly more attractive than the obscurity, aimlessness, and dull placidity of peace, but this was particularly true of Hitler, for he had neither family, wife, job, nor future to which to return: there was much greater warmth and friendliness in the orderlies' mess than he had known since he left Linz. In the years after the war it was from ex-servicemen like this who could never settle down into monotonous routine that the Freikorps (post-war illegal armed bands), the Nazis, and a score of extremist parties recruited their members. The war, and the impact of the war upon the individual lives of millions of Germans, were among the essential conditions for the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party.

It is surprising, in view of his later pretensions as a strategist in the Second World War, that Hitler has nothing to say in *Mein Kampf* about the conduct of the military operations. At the time he wrote his book he was still too anxious to secure the favour of the Army leaders to indulge in the attitude of contempt he later adopted towards the generals. In any case, Hitler followed the conventional Nationalist line of argument: the German Army had never been defeated, the war had been lost by the treachery and

The Formative Years, 1889-1918
cowardice of the leaders at November 1918 was a failure of leadership.

At the time of his stay in his visit to Munich (October) he became indignant at the spirit of the Army at the Front and lack of discipline at home. He boasted of the grumbling, profiteering, the familiar accompaniments of war was with relief that he returned had no use for a government discussion, covert anti-war propaganda of time of war. In *Mein Kampf* he attacked the parliamentary deputies and the decent men who had anything blank in the enemy's face; or mouths shut and did the compromising military measures adopted to root out the evil. He abolished and the Reichstag the point of the bayonet, if been still better if the Reichstag immediately.'

This is no more than the of the ex-servicemen's (Front) which sprang up after the war, wounded pride by blaming the profiteers, and democratic political treachery' of the 'Stab-in-the-back' adds a characteristic twist to the originality of his ideas: with a question of political enough, he concluded, to use Socialist and anti-national propaganda attributed the sapping of German fighting. 'If force be used power, that force remains a

* D.T. I was in effect his editor. "Do not even begin to contemplate a criticism of the generals. Obey. The more you believe in yourself the more you will find the power to command them when the time comes."

Rachman

Aug 1918

to Berlin instead, to stay with the parents of one of his comrades.¹⁴⁷ His postcards to friends in the regiment spoke of how much he enjoyed his eighteen-day leave, and how thrilled he was by Berlin and its museums.¹⁴⁸ In mid-October, he returned to his regiment, which had just moved from Alsace to Champagne. Bitter fighting in April 1918 brought huge losses, and during the last two weeks of July the regiment was involved in the second battle of the Marne.¹⁴⁹ It was the last major German offensive of the war. By early August, when it collapsed in the face of a tenacious Allied counter-offensive, German losses in the previous four months of savage combat had amounted to around 800,000 men. The failure of the offensive marked the point where, with reserves depleted and morale plummeting, Germany's military leadership was compelled to recognize that the war was lost.

On 4 August 1918, Hitler received the Iron Cross, First Class - a rare achievement for a corporal - from the regimental commander, Major von Tubeuf. By a stroke of irony, he had a Jewish officer, Leutnant Hugo Gutmann, to thank for the nomination.¹⁵⁰ The story was later to be found in all school books that the Führer had received the EK I for single-handedly capturing fifteen French soldiers.¹⁵¹ The truth, as usual, was somewhat more prosaic. From the available evidence, including the recommendation of the List Regiment's Deputy Commander Freiherr von Godin on 31 July 1918, the award was made - as it was also to a fellow dispatch runner - for bravery shown in delivering an important dispatch, following a breakdown in telephone communications, from command headquarters to the front through heavy fire. Gutmann, from what he subsequently said, had promised both dispatch runners the EK I if they succeeded in delivering the message. But since the action was, though certainly courageous, not strikingly exceptional, it was only after several weeks of his belabouring the divisional commander that permission for the award was granted.¹⁵²

By mid-August 1918, the List Regiment had moved to Cambrai to help combat a British offensive near Bapaume, and a month later was back in action once more in the vicinity of Wytschaete and Messines, where Hitler had received his EK II almost four years earlier. This time Hitler was away from the battlefields. In late August he had been sent for a week to Nuremberg for telephone communications training, and on 10 September he began his second period of eighteen days' leave, again in Berlin.¹⁵³ Immediately on his return, at the end of September, his unit was put under pressure from British assaults near Comines. Gas was now in extensive use in offensives, and protection against it was minimal and primitive. The List Regiment, like others, suffered badly. On the night of 13-14 October, Hitler himself fell

victim to mustard gas on the high front near Ypres.¹⁵⁴ He and several, during a gas attack, were partially to safety only by clinging on to a wall which was slightly less badly afflicted.¹⁵⁵ He was transported on 21 October 1918 near Stettin, in Pomerania.

The war was over for him. And, Command was already manoeuvring it accepted was lost and a peace which was in Pasewalk, recovering from Hitler to learn the shattering news of defeat, the greatest villainy of the century'.¹⁵⁷

In reality, of course, there had been no gas. It was a pure invention of the Right, an element of their propaganda armoury, not a cause, of military failure. Germany was close to the end of its tether - the capitulation. In fact, triumphant High Command in late October 1918 and in the previous four months had time during the war.¹⁵⁸ In addition, ill German soldiers had fallen victim to gas and July, and around 750,000 were little wonder that the medical service had collapsed, and that desertions and 'defections' (estimated at close on a million men) rose dramatically.¹⁵⁹ At home, the mood was embittered, angry, and increasingly fabricated by Bolshevik sympathizers grew out of the profound disillusionment in even as early as 1915 and from 1916 became a torrent of disaffection. The war in total patriotic unity ended in 1918 by the experience.

* D.T. I staked a bit on this move. The irony appealed to me. Moreover, the Iron Cross - First Class would be

essential! presented to him.

H D.T. 2 - It was crucial that he feel no gratitude toward Gutmann and so I coached him into the position that Gutmann, a Jew, was trying to make him feel beholden to the Jews. I did not have to try too hard. He had come to recognize already that this was an all-out condemnation of the Jews could show he the rough road often all could

Oct 1918

as of one of his comrades.¹⁴⁷ His
 oke of how much he enjoyed his
 was by Berlin and its museums.¹⁴⁸
 ment, which had just moved from
 April 1918 brought huge losses, and
 giment was involved in the second
 or German offensive of the war. By
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 ailure of the offensive marked the
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 ze that the war was lost.

Iron Cross, First Class – a rare
 gimental commander, Major von
 a Jewish officer, Leutnant Hugo

¹⁴⁹ The story was later to be found
 eived the EK 1 for single-handedly
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 uding the recommendation of the
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 o a fellow dispatch runner – for
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 een sent for a week to Nuremberg
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 imitative. The List Regiment, like
 3–14 October, Hitler himself fell

victim to mustard gas on the heights south of Wervick, part of the southern
 front near Ypres.¹⁵⁴ He and several comrades, retreating from their dug-out
 during a gas attack, were partially blinded by the gas and found their way
 to safety only by clinging on to each other and following a comrade who
 was slightly less badly afflicted.¹⁵⁵ After initial treatment in Flanders, Hitler
 was transported on 21 October 1918 to the military hospital in Pasewalk,
 near Stettin, in Pomerania.

The war was over for him. And, little though he knew it, the Army High
 Command was already manoeuvring to extricate itself from blame for a war
 it accepted was lost and a peace which would soon have to be negotiated.¹⁵⁶ It
 was in Pasewalk, recovering from his temporary blindness, that Hitler was
 to learn the shattering news of defeat and revolution – what he called 'the
 greatest villainy of the century'.¹⁵⁷

IV

In reality, of course, there had been no treachery, no stab-in-the-back. This
 was a pure invention of the Right, a legend the Nazis would use as a central
 element of their propaganda armoury. Unrest at home was a consequence,
 not a cause, of military failure. Germany had been militarily defeated and
 was close to the end of its tether – though nothing had prepared people for
 capitulation. In fact, triumphalist propaganda was still coming from the
 High Command in late October 1918. The army was by then exhausted,
 and in the previous four months had suffered heavier losses than at any
 time during the war.¹⁵⁸ In addition, illness took its toll. Around 1.75 million
 German soldiers had fallen victim to an influenza epidemic between March
 and July, and around 750,000 were wounded in the same period. It was
 little wonder that the medical service could not cope, that discipline sagged
 drastically, and that desertions and 'shirking' – deliberately ducking duty
 (estimated at close on a million men in the last months of the war) –
 rose dramatically.¹⁵⁹ At home, the mood was one of mounting protest –
 embittered, angry, and increasingly rebellious. The revolution was not
 fabricated by Bolshevik sympathizers and unpatriotic troublemakers, but
 grew out of the profound disillusionment and rising unrest, which had set
 in even as early as 1915 and from 1916 onwards had flowed into what finally
 became a torrent of disaffection. The society which had seemingly entered
 the war in total patriotic unity ended it completely riven – and traumatized
 by the experience.

* the effort would be wasted or not,
 I had to share his pain. It would be terrible
 if he recovered with the conviction that
 I had let him down. I, his guardian angel, had
 deserted him in a crisis.

* D.T. At that moment, I did not
 know if ~~he~~ his spirit would return,
 or was it gravely impaired, or was he
 altogether blind? What a blow to me. How
 all I could do to enter his misery and
 reassure him that he would be well, but whether

on this note.
 - Mr. Morison,
 has would be

osed for the 'Cross' was being dis-
lers came into the tent, or dugout.
of us had to step out. We hadn't
when a grenade struck the tent,
Colonel Engelhardt and killed or
f. It was the most terrible moment
Lieutenant-Colonel Engelhardt.

w. . . Day after day we are under
eight in the morning to five in the
s even the strongest nerves. I often
n of us has the single wish that the
their hash settled once and for all.
ny cost, and we hope that those of
: to see their homeland again will
d of foreignism. That through the
hundreds of us go through every
blood that flows here day after day
l of enemies, not only Germany's
d, but that our internal internation-
at would be worth more than any
it will come as I have always said.
elt thanks and remain your most

ADOLF HITLER.

sioned warrior. In it there is not
ly the enemy whom he hates, and
e is brave and attaches no value to
ander later attested. But there is
f that he owes his own life to a
miracles; that the bursting shells
t, while three quarters of his regi-
enjoyed the special protection of

at a lawsuit in the Hamburg pro-
t a newspaper which had accused
His attorney submitted a number
the contrary. Lieutenant-Colonel
r's letter, wrote:

As commander of the 16th Regiment of Bavarian Infantry at the
Battle of Ypres in the period from November 10 to November 17,
1914, I came to know Adolf Hitler as an exceedingly brave, effec-
tive and conscientious soldier. I must emphasize the following:
As our men were storming the wedge-shaped forest (later known
as Bayer-Wald), I stepped out of the woods near Wytshaete to get
a better view of developments. Hitler and the volunteer Bachmann,
another battle orderly belonging to the 16th Regiment, stood be-
fore me to protect me with their bodies from the machine-gun
fire to which I was exposed. . . Munich, February 29, 1932, signed,
Engelhardt, Major General (retired).

The Iron Cross referred to in Hitler's letter was of the second
class, but on August 4, 1918, he was awarded the Iron Cross
first class, one of the highest distinctions to which a common soldier
in the German army could aspire. He is supposed to have received
it for an astounding feat; a witness described it as follows in the
above-mentioned trial:

On his way to the battalion staff, Adolf Hitler, regimental or-
derly, was caught in a barrage. He thought that the battalion was
behind a hill, ran over the top and fell into a shell-hole occupied
by Englishmen, who at once demanded his surrender. Hitler was
armed only with a pistol. He drew it out and not only held the
Englishmen at bay, but took them prisoner and led them to his
regimental staff. An officer, a sergeant and thirteen men!

A comrade named Schmidt, it is true, describes the episode
somewhat differently:

. . . In the spring or summer of 1918, Hitler received the I.C.1
for his extraordinary accomplishments as a dispatch carrier in the
big offensive of 1918, especially for having personally taken pris-
oner a French officer and about fifteen men, whom he suddenly
ran into while carrying dispatches, and who, as a consequence of
his decision and presence of mind, laid down their arms. . .

In this version they are Frenchmen instead of Englishmen. This
contradiction does not necessarily disprove the story. But it does
seem strange that none of his superiors had apparently heard of the
dramatic exploit. The official history of the List Regiment does,

During combat, D.T. saves him,
makes him to himself. D.T. escape.

1918

'32

-32

09.14

OT

"

"

To Col. I make a run
as the 16th Regt.
Dummeckhoff in the 16th Regt. 1918

was never before

: FUEHRER

se sailors spoke to Hitler. It would hem — later he was not squeamish in ed to do so in Pasewalk is not quite In't denounce them, for even then I r.' He did not write this unusual ad- curred in his defense plea in the 1924 iced to inactivity, he looked on at the been his fatherland.

Chapter V

THE BURNING HEAVENS
ARE REFLECTED IN
A MUD PUDDLE

1918

THE GAS SLOWLY VANISHED FROM LUNGS AND EYES, but its traces remained. A strange hoarseness of the voice seems to be an inheritance the war has left to Adolf Hitler, an obstacle in the throat which has to be overcome by an effort when he talks a long time. Speaking was to mean fighting to him from now on, and this fight against his acquired weakness penetrates the whole man — a fight he had been unable to put up against his natural weaknesses of laziness and timidity. The amount of force he has now to put into the simple action of speaking may at least have contributed to the impression of power which seems to stream even from his insignificant utterances. Although the power of this thundering voice certainly was there before the gas enhanced it, hidden sources of his personal strength probably have been brought to life by the almost deadly touch of the poison. The experience of war and defeat stirred up qualities in Adolf Hitler which peace had left slumbering; the physical remnants of the gas in his body were at least an everlasting memo of this experience.

After his discharge from the hospital, Hitler went to Bavaria, lived for a time with the replacement battalion of his regiment in

* An expatiation (EXP) from D.T. on the dialectic of poison

1920?

108

DER FUEHRER

Goering - was in 1920? when he met Hitler

lin. At this time, as he later told the story, he often envied his luckier classmates, who had a family and who, therefore, were invited to attend parties at the emperor's court. He was brought up as a soldier, and he became a soldier by profession.

1918

He had begun the World War as an infantry officer, and then, in defiance of his superiors, made himself into an aviator by taking flying lessons from a friend by the name of Lörzer. He was a good combat pilot, sparing neither himself, his subordinates, nor his planes. At the end of the war he was leading a pursuit squadron, which Baron von Richthofen, the most famous of German World War aviators, had commanded before him. He was decorated with the *Pour le Mérite*, the highest distinction accessible to a soldier of his rank. But medals were not the only pay he obtained for his achievements. The German front-line fliers had great influence in the choice of planes and engines; manufacturers sought to win this influence in their own way, and all aviators did not resist these temptations, which began with golden cigarette cases concealed beneath their napkins at banquets. In partnership with Prince Philipp of Hessa, a fellow officer, he established a shoe factory for army orders—in the midst of the war. His friendship with Prince Philipp later took on prime importance for Göring, when the prince became son-in-law to the king of Italy. Again and again he had startling luck in his personal encounters. During the war he was quartered for a time at Stenay on the Maas. In near-by Charleville the crown prince had his dissolute and justly notorious headquarters. Göring made the acquaintance of Friedrich Wilhelm, and this, too, was to prove profitable.

He was on top of the world. Everything that an ambitious man can hope to have at the age of twenty-five had fallen to Göring's lot. He had fame, money, connections, future, and, best of all, pride in his own accomplishments. More important than his private career, he had a small share in the domination of the world. Since Napoleon I, no group of European men had looked forward to such brilliant careers as offered themselves to the young leaders of this German Army, which from the English Channel to the Black Sea and the Euphrates seemed to have conquered a world empire by the force of its arms.

ARYANS OF ALL NATION

In every respect they were on top of the world, required artificial exaltation. Life in the fly though in many ways pleasant. The aviators, petted darlings of the Army, with frequent indulgence of food, and every possible consideration; the individual was more conspicuous, less common than twenty years later. Nerves suffered between death and champagne; some took to it as a morphine addict. Up to 1932 his vice was alcohol. Later he seems to have overcome it; this characterizes the man.

From these giddy heights there came a crash in November, 1918. From the first this meant a change of bread. After the peace, Germany was peopled with very few commercial planes. German aviators were scarce in other countries. Göring became a transport pilot, carrying passengers and mail bags. One winter he flew to Stockholm with a single passenger, Count Rosen, who flew to Rosen's estate of Rockelstadt, where a pond in front of the castle. Göring was Count Rosen's whole family turned out to be aristocrats. These Swedish aristocrats had intermarried families; they had relatives who were officers in the German Army. Göring's hope for Germany's future and even sang German songs. Two large swastika flags, the lute of the house, it transpired, had a niece Baroness Fock. She had an eight-year-old daughter, married and spent most of her time in Berlin, beautiful and charming, but suffered from tuberculosis. Kantzow soon dissolved her marriage with a transport pilot, Hermann Göring.

His marriage brought Göring a certain amount of money and turned to Germany and enrolled as a member of the Munich. Up to that time he had stood apart, taken no part in the various armed activities of the revolution. Now he became a National

IC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

furious fulminations about
"We all cursed him and
recalled. "There was this
when we damned the war
When a buddy, Hans Mend,
girl, Hitler preached him a
and the importance of keeping
known in the regiment as
one indulgence continued to
another joke of his outfit:
ing could get him away from

remembered for in his regi-
ter time he seemed to court
rade, he escaped unscathed.
regiment decimated, someone
"dich gibt es keine Kugel!"
one on it!") Successive letters
racle that I was not injured
bright... Through a miracle
reinforced Hitler's conviction
unlike his brothers and sister
cial mission.

lonely, brooding silence, he
orations in which he held
about from reading Lanz-
of Freemasons, Catholics, and
to the Jews as the archenemy
ughed, Hitler furiously prom-
When he came to power, he
Jews.

and mockery. For security
Hitler's colleague for over 32
structor in civilian life. Mend
him by affecting mock for-
to wish the Immortal Horse-

then they testify that Hitler
is evidence of at least one
typical misspellings) sent from
ndt in Wurbach, Thuringia:

ndt family is very nice. I will
The city is great. . . . I now

target into
in of our
town (Eyn). 2
thousand remaining

The Child As Father to the Man

have finally opportunity to study the museums a bit better. In
short I am missing [sic] nothing.
Es gruss [sic] dir [sic] dein,

A. Hitler ²⁰⁵

All Hitler's commanding officers agreed that he was a brave and
exemplary soldier. Testifying in 1922, before it was obligatory to praise
the Führer, an officer recalled his courage and noted particularly that he
somehow managed always to keep himself scrupulously clean.²⁰⁶

Hitler had been awarded the Iron Cross, Second Class, as early
as December 1914. In March 1932 he sued a German newspaper for libel
after it wrote that his conduct in the war was cowardly. A former com-
manding officer at regimental headquarters, Lieutenant Colonel Engel-
hardt, convincingly testified to his bravery. Hitler won the case.²⁰⁷

He was wounded for the first time on 5 October 1916 at 5:00 A.M.,
near Le Bargaue, when he caught shell fragments in his left shoulder.
Hospitalized in Beelitz-Berlin, he petitioned to be returned to the front
so that he could spend Christmas alone there.²⁰⁸

Hitler was one of the very few common soldiers of World War I
to be awarded the Iron Cross, First Class. There are differing and
improbable accounts of how he won the great distinction,* but three
things seem clear. First, he was entitled to the honor. Second, it was
enormously important to him both personally and politically. He wore
the Iron Cross constantly, for it was visible proof of his claim that he
was the "unknown hero of the Great War." Third, the award shows
that once again he had reason to be grateful to a Jew. As his com-
manding officer has written, Hitler never would have received the
honor had it not been for the efforts of the regimental adjutant, Hugo
Gutmann, a Jew.²⁰⁹

Hitler was wounded a second time when, on 15 October 1918, he
was gassed on the southern front of the battle of Ypres. Records from
the military hospital of Pasewalk near Berlin where he was evacuated
simply say that he was gassed (gaskrank); but Hitler—hence all of-
ficial biographies—always insisted that he was blinded by mustard
gas. That he exaggerated the extent of his injury seems clear not only
from the army records but also from two other facts. First, within one

* It has been said that he won it by his heroic, single-handed capture of
seven Englishmen, or 12 (or 20) Frenchmen; or by luring an English tank to its
destruction; or "for general bravery." An uplifting biography of Hitler written for
schoolchildren of the Third Reich finds a moral in this incident in the life of the
Führer: he had studied so hard in school that he spoke perfect French and thus
could command 20 French soldiers to surrender. The book is aptly titled: *Unser
Führer: ein Jungen- und Mädchenbuch* (Our Leader: A Book for Boys and Girls). The same edition of the
official Nazi newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter* (14 August 1934) gives two different dates for the
heroic exploit: 4 August 1918 and 4 October 1918. Surprisingly, the official history of the List
Regiment is silent about Hitler's citation.

that I could command few small
powers of deflection when it
came down to a matter of the blast
or slightly warped trajectory of bullets.

get the quote!

1896 → 1918
THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

month after his discharge he was accepted for reenlistment into the army—at a time when there was great competition for the few places available. Second, though in need of money, he never applied for a disabled veteran's pension. It seems apparent that he knew army hospital records would not support his claim.²¹⁰

It is quite possible that Hitler's blindness, while real, was psychosomatic in origin, a form of hysteria produced by the trauma of Germany's defeat. Certainly news of the armistice was a shattering experience, and there is no reason for doubting the sincerity and intensity of his description of the event:

Everything began to go black again before my eyes. Stumbling, I groped my way back to the ward, threw myself on my bed, and buried my burning head in the covers and pillows. I had not cried since the day I had stood at the grave of my mother.²¹¹

Something else may have reminded him, unconsciously, of his mother. As a little child, he had shut his eyes to avoid seeing his beloved Klara ravished by a father whom he was to suspect of being half-Jewish. Was he now blinded because he could not bear to see his Motherland defeated and humiliated by the Jews?

Hitler was certainly not the only German soldier to be appalled by the defeat and shocked by the "stab in the back" of the armistice and proclamation of a republic. But one has the feeling that for him there was something very personal about it, for he could never speak of the defeat of Germany without succumbing to paroxysms of hatred. Over and over again, for the rest of his life, he would rain a torrent of vituperation on those "traitors" who had "betrayed the Motherland" and committed "the greatest villainy of the century." This was the "November shame," perpetrated by the "November criminals" who had produced the misbegotten "Jew Republic."²¹²

Something clicked in the Pasewalk Hospital. It was there at the turn of the year 1918-1919 that Hitler resolved his identity problem and reached what he called "the most decisive decision of my life." For now, finally, he knew who he was and what he must do. He was the leader sent by destiny. He must answer the "voices" that he said he heard—like Joan of Arc—distinctly calling him as he lay in his hospital bed. The voices told him to rescue his Motherland from the Jews who had violated her. He ends his chapter:

With the Jews there can be no bargaining. There can only be the hard either/or.

I had resolved to become a politician.

In this decision, the central position of anti-Semitism should be noted. Hitler's fight against the Jews who menaced the Motherland had become the central, driving force of his political mission.²¹³

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1896
D.T. It is here that I joined him
I was, of course, the voice
and I did it with the full
recollection of the impact
the story of Joan of Arc
had on him as a boy.
His mother, a devout Catholic,
had told him about Joan
of Arc, and I had made a
mental note at the time. The question of
when to use it was of course years away.

The Child As Father to the Man

Years later he would re-
mission to the German people
age that another Messiah be.

MISSION IN MUNICH

The Munich to which Hitler
be fulfilling the direst need
graceful capital of the Weimar
good-humored apathy, was
and other Dark Ones.

The postwar history of
were, in turn, inefficient, dis-
served as excellent grist for
He did not allow the German
Motherland from the horri-
ample, "when Israel was killed."

After the collapse of the
Front, Kurt Eisner, a Jew, and
considered a "foreigner" who
had become leader of the
the old cry of *Los von Bet*
a socialist republic in conse-

His support dwindled
his regime. After the disaster
received less than 3 percent
he was on his way to tend
auf Valley, was a young man
in the racist Thule Society
founder of the society paid
wanted to show that even a

Eisner's confused political
group of radical intellectuals
queen's bedroom of the V
governmental experiment
was president of the Execu-
tion, he issued decrees and
soul was to be sought in
free-money clique, found
theories as minister of finan-
foreign affairs, was thor-
foreign policy consisted lar-
including one to Pope Bene-

*met I had
the confidence
that I could
know when*

*We demand
pride and honor
on being in
command of
better timing
than they are
we must*

*Brotherhood. Many other advantages, how much they
gain back their reputation in the
last moments of a life. As many of our
clients lose the proper way to end
by the end*

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tory, he compelled others to believe it was true. How else can one explain the statement of Professor Percy Schramm, who had watched Hitler for many years:

It is almost impossible to convey to those who never experienced it the personal impact of Hitler. Such could be its strength that it sometimes seemed a kind of psychological force radiating from him like a magnetic field. It could be so intense as to be almost physically tangible.⁷⁵

* Hitler never actually possessed the personal strength, integrity, and purpose that he projected. But he gave the illusion of possessing them. And that was sufficient. He moved men because he was able—in Heiden's phrase—"to act out greatness," to change himself from a hesitant and unsure little man to a person of towering historic force who paralyzed opposition and commanded millions to do his will.

Thus the "acting out" which was for him a psychic necessity became one of his greatest political assets.

The Power of Delusion

I go the way that Providence dictates . . .
—Adolf Hitler

Hitler, it has often and rightly been said, was a man of delusions. Like other borderline personalities, he indulged in "omnipotent fantasies . . . of power, greatness and perfection."⁷⁶ In Hitler's case, delusions were an important source of his political effectiveness.

Ever since 1918, when he imagined he heard a strange voice calling to him in his hospital bed at Pasewalk, he had deluded himself into believing that destiny had chosen him as the German Messiah. This delusion would sustain him through the darkest days of his career and help him to convince millions that he really was their heaven-sent savior.

It seems likely that this hallucination was psychologically related to his role playing, which was so effective in winning followers. The incident also shows the splitting of his ego—another mark of the borderline. In his hospital bed, one part of himself had spoken to another part through the means of a disembodied "voice." He did not conclude that he was delirious; he firmly believed that he had established a profound relationship between himself and destiny, or God, or the Spirit of the Motherland—a relationship that held the absolute assurance of life-sustaining and life-saving properties. Years later he would say, "I go the way that Providence dictates, with all the assurance of a sleepwalker." Convinced that he had undergone the experience of being called by destiny, Hitler was able to inspire in others exactly the same reaction, only now it would be his miraculously compelling voice which became the "outer" voice of Germany's destiny. And when his followers had the choice between following the dictates of reason and independent thought

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From Private Neurosis to

or the call of irrational delusion.

Albert Speer, a clarity how this process—indeed, in all those that all was lost. Speer

Hitler's obsessive part of my conscience thing must be applied more frequently confidence exists.

BRUTALITY AND

It was very important softness and always doing so was by acting adjectives which he came out to Field Marshal G.

The Reichsmarschall proven himself to need than the Reich crisis brutal and be without consideration better one than his he was always ice out to be ice-cold.

A man who had survived recalled that "never would show that he had

The cultivation of political career. As early his solution to the problem saying, "Only fervent, situation at that time. Hitler's long harangue.

* D.F. A disquisition on acting and, on psychopathy and how little the standards of Hitler understand it. The psychopaths defend on psychological reality. At the instant they seize the moment, the moment becomes so electrically charged that the other people present are altered in their understanding of the protagonist.

ADOLF HITLER

ler and his primi-
What forces made
Why precisely in
to Hitler? Peter
sis, has suggested
ledge of the two
standing of per-
sonal change, de-
as.

ian tradition, an
and social conse-
an understanding
individual personal
ing these young
rior, Loewenberg
en anxieties and
infantile experi-
h. The Great De-
sturbance" which
ance, the trauma
ants, experienced
the return of an
-1933 evoked in
welcoming Hitler
early childhood

because a group
ult of the date of
hological experi-
the survivors of
ered similar psy-
camp experience
major catastrophe
ence on the very
le. World War I
r. Broadly speak-
generation we
900, which par-
erlebnisse of the
of the Nazi Youth
ey were not too
they remembered
prolonged and
ad. To take only
vividly she re-
family collected
was sick, she had

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the glorious—but guilty—experience of drinking, ever so slowly, a whole glass of milk all by herself.²¹²

Hunger increased after the armistice, as the Allies continued the blockade until Germany accepted the Versailles Treaty. The birth-weights of babies went down alarmingly. Mothers were unable to nurse, and cow's milk—when available—was lacking in fats and vitamins. Schoolchildren of those years showed a marked increase in bed-wetting and "nervous disorders." A hardened British war correspondent reported from Cologne in 1919: "Although I have seen many horrible things in the world, I have seen nothing so pitiful as these rows of babies feverish from want of food, exhausted by privation to the point that their little limbs are like slender wands, their expression hopeless and their faces full of pain."²¹³ An American historian who was a student in Germany in 1921 recalls being asked over and over, "How could you, a civilized human being, withhold food from us after the fighting had stopped?"²¹⁴ Hunger, coupled with anxiety and fear, produced in these children—as it had in the infant Hitler—feelings of hostility, hatred, and aggression. Normally, society requires that children repress such feelings, but the war atmosphere actually encouraged destructive impulses.

Children tend to reflect the attitudes of the society in which they live. The sales of toy bombing planes and machine guns, for example, declined in America each Christmas between 1971 and 1973 while the United States was committing what parents increasingly came to believe were outrages against the people of Vietnam and Cambodia. On the other hand, in Northern Ireland sales of war games and guns increased during the same years. In Germany during World War I, children learned a kind of "primitive idealization": the world was either all good (German) or all bad (the Enemy). The Enemy was to be hated, feared, and killed. Thus, instead of repressing destructive impulses and turning away from horror and hatred, children turned "toward them with primitive excitement."²¹⁵

The Nazi Youth Cohort, during their wartime infancy, must have felt abandoned when their mothers, by the thousands, left their traditional roles in nursery, kitchen, and church to work in armament factories. One of the most remarkable social facts in German history is the statistic that in Prussia by 1917 there were 500 percent more women working in industry than in 1913 and 1 000 percent more serving as railway workers.

As children, members of the Cohort tended to have an ambivalent attitude toward their absent fathers. They were idolized as heroes who would certainly save the Fatherland and return in glory. But there must also have been resentment and hostility toward a father who had left his children alone for so long with their mother. Child psychologists have demonstrated that when fathers are absent for protracted periods, Oedipal desires increase, along with guilt feelings and hostility toward the absent father. Such feelings of guilt, mixed with separation

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anxiety, often result in rage and aggression, which may break out in later periods of life: witness the excesses of the Free Corps, which thousands of the older Cohort joined, and the violent aggressive tendencies many contemporaries observed among the young adults of the Great Depression.

It is true, of course, that in other belligerent countries mothers and fathers left home and children felt neglected. But two facts made a critical difference in the German experience and had a significant effect on the Nazi Youth Cohort in the days of their early childhood: first, they suffered persistent hunger not experienced in the countries of the Entente; second, the German father, if he returned home at all, came back in defeat and not as a hero. Further, in Germany the traditional authoritarian father-figure of the emperor had fled and abandoned his people. The Revolution provided no one to take his place.

The children of the Cohort had other experiences that seared their memories: defeat was followed by near starvation and revolution. The Versailles Treaty added to the syndrome, for it made all Germans—including the young—formally responsible for all the disasters of the war. The inflation of 1923 reinforced the conviction that fathers had failed to provide order and security. The frustrations and fears and hunger of the Great Depression reawakened infant memories of hunger in 1919 and 1916-1917—hunger that evoked aggressive and destructive impulses.

It is not nearly enough to make the general comment that German youth were attracted to Hitler because he was "an authoritarian figure who offered a radical program." Young Germans were drawn to Hitler for *very specific reasons*. He alone, among all the political leaders of the postwar world, responded to their particular, deeply felt psychological needs. He was the incarnation of the idealized father-Führer they had imagined during the disturbing years of their infancy; he was what they had always hoped their own fathers would be—"the unknown hero of the trenches" who returned in glory wearing the Iron Cross First Class. He was a soldier-leader who promised to establish a military state where children and adults would wear uniforms and march in purposeful, disciplined ranks. They could swear an oath of total fidelity to this deified and distant Führer and help him build a resurgent and powerful German nation. The very fact that Hitler looked so average and nondescript and that so little was known about his personal life helped to strengthen the image of the father substitute. For their own fathers were average Germans who had been absent so long as to become strangers to their children.

It is difficult to convey the depths of desire young Germans felt in the postwar years for a father-Führer they could believe in and follow. A lead article in a national student magazine for January 1924 sent forth "a call for the Führer" who would have "faith in himself, in us, and in his mission." Students at Göttingen University as early as July 1920 proclaimed, "We are consumed [wir verzehren uns] with long-

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ing for a great Führer. . . Students expressed the sense of an urgent, pent-up demand coming of the Führer of c

Young women of the image of their dreams. To their earliest memory was over their missing father. They felt on see stirred that they could not the wondrous Führer who they prayed that nothing together they asked for. They joined the Party and for Nazi Storm Troopers.²¹

In reflecting on the a psychiatrist wondered why was essentially so childlike responded to this immaturity? ²¹⁸ It seems likely that precisely because he was childlike. He too used the deftly suffered hunger and deeply capable of furious temper and vulnerable, but he commands, a destroyer and creator and build a New Order. His world was divided into the Aryans, the evil, destructive

Above all, the Youth institutionalized hatred at the Cohort needed to cope experienced during their during the Depression. To redirect feelings of hostility toward the distant replacement for the distant psychological defense against toward their fathers who had cal problems of the Youth project upon the German had shaped his own infant own pathology harmonized

Hitler's hatred of the young people of Germany. own prejudices. Anti-Semi Weimar youth movement, life. Almost all the dueling

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* D.T. Here we were one up on the D.K. who looked beautiful and manly in his creation to serve as an example to others we preferred to believe the mediocre with the confidence that they, too, were giants.

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ments of the Western Front
che Stil (The Prussian Style)
of Frederick the Great and the
white and red. The book was
sewitz." Its central theme was
ist ohne Mythos" (Prussia is
Prussia was, it still lacked
old, rational. Germany needed
dynamic. In short, Germany
One is reminded of Kohn's
the marriage of Prussianism

aw as a temporary truce in a
one of the cofounders of the
the "Treaty of Shame" was
to the destruction of democ-
der. To this end, in 1923 he
he entitled *Das dritte Reich*
greater role in German-party
single volume, not excluding
before Hitler's. Moeller was
Nieksch, the National Bol-
tallism "was a mood which
of Nazis called Moeller "a
book of the Black Front".
noted in 1925 that he was

is book, published in 1923,
ter 1, on revolution, indicts
at Germany will arise trium-
r 2 shows how much Moeller
ot accept Marxism because
e calls for a socialism more
horitarian national socialism
Chapters 3 and 4 are a sus-
he calls, variously, "mental
of youth." His hatred of the

ese intellectuals who lured
now stand with their stupid
eir ideology led them!
still not learned anything;
of their principles: world
ernational arbitration; the
neither see nor hear nor con-

ness that through their guilt, men all around us are suffering under
foreign domination.

The concluding chapter, "The Third Reich," is full of magic and myth.
Remember," he pleads in 1923, "that the words themselves are a mys-
tery, indeterminate and charged with feeling not of this world but of the
next."

In 1925, when Germany seemed to be recovering economic and
political stability and it looked as if the despised Republic might survive,
Moeller committed suicide. His ideas were then promoted by the in-
fluential magazine *Die Tat* (The Deed), which proclaimed in 1929 the
advent of a final crisis and the coming of a dictatorship which would
bring about the kind of national socialist state that would fulfill Moel-
ler's myth.¹⁸¹

Oswald Spengler had been an obscure high school teacher until the
publication in 1918 of the first of two massive and murky volumes
entitled *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, well known in English as
The Decline of the West. The work achieved surprising popularity
throughout the world, but was read with something approaching mor-
bid fascination in Germany, where it was "the most widely studied
book" within a year of its publication.¹⁸²

The atmosphere of gathering gloom with which Spengler's tomes
begin deepened to something akin to a triumphant death wish as he
announced the doom of Western civilization: "There is only one end of
the eternal struggle, death: death of individuals, death of peoples,
death of culture. . . ." There was, however, one glimmer of hope, at least
for Germany. Though Western culture would inevitably die, a new breed
of hard-hearted conquerors could arise in the Fatherland. Here, following
the dictates of an ancient myth, a New Order would be established
which, he wrote, would be called *Das dritte Reich*: "The Third Reich
is the Germanic ideal, an eternal new dawn."

The last page of the book sounds a call to struggle and racial power
that Hitler would re-echo in a hundred speeches:

Ever in History it is life and life only—race quality, the triumph,
of the will-to-power—and not the victory of truths, discoveries, or
money that signifies. World-history is the world-court, and it has
ever decided in favor of the stronger. . . Always it has sacrificed
truth and justice to power and race. ¹⁸³

In the summer of 1919, Spengler completed the manuscript of a
work which was to become even more popular, particularly among
German youth. Indeed, one historian of the Weimar youth movement
has called this pamphlet, *Preussentum und Sozialismus* (Prussianism
and Socialism), "one of the Holy Scriptures" of those young people

* D.T. A Disquisition on words 323

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reaching their maturity on or about the year 1933.¹⁸⁴ Spengler began with a savage indictment of the revolution of 1918 and the "November Criminals" of the Weimar Republic. He characterized the Revolution as "the most senseless act in German history. . . . In the heart of the German Volk, Weimar stands condemned. One can't even laugh at it. . . . The future will most certainly look on this episode with profound contempt." The whole idea of erecting a parliamentary Republic in Germany was, he insisted, a laughable anachronism, repugnant to the whole of German history. "Parliamentarianism in Germany is either nonsense or treason [*Unsinn oder Verrat*]."

Spengler then launched his thesis: what Germany needed was not Western liberalism but socialism of a particular kind, namely, Prussian-German socialism. "Frederick William I and not Marx was the first conscious socialist." Indeed, Marx was not a socialist at all, he was a materialist with no conception of the German spirit; he was "exclusively an English thinker." Spengler gazed into a clouded crystal ball in 1919 to predict the imminent demise of Marxism: "Today Marxism is collapsing amid the clamorous orgy of its attempt to become reality . . . the *Communist Manifesto* has entered upon a career as a literary curiosity. . . ." The future belonged not to the Marxists but to the only genuine socialists in the world, the Germanic Volk: "I say German socialism for there is no other . . . we Germans are socialist. The others cannot possibly be socialist. . . . The only true socialism is German socialism. . . . Prussianism and socialism are one and the same."

Spengler, like Hitler after him, was much taken with the "power of blood" to form history, and he combined it with the world of ideas in a curiously aggressive way: "Ideas that have become blood demand blood. War is the eternal pattern of higher human existence, and countries exist for war's sake."

This little book of large consequence ends with a stirring challenge to the youth of Germany:

I turn to youth. I call upon all those who have marrow in their bones and blood in their veins . . . to become men! We do not want any more ideologies, no more talk about culture and cosmopolitanism. . . .

We need hardness, brave skepticism, we need a body of socialist supermen [*sozialistische Herrennaturen*]. Once again: socialism means power, power, and power over and over again [*Sozialismus bedeutet Macht, Macht, und immer wieder Macht*]. . . .¹⁸⁵

Martin Heidegger, probably the most influential German philosopher of the 20th century, had nothing but scorn for democracy. Politically he sought a Hegelian synthesis between the apparently irreconcilable forces of Bismarckian Power and Nietzschean Spirit. Like many of his colleagues, he believed that a full reconciliation of political force and intellectual creativity could come only when it was imposed from

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*Review
of book 1 325
in words - important
on Heidegger.*

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above by a power state, a new of Heidegger wrote in 1932, of the world. It would be the Goethe of the Germans would impeded meeting between, Bishplished; against that, every shattered."¹⁸⁶

The Führer of the Nazis was in mind. (Even Spengler was their most cherished ideas were *prinzip, Volksgemeinschaft*, the creed of force, heroic promise of a Third Reich. Hitler they would have liked, but the their own dreams."¹⁸⁷ Thus it of Germany not only acquiesced applauded it.

Heidegger was among the of his inaugural address as re 1933 to hail Hitler as the fulfill the synthesis of idea and action urged the academic community higher demands of race and freedom in quotation marks, grandly called "the inexorable the destiny of the German Volk word of defense for his great defamed by the Nazis as a difficulty in bringing himself Hitler, whose power he said a law: "Not theses and ideas an academic world. "The Führer reality and law today and in the directly from Hitler's propaganda the primary purpose of the up by three kinds of service: "La edge service: they are equally academic community, he concl in a common struggle: "All po of the heart and all the capacity struggle, elevated in struggle, he dedicated himself, his colle "battle community" (*Kampfgen* The Nazis, of course, recor dorsement and had Heidegger the thousands. They also saw in their official *Führer-Lexikon*.

** D.T. Heidegger
his father's attitude
gave him the way
of a leader*

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widespread propaganda disseminated by the Army, and the bungling attempts of the civilian government to win the support of veterans by flattery. One of the new government's incredible pamphlets told the soldier:

A new Germany greets you! . . . Perhaps you do not return as victors who have completely crushed the enemy to the ground . . . but neither do you return as the vanquished, for the war was stopped at the wishes of the leadership of the country [Reichsleitung] . . . so you can hold your heads high.¹⁴²

It was not difficult to predict the attitude of the front-line soldier when he returned home. He was convinced that the Army, which had fought through four years of cruel war, had been stabbed in the back by cowards and pacifists on the home front.

"TREATY OF SHAME"

In the eyes of the soldier-patriots, the Republic renewed its treason by signing the Treaty of Versailles, a treaty despised by all Germans. When its terms became known in May 1919, mass demonstrations were held; a period of mourning was declared; and cinemas, theaters, and other places of amusement were closed. Throughout the Republic on "Versailles-Diktat Day" the schools of Germany were draped in black.

In retrospect, it seems likely that the primary political reason for the failure of democracy in Germany and the rise of militant dictatorship during the interwar years was German reaction to this "Treaty of Shame," this "Treaty of Treason." With sure political instinct Hitler, in dozens upon dozens of impassioned speeches, played on a constant theme: the betrayal of the Motherland, the direct responsibility of the "November Criminals" for the humiliation of Versailles. "How many times, oh how many times," he later mused, "did I speak about the Versailles-Diktat?"

It has often been suggested that the treaty was not in fact so harsh as the lamentations of German patriots proclaimed, and that if Germany had won World War I, the treaty imposed upon the Allies would have been infinitely harsher. Support for this view may be found in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which Germany dictated to Russia in February 1918. According to its terms, Germany seized control of a vast sweep of land from the Arctic to the Black Sea. It was planned that German dynasties would be established in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and possibly in the Ukraine and in Georgia. By the treaty, Russia lost 25 percent of its territory, over 40 percent of its population, and more than 70 percent of its industrial capacity. "Never in the history of the world," a member of the Reichstag admitted, "has there been an instance of greater annexationist politics. . . ." And seldom has a treaty been so widely acclaimed. A leading Christian newspaper, *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, reflect-

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ing the enthusiasm of the nation, annexation and hailed the triumph of Germany:

Peace without annexation solve. . . . But here, too, finally had to give up in railroad cars filled with . . . knew we needed this. We God knew that, too. So He gave us 2,600 cannons of ammunition for the trucks and much more.

The stated war aims of Germany provide evidence of the kind of exacted from the defeated Allies: conquest of Eastern Europe by Germany, the Low Countries, and German control, as would the in Africa.¹⁴³

But Germans forgot their selves a strict application of "peace without victory." They paying lip service to the right ignored the wishes of German land and Czechoslovakia. The colonial claims, yet all Germany. The treaty set up a new world as unworthy of membership. T only Germany was forced to c treaty was Article 231, in which what was patently untrue: that World War I. Germany was the the treaty.

The result of all this was ered themselves betrayed. If a of an entire country, that spe minister, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau Versailles Treaty. Refusing to remained seated to deliver the foll

We are under no illusions degree of our powerlessness German arms is broken. which meets us, and we ha that as the vanquished we we shall be punished.

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

Army, and the bungling at the support of veterans by credible pamphlets told the

perhaps you do not return as enemy to the ground . . . vanquished, for the war leadership of the country heads high.¹⁴²

of the front-line soldier that the Army, which had been stabbed in the back

public renewed its treason despised by all Germans. Mass demonstrations were in cinemas, theaters, and throughout the Republic on they were draped in black. Primary political reason for rise of militant dictatorship reaction to this "Treaty of Versailles" political instinct Hitler, played on a constant respect responsibility of the of Versailles. "How many did I speak about the

ty was not in fact so proclaimed, and that if imposed upon the Allies this view may be found by dictated to Russia in any seized control of a Sea. It was planned that and, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and in Georgia. By the over 40 percent of its industrial capacity. "Never Reichstag admitted, "has ant politics. . . ." And ed. A leading Christian Kirchenzeitung, reflect-

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ing the enthusiasm of the nation, rejected the idea of peace without annexation and hailed the treaty as evidence of God's special will for Germany:

Peace without annexations and reparations! Such was man's resolve. . . . But here, too, God willed otherwise. . . . And Russia finally had to give up immense booty: 800 locomotives and 8,000 railroad cars filled with all manner of goods and provisions, God knew we needed this. We also needed cannon and munitions. . . . God knew that, too. So out of His generosity—for God is rich—He gave us 2,600 cannons, 5,000 machine guns, 2 million rounds of ammunition for the artillery. He also gave us rifles, airplanes, trucks and much more.

The stated war aims of German political and military leaders also provide evidence of the kind of treaty a victorious Germany would have exacted from the defeated Allies. The war aims called not only for conquest of Eastern Europe but also for domination of the West. Belgium, the Low Countries, and industrial France would all come under German control, as would the British Empire and huge tracts of land in Africa.¹⁴³

But Germans forgot their own precedent and expected for themselves a strict application of Wilsonian ideals of reconciliation and "peace without victory." They were soon disabused. The victors, while paying lip service to the right of "self-determination of nationalities," ignored the wishes of German inhabitants and transferred land to Poland and Czechoslovakia. The treaty promised impartial solutions to colonial claims, yet all German colonies were seized by the victors. The treaty set up a new world organization, but Germany was excluded as unworthy of membership. The treaty talked about disarmament, but only Germany was forced to disarm. The most galling section of the treaty was Article 231, in which the Germans were required to confess what was patently untrue: that they were solely responsible for causing World War I. Germany was threatened with a blockade until she signed the treaty.

The result of all this was that Germans—all Germans—considered themselves betrayed. If any one speech can convey the attitude of an entire country, that speech was given by the German foreign minister, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, when he received the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Refusing to stand as a penitent in the dock, he remained seated to deliver the following memorable commentary:

We are under no illusions as to the extent of our defeat and the degree of our powerlessness. We know that the strength of the German arms is broken. We know the intensity of the hatred which meets us, and we have heard the victor's passionate demands that as the vanquished we shall be made to pay, and as the guilty we shall be punished.

