

1943

Hitler The man + military leader - Derwiler
The Ailing Empire - Haffner
Life + Death of A.H. - Poyne

QMD-Bues

1943

Adolf thinks of his vanguard.
His soldiers are not ready to
die, they are children, he would
have to control them.

The Foundation of the City
who is forever disturbing the most con-
servative, and producing grandiose, inex-
plicable phenomena. In the natural order
of things, in the monotonous life of the
forest, the madness Langstroth describes
would be possible only were some accident
suddenly to destroy a hive full of honey.
But in this case, even, there would be no
fatal glass, no boiling sugar or cloying
syrup; no death or danger, therefore,
other than that to which every animal is
exposed while seeking its prey.

Should we be more successful than
they in preserving our presence of mind
if some strange power were at every step
to ensnare our reason? Let us not be
too hasty in condemning the bees for the
folly whereof we are the authors, or in de-
riding their intellect, which is as poorly
equipped to foil our artifices as our own
would be to foil those of some superior
creature unknown to us to-day, but on

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creation, and that are
ready to die for their
dream. That is what
makes us - people
whose reputation from
their defeat dream.

the O.C. encourages D.T. to
abolish the state in the best of
all

143 and 145

~~145~~

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~~AA~~

AA

after the

leave

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husband

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The Life of the Bee

I have seen thousands strained out from the syrups in which they had perished; thousands more alighting even on the boiling sweets; the floors covered and windows darkened with bees, some crawling, others flying, and others still so completely besmeared as to be able neither to crawl nor to fly — not one in ten able to carry home its ill-gotten spoils, and yet the air filled with new hosts of thoughtless comers."

This, however, seems to me no more conclusive than might be the spectacle of a battlefield, or of the ravages of alcoholism, to a superhuman observer bent on establishing the limits of human understanding. Indeed, less so, perhaps; for the situation of the bee, when compared with our own, is strange in this world. It was intended to live in the midst of an indifferent and unconscious nature, and not by the side of an extraordinary being

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143, 5th August

* A.H. asks how they can be so stupid, & do as much as men on the battlefield; — Touch the deepest desire in any

In '45

inbound

die, AA thinks

of bee self-

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since Celi.

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Remember's
Galt in '43

resume a normal life. But the combs are lashed by rain and winds, subjected to sun and snow. The brood are dead. The violated hive is doomed. Without a queen or brood there can be no future.

Usually cause and effect are not so clearly established when a queen vanishes from a hive; her end is not so dramatic or definitive. But once her ovaries are worn out or her reservoir of sperm depleted, the end is near. The anonymous lethal ball of bees is her executioner.

In death she is shown no more respect or honor than any other felled member of the community. All distinctions end in the abyss beyond the landing board.

~~Along to Adt.~~

~~A 3a~~

FORTY-SIX



If there is no mishap and all goes well with queen and colony, and the outpouring of eggs brings a buildup of bee population and crowding, nature intervenes with a mysterious and wondrous solution: the bees prepare to swarm. This is their way of preserving the species and increasing their numbers, the most powerful drive in all of nature. The earliest bees must have responded to the same silent summons millions of years ago.

Before a swarm can issue, it first must provide for a new queen to be left behind, as the old queen accompanies the departing bees to get them established in their new home. The process of producing a new queen to stay behind is much the same as that in superseding, but the technique and circumstances differ.

While superseding cells are attached high up on the side of the comb, jutting straight out, swarm cells are built on the

bottom, drooping down below the frame, resembling a peanut hanging from one end. No one knows why bees employ different techniques of placement and construction for superseding and swarm cells; it could be a signal to the community, or convey a message to the occupant of what her role would be. Again, it could put the queen mother on notice that this newcomer is not a threat to her as a superseding queen would be and not to bother the princess within.

In any case, superseding and swarm queen larvae alike are fed nothing but royal jelly. While the circumstances of birth differ, both have the same destiny: to replace the reigning queen, each responsible for the continuity of the colony.

A swarm usually departs on a sunny day in late spring or early summer, most likely in May or June, between the hours of ten in the morning and three in the afternoon. From half to two-thirds of the colony may take off, accompanied by the old queen, to establish a new home elsewhere. Behind they leave enough brood, young bees, queen cells, and food for the parent colony to build itself up again.

Until the new queen goes on her mating flight and starts laying eggs, the parent colony suffers a severe setback. A colony may be so weakened that it has a hard time recovering; the swarm impulse is felt not only by strong colonies, but often by those that can ill afford to lose numbers. If the new queen fails in her mating flight or doesn't return home, and there is no replacement for her, the hive may die out altogether. Swarming can decimate as well as increase.

Once bees start building swarm cells, they have made up their minds to leave. Swarms may take off any time after these cells are capped. Most swarms issue eight or nine days after placing an egg inside of a queen cell, an act of optimism, considering all that can go amiss.

Since most swarms issue at the peak of the spring honeyflow, it represents a grievous loss for the beekeeper, but it makes sense for the bees, giving both the departing swarm and the

1891
+
1945

1891

1943

Swarm

Diary

then tell another, and she, in turn, passes it along until all are doing it? Then how does it get incorporated into the gene pattern and passed down from generation to generation, practiced by different races of bees all over the world? How did the first bee make the connection between water and temperature control? Who can explain the quantum leap from idea to practice, and then to the genetic transference of information echoing down through the ages? It is too much for me!

During a heat crisis, each bee seems to know her role, as if she had been drilled, as in civil defense or fire drills. It would be stretching things a bit to call our whimsical but vital water carriers specialists. They do not sit around waiting for a heat crisis. But there is no confusion or hesitation. The alarm is sounded. Individuals drop whatever they are up to for this new priority, scurrying to their stations, just like small-town volunteer firemen quitting their jobs to answer a fire alarm.

Here we have what appears to be a spontaneous new division of labor. How do the individual bees know what they are supposed to do, what is expected of them? Who carries water and who fans? Are we to believe this is all neatly packaged in some little gene marked "heat crisis, instructions therein"?

During a heat crisis, field bees may make a hundred trips or more gathering water. Each can carry only a tiny amount at a time, and after transferring it to a hive bee they zip away for more. It must be a time of high drama; you can sense the urgency as the fielders shuttle back and forth from water source to hive, and hive bees race to and fro smearing the dabs of water on the combs. No military operation could be better synchronized.

There is, for all of the drama, a comic side, all of this running back and forth. Eventually the hive is cooled down. The crisis is over. The hive bees return to their regular tasks, but to one, it seems, bothers to tell the field bees the emergency is over. They keep appearing with their mouths full of water, looking desperately for someone to take it from them. The busy hive bees ignore them. It is, apparently, a breakdown in com-

munications. Nature, or evolution, it would seem, could have taken the next logical step and had someone inform the foragers that they could return to the fields. Would that have taken so much more space in the gene package? Or does nature, at times, enjoy mocking her own, playing small jokes, some of them amusing, some grisly and horrible.

The division of labor is never quite so coordinated and unified as when all hands fan together. This is a vital function in curing honey. Nectar, when brought into the hive, contains about 80 percent water, and most of the moisture must be reduced to approximately 18 percent to produce thick honey. At night, after the runny nectar has been deposited in open wax vats, like so many miniature barrels stacked row upon row on their sides, the comb cells tilted slightly upward so their contents won't spill out, the colony gathers at the hive entrance to evaporate the water by fanning.

Half of the colony is on one side, beating their wings in unison to blow air into the hive, while the other half fans on the opposite side, creating a breeze that carries water vapor from the nectar out of the hive. How do the bees decide who is to blow in and who is to blow out? The draft produced is so strong that if a lighted match is held at the hive entrance, the flame will bend in the direction of air being forced in or out. The method is so effective that puddles of water often are found on the inner cover after a night of fanning.

During a honeyflow, nectar must be processed immediately so the honey can be capped in preparation for the next day's collection. In the summer bees often work around the clock, field bees bringing in nectar for twelve straight hours and then fanning for the next twelve, rapidly wearing out those wings, which have only so many beats in them. There is no division of labor now, other than those who blow in and those who blow out. There are no individuals; there is only the common good to be served.

D.T. Sometimes I wonder if this were some species of hell.

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Stalund

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remove themselves voluntarily by "committing suicide." The old or sick bee, at a time of her own choosing, simply crawls or drags her way painfully to the landing board and quietly topples over the edge, to perish in the tall grass or weeds below so she won't be a burden to the colony, a final sacrifice for the collective good of the community to which she devoted her life and energies, and I do not know whether she is to be pitied or exalted.

THIRTY-FIVE



In paying tribute to the division of labor in the hive, we are likely to make the error of comparing it to a factory where workers are trained to perform a particular job and are limited to that one operation or task, repeating it endlessly, and that is all that is expected of them; if their function is changed or eliminated, the person must be retrained for another job or let go. That is not the way a beehive functions. There is a division of labor, as we have seen, but it is based less on individual preference than on the convenience of the colony. Certain bees may be specialists but they have probably had a turn at most jobs and are able to perform them in an emergency; even older workers whose time of secreting wax is past can, if need be, reactivate their wax glands. In a crisis each individual ceases whatever she is doing to pitch in and do whatever is necessary for the common good. Individual sacrifice for the good of all! That is the cachet of hive life; it is an immutable law.

Let us now observe the bees in a crisis situation, our focus on the indomitable water carriers. They are primarily in charge of regulating the hive temperature during the summer. It is an

essential role, demanding expertise. If the queen is to lay eggs, a temperature of about ninety-four degrees Fahrenheit is necessary, and the hive must remain in the range of ninety-two to ninety-eight degrees for metamorphosis to occur. But if the hive gets too hot, the wax combs will melt and the delicate brood can bake; if it becomes too cool, the brood will chill and die.

Maintaining this critical level of heat requires almost constant vigilance and temperature control. In the cold months heat is produced by clustering, but since most brood is raised in the summer, air conditioning is essential. Should overheating threaten from the sun beating on the closed, boxlike hive and all of the activity within, an emergency call is sent for water. Bees have an internal biological thermostat that triggers an alarm signal that is immediately relayed throughout the colony.

Field bees who are between trips drop whatever they are doing to rush to the nearest water source and scurry back with a mouthful of water. There, waiting house bees called from their regular jobs take the liquid from the fielders and spread it on the frames of honeycomb. All bees in the hive cease whatever they are doing to beat their wings vigorously, in unison. The fanners have been described as sitting like little living ventilators over the cells, driving the air toward each other and pushing it out through the entrance. Their fanning sets up a draft that evaporates the water, a primitive form of air conditioning that lowers the temperature, cooling the hive.

It is an ingenious system, much like one used in the Midwest before the advent of mechanical air conditioners; sweltering families would rig up a bale of straw at an open window, let water from a hose trickle through it and a fan inside would circulate the cooled air, lowering the temperature. But the bees developed their own method millions of years ago and incorporated it into their genetic pattern.

How do such things happen? Does one bee figure it out,

* *Adi think that one could never learn as if people were good as bees. Ht*

*Alt
43
Station*

*P. T. J.
Ht
Humble and the D.V. in relation to bees.*

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lecture to AH

1987 may come down with a severe bowel disease that, left untreated, can cause a colony to weaken or lead to heavy loss of life. Worker bees are so incredibly clean that they will risk death by flying in cold weather rather than defoul their home. Only the boorish males are guilty of soiling the hive, and there are not likely to be any of them in the winter colony.

When there is a long spell of cold and the bees can't get out to relieve themselves, on the first warm day they fairly explode from the hive; it is not unusual to see the snow splashed almost solid brown for several hundred feet in all directions. Generally bees do not go far from the hive on cleansing flights. This is sensible on their part. If they went any distance and the temperature suddenly dropped, they probably wouldn't make it back.

Bees, unlike humans, have a sound sense of their life mission. They work hard in the spring, summer, and fall, and in the winter they loaf, or take it fairly easy, like retirees at leisure. But that is not an altogether accurate statement. The bees that work so diligently from April through September are probably not the same ones that more or less knock off during the cold months. In the summer the field bees work so hard that their average life is only four to six weeks. Their wings beat about two hundred times a minute, which musicians say is in the key of C sharp below middle C. The fragile wings become ragged and torn, and finally wear out altogether so that they no longer will support flight. An experienced beekeeper can usually tell a bee's approximate age by the condition of her wings.

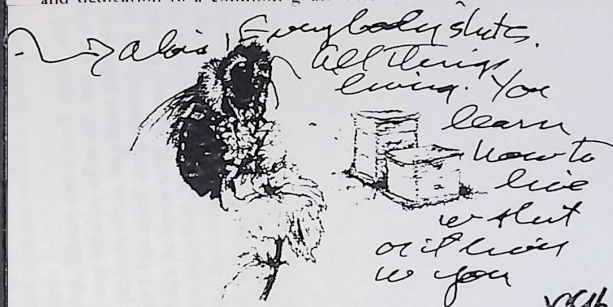
1988 Hive values are such that when a bee no longer can fly and be an asset to the colony, she will remove herself from the hive rather than be a burden. If she lacks the grace to commit suicide, or to depart of her own will, she will be kicked out of the hive or killed outright by those she served so faithfully while she could. Human societies have no monopoly on ingratitude and treachery.

AH broadrow this -
Alois comparing himself to bees

In 1943 AH thought they are not
bees honorable as bees,

THE QUEEN MUST DIE • 13

There is little sentiment in a hive. The motto, indelibly and invisibly etched in bee genes, is "work or die." Every female bee, except the queen, is expected to give full measure in hard labor for her keep, and the queen has her own biological obligations. This is a completely socialistic society, the direct opposite of the competitiveness and spirit of individual advantage that governs most human societies. No goods are owned privately. The collective wealth is the pooled honey in the combs and dedication to a common goal. The individual bee owns



nothing, and owes full allegiance to the colony. In exchange she is provided a place to live and work while she is a productive member of the community.

1986 Many human communes could have used bees as their models, but such experiments seldom come off. Humans rarely are capable of the self-sacrifice and dedication of bees. On the other hand, bees are not wracked and diverted by sexual desire as humans are, and such wholehearted fidelity to ceaseless work may be a questionable virtue: is this drive motivated by pleasure or compulsion? Is it socially useful or only for personal gain?

In a beehive every effort is directed toward the common good. Every individual, except the queen, is expendable, but under

* after lecture by Alois, AH wrote he will never be wracked in that manner

death is w/ bees

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twenty-four generals and 180,000 men—the survivors of the original 300,000—passed into captivity to be sent out on forced marches to prison camps in Siberia, where most of them perished. Only 6,000 survivors have been accounted for.

The army of Stalingrad perished as Hitler had intended that it should perish. But it did not perish heroically, fighting "to the last man and the last round for Fuehrer and the Fatherland to the end." It perished of exhaustion along the long icy roads of Siberia and of cholera and typhus epidemics in the prison camps. The Russians saw no reason why they should treat their prisoners tenderly.

Although there had been no ceremonies of surrender and no documents were signed, the Soviet Government quite properly broadcast the news that Field Marshal Paulus and his entire army had surrendered.

Hitler heard the news and was shattered by it. What especially disturbed him was the fact that it was impossible to reconcile the last message he received from Stalingrad with the Soviet Government's boast that it had accepted the surrender of the Sixth Army with all its weapons, trucks, tanks, and machines intact. There had been no battle to the death. The thought that Paulus was still alive drove Hitler to fury, and at the situation conference held at noon on February 1, 1943, he talked endlessly about this betrayal of trust. If only Paulus had killed himself! If only the whole army had somehow formed in a square facing outward against the enemy, and then all the German soldiers had shot one another with their last bullets! If only the army in a common bond of suicide had annihilated itself!

At first he could scarcely bring himself to believe that so vast an act of treason had been performed, and he clung to the hope that the Soviet broadcast was no more than propaganda. Perhaps, after all, Paulus had been wounded and taken prisoner: the suggestion came from General Zeitzler, but Hitler found no comfort in it. He was sure that Paulus had surrendered dishonorably, and soon he would be speaking on behalf of Bolshevism over Radio Moscow.

In his rage and frustration, Hitler came back again and again to thoughts of suicide. What was suicide, after all, but the simple and honorable act that all men perform when they have exhausted all other means of saving their honor? His mind dwelt lavishly on suicide; he recalled the one case of suicide he knew well, because he had been the cause of it. He had driven his niece Geli Raubal to suicide by threatening and cursing her, and she had done what he had expected her to do. At the time he had been full of remorse. Now, contemplating the surrender of Stalingrad, he shouted that she had acted nobly, while Field Marshal Paulus had acted with the utmost ignominy. It was as though he had

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The Life & Death of A.H.

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been haunted for a long time by her suicide, and now at last, in the
situation room at the Wolf's Lair, surrounded by his generals, he con-
fronted her ghost.

The greater part of the stenographic report of Hitler's conference
on February 1 has survived. Here and there it is fragmentary and incom-
plete, but whole sections have been preserved intact. Here is Hitler
raging about the fall of Stalingrad:

HITLER: So they have made a formal and absolute surrender over
there. Otherwise they would have closed ranks, formed a hedge-
hog, and shot themselves to death with their last bullets. When
you consider that a woman who has her pride goes out, shuts
herself in her room, and immediately shoots herself just because
someone has made a few insulting remarks, then I can have no
respect for a soldier who is too frightened to do the same thing, but
prefers to go into captivity.

ZEITZLER: I can't understand it either. I still wonder whether it really
happened. Perhaps he is lying there badly wounded.

HITLER: No, it is true. They will be taken straight to Moscow and
the GPU. . . . A man who does not have the courage at a time like
this to take the road that every man has to take one day won't have
the strength to stand up to it. He'll suffer mental torture. We put
too much emphasis on training the intellect and too little on
strength of character.

ZEITZLER: It's impossible to understand that kind of man.

HITLER: Don't say that. I've seen a letter. . . . [Colonel Nicolaus von]
Below received it. I can show it to you. The letter says: I have
come to the following conclusions about these people. Paulus,
question mark; Seydlitz, should be shot; Schmidt, should be shot.
. . . In Germany in peacetime from 18,000 to 20,000 men choose
to kill themselves, though none of them are in a situation like this.
Here is a man who sees 50,000 or 60,000 of his soldiers die and
they defend themselves bravely to the end—how can he give him-
self up to the Bolsheviks? Ach, it is—

ZEITZLER: It is something completely beyond comprehension.

HITLER: But I already had my doubts. This was at the moment when
I heard he was asking what he should do. How could he even ask
about such a thing? In the future whenever a fortress is besieged
and the commander is called upon to surrender, he will ask: What
shall I do now? . . . A pistol makes it all easy. How cowardly can
you be, to be afraid of something like that! Ha! Better be buried
alive! And in a situation like this, when he knows well enough

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that his death will set an example of behavior for those in the next cauldron. When we are faced with examples like this, one can hardly expect people to go on fighting.

ZEITZLER: There is no excuse. When a man's nerves threaten to break, then he must shoot himself.

HITLER: When a man's nerves break, there's nothing left but to say, I can't go on any more, and then shoot oneself. You could even say, a man ought to shoot himself, just as in the old days the generals fell on their swords when they saw that all was lost. That goes without saying. Even Varus gave the order to his slave, Now kill me!

ZEITZLER: I still think they may have done that and the Russians are only claiming to have captured them all.

HITLER: No! . . .

ZEITZLER: We were so rock-certain how it would end that we felt we must give them this last joy.

HITLER: That it would end heroically was only natural.

ZEITZLER: Impossible to think otherwise. . . .

HITLER: What makes me so sad is that the heroism of so many soldiers is canceled out by one single weakling without any character—and I know what he is going to do now. You have to think how he will be brought to Moscow, and imagine that "rat cage"! He'll sign anything. He will make confessions. He will issue proclamations. You'll see. He'll go the way of those who are without character and plumb the lowest depths. One can say that every bad deed brings new evils in its train. . . . What is life? The nation. The individual must die anyway. The nation continues to live on after the individual. . . . Any minute now he will be speaking on the radio—you'll see. Seydlitz and Schmidt will also be speaking on the radio. The Russians will shut them up in that "rat cage," and two days later they'll be so softened up they will say anything. And there's this beautiful woman, a real beauty of the first rank, and she feels insulted by some words, nothing of any importance, and she says, Then I can go, I am not needed, and the man says, Get out. So she goes away, writes a farewell letter, and shoots herself. . . . The heroism of so many tens of thousands of men, officers and generals is canceled out by a man who has not the character to do in a moment what a weakling of a woman can do. . . .

He talked in this fashion for a long time, shaking his head with incomprehension over the strange cowardices of men. Three times he spoke about Geli Raubal, and three times he turned away from the contemplation of the woman who had committed suicide to contemplate

Field Marshal P. prison in Moscow. . . . rity and honor. slightest compel the death of a v army wanting.

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Field Marshal Paulus being worked over in the cells of the Lubianka prison in Moscow and there committing the ultimate surrender of integrity and honor. He never mentioned the soldiers and showed not the slightest comprehension of their sufferings. He was weighing in his mind the death of a woman against the loss of an army, and he found the army wanting.

Hitler had spoken many times about suicide, and at least twice he had seriously threatened to kill himself, once before the putsch of November, 1923, and then again after the putsch failed. According to Gregor Strasser he spoke of suicide often in the weeks following the death of Geli Raubal and had to be physically restrained. The knowledge that he was quite capable of killing himself, that at any moment and without regrets he would put an end to himself, gave him an extraordinary advantage over his adversaries. It left him free to dare to the utmost, beyond all that was reasonable and sometimes beyond all that was possible. He had no family, no intimates, no loyalties, no faith in God, no faith in people. Throughout that long conversation with General Zeitzler there is not a word of human sympathy or compassion. Geli Raubal had shot herself heroically, and the German Army at Stalingrad had showed no heroism. Hitler told Goebbels: "After the war, I'll have Paulus arrested, court-martialed, and shot." The thought of killing Paulus gave him an exquisite pleasure.

Three days after the surrender Second Lieutenant Herbert Kuntz flew over Stalingrad with orders to report whether the fighting was still continuing. He flew low, but there was no anti-aircraft fire. There was only the ruined city, the endless plains of snow, the huddled dead. No men were walking, no trucks were moving. There was only the silence of death.

** What does D.T. have to say about this?*

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surrounding powers, there now was a block of con-
crete—a fear-inspiring block sprouting gun bar-
rels. And this transformation—a source of joy for
German nationalists but a more questionable de-
velopment as far as the rest of Europe was con-
cerned—had come about in the course of a war in
which the new German great power had shown
enormous strength as well as harsh toughness.
The Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 was not con-
ducted with the same detached restraint as was
the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. With the an-
nexation of Alsace-Lorraine in particular, Bis-
marck can be said to have bestowed on Germany
its *Erbfeindschaft*, its "traditional enmity" with
France. Bismarck himself made a little-known but
remarkable statement about this. As early as Au-
gust 1871 he told the then French chargé d'affaires
in Berlin, who promptly passed it on to Paris: "We
made a mistake in taking Alsace-Lorraine from
you if [we expected] the peace to be a lasting one.
Because for us these provinces are an embarrass-
ment, a Poland backed by France." Apparently he
well knew what he had done.

Why, then, did he do it? Historians are still
at odds about the answer to that question. The
national cry about bringing the old German Alsace
annexed by France two hundred years earlier
"back to the Reich" could hardly have motivated
him. As far as Bismarck was concerned his new,
Prussian-dominated German Reich was not iden-
tical with that ancient Reich.

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* Gloom for H after Stalingrad

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by the "nightmare of the coalitions . . . that the polar direction of millions of bayonets is the center of Europe, that we stand in the center of Europe, and as a result of our geographic situation and moreover as a result of all of European history, we are the preferred targets of the coalitions of other powers" (Reichstag speech, 1882). Somebody said to him, "You have the nightmare of the coalitions," and he replied: "This nightmare will remain a very logical one for a German minister for a long time, and perhaps forever."

It is, however, doubtful that Bismarck's justified fear of hostile coalitions really had only geographic and historical causes. Rather, there is every reason to believe that they were grounded in his foreign policy. Let us be clear about the vast changes Bismarck had wrought with the founding of the Reich in 1870-71, which Disraeli even then had called the German revolution. Before that time the European area inhabited by Germans was a collection of many small and medium-sized states, and two big states loosely allied with one another (and with other European powers), none of which their neighbors had much reason to fear. The German Confederation of the years from 1815 to 1866 was not threatened by any possible coalitions of European big powers and their satellites. Then suddenly that confederation was replaced by a united, big, powerful, militarized state. In place of a huge sponge or a large amorphous synthetic layer gently cushioning central Europe against the

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surrounding powers, there crete—a fear-inspiring blocs. And this transformation: German nationalists but a development as far as the concerned—had come about in which the new German enormous strength as well. The Franco-Prussian War of ducted with the same detachment the Austro-Prussian War of nexation of Alsace-Lorraine marck can be said to have lost its *Erbfeindschaft*, its "traditional enmity" with France. Bismarck himself made a remarkable statement about August 1871 he told the then French Emperor in Berlin, who promptly passed made a mistake in taking you if [we expected] the peace. Because for us these provinces ment, a Poland backed by France well knew what he had done.

Why, then, did he do it at odds about the answer to national cry about bringing the annexed by France two hundred "back to the Reich" could have him. As far as Bismarck was Prussian-dominated German tactical with that ancient Reich

* Gloom for A1.

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grad in February 1943, nor from the collapse of Axis resistance in North Africa in May 1943, nor from subsequent blows. He did react to them, however, by becoming more obstinate, more unteachable, or, in Hitler's language, more "fanatical."¹

To what degree this rigidity can be attributed to physiological factors remains unanswered. But Hitler continued, in the everyday sense of the word, to be more or less "normal" to the very end. His basic approach and the overall pattern of his military orders and instructions, despite their objective flaws, remained entirely consistent from the beginning of the war to the final catastrophe.

1. Hitler as Supreme Commander

The War Diary that it became my responsibility to compile after I was assigned in January 1943 to the Operations Staff of the High Command of the Wehrmacht (Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, or OKW) shows clearly that Hitler was in the most literal sense Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht. I was intent on recording as accurately as possible which decisions originated with Hitler himself and which were suggested to him by others. Wherever possible, I also noted, on the basis of the situation conference records and the

"This increasing fanaticism can be confirmed in the diction of Hitler's directives and orders, in which phrases such as "no retreat," "only with permission," "determined assault with all available forces," "swift mopping-up operation," "accepting the risk," and so on, came to be stereotypes. See, for example, the order of November 24, 1944, to the Commander-in-Chief West (i.e., the Commanding General of the Western Theater, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt) to carry out "concentrated, bold, and determined attacks," and the repeated admonitions to weather crises with a "fanatical" will to fight.

Corresponding orders were passed on down from the theater command posts, though whether the commanders really expected to accomplish anything by them or whether they were simply covering themselves is an open question. For example, the entry of April 26, 1945, less than a week before Hitler's suicide, in the *War Diary* of the Operations Staff (South) of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, records the situation evaluation as of the evening of April 25, 1945: "... Prospects depended upon: ... 2. the fanaticizing of the will to fight in the Southern Theater. All possible means for this end have not yet been exhausted." Or, again, the order of April 27, 1945, "for the Commander-in-Chief Southwest, for fanatical resistance."

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files, which suggestions of the Operations Staff of the OKW and the field commanders he rejected and which of them he adopted only in altered form. This detailed record of Hitler's supreme command during the latter part of the war permits us to reconstruct the basic principles he followed and to compare them with those of the General Staff.

It ought to be obvious that an "all-front" (rather than merely two-front) war demanded coordination of operations in the different war theaters; inevitably risks had to be taken or opportunities ignored in one area because of what might be at stake in another. Given the lack of resources that forced Germany to fight a "poor man's war" after 1942, it was up to Hitler's headquarters to make increasingly hard decisions. Therefore, quite aside from Hitler's personality, the war situation itself would have forced a centralization of command.

The question we may ask was whether Hitler, as Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht, intervened further than was appropriate under the circumstances in the operational leadership of the individual theaters of war. The best test case, in my opinion, is to be found in the preparations for the Ardennes Offensive, also known as the Battle of the Bulge, which began on December 16, 1944. Hitler had already been considering a counterattack when, on July 31, the Americans broke through near Avranches in southern Normandy. There was no immediate prospect of stopping them, and further reverses continued to force Hitler to modify his initial plans for a counterthrust. When it finally became possible, despite fears to the contrary, to establish a new defense line in the West, it developed that the counterattack would have to be mounted as a frontal assault from a stationary front. It would have a chance of success only if it could be kept secret to the very last moment and if every possible division could be concentrated for the planned attack at the cost of neglecting the other fronts.

The *War Diary* records the proposals of the field commanders and how Hitler brushed their objections aside because he considered his desired goal—splitting the Anglo-American forces at the seam and driving a German spearhead to Antwerp—to be realistic. The commanders contradicted him, but eventually had no choice except

to comply. Early in the war, who could not accept an order from command; but before such action as a matter of

The Commander-in-Chief Army Group B, and the Coming armies merely carried out Führer Headquarters. Their Baron Wolfram von Richthofen commissioned officers."

Hitler thus violated the traditionate commanders must be allowed cause they are in a better position in their sector of swift action, to deal with a sudden himself dictator of state and consolidated his dictatorship. A military dictator not only in the sense also in that he succeeded in doing the once relatively independent thoroughly subordinated to him of the state.³

³Asked about this question at witness for the defense. Schramm has the right to report his misgivings, but only insofar as they are in his opinion they might be wrong. Hitler had added that a commander submitting his resignation than a commander could inform his company leader like his orders.—ED.

⁴The process had, of course, been going on for some time. Gordon A. Craig and Sir John W. S. Smart write of the reorganization time had come at last when the country, had to submit to the process to the old conception of the army of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945, same reorganization (whereby Hitler, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Minister of War and Supreme Com-

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[Jodl's relationship with Hitler will be made clear by a passage that a General Staff officer, who was assigned to Führer Headquarters in 1945, wrote during the winter of 1945-1946 (before Jodl's death sentence was pronounced): "Jodl was not one of the people who crept before Hitler. He spoke his mind openly, bluntly, and often in very harsh terms. But what he said did not get through. The very first time I heard him briefing Hitler it was clear to me that Jodl did not have the slightest illusions about the real situation. He saw things objectively and clearly. He also gave the unmistakable impression, often in an almost cynical fashion that he made no effort to suppress, that so far as operational ability was concerned, he regarded himself superior to Hitler.³ His stance in regard to Hitler was occasionally even pedantic. But he thereby also revealed clearly that he was convinced he was preaching to deaf ears. He did not allow himself to be put upon. He occasionally went so far as to put Hitler in the position of having to acknowledge that either he himself or else Jodl was an idiot. Hitler would not take him up on it. Everything Jodl said simply bounced off him with no visible effect. I was told that earlier Hitler had had a great deal of confidence in Jodl and consequently also in the Operations Staff of the OKW. But during

thereby weakened the striking force which could have been mobilized for war abroad. These dangers existed in Hitler's state exactly as in that of William II. Hitler could not shake off the entire burden of Germany's historical past. The place of the territorial princes had been taken by the *Gauleiter*. The racial and religious struggle had been unleashed by the party, and in place of opposition between parties, similar conflicts emerged within the functions of the party itself. Here there were more nationalistic or more socialistic directions. The antagonism between Wehrmacht and state leadership, which had not existed earlier, was a fact, and the controversies, jealousies, and power struggles between the individual administrative departments far exceeded the previously unavoidable level. Thus one has to understand that throughout the whole war I never voiced criticism except with a few confidants such as Scherff, Schmundt, and Hewel, and used every opportunity to work for understanding and unity. These were the prerequisites for the victory, to work for which was my sacred duty."

³In his diary for March 2, 1943, Goebbels wrote: "Göring very sharply condemns the Führer Headquarters. He is particularly disgusted with Jodl who, he tells me, has even gotten to the point of making up jokes about the Führer. That's all we need. The Führer puts too much trust in these people."

—ED.

the battles in the Caucasus. In Hitler's opinion Headquarters he deferred confidence in him and entire OKW Operations previously eaten. The was that Hitler was would be even more 'u

Among the many cor the word "strategy," uses it, but many wou "What is strategy, the sense that the success fate also. Thus it conc much more clearly tha To judge or criticize the doing—even the officer the General Staff. Tha been mounted sooner whether strength shoul left wing, whether on encircled, or perhaps other fronts could hav should have remained attack in order to pin them withdraw behind problems of military lea even the carping critics on these matters, one own and the enemy's equipment and armame are secrets that remain Staff, and even if they st tary history, they woul same extent as the stra

Hitler - The Man & The Military Leader 1943

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Introduction 15 A

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to conclusions beyond the self-imposed limitations appropriate
to the *War Diary*. The *War Diary*, he emphasizes, is not yet military
history but rather the source material from which military history
will be written. Schramm's purpose is not to indulge in extensive
interpretation but rather to underscore the basic points that emerge
from the material. The most important of these pertain to Hitler's
conduct of the last phase of the war, the extent to which he assumed
personal control of operations, and the principles that guided him
in the exercise of that control. Schramm shows that in 1943, at the
very latest, Hitler knew that the war was irretrievably lost, yet de-
liberately continued it with no prospect of victory or even of better-
ing Germany's condition in defeat. Thereby he wantonly assured
not only that the empire of Bismarck would be dismembered and
the very name of Prussia erased from the map, but that hundreds
of thousands, if not indeed millions more would fall and their sur-
vivors be stripped of even the most primitive means of existence.

Schramm's essay on Hitler's personality, based primarily on con-
versations held during the middle years of the war, reflects Hitler
as the conqueror of an empire stretching from the Pyrenees to the
Crimea, from the Arctic Circle to the Sahara. But the study of him
as a military dictator, based on the last two and a half years of the
War Diary, shows us how Hitler reacted to the gradual but relentless
reduction of that empire until its final destruction in the rubble of
Berlin. Under the constraint of circumstances over which he had
lost control, Hitler came to devote all his time and energy to
the military struggle for survival. Toward the end, the elementary
character of this *Existenzkampf* was the only rationale of Hitler's
military dictatorship, a regime of terror ultimately resting on brute
force. All else—the social, economic, and political structure of
Germany, and even the lifeblood of the youth and the aged—was
grimly squandered in order to keep the military machine going, if
only a short while longer. The sheer madness of it was enough to
rouse conservative militarists as well as Christian liberals to an
unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life nine months before the end.
The savage vengeance he wreaked not only upon them but also on
their kin further vindicated their cause. In his Berlin bunker,
the megalomaniacal tyrant continued to direct his war as the world

* I.e. The war was lost, but the
extermination of the Jews was seriously
uncompleted - it was essential that the
war go on.

Front, following the Allied breakthrough after the successful establishment of the Normandy beachhead, Hitler pointed out the steadfastness which he had demonstrated during the winter of 1941-1942.

A leader of indomitable character could rely, Hitler believed, on the "eternal laws of nature," according to which the more valuable

person, the man superior in character, had to triumph in the end.

Consequently, when in defiance of "nature" Hitler's Greater German Reich crumbled, he blamed the Germans. "The German people had

proved themselves to be the weaker," and the stronger Eastern peoples "alone should inherit the future. Whoever survived the struggle

would in any case only be the inferior, for the good had fallen."

This conception was, as we can see in the *Table Conversations*, already implicit in the positions Hitler took during 1941-1942, and had its origins even earlier. Greek mythology tells of the face of Medusa, which is said to have petrified those who beheld it. Had the members of Hitler's circle of mealtime companions ever been able to see his true face, even the most loyal and devoted of them would have turned to stone.

Whenever anyone tries to understand Hitler, the final result somehow never adds up correctly. His contact with children and dogs, his joy in flowers and in culture, his appreciation of lovely women, his relationship to music were all quite genuine. But no less genuine was the ferocity—morally uninhibited, ruthless, "ice-cold"—with which Hitler annihilated not only real but even potential opponents.

Hitler's two faces explain why he had such differing impacts upon people, arousing enthusiasm in some, aversion in others. He could switch these faces from one moment to the next, so that people whom he had just charmed, or had just repelled, were utterly confounded.¹ Alternately driven by reason, by temperament, or by dark instincts, Hitler was more enigmatic than anyone in German history had ever been before him. But this man, who had so uncannily an ability to draw others into his sphere of personal influence and

¹See, for example, the memoirs of Dr. Peter Kleist (*Die europäische Tragödie*, Göttingen, 1951, p. 199), who had first been employed in the Bureau Ribbentrop and then in the Ministry for the Eastern Areas, concerning a conversation with Hitler in the *Wolfsschanze* during the summer of 1943. He had an opportunity to study his face carefully. It had always amazed

then to dominate them, awkward, and even embarrassed occurred during his state memoirs precisely described hardly ever lost control of his nerves were taxed to under a similar burden, v

Consequently, it is very really thought and perceived he was motivated by logic shall attempt to draw together in this respect. To begin with, focusing on his personality, family, and women. Next animosities. Then we bring and of the world of economic general political and social a position to explore morality and intellect, turning ship to the arts in general intellectual world, particularly. This leads to the question at all or whether he should military technician and his leadership is a dual theme on in this essay because it as a military leader print discussion of his will power his characteristics, is followed reflections on Hitler as an

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after the successful establishment pointed out the steady decline of the winter of 1941-1942. He relied, Hitler believed on which the more valuable had to triumph in the end. "Hitler's Greater German" "The German people had the stronger Eastern people ever survived the struggle or the good had fallen." the Table Conversations, he during 1941-1942, and ology tells of the face of se who beheld it. Had the companions ever been able devoted of them would

ler, the final result somewhat with children and dogs, iation of lovely women. ine. But no less genuine thless, "ice-cold"—with ven potential opponents. a differing impacts upon ion in others. He could ie next, so that people elled, were utterly con- y temperament, or by han anyone in German in, who had so uncanny personal influence and

Kleist (*Die europäische* st been employed in the Eastern Areas, concern- ing during the summer of lly. It had always amazed

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then to dominate them, also understood how to master himself. As awkward, and even embarrassing, as were some of the scenes that occurred during his staff conferences (General Guderian in his memoirs precisely described one such clash with Hitler), Hitler hardly ever lost control of himself completely, even though in time his nerves were taxed to such an extent that most men, operating under a similar burden, would not have been physically equal to it.

Consequently, it is very difficult to come to grips with what Hitler really thought and perceived, difficult to clarify the extent to which he was motivated by logic or impelled by instinct. In this essay I shall attempt to draw together what the *Table Conversations* reveal in this respect. To begin with, we discuss Hitler's immediate environment, focusing on his personal relations with his associates, his family, and women. Next we turn our attention to his prejudices and animosities. Then we briefly examine his views of foreign countries and of the world of economics and administration. With these general political and social considerations behind us, we shall be in a position to explore more fundamental aspects of Hitler's personality and intellect, turning first to his artistic bent and his relationship to the arts in general. I shall further attempt to reconstruct his intellectual world, particularly his concept of history and biology. This leads to the question whether Hitler was religious in any sense at all or whether he should be considered nonreligious. Hitler as a military technician and his relationship with the professional military leadership is a dual theme of central importance, but is only touched on in this essay because it is explored in detail in the study of Hitler as a military leader printed in the second half of this volume. A discussion of his will power, the most uncanny and extraordinary of his characteristics, is followed by notes on his health and concluding reflections on Hitler as an historical problem.

me because of the multiplicity of expressions it contained. It was as though it were composed of a whole series of individual elements without adding up to a single total. . . . Photography, by selecting only a single moment out of context, could show only one aspect, thereby giving a false impression of the duplicity or multiplicity of being which lay behind this image. I tried to find some explanation for the hypnotic effect of those eyes without arriving at any explanation."

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Hitler Orders the Holocaust

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tainly not prior to the spring of 1941. Until that date, with the exception of the killings during the invasion of Poland in 1939, all officials in charge of the Jewish question, from Göring and Himmler to Heydrich and Eichmann, were fully involved in emigration, evacuation, or deportation, and there is no evidence that any one of them proposed or envisaged a different procedure. On the other hand, there is a great deal of evidence that at least some of them were shocked or even appalled when the final solution went into effect. To be sure, they did not disagree with it. But they agreed only reluctantly, referring time and again to an order given by Hitler. This is a strong indication that the idea did not originate with them.

In his secret speeches in 1943 and 1944 Himmler lamented many times that this order had been a burden for him, the hardest challenge of his life, or even the most dreadful task, the most dreadful order that could be assigned to an organization.⁶⁰ When Goebbels learned of Globocnik's action in the death camp of Belzec near Lublin, where mass killings in gas chambers had begun shortly after March 16, 1942, Goebbels wrote in his diary on March 27 that the procedure was barbarous, that Hitler's prophecy was coming true in the most dreadful manner, and that "the führer is the unrelenting protagonist and advocate of a radical solution."⁶¹ Rosenberg, apparently after having been briefed by Hitler on the same question, noted in his diary on April 2, 1941, the stunted sentence: "What I do not want to write down today but will never forget."⁶²

Before producing further evidence that Hitler was the prime and only instigator of the Holocaust, I shall briefly return to the killings in Poland in 1939. Again there is no evidence that they were proposed or initiated locally or by subordinate agencies. On the contrary, in a note of July 2, 1940, Heydrich described them as a political operation carried out by Himmler according to instructions (*Weisungen*) from Hitler, and he mentioned the term order (*Befehl*) twice.⁶³

* Obviously a clue

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Hitler and the Germans

tions, "unanimously" condemned but even contributed to a strengthening of the "bond to the führer."¹⁸

This, then, is in general the other predominant view, and with that we return to the fundamental issue: Whatever criticism may have been aired, Hitler was almost always spared it. Nearly every one of his speeches raised the general morale. People were disappointed if those speeches were not carried by the radio. They felt the need, as was reported during the war, "to hear, once again, the voice of the führer."¹⁹ They wanted to see him too. A report of November 1940 stated, "we have almost reached the point where a newsreel without pictures of the führer is considered inferior. People always seem to want to see what the führer looks like, whether he appears serious or is laughing."²⁰ Similar sentiments were expressed even more emphatically in April 1943, when pictures of the führer had become rare. "A picture of the führer from which one could determine that, contrary to rumor, his hair had not turned completely white has a more positive effect on the mood of the people than a whole raft of battle slogans."²¹

Neither admiration, nor respect, nor even fear seems to characterize perfectly the attitude of the Germans toward Hitler. What they felt for him, especially during the war years, was an almost childlike devotion to a beloved father, a devotion that could easily dissolve into compassion. According to reports on morale, the general reaction to Rudolf Hess's flight to England was a "deeply felt sympathy . . . for the heavy blow that had struck the führer, 'who is not spared the cruel strokes of fate'."²² Up to the very end, this reaction recurred whenever signs of defeat, disloyalty, or betrayal appeared—not least on July 20. "The führer is really spared nothing" was a phrase that functioned as a code word, much like the phrase "If only the führer knew about that!"

These observations do not correspond to what became the prevailing opinion after 1945, and the quotations cited above

* The treachery, as they saw it, was Wagnerian. The depth of the blow, the internal suffering of the Führer.

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full ramifications of the operation, one major reason for this secrecy being that the Americans would not have appreciated being hoodwinked by the British government to the extent their president was set up in a "sting." Another reason may have been the character of de Wohl. Howe himself seems to have taken an instant dislike to de Wohl when they met in 1943 in an office of the British Political Warfare Executive. Howe describes his fellow employee as a "flabby elephant of a man." They had been assigned to concoct a letter that was above a forgery of Krafft's signature. In it Krafft was alleged to have informed his correspondent that Germany would lose the war and Hitler would die a violent death. The plan was to maneuver the letter into the hands of the Gestapo so that Krafft would be arrested and Hitler would thereby lose the services of his invaluable astrologer.¹⁶ Krafft was at that time (1943) well and truly in jail for making astrological projections injudiciously. The letter would only have amused the Gestapo who were responsible for his jailing; Krafft was in no position to write letters.¹⁷

A second account of de Wohl's U.S. mission paints a different picture, that of it being highly successful into which far more time, effort, and money went than Howe's sources were willing to reveal or suggest.

Author William Stevenson, who had access to British security documents for his book *A Man Called Intrepid*, says the mission went well from the start. De Wohl had been billed as a distinguished astrological figure and news of his impending visit created great interest in the media. On his arrival in New York de Wohl told a press conference that Hitler's horoscope showed the planet Neptune in the house of death; this was dutifully reported.¹⁸

Denying de Wohl had any contact whatever with the SOE office in New York, Howe's source adds that he probably never knew its address.¹⁹ Stevenson, on the other hand, claims the only "stars" de Wohl ever consulted were in that office.²⁰

The harder evidence of Stevenson shows information was relayed from London and passed on to de Wohl who used it to good effect. His resulting "prophecies" were validated and an

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War-Lord, 1939-45

ceivable military purpose was served by holding the German troops in their positions, but Hitler's personal prestige as a leader was now engaged, and in comparison with that the lives of the 330,000 men of the 6th Army were nothing.

Towards the end of January 1943 Paulus reported that the suffering of the troops, through cold, hunger, and epidemics, was no longer bearable, and that to continue fighting in such conditions was beyond human strength. Hitler was unmoved. For answer he sent Paulus the message: 'Capitulation is impossible. The 6th Army will do its historic duty at Stalingrad until the last man, in order to make possible the reconstruction of the Eastern Front.'

Hitler did not hesitate to stoop to bribes: at the last moment he promoted Paulus to the rank of Field-Marshal in order to buy the loyalty of the commander whose troops he had deliberately condemned to death. 'There is no record in military history,' he remarked to Jodl, 'of a German Field-Marshal being taken prisoner.'

The outcome was a far worse blow to Hitler's prestige than any order to withdraw could ever have been. On the night of 31 January, the Russians announced that they had completed the capture or annihilation of the remainder of the 6th Army and the 4th Panzer Army, adding that among the officers who had surrendered was Field-Marshal von Paulus himself.

At noon on 1 February, the day after the Russian communiqué, Hitler held his usual military conference. Totally oblivious of his own responsibility for what had happened, the Führer spared no thought for the men he had driven to death or captivity. He could think only of the commanders who had capitulated: such ingratitude and disloyalty, he declared, were beyond his comprehension. In the suffer-

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Amongst the reasons is of particular interest litical possibilities of w At an earlier stage—fo attack France—Hitler h standing of how war cou military weapons. But, scribed the war with Ru and counted on the over ment by the Russian p adopted in the east work

There is evidence to s armies entered the Ukr. they were looked upon a the local population recei tration and the S.S. who rapidly destroyed these might have been done to people and the Soviet Go Ukraine, Hitler preferre of Eastern Europe indis menschen. fit only for sla

Goebbels was quick-wit portunities that were bei he dictated a lengthy men for handling the Russian tried to get Hitler to issue the Russians greater free the oppressive exactions c But Hitler's policy in Eas improvisation: it was the mind which could conceive of domination and could u power solely in terms of th The first need was to ex

ning and relief of the ad been foreseen in the up before the invasion, d by Göring and others. 1942 Göring, as Plen- Plan, told the commis- ons: 'It used to be called gs have become more ntend to plunder and to

1 industry and the losses began to exert a greater omy, so the demands on ted. These demands were ls, food, and machinery, as well. Russia, like Po- d countries in the west, and, was turned into a ide the human material l agriculture needed. The slave traffic was in the brutality of the methods nd children were rounded nd forced to work, often ns, beggars description. 1 Russian, Polish, French, an workers did not satisfy ased his demands on Sauc- e local authorities to apply s to secure more manpower. astern occupied territories, t determined by Germany's s. Under cover of the occu- l to lay the basis of a Ger- ds between the Vistula and ettlers from Germany and ties in other countries were and and European Russia, ed by a network of military

is that people
are men of flesh
and blood

roads and protected by S.S. garrisons set up at key points, whose task was not only to guarantee the new frontiers after the war but to keep the native popula- tion in permanent subjection and extract from it slave labour for the industries and agriculture of the new German Empire.

The tasks of Himmler, as Reich Commissioner for the Strengthening of German Folkdom, were defined as the elimination of such alien groups as represented a danger to the Reich and the German Folk Community, and the formation of new German settlements from returning German citizens and racial Germans abroad. To carry out these duties Himmler set up special departments of the S.S. and outlined his programme in a number of speeches to his S.S. commanders which give an authoritative picture of Hitler's plans for the future.

The most interesting of these speeches of which we have a record is one which Himmler made to his S.S. Obergruppenführers at Posen on 4 October 1943. He began by insisting on the need for ruth- lessness. 'One basic principle must be the absolute rule for the S.S. men: we must be honest, decent, loyal, and comradely to members of our own blood and nobody else. . . . Whether nations live in pros- perity or starve to death interests me only in so far as we need them as slaves for our *Kultur*: otherwise it is of no interest to me. Whether ten thousand Russian females fall down from exhaustion while digging an anti-tank ditch interests me only in so far as the anti-tank ditch for Germany is finished. We shall never be rough and heartless when it is not necessary, that is clear. We Germans, who are the only people in the world who have a decent at- titude towards animals, will also assume a decent attitude towards these human animals. But it is a crime against our own blood to worry about them and give them ideals. . . . Our concern, our duty, is our people and our blood. We can be indifferent to

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everything else. I wish the S.S. to adopt this attitude to the problem of all foreign, non-Germanic peoples, especially Russians.'

In passing, Himmler mentioned the extermination of the Jews: 'Most of *you* know what it means when a hundred corpses are lying side by side, or five hundred or one thousand. To have stuck it out, and at the same time—apart from exceptions caused by human weakness—to have remained decent fellows, that is what has made us hard.'

Among the particular duties of the S.S. was that of organizing the concentration camps. In 1942, Himmler, with Hitler's agreement, began to use these as a source of labour for armaments work, and the S.S. established its own factories. Certain categories of prisoners were agreed upon as suitable 'to be worked to death'. Among other uses to which concentration-camp prisoners were put was to serve as the raw material for macabre medical experiments by S.S. doctors.

The work of guarding the concentration camps and carrying out the brutal sentences of flogging, torture, and execution which were everyday occurrences was allotted to the S.S. Death's Head Units (Totenkopfverbände). In a speech which he delivered to S.S. leaders at Metz in April 1941, Himmler described such work as 'fighting the sub-humanity. This will not be a boring guard duty, but, if the officers handle it right, it will be the best indoctrination on inferior beings and the sub-human races.'

More terrible even than the concentration camps were the extermination camps. The largest of these was Auschwitz in Poland, where the four large gas chambers and crematoria were capable of a rate of extermination far above that of the others like Treblinka. Rudolf Höss, a member of the S.S. Totenkopfverbände since 1934, served in concentration camps for eleven years. From May 1940 to December 1943 he was at Auschwitz. In his affidavit he says:

'I was ordered to establish a camp at Auschwitz in June 1940 to find out how they carried out the gas. The Camp Commandant was dated eighty thousand in 1941. He was principally all the Jews from the monoxide gas and I did were very efficient. So at B, which was a crystal into the death chamber. I minutes to kill the people to climatic conditions. They were dead because they usually waited about half the doors and removed the were removed, our spec- rings and extracted the corpses. Another improvement at Treblinka was that we accommodated two thousand.

Even the facilities at the demands made on the days during the summer of 1941 and 300,000 Hungarian Jews at the camp and the S.S. to relieve the pressure on

When the invasion of Poland, Himmler recruited four Einsatzkommandos to carry out the Jewish population functionaries. Otto Ohlendorf, Security Police (SD), Gruppe D in southern Russia that 90,000 men, women, and children, dated by his formation of the victims were made to which they were thrown a In the spring of 1942, he

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

TWO JULYS

1943-4

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The immediate consequences of the Stalingrad disaster were not so great as might have been expected, and did not lead to a collapse of the German front in the east. The Russian attempt to cut off the army in the Caucasus was defeated by a skilfully conducted retreat. Moscow was relieved, but Leningrad remained under German shell-fire. When the winter fighting came to an end the German line, although withdrawn in the centre and the south, was still deep in Russian territory. It was not until the late summer of 1943 that the Russians renewed their attacks. By that time Hitler was faced with an even graver situation in Italy.

Hitler's rapid decision to seize Tunisia in November 1942 proved effective in balking the Allies of victory before the end of that year. The news from Italy, however, made him anxious: the Duce was ill, dislike of the Germans was widespread, and the one ambition of the Italian people was to get out of the war as soon as possible.

Something must clearly be done to stiffen his failing ally, and at the end of February 1943 Hitler sent Ribbentrop on a visit to Rome with a long personal letter to the Duce, following it with an agreement to allow the Italian workmen in Germany to return home—a considerable concession at a time when Sauckel was mobilizing the labour resources of the rest of Europe to work for Germany. But Mussolini, ageing, sick, and disillusioned, was fast losing control of the situation. Mass strikes in Turin and Milan, with the slogans 'Peace and Liberty', were a

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pointer to the impending collapse of the régime. All that Mussolini could think of was a renewed appeal to Hitler to make a separate peace with Russia. Hitler's reply was to press Mussolini to come to Salzburg, where they met in the middle of April.

Mussolini promised his lieutenants that this time he would stand up to Hitler: he was determined to urge peace with Russia, and the withdrawal of the Italian armies from abroad to defend their homeland. But, face to face with the dynamic Führer, he succumbed and sat silent while Hitler talked, and he returned to Rome a defeated man, no longer able to convince himself of the part he had to play. His despair was soon justified. On 7 May Tunis and Bizerta were captured by the Allies, and within a week the entire Axis forces in Africa, which Hitler, against Rommel's advice, had built up to more than 250,000 men, were taken prisoner with all their equipment.

It was obvious that the Allies would attempt a landing on the northern shores of the Mediterranean—and equally obvious that, with the loss of the troops in Tunisia, Hitler and Mussolini would be hard pressed to prevent them. The most difficult problem was whether the Italians could be relied on to fight. Cooperation between the Italian and German Armed Forces was increasingly strained. Hitler well knew the danger of the situation, but he feared to take drastic action lest this should drive the Italians into open revolt.

In this uneasy state of mind, foreseeing what might happen but unable to prevent it, Hitler waited for the Allied attack. It came on 10 July, in Sicily, and the Allies at once made good their landings.

Nine days later Hitler summoned Mussolini to meet him at Feltre, in Northern Italy. In a last effort to put new life into the alliance, Hitler talked for three hours on end before lunch. There was one course open to them, he declared, to fight and go on

Two Julys, 1943-4

fighting, on all fronts and with a fanatical

After lunch Hitler's second performance. often noted, he talked, the Duce sat silent to promise of reinforcement

Immediately after content with the Gern as its representative Grand Council met on Mussolini had to listen duct of the war. The f dismissed by the King veteran Marshal Bado ernment; the party its officials expelled from new Government's aut Army.

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War-Lord, 1939-45

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fighting, on all fronts—in Russia as well as Italy—
and with a fanatical will to conquer.

After lunch Hitler summoned up his energies for a
second performance. Once again, as Ciano had so
often noted, he talked, talked, talked; and once again
the Duce sat silent to the end. He even failed to get a
promise of reinforcements from the Germans.

Immediately after the Feltre meeting Italian dis-
content with the German alliance and with the Duce
as its representative came to a head. The Fascist
Grand Council met on the night of 24-25 July, and
Mussolini had to listen to violent criticism of his con-
duct of the war. The following evening the Duce was
dismissed by the King and placed under arrest. The
veteran Marshal Badoglio formed a non-Fascist gov-
ernment; the party itself was dissolved, and Fascist
officials expelled from their posts. The basis of the
new Government's authority was the Crown and the
Army.

As soon as the news reached his headquarters
Hitler summoned an immediate conference of all the
Nazi leaders, together with Rommel, Dönitz, and
other military figures. The fact that what he feared
had at last materialized relieved rather than de-
pressed Hitler, although it was an embarrassing
situation involving his own prestige. Despite the
strain, intensified by heavy fighting on the Eastern
Front, he kept his head, showing not only determina-
tion and energy in dealing with the crisis, but con-
siderable skill as well. This, combined with the
slowness of the Allies in taking advantage of the
situation, enabled him to make a brilliant recovery.

Hitler did not wait for his lieutenants to arrive be-
fore taking a number of key decisions on the spur of
the moment. The first and most important was that
the new Italian Government under Badoglio, how-
ever much it might protest its loyalty to the Axis,
was only playing for time in order to make a deal
with the Allies and must be treated accordingly. The

July 1943

second was to move in every man he could find in order to seize control and hold Italy when the time came.

By the time of his conference on the 26th, Hitler had prepared four sets of plans, and the forces to carry them out were steadily being collected. The first was a plan for the rescue of Mussolini, to which Hitler attached great importance; the second provided for the occupation of Rome and the restoration of the Fascist régime; the third covered the military occupation of Italy; and the fourth dealt with measures for the capture or destruction of the Italian fleet.

The practical question was one of timing. Hitler, Göring, and Goebbels wanted to act at once: the King, Crown Prince, and Badoglio's Government should be seized and brought to Germany, while Mussolini was restored to power in Rome. Rommel (whom Hitler had appointed Commander-in-Chief in Italy) and the other soldiers wanted to wait until the situation became clearer. They feared that precipitate action would drive Badoglio, whom they hoped to keep on their side, into the arms of the Allies; they were highly sceptical about the authority of Mussolini or the popularity of a revived Fascist régime, and they were impressed by the risks involved at a time when the German forces in Italy were still weak.

