

1939

Jauchels
Speer

Hitler - The man + military leader - Desowitz
The Ailing Empire - Haffner
The war path - David Irving

Q.M.D.
BeeS

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dominate an

moral flaw. A colony will often turn to stealing when there is no honeyflow, usually in the fall, and nearby hives that are weak have honey more or less for the taking. Such hives are, in effect, poorly secured vaults bursting with wealth begging to be heisted.

Beekeepers can contribute to corrupting their colonies if, through inexperience or carelessness, they leave honey exposed while working their hives, presenting a temptation seldom resisted even by the most upright colonies. The temptation is increased if there is no honeyflow or a poor harvest has left inadequate winter supplies.

The ever-practical bees recognize this lack of principle in their kind and most colonies take measures to protect against marauders. When honey stores are built up, the number of guards is increased and the troops are on a war alert to repel trespassers, in the same way that weak colonies with inadequate stores are ill tempered and inclined to sting; the strong and the weak are equally dangerous, but for different reasons.

Robber bees, sensibly, prefer defenseless and weak victims; nature does not burden most of her charges with scruples. She gives them an appetite and a means of appeasing it and sends them on their way to work things out among themselves. Compared to other creatures of the earth, bees get along together better than most. They do not try to monopolize the flowers in the fields, but recognize them as common property, available to all, first come, first served. Bees have enemies, as we have seen, but bees do not attack unless they are attacked or threatened. For the most part they do not prey upon one another, a common practice throughout nature; when this does happen, it is for a sound, practical reason: hive economics.

It implies a moral posture to use the term robbing. In nature, where force and guile dominate, stealing is a fact of life, enabling the sly and quick to live at the expense of the industrious and dull. It is probably less compensation for other shortcomings than part of the evolutionary process enabling the fit to dominate and live at the expense of the less fit. That which we

call robbing is simply another survival strategy, a means of evening things up a bit between haves and have-nots, in the competition among unlimited applicants for limited resources.

Honeybees are not inherent thieves but usually turn to robbing by chance events, sudden opportunity for quick riches, necessity if their own survival is threatened, or the temptation of effortless gain. Most robbing is sporadic and impetuous, ending quickly, as the weak hive is wiped out or the invaders, usually from a neighboring hive, are driven off and peace restored. But some colonies, once exposed to the quick and easy rewards of theft, are likely to take to the primrose path as a career, looking for victims, like brigands living off their neighbors.

It is no more possible to explain why some colonies turn robber and others remain straight than to tell why some people succumb to temptation while others resist. But who can deny that it is easier to steal than to drudge unceasingly, that it must be more appealing to a bee to steal honey than to visit thousands of flowers and fly long distances for a smidgen of raw nectar that must be processed into honey, when the finished product is to be had for the taking.

It is undeniable that the rewards of theft are more effortlessly obtained than those procured by hard work. Honesty, for all its acclaim, does have its limitations and disadvantages. To the credit of bees, they do not resort to moral subterfuge when the strong plunder the weak, and expediency or need takes precedence over live and let live.

SEVENTY-FOUR



Robbing appears to be a mechanism to eliminate the unfit, but when bees turn to robbing as a way of life the mechanism itself seems to have gone awry. Robber

1944

promoting the common good, quietly, efficiently, and resolutely.

2 copies
An existing colony can get a new queen by two primary means: supersedure and requeening. They are, in effect, the same, in that a new queen is introduced. In requeening, the beekeeper provides a new queen, one he has raised himself or, more likely, one bought from an apiary in the south. In supersedure the bees produce their own queen. Most beekeepers prefer to provide a queen of their choice before the bees can take over to assure greater quality control. Often there is a conflict between what the bees and their keepers desire: man usually seeks uniformity in the same way that nature prefers diversity.

1944-45
It is understandable that most queens use up their supply of sperm within a year or two. Every twenty-four hours a queen lays eggs equal to her own weight. When her sperm is largely spent, she starts laying at a reduced rate; when it is completely exhausted she can lay nothing but unfertilized drone eggs or none at all.

Bees almost never supersede a queen if she is producing brood satisfactorily, but the prevailing wisdom among beekeepers is that queens should be replaced routinely every year, two at most, before they fail. Commercial operations rarely keep a queen more than one year. Requeening usually means killing the old queen, an unpleasant business that I flinch from, preferring to let the bees work it out among themselves. To the old queen who must be replaced, I suppose, it makes little difference whether she is dispatched by her own from within, or by the beekeeper from without. In either case the queen must die.

M BF
The best queens come from eggs only a few hours old, the fresher the better. The bees may select a newly laid egg and build a queen cell around it, or move it to a waiting royal crib. Both methods require preparation and planning, so supersedure cannot be an impetuous act, but represents a sober judgment by the colony's ruling councils. Supersedure cells, unlike

swarm cells, are usually found high up on the frames of honeycomb, near the center of the hive, probably so the young princesses can be protected from the old queen's jealousy and wrath.

Supersedure cells are about three times the size of worker cells and double that of drone cells, sticking out from the comb they're attached to like the nose of a bullet, with a corrugated peanut-like texture. Once supersedure cells appear, the old queen's days are numbered, but business in the hive goes on as usual, the failing queen laying as best she can. It would be rash on the part of the colony to dispatch her before a successor is ready to take her place. Treachery has its own logic.

1945

THIRTY-NINE



Supersedure must, of necessity, be a surreptitious undertaking. Otherwise it probably couldn't come off. Why would the queen, dim-witted as she is, cooperate in providing her own successor? And yet, to confound us a bit more, queens have been seen actually depositing eggs in supersedure cells. But this is so rare that we are left wondering whether it is an absent-minded act, unnoticed by the queen in laying thousands of eggs, a breakdown of instinct, senility, a flaw in her programming, or done under duress.

The fact that any fertile egg is a potential queen suggests a perfect biological democracy within the hive, each egg being the equal of all others, assuming that an egg selected to become a queen is chosen at random. But that may be a romantic notion with no basis in fact, and bees have an elitist or selective criterion unknown to us. Certainly they have the highest standards for their young. Any worker or drone born with the slightest imperfection is destroyed at once. However, in their

enthusiasm (1939?)

David Irving
The War Path

Fifty

1939 241

for treating this condition, called "Mutaflor", an emulsion of a certain strain of *coli communis bacillus* which had the property of colonizing the intestinal tract. "I was given these coli capsules and large quantities of vitamins and extracts of heart and liver," Hitler recounted. He began to feel better. Morell moved in to the Berghof. "After about six months," said Hitler, "the eczema had gone and after nine months I was completely well again." In September 1937, Morell was an honoured guest at the Party rally: Hitler could wear boots again.

Immediately the jealous rumours against Morell began. People said he had never qualified, and that was why he did not claim to be a "Facharzt," a specialist. His technique was anything but antiseptic. He used one cloth to mop the table and to bind an arm after an injection; he used the same needle twice on successive patients without cleaning it; he injected Hitler daily from ampoules unmarked by any kind of label. He began treating Hitler with medicines that he had devised himself and was manufacturing in one of his pharmaceutical companies. Hitler paid him an annual retainer of 36,000 Reichsmarks—not much, considering his previous income had been four times as high—enabling Morell to purchase properties in the largely Jewish coastal resort of Heringsdorf on the Baltic, and to equip a flamboyant surgery in Berlin's West End, in the best part of Kurfürstendamm. Hitler's coterie, however, also rushed to become Morell's patients—Funk, Ley, Speer, Goebbels, Göring, the Ribbentrops, all Hitler's older adjutants, his generals like Kleist, Jodl and Heusinger, and famous theatre names like Richard Tauber and O. E. Hasse too. Morell was the back door to Hitler, people believed. He was too witless to intrigue, but the hostility this situation aroused is easily conceived. The younger adjutants made life uncomfortable for him—Morell was left out of their birthday greeting lists and other invitations. Their wives refused to let him touch them.

It is true that Morell's personal habits were revolting, but Hitler ignored them: this was characteristic of him. Morell rarely washed and was in that sense unapproachable. Hitler defended him thus: "I don't retain Morell to sniff at him, but to keep me fit." His eating habits were audible and unpleasant. In July 1939 he was among the guests at Frau Winifred Wagner's house at Bayreuth. When Hitler inquired of Verena, his favourite among the Wagner girls, why she was not eating she pointed to the disturbing spectacle of the fat doctor busily and noisily devouring a whole orange with both hands, sucking its contents through a small window that he had scooped out of its peel.

1939 on

Morell was the first doctor that Hitler allowed to give him a complete physical examination. As he described it, the Führer's medical history was not unusual. His tonsils had been removed, though he had no recollection of any operation; as a child he had displayed a pulmonary apical pathology, that had disappeared in later years. Morell noticed a scar on Hitler's left thigh, caused by wartime shrapnel. During the 1923 putsch, the dying Scheubner-Richter had pulled Hitler down, resulting in a fracture of Hitler's left shoulder-blade (so that for many years now Hitler had been unable to abduct or rotate his upper left arm more than a limited amount).

In 1938 and 1939, Hitler was unquestionably at the peak of his health. He looked younger than fifty. Major physical exertions like the Birthday Parade were child's play to him. He could still laugh heartily, and was outwardly a very healthy man despite a few private eccentricities like his extreme vegetarianism. The laboratory that periodically ran checks for Morell on the contents of "Patient A's" stomach expressed discreet surprise that these consisted solely of vegetable fibres. A typical Berghof menu for Hitler in the summer of 1937 was this: "Barley soup followed by semolina noodles and an egg and green salad."

From Morell's own records, it is clear that most of his medicines were administered by hypodermic syringe, whether his patients suffered from coughs or cancer. They often felt better afterwards: but Morell was usually just giving shots of harmless dextrose, hormones or vitamins that had very little long-term benefit. He also administered liberal quantities of sulphonamide drugs to treat even the common cold—effective enough, but an irresponsible use of a drug to which the human body rapidly becomes resistant. Hitler certainly was impressed. "Without Morell," he once said, "I would not be able to achieve half as much. I would never be able to endure the mental and physical burden." Three to six Morell-type injections a day soon stopped Hitler's colds almost before they started. The daily injections of 10 cc of glucose and of Morell's own proprietary compound, Vitamultin, containing virtually every vitamin from A to K—it consisted of ascorbic acid, calcium, nicotinic acid amine, and either caffeine or cocoa as a sweetener—left Hitler with a kind of euphoria: and soon Morell was treating Hitler with his "pep" shots of glucose before major speeches and parades. In this way the body's normal built-in powers of resistance were being replaced by injected substitutes—not narcotics, but just as habit-forming.

In fact, Hitler's stomach spasms returned despite the Mutaflor treatment. Morell then prescribed intramuscular injections of "Pro-

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gynon", a preparation with benzoic acid and dihydro-follicle hormone which tends to prevent spasm of the gastric walls. He also administered "Luizym" enzyme tablets, to make Hitler's vegetable food intake more digestible. From 1938 to 1940 he also occasionally injected 3 cc of "Glyconorm"—the product of another of his associated factories, Nordmark Werke in Hamburg, containing metabolic ferments, vitamins and amino acids. Yet after a while the stomach cramps returned. In 1939, Morell put Hitler on a course of "Euflat" pills that was to last five years, and injections of "Eukodal" and "Eupaverinum".

A modern expert scanning Morell's treatment notes has suggested he was "polypragmatic"—keen to dose Hitler with a bit of everything: not enough to do much harm, but not enough to do much good. Hitler trusted him, and so did most of his staff. In a prison camp in 1945, Brandt rebuked him: "Your behaviour has brought disgrace on the entire medical profession!" Yet Morell cured Goebels of a skin disease where twenty-two leading dermatologists had failed. And when Rudolf Hess flew to Scotland in 1941, it was Morell's little vitamin pills and energy tablets that he had packed in his luggage. Morell's patient, Hitler, was to outlive both Neville Chamberlain and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

It is to the actions of Chamberlain and Roosevelt in April 1939 that we now return, as—late that month—Europe took another lurch towards war. For domestic political reasons, Chamberlain decided to reintroduce National Service and announced this on the twenty-sixth. Henderson had just returned to Berlin from London, where a strident British press campaign was beginning. He informed the Foreign Office on 25 April—an unpublished telegram, intercepted however by the FA for Hitler—that this rendered his position very unpleasant: "The press is making life very difficult for me." Next day's FA wire-taps showed that the Foreign Office told him to give the Nazi government advance warning of Chamberlain's conscription announcement—Hitler too was due to speak at the Reichstag shortly—and to reassure it that National Service was not to be construed as directed against Germany.

Hitler's speech on 28 April was primarily a diatribe against Roosevelt, however. Hitherto he had felt able to ignore the President's forays into European politics. At the time of Munich, Roosevelt had sent him an open telegram: Neurath took it from Wiedemann's hands and pocketed it with the words, "What business does Roosevelt have poking his nose in here?" That was Hitler's attitude too. He

blamed Roosevelt's anti-Reich stance on Jewish influences. The US chargé d'affaires in Budapest had recently advised the new foreign minister there, Count Csáky, that world war was certain in 1939; and on 16 January, Csáky had repeated this to Ribbentrop and quoted the American's remark: "That's why the Americans are exploiting the Jewish issue from Canada right down to the tip of South America."

Hitler believed that the isolationists were still the stronger force in the United States. Fritz Todt had sent to Hewel, for example, a recent letter from a Harvard professor, Arthur Casagrande, reporting, "Roosevelt's attitude to Germany is strongly criticized here among my many acquaintances. There is no doubt the vast majority of Americans are against this meddling in European affairs . . . Roosevelt is trying to distract public attention from his own domestic failures." All this was what Hitler wanted to hear.

Then, in April 1939, Hitler was the bemused recipient of yet another open letter from Roosevelt, appealing to him to give public assurances that he would not attack any of thirty-one specified countries. This unorthodox diplomacy caused embarrassment in London; and wiretaps on the US embassy in Berlin revealed that staff there regarded it as a gaffe. Ribbentrop's staff asked each of the thirty-one countries (except Poland, Russia, Britain and France) whether they felt threatened by Nazi Germany—all replied No (although some negatives were obliquely phrased). Hitler made his reply in his Reichstag speech on the twenty-eighth. The Kroll Opera-house rocked with laughter as he added sardonically his own personal assurance that the Reich was not planning to invade the USA either. A copy of the speech was handed in at the US embassy, betokening Hitler's only reply. The FA wiretaps noted that US embassy staff conceded the Führer had won "the match".

In the same Reichstag speech—delivered as usual without Ribbentrop's prior approval—Hitler revoked the 1934 non-aggression pact with Poland and the 1935 naval agreement with Britain too. Again he notably abstained from attacking the USSR. In private, he justified his stiffer attitude to Britain by the secret documents now found in Prague archives. "One day we'll publish them to all the world, to prove Britain's dishonesty," Bodenschatz told a French diplomat. "All we're asking for is our right to live, and we're not going to let a country that owns three-fifths of the earth deny us this elementary right." But informed Germans still doubted that there would be war. Baron von Weizsäcker commented in one letter on 29 April, "Evidently we are not going to escape a degree of drama. But

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7, he said: "They wanted
a wall between us and
accepted it because it cor-

responded to our needs and our interests, but could
they have been so deluded as to believe that it was
not a real wall but . . . a grid through which the
Nationalist stream would find its way?" Or, tem-
porizing still more, in May 1868:

"We all carry national unity in our hearts, but
for the prudent politician necessity takes prece-
dence over desirability, that is, first the comple-
tion of the building and then its expansion. If
Germany were to achieve its national goal still in
the nineteenth century I would consider it some-
thing great, and if it occurred in ten or even five
years, it would be something extraordinary, an un-
expected gift by the grace of God."

Finally, there is the perhaps most frequently
quoted of Bismarck's admonitions to the German
Nationalists, in an executive order to the North
German ambassador in Munich of February 26,
1869: "That German unity could be promoted by
force I think is probable. But it is an entirely dif-
ferent matter to precipitate a powerful catastro-
phe, and the responsibility for choosing its time.
The arbitrary intervention into the evolution of
history based solely on subjective factors invari-
ably results in the plucking of unripe fruit, and
that German unity at this time is no ripe fruit is
in my opinion obvious."

These words clearly contradict the assertion
that Bismarck conducted the war of 1870 and the
war of 1866 in order to complete the process of
German unification and to turn the North German

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36-39

ment also was under the aegis of a state within the state, not under Hitler's personal auspices. It was largely the domain of Hjalmar Schacht, a former Democratic party politician. At first he was head of the State Bank, and later he became the chief of Hitler's Economic Ministry. Schacht stimulated the economy through rigidly compartmentalized domestic economic measures—through credits without immediately felt inflationary consequences. The years from 1936 to 1939 were a time of unimagined well-being in which both sides, business and labor, were prospering—very different from the crisis days of Brüning. One must not underestimate the effects of the economy on the political climate. In those Hitler years the weather was benign.

The second big success Hitler scored in those years was his decision to rearm. It helped him overcome any misgivings the Reichswehr might still have harbored. Nor should one underestimate the professional and personal benefits rearmament brought to the officers' corps of the old Reichswehr. In the new big army promotions proliferated: lieutenants became colonels, colonels generals, generals field marshals. In short, everybody was doing well, not only materially but professionally. They were finally again allowed to show what they could do; they were part of an expanding military apparatus. Under these circumstances it would be foolish to go into opposition; it was easier to swallow all sorts of

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1938-1945

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a public partially explains their failure
to act, and I believe even more valid,
is the fact that even if they had known
they should have done something about it under
the circumstances that prevailed in the second half of

whether or not the Germans knew about the
murder of the Jews is a question that can be
asked only on an individual basis. Of course a
person could be expected to see it
passed through. Was it believed? I don't
know. In a long time it also was not believed
in Germany, the horror of it all went be-
yond the limits of the human imagination. The
Germans themselves did not believe that any-
thing of that kind could happen, or more of them
tried to flee after 1938.

The policy of the German Reich cannot ignore
the extermination of the Jews and their program-
matization. It happened, and it is an in-
alienable part of the history of Germany. Yet on
the other hand, it cannot be put into the same
category as other aspects of that history which,
like the rest in the Führer state, were rooted
in the very nature and nature of the German Reich.
Something like a Führer state would
not come into being even without Hit-
ler. It probably would have been another
dictator without Hitler. But not the murder of
the Jews.

1939

9

World War II

THE WAR HITLER IGNITED
on September 1, 1939, was not the war he had
visualized and planned. The lesson he had learned
from World War I was that the war in the East
against Russia had been won by Germany. Because
Russia turned out to be weaker than anticipated,
it was forced to sign a dictated peace, and so by
the end of the war a great deal of Russian land
ended up in German hands. Hitler was convinced
that he would be able to duplicate this outcome.

1933-38, 1935

Mein Kampf: "It seems as though
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agreed to limit the German fleet
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considering that Germany had

1937, 1939

practically no fleet to speak of. But perhaps Hitler
signed this agreement in good faith. He did not
want a war with England or to challenge England.
He wanted England to stand by and watch Ger-
many conquer Bolshevik Russia and make it into
a German sphere of influence. Hitler sent Ribben-
trop on a mission to London with instructions to
come back with a signed agreement.

England, however, did not want any agree-
ment with Germany, nor was it ready to accede
to Germany's conquest and subjugation of Russia.
But it was willing to make major concessions if
Germany would accept the status quo on the con-
tinent, that is, if Germany agreed to spare France
and leave Russia alone.

The basic issue in the German-English ne-
gotiations of 1937 and 1939 was Germany's war
against Russia. England sought to prevent such a
war, not out of affection for the Soviet Union—
on the contrary, Russian-British relations were
quite bad—but because it realized that a German
conquest of the Soviet Union would make Ger-
many, even without a strong navy, far more pow-
erful than England and France. England hoped to
dissuade Germany from its projected war of con-
quest in the East and refused to give Germany the
free hand in the East that Ribbentrop openly de-
manded in Hitler's name. England's response to
Ribbentrop's proposal was a policy that came to
be known as appeasement.

England proposed to use its influence to help

1937, 1939

Germany win major concessions, including control over the German-speaking regions Hitler wanted to integrate into the Reich: Austria, the border regions of Czechoslovakia, and probably Danzig as well. In return, Germany was to commit itself to working together with England and France, particularly with England, to preserve the peace in Europe.

Thus between 1937 and 1939 two conflicting concepts met head-on: Hitler's, which visualized a benevolently neutral England standing by and watching Germany's conquest of the East, and Britain's, which hoped that a satiated, appeased Germany would become part of a peaceful Europe.

England's motives were not purely altruistic. Peace was of overriding importance to England. In case of a European war, England was sure to be drawn in. That would expose the fragility of Britain's worldwide colonial empire—in eastern Asia, in the Mediterranean, in the Near East—for England did not feel strong enough to defend its overseas empire against the other two aggressive revisionist powers, Japan and Italy.

One of the most interesting aspects of this diplomatic balancing act between Germany and England was the fact that initially only Germany stood to gain from it, for it would have allowed Germany to expand and regain its power position on the continent. With the help of the Western powers Hitler could have realized the Central European concept of World War I and averted a sec-

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ond world war. However, that was not enough for
him.

The first head-on clash in the contest between
these two opposing concepts was the Sudeten cri-
sis of 1939; at issue were the ethnic-German
'border regions of Czechoslovakia. It is generally
assumed that this crisis ended in a complete and
uncontested victory for Hitler. Even though En-
gland and France had been instrumental in the
creation of Czechoslovakia after World War I, and
even though France still had a pact with Czech-
oslovakia, the Western powers narrowly averted
war by handing over the Sudetenland to Hitler at
a hurriedly convened summit meeting at Munich.

To repeat: This looked like Hitler's greatest
triumph. And after Munich the military's oppo-
sition to Hitler, which had resurfaced during this
crisis, collapsed completely. Yet strangely enough
Hitler did not see the prize he won at Munich as
a victory; he would have preferred a quick war
against Czechoslovakia. What triumphed in Mu-
nich was not so much Hitler's planning as Brit-
ain's policy of appeasement. When the British
Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returned to
London from Munich, he proclaimed that the con-
ference had brought "peace in our time."

The English undoubtedly figured that the
countries of southeastern Europe would seek an
accommodation with Hitler, and that Hitler
would need anywhere from five to ten years to
organize the spheres of interest more or less

1839

handed to him on a platter. During that time, they reasoned, Hitler would not be able to plan any major campaigns, leaving the West time to rearm in peace and reestablish military parity with Germany. But Hitler did not take the time. He adhered to his Russian plan, convinced that he could execute it without England, and if necessary even against England. After Munich he tended to be somewhat contemptuous of England. That brought him to the crisis of 1939.

All in all, 1939 began rather calmly. In England there was the feeling that appeasement had worked. But Hitler was not interested in organizing eastern and southeastern Central Europe under German aegis. If he had any plans at all for that region it was to win the support of some of the neighboring countries for his planned war against Russia, and he focused his sights on the Poles.

*

Poland, being situated between Germany and Russia, threatened to obstruct Hitler's plans. For how could he launch a war against Russia in the absence of a joint German-Russian military border somewhere along the line? From the German perspective that border ideally ought to be as far to the east as possible. In other words, it seemed advisable to recruit Poland for the campaign against Russia. In return, if Poland agreed to conclude a twenty-five-year pact with Germany, to cede Danzig to Germany, and to pledge its active cooperation in a future German war against the Soviet

* *Conversations²²² between Hitler and Himmler about Germany's future in Russia*

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and to pledge its active cooper-
German war against the Soviet

1939

Union, Germany was ready to give Poland a part
of the Ukraine.

Poland refused, and it was this refusal rather
than the question of Danzig that led Hitler to
change his plans. If Poland could not be induced
to enter into an agreement with him, then he
would simply have to overrun and occupy it. The
planned war against Russia would have to be put
off until after the war against Poland—a war that
threatened to involve him in a war against England
as well, for in the meantime Hitler's actions had
also brought about a change in England's position.

In addition to giving Hitler the Sudetenland,
the agreement reached at Munich also stipu-
lated—and from the British perspective this was
probably the most important provision—that Ger-
many would not undertake any foreign ventures
without prior consultation with England. That
rankled Hitler. He wanted a free hand in the East.
And so, defying England, he decided to occupy
rump Czechoslovakia and divide it up without
prior notice to England. Bohemia-Moravia became
a "Reich protectorate," and Slovakia a vassal state.
It was a gratuitous provocation, because rump
Czechoslovakia was putty in Hitler's hands any-
way. It seems Hitler was avenging Munich, or at
least that portion of the agreement he felt to be a
defeat for himself and a victory for England.

The move into Czechoslovakia in March 1939
alarmed England. The Chamberlain government
still did not give up on the policy of appeasement,

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1939

but it changed its methods. Up to then they had tried to lure Hitler with promises and concessions; ~~now they also resorted to threats.~~ ^{England} If Hitler continued his autocratic eastward expansion, he was told, he would find England blocking his way. To underscore this threat, Britain at the end of March 1939, after Poland turned down Hitler's invitation to join him in an anti-Russian alliance, announced that it would help preserve Poland's independence.

Britain's guarantee changed the picture. Hitler himself summed it up in his message of August 11, 1939, three weeks before the outbreak of the war, when he told Karl J. Burckhardt, the League of Nations commissar in Danzig: "Everything I do is directed against Russia. If the West is too stupid and too blind to see this I shall be forced to reach an understanding with Russia and fight the West, and then, once the West is defeated, turn against the Soviet Union with all the power at my command."

These words hold the key for the outbreak of World War II. This was Hitler's new improvised program, and it was the plan he followed in the first two years of the war. Hitler made an agreement with the Soviet Union, and together with the Soviet Union he turned against Poland; then, with the Soviet Union covering his rear, he turned against the West. Only after that, as promised, did he turn against the Soviet Union "with all the power at [his] command."

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1939

But why did the Soviet Union go along with this plan? Stalin must have been aware of Hitler's ultimate designs on the Soviet Union, and Hitler did nothing to make him think otherwise. Since 1936 he had concluded a series of anti-Comintern pacts with a number of countries—Japan, Italy, and also some smaller ones. These pacts were actually anti-Soviet alliances with secret clauses pledging neutrality in case of a German war against the Soviet Union.

In 1939 Stalin saw a chance for averting such a war by tossing the ball to the West. He thought to keep Hitler from going to war against the Soviet Union for as long as possible by involving Germany in a war with England and France. Under these circumstances Stalin was more than willing to make an arrangement with Hitler to divide East Europe between the Soviet Union and Germany.

On August 23, 1939, Germany and the Soviet Union concluded a nonaggression pact. It contained secret provisions to the effect that in case of a war against Poland, the Soviet Union would get back the parts of eastern Poland it had ceded to Poland in 1921, and furthermore that it would be given control over the Baltic border states and Finland. Similar and somewhat vague conditions were also agreed upon with regard to southeast Europe.

That is how the war ignited by Hitler began on September 1, 1939. A war with Poland, and consequently also with France and England, and

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he came back to this, not publicly, but in secret meetings with his generals. He told them that he was like the spider in his web waiting for a falling-out between the West and the Soviet Union. The only thing wrong with this picture was that he was not the spider but the fly. He failed to understand that the disagreements over the postwar order and the ideological differences between the West and the Russians would not surface, let alone lead to an armed clash, as long as a Germany at war with both of them acted as a buffer. Before the possibility of a third world war could arise, Germany had to be defeated and occupied, the two big power blocs had to meet and confront each other in the heart of Germany. Every delay in this process kept the differences between the two blocs from erupting. As long as Germany stayed in the war, their conflict was bound to remain latent. Thus Germany's continued resistance prevented the very thing Hitler hoped for. His calculation about a possible disintegration of the East-West alliance, if indeed there was one, was a miscalculation. We have no proof that Hitler actually continued to believe in final victory up to the very end. His reasons for continuing the war to the last man might have been psychological rather than political.

1939 There was something mock-heroic about Hitler. According to fairly reliable sources, Göring allegedly told him in August 1939, "Let's stop this

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gamble," to which Hitler replied, "I've been gambling all my life." Whether or not he actually said it, it was the truth. He was a man who had to go for broke. If he could not make Germany into the world power then he was prepared to set off the greatest conflagration in German history. There are indications that at the end Hitler consciously desired that catastrophe. — *thinks of edgewise of war*

At the end of 1941, when the first signs that Germany might be facing defeat appeared, Hitler reportedly told a foreign diplomat: "If the German people should no longer be strong enough and determined enough to sacrifice their blood for their survival then let them perish and be destroyed by another, greater power. I will shed no tears for the German people." A truly unique admission from the lips of a German statesman. 1941

At the end of the war, to the horror of many of his comrades, Hitler did indeed try to turn Germany's military defeat into the annihilation of the German people.

There exists a document, the so-called Nero Directive of March 18 and 19, 1945, in which Hitler ordered all still remaining resources of the Reich, even those vital to the survival of the population, to be destroyed rather than allow them to fall into the hands of the enemy. If Hitler could not be the architect of Germany's greatest victory then at least he could be the architect of its destruction. This order, which epitomizes Hitler's

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lead the country—though divided and without a strong political
hand—in a war that was waged not as a means of politics, but rather
with politics being made to serve as handmaiden of war. The reader
should have a clear picture of this transformation before we go on
to consider in greater detail Hitler's influence on the war, on the
campaigns, and on the individual battles. Otherwise we cannot
confront the question that has been posed again and again: How
was it possible for the German military leaders and professionals
to permit a layman and former corporal of the First World War
to dictate to them the prescription for victory and defeat? Those
who pose this question have not yet adequately understood what
strategy in the modern sense is all about.

I believe it is necessary to define the concept in the following
terms: Strategy is the supreme leadership activity in warfare. It
comprehends foreign and domestic policy, military operations and
economic mobilization, propaganda and popular leadership, and
must harmonize these vital aspects of the war effort in terms of the
purposes and the political goal of the war. Only when the concept
of strategy is understood in such terms is it clear that no general but
only a statesman can be a strategist, though this does not preclude
the possibility that both functions may be united in one person, as
was the case in China.

Hitler was a statesman. He was a dictator. He was Supreme
Commander of the Wehrmacht and since 1941 Commander-in-
Chief of the Army as well. He had unleashed the war, and it was up
to him and no one else to lead it. He did in fact lead the war. It was
Hitler who gave the order in the spring of 1939 to prepare military
plans for the attack on Poland. No soldier could know whether the
attack would take place, whether it would be provoked or un-
provoked, a war of aggression or of defense; for even a politically
defensive war could be waged by Germany—given its central posi-
tion and the constant prospect of a two-front war—only as a military
offensive. When the propaganda machine began to run and mobiliza-
tion on the Polish border was ordered, all the leading soldiers were
indeed quite clear about the operational questions confronting
them, but the political, the strategic remained for them a veiled
secret. Had Hitler himself not implied and even stated in his ad-

dresses that he confidently expected to reach a settlement with the West? Was the mobilization backed by a serious determination to attack Poland, or was it only a means of exerting pressure for negotiation, as had been the case in 1938 with Czechoslovakia? Was this hope not confirmed when, on August 26, 1939, the ordered attack was halted? The details of the struggle of the Great Powers to preserve the peace were unknown to the Commanders-in-Chief and their staffs, with the exception of Göring.

If there is anything that clearly demonstrates the revolutionary character of Hitler's method of leadership, it is that he did not concede to his military working staff, the OKW, and within it, the Operations Staff, the role of strategic adviser. All attempts I undertook in this direction failed. Hitler was willing to have a working staff that translated his decisions into orders which he would then issue as Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, but nothing more. The fact that even men like Frederick the Great would have their own thoughts and decisions tested and re-examined against the often contrary ideas of their generals made no difference to Hitler, who resented any form of counsel regarding the major decisions of the war. He did not care to hear any other points of view; if they were even hinted at he would break into short-tempered fits of enraged agitation. Remarkable—and, for soldiers, incomprehensible—conflicts developed out of Hitler's almost mystical conviction of his own infallibility as leader of the nation and of the war. To reflect individually on the dozen or more decisions that determined the course of the war would be psychologically and historically tempting, but that cannot be the purpose of this sketch. The man who succeeded in occupying Norway before the very eyes of the British Fleet with its maritime supremacy, and who with numerically inferior forces brought down the feared military power of France like a house of cards in a campaign of forty days, was no longer willing, after these successes, to listen to military advisers who had previously warned him against such overextensions of his military power. From that time on he required of them nothing more than the technical support necessary to implement his decisions, and the smooth functioning of the military organization to carry them out.

Quite apart from Hitler's arbitrarily dictatorial methods, there is

the question of the posing his individual decisions without unanimous agreement every war and under a restless spirit would find before the eyes of his tangible or threatening the occupation of Norway if England had been to block the sole reliable perceived first by the rest of the world had not conceived until in January 1940 daring of solutions, on the threatening intention

Let us leave further, but time in the future will come upon the decision Chief of the Army [Gerd von Rundstedt] to do it. To remain on the Western Front, letting the way to peace, which I particularly the inadequate task. Not all leading was the prevailing opinion. Hitler ordered the attack also through Holland, one automatically, but he decided to attack if all generals all objected; to against it. But it did not harder than Hitler, der weather. It was necessary 1940, was correctly at Maubeuge toward Abb thought of a broad encirclement Plan] by initially

German cities were to be kept deliberately at a low level of culture, and the Russian cities which already existed were not to be improved, "not to mention their being beautified." The trade in birth-control devices was to be encouraged in every possible way in order to cut back the expansion of the native population. Considering their prolificacy, "it would be perfectly all right with us for the women and girls there to have as many abortions as possible." To try to set up a public health organization along German lines in the occupied Eastern territories "would be sheer madness," and vaccinations and other preventive measures were not even in question. As a matter of fact, even the desire for such measures should be suppressed. "One should go right ahead and spread the superstition among them that inoculations and the like are very dangerous." Even dental care would be limited.

A parallel chain of thought led Hitler to the conclusion that the Eastern populations should not be permitted to enjoy advanced schooling. Instruction would be limited to fundamentals such as traffic signs, the acquisition of a limited familiarity with the German language, and sufficient geography to know that Berlin is the capital of the Reich. "Instruction in arithmetic and the like would be superfluous." For this reason, Hitler noted, one should "above all not set German schoolmasters loose in the Eastern territories." It need hardly be added that the inhabitants would have neither their own government nor armed forces.

Hitler's talk about his plans for the East was more than idle chatter, for what he envisioned corresponded to the measures which had already been initiated in the so-called *Generalgouvernement*, the portion of Poland not directly annexed by Germany or the Soviet Union, a program that was being further refined at the time of the *Table Conversations*.

As early as October 18, 1939, General Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the Army, made the following notes in his diary after he had been briefed on Hitler's plans for Poland: "We do not want to restore Poland. . . . Base for future German expansion, Poland to supply its own [local] administration. It is not to become a model state according to German conception. Prevent Polish intelligentsia developing itself into a new leadership class. Lower

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standard of living to be maintained. Cheap slaves. All the rabble
has to be cleared out of the German area. Administration of Poland
shall unite in itself all command authority except military. Only one
command authority—the Governor General. Creation of total dis-
organization. No coordination with Reich authorities! The Reich is
to enable the Governor General to complete this work of the devil.
Military requirements: highways—railroads. Garrisons like fort-
resses of Teutonic Knights along the security line or forwards."

The cultural achievements of Hitler's viceroy in Poland, Dr. Hans
Frank, were recently summarized in a stark and factual account:

"The possession of a radio receiver was punished with death.
Permitted and encouraged were a few cultural products of demon-
strably inferior value. . . . In the few public libraries that were made
accessible, all works on geography, including maps and atlases, were
taken away, as well as all books in English or French regardless of
their content and all dictionaries. Also removed from the shelves
[except possibly at the State Library in Cracow] were most classical
and Polish literary, historical, philosophical, and ideological works.
Only a few politically collaborating Polish theaters were re-opened,
to present superficial entertainment: sex skits, moralistic pieces from
the nineteenth century, and revues. Drama, opera, and the like were
forbidden. In the concert halls, classical music, folk songs, and na-
tional songs were banned. The music of Chopin stood at the top of
the blacklist. Even the musical selections in the coffee houses had
to be approved. Every form of sport was prohibited. . . . Mandatory
deliveries by the Polish farmers and scrap metal collections in the
Polish schools were paid for with brandy. Alcoholism and abortion
were encouraged in accordance with official policy directives."

The feasibility of Hitler's plans for the Russian areas, leaving aside
all ethical considerations, confronts us with a maze of questions
which none of his table companions—whether out of blindness or
cowardice—knew how to pose. How would it be possible to reduce
millions of persons to illiteracy, to eradicate their sense of historical
tradition, and to degrade them to a completely servile status? How
could the Germans—even if tens and hundreds of thousands were
prepared to occupy and guard these outer areas—assert themselves
in the long run against a population larger than all the German-

speaking peoples together? By way of analogy, Hitler and his followers cited India with its 400 million inhabitants held in check by sixty thousand British. But this comparison was based on a false conception of Britain's relationship to the subcontinent, demonstrated by her postwar understanding with India and Pakistan. Even the feasibility of setting up a similar arrangement in the Ukraine would have had to be recognized as being out of the question had Hitler listened to experts on Eastern affairs. His picture of Russia as a land inhabited by servile peasants accustomed to the lash and unable to think far beyond eating and drinking was totally distorted and, since the emancipation in the nineteenth century, not to mention the Russian Revolution, no longer relevant.

To think like Hitler, one would have to be possessed of that ambivalent love-hate (*Hassliebe*) attitude toward England characteristic of so many Germans in the nineteenth century. One would have to be a European whose imagination was still fired by the example of America sweeping across the continent to the Pacific in its struggle against the Mexicans and the Indians; who still believed, in Kipling's sense, in "the white man's burden" of spreading European culture, and who had no notion whatsoever of the changes which had taken place in Russia since Gogol, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky.

In reality there were clear signs after the First World War that the time was past when other continents would be dominated by Europe. As early as 1916, the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League had joined forces at Lucknow, brought together by the desire to free India from the British yoke. In 1926, England attempted to head off the self-determination of segments of the Commonwealth with the "Balfour Formula," which conceded the dominions autonomous equality. In 1933, the United States promised the Philippines independence. One could go on and on. It was not necessary to be particularly perceptive to recognize that the age of colonial domination, when one people might rule over another, was coming to an end. Hitler's plans for the East reveal that he had no conception of the new realities which had been taking shape since the end of the First World War beyond the frontiers of the Reich, and that his dreams of territorial expansion were still completely dominated by nineteenth-century conceptions.

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eye fixed on this final goal finds the right way. A people that is too timid, or no longer possesses the courage or the strength, to set itself this goal enters upon the second way, that of renunciation and self-surrender ending in extinction."⁴² He went after the deal, or double-deal, with England neither forthrightly nor beguilingly when the time came, but in the self-defeating Wilhelminian way—by nuisance threats, or pressure without leverage, in the naval, maritime, and colonial spheres.⁴³ He did enlarge his intended offer in the latter 1930s to a guarantee of the British Empire against non-German threats. But he did so while he was already "smashing" the peace settlement of 1918–1919 in central Europe by way of bringing Germany up to his planned starting point for his expansionist push.⁴⁴ That smashing destroyed the worth of a German guarantee many times over before he even brought out the enlarged offer, which "had no chance of being accepted" anyhow—and which he brought out only in a fit of last-minute nervousness on 25 August 1939 as Britain stood by its guarantee of Poland despite his startling conclusion of a pact with Stalin two days earlier.⁴⁵

Before this fit he had maneuvered himself, since 1933, through a devaluation of the proposed British entente into an acceptance of the risk and finally even of the desirability of forcibly disinteresting Britain from continental involvement.⁴⁶ Nominally he was thereby only revising the first installment of his counteredition of World War I. Actually he had begun scrapping his installment plan itself—his winning combination. As his appointed adversaries began rearming, he forced events with the idea—Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg's of the years before World War I—that if a general war was inevitable, then the sooner the better.⁴⁷ On the eve of his Polish campaign he concealed his nervousness about England to tell his entourage: "This time the mistake of 1914 will be avoided."⁴⁸ After the British ultimatum to evacuate Poland was read to him, he sat petrified a while, then turned upon his muddled foreign minister, demanding: "What now?"⁴⁹ He had frequently cited the 1914 precedent himself with a sneer at Bethmann Hollweg: "On the morning of 3 August [1914] he knows for sure that England will not declare war on us."⁵⁰

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come the second time around was also the means whereby that hopelessness was driven home with gruesome finality.¹⁰⁶ But the most conspicuous liberty taken with the bygone war as Hitler refought it for Germany was just this tendency to carry it to a full finish—to fashion “a new war a hundred times more dreadful and cruel that will complete what the old one started.”¹⁰⁷ In the process, the defeat was shown to be Germany's due—materially in that every potential scapegoat was savagely sacrificed in advance,¹⁰⁸ and morally in that every crime charged and overcharged to Wilhelmian Germany by the victors of 1918 was committed and overcommitted by Hitlerian Germany: authoritarianism, militarism, planned aggression, deceitfulness, brutality in conquest, “acts of inhumanity, spoliation, and desolation” (thus Wilson in October 1918).¹⁰⁹ And the defeat was made total, final, indisputable, in a foregone conclusion corresponding to Hitler's impassioned slogan: “Never again a November 1918!”¹¹⁰

The Hitlerian replay remained just that through all these variations on the original. Hitler's post-Putsch title to leadership, his program for that replay, was on the surface a program for guarding against one. Thus he clung to that program even after September 1939—unrealistically until the invasion of Russia, then downright absurdly.¹¹¹ The replay was the great hazard he was seemingly set on avoiding, the dread fate that is conjured up in the process of being warded off and with a feeling that every move that way is forced.¹¹² This is precisely the traumatic syndrome. The former League of Nations High Commissioner in Danzig, Carl J. Burckhardt, caught its mood in a reflection on his futile efforts to mediate between the western powers and Hitler in August 1939: “The German word ‘fate’ [Verhängnis] is a very expressive word. It conveys the idea of a chain reaction which, once set off, can no longer be halted. Paradoxically, the mechanical process under way worked through Hitler's decisions. Running its course outside of his will, it became a seeming act of that will itself. Remarkable was his fixed vision—the set goals of his dream. Quite incomprehensibly, he always announced straight off what after many detours, reverses, and false departures he then did actually wind up doing. And it is not far out to

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shortly thereafter as foreign minister, saw England as the mortal enemy.⁸² Propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels was at heart for an understanding with the Soviets against the West—openly so at the start and finish of his Nazi career.⁸³ Farther afield, SS chief Heinrich Himmler drifted from Ribbentrop's side to undercover advances toward America in 1944–1945.⁸⁴ Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg saw the colonization of Europe as the terminal stage of German expansion.⁸⁵ Of Hitler's collaborators however fanatical, one at most, financier Hjalmar Schacht, grasped his foreign program with full clarity.⁸⁶ And none of them heeded it except Hess when Hess went mad. Hitler's second in command of the Party, Rudolf Hess, crossed the Channel in the eleventh hour before Barbarossa to negotiate on Hitler's terms of guaranteeing the British Empire in return for a free hand in continental Europe, whereupon Hitler repudiated him in an animal rage.⁸⁷ Hess's case dramatizes the point that Hitler's program was not meant for implementation. It was a reworking of World War I that Hitler made it his business to prove unworkable. The obsolete Wilhelmian language of world power or ruin⁸⁸ was respo-ken in Hitler's raucous accents out of the national trauma of 1918. At that aural frequency, "living space" signified the eastern conquest of 1917–1918 and stirred associated visions of German continental sufficiency and invulnerability in the unequal struggle for equality with England—of a barbed-wired German continental *Grossraum*. The program sounded at that pitch "did not penetrate the consciousness of the German public";⁸⁹ it penetrated deeper.

It is true too—indeed it is crucial—that Hitler took to mincing his public words about living space soon after the Nazis' great leap forward in the national elections of 14 September 1930.⁹⁰ *Mein Kampf* remained in full force nonetheless and was sold ever harder. Its expansionism came across sufficiently for the joke to be whispered around Germany, following the German-Soviet Pact, that Hitler gave Molotov a copy with deletions in his own hand.⁹¹ Hitler did also re-echo his old cries for feeding ground sparingly, but tellingly, after September 1930. On 8 November 1930 he spoke of the Germans' need to expand their "liv-

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Semitism once they came into full action together:⁶⁰ his rhetorical reversal of means and end was unreversed in practice. Ostensibly, however, to increase German power was all along the objective that Hitler pursued in eliminating Jewish influence and then Jewry itself from Germany. Either way, the two tracks ran wide apart in his mental landscape. On the Jewish track it was axiomatic that the Jews would, and then did, cause a new world war. But on the German track that war was expressly, even ostentatiously, his. His it was par excellence in his briefing sessions with political and military aides. Hardly had he prophesied on 30 January 1939 that a new war begun by Jewry would mean the end of Jewry in Europe⁶¹ when he told a gathering of army commanders that he must go to war soon because he was aging and "the others" were arming.⁶² Here for once his anti-Semitism fronted for his expansionism.

Hitler did not scrap his old means-end formula when he launched Barbarossa. Nonetheless Barbarossa signaled an ascendancy of his ideological style, recessive until then, over his power-political style, previously dominant.⁶³ His style in this German line was ever Machiavellian and in his own line fanatical.⁶⁴ True, before 1941 he imposed on his racist policy a semblance of pragmatism backed by cunning. On 29 April 1937 he told a gathering of Nazi district leaders, by way of justifying a tactical slowdown of his moves against the Jews: "I don't want to start an opponent fighting right away by force, I don't say 'Fight!' because I feel like fighting, but I say 'I will destroy you! And now Shrewdness, help me maneuver you into the corner without your making a single thrust, and then you get the thrust straight to the heart.' That's it!" But he delivered himself of this Machiavellian rhetoric in a telltale crescendo of frenzy.⁶⁵ The change in his controlling style from Machiavellism to fanaticism with the start of his war proper in the spring of 1941 was in effect foretold in a passage of *Mein Kampf* about workers deserting Marxism for the national cause in the August days of 1914: "But now was the time to proceed against the whole fraudulent fellowship of these Jewish nation-poisoners" and "make short work of them without the slightest regard for any clamor or

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the annexation of Austria another 200,000 were added. Although a quarter of them left the country within six months, by the end of 1938 Greater Germany had once again as many Jews as Germany had had in 1933. The task seemed unending.

For whatever reasons, after the annexation of Austria and especially after the Munich Conference of September 29, 1938, the anti-Jewish policy became more intense. By March of that year Hitler spoke with increased furor.¹³ In June the Nazi leader and writer Rosenberg proposed Madagascar as a country of emigration.¹⁴ In October Göring wanted the Jews to get out of the economy and if necessary to establish ghettos.¹⁵ Then approximately seventeen thousand Jews holding Polish passports were deported from Germany to Poland.¹⁶ This was a prelude to the November pogrom. A few days later Göring said that if war came, there would be a great settling of accounts with the Jews.¹⁷ On November 24 Hitler told a foreign statesman that the Jewish question was a European problem.¹⁸ On the same day the SS newspaper demanded total destruction of the German Jews if war came.¹⁹ On January 21, 1939, Hitler told the Czech foreign minister that the Jews in Germany were going to be destroyed.²⁰ On January 24 Göring ordered Heydrich and Frick to prepare a solution of the Jewish question by emigration or evacuation.²¹ Finally on January 30 Hitler publicly declared—or, as he put it, prophesied—that the result of another world war would be the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe.²² What sounds so ominous in three of these proclamations is the projected relation between a war and the solution to the Jewish question. Hitler had drawn this connection in *Mein Kampf* and had redrawn it since on several occasions. On February 10, 1939, he repeated to commanding officers that the next struggle was going to be a racial war.²³

When World War II broke out, there was no immediate action against the Jews. Despite Hitler's demand in 1926 for the destruction of the Jews, there was no pogrom and no Jews

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were killed. Instead, the government began killing mental patients by means of gas and deporting Jews. The main destination was occupied Poland, where the Nazis finally seemed to have found a convenient dumping ground for the Jews, whose numbers had once more increased after the recent territorial acquisitions. On September 21, 1939, Heydrich informed his subordinates that Hitler had permitted the deportation of the German Jews and of those Jews living in the annexed parts of Poland, apparently to the region near Cracow.²⁴ One week later the Soviets ceded the province of Lublin, and Hitler told Rosenberg the next day that he wished to remove all of German-controlled Jewry into this area between the Vistula and the Bug rivers.²⁵ On October 7 Himmler was appointed "Reich Commissar for the strengthening of German folkdom" and was charged with the task.²⁶

The operation ran into countless difficulties, however, and turned out to be a failure. Hans Frank, the governor general of occupied Poland, which had been renamed the General Government, constantly complained that he could not settle those who had been or were to be deported.²⁷ To be sure, about 50 percent of the Jews and 10 percent of the Poles in the annexed Polish territories were deported and their homes given to German resettlers, who poured in at the same time from Russia and southeast Europe after an agreement concluded with the Soviet Union. But only a few thousand Jews from Austria, Moravia, and Pomerania could be deported. In March 1940 Göring stopped all deportations.²⁸ And Hitler told a Swedish visitor that a Jewish state around Lublin would never be a solution to the Jewish problem.²⁹

After the fall of France, new prospects opened for disposing of Europe's Jews. Already on May 25, just a fortnight after the beginning of Germany's western campaign, Himmler delivered to Hitler a lengthy memorandum envisaging the emigration of all Jews to Africa or a colony.³⁰ On June 24, right after the armistice, Heydrich wrote to Ribbentrop that the

In four public speeches during 1942 Hitler reminded his listeners of his so-called prophecy of destruction of the Jews of Europe. Unlike Goebbels, who always dated it correctly from January 30, 1939, Hitler invariably misdated it to September 1 of that year. On that day, when the war against Poland began, he had also spoken in the Reichstag but he had not mentioned the Jewish question at all. There can be no doubt that the misdating, which was repeated in the printed versions of the speeches, was deliberate. Evidently he wanted the extermination of the Jews to be seen in connection with the beginning of the war.