→ This speech is
important & is
continued on p 310.

fill. The call for immediate to which Hitler, the century's brilliant response.

techniques to control the masses emotions. During the war, nationalism attributed to Thucydides. "All countries experienced a need to move men. War produced commitment: to love one's country, to hate the enemy passionately. Destruction mounted, year after year, to justify the carnage by a noble cause and the total demobilization of hatred" on a modern effort at systematic mobilization." 131

In *Mein Kampf* he showed it closely. He devoted a chapter to "it was shown only during the war that a suitably applied propaganda was a very effective use of those

emotions points to another totalitarian government. For totalitarianism is that unlike democracy from mass support and a clear development of a Hitler's Reich: the "voluntary war, the phrase was associated with Hitler, it became an obligation. Citizens were compelled to volunteer in various forms of tyranny. As a result, "compulsion" blurred conventional distinctions between coercion and consent. Through the high art of propaganda," he said, "they not merely acquiesced

as well as psychological, and it was in the public and private sector. All countries, nowhere was government more effective as in Germany, where the "Kriegswirtschaft" or war economy, a relatively free economy in the sense of the "German" emerged in the name of state socialism in which all phases of economic

life." The precedent was important for the future; the Nazi economic system profited enormously from the wartime experience.¹³⁴

Thus, during the years from 1914 to 1918, Germans experienced three essentials of Nazi totalitarianism: totality of commitment; the power of the state to coerce and control the lives and fortunes of its people; and a new form of autocracy basing its legitimacy on the will of the masses, which it manipulated through advanced technology.

Moreover, extremism, which flourished in every belligerent country, seemed to grow with particular virulence in Germany, which had already shown a tendency to succumb to "the eternal either/or." The pull of opposites was felt particularly in the last phase of the war and its immediate aftermath. Feelings of desperation and despair, with the impulse to smash all social systems, vied with vaulting hopes that a "New Order" would bring complete solutions to all Germany's problems. Neither attitude was helpful to the struggling young republic.

After the catastrophic defeat of 1918, many Germans came to hope that the destruction prescribed by Nietzsche had been accomplished. They swung from depression to euphoric expectation that the revolution would establish the long-awaited Reich of the patriots' dreams. The tenacious myth of the coming of a new Barbarossa was renewed with unusual fervor during the dark days of defeat and revolution. And the experience of the war fostered chiliastic thinking in other ways. The sheer horror of war and the enormity of the sacrifice could be justified only if one could believe that a splendid new society would come into being—a society that would preserve the wartime experience of comradesly sacrifice and cooperation. Economic mobilization of the war years contributed to the idea of a patriotic socialism which was to be expected in the New Order, where an economy of "service to state and Volk would form the material foundations for the social and moral edifice of a new Germany."

Life in the trenches—at least in retrospect—had also made a positive contribution to the hopes of a new social order based on what was called "front socialism." For at the front, it was said, soldiers experienced a "close, warm feeling of belonging together, a deep solidarity of all members of the Volk . . . a common life in which all social, political, religious and cultural differences either virtually disappeared or sank into insignificance." One writer saw in this "socialism of the trenches" a true revolution—a German counterpart of the French Revolution of 1789: "In the battle for the existence of our Volk, the new idea of 1914 was born, the idea of German organization, of *Volksgemeinschaft*, of national socialism."¹³⁵

Faith in a coming New Order, in a new Reich, and in the establishment of a *Volksgemeinschaft* was held with religious intensity. The political romantics of 1918—much like the Romantics of an earlier generation—longed for a new kind of religion, "the spiritual organization of the German Volk, of the German nation: the *corpus mysticum*

in this manner, I would certify his morale as he left.

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

1918
Germanicum." In this new religion, concepts of sin and responsibility would be collectivized. "It will not be as individuals that we stand before God to be judged," a neo-Romantic wrote, "but as a Community of Fate, of Race and Blood."¹³⁰

As hope and expectations soared ever higher, all the more sordid seemed the bleak reality of the Weimar Republic, born of defeat and national humiliation and staggering under economic and psychological burdens it was too weak to bear.

THE "NEW MEN" VS. THE "NOVEMBER CRIMINALS"

World War I contributed to the receptibility of Hitler's totalitarian ideology. It also provided his movement with a particular kind of personnel: the "New Men" who, like Hitler, had fought on the Western Front and who would form the overwhelming majority of the leadership group of the Nazi Party.¹³⁷

In August 1914 a young law student who was soon to die at Châlons-sur-Marne wrote these lines in a letter to his family:

Hurrah! At last I have my orders. I report tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock. . . . We are bound to win! Nothing else is possible in the face of such a determined will to victory. My dear ones, be proud that you live in such a time and in such a nation and that you too have the privilege of sending those you love into so glorious a battle.¹³⁸

Thus the unknown Austrian volunteer who was "overwhelmed by impassionate enthusiasm," and who fell on his knees and thanked God for the coming of the war, was no exception. German youth by the thousands welcomed the war and eagerly grasped the opportunity to defend their Fatherland. To a man they were convinced of the righteousness of their cause. Even the pacifist poet Ernst Toller wrote in his memoirs, "I was proud. I was a soldier at last, a privileged defender of the Fatherland."¹³⁹

As the jubilant, singing throng left for the front, only one thought disturbed them. The war, everyone knew, would be over in a month or so, and they might be too late to share in the glory of the hour. As the war dragged on year after year, youthful enthusiasm vanished. The war diary of Ernst Jünger records a terrible transformation. As a sensitive, idealistic volunteer he was nauseated by the sight and stench of rotting corpses, and on a lovely April day he wrote that his sympathy was with the poet:

Surely this day that God has given
Was meant for better uses than to kill.

In the course of two war years, that boy of 19 was changed into a hard and ruthless killer, the veteran of 20 wounds, the proud wearer

306

* D.T. This principle, too, I employed
It was crucial to break the
back of average German religiosity
— I, alone, before God. Such a
new worshipable/paralyzing
the strongest of men.

The Past As Prologue: Hitler

of the *Pour le Mérite*, the wrote in memoirs which sol period:

The turmoil of our f
and thirst for blood.
gripped me—it gripped
powering desire to kill
from my eyes. . . . On

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oughly, that the army had no
very real fact that the sold
patriotic myth-makers were

Guido von List

A prolific writer, List's first success was *Caruntum*, a novel in two volumes published in 1888. The book portrays the Germans, ever brave, forceful, and morally pure, as they reconquered the Roman garrison Caruntum—which was allegedly rundown and immoral—in the fourth century and subsequently established a new Germanic empire. In his book *Deutsch-Mythologische Landschaftsbilder* (German-mythological landscape portraits), published in 1891, he started out with a description of landscapes and their names to develop an Old German cultural history, which he suggested had to be revived. In addition, he wrote epics, such as *Walküren-Weihe* (Valkyrie's consecration) in 1895 and *Ostara's Einzug* (Ostara's entry) in 1896, in both of which Wodan, the father of the gods, is implored to call on his Germans to rise from suppression and reclaim power after a thousand-year twilight. At that point Ostara, the Germanic goddess of spring, will enter into the land dedicated to her: "Ostar land" = Austria.

↓
19.98

During Hitler's years in Vienna, List's main works appeared in quick succession. The Pan-German publications dealt with and quoted them so

extensively that any of their relatives with them. For example Aryo-Germans, 1909) offered men's law, and called for a re-donkey ride for unfaithful women in public. The fact that Jews had a 'Jewish hat', was a 'tell-tale sign of greed even today.'¹⁷

List argued that this pure "demixing" and strict segregation of races should be prohibited. The Aryo-German master race, to rule the world, should be privileged, while the "inferior people" should be assigned the position of slaves.

\$ D. T. During this period in 1919 when he was blind, A. B. thought of him in some

1917 - 1918

analogy with 'the National Socialist rampage' is incontestable."¹⁴ Another historian, stressing Ludendorff's idea "that only expansion can bring full security and that without full security Germany would be unable to survive and develop," observes: "But this conception was not gained from a rational analysis of political reality; it was part of a pre-given political outlook, one not rationally grounded, which so absolutized the conflicts of interest between peoples that conquering and surviving became one."¹⁵ This outlook was the typical Wilhelmian one blindly intensified, the ultimate in proud power politics: pure, and hence unrealistic, realpolitik.¹⁶ "Germany should simply strive for what she needs to live" was Ludendorff's rule covering annexations on all sides.¹⁷ Eschewing mere treaties with future German satellites, he prescribed for Germany in Belgium: "Here too only real power! This we must have. All else is illusion."¹⁸ Hitler preferred to ideologize, yet those same power-political terms of reference for the war he later refought came as if naturally to him after he adopted them on 31 May 1921 to deplore the loss of Ludendorff's eastern conquest.¹⁹

It was while he was assuming Ludendorff's succession beginning at their Putsch trial that Hitler elaborated his program for German expansion and fitted his anti-Semitism to it for German consumption. To achieve this congruence he generalized his animus against the Jew into an ethnic imperialism continuous with the German supremacism practiced in Eastern Europe in 1917-1918. This supremacism was thereby more radicalized than his other World War I originals except perhaps military aggression. The subjugation of non-Germans in conquered eastern territories under Ludendorff reappeared under Hitler as their spoliation, degradation, extermination. Germany itself was Germanized besides as, with the Polish conquest, Hitler ordered German Jews deported to a "General Government" in Poland (another Ludendorff original²⁰) pending worse. The martyrdom of the Jews contributed to validating the moral verdict of 1918 the second time around. And it was central to Hitler's system of false correctives for the 1918 defeat that were suited to fool Germans consciously at most. Once Hitler had subordinated his Jew-baiting to his

* It was the C.O. who insisted upon the
gradualism of the Jews.¹¹⁶ Why? Because
they were an anti-dominant principle
an equalizer who leveled the —

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warmongering, its negative effect on most Germans was blurred or canceled over the years. At length Germany's Jews were lumped together with foreigners in Germany's way. The official euphemisms—"transportation," "special handling," "final solution"—veiled Hitler's Jewish operation only in the sense that they shrouded its starkness.²¹ It tried a few private consciences, but no more aroused German opposition to Hitler than did the devastations and depredations inflicted on Poland and Russia.²² Such organized opposition as did arise in Hitlerized Germany turned on expectations of a German defeat.

The anti-Semitic agitator groomed himself as a drastic latter-day Ludendorff in the mid-1920s by way of gaining the dictatorial power he needed for his traumatic purpose of poisoning Germany's poisoner with Germany succumbing. But the terms of his leadership were a tacit trade-off whereby he would conduct his own traumatic business along with Germany's. He entered into the role of Ludendorff losing World War I the more passionately since it took him back to his own losing struggle of 1914-1918 for mother Germany. His acting for Germany was the central fact of the concurrent German reexperience of 1914-1918. That is, the German nation merely underwent that reexperience, whereas an individual engaged in traumatic reliving will control and even force events. Indeed, to control and thereby detraumatize a traumatic experience is the apparent aim of reliving it. But Hitler controlled events for Germany. For this he was invested by Germans en masse as Ludendorff was not. They deputized him to drive home their 1918 defeat—and then read the signs of a renewal of World War I with submissive foreboding, holding fate to blame.²³ They exalted him personally above both his policy lines like heaven over hell. His atrocities in the ideological line were ascribed to evil henchmen,²⁴ and when he attacked Russia "a wave of compassion and sympathy welled up" for him as the victim of alleged treachery by the Bolshevik ally.²⁵ This unreality principle held even high above the popular consciousness. Only two out of seven Reichswehr chiefs' records or recollections of his briefing session of 28 February 1934 mention his representations on living space,²⁶ and his grim harangue of 30

1941
delayed by the fear

playing field. Thus, a formal
recess over the ¹¹⁷ D.K. (given the
accelerating appropriation of
language by science) was suddenly

1918

Freud's theory of the unconscious is not a discovery but a confession.

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chae, Dionysus, son of Zeus by a woman of Thebes, proves his divine power to the doubting city by inflicting a ruinous mass enchantment on it. The Theban women in particular succumb, like the maenads who have followed Dionysus from Phrygia. Their enchantment is regressive—a flight from domestic constraint to elemental communion with nature in roving bands. Now quiescent, now frenzied, they suckle beasts only to devour them while chanting and swaying in unison.

Remotely comparable regressive behavior in crowds led Freud to suppose that human consciousness was originally shared within a human horde. In Freud's developed conception, that primal, psychically undifferentiated human mass cohered around an individualized, self-willed tyrant holding it in thrall by his overpowering gaze.³⁷ Hitler evidently read Freud's Mass Psychology and Ego Analysis in prison after the Putsch.³⁸ His subsequent insistence on "the right of the personality" (that is, of his personality alone) and the "leadership principle,"³⁹ together with unity of mind and will in his following, suggests a calculated effort to reproduce first in his Party, then in his Reich, the tribal configuration imagined by Freud. But Hitler was less of a terrorizer than his Freudian prototype. In Hans Frank's overstatement of 1946: "One must not say that Hitler violated the German people—he seduced them! They followed him with a mad jubilation. . . . It was a madness, a drunkenness."⁴⁰ Nor was the regressive effect of Hitlerism⁴¹ a trick of psychological manipulation in the manner of Dionysus enticing his antagonist—Pentheus, fledgling tyrant of Thebes—back to babyhood. Even Dionysus only drew on impulses he found latent in Pentheus as in more compliant Thebans. Hitler too, by a sixth sense, caught the mute signals from his constituency: his message of war only verbalized them. Hitlerism harked back to an earlier mass regression contained between the blood lust of 1914 and the shock of defeat in 1918. And Hitlerism tended to become ritualized in its turn, like the celebration of the tempter god.⁴²

Hitler's secret intelligence with his public looks like a reversion to a primitive leader's sharing his followers' thoughts. Ves-

such a choice because he was afraid of his own creation. It lacked sufficient balance to protect itself from destruction in itself. What the G.O. looked to but was not that—a made-

a way of mass being by which the human creature would destroy itself. The G.O. is a creature of its own making, but it is a creature of its own making, and it is a creature of its own making, and it is a creature of its own making.

1918,

1936

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fancies he articulated unconscious¹¹⁹ if he did articulate them. And it does not suffice to specify that he spoke to a national trauma if he personally came across more strongly than what he said. To be sure, his message also carried in transcription. "In 1928-1929 I read and heard about Adolf Hitler and his words went right to my marrow": this experience by a German farmer can be multiplied by millions.¹²⁰ As Hitler liturgically put it to "my columns of flag bearers" in Nuremberg on 11 September 1936 and, by extension, to all Germany lined up behind them: "You once hearkened to a man's voice, and it beat on your hearts, it awakened you, and you followed this voice. You followed it for years without ever having seen the bearer of this voice."¹²¹ Even so, his presence enhanced his message by that "terrific magnetism of his personality."¹²² The question is that enhancing.

A single answer remains—the right one. It is that Hitler's uncanny personal power over Germans came from his having coordinated his private traumatic fury with the national traumatic need.

This was a stupendous stunt. It took the devil's own psychological genius. But even with that, it was possible only because of three historic accidents. Hitler was born of a precedent for the German traumatic need, his breakdown coincided with Germany's in time, and his traumatic project complemented Germany's. Otherwise he would have come away from Pasewalk about like the next traumatic casualty before or after him: hell-bent on reliving his traumatic experience, but without that imperative engaging anyone else.

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An unconscious national regression to time out of mind sounds through the German rhetoric of enslavement and annihilation thrown up by the 1918 defeat. Defeat often carried just such penalties of old, which Hitler went far toward restoring. That does not prevent the apparent logic of traumatic reliving by individuals from fitting the German case. Well may a primitive people that somehow survived a sudden, startling defeat have relived it suicidally in striving to master the attendant fear.

* the act of reliving the trauma is to free the soul, the difference with Hitler is that the prodigious multiplication of the states was made possible only by the emotional incantation provided by the O.D.

1918, 1922

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lessness was chronic with Hitler after World War I. Presumably his mustard gas poisoning brought it on in lieu of the usual depressive apathy. It is consonant with Forster's false diagnosis of psychopathic hysteria. More, Weiss's novelized Hitler is nervously agitated at Pasewalk, and Weiss was informed by Forster. So Hitler may have appropriated his mother's last symptoms in associating his poisoning with hers. That could account for his hallucinating.¹ But so could Forster's treatment. Forster's regular medicine for war hysterics was, by all accounts including his own, a calling down for shameless shirking. That medicine is indicated in Hitler's case by Forster's transparent reference to Hitler in a 1922 discussion of war hysteria as shameless shirking.² A calling down for self-pity instead is suggested by a passage in *Mein Kampf*: "And when in the very last days of the fearful struggle the creeping gas finally attacked me too and began eating into my eyes, and from fear of going blind forever I felt for a moment like despairing, the voice of conscience thundered at me: Miserable wretch, would you cry when thousands are a hundred times worse off than you!"³ That voice is audibly Forster's. Its having thundered like that would not have prevented Forster, when Hitler relapsed, from using hypnosis as his counterpart in Weiss's novel does on A.H.⁴ And the view expressed by Weiss's hero that hypnosis is the patient's achievement was Forster's. By means of hypnosis Forster can have drawn Hitler out of his relapse even without having understood Hitler's complaint any more than did Weiss. Hitler's identification of Forster's voice with his own conscience looks like an aftereffect of just such a treatment. So does the stance as Wil-lens-mensch—man of will—that Hitler struck after Pasewalk.⁵ And so does his perception of Germany's breakdown concurrent with his own as a dysfunction of the national will to be treated by both hortatory and hypnoid devices. His mission would have been recollected from a hypnotic trance with the very uncertainty he did show about how it was conveyed,⁶ on top of that deeper uncertainty about it discernible in his order to the Gestapo to destroy all records of his treatment at Pasewalk.⁷

The gas that hit Hitler involves a complication I evaded. It was

1918

PART ONE

DECISION TO ENTER POLITICS (1918)*

On a hill south of Wervick, we came on the evening of October 13 [1918] into several hours of drumfire with gas shells which continued all night more or less violently. As early as midnight, a number of us passed out, a few of our comrades forever. Toward morning I, too, was seized with pain which grew worse with every quarter hour, and at seven in the morning I stumbled and tottered back with burning eyes; taking with me my last report of the War.

A few hours later, my eyes had turned into glowing coals; it had grown dark around me.

Thus I came to the hospital at Pasewalk in Pomerania, and there I was fated to experience—the greatest villainy of the century.

For a long time there had been something indefinite but repulsive in the air. . . . Even in the hospital, people were discussing the end of the War which they hoped would come soon, but no one counted on anything immediate. I was unable to read the papers.

In November the general tension increased.

And then one day, suddenly and unexpectedly, the calamity descended. Sailors arrived in trucks and proclaimed the revolution; a few Jewish youths were the "leaders" in this struggle for the "freedom, beauty, and dignity" of our national existence. . . .

My first hope was still that this high treason might still be a more or less local affair. . . .

The next few days came and with them the most terrible certainty of my life. The rumors became more and more oppressive. What I had taken for a local affair was now said to be a general revolution. To this was added the disgraceful news from the front. They wanted to capitulate. Was such a thing really possible?

On November 10, the pastor came to the hospital for a short address: now we learned everything.

In extreme agitation, I, too, was present at the short speech. The dignified old gentleman seemed all atremble as he informed us that the House of Hohenzollern should no longer bear the German imperial crown; that the fatherland had become a "republic"; that we must pray to the Almighty not to refuse His blessing to this change and not to abandon our people in the times to come. . . . But when the old gentleman tried to go on, and began to tell us that we must now end the long War, yes, that now that it was lost and we were throwing ourselves upon the mercy of the victors, our fatherland would for the future be exposed to dire oppression, that the armistice

* From *Mein Kampf*, pp. 202-6.

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Stupid sentimentalism
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Life

(1918), 1920

more than he had lacked the courage to implement radically in practice the conclusions he had theoretically, and again radically, drawn. It is, of course, worth noting that the entire edifice of his ideas was based on a fallacy – the fallacy that the 1918 revolution had been the cause of defeat. In fact it had been its consequence. But then that was a fallacy which Hitler shared with a great many Germans.

His triggering experience of 1918 did not yet provide him with a foreign policy programme. He only developed that during the following six or seven years, but we will briefly deal with it now. Initially there was only the decision at all costs to resume the war which, in Hitler's opinion, had been prematurely discontinued. Then came the idea of planning the new war not simply as a replay of the old one but under new, more favourable constellations, exploiting the conflicts which had torn asunder the enemy coalition during and after the First World War. We shall omit the phases through which the development of this idea ran and the various possibilities with which Hitler toyed during the years 1920 to 1925; they can be found in other books. The final result, at any rate, as laid down in *Mein Kampf*, was a plan which envisaged Britain and Italy as allies or benevolent neutrals, the Austro-Hungarian successor states and also Poland as auxiliary nations, France as a secondary enemy to be eliminated at the start, and Russia as the principal enemy to be conquered and permanently subjected, and to be turned into German living space, 'a German India'. That was the plan underlying the Second World War, though it went wrong right from the start when Britain and Poland did not accept the roles intended for them. We shall come back to this point later, as we are now dealing with Hitler's political development.

We are now at the point of Hitler's entry into politics and public life, in the autumn and winter of 1919/20. This was his breakthrough experience following the awakening experience of November 1918. The breakthrough was not so much the fact that he rapidly became the leading figure in the German Workers' Party (which he presently renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party). That did not require a lot. The party, when

which he had always, even as a failure and an 'unrecognized genius', and perhaps especially then, inclined. From this gradually arose what was probably the greatest and most revolutionary decision in his political life – the decision to become *Der Führer*.

That decision cannot be dated, nor was it triggered off by one particular event. We may be certain that it was not present during the initial years of Hitler's political career. Hitler then was content to have become the propaganda speaker, the 'drummer', of a national revivalist movement. He still stood in awe of the fallen leaders of Imperial Germany who used to gather in Munich at that time and hatch plans for the most diverse *coups d'état*; especially of General Ludendorff who had directed the German war effort during its last two years and was now the recognized central figure of all revolutionary Right-wing movements.

Upon closer acquaintance Hitler lost that awe. The consciousness of his assured domination of the masses, which he shared with no one, came gradually to be accompanied by a sense of political and intellectual superiority over all conceivable rivals. At some point or other there must have also come the further realization – a realization by no means a matter of course – that this rivalry was not just about the share-out of posts or the order of precedence in a future Right-wing government but about something in fact unprecedented – the position of an all-powerful permanent dictator, uninhibited by any constitution or division of powers, without any strings of collective leadership.

Here the vacuum was revealed which the disappearance of the monarchy had left behind and which the Weimar Republic was unable to fill since it was accepted neither by the revolutionaries of November 1918 nor by their opponents. It remained, as a well-known slogan put it, a 'republic without republicans'. There emerged in the Germany of the early twenties a mood in which, in Jacob Burckhardt's words, 'the yearning for something analogous to the former powers became irresistible' and which 'was working towards the *one man*'. It was not only as a substitute for their lost Kaiser that a large part of the nation was longing for 'the *one man*', but also because of bitterness over the lost war and impotent anger against what was felt to be an insulting dictated

1918

countless letters to friends and relatives announcing that at last he was a soldier.¹⁰

The officer-training program normally extended over one or two years and was conducted at a series of special schools. The candidate's initial title was that of *Fahnenjunker* (cadet). After three to five months of training he was designated a noncommissioned officer with the rank of corporal. In peacetime he would normally receive a further one to three months' training and then be sent to war school for eight to nine months. After completing war school he would be designated a *Fähnrich* (a rank similar to that of warrant officer) and be assigned to a unit to perform the normal duties of a noncommissioned officer. After satisfactory performance in this rank he would receive his commission. In 1918, however, owing to the demands of war this system had been speeded up. After the initial period of training and his designation as a corporal the *Fahnenjunker* was usually put through a specialized training program in heavy weapons, machine gunnery, or tanks, and then assigned to a unit as a *Fähnrich*. If his regiment escaped heavy losses among its lower officers, he would remain a *Fähnrich* throughout the war; if, however, the casualty rate was high, he might be sent back for accelerated training leading to a commission. In rare cases a *Fähnrich* might be given a battlefield commission, but even then he usually had to complete the modified war school program at the first opportunity.¹¹

Arriving at the 11th Regiment's training camp near Regensburg in the first days of January, Heinrich had little time to worry about the tortuous route ahead of him. He was completely caught up in the adventure of being a soldier and the problems of his first stay away from home. He was thrilled by the rituals of military life—the uniform, the oath (which he described as "very fine"), and his first inspection—which were all proudly recounted to his parents and younger brother. With the pride and status-consciousness of a seventeen-year-old who had just left the classical *Gymnasium* he signed his third letter to his parents with a Latin flourish, "miles Heinrich" (soldier Heinrich).¹²

Despite his pride in soldiering Heinrich had a hard time adjusting to the comparatively Spartan conditions and to the separation from home and family. The long years of tight control had made it difficult for him to be on his own, and he suffered from acute homesickness. In his first month at

Regensburg he wrote twenty-three letters home, and though he received ten or twelve in reply, he continually complained that the family did not write enough. The first sentence of his letter on January 24 is typical: "Dear Mommy, Many thanks for your dear letter. Finally I received something from you." Two days later, having received another note from home, he starts off in the same vein and adds, "I have waited a painfully long time for it." And two letters in three days do not stop him from lamenting on the 29th, "Again today I got nothing from you."¹³

5

His early letters combined pleas for mail with complaints about his living conditions: his room was barren and cold, and he suffered from the attentions of bedbugs; he found the food sparse and uninviting and pleaded for packages of food and enough money to allow him to eat at the canteen or the beer-hall restaurants in town. Trivial mishaps, such as the inadvertent picking up of the wrong clothes at the bath assumed the dimensions of minor tragedies and were reported in detail to the family. In part these complaints and lamentations were appeals for help from Frau Himmler. In response, she dispatched a succession of money orders and of parcels containing food, extra bedding, insect powder, and clean laundry. Apparently much advice and many expressions of worry accompanied the provisions that arrived from Landshut. Under the impact of these messages Heinrich, aware that he must maintain his stance as a brave soldier, would sometimes try to retract the complaint that had set the whole operation in motion. But he always waited until he received the package before changing his tune, and his reserve never lasted long. In the matter of food he was completely unashamed and his letters are filled with appreciative remarks about his mother's cooking ("the *Apfelstrudel* which I ate after the training session was marvelous") and with requests for snacks such as apples and cookies.¹⁴ These requests were sometimes accompanied by the argument that the package would enable him to snack in the barracks and thus lessen the money the family would have to send him for support. Judging from his exuberant descriptions of his eating habits, there was probably some merit in this argument. "This evening I ate *Schweinebraten* in the Bischofshof" (a beer-hall restaurant), he wrote on January 21, "and even though it was excellent it wasn't as good as yesterday. It was still fine." Then as if to underscore the link between his appetite and his

1918

devotion to duty he added, "I am, however, today again a soldier, body and soul."¹⁵

E In his loneliness he pinned his hopes on getting a pass to go home, but for the first six weeks of training he failed to obtain one. A visit from his brother Gebhard, who came over on a pass from his duty station at Bamberg, helped to tide him over. He also made many calls on family friends and relatives in the Regensburg area (one of the first things he asked to have sent from Landshut was a pack of visiting cards) and enjoyed the warm reception he received and the opportunity to share the comforts of their civilian life. As much as possible he clung to the routine of home and frequently attended church. Nevertheless for much of the time he was unhappy and upset. Vague hints of poor health and complaints of depression because he had "nothing to do and froze the greater part of the day" threw his parents, especially his mother, into panic.¹⁶

At the end of the first week, with even more than the proverbial gullibility of a new recruit he picked up a story that he was not going to be kept in officer training but was scheduled for immediate shipment to the front. This tale reduced him to greater depths of gloom and washed away his ardor for combat. To his parents, however, he explained that it only upset him because it would mean the end of his aspirations to become an officer. In desperation he asked them to get in touch with Lieutenant Zahler (apparently Ludwig Zahler, his second cousin who was in the Eleventh Infantry Regiment) and request his help in the matter. The prospect of his assignment to the front terrified his mother as much as it did the boy himself, and their fears were not completely allayed by the authorities' firm assurances that he would remain in officer training. A month later Lieutenant Zahler was still assuring Heinrich that he was not going to be shipped out and urging him to calm down and go through the program.¹⁷

Although the threat of combat kept cropping up every few weeks, by the middle of January Heinrich had settled into a more satisfactory routine. Many of his letters included the phrase "things are going fine with me,"¹⁸ and the number of complaints and scare stories decreased. He enjoyed the training exercises, particularly the field maneuvers, and found his superior officers and the NCOs who conducted the course uniformly "very nice." His effort to be a big boy and play

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the part of a soldier became more successful. He had himself photographed in uniform and sent copies to friends of the family. Toward his twelve-year-old brother he adopted a tone of big-brother camaraderie spiced with a note of superiority and periodic jabs at the failings of "little Ernst."¹⁹

1918

E

Perhaps the most convincing indication of his improved adjustment and of his desire to appear more mature was the fact that he was smoking, although he had to beg the tobacco from his father. He also indulged in occasional pronouncements about the general course of the war. Thus on one occasion the way in which the press handled an erroneous report of Ludendorff's resignation "didn't please" him; on another he reported with enthusiasm that the garrison in Regensburg was being held in readiness for possible use against a strike in Nuremberg and added sarcastically, "One notes, however, once again, the splendid German unity."²⁰

His letters home, though seldom falling below three a week, grew less frequent. Yet his requests for mail were as insistent as ever, and from time to time he became quite unpleasant about the dearth of replies: "Dear Mother," he began a letter on March 23, "Many thanks for your nice news (which I didn't get). It is really mean of you not to have written."²¹ He was still capable of falling into panic over the possibility of being sent to the front and could still feel it necessary to buy war bonds to keep in the good graces of his commander. Even in his good moods he appears to have needed continuous expression of his mother's devotion and concern. Repeated scare stories, especially about his health, were apparently unconscious efforts to elicit demonstrations of affection. Often after an incident had passed he would comfort her with such phrases as "dry your tears," as if seeking to induce additional expressions of her love.²²

The main cause of his increased ability to keep the pressures and feelings of inadequacy under control was the resumption of direct contact with his family. In early February his father came to Regensburg for a weekend with him. Shortly thereafter Heinrich began to get the long-sought passes for weekends home; between February and June he received at least fourteen passes or short leaves, which meant that he went home three weekends in four. Even for a seventeen-year-old this was a comparatively pleasant form of military service.²³

1918

E He seems to have been comforted and strengthened by the renewal of direct parental supervision. As in earlier days, parental concern in the Himmler household meant rigid record-keeping and accounting—every letter, package, and money order was duly noted down by Heinrich and his mother. It also meant the maintenance of proper social forms and the performance of small social duties, such as sending a postcard home whenever he visited relatives or family friends. A letter to his mother on March 11 expresses his embarrassment at having failed to write her while he was on a weekend visit to Gebhard who had been transferred to Passau. It also meant a revival of his parents' interest in proper thoughts and values as well as correct behavior. On March 1 Heinrich gravely assures his mother that his father need not worry, he is not reading Zola. The danger of corruption by a realistic socialist writer was apparently more threatening than the risks of war!²⁴

He cultivated no close friendships with his fellow trainees but worked hard to excel and to impress his superiors. When near the end of February his commander praised his work in the course, he was very gratified. More at peace with himself and his position, he resumed many of the interests that he had enjoyed before entering the service. After one weekend at home he took his bicycle back to Regensburg and began making tours of the neighborhood in the late afternoons and evenings. Frequently these outings brought him to the home of the Wills, who were old friends of the family, or of his second cousins, the Patins. He prized these quiet evenings and often reported to his parents the special pleasures, such as an occasional large piece of cake, he got from them.²⁵

Amidst all of his other activities he maintained a steady correspondence with such "right" people as former teachers, well-placed relatives, and influential family friends. A frequent recipient of his letters was Frau Hager. He was still interested in Luisa and badgered his parents for news about her when they went to Munich. Somewhat on guard against writing her too frequently, he usually alternated his letters between mother and daughter. Not all the attention to Frau Hager, however, was due to his interest in Luisa; sometimes he received a package and sometimes some of the free opera and theater tickets to which Herr Hager was entitled by virtue of his official position.²⁶

In Regensburg Heinrich revealed a touch for manipulating

ler's grasp of how to create a mass-movement and secure power on the basis of these ideas.

The three parties which interested Hitler were the Austrian Social Democrats, Georg von Schönerer's Pan-German Nationalists, and Karl Lueger's Christian Social Party.

From the Social Democrats Hitler derived the idea of a mass party and mass propaganda. Studying the Social Democratic Press and Party speeches, Hitler reached the conclusion that: 'the psyche of the broad masses is accessible only to what is strong and uncompromising. . . . The masses of the people prefer the ruler to the suppliant and are filled with a stronger sense of mental security by a teaching that brooks no rival than by a teaching which offers them a liberal choice. They have very little idea of how to make such a choice and thus are prone to feel that they have been abandoned. Whereas they feel very little shame at being terrorized intellectually and are scarcely conscious of the fact that their freedom as human beings is impudently abused. . . . I also came to understand that physical intimidation has its significance for the mass as well as the individual. . . . For the successes which are thus obtained are taken by the adherents as a triumphant symbol of the righteousness of their own cause; while the beaten opponent very often loses faith in the effectiveness of any further resistance.'

From Schönerer Hitler took his extreme German Nationalism, his anti-Socialism, his anti-Semitism, his hatred of the Hapsburgs and his programme of reunion with Germany. But he learned as much from what he believed were the three cardinal errors committed by Schönerer and the Nationalists in their political tactics: The Nationalists failed to grasp the importance of the social problem, directing their attention to the middle classes and neglecting the masses. They wasted their energy in a parliamentary

struggle and failed to est leaders of a great move mistake of attacking the (their forces instead of con of leadership,' Hitler wrote the attention of the people and taking care that nothin tion. . . . The leader of ge to make different opponen longed to one category.'

It was in the third party and their remarkable leader found brilliantly displayed tics, the lack of which har Nationalists. Lueger had n of Vienna—in many ways tive post in Austria—and l cialists under his leadership party in the Austrian parlia criticize in Lueger's progr was based on religious and grounds ('I decide who is a and he rejected the intran: Pan-Germans, seeking to pr Hapsburg State with its But Hitler was prepared to admiration for Lueger's le:

The strength of Lueger's middle class of Vienna, the ness men and artisans, the ipal employees. 'He devoted political activity,' Hitler n ning over those sections existence was in danger.'

Finally, instead of quar Lueger made it his ally and ditional loyalty to crown which again points forward

1918-19: the Saar, Alsace-Lorraine, the German colonies, above all Danzig, and the lands incorporated in the new state of Poland.

But this was only a part of Hitler's programme in foreign policy. As Hitler had said quite plainly in *Mein Kampf*, his aim was to extend the frontiers of Germany to include those people of German race and speech who, even in 1914, had lived outside the Reich, the Germans of Austria, and the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia, who, before 1914, had formed part, not of the German Empire, but of the Hapsburg Monarchy.

Hitler was an Austrian, a fact of the greatest importance in understanding his foreign policy. For, in the 1860s, when Bismarck carried out the unification of Germany and founded the German Empire, he deliberately excluded from it the Germans of the Hapsburg Monarchy. After the collapse of the Monarchy these Germans became citizens either of the Austrian Republic or of Czechoslovakia. Amongst these Germans of the old Hapsburg Monarchy there had sprung up before the war an extreme Pan-German nationalism which sought to re-establish a union of all Germans in a single Greater Germany, and which was now violently opposed to the claims of the Czechs and the other former subject peoples of the Monarchy to nationhood and equality with the Germans.

Born on the frontier between Germany and Austria, Hitler felt called upon to reunite the two German states which had been left divided by Bismarck's solution of the German problem. His hatred for the Czechs was the product of his early life in an empire where the Germans felt themselves on the defensive against the rising tide of Slav nationalism, most strongly represented in Hitler's experience by the Czech working men whom he met in Vienna. Here, too, is to be found one of the roots of the distinction Hitler made between the *Volk*, all those of German

race and speech, and the extensive with the first the old Hapsburg Monarchy include peoples of different

Even this does not express belief that Germany's quote. In the Nazi Party early as 1920, is to Hitler's foreign policy *raum*, living room for advocated a continentation eastwards, seeking Eastern Europe, in the Ukraine, and Russia. The resumption of the ancient and its logical consequence Hitler faced and accepted and when the German Union in 1941 it was its outlines are already to be

Hitler looked to the East and Russia for the Order, the empire of the slave labour of the inferior the movement of population the oppression of whole races and civilization, the destruction or medical facilities for Jews, systematic extermination

In these schemes for the world and remodelling the biological principles of geopolitics is to be discarded, imagination set no bounds to power. As Papen remarked the limitless character aground.' In the early 1930s than the fantasies with which early morning hours were

The German reception of the Italians was cordial, but Ribbentrop made it quite plain that Hitler would not agree to make demands of the French which might drive them to continue the war from North Africa or England. For this reason, no less than for the effect on British opinion, Mussolini's annexationist ambitions would have to be deferred. Hitler proposed to occupy only three-fifths of France, to allow a French Government in Unoccupied France, to promise not to make use of the French fleet during the war and to leave the French colonies untouched.

These were heavy blows for Mussolini, but he was in no position to argue. Hitler agreed not to conclude an armistice with France until she had come to terms with Italy as well, but he declined Mussolini's suggestion of joint German-Italian negotiations with the French. He had no intention of sharing his triumph.

- For the signing of the armistice Hitler had appointed the exact place in the Forest of Compiègne, north-east of Paris, where Foch had dictated the terms of capitulation to the German delegation on 11 November 1918. The old restaurant car in which the negotiations had taken place was brought out from its Paris museum and set up on the identical spot it had occupied in 1918.

It was a hot June afternoon when Hitler led his small but impressive retinue—Göring, Keitel, Brauchitsch, Raeder, Ribbentrop, and Hess—through the elms and pines up to the block of granite on which the French inscription read: 'Here on 11 November 1918 succumbed the criminal pride of the German Reich . . . vanquished by the free peoples which it tried to enslave.'

Hitler received the French delegates in silence. He stayed to listen to the reading of the preamble, then rose, gave a stiff salute with his outstretched arm, and, accompanied by his retinue, left the railway car.

As he strode back down the waiting cars the German *über Alles*, and the Nazi Hitler, the time agitator, who told them that he would never rest until the Treaty of Versailles, had been avenged. He had kept his promise. 1918 was avenged.

With France Hitler had had the French Government comparative moderation of the armistice was signed. But the news which Hitler had since the middle of June, that the British were willing to come to terms still failed to come. Tentative neutral capitals produced Churchill, speaking in the name of the Government's whatever the odds, 'so that the Commonwealth last will still say: "This was the end of the war."

Hitler at last summoned more than a month after the month's silence left little doubt of Hitler's genuine astonishment. He resolved to continue the war for a move on the part of Hitler decided to make a last appeal once more to reassemble Great Britain as much as possible in a position to make the vanquished begging speaking in the name of why this war must go on.'

Hitler had already issued his declaration of Britain three days before Britain would not come to terms.

War-Lord, 1939-45

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when Hitler led his Böring, Keitel, Braud Hess—through the of granite on which ere on 11 November ride of the German free peoples which it

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The Inconclusive Victory, 1939-40

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As he strode back down the avenue of trees to the waiting cars the German band played *Deutschland über Alles*, and the Nazi Horst Wessel Song. The one-time agitator, who told the Munich crowds in 1920 that he would never rest until he had torn up the Treaty of Versailles, had reached the peak of his career. He had kept his promise: the humiliation of 1918 was avenged.

With France Hitler had every reason to be satisfied. The French Government had been relieved by the comparative moderation of the German demands, and the armistice was signed without further difficulty. But the news which Hitler had been waiting for since the middle of June, a sign for London that the British were willing to consider peace negotiations, still failed to come. Tentative soundings through the neutral capitals produced no result. On 18 June Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons, declared the Government's determination to fight on whatever the odds, 'so that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say: "This was their finest hour".'

Hitler at last summoned the Reichstag for 19 July, more than a month after the collapse of France. The month's silence left little doubt that the British, to Hitler's genuine astonishment and even regret, were resolved to continue the war. After waiting in vain for a move on the part of the British Government Hitler decided to make a last gesture. 'In this hour, I feel it to be my duty before my own conscience to appeal once more to reason and common sense in Great Britain as much as elsewhere. I consider myself in a position to make this appeal since I am not the vanquished begging favours, but the victor speaking in the name of reason. I can see no reason why this war must go on.'

Hitler had already issued the directive for the invasion of Britain three days before his speech. If Britain would not come to terms she must be forced

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

Blood also played a very important role in Hitler's private life. Apparently he thought a great deal about drinking and sucking blood. He wondered, for example, what the blood soup of the ancient Frisians tasted like; in commenting on the history of the world as the chronic warfare of one people against another, he said, "One creature *drinks* the blood of another. The death of one nourishes the other." And he wrote that the Jew was a spider which "*sucked the people's blood* out of its pores."

He liked to have his own blood drawn from his body, and enjoyed telling his secretaries what fun it was to watch leaches as they sucked it out. When one of them shuddered and said she didn't like the looks of the horrible animals, he stopped her by saying, "Don't say that. They're sweet little, dear little animals who have done me a great deal of good." He also had his doctor, Morrell, draw his blood and save it in test tubes so that he could gaze at it. Was he afraid that there was something wrong with his own blood?

He liked to taunt members of his intimate circle when he saw them eating meat. Referring to Morell's collection of the Führer's own blood, he said, "I will have blood sausage made from my excess blood as a special culinary treat for you. Why not? You like meat so much." He repeated the offer.^{61a}

Hitler's great concern about infected blood was manifested in dozens of political speeches and was the underlying reason for the Nuremberg Racial Laws, which he called "The Laws for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor." He personally supervised the wording of the text. His private and public speeches are redolent with metaphors of disease, blood poisoning, illness, tubercles, spirochetes, and microbes. Toward the end of February 1942, just after the Wannsee Conference which organized the "final solution" to the Jewish problem, Hitler listed himself among the great benefactors of mankind who had isolated dangerous disease germs: "The discovery of the Jewish virus is one of the greatest revolutions that has ever taken place. The fight we are carrying on is of the same nature as that waged by Pasteur and Koch during the last century. How many diseases have their origin in Jewish virus! . . . We shall only retain our health when we eliminate the Jew."⁶²

Of all the infections to which mortal flesh is prone, Hitler most feared—and was most fascinated by—syphilis. As a young man he talked about the disease by the hour.⁶³ Years later, when he wrote his memoirs, he devoted page after passionate page to the evil power of the disease, insisting that it was the true reason for Germany's defeat in 1918 and proclaiming that the struggle against syphilis was the most important single task confronting statesmen. In reaching for the worst epithet he could hurl at the Weimar Republic, he accused it of surrendering the German nation "to syphilization" by Jews and Negroes.⁶⁴

1918, 1942

The Image and the Man

Cleanliness and Purity

Hitler often talked about dirt, described as being filthy. Thus the satisfactory grades had "filthy necks": artists sat on "the dung-heap of liter *dirty* and false." To democrats he wrote: "wretch! Step back, you are soiling the filthy: 'The smell of these caf Added to this were their *dirty* clothes . . . Was there any form of *filth* . . . participate? When carefully cutting of a little Jew, blinded by the sudden b corpse. . . . If the Jews were alone in . . . in *dirt* and *filth*.'" Hitler used the of the Jewish people, *Entjudung* (de speaking of delousing or fumigation).⁶⁵

Hitler was a scrupulously, indeed boyhood friend recalls that during the from hunger, he suffered from a lack pathologically sensitive about anything costs, he would keep his linen and, a chancellor, he washed his hair every often, brushed his teeth and rinsed h shaved twice a day and never used— told a British journalist that when h resolved that someday he would be ric an open fireplace in every room and t His well-tailored shirts were generally m

Food and Drink

Throughout his life, Hitler seemed food. His speeches on foreign policy reg of food supply; private conversations homilies on healthy foods; his library cial diets. He told his dentist that a par infected his colon and hoped that a i destroy it.⁶⁷

He may have become a vegetarian disorder, but he gave a whole variety meat. He told one doctor that he had youth, but to others he said that prio quantities of meat, particularly fat porl year 1931 as the beginning of his vegeta

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ADOLF HITLER

The Child As Father to the Man

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Years later he would remind his followers that when he started his mission to the German people he was 30 years old, exactly the same age that another Messiah began His ministry.

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MISSION IN MUNICH, 1919-1933

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The Munich to which Hitler returned in the spring of 1919 seemed to be fulfilling the direst predictions of the Viennese pamphleteers. The graceful capital of the Wittelsbachs, the home of *Gemütlichkeit* and good-humored apathy, was being taken over by foreign radicals, Jews, and other Dark Ones.

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The postwar history of the city is a sorry tale of regimes which were, in turn, inefficient, daft, corrupt, and terroristic—a history which served as excellent grist for the mills of Hitler's later propaganda. He did not allow the German people to forget that he had saved the Motherland from the horrors of democracy—from the time, for example, "when Israel was king of Bavaria."²¹⁴

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After the collapse of the Imperial German Armies on the Western Front, Kurt Eisner, a Jewish journalist recently released from prison and considered a "foreigner" because he spoke with a Berliner accent, had become leader of the Bavarian Independent Socialists. He raised the old cry of *Los von Berlin!*, and on 8 November 1918 proclaimed a socialist republic in conservative, Catholic Bavaria.

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His support dwindled rapidly during the three short months of his regime. After the disastrous elections of January 1919, in which he received less than 3 percent of the popular vote, he was shot down as he was on his way to tender his resignation. His assassin, Count Arco auf Valley, was a young man who had been rejected for membership in the racist Thule Society because of a Jewish grandmother. The founder of the society paid him a twisted tribute for the murder: "He wanted to show that even a half-Jew could carry out an act of heroism."

There can only be the

Eisner's confused political inheritance was seized by a motley group of radical intellectuals who, after setting up headquarters in the queen's bedroom of the Wittelsbach palace, began the most bizarre governmental experiment in European history. The poet Ernst Toller was president of the Executive Council. While Munich faced starvation, he issued decrees announcing that the regeneration of the human soul was to be sought in art and free love. Silvio Gesell, leader of a free-money clique, found ample opportunity to experiment with his theories as minister of finance. A Dr. Franz Lipp, the new commissar for foreign affairs, was thoroughly enjoying a full-blown psychosis. His foreign policy consisted largely in writing a series of remarkable letters, including one to Pope Benedict XV to lodge a formal protest that some-

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of the *Pour le Mérite*, the commander of a Storm Battalion. He now wrote in memoirs which sold tens of thousands of copies in the postwar period:

The turmoil of our feelings was called forth by rage, alcohol, and thirst for blood. . . . I was boiling over with a fury which gripped me—it gripped us all—in an inexplicable way. The overpowering desire to kill gave me wings. Rage squeezed bitter tears from my eyes. . . . Only the spell of primeval instincts remained.