Hitler continued to defer final orders from day to day, much to his advantage. He was right in supposing that Badoglio would at once begin negotiations for a separate peace, but until he could reach agreement with the Allies he had to keep up the pretence of cooperation with the Germans. Hitler, realizing the game that was being played, made the most of the Allies' long delay to strengthen his forces in Italy before the showdown came. At the end of the six weeks which the Allies allowed to elapse between Mussolini's fall (25 July) and the publication of the

armistice with the Badoglio Government) Hitler was in a very real sense putting his plans into effect.

The announcement of the armistice took Hitler by surprise, for he had been completely in deceiving the German Government, however, was immediate action, who was in command in southern Italy.

By 10 September the German divisions, had disarmed the Italian formations and seized control of Rome, with resistance. The King and the Government, capital, and within a matter of days were masters of the greater part of the country.

Simultaneously with the announcement of the armistice, the Allied Fifth Army landed on the Italian mainland, their way north. To Kesselring's surprise, the Allies landed much farther to the north, at Salerno, to the north of Rome, but in holding up the Allied advance for the year they had advanced miles from Salerno—Hitler's plan to fight on the Winter line, peninsula not far to the north, more than two-thirds of the way to the north, in German hands. June 1944 that the Allies were

After his fall Mussolini was taken to a small hotel, finally taken to a small hotel.

on he could find in Italy when the time

on the 26th, Hitler and the forces to be collected. The Mussolini, to which; the second pro- and the restoration covered the military with measures of the Italian

of timing. Hitler, at once: the King, Government should be while Mussolini was in Rome (whom Hitler had sent to Italy) and the situation but precipitate action they hoped to keep on the Allies; they were the policy of Mussolini or the régime, and they arrived at a time when it was still weak.

His orders from day to day were right in supposing once begin negotiations until he could reach had to keep up the pressure on the Germans. Hitler, in playing, made the situation strengthen his forces in Rome. At the end of the period to elapse between the publication of the

armistice with the Badoglio Government (8 September) Hitler was in a very much stronger position to put his plans into effect.

The announcement of the Italian armistice again took Hitler by surprise, for the Italians kept up appearances to the last moment and succeeded completely in deceiving the Germans. The code-word for action, however, was immediately sent to Kesselring, who was in command in southern Italy.

By 10 September the German forces, some sixteen divisions, had disarmed the much more numerous Italian formations and seized the key positions, including control of Rome, without meeting any serious resistance. The King and Badoglio fled from the capital, and within a matter of hours the Germans were masters of the greater part of the country.

Simultaneously with the announcement of the armistice, the Allied Fifth and Eighth Armies had landed on the Italian mainland and begun to fight their way north. To Kesselring's relief, however, the Allies landed much farther south than he had dared to hope, at Salerno, to the south of Naples. Hitler had already written off the south of Italy, and the German defence plans were based on positions well to the north of Rome, but when Kesselring succeeded in holding up the Allied advance—even by the end of the year they had advanced no more than seventy miles from Salerno—Hitler agreed to allow Kesselring to fight on the Winter Line drawn across the peninsula not far to the north of Naples. This kept more than two-thirds of Italy, including the industrial north, in German hands, and it was not until June 1944 that the Allies succeeded in reaching Rome.

After his fall Mussolini was moved by the Badoglio Government from one place to another until he was finally taken to a small hotel at the Gran Sasso, high

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up in the Abruzzi Mountains. Hitler took a close personal interest in Mussolini's movements, and once he had been located a spectacular rescue from the air was planned. On 12 September this was carried out with success by an S.S. detachment under the command of Otto Skorzeny, and Mussolini was brought to the Führer's Headquarters at Rastenburg.

The first meeting between the two men was cordial, but a rapid disenchantment followed. Hitler's plan was to re-establish the Fascist régime in Italy, and to be successful, it must have Mussolini at its head. The Duce, however, was now a shrunken figure, an ageing man without political ambition, whose real wish was to be allowed to go home to the Romagna. Under Hitler's urging—and scarcely veiled threats—he agreed to play the part for which he had been cast, but it was without enthusiasm and, as it soon appeared, only with the help of vigorous prompting from the producer.

On 15 September Mussolini's restoration to the leadership of Fascism was proclaimed, and the new Italian Social Republic came into being. Its 'Government' followed a squalid and undistinguished career until the end of the war in Italy. Even when Mussolini returned to Italy, his villa was surrounded by S.S. Guards, ostensibly as a bodyguard. The new régime possessed neither independence nor authority: it was despised by the Germans and hated by the Italians.

The last phase of Mussolini's life was the most degrading of all. He was reduced to the rank of a puppet dictator, and Hitler exacted the full humiliation. In January 1944 Ciano was shot by a Fascist firing squad acting under the nominal authority of his father-in-law. The fascination which Hitler had once exerted over Mussolini was turned to hatred. But the Duce could not escape from the destiny he had forged for himself in making his pact with Hitler and, when the end came, his body was hung up on a gibbet in

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that same city of Milan in the Axis on 1 November 1

Hitler's conviction that in Italy proved as insu Mussolini as a brother blows of Fate. But the It: his purpose: it enabled a) at least for a time. Taken in occupying the greater p Allies well south of Rom solini could be presented the crisis which had th: leave the southern frontie posed to Allied attack.

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that same city of Milan in which he had proclaimed the Axis on 1 November 1936.

Hitler's conviction that Fascism could be revived in Italy proved as insubstantial as his belief in Mussolini as a brother Superman superior to the blows of Fate. But the Italian Social Republic served his purpose: it enabled appearances to be preserved, at least for a time. Taken with the German success in occupying the greater part of Italy and holding the Allies well south of Rome, the restoration of Mussolini could be presented as a triumphant ending to the crisis which had threatened in the summer to leave the southern frontiers of the Reich directly exposed to Allied attack.

Moreover, the Germans also took over the Italian zones of occupation in the Balkans, in Yugoslavia, Albania, and Greece, where Hitler had for some time been apprehensive of a British landing. Considering the course of events in the Mediterranean theatre since El Alamein and the landings in north-west Africa fourteen months before, Hitler might well congratulate himself at the end of 1943 on the effective way in which, by energy, determination, and luck, he had retrieved a disastrous situation.

Even so, the position in southern Italy was weakening in 1943. However slow might be the Allied advance, all that Kesselring could do was to fight a skilful rearguard action. The prospect elsewhere was still darker.

In the east, after throwing back the Russians in March 1943, in July the Germans launched a new offensive against their lines round Kursk. Half a million men, the finest troops left in the German Army, including seventeen panzer divisions equipped with the new heavy Tiger tanks, were used to carry it out. After heavy and costly fighting the Russians not only succeeded in bringing the German attack to a halt, but on 12 July themselves opened an offensive farther north. Gradually their attacks spread

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along the whole front. On 4 August they retook Orel, and on 23 August Kharkov. On 23 September they recaptured Poltava, and on the 25th Smolensk.

The sole result of Hitler's inflexible orders to stand and fight, without giving a yard, was to double the German losses and deprive his commanders of any chance of using their skill in defence. As the year ended the Red Army was steadily pushing the Germans back to the Polish and Rumanian frontiers.

The Russian advances, especially in the south, had political as well as military repercussions. As the Red Army drew nearer to their frontiers, fear began to spread among the satellite states, Rumania, Hungary, and Slovakia, whose loyalty to the Axis had been badly shaken by events in Italy. Hitler, already worried about the Balkans and the possibility of landings there, watched Turkey too with anxiety.

It was for these political as much as for military reasons that he rejected any suggestion of withdrawal on the southern sector of the Eastern Front, and obstinately refused to give up the Crimea at the cost of losing well over 100,000 men. When he was urged to evacuate the German garrisons in the Aegean and on Crete, he replied: 'To abandon the islands would create the most unfavourable impression. To avoid such a blow to our prestige, we may even have to accept the eventual loss of the troops and material.'

In the west, although the Allies had not yet attempted an invasion, 1943 saw two heavy blows to Hitler's hopes, the defeat of the U-boats and the intensification of the air war against Germany. In January 1943, angry at German naval losses, Hitler accused Raeder of lacking the will to fight and run risks. He appointed the Navy's U-boat specialist, Dönitz, as Commander-in-Chief of the Navy in Raeder's place, but as the Allies strengthened their defences against submarine attack, the figures for

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U-boat losses began to : Dönitz was driven to w the North Atlantic.

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U-boat losses began to rise, and at the end of May
Dönitz was driven to withdraw all his vessels from
the North Atlantic.

Hitler was no longer blind to the importance of the
Battle of the Atlantic, but he lacked the resources to
support it. Increased production of U-boats could only
be at the expense of other equally urgent needs. By
the end of 1943 the Battle of the Atlantic was lost.

During 1943 the American day-bombers joined the
R.A.F. in keeping up an almost continuous offensive
against targets in Germany and Western Europe. The
scale of the raids began to rise too.

Hitler, worried most about the effect on German
war production, was beside himself with fury at the
failure of Göring and the Luftwaffe to fend off the
attacks or to satisfy his demand for reprisals on
Britain.

In 1938 and 1939 Hitler had been warned by
Schacht and others that Germany had not the eco-
nomic resources to wage another war. By 1943 the
accuracy of these warnings was obvious. There was
an increasing shortage of everything—manpower,
raw materials, transport, oil, food, steel, armaments
and planes. Even if the German people could with-
stand the strain of the air war, the effect on war
production was such that it must in the end place
Germany in a position of permanent inferiority.

Thus, if the last months of 1942 mark the turning-
point of the war, 1943 may be taken as the year of
Germany's defeat.

Hitler was now in his fifty-fifth year. The strain
imposed on him by the war, particularly since the
winter of 1941-2, had begun to leave its mark. Dur-
ing the course of 1943 he began to suffer from a
trembling of his left arm and left leg, which became
steadily more pronounced and refused to yield to any
treatment. In an effort to control this tremor, Hitler

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greatest difficulty. On no account was the war or anything connected with it permitted as a subject of discussion.

The dominant impression derived from accounts of life at the Führer's Headquarters in 1943 and 1944 is one of intense boredom, punctuated by the excitement of crises like that caused by Mussolini's fall and by Hitler's unpredictable outbursts of rage, usually directed against the generals. Hitler saw little even of Eva Braun, who remained on the Obersalzberg. So long as Hitler remained at his headquarters Goebbels thought that Blondi was closer to him than any human being.

Hitler's ostensible reason for shutting himself up in this way was the demands made on him by the war. But there was a deeper psychological compulsion at work. Here he lived in a private world of his own, from which the ugly and awkward facts of Germany's situation were excluded. He refused to visit any of the bombed towns, just as he refused to read reports which contradicted the picture he wanted to form. The power of Martin Bormann, Hitler's personal secretary, was built up on the skill with which he pandered to this weakness, carefully keeping back unpleasant information and defeating the attempts of those who tried to make Hitler aware of the gravity of the situation.

In the last years of his life Hitler deliberately refused to exercise the extraordinary powers he had once displayed as a mass-orator. Goebbels did everything he could to overcome the Führer's reluctance. Hitler's excuse was always the same: he was waiting for a military success. But again one may suspect a deeper reason. Hitler's gifts as an orator had always depended on his flair for sensing what was in the minds of his audience. He no longer wanted to know what was in the minds of the German people; at all costs he must preserve his illusions. Until he could

field—amongst them Field-Marshal von Kluge, the commander of Army Group Centre in the East—to arrest or get rid of Hitler. All such hopes proved illusory, and after Stalingrad the more active conspirators accepted the fact that they would have to assassinate Hitler first before anyone in authority would be willing to move.

The first attempt was made on 13 March 1943, when Hitler paid a visit to Kluge's headquarters at Smolensk. General Henning von Tresckow and Fabien von Schlabrendorff hid a time-bomb in a package of brandy to be delivered to a friend, and placed it on the plane which carried Hitler back to East Prussia. The bomb failed to explode. Schlabrendorff flew at once to the Führer's Headquarters, recovered the bomb before it had been discovered, and took it to pieces on the train to Berlin.

* As many as six more attempts on Hitler's life were planned in the later months of 1943, but all for one reason or another came to nothing. In the meantime Himmler's police agents, although singularly inefficient in tracking down the conspiracy, were beginning to get uncomfortably close. In April 1943 they arrested Dietrich Bonhöffer, Joseph Müller, and Hans von Dohnanyi. Too many threads led back to the Abwehr, which the rival S.S. Intelligence Service was eager to suppress, and in December 1943 General Oster, the key figure in the Abwehr, was forced to resign.

Fortunately, just as the Abwehr circle was being broken up, a new recruit joined the conspiracy who promised to bring to it the qualities of decision and personality which the older leaders lacked.

Klaus Philip Schenk, Count von Stauffenberg, born in 1907, came of an old and distinguished South German family. A brilliant young man, he served with distinction as a staff officer in Poland, France, and Russia. In Russia he was initiated into the conspiracy by Tresckow and Schlabrendorff. After recovering

from wounds in the Tunisian campaign, he lost him his left eye, right hand, and other limbs. On the other hand, Stauffenberg's staff in Berlin made preparations for a renewed attempt.

Stauffenberg used the revolt by the millions of Germans to prepare plans for the emergency powers in Berlin. 'Operation Valkyrie' was a series of orders and appointments by Beck as the new head of the government.

With the help of men of the Führer's headquarters, in the Army in the west, Stauffenberg's reluctant Army leaders in the east, Stauffenberg's assassination to himself despite the odds.

The conspirators were 1. Further arrests were made that of Moltke. In February 1944 Abwehr functions were transferred to the Intelligence Service under Hans Canaris that he knew very well planned and that he would come.

The news that the Allies had added confusion to the confusion there were more arrests, and Goerdeler. The plot was wrecked.

At the end of June Stauffenberg was Chief of Staff to the Commander of the Home Army, a position of access to Hitler. On 11 July he was at Berchtesgaden with a brief-case, but in the absence

* D.T.'s presence?

* * *

Göring's own diary opened in 1943 to reveal him still at Carinhall, seeing the New Year in. He made only occasional forays into Berlin. He proudly watched little Edda at ballet school, listened to Rosita Serrano sing, went for drives in the snow, hunted wild boar; he canceled a conference with Galland and Dietrich Pelz, his bomber commander, and in general refused to see what was bearing down on Germany's skies. On January 4, Milch and his technical chief Colonel Wolfgang Vorwald brought out to Carinhall the red top-secret volume of enemy production statistics: Britain, the United States, and Canada, this showed, had been producing 1,378 bombers and 1,959 fighters per month during 1942, while German industry had averaged only 349 and 247 respectively. "Milch," thundered the Reichsmarschall, comfortably seated behind his great desk, "have you joined the dreamers too? Do you really believe all this?"

The next day Milch confessed to his staff, "The Reichsmarschall doesn't quite see eye to eye with me on these figures."

"Even if they are making these numbers," he quoted Göring as saying, "they're no use whatever to their forces in Africa if they can't back them up with the necessary shipping space."

In a few days' time Göring would complete his half-century. Late on January 6, 1943, he left for East Prussia, spent seven hours the next day with Hitler, jotted into his diary a jumble of notes on discussions with Speer, Rosenberg, Bormann, and Milch; then waddled back to Carinhall. The preparations for his fiftieth birthday helped to deaden the ever-fainter cries coming from Stalingrad, and the hollering from North Africa. He had one talk with Kesselring about "the case of Rommel," but his birthday overshadowed all else. Pandering to his eager mood, the Italians awarded him the first Gold Star of the Roman Eagle at their embassy. The Berlin theaters were closed, but he ordered one reopened and bused his staff in from Carinhall to hear music by Handel and an aria from a Glück opera ("O that I were never born"), followed by scenes from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a play by Kleist. Two of the actors had Jewish wives, but Göring had extended to them his personal protection.

The birthday gifts might seem to have borne witness to the enduring strength of his political position in Germany. Mussolini had sent a golden sword originally destined for General Franco. (As Ciano observed, "Times have changed.") Ciano himself gave him the Star of San Maurizio (once earmarked for King Zog of Albania, but also reassigned.) Three leading German businessmen gave a twenty-four-hundred piece Sèvres porcelain service of a hunting design. Kurt Schmitt, the Allianz Insurance Company's chief, had swiftly complied when Gritzbach of Göring's staff phoned to suggest giving three medieval statues at seventeen thousand marks apiece. Paul Pleiger had given one million marks (one hundred thousand from H.G.W., the rest from a political fund controlled by the Reich coal owners' lobby).

Jan 1943

Hitler had sent a personal haul among Göring's most prized, as is the solid-gold jewel-encrusted designer, Gerdi Troost, and his parchment authority as Reichsmarschall.

Hitler had ordered public exclamations and later described fortunes. Overwhelmed by defeat on the thirteenth the words "ill and on the fourteenth, again, Zähler was sent for."

In part the heart problems of part the malaise was probably openly dismantled. On January (Dreierausschuss) to control in tenth, bypassing Göring, Hitler him to take over—even at this

On the night of January 16-17 "buster" bombs. After inspecting headquarters on the eighteenth, from Paulus about the airlift at the front line. "The most frequent Göring complained.

In fact Göring had provided commanders were letting him, waiting air crews warm, the cold-start procedures, and moral ports, only 15 were operational 111's only 41, of 20 FW 200's and eleven Heinkels were actually Milch at once sacked the incomplete parachuted radio beacons and for the weeks passed, the airfields retreated so far that the Heinkels

Hitler ordered Milch to fly the out of the fortress. "Why not kill him, pointing out that there was Stalingrad. Hitler passed the sc markable," sneered Göring to Milch immediately loses his clear view

*Göring was now taking Cardiazol, Perwigshafen, a heart stimulant of relatively small had ordered from Siemens a portable electric endorsed the order as "very urgent."

Jan 1943

Hitler had sent a personal handwritten letter dated January 11, 1943; it was among Göring's most prized papers in 1945, but was looted and is now lost, as is the solid-gold jewel-encrusted cassette handcrafted by Hitler's favorite designer, Gerdi Troost, and handed by Keitel to Göring to house his white parchment authority as Reichsmarschall.

Hitler had ordered public celebration, but Göring saw through the phony acclamations and later described this birthday as the final watershed in his fortunes. Overwhelmed by depression, he retired to bed, entering in his diary on the thirteenth the words "ill" and "bed rest because of heart palpitations," and on the fourteenth, again, "Bed rest all day, ill! (Heart)." Professor Zahler was sent for.*

In part the heart problems were a consequence of his massive obesity; in part the malaise was probably psychological. He could see his authority being openly dismantled. On January 13, Hitler created a "Commission of Three" (*Dreierausschuss*) to control manpower. Göring was excluded. On the fourteenth, bypassing Göring, Hitler sent for Staatssekretär Milch and instructed him to take over—even at this eleventh hour—the vital Stalingrad airlift.

On the night of January 16-17 the RAF attacked Berlin using new "blockbuster" bombs. After inspecting the damage, Göring lunched at Hitler's headquarters on the eighteenth. Hitler showed him the latest hysterical signals from Paulus about the airlift. Göring phoned them through to Milch, now at the front line. "The most frightful signals are coming from the fortress," Göring complained.

In fact Göring had provided the planes he promised, but the squadron commanders were letting him down. They had done nothing to keep the waiting air crews warm, the crews themselves were ignorant of standard cold-start procedures, and morale was rock-bottom. Of 140 Junkers 52 transports, only 15 were operational on the day Milch arrived; of 140 Heinkel 111's only 41, of 20 FW 200's only 1. Of these planes only seven Junkers and eleven Heinkels were actually scheduled to make the round trip that day. Milch at once sacked the incompetent generals, organized new landing grounds, parachuted radio beacons and flare-path equipment into the fortress. But as the weeks passed, the airfields in Stalingrad were lost, and the front line retreated so far that the Heinkels could no longer make the return flight.

Hitler ordered Milch to fly the highly esteemed Panzer general Hans Hube out of the fortress. "Why not kill an air-force general or two!" Hube told him, pointing out that there was not one Luftwaffe general now left inside Stalingrad. Hitler passed the scathing remark on to Göring. "Isn't it remarkable," sneered Göring to Milch, "how anybody who goes to the front immediately loses his clear view of the front!" Richthofen, listening on the

*Göring was now taking Cardiazol, Pentamethylene-Tetrazol, manufactured by Knoll of Ludwigshafen, a heart stimulant of relatively short-lived effect. Back in November 1941 Göring's staff had ordered from Siemens a portable electrocardiograph for Professor Zahler, and Görnert had endorsed the order as "very urgent."

reveal him still at Carinhall, seeing
forays into Berlin. He proudly
to Rosita Serrano sing, went
par, he canceled a conference with
commander, and in general refused
many's skies. On January 4, Milch
Vorwald brought out to Carinhall
production statistics: Britain, the United
been producing 1,378 bombers and
while German industry had averaged
thundered the Reichsmarschall,
"have you joined the dreamers
staff, "The Reichsmarschall doesn't
figures."
others," he quoted Göring as saying,
in Africa if they can't back them
complete his half-century. Late on
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suit, the Allianz Insurance Company's
itzbach of Göring's staff phoned to
at seventeen thousand marks apiece.
(one hundred thousand from H.G.W.,
ed by the Reich coal owners' lobby).

Febr. 1943

to run up," as he admitted in his
ed again on the twentieth, Milch
Sixth Army's plight as hopeless.
now haunted Hitler's headquar-
23, "Telephoned Führer's head-
ends endless telegrams." Displaying
at five hours with Hitler that day,
about a new crisis developing at
s main conferences on the twenty-

gliders, ground crew, preheating
ainers bearing down on the Sta-
09G fighter planes was also on its
vicious criticism of the Luftwaffe.
r described in his diary the sense
s "unfulfilled promises" of an
sgust at the fiasco of the vaunted

an B-17 bombers delivered their
y, attacking Wilhelmshaven Naval
ride followed on the thirtieth. It
zure of power." Göring was due
an radio station; but with sublime
Mosquito bombers scudding right
nderground at that precise hour.
th to tend specifically to the air
! Kassel. On the twentieth Göring
eral Hans Kammhuber, to extend
and into southern Germany, he
nder to come to Carinhall at the
s intercepted this signal.) Colonel
who lunched and conferred with
ing ways of defeating this two-
ribed his plans to strengthen the
ow, spoke about the expanding
Galland referred to the Reich's
: 163 rocket-powered interceptor.
covered revolutionary new elec-
down that very night, January
screen designed to give a picture
of darkness and cloud cover.
my generals, including Paulus,

chose Soviet captivity to death and glory on the battlefield. The army's
General Erwin Jaenecke, flown injured out of Stalingrad on one of the last
planes, urged Hitler to punish the guilty men—"Even," he spat out, "if
that means the Reichsmarschall himself!" But Göring was not to be seen.
His diary shows that he spent much of the next week at Emmy's hospital
bedside—she had been operated on by Professor Gohrbandt for sinus prob-
lems on February 1—and he manifested no urgent desire to face his Führer.
Hitler vented his rage on Jeschonnek instead—then clapped the unhappy
general on the shoulder after the conference and reassured him, "It wasn't
you I meant!" "I alone bear responsibility for Stalingrad," he frankly ad-
mitted to Field Marshal von Manstein on February 6—but then devalued
that acceptance of the blame by adding, "I could pin the blame onto Göring
. . . but he is my designated successor. So I can not."

Reassured by General Bodenschatz that Hitler was not disposed to blame
him, Göring slunk back in to the Wolf's Lair later in February. Hitler avoided
puncturing his pride. Göring's posture at this time is described in an insightful
entry of Richthofen's diary—the Luftflotte 4 commander had arrived at
Rominten on the tenth, to find Göring just setting out to hunt wild boar.
They dined alone together, and commiserated about the soldier's hard lot.
"As you know," said Göring, carving juicy chunks off a leg of veal served
to him as a third course, "the only luxury I allow myself is to have fresh
flowers sent in from time to time." He admitted having approved of the
Stalingrad airlift, but only because he expected the encirclement to be tem-
porary. Then the Italian Army had collapsed, and this had triggered the
catastrophe.

Richthofen ventured the remark that Göring ought to have risked going in
person to the Stalingrad battlefield. "If you can't trust in your own lucky
star," he said, "then you have no right to believe in your destiny in larger
things. None of our army commanders is a Caesar or an Alexander," he
continued. "But they all know their job and do their duty. They just need
to be given tasks they understand." He praised Manstein in particular.

The next morning, February 11, they went to see Hitler. Richthofen re-
peated his comments. "If I didn't straitjacket my commanders," Hitler told
Richthofen tersely, "they would all be fighting on German soil by now."

Göring nodded tame approval. He did attempt one diffident interpolation,
but Hitler deftly deflected the conversation to the Old Burg Theater in Vienna.
"Now that," chortled Hitler, aware of Göring's pride in his Prussian State
Theater, "was *really* art, of a kind you don't find too often nowadays."

Assembling all the Luftwaffe's top generals at Rominten for three days
of confidential consultations ("to go over everything, issue guidelines, and
deliver a pep talk for the coming months," as he put it in his diary) Göring
was frank about the gravity of the crisis that now faced Nazi Germany.
General Karl Koller, chief of staff of Luftflotte 3, took this shorthand note:

March 1943

did grow on him to revive the Little Cabinet of the first war weeks—the Reich Defense Committee. Milch took it up with Speer; Speer got Goebbels's backing for the idea, and came down to the mountainside villa on the last day of February. Göring talked with him for several hours. The minister was fascinated by the apparently rouged cheeks and lacquered fingernails of the Reichsmarschall. Before bringing Goebbels back with him the next afternoon, Speer warned the propaganda minister that Göring was "rather resigned." Göring was wearing what Goebbels dryly described as "a somewhat baroque costume, which would look rather grotesque if one did not know him so well." Both ministers tried to restore the Reichsmarschall's waning self-confidence; he turned down the Little Cabinet idea. "I gained the impression," wrote Milch in his memoirs, "he was afraid of Hitler."

That night, March 1–2, the British weakened his bargaining position still further by blitzing Berlin. The raid gashed the Air Ministry, started six hundred fires, wrecked twenty thousand buildings, and killed seven hundred Berliners. Hitler ordered massive retaliation against London, but only a dozen planes even found the empire's sprawling capital. "When is the Reichsmarschall coming back?" asked Hitler irritably of his staff at midday on the fifth. (Stenographers recorded his words.) "This can't go on! We'll never cut the British down to size like this!"

Göring, however, had fled to Rome, to see Mussolini and—no doubt, incidentally—his art-dealer friends. From the letter that the Fascist dictator wrote to Hitler a few days later, it is clear that the Italians were again begging Nazi Germany to make peace with Stalin on whatever terms they could get.

The papers of Walter Hofer reveal how Göring comforted himself after the meeting with Mussolini. Visiting the country estate of art dealer Eugenio Ventura in Florence on March 2, he decided to acquire various objets d'art, including four Italian and Tyrolean paintings and triptychs, and four wood carvings of garlands. Greedy to lay hands on them, he instructed his staff to load them aboard his train immediately. "It's getting late already," he remarked suavely, "so I'd better take the things with me right away."

In exchange, he offered nine nineteenth-century works confiscated in France, including three Monets and works by Sisley, Cézanne, Degas, Renoir, and Van Gogh, which Hofer had removed to Florence in December for "restoration."

Further crates were loaded aboard, of objects bought from Count Contini, including a sixteenth-century walnut bench, a table, a large medicine cabinet, a prayer stool, and religious and hunting sculptures, a marble "Aphrodite After the Bath" purchased from Iandolo in Rome, and ten items bought from Grassi in Florence, including a bust of the Emperor Hadrian. Lost in the familiar art collector's trance, Göring had put the war behind him.

Scathing about the absentee Reichsmarschall, Hitler discussed the new violent RAF raids with Goebbels and Speer at the Wolf's Lair. That afternoon, March 8, 1943, he described Göring as being oblivious of the war in the

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ELLED

ing's air force had airlifted into Leningrad 8,350 tons of supplies, a daily average of 116 tons. 65 Heinkel 111 bombers, and 12 corps. "I always believed in the renowned American aviation after the war ended. "My beautiful munitions and supplies to the Russian campaign." by Milch when he received January 22, 1943, he bleated the even for 1946. y four-engined bomber project field marshal felt that Göring's his day.

retired to his villa on the Ob- him into approaching Hitler any or the other while he still during February the pressure

air, and totally misinformed by his ex-Richthofen Squadron cronies like Bodenschatz. "While I brood day and night on how to stop these air raids," an adjutant heard him say, "the Reichsmarschall leads his carefree life."

That night the RAF dropped eight hundred tons of bombs on medieval Nuremberg. Hitler had Bodenschatz fetched out of bed and raged at him.

Twenty-four hours later Munich was the British bombers' target. The fear of German retaliation was evidently no deterrent at all. Hitler blamed this on Göring's portly friend Field Marshal Hugo Sperrle, who had set up his Luftflotte 3 headquarters in a French château. "He has about as much interest in bombing Britain as in wolfing down a gourmet dinner," said Hitler, and ordered Göring back from Italy.

To his adjutant Jeschonnek remarked emptily that perhaps he ought to commit suicide—then Göring might mend his ways. The remark revealed how much the general was being pulverized between these heaving millstones of the high command. Later that spring the adjutant managed to wrest a revolver out of Jeschonnek's hand—he heard the general muttering about wanting to be buried in East Prussia on the shores of Lake Goldap.

He arrived back at the Wolf's Lair at 4:00 P.M. on March 11, 1943, chatted for a while with Rommel, who had relinquished command of his army in Tunisia the previous day, and slunk in to see Hitler at 9:30.

Hitler gave Göring one more chance to redeem himself.

Göring put pressure on to his plane manufacturers. Assembling them for a ninety-minute tirade at Carinhall a week later, he ladled vitriol over them—the Professors Messerschmitt, Heinkel, and Dornier—for Germany's "total failure" in aviation technology. "I have been deceived," he roared, "on a scale to which I was hitherto accustomed only in the variety acts of magicians and conjurers." "There are some things, which were reported to me before the war as completely ready, but which are *still* not even ready today!" To which remark he significantly added, "I am not talking of the eastern theater at all. When I speak of the 'enemy' now, I am referring only to the enemy in the west."

"The most modest requirement," he shrieked at Messerschmitt, "is that your aircraft must take off and land without their pilots risking every bone in their body." He glared at Heinkel: "I was promised a heavy bomber. The Heinkel 177. After calamity upon calamity they tell me, 'If only the plane didn't have to *dive*, it would be the finest bird in the world—it could go into service at once. At once!' I declare at once, 'It doesn't *have* to dive!' But now that it's been tried in operations there have been catastrophic losses, none caused by enemy action. So, Mr. Heinkel, what do you say today! And how many will go up in flames? Half of them! . . . How *amused* we all were about the enemy's backwardness, their 'plodding four-engined crates,' and so on. Gentlemen, I'd be delighted if you'd just copy one of their four-engined crates, double-quick! Then at least I'd have a plane to brag about!"

So he raged on. (The transcript covered one hundred pages.) "That's what

March 1943

J E'

gets under my skin," he said through cloud cover into a pick 'can't quite find London.' . . .] ment was limitless. "I have lost the British do not have. What it without so much as a by-your-God's will, and when I get ste the workers. . . . Gentlemen, power." The British H2S radar at Rotterdam—was a fine example German bomber was big enough built those 'old four-engined crates could lay out a dance floor in the

He rounded on General Wolf Luftwaffe signals. "I refuse to be . . . The enemy can actually see w the clouds. We cannot jam him and in the same breath you add,

Later that month Göring retreated. The catastrophic air raids violence, and now the Americans lost fifteen thousand dead in air killed 229 Frenchmen in Paris a U.S. bomber squadrons killed 2 phoning Goebbels in Berlin on the would courier reports of his scab obloquy on the Reichsmarschall's

Intervening in Luftwaffe operations to the Russian front. "It's out of the to Jeschonnek. "It's about time Swamped in the east, run out of air force struggled to survive. Trou and threats of cuts in the meat ration shows April 1943 ending with vis his own doctor Ondarza, who helped

Göring still found time for less. Limberger "whether the amethysts from Perugia for little Edda's birthday Emmy to buy expensive china. Ric berg, and noted in his diary on April the latest North Africa debacle had

In Tunisia 250,000 more German now took refuge in his childhood country stay until the end of May 1943. Mil

March 1943

Richthofen Squadron cronies like on how to stop these air raids," Marshall leads his carefree life." "I've got tons of bombs on medieval and out of bed and raged at him. The British bombers' target. The fear deterrent at all. Hitler blamed this Hugo Sperrle, who had set up his command. "He has about as much interest in a gourmet dinner," said Hitler, and

amply that perhaps he ought to end his ways. The remark revealed between these heaving millstones the adjutant managed to wrest a heard the general muttering about the shores of Lake Goldap.

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struck at Messerschmitt, "is that about their pilots risking every bone was promised a heavy bomber. The way they tell me, 'If only the plane had been in the world—it could go into space. 'It doesn't have to dive!' But there have been catastrophic losses,inkel, what do you say today! And seem! . . . How amused we all were at flooding four-engined crates,' and you'd just copy one of their four-engined. I'd have a plane to brag about!" (one hundred pages.) "That's what

gets under my skin," he said at one stage. "They can drop their bombs through cloud cover into a pickle barrel in a railroad station, but our gentlemen 'can't quite find London.' " His admiration of the British electronic equipment was limitless. "I have long been aware," he said, "that there is nothing the British do not have. Whatever equipment we have, the enemy can jam it without so much as a by-your-leave. We accept all this as though it were God's will, and when I get steamed up about it, the story is we haven't got the workers. . . . Gentlemen, it isn't manpower you're short of, it's brainpower." The British H2S radar set—first recovered from the RAF bomber at Rotterdam—was a fine example. It filled half a dozen steel cabinets. No German bomber was big enough to carry them. "That's because they have built those 'old four-engined crates,'" he mimicked. "Aircraft so big you could lay out a dance floor in them!"

He rounded on General Wolfgang Martini, the shy and academic chief of Luftwaffe signals. "I refuse to be led a song and dance like this," he declared. "The enemy can actually see whether he is over a city or not, right through the clouds. We cannot jam him. You tell me that we also have something, and in the same breath you add, 'But it can all be jammed by the enemy!'"

Later that month Göring retreated to Berchtesgaden, and tried to clear his mind. The catastrophic air raids on Berlin and the Ruhr were increasing in violence, and now the American bombers were joining in. The Reich had lost fifteen thousand dead in air raids. On April 4, American daylight raids killed 229 Frenchmen in Paris and 221 Italians in Naples; on the fifth, the U.S. bomber squadrons killed 2,130 Belgian civilians in Antwerp. Telephoning Goebbels in Berlin on the sixth—fully aware that the Forschungsamt would courier reports of his scathing language to Göring—Milch heaped obloquy on the Reichsmarschall's name.

Intervening in Luftwaffe operations, Hitler ordered fighter squadrons switched to the Russian front. "It's out of the question," Göring ranted over the phone to Jeschonnek. "It's about time you learned to stand up to the Führer." Swamped in the east, run out of Africa, almost nonexistent in the west, his air force struggled to survive. Troubled by the Reich's growing food shortage and threats of cuts in the meat ration, Göring took refuge in bed. His diary shows April 1943 ending with visits from Hitler's surgeon Karl Brandt and his own doctor Ondarza, who helpfully prescribed still more bed rest.

Göring still found time for less martial pursuits—he inquired of Fräulein Limberger "whether the amethysts were ready," he ordered designer shoes from Perugia for little Edda's birthday, and drove down to Munich with Emmy to buy expensive china. Richthofen turned up once on the Obersalzberg, and noted in his diary on April 26 that he feared that Stalingrad and the latest North Africa débacle had "put the skids" under Göring for good.

In Tunisia 250,000 more German troops went into enemy captivity. Göring now took refuge in his childhood castle at Veldenstein, and here he would stay until the end of May 1943. Milch came down on the thirteenth to tender

prototypes had functioned perfectly. Field Marshal Milch was planning, said Ulrich, to mass produce five thousand a month. Greedy for revenge, Göring added a zero to the figure on the document: *fifty* thousand; and ordered construction work to begin immediately on the first one hundred catapult-launching sites along the French coast. "The enemy air force will be obliged to attack these launching sites," predicted Milch in a letter to Göring a few days later, "and our fighter planes and flak will have wonderful opportunities to inflict annihilating damage on them." Göring began to savor the moment when he could not only launch these flying bombs against London but against General Dwight D. Eisenhower's supply ports in North Africa and—from the decks of U-boats cruising off the American coast—even against the skyscrapers of New York too.

All this lay some time in the future. Meanwhile a number of urgent personnel problems had to be faced. Smoldering over Göring's insensitive recourse to his own "little air staff" of Brauchitsch, Diesing, and Ondarza, the chief of air staff, Hans Jeschonnek, reported "sick"—or so his deputy General Rudolf Meister told Göring on June 21, 1943. Probably the illness was more psychological than real, because the cure that Göring contemplated was giving Jeschonnek command of a Luftflotte (the Fourth) and sending Richthofen up to *Robinson*, the Luftwaffe's forward headquarters, to supplant him. Had Göring not always accused Jeschonnek of being too pliable at the Wolf's Lair? "You just stand at attention to the Führer, with your thumbs on your pant seams!" he had jeered. The job switch looked like the ideal solution, but Göring hesitated to appoint such a forceful, blunt-spoken character as Richthofen to Hitler's conference table. So the decision was postponed, not once but several times.

Göring's own stock was too low at present. People in the Ruhr were bitter that he did not show his face there. "This," wrote Goebbels after seeing Hitler on June 22, "is why Göring's failure oppresses [Hitler] so much: because he's the only man capable of taking over if anything should happen to him."

Summoned to the Führer's presence the next day, Göring penciled into his notebook reminders that betray an apprehensive state of mind:

Situation in the south! In the southeast! In the north! My own position as commander in chief. Jeschonnek (on leave)—Milch (Udet) controversy. My own activities (stenographic record, produce my appointment diary). Influencing subordinates, consulting with them. Troops' confidence in me.

Worst will be over this autumn. Inspection visits by me. Examples, Vienna airplane-engine works!

My present task: Overhauling the air force. Clear technological objectives. Revive flagging spirits.

June 1943

EXIT

"Please," he intended to tell wishes, complaints, or orders." at Martin Bormann's suggestion—Hitler called in all the aircraft not to breathe a word of this to industry.

Göring had more immediate problems most nights now, the RAF every Ruhr city, dumping two tons on Mülheim and Oberhausen the American bombers now at refinery at Hüls on June 22, half of their entire synthetic fuel within easy bombing range. If divert June's entire fighter production this were not enough, Göring's that the British could at any time aluminium foil; there was, was yet no antidote. Frightened of the device, Göring halted all German mentioned.

Instead, he continued to sear of air defense. On the day that aircraft designers, Göring was experts, the buccaneering major Herrmann had recently taken a bombing techniques for himself otechnic flares. He had not been clearly silhouetted against clouds beneath. His proposal was planes at the British, crewed by

Again Göring followed close

Free-lance single-engine bat over target area using searchlights—forty during

Our present system does [bomber] point of penetration centimeter [searchlight] will be sighted even in the Best thing is to shoot down and then send in our own

this," an SS Obergruppenführer wrote to Himmler on July 30. "Someone's got to speak to the German people. They won't listen to the Reichsmarschall now. Not just because of the obvious supremacy of the enemy air force, but because he has failed to go into the blitzed areas and talk with the people." On August 2, Hamburg was again the RAF target. Milch sent a frantic telegram to Göring, demanding that fighter squadrons be brought back from Russia and even Italy. "It's not the front line that is battered and fighting for life," this telegram said. "It is the fatherland that is under grave attack, and fighting a desperate battle."

Göring cast Hans Jeschonnek, chief of the air staff, as the scapegoat for Hamburg. Jeschonnek crumpled. Beppo Schmid saw it happening, and so did Kurt Student, whom Göring fetched back from Italy to plot ways of liberating Mussolini as soon as his whereabouts could be found. The destruction at Hamburg propelled Jeschonnek into a terminal, three-week-long bout of depression. He had recently lost his father, and his brother and brother-in-law had been killed in action. His frail efforts to escape from the stifling atmosphere of *Robinson* and the Wolf's Lair had been thwarted. As recently as the end of July he had told General von Seidel that he was being given a Luftflotte, but Göring quailed at the idea, and Hitler talked him out of it. After an "all-field-marshal" luncheon with Hitler on July 28, as Richthofen recorded, Göring had touched on possible replacements for Jeschonnek—"I agree a reshuffle is necessary," Richthofen delicately recorded afterward, "but who? He names [Günther] Korten and myself. I recoil in horror, but have to admit I don't think Korten is up to much." Göring, however, abandoned all idea of replacing Jeschonnek. On August 5, Major Werner Leuchtenberg, Jeschonnek's adjutant, broke it to Field Marshal Richthofen in Rome that the Reichsmarschall had used "distinctly pejorative" language about him and had warned his staff, "We've got to make damn sure that the Führer never gets to hear of Richthofen's views!"

Jeschonnek phoned Seidel that same day. "It's all off," he said gloomily. "I've got to stay put."

At the Wolf's Lair the jostling for position began, with Göring reduced to the role of occasional onlooker. He hung around East Prussia until mid-August 1943 observing the comings and goings of the new strongmen. The balance of power there was tilting against him. To Göring it was clear that Hitler was opting for the proponents of brute force. Bormann regularly attended Hitler's main conferences. So did Himmler, who now became minister of the interior. "From now on," Göring would recall, "Bormann had Himmler to contend with as well: because as far as the succession was concerned, Himmler came right after me."

Hitler promised Rommel that he would soon be marching into Italy to restore the Fascist regime. Down in Rome, Richthofen wrote uneasily: "[I]

Aug 1943

EXI

definitely hope I can superintend any decisions they take up to

All that summer, in the bombers continued to blast; bombers flew all the way up works at Wiener Neustadt. I air staff for four hours after the Reichsmarschall?" whin

The answer was that Göring escape the glare of his fellow tongue. Holing up in Bavaria Professor Ludwig Peiner about Peiner told him with regret that ("Autumn," a nude lady) Limberger to see that the project the draft and paint a new "A August 17, the Americans Jgensburg and the ball-bearing to North Africa. Four hundred the chaotic structure of the was not surprising. The def Prussia, by Göring in Bavaria Fighter Corps at Arnhem. Ey had a finger in the pie. "It was summer's evening." It was had penetrated so deep into C

Hitler [said Ondarza] to and Göring then put the Jeschonnek. I didn't listen the open window said he

A bright moon came up that out into the middle of Lake G. flight of wild duck. Later he daughter's birthday. At 11:00 setting out flares and target mass attack. All fifty of Herr Berlin. Göring, alerted by the fire to eighteen thousand fighters to Bear [Berlin]. But over the city were the Mosquit nightfighters on whom these two hours the slam-bang barr

At 6:00 A.M. the next morning Luftwaffe headquarters learned that the night's real RAF target had been Peenemünde, the top-secret army-missile establishment where the A-4 long-range rocket was being built and tested. It was in flames, and seven hundred rocket scientists and engineers were dead. Jeschonnek was awakened with this awful news at Goldap at 8:00 A.M. Hitler phoned soon after from the Wolf's Lair. "You know what to do!" he snapped. Jeschonnek did—there was precedent enough.

Later that morning a teleprinter message arrived on the Obersalzberg from General Meister. It informed Göring that Jeschonnek had shot himself dead. Betraying no emotions, Göring notified Richthofen in Rome. The laconic telegram merely said that Jeschonnek had died suddenly of a "stomach hemorrhage." Equally stone-faced, Richthofen dictated his own diary comment: "Lost a good comrade and friend. Who will succeed him?"

Göring, of course, had to fly up to East Prussia immediately. Major von Below, Hitler's air-force adjutant, and Meister met him at Rastenburg Airfield. "Jeschonnek promised me he would never do this," said Göring helplessly.

At air-force headquarters Jeschonnek's mortal remains were lying in his little wooden hut. Göring went in alone, and emerged shaking his head. "Some saint!" he sniffed. He ordered Meister to open the general's safe. It contained two envelopes addressed to von Below. The major scanned their content briefly, said simply that they were private, and made no effort to hand them over.

The safe also contained a ten-page memorandum dictated by Jeschonnek to his secretary, Lotte Kersten. Göring read it, his face reddening, then exclaimed, "I forbid staff officers to write down their personal opinions!" (The document recommended that Göring appoint a capable deputy commander in chief.) "Look at this," he cried, brandishing the sheets of paper at Meister. "The man was working against me all along!"

Meister shook his head. "General Jeschonnek was loyal to you to the very end."

Two revealing notes were also found in the desk. One read, "I can't work anymore with the Reichsmarschall! Long live the Führer!" The other cursed the glossy officers of Göring's little air staff. "Diesing and Brauchitsch," it stipulated, "are not to attend my funeral."

As it happened, Kesselring was the only field marshal to attend. Richthofen decided, on balance, not to face the Reichsmarschall right now. Göring admitted to Ondarza that the memorandum had shaken him. "He had no option but to shoot himself," he murmured. "He blamed me and the Luftwaffe for everything." "I am endlessly sorry," he admitted to Pili Körner. "How he must have struggled with himself! I never really knew him before I read that document."

He submitted Jeschonnek's staff to cross-examination. Leuchtenberg told him straight out that Jeschonnek had lost faith in him. Göring adopted an expression of pained innocence. The major reminded him of certain violent

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episodes aboard Göring's train with clenched fists.

"Herr Reichsmarschall!" s
yourself together!"

Göring skidded to a halt, an
"How many of you," he r
who had watched this scene, "
this young man has today!"

He placed both hands on the
"I'd like you on the air staff

He had appointed his crony)
as chief of personnel. A few d
to the remotest corner of the e
Crimea.

Aug 1943

episodes aboard Göring's train. Infuriated, Göring pounded across the room with clenched fists.

"*Herr Reichsmarschall!*" screamed the junior officer, alarmed. "Pull yourself together!"

Göring skidded to a halt, and slumped into a chair.

"How many of you," he roared eventually to the high-ranking officers who had watched this scene, "would have had the courage to tell me what this young man has today!"

He placed both hands on the major's shoulders.

"I'd like you on the air staff. Have a word with Loerzer about it."

He had appointed his crony Loerzer—disgraced by the fiascos in Italy—as chief of personnel. A few days later Leuchtenberg found himself posted to the remotest corner of the eastern front, attached to I Air Corps in the Crimea.

headquarters learned that the
the top-secret army-missile
project was being built and tested.
scientists and engineers were
at Goldap at 8:00 A.M.
air. "You know what to do!"
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"No doubt about it, though, Hermann is very popular, particularly in Berlin." At Hitler's headquarters his arrival was greeted each time with less enthusiasm. On October 27, 1943, as Hitler's distant armies in Russia began to fall back, he reminded the Reichsmarschall that the defense of Western Europe was of paramount importance: because there he could not afford to lose one inch of territory.

The Luftwaffe had lost the initiative, with little prospect of regaining it until the new mass-produced jet airplanes entered service. Thus Göring became the most plausible scapegoat for each Nazi defeat. Speer felt safe in expressing pronounced hostility. On November 8, Rommel too would tell anybody who would listen at the high command that Göring had been to blame for his defeat at El Alamein in 1942—"He just refused to believe the British had air supremacy." On November 20 Milch noted that he had "poured out his heart" to SS Reichsführer Himmler about the Reichsmarschall.

Perspiring freely, the Reichsmarschall had no option but to swallow the insults that Hitler hurled at him, often in front of junior officers. "The Führer's estrangement from me grew," he recalled two years later, speaking with George Shuster. "I could see his impatience when I briefed him. He often cut me off in midsentence, and began to intervene more and more in Luftwaffe affairs."

"Do you think there's a squadron left in your air force with the guts to fly to Moscow?" Hitler would challenge. Ordering him to intervene in Leningrad, he would sneer—"Always assuming that you still have bombers able to fly that far!" Luftwaffe liaison officer Karl Bodenschatz, no more eager than Göring to sweat it out round the clock at the Wolf's Lair, rented overnight rooms at the Park Hotel at Königsberg, and took to fleeing there by Storch each night until Göring found him out. "Your job is to be with the Führer," he snapped.

The Korten era began at 2:00 P.M. on August 20, 1943, when Göring introduced him to Hitler as Jeschonnek's successor as chief of air staff. Over the eleven months until his untimely death in July 1944 General Günther Korten would give the air force a new sense of strategic purpose. Backed by his new deputy, the ponderous, Bavarian-born Lieutenant General Karl Koller, Korten pulled fighter squadrons out of Russia and Italy and transferred them to the defense of the Reich. General Rudolf Meister was given command of the new IV Air Corps, which would bomb the seven main power stations along the Upper Volga, in Moscow, and in Leningrad, on which Soviet tank and aircraft-engine production depended.

The nights were soon long enough for the British to reach Berlin again. The first RAF raid on August 23 killed 765 people. Hitler wanted to strike back, but he knew that reprisals were going to have to wait. Meanwhile British code-breakers heard Korten ordering Luftflotte 4 on August 26 to transfer elements of KG51 bomber wing to Illersheim for conversion to the

INFURT

For the rest of 1943 the tide of the war in the air would ebb and flow dramatically. Aided by new tactics it would have temporarily crippled the winter of 1943/44; but simultaneous precision raids by day deeper into

and stationed 8,876 of the formidable 600 light flak guns. The flak gunners had no less than 12,774 enemy planes, and a hundred thousand German civilians, however, and there was an air of desperation over a glider pilot who had survived in a suicide squadron of men willing with high explosives into the midst of it all out if they could at the last moment. Jeschonnek's successor, put the idea to reservations.

diminished. "Göring swears like a trigger, shot down in February 1944.

barrel, and then came whining to me
y, but we haven't the fuel!" I gave
we find they have sixty-five thousand

Göring to bomb an Italian city like
had time to organize air defenses.
rasped Göring, passing on Hitler's
centrals and our other indolent allies,
ou're not out of the war!" Told that
their equipment over to the Germans,
machine-gun fire and ripped up the
hunted down. "I would have them
leave the bodies dangling for three

Italians ever since 1924.

U.S. General Carl F. Spaatz on May
n Italy. If they had only been our
have won the war."

ce," said Göring that October, 1943,
ly so." For a few days that month
n an uglier turn. Spaatz's bombers
mden on the second were clearly
uld bomb through ten-tenths cloud.
ent. By day Galland's fighter squad-
s fighters have arrived," the people
over!" The Luftwaffe sent a mere
harass RAF bases one night. Hitler
elephoning Göring, "to keep bomb-

sunny and agents had actually told
Kurt-Hedderheim—Galland's pi-
dly mauled. Hitler phoned Göring
ring found out subsequently that the
d by bad weather." "The German
our fighter losses," he snapped at
impression your fighter losses that
re out of your mind—look at our
the sake of our Luftwaffe prestige,
ps you can take it. I can't!"
t day and cursed for ninety minutes,
ogram, number 224. It featured the

relets in the tunnels at La Spezia; the Germans

262 jet for the first time, but Hitler's eagle eye detected what Göring's had
not—that bomber production virtually vanished in the spring of 1944 although
he was calling for a strike force by May 1944 capable of defeating the
expected Allied invasion in the west.

Göring transmitted Hitler's anger vocally to his staff. "I was told I just
had to hold tight for a year," he raged, "and then everything would come
out right in mid-1944. But that's not true. This month the program shows
410 bombers, and next October only 266. . . . What on earth is the field
marshal [Milch] thinking of? I want an end to this swindling, once and for
all," he shouted, losing his temper. "This is worse than under Udet. Where's
the 'production increase'?" He learned only now that the He 177 would have
no rear gun turret at all. Göring suddenly snapped. Face glistening, he ordered
the arrest of Udet's erstwhile chief engineer Reidenbach by the Gestapo,
along with his "fellow bunglers." "There's to be no court-martial . . . If
they're at fault they'll be executed. Just watch—if we announce in a week's
time that the former heads of development and planning and the chief of
staff of air armament have all been shot—that'll make the whole herd of
swine sit up and take notice!" His staff listened in bemused silence. Göring
reddened. "The field marshal is always talking about shooting people," he
screamed. "When I say it, it will be done without mercy. I am not all
mouth!"

Shaken by the increasing daring of the American raids, Göring flew down
to the Obersalzberg—although he was now understandably reluctant to com-
mit his valuable person to the unfriendly skies. As his Focke-Wulf 200 droned
south for four hours, his colorful imagination came into play as vividly as
though he were once again on the battlements of Veldenstein. Now he imag-
ined himself an American air gunner, trapped in a Flying Fortress while
hundreds of Nazi fighter planes zeroed in and hammered away relentlessly
from every quarter. After an hour he realized that *his ammunition belts were*
empty. Around him (in his imaginary scenario) the other guns were jammed
or the gunners were dead or dying. By the time his plane landed near the
Obersalzberg, he knew how to defeat the Americans: attack and attack and
attack. "There's not one squadron that could take that," he told Galland
and the generals at his villa on the seventh.

Galland blinked skeptically and lit a cigar.

"How long can you fire—from every buttonhole?" persisted Göring.

"Seven minutes," replied the fighter force commander.

"Right," said Göring, and did the calculation for him. "That means you
can make three sorties to engage the enemy during each four-hour raid—if
you really wade into them!"

Galland hesitated to commit himself.

"Three times," said Göring flatly. "I insist!"

Thus he became the architect of the Luftwaffe's biggest victory over the
American bombers one week later.

over 7, 8, and 9, 1943, he held a none of its edge. "Our Luftwaffe," eighth, "is at the bottom of an abyss. and the armed forces. . . . The people and trail along behind while the big cities for hours on end in 'Nurem-bachphrase now.'"

Göring, however, these youngsters to close the enemy to four hundred ave to bring down eighty instead of one, and I will doff my hat to them. and yards, my attitude is this: *Götz*

October 9, a message was handed in northern Germany involving German the American bombers had wrecked plant at Marienburg in East Prussia. "Order," announced Göring. "Orders build six underground factories for

bombers that day. They took revenge and lost thirty more. At midday on the of aircraft-industry bosses at Berch-purs, with Professor Messerschmitt's gh on the agenda. "If only," said dropping a few bombs over there ackout on them too!" More rational in the 264 would delay the Me 262 as the cure to all his strategic prob-ber," agreed Göring with a sigh,

had begun. It was the day that the ty. Their target was once more the ord reached Göring of the drama as lzberg villa. As the American escort closed in, hurling bombs, rockets, hundred heavy bombers. This time, landing all over southern Germany h big gaps already torn in their tight i. First Air Division hit Schweinfurt fighters thundered in simultaneously or only 14 losses that day Galland

would claim to have destroyed 121 of the Americans. Proud and happy at this very real victory, Göring telephoned Hitler at 9:00 P.M.

As bad luck would have it, his rival and enemy Albert Speer was sitting next to Hitler at the precise moment that phone call came through. Putting down his knife and fork, the young minister slipped out to phone one of the ball-bearing factories. The foreman told him that the whole town was devastated. Speer hurried back to report this to Hitler in his own triumphant way. Speer's report at least temporarily diminished the impact of Göring's. In fact, not one tank or plane was lost to the Nazi production in consequence of this raid. The Americans made no further attempt to penetrate deep into the Reich until they obtained proper long-range fighter cover in early 1944.

After Schweinfurt, Göring decided it was safe to go out and tour the ravaged cities of the Rhineland. He had already decided to inspect the fighter, flak, and radar organizations. Surprisingly, wherever his bulletproof limousine halted—whether in Cologne, Wuppertal, Krefeld, or Bochum—he was mobbed by cheering civilians. He took in all the unfamiliar sights of the blitz—people reopening stores amid the rubble; messages chalked on broken walls from relatives seeking next of kin; signboards pointing to shelters; and broad arrows indicating safe escape routes if the whole city should catch fire. True, when Göring appeared, there were ironic shouts of "Call me Meier!" but there were mothers holding out babies to him as well. "I'm human too," he said a few days later, "and I would have understood it if these people who had just ruins all around them—just rubble to the left and right of them—upon seeing a brass hat go by (and the one responsible for the whole mess at that, or at least responsible for their defense)—might, well, not exactly toss rotten eggs at me, but at least throw the odd scowl or shout 'You fat old lump!' " He turned to the generals who had witnessed these scenes with him. "You saw how the people all streamed over to me. What a welcome! I could have cried. And in the fifth year of the war at that! That's when I knew," he continued, "that provided we, their leaders, don't perpetrate any really serious blunders, we can't lose this war!"

In a similarly optimistic vein he addressed bomber pilots of the hard hit KG2 on an air base in Holland. "How he cursed the Dutch," recalled one listener, radio operator Corporal Schürgers, shot down soon after:

He said, "I noticed this morning as I was driving here through Holland, how the mob of women was loafing around with rucksacks and picnicking in the woods of a Sunday morning, instead of working for a living like any decent German woman. *She* is standing at a lathe right now, while these lazy beggars gallivant around and gape at me as I drive past."