We need not enter into the later stages of the Holocaust in order to answer our questions. Apparently not just one order was given to initiate it. And apparently its beginnings involved considerable inconsistency, improvisation, and confusion.

This has led some of the so-called functionalist historians to infer that the whole operation may not have been ordered or premeditated at all. In order to avoid misunderstandings it should be stressed that Martin Broszat, who has developed this thesis most explicitly, does not deny Hitler's responsibility for or approval of the killings. Broszat's thesis is only that they were proposed and initiated by others as well, that they were not planned long in advance and initiated by a single secret order.

There is some evidence for such an interpretation. On July 16, 1941, a relatively early date, officials close to the *Reichsstatthalter* in Posen, in the annexed Polish territories, asked Eichmann to consider seriously whether instead of letting the Jews starve, it would not be more human to dispose of those who could not work by a rapidly effective means.⁵⁹ Is it not logical to infer—that is the functionalists' question—that the final solution evolved gradually out of such proposals and the resulting individual killing operations?

My first answer is that there is no evidence that there were many such proposals or individual killing actions, and cer-

* The point of the Holocaust (as seen by the O.C.) is that the immune act itself will dispirit humanity and drive them into more and more superficial & extensive developments

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since. He argues that an internal Nazi investigation showed that Rauschning met Hitler only a couple of times on formal occasions.⁶ Irving does not enlarge on this claim, but it is obvious the Nazis would have wanted to play down any close relationship between the two men given the nature of the material in question and its propaganda potential at the time of publication.

Schieder estimates that Rauschning met with Hitler, at most, thirteen times, and was alone with him during about six of these meetings⁷—enough time for any reasonably astute observer to have formed some idea of the character and thoughts of a person.

Irving goes on to cite a chapter which he says was deleted from the original edition (1939) of Rauschning's book *Hitler Speaks*, but was included in the 1973 edition published in Vienna. This chapter, he finds, "is revealing in more senses than one, as it purported to describe how Hitler regularly woke up at night screaming 'It's Him—Him,' meaning the devil." This "disposes of Rauschning's credibility once and for all."⁸

Irving may well see this extract as solid evidence against Rauschning, but his promotion of it creates some confusion. The passage to which he appears to be referring was certainly not deleted from the 1939 British edition of *Hitler Speaks*. Its use does not, incidentally, appear to have damaged Rauschning's credibility as such.

Our main interest is the alleged occult implications implied in the material in question: Hitler feared he had been visited by the Devil. Therefore it is necessary and enlightening to look at the material in context.

Whatever is said about it is certainly not complimentary to Hitler. Rauschning wrote:

Hitler, however, has states that approach persecution mania and dual personality. His sleeplessness is more than the mere result of excessive nervous strain. He often wakes in the middle of the night and wanders restlessly to and fro. Then he must have light everywhere. Lately he has sent at these times for young men who have to keep him company during his hours of manifest anguish. At times these conditions must have become

dreadful. A man in the closest daily association with him gave me this account: "Hitler wakes at night with convulsive shrieks. He shouts for help. He sits on the edge of his bed, as if unable to stir. He shakes with fear, making the whole bed vibrate. He shouts confused, totally unintelligible phrases. He gasps, as if imagining himself to be suffocating."

My informant described to me in full details a remarkable scene—I should not have credited the story if it had not come from such a source. Hitler stood swaying in his room looking wildly about him. "He! He! He's been here!" he gasped. His lips were blue. Sweat streamed down his face. Suddenly he began to reel off figures, and odd words and broken phrases, entirely devoid of sense. It sounded horrible. He used strangely composed and entirely un-German word-formations. Then he stood quite still, only his lips moving. He was massaged and offered something to drink. Then he suddenly broke out—"There, there! In the corner! Who's that?"

He stamped and shrieked in the familiar way. He was shown that there was nothing out of the ordinary in the room and then he gradually grew calm. After that he lay asleep for many hours.⁹

Apart from the fact that the passage was not omitted from the original edition of the book, as Irving asserts, there are several other points to be made. The first is that Rauschning is not relating a first-person account. Second, Rauschning does not write, as Irving claims, that Hitler "regularly woke up at night screaming 'It's Him—Him.'" The circumstance in which this phrase arose refers to a particular incident, although Hitler's "night terrors" were obviously not unusual. Finally, Rauschning does not claim Hitler meant the Devil when he screamed in terror, "He! He! He's been here." In fact, Rauschning does not speculate on who the being or entity may have been—if any.

This comment of Hitler's recorded by Rauschning offers us one theory as to who this terrifying vision was.* Note it differs from the passage Ravenscroft assigns to Rauschning. Further, it

*The source is the original translation of Rauschning's book.

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Once in Germany, he quickly became a rabid Nazi and produced a number of pamphlets in which he claimed astrological data showed a worldwide Jewish conspiracy against the Aryan race.³³ In 1939, a few days after Britain and France declared war on Germany, Krafft was hired by SS leader Himmler's secret intelligence service, the *Reichsicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA).³⁴ As with de Wohl and British intelligence there seems to be some uncertainty about Krafft's work status and job description.

On 2 November 1939, Krafft came up with a prediction which he disclosed in a note to another member of the RSHA, a Dr. Heinrich Fesel. The doctor was a prominent classical scholar and an astrologer and, says Howe, a reluctant employee of the RSHA engaged in investigating occult matters.³⁵ Krafft's prediction was that Hitler would be in danger between 7 November and 10 November. In the note to Fesel was the phrase "possibility of an attempt of assassination by the use of explosive material."³⁶

The reluctant Fesel was by no means anxious to circulate the document in RSHA headquarters so he kept a discreet silence and "filed" it for the very good reason that, as we have seen,³⁷ astrological prediction concerning the Führer was strictly taboo.³⁸

On 8 November Hitler and other veteran members of the Nazi party attended the traditional annual reunion at the Burgergrau beer hall in Munich where the unsuccessful 1923 *putsch* had begun. Within minutes of Hitler and some other party VIPs making a surprisingly early exit (to catch a train for Berlin) a bomb planted behind the speaker's rostrum exploded. Seven people were killed and sixty-three injured.³⁹

Early the following morning, Krafft sent a telegram to Hitler's Deputy, Rudolf Hess, at the Reich Chancellory in Berlin pointing out the prediction he had made to Fesel. Krafft went further, adding that the Führer might still be in danger in the days ahead.⁴⁰ Krafft was later to boast that his letter had exploded like a second bomb in the Reich Chancellory.⁴¹

It appears to be widely accepted by historians that the real bomb may have been deliberately planted and timed to go off as soon as Hitler had departed so Germany could accuse France

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and Britain of a deliberate murder attempt.⁴² There was another benefit: the timing showed Providence had Hitler under some occult-like protection.

In any case, the following day Dr. Fesel was ordered to produce the note Krafft had given him and it was soon in the hands of Hitler.⁴³ About the same time as Hitler was reading it, the Gestapo was arresting Krafft.⁴⁴

Howe says Krafft was able to satisfy his interrogators that he was not involved in a bomb plot and was even able to convince them of the accuracy of astrological predictions under certain circumstances.⁴⁵

The reason why Krafft should send the note to Hess and not directly to Hitler is the subject of some speculation, especially in view of Hess's subsequent and never fully explained action of flying to Britain. Howe says Krafft never met Hess,⁴⁶ although for some years Hess may have been a reader of Krafft's newsletter, which was first printed in 1935.⁴⁷ On the other hand, Max Hassell says that Krafft had sent his original prediction to Hess a week before the incident. Hess had at first regarded it as a crank letter until the bomb had gone off, whereupon he had come to accept Krafft as a true prophet.⁴⁸ If Hassell's version is accepted, it would mean, among other things, that Hess knew nothing of a bomb plot, which would not be surprising as it appears he was very much on the outs with Hitler by this time.⁴⁹ Given his well-known belief in astrology and Howe's assertion that he had known of Krafft's writings through his (Krafft's) newsletter, it is unlikely Hess would have simply dismissed the letter as the work of a crank without making some inquiries. Hassell goes on to say that following Krafft's arrest, Hess put pressure on Gestapo chief Himmler to release his newfound prophet.⁵⁰

In any case, whatever the forces at work—be it Hess, Krafft's ability to convince his interrogators of astrology's efficacy, or even occult influences—Krafft was free within a matter of weeks. Krafft did return to work for the RSHA but, Hassell says, in truth his real job was as private astrologer to Hess.⁵¹

In an address to his generals on 23 November 1939, Hitler

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ness of purpose and bad conscience of the other Powers to win a series of diplomatic successes without even the display of force. In 1938-9, with German rearmament under way and his confidence fortified by success, he was prepared to take bigger risks and to invoke the threat of force if his claims were refused.

It is in this context that the meeting of November 1937 is to be seen. The harangue which Hitler delivered reflects the change of mood at the end of the first period and the opening of the second, a new phase in which Hitler was ready to increase the pressure and enlarge the risks of his foreign policy.

The picture he had formed of the immediate future was inaccurate. Events did not follow the course he predicted; war came at a date and as a result of a situation he had not foreseen. But the inaccuracy of the details matters little, for Hitler was ready to take advantage of any situation that emerged. The importance of the occasion lies in the changed tone in which Hitler spoke, in his readiness to run the risk of war and to annex Czechoslovakia and Austria whenever circumstances offered a favourable opportunity, 'even as early as 1938'.

The years of preparation and concealment were at an end: the Man of Peace was to give way to the Man of Destiny, a new role in which, by March 1939, Hitler was to achieve both the objectives of November 1937: the annexation of Austria and the conquest of Czechoslovakia.

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In the spring of 1938, umphs, Adolf Hitler's physical appearance was still awkward. The f smudge of his moustache and curiously undisturbed alone attracted attention. He possessed was mobility, rapidly changing mood charming, at another ca sarcastic, or swollen ar

Speech was the essence. Hitler talked incessantly, communicate his thoughts spring of his own and himself and his audience the sound of his voice. too. 'Words,' he once explored regions.' As he t until certainty came and

Hitler always showed criticism. Unable to argue early days in Vienna his his opponent down. The tions or of his facts rather intellectual processes of c the intrusion of hostile exercise of manipulation hatred of the intellectual supreme and from institutions the healthy common folk ranks to form a community intellectuals run this way and

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refused to give the guarantee for which the Czechs
anxiously pleaded.

There were considerable practical advantages to be
derived from such a move. The German Army was
anxious to replace the long, straggling German-
Czech frontier, which still represented a deep enclave
in German territory, with a short easily-held line
straight across Moravia from Silesia to Austria. The
German Air Force was eager to acquire new air bases
in Moravia and Bohemia. The seizure of Czech Army
stocks and of the Skoda arms works, second only to
Krupps, would represent a major reinforcement of
German strength. The rearmament of Germany was
beginning to impose a severe strain on the German
economy and standard of living. The occupation of
Bohemia and Moravia would help to alleviate this
strain. Czech reserves of gold and foreign currency,
Czech investments abroad and the agricultural and
manpower resources of the country could be put to
good use. At the same time, another cheap success in
foreign policy would distract attention from any
shortages at home and add to the prestige of the
régime.

The role of fifth column, which had been played by
the Sudeten Germans in 1938, was now assigned to
the Slovaks, assisted by the German minority left
within the frontiers of the new State. The demand of
the Slovak extremists for complete independence was
carefully cultivated by the Germans. The Prague
Government had either to act or watch the separatist
intrigues in Slovakia and Ruthenia break up the
state. On 6 March the President of Czechoslovakia,
Emil Hacha, dismissed the Ruthenian Government
from office, and, on the night of 9-10 March, the
Slovak as well. It did not take Hitler long to grasp
that here was the opportunity for which he had been
waiting.

Some of the Slovak leaders seem to have shown a

the withdrawal of all Czech troops from Ruthenia, and the President had not yet crossed the Czech frontier when news reached Prague that German troops had already occupied the important industrial centre of Moravska Ostrava.

In Berlin President Hacha was received with all the honours due to a Head of State and, when he reached the Chancellery, found an S.S. Guard of Honour drawn up in the courtyard. The irony was barely concealed. Not until after 1 a.m. was the President admitted to Hitler's presence. Ill at ease, politically inexperienced, old, tired, and without a card in his hand, Hacha tried to soften Hitler's mood by ingratiating himself. He had no grounds for complaint over what had happened in Slovakia, he declared, but he pleaded with the Führer for the right of the Czechs to continue to live their own national life.

When Hacha had finished his abject plea Hitler began to speak. Once again he reviewed the course of his dealings with the Czechs; once again he repeated the charge that they had failed to break with the old régime of Benes and Masaryk. He no longer had confidence in the Czech Government, and was invading Czechoslovakia this very morning. The Czechs could resist and be destroyed, or allow the troops to enter peacefully.

Hacha and Chvalkovsky were then taken into another room for further talks with Göring and Ribbentrop. During this interlude Göring threatened to destroy Prague by bombing and Hacha fainted. After he was revived by an injection from Hitler's doctor, Morell, Hacha was put through to Prague by telephone, and the Czech Government undertook to order no resistance to the German advance. In the meantime a draft communiqué had been prepared for Hacha's signature. Its smooth terms were a masterpiece of understatement. The Führer had received President Hacha at the latter's request, and the Presi-

From Vienna to Prague

dent 'confidently placed in the hands of the Führer's threats or invasion.

Hitler could hardly call his secretaries' room a 'Children,' he declared, 'life. I shall go down to man.'

Two hours later Gertrude. When the British called at the Wilhelmstrasse protests they were the Führer had acted or President.

By the afternoon of way to Prague. His people revived the story of terror, which had forced the 'complete destruction . . . which for over a century of the German Reich.' The Kings of Bohemia from its battlements. In the historic grudges of the resentment of the Czech claim to equality.

The next day, Hitler took the Germans to the territory in which the upstart Czechs their own national state. The Western Powers, Neurath and named his Czechs lay in the hands of the administration and the offices Hitler appointed Frank, the leaders of as a suitable reward for

On the 16th Tiso sent

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re then taken into an- th Göring and Ribben- Göring threatened to d Hacha fainted. After n from Hitler's doctor, gh to Prague by tele- ent undertook to order advance. In the mean- had been prepared for terms were a master- e Führer had received s request, and the Presi-

dent 'confidently placed the fate of the Czech people in the hands of the Führer'. Not a word was said of threats or invasion.

Hitler could hardly contain himself. He burst into his secretaries' room and invited them to kiss him. 'Children,' he declared, 'this is the greatest day of my life. I shall go down to history as the greatest German.'

Two hours later German troops crossed the frontier. When the British and French Ambassadors called at the Wilhelmstrasse to deliver their inevitable protests they were met with the argument that the Führer had acted only at the request of the Czech President.

By the afternoon of 15 March Hitler was on his way to Prague. His proclamation to the German people revived the stories of an 'intolerable' reign of terror, which had forced him to intervene to prevent the 'complete destruction of all order in a territory . . . which for over a thousand years belonged to the German Reich.' That night he spent in the palace of the Kings of Bohemia with the swastika waving from its battlements. Hitler had paid off another of the historic grudges of the old Hapsburg Monarchy, the resentment of the Germans of the Empire in face of the Czech claim to equality.

The next day, Hitler reaffirmed the claim of the Germans to the territories of Bohemia and Moravia in which the upstart Czechs had dared to establish their own national state. As a contemptuous sop to the Western Powers, Hitler recalled the 'moderate' Neurath and named him the first Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. But the real power over the Czechs lay in the hands of the Head of the Civil Administration and the Secretary of State. To these two offices Hitler appointed Henlein and Karl Hermann Frank, the leaders of the Sudeten German Party, as a suitable reward for their services.

On the 16th Tiso sent Hitler a telegram asking him

to take Slovakia under his protection, which had been drafted with German help during his visit to Berlin on the 13th. Hitler graciously responded and German troops promptly moved in to guarantee Slovakia's newly won independence. Ruthenia, however, which was no longer of interest to the Germans, was abandoned to the Hungarians, whose troops marched in, overrunning all opposition, and soon reached the Polish border, establishing a common frontier between Hungary and Poland.

Hitler was back in Vienna on the 18th for the drafting of the Treaty of Protection between Germany and Slovakia. Slovakia granted to Germany the right to maintain garrisons in its territory and promised to conduct its foreign policy in the closest agreement with its Protector. A secret protocol allowed Germany the fullest rights in the economic exploitation of the country.

As the year before in Austria, so now in Czechoslovakia, the speed of the operation staggered the world.

Nowhere was the German action more resented than in Rome. Attolico, the Italian Ambassador in Berlin, had only been informed of the German intentions on 14 March, and the arrival of Philip of Hesse with his usual message of thanks for Italy's unshakable support scarcely mollified Mussolini. 'The Italians will laugh at me,' he told Ciano; 'every time Hitler occupies a country he sends me a message.' The Duce was gloomy and worried at the prospect of the expansion of German influence down the Danube and in the Balkans, his own chosen sphere of interest, but anger was tempered by the calculation that Hitler was now too powerful to oppose and that it was best to be on the winning side.

Mussolini was the prisoner of his own policy. Hitler's success roused his envy, yet the more he attempted to imitate the Führer the more dependent he became upon him. A personal letter from Hitler

From Vienna to Pragu

on the twentieth anniversary helped to smooth the Duce's path. On 26 March he was making a speech of loyalty to the Axis. If he must be within the framework of the Axis, he would side it. The Duce's eye was on Albania.

In London the effects of the German move were far-reaching. Prague had been a turning point in British policy, which the British Government had ineptly, to organize a more aggressive move by the Germans.

Much has been made of the German move out of lands inhabited by Czechs. Hitler had now departed from his previous determination to which he had adhered. Hitler's adoption of the determination was no more than his use of the language suited his purpose.

Those who had been in a state of self-determination made a mistake who had imagined that Hitler's Nazi Party Programme would be the end after he became Chancellor. Hitler had only one aim: to increase his own power in Germany and German power in Europe. This had been his aim from the beginning. It remained his program. The question was whether he would achieve the German aim without taking effective action.

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helped to smooth the Duce's ruffled feathers, and by
26 March he was making a speech full of aggressive
loyalty to the Axis. If he was to find compensation it
must be within the framework of the Axis, not out-
side it. The Duce's eyes began to wander towards
Albania.

In London the effects of Hitler's *coup* were more
far-reaching. Prague has rightly been taken as the
turning point in British foreign policy, the stage at
which the British Government set to work, however
inexpertly, to organize resistance to any further ag-
gressive move by the German dictator.

Much has been made of the fact that by his seizure
of lands inhabited by Czechs, not by Germans, Hitler
had now departed from the principle of self-deter-
mination to which he had hitherto appealed. But
Hitler's adoption of the phraseology of national self-
determination was no more to be taken seriously than
his use of the language of the League when that
suited his purpose.

Those who had been taken in by the arguments of
self-determination made the same mistake as those
who had imagined that Hitler would be bound by the
Nazi Party Programme or by the policy of 'legality'
after he became Chancellor. They failed to recognize
that Hitler had only one programme: power, first his
own power in Germany, and then the expansion of
German power in Europe. The rest was window-dress-
ing. This had been his programme before Prague, as
it remained his programme afterwards. The only
question was whether the other Powers would let
him achieve the German domination of Europe with-
out taking effective action to stop him.

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sent for Schacht and handed him his dismissal. 'You don't fit into the National Socialist picture,' he told him. Schacht was replaced by the docile Funk, and a secret decree placed the Bank under the direct orders of the Führer, with the obligation to provide the Government with whatever credits it demanded.

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If any country had good reason to fear Germany's intentions it was Poland. At the Peace Settlement of 1919, and afterwards when Germany was weak, the Poles had acquired territory, the loss of which was more resented by the Germans than perhaps any other part of the Versailles Settlement. In order to provide Poland with access to the sea, Danzig was separated from Germany and made into a Free City, where the Poles enjoyed special privileges, while East Prussia was divided from the rest of the Reich by the Polish Corridor. There was justice on both sides. Much of the land regained by Poland had been first seized by Prussia at the time of the Partitions, and was inhabited by Poles. But the Poles had in turn taken more than they could legitimately claim. German public opinion was as solid in demanding that the eastern frontiers should be redrawn as Polish opinion was in refusing it. The rise of the Nazis to power in Germany had been followed by the steady growth of Nazi influence in Danzig, and it appeared only a question of time before the city was reunited to the Reich.

Yet the first country with which Hitler had signed a Pact of Non-Aggression had been Poland. The obvious reason for Hitler's friendliness was his need to placate the most suspicious of Germany's neighbours and France's principal ally in Eastern Europe, until he was strong enough to risk her hostility with equanimity. But there is also evidence to show that Hitler was anxious to secure Polish support against Russia. If the Poles accepted the restoration of Dan-

*The Army, the Foreign Service
and the Reichsbank.*

fact now fixed on Poland. asked the Polish Ambassador Lipski complained of the , which had been under the Poles. Ribbentrop re-Danzig and the extra-ter-to East Prussia could be faction, the Slovak ques-ult with in such a way as The Führer had been dis-e failure of the Poles to y to his proposals, and it ould not come to the con-jecting his offer. For that e for Colonel Beck to come e, and for the Ambassador e.

ed to press the Poles hard, n terms of a peaceful set-the Poles more closely to en glad enough to recover mies of the Poles. On the pared to wait indefinitely, then characteristically he tic settlement, the outline e back of his mind. Every- nswer the Poles gave him

Lipski informed Ribbentrop it was prepared to discuss communications with East to reach a settlement with German demands, the re-extra-territorial road and rejected. Ribbentrop re-gan to threaten. rop told Lipski that the ere wholly unsatisfactory,

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began blustering about Polish outrages against the German minority in Poland and warned him that the German Press could hardly be restrained much longer from answering Polish attacks. On 28 March Beck announced that the Polish Government would equally regard any attempt by the Germans, or by the Danzig Senate, to change the *status quo* in the Free City as an act of aggression against Poland.

The next stage was to be the application of pressure to the recalcitrant Poles, but the situation was suddenly complicated by the unexpected intervention of the British Government, which, to Hitler's anger, refused to mind its own business. Alarming reports were reaching London of German preparations for immediate action against Danzig and Poland. This time Chamberlain announced that Great Britain would risk war to protect Polish independence, and the French associated themselves with the British in these assurances.

Hitler was both surprised and angered. The day after Chamberlain's announcement, he insisted excitedly that he was not to be turned from the path he had chosen. Germany could not submit to intimidation or encirclement. In the same mood Hitler issued a new directive to his commanders on 3 April which listed as the three contingencies for which they were to prepare, the defence of the frontiers, Operation White (war with Poland), and the seizure of Danzig. Plans for the smashing of the Polish armed forces were to be ready by 1 September 1939, the actual date of the German invasion of Poland. German policy, the directive stated, continued to be based on the avoidance of trouble with Poland. But 'should Poland reverse her policy towards Germany and adopt a threatening attitude towards the Reich, we may be driven to a final settlement, notwithstanding the existing Pact with Poland'. For the moment, however, Hitler seems to have been at a loss how to proceed. This time the British Prime Minister showed

no disposition to fly to Germany, and the Polish Foreign Minister, instead of coming to Berlin as Ribbentrop had demanded, visited London, where agreement was announced on the preparation of a pact of mutual assistance between Great Britain and Poland.

Some of the anger which Hitler felt at this check came out in his speech to the Reichstag at the end of the month. On 14 April, following the Italian invasion of Albania on the 7th, President Roosevelt had addressed a message to Mussolini and Hitler, asking if they were willing to give assurances against aggression to a list of thirty countries. It was announced that Hitler would reply to the President on 28 April.

Hitler began his speech with a lengthy and elaborate defence of his foreign policy, up to the present. This is so frequent a feature of his speeches on foreign policy as to suggest that this act of self-justification was psychologically necessary, in order to kindle the indignation and conviction with which he could defend the most blatant acts of aggression.

After describing his action in Czechoslovakia as a service to peace, Hitler declared that he had nothing but feelings of friendship and admiration for Great Britain, but friendship could survive only if it was based on mutual regard for each other's interests and achievements. The British, by beginning their old game of encircling Germany, had destroyed the basis for the Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935, and he had therefore decided formally to denounce it.

With Poland, too, Hitler declared, he had been only too anxious to reach a settlement. He had never ceased to uphold the necessity for Poland to have access to the sea. But Germany also had legitimate demands, for access to East Prussia and for the return of the German city of Danzig to the Reich. To

* D.P. He was terrible, since he lived in the cold and empty house of his own interior, he

solve the problem Hitler had offered to Poland, the terms with the careful omission to join in a bloc directed against ever, had not only rejected to lend themselves—like the—to the international campaign. In these circumstances the Agreement of 1934 had not. Hitler had therefore decided to be careful to add, however agreement between Germany and Poland.

Throughout this speech terms of the 'international democracies, whose one aim was to stir up the strength of the Axis, the occupation of Albania and in a territory which was part of the *Lebensraum*.

Hitler had by now worked out in his mind in which to answer the second half of his speech with sarcasm which produced the Reichstag. It is not Hitler's argument when it comes to point to the cheapness and hear it brought to life once again by Hitler's masterful trick of the orator.

The American President had pointed out the wickedness and futility of the better, Hitler retorted, that had suffered from the oppression for twenty years? Must all problems could be solved by the first nation to

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cancellor, 1933-9

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Hitler's War, 1939

April 1939

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solve the problem Hitler had made an unprecedented
offer to Poland, the terms of which he now repeated,
with the careful omission of the German invitation to
join in a bloc directed against Russia. The Poles, how-
ever, had not only rejected his offer, but had begun
to lend themselves—like the Czechs the year before
—to the international campaign of lies against Ger-
many. In these circumstances the German-Polish
Agreement of 1934 had no longer any validity, and
Hitler had therefore decided to denounce this too. He
was careful to add, however, that the door to a fresh
agreement between Germany and Poland was still
open.

Throughout this speech Hitler spoke in violent
terms of the 'international warmongers' in the De-
mocracies, whose one aim was to misrepresent Ger-
man aims and to stir up trouble. He exalted the
strength of the Axis, congratulating Mussolini on the
occupation of Albania and the establishment of order
in a territory which naturally belonged to Italy's
Lebensraum.

Hitler had by now worked himself into the state of
mind in which to answer President Roosevelt. The
second half of his speech was marked by a display
of sarcasm which produced roars of applause from
the Reichstag. It is not difficult to pull holes in
Hitler's argument when it is set down in cold print,
or to point to the cheapness of his retorts, but to see
and hear it brought to life on the film is to be struck
once again by Hitler's mastery of irony and every
other trick of the orator.

The American President had read him a lesson on
the wickedness and futility of war: who should know
better, Hitler retorted, than the German people, who
had suffered from the oppression of an unjust peace
treaty for twenty years? Mr. Roosevelt believed that
all problems could be solved round the conference
table: yet the first nation to express distrust of the

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1918, by pointing to the inconsistencies and short-
 comings of his critics, and by playing upon that his-
 torical pariah-complex of self-pity and self-justifica-
 tion which the German people had developed after
 the defeat of 1918. Even to question his intentions
 was made to appear as part of that denial of equal
 rights to the German people upon which he had fed
 his own and his audiences' indignation for so long.

The speech marked the close of a period of activity
 on Hitler's part. Having answered Polish obduracy
 and the British guarantees by the denunciation of
 the Naval Treaty and the German-Polish Pact, Hitler
 was content to sit back and wait. The door had been
 left open to further negotiations with the Poles, if
 they should change their minds.

Throughout the summer of 1939, from the end of
 April to August, Hitler was little to be seen in public.
 He could have devised no better tactics for the occa-
 sion. The measures hastily improvised by the Cham-
 berlain Government had been due to the sense of
 urgency created by his action in Czechoslovakia and
 the Memelland. Once the tension relaxed, there was a
 good chance that London and Paris might be tempted
 to reduce rather than extend the obligations they
 had assumed. The British Government was still eager
 to avoid war and find a settlement, while in Paris the
 currents of appeasement and defeatism ran strongly
 beneath the surface. Nor was the guarantee which
 had been given to Poland of practical value, unless
 the Russians could be brought in as well.

Although the British opened negotiations in Mos-
 cow, they pursued them without conviction. The
 Russians looked upon Western policy with distrust
 and were determined not to accept any obligations
 towards Poland except as part of a mutual assistance
 pact binding Britain and France as well as them-
 selves to the defence of Eastern Europe including
 the Soviet Union. In any case, the Poles and the other
 peoples living between Germany and Russia were not

likely to accept help from a country they regarded with as much suspicion as the Germans.

Here was a situation from which Hitler did not find it hard to extract profit. Throughout the summer the remilitarization of Danzig, the training of the local S.S. and S.A. with arms smuggled across the frontier, and a series of incidents designed to provoke the Poles continued with little remission.

While pressure was kept up on Poland, German propaganda through the radio and the Press hammered home the argument that Danzig was not worth a war, and that war was only likely because of the obstinacy of the Poles. In their turn the Poles were warned not to trust their new friends, the British, who would soon tire of their energetic attitude, and sell them down the river, as they had sold the Czechs at Munich.

Meanwhile, relations with the other States in the German sphere of influence were strengthened, in order to keep Poland isolated. The visit of the Hungarian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to Berlin, at the end of April, was followed by the State visit of Prince Paul, the Regent of Yugoslavia, at the beginning of June. Hitler laid himself out to please, and there was an impressive military review. A month later the Bulgarian Prime Minister was fêted in the German capital. The Germans showed an equal interest in the Baltic. The Pact of Non-Aggression signed with Lithuania after the cession of Memelland was matched by similar pacts with Latvia and Estonia.

Hitler's greatest success, however, was his alliance with Italy. The invasion of Albania in April, which Mussolini and Ciano regarded as the assertion of Italian independence, only bound them more closely to the Axis. The Germans now began to press for the signature of the military alliance which Mussolini had so far evaded. Ciano, who was uneasy about

the state of German-Polish relations, Ribbentrop to come to Italy, in which was in Hitler's mind, and so on. In Milan (on 6 May) with a new Duce laid great stress on the period of not less than three

Ribbentrop did not disguise his intention to recover Danzig and secure Prussia, but he was sympathetic on the need to defend Italy. He telephoned to Mussolini and his conversations were going well. At the spur of the moment, apparently of anti-British irritation and doubts, ordered Ciano to announce an Italo-German alliance. Ribbentrop would have preferred to bring in Japan as well, but Hitler he found the Führer's offer offered by Mussolini's sudden announcement of the alliance would further weaken the British position to stand by Poland. On 23 August Berlin for the formal signature.

The preamble of the Treaty of German and Italian friendship, alliance and mutual assistance side by side and with united efforts of their living-space and the pledged Germany and Italy to each other in the event of war regarding any armistice.

Mussolini's chief anxiety, however, was the possibility of war. On 23 August a secret memorandum for Hitler on Italy's need of a preparatory war, ending as far as the end of 1939, a vague suggestion that he should discuss some time in the future

May 1939

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the state of German-Polish relations, invited Rib-
bentrop to come to Italy, in the hope of learning what
was in Hitler's mind, and set off for their meeting at
Milan (on 6 May) with a memorandum in which the
Duce laid great stress on Italy's need of peace for a
period of not less than three years.

Ribbentrop did not disguise Hitler's determination
to recover Danzig and secure his motor-road to East
Prussia, but he was sympathetic to Mussolini's in-
sistence on the need to defer war. After dinner Ciano
telephoned to Mussolini and reported that the con-
versations were going well. Thereupon the Duce, on
the spur of the moment, apparently swayed by a gust
of anti-British irritation after a year's hesitations
and doubts, ordered Ciano to publish the news that
an Italo-German alliance had been agreed upon. Rib-
bentrop would have preferred to wait until he could
bring in Japan as well, but when he telephoned to
Hitler he found the Führer eager to seize the chance
offered by Mussolini's sudden change of mind. The
announcement of the alliance, Hitler was convinced,
would further weaken the British and French resolu-
tion to stand by Poland. On 21 May Ciano arrived in
Berlin for the formal signature of the Pact of Steel.

The preamble of the Treaty announced that 'the
German and Italian nations are determined to act
side by side and with united forces for the securing
of their living-space and the maintenance of peace'. It
pledged Germany and Italy to full military support of
each other in the event of war, and mutual agreement
regarding any armistice.

Mussolini's chief anxiety, however, continued to
be the possibility of war. On 30 May the Duce sent a
secret memorandum for Hitler which emphasized
Italy's need of a preparatory period of peace extend-
ing as far as the end of 1942. Hitler's reply was a
vague suggestion that he should meet the Duce for a
discussion some time in the near future. Beyond that

May 1939

Chancellor, 1938-9

he made no comment, and his silence seems to have been accepted by the Italians as assent.

Had Mussolini been present when Hitler met his senior Army, Navy, and Air Force officers on 23 May, the day after the Pact of Steel had been signed, his anxiety would have been vastly increased. Hitler began from the same premises as in the meeting in November 1937: the problem of *Lebensraum*, and the need to solve it by expansion eastwards. This time, however, he passed rapidly over the assumptions on which his views were based, and came almost at once to the military problem.

War, Hitler told his officers, was inevitable. 'Danzig is not the object of our activities. It is a question of expanding our living-space in the east, of securing our food-supplies, and of settling the Baltic problem. . . . There is no question of sparing Poland and we are left with the decision: To attack Poland at the first suitable opportunity.'

Hitler then went on to discuss the character of a war with the British, whom he described as the driving force against Germany, and of whose strength he spoke with appreciation. It would, he declared, be a life-and-death struggle and probably of long duration. Hitler saw the Ruhr as Germany's vital point, and so made the occupation of Holland and Belgium, to protect the Ruhr, a first objective. Because Britain's weakness was her need of sea-borne supplies, the Army's task must be to overrun the Low Countries and France in order to provide bases from which to blockade Britain. Analysing the lessons of the First World War, Hitler argued that a wheeling movement by the German Army towards the Channel ports at the outbreak of war—instead of towards Paris—might well have been decisive. This was in fact to be his own strategy in 1940.

Hitler's object was still, as it had always been, continental expansion eastwards, but the chief obstacle

Hitler's War, 1939

to his plans he now saw Germany and Great Britain could not be avoided.

The German Army had its peacetime strength of the newly equipped Panzer divisions and twenty-two machine-guns; its strength had been increased by one division. Behind the increasing number of re-armed armaments industry in the Reich had been built up at the expense of the armed forces. Since 1918, put into service two battle cruisers, and forty-seven destroyers, and completing two more battle cruisers, much larger, for the *marck*; four heavy cruisers, one aircraft carrier; five destroyers. The German Air Force, which since 1933, now had a strength of twenty-one squadrons consisting of anti-aircraft forces numbered batteries.

If, numerically, the number of troops could put in the field was the French or Russian Army, and equipment it was almost without equal—and this time it was to put it to use. By 15 June 1939, for operations in Poland, the object of the operation was to destroy the armed forces. The political aim was that the war should be begun by a series of quick successes. The chief obstacle to the occupation of Poland was being left blank for the French.

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May 1939

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to his plans he now saw as England. War between
Germany and Great Britain, Hitler was convinced,
could not be avoided.

The German Army had now been expanded to a
peacetime strength of thirty infantry divisions, five
newly equipped Panzer divisions, four light divisions,
and twenty-two machine-gun battalions. In four years
its strength had been increased from seven to fifty-
one divisions. Behind these forces stood a steadily
increasing number of reserves and the most powerful
armaments industry in the world. Nor had the Army
been built up at the expense of the other branches of
the armed forces. Since 1933 the German Navy had
put into service two battleships of 26,000 tons; two
armoured cruisers of 10,000 tons; seventeen de-
stroyers, and forty-seven U-boats. It was engaged on
completing two more battleships of 35,000 tons (ac-
tually much larger, for one of them was the *Bis-
marck*); four heavy cruisers of 10,000 tons; an air-
craft carrier; five destroyers, and seven U-boats. The
German Air Force, which had been entirely built up
since 1933, now had a strength of 260,000 men, with
twenty-one squadrons consisting of 240 echelons. Its
anti-aircraft forces numbered close on three hun-
dred batteries.

If, numerically, the number of divisions Germany
could put in the field was still smaller than that of
the French or Russian Armies, in quality, leadership,
and equipment it was almost certainly an instrument
without equal—and this time Hitler was determined
to put it to use. By 15 June, he had the Army's plan
for operations in Poland. Brauchitsch defined the
object of the operation as 'to destroy the Polish
armed forces. The political leadership demands that
the war should be begun by heavy surprise blows and
lead to quick successes.' On 27 July, the order was
drafted for the occupation of Danzig, only the date
being left blank for the Führer to write in.

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hours together. Ciano pleaded with all the eloquence
at his command for a peaceful settlement of the dis-
pute with Poland; he found himself up against a
brick wall. Ciano described the atmosphere of his
talks with Ribbentrop as icy. Hitler, whom he was
taken to see the following day at the Berghof, was
more cordial, but appeared equally implacable in his
decision. He was already lost in military calculations.

'I return to Rome,' Ciano wrote in his diary, 'com-
pletely disgusted with the Germans, with their leader,
and with their way of doing things. They have be-
trayed us and lied to us. Now they are dragging us
into an adventure which we do not want and which
may compromise the régime and the country as a
whole.'

There is no need to look far for an explanation of
the indifference Hitler and Ribbentrop showed to-
wards the ally they had welcomed with such effusive-
ness three months before. It was the prospect of an
agreement with Russia which now dazzled the Führer
and his Foreign Minister.

Yet the agreement had still to be negotiated, and
the Russians did not seem eager. Hitler, with his
eyes on the deadline he had fixed for the attack on
Poland, began to press for the negotiations to start
at once. On 14 August Ribbentrop telegraphed to the
German Ambassador in Moscow, instructing him to
see Molotov—if possible, Stalin—and to suggest that
he should himself come to Moscow for direct discus-
sions with the Russian Government. Molotov was not
to be hurried. Such a visit, he said, 'required ade-
quate preparation in order that the exchange of opin-
ions might lead to results', to 'making concrete de-
cisions'.

Ribbentrop at once accepted Molotov's suggestion
and added that he was ready to come at any time af-
ter Friday 18 August with full powers to conclude a
treaty.

Russia's military talks with the British and French

Aug 1939

Chancellor, 1933-9

had reached a deadlock and were adjourned on 17 August; they were never seriously resumed. The Russians, however, meant to take full advantage of the Germans' eagerness. When Molotov received the German Ambassador the same day, the 17th, he told him that, first, they must conclude the trade agreement which had been hanging fire for several months; then they could turn to a non-aggression pact. Molotov made no reference to Ribbentrop's specific proposal of a date for his visit.

Molotov's tactics only added to Hitler's impatience. The trade treaty would be signed at once, Ribbentrop telegraphed back; what mattered was his immediate departure for Moscow.

On the 19th the Russian Government agreed to Ribbentrop's meeting—but only a week after the signature of the trade treaty, on 26 or 27 August. Faced with a delay which might disrupt the timetable he had laid down, Hitler swallowed his pride and brought himself to ask a personal favor of Stalin, the head of the Bolshevik state which he had proclaimed the irreconcilable enemy. On Sunday the 20th Hitler telegraphed Stalin, urging him to receive Ribbentrop on the 22nd, or the 23rd at the latest.

Hitler waited on tenterhooks for Stalin's reply. On Monday morning, Stalin indicated he would see Ribbentrop on the 23rd.

Hitler had already accepted Molotov's draft of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, but the Russians had added a postscript to the text: 'The present pact shall be valid only if a special protocol is signed simultaneously covering the points in which the High Contracting Parties are interested in the field of foreign policy.'

To put it in crude terms, the Soviet Government did not propose to sign until it learned what its share of the spoils was going to be, and how Eastern Europe was to be parcelled up. It was to complete this process of horse-trading that Ribbentrop was now

Hitler's War, 1939

to fly to Moscow. But what mattered was the Pact; the Pact meant the neutralization of any threat of a British-backed German design on the isolation of Poland. To this was prepared to promise

Ribbentrop left for Moscow on the 22nd. Later that day one of the commanders of the Army was specially summoned by the Führer; he was then permitted; they were then

Hitler recited at length with Poland was inevitable possibilities of French spoke of the need for irrevocable back from anything.' With your hearts to pity. Address his generals. The order he added, would begin late in the day on Saturday, 26

Hitler stayed on at the Hotel from Moscow. It was here that the German Ambassador, found himself on the 23rd. On the previous day he had met to discuss the announcement that Russia were about to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany. The Cabinet had then determined to fulfil their promise to the British Government by ordering their Ambassador to Berlin to deliver personally a letter from Hitler stating that, if necessary, Germany was 'resolved, and prepared, to use the forces at their command to foresee the end of hostilities.'

If the warning Chamberlain took Hitler by surprise, it

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to fly to Moscow. But to Hitler the one thing that
mattered was the Pact; whatever its precise wording,
the Pact meant the neutrality of Russia, an end to
any threat of a British-French-Russian agreement to
block German designs in Eastern Europe, and the
isolation of Poland. To get Stalin's signature Hitler
was prepared to promise anything.

Ribbentrop left for Moscow on the morning of the
22nd. Later that day one after another of the senior
commanders of the Armed Services drove up the
mountain road to the Berghof for a conference spe-
cially summoned by the Führer. No discussion was
permitted; they were there to listen.

Hitler recited at length the reasons why a conflict
with Poland was inevitable and ranged over the vari-
ous possibilities of French and British reaction. He
spoke of the need for iron resolution, 'no shrinking
back from anything.' With the exhortation: 'Close
your hearts to pity. Act brutally', Hitler dismissed
his generals. The order for the start of hostilities,
he added, would begin later: the probable time would
be dawn on Saturday, 26 August.

Hitler stayed on at the Berghof, waiting for news
from Moscow. It was here that Henderson, the Brit-
ish Ambassador, found him on the afternoon of the
23rd. On the previous day the British Cabinet had
met to discuss the announcement that Germany and
Russia were about to conclude a Pact of Non-Ag-
gression. The Cabinet concluded that they were de-
termined to fulfil their obligations to Poland. The
British Government began to call up reservists and
ordered their Ambassador in Berlin to deliver to Hit-
ler personally a letter from the Prime Minister which
stated that, if necessary, the British Government was
'resolved, and prepared, to employ without delay all
the forces at their command, and it is impossible to
foresee the end of hostilities once engaged.'

If the warning Chamberlain's letter contained
took Hitler by surprise, its effect on him was at once

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Aug 25, 1939

Hitler next received Attolico, the Italian Ambassa-
dor. When he learned that no reply to his letter to
Mussolini had yet reached Berlin, Hitler sent Rib-
bentrop to telephone Ciano.

A message was now brought to Hitler announcing
the signature in London of the Pact of Mutual As-
sistance between Britain and Poland. The final sig-
nature of the Agreement had been held up for months
by one delay or another: the fact that it should be
signed on this very day, after Hitler had made his
final offer to Great Britain, meant that his latest at-
tempt to drive a wedge between the British and the
Poles had failed.

A second piece of unwelcome news followed, this
time from Rome. Hitler's message of the 25th, with
its hint of imminent action against Poland, had found
Mussolini still in a state of painful hesitation. He
could not ignore the poor state of the Italian Army
and the lack of preparations for a major war. The
message which Attolico now brought to the Reich
Chancellery expressed Mussolini's satisfaction at the
agreement with Russia, but stated that the Duce
declined going to war at this stage, unless Germany
sent immediate military supplies.

Added to the news from London the effect of Mus-
solini's reply was to convince Hitler that he must
give himself more time. Less than twelve hours be-
fore zero hour the invasion was halted.

The strain on Hitler at this point was intense.
But, haggard and preoccupied though he appeared,
he had lost neither his nerve nor his skill in political
calculation. He went on probing the strength of the
opposition he had encountered, searching for a weak
point, trying to gauge how far he could go, exploring
every possibility that turned up, revealing his inner
mind to no one, waiting for the opportunity and the
intuitive impulse to carry him forward.

hours after he had posted, Hitler fixed a new zero to depart from it.

With Rome, with Paris, and Hitler's immediate reply to him what he needed to in order to see whether deficiencies. The Italian live as to rule out any hope at some of the Italian de- not before the outbreak of

, was beside himself at the to cut, and he telegraphed ret at being unable 'to af- the moment of action.'

ower was resigned; he con- e further requests to his ermany in the Italian press bilization of as large Brit- possible; and, as a great for industrial and agricul-

face, Mussolini revived his ce and at the last moment, ust, offered to act as media- olini for his trouble but de- was no open breach between Hitler refused to alter his Mussolini's reputation. The to provide the support he ot going to let it act as a

o Daladier, in which he re- e skill the argument that ot represent a sufficient issue France and Germany, Hitler France in the final stages of l, correctly, that it was on

London that everything, including the French deci- sion, would depend.

On the evening of the 26th Dahlerus returned from London, bringing with him a letter which he had persuaded Lord Halifax to write to Göring express- ing Britain's desire for peace and wish to come to an understanding with Germany. Halifax's letter was couched in the most general and non-committal terms, but Göring declared it to be of enormous importance and drove to Berlin with Dahlerus to see Hitler. When they reached the Chancellery at midnight, Hit- ler was in bed, but Göring insisted on waking him up.

Entirely ignoring the letter Dahlerus had brought from London, Hitler began with a twenty-minute lecture justifying German policy and criticizing the British. After that he spent half an hour eagerly questioning Dahlerus, a Swedish friend of Göring's, about the years he had passed in England. Only then did he return to the current crisis, becoming more and more excited, pacing up and down and boasting of the armed power he had created, a power un- equalled in German history. Suddenly, Dahlerus writes, Hitler 'stopped in the middle of the room and stood there staring. His voice was blurred, and his behaviour that of a completely abnormal person. He spoke in staccato phrases: "If there should be war, then I shall build U-boats, build U-boats, U-boats, U-boats, U-boats." His voice became more indistinct and finally one could not follow him at all. Then he pulled himself together, raised his voice as though addressing a large audience and shrieked: "I shall build aeroplanes, build aeroplanes, aeroplanes, aero- planes, and I shall annihilate my enemies." He seemed more like a phantom from a story-book than a real person. I stared at him in amazement and turned to see how Göring was reacting, but he did not turn a hair.'

The upshot of the meeting was that Dahlerus

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sent, and the second,

In the first Hitler had
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Now the offer brought
Hitler was prepared to
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German colonies, guar-
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thrown together, how-
ernment sceptical as to
ed that Dahlerus should
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Hitler, before the official
rafted and sent over by

flew back to Berlin, and
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ple the British were will-
with Germany, but they
to Poland; they recom-
between Germany and Po-
frontiers and minorities,
would have to be guaran-
wers, not simply by Ger-
eturn of colonies at this
though not indefinitely;
ed the offer to defend the
once went off to Hitler,
us's surprise, Hitler ac-
Dahlerus got the British
l at 2 a.m. and sent an ac-
p London.

flew back to Berlin on the

evening of Monday the 28th, and was received in
state. Despite further outbursts on Hitler's part
against the Poles, the interview was conducted in a
reasonable manner. The British politely declined Hit-
ler's bribe. Britain would maintain her obligations to
Poland, and must, in any case, insist that any settle-
ment arrived at should be guaranteed by the other
European Powers as well as by Germany. The British
Government had secured the agreement of the Polish
Government to discussions: they now asked the Ger-
man Government if they too were prepared to negoti-
ate.

Having got the British and the Poles' offer to start
negotiations, Hitler characteristically put up his de-
mands. The German reply, handed to Henderson the
next day, began with a lengthy indictment of the
Poles, their refusal of the German demands, the prov-
ocation and threats they had since offered to Ger-
many, and their persecution of the German minority
—a state of affairs intolerable to a Great Power. All
this was skilfully used to heighten the effect of the
concession Hitler was ready to make in order to win
Britain over, a declaration that the German Govern-
ment was prepared to enter into negotiations with
Poland.

The catch was Hitler's demand, that the Polish
emissary was to leave at once and reach Berlin the
following day—and was to come provided with full
powers. If the Poles accepted, it meant capitulation.
To send a plenipotentiary to Berlin, with full powers
to commit the Polish Government, was to invite a
repetition of what had happened to the Austrian
Chancellor, Schuschnigg, and to President Hacha.
But if the Poles refused, Hitler hoped, the British
and French might come to regard them in the same
light as Benes and the Czechs the year before, as the
sole obstacles to a peaceful settlement, which Ger-
many was only too eager to sign. After all, was Dan-
zig worth a war?

Chancellor, 1933-9

ment did not fall into
ued to work for ne-
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clined to put pressure
Hitler's demand for a
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display of temper. Al-
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out of bed at 2 a.m. and
art negotiations. But the
accept German dictation,
ere simply to inform the
ggestion of direct negoti-
considered by the Polish

Hitler's War, 1939 Aug 31, 1939 313 G
Government, and that they would send a reply in a
few hours.