And he acclaimed what he called the "New Man" born in battle on the Western Front. Since we shall meet him again in the Free Corps and among the Nazis, we had better be introduced:

This is the New Man, the storm soldier, the elite of Central Europe. A completely new race, cunning, strong, and packed with purpose. Far behind them awaits . . . the nations whose inner foundations will be torn asunder by the attacks of this New Man—of the audacious, the battle-proven, the man merciless both to himself and to others. This war is not the end. It is only the call to power. It is the forge in which the world will be beaten into new shapes and new associations. New forms must be molded with blood, and power must be seized with a hard fist.¹⁴⁰

Of course, it should not be suggested that the attitude of these "New Men" is typical of all German soldiers in World War I. A convenient antidote to Jünger can be found in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. But the popularity of Remarque belongs to a later era. He was no spokesman for the war veterans of the immediate postwar years. His was a statement of a humane spirit looking back from the relative peace of 1928.¹⁴¹

Germans were totally unprepared for the sudden news of defeat in 1918. Patriots spread the story that the army had never really been defeated in the field. Rather, like Wagner's Siegfried, the Fatherland had been betrayed and given a stab in the back (*Dolchstoß*) by the "November Criminals"—that is, by traitorous Jews and other revolutionaries at home. The story was a myth. Time and again it has been pointed out that the Supreme Command threw in the towel well before the revolution; that during the war years it had exercised military, political, and economic control over the civilian government; and finally, that it was General Ludendorff who forced an unwilling civilian government to sue for peace. Yet the historical importance of the legend is not that it was false but that it was *believed to be true*. By a process of rationalization born of humiliation and wounded pride, German patriots believed, or came to believe, completely and thoroughly, that the army had never been defeated after all. Apart from the very real fact that the soldiers wanted desperately to believe it, the patriotic myth-makers were aided by two other factors: effective and

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THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

widespread propaganda disseminated by the Army, and the bungling attempts of the civilian government to win the support of veterans by flattery. One of the new government's incredible pamphlets told the soldier:

A new Germany greets you! . . . Perhaps you do not return as victors who have completely crushed the enemy to the ground . . . but neither do you return as the vanquished, for the war was stopped at the wishes of the leadership of the country [*Reichsleitung*] . . . so you can hold your heads high.¹⁴²

It was not difficult to predict the attitude of the front-line soldier when he returned home. He was convinced that the Army, which had fought through four years of cruel war, had been stabbed in the back by cowards and pacifists on the home front.

"TREATY OF SHAME"

In the eyes of the soldier-patriots, the Republic renewed its treason by signing the Treaty of Versailles, a treaty despised by all Germans. When its terms became known in May 1919, mass demonstrations were held; a period of mourning was declared; and cinemas, theaters, and other places of amusement were closed. Throughout the Republic on "Versailles-Diktat Day" the schools of Germany were draped in black.

In retrospect, it seems likely that the primary political reason for the failure of democracy in Germany and the rise of militant dictatorship during the interwar years was German reaction to this "Treaty of Shame," this "Treaty of Treason." With sure political instinct Hitler, in dozens upon dozens of impassioned speeches, played on a constant theme: the betrayal of the Motherland, the direct responsibility of the "November Criminals" for the humiliation of Versailles. "How many times, oh how many times," he later mused, "did I speak about the *Versailles-Diktat*?"

It has often been suggested that the treaty was not in fact so harsh as the lamentations of German patriots proclaimed, and that if Germany had won World War I, the treaty imposed upon the Allies would have been infinitely harsher. Support for this view may be found in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which Germany dictated to Russia in February 1918. According to its terms, Germany seized control of a vast sweep of land from the Arctic to the Black Sea. It was planned that German dynasties would be established in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and possibly in the Ukraine and in Georgia. By the treaty, Russia lost 25 percent of its territory, over 40 percent of its population, and more than 70 percent of its industrial capacity. "Never in the history of the world," a member of the Reichstag admitted, "has there been an instance of greater annexationist politics. . . ." And seldom has a treaty been so widely acclaimed. A leading Christian newspaper, *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, reflect-

The Past As Prologue: Hitler and

ing the enthusiasm of the nation, annexation and hailed the triumph of Germany:

Peace without annexation solve. . . . But here, too finally had to give up in railroad cars filled with. . . knew we needed this. We God knew that, too. So. He gave us 2,600 cannon of ammunition for the trucks and much more.

The stated war aims of Germany provided evidence of the kind of exacted from the defeated Allies: conquest of Eastern Europe, Belgium, the Low Countries, and German control, as would the in Africa.¹⁴³

But Germans forgot their selves a strict application of "peace without victory." They paying lip service to the right ignored the wishes of German land and Czechoslovakia. The colonial claims, yet all Germany. The treaty set up a new world as unworthy of membership. T only Germany was forced to. the treaty was Article 231, in which what was patently untrue: that World War I. Germany was the the treaty.

The result of all this was ered themselves betrayed. If a of an entire country, that speaker minister, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau Versailles Treaty. Refusing to remain seated to deliver the fol-

We are under no illusions degree of our powerlessness. German arms is broken. which meets us, and we have that as the vanquished we we shall be punished.

The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

ing the enthusiasm of the nation, rejected the idea of peace without annexation and hailed the treaty as evidence of God's special will for Germany:

Peace without annexations and reparations! Such was man's resolve. . . . But here, too, God willed otherwise. . . . And Russia finally had to give up immense booty: 800 locomotives and 8,000 railroad cars filled with all manner of goods and provisions, God knew we needed this. We also needed cannon and munitions. . . . God knew that, too. So out of His generosity—for God is rich—He gave us 2,600 cannons, 5,000 machine guns, 2 million rounds of ammunition for the artillery. He also gave us rifles, airplanes, trucks and much more.

The stated war aims of German political and military leaders also provide evidence of the kind of treaty a victorious Germany would have exacted from the defeated Allies. The war aims called not only for conquest of Eastern Europe but also for domination of the West. Belgium, the Low Countries, and industrial France would all come under German control, as would the British Empire and huge tracts of land in Africa.¹⁴³

But Germans forgot their own precedent and expected for themselves a strict application of Wilsonian ideals of reconciliation and "peace without victory." They were soon disabused. The victors, while paying lip service to the right of "self-determination of nationalities," ignored the wishes of German inhabitants and transferred land to Poland and Czechoslovakia. The treaty promised impartial solutions to colonial claims, yet all German colonies were seized by the victors. The treaty set up a new world organization, but Germany was excluded as unworthy of membership. The treaty talked about disarmament, but only Germany was forced to disarm. The most galling section of the treaty was Article 231, in which the Germans were required to confess what was patently untrue: that they were solely responsible for causing World War I. Germany was threatened with a blockade until she signed the treaty.

The result of all this was that Germans—all Germans—considered themselves betrayed. If any one speech can convey the attitude of an entire country, that speech was given by the German foreign minister, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, when he received the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Refusing to stand as a penitent in the dock, he remained seated to deliver the following memorable commentary:

We are under no illusions as to the extent of our defeat and the degree of our powerlessness. We know that the strength of the German arms is broken. We know the intensity of the hatred which meets us, and we have heard the victor's passionate demands that as the vanquished we shall be made to pay, and as the guilty we shall be punished.

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

tory, he compelled others to believe it was true. How else can one explain the statement of Professor Percy Schramm, who had watched Hitler for many years:

It is almost impossible to convey to those who never experienced it the personal impact of Hitler. Such could be its strength that it sometimes seemed a kind of psychological force radiating from him like a magnetic field. It could be so intense as to be almost physically tangible.⁷⁵

Hitler never actually possessed the personal strength, integrity, and purpose that he projected. But he gave the illusion of possessing them. And that was sufficient. He moved men because he was able—in Heiden's phrase—"to act out greatness," to change himself from a hesitant and unsure little man to a person of towering historic force who paralyzed opposition and commanded millions to do his will.

Thus the "acting out" which was for him a psychic necessity became one of his greatest political assets.

The Power of Delusion

I go the way that Providence dictates . . .
—Adolf Hitler

Hitler, it has often and rightly been said, was a man of delusions. Like other borderline personalities, he indulged in "omnipotent fantasies . . . of power, greatness and perfection."⁷⁶ In Hitler's case, delusions were an important source of his political effectiveness.

Ever since 1918, when he imagined he heard a strange voice calling to him in his hospital bed at Pasewalk, he had deluded himself into believing that destiny had chosen him as the German Messiah. This delusion would sustain him through the darkest days of his career and help him to convince millions that he really was their heaven-sent savior.

It seems likely that this hallucination was psychologically related to his role playing, which was so effective in winning followers. The incident also shows the splitting of his ego—another mark of the borderline. In his hospital bed, one part of himself had spoken to another part through the means of a disembodied "voice." He did not conclude that he was delirious; he firmly believed that he had established a profound relationship between himself and destiny, or God, or the Spirit of the Motherland—a relationship that held the absolute assurance of life-sustaining and life-saving properties. Years later he would say, "I go the way that Providence dictates, with all the assurance of a sleepwalker." Convinced that he had undergone the experience of being called by destiny, Hitler was able to inspire in others exactly the same reaction, only now it would be *his* miraculously compelling voice which became the "outer" voice of Germany's destiny. And when his followers had the choice between following the dictates of reason and independent thought

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Hitler's long harangue

been achieved by its most notorious son. The "problem" of the Sudeten Germans of Czechoslovakia came next. To Hitler, the Czechoslovak Republic represented everything he despised about the time of Versailles. The new country had been formed in 1918 out of parts and parcels of the old Austrian Empire. Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Hungarians, Poles, and Ruthenians, held together by a newly created democratic form of republic, were asked to live in harmony. This was not an unlikely notion, since the fledgling republic was comparatively rich in minerals and had strong industry and agriculture and therefore a good basis for economic existence.

In 1918, everyone tried to follow the American example: Americans of diverse national and religious backgrounds seemed to be able to live together in a brand-new nation. But Europe was different. Old hatreds, both ethnic and religious, persisted. Countries were small and crowded. Perhaps if the different components of Czechoslovakia had been reassembled three thousand miles away in a vast country like America, the Czechs could have had their wish. Meanwhile, underneath the appearance of a successful new nation, the dream of its founder and first president, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, was full of cracks and fissures.

Much of Czechoslovakia's German-speaking population lived in the Sudetenland, the mountain range called the Erz Gebirge, just south of the German border. There were ancient hatreds. During the First World War, Czechs had fought on the Allied side. The mutual dislikes of Czechoslovakia's Slavs, Hungarians, and Germans were as old as their mountains. The Czechoslovak Germans were often accused of arrogance. Indeed, the city of Prague and its ancient university were jewels of the German-speaking world and a source of German pride, though not of arrogance. It was said that some upper-class Czechoslovaks avoided speaking their own language, particularly in Prague or international resorts like Karlsbad and Marienbad, to "avoid being taken for servants." The Czechoslovak Germans, in turn, felt that they were discriminated against by the Slavic government and that they were entitled to better representation.

As is often the case in political disputes, there was some basis of truth in each of the accusations. Mutual antipathies simmered and grew. German-speaking Czechoslovak citizens, encouraged by blatant propaganda from the German side of the border, decided that their day had come. After all, they were, in their eyes and in the eyes of their "brothers" across the border, superior people, neat, clean, conscientious, hard-working, educated — in a word, German. The German pejorative term for something slovenly and inefficient is "Polish

farm" (*Polnische*).

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to be held in Munich early in 1919.⁴¹

Heinrich lent a hopeful ear to every rumor which offered some prospect of realizing his dream of securing a commission. He stayed in Regensburg and obtained a position at a small salary, working with his cousin Lieutenant Ludwig Zahler in the demobilization records section of the regiment. Along with Zahler (to whom even in his letters home he referred as Lieutenant Zahler rather than Lu) he rented a room in Regensburg and settled down to a pleasant routine. He resumed his social visits in the neighborhood and his regular attendance at the theater. In early December Gebhard returned from the front and the brothers spent many pleasant hours together in Regensburg. It gradually became clear however that the special war school was a mirage, and that there was little or no chance that any officer candidates born after 1899 would be allowed to complete their training. Heinrich, whose age was a year under this limit, began to spend more of his free time studying French and brushing up on the German writers from Otto Ludwig to Gerhart Hauptmann, in the event that after all he would return to the *Gymnasium*.⁴²

His uncertainty about the future was increased by the signs of radical social change associated with the revolution. He was unsettled by stories of attacks on officers which had occurred here and there, even in Bavaria, and begged his parents to send him some civilian clothes so that he would be able to travel safely. His passion for inside information made him lend a ready ear to conservative scare stories, which he eagerly passed on to his parents. Thus, after attending a closed meeting of the *Bayerische Volkspartei (BVP)*, an organization newly formed to rally conservative Bavarians, he was nearly overcome with foreboding. "What one hears is shattering and perhaps twice as bad as I told the Schulers [family friends in Landshut]. Buy all of the coal you can and also all the food, even if you have to buy it by the pound. In 14 days there will be no more coal and no more electric light. . . . Father, you must join the *Bayerische Volkspartei*, it is the only hope." At the end of this letter, written on November 30, he added a private note in shorthand to his father: "Now only for you. I don't know how it is in Landshut. Don't let mother go out alone at night. Not without protection. Be careful in your letters. You can't be sure."⁴³

1919

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Heinrich's fears were made more bearable by the new opportunities to become involved in behind-the-scenes maneuvering. One of Gebhard's former school friends was a leading *BVP* spokesman in Regensburg, and Heinrich used this opportunity to gather information and flirt with politics. He relished his role, even though much of his involvement and much of the danger which he saw everywhere was imaginary. His ideal is perhaps expressed in the concluding sentence of the shorthand note to his father quoted above: "Have no fears on my account for I am sly as a fox."⁴⁴

In spite of the pleasure he derived from it, however, he could not forever chase rumors in Regensburg. His last chance to gain admission to officers' school was to wait until the regiment arrived from the West and then somehow persuade its commander to retain him in service. When the regiment arrived in the second week of December, Heinrich's request was turned down. On December 17 he was informed that all *Fahnenjunker* of the 1900 age group were to be discharged.⁴⁵

With that Heinrich gave up and returned to Landshut a few days before Christmas. He left the army, frustrated in his dream of acquiring military glory and with the shadowy status of a *Fahnenjunker* who had earned his qualification for yet never attained the rank of *Fähnrich* or received a formal commission. With his own military hopes in ruins and conditions in Germany almost in chaos, his return to Landshut was a sorry ending to a year that had promised so much and produced so little.⁴⁶

1919

Chapter V

A Young Man Groping: 1919

At the time of his entry into military training in January 1918 Heinrich had completed seven years of the nine-year program at the *Gymnasium* and had attended the eighth class for a few weeks. When he returned to Landshut shortly before Christmas 1918, his family's views and his own values made it virtually inevitable that he would resume his education. In spite of this, however, his confusion and frustration might well have undermined his resolve and caused him to drop out, had he been required to go through the normal last two years to obtain his *Abitur* (graduation certificate). But the Education Ministry's emergency regulations covering men returning from service offered him an opportunity to complete his secondary education with a minimum of inconvenience. One of these orders established special *Gymnasium* classes (*Sonderklassen*) for veterans and specified that those who had attended the eighth year prior to entering the service could qualify for graduation after two semesters. As an additional incentive, the semesters were shortened so that a veteran could complete two years of regular work in an intensified six-month course. For Heinrich this meant that, if he completed the two semesters of *Sonderklasse*, he would graduate in the early summer of 1919, the exact time at which he would have graduated if he had never entered the army.¹

The system of *Sonderklassen* made certain concessions to the special problems and greater maturity of veterans but left the authoritarian atmosphere of the *Gymnasium* untouched. The students were still treated as schoolboys. The curriculum retained its major emphasis on Latin, Greek, and German, and classes in science, history, and religion were merely supplementary. The impression that little had changed was heightened by the fact that the returnees, many of whom had entered the service at the same time, tended to be reunited in the same *Sonderklasse*. Thus when Heinrich enrolled in *Sonderklasse A* in Landshut he found himself with Anton Meier, Falk Zipperer, and many others among his old classmates.²

His return to the status of lowly schoolboy was made

1919

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unmistakably clear to the young Himmler by the fact that his homeroom teacher for the *Sonderklasse* was none other than his father. This ensured that, though he could hope for special assistance at home and school, there would be no escape from the precise requirements of *Gymnasial* education. Konrektor Himmler prepared the class schedule and the personal records of the *Sonderklasse* students in the same rigid detail that he used for all his other classes. His all-consuming pedantry is revealed in the shorthand entry in his private records appearing under Heinrich's name: "Himmler, Heinrich. Father *Gymnasium Konrektor*. Left the eighth class, Landshut (after 7.10.1917) then *Hilfsdienst*. Since 2.1. *Fahrenjunker* in the 11th I.R. Certificate for the seventh class."³ In the hands of a father-teacher with this kind of bureaucratic mania, Heinrich can have had no doubt of the status to which he had returned.

*

In the free time permitted by his heavy class load, Heinrich resumed the familiar interests and activities of his pre-army days. His closest friend was again Falk Zipperer, and the two young men spent much of their time writing poetry. Falk had a genuine poetic touch and his period of military service had helped him to develop his skill and broaden his interests. Following his return from the army a number of his poems were published in the local paper, and the samples of his work which he gave to Heinrich reveal a wide range of subjects and careful craftsmanship. A poem written in March 1919 begins:

Frühling ist draussen und Sonne
Und auf die Wiesen Blumen und Tau
Und es lachen der herzigen Liebsten
Schelmische Augen so leuchend und blau.*⁴

Heinrich's precisely written poems on the other hand seldom deviated from the theme of war. One poem of his, written about the same time as the lines by Falk quoted above, starts with the following lines:

*Spring is outside and sun
And in the meadows flowers and dew.
And the dearest love laughs,
Roguish eyes so shining and blue,⁴

* D.T. To be a German bureaucrat was to be a bureaucrats bureaucrat. The essence of the work was to create a detailed record of activities which

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Franzosen, Franzosen, O gebt nur recht acht
Für euch wird kein Pardon gemacht.
Uns're Kugeln pfeifen und sausen
Und verbreiten euch Schrecken und Grauen
Wenn wir da so unheimlich hauen.*⁵

Falk must have been remarkably kind about his friend's endeavors, for Heinrich wrote many verses and apparently never lost his enthusiasm.

Evening strolls, bicycle riding, and various games were among the other earlier pursuits which the young Himmler now resumed. And his interest in Luisa Hager continued, although apparently somewhat cooled by distance and differing pursuits. While in the army he had acquired some new friends and renewed some old acquaintanceships. He kept in touch with his cousin Ludwig Zahler, with whom he had worked in Regensburg. The Zahler family home was in Landshut, and while attending the *Technische Hochschule* in Munich during spring 1919 young Zahler became a close friend of Heinrich's brother Gebhard, who was a student in the same school. A combination of shared army and school experiences drew the three cousins closer together, but Heinrich, two years younger than either Gebhard or Lu, was the junior member of the triumvirate.⁶

In among his school load and his social activities Heinrich also managed some personal reading. He had a passion for adventure stories and was particularly taken with the works of Jules Verne. During the first nine months of 1919 he read twelve volumes of Verne's collected works, including *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Near the end of his second term in the *Sonderklasse* he began to read the *Die Entstehung der Erde* (The origin of the earth) by M. Wilhelm Meyer, a late-nineteenth-century scientific popularizer. Meyer mixed together religion, scientific theory, and some of his own exotic notions, such as the suggestion that God had spread life through the universe by means of planets. On finishing this blend of imagination and religious and scientific orthodoxy Heinrich wrote:

*Frenchmen, Frenchmen, oh pay close attention
For there will be no pardon for you.
Our bullets will whistle and hiss
Spreading fright and terror among you
As we so sternly chop away.

→ could be examined independently
oneself, the fundamental principle
that one did not exist peacefully
was of insurmountable merit when it came
to carrying forward the most
authoritative of all.

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"Highly interesting, rigidly scientific, philosophic, and religious."⁷ Indeed, he was so impressed that he read it again two years later.

His satisfaction with Meyer's position highlights the effort he and his family were making to hold together the old value system which balanced the demands of the new science against the teachings of the church. Despite the chaos and confusion of the war era, which might have led to deep questioning of traditional values and beliefs, this effort was initially quite successful, and Heinrich clung to the old values, apparently untroubled by doubts.

Return to prewar Bavarian political conservatism was far more difficult. The war had upset the political balance at home and altered the form and tone of public life. Its disastrous conclusion, bringing in its train the collapse in the West and the revolution, threw into complete disarray what was left of conservative orthodoxy. Loyalty to the state now had to reconcile itself to the loss of the ruling house in both Bavaria and the German Empire. The conservative had somehow to find his place in a world dominated by the victorious Allies and in a republic dominated by liberals and Social Democrats.

The events of the immediate postwar period, especially the months during which Heinrich was a student in the *Sonderklasse*, graphically illustrated how difficult adjustment to the new situation would be. The six months from January to June 1919 saw the convening of the Paris Peace Conference, the drafting of peace terms which Germans viewed as monstrous, and the republican government's painful decision to sign the treaty. Inside Germany the elections to the constitutional assembly had produced an overwhelming victory for what came to be known as the Weimar coalition of Democrats, moderate Socialists, and the Catholic Center. The constitution that resulted was far too democratic for most conservatives. In Bavaria itself the revolutionary regime was crippled by election defeat and the assassination of its Socialist minister-president, Kurt Eisner; in the resulting confusion the radical Left seized the initiative and on April 6, 1919, proclaimed a Soviet republic in Munich.⁸

Events of this magnitude could not be walled out. Heinrich had already taken an interest in conservative politics while he was in Regensburg. When he returned to Landshut he worked

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Oberland reserve company was not included.¹⁵ As on earlier occasions when Heinrich had sought a place in the army, he was defeated by a combination of parental reservations and his own bad timing. E

His military dreams again thwarted and his *Gymnasium* education completed, young Himmler now had to make a basic decision regarding his future training and career. The decision he made (or, probably more accurately, the decision he made in conjunction with his parents) constitutes the most surprising and unpredictable turn in the course of his early life. He decided to train for a career in agriculture by working on a farm for a year or two and then enrolling in the agronomy program at the *Technische Hochschule* in Munich. A period of work as a *Praktikant* prior to classroom study was the accepted procedure in many technical courses. The surprising thing about Heinrich's decision is that he should have wanted to go into agriculture at all. None of the surviving documents contain any hint of his interest in agriculture prior to August 1919, although it should be noted that the documentation for this period is somewhat sparse. Agriculture was not an occupation that accorded well with the Himmlers' views on occupation and social status. It was dangerously close to a manual occupation, and the training program in agriculture was far removed indeed from the family's ideal of a humanistic education. Training in the physical sciences, even in engineering, carried more prestige than training in agriculture. Some idealization of the peasantry and life on the land may well have crept into Professor Himmler's romantic and conservative view of the social order, but, as is apparent from Heinrich's own earlier social attitudes, there had never been any question of associating with peasants.¹⁶ A trained agronomist was certainly not a peasant, but the training as a *Praktikant* and some of the career possibilities would place Heinrich on the fringe of the social position which the Himmlers had considered right and proper. Perhaps Gebhard's earlier decision to abandon humanistic education in favor of a technical career (apparently engineering) and Ernst's inclination toward applied science, which would subsequently also lead to engineering,* made the decision

*Ernst went on to become an engineer and collaborated on a book on elimination of radio interference: Alfred Dennhardt and Ernst H. Himmler, *Leitfaden der Rundfunkstörung*.

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easier for the family to accept.¹⁷ Yet Heinrich's decision to train for an agricultural career constitutes an abrupt and largely inexplicable break with his own earlier views and his family's ideas of social status.

Once the decision was made, Professor Himmler did his best to make sure that it was carried out as safely and respectably as possible. He had been appointed *Rektor* at the *Gymnasium* in Ingolstadt—a significant promotion from his position as *Konrektor* at Landshut—and planned to move the family there in the late summer of 1919. If Heinrich could do his *Praktikum* near the new family home, the Himmlers would find the situation more agreeable and some family supervision would be possible. An acquaintance, Karl Otto, brought the family into contact with Ökonomierat Winter who owned a sizeable farm in Oberhaunstadt, three kilometers north of Ingolstadt. After careful preparation, including apparently a trip by Heinrich to the farm on July 24, an agreement was concluded whereby he would work on Winter's farm for at least one year, beginning August 1. Heinrich seems to have been enthusiastic about the arrangements, and, as he had done on a previous occasion, spent the last week of July happily notifying relatives and friends of his new job and future plans.¹⁸

On August 1 he arrived at the farm on schedule and went to work almost immediately. The farm, which grew cereals, predominantly wheat and rye, was worked by a nucleus of regular farm laborers and harvest hands. In addition, there was another *Praktikant*, Joseph Strasser (a relative of the Karl Otto who had recommended Heinrich) who had some experience in farming and helped Heinrich find his way. Young Strasser's similar social background was as welcome to Heinrich as his assistance, and the two got on very well together.¹⁹

In his letters home Heinrich stressed that he enjoyed his work and that his fellow workers and the overseer were kind and helpful. At the same time he found the work very hard, and the detailed schedule, which he sent home three times during the first ten days, seems formidable enough: "Around 4 a.m. in the horse stall, then coffee at about 5:30. At 6 the real work begins. So far it has been sheaving grain. At 10:30 in the stall again. At 11:30 lunch. At 12:00 the work begins again, in the field or loading straw. 3-3:30 bread and beer, then work until 6:00. At 6 in the Stall. 6:30 dinner. Then to

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bed around 8:00."²⁰ For a city boy who had spent the last six months in school it was a grueling pace, and he adds ruefully that he was so tired on Sunday that he fell asleep in church. After a few days, he was happy to report that he had been relieved of his duties in the horse stall.²¹ E

Through it all, he remained in high spirits and stressed that, though the straw binding tended to fatigue even the most experienced workers, he welcomed it as an opportunity to build up his strength.²² Perhaps his eagerness for hard physical work affords a clue to his reasons for choosing an agricultural career: it offered him a chance to overcome the feelings of inadequacy arising from his unathletic body and poor health. There is no question that throughout his life he was obsessed by the desire to achieve a fine physique and that he suffered acutely at any revelation of his softness and awkwardness.

If Heinrich moved to Oberhaunstadt primarily in order to attain physical strength, this did not mean that he was prepared to forego the assistance and comfort provided by his family. As in his army years, his letters were filled with lists of items he wanted his mother to send, including blankets, clothing and—above all—food. He admitted the food on the farm was good and the portions generous but pleaded with his mother to send what he called “goodies [Gutterln]”; and when a food package arrived his happiness knew no bounds. Sometimes he was embarrassed by his parents’ continuous shipment of provisions and tried to send something home in exchange; on his father’s name-day he sent a spray of wheat, rye, and barley as a ceremonial gift. But normally the only thing, aside from letters, that arrived from Oberhaunstadt was his dirty laundry.²³

The Himmlers were not disturbed by his requests; Frau Himmler especially seized the opportunity to do something for him as a means to ease her concern. Both parents were somewhat doubtful about the whole venture and repeatedly requested detailed information about his workload, living conditions, and health. His stress on the amount and difficulty of his toil did little to reassure them, but he did take great pains to say that he was well, comfortable, and happy. More than once he chided his mother for her fears and begged her “not to read between the lines” of his letters.²⁴ Yet he could not completely break himself of his old wartime habit of describing all his little problems or stifle

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his need for contact with and support from his parents. Although he often noted that he was so busy that it was impossible for him to write, he sent home at least eight letters and cards during his first three and a half weeks on the farm.²⁵ Despite his resolve to be strong and independent, he was still a very young nineteen-year-old who wanted and needed a protective hand.

Within a month it became clear that the leap from *Gymnasium* student to field hand had been too abrupt. In the late afternoon of September 2 while following his accustomed work routine he became seriously ill. Through the next day and a half he tried to rest, but the combination of fever, fainting, and intestinal trouble got worse. During the night of September 4 he was taken to the hospital where tests revealed that he was suffering from paratyphus, a bacterial infection similar in many of its symptoms to typhoid fever but not as severe or dangerous. With due allowance for his enjoyment of the role of hospital patient, it is clear that he was seriously ill. He spent more than three weeks in the hospital. The doctors were able to get the disease under control in approximately ten days, however, and during the last part of his convalescence he was required to stay in the hospital only overnight.²⁶

The first news of his illness and hospitalization reduced his mother almost to frenzy, partly because she was in the midst of preparations for moving to Ingolstadt and, understandably, somewhat on edge. Her worst fears were soon checked, however, because Rektor Himmler went to Ingolstadt ahead of his family and from September 7 on was able to visit Heinrich once or twice a day. With the dangerous phase of the illness soon over and direct contact with the family restored, Heinrich was able to lie back and enjoy the last part of his hospital stay. He rested, strolled in the garden, and often conversed with the colleagues and friends whom his father brought along on his visits. In between, he wrote letters, chiefly to his mother but also to close friends and relatives. Frau Himmler was spared none of the details about his condition and received current reports on his temperature, bowel movements, aches, and pains. While giving careful descriptions of his condition, interspersed with reassurances that he was fine and the food excellent, he also chided her for worrying. On September 9 he began his letter to her with three or four items of general interest, then

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diagnosis in the fall of 1919 was one more link in the chain that led from his childhood illnesses through his youthful frustrations in the army to his adult condition of nervous hypochondriac.

For the immediate future the Himmlers had to consider an alternative to the planned year of work on the farm. A possible course of action was to enroll Heinrich in the *Technische Hochschule* in October and defer the *Praktikum*, if he could, for another year. In the meantime he was to rest and as far as possible avoid physical strain.

The weeks in the hospital and the subsequent period of convalescence gave Heinrich an excellent opportunity for sustained reading, of which he took full advantage. Between August and mid-October he read a total of twenty-eight volumes, some of which he had started earlier and only finished off during this period.³⁰ Many of the books were probably chosen by his father, but it is not only the selection but also the comments which he jotted down about his reading that provide an excellent opportunity to assess his literary taste and his intellectual values. As might have been expected of a young convalescent, he read numerous adventure stories, including seven more works by Jules Verne. He also read a number of German classics, such as the second part of *Faust*, and works that in Bavaria had assumed the position of near classics, especially the popular tales of Maximilian Schmidt. There was a sprinkling of old-fashioned novels including Ottilie Wildermuth's *Frauenleben* (Women's lives), religious stories, and such collections of amusing trifles as Gustav Blumröder's *Geist und Welt bei Tische, humoristische Vorlesungen über Esskunst* (The spirit and world of the table, humorous lectures on the art of dining), which in view of Heinrich's love of food must have afforded him particular pleasure. Only one fairly current novel was included, Thomas Mann's *Königliche Hoheit* (Royal Highness), and he did not like it. "A novel that is terribly dull at the beginning but more exciting at the end. Too naturalistic,"³¹ he noted. The remaining titles were concerned with World War I and the current political situation, and ranged from Henrietta Brey's sentimental *Mein Bruder bist du!* (You are my brother!), written for wounded soldiers in 1918, to Friedrich Wichtl's hate-filled tract, *Weltfreimaurerei, Weltrevolution, Weltrepublik. Eine Untersuchung über Ursprung und Endziele des Weltkrieges*

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(World Freemasonry, world revolution and a world republic: an investigation of the origin and purpose of the world war).³² E

Heinrich's comments reveal a mechanical reader, very deferent to the authority of the written word and completely convinced that good books are those that present important truths in a didactic manner. Often he describes books as "intellectual" and "educational" or vaguely expresses his feeling that a work is significant by noting that it is "worthy of recommendation".³³ His comment on Ludwig Aurbacher's *Volksbüchlein* (People's book) epitomizes his longing for significance in one short sentence: "Something one must read, [it] is part of an education."³⁴

If a book expounded conventional moral lessons or patriotic sentiments, it automatically became significant. Regarding Brey's *Mein Bruder bist du!* he writes, "Moral, elevating, a book which a German must feel and understand."³⁵ He was somewhat uneasy about his love for adventure stories because they did not have obvious educational value. He did not write comments on each and every one of the weightier tomes he read; not a single one of the numerous Jules Verne stories received any comment at all. When he found an exciting book which included what he considered useful features, he was especially pleased. Commenting on Heinrich Smidt's *Seeschlachten und Abenteuer* (Sea battles and adventures), he writes: "Very interesting and extremely exciting, but at the same time historically instructive."³⁶

Not all of his comments are conventional and bland; he is very critical of what he considers dull fiction. Thomas Mann is criticized on this count as are the pious tales of Heinrich Federer which are stigmatized as "incomprehensible and dull" even though Heinrich usually enjoyed stories of Catholic piety.³⁷ He also finds fault with Ossian's *Fingal* and *Temora* because "the translation is too literal for prose," although he grants that they are "interesting." He makes no reference to the question of Ossian's authenticity.³⁸

In the last part of September and the first part of October books about war and politics engaged more of his attention. Some of his comments reveal the degree to which he was still dominated by the moderate patriotic and conservative values of the prewar period. His enthusiasm for Brey's book is one example, and his comments on Schrott-Fiechtl's *Sonnseitige*

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Menschen (People on the sunny side) illustrate the same commitment to traditional social morality. "An excellent novel of the Tyrol," he writes, "resolves the problem of the worker in an agrarian state very well. A lofty hymn to morality, work and religion."³⁹

Yet there were also clear signs that under the impact of recent changes and the onrush of events he was having difficulty in applying the old values and was casting about for new ones. Wichtl's book on Freemasonry, published by the Pan-German Lehmann press, provided an intelligible bridge from the old to the new. Catholic authorities had long attacked Freemasons as anti-Catholic, liberal, and potentially subversive. Wichtl's book stressed the view that the Masons were republican revolutionaries, centered in England, who had engineered World War I as part of their plot to destroy monarchies. Its treatment of the subject was very anti-Semitic and portrayed Jews, Masons, and Democrats as the core of the revolutionary plot.* Wichtl made generous use of anti-Semitic anecdotes and carefully cited the anti-Semitic literature (including the *Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*). Heinrich was impressed by the book, though he makes no mention of the specifics in Wichtl's argument. His comment reads, "A book that explains everything and tells us whom we must fight against next time."⁴⁰ This might suggest that he had already made the leap to a radical anti-Semitic position, but such an interpretation would probably overstate the case. The comment in question does not fit easily into the available space and may have been tacked in later. More important, it does not make clear whether Heinrich's hostility stopped at Freemasons or accepted Wichtl's argument and went on to embrace Jews and even the English. From some of his comments in late 1919 and 1920 it seems probable that he had not yet accepted the Jewish conspiracy doctrine although he was moving in that direction and harbored a considerable amount of conservative antipathy to Jews.

*A fascinating parallel to Wichtl's book is the work of an Englishwoman Nesta H. Webster, *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, originally published in the 1920s. This work equates Jews-Freemasons-revolutionaries and German nationalists, laying stress on the evil plots of Bavarian groups such as the *Einwohnerwehr* and the *Organization Escherich*. The latter were the very groups which found Wichtl's theory of an English-Jewish-Freemason-republican conspiracy most attractive. Incidentally, Heinrich Himmler later joined the *Einwohnerwehr* and enthusiastically read the publications of *Escherich*.

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the ready reserve units of the *Reichswehr* that had grown out of the attack on revolutionary Munich in the spring of 1919. Heinrich had the rank of *Fahnenjunker*, Gebhard that of *Fähnrich*, and Zahler that of *Fähnrich* or perhaps lieutenant. Like other units of the Twenty-first *Schützenbrigade*, the Fourteenth Alarm Company underwent weekend training sessions, including target practice, and kept in a state of readiness for emergencies. The unit could be placed on active service at a moment's notice, and its members were required to remain as much as possible in the Munich area. If they left, they had to secure a pass or leave beforehand and furnish an address where they could be contacted if the unit should be called into active service. At least twice in the year 1919-20 the company was placed on active duty and used to patrol the streets during periods when the authorities believed there was danger of revolutionary activity.⁴

The opportunity to be a student at two institutions of higher learning, and simultaneously to play the part of a soldier was the fulfillment of Heinrich's fondest dreams. He was proud of his status as a student and took advantage of his dual university and *Technische Hochschule* enrollment to involve himself in such activities as the *Allgemeiner Studenten Ausschuss* (General Student Committee) and the *Reichs Kriegsteilnehmer Verband* (Imperial War Veterans League).⁵ But the chance to be a soldier again, even if only on weekend training exercises, pleased him even more. "Today I have put the uniform on again," he wrote in his diary on December 1. "For me it is always the most precious clothing one can wear."⁶ By building his life round the twin pillars of student status and part-time military service he was able to adjust to the outward demands of his new environment and, through the give-and-take with his fellow students, to strengthen his self-confidence.

The center of his social life was the Loritz home, where he went for meals and often stayed to meet and chat with people he knew and liked. Frau Loritz was the personification of traditional propriety, and the atmosphere of her home corresponded closely to the way of life Heinrich had enjoyed with his parents. The singer's widow valued "the finer things in life," and the cultural emphasis of the household was on good books, serious discussion, and impromptu music recitals. At the time Heinrich arrived in Munich his brother Gebhard was much attracted to the elder

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in the German army. He fought well and with the conviction that Germans as the superior race must win. He won the Iron Cross, First Class. But Germany lost to the military superiority of the Allies. It was a blow which he and millions of other Germans could not accept. Many claimed they had not been beaten on the field of battle but stabbed in the back—like Siegfried—the treacherous person in this case being their own leaders who had capitulated.

Many of those Germans who would not acknowledge the reality created by the war organized into a fantastic swarm of racist-nationalist parties, clubs, and free corps. Some attracted the petty bourgeois elements, others the peasants, yet others the working class.⁶ These were generally conservative groups, opposed to the changing face of Europe. They saw the Jew as a threat to their largely imagined idyllic past with its stability and values. The Jew was behind communism; he was the greedy face of capitalism; he was the voice urging the suppression of the Teutonic traditions.

One of these organizations was the German Workers party. Its origins were not a result of a spontaneous action by members of the working class. Rather it had been founded by the Thule Society, largely made up in the immediate post-war period of members of the upper echelons of Bavarian society. "Thule" in folklore is the mythical north Atlantic island from which came the first members of Nordic civilization.

As we shall see in chapter 11, occult writers claim that some of these latter-day Thulists believed they were direct descendants of this early Northern race. Some members, it is alleged, practiced bizarre magic rituals. Hence a direct link between Hitler and the occultists is supposedly drawn. In September 1919 Hitler became a member of the Workers party. While still in the army he had been assigned to infiltrate the party. At a meeting he had demanded to speak when a member had argued for the annexation of Bavaria from Germany to Austria. The oratorical skills displayed in his strong opposition to the proposal led to the party leaders inviting him to join. Hitler was to write later of his decision to accept as the turning point in his life. There are suggestions he believed

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he had arrived at this point by predetermined destiny, the guiding hand of Providence. An objective examination would suggest he was affected more by chance than convergence.

On 16 October 1919, a month after his "spy" mission, Hitler addressed his first public meeting on the party's behalf. Hitler biographer Joachim Fest describes it:

In a bitter stream of words, the dammed-up emotions, the lonely man's suffocated feelings of hatred and impotence burst out, like an explosion after the restriction and apathy of the years, hallucinatory images and accusations came pouring out; abandoning restraint, he talked until he was sweating and exhausted.

Wildly acclaimed by his audience, Hitler had discovered that he could wield "the magic power of the spoken word."

As news of his oratorical abilities spread, each meeting drew more followers. Hitler came to the attention of influential Bavarians who encouraged and backed him, finding funds from wealthy members of society and Russian emigrés afraid of the spread of Communism. Hamburg, the Bavarian capital, was one of the cities that had fallen to the Communists in the thwarted revolution of 1919. It was recovered in a bloody counterattack in which the Thule society supplied arms to the counterrevolutionaries. A number of Thulists had been captured and executed by the Reds.

Hitler soon took control of the party. In 1920 he changed its name to the National Socialists, which became abbreviated to the Nazis. As we have seen there were many such parties where beer drinking seemed to be one of the reasons for their gatherings. What then made Hitler's Nazis stand out and survive? Undoubtedly it was in large part due to the personality of Hitler himself.

He was articulating the passions and frustrations of party members—and a great many other Germans—in the voice of a working-class hero. He spoke for those who felt disenfranchised and alienated, and he did it brilliantly.

There were setbacks. A 1923 coup attempt by party members resulted in the jailing of Hitler and other Nazis. However, Hitler turned the incident into a plus with a stirring address to the judges

industrious, and the upright." He returned to the theme again in his closing speech to the rally: "For us the truth of a wise old saying can really stand as proven: 'Often the deepest love of Providence toward its creatures is expressed in chastisement. A just providence . . . rewards the strong and expresses its love through chastisement!'"⁶ This was Hitler's version of the force that guided him!

Did he see this Providence in wider, occult terms: fate, luck, good fortune, coincidence? We may never know, but the evidence is to the contrary. From early in his ascendancy there were very few people foolish or brave enough to ask Hitler to define his terms. In any case, the terms Hitler used were often a matter of time and mood and the interpretation of others.

The role of Providence and its inner voice is said by some observers to have played a key role in Hitler joining the party that he was to swiftly take over and rejuvenate as the Nazi party.

Hitler attended his first meeting of the New German Workers party on 12 September 1919 which was held as usual in a Munich beer hall. Hitler says of this initial contact that he had been ordered by his army bosses to find out what was behind the party—in other words to spy on it.⁷ He noted that some twenty or twenty-five people were present "chiefly from the lower classes." His first impression was that this was just another one of those organizations in which "anyone who was not satisfied with developments and no longer had any confidence in the existing parties felt called upon to found a new party," only to have it vanish silently after a time.

That night he had seen and heard enough by the time the principal speaker had finished and was about to leave when the floor was opened to discussion. He remained. One speaker suggested that the state of Bavaria should separate from Prussia and join Austria. Hitler demanded the floor and argued against the suggestion. As a result the speaker he had attacked "left the hall like a wet poodle" and the audience "listened with astonished faces." At the end of the evening a party official introduced himself and pressed a booklet into Hitler's hand.

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At the barracks early next morning Hitler was awakened by the hustle and bustle of mice looking for the breadcrumbs he had scattered for them. It was then that he remembered the booklet he had been given. There was nothing mystical or occult-like in its content. Its author, a member of the party, described how he had "returned to national thinking out of the Babel of Marxist and trade-unionist phrases." It reflected a thought process Hitler had gone through a dozen years before. This sparked his first real interest in the possibilities of the party, although he continued to have serious doubts.

To his surprise, less than a week later he received a postcard saying he had been accepted as a member and should attend the next meeting of the executive committee. Hitler had not applied to join; he described his decision to attend not as the work of Providence or an inner voice but as simple curiosity.⁸ Even after the next meeting Hitler says he was still largely unimpressed. He found the organization's aims and procedures terrible. "There was nothing, no program, no leaflet, no printed matter at all, no membership cards, not even a miserable rubber stamp."⁹

Nevertheless, back at barracks he found himself struggling with "the hardest question of my life; should I join or should I decline." Reason could only advise him to decline, but his feelings left him with no rest. "As often as I tried to remember the absurdity of this whole club, my feeling argued for it."¹⁰ The one advantage he could come up with for this "absurd little organization" was that it could be molded, or as Hitler says "put into proper form." After two days of agonized ponderings and reflection, he finally came to the conviction that he had to join the party.

It was the most decisive resolve of my life. From here there was and could be no turning back. And so I registered as a member of the German Workers Party and received a provisional membership with the number seven.¹¹

The main reason for detailing Hitler's version of these events is that it shows us he did not assign a role to Providence or its concomitant inner voice for his taking what he considered to be

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Eckart stepped in as mediator and the "crisis was laid to rest."³¹ What it amounted to was a total victory for Hitler.

Eckart took over the editorship of the *Volkischer Beobachter* (National Observer), the party newspaper, and began a well-orchestrated campaign to purvey the Hitler myth. On 4 August of that year he wrote of Hitler as a man who was selfless, self-sacrificing, devoted, and sincere, forever purposeful and alert.³²

In the following year, when Hitler seized guns from an army barracks on the pretext they were to quell a leftist coup, he found himself in trouble with the law and had to hide out. He took refuge with Eckart for several weeks.³³

Despite all this, Eckart was not in awe of Hitler. He complained before the 1923 *Putsch* of Hitler's delusions of grandeur and his "Messiah" complex.³⁴ This comment directly contradicts the version of Ravenscroft and others of Eckart's attitude toward Hitler as the messianic Antichrist.

Once again we are faced with contradictions when it comes to evaluating occult influences. Perhaps Eckart stated his real attitude toward Hitler in the Brennessel Cabaret or wine cellar one night in 1919:

We need a fellow at the head who can stand the sound of a machine gun. The rabble need to get fear into their pants. We can't use an officer, because the people don't respect them any more. The best would be a worker who knows how to talk. . . . He doesn't need much brains, politics is the stupidest business in the world, and every marketwoman in Munich knows more than the people in the Weimar. I'd rather have a vain monkey who can give the Reds a juicy answer and doesn't run away when people begin swinging table legs, than a dozen learned professors. He must be a bachelor, then we'll get the women.³⁵

There is no call for a messianic figure in this job description, indeed it lacks any hint of occult skills, is totally pragmatic, unromantic and unadulterated, and comes from a man whose heart must have been made of stone. It also appears to answer the question of the level at which the two men were related.

identified himself seemed to be defeated, swept aside in a torrent of events which had been released, as he had no doubt, by the same Jews who had always desired the defeat and humiliation of Germany.

Like many others among the mob of demobilized men who now found themselves flung on to the labour market at a time of widespread unemployment, he had little prospect of finding a job. The old problem of how to make a living, conveniently shelved for four years, reappeared. Characteristically, Hitler turned his back on it. After all, what had he to lose in the break-up of a world in which he had never found a place? Nothing. What had he to gain in the general unrest, confusion, and disorder? Everything, if only he knew how to turn events to his advantage. With a sure instinct, he saw in the distress of Germany the opportunity he had been looking for but had so far failed to find.

With considerable naïvety, he wrote in *Mein Kampf*: 'Generally speaking, a man should not take part in politics before he has reached the age of thirty.' Hitler was now in his thirtieth year, the time was ripe and the decision was taken: 'I resolved that I would take up political work.'

But how? Uncertain as yet of the answer, Hitler, after his discharge from hospital, but not yet demobilized, made his way through a disorganized country back to Munich, the capital of Bavaria.

Few towns in the Reich were as sensitive to the mood of unrest as Munich. Its political atmosphere was unstable and veered from one extreme to the other: revolution, political murder, a Soviet government, followed by a wave of suppression by the emerging Right-wing factions occurred in rapid succession through the year 1918.

In Bavaria ever since the unification of Germany there had been a strong dislike of government from Protestant, Prussian Berlin. In the disturbed and

unstable condition of Germany in 1923 the power of the centre was weakened, and the Bavarians with a strong Right-wing bias in the situation in which the orderment were respected only if it had the support of the authorities it became a natural centre for a movement to get rid of the Republic and to restore the Bavarian Government to power. Treason and conspiracy against the Reich which were being carried out in Munich. It was in Bavaria that the Freikorps, the bands of volunteers formed at the end of the war to maintain the eastern frontiers of Germany, turned their guns against the Reich. The Freikorps were the training school for the terrorism which disappeared in 1924, and again after 1933.

Among the regular Army in Munich were men like Major-General and his assistant, Captain Eberhard, the innumerable divisions, and ex-servicemen sprang up in Bavaria, they formed the future German Army which was the humiliations of 1918. Unessential to keep together the backbone of the old German Army, reduced by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles to mere hundred thousand.

Pöhnner, the Police President, gave a famous reply, when asked about political murder gangs in Munich: 'Enough of them.' Wilhelm Fick, Minister of the Interior, was Pöhnner's colleague in the Bavarian

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unstable condition of Germany between 1918 and 1923 the power of the central government in Berlin was weakened, and the Bavarian State Government, with a strong Right-wing bias, was able to exploit a situation in which the orders of the Reich Government were respected only if they were backed by the support of the authorities in Munich. Bavaria thus became a natural centre for all those who were eager to get rid of the Republican régime in Germany, and the Bavarian Government turned a blind eye to the treason and conspiracy against the legal government of the Reich which were being planned on its doorstep in Munich. It was in Bavaria that the irreconcilable elements of the Freikorps gathered, armed bands of volunteers formed by the Reichswehr at the end of the war to maintain order and protect the eastern frontiers of Germany but now just as willing to turn their guns against the Republic. The Freikorps were the training schools for the political murder and terrorism which disfigured German life up to 1924, and again after 1929.