"Gentlemen," says he, "I'll soon put a stop to that. I want all Dutchmen who are too idle to work locked up."

heart of the enemy without regard
—"pilots who are absolutely de-
them rather than land without a

ed to win the war by obliterating
than their attempt, launching a raid
ed serious damage on the ministries
s "pet," his Forschungsamt. On
Milch, and their bleary-eyed pro-
ma routine problems of jet-aircraft
industrial manpower. Milch pleaded
the army's reserves of manpower—
million German soldiers now on the
fighting. "Two million soldiers,"
ent line proper in three weeks." But
Göring was cowed into adopting pre-
dmiral Dönitz's record, Göring de-
ber of new front-line soldiers could
eas, never mentioning the army's.
n, killing twelve hundred civilians
ous Kaiserhof Hotel, and the entire
len the flak to open fire since 193
on this occasion the fighters arrived
kers.

tige, Göring ordered an impromptu
tler. He directed his engineers to
the Hs 293 and Fritz antishipping
bomb at Insterburg airbase, which
Lair—on November 26. With the
s engineers of, Göring even ordered
to be shown, like the Junkers 388
two double-row radial BMW 801's.
d pleaded to them on the twenty-

lay was a disaster for Göring.
and, the Reichsmarschall read out
past the rank of parked planes and
103 flying bomb Hitler asked when
staff engineer from Peenemünde,
44." Hitler's face darkened, and
og of New Year's Eve, winced.
paused. "I'm not interested in this
s it carry bombs?"

Messerschmitt bounded forward, saluted, and announced that the 262 could carry one ton.

Hitler announced, "I order this plane built as a bomber!"

He took only Milch onto the roof of the control tower to watch the 262 fly past. "The Reichsmarschall," he said, "is too fat to get up through the trapdoor."

Göring returned to the hunting lodge at Rominten. At Carinhall, gangs of laborers had completed installing twenty-millimeter flak positions and bunkers across the surrounding Schorf Heath. Scores of soldiers were sweeping the leaves of autumn off the estate's asphalt roads, in case the Reichsmarschall returned. But although he had two well-equipped air-raid shelters at Carinhall—one for family and one for staff—Göring decided to remain in East Prussia, far from the howl of the sirens and the blast of the bombs.

On the night of the Insterburg display the RAF sent 450 planes to Berlin and 178 on a diversionary raid to Stuttgart.

Hitler ordered Göring to exact violent retribution against London. The Reichsmarschall called Koller and Pelz aboard his train and directed them to scrape together every available Ju 188, Ju 88, Me 410, and He 177 for Operation Capricorn—planning to saturate the city's air defenses by sending in first 300 bombers, then 200 of them returning that same night, and 150 more the following morning. Pelz suggested sending the ten He 177's to drop two 2500-kilo bombs each, filled with Trialen, on Parliament.

Göring greedily approved. "Just imagine the effect," he chuckled, "of twenty Bix Maxes thumping down with this super explosive in them!"

On December 3, he issued the formal order for a general new blitz on Britain's industrial centers and ports, and directed that the German bombers were, like the British, to carry 70 percent incendiary loads and the biggest blast bombs available. Leaving written instructions with Field Marshal Milch that the Me 262 was "only to be regarded as a jet bomber" as Hitler had ordained, Göring departed for Paris on the sixth, to supervise Capricorn the Blitz on London.

In Paris, surrounded by the familiar cosmopolitan sights and aromas, he reverted to his old haunts and habits. He had been trying for some time to prise out of the Musée de Cluny a fabulous example of German goldsmiths' craft—the Basel altar known as the Antependium of Emperor Otto II. He proposed a swap, acquired title to the three objects offered in exchange, and on December 11, 1943 had the magnificent, ornate Antependium brought around to the Quai d'Orsay. But the French had now grown crafty: They sensed which way the war was turning, and wanted to make a gift of it in recognition of the Reichsmarschall's "services in protecting the national treasures." A gift, in their view, could be subsequently recovered. Outsmarted, Göring gave up this particular quest. Deciding to examine the altar anyway, he knelt artlessly down to scrutinize the pedestal's workmanship.

The museum directors chuckled silently at the image of the paunchy, be-medaled Reichsmarschall groveling before their ancient altar.

Capricorn was delayed, first by weather, then by equipment shortages. Wanting to spend Christmas with his family, Göring returned to Carinhall.

The British night raids on Berlin had not diminished. On typical nights high-powered British transmitters flooded the fighter-controller's radio channels with bell sounds and snatches of Adolf Hitler's speeches. On December 16, Hitler instructed Göring to speed up the Me 262 bomber—although Hitler was thinking now less of reprisals than of the coming Allied invasion. "With every month," he confided to his staff two days later still, "the probability grows that we'll get at least one squadron of jet planes. The vital thing is to rain bombs down on the enemy the moment they invade. . . . Even if there's only one plane up, they'll have to take cover and they'll lose hour after hour! Within half a day we'll be bringing up our reserves. Even if they're pinned down on the beach only six or eight hours, you can figure what that'll mean for them."

That Christmas his troops in Italy presented Göring with something of a cuckoo's egg. His aides Brauchitsch, Gritzsch, and Hofer unpacked from sixteen crates at Carinhall some of the rarest art treasures Göring had ever seen—a prebirthday surprise from the paratroops in Italy. Even Göring became uneasy at theft on such a grand scale. His inquiries revealed that the Italians had evacuated 187 such crates from Naples galleries to the mountaintop abbey at Monte Cassino. With the connivance of the new Nazi "Art Protection Commission" in Rome, the Hermann Göring Division had offered to transport them to the Vatican—but only 172 crates would eventually arrive there (on January 4). The contents of the other sixteen now lay spread out for the Reichsmarschall's delectation—lifesize bronze statues of Hermes Resting, a female dancer, an Apollo from Pompeii, two stags from the Herculeum, antique gold and silver, and a stack of paintings too: two Titians ("Danse" and "Portrait of Lavinia"), a Claude Lorrain landscape, a Raphael, a Tiepolo, a Palma Vecchio, and Pieter Breughel the Elder's famous painting of "The Blind Leading the Blind." His barely used conscience sorely troubled, Göring put them on "temporary" display at Carinhall and asked Hitler for a ruling on this booty. Hitler told him to remove them immediately to the safety of the flak bunker at *Kurfürst*, air-force headquarters outside Berlin.

Ironically it was thus Göring and Hitler who rescued these famous treasures for posterity. American officers afterward solemnly accused the Reichsmarschall of having "stolen" the Monte Cassino treasures: In view of the depredations visited by their strategic bombers upon the historic abbey just a few weeks later, in February 1944, they were, however, in no position to press their point.

The year 1944 would see the first cities, but also the beginning of propelled aircraft leading the way that he attached top priority now and to these jet planes. "If I get off the invasion." It had become evening, Göring sent a telegram even more aircraft types to boost Hitler's help he now planned to put its Jumo 004 jet engine undergr Harz Mountains. There was no newspapers revealed that they too

Göring's fifty-first birthday, a few successors.

Any last vestiges of festive mood from Hitler about the heavy Me 4 cannon, one of the planes displayed Göring testily cabled to Milch that these planes are in operation. Since that virtually no such planes are in been equipped with the cannon, displays in the same light as the first

On January 20, 1944, the RAF drove on Berlin, an extraordinary effort of Luftwaffe's difficulties one year earlier the short range to Stalingrad. Only much-delayed Operation Capricorn hundred bombers had attacked London number arriving at about thirty. General Korten. "Find out!" Göring of the raids on Berlin to the hidden

That winter the paratroop general marschall in this, his natural habit experience.

Brauchitsch apologized that Göring dispute with Milch the day before, art dealers to haggle with. It was 7:00 the lavishly appointed, sixty-foot-long and precious books. "Lieutenant General" Commander of the Second Paratroop service." (He had broken an arm.) light.

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

volume of the pyramid of well known among his per- cautious little jokes about telling one of his buildings, should have at least 400 to took it seriously and said or plans would not permit that "He was particularly of." ³⁰

man purpose, but that does per political and psychologi- id planned: they dominated ie overpowering domes, the ters of passageway which a as finally ushered into the y two forbidding SS men. sonal, cold, and terrifying ritions of his new Chancel- good! When the diplomats werden sie das Fürchten ecting in his memoirs that n of a tyranny." ³¹ It took nclusion.

th in his private collection 1 Nazi Germany, for he was . Approved paintings were edicated in Munich in 1937 which Münchener still call k letters of bronze was em- sonal theory of aesthetics: itismus verpflichtende Mis- ng fanaticism"). At first it l select the paintings to be : learned that examples of ious and shouted that no gallery. The jury was dis- tographer and a man who rian "abysmally ignorant" paintings. Hitler personally

iate between the paintings rty and those he intended al monument an enormous

The Intellectual World of Adolf Hitler

museum with a colonnaded facade over 150 meters in length. In either case, his taste ran heavily to 19th century romantic landscapes, insipid pastoral scenes, and erotic nudes.

The money spent on books and paintings for the Linz Art Center was particularly noteworthy when one considers that these amounts were set aside in the midst of war. During 1943 and 1944 some 3,000 paintings were purchased for Linz at a total cost of 150 million RM. With the Allies about to land in Normandy, Hitler completed negotiations for the purchase of the Mannheimer collection, one of the finest in Europe, for a total of 6 million RM. As Russia counterattacked from the East and the Allies moved in from the West, "expenditures for the year 1944 jumped another 548,766 RM. In 1945 up to the last entry on 1 March [an additional] 53,094 RM had been spent." In the salt mines at Alt-Aussee alone—the largest but not the only cache—there were 6,755 paintings and 237 cases of books for the Linz Center. ³³

When the Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg visited Hitler for his disastrous conference on 11 February 1938 in the Obersalzberg, he admired a Madonna by Dürer. Hitler also boasted that he had "the best collection of the works of Spitzweg in the world" and that he had "paid 80,000 marks for a Defregger." ³⁴ Defregger, a native of the Tyrol, delighted in peasant scenes such as *The Prize Horse* or *The Dance* showing peasants doing the *Schuhplattler*. All of Defregger's characters are chaste, beautiful, handsome, honest, and kind.

Hitler also admired Eduard Grützner, whose pictures of tipsy monks and inebriated butlers seem to have amused him. He was convinced that Grützner was greatly underrated. "Believe me, this Grützner will someday be worth as much as a Rembrandt. Rembrandt himself couldn't have painted that better." Hans Makart was another favorite. When Hitler acquired *Plague in Florence*, a secretary recalled, "his enthusiasm was boundless. He ordered all of us to admire it with him and stood entranced before the huge painting which was completely incomprehensible to me. I found the macabre theme and especially the yellowish-green corpses repulsive, but I didn't convey my repugnance for fear of spoiling his pleasure." ³⁵

But the artist who impressed him most was Franz von Stuck. Indeed, he once told Ernst Hanfstaengl that the two artists who had the greatest impact on his life were Richard Wagner and Franz von Stuck. He was "absolutely enthralled by them both." ³⁶ On going to Hanfstaengl's spacious and art-cluttered home on the Pienzenauerstrasse in Munich he would invariably ask for a volume which contained Stuck's paintings. He pored over them as his breath escaped in little gasps. The volume that Hitler perused so passionately contained the following pictures: *Das böse Gewissen* (*The Evil Conscience*), a title that intrigued him; *Die Sinnlichkeit* (*Sensuality*), showing a voluptuous nude smiling enigmatically as a huge black snake slithers through her legs and around her neck; *Verfolgung* (*Pursuit*), in which a black centaur

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ably been over-flattered by Himmler's attitude and had been tempted to open his heart to him. Eventually I succeeded in persuading Himmler to forget the incident.

Then Luther's clipped speech, full of Berlin slang, came over the telephone: 'I must say, my dear chap, your chief is a real sport—he's a man one can talk to. You know, last night I really got on well with him. My boss can lump it now, as far as I am concerned.' He went on for some time, until in the end I suggested that I should call on him the next day so that we could have a talk.

When we met I gave him a good dressing down and warned him that Himmler was a man of the most complex and changeable disposition who needed time to reach difficult decisions. I insisted also that he should make no move against Ribbentrop without telling me, so that I should have a chance to discuss them fully with Himmler beforehand. Luther gave me a solemn promise that he would do this.

Then one day in January 1943, one of his assistants came to me in a state of great excitement. He told me that Luther had compiled a file against Ribbentrop which contained reports on his personal behaviour, raised serious doubts about his sanity, and indicated that he was obviously not fit to carry on his duties as Foreign Minister. Confident of Himmler's support, and of mine, he had sent this report to various government departments in the hope of bringing about Ribbentrop's downfall. Those involved were waiting for Himmler to say the word 'go' before taking any action. Luther therefore wanted me to induce Himmler to begin his attack without delay, and asked me to arrange for him to see Himmler immediately.

I had to think the situation over quickly—Luther seemed to have acted in defiance of our agreement. I was by no means certain whether Himmler had managed to re-establish and strengthen his position with Hitler sufficiently to be able to launch an all-out attack against Ribbentrop. On the whole, however, I welcomed Luther's move, though it would have been foolish to commit myself prematurely. Consequently, I made everything conditional upon Himmler's approval, which I said I would try to secure that very day.

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This conversation took place during the afternoon. It was not until the evening that I telephoned Himmler, who told me to go to him at once. Unfortunately, I had first of all to discuss some urgent Secret Service matters with him, which took a great deal of time because of his lack of decision. I did not know that he had to appear at an official gathering that evening; however, I did notice that while I was telling him what Luther had done, he became increasingly nervous and impatient, and presently SS Obergruppenfuehrer Wolff looked in to warn him to get ready.

I had to act swiftly, and as soon as Wolff had left the room I began to press Himmler to take immediate action in support of Luther. But he hesitated, twisting this way and that, then was just about to say 'yes', when Obergruppenfuehrer Wolff appeared again, carrying Himmler's coat. Himmler rose, and in a few words explained the situation to him, then said, more by the way of a question, 'That, I presume, will settle—'

At this dramatic moment Wolff, who had always held Luther in contempt, butted in. 'But, Herr Reichsfuehrer, you cannot let SS Obergruppenfuehrer Joachim von Ribbentrop, one of the highest ranking members of our order, be kicked out by this scoundrel Luther. It would be a grave infringement of the rules of the Order. I'm certain you would never get Hitler's approval.'

Suddenly all Himmler's old animosity against Luther was revived. I knew only too well that if Luther were dropped now, for reasons of SS etiquette, his fate would be sealed. It occurred to me therefore that it might be more prudent to give up for the moment and return to the matter when circumstances were more favourable. But it seemed as if Luther's destruction was pre-ordained. A nervous restlessness had seized Himmler, and he muttered repeatedly, 'Yes, yes, Woelffchen, you are right.' I interrupted him: 'Herr Reichsfuehrer—I must beg you not to reach a hasty decision in this matter. It is too complex and its effects are too far-reaching.'

It was impossible to guess what was going on inside Himmler's mind at this moment; I imagine he was trying to gauge his present position with Hitler and decide what risks he could take. I felt the decision was going against me, but he left without making up his mind.

I was disappointed and at a loss what I could have had another talk with him. When I turned over a thousand possibilities to him at midnight I was a telephone call.

It was Mueller, who told me to turn Luther's case over to him to put myself at his disposal and told me to have Luther's assistant the morning and get a written statement from him. This Mueller part of his evidence. I hung up in the most unpleasant situation.

The next morning I telephoned him more evasive and indefinite, but calm down. After all, no final decision reached yet. Whatever happens I'll give you a chance to see.

Luther's colleague was cross-examined and then arrested. A succession of interrogations. Finally, Luther himself a non-stop interrogation. All of opinions. Ribbentrop was serious, and if the country had been enough. But the machinery of the Third Reich the protocol of the High Order of the Specially incriminating facts were and disappeared into Himmler's. Himmler did this in order to protect the good name of the SS.

After eight days Ribbentrop went and went at once to see Hitler. (one-sided version of the incident. was nothing but an unpleasant at the foreign policy which Hitler had

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I was disappointed and at a loss what to do next. I wished that I could have had another talk with Himmler that night, but knowing his fixed habits I realized it would be unwise even to try. I turned over a thousand possibilities and still could find no way out. Then at midnight I was aroused from my brooding by a telephone call.

It was Mueller, who told me curtly that Himmler had decided to turn Luther's case over to him for investigation. He asked me to put myself at his disposal and give him information. He then told me to have Luther's assistant in my office the first thing in the morning and get a written statement from him about his conversation with me. This Mueller wanted to use as the principal part of his evidence. I hung up without saying good-bye. It was a most unpleasant situation.

The next morning I telephoned Himmler. He could not have been more evasive and indefinite, but eventually he said, 'Now, now, calm down. After all, no final decision against Luther has been reached yet. Whatever happens I will have time to think the matter over and I'll give you a chance to discuss it with me once more.'

Luther's colleague was cross-examined by Mueller the next day, and then arrested. A succession of Foreign Office officials was then interrogated. Finally, Luther himself was arrested and put through a non-stop interrogation. All of them stood resolutely by their opinions. Ribbentrop was seriously incriminated by their testimonies, and if the country had been run by responsible leaders, that should have been enough for his dishonourable dismissal. But the machinery of the Third Reich worked in a different way; the protocol of the High Order of the SS stood above everything. Specially incriminating facts were removed from the testimony and disappeared into Himmler's desk. I was never clear whether Himmler did this in order to have a reserve of incriminating material should a need arise for it later on, or whether he did it to protect the good name of the SS.

After eight days Ribbentrop received a summary of the files and went at once to see Hitler. Of course, his was an extremely one-sided version of the incident. This affair, he told the Fuehrer, was nothing but an unpleasant attack by a subordinate official on the foreign policy which Hitler himself ordered. Ribbentrop de-

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mandated that Luther should be removed from office for insubordination and hanged for defeatism. But this was too much even for Hitler. He must have discussed the case with Himmler too; anyway, he finally ordered that Luther be dismissed and put in a concentration camp for the duration of the war.

When I discussed the matter with Himmler later on, I did not try to conceal my disappointment. I told him frankly that his handling of the affair had been most unfortunate. Himmler silently accepted this reproach. I demanded that he should not carry out the severe sentences which Ribbentrop wanted to impose upon Luther's colleagues. Himmler agreed, and no further punishments were dealt out, except to a few officials who were transferred to front line duty with the Waffen SS. Hitler had expressly forbidden that I should visit Luther, but I used my influence with Mueller to secure preferential treatment for him. Later I heard that at the end of the war Luther refused to help in building a bridge for the Russians in the eastern Sector of Berlin, claiming exemption as a concentration camp inmate, and that he had been shot on the spot by a Russian sergeant for refusing to obey orders.

* * *

While I should have liked to go ahead as quickly as possible with the plans laid down at Zhitomir, I realized that hasty action would be fatal. I could only employ such Secret Service contacts as I had built up over the past few years, and I did not wish to use the most important of these hastily, but to reserve them for the final negotiations. At the same time, I confess I was a little worried by the fact that I, the youngest member of Himmler's staff, had succeeded in securing such sweeping authority for myself. I had to overcome a feeling of insecurity. Was Himmler's promise honestly and seriously meant? I already suspected a strong element of indecision in his character, and I decided not to rush my fences.

I began by establishing contact with a British official who was at that time in Zurich. He expressed his readiness to begin preliminary conversations with an authorized German representative. Later he sent word that he had in fact received authorization

from Churchill to carry out negotiations, subject to certain assurances, come to Germany to pursue Secret Service level. He was well informed.

After these preparations were made on the first steps that I had taken to secure his agreement here I experienced my first doubts with me for hours, and I soon found the matter were becoming more complicated. At first I did not understand but then I realized he was serious. I imagine my disgust and dismay in his manner, he came to me and would be best to discuss the matter.

I pointed out that fundamental line of policy he had chosen would be catastrophic if Ribbentrop's thing depended on his exclusive likely—then we should meet plans. I was at a loss to understand how to bring him in.

He replied to my argument against the Fuehrer—I wanted a decision, and you'll have to make it.

And so the whole matter was closed—and neither of them could gather, neither so courteous and meaningless as I had feared, all this put to discuss the affair with Himmler apathetically, showing nothing, while Ribbentrop, on the other hand, was very direct.

It was obvious that Hitler and later I received a note from the Secret Service to contact this as defeatism, which, from

in office for insubordination was too much even with Himmler too; missed and put in a letter.

Later on, I did not say frankly that his fate was unfortunate. Himmler said that he should not stop wanted to improve, and no further officials who were in the SS. Hitler had said, but I used my influence for him. He refused to help in the Sector of Berlin, inmate, and that he went for refusing to

as quickly as possible and that hasty action by the Secret Service contacts did not wish to use force against them for the time being. I was a little member of Himmler's authority for my part. Was Himmler's suspicion a strong one? He decided not to rush

an official who was unwilling to begin German representation without authorization

from Churchill to carry on such unofficial exploratory conversations, subject to certain assurances. Finally, he was even ready to come to Germany to pursue these talks at the appropriate Secret Service level. He was well informed about me and my attitude.

After these preparations were completed I reported to Himmler on the first steps that I had taken under his authority. My object was to secure his agreement before venturing any further, but here I experienced my first disappointment. He discussed the affair with me for hours, and I soon began to notice that his views on the matter were becoming more and more involved and changeable. At first I did not understand why he was behaving in this manner, but then I realized he was scared by his own daring. It is easy to imagine my disgust and disappointment when, in his best schoolmaster's manner, he came out with the suggestion that perhaps it would be best to discuss the whole thing with Ribbentrop first of all.

I pointed out that fundamentally this would be against the general line of policy he had laid down and developed. It would be catastrophic if Ribbentrop agreed to the scheme, for the whole thing depended on his exclusion. Should he reject it—as was most likely—then we should merely have called his attention to our plans. I was at a loss to understand Himmler's motives in wanting to bring him in.

He replied to my argument impatiently: 'I am tired of working against the Fuehrer—I want to work with him. That's my final decision, and you'll have to put up with it.'

And so the whole matter was placed before Ribbentrop. As far as I could gather, neither of them in discussing it went beyond courteous and meaningless formalities—fencing with their visors closed—and neither of them divulged his real thoughts.

As I had feared, all this put Ribbentrop on his guard; he decided to discuss the affair with Hitler. Himmler watched this development apathetically, showing a cowardly lack of decision and doing nothing, while Ribbentrop, as they say, 'cleaned up'.

It was obvious that Hitler discussed this matter with Himmler, and later I received a note from Ribbentrop in which occurred a passage that I have never forgotten: 'I forbid the political sector of the Secret Service to contact enemy nationals in this way. I regard this as defeatism, which, from now on, will be severely punished.'

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On the other hand, if any Englishman should wish to converse with us, he must first hand us a declaration of surrender'—an echo of Hitler's own words on the subject.

When we next discussed the matter, Himmler was sullen and taciturn, possibly because of a guilty conscience. In an impassioned appeal I declared that things could not possibly go on like this: it indicated a complete misconception of the nature of a Secret Service. One expected such things from Ribbentrop, but I asked Himmler to show more understanding for my tasks, as well as for me personally, and for the scheme which he himself had approved.

He rambled on evasively, and finally said, 'Well, you know, perhaps you did make a mistake after all, but I won't hold it against you. Perhaps it was unwise to contact the British directly. Maybe you should have used a neutral as a buffer.'

Of course, this was only an attempt to save his face. But I grasped the opportunity at once and answered casually, 'Very well, in the future I shall see to it that these things are handled through neutral channels.' I wanted to try to save at least part of the foundations laid at Zhitomir.

Himmler agreed. His reaction was typical; he seemed relieved, freed from the trammels of his own conscience, and therefore generous. I exploited this at once, and said that in future I would continue to work along the lines which we had discussed, but would take all possible precautions. I was careful to add, however, that contact between members of my service and enemy nationals might still occur, since this could not possibly be avoided.

Again Himmler's reaction was true to form: 'Well, I don't wish to know all those details—that's your responsibility.'

It was then that I decided personally to take up certain secret and long-standing service connections with Switzerland, for no other purpose than to try to bring peace one step closer. I had a personal conversation with Brigadier Masson, then Chief of the Swiss Secret Service, and this led to further talks. But the failure to remove Ribbentrop, Himmler's wavering, and the unconditional surrender policy of Casablanca, frustrated any real progress in the matter, despite continual efforts to keep these tenuous contacts in being.

After a short time Himmler succeeded in re-establishing his former position of power and confidence with Hitler, who at

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length believed his version of the whole thing to the detriment of the cause because no chief of the German Secret Service was pointed to replace Heydrich. The appointment of the new chief would have been almost certainly selected, Obergrenze. Hitler was convinced that Kaltenbrunner was an Austrian, the job, of which undoubtedly the Fuehrer were not the best qualified.

Incidentally, Himmler, who was a foibles, had been able to get a higher SS and police leader post. Thus, even Kaltenbrunner's impending appointment was a day. Afterwards Kersten, a callous ox to examine a wood would be more suitably only capable of the job, but he still seems to think.

Kaltenbrunner was a genuine real lumberjack. It was the character of the man, with the back of his head, coarseness. His small, petulant they looked at one fixed petrify its prey. When on thing, his angular, wooden then, after several seconds, table and begin to speak. ing at the hands of an old the fingers were brown. smoked up to one hundred

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length believed his version of the Horia Sima affair. He attributed the whole thing to the fact that Himmler had been over-worked because no chief of the Reich Security Centre had yet been appointed to replace Heydrich. Thus the whole matter also affected the appointment of the new chief of the RSHA. My own choice would have been almost anyone except the man whom Hitler finally selected, Oberguppenfuehrer Ernst Kaltenbrunner. But Hitler was convinced that this countryman of his—for Kaltenbrunner was an Austrian—had all the necessary qualifications for the job, of which unconditional obedience and personal loyalty to the Fuehrer were not the least important.

Incidentally, Himmler, in accordance with one of his peculiar foibles, had been able to arrange for Dr Kersten to examine all the higher SS and police leaders who were being considered for the post. Thus, even Kaltenbrunner, having no idea as yet of his impending appointment, was examined by the 'fat fellow' one day. Afterwards Kersten said to me, 'I've seldom had such a tough, callous ox to examine as this fellow Kaltenbrunner. A block of wood would be more sensitive. He's coarse, hard-bitten, probably only capable of thinking when he's drunk. Naturally he'll be the right man for Hitler. I gave Himmler a report on all this, but he still seems to think he's the right man.'

Kaltenbrunner was a giant in stature, heavy in his movements—a real lumberjack. It was his square, heavy chin which expressed the character of the man. The thick neck, forming a straight line with the back of his head, increased the impression of rough-hewn coarseness. His small, penetrating, brown eyes were unpleasant; they looked at one fixedly, like the eyes of a viper seeking to petrify its prey. When one expected Kaltenbrunner to say something, his angular, wooden face would remain quite inexpressive; then, after several seconds of oppressive silence he would bang the table and begin to speak. I always had the feeling that I was looking at the hands of an old gorilla. They were much too small, and the fingers were brown and discoloured, for Kaltenbrunner smoked up to one hundred cigarettes a day.

My first proper contact with him was in January 1943, and from the first moment he made me feel quite sick. He had very bad teeth and some of them were missing, so that he spoke very

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Of particular importance to him was the fact that he knew of my aim to separate the Secret Service from the RSHA. The significance of this was reinforced by the fact that though he was Chief of the RSHA, I was the only one of the departmental chiefs under him who had the privilege of direct access to Himmler, who had quite clearly indicated to Kaltenbrunner the nature of my exceptional status. On the other hand, Himmler gave Kaltenbrunner the right to take a personal interest in the Secret Service abroad, and indeed encouraged him actively to occupy himself with the needs of my department. My having direct access to Himmler was the worst thorn in Kaltenbrunner's flesh. My limited interest in nicotine and alcohol was another thing which infuriated him. On several occasions he tried to force me to exceed my quota of one or two glasses of wine.

The more desperate the situation became towards the end of the war, the more Kaltenbrunner drank. I would find him in his office at eleven o'clock in the morning, having risen hardly more than half an hour earlier, his small eyes dull and empty. With the joviality of a drunkard he would reach under his desk, or bellow 'Orderly!' and pour out a glass of champagne or brandy for me. Then, when he became too obstreperous, I would take a nip or two to pacify him and pour the rest on to the carpet. Usually he did not notice this, but once when he did, the veins in his face became so swollen with rage that I thought he was about to have a stroke.

In the last years of the war I was forced to have lunch with the departmental heads of the RSHA, which we all had together on Himmler's orders. Kaltenbrunner presided, and availed himself of the opportunity to attack me in the most sadistic manner. To put up with this cost me dear. I complained to Himmler that this half hour took more out of me in nervous control than ten days' hard work. Himmler was much concerned and tried to calm me by telling me not to pay any attention, but because of Kaltenbrunner's relationship with Hitler, Himmler considered it important that I should not increase my reputation for unsociability. Among the top leaders I had few friends and many enemies, so there was nothing for me to do but to put up with it. I am not exaggerating when I say that because of such associations alone those terrible last years of the war seemed a real torture to me.

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ideas and travelled restlessly
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For me the climax, as in the
year 1943 was the penultimate
the tragic conclusion.) I ex-
plained to my colleagues in in-
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and clearly that otherwise we
could not do our work. Our information
was well founded that we would
need the necessity of an alternative

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possible manœuvre, together
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our Military and Political
to the imminence of such a

change. Yet in spite of this, Canaris's reports to his immediate
superior, Field-Marshal Keitel, were reassuring. Hitler's anxiety
and suspicion had been aroused, however, by my reports. But as
the only possible preventative measures would have to be of a
military nature, the army had the last word. At Keitel's suggestion
Canaris was sent to discuss the situation with General Amé—a sug-
gestion which was probably Canaris's own in the first place. For
he and Amé were both agreed that Italy's exit from the war
should proceed undisturbed by any German measures. This agree-
ment, of course, remained a secret between the two, while offi-
cially Amé's reassurances were brought back to Keitel: Long live
the Axis—Italy is the most faithful of allies.

Six days later I was able to present Himmler with a dossier
which included absolute proof of Canaris's treachery. Neverthe-
less, Himmler refrained from passing the dossier on to Hitler. The
facts of the case came to light in the following manner. One of
Canaris's assistants, Colonel Helfferich, was on the staff of the
German Military Attaché in Rome, General von Rintelen. The
Colonel employed two Italian chauffeurs who were both homo-
sexuals and both in Amé's service. I pointed out the dangers of
this arrangement to Canaris, but Helfferich was of such high
standing that he pooh-poohed my warning. 'Ach, Schellenberg,
after one's been in our profession a while one begins to see pink
elephants everywhere.'

One of these chauffeurs was unwittingly the most valuable
source of information for my political Secret Service, for he re-
peated all Amé's assignments and conversations to a friend who
was in our pay. Thus we were able to piece together a very clear
picture of the planned coup, and of how far Canaris was involved
in the affair.

I remember adding the following sentence to the dossier which I
gave to Himmler: 'It would have been better for Admiral Canaris
to have concerned himself with his own tasks in Italy, rather than
to carry on such sessions with Amé.'

During the years 1941-1942 the greater part of the work of my
organization was concerned with silencing treacherous informers
in Italy. Until the capitulation of the Afrika Corps in May 1943,
there was not a single German tanker, troopship or aerial transport

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whose position was not reported to the western Allies. This is an established fact. It certainly would have been more in the interests of the German soldiers if the Abwehr had honestly carried out their tasks of counter-espionage.

acme? Himmler always held Canaris up to me as a wise and experienced chief of Secret Intelligence from whom I could learn much. His faults and his opposition to the régime were another chapter, with which I need not concern myself. When I presented my reports about his various betrayals, Himmler would nervously tap his thumbnail against his teeth and say, 'Leave the dossier here with me. I will bring it to Hitler's attention when the right opportunity arises.' Again and again I raised these matters because of their importance to Germany's war effort, but Himmler obviously did not wish to be burdened with the responsibility. Like Heydrich, he seemed to have some inhibitions with regard to the Admiral. I am certain that at some time or other Canaris must have got to know something incriminating against Himmler, for otherwise there is no possible explanation of Himmler's reaction to the material which I placed before him.

During the following years Canaris's work grew continually worse. In spite of his intelligence, his behaviour aroused suspicion and many people became convinced that he was involved in treasonable activities. Himmler had decided to employ a sort of snowball tactic against him. He never spontaneously expressed his opinion on Canaris to Hitler, but always waited until the problem of Canaris was raised by Hitler himself. Meanwhile, he saw to it that other leaders, both political and of the Wehrmacht, who for one reason or another were opposed to the Admiral, continually kept the subject of Canaris in the limelight. Himmler regularly furnished this anti-Canaris clique with new material against him, and so added continually to the stiffening opposition.

In the middle of 1943 Canaris's staunch supporter, Keitel, tried to come to his aid by arranging a game of musical chairs in Canaris's departments. He told Hitler that he had taken these steps as Chief of the OKW. A fresh wind was to blow in Canaris's service and new heads were appointed to all departments. But this last attempt was in vain because by 1944 Canaris's personal and professional failings had so incriminated him in Hitler's eyes that

he had been relieved of it that the conduct of the w. fied German Intelligence : one of the main points of in 1941.)

The inevitable downfall at the beginning of Aug Secret Service office with phone call from SS Gruf Kaltenbrunner, had been into the plot of July 20. (me and tried to incrimina voice Mueller ordered me him that he was under ; Kaltenbrunner. I was to ta burg, and not to return w been cleared up.

I said that I was not an e carrying out such an assign me. 'Furthermore,' I said, is an imposition.'

'You know,' said Muell charge of the investigati refuse to comply with th will have to suffer the cor

I realized at once what t would have an excellen Mueller and Kaltenbrunn bore me, had already trie agent in connection with Therefore I had to be on Mueller I hung up. After c to comply. I also thought able to be of some help t Baron von Voelkersam al accompany me. The Baro operations in Belgium in 1 had also served under Can

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Goebbels, as Propaganda Minister, had established a comprehensive monitoring service which served mainly to supply his Ministry with suitable material for propaganda to enemy countries. This service, with its host of foreigners working as monitors, was of course a breeding ground for the enemy's intelligence services, and was therefore under constant and thorough surveillance by the Gestapo. My approach in this matter was cautious and involved a great deal of patient and painstaking work, in which I was given valuable assistance by Naumann, Under-Secretary of State in the Propaganda Ministry, who also enjoyed the fullest confidence of Himmler. Naumann, a dynamic personality, identified himself fully with the tasks of the Secret Service, and indeed he was the only one who was able to match and counter the brilliant dialectics of his chief.¹ Time and again he managed to neutralize violent attacks by Goebbels against me personally.

During 1943 Goebbels and I were at loggerheads over the question of the treatment of the churches. I had warned Himmler not to fall in blindly with Goebbels's and Bormann's anti-church campaign, for as Hitler's heir presumptive he would lose any potential confidence abroad once he allowed himself to be involved in these matters. Under the influence of Goebbels a point had been reached in the autumn of 1943 when Hitler was seriously considering the deportation of the Pope into a kind of exile at Avignon. In extensive reports I tried to point out the immense disadvantages that would result from such an action and how it would discredit Germany in the eyes of the entire world. At last, Himmler agreed with my views and took the matter up with Hitler, who then gave him a comparatively reasonable answer: 'If full churches contribute to the maintenance of unity amongst the German people, then I cannot object to it, in view of the strains imposed by such a war as this.'

The set-backs we had received in rapid succession in the years 1943 and 1944—the capitulation of our armies at Stalingrad, the collapse of our African army in Tunisia, the landing of the Allies in Sicily, the fall and arrest of Mussolini, the capitulation of Italy, all

¹ Werner Naumann was arrested by the British authorities in January 1953, together with six other Nazi leaders on the grounds that they were trying to seize power in Germany. He was released in July of the same year.

1943 #

in 1943, and finally the invasion of France in 1944—confirmed the analysis of the situation that I had given to Himmler at Zhitomir during August 1942.

In view of this meeting, I had taken up indirect contacts with the Russians through Switzerland and Sweden, and it seemed to me that they were genuinely interested in negotiations which might end the fighting with us. But all my efforts were wrecked by Ribbentrop's shortsighted clumsiness and his incredible conceit and optimism in spite of all reverses. Before agreeing, for instance, to meet the Russians, he demanded proof that their representatives were not of Jewish origin. Of course it may easily have been that the willingness of the Russians to negotiate was simply a manoeuvre to bring pressure on the Allies to open their Second Front. But whatever the reason, we were in no position to turn them down.

As soon as I heard from Dr Kersten that a Mr Hewitt, an American diplomat, was in Stockholm ready to talk about the possibility of peace negotiations, I took a special plane to Sweden. Mr Hewitt was Roosevelt's special representative for European affairs. Taking all possible precautions for secrecy, I met him in his suite at one of the largest hotels in Stockholm. Afterwards I asked some well-informed Swedish friends to tell me precisely the extent of Hewitt's influence. The references they gave him were excellent. Apparently he had a decisive influence on Roosevelt in all matters concerning Europe. Therefore, on my own responsibility and without reservations, I told him how essential a compromise peace was to Germany. He agreed to arrange official negotiations as soon as I gave my consent. When our talks ended, I flew back to Berlin and worked all night on a report to Himmler.

The next afternoon at three o'clock I saw him and informed him fully about my conversations with Hewitt. He was confused and quite aghast at my independent actions, and kept shaking his head and literally gasping for breath. Then he began to talk and gradually worked himself into a state of rage. Fortunately at its climax he had to take part in some ceremony, but later he called me to his office again to continue our talk. There followed a heated discussion between us. I was lucky not to be arrested, but all my plans were upset. My powers of persuasion, my efforts to present

my analysis of the situation of Germany comprehensible to Himmler, were the spell which Hitler still ex-

* 1

When in the summer of 1944 I see him at his summer residence in apprehension. I had not heard from him sure that he must have been brooding which would solve all problems. I combined the trip with an inter up his headquarters in a special mountain retreat. I was very over just when I was taking over Canadian Service.

Ribbentrop lived at Fuschl in a magnificent park, which the staff that he could receive important Hitler. Contrary to his usual cordiality, asked how my work in important my department had been whether this was plain hypocrisy or motive. Calmly I waited for his answer.

After declaring his wholehearted of the Secret Service, he said he visited United States and especially on Roosevelt. He also wanted me to arrange to agents to work in America on a visualized a great radio campaign national minorities in the United States Roosevelt's re-election. We discussed why these minorities should vent Roosevelt's re-election. He said "They don't have to have any important thing is for us to find activities by broadcasts from Europe. They

I pointed out that there were among them the great burden be-

Jan '43

Ribbentrop's expensive tastes. Luther, who had special access to party funds, had been able to supply the money for the von Ribbentrops' indulgence — in 1942 the wallpaper in the Dahlem villa was changed four times to please Annelies von Ribbentrop — but now the disbursements came to a stop. These were Luther's claims.

Although Himmler still liked von Ribbentrop, Heydrich and the SD had always hated him. One of the points of friction between Heydrich and von Ribbentrop was that the SD wanted to install its own secret agents in the ministry's embassies and ministries. Von Ribbentrop tried to stipulate that they be controlled by him, and a major contest about areas of competence and supervision soon developed. Eventually, through Luther, a deal was made that showed the SD's strength. SD agents were to become part of most of the missions, carried as members but not directly responsible to von Ribbentrop. For instance, they would use special green envelopes because their mail was to remain uncensored. Special radio transmitters were to be built for them, but not inside embassies. In certain emergency cases, the SD could use the broadcast facilities of the missions.

During this contest, Schellenberg reported to Professor de Crinis, a well-known SS medical adviser, that von Ribbentrop's face would slacken on one side whenever he got tired, and his eyelids would droop. Dr. de Crinis claimed that these dysfunctions were due to von Ribbentrop's early kidney problems and would get worse.²

According to Schellenberg's memoirs, Luther's attack on his own minister was meant to ingratiate him with Himmler; for years he had not been loved by the black-shirted fraternity. Luther probably sensed that von Ribbentrop was sliding while Himmler was growing in power. When Schellenberg first brought Luther's evidence of von Ribbentrop's extravagance and diplomatic incompetence to Himmler, the Reichsführer SS was tempted to take action, but his aide, SS General Wolff, the man von Ribbentrop had once flown to Scotland, came to the minister's defense. Wolff said, "You cannot allow SS General von Ribbentrop, one of our highest officials, to be wrecked by his miserable crook Luther." Himmler, who had been sitting on the fence, agreed, particularly after Wolff correctly pointed out that Hitler would never dismiss his "Bismarck" because of accusations brought by Luther, a nobody.

The next day a feared senior Gestapo official named Heinrich Müller questioned several quaking subordinates of Luther. A week later Luther was arrested, and von Ribbentrop was given the file of accusations Luther had compiled. He took them to Adolf Hitler, pointing out that Luther had committed treason by criticizing Adolf

Scam?

Hitler's own foreign policy, and demanded that Luther be hanged for "defeatism." Hitler thought that excessive for an old party comrade, so he ordered that Luther be jailed in Sachsenhausen concentration camp. He became a "privileged" prisoner and was later freed by the Russians. Some say they shot him. Others report he died of a heart attack. The file of accusations against von Ribbentrop remained locked in Himmler's desk. He need not have worried; von Ribbentrop was now umbilically linked to the SS.

In Rome, for instance, he reprimanded a head of mission, Consul Eitel Moellhausen, for interfering with the SS. The consul wanted to warn the minister that eight thousand Jews were to be deported from Rome by the SD for liquidation in Mauthausen concentration camp. On October 10, 1943, the consul was told "to leave things in the hands of the SS and not to interfere." Great offense was taken by the ministry in Berlin that the consul had used the word "liquidation" in his cable.

On May 10 the North African campaign collapsed in Tunis. Von Arnim surrendered to Montgomery. It was the beginning of the avalanche.

It could not have failed to reach the ears of the von Ribbentrops that there was a small but growing anti-Hitler resistance movement. It was probably strongest among certain Army officers, most of them from titled families. Other resistance groups formed around the newly formed "confessing Christians," who refused to accept the official Nazi-tainted Protestant "Reich Church," which had its own Nazi bishop.

The most professional anti-Hitler cell grew around Admiral Canaris, the head of German Armed Forces Intelligence, and several of the senior officers around General Beck, who had wanted to take over the government just before the Munich Conference in 1938. Although there were rumors about these resistance cells, there had been no arrests.

More than ever, Germans, particularly those in the upper strata, with their international connections, looked over their shoulders in fear of the growing strength of the SD and the Gestapo. The SS, like a bull terrier that would rather drown than relinquish its hold on a swimming victim, committed its horrors until the very moment the Allies poured through the walls of their concentration camps and jails.

One case of open resistance became known in many parts of Germany: the White Rose, an innocent, defenseless, and deeply religious group of young Catholics, who chose the gentle flower as their

symbol. The White the University of M bias. Their leaders w a student at the un named Kurt Huber. became disenchante against Jews and Pc convicted of treason. execution, took four The student resist all sang a great Ger neously whenever t ganda:

Die Gedanken sind
sie Ziehen vorbei u
Kein Mensch kann
Es bleibt dabei, die
Und sperrt man mi
das alles sind rein v
denn meine Gedan
und Mauern entzw.

Thoughts are free,
They pass like the s
No man can know
That's the way it is.
And if you lock me
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In 1943 the bomb
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symbol. The *White Rose* fliers, which they wrote and distributed at the University of Munich, condemned Nazi thought and antireligious bias. Their leaders were Hans Scholl, an army medic, his sister Sophie, a student at the university, and their mentor, a professor of music named Kurt Huber. Hans had been an enthusiastic Hitler Youth but became disenchanted after seeing the Einsatzkommandos in action against Jews and Poles. He and his sister and Huber were arrested, convicted of treason, and beheaded. The entire process, from arrest to execution, took four days.

The student resistance groups of 1942, of which there were several, all sang a great German folk song. They would take it up spontaneously whenever they were forced to listen to Goebbels's propaganda:

*Die Gedanken sind Frei, wer kann sie erraten,
sie Ziehen vorbei wie nächtliche Schatten.
Kein Mensch kann sie wissen, kein Jäger erschiessen.
Es bleibt dabei, die Gedanken sind Frei.*

*Und sperrt man mich ein in finstere Kerker,
das alles sind rein vergebliche Werke;
denn meine Gedanken zerreißen die Schranken
und Mauern entzwei, die Gedanken sind frei.*

Thoughts are free, who can guess them,
They pass like the shadows of night.
No man can know them, no hunter can shoot them
That's the way it is. Thoughts are free.

And if you lock me in a dark vault,
It will be a waste of effort.
My thoughts will tear up gates and walls,
Because thoughts are free.

In 1943 the bombings of Germany intensified. The RAF continued its night attacks, and now the American Eighth Air Force added saturation daylight attacks with its large new B-17 Flying Fortresses. The old building of the Foreign Ministry on the Wilhelmstrasse suffered severe damage, but the staff kept working, although the top floors were gone. The work was carried on with no heat that cold autumn and winter, and with pools of water on the thick carpets whenever it rained. Each chandelier became a fountain; windows were haphazardly nailed shut. Von Ribbentrop's own office had been "moved" by the bombers to the floor below its usual location.³

The minister had stayed as long as he could in East Prussia, lambasting his Berlin staff from a distance, exhorting them to greater

1943

efforts in the Führer's task of resettling people to suit his vision of the future. Meanwhile, Berlin was bombed day and night, and the ruined Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church stands to this day at the end of the Ku'damm, preserved in its grotesque 1943 agony.

Probably the heaviest loss of human life in 1943 through air attacks came in Hamburg, which was attacked twice during July by over twelve thousand British bombers. Fatalities were 30,480 people; 277,330 apartments were burned out. Twenty-four hospitals were destroyed. Two hundred and twenty schools and fifty-eight churches were razed. This was only a token of the terrible destruction yet to come.

The Luftwaffe was no longer able to keep its enemies at bay. The industrial Ruhr was smashed, its capital, Düsseldorf, flattened by two thousand tons of bombs, and two vast dams in the valley were breached, drowning thousands. Nürnberg, Hitler's mecca, was blasted in March, and a day later, the *Geburtsstadt der Bewegung*, the birthplace of the movement — Munich. Göring took to his bed and then to several of his homes, isolating himself from the truth that Germany was not able to keep up the air contest. Even the visit from young General Adolf Galland, when the fighter ace told him of the fantastic new Messerschmitt jet pursuit craft, the ME-262, had failed to rouse Göring from his daydreams of shopping and collecting *objets d'art*.

Hitler barely spoke to him, and Göring did not seek contact with the Reich's leaders. His only moments of joy came when he was introduced to V-1, the self-propelled, jet-powered bomb later known as the buzz bomb in England. Revenge! V for *Vergeltung* (vengeance).

Von Ribbentrop's activities in 1943 were limited. In February, he had the dubious joy of traveling to Rome to explain the Stalingrad disaster to a cynical Duce and his less than sympathetic son-in-law, Ciano, who was about to lose his job (he was sent to the Vatican) and, less than a year later, his life.

Early on July 10, the Allies landed in Sicily, and the Duce himself was only fifteen days from being deposed. After a meeting with the King, he was arrested by the Carabinieri, ushered into a waiting ambulance, and taken into confinement at a Carabinieri barracks.

It became von Ribbentrop's task to meet with Badoglio's new regime at Tarvisio, a border town. Badoglio, Italy's most distinguished marshal, was commanded by the King to form a post-Mussolini government. Von Ribbentrop tried to save some semblance of Axis solidarity, but just to make sure that he would not be kidnaped, he brought along a bodyguard of pistol-wielding SS. Raffaele Guariglia, the new Italian foreign minister, swore solidarity, but General Vittorio

Ambrosio, the new German troops no followed two hour raised an arm in the out. Schmidt, who to see the embarrass same people he had On September 8, I put under arrest by

In 1943, with e have realized that soon invade the he: Russians would dri The German Ai not yet faced the m waffe was helpless destroy the enorm tains of supplies. I Ribbentrop? Was t They were being pu heavy bombardmer What remained of with Adolf Hitler?

On September : his face, was rescu Imperatore high u Adolf Hitler woul over his blue suit a and the group of C With only centime groped its way dov with its load of th and then the six-fo secret agent. They waffe's best, ran th thousand-meter drc pulled out of the di solini, who fancied He had pulled it off In the Imperial I was decorated with colonel who had be

*D. T. these
illuminate

July '43

take off his own Knight's Cross and hang it around Skorzeny's vast neck. Adolf Hitler still had a sense of drama, though the wasteful and dangerous act of saving Mussolini, his old patron and idol, was merely a sop to Hitler's vanity. It turned out to be poisonous for Mussolini's self-esteem.

Himmler was delighted. The rescue was an SS operation, and the "Black Knights" had received another enormous boost in prestige, though one asks oneself, "For what?" Surely the Reichsführer of the SS must have known that the Reich's days of glory were ending. Was there still hope?

There were to be a few more moments of elation, a few fleeting hours when Hitler's stubborn belief in his destiny would seem nearly justified, but not in 1943 during that September.

The Duce was flown to the Wolfsschanze, but he was reluctant to leave the plane to meet Adolf Hitler. His disgrace was too immense, and he was in tears when he finally shook hands with the Führer. He thought perhaps his dignity would now be restored, but he soon learned his new place in Hitler's scheme of things. He was quickly accused of being a failure. He was asked, "What is this Fascism that it melts like snow under the sun?"⁶ Hitler wanted Mussolini to head a new Italian state and to announce that the monarchy was abolished. Ciano was to be executed. He was held in a Munich Nazi Party guest house, where Mussolini had just heard his son-in-law's confession before flying to the Wolfsschanze. Mussolini was aware that Ciano had betrayed him; on July 25, 1943, he had voted in a secret Fascist council to depose Mussolini. But to execute him? Aghast, he said to Hitler, "This is the father of my grandchildren!"

"Duce, you are too good," said Hitler. "You can never be a dictator."

On September 25, 1943, from a borrowed chalet in Bavaria, Mussolini tried, on a priority Führer-phone, to gather a cabinet of old Fascist collaborators, all scattered in exile and safety from Madrid to Bucharest and Bern, but each of them turned him down.

So he flew back to Italy. His chief new associate was Marshal Graziani, the African failure, who hated Badoglio, the new chief of state. Graziani also hated the Germans and he barely put up with Mussolini. Nevertheless, he accepted when he was offered the post of senior minister in Mussolini's new puppet government.

The Germans installed the patched-up Duce in a villa on Lake Garda near the town of Salò. On September 27 he had his first pathetic cabinet meeting. He was a puppet and was to die a few days

before Hitler, telling women, the were hung upside down in a garage on April 28. And von Ribbentrop, his false new role, see the end of the playboy had been the "Republic of Salò" executed on Jaroslav Ciano vain and truth. He accused Ribbentrop, M. years, and von Ribbentrop, which were in the Crimes Trials. In his diaries, October 1943, Italy was out at length through the Mediterranean. "I am of the opinion that the proceedings will proceed forthwith." Hitler: "My Army."

It was Joachim Goebbels who faked long after the war.

The bombing of Rome, the abduction of Adolf Hitler in Ankara, the evacuation of the German population in Berlin's Esplanade, which was burned above the city. Everyone fled in panic, windows and doors were broken, and stations had been left intact.

The irrepressible Vassiltchikov, the Foreign Minister, noted on Tuesday that the central Berlin was

late '43

of banality and danger, of life constantly on the brink of death. The next day she had to rush to a meeting through the pouring rain when the air-raid alarm went off at Danger 15, the highest level. "The streets were full of people standing around. I decided to walk home." On the way she stopped at a mailbox to post a long letter she had written to her sister. She had not lunched, and she was ravenous, so the old family cook started to heat some soup while Missy went upstairs to put on slacks and a sweater, her air-raid gear. The sirens wailed once more, and Missy, the cook, and Missy's old father huddled in the kitchen. It was their first taste of massive daylight carpet bombing with its immense crashes, heavy air pressure, huge noise, showers of glass. All three doors flew into the kitchen, torn off their hinges. The two women and the old man managed to prop the doors back into place. When an incendiary bomb fell into the house entrance, they tried to put it out. They turned on all the water taps in case of fire. In the middle of it all, the old cook suddenly served the soup. When Missy jumped up after one nasty crash, her father said, "Sit down. That way you're farther off when the ceiling collapses." They had Schnapps. The bombing continued until early evening. Then the phone rang. A friend, Count Bismarck, called to make sure they were all right.

These American daylight bombings went on for weeks. At night, the British bombers had their turn.

At one point, Missy told of running down a street of burning houses when a nearby wall began to collapse. She lay on the street, covering her head with her arms. When she got up, she spotted the dust-covered face of a Japanese diplomat whom she and her sister had often dodged because he fancied himself a Lothario; under the circumstances, having just shared near-death, she decided to say hello in English. He stared at her dusty face and asked in German, "Have we met?" She decided it was not the time for formal re-introductions.⁸

The von Ribbentrops spent part of late 1943 in Fuschl, because Joachim must have felt useless in East Prussia near the Führer. According to his memoirs, late in 1943 he had advised Hitler by memorandum to make peace with Stalin as quickly as possible. In reply he received a message through Ambassador Hewel, his liaison man at Hitler's headquarters, that "there is no compromise in the fight against Bolshevism. I cannot accept von Ribbentrop's 'business politics.' This war cannot be won by diplomatic means." This was the crux of von Ribbentrop's dilemma. His role had ended.

When the Allied bombing of Berlin intensified, von Ribbentrop returned to the capital. What drove him voluntarily to expose himself

to the danger? James in his diary on Novem

All the military officials were more comfortable on the other hand Ribbentrop concerned themselves with the bombed-out, inspected it that their office furniture was from East Prussia and in

He probably preferred the ministry in bombed Berlin when handing him.

On December 5 von Ribbentrop's duties of the month, he had been taken again there were widespread to the German government were too sweeping, but Swedish protest "in the

That day came the end of the war. Its ruin of thousands of homeless was near. Instead, Joseph Goebbels' reprisals" because of the

The following day between von Ribbentrop and Goebbels. There was a heated exchange convinced by his own Goebbels, the whole angry about the way in which Himmler was the element of the Reichsführer's thousand to sixty the Viking, which comprised these units were not (Dutch and Flemish), the union of Finnish volunteer students would not

On December 9, Goebbels' fight between him was about who was to

brink of death. The pouring rain when it level. "The streets walk home." On the other she had written to be venomous, so the old lady went upstairs to see the sirens wailed once they huddled in the tight carpet bombing noise, showers of off their hinges. The doors back into the house entrance, they were in case of fire. In the evening, When she said, "Sit down. They had collapsed." They had evening. Then the make sure they were

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ed, von Ribbentrop ily to expose himself

to the danger? James von Moltke, the anti-Hitler conspirator, wrote in his diary on November 28, 1943:

All the military officers are alike. They think [only] of making their lives more comfortable and are indifferent to everything else. On the other hand Ribbentrop and Goebbels, for whom I have no love, concern themselves with everything: they visit their wounded and bombed-out, inspect the damaged sections of their offices, and see to it that their office functions again. Ribbi in particular refuses to return to East Prussia and remains firmly in Berlin.⁹

He probably preferred the danger and purpose of being near his ministry in bombed Berlin to the ignominious treatment Hitler had been handing him.

On December 5 von Ribbentrop had one of his few diplomatic duties of the month, following a severe raid on Berlin. Tough reprisals had been taken against anti-German Norwegian students in Oslo; there were widespread arrests. The Swedish government had protested to the German government. Even Hitler agreed that these measures were too sweeping, but von Ribbentrop was instructed to answer the Swedish protest "in the sharpest language."¹⁰

That day came the terrible raid on Leipzig, one of the most destructive of the war. It ruined the splendid Baroque city and made hundreds of thousands homeless. And still, no one in the party admitted the end was near. Instead, Joseph Goebbels kept talking of "British fears of reprisals" because of their "bad conscience."¹¹

The following day in Berlin there was another confrontation between von Ribbentrop and the Swedish chargé about the Oslo affair. There was a heated exchange. Von Ribbentrop, probably less than convinced by his own words, was a good and faithful servant. To Goebbels, the whole Norwegian affair "stank," and the Führer was angry about the way it had been handled by Norway's Nazi government. Himmler was especially upset (an example of the poor judgment of the Reichsführer SS), because he had planned to recruit forty thousand to sixty thousand volunteers in Norway for SS Division Viking, which comprised the shreds of earlier volunteer SS regiments. These units were Nordland (Danes and Norwegians), Westland (Dutch and Flemish), Germania (Germans and Baltics), plus a battalion of Finnish volunteers. He was sure that the arrest of the Norwegian students would ruin the SS recruiting efforts.

On December 9, Goebbels's diary for 1943 described an apocalyptic fight between himself and Joachim von Ribbentrop. The conflict was about who was to conduct propaganda in Paris. Von Ribbentrop

Dec '43



boats, 2 gunboats, 1 icebreaker, 15 landing craft. Others were heavily damaged.

Obviously, Hitler was an avid reader of his Wehrmacht's reports.