Immediately on receiving this message from War-
saw, Lipski requested an interview with Ribbentrop,
but the Germans had already broken the Polish dip-
lomatic cipher and knew that Lipski was not empow-
ered to act as a plenipotentiary and agree to Hitler's
demands on the spot. The Foreign Minister brusquely
informed Lipski there was no further point in talk-
ing.

There was not much longer to wait. The High Com-
mand of the Army was pressing Hitler for a decision
one way or the other. On Thursday 31 August, Hit-
ler signed 'Directive No. 1 for the Conduct of the
War'.

Every preparation was complete, even down to the
necessary 'incidents'. Since 10 August one of Hey-
drich's S.S. men, Naujocks, had been waiting at Gleiwitz,
near the Polish frontier, in order to stage a
faked Polish attack on the German radio station
there. Condemned criminals dressed in Polish uni-
forms were to be given fatal injections, then gunshot
wounds, and left dead on the ground by Müller, the
head of the Gestapo. At 8 p.m. on 31 August Nau-
jocks picked up one of these men near the Gleiwitz
radio station, seized the station as he had been or-
dered, broadcast a short proclamation and fired a few
pistol shots. The 'attack' on Gleiwitz was one of the
Polish infringements of German territory cited by
the Germans as the justification for their attack the
next day.

At nine o'clock on the night of the 31st, the Berlin
radio broadcast the sixteen points of the German de-
mands as proof of the moderation and patience of
the Führer in face of intolerable provocation. The
Poles were represented as stubbornly refusing to un-
dertake negotiations.

Away to the east of Berlin, tanks, guns, lorries,
and division after division of troops were moving up

G 320 Sept 1939

Chancellor, 1933-9

though he was prepared to change course and adapt himself to any new circumstance that appeared, the drift of his ideas is clear enough: deal with Poland before turning west; deal with France and Britain, before turning back to the east.

To a man of Hitler's hesitations the decision to resort to war represented a severe psychological test. He had supported himself with the assurance that it was only a localized war on which he was embarking. But now that the ordeal was past, now that military success had proved both so easy and so gratifying, his confidence bounded up and he let his ideas expand. Instead of waiting to see what the Western Powers were going to do, he would take the initiative himself. Released from the hesitation and anxieties of the time before he had risked war, he was already on the way to that assumption of his own infallibility which marked the deterioration of his judgement.

BOOK III

WAR

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THE INCONCI

193

With the beginning of the war and more immersed in the calculations by which he was to survive, it was difficult at times in the early months to detect the figure that lay solely to the character of the man who had survived—minutes of changes, and military decisions, the actual conditions of the world. The human being disappeared behind the public figure of the Führer. The magic of his life, as the magic of his death, to discover again the man beneath. The greater part of his life was before necessarily be concerned with the lord of Nazi Germany, who had confronted him and with the world.

In the autumn of 1939 the professional soldiers of the war by an attack in the time he proposed, in the time he proposed, in the time he proposed. Before he could develop this opposition, and to the

Chancellor, 1933-9

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BOOK III

1939

WAR-LORD

1939-45

CHAPTER TEN

THE INCONCLUSIVE VICTORY

1939-40

With the beginning of the war Hitler became more and more immersed in the political and strategical calculations by which he hoped to win it. If it is difficult at times in the intricate history which follows to detect the figure of the man, this is not due solely to the character of the records which have survived—minutes of conferences, diplomatic exchanges, and military directives: it corresponds to the actual conditions of his life during these years. The human being disappears, absorbed into the historic figure of the Führer. Only in the last two years of his life, as the magic begins to fail, is it possible to discover again the mortal and fallible creature beneath. The greater part of this section must therefore necessarily be concerned with Hitler as the war-lord of Nazi Germany, with the situations that confronted him and with the decisions that he took.

In the autumn of 1939 Hitler was well aware that the professional soldiers were opposed to extending the war by an attack in the west, particularly at the time he proposed, in the closing months of the year. Before he could develop his plans he had to master this opposition, and to that end he drafted a mem-

orandum setting out his views and read it to the three Commanders-in-Chief, Halder, and Keitel at a conference held on 10 October.

The memorandum, a well-constructed piece of work, began with the defensive argument that Germany must strike in the west to prevent the occupation of Belgium and Holland by the French, and sought to prove that time was on the side of the enemy, not least because of the uncertainty of Russia's intentions.

In his eagerness to launch the attack during the autumn Hitler insisted that the process of refitting and reinforcing formations used in Poland must be carried out with a speed which might leave much to be desired. If necessary, the attacking forces must be prepared to go on fighting right into the depths of the winter—and they could do this, he argued, so long as they kept the fighting open and did not let it become a war of positions. The German Army was to sweep across Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg, and destroy the opposing forces before they could form a coherent defensive front.

Hitler's arguments did not convert the opposition in the Army. They did not share his confidence in the superiority of the German Army over the French; and they were sceptical of the claims which Hitler made for their advantage in armour and in the air. If the gamble failed to come off, and no quick victory was obtained, Germany would find herself involved in a second world war, for which, they felt, her resources were inadequate.

While the Army leaders tried to dissuade Hitler by playing up the practical difficulties, in the background the same group of men who had urged Brauchitsch and Halder to remove Hitler by force in 1938 was again active—among them General Beck, the former Chief of Staff; Goerdeler; Hassell, the former Ambassador in Rome; General Oster, of the Counter-Intelligence (the Abwehr); and General Thomas,

Head of the War Econ

A lull followed, but a announced that the attack, Brauchitsch, as Army, was faced with orders for an offensive to end disastrously for putsch against the man Chief of the German Army the State.

The one institution in the authority and the *d'état* was the Army. A active German Opposition attempts to persuade of leaders to use armed force.

For a few days at the conspirators were hopeful Hitler were removed, it settlement with the Wehr many from another disa an impression on the discussions were held with General Halder, on 2 an Oster was assured that putsch had been made, if ing the final order for th General Brauchitsch and 5 November, after which a final decision.

The interview between did not last long. Hitler Brauchitsch set out his attack, but when the Colonel that the spirit of the German fallen far short of that Hitler flew into a rage. Brauchitsch and forbidding it

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r; Hassell, the former
Oster, of the Counter-
and General Thomas,

Head of the War Economy and Armaments Office.

A lull followed, but at the end of October Hitler announced that the attack would begin on 12 November, and Brauchitsch, as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, was faced with the choice between giving orders for an offensive which he believed was bound to end disastrously for Germany, and organizing a putsch against the man who was the Commander-in-Chief of the German Armed Forces and the Head of the State.

The one institution in Germany which possessed the authority and the forces to carry out a *coup d'état* was the Army. As a result the history of the active German Opposition is a history of successive attempts to persuade one or other of the military leaders to use armed force against the Nazi régime.

For a few days at the beginning of November the conspirators were hopeful. Their argument that, if Hitler were removed, it would be possible to reach a settlement with the Western Powers and save Germany from another disaster appeared to be making an impression on the Army High Command. Discussions were held with the Army Chief of Staff, General Halder, on 2 and 3 November, and General Oster was assured that preparations for a military putsch had been made, if Hitler should insist on giving the final order for the attack. A meeting between General Brauchitsch and Hitler was fixed for Sunday, 5 November, after which the Army leaders promised a final decision.

The interview between Hitler and Brauchitsch did not last long. Hitler listened quietly enough as Brauchitsch set out his anxieties over the proposed attack, but when the Commander-in-Chief remarked that the spirit of the German infantry in Poland had fallen far short of that of the First World War, Hitler flew into a rage, shouting abuse at Brauchitsch and forbidding him to continue with his re-

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port. Under this direct attack the Commander-in-Chief crumpled up. Furious at the defeatism of the High Command, Hitler peremptorily ordered the preparations to continue and the attack to begin at dawn on the day fixed, 12 November.

After the dressing-down he received from Hitler, Brauchitsch (and Halder) hastily disavowed all interest in the conspiracy. Chance offered them a way out. On 7 November the attack had to be postponed, owing to an unfavourable weather forecast, and the High Command was able to make use of the same excuse to secure further postponements throughout the winter.

While the conspirators of the Opposition group around Beck and Oster had been trying, with diminishing hopes, to stir the Army High Command to action, they were startled by the news that a bomb explosion had wrecked the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich a short time after Hitler had finished speaking there on the anniversary of the 1923 putsch. It seems likely that the attempt on Hitler's life was organized by the Gestapo as a means of raising the Führer's popularity in the country. Goebbels made the utmost use of the incident to stir up resentment against those who were lukewarm towards the war, and to portray Hitler as an inspired leader whose intuition alone had preserved him from death. The timing had been a little too perfect, however, and the German people remained stolidly sceptical of their Führer's providential escape.

On 20 November Hitler ordered the state of alert to be maintained, so that immediate advantage could be taken of any improvement in the weather, and on 23 November he summoned the principal commanding officers of the three services to the Chancellery for another conference.

Hitler laid great stress on the fact that for the first time since the foundation of the German Empire by Bismarck, Germany had no need to fear a war on two

The Inconclusive Victory

fronts. The Pact with Russia for the future: 'Everything that the moment is favourable may not be so any more. all modesty name my own My decision is unchangeable and England at the moment. Breach of the Holland is meaningless. when we have won.'

Although Hitler had decided in order to stamp the imperialism upon his command that he was still only acting of the later years is already convince the senior general the vacillating doubts of prove insufficient to halt had been hardened into that the generals could not continued bad weather to survive until well into 1940.

Meanwhile the impression of the lack of enthusiasm of the commanders strengthened with which he was coming soldiers. The clash between in the winter of 1939-40 again to let himself be When the attack in the weeks startling victories of the to believe that his judgment theirs in strategy, and even known it to be in politics for both Hitler and the A

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the future: 'Everything is determined by the fact
that the moment is favourable now: in six months it
may not be so any more. As the last factor I must in
all modesty name my own person: irreplaceable. . . .
My decision is unchangeable. I shall attack France
and England at the most favourable and quickest
moment. Breach of the neutrality of Belgium and
Holland is meaningless. No one will question that
when we have won.'

Although Hitler had designed the whole occasion
in order to stamp the impression of an inspired lead-
ership upon his commanders, it is difficult to believe
that he was still only acting a part; the megalomania
of the later years is already evident. He failed to
convince the senior generals, but it was certain that
the vacillating doubts of the High Command would
prove insufficient to halt Hitler in a mood which
had been hardened into reckless determination. All
that the generals could do was to make use of the
continued bad weather to delay the start of the offen-
sive until well into 1940.

Meanwhile the impression which Hitler had formed
of the lack of enthusiasm for war among his senior
commanders strengthened the feelings of distrust
with which he was coming to regard the professional
soldiers. The clash between Hitler and his generals
in the winter of 1939-40 bore fruit in his refusal ever
again to let himself be influenced by their advice.
When the attack in the west was followed by the most
startling victories of the war, Hitler was encouraged
to believe that his judgement was as superior to
theirs in strategy, and even tactics, as he had always
known it to be in politics—with disastrous results
for both Hitler and the Army.

Throughout the autumn and winter of 1939-40
Hitler's mind was filled with the prospects of the
offensive which he meant to launch in the west. De-

spite the successive postponements, he still thought of the attack as no more than a few days distant, and not until the New Year did he reluctantly agree to defer it to the spring or early summer. In the meantime, awkward problems were raised by German relations with Italy and with Russia.

The brief honeymoon period of the Pact of Steel was long since over. The alliance was popular in neither country, and Hitler admitted at the meeting with his commanders on 23 November that Italy's reliability depended solely upon Mussolini's continuation in power. The Duce's own attitude was far from stable. On 26 December, hoping for a German defeat, Mussolini told Ciano to let the Dutch and Belgian Governments know surreptitiously that their countries were threatened with an imminent German invasion. At other times Mussolini swung round and talked of intervening on Germany's side. But the ill-concealed contempt which many Germans felt for their 'non-belligerent' ally kept Mussolini's resentment alive, while German policy on a number of important issues was strongly criticized in Rome. The situation was not eased by Russia's invasion of Finland in early December. In January Mussolini sent Hitler a letter which represents the high-water mark of his independence towards his brother dictator.

The main burden of Mussolini's letter was the unfortunate consequences of Hitler's Pact with Russia—discontent in Spain and Italy; the sacrifice of Finland in a war for which Italian volunteers had come forward in thousands, as well as the failure to preserve an independent Polish State. Opposed to an extension of the war in the west, Mussolini urged Hitler to turn back and seek Germany's *Lebensraum* in the east, in Russia. He concluded: 'I have a duty to perform in adding that one step further in your relations with Moscow would have catastrophic results in Italy.'

Mussolini's letter was not only evidence of the

The Inconclusive Victory,

troubled state of the relation: its arguments touched on a the Nazi-Soviet Pact—about altogether at ease.

The major problem in (Russia was no longer reprimand the partition, while part of it was annexed to the Reich—the Government-General. In October, the day after his Hitler appointed Himmler action, the R.K.F.D.V., the Re-Strengthening of German F to carry out the deportation the provinces annexed to (

In the Government-General deported, Frank, besides re-stripping the country of focus the responsibility for the 'Final Action', the liquidation of The treatment of the Jews by Hitler and the S.S. 'The final problem', that sinister and cover name used to disguise the extermination of all men, women and blood in Europe: its first action in the Polish Government-General, Auschwitz, close on a million before the end of the war. A working model of the Nazi the elimination of the Jewish population of inferior races Aryan master-race represented

Whatever fears, therefore, had that Hitler would use German rule to stir up trouble under Soviet rule were soon way in which the Germans of German-Russian relations

Jan 1939

or any total ban on using public
and that Jewish civil servants would

op, and Himmler all saw eye to
Tanganyika, to Madagascar, or to
January 24, 1939, Göring set up
ral Reich Office for Jewish Emi-
suitable Jewish agency to process
Jews, and agree on destinations.
"My decision," he ruled, "is to
il actions."

tral office, the expulsion of Jews
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LOSING WEIGHT

When he turned forty-six on January 12, 1939, the gift that would please him the most was a scale model of the sprawling Hermann Göring Works. He was not interested in war—he wanted to exploit the economic potential of southeastern Europe. Politically he was increasingly at odds with Hitler. As he heard the Führer unveil his plans for world domination in a series of secret speeches that January and February 1939, he would feel the gulf between them growing wider. In the coming year Göring would repeatedly appear on the side of the moderates. But he was cautious even then, not wanting to forfeit his hard-earned status as Hitler's principal lieutenant.

Little was left of their earlier intimacy. Leaving Germany for San Francisco in February 1939, Hitler's adjutant Fritz Wiedemann would reflect that in recent months he had seen Goebbels, Hess, Bormann, and other Nazi notables among the late-night guests at Hitler's table, "but rarely Göring."

From the field marshal's diary it is evident, however, that he continued to have "his pudgy fingers in every pie," as his later prosecutors at Nuremberg would put it.

Considering his later reputation for indolence, his 1938 diary entries are often of a surprising intricacy and length. October 3, three days after the

Still tinkering with his Grand Solution, on October 21 he invited the Polish ambassador out to Carinhall. His diary shows that he again hinted at a deal with Poland. Józef Lipski, who confirmed the date from his own diary, was later astonished to hear that Göring had kept such a detailed record.

Lipski, October 21. Discussion of Poland's intentions. [We must] maintain contact, avoid misunderstandings. Obstacle is the Carpatho-Ukraine [the eastern tip of Czecho-Slovakia, bordering on Poland, Romania, and Hungary]. Poland interested but not as a territorial matter. Poland is afraid that Communist troubles might take root there. The region inclines toward Hungary. Should be a bridge for settlement of the Greater Ukraine issue. There was and is a Communist center established there for subverting the Balkans and Poland. Such a hotbed of Ukrainian intransigence is very disturbing for Poland; it might exacerbate the Ukrainian problem in Poland. Poland's wish is therefore that this region go to Hungary, so that it can be brought under control.

It is worth quoting such diary entries if only because they show both the extraordinary complexities induced by Europe's ill-fitting frontiers in the winter of 1938/39 and the far-flung interests of Field Marshal Göring. "I protested," he records on one page, "about the treatment of Germans in Poland [and insisted on a] strict warning from Warsaw that Germans are to be well treated." And on another page he shows his economic interest in the German film industry as an export earner. "Great shortfall in Italy," he writes. "Political considerations there, as Italian film industry would otherwise collapse. It's costing us foreign currency. . . . Losses in France through joint film venture. . . . Poland—nothing doing. Yugoslavia refusal. . . . Balkans must be conquered. In the north we are definitely catching up."

Simultaneously with the consolidation of Germany's political gains after Munich, the diary shows Göring acting to force the pace of rearmament. On October 14, he summoned arms industrialists to the Air Ministry. "The Führer," he revealed to them, "has directed me to execute a gigantic program beside which all our achievements hitherto pale into insignificance." Specifically, Hitler had ordered an immediate fivefold increase in the air force. Discussing priorities with the OKW's General Keitel at Carinhall six days later, Göring said that food supplies must come first, followed by exports—but then, "Major expansion of air force for attack, including reserves."

The target now under discussion was Britain, and Milch's own notes for October 26 portray Göring discussing with Udet and him a bizarre plan to set up a private air-force navy under Kessler, officially to be designated "commander of security ships." It would operate fast patrol boats of upward of one thousand tons armed with flak guns and torpedo tubes, capable of

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circling two or three times
"faster than any warship."

On Hitler's instructions
body consisting of every mi
the commanders in chief,
at the Air Ministry on Nov
address on the need to tr
attendant problems: lack o
currency.

As the new year, 1939, be
his normally cherubic feat
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By the time that Sir Nev
shed forty pounds and hope

Something of the old He
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that Ribbentrop had done the
his credentials in 1936. "Me
undismayed, "suppose Mosc
came and greeted you with"
"Long live the Communist r
"I understand," remarked
ruary 18, "that Ribbentrop ha
into his own hands."

Göring rewarded him with
Poland and Yugoslavia," he i
the foreign minister has instr
at all times."

The two men, now firm fri
mongers" in London and Ber

and London opinion" wanted a preventive war against Nazi Germany. Göring retorted wearily that nobody in Berlin except for a few fools wanted war of any kind. "Tyrants who go against the will of the people," he boomed, "come to a sticky end."

Surprising the ambassador, he revealed that he had decided to leave Germany in March for a long rest. "People can make what mistakes they like while I am away—I shall not care."

For a few more days he fulfilled engagements in Berlin. On February 24, looking already substantially slimmer than at Munich, he granted an interview to four British financial experts at his villa. They sat in a line in enormous chairs in front of a high writing desk on a dais, behind which sat the field marshal at some distance. "It was not," reported one of them to Whitehall, "an easy position for a friendly chat." Challenged about the war rumors flooding foreign newspapers, Göring dismissed them as nonsense. "I have never seen any memorandum, plan, or proposal about this so-called Ukraine business," he said. "It simply does not figure in our calculations."

His imagination was already on the sunlit shores of the Mediterranean. He took leave of Hitler later that day, reviewed an Air Force Day parade on March 1, then left with Emmy for the tiny Italian principality of San Remo. He took "Pili" Körner and his "court biographer," Erich Gritzbach, with him. For a few days he lazed around, soaking up sunshine and sea air. Photographers snapped the Görings buying violets like a happy honeymoon couple, but the idyll did not last.

Late on the tenth his chief intelligence officer, Colonel Beppo Schmid, arrived from Berlin with a sealed envelope.* Göring tore it open and sat down heavily. "Something's up in Berlin," he exclaimed. "No sooner do I leave than something goes awry. I've got to hurry back and straighten things out."

At this the colonel revealed that the Führer had dictated an oral postscript—on no account was Göring to leave San Remo before German troops entered Czechoslovakia, so as not to arouse worldwide suspicions.

Göring choked on this. He knew that Hitler's only purpose was to prevent the "old woman" from interfering again.

He sent Schmid back to Berlin with a letter begging Hitler not to invade Czechoslovakia. Fretting, he then decided to ignore Hitler's prohibition, told Emmy to leave everything unpacked at the hotel, and set out by slow train northward to Berlin. Milch met him at the station late on March 14—with word that it was too late: Keitel had already reported the Wehrmacht ready to invade Czechoslovakia at 6:00 A.M. The good news, however, was that once more the British government was just shrugging its shoulders. For-

*A similar message had gone to General Milch, vacationing in Switzerland: "The Czecho-Slovak state is breaking up. Wehrmacht intervention may become necessary within the next few days."

schungsamt intercept N112, Henderson that His Majesty necessarily in matters with involved."

Göring swallowed his dist president Hácha arrived in I at which Hitler demanded : Göring who threatened the fi appear over the streets of Pra menacingly, "will serve as : Hácha signed on the dotted l as the 7th Airborne Division by snow at Schönwalde Air bronzed Zeppelin in air-forc requisite orders over the pho fire on the Germans.

The invasion operation bey into Prague, Field Marshal (head of state. He phoned the Hungarians were about to ma put as much as one foot over t he listened sympathetically w Ribbentrop's inaccessibility a sador's belated outrage over I prise that Britain should get a returned, Göring took the en him.

He did not alter his private c and a mistake. On November all the machine tools that he c dation that the Reich buy sha had no inkling then of Hitler's oslovakia, inspect their indust left Berlin as suddenly as he b the train back to San Remo on he told General Milch, "as my

The Nazi occupation of Cz industrial capacity and gold tha Czech industrialists and busin masters. The Hermann Göring firms like Škoda, Brno Weapc (Göring would install his brot export director.) H.G.W. would

April 1939

Libya in 1940. For three days
ations at Leptis Magna, visited
isurata, and exposed acres of
He took in a military parade
en watched "desert battles" at
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fore leaving for Italy on April
in their caves at Garian.

to meet the Italian leaders in
imposed him five months earlier
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his fingers, and a Nazi eagle
re somberly attired now, Göring
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their common struggle. Meeting
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tler had telephoned instructions
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aken to invade Czechoslovakia
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Germany's preparedness for war,
ing with the Junkers 88 bomber
sition in the air was unlikely to
to persuade Britain to reverse

any. Hitler would soon be fifty,
icular birthday parade. His train
8. Press photographers snapped
own and fit, in a light summer
a gold-knobbed walking cane.
h Hitler that evening. Hitler told
of Danzig by military action if
nt German city had been placed
the war.) It was the first that
to prepare *Case White*, covering
is Ribbentrop's revenge: Göring
te visit" to Rome—indeed, he
trop had telegraphed to Libya.
Göring. Poland was his preserve.
ped.

" was Hitler's measured retort.
ambassador. Henderson learned

that the field marshal had returned from Italy with "counsels of moderation"
but that Hitler had scolded him about being so *weibisch*, such an "old
woman."

Europe seemed to be heading for another war. At 10:00 A.M. on the
morning of his fiftieth birthday, April 20, Hitler called his commanders in
chief into his study and sobered them with a brief, blunt discourse on the
need to seize the initiative. His first half-century, he said, was now over. "I
am at the summit of my powers," he added, without emotion. "So I have
decided to strike now, while we still possess the arms lead that we do." As
the Reich capital shook to the thud and blare of the five-hour military parade
that day, Göring decided not to stay in Berlin one day longer than necessary.
Göring's aide Karl Bodenschatz hinted to the French air attaché that Göring's
health was "beyond repair" and that Ribbentrop had completely eclipsed
him.

For two more weeks Göring performed official functions, such as laying
a wreath on Baron von Richthofen's tomb on April 21. On the twenty-fifth
he instructed Milch to take up the staff talks with Italy and was briefed by
his new chief of air staff, the young Colonel Jeschonnek, on the planning
for *White*. Then, on May 3, 1939, he absconded to San Remo yet again.

Göring's esteem was at its lowest ebb. A few days later he suffered his
most humiliating reverse and again saw Ribbentrop as being behind it. He
had instructed his Four-Year Plan agent in Spain, Johannes Bernhard, to
arrange a meeting between Göring and the now-victorious General Franco
but had forbidden him to notify the German ambassador about it, citing its
"military character." Initially Franco agreed to the meeting, but then post-
poned it for "political reasons." Göring declared that he would come any-
way, and days of excruciating haggling began. Ribbentrop, alerted by the
ever-garrulous Bodenschatz on May 1, instructed his ambassador to inter-
vene. Franco still refused, but on May 9, Göring received a telegram notifying
him that the new dictator had after all agreed to see him at Saragossa. Göring
objected to the location. He demanded that Franco meet him near Valencia,
boarded the Hamburg-America liner *Huascaran* on the tenth, and weighed
anchor for Valencia escorted by four destroyers, with the intention of pro-
ceeding thus to Hamburg after the meeting.

The little armada dropped anchor off Castellón to news that Franco ada-
mantly refused to come to Valencia. Hitler signaled, forbidding Göring to
go ashore. Thwarted and outraged, the field marshal stalked the liner's decks,
as Beppo Schmid later testified, using the obvious and by now much-over-
worked simile, "snarling like a caged lion."

Suspecting that Ribbentrop was behind this humiliation, Göring ordered
the liner's course reversed to Livorno, Italy, and charged back overland to
Berlin. Here, he was handed a stinging six-page rebuke dictated by the foreign
minister on May 16, expressing "profound concern" at Göring's unauthor-
ized "state visit" to Rome and his appalling Spanish diplomatic fiasco.

May 1939

only serves to create in
nity in German government

erg.

complained Göring, refer-
out enemies. He writes me
al. 'I've a good mind to show
already taken that precaution

"But with all the arrogance

Göring grouched. "When we
ish lords they all turned out
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for everywhere." He mused
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ster Count Ciano arrived in
not been consulted, but Rib-
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"I don't even know what

November 1945, when it no
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the fabulous decoration that
Annunziata, bestowed at the
k it as a deliberate slight and
being mollified only by the
ollar in consolation.

ments in Berlin. He appeared
Defense Academy at Wannsee
General Milch to attend an
Chancellery that afternoon.
in his diary, "Führer [talks
in for Göring, fetched at last
utant Rudolf Schmundt later
was present; he was not, but
efforts that summer to head off

that he knew. Germany's offer

of friendship to the British Empire had been deliberately ignored. To Sir Neville Henderson on (May 27, 1939) Göring spoke with tears in his injured eyes about the silence with which Britain's press and Parliament had blan- keted this offer. By his reply, the ambassador showed that the two countries had drifted helplessly apart since Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia: His Majesty's government, he intoned, would not shrink from declaring war if Germany once more resorted to force.

At Carinhall later that day Göring showed him colored sketches of some tapestries that he was buying from William Randolph Hearst, the American newspaper magnate. The tapestries portrayed a bevy of toothsome ladies identified by names like Mercy and Purity. "I can't see one called Patience," Henderson dryly observed.

Göring had no more authority than a circus ringmaster that summer—a master of ceremonies. When the slim, slightly built Prince Paul of Yugoslavia paid his first state visit to Berlin early in June, Hitler permitted the field marshal to stage a thundering air display across the city's rooftops and to entertain the royal couple at Carinhall, but it was clear to Henderson, who was among the invited guests, that Göring no longer had the special responsibility for Yugoslavia (and Poland) about which he had bragged four months before.

"I wish I could see how to put a stop to the present situation," Henderson ventured to Göring. "It's getting very dangerous. We British don't want war. You may think we do, but we don't. But we shall certainly go to war if you attack the Poles." He added, "If Herr Hitler could now give us an indication that he's prepared to abandon the policy of coups and aggression, Mr. Chamberlain might give a not-unfriendly reply."

Göring shrugged. He spelled out once more Germany's "final demands," and reminded Henderson that there existed an influential clique in London who wanted "war at any price."

While not denying it, Henderson countered with Ribbentrop's name.

"People can say what they like," replied Göring, thrown onto the defensive. "But when a decision is called for, none of us counts for more than the gravel on which we are standing. It is the Führer alone who makes the decisions."

Henderson climbed into his limousine.

"Do you think that I want war?" appealed Göring, waving a hand toward the luxuries of Carinhall. "I was against war last September, as you know. And I would be again."

His influence on foreign affairs was diminishing each day. Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop boasted to the Italian ambassador in June 1939 that he had buried the hatchet with Göring—on condition that the latter stopped meddling in diplomacy. Göring kept a baleful eye on him nonetheless through the wiretaps on foreign embassies, and he opened private lines of communication to Prime Minister Chamberlain.

Göring nodded. Dahlerus busily put the idea to three English company directors visiting Berlin, Messrs A. Holden, Stanley Rawson, and Charles Spencer. They welcomed the initiative, but now Göring got cold feet. When Dahlerus came out to Carinhall again on July 8, Göring merely suggested they meet again in Hamburg in two weeks' time; but he did send Dahlerus to ask fellow Swede Axel Wenner-Gren whether he would lend his luxury yacht *Southern Cross* for the conference. On July 19, he received a discouraging reply from Wenner-Gren: Mr. Chamberlain, he said, had confided to him that the revelation of any high-level secret conference might well bring down his government; in his letter Chamberlain had, however, agreed that Field Marshal Göring did appear to be out of step with Hitler.

The mere thought of this sent shudders down Göring's spine, and over the next months he seldom tired of protesting that he would "never, never" go behind Hitler's back.

For a few days he lazed along the waterways in *Carin II*, ostensibly inspecting them on behalf of the Four-Year Plan. Dahlerus did not give up. Visiting London, he obtained Foreign Office approval for the proposed informal Anglo-German meeting. Late on July 22, he came to Göring's luxury suite at the Hotel Atlantic in Hamburg and tackled the field marshal again. Although involved in costuming himself in his whitest uniform preparatory to addressing a mass rally, Göring talked to him for two hours, then agreed to meet seven selected English businessmen. He anxiously stressed that he proposed to ask Hitler's permission for the meeting.

Carin II conveyed him onward through choppy seas to the island of Sylt. At Westerland he conferred on July 25 with his generals, ordering them to crank up the newly acquired Czech factories for war production. "Now that we've got them," Körner heard him protest, "none of you ~~Scheisskerle~~ has the faintest idea of what to do with them!" Significantly, he ordered an immediate halt to warplane exports. "Germany," he said, "must now come first." By way of explanation he added, "The political situation has changed quite a lot." On the following day he underlined this by receiving Colonel Beppo Schmid for a secret intelligence report on *Blue*, Britain, which seemed a probable consequence of war against *White*, Poland. "Contrary to his usual custom," recalled Schmid afterward, "Göring listened for several hours and expressed complete agreement."

On Friday, August 4, Göring began another weekend cruise on the *Carin II*. He was still ambivalent about the prospects of war. Nervous and apprehensive, he kept asking Beppo Schmid the one question that the intelligence officer felt least qualified to answer: "What will the British do?"

Göring had informed only his closest colleagues—Körner, Bodenschatz, and Görmert—about the coming top-secret meeting with the seven English businessmen. He and Dahlerus had selected the remote farmhouse belonging to the Swede's wife at Sönkenissen-Coog, on the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein in Germany's far north. On the pretext of joining Emmy and Edda

at their beach house on the island of Bredstedt, the last station. It was at Bredstedt that had taken unprecedented precautions, multitudes lined the station platform, printed a vivid report of the scene, and specially selected from his Havana cigar, Göring stepped from his Swede and drove off in a slow, the dense crowds to the Dahlerus from its flagpole to offer a prelude.

Dahlerus introduced the seven Brian Mountain, Sir Robert Ren had come over with Holden, Sp. After three hours (during which would be synthesizing 12 million. He proposed a toast to peace, but uneasy—the impression that Spencer to take part in very important conference 15." How Spencer arrived at this now in British Foreign Office file.

He was due to see Hitler on the telephoning Dahlerus, that he had Britain.

The days passed, and there was a bulk on the beach at Kampen a North Sea winds by a sandcastle and by notices warning of the perils that had not gone too far with these

There was one move in this dead a hopeless position—if Stalin was Soviets, like the Germans, had since January, Hitler had been probably knew of this, because he spoke of restoring Germany's trading relations, cussed the merits of such a deal had then begun dropping dark hints. May. "Germany and Russia," Henderson in June, "will not allow issued further such warnings that negotiate with Russia," he told August 7. "We still have many friends. Even so, his heart was not in the

shit
buddies

had second place in Hitler's motor

while underwent grave changes as he
y and despairing infatuation. Prince
mark by Hitler: "I am not a lonely
world, I have Göring!" Hearst-group
ally testified to the FBI in 1940 that
lay in his determination not to forfeit
he suggested, "is why Göring is so
ther man would take. He knows that
just by the scratch of a pen."

was revived during *White and Yellow*
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air attaché in Warsaw, later published
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is still living amid the fantasies of the
ators did that sort of thing.

to open his assault on Britain with an
ish Fleet anchored at Scapa Flow, its
er forbade it. Each side still hoped to
so remained initially inactive, as did the

French. The Deutsche Reichsbahn's crack "Rheingold" express train shut-
tled unscathed the length of the French front each day, from Amsterdam to
Basel.

For all his bombast and bellicose utterances, Göring detested the senseless
destruction of war, as he was about to demonstrate, and this increased the
mutual contempt between him and the career soldiers like Manstein, Rommel,
and Halder.

While Hitler toured the front, Göring remained in Berlin. When Hitler
returned, Göring transferred his own "headquarters" to the state hunting
lodge at Rominten in East Prussia. He invited the crown prince to join him
hunting stags there, but received the frosty answer that the prince would
accept only when hostilities were over. Once, when Ribbentrop was away
negotiating the future Nazi-Soviet demarcation line in Poland, Göring tele-
phoned Hitler's command train to plead for the inclusion of the Bialystok
forests in the German zone because of their valuable timber. "He says
timber," scoffed Hitler, "and means big game." A photograph taken on
September 29 showed the field marshal inspecting front-line units in a rain-
soaked leather coat, while Kesselring looked on. By that time Göring had
dictated to Beppo Schmid the ultimatum ordering Warsaw to surrender, and
when this was refused he ordered the saturation bombardment that brought
the Polish war to an end. Hitler rewarded him with the unique Grand Cross
decoration to the Iron Cross.

During those first few weeks Göring's Ministerial Defense Council restored
a semblance of Cabinet government to the Reich. "The Defense Council,"
wrote Schwerin von Krosigk, the fifty-two-year-old Oxford-educated minister
of finance, "sat several times a week and he co-opted onto it any outside
ministers he needed. I regularly attended these first sessions. At its meetings
Göring not only allowed but actively insisted on a completely frank discussion
of the matters on the agenda. So at long last we had what we had been urging
for years." But, wrote this minister, their pleasure was short-lived. Hitler
returned to Berlin after the victory parade in Warsaw, and Hans Lammers,
the senior civil servant who had headed the now-defunct Reich Cabinet, took
charge again. Turning down Göring's request for a Defense Council session
to discuss amendments to the penal code, Lammers indicated that Hitler
would now be resuming regular Cabinet meetings. Probably it was a ma-
neuver by Lammers to regain his own lost authority; the damage to the
political direction of the war was permanent, because Hitler never convened
the Cabinet again. "Moreover," lamented Krosigk later, "when Hitler shifted
his headquarters back out of Berlin again, Göring never resumed the customs
he had adopted during those first weeks of the war."

The earlier meetings of the Defense Council are portrayed in the private
records kept by participants like Goebbels, Darré, Backe, and the OKW arma-
ments specialist, Georg Thomas. "Göring," noted Darré on September 4,
the day after Britain and France had declared war, "looked fresh and

every inch a soldier. What a guy! Hess sends his stooge as usual; what a zero, he can't stand up to Göring. Thus the dwindling party is gradually frozen out."

"Britain," ruminated Göring at this session, "has nothing to gain in this war. But we might inherit the British Empire."

At their council's session on the sixth, Goebbels objected to Göring's plan to print the party emblem on food-ration cards, arguing that it would hardly advance the party's popularity. "I'm afraid, dear Dr. Goebbels," retorted Darré, "that this is not a war that can be won by popularity." Göring nodded vigorously.

Thomas's files show the Defense Council allocating oil and steel between the U-boat, Ju 88, explosives, and ammunition production programs. "The Führer," Thomas heard Göring say on September 11, in one of the few indications that Hitler consulted him on the harsh Nazi occupation policies, "intends to establish great Reich domains in Poland, and to endow particularly deserving [German] personages with farms and large estates." Hinting at the bloody purges just beginning in Poland, Göring claimed that the Polish clergy were directing a protracted guerrilla warfare against the Nazi invaders.

After this meeting, Darré noted with some disbelief the field marshal's optimism that Hitler would yet make a deal with Britain. "All the indications are," commented the minister in his diary, "that the Führer is facing a war lasting years."

By the end of the year 1939 the Defense Council had fallen into disuse. "Why does Adolf Hitler just let domestic affairs drift?" complained Darré in his private chronicle on December 4. "We ministers can't get through to him anymore. . . . In civil matters he deals with Göring alone now."

Astonishingly—because they are not even hinted at in British official histories—Hermann Göring maintained his secret channels of communication to British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain during these nervous months of what was later called the "phony war." He also entered into a round of talks with emissaries of President Franklin D. Roosevelt through contacts established by Dr. Joachim Hertslet, the Four-Year Plan's agent in Mexico. Göring talked in Berlin with the influential Swedish banker Marcus Wallenberg, and urged him to press the British to accept the German peace plan; and he sent his anglophile friend, Prince Max Egon zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, to initiate secret talks with British diplomats in Switzerland.

The most startling feature of Göring's diplomatic activities that winter of 1939/40 was that he hinted to the British that he was willing to take over the real power in Germany from Hitler, and that he would halt the persecution of Jews and pull out of the "non-German" parts of Poland; Hitler would be shunted off into "some sort of presidential role."

His peace offensive began on September 8. On that day he phoned Dahlerus in Stockholm with the triumphant news that two-thirds of the Polish Army

1939/40

DOCTOR RE

was now surrounded. He re-bombing Britain first—"In 1 Britain to act first in every workers on the following day willing to make what he calls

Simultaneously he directed—to send a message in code William Rhodes Davis. The t Davis in New York: ALL WE later a second code message SEPTEMBER 26 ROME TO MEEI (The FBI, who decoded these Göring from other items.) On with Roosevelt (as the presiden directed Hertslet to cable a fun at a Göring-controlled Reich g MENT AFTER POLAND WAR IF N TRAL U.S.A. GOVERNMENT.

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Sept 1939

was now surrounded. He repeated that his Luftwaffe would refrain from bombing Britain first—"In fact," he volunteered, "Germany will wait for Britain to act first in everything else too." Addressing Berlin munitions workers on the following day, he stated explicitly that Germany was still willing to make what he called "an honest peace."

Simultaneously he directed Hertslet—who was currently visiting Berlin—to send a message in code to a high-level contact in the United States, William Rhodes Davis. The telegram, dated September 8, was addressed to Davis in New York: ALL WELL NOW, WAR IN EAST SUCCESS. Three days later a second code message followed: NECESSARY FOR DAVIS TO COME SEPTEMBER 26 ROME TO MEET DOCTOR. DOCTOR READY TO BE BOSS HERE. (The FBI, who decoded these messages, had already identified "Doctor" as Göring from other items.) On the fifteenth, Davis was allowed an audience with Roosevelt (as the presidential diary shows). Three days after that, Göring directed Hertslet to cable a further code message to Davis, evidently hinting at a Göring-controlled Reich government: CAN ASSURE ABSOLUTE APPEASEMENT AFTER POLAND WAR IF NEW COMBINATION HERE IS ASSISTED BY NEUTRAL U.S.A. GOVERNMENT.

In Washington the labor-union boss John L. Lewis, a close friend of Davis, showed this extraordinary message to President Roosevelt. Davis reported by code to Berlin the next day, September 19: CONTENTS YOUR CABLE DISCUSSED WITH FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT WHO IN PERFECT AGREEMENT . . . THIS SIDE READY PROVIDING FLEXIBILITY WITH YOU. The upshot was a further American code message to Hertslet in Berlin, for Hermann Göring, on the twentieth, announcing that Davis had now left for Europe. (Ten days later he would actually be in Berlin, negotiating with the field marshal.) Sadly for history, nothing came of Göring's remarkable initiatives.

Equally circumspectly, though with even less success, Göring pursued his other contacts with London throughout September 1939. When two RAF airmen were shot down in Germany he phoned Dahlerus on the tenth, and sent their letters to London with a personal message to say that they were alive and well. (The indignant Foreign Office requested the Swedes not to forward any more such letters, since the Red Cross was the proper channel.)

After the Soviet Union sprang its armies on eastern Poland on September 17, Göring telephoned Dahlerus in Sweden. "What are you going to do about it?" he asked.

"I am remaining here," Dahlerus replied emphatically; but he related this renewed approach to the British legation the next day. "The field marshal is willing to do all he can to arrange a truce," he said, "provided he gets the credit." If Göring could meet somebody like General Ironside on neutral ground, this would give him the necessary leverage to persuade Hitler. Arriving back in Berlin on the twenty-first, however, Dahlerus had to tell Göring that the British were refusing to state terms—it was for him to find out first what Göring had to offer, they said. Three days later Dahlerus met Sir George

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sion of the country and then to negotiate on the question of its
 cession. "I will put a problem to you," he wrote to his minister
 Podewils; "when one has the advantage, should one take advan-
 tage of it or not? I am prepared with my troops and with every-
 thing. If I do not exploit my opportunity, I shall have in my hands
 an asset that I do not know how to use; but if I do exploit it, they
 will say that I am clever enough to turn to good account the ad-
 vantage I possess over my neighbours." And in 1743, he says, look-
 ing back in the preface to the first draft of his *Memoirs*: "I do not
 claim to defend the policy which the established custom of the
 nations has handed down to us as legitimate. I merely expound in
 simple fashion the reasons which, it seems to me, bind every prince
 to follow the practice authorizing deceit and misuse of force; and
 if he did not, I say frankly that his neighbours would only take
 advantage of his integrity, and that the wrong assumption and the
 fallacious conclusion would ascribe to weakness what had been
 only virtuousness on his part. These reflections and many others,
 well weighed, have made me decide to conform to the custom of
 princes. . . . One finds oneself confronted, at bottom, with choos-
ing between the dreadful necessity of sacrificing one's subjects or
one's word. . . . And so the sovereign sacrifices himself for the
welfare of his subjects." What other prince would have been able
 to discuss with such deep and clear, such honourable and plainly
 worded objectivity, this immense moral dilemma, which, unfortu-
 nately, is an undeniable reality! Who else indeed would have been
 even conscious of this tragic conflict? The sense of an overwhelm-
 ing life-tragedy breathes to us out of these and countless similar
 confessions made in widely dissimilar periods of his life. They are
 the words of a genius predestined by its intellectual form for a world
 of pure reflection, but flung, a martyr, into the troubled sphere
 of action, to which — humbly accepting its fate — it sacrifices itself.
 This, in all nudity, was the real soul of that intriguer and un-
 scrupulous *Realpolitiker*. But men are very odd: when one man
 rises up in their midst, sharing their guilt, indeed, but knowing it
 and suffering under it, they do not call him greater and better than
 themselves, but throw it in his face that he is no saint.

For that matter, not only the inner life of Frederick the Great,
 but his system of foreign policy is very often entirely misjudged.
 He was in no sense Austria's "hereditary enemy." We have seen

A MAN OF CONTRASTS

Hitler was a person of contrasts, a man of dualities who thought and spoke in disjunctives. Anybody accused of crime should either be acquitted or beheaded; "the only choice," he said, "is between life and death, victory or destruction, glory or ignominy. . . . We shall be conquering heroes or sacrificial lambs." The battle against the Jews, he predicted, could end "either with the victory of the Aryan side or its annihilation and victory of the Jews." Or again, "One is either a hammer or an anvil." A person either followed him blindly or was a traitor. A leader could be either brutal and hard as steel or as soft and weak as a woman. There was absolutely no other alternative.⁸⁰

The urbane and perceptive French ambassador André François-Poncet was fascinated by the dual nature of the person he visited so often: "The same man, good-natured in appearance and sensitive to the beauties of nature, who, across a tea table, expressed reasonable opinions on European politics, was capable of the wildest frenzies, the most savage exaltation and the most delirious ambition."⁸⁰

Creation and Destruction

The constant battle within him between the opposing forces of destruction and creativity was brought into particularly sharp focus during a conversation prior to the war with Professor Burckhardt, the League of Nations representative for Danzig. Burckhardt had asked for an interview in an effort to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Polish problem. At one moment Hitler shook with rage, crashed his fists against table and walls, and screamed in a voice cracking with fury, "If the slightest incident occurs I will smash the Poles without warning, so that not a trace of Poland will ever be found. I'll smash them like lightning with the full power of a mechanized army. . . ." Then he suddenly stopped, turned to look pensively out the window at the glorious Alps, and observed quietly, "How fortunate I am when I am here. I have worked hard enough. Now I need a rest. . . . Oh, how gladly would I stay here and work as an artist. I am an artist, you know." Years later, in the midst of war, he mused, "Wars come and go. What remains is only the values bestowed by culture. Hence my love of art, music, and architecture—are they not the powers which point the way for future humanity?"⁸¹

Albert Speer has described the constant conflict between destruction and creation, observing in his memoirs that he concentrated on Hitler's architecture "not only because it was my field but because I believe at least one pregnant clue to this strange man lies there. It was not his avocation; it was his obsession. And long before the end I knew that Hitler was not destroying to build, he was building to destroy."⁸²

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

Thoughts of death and destruction kept intruding on plans for creation. In setting forth grandiose plans for magnificent stone buildings greater than the pyramids, and while proclaiming that he was "building for all eternity," he felt compelled to add a note of finality and death: "We are the last Germany. If we should ever go down, then there will no longer be a Germany." In planning the colossal Assembly Hall in Nuremberg, he included in his sketches one showing what the building would look like as a ruin.⁹³

The life-long interplay between destruction and creativity is seen vividly during the last days. He spent his 56th and last birthday, 20 April 1945, working until 3 o'clock in the morning on plans for the "greater Linz" which he had fussed over for many years. But during this same period he also called forth an orgy of destruction. Farms and woodlands were to be burned, cattle slaughtered. Works of art, monuments, palaces, castles, churches, theatres—all were to be obliterated. The idea is conveyed clearly in an editorial which, at Hitler's express command, appeared in the Party organ *Völkischer Beobachter* on 7 September 1944: "Not a German stock of wheat is to feed the enemy, not a German mouth to give him information, not a German hand to offer him help. He is to find . . . nothing but death, annihilation and hatred."⁹⁴

Psychologists have noted that fire is an expressive symbol of destruction, "admirably suited to the venting of aggressive, destructive tendencies." Hitler was fascinated by fire. He said that he would like to have a fireplace in every room of his house. The nightly conversations at the Berghof were held, summer and winter, in front of a gigantic fire which Hitler tended himself. He "delighted in throwing fresh logs on the roaring flames."

He worked himself into a frenzy of delight over the pictures of great capitals of Europe in flames. In 1939 he reveled in a newsreel of the bombing and burning of Warsaw, crying ecstatically to an intimate, "That is how we will annihilate them!" In 1940 he was delighted with pictures of the burning of London and the prospects of destroying it totally. "Have you ever looked at a map of London?" he gloated. "It's so closely built up that one source of fire alone would suffice to destroy the whole city, as happened once before, 200 years ago. Göring wants to use innumerable incendiary bombs of an altogether new type to create sources of fire in all parts of London. Fires everywhere. Thousands of them. Then they'll unite in one gigantic area of conflagration. Explosive bombs don't work, but it can be done with incendiary bombs—total destruction of London. What use will their fire department be once that really starts!" He was, it will be recalled, furious with the commandant of Paris for not setting that city afire; he kept sending the famous interrogatory telegram, "Is Paris burning?" Hitler also associated death with fire, once remarking that the best way to die would be to be burned in one's own home, which would make, he said, "a magnificent funeral pyre." As we shall see, however,

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The Image and the Man

his efforts to have his own be than magnificent.⁹⁵

Honesty and Duplicity

Hitler had a double image of himself an honest and straight abide by treaties "blindly and a clever dissimulator who could and who was, he said, "the great he confided that "Treaties will be useful. . . . Treaties exist for the convenient moment."⁹⁶

In August 1939, when it was necessary that the British, after word, might not believe his promises, he was horrified at the thought. He surprised and cried, "Idiots! Have I

The question must be asked. In the Purge of June 1934, he had or he suspected of opposing him. He said:

I must make here the statement that in my movement there lies not a single man who has been murdered!

Repeatedly he gave his "sacred" word that he had "no intention of threatening Europe"; but in the internal affairs of the Reich he swore that "peace will never be guaranteed" "the inviolability" of a phrase," he said, "that is our

One reason he felt obliged to be honest may have been that to prevaricate. He admitted at the beginning of a speech he gave that he broke a long silence after the

Freed from the heavy burden of long time, I now consider myself to the German people, either to myself or to

He lied for tactical reasons. He considered matters of little apparent importance.