Among the regular Army officers stationed in Munich were men like Major-General Ritter von Epp and his assistant, Captain Ernst Röhm. In the Freikorps and the innumerable defence leagues, patriotic unions, and ex-servicemen's associations which sprang up in Bavaria, they saw the nucleus of that future German Army which should one day revenge the humiliations of 1918. Until that day it was essential to keep together the men who had been the backbone of the old German Reichswehr, now reduced by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles to a mere hundred thousand.

Pöhner, the Police President of Munich, gave the famous reply, when asked if he knew there were political murder gangs in Bavaria: 'Yes, but not enough of them.' Wilhelm Frick, later Hitler's Minister of the Interior, was Pöhner's assistant; one of his colleagues in the Bavarian Ministry of Justice

er Hitler's Minister of Justice. Ends of all these men was the the German Right for twenty Republic, restoring Germany on as the greatest power of restoring the Army to its was the promising political began his career.

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this that Drexler, impressed, gave Hitler a copy of his autobiographical pamphlet, and a few days later Hitler received a postcard inviting him to attend a committee meeting of the German Workers' Party.

After some hesitation Hitler went. The committee met in an obscure beer-house, the Alte Rosenbad, in the Herrnstrasse. 'I went through the badly lighted guest-room, where not a single guest was to be seen, and searched for the door which led to the side room; and there I was face to face with the Committee. Under the dim light shed by a grimy gas-lamp I could see four people sitting round a table. . . . ' As Hitler frankly acknowledges, this very obscurity was an attraction. It was only in a party which, like himself, was beginning at the bottom that he had any prospect of playing a leading part and imposing his ideas. In the established parties there was no room for him, he would be a nobody. After two days' reflection he joined the Committee of the German Workers' Party as its seventh member.

Slowly and painfully he pushed the Party forward, and prodded his cautious and unimaginative colleagues on the committee into bolder methods of recruitment. Invitations were multigraphed, a small advertisement inserted in the local paper, a larger hall secured. When Hitler himself spoke for the first time, the result was only to confirm the chairman, Karl Harrer, in his belief that Hitler had no talent for public speaking. But Hitler persisted, and at the beginning of 1920 he was put in charge of the Party's propaganda. By the use of clever advertising he got nearly two thousand people into the Festsaal of the Hofbräuhaus on 24 February. The principal speaker was overshadowed by Hitler, who captured the audience's attention. Angered by the way in which Hitler was now forcing the pace, Harrer resigned as chairman. On 1 April 1920 Hitler left the Army and devoted all his time to the Party.

Hitler's and Drexler's group in Munich was not

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in these very inversions that his origins perhaps disclose themselves most surely. That is why only his historical conclusions are absolutely compelling, and not by any means his philosophical. When, for instance, we read on the last page of his work: "It is Time whose inexorable movement embeds the ephemeral incident of the Culture, on this planet, in the incident of Man — a form wherein the incident life flows on for a time," his assertions are true and yet not true: true, that is, as vital manifestations of a definite historical variety of man, that of today, of which Spengler himself is an example, and one of the most shining; and neither more nor less true than fetishism in primitive peoples, or the Ptolemaic world-system of the Classical age.

Fruitful new ideas never come from an individual, but from the age. It is the very touchstone of its value that such ideas occur simultaneously to many people. Spengler recognizes this too when he says in his preface: "An idea that is historically essential — that does not occur within an epoch, but itself makes that epoch — is only in a limited sense the property of him to whose lot it falls to patent it. It belongs to the time as a whole and influences all thinkers without their knowing it." And, in fact, there appeared almost on the same day as Spengler's first volume a remarkable book by the Swiss writer C. H. Meray, which started from the basis that every civilization was a self-contained whole, a living thing similar to the multicellular organisms. We even find there the proposition: "so many religions, so many civilizations." The religions are said to be, as it were, the nerve-centres of individual cultures, the vital activity of which they unify and regulate. Further, every civilization has its own style; this too has its parallel phenomenon in the world of cells, where the protoplasm has likewise a specific constitution — its chemical structure — by which the genus of each individual living organism can be instantly determined. In the case of all these civilizations, now, the observer will find that after a certain time — that is, after about two to three thousand years — they die. The Egyptian, the Sumerian, the Babylonian, the Mycenæan, and the recently discovered Minoan: all these high and very individual cultures failed to pass this span. Civilizations have, therefore, just like organisms, a definite length of life, which may doubtless be curtailed through violent attacks from outside, but can in no case be extended. In

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These have vitality, but are not productive; they include the big battalions of the "normal" people: the peasant, the bourgeois, the honest craftsman, the capable official, and the plain scholar. Thirdly, we have the man of genius with an extremely irritable peripheral system and a proportionately hypertrophied central system; he is both vital and productive. Genius is, on this showing, nothing more than an organized neurosis, an intelligent form of madness. And thus we begin to understand why genius not only regularly displays pathological traits, but is notable for extraordinary brain power and particularly strong and delicate sense of moral values: for this surplus is *essential*. The same relations may even occasionally be noticed in highly gifted people such as the Hellenes: the Dionysiac was the peripheral system, the Apollinian the central system, of the collective genius, "Greek genius."

The necessity of the Apollinian component in all creative genius is now generally admitted; it is less easy to convince people that the Dionysiac is of equal importance. A genius is not only a latent lunatic, but also a latent criminal, who only avoids conflict with the law because his genius enables him to take refuge in production. "I have never heard of a crime that I should be incapable of committing," said Goethe. For of such is the poet made. A crime that he could not commit would lie outside his powers of description. But he does not need to commit any crime: he can construct it artificially. Hebbel was making a deeper self-revelation than he knew, perhaps, when he wrote: "By creating murderers Shakspeare saved himself from the necessity of becoming one." Hebbel's dramas are full of bloodshed, and his diaries also show a surprising delight in murder stories of every description. Wherever he found one of these, he noted it down, studied it psychologically, and turned it about with an interest that was quite disproportionate to the actual case. It seems extremely probable too that Schiller was a really clever robber and Balzac an extortioner of the first water: only their literary talent was incomparably greater than their talent for robbery or extortion. All the creative artists — Dante and Michelangelo, Strindberg and Poe, Nietzsche and Dostoevski — what were they but cannibals rescued by art? Then, the "monsters" of world-history — Caligula and Tiberius, Danton and Robespierre, Cæsar Borgia and Torquemada — what were they but artists cast adrift in reality? And

Production
as a refuge

Edelmann
1919

1919

such as adventurers, social outcasts, beggars, Manichees, and pervers. What unspeakable emotions, compounded of hope and fear, disgust and awe, must have seized the people at the advance of one of these ghastly processions of fanatics, lunatics, and criminals, whose coming was heralded from afar by their ghastly and monotonous chanting: "Lift ye up your hands and pray, God may turn this pest away. Lift ye up your arms, implore Him to veil His face no more! Jesus, through Thy name of Three, From our sins oh set us free! Let us by Thy blood so red From the Death be rescued!"

These Flagellant bands were not, however, simply a phenomenon arising out of the Plague, a mere attempt at a sort of religious therapy. It is highly probable that what they represent is a parallel epidemic or further symptom of the general psychosis, the Plague being only an external point on which it seized. In support of this theory we have the fact that widespread mental disorders made their appearance at that time quite independently of the Plague. A whole year before, men and women were to be seen dancing hand in hand in circles by the hour, working themselves up to a pitch at which they foamed at the mouth and sank down half fainting. During the dance they had epileptic fits and visions. It was the now familiar St. Vitus's dance, which quickly spread to wider circles, taking on more and more of a sexual character as it developed and finally becoming a sort of fashion, so that vagabonds could make a living by imitating the symptoms.

In the same order of phenomena was the extraordinary Crusade of the Children of Schwäbisch-Hall in Germany, when as the result of a religious hypnosis a band of children set out to do homage to the archangel Michael at St. Michael's Mount in Normandy. The fixation of this idea was so strong that those among them who were forcibly kept back became seriously ill and in some cases died.

The contemporary persecutions of the Jews also had a pathological and epidemic character, though it cannot be said that this was a phenomenon which might not have taken place at any other time. The rumour, which sprang up suddenly in southern France, that the Jews had poisoned the wells, spread faster than the plague into the adjoining countries. It led to a horrible slaughter of the Jews, in which the Flagellants formed the shock-troops and the

The well-
poisoners

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Hitler decides to use the image
of poisoned wells

1919

Jews displayed that blinding whole history from the to the Russian pogrom. At Esslingen the whole gogue and deliberately been baptized to escape with remorse and burn house. The Jewish persecutor, but there were, none of the world towards the ambiguous. Both the spirit Jews, and indeed extended. In fact, they could not of their special talent for a far greater asset than education. The courts appear culture and, still more, full and tractable objects come allotted to the vulgar. always figure in the list money, salt-mines, and it was the Jews who killed a gentle-minded preacher to visit the guilt of this easy to reply with the continued to deny the God. That the smallest, wealthiest nations of the West shut aloof from the light of Christ — which, psychoanalytically over. Matters were made worse by Jewish extortion. religion permitted the to appear even meritorious believing "Goy." In a them, for naturally no guilds. Thus it came to were less concerned with

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Jews displayed that blind heroism which appears throughout their whole history from the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Titus down to the Russian pogroms. Mothers who saw their husbands burnt at the stake flung themselves with their children into the flames. At Esslingen the whole Jewish community assembled in the syna-
gogue and deliberately set fire to it. At Constance a Jew, who had been baptized to escape death by burning, was afterwards seized with remorse and burnt himself and his whole family in his own house. The Jewish persecutions were primarily religious in character, but there were, no doubt, social causes as well. The attitude of the world towards the Jewish question in those days was ambiguous. Both the spiritual and the temporal powers tolerated the Jews, and indeed extended to them a certain amount of protection. In fact, they could not readily do without them, not only because of their special talent for economic affairs (which, be it noted, was a far greater asset then than now), but because of their higher education. The courts appreciated them as transmitters of Arabian culture and, still more, as physicians. Above all, they were fruitful and tractable objects of taxation. Among the sources of income allotted to the various feudal lords as privileges the Jews always figure in the list side by side with the right of coining, toll money, salt-mines, and the like. But the people never forgot that it was the Jews who killed the Saviour, and when here and there a gentle-minded preacher tried to point out that it was not right to visit the guilt of this upon the rest of the race for ever, it was easy to reply with the further argument that the Jews still continued to deny the Gospel and even fought it by secret means. That the smallest, weakest, and most scattered of all the civilized nations of the West should be the only one to hold obstinately aloof from the light of Christianity was a fact — a stupendous fact — which, psychoanalytically, the people of that time could not get over. Matters were made worse by the really hard oppression practised by Jewish extortioners. The Jews were the only people whose religion permitted the taking of interest, and in their eyes it might appear even meritorious to inflict the utmost damages on the unbelieving "Goy." In addition, all other callings were closed to them, for naturally none but Christians were admitted to the guilds. Thus it came about that not a few of these persecutors were less concerned with burning Jews than with burning bonds.

1919

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return to the early Christian doctrines and customs. The Domini-
 cans took the more moderate view that men must restrict them-
 selves to "necessary" things in following Christ; but the Fran-
 ciscans went all the way, teaching that no one could be saved
 who did not abjure the world and seek to become an image of
 the Apostles in his way of life, and this rule, they insisted, applied
 above all to the earthly successors of Peter, the popes. Small
 wonder that Pope John XXII declared their teaching to be he-
 retical. In the matter of preaching, on the contrary, it was the
 Franciscans who aimed at keeping in close touch with the world.
 They wanted to work on the people and therefore relied on plastic
 vividness and force, rejecting neither coarse realism nor harsh
 satire as means to their end. The Dominicans, on the other hand,
 became the classics of mystic philosophy. Their brightest light was
 Meister Eckhart, one of the most profound and universal intel-
 lects that Germany has ever produced.

Eckhart is a curious cross between the crystal-clear thinker,
 the poet of incomparable power and plastic and original language,
 and the religious genius. His teachings, banned by the Curia after
 his death, constitute a *Summa* of all mystical speculation. Natu-
 rally, he was an agnostic — he says of truth that were it compre-
hensible, it could not be truth. The godhead is enthroned in
 impenetrable darkness, motionless, calm. We can only make
 negative assertions about it, as, for instance, that it is infinite, un-
 fathomable, uncreated; every positive predicate turns God into an
 idol. God is not this or that. Anyone who imagines he has known
 God or has formed for himself any figure whatever of God, may
 indeed have known "something or other," but not God. "Thou
 shouldst know Him without the help of any picturing, mediation,
 or analogy." "If I ought to recognize God without mediation,
 then surely I must actually become He, and He I!" "But that is
 just what I mean! God must actually become I and I actually
 become God." "The smallest creative picture formed within thee
 is as big as God. Why? It takes from thee a whole God. For in the
 moment when this picture enters into thee, God, with all His
 godliness, must make way for it. But when this picture goes out,
 God comes in. And is it going to do thee any harm, friend, that
 you allow God to be God within thee?" "Never has man so longed
 for anything as God has longed to persuade man to be one with

The new
 religion

Dieter
 Eckhart

March 1919

America's
return gift

Dieter
Eckhardt

that some even of his own bandits protested. Such was the achievement of Christians in the year 1533, exactly fifteen hundred years after the crucifixion of their Saviour.

Pizarro ended his career like most murderers, being killed by one of his own boon companions. And all Spain had loss and not profit by his deeds of shame, for it fell more and more a victim to the enervating and stupefying habit of living on stolen goods, so that within a bare hundred years it lay as it has lain ever since, a soulless, mortifying corpse, gloomy, sullen, self-consuming, a victim of its own dullness of intellect, its own appalling barrenness of heart, its own fierce brutality. The rest of Europe, too, has fallen to the divine nemesis, for from the New World it imported not only maize and tobacco, tomatoes and bananas, cocoa and potatoes, vanilla and cochineal, but—*gold and syphilis*.

The penalty of lust, the "venerie," rapidly became the fashionable disease. Almost all the outstanding figures of the age, according to contemporary evidence, were syphilitics — Alexander and Cæsar Borgia, Julius II and Leo X, Celtes and Hutten, Charles V and Francis I, the last of whom, indeed, acquired the disease quite romantically, for, according to Mézeray, author of the famous *Histoire de France*, the husband of the beautiful *Fernonière*, with whom the King was carrying on an intrigue, intentionally infected himself so that he might destroy the King: and the disease did actually hasten his death. So widespread was it that no one was ashamed to confess to the fact; it was a common topic in society talk and became a theme for poets. It is undoubtedly one of the chief causes of the darkening of Europe which begins with the close of the Middle Ages, and it introduced into the highest and the lowest, the most physical and the most metaphysical activity of man, an element of suspicion that doubled the poison.

American gold became perhaps an even worse curse than syphilis. The sudden colossal influx of the valuable metals, of which there had been a great dearth during the Middle Ages, was an immediate cause in the extension of money-economy. Indeed, it made a real capitalistic organization for the first time possible, enormously increasing the gulf between rich and poor and bringing about a universal rise of prices with which the rise of wages could not keep pace. The first half of the sixteenth century saw

1919

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'A huge un-

tended garden full of weeds, a gathering-place just as much of folly and error as of virtue and greatness." Goethe in his youth wrote: "If we can find a place in the world in which to settle with our possessions, a field to feed us, a house to cover us, is not that our fatherland? And are there not thousands in every state who possess this much? And are they not living happily within these limits? Why, then, this useless striving after a feeling which we neither can have nor would like to have, and which, with certain peoples, and at certain moments only, has been and is the result of fortunately concurring circumstances? Roman patriotism! May God save us from that as from any monster. We should have no stool to sit on, no bed to lay ourselves down in." And even as a matured man he comments thus on the recent establishment of the Rheinbund: "a split between the coachman and the groom on the box which aroused more feeling in us than the division of the Roman Empire." The author of an "article from Katzenellenbogen" in Schlözer's *Staatsanzeiger* certainly expressed a general feeling when he wrote: "Others may deplore the fact that our rulers have no authority on the Ganges, but I regard it as a blessing for our country that the Hanseatic League has been broken up, that the German Admiral of the Sea under Ferdinand II was stifled at birth, that the Peace of Westphalia has divided Germany for some centuries to come into so many small states, each with its own interest, that in one case position, in another size, has made it impossible for them to launch vast merchant fleets. How foolish it is to run after pepper on the coasts of Malabar when our hands are full at home!" Lichtenberg summed the whole matter up in his effective style when he said: "I would give much to know for whom really the things are done which we are told publicly are done for the Fatherland."

Schiller, also, is no exception, though text-books and leading articles for a hundred years have pointed to him as the re-awakener of German patriotism. He uses the love of one's country in his poems merely as a valuable dramatic subject, without ever giving it a German nationalist colouring. *Wilhelm Tell* describes the heroic struggle of a people for its home and its liberty, and the *Maid of Orleans* the heroic resistance of a country against its conqueror; but the people is the Swiss, and the country is France. Only two of his plays take place on German soil: the one

A. H.
discovering
Goethe

W
Dietrich
Gellert
Wey
refers:
Goethe was
a genius.
A genius
is a
simulacrum
of nature.
He feels
everything,
says
everything
All is
found in
him including
a change
in the
intellectual
weather.

Fretful worries about his own image alternated with glowing assertions of indispensability, historic greatness, and immortality. Thus, to the same valet, Linge: "My life is worth more than one or two divisions. Without me the army and Germany would collapse." He told the Austrian chancellor, "I have made the greatest achievement in the history of Germany, greater than any other German." Ever since his youth, Hitler was convinced that he alone understood the real meaning of world history. Thus, when an intimate asked him the most revealing statement he had made about himself in his memoirs, Hitler replied at once: "A short sentence at the very beginning of the book [actually it appears on p. 11] in which I say that as a youth I learned the meaning of history." His feeling that he had mastered all history led him, in 1919, to set forth detailed plans for a book he planned to entitle *Die Monumentalgeschichte der Menschheit* (Monumental History of Humanity).¹³³

In a speech to the commanding generals of the Wehrmacht on 23 November 1939, he laid particular stress on the special importance of his own person: "I must in all modesty say that my own person is indispensable. Neither a military nor a civilian personality could replace me. . . . I am convinced of the strength of my brain and my resolution. . . . The fate of the Reich is dependent entirely upon me." As the war progressed, Hitler saw himself as the personification of Germany, and the single focus for all the attacks of the enemy. That he believed the entire world was personally against him was made clear in a speech of 15 February 1942:

Today I have the honor of being this enemy because I have created a world power out of the German Reich. I am boundlessly proud that I was blessed by Providence with the permission to lead this battle. . . .¹³⁴

And at the very end—with his world crashing about him as he cowered in the air raid shelter and planned his own suicide—he still saw himself as a genius with nerves of steel. In his last political testament, he observed that during his lifetime he had made "the most difficult decisions that ever confronted mortal man." And when a secretary, Traudl Junge, asked him as she was typing up this last testament on 29 April 1945 if National Socialism would survive after his death, Hitler answered emphatically in the negative: "The German people have shown that they are not worthy of my movement. Perhaps in a hundred years another genius will take up my ideas and National Socialism like a phoenix will arise again from the ashes." He assured himself that a special place was reserved for him and the other immortals, saying, "I shall feel I am in my proper place if after my death I find myself, together with people like me, on some sort of Olympus. I shall be in the company of the most enlightened spirits of all times."¹³⁵

But the pendulum kept swinging back. After making assertions of

1919, 1945

The Image and the Man

omnipotence and infallibility. His memoirs recall how man "I had forebodings and was fi him after he attained power. nervous apprehension" that I himself by insisting that he necessary to say, for examp Cities will become heaps of ri forever. . . . But I am not af into a familiar disjunctive w "There are two possibilities: all my plans or to fail. If I history. If I fail I shall be con

At the very height of f On 10 November 1938, for e: what should have been a n against the Jews in the Kri the acquiescence of the Gern a series of other victories: ing; occupation of the Rhin proving his withdrawal from Austria; and most recently, And yet this speech of 10 N words Angst, Rückschlag, N ing:

a cruel set-back

I must tell you that I become almost *anxious*. what would happen if I even that can happen. had a failure? Formerly I built up a Party th me. . . .¹³⁷

Even in the Declaration was thinking of the defeat of word "capitulation." He also f

Once again I have put o dearest of all. I will on! survive the end. If anytl successor will be [Field pen to [him] his succe never learned and that i will never be repeated. mental goal; it is com necessary that our peop

1919

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ADOLF HITLER

The Intellectual World of Adolf Hitler

1919

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page of notes for speeches in 1919-1920. They show the tenacity of the author's basic ideas, and his confidence that someday he would put them into practice. The central ideas of 1919 remained at the core of his later political thinking: all human history must be written in terms of conflict between Aryans and Jews. The undergirding law of civilization is this: "Racial purity is the highest principle." He proclaimed the coming of a "new Reich whose slogan will be *Germany Awaken!*"; expressed the need for "unmerciful thinking about truth and reality," and insisted that salvation can come only through a "dictator of genius."⁶

Hitler shows here a characteristic which proved to be an enormous political asset. He was what Jacob Burckhardt called a "terrible simplifier." Neither innovative nor disciplined, his mind had a remarkable capacity to simplify ideas and reduce them to effective political slogans and programs while, at the same time, creating the illusion that he was thereby achieving a higher wisdom.⁷

That Hitler's mind worked with simple and sometimes startling logic is illustrated in a rare interview he granted an American journalist just before coming to power in 1933. When H. V. Kaltenborn pointed out that Hitler had no electoral mandate from the German people, the Nazi leader set forth his reasons for claiming the right to dominate the government. By his reckoning, 37 percent of the total vote entitled him to 75 percent of the political power:

Under the rules of democracy, a majority of 51% governs. I have 37% of the total vote which means that I have 75% of the power necessary to govern. That means I am entitled to three-quarters of the power and my opponent to one-quarter. . . . We bring into the business of government 75% of the capital investment . . . and this takes no account of the plain truth that every unit of my investment is worth twice that of the others. My 15 million voters are in reality worth 30 million.⁸

*

His capacity to simplify and push through one clear policy amid the confusions of complex economic and social issues was brilliantly demonstrated as soon as he got into office. John Kenneth Galbraith has noted that Hitler had the insight to perceive the right economic policy at the right time. Immediately in 1933 he instituted a concerted and coordinated policy of deficit spending and public works. Like Franklin Roosevelt he "sensed that reputable economists were poor guides to policy," but he went well beyond FDR in the energy and clarity of his actions. To those who object that Hitler did not know enough about economics to understand what he was doing, Galbraith comments with tongue only partly in cheek, "This may be so. But in economics it is a great thing not to understand what causes you to insist on the right stand." A careful student of Hitler's economic policy agrees and con-

* The intensity of his notes twice the emotional commitment of other notes⁵⁷

nation he collected and cited papers, pamphlets, popular the foreign press. He looked little for power, and judged him with arguments that he said, he could get all he reading. Here, as in so many studies remained with him. As for and found in his reading discussion by citing an author wrote this is of exactly the to encourage systematic reading, his evenings at home were ing until dawn. The mornings to travel or conferences. ly did read, repeatedly and intellectual challenge. In he was very much taken with and followed him avidly as (ants to Live) to the cavalry and of these short and simple residences, and would often guests. He also kept by his *Flottenkalender*, which gave of all navies of the world, al experts in his entourage.¹⁴ ds of his life as having been his years in Vienna, which he school" in training him for fortress of Landsberg (11 which he said, "Landsberg was

enna left two quite different In his published memoir, list of the books he claims classics one would expect to iller, Goethe, Schopenhauer, vate letter to the Linz architect said that there were only talked about repeatedly: one oes, the other a volume on ribes. One of these books pressed Hitler: "Adolf said ed a symbol which would us that he had not really d. In his later memoirs and

conversations it is noteworthy that he can recall the names of the newspapers he read in Vienna but does not mention the title of a single book dealing with the social problems he professed to solve. Hitler also gives us insight into the way he approached the study of important social or intellectual questions. He says that when he first became aware of the "Jewish problem," and again when he decided to study Marxism, he sought insight and understanding by purchasing "some pamphlets" on these subjects.

His own commentary on the role that his stay in prison played in his education is also revealing. Immediately after saying that the prison was for him a college education, he undercuts and deprecates formal education and systematic reading. In a long, convoluted, and fuzzy sentence he insists that his method of reading for the confirmation of his views was infinitely better than any other, since "I recognize the correctness of my views in the long run throughout the history of the world and of nature, and was convinced of the contradictory and hypocritical 'intellectualizing' of the professors and high priests of the universities. Anyway, will-power is greater than knowledge."¹⁷

During the "battle years" before he attained power, Hitler often borrowed books. Indeed he borrowed so many and so often from a private library belonging to a right-wing nationalist that the owner, Friedrich Krohn, is probably right in suspecting that Hitler had only skimmed through them in order to impress his patron with his industry and knowledge. At any rate, of the more than 100 books and pamphlets he borrowed during the years 1919-1921, almost two-thirds were tawdry anti-Semitic and racist pamphlets: *Goethe and the Jews*, *Secret Law of the Jews*, *Luther and the Jews*, *Bolshevism and Jewry*, *Schopenhauer and the Jews*, Henry Ford's *The International Jew: A World Problem*, *Wagner and the Jews*, *Extracts from the Talmud*, and so forth. He also borrowed histories of medieval and modern Germany, church histories and exposés of the Catholic church, and a translation of writings of Montesquieu and Rousseau.¹⁸

Certainly Hitler wanted to give the impression of wide reading and great erudition by amassing an impressive collection of books. An intimate who prided himself on being something of an intellectual claimed that Hitler's private library contained some 6,000 books.¹⁹ Toward the end of World War II, American soldiers found a part of the personal library hidden in a salt mine in the neighborhood of Berchtesgaden. The books, numbering about 2,000, were shipped to Washington, where they are now housed in the Rare Books Division of the Library of Congress—standing grotesquely next to the private collections of Thomas Jefferson, Woodrow Wilson, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

While his library gives some indication of his reading tastes, it must be approached with caution as a key to his intellectual interests. Most of the books were not chosen by Hitler himself; they were presented as gifts. The fact that Hitler accepted and preserved them, however, would seem to indicate a degree of approval of their contents—or

Lords of the world." Emperor He hailed Chamberlain as his "It was God who sent your ally to me."¹⁵¹ lands of England and its allies But in meeting Hitler the old him as the long-awaited Führer b. The meeting took place in at of many pilgrimages to the ed by Wagner's widow, Cosima ghted everyone. He told Frau est influence on his life, that der listened to one of Wagner's yried; he absolutely captivated d man "with spent eyes in the as Wagner's son-in-law, H. S. d him for all his contributions -eyed man of destiny and racial etated a letter to Hitler. Like h Hitler's eyes: "... that you butable to your eyes and the eyes were equipped with hands, " The letter ended, "My faith in moment, but my hope, I must stroke you have transformed the

important to the development of erience there during the years an the political ideas which, in Hitler himself showed in an in Munich was effective precisely experience for him; rather, it re- in Vienna before the war—ideas, ily and so basic to his political ite foundation" and required no politics at Munich in 1919, Hitler pamphlet entitled "My Political tify the author of the pamphlet to admit that he had predecessors of racism. In fact, the author Drexler. His shabby racist tract Once more the "Goddess of Fate" y upon him. He read the little d the eerie feeling that he was

relying vividly some prior experience, an experience, he wrote, "which I had gone through personally in a similar way twelve years ago. Involuntarily I saw thus my own development come to life again before my eyes."¹⁵⁴ Twelve years before meant 1907–1908, when he was devouring the pamphlets issued by the List Society. It was during this period that he underwent the traumatic personal experience which made him a fanatic anti-Semite.

Drexler was an adjunct member of the Thule Society, the most influential of the many racist anti-Semitic groups spawned in Munich during the immediate postwar period. Outwardly it called itself a literary and scholarly circle, and it met at the posh Hotel Vierjahreszeiten. In addition to holding discussion meetings, the Thule Society also established secret arms depots to fight "subversion and treason" and distributed scurrilous anti-Semitic literature. By the time of the Revolution of 1918, the society numbered some 1,500 members in Bavaria and included many of Hitler's later supporters. Hitler himself, it is reported, "was often a guest of the society."¹⁵⁵

In addition to pledging their lives in the battle against Jews, prospective members were obliged to pass several tests. They had to prove that their Aryan blood had not been sullied for at least three generations,* indicate in a special form the amount of hair on various parts of their body (like Lanz, the society believed that non-Aryans were excessively hairy), and submit a footprint on a separate piece of paper as proof that their feet were Aryan.¹⁵⁶

As early as October 1918, however, Drexler had decided that discussion groups such as the Thule Society were insufficient to create a new Germany. So, in collaboration with a sportswriter named Karl Harrer, he established the "Political Workers' Circle," which was to serve as the nucleus for a large political organization he planned to call the German Workers' Party. The topics announced for discussion at meetings of the Workers' Circle convey sufficiently the ideas of the group. On 11 December 1918 the topic was "Germany's Greatest Enemy: the Jew"; on 16 January 1919, "Why the War Came"; on 22 January, "Could We Have Won the War?"; on 30 January, "Why the War Was Lost"; and on 5 February, "What Are the Consequences of the Lost War?" The message was clear: Jews were to blame. They had caused the war and traitorously lost it. The Jews were Germany's greatest enemy; they must be removed.¹⁵⁷

The actual German Workers' Party—which was to become the mighty Nazi movement—was established by Drexler and Harrer on 5 January 1919 in the Fürstenfelder tavern. It differed very little from the discussion groups and activities of the Thule Society or the other racist groups to which all the founders belonged. The party's total membership fluctuated between ten and 40 men during the first half of 1919. Its program was to meet weekly in various taverns, to lament the loss

* One of the reasons Hitler never joined the society may have been that he would have been unable to provide such proof.

of the war, and to explain Germany's past defeat and present difficulties by pointing to the "Jewish peril."

It was at one of the badly attended meetings of the ineffective little party, held in a tavern in the Tal on 12 September 1919, that Adolf Hitler appeared. As a political informer attached to the Bavarian Regiment No. 4 he had come to investigate the group. That evening he heard a speech by a certain Professor Baumann who raised the question of separating Bavaria from the Reich. Hitler was furious. He jumped to his feet and denounced the professor's suggestion with a passion and invective so intense the man left the meeting. Anton Drexler was enormously impressed with the magnetic newcomer's oratory and whispered in broad Bavarian dialect to the man next to him, "Man, he's got something there, we can sure use him!" As the meeting was breaking up, Drexler handed Hitler the fateful pamphlet, *My Political Awakening*.

Later that month Hitler made what he was to call "the most fateful decision of his life" and joined the German Workers' Party. But not as number 7, as he and many subsequent historians have recorded. His membership number was 555, which is to say he was the 55th member to join the party—it began its numbering at 500 to give the illusion of a strength it did not in fact possess. Hitler's number 7 was his number in the party's Workers' Committee.¹⁵⁸

DIETRICH ECKART

The member of the Thule Society who most influenced Hitler and who helped reinforce his political ideas was the racist poet Dietrich Eckart, best known in Germany for his translation of *Peer Gynt*. Hitler's eyes invariably moistened whenever he spoke of Eckart. He dedicated the second volume of *Mein Kampf* to him—a highly untypical public acknowledgment of indebtedness. And years later, in a midnight reverie, he looked back upon Eckart as an admonishing father figure in whose presence he felt like a small boy: "He shone in our eyes like a polar star. . . . When he admonished someone, it was with so much wit. At that time [1922] I was intellectually a child still on the bottle."¹⁵⁹

Eckart had written scathing attacks on Jews and other non-Germans in his racist periodical, *Auf gut Deutsch* (In Plain German), a journal which shows clearly Eckart had read Lanz-Liebenfels, List, Fritsch, Wagner, and H. S. Chamberlain, and that he too was fascinated with runic mysteries and such secret signs as the SS and the swastika. His poetry—which Hitler considered "as beautiful as Goethe's"—proclaimed his belief in Germany's messianic mission:

Father in Heaven, resolved to the death
Kneel we before Thee, Oh answer us, then!
Does aught other people Thine awful command
More loyally follow than we Germans do?

Is there one su
Laurel and vic
Father, Thou s
Up! and onwa

A little known pamphlet by Eckart and published in 1919 during these years *Moses to Lenin: Dialogues* virtually nothing in the here, as it had been in conspiracy. He and Eckart, Freemasonry, Christian invectives against the "B reasons of political expedi- gandists later claimed, "grudging admiration for the way Communist leaders late the masses. Stalin, I fellow!"

Eckart was not the times been suggested; r prejudices Hitler had alr this pamphlet which Hit Lanz, List, Fritsch, Wag And the tedious refrain of times in Hitler's spee Last Testament of 1945: nations, were the enemy Bolshevism" had been d acy" designed to infiltrat historic duty and destiny remarks he would repea that Christianity, like Ju Paul," he said, was resp peals to love and brother Jew triumphant!"

In the pamphlet, Hi Luther. They praised hi

* *Der Bolschewismus : Hitler und Mir* (Munich, 1919) involved in writing the pamphlet thinks that Eckart did all. Certainly Hitler neither deny it contains. See Ernst Nolte *Historische Zeitschrift* 192 (1961) "volksische" Publizist Dietrich

The Child As Father to the Man

many injections which he pumped into his bloodstream was a concoction of syrup mixed with extract of bull testicles.⁶⁶

He sought to reassure himself about his sexual powers in another way. His valet of many years was emphatic in reporting that Hitler kept two pistols near him: one, a 7.65 Walther, was always on his bedside table; the other, a 6.35 Walther, "ever since 1919 was always [ständig] carried in a specially made leather pocket which was sewn into all his trousers."⁶⁷ Thus, during his waking hours, when he entertained Chamberlain or the Duchess of Windsor, when he sat with Winifred Wagner listening to the *Götterdämmerung*, when he walked with little children, the pistol was in his pocket; when he orated to jubilant thousands, when he strolled the terrace of the Berghof, when he chattered gaily with movie starlets—always, a pistol was with him with its barrel pressed reassuringly against his thigh.

Let us return to Adolf's childhood. We have concluded that he was born with a sexual defect. The autopsy report, supported by psychological data and a consideration of his childhood and adult behavior, indicates that he was a monorchid. Further, we conclude that this physical condition, coupled with disturbed mother-child relations, shaped his attitude to his mother and contributed to his general psychological "modes" of mistrust and shame.

There is no direct evidence of the way Klara responded to her son's malformation. As with many questions raised by this book, we must speculate. It seems likely that she would have sought advice first from her aunts, who were experienced peasant women. There is no evidence that she consulted a physician. Probably her aunts assured her that little Adolf's condition was not at all unusual; she need not worry, since it was just a matter of time until the testicle "came down by itself." Thus the anxious mother—we are conjecturing—repeatedly reassured herself and her little boy that everything would be all right. If he waited patiently, surely the left testicle would, in due time, descend and everything would be normal. In this way, Hitler's childhood anxiety about time, and his impatience with waiting, were extended into a lifelong concern. He never trusted time again, and he developed a preference for watches whose faces were covered and clocks that were left unwound.

Time had always worked against him. In one of the last "Table Conversations" of which we have a record, that of 15 February 1945, he put it at the top of the list of those forces which had betrayed him and caused his defeat: "Time—and it's *always* Time, you notice—[is] against us."⁶⁸

His mother's repeated and worried reassurances would have served not to alleviate little Adolf's apprehension but to intensify it. And her reminders would have further confused his ambivalent feelings about her. He did indeed love his mother, as he so often insisted. But she had

1889, the year Hitler was born. Hitler was a generally identified with the portrayal of Wotan at the Deutsche Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich.



last official portrait, 1944. Used as a propaganda poster, the caption read, "Adolf Hitler ist der Sieg."

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

he used in describing the event—or the fantasy—show a clear development of the mistrust and hatred that would determine all his interpersonal relations. His mental picture of the incident reveals that to his mind sexuality, power, aggression, and cruelty were all fused together in a dangerous, pathologic union: terror, brutalization, and ruthless power were to him the primary features of sex and life.

In short, attitudes revealed here characterized both his own personality and the political system he imposed on his country and much of Europe.¹⁰²

LATER CHILDHOOD

Adolf Hitler's formative early years did not bode well for the development of the crucially important mother-child relationship. Maternal indulgence and paternal severity bound him excessively to his mother. Though tied to her emotionally, he was at the same time unconsciously repelled, for he blamed her for two things—his monorchism and the "primal scene"—which greatly complicated his Oedipal feelings. It is not possible to say which was the more important; indeed, we will probably never know. But it is less important to assign priority than to stress the cumulative effect of both experiences. That there was interaction and mutual reinforcement seems evident because the consequences of both experiences, as revealed in Hitler's later life, were far more intense than the symptoms observed in clinical cases where only one or the other trauma was experienced.¹⁰³

Subsequent events of childhood served to strengthen his attitudes about himself and others. The beatings he had suffered from his father, for example, helped to justify his hatred of the old man; they also must have increased his ambivalence toward his mother, who was either unable or unwilling to protect him from his father's attacks. In his later recollections, Hitler was not very successful in justifying his mother's ineffectiveness and acquiescence to the beatings. "My poor mother was always afraid for me"—but was unable to protect him. "I knew my mother stood anxiously outside the door"—but did nothing to stop the torture.¹⁰⁴

These childhood punishments, real and fantasied, intensified Hitler's Oedipal problem and may also have contributed to the later "splitting," so characteristic of the adult Hitler, between sadism and masochism, destruction and creativity, cruelty and kindness, love and hatred. As Freud pointed out in a famous study of sadomasochism, a sense of guilt for Oedipal desire is invariably present as the decisive force transforming sadism into masochism.¹⁰⁵

An interesting line in *Mein Kampf* may or may not be autobio-

1900

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graphical. If it is, we can profound guilt feelings for this passage, he is continually age 15, and how he stays (disdain for parental authority) Adolf's own behavior after and God only knows when *beat the poor creature who world. . .*"¹⁰⁶

Key events of Adolf's birth and death of his brother Adolf saw the arrival of Ed: this rival deeply and harbor wishes were fulfilled. For w the age of six. During the i have grown close to each sudden death awakened gu story of the little boy's fune could not be completely tr abandoned her sons in their

Neighbors of the Hitle the 1950s shook their heads little Edmund Hitler died of 1900 and was buried in the father attended the funeral, Josef Mayrhofer, the usual Alois Hitler, could explain th

Neighbors suggested or was not very persuasive. Th had no liking for the village. For example, the priest and a soup kitchen for indige Alois Hitler, the retired imp in the village, became the considered this church-sch ference in local politics." If mayor sided with Hitler pèr sence from Edmund's funer At any rate, it does seem furious with the local pries and swore, in one of his fit church of his enemy again, hear that priest pray over l refused to go to the funeral. She was a devoted mother were not, it seems passing : own son's burial. The only

sy—show a clear development—determine all his interests incident reveals that to cruelty were all fused together, brutalization, and ruthlessness and life.

terized both his own person his country and much

graphical. If it is, we can speculate that Hitler may have developed profound guilt feelings for having once whipped his own mother. In this passage, he is continuing his description of the "worker's son," now age 15, and how he stays out to all hours of the night, showing total disdain for parental authority—a description, as we shall see, that fits Adolf's own behavior after the death of his father: "He loiters about, and God only knows when he comes home; for a change *he may even beat the poor creature who was once his mother*, curses God and the world. . . ." ¹⁰⁶

Key events of Adolf's later childhood appear to revolve around the birth and death of his brother Edmund. When, at the age of six, young Adolf saw the arrival of Edmund, it may be imagined that he resented this rival deeply and harbored death wishes towards him. If so, the wishes were fulfilled. For when Adolf was 11, his little brother died at the age of six. During the intervening years the two brothers seem to have grown close to each other, and it seems likely that Edmund's sudden death awakened guilt feelings in Adolf. Certainly the strange story of the little boy's funeral reinforced Adolf's belief that his mother could not be completely trusted. Like the fickle Goddess of Fate, she abandoned her sons in their direst need.

Neighbors of the Hitlers still alive in the village of Leonding in the 1950s shook their heads in incredulity when they recalled that when little Edmund Hitler died of complications following measles in March 1900 and was buried in the church graveyard, neither his mother nor father attended the funeral. They spent the day in Linz. Not even old Josef Mayrhofer, the usually outspoken village mayor and friend of Alois Hitler, could explain the curious behavior of the parents.

Neighbors suggested one possible explanation, but admitted that it was not very persuasive. They recalled that the anticlerical Alois Hitler had no liking for the village priest, whom he considered too "political." For example, the priest and a schoolteacher had the idea of organizing a soup kitchen for indigent wanderers and migrant farm laborers. Alois Hitler, the retired imperial official, as the most prestigious person in the village, became the leader of an anticlerical opposition which considered this church-school alliance to be "socialization and interference in local politics." If this were so, it would help explain why the mayor sided with Hitler *père* and was later so embarrassed about his absence from Edmund's funeral that he refused to talk about the matter. At any rate, it does seem possible that Alois could have become so furious with the local priest that he thumped the tavern *Stammtisch* and swore, in one of his fits of temper, that he would never enter the church of his enemy again, that he would be damned if he would ever hear that priest pray over his dead son. And so the stubborn old man refused to go to the funeral. Perhaps. But how explain Klara's absence? She was a devoted mother and a devout Catholic. And even if she were not, it seems passing strange that a mother would not attend her own son's burial. The only explanation that comes to mind, if valid,

C GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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-called Free Corps, who pre-
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to play the role destiny had
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of anxiety, inadequacy, and
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corps occupation swirled about
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been chosen; that somehow,
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he did.

His first steps led him back to the army. He was assigned to a special new department (Abteilung I S/P) which, after the recent events in Munich, had been established to investigate offbeat or subversive political groups. Hitler later styled himself the "educational officer" of the regiment. Actually he was a "V-Mann" (the abbreviation for *Vertrauensmann*), or undercover agent. His job was to act as a spy and report "reliable" and "unreliable" political movements.²¹⁵

As part of his training, he was required to attend a series of indoctrination lectures given by patriotic professors at the University of Munich. One of his instructors, Professor Karl-Alexander von Müller, recalled that after a lecture he noticed that "the men seemed spellbound by one of their number who was haranguing them with mounting passion in a strangely guttural voice. I had the peculiar feeling that their excitement derived from him and at the same time they, in turn, were inspiring him."²¹⁶ This giving and receiving, this mutual nourishment between Hitler and his audience, would remain characteristic of his relationship to a crowd.

The professor was so impressed he recommended that Hitler be assigned to promoting patriotism in the ranks of the army. Hitler himself remembered the incident clearly and gloried in the power and personal satisfaction he felt in moving a crowd through the spoken word:

I started full of ambition and love. For thus I was at once offered the opportunity to speak before a large audience. . . . What previously I had always assumed to be true out of pure feeling without knowledge, became clear now: I could "speak" [*Ich konnte "reden"*]. . . . No other task could make me happier than this one.²¹⁷

He was about to illustrate this power at a fateful moment in history. For one day in September 1919, either because his job as an army informer required it or—as he preferred to believe—because the Goddess of Fate directed him to do so, he investigated a meeting of the struggling racist party founded by a railway mechanic named Anton Drexler. The little group, which called itself the German Workers' Party, gathered in the Sterneckerbräu tavern in the Tal. The meeting, in a back room that reeked of good beer and bad cigars, was moribund until the stranger with the flashing eyes and compelling voice rose in anger to answer a professor who had suggested that Bavaria should break away from the Reich. So furious and effective was Hitler's attack that the demolished opponent left the meeting. Drexler was impressed.

Hitler subsequently wrote a report to his superior officer, Lieutenant Mayr, warning of the "Jewish racial tuberculosis" and insisting on the need for immediate "Progroms [sic]" and "the removal [Ent-

The Beer Hall Putsch

Hitler's first attempt to seize power in Germany, the Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923, casts special light on his personality. He showed a combination of decision and irresolution, effectiveness and ineptitude, and—as we shall see in a later connection—a curious impulse to flirt with disaster.

The historical background for the famous event can be quickly sketched. After Munich was "liberated" from the Communists in the Spring of 1919, Free Corps fighters by the hundreds flocked to the city where sympathetic officials gave them haven.* Two political leaders sought the support of these militant, unruly veterans and racist activists: the "strongman" of Bavaria, Gustav von Kahr, and Adolf Hitler. Kahr was a ponderous, stubborn, uninspiring bureaucrat who had just been made state commissioner general [*Generalstaatskommissar*]—a post whose powers were well beyond his ability. Both men were uncomfortable with their restless supporters who demanded action and the immediate overthrow of the hated Weimar Republic.

Hitler in particular was uncertain and hesitant. He did not quite know what to do with a political situation which seemed so propitious for political upheaval. By the late summer of 1923, Germans were stunned and shaken by the recent French invasion of the Ruhr; runaway inflation was wiping out people's life savings; unemployment grew unchecked; thousands went hungry. In addition to economic distress, there seemed to be political crises everywhere. Radical socialists seized the governments of Saxony and Thuringia. A Red uprising in Hamburg was put down only after vicious street fighting. In the Rhineland, separatists proclaimed an independent Rhenish Republic. Everywhere, it seemed, "things were falling apart." And nowhere was there more happiness than in Hitler's headquarters.

Destiny seemed to be calling him. But he was not quite sure. He got no clear message. For weeks he had talked loudly and often about overthrowing the government of "Jewish traitors" and "November Criminals." But he was disconcerted when militant veterans began to take him literally. They wanted action, and he was disappointing them. They began to mutter about the leader "who makes revolution with his mouth." In a secret session of Hitler's subsequent trial, Wilhelm Brückner, then the leader of the Munich Brownshirts and later Hitler's personal adjutant, testified, "I also personally told Hitler that the day was

* The tone and political bias of the city is shown in an incident recalled by Ernst Röhm, a right-wing militant and early supporter of Hitler who was later gunned down on his Führer's orders. "One day an alarmed statesman went up to the Police President (Ernst Pöhner) and whispered in his ear, 'Herr President, political murder organizations actually exist in this country!' Pöhner replied, 'Yes, I know—but not enough of them!' [*So, so, aber zu wenig!*]" Röhm, *Die Geschichte eines Hochveräters*, 7th ed. (Munich, 1934), 131.

near when I could no longer the men would drift away

Nor could Hitler be recently made to the Bavarian had called him to his he and his men were about his chair, beat his breast of honor, never as long "My word of honor, I was first formal political pron

Kahr was equally to a revolution, but he never gram of conservative reservists gravitate to him invited the leading nation which was to be held on intended, but Hitler was dramatic announcement-telsbach monarchy. At initiative pass to Kahr. A that the time had come

On the evening of 8 servatives of Bavaria as respectable Bürgerbräuk was reading falteringly a reached a passage asse voice droned on, the as motion near the center morning coat had jumped—fired two shots into t that the national revolution

Hitler did not look l cut a very imposing figure secretary of state for for that night, recalled that most difficult of all garn coat, and let alone a man legs and his long torso. ridiculous costume I thought

After firing his shot point commanded the th sow, and Seisser * to go

* Kahr, as noted, was t sow was commander of the l telligent man with wry wit l commander of the Bavarian independent mind and proved

: ADOLF HITLER

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THE FIRST REICH, 800-1806

The path to dictatorship in Germany was long, tortuous, and amazingly crowded.