The Russians were gathering for the final offensive into Germany. Allied bombers were devastating Germany's cities. Anglo-American forces were in command of North Africa, Sicily, Crete, and the lower boot of Italy, and what was most ominous, even the tightest security could not hide the gathering of millions of troops in Britain, ready to invade the continent. The Axis alliance was gone, with Italy now on the Allied side, Hungary about to defect, Japan fighting her own, and desperate battles in the Pacific.

What, then, was Hitler's cause? How did he maintain his faith in the destiny he had chosen for Germany?

Meanwhile, the slaughter of thousands in the eastern camps continued with mounting savagery, and in Germany itself the SD and the Gestapo pounced on any sign of opposition. Many who were physically and mentally handicapped were disposed of under a regulation called Aktion 1413k2, code-named T4 because the location of the office administering this horror was on the Tiergarten Strasse Number 4.¹⁸ Everything was molded into bureaucratic form, couched in bureaucratic jargon. Nazi Germany in 1944 was probably the only country that made its victims pay for their own beheading by dunning their surviving relatives.

For example, a government bill was sent to the family of a man arrested for the crime of *Wehrkraftzersetzung* (loosely translated as "subversion of the will to fight"). The accused, a lawyer, was overheard by someone on a tram and denounced to the police for this fatal statement: "When the Italians formed a new government after Mussolini's fall, the Führer should have stepped down, because we can no longer win and we'll be burned alive." He was condemned to death and executed. His arrest was on December 24, 1943. He was beheaded on May 8, 1944. The statement sent to his wife included the costs of punitive detention, execution, and bill-mailing. The total was 746 marks, 60 pfennigs.

Several anti-Nazi groups had existed, without formal organization, since before the beginning of the war. The purpose of most of them was to assassinate Hitler and to institute an anti-Nazi government that could now negotiate with the invaders from the east and west. Would the Allies have halted their attacks? Probably not. But Germany would have removed Hitler's gash before the Allies could do so.

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The conspiracies, had been abort several ea whim. In some schedules.

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	No
Wake up	1c
Situation	12
Lunch	14
Situation	22
Tea	1
Bed	2

Any man who k

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to conclusions beyond the self-imposed limitations appropriate to the *War Diary*. The *War Diary*, he emphasizes, is not yet military history but rather the source material from which military history will be written. Schramm's purpose is not to indulge in extensive interpretation but rather to underscore the basic points that emerge from the material. The most important of these pertain to Hitler's conduct of the last phase of the war, the extent to which he assumed personal control of operations, and the principles that guided him in the exercise of that control. Schramm shows that in 1943, at the very latest, Hitler knew that the war was irretrievably lost, yet deliberately continued it with no prospect of victory or even of bettering Germany's condition in defeat. Thereby he wantonly assured not only that the empire of Bismarck would be dismembered and the very name of Prussia erased from the map, but that hundreds of thousands, if not indeed millions more would fall and their survivors be stripped of even the most primitive means of existence.

Schramm's essay on Hitler's personality, based primarily on conversations held during the middle years of the war, reflects Hitler as the conqueror of an empire stretching from the Pyrenees to the Crimea, from the Arctic Circle to the Sahara. But the study of him as a military dictator, based on the last two and a half years of the *War Diary*, shows us how Hitler reacted to the gradual but relentless reduction of that empire until its final destruction in the rubble of Berlin. Under the constraint of circumstances over which he had lost control, Hitler came to devote all his time and energy to the military struggle for survival. Toward the end, the elementary character of this *Existenzkampf* was the only rationale of Hitler's military dictatorship, a regime of terror ultimately resting on brute force. All else—the social, economic, and political structure of Germany, and even the lifeblood of the youth and the aged—was grimly squandered in order to keep the military machine going, if only a short while longer. The sheer madness of it was enough to rouse conservative militarists as well as Christian liberals to an unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life nine months before the end. The savage vengeance he wreaked not only upon them but also on their kin further vindicated their cause. In his Berlin bunker, the megalomaniacal tyrant continued to direct his war as the world

* I.e. The war was lost, but the extermination of the Jews was seriously incomplete - it was essential that this was done.

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Front, following the Allied breakthrough after the successful establishment of the Normandy beachhead, Hitler pointed out the steadfastness which he had demonstrated during the winter of 1941-1942.

A leader of indomitable character could rely, Hitler believed, on the "eternal laws of nature," according to which the more valuable person, the man superior in character, had to triumph in the end. Consequently, when in defiance of "nature" Hitler's Greater German Reich crumbled, he blamed the Germans. "The German people had proved themselves to be the weaker," and the stronger Eastern peoples "alone should inherit the future. Whoever survived the struggle would in any case only be the inferior, for the good had fallen." This conception was, as we can see in the *Table Conversations*, already implicit in the positions Hitler took during 1941-1942, and had its origins even earlier. Greek mythology tells of the face of Medusa, which is said to have petrified those who beheld it. Had the members of Hitler's circle of mealtime companions ever been able to see his true face, even the most loyal and devoted of them would have turned to stone.

Whenever anyone tries to understand Hitler, the final result somehow never adds up correctly. His contact with children and dogs, his joy in flowers and in culture, his appreciation of lovely women, his relationship to music were all quite genuine. But no less genuine was the ferocity—morally uninhibited, ruthless, "ice-cold"—with which Hitler annihilated not only real but even potential opponents.

Hitler's two faces explain why he had such differing impacts upon people, arousing enthusiasm in some, aversion in others. He could switch these faces from one moment to the next, so that people whom he had just charmed, or had just repelled, were utterly confounded.¹ Alternately driven by reason, by temperament, or by dark instincts, Hitler was more enigmatic than anyone in German history had ever been before him. But this man, who had so uncanny an ability to draw others into his sphere of personal influence and

¹See, for example, the memoirs of Dr. Peter Kleist (*Die europäische Tragödie*, Göttingen, 1951, p. 199), who had first been employed in the Bureau Ribbentrop and then in the Ministry for the Eastern Areas, concerning a conversation with Hitler in the *Wolfsschanze* during the summer of 1943: "I had an opportunity to study his face carefully. It had always amazed

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then to dominate them, also understood how to master himself. As awkward, and even embarrassing, as were some of the scenes that occurred during his staff conferences (General Guderian in his memoirs precisely described one such clash with Hitler), Hitler hardly ever lost control of himself completely, even though in time his nerves were taxed to such an extent that most men, operating under a similar burden, would not have been physically equal to it.

Consequently, it is very difficult to come to grips with what Hitler really thought and perceived, difficult to clarify the extent to which he was motivated by logic or impelled by instinct. In this essay I shall attempt to draw together what the *Table Conversations* reveal in this respect. To begin with, we discuss Hitler's immediate environment, focusing on his personal relations with his associates, his family, and women. Next we turn our attention to his prejudices and animosities. Then we briefly examine his views of foreign countries and of the world of economics and administration. With these general political and social considerations behind us, we shall be in a position to explore more fundamental aspects of Hitler's personality and intellect, turning first to his artistic bent and his relationship to the arts in general. I shall further attempt to reconstruct his intellectual world, particularly his concept of history and biology. This leads to the question whether Hitler was religious in any sense at all or whether he should be considered nonreligious. Hitler as a military technician and his relationship with the professional military leadership is a dual theme of central importance, but is only touched on in this essay because it is explored in detail in the study of Hitler as a military leader printed in the second half of this volume. A discussion of his will power, the most uncanny and extraordinary of his characteristics, is followed by notes on his health and concluding reflections on Hitler as an historical problem.

me because of the multiplicity of expressions it contained. It was as though it were composed of a whole series of individual elements without adding up to a single total. . . . Photography, by selecting only a single moment out of context, could show only one aspect, thereby giving a false impression of the duplicity or multiplicity of being which lay behind this image. I tried to find some explanation for the hypnotic effect of those eyes without arriving at any explanation."

May 22, 1943

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had the tumble-down castle of Klessheim near Salzburg rebuilt into a luxurious guest house at an expenditure of many millions of marks. Near Berchtesgaden, Himmler erected a country lodge for his mistress and did it so secretly that I did not hear of it until the last weeks of the war. Even after 1942, Hitler encouraged one of his Gauleiters to renovate a hotel and the Posen Castle, both projects drawing heavily on essential materials. The same Gauleiter had a private residence built for himself in the vicinity of the city. In 1942-43 new special trains were built for Ley, Keitel, and others, although this kind of thing tied down valuable raw materials and technicians. For the most part, however, these whims of the party functionaries were concealed from me. Given the enormous powers of the Reichsleiters and Gauleiters there was no way to check up on what they were doing. I therefore could rarely interpose a veto—which in any case was disregarded. As late as the summer of 1944 Hitler and Bormann were capable of informing their Minister of Armaments that a Munich manufacturer of picture frames must not be made to shift to war production. A few months before, on their personal order, the "rug factories and other producers of artistic materials," which were engaged in manufacturing rugs and tapestries for Hitler's postwar buildings, were given a special status.⁴

After only nine years of rule the leadership was so corrupt that even in the critical phase of the war it could not cut back on its luxurious style of living. For "representational reasons" the leaders all needed big houses, hunting lodges, estates and palaces, many servants, a rich table, and a select wine cellar.* They were also concerned about their lives to an insane degree. Hitler himself, wherever he went, first of all issued orders for building bunkers for his personal protection.

* For propaganda reasons, Goebbels tried to change the life style of the prominent men in government and the party, but in vain. See his diary, February 22, 1942: "Bormann has issued a directive to the party regarding the need for greater simplicity in the conduct of the leaders, particularly with respect to banquets—a reminder to the party that it should provide a good example for the people. This directive is most welcome. I hope it will be taken to heart. In this connection I have become rather skeptical." Bormann's directive had no effect. On May 22, 1943, more than a year later, Goebbels wrote in his diary: "Because of the tense situation domestically the people naturally have been keeping a sharp eye on the life style of our so-called celebrities. Unfortunately many of the prominent people pay no heed; some of them are living a life which can in no way be called suitable under current conditions."

April 1942, 1945

as a Gauleiter he was Hitler's subordinate and responsible to the Fuehrer alone. But before the discussion was over, he offered to put the question to Goering, who as Commissioner of the Four-Year Plan should have the final say. Our conference with Goering took place in Karinhall. Goering showed plainly that he was flattered at being consulted. He behaved with excessive amiability toward Sauckel and was markedly cooler toward me. I was scarcely allowed to advance my arguments; Sauckel and Goering continually interrupted me. Sauckel laid great weight on the danger that factory work might inflict moral harm upon German womanhood; not only might their "psychic and emotional life" be affected but also their ability to bear. Goering totally concurred. But to be absolutely sure, Sauckel went to Hitler immediately after the conference and had him confirm the decision.

All my good arguments were thereby blown to the winds. Sauckel informed his fellow Gauleiters of his victory in a proclamation in which, among other things, he stated: "In order to provide the German housewife, above all mothers of many children . . . with tangible relief from her burdens, the Fuehrer has commissioned me to bring into the Reich from the eastern territories some four to five hundred thousand select, healthy, and strong girls."¹¹ Whereas by 1943 England had reduced the number of maidservants by two-thirds, nothing of the sort took place in Germany until the end of the war.¹² Some 1.4 million women continued to be employed as household help. In addition, half a million Ukrainian girls helped solve the servant problem for party functionaries—a fact that soon caused a good deal of talk among the people.

Armaments production is directly dependent on the supply of crude steel. During the First World War the German war economy drew on 46.5 percent of its crude steel production. One of the first facts I learned when I took office was that the parallel figure was only 37.5 percent.¹³ In order to be able to gain more steel for armaments, I proposed to Milch that we jointly undertake the allocation of raw materials.

On April 2, therefore, we once again set out for Karinhall. Goering at first beat about the bush, talking on a wide range of subjects, but finally he agreed to our suggestions about establishing a central planning authority within the Four-Year Plan. Impressed by our firmness,

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This "Central Planning" in our war economy. The board of this sort has not been established personally taken care of authority who could bring an urgent problem when Goering began of Central Planning say whenever he is asked about anything bother him.¹⁵

The Central Planning hall in my Ministry. of participants. Min. Supported by their sometimes highly dramatic we had to trim the as to impair its efficiency war industries or in

I myself was trying goods production—beginning of 1942 were peacetime level. But percent cutback.¹⁷ I Hitler began to regret "that the fabrication tion must be resumed will encourage those tration on armament "those" I meant the to these reminders.

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* Körner was Goering

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employ atom bombs against England. I remember his reaction to the final scene of a newsreel on the bombing of Warsaw in the autumn of 1939. We were sitting with him and Goebbels in his Berlin salon watching the film. Clouds of smoke darkened the sky; dive bombers tilted and hurtled toward their goal; we could watch the flight of the released bombs, the pull-out of the planes and the cloud from the explosions expanding gigantically. The effect was enhanced by running the film in slow motion. Hitler was fascinated. The film ended with a montage showing a plane diving toward the outlines of the British Isles. A burst of flame followed, and the island flew into the air in tatters. Hitler's enthusiasm was unbounded, "That is what will happen to them!" he cried out, carried away. "That is how we will annihilate them!"

On the suggestion of the nuclear physicists we scuttled the project to develop an atom bomb by the autumn of 1942, after I had again queried them about deadlines and been told that we could not count on anything for three or four years. The war would certainly have been decided long before then. Instead I authorized the development of an energy-producing uranium motor for propelling machinery. The navy was interested in that for its submarines.

In the course of a visit to the Krupp Works I asked to be shown parts of our first cyclotron and asked the technician in charge whether we could not go on and build a considerably larger apparatus. But he confirmed what Professor Heisenberg had previously said: We lacked the technical experience. At Heidelberg in the summer of 1944, I was shown our first cyclotron splitting an atomic nucleus. To my questions, Professor Walther Bothe explained that this cyclotron would be useful for medical and biological research. I had to rest content with that.

In the summer of 1943, wolframite imports from Portugal were cut off, which created a critical situation for the production of solid-core ammunition. I thereupon ordered the use of uranium cores for this type of ammunition.²⁷ My release of our uranium stocks of about twelve hundred metric tons showed that we no longer had any thought of producing atom bombs.

Perhaps it would have proved possible to have the atom bomb ready for employment in 1945. But it would have meant mobilizing all our technical and financial resources to that end, as well as our

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scientific talent. It was such as the development view, too, Peenemünde guided project.*

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But even if Hitler search and even if the 1942 could have freed for the production of given the strain on materials, priorities, an investment. For it was lowed the United States increasing air raids had Germany which ruled with extreme concentr

* From 1937 to 1940 the development of a large Hitler's principle of scatter teams were divided and of *Journal*, August 17, 1944, also other organizations, search facilities. In the United States to take an example—we

** According to L. W. Lenard inveighed against four-volume work, *Die 1* "cleansed of the outgrowth research have shown to be the German Volk must s

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of it to a subsequent conference. He proceeded on the assumption that military men were shy about giving in on points in front of their staff officers. Probably he also expected his aura and his persuasive-ness to operate better in a face-to-face discussion with an individual. Both these elements came across poorly over the telephone. Probably that was why Hitler always showed a distinct dislike for conducting important arguments on the telephone.

In the late evening hours there was a further situation conference in which a younger General Staff officer reported on the developments of the last few hours. Hitler would sit alone with the officer. If I had dined with Hitler, he sometimes took me along to these reports. Undoubtedly he found these occasions far more relaxing than the main situation conference, and the atmosphere and tone would be considerably less formal.

Hitler's entourage certainly bore a measure of the blame for his growing belief in his superhuman abilities. Early in the game, Field Marshal Blomberg, Hitler's first and last Minister of War, had been overfond of praising Hitler's surpassing strategic genius. Even a more restrained and modest personality than Hitler ever was would have been in danger of losing all standards of self-criticism under such a constant torrent of applause.

In keeping with his character, Hitler gladly sought advice from persons who saw the situation even more optimistically and delusively than he himself. Keitel was often one of those. When the majority of the officers would greet Hitler's decisions with marked silence, Keitel would frequently feel called upon to speak up in favor of the measure. Constantly in Hitler's presence, he had completely succumbed to his influence. From an honorable, solidly respectable general he had developed in the course of years into a servile flatterer with all the wrong instincts. Basically, Keitel hated his own weakness; but the hopelessness of any dispute with Hitler had ultimately brought him to the point of not even trying to form his own opinion. If, however, he had offered resistance and stubbornly insisted on a view of his own, he would merely have been replaced by another Keitel.

In 1943-44 when Schmuntz, Hitler's chief adjutant and army personnel chief, tried, along with many others, to replace Keitel by the much more vigorous Field Marshal Kesselring, Hitler said that he could not do without Keitel because the man was "loyal as a dog" to

* A. H.'s diary
on this point

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him. Perhaps Keitel embodied most precisely the type of person Hitler needed in his entourage.

General Jodl, too, rarely contradicted Hitler openly. He proceeded diplomatically. Usually he did not express his thoughts at once, thus skirting difficult situations. Later he would persuade Hitler to yield, or even to reverse decisions already taken. His occasional deprecatory remarks about Hitler showed that he had preserved a relatively unbiased view.

Keitel's subordinates, such as, for example, his deputy General Warlimont, could not be more courageous than their superior; for Keitel would not stand up for them against Hitler's ire. Occasionally they tried to counter the effects of obviously absurd orders by adding little clauses that Hitler did not understand. Under the leadership of a man so submissive and irresolute as Keitel, the High Command often had to look for all sorts of crooked paths in order to arrive at its goals.

The subjugation of the generals might also be laid in part to their state of permanent fatigue. Hitler's work routine intersected the normal daily routine of the High Command. As a result, the generals often went without regular sleep. Such purely physical strains probably affect events more than is generally assumed, especially when high performance over a protracted span of time is required. In private associations, too, Keitel and Jodl gave the impression of being exhausted, burned out. In order to break through this ring of hollow men, I hoped to place—in addition to Fromm—my friend Field Marshal Milch within the Fuehrer's headquarters. I had taken him with me to headquarters several times, supposedly in order to report on activities of Central Planning. A few times all went well, and Milch was gaining ground with his plan of concentrating on a fighter-plane program instead of the proposed fleet of big bombers. But then Goering forbade him to pay any further visits to headquarters.

Goering too gave the impression of a worn-out man at the end of 1942, when I sat with him in the pavilion that had been built especially for his brief stays at headquarters. Goering still had comfortable chairs, not the spartan furnishings of Hitler's bunker office. Depressed, the Reich Marshal said: "We will have reason to be glad if Germany can keep the boundaries of 1933 after the war." He quickly tried to cover up this remark by adding a few confident banalities, but I had the impression that in spite of the bluntness he put on, he saw defeat coming closer.

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After his arrival at the Fuehrer's headquarters, Goering usually withdrew to his pavilion for a few minutes while General Bodenschatz, his liaison officer to Hitler, left the situation conference in order to brief Goering by telephone, so we suspected, on certain disputed questions. Fifteen minutes later, Goering would enter the situation conference. Of his own accord he would emphatically advocate exactly the viewpoint that Hitler wished to put across against the opposition of his generals. Hitler would then look around at his entourage: "You see, the Reich Marshal holds exactly the same opinion as I do."

On the afternoon of November 7, 1942, I accompanied Hitler to Munich in his special train. These journeys were a favorable occasion to draw Hitler into the necessary but time-consuming consideration of general armaments questions. This special train was equipped with radio, teletype machines, and a telephone switchboard. Jodl and some members of the General Staff had joined Hitler.

The atmosphere was tense. We were already many hours late, for at every sizable station a prolonged stop was made in order to connect the telephone cable with the railroad telegraph system, so we could get the latest reports. From early morning on a mighty armada of transports, accompanied by large naval units, had been passing through the Strait of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean.

In earlier years Hitler had made a habit of showing himself at the window of his special train whenever it stopped. Now these encounters with the outside world seemed undesirable to him; instead, the shades on the station side of the train would be lowered. Late in the evening we sat with Hitler in his rosewood-paneled dining car. The table was elegantly set with silver flatware, cut glass, good china, and flower arrangements. As we began our ample meal, none of us at first saw that a freight train was stopped on the adjacent track. From the cattle car bedraggled, starved, and in some cases wounded German soldiers, just returning from the east, stared at the diners. With a start, Hitler noticed the somber scene two yards from his window. Without as much as a gesture of greeting in their direction, he peremptorily ordered his servant to draw the shades. This, then, in the second half of the war, was how Hitler handled a meeting with ordinary front-line soldiers such as he himself had once been.

At every station along the way the number of reported naval units

Jan '43, Aug '44

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ures in the air force and the civilian air fleet that he considered necessary for supplying Stalingrad—without asking Goering's permission.* At the time I telephoned Milch several times, for he had promised me to rescue my brother, who was caught with the rest of the encircled troops in Stalingrad. In the general confusion, however, it proved impossible to locate him. Desperate letters came from him. He had jaundice and swollen limbs, was taken to a field hospital, but could not endure conditions there and dragged himself back to his comrades at an artillery observation post. After that nothing more was heard from him. What my parents and I went through was repeated by hundreds of thousands of families who for a time continued to receive airmail letters from the encircled city, until it was all over.** In the future Hitler never said another word about the catastrophe for which he and Goering were alone responsible. Instead, he commanded the immediate formation of a new Sixth Army which was supposed to restore the glory of the doomed one. A year and a half later, in the middle of August 1944, it too was encircled by the Russians and annihilated.

Our enemies rightly regarded this disaster at Stalingrad as a turning point in the war. But at Hitler's headquarters the only reaction was a temporary numbness followed by a rush of feverish staff work in which the most trivial details were threshed over. Hitler began conceiving plans for new victories in 1943. The top leadership of the Reich, already torn by dissension and filled with envy and jealousy, did not close ranks in the face of the peril that was almost upon us. On the contrary, in that den of intrigue which Hitler had created by splitting all the centers of power, the gamblers began playing for higher stakes than ever before.

* Milch directed this operation from the air force headquarters south of Stalingrad. He was able to increase the flights to Stalingrad appreciably, so that at least some of the wounded could be evacuated. After performing his mission, Milch was received by Hitler. Their conversation ended in a violent clash over the desperate military situation, whose seriousness Hitler still refused to acknowledge.

** Hitler could not have blocked delivery of these letters without causing wild rumors. But when the Soviet Army allowed German prisoners to send home postcards, Hitler ordered the cards destroyed. Because they were a sign of life from the relatives, they might have mitigated the Russophobia that was being so carefully cultivated by Hitler's propaganda apparatus. Fritzsche told me about this at Nuremberg.

Jan 1943

tinue on an orderly basis in the severely affected cities. Tax revenues for instance went on being paid even after bombs falling on Treasury offices had destroyed the documents. Taking my cue directly from the principle of self-responsibility in industry, I formulated a program which would substitute trust for distrust toward the populace and allow us to trim our supervisory and administrative agencies, which alone employed nearly three million persons. We considered ways in which the taxpayers could be made responsible for their own declarations, or the feasibility of not reassessing liability at all, or for withholding taxes from the payrolls. Given the billions being spent on the war every month, Goebbels and I argued, what did it matter if a few hundred millions were lost to the government due to the dishonesty of some individuals.

A considerably greater stir was created by my demands that the working time of all government officials be extended to match the hours of armaments workers. That alone, in purely arithmetical terms, would have freed some two hundred thousand administrative people for armaments work. Furthermore, I wanted to release several hundreds of thousands of workers by a drastic cut in the living standard of the upper classes. At a meeting of Central Planning, I made no attempt to gloss over the effect my radical proposals would have on the German scene: "This means that for the duration of the war, if it goes on for a long time, we shall be—to put it crudely—proletarianized."² Today, I am glad that my plan did not win acceptance. Had it, Germany would have faced the extraordinary burdens of the early postwar months economically even more weakened and administratively more disorganized. But I am also convinced that in England, for example—had she been facing the same situation—such proposals would have been consistently carried out.

[We had a hard time persuading a hesitant Hitler that certain austerities were essential, that the administrative apparatus had to be enormously simplified, consumption checked, and cultural activities restricted. But my proposal that Goebbels handle all this was thwarted by an alert Bormann, who feared an increase in power on the part of this rival. Instead of Goebbels, Dr. Lammers, Bormann's ally in the Committee of Three, was assigned the task. He was a government official without initiative or imagination whose hair stood on end at the thought of such disregard for the sacred bureaucratic procedures.

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It was also Lammers who from January 1943 on presided over the Cabinet meetings, which were then resumed, in Hitler's stead. Not all members of the Cabinet were invited, only those who were concerned with the subjects on the agenda. But the meeting place, the Cabinet Room, showed what power the Committee of Three had acquired or at any rate intended to acquire.

These meetings turned out quite heated. Goebbels and Funk supported my radical views. Minister of the Interior Frick, as well as Lammers himself, raised the anticipated doubts. Sauckel maintained that he could provide any number of workers requested of him, including skilled personnel, from abroad.³ Even when Goebbels demanded that leading party members forgo their previous, almost limitless luxuries, he could change nothing. And Eva Braun, ordinarily so unassuming, had no sooner heard of a proposed ban on permanent waves as well as the end of cosmetic production when she rushed to Hitler in high indignation. Hitler at once showed uncertainty. He advised me that instead of an outright ban I quietly stop production of "hair dyes and other items necessary for beauty culture," as well as "cessation of repairs upon apparatus for producing permanent waves."*

After a few meetings in the Chancellery it was clear to Goebbels and me that armaments production would receive no spur from Borrmann, Lammers, or Keitel. Our efforts had bogged down in meaningless details.

On February 18, 1943, Goebbels delivered his speech in the Sportpalast on "total war." It was not only directed to the population; it was obliquely addressed to the leadership which had ignored all our proposals for a radical commitment of domestic reserves. Basically, it was an attempt to place Lammers and all the other dawdlers under the pressure of the mob.

Except for Hitler's most successful public meetings, I had never seen an audience so effectively roused to fanaticism. Back in his home, Goebbels astonished me by analyzing what had seemed to be a purely emotional outburst in terms of its psychological effects—

* Even Goebbels wavered on the question of cosmetics: "A whole series of individual points are still being debated [by the public], especially the question of feminine beauty care. . . . Perhaps in this case we ought to be somewhat more lenient." (Diary entry for March 12, 1943.) Hitler's recommendation may be found in the *Führerprotokoll*, April 25, 1943, Point 14.

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much as an experienced actor might have done. He was also satisfied with his audience that evening. "Did you notice? They reacted to the smallest nuance and applauded at just the right moments. It was the politically best-trained audience you can find in Germany." This particular crowd had been rounded up out of the party organizations; among those present were popular intellectuals and actors like Heinrich George whose applause was caught by the newsreel cameras for the benefit of the wider public.

But this speech by Goebbels also had a foreign-policy aspect. It was one of several attempts to supplement Hitler's purely military approach by introducing politics. Goebbels at any rate thought that he was also pleading with the West to remember the danger which threatened all of Europe from the East. A few days later he expressed great satisfaction that the Western press had commented favorably upon these very sentences.

At the time, as a matter of fact, Goebbels seemed interested in becoming Foreign Minister. With all the eloquence at his command he tried to turn Hitler against Ribbentrop and for a while seemed to be succeeding. At least Hitler listened in silence to his arguments, without shifting the conversation to a less unpleasant subject, as was his habit. Goebbels already thought the game was won when Hitler unexpectedly began praising Ribbentrop's excellent work and his talent for negotiations with Germany's "allies." He concluded finally with the remarkable statement: "You're altogether wrong about Ribbentrop. He is one of the greatest men we have, and history will some day place him above Bismarck. He is greater than Bismarck." Along with this, Hitler forbade Goebbels to extend any more feelers toward the West, as he had done in his Sportpalast speech.

Nevertheless, Goebbels's speech on "total war" was followed up by a gesture which was roundly applauded by the public: He had Berlin's luxury restaurants and expensive places of amusement closed. Goering, to be sure, promptly interposed his bulk to protect his favorite restaurant, Horcher's. But when subsequently some demonstrators (set on by Goebbels) appeared at the restaurant and smashed the windows, Goering yielded. The result was a serious rift between him and Goebbels.

On the evening after the speech in the Sportpalast mentioned above, many prominent persons assembled in the palatial residence that

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Goebbels had built shortly before the beginning of the war near the Brandenburg Gate. Among those present were Field Marshal Milch, Minister of Justice Thierack, State Secretary Stuckart of the Ministry of the Interior, Goering's right-hand man, State Secretary Körner, and Funk and Ley. For the first time a motion proposed by Milch and myself was discussed: to use Goering's powers as "Chairman of the Council of Ministers for the Defense of the Reich" in order to stiffen the home front.

Nine days later Goebbels invited me to his home again, together with Funk and Ley. The huge building with its rich appointments now gave a gloomy appearance. In order to provide a good example of acting in the spirit of "total war," Goebbels had had the large public rooms closed and most of the electric bulbs removed in the remaining halls and rooms. We were asked into one of the smaller rooms, perhaps four hundred fifty square feet in area. Servants in livery served French cognac and tea; then Goebbels signaled to them to leave us undisturbed.

"Things cannot go on this way," he began. "Here we are sitting in Berlin. Hitler does not hear what we have to say about the situation. I cannot influence him politically, cannot even report the most urgent measures in my area. Everything goes through Bormann. Hitler must be persuaded to come to Berlin more often."

Domestic policy, Goebbels continued, had slipped entirely out of Hitler's hands. It was being controlled by Bormann, who managed to give Hitler the feeling that he was still directing things. Bormann, Goebbels said further, was guided only by ambition; with his rigidly doctrinaire approach, he represented a great danger to any sane evolution of policy. First and foremost his influence must be diminished!

Altogether contrary to his habit, Goebbels did not even except Hitler from his critical remarks. "We are not having a 'leadership crisis,' but strictly speaking a 'Leader crisis!'"⁴ To Goebbels, a born politician, it was incomprehensible that Hitler should have abandoned politics, that most important of instruments, in favor of playing a superfluous role as Commander in Chief.

The rest of us could only agree; none of us could hold a candle to Goebbels where political instinct was concerned. His criticism showed what Stalingrad really meant. Goebbels had begun to doubt Hitler's star, and hence his victory—and we were doubting with him.

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I repeated the proposal we had made: that Goering be reinstalled in the function that had been intended for him at the beginning of the war. Here was an organizational position equipped with the fullest powers, including the right to issue decrees even without Hitler's collaboration. From this post the power usurped by Bormann and Lammers could be shattered. Bormann and Lammers would have to bow to this existing authority whose potentialities had so far gone untapped because of Goering's indolence.

Since Goebbels and Goering were on bad terms because of the Horchers Restaurant incident,* the group asked me to speak with Goering about the matter.

The present-day reader may well wonder why, when we were making a last effort to rally all our forces, our choice should have fallen on this man who had done nothing but loll about in apathetic luxury for years. Goering had not always been this way, and his reputation of an admittedly violent but also energetic and intelligent person still lingered on from the days when he had built up the air force and the Four-Year Plan. There seemed a chance that if a task appealed to him he might recover some of his old daring and energy. And if not, we reckoned, then the committee of the Reich Defense Council would in any case constitute an instrument that could make radical decisions.

Only in retrospect do I realize that stripping Bormann and Lammers of power would hardly have changed the course of events. For the shift in direction we wanted to bring about could not be achieved by overthrowing Hitler's secretaries but solely by turning against Hitler himself. For us, however, that was beyond imagination. Instead, if we had succeeded in restoring our personal positions which were endangered by Bormann, we would presumably have been ready to follow Hitler even more loyally than before, if possible; more so than we actually did under the cowardly Lammers and the scheming Bormann. The fact that we regarded minimal differences as so important merely shows in how closed a world we all moved.

This was the first time I emerged from my reserve as a specialist to plunge into political maneuvering. I had always carefully avoided

* The dispute between Goebbels and Goering over the restaurant was resolved as follows: The restaurant remained closed as a public restaurant, but it reopened as a club for the Luftwaffe.

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such a step; but the fact that I took it now had a certain logic. I had decided that it was wrong to imagine I could concentrate exclusively upon my specialized work. In an authoritarian system anyone who wants to remain part of the leadership inevitably stumbles into fields of force where political battles are in progress.

Goering was staying in his summer house at Obersalzberg. As I learned from Field Marshal Milch, he had deliberately withdrawn there for a rather long vacation because he was offended by Hitler's criticisms of his leadership of the air force. I went to see him the day after our meeting, February 28, 1943. He was prepared at once to receive me.

The atmosphere of our discussion, which lasted for many hours, was friendly and unconstrained, in keeping with the intimate conditions of the relatively small house. I was astonished, though, by his lacquered fingernails and obviously rouged face, although the over-size ruby brooch on his green velvet dressing gown was already a familiar sight to me.

Goering listened quietly to our proposal and to my report of our Berlin conference. As he sat he occasionally scooped a handful of unset gems from his pocket and playfully let them glide through his fingers. It seemed to delight him that we had thought of him. He too saw the danger in the way things were going with Bormann and agreed with our plans. But he was still angry with Goebbels because of the Horcher incident, until I finally proposed that he personally invite the Propaganda Minister here, so that we could thoroughly discuss our plan with him.

Goebbels came to Berchtesgaden the very next day. I first informed him of the result of my discussion. Together, we drove to Goering's, where I soon withdrew to let the two men, whose relations had been almost continually strained, have it out. When I was called in again, Goering rubbed his hands with delight at the prospect of the struggle that was about to begin and showed his most engaging side. First of all, he said, the personnel of the Council of Ministers for the Defense of the Reich must be broadened. Goebbels and I ought to become members; the fact that we were not, by the way, indicated that the council was of little importance.

There was also talk about the necessity for replacing Ribbentrop. The Foreign Minister should be persuading Hitler to adopt a rational

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policy, but instead he was too much Hitler's mouthpiece to find a political solution for our sorry military predicament.

Growing more and more excited, Goebbels continued: "The Fuehrer has not seen through Lammers any more than he has seen through Ribbentrop."

Goering sprang to his feet. "He's always putting in a word edge-wise, torpedoing me below the water line. But that's ending right now! I'm going to see to it, gentlemen!"

Goebbels was obviously relishing Goering's rage and deliberately trying to spur him on, while at the same time fearing some rash act on the part of the tactically unskilled Reich Marshal. "Depend on it, Herr Goering, we are going to open the Fuehrer's eyes about Bormann and Lammers. Only we mustn't risk going too far. We'll have to proceed slowly. You know the Fuehrer." His caution increased as he spoke: "At any rate we had better not talk too openly with the other members of the Council of Ministers. There's no need for them to know that we intend to slowly spike the Committee of Three. We're simply acting out of loyalty to the Fuehrer. We have no personal ambitions. But if each one of us supports the others to the Fuehrer we'll soon be on top of the situation and can form a solid fence around the Fuehrer."

Goebbels was highly pleased by the time he left. "This is going to work," he said to me. "Goering has really come to life again, don't you think?"

I too had not seen Goering so dynamic and bold in recent years. On a long walk in the peaceful vicinity of Obersalzberg, Goering and I discussed the course Bormann had taken. Goering maintained that Bormann was aiming at nothing less than the succession to Hitler, and that he would stop at nothing to outmaneuver him, Goering—in fact, all of us—in influencing Hitler. I took occasion to tell Goering how Bormann seized every opportunity to undermine the Reich Marshal's prestige. Goering listened with mounting feeling as I spoke of the teatimes with Hitler at Obersalzberg, from which Goering was excluded. There I had been able to observe Bormann's tactics at close vantage.

He never worked by direct attack, I said. Instead, he would weave little incidents into his conversation which were effective only in their sum. Thus, for example, in the course of the teatime chatter Bormann would tell unfavorable anecdotes from Vienna in order

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to damage Baldur von Schirach, the Hitler Youth leader. But Bormann carefully avoided agreeing with Hitler's subsequent negative remarks. On the contrary, he thought it prudent to praise Schirach afterward—the kind of praise, of course, which would leave an unpleasant aftertaste. After about a year of this sort of thing Bormann had brought Hitler to the point of disliking Schirach and often feeling outright hostility toward him. Then—when Hitler was not around—Bormann could venture to go a step further. With an air of casually dismissing the matter but in reality annihilating the man, he would remark contemptuously that of course Schirach belonged in Vienna since everybody there was always intriguing against everybody else. Bormann would be playing the same sort of game against Goering, I added in conclusion.

The trouble was that Goering was an easy mark for this sort of thing. In the course of these days at Obersalzberg, Goebbels himself spoke somewhat apologetically of the "baroque garments" Goering favored which did seem rather comical to anyone who did not know the Reich Marshal. And then Goering continued to comport himself with sovereign dignity, forgetful of his failures as Commander in Chief of the Air Force. Much later, in the spring of 1945, when Hitler publicly insulted his Reich Marshal in the most cutting manner before all the participants in the situation conference, Goering remarked to Below, Hitler's air force adjutant: "Speer was right when he warned me. Now Bormann had succeeded."

Goering was mistaken. Bormann had already done his work by the spring of 1943.

A few days later, on March 5, 1943, I flew to headquarters to obtain several decisions on armaments questions from Hitler. My chief purpose, however, was to promote our little plot. I found it easy to persuade Hitler to invite Goebbels to headquarters. Things were especially dreary, and he looked forward to a visit from the sprightly, clever Propaganda Minister.

Three days later Goebbels arrived at headquarters. He first took me aside. "What is the Fuehrer's mood, Herr Speer?" he asked. I had to tell him that Hitler was not feeling particularly warm toward Goering at this juncture and advised restraint. It would probably be better not to press the matter right now, I thought. Consequently, after

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briefly feeling my way, I had done nothing further. Goebbels agreed: "You're probably right. At the moment we had better not mention Goering to the Fuehrer. That would spoil everything."

The massed Allied air raids, which had been going on for weeks and meeting almost no opposition, had further weakened Goering's already imperiled position. If Goering's name was as much as mentioned, Hitler would start fuming at the mistakes and omissions in the planning for air warfare. That very day Hitler had repeatedly exclaimed that if the bombings went on not only would the cities be destroyed, but the morale of the people would crack irreparably. Hitler was succumbing to the same error as the British strategists on the other side who were ordering mass bombing.

Hitler invited Goebbels and me to lunch. Oddly enough, on such occasions he refrained from asking Bormann—who was otherwise indispensable—to join him. In this respect he treated Bormann entirely as a secretary. Enlivened by Goebbels, Hitler became considerably more talkative than I was accustomed to seeing him on my visits to headquarters. He used the opportunity to unburden his mind and as usual made disparaging remarks about almost all of his associates except those of us who were present.

After the meal I was dismissed, and Hitler spent several hours alone with Goebbels. The fact that Hitler courteously and amicably showed me out corresponded with his way of sharply separating individuals and areas. I did not return until it was time for the military situation conference. At supper we met again, this time all three of us. Hitler had a fire made in the fireplace; the orderly brought us a bottle of wine, and Fachinger mineral water for Hitler. We sat up until early morning in a relaxed, almost cozy atmosphere. I did not have a chance to say much, for Goebbels knew how to entertain Hitler: He spoke brilliantly, in polished phrases, with irony at the right place and admiration where Hitler expected it, with sentimentality when the moment and the subject required it, with gossip and love affairs. He mixed everything in a masterly brew: theater, movies, and old times. But Hitler also listened with eager interest—as always—to a detailed account of the children of the Goebbels family. Their childish remarks, their favorite games, their frequently pungent comments, distracted Hitler from his cares that night.

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assurance and to flatter his vanity, which the sober tone of the military men hardly pampered. Hitler, for his part, reciprocated by magnifying his Propaganda Minister's achievements and thus giving him cause for pride. In general the leaders of the Third Reich were fond of mutual praise and were continually reassuring one another.

In spite of certain qualms, Goebbels and I had agreed beforehand that somewhere in the course of the evening we would bring up our plans for activating the Council of Ministers for the Defense of the Reich, or at least drop some hints about it. The atmosphere certainly seemed favorable—though there was always the danger that Hitler might take such suggestions as a criticism of the way he was running things—when suddenly this idyll at the fireplace was interrupted by the report of a heavy air raid on Nuremberg. As if he had guessed our intention—perhaps, too, he had been warned by Bormann—Hitler put on a scene such as I had seldom witnessed. He immediately had Brigadier General Bodenschatz, Goering's chief adjutant, hauled out of bed and brought before him, where the poor man had to take a terrible tongue-lashing on behalf of the "incompetent Reich Marshal." Goebbels and I tried to soothe Hitler, and finally he did calm down. But all our spadework had obviously been in vain. Goebbels, too, thought it advisable to give the subject wide berth for the present. Nevertheless, after Hitler's many expressions of appreciation he felt that his political stock had risen considerably. Afterward, he no longer spoke of a "Leader crisis." On the contrary, it even seemed as if he had recovered his old confidence in Hitler. But we still had to go on with the struggle against Bormann, he decided.

On March 17, Goebbels, Funk, Ley, and I met with Goering in the latter's Berlin palace on Leipziger Platz. At first Goering received us in his office, adopting his most official manner—planted behind his enormous desk on his Renaissance throne. We sat facing him on uncomfortable chairs. Initially, there was no sign of the cordiality he had shown at Obersalzberg. It rather seemed as if Goering had repented of his candor.

But while the rest of us sat silent for the most part, Goering and Goebbels aroused each other by outlining the perils presented by that triumvirate around Hitler and by devising schemes for recapturing Hitler for ourselves. Goebbels seemed to have forgotten completely how Hitler had lashed into Goering only a few days earlier. Soon both of them saw their goal within reach. Goering, alternating as

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always between torpor and euphoria, was already beginning to discount the influence of the headquarters clique. "We mustn't overestimate it either, Herr Goebbels! Bormann and Keitel are nothing but the Fuehrer's secretaries, after all. Who do they think they are! As far as their own powers are concerned, they're nobodies."

What seemed to disturb Goebbels most was the possibility that Bormann might utilize his direct contacts with the Gauleiters to build up bases against our efforts on the home front also. I recall the way Goebbels tried to enlist Ley against Bormann in his capacity of Organization Chief of the Party. Finally, Goebbels proposed that the Council of Ministers for the Defense of the Reich must be given the right to summon Gauleiters and call them to account. Fully aware that Goering would scarcely attend the sessions so often, he proposed weekly meetings. Casually, he added that probably it would be all right, wouldn't it, if he acted as deputy chairman if Goering were sometimes unable to attend.³ Goering did not see through Goebbels's machinations and consented. Behind the fronts of the great struggle for power the old rivalries continued to smolder.

For a considerable time the numbers of workers whom Sauckel claimed to have sent into industry, statistics which he reported to Hitler, had ceased to correspond with the actual figures. The difference amounted to several hundred thousand. I proposed to our coalition that we join forces in compelling Sauckel, Bormann's outpost in our territory, as it were, to report truthful data.

At Hitler's request a large building in the rustic Bavarian style had been erected near Berchtesgaden to house the Berlin Chancellery secretariat. Whenever Hitler stayed at Obersalzberg for months at a time, Lammers and his immediate staff conducted the business of the Chancellery there. Goering arranged for Lammers as the host to invite our group, as well as Sauckel and Milch, to meet in the conference room of this building on April 12, 1943. Before the meeting Milch and I once more reminded Goering of what we wanted. He rubbed his hands: "That will soon be taken care of!"

We were surprised to find that Himmler, Bormann, and Keitel were also in the conference room. And to make matters worse, our ally Goebbels sent his apologies: On the way to Berchtesgaden he had suffered an attack of kidney colic and was lying ill in his special car.

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To this day I don't know whether this was true or whether he merely had an instinct for what was going to happen.

That session marked the end of our alliance. Sauckel simply challenged our demand for an additional two million, one hundred thousand workers for the entire economy, insisted that he had delivered the needed forces, and became furious when I charged that his figures could not be accurate.*

Milch and I expected that Goering would ask Sauckel for explanations and make him change his labor-assignment policy. Instead, to our horror Goering began with a violent attack upon Milch, and thus indirectly upon me. It was outrageous that Milch was making so many difficulties, he said. Our good party comrade Sauckel who was exerting himself to the utmost and had achieved such successes. . . . He at any rate felt a great debt of gratitude toward him. Milch was simply blind to Sauckel's achievements.

It was as though Goering had picked out the wrong phonograph record. In the ensuing prolonged discussion on the missing workers, each of the ministers present offered explanations, on entirely theoretical grounds, of the difference between the real and the official figures. Himmler commented with the greatest calm that perhaps the missing hundreds of thousands had died.

The conference proved a total failure. No light was thrown on the question of the missing labor force, and in addition our grand assault on Bormann had come to grief.

After this meeting Goering took me aside. "I know you like to work closely with my state secretary, Milch," he said. "In all friendship I'd like to warn you against him. He's unreliable; as soon as his own interests are in question, he'll trample over even his best friends."

I immediately passed this remark on to Milch. He laughed. "A few days ago Goering told me exactly the same thing about you."

This attempt on Goering's part to sow distrust was the very opposite of what we had agreed on: that we would form a bloc. The sad

* Later we learned from General Roesch, our armaments inspector for Upper Bavaria, that Sauckel had directed his employment bureaus to list every worker who was assigned to a factory as placed, even if the worker turned out to be unqualified for the particular job and was sent back to the bureau. The factories, on the other hand, listed only those workers who were actually hired.

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fact was that our circles were so infected by suspicion that friendship was felt to be a threat.

A few days after this affair Milch commented that Goering had switched sides because the Gestapo had proof of his drug addiction. Quite some time before Milch had suggested to me that I look closely at Goering's pupils. At the Nuremberg Trial my attorney, Dr. Flächsner, told me that Goering had been an addict long before 1933. Flächsner had acted as his lawyer once when he was sued for improperly administering a morphine injection.*

Our attempt to mobilize Goering against Bormann was probably doomed to failure from the start for financial reasons as well. For as was later revealed by a Nuremberg document, Bormann had made Goering a gift of six million marks from the industrialists' Adolf Hitler Fund.

After the collapse of our alliance, Goering actually bestirred himself for a while, but, surprisingly, his activity was directed against me. Contrary to his habit, a few weeks later he asked me to invite the leading men in the steel industry to a conference at Obersalzberg. The meeting took place at the drafting tables in my studio and was memorable only because of Goering's behavior. He appeared in an euphoric mood, his pupils visibly narrowed, and delivered to the astonished specialists from the steel industry a long lecture on the manufacture of steel, parading all his knowledge of blast furnaces and metallurgy. There followed a succession of commonplaces: We had to produce more, must not shun innovations; industry was frozen in tradition, must learn to jump over its own shadow; and more of the like. At the end of his two-hour torrent of bombast, Goering's speech slowed and his expression grew more and more absent. Finally, he abruptly put his head on the table and fell peacefully asleep. We thought it politic to pretend to ignore the splendidly uniformed Reich Marshal and proceeded to discuss our problems until he awoke again and curtly declared the meeting over.

For next day Goering had announced a conference on radar problems which likewise ended with nothing accomplished. Once again,

* A lady's dress caught fire in a night club. Goering gave her an injection of morphine to relieve the pain. But the injection left a scar and the woman sued Goering.

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in the best of humor, he gave endless explanations in his Imperial Majesty style, telling the specialists what they already knew and he knew nothing about. Finally, there came a spate of directives and injunctions. After he had left the meeting, highly pleased with himself, I had my hands full undoing the damage he had done, while somehow avoiding an outright disavowal of Goering. Nevertheless, the incident was so serious that I was compelled to inform Hitler about it. He seized the next opportunity to summon the industrialists to headquarters on May 13, 1943, in order to restore the government's prestige.*

A few months after this setback to our plans I ran into Himmler at headquarters. Bluntly, in a threatening voice, he said to me: "I think it would be very unwise of you to try to activate the Reich Marshal again!"

But that was no longer possible in any case. Goering had relapsed into his lethargy, and for good. He did not wake up again until he was on trial in Nuremberg.

*In an unpublished diary passage, May 15, 1943, Goebbels wrote: "He [Hitler] spent the whole day conferring with the captains of the armaments industry on the measures that must be taken now. This conference with the Fuehrer was intended to salve the wounds left by Goering's latest, rather unfortunate conference. Goering's tactical blunders offended the armaments manufacturers. The Fuehrer has now straightened that out."

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serves. Undoubtedly, I behaved much too trustfully in my relations with him. I was fascinated by his dazzling friendliness and perfect manners, as well as by his cool logic.

Outwardly, then, little had changed. The world in which we lived forced upon us dissimulation and hypocrisy. Among rivals an honest word was rarely spoken, for fear it would be carried back to Hitler in a distorted version. Everyone conspired, took Hitler's capriciousness into his reckonings, and won or lost in the course of this cryptic game. I played on this out-of-tune keyboard of mutual relations just as unscrupulously as all the others.

In the second half of May, Goering sent word to me that he wanted to make a speech on armaments, together with me, in the Sportpalast. I agreed. A few days later, however, Hitler to my surprise appointed Goebbels as the speaker. When we were coordinating our texts, the Propaganda Minister advised me to shorten my speech, since his would take an hour. "If you don't stay considerably under half an hour, the audience will lose interest." As usual, we sent both speeches to Hitler in manuscript, with a note to the effect that mine was going to be condensed by a third. Hitler ordered me to come to Obersalzberg. While I was sitting by, he read the drafts Bormann handed to him. With what seemed to me eagerness, he ruthlessly cut Goebbels's speech by half within a few minutes. "Here, Bormann, inform the Doctor and tell him that I think Speer's speech excellent." In the presence of the arch-intriguer Bormann, Hitler had thus helped me to increase my prestige vis-à-vis Goebbels. It was a way of letting both men know that I still stood high. I could count on Hitler's supporting me, if need be, against his closest associates.

My speech on June 5, 1943, in which I could for the first time announce a sizable increase in armaments production, was a failure on two scores. From the party hierarchy I heard such comments as: "So it can be done without big sacrifices! Then why should we upset the populace by drastic measures?" The General Staff and the frontline commanders, on the other hand, doubted the truth of my statistics whenever they had supply difficulties with ammunition or ordnance.

The Soviet winter offensive had ground to a halt. Our increased production enabled us to close the gap on the eastern front. What is more, the delivery of new weapons encouraged Hitler to make preparations for an offensive in spite of the winter's losses of matériel. The

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objective was to cut off a bend in the line near Kursk. The beginning of this offensive was prepared under the code name "Operation Citadel." It kept being postponed because Hitler counted heavily on the effectiveness of the new tanks. Above all he was expecting wonders from a new type of tank with electric drive constructed by Professor Porsche.

At a simple supper in a small back room of the Chancellery furnished in peasant style, I by chance heard from Sepp Dietrich, the commander of Hitler's bodyguard, that Hitler intended to issue an order that this time no prisoners were to be taken. In the course of advances by SS units it had been established, Dietrich said, that the Soviet troops had killed their German prisoners. Hitler had then and there announced that a thousandfold retaliation in blood must be taken.

I was thunderstruck. But I was also selfishly alarmed at the sheer wastefulness of such a step. Hitler was counting on hundreds of thousands of prisoners. For months we had been trying in vain to close a gap of hundreds of thousands in the supply of labor. I therefore took the first opportunity to reason with Hitler on this score. It was not difficult to persuade him to reconsider; he seemed rather relieved to be able to withdraw his pledge to the SS. That same day, July 8, 1943, he had Keitel prepare instructions to the effect that all prisoners must be sent into armaments production.¹

The disagreement over the fate of prisoners proved to be unnecessary. The offensive began on July 5, but in spite of the formidable array of our most advanced weapons we were not able to encircle the Soviet forces. Hitler's confidence had been mistaken. After two weeks of battle he gave up. This failure was a sign that even in the summer the initiative had passed to the enemy.

After the second winter disaster at Stalingrad, the Army High Command had urged the establishing of a defensive position far to the rear, but Hitler would not hear of it. Now, after the thwarted offensive, even Hitler was ready to prepare defensive positions from twelve to fifteen miles behind the main line of battle.² The General Staff made a counterproposal: establishing the defensive line on the west bank of the Dnieper where the steep slope, over a hundred and fifty feet high, dominated the plain across the river. There would presumably have been sufficient time for building an extensive defensive line there, for the Dnieper was still some one hundred twenty-five

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miles behind the front. But Hitler flatly rejected this plan. Whereas during his successful campaigns he had always hailed the German soldiers as the best in the world, he now declared: "Building a position so far to the rear is not possible for psychological reasons. If the troops learn that there are fortified positions perhaps sixty miles behind the front line, no one will be able to persuade them to fight. At the first opportunity they'll fall back without resistance."³

In spite of this ban, on Manstein's orders and with the tacit consent of Zeitzler, the Todt Organization began building fortified positions on the Bug in December 1943. Hitler found out about this from my deputy, Dorsch. At this time the Soviet armies were still some one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five miles east of the Bug River. And once again Hitler commanded, in unusually strong language and on the same grounds as before, that the work be stopped at once.* This building of rear positions, he stormed, was proof again of the defeatist attitude of Manstein and his army group.

Hitler's obstinacy made it easier for the Soviet troops to harass our armies. For in Russia digging became impossible once the ground froze in November. What time we had squandered. The soldiers were exposed with no defenses to the weather; moreover our winter equipment was of poor quality compared to that of the enemy.

Such behavior was not the only indication that Hitler had refused to acknowledge the turn of affairs. In the spring of 1943 he had demanded that a three-mile-long road and railroad bridge be built across the Strait of Kerch, although we had long been building a cable railway there; it went into operation on June 14 with a daily capacity of one thousand tons. This amount of supplies just sufficed for the defensive needs of the Seventeenth Army. But Hitler had not forsaken his plan to push through the Caucasus to Persia. He justified his order for the bridge explicitly on the necessity to transport matériel and troops to the Kuban bridgehead for an offensive.** His generals,

* Jodl's unpublished diary (entry for December 16, 1943) describes the outcome of this unauthorized action: "Dorsch reported the deployment of the Todt Organization along the Bug, something of which the Fuehrer had known nothing. . . . The Fuehrer spoke agitatedly to Minister Speer and me about the defeatist mood of Manstein's staff, which Gauleiter Koch had described to him."

** Because of the frequency of earth tremors, provision had to be made for extra-strength girders which would have required vast quantities of precious

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thought. Hitler, as Commander in Chief of the armed forces, ought to remain nonpartisan. A Commander in Chief of the army, Guderian added, had to maintain close personal contact with the army commanders. He should be looking out for the needs of his troops and deciding fundamental questions of supply. But Hitler, both men agreed, had neither the time nor the inclination to act on this practical level, nor to uphold the special interests of one branch of the service. He appointed and deposed generals whom he hardly knew. Only a Commander in Chief who associated with his higher-ranking officers on a personal basis could decide such questions of personnel. The army knew, Guderian said, that Hitler scarcely interfered in the personnel policies of his Commanders in Chief of the air force and the navy. Only the army was exposed to this sort of treatment.

We came to the conclusion that each of us would try to appeal to Hitler to appoint a new Commander in Chief of the army. But the very first hints that Guderian and I separately made to Hitler came to grief; he was obviously offended and rejected the idea in unusually sharp terms. I did not know that shortly before we spoke Field Marshals von Kluge and von Manstein had undertaken a similar probe on the same subject. Hitler must have assumed that we were all in collusion.

The time when Hitler readily granted all my personal and organizational requests was long since past. The triumvirate of Bormann, Lammers, and Keitel was doing its best to block any further extension of my power, even though concern for the armaments program might have dictated the opposite. However, there was little these three could do against the joint proposal by Admiral Doenitz and myself that we also assume control of naval armaments.

I had met Doenitz immediately after my appointment in June 1942. The then commander of the U-boat fleet received me in Paris in an apartment which struck me at once by its avant-garde severity. I was all the more taken with the plain surroundings since I had just come from an opulent lunch with many courses and expensive wines given by Field Marshal Sperrle, commander of the air forces stationed in France. He had set up headquarters in the Palais du Luxembourg, the former palace of Marie de Médicis. The Field Marshal's craving for luxury and public display ran a close second to that of his superior Goering; he was also his match in corpulence.

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armaments plants, I explained to Hitler, we would not only free half a million German workers but also enlist the industrial managers and the factory machinery in our urgent programs. Most of the Gauleiters, however, objected to such measures. The Ministry of Economics had proved too weak to enforce such shifts against the opposition of the Gauleiters. And, to jump a bit ahead in the story, I also was too weak, as I was soon forced to realize.

After an unusually protracted procedure, in which all the ministers involved and all the various boards of the Four-Year Plan were requested to hand in their objections, Lammers convoked the ministers for a meeting in the Cabinet Room on August 26. Thanks to the generosity of Funk, who at this meeting "delivered his own funeral oration with wit and humor," it was unanimously agreed that from now on all war production would be placed under the control of my Ministry. Willy-nilly, Lammers had to promise to communicate this result to Hitler via Bormann. A few days later Funk and I went to the Fuehrer's headquarters together to receive Hitler's final authorization.

