

1945

Hitler - The man & military leader - Dictator
The Dining Empire - Haffner

Q.M.D. Rees

16. Hitler's Technical Knowledge and Military Ability

We have reached the end of the part of our analysis that may be drawn from the evidence of the *Table Conversations*. So far we have attempted to deal only with the cultural and ideological sides of Hitler's personality and development. The often discussed problem of Hitler as a politician and statesman would have required an entirely different point of departure and the consideration of countless protocols, documents, and contemporary statements of all sorts. While the subject of Hitler as a military leader will be dealt with in the second essay of this volume, there are a number of observations on this and the related subject of his technological role that should be taken up at this point.

On the subject of Hitler's technological talent and its limitations, we have information from three witnesses who prepared their statements independently after the defeat and who, moreover, may be considered free of the suspicion of having curried favor for personal advantage. Dr. von Hasselbach summarized his observations in 1945:

"The officers who had contact with him were continually astounded how precisely Hitler was informed about the caliber, mechanism, and range of a field piece, about the armament and speed of German and foreign warships, and about what could reasonably be expected of fortification lines. When new weapons or vehicles were demonstrated, Hitler showed astonishing intuition concerning the advantages and flaws of their construction, and he often made helpful suggestions for improving them. He had a good understanding of the technology of truck and airplane motors and was intensely interested in other technical questions, such as the production of synthetic materials."

General Alfred Jodl, who for years was able to observe Hitler daily, has given us concrete details on the innovations in military technology directly attributable to Hitler's personal orders. Jodl reports that Hitler intervened hard-handedly in the armament program of the army, because he regarded the military technologists as lazy, bureaucratic, and backward. As a consequence, Hitler depended upon civilian professionals. "He created the Ministry for Weapons and Munitions under [Fritz] Todt, leaving only the build-

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ing of airplanes and ships with the air force and the navy. From then on Hitler determined the monthly quota as well as the direction and scope of all production of weapons and munitions down to the last detail. All the Operations Staff [of the High Command of the Wehrmacht] had to do was to give him the exact figures: inventory, utilization, and production during the previous month. But beyond this, Hitler's astounding technical and tactical vision led him also to become the creator of modern weaponry for the army. It was due to him personally that the 75-mm anti-tank gun replaced the 37-mm and 50-mm guns in time, and that the short guns mounted on the tanks were replaced with the long 75-mm and 88-mm guns. The Panther, the Tiger, and the Königstiger [i.e., Tiger II] were developed as modern tanks at Hitler's own initiative."⁶

Jodl's observations are confirmed and complemented by Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, who was critical of Hitler and therefore not inclined to overpraise. As a military technologist he evaluates Hitler in the following terms: "... Hitler's memory and knowledge were astounding with respect to creative imagination and technical questions and to all problems of armaments. He could display a staggering grasp of the effectiveness even of new enemy weapons as well as of our own and enemy production figures.

"To substantiate Jodl's statement, it is sufficient to cite merely one striking example from H. Heiber's edition of *Hitlers Lagebesprechungen* (where many other examples may be found)—the record of a situation conference on the evening of June 18, 1944, shortly after the invasion of Normandy. Hitler points out that immediately after the occupation of Czechoslovakia, the most valuable guns were scrapped. "That was done out of a mania for uniformity. Only just barely were [at least] the Czech howitzers saved from being scrapped! At the demonstration, the Czech howitzer was presented as a monstrous abortion. In fact, it was better than ours. Unfortunately I made a major mistake then. From the very beginning I should have had the production of those guns continued. . . . [Ellipsis due to gap in text.] The same with the 210-mm gun! The Skoda guns were disparaged because the new German 210-mm guns were going to shoot further, up to as far as 33 kilometers, while the Skoda only shot 30 kilometers. But they were there and tested, an outstanding piece, and could fire in any direction, which in this case certainly is an advantage. I do not need to keep running around with the trail [i.e., support of the gun carriage], but can continually turn in any direction. For coastal defense especially, for our purpose, it is an excellent piece. The best proof is that everyone is trying to get it. The Turks want it and also the Swedes. . . ."

He was particularly fond of making wanted to change the subject from s genial to him. There can be no questionments he initiated and expedited a great extraordinary energy."

Two further details can be added to basis of reports made to me by eyewitness.

When it became necessary in 1944 at Narvik on the northern coast guns, the only form of transportation to the submarine. The navy had to report anti-tank gun used by the army, mounting, would not pass through the entry recalled, however, that during the war had seen an anti-tank gun mounted on into a submarine. After a series of tests the anti-tank gun was found, and it did

After the Allied landing in the West the infantry complained again and again of fire laid down by the enemy ships off to move. When this was reported to Hitler he asked how far inland the ships' gun were three naval officers present, but not displeased, Hitler said he expected to hear next day. In calculating it, he added, it was the different enemy ships drew different of this difference in draft could come up. Furthermore, the depth of the water between differences in caliber of the enemy guns memory—had to be considered. Thus a fairly complex calculation flashed before ment's notice.

This degree of technological aptitude considering that Hitler had never had a the opportunity to gather practical or astounding memory as well as his unusual helped him in this area; he may not have

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He was particularly fond of making use of this ability when he
 wanted to change the subject from some topic that was not con-
 genial to him. There can be no question but that in the area of arma-
 ments he initiated and expedited a great deal with understanding and
 extraordinary energy."

Two further details can be added to this general picture on the
 basis of reports made to me by eyewitnesses:

When it became necessary in 1940 to supply the infantry iso-
 lated at Narvik on the northern coast of Norway with anti-tank
 guns, the only form of transportation that could be considered was
 the submarine. The navy had to report, however, that the type of
 anti-tank gun used by the army, mounted on a two-wheeled cari-
 riage, would not pass through the entry hatch of a submarine. Hitler
 recalled, however, that during the march into Austria in 1938 he
 had seen an anti-tank gun mounted on three legs which ought to fit
 into a submarine. After a series of long-distance telephone calls,
 the anti-tank gun was found, and it did in fact go through the hatch.

After the Allied landing in the West in the summer of 1944,
 the infantry complained again and again that because of the blanket
 of fire laid down by the enemy ships off the coast, they were unable
 to move. When this was reported to Hitler at a situation conference,
 he asked how far inland the ships' guns were able to reach. There
 were three naval officers present, but none knew the answer. Quite
 displeased, Hitler said he expected to have this information by the
 next day. In calculating it, he added, it should be borne in mind that
 the different enemy ships drew different depths of water and because
 of this difference in draft could come unequally close to the shore.
 Furthermore, the depth of the water before the coast as well as the
 differences in caliber of the enemy guns—Hitler recited them by
 memory—had to be considered. Thus the procedure for making a
fairly complex calculation flashed before his mind's eye on a mo-
ment's notice.

This degree of technological aptitude is all the more remarkable
 considering that Hitler had never had any technical education nor
 the opportunity to gather practical experience in industry. His
 astounding memory as well as his unusually keen visual perception
 helped him in this area; he may not have had a photographic mind.

but certainly he was visually oriented to a high degree. Moreover, Hitler's ideological prejudices had no inhibiting influence in technological matters. Nonetheless, it is difficult to find an adequate explanation for his phenomenal ability in this direction.

The principal limitation of Hitler's technological understanding was his lack of serious training or inclination for the exact sciences. His comprehension stopped where simple technology could go no further without physics, chemistry, and the like. In his statement on Hitler, Dr. von Hasselbach continues: "He had little interest in other technical questions, particularly in the area of physics, such as high-frequency technology or atomic physics and the like, even though they were brought to his attention. Consequently he came to recognize their significance in warfare only when enemy progress in these areas had already won a decisive influence in the sea and air war."

Even in technological questions, Hitler was his own worst enemy as he became more and more firmly convinced that he knew more than anyone else. According to Field Marshal von Manstein, Hitler's belief in his own superiority in technological questions had fateful consequences: "By his interference he prevented the steady development of the air force at the right time. In the development of rocket propulsion and atomic weapons he undoubtedly had an inhibiting influence." Many of Hitler's decisions in matters of technology were recognized by the experts at the time as having been mistaken, and today they can clearly be seen as false. Such was his decision about the construction of jet aircraft, for use both at the front and against enemy bombers, which had the effect of vitiating a great opportunity. What is clear is that even in the area of military technology, about which Hitler understood a good deal, his prejudice against the professionals, his suspicion of all who did not agree with him, and his inability to change his mind once he had made it up, combined to hinder his capacity and talent.

But technological knowledge and a good understanding of the procedures of modern warfare placed Hitler on solid ground in his discussions with the generals and General Staff officers. These were areas in which he was equal to them, and indeed often superior; and we should once more point out Hitler's uncommonly clear concep-

tion of spatial relationships, which is that he had never before entered an task of directing operations on sea

None of this, however, explains as a corporal who in World War I pany and consequently, in matters than in military technology, was se of a military dictator. Field Marsl to Hitler "a certain eye for operati, quently found among laymen, thoug it was an eye dimmed by a tendency cal means at hand and by an inadeq ing possible results. General Jodl successful operations in which Hitle the extension of the attack in the N of Narvik beyond the Arctic Circle against the center of the enemy fro wing, both in the spring of 1940.

It is not to be denied, therefore expectations of the professionals an surprise—developed certain talents miss Hitler as "the corporal from t done at first after the catastrophe in 1 as someone who seized control and n contributes nothing to the evaluatio nomenon. Hitler is difficult enough to military area perhaps most difficult o

However, there can be no quest military decisions that were disastrou of the war he followed a strategy be against which the gravest objections oning must be made no differently is defeated or gives orders which enc

In terms of our concern in this c the important thing is to point out t of thinking and that of the General S a study on the Ardennes Offensive, a

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 e was always someone to blame. face to face after Stalingrad for reported that during this and the his temper and raged, and was 1 and decided." Jodl speaks of so feared that at situation conference was absolutely necessary were ns Staff of the Wehrmacht High 13, the custom of permitting off- after extensive service in the Hitler personally and then, as a ag situation conference, had been to fear that they might involun- "Fuhrer," and that they would

Manstein, Hitler sensed instinct- with the person to whom he was d to restrain himself and whom ccessfully through an outburst of consciously staged." So sinister was ents when he gave the impression mself, he might only have been mination over the person before

keep going, despite the excessive is something of a miracle. Aside othing in his daily routine was day, refused to be talked out of his stomach, took medicine with er eating, and from his personal ed with suspicion in professional and doses of medicaments, with- longer able to exist. It is almost dy survived such punishment for nking of it in terms of a poorly d heat in order to barely be able route. a car. nsequences of this regimen were

apparent. An older General Staff officer, who gave Hitler briefings during the last weeks of the war in the bunker beneath the Reich Chancellery, recorded the impression Hitler made on those who still had the chance to see him: "Physically he was a frightful picture. As he moved from his living quarters to the conference room of the bunker, he dragged himself forward slowly and painfully, the upper part of his body thrust forward, his legs drawn along behind. He had lost his sense of equilibrium. If he stopped on the way, a distance of seventy-five to a hundred feet, he either had to sit down on one of the benches provided for this purpose along both walls, or else hold on to the person with whom he was talking. He had lost control of his right arm, and his right hand trembled continually."³

It would be an oversimplification, nevertheless, to explain Hitler's morbid rigidity of will purely in medical terms. In his reflections on Hitler's military effectiveness, Alfred Jodl pointed out that after Stalingrad, Hitler was not able to reach any further strategic conclusions—"but perhaps there was no longer one to be reached." Jodl lays his finger on a crucial fact: Even had Hitler's nerves remained as firm as they had been in the winter of 1941-1942, even had his health not deteriorated, he would still have had no further alternatives—unless he were prepared to capitulate (the very thought of which he had always rejected) or to clear the way for others by suicide, thereby acknowledging to the world that he, founder of Greater Germany, was bankrupt and his Third Reich defeated.

Shortly before taking his own life, Hitler said to Jodl, "I should already have made this decision, the most important in my life, in November 1944, and should never have left the headquarters in East Prussia." But he had not been able to bring himself to do it. He had looked for an unexpected miracle to save him. With his wrecked body and his nerves increasingly out of control, he had been sustained by that infernal, intransigent will, which in turn was sustained by the memory of the winter of 1941-1942 and the example of Frederick the Great.⁴

³Not Hitler's right, but his left arm and hand, were affected.

⁴After a series of disastrous reverses during the latter half of the Seven Years' War Frederick the Great became despondent enough to consider suicide; but in 1762 his enemy, the Empress Elizabeth of Russia, suddenly died

Finally, Hitler's will, coupled with his pseudo-Darwinistic idea that in the end the stronger must win, became his fate. It had led Hitler in a unique rise to power to become the key figure in Europe, made him ruler of the area from the Atlantic Coast to the Caucasus, from the North Cape to North Africa, and then, finally led to a fall such as no man in history who had just concentrated supreme power in his hands had ever before suffered.

18. Notes on Hitler's Health

The treatment of Hitler by Dr. Theo Morell—whom he had consulted even before the war as a personal physician—is a special problem dealt with in a memorandum by Dr. Karl Brandt, another of Hitler's doctors. This is the memorandum I use as my point of departure in the following discussion.

Whether it was advisable or even responsible, from a medical point of view, to give Hitler the injections and drugs that Morell administered, and whether the dosages were appropriate or excessive, is open to question. Morell told Brandt that he used neither narcotic nor hormonal preparations, but mainly dietary supplements such as glucose and liver preparations, together with multiple vitamins, a cardiac glycoside, multiple enzymes, a bile stimulant, anti-gas lozenges, and other preparations.⁵ Hitler attributed his physical en-

and her successor, Tsar Peter III, withdrew Russia from the overwhelming coalition against Prussia. Hitler hoped for a similar miracle and celebrated the news of Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1945, as that of the death of the empress.—ED.

⁵The formulas and patent medicines which Dr. Morell administered to Hitler included *Glykonorm*, *Vitamultin-Calcium*, *Vitamin-B-Komplex*, *Glukadenose*, *Sirophantose*, *Omnadin*, *Septojod*, *Gallistol*, *Testavican*, and *Dr. Koesters Antigaspasillen*. In the opinion of Dr. F. O. Rupprecht, a German-trained physician familiar with these preparations, each would have had the effect of stimulating one or another of Hitler's physiological functions, tending to throw his entire system out of balance unless corresponding functions of other organs were similarly stimulated. To keep Hitler going at this artificially high level, therefore, Morell developed his radical program to stimulate Hitler's total organism in every way, stimulating his various glands and organs to overproduction, while attempting to control the resulting gas in his digestive tract with anti-gas pills containing strychnine and belladonna. Morell's

duration to Morell's effectiveness. He was also experienced a student and a protégé of this number of officers, been treated by Morell cannot simply be dismissed by a charlatan or a false entirely professional biology and chemistry ministrations.⁶

administration of the man used such a drug, may appropriate compensations (insofar as one can Russian autopsy for accurate quite conceivable, as possible by a number of numerous sophisticated high level of physiology concomitant overstimulation affected by the continual lar effects or side-effects implications adversely : matter of speculation. I contention that no definite available medical information by a fully qualified panel

⁶After this essay first officer in Albert Speer's as a prisoner of war in wrote to me: "Brandt's taking and using up the layman should think of during each year of the effects of ageing such as they should have. In 1945 see in Hitler's bedroom, horrified at how extraordinary discussion with Morell, assertion that he 'had no Hitler. That was the poor physician in Hitler's decision to Dr. Brandt who

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durance to Morell's medication and was absolutely convinced of its
 effectiveness. He was apparently not alone in this: Mussolini had
 also experienced a similar improvement under Morell's treatment,
 and a protégé of this miracle doctor was ordered to his side. Also
 a number of officers experienced definite improvement after having
 been treated by Morell. Consequently, Hitler's confidence in him
 cannot simply be dismissed by the assertion that he was taken in
 by a charlatan or a faith healer. From Hitler's point of view, it was
 an entirely professional and serious form of therapy, based on mod-
 ern biology and chemistry, and he was grateful to Morell for his
 ministrations.⁶

administration of the male hormone *Testavican*, despite his claim not to have
 used such a drug, may have been less a matter of overstimulation than
 appropriate compensation for the deficiency resulting from Hitler's monor-
 chism (insofar as one can depend upon the recently published report of the
 Russian autopsy for accuracy in reporting this condition). In any case it is
 quite conceivable, as pointed out by Dr. Rupprecht, that although it was
 apparently possible by Morell's drastic but carefully orchestrated administra-
 tion of numerous sophisticated stimulants to crank Hitler up to an abnormally
 high level of physiological activity (at the cost of premature ageing), the
 concomitant overstimulation of his brain—an organ which could not but be
 affected by the continual program of overstimulation, aside from any particu-
 lar effects or side-effects—might well have had significant psychological
 implications adversely affecting his judgment. This is, of course, only a
 matter of speculation, but it does underline the validity of the author's
 contention that no definitive biography of Hitler can be written until all
 available medical information has been gathered and systematically evaluated
 by a fully qualified panel of medical specialists.—ED.

⁶After this essay first appeared in Germany. Hans Kehrl, formerly a high
 officer in Albert Speer's Ministry for Armaments and War Production, who
 as a prisoner of war in 1945 spent several weeks together with Dr. Brandt,
 wrote to me: "Brandt explained that Morell's treatment had the effect of
taking and using up the elixir of life years ahead of time, so to speak. A
layman should think of it in terms of Hitler having aged not merely one year
during each year of the war, but four to five years. That was why manifesta-
tions of ageing such as senile obstinacy and the like appeared earlier than
they should have. In 1944, Dr. Brandt happened to have the opportunity to
see in Hitler's bedroom what he was taking on Morell's instructions. He was
horrified at how extraordinarily large the doses were. This led to a vehement
discussion with Morell, in which the latter's defense revolved around the
assertion that he 'had no choice.' Thereupon Dr. Brandt turned directly to
 Hitler. That was the point at which he was relieved of his duties as a personal
physician in Hitler's headquarters (autumn 1944). Hitler announced his
 decision to Dr. Brandt with the words, 'It is impossible for me to have myself

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remained was mutilated in the East, reduced to rubble in the interior, morally threatened to the core, and gravely endangered in its artistic and intellectual capacities. A traditional military leader and statesman would have seen the inevitable and, by the summer of 1943, after the loss of Stalingrad and Tunisia, brought the war to an end. But with morbid rigidity Hitler struggled against fate and prolonged the war. When Stauffenberg's assassination attempt failed and no one else stopped him, Hitler was free to continue the war to its final absurdity. He fought to the bitter end with amazing willpower and an uncanny logical adherence to his ideological philosophy of life and his peculiar morality that reversed all traditional ethical values. Thus he became a victim of his logic, his willpower, his morality—and with him the Germans, Europe, and the whole world.

Who was this man who perpetrated such monstrous atrocities?

Anyone who concerns himself with Hitler should bear in mind what Alfred Jodl, shortly before his execution, wrote about him from his Nuremberg cell: "Do I then know this person at all, at whose

side I led for so many years so thorny and self-abnegating an existence? Did he not play with my idealism, too, and only use it for purposes that he concealed in his innermost being? Who will boast of knowing another when that person has not opened to him the most hidden corners of his heart? Thus I do not even know today what he thought, knew, and wanted to do, but rather only what I thought and suspected about it."⁹

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Once Hitler did reveal, if only for a moment, the devious complexity of what lay behind the mask he normally wore. When on May 23, 1939, the Supreme Commander of the German Navy, Admiral Erich Raeder, asked him what his real intentions were, he replied that he had three ways of keeping secrets: "The first, when we two speak alone; the second, when I . . . keep them to myself; the third, for problems of the future, which I do not think out to . . . [the] end." This is one of the very few key phrases traced directly to Hitler which enables us to come to grips with the core of his being. It reveals that there were several Hitlers simultaneously: the one

⁹The context of the letter from which this is excerpted is given at the end of the second appendix to this volume.—ED.

he showed in public; the one circle of his table companion deal of what actually concerned about current problem solute silence; the one who passed kilometers on end, and—turned over and over in his mind Hitler "whose restless spirit"—cast its spotlight into the dark military staff were able to peer in that darkness." It was this indeed sensed the problems and think them through, especially clearly aware of the abyss into by hubris.

Against this "ultimate" Hitler his might, stalking back and forth the truth, resisting inexorable his willpower had taken on. The delusion that the course of his stronger character. This Hitler hearted of Germany's ultimate the end is something we can shudders to think of it, and it especially the extent of his power.

Adolf Hitler could become German history precisely because being behind his opaque mask. Hitler must remind himself again who was with Hitler for hours was one of a very few who ever discuss things with him, in the conclusion that this man remains seals.¹ Guided by this insight

¹That Jodl really did have long clearly brought out by Schramm relationship to the General Staff:

Jodl on Hitler

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feature

I heard Hitler shoot himself

Last month, Adolf Hitler's skull went on display in Moscow, showing the bullet hole where, 55 years ago today, he shot himself. Rochus Misch, a member of the Führer's personal staff, witnessed the suicide. He tells his story, for the first time, to Simon Finch

External Links

Hitler Historical Museum

IT looks like any children's sandpit, surrounded by the building sites of 21st century Berlin. But for the old man at my side, this deserted playground on the edge of Potsdamer Platz has a very different resonance.



The bullet hole that 'ended the Third Reich': Hitler's skull, now on display for the first time

Rochus Misch has paced out the distance - 140 metres from Zimmerstrasse and 90 metres from Wilhelmstrasse. Here, he says, was the garden of the German Chancellery, in whose bomb-cratered morass Hitler's impromptu funeral pyre was lit. And just here, beneath this building site, was the place Misch had spent his war: Hitler's underground bunker, the concrete heart of the Third Reich, where the Führer took his own life as his dreams were ground beneath the Allied advance.

"Everyone was waiting for the shot. We were expecting it. I had just said to the technicians, 'I'm going over [to Hitler's office], can I fetch you anything?' And they said no. Then came the shot. I was just six metres away from him when he did it.

"Linge [Hitler's valet] took me to one side and we went in, just after the shot. I saw Hitler slumped by the table. I didn't see any blood on his head. And I saw Eva with her knees drawn up lying next to him on the sofa - wearing a white and blue blouse, with a little collar: just a little thing. I was just a young man then. That is why it stays with me so strongly."

For five years, Rochus Misch was a member of Hitler's personal staff, living in Hitler's bunker; he finished the war as Chief of Communications, in charge of the bunker switchboard. It was 55 years ago today, April 30, 1945, when Russian troops were closing in, that he heard that shot. Hitler's skull, the bullet hole clearly visible, went on display in Moscow for the first time last week - part of the "Agony of the Third Reich: Retribution" exhibition organised by the Russian state archives to mark the anniversary of the Russian conquest of Berlin.

"After the shot, it all happened very quickly. The door was opened then closed again, then someone else came, then the blankets were brought in. I ran away, then I came back. I wanted to tell my boss that the Führer was dead - I wanted to make a report, but just after I left the front bunker I ran back. It all happened in seconds. Not minutes, seconds. Then some other people came and they wrapped the bodies up in the blankets.

"They took Hitler out of the emergency exit and put him in a bomb crater. Petrol was poured over him and he was burnt. Not completely burnt, but the corpse was charred. That was the end of Adolf Hitler and along with him, the end of the Third Reich - here, in this place."

Misch's descriptions of the last days of the Reich have a hauntingly intimate intensity. Hitler's bunker, after all, was not a large place. Misch describes it as 15 metres long, with very small rooms. Hitler's study, sitting-room and bedroom on one side; on the other, the bedroom of Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress whom he married in those last hours.

"And then my room. Telex, telephone - all that was done from there. 120050 - that was the telephone number of the bunker and Hitler's living quarters. That day, I said it loudly on the telephone on purpose, just to break the silence. Everyone was walking quietly by. People were whispering - it was deathly silent down there. It was a coffin for the dead, a concrete coffin.

"The last time I saw Hitler alive he walked out into the corridor and along to the machine room past me, and we looked at each other. He was a broken man, quite hunched up, like a dead man. I don't think it was hard for him to die.

"We knew when Hitler said he was staying in Berlin that he would shoot himself. He said this to his valet, his adjutant and so on, who told

us that the boss was staying here. We were suspended between hope and death.

"We had always been waiting for it, we just didn't know when it would happen. It all went wrong from one day to the next. One adjutant told Hitler he was leaving and Hitler said to the others 'What am I doing wrong? An adjutant has announced his departure. He wants to leave. Why are people running away from me?' And a secretary said, 'Mein Führer, you are doing nothing wrong. But the adjutants here are front-line soldiers. They want to go back to the front. They don't want to just walk about here in their patent leather shoes.'"

After the bodies of Hitler and Braun had been removed, the afternoon continued in a crescendo of the macabre. Into Misch's office came Magda, wife of the propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, with her six children: she had decided the whole family should die together.

"The children were prepared for their deaths in my work room. Their mother combed their hair - they were all dressed in white nightshirts - and then she went up with the children. There were kitchen workers and secretaries who went down on their knees to Magda and cried for the children - they said they would look after them." But all six were poisoned. "After the children were dead, Magda came down again, walked past me, and sat down at a table two metres away and started playing patience, she started laying down cards. She was crying."

Misch, fearing his own death was imminent, wanted to leave the bunker. "I kept saying to Goebbels, 'I want to go. I want to go away to meet my comrades.' But he said to me, 'There are still telephone calls to make.'"

"There were still people there - General Krebs [Army Chief of Staff], General Burgdoff [Chief Adjutant], Martin Bormann [Hitler's deputy] - they were all still there and the telephone lines had to work. We were still receiving phone calls - we were negotiating with the Russians, there were civilians who phoned us up, who knew our number. I still had to carry out my duty."

But eventually even the propaganda minister accepted the inevitable. "Goebbels said to me, 'We understand how to live, so we also understand how to die. You can stop now.' Then I dealt with my things. I took out all the cables, all the connections."

Joseph and Magda Goebbels committed suicide and Misch finally fled from the bunker, but a day later he was captured by the Russians. When the authorities realised who he was, he was sent, on Stalin's orders, to Moscow. The Russian leader couldn't accept that his rival was finally dead.

"They thought what I had described wasn't true. 'What if the body you saw was someone else?' 'But it wasn't someone else, no one else came in.' 'Ah, you're lying, you're lying', always the same. I knew Hitler for five years, I saw him two or three hours before his death and no one else came in."

Misch and the other witnesses to Hitler's last days were ordered to be

tortured as Stalin's paranoia raged. "They stripped me and then they whipped my testicles and I lost consciousness. I lost a lot of blood. After a while I ceased to be a human being. I despaired of life, of everything that had happened. There was no heating in the basement, even the urine was frozen. I was laid on an iron bed without a blanket, without anything, nothing. That's why I wrote to Beria [Stalin's head of secret police] that I wanted to be shot, because I couldn't go on."

To test the statements of their German prisoners, the Russian authorities staged a reconstruction of Hitler's suicide and the burning of his corpse, complete with the original eyewitnesses. The "Reich Chancellery Group" was assembled, bundled onto a train, and then onto a plane bound for Germany. A disorientated Misch looked on as the re-enactment took place.

But if the charade finally satisfied the Soviets that their prisoners were telling the truth, it now suited Stalin to keep the mystery over Hitler's death alive. Misch was flown back to the Soviet Union, where he was sent to the Gulags.

"There was order in the prison camps, I have to admit that. We were given our food, one was simply a prisoner. I was mostly in the so-called 'regime camps' where they held people such as the atomic physicists, the people who had taught in the university in Moscow.

"You had to survive on hope. You had to live on very little - little food, little sleep; but it was better for us than for much of the population of Russia. We had our 600 or 400 grams of bread per day - the Russian people didn't always have that."

After Stalin's death in 1953, Misch was released under Khrushchev's general amnesty and sent back to East Germany. There he lived a life of quiet anonymity with his wife Gerda and their daughter Birgitta, who had been born during the war (Eva Braun had given them a pushchair back in the days of the Reich). Together, they ran a small home-decorating shop.

It was just by chance that Rochus Misch had so unusual a war. A member of the SS Leibstandarte elite guards, he was wounded during the invasion of Poland in 1939.

"That was a lucky break for me because it was through my injury that I came to work for Hitler." Still in his early twenties, Misch was taken out of active service and, following a recommendation from one of his commanding officers, was summoned to the Reich Chancellery.

"The head adjutant interviewed me. He had to know who would be living in Hitler's apartment. Then he stood up and went to the door. And who was standing behind the door? Hitler. I got in a state, freezing cold one moment, hot the next. We were one metre apart. He had been listening to the interview behind the door.

"Hitler asked where I came from and I said, 'Mein Führer, I come,' - in the meantime I had composed myself a little - 'I come from Upper Silesia.' He asked, 'Do we have any Silesians here?' and the head

adjutant said, 'I don't know, I don't know.' Hitler went on, 'Well, the young man can do something for me straight away.' And he gave me a letter and said, 'Please take this to my sister Paula in Vienna.'

It was May 1940. This was Misch's first task as one of the Führer-Begleitung (Hitler's personal staff). Until this promotion, Misch had been living obscurely in an army barracks and at first this new position left him awestruck.

"Hitler was acclaimed, celebrated everywhere. This was the Führer. I was scared. But after ten days or so I got used to the fact that Hitler was a human being, like any other. Then he was no longer the great Führer, but simply 'the boss'.

"He was a very good boss, very loyal. We who were closest to him tried to carry out our duties properly. We were bodyguards, telephonists, whatever; we did everything that would have to be done for the head of any firm, whoever he may be. There is nothing to complain about when you have such a boss. He always asked how we all were. Those who claim Hitler wasn't interested in ordinary people are talking nonsense."