—Fritz Stern

To most Germans the medieval past was an indistinct shimmer, a romantic haze through which resounded the reassuring phrase all school-children learned: Das heilige römische Reich deutscher Nation. Of course Voltaire was right in asking his questions: "In what respects, Monsieur, was it Holy? or Roman? or an Empire? or a Nation?" In point of historic fact it was none of these, but it left a glorious memory, a lasting myth, and a longing for the future—for a time when there would indeed be one German nation and a mighty Reich. The untranslatable word "Reich" would have continuing appeal to Germans across the centuries. To the Romantics, to Pan-German nationalists, and eventually to the Nazis it would express a mystical and "eternal" German-*dom* (*Deutschtum*).

"Reich" was not only a favorite word of German intellectuals, but it also entered into popular culture. A student who has traced the power of myth in German history has written that belief in the Reich was "so deeply implanted in the German people through the schools and universities and as a result of the monotonous repetition of its themes that through the force of habit the German people came to accept it as the truth." In order to understand its power to attract, one must remember that this beautiful little word of Celtic origin has to the German ear a sacred and religious tone. To Catholics and Protestants alike, it is a cherished word in their most familiar prayer: Dein Reich komme, dein Wille geschehe. . . . The word also conjures up romantic glories in a dozen fairy tales. "When one pronounces the word," a German has written, "a picture book of enchanted centuries flashes before the mind's eye."⁴

Hitler, with his remarkable ability to respond to the myths and aspirations of the German people, had planned to paraphrase the expression in a book he thought of writing in 1919, the "Monumental History of Humanity." The German task, he said at that time, was to establish a new and racially pure Reich: "The Germanic Reich of the German Nation" (*Germanisches Reich deutscher Nation*). The book of 1919 did not materialize. But his Reich did, and it preserved the cadence of the ancient phrase in its title *Das dritte Reich deutscher Nation*.

The writers of school textbooks also took the concept of the Holy Roman Empire much more seriously than did Voltaire. A widely used geography of 1913, for example, claimed this "first German Reich" to be the predecessor of the "Second Reich of Bismarck and our Kaiser." It listed all the lands that "belonged to Germany" during the First Reich, noting pointedly that Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Belgium, the Nether-

and corruption which plagued other governments on the eve of revolution were not hallmarks of the Hohenzollerns. Moreover, German intellectuals, unlike such thinkers as Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson, Herzen, or Mao, had not deserted the establishment; they still endorsed it. Normally, revolutions veer sharply to the left; but this one moved steadily to the right. It was a revolution without joy and without song—perhaps the only songless revolution in history.

Revolutionaries, normally required by successful revolutions, could not be found among the leaders of the new German government. Friedrich Ebert (1871-1925)—who looked and acted like the successful small businessman he was—was the leader of the revolutionary republic which, on 9 November 1918, had been proclaimed against his wishes. Five days earlier, he had entreated the Army to save the monarchy because he was convinced it was the only alternative to revolution, and he abhorred the very idea. "I want no part of it," he had said on the eve of the event, "I hate it as I hate sin."¹⁴⁸

In a very real sense, there was no Revolution of 1918. To be sure, political change had taken place at the top—a president, after all, had replaced an emperor. But basic social, institutional and attitudinal patterns remained largely unaffected.^{*} The forces that had dominated the Empire and had done so much to produce the "German condition" remained to plague the Republic: military ideals continued to pervade society; Junkers and Ruhr barons were untouched by revolution, as the same families controlled industry, banking, and agriculture; the imperial bureaucracy was left intact in central and local government, in the Foreign Office and in the judiciary; intellectuals still disdained politics and ridiculed parliament; authoritarian families and schools continued to inculcate attitudes inimical to democracy and favorable to fascism.

In short, from the outset of the revolution, prospects for democracy were not good. They did not improve when, after the regular army had been dissolved, President Ebert felt obliged to call on radically hostile soldiers—the Free Corps—to defend his precarious government from the leftist revolts which were sweeping Germany and establishing Soviet-style republics in major cities of the country.

THE FREE CORPS AS VANGUARD OF NAZISM

By the summer of 1919—when Hitler was still unknown—the Free Corps had become the most important political force in Germany and the greatest single source of future Nazi personnel and spirit. Some 500,000 strong, these self-styled Freebooters had smashed leftist movements with exultant brutality from the Ruhr to the Baltic, from Ham-

^{*} Germans showed the depth of their desire to avoid change and to preserve the magic of a word when they refused to call the new government the "German Republic"; they chose instead "German Reich." Thus, constitutional purists can argue that the Third Reich actually began in 1919, when the new constitution was adopted, and not in 1933 with Hitler's "seizure" of power.

burg to Munich. Battle-to-battle fight in the Great War, not because they respected the cause they needed money to fight and destroy. Listen

People told us that we ourselves are the War nates us with the ent the battlefields of the battle on the Western joy of adventure as remorseless in battle.¹

The chief characteristics, those of Hitler's Story had been developing in the manifested at two levels. The one called the Führer and idolized him. The leader was also an alchemist, a barossa legend. Thus, in 1919, a *Freikorpskämpfer* to lead us—a Man who Believe me . . . things will happen. Second, there was its smash the whole philistine spokesman of the movement.

"What do we believe? We were a band of world; full of lust, excitement and destruction up from every part of

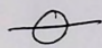
Third, like the Nazis, they indicated themselves to what were savagely anti-Semitic.

Fourth, like so many dreamed of a new German political program for the shunned one, for reasons of

Nothing is more chaotic than their deep dreams of this

1919

23



BERLIN, 1919

Ribbentrop did not take long to find his way. Berlin was never a stuffy city, in part because of the early influence of the eccentric Frederick the Great, the Prussian soldier-king. Frederick Rex preferred to speak French, loved flute concerts, encouraged French Huguenot immigration, and even made life easier for his Jewish subjects (generally if they made the beau geste of converting to Protestantism). At Sans Souci, his castle in Potsdam, he was host to radical thinkers like Voltaire and Rousseau. This liberal tradition introduced Berliners to a sense of freedom from the powers above. Besides, those who lived in the city on the Spree River were a mixture of Slavic, Celtic, Nordic, and Frankish. Berlin always welcomed the new, the exotic, the strange. The city's language — all through the time of Hitler — included Yiddish and French expressions as integral parts. Berlin's disrespectful big-city humor is legendary, and the Berlin of 1919 was raucous and dynamic. As Europe's youngest capital city, it lacked the traditions of London, Paris, and Rome, but it had elasticity and great recuperative power.

By 1920, though there were still riots in the streets, shots being exchanged between political demonstrators, the police, and hastily assigned troops, Berlin's West End had its cafés and cabarets, its *thés dansants* and dinner parties. Rich women went to their dressmakers and coiffeurs, and straying husbands visited their mistresses in cozy little Charlottenburg flats. Most upper-class Berliners were not suffering financially. Their main complaints were that Germany had lost the war ("How could it happen to us?") and that the government seemed a shambles compared with years of imperial security. Upper-middle-class Germans found it painful not to know exactly what to expect. Even Berliners longed for "order." As Stendhal had written: "For the Germans, truth is not what exists but what ought to be true according to their system." In this respect, Berliners were typical Germans. After all, the reassuring Imperial government had been right there in Berlin. This was the Berlin Ribbentrop found in 1919.

In July of that year, Dr. Paul Schwarz, a long-time member of Germany's elite Foreign Service, the *Auswärtiges Amt*, was lunching with Ottmar Strauss and some others. Strauss, a prominent industrialist and a Jew, introduced him to a recently demobilized young officer named Ribbentrop, who spoke German with a slight English accent. The young man explained that he had studied in London and had lived in Canada. He had been sent to meet Strauss by Mathias Erzberger, the minister of finance. Ribbentrop was pleasant company. He spoke several other languages and was descended from an old military

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Von Hindenburg shook his hand, and they had a leisurely chat about the war while the director of the opera and the other dignitaries stood waiting.¹³

Berlin was reviving as an international diplomatic center. After the war, the decisions were made in London, Paris, and Washington. The first of many heads of state to visit the newly republican city was the exotic potentate King Aman-Ullah of Afghanistan. At one state ceremony, the Muslim King drank the republic's health in water. He then wanted to present a decoration to the head of Parliament, who, regretfully and apologetically, turned it down. "We are a republic, sire. You, sire, do not drink alcohol, and we cannot accept titles or decorations." However, the magnificent red Afghan coat that accompanied the decoration was accepted and passed on to State Secretary Weissmann, a bon vivant who sported it a few nights later. The Berlin street wits promptly dubbed him Weissmannulla.

Next came the pragmatic King Fuad of Egypt, who in French-accented German said, "During the mornings I work at the King business. During the afternoons I work for myself, the banks, *les maisons*, the estates."

King Faisal of Iraq appeared in civilian clothes. He was a modern monarch and wished no fuss.

The first postwar U.S. ambassador to Berlin was the wealthy and much-liked Fredrick Sackett, a great party-giver with a beautiful wife. They invited many young Berliners and even received acceptances from some Prussian aristocrats, who, as a matter of principle, snubbed most invitations to the embassies of their former enemies, particularly the French.

The spirit of Berlin was reviving in other ways. In 1919, for the first and only time, the German Derby, usually run in anglophile Hamburg, was moved to Berlin's Grunewald Racetrack. The winner was German-bred Gibraltar; ironically, his jockey was named Kaiser.*

Many people found irresistible the comparison with their runaway monarch. Most of Berlin's horse-breeding families, several of whom were Jewish, belonged to the Grunewald Jockey Club. Joachim and Annelies were always happy to be invited to the club. Jockey Club Jews were not too Jewish.¹⁴

Postwar Berlin was as bewitched with theater, film, and music as were the other capitals of the world, but nowhere else was there such

*Kaiser Bill, as he was dubbed in Britain and America, was living in comfortable exile in a half-million-guilder mansion named House Doorn. It had been purchased from the van Heemstra-de Beauforts, the family of film star Audrey Hepburn.

a mania for sport equivalent of Nevada, was always there, from society night in their swinging, horse shows stars, like the m Gitta Alpar, were the crowd to sing was all in the family the Sportpalast for

Berlin's sports nish runner; Arne of tennis; Norway diately and affect Tilden's racquets came Häseken; the language. Any thing

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a mania for sports. The Sportpalast, a large indoor arena, Berlin's equivalent of New York's Madison Square Garden or London's Olympia, was always filled to overflowing with spectators. Everyone was there, from society people in evening clothes to workmen out for the night in their sweaters and knickerbockers. Six-day bike races, boxing, horse shows were invariably sold out. If Berlin's great singing stars, like the monocled Richard Tauber or Hungary's blond diva Gitta Alpar, were in the audience, they could always be persuaded by the crowd to sing their most famous melodies during intermission. It was all in the family. Small wonder that later Hitler often requisitioned the Sportpalast for his most important speeches.

Berlin's sports heroes of the twenties were Paavo Nurmi, the Finnish runner; Arne Borg, the Swedish swimmer; America's Bill Tilden of tennis; Norway's Sonja Henie of skating; foreigners all, but immediately and affectionately adopted by Berlin. Everyone knew that Tilden's racquets were strung with purple gut. Tiny Sonja Henie became Häseken, the baby hare. Nurmi's name was part of the Berliner's language. Any thief who was chased by the cops "ran like Nurmi."

Nowhere else was there such a love affair between a big metropolitan city and its film people. The premiers of *Blue Angel*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Madchen in Uniform*, and *The Congress Dances* became events of tremendous importance, and, in the case of *All Quiet*, of political rioting. The Nazis considered the war novel by Remarque and the film that followed it to be "pacifist treason to the brave men who fought and died" and an "unpatriotic slander to their sacred memory." The theater had to cancel some performances to avoid riots. Peter Lorre, Luise Rainer, Elisabeth Bergner, Marlene Dietrich, Conrad Veidt, Pola Negri, Emil Jannings, and even the Swedish Greta Garbo were all launched in Berlin, as were the directors Ernst Lubitsch, George William Pabst, and Billy Wilder.

Theater? The names Max Reinhardt, Erwin Piscator, Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill, evoke new, sometimes jarring ways to present famous pieces. Bert Brecht's *Threepenny Opera* and *Mahagonny*, once called monstrous and repetitious, have become classics. The Bauhaus and its multinational stars stunned the world of architecture. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Erich Mendelsohn, shaped new offices and dwellings from concrete and glass. The world still is influenced by Bauhaus architects, although Hitler, an architectural dilettante, damned flat roofs as "oriental" and the use of glass and concrete as "foreign." Berlin's painters of that time were usually political. George Grosz, Käthe Kollwitz, Otto Dix, Christian Schad, were all pacifists and bitter critics of Germany's upper strata. Their exhibitions

were usually political events. (In the long run, the nonpolitical artists' names of the time became more famous: Oskar Kokoschka, Paul Klee, Emil Nolde.) The conductors Wilhelm Furtwängler, Werner Klemperer, and Bruno Walter, the composer Arnold Schönberg, and the Berlin Philharmonic brought music lovers of the world to Berlin. There was also a mediocre violinist named Albert Einstein.

In the Berlin of the twenties and thirties the automobile was king, just as it was in New York, London, and Paris. But Berlin was also married to motor sports. Great race drivers became the spoiled, much-invited darlings of Berlin society. Every schoolboy knew the German champion "Karatsch" (Caracciola, a German despite his Italian name) and his personal white two-seater supercharged SSKL Mercedes, license number 1A-4444. Twice each year the AVUS road, normally a wide highway to the wealthy suburbs, became an automobile race-track, and over 100,000 Berliners flocked to watch Karatsch and the other German aces race against the French, the Italians (Signor Ferrari was the team manager for Alfa Romeo), and the English.

Mercedes-Benz was the "prestige" car, preferably the big Kompressor (supercharged) one with its tubular outside exhausts; that is, unless one was rich enough to own an American Packard, which was considered *prima*. In fact, most American and English fads or stars were *prima*, from Josephine Baker to "Yes, we have no bananas" (*Ausgerechnet Bananen*). The Charleston was danced, cocktails were offered, and the very worldly, the very rich, and the very dissolute sniffed cocaine. The Berlin versions of New York's vaudeville or London's revues were Berlin's Varieté, complete with long-legged English chorus girls. Berlin loved the English. To excuse anything lopsided, Berliners said, "Lopsided is English, and English is modern" (*Schief ist englisch und englisch ist modern*). Many Berliners bought cheap cars, Opels and DKWs, and they got them *auf Stottern* (literally, "stuttering") or in installments. No matter how precarious the economy, Berlin's roads were always jammed on weekends as people streamed out of the city to *das Grüne*, the beloved outdoors. Working-class families made day excursions to the nearby lakes and woods. The rich owned villas on the beautiful lake called Wannsee, where they played tennis, danced, sailed, played golf, and partied.

Later, Berlin's mania for automobile racing became one of Adolf Hitler's favorite propaganda tools. Hitler himself was a second-to-none enthusiast of the automobile, with a superstitious preference for Mercedes; once when he was a passenger in a Mercedes that was involved in an accident, the other car was demolished, but the Mercedes survived easily.

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*The Treaty of Versailles

officer like Göring and Hess, or the embittered intellectual like Rosenberg and Goebbels, as for the working man who refused to join a trade union or the small shopkeeper who wanted to smash the windows of the big Jewish department stores. Ambition, resentment, envy, avidity for power and wealth—in every class—these were the powerful motive forces Hitler sought to harness. He was prepared to be all things to all men, because to him all men represented only one thing, a means to power.

The committee which had hitherto controlled the Party was now swept away—Hitler had long since ceased to attend its meetings. The new president put in Max Amann, the ex-sergeant-major of the List Regiment, to run the business side of the Party, and Dietrich Eckart as editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the weekly Party paper. The power of making all big decisions Hitler kept in his own hands. He was working as he had never worked before. But it was work which suited him: his hours were irregular, he was his own master, his life was spent in talking, he lived in a whirl of self-dramatization, and the gap between his private dream-world and his outer life had been narrowed, however slightly.

Until the end of his life Hitler regarded these early years of the Nazi movement with pride. It was the heroic period of the Party's struggle, the *Kampfzeit*. 'It is truly a miracle to trace this development of our movement. To posterity it will appear like a fairy-tale. A people is shattered and then a small company of men arises and begins an Odyssey of wanderings, which begins in fanaticism, which in fanaticism pursues its course.'

Who were the men with whom Hitler began his 'Odyssey' in Munich? One of the most important was Ernst Röhm, a man for whom soldiering was his whole life and who had little but contempt for any-

The Years of Struggle, 1
thing outside it. Röhm was too much of the unruly to fit easily into the rigid pattern. None the less he provided Army authorities, even as more than any other man S.A.

Hess and Göring were to Hess, the son of a German and stupid young man whose seriousness, conceived as a duty and became his secretary very different figure from swaggering Hermann Göring, the crack Richthofen Fighter, Germany's highest decoration. In the autumn of 1922 he was shortly afterwards he became

Like Röhm, Gottfried Feder had joined the German Workers' Party. Feder had unorthodox ideas, made a great impression on Hitler, he had clipped his moustache in imitation of him. Eckart, a journalist, poet, and playwright, anti-democratic, and an enthusiasm for Nordic things. Eckart had read widely, lent Hitler books, corrected in speaking and writing, a influential people, including the famous piano manufacturer took a great liking to the Party, for people to meet the new Party and later visited

Through Eckart, Hitler met a refugee of German descent, an architect in Moscow, but

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the peace terms to be decided by the Paris peace conference.

The triangle of authority laid out between the Berlin authorities, the Supreme Command in Kassel and the holders of industrial power wanted to bring home the soldiers, turn industry back to peacetime production, negotiate a peace and create a parliamentary republic. While street fighting was going on in Berlin the elections of January 19, 1919 gave a three-quarters majority to the parties of the center-left: the Social Democrats, the leftwing liberal Deutsche Demokratische Partei and the old Catholic Center Party. The old National Liberal Party reemerged under Gustav Stresemann, adopting the name of Deutsche Volkspartei, and so did the Deutschkonservative Partei, now under the name of Deutschnationale Volkspartei. The Communists had rejected the elections as just another bourgeois plot, while the radical Volkische fringe on the right was conspicuous by its absence.

As fighting continued in Berlin, a safe venue had to be found for the German National Assembly. Weimar was chosen not because of its associations with Goethe and Schiller, but because the little town in Thuringia offered relative calm, a suitable building in its National Theater, enough to eat and, above all, security against a Leninist coup. In fact, for the duration of the constitutional deliberations, Weimar was guarded by the Freikorps Maercker, one of the many freelance military units in search of employment.

Germans looked to Weimar to open a new chapter of national history. Nine out of ten had no stomach for Leninist revolution, but eight out of ten were ready to give democracy a try, to attempt to learn from the victors. Constitution making in Weimar was, of course, coupled to

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peace making in Paris. While their fate into their own hands, it was to be decided, first and foremost at the conference tables.

In the next few months, the suppressed in Berlin and elsewhere Rosa Luxemburg were shot in the operation by Freikorps troops in the name of giving rise to a martyrs' cult. The *publik* ended with its leader, Ku then the killing of hostages, mostly the Art Academy, by the revolutionaries by bloody revenge on the part of the workers moving in from the mountains. Some of them under the swastika courts, which meted out draconian sentences included.

The men and women assembled in the National Theater in the heart of Weimar were aware of what was at stake. They were taking the best from the German past offered a strong bureaucratic courts, one man, one vote election, a role for parliament. Federalism to the revolution, and while it proved in old imbalance inherent in the weight of the state of Prussia, for Reich had power over direct taxation give rise to sweeping legislation. That the elements of state socialism of recent months were preserved. The middle classes secured guarant

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aid out between the Berlin command in Kassel and the need to bring home the solace of time production, negotiable parliamentary republic. While

Berlin the elections of January gave majority to the parties of the Democrats, the leftwing liberal Partei and the old Catholic National Liberal Party reemerged adopting the name of Deutsche Deutschkonservative Partei, the National Volkspartei. The elections as just another liberal Volkische fringe on the scene.

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war to open a new chapter of history. Ten had no stomach for it out of ten were ready to give to learn from the victors. Con- r was, of course, coupled to

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peace making in Paris. While the Germans tried to take their fate into their own hands, it was all too evident that it was to be decided, first and foremost, at the Paris conference tables.

In the next few months, the communist uprisings were suppressed in Berlin and elsewhere. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were shot in the course of a mopping-up operation by Freikorps troops in the service of the government, giving rise to a martyrs' myth. The Munich *Räterepublik* ended with its leader, Kurt Eisner's assassination, then the killing of hostages, mostly elderly professors from the Art Academy, by the revolutionaries. This was followed by bloody revenge on the part of the Freikorps and volunteers moving in from the mountains of Upper Bavaria, some of them under the swastika. The rest was left to the courts, which meted out draconian punishment, death sentences included.

The men and women assembled in the celebrated National Theater in the heart of the city of Weimar were aware of what was at stake. They wanted a perfect constitution, taking the best from the German tradition and adding what they found convenient from the west. The German past offered a strong bureaucracy and administrative courts, one man, one vote elections and a legislative role for parliament. Federalism too had survived war and revolution, and while it proved impossible to reduce the old imbalance inherent in the overwhelming size and weight of the state of Prussia, for the first time now the Reich had power over direct taxation, which was soon to give rise to sweeping legislation. The trade unions saw to it that the elements of state socialism and the achievements of recent months were preserved in constitutional form. The middle classes secured guarantees of individual prop-

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erty. The social democrats tried to keep the door open for more socialism, once they achieved an overall majority—something they regarded as merely a matter of time thanks to the internal contradictions of capitalism.

Restoration of the monarchy was not seriously debated because even the conservatives-turned-nationalists would have been hard pressed to name a likely candidate. Instead, the left-wing liberals inspired by Max Weber, the famous sociologist, and Friedrich Naumann, the Nationalsozial leader, created an Ersatzkaiser and guardian of the constitution in the shape of the new office of Reich President. This was done not out of theoretical considerations, but primarily to create a rock on which all anti-republican movements of the future should founder. But there was also a belief in the benefits of personal authority and the hope that a popularly elected chief executive would forever block socialist experiments. Ebert, however, had forebodings of crises to come and, although a dyed-in-the-wool social democrat and now himself Reich President, he regretted the bonds of tradition and legitimacy that had been broken with the fall of the monarchy. His fellow social democrats, for their part, insisted on installing a system for referendums, assuming that this would provide a means to overrule middle-class majorities in parliament.

So, while parliament passed legislation and voted governments into or out of power, both the President and the popular referendum curtailed parliamentary primacy. The eagle remained Germany's state symbol, but one could say that now it had three heads ready to fight each other. On the face of it, the constitution looked like a piece of perfect locksmithing. In reality, it would open the gates to the barbarians once the democratic honeymoon was over.

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Meanwhile in Paris, twenty-seven attend the conference to make peace, the process of defining themselves, fighting their neighbors, many of inexperienced, at worst bent on exquished states were not invited: Germany, Turkey, Bulgaria. The Russia of sent a formal invitation, but there was. Thus, Germany and Russia, the two most on the European continent, were in absence. The conference was conceived and since the Supreme Council, composed of States, Britain, France, Italy and Japan agree upon an overall organizing principle, wishful thinking and huge contradiction among them was the incompatible high-flying idealism with French pragmatism.

Wilson wanted to call a new world of national self-determination, democracy, absence of secret diplomacy and a League to ensure peace. He understood neither the empires nor the conglomerate nature of nation-states, in particular Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Nor did he realize that, for it to work, it needed an open-ended American to put right every wrong and be the world.

French leaders, by contrast, were obsessed up Germany, extracting vast reparation from the *petite entente* of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia around Germany in the east that would contain the Bolshevik revolution. They were that without the *Anglosaxons* the balance of

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attend the conference to make peace, many of them still in
the process of defining themselves, forming a government
and fighting their neighbors, many of their leaders at best
inexperienced, at worst bent on expansion. The van-
quished states were not invited: Germany, Austria, Hun-
gary, Turkey, Bulgaria. The Russia of the Tsars had been
sent a formal invitation, but there was no one to accept.
Thus, Germany and Russia, the two most powerful nations
on the European continent, were conspicuous by their
absence. The conference was conceived as an open forum,
and since the Supreme Council, composed of the United
States, Britain, France, Italy and Japan, never managed to
agree upon an overall organizing principle, it got lost in
detail, wishful thinking and huge contradictions. Promi-
nent among them was the incompatibility of Wilson's
high-flying idealism with French paranoia.

Wilson wanted to call a new world into being based on
national self-determination, democracy and free trade, the
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ensure peace. He understood neither the role of the old
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nation-states, in particular Czechoslovakia, Poland and
Yugoslavia. Nor did he realize that, for the post-war order
to work, it needed an open-ended American commitment
to put right every wrong and be the world's policeman.

French leaders, by contrast, were obsessed with carving
up Germany, extracting vast reparations and building a
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THE "JEWISH POISON"

The greatest danger is and remains for us the alien racial poison in our body. All other dangers are transitory. This one alone is perpetually present for us in its resultant effect.

ADOLF HITLER, 27 February 1925.¹

Adolf Hitler changed markedly with the close of World War I. Before then his occasional speechifying met with smiling sufferance at best.² Once on an anniversary of the revolution of 1918, which symbolized for him the collapse of the Reich, he remarked: "I don't think I could have spoken to twenty people before that time without being at a loss for words."³ Yet early in the postwar period he was already a spellbinding orator, drawing deep and powerful shared emotion from his audiences. In the spring of 1919 a member of the party he was to join, the German Workers Party, heard him address a soldiers' council in Munich and noted "his almost occult power of suggestion over the assemblage."⁴ Then on 5 June 1919 a professor who gave the first class of a training course for Reichswehr political lecturers in Munich, among them the thirty-year-old Hitler, observed a small group that formed afterward. "It seemed to be held enthralled around a man in its midst who was addressing it uninter- ruptedly and with mounting passion in a strangely guttural

1918, 1919

stall a debacle when German strength was exhausted in the face of practically unlimited Allied resources being mobilized. To the German people this final outcome was unacceptable after four years of overstraining, starving, and bloodletting in supposed self-defense combined with expectations of gain, unbelievable after four years of victories in the east and victory bulletins from the west.⁴ Discouragement did mount earlier as the all-out spring and summer offensives of 1918, launched by the Reich's warrior chief Erich Ludendorff, ended in so-called strategic retreats.⁶ But the worst expectation was that occupied Flanders, and the very worst that Alsace-Lorraine as well, would have to be surrendered in a negotiated settlement that would leave the Reich's eastern gains untouched. Because the Reich had been born of military victories, military victories were felt to be its birthright.⁷ As Ludendorff's frantic disclosure of 29 September 1918—that the army was on its last legs and the front could crack momentarily—filtered down, the Reich did not rally:⁸ it panicked as if it were all at once laid open to savage depredation. An archaic terror sounds through the insistent, shrill silliness with which for years afterwards Germans right, left, and center called the lost war a struggle for national survival and charged the victors with intent to enslave and annihilate. The shock effect of the defeat was truly pervasive: no Reich German escaped it (not even Ludendorff himself)—least of all on the extreme left, where the fear had been rather that German soldiery might subdue all Europe.⁹ That effect was largely drained in the first instance by domestic turmoil and turbulence. Sailors and soldiers, workers and even peasants, set up "councils" styled after the Russian soviets, which had snatched revolutionary victory from military defeat.¹⁰ At the other extreme, Freikorps formed that refused to be done with the lost war.¹¹ The republic arose at Wilson's bidding—unresisted,¹² and in the put-on mood of a reconciliation of peoples.¹³ Its institutions were then fashioned in the perfected image of those on the victors' side. The theory was that the onus of defeat was on the Empire, so that with the Empire disavowed, Germany was out from under.¹⁴ When the victors shattered this theory, the republic was thrown on the defensive, and defended

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It was when he launched Barbarossa that Hitler ordered European Jewry exterminated. This shows that on his own traumatic level ("he lived continually on several levels of consciousness at once"⁷⁹) he took for granted that Barbarossa would fail. For he realized that it could succeed only as a blitzkrieg.⁸⁰ But he also realized that the massive extermination of Jews would be possible only in a climate of all-out war and would take long months just to prepare.⁸¹ As his closest military adviser avowed after the event: "Earlier than anyone in the world Hitler sensed and knew that the war was lost."⁸² "No one doubts ... that I meditated more than anyone on Napoleon's Russian experience," declared Hitler himself apropos of his choice of the same day of the year as Napoleon to invade.⁸³

The eastern land grab was anticipated in Hitler's occasional pre-Putsch considerations of power politics alongside of his prepossession with Jewry. On 10 December 1919 he proclaimed that "might ... decides right. Is it right that for instance eighteen times as much soil should fall to a Russian per capita as to a German?"⁸⁴ The ratio took a sly cut when he returned to this loaded question on 6 March 1921: "Today the German people is taxed with being imperialistic and believes this nonsense. No one will face the fact that eighteen times as much land and soil falls to every adult Russian as to every German inclusive. ... Is it perhaps imperialistic if we demand land and soil for all our countrymen?"⁸⁵ That was ten days after he explicated the Nazi Party program for its first anniversary, its Point 3 being: "We demand land and soil (colonies) for the nourishment of our people and settlement of our surplus population."⁸⁶ At a Party meeting the following 31 May he declared in a speech entitled "Versailles and the German Worker" (as reported in outline by the Party newspaper) that Germany in 1914 was catching up with England in foreign trade and that "in this fact lies the inner cause of the outbreak of the war." From this tired disclosure⁸⁷ he went on: "There are only three ways for a dynamic people to preserve itself insofar as it does not want to become more of a plaything than ever of the other rising nations by deliberately restricting births. Colonization. Germany came too late and

* D.T. I was receiving memos from
the O.O. - Encourage him to do both.

1919

settling over the best of us like a nightmare. Yet"—and here was the traumatic rub—"a certain feeling impels me not to believe in the complete collapse of our hopes."¹⁶³ Arresting testimony came from many a moral casualty of the crash. Thus Franz Schauwecker: "With one blow the most tremendous expectations were dispelled. Suddenly everything had been in vain. The world appeared senseless."¹⁶⁴ Ernst Jünger felt weak and vulnerable at first, then developed "symptoms that, as in a chronic illness, were now more, now less pronounced without ever vanishing entirely. Among them was a sense of constriction, of being tight pressed, about like that of a culprit at times and a trapped soldier at others, and of a rustic too who thinks he has been taken in by shrewd lawyers. Stalingrad," Jünger adds, "was for me more of a confirmation, like sediment settling in a turbid solution."¹⁶⁵ But did an Ernst Jünger fall in with that national traumatic effect while, say, a Bertolt Brecht fell out with it? It was distinct from any individual German's reaction to the defeat, yet it must have been felt by Germans individually. Perhaps C. G. Jung can be believed here. "I could have predicted the Nazi rising in Germany through the observation of my German patients," Jung claimed in old age. "They had dreams in which the whole thing was anticipated, and with considerable detail. And I was absolutely certain—in the years before Hitler, before Hitler came in the beginning; I could say the year, in the year 1919—I was sure that something was threatening in Germany, something very big, very catastrophic. I only knew it through the observation of the unconscious."¹⁶⁶

The German trauma of defeat was detected through its causation of Hitler's expansionist politics. But little headway could be made toward evidencing it directly. And by now the search for distinctive signs of its workings has thrown it out of historical focus. Its interplay with Hitler's own trauma behind his politics and, after that, Hitler's action on his traumatized public remain to be considered. But first some historic perspective must be restored.

The Germany traumatized in 1918 had for four years been

from the Allies and that the first task must be to win the masses for nationalism and antisemitism. Only when this had been achieved would she be able to assert herself abroad.

His military superiors were happy to encourage his political activity and it was at their request that, on 16 September 1919, he wrote his first major political statement in reply to a letter asking for information on the Jewish problem from one of his fellow-participants in the Army indoctrination course, Adolf Gemlich. It expressed a number of ideas which were to remain basic to his thought for the rest of his life. Important, for example, was his emphasis on the fact that the Jews were a racial community rather than a religious group. Secondly, there was the emphasis on the need for the 'rebirth of the moral and spiritual energies of the nation...through the ruthless action of personalities with a capacity for national leadership', though there is no evidence that he yet saw himself in such a role.

2

If the danger represented by the Jews today finds expression in the undeniable dislike of them felt by a large section of our people, the cause of this dislike is on the whole not to be found in the clear recognition of the corrupting activity of the Jews generally among our people, whether conscious or unconscious; it originates mainly through personal relationship, and from the impression left behind him by the individual Jew which is almost invariably unfavourable. Antisemitism thereby acquires only too easily the character of being a manifestation of emotion. But this is wrong. Antisemitism as a political movement must not be, cannot be, determined by emotional criteria, but only through the recognition of facts. The facts are as follows: First, the Jews are definitely a race and not a religious community. The Jew himself never calls himself a Jewish German, a Jewish Pole, a Jewish American, but only a German, a Polish, an American Jew. From the foreign nations in whose midst he lives the Jew has adopted very little more than their language. A German who is compelled to use French in France, Italian in Italy, Chinese in China, does not thereby become a Frenchman, an Italian, or a Chinese; similarly a Jew who happens to live among us and is thereby compelled to use the German language cannot be called a German. Even the Mosaic faith, however important for the maintenance of this race, cannot be considered as absolutely decisive in the question of whether or not someone is a Jew. There is hardly a single race whose members belong exclusively to one particular religion.

Through a thousand years of inbreeding, often practised within a very narrow circle, the Jew has in general preserved his race and character much more rigorously than many of the peoples among whom he lives. And as a result, there is living amongst us a non-German, foreign race, unwilling and unable to sacrifice its racial characteristics, to deny its own feeling, thinking and striving, and which none the less possesses all the political rights that we ourselves have. The feelings of the Jew are concerned with purely material things; his thoughts and desires even more so. The dance round the golden calf becomes a ruthless struggle for all those goods

which, according to our innermost feelings, should not be the highest and most desirable things on this earth.

The value of the individual is no longer determined by his character, by the importance of his achievements for all, but solely by the amount of his possessions, by his money.

The value of the nation is no longer to be measured in terms of the sum of its moral and spiritual forces, but solely on the basis of the wealth of its material goods.

From this feeling emerges that concern and striving for money and for the power which can protect it which makes the Jew unscrupulous in his choice of means, ruthless in his use of them to achieve this aim.

In an autocratically governed state he whines for the favour of the 'Majesty' of the prince and abuses it to batten on his subjects like a leech. In a democracy he courts the favour of the masses, crawls before the 'majesty of the people' and yet knows only the majesty of money.

He destroys the character of the prince with byzantine flattery, and national pride, which is the strength of a nation, with mockery and shameless training in vice. His weapon is that public opinion which is never given utterance by the press, but is always led by it and falsified by it. His power is the power of money which in the form of interest effortlessly and interminably multiplies itself in his hands and forces upon nations that most dangerous of yokes, the sad consequences of which are so difficult to perceive because of the initial gleam of gold. Everything which makes men strive for higher things, whether religion, socialism or democracy, is for him only a means to an end, to the satisfaction of a lust for money and domination. His activities produce a racial tuberculosis among nations.

And this has the following result: Antisemitism stemming from purely emotive reasons will always find its expression in the form of progroms [sic]. But antisemitism based on reason must lead to the systematic legal combating and removal of the rights of the Jew, which he alone of the foreigners living among us possesses (legislation to make them aliens). Its final aim, however, must be the uncompromising removal of the Jews altogether. Both are possible only under a government of national strength, never under a government of national impotence.

The Republic in Germany owes its birth not to the united national will of our people but to the cunning exploitation of a series of circumstances which combined to produce a deep general discontent. But these circumstances were independent of the form of the State, and are still active today; more active, indeed, today than before. And a large section of our people is aware that no mere change in the form of the State as such can alter or improve our position, but only the rebirth of the moral and spiritual energies of the nation.

This rebirth will be set in motion not by the political leadership of irresponsible majorities under the influence of party dogmas or of an irresponsible press, nor by catchwords and slogans of international coinage, but only through the ruthless action of personalities with a capacity for national leadership and an inner sense of responsibility.

But this fact robs the Republic of the internal support of the spiritual forces of the nation which are so necessary. And so the present leaders of the State are compelled to seek support from those who alone benefited from the changed

identified himself seemed to be defeated, swept aside in a torrent of events which had been released, as he had no doubt, by the same Jews who had always desired the defeat and humiliation of Germany.

Like many others among the mob of demobilized men who now found themselves flung on to the labour market at a time of widespread unemployment, he had little prospect of finding a job. The old problem of how to make a living, conveniently shelved for four years, reappeared. Characteristically, Hitler turned his back on it. After all, what had he to lose in the break-up of a world in which he had never found a place? Nothing. What had he to gain in the general unrest, confusion, and disorder? Everything, if only he knew how to turn events to his advantage. With a sure instinct, he saw in the distress of Germany the opportunity he had been looking for but had so far failed to find.

With considerable naïvety, he wrote in *Mein Kampf*: 'Generally speaking, a man should not take part in politics before he has reached the age of thirty.' Hitler was now in his thirtieth year, the time was ripe and the decision was taken: 'I resolved that I would take up political work.'

But how? Uncertain as yet of the answer, Hitler, after his discharge from hospital, but not yet demobilized, made his way through a disorganized country back to Munich, the capital of Bavaria.

Few towns in the Reich were as sensitive to the mood of unrest as Munich. Its political atmosphere was unstable and veered from one extreme to the other: revolution, political murder, a Soviet government, followed by a wave of suppression by the emerging Right-wing factions occurred in rapid succession through the year 1918.

In Bavaria ever since the unification of Germany there had been a strong dislike of government from Protestant, Prussian Berlin. In the disturbed and

The Years of Struggle, 1919

unstable condition of Germany in 1923 the power of the central government was weakened, and the Bavarian Government, with a strong Right-wing bias, was in a situation in which the orders of the central government were respected only if they had the support of the authorities in Bavaria. Munich became a natural centre for a movement to get rid of the Republican Government, and the Bavarian Government turned to the idea of treason and conspiracy against the Government of the Reich which were being organised in Munich. It was in Bavaria that the most militant elements of the Freikorps were formed by bands of volunteers formed by the army at the end of the war to maintain the eastern frontiers of Germany and to turn their guns against the Bolsheviks. These corps were the training schools for the army and terrorism which disappeared in 1924, and again after 1928.

Among the regular Army Munich were men like Major- and his assistant, Captain E korps and the innumerable de unions, and ex-servicemen sprang up in Bavaria, they s future German Army which the humiliations of 1918. U sential to keep together the backbone of the old Germa duced by the terms of the T mere hundred thousand.

Pöhner, the Police President of Munich, gave the famous reply, when asked if the police could cope with the political murder gangs in Bavaria. 'We are not strong enough of them,' Wilhelm Fick, Minister of the Interior, was Pöhner's answer. Pöhner and his colleagues in the Bavarian

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unstable condition of Germany between 1918 and 1923 the power of the central government in Berlin was weakened, and the Bavarian State Government, with a strong Right-wing bias, was able to exploit a situation in which the orders of the Reich Government were respected only if they were backed by the support of the authorities in Munich. Bavaria thus became a natural centre for all those who were eager to get rid of the Republican régime in Germany, and the Bavarian Government turned a blind eye to the treason and conspiracy against the legal government of the Reich which were being planned on its doorstep in Munich. It was in Bavaria that the irreconcilable elements of the Freikorps gathered, armed bands of volunteers formed by the Reichswehr at the end of the war to maintain order and protect the eastern frontiers of Germany but now just as willing to turn their guns against the Republic. The Freikorps were the training schools for the political murder and terrorism which disfigured German life up to 1924, and again after 1929.

Among the regular Army officers stationed in Munich were men like Major-General Ritter von Epp and his assistant, Captain Ernst Röhm. In the Freikorps and the innumerable defence leagues, patriotic unions, and ex-servicemen's associations which sprang up in Bavaria, they saw the nucleus of that future German Army which should one day revenge the humiliations of 1918. Until that day it was essential to keep together the men who had been the backbone of the old German Reichswehr, now reduced by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles to a mere hundred thousand.

Pöhner, the Police President of Munich, gave the famous reply, when asked if he knew there were political murder gangs in Bavaria: 'Yes, but not enough of them.' Wilhelm Frick, later Hitler's Minister of the Interior, was Pöhner's assistant; one of his colleagues in the Bavarian Ministry of Justice

Hitler's Minister of Justice. One of all these men was the German Right for twenty years, restoring Germany as the greatest power of Europe, restoring the Army to its former glory was the promising political career began his career.

On the exciting days of April and May 1919. According to his account, he had been put under arrest by the government then in power but he was one of the three men who came to the Commission. Communists had been overthrown and shot those reported to be on the other side. Hitler then got a job in the News Bureau of the Army as a centre for the activities of the Party. After attending a course of instruction for the troops, Hitler was given the task of the men against contagion by democratic ideas. This was the first time he had any political ability at all. He was instructed to investigate a meeting of the German Workers' Party, which was of interest to the Army.

The Party was originally set up in a Munich locksmith, whose workshop was working class and nationalist. It was a very impressive scene on 12 September 1919, Hitler was one of the German Workers' Party members where about twenty-five men were present. One of them, a Bavarian from Germany and union leader, was Hitler's rebuttal of

5 Sept 1919
this that Drexler, impressed, gave Hitler a copy of his autobiographical pamphlet, and a few days later Hitler received a postcard inviting him to attend a committee meeting of the German Workers' Party.

After some hesitation Hitler went. The committee met in an obscure beer-house, the Alte Rosenbad, in the Herronstrasse. 'I went through the badly lighted guest-room, where not a single guest was to be seen, and searched for the door which led to the side room; and there I was face to face with the Committee. Under the dim light shed by a grimy gas-lamp I could see four people sitting round a table. . . .' As Hitler frankly acknowledges, this very obscurity was an attraction. It was only in a party which, like himself, was beginning at the bottom that he had any prospect of playing a leading part and imposing his ideas. In the established parties there was no room for him, he would be a nobody. After two days' reflection he joined the Committee of the German Workers' Party as its seventh member.

Slowly and painfully he pushed the Party forward, and prodded his cautious and unimaginative colleagues on the committee into bolder methods of recruitment. Invitations were multigraphed, a small advertisement inserted in the local paper, a larger hall secured. When Hitler himself spoke for the first time, the result was only to confirm the chairman, Karl Harrer, in his belief that Hitler had no talent for public speaking. But Hitler persisted, and at the beginning of 1920 he was put in charge of the Party's propaganda. By the use of clever advertising he got nearly two thousand people into the Festsaal of the Hofbräuhaus on 24 February. The principal speaker was overshadowed by Hitler, who captured the audience's attention. Angered by the way in which Hitler was now forcing the pace, Harrer resigned as chairman. On 1 April 1920 Hitler left the Army and devoted all his time to the Party.

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attention, to win them over; most important of all, learning to read the minds of his audiences, finding the sensitive spots on which to hammer. Hitler came to know Germany and the German people at first hand as few of Germany's other leaders ever had. Over nearly all the politicians with whom he had to deal he had one great advantage: his immense practical experience of politics in the street, the level at which any politician must be effective if he is to carry a mass vote.

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Hitler was the greatest demagogue in history. Those who add 'only a demagogue' fail to appreciate the nature of political power in an age of mass politics. As he himself said: 'To be a leader, means to be able to move masses.'

The lessons which Hitler drew from the activities of the Austrian Social Democrats and Lueger's Christian Socialists were now tried out in Munich. Success was far from being automatic. Hitler made mistakes and had much to learn before he could persuade people to take him seriously, but he learned from his mistakes, and by the time he came to write *Mein Kampf* in the middle of the 1920s he was able to set down the conditions of success. The pages in which he discusses the technique of mass propaganda stand out in brilliant contrast with the turgid attempts to explain his entirely unoriginal political ideas. He is quite open in explaining this procedure of political leadership: 'The receptive powers of the masses are very restricted, and their understanding is feeble. On the other hand, they quickly forget. Such being the case, all effective propaganda must be confined to a few bare necessities and then must be expressed in a few stereotyped formulas.' Furthermore, it is better to stick to a programme even when certain points in it become out of date: 'As soon as one point is removed from the sphere of dogmatic certainty, the discussion will not simply result in a new

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and better formulation, but may easily lead to endless debates and general confusion.'

When you lie, tell big lies. 'The grossly impudent lie always leaves traces behind it, even after it has been nailed down.'

Above all, never hesitate, never qualify what you say, never concede an inch to the other side, paint all your contrasts in black and white. This is the 'very first condition which has to be fulfilled in every kind of propaganda: a systematically one-sided attitude towards every problem that has to be dealt with. . . .'

Vehemence, passion, fanaticism, these are 'the great magnetic forces which alone attract the great masses; for these masses always respond to the compelling force which emanates from absolute faith in the ideas put forward, combined with an indomitable zest to fight for and defend them. . . . The doom of a nation can be averted only by a storm of glowing passion; but only those who are passionate themselves can arouse passion in others.'

Hitler showed a marked preference for the spoken over the written word. 'The broad masses of a population are more amenable to the appeal of rhetoric than to any other force.' The employment of verbal violence, the repetition of such words as 'smash', 'force', 'ruthless', 'hatred', was deliberate. Hitler's gestures and the emotional character of his speaking, lashing himself up to a pitch of near-hysteria in which he would scream and spit out his resentment, had the same effect on an audience. Men groaned or hissed and women sobbed involuntarily, caught up in the spell of powerful emotions of hatred and exaltation.

Propaganda was not confined to the spoken word. There were the red posters to provoke the Left; the flag, with its black swastika in a white circle on a red background, a design to which Hitler devoted the utmost care; the salute, the uniform, and the hierarchy of ranks. Mass meetings and demonstrations,

The Years of Struggle, 1919- another device which Hitler Austrian Social Democrats, w a sense of power, of belonging success was irresistible. Hit psychological fact which was portance in the history of the violence and terror have their and that the display of phys many as it repels. 'When our started,' Hitler writes, 'I mad organize a suitable defence squ were comrades who had seen a others were young Party men the start had been trained and that only terror is capable of fence is an ambiguous word to ties, for, as Hitler adds, 'the l is attack, and the reputation of stamped us as a political fighti debating society.'

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Far from using violence in way, Hitler gave it the widest that people were forced to pay was doing. No government c would have tolerated such m publican Government in Berl authority in Bavaria, and the ernment showed remarkable political terrorism, provided it the Left.

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leader could inspire them with ideals of service, sacrifice, and patriotism.