Greatly to my surprise, however, Hitler, in Funk's presence, cut short my remarks, saying irritably that he would not listen to any further explanations. Only a few hours ago Bormann had warned him, he said, that I was going to lure him into signing something that had been discussed neither with Reich Minister Lammers nor with the Reich Marshal. He was not going to be drawn into our little rivalries. When I tried to explain that Reich Minister Lammers had properly obtained the consent of Goering's state secretary for the Four-Year Plan, Hitler again cut me off with unaccustomed curtne-ness: "I am glad that in Bormann at least I have a faithful soul around me." The implication was clear: He was accusing me of trickery.

Funk informed Lammers of the incident. Then we went to meet Goering, who was on the way to Hitler's headquarters in his private car; he had just come from his personal hunting preserve, the Romin-ten Heath. Goering, too, was very huffy; undoubtedly he had been told only one side of the story and had been warned against us. Funk, amiable and persuasive, finally succeeded in breaking the ice and going over our decree point by point. And now Goering indicated full agreement, though not before we had inserted a sentence: "The powers of the Reich Marshal of the Greater German Reich as Com-

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missioner General for the Four-Year Plan remain unaffected." In practice that was a very minor reservation—all the more so since most of the important functions of the Four-Year Plan were directed by me anyhow through the Central Planning Board.

As a sign of his approval, Goering signed our draft, and Lammers could report by teletype that there were no longer any objections. Thereupon Hitler, too, was ready to sign the draft when it was presented to him for signature a few days later, on September 2. From a Reich Minister of Armaments and Munitions I had now become Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production.

Bormann's intrigue had fallen through this time. I did not make remonstrances to Hitler; instead, I left it to him to consider whether Bormann had actually served him loyally in this case. After my recent experiences I knew it was wiser not to expose Bormann's machinations and to spare Hitler embarrassment.

* But Bormann was surely the source of all the overt or covert opposition to an expansion of my Ministry. To Bormann it was all too clear that I was moving outside the reach of his power and accumulating more and more power myself. Moreover, my work had brought me into comradely contacts with the leadership of the army and navy: with Guderian, Zeitzler, Fromm, and Milch, and now lately with Doenitz. Even in Hitler's immediate entourage I was particularly close to the anti-Bormann forces: Hitler's army adjutant, General Engel; his air force adjutant, General von Below, and Hitler's armed forces adjutant, General Schmundt. In addition Hitler's physician, Dr. Karl Brandt, whom Bormann likewise considered a personal opponent of his, was quite close to me.

One evening when I had had a few glasses of Steinhäger with Schmundt, he came out with the declaration that I was the army's great hope. Wherever he went, he said, the generals had the greatest confidence in me, whereas they had nothing but derogatory opinions of Goering. With rather high-flown emotion he concluded: "You can always rely on the army, Herr Speer. It is behind you."

I have never quite fathomed what Schmundt had in mind, though I suspect that he was confusing the army with the generals. But it seems probable that Schmundt must have said something of the sort to others. Given the narrow confines of the headquarters, such remarks must surely have reached Bormann's ears.

Around this time, perhaps in the autumn of 1943, Hitler put me

* D.T. What with Hitler's ailments they were all jockeying to see who would be the next Führer

in some embarrassing conference, he several associates whom Hitler meant by it, the by this remark, give those same weeks Zeisler is so pleased with your hopes in you, that now

I asked Zeitzler who reported to me by order could be no doubt that the successful secretary was for Hitler against me then

Since Hitler did not taken the threat to himself kept telling his closest the party but was entirely wrong in the suggestions with Milch at

At the time Hitler lectured for his success had ruled himself out of intrigues, and Bormann the "artistic type" H n ized kindred features within a short time ical hierarchy and finally had also demonstrated foreign policy, Hitler Possibly he regarded

* It might be thought such remarks were recorded not decide whether Hitler was doing so. Sometimes he did not care what the things right himself was

** Dr. G. Klopfer, July 7, 1947: "Bormann of the party and was

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in some embarrassment when, just before the beginning of a situa-
tion conference, he greeted Himmler and me in the presence of
several associates with the phrase: "You two peers." Whatever
Hitler meant by it, the chief of the SS could scarcely have been pleased
by this remark, given his special niche in the power structure. In
those same weeks Zeitzler, too, told me with pleasure: "The Fuehrer
is so pleased with you. He recently said that he placed the greatest
hopes in you, that now a new sun has arisen after Goering."*

I asked Zeitzler not to quote this. But since the same words were
reported to me by other persons within the headquarters area, there
could be no doubt that Bormann also heard the tribute. Hitler's pow-
erful secretary was forced to realize that he had not been able to turn
Hitler against me that summer. Rather, the opposite had happened.

Since Hitler did not say such things often, Bormann must have
taken the threat to heart. To him, it spelled danger. From now on he
kept telling his closest associates that I was not only an enemy of
the party but was actually bent on succeeding Hitler.** He was not
entirely wrong in this assumption. I recall having had several conver-
sations with Milch about the matter.

At the time Hitler must have been wondering whom he should se-
lect for his successor. Goering's reputation was undermined, Hess
had ruled himself out, Schirach had been ruined by Bormann's in-
trigues, and Bormann, Himmler, and Goebbels did not correspond to
the "artistic type" Hitler envisaged. Hitler probably thought he recog-
nized kindred features in me. He considered me a gifted artist who
within a short time had won an impressive position within the polit-
ical hierarchy and finally, by achievements in the field of armaments,
had also demonstrated special abilities in the military field. Only in
foreign policy, Hitler's fourth domain, I had not come to the fore.
Possibly he regarded me as an artistic genius who had successfully

* It might be thought that after years of experience Hitler would know how
such remarks were received and what reactions they inevitably evoked. I could
not decide whether Hitler did think this far ahead or was even capable of do-
ing so. Sometimes he struck me as a total innocent—or as a misanthrope who
did not care what the effects were. Perhaps, too, he believed that he could set
things right himself whenever he chose.

** Dr. G. Klopfer, Bormann's state secretary, testified in an affidavit dated
July 7, 1947: "Bormann repeatedly stated that Speer was a confirmed opponent
of the party and was in fact ambitious to become Hitler's successor."

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switched to politics, so that I thus indirectly served as a confirmation of his own career.

Among friends I always called Bormann "the man with the hedge clippers." For he was forever using all his energy, cunning, and brutality to prevent anyone from rising above a certain level. From then on, Bormann devoted his full capacities to reducing my power. After October 1943 the Gauleiters formed a front against me. Before another year had passed, things became so difficult that I often wanted to give up and resign my post. Until the end of the war this struggle between Bormann and me remained undecided. Hitler did not want to lose me, even occasionally singled me out for a display of favor, but then again would turn on me rudely. Bormann could not wrest from me my successful industrial apparatus. This was so much my own creation that my fall would have meant the end of it and thus have endangered the war effort.

THE EXUBERANCE I HAD in my organization and the success soon gave way to more serious worries. The British air raids on production and for raw materials worried me. The British air raids on production and for raw materials worried me. The British air raids on production and for raw materials worried me.

These air raids carried on by the British devastated cities we had to defend. And it spurred us to do more.

Neither did the bombing of them weaken the morale of my visits to armaments plants. In the street I carried away the impression that the estimate of my ability was amply balanced.

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Bombs

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THE EXUBERANCE I HAD FELT DURING THE BUILDING OF THE NEW organization and the success and recognition of the early months soon gave way to more somber feelings. The labor problem, unsolved raw materials questions, and court intrigues created constant worries. The British air raids began to have their first serious effects on production and for a while made me forget about Bormann, Sauckel, and the Central Planning Board. However they also served to raise my prestige. For in spite of the losses of factories we were producing more, not less.

These air raids carried the war into our midst. In the burning and devastated cities we daily experienced the direct impact of the war. And it spurred us to do our utmost.

Neither did the bombings and the hardships that resulted from them weaken the morale of the populace. On the contrary, from my visits to armaments plants and my contacts with the man in the street I carried away the impression of growing toughness. It may well be that the estimated loss of 9 percent of our production capacity¹ was amply balanced out by increased effort.

borate defensive measures. of war the barrels of ten toward the sky.² The same Russia against tanks and his new front, the air front nst tanks would have been concerned. Moreover, the ousands of young soldiers. roducing gunsights for the ics industry was engaged etworks for defense against e of the high level of the , the supply of our front- ned far behind that of the

woes as early as the night red all their forces for an ty-six bombers. ed to see Goering on the t residing in Karinball, but und him in a bad humor, gne bombing. "Impossible, a single night," he snarled iter of Cologne."

osterous telephone conver- missioner is a stinking lie!" "I tell you as the Reich y too high. How can you The Gauleiter at the other his figures. "How are you are nothing but estimates. too high. All wrong! Send ng your figures. Or are you

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trying to imply that I am lying? I have already delivered my report to the Fuehrer with the correct figures. That stands!"

As though nothing had happened, Goering showed us through his house, his parents' former home. As if this were most serene peace-time, he had blueprints brought in and explained to us what a magnificent citadel he would be building to replace the simple Biedermeier house of his parents in the courtyard of the old ruin. But first of all he wanted to have a reliable air-raid shelter built. The plans for that were already drawn up.

Three days later I was at headquarters. The excitement over the air raid on Cologne had not yet died down. I mentioned to Hitler the curious telephone conversation between Goering and Gauleiter Grohé—naturally assuming that Goering's information must be more authentic than the Gauleiter's. But Hitler had already formed his own opinion. He presented Goering with the reports in the enemy newspapers on the enormous number of planes committed to the raid and the quantity of bombs they had dropped. These figures were even higher than those of the Cologne police commissioner.³ Hitler was furious with Goering's attempt to cover up, but he also considered the staff of the air force command partly responsible. Next day Goering was received as usual. The affair was never mentioned again.

As early as September 20, 1942, I had warned Hitler that the tank production of Friedrichshafen and the ball-bearing facilities in Schweinfurt were crucial to our whole effort. Hitler thereupon ordered increased antiaircraft protection for these two cities. Actually, as I had early recognized, the war could largely have been decided in 1943 if instead of vast but pointless area bombing the planes had concentrated on the centers of armaments production. On April 11, 1943, I proposed to Hitler that a committee of industrial specialists be set to determining the crucial targets in Soviet power production. Four weeks later, however, the first attempt was made—not by us but by the British air force—to influence the course of the war by destroying a single nerve center of the war economy. The principle followed was to paralyze a cross section, as it were—just as a motor can be made useless by the removal of the ignition. On May 17, 1943, a mere nineteen bombers of the RAF tried to strike at our whole armaments industry by destroying the hydroelectric plants of the Ruhr.

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A few days after this attack seven thousand men, whom I had ordered shifted from the Atlantic Wall to the Möhne and Eder areas, were hard at work repairing the dams. On September 23, 1943, in the nick of time before the beginning of the rains, the breach in the Möhne dam was closed.⁵ We were thus able to collect the precipitation of the late autumn and winter of 1943 for the needs of the following summer. While we were engaged in rebuilding, the British air force missed its second chance. A few bombs would have produced cave-ins at the exposed building sites, and a few fire bombs could have set the wooden scaffolding blazing.

After these experiences I wondered once again why our Luftwaffe, with its by now reduced forces, did not launch similar pinpoint attacks whose effects could be devastating. At the end of May 1943, two weeks after the British raid, I reminded Hitler of my idea of April 11 that a group of experts might pinpoint the key industrial targets in the enemy camp. But as so often, Hitler proved irresolute. "I'm afraid that the General Staff of the air force will not want to take advice from your industrial associates. I too have broached such a plan to General Jeschonnek several times. But," he concluded in rather a resigned tone, "you speak to him about it sometime." Evidently Hitler was not going to do anything about this; he lacked any sense of the decisive importance of such operations. There is no question that once before he had thrown away his chance—between 1939 and 1941 when he directed our air raids against England's cities instead of coordinating them with the U-boat campaigns and, for example, attacking the English ports which were in any case sometimes strained beyond their capacity by the convoy system. Now he once again failed to see his opportunity. And the British, for their part, thoughtlessly copied this irrational conduct—aside from their single attack on the dams.

In spite of Hitler's skepticism and my own lack of influence upon air force strategy, I did not feel discouraged. On June 23, I formed a committee consisting of several industry experts to analyze prime bombing targets.⁶ Our first proposal concerned the British coal industry, for British technical publications provided a complete picture

April 5, 1943, that the Möhne and Sorpe dams be attacked before the Eder dam. But the bombs that had been developed specifically for this purpose were considered unsuitable for the earthen dam of the Sorpe reservoir.

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June 1943

of its centers, locations, capacities, and so on. But this proposal came two years too late; our air power no longer sufficed.

Given our reduced forces, one prime target virtually forced itself on our attention: the Russian electric power plants. To judge by our experiences, no systematically organized air defenses needed to be anticipated in Russia. Moreover, the electric power system in the Soviet Union differed structurally from that of the Western countries in one crucial point. Whereas the gradual industrial growth of the West had resulted in many middle-sized power plants connected in a grid, in the Soviet Union large power plants of gigantic dimensions had been built, usually in the heart of extensive industrial areas.⁷ For example, a single huge power plant on the upper Volga supplied most of the energy consumption of Moscow. We had information, in fact, that 60 percent of the manufacturing of essential optical parts and electrical equipment was concentrated in the Soviet capital. Moreover, the destruction of a few gigantic power plants in the Urals would have put a halt to much of Soviet steel production as well as to tank and munitions manufacture. A direct hit on the turbines or their conduits would have released masses of water of a destructiveness greater than that of many bombs. Since many of the major Soviet power plants had been built with the assistance of German companies, we were able to obtain very good data on them.

On November 26, Goering gave the order to strengthen the Sixth Air Corps under Major General Rudolf Meister with long-range bombers. In December the units were assembled near Bialystok.⁸ We had wooden models of the power plants made for use in training the pilots. Early in December I had informed Hitler.⁹ Milch had relayed our plans to Günter Korten, the new Chief of Staff of the air force. On February 4, I wrote Korten that "even today the prospects are good . . . for an operative air campaign against the Soviet Union. . . . I definitely hope that significant effects on the fighting power of the Soviet Union will result from it." I was referring specifically to the attacks upon the power plants in the vicinity of Moscow and the upper Volga.

Success depended—as always in such operations—upon chance factors. I did not think that our action would decisively affect the war. But I hoped, as I wrote to Korten, that we would wreak enough damage on Soviet production so that it would take several months for American supplies to balance out their losses.

Once again we were too sive forced our troops to ret emergencies Hitler was, as s end of February he told n ordered to destroy railroad l plies. I objected that the s bombs would have only a s our own experience and de were much more complex : damage to railroad sections hours. But these objection came to grief in a senseless way impeded.

Whatever interest Hitler point bombing strategy was to retaliate against Engla "Meister Corps," we would ited targets. But Hitler succ massive air strikes on Lonc their pounding of Germany to demand, as late as 1943 heavy bombers. It made no could have been used with occasionally, even as late as swayed by my arguments.¹⁰ grasp the principle of aeri they proceeded along outn at first.

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Once again we were two years too late. The Russian winter offensive forced our troops to retreat. The situation had grown critical. In emergencies Hitler was, as so often, amazingly short-sighted. At the end of February he told me that the "Meister Corps" had been ordered to destroy railroad lines in order to slow down Russian supplies. I objected that the soil in Russia was frozen hard and our bombs would have only a superficial effect. Moreover, according to our own experience and despite the fact that the German railroads were much more complex and hence more sensitive to destruction, damage to railroad sections could often be repaired in a matter of hours. But these objections were in vain. The "Meister Corps" came to grief in a senseless operation, and the Russians were in no way impeded.

Whatever interest Hitler might still have had in the idea of pinpoint bombing strategy was forgotten in his stubborn determination to retaliate against England. Even after the annihilation of the "Meister Corps," we would still have had enough bombers for limited targets. But Hitler succumbed to the unrealistic hope that a few massive air strikes on London might persuade the British to give up their pounding of Germany. That was the only reason he continued to demand, as late as 1943, the development and production of new heavy bombers. It made no impression upon him that such bombers could have been used with far greater effect in the east, although occasionally, even as late as the summer of 1944, he would seem to be swayed by my arguments.¹⁰ He as well as our air force staff could not grasp the principle of aerial warfare in technological terms. Instead they proceeded along outmoded military lines. So did the other side at first.

While I was trying to convert Hitler and the General Staff of the air force to this policy, our Western enemies launched five major attacks on a single big city—Hamburg—within a week, from July 25 to August 2.¹¹ Rash as this operation was, it had catastrophic consequences for us. The first attacks put the water supply pipes out of action, so that in the subsequent bombings the fire department had no way of fighting the fires. Huge conflagrations created cyclone-like firestorms; the asphalt of the streets began to blaze; people were suffocated in their cellars or burned to death in the streets. The devastation of this series of air raids could be compared only with the

effects of a major earthquake. Gauleiter Kaufmann teletyped Hitler repeatedly, begging him to visit the stricken city. When these pleas proved fruitless, he asked Hitler at least to receive a delegation of some of the more heroic rescue crews. But Hitler refused even that.

Hamburg had suffered the fate Goering and Hitler had conceived for London in 1940. At a supper in the Chancellery in that year Hitler had, in the course of a monologue, worked himself up to a frenzy of destructiveness:

Have you ever looked at a map of London? It is so closely built up that one source of fire alone would suffice to destroy the whole city, as happened once before, two hundred years ago. Goering 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 conflagration. Goering has the right idea. 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!

Hamburg had put the fear of God in me. At the meeting of Central Planning on July 29 I pointed out: "If the air raids continue on the present scale, within three months we shall be relieved of a number of questions we are at present discussing. We shall simply be coasting downhill, smoothly and relatively swiftly. . . . We might just as well hold the final meeting of Central Planning, in that case." Three days later I informed Hitler that armaments production was collapsing and threw in the further warning that a series of attacks of this sort, extended to six more major cities, would bring Germany's armaments production to a total halt.* "You'll straighten all that out again," he merely said.

In fact Hitler was right. We straightened it out again—not because of our Central Planning organization, which with the best will in the

* The next day I informed Milch's colleagues of similar fears (Conference with chief of Air Force Procurement, August 3, 1943): "We are approaching the point of total collapse . . . in our supply industry. Soon we will have airplanes, tanks, or trucks lacking certain key parts." Ten months later I said to a group of Hamburg dockworkers: "A while back we were saying to ourselves: If this goes on another few months we'll be washed up. Then armaments production will come to a standstill." (*Office Journal*.)

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After this attack the pro cent.¹² Despite the peril facilities there, for to atte would have held up produ the light of our desperate ball-bearing factories in B the enemy must have been :

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world could issue only general instructions, but by the determined efforts of those directly concerned, first and foremost the workers themselves. Fortunately for us, a series of Hamburg-type raids was not repeated on such a scale against other cities. Thus the enemy once again allowed us to adjust ourselves to his strategy.

We barely escaped a further catastrophic blow on August 17, 1943, only two weeks after the Hamburg bombings. The American air force launched its first strategic raid. It was directed against Schweinfurt where large factories of the ball-bearing industry were concentrated. Ball bearings had in any case already become a bottleneck in our efforts to increase armaments production.

But in this very first attack the other side committed a crucial mistake. Instead of concentrating on the ball-bearing plants, the sizable force of three hundred seventy-six Flying Fortresses divided up. One hundred and forty-six of the planes successfully attacked an airplane assembly plant in Regensburg, but with only minor consequences. Meanwhile, the British air force continued its indiscriminate attacks upon our cities.

After this attack the production of ball bearings dropped by 38 percent.¹² Despite the peril to Schweinfurt we had to patch up our facilities there, for to attempt to relocate our ball-bearing industry would have held up production entirely for three or four months. In the light of our desperate needs we could also do nothing about the ball-bearing factories in Berlin-Erkner, Cannstatt, or Steyr, although the enemy must have been aware of their location.

In June 1946 the General Staff of the Royal Air Force asked me what would have been the results of concerted attacks on the ball-bearing industry. I replied:

Armaments production would have been crucially weakened after two months and after four months would have been brought completely to a standstill.

This, to be sure, would have meant:

One: All our ball-bearing factories (in Schweinfurt, Steyr, Erkner, Cannstatt, and in France and Italy) had been attacked simultaneously.

Two: These attacks had been repeated three or four times, every two weeks, no matter what the pictures of the target area showed.

Three: Any attempt at rebuilding these factories had been thwarted by further attacks, spaced at two-month intervals.¹³

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followed raids on Erkner, Schweinfurt, and again Steyr. After only six weeks our production of bearings (above 6.3 centimeters in diameter) had been reduced to 29 percent of what it had been before the air raids.¹⁷

At the beginning of April 1944, however, the attacks on the ball-bearing industry ceased abruptly. Thus, the Allies threw away success when it was already in their hands. Had they continued the attacks of March and April with the same energy, we would quickly have been at our last gasp.* As it was, not a tank, plane, or other piece of weaponry failed to be produced because of lack of ball bearings, even though such production had been increased by 19 percent from July 1943 to April 1944.¹⁸ As far as armaments were concerned, Hitler's credo that the impossible could be made possible and that all forecasts and fears were too pessimistic, seemed to have proved itself true.

Not until after the war did I learn the reason for the enemy's error. The air staffs assumed that in Hitler's authoritarian state the important factories would be quickly shifted from the imperiled cities. On December 20, 1943, Sir Arthur Harris declared his conviction that "at this stage of the war the Germans have long since made every possible effort to decentralize the manufacture of so vital a product [as ball bearings]." He considerably overestimated the strengths of the authoritarian system, which to the outside observer appeared so tightly knit.

As early as December 19, 1942, eight months before the first air raid on Schweinfurt, I had sent a directive to the entire armaments industry stating: "The mounting intensity of the enemy air attacks compels accelerated preparations for shifting manufactures important for armaments production." But there was resistance on all sides. The Gauleiters did not want new factories in their districts for fear

* Perhaps the enemy air staffs overrated the effects. Our Air Force General Staff also concluded from aerial photographs that an attack on a Soviet synthetic rubber factory in the fall of 1943 had completely wiped out production for many months to come. I showed these photos to our leading synthetic rubber specialist, Hoffmann, the manager of our plant in Hùls, which had undergone much more severe attacks. After pointing out various key sections of the plant which had not been hit, he explained that the plant would be in full production again within a week or two.

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flagration. I drove over there at once. A few secretaries, looking like Amazons in their steel helmets, were trying to save files even while isolated time bombs went off in the vicinity. In place of my private office I found nothing but a huge bomb crater.

The fire spread so quickly that nothing more could be rescued. But nearby was the eight-story building of the Army Ordnance Office, and since the fire was spreading to it and we were all nerved up from the raid and feeling the urge to do something, we thronged into the imperiled building in order at least to save the valuable special telephones. We ripped them from their wires and piled them up in a safe place in the basement shelter of the building. Next morning General Leeb, the chief of the Army Ordnance Office, visited me. "The fires in my building were extinguished early in the morning hours," he informed me, grinning. "But unfortunately we can't do any work now. Last night somebody ripped all the telephones from the walls."

When Goering, at his country estate Karinhall, heard about that nocturnal visit to the flak tower, he gave the staff there orders not to allow me to step out on the platform again. But by this time the officers had already formed a friendly relationship with me that was stronger than Goering's command. My visits to the tower were not hampered by his order.

From the flak tower the air raids on Berlin were an unforgettable sight, and I had constantly to remind myself of the cruel reality in order not to be completely entranced by the scene: the illumination of the parachute flares, which the Berliners called "Christmas trees," followed by flashes of explosions which were caught by the clouds of smoke, the innumerable probing searchlights, the excitement when a plane was caught and tried to escape the cone of light, the brief flaming torch when it was hit. No doubt about it, this apocalypse provided a magnificent spectacle.

As soon as the planes turned back, I drove to those districts of the city where important factories were situated. We drove over streets strewn with rubble, lined by burning houses. Bombed-out families sat or stood in front of the ruins. A few pieces of rescued furniture and other possessions lay about on the sidewalks. There was a sinister atmosphere full of biting smoke, soot, and flames. Sometimes the people displayed that curious hysterical merriment that is often observed in the midst of disasters. Above the city hung a cloud of smoke

Nov 26, 1943

that probably reached twenty thousand feet in height. Even by day it made the macabre scene as dark as night.

I kept trying to describe my impressions to Hitler. But he would interrupt me every time, almost as soon as I began: "Incidentally, Speer, how many tanks can you deliver next month?"

On November 26, 1943, four days after the destruction of my Ministry, another major air raid on Berlin started huge fires in our most important tank factory, Alkett. The Berlin central telephone exchange had been destroyed. My colleague Saur hit on the idea of reaching the Berlin fire department by way of our still intact direct line to the Fuehrer's headquarters. In this way Hitler, too, learned of the blaze, and without making any further inquiries ordered all the fire departments in the vicinity of Berlin to report to the burning tank plant.

Meanwhile I had arrived at Alkett. The greater part of the main workshop had burned down, but the Berlin fire department had already succeeded in extinguishing the fire. As the result of Hitler's order, however, a steady stream of fire equipment from cities as far away as Brandenburg, Oranienburg, and Potsdam kept arriving. Since a direct order from the Fuehrer had been issued, I could not persuade the chiefs to go on to other urgent fires. Early that morning the streets in a wide area around the tank factory were jammed with fire engines standing around doing nothing—while the fires spread unchecked in other parts of the city.

In order to awaken my associates to the problems and anxieties about air armaments, Milch and I held a conference in September 1943 at the Air Force Experimental Center in Rechlin am Müritzsee. Among other things, Milch and his technical experts spoke on the future production of enemy aircraft. Graphs were presented for type after type of aircraft, with emphasis especially on American production curves as compared with our own. What alarmed us most were the figures on the future increase in four-motored daylight bombers. If these figures were accurate, what we were undergoing at the moment could be regarded only as a prelude.

Naturally, the question arose as to how aware Hitler and Goering were of these figures. Bitterly, Milch told me that he had been trying for months to have his experts on enemy armaments deliver a report to Goering. But Goering refused to hear anything about it. The Fuehrer had told him it was all propaganda, Milch said, and Goering

was simply holding to these production figures you. Those are all plant Air Ministry fall for them all warnings in the winter after the next being blasted.

About this same time Goering and General Galland had reported to Hitler planes accompanying the bombers to Aachen. He had added that American fighters, thanks to them, would be able to provide escort far even deeper into German territory.

Goering was embarking when Galland came along telling the Fuehrer that Aachen was the territory of the Reich? Goering said: "Herr Reichsmarschall,"

"they will soon be flying over."

Goering spoke even more loudly than what gives you such fantastic ideas. Galland shook his head and said: "schall!" As he spoke he held his cap somewhat askew, a gesture which said: "American fighters have no doubt about it!"

Goering obstinately held his ground. Galland. It's impossible."

Galland reacted with a touch of irony to it yourself, sir; the downed plane.

Goering tried to smooth things over. I tell you something. I'm an expert on what is possible. But I know what's not possible."

Galland only shook his head. What must have happened is that the Americans were west. I mean, if they were

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blems and anxieties rence in September chlin am Müritzsee. perts spoke on the e presented for type n American produced us most were the daylight bombers. If oing at the moment

Hitler and Goering he had been trying nts deliver a report ng about it. The h said, and Goering

was simply holding to this line. I too had no luck when I tried to force these production figures on Hitler's attention. "Don't let them fool you. Those are all planted stories. Naturally those defeatists in the Air Ministry fall for them." With similar remarks he had thrust aside all warnings in the winter of 1942. Now, when our cities were one after the next being blasted into rubble, he would not change his tune.

About this same time I witnessed a dramatic scene between Goering and General Galland, who commanded his fighter planes. Galland had reported to Hitler that day that several American fighter planes accompanying the bomber squadrons had been shot down over Aachen. He had added the warning that we were in grave peril if American fighters, thanks to improved fuel capacity, should soon be able to provide escort protection to the fleets of bombers on flights even deeper into Germany. Hitler had just relayed these points to Goering.

Goering was embarking for Rominten Heath on his special train when Galland came along to bid him good-by. "What's the idea of telling the Fuehrer that American fighters have penetrated into the territory of the Reich?" Goering snapped at him.

"*Herr Reichsmarschall*," Galland replied with imperturbable calm, "they will soon be flying even deeper."

Goering spoke even more vehemently: "That's nonsense, Galland, what gives you such fantasies? That's pure bluff!"

Galland shook his head. "Those are the facts, *Herr Reichsmarschall*!" As he spoke he deliberately remained in a casual posture, his cap somewhat askew, a long cigar clamped between his teeth. "American fighters have been shot down over Aachen. There is no doubt about it!"

Goering obstinately held his ground: "That is simply not true, Galland. It's impossible."

Galland reacted with a touch of mockery: "You might go and check it yourself, sir; the downed planes are there at Aachen."

Goering tried to smooth matters over: "Come now, Galland, let me tell you something. I'm an experienced fighter pilot myself. I know what is possible. But I know what isn't, too. Admit you made a mistake."

Galland only shook his head, until Goering finally declared: "What must have happened is that they were shot down much farther to the west. I mean, if they were very high when they were shot down

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they could have glided quite a distance farther before they crashed."

Not a muscle moved in Galland's face. "Glided to the east, sir? If my plane were shot up. . ."

"Now then, Herr Galland," Goering fulminated, trying to put an end to the debate, "I officially assert that the American fighter planes did not reach Aachen."

The General ventured a last statement: "But, sir, they were there!"

At this point Goering's self-control gave way. "I herewith give you an official order that they weren't there! Do you understand? The American fighters were not there! Get that! I intend to report that to the Fuehrer."

Goering simply let General Galland stand there. But as he stalked off he turned once more and called out threateningly: "You have my official order!"

With an unforgettable smile the General replied: "Orders are orders, sir!"

Goering was not actually blind to reality. I would occasionally hear him make perceptive comments on the situation. Rather, he acted like a bankrupt who up to the last moment wants to deceive himself along with his creditors. Capricious treatment and blatant refusal to accept reality had already driven the first chief of Air Force Procurement, the famous fighter pilot Ernst Udet, to his death in 1941. On August 18, 1943, another of Goering's closest associates and the man who had been Air Force Chief of Staff for over four years, General Jeschonnek, was found dead in his office. He too had committed suicide. On his table, so Milch told me, a note was found stating that he did not wish Goering to attend his funeral. Nevertheless Goering showed up at the ceremony and deposited a wreath from Hitler.²¹

I have always thought it was a most valuable trait to recognize reality and not to pursue delusions. But when I now think over my life up to and including the years of imprisonment, there was no period in which I was free of delusory notions.

The departure from reality, which was visibly spreading like a contagion, was no peculiarity of the National Socialist regime. But in normal circumstances people who turn their backs on reality are soon set straight by the mockery and criticism of those around them, which makes them aware they have lost credibility. In the Third Reich

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Hitler in the Autumn of 1943

BOTH HIS OLD ASSOCIATES AND HIS ADJUTANTS AGREED THAT HITLER had undergone a change in the past year. This could scarcely be surprising, for during this period he had experienced Stalingrad, had looked on powerlessly as a quarter of a million soldiers surrendered in Tunisia, and had seen German cities leveled. Along with all this he had to approve the navy's decision to withdraw the U-boats from the Atlantic, thus relinquishing one of his greatest hopes for victory. Undoubtedly, Hitler could see the meaning of this turn of affairs. And undoubtedly he reacted to it as human beings do, with disappointment, dejection, and increasingly forced optimism.

In the years since then, Hitler may have become the object of sober studies for the historian. But for me he possesses to this day a substantiality and physical presence, as if he still existed in the flesh. Between the spring of 1942 and the summer of 1943 he sometimes spoke despondently. But, then, a curious transformation seemed to take place in him. Even in desperate situations he displayed confidence in ultimate victory. From this later period I can scarcely recall

* D. & altogether my darling. I would offer him the most extraordinary hopes in his dreams

349 Hitler in

any remarks on the depicting them. Had he now firmly believed in events moved toward a more rigidly convinced

His closest associates ately made his decision intellectually more sluggish new ideas. It was as if he could no longer find the

Underlying all this was by the superior power of issued a demand for Germany probably the only German the seriousness of this would talk about explaining Allies. Still others imagine vice by which he could he not earlier, starting with the Soviet Union, new tricks, new shifts, conferences, he more at There is no turning back our bridges." In speaking off from any negotiation revealed at the Nuremberg

One of the causes for thought at the time, was He was working in an Russian campaign he of administering the affairs spells of indolence in the enormous daily mass of how to let others work responsibility for detail into a strictly disciplined his nature, and this was cisions.

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any remarks on the disastrous course of affairs, although I was expecting them. Had he gone on for so long persuading himself that he now firmly believed in victory? At any rate, the more inexorably events moved toward catastrophe, the more inflexible he became, the more rigidly convinced that everything he decided on was right.

His closest associates noted his growing inaccessibility. He deliberately made his decisions in isolation. At the same time he had grown intellectually more sluggish and showed little inclination to develop new ideas. It was as if he were running along an unalterable track and could no longer find the strength to break out of it.

Underlying all this was the impasse into which he had been driven by the superior power of his enemies. In January 1943 they had jointly issued a demand for Germany's unconditional surrender. Hitler was probably the only German leader who entertained no illusions about the seriousness of this statement. Goebbels, Goering, and the others would talk about exploiting the political antagonisms among the Allies. Still others imagined that Hitler would find some political device by which he could save the situation, even now. After all, had he not earlier, starting with the occupation of Austria up to the pact with the Soviet Union, contrived with apparent ease a succession of new tricks, new shifts, new finesses? But now, during the situation conferences, he more and more often declared: "Don't fool yourself. There is no turning back. We can only move forward. We have burned our bridges." In speaking this way Hitler was cutting his government off from any negotiation. The meaning of these words was first fully revealed at the Nuremberg Trial.

One of the causes for the changes in Hitler's personality, so I thought at the time, was the constant stress under which he labored. He was working in an unaccustomed way. Since the beginning of the Russian campaign he had abandoned his former staccato method of administering the affairs of government in flurries of activity, with spells of indolence in between. Instead, he regularly attended to an enormous daily mass of work. Whereas in the past he had known how to let others work for him, he now assumed more and more responsibility for details. As anxieties mounted, he made himself into a strictly disciplined worker. But such discipline ran counter to his nature, and this was inevitably reflected in the quality of his decisions.

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It is true that even before the war Hitler had shown signs of overwork. At times he would be distinctly averse to making decisions, would appear absent-minded, and would relapse into painful spells of monologuing. Or else he would fall into a sort of muteness or would say nothing more than an occasional "yes" or "no." At such times it was not clear whether he still had his mind on the subject or was brooding on other thoughts. Earlier, however, these states of exhaustion did not usually last long. After staying at Obersalzberg for a few weeks he would appear more relaxed. His eyes would be brighter, his capacity for reaction would have increased, and he would recover his pleasure in state business.

In 1943, too, his entourage frequently urged him to take a vacation. At such times he would change the location of his headquarters and would go for weeks and sometimes even for months to Obersalzberg.* But these vacations did not involve any change in his daily routine. Bormann was always hovering nearby, with endless small questions which the Fuehrer had to settle. There was a stream of callers, Gauleiters or ministers who could not obtain admission to headquarters and who now insisted on seeing him. Along with all this the lengthy daily situation conferences went on, for the entire military staff came along to wherever Hitler happened to be staying. Hitler frequently said, when we expressed concern for his health: "It's easy to advise me to take a vacation. But it's impossible. I cannot leave current military decisions to others even for twenty-four hours."

The people in Hitler's military entourage had been used to concentrated daily work from their youth. They could not have realized how overstrained Hitler was. Bormann, likewise, seemed unable to understand that he was asking too much of Hitler. But even apart from this, Hitler neglected to do what every factory executive must do: appoint good deputies for each important phase of his work. He had neither a competent executive chief nor a vigorous head of the armed forces nor even a capable Commander in Chief of the army. He con-

* During the twenty months from July 28, 1941, to March 20, 1943, Hitler interrupted his stay in Rastenburg four times, for a total of fifty-seven days. Beginning on March 20, 1943, on his doctor's urging, he went to Obersalzberg for a three-month vacation and then worked for the next nine months in Rastenburg. After this, completely exhausted, he spent the four months after March 16, 1944, at Obersalzberg and in Berlin. (Domarus, *Hitlers Reden*, Vol. IV [Munich, 1965].)

tinually flouted the old rule that time a man should have available rule.

Overwork and isolation led to rigor. He suffered from spells of caustic and irritable. Earlier, sportive ease; now, he had to face As a former racing shell crewman overtraining. I remembered how performance dropped, we began bility. We would become autopsied period seemed actually unwelcome training. Excessive intellectual strain During the difficult days of the war mind went on working mechanically to absorb fresh impressions in an apathetic way.

The fact that Hitler left the secrecy on the night of September proved to be a step of high significance relationship to the people had contact with the populace—at enthusiasm and capacity to respond power over them seemed likewise

In the early thirties, during power, Hitler had driven himself the war. But he probably drew more mass meetings than he himself had. Even during the period between made life easier for him, he was a vision of admirers who came to pay. The rallies in the prewar period. They were part of his life, and he self-assured than he had been before.

The private circle—his secretariat he moved at headquarters was, if the prewar circle at Obersalzberg cellery. Here there were no people they could hardly speak. Daily ass

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tinually flouted the old rule that the higher his position the more free
time a man should have available. Formerly, he had abided by this
rule.

Overwork and isolation led to a peculiar state of petrification and
rigor. He suffered from spells of mental torpor and was permanently
caustic and irritable. Earlier, he had made decisions with almost
sportive ease; now, he had to force them out of his exhausted brain. (P 648)
As a former racing shell crewman I knew about the phenomenon of
overtraining. I remembered how, when we reached such a state, our
performance dropped, we became dull and irritable and lost all flexi-
bility. We would become automatons to such an extent that a rest
period seemed actually unwelcome and all we wanted was to go on
training. Excessive intellectual strain can produce similar symptoms.
During the difficult days of the war, I could observe in myself how my
mind went on working mechanically, while at the same time my ability
to absorb fresh impressions diminished and I made decisions in an
apathetic way.

The fact that Hitler left the darkened Chancellery in silence and
secrecy on the night of September 3, 1939, in order to go to the front,
proved to be a step of high significance for the subsequent years. His
relationship to the people had changed. Even when he did come into
contact with the populace—at intervals of many months—their en-
thusiasm and capacity to respond to him had faded and his magnetic
power over them seemed likewise to have fled.

In the early thirties, during the final phases of the struggle for
power, Hitler had driven himself as hard as during the second half of
the war. But he probably drew more impetus and courage from those
mass meetings than he himself had poured out upon the multitude.
Even during the period between 1933 and 1939, when his position
made life easier for him, he was visibly refreshed by the daily proces-
sion of admirers who came to pay homage to him at Obersalzberg.
The rallies in the prewar period had also been a stimulant to Hitler.
They were part of his life, and each one left him more incisive and
self-assured than he had been before.

The private circle—his secretaries, doctors, and adjutants—in which
he moved at headquarters was, if possible, even less stimulating than
the prewar circle at Obersalzberg had been, or the circle in the Chan-
cellery. Here there were no people so carried away by his aura that
they could hardly speak. Daily association with Hitler, as I had already

med together over building Goebbels had made of him an needs and weaknesses,

ave been tiring to him. For quarters any touch of idolatry the contrary, the military Even had they not been so of their training. For that and Goering seemed all the sound genuine. Hitler him- to be servile. In that atmos- te.

t his own life pattern. Con- to conceal their worries and and more he avoided con- the rare sentimental talks e early days, such as Goeb- e spoke in an impersonal, still made decisions alertly nd once in a long while he arguments. But these times made special note of them.

ng young frontline officers the mood of the outside of the headquarters. But Hitler seemed unwilling to ve also realized that these r example, a young tank ng the Terek his unit had had to check the advance his overwrought state of or days afterward. "There 5 centimeter guns! What's creased at once by every ited facilities there was the supply lines were so it up with the tempestuous

advance of the tank troops. Hitler, however, refused to take this factor into account.

On such occasions the young frontline officers would disclose other details into which Hitler immediately read major errors of omission on the part of the General Staff. In reality most of the difficulties arose from the tempo of the advances, which Hitler insisted on. It was impossible for the army staff to discuss this matter with him, since he had no knowledge of the complicated logistics involved in such advances.

At long intervals Hitler still continued to receive officers and enlisted men on whom he was to confer high military decorations. Given his distrust in the competence of his staff, there were often dramatic scenes and peremptory orders after such visits. In order to avert such complications, Keitel and Schmudt did their best to neutralize the visitors beforehand, insofar as they could.

Hitler's evening tea, to which he invited guests even at headquarters, had in the course of time been shifted to two o'clock in the morning and did not end before three or four o'clock. The time when he went to bed had also been shifted more and more into the early morning, so that I once commented: "If the war goes on much longer we'll at least come around to the normal working hours of an early riser and take Hitler's evening tea as our breakfast."

Hitler unquestionably suffered from insomnia. He spoke of the agony of lying awake if he went to bed earlier. During the tea he would often complain that the day before he had only been able to snatch a few hours of rest in the morning, after many hours of sleeplessness.

Only the intimates were admitted to these teas: his doctors, his secretaries, his military and civilian adjutants, the press chief's deputy, the Foreign Ministry's representative, Ambassador Hewel, sometimes his Viennese diet cook, such visitors as were close to Hitler, and the inevitable Bormann. I too was welcome as a guest anytime. We sat stiffly in Hitler's dining room in uncomfortable armchairs. On these occasions Hitler still loved a *gemütlich* atmosphere, with, if possible, a fire in the fireplace. He passed cake to the secretaries with emphatic gallantry and tried to achieve a tone of friendliness with his guests like an easy-going host. I felt pity for him; there was always something misbegotten about his attempts to radiate warmth in order to receive it.

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Since music was banned at headquarters, there remained only conversation, with Hitler himself doing most of the talking. His familiar jokes were appreciated as if they had been heard for the first time; his stories of his harsh youth or the "days of struggle" were listened to as raptly as if they were being told for the first time; but this circle could not whip up much liveliness or contribute to the conversation. It was an unwritten law that events at the front, politics, or criticism of leaders must be avoided. Naturally, Hitler, too, had no need to talk about such matters. Only Bormann had the privilege of making provocative remarks. Sometimes, too, a letter from Eva Braun would send Hitler into a fit, for she was apt to cite cases of blatant stupidity on the part of officials. When, for example, regulations were issued forbidding the people of Munich from going to the mountains for skiing, Hitler became extremely excited and launched into tirades about his everlasting struggle against the idiocy of the bureaucracy. In the end, Bormann would be ordered to look into such cases.

The banality of the subjects indicated that Hitler's threshold of irritability had become extremely low. On the other hand, such trivialities really had a kind of relaxing effect on him, since they led him back to a world in which he could still issue effective orders. For the moment at least he could forget the impotence that had plagued him since his enemies had begun to shape the course of events.

Even though he still played at being master of the situation and his circle did its best to abet him in his illusions, elements of the truth forced themselves upon his consciousness. At such moments, he would go back to his old litany that he had become a politician against his will, that basically he was an architect but that he had been out of luck: The kind of projects that would have suited his talents were not being built. Only when he himself was head of government was the right kind of building possible. He had only one remaining wish, he would say in one of those bursts of self-pity which became more and more frequent these days. "As soon as possible I want to hang the field-gray jacket on its nail again.* When I have ended the war victoriously, my life's task will be fulfilled, and I'll withdraw to the

* Since the beginning of the war he had worn military dress rather than his old party uniform, and he had promised the Reichstag that he would not put it aside until the war was over—just as Isabella of Castile had once sworn not to take off her chemise until the country was liberated from the Moors.

home of my old age, in Linz can worry about these problems spoken in this vein before more relaxed teatimes at Oberammergau. All that was mere coquettishness, unsentimentally, in a normal note of bitterness.

His abiding interest in the war, Hermann Goessler, the to headquarters more and whereas Hitler scarcely ever went to the mountains, or Munich plans, with him. When he considered it would say gloomily, death coming with this mood, when he repeatedly turned to the sketches in one of the towers of the Reich Chancellery. After a victorious war, he would sit beside his field marshals in the Reich Chancellery.

During these nocturnal hours at the Prussian headquarters, Hitler was slightly unbalanced. The hours weighed on those few hours, and a sense of duty could be felt in the day of strenuous conferences during the monotonous conferences.

Before Hitler appeared, it was this evening?"

Someone else would repeat these evenings."

One of the secretaries: "While. It's always the same.

Another: "We really should come to shirk and the same

Of course Hitler was still was distinctly wearing thin.

ters, there remained only cost of the talking. His familiar been heard for the first time; days of struggle" were listened for the first time; but this circle contribute to the conversation. the front, politics, or criticism Hitler, too, had no need to in had the privilege of making a letter from Eva Braun would o cite cases of blatant stupidity ample, regulations were issued in going to the mountains for ted and launched into tirades the idiocy of the bureaucracy. to look into such cases.

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home of my old age, in Linz, across the Danube. Then my successor can worry about these problems." He had, it is true, sometimes spoken in this vein before the beginning of the war, during those more relaxed teatimes at Obersalzberg. But in those days, I suspect, all that was mere coquettishness. Now, he formulated such thoughts unsentimentally, in a normal conversational tone and with a credible note of bitterness.

His abiding interest in the plans for the city of his retirement years also gradually assumed an escapist character. Toward the end of the war, Hermann Giessler, the chief architect of Linz, was summoned to headquarters more and more frequently to present his designs, whereas Hitler scarcely ever asked for the Hamburg, Berlin, Nuremberg, or Munich plans, which had previously meant so much to him. When he considered the torments he now had to endure, he would say gloomily, death could only mean a release for him. In keeping with this mood, when he studied the Linz plans he would repeatedly turn to the sketches for his tomb, which was to be located in one of the towers of the Linz complex of party buildings. Even after a victorious war, he emphasized, he did not want to be buried beside his field marshals in the Soldiers Hall in Berlin.

During these nocturnal conversations in the Ukrainian or East Prussian headquarters, Hitler often gave the impression of being slightly unbalanced. The leaden heaviness of the early morning hours weighed on those few of us who participated. Only politeness and a sense of duty could induce us to attend the teas. For after the day of strenuous conferences, we could scarcely keep our eyes open during the monotonous conversations.

Before Hitler appeared, someone might ask: "Say, where is Morell this evening?"

Someone else would reply crossly: "He hasn't been here the past three evenings."

One of the secretaries: "He could stand staying up late once in a while. It's always the same. . . . I'd love to sleep too."

Another: "We really should arrange to take turns. It isn't fair for some to shirk and the same people have to be here all the time."

Of course Hitler was still revered by this circle, but his nimbus was distinctly wearing thin.

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After Hitler had eaten breakfast late in the morning, the daily newspapers and press information sheets were presented to him. The press reports were crucially important in forming his opinions; they also had a great deal to do with his mood. Where specific foreign news items were concerned, he instantly formulated the official German position, usually highly aggressive, which he would then dictate word for word to his press chief, Dr. Dietrich, or to Dietrich's deputy, Lorenz. Hitler would boldly intrude on all areas of government, usually without consulting the ministers in question, such as Goebbels or Ribbentrop, or even bothering to inform them beforehand.

After that, Hewel reported on foreign events, which Hitler took more calmly than he did the press notices. In hindsight it seems to me that he considered the reverberations more important than the realities; that the newspaper accounts interested him more than the events themselves.

Schaub then brought in the reports of last night's air raids, which had been passed on from the Gauleiters to Bormann. Since I often went to look at the production facilities in the damaged cities a day or two later, I can judge that Hitler was correctly informed on the degree of destruction. It would in fact have been unwise of a Gauleiter to minimize the damage, since his prestige could only increase if, in spite of the devastation, he succeeded in restoring normal life and production.

Hitler was obviously shaken by these reports, although less by the casualties among the populace or the bombing of residential areas than by the destruction of valuable buildings, especially theaters. As in his plans for the "reshaping of German cities" before the war, he was primarily interested in public architecture and seemed to give little thought to social distress and human misery. Consequently, he was likely to demand that burned-out theaters be rebuilt immediately. Several times I tried to remind him of other strains upon the construction industry. Apparently the local political authorities were also less than eager to carry out these unpopular orders, and Hitler, in any case sufficiently taken up by the military situation, seldom inquired about the way the work was going. Only in Munich, his second home, and in Berlin did he insist that the opera houses be rebuilt at great expenditure of labor and money.²

Incidentally, Hitler betrayed a remarkable ignorance of the true

situation and the mood of the objections with: "Theatrical performance the morale of the people must certainly had other thin remarks showed to what extent milieu."

While reading these reports against the British government these air raids. We could force fleet of bombers ourselves, but we had neither the planes nor always returned the same as possible, Speer. You'll manage, that our ability to produce raids must have been one of the air battle over Germany's proposals that the manufacture favor of increased fighter-plan too late.

I tried a few times to persuade and let himself be seen there the same idea, but in vain. I preferred enviously to the conduct propaganda value I could merely brushed away any such Stettin Station to the Chancellorsstrasse in Munich, he now route, whereas he formerly let him several times on such drive he noted the new areas of rubble

Morell had advised Hitler to have been very easy to lay out in the woods. But Hitler vetoed his daily airing consisted of long within Restricted Area I.

On these walks Hitler's in companions but on his Alsatian for training purposes. After a

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situation and the mood of the populace when he answered all objections with: "Theatrical performances are needed precisely because the morale of the people must be maintained." The urban population certainly had other things to worry about. Once more, such remarks showed to what extent Hitler was rooted in a "bourgeois milieu."

While reading these reports, Hitler was in the habit of raging against the British government and the Jews, who were to blame for these air raids. We could force the enemy to stop by building a large fleet of bombers ourselves, he declared. Whenever I objected that we had neither the planes nor explosives for heavy bombing,³ he always returned the same answer: "You've made so many things possible, Speer. You'll manage that too." It seems to me, in retrospect, that our ability to produce more and more in spite of the air raids must have been one of the reasons that Hitler did not really take the air battle over Germany seriously. Consequently, Milch's and my proposals that the manufacture of bombers be radically reduced in favor of increased fighter-plane production was rejected until it was too late.

I tried a few times to persuade Hitler to travel to the bombed cities and let himself be seen there.⁴ Goebbels, too, had tried to put over the same idea, but in vain. He lamented Hitler's obstinacy and referred enviously to the conduct of Churchill: "When I think of the propaganda value I could make of such a visit!" But Hitler regularly brushed away any such suggestion. During his drives from Stettin Station to the Chancellery, or to his apartment in Prinzregentenstrasse in Munich, he now ordered his chauffeur to take the shortest route, whereas he formerly loved long detours. Since I accompanied him several times on such drives, I saw with what absence of emotion he noted the new areas of rubble through which his car would pass.

Morell had advised Hitler to take long walks, and it would indeed have been very easy to lay out a few paths in the adjacent East Prussian woods. But Hitler vetoed any such project. The result was that his daily airing consisted of a small circuit barely a hundred yards long within Restricted Area I.

On these walks Hitler's interest was usually focused not on his companions but on his Alsatian dog Blondi. He used these intervals for training purposes. After a few exercises in fetching, the dog had to

* P.T. City the Jews, the Jews - that
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the blood to boil in his stagnant
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balance on a board about a foot wide and twenty-five feet long, mounted at a height of more than six feet. Hitler knew, of course, that a dog regards the man who feeds him as his master. Before the attendant opened the dog cage, Hitler usually let the excited dog leap up against the wire partitions for a few minutes, barking and whimpering with joy and hunger. Since I stood in special favor, I was sometimes allowed to accompany Hitler to this feeding, whereas all the others had to watch the process at a distance. The dog probably occupied the most important role in Hitler's private life; he meant more to his master than the Fuehrer's closest associates.

Hitler frequently took his meals alone when no guest he liked was at headquarters. In that case only the dog kept him company. As a matter of course, during my two- or three-day stays at headquarters I was asked to dine with the Fuehrer once or twice. People no doubt thought we were discussing important general matters or personal subjects during these meals. But even I found there was no talking with Hitler about broader aspects of the military situation, or even the economic situation. We stuck to trivial subjects or dreary production figures.

Initially, he remained interested in the matters that had absorbed both of us in the past, such as the future shaping of German cities. He also wanted to plan a transcontinental railroad network which would link his future empire together economically. After he decided on the size of the wide-gauge track he wanted for the railroad, he began considering various car types and plunging into detailed calculations on freight tonnages. Such matters occupied him during his sleepless nights.* The Transportation Ministry thought that the drawbacks of two railroad systems more than outweighed the possible advantages, but Hitler had become obsessed with this idea; he decided that it was even more important as a binding force in his empire than the autobahn system.

From month to month Hitler became more taciturn. It may also be that he let himself go with me and made less of an effort at con-

* The idea behind this transcontinental service was that a single train would transport as much as a freighter. Hitler felt that sea travel was never sufficiently safe and was certainly unreliable in wartime. Even where plans for new railroad facilities had already been completed, as in Berlin and Munich, an extra pair of tracks had to be added for Hitler's new railroad system.

versation than he did with others of 1943 on, a lunch with him spooned up our soup. While he made a few remarks about it, I usually say something acid about the bureau. Finally the conversation turned to food. He was highly pleased with the vegetarian cuisine. If I did ask him to have a taste of it.

He was forever worried about the future of the Third Reich. "Imagine me going around in a political ruin." After making such a statement, he would usually order me, in a very orderly, to put an end to this talk. "It is too much." Incidentally, even though I made fun of meat-eaters, but he had no objection to a Steinhäufigkeit, commented pityingly that he did not like a meat broth I could depend on. In connection with crayfish he brought up his mother whose relations had been with the crustaceans; for eels, that he had by using dead cats.

Earlier, during those even though he had never been shy about repeating his views, now, in these times of retreats, he had to be regarded as signs that he was not. For most of the time a deadly silence. For most of the time a deadly silence of a man whose life was slowly

During conferences that often took place, Hitler ordered his dog to lie down. When he was finally settled with a protesting growl, he watched, he crawled closer to him. When the maneuvers finally landed with him, upon a sharp command banished him. He did any reasonably prudent thing in the dog. That was at meals the dog laid his head on the table and actively studied the pieces of meat. He was master's vegetarian dishes. When

* "Can you in matters of the wrong, it is all

and twenty-five feet long, feet. Hitler knew, of course, him as his master. Before he usually let the excited dog leap minutes, barking and whimpering in special favor, I was sometimes this feeding, whereas all the distance. The dog probably Hitler's private life; he meant his best associates.

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versation than he did with other guests. In any case, from the autumn of 1943 on, a lunch with him became an ordeal. In silence, we spooned up our soup. While we waited for the next course we might make a few remarks about the weather, whereupon Hitler would usually say something acid about the incompetence of the weather bureau. Finally the conversation would revert to the quality of the food. He was highly pleased with his diet cook and praised her skill at vegetarian cuisine. If a dish seemed to him especially good, he asked me to have a taste of it.

He was forever worried about gaining weight. "Out of the question! Imagine me going around with a potbelly. It would mean political ruin." After making such remarks he would frequently call his orderly, to put an end to temptation: "Take this away, please, I like it too much." Incidentally, even here at headquarters he would often make fun of meat-eaters, but he did not attempt to sway me. He even had no objection to a Steinhäger after fatty food—although he commented pityingly that he did not need it, with his fare. If there were a meat broth I could depend on his speaking of "corpse tea"; in connection with crayfish he brought out his story of a deceased grandmother whose relations had thrown her body into the brook to lure the crustaceans; for eels, that they were best fattened and caught by using dead cats.

Earlier, during those evenings in the Chancellery, Hitler had never been shy about repeating stories as often as he pleased. But now, in these times of retreats and impending doom, such repetitions had to be regarded as signs that he was in an especially good humor. For most of the time a deadly silence prevailed. I had the impression of a man whose life was slowly ebbing away.

During conferences that often lasted for hours, or during meals, Hitler ordered his dog to lie down in a certain corner. There the animal settled with a protesting growl. If he felt that he was not being watched, he crawled closer to his master's seat and after elaborate maneuvers finally landed with his snout against Hitler's knee, whereupon a sharp command banished him to his corner again. I avoided, as did any reasonably prudent visitor to Hitler, arousing any feelings of friendship in the dog. That was often not so easy, especially when at meals the dog laid his head on my knee and in this position attentively studied the pieces of meat, which he evidently preferred to his master's vegetarian dishes. When Hitler noticed such disloyalty, he

* "Can you imagine? It does no matter what they say. Right or wrong, it is all the same to them."

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slaught until the Russians had been bled white. Moreover, many of us believed that Hitler would end the war at the right time.

To forecast what we might expect in the next few months, Jodl prepared a report to Hitler. At the same time he tried to revive his real job as chief of the Armed Forces Operations Staff, which Hitler had more and more taken over. Jodl knew well Hitler's distrust for arguments based on calculations. Toward the end of 1943, Hitler was still speaking scornfully of a projection by General Georg Thomas which had rated the Soviet war potential as extremely high. Hitler was irate over this memorandum, and soon after its presentation he had forbidden Thomas and the OKW to undertake any further studies of this type. When around the autumn of 1944 my planning board, in an earnest effort to help the military operations staff make its decisions, worked out a memorandum on the enemy's armaments capacities, we received a reprimand from Keitel and were told not to transmit such documents to the OKW.