A few months ago, builders digging the foundations for a new government office block next to the sandpit on the edge of Potsdamer Platz accidentally exposed part of the bunker roof. It rekindled a debate: should the bunker be left buried, destroyed, or maintained as a museum? Despite a substantial lobby, running the gamut from archaeologists and historians to Holocaust campaigners and the inevitable neo-Nazi groups, the Berlin authorities decided to rebury their past. Misch, however, believes the bunker should have been excavated.

"It should be preserved for the sake of history. This is where the Nazi era happened and where Hitler died. It was a momentous event. It should be kept for the world to see."

The latest scholarship suggests that by the end of 1942, a large percentage of the German population knew that the "Jewish problem" - as Nazi ideology had it - had been radically solved and millions put to death. Coming to terms with Hitler's crimes and the Holocaust has been a struggle for the German people; for Misch, it has been harder than for most.

To him, Hitler was not just a distant leader. He was the kind boss who joked with his staff; the film buff who loved Charlie Chaplin and watched *Gone With the Wind* three times. The man who always said that he was too busy for a wife and yet, Misch believes, married Eva Braun the day before their deaths so that "he took her to the grave as a married woman solely out of consideration for her parents". And for Misch, this dichotomy is made more extraordinary by the fact that, despite being at the heart of Hitler's operation, he insists he never heard any talk of the mass murder of Jews.

"How could we fail to find this out - my God, we knew nearly everything that was going on - us in the inner circle - we were always there, day and night. We saw Hitler in his nightshirt! We received the

dispatches and brought them to Hitler to read. He would have them under his arm and tear out a report and hand it to me, and I would get rid of it in a waste-paper basket. There was never anything on this subject."

And yet, he does not deny the Holocaust happened. "Yes, it happened, but I can't imagine it. I can't imagine Hitler as a murderer. It's simply impossible. He was so friendly, nice.

"If I met him today, I'd say, 'Mein Führer, I didn't really get to know you that well. For five years we could look each other straight in the eye and smile and . . . all these things that have been written about, where did that all come from? I never knew you to be like that, Mein Führer.' "

26 October 1999: [International] Dental detective work gets to the root of Hitler mystery

26 October 1998: [International] Unseen Hitler films found

4 May 1998: [International] The seven faces of Adolf Hitler

? Can we get this

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D his way to that new symbiosis. "Stop his mouth and you destroy his drawing power": this was the logic of the temporary prohibitions leveled against his speaking in most German states after he served his term for the Putsch.²⁶ In haranguing a mass audience he would work himself into a crescendo of fury, foaming at the lips—an oral-sadistic orgasm.²⁷ He had presumably felt it as an abandonment, a betrayal, when his privileged position collapsed with his mother's new pregnancy—and these deathly feelings revived in him against Providence and Germany respectively when his Putsch collapsed in 1923 and when his Reich collapsed in 1945. The failed Putsch left him with a "very severe traumatic neurosis," as diagnosed by the prison doctor.²⁸ It also turned him back into a spoiled baby crossed: in his first interrogations "he was fresh at times and for the rest would break into crying fits."²⁹ Meanwhile he tried to starve himself to death; next he insisted that the food offered him was poisoned; finally he fed himself fat with sweets from his "motherly lady friends" while he talked himself out of this oral crisis at his trial.³⁰

It was then that he began publicizing his new aim of eastern conquest.³¹ The single reason he gave for that aim from the time it germinated in 1921, that the "Germanic mother" could not feed her children adequately,³² expressed his mother's maternal trauma as he had absorbed it through her compensatory overfeeding of him. But the aim itself expressed his oral-aggressive side of that absorbing. He said as much when he asked: "How can we feed the nation?" then answered: "We either export people or goods, or else we strive to adjust land and soil to population. Nature lays this possibility at every living creature's cradle. That is the self-preservative instinct. The child does not ask, when it drinks, whether the mother's breast is being tortured. Hunger and love are healthy instincts."³³ Universalizing his oral-aggressive input into his eastern course of conquest, he called all history a fight for feeding ground.³⁴ And he projected the eastern land grab beyond itself to world conquest—half circle back to his all-enfolding ecstasy at the breast.

It has already been shown that the conquest of feeding ground

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assume that the insatiable hate in him linked up in the unconscious part of his being with the concealed, yet ever-present certainty that awaiting him at the end was the most dreadful failure and a personal demise such as was in fact reserved for him in the Reich Chancellery on 30 April 1945."¹³ That "ever-present certainty" emerged from concealment once in the winter following the fall of Poland as Hitler was railing against foreign journalism as Jewish. "For almost fifteen years this propaganda was made against us," he cried. "My old Party comrades, you remember this propaganda! It's the same words and the same phrases; yes, if we look more closely, even the same faces and the same dialect! I dealt with these people as a solitary unknown who drew a handful of men around him. For fifteen years I dealt with these people, and today Germany is the greatest world power." This outburst of hubris brought on the ironic prophecy: "It is not true that age of itself makes one wise. Age does not make the blind see either. But he who once already was stricken with blindness is so now too. But he who is stricken with blindness, him would the gods destroy."¹⁴

A huge question has been tacitly reserved about the Germans' felt need to lose World War I over again. Did that need exist outside of Hitler's psychic system? The question can be approached only through a consideration of the precedent that dominated Hitler's experience of sensing and supplying Germany's traumatic need. This precedent was his experience of a traumatic need of his mother's that he was literally born to meet.

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1940, and with decreasing medical pretense²⁷¹—then from concentration camps as well beginning in March 1941, and with decreasing regard for fitness to labor.²⁷² In July 1941 the mass execution of Jews and of derivative political and racial enemies began behind the German battle lines in Russia as provided by a directive of Hitler's of the previous 13 March.²⁷³ Then on 24 August Hitler called off the Euthanasia program as of that fall.²⁷⁴ Over the following months Bouhler and Brack stepped up the removal of Jews from the concentration camps to the gas chambers while also transferring Euthanasia equipment and personnel piecemeal to Poland for the Final Solution.²⁷⁵ On invading Poland in September 1939 Hitler had ordered Jews from the Reich massed in a few specified Polish cities having good rail connections—for "the final aim," which was "to be held strictly secret" and "will take some time," as Heydrich told SS commanders on 21 September (that was not the open aim of a Jewish reservation).²⁷⁶ Jewish egress from all German-controlled Europe was halted in 1941—stark proof that "the final aim" was not a last recourse. Once the Final Solution was under way in its Polish compound, Hitler's involvement in its details slackened even as its implementation gradually passed from the Kanzlei des Führers to the SS. Thereafter Hitler applied himself instead to extending its compass to Germany's satellites—by diplomacy so long as this availed. When his Reich was collapsing he boasted: "We have lanced the Jewish abscess."²⁷⁷ And he managed some positive thinking against all odds: "In a world that will be increasingly infected by the Jewish poison, a people immunized against that poison must prevail in the long run."²⁷⁸ He had meanwhile refuted with a vengeance his postulate that Germany's 1918 defeat, being the Jews' doing, would be undone by their undoing. That refutation covered the subpostulate that his mother's death was Bloch's doing.

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The secret sense of Hitler's secret Euthanasia program as he initially framed it at the Nuremberg Rally was to rectify 1907 with a mercy killing of his incurably sick mother by Bloch that would, incidentally, obviate wasteful expense. But through the program as he applied it he identified himself in Pasewalk with

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ence a month later found him still castigating rear-line officers for infecting front-line officers with defeatism.¹⁰⁴ But the July bomb blast was again just a failed dagger thrust in his proclamation for the next anniversary of the November revolution.¹⁰⁵ And for front-line commanders in his Ardennes offensive of December 1944 he drummed up his old motif intact: "Today the entire German people stands unshakable and will stand unshakable. In 1918 the German people capitulated without any need."¹⁰⁶ That New Year's Day he assured both army and nation that, since he had mercilessly purged them both after 20 July, the byword of no defeat without or within was more valid than ever.¹⁰⁷ On 30 January, in his last radio address, he ruled out a new capitulation, declaring: "History does not repeat itself!"¹⁰⁸ As late as 11 March 1945 he was still proclaiming: "1918 will not be repeated."¹⁰⁹

Eight days later he ordered Germany destroyed in the wake of its retreating armies.¹¹⁰ In his political testament he claimed that "our resistance is gradually being sapped by creatures as deluded as they are unprincipled,"¹¹¹ and in his addendum to it that "disloyalty and treachery had undermined the force of resistance during the entire war. It had therefore not been granted to him to lead his people to victory."¹¹² This hollow updating of the legendary defeat from within perfected his full-scale refutation of it. This time around, moreover, the defeat was driven home, and the collapse of the established order was unmistakably its result.

"No new November 1918" was like a motto for Hitler's entire approach to World War II. His program for the new war turned on precautions against the old one being repeated: proceeding against the old adversaries by stages (continental, hemispheric, global), successive localized blitzkriegs in the first stage, Britain's advance acquiescence in the continental conquest. And he promoted his Jewish policy as a precaution against the internal poisoning he blamed for the old defeat. Those were respectively two kinds of precaution he took against renewing the 1918 defeat: ineffective preventions of true causes of that defeat and effective preventions of false causes of it. Under the latter head,

& a scene where lists of names
are checked off. Hitler's pleasure
was born as opposed to the Roman days

1941, 1942, 1945

B 62

Hitler Orders the Holocaust

those who laughed then, countless numbers no longer laugh today, and those who still laugh now will perhaps no longer laugh a short time from now. This realization will spread beyond Europe throughout the entire world. International Jewry will be recognized in its full demonic peril; we National Socialists will see to that.⁶⁸

It should first be noted that Hitler used the formulation "international world war" as he had earlier, on September 30 of that year. This pleonasm was, of course, ridiculous unless Hitler wanted to differentiate between a national world war for living space and an international world war against the Jews. This may indeed have been his intention.

Furthermore, we must remember that in the course of that autumn of 1942 the second assault against the Soviet Union had failed, like the first, and the American invasion of North Africa had just begun. Yet according to Hitler's earlier plans, Russia was to have been vanquished by 1941, before the United States was ready for war. Thus there were definite reasons for Hitler to wonder if the war perhaps could not be won. Hitler would, of course, not admit this in public. But he may have felt that if he could not acquire new living space for Germany, he might at least achieve something for humanity. As the fortunes of war turned against Germany, Hitler became more and more convinced that the destruction of the Jews was his gift to the world. This became totally clear toward the end of the war. In a dictated memoir on February 13, 1945, Hitler said, "I have lanced the Jewish abscess, like the others. For this, the future will be eternally grateful to us." And again in his last words recorded on April 2 in his bunker in Berlin, "The world will be eternally grateful to National Socialism that I have eradicated the Jews in Germany and Central Europe."⁶⁹

For the last time we return to the question how and when the decision was made. There can no longer be a reasonable doubt that it was made by Hitler. But how are we to envision

* See p 61 of the reason he did not see it as a conflict is that the "demonic peril" was upon them - one could hardly count on the Jews to weaken other nations.

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very hard—he never looked convincing in his role as dreaded police chief and mass murderer. The swastikas, death's-head insignia, and tailored uniforms could not hide the fact that Himmler was a plump man with a blank visage and balding head, who invariably seemed the most clumsy and awkward figure at Nazi gatherings. His conduct and manner of life make it difficult for us to accept him at face value as a master of genocide. He was a fussy little man, pedantic to the point of caricature, who loved dogs, children, and family life. He railed against the timid middle class but embodied most of the middle-class virtues, especially thrift, sobriety, and a belief in hard work. Yet his devotion to the traditional virtues and his near obsession with sexual morality did not prevent him from keeping his secretary as his mistress and fathering two children by her. His taste in art, music, furniture and clothing remained within cozy bourgeois limits, while his SS men in their awesome black uniforms personified the new era of sleek political terror.

Side by side with his scientific and technical enthusiasm Himmler also had a strong leaning to the mystical and occult. Of all the Nazi leaders he most closely approximated the picture of the powerful figure surrounded by astrologers, faddists, quacks, and mystics. Even his self-image appears to have embodied a bewildering array of inconsistencies and contradictions. On the one hand he saw himself as the iron man who performed distasteful, often horrible, tasks in order to create a new racist order. On the other, he was sincerely mystified to learn in 1945 that he was not considered a suitable figure to negotiate with the Allies. His reputation as a bloody murderer seems never to have penetrated his consciousness. He was a remote-control killer who had no stomach for blood and found his deepest pleasure in playing father to his army of SS subordinates. Most perplexing of all, he showed little inventive ability and lacked any trace of the creative but murderous genius so evident in Hitler.

These anomalies and paradoxes, hovering as they do between horror and farce, have long interested journalists, political observers, and historians. Most of the early descriptions of Himmler made by non-Germans portrayed him as a bloodthirsty monster. Konrad Heiden, however, used a brief but generally accurate account of Himmler's life, published in 1944, to support his argument that most of the Nazi leaders were mediocrities.¹ And in the memoirs which

* Nor did the thought that he was not an absolutely scrupulous decent person under all circumstances.

1945

may therefore elicit indignant protest, especially among those who lived through those times. It is true that there was always dissent and even resistance: The reports on morale offer clear evidence of that. But it is also true, unfortunately, that this resistance (honorable and courageous though it was) receives an emphasis that may well be morally justified but that somewhat stretches the actual historical facts. When a German schoolbook dealt with National Socialism a few years ago under the rubric "Persecution and Resistance," that may well have been pedagogically salutary, but it did not represent the truth. On the other hand, this pessimistic view cannot and should not lead to a blanket moral condemnation of the Germans living at that time, for they were as a whole no worse and no better than the generations before and after them. But they were subjected to ordeals and to temptations that others escaped.

If one proceeds on the assumption that the Germans did not suddenly become criminals, then unusual circumstances must have led them to support the criminal that Hitler undoubtedly was. The nature of these circumstances is a significant question if we intend to go beyond superficial description to a historical analysis of the relationship of the German people to Hitler.

At the time of Hitler's rule, the vast majority of the German people were denied the kind of information that ordinarily builds the foundation of public opinion. Nothing shows this more clearly than the countless and often quite extravagant rumors that made the rounds in those days and were dutifully recorded in the reports on morale. Not infrequently those rumors had been put into circulation by Goebbels himself. The free expression of diverse opinions was replaced by a form of propaganda that twisted everything. Many fell victim to that propaganda out of sheer ignorance; those who voiced criticism publicly were persecuted by the police.

It must once again be emphasized that Hitler's rule over the

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General Patton and the Holy Lance

By 1938, says Ravenscroft, Hitler had ensured the lance and other treasures taken from Vienna were back in Nuremberg.¹ Hitler decreed that they should rest in the ancient hall of St. Katherine's Church where the lance had previously been held in the city for nearly four hundred years.²

Hitler felt that with the lance safely returned to Germany, the war could begin. However the first Allied bombing raid of Nuremberg damaged part of the church and the lance was hastily moved beneath the Nuremberg fortress to a vault specially built to hold the treasures looted by the Nazis.³ By mistake, when this vast hoard was again moved toward the end of the war to another hiding place, the lance was left behind.⁴

With the war over, U.S. soldiers who had taken command of Nuremberg came across the underground vault in which the wayward object was lying and took possession of it for their country.⁵ The date on which the lance fell into the hands of the Americans was 30 April 1945. A matter of hours later Adolf Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker.⁶ The occult symbolism of this claimed coincidence is obvious: the lance had passed on to the next claimant to world power in a line of succession that stretched back into history.

Months later the inheritance was confirmed when, with Amer-

The Czarina Is Dead

The tendency to seek signs and portents outside reality became frantic among the Nazi leaders as the end came closer.

In the early part of April (1945) . . . Goebbels sought predictions in . . . horoscopes and while American troops had already reached the foothills of the Alps, while Schleswig-Holstein was cut off and Vienna lost, out of planetary conjunctions, ascendants and transits in the quadrant, hopes once more flickered up of a great turning point in the second half of April.²⁹

By coincidence, in this period Goebbels told Count Lutz Schwerin von Krosigk, the Nazi minister for finance, that he had read to Hitler from Carlyle's History of Frederick the Great (Hitler's favorite book).³⁰ The extract details the desperate situation faced by the German king (on whom Hitler believed he modelled himself) in the winter of 1761-62, the darkest period of the Seven Years' War against Russia. All of Frederick's generals and ministers were convinced that he was finished; the enemy already looked upon Prussia as destroyed; the future appeared entirely dark. In a letter to one minister, Count d'Aregenson, Frederick gave himself a final time limit: if there was no change in the situation by 15 February he would give up and take poison. Then, on 5 February, the sign! The Czarina died! Peter III who succeeded her to the throne immediately sued for peace. Goebbels said the words had brought tears to Hitler's war-weary eyes.

All they now needed, he told von Krosigk, was a sign of their own. He went on to say that in the course of a conversation following that reading, he had sent for two horoscopes that were carefully kept in one of Himmler's research departments. One was the horoscope for the Führer, drawn up on 30 January 1933, the other was the horoscope for the Weimar Republic, dated 9 November 1918. Goebbels found that both horoscopes predicted the outbreak of war in 1939, the victories of 1941, and then the series of defeats culminating in the worst disasters in the early months of 1945, especially in the first half of April. Then there

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was to be an overwhelming victory in the second half of April, stagnation until August, and, in August, peace. After the peace there would be a difficult time for Germany for three years; but from 1948 she would rise to greatness again.³¹

King dismisses suggestions that the horoscopes may have been fake creations of Himmler's research department, or that they were drawn up with the advantage of hindsight.³²

Late at night on 12 April, after a heavy air raid on Berlin, von Krosigk and some cronies were drinking when the phone rang. "The state-secretary wished to speak to me," von Krosigk wrote. "What could he want at so late an hour. He only uttered one short sentence: Roosevelt is dead."³³ The Sign!

At the news of the death of the American president, "we felt the wings of the Angel of History rustle through the room. Could this be the long desired change of fortune?" Next morning he telephoned Goebbels to put to him that this was indeed the portent for which they had all been waiting.

Goebbels had already heard the news. He told von Krosigk that the previous evening he had stayed at General Busse's headquarters at Kuestrin (on the Eastern front) and later, sitting with the officers, had developed a thesis that a portent such as had happened to Frederick the Great was needed for reasons of "historical necessity and justice." One of the officers had skeptically and ironically asked: "What czarina will die this time?"

After driving home, where he heard the news, he had put a late call through to Busse and said, "The czarina is dead!" Goebbels had called for champagne, then made another late-night call to Hitler. "My Führer, I congratulate you!" he shouted into the telephone. "Roosevelt is dead. It is written in the stars that the second half of April will be the turning point for us. Today is Friday 13 April. It is the turning-point."³⁴

Some writers say Hitler did take the coincidence of the czarina's and president's deaths as corroboration that Providence had given him a final miraculous intervention. But any exhilaration generated as a result soon evaporated.

Naturally, Roosevelt's death did not affect the outcome of

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the war and within days Hitler had done what Frederick had been saved from doing two hundred years before—he committed suicide by taking poison, as did Goebbels. (Zwischen?)

Notes

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 243.
4. H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 95–97.
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9. Ellic Howe, *Urania's Children* (London: William Kimber, 1967), p. 239.
10. Peter Padfield, *Himmler Reichsführer-SS* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990), p. 136.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 573.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 576.
14. Felix Kersten, *The Kersten Memoirs*, cited in Michael FitzGerald, *Storm Troopers of Satan* (London: Robert Hale, 1990), pp. 169–70.
15. FitzGerald, *Storm Troopers of Satan*, p. 168.
16. Brennan, *The Occult Reich*, cited in FitzGerald, *Storm Troopers of Satan*, pp. 170–71.
17. Kersten, *The Kersten Memoirs*, cited in FitzGerald, *Storm Troopers of Satan*, p. 171.
18. Walter Langer, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler* (New York: Basic Books, 1972), pp. 31–32.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
21. See chapter 17.
22. Langer, *The Mind of Adolf Hitler*, p. 32.

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War-Lord, 1939-45

awkwardly, stooped more than ever, and his gestures were both jerky and slow. He had to have a chair pushed beneath him when he wished to sit down.' This was his state of health when he returned from the west in the middle of January, shortly after the beginning of the Russian offensive, and moved into the Reich Chancellery.

The vast pile which Hitler had built to overawe his tributaries was now surrounded by the ruins of a bombed city. Jagged holes had appeared in the Chancellery's walls; the windows were boarded up; the rich furnishings removed—except from Hitler's own quarters. During the frequent air-raids Hitler moved to the massive concrete shelter built in the Chancellery garden.

1945 Hitler rarely moved out of the Chancellery building, and in the last month lived almost entirely in the deep shelter. One of the few visits he paid was in January, shortly after his return to Berlin, when he drove out to Goebbels's home and took tea with his wife and family. It was the first visit he had paid them for five years, an indication of Goebbels's return to favour in the latter part of the war. Hitler was accompanied by a bodyguard of six S.S. officers, his adjutant and his servant, the last carrying a brief-case in which were contained the Führer's own vacuum-flask and a bag of cakes. They spent the afternoon reviving memories and discussing the plans for rebuilding Berlin. When Hitler left, Frau Goebbels expressed her satisfaction with the remark: 'He wouldn't have gone to the Görings.'

From the period between September 1942 and the beginning of 1945 only a few scattered records of Hitler's table talk have survived. But there has recently come to light the transcript of seventeen conversations (or rather, monologues), which Bormann arranged to be recorded in February 1945. Their single theme is the war and Hitler's analysis

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of the mistakes which had brought Germany to the position in which she then found herself. It was one of the few times in his life when Hitler was prepared to admit that he had made any mistakes at all, and this alone would endow these talks with interest, quite apart from the fact that whenever Hitler discussed politics—as distinct from art or religion—he never failed to show the power of his twisted mind.

Had it been wrong to go to war? No, he had been jockeyed into war: 'It was in any case unavoidable; the enemies of German National Socialism forced it upon me as long ago as January 1933.' The same was true of the attack on Russia. 'I had always maintained that we ought at all costs to avoid waging war on two fronts, and you may rest assured that I pondered long and anxiously over Napoleon and his experiences in Russia. Why, then, you may ask, this war against Russia, and why at the time I selected?'

Hitler gave several answers to this question. It was necessary to deprive Britain of her one hope of continuing the war; Russia was withholding the raw materials essential to Germany; Stalin was trying to blackmail him into concessions in Eastern Europe. But the reason to which he always returned, 'and my own personal nightmare, was the fear that Stalin might take the initiative before me. . . . If I felt compelled to settle my accounts with Bolshevism by force of arms . . . I have every right to believe that Stalin had come to the same decision even before he signed the pact [of 1939].'

'The disastrous thing about this war is the fact that for Germany it began both too soon and too late.' He needed, Hitler declared, twenty years in which to bring his new élite to maturity. But the war also came too late. From a military point of view, it would have been better to fight in 1938, not 1939. Czechoslovakia was a better issue than Poland; Britain and France would never have intervened,

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and Germany could have consolidated her position in Eastern Europe before facing world war several years later. 'At Munich we lost a unique opportunity of easily and swiftly winning a war that was in any case inevitable.' It was all Chamberlain's fault: he had already made up his mind to attack Germany, but was playing for time and by giving way all along the line robbed Hitler of the initiative.

Once the war had begun, 'I must admit that my unshakable friendship for Italy and Duce may well be held to be an error on my part.' The Italian alliance had been a disaster. Not only had the Italians lost every campaign on which they had embarked, but by stirring up the Balkans they cost Germany six vital weeks' delay in the attack on Russia. Arab contempt for the Italians and the Duce's 'ridiculous pretensions' of an Italian empire robbed Germany of her opportunity. A similar opportunity had been lost in the French empire, where it should have been German policy to rouse the Arabs and other colonial peoples to throw off the French yoke.

But the greatest mistakes, Hitler concluded, had been made by Britain and the United States. Britain ought to have seen that it was in her interests to ally with Germany, the rising continental power, in order to defend the imperial possessions which she was now certain to lose. Churchill, a 'Jew-ridden, half-American drunkard', failed to see the need to bring about a unification of Europe, in which Britain would 'still retain the chance of being able to play the part of arbiter in world affairs.'

The United States ought to have realized that she had no quarrel with the Third Reich and preserved her isolation, Hitler continued. 'This war against America is a tragedy. It is illogical and devoid of any foundation of reality.' Once again it was due to the same sinister influence, the Jewish world conspiracy against Nazi Germany. 'Well, we have lanced

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the Jewish abscess; and world of the future will be eternally grateful to us.'

Such was Hitler's reasoning as he faced the possibility of defeat. There was not even a passing thought for the millions of deaths, the untold suffering, and the destruction he had brought on Germany and Europe. If he admitted to errors of judgement, they sprang from insufficient hardness, from his own too great tolerance; and the blame for war and for defeat rested not on himself, but on others.

To this Hitler added a postscript. On 2 April, he delivered the last of his table talk monologues, in effect a political testament to the German nation. 'I have been Europe's last hope,' he had declared in February. If Germany was to suffer defeat after all, it would be utter and complete, and a tragedy for Europe as well as the German people. Then with a last burst of prophetic power he drew his picture of the future:

'With the defeat of the Reich and pending the emergence of the Asiatic, the African, and perhaps the South American nationalisms, there will remain in the world only two Great Powers capable of confronting each other—the United States and Soviet Russia. The laws of both history and geography will compel these two powers to a trial of strength, either military or in the fields of economics and ideology. These same laws make it inevitable that both Powers should become enemies of Europe. And it is equally certain that both these Powers will sooner or later find it desirable to seek the support of the sole surviving great nation in Europe, the German people.'

Those who dismiss Hitler's political gifts as negligible may well be asked how many in the spring of 1945, with the war not yet over, saw the future so clearly.

As the façade of power crumbled, Hitler reverted to his origins; there is a far closer resemblance be-

tween the early Hitler of the Vienna days and the Hitler of 1944-5 than between either and the dictator of Germany at the height of his power. The crude hatred, contempt, and resentment which were the deepest forces in his character appeared undisguised. They found expression in the increasing vulgarity of his language. It was the authentic voice of the gutter again.

The man who had made it his first principle never to trust anyone now complained bitterly that there was no one he could trust. Only Eva Braun and Blondi were faithful to him, he declared, quoting Frederick the Great's remark: 'Now I know men, I prefer dogs.'

Years before, Hermann Rauschning, describing Nazism as the St Vitus's Dance of the twentieth century, had diagnosed its essential element of nihilism. In his conversations with Hitler during the years 1932-4 he records many remarks that betray the underlying passion for destruction which was only cloaked during the period of his success.

In talking to Rauschning, Hitler frequently became intoxicated with the prospect of a revolutionary upheaval which would destroy the entire European social order. In 1934, when Rauschning asked him what would happen if Britain, France, and Russia made an alliance against Germany, Hitler replied: 'That would be the end. But even if we could not conquer them, we should drag half the world into destruction with us, and leave no one to triumph over Germany. There will not be another 1918. We shall not surrender.'

This was the stage Hitler had now reached, and he was as good as his word. Goebbels shared Hitler's mood, and Nazi propaganda in the final phase has a marked note of exultation in the climax of destruction with which the war in Europe ended. But Hitler's determination to drag Europe down with him was

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most clearly expressed in his insistence on continuing the war to the bitter end and in his demands for a 'scorched earth' policy in Germany. Speer did his best to dissuade Hitler on the grounds that the German people must still go on living even if the régime were to be overthrown. On 15 March Speer drew up a memorandum in which he set out his case. Within four to eight weeks, he wrote, Germany's final collapse was certain. A policy of destroying Germany's remaining resources in order to deny them to the enemy could not affect the result of the war. The overriding obligation of Germany's rulers, without regard to their own fate, was to ensure that the German people should be left with some possibility of reconstructing their lives in the future.

Hitler was adamant. On 19 March he issued categorical and detailed orders for the destruction of all communications, rolling-stock, lorries, bridges, dams, factories and supplies in the path of the enemy. Sending for Speer, he told him: 'If the war is to be lost, the nation also will perish. This fate is inevitable. There is no need to consider the basis even of a most primitive existence any longer. On the contrary, it is better to destroy even that, and to destroy it ourselves. The nation has proved itself weak, and the future belongs solely to the stronger eastern nation. Besides, those who remain after the battle are of little value; for the good have fallen.'

In these senseless orders to destroy everything and to shoot those who failed to comply with his directive he found some relief for the passion of frustrated anger which possessed him, and it was only thanks to the devotion of Speer that these orders were not fully carried out. But, as General Halder remarks, this mood was something more than the product of impotent rage. 'Even at the height of his power there was for him no Germany, there were no German troops for whom he felt himself responsible;

* for him there was—at first subconsciously, but in his last years fully consciously—only one greatness, a greatness which dominated his life and to which his evil genius sacrificed everything—his own Ego.

In order to keep alive the will to go on fighting, Hitler made desperate efforts to conceal the hopelessness of the situation. As soon as he came across the words: 'The war is lost,' in Speer's memorandum, he refused to read another line and locked it away in his safe.

Hitler turned for comfort to the example of Frederick the Great, who in 1757, when Prussia was invaded by half a dozen armies and all hope seemed gone, won his greatest victories and routed his foes. He kept Graff's portrait of Frederick hanging above his desk and told Guderian: 'When bad news threatens to crush my spirit I derive fresh courage from the contemplation of this picture. Look at those strong, blue eyes, that wide brow. What a head!'

His private conversation in the early hours of the morning, however, was increasingly pessimistic in tone. Before the war he had strongly condemned suicide, arguing that if only a man would hold on something would happen to justify his faith. Now he announced his conversion to Schopenhauer's view that life was not worth living if it brought only disillusionment. He was depressed by his own ill-health. 'If a man is no more than a living wreck, why prolong life? No one can halt the decay of his physical powers.'