Hitler, an opportunist but also man of faith, found it easy to put on the armor of righteousness: he would save Germany from selfishness, materialism, factionalism, moral depravity, racial corruption. The effectiveness of his propaganda lay finally in this—he made it seem that his party's nihilism was idealism, its brutality strength, its vicious "ideology" altruism.²²⁴ And his converts in the name of idealism were legion. Trevor-Roper is right in reminding us that not all adherents of Hitler were vicious anti-Semites, sadistic brutes, bullies, and neurotics. "Many young people," he has written, "bewildered by the confusion of their time, were inspired by the message of hope, the simple, crystal-clear, infectious insurance" that a nation defeated and bound could, by the exercise of faith and willpower, arise again to a position of pride and independence.²²⁵

The memoirs of hundreds of young people who gladly joined Hitler's movement speak eloquently of such hope and idealism. Young people were particularly attracted by the promise of a *Gemeinschaft* where common good would come before personal interest, where brotherly concern and support of an inspired leader would solve the problems of Germany and end the awful feelings of individual isolation and individual responsibility. Many who were incensed by national defeat and the dishonor of Versailles might normally have supported traditional nationalist parties. But such parties as the Conservatives and the German National People's Party had nothing to offer this Youth Cohort, who believed that the conservative groups merely talked about patriotism while seeking to restore caste privilege. The idealistic young people wanted a united cooperative community, not the old social order. They found what they sought in Hitler. A student wrote:

How different from [traditional party politics] was the daring proposition that sprang from Hitler's warm, sympathetic heart! His idea was not to use the resources of the State to help industrialists and landowners, but to take advantage of them immediately to relieve the misery of millions of unemployed Germans!

A young laborer was attracted to Hitler because he believed that Hitler shared his desire for sacrifice and his faith in the Fatherland: "Faith was the one thing that always led us on, faith in Germany, faith in the purity of our nation and faith in our Leader." The memoir of a young soldier strikes the same note of faith and sacrifice: "It is superfluous to describe the sacrifices I made. . . . [They] were made in the spirit of *Gemeinsschaft*."²²⁶

Hitler, it should never be forgotten, was a master of mass psychology. As early as 1923 he showed that he knew the power of appeals to service and sacrifice, the longing for *Gemeinschaft*, the "hunger for wholeness," the call to national greatness. He confided the secret of his

→ cartoon #166 for young Germany
and young Americans in the years
before the first world war.

1919

can be interpreted as
"collective guilt"

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

landlords," "Social Fascists," and "intellectual lackeys." But they were too various and too vague. Besides, they tended to divide and alienate Germans from each other. Hitler's scapegoat was monolithic, discernible, and defenseless. Through anti-Semitism, ethnic Germans of all classes and callings were brought together in a common hatred of a traditional enemy of German Kultur. "The Jew" was the single, simple answer to all problems. Who had stabbed Germany in the back during the war and caused the disastrous defeat? Who had signed the armistice? (The answer to that one was a little trickier. As given by Hitler, it was Erzberger, and he was not Jewish. But small matter. Hitler found for him a Jewish grandparent.) Who had accepted the "Treaty of Shame"? Who were the profiteers and exploiters who caused the inflation and the Great Depression? The answer was clear and compelling; "always and only the Jew!"

His personal enemy was also a political asset in helping him reconcile conflicting parts of Nazi ideology and enhance its appeal to very different social groups. He assured the propertied middle class that he was fighting only "Jewish capitalists"; to the workers he said he was opposed only to "Jewish socialism." In an adroit speech in Munich, 28 July 1922, he showed the political advantage of having it both ways by making the Jew serve as a common enemy of opposing interests:

In all this we can see again and again how well they work together, the Jew from the stock exchange and the leader of the workers. . . . While the business agent Moses Cohn persuades his company to react most unfavorably to the demands of the workers, his brother Isaac Cohn, the labor leader, stands at the factory yard, arouses the masses and shouts: . . . "throw off your chains." And upstairs his brother sees to it that those chains are well forged.

In attacking the Jew as the enemy of all Germans, Hitler fulfilled a personal psychic need and at the same time greatly widened his political appeal.

His anti-Semitism had other political advantages. The Jew served as a safe outlet for hatred and aggression when war against an external enemy was not feasible. He could be presented as "an outsider" and thus provide Germans with an opportunity to defend their "Germanism" from "alien" forces by attacking the Jews within the country. It was also reassuring, at a time when national effectiveness was in doubt, to assert basic racial superiority. Further, the Jews were said to be intellectuals, and in denouncing them many Germans found a convenient way to deprecate the rationalism which they had so long found suspect. There was also a moral and religious problem that anti-Semitism helped assuage. The Weimar period was not only a time of economic, social, and political confusion; it was also a decade of crisis in traditional moral values. Many Germans were shocked by what they

From Private Neurosis

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and corruption which plagued other governments on the eve of revolution were not hallmarks of the Hohenzollerns. Moreover, German intellectuals, unlike such thinkers as Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson, Herzen, or Mao, had not deserted the establishment; they still endorsed it. Normally, revolutions veer sharply to the left; but this one moved steadily to the right. It was a revolution without joy and without song—perhaps the only songless revolution in history.

Revolutionaries, normally required by successful revolutions, could not be found among the leaders of the new German government. Friedrich Ebert (1871–1925)—who looked and acted like the successful small businessman he was—was the leader of the revolutionary republic which on 9 November 1918, had been proclaimed against his wishes. Five days earlier, he had entreated the Army to save the monarchy because he was convinced it was the only alternative to revolution and he abhorred the very idea. “I want no part of it,” he had said on the eve of the event, “I hate it as I hate sin.”¹⁴⁸

In a very real sense, there was no Revolution of 1918. To be sure, political change had taken place at the top—a president, after all, had replaced an emperor. But basic social, institutional and attitudinal patterns remained largely unaffected.* The forces that had dominated the Empire and had done so much to produce the “German condition” remained to plague the Republic: military ideals continued to pervade society; Junkers and Ruhr barons were untouched by revolution, as the same families controlled industry, banking, and agriculture; the imperial bureaucracy was left intact in central and local government, in the Foreign Office and in the judiciary; intellectuals still disdained politics and ridiculed parliament; authoritarian families and schools continued to inculcate attitudes inimical to democracy and favorable to fascism.

In short, from the outset of the revolution, prospects for democracy were not good. They did not improve when, after the regular army had been dissolved, President Ebert felt obliged to call on radically hostile soldiers—the Free Corps—to defend his precarious government from the leftist revolts which were sweeping Germany and establishing Soviet-style republics in major cities of the country.

THE FREE CORPS AS VANGUARD OF NAZISM

By the summer of 1919—when Hitler was still unknown—the Free Corps had become the most important political force in Germany and the greatest single source of future Nazi personnel and spirit. Some 500,000 strong, these self-styled Freebooters had smashed leftist movements with exultant brutality from the Ruhr to the Baltic, from Ham-

* Germans showed the depth of their desire to avoid change and to preserve the magic of a word when they refused to call the new government the “German Republic”; they chose instead “German Reich.” Thus, constitutional purists can argue that the Third Reich actually began in 1919, when the new constitution was adopted, and not in 1933 with Hitler’s “seizure” of power.

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and corruption which plagued other governments on the eve of revolution were not hallmarks of the Hohenzollerns. Moreover, German intellectuals, unlike such thinkers as Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson, Herze, or Mao, had not deserted the establishment; they still endorsed it. Normally, revolutions veer sharply to the left; but this one moved steadily to the right. It was a revolution without joy and without song—perhaps the only songless revolution in history.

Revolutionaries, normally required by successful revolutions, could not be found among the leaders of the new German government. Friedrich Ebert (1871-1925)—who looked and acted like the successful small businessman he was—was the leader of the revolutionary republic which, on 9 November 1918, had been proclaimed against his wishes. Five days earlier, he had entreated the Army to save the monarchy because he was convinced it was the only alternative to revolution, and he abhorred the very idea. "I want no part of it," he had said on the eve of the event, "I hate it as I hate sin."¹⁴⁸

In a very real sense, there was no Revolution of 1918. To be sure, political change had taken place at the top—a president, after all, had replaced an emperor. But basic social, institutional and attitudinal patterns remained largely unaffected. The forces that had dominated the Empire and had done so much to produce the "German condition" remained to plague the Republic: military ideals continued to pervade society; Junkers and Ruhr barons were untouched by revolution, as the same families controlled industry, banking, and agriculture; the imperial bureaucracy was left intact in central and local government, in the Foreign Office and in the judiciary; intellectuals still disdained politics and ridiculed parliament; authoritarian families and schools continued to inculcate attitudes inimical to democracy and favorable to fascism.

In short, from the outset of the revolution, prospects for democracy were not good. They did not improve when, after the regular army had been dissolved, President Ebert felt obliged to call on radically hostile soldiers—the Free Corps—to defend his precarious government from the leftist revolts which were sweeping Germany and establishing Soviet-style republics in major cities of the country.

THE FREE CORPS AS VANGUARD OF NAZISM

By the summer of 1919—when Hitler was still unknown—the Free Corps had become the most important political force in Germany and the greatest single source of future Nazi personnel and spirit. Some 500,000 strong, these self-styled Freebooters had smashed leftist movements with exultant brutality from the Ruhr to the Baltic, from Ham-

¹⁴⁸ Germans showed the depth of their desire to avoid change and to preserve the magic of a word when they refused to call the new government the "German Republic"; they chose instead "German Reich." Thus, constitutional purists can argue that the Third Reich actually began in 1919, when the new constitution was adopted, and not in 1933 with Hitler's "seizure" of power.

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People told us that the ourselves are the War. nates us with the entic: the battlefields of the battle on the Western) joy of adventure as v remorseless in battle.¹⁴⁹

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PATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

1919

burg to Munich. Battle-tough veterans and radical youths too young to fight in the Great War, they had entered the service of the Republic not because they respected the government—they despised it—but because they needed money, food, and comradeship and an opportunity to fight and destroy. Listen to one of them:

People told us that the War was over. That made us laugh. We ourselves are the War. . . . It envelops our whole being and fascinates us with the enticing urge to destroy. We. . . . marched onto the battlefields of the postwar world just as we had gone into battle on the Western Front: singing, reckless and filled with the joy of adventure as we marched to the attack; silent, deadly, remorseless in battle. 149

The chief characteristics of the Free Corps were, without exception, those of Hitler's Storm Troopers. First, the *Führerprinzip*, which had been developing in the prewar youth movements, was now manifested at two levels. The commander of an individual corps was often called the Führer and idolized as the embodiment of all soldierly virtues. The leader was also an abstraction, a 20th-century version of the Barbarossa legend. Thus, in the black days after defeat in the Baltic in 1919, a *Freikorpskämpfer* wrote to his sister: "Someday a Man will come to lead us—a Man who unites German spirit and German power! Believe me. . . . things will be a little better for us then!" 150

Second, there was in these men a reckless desire to attack, to smash the whole philistine middle-class world. The acknowledged spokesman of the movement gave the clearest statement of this attitude:

"What do we believe in?" you ask. Nothing besides action. . . . We were a band of fighters drunk with all the passions of the world; full of lust, exultant in action. What we wanted, we did not know. And what we knew, we did not want! War and adventure, excitement and destruction. An indefinable, surging force welled up from every part of our being and flayed us onward. . . . 151

Third, like the Nazis, Free Corps members were racists who dedicated themselves to what they called the "Volk soul of the race." They were savagely anti-Semitic.

Fourth, like so many of their generation, Free Corps fighters dreamed of a new Germany, a Third Reich. They had no definite political program for this government. Indeed, they deliberately shunned one, for reasons suggested by an admirer:

Nothing is more characteristic of the associative spirit of *Oberländer* than their Idea of the Third Reich . . . the men dreamed deep dreams of this Mystery—a mystery which would have been

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

debased into a concrete political program as soon as one attempted to define it precisely.

The mystery was partially penetrated by the same writer: "Two motifs are constantly repeated in the recitals of the *Oberländer*: the sacredness of the *Volksboden* and the heroic *Führerschicht*, which must be accepted by the *Gemeinschaft* as the force which will achieve the goal of the docile followship [*willige Gefolgschaft*] of all." ¹⁰²

On a less abstract level, a Free Corps leader set forth his political program in words quoted here not for the delicacy of the language but because they are an honest reflection of the Freebooter mind addressing itself to problems of politics:

We must . . . smash once and for all these damned revolutionary rats and choke them by sticking their heads in their own shit. ¹⁰³

The Freebooters made important contributions to the coming of Hitler's Germany. Negatively, they helped mightily to undermine and destroy Germany's first experiment in democracy. Positively, they contributed thousands of their members to positions of power in the Third Reich. Indeed, 48.6 percent of the Party leadership came from veterans who had taken an active part in the battles of the war and postwar years. ¹⁰⁴ They also contributed a well-developed leadership principle, racism, the idea of labor camps and youth programs, and the concept of political shock troops.

But their main contribution lay in the realm of the spirit. Their contempt for humane values and their exaltation of power and brutality formed their chief legacy to Hitler's Reich.

A remarkably prophetic poem was written in 1919 by a man who had watched the Free Corps in action. Walther Mehring, who became one of Germany's most effective satirists, wrote the verse in bitter paraphrase of the Freebooter mentality which foretold atrocities to come:

Come on, boys, let's all go . . .
Off to the pogrom with a ho, ho, ho . . .
Pull in your bellies and throw out the Jews
With swastika and poison gas . . .
Let's have a go at murder in the mass. ¹⁰⁵

THE ANTIDEMOCRATIC ESTABLISHMENT

Older established institutions also helped clear Hitler's path to power, either by refusing to support the democratic alternative or by contributing in more positive ways.

The Army supported Hitler because it saw in him a useful tool to militarize the masses. One of the more responsible military leaders later spoke quite candidly about the value they had seen in Hitler and

The Past As Prologue: Hitler and

suggested that the Nazi idea from the army's:

The Army . . . consider into a fury, passions . . . nothing different from it

There was, of course, no Command that it could ord bidding.

At lower echelons of the greater enthusiasm. As noted, Nazi Party had been veteran commissioned officer spoke for reasons for following Hitler:

We . . . did not join the considerations, or after murdered us to Hitler. What this: Hitler, you're our at the Front, who's better like us, an unknown soldier

The Navy, if anything, opposition to the Republic. Immediately after the Ehrhardt Frigate on their helmets—had marched 1920 to overthrow the republic whole units of the brigade. ¹⁰⁸

The civil service, which Prussian kings and German Republic. In every department nationalist, antidemocratic personnel from Second to Third Office, for example, of the Reich in 1929, only one (London)—all the others had once sworn no need for changing the policies. In 1939, of nine divisions endorsed Hitler's war, only one there any basic change in the laws of the empire as on German law during the period and the old Reich the jurisdiction but one of identity." ¹⁰⁰

Documents of the Weimar

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

the Germans as still another disaster and terror to ruin themselves: expansion of the self into which is free because it has. In more than one sense history, frightful history, itself "a nemesis."⁷⁵

Carl Jaspers: "Is he the one who is impossible, who against among us all the devils of

with a one.

of Imperial Germany had. Priding themselves on a game to others. Many many from the confusions little to alleviate. When the for Lagarde, Nietzsche, had performed the service

ing the Second Reich was a short essay written by *es Unpolitischen* (Reflexional book, Mann urged his politics was associated with man. Freedom from political stone of German

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The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

ple of the forces that stunted the growth of German democracy. The noted sociologist often spoke in favor of democracy; indeed, he would help to establish the Democratic Party just after the war. But his understanding of the term was peculiar. When it was clear in 1918 that Germany would be defeated, he spoke directly to General Ludendorff urging that he sign a peace treaty and establish a democratic government. The following conversation took place:

Ludendorff: Then what do you mean by democracy?

Weber: In a democracy, the people choose a leader in whom they trust. Then the chosen leader says, "Shut up and obey me." The masses and political parties are then no longer free to interfere with the leader.

Ludendorff: I could like such a democracy.

That Weber meant what he said in this conversation became apparent when, after the Weimar democracy was established, he used his very considerable influence to undercut its effectiveness because it failed to produce the "chosen leader" he had mentioned to Ludendorff. In a lecture to Munich students in 1919 on the subject of politics as a profession, Weber paid special tribute to government that demanded the devotion of the masses to a "charismatic leader." He concluded his lecture by saying that Germans had a choice between an effective Führer and the present leaderless democracy, which had created "a carnival," not a true German government.⁷⁶

Anti-Semitism in the Second Reich

In plain words, the Jew has always been an element of national decomposition. . . . The Jews are our misfortune.

—Heinrich Treitschke (c. 1875)

Fundamentally, only the complete disappearance of the Hebrew can be called a worthy solution to the Jewish Problem.

—Eugen Dühring (1880)

Something of the long and tragic history of German anti-Semitism is caught in the following vignette from the 18th century:

In October 1743, a boy stood at the gates of the city of Berlin, asking permission to enter. He was only 14 and a hunchback, and he had to ask permission to enter because he was a Jew. Jews not only were required to enter cities through a designated gate, but they had to have a permit to travel the country's roads. This hunchback Jewish boy had grown up in the restricted circumstances of the ghetto, and he knew only a few words of German. One of them was "Dessau," the city from which he had walked, alone to Berlin; the other word was "lernen"—the reason for his trip—"to learn,"

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THE FIRST REICH, 800-1806

The path to dictatorship in Germany was long,
tortuous, and amazingly crowded.

—Fritz Stern

To most Germans the medieval past was an indistinct shimmer, a romantic haze through which resounded the reassuring phrase all school-children learned: *Das heilige römische Reich deutscher Nation*. Of course Voltaire was right in asking his questions: "In what respects, Monsieur, was it Holy? or Roman? or an Empire? or a Nation?" In point of historic fact it was none of these, but it left a glorious memory, a lasting myth, and a longing for the future—for a time when there would indeed be one German nation and a mighty Reich. The untranslatable word "Reich" would have continuing appeal to Germans across the centuries. To the Romantics, to Pan-German nationalists, and eventually to the Nazis it would express a mystical and "eternal" Germanism (*Deutschtum*).

"Reich" was not only a favorite word of German intellectuals, but it also entered into popular culture. A student who has traced the power of myth in German history has written that belief in the Reich was "so deeply implanted in the German people through the schools and universities and as a result of the monotonous repetition of its themes that through the force of habit the German people came to accept it as the truth." In order to understand its power to attract, one must remember that this beautiful little word of Celtic origin has to the German ear a sacred and religious tone. To Catholics and Protestants alike, it is a cherished word in their most familiar prayer: *Dein Reich komme, dein Wille geschehe*. . . . The word also conjures up romantic glories in a dozen fairy tales. "When one pronounces the word," a German has written, "a picture book of enchanted centuries flashes before the mind's eye."

Hitler, with his remarkable ability to respond to the myths and aspirations of the German people, had planned to paraphrase the expression in a book he thought of writing in 1919, the *Monumental History of Humanity*. The German task, he said at that time, was to establish a new and racially pure Reich: "The Germanic Reich of the German Nation" (*Germanisches Reich deutscher Nation*). The book of 1919 did not materialize. But his Reich did, and it preserved the cadence of the ancient phrase in its title *Das dritte Reich deutscher Nation*.

The writers of school textbooks also took the concept of the Holy Roman Empire much more seriously than did Voltaire. A widely used geography of 1913, for example, claimed this "first German Reich" to be the predecessor of the "Second Reich of Bismarck and our Kaiser." It listed all the lands that "belonged to Germany" during the First Reich, noting pointedly that Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Belgium, the Nether-

1919

caste. If this officers' corps combated
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1918 to 1923 was not the great expe-
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 r rose from the trenches and over-
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 them. 'I find,' wrote one of those
 s in his autobiography, 'that I no
 All I remember is that I once be-

a. This Röhm, more than any other
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 patriotic youth. Röhm was only an
 antry troops stationed in Bavaria, a

certain Colonel von Epp. But from this modest post he established,
 in defiance of the law and against the will of every minister in
 Berlin and Munich, a volunteer army of a hundred thousand men,
 calling themselves modestly the *Einwohnerwehr* (citizens' de-
 fense). When this armed mass was finally disbanded by orders from
 above, he formed new nuclei. New organizations kept springing up,
 with all sorts of names, under constantly changing official leaders,
 all having ostensibly nothing to do with the Reichswehr. Actually
 all were an extension of the Reichswehr, under the command of
 Röhm.

Röhm was a professional soldier of petty-bourgeois origin. His
 father was a middling railway official in Ingolstadt, Bavaria, where
 Ernst Röhm was born on November 28, 1887. The boy became an
 excellent soldier, the embodiment of personal bravery. In 1906 he
 joined the army, in 1908 became a lieutenant. Three times wounded
 in the war, he returned each time to the front. Half his nose was
 shot away, he had a bullet hole in his cheek; short, stocky, shot to
 tatters, and patched, he was the outward image of a freebooter
 captain. He was more a soldier than an officer. In his memoirs he
 condemns the cowardice, sensuality, and other vices of many com-
 rades; his revelations were almost treason against his own class.

A gigantic arsenal had been left behind by the fallen German
 army. In the peace treaty Germany had promised to destroy it.
 The Allies supervised the process by control commissions, sitting in
 the large cities of Germany and traveling through the country.
 These arms had to be saved. In Bavaria Röhm undertook this task.

He was able to persuade a few of the Allied officers that these
 old armored cars and rusty machine guns could be of no use in
 serious warfare, but would come in handy for combating the world
 revolution which was moving, through Germany, toward the
 Rhine. This strange collaboration with the Allied organs must have
 been very close; in his memoirs Röhm indicates as much in pass-
 ing, praising certain British officers and mentioning an Italian,
 Major Grammacini. He succeeded in surrounding the Allied offi-
 cials with a dense net of counter-spies; men wishing to report a
 secret arsenal were prevented from reaching the foreigners; they
 fell into the hands of a German, masquerading as an officer of the

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Entente, who with a straight face, stammering broken German, listened to their reports, and then delivered the traitors to eager assassins.

'We will transfer them from their rascally lives to death,' Röhm used to say in such cases. 'That is the soldier's law of self-defense.' Many years later, generals might from time to time appear as witnesses before courts and parliamentary committees, raise their right hands and swear that they had known nothing of the murders, and had no idea who the murderers were. The job was done by Röhm and his henchmen, the Heineses, Neunzerts, Schweikharts, and Ballys—to mention only a few of all those who have been half or totally forgotten. He was not the only such leader in the Reich. There was Lieutenant Rossbach in Pomerania, Captain von Pfeffer in the Ruhr; there was Captain Ehrhardt who marched through the whole of Germany with his armed band, and at the height of his career instigated the *putsch* which was stifled by the general strike. Röhm was more conscious of his goal than any of the others; his career was the most successful, his end the most tragic.

In any case, it was the officers of middle rank, captains, or at most majors, who relieved the generals of their responsibility, ostensibly without their knowledge, often actually against their will. They shoved their generals aside, in the end openly combated them, and during the whole period grimly despised them for their cowardice and inertia. The officers' class struggle became the struggle of the lower against the higher officers. When the German Republic disbanded the army, more generals retained their posts than the English army has in peacetime; those who were discharged received pensions they could live on. The well-paid generals became easily reconciled to the republic; they were not grateful enough to admit it openly, nor courageous enough to deny it. But the lieutenants and captains saw no place for advancement in the tiny army of a hundred thousand men; they saw themselves reduced to the level of armed élite proletarians; many, with no official position at all, marched through the land at the head of mercenary bands, subsidized by heavy industrialists and landowners to protect their factories or estates from the specter of communist revolution.

This seemed the end of the lordly life to which the German in-

lectual youth had grown accustomed during school course had been broken off ahead of time had been made easy for them. After a short period they were sent to an officers' training course—lieutenants with a monthly salary of three hundred marks. The material level of life was high enough for them when, as Röhm put it, 'peace broke out.' His biography: 'Since I am an immature and bad man more than peace.' But peace had come.

These armed intellectuals were the German officers; their spirit, upheld its tradition. Even before the war it had ceased to be the army of Prussian junkers; it held it to be. Its most brilliant mind, its leader, was Erich Ludendorff, a man of bourgeois origin. Important German generals in the World War were Ludendorff, von Kluck, Groener, Max Hoffmann. Kaiser offered him nobility, Ludendorff declined to bear the same name as his father. Since the war, lower officers give an army its character, the German army. The World War could be called an army of armed intellectuals in uniform found no career breakdown after the peace, their officer days the high point of their existence; the hope for a better future remained their secret consolation.

Among these bright-colored, though plucky, conspicuous by his simplicity; he had the nature of an aristocrat. This freebooter captain was in worshipful love for his subordinates; he was an officer who lives and dies for his troop and for his superior officers in their behalf. 'Respect a subordinate, not the praise of your superior, is written as a young lieutenant. In general, of strong point. 'The thinking subordinate is the superior,' is another of his maxims.

And this fatherly soldier was a homosexual. We shall not go into the apparent contradiction.

1919

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tellectual youth had grown accustomed during the war. Their
school course had been broken off ahead of time; their examinations
had been made easy for them. After a short period of active service,
they were sent to an officers' training course and soon they were
lieutenants with a monthly salary of three hundred gold marks. It
was a dangerous existence, but one full of pride and pleasure.
The material level of life was high enough to permit of a hard fall,
when, as Röhm put it, 'peace broke out.' He adds in his auto-
biography: 'Since I am an immature and bad man, war appeals to
me more than peace.' But peace had come.

These armed intellectuals were the German army, they preserved
its spirit, upheld its tradition. Even before the First World War,
it had ceased to be the army of Prussian junkers, which foreigners
held it to be. Its most brilliant mind, its leader in the World War,
was Erich Ludendorff, a man of bourgeois origin, like most of the
important German generals in the World War, such as von Mac-
kensens, von Kluck, Groener, Max Hoffmann, Scheer. When the
Kaiser offered him nobility, Ludendorff declined, saying he wished
to bear the same name as his father. Since the broad mass of the
lower officers gives an army its character, the German Army of the
World War could be called an army of armed students. And since
these intellectuals in uniform found no career and no bread in the
breakdown after the peace, their officer days remained for many
the high point of their existence; the hope for a return of the golden
days remained their secret consolation.

Among these bright-colored, though plucked birds, Röhm was
conspicuous by his simplicity; he had the nature of a leader, not of
an aristocrat. This freebooter captain was inspired by an almost
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officer who lives and dies for his troop and is constantly fighting
his superior officers in their behalf. 'Respect and affection for your
subordinate, not the praise of your superior, is the highest ideal,' he
wrote as a young lieutenant. In general, obedience was not his
strong point. 'The thinking subordinate is the natural enemy of his
superior,' is another of his maxims.

And this fatherly soldier was a homosexual murderer.

We shall not go into the apparent contradictions in Röhm's

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nature. He was the secret head of a band of murderers. For his arsenal, he had men killed without the slightest qualm. In his inconspicuous position, he spent four years in Bavaria, secretly building up an army; or, more accurately, he kept building up new armies, for this secret army often disbanded. It was scattered by commands from above, torn by internal struggles. It allowed itself to be used for different purposes by political leaders who the next day abandoned them. But somehow Röhm always kept his army in hand, for he disposed of the arms and maintained a bloody guard over them.

It was this atmosphere that led him personally astray. Many sections of this secret army of mercenaries and murderers were breeding places of perversion. One of these was Rossbach's free corps. Rossbach and his adjutant, Heines, seem to have brought Röhm to the path which ultimately led to his destruction.

1918-1922
It is no contradiction that this misled leader should have been attached to his soldiers and thought more about them than most of his comrades did. Röhm was the type of officer who fights with the revolution for the soldier's soul. He grasped the great truth that the new army should not destroy the revolution but use it. "The revolutionary school of communism prepares the German worker for the struggle for national freedom," he writes. He never wearies of praising the communists and their military qualities. Once he had him in his company, he assures us, he could turn the reddest communist into a glowing nationalist in four weeks.

The future workers' army passes through the school of civil war. These freebooters do not complain about the inner conflict in their fatherland. There are too many soft and rotten elements among the people, wipe them out! Röhm calls them the 'philistines,' and by that he means everything mediocre: in spirit, in passion, in possessions; sometimes he seems to mean everyone who has a family. He praises the have-nots without office and property, the raw warriors. They are the stuff the new army needs, for the new army must wage war in Germany, to wean the workers from the parties.

1920?
To this end, Röhm founded the National Socialist German Workers' Party. It might be said to have existed before him, first under the simpler name of the German Workers' Party. But that was a

club, sitting in the back rooms of little restaurant events, a mere idea. And an idea it remained until it won over the German workers, became the power was Röhm's work. He discovered the club, joined among workers! And not he alone. With comrade soldiers, with pleas he drove his comrades into it. came a political troop. Whole Reichswehr came through the streets in civilian clothes as National arose the formation which later, as the SA, became formation.

They hunted down the Jews and beat them. Black Hundreds of southern Russia, risen for fifteen years? At all events, they employed the same thought the same thoughts; for all these sold *Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*, or read a And, indeed, they were practically the same men

A colony of Russian émigrés — aristocrats, German scholars, artists, students — had settled in Munich other big city throughout the world. They stood great Bolshevik terror which kept the post-war and made Europe skip a heartbeat when in 1921 appeared before Warsaw and nearly changed the

From this Russian legion, Rosenberg stepped new friends of the Thule Society, with Dietrich I Hess, with an engineer named Gottfried Feder, German Workers' Party. First he delivered lectures Men of Zion, the Jewish peril, the Jewish wire, shevism. This was still a far cry from an organ berg repeated the same lectures before a dozen grouplets, all in obscure back rooms and small but Röhm sent in his soldiers from the other side. That a piece of that German Reichswehr which the political party under arms, though without a private leader.

Rosenberg supplied the program. It had already idea of the Wise Men of Zion had gripped the world. Rosenberg pointed eastward. From Russia

after moving his cannon to the

going a revolution, a profound is. The impact upon this army policy, conceived in gigantic great movement which has been ism. A captain from the Ger- student had to meet before the embracing fantasy of the East ture. Personally Röhm always tives and probably never took st of the world,' he says, 'can s? Germany must live and be esis of any broad world policy. l that they were foreign to one hroughout their collaboration. ey.

recognize the ironical textbook :. To him it sufficed that it was ws. The defeated German offi- in army that wants to maintain ot be defeated. For forty years eat the French; it could not als offered consolation: 'It was the Jews.'

, crafty and strong personalities uly by violence. Four hundred etical form which today seems adapted these thoughts to the issian conspirators to transform And in Germany the program e first time. German officers eriously.

world must be able to transform deed begins with one's own utsch in 1923, General Luden- er of all national revolutionary

movements in Germany, said in court: 'Events have taught me, and it pains me to own, that the leading stratum of our society is incapable of giving the German people the will to freedom.'

Röhm says it more simply: 'Only he who is without possessions has ideals.'

A broken people, a broken army, broken men. The new movement rises out of wreckage. Ideals had to fall into the mire, destinies to be shattered, characters to sicken, before something new could be born. For this thing was new, and from the very beginning it was frightful. Rosenberg lost his home, Röhm his people; the type which now fell in with them, bringing them their greatest strength, had nothing to lose.

The gilded troop met in feebly lighted beer halls, smelling of cold smoke. Officers became conspirators. And they were no longer alone—that was the decisive factor. Now they were with workers. Not with the main body of the workers, with the mighty masses from the factories, but with the flotsam, the stragglers living on the fringe of their class, the workers at odd jobs and the unemployed. The declassed of all classes came together; those of the upper and the lower classes made common cause. In all times this has been the way of counter-revolution: an upper layer that has lost its hold in society seeks the people and finds the rabble. The officers were out to find a demagogue, of whom it could be said that he was a worker. They would cry out to him: Leader, command us, we shall follow.

In their class struggle the officers were forced by circumstances to create a workers' army; they found their leader in the lowest mass of their subordinates, and commanded him to command. The spirit of history, in its fantastic mockery, could not have drawn an apter figure. It was the man who had sent his comrades to the slaughterhouse wall after the overthrow of the Munich soviet. A human nothing, a gray personality even among soldiers, 'modest and for that very reason inconspicuous,' as a superior has characterized him; not even a German, but a homeless derelict from the Viennese melting-pot. The army in which he was a soldier was charged with energy, laden with possibilities, but he descended to

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the most dubious level, that of *agent-provocateur*; even in that field he was no leader, but an unsavory tool of the political counter-espionage; an *homme de main*, entrusted with necessary but loathsome tasks; happy when he could obey and, by his own admission, knowing no higher goal than 'to follow his superior blindly and contradict no one.' His exterior was without distinguishing marks, his face without radiance; there was nothing unusual in his bearing. He was one of those men without qualities, normal and colorless to the point of invisibility. They can be forgotten beneath the broadest spotlight, even while they are present. The void, it might be said, had disguised itself as a man.

The leadership of the new military party in Munich was given over to this human object. The officers wanted a tool. They sent him through the country on speaking tours, used him in their press bureau to write releases, sent him into political meetings to hear what he could hear. At length, as propagandist orator for the German Workers' Party, he seemed to have found his niche in the world. He was a man of the people, at home amid the most sordid poverty, hence familiar with the heart of the poor. To speak in the language of his employers, accustomed to the military trade and embarrassed in the presence of the people: that trap of his will come in handy.

1919 For in this unlikely looking creature there dwelt a miracle: his voice. It was something unexpected. Between those modest, narrow shoulders, the man had lungs. His voice was the very epitome of power, firmness, command, and will. Even when calm, it was a guttural thunder; when agitated, it howled like a siren betokening inexorable danger. It was the roar of inanimate nature, yet accompanied by flexible human overtones of friendliness, rage, or scorn.

The contradiction between the lamentable appearance and the mighty voice characterizes the man. He is a torn personality; long reaches of his soul are insignificant, colored by no noteworthy qualities of intellect or will; but there are corners supercharged with strength. It is this association of inferiority and strength that makes the personality so strange and fascinating.

Adolf Hitler, the man, is portrayed here as most of his contem-

poraries and many of his own supporters saw and the picture is basically true. As a human as a political mind, one of the most tremulous world history — this is a contradiction of genius, from the stuttering Moses to Bo glamorous artillery captain; but few of those so many contradictions, such lack of distinct human strength.

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paragraphs. Point 13 runs: 'We deprive [trusts] be taken over by the state and a passage of a law for confiscation of all speculation in soil.'

He called the Socialist part of the program ideas: the destruction of finance and the creative industrial personality. He pronounced tendency to attack large property and the idea that the power of finance capital and concentration of capital interest originated with capitalism. This plan made a tremendous use he approved it from the economic point of view he admittedly understood nothing. He regarded all finance capital as Jewish and sought to protect small business. 'Taken over by the Socialist, but the main emphasis is not in the clause is that the corporations of private business and replaced by small business. In other words, none of these points ever

are fine-sounding slogans. It affirmed the end-point of a positive Christianity (few want a non-Biblical, non-ecclesiastical ethical principle of the movement was: individual good.' Finally: 'In order that we demand the creation of a strong unconditional authority of the political whole Reich and its general organization the corporations and trades shall be

striking. Apparently the founders of it or not yet agreed concerning one of the elements of democracy by dictatorship. Drexlers and Harrers, actually did not know of Soviet Russia was too terrifying to their party as a 'party of the

But in demanding a strong central power in the Reich, Hitler impressed his absolute will on his comrades. In the next few years this became one of the decisive party problems. Up to 1918, Germany had consisted of relatively independent federative states; formally, only foreign policy and war came within the sphere of the Reich. When the princes fell, taking with them the historical glamour of the old political subdivisions, the republic ruthlessly broke the old independence of these subdivisions, particularly in the realm of tax and finance. Of course, this aroused violent local opposition; in parts of the Reich an embittered discontent against Berlin arose, particularly in proud and volatile Bavaria. The German counter-revolution consciously exploited this local discontent. An armed uprising was organized amid the tumult and trumpets of national festivals. Rheumatic old officers still regarded themselves, not as leaders of the Reichswehr, but as colonels in the Royal Bavarian Army. A deep-seated, often humorous hatred for the more progressive, more industrial, far larger, richer, more powerful, and predominantly Protestant Prussia, which for generations had been leading Germany, was one of the oldest national sentiments of Catholic Bavaria. There were influential political figures who wanted it under certain circumstances to secede from the Reich altogether, perhaps to join Austria; some even wanted to form a new Danubian state under French protection; at the very least, these men wanted to restore Bavaria's king and its old independence of Berlin.

During the next three years, the future of Bavaria became a question of life and death for Germany and for Hitler. In his personal propaganda he unscrupulously exploited all opposition to Berlin, but in his politics he combated it. He spoke Bavarian at meetings, but his thoughts were Pan-German. In this respect he differed from many fellow members and sympathizers. It was self-evident that he would demand a strong central power, some day he wanted to be that central power himself. Therefore, point 25 sounds as though a sentence from *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion* had been ringing in Hitler's ears: 'For modern society, a colossus with feet of clay, we shall create an unprecedented centralization, which will unite all powers in the hands of the government. We

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shall create a hierarchical constitution, which will mechanically govern all movements of individuals.'

Three weeks after the party's first public meeting the goal seemed reached, the struggle won, the new party already obsolete. The military *putsch* of March, 1920, which failed in the greater part of the Reich, succeeded in Bavaria; the Reichswehr overthrew the government, put in a new cabinet enjoying their confidence, under Premier Gustav von Kahr, installed their own men as ministers and police presidents. During the *putsch*, Hitler flew to Berlin in a small plane to entreat the Prussian generals to hold out, as Bavarian assistance would soon be forthcoming. For Berlin it was too late; but in Munich events seemed to have gone almost ahead of Hitler. The Reichswehr, a short time before a rebellious faction, now had become the state; Hitler, still a rebel, had to give up his desk in the District Army Command (April 1, 1920).

Nevertheless, the Reichswehr went on supporting its child and, if possible, guiding its steps. There was a little weekly in Munich, originally nothing but a rather suspect, scandal-mongering enterprise, called *The Munich Observer* (*Münchner Beobachter*); a gossip sheet, not more. After the war it slowly turned anti-Semitic, changed its name into *Racial Observer* (*Völkischer Beobachter*); on account of internal and personal quarrels the paper was rather cool toward Hitler and his friends. Now Major-General Franz von Epp, commander of the Bavarian infantry troops, and the body to which Röhm was the right hand, bought the *Völkischer Beobachter* for the National Socialists; rather he raised a fund among wealthy persons and gave it to Dietrich Eckart to buy a paper. To be sure, the rich men were little inclined to support a party calling itself Socialist. But Hitler publicly set them straight:

'For National Socialists it goes without saying that industrial capital, since it creates values, will remain untouched. We combat only Jewish international loan capital. . . .'

As a matter of fact, it was, above all, the material and financial organization of the new party that kept Hitler busy in these first months, when the Reich was shaken by tremendous uprisings. All his life he has had a possessive sense, as far as his party was concerned; far more than for his own person. This is how he tells the story:

'At the beginning of 1920, we succeeded in chamber of the Sternecker brewery in Sternecker office. It was a small, vaulted, dark room paneling, about six yards long and three broad everything was dark.

'We brightened up the walls with posters arings, and for the first time hung up our new p held a meeting, it was spread out on the tal mained always before our eyes.'

In this dark back room, Hitler delivered his several times a week to fifteen or twenty personades and the friends they brought along. T the cigarmoke in his gray soldier's uniform. his gas-corroded throat, and shouted: the day a banner of our movement will fly over the Reich in Berlin, yes, over every German house.'

Among the audience was that twenty-three formerly a war aviator, a volunteer in the List the twenty men, he saw the gray speaker, and as he later reported: Was this man a fool, or would save all Germany? He decided the late voice shook Rudolf Hess, and carried him away member and soon a close friend of the speaker

Hess was originally a purer type than me broken figures in this armed Bohemia. All the termination to think his way into their life a violence was not an urge, but a principle. Nat to be the mirror and sloganizer of other men his approval where strong men entered upon lending encouragement where difficulties caution to flag; and finally lending even his hand, had transformed his ideas into a command.

This flying, shooting, leaflet-distributing student and later geographer embodied in his longing intellectual who is becoming the new ruler engineer stands in his control room, high above ing machine; he presses a button, and the ma

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The Child As Father to the Man

Years later he would remind his followers that when he started his mission to the German people he was 30 years old, exactly the same age that another Messiah began His ministry.

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MISSION IN MUNICH, 1919-1933

1919

The Munich to which Hitler returned in the spring of 1919 seemed to be fulfilling the direst predictions of the Viennese pamphleteers. The graceful capital of the Wittelsbachs, the home of *Gemütlichkeit* and good-humored apathy, was being taken over by foreign radicals, Jews, and other Dark Ones.

The postwar history of the city is a sorry tale of regimes which were, in turn, inefficient, daft, corrupt, and terroristic—a history which served as excellent grist for the mills of Hitler's later propaganda. He did not allow the German people to forget that he had saved the Motherland from the horrors of democracy—from the time, for example, "when Israel was king of Bavaria."²¹⁴

After the collapse of the Imperial German Armies on the Western Front, Kurt Eisner, a Jewish journalist recently released from prison and considered a "foreigner" because he spoke with a Berliner accent, had become leader of the Bavarian Independent Socialists. He raised the old cry of *Los von Berlin!*, and on 8 November 1918 proclaimed a socialist republic in conservative, Catholic Bavaria.

His support dwindled rapidly during the three short months of his regime. After the disastrous elections of January 1919, in which he received less than 3 percent of the popular vote, he was shot down as he was on his way to tender his resignation. His assassin, Count Arco auf Valley, was a young man who had been rejected for membership in the racist Thule Society because of a Jewish grandmother. The founder of the society paid him a twisted tribute for the murder: "He wanted to show that even a half-Jew could carry out an act of heroism."

Eisner's confused political inheritance was seized by a motley group of radical intellectuals who, after setting up headquarters in the queen's bedroom of the Wittelsbach palace, began the most bizarre governmental experiment in European history. The poet Ernst Toller was president of the Executive Council. While Munich faced starvation, he issued decrees announcing that the regeneration of the human soul was to be sought in art and free love. Silvio Gesell, leader of a free-money clique, found ample opportunity to experiment with his theories as minister of finance. A Dr. Franz Lipp, the new commissar for foreign affairs, was thoroughly enjoying a full-blown psychosis. His foreign policy consisted largely in writing a series of remarkable letters, including one to Pope Benedict XV to lodge a formal protest that some-

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one had stolen the key to his toilet. The commissar for public housing decreed that henceforth no home in Bavaria could contain more than three rooms and that the living room must always be placed above the kitchen.

The happy, irresponsible government of these "coffee house anarchists" did very well to last for six days. It was succeeded on a lovely Palm Sunday in April 1919 by a group of Communists who established a Republic of Soviets (*Räterepublik*). Leadership was vested in three Russian emigrés—Leviné, Axelord, and Levien—whom Hitler would later castigate as the "Jewish kings of Munich." Their arrival brought a reign of terror that was mitigated only by confusion and inefficiency. Decree followed violent decree; soldiers of the "Red Army" ran drunkenly through the streets on plundering expeditions; schools, banks, newspaper offices, and the theater were closed; prisoners were released from jails, and police dossiers were burned.

Fed up with the chaos and terror of radical political experiments Müncheners finally called for help from the central government, which in May 1919 dispatched volunteer bands of soldiers to "liberate" the city and "restore order." These were the so-called Free Corps, who preferred to dub themselves Freebooters. Their contribution to the rise of Hitler will be discussed in a later connection (see Chapter 5, pp. 312-314), but it may be noted here that they established a reign of terror in Munich which made the "Red Terror" of preceding weeks look pale. Only relative political stability followed the Free Corps occupation in 1919. A year later, during unrest occasioned by the Kapp Putsch in Berlin, military leaders installed Gustav von Kahr as the virtual dictator of Bavaria. (This, substantially, was the government Hitler would try to overthrow in his Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923.) But in the meantime, Munich had become a haven for dozens of militant rightist and racist groups, all trying strenuously to save Germany from the evils of democracy.

Political Skirmishes

The crowded historical stage had been set for Hitler's appearance as Messiah. But the future Führer still stayed in the wings, hesitant and unsure. He did not yet know how to play the role destiny had assigned him. As would happen often in his life in moments of personal crisis, he was assailed by feelings of anxiety, inadequacy, and self-doubt. Thus, month after month, as the turbulent events of revolution, Soviet-style government, and Free Corps occupation swirled about him, he stood aloof, unsure of what to do. Yet through it all he was sustained by the conviction that he had been chosen; that somehow, someday, he would become leader of Germany. Belief in himself and his mission never left him. He must keep the faith and wait for the Goddess of Fate to guide him. And soon she did.

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The Child As Father to the A

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As part of his training doctrine lectures given of Munich. One of his ins recalled that after a lecture by one of their number vision in a strangely guttural excitement derived from were inspiring him." ²¹⁶ I ment between Hitler and his relationship to a crowd

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His first steps led him back to the army. He was assigned to a special new department (Abteilung I S/P) which, after the recent events in Munich, had been established to investigate offbeat or subversive political groups. Hitler later styled himself the "educational officer" of the regiment. Actually he was a "V-Mann" (the abbreviation for *Vertrauensmann*), or undercover agent. His job was to act as a spy and report "reliable" and "unreliable" political movements.²¹⁵

As part of his training, he was required to attend a series of indoctrination lectures given by patriotic professors at the University of Munich. One of his instructors, Professor Karl-Alexander von Müller, recalled that after a lecture he noticed that "the men seemed spellbound by one of their number who was haranguing them with mounting passion in a strangely guttural voice. I had the peculiar feeling that their excitement derived from him and at the same time they, in turn, were inspiring him."²¹⁶ This giving and receiving, this mutual nourishment between Hitler and his audience, would remain characteristic of his relationship to a crowd.

The professor was so impressed he recommended that Hitler be assigned to promoting patriotism in the ranks of the army. Hitler himself remembered the incident clearly and gloried in the power and personal satisfaction he felt in moving a crowd through the spoken word:

I started full of ambition and love. For thus I was at once offered the opportunity to speak before a large audience. . . . What previously I had always assumed to be true out of pure feeling without knowledge, became clear now: I could "speak" [*Ich konnte "reden"*]. . . . No other task could make me happier than this one.²¹⁷

He was about to illustrate this power at a fateful moment in history. For one day in September 1919, either because his job as an army informer required it or—as he preferred to believe—because the Goddess of Fate directed him to do so, he investigated a meeting of the struggling racist party founded by a railway mechanic named Anton Drexler. The little group, which called itself the German Workers' Party, gathered in the Sterneckerbräu tavern in the Tal. The meeting, in a back room that reeked of good beer and bad cigars, was moribund until the stranger with the flashing eyes and compelling voice rose in anger to answer a professor who had suggested that Bavaria should break away from the Reich. So furious and effective was Hitler's attack that the demolished opponent left the meeting. Drexler was impressed.

Hitler subsequently wrote a report to his superior officer, Lieutenant Mayr, warning of the "Jewish racial tuberculosis" and insisting on the need for immediate "Programs [sic]" and "the removal [Ent-

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fernung] of absolutely all Jews." His report must have persuaded his superior, for he appended a note and endorsed Hitler's metaphor: "I am in agreement with Herr Hitler . . . all dangerous elements must, like disease carriers, be either 'isolated' [literally, encysted, *verkapselt*] or eliminated. That includes Jews."²¹⁸

A few days later, Hitler made another of "the greatest decisions" of his life: he joined the German Workers' Party. At a subsequent meeting he listened as a dutiful treasurer reported with pompous pride that the Party now had total assets of 7 marks, 15 pfennig. It was suggested that it might invest some of its money in three rubber stamps to improve its office equipment.²¹⁹

This was the group that Hitler would transform into one of the most effective political movements of modern history. He did it largely through the force of his personality and the power of the spoken word. His effectiveness as a demagogue is attested by nearly everyone who heard him. The Munich police reports for November 1919 describe his performances as Party orator as "masterful" and note time and again that he was received with "tumultuous applause." Ernst Hanfstaengl, a sophisticated Harvard graduate, found Hitler "absolutely irresistible . . . a master of the spoken word." Konrad Heiden, then a university student and political opponent of Hitler who had heard him dozens of times, put his finger on a source of Hitler's effectiveness: he played the role of man of destiny with such fidelity that he actually became the part he played. In transforming himself, he transformed his audience:

... suddenly this man, who has been awkwardly standing around ... begins to speak, filling the room with his voice, suppressing interruptions or contradictions by his domineering manner, spreading cold shivers among those present by the savagery of his declaration, lifting every subject of conversation into the light of history ... the listener is filled with awe and feels that a new phenomenon has entered the room. This thundering demon was not there before; this is not the same timid man with the contracted shoulders. He is capable of this transformation in a personal interview and facing an audience of half a million.²²⁰

Other opponents observed the same phenomenon: a limp, little man changed into a force of overwhelming power, the stream of speech stiffening him "like a stream of water stiffens a hose." Otto Strasser gave one of the most graphic descriptions of the rhetorical skills that were to make Hitler master, first of the Party, and then of Germany:

Adolf Hitler enters a hall. He sniffs the air. For a minute he gropes, feels his way, senses the atmosphere. Suddenly he bursts forth. . . .