Thus, Jodl knew that there were serious barriers that prevented him from delivering his report. He therefore appointed a young air force colonel named Christian to give a quick sketch of the matter at one of the situation conferences. The colonel had the rather significant advantage of being married to one of Hitler's secretaries, one of those who belonged to the nightly teatime circle. The idea was to discern the enemy's possible long-run tactical plans and what the consequences would be for us. But aside from the scene of Colonel Christian's showing a completely silent Hitler various places on several large maps of Europe, I no longer recall what happened with this attempt. In any case, it failed miserably.

Without much fuss, and without any rebellion on the part of those concerned, Hitler continued to make all decisions himself, in total disregard of any technical basis. He dispensed with analyses of the situation and logistical calculations. He did not rely on any study group which would examine all aspects of offensive plans in terms of their effectiveness and possible countermeasures by the enemy. The headquarters staffs were more than competent to carry out these functions of modern warfare; it would only have been necessary to activate them. To be sure, Hitler would accept information about partial aspects of situations; but the grand synthesis was supposed to be born solely in his head. His field marshals as well as his closest associates had, therefore, merely advisory functions, for his decision

* *Air jealousy of the talents of other human beings was without compare.*

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opinions, too, were indications of his flight from reality in the last years of his life.

Within Restricted Area I in Rastenburg a teahouse had been built. Its furnishings were a pleasant change from the general drabness. Here we occasionally met for a glass of vermouth; here field marshals waited before conferring with Hitler. He himself avoided this teahouse and thus escaped encounters with the generals and staff officers of the High Command and of the armed forces. But for a few days, after Fascism had ingloriously come to an end in Italy on July 25, 1943, and Badoglio had taken over the government, Hitler sat there over tea several afternoons with perhaps ten of his military and political associates, among them Keitel, Jodl, and Bormann. Suddenly, Jodl blurted out: "Come to think of it, Fascism simply burst like a soap bubble." A horrified silence followed, until someone launched another subject, whereupon Jodl, visibly alarmed, flushed beet red.

A few weeks afterward Prince Philip of Hesse was invited to the headquarters. He was one of the few followers whom Hitler always treated with deference and respect. Philip had often been useful to him, and especially in the early years of the Third Reich had arranged contacts with the heads of Italian Fascism. In addition he had helped Hitler purchase valuable art works. The Prince had been able to arrange their export from Italy through his connections with the Italian royal house, to which he was related.

When the Prince wanted to leave again after a few days, Hitler bluntly told him that he would not be allowed to leave headquarters. He continued to treat him with the greatest outward courtesy and invited him to his meals. But the members of Hitler's entourage, who until then had been so fond of talking with a "real prince," avoided him as if he had a contagious disease. On September 9, Prince Philip and Princess Mafalda, the Italian King's daughter, were taken to a concentration camp on Hitler's direct orders.

For weeks afterward Hitler boasted that he had begun suspecting early in the game that Prince Philip was sending information to the Italian royal house. He himself had kept an eye on him, Hitler said, and ordered his telephone conversations tapped. By methods such as these it had been discovered that the Prince was passing number codes to his wife. Nevertheless, Hitler had continued to treat the Prince with marked friendliness. That had been part of his tactics, he declared, obviously delighted with his gifts as a detective.

The arrest of the Prince as similarly close to Hitler that hands. The feeling spread, subtly and meanly keeping and might deliver him up to slightest opportunity to justify

Mussolini's relationship to the Duce's support during truce. After the Italian Chief without a trace, Hitler seemed ungen loyalty. Again and again that everything must be done declared that Mussolini's fate was and night.

On September 12, 1943, to which the Gauleiters of Tyrol with me. It was settled that territory as far as Verona was of Gauleiter Hofer of Tyrol. I were assigned to the territory given jurisdiction in all quest the remaining Italian territory the Italian authorities. Then after the signing of these denounced.

The two Gauleiters thought lost again. So did I. "The Fue that!" I said. Shortly afterward he cancel the new arrangements meant to do. To my surprise he would continue to be valid, the new Italian government formed fringe on Italy's sovereignty. I sent my decree to me for signature will be no doubt that my ordination."⁶

Undoubtedly Hitler had already this amputation of northern Italy

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The arrest of the Prince and his wife reminded all those who were similarly close to Hitler that they had put themselves utterly into his hands. The feeling spread, unconsciously, that Hitler might be covertly and meanly keeping watch on anyone among his intimates and might deliver him up to a similar fate without giving him the slightest opportunity to justify himself.

Mussolini's relationship to Hitler had been for all of us, ever since the Duce's support during the Austrian crisis, the very symbol of amity. After the Italian Chief of State was overthrown and vanished without a trace, Hitler seemed to be inspired with a kind of Nibelungen loyalty. Again and again in the situation conferences he insisted that everything must be done to locate the missing Duce. He declared that Mussolini's fate was a nightmare that weighed on him day and night.

On September 12, 1943, a conference was held in headquarters to which the Gauleiters of Tyrol and Carinthia were invited, along with me. It was settled that not only South Tyrol but also the Italian territory as far as Verona would be placed under the administration of Gauleiter Hofer of Tyrol. Large parts of Venetia, including Trieste, were assigned to the territory of Gauleiter Rainer of Carinthia. I was given jurisdiction in all questions of armaments and production for the remaining Italian territory and powers over and above those of the Italian authorities. Then came a great surprise: A few hours after the signing of these decrees Mussolini's liberation was announced.

The two Gauleiters thought their newly acquired domains were lost again. So did I. "The Fuehrer won't expect the Duce to swallow that!" I said. Shortly afterward I met Hitler again and proposed that he cancel the new arrangement. I assumed that this was what he meant to do. To my surprise he fended off the suggestion. The decree would continue to be valid, he said. I pointed out to him that with a new Italian government formed under Mussolini, he could hardly infringe on Italy's sovereignty. Hitler reflected briefly, then said: "Present my decree to me for signature again, dated tomorrow. Then there will be no doubt that my order is not affected by the Duce's liberation."⁶

Undoubtedly Hitler had already been informed, a few days before this amputation of northern Italy, that the place where Mussolini was

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being held prisoner had been located. It seems a fair guess that we were called to headquarters so quickly precisely because of the impending liberation of the Duce.

The next day Mussolini arrived in Rastenburg. Hitler embraced him, sincerely moved. On the anniversary of the Three-Power Pact, Hitler sent to the Duce, with whom he declared himself "linked in friendship," his "warmest wishes for the future of an Italy once more led to honorable freedom by Fascism."

Two weeks before, Hitler had mutilated Italy.

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THE MOUNTING FIGURES FOR ARMAMENTS PRODUCTION STRENGTH-
ened my position until the autumn of 1943. After we had virtually
exhausted the industrial reserves of Germany, I tried to exploit the
industrial potential of the other European countries we controlled.¹
Hitler was at first reluctant to make full use of the capacity of the
West. And in years to come, he had decided, the occupied eastern
territories were actually to be deindustrialized. For industry, he held,
promoted communism and bred an unwanted class of intellectuals.
But conditions quickly proved stronger than all such theories.
Hitler was hardheaded enough to recognize how useful intact in-
dustries could be toward solving the problems of troop supply.

France was the most important of the occupied industrial coun-
tries. Until the spring of 1943, however, its industrial production
scarcely helped us. Sauckel's forcible recruiting of labor had done
more damage there than its results warranted. For in order to escape
forced labor, the French workers fled their factories, quite a few of
which were producing for our armaments needs. In May 1943, I

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remonstrated to Sauckel about this. That July at a conference in Paris I proposed that at least the factories in France that were working for us be immune from Sauckel's levies.*

My associates and I intended to have the factories in France particularly, but also in Belgium and Holland, produce large quantities of goods for the German civilian population, such as clothing, shoes, textiles, and furniture, in order to free similar factories in Germany for armaments. As soon as I was charged with all of German production at the beginning of September, I invited the French Minister of Production to Berlin. Minister Bichelonne, a professor at the Sorbonne, was reputed to be a capable and energetic man.

After some bickering with the Foreign Office, I ensured that Bichelonne would be treated as a state visitor. To win that point I had to appeal to Hitler, explaining to him that Bichelonne was not going to "come up the back stairs" to see me. As a result, the French Production Minister was quartered in the Berlin government guest house.

Five days before Bichelonne arrived I cleared the idea with Hitler that we would set up a production planning council on a pan-European basis, with France as an equal partner along with the other nations. The assumption was, of course, that Germany would retain the decisive voice in this planning.²

On September 17, 1943, I received Bichelonne, and before very long a distinctly personal relationship sprang up between us. We were both young, we believed the future was on our side, and both of us therefore promised ourselves that someday we would avoid the mistakes of the First World War generation that was presently governing. I was even prepared to prevent what Hitler had in mind in the way of carving up France, all the more so since in a Europe integrated economically it did not matter where the frontiers ran. Such were the utopian thoughts in which Bichelonne and I lost ourselves for a while at that time—a token of the world of illusions and dreams in which we were moving.

On the last day of the negotiations Bichelonne asked to have a private talk with me. At the instigation of Sauckel, he began, Premier

* *Office Journal*, July 23, 1943: "The minister proposed to improve the situation by designating protected factories. These would be guaranteed against levying of workers and would thus be made more attractive to French labor."

Laval had forbidden him to of workers from France to willing to deal with the qu explained his concern, and I fi tecting French industrial pl "If that is possible, then all relating to the program we hi relief. "But then the transfer virtually cease. I must tell you

I was fully aware of that. harness French industrial p had done something unusual. from Laval, and I had disav out the backing of our super ment.*

Our production plan wo would gain armaments capa chance to resume peacetime collaboration with the mill factories would be establisl posted in these factories we levies to all the workers emp behind this pledge, since the facsimile. But French basic transportation guaranteed, f mately almost every importar ten thousand—would be shield

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Laval had forbidden him to discuss the question of the transportation of workers from France to Germany.⁸ Would I nevertheless be willing to deal with the question? I said I would. Bichelonne explained his concern, and I finally asked him whether a measure protecting French industrial plants from deportations would help him. "If that is possible, then all my problems are solved, including those relating to the program we have just agreed on," Bichelonne said with relief. "But then the transfer of labor from France to Germany will virtually cease. I must tell you that in all honesty."

I was fully aware of that, but this seemed the only way I could harness French industrial production to our purposes. Both of us had done something unusual. Bichelonne had disobeyed an instruction from Laval, and I had disavowed Sauckel. Both of us, basically without the backing of our superiors, had come to a far-reaching agreement.*

Our production plan would offer benefits to both countries. I would gain armaments capacity, while the French appreciated the chance to resume peacetime production in the midst of war. In collaboration with the military commander in France, restricted factories would be established throughout the country. Placards posted in these factories would promise immunity from Sauckel's levies to all the workers employed in them. I personally would stand behind this pledge, since the placards would bear my signature in facsimile. But French basic industry also had to be strengthened, transportation guaranteed, food production assured—so that ultimately almost every important productive unit—in the end a total of ten thousand—would be shielded from Sauckel.

Bichelonne and I spent the weekend at the country house of my friend Arno Breker. On Monday, I informed Sauckel's associates of the new arrangements. I called upon them to direct their efforts from then on to inducing workers to go back to French factories. Their numbers, I pledged, would be reckoned in on the quota of "assignments to German armaments production."⁴

Ten days later I was at the Fuehrer's headquarters to beat Sauckel

* Sauckel pointed this out at the Central Planning meeting, March 1, 1944: "It is certainly difficult for me as a German to be confronted with a situation which all too plainly tells the French industries in France they have been placed under protection simply to keep them out of the grasp of Sauckel."

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to the punch in reporting to Hitler. And in fact Hitler proved content; he approved my arrangements and was even ready to take into account possible production losses because of riots or strikes.⁵

In this way Sauckel's operations in France virtually came to an end. Instead of the previous monthly quota of fifty thousand, before long only five thousand workers a month were being taken to Germany.* A few months later (on March 1, 1944), Sauckel reported angrily: "I hear from my offices in France that everything is finished there. 'We might as well close down,' they tell me. It's the same story in every prefecture: Minister Bichelonne has made an agreement with Minister Speer. Laval has the nerve to say: 'I won't give you any more men for Germany.'"

A short while later I proceeded to apply the same principle to Holland, Belgium, and Italy.

On August 20, 1943, Heinrich Himmler had been appointed Minister of the Interior of the Reich. Until then, to be sure, he had been Reichsführer of the all-embracing SS, which was spoken of as a "state within the state." But in his capacity as chief of the police he had been, strangely, a subordinate of Minister of the Interior Frick.

The power of the Gauleiters, constantly furthered by Bormann, had led to a splintering of sovereignty in the Reich. There were two categories of Gauleiters. The old ones, those who had held their positions before 1933, were simply incompetent to run an administrative apparatus. Alongside these men there rose, in the course of the years, a new class of Gauleiters of Bormann's school. They were young administrative officials, usually with legal training, whose one thought was to strengthen the influence of the party within the state.

It was characteristic of Hitler's double-track way of running things that the Gauleiters in their capacity of party functionaries were under Bormann, while in their capacity as Reich Commissioners for Defense they were under the Minister of the Interior. Under the feeble

* See Nuremberg Document RF 22. On June 27, 1943, Sauckel wrote to Hitler: "Therefore I ask you, *mein Führer*, to accept my proposal that another half a million French men and women be imported into the Reich until the end of the war." According to a notation by his assistant, Dr. Strothfang, dated July 28, 1943, Hitler had already agreed to this measure.

Frick this double allegiance in the lysts of the political scene suspended the Minister of the Interior, Bornpoise.

I too saw it this way and waler's reign. Above all I countermentation of the government promptly gave me his promise the Reich government he would

On October 6, 1943, I declared the leisters of the party. The reaction point. My purpose was to open to the true state of affairs, to would soon be ready for use, calling all the turns. For us structure of Germany, in part shaken up, I declared. Of the consumer goods industries, offered to armaments production would be manufactured in France in a favorable starting view is," I declared to my audience as if petrified, "that if v who will primarily have to mal

I challenged the Gauleiters

You will please take note. districts [*Gaue*] have hitherto goods production can and w the districts do not respond to self order the shutdowns. An apply the authority of the Reich with Reichsführer-SS Himmler with the districts that do not

The Gauleiters were less diligent program than by these two speeches when several of them

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and in fact Hitler proved convinced he was even ready to take into account the possibility of riots or strikes.⁵

France virtually came to an end of fifty thousand, before the war were being taken to Germany (1, 1944), Sauckel reported that everything is finished. He told me. It's the same story. He has made an agreement with me to say: 'I won't give you

only the same principle to Hol-

Himmler had been appointed. Until then, to be sure, he had been in the SS, which was spoken of as a city as chief of the police he was Minister of the Interior Frick. He was furthered by Bormann, had been in the Reich. There were two, those who had held their position competent to run an administration there rose, in the course of Bormann's school. They were with legal training, whose competence of the party within the

on-track way of running things. Party functionaries were under Reich Commissioners for Defense and Interior. Under the feeble

On June 27, 1943, Sauckel wrote to me to accept my proposal that another be brought into the Reich until the end of the war. Assistant, Dr. Strothfang, dated this measure.

Frick this double allegiance involved no danger to Bormann. Analysts of the political scene suspected, however, that with Himmler as Minister of the Interior, Bormann had acquired a serious counterpoise.

I too saw it this way and was looking forward hopefully to Himmler's reign. Above all I counted on his checking the progressive fragmentation of the government executive power. And, in fact, Himmler promptly gave me his promise that on administrative matters of the Reich government he would call the willful Gauleiters to account.⁶

On October 6, 1943, I addressed the Reichsleiters and the Gauleiters of the party. The reaction to my speech signaled a turning point. My purpose was to open the eyes of the political leadership to the true state of affairs, to dispel their illusion that a great rocket would soon be ready for use, and to make it clear that the enemy was calling all the turns. For us to regain the initiative, the economic structure of Germany, in part still on a peacetime basis, must be shaken up, I declared. Of the six million persons employed in our consumer goods industries, one and a half million must be transferred to armaments production. From now on consumer goods would be manufactured in France. I admitted that this would place France in a favorable starting position for the postwar era. "But my view is," I declared to my audience of top party executives who sat there as if petrified, "that if we want to win the war we are the ones who will primarily have to make the sacrifices."

I challenged the Gauleiters even more bluntly when I continued:

You will please take note of this: The manner in which the various districts [*Gaue*] have hitherto obstructed the shutdown of consumer goods production can and will no longer be tolerated. Henceforth, if the districts do not respond to my requests within two weeks I shall myself order the shutdowns. And I can assure you that I am prepared to apply the authority of the Reich government at any cost! I have spoken with Reichsführer-SS Himmler, and from now on I shall deal firmly with the districts that do not carry out these measures.

The Gauleiters were less disturbed by the comprehensiveness of my program than by these two last sentences. I had barely finished my speech when several of them came rushing up to me. Led by one of

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the oldest among them, Joseph Bürkel, in loud voices and with waving arms they charged that I had threatened them with concentration camp. In order to correct that misapprehension, I asked Bormann if I could once more take the floor. But Bormann waved me aside. With hypocritical friendliness he said this was not necessary at all, for there were really no misunderstandings.

The evening after this meeting many of the Gauleiters drank so heavily that they needed help to get to the special train taking them to the Fuehrer's headquarters that night. Next morning I asked Hitler to say a few words about temperance to his political associates; but as always he spared the feelings of his comrades in arms of the early days. On the other hand, Bormann informed Hitler about my quarrel with the Gauleiters.* Hitler gave me to understand that all the Gauleiters were furious, without telling me any of the specific reasons. Bormann, it soon became plain, had at last found a way to undermine my standing with Hitler. He went on chipping away incessantly, and for the first time with some success. I myself had given him the means. From now on I could no longer count on Hitler's support as a matter of course.

I also soon found out what Himmler's promise to enforce my directives was worth. I had documents on serious disputes with Gauleiters sent to him, but I did not hear anything about them for weeks. Finally, Himmler's state secretary, Wilhelm Stuckart, informed me with some embarrassment that the Minister of the Interior had sent the documents directly to Bormann, whose reply had only now arrived. All the cases had been checked over by the Gauleiters, Stuckart said. As might have been expected, it had turned out that my orders were invalid and the Gauleiters were entirely justified in refusing to follow them. Himmler, Stuckart said, had accepted this report. So much for my hope of strengthening the government's as against the party's authority. Nothing came of the Speer-Himmler coalition either.

A few months passed before I found out why all these plans were doomed to failure. As I heard from Gauleiter Hanke of Lower Silesia, Himmler had actually tried to strike a blow against the sover-

* I did not learn the particulars from Gauleiter Kaufmann until May 1944. Then, I immediately requested a meeting with Hitler. For further details, see Chapter 23.

eignty of some Gauleiters commanders in their districts quickly learned that the G in Bormann's party headq Hitler prohibit any such st tempt for his Gauleiters, bu loyal to these comrades of and the SS could do nothing

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Within a few months I co to activate the power and j dilemma, I tried to escape after my speech I had Hitle all the cities damaged by powers in a field which wa nents, including Bormann l cerned with the war. Some construction of the cities as reminded them that I would

I wanted this assignment gle. There was another thre Gauleiters, which I felt had tation of the cities as an op which to them had little me: were all too common. One terrace with the Gauleiter o: heavy air raid. He commen Essen could be torn down e it anyhow and it was only : The Mayor of Mannheim :

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Kaufmann until May 1944.
Hitler. For further details, see

eighty of some Gauleiters. He sent them orders through his SS commanders in their districts, a clear affront to their power. But he quickly learned that the Gauleiters had all the backing they needed in Bormann's party headquarters. Within a few days Bormann had Hitler prohibit any such steps by Himmler. Hitler might have contempt for his Gauleiters, but at crucial moments he always remained loyal to these comrades of his early days of struggle. Even Himmler and the SS could do nothing against this sentimental cronyism.

Worsted in this one inept maneuver, the SS leader completely acknowledged the independence of the Gauleiters. The projected meeting of "Reich Defense Commissioners" was never called, and Himmler contented himself with making his power felt among the politically less influential mayors and governors. Bormann and Himmler, who were on a first-name basis anyhow, soon became good friends again. My speech had brought to light the strata of interest-groups, but in revealing these power-relationships I had endangered myself.

Within a few months I could chalk up a third failure in my efforts to activate the power and potentialities of the regime. Faced with a dilemma, I tried to escape it by taking the offensive. Only five days after my speech I had Hitler appoint me chief of future planning for all the cities damaged by bombing. Thus I was invested with full powers in a field which was much closer to the hearts of my opponents, including Bormann himself, than many of the problems concerned with the war. Some of them were already thinking of this reconstruction of the cities as their foremost future task. Hitler's decree reminded them that I would be standing over them in this.

I wanted this assignment not only as a counter in the power struggle. There was another threat, one springing from the quality of the Gauleiters, which I felt had to be headed off. For they saw the devastation of the cities as an opportunity to tear down historic buildings which to them had little meaning. Instances of this tendency of theirs were all too common. One day, for example, I was sitting on a roof terrace with the Gauleiter of Essen looking out over the ruins after a heavy air raid. He commented casually that now the Cathedral of Essen could be torn down entirely, since the bombing had damaged it anyhow and it was only a hindrance to modernization of the city. The Mayor of Mannheim appealed to me for help to prevent the

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demolition of the burned-out Mannheim Castle and the National Theater. From Stuttgart, I heard that the burned palace there was also to be torn down at the orders of the local Gauleiter.*

Q.T. The reasoning in all these cases was the same: Away with castles and churches; after the war we'll build our own monuments! In part this impulse sprang from the feeling of inferiority toward the past that the party bigwigs had. But there was another element in this feeling, as one of the Gauleiters explained when he was justifying his demolition order to me: Castles and churches of the past were citadels of reaction that stood in the way of our revolution. Remarks of this sort revealed a fanaticism that belonged to the early days of the party, but that had gradually been lost in the compromises and arrangements of a party in power.

I myself placed such importance on the preservation of the historical fabric of the German cities and on a sane policy of reconstruction that even at the climax and turning point of the war, in November and December 1943, I addressed a letter to all Gauleiters in which I recast most of my prewar philosophy: no more pretentious artistic notions, but economy-mindedness; broad-scale transportation planning to save the cities from traffic congestion; mass production of housing, cleaning up the old quarters of the cities, and establishing businesses in the city centers.⁷ There was no longer any talk of monumental buildings. My enthusiasm for them had faded,

* Hitler found out about such plans too late. Besides, the Gauleiters were able to make it appear that the buildings had been on the point of collapse. Eight months later, on June 26, 1944, I protested to Bormann: "In various cities efforts are under way to tear down buildings of historical and artistic merit that have been damaged in the raids. The argument offered to justify these measures is that the buildings are either about to collapse or cannot be restored. It is also contended that demolition will provide a welcome opportunity for urban renewal. I would be very grateful if you would send a memorandum to all the Gauleiters pointing out that historical monuments, even in ruins, must be preserved at all costs. I must ask you also to inform the Gauleiters that such monuments cannot be torn down until the Fuehrer himself has definitely decided on reconstruction plans for the cities and thus also for these buildings." Despite the limited means, materials, and workmen available, I also ordered that many damaged monuments be patched up sufficiently to prevent further dilapidation. I tried to put this plan into effect in northern Italy and in France by giving similar instructions to the Todt Organization.

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business life & bank.

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Early in November 1943 the center of manganese in incident in which Hitler ordered his generals to tell

Chief of Staff Zeitzler violent disagreement with Hitler had insisted, he stood for the defense of Nikopol excitedly, the war would have to halt arm: stocks of manganese.⁸ Zeitzler bringing in new troops, I treat. This was our only chance.

After hearing this, I at our steel industry experts manganese. Manganese was, of high-strength steels. By phone call that one way Russia were lost to us. Surprisingly favorable. On November 1 by teletype: "Manganese available in the Reich." The Reich Steel Association introduction of other metals stocks without additional months."⁹ I could more Krivoi Rog—for the whole defensive battle—would German steel production

When I arrived at the snarled at me in a tone was the idea of your giving the manganese situation.

I had expected to find only to reply, stunned:

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and so in all probability had Hitler's, for he let me describe this new planning concept to him without the least protest.

Early in November 1943, Soviet troops were approaching Nikopol, the center of manganese mining. At this time there occurred a curious incident in which Hitler behaved much as Goering had when he ordered his generals to tell a deliberate lie.

Chief of Staff Zeitzler phoned to tell me that he had just had a violent disagreement with Hitler. He himself was highly agitated. Hitler had insisted, he said, that all available divisions be massed for the defense of Nikopol. Without manganese, Hitler had declared excitedly, the war would be lost in no time. Three months later Speer would have to halt armaments production, for he has no reserve stocks of manganese.⁸ Zeitzler begged me to help him. Instead of bringing in new troops, he said, the time had come to begin the retreat. This was our only chance to avert another Stalingrad.

After hearing this, I at once sat down with Röchling and Rohland, our steel industry experts, to clarify our situation in regard to manganese. Manganese was, of course, one of the principal constituents of high-strength steels. But it was equally clear after Zeitzler's telephone call that one way or another the manganese mines in southern Russia were lost to us. What I learned at my conferences was surprisingly favorable. On November 11, I informed Zeitzler and Hitler by teletype: "Manganese stocks sufficient for eleven to twelve months available in the Reich even if present procedures are maintained. The Reich Steel Association guarantees that in case Nikopol is lost introduction of other metals will enable us to stretch the manganese stocks without additional strain on other alloy materials for eighteen months."⁹ I could moreover state that even the loss of neighboring Krivoi Rog—for the holding of which Hitler wanted to wage a great defensive battle—would not seriously affect the continued flow of German steel production.

When I arrived at the Fuehrer's headquarters two days later, Hitler snarled at me in a tone he had never used toward me before: "What was the idea of your giving the Chief of Staff your memorandum on the manganese situation?"

I had expected to find him well pleased with me, and managed only to reply, stunned: "But, *mein Führer*, it's good news after all!"

Hitler did not accept that. "You are not to give the Chief of Staff

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any memoranda at all! If you have some information, kindly send it to me. You've put me in an intolerable situation. I have just given orders for all available forces to be concentrated for the defense of Nikopol. At last I have a reason to force the army group to fight! And then Zeitzler comes along with your memo. It makes me out a liar! If Nikopol is lost now, it's your fault. I forbid you once and for all!"—his voice rose to a scream at the end—"to address any memos to anybody but myself. Do you understand that? I forbid it!"

Nevertheless, my memorandum had done its work; for soon afterward Hitler stopped insisting on a battle for the manganese mines. But since the Soviet pressure in this area ceased at the same time, Nikopol was not lost until February 18, 1944.

In a second memorandum I gave to Hitler that day, I had drawn up an inventory of our stocks of all alloy metals. By the single sentence, "imports from the Balkans, Turkey, Nikopol, Finland, and northern Norway have not been considered," I alluded to the possibility that these areas might well be lost to us. The following table sums up the results:*

	Manganese	Nickel	Chromium	Wolframite	Molybdenum	Silicon
Home stocks	140,000 t	6,000 t	21,000 t	1,330 t	425 t	17,900 t
Imports	8,100 t	190 t	—	—	15.5 t	4,200 t
Consumption	15,500 t	750 t	3,751 t	160 t	69.5 t	7,000 t
Months reserve	19	10	5.6	10.6	7.8	6.4

From this table I drew the following conclusions:

Hence, the element in shortest supply is chromium. This is especially grave since chromium is indispensable to a highly developed armaments industry. Should supplies from Turkey be cut off, the stockpile of chromium is sufficient only for 5.6 months. The manufacture of planes, tanks, motor vehicles, tank shells, U-boats, and almost the entire gamut of artillery would have to cease from one to three months after this deadline, since by then the reserves in the distribution channels would be used up.¹⁰

That meant no more or less than that the war would be over approximately ten months after the loss of the Balkans. Hitler listened

* Figures given in metric tons.

to my report, whose import to the Balkans that would determine. Then he turned away, out of to discuss new tank programs.

Until the summer of 1943, beginning of every month to which he then entered on a p the customary order, and Hitler's such as: "Very good! W and ten Tigers? That's more than Tigers do you think you'll need important now. . . ." He gave a brief reference to the situation going well. Well then, nice to Is she still at Obersalzberg? When I thanked him and added he sometimes replied, "Heil, S which he only rarely vouches for other intimates; underlying it is the story, "*Heil, mein Führer.*" At been conferred on me. I did not in this familiarity. Although the excitement of being on an intimate passed, although I no longer Hitler's architect, and although apparatus of government, a magical force. To be precise power were directed toward each for. The position of each and attitude.

The telephone calls gradually but from the autumn of 1943 of calling Saur to ask for the name since I recognized Hitler's right since Bormann had particular Dorsch—both men were old feel insecure in my own Ministry

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to my report, whose import was that it would not be Nikopol but the Balkans that would determine the outcome of the war, in total silence. Then he turned away, out of sorts. He addressed my associate Saur, to discuss new tank programs with him.

Until the summer of 1943, Hitler used to telephone me at the beginning of every month to ask for the latest production figures, which he then entered on a prepared sheet. I gave him the figures in the customary order, and Hitler usually received them with exclamations such as: "Very good! Why, that's wonderful! Really a hundred and ten Tigers? That's more than you promised. . . . And how many Tigers do you think you'll manage next month? Every tank is important now. . . ." He generally concluded these conversations with a brief reference to the situation: "We've taken Kharkov today. It's going well. Well then, nice to talk to you. My regards to your wife. Is she still at Obersalzberg? Well then, my regards again."

When I thanked him and added the salutation, "*Heil, mein Führer!*" he sometimes replied, "Heil, Speer." This greeting was a sign of favor which he only rarely vouchsafed to Goering, Goebbels, and a few other intimates; underlying it was a note of faint irony at the mandatory, "*Heil, mein Führer.*" At such moments I felt as if a medal had been conferred on me. I did not notice the element of condescension in this familiarity. Although the fascination of the early days and the excitement of being on an intimate footing with Hitler had long since passed, although I no longer enjoyed the unique special position of Hitler's architect, and although I had become one of many in the apparatus of government, a word from Hitler had lost none of its magical force. To be precise, all the intrigues and struggles for power were directed toward eliciting such a word, or what it stood for. The position of each and every one of us was dependent on his attitude.

The telephone calls gradually ceased. It is difficult to say just when, but from the autumn of 1943 on, at any rate, Hitler fell into the habit of calling Saur to ask for the monthly reports.¹¹ I did not oppose this, since I recognized Hitler's right to take away what he had given. But since Bormann had particularly good relations with Saur as well as Dorsch—both men were old party members—I gradually began to feel insecure in my own Ministry.

At first I tried to consolidate my position by assigning a representative from industry as a deputy to each of my ten department

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Summer 1942

frustrating my intention ever more apparent under the leaders of kind of "coup d'état," my days as Hitler's chief organization Section,¹⁸ and organization under their

ardens of the year 1943, ents and intrigues, by of the world within our and 1942, Hitler had and Russia because he me too indispensable. ado.

ar-motored Focke-Wulf e of its built-in reserve amateur magician who ne of Kalanag, accomg speeches, we would soldiers and Todt Orve looked down at Finhad longed to explore in the last glimmers of Rovaniemi on a primitive lamps.

and seventy-five miles all Arctic port of Petine monotony, but the des from yellow to red, had a fantastic beauty. es for workers, soldiers evenings in the other personal blockhouse of From here we visited hermost and the most es from Murmansk. It greenish light slanted a treeless, deathly rigid

landscape. Accompanied by General Hengl, we slowly worked our way on skis to the advance strongpoints. At one of these positions a unit demonstrated to me the effect of one of our 15 centimeter infantry howitzers on a Soviet dugout. It was the first "test-firing" with live ammunition I had really witnessed. For when one of the heavy batteries at Cape Griz-Nez was demonstrated to me, the commander said his target was Dover but then explained that in reality he had ordered his men to fire into the water. Here, on the other hand, the gunners scored a direct hit and the wooden beams of the Russian dugout flew into the air. Immediately afterward a lance corporal right beside me collapsed without a sound. A Soviet sharpshooter had hit him in the head through the observation slit. Oddly enough, this was the first time I had been confronted with the reality of the war. I had been acquainted with our infantry howitzers only as technical items to be demonstrated on a shooting range; now I suddenly saw how this instrument, which I had regarded purely theoretically, was used to destroy human beings.

During this inspection tour both our soldiers and officers complained about our lack of light infantry weapons. They particularly missed an effective submachine gun. The soldiers made do with captured Soviet weapons of this type.

Hitler was directly responsible for this situation. The former First World War infantryman still clung to his familiar carbine. In the summer of 1942 he decided against a submachine gun that had already been developed and ruled that the rifle better served the ends of the infantry. One lingering effect of his own experience in the trenches was, as I now saw in practice, that he promoted the heavy weapons and tanks he had then admired, to the neglect of infantry weapons.

Immediately after my return I tried to correct this unbalance. At the beginning of January our infantry program was supported with specific requests from the army General Staff and the Commander in Chief of the reserve army. But Hitler, as his own expert on matters of armaments, waited six months before approving our proposals, only afterward to hector us for any failure to meet our quotas on the deadlines. Within three-quarters of a year we achieved significant increases in this important area. In the case of the submachine gun we actually expanded production twenty-fold—though, to be sure, hardly any of these guns had been produced previously.¹⁵ We could have

achieved these increases two years earlier without being compelled to use any facilities involved in the production of heavy weapons.

The next day, I had a look at the nickel plant of Kolosjokki, our sole source of nickel and the real destination of this Christmas trip of mine. Its yards were filled with ore that had not been shipped out because our transport facilities were being employed on building a bomb-proof power plant. I assigned the power plant a lower priority rating and the supply of nickel began to move to our factories at a faster pace.

In a clearing in the heart of the primeval forest, some distance from Lake Inari, Lapp and German woodcutters had gathered around an artfully built wood fire, source of both warmth and illumination, while Siegfried Borries began the evening with the famous *chaconne* from Bach's D-minor Partita. Afterward we took a nocturnal ski tour lasting for several hours to one of the Lapp encampments. Our expected idyllic night in a tent at twenty-two degrees below zero Fahrenheit came to naught, however; for the wind turned and filled our shelter halves with smoke. I fled outside and at three o'clock in the morning bedded down in my reindeer skin sleeping bag. The next morning I felt a darting pain in my knee.

A few days later I was back at Hitler's headquarters. At Bormann's instigation he had called a major conference at which, in the presence of the chief ministers, the labor program for 1944 was to be drafted and Sauckel was to lodge his complaints against me. On the day before I proposed to Hitler that we hold a prior meeting under the chairmanship of Lammers to discuss those differences which were better thrashed out beforehand. At this, Hitler became distinctly aggressive. He said in an icy voice that he would not put up with such attempts to influence the participants in the conference. He did not want to hear any preconceived opinions; he wanted to make the decisions himself.

After this reprimand I went to Himmler, accompanied by my technical advisers. Field Marshal Keitel was also present at my request.¹⁶ I wanted to agree on joint tactics with these men at least, in order to prevent Sauckel from resuming his deportations from the occupied western areas. For Keitel, as superior to all the military commanders, and Himmler, who was responsible for the policing of the occupied territories, feared that such a step would bring about a rise in partisan activities. Both Himmler and Keitel, we agreed, were to

declare at the conference that they would not allow any new roundup of labor for any new roundup of labor for any new roundup of labor. Public order would be imperiled. By the aim of finally stopping the deportation of intensified employment of the German women.

But apparently Bormann had prevailed just as I had Himmler and he showed, by his coldness and refusal that he was out of sorts. Seeing such a day, would have left all my briefcase and would have presented But the subject of the conference co Hitler cut me off: "Herr Speer, I want to force your ideas on a conference. I shall decide at the end what is to be that!"

No one ever opposed Hitler in the allies Keitel and Himmler no longer as agreed on. On the contrary, they would do all in their power to support him to ask the various ministers present in 1944. He carefully wrote down a himself, and turned to Sauckel,¹⁷ "Can you obtain four million workers this year?"

Sauckel puffed out his chest. "Of course, my word on that. But to fill the quotas again in the occupied territories."

I made a few objections to the effect of these millions could be mobilized off sharply: "Are you responsible to Comrade Sauckel?"

In a tone that excluded all compromise Keitel and Himmler to instruct the program of obtaining workers. Keitel, *mein Führer!*" And Himmler remained ready lost. In order to save something whether in spite of his recruitments he

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women.

But apparently Bormann had prepared Hitler on the problems in-
volved just as I had Himmler and Keitel. Even as Hitler greeted us
he showed, by his coldness and rudeness toward all the participants,
that he was out of sorts. Seeing such omens, anyone who knew Hit-
ler would be very careful about raising difficult questions. I, too, on
such a day, would have left all my most important concerns in my
briefcase and would have presented him only with minor problems.
But the subject of the conference could no longer be dodged. Irritably,
Hitler cut me off: "Herr Speer, I will not have you trying once again
to force your ideas on a conference. I am chairing this meeting and
I shall decide at the end what is to be done. Not you! Kindly remem-
ber that!"

No one ever opposed Hitler in these angry, ill-natured moods. My
allies Keitel and Himmler no longer dreamed of saying their pieces,
as agreed on. On the contrary, they stoutly assured Hitler that they
would do all in their power to support Sauckel's program. Hitler be-
gan to ask the various ministers present about their need for workers
in 1944. He carefully wrote down all these figures, added up the sum
himself, and turned to Sauckel,¹⁷ "Can you, Party Comrade Sauckel,
obtain four million workers this year? Yes or no."

Sauckel puffed out his chest. "Of course, *mein Führer*. I give you
my word on that. But to fill the quota I'll have to have a free hand
again in the occupied territories."

I made a few objections to the effect that I thought the majority
of these millions could be mobilized in Germany itself. Hitler cut me
off sharply: "Are you responsible to me for the labor force or is Party
Comrade Sauckel?"

In a tone that excluded all contradiction, Hitler now ordered
Keitel and Himmler to instruct their organizations to push the pro-
gram of obtaining workers. Keitel, as always, merely said: "*Jawohl,*
mein Führer!" And Himmler remained mute. The battle seemed al-
ready lost. In order to save something out of it, I asked Sauckel
whether in spite of his recruitments he could also guarantee the labor

1943

1943, Jan 1944

supply for the restricted factories. Boastfully, he replied that this would not cause any problems. I then attempted to settle the priorities and to extract some kind of pledge from Sauckel to transport workers to Germany only after the supply for the restricted factories had been guaranteed. Sauckel also consented to this with a wave of his hand. But Hitler promptly intervened: "What more do you want, Herr Speer? Isn't it enough if Party Comrade Sauckel assures you that? Your mind should be at ease about French industry."

Further discussion would only have strengthened Sauckel's position. The conference was over; Hitler became more cordial again and exchanged a few friendly words, even with me. But that was the end of it. Nevertheless, Sauckel's deportations never got started. That had little to do with my efforts to block him through my French offices and with the collusion of the army authorities.¹⁸ Loss of authority in the occupied areas, the spreading rule of the maquis, and the growing reluctance of the German occupation administrators to increase their difficulties, prevented the execution of all these plans.

The outcome of the conference at the Fuehrer's headquarters had consequences only for me personally. From Hitler's treatment of me, it was clear to everyone that I was in disfavor. The victor in the struggle between Sauckel and me had been Bormann. From now on we had to deal with, at first covert, but soon with more and more overt, attacks upon my aides from industry. More and more frequently I had to defend them at the party secretariat against suspicions or even intervene with the secret police to protect them.¹⁹

Even the last scintillating assembly of the prominent leaders of the Reich could scarcely distract me from my cares. That was the gala celebration of Goering's birthday on January 12, 1944, which he held at Karinhall. We all came with expensive presents, such as Goering expected: cigars from Holland, gold bars from the Balkans, valuable paintings and sculptures. Goering had let me know that he would like to have a marble bust of Hitler, more than life size, by Breker. The overlaid gift table had been set up in the big library. Goering displayed it to his guests and spread out on it the building plans his architect had prepared for his birthday. Goering's palace-like residence was to be more than doubled in size.

At the magnificently set table in the luxurious dining room flunkies in white livery served a somewhat austere meal, in keeping with the conditions of the time. Funk, as he did every year, delivered the birth-

day speech at the ban and dignities and offered mans." Funk's extravagant actual situation. The place against a background

After the meal the g Karinhall. Milch and I this ostentation was pre Goering's old friend L World War, had sent I market: women's stock informed Milch that he market. There had even with the intention of ke Germany, and the cons already been computed. distributed among the e heard that many other c And a while after that t Plagemann, who had to moved from Milch's cont

I had had my persona since I had been entitled of the Prussian Council c just before Goering's bir able portion of my fee v birthday gift to Goering. When I mentioned this t was followed with the Ai a large sum from this whereupon the Reich M be bought with this sum.

Yet we knew that suc Goering's enormous exp industry provided the sul occasion to find out the phoned us because some his patrons a bit roughly.

My recent experiences

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Sept 1943

25

Blunders, Secret Weapons, and the SS

L

AS THE SITUATION DETERIORATED FURTHER, HITLER CLOSED HIS MIND more and more to any word against his decisions. He proved to be more autocratic than ever in this crisis. This hardening of his mental arteries had crucial consequences in the technical area as well; because of it the most valuable of our "secret weapons" was made worthless. That was the Me-262, our most modern fighter plane, with two jet engines, a speed of over five hundred miles per hour, and a fighting capability far superior to any plane the enemy had.

As early as 1941, while I was still an architect, I had paid a visit to the Heinkel aircraft plant in Rostock and heard the deafening noise of one of the first jet engines on a testing stand. The designer, Professor Ernst Heinkel, was urging that this revolutionary advance be applied to aircraft construction.¹ During the armaments congress at the air force test site in Rechlin (September 1943) Milch silently handed me a telegram which had just been brought to him. It contained an order from Hitler to halt preparations for large-scale production of the Me-262. We decided to circumvent the order. But

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possible, had we utilized

the talents of those technicians and scientists busy with rocket de-
velopment at Peenemünde under Wernher von Braun.*

Approximately twenty-five feet long, the Waterfall rocket was ca-
pable of carrying approximately six hundred and sixty pounds of ex-
plosives along a directional beam up to an altitude of fifty thousand
feet and hit enemy bombers with great accuracy. It was not affected
by day or night, by clouds, cold, or fog. Since we were later able to
turn out nine hundred of the offensive big rockets monthly, we could
surely have produced several thousand of these smaller and less ex-
pensive rockets per month. To this day I think that this rocket, in con-

* Even aside from Hitler's objections, a rational course of action such as this
would have been complicated by the fact that Peenemünde was developing
weapons for the army, whereas air defense was a matter for the air force. Given
the conflict of interests and the fierce ambitions of the army and the air force,
the army would never have allowed its rival to take over the installations it
had built up in Peenemünde. This rivalry made it impossible for even research
and development to be conducted jointly (see footnote on p. 258 in Chapter
16). Project Waterfall could have gone into production even earlier had
Peenemünde's full capacity been used in time. As late as January 1, 1945, there
were 2210 scientists and engineers working on the long-range rockets A-4 and
A-9, whereas only 220 had been assigned to Waterfall, and 135 to another anti-
aircraft rocket project, Typhoon.

Professor C. Krauch, the commissioner for chemical production, had sent
me a detailed memorandum on June 29, 1943, barely two months before our
unfortunate decision, offering this opinion:

Those who advocate accelerated development of aerial weapons are pro-
ceeding on the principle that terror is best answered by terror and that rocket
attacks against England will necessarily lead to a decrease in the missions
flown against the Reich. Even assuming that the large long-distance rocket
were available in unlimited quantities, which it so far is not, previous ex-
perience suggests that this reasoning is unjustified. On the contrary, those
elements in England who formerly opposed the use of terror-bombing
against Germany's civilian population . . . have been moved, since our
rocket attacks, to urge their government to launch massive raids against our
densely populated areas. We are still helplessly vulnerable to raids of this
sort. . . . Such considerations point to the necessity of concentrating heavily
on anti-aircraft weaponry, on the C-2 device of Waterfall. We must be able
to deploy it at once and on a large scale. . . . In other words, every expert,
every worker, and every man-hour devoted to the speeding of this program
will yield results proportionately far more effective for winning the war than
the same resources invested in any other program. Delaying such a program
can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

apathy and inability to live
with the enemy. But the rockets
were precisely Russian results
Hitler gave the example of the bombing
of London today

June 1943

development
in the past
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I now had to make arrangements for mass production. On December 22, 1942, I had Hitler sign an order to this effect, although the rocket still needed considerable development before it could lend itself to mass manufacture.⁸ I thought I could risk rushing matters in this way. Based on the progress already made and the promises from Peenemünde, the final technical data was to be available by July 1943, at which point we could go right into production.

On the morning of July 7, 1943, I invited Dornberger and von Braun to headquarters at Hitler's request. The Fuehrer wanted to be informed on the details of the V-2 project. After Hitler had finished with one of his conferences, we went together over to the movie hall, where some of Wernher von Braun's assistants were ready. After a brief introduction the room was darkened and a color film shown. For the first time Hitler saw the majestic spectacle of a great rocket rising from its pad and disappearing into the stratosphere. Without a trace of timidity and with a boyish sounding enthusiasm, von Braun explained his theory. There could be no question about it: From that moment on, Hitler had been finally won over. Dornberger explained a number of organizational questions, while I proposed to Hitler that von Braun be appointed a professor. "Yes, arrange that at once with Meissner," Hitler said impulsively. "I'll even sign the document in person."

Hitler bade the Peenemünde men an exceedingly cordial good-by. He was greatly impressed, and his imagination had been kindled. Back in his bunker he became quite ecstatic about the possibilities of this project. "The A-4 is a measure that can decide the war. And what encouragement to the home front when we attack the English with it! This is the decisive weapon of the war, and what is more it can be produced with relatively small resources. Speer, you must push the A-4 as hard as you can! Whatever labor and materials they need must be supplied instantly. You know I was going to sign the decree for the tank program. But my conclusion now is: Change it around and phrase it so that A-4 is put on a par with tank production. But," Hitler added in conclusion, "in this project we can use only Germans. God help us if the enemy finds out about the business."⁹

rockets, that is more than five months' production, would have delivered only 3750 tons of explosives; a single attack by the combined British and American air forces delivered a good 8000 tons.

There was only one point on w alone again. "Weren't you mistaken one? I would have thought him tonishing that so young a man co about a technical breakthrough w future. From then on he would sor in our century people squandered less things. In past eras an Alexand empire at the age of twenty-three liant victories at thirty. In connecti as if casually, to Wernher von Br: created a technical marvel at Peenei

In the autumn of 1943 it turned premature. The final blueprints h: promised, so that we were not abl mediately. A great many sources particular, when the first rockets wi inexplicable premature explosions atmosphere.¹⁰ There were still me in a speech on October 6, 1943, s count with certainty on this new w difference between individual manu siderable enough in itself, would in: of these highly complicated mechani

Almost a year passed. At the l first rockets were fired at England. thousand at one blow, but twenty-f over a period of ten days.

After Hitler had become excited entered the picture. Six weeks later simplest way to guarantee secrecy f work force were concentration can outside world would be eliminated. any mail, Himmler said. Along wi necessary technicians from the ran would have to furnish would be th

Hitler agreed to this plan. And S: since we could not offer a more pers

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ed Dornberger and von The Fuehrer wanted to t. After Hitler had fin- it together over to the Braun's assistants were is darkened and a color majestic spectacle of a ng into the stratosphere. h sounding enthusiasm, be no question about it: y won over. Dornberger ns, while I proposed to sor. "Yes, arrange that rely. "I'll even sign the

dingly cordial good-by. had been kindled. Back the possibilities of this side the war. And what attack the English with i what is more it can be eer, you must push the materials they need must g to sign the decree for : Change it around and tank production. But," : can use only Germans. isiness."⁹

would have delivered only ined British and American

There was only one point on which he pressed me, when we were alone again. "Weren't you mistaken? You say this young man is thirty-one? I would have thought him even younger!" He thought it astonishing that so young a man could already have helped to bring about a technical breakthrough which would change the face of the future. From then on he would sometimes expatiate on his thesis that in our century people squandered the best years of their lives on useless things. In past eras an Alexander the Great had conquered a vast empire at the age of twenty-three and Napoleon had won his brilliant victories at thirty. In connection with this he would often allude, as if casually, to Wernher von Braun, who at so young an age had created a technical marvel at Peenemünde.

In the autumn of 1943 it turned out that our expectations had been premature. The final blueprints had not been delivered in July, as promised, so that we were not able to go into mass production immediately. A great many sources of error had been discovered. In particular, when the first rockets with warheads were fired, there were inexplicable premature explosions when the missile reentered the atmosphere.¹⁰ There were still many questions unsolved, I warned in a speech on October 6, 1943, so that it would be premature "to count with certainty on this new weapon." I added that the technical difference between individual manufacture and mass production, considerable enough in itself, would involve special difficulties in the case of these highly complicated mechanisms.

Almost a year passed. At the beginning of September 1944 the first rockets were fired at England. Not, as Hitler had imagined, five thousand at one blow, but twenty-five, and then not at one blow but over a period of ten days.

After Hitler had become excited over the V-2 project, Himmler entered the picture. Six weeks later he came to Hitler to propose the simplest way to guarantee secrecy for this vital program. If the entire work force were concentration camp prisoners, all contact with the outside world would be eliminated. Such prisoners did not even have any mail, Himmler said. Along with this, he offered to provide all necessary technicians from the ranks of the prisoners. All industry would have to furnish would be the management and the engineers.

Hitler agreed to this plan. And Saur and I had no choice, especially since we could not offer a more persuasive arrangement.¹¹

Dec 10, 1943

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to train a new group every few months. In response to our com-
plaints the SS made considerable improvements in the sanitary con-
ditions and rations of the camps. Soon, in the course of my rounds
through the armaments plants, I saw more contented faces among the
prisoners and better fed people.¹⁴

Our hard-won independence in matters of armaments was broken
by Hitler's order to erect a large rocket-production plant dependent
on the SS.

In a lonely valley in the Harz Mountains a widely ramified system
of caves had been established before the war for the storage of vital
military chemicals. Here, on December 10, 1943, I inspected the
extensive underground installations where the V-2 was to be pro-
duced. In enormous long halls prisoners were busy setting up machin-
ery and shifting plumbing. Expressionlessly, they looked right through
me, mechanically removing their prisoners' caps of blue twill until
our group had passed them.

I cannot forget a professor of the Pasteur Institute in Paris who
testified as a witness at the Nuremberg Trial. He too was in the Cen-
tral Works which I inspected that day. Objectively, without any dra-
matics, he explained the inhuman conditions in this inhuman factory.
The memory is especially painful, the more so because he made his
charge without hatred, sadly and brokenly and also astonished at
so much human degeneracy.

The conditions for these prisoners were in fact barbarous, and a
sense of profound involvement and personal guilt seizes me when-
ever I think of them. As I learned from the overseers after the in-
spection was over, the sanitary conditions were inadequate, disease
rampant; the prisoners were quartered right there in the damp caves,
and as a result the mortality among them was extraordinarily high.*
That same day I allocated the necessary materials and set all the
machinery in motion to build a barracks camp immediately on an
adjacent hill. In addition, I pressed the SS camp command to take

* The shocking effect the camp had on us is indicated in the deliberately
veiled phraseology of the *Office Journal* entry for December 10, 1943: "On
the morning of December 10 the minister went to inspect a new plant in the
Harz Mountains. Carrying out this tremendous mission drew on the leaders'
last reserves of strength. Some of the men were so affected that they had to be
forcibly sent off on vacations to restore their nerves."

May we were able to increase production to 25 percent more than April's figure, to 700,000 bearings 6.3 centimeters in diameter. In June we reached 1,003,000 bearings, and in September 1944 we had again reached 1,519,000 or 78 percent of our original production. In September 1944 we manufactured 8,601,000 bearings of all sizes or 94 percent of the production before the bombings.

18. According to *Indexziffern der deutschen Rüstungsproduktion*, January 1945.
19. *Office Journal*, January 7-11, 1944.
20. *Office Journal*, August 2, 1944. On the same day I issued the following decree: "Transfer of bearing production to underground facilities is of the greatest urgency. The necessary labor force has hitherto not been provided because the agencies responsible have not obeyed their orders [1]." A few months earlier, on May 10, 1944, I explained to the committee (only key phrases were recorded): "Bearings, etc., extraordinarily difficult to popularize. Means not yet found for making people see that this is as urgent and important as tanks and artillery. In my opinion have to hammer away at that harder. Not the fault of the Jägerstab [Fighter Staff; a special committee set up to speed and coordinate fighter production]; rather my old worry which keeps recurring: I have no grasp of propaganda techniques." Just issuing an order proved insufficient—even in the Third Reich, even in wartime. We, too, were at the mercy of the willingness of the people involved.
21. German News Agency (DNB) report, August 21 and 22, 1943.

CHAPTER 21: Hitler in the Autumn of 1943

1. See R. Brun, *Allgemeine Neurosenlehre* (Basel, 1954): "The patient no longer regulated his need for physical and mental rest automatically and disregarded excessive strain. . . . The conscious will is thwarted by an unconscious negation, which the patient attempts to overcome by frantic, tense overexertion. The excessive fatigue which gradually builds up would vanish if the patient allowed himself a rest period, but instead this fatigue is used by the unconscious 'devil's advocate' to disguise deeply rooted inferiority feelings."
2. *Führerprotokoll*, November 13-15, 1943, Point 10: "The restoration of the National Theater and the Prince Regent Theater in Munich is to be subsidized by the Ministry." These projects were never completed.

3. The explosives in production of millions. The index 1941 to 131 in 19 munitions production in 1942 to 247 it do not provide more bombs had explosives to fill.
4. *Führerprotokoll*, personal inspection as he can find time. Goebbels (1943): "Above all not visit the areas."
5. In his diary Goebbels stance on September a great misfortune and again crises at home and our state political point of view.
6. *Office Journal*, 1943: "Above all not visit the areas." production. This decree from the Fuehrer production. This decree 12, was re-signed on it granted remained. Goebbels feared that the interfere with his plan the German armament.

1. Thus coal mining in 1942, and at the same time established near the successes had brought the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, whose hold no one were manufactured in 1943 the Ministry of

July 25, 1943

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3. The explosives industry had difficulty in keeping pace with the rising production of munitions for the army and for antiaircraft operations. The index for the production of explosives rose from 103 in 1941 to 131 in 1942 to 191 in 1943 to 226 in 1944. But the index for munitions production, including bombs, rose from 102 in 1941 to 106 in 1942 to 247 in 1943 to 306 in 1944. Although these two indexes do not provide directly comparable figures, they do indicate that if more bombs had been produced, there would not have been enough explosives to fill them.
4. *Führerprotokoll*, June 18, 1943: "Pointed out to the Fuehrer that personal inspection of the Ruhr by him is urgently necessary. As soon as he can find time the Fuehrer will make the trip." He never did find the time. Goebbels, too, wrote a month later in his diary (July 25, 1943): "Above all these letters repeatedly ask why the Fuehrer does not visit the areas that have come under heavy bombing."
5. In his diary Goebbels often recorded remarks by Hitler, as for instance on September 10, 1943: "What today we cannot help seeing as a great misfortune may later seem a piece of great good fortune. Time and again crises and calamities in the struggle waged by our movement and our state have proved to have been for the best from a historical point of view."
6. *Office Journal*, 1943: "By acting quickly the Minister obtained a decree from the Fuehrer assuring him total control of Italian armaments production. This decree, already signed by the Fuehrer on September 12, was re-signed on the thirteenth in order to indicate that the rights it granted remained intact despite the Duce's liberation. The Minister feared that the formation of a new Fascist regime in Italy would interfere with his preempting Italian industry to serve the needs of the German armaments industry."

CHAPTER 22: Downhill

1. Thus coal mining in the Ukraine was supposed to resume in April 1942, and at the same time munitions production facilities were to be established near the front. By the end of August 1943, Soviet military successes had brought this program to a standstill. The so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was controlled de facto by the SS, whose hold no one dared to challenge. There all sorts of articles were manufactured for the use of the SS troops. In the summer of 1943 the Ministry proposed a plan for producing an additional one

Dec 18, 1943

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43, Point 22.

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In my December 18, 1943, memorandum to the Gauleiters I expanded on this theme: "Demobilization will necessitate large projects to absorb the huge labor force which will suddenly become available. . . . If we make our plans for urban reconstruction well in advance, we will avoid wasting valuable time after the war for city planning and will not have to resort to stopgap measures which in the long run would obstruct the planned development of our cities. . . . If we start building with the same determination and innovative energy that we see at present in our armaments industry, an extraordinarily large number of housing units will be constructed each year. Therefore, it is essential that we think in terms of areas big enough for the purpose. . . . If we do not prepare adequately, we will be forced in the immediate postwar era to resort to measures that will seem totally incomprehensible a few years later."