His secretary, who had to endure many such outbursts, records that after his return to Berlin in January his conversation became entirely self-centred and was marked by the monotonous repetition of the same stories. His intellectual appetite for the discussion of such large subjects as the evolution of man, the course of world history, religion, and the future of science had gone; even his memory began to fail him. His talk was confined to anecdotes about

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Himmler was unquestioned the rapidly dwindling obvious heir to Hitler. E not undisputed. In accepting an Army Group, Himmler moving himself from the failure to halt the Russian standing with Hitler. In Third Reich it was Bormann who was the rising power quarters.

For Bormann, content and appear solely as the Führer, took care never to justify his way of life in at the same time as Hitler control over access to his powerful enough to keep Goebbels, but he soon became a permanent representative with Goebbels, took every opportunity to confide in Speer, and with Goebbels.

In the middle of these relations remained unchallenged. Speer, dare to question the continuation of the war. The intention of replacing him, but at the same time his voice in the nomination of striking testimony to Hitler; him can be imagined that

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his dog or his diet, interspersed with complaints
about the stupidity and wickedness of the world.

Yet he still maintained his hold over those who
were in daily contact with him: the sorcerer's magic
was not yet exhausted. Goebbels, Göring, Himmler,
Bormann, Ribbentrop—every one of them clung
despairingly to the hope that the man to whom they
owed everything would yet find a way out.

Himmler was unquestionably the second man in
the rapidly dwindling Nazi empire and the most
obvious heir to Hitler. But Himmler's position was
not undisputed. In accepting the active command of
an Army Group, Himmler made the mistake of re-
moving himself from the Führer's court, while his
failure to halt the Russian advance much reduced his
standing with Hitler. In the last six months of the
Third Reich it was Bormann, rather than Himmler,
who was the rising power at the Führer's Head-
quarters.

For Bormann, content to keep in the background
and appear solely as the devoted servant of the
Führer, took care never to leave Hitler's side. He ad-
justed his way of life in order to go to bed and rise
at the same time as Hitler, and he strengthened his
control over access to him. Bormann was still not
powerful enough to keep out Himmler, Speer, and
Goebbels, but he soon made sure of Himmler's per-
manent representative with Hitler, Hermann Fege-
lein, took every opportunity to undermine Hitler's
confidence in Speer, and concluded a tacit alliance
with Goebbels.

In the middle of these rivalries Hitler's own posi-
tion remained unchallenged, nor did anyone, except
Speer, dare to question the wisdom of his decision to
continue the war. The intrigues were aimed not at
replacing him, but at securing his favour and a
voice in the nomination of his successor. No more
striking testimony to Hitler's hold over those around
him can be imagined than the interest they still

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showed in the unreal question of who was to succeed him.

As day succeeded day in the isolated world of the Reich Chancellery and its garden shelter, the news grew steadily worse. Between 12 January, the day on which the Russians opened their offensive in Poland, and 12 April, the day on which the U.S. Ninth Army crossed the Elbe, the Allies inflicted a total defeat upon the German Army.

On the 13th the Russians captured Vienna, and on the 16th they broke the defence line on the Oder. The way to Berlin was open, and it was now only a question of time before the armies advancing from the west met those coming from the east and cut Germany in two.

Hitler had lost all control over events, and by April he had the greatest difficulty in discovering what was happening. The Germans went on fighting—in the east, with the courage of despair—but there was no longer any organized direction of the war. Records of the discussions of the military situation in the early months of 1945 are rambling, confused, and futile. Hours were wasted in discussion of questions of detail and local operations, interrupted by reminiscences and recriminations. Hitler's orders became wilder and more contradictory, his demands more impossible, his decisions more arbitrary. His one answer to every proposal was: No withdrawal.

Hitler had long scorned the belief that war can be waged without resort to terrorism. A succession of orders from his headquarters—such as the notorious 'Commissar' and 'Commando' orders—demanded deliberate brutality in dealing with the enemy. In February 1945 there were prolonged discussions of a proposal made by Goebbels and eagerly seized on by Hitler that the German High Command should denounce the Geneva and other international conven-

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tions, shoot all captured enemy airmen out of hand and make use of the new poison gases, Tabun and Sarin. Only with the greatest difficulty was he restrained from taking this desperate and irresponsible step.

Without bothering to investigate the facts he ordered the dismissal, degradation and even execution of officers who, after fighting against overwhelming forces, were forced to give ground. Even the Waffen S.S. was not exempt from his vicious temper. When Sepp Dietrich, once the leader of his personal body-guard and now in command of the Sixth S.S. Panzer Army, was driven back into Vienna, Hitler radioed: 'The Führer believes that the troops have not fought as the situation demanded and orders that the S.S. Divisions Adolf Hitler, Das Reich Totenkopf, and Hohenstauffen, be stripped of their arm-bands.'

When Dietrich received this he summoned his divisional commanders and, throwing the message on the table, exclaimed: 'There's your reward for all that you've done these past five years.' Rather than carry out the order, he cabled back, he would shoot himself.

Hitler still tried to buoy himself up with the belief that the new weapons, of which he never ceased to talk, would work a miracle. But gradually these hopes too faded and his continued references to them became no more than the mechanical repetition of ritual phrases. The V1s and V2s had come and gone. The Ardennes offensive had been launched and failed. The jet fighters never took the air. The U-boat fleet, reinforced by the new types on which Hitler and Dönitz had built the most extravagant expectations, put to sea but were routed.

The last hope of all was a split in the Grand Alliance, but Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin, meeting at Yalta in February, patched up their differences and contrived an agreement which, however im-

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permanent, outlasted Hitler. The demand for unconditional surrender was reaffirmed, and the Allied armies never paused in their advance.

In the middle of April the Nazi Empire which had once stretched to the Caucasus and the Atlantic was reduced to a narrow corridor in the heart of Germany little more than a hundred miles wide. Hitler had reached the end of the road.

In April Eva Braun arrived unexpectedly in Berlin and, defying Hitler's orders, announced her intention of staying with him to the end. For some time Goebbels had been urging Hitler to remain in Berlin and make an ending in the besieged city worthy of an admirer of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*. Goebbels scorned any suggestion that by leaving the capital he might allow the two million people still living there to escape the horrors of a pitched battle fought in the streets of the city. 'If a single white flag is hoisted in Berlin,' he declared, 'I shall not hesitate to have the whole street and all its inhabitants blown up. This has the full authority of the Führer.'

None the less Hitler's mind was not yet made up. Preparations were in train for the Government to leave Berlin and move to the 'National Redoubt' in the heart of the Bavarian Alps, round Berchtesgaden, the homeland of the Nazi movement, where the Führer was expected to make his last stand. Various ministries and commands had already been transferred to the Redoubt area, and the time had come when Hitler himself must follow if he was still to get through the narrow corridor left between the Russian and American armies.

Hitler's original plan was to leave for the south on 20 April, his fifty-sixth birthday, but at the conference on the 20th, following the reception and congratulations, he still hesitated. For the last time, all the Nazi hierarchs were present—Göring, Himmler, Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Bormann, Speer—together

The Emperor without

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with the chiefs of the three Services. They advised his leaving Berlin. The most Hitler would agree to, however, was the establishment of Northern and Southern Commands, in case Germany should be cut in two by the Allied advance. There and then he appointed Admiral Dönitz to assume the full responsibility in the north, but, although Kesselring was nominated for the Southern Command, Hitler left open the possibility that he might move to the south and take the direction of the war there into his own hands.

On the 21st Hitler ordered an all-out attack on the Russians besieging Berlin, and he built the most exaggerated hopes on the success which he anticipated from the operation. It was the disappointment of these hopes which led him finally to make up his mind and refuse to leave the capital.

For the attack was never launched. The withdrawal of troops to provide the forces necessary allowed the Russians to break through the city's outer defences in the north, and Hitler's plan foundered in confusion. Throughout the morning of the 22nd a series of telephone calls from the bunker failed to elicit any news of what was happening. By the time the conference met at three o'clock in the afternoon Hitler was on the verge of one of his worst outbursts.

The storm burst during the conference, which lasted for three hours and left everyone who took part in it shaken and exhausted. In a universal gesture of denunciation Hitler cursed them all for their cowardice, treachery, and incompetence. The end had come, he declared. There was nothing left but to die. He would meet his end there, in Berlin; those who wished could go to the south, but he would never move. From this resolution he was not to be swayed.

Now that he was forced to admit the fact of defeat, the man who had insisted on prolonging the war against the advice of his generals refused to take any further responsibility. All the grandiloquent talk

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of dying in Berlin cannot disguise the fact that this petulant decision was a gross dereliction of his duty to the troops still fighting under his command and an action wholly at variance with the most elementary military tradition.

The setting in which Hitler played out the last scene of all was well suited to the end of so strange a history. The Chancellery air-raid shelter, in which the events of 22 April had taken place, was buried fifty feet beneath the ground, and built in two storeys covered with a massive canopy of reinforced concrete. The lower of the storeys formed the Führerbunker. It was divided into eighteen small rooms grouped on either side of a central passageway. Half of this passage was closed by a partition and used for the daily conferences. Eva Braun had a bed-sitting-room, a bathroom, and a dressing-room; Hitler a bedroom and a study, the sole decoration in which was the portrait of Frederick the Great. A map-room used for small conferences, a telephone exchange, a power-house, and guard rooms took up most of the rest of the space, and there were two rooms for Goebbels, whom Hitler had invited to join him in the Führerbunker, and two for Stumpfegger, now Hitler's surgeon. Frau Goebbels, who insisted on remaining with her husband, together with her six children, occupied four rooms on the floor above, where the kitchen, servants' quarters and dining-hall were also to be found. Other shelters near-by housed Bormann, his staff and the various Service officers; and Mohnke, the S.S. commandant of the Chancellery, and his staff.

The physical atmosphere of the bunker was oppressive, but this was nothing compared to the pressure of the psychological atmosphere. The incessant air-raids, the knowledge that the Russians were now in the city, nervous exhaustion, fear, and despair pro-

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20.-24. April 1945

duced a tension bordering on hysteria, which was
heightened by propinquity to a man whose changes
of mood were not only unpredictable but affected the
lives of all those in the shelter.

Hitler had been living in the bunker for some time.
Such sleep as he got in the last month appears to have
been between eight and eleven o'clock in the morning.
As soon as the mid-morning air-attacks began, Hitler
got up and dressed. He had a horror of being caught
either lying down or undressed.

Much of the time was still taken up with con-
ferences. The midday or afternoon conference was
matched by a second after midnight which some-
times lasted till dawn. The evening meal was served
between 9 and 10 p.m., and Hitler liked to drag it
out in order not to be left alone during a night air-
raid. Sometimes he would receive his secretaries at
six in the morning, after a late-night conference. He
would make an effort to stand up and greet them, but
rapidly sank back exhausted on to the sofa. The early
morning meal was the one he most enjoyed, and he
would eat greedily of chocolate and cakes, playing
with Blondi and the puppies which she produced in
March. To one of these puppies Hitler gave his own
old nickname, Wolf, and brought it up without any-
one's help. He would lie with it on his lap, stroking
it and repeating its name until the meal was over
and he tried to get some sleep.

Between 20 and 24 April a considerable number of
Hitler's entourage—including Göring and Morell—
left for the south. In the last week of his life Hitler
shared the cramped accommodation of the Führer-
bunker with Eva Braun, the Goebbels and their
children, his surgeon, his valet, his S.S. adjutant, his
two remaining secretaries, his vegetarian cook, and
Goebbels's adjutant. Frequent visitors to the Führer-
bunker from the neighbouring shelters were Bor-
mann; General Krebs, who had succeeded Guderian

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as the Army's Chief of Staff; General Burgdorf, Hitler's chief military adjutant; Artur Axmann, the leader of the Hitler Youth (a thousand of whom took part in the defence of Berlin), and a crowd of aides-de-camp, adjutants, liaison officers, and S.S. guards.

On Monday 23, April, having at last come to a decision, Hitler was in a calmer frame of mind. Speer, who flew back from Hamburg to say farewell, made a full confession of the steps he had taken to thwart Hitler's orders for scorching the German earth. Hitler undoubtedly had a genuine affection for Speer, but it is surprising that he was moved, rather than incensed, by his frankness. Speer was allowed to go free, and like everyone else who saw Hitler that day he was impressed by the change in him, the serenity which he appeared to have reached after months of desperate effort to maintain his conviction, in the face of all the facts, that the war could still be won. Now that he had abandoned the attempt to flog himself and those around him into keeping up the pretence, he was resigned to facing death as a release from the difficulties which overwhelmed him. He repeated to Speer what he had told Jodl and Keitel the day before, that he would shoot himself in the bunker and have his body burned to avoid its falling into the hands of the enemy. This was stated quietly and firmly, as a matter no longer open to discussion.

While it is true, however, that Hitler never varied this decision, his moods remained as unstable as ever, anger rapidly succeeding to resignation, and in turn yielding to the brief revival of hope. This is well illustrated by the incident of Göring's dismissal.

When Göring flew to the south he left behind as his representative General Koller, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. On 23 April Koller appeared at the Obersalzberg and reported the decisions of the fateful conference in the bunker the day before. Hitler's intentions appeared to be clear enough: 'if it comes to negotiating the Reichsmarshal can do better than

* D. P. It was I who offered him serenity. On the rare

The Emperor without E

I can.' But Göring was afraid in particular of fetched from the safe then named him as the Führer cided to wireless Hitler f your decision to remain of Berlin, do you agree t total leadership of the I action at home and abroa cordance with your decreply is received by ten o for granted that you hav tion, and shall consider th as fulfilled, and shall ac our country and our people

When Göring's message not take long for Bormann to represent it as an u present, reports that Hitler cited, denouncing Göring drug addict, but adding: 'I lation all the same. It do does it.'

The addition is revealing at Göring's presumption—not easily broken—he admitted that Göring should be and he authorized his dismissal including the succession—anyway'. As Speer pointed Hitler's contempt for the tained in the off-hand way mark.

To try to make too much said or ordered in those i to misread both the extrao his state of mind. Those and who were not so infex

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General Burgdorf, Artur Axmann, the thousand of whom took and a crowd of aides-ers, and S.S. guards. g at last come to a rame of mind. Speer, say farewell, made a had taken to thwart German earth. Hitler ction for Speer, but ved, rather than in- e was allowed to go saw Hitler that day in him, the serenity hed after months of onviction, in the face ld still be won. Now empt to flog himself ing up the pretence, as a release from the him. He repeated to d Keitel the day be- lf in the bunker and its falling into the s stated quietly and en to discussion. t Hitler never varied d as unstable as ever, gnation, and in turn f hope. This is well ring's dismissal. th he left behind as er, the Chief of Staff ller appeared at the decisions of the fate- e day before. Hitler's enough: 'if it comes al can do better than

I can.' But Göring was afraid of the responsibility, afraid in particular of Bormann. He anxiously fetched from the safe the decree of June 1941 which named him as the Führer's successor, and finally decided to wireless Hitler for confirmation: 'In view of your decision to remain at your post in the fortress of Berlin, do you agree that I take over, at once, the total leadership of the Reich, with full freedom of action at home and abroad, as your deputy, in accordance with your decree of 29 June 1941? If no reply is received by ten o'clock tonight I shall take it for granted that you have lost your freedom of action, and shall consider the conditions of your decree as fulfilled, and shall act for the best interests of our country and our people. . . .'

When Göring's message reached the bunker it did not take long for Bormann, Göring's sworn enemy, to represent it as an ultimatum. Speer, who was present, reports that Hitler became unusually excited, denouncing Göring as corrupt, a failure, and a drug addict, but adding: 'He can negotiate the capitulation all the same. It does not matter anyway who does it.'

The addition is revealing. Hitler was clearly angry at Göring's presumption—the habits of tyranny are not easily broken—he agreed to Bormann's suggestion that Göring should be arrested for high treason, and he authorized his dismissal from all his offices, including the succession—yet 'it does not matter anyway'. As Speer pointed out at Nuremberg, all Hitler's contempt for the German people was contained in the off-hand way in which he made this remark.

To try to make too much sense out of what Hitler said or ordered in those final days would be wholly to misread both the extraordinary circumstances and his state of mind. Those who saw him at this time and who were not so infected by the atmosphere of

was offered
On the rare

occasions when he could use it.

G 474 April 24, 1945 War-Lord, 1939-45

the bunker as to share his mood regarded him as closer than ever to that shadowy line which divides the world of the sane from that of the insane. He spoke entirely on the impulse of the moment, and moods of comparative lucidity were interspersed with wild accusations, wilder hopes and half-crazed ramblings.

Hitler found it more difficult than ever to realize the situation outside the shelter, or to grasp that this was the end. Conferences continued until the morning of the day on which he committed suicide. On the 24th he sent an urgent summons for Colonel General Ritter von Greim, in command of Air Fleet 6, to fly from Munich to Berlin. Greim made the hazardous journey into the heart of the capital, with the help of a young woman test-pilot, Hanna Reitsch, at the cost of a severe wound in his foot. When Greim arrived it was to find that Hitler had insisted on this simply in order to inform him personally that he was promoting him to be Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe in succession to Göring, an appointment that he could perfectly well have made by telegram.

Later that night Hitler gave Hanna Reitsch a vial of poison. 'Hanna, you belong to those who will die with me. Each of us has a vial of poison such as this. I do not wish that one of us falls into the hands of the Russians alive, nor do I wish our bodies to be found by them.' At the end of a highly emotional interview Hitler reassured her: 'But, my Hanna, I still have hope. The Army of General Wenck is moving up from the south. He must and will drive the Russians back long enough to save our people. Then he will fall back to hold again.'

Hitler's resentment found expression in constant accusations of treachery, which were echoed by Goebbels and the others. Hanna Reitsch describes Eva Braun as 'raving about all the ungrateful swine who

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The Emperor without His Clothes

April 26, 1945
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had deserted their Führer and should be destroyed. It appeared that the only good Germans were those who were caught in the bunker and that all the others were traitors because they were not there to die with him.' Eva regarded her own fate with equanimity. She had no desire to survive Hitler, and spent much of her time changing her clothes and caring for her appearance in order to keep up his spirits. Her perpetual complaint was: 'Poor, poor Adolf, deserted by everyone, betrayed by all. ~~Better that ten thousand~~ others die than that he should be lost to Germany.'

On the night of the 26th the Russians began to shell the Chancellery, and the bunker shook as the massive masonry split and crashed into the courtyard and garden. The Russians were now less than a mile away.

The climax came on the night of Saturday-Sunday, 28-9 April. Between nine and ten o'clock on the Saturday evening Hitler was talking to Ritter von Greim when a message was sent to him which determined him to end at last the career which had begun twenty-seven years before, at the end of another lost war. It consisted of a brief Reuter report that Himmler had been in touch with the Swedish Count Bernadotte for the purpose of negotiating peace terms.

Since the beginning of 1945 Himmler had been secretly urged by Walter Schellenberg, the youngest of his S.S. generals, to open negotiations with the Western Powers on his own initiative, and when Count Bernadotte visited Berlin in February Schellenberg arranged for Himmler to meet him. At that stage the reluctant Reichsführer S.S., much troubled by his loyalty to Hitler, had been unwilling to commit himself. Even when Bernadotte paid a second visit to Berlin in April Himmler could not make up his mind to speak out. But reports of the dramatic

to ten million

* D.T. She was a simple woman, yes!
Ten thousand should die. Of course.
There was no man she could count on.

G 476 April 27, 1945 War-Lord, 1939-45

scene at the conference of 22 April and Hitler's declaration that the war was lost, and that he would seek death in the ruins of Berlin, made much the same impression on Himmler that it had made on Göring. Both men concluded that loyalty to Hitler was no longer inconsistent with steps to end the war, but while Göring telegraphed to Hitler for confirmation of his view, Himmler more wisely acted in secret. On the night of 23-4 April, Himmler accompanied Schellenberg to Lübeck for another meeting with Count Bernadotte at the Swedish Consulate. This time Himmler was prepared to put his cards on the table. Hitler, he told Bernadotte, was quite possibly dead; if not, he certainly would be in the next few days. 'In the situation that has now arisen,' Himmler continued, 'I consider my hands free. I admit that Germany is defeated. In order to save as great a part of Germany as possible from a Russian invasion I am willing to capitulate on the Western Front in order to enable the Western Allies to advance rapidly towards the east. But I am not prepared to capitulate on the Eastern Front.'

Bernadotte agreed to forward a proposal, although he warned the two Germans that he did not believe there was the least chance that Britain and the U.S.A. would agree to a separate peace.

On 27 April, Bernadotte returned with the news that the Western Allies insisted on unconditional surrender. This was a heavy blow, especially to Schellenberg. But worse was to follow: on the 28th the fact that Himmler had been taking part in such negotiations was reported from London and New York. Himmler was now to discover, as Göring had before him, that it was unwise to discount Hitler before he was really dead.

Hitler was beside himself at the news. Göring had at least asked permission first before beginning negotiations; Himmler, in whose loyalty he had placed unlimited faith, had said nothing. That Himmler

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The Emperor without His Clothes

ler should betray him was the bitterest blow of all, and it served to crystallize the decision to commit suicide which Hitler had threatened on the 22nd, but which he had not yet made up his mind to put into effect. This final decision followed the pattern of all the others: a period of hesitation, then a sudden resolution from which he was not to be moved. Throughout the week Hitler spoke constantly of taking his own life, and on the night of the 27th—if Hanna Reitsch's report is to be believed—he held a conference at which the plans for a mass suicide were carefully rehearsed and everyone made little speeches swearing allegiance to the Führer and Germany. But still he waited and hoped—until the night of the 28th, the night of decisions.

Shortly after he received the news of Himmler, Hitler disappeared behind closed doors with Goebbels and Bormann, the only two Nazi leaders in whom he now felt any confidence. Hitler's first thought was revenge, and Bormann had at least the satisfaction of removing Himmler as well as Göring before the Third Reich crumbled into dust.

Himmler's representative with the Führer, Fegelein, had already been arrested after it had been discovered that he had slipped quietly out of the bunker with the apparent intention of making a discreet escape before the end. The fact that he was married to Eva Braun's sister was no protection. He was taken into the courtyard of the Chancellery to be shot. Himmler was more difficult to reach, but Hitler ordered Greim and Hanna Reitsch to make an attempt to get out of Berlin by plane and entrusted them with the order to arrest Himmler at all costs.

Greim and Hanna Reitsch left between midnight and 1 a.m. on the morning of Sunday 29 April, and Hitler now turned to more personal matters. One human being at least had remained true and she should have her reward. Now that he had decided to end his life, the argument he had always used against mar-

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April and Hitler's and that he would made much the it had made on loyalty to Hitler steps to end the to Hitler for conre wisely acted in, Himmler accomanother meeting wedish Consulate. o put his cards on te, was quite possould be in the next has now arisen,' ny hands free. I n order to save as le from a Russian e on the Western tern Allies to adbut I am not preFront.'

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*riage—that it would interfere with his career—no longer carried weight. So, between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. on the 29th, Hitler married Eva Braun. The ceremony was hurriedly performed by a municipal councillor, Walter Wagner, then serving in the Volkssturm and called in by Goebbels. Both bride and bridegroom swore that they were 'of pure Aryan descent.' Goebbels and Bormann were the witnesses. Afterwards the bridal party returned to their private suite to drink champagne and talk nostalgically of the old days.

The celebration went on while Hitler retired to the adjoining room with his secretary, Frau Junge. There, in the early hours of 29 April, he dictated his will and his political testament.

Facing death and the destruction of the régime he had created, this man who had exacted the sacrifice of millions of lives rather than admit defeat was still recognizably the old Hitler. From first to last there is not a word of regret, nor a suggestion of remorse. The fault is that of others, above all that of the Jews, for even now the old hatred is unappeased. Word for word, Hitler's final address to the German nation could be taken from almost any of his early speeches of the 1920s or from the pages of *Mein Kampf*. Twenty-odd years had changed and taught him nothing.

The first part of the Political Testament consists of a general defence of his career. Hitler then turned to defend his decision to stay in Berlin and to speak of the future. 'After six years of war, which in spite of all set-backs will go down one day in history as the most glorious and valiant demonstration of a nation's life-purpose, I cannot forsake the city which is the capital of the Reich. . . .

' . . . I beg the heads of the Army, Navy, and Air Force to strengthen by all possible means the spirit of resistance of our soldiers in the National Socialist

* D.T. To spend some of the funds of his immense race on a war which would be unprofitable

The Emperor without sense, with special reference as founder and creator of the German Reich, preferred death to cowardly flight.

The second part of the provisions for the succession of Hitler's offices of State, and the measures to be taken to prevent any harm to the German people appointed Admiral Dönitz as Minister of War, and the Armed Forces—and for his Government for his reward, the first and second as Party Minister.

After naming other provisions in the last paragraph of his testament, Hitler's earliest of his obsessive leaders of the nation and his observance of the opposition to the universal Jewry.

The Testament was written on Sunday 29 April 1945. Goebbels and Bormann and Krebs, as representatives of the same time Hitler signed a personal document:

'Although I did not bear responsibility during the war, I am not retracting a marriage, I am at the end of my life, to take after many years of freedom will entered this besieged, in order to share the death with her. I beg the German people to compensate us for what we have done in the service of the German people.

'What I possess below:

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April 29, 1945
The Emperor without His Clothes

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sense, with special reference to the fact that I myself,
as founder and creator of this movement, have pre-
ferred death to cowardly abdication or even capitula-
tion.'

The second part of the Testament contains Hitler's
provisions for the succession. He began by expelling
Göring and Himmler from the Party and from all
offices of State, and accused them of causing im-
measurable harm to Germany. As his successor he
appointed Admiral Dönitz President of the Reich,
Minister of War, and Supreme Commander of the
Armed Forces—and promptly proceeded to nominate
his Government for him. Goebbels and Bormann had
their reward, the first as the new Chancellor, the
second as Party Minister.

After naming other officials to be appointed, Hitler
in the last paragraph returned once more to the
earliest of his obsessions: 'Above all I charge the
leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupu-
lous observance of the laws of race and to merciless
opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, in-
ternational Jewry.'

The Testament was signed at four o'clock in the
morning of Sunday 29 April, and witnessed by
Goebbels and Bormann for the Party, by Burgdorf
and Krebs, as representatives of the Army. At the
same time Hitler signed his will, a shorter and more
personal document:

'Although I did not consider that I could take the
responsibility during the years of struggle of con-
tracting a marriage, I have now decided, before the
end of my life, to take as my wife the woman who,
after many years of faithful friendship, of her own
free will entered this town, when it was already
besieged, in order to share my fate. At her own desire
she goes to death with me as my wife. This will
compensate us for what we have both lost through my
work in the service of my people.

'What I possess belongs—in so far as it has any

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value—to the Party, or, if this no longer exists, to the State. Should the State too be destroyed, no further decision on my part is necessary.

My pictures, in the collection which I have bought in the course of years, have never been collected for private purposes, but only for the establishment of a gallery in my home-town of Linz on the Danube.

It is my heartfelt wish that this bequest should be duly executed.

As my executor I nominate my most faithful Party comrade, Martin Bormann. He is given full legal authority to make all decisions. He is permitted to hand to my relatives anything which has a sentimental value or is necessary for the maintenance of a modest standard of life; especially for my wife's mother and my faithful fellow-workers who are well known to him. The chief of these are my former secretaries, Frau Winter, etc., who have for many years helped me by their work.

I myself and my wife choose to die in order to escape the disgrace of deposition or capitulation. It is our wish to be burned immediately in the place where I have carried out the greater part of my daily work in the course of my twelve years' service to my people.

Hitler's choice of Dönitz as his successor is surprising, and to no one did it come as more of a surprise than to Dönitz himself. Hitler, who had come to look upon the Navy with different eyes, attached the greatest importance to the U-boat campaign, and contrasted the 'National Socialist spirit' of the Navy under Dönitz with what he regarded as the treachery and disaffection of the Army and Air Force. With Göring and Himmler excluded, Goebbels was the obvious choice as Hitler's successor, but Goebbels would never have been accepted by the soldiers. To command the Armed Forces—which, in effect, meant to negotiate a surrender—someone else, preferably a serving officer, must become Head of the State and

The Emperor without I

Minister for War. Goebbels offered Hitler as Chancellor, but of the State and Supreme Commander of the Navy, Hitler offered a last delicate case on whom he laid the

Characteristically, Hitler's German people contained death was anything but a suicide he deliberately attempted and took a way out which was strongly condemned as a Political Testament are carefully speaks of his 'unity with the German people' again of fulfilling his duty which was maintained in the Dönitz, in his broadcast. The Führer had died fighting

During the 29th, while in the bunker to deliver his Political Testament, the end. The Duce, too, had a mistress; together with her he was shot by the Partisans on 28 April. Their bodies were found in the Piazzale Loreto. They confirmed Hitler in the decision of his own end. Even when dead they were put on show.

He now began to make arrangements for taking his life. He had his private quarters destroyed, and in the early morning he assembled his staff in the bunker for a farewell by shaking each other's hands. Bormann sent out a message instructing him to proceed against all traitors.

On the morning of the

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successor is sur- as more of a sur- ler, who had come rent eyes, attached boat campaign, and spirit' of the Navy ad as the treachery l Air Force. With Goebbels was the sor, but Goebbels y the soldiers. To h, in effect, meant else, preferably a l of the State and

The Emperor without His Clothes

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Minister for War. Goebbels was thus to succeed Hitler as Chancellor, but Dönitz was to become Head of the State and Supreme Commander. By choosing an officer from the Navy, rather than from the Army, Hitler offered a last deliberate insult to the military caste on whom he laid the blame for losing the war.