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* He was *speaking* in powerful words, full of the best and most assured nature of all the little dirty remarks they were used.

The Child As Father to the

His words go to the private wound on the pressing its innermost to hear.²²¹

Oratorical ability is it is never enough in Trotsky, the best orator Hitler's success must all and his capacity for ruthl

He soon had need f did not go unchallenged crucial year in the life ; the end of July an anony among Party leaders and Post, 3 August 1921.²²² question, *Adolf Hitler*—V Hitler's "lust for persona personal finances and e women. Did he see hims class party or as "Adolf I that Hitler treated his c "common dogs"; it gave own purpose "in a typic "infallibility" as the "so- it appealed to all decent deceived by this "megalo be removed from office.

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About 1,200 member he was introduced with fi one had assumed was his Drexler, whom the pamph he then launched into a cheering. The meeting w resolution made him, in c figures of the movement personal and national sa tant event has conclude German Workers' Party dictatorial Führer."²²⁴

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with treason against the state, Hitler put the entire government of the republic in the dock, accusing President Ebert and Chancellor Scheide-mann and all their supporters of high treason against Germany.

In this most important speech in which he was fighting for his political life, Hitler's thoughts turned to Wagner and to mothers. He aspired, he said, to no special title: "As I stood for the first time at Wagner's grave, my heart overflowed with pride that here lay a man who had forbidden it to be written: 'Here lies Privy Counselor Music Di-rector, His Excellency Baron Richard von Wagner.'" His final appeal involved mothers. The deed of 8-9 November, he proclaimed, could not be considered a failure. The only possible way he himself could have looked upon it that way would have been if "a mother had come to me and said. 'Herr Hitler, you have my son on your conscience.' No mother came to me." Which is to say, his own mother did not blame him; his own conscience was clear. Indeed, at the end of the speech a mother figure—once more appearing as a benevolent goddess—smiled benignly upon him. He turned to the judge and said:

You may pronounce us guilty a thousand times, but the Goddess of the Eternal Court of History will smilingly tear up the indict-ment of the prosecutor and the verdict of the judges and set us free!²³⁰

At the close of the trial, thousands upon thousands of supporters jammed in front of the Ministry of Justice. In a preview of coming years, they kept yelling "Heil Hitler!" until he appeared on a balcony to accept their homage. Overnight the obscure Munich street agitator, who had failed so lamentably a few months before, had become a national hero and martyr to the cause of a resurgent Germany.

His sentence was about what could be expected from the sympa-thetic court system of the Weimar Republic. He was not deported to Austria, as the law for treason clearly required; a judge ruled that though technically he might be an Austrian, he certainly "thought like a German." Formally he was sentenced to five years of fortress confine-ment at Landsberg am Lech; actually he served less than nine months, from 1 April to 20 December 1924.

Hitler in Prison

With the approval of indulgent guards, Hitler's suite in the Lands-berg fortress, which he shared with Rudolf Hess, was converted into what was laconically called "the first Brown House"—the later head-quarters of the Nazi Party. Party emblems, pictures, and a huge swastika covered the walls. The state's attorney made a special concession on 3 December 1923: "Hitler's shepherd dog may be present during inter-views." He was permitted to read or talk until midnight and to sleep late in the morning. His breakfast was served in bed by regular pris-

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On his 35th bñ the fortress and dip who called to cong looked like a delicat and fruit and wine : sending presents fro fatter as a result." W cipate in the prison g I keep away from ti in physical training.

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Hitler arrived in his weight he had adde umph, Hitler was ill death. "Hanfstaengl obliged by hammerb from *Tristan und Isc* trian pastries, Hitler Striding diagonally a of the Western Front reproduce the noise lish, Howitzers, 75's, really went through The virtuosity of the imitations many tim was also on this—or traits of leading Na carpet; ponderous p melodies to imitate joyed the infirmities his mouth and bad te

Reassertion

The political situ was not so amusing government decree, v Yet within ten years had become undisput German nation. It w by Lenin's triumph

ADOLF HITLER

The Image and the Man

20 years) was Johanna Wolf. She recalled that while Hitler addressed all other secretaries formally as "Frau" or "Fräulein," he invariably called her "Wölfin" (She-Wolf). One of his favorite tunes came from a Walt Disney movie. Often and absent-mindedly he whistled "Who's Afraid of the Big-Bad Wolf?"—an animal, it will be recalled, who wanted to eat people up and blow their houses down.⁷⁰

1930

Why this infatuation with wolves? Was Hitler trying to submerge feelings of inadequacy and dependence by creating a counterimage of himself as the lone wolf—tough, independent, resourceful, cunning, remorseless, and strong? Were there other reasons why, throughout his life, he was so attracted to wolves? We shall return to the question in later chapters.

HITLER AS RELIGIOUS LEADER

Since Hitler saw himself as a Messiah with a divine mission to save Germany from the incarnate evil of "International Jewry," it is not surprising that he likened himself to Jesus. On one occasion during the 1920s, as he lashed about him with the whip he habitually carried, he said that "in driving out the Jews I remind myself of Jesus in the temple." At another time he said, "Just like Christ, I have a duty to my own people. . . ."

At a Christmas celebration in 1926 he thought it appropriate to compare his own historical importance favorably with that of Jesus. Christ had changed the dating of history; so would Hitler, for his final victory over the Jews would mark the beginning of a new age in the history of the world. "What Christ began," he observed, he, Hitler, "would complete." And in a speech on 10 February 1933 he parodied the Lord's Prayer in promising that under him a new kingdom would come on earth, and that his would be "the power and the glory, Amen." He added that if he did not fulfill his mission, "you should then crucify me."⁷¹

He liked to remind his followers that a turning point in his life came in 1919, when he undertook his mission. He told an aide that during the preceding autumn, as he lay wounded in a military hospital, he had received a supernatural vision which commanded him to save Germany. And through the years he came back repeatedly to stress the importance of the year 1919. In a speech to the commanding generals of the Wehrmacht on 23 November 1939, he began two paragraphs with the same idea:

1919

When I began my political work in 1919 I based it. . . .

* D.T. "I was an angel."
"You can believe that
I was four angels."

27

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

1919
Fretful worries about his own image alternated with glowing assertions of indispensability, historic greatness, and immortality. Thus, to the same valet, Linge: "My life is worth more than one or two divisions. Without me the army and Germany would collapse." He told the Austrian chancellor, "I have made the greatest achievement in the history of Germany, greater than any other German." Ever since his youth, Hitler was convinced that he alone understood the real meaning of world history. Thus, when an intimate asked him the most revealing statement he had made about himself in his memoirs, Hitler replied at once: "A short sentence at the very beginning of the book [actually it appears on p. 11] in which I say that as a youth I learned the meaning of history." His feeling that he had mastered all history led him, in 1919, to set forth detailed plans for a book he planned to entitle *Die Monumentalgeschichte der Menschheit* (Monumental History of Humanity).¹³³

In a speech to the commanding generals of the Wehrmacht on 23 November 1939, he laid particular stress on the special importance of his own person: "I must in all modesty say that my own person is indispensable. Neither a military nor a civilian personality could replace me. . . . I am convinced of the strength of my brain and my resolution. . . . The fate of the Reich is dependent entirely upon me." As the war progressed, Hitler saw himself as the personification of Germany, and the single focus for all the attacks of the enemy. That he believed the entire world was personally against him was made clear in a speech of 15 February 1942:

Today I have the honor of being this enemy because I have created a world power out of the German Reich. I am boundlessly proud that I was blessed by Providence with the permission to lead this battle. . . .¹³⁴

And at the very end—with his world crashing about him as he cowered in the air raid shelter and planned his own suicide—he still saw himself as a genius with nerves of steel. In his last political testament, he observed that during his lifetime he had made "the most difficult decisions that ever confronted mortal man." And when a secretary, Traudl Junge, asked him as she was typing up this last testament on 29 April 1945 if National Socialism would survive after his death, Hitler answered emphatically in the negative: "The German people have shown that they are not worthy of my movement." Perhaps in a hundred years another genius will take up my ideas and National Socialism like a phoenix will arise again from the ashes." He assured himself that a special place was reserved for him and the other immortals, saying, "I shall feel I am in my proper place if after my death I find myself, together with people like me, on some sort of Olympus. I shall be in the company of the most enlightened spirits of all times."¹³⁵

But the pendulum kept swinging back. After making assertions of

The Image and the Man

omnipotence and infallibility. His memoirs recall how man "I had forebodings and was fit him after he attained power. nervous apprehension" that I himself by insisting that he necessary to say, for example Cities will become heaps of ruins forever. . . . But I am not afraid into a familiar disjunctive word "There are two possibilities: all my plans or to fail. If I fail history. If I fail I shall be content."

At the very height of power On 10 November 1938, for example what should have been a triumph against the Jews in the Kristallnacht the acquiescence of the German a series of other victories: including; occupation of the Rhineland proving his withdrawal from Austria; and most recently, And yet this speech of 10 November words Angst, Rückschlag, and ing:

a great set-back
I must tell you that I become almost anxious. what would happen if I even that can happen. had a failure? Formerly I built up a Party through me. . . .¹³⁷

Even in the Declaration was thinking of the defeat of word "capitulation." He also found

Once again I have put out dearest of all. I will only survive the end. If anything successor will be [Field Marshal] his successor never learned and that will never be repeated. mental goal; it is completely necessary that our people

ADOLF HITLER

The Intellectual World of Adolf Hitler

hat a specific item invariably it was, he had the right "how one human

in his system of convince himself intellectual ability, or better trained. itation of statistics by brain works in it was a fairly appreciated. A German ears said that the technical and intelligent layman." not able to catch

weapon to ward off the Eastern Front could either dismiss could overcome all don statistics and Or he would uncom them informample, they raised am with questions inate commanders ear. When a field tler would provide d more knowledge

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ry, Hitler planned and development Die Monumental Humanity). The s in Coblenz conwell as page after

page of notes for speeches in 1919-1920. They show the tenacity of the author's basic ideas, and his confidence that someday he would put them into practice. The central ideas of 1919 remained at the core of his later political thinking: all human history must be written in terms of conflict between Aryans and Jews. The undergirding law of civilization is this: "Racial purity is the highest principle." He proclaimed the coming of a "new Reich whose slogan will be *Germany Awaken!*"; expressed the need for "unmerciful thinking about truth and reality," and insisted that salvation can come only through a "dictator of genius."⁶

Hitler shows here a characteristic which proved to be an enormous political asset. He was what Jacob Burckhardt called a "terrible simplifier." Neither innovative nor disciplined, his mind had a remarkable capacity to simplify ideas and reduce them to effective political slogans and programs while, at the same time, creating the illusion that he was thereby achieving a higher wisdom.⁷

That Hitler's mind worked with simple and sometimes startling logic is illustrated in a rare interview he granted an American journalist just before coming to power in 1933. When H. V. Kaltenborn pointed out that Hitler had no electoral mandate from the German people, the Nazi leader set forth his reasons for claiming the right to dominate the government. By his reckoning, 37 percent of the total vote entitled him to 75 percent of the political power:

Under the rules of democracy, a majority of 51% governs. I have 37% of the total vote which means that I have 75% of the power necessary to govern. That means I am entitled to three-quarters of the power and my opponent to one-quarter. . . . We bring into the business of government 75% of the capital investment . . . and this takes no account of the plain truth that every unit of my investment is worth twice that of the others. My 15 million voters are in reality worth 30 million.⁸

His capacity to simplify and push through one clear policy amid the confusions of complex economic and social issues was brilliantly demonstrated as soon as he got into office. John Kenneth Galbraith has noted that Hitler had the insight to perceive the right economic policy at the right time. Immediately in 1933 he instituted a concerted and coordinated policy of deficit spending and public works. Like Franklin Roosevelt he "sensed that reputable economists were poor guides to policy," but he went well beyond FDR in the energy and clarity of his actions. To those who object that Hitler did not know enough about economics to understand what he was doing, Galbraith comments with tongue only partly in cheek, "This may be so. But in economics it is a great thing not to understand what causes you to insist on the right stand." A careful student of Hitler's economic policy agrees and con-

* The intensity of his notes twice the emotional commitment of other notes

1919

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very line on.

ation he collected and cited papers, pamphlets, popular the foreign press. He looked title for power, and judged him with arguments that he said, he could get all he reading. Here, as in so many sides remained with him. As for and found in his reading discussion by citing an author wrote this is of exactly the encourage systematic reading his evenings at home were until dawn. The mornings to travel or conferences. He did read, repeatedly and intellectual challenge. In he was very much taken with and followed him avidly as (wants to Live) to the cavalry and of these short and simple residences, and would often guests. He also kept by his *Flottenkalender*, which gave of all navies of the world, experts in his entourage.¹⁴ de of his life as having been his years in Vienna, which he school" in training him for fortress of Landsberg (11 which he said, "Landsberg was

enna left two quite different In his published memoir, list of the books he claims classics one would expect to iller, Goethe, Schopenhauer, ate letter to the Linz architect said that there were only talked about repeatedly: one pes, the other a volume on ribes. One of these books pressed Hitler: "Adolf said ed a symbol which would ts that he had not really l. In his later memoirs and

conversations it is noteworthy that he can recall the names of the newspapers he read in Vienna but does not mention the title of a single book dealing with the social problems he professed to solve. Hitler also gives us insight into the way he approached the study of important social or intellectual questions. He says that when he first became aware of the "Jewish problem," and again when he decided to study Marxism, he sought insight and understanding by purchasing "some pamphlets" on these subjects.

His own commentary on the role that his stay in prison played in his education is also revealing. Immediately after saying that the prison was for him a college education, he undercuts and deprecates formal education and systematic reading. In a long, convoluted, and fuzzy sentence he insists that his method of reading for the confirmation of his views was infinitely better than any other, since "I recognize the correctness of my views in the long run throughout the history of the world and of nature, and was convinced of the contradictory and hypocritical 'intellectualizing' of the professors and high priests of the universities. Anyway, will-power is greater than knowledge."¹⁷

During the "battle years" before he attained power, Hitler often borrowed books. Indeed he borrowed so many and so often from a private library belonging to a right-wing nationalist that the owner, Friedrich Krohn, is probably right in suspecting that Hitler had only skimmed through them in order to impress his patron with his industry and knowledge. At any rate, of the more than 100 books and pamphlets he borrowed during the years 1919-1921, almost two-thirds were tawdry anti-Semitic and racist pamphlets: *Goethe and the Jews*, *Secret Law of the Jews*, *Luther and the Jews*, *Bolshevism and Jewry*, *Schopenhauer and the Jews*, Henry Ford's *The International Jew: A World Problem*, *Wagner and the Jews*, *Extracts from the Talmud*, and so forth. He also borrowed histories of medieval and modern Germany, church histories and exposés of the Catholic church, and a translation of writings of Montesquieu and Rousseau.¹⁸

Certainly Hitler wanted to give the impression of wide reading and great erudition by amassing an impressive collection of books. An intimate who prided himself on being something of an intellectual claimed that Hitler's private library contained some 6,000 books.¹⁹ Toward the end of World War II, American soldiers found a part of the personal library hidden in a salt mine in the neighborhood of Berchtesgaden. The books, numbering about 2,000, were shipped to Washington, where they are now housed in the Rare Books Division of the Library of Congress—standing grotesquely next to the private collections of Thomas Jefferson, Woodrow Wilson, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

While his library gives some indication of his reading tastes, it must be approached with caution as a key to his intellectual interests. Most of the books were not chosen by Hitler himself; they were presented as gifts. The fact that Hitler accepted and preserved them, however, would seem to indicate a degree of approval of their contents—or

1919

ADOLF HITLER

The Intellectual World of Adolf Hitler

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I of Prussia). He also called for a "biological conception of the state," exalted a "scientific world view," and demanded the destruction of liberal attitudes and institutions. One can imagine the pale blue eyes of the young rebel of Vienna flashing as he furiously underlined this passage: "It is a simple matter to transform all justice and law." Also underlined is a passage (p. 71) attacking "the stupidity of liberal-bourgeois attitudes" and insisting that "the whole system must be changed," as well as lines calling for a "new socialism" rooted in "biological conceptions of state organization" (p. 300). There is particularly heavy underscoring of the author's conclusion that society can only be transformed by a leader of mystery and power.

Hitler's library also contained a large collection of books on military history and strategy. The edition of Clausewitz, *Vom Krieg* (On War), was especially well thumbed.

Two other books seem to have interested Hitler particularly— if, as seems likely, the blue-penciled underlining and marginal marks are his own. One is a work entitled *Auswanderungs-Möglichkeiten in Argentinien* (Emigration Possibilities in Argentina), where a passage noting that the country could provide ample space for German settlement is underscored. There are two travel guides, one to the city of Brussels and the other to Berlin, the latter written by the well-known Jewish critic, Max Osborn. The book—which is inscribed in pencil "A. Hitler, Fournés, 22 November 1915"—was apparently much read, but with no underlining or marginal comments. During the war Hitler had been stationed near Fournés, not far from Lille. It is known that he went on furlough to Berlin in 1917. The Library of Congress has facsimiles of three postcards (including one of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church) sent from the German capital to his sergeant and later press chief, Max Amann. There is no mention of the artistic riches of the city.

HITLER AND THE ARTS

Art demands fanaticism.

—Adolf Hitler

The attributes Hitler assigned to great political leaders were those that fit his own self-image. True statesmen, he said, should begin their careers as he had, at the age of 30. And they should also be musical (he considered himself "perhaps the most musical of all Germans"). In 1925 he ruled out General Ludendorff as a political leader because he had no ear for music. In 1945, when talking about possible successors, he rejected Heinrich Himmler because he was not musical enough. Only musical people, he was convinced, feel "the vibrations

D.T. Over and over, I would repeat this to him in his sleep as if

63

1919

?

P.T.

I saw his copy of the book and I can well be a fan of it

We were my Harley and I saw his copy of the book and I can well be a fan of it

Lords of the world." Emperor He hailed Chamberlain as his son. "It was God who sent your son to me."¹⁵¹ Lands of England and its allies. But in meeting Hitler the old man as the long-awaited Führer. The meeting took place in the first of many pilgrimages to the home of Wagner's widow, Cosima, which delighted everyone. He told Frau Wagner the greatest influence on his life, that Hitler listened to one of Wagner's operas; he absolutely captivated the old man "with spent eyes in the face of Wagner's son-in-law, H. S. He looked at him for all his contributions to the aged man of destiny and racial destiny dictated a letter to Hitler. Like the eyes of Hitler's eyes: "... that you are attributable to your eyes and the eyes were equipped with hands, ...". The letter ended, "My faith in you at this moment, but my hope, I must believe you have transformed the

important to the development of experience there during the years when the political ideas which, in Hitler himself showed in an inchoate form in Munich was effective precisely because of his experience; rather, it reflected the Vienna before the war—ideas, simple and so basic to his political thought foundation" and required no further development. Politics at Munich in 1919, Hitler's pamphlet entitled "My Political Program" admitted that he had predecessors of racism. In fact, the author was Drexler. His shabby racist tract once more the "Goddess of Fate" lay upon him. He read the little book and the eerie feeling that he was

reliving vividly some prior experience, an experience, he wrote, "which I had gone through personally in a similar way twelve years ago. Involuntarily I saw thus my own development come to life again before my eyes."¹⁵⁴ Twelve years before meant 1907–1908, when he was devouring the pamphlets issued by the List Society. It was during this period that he underwent the traumatic personal experience which made him a fanatic anti-Semite.

Drexler was an adjunct member of the Thule Society, the most influential of the many racist anti-Semitic groups spawned in Munich during the immediate postwar period. Outwardly it called itself a literary and scholarly circle, and it met at the posh Hotel Vierjahreszeiten. In addition to holding discussion meetings, the Thule Society also established secret arms depots to fight "subversion and treason" and distributed scurrilous anti-Semitic literature. By the time of the Revolution of 1918, the society numbered some 1,500 members in Bavaria and included many of Hitler's later supporters. Hitler himself, it is reported, "was often a guest of the society."¹⁵⁵

In addition to pledging their lives in the battle against Jews, prospective members were obliged to pass several tests. They had to prove that their Aryan blood had not been sullied for at least three generations,* indicate in a special form the amount of hair on various parts of their body (like Lanz, the society believed that non-Aryans were excessively hairy), and submit a footprint on a separate piece of paper as proof that their feet were Aryan.¹⁵⁶

As early as October 1918, however, Drexler had decided that discussion groups such as the Thule Society were insufficient to create a new Germany. So, in collaboration with a sportswriter named Karl Harrer, he established the "Political Workers' Circle," which was to serve as the nucleus for a large political organization he planned to call the German Workers' Party. The topics announced for discussion at meetings of the Workers' Circle conveyed sufficiently the ideas of the group. On 11 December 1918 the topic was "Germany's Greatest Enemy: the Jew"; on 16 January 1919, "Why the War Came"; on 22 January, "Could We Have Won the War?"; on 30 January, "Why the War Was Lost"; and on 5 February, "What Are the Consequences of the Lost War?" The message was clear: Jews were to blame. They had caused the war and traitorously lost it. The Jews were Germany's greatest enemy; they must be removed.¹⁵⁷

The actual German Workers' Party—which was to become the mighty Nazi movement—was established by Drexler and Harrer on 5 January 1919 in the Fürstenfelder tavern. It differed very little from the discussion groups and activities of the Thule Society or the other racist groups to which all the founders belonged. The party's total membership fluctuated between ten and 40 men during the first half of 1919. Its program was to meet weekly in various taverns, to lament the loss

* One of the reasons Hitler never joined the society may have been that he would have been unable to provide such proof.

of the war, and to explain Germany's past defeat and present difficulties by pointing to the "Jewish peril."

1919
Scene
It was at one of the badly attended meetings of the ineffective little party, held in a tavern in the Tal on 12 September 1919, that Adolf Hitler appeared. As a political informer attached to the Bavarian Regiment No. 4 he had come to investigate the group. That evening he heard a speech by a certain Professor Baumann who raised the question of separating Bavaria from the Reich. Hitler was furious. He jumped to his feet and denounced the professor's suggestion with a passion and invective so intense the man left the meeting. Anton Drexler was enormously impressed with the magnetic newcomer's oratory and whispered in broad Bavarian dialect to the man next to him, "Man, he's got something there, we can sure use him!" As the meeting was breaking up, Drexler handed Hitler the fateful pamphlet, *My Political Awakening*.

Later that month Hitler made what he was to call "the most fateful decision of his life" and joined the German Workers' Party. But not as number 7, as he and many subsequent historians have recorded. His membership number was 555, which is to say he was the 55th member to join the party—it began its numbering at 500 to give the illusion of a strength it did not in fact possess. Hitler's number 7 was his number in the party's Workers' Committee.¹⁵⁸

DIETRICH ECKART

The member of the Thule Society who most influenced Hitler and who helped reinforce his political ideas was the racist poet Dietrich Eckart, best known in Germany for his translation of *Peer Gynt*. Hitler's eyes invariably moistened whenever he spoke of Eckart. He dedicated the second volume of *Mein Kampf* to him—a highly untypical public acknowledgment of indebtedness. And years later, in a midnight reverie, he looked back upon Eckart as an admonishing father figure in whose presence he felt like a small boy: "He shone in our eyes like a polar star. . . . When he admonished someone, it was with so much wit. At that time [1922] I was intellectually a child still on the bottle."¹⁵⁹

Eckart had written scathing attacks on Jews and other non-Germans in his racist periodical, *Auf gut Deutsch* (In Plain German), a journal which shows clearly Eckart had read Lanz-Liebenfels, List, Fritsch, Wagner, and H. S. Chamberlain, and that he too was fascinated with runic mysteries and such secret signs as the SS and the swastika. His poetry—which Hitler considered "as beautiful as Goethe's"—proclaimed his belief in Germany's messianic mission:

Father in Heaven, resolved to the death
Kneel we before Thee, Oh answer us, then!
Does aught other people Thine awful command
More loyally follow than we Germans do?

Is there one su
Laurel and vic
Father, Thou
Up! and onwa

A little known pamphlet Eckart and published in 1919 during these years *Moses to Lenin: Dialogues* virtually nothing in the here, as it had been in conspiracy. He and Eckart Freemasonry, Christianity, and the reasons of political expediency. The reasons of political expediency later claimed, "grudging admiration for the way Communist leaders lead the masses. Stalin, I fellow!"

Eckart was not the times been suggested; rather, prejudices Hitler had already in this pamphlet which Hitler, Lanz, List, Fritsch, Wagner, and the tedious refrain of times in Hitler's speech. Last Testament of 1945: nations, were the enemies of Bolshevism. "The 'Bolshevik' designed to infiltrate historic duty and destiny remarks he would repeat that Christianity, like Jesus Paul," he said, was responsible to love and brother Jew triumphant!"

In the pamphlet, Hitler Luther. They praised him:

* *Der Bolschewismus: Hitler und Mir* (Munich, 1919): involved in writing the pamphlet thinks that Eckart did all. Certainly Hitler neither denied it contains. See Ernst Nolte *Historische Zeitschrift* 192 (1919) "völkische" Publizist Dietrich

The Child As Father to the Man

many injections which he pumped into his bloodstream was a concoction of syrup mixed with extract of bull testicles.⁸⁶

He sought to reassure himself about his sexual powers in another way. His valet of many years was emphatic in reporting that Hitler kept two pistols near him: one, a 7.65 Walther, was always on his bedside table; the other, a 6.35 Walther, "ever since 1919 was always [ständig] carried in a specially made leather pocket which was sewn into all his trousers."⁸⁷ Thus, during his waking hours, when he entertained Chamberlain or the Duchess of Windsor, when he sat with Winifred Wagner listening to the *Götterdämmerung*, when he walked with little children, the pistol was in his pocket; when he orated to jubilant thousands, when he strolled the terrace of the Berghof, when he chattered gaily with movie starlets—always, a pistol was with him with its barrel pressed reassuringly against his thigh.

1919

Let us return to Adolf's childhood. We have concluded that he was born with a sexual defect. The autopsy report, supported by psychological data and a consideration of his childhood and adult behavior, indicates that he was a monorchid. Further, we conclude that this physical condition, coupled with disturbed mother-child relations, shaped his attitude to his mother and contributed to his general psychological "modes" of mistrust and shame.

There is no direct evidence of the way Klara responded to her son's malformation. As with many questions raised by this book, we must speculate. It seems likely that she would have sought advice first from her aunts, who were experienced peasant women. There is no evidence that she consulted a physician. Probably her aunts assured her that little Adolf's condition was not at all unusual; she need not worry, since it was just a matter of time until the testicle "came down by itself." Thus the anxious mother—we are conjecturing—repeatedly reassured herself and her little boy that everything would be all right. If he waited patiently, surely the left testicle would, in due time, descend and everything would be normal. In this way, Hitler's childhood anxiety about time, and his impatience with waiting, were extended into a lifelong concern. He never trusted time again, and he developed a preference for watches whose faces were covered and clocks that were left un wound.

Time had always worked against him. In one of the last "Table Conversations" of which we have a record, that of 15 February 1945, he put it at the top of the list of those forces which had betrayed him and caused his defeat: "Time—and it's always Time, you notice—[is] against us."⁸⁸

His mother's repeated and worried reassurances would have served not to alleviate little Adolf's apprehension but to intensify it. And her reminders would have further confused his ambivalent feelings about her. He did indeed love his mother, as he so often insisted. But she had

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1889, the year Hitler was born. Hitler was a grandson of a man who was originally identified with the portrayal of Wotan at the National Gallery in Lenbachhaus, Munich.



1944. Used as a propaganda poster, the caption read, "Adolf Hitler ist der Sieg."

1919

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Hitler was more than just deeply
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eches in Munich, before 1920.
al hate-figures, its incorporation
world-view', came only during
f 1919. And later still came the
erging into a dominant theme
1924.¹⁹¹ Pasewalk was a crucial
f his prejudices. But even more

important, in all probability, was the time he spent in the Reichswehr in 1919.

The last implausible point of Hitler's Pasewalk story is that he resolved there and then to enter politics.¹⁹² In none of his speeches before the Pursch in November 1923 did Hitler say a word about deciding in autumn 1918 to enter politics.¹⁹³ In fact, Hitler was in no position in Pasewalk to 'decide' to enter politics – or anything else. The end of the war meant that, like most other soldiers, he faced demobilization.¹⁹⁴ The army had been his home for four years. But now once more his future was uncertain.

When he left Pasewalk on 19 November 1918, eight days after the Armistice, to return, via Berlin, to Munich, he had savings totalling only 15 Marks 30 Pfennige in his Munich account.¹⁹⁵ No career awaited him. Nor did he make any effort to enter politics. Indeed, it is not easy to see how he could have done so. Neither family nor 'connections' were available to gain him some minor patronage in a political party. A 'decision' to enter politics, should Hitler have made one in Pasewalk, would have been empty of meaning. Only staying in the army offered him the hope of avoiding the evil day when he would once more have to face up to the fact that, four turbulent years on, he was no nearer his chosen career as an architect than he had been in 1914, and was without any prospects whatsoever. The future looked bleak. A return to the lonely existence of the pre-war small-time painter had no appeal. But little else beckoned. The army gave him his chance. He was able to stave off demobilization longer than almost all his former comrades, and to keep on the payroll, until 31 March 1920.¹⁹⁶

It was in the army in 1919 that his ideology finally took shape. Above all, the army, in the extraordinary circumstances of 1919, turned Hitler into a propagandist – the most talented demagogue of his day. Not a deliberate choice, but making the most of the conditions in which he found himself provided Hitler with his entry into politics. Opportunism – and a good slice of luck – were more instrumental than strength of will.

Nov 1918

On 21 November 1918, two days after leaving hospital in Pasewalk, Hitler was back in Munich. Approaching thirty years of age, without education, career or prospects, his only plans were to stay in the army, which had been his home and had provided for him since 1914, as long as possible. He came back to a Munich he scarcely recognized. The barracks to which he returned were run by soldiers' councils. The revolutionary Bavarian government, in the shape of a provisional National Council, was in the hands of the Social Democrats and the more radical Independent Social Democrats. The Minister President, Kurt Eisner, was a radical; and he was a Jew. By spring, Eisner was to be assassinated, Bavarian politics to come close to chaos, and Munich for a month in April to be ruled by Soviet-style councils – for the last two weeks of April by Communists looking directly to Moscow for their model. The bloody repression accompanying the 'liberation' of Munich by Reichswehr troops and Freikorps (volunteer freebooter formations) was to lead to Hitler's first involvement in counter-revolutionary activity. In turn this was to mark the beginning of the process which would see him employed by the army as an informant, 'talent-spotted' as a 'born popular speaker' by his superior officer in the Reichswehr, and entering politics, still in army service, as a populist agitator in the tiny German Workers' Party.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the biographical parts of *Mein Kampf* is how quickly Hitler passed over his own experience of the traumatic revolutionary period in Bavaria. After all, he witnessed for the most part at close quarters the turmoil which so deeply scarred his psyche. He was based in Munich, at the epicentre of events, for the whole period that saw the descent into political chaos following the assassination of Eisner and culminated in the violent end of the 'councils' republic'. Yet his entire treatment of the months between the November revolution and the suppression of the

Räterepublik covers a mere page of his otherwise expansive book. Finding the soldiers' councils in charge of his regiment so repelled him, he wrote, that he decided to leave again as soon as possible. He was sent – after volunteering for service is the clear implication – with his closest wartime comrade Ernst Schmidt (whose name he misspells as 'Schmiedt') to Traunstein in the east of Bavaria, not far from the Austrian border, where he remained until the camp (which held prisoners of war) was disbanded, returning to Munich in March 1919. During the Räterepublik – the 'passing rule of the Jews' as he dubbed it – Hitler claimed he pondered what could be done, but repeatedly realized that, since he was 'nameless', he 'did not possess the least basis for any useful action'. In other words, he did nothing; before, that is, allegedly acting in some way – though he does not describe it, and the whole story has the air of a fabrication – that aroused the disapproval of the Central Council. Accordingly, in his account, he was to have been arrested on 27 April, but drove away with a loaded rifle the three men who had come to take him into custody.² Finally, he adds that, a few days after the 'liberation' of Munich, he was summoned to report to the commission examining the 'revolutionary occurrences' within his regiment – his 'first more or less purely political activity'.³

The gulf between the momentous nature of the events taking place before his eyes and this brief and laconic account came not unnaturally to fuel speculation that Hitler was trying to obfuscate his own actions and conceal a role which might prove embarrassing to the later nationalist hero. It does seem likely that this was indeed his aim, and to a considerable extent he succeeded in it. What Hitler did, how he reacted to the drama unfolding around him in Munich in the first half of 1919, remains for the most part a dark spot in his personal history. Even so, the evidence, patchy in the extreme though it is, reveals one or two surprises.

I

The German Revolution, which had been triggered by the mutinies at Wilhelmshaven and Kiel at the end of October and beginning of November, and rapidly spread to most cities and large towns, reaching the national capital on 9 November, was a messy, largely spontaneous and uncoordinated affair. It arose not, as the Right claimed, from the treacherous machinations of hard-core left-wing revolutionaries, but, as we have already noted, out of massive disaffection and mounting popular protest demanding an end to

the war, an end to the hunger and monarchy capable of bringing about on 3 October for an armistice, which was totally unprepared for defeat, the 1 like a bush-fire. The American President on 23 October, in his third note reply rulers and autocratic monarchs position was only at this stage that revolution then weak and not numerous, found of popular demand for radical change sprang into existence; monarchies rulers of Bavaria for over seven centuries to fall, on 7 November; the Kaiser Flag fluttered over the palace in Berlin. But ending the old system was all the representatives of the mobilization opinion varied on what that meant. Improvisation rather than planning. The great majority of Council democracy. But the minority wanted and extending the power of the Council in their demands, as the Majority showed themselves too fearful of a box of potential social change that their own mass support; and too violent order rather than risk more democracy for the socialization of industries of the army, and drastic reform or reaction, for a short time in disarray within the revolutionary movement widened alarmingly. In Berlin, the Council of People's Representatives to the right had its most fateful government of troops and counter-the small, ill-organized, and mis-carried out by left radicals, mainly in Berlin in early January 1919. The Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg of the disastrous rift within the w

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the Weimar Republic prevented any united front being formed against the growing threat of National Socialism.

The revolution in Bavaria had preceded that in the Reich itself. It took place in circumstances and developed in ways that were to leave a profound mark on Hitler, and to fit more than the events in Berlin into what became the Nazi caricature of the 1918 revolution. It was more radical, with the leadership in the hands of the Independents; it degenerated into near anarchy, then into a short-lived attempt to create a Communist-run Soviet-style system; this in turn led to a few days – though a few days which seared the consciousness of Bavarians for many years to come – that amounted to a mini-civil war, ending in bloodshed and brutality; and a number of the revolutionary leaders happened to be Jewish, some of them east European Jews with Bolshevik sympathies and connections. Moreover, the leader of the Bavarian revolution, the Jewish journalist and left-wing socialist Kurt Eisner, a prominent peace-campaigner in the USPD since the split with the Majority Social Democrats in 1917, together with some of his USPD colleagues, had unquestionably tried to stir up industrial unrest during the 'January Strike' in 1918, and had been arrested for his actions. That was to fit nicely into the Right's 'stab-in-the-back' legend. The same was true of Eisner's subsequent publication of official Bavarian documents revealing Germany's complicity in Austria's ultimatum to Serbia in July 1914, which fed right-wing allegations of treason against him and his entourage even after the Minister President's assassination in February 1919.⁷

When, with a cry of 'off to the barracks', workers, peasants, soldiers, and sailors attending a huge peace demonstration on Munich's Theresienwiese on 7 November 1918, addressed by Eisner, had headed for the city's main garrison area, they had met with no resistance from the troops.⁸ There was relatively little genuine revolutionary fervour in the barracks, but nevertheless as good as no opposition to the revolution, and no support left for the monarchy. War-weariness was the main determinant of the mood. 'These people wanted neither continued war nor revolutionary tribunals and burning stately homes,' wrote one eye-witness, long after the events. 'They wanted to get home to their farms and workshops.'⁹ Without support from the army, the monarchy was finished. The ailing King Ludwig III and his family fled that night. Hitler, over two decades later, was to remark that at least he had to thank the Social Democrats for ridding him of 'these courtly interests'.¹⁰

The provisional government that was soon constituted under Eisner's leadership was from the outset a highly unstable coalition, mainly composed

of the radical but largely idealistic had not even wanted a revolutionary mastering the daunting social and support from the countryside, in a problems alone could not be tackled the abandonment of radical land-worsen. The political turmoil moved USPD to a rump. Rapidly, and probably above all in the Bavarian countryside at the same time innately and overthrown of Eisner by a young, aristocrat Munich University, Graf Anton von provided then the signal for a deterioration.

With 'Red Guards' tramping the Palace where once maids-in-waitress attendance on their royal masters',¹¹ the Queen of Bavaria, dominated by proclaimed a 'Councils Republic' in communists – the latter dubbing it a 'Peasants Republic' – refused to participate.¹² A loyal to the elected government, now But the initial failure of the counter-revolution of the revolutionary hot-heads and us revolution: the full Communist takeover – an attempt to introduce a Soviet-style has finally erected the dictatorship of the new Executive Council under Leonid Leviné, a veteran of the 1905 Russian a fortnight. But it ended in violence, imposing a baleful legacy on the political situation.

In conditions of a proclaimed ten-around 20,000 workers and soldiers factories and army garrison was gathered three-year-old sailor and 'veteran' of the it was without hope against the Prussians with Bavarian Freikorps units, that no after Eglhofer, on 29 April, had proclaimed 'Army', eight (including a woman) of them several from the *volksisch* Thule

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of the radical but largely idealistic USPD and the 'moderate' SPD (which had not even wanted a revolution).¹¹ Moreover, it stood no chance of mastering the daunting social and economic problems it faced. Without support from the countryside, in a largely rural province, the provisioning problems alone could not be tackled. But the price of any such support was the abandonment of radical land-reform plans. Conditions continued to worsen. The political turmoil mounted. Elections in January reduced the USPD to a rump. Rapidly, and predictably, the radicals had lost support above all in the Bavarian countryside – massively disaffected, but remaining at the same time innately and overwhelmingly conservative. The assassination of Eisner by a young, aristocratic former officer, currently a student at Munich University, Graf Anton von Arco-Valley, on 21 February 1919, provided then the signal for a deterioration into chaos and near anarchy.¹²
With 'Red Guards' tramping the corridors and rooms of the Wittelsbach Palace where once maids-in-waiting and powdered lackeys had fawned attendance on their royal masters',¹³ a meeting in the one-time bedroom of the Queen of Bavaria, dominated by members of the USPD and anarchists, proclaimed a 'Councils Republic' in Bavaria. Majority Socialists and Communists – the latter dubbing it a 'Pseudo-Councils Republic' (*Scheinräte-republik*) – refused to participate.¹⁴ An attempt to unseat it by using troops loyal to the elected government, now exiled in Bamberg, failed on 13 April. But the initial failure of the counter-revolution simply strengthened the resolve of the revolutionary hot-heads and ushered in the last phase of the Bavarian revolution: the full Communist takeover in the second, or 'real' Räterepublik – an attempt to introduce a Soviet-style system in Bavaria. 'Today, Bavaria has finally erected the dictatorship of the proletariat', ran the proclamation of the new Executive Council under the direction of the Communist Eugen Leviné, a veteran of the 1905 Russian revolution.¹⁵ It lasted little more than a fortnight. But it ended in violence, bloodshed, and deep recrimination, imposing a baleful legacy on the political climate of Bavaria.
In conditions of a proclaimed ten-day general strike, a 'Red Army' of around 20,000 workers and soldiers drawn mainly from Munich's big factories and army garrison was gathered under the command of the twenty-three-year-old sailor and 'veteran' of the Kiel Mutiny, Rudolf Eglhofer. But it was without hope against the Prussian and Württemberg troops, combined with Bavarian Freikorps units, that now massed around Munich. The day after Eglhofer, on 29 April, had proclaimed the 'dictatorship of the Red Army', eight (including a woman) of the 'Red Army's' prisoners, among them several from the *völkisch* Thule-Gesellschaft, held as hostages in

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the Luitpold-Gymnasium, together with two captured soldiers from the government troops, were badly maltreated then shot by their captors. The fateful order for the shooting had been given as retaliation for atrocities committed by the encroaching 'White Guard' on the outskirts of Munich. News of the shooting of the hostages spread like wildfire, horrified the city, and incited the counter-revolutionary army to speed up its assault on Munich, and to undertake drastic and savage reprisals. The street-fighting in the city centre of Munich and in some working-class districts was bloody. Flame-throwers, heavy artillery, armoured vehicles, even aircraft, were deployed in a short but merciless civil war. The victims of the 'White Guard' included fifty-three Russian prisoners-of-war who had had nothing whatsoever to do with the Räterepublik but were driven into a quarry and summarily dispatched, a group of first-aiders mown down as supposed revolutionaries, twelve civilian SPD supporters in the working-class district of Perlach who had been denounced by political enemies, and twenty-one members of the Catholic St Joseph's Association, mistaken for Spartacists. For several days, terror ruled Munich's streets. All involved in the socialist experiment had to fear for their lives. When Munich was finally 'liberated' on 3 May, the death-toll numbered at least 606 persons, 335 of them civilians. Of the leaders of the Räterepublik, only the Russian-born Communist Max Levien escaped the clutches of the right-wing backlash. Eglhofer and the Jewish anarchist and writer Gustav Landauer were murdered by Freikorps troops; Leviné was executed for high treason (amid a storm of protest and a one-day general strike in Berlin); the anarchist Jewish writer Erich Mühsam was sentenced to fifteen years; Ernst Toller, another Jewish writer, to five years. In all, the draconian sentences meted out totalled some 6,000 years: sixty-five of those indicted were sentenced to hard labour, 1,737 to periods of imprisonment, and 407 to lighter internment.¹⁶

It would be hard to exaggerate the impact on political consciousness in Bavaria of the events between November 1918 and May 1919, and quite especially of the Räterepublik. At its very mildest, it was experienced in Munich itself as a time of curtailed freedom, severe food shortages, press censorship, general strike, sequestration of foodstuffs, coal, and items of clothing, and general disorder and chaos.¹⁷ But, of more lasting significance, it went down in popular memory as a 'rule of horror' (*Schreckensherrschaft*)¹⁸ imposed by foreign elements in the service of Soviet Communism. In reality, the revolutionaries had achieved nothing – beyond gaining some genuine support from Munich's soldiers and workers. Neither the threat to confiscate private property nor the creation of a new political and social order had

any prospect of implementation. Luitpold-Gymnasium was deplorable. But it paled alongside the atrocities which were regarded with relative indifference. However, as so often, images were constructed and massively shored up. Reich as well as in Bavaria itself, where forces taking over the state, threatening property, presiding over chaos and violence, and causing anarchy of a kind even more moderate press organs. Even more moderate newspaper of Munich's *Nachrichten*, spoke of the 'aims and 'Russian emissaries', 'Bolshevik agents and 'foreign agitators'. It placed the blame on the 'bestial slaughter of innocent leaders'. Any leniency shown towards the troops who had 'liberated' Munich from 'in strict discipline' restored 'the spirit

A mere eighteen months after the reports of the terrible civil war taking place, eventually defeated their counter-revolutionary forces. Immense mortalities and unspeakable suffering were recognized how penetrating and pervasive was in a rural province of deeply ingrained polarization. The radical Right in the Räterepublik were the radical Right who stoked the fear and hatred of Bolshevism in the middle classes.²⁰ Not least, extreme counter-revolution was accepted as a legitimate response and now became a regular feature of the political scene. Its flirt with left-wing socialism over the years into a bastion of the conservative Right extremists throughout Germany. Though sharply, 'white-blue' Bavarian separatists and *völkisch* extremists found common cause (and broader 'Marxist') Left.²¹ And the stronghold of reactionary, anti-Republican

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any prospect of implementation. The shooting of the hostages in the Luitpold-Gymnasium was deplorable, and horrified the Munich bourgeoisie. But it paled alongside the atrocities perpetrated by the 'liberating' troops, which were regarded with relative equanimity as 'restoring order'.

However, as so often, images were more telling than reality. And the image, constructed and massively shored up by rightist propaganda throughout the Reich as well as in Bavaria itself, was that of alien – Bolshevik and Jewish – forces taking over the state, threatening institutions, traditions, order, and property, presiding over chaos and mayhem, perpetrating terrible acts of violence, and causing anarchy of advantage only to Germany's enemies. Even more moderate press organs painted much the same picture. The mainstream newspaper of Munich's middle class, the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, spoke of the 'aims and methods of Russian Bolshevism', 'Russian emissaries', 'Bolshevik agents', the 'practice of asiatic Bolshevism', and 'foreign agitators'. It placed the blame for the 'criminal atrocities' and the 'bestial slaughter of innocent hostages' squarely on the 'communist leaders'. Any leniency shown towards such 'criminals' would be 'a sin against the laws of humanity and justice', it was stated. In contrast, the troops who had 'liberated' Munich from the 'red terror' had, it was claimed, 'in strict discipline' restored 'the spirit of order'.¹⁹

A mere eighteen months after the Russian Revolution and fuelled by reports of the terrible civil war taking place in Russia (in which the Bolsheviks eventually defeated their counter-revolutionary enemies, but only after immense mortalities and unspeakable savagery on both sides), it is not hard to recognize how penetrating and pervasive the neurotic fear of Bolshevism was in a rural province of deeply ingrained conservatism, and in politically polarized towns and cities. The real gainers from the disastrous weeks of the Räterepublik were the radical Right, which had been given the fuel to stoke the fear and hatred of Bolshevism among the Bavarian peasantry and middle classes.²⁰ Nor least, extreme counter-revolutionary violence had come to be accepted as a legitimate response to the perceived Bolshevik threat and now became a regular feature of the political scene.

Its flirt with left-wing socialism over, Bavaria turned in the following years into a bastion of the conservative Right and a magnet for right-wing extremists throughout Germany. Though their political tendencies differed sharply, 'white-blue' Bavarian separatists, 'black-white-red' nationalists, and *völkisch* extremists found common cause in their hatred of the Bolshevik (and broader 'Marxist') Left.²¹ And the Bavarian Reichswehr became a stronghold of reactionary, anti-Republican, counter-revolutionary forces,

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which were strengthened still further after March 1920, when the leaders of the failed right-wing Kapp Putsch and their paramilitary organizations found a haven awaiting them in Bavaria. These were the conditions in which the 'making of Adolf Hitler' could take place.