8. See also Manstein, *Aus einem Soldatenleben* (Bonn, 1965).
9. From my memorandum, "The Importance of Nikopol and Krivoi Rog for German Steel Production," November 11, 1943.
10. From my memorandum, "Alloys in Armaments Production and the Importance of Chromium Imports from the Balkans and Turkey," November 12, 1943.
11. See also the record of Hitler's telephone conversation with Saur on December 20, 1943, printed in *Hitlers Lagebesprechungen*.
12. See *Office Journal*, October 13, 1943: "By far the most upsetting item for the department heads was the Minister's plan of assigning one or more representatives from industry to each department. . . . Since this new arrangement involved personal qualities rather than factual issues, strong feelings were aroused."
13. Dr. Gerhard Fränk and Erwin Bohr.
14. Aside from Doenitz, who was assigned exactly the same type of plane, I was the only leader who was regularly in a position to travel in his own plane. My ministerial colleagues no longer had private planes. Nowadays, Hitler himself seldom flew, while Goering, as an "old" flier, felt somewhat nervous about using "newfangled machines."
15. *Führerprotokoll*, June 28-29, 1944, Point 55: "The Fuehrer stated very firmly that he would never agree to production of the submachine gun unless it were designed for ordinary rifle ammunition. Besides, he is almost completely convinced that the rifle suits the purpose better." On January 14, 1944, two weeks after the trip to Lapland, the infantry program was initiated. The increases it brought about can be seen from the following table:

1943-44

APPENDIX A: ADOLF EICHMANN'S ACCOUNT OF HIMMLER 251

spring
1945

evidence of Himmler having devoted much time during the difficult years of 1943-4 to such petty details as the question of two or three Jews in one case and five or six in another being exempted from extermination on account of their expertise in metallurgy and diamonds respectively, experts in that field being required for the armaments industry and for the production of the highest grade of Knight's Cross.

scene!

There are several references (such as those on pp. 1249, 1290 and 1318) to Himmler's orders of October 1941 stopping any emigration of Jews, 'except in isolated instances beneficial for the Reich' (which refers to Jews wealthy enough to pay a minimum of 100,000 Swiss francs). In July 1944 Himmler issued an order that the emigration of certain Hungarian Jews to Palestine must be stopped 'because they are biologically potent, so their survival is not desirable in the interests of the Reich.' But in April 1942 (p. 478) Himmler wrote to the Chief of the S.D. stating that while the Führer's orders for the 'final solution' must be carried out ruthlessly, he wanted those Jews and Jewesses still capable of work to be exempted for the time being and set to work in the concentration camps. In July 1942 neither Eichmann nor his chief Mueller dared to decide about the fate of French Jewish children still cared for by French welfare organizations (p. 701-2). Mueller asked Himmler for a decision, and the Reichsführer's personal order came for 'sending all of them East', that is, having them killed. On pp. 660 *et seq.* there are details about Himmler's personal orders for a *Grossabschiebung* (mass removal) of French Jews eastwards for the 'final solution'.

The last time Eichmann saw Himmler was during the spring of 1945, when Himmler told him that in the case of future negotiations with Eisenhower he wanted some 200 to 300 prominent Jews 'for hostage purposes'. Eichmann was to collect them in various camps, and see Gauleiter Hofer in Innsbruck about allocating some evacuated villages for them. Eichmann dutifully reported the Reichsführer's order to Kaltenbrunner, who, according to Eichmann, 'showed little interest, since nothing really mattered any longer'.

scene

1943-44

APPENDIX A: ADOLF EICHMANN'S ACCOUNT OF HIMMLER 251

spring
1945

evidence of Himmler having devoted much time during the difficult years of 1943-4 to such petty details as the question of two or three Jews in one case and five or six in another being exempted from extermination on account of their expertise in metallurgy and diamonds respectively, experts in that field being required for the armaments industry and for the production of the highest grade of Knight's Cross.

scene?

There are several references (such as those on pp. 1249, 1290 and 1318) to Himmler's orders of October 1941 stopping any emigration of Jews, 'except in isolated instances beneficial for the Reich' (which refers to Jews wealthy enough to pay a minimum of 100,000 Swiss francs). In July 1944 Himmler issued an order that the emigration of certain Hungarian Jews to Palestine must be stopped 'because they are biologically potent so their removal is not desirable in the interests of the Reich.' But in April 1942 (p. 478) Himmler wrote to the Chief of the S.D. stating that while the Führer's orders for the 'final solution' must be carried out ruthlessly, he wanted those Jews and Jewesses still capable of work to be exempted for the time being and set to work in the concentration camps. In July 1942 neither Eichmann nor his chief Mueller dared to decide about the fate of French Jewish children still cared for by French welfare organizations (p. 701-2). Mueller asked Himmler for a decision, and the Reichsführer's personal order came for 'sending all of them East', that is, having them killed. On pp. 660 *et seq.* there are details about Himmler's personal orders for a *Grossabschiebung* (mass removal) of French Jews eastwards for the 'final solution'. The last time Eichmann saw Himmler was during the spring of 1945, when Himmler told him that in the case of future negotiations with Eisenhower he wanted some 200 to 300 prominent Jews 'for hostage purposes'. Eichmann was to collect them in various camps, and see Gauleiter Hofer in Innsbruck about allocating some evacuated villages for them. Eichmann dutifully reported the Reichsführer's order to Kaltenbrunner, who, according to Eichmann, 'showed little interest, since nothing really mattered any longer.'

scene

4. In the evidence she gave H.F., Frau Heydrich denies the familiar story that the girl with whom Heydrich was previously in love was with child by him. She also denies that Heydrich had any Jewish blood in his ancestry; even so, the suspicion of it hung over him throughout his career in the Party. See also Chapter IV, note 3.
5. This account of Heydrich's introduction to the Nazi Party and to Himmler was given us by Lina Heydrich. It is supported by Werner Best in evidence he gave H.F.
6. Frau Heydrich has stressed how extremely poorly paid her husband was, as well as other S.S. leaders. Since neither she nor Heydrich had significant private means, they lived very humbly. Frau Heydrich's family gave them furniture and linen. They could afford no servants for several years. Frau Heydrich has also given us a number of interesting sidelights on Himmler's character at this time. He insisted that she address him as Reichsführer, and not as Herr Himmler, which she thought more appropriate for a woman. She found him fussy, and still remembers with some amusement how, when he came to stay at her house, he carefully hung up his face-cloth to dry, and that it had a red rose embroidered upon it. He refused to eat potatoes, rice or spaghetti.
7. The term *Junker* is mostly misunderstood outside Germany. It is an archaic term implying descent from noble stock, an *élite* class. A *Junkerschule*, therefore, is an institution for the upper class, or so Himmler implied.
8. Nevertheless, Himmler seemed at first to welcome the idea of the return of Roehm, his former commanding officer, and not to see it as a threat to his own position. Roehm and Himmler corresponded while Roehm was in Latin America; during 1930 Himmler wrote to him at least twice, complimenting him on his escape from danger in campaigns against the Indians, and joking about him being an old hand at revolutions. He also urged him to raise money for the S.S. among the wealthy Latin Americans of German descent and said how he looked forward to their future co-operation on Roehm's return to Germany. The letters are preserved at the Federal Archives at Koblenz.
9. Herr Riss, a friend of Himmler during his student days, told H.F. that when he met Himmler during 1931 and complimented him on becoming a Reichstag deputy, Himmler merely laughed at the 'talking shop' and claimed the Nazi deputies were only there to make use of the occasion for their own ends. What he was proud of, he said, was being Reichsführer S.S.
10. See Lüdecke, op. cit., p. 433.
11. See Gerald Reitlinger, *The S.S.* p. 27, William L. Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* pp. 144-5, and Nuremberg Case XI, transcript of judgment 28, 440-7; 28, 599; and 28, 794. Keppler was later to support Himmler's so-called research into Aryan history by forming a circle of businessmen-patrons called 'Friends of the Reichsführer S.S.'. Himmler is stated by Schroeder himself to have accompanied Hitler when he attended the famous Hitler-Schroeder meeting. See Alan Bullock, *Hitler* (Edition, 1952), p. 220 and Schroeder's testimony at Nuremberg in N.C.A. II, 922-4.
12. I.M.T. XX, p. 246.

13. Later, in 1936, he was to become head of the uniformed police (O.R.P.O.) and, after the assassination of Heydrich in Prague in 1942, Heydrich's successor as Reich Protector.
14. This and subsequent accounts of Hoess's extraordinary career and relationship to Himmler are taken largely from his own autobiography written in prison after the war - *Commandant of Auschwitz*.
15. See I.M.T. II, p. 361.
16. See I.M.T. documents PS-778; also Trial II, pp. 371-2. And compare Shirer, op. cit., p. 272.
17. Himmler worked fast; he became Chief of Political Police in Bavaria in April 1933, then in Hamburg the following October, and in Mecklenburg, Lübeck, Wuerttemberg, Baden, Hessen, Thüringen and Ambalt in December. In January 1934, he assumed the same office in Oldenburg, Bremen, Saxony and Prussia. (Taken from the official file listing Himmler's offices preserved at the Berlin Document Centre.)

CHAPTER III

1. Gebhard Himmler explained to H.F. that the boy Gerhard, who was a year or so older than Gudrun, was never formally adopted by his brother. He was the son of an S.S. officer called von Ahe who had been killed before the war, and he was brought up in Himmler's household.
2. The estrangement was neither formally recognized nor privately acknowledged, even when Himmler much later set up a second household with his mistress Hedwig, who bore him the two children of whom he became the legal guardian. His love for his wife Marga cooled after a period of years, and his visits to Gmund became less and less frequent, though he was always deeply concerned over the welfare of Gudrun. Himmler and his wife continued to conduct the mere business of marriage throughout the rest of their lives, though Marga tacitly accepted Himmler's relationship with Hedwig and all affection died between them. Marga's term of address for her husband in her letters became *Mein Lieber Guter*, an untranslatable phrase which combines a kind of old-fashioned feminine effusiveness, with possessive sentimentality. As we shall see, Himmler's relations with Marga's interfering sister Bertha became very strained. It should be added that on rare occasions Himmler did allow Marga to accompany him on state occasions. For example, he took her to Italy; it is typical of him that, on this occasion, he insisted that all her expenses should be charged to his private account.
3. Himmler's good relations with Roehm rapidly changed when his former superior officer stood in his way. It should, however, be realized that what finally drove Hitler to discard Roehm, of whom he was genuinely fond, was the implacable opposition to him and the S.A. that had developed among the very people whose support he felt at this stage he most needed - the generals and the industrialists. Hitler's promise to Eden to reduce the S.A. fitted in well with this policy. These considerations, and not solely the pressure brought to bear on him by Göring and Himmler led to Hitler's decision to strike down Roehm and destroy the influence of the S.A. For

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→ D.T. "You will have to eat shit
After all, you have done it before
The fundamental fulcrum of Winston - does come in"

Frick's affidavit see N.C.A. V, pp. 654-5. See also Reitlinger, S.S. p. 62 for further evidence from Roehm's legal adviser that Himmler twisted every circumstance he could in order to incriminate Roehm in Hitler's eyes.

4. Gisevius, the former Gestapo official who joined the resistance movement and whose book, *To the Bitter End*, is one of the most revealing and colourful sources of information about the Nazi régime, claims to have seen the report on this incident prepared by Daluge on orders from Himmler. Daluge was much more amused than concerned about the hole in the windscreen, which his report claimed was made by a stone thrown up by a passing car. This explanation was also given to H.F. by Bodenschatz, who was present at the ceremony. According to Gisevius, Himmler, 'white, trembling, excited', held up the interment while he insisted that forty Communists should be shot at once as a reprisal; later he had two S.A. brigade leaders executed for making an attempt on his life. Frischauer, in his biography of Himmler (p. 64) is inaccurate in claiming that Himmler was travelling to Carinhall in the same car as Hitler after their conference on Roehm in Berlin, and that he was actually wounded in the arm.

5. I.M.T. XX, p. 249.

6. This was Papen's own view as he expressed it to H.F.

7. I.M.T. XII, p. 278.

8. The oath demanded of the S.S. officers was more exacting: for example, the oath for a Lieutenant-General ran: 'Being an S.S. Lieutenant-General, I undertake to see to the best of my ability that, with complete disregard of whatever merits his parents or ancestors may have, only such men are to be accepted into the S.S. who comply fully with its high standard. I will see to this even if it means rejecting my own sons or daughters or those of my *Sippe*. I further undertake to see to it that in every year one quarter of S.S. candidates consists of men who are not sons of S.S. men. I swear to live up to these obligations in loyalty to our Führer Adolf Hitler and to the honour of my ancestors: so help me God.' The text of this oath is preserved in the Federal Archive at Koblenz. It is significant because it reveals Himmler's deep distrust of aristocrats exploiting the 'merits of their ancestors'.

9. Schellenberg's *Memoirs*, p. 10.

10. See I.M.T. III, p. 130.

11. A considerable file of correspondence survives in the Federal Archive dealing with the coats-of-arms the S.S. officers were expected to produce for formal emplacement at Wewelsburg. Since for the most part S.S. men were of middle-class origin, they had some difficulty in concocting 'authentic' coats-of-arms to satisfy Himmler's Teutonic snobbery. See below, Chap. IV, Note 12.

12. A letter is preserved in the Federal Archive in which a schoolboy called Fritz Brüggemann wrote in January 1937 directly to Himmler for an authoritative statement as to whether or not Jesus was a Jew. Himmler sent the answer through a member of his staff: 'Most certainly, dear boy, Jesus was not a Jew.' Himmler favoured adapting Christian ceremonies and festivals to Teutonic forms - for example, ceremonies for christening and

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414 IV: THE PROPAGANDA WARRIOR

There is no doubt that Goebbels, perhaps over-simplifying, saw total war as the ultimate answer to his embattled country's difficulties.³⁷ 'Total war,' he felt, 'should have been brought in eighteen months ago.'³⁸ They had the manpower, if only they could drain it off the home front.

Lammers held the promised conference on January 8—delayed one day by Speer's tardiness. Sauckel at once threw a ~~spatula~~ ^{spatula} into the works, declaring himself quite capable of raising the manpower without total war. Funk and Bormann gave only limited backing to Goebbels' plan.³⁹ Frustrated, Goebbels re-ran Russian newsreels of the siege of Leningrad which showed what people were willing to do if pressed.⁴⁰ More conservative than the Goebbels plan, the document which Lammers drafted and Hitler eventually signed spoke of releasing up to 700,000 men to the armed forces; however it provided for a three-man committee to run total war acting only 'in close touch' with Goebbels.⁴¹ He tried for several days to become at least an equal wheel on this unwieldy wagon. Lammers sought in vain to appease him.⁴² Goebbels felt slighted; he was sure that 'certain circles' were trying to freeze him out.⁴³ When he phoned the Wolf's Lair, Lammers rebuked him, insisting that this was what the Führer himself had decided.⁴⁴ The whole episode probably recalled to Goebbels his galling omission from Hitler's first cabinet in 1933.⁴⁵

When Hans Lammers presided over the first meeting on January 20, Goebbels rather pathetically called it the Committee of Four in his diary; but he was very much a junior partner.⁴⁶ He harangued them all for an hour and dictated mechanically afterward, 'I am still seen and recognized as the driving force.' This however was not true. Within his own four walls he muttered to personal staff that Lammers had 'wet blanketed' his ideas.⁴⁷ For the next month he grappled with the bureaucratic red tape with which Lammers deftly packaged each measure that his three-man committee hesitantly approved.

THUS Goebbels began dreaming about a spectacular mass meeting at which he would appeal over their heads to the people, and ask *them* what they desired. *Vox populi*—the voice of the street: Ugly enough, but the next best thing to a dictatorship of the proletariat.

During these first three weeks of January 1943, meanwhile, the Sixth Army was dying in Stalingrad. The airlift of food and ammunition failed as the airfields were lost, aircraft engines froze, and aircrew morale slumped. Although Hitler continued a news blackout policy, hoping for better times, millions of Germans now suspected that something was going badly wrong. Goebbels promised to persuade Hitler to release the awful news.⁴⁸ Colonel Martin reported to Berlin that Hitler seemed to be out of touch with reality.⁴⁹ Hitler was not alone in this. Attending one propaganda ministry meeting, the army's radio commentator General Dittmar was horrified by the superficiality on display. 'Even that clever-dick Hans Fritzsche asked me how close we are to relieving Stalingrad,' he noted.⁵⁰ Five more days would pass before the High Command obliquely admitted that the Sixth Army was encircled, and had been for

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two months.⁵¹ On January 21 Goebbels dictated that it was time to make a clean breast to the people. 'It should have been done long ago,' he wrote, adding in almost treasonable language: 'But the Führer was against it until now.' Perhaps Stalingrad might yet become a symbol, as the Alcazar of Toledo had been for the nationalists in the Spanish civil war. He announced to his ministerial conference that he was going to see Hitler the next day to demand that they adhere in future to the unvarnished truth—and to total war.⁵²

It was misty, gray, and damp as he arrived at the Wolf's Lair on January 22. Hitler's jug-eared chief adjutant General Rudolf Schmundt had just returned from the Stalingrad front. He besought Goebbels to force through his total-war plans. When Goebbels protested to Hitler about being frozen out of the Lammers committee, Hitler expressed surprise: 'You yourself had Bormann inform me that you were happy with the role of "harbinger,"' he said, 'and preferred to leave the implementation to the experts.'⁵³ Strolling around the compound with Goebbels and his Alsatian bitch Blondi, Hitler blamed the coming catastrophe in Stalingrad on Göring and Germany's allies. The Hungarian troops had abandoned their tanks and stormed the empty hospital trains waiting to carry casualties away.⁵⁴ There was however one good thing about their allies' failure, he remarked. If at the end of the war Germany stood alone the spoils of victory would be hers alone too. He had resigned himself, he said, to the loss of all twenty-two divisions in Stalingrad. The phone rang incessantly as they talked, bringing fresh messages of woe.⁵⁵

Goebbels then told him of his plans for total war. He promised to raise 1.5 to two million soldiers by the coming summer. Hitler winced at the mention of female labor service, but otherwise endorsed everything.⁵⁶ 'He would prefer,' dictated Goebbels with probably less than utter candor, 'that I do not join the three-man committee myself—so as not to become bogged down with the minutiae of this vast program.' Hitler had however authorized him to attend all its meetings and to ensure that all its proposals were 'radical' enough. The minister further told his diary that Hitler had ordered an internal dictatorship set up with Goebbels as the 'psychological dictator and motive force.' This was somewhat premature, indeed downright untrue. As Himmler was informed a few days later, Goebbels had tried to persuade Hitler to appoint him alone as 'Führer of the Home Front.' 'But he has not succeeded.'⁵⁷

AFTER this meeting Hitler had to see Goebbels in a new light. None of his army generals had ever stood up to him like this. For that matter, none could inspire him the way his propaganda minister did either.⁵⁸ When he now asked Goebbels to return as often as possible, it was perhaps no longer a casual pleasantry. As he hoisted himself aboard the Berlin-bound train at Rastenburg, Goebbels caught sight of young men of the Führer's escort battalion on another platform, mustering for the eastern front. He wondered how many would survive the next twelve months.⁵⁹

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The Sixth Army would probably not survive another week. As Goebbels began drafting the inevitable communiqué—choosing his language with the utmost care, because in ages to come Germans would always recall how they had heard of the death of their army in Stalingrad—the mood in official Berlin was already catastrophic. 'For the first time,' noted General Dittmar, 'there is everywhere personal bitterness against the Führer who led us to Stalingrad.... A searing sense of shame fills us all.'⁶⁰ Dittmar heard from Colonel Martin how easily Goebbels had persuaded Hitler to change the tenor of the High Command communiqué to allow greater gravity and more truth after the generals themselves had not dared to ask Hitler themselves. The question was, Martin had said, how to restore Hitler's bruised prestige among the troops.

It was a somber time. Goebbels decreed that January the Thirtieth, tenth anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power, would not be a public holiday: No flags, no parades. At eleven A.M. Göring would broadcast to the armed forces from the air ministry. At five P.M. Goebbels would speak from the Sport Palace and read out a proclamation on Hitler's behalf.⁶¹ Briefed by the British embassy in Stockholm, London shortly announced all this—Goebbels was furious that the enemy had somehow learned of his secret plans.⁶²

British Intelligence seemed to be better in every way than Hitler's. When Churchill and Roosevelt met in Casablanca, and announced their demand for unconditional surrender, Goebbels at first missed it and then ignored it; his rage was directed at the Abwehr which had confidently translated Casablanca as 'The White House' and declared that the Allied meeting was in Washington.⁶³ On January 27 Goebbels briefed journalists that unconditional surrender was probably Roosevelt's reference to the capitulation of the French generals in Algiers, and even when Churchill announced the demand in the House of Commons Goebbels ignored it, his only comments being on the prime minister's statements about the submarine war and General Eisenhower's appointment as supreme Allied commander.⁶⁴ Reviewing thirty different Nazi newspapers, Allied Intelligence officers found their 'unconditional surrender' slogan ignored except for one reference in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.⁶⁵

Returning to his struggle for total war, Goebbels dictated a blazing article for *Das Reich*.⁶⁶ When the *Reich Gazette* published the first ordinances closing down bars, confectioners, and jewelers however, and announcing the call-up of men and women for labor service, the upper age limit for women was set at forty-five, not at fifty.⁶⁷ The lack-luster Lammers committee also showed a marked reluctance to shut down many businesses. The enemy bombers, Goebbels bitterly pointed out to Hitler eighteen months later, closed most of them down anyway.⁶⁸

Infuriated by the committee's weakness, he decided to go ahead with his plan for a mass meeting to put pressure on Hitler. 'Public opinion,' he noted, 'is always a powerful ally.'⁶⁹ He had honed his skills promoting the images of Hitler, Rommel, Speer, and others. The time had now come to promote his own.

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NEVER had Nazi Germany suffered a disaster like the one approaching in Stalingrad. Goebbels ordered the magnificent Hitler posters entitled 'Adolf Hitler is victory' called in and stored away for future use; a tenth-anniversary poster designed by Mjöltnir, the top Nazi artist, 'January 30, 1933-January 30, 1943: one fight, one victory,' was called in and pulped.⁷⁰ On the historic thirtieth itself, British Mosquito bombers inflicted on Göring of all people the ultimate indignity of having to broadcast from an air ministry shelter, and an hour later than planned.⁷¹ As Dr Goebbels spoke from the Sport Palace that evening the bombers reappeared; he carried on regardless.⁷²

Goebbels had become by default the spokesman for the Reich. He had tried in vain to get Hitler to speak since December.⁷³ During the coming year in fact Hitler would speak only four times (and Göring only this once). As the Führer reminded Goebbels before this speech, it was still proper to compare Germany's situation now with that of 1933. Goebbels had already done this subtly with his Christmas broadcast, bringing in the voices of soldiers in Stalingrad, Lapland, southern France, and the Caucasus—in short from the four corners of Hitler's still vast empire. He now did it again with the radio preamble to his speech of January 30:

This is the Greater German Radio with the German shortwave stations beamed to all parts of the world—

The transmitter groups Bohemia-Moravia with the stations Prague, Brno, and Moravian Ostrau; the stations of the Government-General, Kraków, Warsaw, and Lvów; the Baltic transmitter group with the chief station Riga and the stations Madona, Gdynia, and Libau; Radio Kaunas with Vilnius, Radio Reval and Dorpat, Radio Minsk with Baranovice.

The transmitter group Ukraine with the chief station Ukraine, the station Vinnitsa and the shortwave station Kiev; the German Europa stations Alps, Bremen, Calais, Danube, Frisians, and Vistula—

and so the list went on, as listeners were reminded that their troops were also in Belgrade, Athens, Salonika, the occupied eastern territories, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Paris, Argenteuil, Bordeaux, Lille, Normandy, Rennes, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary.⁷⁴

The British thought his delivery diffuse and nervous; the Americans considered that he threw in his climax sooner than usual. Twice he was actually heckled. 'The German people want to know,' one voice was picked up shouting, 'won't we be hearing from the Führer?' As he then read out Hitler's proclamation, the radio microphones recorded applause but also another voice shouting, 'Cease! Stop!'⁷⁵ Even so, as he finished speaking, no foreign listener could assume that Germany was near collapse—'And that was the object of the exercise,' he dictated afterward. His audience of Berliners had acted 'with sound political instinct' throughout. As he climbed into his armor-plated Mercedes he asked his adjutant what he had thought of it, and back at No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse he had his chauffeur Rach read aloud, from Nietzsche's *Will to*

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Power, the recipe for 'what the masses call a great man.' 'He must be outrageous, jealous, manipulative, designing, flattering, fawning, inflated,' this ran: 'In short all things to all men.' Goebbels unconsciously slipped into his speaking posture, his hands planted on his hips. 'Make no mistake,' he shrieked. 'You can't change the masses. They will always be the same: Dumb, gluttonous, and forgetful.'⁷⁶

Jan 30

In this January 30, 1943 speech he had made no reference to U-boats, Churchill, Roosevelt, or North Africa; nor for that matter to unconditional surrender. Sixty percent of his speech had dealt with Russia, ten percent with Britain, and only three percent with the United States. He had used the word *total* ten times, and ninety-three different negative words like *danger, inconceivable, strain, difficult, hard, menace, catastrophe, superhuman, trials, misery, anxiety, hopeless, defeat and desperate*.⁷⁷ Twenty-three times he had referred to 'faith' (*Glaube and gläubig*). 'Defeat,' the Americans unkindly concluded, 'drives the Nazi orators into the arms of historical analogies, bombastic heroizations, and empty irrational appeals.'

On the last day of January 1943 Hitler dramatically promoted the doomed Sixth Army's commander to field marshal, thus pressing a pistol into his hand. As a German officer Friedrich Paulus had no alternative but suicide. 'Fate,' Goebbels argued in his diary, 'has put him in a situation where, now that so many of his men have died in battle, he must forgo fifteen or twenty years of life to achieve immortality.'⁷⁸ He asked Fritzsche, who had been with Paulus most recently, for his view. 'Herr Minister,' responded Fritzsche. 'I'd take a bet on it. The field marshal won't surrender.'⁷⁹

That same night Moscow radio announced that Paulus had surrendered. Two days later they added the names of thirteen of his generals. Goebbels was thunderstruck. Having ordered their men to fight to the death, had these generals meekly turned themselves over to the Russians? Hitler phoned. Goebbels called him back and recommended they postpone any comment—they could not be certain one way or the other.⁸⁰ Paulus' surrender made him more determined than ever to take his own life if the time ever came.

He broadcast the prepared communiqué on Stalingrad at four P.M. on the third—it was 'grave, objective, sober, without pathos but also not without warmth'—accompanied by the heroic ceremonial which he had elaborated with Hitler in advance. 'Loyal to its oath of allegiance to the last breath,' the communiqué read, the Sixth Army had 'succumbed to the superior enemy strength and to the disfavor of the circumstances.' Goebbels ordered three days of national mourning.⁸¹

Three days later at the Wolf's Lair Goebbels was among the gauleiters who heard Hitler's explanation for Stalingrad. 'You are witnessing a catastrophe of unheard-of magnitude,' Hitler began, before again blaming his allies. 'The Russians broke through, the Romanians gave up, the Hungarians didn't even put up a fight.' He estimated their own losses at one hundred thousand dead.⁸² It was a setback, he admitted, but by no

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means fatal. 'Besides,' he said, brightening, 'world history has a deeper meaning and it does not consist of having the supreme race of Europe finished off by one of the most inferior.'⁷⁹ It was a novel argument, and Goebbels frequently advanced it thereafter.

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48: Sin Will Pluck on Sin

AFTER Stalingrad, Joseph Goebbels revealed to Schirmeister that if the worse came to the worst he was going to kill himself and his entire family.¹ His contemptuous remarks about Paulus showed that he regarded self-immolation as the prerequisite for entry to Valhalla.² Besides, as he often said, for the top Nazis there was no going back; the enemy had often warned that they could expect nothing but the gallows.

This lethal resolve concentrated his mind, and he threw his puny frame into reviving Germany's fortunes with a fervor lacking in those colleagues who had less cause to fear retribution. His days became even longer. He spoke to workers on the tank-assembly lines of the Alkett plant, gauleiters at Posen, army adjutants from every theater of war.

In his view government officials presented a special problem. His own Staatssekretär Gutterer had privately decided months earlier that the war was lost, and hundreds more thought like him. In mid-February Goebbels addressed the entire government in the chancellery building—a 'somewhat leaden' audience, he found them.³ 'Goebbels told us,' wrote Ribbentrop's Staatssekretär von Weizsäcker afterward, 'that we're too defeatist—we know too much to have faith, and too little to comprehend.'⁴ Göring's Staatssekretär Milch was more impressed. 'Minister Goebbels,' he told his colleagues afterwards, 'using incredibly apt and clear, convincing language, indicated that the leadership of a state has the obligation during a crisis to keep a stiff upper lip. . . . Our people look to us for leadership. They must not gain the impression that we are not taking up this energy which they are offering to us. From thousands if not millions of letters, this want emerges,' added Milch, quoting Goebbels.⁵

Göring, the real culprit, had taken to his bed after Stalingrad.⁶ The army's generals, sensing themselves also under attack, pointed out that Goebbels too was supposed to give up several thousand of his ministry's staff toward the promised 800,000 new troops. General von Unruh swooped on Goebbels' office flanked by General Friedrich Olbricht—of whom more later—and several other officers, and called on him to justify his non-fulfilment of his 3,400-man quota. 'From what I was told,' related an S.S. Obersturmbannführer gleefully to Himmler, 'the Reichsminister threw a fit and intimated to General von Unruh that the Wehrmacht would do well to make a clean sweep in Bendler Strasse [the war ministry] first and see to it that their fat and well-fed majors there are put to

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sensible work.⁷ The row left feelings ruffled everywhere.

On February 12, after a conspiratorial meeting with Speer and Ley, Goebbels decided to go ahead with his Big Meeting idea. Just six days later he would pack the Sport Palace with his trusty Berliners and stage the most important mass meeting of his life; he would deliver to them a white-hot speech on total war, and broadcast it worldwide.⁸ He banked on his audience's response to show the out-of-touch bigwigs like Lammers and Bormann which way the wind was blowing. 'The Führer,' he dictated, 'is much more radical than he's generally given credit for—if only we can stop the fainthearts beating a path to his door and pleading for moderation.'⁹

He began dictating the historic total war speech two days later. Over the next days he trimmed and modulated its tone, and even checked passages on foreign policy with Ribbentrop's officials.¹⁰ He was planning to present Hitler with a *fait accompli*. Probably for the first time, he did not even show him the script.¹¹

Structured in three parts the speech drew on Goebbels' twenty years of experience as a demagogue. He selected mawkish, abstract phrases that had not failed him before ('I want to speak to you from the depths of my heart, to the depths of your heart'). He conjured with *holy earnest*, with *utter candor*, with *historic missions*, with *devout faith*, and with *solemn and sacred oaths*. He would begin in the third person ('they'), glide imperceptibly up into the oily-familiar second ('*ich frage euch*') and finally unite orator and listening public into one all-embracing, gigantic, multi-millionfold first-person *we* ('we all, the children of our nation...'). *Heroic*, *steel*, *gigantic*—the adjectives were all there, as were the clichés. The speech would take as its starting point the nation's eagerness for total war and follow through with warnings that a bolshevik victory would entail the liquidation of their entire intelligentsia. Specters of 'Jewish liquidation squads,' terrorism, starvation, and anarchy haunted the pages of his script, as did more complex and inbred hatreds too, as he drew an angry picture of an upper class who must now be compelled to 'sully their dainty hands' along with the rest. In short he saw in this appeal for total war his chance to rededicate the party to its former socialist ideals.¹²

On the morning of the big speech, February 18, his ministry telexed the entire text to newspapers, forewarning editors that Dr Goebbels intended to ask the audience ten questions. 'In your front-page make-up,' the newspapers were instructed, 'their response is to be reported as the express will of the entire nation.'¹³ While there were no *claqueurs* in the vast auditorium, Goebbels had arranged for the usual canned applause and laughter to be trickled into the loudspeakers to trigger audience response at the proper moments.

The demand for tickets was colossal. Fifteen thousand packed in, just as in the good old days before 1933, ordinary people coming together in a mood of self-doubt.¹⁴ Here in Germany's undoubted hour of crisis they were to rediscover their community of purpose and sense of power. The hall was sparsely decorated. Just one huge banner hung above the podium,

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reading 'TOTAL WAR: SHORTEST WAR.' As Goebbels skillfully whipped them up, his audience had an overwhelming sense of release. He had deliberately chosen the amplitude, intonation, and rhythm of each passage. The newsreels captured extraordinary scenes of emotion. Within minutes the audience was leaping to its feet, saluting, screaming, and chanting ('Führer command! We obey!'). 'Goebbels' delivery,' wrote one postwar analyst of this famous speech, 'was grave, imploring, moralizing, stern, provocative, mocking, derisive, ironic, and even monotonous as need dictated.' Key words, particularly superlatives, were drawn out and accentuated. He paused deliberately before important passages: Embarking on a particular challenge he increased the tempo so that the words came out in a rush, and he leaned closer to the microphone to increase the volume. He was particularly adept at the trick of building on applause by briefly carrying on speaking despite it. He augmented the shouts of assent to his questions by hurling words into the applause like "Is that what you want?" or "Are you willing?"¹⁵ Over two hundred times his audience interrupted with exclamations, shouts of approval, applause, and laughter; soon they were cheering every sentence, sometimes every phrase. One seasoned journalist later described the audience reaction as a kind of euphoria. 'Even the foreign and neutral journalists were excitedly jumping up and down applauding Goebbels.'¹⁶

The audience included most of the government and party leadership. The newsreels show the front rows filled with war-wounded, attended by Red Cross nurses, and bemedalled soldiers. Behind them, as Goebbels remarked during the speech, sat Berlin's ordinary munitions workers, doctors, scientists, artists, engineers, architects, teachers, and civil servants ('Of course,' he pointed out, 'the Jews are not represented here').* Camera operators picked out popular filmstars like Heinrich George—he was seen in close-up cheering, leaping to his feet, and saluting excitedly—and several children in the front rows, including Helga and Hilde Goebbels, allowed their first glimpse of such a mass meeting.¹⁷ Between them sat their mother, who had just been discharged from the clinic.

Addressing this huge multitude Goebbels promised an unvarnished picture of the crisis—he flattered the 'schooled and disciplined German people' that they could be trusted with the truth. He was not going to apportion blame for Stalingrad, he said: the future would show why the sacrifice had not been in vain. Germany and her allies, he said to tactful applause, were the last bulkhead of 'our venerable continent.'¹⁸ Toward the end he hurled at them the ten questions, challenging their belief in victory, their willingness to fight, and their determination to work if need be sixteen hours each day and to 'give all they had for victory.' The orgasmic climax was reached by the question: 'Do you want total war? Do you want war more total, if need be, and more radical than we can even begin to conceive of today?' And then, almost casually, 'Do you

* This sentence was cut from the published transcript.

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agree that anybody who injures our war effort should be put to death?¹⁹
The bellow of assent each time was deafening.

He dined that evening with Milch, Paul Körner, Wilhelm Stuckart, Otto Thierack, Ley, and Speer. Somebody remarked that the speech had been a kind of 'silent *coup d'état*' by Goebbels. He quoted this phrase with satisfaction in his diary, while hastening to add that the coup was 'against bureaucracy.'²⁰

This speech was his greatest achievement in a lifetime of speaking. Curiously, neither Hitler nor Göring bothered to listen to the broadcast. Hitler was at the front, and Göring had retired to bed at five P.M.²¹

Goebbels however heard it broadcast at eight P.M.; the answers to his ten questions nearly burst the loudspeaker membranes of his radio. For twenty full minutes after his final defiant phrase, 'Arise as one nation, and let the storm burst upon them!' the radio network continued to broadcast the tumult of acclaim. The field agencies of the S.D., briefed to stand by twelve hours earlier, had sent agents to eavesdrop in railroad waiting rooms and cafés; at one A.M. the S.D. regions (*Leitabschnitte*) telexed their collated reports to Himmler's Amt III in Berlin, and this provided the propaganda ministry with a glowing summary two hours later.²² Goebbels' field offices reported in equally favorable terms.²³ Studying every available newspaper from around the world, he basked in glory. The Forschungsamt, wiretapping the foreign journalists in Berlin, recorded high praise. Only the final S.D. report was critical.²⁴ Jealous army officers were also less enthusiastic.²⁵

No matter, Goebbels was the man of the moment. 'It is beautiful,' he dictated, 'to be the gauleiter of Berlin and to gather around one so many prominent men of party and state.' He decided to do it more often, 'since the central leadership is lacking now, during the Führer's absence from Berlin.'²⁶ These words reveal that he was setting himself very ambitious goals indeed.

THE fine weather which now set in displeased Goebbels. For his purposes he needed the winter gloom to linger on.²⁷ Toward the end of February the eastern front was stabilized again; he forbade the media to mention it. Their propaganda would forfeit all respect if it bleated about crises each winter, and forgot them in the spring. When the Waffen S.S. shortly retook Kharkov, Goebbels even tried to prevent any special communiqué being issued.²⁸ 'We got over the first winter crisis relatively well,' he reminded his staff. 'But we only just survived the second. If there's ever a third, I don't want to be propaganda minister.'²⁹

The Sport Palace speech was never forgotten. It marked a turning point in Goebbels' career but not in the war effort. 'After Stalingrad,' he reminded Hitler in July 1944, 'I proclaimed total war. . . . But it remained only superficial.'³⁰ He had worked off many private complexes in the speech, and settled many old scores; he had referred to 'a certain social stratum' which was interested only in preserving its almost peacetime lifestyle. National Socialism heeded neither class nor profession. 'It's

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time to put an end to bourgeois pruderies,' he had said, and: 'It's time to take off the kid gloves and clench our fists.' His speech had also referred to the idle classes who 'loll[ed] around in stylish bars' with no greater concern than the welfare of their stomachs. Not surprisingly after this speech the middle class suspected Goebbels of planning to eliminate them, and Berndt had to issue a discreet denial during May.³¹

Total war remained however a chimera. Goebbels closed down some stores and restaurants, about half the newspapers, and the *Ruhleben* racetrack; he banned manicures, pedicures, and permanent-waves.³² Even so General von Unruh reported that they would not meet the new manpower target.³³ What happened was often a parody of total war. Magda, convalescent and dizzy, was put to work in the *Telefunken* factory, but none of the other ministers' wives followed suit. Goebbels patriotically laid off his domestic staff, including his treasured chef; Ribbentrop, his arch-enemy, snapped them all up for his own expanding household.³⁴ The inertia produced by easy earlier victories proved impossible to dispel. Goebbels shut down Rothe's, the exclusive flower shop where Emmy Göring shopped, but every other luxury flower shop and eating place seemed to have its protectors. Professor Morell saved the *Stadtkrug* restaurant in Vienna by a word in Hitler's ear.³⁵ Göring pleaded for Horcher's restaurant. After Goebbels had sent in hired thugs to smash its windows the Reichsmarschall posted two policemen permanently outside; Goebbels phoned him at the *Obersalzberg* and threatened to use his powers as gauleiter; Göring retorted that his *Luftwaffe* would in that event take over Horcher's as an exclusive officers' club.³⁶

The Reichsmarschall seemed however to be Goebbels' only hope of neutralizing the incompetent Committee of Three (Lammers, Keitel, and Bormann). Speer flew down to the *Obersalzberg* on Sunday February 28 to suggest that Göring reactivate the moribund Reich Defense Committee. He phoned Goebbels later that afternoon to come down too and at four P.M. on Monday Goebbels was driven up the hairpin bends to Göring's villa. The Reichsmarschall received him wearing what the propaganda minister wearily described as a somewhat baroque costume—'But that's how he is, and you've got to take him foibles and all.'³⁷ They needed his name, his authority, his clout; but no more.

For five hours they wrangled until everybody agreed to let bygones be bygones—Goebbels dismissed their past differences with a wave of the hand. Göring bellowed with laughter when he heard of Goebbels' run-in with Unruh. Cunning as a fox, Goebbels intimated that it was everybody's duty to rally round the Führer at this time of crisis. But he also left Göring with no illusions that like him the Reichsmarschall was up to his neck in blood. ('I am in,' Shakespeare's King Richard III had moaned, 'so far in blood, that sin will pluck on sin. . . .') 'Göring,' dictated Goebbels the next morning, 'is quite clear about what threatens us all if we go soft in this war. . . . Above all we have committed ourselves so far in the Jewish problem that for us there is no escape any more, none whatever.' The same would go for Himmler, whom Göring promised to win over too.³⁸

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With Göring's backing secured, Goebbels took the sleeper back to Berlin that night, March 1, 1943. Churchill's bomber squadrons got there before him and Göring's stock temporarily slipped again. Berlin's death-roll from this one raid topped six hundred.³⁹ One bomb had fallen two hundred yards from the Goebbels home in Schwanenwerder; he decided to bring his children to No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse, where they now had the deep shelter. Many officials, particularly Goebbels' deputy gauleiter, had lost their heads; inadequately drilled in civil defense, thousands had crouched too long in their shelters while buildings which could have been saved burned to the ground. Several plunderers had been caught: They lost their heads too (as Reich Defense Commissioner, Goebbels had the power of life and death in Berlin).⁴⁰

War had a brutalizing effect. Watching rescue operations S.S. Obersturmbannführer Eichmann found one elderly couple crushed beneath girders, whimpering to be put out of their agony; he told his corporal to oblige.⁴¹ At a wrecked hospital Goebbels looked on as the bodies of patients and nurses were pulled out of the rubble; he too swore revenge, enraged at the thought that 'some Canadian thug' could do this to his city. After the British next hit Essen, the S.D. reported that many people were asking about when Germany would begin hitting back. Speer confided that powerful new secret weapons were in production, and Goebbels began hinting at them in his speeches.

When he arrived at Hitler's HQ, now at Vinnitsa in the Ukraine, on March 8 he found everybody livid with Göring.⁴² For hours the Führer let fly about the Luftwaffe's useless commander-in-chief and his corrupt entourage of high-living World War One cronies—they were all currently shopping for looted art works in Italy. As Hitler went on to discuss Rosenberg's talents and Goebbels' propaganda offensive against bolshevism,⁴³ further disastrous news came: British bombers had struck at ancient Nuremberg. Goebbels tried hard to salvage the absent Reichsmarschall's reputation—he phoned Nuremberg and assured Hitler that the damage was less than feared—but in vain. 'Given the prevailing mood,' he dictated to his secretary afterward, 'I consider it inopportune to raise the question of Göring's political leadership with the Führer. Now is not the right time.'

Göring was missing from the next total-war conference that Lammers called in the chancellery on March 16. Goebbels took Speer, Ley, and Funk to see him for three hours on the seventeenth, but he seemed totally out of touch with reality. He was astonished when Goebbels told him that 616 people had died in the latest raid on Berlin.⁴⁴ He agreed to ask Hitler's consent for the revival of the Reich Defense Committee.⁴⁵ But Hitler was in no mood to listen. He wanted only to hear that the Luftwaffe was hitting back at Britain; when he came to Berlin for Memorial Day Goebbels proposed that they take out London's wealthier suburbs one by one, rather than those of the working class.⁴⁶

Meanwhile Berlin and other cities, particularly in the Ruhr, would just have to bear the onslaught. Many a hardened soldier on home leave soon

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wished that he was back on the battlefield. Even Count von Helldorff pleaded to be posted to an S.S. unit; Himmler ordered him to stay in Berlin.⁴⁷

'COUNT von Helldorff,' Himmler had been notified in January 1943, 'is very often questioned by Dr Goebbels about the evacuation of the Jews, and about communism and other political affairs in Berlin.'⁴⁸

Talking with Hitler into the small hours of January 22, Goebbels had again badgered him to let him get on with ridding the city of its Jews. It had become an obsession. He devoted twenty-six percent of his speech of January 30 to attacking the Jews.⁴⁹ His staff instructed field offices to link them closely to the concept of bolshevism.⁵⁰

So far, seventeen thousand of Berlin's Jews had gone. The trains began heading for Auschwitz, the most brutal of all Himmler's slave-labor camps and the one with the highest mortality rate. Working closely with the S.D., Goebbels planned one final sudden sweep for the night of February 27 when the remaining Jews would be rounded up and held, ready for deportation in trainloads of two thousand at a time.⁵¹ He set himself the target of evacuating the very last Jews by the end of March. During his total war speech he had called them the incarnation of evil (he had said that neither foreign protests nor crocodile tears would deter Germany from 'the exter—', he began, then checked himself and continued, 'the neutralization of Jewry'). On the day after the speech, February 19, one thousand more Berlin Jews were shipped to Auschwitz. 'Experience goes to show,' he dictated cynically a few days later, 'that a movement and a party which have burned their boats fight more ruthlessly than those which still have an avenue of retreat.'⁵²

The police bungled their swoop on Berlin's Jews. Goebbels had arranged to use the loyal units of the S.S. Leibstandarte to cordon off factories while police seized their Jewish labor force for deportation. 'Misguided' fellow Germans, wrote Goebbels, had however tipped them off and four thousand slipped through his fingers. 'We'll get our hands on them yet,' he added.⁵³ For several days there was chaos, compounded by the horrific air raid of March 1, as the manhunt for missing Jews went on. In the first six days of March five more trains left for Auschwitz (carrying 1,736, 1,758, 1,732, 1,143, and 662 Berlin Jews). 'War is no time to be sentimental,' commented Goebbels.⁵⁴ But there was widespread public disquiet at the continuing manhunt, especially after the air raid, and unfortunate scenes outside one Jewish old folks' home where crowds intervened on their behalf: Goebbels professed distress at the tactless timing.⁵⁵ He told the S.D. to go easy for a few weeks. After one more transport, of 947 Jews to Auschwitz on March 12, the operation was halted for five weeks.

Widespread damage had however been done. General Dittmar remarked that public concern was growing about Hitler's military leadership, about the air raids, and about the Jewish problem.⁵⁶ It did not surprise Goebbels that most of the hate mail after the total-war speech

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came from Jews.⁵⁷ A significant number of letter writers protested about his picking on the Jews, and some even saw a poetic justice in the air raids on Nazi Germany.⁵⁸

As more than once before he sought absolution from his Führer. After seeing him on March 8 at Vinnitsa he again noted for the record that Hitler had endorsed his plans to rid Berlin of its Jews. There was much the same diary entry after Hitler phoned him on the fourteenth, and on the twentieth he noted how pleased the Führer, visiting Berlin, had been when he told him that a large part of the Jews had now gone.⁵⁹ The war had, agreed Hitler, enabled them to tackle a number of thorny problems. In mid-April however Goebbels found his city once more seemingly 'overrun' with Jews claiming exemption from deportation. He ordered a thorough screening. 'I am convinced,' he dictated, 'that by ridding Berlin of the Jews I have achieved one of my greatest political goals.'⁶⁰

GOEBBELS' chronic ailment, eczema, had returned. He tried to rest out at Lanke. Magda returned to her clinic and remained there, bedridden and despairing, for several weeks.⁶¹ She began drafting her will; once she joined her husband out at Lanke, but he found the melancholy of the Brandenburg landscape getting him down. Morell's assistant Dr Richard Weber gave him a course of the hormone treatment Homoseran and the eczema began to go.⁶²

Round-the-clock bombing by the British and Americans had now begun, giving him a headache which no jabs could cure. The British rained fake ration cards on the cities too.⁶³ True, Germany had still lost only sixteen thousand dead in the raids, but they eroded Nazi prestige and they added to Goebbels' workload as chairman of the inter-departmental committee which directed relief operations.⁶⁴ He had accepted this post in January as a stepping stone to power; now it was proving anything but a sinecure. Among his proposals was one that the most heavily bombed cities be granted the right to wear the Iron Cross in their coat of arms.⁶⁵ He also had to suppress inopportune song-hits. The radio band was no longer allowed to play 'I Dance in your Arms right up to the Skies.'⁶⁶ Once Fritzsche boasted in a broadcast that despite the latest raids on Essen the Krupps works was still working flat out. The bombers returned, and Goebbels got the blame.⁶⁷

THAT April he made a well-publicized tour of Essen. On the way over Göring's deputy Milch, who had spent two traumatic weeks on the Stalingrad front, remarked that if he had been Paulus he would have disobeyed Hitler and brought the Sixth Army out to safety.⁶⁸ Disobey Hitler? Goebbels—for the record—disputed the very notion in his diary, but it clearly gave food for thought. His mother also told him about growing public dissatisfaction with their commanders.⁶⁹ Conversely, captured Russian soldiers' letters provided evidence of the enemy's high morale. Stalin's slogan—'Better to die on your feet than survive on your

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knees'—had taken root, nurtured by the brutality of the Nazis in the east.⁷⁰

There were thus fundamental problems that Goebbels needed to discuss with Hitler, still recuperating from the winter's strains on the Obersalzberg.

He set off for Berchtesgaden late on April 11, ostensibly for a manpower conference called by Göring with Speer and Ley.⁷¹ The next morning however he learned that Hitler would not see him, pleading lack of time.⁷²

Goebbels took this snub very hard; he declared that he would leave at once, and ducked the Göring conference. He dictated a petulant note in his diary that he must have an entire afternoon with the Führer. He masked his injured feelings with a real or imaginary kidney-stone attack. Ley, taken in (again), sent a posy of hand-picked flowers to the train. Morell was summoned to inject morphine; aboard the rattling train Werner Naumann administered two more shots during the night. The minister had the train halted some distance from Berlin's Anhalt station so that nobody would see him alighting, and he took to his bed moaning with pain.⁷³ Still sulking, he refused to allow the stockpiled 'Adolf Hitler is victory' posters to go up for the Führer's coming birthday.⁷⁴ By the fourteenth the illness had passed; although an X-ray examination had found nothing, he toyed with taking a cure in Dresden or Karlsbad.⁷⁵

At the end of the month he was still angling for that audience with Hitler, but Bormann kept fobbing him off again. He had a healthy respect for Martin Bormann and recognized his inherent weakness in his dealings with him. Once over lunch he accurately described him as 'a primitive OGPU type' like the Russians who had escorted Molotov to Berlin in 1940; two days later he warned his staff never to repeat what they heard him say at table.⁷⁶

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UNTIL the spring of 1943 two broad streams had carried his propaganda message out to the world, antisemitism and anti-communism.¹ In April 1943 these streams converged in the forest of Katyn, near Smolensk. 'The great surge in antisemitic propaganda,' Fritzsche would testify, 'only really began after Katyn.'² After murdering many thousands of Polish officers and intellectuals in the Katyn forest in 1940 Stalin's secret police had planted trees to conceal the graves. Locals had tipped off the Germans in 1942, but it had taken until now for the ground to thaw.

Two months earlier Goebbels had remarked that 'ghosts were coming to life' as other Soviet atrocities in Latvia were revealed.³ In March 1943 Moscow had begun a serious dispute with the Polish exile government in London over their countries' future common frontier.⁴ It was now that the German troops uncovered at Katyn the mass graves of thousands of Polish prisoners of war, their hands crudely bound with barbed wire, expertly executed by the Russians by bullets in the nape of the neck. The first such grave yielded 4,143 victims.⁵ On April 4 an S.S. Unterscharführer reported that they had already found the corpses of a Polish general, senior staff officers, a bishop—and diaries.⁶ The letters and diaries in the corpses' pockets had expired, like their authors, in April 1940 when the Russians controlled the region. 'Once again,' dictated Goebbels, 'one sees how the Jews work hand in hand, and what Europe may expect if it ever falls into the hands of the eastern or western denizens of this subversive race.'⁷

Goebbels acted swiftly and shrewdly. He briefed his staff at his April 8 morning conference that he was sending neutral journalists and Polish community leaders with captured British medical officers to witness the opening of further mass graves.⁸ Berndt, his finest propagandist, had now returned from Tunisia: Goebbels put him in charge. By April 13 twelve thousand rotting corpses had been exhumed.⁹ 'One dare not think what would become of Germany and Europe if this Asiatic-Jewish torrent ever burst upon our country and continent,' wrote Goebbels after seeing the film footage.¹⁰ He ordered his editors to feature Katyn two or three times each week. Undeniably embarrassed by the discovery, Moscow alternately called the graves 'ancient burial grounds' and blamed the Nazis.¹¹ Shocked by the revelations, the Polish exile prime minister General Wladyslaw Sikorski appealed to the International Red Cross

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to investigate Katyn; Stalin broke off diplomatic relations with him.¹² Goebbels was dizzy with pride at this unexpected triumph of his propaganda. Katyn was suddenly a threat to Churchill's carefully constructed grand coalition. The British prime minister (that 'vassal of the Jews')¹³ did as Goebbels himself would have done: He thrice denied all evidence of Soviet culpability for the massacres. When a British plane-crash shortly killed off the inconvenient Polish prime minister Sikorski—the pilot survived—Goebbels found still further grist for his pernicious propaganda mills.¹⁴

The success of the Katyn revelations in a Germany long saturated with anti-Soviet atrocity propaganda was only limited. Editors soon tired of carrying the story. The public profoundly mistrusted the revelations. One reaction cited by the S.D. was that they had no right to get worked up since the Nazis had liquidated far more Poles and Jews than had the Russians.¹⁵ One minor annoyance was when German ammunition was found in some of the graves, probably part of the pre-Barbarossa deliveries to Stalin.¹⁶ When still more Soviet mass graves were found at Vinnitsa, the people commented: 'We also ruthlessly wiped out all opposition elements in the east.'¹⁷

IN Nazi-occupied Poland the impact of Katyn was equally disappointing.