Characteristically, Hitler's last message to the German people contained at least one striking lie. His death was anything but a hero's end; by committing suicide he deliberately abandoned his responsibilities and took a way out which in earlier years he had strongly condemned as a coward's. The words in the Testament are carefully chosen to conceal this; he speaks of his 'unity with our soldiers unto death', and again of fulfilling his duty unto death. The fiction was maintained in the official announcement, and Dönitz, in his broadcast of 1 May, declared that the Führer had died fighting at the head of his troops.

During the 29th, while messengers were setting out from the bunker to deliver copies of the Führer's Political Testament, the news arrived of Mussolini's end. The Duce, too, had shared his fate with his mistress; together with Clara Petacci, he had been shot by the Partisans on the shore of Lake Como on 28 April. Their bodies were taken to Milan and hung in the Piazzale Loreto. The news can only have confirmed Hitler in the decision he had taken about his own end. Even when dead he was determined not to be put on show.

He now began to make systematic preparations for taking his life. He had his Alsatian bitch, Blondi, destroyed, and in the early hours of Monday 30 April assembled his staff in the passage and silently said farewell by shaking each by the hand. Shortly afterwards Bormann sent out a telegram to Dönitz, instructing him to proceed 'at once and mercilessly' against all traitors.

On the morning of the 30th Hitler was given the

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latest reports on the situation in Berlin at the usual conference. The Russians had reached the Potsdamer Platz, only a block or two away from the Chancellery. Hitler received the news without excitement, and took lunch at two o'clock in the afternoon in the company of his two secretaries and his cook. Eva Hitler remained in her room and Hitler behaved as if nothing unusual were happening.

In the course of the early afternoon Erich Kempka, Hitler's chauffeur, was ordered to send two hundred litres of petrol to the Chancellery Garden.

Meanwhile, Hitler went to fetch his wife from her room, and for the second time they said farewell to those who remained in the bunker. Hitler then returned to the Führer's suite with Eva and closed the door. A few minutes passed while those outside stood waiting in the passage. Then a single shot rang out.

After a brief pause the little group outside opened the door. Hitler was lying on the sofa, which was soaked in blood: he had shot himself through the mouth. On his right-hand side lay Eva Braun, also dead: she had swallowed poison. The time was half past three on the afternoon on Monday 30 April 1945, ten days after Hitler's sixty-sixth birthday.

Hitler's instructions for the disposal of their bodies had been explicit, and they were carried out to the letter. Hitler's own body, wrapped in a blanket, was carried out and up to the garden by two S.S. men. Eva's body was picked up by Bormann, who handed it to Kempka. They made their way up the stairs and out into the open air, accompanied by Goebbels, Günse, and Burgdorf. The doors leading into the garden had been locked and the bodies were laid in a shallow depression of sandy soil close to the porch. Picking up the five cans of petrol, one after another, Günse, Hitler's S.S. adjutant, poured the contents over the two corpses and set fire to them with a lighted rag.

A sheet of flame leapt up, and the watchers with-

The Emperor with

drew to the shelter. The bombardment was burst on the Chancellery, and for the first time then turned and dis-

The rest of the once informed De nominated him as the fact of Hitler's death. During the interval, Goebbels and Bormann negotiate with the 'unconditional surrender' sent a further death. The news was May to the solemn Bruckner's Seventh was that of a hero's Bolshevism.

An attempt at women crowded into the Chancellery was and a considerable way out of Berlin. Goebbels: whether he has never been seen them. On the evening to his children, Goebbels the Chancellery Garden by Goebbels's adjutant and the charred remains of the Russians. After Goebbels was set on fire.

In the following terms of surrender their reply was unconditional. In Italy had already Americans refused

* D.T. His most valuable possession he had eaten shit, he had skinned

out shit he had to his dog and

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The Emperor without His Clothes

April 30, 1945

drew to the shelter of the porch. A heavy Russian
bombardment was in progress and shells continually
burst on the Chancellery. Silently they stood to atten-
tion, and for the last time gave the Hitler salute;
then turned and disappeared into the shelter.

The rest of the story is briefly told. Bormann at
once informed Dönitz by radio that Hitler had
nominated him as his successor, but he concealed the
fact of Hitler's death for another twenty-four hours.
During the interval, on the night of 30 April, Goeb-
bels and Bormann made an unsuccessful effort to
negotiate with the Russians. The Russian reply was
'unconditional surrender'. Then, but only then, Goeb-
bels sent a further cable to Dönitz, reporting Hitler's
death. The news was broadcast on the evening of 1
May to the solemn setting of music from Wagner and
Bruckner's Seventh Symphony: the impression left
was that of a hero's death, fighting to the last against
Bolshevism.

An attempt at a mass escape by the men and
women crowded into the network of bunkers round
the Chancellery was made on the night of 1-2 May,
and a considerable number succeeded in making their
way out of Berlin. Among them was Martin Bor-
mann: whether he was killed at the time or got away
has never been established. Goebbels did not join
them. On the evening of 1 May, after giving poison
to his children, Goebbels shot his wife and himself in
the Chancellery Garden. The bodies were set fire to
by Goebbels's adjutant, but the job was badly done,
and the charred remains were found next day by the
Russians. After Goebbels's death the Führerbunker
was set on fire.

In the following week Dönitz attempted to nego-
tiate terms of surrender with the Western Allies, but
their reply was uncompromising. The German Army
in Italy had already capitulated and the British and
Americans refused to be drawn by Dönitz's clumsy

in Berlin and kept it in power, so that the two, and
and about twenty years after the war, he was the
with his men.

April 30, 1945

G 484 May 4, 1945

War-Lord, 1939-45

efforts to secure a separate peace and split the Grand Alliance. On 4 May Admiral von Friedeburg signed an armistice providing for the surrender of the German forces in north-west Europe, and early on the morning of the 7th General Jodl and Friedeburg put their signatures to an unconditional surrender of all the German forces presented to them jointly by the representatives of the U.S.A., Great Britain, the U.S.S.R., and France at Rheims.

The Third Reich had outlasted its founder by just one week.

Many attempts have shown the importance of Hitler's picture in *The Great* . . . ing picture of Hitler as a man of capitalism. Of nothing in himself, bition of the German creature flung to the change, or the emblem of a people . . .

These arguments show a confusion of two things. Nazism was a combination of social and economic factors—social, economic, and political. But what was the episode in European history—one—that does not show this book has been played by Hitler. I mean, strongly nationalistic, would have sprung. But so far as what not what might have to me to leave no doubt role in the Nazi re-Third Reich remote Hitler.

The conception of with which it must the tactics by which were unquestionably no rivals left and by checks on his freedom cised an arbitrary rule if ever, equalled in a

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r all. He began with few ad-
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hich he acquired for himself,
e country he aspired to rule.
Hitler needed—and possessed
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n sufficiently described in the story of the irrational factors into the weaknesses of his simplification, his sense of timidity to take risks. An opportunist, he showed both consistency and power of will in pursuing his policy of exploitation of the masses. He retained an unshaken belief in himself as a creature of

eer ended in failure, and that
ently due to his own mistakes,
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with an ugly and strident

egotism, a moral and intellectual cretinism. The passions which ruled Hitler's mind were ignoble: hatred, resentment, the lust to dominate, and, where he could not dominate, to destroy. His career did not exalt but debased the human condition, and his twelve years' dictatorship was barren of all ideas save one—the further extension of his own power and that of the nation with which he had identified himself. Even power he conceived of in the crudest terms: an endless vista of military roads, S.S. garrisons, and concentration camps to sustain the rule of the Aryan 'master race' over the degraded subject peoples of his new empire in the east.

The great revolutions of the past, whatever their ultimate fate, have been identified with the release of certain powerful ideas: individual conscience, liberty, equality, national freedom, social justice. National Socialism produced nothing. Hitler constantly exalted force over the power of ideas and delighted to prove that men were governed by cupidity, fear, and their baser passions. The sole theme of the Nazi revolution was domination, dressed up as the doctrine of race, and, failing that, a vindictive destructiveness. It is this emptiness, this lack of anything to justify the suffering he caused rather than his own monstrous and ungovernable will which makes Hitler both so repellent and so barren a figure.

The view has often been expressed that Hitler could only have come to power in Germany, and it is true—without falling into the same error of racialism as the Nazis—that there were certain features of German historical development, quite apart from the effects of the Defeat and the Depression, which favoured the rise of such a movement.

This is not to accuse the Germans of Original Sin, or to ignore the other sides of German life which were only grossly caricatured by the Nazis. But Nazism was not some terrible accident which fell upon the German people out of a blue sky. It was

* D.T. The ideal was to promote a revolution that had no religion

with the book "The Dawn of the New World"
 Epilogue 487

just came a way to understand how possible it could be!

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of justice, in consequence of equality of freedom.

—Hitler's predatory Mephistoph-
—desperate pages that mirrored
as the suspicions grew among its
n.

awled onto the cream-colored paper
rer [Lieutenant Colonel] Bernhard
t on the mountain called the Ober-

arrest the former Reichsmar-
nash all resistance.

ADOLF HITLER

1945. Russian troops had already
district. The bunker was filling with
was mingling with the mortar dust
raval by Albert Speer, the young,
oreign Minister Joachim von Rib-
ages signed by Göring himself had
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about the constricted tunnels clutch-
mann swept his desk clear of debris
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ührer's order is not executed.
Utmost caution, but act like

BORMANN

ightmare might be ending, an ordeal
h air raids, and nearly every family
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artin Bormann the entire battle had
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piring, hoping that the fat air-force
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desk to prove it.

directive, this time to Paul Giesler,

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

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

BORMANN

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

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

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

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

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

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

Goebbels
Göring
S. Irving

April 1945

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

Speer has meantime arrived here.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So Hitler was still alive! Pan to Ribbentrop, Himmler, and the messages he had sent out at midnight when telephone lines went dead. By 10:30 the villa, and at ten o'clock SS Colonel in, saluted, and announced, "The Führer is still alive!"

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

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

Twenty-four hours later, when the windows beginning to vibrate—tremor. A deafening roar swept the villa. Plates fell off shelves, a closet door heaved. "The English!" cried one.

There had been no radar warning. The villa was still cut. A hundred yards' distance into action as the four-engined generators belatedly pumped out smoke. Mountainside as thick as a San Francisco fog, fumes came shattering explosion.

His face chalk white, Göring looked around him, he shouted, "Into the bunker! Back at gunpoint."

As a second wave approached, Göring and his family fled down the 288 steps into the subterranean

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

April 1945

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hand

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Grand Admiral!

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

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

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

The fighting had all but ended. Given the Americans, bearing a laissez-faire attitude toward the "Marshal" Eisenhower and U.S. Secretary of State James B. Byrnes.

The letter to Eisenhower, verbalized by Jodl, read:

Your Excellency!

On April 23, I decided as commander in chief to contact you, Excellency, to discuss a basis for preventing further fighting. I was arrested with my family by the SS. An order for our release was issued by the captors. I was simultaneously released. The public was informed that I was an air-force commander in chief. . . . Under the decree of the law on my side. I have been in a difficult position and the appropriate circumstances and the appropriate measures to regain my liberty . . .

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

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

The accompanying letter asked Devers to act immediately. It is unlikely that Eisenhower would have acted.

Göring then sent Eisenhower a letter from Zell am See, fifty miles away, near Salzburg, claiming to be in a difficult situation.

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

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

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

"Do you speak English?" asked Stack.

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

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

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

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

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

PA
THE O

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

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

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

He destroyed south of Paschendale
men. On August 5 he downed his

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1945

29

SIGNING HIS OWN DEATH WARRANT

“At last a proper war!” exclaimed General Jeschonnek as the German armies uncoiled into Russia on June 22, 1941. The chief of air staff had good cause for satisfaction. The Luftwaffe enjoyed total technological supremacy on the eastern front. Milch's diary records 1,800 Russian warplanes destroyed on that first Sunday, 800 on Monday, 557 on Tuesday, 351 on Wednesday, and 300 on the fifth day, June 26.

Nobody expected the war to last more than a few weeks longer, and jostling for power and position had already begun. Alarmed by Bormann's elevation to the full dignity of Reich minister two weeks earlier, Göring arrived at the Wolf's Lair, the new Führer headquarters, on the twenty-eighth. He wanted reassurances from Hitler, and got them. On the next day Hitler signed a secret decree confirming Göring as his exclusive successor in the event of his own death, and as his “deputy in all offices.” This by no means eliminated the rivals. Himmler also had ambitions, but as SS Obergruppenführer Gottlob Berger, one of his principal aides, commented, Göring was still the more powerful of the two. “However,” added Berger, under interrogation in May 1945, “Himmler had a thing or two on Göring even then.” The SS chief at The Hague, Wilhelm von Rauter, had discovered, for instance, that the

Reichsmarschall was quietly bsterdam; Himmler began fillin chief, Reinhard Heydrich, also Protection Unit because of its i rency, but he trod very warily. later, “was much too clever t to keep Göring's power intact- under its gaudy, all-embracing Göring established his head Spirding in East Prussia, and p hour's drive from the Wolf's L- mobile headquarters, *Robinson* climate that summer affected Gi ups by his cardiologist, Profess Göring's diary on July 20, 22 (“stomach upset, headaches”) 24, and 25, and again in Septem would record, “heart pains, ba enough to enjoy the fruits of p daily swims, walks, horseback-r He telephoned Emmy and Edd them; but not once that summer was bored with the war. When Luftflotte 5 in Norway) came t “Enough! Now let's take a look kept nodding off.

By mid-July 1941 it was clear th soon, and had in fact underestim East, the Germans discovered th tanks and eight thousand warpl Red Army's equipment staggers “In their Lemberg [Lvov] salien two runways and still incomple tions.”

On the following day, July 16, how to consolidate Nazi rule in diary, “7:30 A.M. rose. Party c patches and swimming, was brie and Udet at midday, before settin p.m., conference with Führer: I appointed Rosenberg minister wi territories.)

Both Otto Bräutigam, Rosenber

Jan 1945

thin frozen mist drifting in
a surviving bison, stags, and
time to time at the unfamiliar
her returning warrior husband
ed in the large hall, to distribute
ler, and now Pelz were still in
en parsimonious with his wealth.
household contents of Rominten
among her bombed-out friends
Christmas person. Every Yuletide
Hermann to send money to, and
Hler packing toys and writing

of 1944 with their families like
quarters on December 25, just
ig, Göring returned to Carinhall
ing odor of self-indulgence and
end.

of the air defenses, Göring had
teral of fighters, and began to
made insulting remarks in the
phrase oddly reminiscent of his
he spoke of generals who had
Galland's following among the
" muttered one corporal after
"is perfumed like a whore. I
may have been a good fighter-
ganization and technical ability
general's stripes, and knicker-
me for Galland, but higher up
ig and the prudish Hitler. Even
receipts peculiar—Galland had
lived with several women si-
an example to his men."

Reichsmarschall. He had refused to
his eyes had been opened by
the west. Before returning to the
him to Carinhall and informed
that he was to be dismissed
and for insubordination. Until a
on leave.

He back to Berlin. His dismissal
with Göring's most spectacular
Luftwaffe's mass attack on the

Allied air forces. Speculating on the chance of catching the enemy aviators with their pants down, Göring had authorized a swoop on their airbases in the Low Countries at first light on New Year's Day 1945. Reconnaissance planes had brought back tempting photographs of their quarry—for example, of 149 P-47 fighters and 8 heavy bombers neatly parked at Saint Trond in Belgium, literally begging to be attacked. Göring brought in every available pilot, including instructors, pupils, and even veteran Geschwader commanders like Major Michalski, who would personally lead the fifty-five Me 109-G14's and FW 190-A8's of his Jagdgeschwader 4, and Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Ihlefeld of JG1.

Again the code-breakers did not realize what Göring was up to—even though at 6:30 P.M. on New Year's Eve his 3rd Fighter Division had been heard forecasting fine weather at zero hour and at 11:30 P.M. instructing the four Geschwader of fighter planes, "Zero hour for Hermann 0820 hrs."

At 9:15 A.M.—with zero hour delayed an hour by ground fog—Bodenplatte began, with the hundreds of FW 190's and Me 109's suddenly screaming across the Allied lines, firing rockets and cannon, and bombing every targeted airfield simultaneously. It was a more spectacular triumph than Poltava. The devastation caused, particularly to the British-occupied airfields in Belgium, was colossal though never officially admitted at the time. Göring claimed to have used twenty-three hundred planes, which may well have been true. Photographic reconnaissance planes brought back pictures of nine of the many airfields targeted, showing on these alone 389 Allied warplanes definitely destroyed and 117 damaged. But as the day wore on, it became clear that his own fighters had taken an unexpected hammering. "What we did not allow for," said Göring later, not without a degree of perverse pride, "was the intense concentration of [Allied] anti-aircraft guns set up against our V-1 [flying bombs]." Probably two-thirds of his own losses of about 227 planes were caused by his own trigger-happy flak gunners. (The German naval flak in Holland alone admitted having shot down twenty German fighter planes.) Both Göring and Koller defended the operation at Hitler's main conference, commenting that at least it had given his fighter crews a chance to take off. But Hitler forbade any repetition—he wanted the air battles to be in German skies, where his revenge-hungry public could see them.

Göring attended every conference at the Eagle's Nest until January 10, but they were increasingly joyless occasions. As Hitler's Ardennes gamble faltered and finally failed, his attitude toward Göring congealed to ice. With evident malice Martin Bormann wrote in his diary on the fifth, "Reichsmarschall summoned to the Führer on account of the air-war situation." Attending these conferences, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt noticed that Hitler allowed him to sit, but always obliged the Reichsmarschall to stand.

"Things got so crazy," confessed Göring to American historian Shuster, "that I said to myself: Let's hope it's all over quickly so I can get out of this lunatic asylum." He barricaded himself in his special train, read cheap

detective novels—sometimes devouring the same pulp book three times over—and smoked his favorite cigars, very slowly. "Three quarters of my shattered nerves are due—not to the war," he shouted to Bodenschatz, deaf ever since the bomb blast, "but to the Führer! I've been under massive attack for a whole year now." On January 11, having served his penance long enough, he fled the Eagle's Nest and returned to the uxorious comforts of Carinhall.

Indignant at the Bodenplatte casualties, and egged on by Koller and Greim, three fighter aces formed a deputation, with Oak Leaves-holder Günther Lützow at their head, to protest to the Reichsmarschall his exclusion of Galland. Göring listened soberly, then summoned all the Geschwader commanders to the sumptuous Aviators' Building in Berlin. Lützow again headed the deputation; he had tabulated their complaints, which included the undue influence of former bomber commanders like Pelz and Hermann, the misuse of the Me 262, the Reichsmarschall's slurs on his fighter pilots, and his humiliation of Galland. Göring, his knuckles turning white with anger, shouted that this was a "mutiny without parallel in history," and threatened them all with the firing squad. Two days later he pronounced the banishment of Lützow to Italy; Galland was placed under house arrest, forbidden to return to Berlin.

Göring spent his last wartime birthday skulking at Carinhall, surrounded by his camarilla, and entertaining at luncheon the few remaining Axis attachés still accredited to Berlin. The Japanese attaché's report to Tokyo portrays a Göring in a chastened, introspective mood, candidly admitting that he himself had believed that for large enemy bomber formations to operate over Germany for any length of time was "a complete impossibility."

Without appreciating it yet, however, he was already regaining air supremacy for Germany. A week earlier, on January 5, 1945, the U.S. Air Force generals Carl F. Spaatz and Jimmy Doolittle had frankly warned Eisenhower that they were going to have to attack the jet-fighter production very soon. They estimated that ten thousand tons of well-aimed bombs might set the Me 262 back by three months. Eisenhower agreed, and on this very day, January 12, Spaatz issued a new directive establishing the German jet aircraft as the "principal objective for attack." If Hitler could prolong the war beyond the summer, Spaatz warned, he would have "jets of such superior performance and such numbers as to challenge our aerial supremacy over not only Germany but all of Western Europe."

The Soviet winter offensive that began that same day was going to be hard to stop. To halt the masses of tanks and infantry, Göring transferred twenty squadrons of single-engined fighters from the Reich defenses. Hitler left the Eagle's Nest and returned to Berlin. Göring showed his face only briefly in the Chancellery, then hurried back to Carinhall. As the Russian tank columns plowed on, literally flattening the refugee columns into the bloodstained

Jan 1945

ZERO HC

snows, Göring found something announced a string of death snafus bolting under enemy mortar fire on plain clothes and hiding with him. He ordered the Luftwaffe's Göring to the Balkans, as Göring announced "extraordinary quantities of Breslau: forty-one thousand cigarettes, and sixty kilograms of opium there." "From one private hour of Göring's announcement continued two vases."

Over the next days it seemed before Berlin. At night he heard the rumble of the tank engines. "There's nothing left between us and the West Wall and the V-2s possible—but not now." "People heard him exclaim, 'that we've'

Hitler, however, believed that would change the whole picture and so did Grand Admiral Dönitz agreed to give Galland's vacation don't know him myself," said I of him.") That Göring was not the cold language of his Reich's new man to the Luftwaffe, the organization nor the man, regaining mastery of Germany's

Under house arrest in the H of the increasingly influential Goebbels him—on his private use of Luftwaffe. Galland lost his nerve as about his alleged defeatism and like Udet and Jeschonnek. Action and Speer forced the Gestapo into a suicide scandal. Milch threatened Göring. "Just one percent of it von Below, 'will suffice to bring'

The solution that Göring here an uncharacteristically neat one Carinhall, ordered him to form jets, and to take the other "mutiny" given the crushing American day

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snows, Göring found something of his old ruthlessness. On January 16, he announced a string of death sentences against junior officers and NCOs: for bolting under enemy mortar fire, for abandoning a flak battery, for putting on plain clothes and hiding with the French, for swapping gasoline for liquor. He ordered the Luftwaffe's General Waber shot for using military trucks in the Balkans, as Göring announced with well-simulated indignation, to transport "extraordinary quantities" of consumer goods back to Bavaria and Breslau: forty-one thousand cigarettes, a thousand bottles of champagne and spirits, and sixty kilograms of coffee had been found in Waber's houses there. "From one private house in Serbia he stole valuable works of art," Göring's announcement continued, itemizing: "A watercolor, a carpet, and two vases."

Over the next days it seemed that nothing would halt the Soviet invasion before Berlin. At night he heard the windows rattling to the gunfire and rumble of the tank engines. "Emmy," he said, padding into her bedroom, "there's nothing left between us and the Russians." Had the Nazis held on to the West Wall and the Vistula line, a compromise might have been possible—but not now. "People still won't see," his personal detectives heard him exclaim, "that we've lost the war!"

Hitler, however, believed that after the summer the new jets and U-boats would change the whole picture. Bormann and other fanatics backed him, and so did Grand Admiral Dönitz and Himmler. Göring now reluctantly agreed to give Galland's vacant office to Colonel Gordon Mac Gollob. ("I don't know him myself," said Hitler, "but the Reichsführer SS speaks highly of him.") That Göring was not behind Gollob's appointment was plain from the cold language of his Reichsmarschall Order of January 23, commending the new man to the Luftwaffe. "What matters," he suggested, "is neither the organization nor the man, only the aim that is common to us all—regaining mastery of Germany's air space."

Under house arrest in the Harz Mountains General Galland learned that the increasingly influential Colonel Gollob was building up a dossier on him—on his private use of Luftwaffe cars, his gambling, and his philandering. Galland lost his nerve as his private staff were called in for questioning about his alleged defeatism and disloyalty, and he talked of shooting himself like Udet and Jeschonnek. Acting through Hitler's adjutant von Below, Milch and Speer forced the Gestapo to drop the witch hunt to avoid yet another suicide scandal. Milch threatened to reveal to the Führer what he knew against Göring. "Just one percent of it," the stocky field marshal assured Colonel von Below, "will suffice to bring him a court-martial!"

The solution that Göring hereupon devised for the Galland problem was an uncharacteristically neat one: He summoned the general once more to Carinhall, ordered him to form an elite fighter squadron using only Me 262 jets, and to take the other "mutineers" like Steinhoff with him. In effect, given the crushing American daylight-fighter supremacy, Göring was making

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appointment to command this was entered in the Luftwaffe

Shortly these ancient, blood-land. Asked by Hitler on January American airmen held at the Sagan advancing Soviet Army, Göring resight and pointed out, "They'll tested loading the prisoners aboard and boots so they can't escape

led Hitler, approvingly. ing westward before the Russians waterway. The River Oder, last over. Some enemy tanks did get the Russian monster clanked past all the women and children to ed in the foggy, frosty courtyard. Emmy arranged for her friends to carried them down to Bavaria as all day long until she picked up rived safely at the villa—still a nts.

in at this time. Heinrich Müller, Göring's arrest for still more anti-linner in Bucharest with the am- to "sit down with a murderer" er Walther von Rathenau). More ennese Jews who had emigrated Jews," the Reichsmarschall had own affair. But be more careful "Now he had to lean on the time I can help you," he told

vinegary flavor. As one ancient Göring's defeat, the British heard secracking to his comrades that e the big chain store—"one in d destruction. The Reich capital raids, was still alive and func- e Chancellery's bunker—a sub-

terranean labyrinth of tunnels and cramped cells, lavishly carpeted and walled with priceless paintings rescued from above-ground galleries.

Here, on February 2, 1945, he ordered Göring to move 123 heavy flak batteries from the cities into an antitank line along the frozen Oder: Holding the Russians here was more vital now than defending the ruins of ancient cities.

The next morning nine hundred American bombers launched a "terror raid" on Berlin. Huge new holes gaped in the Chancellery's façade. "During this morning's heavy raid on Berlin," recorded the Luftwaffe war diary, "the Reichsmarschall asks the chief of operations [General Christian] why not one of our own fighters was scrambled." The answer was that every available fighter was out counterattacking the Russians on the Oder. Göring decided to go out there too. With Emmy and the child gone, something of the old soldier stirred in his blood. After a hot bath and breakfast he now took to driving the sixty miles out to the front line and speaking with Skorzeny and the other officers defending the Frankfurt-on-Oder bridgehead. To this huntsman and forest spirit, the freezing plains were a welcome relief from the fetid, airless atmosphere of Hitler's bunker. ("He [Hitler] would scream about the uselessness of the Luftwaffe with such contempt and viciousness," recalled Göring later, "that I actually went red and squirmed. I preferred to go to the front to avoid these scenes.") Once, or so he would later claim, his car came under fire; and another time, sensing himself outflanked in the darkness by Russian tanks, Göring palmed a lethal cyanide capsule that Philipp Bouhler had obtained for him. The press ignored Göring's front-line visits, while those made by Admiral Dönitz were widely acclaimed. Hitler sneered at what he called Göring's "ridiculous excursions." "He ordered me to attend his war conferences," recalled Göring, "as though to say, 'Stand there and take it, damn you!'"

By February 6, his air force had emplaced 327 heavy flak batteries along the eastern front. Evidently none too sanguine about the battle's outcome, on the seventh the Reichsmarschall quietly called in Walter Hofer and chief architect Hetzelt to discuss evacuating the Carinhall treasures to Veldenstein—where to distribute the various items around the structure of this Franconian castle, and what modifications would be necessary to house the sculptures, paintings, tapestries, and furniture in its towers, tunnels, keeps, and stables.

The Russians launched a dangerous attack from their bridgehead at Steinau on the Oder. That day, February 8, Göring was—briefly—glimpsed down in Hitler's bunker with Field Marshal von Richthofen, now retired and terminally ill. That day too the American bombers were wrecking his synthetic-oil plant at Pölitz. With stocks of only six thousand tons of aviation fuel left, the air force would get only four hundred more tons in February. Inevitably, flying operations virtually halted.

* all the mix of a love-affair in which hatred was becoming more and more pronounced

Each time the Reichsmarschall eased his bulk into Hitler's bunker wearing the familiar uniform of soft, pearl-gray cloth, the diehard Nazis swooned with rage. Goebbels protested to Hitler. "Medal-jangling asses and vain, perfumed dandies don't belong in the high command," he wrote. "They must be eliminated."

Hitler agreed. "I am glad," he remarked, "that his wife at least has moved down to the Obersalzberg. She was the rotten influence on him."

Göring gloomily wrote his last will and testament on February 12, and drove in to Berlin for the afternoon conference. A thaw was breaking up the ice along the Oder, so the immediate danger there was lessening. But his fighter defenses were virtually immobilized by the lack of fuel.

Late on the thirteenth, radar reported enemy bombers penetrating deep into Germany behind a screen of electronic jamming. The night's real target was Dresden, Germany's "Florence of the Elbe."

One of Europe's most beautiful historic cities, Dresden had no air-raid shelters, and its streets were crowded with a million refugees from the east when the first three hundred RAF heavy bombers unloaded their fire bombs at 10:15 P.M. Three hours later, with the city's heart already a raging inferno visible 200 miles away, 529 more Lancaster bombers completed the destruction. Dresden, reported the Luftwaffe war diary, was "critically damaged, its inner city virtually destroyed, with immense casualties." On the following midday, the record book continued, twelve hundred American bombers attacked with "grave terror effect." Dresden had been engulfed during the night by a fire storm. The horrific scenes were without parallel in history—far worse than in Hamburg, Kassel, or Berlin. All telegraph lines were down, and British code-breakers heard Heinrich Himmler radioing to SS Obergruppenführer Ludolf von Alvensleben, the Dresden police chief, a message that showed how little Berlin was aware of the true horror. "I have received your report. The attacks were obviously very severe, yet every first air raid always gives the impression that the town has been completely destroyed. Take all necessary steps at once. . . . All the best." Göring, sensing disaster, sent Bodenschatz to report. The general returned to Carinhall ashen-faced, with word that fifty-one thousand dead had already been counted in Dresden. The death toll of that night's massacre would rise to over one hundred thousand.