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The Image and the Man

his efforts to have his own body consumed by fire were notably less than magnificent.⁹⁵

Honesty and Duplicity

Hitler had a double image of his own integrity. He considered himself an honest and straightforward man who would, for example, abide by treaties "blindly and faithfully"; but he also saw himself as a clever dissimulator who could "fool people" into believing anything and who was, he said, "the greatest actor in Europe." Playing this role, he confided that "Treaties will be honored only as long as they are useful. . . . Treaties exist for the purpose of being broken at the most convenient moment."⁹⁶

In August 1939, when it was suggested to him by a Swedish emissary that the British, after their long experience with his broken word, might not believe his promises with regard to Poland, Hitler was horrified at the thought. He stopped his pacing, turned in hurt surprise and cried, "Idiot! Have I ever in my entire life ever told a lie?"⁹⁷

The question must be answered affirmatively. During the Blood Purge of June 1934, he had ordered the murder of hundreds of people he suspected of opposing him. But two years later in a public speech he said:

I must make here the solemn declaration: On the road of our movement there lies not one single opponent whom we have murdered!

Repeatedly he gave his "sacred word" to Germany and the world: he had "no intention of threatening anyone"; he had "no territorial demands to make in Europe"; he had no intention whatever of "interfering in the internal affairs of Austria or of annexing Austria"; he swore that "peace will never be broken by us"; he would personally guarantee "the inviolability" of all his neighbors' territory. "That is not a phrase," he said, "that is our sacred will."⁹⁸

One reason he felt obliged to insist so stridently that he was an honest man may have been that he was aware of his own propensity to prevaricate. He admitted as much in a revealing comment at the beginning of a speech he gave in Berlin on 10 September 1943. He broke a long silence after the catastrophe of Stalingrad by saying:

Freed from the heavy burden of expectation weighing on us for a long time, I now consider that the moment has come again to address myself to the German people *without having to resort to lies, either to myself or to the public.*⁹⁹

He lied for tactical reasons, but he also lied, gratuitously, over matters of little apparent importance. He gave, for example, many dif-

faith . . . concentrated strength . . . iron energy . . . bold determination."

In 1939 it was announced that "Adolf Hitler is the greatest German of all times." But that was not enough. Adulation waited until 1941 before it reached its apogee: "The Führer is the highest synthesis of his race. . . . He embodies the universalism of Goethe, the depth of Kant, the dynamism of Hegel, the patriotism of Fichte, the genius of Frederick II, the realism of Bismarck as well as the tumultuous inspiration of Wagner, the perspicacity of Spengler. He embodies the inspiration of Tannenberg . . . and the dash of *Sturm und Drang*." ⁷²

All this raises questions that are as obvious as they are psychologically complex: What was the insatiable need within this person that required such total approval? Why all this craving for personal power? Why did Hitler condemn himself to infallibility?

Racial Theory and *Volksgemeinschaft*

Hitler's idea of race was the bedrock upon which all else depended. Struggle and conflict were important to him, but the crucial struggle of all history was racial; the *Führerprinzip* was important, but the mission of this leader was to establish a racially pure "New Order." He felt himself to be the very embodiment of that racial idea. He was not the representative of the German people; he *was*—somehow—the *Volk*, as he himself proclaimed: "*Ich bin das deutsche Volk!*"

Hitler was so preposterous and irrational when he spoke about race that he was never fully believed by eminently sensible critics. Yet he meant precisely what he said. In dozens of impassioned and sincere statements he promised the German people that he intended to establish a society based upon racial discrimination. He fulfilled that promise.

It is a simple matter to set forth his racial theory; it is not so easy to convey its importance to him as a person or to his government, where it took on the dimension of a historic force. We must listen to Hitler on this issue and take him very seriously. "The race question," he said, "not only furnishes the key to world history, but also to human culture as a whole." Mixture of the blood was to him *the* original sin and *the* cause for the decline of civilization, or the expulsion from Paradise, in Hitler's version of the Garden of Eden story: "The Aryan gave up the purity of his blood and therefore he also lost his place in the Paradise which he had created for himself. He became submerged in the race-mixture. . . . In this way culture and empires collapsed in order to make room for new formations. . . . People do not perish by lost wars, but by the loss of that force of resistance which is contained only in the pure blood. All that is not race in this world is trash." ⁷³

Unlike other German political theorists who joined Hegel in exalting the power of the State as "the institutionalization of God on earth," Hitler considered political forms of secondary importance: "The State is a means to an end. Its end is the preservation and the promotion

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HOD: ADOLF HITLER

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The Child As Father to the Man

unlikely that Hitler chose this particular village at random. He seems to have had a compulsion to wipe out—quite literally—the suspicion of his own Jewish blood by obliterating the birthplace of his father and the grave of his grandmother.

Hitler's uneasiness about his ancestors is suggested in a remark he made in 1930 when reporters were trying to get information about his family. "These people," he said, "must never find out who I am. They mustn't know where I come from or my family background."¹³ As we have noted, he felt it necessary to lie about his ancestors, saying, for example, that they had come from Lower Saxony.

There is other evidence that Hitler worried about his own "Jewishness." The two physical characteristics he associated with Jews—body odors and large noses—were two things that bothered him about himself. Hitler's obsessive concern with personal cleanliness and his abhorrence of perfume and aftershave lotion was so great, one suspects, because he was afraid that either the smell of body odor or the use of perfume to cover it up might make people think he was a Jew. When one of his colleagues asked why Jews "always remain strangers in the nation," Hitler had a ready answer: "The Jews [have] a different smell." He expressed his repugnance for both odor and perfume publicly in a Munich speech of 29 November 1939:

Racial instinct protected the people; the *odor* of that race deterred Gentiles from marrying Jews. At present in these days of perfume, where any dandy can assume the same *odor* as anyone else, the feeling for these finer distinctions between peoples is being lost. The Jew counts on that.¹⁴

Those who have commented on Hitler's physical characteristics have all said that his least attractive feature was his grossly shaped nose and unusually large nostrils—hence the bushy little mustache grown just wide enough to help conceal them. With this in mind, it is worth noting Hitler's pointed observation about the Jewish people: they have, he said, a characteristic which is "permanently common to all Jews from the ghetto of Warsaw to the bazaars of Morocco: the offensive nose, the cruel, *vicious nostrils*. . . ."¹⁵

THE FATHER: ALOIS (SCHICKELGRUBER) HITLER

Alois Hitler's career in the Austrian bureaucracy had been eminently respectable. After nine years of service he had achieved the title of senior assistant customs official, and by 1892 he had been promoted to higher collector, the highest rank open to a man of only an ele-

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HIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

good for you." 209 Eva's own private diary and in letters the diary is that of an immature for Hitler is unmistakably

more and more bound to Eva. every night, and we have a mpt on his life in the "Bomb a typewriter and pocked with crases of the kind Hitler had nce with Kubizek. One must possible for Hitler to love anyone and tender concern for

perhaps a little tired. I hope rest in your arms. I have a to the German people comes that the dangers I encounter tters at the Front. I thank you ask you also to thank your ous mother for their greetings f the honor—please tell them who comes from such a dis- n the uniform I was wearing roof that Providence has pro- nore to fear from our enemies.

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The Child As Father to the Man

anything happened to you. From our first meeting on, I have promised myself to follow you wherever you go, even to death. You know that I live only for your love.

Your Eva

In the end, as we shall see, she flew to crumbling Berlin to die with the man she loved. Amid the bedlam of the last days in Hitler's air raid shelter, while others faced death with varying degrees of cowardice, panic, and histrionics, Eva Braun grew in stature. There was about her a quiet inner strength. Even someone who had cordially disliked her said at the end that "she attained heights which more than atoned for the vanities and frivolities of the past." 270

Affairs with Other Women

Though he could not possibly have had the number of sexual liaisons with beautiful young women that rumor and conjecture have claimed, Hitler apparently had a number of fleeting affairs or overnight experiences during the years that he lived with Geli Raubal and Eva Braun.

A German film director testified to OSS officers during the war that he had helped supply Hitler with attractive starlets for the night.²⁷¹ He had been infatuated with the famous movie director Leni Riefenstahl, who filmed both the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936 and the effective propaganda film *The Triumph of the Will* in 1934. Fräulein Riefenstahl later denied having anything more than a platonic relationship with the Führer. The Italian foreign minister believed that Hitler had had intimate relations with a Sigrid von Lappus, whom he described as 20 years old with "beautiful quiet eyes." ²⁷² U.S. Military Intelligence found evidence of intimate affairs with two young Munich women, Fräuleins Abel and Haue.²⁷³ Ernst Hanfstaengl reported that, while entertaining Hitler in his home one evening, he returned from calling a taxicab to stumble upon an awkward scene. Hitler was down on his knees in front of Hanfstaengl's beautiful wife, Hélène. He was proclaiming his love for her, saying that it was a shame he had not met her while she was still free and declaring himself her "slave." He made a similar declaration in Berlin to one of the daughters of a benefactor, again going down on his knees in front of the embarrassed young woman.²⁷⁴

According to another intimate, Hitler had an affair with a young married woman, Suzi Liptauer, who, after one strange encounter, tried to hang herself in a Munich hotel. The last wife of the leader of the Labor Front, Frau Inge Ley, committed suicide, it is reported, after having an affair with him. The German film star Renaté Mueller also killed herself, reportedly after a harrowing sexual experience with him.²⁷⁵ Hitler himself claimed that Frau General Ludendorff was quite mad about him, and that shortly before she married the general she had entreated the Führer to be her lover.²⁷⁶

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

There can be no doubt that Hitler was impressed by Miss Unity Walkyrie Mitford, the daughter of Lord Redesdale. Often, and in front of Eva Braun, he extolled her as the "perfect Germanic woman." Miss Mitford, who had long enthused over Hitler's ideas, developed a cloying devotion to his person. She and her sister, who later married Sir Oswald Mosley, the British fascist leader, would haunt the Osteria Bavaria first to gaze at their hero and then, after they had been welcomed to the group, to spend hours listening with rapture to his table conversation.

On one occasion Miss Mitford astonished the British ambassador, Sir Neville Henderson, by greeting him in public with the Hitler salute and a loud "Heil Hitler!" Sir Neville was so dumbfounded he forgot his usual response to such greeting: snapping to attention, giving a crisp British Army salute, and proclaiming, "Rule Britannia!"²⁷⁷ Miss Mitford's car was emblazoned with both a swastika and a Union Jack. She drove through her adopted Fatherland breathlessly and indefatigably preaching the message of the flags and the symbol of her name: the unity between the "Lord of the Land and the Ruler of the Seas." For this faith and this mission, she said, she would gladly die. She very nearly did.

On 3 September 1939, when Britain entered into a state of war with Germany, Unity Mitford saw the dream of her life shattered. In despair, she went to the English Garden in Munich and shot herself in the head. Adolf Hitler sent for the best physicians, brought her flowers in the hospital, held her hand, and signed a portrait of himself which she kept at her bedside table. On his orders, she was escorted by his personal physician to Switzerland, where she recovered. She died in England in 1948.²⁷⁸

HITLER'S SEX LIFE

No area of Hitler's life has been the subject of more controversy and speculation than his sexual practices. It has been asserted, variously, that he was absolutely normal, that he was a homosexual, that he had no interest whatever in sex, that he engaged in a particularly gross form of perversion.

Serious students of his career will wish to pursue this matter in some detail—not in order to indulge prurient interests, but because of its redeeming historical value. For one major contribution that psychoanalysis made to historical biography is the demonstration that sexual attitudes and practices play an important and integral part in personality development. Moreover, they help shape a person's social thinking. As Theodor Reik has noted, "Whoever has had the opportunity to observe

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persons analytically for any but a distinct impression that the individual's attitude toward sex

It is probable that we shall find Hitler's sex life. But of one thing biographers untrained and disinterested are sure: that Hitler was "in all respects a normal man" is simply too much evidence against him.

Ever since the trauma of his childhood, intercourse had seemed frightfully repelled by sex, he was also interested in and sketches are replete with sexual imagery. Every child is excited by rape, prostitution, sexual practices. He wanted von Stuck's sensuous paintings, had "blue" films made especially for him which "only a pervert could watch."²⁸⁰

The amount of time he devoted to sexual practices was among his favorite pastimes; as chancellor, he would devote about their sexual experiences to his own contributions. His own contributions to the length and with increasing excitement. Several of the chorus girls who had nothing much happened except whole evening . . . of his greatness.

Much as he enjoyed sexual activity, he was usually careful of his own age. He delighted in motherly older women to stroke him; he had been outraged when it was later, as chancellor, he refused to attend parties or at state functions. I

* Proponents of this view include Sigmund Freud (Adolf Hitler, *passim*) and John Toland (*Adolf Hitler* and valets also believed that rumors were false." (Zoller, *Privat*, 107; and Linow, *Hitler* self apparently told her sister that he was completely normal." (Nerlin Gun, letter to the author). But she gave a very different impression since their schoolgirl days. To this fact she confided disgustedly, "As far as I know nothing from him. [Als Mann habe ich ihn nie gekannt]." (Hitler, *interview*, April, 1967).

Führer had proclaimed that life, absolutely essential to

not in 1939 with Hitler's in- power in 1933. Psychologi- cal: perhaps in the conflicts of childhood, but certainly in his life to Hitler was brought home by his Führer in Paris in 1940. Hitler was totally unimpressed by the triumphal arch, to be erected in the center of the city, to dwarf the one in Paris. But the triumphal arch was dated 1925. He came to mean by the connection between the historians must ask the question, in 1925?" 106 from Landsberg prison, was Party and very little support. The triumphal arch in that year indicates his feeling that the resolve to

passage in his second book, drove him insatiably onward: "If we go 10 or 1,000 kilometers we gain, it will always be worth it. To live in peace with an enemy, for as he told his foreign ally of Russia today, I could not live myself. [Ich kann nicht leben in Frieden mit einem Feinde.] " 107 "The psychological need for battle" 108 "The reason why Hitler required war: the Motherland from impure conditions of maximum state of people, would provide the ideal launch a vast program of conquest." Furthermore, conquest of extermination camps where the soil of his Reich. Both the conditions for mass killings are important: destruction of Lives Which are unworthy of life (Lebensunwerten Lebens), and in 1939. That is, he would have said that he would start with the "Reinigung." As the German people Hitler's idea of "cleans-

ing" and genocide has commented: "If a biography of Hitler is undertaken from a psychoanalytical approach, his compulsions about hygiene and cleanliness would be its most important point of departure." 109

Thus were private feelings projected into public policy: because the Führer felt unclean and unworthy, millions of people had to die.

Nazi foreign policy also illustrates the way personal fantasies and unconscious desires affected national decisions. The dizzy pace of crisis upon crisis—from the Rhineland to Austria to the Sudetenland to Prague to Poland—was related to Hitler's personal battle against time and his fantasies about the imminence of death. Against all medical evidence, he was convinced that, like his mother, he was suffering from terminal cancer. He must do his conquering now before death conquered him. 110

His decision to seize Austria in the Anschluss (annexation) of 1938 provides a particularly vivid illustration of the connection between private feelings and foreign relations. Of course it is true there were other reasons for the Anschluss, but since they have been set forth in many books, they need no emphasis here.

We have seen that in Hitler's imagery his mother was identified with Germany. He loved her with the intense "primitive idealization" associated with borderline personalities. As he loved her as the racially pure Motherland, so he hated the bureaucratic, racially mixed Austria, which he associated with his bureaucratic and racially suspect father. Just as he spoke well of his father publicly in stilted, standard phrases, so he could also refer to Austria as his "beautiful, beloved homeland." But basically he despised them both. To his mind, the "debauched" Austrian dynasty—exactly like his father—had defiled and "betrayed" Germany again and again. 111

Even as a boy, he said, he knew that Austria—like his cold and distant father—"did not and could not provide any love for us Germans." Austria, in ways reminiscent of his father's treatment of him, had also tried "to oppress and handicap every truly great German." Hitler's hatred for his father was intense; his hatred for Austria was, he said, "fanned into flaming indignation and contempt." 112

Both his father and Austria evoked in him fears of blood contamination by the Jews. The Austrian capital (to which his father had gone before him) was a cesspool of racial pollution: "Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Serbs, Croats, etc.—but among them all the eternal fission-fungus [Spaltpilz] of humanity: Jews and more Jews. To me the city was the personification of incest [Blutschande]." 113

The emotional young German patriot must have despised his father's rejection of Germany. The old man's grandson, Adolf's nephew William, testified that "He [Alois Hitler] considered it a grave insult to be classed [as a German] and stoutly maintained that he was an Austrian, and that was something entirely different." 114

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THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

"reaction formation," masking voyeurism and perverse sexual interests behind ostentatiously prudish behavior. His scrupulous personal cleanliness and compulsive handwashing indicates unconscious guilt feelings and the desire to wash away "dirtiness." He also sought to dull feelings of unworthiness by a kind of "introjection" in which he took unto himself the role of moral and religious leader. He could not possibly be guilt-ridden because he was the chosen instrument of God Almighty, the Messiah who spoke the words of Jesus, proclaimed himself as infallible as the Pope, and established his Reich upon patterns perverted from the Catholic Church.

His many references to other people as being "unworthy" indicate continuing concern about his own worth. One way he found to reassure himself was to put the onus of unworthiness onto others and then have them destroyed. In 1929, at the conclusion of an early Nuremberg rally, he declared that if a million children were born in a year and 800,000 of the weakest and most "unworthy" were killed, the end result would be a strengthening of the population. In his decree of September 1939 which called for the "Destruction of Lives which Are Unworthy of Being Lived," he said that as "the father of his people" he had the responsibility of making sure that unworthy members of his family were destroyed.¹²⁰ In the late stages of the war, as his difficulties and self-doubts increased, so did his list of those who were "unworthy" to live. By the spring of 1945 he had reached the conclusion that the entire German people had proved unworthy of him. They all must perish.¹²¹

In addition to punishing others, he may also have tried to lessen feelings of guilt by punishing himself. As a young man he stayed on for years in Vienna, a city he detested, when he could easily have moved to the Germany he loved; he suffered needlessly from hunger and privation; his reported perversion was monstrously masochistic; and he talked repeatedly of killing himself, the ultimate masochistic act. There is strong evidence to support a German psychiatrist's conclusion that as a personality Hitler was "massively self-destructive." One form of self-punishment can be seen in a curious pattern in Hitler's life. Time after time he seemed to cultivate difficulties for himself and to court disaster. "Many of Hitler's actions," an observer has written, "remain inexplicable unless we assume that he did not (either consciously or unconsciously) always intend to succeed . . . Hitler was . . . a man bent on doing injury to himself."¹²²

This suggestion needs to be investigated, for if Hitler had an impulse for self-injury and an unconscious desire for defeat, it would help to explain some surprising facts about his career.

Of course, Hitler's life can be read as a remarkable success story. The unlikely hero is played by a neurotic dropout from Linz and Vienna who, though he had failed in all his previous undertakings and had been jailed at the start of his political career, became master of Germany and arbiter of Europe within a decade. Surely biographers are justified in dwelling on Hitler's remarkable successes: his skill in pulling the Party

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The Fiasco of 1923

Hitler's first try for l
choosing alternatives leas
that he planned not merel
to overthrow the "Weima

392 * The Jewish doctors keep too many
alive. They do not believe in a pauper
hundred death - so they value life and

at all costs, c

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THIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

and perverse sexual interests
 His scrupulous personal cleanliness
 unconscious guilt feelings
 He also sought to dull feelings
 "in which he took unto himself
 He could not possibly be
 instrument of God Almighty, the
 proclaimed himself as infallible
 upon patterns perverted from the

people as being "unworthy" individuals
 unworthy. One way he found to remove
 unworthiness onto others and then
 conclusion of an early Nuremberg
 children were born in a year and
 worthy" were killed, the end result
 nation. In his decree of September
 of Lives which Are Unworthy of
 father of his people" he had the
 worthy members of his family were
 war, as his difficulties and self
 who were "unworthy" to live. By
 conclusion that the entire German
 they all must perish.¹²¹

he may also have tried to lessen
 As a young man he stayed on for
 then he could easily have moved to
 endlessly from hunger and privation
 masochistic; and he talked
 masochistic act. There is
 psychiatrist's conclusion that as a
 "destructive." One form of self-
 pattern in Hitler's life. Time after
 for himself and to court disaster.
 has written, "remain inexplicable
 consciously or unconsciously")
 s... a man bent on doing injury

stigated, for if Hitler had an insatiable
 desire for defeat, it would help
 his career.

ed as a remarkable success story.
 ic dropout from Linz and Vienna
 vious undertakings and had been
 became master of Germany and
 rely biographers are justified in
 ses: his skill in pulling the Party

for keep too many
 things in a power
 only
 to value life and -

From Private Neurosis to Public Policy

together after the disaster of the Beer Hall Putsch; his insight and perseverance during the political crisis of 1932; his brilliant diplomatic coups and smashing military victories at the start of the war.

And yet another, very different pattern of behavior also is characteristic of this complex and deeply divided personality: throughout his life Adolf Hitler flirted with failure, talked of defeat even in moments of triumph, and repeatedly involved himself unnecessarily in situations that were fraught with danger to himself and his movement. He liked to think of himself as a ruthless and ice-cold gambler, but he gambled at very bad odds. He once confessed that somehow he felt compelled to court disaster: "You know, I am like a wanderer who must cross an abyss on the edge of a knife. But I must, I just must cross."¹²³

Declined Opportunities of Youth

Even though he had contrived to drop out of *Realschule*, young Adolf was still given a marvelous opportunity when he arrived in Vienna in 1908 to enter the artistic world he had set his heart on. A friend of his mother's had connections with Alfred Roller, a noted artist and director of scenery at the Imperial Opera. Adolf could have had a job painting backdrops for the Vienna Opera, thus combining two of his greatest loves, painting and Wagner. A friend wrote in Hitler's behalf, and Professor Roller offered to help the young man. But Adolf refused to take advantage of his opportunity.¹²⁴ Instead, quite on his own, he tried to get into the Viennese Academy of Art. He failed his first examination and then, when given a second chance, refused to apply himself. It may be true that he took a few art lessons from a man named Panholzer in Vienna. But there is no basis for the conclusion, reached by one biographer, that after failing his first examination he "now did what he had failed to do in school: worked industriously, effectively and purposefully."¹²⁵

On the contrary, his roommate during these months reported that Hitler did no serious painting at all. He went to operas almost every night; he spent hours walking around the Ring; he designed grandiose buildings; he set forth schemes for traveling orchestras; he wrote sketches for dramas and operas; he chattered about life, sex, and politics by the hour. Indeed, he did almost everything but apply himself effectively and purposefully to his painting. The result was that he was not even admitted to the entrance examination when he reapplied in October 1908.¹²⁶

The Fiasco of 1923

Hitler's first try for political power also illustrates the pattern of choosing alternatives least likely to succeed. In 1923 he had proclaimed that he planned not merely a *Putsch* in Bavaria, but a march on Berlin to overthrow the "Weimar traitors." Openly and explicitly promising

at all costs, at all cowardly costs. 393

something strange, which I had never noticed when he had talked to me in moments of the excitement. It was as if another being spoke out of him and moved him as much as it did me. It wasn't as if a speaker being carried away by his own words. I rather felt as though he himself listened to the excitement and emotion to what burst forth from his elementary force. I will not attempt to interpret this phenomenon, but it was a state of complete ecstasy and euphoria, which he transferred the character of *Rienzi*, when mentioning him as a model or example, with reference to the plane of his own ambitions. But it was rather a cheap adaptation. Indeed, the impact of this was rather a sheer external impulse which came to speak. Like flood waters breaking their dykes, it burst forth from him. He conjured up in grandiose pictures his own future and that of his

I had been convinced that my friend wanted to be an artist, a painter, or perhaps an architect. Now it was no longer the case. Now he aspired to something which I could not yet fully grasp. It rather surprised me to thought that the vocation of the artist was for him the most desirable goal. But now he was talking of something which, one day, he would receive from the people, a liberation out of servitude to the heights of freedom. I knew an unknown youth who spoke to me in that strange way, spoke of a special mission which one day would be entrusted to him, and I, his only listener, could hardly understand what he meant. Many years had to pass before I could grasp the significance of this enraptured hour for my

These days were followed by silence. I returned to the town. The clock struck three. We parted from my house. Adolf shook hands with me,

and I was astonished to see that he did not go in the direction of his home, but turned again towards the mountains.

"Where are you going now?" I asked him, surprised. He replied briefly, "I want to be alone."

In the following weeks and months he never again mentioned this hour on the Freinberg. At first it struck me as odd and I could find no explanation for his strange behaviour, for I could not believe that he had forgotten it altogether. Indeed he never did forget it, as I discovered thirty-three years later. But he kept silent about it because he wanted to keep that hour entirely to himself. That I could understand, and I respected his silence. After all, it was *his* hour, not mine. I had played only the modest role of a sympathetic friend.

In 1939, shortly before war broke out, when I, for the first time visited Bayreuth as the guest of the Reichs Chancellor, I thought I would please my host by reminding him of that nocturnal hour on the Freinberg, so I told Adolf Hitler what I remembered of it, assuming that the enormous multitude of impressions and events which had filled these past decades would have pushed into the background the experience of a seventeen-year-old youth. But after a few words I sensed that he vividly recalled that hour and had retained all its details in his memory. He was visibly pleased that my account confirmed his own recollections. I was also present when Adolf Hitler retold this sequel to the performance of *Rienzi* in Linz to Frau Wagner, at whose home we were both guests. Thus my own memory was doubly confirmed. The words with which Hitler concluded his story to Frau Wagner are also unforgettable for me. He said solemnly, "In that hour it began."

grand alliance to be supported
ed States, which, incidentally,
ope to regain their prosperity,
or American products.

Ludendorff, too, lent his support
them, Ludendorff, Hoffmann
with several leading French
General Malcolm, the British
and Hesnard on the French
head of the French Control
declared themselves ready to
policy, their governments were
evik danger, and in the end

European industry met with
ted among industrial leaders
embourg, M. Duchemin, of
fred Mond and Sir Harry
nperial Chemical Industries,
thers. At first the industrial
rather reluctant. Rechberg,
that international measures
not be undertaken without
began conversations with

igned between the German
had a decisive influence, and
s had proved highly advan-
industries of Germany and
joined by those of Belgium
r the International Rohstahl
n. Similar agreements were
ries of France and Germany.
joined the Franco-German

oration could not remain
nsequences. Through Poin-
contact with Marshal Foch.

Rechberg himself declared: 'Marshal Foch has been the most
outspoken enemy of Germany. But when I talked with him, in
1923, the great French soldier showed an astonishing understand-
ing of the Bolshevik danger. He had come to the conclusion that
the old antagonisms of the European nations were now outdated,
and that industrial co-operation between our countries must be
guaranteed by military agreements.'

Between them Rechberg and Foch worked out the following
proposal:

'A ratio of 5 to 3 be established between the French and Ger-
man Armies. A Supreme Command of French and German
generals to be created, giving each party the right, in times of
peace, to inspect both armies, and this Joint Command to direct
them in times of war. To every German Headquarters, from
the divisional level up, a French staff officer should be attached.
Once in force, Britain should be invited to join this agreement,
with the strength of the British forces to be determined by the
British themselves.'

A naval agreement between the three powers was also envisaged.

However, this policy met with strong resistance from the
leadership of the Reichswehr. Both General von Seeckt and
General Schleicher were against breaking off the relations already
established with the Red Army. To carry through such plans as
these against the opposition of the German General Staff was
clearly impossible.

General Hoffmann had never sought to disguise his aims: he
was convinced that Russian Bolshevism could only be removed
by a German invasion, penetrating at least as far as the Urals.
He was convinced, furthermore, that Germany alone was not
strong enough to undertake such an invasion unless she were
assured of the full support of France, Britain and the United States.

In the midst of his efforts to bring about the Western Alliance,
General Hoffmann died, somewhat mysteriously, in 1927. Then
Ludendorff lost faith in the Western Allies, and turned towards
the extreme wing of nationalism and to Hitler.

Arnold Rechberg was arrested on Hitler's orders at the time of
the non-aggression pact with Soviet Russia, for through me he

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ies of Nostradamus—cluded—the pamphlet 'fire-machines', stress- would be preserved rochures, I had never endous effect. All the es to divert the great reach South-eastern

's armoured column ille, the capitulation of the Anglo-French ment at Arras. At this won.

he German armies to additional battlegrounds planation in the per-

at the climax of the position to attack the est—that is, from the units to hold off their an motorized spear- al and wait for the against the French ports from the front, nearly established that titute a threat to the ve put forward the e failed, and that he which would have erman General Staff

ation 'Seelöwe' (Sea- for this giant under- when, in September,

man alliance against

England at the armistice negotiations with France is also attribut- able to his personal views and prejudices.

Anti-British feeling was running high in France at the time, and was intensified by the heroic struggle of the French Fleet against the superior forces of the British. As far as the British were concerned, the *Entente Cordiale* was dead, as it was of little use to them in the life-and-death struggle for their own island home which now ensued. Churchill admitted quite openly that he had refused to expend the strength of the British Air Force in France.

German relations with France, however, could never grow into an active collaboration because of Hitler's underlying suspicion and revulsion. He considered the French to be a dying nation, biologically, economically, and morally. And in order to achieve a compromise with England he would have sacrificed France without a moment's hesitation.

The failure to achieve a Franco-German alliance, the hesitation that allowed the British Expeditionary Force to escape under the very eyes of the Germans, and the subsequent failure to proceed resolutely to the next step—obvious even to the lowliest private in the German Army—the immediate invasion of the British Isles, found its final explanation in Hitler's blind and stubborn conviction that the British were a Germanic brother-people worthy of preservation. Great Britain would finally see reason and join Germany. As he told me personally in 1939: 'By no means do I wish to destroy the British. I want them to be humbled, and to learn to see things from a Continental-European viewpoint, as we see them. They have to give up their policy of a balance of power in Europe. They may keep their colonial empire and their naval power. But on the Continent they have to grow close to us and form a unity with us. Then we will rule Europe together and the East will no longer be a danger.'

Until late in the year 1941 Hitler believed that he could achieve an understanding with Great Britain. As Bismarck had forced Austria into an alliance with Germany by inflicting military defeat upon her, so Hitler wanted to win an alliance from Britain by the same means.

But at the time of Operation 'Sea-lion', in the summer of 1940, he had not yet recognized the impossibility of achieving an under-

...nature therapists, and so forth; consequently, there was also made among the ranks of fact, the great weakness he had displayed had been known for a long time.

...that, so Himmler told me, the great weakness shown in astrology changed to an advantage. In my first conversations with him, in May 1941, I said that I considered much too intelligent for the story. Himmler replied quickly, 'That was me looking at me for a long time he knew nothing about it now.'

...how upset Himmler was by the measures taken. And it was with satanic glee that he, in presence, explained to Mueller in detail about them. Heydrich, of course, knew of this and would often say to me, complaining of my naivety, that the Reichsfuehrer had been looking at the horoscope again. Once during a telephone conversation I heard Heydrich say, '... one on the epaulettes, the other about the question of who is the more difficult to handle. At the time Heydrich made a gesture to me, as he had not gone too far. He had taken care not to speak only of Hess, but Himmler said that it applied to him too.'

...the conversation that I received the order which I was preparing for Hitler. In it I said that he had shown that for some years Hess had been of the British Secret Service and their plan that they had played a large part in Hess's flight to Scotland. This was true more of the influence of a Professor G—, a gland expert.

...at that time, at which both Himmler and I were present, there was a general discussion of the matter. In my opinion, I said that though pathological, an explanation, for psychiatrists had

described Hess's condition as pathological, the influences of British circles which had been exerted over a number of years should also be taken into account, though neither gave a really satisfactory explanation, and further investigation would probably be needed to clarify the matter. I was convinced, I said, that because of his fanatical devotion, Hess would never betray the details of our strategic planning to the enemy, though certainly he was in a position to do so. Nor was his intellect so deranged that he would be incapable of giving a clear account of our plans. The precision with which he had prepared his flight, and the purposeful manner in which he had carried it through, was a clear indication of this.

As far as the imminent Russian campaign was concerned, I said I thought that it might be wiser to consider that the whole incident in its context could act as a warning to the Russians. However, it seemed to me very doubtful whether the English would be prepared to send a specific warning to the Russian leaders as a result of the first interrogation of Hess.

For the rest, I believed that Hess, having been the Fuehrer's most intimate friend, was, perhaps without even realizing it, strongly under Hitler's suggestive influence. Thus, following Hitler's original conceptions and his attitude towards England, he had considered it his Messianic task to reconcile the two peoples. This would follow Hitler's conceptions about Britain as expressed to me in 1939, and which Hess kept repeating in his intimate circle—that the English were a brother people and the bonds of race made it obligatory to preserve them. One must not forget that, as a German born abroad, Hess had been subjected to British influences during his youth and education, a fact he never sought to hide or deny, especially when discussing collaboration with the Russians along the lines conceived by the former Reichswehr chief, General von Seeckt.

While I was saying all this Heydrich kicked me several times under the table and shook his head disapprovingly. He did not like my frankness, and afterwards said to me, 'You still have a great deal to learn. And I don't believe the Reichsfuehrer understood what you really meant.' But Heydrich was honest enough to admit to me that my analysis had been correct. As far as my report was concerned, he took up the point about the influence of the

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British Secret Service, and said several times that we had to try to go further in that direction for, if the information proved correct, these circles would be able to inflict additional damage on us. He felt that the British were capable of formulating and carrying out that sort of plan, and he would be surprised if we did not have some similar experiences in the future. Then he added an interesting remark: 'Well, the Russians are no less clever.'

In view of my knowledge of the Hess affair and of the investigations in the Abwehr, I can say definitely that it is quite impossible that Hitler ordered Hess to fly to Britain to make a last offer of peace. I only mention this because the lively fantasy of journalists raises it again and again. The only truth in this notion is that Hess, when he decided to take such action, felt that he was carrying out Hitler's original ideas as far as Britain was concerned, and the time selected for this attempt was determined by Hitler's decision to attack Russia. As I have already pointed out, his character, his mysticism, his racial ideas and Messianic complex, all played their part in his decision. Without being conscious of it, he was led to take this action through the influence of astrological circles and by intimate advisers, such as Professor G— and Haushofer. Our investigation has never made clear whether negotiations in Switzerland by Haushofer or by Hess himself preceded the flight. Haushofer has always denied it. However, even if this had been the case, the basic psychological motivation still remains, together with the fact that Hess received no express authorization from Hitler for his flight to England.

I was sincerely sorry about the fate of Hess's first adjutant, von L—, a man of honest and open character. He was the victim of Hitler's rage and of the continual intrigues of Bormann. In spite of Heydrich's skilful counter-moves, von L— was placed in a concentration camp, where he remained until the end of the war, and as if this were not enough, was afterwards treated as an antagonist by the Allies.

To a great extent this was Mueller's doing. While acting in an apparently friendly manner towards von L—, he was in fact carrying out Bormann's instructions. Mueller realized that Bormann would become Hess's successor, and that he was a personality of much greater dynamic force. Privately Mueller established good

relations with Bormann, while as far as Himmler and Heydrich were concerned, he played a considerable importance.

Subsequently the great eve into the background. But I ordered to gather further information and his mental state. I also had wife to write to each other. I to correspond, within limits Cross in Switzerland, and it ment, since it was carried Himmler, however, was definitely was clever enough not to oppose fore agreed with Himmler to

After that Hess's replies began part of the correspondence was dealt exclusively with his wife's deepest love and attachment. difficult to understand, was co previous conversations with I I wondered why the British perhaps, having already examined mystical and maniac notions than a political censor.

It was astonishing how He fanatic or a madman, believed revelations. He would recite prophecies, such as Nostradamus and also referred to old horoscopes as well as that of his family and signs of uncertainty which in depressive state. All this he expressed in an elaborate manner to his wife. of his and expressed her agreement actually represented her perspective of consideration for him, I can

l to make my position secure. Indeed, he take me into the Foreign Service. There, myself with the study of general questions, organization of a small Secret Service such as ned to him once again that personalities this matter, which did not concern me ould not agree with his ideas. I felt that most decisive for a Secret Service, and istic and methodical evaluation of the e's net could the real bases for policy be ot be done through accidentally acquired e minds of ten or twenty people, no ere.

op suddenly began to look tired, and the noticed that one half of his face and one k. Some days later I reported this to Dr iously been called in more than once for bentrop. In his opinion there was some er, probably connected with a disease of y had already been removed and the s probably disturbed.

icely and formally. All my illusions had ould not agree with this man, not in any uld never show any understanding of the ce of the Secret Service.

ibbentrop was inexplicable to me. Prob- everyone else around him, Ribbentrop bureaucratic exactness and carried them ie to be that the foreign policy conducted a sort of appendage to his own struggle seemed to be governed by an inner feel- cy—though how much this was a basic i it had developed in him—or why—I explain a great deal about his attitudes ise, for instance, could one explain his else explain his garrulous and overbear-

wness of mind really shocked me. They

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showed clearly the reasons for the limitations of our Foreign Policy, and also for its basic stupidity. Between them, he and Hitler were obviously prepared to go to any lengths, up to the ruthless sacrifice, if necessary, of the German people. At the time of this first long interview with Ribbentrop I did not understand this clearly, though the basis of this policy must already have existed. But I felt something of the sort instinctively, and both he and I knew that we were worlds apart.

On the other hand, he did not altogether dismiss me from his mind. I heard from members of his entourage that again and again he asked about details of my earlier career, and would sometimes say something to the effect that, 'The Fuehrer is right—Schellenberg is nothing but a decadent lawyer, and one day we shall have to deal with him'. He even gave Luther orders to report every detail of our collaboration, and to note especially whether I made any derogatory remarks about him or the conduct of Foreign Policy. One will never be able to understand how Hitler, in 1939, saw fit to proclaim that Ribbentrop was the greatest master of foreign policy Germany had had since Bismarck.

Possibly during the day the Foreign Office would ask me to prepare a brief on the administrative structure of the Roman Catholic Church and its policy in the South American Republics. Then perhaps Himmler would ask me to let him have a comprehensive report on the British Foreign Secretary's relationship with his Prime Minister.

Besides all this, a number of memoranda would regularly arrive from Hitler's Chancellery asking for reports on problems ranging over widely varied fields of interest. For instance: measures taken by the Russians to deal with the problems of the Kulak; the development of national aspirations in the Crimea; the raw materials of the Urals, and the extent of their exploitation; the social measures taken by Kemal Ataturk, and their effect on modern Turkey; the petroleum resources of South America, and the attempts by the United States war economy to control them.

These requests were elaborated into the form of questionnaires, and were then sent out post haste to the various Government departments, the Secret Service, certain offices of the Wehrmacht—who often had nothing at all to do with the questions involved—and even to the Waffen SS. Thus, ten or more offices might set to work separately and with the proverbial industry of ants, for this was an order of the Fuehrer! Because of secrecy regulations, none of the offices approached would know that others were also working on the same problem.

After a while the reports would begin to come in. To impress the Fuehrer, of course, everyone wrote as much as possible. As a result, there emerged whole volumes of scientific dissertation, seventy per cent of them pure theory, lofty structures of deduction based on a minimum of fact. Even if these reports had been of real value, Hitler could not possibly have read all this stuff, let alone understand and digest it.

There were about 380 research institutes, subsidized by the Government through special funds, which were occupied with problems of geography, ethnography, population, politics, psychology and so forth. Each of them had a selected staff of scientific workers and if they received no assignments, they set themselves their own tasks. Each institution considered itself of major impor-

* the toy store.



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But through all the anger, the romantic Hitler's tear-filled eyes saw the "besmirching of the noble German military spirit." Now, fifteen days after he had witnessed von Blomberg's wedding, Hitler told his war minister, "It is time for us to part," and von Blomberg was summarily dismissed. The von Blombergs stayed married. They went off for a honeymoon.

The world of the generals would undergo yet another jolt, this time delivered unintentionally by General Werner von Fritsch, the chief of staff. Von Fritsch, one of the architects of the new German Wehrmacht, had backed Adolf Hitler in the Röhm action, but after the meeting documented by Major Hossbach on November 5, 1937, von Fritsch feared that Hitler's plans of eastern conquest were premature and precipitous. Von Fritsch had counseled moderation, and his influence among senior Wehrmacht officers had to be considered. Then, suddenly, came a Gestapo report stating that von Fritsch had engaged in "offenses against paragraph 175," the coy German way of referring to homosexual acts.

Von Fritsch stood accused by a homosexual blackmailer and prostitute who was serving time in jail. The report had first landed on Göring's desk. Göring advised the Führer. Von Fritsch was secretly warned by newly promoted Colonel Hossbach, Hitler's military aide, who respected the general. Of course, von Fritsch insisted on facing Hitler and Göring. He rushed to the Chancellery, where he was kept waiting for several hours. As if they were small-time detectives, they produced the accuser, who had been temporarily freed for the purpose of confronting von Fritsch.

"Is this the man you saw?" they asked the shaken crook, who immediately said, "That's the man!" No one knows what the Gestapo had done to him or had promised him.

The shocked von Fritsch did something Hitler observers judged a great mistake. Instead of howling his defiance, breaking his sword over his knee, and throwing it at Hitler's feet, which would have impressed the Führer, von Fritsch calmly denied everything. Hitler never understood understatement, as the British were to learn.

Hitler immediately passed summary judgment instead of waiting for the Military Court of Honor, which was to convene later. Von Fritsch had to retire and "go on a long vacation." Later, the disgraced von Fritsch was acquitted by a military tribunal, but it was too late. In 1939 during the attack on Poland he was killed while leading a regiment of artillery.³ Most German military men said he was seeking death. As a postscript, Colonel Hossbach, who had warned von Fritsch, was dismissed.

Hitler appointed Brauchitsch, and his perfect in post of command servile man, was Lakei, "lackey." I Hitler, endorsed and was hanged a lived.

The armed force now entirely in his was ignored. German Hitler and the par

Not all of them who opposed Hitler leading officers of He promoted his they no longer su them cash bonuses had managed to j early wartime gen their own masters

Now that the Foreign Ministry again they had act what he considered of flexibility and i Neurath and his c path of convention Anti-Comintern P tently been nay-sa

The conciliator friendly King Edward were stalled. Italy stayed placid no r needed the League tent and ineffective

Von Neurath h problems such as access by road and called the Polish C Memel.

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Hitler appointed a new head of the Army, General Walther von Brauchitsch, and General Wilhelm Keitel became Hitler's chief of staff and his perfect instrument, but now Adolf Hitler himself assumed the post of commander-in-chief of the entire Wehrmacht. Keitel, a passive, servile man, was soon called Lakeitel, a play on the German word Lakei, "lackey." He was a cynical flunky who never disagreed with Hitler, endorsed all measures taken by the increasingly cruel party, and was hanged at Nürnberg. He died with more dignity than he had lived.

The armed forces, always Hitler's main instrument of policy, were now entirely in his hands. All opposition had been silenced, all reason was ignored. Generals and admirals would be instruments of Adolf Hitler and the party. The Luftwaffe was Göring's creation.

Not all of them were automatons. There were still senior officers who opposed Hitler, and who had not buried their morality, but most leading officers of Germany's armed forces were now Hitler's property. He promoted his generals when he needed them, discarded them when they no longer suited his purpose, or decorated them and even gave them cash bonuses in the manner of a feudal lord. Some generals who had managed to preserve their integrity were seduced when Hitler's early wartime generalship seemed brilliant. Only a handful remained their own masters.

Now that the Wehrmacht had been brought to heel, only the Foreign Ministry remained a stronghold of the old guard. Time and again they had acted as brakes, slowing Hitler's plans. He was sick of what he considered their air of superiority, their vacillation, their lack of flexibility and imagination. He had to persuade and convince von Neurath and his diplomats each time he wanted to step outside the path of conventional policy. From Rhineland to Naval Agreement to Anti-Comintern Pact, the Foreign Office professionals had consistently been nay-sayers.

The conciliatory year of the Olympics was now in the past. The friendly King Edward VIII was gone. The attempts to deal with Britain were stalled. Italy and Japan had become closer allies. France had stayed placid no matter what the provocation. Germany no longer needed the League of Nations, whose system of sanctions was impotent and ineffective.

Von Neurath had not made any plans for dealing with upcoming problems such as the former German port of Danzig or guaranteed access by road and rail across that "Versailles abomination," as he called the Polish Corridor, or the return of the former German port of Memel.

Von Neurath was reluctant to look east. Hitler had always insisted that was where Germany's future lay, in Poland and Russia. Von Neurath even failed to acknowledge the alleged "danger" that the Franco-Russian treaty had brought by way of Germany's southeastern neighbor, Czechoslovakia.

And did von Neurath really understand Austria's hunger for union with its German "brothers?" Adolf Hitler had reasons to doubt it. All of von Neurath's demonstrated allegiance to National Socialism seemed opportunistic. It is odd that Hitler unknowingly agreed with François-Poncet, who called von Neurath "not frank, but lazy, a liar, and lacking in moral courage."⁶ Von Neurath did not join the party until 1937, and his general's rank in the SS was Himmler's gesture to him as a government minister. He did get involved in anti-Semitic measures and antichurch measures, but that took little National Socialist conviction or personal courage.

Hitler needed a young, imaginative, flexible internationalist, someone totally loyal and aggressive who would agree with Führer policy, Führer plans, Führer wishes. Since his earliest days of political combat, Adolf Hitler had been completely sure of his own political credo. He rambled and meandered when he wrote *Mein Kampf*, but he had not changed one scintilla of his views. He now needed a new foreign policy executive.

He made an unlikely choice for foreign minister because he had only the narrowest list of candidates: Rosenberg, Goebbels, and Göring. Alfred Rosenberg had failed on his London mission in 1934. He preferred that Goebbels concentrate on propaganda. Göring was already too powerful. Most top ambassadors, like Ulrich von Hassell in Rome and Herbert von Dirksen in Tokyo, were professional diplomats, not in the least different from von Neurath. Von Papen could not be taken seriously. He too was an opportunist and, as a Roman Catholic, too closely tied to the Vatican. Hess had never expressed great interest in the job. So Hitler chose von Ribbentrop, his adviser on foreign policy since 1932 and his ambassador to Germany's most important adversary.

Konstantin von Neurath was completely unaware of his impending dismissal. He was sure that Hitler trusted him and depended on him. Hitler had time and again backed him against von Ribbentrop's attacks, although von Ribbentrop's Büro was still active and had often briefed Hitler before meetings on foreign policy. Von Neurath had put up with the Büro. Anyway, it did much of the dirty work, like bribing foreign journalists and recruiting shady agents, and it was welcome to

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his Berghof performance during the Warsaw visit, but he was disappointed once more. It angered him that Hitler had supported Poland's claims against Czechoslovakia and her seizure of Olsa. Was Poland still to be pampered because she was a potential ally against Soviet Russia? In von Ribbentrop's view, Poland had exhausted her credit. He had other initiatives in mind, which might involve an alliance with the devil, an unthinkable notion: *a deal with the Soviets*. Poland would no longer be needed except as a buffer area, a margin of safety. The idea would have been inconceivable for men who had grown up with Nazi ideology and who considered *Mein Kampf* their bible, but von Ribbentrop was enough of the international businessman to remain unhindered by such ideological instincts, and Annelies was in complete agreement. They awaited only the supreme opportunity.

According to Annelies in the von Ribbentrop memoirs, which she edited after his death, on the train back to Berlin from Warsaw Ribbentrop told his staff, "Now all that remains is to make an agreement with Russia if we want to avoid being completely surrounded."

Was Hitler ready for this hateful solution? Was he prepared to parlay with the Satan of his nightmares, the dragon he had sworn to slay since the beginning of his political life? Or was this sort of power-block thinking only the businessman's despised way of international diplomacy?

Before turning to this problem, Hitler had to deal with the correction of an error he had made in 1938: the Munich Agreement. It had not sated his appetite to solve the "problem" of Czechoslovakia. The Sudetens were now "free." The Poles and Hungarians had received their territories through the Vienna "jury." Even the Slovaks had formed a separate republic in Bratislava on October 6, 1938, under a Slovak priest named Father Josef Tiso. Tiso had asked for and received German backing. His violently anti-Prague views led to deep conflict with the Czechoslovakian government. "Offenses" against German-speaking people of the area were drummed up in the German and Austrian press as preparation, once again, for conquest.

Father Tiso's rule, encouraged by Hitler, was so inflammatory toward Prague that the Czechoslovak government occupied Tiso's capital, Bratislava, on March 10, 1939, and substituted another, more reliable Slovak named Karol Sidor to head the new Slovak republic.

On March 11 in Berlin, Tiso requested Hitler's help and patronage after being persuaded by von Ribbentrop to do so. Then, "in order to avoid further Slovak-Czech conflict and to stop further violence against Germans living in the remainder of Czechoslovakia," Hitler agreed to meet with the current Czechoslovak president, a former

judge named Emil task of shepherding the meeting through to von Ribbentrop's instant agreement. arrived in Berlin. Ribbentrop's men

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To von Ribbentrop entered Prague in license WH 32288 proclamation that torate." Again, ac and calm.⁷⁵

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Hitler came so troops cannot be minister of war at the conversation f

one in the German party had slept the previous night, because von Ribbentrop kept everyone awake to help him assemble his notes.

The meetings began at once. Schmidt's chief Russian language expert, Gustav Hilger, did the interpreting. Schmidt himself remained at the German Embassy, because von Ribbentrop wanted "the fewest faces" to simplify dealing with the Russians.*

To everyone's surprise, Stalin appeared in Molotov's office. Even von der Schulenburg was stunned. He had served in Moscow for four years but had never spoken to Stalin. Stalin, shorter than everyone had assumed, was dressed in his simple high-buttoned tan twill jacket, smoking a cardboard-tipped Russian cigarette. At Stalin's gesture to Molotov to lead off the meeting, Molotov deferred, and, shrugging his reluctance, Stalin took charge, as was predestined.