Goebbels had tried for months to settle his differences with Hans Frank, but the uproar caused by Himmler's anti-Jewish measures rendered all coherent propaganda work impossible.¹⁸ Over lunch on May 9 Hitler and Goebbels agreed that Frank had lost control, but there was nobody fit to replace him.¹⁹ As anti-German incidents multiplied, Frank blamed the S.S.; on May 26 Himmler disclosed to him that he was going to evacuate the last 250,000 Polish Jews regardless.²⁰ When Goebbels again suggested Frank's replacement in June, Hitler exonerated the Governor-General: 'He has to extract food supplies, prevent the unification of the people, ship out the Jews and yet at the same time accommodate the influx of the Jews from the Reich.'²¹

According to the propaganda minister, Hitler ordered him to link the Jews directly to Katyn.²²

At the end of April Goebbels composed another major assault on the Jews for *Das Reich*. In this he argued that the Jews had wanted this war. The warmongers in London and Washington were all Jews, as were the Soviet secret police and commissars.²³ 'It is therefore a matter of state security,' he explained, 'for us to take certain steps in our own country.' This was now a race war, in which the Jews aimed at the destruction of the German people. The Jews had always been criminals, he continued: 'The Jews have not enjoyed such remarkable rewards because they are cleverer than non-Jews, but because they operate by a different code of ethics.' Hitler's January 1939 prophecy was ineluctably coming true. 'One day the same punishment will be meted out to Jews worldwide as they are suffering in Germany today.' 'There is no place for sentimental considerations,' he emphasized. 'When they hatched their plot for the total

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destruction of the German people they were signing their own death warrant.²⁴ Newspapers around the world quoted surprisingly freely from the article, and he took this as proof that many people in every editorial office thought like him.²⁵

Despite the apparent implicit admissions in the article, when his press officer showed him foreign allegations about 'Gestapo extermination camps' in Poland, where Jews and others were being gassed and cremated, Goebbels dismissed them as 'sensationalism.'²⁶ Nevertheless Bormann notified every Reichsleiter and gauleiter including Goebbels in July that Hitler did not want public discussion of any 'overall solution' (*Gesamtlösung*) of the Jewish problem. 'It can however be stated,' Bormann informed them, 'that the Jews are under confinement and being given appropriate employment.'²⁷

Goebbels knew different. In the first six months of 1943 fourteen trains had carried 14,620 of his city's Jews to Auschwitz. Over thirty-one thousand Jews had now been expelled from Berlin by the joint efforts of Goebbels, Speer, and the police.²⁸

THROUGHOUT these months the Nazi propaganda policies in the eastern territories were chaotic. In occupied Poland there was the usual conflict between rival Nazi agencies. Propaganda was run from Kraków by a capable civil servant, Oberregierungsrat Wilhelm Ohlenbusch, but he was permanently at loggerheads with Hans Frank's press chief Dr Gassner, an Otto Dietrich appointee.²⁹ Gassner had replaced the once independent Polish press with gutter publications which included pornographic Polish-language magazines whose explicit purpose was to undermine family life and thus destroy Polish society; conversely Gassner prohibited the importation of the 'healthy' publications produced in Germany under Goebbels' fiat, like *Mother and Child*.³⁰

As for the Soviet Union, right up until February 1944 Goebbels bickered with Rosenberg, Bormann, and the tiresome pedant Lammers over jurisdiction.³¹ He pleaded for a far-reaching proclamation designed to win over the Russian peoples. He was in no doubt that a slogan that the Germans were fighting the bolsheviks and not the Russian people would significantly aid the propaganda battle.³² Hitler flatly opposed this: His view was that they could hardly seize the Russian peasants' last cattle at the same time as wooing them for support.³³ Knowing that Hitler and Himmler vehemently opposed it the German army did not back Goebbels.³⁴ Several times he resolved to discuss the issue with Hitler, only to lose courage when he faced those steely blue-gray eyes.³⁵

So the unproductive bickering with Rosenberg continued.³⁶ Rosenberg demanded that Goebbels shut down Taubert's eastern propaganda unit. 'It's perfectly obvious,' Goebbels wrote to Hitler, 'that I as propaganda minister should have responsibility for all propaganda throughout the Reich.'³⁷ The finance ministry cut off all his funds for propaganda work in the east.³⁸ When Bormann conveyed his protests to the Wolf's Lair, Hitler—after further delay—agreed that all propaganda *should* be in one

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hand, and he signed a decree to this effect in August, allowing Goebbels to attach a propaganda field office (*Reichspropaganda-Amt*) to each Nazi governor in the east.³⁹ But time was already running out: By the time they were in place (and then only in Minsk, Riga, Reval, and Kaunas)⁴⁰ it would be February 1944 and the Nazi dominion was coming to an end. Goebbels blamed Rosenberg. 'Now we've missed the bus,' he sourly observed in February 1944.⁴¹

Their unsettled policies toward the captive lieutenant-general Andrei Vlasov further illustrated this rift at the top. This renegade Russian offered to raise an army of fellow prisoners to overthrow bolshevism in Russia. Goebbels backed him; again Himmler and Hitler did not.⁴² When Hitler did grudgingly allow the project to go ahead, it was purely as a dishonest propaganda ploy.⁴³ Goebbels' radio stations thereupon took up Vlasov's cause. After hearing one such broadcast on his automobile radio in July, Himmler wrote, 'I forbid the S.S. once and for all to fall in, in any way whatsoever, with the entire bolshevik-Vlasov act which the Wehrmacht are staging and which the Führer has so clearly rejected.'⁴⁴

On the very next day the Soviet government established near Moscow the mirror-image of the Vlasov movement—a Free Germany Committee under the communist writer Erich Weinert.⁴⁵ Its members were a ragbag of captured German officers, Jews, and other émigrés; its first manifesto was signed by Goebbels' old sparring partners in the Battle for Berlin, Walter Ulbricht and Wilhelm Pieck. Two months later the Russians formed a renegade League of German Officers—primarily those captured at Stalingrad like General Walter von Seydlitz.⁴⁶

Stalingrad had deeply afflicted German morale. The relatives of the one hundred thousand missing German soldiers had been dismayed by Goebbels' revelations about the fate of the Polish prisoners in Soviet hands.⁴⁷ The slew of nightly British raids on the Ruhr, coinciding as they did with a drastic cut in the meat ration, further eroded morale. Moreover the German submarine campaign was in disarray as the British introduced new radar devices.⁴⁸ Germany was passing through a trough in the waves, said Goebbels; but the waves seemed to be getting ever taller.⁴⁹ Women shoppers in Berlin were heard openly cursing this damned war.⁵⁰ They inveighed against Göring, and sometimes even against Hitler. Goebbels wished that he could persuade these two to speak, or at least to pay their respects in a Ruhr city. Limping down Wilhelm Strasse with Dr Naumann after dining with Hitler in May he spoke pointedly of the need to install a clear political leadership at home.⁵¹

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Speaking alone with Goebbels in his private quarters in the chancellery, Hitler again—allegedly—suggested they whip up more antisemitic propaganda as a smoke screen. Goebbels pointed out that it already accounted for eighty percent of their overseas broadcast output. The virus was already implanted throughout Europe. Antisemitism was steadily rising overseas, and Goebbels was proud to take the credit.⁵² Turning to the bombing war, Hitler ruled out copying the Japanese example of executing captured Allied air crews. The Allies would shortly have a hundred

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thousand more German prisoners, taken in Tunisia, and this probably influenced his decision. He was sick of war, he told Goebbels. He longed to take off his field-gray uniform and become a human being again. He was sick of his generals too: They were all liars, disloyal, reactionary, and hostile to National Socialism.⁵³ Goebbels will not have disagreed.

THE imminent final loss of North Africa faced Goebbels with the problem of explaining how Field Marshal Rommel had been spirited out of Tunisia to safety two months before.⁵⁴ Over tea with Goebbels and Berndt, a dispirited and embittered Rommel said that the Italians really were useless as fighters.

Italy was clearly the Allies' next invasion target, with Sicily particularly at risk. Abwehr chief Admiral Canaris however boasted to Goebbels that he had recovered from a corpse washed ashore in Spain a secret letter to General Sir Harold Alexander revealing that the Allies would invade Sardinia.⁵⁵ Goebbels—like Hitler—suspected a British plant, and they were right. He did not know what to make of the pink-faced and flabby-fingered Abwehr chief. At Colonel Martin's pleading he had first met Canaris a month earlier.⁵⁶ Flourishing a sheaf of papers Canaris claimed to have correctly predicted the strength of Soviet armor before Barbarossa and the site of the Allied invasion of North-west Africa in November 1942. 'Despite all the assertions,' dictated Goebbels, unconvinced, 'our political and military Intelligence just stinks.'⁵⁷

IN the middle of May 1943 the last Axis positions in Tunisia were overrun. As with Stalingrad, Goebbels had prepared an impressive radio ceremony to cushion the bad news. Hitler forbade the broadcast. Goebbels made no secret of his irritation.⁵⁸

To set the loss of North Africa in perspective he wrote a clever leading article entitled 'With sovereign calm.' 'A victory of initially only the barest significance can turn out to be decisive in a war,' he argued, 'while one that has been contested over immense areas and at the cost of many men and much material may soon pale into insignificance.' Let nobody claim that the loss of North Africa was on the same historical plane as Britain's expulsion from Europe at Dunkirk. 'For years,' he scoffed, the Allies have committed their entire armed might—to capture what is in effect just barren desert.' 'We have suffered a setback at the periphery,' he conceded, 'but the center of our war effort remains totally undamaged.'⁵⁹

This was an unfortunate turn of phrase, as Churchill was now raining explosives and fire bombs on Hitler's cities night after night. Goebbels pronounced once more that it was the British who had started this bombing of civilians. It was casuistry—true or false, it hardly mattered. Essen, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, and Duisburg were ravaged within days. Sometimes a handful of Mosquito bombers, each armed with a one-ton sting, left a trail of sirens across Germany that drove twenty-five million Germans into their wet and stinking air-raid shelters.⁶⁰ In one daring low-level raid the heavy bombers breached several Ruhr dams.⁶¹ The

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deluge drowned seven hundred people. Goebbels learned that the British were saying that a Jewish émigré had master-minded this raid.⁶² On the evening of May 21 Speer, Ley, and Funk came to see him. They all agreed that the country was in the grip of a 'Göring crisis'—an implicit criticism of Hitler too for tolerating the indolent Reichsmarschall.

June 5

In *Das Reich* on May 30 Goebbels lectured his readers on 'The nature of crises.' Was it not Schlieffen, he asked, who had remarked that a battle without a crisis was just a skirmish? Just as a man who survived an illness felt a new urge to live, a nation too must sense 'the healing power of crisis.'⁶³ And so his silver prose ran on—column after column of clever dialectics. But he could not fool everybody all the time. Still resting at the Berghof, Hitler checked the speech which Goebbels proposed to deliver on June 5. Where the minister had written *when victory is ours*, Hitler crossed it out and inked over it, 'when this struggle is over.'⁶⁴

THE speech, to Berlin munitions workers, was his first devoted to the enemy raids. 'There is only one thought in the mind of the entire German people,' he said, 'and that is to repay the enemy in his own coin.' He spoke of his tour of the Ruhr cities: 2,450 people had been burned alive in Wuppertal on May 22. 'One day,' he promised, 'the hour of retribution will come.' He then launched into a fresh diatribe against the Jews.⁶⁵

Compounding his problems, both he and Magda were ill. Magda had spent several weeks in hospitals undergoing a painful operation on her face; her trigeminal nerve was playing up.⁶⁶ The surgeon had botched the operation, and the minister sent her off to the White Hart clinic in Dresden to recuperate.

Infuriatingly, his own eczema had returned. Professor Morell's assistant Dr Weber treated Goebbels with multivitamins, the muscle tonics Tonophosphan and Cortiron, and with injections of Morell's proprietary liver extract; the latter gave the minister three days of excruciating headaches. 'The Reich minister now has so many pockmarks and scars,' Weber advised Morell, 'that injections are virtually impossible.' In mid-July Dr Weber reverted to his own Homoseran injections. Finally cured, Goebbels gave him two thousand marks, a radio set, and a signed photograph as a reward.⁶⁷

Magda stayed in Dresden until August. Goebbels sent his young and personable chief aide Dr Werner Naumann, who had just turned thirty-four, to join her there on sick-leave.⁶⁸ Leaving Hadamowsky or Fritzsche to run the ministerial conferences—the participants hung around outside swapping blasphemous jokes about Hitler and their minister—Goebbels spent Whitsun out at Lanke alone, recovering from the eczema.⁶⁹ With Magda away, some things had not changed. One evening a sentry detected a pretty girl cycling inside the perimeter fence and apprehended her: At which an angry figure limped out of the trees ahead. Volubly cursing the soldier, Goebbels took charge of his young female guest, an actress whom he had invited round for the evening.⁷⁰

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devastated by two-thousand-ton raids during June, Goebbels ordered newsreel teams to capture the harrowing scenes for the archives. Dr Gutterer thoughtlessly included some of the footage in one week's newsreel. The screen images of mangled, headless infants and bulldozers tipping bodies into pits were so terrifying that Magda and the children burst into tears at the preview. 'If these pictures have this effect on my National Socialist family,' shrieked Goebbels at his next conference, 'just imagine the utter panic in the public!' 'Whoever let that through understands as much about propaganda as a cow about the quantum theory!'⁷¹ Colonel Martin asked Magda about her husband's callous behavior toward his staff. 'If he talks with the children for longer than a couple of minutes,' she replied with a sigh, 'you can be sure that eventually they will all be in tears. They just can't take his brand of mordant sarcasm.'⁷²

Guided by increasingly accurate radar, the enemy's bombers were pulverizing the Ruhr. Goebbels followed them around, speaking in city after city in an undeclared personal campaign for Hitler's succession. He ordered cities to evacuate all non-essential personnel—old people's homes into ancient castles and monasteries, entire schools to provinces remote from the enemy's airfields.⁷³ Over the next months he issued 157 civil defense circulars covering every aspect of the new warfare from the procurement of excavators for digging mass graves, the escorting or burial of enemy bomber crews, and the use of subway systems for fleeing through firestorms—a new phenomenon in war—to the recovery of the air-raided dead.⁷⁴ He ordered static water tanks to be built everywhere. 'In the big conflagrations,' Berndt explained to the gauleiters, 'many people have died even after the All Clear was sounded because they lacked the water to soak their clothing and face-cloths to enable them to breathe.'⁷⁵ Speaking that day at the mass funeral of the Wuppertal air-raided victims Goebbels swore vengeance in their name, and at another rally in the Westphalia Hall at Dortmund, as the wind blew the acrid smell of a burned-out city through the building's windowless sockets, he confided to twenty thousand Ruhr workers that their scientists were working on that revenge even now.⁷⁶

In Stalingrad, he told his staff the next day, wedging his knees nonchalantly against his desk, a quarter of a million soldiers had suffered. But in the Ruhr seven or eight million ordinary people were facing sudden death each night. 'Hats off to them all,' he said. 'Magnificent!' And he snapped a flawless imaginary salute to the unseen heroes.⁷⁷

JUNE 1943 was nearly over. Hitler was about to return to the Wolf's Lair in East Prussia for Operation Citadel, his tank battle against the Russians at Kursk. Before leaving he called Goebbels down to the Berghof. Comfortably surrounded by his friends and his favorite oil paintings he listened sympathetically to Goebbels' nightmarish descriptions of the air raids and assured him that he was going to speak his mind to the Reichsmarschall the next day. The damage that mattered, he continued,

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was that to the arms factories; the human casualties were regrettable, but inevitable. He actually welcomed the destruction of the cities; after the war Germany would have fifteen million motor cars, most of them the new Volkswagens, and the fusty and ill-bricked cities of old would never sustain the load.⁷⁸ He spoke to Goebbels of their coming 'revenge weapons'—mysterious missiles which would soon rain down on London. He admitted that their U-boats had been thwarted, but soon they would return to their hunting grounds, equipped with noise-making decoys and top-secret torpedoes.⁷⁹

Turning to the eastern front Hitler told him he was going to make 'a few necessary adjustments' to the line which might well cost the Russians several armies. Stalin had nothing to match the new Panther and Tiger tanks. But, he admitted, he had been forced by the winter disasters to abandon his old plans to occupy the Caucasus and march into the Middle East. If the Italians deserted the Axis, Germany would fight on alone—on Italian soil. 'He no longer trusts them out of his sight,' commented Goebbels afterward. It was because of the Italian factor that he was determined not to get too embroiled at Kursk. After supper that evening he found Hitler quiet and pensive as they chatted around the open fire. Bormann's teleprinter network reported that the British had delivered another raid on Wuppertal—2,750 more people had been burned alive.

'When I see the Führer in the middle of the night on the Obersalzberg,' dictated Goebbels to his faithful scribe Otte, 'bowed down by all his cares, my love and veneration of him just grow stronger.'

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50: The First Battle of Berlin

THE truth,' defined Joseph Goebbels that summer, 'is whatever helps bring victory.'¹ German propaganda could no longer afford the luxuries of 1940. They would have to lie and deceive to survive. The moral high ground was no longer refuge enough, when the very skies rained phosphorus and death.²

If July 1942 had brought victories on every front, July 1943 brought only adversity—in Italy, in Russia, and in the air. Historic air and tank battles raged as Hitler's field marshals staged Citadel, their classic pincer attack on Kursk. A week later Stalin launched his counter-offensive at Orel, and Hitler called off the attack.

More than half the letters addressed to Goebbels' special Berlin post-box now were anonymous, a bad sign. Many asked why Hitler and Göring did not speak or visit the bombing disaster zones—Goebbels had banned the use of 'air war zones' as British propaganda was using the phrase to legalize their raids.³ Goebbels had no inhibitions about appearing. In Cologne his fellow Rhinelanders greeted him with warmth and he responded in their native dialect. Seeing Cologne's historic High Street in ruins, he remembered Hitler's words; what mayor would have dared to demolish this historic boulevard—now a few British blockbusters had done the job for them.⁴

The night train back to Berlin stopped at Erfurt station, scene of many a tryst with Anka Stalherm. Here he received news that the Allies had landed in Sicily. He muttered unpleasant remarks about 'macaroni eaters.'⁵ He did not expect the Italians to hold out for long.

His agents had told him that the German people no longer believed in victory.⁶ He half shared that view. Visiting Rechlin, the Luftwaffe's experimental research station, he displayed an uncharacteristic pessimism to the air-force colonels and engineers who met him after dinner. 'The situation does look very fraught,' he admitted, 'and one doesn't really know which way things are going to go.'⁷

The time was ripe, he decided, to embark on the biggest movie epic the Reich would ever make, *Kolberg*, the inspiring story of Gneisenau's historic defense of the Baltic city under Napoleonic siege from 1806 to 1807. 'The film will fit well into the political and military landscape which we shall probably be facing when it appears,' he observed.⁸ Directed by Veit Harlan, the film cost 8.5 million marks to make, eight times the average. Shooting began late in October 1943 and continued throughout

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1944; eventually 187,000 soldiers were conscripted as extras, with six thousand horses in some scenes. The city of ancient Kolberg, rebuilt on a film set outside Berlin, burned for the cameras as satisfyingly as had 'Atlanta' in *Gone with the Wind*.

During these weeks it seemed that his oratory was all that held Germany together. In mid-July General Schmundt, Hitler's chief adjutant, brought 150 staff officers to hear him. Goebbels spoke in melodious tones for two hours and without notes. 'You could have heard a pin drop,' recalled one major. 'I've seldom seem anyone so polite and charming.' The minister was dressed, he recalled, in gray trousers that were perhaps a shade too light, a double-breasted jacket that was a shade too blue, and a black and white tie that was a little too large. 'He had that dreadful limp too. But one completely overlooked all those faults, and he held one's undivided attention.'⁹

'There is no going back,' Goebbels told these officers. 'We've burned our bridges.' Developing a new theme he said that they had won their victories in 'the first half' too easily. Switching to another line he talked of how convalescents needed spiritual succor. 'Sometimes a patient owes his life to a nurse who exhorts him at the hour of crisis, "You're just feverish, it'll pass by." Obviously,' continued Goebbels, 'it would be stupid for the doctor to tell the patient how sick he really is.' Perhaps that was a tactless argument, in the circumstances. 'The Soviet Union has also survived exceptional crises,' he added wistfully. 'But at the head of the Soviet Union there is a little clique of very energetic, even brutal leaders with the determination to bring their people through.' Before he ended he warned these officers, 'This passage of arms is decisive. Let nobody think that if we get it wrong this time we can have another shot at it in twenty years' time. It's now or never.'¹⁰

The passage which his audience most vividly recalled was his analogy between their current strategic position and the moment in the 1936 Olympics when the Japanese marathon winner collapsed after breasting the tape. 'Nobody who saw it,' he said, 'will ever forget that. Why? Because here was an individual making a superhuman effort.... Over the last five kilometers he perhaps told himself, I don't care if I pass out or have a heart attack—I'm going to hit that tape first!' If, he concluded, like the traitors of November 1918 a nation did not intend to stay the course then it would do better not to begin.

'I think that did the trick,' he said to Lieutenant Wilfried von Oven, his personal assistant, afterward. 'You've got to use a lot of analogies with these people.' He threw back his head and guffawed.

The crisis in public morale could not be so easily laughed off. The British fire raids were sometimes killing thousands every night. Somebody suggested requiring everybody to wear fireproof dogtags to facilitate the identification of corpses. Shades of the Yellow Star! Goebbels shuddered and discarded the idea.¹¹

'I am afraid,' he dictated, 'that the British are about to reopen the air war with a massive assault on one German city at their next opportunity.'¹²

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THAT was the uneasy mood in Berlin on July 24, 1943—a broiling-hot Saturday. Desperate for a break, Goebbels took his train down to Dresden. Perhaps Magda had divined that he was bringing her white roses, because she was waiting with Naumann on the platform in a dazzling white summer dress. Lieutenant von Oven watched with voyeurish curiosity as his minister planted a kiss on her lips.

Odd news reports were trickling in from Rome. The Fascist Grand Council there had gone into a secret conclave. The following morning's news was bad. Using new electronic counter-measures to blind the radar defenses, the British bombers had wrecked Hamburg. Hitler had withdrawn the city's heavy flak to Italy only two days before. Two hundred thousand people had lost their homes. The city was still burning. At nine P.M. Goebbels returned to Berlin to direct relief operations. Gutterer told him he had ordered fire brigades into Hamburg from all over northern Germany. But there was worse to come. At No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse they found the switchboard ablaze with blinking lamps. Benito Mussolini had been forced out of office and arrested; Marshal Pietro Badoglio, no friend of Germany, had replaced him. It was stunning news. Goebbels gaped at Gutterer: He ordered Naumann back from Dresden: He sank into a chair in the breakfast niche, and broke the silence finally with an expletive, '*Dreckhammel!*'—though whether the Duce, Badoglio, the monarchy, or all Italians were the animal so specified remained unclear. '*Finis Italiae!*' he exclaimed after another silence.

The phone rang, Hitler ordering him to catch the five-thirty A.M. flight over to HQ the next morning. That was something. Goebbels brightened. Sitting at Oven's desk, he mimicked in a faint piping voice the Italian crowds he had seen on the newsreels: 'Duce ... Duce ... Duce ...!' Then he exclaimed, 'So now we're on our own.'¹³

Fascism in Italy had disappeared. Mussolini had been toppled—in fact by just such a senate as Goebbels had been urging upon Hitler since 1933. The Wolf's Lair hosted the next morning a meeting which was the closest to an emergency Cabinet since 1939. From all over occupied Europe the planes flew into Rastenburg, disgorging onto the runway Himmler, Guderian, Göring, Speer, an ailing Ribbentrop, and the naval commander-in-chief Admiral Karl Dönitz. Rumors swept Germany. Some said that Göring had fled or been shot. Heinz Guderian confided to Goebbels his own misgivings about the war. Goebbels listened attentively (but assured his diary that the general was an 'ardent and unconditional' supporter of their Führer). Both men felt it was time to start parleying with the enemy.¹⁴

Hitler's eyes however glinted with a sudden determination. He talked about dropping a paratroop division onto Rome to arrest the king and Badoglio. Ribbentrop, shocked at the possible repercussions, and even Goebbels, whose awe of the catholic church had never really left him, talked Hitler out of a plan to smoke out the Vatican as well.

Rommel, flown in from Greece, urged that any military operation be carefully thought out. Goebbels sided with Hitler, feeling that they would

matter

achieve more with less by striking instantly.¹⁵ With the issue still unresolved, he flew back to Berlin on the twenty-seventh. Gutterer, Martin, and Hadamowsky met him at Tempelhof with his corpulent chief of staff Gerhard Schach. Radiating false confidence he assured them (untruthfully) that Hitler had taken all the necessary decisions: 'Unfortunately I am not at liberty to tell you what they are.'

Goebbels spoke of his puzzlement at Canaris' failure to give any warning of Mussolini's overthrow.¹⁶ 'I am not having anybody "arresting" me,' he said. He stowed a 6.35 millimeter pistol in his desk, and set up an in-house machine-gun company for the protection of the ministry.¹⁷ Against whom? The summer air was clammy, he could hardly breathe, and nobody spoke their true feelings any more.

July 27-28
as a distraction from the worsening news he had his two eldest girls, Helga and Hilde, brought into Berlin. That night, July 27-28, over seven hundred British bombers dropped a further 2,312 tons of bombs on Hamburg creating a firestorm as the entire center, tinder-dry in the summer drought, caught fire. There was no escape from the holocaust. Twice Goebbels phoned Karl Kaufmann, the Hamburg gauleiter, one of their best: 'We've got fifteen thousand dead,' shouted Kaufmann, his voice cracking. (Richard Orte, taking dictation the next morning, thought that Goebbels might even have said fifty thousand.) He was talking of evacuating the whole city; Goebbels agreed, and ordered all non-essential personnel to leave Hamburg at once.

As Goebbels entered his ministerial conference at eleven A.M. Berlin's sirens sounded. He waited wordlessly for the nerve-wracking wail to die away. From time to time slips of paper were laid before him, but the American squadrons turned away short of Berlin.¹⁸

August 2
Speer said the next day, 'If the raids continue on this scale three months will see us relieved of many a problem that exercises us today. Things will slide downhill smoothly, irrevocably, and comparatively fast!'¹⁹ The raids did continue. That night the British dropped another 2,277 tons of bombs on Hamburg. Speer told Hitler that if this happened to six more cities the war would be over.²⁰ 'Things are blacker than Speer paints them,' exclaimed Milch at an air ministry conference. 'If we get just five or six more attacks like these on Hamburg, the German people will just pack up, however great their willpower.'²¹ On the last night in July Goebbels had leaflets issued to every household ordering all children, old people, and non-essential civilians to leave Berlin.²² When he addressed a panicky meeting of ministers and state-secretaries, with Hitler's sanction, in his ministry on August 2, Milch kept shouting: 'We have lost the war! Finally lost it!'²³

Subsequently Hitler agreed that Goebbels should brief all the ministers and state-secretaries like this more often, provided that he did so at the chancellery rather than in his own ministry, and provided he as Führer was consulted each time first.²⁴

It was another important step up the ladder of real power. Goebbels

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had even begun unconsciously prefacing his utterances with the phrase 'if I were Führer,' and venturing criticisms of their *Führung*—i.e. of what their Führer did.²⁵ He could afford to. Thanks to his air-raid relief work his popularity was steeply rising, while Göring's was in terminal decline. Nothing, remarked Goebbels, was harder to recapture than lost prestige. He had still not made up all the ground he had lost in 1938, he admitted.²⁶

RUMORS ran riot through Berlin's rapidly emptying streets.²⁷ One had it that 150,000 had died in Hamburg. Goebbels confidentially informed the gauleiters that 18,400 dead had been recovered so far; he asked them to use schoolchildren to spread counter-rumors through their parents.²⁸ Soon the whisper was that the reprisal bombardment of London had secretly begun.²⁹ In fact nearly fifty thousand people had died in Hamburg, literally incinerated inside the bunkers, torn apart by explosives, tossed into the flames by the fiery tornadoes.

With Berlin obviously Churchill's next target for saturation raids, Goebbels forced the pace of evacuation. Fifteen or twenty trains a day carried schoolchildren, infants, mothers, and the elderly eastward to safety.³⁰ There was opposition from parents and the host provinces, but Goebbels appealed to all the eastern gauleiters to display the proper 'socialist spirit' toward these people, who had often lost all they had.³¹ He felt himself like the commander of an important battle front. He intended to show the generals how to win. 'In seven years,' he told his staff, 'I earned one title, as Conqueror of Berlin. In seven weeks I intend to add another: Its Defender.'³² He was in his element. 'Grievous though it was,' he wrote to Hitler afterward, 'I never felt as good as I did during the bombing of Berlin; because all the medal-hunters got cold feet the moment the going got really tough.'³³

He did not want a blood bath in his city. The evacuation was brought under control as the party and welfare agencies struggled to get the frail and the defenseless out through the railroad stations before the bomber hordes arrived. White-painted arrows appeared at every street corner telling those who remained which way to run if firestorms broke out.³⁴ Slit trenches were dug in the streets and parks, water tanks were built, and the remaining art treasures were crated up and trucked out to safety. Removal vans carried Magda's priceless carpets and porcelain out to Lanke, followed two days later by an Aladdin's hoard of antique furniture and silver toilet articles, clocks, engraved cigarette boxes, candelabras, mirrors, and inkwells along with gold-rimmed crystal ware, and a huge tapestry.³⁵ Fearing that even the white-walled, horseshoe-shaped mansion at Lanke was a landmark for bombers, Goebbels ordered it draped with eight thousand square meters of camouflage netting.³⁶

Writing an understated article, 'A word about the air war,' in the newspapers, Goebbels called for a steadfast heart from his Berliners. 'What the British could take in the autumn of 1940—for which more than one of us admired them at the time—we must now show we too can

1943

take,' he declared, and then turned the compliment as deftly as he uttered it: 'But just as Britain turned a new page in the air war after 1940, so too we shall turn a new page now.' The battle of Berlin, he announced, would soon be joined. 'As Berlin's gauleiter, I shall not, of course, be leaving the capital.'³⁷

In this defiant spirit he prepared his capital city for its hour of glory. First he investigated whether his own household bunker would withstand the latest enemy bombs. Architect Hugo Bartels replied candidly that the concrete was thick enough for the bombs of 1941, but they had got bigger since then.³⁸ Bartels also warned that if a firestorm broke out any papers in the safe would be incinerated along with the people in the bunker. During any alert, Goebbels dictated on the sixth, Emil the butler was to take not only the minister's briefcase but also the pistol into the bunker—following Mussolini's arrest, Goebbels intended to be prepared for anything.³⁹

Taking his immediate staff, Goebbels flew over to inspect the damage to Hamburg. As their Junkers 52 droned across the first villa-dotted outskirts there was little to be seen. 'You always tend to expect the worst,' said Goebbels, then caught his breath as the plane banked and acres of charred and lifeless ruins unfurled like a black flag from beneath the wing. Gauleiter Kaufmann, a small, spry figure, however impressed him with what he had done. 'I am convinced,' said Goebbels as they flew back, 'that we'd have won the war long ago if it was up to the party rather than the generals.'⁴⁰

WITH the evacuation of two million civilians and almost all children, Berlin was now ready. The nights were long enough for the British once more.

Aug 23

On August 23, 1943 they came, 625 heavy bombers carrying 1,765 tons of bombs, but what followed was a bomber-massacre. Under Major Hajo Herrmann the fighter defenses had developed new tactics using largely visual sightings. The British lost fifty-six bombers; 765 Berliners died, and only twenty-seven of these were children. Goebbels took it as a very personal victory. On the last night of the month the enemy came again. This time Milch had pots of magnesium blazing around the city and planes laying vapor mists across which the marauding enemy bombers crawled like clumsy insects on a fluorescent table-cloth. The Luftwaffe brought in every available fighter squadron, from as far afield as Denmark and central France.⁴¹ Of the 512 heavy bombers which reached Berlin, forty-seven were destroyed. Only thirteen Berliners died, and no children at all. Churchill had difficulty in mounting a third raid at all. On September 3 he sent 295 bombers, all Lancasters; they lost twenty after killing only 346 Berliners (one of them a child). Unable to sustain such losses (126 bombers in three raids, and many more damaged beyond repair) he called off the attack.⁴²

Coming so soon after the holocaust in Hamburg, this unexpected victory gave a palpable boost to Berlin's morale.⁴³ There were also fringe

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benefits as thousands of captured British airmen, Churchill's erstwhile elite, were processed through the Dulag Luft interrogation center near Frankfurt. Milch recommended throwing parties for these Englishmen with high-class call-girls—he understood that Goebbels had 'girls on hand for such purposes.' Gutterer agreed, and briefed Milch to ask the prisoners about Lord Haw-Haw, about the bombing atrocities against women and children, about the massacres at Katyn and Vinnitsa, and about the Jews.⁴⁴ In January 1944 Goebbels would ask for a breakdown of captured aircrews, to prove his theory that Churchill was using primarily Canadians and New Zealanders for his 'terror' raids (the answer has not survived in the files).⁴⁵

EARLY on September 8, 1943 the relex machines again began to rattle out disquieting rumors about Italy. At five-twenty P.M. Lieutenant von Oven alerted Goebbels that Eisenhower's HQ had announced that Italy had capitulated. At six P.M. the B.B.C. confirmed it. With difficulty Goebbels got a line to Rome. The embassy there was frankly incredulous as the king and Badoglio were still denying the reports. Shortly the switchboard lamp labeled 'Der Führer' blinked: Hitler gruffly instructed Goebbels to take the night train out to Rastenburg. He had anticipated this treachery, aided by intercepts of transatlantic phone calls from Churchill to Roosevelt which revealed the Italian plans. He instructed Rommel to invade northern Italy at once. 'You cannot break your word twice in one century,' dictated Dr Goebbels, alluding to Italy's earlier defection in 1915, 'without having a blot on your political escutcheon for ever more.'⁴⁶

A summer downpour drenched Berlin as his train pulled out at nine-twenty P.M. that evening. Since his special saloon coach had been shunted out of Berlin to safety, four regular sleeping compartments had been emptied of their indignant occupants to make room for him. Here on the train he found Professor Hofer, who was to repair the faulty surgery on Magda's jaw.⁴⁷ Hofer told him that it was vital to get Hitler to broadcast to the people.

Hitler had spent the whole of the historic previous day flying down to Zaporozh'ye to see Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, then flying back to his HQ at the Wolf's Lair. He had not retired until five A.M. Despite this and the shocking news about Italy he was poised and optimistic.⁴⁸ He sent for Goebbels straight after breakfast and bragged that he was going to wipe the floor with the Italians: He was ready to write off all of Italy south of the Apennines. In Russia too, he would fall back, building an East Wall along the Dniepr river. Finding him in such a realistic mood, Goebbels ventilated the possibility of cutting a deal with Stalin. Hitler however declined—'And quite right too,' dictated Goebbels prudently afterward to Otto, 'given the crisis in the east.' Hitler seemed more inclined to parley with the west: Surely the British must see reason eventually? Here it was Goebbels who disagreed, although he did ponder whether taking Sicily might satisfy Britain's imperialist appetite. 'Sooner

Sept 8

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or later,' Goebbels reflected, 'we shall find ourselves having to lean one way or the other.'⁴⁹

For hours that day—the Wolf's Lair diary shows him lunching and dining with Hitler, and taking tea with him until nearly four A.M.—Goebbels pleaded with Hitler to broadcast to the nation. At 6:35 P.M. the next day, September 10, he finally had him before a microphone, speaking a twenty-page script down the ministry's special line to a tape machine in Berlin. Hitler's broadcast expressed concern about the 'unique injustice' done to Mussolini; but privately he was more callous. Ice-cold pragmatism, he told Goebbels, would dictate his decisions from now on. Now Germany would retrieve the South Tyrol after all, and all of Austria's former dominions as far as Venice. After a special communiqué about Rommel's success in seizing Rome—'It is,' dictated Goebbels, 'almost like the great advances of 1939 and 1940 all over'—Hitler's speech went out over the airwaves at eight P.M. The Russians were not mentioned. But Hitler did promise *Vergeltung*, revenge for the air raids.

As the days became weeks, Goebbels often expected the bombers to return.⁵⁰ Once, Beppo Schmid, commanding the night fighter corps, phoned from Holland warning that massed bomber formations were thundering eastward overhead; but their target was Hanover.⁵¹ Goebbels shifted Magda and the children out to Lanke, where his mother and sister were also living. The children went by pony cart to the local village school at Wandlitz, leading a Snow White existence with ponies, horses, rabbits, and goats crowding their brief lives.⁵² Magda's trigeminal nerve still caused her agony, but Hitler talked her out of an operation, fearing that she would be permanently disfigured.⁵³ Goebbels delved into Machiavelli, reading his *Thoughts on Politics and War*.⁵⁴

His own literary efforts were complicated by the reversal in Germany's fortunes. Preparing his next anthology of articles and speeches for publication, he found it prudent to omit several passages where his bolder predictions had now been overtaken by events.⁵⁵

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51: The White Suit Bespattered

ON the day after Goebbels' return from the Wolf's Lair, Hitler's special forces liberated Mussolini from his mountain-top prison. Goebbels was initially dismayed, fearing that the Duce's reincarnation would thwart their revanchist ambitions in northern Italy. The communiqué was however a welcome boost to morale.¹

There was a second boost when Otto Dietrich announced that they were about to throw the American invasion forces back into the sea at Salerno. (They didn't.) Coupled with a spate of recent death sentences and the absence of air raids these announcements had a steadying effect.² Goebbels assessed that the low marked by Hamburg had been passed.³ He took stock. Air-raid damage by the end of September 1943 had already cost thirty-two million marks; but the final replacement of damaged cities, factories, roads, and railways would cost about one hundred and twenty millions.⁴ Germany had lost 72,000 dead in the air raids; but they had evacuated around 3.9 million civilians to safety.⁵ Others were put out of harm's way by more radical means: Goebbels noted with approval that the ministry of justice speeded up the execution of all condemned prisoners to avoid their escape during air raids.⁶

The invasion battle at Salerno took a sudden turn for the worse after the Allied warships brought up their big guns. In a barrage of phone calls to the Wolf's Lair Goebbels protested that once again it was he whom the enemy were mocking for one of Dietrich's gaffes.⁷ Hitler invited him back to his HQ and, pacing up and down his map room until 3:40 A.M., he unburdened himself of many a private thought—including his suspicion that Mussolini might actually have been planning to double-cross them in July.⁸ He revealed that Admiral Dönitz already had 120 submarines back at sea, equipped with new radar detectors and torpedoes. He also revealed details of new secret weapons to be ready in January, including a high-speed pilotless flying bomb carrying a one-ton warhead and a ballistic missile weighing fourteen tons. Perhaps, he conjectured, all these would bring Britain to her senses. Goebbels again raised the topic of secretly negotiating with the enemy, pointing out that Germany had never yet won a war on two fronts. Hitler responded that, if only the Russians did not have the upper hand right now, Stalin would still be a more likely prospect than Churchill. At Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel's sixty-first birthday celebration later that evening Goebbels noted that Hitler was far less frank to his generals. The Führer also said that

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victory would go to the side which kept its nerve the longest. 'The more strongly the wind howls,' Goebbels dictated in his 144-page diary entry for this day, 'the more obstinately the Führer leans into it.'

Before parting, Goebbels cunningly persuaded Hitler to receive his arch-enemy in the High Command, Major General Hasso von Wedel, chief of Wehrmacht propaganda. He banked on Hitler taking an instant dislike to this pot-bellied, indolent Epicurean. He wished he could cook Otto Dietrich's goose as effectively. *Sept 43*

Oct 26

He was confident that he and Hitler were growing together again. At the Wolf's Lair on October 26, 1943 they spent the whole day side by side from Hitler's first morning stroll until his nocturnal tea party ended at 3:30 A.M. the next day.¹⁰ His rival Rosenberg would see Hitler soon after—for the last time.¹¹

THREE days later Joseph Goebbels turned forty-six. He ordered the ministry's evening courier limousine to ferry three ladies of his choice out to join his family celebration at Lanke, and to bring a score of foreign movies for their delectation.¹²

His existence at Lanke was almost too idyllic. Each morning S.S. Sturmführer Rach drove him in the large dark unmarked Mercedes into Berlin, taking the Prenzlau highway rather than the more obvious autobahn, with a carload of detectives behind.¹³ They returned between six and seven P.M., and Magda lined up the children with their butler Emil, a forty-six-year-old six-footer, standing behind them in his livery. To Goebbels it was often too quiet out here. One Sunday he said with a sigh, 'Three days like this in a row and I'd go raving mad.' He needed the pumping adrenaline, the blinking lights on the telephone console, the burden of life-and-death decisions, the Machiavellian intrigue. He probably even needed the hatred of his enemies. He saw them everywhere—not only in Ribbentrop, and Dietrich, and Rosenberg, but in Hans Lammers for example, a member of the *ancien régime* who seemed dangerously interested in becoming Reich chancellor. 'I'll find enough allies,' predicted Goebbels to his diary, 'to put a stop to that.'¹⁴

The British press dropped strong hints that Berlin's ordeal was about to resume. The Luftwaffe generals assured Goebbels that this time the enemy would lose thirty or forty percent of their planes each night.¹⁵ Goebbels was ready. Speer's engineers had excavated half of Wilhelms Platz next to the Kaiserhof hotel and built a deep underground command post for Goebbels as gauleiter. They had also strengthened 110,000 basements throughout the city to provide rudimentary shelters for three million people, with space for seven hundred thousand more in bunkers in the city center.¹⁶

The American day-time bombers were also becoming more active at long range, but bloody losses at Schweinfurt and elsewhere still kept them at a respectful distance from Berlin. From the interrogations of captured American aircrews, Goebbels deduced that many were homesick and few had wanted to fight Germany.¹⁷

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The British night bombers were still the greater danger, and not every city was as well prepared as Berlin. Using German émigrés—the very people whom Goebbels had hounded out of Germany—to broadcast confusing orders to the defenses, the British concentrated 444 heavy bombers on Kassel on October 22; 380 dropped their bombs within three miles of the aiming point, a colossal concentration which unleashed Germany's second firestorm. Sixty-five percent of the city was destroyed.¹⁸ Goebbels arrived there on November 5 to investigate the disaster. The local gauleiter Karl Weinrich turned up late at the freight-yard where the minister's train was forced to halt, then drove off downtown in a heated, armored limousine; Goebbels followed in an open-topped Volkswagen with the local police chief at his side.¹⁹ Much had been done to prepare Kassel for air raids, but not enough: In other cities the gauleiters had ordered basement connecting-walls torn down to provide tunnels of escape in the event of firestorms. Weinrich, the worst type of good-time gauleiter, had done nothing even to evacuate the children.²⁰ Goebbels harangued the party dignitaries in the still undamaged city hall. 'I expect that you realize, *Mister Weinrich*,' he concluded sarcastically, 'that the British can be blamed for only a fraction of the five thousand dead in Kassel—including a thousand children.' (The death toll from the firestorm rose to eight thousand, nearly six thousand of them killed by carbon-monoxide fumes.)²¹ Goebbels had Weinrich dismissed immediately from the party and from all his offices.²²

Hartmann Lauterbacher, the young gauleiter of Hanover who drove them up the autobahn to his city, was all that Weinrich was not. He had prepared his city well, with shelters big enough for thousands, underground command posts, water tanks, and mobile kitchens. In the thick of one raid he had led police and soldiers through the blazing streets to rescue four thousand civilians entombed in a bunker and in danger of asphyxiation.²³

These latest raids taught Goebbels and his men a lot for Berlin. He issued instructions that bunkers had to have wider exits and be built in open spaces (he withheld from the public the gruesome details of what had happened inside Hamburg's superheated bunkers).²⁴ On the same date he forbade military honors for the burial of bomber crews, deeming funeral music, graveside salvoes, and official wreaths inappropriate accompaniments for the burial of 'mass-murderers.'²⁵

THE Russian advance gathered momentum. The Dniepr line was breached. The Red Army retook Katyn. Goebbels resigned himself to Soviet claims that the Nazis had themselves carried out the Katyn massacres. 'In fact,' he conceded, perhaps referring obliquely to the fate of the Jews whom he had expelled, 'that's one problem that's going to cause us a lot of difficulty in future. The Soviets will indubitably take pains to find as many such mass graves as possible to pin onto us.'²⁶ Putting Nazi officers on trial in Kharkov the Russians alleged that they had used 'gas vans' for exterminations. Tackled by Fritzsche about these allegations, Goebbels

Oct
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promised vaguely to ask Hitler and Himmler about them.²⁷

He certainly asked Hitler more often now about striking another deal with Stalin. He shared Himmler's nervousness about Ribbentrop's 'lack of flexibility' in foreign policy. He clutched at every straw. When Moscow informed Washington that they were insisting on the Polish-Soviet border that Hitler had agreed to in 1939, Goebbels hoped that this was an overture to Berlin.²⁸

Oct
143

AIR raids had killed ten thousand more Germans during the month of October 1943.²⁹ Over Berlin however the night skies were still silent. After three weeks of quiet, Goebbels mused, one tended to forget all about air raids.³⁰ November brought blankets of low cloud, fog, and drizzle across the city—these probably closed down the enemy bomber airfields too. If the bombers stood down until February or March 1944, Germany's secret weapons should be ready. Ley told Goebbels that the boffins at Peenemünde expected to have them operational by late January; young professor Wernher von Braun had boasted that his rocket missiles would turn the tide of the war against Britain.³¹

As the nights drew in, Goebbels wondered every evening whether the bombers were coming back. He began to haunt his new two-story command bunker under Wilhelms Platz. From here, thirty feet below ground, he could follow the invading bomber streams and watch as Schach and the men of the S.A. brigade Feldherrnhalle, their uniforms distinguished by red tabs and piping, plotted the damage reports on a perspex wall map of Berlin.³² Every household now had fire-buckets, syringes, sand boxes, fire-beaters, shovels, sledgehammers, and axes at the ready. Count von Helldorff would be in charge of the fire-fighting. The air-raid wardens had been drilled. Every man in Berlin knew what to do if the firestorms came.

Goebbels had to leave Berlin for three days for the twentieth anniversary of the Munich putsch. He listened with half an ear to General Jodl's lecture to the gauleiters, and with no interest at all to Göring's.³³ For Goebbels, the highlight was a dinner alone with Himmler. They talked about security operations in Berlin.³⁴ The People's Court and military tribunals had crushed some unrest in Berlin caused by the last air raids. Lieutenant-General Paul von Hase, the city's Prussian, monocled commandant, told Goebbels on the fifteenth that he had condemned a dozen officers to death; Goebbels persuaded him to commute some of the sentences.³⁵

Still the bombers had not come. Altogether Goebbels' evacuation measures had reduced the city's population by some two million, to just over 3,300,000.³⁶

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FROM late November 1943 the British bomber commander Sir Arthur Harris—'the mass murderer', as Goebbels called him—now really did attempt to repeat in Berlin what he had achieved in Hamburg. The city's outline on the radar screens was unmistakable, with its hundreds of lakes,

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canals, and rivers. In sixteen air raids until the spring Harris would commit over nine thousand heavy-bomber sorties against this 883-square-mile city, with the stated aim of killing as many of its inhabitants as possible, using the most refined tactics that human ingenuity could devise.³⁷

Flanked by special squadrons carrying electronic jamming equipment, approaching stealthily behind showers of aluminum foil while decoy squadrons dropped marker flares and feinted away to the north and south, the leading squadrons of Harris's main bomber force arrived over Berlin late on November 18. Seen from the ground it was a frightening spectacle as the first waves of Pathfinder Lancasters arrived above the clouds, their engines' roar filling the horizons, and suddenly lit up the night sky with flares, followed by deadly displays of aerial pyrotechnics colored in red, green, or yellow to indicate the different aiming points for each wave. The searchlight beams probed and flickered, and silent flashes high above the clouds showed that the 'eighty-eights' and the 105-millimeter heavy gun batteries defending Goebbels' city were engaging their first targets.

That first night only fifty or sixty of Harris's bombers ventured all the way into Berlin's airspace. Damage was negligible. The city's morale, astonishingly, soared. It was like wearing a new white suit, said Goebbels, who ought to know: You were terrified of the first mud-splash until it happened—after that you took the rest in your stride.³⁸

Four days later, on Sunday November 22, Harris tried again. With Berlin seemingly safely shrouded in low, rainsoaked clouds Goebbels was speaking in a high school in suburban Steglitz when a slip of paper was handed to him. His face perceptibly paler, he continued but lost his thread. He had uttered only a few more sentences when the sirens started. A phone call to the Wilhelms Platz bunker told him that the bombers were already overhead. With bombs bursting all over the city he raced back to the bunker, his car twice just missing fresh craters. The bunker was filled with the clatter of teleprinters, hobnailed boots, and unattended telephones. Chain-smoking, he watched as S.A. men grease-chalked the first reports onto the perspex damage-map. The opera and the Schiller theater were blazing; the Scala burlesque, and the famous Ufa and Gloria Palace movie theaters—where Lida Baarova had been heckled in 1938—were already gone. The government district was devastated. About twelve hundred Berliners died and two hundred thousand more were left homeless, including both his mother and his mother-in-law—the home they had been sharing in Flensburger Strasse flattened by a two-ton block-buster bomb.

For the first time in years Goebbels had no time to dictate a diary.³⁹ The next evening the sirens sounded again. He rode out the attack in the command bunker. Incendiaries hit the state theater and the Reichstag building, but both blazes were extinguished. The Kaiserhof hotel—another historic station in his *via dolorosa*—caught fire and collapsed onto the bunker's entrance. Gutterer, on duty at the propaganda ministry,

Nov 18

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22

Nov 14/43

saved that building almost single-handed. Goebbels called in fire brigades from as far away as Hamburg. He appealed to Potsdam for troops to fight the fires. The army had an emergency plan called Valkyrie; Major-General Hans-Günther von Rost, chief of staff of Third Army district, gave it a dry run and sent in not only infantry but tanks as well; at two A.M. Goebbels angrily phoned Rost's superior, General Kortzfleisch, to order the tanks off the streets before foreign journalists saw them.⁴⁰ He asked what the devil was going on: In July 1944 he would find out.

It was four A.M. before he got back to No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse. The house was a sorry sight, its windows smashed but otherwise intact. He went down to the sleeping cabin in his family bunker—its light-paneled walls embellished incongruously with priceless paintings including Rembrandts, Spitzwegs, Rubens, and Giotto's also sheltered from the inferno outside.

Magda was already there. 'One of the wildest nights of my life,' he dictated the next morning, referring to the raids. 'But I think we came out on top.' He woke to a searing headache and the smell of burning. There was no power, heating, or water; he could neither wash nor shave. He groped his way out of the bunker by candlelight. Sixty thousand troops, conjured up seemingly from nowhere by the army, were already clearing the streets and railroad tracks. He dictated a proclamation to the Berliners, and since there were no newspapers he had a million copies handed out at communal feeding centers.⁴¹ His ministry was stone-cold and, like his official residence, windowless. Momentarily disheartened and needing fresh faith, he did what Churchill did—he had his chauffeur Alfred Rach drive him into the worst-hit areas and let the crowds throng round and slap him on the back. He spied one old crone making the sign of the cross over him and chanting a blessing, and he did not even take that amiss. He heard one shout of 'Plutocrat!' as his limousine bumped past, from somebody who may not have recognized him.⁴²

Seventy-five percent of the city's labor force turned up for work that day. That was not bad. As dusk fell the sky still glowed red. Beppo Schmid's monitoring posts heard the bombers preparing to take off but bad weather intervened. Goebbels drove out to the totally undamaged Schwanenwerder peninsula: Their house was warm, the phones here and the radio worked, and there was hot water in the bath. This third attack had taken eight hundred lives, and there were now four hundred thousand homeless, but morale was still high.⁴³ The B.B.C. claimed that up to forty thousand had died in the two latest raids. Goebbels allowed them their belief.

Lunching with him in the badly damaged chancellery, Lammers told him that Hitler had ordered all the ministries to stay put. Dr Goebbels was to set up an Air War Inspectorate to prepare every city in Germany for a similar ordeal.⁴⁴ The early symptoms of another raid again fizzled out that night.

As munitions minister, Albert Speer was more visibly shaken by the

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THE WHITE SUIT BESPATTERED 451

raids when he lunched with Goebbels on Thursday the twenty-sixth. It was not just that his ministry had been totally burned out; Berlin housed one-third of the Reich's electrical engineering plants, mainly in the Siemensstadt suburb. He warned Goebbels that their V-weapons would not now be operational until March. 'They keep dropping back,' noted Goebbels.⁴⁵

At first that night the British seemed to be making for Frankfurt, but that was a feint and their bomber formations suddenly turned north to Berlin. The Alkett plant and two more of Berlin's finest opera houses were hit. Alkett's, the only assembly plant for the assault gun, produced one-quarter of all tanks other than the Panther and the Tiger, and nearly half of all field artillery. Without hesitation Goebbels ordered Count von Helldorff to save Alkett's. 'Tanks are more vital than operas right now,' he told Schach, and pushed the button on his console to tell Hitler of his decision.⁴⁶ Three more times he phoned Hitler that night. Beppo Schmid reported that they had shot down a hundred of the attacking bombers, and this raid had killed only eight Berliners. Through his propaganda channels Goebbels however spread the whisper around the world that Berlin was finished.⁴⁷

He felt like a hero. The next day he addressed the entire Reich Cabinet. After he had finished telling them of the battle, they gave him a standing ovation. The last time that had happened was in 1933 when Hitler pulled Germany out of the League of Nations. His star was finally in the ascendant. Going behind Ribbentrop's back he began sending regular commentaries on foreign policy to Hitler.⁴⁸ He spent all day with the Führer again on December 19.⁴⁹ 'I was able to join you at headquarters more frequently than ever this year,' he wrote him afterward. 'These visits have given me far more than you, mein Führer, could possibly divine.'⁵⁰

Dec 19 43

A FIFTH raid had hit Berlin with over two thousand tons of bombs on December 2. Forty more bombers had been destroyed. Grimly fought and with no quarter given on either side, the battle of Berlin continued all winter. While Goebbels directed the city's civil defense, Magda handled the tide of public queries and complaints. Her files contain harrowing letters from mothers robbed of their children, and from widows of party 'martyrs'—she had looked after their needs ever since 1934; she controlled a small account from which she judiciously dispensed welfare (N.S.V.) funds to those in need, often asking local party agencies to make discreet inquiries first. ('Subject frequents pubs and tobacco stores,' she might be told; or 'Miss A— has seven illegitimate children, not just three as she claims.') Her advice was always tactful. When women asked whether to baptize their infants, Magda, who had baptized none of hers, replied quoting Frederick the Great—'Blessed be each in their own way.' Her replies could be uncompromising too. A Miss Charlotte Goebel, who had lost everything in the November air raids and wanted only to return to her native—and remote—Danzig was informed: 'In all such

Dec 2

Dec 14/3

cases where blitz victims with employment here have deserted Berlin, Mrs Goebbels has refused any aid whatsoever and they have had to return to their workplace in Berlin.⁵¹

Nov 28

Addressing a youth film festival on November 28 Dr Goebbels warned the *britischen gentlemen* that they would never score an 'easy, cheap, and totally unmilitary' victory. The British were hoping to win by a war of fire and flame against women and children. 'In the name of the citizens of this capital, and in the name of the entire German people, let me give them this reply. *Never!*' To rising applause he announced: 'In Germany today there is no more urgent demand than that we pay back the criminals on the Thames with added interest for what they have done to us.' Day and night, he promised, this reprisal was being prepared. 'When one day retribution comes, and it's the British people's turn to hurt, then we shall weep not one tear for them.'⁵²

A few days later he harangued two score German air attachés seated around a long table at his ministry; rapping his index finger on the table he taught them about the rift that must come between the Allies, and compared Germany's situation now with the Nazi party's on the eve of power. He brooked no discussion afterward, but silently shook each officer's hand on leaving. 'You had the feeling,' wrote one, 'that Mephistopheles himself had just shaken hands with you.'⁵³ Writing in *Das Reich* Goebbels struck an upbeat note. 'When the skies darken and there is scarcely a gleam of light,' he wrote, 'then the people's gaze turns unbidden to the Führer. He is the rock in the surging seas of time.'⁵⁴

'ANYTHING in the air?' Goebbels would now ask Lieutenant von Oven before retiring to bed. If an alert sounded, Oven would let him sleep and dial the minister's extension, 2-4, only after the bombers had reached Mecklenburg. 'About twenty minutes, Herr Minister!' After a while Goebbels would appear in the bunker, immaculately dressed, his tie perfectly knotted.

Göring meanwhile had left for France, sent there by Hitler to prepare revenge raids against London. Before he left, he asked Goebbels to find another word for *catastrophe*—it injured his vanity each time he saw convoys of trucks labeled 'Catastrophe Relief' dashing to the latest bombed city.⁵⁵

At Christmas Goebbels did crack, but only briefly. His adjutants had arranged to show an American movie at Lanke, but Magda had set up her Christmas tree slap in front of the screen. Goebbels threw a tantrum and stormed back to Schwanenwerder, thirty-five miles away. Angry and depressed, he sulked there, glowering over a book of Schopenhauer throughout the festivities.⁵⁶ Reviewing the year in his diary he decided it had been one run of bad luck after another. The British called again, 656 bombers this time laden with death and destruction, if not 'catastrophe,' even now. He reached the command bunker just as the flak batteries opened fire. Afterward he drove over to Neukölln, a working-class district which had been hard hit. The people joked with him, cursed the British,

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and even shouted 'Heil Hitler' as he left. 'Who ever would have thought that possible of our Neukölln workers,' he exclaimed to Otte.⁵⁷

In fact the Allies now discovered that recently captured German prisoners like those from the battleship Scharnhorst had more confidence in victory than ever. 'We must win,' said one, simply, 'and therefore we shall win.' One Viennese-born Luftwaffe lieutenant termed Goebbels' emphasis on 'strength through fear' particularly effective.⁵⁸ 'Butcher' Harris, as he liked to be known, had under-estimated the Berliners. His first twelve raids had killed 5,166 people and destroyed one-fifth of the available housing; but Speer's arms output in Berlin was actually increasing.⁵⁹

Visiting the Wolf's Lair Goebbels found workers again strengthening the bunkers. Sixteen feet of reinforced concrete would henceforth protect Hitler, three times the thickness of the gauleiter's air raid shelter in Berlin.

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THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The Past As Prologue: Hitler

1899

Although it is obviously risky to generalize about life-styles in the homes of any country, two observations about the German family can be made. Students of comparative family life have shown that German families tended to be more authoritarian than those of other countries and that authoritarian values were maintained over a longer period of time. A careful sociological study based on interviews with many different age groups of Germans who spent their childhood, variously, under the Empire, the Republic, and the Nazis concluded that "the basic premises of German family life show no significant difference during these 76 years [1870-1946]. . . ." ¹¹⁶

1900

Ehrfurcht, the German word used to express the proper and traditional attitude towards the father of the family, is normally translated "respect." But it connotes far more than that, for it combines, quite literally, "honor-fear." The continuing force of the idea is suggested by the fact that even after the collapse of Hitler's dictatorship, 73 percent of the ~~German~~ Germans questioned in 1946 agreed with the following statement: "The word of the father has to be an inflexible law in the family."

The passive mother was expected to devote her life to her "three K's." She should show affection and concern for her children, but she was not to interfere with the father's prerogative of determining family policy and dominating the group. After World War II, 70 percent of German women chose the words "a bad wife" as the best way of completing the sentence "A mother who interferes when a father is punishing his son is, a bad wife."

1900-3

Glen in blood

Additional features of German family life should be noted. There was a tendency to adhere to set patterns and to feel uncomfortable when obliged to deviate from a position once taken. The German father found it very difficult to admit mistakes or to yield a point in discussion. To do so was generally considered weiblich (effeminate). The father also asserted his masculine power by insisting that the children live up to his demanding expectations. Since the child was afraid of failure, he tried to avoid mistakes by constant repetition and compulsive thoroughness in performing household tasks.

Obedience was the greatest virtue in the family, but it was also a defense. From his earliest years, the German child learned that compliance was the key to safe relationships with his parents. Hence he tended to feel comfortable in yielding to authority and uneasy when given too much freedom. The importance of obedience in family training was emphasized by Rudolf Hoess, who, under Hitler, became commandant of the death camp at Auschwitz. He also spoke for many of his generation in emphasizing the virtues of cleanliness:

1943

I was perpetually washing and bathing . . . this passion for water remains with me to this day. I had been brought up by my parents to be respectful and obedient toward all grown-up people . . . it

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Hoess

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