As troops began to cremate Dresden's air-raid victims on makeshift pyres, five hundred at a time, Hitler swore revenge. His scientists had perfected the nerve gases *tarin* and *sabun*, which would have penetrated any Allied gas mask. Hitherto he had forbidden their use, as violating the Geneva Convention. Now he pondered whether it was not time to fight dirty too. Goebbels cackled approval, but Göring, Ribbentrop, and Dönitz were united in opposing any such late departure from the conventions and rules of war.

For Göring the setbacks now came thick and fast. One February morning French men and women agents were loaded aboard one of the Luftwaffe's

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ZERO H

two remaining captured B-17 Echtingen Airbase. Two colored Flying Fortress with entire economy. At ten-thirty orders from the Reichsmarschall tiny swastika barely visible on exploded. "One of those idiots who witnessed the drama . . . crawling with generals. . . . From the Führer for that one!"

Bad luck completed the disaster, the Luftwaffe lost its only cargo and nine agents behind fighter shot it down, mistaking it. On the day after this incident the Reichsmarschall. Hitler had to reply to his successor. He also refused to be *Staatssekretär*—"He'd freeze!" said. "The Reichsmarschall said."

Listening to the guns along the Rhine might stand down and allow a negotiated peace. He had but he cautiously ventilated his Great. "Hitler admonished his Goebbels on the eleventh that he called "a new atmosphere!" "he'd do better to occupy him air." He could see the Reich's retort. "I just couldn't take it later. "I finally worked myself

Hitler instructed him to lay out Day. This was probably how he was a figurehead once more, while Himmler's ruthless engineer chief over the Me 262 deliveries to the

On March 13, 1945, Göring sent a second cargo of art treasures, sculpture, and 50 tapestries. He sent paintings and eleven crates of c to the party Chancellery for se to Berlin late on the fourteenth. It to notify his staff in Bavaria, v

March 1945

bulk into Hitler's bunker wearing
cloth, the diehard Nazis swooned
"Medal-jangling asses and vain,
high command," he wrote. "They

ed, "that his wife at least has moved
written influence on him."

and testament on February 12, and
erence. A thaw was breaking up the
langer there was lessening. But his
zed by the lack of fuel.

Enemy bombers penetrating deep
nic jamming. The night's real target
he Elbe."

ric cities, Dresden had no air-raid
th a million refugees from the east
bombers unloaded their fire bombs
city's heart already a raging inferno
er bombers completed the destruc-
lar diary, was "critically damaged,
tense casualties." On the following

Five hundred American bombers at-
den had been engulfed during the
were without parallel in history—

erlin. All telegraph lines were down,
h Himmler radioing to SS Ober-

the Dresden police chief, a message
of the true horror. "I have received

very severe, yet every first air raid
en has been completely destroyed.

the best." Göring, sensing disaster,
returned to Carinhall ashen-faced,

ad already been counted in Dresden.
e would rise to over one hundred

air-raid victims on makeshift pyres,
venge. His scientists had perfected

would have penetrated any Allied
their use, as violating the Geneva

it was not time to fight dirty too.
Ribbentrop, and Dönitz were united

the conventions and rules of war.
ck and fast. One February morning

aded aboard one of the Luftwaffe's

two remaining captured B-17's in the high-security enclosure of Stuttgart's
Echterdingen Airbase. Two billion French francs were stowed in the khaki-
colored Flying Fortress with them. Their mission—the sabotage of France's
entire economy. At ten-thirty all other flying operations were halted—"on
orders from the Reichsmarschall"—while the plane took off, its obligatory
tiny swastika barely visible on its tailplane. At three hundred feet the plane
exploded. "One of those idiot bitches blew herself up," said a Heinkel pilot
who witnessed the drama. "Eighteen dead! The next day the place was
crawling with generals. . . . Hermann was furious. He got one hell of a cigar
from the Führer for that one!"

Bad luck completed the disaster that poor security had begun. On March
2, the Luftwaffe lost its only other B-17: The plane had managed to set down
its cargo and nine agents behind Allied lines. As it returned, an Allied night
fighter shot it down, mistaking it for a German FW 200.

On the day after this incident Goebbels urged Hitler to replace the Reichs-
marschall. Hitler had to reply that the air force had not produced one suitable
successor. He also refused to force Göring to appoint an efficient
Staatssekretär—"He'd freeze him out the moment he was appointed," Hitler
said. "The Reichsmarschall can't abide strong personalities around him!"

Listening to the guns along the Oder, Göring dreamed that even now Hitler
might stand down and allow him, the Reichsmarschall, to steer Germany
into a negotiated peace. He admitted to Görnert that this seemed unlikely,
but he cautiously ventilated the subject of a deal to Hitler. "Frederick the
Great," Hitler admonished him, "never struck bargains." He related to
Goebbels on the eleventh that Göring had recommended they generate what
he called "a new atmosphere" toward the enemy. "I told him," said Hitler,
"he'd do better to occupy himself with generating a new atmosphere in the
air." He could see the Reichsmarschall was completely shattered by his
retort. "I just couldn't take it any longer," admitted Göring four months
later. "I finally worked myself up into a state of nerves."

Hitler instructed him to lay the wreath at that year's Heroes Memorial
Day. This was probably how he planned to employ Göring in the future—
as a figurehead once more, while real men ran the war in the air. He engaged
Himmler's ruthless engineer chief, SS Gruppenführer Hans Kammler, to take
over the Me 262 deliveries to the squadrons.

On March 13, 1945, Göring sent his train to southern Germany loaded with
a second cargo of art treasures from Carinhall—739 paintings, 60 pieces of
sculpture, and 50 tapestries. He also turned over the seventeen priceless
paintings and eleven crates of other relics "rescued from Monte Cassino"
to the party Chancellery for separate shipment south, in a truck that left
Berlin late on the fourteenth. It was loaded, as Martin Bormann was careful
to notify his staff in Bavaria, with "the most valuable paintings from the

Reichsmarschall," and arrived at its destination, a disused mineshaft at Alt Aussee in Austria, two days later.

Göring now remained at Carinhall, although the walls were bare and the bookshelves empty. He descended into Hitler's bunker only infrequently. On March 18, a thousand American bombers again blasted Berlin, escorted by seven hundred fighter planes. Galland sent twenty-eight of his Me 262's into action against them. Hitler had now ordered every captured bomber aviator turned over to the Gestapo for liquidation. "Listen," shouted Göring to his chief of air staff, "has that man gone stark raving mad?"

Not caring what impression he made, Göring wheedled out of his Führer permission to travel down to Berchtesgaden briefly to "inspect the flak." More probably he wanted to check that his trainload of art had arrived safely at Veldenstein. He was living in a deranged world of his own. Hearing of the starvation among the refugees, he ordered one of his rare Schorf Heath bison shot and the carcass distributed to them. Choking upon a newspaper report of this, Goebbels recalled Marie Antoinette and her haughty advice to her own paupered subjects. His field offices reported an "unbridled hatred" of the Reichsmarschall—"Not a trace remains," rejoiced Goebbels, "of his former popularity."

In Göring's absence there emerged a crippling indecisiveness about certain secret Luftwaffe projects. Back in February, acting on the advice of Speer and Baumbach, Hitler had agreed to go ahead with Project Mistletoe, which the air force had long been planning: 120 piggy-backed planes—Ju 88's coupled with Me 109's—were standing by in East Prussia to bomb the principal Soviet power stations at last. Göring too approved, and the fuel was set aside. But in mid-March Hitler decided to hurl these planes at the bridges across the Oder and Neisse rivers the moment the major Russian offensive began. Then he changed his mind—he would use twenty-six of them against the bridges across the Vistula, in the Russians' rear. General Koller objected that the project had originally been designed to wipe out Stalin's power supplies, and that the remaining Mistletoes would not suffice for this project. Hitler hesitated, and was lost—torn between the immediate tactical needs of battle and his long-term strategic objectives: between inevitable defeat, and possible ultimate victory. "Imagine," he told Koller on March 26, "if the enemy had bombed all our power stations simultaneously! I'll forego the Vistula bridges—we can deal with them later."

"Ribbentrop," Hitler told his foreign minister, who was also anxious to end the war by diplomacy, "we're going to win this one by a nose." He mentioned the jet planes—in March 1945 Himmler's underground factory at Nordhausen would in fact assemble five hundred Me 262's and in April twice as many. The first Type XXI submarines were about to enter service—capable of cruising to Japan underwater and at high speed. By late 1945 bombproof underground refineries would be turning out three hundred thousand tons of synthetic gasoline per month. "If only," he remarked to Goeb-

* He believes that the closer the enemy comes, the more tired they will be and the more determined his people will

bel on March 21, "Göring h And he added bitterly, "He's j two trains, to see his wife."

Göring returned to Berlin k civil servant Hans Lammers March 27, he found the Führer tempting to start negotiations wi hints to Görnert, who stayed thinking of contacting the Ame was sure that the Americans kne airmen parachuted into the Scl brought to Carinhall. Perhaps h links to the Americans. But h Hollywood, and Göring lost in

General Koller's diary establi bloodshed now that Germany a thing," Koller complained to C tives from top level."

The Reichsmarschall agree tells him nothing, won't instance, a British diplom Sweden, but this was flatl F. has prohibited Reicli contacts. . . . F. has also minister has reported to hi

Hitler ordered Göring to attend dealt preferentially with SS G Goebbels on April 3, "has to lis the slightest excuse."

Under pressure from every si Luftwaffe suicide missions. Vol remaining Me 109's into Allied b had already intercepted the me: commodores to read out secretly

The fateful struggle for the is at its climax. Virtually t and is resolved to destroy u us. With our last and utmo menacing onslaught. Now German fatherland we are t

March 1 45

March 1945

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bels on March 21, "Göring had done more to rush the jets into service!" And he added bitterly, "He's just gone down to the Obersalzberg again with two trains, to see his wife."

Göring returned to Berlin keener on peacemaking than ever. When top civil servant Hans Lammers visited the Chancellery for the last time on March 27, he found the Führer very upset about the Reichsmarschall "at-tempting to start negotiations with the Allies." Emmy Göring certainly dropped hints to Gömmert, who stayed behind with the train, that her husband was thinking of contacting the Americans, and Göring confided to Speer that he was sure that the Americans knew he was on their side. One day five American airmen parachuted into the Schorf Heath, and Göring ordered their captain brought to Carinhall. Perhaps he was thinking ahead, to ways of establishing links to the Americans. But this officer had only been a movie director in Hollywood, and Göring lost interest in him.

General Koller's diary establishes how concerned Göring was to end the bloodshed now that Germany appeared to have lost. "Nobody tells us any-thing," Koller complained to Göring on March 28. "We badly need direc-tives from top level."

The Reichsmarschall agreed. He too is in the dark. F. [Führer] tells him nothing, won't permit the slightest political step. For instance, a British diplomat tried to enter into talks with us in Sweden, but this was flatly forbidden by Hitler.

F. has prohibited Reichsmarschall to use his own extensive contacts. . . . F. has also rejected every opening that the foreign minister has reported to him.

Hitler ordered Göring to attend every war conference at 4:00 P.M., but he dealt preferentially with SS Gruppenführer Kammler. "Göring," wrote Goebbels on April 3, "has to listen day after day without being able to offer the slightest excuse."

Under pressure from every side, Göring made the decision to authorize Luftwaffe suicide missions. Volunteer pilots would ram the Luftwaffe's few remaining Me 109's into Allied bombers. In mid-March British code-breakers had already intercepted the message that Göring ordered all Geschwader commodores to read out secretly to pilots who had completed fighter training:

The fateful struggle for the Reich, our people, and our native soil is at its climax. Virtually the whole world is fighting against us and is resolved to destroy us and, in blind hatred, to exterminate us. With our last and utmost strength we are standing up to this menacing onslaught. Now as never before in the history of the German fatherland we are threatened with final annihilation from

which there can be no revival. This danger can be arrested only by the utmost preparedness of the supreme German warrior spirit.

Therefore, I turn to you at this decisive moment. By consciously staking your own lives, save the nation from extinction! *I summon you for an operation from which you will have only the slenderest chance of returning.* Those of you who respond will be sent back at once for pilot training. Comrades, you will take the place of honor beside your most glorious Luftwaffe warriors. In the hour of supreme danger, you will give the whole German people hope of victory, and set an example for all time. GÖRING.

The first mission, code-named *Werewolf*, ran into pragmatic objections. General Koller pointed out that if the Me 109's were used up on this, all reconnaissance and conventional-fighter operations would collapse until Focke-Wulf's new Ta 152 and the Me 262 became available in large numbers. But Hitler gave the go-ahead. Several hundred volunteers were given ten days of ideological training at Stendal, and on April 4, General Pelz, whose IX Air Corps would control the mission, reported all ready for *Werewolf*. "For psychological reasons," Pelz told the Luftwaffe high command, "we should not delay too long with the actual operation." Three days later *Werewolf* was executed—one of the most desperate Luftwaffe operations of the war. The Luftwaffe war diary confirms that 180 suicide crews took part, escorted into battle by their less-exalted comrades from JG7 and the first squadron of KG54(J). Astonished Allied radio monitors heard patriotic marches flooding the fighter-control wavelength and a female choir singing the German national anthem, while anonymous voices exhorted these 180 pilots to die—now—for the Führer and for Germany. Seventy of them did.

Such was the heroism of which Göring's young airmen were capable even on the threshold of national defeat. But there were also acts of a different hue. On March 30, Messerschmitt ferry-pilot Henry Fay picked up a brand new Me 262 jet to fly to Neuburg Airbase on the Danube. He deserted to the Americans and handed the top-secret plane over in return for a promise of immediate release to his mother. Fay also revealed to the Americans where the Me 262 and its fuel were manufactured, and described its most vulnerable points. "Aim for the engines," he recommended, "as they catch fire easily."

At 5:00 A.M. on April 16, 1945, the final Soviet push across the Oder began. Sixty more suicide pilots crash-bombed their planes onto the Oder bridges in a desperate attempt to save Berlin.

But the decay of defeat had already reached the highest levels in the capital. Learning that even Speer had disobeyed orders to destroy bridges within Berlin, Hitler challenged him to say whether he still believed in victory.

"I cannot say that I do," the minister replied. But he agreed without enthusiasm that he still *wished* that the war could be won.

March 1945

ZERO HO

"I thank you for saying the say only this"—and Göring, with his brow—"We must hold on Donner and Blitzen! I know we

Göring intended to come through leaving one thousand air-force lition charges laced the beautiful evacuate were being buried by and their position marked on a dame de Pompadour," and the fountain and two Cladion caryati

On April 19, he signed letters half a million marks to his pers und Wechsel Bank in Berchtesg account that he had opened in arrived there with Carin in 192

As midnight approached, he bunker and waited to go in, to returns hardly seemed appropriate to serve the Reich better at a di

Hitler merely nodded toward Göring took that as yes, but that he would expect the Reichs

It was not a restful night, wh next morning Göring plodded o by the lake, to say farewell to Ca salvation. As he eased his bulk, he could hear the rippling sound eastern outskirts of Berlin. He cold granite tomb where once h

He drove along the deserted a Ramon von Ondarza with him. senior officers standing shoulde table. Hitler announced that he w Dönitz would command in the n as he himself arrived from Berl trembled violently.

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Göring lingered behind. "Me have no objection to my leaving

April 1945

anger can be arrested only
 extreme German warrior spirit.
 ive moment. By consciously
 and from extinction! *I summon*
will have only the slenderest
 who respond will be sent back
 you will take the place of
 Luftwaffe warriors. In the hour
 the whole German people hope
 all time. GÖRING.

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"I thank you for saying the best you could," replied Hitler. "But I can say only this"—and Göring, watching, saw the perspiration standing out on his brow—"We must hold on until the last hour! No matter how much Donner and Blitzen! I know we shall come through."

Göring intended to come through. He was packed and ready to go. He was leaving one thousand air-force troops to guard his Carinhall estate. Demolition charges laced the beautiful structure. The art treasures too bulky to evacuate were being buried by troops of the Hermann Göring Panzer Corps and their position marked on a map—Houdon's "Bather," Pigalle's "Madame de Pompadour," and the famous Venus given to him by Italy. A costly fountain and two Cladion caryatids were carried out into the heath and hidden.

On April 19, he signed letters directing the August-Thyssen Bank to cable half a million marks to his personal account at the Bayerische Hypotheken und Wechsel Bank in Berchtesgaden, and closing out the old Deutsche Bank account that he had opened in Berlin's Schöneberg suburb when he first arrived there with Carin in 1928.

As midnight approached, he stationed his portly person outside Hitler's bunker and waited to go in, to present his birthday wishes. Many happy returns hardly seemed appropriate—he inquired whether he might be able to serve the Reich better at a distance from Berlin, Berchtesgaden perhaps?

Hitler merely nodded toward the door.

Göring took that as yes, but to his dismay Hitler phoned soon after to say that he would expect the Reichsmarschall at the midday conference as usual.

It was not a restful night, what with the Russian troops so close by. The next morning Göring plodded off through the pine woods to the mausoleum by the lake, to say farewell to Carin—the wife to whom he owed his personal salvation. As he eased his bulk down the narrow, moss-covered stone steps, he could hear the rippling sound of Russian artillery lobbing shells into the eastern outskirts of Berlin. He knelt briefly, then straightened and left the cold granite tomb where once he had planned to join her.

He drove along the deserted autobahn into the city, taking only his doctor Ramon von Ondarza with him. At the noon conference he found twenty senior officers standing shoulder to shoulder around the cramped briefing table. Hitler announced that he was splitting up the high command—Admiral Dönitz would command in the north and Göring in the south until such time as he himself arrived from Berlin. As he signed the orders, his right hand trembled violently.

Not keen to be trapped like a rat in Berlin, General Koller pointed out in his thick Bavarian brogue that nobody should bank on being able to fly out, and that the Russians might cut off Berlin at any moment. The bunker room emptied rapidly.

Göring lingered behind. "Mein Führer," he ventured. "I presume you have no objection to my leaving for the Obersalzberg right away?"

April 1945

ZERO I

"Do what you want," said Hitler curtly. "But then Koller stays here."

It was an ignominious parting for two men who had been each other's fortune and misfortune for over twenty years. But even Koller found it hard to condemn Göring for turning his back on the clique around Hitler. He had not a single friend there now—there remained just ambitious men who had fought tooth and claw for power, while millions of ordinary citizens had perished.

It must have been now that a curious private discussion took place between Göring and Himmler. Göring touched on it only once in later months, saying it was the last time he saw Himmler (and Hitler's secretary Gerda Christian specifically recalled seeing Himmler and Göring talking this day). For "two or three hours," Göring recalled, they talked on the delicate topic of how to make contact with the enemy. Himmler smugly revealed that the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte had recently visited him, and was actually returning for a further meeting that evening at Hohenlychen, the SS clinic. "You know," boasted Himmler, "he must be the man sent by Eisenhower to negotiate."

Göring felt sick. "I can't believe that," he said woodenly. "Don't take offense, but I doubt that they'll find you acceptable as a negotiating partner."

"Sorry to contradict," smiled Himmler. "But I have incontrovertible proof that I am considered abroad to be the only person capable of maintaining order."

At this, Göring shut up. Perhaps Himmler knew more than he. As they parted, the Reichsführer asked him rather too insistently whether he, Göring, would appoint him chancellor in the event that anything now happened to the Führer. Göring mumbled that that would not be possible since constitutionally both offices were now combined.

"Herr Reichsmarschall," persisted Himmler delicately. "If anything should prevent you from succeeding the Führer—say you are eliminated (*ausgeschaltet*)—can I have the job?"

Göring gulped. Eliminated? He recalled that after the July 1944 bomb plot Popitz had testified under interrogation that Himmler was planning to replace Göring in the line of succession, and that upon reading this he had asked permission to interrogate the condemned man himself: But the Gestapo hangman had got to Popitz first. "My dear Himmler," he replied uneasily. "We shall have to wait and see. That will depend upon circumstances. I can't see for the life of me what might prevent me from taking up the office."

Darkness fell on the Reich capital. RAF Mosquito bombers had begun pummeling Berlin. On an impulse Göring decided to visit the air-raid shelters—although he would have been better advised to depart before the one remaining road to the south was overrun.

It is clear that he wanted to test his own popularity. Wisecracking his way from one bunker to another, he said farewell to the stoical Berliners. Word

spread ahead, and messengers wanted to see "Herr Meier" would have greeted the Reich words later, "We headed for

It was 2:20 A.M. before the armor-plated limousine, chaperoned out of the courtyard by Philipp Bouhler. In Göring's and nurse Christa, who had spent the night the convoy drove south, rimmed by a fiery haze lit eclipsed all other emotions. From there he intended to see Churchill. He would end the night, and he would not allow it.

The route passed through the been evacuated here, but he at a mobile flak unit to refuge

He arrived on the Obersalzberg. Edda, Emmy, her sister, nephew was here too—the Russians rounded by the females of his into the tranquil mountain sky phones jangled they did so on

Dismissing from his mind the art collection down at Berchtesgaden his bed and fell into a long afternoon

April 1945

horn Castle near Zell am

Göring glimpsed a G.I. and the gateway. Rather alarm-cavalry division.* "Guard luftwaffe major noticed that eli Bouhler fell into each

Göring.

ed to the interpreter. "Ask a pistol or my ceremonial

ated to him to take a bath and a dozen medals, and front of the Lone Star flag he asked whether he might after talking it over with the [encl] Waldemar Fegelein, the

Göring told Emmy privately. many."

nds before switching on the minded her, and withdrew into for herself and little Edda—pose his thoughts for the next floorboards creak as he paced dialogue with General Eisen-

ext morning. He had chosen a ring or two and bejeweled foppery. "It's not farewell," twelve-cylinder Maybach for uarters. "Things are looking

ou still have what Ango gave

his eyes off the matching blue an cars. They parted. It would or daughter again.

containing the private diaries of Hitler's at she and Adolf had exchanged. Found pments are now sadly missing.

The Texas Division had its headquarters in the five-star Grand Hotel at Kitzbühl. G.I.'s and reporters mobbed the little convoy as it arrived. The division commander, Major General John E. Dahlquist, saluted Göring, shook hands, and invited him to share his lunch of chicken, potatoes, and peas eaten out of a mess tin. Afterwards, the Reichsmarschall—for such was still his rank—went out onto the hotel balcony so that the American and German troops milling around the Maybach could take snapshots. One report even said he had a champagne glass in his hand.

Dahlquist asked his opinion of the other Nazi leaders. Still angry at the Führer's all too recent death sentence on him, Göring described Hitler as narrow-minded and ignorant, adding that Ribbentrop was a scoundrel and Hess an eccentric. Dahlquist perceived an underlying irritation at his captors' tardiness in bringing him together with Eisenhower.

As the days wore on, such a meeting seemed increasingly unlikely. A tiny Piper Cub flew him on May 10, across to U.S. Seventh Army headquarters at Augsburg. His composure was unshaken until Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch asked him why Nazi Germany had not overrun Spain and Gibraltar in 1940, thus bottling up the British Fleet in the Mediterranean. "That was always my advice!" screamed Göring. "Always, always, always! And it was never, never taken."

At 5:00 P.M. he was brought face to face with his principal American adversary, General Spaatz, commanding general of the U.S. strategic air forces. Göring saluted, and Spaatz gave the correct salute in response (nor did he have the slightest misgivings about doing so, as he told Colonel Lindbergh five days later). Bruce Hopper, Spaatz's chief historian, took in the heavy silver ring on the Reichsmarschall's third finger, the clear blue eyes, the ruddy but not unpleasant features, the outsize thighs, and the tan-colored boots. Göring responded to questions with a good humor that belied his growing concern.

"In the Battle of Britain," asked Spaatz, "why did you maintain such rigid formations of fighters and bombers?"

"It was necessary to escort the bombers because their firepower was low (not like your bombers)."

"Was the Junkers 88 designed for the Battle of Britain?"

"We had nothing else," explained Göring. "I was not in favor of engaging in the Battle of Britain at that time. It was too early."

He asked Spaatz if a bottle of whiskey could be produced, and General Patch rather grudgingly obliged. Spaatz asked the Luftwaffe chief whether the jet airplane ever really had a chance of winning the war.

"Yes," said Göring, "I am convinced—if only we had had four or five months more. Our underground installations were practically ready. The factory in the Harz had a capacity of a thousand to twelve hundred jet airplanes a month. Now with five to six thousand jets, the outcome would have been very different!"

Lieutenant General Hoyt Vandenberg, of the Ninth Air Force, chipped in, "But could you have trained sufficient jet pilots given your shortage of oil?"

"Oh, yes," replied Göring. "We would have had underground oil plants producing a sufficient quantity for the jets. The pilot's conversion to the jets was very easy. Output of jet pilots was always a month ahead of jet-aircraft production."

Spaatz leaned forward. He inquired intently which had contributed more to the defeat of Nazi Germany—precision bombing or area bombing? It was a question of patriotic importance, and Göring knew it. "Your precision bombing," he flattered Spaatz, "because that was decisive. A ruined industry was difficult to replace. . . . I myself planned to carry out only precision bombing at the beginning. I wanted to lay a barrier of contact mines around Britain and seal off her ports, but again I was forced to do otherwise by political *Diktat*."

Recalling this unusual dialogue years later in an oral interview, Brigadier General Glenn O. Barcus remembered that Spaatz asked Göring whether he had any recommendations as to the improvement of American airpower. "Göring kind of smiled, and said, 'I should be telling *you* about how to use air power!'" The verbatim record in Spaatz's papers shows that he asked, "If you had to design the Luftwaffe again, what would be the first airplane you would develop?" "The jet fighter," said Göring, "and then the jet bomber. The problem of speed has been solved. It is now a question of fuel. The jet fighter consumes too much. The Me 264 jet bomber, designed to fly to America and back, awaited only the final solution of this problem."

"Did you have a three-inch gun for the jet?" asked Spaatz.

"The fifty-five-millimeter cannon, which is only now going into production, would have made a great difference in the jet. While waiting for that, we were using the fifty-five-millimeter rocket. You might find some jet airplanes around Germany equipped with [55mm] antitank guns. Don't blame me for such monstrosities. This was done on the explicit orders of the Führer. Hitler knew nothing about the air . . . absolutely nothing. He even considered the Me 262 to be a bomber, and he insisted it should be called a bomber!"

After this talk they took him into the kitchen of the camp office, and stripped him of all his medals and insignia except for his Reichsmarschall's epaulets. On the following day, May 11, 1945, he was taken out of the back door of the two-story suburban house in Augsburg to meet fifty Allied newspapermen. Gripping a pair of matching gray suede gloves, he slumped into an easy chair and mopped at his brow as the shutters clicked. After five minutes they allowed him to move into the thin shade of a willow tree. The questioning resumed. Heaping blame for the first time in public on Martin Bormann, he insisted that it must have been Bormann and not Hitler who had nominated Dönitz as the new Führer. "Hitler," rasped Göring, "did not leave a thing in writing saying that Dönitz was to take his place!"

He publicly revealed that he had opposed Hitler's attack on Russia. "I

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IN

pointed out to him," said Göring, "a two-front war. . . . But I bring Russia to her knees." I moment of the war. "The g range fighter bomber that co return to its home base. I re was lost shortly after the [Jr breakthrough."

Asked inevitably about the missive. "I was never so close me on this subject," he said "merely propaganda. Hitler, hand signing the documents, time I saw him."

Göring was removed to the Villa Pagenstecher in Wiesbaden. He tried hard to make a case for himself after interviewing him, "and I was mentally deranged. In fact he was a great actor and professional improvisations, trying to keep what order to have some bargaining know my speeches," Göring said. "Of them have I attacked fore sincerity he even claimed never sent anybody to a concentration camp, course," he remarked as an admission of necessity and expediency!"

He still sidestepped all known thought that they were places said. Shown grim pictures taken up with this answer: "Those pictures depict things that happened in the past, suddenly derived a fiendish plea efforts to disclaim any responsibility for atrocity stories spread after the war."

Hidden microphones heard his "fraudulent" claim by Dönitz. "I know about it," Göring reminded. "Anybody might turn up tomorrow. Dönitz got his—now I am Lammers listened intently. "You produce documentary proof."

The two men reexamined the

then reconsidered the last signal Bormann had transmitted from the bunker: "In the place of Reichsmarschall Göring, the Führer appoints you, Grand Admiral, as his successor." "Is there anything," shouted Göring, "more fantastic than this fraud committed by Bormann? . . . Well, I must say those damn crooks have pulled a fast one. It beats everything. . . . I always knew that if anything happened to the Führer, my life would be in the gravest danger for the next forty-eight hours. After that I would have been sworn in and it would have taken legal effect. Whatever happened, I would have arrested Bormann in forty-eight hours—and he knew it, too!—and sacked Ribbentrop. Those two were the thorns in my flesh."

Talking with interrogators again, he willingly blamed Hitler but denied that they had seriously planned to use chemical warfare or nerve gas. "None of your gas masks would have afforded any protection," he added. "This gas was so dangerous that I would not permit another demonstration. I knew that the gas would have had to be transported to the rear when the Americans came, and the result of an air attack on the train might have been catastrophic. . . . We knew we were the more advanced in chemical warfare and that we had the more deadly gases." Talking of the fire storms in Hamburg and Dresden, he dabbed at his eyes. "It was terrible," he said. "The people of Dresden could not believe that you would bomb their city, because they thought that Dresden was too well known as a cultural center." Then he changed the subject. "The people," he boasted to chief interrogator Major Paul Kubala, "never called me anything but Hermann! Just Hermann! Never anything but Hermann! To be called by one's first name—that is the height of popularity."