Poland was split in half like a melon, on a north-south axis, and then apportioned to each party in the negotiations. Every Russian "suggestion" was followed, and twice von Ribbentrop had to use the telephone to get permission from the Führer, specifically for the secret "assignment" of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Bessarabia to the Soviets. Hitler was agreeable; he wanted the treaty signed and sealed. He was in a hurry.

Late that afternoon von Ribbentrop and his delegation went back to the embassy for a hasty meal. The foreign minister was enthusiastic about the men around Stalin: "*Die Männer mit den starken Gesichtern*" (The men with the strong faces).

Later, in Berlin, he would tell the story of his Moscow triumph and say how much he felt at home with the men in the Kremlin. "They were," he told several Nazi Party stalwarts, "wonderful fellows. It was like being among old party comrades!" The comparison was not appreciated by the old party comrades. The diplomat clearly hadn't learned diplomacy with his own people.

After the snack, Ribbentrop and his men returned to the Kremlin. At 6 P.M. the broad-shouldered commander of Stalin's bodyguard conducted them up narrow stairs to the long office where Stalin and Molotov stood waiting once more.

Since this was, in many ways, the apex of his career, his most important achievement, von Ribbentrop's memoirs told the story of the two days in some detail.⁹³ He began by insisting that at first he had asked his Führer to send someone else to Moscow, possibly Göring, because he thought of himself as badly compromised by his years of anti-Bolshevik speeches and his friendship with the Japanese.

*Russian was one of the few languages Schmidt did not command.

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But Adolf Hitler insisted that von Ribbentrop "understood these things best" (*die besser verstände*). Until von Ribbentrop left for Moscow, he claimed, he "knew nothing about an alleged decision of Hitler's to attack Poland," although he acknowledged that Hitler had mentioned "a definite solution to the Danzig and Corridor problems." His impression was that the Polish problems would be solved peacefully, through diplomacy. The outline for the Soviet pact was not sketched until the plane ride to Königsberg and Moscow. The Russians had prepared no draft at all.

According to von Ribbentrop's recollections, at 10 P.M. there was a late supper for four, at which Stalin rose and spoke of a friendly new phase, as did Molotov. After much haggling and several concessions by telephone from Hitler, the treaty was signed, at 2 A.M., Wednesday, August 24. The fate of Estonia, Latvia, Finland, and Bessarabia (Lithuania was eventually to follow) as "assigned to the Soviet sphere" was contained in a separate secret protocol.

Von Ribbentrop was impressed by the affable, quietly dressed, and plain-spoken Stalin. During an early morning photography session by Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's photographer, Stalin made it a point to tell von Ribbentrop that this was the first time a foreigner had been permitted into the Kremlin since the Soviet takeover. Then he refused to be photographed in the reactionary act of drinking Crimean champagne, which must have dismayed von Ribbentrop, the old champagne merchant. The next morning von Ribbentrop noticed there were faces staring at him through the open window of one of the buildings across from the old Austrian Embassy, where the Germans were quartered. He was told they belonged to the Anglo-French team.

Von Ribbentrop probably had no idea that Hoffmann, an old friend (Eva Braun was an assistant in the Hoffmann studio when Hitler first met her), had special instructions from the Führer: he was to photograph Stalin's ears so that Hitler could judge whether they looked Aryan (loose) or Jewish (supposedly indicated by attached lobes).

Von Ribbentrop also did not mention that when he wanted to introduce the text of the treaty with some lofty phrases of mutual admiration and respect, Stalin stopped him and said, "We have been pouring buckets of manure all over each other for years. So let us tone down the praise."

At a final serving of caviar and champagne, Stalin toasted Hitler "because the German people love him."³⁴ Von Ribbentrop shook hands warmly with Trade Commissar Lazar Kaznovich, a Jew. The

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tive for full discussions." It was August 28. Hitler immediately told Henderson that the Poles were to have their man in Berlin by August 30: "The barbaric treatment of Germans in Poland cries to high heaven. This cannot wait!" Sir Neville complained strenuously: "The Poles barely have twenty-four hours! It's an ultimatum!" Hitler warned that "Polish atrocities" might bring matters to a boil long before then. There was no time. He yelled, "You don't give a damn how many Germans are mauled by the Poles!" Henderson had just returned from London, tired and worn-out. He had bathed, changed clothes, and drunk a half-bottle of champagne. His limit had been reached. He lost his temper. He pounded on the table and yelled his anger and defiance at Adolf Hitler, the man he had once tried to trust. It was to be his final meeting with the Führer.¹⁰⁴ Hitler would have accepted the gesture of a Polish negotiator, but one never appeared.

More interference with von Ribbentrop's area of responsibility and, as he saw it, with the Führer's own plans came from an old von Ribbentrop enemy, the powerful Hermann Göring. An old friend of the Reichs marshal's, Birger Dahlerus, a Swedish industrialist, thought he could use his London connections to defuse conditions. Von Ribbentrop was outraged by this unsolicited offer. Nevertheless, Dahlerus traveled between Berlin and London a number of times. He did his best but was generally ignored as an amateur without credentials. He began to pout and withdrew from the task, but not before shopping for some special teas at Fortnum & Mason in London. This last initiative of Göring's soon dissipated, leaving von Ribbentrop once more in command of the field.

Göring was apoplectic with anger at the "champagne salesman." He was convinced that von Ribbentrop was a warmonger and had an evil influence on Hitler. Hermann Göring was always willing to see the best in his old comrade Hitler and to distrust the newcomer to National Socialism, a man he believed ill qualified to be foreign minister.

The avalanche of conferences, telephone calls, and teletype messages of those last two days before Hitler attacked Poland were like the "fast forward" on a modern video cassette. The number of events was almost unaccountable by location and content. The arrival within twenty-four hours of a Polish negotiating team with full plenipotentiary powers became more and more unlikely. Colonel Beck, the Polish foreign minister, was as stiff-necked and stubborn as the German Führer. Beck was absolutely sure of Poland's military strength and

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more than eager to hold Britain and France to their promises. Hitler counted on Beck's immovable attitudes and on his arrogance, and he was right. Ambassador Lipski told Dahlerus in Berlin on the day before war broke out that from the Polish side there was not the slightest interest in any German proposals. After five years in Berlin, said Lipski, he knew Germany well, and in case of war "the Germans would overthrow their government and the Polish Army would then march into Berlin."¹⁰⁵ So much for Polish political judgment.

Poland mobilized on August 30. Sometime that day Schmidt was suddenly asked to translate yet another final proposal from Adolf Hitler to Great Britain, France, and Poland. To Schmidt's amazement, the draft he read was logical, reasonable, sensible, and constructive. Not since the days of the League of Nations had he seen anything as conciliatory. Then he realized it was a complete sham, set against the never-to-be-observed Polish deadline, a bitter joke to make Hitler seem a statesmanlike, judicious man, who had proposed these solutions but had been rebuffed. How could Hitler help it if the Poles had failed to keep their appointment? Later, Hitler said in the presence of Schmidt, about this "reasonable" draft, that he needed an alibi to show the German people he had done everything in his power to avoid war.

Late that night, just before the Polish deadline of midnight, von Ribbentrop asked Sir Neville Henderson to the Foreign Office, where he read the full text of the "reasonable" proposals. The startled British diplomat fancied he knew German well, but a treaty and all its technicalities, orally delivered, tested his linguistic skills. He began to interrupt and ask questions and then asked to read the paper himself. Von Ribbentrop at first refused, but then tossed it on the desk. Contemptuously he said, "There! Go ahead. It's no good, though. The deadline for the Polish negotiator has come and gone." Schmidt told the story of this, "the most stormy meeting he had witnessed in his years as a diplomatic interpreter."¹⁰⁶ Von Ribbentrop started to yell at Henderson, who took what the German foreign minister was dishing out until von Ribbentrop yelled that the matter was damned (*verdammt*) grave. That breached Henderson's limit of self-control. Sir Neville, red-faced in his turn, shouted, "You have used the word damned (*verdammt*). That is not the language of statesmanship in this grave situation." It sounds mid-Victorian by today's standards, but Sir Neville had a strict sense of what was decorous and what was unseemly in diplomatic conduct. Von Ribbentrop was struck dumb for the moment. This cowardly British aristocrat had dared to speak to

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an excellent intelligence organization, preferred the patriotic variety. There were German Military Intelligence agents in the most unexpected places and guises. Usually they were separatist patriots in foreign countries motivated politically, not financially. For instance, among Canaris's Egyptian agents were Lieutenants Nasser and Sadat, both patriotic antiroyalists and therefore anti-British. Canaris's organization also was the heart of the early wartime anti-Hitler conspiracy and the military opposition to Hitler.

Erich and Theo Kordt, Count Schwerin, Colonel von Kleist, State Secretary von Weizsäcker, Generals Beck and von Witzleben, General Oster, all of them men who wanted to remove Hitler and avoid needless war, depended on the silver-haired Admiral Canaris to lead their effort. He was cooperative but not active. He was a cynic. He knew human nature and the vicious men around Himmler and the Führer. Many histories of the early days of World War II speak of the 1938 rebellion that was supposed to have taken place inside Germany in order to prevent war.

Joachim von Ribbentrop blamed the halfhearted German opposition groups for falsely stiffening the backs of the Chamberlain group and reinforcing the arrogance of the Poles. "They squelched all our attempts to find a peaceful solution."¹ It never occurred to von Ribbentrop that the world at last became ashamed of accommodating the men who had unleashed such horror in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia.

On April 20 he was promoted to SS Obergruppenführer, the third-highest SS rank. Perhaps this clouded his vision about that black-uniformed fraternity and its crimes, the subversion of individual rights, the suspension of due process, the mass arrest, torture, and repression of racial minorities, and the black plague of Gestapo and SS that swamped Germany and each place Germany now dominated.

Until September 2, 1939, this SS flood of horror had not followed combat troops, bombers, and tanks like a pack of scavenging hyenas. Germany and Austria were wealthy, well-organized countries, and even small Czechoslovakia was wealthy, worldly, and industrialized. SS and Secret Police functioned in these countries, but covertly. It was different in devastated Poland, with its mud-caked villages, churchgoing peasants, and clustered Jewish settlements, which became SS machine gun-controlled hells long after the Stukas had finished their bombing, the panzers had done their mauling, and the armored infantry had mopped up and passed through. In the wake of the German Army men, who wore the new Germany's eagle and swastika insignia

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on the right front of their uniforms, came those who wore this insignia on the left sleeves, the SS and its Einsatzgruppen.

The German historian Heinz Höhne, a leading expert on the SS, told the story of these ruthless groups.² Reinhard Heydrich, Gestapo and SD head, formed five of the Einsatzgruppen, or "attack groups." During the Polish campaign, they were attached to each German field army. Every Einsatzgruppe contained four Einsatzkommandos of a hundred to a hundred and fifty men. Each small, vicious Kommando was assigned to an Army corps. At first, trying to keep track of what the SS Kommandos were doing was like keeping an eye on a group of ten men in a crowded sports stadium. But while they were carrying out their supposed mission of suppressing anti-Reich and anti-German elements, they became extremely noticeable. These Einsatzkommandos were often assisted by Poles of German ancestry taking revenge on the Slavic Poles who had hounded them earlier. These "racial German self-defense organizations" soon were shooting untold numbers of Poles and Jews. One of their leaders was SS Colonel Rudolf von Alvensleben of the family that had once attracted the young Ribbentrop brothers to seek adventure in Canada. On April 20, 1940, the first Jewish ghetto was formed in Lodz. The special SS men with the SD diamond patch on their sleeves began to commit such acts of brutality and bestiality that word soon reached the top echelons of the Army.

Then, to the deep shock of the SD and its chief, Reinhard Heydrich, Colonel General Johannes Blaskowitz, the German Army commander in Poland, interfered. He would not permit the Army to be complacent witnesses and passive collaborators in things that the general considered abominable. He had many reports of shameful acts. He collected these and sent a written protest about the mass murders and other SD debauches to the Army chief of staff.

General Blaskowitz said it affected Army morale to witness this SD swinishness. The memorandum was read by Adolf Hitler on November 18, 1939. He was furious with the general, but Blaskowitz was undeterred. The field generals under his command continued to report SD atrocities all over Poland. Poles were shot arbitrarily. Jews were beaten, humiliated, and killed, men, women, children, and babies, sometimes in their synagogues. There was rape and looting.

Blaskowitz's next memorandum stated that "the attitude of the troops toward SD and police alternates between abhorrence and hatred. Every soldier feels disgusted by these crimes committed in Poland by nationals of the Reich and representatives of our state."

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situation. Schmidt then returned to *Heinrich* to give a briefing to von Ribbentrop and his people, using the same sweeping gestures that soon earned him the nickname "Napoleon." Reluctant ministry staff members were instructed in the loading and firing of two small anti-aircraft guns, one at each end of *Heinrich*. Fortunately for them, their gunnery was never needed.

In Poland, the *Adler* was Hitler's temporary command post. Later, various Führer headquarters were built, both in the west and the east. They usually had Teuto-romantic war names like Wolfsschanze (Wolf's Lair). The men around Hitler knew how to satisfy his Wagnerian taste for Germanic folk tales and myths. Other headquarters were dubbed Felsenest (Rock's Nest) and Wolfsschlucht (Wolf's Gorge).

There was much nighttime work on *Heinrich* in the early hours of September 18. At 2 A.M. von Ribbentrop finally went to sleep in his car, as did Schmidt and the other staff members in theirs. The foreign minister had spent hours on the phone, fighting to bar Propaganda Minister Goebbels from seizing charge of the field of foreign propaganda and in pursuit of evidence of Goebbels's incursions into his own sacred territory. At 5 A.M. the tired Schmidt was awakened and told that the Russians had begun their entry into Poland toward the agreed line of demarcation between the two armies.⁵

He waited until 8 A.M. to tell von Ribbentrop, who was shaving. Dressed in his underwear, the apoplectic foreign minister, his soap-flecked face purple, waved his razor at Schmidt and howled, "Because you're too damned lazy to come to my bedroom, you've now interfered with history! You're too young to do that! What if there were clashes between their troops and ours?" Schmidt tried to calm him. After all, the line of demarcation was well known to both German and Russian troop commanders. But von Ribbentrop did not quiet down, probably because he was sure the hated Goebbels had already broadcast the news of the Russian advance. That honor belonged to the press chief of his own Foreign Ministry.

On September 19 they left *Heinrich*, and temporary headquarters was established in a beachfront hotel of the Baltic Sea resort Zoppot. They were still in Zoppot when Poland surrendered, divided now between Germany and Russia.

Von Ribbentrop returned to Berlin. On September 26 he flew to Moscow, this time to sign away Lithuania. It was the final section of the secret protocol to the Soviet treaty of August.

Ciano arrived in Berlin on October 1, representing Italy, the "cowardly shirkers." At dinner in Dahlem, von Ribbentrop, now very much the superior after the Soviet treaty and the Polish victory, patronized

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or coupons or special permits. One had asked him about the fate of France.²⁰

If Abetz was swamped with favor seekers, how the Parisians would have fed the von Ribbentrops' self-esteem. They would have been the toast of *le tout Paris*. If one reads the names of those who followed Marshal Pétain's request to collaborate with the new masters, it is difficult to understand so many claims of "resistance." Or perhaps it is human nature to keep on living as normally as possible, even after *l'affreuse chose c'est réalisée*, as the Paris police prefect had called it in his diary.

The first German commander, General Bogislav von Studnitz, opened events by giving a reception at the Hôtel Crillon for the dignitaries of the city. Next came a victory parade on Champs Élysées, which was less than formal, an entertainment rather than a drama. Later, standing in front of the American Embassy on the Place de la Concorde, Robert Murphy, the deputy to anti-German American Ambassador William Bullitt, watched as motorized German Army columns passed by. One stopped, and a young German lieutenant walked over and asked Murphy for a good hotel. Murphy suggested several, as if the German officer were a tourist. Shortly after, Murphy was sent to the Crillon to "see what was happening." As a neutral diplomat, he was welcomed by General von Studnitz. The German Army made a big show of courtesy and manners.

Many Parisians who had fled the city before the truce now returned, but some of the famous internationalists who considered Paris their home left for the duration. The Windsors hurried from their house on Boulevard Suchet. The Aga Khan, James Joyce, Daisy Fellowes, Peggy Guggenheim, the Princess de Polignac, Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas, René Clair, Louis Jouvet, Jean Renoir, André Maurois, Fernand Léger, Elsa Maxwell, Sir Charles and Lady Mendl, Vladimir Nabokov, Marc Chagall, André Malraux, Henri Matisse, André Gide, had all left for the unoccupied zone or for other countries.

But Paris was by no means emptied of the famed, the mighty, the notorious. De Gaulle was broadcasting from London, but his appeals did not stop Sacha Guitry or the dancer Serge Lifar from being acclaimed by the Germans. Lifar performed for Hitler, Goebbels, and Göring during three trips to Germany. The couturière Coco Chanel was having an affair with a very senior German Nazi.* She "holed up" (as the historian David Pryce-Jones reported it) at the Ritz with

*The consensus points to Walter Schellenberg, the Gestapo-SD espionage head.

her National Socialist paramour and appeared only occasionally at parties to spew forth anti-Semitic tirades.²¹

Perhaps it is fair to offer the names of some who stayed in Paris during the occupation, if only to balance Britain's prewar appeasers: Colette, Cocteau, Georges Duhamel, Georges Simenon, and Jean Giraudoux functioned as before. Braque, Vlaminck, and Laurencin painted, as did Picasso, who returned to Paris during the occupation and remained there until the Allied victory. Jean Berard stated that "Fascist and Hitlerian doctrines are today championing civilization."²²

Herbert von Karajan came often to Paris to conduct, but Wilhelm Furtwängler, the most patrician of Germany's conductors, refused to come while there was a military occupation.

Mistinguett, Edvige Feuillère, and Edith Piaf were performing in Paris, as were Maurice Chevalier and Piaf's newest protégé, Yves Montand.

In literature and the arts, the American Sylvia Beach continued to run her bookshop, Shakespeare and Company, where Joyce was once published and Hemingway had often roamed. Also among those propagating Franco-German friendship were Marie-Laure de Noailles, the Duchesse d'Harcourt, and Marie Louise Bousquet, who became the postwar doyenne of the Paris office of New York's *Harper's Bazaar*.²³

The couture was open for business. Balenciaga, Nina Ricci, Paul Poiret, Lucien Lelong, and Jacques Fath catered to rich clients, mostly German.²⁴ Of course the House of Chanel was open.

The Hotel Majestic (later General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters) became German Army headquarters; 72 Avenue Foch was turned into Gestapo and SD offices. Maxim's was run by the management of Berlin's Horcher restaurant. Much seemed to be functioning as usual in non-Jewish Paris. Porfirio Rubirosa, the Santo Domingo playboy-diplomat who later married, successively, Doris Duke and Barbara Hutton, was giving all-night parties to the music of Django Reinhardt's jazz (Le Hot Club of France) and selling visas to Santo Domingo for much money to wealthy refugees who needed to escape from the Nazis.

Otto Abetz, who, at thirty-seven, was von Ribbentrop's careful choice for "ambassador" to occupied France, was a believer in Franco-German amity. A francophile since he was a very young man; he had taught art, knew France well, and spoke excellent French. He was also married to a Frenchwoman, Suzanne de Bruyker. Von Ribbentrop had recruited Abetz into the Büro before the war and sent

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him to Paris, attached to the embassy. The French expelled him in 1939 with vague accusations of espionage, which brought a storm of unpleasant newspaper publicity. His diplomatic status had saved him from jail. Now, back in Paris, Abetz understood he was to watch over von Ribbentrop's interests, although running occupied France was actually the business of the military and of the many French collaborators who — collaborated.

The SD had their own harsh job: the Nazi-style boundaries of everyday life, the racial laws, the political consensus. Abetz's function eventually evolved into becoming the catalyst for society, the arts, industry, education, and, above all, propaganda. He assembled a team of journalists and academics. In the former German Embassy, where he entertained often and in regal style, he soon became known as King Otto I.

Otto Abetz was one of the few German functionaries who admired and respected von Ribbentrop. He blamed most of the foreign minister's failings on the immense pressures and endless tasks that were part of the 1936–1943 period. By the summer of 1942, von Ribbentrop told Abetz that he preferred separate field headquarters, because being near Hitler was "too strenuous and abrasive."²³ But Abetz's memoirs throw little light on the puzzling reason for von Ribbentrop's absence from Paris.

Occupied France, especially Paris, became a hunting ground for Nazi and French opportunists, who indulged their conceits and vanities. Typical was Göring, with his collection of stolen art assembled in the Jeu de Paume, much of it taken from Jews and Gaullists. In Göring's view, "They are a defeated nation. Let Herr Abetz worry about their sensibilities."

Alfred Rosenberg, licensed by Adolf Hitler to do so, conducted his own hunt for art. Rosenberg's inventory was meant to be used as a bargaining tool with the French. By 1944, 21,900 pieces of art had been "curated" by Rosenberg's staff.²⁶

In 1940, the occupation was still in its infancy. Much horror, debauch, and degradation, some of it self-inflicted, was yet to come. In 1940, there remained a semblance of German "correctness" and good manners; the true evils of collaboration were not yet apparent. The line between unwilling acceptance and enthusiastic, self-promoting cooperation with the Germans had not yet been crossed. The mass deportation of Jews, the murder of hostages, the recruiting of French volunteers for the SS, and all the other French debasements were still in their cocoons. Some of it began with the Statut des Juifs, issued on

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even possible that the aim was to place the former Edward VIII once more on the throne of Great Britain, after Britain was invaded and defeated. But any use of the Windsors, no matter how passive, was the sort of laughable plan the Berliners called a Schnapps Idee (a notion found at the bottom of a glass of brandy).

Having left Paris to avoid the Germans, and unwilling to deal with the vagaries of "unoccupied" France under Pétain and Laval, the Windsors arrived in neutral Spain on Sunday, June 2. It was the duke's forty-sixth birthday.²⁹

A rudimentary explanation of Franco Spain can be given only in broad outline. General Franco seemed neutral, neither pro-Axis nor pro-Allies. He was careful and judicious. The second most powerful man in Spain, the interior minister and a Franco in-law, Ramón Serrano Suñer, was pro-Axis, but Spain's foreign minister, Colonel Juan Beigbeder, was in sympathy with the Allies. Representing the Nazi side in the seething, spy-ridden, rumor-swilling Spanish capital was the German ambassador, Eberhard von Stohrer, lukewarm toward the Nazis, disliked by von Ribbentrop, despised by Hitler. Von Stohrer's beautiful and unfaithful wife, Marie Ursula, had great influence with certain gentlemen of Spanish society. On the Allied side was the new British ambassador, a former Chamberlain colleague, Sir Samuel Hoare, a man who seemed to be so stuffy that he was described as "descended from a long line of maiden aunts." He was, however, an accomplished politician and diplomat. After presenting his credentials to Franco, he wrote about the Caudillo, "There was obviously more in him than met the eye, or how else could this young officer of Jewish origin, little influence, and unimpressive personality have risen to the highest post in the State?"³⁰

Spain was waiting particularly to see some signs of the future, although the Germans had squashed France and the British had fled for their lives from Dunkirk. Britain's long history should have been proof to Spain of her resilience, but unless Churchill could convince Spain that Britain still had the will to fight, Spain would ally itself with the Axis. Sir Samuel Hoare's brief was brutally simple: convince the Spaniards that Britain will fight and fight and fight!

The duke's arrival could have been either godsend or disaster, depending on his frame of mind and strength of devotion to his country. The duke had been treated coldly by his brother, King George VI. The duke was also in search of a decent war job, and he wanted the royal family to accept his American duchess as a part of the House of Windsor. How would he behave?

Sept '39

Italy now "guaranteed the integrity of the Romanian frontier." This would not please the Russians, who had already occupied some small Romanian islands in the Danube delta. Germany also sent "training battalions" to Romania. Tension was rising between the unconventional partners of August 23, 1939.

Von Ribbentrop's persistence was famous. Franco's lack of enthusiasm did not prevent von Ribbentrop from assuring Mussolini in Rome, on September 19 and 20, that Spain would soon enter the war.³⁶ He obviously wished to ignore the only valid signal to come out of the "Willy" embarrassment: Franco was not about to rush to the German-Italian side.

In the same euphoric flow of wishful thinking, von Ribbentrop assured the Duce that the invasion of Britain was imminent, and would be so easily performed that a single German division would cause British defenses to collapse. Ciano reported this exact sentence, and Schmidt noted in his memoirs that this was a typical Ribbentrop statement and that he, Schmidt, had translated hundreds like it. "I got the impression that most people no longer took him seriously." Obviously, Mussolini was one of them. He looked at von Ribbentrop "amusedly and incredulously."

Serrano Suñer, about to become Spanish foreign minister, came to Berlin late in September to represent his side of "the Spanish question" and to prove that von Ribbentrop had been wildly optimistic. From Hitler and von Ribbentrop's point of view the key was the infuriating lack of enthusiasm Franco showed for combat against England and her empire. Schmidt reported the scene in von Ribbentrop's office in front of the windows giving onto the old park behind the minister's renovated Wilhelmstrasse office. A map of France's colonies was set on an easel, and what von Ribbentrop said to Serrano Suñer boiled down to "Do help yourself to some colonies!" The visitor was not shy. He immediately chose Oran in Algeria, all of Morocco, sizable stretches of desert, and the French West African colony of Rio de Oro. Von Ribbentrop was "selling merchandise he did not own." All he asked for in return were some German submarine support bases in Spain; Serrano Suñer agreed to only a few.

There now followed a diplomatic maneuver that was to become a millstone around Germany's neck. In Berlin on September 27, 1940, the seventh year of National Socialism, the seventeenth year of Fascism, the ninth month of the fifteenth year of Emperor Hirohito's reign, the tripartite military agreement between Germany, Italy, and Japan was signed. Within fourteen months it would force Germany to

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Up to this point, Hitler's ideas about the Church are not uncommon. Many others have taken a similar position. What is startling, however, is the malicious condescension with which Hitler disparaged the "shavelings," including the popes, and how he attributed everything they had ever achieved to exclusively base motives. He accused them of a "cunning mixture of hypocrisy and avarice," and spoke of their "satanic superstition" as well as of the "hypocrisy" of Christian teachings about love. So profound and intense was his hatred that he was continually conceiving new phrases to give it expression. Basically, his view of the Church was rooted in the unsophisticated polemicism of the nineteenth century, which in turn had its origins in a vulgarized liberalism derived from the popularization of the teachings of the Enlightenment. Any more recent ideas about the role of the Church in the modern world were apparently unknown to him. When his ruthless campaign against both Catholicism and Protestantism in Germany led to the mobilization of both religions' full resources in defense, Hitler's reaction was to see in this nothing but a political response, requiring appropriate laws, surveillance, and arrests. He was apparently oblivious to the spiritual, intellectual, and moral dimensions of the issue.

Hitler's relationship to the Church was riven by the most obvious contradiction. Hitler regarded himself, rightly, as a master of mass psychology—as someone who not only knew the way the masses thought but also knew how to manipulate their thinking. Yet in his relationship to the Church he became a prisoner of his own prejudices. He applied precisely the wrong methods to deal with the very opposition he himself had provoked, thus clearly demonstrating his limitations. He was so badly crippled by his own narrow-mindedness on the subject of the Church that his policy can only be described, and this charitably, as obtuse.⁴

⁴The limitations of Hitler's policy toward the Church were dramatically demonstrated in August 1941. At the beginning of the war, Hitler had ordered that all persons who were incurably ill be put to death as socially worthless parasites. His compulsory euthanasia policy was top secret, but a program which within two years provided for the killing of some seventy thousand persons could hardly be concealed indefinitely. The victims were drawn from all walks of life throughout Germany. Relatively large numbers of people were directly engaged in the euthanasia program. At first suspicion and then

* his father

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lead the country—though divided and without a strong political hand—in a war that was waged not as a means of politics, but rather with politics being made to serve as handmaiden of war. The reader should have a clear picture of this transformation before we go on to consider in greater detail Hitler's influence on the war, on the campaigns, and on the individual battles. Otherwise we cannot confront the question that has been posed again and again: How was it possible for the German military leaders and professionals to permit a layman and former corporal of the First World War to dictate to them the prescription for victory and defeat? Those who pose this question have not yet adequately understood what strategy in the modern sense is all about.

I believe it is necessary to define the concept in the following terms: Strategy is the supreme leadership activity in warfare. It comprehends foreign and domestic policy, military operations and economic mobilization, propaganda and popular leadership, and must harmonize these vital aspects of the war effort in terms of the purposes and the political goal of the war. Only when the concept of strategy is understood in such terms is it clear that no general but only a statesman can be a strategist, though this does not preclude the possibility that both functions may be united in one person, as was the case in China.

Hitler was a statesman. He was a dictator. He was Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht and since 1941 Commander-in-Chief of the Army as well. He had unleashed the war, and it was up to him and no one else to lead it. He did in fact lead the war. It was Hitler who gave the order in the spring of 1939 to prepare military plans for the attack on Poland. No soldier could know whether the attack would take place, whether it would be provoked or unprovoked, a war of aggression or of defense; for even a politically defensive war could be waged by Germany—given its central position and the constant prospect of a two-front war—only as a military offensive. When the propaganda machine began to run and mobilization on the Polish border was ordered, all the leading soldiers were indeed quite clear about the operational questions confronting them, but the political, the strategic remained for them a veiled secret. Had Hitler himself not implied and even stated in his ad-

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dresses that he confidently expected to reach a settlement with the West? Was the mobilization backed by a serious determination to attack Poland, or was it only a means of exerting pressure for negotiation, as had been the case in 1938 with Czechoslovakia? Was this hope not confirmed when, on August 26, 1939, the ordered attack was halted? The details of the struggle of the Great Powers to preserve the peace were unknown to the Commanders-in-Chief and their staffs, with the exception of Göring.

If there is anything that clearly demonstrates the revolutionary character of Hitler's method of leadership, it is that he did not concede to his military working staff the OKW, and within it, the Operations Staff, the role of strategic adviser. All attempts I undertook in this direction failed. Hitler was willing to have a working staff that translated his decisions into orders which he would then issue as Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, but nothing more. The fact that even men like Frederick the Great would have their own thoughts and decisions tested and re-examined against the often contrary ideas of their generals made no difference to Hitler, who resented any form of counsel regarding the major decisions of the war. He did not care to hear any other points of view; if they were even hinted at he would break into short-tempered fits of enraged agitation. Remarkable—and, for soldiers, incomprehensible—conflicts developed out of Hitler's almost mystical conviction of his own infallibility as leader of the nation and of the war. To reflect individually on the dozen or more decisions that determined the course of the war would be psychologically and historically tempting, but that cannot be the purpose of this sketch. The man who succeeded in occupying Norway before the very eyes of the British Fleet with its maritime supremacy, and who with numerically inferior forces brought down the feared military power of France like a house of cards in a campaign of forty days, was no longer willing, after these successes, to listen to military advisers who had previously warned him against such overextensions of his military power. From that time on he required of them nothing more than the technical support necessary to implement his decisions, and the smooth functioning of the military organization to carry them out.

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sage in a letter Jodl sent to his wife. When she had written to him, after the interrogation at the Nuremberg Trial of Field Marshal Erhard Milch on March 8 and 11, 1946, concerning her own estimation of Hitler, he answered her that in many respects he agreed, although on one or another point he saw things somewhat differently, though for a number of reasons he did not care to go into it. He then went on as follows:]

When I read how Frank Thiess, breaking with historical tradition after fifteen hundred years, tries to reach a true picture of Justinian,⁷ then I must think more than ever of the present and am reminded of how the history of that man who brought the whole world into flux was falsified during the course of his life, in part even by himself. And so I find myself thinking again and again whether it might not be my responsibility to set the historical record straight without the slightest regard to my personal defense. And I would do this except for two considerations. In the first place, that is not the primary purpose of the court, which can bring an end to any such attempt by application of the legal concept of "irrelevance." In the final analysis, the attempt would be futile, because the archives of the other side remain closed. In the second place, I ask myself: Do I then know this person at all, at whose side I led for so many years so thorny and self-abnegating an existence? Did he not play with my idealism, too, and only use it for purposes that he concealed in his innermost being? Who will boast of knowing another when that person has not opened to him the most hidden corners of his heart? Thus I do not even know today what *he* thought, knew, and wanted to do, but rather only what *I* thought and suspected about it. And if today a picture is unveiled in which one had once hoped to see a work of art, but one is confronted only with a diabolical distortion, then it is up to the historians of the future to rack their brains over the question of whether it was that way from the very beginning, or whether this picture had gradually transformed itself with the course of events. At times I often make the mistake of blaming [Hitler's] origins, only to remember how many peasants' sons have been given the name "the Great" by history. The ethical foundation is what counts.

⁷The reference is to novelist Frank Thiess's *Das Reich der Dämonen* (The Empire of Demons, 1941), with its very free treatment of Byzantine history.

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to between two hundred and two hundred and fifty million marks—approximately a billion marks [\$250,000,000] at present-day construction costs. Hitler took this calmly. "That is less than two battle-ships of the *Bismarck* class. How quickly a warship can be destroyed, and if not, it is scrap-iron anyhow in ten years. But this building will stand for centuries. When the Finance Minister asks what it will cost, don't give him any answer. Say that nobody has any experience with building projects of such size." Granite to the value of several million marks was ordered, pink for the exteriors, white for the stands. At the site a gigantic pit for the foundation was dug; during the war it became a picturesque lake, which suggested the proportions of the structure.

Farther to the north of the stadium the processional avenue crossed an expanse of water in which the buildings would be reflected. Then, concluding the complex, came a square, bounded on the right by the Kongresshalle, which still stands, and on the left by a "Kulturhalle" meant specifically for Hitler's speeches on cultural matters.

Hitler had appointed me the architect for all these buildings except the Kongresshalle, which had been designed in 1933 by Ludwig Ruff. He gave me a free hand with plans and execution and participated every year in a ceremonial cornerstone laying. However, these cornerstones were subsequently moved to the municipal buildings and grounds yard to wait until the building had made further progress and they could be incorporated in the wall. At the laying of the cornerstone for the stadium on September 9, 1937, Hitler solemnly shook hands with me before the assembled party bigwigs. "This is the greatest day of your life!" Perhaps I was something of a skeptic even then, for I replied: "No, not today, my Fuehrer, but only when the building is finished."

Early in 1939 Hitler, in a speech to construction workers, undertook to justify the dimensions of his style: "Why always the biggest? I do this to restore to each individual German his self-respect. In a hundred areas I want to say to the individual: We are not inferior; on the contrary, we are the complete equals of every other nation."

This love for vast proportions was not only tied up with the totalitarian cast of Hitler's regime. Such tendencies, and the urge to demonstrate one's strength on all occasions, are characteristic of quickly acquired wealth. Thus we find the largest buildings in Greek an-

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tiquity in Sicily and Asia Minor. It is an interesting corollary that those cities were generally ruled by despots. But even in Periclean Athens the statue of Athena Parthenos by Phidias was forty feet high. Moreover, most of the Seven Wonders of the World won their repute by their excessive size: the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, and the Olympian Zeus of Phidias.

Hitler's demand for huge dimensions, however, involved more than he was willing to admit to the workers. He wanted the biggest of everything to glorify his works and magnify his pride. These monuments were an assertion of his claim to world dominion long before he dared to voice any such intention even to his closest associates.

I, too, was intoxicated by the idea of using drawings, money, and construction firms to create stone witnesses to history, and thus affirm our claim that our works would survive for a thousand years. But I found Hitler's excitement rising whenever I could show him that at least in size we had "beaten" the other great buildings of history. To be sure, he never gave vent to these heady feelings. He was sparing in his use of high-sounding words to me. Possibly at such moments he actually felt a certain awe; but it was directed toward himself and toward his own greatness, which he himself had willed and projected into eternity.

At the same Party Rally of 1937 at which Hitler laid the cornerstone of the stadium, his last speech ended with the ringing words: "The German nation has after all acquired its Germanic Reich." At dinner afterward Hitler's adjutant, Brückner, reported that at these words Field Marshal von Blomberg had burst into tears from sheer emotion. Hitler took this as evidence of the army's assent to what was being promised in this slogan.

At the time there was a great deal of talk to the effect that this mysterious dictum would be ushering in a new era in foreign policy; that it would bear much fruit. I had an idea of what it meant, for shortly before the speech was given, Hitler one day abruptly stopped me on the stairs to his apartment, let his entourage go on ahead, and said: "We will create a great empire. All the Germanic peoples will be included in it. It will begin in Norway and extend to northern Italy. I myself must carry this out. If only I keep my health!"

That was still a relatively restrained formulation. In the spring of 1937 Hitler visited me at my Berlin showrooms. We stood alone in

front of the nearly seven hundred thousand people. Every detail had been right, so that with only a lift of this structure. Along the boards. Hitler turned to me and I pointed out, as I believe he did not have the proper change of tone, as if it were a matter of discussion, Hitler of Games will take place in Germany for all time to determine the measurement.

According to our calculations supposed to be complete

I proposed to Hitler that Paul Wallot's Reichstag, built in Wilhelmine Germany, be razed. But here I met unexpected resistance. Hitler liked the structure. However, he intended to use it merely for social purposes. Hitler was usually taciturn about his ultimate goals. When on this and some other occasions he spoke rather candidly to me about the background of his building plans, he did so out of that intimacy that almost always crops up in the relationship between an architect and his client. "In the old building we can set up reading rooms and lounges for the deputies. For all I care the chamber can be turned into a library. With its five hundred and eighty seats it's much too small for us. We'll build a new one right beside it. Provide a chamber for twelve hundred deputies!"¹ That assumed a population of one hundred and forty million, and so in saying this Hitler was revealing the scale on which he was thinking. Partly he had in mind a rapid natural increase of the Germans, partly the incorporation into the Reich of other Germanic peoples—but he was not including the population of subjugated nations, for these would not have any voting rights. I proposed that he simply increase the number of voters whom each deputy represented, and thereby make the old Reichstag chamber still usable. But Hitler did not want to alter the proportion of sixty thousand voters for each deputy which had been set by the Weimar Republic. He never explained his reasons; but he was as firm on this matter as he was firm about nominal retention of the traditional electoral system with its fixed dates for elections, rules of franchise, ballot boxes, and secret ballot. On this matter he evidently wanted to preserve a tradition which had brought him to power, even though his introduction of the one-party system had made the whole thing pointless.

The buildings which were intended to frame the future Adolf Hitler Platz lay in the shadow of the great domed hall. But as if Hitler wanted by architecture alone to denigrate the whole process of popular representation, the hall had a volume fifty times greater than the proposed Reichstag building. He had asked me to work out the designs for this hall as early as the summer of 1936.² On April 20, 1937, his birthday, I gave him the renderings, ground plans, cross sections, and a first model of the building. He was delighted and only quarreled with my having signed the plans: "Developed on the basis of the Fuehrer's ideas." I was the architect, he said, and my contribution to this building must be given greater credit than his sketch of

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In a sense the Pantheon Berlin dome was also opening alone would be larger than the entire Peter's (145 feet). The volume of St. Peter's.

The interior appoin- tment an area four hundred gallery rose to a height of rectangular marble they were only eighty entrance. This recess ninety-two feet wide, In front of it, on a

the idea dating from 1925. I stuck to this formula, however, and Hitler was probably gratified at my refusal to claim authorship for this building. Partial models were prepared from the plans, and in 1939 a detailed wooden model of the exterior some ten feet high and another model of the interior were made. The floor could be removed in order to test the future effect at eye level. In the course of his many visits to the exhibit Hitler would unfailingly spend a long time contemplating these two models. He would point triumphantly to them as an idea that must have struck his friends fifteen years ago as a fantastic quirk. "In those days who was prepared to believe me when I said that this would be built some day!"

This structure, the greatest assembly hall in the world ever conceived up to that time, consisted of one vast hall that could hold between one hundred fifty and one hundred eighty thousand persons standing. In spite of Hitler's negative attitude toward Himmler's and Rosenberg's mystical notions, the hall was essentially a place of worship. The idea was that over the course of centuries, by tradition and venerability, it would acquire an importance similar to that St. Peter's in Rome has for Catholic Christendom. Without some such essentially pseudoreligious background the expenditure for Hitler's central building would have been pointless and incomprehensible.

The round interior was to have the almost inconceivable diameter of eight hundred and twenty-five feet. The huge dome was to begin its slightly parabolic curve at a height of three hundred and twenty-three feet and rise to a height of seven hundred and twenty-six feet.

In a sense the Pantheon in Rome had served as our model. The Berlin dome was also to contain a round opening for light, but this opening alone would be one hundred and fifty-two feet in diameter, larger than the entire dome of the Pantheon (142 feet) and of St. Peter's (145 feet). The interior would contain sixteen times the volume of St. Peter's.

The interior appointments were to be as simple as possible. Circumcribing an area four hundred sixty-two feet in diameter, a three-tier gallery rose to a height of one hundred feet. A circle of one hundred rectangular marble pillars—still almost on a human scale, for they were only eighty feet high—was broken by a recess opposite the entrance. This recess was one hundred and sixty-five feet high and ninety-two feet wide, and was to be clad at the rear in gold mosaic. In front of it, on a marble pedestal forty-six feet in height, perched

Ministerial Councilor Knipfer, who was in charge of air-raid protection in the Reich Air Ministry, had heard rumors about this gigantic structure. He had just issued directives providing that all future buildings be as widely dispersed as possible in order to diminish the effect of air raids. Now, here in the center of the city and of the Reich, a building was to be erected which would tower above low clouds and act as an ideal navigational guide to enemy bombers. It would be virtually a signpost for the government center. I mentioned these considerations to Hitler. But he was sanguine. "Goering has assured me," he said, "that no enemy plane will enter Germany. We will not let that sort of thing stand in the way of our plans."

Hitler was obsessed with the idea for this domed building. We had already drawn up our designs when he heard that the Soviet Union was also planning an enormous assembly building in Moscow in honor of Lenin. He was deeply irked, feeling himself cheated of the glory of building the tallest monumental structure in the world. Along with this was an intense chagrin that he could not make Stalin stop by a simple command. But he finally consoled himself with the thought that his building would remain unique. "What does one skyscraper more or less amount to, a little higher or a little lower. The great thing about our building will be the dome!" After the war with the Soviet Union had begun, I now and then saw evidence that the idea of Moscow's rival building had preyed on his mind more than he had been willing to admit. "Now," he once said, "this will be the end of their building for good and all."

The domed hall was to be surrounded on three sides by water which would reflect it and enhance its effect. For this purpose we intended to widen the Spree into a kind of lake. The normal river traffic, however, would have to bypass this area through a set of underground canals. On its south side, the building would be flanked by the great plaza, the future Adolf Hitler Platz. Here the annual May 1 rallies would take place; these had previously been held on Tempelhof Field.*

The Propaganda Ministry had worked out a pattern for managing such mass rallies. In 1939, Karl Hanke told me of the variants of such demonstrations; which manner of demonstration was wanted depended on political and propagandistic factors. From the gathering of

schoolchildren to of millions of workers, the Propaganda Ministry had "cheering levies." have taken the ul Platz, since it would

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* The eight public feet. The theater was normal practice of ater, the 3,442 square sons in the orches planned to have a

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located at the very center of this official sector. Its measurements far exceeded the reception room of the President of the United States.⁹ Hitler was so well pleased with the long hike the diplomats had to take in the recently completed new Chancellery that he wanted a similar device in the new building. I therefore doubled the distance visitors would have to traverse, making it somewhat more than a quarter of a mile.

From the former Chancellery, built in 1931, Hitler's aspirations had by now multiplied seventy-fold.¹⁰ That gives some idea of the proportions by which his megalomania had evolved.

And in the midst of all this splendor Hitler would have set up his white enameled bedstead in a bedroom of fairly modest dimensions. He once said to me: "I hate all show in a bedroom. I feel most comfortable in a simple ordinary bed."

In 1939, when these plans were assuming tangible form, Goebbels's propaganda went on fostering the German people's belief in Hitler's modesty and simplicity. In order not to imperil this image, Hitler said scarcely a word about the plans for his palatial private residence and the future Chancellery. But once, when we were tramping through the snow, he gave me justification for his soaring demands:

You see, I myself would find a simple little house in Berlin quite sufficient. I have enough power and prestige; I don't need such luxury to sustain me. But believe me, those who come after me will find such ostentation an urgent necessity. Many of them will be able to hold on only by such means. You would hardly believe what power a small mind acquires over the people around him when he is able to show himself in such imposing circumstances. Such rooms, with a great historical past, raise even a petty successor to historical rank. You see, that is why we must complete this construction in my lifetime—so that I shall have lived there and my spirit will have conferred tradition upon the building. If I live in it only for a few years, that will be good enough.

In his speeches to the construction workers of the Chancellery in 1938, Hitler had made similar remarks, though of course without revealing any of his plans, which by then were already quite far advanced. As Leader and Chancellor of the German nation, he had said, he did not enter former palaces; that was why he had refused

to move into the palace to live in a former I too, he would see to public building that a king or emperor.¹¹

Even at that time, the costs of these buildings were volume calculations. I after a quarter of a cen

1. Domed hall
2. Residential palace
3. Office suite and
4. Appendant secret
5. High Command
6. New Reichstag

Although the immense cubic yard, the total construction structures would need foundations. Moreover: sive granite, the interior were likewise to be en on. A cost of five billion Hitler Platz alone prob

The shift in the manner which began to be felt in the necessity to organize Hitler had been able himself had meanwhile tended to be angry and as still occasionally happening for him to appear. the "historic balcony," when they came to him bothering me with that

This seemingly small notion of the new Adolf know it is not out of

to move into the palace of the Reich President, for he was not going to live in a former Lord Chamberlain's residence. But in this area, too, he would see to it that the German state was provided with a public building that matched the prestigious edifices of any foreign king or emperor.¹¹

Even at that time, Hitler ruled that we were not to worry about the costs of these buildings, and we therefore obediently omitted volume calculations. I have drawn them up for the first time only now, after a quarter of a century. The result is the following table:

1. Domed hall	27,468,000 cubic yards
2. Residential palace	2,485,000
3. Office suite and Chancellery	1,569,000
4. Appendant secretariats	261,000
5. High Command of the Armed Forces	784,000
6. New Reichstag	457,000
	33,024,000 cubic yards

Although the immense scale would have reduced the price per cubic yard, the total costs were almost inconceivable. For these vast structures would need enormous walls and correspondingly deep foundations. Moreover, the exterior walls were to be clad in expensive granite, the interior walls in marble. The very best materials were likewise to be employed for doors, windows, ceilings, and so on. A cost of five billion present-day marks for the buildings of Adolf Hitler Platz alone probably represents far too low an estimate.¹²

The shift in the mood of the population, the drooping morale which began to be felt throughout Germany in 1939, was evident in the necessity to organize cheering crowds where two years earlier Hitler had been able to count on spontaneity. What is more, he himself had meanwhile moved away from the admiring masses. He tended to be angry and impatient more often than in the past when, as still occasionally happened, a crowd on Wilhelmsplatz began clamoring for him to appear. Two years before he had often stepped out on the "historic balcony." Now he sometimes snapped at his adjutants when they came to him with the request that he show himself: "Stop bothering me with that!"

This seemingly small point had a certain bearing on the conception of the new Adolf Hitler Platz, for one day he said to me: "You know it is not out of the question that I shall some day be forced

to take unpopular measures. These might possibly lead to riots. We must provide for that eventuality. All the buildings on this square must be equipped with heavy steel bulletproof shutters over their windows. The doors, too, must be of steel, and there should be heavy iron gates for closing off the square. It must be possible to defend the center of the Reich like a fortress."

This remark betrayed a nervousness he had not had before. The same feeling emerged when we discussed the location of the barracks for the bodyguard, which had meanwhile grown into a fully motorized regiment armed with the most modern equipment. He shifted its headquarters to the immediate vicinity of the grand southern axis. "Suppose there should be some disturbances!" he said. And pointing to the four hundred foot wide avenue: "If they come rolling up here in their armored vehicles the full width of the street—nobody will be able to put up any resistance." I do not know whether the army heard of this arrangement and wanted to be on the spot before the SS, or whether Hitler himself gave the order—but in any case, at the request of the army command and with Hitler's approval a barracks site was prepared even closer to the center for the Gross-deutschland guards regiment.¹⁸

I unwittingly gave expression to this separation of Hitler from his people—a Hitler who was ready to have soldiers fire upon the populace—in my design for the façade of his palace. There was no opening in it except for the great steel entrance gate and a door to a balcony from which Hitler could show himself to the crowd. But this balcony was now suspended five stories high above the street. This frowning façade still seems to me to communicate an accurate image of the remote Leader who had in the meantime moved into realms of self-idolatry.

During my imprisonment, this design, with its red mosaics, its pillars, its bronze lions and gilded silhouettes, had assumed in my memory a bright, almost pleasant character. But when I once again saw the color photographs of the model, after a lapse of more than twenty-one years, I was struck by the resemblance to a Cecil B. De Mille set. Along with its fantastic quality I also became aware of the cruel element in this architecture. It had been the very expression of a tyranny.