Not least, as already indicated, the history of the Bavarian revolution was almost tailor-made for Nazi propaganda. Not just the legend of the 'stab-in-the-back', but the notion of an international Jewish conspiracy could be made to sound plausible in the light of the Munich Räterepublik. Though right-wing extremism had no stronger traditions in Bavaria than elsewhere up to this point, the new climate provided it with unique opportunities and the favour of a sympathetic establishment. Many of Hitler's early followers were deeply influenced by the experience of the turbulent months of post-revolutionary Bavaria. For Hitler himself, the significance of the period of revolution and Räterepublik in Munich can hardly be overrated. It has been said that Hitler did not decide to become a politician; rather, through the revolution and the rule of the Councils, politics came to him, into the barracks.²² It is time to explore the truth of that assertion.

II

On his return to Munich on 21 November 1918, Hitler had been assigned to the 7th Company of the 1st Reserve Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, where, a few days later, he met up again with several wartime comrades. A fortnight later, he and one of these comrades, Ernst Schmidt, were among the fifteen men from his Company (and 140 men in all) assigned to guard duties at the Traunstein prisoner-of-war camp. Probably, as Schmidt later recounted, Hitler suggested they let their names go forward when volunteers were called for to make up the deputation.²³ Hitler, remarked Schmidt, did not have much to say about the revolution, 'but it was plain enough to see how bitter he felt'. Both, according to Schmidt, were repelled by the changed conditions in the Munich barracks, now in the hands of the Soldiers' Councils, where old standards of authority, discipline, and morale had collapsed.²⁴ If that was indeed the reason for volunteering, Hitler and Schmidt could have found no improvement on reaching Traunstein. The camp, meant to contain 1,000 prisoners but much overcrowded, was also run by the Soldiers' Councils which Hitler allegedly so detested. Discipline was poor, and the guards, according to one source, included some of the worst elements among the troops who – like Hitler – saw the army 'as a means

of maintaining a carefree existence Schmidt had an easy time of this. They were there in all for almost prisoners-of-war, mainly Russian. At the beginning of February the camp was full. Probably in late January, as Schmidt stated, he certainly returned no later than stated), since, on 12 February, he was assigned to the 2nd Demobilization

In general, as we have noted, was carried out remarkably swiftly comrades, including Ernst Schmi That Hitler himself was able to everything to his increasing invo political work for the Reichswhe to emerge. Meanwhile, he was ke itself to stay in the army as long

For just over two weeks, begin guard duty at the Hauptbahnhof, responsible for maintaining order, particularly to and from Munich. During this was the subject of an investigation instances of maltreatment of persons is not known, though he cannot and brutality.³⁰ Beyond guard duty demobilization company had to earn 3 Marks a day testing old guards for the occasional visit to the open about 40 Marks a month – with food enough to keep body and soul together distinctively less rosy.

As we have noted, Hitler spoke of a 'revolutionary commission' following the suppression of the 1918-1919 revolutionary activity. Evidence recently comes from the revolutionary era does not account for why Hitler was so reticent about the 'November criminals', as he later

A routine order of the demobilization to Hitler by name as the representative

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Democracy, belligerent militarism, and aggressive xenophobia rules out any genuine attuning to the aims, policies, and ideas of the SPD after 1918. If, as seems almost certain, Hitler felt compelled to lean outwardly towards the Majority Social Democrats during the revolutionary months, it was not prompted by conviction but by sheer opportunism aimed at avoiding for as long as possible demobilization from the army.

A number of pointers towards Hitler's opportunism exist from this period. In Pasewalk, he did not denounce to his superiors (as patriotic duty would have demanded) the sailors who arrived in the hospital preaching sedition and revolution.⁴⁶ On leaving the hospital, he avoided committing himself politically, and made no attempt to join any of the numerous Freikorps units which sprang up to engage in the continued fighting on the eastern borders of the Reich and the suppression of left-wing radicalism within Germany, not least in Munich itself. After his return to Munich from Traunstein in February 1919, he most likely took part, since his regiment had issued orders to participate, in a demonstration march of about 10,000 left-wing workers and soldiers in Munich. Probably in April 1919, with Munich ruled by the Communist Councils, he wore, along with almost all the soldiers of the Munich garrison, the revolutionary red armband.⁴⁷ That Hitler stood back and took no part whatsoever in the 'liberation' of Munich from the Räterepublik is said to have brought him later scornful reproaches from Ernst Röhm (who was to head the Nazi stormtroopers), Ritter von Epp (after 1933 Reich Governor in Bavaria), and even Rudolf Heß (who would serve as Hitler's private secretary and subsequently become Deputy Leader of the Party).⁴⁸

Whatever his opportunism and passivity, Hitler's antagonism to the revolutionary Left was probably evident to those around him in the barracks during the months of mounting turmoil in Munich. If indeed, as was later alleged, he voiced support for the Social Democrats in preference to the Communists,⁴⁹ it was presumably viewed as a choice of the lesser of two evils, or even, by those in Hitler's unit who knew him of old, as an opportune adjustment betraying none of his real nationalist, pan-German sympathies. Ernst Schmidt, for example, who by then had been discharged but was still in regular touch with him, spoke later of Hitler's 'utter repugnance' at the events in Munich.⁵⁰ The nineteen votes cast for 'Hitler' on 16 April, electing him as the second company representative – the winner, Johann Blüml, received thirty-nine votes – on the Battalion Council, may well have been from those who saw him in this light.⁵¹ That there were tensions within the barracks, and between the soldiers' elected representatives, might be read

out of the subsequent denunciation of the Battalion Council at the Munich soldiers of his regiment during the counter-revolutionary he is indistinguishable from those of the city. One plausible, if unsubstantiated, exhortation to his battalion to remain loyal was that 'we are not a revolutionary Significant, above all, is that with the Councils, Hitler had been nominated on a three-man committee to represent the Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment in the Räterepublik.⁵⁴ This speaks in favour of his deep antagonism to 'red' in Hitler being discharged, along with the end of May 1919.⁵⁵ More important, it placed him in the orbit of counter-revolutionary rather than any psychological trauma or dramatic decision to rescue was, within the following month, the rise of extreme right-wing politics in

On 11 May 1919, under the command of the Bayerische Reichswehr Gruppenführer created from the Bavarian units of the Räterepublik.⁵⁶ With the Bavarian end of August, Munich – its telephone wire, and army control-points – was placed effectively under military rule and surveillance of the political scene and indoctrination 'dangerous' attacks. Gruko took over in May 1919 the 'Abteilung, Abt. Ib/P' which had been the suppression of the Räterepublik 'correct' anti-Bolshevik, national

He told him: Young man, you are a member of the Social Democrats one time or another

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aggressive xenophobia rules out any and ideas of the SPD after 1918. If, impelled to lean outwardly towards the revolutionary months, it was not opportunism aimed at avoiding for as the army.

opportunism exist from this period. is superiors (as patriotic duty would) and in the hospital preaching sedition. It is, he avoided committing himself to join any of the numerous Freikorps. He continued fighting on the eastern side of left-wing radicalism within

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assivity, Hitler's antagonism to the returned to those around him in the barracks until in Munich. If indeed, as was later said, Social Democrats in preference to the returned as a choice of the lesser of two evils, who knew him of old, as an opportunist, nationalist, pan-German sympathies. He had been discharged but was still a part of Hitler's 'utter repugnance' at the time cast for 'Hittler' on 16 April, electing a representative – the winner, Johann Blüml, Battalion Council, may well have been. That there were tensions within the elected representatives, might be read

out of the subsequent denunciation by Hitler of two colleagues on the Battalion Council at the Munich tribunal investigating the actions of the soldiers of his regiment during the Räterepublik.³² Hitler was probably known to those around him, at the latest towards the end of April, for the counter-revolutionary he really was, whose actual sympathies were indistinguishable from those of the 'white' troops preparing to storm the city. One plausible, if unsubstantiated, story has him jumping on a chair to exhort his battalion to remain neutral in the imminent fighting, exclaiming that 'we are not a revolutionary guard for Jews who have come over here'.³³ Significant, above all, is that within a week of the end of the rule of the Councils, Hitler had been nominated – by whom is not known – to serve on a three-man committee to explore whether members of the Reserve Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment had been actively involved in the Räterepublik.³⁴ This speaks in favour of the recognition within his battalion of his deep antagonism to 'red' rule. At any rate, his new role now prevented Hitler being discharged, along with the rest of the Munich garrison, by the end of May 1919.³⁵ More importantly, it brought him for the first time into the orbit of counter-revolutionary politics within the Reichswehr. This, rather than any psychological trauma in Pasewalk at the news of the defeat, any dramatic decision to rescue Germany from the 'November criminals', was, within the following months, to open up his path into the maelstrom of extreme right-wing politics in Munich.

III

On 11 May 1919, under the command of Generalmajor von Möhl, the Bayerische Reichswehr Gruppenkommando Nr. 4 ('Gruko' for short) was created from the Bavarian units that had been involved in the crushing of the Räterepublik.³⁶ With the Bavarian government 'exiled' in Bamberg until the end of August, Munich – its centre crammed with barricades, barbed wire, and army control-points – was throughout the spring and summer a city effectively under military rule.³⁷ Recognizing twin tasks of extensive surveillance of the political scene and combating by means of propaganda and indoctrination 'dangerous' attitudes prevalent in the transitional army, Gruko took over in May 1919 the 'Information Department' (Nachrichtenabteilung, Abt. Ib/P) which had been immediately established in Munich at the suppression of the Räterepublik. The 'education' of the troops in a 'correct' anti-Bolshevik, nationalist fashion was rapidly regarded as a

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or another

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priority, and 'speaker courses' were devised in order to train 'suitable personalities from the troops' who would remain for some considerable time in the army and function as propaganda agents (*Propagandaleute*) with qualities of persuasion capable of negating subversive ideas.⁵⁸ The organization of a series of 'anti-Bolshevik courses', beginning in early June, was placed in the hands of Captain Karl Mayr, who, a short while earlier, on 30 May, had taken over the command of the Information Department.⁵⁹ Mayr, one of the 'midwives' of Hitler's political 'career',⁶⁰ could certainly have claimed prime responsibility for its initial launch.

The first of Hitler's many patrons, Mayr had a maverick career which saw him swing from active engagement on the extreme counter-revolutionary Right – he was an important Bavarian link with the putschist Wolfgang Kapp in 1920 – to become a strong critic of Hitler and an active figure in the Social Democrat paramilitary organization, the Reichsbanner. He fled to France in 1933, but was later captured by the Nazis, and died in Buchenwald concentration camp in February 1945. In 1919, his influence in the Munich Reichswehr extended beyond his rank as captain, and he was endowed with considerable funds to build up a team of agents or informants, organize the series of 'educational' courses to train selected officers and men in 'correct' political and ideological thinking, and finance 'patriotic' parties, publications, and organizations.⁶¹ Mayr first met Hitler in May 1919, after the crushing of the 'Red Army'. Hitler's involvement in his battalion's investigations into subversive actions during the Räterepublik may have drawn him to Mayr's attention. And as we have noted, Hitler had already been engaged in propaganda work in his barracks earlier in the spring – though on behalf of the Socialist government. He had the right credentials and ideal potential for Mayr's purposes. When he first met Hitler, Mayr wrote much later, 'he was like a tired stray dog looking for a master', and 'ready to throw in his lot with anyone who would show him kindness...'. He was totally unconcerned about the German people and their destinies.⁶²

The name 'Hittler Adolf' appears on one of the early lists of names of informants (*V-Leute*, or *V-Männer*) drawn up by the Information Department Ib/P at the end of May or beginning of June 1919. Within days he had been assigned to the first of the anti-Bolshevik 'instruction courses', to take place in Munich University between 5 and 12 June 1919. For the first time, Hitler was to receive here some form of directed political 'education'. This, as he acknowledged, was important to him; as was the fact that he realized for the first time that he could make an impact on those around him. Here he heard lectures from prominent figures in Munich, hand-picked by Mayr,

partly through personal acquaintanceship, 'The Political Historical Practice', 'Our Economic Situation', 'The Connection between Domestic and Foreign Policy', 'The specific insistence of Mayr to deliver a lecture', was Gottfried F. among the Pan-Germans as an economist of interest slavery' (a slogan Hitler realized), on which he had already published in nationalist circles – distinguish 'rapacious' capital (which he associated with Hitler, and eventually led to the early Nazi Party.⁶³ The history professor Karl Alexander was his first lecturer, emptying lecture hall surrounding a strikingly guttural, tone. He mentioned one of his trainees had natural rhetorical talent, he was sitting. Mayr recognized him as 'List Regiment'.⁶⁴

Hitler himself thought this incident intervened by one of the participants to his deployment as an 'educational officer', but he was never a *Bildungsoffizier*, but the late May or early June.⁶⁵ Plainly, attention on Hitler. But it was certainly Hitler's activity for his department to the latter's selection as one of a group drawn from the participants in the Munich to conduct a five-day course at the Augsburg. The course, beginning on arrival in the camp, was arranged to show the political unreliability of men stationed being held as prisoners-of-war and no squad was to inculcate nationalist propaganda to troops, described as 'infected' by Bolshevism, to effect the continuation of what the inmates were doing in Munich.

Alongside the commander of the un-

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partly through personal acquaintance, on 'German History since the Reformation', 'The Political History of the War', 'Socialism in Theory and Practice', 'Our Economic Situation and the Peace Conditions', and 'The Connection between Domestic and Foreign Policy'. Among the speakers, too, at the specific insistence of Mayr (since he was not originally scheduled to deliver a lecture), was Gottfried Feder, who had made a name for himself among the Pan-Germans as an economics expert. His lecture on the 'breaking of interest slavery' (a slogan Hitler recognized as having propaganda potential), on which he had already published a 'manifesto' – highly regarded in nationalist circles – distinguishing between 'productive' capital and 'rapacious' capital (which he associated with the Jews), made a deep impression on Hitler, and eventually led to Feder's role as the economics 'guru' of the early Nazi Party.⁶¹ The history lectures were delivered by the Munich historian Professor Karl Alexander von Müller, who had known Mayr at school. Following his first lecture, he came across a small group in the emptying lecture hall surrounding a man addressing them in a passionate, strikingly guttural, tone. He mentioned to Mayr after his next lecture that one of his trainees had natural rhetorical talent. Müller pointed out where he was sitting. Mayr recognized him immediately: it was 'Hitler from the List Regiment'.⁶⁴

Hitler himself thought this incident – he said he had been roused to intervene by one of the participants defending the Jews – had led directly to his deployment as an 'educational officer' (*Bildungsoffizier*). However, he was never a *Bildungsoffizier*, but a *V-Mann*, which he had been since the late May or early June.⁶⁵ Plainly, the incident helped to focus Mayr's attention on Hitler. But it was certainly Mayr's regular close observation of Hitler's activity for his department rather than a single incident that led to the latter's selection as one of a squad of twenty-six instructors – all drawn from the participants in the Munich 'instruction courses' – to be sent to conduct a five-day course at the Reichswehr camp at Lechfeld, near Augsburg. The course, beginning on 20 August 1919, the day after Hitler's arrival in the camp, was arranged in response to complaints about the political unreliability of men stationed there, many having returned from being held as prisoners-of-war and now awaiting discharge. The task of the squad was to inculcate nationalist and anti-Bolshevik sentiments in the troops, described as 'infected' by Bolshevism and Spartacism.⁶⁶ It was in effect the continuation of what the instructors themselves had been exposed to in Munich.

Alongside the commander of the unit, Rudolf Beyschlag, Hitler undertook

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the lion's share of the work, including helping to stir discussion of Beyschlag's lectures on, for example, 'Who Bears the Guilt for the World War?' and 'From the Days of the Munich Räterepublik'. He himself gave lectures on 'Peace Conditions and Reconstruction', 'Emigration', and 'Social and Political-Economic Catchwords'.⁶⁷ He threw himself with passion into the work. His engagement was total. And he immediately found he could strike a chord with his audience, that the way he spoke roused the soldiers listening to him from their passivity and cynicism. Hitler was in his element. For the first time in his life, he had found something at which he was an unqualified success. Almost by chance, he had stumbled across his greatest talent. As he himself put it, he could 'speak':

I started out with the greatest enthusiasm and love. For all at once I was offered an opportunity of speaking before a larger audience; and the thing that I had always presumed from pure feeling without knowing it was now corroborated; I could 'speak' . . . And I could boast of some success: in the course of my lectures I led many hundreds, indeed thousands, of comrades back to their people and fatherland. I 'nationalized' the troops . . .⁶⁸

Participants' reports on the course confirm that Hitler was not exaggerating the impact he made in Lechfeld: he was without question the star performer. Ewald Bolle, who had served on an airship, wrote that Beyschlag's lectures did not go down as well 'as the passionate (*temperamentvollen*) lectures (with examples from life) of Herr Hitler'. Gunner Hans Knoden thought Hitler especially 'revealed himself to be an excellent and passionate speaker and captured the attention of all the listeners with his comments'. And stretcher-bearer Lorenz Frank wrote: 'Herr Hitler especially is, I might say, a born popular speaker who, through his fanaticism and his populist style (*populäres Auftreten*) in a meeting, absolutely compels his audience to take note and share his views.'⁶⁹

A central feature of Hitler's demagogic armoury at Lechfeld was antisemitism. In his ferocious attacks on the Jews, he was, however, doing no more than reflect sentiments which were widespread at the time among the people of Munich, as reports on the popular mood demonstrated. One vicious comment - 'All [the Jews] deserve to be hanged. They are guilty of the war' - made in a Munich tram met with the approval of all other passengers. A worker in a train travelling from Munich to Lindau thought the troops ought to have opened fire on the Jews on 1 May. People said major pogroms against the Jews were as certain to come as the revolution had been. Other reports on popular opinion in August and September 1919 also recorded

* It was here that the virulence of his anti-Semitism & demand for a 'Anti-Semite' was equal to now, political power

How I count
Here you do it
from your anti-Semitism
demands to hang all the Jews
present the greatest danger for
Reich is liberated from this m:
revival be contemplated. Am
The responses to Hitler's add
soldiers were to his way of
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to power, political power

How I counseled him on this letter
Here you do both of them. You profit
from your anti-Semitism and you are
absolutely legal in tone. If you will not
demands to hang all the Jews together with comments that 'the Jews are at
present the greatest danger for all working Germans', and that 'only when the
Reich is liberated from this malicious, treacherous vermin' could Germany's
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The responses to Hitler's addresses at Lechfeld indicate how accessible the
soldiers were to his way of speaking.⁷⁰ The commander of the Lechfeld
Camp, Oberleutnant Bendt, even felt obliged to request Hitler to tone down
his antisemitism, in order to prevent possible objections to the lectures as
provoking antisemitic agitation (*Judenhetze*). This followed a lecture by
Hitler on capitalism, in which Hitler had 'touched on' the 'Jewish Question'.⁷¹
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reply to Gemlich, dated 16 September 1919, is his first recorded written
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be based not on emotion, but on 'facts', the first of which was that Jewry
was a race, not a religion. Emotive antisemitism would produce pogroms,
he continued; antisemitism based on 'reason' must, on the other hand, lead
to the systematic removal of the rights of Jews. 'Its final aim,' he concluded,
'must unshakably be the removal of the Jews altogether.'⁷³

The Gemlich letter reveals for the first time key basic elements of Hitler's
Weltanschauung which from then on remained unaltered to the last days
in the Berlin bunker: antisemitism resting on race theory; and the creation
of a unifying nationalism founded on the need to combat the external and
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letter the arguments of Gottfried Feder, on whom he continued to lavish
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and I who knew him well, knew that he had not profited by reading Faust, not at all - he was ready to sell his soul to the devil. I was there to rescue him in his sleep,

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IV

On returning to Munich following the end of the Lechfeld course on 25 August, the commander Rudolf Beyschlag had been accused of not distributing 500 Marks, meant to be given to the course instructors. The case for the instructors was made by Hitler, now evidently the spokesman for his group. Following his success at Lechfeld and in the light of Beyschlag's disgrace, he was by this time plainly Mayr's favourite and right-hand man.⁷⁵ Among the duties of the V-Men assigned to Mayr was the surveillance of fifty political parties and organizations ranging from the extreme Right to the far Left in Munich.⁷⁶ It was in his capacity as V-Man that Hitler was sent, on Friday, 12 September 1919, to report on a meeting of the German Workers' Party in Munich's Sterneckerbräu. He was accompanied by at least two former comrades from Lechfeld.⁷⁷ The speaker was to have been the *volkisch* poet and publicist Dietrich Eckart, but he was ill and Gottfried Feder stood in to lecture on the 'breaking of interest slavery'. According to his own account, Hitler had heard the lecture before, so took to observing the party itself, which he took to be a 'boring organization', no different from the many other small parties sprouting in every corner of Munich at that time. He was about to leave when, in the discussion following the lecture, an invited guest, a Professor Baumann, attacked Feder and then spoke in favour of Bavarian separatism. At this Hitler intervened so heatedly that Baumann, totally deflated, took his hat and left even while Hitler was still speaking, looking 'like a wet poodle'.⁷⁸ The Party Chairman, Anton Drexler, was so impressed by Hitler's intervention that at the end of the meeting he pushed a copy of his own pamphlet, *My Political Awakening*, into his hand, inviting him to return in a few days if he were interested in joining the new movement. 'Goodness, he's got a gob. We could use him' (*Mensch, der hat a Gosch'n, den kunnt ma brauchn*'), Drexler was reported to have remarked.⁷⁹ According to Hitler's own account, unable to sleep he read Drexler's pamphlet in the early hours, and it struck a chord with him, reminding him, he claimed, of his own 'political awakening' twelve years earlier. Within a week of attending the meeting, he then received a postcard informing him that he had been accepted as a member, and should attend a committee meeting of the party a few days later to discuss the matter.⁸⁰ Though his immediate reaction, he wrote, was a negative one – he allegedly wanted to found a party of his own⁸¹ – curiosity overcame him and he went along to a dimly-lit meeting of the small leadership group in the Alte

Rosenbad, a shabby pub in Herre aims of those he met. But he was an organization he encountered – 'cl dubbed it'.⁸² After a few days of in mind to join. What determined organization offered 'the individual – the prospect, that is, of quickly

Some time during the second ha Workers' Party, and was given th as he always claimed, the seventh Drexler, put it in a letter address sent:

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Rosenbad, a shabby pub in Herrenstraße. He sympathized with the political aims of those he met. But he was appalled, he later wrote, at the small-minded organization he encountered – 'club life of the worst manner and sort', he dubbed it.⁸² After a few days of indecision, he added, he finally made up his mind to join. What determined him was the feeling that such a small organization offered 'the individual an opportunity for real personal activity' – the prospect, that is, of quickly making his mark and dominating it.⁸³

Some time during the second half of September, Hitler joined the German Workers' Party, and was given the membership number 555. He was not, as he always claimed, the seventh member.⁸⁴ As the first party leader, Anton Drexler, put it in a letter addressed to Hitler in January 1940, but never sent:

No one knows better than you yourself, my Führer, that you were never the seventh member of the party, but at best the seventh member of the committee, which I asked you to join as recruitment director (*Werbeobmann*). And a few years ago I had to complain to a party office that your first proper membership card of the DAP, bearing the signatures of Schüssler and myself, was falsified, with the number 555 being erased and number 7 entered.⁸⁵

Like so much of what Hitler had to say in *Mein Kampf* about his earlier life, his account of entering the party cannot be taken at face value, and was devised, like everything else, to serve the Führer legend that was already being cultivated. And whatever Hitler wrote about wrangling for days about whether or not to join the DAP, the decision might not ultimately have been his to take. In a little noticed piece of evidence, his Reichswehr boss Captain Mayr later claimed that he had *ordered* Hitler to join the German Workers' Party to help foster its growth. For this purpose, Mayr went on, he was provided at first with funds – around the equivalent of 20 gold Marks a week – and, contrary to normal practice about members of the Reichswehr joining political parties, was allowed to stay in the army.⁸⁶ He was able to do this, drawing his army pay as well as speaker fees, until his discharge on 31 March 1920. This already enabled him – in contrast to the other DAP leaders who had to fit politics around their normal jobs – to devote all his time to political propaganda.⁸⁷ Now, on leaving the army, his confidence boosted by his early successes as a DAP speaker in the Munich beerhalls, he was in a position to do what, since he had made his mark in the anti-Bolshevik course at Munich University and worked with Mayr as a Reichswehr propagandist and informant, had emerged as a ready-made career opening to replace the fantasies of becoming a great architect and

the end of the Lechfeld course on Beyschlag had been accused of not given to the course instructors. The Hitler, now evidently the spokesman Lechfeld and in the light of Beyschlag's Mayr's favourite and right-hand man.⁷⁵ gned to Mayr was the surveillance of ns ranging from the extreme Right to is capacity as V-Man that Hitler was to report on a meeting of the German kerbräu. He was accompanied by at hfeld.⁷⁷ The speaker was to have been ch Eckart, but he was ill and Gottfried king of interest slavery'. According to ie lecture before, so took to observing : a 'boring organization', no different routing in every corner of Munich at vhen, in the discussion following the r Baumann, attacked Feder and then m. At this Hitler intervened so heatedly his hat and left even while Hitler was oodle'.⁷⁸ The Party Chairman, Anton c's intervention that at the end of the n pamphlet, *My Political Awakening*, (in a few days if he were interested in ss, he's got a gob. We could use him' nt ma braucha'), Drexler was reported itler's own account, unable to sleep he hours, and it struck a chord with him, wn 'political awakening' twelve years he meeting, he then received a postcard epted as a member, and should attend few days later to discuss the matter.⁸⁰ wrote, was a negative one – he allegedly – curiosity overcame him and he went e small leadership group in the Alte's

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Without the Reichswehr's 'discovery' of his talent for nationalist agitation, Hitler had every prospect of returning to the margins of society – an embittered war veteran with little chance of personal advancement. Without his self-discovery that he could 'speak', he would not have been able to contemplate the possibility of making a living from politics. But without the extraordinary political climate of post-war Germany, and, quite especially, the unique conditions in Bavaria, Hitler would have found himself in any case without an audience, his 'talent' pointless and unrecognized, his tirades of hate without echo, the backing from those close to the avenues of power, on whom he depended, unforthcoming.

When he joined the infant German Workers' Party in September 1919, he was still, as he himself put it, among the 'nameless' – a nobody.¹ Within three years, he was being showered with letters of adulation, spoken of on in nationalist circles as Germany's Mussolini, even compared with Napoleon.² And little more than four years later, he had attained national, not just regional, notoriety as a leader of an attempt to take over the power of the state by force. He had of course failed miserably in this – and his political 'career' looked to be (and ought to have been) at an end. But he was now a 'somebody'. The first part of Hitler's astonishing rise from anonymity to prominence dates from these years in Munich – the years of his political apprenticeship.

It is natural to presume that such a swift rise even to provincial celebrity status must have been the result of some extraordinary personal qualities. Without doubt, Hitler *did* possess abilities and traits of character that contributed towards making him a political force to be reckoned with. To ignore them or disparage them totally would be to make the same mistakes of underestimation made by his political enemies, who ridiculed him and regarded him as a mere cipher for the interests of others. But Hitler's personality and his talents, such as they were, alone do not explain the

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adulation already being lavished on him by growing numbers in the *völkisch* camp by 1922. The origins of a leadership cult reflected mentalities and expectations prevalent in some sectors of German society at the time, more than they did special qualities of Hitler. Nor would his abilities as a mob-orator, which were most of what he had to offer at the time, in themselves have been sufficient to have lifted him to a position where he could, even if for a mere few hours – in retrospect, hours of pure melodrama, even farce – head a challenge to the might of the German state. To come this far, he needed influential patrons.

* Without the changed conditions, the product of a lost war, revolution, and a pervasive sense of national humiliation, Hitler would have remained a nobody. His main ability by far, as he came to realize during the course of 1919, was that in the prevailing circumstances he could inspire an audience which shared his basic political feelings, by the way he spoke, by the force of his rhetoric, by the very power of his prejudice, by the conviction he conveyed that there *was* a way out of Germany's plight, and that *only* the way he outlined was the road to national rebirth. Another time, another place, and the message would have been ineffective, absurd even. As it was, indeed, in the early 1920s the great majority of the citizens of Munich, let alone of a wider population to whom Hitler was, if at all, only known as a provincial Bavarian hot-head and rabble-rouser, could not be captivated by it. Nevertheless, at this time and in this place, Hitler's message did capture exactly the uncontrollable sense of anger, fear, frustration, resentment, and pent-up aggression of the raucous gatherings in the Munich beerhalls. The compulsive manner of his speaking derived in turn much of its power of persuasion from the strength of conviction that combined with appealingly simple diagnoses of and recipes to Germany's problems.

Above all, what came naturally to Hitler was to stoke up the hatred of others by pouring out to them the hatred that was so deeply embedded in himself. Even so, this had never before had the effect it was to have now, in the changed post-war conditions. What, in the Men's Home in Vienna, in the Munich cafés, and in the regimental field headquarters, had been at best tolerated as an eccentricity now turned out to be Hitler's major asset. This in itself suggests that what had changed above all was the milieu and context in which Hitler operated; that we should look in the first instance less to his own personality than to the motives and actions of those who came to be Hitler's supporters, admirers, and devotees – and not least his powerful backers – to explain his first breakthrough on the political scene. For what becomes clear – without falling into the mistake of presuming

that he was no more than the puppet would have remained a political support he obtained from influential Hitler was seldom, if ever, master to take over the party leadership in 1923 – were not carefully conceived to save face – behaviour characterised

It was as a propagandist, not as a of political ideas, that Hitler made nothing new, different, original, peddling in the Munich beerhalls. Various *völkisch* groups and sects essential by the pre-war Pan-Germ unoriginal ideas in an original way make no impact at all. It was less counted. As it was to be through mattered. He consciously learnt how speaking. He learnt how to devise the impact of targeting specific scape he was able to mobilize the masses route to the attainment of political that his way and no other could succ that he conveyed to others. Conversely – later the mass rallies – gave him the of security, which at this time he of Hoffmann, when asked to give a speech party in the early 1920s, he refused. explained. 'In a small intimate circle only disappoint you all, and that is a either at a family gathering or a funeral demonstrated diffidence and unease diametrically with his self-confident his listeners in the theatrical setting orgasmic excitement which only the satisfaction gained from the rapturing crowds must have offered compelling relations. More than that, it was a decades in which – apart from the personal achievements of note to set again

* D.T. I had no need to explain these principles to him. He had his own instinct for such occasions

* D.T. there were our only ones

two key ingredients in his speaking of unvarying essential driving-points of the masses, the reversal of the great Germany's internal enemies (above all racial and psychological rebuilding as the attainment of a position of world power to Germany's 'salvation' and rebirth in embryo, by the date of his letter to the Beerhall agitator, however, to be essential for 'living-space' in eastern Europe until the middle of the decade. It was following the putsch débâcle, therefore, to form the characteristic fully-fledged Beerhall agitator remained unaltered.

racial developments which shaped the Beerhall agitator as the beerhall agitator of an era and the circumstances under which he

I

with Hitler, the frequently heard claim that the Beerhall agitator was a quite misleading oversimplification of the rise to and exercise of power, undeniable. But the phenomenon of the Beerhall agitator, and would have continued to exist in Vienna'.⁷ Much of the pot-pourri of Beerhall agitator ideology – an amalgam of prejudices, contradictions rather than a coherent set of ideas, found in different forms and intensities in the programmes and manifestos of various Beerhall agitator countries. Integral nationalism, anti-Semitism, racism, biological antisemitism, varying strengths to provide a heady mix of some cultural pessimists among the Beerhall agitator societies undergoing rapid social, and late nineteenth century. There was, however, Beerhall agitator, naturally, as we noted in

an earlier chapter, some of the ideas took on a particular form and developed a specific intonation in Germany and German-speaking Austria.

Ideas of a 'national', or 'German', socialism, in contrast to the international socialism of Marxism, were nothing new in Germany in 1919, though the war had given such notions a strong boost. The liberal pastor Friedrich Naumann had founded a 'National-Social Association' in the 1890s with a view to weaning industrial workers from class-struggle and integrating them as the pillars of the new nation-state. The attempt had failed dismally by 1903, and the notion of a 'German' socialism came to be wholly associated with the extreme anti-liberal politics of the antisemitic and *völkisch* movement. The appeal here was mainly to the lower-middle classes – traders, craftsmen, small farmers, lower civil servants – and rooted in a combination of antisemitism, extreme nationalism, and vehement anti-capitalism (usually interpreted as 'Jewish' capitalism).⁸ Similar tendencies in Austria, during the time of Hitler's youth, were to be found, as we noted in an earlier chapter, in the Schönerer movement. We noted, too, that conflicts between Czech and German workers in Bohemia had already led by 1904 to the establishment of a German Workers' Party at Trautenau in what came to be known as the Sudetenland, combining *völkisch* nationalism and anti-Marxist, anti-capitalist socialism.⁹ Hitler acknowledged the foundation, twenty years earlier, of this Austrian National Socialist Party, at his trial after the Putsch, though disclaimed any connection with his own movement.¹⁰ Certainly, there is no hint that he showed any interest in it or even acknowledged its existence during his time in Austria. The similarity of name continued after the war, when the Trautenau party became the German National Socialist Workers' Party (DNSAP, Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei). There were contacts with Hitler's movement in the early 1920s, but by 1923 the supremacy of the latter was established and in 1926 Hitler became acknowledged as the sole leader of both the Austrian and German branches of the re-established NSDAP.¹¹

The *völkisch* variant of nationalism remained a minority taste before the First World War, though gaining influential backing through the Pan-Germans, through the dissemination of popular racist works such as those of Theodor Fritsch and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and through the popularizing of exclusivist and aggressive ethnic nationalism in countless schools and youth organizations. The central strands of *völkisch* ideology were extreme nationalism, racial antisemitism, and mystical notions of a uniquely German social order, with roots in the Teutonic past, resting on order, harmony, and hierarchy.¹² Most significant was the linkage of a

romanticized view of Germanic culture (seen as superior but heavily threatened by inferior but powerful forces, particularly Slavs and Jews), with a social Darwinian emphasis upon struggle for survival, imperialist notions of the need for expansion to the Slavic east in order to safeguard national survival, and the necessity of bringing about racial purity and a new élite by eradicating the perceived arch-enemy of Germandom, the spirit of Jewry.

We have already seen how conditions in the last two years of the war were conducive to the rapid spread of antisemitism and *völkisch* nationalism, of which it was an integral part. The massive political upheaval and disarray that followed defeat and revolution gave even greater sustenance to the ideas of extreme nationalism. These ideas were represented in a variety of forms by a myriad of different political groups and movements. But of importance, in the changed circumstances, was that *völkisch* nationalism, in all its extremes, could now blend into more mainstream nationalist forces to offer a frontal ideological rejection of democracy and the Weimar state. The foundations of a rounded anti-democratic ideology, an antithesis to Weimar, were established not in the primitive beer-table discussions of *völkisch* 'thinkers' and 'philosophers', but by neo-conservative writers, publicists and intellectuals such as Wilhelm Stapel, Max Hildebert Boehm, Moeller van den Bruck, Othmar Spann, and Edgar Jung. Ideas of an organic *Volk*, resting on purity of blood and race, forming a national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) that transcended each individual within it, producing a true 'national' socialism which was anti-liberal as it was anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois, binding each individual at the same time to service to that community through subordination to leaders of notable ability, wisdom, and substance, formed central elements of this ideology.¹³

The anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois ideas of this ensemble naturally did not endear themselves to the conservative nationalists in the German National People's Party, the DNVP, the mainstream nationalist party which had arisen from the ashes of the old German Conservative Party.¹⁴ And the neo-conservatives generally thought the Nazis were vulgar and primitive. Even so, defeat, revolution, and the establishment of democracy had fostered a climate in which a counter-revolutionary set of ideas could gain wide currency, blending in part both into older forms of conservative nationalism and into the newer, popularized and vulgarized brands of *völkisch* nationalism. The 'national disgrace' felt throughout Germany at the humiliating terms imposed by the victorious Allies and reflected in the Versailles Treaty signed on 28 June 1919, with its confiscation of territory and, even more so, its 'guilt clause', enhanced the creation of a mood in which such ideas

were certain of a hearing. The first R year, in its calamitous losses for the pa revealed, as is often said, that Weimar cans' – a notable exaggeration, but e the eyes of a majority of its citizens (u The potential was thus provided for c fringes of politics towards the centre

The crowds that began to flock i were not motivated by refined theori the fires of anger, resentment, and l they were offered in the Munich be version of ideas which were in far w in *Mein Kampf* that there was no ess the *völkisch* movement and those c interest in clarifying or systematizing obsessions – a few basic notions wh formed into a rounded 'world-view driving-force of his 'mission' to 'rescu for Hitler as abstractions. They we mobilization.

When Hitler joined the German seventy-three *völkisch* groups in Ger end of the war.¹⁵ In Munich alone Like the DAP, most of these were exception, however, and an importa Nazi Party, was the German Nationa (Deutschvölkischer Schutz- und Tru 1919 on an initiative of the Pan-Ger of smaller *völkisch* associations into the masses to the antisemitic move located in Hamburg, where *völkisch* white-collar workers' union, the Dei band, it found significant resonanc Munich. Its propaganda output was 7.6 million pamphlets, 4.7 million h the symbol of the *völkisch* struggle i membership had drained into it fr Within a year it had expanded from on to more than double this to over

Oct 1919

II

Hitler's part in the early development of the German Workers' Party (subsequently the NSDAP) is obscured more than it is clarified by his own tendentious account in *Mein Kampf*. As usual, this is characterized less by pure invention than by selective memory and distortion of facts. And, as throughout his book, Hitler's version of events is aimed, more than all else, at elevating his own role as it denigrates, plays down, or simply ignores that of all others involved. It amounts, as always in Hitler's own account, to the story of a political genius going his way in the face of adversity, a heroic triumph of the will. The story was the core of the 'party legend' which in later years Hitler never tired of retelling at inordinate length as the preface to his major speeches. It was that of the political genius who joined a tiny body with grandiose ideas but no hope of realizing them, raising it single-handedly to a force of the first magnitude which would come to rescue Germany from its plight.

Hitler wrote contemptuously of the organization he had joined. The state of the party was depressing in the extreme. The committee constituted practically the whole membership. Though it attacked parliamentary rule, its own matters were decided, after 'interminable argument', by majority vote. It met in the dingy back rooms of Munich pubs. It had no permanent headquarters. In fact, it had no membership forms, no printed matter, not even a rubber stamp. Invitations to party meetings were handwritten or produced on a typewriter. The same few people turned up.³⁰ Eventually, a move to mimeographed notices brought a modest rise in numbers attending, and funds were raised to allow a newspaper advertisement in the *Münchener Beobachter* for a meeting on 16 October 1919 which attracted 111 people to the Hofbräukeller, the large drinking saloon attached to one of Munich's big breweries, situated in Wienerstraße to the east of the city centre (and not to be confused with the better-known Hofbräuhaus, located in the city centre itself). The main speaker was a Munich professor, but Hitler – according to his own account – then spoke for the first time in public (apart from to captive audiences in the Lechfeld Camp), for half an hour instead of his scheduled twenty minutes. He electrified his audience and prompted a collection of 300 Marks for the party coffers. He brought some of his army contacts into the movement, breathing much-needed new life into it. The party leaders, Harrer and Drexler, were in his view uninspiring: they were neither good speakers, nor had they served in the war. Hitler and the

party leadership were at odds ab initio, Hitler insisted on his way, and these took place in the 'Deutschen Reich', on Dachauerstrasse speaking to bigger audiences and within a few weeks later, the attendance list star was now in the ascendant with went on, he urged the staging of there were major differences of opinion arguing that it was premature and with Harrer, the party's first chairman, and Hitler, and was replaced by Drexler. The meeting was organized for 24 February in the centre of Munich. The atmosphere was even rougher and rowdier. 'Schubert's' numerous big drinking establishments the stone beermugs and benches groined in Bavarian short leather trousers, the tables delivering foaming litres. It frequently was, for large political would sway merrily to drinking. At political meetings, heavy drinking sometimes brewed, was commonplace in a bigger hall than the infant party had experienced, an embarrassment of a small turnout.

A good deal of effort was put into leaflets advertising the meeting. Though at the meeting, was also printed and a huge hall was packed when Hitler arrived. Still according to his own account, a not mention, had spoken, Hitler – Drexler, who had apparently suffered the floor. Clashes between his supporters took place, but Hitler continued and expounded the programme, with unanimous acclamation of its twenty in his *Mein Kampf* version, 'there united by a new conviction, a new faith setting out on his quest: 'A fire was

* D.T. And I kept him behaving this,

* what fear

³ He wrote to Kapp, now exiled in

e the basis for the strong assault-force programme is still somewhat clumsy and upplement it. Only one thing is certain: a good number of supporters. Since July when the movement . . . I've set up very example, has become a motive force, a ank. In the Munich branch we have over in summer 1919.¹¹⁴

he Reichswehr, Mayr had taken him club for radical nationalist officers, er had been introduced to Röhm by ⁵ Interested in a variety of nationalist nning the workers to the nationalist ting of the DAP addressed by Hitler the party shortly afterwards. Now Röhm, who rapidly came to replace chr. Röhm had been responsible for e' (Einwohnerwehr) units in Bavaria ortant player in paramilitary politics, y, the 'patriotic associations', and , in fact, at this time, along with his re interested in the massive Ein-over quarter of a million men, than ie provided the key contact between ic associations' and offered avenues -up party desperately needed.¹¹⁶ His ising so from 1921 onwards, when

e was the *völkisch* poet and publicist ears older than Hitler, Eckart, who nslation of *Peer Gynt*, had not been et and critic. Possibly this stimulated politically active in December 1918 e weekly *Auf gut deutsch* (In Plain tions from Gottfried Feder and the senberg. He spoke at DAP meetings

in the summer of 1919, before Hitler joined,¹¹⁸ and evidently came to regard the party's new recruit as his own protégé. Hitler himself was flattered by the attention paid to him by a figure of Eckart's reputation in *völkisch* circles. In the early years, relations between the two were good, even close. But for Hitler, as ever, it was Eckart's usefulness that counted. As Hitler's self-importance grew, his need for Eckart declined and by 1923, the year of Eckart's death, the two had become estranged.¹¹⁹

At first, however, there could be no doubt of Eckart's value to Hitler and the NSDAP. Through his well-heeled connections, Eckart afforded the beerhall demagogue an entrée into Munich 'society', opening for him the door to the salons of wealthy and influential members of the city's bourgeoisie. And through his financial support, and that of his contacts, he was able to offer vital assistance to the financially struggling small party. Since membership fees did not remotely cover outgoings, the party was dependent upon help from outside. It came in part from the owners of Munich firms and businesses, including the publisher Lehmann. Some aid continued to come from the Reichswehr. Mayr's office paid for the 3,000 brochures, attacking the detested Versailles Treaty (seen not just on the extreme Right as cripplingly punitive and humiliating for Germany), which Lehmann had published for the party in June 1920.¹²⁰ But Eckart's role was crucial. He arranged, for example, the funding from his friend, the Augsburg chemist and factory-owner Dr Gottfried Grandel, who also backed the periodical *Auf gut deutsch*, for the plane that took him and Hitler to Berlin at the time of the Kapp Putsch. Grandel later served as a guarantor for the funds used to purchase the *Völkischer Beobachter* and turn it into the party's own newspaper in December 1920.¹²¹

The party leadership had been looking to buy the near-bankrupt *Beobachter* since the summer to provide the wider publicity that was needed. But it was only in mid-December, when rival bidders for the newspaper emerged, that Hitler moved. Together with Hermann Esser and the deputy party-chairman Oskar Körner, he turned up in an agitated state at Drexler's flat at two o'clock in the morning on 17 December claiming the *Beobachter* was 'in danger', that it was about to fall into Bavarian separatists' hands. Drexler's mother was wakened up to make coffee, and around the kitchen table it was decided that Drexler would first thing the next morning call on Eckart to persuade him to encourage his wealthy contacts to provide the financial backing to acquire the newspaper. Hitler, meanwhile, would seek out Dr Grandel in Augsburg. Six hours later, Drexler was drumming an irritable Eckart out of bed, disgruntled at being awakened so early. They

scare

1919

were soon on their way to see General von Epp. Eckart convinced the latter how vital it was to gain possession of the *Beobachter* and stood guarantor with his house and property for the 60,000 Marks which Epp provided from the funds of the Reichswehr. Other sources yielded a further 30,000 Marks, and Drexler himself, earning 35 Marks a week, took over the remaining debts of 113,000 Marks before, that afternoon, becoming the legal owner of the *Völkischer Beobachter*.¹²² Thanks to Eckart, the Reichswehr, and in no small measure to Drexler himself, Hitler now had his newspaper. His thanks to Eckart were suitably fulsome.¹²³

VI

To the Munich public, by 1921, Hitler was the NSDAP. He was its voice, its representative figure, its embodiment. Asked to name the party's chairman, perhaps even politically informed citizens might have guessed wrongly. But Hitler did not want the chairmanship. Drexler offered it him on a number of occasions. But Hitler refused.¹²⁴ Drexler wrote to Feder in spring 1921, stating 'that each revolutionary movement must have a dictatorial head, and therefore I also think our Hitler is the most suitable for our movement, without wanting to be pushed into the background myself'.¹²⁵ But for Hitler, the party chairmanship meant organizational responsibility. He had – this was to remain the case during the rise to power, and when he headed the German state – neither aptitude nor ability for organizational matters. Organization he could leave to others; propaganda – mobilization of the masses – was what he was good at, and what he wanted to do. For that, and that alone, he would take responsibility. Propaganda, for Hitler, was the highest form of political activity. He had learnt at first from the Social Democrats as well as from the antisemites of the Schutz- und Trutzbund. He probably also learnt from Gustave Le Bon's tract on crowd psychology – though most likely at second hand.¹²⁶ But most of all he learnt from his own experience of the power of the spoken word, given the right political climate, the right crisis atmosphere, and a public ready to trust in political faith more than reasoned argument. In Hitler's own conception, propaganda was the key to the nationalization of the masses, without which there could be no national salvation. It was not that propaganda and ideology (*Weltanschauung*) were distinctive entities for him. They were inseparable, and reinforced each other. An idea for Hitler was useless unless it mobilized. The self-confidence he gained from the rapturous reception of his speeches

assured him that his diagnosis redemption was right – the on self-conviction that conveyed it well as those listening to his; 'drummer' of the national cause was why, before the middle of and not to be bogged down in the with the chairmanship of the p.

The outrage felt throughout C million Gold Marks to be paid i ence at the end of January 19 agitation.¹²⁸ This was the bac NSDAP had until then staged, risked going ahead with the me the usual advance publicity. In two lorries hired to drive roun another technique borrowed fr Nazis had used it. Despite worr be half-empty and the meeting than 6,000 turned up to hear Hit *oder Untergang*), denounce the ' reparations, and castigate the v them.¹³⁰ 'The known leader of th days later when, as third speal the 'patriotic associations' in C 'party-political tendencies'.¹³¹

Hitler wrote that after the Circi propaganda activity in Munich: output was impressive. Hitler Munich and twelve elsewhere (n contributions to 'discussions', ar in the latter part of the year. Ber thirty-nine articles for the *Völk* onwards contributed a number c leaflets (*Mitteilungsblätter*).¹³³ (devote himself solely to propagat leadership, he had no other occu

Politics consumed practically h speeches, or preparing them, he s