His evacuated Carinhall art collection had now been found. The special train had carried on from Veldenstein to Berchtesgaden on April 13. Göring's troops had carried the most spectacular items into a secret cavern walled into a tunnel beneath his staff quarters on the Unsterstein Mountain. As the French Moroccan troops invaded Berchtesgaden, Hofer and Göring's secretary Fräulein Limberger fled the train. "Jewel cases were opened," said Göring later, "and the gems taken, the settings were scattered all around."

After the French came the Americans, the famous 101st Airborne Division. Questioning Göring's household staff, Lieutenant Raymond F. Newkirk heard the first rumors of the walled-up cavern. The tunnel's engineer was located, and he led Newkirk to the second level of a series of underground tunnels. A platoon of U.S. Army engineers broke into the hidden room. It took four days to empty the cavern. It was very damp, and the priceless contents were protected from the water dripping from the ceiling only by costly tapestries that had been hastily flung over them. The paintings were stacked up outside—works by Rubens, Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Boucher, and Botticelli. There was the "Infanta Margareta" by Velázquez, which Göring had bought from a seized Rothschild collection in 1941; and there was a "Rembrandt"

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Göring never let his blue his magnificently crafted to talcum powder to make su
"Where are your private
"I would like to know if

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*The "Rembrandt" was a fake.

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Göring never let his blue luggage out of his sight. Occasionally he checked his magnificently crafted toilet case with all the colognes, hand cream, and talcum powder to make sure that nothing was missing.

"Where are your private jewels?" he was asked by one interrogator.

"I would like to know that myself," was his wan reply.

On May 14, his valet Robert had been sent back to Fischhorn Castle to collect a Rothschild painting. Göring handed it over to Major Kubala and the French liaison officer, Captain Albert Zoller, on the fifteenth—a fifteenth-century painting called "The Madonna of Memling." His bejeweled Reichsmarschall's baton was at that very moment in a parcel being mailed home by a G.I.; intercepted by U.S. Customs, it is now on display at West Point. His 1935 Wedding Sword, stolen by an American platoon sergeant, dwells in a bank safe in Indiana—its value enhanced by the legends about its owner, as though it were Siegfried's sword itself.

Göring had several conversations with the Frenchman Zoller. "Little things," he philosophized, "can have big results. All our cities were devastated, one after the other, and those damned aluminum strips were to blame!"

Several more times the hidden microphones overheard him talking to Lammers about what he would have done if Hitler had died earlier. "I told some gauleiters who were close to me," he remarked on May 19, "about a year and a half ago . . . that if Fate ever destined me to succeed Hitler, I would place a supreme court above me. I told myself that no man ought to assume the responsibility of being answerable to nobody. A dictatorship," he wheezed, "must never come again. It does not work. We see it now. In the beginning everything is wonderful, but then it all gets out of hand."

He complained several times about the humiliating treatment by the Americans. "It is usual," he told Major Kubala, "for a marshal to have a house of his own to live in." Kubala reported that Göring was claiming to have asked Eisenhower for safe-conduct when he "gave himself up," and was indignant now to find himself a prisoner of war. "He is worried," added Kubala on May 23, "about his private possessions."

Göring kept a huntsman's weather eye open for officers whom he could use. He blatantly flattered the Americans. "Without the American Air Force," he assured Lieutenant Colonel Eric M. Warburg, a former Hamburg banker who had served in the Prussian artillery in World War I, "the war would still be going on—but assuredly not on German soil!" He pitted his brains particularly against "Major Evans,"—in real life the Wall Street financier Ernst Englander. Englander was motivated by a thirst for revenge. "I should like to see those boys hang and sweat," he wrote in one private letter at this

*The "Rembrandt" was a fake.

time, "rather than to make themselves out as heroes and martyrs." For several days they sparred. "I found it easier," Englander wrote, "to deal with them by getting reasonably chummy, and as a result Göring asked me to do a favor and see his wife for him."

A tattered snapshot of Emmy and Edda was Göring's most cherished possession. On the back he now penned these words to Emmy: "Major Evans has my confidence. Hermann Göring." To remunerate the officer he also gave him a portrait, signed to "Major Evans, in grateful memory, Hermann Göring." Englander thanked him effusively. It did not escape the prisoner that some American officers would do almost anything in return for a personal souvenir.

On May 20, 1945, they flew him in a small six-seater plane—he had to enter through the cargo hatch—to Luxembourg. With him went a written report from Major Kubala, warning against regarding the captive as a comical figure. Göring was cool and calculating, and "able to grasp the fundamental issues under discussion quickly. He is certainly not a man to be underrated."

They held him in Luxembourg for three months. It was plain that there was to be a major trial. Among the fifty fellow Nazis interned here in the Grand Hotel of the little spa town of Mondorf-les-Bains he found Hans Frank, his wrists still bandaged from a suicide attempt, as well as Bohle, Brandt, Daluge, Darré, Frick, Funk, Jodl, Keitel, Ley, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, and Streicher. He registered with quiet satisfaction that Dönitz, his rival as "Hitler's successor," had also been unceremoniously dumped here too. They agreed on an uneasy truce. "I have always been the second man in the state," Göring told the admiral's adjutant Walther Lüdde-Neurath. "And you can be quite certain that if we're for the high jump, mine will be the first head into the noose!"

There was little luxury about his fourth-floor room. To prevent suicides, the Americans had removed all power supplies and light bulbs and had replaced sixteen hundred window panes with Perspex sheets. After General Greim, his successor as commander in chief, swallowed poison on May 24, the Americans suddenly seized Göring's luggage, to his dismay, and a triumphant G.I. immediately found the brass cyanide cartridge that he had concealed in a tin of American coffee. The Americans now looked no further.

This unusual hotel was commanded by Burton C. Andrus, a pompous and unimaginative colonel in the U.S. Cavalry who moved about majestically, his plump figure impeccably garbed in a uniform and highly polished helmet. Andrus had not been anxious for the job. He knew, as he told his family a year later, that this was one job where he could not win: Like a tightrope walker crossing Niagara Falls, he knew that if he slipped it would be his neck; while if he didn't, the box-office receipts went to the stockholders. Göring gave him sleepless nights to the end of his life. Minutes before Colonel

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INT

Andrus died, years later, he sobbed moaning: "I've got to get to Gi

The hatred was mutual between chief" because of that helmet, sequestered all his treasures, in Andrus papers:

one gold Luftwaffe badge; monds; one desk watch; one *personal toilet case*,* one gold and monogrammed by Prin box; one gold and velvet cigarette set with diamonds; one gold keys; one emerald ring; on semi-precious buttons; one diamond Luftwaffe brooch; one gold pin (evergreen twig with swastika of diamond stones, diamond, inlaid Luft silver); one small watch set Pour le Mérite; one Iron Cross one gold cigarette-lighter, one buckles; one brass compass; *mann Göring*"; one silver watch; one set of lapis lazuli shaped; one platinum Iron Cross *Swiss wristwatch*; 81,268 Re

It is worth noting what became of case" italicized above was back in how. After Göring's death, Emmy's papers—for 750 Reichsmarks, two bag, and other listed items that did earlier, nor the fountain pen or the Evidently he had given these away were later seen in the possession of Army second lieutenant whom he had been seen.

Andrus was a meticulous keeper of these men alive, and his security me

*Italics here and below are the author's.

May 1945

meals were eaten off plain

hopped Göring.

soldiers," shouted a German
ardrus, as he later testified
these Germans not to give

began to worry incessantly:
about how to get into his blue

43

FAT STUFF

"The cause for which Göring stood,"
the Seventh Army interrogation cen-
ter had reported on May 23, 1945,

"is lost. But the canny Hermann even now thinks only what he can do to salvage some of his personal fortune, and to create an advantageous position for himself. He condemns the once-beloved Führer without hesitation. Up to now he has not made a plea in favor of his former henchmen, alive or dead. Yet behind his spirited and often witty conversation is a constant watchfulness for the opportunity to place himself in a favorable light."

Göring's treatment at Mondorf had undoubtedly shaken him. His valet Robert had been taken away from him. His room was barely furnished and unlit. Of his toilet articles he had been left only a sponge, soap, and toothbrush—nothing else, not even a comb. He wrote to protest to Eisenhower at this illegal treatment. "I cannot believe that Your Excellency wishes and knows about the humiliating effect this treatment has upon me." He requested permission to return briefly by plane to his family so that he could at least make the most essential arrangements for them and take proper leave of them. He received no reply.

To while away that time, Admiral Hans von Friedeburg's adjutant taught the fifty imprisoned men how to play Battleships. Göring sank Dönitz's

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Göring corrected him. In his view he had acquired his art collection quite legally.

"Most of these things were bought, yes," conceded Gans, who had evidently done his homework. "But at a price fixed by you!"

Subtly playing on underlying American fears, Göring spoke of the seductive Russian propaganda methods and reminded Gans that once before Germany and Russia had collaborated for a century. "At first," he continued, referring to most recent history, "the Germans were very afraid of the Russians. . . . Immediately after the collapse, the Russians did a skillful job over the radio: they proclaimed that Germany must not be partitioned again, and they started to reopen the German theaters. In this zone you have adopted the opposite approach."

The Americans found it hard to undermine his morale although he was now deeply concerned about Emmy and Edda. On June 25 Lieutenant Herbert Dubois took over the grilling. "Do you know that Hitler, Himmler, and Goebbels are dead? . . . You are the last great Nazi. How did you manage to survive? Why haven't you died?"

"It was an accident," responded Göring. Dubois discomfited him by asking about the billion Reichsmark fine that he had levied on the Jewish community in November 1938. "Is a German field marshal never ashamed?" he challenged.

At first the Reichsmarschall was evasive—"I don't have to answer that question under the Geneva Convention"—but he immediately afterward softened enough to utter one of his rare expressions of personal remorse. "I regret it. You have to take the times into account."

On May 10, 1945, Dr. Robert Kempner, a former Prussian civil servant who had emigrated to Pennsylvania, wrote to the Pentagon pointing out that during Göring's jurisdiction over police matters in 1933 many people had been tortured and killed. "Such cases," Kempner continued, "were brought to his personal attention. At that time bribery was one of the chief means of obtaining release from concentration camps. The money, jewelry, or gold cigarette cases were turned over to his fiancée, now Mrs. Emmy Sonnemann Göring, who has also been captured." Little of this was true, but to break down Göring's "staged self-assurance" Kempner pleaded for Göring to be brought to the United States for interrogation on his morphine addiction, on Emmy's "former intimate friendship with a Jewish theatrical man" and Hermann's "relationship to the late Austrian Jewish landowner Baron Hermann von Epenstein." The suggestion was disregarded. Instead Kempner, himself a Jew, would be taken onto the prosecution staff at Nuremberg.

Evidence against Göring was raked together from the most eclectic sources. British intelligence intercepted a letter in June 1945 from Stockholm to London in which a Mrs. Anna Morck wrote that Göring had given jewelry

to Carin's sister Lily Martin—"Things stolen from Poland and other places, which ought to be given back." Hidden microphones installed in a special prison camp outside London recorded Göring's generals in, as they thought, private conversation. Bodenschatz was heard telling Milch that Göring was "the most ungrateful man in the world!" "Always was," agreed Milch. "A rotten character." When he described the Reichsmarschall's mauve-painted fingernails Galland corrected him: "It wasn't paint, it was a transparent varnish." "Bodenschatz," said Milch, "you say the Führer gave Göring a monthly allowance of thirty thousand Reichsmarks. Do you imagine he met all his expenses out of *that*? . . . The three hundred and sixty thousand marks he received each year wouldn't last him even a month!" Each scrap of conversation was transcribed and sent secretly to brief Göring's interrogators.

Now calling himself "Major Emery," Ernst Englander visited this camp on June 5 and told Milch, Koller, and Galland that Göring was blackening their names. The angry generals exchanged more scuttlebutt about him. In his private diary Milch jotted down what the others told him of Göring's sleazy dealings with Heinkel, Siebel, Koppenberg, and aluminum factories in Norway. Told of Göring's apparent interest in Professor Morell's pharmaceutical empire, General Kreipe chimed in that the Reichsmarschall had also been the majority shareholder in a certain brand of contraceptives. "Do you know," replied Milch, capping that tidbit, "that our commander in chief received money personally for each picture hanging in a barracks?!" He banged his first on the table. "Do you know that our commander in chief pocketed a fine of fourteen million Dutch guilders imposed for a rebellion somewhere in Holland and transferred them to Switzerland for his personal use?*" The SS told me all this, and backed it up with evidence. But there is such a thing as poetic justice, gentlemen! . . . Göring's chauffeur made off with a case containing all Mrs. Göring's jewelry."

Emmy Göring had been allowed to return to a little cottage near Veldenstein. One day an American army sergeant arrived and told her in confidence that her husband had been secretly tried and acquitted, and would be released the next day. Emmy had never been noted for political acuity. She happily gave the messenger a precious emerald ring, scraped together some victuals for a welcoming feast, and waited for several days before she could accept that the man had been a trickster.

Confined at Mondorf still, Göring paced his cage like a trapped lion. For a man born and bred in the mountains, who had spent his youth in the skies

*General Christiansen, military commander of the Netherlands, had imposed a 14-million-guilder levy on a Dutch community. The British informed Allied officials at Nuremberg of the overheard allegation, namely that Göring had given 1 million guilders of this fine to Christiansen and transferred the remainder as Swiss francs to Switzerland. Challenged about this on December 22, 1945, Göring dismissed it as "nonsense" and pointed out that "Krischan" came directly under the high command, not the air force.

May 1945

and his manhood at the wheel moment of this confinement his mugshots taken on June 22 show similar photographs show the was a young lieutenant in the R "Except for a considerable loss: seeing him on the seventh, "C visibly. He is . . . very wary. him of something, but he is no

The commandant, Colonel / duced. On July 19, Göring court and complained, "Each day I been introduced to the prisoner urologist of the type that Göring complained of headaches, and a lems, applied heat therapy inste

"Send up Fat Stuff!" The cr Mondorf, and Göring would a interview room between two gu Army historians came to talk w had no axe to grind and allowe Hitler and Bormann. "Once," thousand phone calls to answer still called Hitler that—"about was Martin Bormann. "I can' evil genius, and I couldn't wi down myself. I haven't the sli reconciliation between the Führ in the air again."

To Kenneth W. Hechler, onc like reeling in a big fish—play eventually. "*Morgen, Herr Rei* tiatingly, and listen with appare iations he was suffering and his Once Hechler tried to ask abou offensive, but Göring began by c through Sedan in 1940 and neve

"Göring," the interrogators v of believing his own fabrication more plausible to him." Hechle about to tell a whopper. His smil his hands swept fractionally wid as though to throw dust in his in

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during which I have had to perform as best I could. No more, and no less. . . . The devil take it, before I allow any man to drag me down and make me grovel just to cling on to this tattered thing called life!"

On August 5, the U.S. Army sent to SHAEF headquarters the formal list of prisoners to be turned over to the control of prosecuting counsel. Göring's name headed the list. He had become number-one man in Nazi Germany at last. Five days later his paracodeine medication was stopped for good.

Unwell once again, he remained upstairs in the Grand Hotel, suffering the old heart trouble, while his more fortunate fellow prisoners were mustered and left. All came to say their farewells except for two Staatssekretäre who churlishly refused. Dönitz's adjutant was the last to come up. Göring received him esconced at the head of his bed in a heap of blankets that he had contrived to convert into a kind of throne, as though sitting in the high chair at Carinhall. The naval officer could see he was in a brilliant mood, having obviously found his old form and vitality. "Whatever happens," the Reichsmarschall promised him, with the glint of coming battle in his eye, "you can count on me. There're one or two things I'm going to say at the coming trial."

That afternoon, August 12, 1945, an American C-47 transport plane flew him from Luxembourg to Nuremberg. Perhaps unaware that it was to be the last airplane journey of his life, he thoroughly enjoyed the trip and chattered keenly about the flight. "His health is probably not very good," warned an American officer three days later, "and on two recent occasions he was to be found in his dressing gown and pajamas in bed, as a result first of a slight heart attack and . . . bronchitis."

Nuremberg was a landscape of ruins surrounding the Palace of Justice and its adjoining detention block. The cells were low-ceilinged cubicles barely thirteen feet by seven. Göring would sleep on a metal cot bolted to the floor along the left wall. Just to the right of the narrow doorway a porcelain toilet bowl was set in an alcove to afford minimal privacy. As his eyes took in the fresh plaster patches where iron hooks had been ripped out of the wall, the lack of electric wiring, and the Perspex freshly installed in the tiny windows high up the end wall, he must have smiled. He had no intention of ducking out of this last battle prematurely. He placed his few possessions on the little table—so flimsy that no prisoner, let alone a Hermann Göring, could stand on it—with pride of place going to a snapshot of Edda. "Dear Daddy," she had written on the back, "come back to me again soon. I have such longing for you. Many thousand kisses from your Edda!!!!"

Tight security precautions were also taken with medication. Pflücker injected daily Vitamin B and provided Seconal tablets to help him sleep despite the harsh new jail regime. Tormented by rheumatism, Göring was also occasionally allowed one aspirin, but he was watched to ensure that he swallowed it.

Colonel Andrus had ordered pencils and paper provided so that the pris-

oners could write private letters. These, Andrus reported, were "promptly sent to the chief of interrogation," Colonel John H. Amen.

One of Göring's first letters was to Helga Bouhler:

Dear Heli!

As I don't know where Emmy and Edda are, please tell me their address if you know it. Are they still at Fischhorn? How are things with you? Where is Angelo? Not very much I can tell you, we've all just got to grin and bear it. But I wish you all the best from the bottom of my heart.

Andrus could not have forwarded this letter even had he wanted to. "Ango" Bouhler had taken cyanide in U.S. captivity, and Helga had leaped to her death from a high window at Fischhorn.

The Americans pocketed these early letters and sold them off privately years later.

Of course, the prisoners were puzzled about the lack of any response. "We've been permitted to write letters and postcards for two months," wrote Keitel on October 10, "but no replies have been received.

Göring's blue luggage had been stowed in a baggage room to which only a few named officers held the key. "There was one item," Andrus would insist later, "that belonged to Göring which he was never allowed to go into, and that was a vanity case containing bottles, jars, nail file, scissors, etc. To the best of my knowledge this vanity case was never opened until it was searched for some salve"—a search that was a consequence, in fact, of the last posthumous shaft that Göring would loose off at the colonel, his detested jailer.

At the end of August 1945, Andrus asked Pfütcker why the prisoners' condition was deteriorating, and the doctor pointed to the poor food and lack of human contact (so he testified to the later board of inquiry): "The colonel ordered better food. I was permitted to speak to the prisoners more."

He testified further that Göring suffered frequent heart attacks.

"I am not a heart specialist," he warned the colonel. "I have no heart instruments to make a proper examination."

The daily routine began at 7:00 A.M. with a prison trusty handing breakfast and a spoon through the Judas hole in Göring's cell door. A barber came and shaved him while a truncheon-wielding sentry ensured that no words were exchanged. "Sentinels moving back and forth on the catwalks," Andrus reassured Justice Robert H. Jackson, the chief American prosecutor, "view the prisoners every half minute." By five-thirty it was dark. At 6:00 P.M. he was given supper. His eyeglasses, pen, and wristwatch were taken away, and the cell light turned off at 9:30 P.M.; a spotlight then beamed through the hole in the door onto his face all night.

Letters from 1945

There was one episode on August 12, 1945, when a group of officers performed the (wholly unnecessary) physical examination of the German armed forces in an attempt to prevent yet another heart attack after being short of breath and exhausted and complained of heart pains. His pulse became irregular, his pulse increased, he was given a cardiac drug and phenobarbital to bring about a crisis to the exertion as well as a charade, the American doctor (Dr. Amen) days. He confidentially warned that he would allow thirty minutes of exercise, but might be Göring's last.

The interrogations resumed, and a week armed sentries handcuffed along the covered catwalks to the of the Palace of Justice. Meeting face to face across an open table (inspired, in part by the patent assigned to him), he was taken away from any physical contact. Docu-mentary had sniffed them to mal-

On August 28, Colonel Amen was sent against Austria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia years ago," Göring said, playing to pin down what the Führer's transcripts, thereby rendering the allegations that the German Aviation 5 million Reichsmarks for information laughed incredulously. The Americans pointed out. "I would probably give him all the intelligence he has, the humorless Amen on the eig-enth Forestry Administration and played Göring retorted with a grin that I had done with my trees." Five days later and claimed that both Diels and Reichstag fire. Göring called his two supposed witnesses. Kempner

Göring was worried about the trial. On October 12, Dr. Douglas M. Ladd wrote a letter to Emmy at Neuhaus, near

was. "As firm as a rock in a raging sea," was the kind reply. She wrote him on the thirteenth and fourteenth, but the letters were not delivered.

To turn the psychological screw on the defendants, their families were now arrested. Even Göring's indignant brother Albert, whom American Special Intelligence had only recently contemplated using as an agent, was incarcerated. At 11:30 A.M. on October 15, Paul H. Goldenberg of the CIC arrested Emmy together with her niece, sister, and the nurse Christa Gormanns. The women were imprisoned in Straubing Jail, and Edda was put in an orphanage.

On October 19, Colonel Amen served the formal indictment on Göring. The transcript shows that he asked only for a trustworthy interpreter and an interview with his old lawyer, Hans Frank. But Frank was in the same boat as Göring now. Others proved more fragile, under this mounting pressure. Ley went insane and strangled himself with a wet towel on October 25. Göring expressed heartless satisfaction. "It's just as well," he told the psychiatrist, "because I had my doubts about how he would behave at the trial." He detected signs that Ribbentrop was cracking up too. "I'm not afraid of the soldiers," Göring remarked. "They'll behave themselves."

After Ley's suicide, Andrus redoubled the security precautions. Göring was repeatedly strip-searched, his private effects were picked through zealously, and he was often moved without warning to a different cell. Asked by Andrus to report, the new psychiatrist Dr. Gustave M. Gilbert assured the commandant that Göring was a very low suicide risk. At 138 Göring's I.Q. was inferior only to Hjalmar Schacht's (143) and Arthur Seyss-Inquart's (141). In fact, Göring's morale was so high that he was likely to prove their most troublesome defendant. When Gilbert remarked that the German public now openly regretted that the attempt on Hitler's life had failed, Göring roared at him. "Never mind what the people say *now*! I know what they said before! I know how they cheered when the going was good."

He looked forward to the trial with undisguised relish. "I can answer for anything I have done," he told Gilbert on November 11, but he added uneasily, "I can't answer for anything I haven't done." And he concluded, "I know what is in store for me."

That day he wrote a farewell letter to Emmy—just in case—and signed a new will. He handed the will to Otto Stahmer. The attorney revealed now that Emmy was being held in prison. Tears in his eyes, the Reichsmarschall told the other prisoners, "You see, the Americans are just as bad as the Gestapo. What have women and children got to do with this?"

On the nineteenth, he wrote Emmy a letter:

My dearest,

Major Kelley still has the last letter I wrote you. If you've got back to Edda at Neuhaus, he'll drive out to give you the letter. . . .

Oct 1945

If you're not back at the [Straubing prison]

The Nuremberg Trial began. Quietly regretting that he had criminals, Hermann Göring from his baggage. He wanted

[945]

improbable that illnesses
age has its particular ill-
fore and will never occur
this, obviously, must be
which are just as much a
the that it produces, just
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e knows. The *Weltgeist*

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ade it still more horrible
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of country, as, for instance, eastern Franconia, and skipped individual houses; or it would disappear all of a sudden and reappear after years. Right into the middle of the fifteenth century we read in the chronicles: "Plague in Bohemia," "The Great Death on the Rhine," "Plague in Prussia," "Death in the country," "Year of general death," "Ten thousand die in Nuremberg," "Plague throughout Germany, strong men die, few women, more rarely children," "Great pestilence in the coast towns." It appears to have been a form of bubonic plague, manifesting itself in swelling of the lymphatic glands (the so-called plague-boils), violent headache, great weakness, and apathy, though also in some cases delirium. According to contemporary reports, death occurred on the first or second, or at latest the seventh, day. The mortality was terrific everywhere. While it was at its height, we hear of sixty deaths daily in Berne, a hundred in Cologne and in Mainz, a total of thirteen thousand at Elbing. Two-thirds of the students at Oxford died, and three-fifths of the Yorkshire clergy. When the Minorites counted their dead at the end of two years of plague, these amounted to over a hundred and twenty thousand. Europe's total losses, according to recent calculation, amounted to twenty millions. The men of the day found it easier to count the survivors than those who had perished.

With the Plague came another movement. The Flagellant monks, in exaltation, went about in great swarms from place to place, waving flags and singing mournful songs, dressed in black cloaks and repulsive caps, with a gleaming red cross before them. Their appearance in a town was the signal for all bells to ring, and all the people flocked to church. The Flagellants then flung themselves down, scourging, singing, and praying for hours together, reading out letters that were said to have fallen from heaven, which condemned the sinful ways of laity and clergy and exhorted them to repent. Their doctrine, if such it can be called, was undoubtedly heretical. They taught that flagellation was the true communion, in that their own blood became mingled with the Saviour's. Priests were unworthy and superfluous, and their presence was not tolerated at their devotional exercises. The effect on a terrified humanity that felt the Church and the world to be falling about its ears was immense. Gradually, however, the ranks of the Flagellants came to be reinforced by various unclean elements,

In the
Middle AgesThe parallel
epidemic

1944

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Historical Memoirs he repeats that his decisions in 1740 were influenced by the desire to make himself a name. These, again, are quite the trains of thought of an actor. This king who goes to war out of psychological curiosity, a species of theatre-mania, and from the ardent desire to appear in the paper, and not only so, but frankly admits such impulses — this detached independence, this bizarre coquetry, this sophisticated and yet naïve craving for the limelight, is Rococo of the most genuine kind.

Strange as it may sound, Frederick the Great was not an earnest person. By an "earnest" person we can only understand one who is caught by reality, the "practical" man, the materialist; and by a non-earnest person we mean the intellectual man who is capable of looking down on life from above, taking it now humorously, now tragically, but never earnestly. Both the humorous and the tragic aspects have one and the same root; they are two polar and therefore complementary expressions of the same world-feeling. Not to take existence seriously is something that belongs no less to the tragic than to the humorous focus. Both are based on the profound conviction of the worthlessness and vanity of the world. And so it comes about that Frederick the Great is one of the few figures of his age that are truly tragic and are yet at the same time enveloped by the breath of a sublime irony.

But at the close of his life, as "Old Fritz," he — like all other really great men: Goethe and Kant, Ibsen and Tolstoi, Michelangelo and Rembrandt — becomes completely unreal and ghostly, transcendent and transparent, already half an inhabitant of the other world. An immense solitude spreads itself about him, he is weary of "ruling over slaves" and wants to be buried beside his greyhounds.

Doubtless he had great faults; but then, the favourites of mankind are not the proper ones. The whole age did him joyous homage because he was the strongest and most human, wisest and most foolish of all: Cæsar and Don Quixote, Hamlet and Fortinbras in one person. In Switzerland there were people who fell ill with mortification when he lost a battle; in England, which even as an ally has never liked to see a development of power on the Continent, his victories were celebrated like national festivals; in Paris one became socially impossible if one took sides against him; in Russia he had an enthusiastic following at court, headed by Peter,

D. T.
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magnificent
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The tragic
ironist

Hilfer
in 1944

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second half of the sentence runs: "but all Nature cries aloud that
he does exist"

It is, however, very difficult to say what his true opinion on these matters was, so susceptible and desultory was his mind, and so subject to the personal impression of the moment. And, besides, everything that he openly expressed was only exoteric doctrine; in the secret chambers of his brain there may well have been quite other and more radical ideas. Possibly his true confession of faith is contained in the words he wrote to Madame du Deffand, six years before he died: "I knew a man who was firmly convinced that the buzz of a bee did not continue after its death. He said, with Epicurus and Lucretius, that it was absurd to presume an unextended being; an extended being ruled, and pretty badly at that. . . . He said Nature had so arranged matters that we think with our heads just as we walk with our feet. He compared us with a musical instrument which does not give forth another note when it is broken. He maintained that man — like every other animal and every plant, and perhaps every being in the world — was manifestly made so that he might be and then not be. This man, too, when he had grown as old as Democritus, used to do as Democritus did and laugh at everything." And nine years further back, on the threshold of his eighth decade, Voltaire gave expression to his profound resignation of spirit in a letter to d'Argenson: "*J'en reviens toujours à Candide: il faut finir par cultiver son jardin; tout le reste, excepté l'amitié, est bien peu de chose; et encore cultiver son jardin n'est pas grande chose.*"

Cultiver son jardin: to cultivate this garden which Voltaire had planted, to make it yield more and more profusely, was the task which the age of Enlightenment set itself and solved. Voltaire held it to be a small thing, but to the Enlightenment it was a very great thing.

D.T. *

Le Jardin

IMPORTANT.

after
1946

D.T. * — Our ultimate aim, and
came to see in the end, was the
destruction of Nature, or, failing that,
destruction of ²⁰⁷least its lustre,
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rested the continuing strength
of the Dampness.