Before the war, I had laughed at an inkwell which the architect Brinckmann (who like Troost had originally designed steamship

décor) had presented Hitler with a solemn construction ornamentation, scrolls and the magnificence of this a tiny pool of ink. I thought. But contrary to my expectation he praised this brood no less successful with a was veritably of Goering's oversized gilded pine cone their inflated bombast, since from about 1937 on Hitler by showing increasing approval Vienna's Ringstrasse, where he moved even further away.

And I moved with him. less to what I regarded as ginnings was revealed in of my buildings. For they ter I had originally tried decadence." Wealth, the Hitler's party ideology, had drew its inspiration rather

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décor) had presented Hitler as a surprise gift. Brinckmann had made a solemn construction out of this simple utensil. It was a mass of ornamentation, scrolls and steps—and then, alone and forlorn amid all the magnificence of this "inkwell for the Chief of State," there was a tiny pool of ink. I thought I had never seen anything so abnormal. But contrary to my expectations Hitler did not disdain the object. In fact he praised this bronze inkwell immoderately. Brinckmann was no less successful with a desk chair he had designed for Hitler. It was veritably of Goeringesque proportions, a kind of throne with two oversized gilded pine cones topping the back. These two items, with their inflated bombast, seemed to me to reek of the parvenu. But from about 1937 on Hitler furthered this tendency toward pomposity by showing increasing approval of it. He had come round again to Vienna's Ringstrasse, where he had once begun. Slowly but steadily he moved even further away from the doctrines of Troost.

And I moved with him. For my designs of this period owed less and less to what I regarded as "my style." This estrangement from my beginnings was revealed in other ways besides the wildly excessive size of my buildings. For they also no longer had any of the Dorian character I had originally tried to achieve. They had become pure "art of decadence." Wealth, the inexhaustible funds at my disposal, but also Hitler's party ideology, had led me along the path to a style which drew its inspiration rather from the show palaces of Oriental despots.

At the beginning of the war, I had formed a theory which I explained at a dinner in Maxim's in Paris to a group of German and French artists. Cocteau and Despiou were among the latter. The French Revolution, I said, had developed a new sense of style which was destined to replace the late rococo. Even its simplest furniture was beautifully proportioned. This style, I argued, had found its purest expression in the architectural designs of Boullée. The Directoire that followed this revolutionary style had still treated their more abundant means with lightness and good taste. The turning point, I said, had come with the Empire style. From year to year new elements were introduced; elaborate ornamentation had been lavished upon the still classical basic forms until, at the end, Late Empire had achieved a resplendence and wealth that could scarcely be surpassed. Late Empire had expressed the end point of a stylistic evolution which had begun so promisingly with the Consulate. It had also expressed the transition from Revolution to the Napoleonic

Empire. Within it were revealed signs of decay which were a forecast of the end of the Napoleonic era. Compressed within the span of twenty years, I said, we could observe a phenomenon that ordinarily took place only over centuries: the development from the Doric buildings of early antiquity to the fissured baroque façades of Late Hellenism, such as was to be seen in, say, Baalbek; or the Romanesque buildings at the beginning of the medieval period and the playful Late Gothic at its end.

Had I been able to think the matter out consistently, I ought to have argued further that my designs for Hitler were following the pattern of the Late Empire and forecasting the end of the regime; that, therefore, Hitler's downfall could be deduced from these very designs. But this was hidden from me at the time. Probably Napoleon's entourage saw in the ornate salons of the Late Empire only the expression of grandeur. Probably only posterity beholds the symptoms of downfall in such creations. Hitler's entourage, at any rate, felt the towering inkwell to be a suitable prop for his genius as a statesman, and similarly accepted my hulking dome as the symbol of Hitler's power.

The last buildings we designed in 1939 were in fact pure neo-Empire, comparable to the style that prevailed a hundred and twenty-five years before, shortly before Napoleon's fall. They were marked by excessive ornamentation, a mania for gilding, a passion for pomp, and total decadence. And not only the style but the excessive size of these buildings plainly revealed Hitler's intention.

One day in the early summer of 1939, he pointed to the German eagle with the swastika in its claws which was to crown the dome nine hundred fifty-seven feet in the air. "That has to be changed. Instead of the swastika, the eagle is to be perched above the globe. To crown this greatest building in the world the eagle must stand above the globe."* There are photos of the models in which this revision is plainly to be seen.

A few months later the Second World War began.

* As late as May 8, 1943, Goebbels noted in his diary: "The Fuehrer expresses his unshakable conviction that the Reich will one day rule all of Europe. We will have to survive a great many conflicts, but they will doubtless lead to the most glorious triumphs. And from then on the road to world domination is practically spread out before us. For whoever rules Europe will be able to seize the leadership of the world."

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ABOUT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST 1939 WE, AN UNTROUBLED GROUP, drove with Hitler up to the Eagle's Nest. The long motorcade wound along the road which Bormann had blasted into the rock. Through a high bronze portal we entered a marble hall, damp from the moisture in the heart of the mountain, and stepped into the elevator of polished brass.

As we rode up the hundred and sixty-five feet of shaft, Hitler said abruptly, as if he were talking to himself: "Perhaps something enormously important will happen soon. Even if I should have to send Goering. . . . But if need be I would even go myself. I am staking everything on this card." There was no more beyond this hint.

Barely three weeks later, on August 21, 1939, we heard that the German Foreign Minister was in Moscow for some negotiations. During supper a note was handed to Hitler. He scanned it, stared into space for a moment, flushed deeply, then banged on the table so hard that the glasses rattled, and exclaimed in a voice breaking with excitement: "I have them! I have them!" Seconds later he

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had already regained control of himself. No one dared ask any question, and the meal continued.

After supper Hitler called his entourage together. "We are going to conclude a nonaggression pact with Russia. Here, read this. A telegram from Stalin." It briefly acknowledged the agreement that had been reached. To see the names of Hitler and Stalin linked in friendship on a piece of paper was the most staggering, the most exciting turn of events I could possibly have imagined. Immediately afterward we were shown a movie depicting Stalin watching a Red army parade; a tremendous number of troops marched past him. Hitler expressed his gratification that this military might was now neutralized. He turned to his military adjutants, evidently wanting to hear their estimate of the mass display of weapons and troops. The ladies were still excluded, but of course they soon heard the news from us, and shortly afterward it was announced on the radio.

Goebbels held an evening press conference on August 23 in which he offered commentary on the pact. Hitler telephoned him immediately afterward. He wanted to know how the foreign correspondents had reacted. With eyes glistening feverishly, he told us what Goebbels had said. "The sensation was fantastic. And when the church bells simultaneously began ringing outside, a British correspondent fatalistically remarked: 'That is the death knell of the British Empire.'" These words made the strongest impression upon Hitler in his euphoria that night. He thought he now stood so high as to be out of the reach of fate.

In the course of the night we stood on the terrace of the Berghof with Hitler and marveled at a rare natural spectacle. Northern lights¹ of unusual intensity threw red light on the legend-haunted Untersberg across the valley, while the sky above shimmered in all the colors of the rainbow. The last act of *Götterdämmerung* could not have been more effectively staged. The same red light bathed our faces and our hands. The display produced a curiously pensive mood among us. Abruptly turning to one of his military adjutants, Hitler said: "Looks like a great deal of blood. This time we won't bring it off without violence."²

Weeks before, the center of Hitler's interests had already shifted to the military area. In long talks with his four military adjutants—Colonel Rudolf Schmundt for the High Command of the Armed Services (OKW); Captain Gerhard Engel for the Army, Captain Nikolaus

von Below for the air force, and Admiral Raeder for the navy—Hitler was especially like this since he was always anxious to give him more than the

During these days of the Russian pact, however, Goebbels, Keitel, and I were all anxiously about the radical Propaganda Ministry. He tried to recommend particularly acrid to the representative of the personal circle considered peace, weakness, and did not want to

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von Below for the air force, and Captain Karl-Jesko von Puttkamer for the navy—Hitler tried to arrive at definitive plans. He seemed to especially like these young and unbiased officers, all the more since he was always seeking approval, which they were more likely to give him than the perhaps better informed but skeptical generals.

During these days immediately after announcement of the German-Russian pact, however, he saw less of the adjutants than of the political and military heads of the German Reich, among them Goering, Goebbels, Keitel, and Ribbentrop. Goebbels above all spoke openly and anxiously about the danger of war. Surprisingly, the usually radical Propaganda Minister considered the risk excessively large. He tried to recommend a peaceful line to Hitler's entourage and was particularly acrid toward Ribbentrop, whom he regarded as the chief representative of the war party. We who were members of Hitler's personal circle considered him as well as Goering, who also counseled peace, weaklings who had degenerated in the luxury of power and did not want to risk the privileges they had acquired.

Even though my future as an architect was also at stake, I thought that the solution of national questions must take precedence over personal interests. Any doubts I might have had were quelled by the self-assurance Hitler showed. In those days he seemed to me like a hero of ancient myth who unhesitatingly, in full consciousness of his strength, could enter upon and masterfully meet the test of the wildest undertakings.*

Whoever did belong to the actual war party, aside from Hitler and Ribbentrop, had worked out arguments more or less as follows:

Let us assume that because of our rapid rearmament we hold a four to one advantage in strength at the present time. Since the occupation of Czechoslovakia the other side has been rearming vigorously. They need at least one and a half to two years before their production will reach its maximum yield. Only after 1940 can they begin to catch up with our relatively large headstart. If they produce only as much as we do, however, our proportional superiority will constantly diminish, for in order to maintain it we would have to go on producing four times as much. We are in no position to do so. Even if they reach only half of

* And, in fact, nine months previously I had had bas-reliefs portraying the Hercules legend installed on the new Chancellery.

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postponed the assault on Poland, which had already been ordered.

But this temporary retreat soon yielded to new hopes; his instincts told him that even with Italy defaulting, the West might still shrink from declaring war. He therefore rejected Mussolini's offer to mediate; he would hold back no longer, he said, for if the army were held in suspense too long it would grow nervous. Besides, the period of good autumn weather would soon pass, and during the later rainy season there was danger of the troops bogging down in the Polish mud.

Notes on the Polish question were exchanged with England. Out of the rush of events I particularly remember one evening in the conservatory of the Chancellor's residence. I had the impression that Hitler looked exhausted from overwork. He spoke with deep conviction to his intimate circle: "This time the mistake of 1914 will be avoided. Everything depends on making the other side accept responsibility. In 1914 that was handled clumsily. And now again the ideas of the Foreign Office are simply useless. The best thing is for me to compose the notes myself." As he spoke he held a page of manuscript in his hand, probably the draft of a note from the Foreign Office. He hastily took his leave, not joining us for dinner, and vanished into the upper rooms. Later, in prison, I read that exchange of notes; it did not seem to me that Hitler had carried out his intent very well.

Hitler's view that the West would once more give in to his demands as it had done at Munich was supported by intelligence information: An officer on the British General Staff was said to have evaluated the strength of the Polish army and come to the conclusion that Polish resistance would soon collapse. Hitler thus had reason to hope that the British General Staff would do everything in its power to advise its government against so hopeless a war. When, on September 3, the Western powers followed up their ultimatum with declarations of war, Hitler was initially stunned, but quickly reassured himself and us by saying that England and France had obviously declared war merely as a sham, in order not to lose face before the whole world. In spite of the declarations there would be no fighting; he was convinced of that, he said. He therefore ordered the Wehrmacht to remain strictly on the defensive. He felt that this decision of his showed remarkable political acumen.

During those last days of August Hitler was in an unwonted state



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of nerves and at times completely lost the reassuring air of infallible leader. The hectic activities were followed by an uneasy period of quiet. For a short time Hitler resumed his customary daily routine. Even his interest in architectural plans revived. To his round table he explained: "Of course we are in a state of war with England and France, but if we on our side avoid all acts of war, the whole business will evaporate. As soon as we sink a ship and they have sizable casualties, the war party over there will gain strength." Even when German U-boats lay in a favorable position near the French battleship *Dunkerque* he refused to authorize an attack. But the British air raid on Wilhelmshaven and the sinking of the *Athenia* soon called for a reconsideration of this policy.

He stuck unswervingly to his opinion that the West was too feeble, too worn out, and too decadent to begin the war seriously. Probably it was also embarrassing for him to admit to his entourage and above all to himself that he had made so crucial a mistake. I still remember his consternation when the news came that Churchill was going to enter the British War Cabinet as First Lord of the Admiralty. With this ill-omened press report in his hand, Goering stepped out of the door of Hitler's salon. He dropped into the nearest chair and said wearily: "Churchill in the Cabinet. That means that the war is really on. Now we shall have war with England." From these and other observations I deduced that this initiation of real war was not what Hitler had projected.

His illusions and wish-dreams were a direct outgrowth of his unrealistic mode of working and thinking. Hitler actually knew nothing about his enemies and even refused to use the information that was available to him. Instead, he trusted his inspirations, no matter how inherently contradictory they might be, and these inspirations were governed by extreme contempt for and underestimation of the others. In keeping with his classic phrase that there were always two possibilities, he wanted to have the war at this supposedly most favorable moment, while at the same time he failed to adequately prepare for it. He regarded England, as he once stressed, as "our enemy Number One,"⁴ while at the same time hoping to come to an arrangement with that enemy.

I do not think that in those early days of September, Hitler was fully aware that he had irrevocably unleashed a world war. He had merely meant to move one step further. To be sure, he was ready to

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accept the risk associated with that step, just as he had been a year before during the Czech crisis; but he had prepared himself only for the risk, not really for the great war. His naval rearmament was obviously planned for a later date; the battleships as well as the first large aircraft carriers were still under construction. He knew that they would not attain full military value until they could face the enemy on more or less even terms. Moreover, he had spoken so often of the neglect of the submarine arm in the First World War that he probably would not have knowingly begun the Second without preparing a strong fleet of U-boats.

But all his anxieties seemed to be scattered to the winds in early September, when the campaign in Poland yielded such successes for the German troops. Hitler seemed to recover his assurance swiftly, and later, at the climax of the war, I frequently heard him say that the Polish campaign had been a necessary thing.

Do you think it would have been good fortune for our troops if we had taken Poland without a fight, after obtaining Austria and Czechoslovakia without fighting? Believe me, not even the best army can stand that sort of thing. Victories without loss of blood are demoralizing. Therefore it was not only fortunate there was no compromise; at the time we would have had to regard it as harmful, and I therefore would have struck in any case.⁵

It may be, nevertheless, that by such remarks he was trying to gloss over his diplomatic miscalculations of August 1939. On the other hand, toward the end of the war Colonel General Heinrici told me about an early speech of Hitler's to the generals which points in the same direction. I noted down Heinrici's remarkable story as follows: "Hitler said that he was the first man since Charlemagne to hold unlimited power in his own hand. He did not hold this power in vain, he said, but would know how to use it in a struggle for Germany. If the war were not won, that would mean that Germany had not stood the test of strength; in that case she would deserve to be and would be doomed."⁶

From the start the populace took a far more serious view of the situation than did Hitler and his entourage. Because of the general nervousness a false air-raid alarm was sounded in Berlin early in

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September. Along with many other Berliners I sat in a public shelter. The atmosphere was noticeably depressed; the people were full of fear about the future.⁷

None of the regiments marched off to war decorated with flowers as they had done at the beginning of the First World War. The streets remained empty. There was no crowd on Wilhelmsplatz shouting for Hitler. It was in keeping with the desolate mood that Hitler had his bags packed into the cars one night to drive east, to the front. Three days after the beginning of the attack on Poland he had his adjutant summon me to the provisionally blacked-out residence in the Chancellery to bid me good-by. I found a man who lost his temper over trivialities. The cars drove up, and he tersely took his leave of the "courtiers" who were remaining behind. Not a soul on the street took notice of this historic event: Hitler driving off to the war he had staged. Obviously Goebbels could have provided a cheering crowd of any size, but he was apparently not in the mood to do it.

Even during the mobilization Hitler did not forget his artists. In the late summer of 1939, orders were given that their draft records be sent to Hitler's adjutant by the various army districts. He then tore up the papers and threw them away. By this original device, the men ceased to exist for the draft boards. On the list drawn up by Hitler and Goebbels, however, architects and sculptors occupied little space. The overwhelming majority of those thus exempted were singers and actors. The fact that young scientists were also important for the future was not discovered until 1942, and then with my help.

While still at Obersalzberg I had telephoned Will Nagel, my former superior and now head of my staff, and asked him to begin forming a technical assistance group under my leadership. We wanted to put our well-coordinated team of construction supervisors to use in rebuilding bridges, extending or widening roads, and similar areas of the war effort. However, our notions about what we could do immediately were extremely vague. For the time being it consisted of no more than getting sleeping bags and tents ready, and painting my car field-gray. On the day of general mobilization I went to the High Command of the Army on Bendlerstrasse. As might be expected in a Prusso-German organization, General Fromm, who was responsible for the army mobilization, sat idle in his office while the machinery ran according to plan. He readily accepted my offer of as-

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sistance; my car was given an army number, and I myself army identification papers. For the present, that was the extent of my wartime activity.

It was Hitler who tersely forbade me to undertake any missions for the army. My duty, he told me, was to continue working at his plans. Thereupon I at least placed the workmen and the technical staffs employed on my buildings in Berlin at the disposal of the army and industry. We took charge of the Peenemünde site for the development of rockets and of some urgent buildings for the aircraft industry.

I informed Hitler of these commitments, which seemed to me the least I could do. I was confident of his approval. But to my surprise there came an unusually rude letter from Bormann. What was I doing choosing new assignments, he demanded. I had received no such orders. Hitler had asked him to let me know that all building projects were to proceed unchecked.

This order provides another example of how unrealistically and dividedly Hitler thought. On the one hand he repeatedly asserted that Germany was now being challenged by fate and had to wage a life-and-death struggle; on the other hand he did not want to give up his grandiose toys. In making such choices, moreover, he was disregarding the mood of the masses, who were inevitably baffled by the construction of such luxury buildings, now that Hitler's expansionism was beginning to demand sacrifices. This order of his was the first one I shirked. It was true that I saw Hitler far more rarely during this first year of the war. But whenever he came to Berlin for a few days, or to Obersalzberg for a few weeks, he still asked to be shown the building plans and urged me to go on developing them. But I think he soon tacitly accepted the cessation of actual work on the buildings.

Around the beginning of October the German Ambassador in Moscow, Count von Schulenburg, informed Hitler that Stalin was personally interested in our building plans. A series of photographs of our models was exhibited in the Kremlin, but on Hitler's instructions our largest buildings were kept secret in order, as he said, "not to give Stalin any ideas." Schulenburg had proposed that I fly to Moscow to explain the plans. "He might keep you there," Hitler commented half jokingly, and refused to let me take the trip. A short while afterward, Schnurre, a member of the embassy staff, informed me that Stalin had liked my sketches.

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On September 29, Ribbentrop returned from his second Moscow conference with a German-Soviet frontier and friendship treaty which was to seal the fourth partition of Poland. At Hitler's table he recounted that he had never felt so much at ease as among Stalin's associates: "As if I were among old party comrades of ours, *mein Führer!*" Hitler listened without a flicker of expression to this burst of enthusiasm on the part of the normally impassive Foreign Minister. Stalin, so Ribbentrop declared, seemed satisfied with the border arrangements, and when it was all settled drew in his own hand on the map along the border of the zone assigned to Russia an area which he presented to Ribbentrop as a vast hunting preserve. At this Goering's hackles rose; he insisted that Stalin could hardly have meant this gift to apply to the Foreign Minister personally. On the contrary, it was a grant to the German Reich and consequently to himself as Reich Master of the Hunt. A hot dispute broke out between the two passionate hunters which ended with the Foreign Minister sulking, for Goering proved more forceful in argument and better able to get his way.

In spite of the war the renovation of the former palace of the Reich President, which was to be the Foreign Minister's new official residence, had to proceed. Hitler inspected the nearly completed building and showed dissatisfaction. Hastily and recklessly, Ribbentrop thereupon ordered the new annex torn down and rebuilt. Probably in order to please Hitler he insisted on clumsy marble doorways, huge doors, and moldings which were quite unsuitable for rooms of middling size. Before the second inspection I begged Hitler to refrain from making negative comments, or else the Foreign Minister would order a third rebuilding. Hitler actually held his tongue, and only later in his intimate circle did he make fun of the building, which to his mind was an utter failure.

In October, Hanke told me something which had been learned when German troops met Soviet troops on the demarcation line in Poland: that Soviet equipment appeared extremely deficient, in fact wretched. Hanke had reported this to Hitler. Army officers confirmed this point; Hitler must have listened to this piece of intelligence with the keenest interest, for thereafter he repeatedly cited this report as evidence that the Russians were weak and poorly organized. Soon afterward, the failure of the Soviet offensive against Finland confirmed him in this view.

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In spite of all the secrecy I obtained some light on Hitler's further plans when he gave me the assignment, still in 1939, to fit out a headquarters for him in western Germany. Ziegenberg, a manorial estate of Goethe's time, situated near Nauheim in the foothills of the Taunus range, was modernized by us for this purpose, and provided with shelters.

When the arrangements were completed, millions of marks squandered on building, telephone cables laid over hundreds of miles, and the most modern communications equipment installed, Hitler abruptly decided that the place was too luxurious for him. In wartime he must lead a simple life, he said, and therefore quarters conceived in this spirit were to be built for him in the Eifel hills. This may have made an impression upon those who did not know how many millions of marks had already been expended and how many more millions would now have to be spent. We pointed this out to Hitler, but he would not be swayed, for he saw his reputation for "modesty" imperiled.

After the swift victory in France, I was firmly convinced that Hitler had already become one of the great figures in German history. Yet I wondered at the apathy I thought I observed in the public despite all the grand triumphs. Hitler's self-confidence was obviously growing by leaps and bounds. He had found a new theme for his monologues at table. His great concept, he declared, had not run afoul of the inadequacies which had caused Germany to lose the First World War. In those days there had been dissension between the political and the military leadership, he said. The political parties had been given leeway to undermine the unity of the nation and even to engage in treasonous activities. For reasons of protocol incompetent princes of the ruling houses had to be commanders of their armies; they were supposed to earn military laurels in order to increase the glory of their dynasties. The only reason that enormous disasters had been averted was that these incompetent scions of decadent royal families had been assigned excellent General Staff officers to aid them. Moreover, at the top as supreme war lord had been the incompetent Wilhelm II. Today, on the other hand, Germany was united. The states had been reduced to unimportance, the army commanders were selected from among the best officers without regard to their descent, the privileges of the nobility had been abolished, political life and the army as well as the nation as a whole had been forged

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into a unity. Moreover, he, Hitler, stood at the head. His strength, his determination, his energy would overcome all future difficulties.

Hitler claimed total credit for the success of the campaign in the West. The plan for it came from him, he said. "I have again and again," he told us, "read Colonel de Gaulle's book on methods of modern warfare employing fully motorized units, and I have learned a great deal from it."

Shortly after the end of the campaign in France, I received a telephone call from the office of the Fuehrer's adjutant: I was to come to headquarters for a few days for a special purpose. Hitler had set up temporary headquarters in the small village of Bruly le Peche near Sedan. The village had been cleared of all inhabitants. The generals and adjutants were established in the small houses that lined the single village street. Hitler's own quarters in no way differed from those of the others. At my arrival he greeted me in the best of humors. "In a few days we are flying to Paris. I'd like you to be with us. Breker and Giessler are coming along also." With that I was dismissed for the present, astonished that the victor had sent for three artists to accompany him on his entry into the French capital.

That same evening I was invited to dine with Hitler's military circle. Details of the trip to Paris were discussed. This was not to be an official visit, I learned, but a kind of "art tour" by Hitler. This was the city, as he had so often said, which had fascinated him from his earliest years, so that he thought he would be able to find his way about the streets and important monuments as if he had lived there, solely from his endless studies of its plans.

The armistice was to go into effect at 1:35 A.M. on June 25, 1940. That night we sat with Hitler around a deal table in the simple room of a peasant house. Shortly before the agreed time Hitler gave orders to turn out the light and open the windows. Silently, we sat in the darkness, swept by the sense of experiencing a historic moment so close to the author of it. Outside, a bugler blew the traditional signal for the end of fighting. A thunderstorm must have been brewing in the distance, for as in a bad novel occasional flashes of heat lightning shimmered through the dark room. Someone, overcome by emotion, blew his nose. Then Hitler's voice sounded, soft and unemphatic: "This responsibility . . ." And a few minutes later: "Now switch the light on." The trivial conversation continued, but for me it remained

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Next day I set out from headquarters for Rheims, to see the cathedral. A ghostly looking city awaited me, almost deserted, ringed by military police protecting the champagne cellars. Casement windows banged in the wind, newspapers of several days ago blew through the streets, open front doors revealed interiors. It was as if ordinary life had stood still for a foolish moment. Glasses, dishes, and half-eaten meals could be seen on the tables. En route we had encountered innumerable refugees along the roads; they used the sides of the roads, for the middle was taken up by columns of German army units. These self-assured troops between the worn-looking people transporting their worldly goods in baby carriages, wheelbarrows, and other primitive vehicles made a striking contrast. Three and a half years later I saw similar scenes in Germany.

Three days after the beginning of the armistice we landed at Le Bourget airfield. It was early in the morning, about five-thirty. Three large Mercedes sedans stood waiting. Hitler as usual sat in the front seat beside the chauffeur, Breker and I on the jump seats behind him, while Giessler and the adjutants occupied the rear seats. Field-gray uniforms had been provided for us artists, so that we might fit into the military framework. We drove through the extensive suburbs directly to the Opera, Charles Garnier's great neobaroque building. It was Hitler's favorite and the first thing he wanted to see. Colonel Speidel, assigned by the German Occupation Authority, was waiting at the entrance for us.

The great stairway, famous for its spaciousness, notorious for its excessive ornamentation, the resplendent foyer, the elegant, gilded parterre, were carefully inspected. All the lights glowed as they would on a gala night. Hitler had undertaken to lead the party. A white-haired attendant accompanied our small group through the deserted building. Hitler had actually studied the plans of the Paris opera house with great care. Near the proscenium box he found a salon missing, remarked on it, and turned out to be right. The attendant said that this room had been eliminated in the course of renovations many years ago. "There, you see how well I know my way about," Hitler commented complacently. He seemed fascinated by the Opera, went into ecstasies about its beauty, his eyes glittering with an excitement that struck me as uncanny. The attendant, of course, had immediately recognized the person he was guiding through the building.

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bouquet that arrives for him. On his discharge he spends a lonesome Christmas at his citadel; his family are next door—they leave him lying there alone the whole evening. When Staatssekretär Hanke visits on official business, it is a frosty affair. A sympathetic letter from Funk cheers him up. Funk is one of the few people he can depend on. Funk, and the Führer. Hitler invites him down to the Obersalzberg. Before leaving, Dr Goebbels tries one more approach to Magda, but she launches into more 'speculations,' and he rushes off yelping. 'I don't know her any more,' he laments.⁸

Once again he is relegated to the guesthouse. 'I live here in splendid isolation,' he writes, making a virtue out of his humiliation. Hitler invites him up to the Berghof for some blunt talking. 'I shall pass over the details here,' writes Goebbels bleakly. The plain speaking continues for four hours the next day. When Hitler leaves for Berlin Goebbels stays on at the Obersalzberg to convalesce. He is at breaking point. 'From Berlin'—he writes Berlin but means Magda—'I hear not a word. Not that I want to anyway.'⁹ 'It's just that I can't sleep at night. Then comes the anger, and the rage, and the hate.'¹⁰

Max Amann breaks to him the bad news that Hitler has forbidden publication of Goebbels' biography of him. Used only to censoring others, Goebbels finds it a bitter blow.¹¹ Later he will concede that Hitler was right, the manuscript was just a hasty pot-boiler.¹² Returning to Berlin on Thursday January 17, 1939 he realizes: 'I am on the verge of a nervous breakdown.'¹³ Seeing Hitler at midday he talks about everything other than what's really on his mind. The next afternoon he ventures out to Schwanenwerder, ostensibly to see the children; he stays at the citadel. By the next day he and Magda have reached an unusual agreement, brokered by Hitler.¹⁴ Goebbels will sign a document binding him to one year's good behavior. Magda agrees to remain outwardly his wife meanwhile, after which she can divorce him if she wishes. He may appear at Schwanenwerder only by prior invitation.¹⁵ (It is precisely the kind of matrimonial truce that Goebbels himself had proposed during the divorce-law discussions in Cabinet two years before.)¹⁶ Hitler offers to act as guarantor.

For two hours the two men stroll around Speer's new chancellery building, talking this irksome affair over. To allow it to consume so much of his time Hitler must have a monumental patience, or a real and enduring fondness for Magda. Her draft of the agreement seems very businesslike. Hitler runs his eye over it and suggests a few minor changes. They all sign it at Schwanenwerder on January 22—the only peace treaty to which Hitler will ever set his name.¹⁷ 'The best thing will be for you to live like a monk,' he tells the minister. 'And you, madam, should live like a nun.' 'Mein Führer, I have been living like a nun for a year already,' she retorts. Goebbels persuades Hitler to write a certain letter to her—it has not survived—and hopes the affair is closed.¹⁸ It has obscured his entire horizon for months.

Their strained marriage is the whisper of all Germany. Scandalized

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travelers say he has twenty-three illegitimate children.¹⁹ Foreign newspapers report that he has been dismissed, and that he is to answer charges before a Nazi tribunal about his private life. They remark on his absence from a dinner for foreign journalists.²⁰ 'Aggravation upon aggravation,' records Goebbels. 'And I've got to swallow hard.' 'There's no end to the rumors and scuttlebutt,' he adds the next day. 'I'm suffering agonies.'²¹ An official informs Hanke that even the charwomen are talking about the minister in the 'most contemptuous' terms.²² Himmler tells Rosenberg at this time that Magda has complained of 'dozens' of infidelities by her husband. 'The women are now lining up to dictate affidavits—both for Mrs G. and for the Gestapo—on how he coerced them,' says Himmler. 'I've handed some of these statements to the Führer.' Unusually well-informed, Himmler adds that in October Magda has given her husband three months to come to heel; in January the time is up.²³

It has taxed even Hitler's powers of persuasion to induce Magda to return to the conjugal home, reports one major fleeing Germany, to British officers.²⁴ Grimly, she fulfills her new contractual obligations. The photographers capture pictures of her at the press ball, sitting blank-faced and embittered at her unloved husband's side.²⁵

'GOEBBELS,' commented Rosenberg with satisfaction on February 6, 'has no friends. Even his hirelings curse him.' Some Nazis felt that he had harmed their movement by his personal behavior and the crudity of his propaganda. One Hitler Youth leader remarked that 'nobody' approved of his anti-Jewish measures.²⁶ He had regimented and punished, censored and sanitized the media to the consistency of a bland brown pudding, then criticized their lack of individuality. The newsreels were uniformly dull, featuring their beloved Führer so often that even he complained.²⁷ Lively, thinking newspapers were suppressed, while Streicher's loathsome organ *Der Stürmer* appeared unmolested.²⁸ Even popular writers like Hans Grimm were called before Goebbels to be screamed at, for not ending letters with 'Heil Hitler' and for not attending the Weimar literary convention. 'If you don't toe the line I'll break you,' shouted Goebbels, 'whatever the wailing from abroad. Just as I broke Furtwängler. I throw writers like you into concentration camp for four months—and the next time after that they never get out again.'²⁹ He censored the latest dance steps, and found nothing absurd in erecting enamel plates in dance halls reading 'Jazz dancing forbidden.'³⁰ Just once he professed to see the funny side of foreign caricatures of himself.³¹ More often he reacted viciously. He took the usual steps to neutralize the acid of political satire. Oblivious of how ludicrous he seemed, he entered pompously in his diary: 'Cranked up the prohibition machinery against the Kabarett der Komiker.'³² He expelled five of its comedians from the chamber of culture, while announcing a joke contest to prove that the Reich had not lost its sense of humor.³³ In March he paid a surprise visit to the cabaret, found it packed and totally non-political. 'So it works. You only need to a firm hand to get your own way.'³⁴

Power had corroded his sense of proportion. He had become more corrupt than the most gluttonous Jewish magnates of his popular invective. At taxpayers' expense he was yet again remodeling his official residence. It was scheduled for completion by July 15, 1939. Its household staff of eighteen would be paid for from his ministry's secret fund.³⁵ He had installed a private apartment in his ministry. He had the sole use for life of the villa on the Bogensee lake at Lanke. He owned outright two luxury properties on the exclusive Schwanenwerder lakeshore. At the nadir of his nervous breakdown in January 1939 he still found the strength to order work to begin on a palatial mansion on the far side of the Bogensee, fencing off a total of 3,200 hectares (eight thousand acres) of woodland in one of Berlin's favorite beauty spots.³⁶ Together with Hanke, whose sins he had evidently forgiven, Goebbels paced off the new site and observed incongruously in his diary, 'At least I'll have one place to call home.'³⁷ His private architect Hugo Bartels promised to have this new refuge ready for his birthday in October 1939. By May, 129 men were laboring on this new Haus am Bogensee. Even after the war broke out construction would continue at the same pace. A letter from Bartels hints at some of the amenities that Goebbels was installing—including a wine cellar and unheard of luxuries like an air-conditioned beer cellar and a refrigerated pastry-cooling table.³⁸ 'It's going to be beautiful,' he wrote after working on the blueprints, 'but unfortunately a bit expensive. It's laid out on a generous scale, and meant to last a lifetime.'³⁹ The Haus am Bogensee would ultimately have a small guest-house, a private cinema, and five bedrooms, including separate rooms for Goebbels and Magda. The architects had provided air conditioning, a disappearing bar, and a large picture window which sank with a faint whirl into the floor at the touch of a brass button.⁴⁰ The inventory of furnishings would fill twenty-eight pages of single-spaced typescript.

The average Berliner probably knew none of this. To ingratiate himself with them he put on his old trenchcoat on November 28, 1938, and made heavily publicized visits to slum-dwellings while reporters took down every word for publication in *Angriff* two days later. 'Heil Hitler, Mrs B—!' he exclaimed. 'Might I look at your apartment for a moment?' 'This man is to have a new apartment, Wächter! Take this down. . . .' He allocated two million marks to slum clearance from the fine levied on the Jews.⁴¹

In a raucous speech to Berlin propaganda workers on November 22 he claimed proof that the Jews had planned the Gustloff and Rath murders long in advance; and, as for the alleged plundering during the pogrom, the reality had been different: Markgraf, the famous jewelers, had not been plundered at all, he said, but had concealed their stock in a nearby hotel 'for safety.' (The next day he told the same to Hitler, who laughed out loud.)⁴² When a British member of parliament suggested resettling Germany's Jews in Britain, Goebbels maliciously applauded: 'I expect it will be a great satisfaction for the British people to assist the much respected Jews from their tremendous financial resources.' That

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was the problem, he noted: everybody wanted to help the Jews out—but nobody wanted them.⁴³

At a secret ministerial conference a few weeks later, the stenographic record quotes him as saying:

It is immaterial how the Jewish problem is actually solved, perhaps by denoting some region of the globe later on for the creation of a Jewish state. But it is remarkable that the states whose public opinion is in favor of the Jews all refuse to accept our Jews from us. They say they are magnificent pioneers of culture, and geniuses in economics, diplomacy, philosophy, and poetry, yet the moment we try to press one of these geniuses upon them, they clamp down their frontiers: 'No, no! We don't want them!' I think it must be unique in the history of the world, people turning down geniuses.⁴⁴

Goebbels set up an institute to research the Jewish problem and flood the media with pseudo-scientific articles.⁴⁵ 'We're gradually crowding the Jews together,' he recorded. 'This will release space for the German workers.'⁴⁶

LENI Riefenstahl, returning from Hollywood, confirmed that the Jews were everywhere there.⁴⁷ Although he secretly enjoyed watching American movies like Walt Disney's *Snow White* with his family, he forbade their general release both to save foreign currency and to get his own back for the American-Jewish boycott of Germany's films.⁴⁸ He assiduously pandered to Hitler's lowbrow film tastes, giving him eighteen Mickey Mouse cartoons for Christmas 1937.⁴⁹ The Führer demanded a copy of the Sherlock Holmes thriller *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as a permanent loan to his film library.⁵⁰ His obiter dicta on films had the force of law even for Goebbels. *Tarzan* was bad, *Woman at the Wheel* was very bad; and he walked right out of *Madame Dubarry*.⁵¹ Goebbels intervened at every level of film production, personally editing *In the Name of the People* and the latest Veit Harlan movie *Immortal Heart*, and ordering key scenes of *Hotel Sacher* shot again.⁵² He put sound financial brains in charge of the major studios, with capable artistic directors like Emil Jannings at Ufa, Demandowsky at Tobis, Hans Schweikart at Bavaria, Karl Hartl at Tobis-Sascha, and Alfred Greven, a world-war fighter pilot, at Terra.⁵³ (It was around Greven that his next major personal crisis would revolve.)

UPSET by the estrangement from Magda and preoccupied with the financial crisis that he had inflicted on himself by his extravagant new plans for Lanke, Goebbels brooded far into the spring of 1939.

Max Amann had invited him to write an article each week for the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Putting on his eyeglasses, he dictated an effortless diatribe against the United States.⁵⁴ Brilliantly composed and elegantly argued these articles would flow like a river of strychnine over the next five years. Usually he hit upon their titles before actually writing the contents.⁵⁵ The articles betrayed his newfound mistrust of the British, in

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line with Hitler's reluctant acceptance that war with Britain was now inevitable.⁵⁶ He did not doubt, he wrote, that the British would defend their way of life to the utmost—they would fight to the last Frenchman, the last Russian, and the last American, if need be.⁵⁷

1938 } NEITHER he nor Hitler knew for sure what to do next. Opening the Sudeten election campaign at Reichenberg on November 19 Goebbels, mimicking Hitler's favorite argument, had said, 'When one has the feeling that the time is ripe, that the Goddess of History is descending on Earth, and that the hem of her mantle is touching mankind, then responsible men must have the courage to grasp the hem and not let go.'⁵⁸ For a few days in December the possibility of wresting Memel, Germany's ancient port on the Baltic, from Lithuanian control again surfaced.⁵⁹ Goebbels damped down speculation. Addressing the Reichstag at the end of January Hitler warned the international Jewish community against provoking a new world war.⁶⁰ He told Goebbels that he planned to think over his next moves at the Berghof. 'Perhaps,' speculated Goebbels, 'it's the Czechs' turn again.'⁶¹ Going for the Ukraine next would require Polish complicity. At lunch two days later Hitler was still preoccupied with foreign policy decisions. 'He is hatching new plans again,' observed Goebbels. 'A real Napoleon!'⁶² The propaganda minister headlined his next article, 'Is war in sight?' In it he fulminated against the British *News Chronicle*—he shortly expelled its Berlin correspondent Ian Colvin. He railed at the communists in New York, at the *Times* correspondent in Washington, at President Roosevelt, and at the BBC's German service. Germany, he insisted, desired nothing but peace.⁶³

Goebbels tried hard to restore his damaged image over the coming year. On the other side of town, Magda let down her hair, modernized her hairstyle, wore make-up, partied, and drank.⁶⁴ Goebbels importuned her by phone to join him at the occasional official function, but she rarely did. Early in March he noted without comment that she was busy getting ready for a trip to Italy.⁶⁵ Albert Speer had invited her, traveling under an assumed name, to join several other couples including Hitler's surgeon Karl Brandt touring southern Italy and Sicily, and they left Berlin on the evening of March 9.

THE very next day the Nazis' months of subversion in Slovakia paid off. For weeks since Munich Hitler's agents had been fomenting discord there. Slovakia declared herself independent from Prague. On the tenth Prague sent in troops to arrest the Slovak prime minister Father Tiso. This was the opportunity Hitler wanted, to 'solve the problem we left half-solved in October,' as Goebbels put it. Springing into action Hitler sent for Goebbels at midday and for Ribbentrop and Keitel soon after. He told them he had decided to march in to the rest of the hybrid Czech state on Wednesday the fifteenth and seize Prague. 'Our frontier must extend to the Carpathians,' Goebbels penned into his hitherto unpublished diaries: 'The Ides of March.'

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We fix all the details already. We are after all well versed in this now. I recall Berndt and Bömer [domestic and foreign press department heads] from leave. . . . We're all very pleased, even Ribbentrop. The Führer shouts with joy. This is going to be a pushover. We'll start broadcasting Slovakian bulletins from our [black] Vienna transmitter. I'll turn the volume up over the next three days to full blast. . . . In the afternoon I work out the battle plan on my own. I think it's going to be another masterpiece of strategy and diplomacy.

Late in the afternoon over to the Führer again. We infer from one report that before its arrest the Tiso regime appealed in despair to the German government. The actual text can always be obtained later. The Führer says, and rightly so, that you can't make history with lawyers. You've got to have heart, head, and courage—just what lawyers lack. In the evening, at my suggestion, the Führer visits the People's Theater to put up a façade.

Afterward he sat sipping tea with Hitler until four A.M. in the Artistes' Club—'We have our alibi,' wrote Goebbels, ignoring the word's criminal connotations. Upsetting Hitler's cynical plot, Tiso refused to sign the appeal for German help that Hitler had sent him. The steam was going out of the plan.⁶⁶ Next day Berndt reported in, and Goebbels jokingly appointed the thickset, burly Nazi propagandist his 'Reich Rumormonger.' It was the Sudeten crisis all over again.

That evening, March 11, he viewed several films, including *The Sweetheart*, starring Lida Baarova, a 'wonderful, poetic and moving love story' which deeply upset him; he drove out to Lanke to sleep it off amid the snow and ice of a winter that had suddenly arrived.⁶⁷ (He had not seen Lida since, allegedly, she had abruptly materialized before him, mischievously disguised in a wig, at a Winter Relief collection.⁶⁸) The news during the night from Bratislava, Slovakia's capital, was distressingly calm. With the activists in jail, the momentum had gone. 'The attempt to whip things up with our S.S. has only partly succeeded. It looks as if Slovakia's not playing along,' noted Goebbels in disappointment. Moreover Prague too was refusing to be provoked this time. 'So we're going to make history there ourselves,' noted Goebbels. He discussed the psychological aspects with Hitler at midday on the twelfth; they decided to keep the crisis out of the editorials, the press must wear an impenetrable mask until Wednesday, the day itself. 'If only we had . . . an appeal for aid or military intervention' lamented Goebbels. 'That would make it all so simple.' All day long the messengers scurried between his ministry and Hitler's chancellery, while the Berlin public had not an inkling of what was brewing.⁶⁹ That night, after another 'alibi' visit to an operetta, Goebbels and Hitler stayed up until three A.M. talking foreign policy. Ribbentrop, recorded Goebbels afterward, 'takes the view that there's bound to be a conflict with Britain later. The Führer is preparing for it, but he does not consider it inevitable. . . . There is a heated argument.'⁷⁰

Still the foreign press acted as though nothing was happening. Early

March 13, 1939

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next morning, Monday March 13, Hitler sent for Goebbels to agree on leaflets for the invasion. While Goebbels, back at his ministry, drafted the wording—'any resistance will be bloodily put down'—his children came for half an hour to rumster around, an idyll on the irony of which he himself commented. That afternoon Germany's newspapers suddenly opened fire, roaring with one voice a broadside of rage at Prague. 'Berndt ... is the best man for such jobs,' Goebbels recognized. 'Now the cat is out of the bag.' London and Paris expressed disinterest in Prague's fate.

Over to the Führer in the evening. He has received Tiso. Explained to him that Slovakia's historic hour has come. If they don't act they'll be swallowed up by Hungary. He is to think it over and go back to Bratislava. No revolutions, it must all be constitutional and above board. Not that we expect very much from him. But that doesn't matter now.

The Führer goes over his plan once more. Within five days the whole operation will be over. On the first day we'll already be in Prague. Our planes within two hours in fact. I think we'll pull it off without significant bloodshed. And then the Führer intends to take a lengthy political breather. Amen! I can't believe it, it's too good to be true.⁷¹

The next morning, March 14, Tiso persuaded his Slovak parliament to declare independence from Prague, but 'not, as at first reported, with an appeal to Berlin for aid.' The Slovaks wanted no German troops. 'Our press,' wrote Goebbels, 'rampages just like last September.' London and Paris still kept well out: 'Once bitten, twice shy!' was his assessment. He had printed twenty-five million leaflets overnight. At midday Hitler discussed with him the new statute for Bohemia and Moravia, as Prague's territories would be styled. ('We order that the name Czechoslovakia is not to be used any more,' noted Goebbels, ordering swift research to back up Germany's historic claim to these regions. 'We shall speak of Bohemia and Moravia as ancient German territories.')

They would be left largely to govern themselves. 'The Czechs will not be germanized, but will enjoy the protection of the Reich's military, foreign, and economic policies.' Hitler told him the Wehrmacht would cross the frontier at six A.M. No sooner had Goebbels predicted that the Czechs would come cap in hand than they did just that. Emil Hacha, Beneš' successor, arranged to come by special train to Berlin immediately. 'Meanwhile we have the first troops move into Czech territory. So Hacha can see what's what.' S.S. units stealthily crossed into Moravian Ostrau and Witkowitz, to prevent the Poles seizing the steel mills there; resistance in two places was quickly broken. Hacha arrived with his foreign minister from Prague that evening. 'The Führer,' recorded his admiring propaganda minister, 'has them wait until midnight, slowly and surely wearing them out. That's what they did with us at Versailles. The tried and tested methods of political tactics.'

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March 16, 1939

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Hitler dictated a proclamation, which Goebbels himself read out over the microphones to a sleeping Germany at six A.M.⁷² When the minister awoke three hours later Hitler had already left to join his troops. In his pocket he carried the new statute for Bohemia and Moravia, and for the Protectorate that he was to establish over this supine neighbor. By evening the entire region had been occupied, a masterpiece of military organization as Goebbels himself noted.

That evening, as Hitler took up residence in the Czech Hradcany castle, Goebbels felt suddenly very lonely: 'I feel a longing for human beings.' He went over to filmstar Zarah Leander's little birthday party for distraction.⁷³ On March 16 he issued an edict: 'The use of the term "Grossdeutsches Reich" is not desired. This term is reserved for later eventualities.' He began to plan an Easter journey across the Balkans and Greece. That evening he went out for another little drive—after all, Magda was a thousand miles away.

WHILE Magda had gallivanted off for six weeks late on March 9, 1939 Goebbels enjoyed unrestricted access to their children. Sometimes he brought them into his ministry and let them tumble around his study.⁷⁴ Still pursuing Magda, his Staatssekretär Hanke meanwhile addressed love letters to her at every station of her journey.

Late on Tuesday the twenty-first, Goebbels again escorted his Führer to the theater on his return to Berlin. This time they had to camouflage their next move, a crude ultimatum which Ribbentrop was at that moment issuing to Lithuania over Memel. 'These petty crooks of Versailles,' chuckled Goebbels, 'are now having to hand back their loot.' As they waited for word from Lithuania, Hitler outlined his next plans to Goebbels—first he would take that respite, to regain people's confidence; and then he would raise the question of Germany's former colonies. 'Always the old one—two,' marveled Goebbels. At six-thirty A.M. Lithuania agreed to relinquish Memel at once. It all seemed so easy: Goebbels realized that this was a dangerous notion that he would soon have to counteract.⁷⁵

Yes, as months went there definitely was something about March. After staging a triumphal entry into Memel aboard the battle-cruiser Deutschland on March 23, Hitler talked in confidence with Goebbels again. 'What a week that was,' wrote Goebbels. Could Hitler pull off the hat-trick and recover Danzig too—the former German port that the League of Nations had unwisely placed under partial Polish control after the world war? 'He's going to try out a little pressure on the Poles,' wrote Goebbels, 'and he hopes they'll respond to that. But we're going to have to swallow the bitter pill and guarantee Poland's other frontiers. It will be decided very soon.'⁷⁶

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RIBBENTROP played their opening gambit. He told the Polish ambassador Josef Lipski that Hitler's offer of a deal at Slovakia's expense was still open, provided that Danzig was returned to Germany. On the twenty-fifth Hitler reassured General von Brauchitsch, his new army commander, that he did not intend to use force against Poland.⁷⁷ He really did expect a deal, and the navy drafted plans for Hitler to enter Danzig in triumph aboard the Deutschland in a few days' time.⁷⁸ Over lunch he said that Poland was still making up her mind. 'We're stepping up the pressure,' wrote Goebbels—impatiently, because both men were planning their vacations, Goebbels in the Mediterranean and Hitler in Bavaria.

Poland however would not play ball. Reports soon reached Hitler that Warsaw had partially mobilized. Ambassador Lipski arrived back on the twenty-sixth and brusquely warned Ribbentrop that if Hitler still demanded Danzig it would mean war. 'The Polacks,' observed Goebbels in disgust, 'will always be our natural enemies, however keen in the past they have been, out of pure self-interest, to do us the odd favor.'