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Abraham Gottlob
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DK

School of Mines at Freiberg, and who explained all (or almost all) changes of the earth's crust as the result of the action of water. Werner was also one of the first to attempt the subdivision of the minerals wholly by their chemical composition, while not neglecting their external peculiarities. Novalis, who was his pupil, said about him: "The impressions of his senses crowded together in vast many-coloured pictures; he heard, saw, touched, and thought simultaneously . . . he played with forces and phenomena and knew where and how he could find this or that." There was also an opposition to this Neptunism in the "Plutonism" of James Hutton, a contrary theory which likewise only won through to acceptance much later: he saw the main cause of geological change in fire, in the volcanic reactions of the glowing interior of the earth against the already hardened earth surface. There was Buffon, too, who employed the splendid rhythms of a fine and nervous style to present the results so far obtained by the descriptive sciences; and, indeed, it was as a writer that he exercised his greatest influence on contemporaries.

But it was in electrical and chemical theory that the most decisive changes occurred. So far, in both subjects, the dogma of imponderabilia had held undisputed sway. Light, like heat, was regarded as a substance, and similar views were held of electricity and magnetism. The failure to discover any increase of weight in all these processes had been explained by the assumption of the "imponderability" of these elements. Now Lavoisier, almost simultaneously with the Englishman Priestley and the Swede Scheele, discovered that the air is made up of two gases, of which the one is the "cause" of fire; because this acted also in the formation of acids, he called it oxygen. In his further researches he succeeded in explaining breathing and fermentation in a similar way. Again, contemporaneously with Cavendish, the discoverer of hydrogen, he arrived at an understanding of the constitution of water, and thus the enormous rôle played by oxygen in the earthly economy was revealed at last in its main lines. The summit of his achievement was the cardinal law that in all chemical processes the sum of the materials remains an unaltered quantity. Yet, though he had clearly laid down the theory of the elements and had established it irrefragably by exact measurement, he still held in practice to the idea of imponderables, and he included heat

The New
Chemistry

spirits

*
problems of explanation

* D.T. It was hard to maintain one's contempt for the Rummholf when one contemplated the elegant solution oxygen gave to the problem.

THE TESTAMENT OF ADOLF HITLER

The Hitler-Bormann Documents

February-April 1945

With an Introduction by L. Craig Fraser

playing the role which subsequently fell to its lot in the nineteenth century. It was a policy designed to preserve the existence of his country. Churchill, by refusing to come to terms with me, has condemned his country to a policy of suicide. He has made the same mistakes as those generals make who wage a war according to the principles of the preceding war. There are now elements which it is impossible to fit into such a scheme of things. The crucial new factor is the existence of those two giants, the United States and Russia. Pitt's England ensured the balance of world power by preventing the hegemony of Europe—by preventing Napoleon, that is, from attaining his goal. Churchill's England, on the other hand, should have allowed the unification of Europe, if it wished to preserve that same balance of power.

At the beginning of this war I did my utmost to act as though I believed Churchill to be capable of grasping the truth of this great policy; and in his lucid moments he was, indeed, capable of grasping it. But for a long time now he has been bound hand and foot to the Jewish chariot. My object in trying to come to terms with England was to avoid creating an irreparable situation in the West. Later, when I attacked eastwards and lanced the Communist abscess, I hoped thereby to rekindle a spark of common sense in the minds of the Western Powers. I gave them the chance, without lifting a finger, of making a contribution to an act of catharsis, in which they could have safely left the task of disinfecting the West in our hands

alone. But the hatred felt by a man of good faith is stronger than preservation. I had underestimated Jewish domination over Churchill preferred, indeed, to perish by admitting National Socialism to pressure, they might have tolerated semitism on our part. But our aim to eradicate Jewish power rooted in the world was far too strong in our stomachs to digest!

Pitt's genius lay in the implementation of his policy, in harmony with the conditions which allowed his country to undergo an ordinary recovery and which ensured supremacy in the nineteenth century. The imitation of this policy which he pursued—and with a complete disregard for the fact that conditions are not in the least the same—sheer absurdity. The fact is that the policy progressed since Pitt's day! For a while it is true, came slowly; but the first pace, and this war has led us to a final settlement!

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the point of power, Europe alone. Asiatic empires had fallen into a state of the sleep of death. The New World was more than an excrescence on the side of Europe; no one could reasonably have fore-

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I—4TH FEBRUARY 1945

alone. But the hatred felt by these hypocrites for a man of good faith is stronger than their sense of self-preservation. I had underestimated the power of Jewish domination over Churchill's England. They preferred, indeed, to perish by default, rather than to admit National Socialism to their midst. Under pressure, they might have tolerated a façade of anti-semitism on our part. But our absolute determination to eradicate Jewish power root and branch throughout the world was far too strong meat for their delicate stomachs to digest!

Pitt's genius lay in the implementation of a realistic policy, in harmony with the conditions of the epoch, which allowed his country to make a truly extraordinary recovery and which ensured for it world supremacy in the nineteenth century. The servile imitation of this policy which Churchill is now pursuing—and with a complete disregard for the fact that conditions are not in the least the same—is a sheer absurdity. The fact is that the world has progressed since Pitt's day! For a whole century, changes, it is true, came slowly; but the first war increased the pace, and this war has led us to a presentation of the bills and a final settlement!

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, from the point of power, Europe alone counted. The great Asiatic empires had fallen into a sleep that resembled the sleep of death. The New World was still nothing more than an excrescence on the end of the old, and no one could reasonably have foreseen the prodigious

Providence is now punishing Albion for her past crimes, the crimes which raised her to the power she was. The advent of Churchill, at a period that is decisive for both Britain and Europe, is the punishment chosen by Providence. For the degenerate *élite* of Britain, he's just the very man they want; and it is in the hands of this senile clown to decide the fate of a vast empire and, at the same time, of all Europe. It is, I think, an open question whether the British people, in spite of the degeneration of the aristocracy, has preserved those qualities which have hitherto justified British world domination. For my own part, I doubt it, because there does not seem to have been any popular reaction to the errors committed by the nation's leaders. And yet there have been many occasions when Britain could well have boldly set forth on a new and more fruitful course.

Had she so wished, Britain could have put an end to the war at the beginning of 1941. In the skies over London she had demonstrated to all the world her will to resist, and on her credit side she had the humiliating defeats which she had inflicted on the Italians in North Africa. The traditional Britain would have made peace. But the Jews would have none of it. And their lackeys, Churchill and Roosevelt, were there to prevent it.

Peace then, however, would have allowed us to prevent the Americans from meddling in European affairs. Under the guidance of the Reich, Europe would speedily have become unified. Once the Jewish

143 and '45

~~145~~

26
AA
after
the
leave
in
march
196

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 bemused 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

148.

143, Stalingrad

* A.H. asks how they can be so stupid, Olois speaks of men on the battlefield; ^{Touch} the deepest desire in any

In '45 before he dies, AA thinks of his self-destruction in the hunt for sweets and realizes that this life can be so hard that they die deeply in a cataclysmic revelation — something we have not seen since Goli.

43

Remember his battle in '44

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1945

1944

ference? Can we be sure they have no voice simply because we cannot hear? Can we assume they do not have yearnings of their own because we cannot penetrate their consciousness? Does the loathsome squash bug want to be a splendid butterfly? The lowly worm become the bird that pursues it? Does the oxen not tire of the yoke and long for a saddle? Would the hare not wish to be a hound, the hound a horse, and the horse to have the wings of Pegasus? Does the sparrow crave to be a hawk or eagle, the crow to sing like a mockingbird? Does the queen bee covet the majestic power of her name rather than being a parody of her royal title?

My heart goes out to the little queen, living out her days in darkness, laying all those eggs, the only one of her kind in the hive with no peer to confide in and, in the end, fertility exhausted, to be ruthlessly dispatched. The queen business isn't all it's cracked up to be. It is true that she has attendants who look after her needs, but it sounds like a public relations scam to extract the last egg out of her. I wonder if, along the way in her cheerless life, anyone ever takes her aside, pats her on the back and says, "You're doing a great job!"

FORTY-FIVE



The queen's misadventures are not confined to natural processes. Disaster can also come from other sources. The scene is the beeyard in late afternoon after school is out. There is bedlam. Rocks bounce off the hive. The frantic bees search for the enemy who attacks them from ambush. A long pole emerges. The hive is knocked over. The vandals flee. Bedlam turns into panic. What cataclysm has ruptured the colony's secure existence? What madness? Why this sudden

upheaval? Who is to blame for this catastrophe?

The overturned hive is in ruins, lying on its side, the frames of honeycomb scrambled like so many jackstraws. The brood is exposed. Honey drips from uncapped and smashed cells. What maniac would commit such an act? Most of the bees are flying, raging in wild gyrations. Those left on the exposed combs race blindly about, bumping into one another, disorganized and distraught. Other bees may appear to steal the unguarded honey, or the crazed bees, for want of a visible enemy to punish, may begin fighting among themselves. They roll and tumble about in combat, friend mistaken for foe. The entire colony has gone insane.

The queen dashes frantically over the combs. Incongruously she straddles an empty cell and begins laying an egg, as if this routine act will restore normalcy to her chaotic world. She is disoriented by the tumult within and blinded by the sunlight that has banished the safe darkness of the hive. A berserk worker suddenly attacks the queen, spinning her off her feet. Another joins the charge. Then another, and others. A scapegoat has been found. Guilt or innocence matter not. Revenge alone counts.

The queen squeals her high-pitched cry of terror. But the bees have forgotten that she is their mother, their salvation. They form a ball around her. This time it is not for her protection but a death sentence. Now, at last, they have united in a single purpose. They tear at the queen's wings and legs, suffocating her, focusing their own terror and frustration on the central figure in their lives. This could be a primitive tribe trying to appease angry gods with a living sacrifice. The queen's shrill cries of terror are unheeded. The ball of bees squeezes tighter and tighter. The cries become more faint. For the queen there is no mercy, no reprieve.

The dead queen is dropped over the landing board, her spent body resting between two blades of grass. The bees, as if purged of the violence against them by violence of their own, try to

* all of them + never forget it. Is by the one who takes the long pole?

The Life of the Bee

but in this instance as in all others the queen was alive, unharmed, and full of vigour; and the last of her companions had probably passed away in the act of presenting the last drop of honey she held in her sac to the queen, who was symbol of a life more precious, more vast, than her own.

145
Death
night
Eve.

[28]

This unwavering affection having come under the notice of man, he was able to turn to his own advantage the qualities to which it gives rise, or that it perhaps contains: the admirable political sense, the passion for work, the perseverance, magnanimity, and devotion to the future. It has allowed him, in the course of the last few years, to a certain extent to domesticate these intractable insects, though without their knowledge; for they yield to no foreign strength, and

V

THE YOUNG QUEENS

[64]

HERE let us close our hive, where we find that life is reassuming its circular movement, is extending and multiplying, to be again divided as soon as it shall attain the fulness of its happiness and strength; and let us for the last time reopen the mother-city, and see what is happening there after the departure of the swarm.

The tumult having subsided, the hapless city, that two thirds of her children have abandoned for ever, becomes feeble, empty, moribund; like a body from which the blood has been drained. Some thousands of bees have remained, however; and

* ~~Also to be read in a book~~

A. H. 1945

The Life of the Bee

in the sphere of man — interventions that may be more hidden, but not the less fraught with danger? And in the case before us, which is right, in the end, — the insect, or nature? What would happen if the bees, more docile perhaps, or endowed with a higher intelligence, were too clearly to understand the desires of nature, and to follow them to the extreme; to multiply males to infinity, seeing that nature is imperiously calling for males? Would they not risk the destruction of their species? Are we to believe that there are intentions in nature that it is dangerous to understand too clearly, fatal to follow with too much ardour; and that it is one of her desires that we should not divine, and follow, all her desires? Is it not possible that herein there may lie one of the perils of the human race? We too are aware of unconscious forces within us, that would appear to demand the reverse

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2 x 1000

* use for the dialogue with M.

The Life of the Bee

endeavour to see ; and at once the least phenomenon of all becomes overpoweringly complex ; we are confronted by the enigma of intellect, of destiny, will, aim, means, causes ; the incomprehensible organisation of the most insignificant act of life.

[11]

239 Our hive, then, is preparing to swarm ; making ready for the great immolation to the exacting gods of the race. In obedience to the order of the spirit — an order that to us may well seem incomprehensible, for it is entirely opposed to all our own instincts and feelings — 60,000 or 70,000 bees out of the 80,000 or 90,000 that form the whole population, will abandon the maternal city at the prescribed hour. They will not leave at a moment of despair ; or desert, with sudden and wild resolve, a home laid waste by famine,

The Life of the Bee

that differs so much from our own
And note, too, in these same little creatures, her unjust avarice and insensate waste. From her birth to her death, the austere forager has to travel abroad in search of the myriad flowers that hide in the depths of the thickets. She has to discover the honey and pollen that lurk in the labyrinths of the nectaries and in the most secret recesses of the anthers. And yet her eyes and olfactory organs are like the eyes and organs of the infirm, compared with those of the male. Were the drones almost blind, had they only the most rudimentary sense of smell, they scarcely would suffer. They have nothing to do, no prey to hunt down; their food is brought to them ready prepared, and their existence is spent in the obscurity of the hive, lapping honey from the comb. But they are the agents of love; and the most enormous, most use-

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the
himself.
145

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.

~~Always to Ant.~~

~~A & A~~

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 supersedure, but the technique and circumstances differ.

While supersedure 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 supersedure 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 supersedure queen would be and not to bother the princess within.

In any case, supersedure 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 honey-flow, it represents a grievous loss for the beekeeper, but it makes sense for the bees, giving both the departing swarm and the

1891

+
1945

1945

143

Stalwart

Scapri

ference? Can we be sure they have no voice simply because we cannot hear? Can we assume they do not have yearnings of their own because we cannot penetrate their consciousness? Does the loathsome squash bug want to be a splendid butterfly? The lowly worm become the bird that pursues it? Does the oxen not tire of the yoke and long for a saddle? Would the hare not wish to be a hound, the hound a horse, and the horse to have the wings of Pegasus? Does the sparrow crave to be a hawk or eagle, the crow to sing like a mockingbird? Does the queen bee covet the majestic power of her name rather than being a parody of her royal title?

My heart goes out to the little queen, living out her days in darkness, laying all those eggs, the only one of her kind in the hive with no peer to confide in and, in the end, fertility exhausted, to be ruthlessly dispatched. The queen business isn't all it's cracked up to be. It is true that she has attendants who look after her needs, but it sounds like a public relations scam to extract the last egg out of her. I wonder if, along the way in her cheerless life, anyone ever takes her aside, pats her on the back and says, "You're doing a great job!"

FORTY-FIVE



The queen's misadventures are not confined to natural processes. Disaster can also come from other sources. The scene is the beeyard in late afternoon after school is out. There is bedlam. Rocks bounce off the hive. The frantic bees search for the enemy who attacks them from ambush. A long pole emerges. The hive is knocked over. The vandals flee. Bedlam turns into panic. What cataclysm has ruptured the only secure existence? What madness? Why this sudden

upheaval? Who is to blame for this catastrophe?

The overturned hive is in ruins, lying on its side, the frames of honeycomb scrambled like so many jackstraws. The brood is exposed. Honey drips from uncapped and smashed cells. What maniac would commit such an act? Most of the bees are flying, raging in wild gyrations. Those left on the exposed combs race blindly about, bumping into one another, disorganized and distraught. Other bees may appear to steal the unguarded honey, or the crazed bees, for want of a visible enemy to punish, may begin fighting among themselves. They roll and tumble about in combat, friend mistaken for foe. The entire colony has gone insane.

The queen dashes frantically over the combs. Incongruously she straddles an empty cell and begins laying an egg, as if this routine act will restore normalcy to her chaotic world. She is disoriented by the tumult within and blinded by the sunlight that has banished the safe darkness of the hive. A berserk worker suddenly attacks the queen, spinning her off her feet. Another joins the charge. Then another, and others. A scapegoat has been found. Guilt or innocence matter not. Revenge alone counts.

The queen squeals her high-pitched cry of terror. But the bees have forgotten that she is their mother, their salvation. They form a ball around her. This time it is not for her protection but a death sentence. Now, at last, they have united in a single purpose. They tear at the queen's wings and legs, suffocating her, focusing their own terror and frustration on the central figure in their lives. This could be a primitive tribe trying to appease angry gods with a living sacrifice. The queen's shrill cries of terror are unheeded. The ball of bees squeezes tighter and tighter. The cries become more faint. For the queen there is no mercy, no reprieve.

The dead queen is dropped over the landing board, her spent body resting between two blades of grass. The bees, as if purged of the violence against them by violence of their own, try to

* *all of them + never forget it. Is by the one who takes the long pole?*

1945

really
dubious

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1944

2 copies DP

1944-45

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

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

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

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

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

M BFA

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

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

1945

THIRTY-NINE



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

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

→ euthanasia (1939?)

perversity, colonies do occasionally tolerate a queen who is inferior in the quality of her laying and the bees seem to honor and care for her as they would for a more robust or fertile mother. Does this mean that special criteria apply or allowances are made for queens that do not apply to others?

Because any fertilized egg can be made into a new queen, the old sovereign makes possible her own succession and death at the whim or convenience of the colony. Is she aware of her vulnerability? Does she know or suspect that treachery is afoot? It would seem that when a new queen cell appears she would know the game is up for her and she would balk or go on strike, but instead she goes about her business as if nothing unusual were taking place.

How do we interpret this? Do the bees in some way try to deceive or placate her? Is she privy to the skulduggery but unable to do anything about it? Are the bees putting her on notice that she isn't measuring up and had better improve her performance or it's all up with her? Is she too stupid to recognize the significance of what is taking place? Or must we ask more profound questions in the hope of getting more profound answers to understand this unfolding dilemma?

FORTY



Bees usually do not raise just one supersede queen at a time, but two, three, or four. The cells generally are built on a staggered schedule so the new princesses will not all emerge at the same time, providing a backup candidate if the first born fails in her mating flight or doesn't return.

The first out frees herself by chewing a perfect circle in the wax cap that imprisons her, or she may be aided by the bees

1945

who eagerly await her. Her first act is to utter a high-pitched cry that sounds something like "Zeep . . . zeep . . . zeep!" She is, in effect, proclaiming, "I'm taking over here." Another virgin queen in a nearby cell, restrained from getting out by guards, replies with a kind of muffled "quahking" sound, as if it were coming from deep within a manhole; this seems to mean, "We'll see about that."

Oddly enough, queens make the same "quahking" sound when they are grabbed or balled by the colony. More curious still, the same sound made by a reigning queen, if endangered or alarmed, will bring bees gathering around to protect her. Place two queens in nearby separate cages and they will call back and forth, challenging one another to mortal combat. Queens, so passive in their egg-laying role and domination by the workers, are murderously aggressive with one another.

If the first virgin princess freed is not restrained, she will rush immediately to the nearby queen cells, furiously tear them to pieces, and sting the rival princesses inside to death. The workers may stand by and watch her fury, or even help the enraged queen in her deadly assault. Generally, however, guards prevent the freed princess from attacking her imprisoned sisters, or spare at least one, until the first has mated and is ready to take over as the queen mother. Those held on standby status poke tiny proboscises through the thin wax cover to be fed by nurse bees or their guards.

If the newborn queen is successful in her mating flight, she will challenge the old queen to a fight to the death. Almost always the vigorous new queen wins. Should she lose, another virgin is freed to try her luck. Eventually the old queen is defeated and replaced, and the new hive mother wipes out any remaining virgins in their cells. This time she is not restrained.

The principle of one queen to a hive is powerful among bees. Occasionally, however, two queens will be found laying side by side. But this is as infrequent as it is inexplicable. It may represent some unusual accommodation between the two

A.H.
in
1945.
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* After July 1944, he knew more and more about the

murder of the queen

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in
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a queen emerge and mature in less time than is required for a worker or drone. We have already noted the physical differences between the queen and her daughters. She has neither their ardor nor their equipment to harvest the fields; her tongue is only about half as long as that of a worker, and even if she visited the blooming meadow she probably could not extract the nectar with her stub of a sucking-tube tongue.

Except for her brief mating flight, she spends her days in the darkness of the hive, a stranger to sunshine and flowers. Her eyesight is only about half that of the workers. A queen can live up to seven years, compared to the brief four- to six-week span of her daughters of summer, but she is usually worn out, her fertility exhausted, after a year or two.

While the queen's wings are short, they are extremely powerful. She can fly faster and higher than her daughters; only the most powerful and swift-flying drones can catch her in mating. Her stinger, although used only on other queens, is a deadly rapier-like instrument that she could easily sink into flesh, administering a painful wound or death to insects like herself, without damage to herself; but she will die rather than sting to defend herself.

The queen's true uniqueness and indispensability reside not in the external organs she has or lacks, but in the two large ovaries in her abdomen for the production of eggs, up to two thousand a day, as I have noted, an oviduct for their passage into the cell crib, and a spermatheca for the storage of sperm which enables her to lay fertilized eggs that become the workers who provide the nurturing qualities in which she is deficient, and unfertilized eggs that produce drones who will mate with future queens.

MBF

Everything about her is a contradiction. If queen she is, she is a queen with servants but no subjects. We assume that she is privy to nature's complex strategies only as a blind slave to her own needs. Would she accept her oppressed role if she had greater intelligence to comprehend it? Is it completely acciden-

tal that she is endowed with less brain power than her dim-witted sons or domineering daughters? Why is nature so parsimonious in doling out intelligence to those she exploits the most? Is it to spare them or to serve her own needs?

THIRTY-EIGHT



Because of her own biological complexity and built-in obsolescence, queens are subject to endless manipulation and frequent replacement. If bees decide that a queen is failing, they will replace her with a new queen of their own making in the process called "supersedure," a nice euphemism for the premeditated murder of the old queen who will be supplanted by one of her own daughters.

APB
in
1945

In literary terms we have here the ingredients for a first-class Shakespearean drama: the reigning queen witlessly bringing about her own ruination by providing her successor, a secret privy council plotting against the throne and selecting from among candidates in the nursery the one to become the new regent, keeping the reigning sovereign in the dark so she will continue to serve until convenient to oust her in a coup d'état, palace intrigues among the conspirators, the double bloody deeds of regicide and matricide by an assassin chosen by lot. We may further garnish our fanciful plot with a bit of sexual titillation: the handsome young prince who will win the beautiful princess, but only at cost of his own life, etc.

MBF
Parasite
in
1945

Bees do not share the human need for fantasies, romance, and contrived plots to divert them from the realities of life and its agitations, but there is little exaggeration in the scenario presented; the parts that apply are played out without dramatic embellishments as the bees go about their business of

1940? CK on euthanasia

16 • WILLIAM LONGGOOD

also 1945

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

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

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

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

The primary rule is inflexible: work or die.

1945 when the stingers are taken out of Alois' skin Kiana is full of love lives as AH's palace guard & Eve was always near him when he works

TWO



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

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

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

1919 & 1945

thinking armies, unlike the old professional armies, which were machines, drilled in order and obedience. There was a saying that thinking should be left to horses because they had bigger heads. Toward the end of the war the army leadership could no longer count on the blind obedience of the old standing army. This new army was made up of thinking citizens. In order to fight at top efficiency they needed not only military discipline but also what nowadays is called motivation. They had to feel that they were fighting for something worthwhile. I am not talking of ideals but simply of the chance of victory.

Objectively speaking, this possibility no longer existed after July, or perhaps even after April 1918. The Germans had shot the last arrow in their quiver and failed to hit the target. After that they fought to postpone the inevitable. The idea of sacrifice without the prospect of victory is bound to produce psychological and physical exhaustion.

Ludendorff was absolutely right when he said that the collapse of the fighting spirit took place in the army itself, not among the civilians in the hinterland, who, misled by unduly optimistic army bulletins, still clung to a blind belief in the possibility of victory. It was the army that, in the spring and summer of 1918, suffered a setback that does not show up on any war maps because it was a matter of morale. The enthusiastic German army of 1914 was no more. Even if some of the

troops continued of the army on shattered, badly, questionably ri cluded that the

But how? I ers had become the critical barrier defensive without their surprise, the attack was successful, army, still fighting zeal, continued the other. By reached the so-called defensive line far where the Allies full force of their were threatening Line, and that in front.

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Behind this unprecedented concentration of military control was Hitler's sense of mission, reinforced by his conviction, largely developed after 1940, that he understood more than the specialists. Then, too, there was Hitler's lurking suspicion of the generals and the General Staff officers, which had been greatly strengthened by the assassination attempt in July 1944. The surprisingly large circle of uninformed conspirators who were apprehended by Hitler's henchmen confirmed his suspicions.⁴ After the attempt he grew steadily more convinced that he was surrounded by treason. The roots of this attitude lay in his political past, when betrayal and treachery by members of the party was something to be calculated.

Within his party, and after securing power in the civilian sector, Hitler relied on two basic principles to protect himself. First, he concentrated all power in himself, so that no one could undertake anything of consequence without his approval. Second, he provided

up the OKW, under the subservient Keitel, as his personal staff), Wheeler-Bennett writes: "... The Führer had outmaneuvered, defeated, humiliated, and dragooned the German Army. The armed forces, of which they were but a part, now assumed their position as the third pillar in the structure of the Thousand Year Reich, ranking parallel with, but not above, the Reich Government and the Nazi Party" (*The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics, 1918-1945*, New York, 1967, p. 373). Thus the formal institutional subordination of the Wehrmacht was achieved in February 1938. The practical implementation of this as a totalitarian dictatorship over the military was fully completed only during the war.—ED.

⁴One reason that the complicity of so many officers was revealed was that during the first hours after the assassination attempt, it was assumed that Hitler had not survived the blast alive (let alone without serious injuries). Therefore the planned *coup d'état* began, and many conspirators clearly identified themselves who might never have been suspected had the signal not been given that Hitler was dead. Even so, however, many were not apprehended, or came under suspicion only after months of investigation revealed the degree of alienation of the officers and professional class from the "new" regime. One of the most striking aspects of this resistance was the extraordinary solidarity of the old-line professional officers. Many who had not been conspirators and had not even been in sympathy with the conspiracy were aware of it. Asked to join, they had declined. Yet their code of personal honor and sense of professional solidarity with their brother officers had precluded their reporting what was afoot. Hitler keenly sensed the reserve of most professional officers, reciprocated with suspicion and distrust, and saw his intuition fully vindicated in the plot of July 20, 1944, and subsequent investigations.—ED.

that every person would be watched by another institution. party it was the SS, protected against ship, that saw to it that the Nazi General Staff would never attempt to exert the danger of a new "Röhm Revolt."⁵ protected himself by installing officers and councilors (*Landräte*) his Nazi Party and opposite the regional administrators his Nazi regional leaders (*Gauleiter*). point, these measures naturally created antagonism, but they assured Hitler of Germany.

In the military sector, Hitler was the continuing antagonism between the which was concerned with the East Staff of the OKW responsible for all the fateful antagonism between the Supreme Headquarters during the I Wehrmacht, he anticipated the danger the Waffen-SS—literally "Weapons-raise divisions and even armies, as a armed services. Hitler even advised meeting before the latter was overthrown *Divide et impera*, "divide and rule," iavellian politics, was also the basic principle of the Wehrmacht, and its appointment him to become military dictator and the

It would require a separate book in detail, but to provide an idea of Hitler's for we have the record in the *War Diary* of Gerd von Rundstedt, as Commander-in-Chief, had to endure in order to secure

⁵Ernst Röhm had been the Chief of Staff of the paramilitary organization of a million and a half men. He had Röhm and many others murdered, just in order to seize power.—ED.

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institution by another institution. Within the National Socialist
party it was the SS, protected against dilution by its small member-
ship, that saw to it that the Nazi functionaries and the brownshirted
SA would never attempt to exert pressure on Hitler. There was no
danger of a new "Röhm Revolt."⁵ Against the bureaucracy, Hitler
protected himself by installing opposite the mayors and county
councilors (*Landräte*) his Nazi Party District Leaders (*Kreisleiter*),
and opposite the regional administrative chiefs (*Oberpräsidenten*)
his Nazi regional leaders (*Gauleiter*). From an administrative stand-
point, these measures naturally created intolerable tensions and
antagonism, but they assured Hitler against losing control of any part
of Germany.

In the military sector, Hitler was not at all inclined to prevent
the continuing antagonism between the General Staff of the Army,
which was concerned with the Eastern Front, and the Operations
Staff of the OKW responsible for all other fronts—thus renewing
the fateful antagonism between the Eastern High Command and
Supreme Headquarters during the First World War. Within the
Wehrmacht, he anticipated the danger of opposition by building up
the *Waffen-SS*—literally "Weapons-SS"—which in time was to
raise divisions and even armies, as an independent branch of the
armed services. Hitler even advised Mussolini, during their last
meeting before the latter was overthrown, to establish an Italian SS.
Divide et impera, "divide and rule," the age-old maxim of Mach-
iavellian politics, was also the basic principle of the Supreme Com-
mander of the Wehrmacht, and its application made it possible for
him to become military dictator and then to maintain this position.

It would require a separate book to substantiate this thesis in
detail, but to provide an idea of Hitler's methods as a military dicta-
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ter, had to endure in order to secure the necessary authority to

⁵Ernst Röhm had been the Chief of Staff of the SA, the brown-shirted Nazi
paramilitary organization of a million and a half men; in 1934, Hitler had
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straighten his front in face of impending disaster in February 1945—a concession to simple military necessity which, even when it was ultimately granted, was made in such a way that the final decision still rested with Hitler.⁶ Rundstedt did not wish to provoke time-consuming objections, and therefore had to anticipate and so far as possible to answer Hitler's predictable remonstrances, while generally reaffirming his absolute agreement with Hitler's basic conception of unyielding resistance. To deal with Hitler, Rundstedt had to be a military strategist at the front and a psychological tactician in the rear.