He set out by train, taking a private secretary and three senior colleagues on the first leg of his vacation.⁷⁹

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April 14, 1939

34: Put Poland on Page Two

SEEN in retrospect those last days of March 1939 were the cradle of the coming war, but Dr Goebbels' diary betrayed no awareness of the solemnity of the hour. Seeking relief from his matrimonial dolours, he was off, visiting Budapest, Athens, and Rhodes.¹ In Budapest he was received by the prime minister, foreign minister, and minister of education.² In Athens, though formally the guest of the mayor, he again visited Prime Minister Metaxas. The Greeks informed the British that Goebbels had told Metaxas that Hitler was not planning any further move 'for the moment.'³ In Athens, he learned belatedly that Poland was still holding out over Danzig. 'If the fat hits the fire the Führer will recall me,' he decided, and traveled on.⁴ In Rhodes he read that Chamberlain had guaranteed Poland against any aggression.* Several more British guarantees followed to other states on Germany's periphery. 'Britain on the path of virtue,' Goebbels scoffed. 'What a hoot!'⁵ He flew on to Egypt, shadowed by British agents wherever he went.⁶

Egypt impressed him. 'Seldom in my life,' he wrote, seeing the Sphinx for the first time, 'has a sight so moved me. Normally one feels cheated. Here, reality surpasses what one had imagined.'⁷ He told the German community that he had not come with pots of gold for propaganda. Germany, he said, again faithfully representing Hitler's policies, had no interest in the Mediterranean, and was 'now fully occupied' digesting the territories she had recently acquired.⁸ At this range, it seemed only a small fly in the ointment that Warsaw and London had signed a formal pact. 'One day, perhaps,' he mused, 'Poland will have to pay very dear for this.' Czechoslovakia had, after all, made the same mistake.⁹

After a brief stopover in Turkey¹¹ he landed back at Tempelhof on April 14 and swapped travel anecdotes with Magda, who had returned from her own travels, at Schwanenwerder that evening. As for foreign affairs he told the diary nothing. Metaxas had speculated that Goebbels was somewhat out of favor.¹² Hitler was certainly in little hurry to take him further into his confidence; four days passed before they next met.

* Except, it turned out, aggression by the Soviet Union; a secret addendum made this clear. It was Ian Colvin of the *News Chronicle*, whom Goebbels expelled a few days later, who tilted the balance to war by telling Chamberlain, untruthfully, on March 29 that Hitler had already drawn up plans to destroy Poland. However the contingency plan (Hitler's Case White) was now activated as a result of the British guarantee.¹⁰

May 19 1939

On April 18, after gathering with his family and Magda for his mother's seventieth birthday ('she's the one fixture in this stormy life of mine') Goebbels was among those dining with Hitler. Göring was also there, bronzed and fit from a vacation at San Remo; he would recall Hitler revealing at this dinner his determination to solve the Danzig question by force if necessary. Goebbels noted in his diary only the words, 'We talked politics a bit.'¹³

He was swamped in the preparations for Hitler's grandiose fiftieth-birthday parade. On the evening of the nineteenth he broadcast a special birthday tribute, then went immediately afterward over to the chancellery to join the leading party officials assembled in the ceremonial rooms overlooking Hermann-Göring Strasse. Hitler appeared an hour late, white-faced, as though he had received bad news. Speaking softly and deliberately, he indicated that he had just had a medical check-up; building on that remark, he added that he could not say how many years he still had in which to achieve his life's ambition.¹⁴ He spoke specifically of the grave risks that he was prepared now to take.¹⁵

More recently retrieved fragments of Goebbels' hitherto unpublished diary throw further shafts of light on the development of Hitler's plans. 'England wants to mend her fences with us again,' Goebbels wrote after lunch with Hitler on the twenty-third. 'Chamberlain has already put out feelers to us. With France we won't have too much difficulty. And Poland is none too comfortable in its policy toward us. But for the time being the Führer doesn't want to repeat his former offer to them on Danzig and the autobahn through the Corridor,' a reference to his offer to settle for an extra-territorial freeway across the Polish territories to East Prussia.¹⁶

Over the next two weeks Hitler briefed him about Case White (war with Poland 'if need be'). On May 1 Goebbels wrote: 'The Poles are agitating violently against us. The Führer welcomes it. We are not to hit back for the time being, but to take note. Warsaw will end up one day the same way as Prague.'¹⁷ Two days later he ordered all editors to go easy on the Soviet Union 'until further notice.'¹⁸ His next *Völkischer Beobachter* leader article was widely seen as flinging down the gauntlet to Poland.¹⁹

Presumably with his Führer's approval Goebbels now made Britain his prime target. Speaking without notes in Cologne on May 19 he blasphemed against the democracies, calling them 'old whores' turned sanctimonious nuns in their old age. 'For one like myself,' reported a local British diplomat, 'who had not heard Goebbels before, the power of his voice was a revelation, coming as it does from such a puny body.'²⁰ The Italian foreign minister came to Berlin to sign a military pact with Germany. At the dinner for Count Ciano Hitler told Goebbels that he had fought twenty years for this.²¹

Preparing Germany for war, Goebbels speeded up work on the cable radio network, to release conventional transmitter capacity; he wrote Hitler a letter urging him to cut the red tape on this project.²² His ministry

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May 19, 1939

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was also building some of the biggest transmitters in the world. The new half-megawatt Deutschland-Sender went on the air on May 19; later, it was to be stepped up to five megawatts. Goebbels was also building four high-powered shortwave transmitters near Hamburg. He wanted the world to hear his voice.²³

He put the cunning and unscrupulous Berndt in charge of this expanding broadcasting network. Berndt had by now, as he himself admitted to Himmler, the unsavory reputation of being in charge of all the dirty tricks necessary in the Nazis' interests—'subversion of the enemy, creating the starting points for political operations, and so forth.'²⁴ His propaganda fictions had paved the way for Munich. In Berndt's place as inland press chief Goebbels appointed Hans Fritzsche, an impressive intellectual with an educated drawl. Both men held high S.S. rank. Both were party veterans, with the kind of radicalism that Goebbels applauded—Berndt would shoot an American airman in cold blood; Fritzsche would turn over to the Gestapo's hangmen a simple Nuremberg fireman who sent him a crude paste-up montage as a one-man protest in 1941.²⁵

UNEXPECTEDLY the Lida Baarova case returns to haunt Goebbels that spring. Fleeing Germany, she has returned to her native Prague, only to find Hitler's troops invading in March and herself trapped again within the Reich's frontiers. She returns to Berlin. Several times in recent weeks Goebbels has asked Hilde Körber about Lida's well-being; he meets Hilde in the woods, terrified of being followed—once he shows her a pistol he is carrying—and sends her over to Lida with messages (Lida never replies). Touched by his concern, Hilde writes little poems to him. Sitting in the dress-circle once, Lida sees him at a distance, but their eyes do not meet. Emil Jannings and others come to plead with Goebbels to allow Lida to film again. He replies, 'It is out of my hands.'²⁶

Then Alfred Greven, now general manager of Ufa, secretly signs her up again. Goebbels blurts out to him: 'But Baarova is banned by the Führer!' The film boss urges him to lift the ban since so much time has elapsed. 'She can be hired as far as I am concerned,' says Goebbels, softening, 'but I don't think it will be possible. I must talk it over with Hanke.'

Hanke however cannot let bygones be bygones. He still has a coverous eye on the minister's sorely wronged spouse. Storming into Greven's office on May 19 he reminds him of the filmstar's notorious affair with 'higher circles.'

'Herr Staatssekretär,' retorts Greven, 'what about your own little affair?'²⁷ It seems that everybody knows about Magda.

Hanke swings a punch at Greven—'because,' as he writes at once to Himmler, 'he countered my allegations with a blatant untruth.'²⁸ Hitler orders Hanke to report to him.

Aghast at this new episode, Goebbels writes in his unpublished diary, 'By his unpardonable assault on Greven of Ufa, Hanke has touched off

May 17, 1939

a hideous scandal. I am furious. Was that the intent? One doesn't know whom to trust. It's left to me now to try and sort things out. Will I ever manage to get clear of all these *Schweinereien*?²⁹ For days the Greven affair clouds his diary's horizon. 'It's sickening. One rumor after another.'³⁰ Greven retaliates, writing to him as gauleiter and demanding a full hearing by the party court. 'He's stirring things up against Hanke now.'³¹

On May 17, Mother's Day, the Berlin *Illustrated* publishes a cover portrait of Magda and a family group photo—without Dr Goebbels. Although an operation on Helga's throat brings them momentarily closer together, the matrimonial stand-off continues.³² He plays with the children and regales them with bedtime stories of Germany's decline and resurgence; his little treasures 'listen with gleaming eyes.'³³ One day he takes the ministry staff on three boats across the Wannsee to Schwanenwerder to shout a big hallo to Magda and the children.³⁴ A couple of days later he gives her a new car (followed by one of the first Volkswagens for the children).³⁵ Magda however has however begun a clean sweep. She sells off the next-door plot, Nos 12 to 14 Insel Strasse ('the so-called citadel'), which has brought her so much unhappiness, and in June she is on the point of selling her present plot too, to buy an even more beautiful site a few houses further down the road.³⁶ The house needs total renovation. 'It will probably take a few months to finish,' she writes to her father Oskar Ritschel. 'I'm looking forward to the job ahead as it will distract me from the more or less grim thoughts that my fate, indeterminate as it is, still provokes in me.' She will take the children to Bad Gastein in Austria for the summer, where her father, no admirer of the minister's, can visit them in privacy.³⁷

That summer the Berlin *Illustrated* also published comparative photos of Goebbels' study together with the fantasy version crafted by a Hollywood studio for the film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*. The American studio version showed 'Goebbels' seated behind a ten-foot-wide desk in front of an eleven-foot Hitler painting, with two huge swastikas embossed in the marble floor. In reality the portrait was six foot tall, and of Frederick the Great; a large globe however dominated the room—and his desk still measured ten feet across.³⁸

MEANWHILE Goebbels methodically stoked up the propaganda fires over Danzig, releasing the steam in carefully controlled bursts. Via teleprinter and telephone, editors were told what stories to print and how—how much leeway was allowed, how big the headline should be.³⁹ 'The [Berlin] press,' an American observer would report to Washington that summer, drawing on the experience of the previous year, 'passes through set stages of investive in preparation for each of the major incidents which have so far occurred.' The first stage, he explained, merely set forth in general terms the German point of view. Secondly, there followed attacks on the foreign government in question. Thirdly, the press attack switched to the 'acts of terror' allegedly perpetrated against the German people by these

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governments. The fourth and final stage of this cycle, he said, was marked by 'lurid tales of German blood being spilled.' This officer pointed out that the process had begun anew in May 1939, with asseverations of Germany's historic right to Danzig.⁴⁰

This analysis was correct. From May onwards Goebbels had lifted the ban on reporting anti-German incidents in Poland, though restricted for the time being to page two.⁴¹ To imprint Danzig's character firmly on the world's mind as a German city, in June Hitler authorized him to deliver a major speech there—a 'trial balloon,' Goebbels confidentially informed his editors, 'to test the international atmosphere on Danzig.'

With the local gauleiter Albert Forster he plotted a 'spontaneous'—how he loved and abused that word—display in Danzig to demonstrate to the foreign journalists traveling in his party the German character of the city and its people.⁴² He delivered the speech 'spontaneously' from the balcony of the Danzig state theater through loudspeakers which had no less spontaneously materialized. 'I am standing here on the soil of a German town,' he emphasized, motioning to the architectural icons all around. 'You long to return to the Reich,' he intoned. The thousands of well-drilled young Nazis chanted in response, 'We want to see Hitler in Danzig!'⁴³ 'My speech,' Goebbels told his diary with a conspiratorial air, 'looked quite improvised but I had prepared the whole thing in advance.'⁴⁴ 'I know,' he said with a careless wink, speaking that evening at the Casino hotel at Zoppot, near Danzig, to the foreign journalists who had accompanied him, 'that some of you are curious whether today's demonstration was truly spontaneous or not.' In fact their Berlin colleagues had received the text in advance, and it had already been typeset for a special Sunday edition of the party's Danzig newspaper the day before.⁴⁵

At this meeting with the journalists Goebbels lamented that there would have been no problem if the British had not butted in with their 'absurd' guarantee to Poland. 'Morally, the right to Danzig is ours,' he argued. 'Just as we had a moral right to everything else we have taken—with the exception,' he added as a disarming afterthought, 'of Bohemia and Moravia. But we had to take those to create a strategic frontier for ourselves.' The British were just bluffing, he suggested. Hitler's nerves would prove the stronger. 'We know for sure that the stupid English are too weak and too cowardly to get in our way.'⁴⁶

On June 20 Hitler summoned him to report on Danzig at the Berghof. He found the Führer sitting in the teahouse, eager to make prognoses:

Poland will offer resistance at first, but upon the first reverse she will pitifully collapse. The Czechs are more realistic. The Poles are quite hysterical and unpredictable.

London will leave Warsaw in the lurch. They're just bluffing. Got too many other worries. . . . The Führer says, and he's right, that Britain now has the most rotten government imaginable. There's no question of their helping Warsaw. They led Prague up the garden path as well.

July 8 → 25, 1939

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and trundle back home in a pony cart.⁸¹ When he leaves Gastein the children cling to him with tear-stained faces and he suspects that Magda too is not unmoved.⁸²

He phones her on the sixteenth, and she joins him in Munich for the lavish, ornate, spectacular, and rain-soaked pageant of German Art.⁸³ Evidently she has told him something about her persistent suitor, because on the twentieth he has a 'serious row' with Hanke.⁸⁴ He visits his troubled wife again in Gastein and that evening she unbends to him. 'It's just as I thought,' snarls Goebbels in his diary. 'Hanke has turned out to be a first-class rotter. So my mistrust of him has been totally justified.' Magda, he decides, is on the horns of a terrible dilemma, and they talk all night about ways of escape. He stays in bed all the next day while she sits at his bedside talking softly with him. All the pieces are falling into place, and this alone brings him peace of mind.⁸⁵ He blames his Staatssekretär for everything, himself for nothing. 'Hanke is the most perfidious traitor I ever saw,' he writes grimly. 'But he's going to get his come-uppance.' Magda agrees to accompany him to Bayreuth—scene of the previous year's opera scandal—on the twenty-fifth.

On July 25 Hanke sends a member of the ministry's staff to see Goebbels, evidently bearing a mixture of threats and entreaties; Goebbels is unimpressed and sends the man, G. W. Müller, back to Berlin with a flea for Hanke's ear.⁸⁷

On the way to Bayreuth Magda, still torn between the two men, faints several times; she is suffering from the nervous strain. At Bayreuth, Goebbels is phoned by Müller—'Has performed his job relatively well. A few more impudent threats and sentimentalities.' Magda is in tears, and Goebbels has difficulty calming her down.

Hitler has other problems on his hands. He is buoyant about his foreign policy. He says that the democracies will shrink back, step by step, from the brink of war.⁸⁸ Over dinner, he expands on this theme—that Warsaw will crumble if push comes to shove.⁸⁹

The next day, July 26, Magda is again wild-eyed and tearful. 'Every hour,' records Goebbels, 'alarming new bulletins come from [G. W.] Müller, from Speer, from Mama and the devil knows whom else. It's wrong even to pay any attention to them, they just get on your nerves.'⁹⁰ He has a long talk with Magda, he wants to help her but knows no way. That afternoon they sit once again through *Tristan and Isolde*, and Magda faints from the strain of it all. 'If only I could help her,' moans Goebbels. 'When shall we ever find a way out of all this misery?'

After supper he goes alone up to his room, unable to join in the general chatter. But when he emerges to fetch Magda, he finds her lying senseless on the staircase outside; he drags her into the room and revives her only with difficulty. Clearly there is something about Bayreuth that brings out the melodrama in some people. She murmurs only that she has confessed everything to the Führer; now they must stand together. Hitler tells Ribbentrop later that she is not fool enough to exchange 'Frau Reichsminister' for 'Frau Staatssekretär.' But the truth is that in a grim, almost

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masochistic way she is beholden to Joseph and will remain his until the end. Folding her in his arms, he says: 'Magda, Hanke is not the man for you.' She promises to telephone her suitor to announce that she and her husband are reconciled.⁹¹ Goebbels witnesses the dialogue, an 'endless, tortured telephone conversation.'⁹² How neatly the summer of 1939 has mirrored the excruciating summer of 1938.

The next day Magda's friends—among them the ubiquitous and bitchy Ello—cut her; a salutary lesson in Goebbels' heartless view. As they drive out of Bayreuth, willingly foregoing the leaden, mystic gloom of *Parsifal*, a burden falls from his shoulders. He and Magda have decided to live together again. He has won the last round.⁹³

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35: Pact with the Devil

1939

GOEBBELS returned briefly to Berlin for the afternoon of July 28, 1939 to open the radio exhibition. The emphasis was on peace; the big attraction was television; the first sets would soon go on sale.¹ The rebuilding of No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse was nearly complete; he hoped to move in on August 15, although he wanted the color scheme changed before then. Karl Hanke stayed out of sight (he went on leave, and eventually joined the army). Goebbels lived in a daze, his faith in human nature finally shattered, or so he claimed.² Back in Munich he found Magda awaiting him.³ Over the next few days they both thawed out. Magda was taken aside more than once by well-meaning critics; but she told them their decision was now final.⁴

Goebbels was still confident that the September Nuremberg rally would go ahead as planned.⁵ Among his miscellaneous directives that summer he requested editors to take note that Peru was not a U.S. state; to report murder trials only in local editions;⁶ to mention sex cases involving Jews only where they had seduced Aryan women by concealing their race; always to give Jewish defendants their mandatory first names of Israel or Sara; and to report with the utmost delicacy Sir Oswald Mosley's latest mass meeting in Earl's Court ('so the democratic press has no locus to depict him as being in Germany's pay'). Editors were instructed however not to overpraise the dancer Palucca, a half-Jew; not to refer to the World Exhibition, but to the New York Exhibition; not to review books by marxist liberals; not to reveal that the Führer had commuted the death sentence on a certain murderer; not to disclose the visit of seventy American-born Germans ('so as not to compromise their later operations'); not to refer to the 'Third Reich' but to National Socialist Germany; not to reproduce the Führer's article on architecture from the latest issue of *Art in the Third Reich* (a title which violated his own edict); and not to publish candid-camera photographs of the infinitely vain Hermann Göring or his wife.⁷

Intensifying his propaganda attack on Britain, he ordered editors for example to remind readers of the August 1915 incident when the British warship Baralong had sunk the Kaiser's submarine U-27, then murdered its survivors one by one.⁸

Analysis of these secret directives shows that over Poland he was still pulling his punches. On August 1 the national press was ordered to display reserve in discussing the Polish army officers infiltrated into

Aug 1939

Aug 7

Danzig disguised as customs officials.⁹ Only on the seventh did the Germany press agency D.N.B. issue a full statement.¹⁰ His propaganda was now an integral part of the military build-up. Hitler told economics minister Walter Funk, who had been badgering him to reduce the foreign currency allocated to the propaganda ministry, to leave the sum unchanged.¹¹

HITLER had gone down to the Berghof after Bayreuth, and Goebbels attended none of his historic conferences during August. He spent the second week of August in Venice with Magda and several colleagues, returning a visit made by his Italian counterpart Dino Alfieri.¹² There survives a letter from Magda's secretary, her childhood friend Wilma Freyre, to Goebbels' adjutant: The Frau Reichsminister had received an invitation to the coming Nuremberg party rally, her first in two years. Did the minister want her to accept?¹³ With Alfieri, he worked on an agreement on collaboration between their two countries' media, as well as film and radio.¹⁴

Clad in summer whites, he and Magda lazed around in gondolas, scudded across the Adriatic in torpedo boats, visited art galleries, inspected a Venetian glass factory, sunned themselves on the beaches, and generally acted as man and wife again—'How long it is since I last had that!'¹⁵ Overwhelmed by the Arabian Nights atmosphere of Venice, he took little note of the developing crisis, except for an insolent speech on Danzig by the Polish president ('so it will soon be time').¹⁶ He learned that Ciano was bound for the Berghof ('but it's not time yet').¹⁷

Aug 8

On August 8, continuing his holiday, he ordered Polish terror incidents still relegated to page two, with Polish threats against Germany promoted to page one.¹⁸ When *Kurier Polski* declaimed 'Germany must be destroyed,' the ministry ordered editors to headline this quotation on their front page.¹⁹ On the eleventh Hitler ordered the volume of the anti-Polish propaganda turned up to eighty percent.²⁰ That day Goebbels ordered Polish terrorist incidents moved onto page one. 'The display is not as yet to exceed two columns however. . . . Newspapers must take care,' he instructed, explaining the precise propaganda dosage, 'not to exhaust all their arguments and vocabulary prematurely.'²¹ Nobody was to mention territorial claims.²² On the fifteenth the minister and his wife flew back to Berlin, picking up the foreign newspapers in Munich on the way. He observed with satisfaction that the British and French were in disarray and were relieved by rumors of German peace initiatives.²³ 'It's now time,' he dictated the next day, 'for the German press to abandon its previous reserve.'²⁴ News items about Polish terror acts were to be well displayed but not splashed so sensationally that people 'might conclude that a decisive event is imminent.'²⁵

Aug 15

At six P.M. on August 15, he and his family moved back into his expensively (3.2 million marks, or three-quarters of a million dollars) rebuilt official residence. The old palace had been demolished in June 1938. To the 164 workmen gathered at the topping-out ceremony in

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January 1939 his office chief, the blindly submissive Werner Naumann, had explained that the 'leading men and ministers from around the world' would be coming to this official residence, hence the luxurious appointments: There was a marble-galleried banquetting hall at ground level; all the rooms, except for the marbled bathrooms, were paneled in costly walnut, mahogany, rosewood, and cherry. Cost-cutting was confined to the servants' quarters, where the eighteen household staff were allowed three primitive Volksempfänger radio sets and one bathtub between them.²⁶ It was not yet ready, but it was home. Goebbels grimly prayed that the house would bring them both more happiness than they had known over the last year.

After supper he inspected the house, and found a lot to curse his architect Paul Baumgarten for. A stickler for detail, he dictated five pages of complaints: A picture of a church in his study was to be replaced by one of the Führer; and the up-market interior decorators United Workshops were to remake his desk, chair, and upholstery in a red that would match the curtains and carpet.²⁷ He was moreover having serious problems financing the luxurious new mansion taking shape on the other side of the lake at Lanke.²⁸ Discussing his personal finances with Dr Karl Ott, his chief of administration, he admitted that they were catastrophic: 'I've got to find some way out.'²⁹

'The war,' he wrote on August 17, 'is now expected with a degree of fatalism. It would almost take a miracle to avoid it.' Hitler was lurking down at the Berghof, where he had taken the decision to invade Poland early on the twenty-sixth; but he had evidently not yet notified Goebbels because the latter began drafting the speeches he would deliver at the Nuremberg party rally still scheduled to be held in September.³⁰

On August 18 the ministry instructed editors to adopt a typical Goebbels device, namely to personalize their attack; in this case they were to blame the Polish governor of eastern Upper Silesia personally for the 'barbaric terror' wave.³¹ While newspapers were encouraged to carry interviews with German refugees even these were to be 'deliberately understated.'³² The war of nerves had begun for him quite literally; he spent that night and all next day doubled up in bed with painful stomach cramps (perhaps of emotional origin?) as he brooded on his own financial crisis and his country slithering toward war.³³ During the day a phone call from the Berghof instructed him to turn up the propaganda volume to full blast by Tuesday the twenty-second. 'So the balloon can go up then,' concluded Goebbels, not liking it at all.³⁴

The very regimentation of this press coverage produced a ghastly sense of *déjà vu* in foreign diplomats, as no doubt Hitler intended. The astute American military attaché observed on the twenty-first that, with German blood now flowing, German refugees fleeing, and German families being attacked by brutish Polish mobs, Goebbels had reached the same stage as in the last week of September 1938: Only the place names and the enemy were different.³⁵

* * *

Aug 1939

ALL of Goebbels' previous problems paled beside the psychological problem of presenting to his public the totally unexpected news that Hitler and Stalin were doing a deal.

Previous indicators during July had been so minute that a seismograph would not have detected them. On July 8 Hitler had told Goebbels that he no longer expected London and Moscow to reach an agreement. 'That leaves the way open for us,' Goebbels had deduced. 'Stalin doesn't want either a won or a lost war. In either case he'd be history.'³⁶ He asked editors not to express glee at the stalling of the Anglo-French negotiations in Moscow;³⁷ not to comment on differences emerging between Moscow and Tokyo;³⁸ and not to pick up foreign press reports that Poland was making airfields available to the Soviet air force.³⁹ Newspapers were told to ignore the German-Soviet trade talks.⁴⁰ Totally unexpectedly the news came on August 20 that Berlin had signed a new trade agreement with Moscow. 'How times change,' was Goebbels' only comment, cautious enough; he instructed editors to restrict the news to one column on page one, with commentaries only of an economic nature.⁴¹

At the government press conference on August 21, he proudly noted, he 'poured oil on the flames. But still kept some in reserve.' General Wilhelm Keitel, chief of the High Command, told him that militarily everything was ready for the attack on Poland. The Germans had almost 1.5 million men under arms. It would take a miracle to avoid war, decided Goebbels. Overwhelmed by his own preparations, he had no time to start constructing his speech for Nuremberg. Studying the wiretap intercepts, he concluded that blind panic was spreading in the enemy camp.⁴² That evening Goebbels heard the news of the Nazi-Soviet pact, and that his arch rival Ribbentrop, triumphant, would be signing the historic document two days later, August 23, in Moscow. 'That really is something!' gasped Goebbels. 'That's a whole new ball-game. We're home and dry. Now we can sleep a bit more peacefully again.'⁴³

The news totally threw Goebbels; it was like living in an eternal kaleidoscope. No sooner did he think he had seen it all than there was a completely new constellation. War still seemed likely, but with Poland's only viable ally now eliminated the conclusion seemed foregone. Goebbels and his staff threw themselves into the final war preparations. His first press directive the next morning spoke of a 'sensational turning point' in their relations with Russia; then caution prevailed and his next directive, while allowing editors to remark upon the ideological differences separating Berlin and Moscow, forbade them to quote even foreign commentaries on the probable consequences. 'Any observations must be sober and objective in tenor,' his third directive that day added, 'devoid of either triumph or Schadenfreude.'⁴⁴

The next telephone intercepts revealed 'utter despair' in the enemy camp.⁴⁵ Out in Lanke, where he and Magda were inspecting building operations, he received a phone call from Hitler in euphoric mood. Goebbels congratulated him on his masterstroke.⁴⁶ That day the Reich had summoned his generals in mufti to the Berghof to hear his plan to

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attack Poland in four days' time, and the astonishing news of the coming non-aggression pact with Russia.⁴⁷

Early the next day, August 23, 1939, before flying down to the Berghof, Goebbels reminded editors that their readers would not understand it if they suddenly sprouted 'flowery and jubilant articles' about German-Soviet friendship. Journalists should gradually warm to the pact to camouflage its opportunistic nature.⁴⁸

Aug 23

The Führer [Goebbels told his diary] is in conference with [Sir Nevile] Henderson. He has brought back a letter from Chamberlain: If Poland is attacked, this says, Britain will go to war. The Führer gives Henderson a robust response. Henderson is quite shattered. The Führer dictates a letter of reply to Chamberlain: If London mobilizes, then Germany's mobilization will ensue. A stop will be put to the Polish provocations. This letter's tone is quite adamant....

The Führer greets me very cordially. He wants me to be with him over the next few days. In the afternoon he gives me a broad overview of the situation: Poland's plight is desperate. We shall attack her at the first possible opportunity. The Polish state must be smashed just like the Czech. It won't take much effort. More difficult is the question whether the west will intervene. At present one can't say. It depends. London is talking tougher than in September 1938. So we're going to have to box cunning. At present Britain probably doesn't want war. But she can't lose face....

Paris is holding back more and dodging the issue. But there too we can't say anything hard and fast....

Italy isn't keen but she'll probably go along with us. She's hardly got any choice. Japan has missed the bus. How often the Führer has urged them to join the military alliance, even telling them he'd have to join forces with Moscow otherwise.... Now Japan is pretty isolated.

Hitler described to Goebbels the deal he had struck with Stalin, with the Baltic states and being split between Berlin and Moscow.⁴⁹

'The question of bolshevism,' noted Goebbels, 'is for the time being of lesser importance.' It was a throwaway line of breathtaking brevity considering all that he had fought against for fifteen years. Hitler speculated that Chamberlain might even resign. On the phone from Moscow, Ribbentrop asked if the Russians might have the Latvian ports of Libau and Windau. 'The Führer approves this,' observed Goebbels. They whiled away the hours watching a movie, until the communiqué finally came through from Moscow. At one A.M. Poland's fate was sealed. They sat up until four A.M. examining the implications.

It was dawn when Goebbels returned to his quarters—still in the humble guesthouse to which Hitler had relegated him.⁵⁰ Probably the Führer had by now told him that he had confidently scheduled the attack on Poland to begin at dawn on Saturday the twenty-sixth.

On the twenty-fourth (Thursday) both men agreed that it was surprising that there had been so little echo from the world's press to the

Aug 1939

Moscow signing. Goebbels lifted the ban on editors speculating on what the new pact would mean for Poland: 'You can indicate that the purpose of this pact is to enable Germany and Russia alone to settle all outstanding problems in the Lebensraum between them, i.e. in eastern Europe.'⁵¹ A second directive that day probably reflected Hitler's decision to strike in two days' time. Editors were now invited to comment on the speed with which the Moscow pact had been signed. 'Newspapers are permitted to display a degree of Schadenfreude, though not in their editorial columns.'⁵² Editors were still not to go into specifics; reports about Polish mobilization and atrocities, and about Danzig, were still to take precedence over the new pact.⁵³

The Führer and his propaganda minister decided it was high time to fly back to Berlin.

During the flight Hitler was on edge; Goebbels wondered how he kept his nerve in crises like this.⁵⁴ That it was a crisis became plain when Goebbels read the telegrams: Chamberlain had told the House of Commons that Britain still stood by her promise to Poland. The radio waves were filled with the chatter of panicking commentators—and Goebbels too lay awake for hours that night.⁵⁵

Aug 25

Friday August 25, 1939 dawned, the eve of war—or so Hitler had planned. At two-thirty P.M. the final mobilization against Poland was due to start. At the noon press conference the ministry instructed editors of the next day's newspapers to highlight Polish preparations for attacking Germany, the Polish blockade of Danzig, and Polish acts of terrorism.⁵⁶ A lieutenant-colonel briefed Goebbels that the attack was scheduled to begin at 4:30 A.M. the next day: A swift *coup de main* against Gdynia, Danzig to declare for the Reich, and then an all-out military onslaught against eastern Upper Silesia. At midday Hitler told him to get two declarations ready, one to the people and one to the party. Forster phoned from Danzig—evidently heedless of telephone security—and demanded leaflets for the Polish army and population. Goebbels heard that the British ambassador had gone to see Hitler again, and that Hitler had offered Britain the closest cooperation after Poland had been dealt with. 'Britain doesn't believe us any more,' commented Goebbels. When Hitler said much the same to France's ambassador, the latter replied stiffly that 'on his word as an officer' France would be obliged to fight.

Undeterred, at 3:02 P.M. Hitler issued the secret executive order for Case White, the attack on Poland at dawn. Japan's ambassador briefly saw him after that—a frosty meeting under the circumstances.

THE Japanese ambassador was followed by the Italian, Bernardo Attolico. Embarrassed, he conveyed to Hitler the shocking news that Italy, his new ally, would not join in this war.

'There you have it,' commented Goebbels acidly. 'As I always feared and probably knew too ever since Venice. Italy wants out.'

It was a hideous new situation: Hitler had been banking on Italy's support. He had to cancel all his orders for 'White'. Goebbels rushed

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out a 'supplemental' directive to his editors revoking the midday directive. The new instructions called for 'press discipline' and 'caution'—editors were to hold back their stories on the Poles' military actions and terrorism.⁵⁷ A photographer snapped Hitler and Bormann with Otto Dietrich and Dr Goebbels, all in plain clothes; the propaganda minister was looking at his feet, baffled.⁵⁸ 'The Führer,' recorded Goebbels, 'is brooding and thinking things over. It's a hard blow for him. But he'll find a way out, even from this devilish situation. He's always found one before and he'll do so this time too.' As grim-faced generals dashed this way and that, Goebbels hurried back to his ministry to throw his whole machinery into reverse as well. It took him until midnight; Magda, ashen-faced with worry, came to be with him. Everything depended on maintaining the pressure, he decided: On keeping a stiff upper lip.

So he wrote afterward, recording this eventful day.⁵⁹ And that was the directive he issued at next morning's press conference. It adumbrated for the first time 'preventive' German operations, but forbade speculation on dates and deadlines; there must be no talk of 'one minute to twelve,' or 'an attack is expected hourly.' The tame newshounds were thus led briefly back to their kennels.⁶⁰

Not surprisingly the Wehrmacht was in a foul mood—they had been all set to attack. Gauleiter Forster phoned from Danzig, depressed by this unexpected turn of events. Dino Alfieri phoned Goebbels from Rome, asking it if was true that Hitler was to broadcast; Goebbels called the rumor a foreign fabrication.⁶¹

He too was in two minds—Britain had now ratified her pact with Poland, encouraged evidently by Italy's defection. When the French and British ambassadors both asked to see Hitler, Goebbels clutched at straws—'Perhaps we'll manage to extricate ourselves from the current sticky situation,' he wrote. 'We've got to be very cunning now.'

The introduction of food rationing confronted him with serious propaganda problems. He harangued Herbert Backe, Darré's Staatssekretär, in the middle of that night about the minuscule fruit and tea rations allowed for, then gave vent to his feelings about the secretiveness of the foreign ministry. The whole world knew, he grumbled, that the British and French ambassadors had been to see Hitler, but Germany's own radio said nothing—which forced German listeners willy-nilly into the arms of the B.B.C.⁶² After that he sat up until three A.M. reading further worrying reports on public morale.⁶³

The embassy wiretap reports which he read the next day, Sunday August 27, gave cause for cautious optimism; but not the one-page digest on morale that Gutterer had compiled for Hitler from their propaganda agencies throughout the Reich. In short, the whole population was against war. The document, typed out in half-inch characters on the special typewriter used for the short-sighted Führer, was dynamite. Goebbels, aware of his own precarious position, had no desire to hand it over himself. He took Gutterer along with him to Hitler's lunch table wearing his black S.S. Brigadeführer's uniform. Hitler read the document,

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purpled with rage, and took Gutterer through into the winter-garden. But Himmler, joining them there, soberly backed the propaganda official: His own Gestapo morale reports painted just the same picture. Both men had reports of anti-war demonstrations in Vienna. Goebbels said nothing.⁶⁴

Later that day Hitler reviewed the whole situation with him. 'It is very grave,' recorded Goebbels, adding the familiar nostrum: 'But the Führer will pull us through. On Poland, our minimum demand is Danzig and a corridor across their corridor. Maximum—that's a matter of record. The Führer can't abandon our minimum demand. And he'll get his way. It's become a matter of honor. Nobody can say what will transpire. The Führer is glad we don't have a monarchy any more. The Italy business has been declared top state secret. Death penalty for treason.'

Hitler spoke to all the Reichstag deputies at five P.M. in the ambassadors' suite of the chancellery. He appealed for courage, and was rewarded with an ovation. He told them that Danzig and the Corridor were his minimum demands. If war came, he would be in the front line. 'As long as I live,' he said dramatically, 'there is to be no talk of capitulation.' He justified his controversial deal with Stalin as being a pact with the devil to drive out Beelzebub.⁶⁵

FOR the next five days Dr Goebbels held the editors like acrobats frozen in mid-leap: In suspended animation until Hitler gave the order for White to proceed. It was not easy. Germany must not lose the initiative. He released to the front pages a welter of stories about visits of ambassadors and exchanges of letters. The wiretaps meanwhile showed a further deterioration in the situation.⁶⁶

Aug 28

The press conference on August 28 was long and difficult. Goebbels still forbade newspapers to play up 'Polish terrorism.' Birger Dahlerus, Göring's secret emissary, had brought word from London that the British might swallow Hitler's minimum demands but they would insist on a guarantee of Poland's frontiers. They could adjourn the issue of colonies until later. A long peace with Britain would follow, which might set Germany at loggerheads with Italy: 'But Rome left us in the lurch,' reflected Goebbels. 'And Moscow would also have to guarantee Poland's frontiers'—which Stalin would never do.

Tipped off by Rome, London must surely have known of Hitler's present predicament. Chamberlain believed he could let Germany stew in her own juice. ('Italy is standing well back,' Goebbels wrote contemptuously. 'Her diplomats promise to fight with us to the last drop of ink.')

Consumed by these anxieties, Goebbels had long worried talks with press chief Otto Dietrich—he too saw the gravity of the hour—and Göring, who was also, as Goebbels put it, pleading for moderation.⁶⁸

A sweltering August heat baked the capital. There were fist-fights outside food stores, as crowds began hoarding for the coming war; a run

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on the banks began. Lunchtime found Hitler grim and rather worn down.⁶⁹

The postponement of hostilities had dislocated Goebbels' timetable. With the war machine crassly halted, there was nothing to report. He directed the press on August 29 to step up the attack on Poland, although it was both difficult and unpopular. From the frontline areas like the Saar he had reports that the mood was anything but blind jingoism. Hitler suggested to Ambassador Henderson that there be a plebiscite in the Corridor. 'He hopes to detach London from Warsaw after all,' assessed Goebbels, 'and thus to find some pretext for attack.'

Hitler agreed that Britain might invite a Polish negotiator to come to Berlin.

His head throbbing with the round-the-clock load of ministerial duties, Goebbels feared that the arrival of a Polish diplomat might result in a ruinous wave of optimism in Germany.⁷⁰ At the press conference on the thirtieth Goebbels again pleaded for a stiff upper lip: Editors were to reserve their vitriol for Poland and her 'atrocities,' while still holding back the most glaring examples, and going easy on England for a while as London seemed to be softening towards Hitler's demands.⁷¹ But this directive was later overtaken by one announcing Polish mobilization: 'The news ... is to be given top billing and editorial commentary.'⁷² (In a significant sentence, editors were asked *not* to mention a 'frontier incident at Hochlinde near Gleiwitz:' a phony raid by S.S. men wearing Polish uniforms had gone off at half-cock.)⁷³

At midnight Hitler sent for him:

He sets out the situation. The British are still hanging tough. Not a peep out of Poland yet. The Führer thinks there *will* be war. Italy's defection is not all that bad for us, as Italy is the most vulnerable to attack by the Entente powers. The Führer has drafted a memorandum: Danzig to be German, a plebiscite in the Corridor in twelve months' time on the basis of 1918; fifty-one percent of the vote to be decisive. Loser to get a one-kilometer-wide corridor across the Corridor. Minorities problems to be examined by an international commission. When the time is ripe the Führer will toss this document to the world community.⁷⁴

His head reeling from worry, late nights, and overwork, Goebbels found it hard to write up his diary on September 1—even as Hitler's war began. The situation changed hourly. He recalled having turned the press conference loose on Britain the day before. Karl Bömer had brought over the latest sheaf of embassy wiretaps from Göring's Forschungsamt: They made clear that alarm bells were ringing in Paris and London. The French and British ambassadors had been overheard agreeing to beg their Polish colleague, Lipski, to go on his own initiative to Hitler.

'But he can't be found,' observed Goebbels, 'for hours at a time. Poland is obviously playing for time.'

'Göring is still skeptical,' he recorded. 'The Führer still does not believe

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Britain will intervene. Nobody can say as yet. The S.S. is given special orders for the coming night'—commando-style operations behind the Polish lines.⁷⁵ In the evening the Polish ambassador was heard asking for an audience. But Hitler had ordered an end to the talking, and Lipski was not allowed to see Ribbentrop until too late. When he confessed that Warsaw had given him no instructions, Ribbentrop brusquely ended the meeting.

'So that's that,' noted Goebbels. 'The Führer is now incommunicado.'

They all talked until midnight, watching the hours tick past. Göring saw a slim chance that London might not act. Goebbels was less sanguine. Hitler released the text of his memorandum, they all hung around a map for a while, then Goebbels returned home to Magda, who was waiting for him.⁷⁶

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36: War

UNTIL the last moment, Dr Goebbels hoped that the western powers were bluffing, but feared that they were not.¹ After Hans Fritzsche had provided an opinion analysis showing that the British were determined to fight, Goebbels submitted a thoughtful memorandum to Hitler.² At his press conference that Friday September 1, after Hitler's historic speech to the Reichstag, Goebbels was able to use plain talk again—which he called 'a real blessing.' Be that as it may, he directed editors to avoid using the word *war* and to adopt instead the formula: 'We are fending off Polish attacks.'³ On the morning of the third his press attaché Moritz von Schirmeister briefed him on the latest news from Reuters.

Goebbels asked: 'What about Britain?' Schirmeister replied that she had not declared war yet. 'Now you see!' triumphed the minister. But an hour later Chamberlain's ultimatum reached them. 'Well, so it did happen,' conceded Goebbels. Until that moment he had not believed it.⁴ He repeated to the editors the injunction to use the word *war* only sparingly.⁵ 'Believe me,' he told Göring, 'we have not done all we have for six years to throw it all away in a war.'

'This will be a war about political ideas,' he wrote in a twenty-five-page memorandum for Hitler entitled 'Thoughts on the Outbreak of War, 1939.' He described the German public mood at that moment as being 'grim but calm.' The disaster of 1918 was fresh in many minds—'So there is nothing of the hooray-atmosphere of 1914,' he warned. With each victory, however, their determination would grow—he himself would see to that. Foreshadowing the great dispute with Ribbentrop that was beginning, he insisted that the entire foreign propaganda effort be concentrated in one hand—namely his own. He saw great propaganda opportunities this time: Unlike 1914, the declarations of war had come from the enemy; and the British and French were repeatedly overflying neutral Holland and Belgium, and committing other violations of international law. 'Britain,' he pointed out to Hitler, 'is governed by the old men of 1914 who are incapable of thinking straight or logically because of their hate complexes.' Poisoned by 'Jewish capital,' Britain would fight to the last man, he prophesied—the last man, that was, of every other nation but herself, and particularly the French. Only the foreign propaganda weapon, he suggested, would defeat Britain. Even bombing would not yield victory, given the famed tenacity of the British people.⁶

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The diary and other documents provide intrinsic evidence of how low he still lay in Hitler's esteem. The Führer had barely consulted him about his war plans. He saw little of him during the Polish campaign; once he tried to reach Hitler by phone, but was told he was away at the front.⁷ Ignoring Goebbels' lengthy memorandum, the Führer awarded all foreign propaganda work to Ribbentrop—a terrible rebuff to his propaganda minister. Hitler had an enduring respect for Ribbentrop which subsequent historians have been unable to explain or share. 'It is totally incomprehensible to me,' Goebbels recorded, hearing of the draft decree. 'It will destroy my entire ministry.'⁸ As will be seen, Hitler would thereafter keep from Goebbels vital information, for instance about the sinking of the British liner Athenia,⁹ about the attempt on his life in November,¹⁰ and, in 1940–41, about his intention to attack the Soviet Union.

HITLER announced the opening of hostilities to the Reichstag on Friday September 1, 1939. He wore a field-gray tunic adorned with the simple Iron Cross he had won in the world war. Morale in Berlin that day was 'grave but resolute,' the deputy gauleiter reported. Chamberlain threatened war if Hitler did not pull his troops out of Poland. 'Wait and see,' was Goebbels' private comment.¹¹ He ordered the press to mute its remarks about London and Paris, reserving its full venom for Warsaw.¹² 'The situation has undergone one remarkable change,' he noted. 'Mussolini has intervened and proposes a six-power conference. A ceasefire until then. The Führer says he's not disinclined to go along, once he gets his hands on something worthwhile. Thus all military efforts are concentrated on shutting off the Corridor.'¹³

The civilian minister, Goebbels, had real cause to fear that the military would henceforth command Hitler's undivided attention. Although his diary had frequently displayed genuine admiration for the junior officer corps, he detested the older, knuckle-brained army generals and found words of admiration only for Blomberg and Fritsch.¹⁴ When Polish machine-gun bullets shortly ended Fritsch's life, Goebbels demonstratively attended the state funeral while Keitel, Himmler, and the S.S. generals stayed away.¹⁵

HIS fear that war would marginalize him proved well founded. He was invited to visit Hitler's field headquarters only twice during the entire Polish campaign.¹⁶ In Hitler's absence, Goebbels' critics became more vociferous. 'The party veterans reject him to a man,' wrote Rosenberg. 'Gauleiters tell me that if the Führer would only dump him, they'd eat him for breakfast.'¹⁷ The tension between Goebbels and his colleagues was evident whenever Göring's ministerial Reich Defense Committee met. Presiding buddha-like over these Cabinet-style meetings, Göring did nothing to protect Goebbels. 'Goebbels appears to be finished,' wrote one rival happily after seeing the field marshal. 'What a blessing.'¹⁸ That Göring had the upper hand was evident on Day Two, as he unexpectedly ordered most of Goebbels' radio stations to shut down in the evenings

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so that the enemy air force could not use them as radio beacons.¹⁹

The conflict of personalities became plain on the very first day of war, September 1, 1939. Goebbels had circulated a proposed law making it a criminal, even capital, offense to listen to foreign radio broadcasts and calling for all radio sets to be turned over to the authorities.²⁰ He met an immediate storm of protest from other ministers. Justice Minister Gürtner pointed to the damning effect it would have at home and abroad on the credibility of their own propaganda, besides creating an army of petty snoopers and informers.²¹ The Göring committee unanimously turned down Goebbels' proposal.²² The next day however the minister of the interior Dr Frick persuaded Hitler to accept a ban on listening to foreign *political* broadcasts, and that evening Goebbels' radio announced the new law.²³ As both Frick and Rudolph Hess pointed out to Hitler, if Goebbels called in everybody's radio sets the people would be unable to hear their Führer, that suggestion—which was surely one of his less intelligent plans—was abandoned. The confiscation was restricted to Jewish-owned radios.²⁴ Goebbels circularized all party officials that under the Reich Defense Committee ordinance of September 1' even they were forbidden to tune in to foreign broadcasts.²⁵

On other issues too he found it hard to prevail. He objected that printing the party's eagle on ration cards would link it too closely with rationing. 'I fear, Dr Goebbels,' retorted Darré sarcastically, 'that this is a war which is not going to be won by popularity.'²⁶

'The Russian military mission arrives in Berlin,' Goebbels noted on September 3. 'A great advantage for us.' But his jubilation was short-lived, as London dictated an ultimatum to Hitler at nine A.M., timed to expire at eleven. 'Straight over to the Reich chancellery,' he recorded. 'The Führer is indignant and has no intention of accepting the ultimatum. He dictates a biting memorandum in which he justifies this.' Even after listening to Chamberlain's radio declaration of war Goebbels was still asking: 'Will London really go for broke?'

Before departing for the 'eastern front' that evening, Hitler reassured him that he anticipated only a phony war in the west. Goebbels was skeptical: 'Now that Churchill is known to be in the Cabinet [as First Lord of the Admiralty] I find that hard to believe.' Göring too had his doubts, he discovered in a lengthy conversation with the field marshal that night: Economically and Militarily, Germany could see it through—but even Göring secretly wondered whether the German people would.²⁷

For a few days, Goebbels was overwhelmed by the new problems of directing propaganda in a shooting war. Hearing of the sinking of the Athenia ('it can't have been us,' he assured his private diary), he dismissed it at once as 'a fresh bluff and propaganda trick by Churchill & Co.' and started 'the denial machine' rolling.²⁸ When Poland claimed that Nazi troops had destroyed the Madonna of Czestochowa, Goebbels flew American journalist Louis Lochner thither in a bomber to see that it was a lie. He had eight hundred banners erected along the western front proclaiming to the French, 'WE WON'T SHOOT IF YOU DON'T. WE'VE NO

Sept 3

QUARREL WITH YOU!²⁹ Leopold Gutterer, one of his most inventive aides, suggested they cascade tons of forged pound notes over Britain—thirty percent of its entire currency. Goebbels liked the idea until it occurred to him that the British might well retaliate in kind.³⁰ A file of his phone conversations with his Italian counterpart confirms his early tactics. He suggested that the Italians concentrate on driving a wedge between the British and French, reserving their most hostile language for Churchill, Eden, and Chamberlain; he asked that if he issued a denial, the Italian press should give it prominence too.³¹

At air staff headquarters outside Potsdam on the fifth, Göring assured him that they would soon have a strategic breakthrough in Poland. The field marshal expressed outrage at the Italians for their cold feet. Sitting under the trees, the two Nazis quietly discussed Germany's plight if a full-scale world war developed. Churchill's appointment to Chamberlain's Cabinet had shocked them both—but Goebbels hoped the British might still be bluffing.³² Göring had nothing but contempt for Ribbentrop, blaming him for having been too inflexible in stating German demands. On the seventh Goebbels flew in a bomber to Hitler's headquarters near Gross-Born to discuss Ribbentrop's take-over of foreign propaganda:

The Führer [he recorded] is living in an armored train in the middle of a forest. . . . He looks magnificent and is in good humor. He at once sets out the situation. The Poles are in a state of complete military collapse. . . . Their situation is hopeless. Our tanks are pushing on without stopping.

When Goebbels moved to touchier matters—the extraordinary decree granting Ribbentrop control of foreign propaganda—Hitler asked him to settle things with the foreign minister direct. Goebbels tried and not surprisingly failed; he found the next day that Hitler had dictated a brief decree defining the two squabbling ministers' areas of responsibility.³³ Although Goebbels was broadly satisfied to find his own ministry left intact, the decree remained a thorn in his flesh for the next four years.³⁴

For all his loud mouth, he was not a fighting man. The prospect of a long war unsettled him, and he registered with alarm each statement by Chamberlain warning that Britain was resolved to fight to the finish.³⁵ He made a brief foray into foreign policy when Dino Alfieri phoned from Rome on the ninth with word that Mussolini proposed that the Italian press ventilate a possible solution whereby the Polish government resigned in favor of ministers willing to make peace; to fight a war in the west, the Duce had added, would be nonsense. 'I treat the matter dilatorily,' Goebbels cautiously recorded, 'then phone the Führer. He is very interested in the offer, but suspects that Mussolini is aiming at a general European peace conference. He therefore asks me to skirt around the subject for the time being; I am to thank Alfieri for any support, but say that I cannot reach the Führer.'³⁶ When Alfieri asked the next day what Moscow was doing, Goebbels stated that he had no official word, but 'something was evidently afoot in Russia.'³⁷ (Stalin's troops invaded

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eastern Poland three days later 'to protect her minorities,' and arguing that 'because a Polish state no longer existed.'³⁸ Ribbentrop shortly asked him to desist from further telephone conversations with Alfieri. 'The Führer does not want to tie himself down.'³⁹

Hitler phoned him the next evening and asked to see him. Together again the next morning in Upper Silesia, they agreed that the fall of Warsaw would be a psychological blow to the enemy. Moscow would probably then intervene. Italy seemed passive, even downright hostile. 'Mussolini seems displeased,' Hitler told Goebbels. But he wanted to preserve their friendship, so Goebbels was to keep the channel to Alfieri open. He showed the Führer the script of his forthcoming speech: Hitler asked him to sharpen the attack on Britain's warmongering role. 'Once we've dealt with the east,' recorded Goebbels, 'he wants to take on the west. He has no use for a long war. If there's got to be war, then short and sharp.'

In Warsaw however the Poles put up a protracted and heroic resistance. The city's commandant called the city's population to arms, and told them to 'resort to every means of combat.' On the sixteenth Goebbels warned Rome that the Wehrmacht would therefore issue an ultimatum and bombard Warsaw. 'There will be an avalanche of protests and defamation from London and Paris,' he anticipated. 'We ask for the support of the Italian press and propaganda.'⁴⁰ Warsaw held out for eight more days under a ruinous air and artillery bombardment. Concerned about Germany's image, Goebbels resorted to legalisms and an appeal to baser human instincts. He directed the platoons of Nazi war reporters and newsreel cameramen:

1. Never refer to Warsaw as a city in reports, but always as a fortress.

2. Use much more film footage than hitherto of Jewish types from Warsaw and the entire occupied area including both character-studies and the Jews at forced labour. This material should service to reinforce our antisemitic education drive both at home and abroad.⁴¹

With Hitler back in Berlin the phony war began, and he gradually became more approachable again. Goebbels attended lunch almost every day. On the twenty-seventh he found Hitler optimistic. He hoped the enemy would see reason. 'It depends on London,' he explained at lunch on October 10, 'whether the war goes on.'⁴² Gradually however his hopes of peace faded, and he authorized Goebbels to turn up the heat on Chamberlain. Churchill however seemed the more rewarding target—easier to identify with the English plutocracy. 'He lives in the sixteenth century,' Hitler would agree. 'Totally out of touch with the real needs of his people.'⁴³ Since Churchill's speeches were at this pass in Britain's naval fortunes necessarily economical with the truth, ridiculing him was too great a temptation for Goebbels to resist.⁴⁴

As the propagandist for an as yet undefeated belligerent Goebbels on the other hand saw no real need to lie. His untruths were still unintentional: Relying on Luftwaffe claims, he declared as sunk not only the

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battleship Royal Oak (sunk that October) but also the aircraft carrier Ark Royal and the cruiser Repulse which remained very much afloat.⁴⁵ Egged on by Hitler—who had learned almost immediately that one of his own U-boats had sunk the British liner—Goebbels reverted to the Athenia mystery in the third week of October.⁴⁶ 'Perhaps,' he noted, 'we'll even succeed in sinking him [Churchill]. That would be worth more than sinking two battleships.'⁴⁷ He wrote a big article accusing the Englishman of having had the Athenia scuttled himself, and broadcast this libel worldwide, calling him a criminal who should now be called to the bar of world opinion. 'I'm working flat out to overthrow this man,' he admitted privately.⁴⁸ Churchill retorted that Goebbels' charge was simply laughable. 'He won't be laughing soon,' snapped Goebbels in the privacy of his diary.⁴⁹

THE PROPAGANDA ministry had rapidly adjusted for war. At eleven each morning Goebbels held a 'ministerial' conference with his department heads and their advisors, about thirty to fifty officials all told, in his private office.⁵⁰ At a quarter to noon Hitler's press officer Otto Dietrich or his hard-nosed deputy Alfred-Ingemar Berndt would hold a further conference elsewhere in the same building to coordinate Goebbels' decisions with requests submitted by other ministries. After 1940 this later conference would end with the dictation to a stenographer of formal *Tagesparolen*, themes for the day which were read out to the general press conference immediately following at twelve-fifteen P.M., attended by one or two hundred German journalists (but only rarely by Goebbels).

About one-third of his men had been drafted into uniform. Karl Hanke, whom he had not seen since the summer, found himself spirited away to the Polish front in a panzer lieutenant's uniform. In September 1939 the ministry employed 9,762 professional orators, and these would address precisely 156,143 political meetings over the first eleven months of war.⁵¹ He would have nearly three hundred mobile cinemas by the end of 1940. His printing presses spun off 560,000 poster-sized portraits of Hitler, and millions of leaflets, placards, banners, and wall-newspapers; eight million copies of the Slogan of the Week wall-newspaper would be printed by the end of 1940, along with war posters like 'WITH OUR FLAGS IS VICTORY', and, less famously, 'THE ETERNAL JEW' and 'STAR OF DAVID.'

Two years earlier, Goebbels had banned one anti-Jewish film as being too shrill.⁵² It was only now, after the war began, that he started work on his own major antisemitic films. The first, *The Eternal Jew*, was produced by Franz Hippler and the Party's movie company DFG. Using photo- and film-montage techniques that mixed documentary shots filmed in the squalor of the Warsaw ghetto and sequences from the feature movies of former big name 'Jewish' movie personalities like Max Reinhardt, Ernst Lubitsch, and Charlie Chaplin this hour-long production conveyed an undeniable visual message. From October 1939 the Goebbels Diary reveals him personally supervising the filming, and checking the necessarily unappetizing footage shot in the Polish synagogues and ghettos.

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'One recoils involuntarily from the spectacle of so much filth,' reads one entry.⁵³ His cameramen had filmed the Jewish ritual slaughter of cattle, and Goebbels was undecided whether to use this revolting footage in this film or in Jew Süss, the Terra studios' remake of the 1935 British film of that name. ⁵⁴ 'This will be *the* antisemitic film,' predicted Goebbels after reading Veit Harlan's treatment: a Jew, Süss Oppenheimer, becomes the Duke of Württemberg's crooked financial adviser and tax collector: involves him in swindles on a Maxwellian scale: is condemned to death.⁵⁵ Replete with scenes of rape and torture this film, released in 1940, would become one of the most insidious propaganda films of all time.⁵⁶

He had perceptibly relaxed his personal vendetta against the Jews during 1939, only to be goaded into reviving it by one of their less felicitous moves as the Zionist leader Dr Chaim Weizmann formally declared war on their behalf against Nazi Germany in September 1939.⁵⁷ Jewish cartoonists abroad poked fun at Goebbels' lame foot, and Jewish radio commentators in England snarled over the airwaves at him when he turned forty-two.⁵⁸ A few days later the *Daily Sketch* printed a cartoon showing him with Hitler and Göring, all hanging from gibbets surrounded by skulls. He repaid these hurts in ways that were petty rather than profound, ordering the Nazi newspapers to publish a cartoon showing Chamberlain in slippers and persuading Hitler to reduce the food allowances for Jews and to withhold chocolate from them altogether.⁵⁹

A visit to the Jewish ghetto in Lodz left an indelible imprint on his mind. 'Those are not human beings any longer,' he wrote after leaving his car to inspect it closer. 'Those are animals. So our task isn't a humanitarian, but a surgical one. . . . Otherwise one day Europe will succumb to the Jewish pestilence.'⁶⁰ Back in Berlin he reported his impressions to Hitler. 'He thoroughly endorses my description of the Jewish problem,' he claimed in his diary. 'The Jews are a waste-product. They are more of a clinical than a social issue.'⁶¹ After visiting the eastern territories again he told Hitler about the unwholesome spectacles he had witnessed there. 'We must outlaw the Jewish danger,' he recorded afterward. 'But it will surface again in a few generations. There's just no antidote.'⁶²

There is evidence of how far his diary now veered from the truth. While it noted that Hitler expressed admiration for his latest speech attacking Churchill over the Athenia, Rosenberg recorded that Göring had told him that Hitler had remarked sarcastically that 'not even the entire Reichstag' had risen to such heights of rhetoric.⁶³ There are also other discrepancies, for example about the latest newsreel. 'The Führer,' Goebbels claimed in the diary, 'finds it very good.' But other sources reveal that Hitler found its mind-numbing sequences on a dance group in the opera, Queen Wilhelmina inspecting the Dutch air-raid defenses, and the Hungarian Labor Service insufferably tedious.⁶⁴ 'The newsreels are put together without inspiration or depth of interest,' he fulminated over lunch to Goebbels and a beaming Rosenberg in December. 'We

have in Germany an entire nation under arms, yet the newsreels take no notice.' Goebbels protested that Karl Ritter was making excellent patriotic movies like *Pour le Mérite*. 'Yes patriotic,' said Hitler, 'but not National Socialist!' They went at it hammer and tongs for twenty minutes before Dr Goebbels lapsed into a stricken silence. 'His appalling arrogance,' gloated Rosenberg, 'is now too much for even the long-suffering Führer to bear.' Goebbels hated being criticized by Hitler. 'But he has the right to criticize,' he loyally noted. 'He is a genius.'⁶⁵

One never knew, after all, who might read the diary's pages.

IN October 1939 Goebbels' new stately home at Lanke, the Haus am Bogensee, is complete. Once his stepson Harald comes, now a young paratrooper whose eyes have seen the horrors of war in Poland. On Goebbels' birthday Hitler invites them to tea; the Führer's face is also lined with worry—the war is not proceeding at all as he had planned.⁶⁶ Worries about financing Lanke still beset Goebbels.⁶⁷ He visits Magda, hospitalized once more with heart problems, and tells her of these irksome difficulties.⁶⁸ 'We have such money worries,' he writes.⁶⁹ He puts pressure on his budget chief Dr Ott to 'show more initiative' in dealing with the stubborn ministry of finance; this evidently works, because Ott shortly tells him that he has 'sorted out some of the problems in financing the new buildings.'⁷⁰ But they are a family again. Goebbels' marital problems seem over; at least the endless rows have faded from the diary's pages. He takes Magda out to Lanke for an afternoon, and they happily arrange the furniture.⁷¹ Once in November they rake over old embers, 'of which,' notes Goebbels, evidently scorched in the process, 'some are anything but agreeable.'⁷² Magda enrolls as a Red Cross nurse.⁷³ Slowly his domestic worries recede.

November 8, 1939 finds him in Munich listening once more to Hitler's speech on the putsch anniversary. From here one year before Goebbels had launched the Night of Broken Glass. By six P.M. Himmler, Bouhler, Rosenberg, Frank, Ribbentrop, and other dignitaries had joined him in the Bürgerbräu beerhall; this time they were surrounded by field-gray army uniforms. Hitler delivered an hour-long attack on Britain, pronounced that he was ready for five years of war if necessary, then finished abruptly—he had to hurry back to Berlin since his army commanders had asked to see him urgently the next morning about Case Yellow, the repeatedly postponed western campaign.

Goebbels joined the Führer in his special railroad car. At Nuremberg station he saw a telegram handed to Hitler: a mighty explosion, it said, had ripped through the beerhall just after they left, killing eight and injuring over sixty.⁷⁴ Goebbels was agog at his Führer's seemingly miraculous escape. If they had not left early, they would all surely have been killed. He really must be under God's protection, he privately concluded. 'He won't die until his mission is complete.'⁷⁵ At the ministry he directed all editors to comment along these lines. 'Urgent state business had called him back to Berlin,' the journalists were told. He forbade them to

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incriminate any specific groups inside Germany like monarchists, the clergy, or Jews.⁷⁶ He did not want any repetition of the November 1938 pogrom. London and Paris meanwhile blamed the Nazis themselves—'As is their wont,' he observed dryly in his diary, with the Reichstag fire allegations in mind.⁷⁷

There was a bizarre sequel. Hitler showed him a letter received a few days before: the writer, an astrologer living in the Black Forest, had cast Hitler's horoscope and regretted to inform him that he was in mortal danger between the seventh and the tenth. 'I'm curious to know what you make of this,' said Hitler.

'Wow!' replied the minister cautiously, knowing Hitler's aversion to the occult: 'Wow!'

Himmler pocketed the letter, promising to look into it.⁷⁸

THAT night there was a mini-pogrom, as rampaging Nazis beat up innocents in Berlin. 'I have them shipped off to concentration camp,' recorded Goebbels grandly, but the outrages continued.⁷⁹ Goebbels ordered the guards on his ministry reinforced (a sign that he at least regarded the assassination attempt as genuine.)⁸⁰ Learning only on the fifteenth that Himmler's men had caught 'the first of the assassins' on the Swiss border, he blamed his old foe Otto Strasser; Strasser, it turned out, had fled from Switzerland to England immediately after the bomb blast. 'We are keeping it all secret,' he summarized, 'so as not to tip off the men really behind it.'⁸¹ The hunt for accomplices turned up nothing; but when the government press agency finally announced the assassin's arrest on November 21, Goebbels released news of the capture of two top British agents on the Dutch border at the same time, so that even the dimmest reader would understand the hint.⁸²

NOV 21

GOEBBELS sent for that astrologer, Karl-Ernst Krafft—a pale, slight fellow with spindly hands and deep-set eyes. He wanted to learn more about his letter to Hitler, though carefully armoring himself with a veneer of skepticism (as recently as November 2 he had directed the party to keep a watchful eye on seers, astrologers, and clairvoyants).⁸³ At his confidential eleven A.M. conference on November 11 he ordered all astrological publications checked for relevant prophecies. In fact all such publications had long been banned, but he mentioned casually in his diary, 'I'm having a watch kept on astrology. A load of rubbish is talked and printed about it. And yet, strangely enough, it all speaks in our favor.'⁸⁴

'Speaks' is perhaps too strong a word. As Krafft explained, it depended how one interpreted the Delphic prophecies, couched in Old French, of Nostradamus (1503-66). Goebbels promptly took him onto the ministry's payroll.⁸⁵ With Krafft's help, and with more than a little imagination, they would hijack Nostradamus' ancient prophecies to benefit the Reich. He ordered a new 'translation' of the prophecies suitable for use in propaganda to France, and printed millions of bogus Nostradamus

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leaflets, with special editions of the selected passages prophesying the downfalls of, respectively, France and Britain.⁸⁶ In December he asked to see the astrological calendars for 1940 (and banned the lot the next day).⁸⁷

That winter he turned out millions of propaganda leaflets designed to subvert the French troops. Some asked the French soldiers how they'd like to die for Danzig. Others were shaped like a yellowing autumn leaf, and asked if they intended to die and fade away like this. Two clandestine radio stations started transmissions in French. He supervised their content closely.⁸⁸ 'I direct that enemy statesmen are no longer to be portrayed as figures of fun,' he wrote, 'but as cruel, vengeful tyrants. This goes for Chamberlain above all.'⁸⁹ He spared the Duke of Windsor from this campaign, as an investment for the future.⁹⁰ For Churchill he had both admiration and contempt. 'Riddled with lies and distortions,' he wrote after one Churchill broadcast. 'He's grown really old. But he's a cunning old fox all the same.'⁹¹

The topics of his ministerial conferences ranged from the ridiculous to the banal, from the supply of shoes, potatoes, diapers, coal, nail varnish, and cosmetics to the chronic shortcomings in the forces' mail.⁹² When London published an uncomfortably accurate account of Himmler's concentration camps, Goebbels commissioned a riposte about their forerunners, the British camps in the Boer War, and other colonial 'atrocities.'⁹³ He remained obsessed with the 'crime' of listening to foreign broadcasts. Despite draconian sentences it was clear from Gestapo reports that listening was on the increase.⁹⁴ British bombers had also started dropping millions of leaflets including a miniature *Völkischer Beobachter* wittily called the *Wölkiger Beobachter*, the Cloudy Observer. The first issue declared: 'The revolver-journalist Goebbels and the young hacks scribbling at his behest may have destroyed the proud craft of German journalism but they cannot assuage so easily the thinking man's natural hunger for news.' Its caricatures were apposite—like Hitler reading Karl Marx and Stalin browsing in *Mein Kampf*; and there was a moving obituary of General von Fritsch complete with a black border.⁹⁵ Goebbels conceded that the British propaganda was becoming more sophisticated.⁹⁶

His own press policies were still diffuse. He believed that he had lightened up on the press, directing: 'We must allow them a free rein.'⁹⁷ But the press directives reflect none of this. After a train crash near Friedrichshafen killed 132 passengers on December 22, and a second rail accident not far away killed fifty more the very next day, he ordered both news items suppressed.⁹⁸ He banned press coverage of the murder trials of several Poles for massacring ethnic Germans, as well as reports on the execution of rebellious Czech students, and other steps against their intelligentsia.⁹⁹ More enlightened were his bans on the printing of anonymous film or book reviews and, conversely, the names of defendants in minor court actions.¹⁰⁰ Many of these rules still hold in Germany today.

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As Christmas 1939 approached he warned editors not to delve into the ancestry of the Führer, his childhood, or his private life, and he rebuked them for drawing festive parallels between Adolf Hitler and Jesus Christ. 'The Führer does not desire such comparisons,' he said.¹⁰¹

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1939-40

37: The Principles of Propaganda

THE winter of 1939-40 wrote its name in the history of Europe with weeks of barbaric blizzards. The canals froze over; deprived of coal, the arms factories slowed down, and power stations dimmed.¹ The radiators in Goebbels' ministerial palace were stone cold. Playhouses and movie theaters closed.² The minister discussed with Albert Speer putting even stronger security fencing around Lanke, and gave orders for a two-month renovation of Schwanenwerder as well.³ The forests around Lanke were blanketed in snow. He took Magda and the children out on sleigh rides until the snow lost its magic for him. Judging from his diary the chattering children were his only joy. 'Children are at least quite honest,' he wrote. 'They say what they mean. Why can't we?'⁴ Visiting his mother at Rheydt he did what he could to help her to make ends meet. 'She brought me through the world war,' he reasoned. 'Now I'm going to see her through this one.' Still plagued with money problems, he persuaded Magda to pass the hat round among their wealthier friends.⁵ As Europe froze, Hitler's plans congealed as well. Once, on January 8, 1940, he invited Goebbels around for a cup of real coffee; but he made no attempt to discuss Yellow, his planned attack on France.⁶

Goebbels boasted to the Führer that their propaganda broadcasts were now going out in twenty-two foreign languages, including Gaelic, Afrikaans, Arabic, Hindustani and a babel of Balkan tongues, compared with four languages a year before. Their English-language broadcasts targeted the working classes, with an emphasis on the anti-plutocratic character of the war; the *News Chronicle*, Goebbels told Hitler, reported that fifty-four percent of the 'little people' in England admitted tuning in to his propaganda.⁷

He was ill at ease in war. His ministerial functions largely bored him. To the foreign journalists stationed in Berlin he offered both the carrot and the stick. He told Karl Bömer to open up luxurious retreats for these important gentlemen, with no expense spared to mollify them; but he also recommended arresting one from time to time and saddling him with 'interminable court proceedings' as a salutary lesson.⁸ He also directed Bömer to ensure that Otto Strasser's autobiography was banned 'in every country in which it is slated to appear.'⁹ The book was not flattering about Goebbels.

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From Private Neurosis to Public Policy

ing" and genocide has commented: "If a biography of Hitler is undertaken from a psychoanalytical approach, his compulsions about hygiene and cleanliness would be its most important point of departure."¹⁰⁰

Thus were private feelings projected into public policy: because the Führer felt unclean and unworthy, millions of people had to die.

Nazi foreign policy also illustrates the way personal fantasies and unconscious desires affected national decisions. The dizzy pace of crisis upon crisis—from the Rhineland to Austria to the Sudetenland to Prague to Poland—was related to Hitler's personal battle against time and his fantasies about the imminence of death. Against all medical evidence, he was convinced that, like his mother, he was suffering from terminal cancer. He must do his conquering now before death conquered him¹⁰¹

His decision to seize Austria in the *Anschluss* (annexation) of 1938 provides a particularly vivid illustration of the connection between private feelings and foreign relations. Of course it is true there were other reasons for the *Anschluss*, but since they have been set forth in many books, they need no emphasis here.

We have seen that in Hitler's imagery his mother was identified with Germany. He loved her with the intense "primitive idealization" associated with borderline personalities. As he loved her as the racially pure Motherland, so he hated the bureaucratic, racially mixed Austria, which he associated with his bureaucratic and racially suspect father. Just as he spoke well of his father publicly in stilted, standard phrases, so he could also refer to Austria as his "beautiful, beloved homeland." But basically he despised them both. To his mind, the "debauched" Austrian dynasty—exactly like his father—had defiled and "betrayed" Germany again and again.¹¹¹

Even as a boy, he said, he knew that Austria—like his cold and distant father—"did not and could not provide any love for us Germans." Austria, in ways reminiscent of his father's treatment of him, had also tried "to oppress and handicap every truly great German." Hitler's hatred for his father was intense; his hatred for Austria was, he said, "fanned into flaming indignation and contempt."¹¹²

Both his father and Austria evoked in him fears of blood contamination by the Jews. The Austrian capital (to which his father had gone before him) was a cesspool of racial pollution: "Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Serbs, Croats, etc.—but among them all the eternal fission-fungus [*Spaltpilz*] of humanity: Jews and more Jews. To me the city was the personification of incest [*Blutschande*]."¹¹³

The emotional young German patriot must have despised his father's rejection of Germany. The old man's grandson, Adolf's nephew William, testified that "He [Alois Hitler] considered it a grave insult to be classed [as a German] and stoutly maintained that he was an Austrian, and that was something entirely different."¹¹⁴

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GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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Speer became Reichsmini- r separate "Supreme Reich r German war production: nistry of Economics, the is Ministry. "Only slightly were at least eight more: Air Force and five plenipo- and Steel, Construction, r Power.)" In addition, mpire of his own through stration, which ran all its atrol."

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From Private Neurosis to Public Policy

extensive, but it always remained limited. And his power derived from "a process of attrition, not through authority explicitly granted by Hitler." 94

The same problem can be seen in the field of intelligence gathering, where Hitler also allowed conflicting agencies to develop. There were the military *Abwehr*, headed by Admiral Canaris, and *Nachrichtendienst* of the SS; Ribbentrop in the Foreign Office had a separate espionage system; Himmler developed his own private agency to spy on the enemy but also to spy on Ribbentrop and others; Goebbels in the Ministry of Propaganda had a special service to watch Göring and Himmler; Rosenberg in the *Ostministerium* developed an espionage organization to spy on Russia—and on his colleagues in the Nazi hierarchy. The Führer's mistrust filtered down through his satraps.

Nor was there any consistent policy in the occupied areas of the Greater Reich. In Czechoslovakia, for example, Hitler could not trust either the first "Protector," Konstantin von Neurath, or his deputy, Karl Frank—and they could not trust each other. Neurath was relatively humane; Frank was brutal; and Hitler's policy was split between the two. In the end he tried to support both irreconcilable positions, just as he tried to live with both parts of his deeply split ego.⁹⁵

Literally dozens of times, when conflicts and confusions produced important disputes crying out for decision, Hitler refused to make a judgment. The result was that his government, as Franz Neumann wrote with some exaggeration, was a "non-State, a chaos . . . disorder and anarchy." 96 The obvious question, once again, is why? In part, confusion and refusal to make decisions among subordinates was technique—the ancient method of the Roman emperors, "divide and conquer." But Hitler had already conquered. He continued to fear and mistrust his subordinates long after he had consolidated total political power and established the principle that he and he alone was the source of all authority in the Reich.

A monographic study dealing with Hitler's methods of government notes his refusal to define his subordinates' spheres of authority or to choose among them. The author wonders what Hitler was afraid of and concludes that "This view of Hitler—the man who does not decide—would help to explain the eternal confusion of the men working for him." 97

A political leader who creates conflicting agencies, who sets forth irreconcilable policies, who thinks he conquers when he divides is a person who is externalizing profound splits and conflicts in his own psychological makeup.

These personal conflicts, rooted in his lifelong mistrust of others, had far-reaching consequences for the home front during the war. Because Hitler distrusted people, he believed the masses to be selfish and avaricious, incapable of sacrifice for the common good and prone to revolt. The masses, he kept saying, were like women, fickle and untrustworthy. That was one of the reasons why Hitler felt he could not

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The Child As Father to the Man

unlikely that Hitler chose this particular village at random. He seems to have had a compulsion to wipe out—quite literally—the suspicion of his own Jewish blood by obliterating the birthplace of his father and the grave of his grandmother.

Hitler's uneasiness about his ancestors is suggested in a remark he made in 1930 when reporters were trying to get information about his family. "These people," he said, "must never find out who I am. They mustn't know where I come from or my family background." 13 As we have noted, he felt it necessary to lie about his ancestors, saying, for example, that they had come from Lower Saxony.

There is other evidence that Hitler worried about his own "Jewishness." The two physical characteristics he associated with Jews—body odors and large noses—were two things that bothered him about himself. Hitler's obsessive concern with personal cleanliness and his abhorrence of perfume and aftershave lotion was so great, one suspects, because he was afraid that either the smell of body odor or the use of perfume to cover it up might make people think he was a Jew. When one of his colleagues asked why Jews "always remain strangers in the nation," Hitler had a ready answer: "The Jews [have] a different smell." He expressed his repugnance for both odor and perfume publicly in a Munich speech of 29 November 1939:

Racial instinct protected the people; the *odor* of that race deterred Gentiles from marrying Jews. At present in these days of perfume, where any dandy can assume the same *odor* as anyone else, the feeling for these finer distinctions between peoples is being lost. The Jew counts on that. 14

Those who have commented on Hitler's physical characteristics have all said that his least attractive feature was his grossly shaped nose and unusually large nostrils—hence the bushy little mustache grown just wide enough to help conceal them. With this in mind, it is worth noting Hitler's pointed observation about the Jewish people: they have, he said, a characteristic which is "permanently common to all Jews from the ghetto of Warsaw to the bazaars of Morocco: the offensive nose, the cruel, *vicious nostrils*. . . ." 15

THE FATHER: ALOIS (SCHICKELGRUBER) HITLER

Alois Hitler's career in the Austrian bureaucracy had been eminently respectable. After nine years of service he had achieved the title of senior assistant customs official, and by 1892 he had been promoted to higher collector, the highest rank open to a man of only an ele-

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.

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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

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

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"surprises" he had played on an unsuspecting world. A member of his intimate circle recalled that during the military reoccupation of the Rhineland in March 1936, which crushed the treaties of Versailles and Locarno under the jarring cadence of the Wehrmacht's boots, "Hitler's face assumed that expression which [we] knew so well meant that he was enjoying a little joke of his own." During the occupation of Austria in March 1938, he led his unsuspecting entourage to the middle of a bridge over the Inn River. They were astonished when Austrian children greeted Hitler as their Führer and presented him with flowers. Hitler "turned round and laughed joyously at our surprised faces. Another surprise packet had come off!" When he forced President Hacha of Czechoslovakia to sign his country over to him in March 1939, Hitler ran up joyously to his secretaries and exclaimed, "Children, I am so happy, I'd really like to stand on my head!" Informed that the Soviet-Nazi Pact had been signed in August 1939, he turned to his court and exclaimed, "Won't that just make the world sit up again!" And in a mood of complete abandon . . . he slapped himself delightedly on the knee and exclaimed, "That will really land them [the Western Powers] in the soup!"¹⁰

A newsreel camera recorded for history the reaction of the man who, after the fall and humiliation of France, had just been proclaimed "The Greatest Military Commander of All Time": he giggled and slapped his thigh with delight.

Hitler characteristically dealt with disappointment and opposition in much the same way he had as a pampered mother's boy in Leonding and Linz: he sulked, ran away and hid, or staged a temper tantrum. A British diplomat recalls that when a dinner conversation did not go according to the Führer's liking, "He behaved throughout like a spoiled, sulky child."

His famous rages were seldom caused by important political or military defeats. When thwarted in his bid for the presidency in 1932, defeated at Stalingrad or the Battle of the Bulge, or confronted by assassination attempts, he took it all calmly and with great self-control. At the end, when defeat was obvious and the decision had been made to die in Berlin, many in his entourage were in a state of hysteria. But not Hitler. His stenographer recalled that at the last military conference he was "generally composed" and the one who "kept his nerves best under control."¹¹ His rages tended to be occasioned by little things. When someone disagreed with him, a valet forgot his favorite mineral water, or it was suggested that he had whistled a tune incorrectly, he would scream or beat his fists upon the table or the walls, sometimes spreading himself out as if crucified. No reliable witness, however, ever saw him lying on the floor chewing a rug. The sobriquet *Teppichfresser* (carpet eater) was not justified.

It has sometimes been suggested that Hitler's fury was carefully staged for effect, that it was a weapon in his armory used to frighten opponents into submission. Certainly he enjoyed his success in reducing

The Image and the Man

the old and ill President Hacha of mission by screaming threats to obliterated and graphic pictures given suggests neither premeditation nor Swedish visitor in August 1939 had resist Nazi aggression against Poland.

Hitler jumped up and became violent and down and declared, as if Germany was invincible. . . . Standing in the room and stared straight ahead more garbled, his whole behavior who was not at all himself. See. . . . "If there is a war," he said, "U-Boats, U-Boats!" His voice gradually one could no longer detect himself, raised his voice and screamed, "I'll build airplanes, I'll annihilate my enemies!" At the demon in bad fiction than a look of amazement. . . .¹⁸

On other occasions he deliberately effect. In any case, whether calculate the weapons of a child, the means of a doting mother into compliance with him.

Hitler went to the Western Front as commander in chief of all German military. He had gone on picnics as a boy. One of them recalled that Hitler liked to take sunbaths where they were going. He would in 1940 he told his entourage that they would not say where. A guessing game of false channels by Hitler and by those you should take bathing suits along with sealskin trophy. To make the game more nameplates removed from the towns as was passing. Not until the entourage of artillery fire did Hitler announce proudly. He proclaimed in boyish triumph: "The Western powers has begun!"¹⁰

Both as boy and man, Hitler II and American cowboys and Indians. In adventure stories of Karl May, a German frontier without visiting the locale an "ern" language which his heroes spotlight. The hero, Old Shatterhand—him.

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The Image and the Man

he bounced," and "Pshaw woman who knocked out [him] at 50 yards with his staggering odds, he defeated [him] every, and treachery.

For May's intrepid generation of German [men]. Few, however, could [match] or the longevity of his [life]. Half built in his library to [read] May's prolific pen, specially [chosen] and commended them [to him]—along with the movie [reel] of his knowledge about [the world]. He knew best how to fight the [enemy]. Every officer to carry with [him]. That's the way the [war] goes: trees and bridges, they [are] [destroyed].

Hitler's personal immaturity found expression in the government he established for Germany. The Third Reich was in many ways the historic actualization of a perverse child's fantasies—William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* further brutalized and made real. The social orders created by both adolescents (Adolf and Jack) demanded contempt for the weak, mindless destruction, murder of the innocent, gratuitous cruelty, forced happiness decreed by the leader, total commitment to primitive symbols, and incessant marching and song. The meaning of song was much the same; only the words were different. The Nazi version, "The blood of the Jew will squirt from our knives," paralleled the children's chant of "Kill the pig! Spill his blood! Do him in!"

The solutions Hitler found to complex political and moral problems were often childish and cruelly simple. He startled British diplomatists by saying that the best way to deal with passive resistance in India was to kill the leaders of the Congress Party. "Shoot Gandhi," he said, "and if that does not suffice to reduce them to submission, shoot a dozen leading members of Congress; if that does not suffice, shoot two hundred more and so on until order is established." 24

Humorlessness and Rigidity

Neither the boy nor the man had a sense of humor. The only close friend of his youth said that Hitler was totally lacking in a spirit of self-irony and that "one thing he could not do was to pass over something with a smile." Many years later a high official of the Foreign Office recalled: "I never experienced a normal bantering conversation at his table . . . Concerning people, Hitler's judgments were usually bitter and derogatory. Qualities such as forbearance, humor and self-irony were completely foreign to him." A private secretary who was with him at the end of his life noted that Hitler liked to play tricks on people and sometimes gave a "sort of barking gurgie when he read of some *Schadenfreude* . . . [but] I must say that I never once heard him laugh heartily." And a valet who had served him a dozen years reported, "He never laughed out loud. At least I never once heard him break out in a hearty laughter." Speer disagrees about the laughter, but not about his humor or the source of his merriment: "Hitler had no humor . . . although he could laugh loudly . . . sometimes literally writhing with laughter. Often he would wipe tears from his eyes during such spasms.

* Whenever he kept me at a distance (for all humans, I am sad to say) do possess this power, I would meet the most vicious criticism upon him

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ADOLF HITLER

The Image and the Man

his efforts to have his own body consumed by fire were notably less than magnificent.⁹⁵

Honesty and Duplicity

Hitler had a double image of his own integrity. He considered himself an honest and straightforward man who would, for example, abide by treaties "blindly and faithfully"; but he also saw himself as a clever dissimulator who could "fool people" into believing anything and who was, he said, "the greatest actor in Europe." Playing this role, he confided that "Treaties will be honored only as long as they are useful. . . . Treaties exist for the purpose of being broken at the most convenient moment."⁹⁶

In August 1939, when it was suggested to him by a Swedish emissary that the British, after their long experience with his broken word, might not believe his promises with regard to Poland, Hitler was horrified at the thought. He stopped his pacing, turned in hurt surprise and cried, "Idiot! Have I ever in my entire life ever told a lie?"⁹⁷

The question must be answered affirmatively. During the Blood Purge of June 1934, he had ordered the murder of hundreds of people he suspected of opposing him. But two years later in a public speech he said:

I must make here the solemn declaration: On the road of our movement there lies not one single opponent whom we have murdered!

Repeatedly he gave his "sacred word" to Germany and the world: he had "no intention of threatening anyone"; he had "no territorial demands to make in Europe"; he had no intention whatever of "interfering in the internal affairs of Austria or of annexing Austria"; he swore that "peace will never be broken by us"; he would personally guarantee "the inviolability" of all his neighbors' territory. "That is not a phrase," he said, "that is our sacred will."⁹⁸

One reason he felt obliged to insist so stridently that he was an honest man may have been that he was aware of his own propensity to prevaricate. He admitted as much in a revealing comment at the beginning of a speech he gave in Berlin on 10 September 1943. He broke a long silence after the catastrophe of Stalingrad by saying:

Freed from the heavy burden of expectation weighing on us for a long time, I now consider that the moment has come again to address myself to the German people *without having to resort to lies, either to myself or to the public.*⁹⁹

He lied for tactical reasons, but he also lied, gratuitously, over matters of little apparent importance. He gave, for example, many dif-

1939

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

—W. H. Auden,
"September 1, 1939"

*D. T. Rousseau. It is the
fatal intellectual flaw
in liberalism. Disproportion
anomaly and transcendence
are what it is all about.
Those to whom great evil is done
do more in retaliation (usually to this side*

The circumstances in which the cover portrait was painted were remarkable. Richter had been invited in 1941 to do a portrait of Reich Marshal Hermann Göring. When he learned that a visit from Hitler was expected, it was arranged for him to sketch the Führer, with the proviso that he do so from a well-concealed hiding place. Richter was unimpressed with Hitler's face until someone mentioned the word "Jew." When Hitler heard that word, Richter later recalled, his face was immediately transformed into something at once demonic and defensive, a haunting look which Richter quickly sketched and later that night, put down in oils. He labeled it "A German Worker" and hung it in a shed where it survived the war. Richter had also painted Field Marshal von Schlieffen, Chancellor Stresemann and President of the Reichstag Lobe, but he considered the Hitler portrait to be his masterpiece. The art critic of *Die Zeit* called it "the only really authentic portrait of Hitler . . . perhaps the most important historical portrait that any German artist has ever had the opportunity to paint."



THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD ADOLF HITLER

ROBERT G. L. WAITE

*the raising dogs or climbing
mountains, or become saints. Magnificent
of possibility is what it is all about.
that is, or, later, our still, an endlessly
developed confidence. I would rather
be a spoiled child on whom to work
my arts than a ~~gathering~~ adolescent.
an animal*

DA CAPO PRESS • NEW YORK

something strange, which I had never noticed when he had talked to me in moments of the excitement. It was as if another being spoke out of me and moved him as much as it did me. It wasn't at all as if a speaker being carried away by his own words. I rather felt as though he himself listened to the excitement and emotion to what burst forth from an elementary force. I will not attempt to interpret the phenomenon, but it was a state of complete ecstasy and euphoria which he transferred the character of *Rienzi*, even mentioning him as a model or example, with reference to the plane of his own ambitions. But it was more than a cheap adaptation. Indeed, the impact of the experience was rather a sheer external impulse which came to speak. Like flood waters breaking their dykes, it burst forth from him. He conjured up in grandiose pictures his own future and that of his

I had been convinced that my friend wanted to be an artist, a painter, or perhaps an architect. Now it was no longer the case. Now he aspired to something which I could not yet fully grasp. It rather surprised me to think that the vocation of the artist was for him the most desirable goal. But now he was talking of something which, one day, he would receive from the people, and which would lead him out of servitude to the heights of freedom. I knew a young man, an unknown youth who spoke to me in that strange way, who spoke of a special mission which one day would be entrusted to him, and I, his only listener, could hardly understand what he meant. Many years had to pass before I could grasp the significance of this enraptured hour for my

My days were followed by silence. I returned into the town. The clock struck three. We stood in front of my house. Adolf shook hands with me,

"IN THAT HOUR IT BEGAN . . ."

101

and I was astonished to see that he did not go in the direction of his home, but turned again towards the mountains.

"Where are you going now?" I asked him, surprised. He replied briefly, "I want to be alone."

In the following weeks and months he never again mentioned this hour on the Freinberg. At first it struck me as odd and I could find no explanation for his strange behaviour, for I could not believe that he had forgotten it altogether. Indeed he never did forget it, as I discovered thirty-three years later. But he kept silent about it because he wanted to keep that hour entirely to himself. That I could understand, and I respected his silence. After all, it was *his* hour, not mine. I had played only the modest role of a sympathetic friend.

In 1939, shortly before war broke out, when I, for the first time visited Bayreuth as the guest of the Reichs Chancellor, I thought I would please my host by reminding him of that nocturnal hour on the Freinberg, so I told Adolf Hitler what I remembered of it, assuming that the enormous multitude of impressions and events which had filled these past decades would have pushed into the background the experience of a seventeen-year-old youth. But after a few words I sensed that he vividly recalled that hour and had retained all its details in his memory. He was visibly pleased that my account confirmed his own recollections. I was also present when Adolf Hitler retold this sequel to the performance of *Rienzi* in Linz to Frau Wagner, at whose home we were both guests. Thus my own memory was doubly confirmed. The words with which Hitler concluded his story to Frau Wagner are also unforgettable for me. He said solemnly, "In that hour it began."

Feb?
1939

1939?
1940?

9/3
1939

On one occasion Miss Mitford astonished the British ambassador, Sir Neville Henderson, by greeting him in public with the Hitler salute and a loud "Heil Hitler!" Sir Neville was so dumbfounded he forgot his usual response to such greeting: snapping to attention, giving a crisp British Army salute, and proclaiming, "Rule Britannia!"²⁷ Miss Mitford's car was emblazoned with both a swastika and a Union Jack. She drove through her adopted Fatherland breathlessly and indefatigably preaching the message of the flags and the symbol of her name: the unity between the "Lord of the Land and the Ruler of the Seas." For this faith and this mission, she said, she would gladly die. She very nearly did.

On 3 September 1939, when Britain entered into a state of war with Germany, Unity Mitford saw the dream of her life shattered. In despair, she went to the English Garden in Munich and shot herself in the head. Adolf Hitler sent for the best physicians, brought her flowers in the hospital, held her hand, and signed a portrait of himself which she kept at her bedside table. On his orders, she was escorted by his personal physician to Switzerland, where she recovered. She died in England in 1948.²⁷⁸

No area of Hitler's life has been the subject of more controversy and speculation than his sexual practices. It has been asserted, variously, that he was absolutely normal, that he was a homosexual, that he had no interest whatever in sex, that he engaged in a particularly gross form of perversion.

Serious students of his career will wish to pursue this matter in some detail—not in order to indulge prurient interests, but because of its redeeming historical value. For one major contribution that psychoanalysis made to historical biography is the demonstration that sexual attitudes and practices play an important and integral part in personality development. Moreover, they help shape a person's social thinking. As Theodor Reik has noted, "Whoever has had the opportunity to observe

persons analytically for any l
distinct impression that the in
individual's attitude toward soc

It is probable that we shall Hitler's sex life. But of one thing biographers untrained and dishonest: that Hitler was "in all respects is simply too much evidence against

Ever since the trauma of intercourse had seemed frighter repelled by sex, he was also into sketches are replete with sexual imagery. Every c
dinantly excited by rape, prost
ing sexual practices. He wanted von Stuck's sensuous paintings had "blue" films made especial pictures which "only a perva
paper." 280

The amount of time he devoted to the study gave an indication that the subject was a serious student. His practices were among his favorite pastimes. As chancellor, he would not neglect his duties about their sexual experiences. His own contributions to the study were of length and with increasing excitement. Several of the chorus girls were very interested in nothing much happened except the whole evening . . . of his great

Much as he enjoyed social activity, he was usually careful of his own age. He delighted in motherly older women to stroke him; he had been outraged when it later, as chancellor, he refused parties or at state functions. I

° Proponents of this view incl *passim*) and John Toland (*Adolf I* and valets also believed that rumo false." (Zoller, *Privat*, 107; and Lin self apparently told her sister that pletely normal." (Nerin Gun, letter But she gave a very different impre since their schoolgirl days. To this f she confided disgustedly, "As far a nothing from him. [*Als Mann habe* interview, April, 1967)."

(3)

~~1921-22-1924-25~~ ~~1923-34~~

1939

raw material of the Ural
ins of the Ukraine to be
rship the German people
39 he began to show his
t even in the Carpatho-

German-Russian improve-
39, that is, before Hitler's
id occupy what remained
decisive change of British
oland and the attempt to
Russia. Many things indi-
n-Russian alliance as un-
of 1939 he demonstrated
statesmanship. Reserve,
marked the tempo of his
oscow (except during the
on a sudden increase of
us then served him well).
contacts and negotiations
ring chapters of modern
revealing of Stalin than
deration of Russian state
er.*

is the triangular relation-
of 1939. The British and
their wish to bring Stalin
the Chamberlain govern-
that if Germany were only
ritish-German agreement

sources indicated Hitler would
months." M. Tilea was not an

aid at the news of the Hitler-
course, largely right, but while
German National Socialism

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

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

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

†HST, pp. 28-29. Also F, p. 801, and HF/Al, p. 224.

a scene

get the same as Munich in 1921

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

p 163

1935, Aug 1939,

1945

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

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

1939

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

1935

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

1945

* P.T. I did not have the answer but I had to consider whether

Stalin's trial and purge of the old Bolsheviks had been stimulated by the ~~execution~~ ^{murder} of Röhm.

①

*1939

1930-31

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

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

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

†Cited by Scholdt, *schno*, p. 660.

... WERE DUALITIES i
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... that is often underst
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Hitler's interest in art w
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He would destroy peopl
... architecture, and architect
... painting or music—that he
... markable achievements.† I k
... or dismissed, and that this i
... tain it further. Allow me o

*See also Gert Kalow, *Hitler—da*.

†This issue is, of course, inseparable from the remnant of materials of Speer (also ship of Speer and Hitler. About this *Battle with the Truth*, 1, 1995.

*P.T. I don't for the oppressing the Jews
and political enemies, it would have been
a good and interesting society. I began to

think again of Goethe's Faust, Part I. What did it
propose, after all, but that a devil's contract
offered everything provided one was true to a
clause, a devil's clause. Our clause—and I confess
I did not understand the O.V.'s reasoning was that
the persecution of the Jews must continue to increase

①

140

THE HITLER OF HISTORY

1933-38, 1939

133-38
Klemm
accp 139

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

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

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

†Thus, for example, he would appoint the same Papen, for whose political ideas and tactics within Germany Hitler had little respect, to important foreign posts (in Vienna and Ankara), where Papen's canny abilities served Hitler well (at least until 1944). As a matter of fact, there were crucial occasions (such as in July 1940) when Hitler would call for Papen, if not for advice, then to hear him out. LEW, p. 334, note 15: "On one occasion, in 1936, Ribbentrop forbade members of the ministry to talk directly with Papen [GB, D, VIII, p. 330]—yet Papen continued to function under Hitler's protection."

‡Görlitz-Quint, GQ, p. 513: "He applied the image of the party struggles [of the Weimar Republic] literally to foreign policy. He never realized that domestic and foreign policy are two entirely different matters." But are they? In this respect Irving's summary statement is, for once, more telling (1/w, p. xxiii): "In Hitler's view, Germany's [former] statesmen had put domestic strength too low in their priorities. . . . First he restored Germany's psychological unity; on this stable foundation he rebuilt her economic strength; and on that base in turn he built up the military might with which to enforce an active foreign policy."

great rise of German power. It would be erroneous to assert that by and large, successful politics; and that the results of ideology over statesmanship he may have been not something apart but part and parcel of the year, 1934, when National Socialism seemed, at least for a while, this would not continue. 1934 may have been in some of his biographers at worst, delayed the part Mussolini would then do nor obstructed its event and statesmanship government Franco in the Spanish Civil War with China and Japan.‡ 1928 "book" he had emphasized the German Reich needing it was more than realized to rejoice at a naval treaty had some evidence to circles of England would

*Thus Fest, *op. cit.* p. 836: "After returned to it." This is very doubtful.

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

‡Toland, *op. cit.* p. 401: Hitler in 1936: "Admittedly spineless to justify German rearmament and to do with his calculations."

*D.T. He loved keeping someone who despised him always on tip-toe, always ready to work for him despite his deepest antagonism. "Give me an elevator toward every tone," he remarked.

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

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

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

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

* D.T. Yes, and it was the best soil in which to work.

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

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

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

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

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

1939

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

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

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

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

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

*Hillgruber (and others) make much of Hitler's refusal to make Moscow the main target. †"His ideology ["Weltanschauung"] It was—and it ought to be—debated after July 1940 the war against England to Hitler. This argument is not tenable. The German historian Bernd Stegemann (1982, pp. 206-13 (also in 1987); also Fest *auf die Sowjetunion 1941 als Versuch, die Welt zu erobern* (Herford/Bonn, 1988). In Manfred Loh *Materialien zur Außenpolitik des III. Reiches* (criticized Broszat's article in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1971) his position to go at Russia was not a "calculation" that he felt compelled [in *Zugzwang*] in 1940 and proceed to a decisive ending

At D. T. The order became more intense from the D. T. Bring out the worst in him. Pull his tail-feathers. Enrage him against the Poles. Excite the barbarism in his veins.

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

ideological

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

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

Is D.T.'s reaction? Is his terror that God will answer D.T. And if not, whether he has happened. But how could it be possible

after all the wreckage accomplished by the Endlösung in Warsaw?

ALLOW ME NOW TO RETURN TO THE principal elements in To relevant to our theme here: the conception of a new kind of tyranny, the tyrannical not of a type only established with the occasion. That new kind of tyranny was already apparent, though not in Germany. It was about it in *Democracy in America*, the plebiscitary triumph of Louis Napoleon III was in the Third Reich, the active consent to the Führer in the broadest sense of the word, more so than in America or Mussolini or Khrushchev (said), Hitler was not really some of the Functionalist he was circumscribed by his bureaucratic dictator; he was something "invoked the past; the new!"

The second element of the revolution, again made first in the revolutions may be a thing in society the majority of people, revolutionary ideas, though they are bureaucracy in their everyday though only to some extent there would be no revolution more than an assuaging of the lives and ordinary people. the adjective "revolutionary" what he established was a

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

1939 "Today I will once more be a prophet. If the international Jewish financiers inside and outside Europe should again succeed in plunging the nations into a world war, the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth and the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race throughout Europe" (my italics).

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

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

* Geliand her Jewish lover

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

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

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

*Carr, c. p. 93: "Just as one must allow which to some extent modified the Holocaust we must allow the post before the gas chambers."

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

* It was an error to justify his cat