The *War Diary* records that at 11:15 P.M. on February 9, 1945, "the Commander-in-Chief West requested authorization to order necessary local straightening of the front and minor withdrawals so as to be in a position to respond quickly to the developing situation. The Führer could be assured that this would only be done when absolutely necessary to maintain the cohesion of the front. In any case that might have operational implications, the approval of the Führer would be duly requested."

On the evening of February 10, the answer was transmitted to Field Marshal von Rundstedt that the Führer had given his approval to localized straightening of the front. He had also, however, forbidden the evacuation of any fortification or city. "Perhaps the enemy can storm the rubble of a line of bunkers or of a city, but they will never be evacuated—except by order of the Führer."

The following day Rundstedt sent an order to that effect to his army groups. Whether they took it at face value or were determined to carry it out depended upon the character of the recipients. But

⁶The phrases "straightening the front" or "shortening the front" (*Frontbegradigung* or *Frontverkürzung*) are not mere euphemisms for retreating. Under heavy attack, a reasonably straight line of defense may be forced back, perhaps substantially, and perhaps at several different points. If there is sufficient force to mount an effective counterattack, it may be possible to cut off one or another of the enemy salients, as the Russians did on a scale unprecedented in the history of warfare at Stalingrad. But if there is no effective counterthrust and if enemy pressure is sustained, the simple geometry of the front means that the line to be defended is substantially longer than it would be if it were straight, with available manpower spread more thinly. Only by withdrawing to a new line of defense can the front be straightened and thus shortened.—ED.

certainly Hitler had created that reports from the front which he would have no grounds for

On February 13, Rundstedt's breakthrough of the enemy which might be taken. To it depended on holding the front with caution of adding that "under no circumstances be permitted to arise of wit delaying action." To this he introduced with the qualifying the question of giving up was

Faced with the imminent Hitler could no longer close. Field Marshal von Rundstedt a secret contingency directive should break through to the Rhine, the Roer, which would no longer recede within a few days. He had been forbidden to transmit such communications and troops in his judgment accorded him so circumspectly that it was only of limited use. The commander was to be able to decide on the enemy before they could be instantaneously.

That Rundstedt had correctly. The Commander was made clear on new orders on the defense of the border of Germany. A week earlier he refused to approve the recommendation of the group commander that the Seventh Army be moved to the mountainous Eifel Forest sector of the German border. But it was also Rundstedt regarded the withdrawal of time and was making his plan on the basis of his own impression that it

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certainly Hitler had created a situation which made it inevitable
that reports from the front would be doctored in such a way so that
he would have no grounds for objections.

On February 13, Rundstedt submitted a report on the likely
breakthrough of the enemy and the conceivable countermeasures
which might be taken. To the obvious conclusion that everything
depended on holding the front together, Rundstedt took the pre-
caution of adding that "under no circumstances should the thought
be permitted to arise of withdrawing to the Rhine in a so-called
delaying action." To this he added another sentence, cautiously
introduced with the qualifying phrase "however," in which he raised
the question of giving up western Holland.

Faced with the imminent danger of major breakthroughs, even
Hitler could no longer close his eyes to the facts. On February 15,
Field Marshal von Rundstedt received, as an exception to the rule,
a secret contingency directive to be implemented in case the enemy
should break through to the Rhine from the Reichswald or across
the Roer, which would no longer be a barrier after the high water
receded within a few days. At the same time Rundstedt was for-
bidden to transmit such contingency orders to the subordinate com-
manders and troops in his theater, which made the freedom of
judgment accorded him so circumscribed from the very beginning
that it was only of limited usefulness. The important thing to a field
commander was to be able to react to unexpected successes of the
enemy before they could be extended; in other words, to react
instantaneously.

That Rundstedt had correctly gauged the attitude of his Supreme
Commander was made clear on February 20, when Hitler sent him
new orders on the defense of the *Westwall*, the fortified western
border of Germany. A week earlier Rundstedt reported that he had
refused to approve the recommendation of a subordinate army
group commander that the Seventh Army fall back to Prüm, in the
mountainous Eifel Forest several miles inside the fortified Franco-
German border. But it was also clear to all concerned that Rund-
stedt regarded the withdrawal of the Seventh Army as only a matter
of time and was making his plans accordingly. Hitler now informed
him of his own impression that the very fact that such a withdrawal

was even anticipated was, in itself, gravely demoralizing to the fighting morale of the Seventh Army. He ordered Rundstedt, in the sharpest terms, to make it absolutely clear that the Seventh Army would hold the Westwall: "The very thought that defense along the so-called Prüm-Line would be easier is to be eradicated from the minds of the leaders and subordinate leaders."

Nor did Hitler leave it at this. Contrary to normal practice, this order was sent directly not only to the Commander-in-Chief West but also to the generals commanding the three army groups under him. Only Army Group B, including the Seventh Army, was directly involved in this particular incident, but the message for the other two was very clear: do not advance any further such proposals.

In a conciliatory report to Supreme Headquarters on the evening of the same day, Rundstedt requested that the Führer be informed that he was fully aware of the danger of the "avalanche effect" (i.e., the danger that an initially orderly retreat might get out of control and degenerate into desperate rout) which could result from the approval of requests for permission to withdraw. He wanted it known that from the very beginning he had harshly opposed such requests, and that for his own part he would seek permission to retreat only in situations where it was the only way to save valuable fighting units from annihilation.

On February 21, 1945, Field Marshal Keitel, Chief of the OKW, once more reiterated Hitler's orders to hold each meter of German soil and re-emphasized that individual sections of the Westwall would not be evacuated without the Führer's explicit personal approval. On the 22nd, Rundstedt replied that he had already repeatedly transmitted this information to his army groups with great emphasis. The explanation of why bunkers were nonetheless being lost seems shamefaced, though it consisted of entirely plausible arguments which would have led someone more reasonable than Hitler to the conclusion that sooner or later, no matter how strenuous the efforts to hold it, the Western Front was going to collapse.⁷

⁷The War Diary summarized Rundstedt's explanation why it was that "precisely those sectors of the front with strong lines of bunkers were lost in conspicuously little time." They definitely proved to be valuable as rear-echelon support bases for staging reserves, etc., since they provided excellent

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On February 22, 1945, the expected major offensive began against the sector of the front held by Army Group B, accompanied by attacks on the approaches to the Prüm-Line. Inevitably, the Prüm-Line was broken near Bitburg. In an evaluation of the situation transmitted to Führer Headquarters on February 25, Rundstedt was already having to think in terms of falling back on the Kyll-Line, the next feasible line of defense, which would have involved the loss of the major city of Trier on the Mosel. On the 27th, Rundstedt received a teletype dispatch signed by Hitler informing him that it was still too early to fall back on the Kyll-Line. According to Hitler, in this section of the front the Americans were merely engaged in a containing attack; they did not have the necessary strength to exploit a possible breakthrough into the Mosel Valley. The surrender of Trier was in any case out of the question. The weight of the attack, in Hitler's view, lay in the Roer sector of the front and in the area around Hagenau.

Concerning the events of that February 27, the following day's entry in the "Situation Book," based on the briefing on the Western Front at the situation conference, recorded it as "a day of great crisis, but one in which, on the whole, one can nonetheless speak of successful defense. The decisive thing is that the British as well as the Americans have already put their operational reserves

protection against aerial and long-range, high-trajectory artillery bombardment. "Against direct artillery or tank fire, however, they were very vulnerable (frontal construction of the embrasures, inadequate reciprocal flanking support of the bunkers, etc.). It was decisive that there were not sufficient forces to man all the installations and to control the area between them . . .," which could not be covered from the bunkers, with their embrasures facing only in one direction. Without control of the areas between them, of course, "the bunkers would be quickly put out of action by going around them" (KTB/OKW, IV, Pt. 2: 1371).

The inadequacy of the *Westwall*—a heavily fortified frontier, not a simple masonry structure like the Great Wall of China—is particularly striking, considering the vast resources, both in skilled labor and scarce materials, such as steel, which had been squandered on it, especially since 1938, at the expense of other areas of economic mobilization. At the beginning of the war, as a matter of fact, Hitler gave the *Westwall* priority over the naval construction program, and it was only in October 1939 that the navy was able to have at least its submarine-building program raised to top priority.—ED.

into action or have already brought them up behind the front lines." Clearly this was a case where the General Staff officers no less than the dictator tended to grasp at straws.

On the previous day, Hitler had refused his Commander-in-Chief West's request to withdraw the left wing of Army Group H. But on the 27th, as the situation in the area of Erkelenz became more threatening, Field Marshal von Rundstedt renewed his plea and Hitler gave his approval "with a heavy heart." On the same day, the marshal directed a personal communication to Hitler—an exception to the rule which could be made only under very special circumstances. In it Rundstedt reiterated that he regarded it as his basic responsibility to keep the entire front intact and cohesive. Since he had to reckon with the possibility of various enemy breakthroughs, he once more requested, according to the secret contingency directive given him on February 15, at least some freedom of action to deal with the swiftly changing situation. He raised the question of giving up Trier and the *Westwall* fortifications which already lay before the advancing enemy front, in order to save the forces he needed for his chief task: to prevent the whole front from being torn to shreds. He asked his Führer to have enough confidence in him to authorize him to issue the necessary orders, as valuable time was often lost through consultation with Supreme Headquarters. He reassured Hitler "that it is my entire purpose to do everything in my power to prevent the front from being thrown back to the Rhine."

In his answer on February 28, Hitler reassured the field marshal of his confidence in him, but otherwise limited himself to confirming the limited concessions to freedom of command decision that he had made earlier. He thus brushed aside Rundstedt's appeal without so much as a word, despite the fact that on the same day he received a new report from him evaluating the impending crisis in uncompromising terms.

On March 1, the enemy forces broke through at Neuss on the Rhine opposite Düsseldorf, making it necessary to give up the Maas-Line. Not only had the Allies reached the Rhine near the Dutch border in northwestern Germany, but to the south they had also forced their way into Trier. This brought with it the danger—be-

cause of the hole torn in the tional necessity of withdraw the entire Mosel Valley. "U tion Book" in euphemistic military jargon, "a great de then, despite the good bear unsatisfactory situation has "catastrophic," the worst de leaving no way to describe ti the weeks that followed.

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used his Commander-in-Chief of Army Group H. But on the day of Erkelenz became more understated renewed his plea and every heart." On the same day, communication to Hitler—an exception only under very special circumstances—that he regarded it as his duty to keep the front intact and cohesive. In the face of various enemy breakthroughs according to the secret contingency plan, at least some freedom of movement was required. He raised the Westwall fortifications which were on the enemy front, in order to save the front from being thrown back. To prevent the whole front from collapsing, Hitler had to have enough confidence in his necessary orders, as valuable in the eyes of Supreme Headquarters. His entire purpose was to do everything to prevent the front from being thrown back.

Hitler reassured the field marshal and limited himself to reconnoitering. He refused freedom of command decision and pushed aside Rundstedt's appeal. He emphasized the fact that on the same day he was evaluating the impending crisis.

It broke through at Neuss on the day when it was necessary to give up the Maas. Behind the Rhine near the Dutch border but to the south they had also fought with it the danger—be-

cause of the hole torn in the front of Army Group G—of the operational necessity of withdrawing back to the Rhine, with the loss of the entire Mosel Valley. "Up until February 28," states the "Situation Book" in euphemistic but nonetheless all too clear German military jargon, "a great defensive battle could be spoken of. Since then, despite the good bearing of the troops and their leaders, an unsatisfactory situation has developed." Had one chosen the word "catastrophic," the worst designation would already have been used, leaving no way to describe the further deteriorating situation during the weeks that followed.

This was the style of leadership that Hitler maintained to the very last. At 12:30 A.M. on April 28, 1945, only two days before his flight through suicide—in other words, even as the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht was contemplating his end—the order was issued, and recorded in the *War Diary*, "that basic decisions are to be presented to the Führer with thirty-six hours' notice. Independent decisions are to be justified in detail."

By this time the once "beloved Führer" lived in a bunker under the Reich Chancellery, which was already being hit by Russian shells. But he was still connected by telephone with the Berlin radio tower which transmitted his orders to all points of the compass, as though that pallid figure with the trembling arm and the protruding, hyperopic eyes, who for weeks on end had been vegetating beneath the earth, were still the Chief of State of the Greater German Reich and master of the strongest military machine on the continent. The man who had only too often had himself praised as "the greatest military leader of all times" could not recognize defeat at the end, just as he had been unable to acknowledge its beginning at Stalingrad. Defiantly committed to delusions leading to a catastrophe such as no responsible statesman in history had ever before suffered, Hitler reeled toward his death.

The most frightful aspect of this infernal charade was that the command structure remained intact and continued to function to the very end. Those caught up in it were driven, on the one hand, by the fear of the consequences of disobedience, often reinforced by their inability to decide independently to act rationally. On the other hand, they were sustained by a feeling of loyalty toward the

Chief of State, reinforced by the conviction that the oath sworn to him as Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht had to be kept, as well as by confidence that their Führer must certainly have had well-founded reason for hope, since he was continuing the resistance.

This is dramatically documented by the grotesque, almost haunted confusion of the entries of April 27 and 28 in the *War Diary*, kept by that part of the Operations Staff of the OKW that had just been evacuated to Berchtesgaden in southern Germany. There one finds that only two or three days before Hitler's suicide a directive was issued by the Chief of the OKW Operations Staff, who had remained in the north nearer Hitler, outlining procedures in case detailed orders no longer reached the south. A command from the Commander-in-Chief West to one of his army groups is recorded, indicating, as a consequence of yet another enemy breakthrough, a new line straight across Germany. In case of extreme necessity it would be permissible to retreat there, but that line would then absolutely have to be held. Yet this was to be done with divisions averaging only a third of their nominal fighting strength, while many were still weaker. Moreover, the Wehrmacht was now firing into German cities and towns as though the war were still being waged in enemy territory. It was ordered that Munich should not be held as a local bastion—which would have meant an embittered and highly destructive house-to-house struggle—but only defended in the broad context of overall strategy. However, this decision was not reached out of consideration for the population or the artistic value of the architecture, but rather "because there were insufficient forces." Even Munich, so cherished by every German, so many centuries in the building, was now only a topographical obstruction which would have been exploited had the forces been available.

Meanwhile, reports were recorded in the *War Diary* concerning a "Bavarian Liberation Committee" which had seized a radio transmitter near Munich. The entry notes the dispatch of troops to deal with the "traitors," and then the diversion of part of the force to defend the "front," which was steadily being rolled back. In addition, at 6:30 P.M. on the 28th: "Information from the Chief of the Army Personnel Office concerning the authority granted

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Even after Hitler was the last bit of gasoline in the Reich Chancellery, the c its wheels and gears having years. Of all the machine: times, the machinery of: such that it still functions met his fate.

2. The Guiding Principle During the Last Year

At this point we may well egypt during the years when onto the defensive and he his opponents with the: had used so effectively du

It would be a mistake t that during the first half regarded as masterly ever the unquestioned military were so daring that a nur respect still considered the risks involved. For example Alfred Jodl pointed out the operational conceptions:

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2. The breakthrough in the Army General Staff had planned direction of Sedan and Al

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theater commanders in regard to promotions, decorations, etc."

Even after Hitler was dead and his body had been burned with the last bit of gasoline that could be procured in the area of the Reich Chancellery, the command machinery continued to function, its wheels and gears having been so well articulated throughout the years. Of all the machines giving material form to the essence of our times, the machinery of state is the most uncanny; its perfection is such that it still functions when the man at the controls has already met his fate.

2. The Guiding Principles of Hitler's Leadership During the Last Years of the War

At this point we may well ask what principles guided Hitler's strategy during the years when his "Greater German Reich" was forced onto the defensive and he was no longer in a position to checkmate his opponents with the surprising *coups* and bold operations he had used so effectively during the first half of the war.

It would be a mistake to belittle Hitler as a strategist, or to deny that during the first half of the war he developed conceptions regarded as masterly even by many skeptical experts. Yet despite the unquestioned military success of several of these ideas, they were so daring that a number of experienced professionals in retrospect still considered them irresponsible because of the harrowing risks involved. For example, during his postwar captivity, General Alfred Jodl pointed out three of the most important of Hitler's basic operational conceptions:

1. The fundamental plan for Operation "Weser-Exercise," on which the Norwegian campaign of April 1940 was based, which included not only the extremely hazardous entry into Oslo Fjord but the even more hazardous occupation of Narvik far to the north.
2. The breakthrough in the West, not on the right wing, as the Army General Staff had planned it, but rather in the center, in the direction of Sedan and Abbeville, a plan Hitler had advocated in

back to him with suggestive force, and that, confronted by a deteriorating situation, he was governed by the experience he had gained as a partisan politician. This must be the basis of any judgment of him as a military leader during the latter years of the war.

3. Hitler's "Wavebreak" Doctrine

Our evaluation of Hitler's military leadership, particularly during the latter part of the war, would be incomplete without considering two further points: the first, what I would like to call his "wavebreak" doctrine; and the second, his responsibility for the senseless prolongation of the war he had arbitrarily unleashed.

According to the wavebreak doctrine, any provisionally fortified place officially proclaimed to be a "fortress" was to be defended even when the enemy had thrust past on the left and right. On the basis of this idea, a whole series of "fortresses," whose fate is recorded in the *War Diary*, was established in the West, especially along the coast. But Hitler also followed the practice in the East on the assumption that the enemy required more forces for the siege than were necessary for the defense. The entire hypothesis presupposed that the enemy would have to take these pseudo-fortresses, since he would need them as road junctions and railway depots. In the actual event, this applied only in individual cases, and in those instances where the enemy needed more forces to invest a town or city that had been cut off, the job could be done by inferior units. With respect to the Red Army, in particular, Hitler made a serious miscalculation, for the German forces in the East were actually outnumbered all along. The practical consequences are shown by the account in the *War Diary* of the fighting on the Eastern Front in 1945.

On the basis of reports made in the situation conference in Hitler's headquarters, the *War Diary* records on February 16: "On the whole, it can be determined that because of the resistance in Posen [Poznań on the Warta] and in other fortresses, the enemy advance has been tangibly delayed and will be made more difficult still." In subsequent entries, however, it became all too clear that it was only

a brief respite, the benefit of the disadvantage resulting from the "fortresses," which resu in numbers.

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a brief respite, the benefit of which was more than outweighed by the disadvantage resulting from the loss of the units defending the "fortresses," which resulted in a still greater operational inferiority in numbers.

Woe unto the commandant of a fortress who, because of a hopeless situation, surrendered the "wavebreak" entrusted to him out of a sense of responsibility to the wounded, the last defenders, and the surviving civilian population! Consider, for example, the fate of General Otto Lasch, an experienced officer whom I had given his initial orientation briefing at Führer Headquarters before he had been put in command of the LXIV Army Corps on the Vizcayan Front. At the end of January 1945, he was made commandant of the East Prussian capital of Königsberg. On April 9, 1945, the general capitulated to the Russians. Further resistance was senseless: the garrison of his "fortress" was largely wounded or otherwise incapable of sustaining the struggle. The Wehrmacht report of April 12 noted that Lasch had been condemned to death by hanging for unauthorized surrender. Because he was already a Russian prisoner, the sentence could obviously not be carried out. But it was more than an empty threat, for the report continued: "His next of kin will be made responsible." The general's daughter, who had been conscripted as a staff assistant, was imprisoned. On April 17, 1945, I recorded in the *War Diary* the report of two of Lasch's officers who had escaped capture by swimming across the Haff, the great lagoon lying before the city. They said that the general was still fighting though "enemy tanks had already appeared before his command post." I had to add that this report was "probably false," for it was clear to me that this was a case where a man of integrity had acted on the only conclusion possible in view of the complete senselessness of further resistance—and done so, moreover, in full awareness of the fact that he was not only sacrificing his reputation but also gambling with the welfare of his family.⁸

⁸The brutal practice of using a man's loved ones as hostages and punishing them as well as him for disloyalty was only too well known: to have kept it secret would have reduced its considerable deterrent value. However, a very revealing exception had to be made by Hitler in the particularly sensitive case of the dangerously popular Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. Seriously injured

particularly bad luck. It was bad luck in a number of different respects." That is a shocking statement. It may at times be appropriate to use the expression "bad luck" for private calamities, though even there it often has a patronizing tone. But it was an outrage for Hitler to employ this trivializing term to the last great exertion of the Wehrmacht, which had cost tens of thousands their lives or health and which—planned and carried out as it was under the circumstances as they developed—was condemned to failure from the very beginning. The point was that by thinking in terms of mere "bad luck," Hitler once more suppressed whatever insight was building up within him and thereby enabled himself to go on with the long-since irretrievably lost war.

The abortive offensive had made clear not only the aerial but also the armored superiority of the enemy. Yet Hitler did not allow himself to be shaken; he placed his confidence in Karl Otto Saur from Speer's Ministry of Armaments and War Production. Saur was a tried and tested master of improvisation, though he did have a tendency to calculate mere possibilities as accomplished facts. In the previously cited conference at the end of December 1944 with General Thomale, who was Chief of Staff of the Inspector General of Armored Forces, Hitler said: "Today I spoke with Saur. He said he hopes to reach a production of 1,500 tanks and self-propelled assault guns this month. The important thing is that the replacements go to Model [on the Western Front] and, above all, quickly enough so that we can move again."⁷ No doubt when Hitler spoke these words he was convinced by them, though at some deeper level his negative insight may already have prevailed.

In January 1945, there were new factors thrown into the balance

⁷The production figure of 1,500 tanks which Hitler cites is in itself not grotesque. What is astounding is the underlying assumption that under the prevailing conditions in Germany in the winter of 1944-1945, most of those armored vehicles would be able to reach the front, or once there, have fuel to operate. Albert Speer had succeeded in tripling German war production from 1942 to 1944, despite aerial bombardment, but of 1,764 tanks built from September to November 1944 only 1,371 could even be delivered to the Wehrmacht. For a concise general introduction to the problem of economic mobilization and war production in the Third Reich in the context of Hitler's ideology, see this editor's review article, "Hitler's Fatal Mistake," *Air University Review*, XXI (May-June 1970), 82-90.—ED.

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that should have forced Hitler to end the war. We have already
touched on the unavoidable collapse of the armaments industry,
sealed by the loss of Upper Silesia, as well as the drastic reduction
of fuel production. Now came the threat of the loss of the Hungarian
oil fields, which at least to a certain extent had served as a substitute
—though most inadequate—for the Rumanian. In establishing his
strategic priorities on the Eastern Front, therefore, Hitler gave first
place to the oil areas in Hungary and in the Vienna basin, "since
without this oil [representing 80 per cent of the remaining produc-
tion] it is not possible to continue waging war." But when Hungary
was lost and the enemy drove on into the Vienna basin, Hitler once
more—despite his own clearly stated appraisal of the consequences
—failed to reach the obvious conclusion.

The power of suggestion that Hitler radiated to the very end,
despite his inner struggle between false hopes and real insight, was
uncanny. Even so shrewd a man as Josef Goebbels was unable to
evade it. On May 8, 1943, he had confided to his diary: "The
Führer gave expression to his unshakable conviction that the Reich
will be the master of all Europe. We must still engage in many fights,
but these will undoubtedly lead to magnificent victories. Thereafter
the way to world domination is practically certain. To dominate
Europe will be to assume the leadership of the world." Meanwhile,
as we have seen, even Goebbels had changed his tune. He was seized
—as his adjutant confirmed—with doubt of Hitler's genius, and
from that time on he traveled repeatedly to the Führer Headquarters
with the intention of speaking his mind. He never did, however, and
returned each time to Berlin full of admiration.

Even as late as February 24, 1945, with the situation obviously
hopeless, Hitler had the suggestive power to inspire confidence in
the *Gauleiter* gathered around him for one last time. By force of
his personality he was able to give them enough of a "booster shot"
to hold on.⁸ Even during the final phase of the catastrophe, the power

⁸It was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Nazi mass meeting, at which
Hitler proclaimed the Twenty-Five Point Program. In addition to addressing
the assembled *Gauleiter* on February 24, 1945, Hitler also published a procla-
mation to the German people in which he predicted a change in the course
of the war within the next ten months.

strong bomb?

of suggestion that emanated from Hitler did not fail him. This was grimly documented by Baron Robert von Greim's report to General Karl Koller, Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe. Hitler had promoted Greim to field marshal in April 1945 and named him Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe in place of Göring, the latter having been discredited for alleged treachery. Greim, whose right foot had been shattered as he flew into the beleaguered city on April 26, and whose flight out two days later was to be hardly less hazardous, told Koller during a long-distance telephone conversation the evening of the 27th that he must never lose faith. Everything would turn out in the end. "Being with the Führer and his strength," said Greim, "have fortified me extraordinarily; it is like a fountain of youth for me. The Führer sat on my bed for a long time and talked through everything with me. He retracted all of his criticisms of the Luftwaffe. He knows what our branch of the armed forces has achieved; his criticism is directed only against Göring. For our men he has only the highest praise. I have been gratified no end about this."

When he had exhausted every delusive hope, Hitler fell back on the explanation that whatever happened was preordained. More than once he adopted this attitude. On one occasion Reich Minister Albert Speer made it a matter of record. In a letter he addressed to Hitler on March 29, 1945, Speer pointed out that Hitler had once observed that the task of statesmanship was "to save a people who had lost a war from an heroic end." In a conversation on March 18, 1945, however, Hitler had taken exactly the opposite standpoint. "In the evening," wrote Speer, "you clearly and unambiguously explained to me, if I did not misunderstand you, that if the war is lost, then the people is also lost. This fate is inexorable. It is not necessary to consider the fundamental things that a people needs to sustain its

The scene was described to me by Gauleiter Rainer of Carinthia—later extradited to Yugoslavia where he was condemned to death—in the witnesses' wing of the prison at Nuremberg. Hitler's left hand already trembled so badly that he could no longer use it to lift a glass of water to his lips. He pointed this out himself, and said that one day his head might also start to wobble, but never his heart. Whoever still believed in him said to himself that if the Führer still faced the future so firmly, then he must surely have something at hand—a secret weapon or the like—with which he could hope to reverse the situation at the last moment.

* O.T. at the end, I came to believe that if the Allies came up with the atom bomb, it would mean that the O.O. had switched his allegiance.

bare existence. Or oneself. For the weaker, and the people of the East, be only the inferior

Objectively speaking, the rationalization of the war is capable of distortion. Historically, of the most infamous career, so rich in victories, Reich"—for it was unleashed the war attack on the Soviet Union, its duration beyond

By January 31, of the Wehrmacht, with a death toll of 2,000,000 who were still listed as missing in bombardment. To continue to rise steadily, less numbers who perished in the East in the course of the war, and among them Hitler nothing but the

"Hitler had long since lost all illusions, for example, we were of the belief that in the end the quality will always be the better, would be disrupted if the

"In addition to the two that as of January 31, 1945, that date—after which had suffered 8,333,978 continued for more than ten years not be maintained, and Schramm estimates that casualties and another half million and other causes.—ED.

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bare existence. On the contrary, it is better to destroy these things oneself. For the people would have proved itself to have been the weaker, and the future would belong exclusively to the stronger people of the East. Whoever survives the struggle would in any case be only the inferior, for the worthy would have fallen!"

Objectively speaking, this statement was a pseudo-Darwinistic rationalization of the defeat, conceived in a semi-educated mind capable of distorting anything it encountered to fit its preconceptions.⁹ Historically speaking, this monstrous judgment stands as one of the most infamous, hideous statements ever uttered in the long career, so rich in vituperation, of the "Führer of the Greater German Reich"—for it was no one but Hitler himself who in 1939 had unleashed the war against Poland and then, in 1941, through the attack on the Soviet Union, had extended its scope and prolonged its duration beyond all measure.

By January 31, 1945, the cumulative monthly casualty report of the Wehrmacht, which was presented to Hitler personally, showed a death toll of 2,000,699. This figure did not include the fallen who were still listed as "missing in action," or the victims of aerial bombardment.¹ To this army of millions of dead, whose numbers continued to rise steadily during the final months, were added countless numbers who perished among the columns of refugees fleeing the East in the course of the forced deportations of untold thousands more, and among those who died as prisoners. All these were for Hitler nothing but the sum total of the sacrifices in a race war which,

⁹Hitler had long since expressed this basic attitude. In his *Table Conversations*, for example, we read that on July 5, 1942, he was "an ardent advocate of the belief that in the struggle between peoples those with the better average quality will always be the victors." In his opinion, "the natural order of things would be disrupted if the inferior should master the superior."

¹In addition to the two million dead, the records of the Wehrmacht showed that as of January 31, 1945, there were almost two million missing. As of that date—after which systematic reporting broke down—the Wehrmacht had suffered 8,333,978 casualties—dead, wounded, or missing. The war continued for more than three months longer, but dependable records could not be maintained, and therefore no exact accounting can ever be made. Schramm estimates that a total of four million Germans died as military casualties and another half-million civilians perished as a result of air raids and other causes.—ED.

having reaped its negative harvest, was now drawing to a close. Those who survived, the maimed and wounded, those still holding on at the front, the workers in the bombed-out industrial areas, the women, the aged, the children, everyone who in any way had been affected by the war—these were all dismissed by Hitler, before his own escape from life and flight from responsibility, as biologically inferior and therefore worthy of nothing but extinction. Thus we see that this man who had deceived so many through base dissimulation and vicious falsehood was no less capable of deluding himself when the incontrovertible truth threatened to overpower him.

To grasp the full significance of Hitler's appalling statement to Albert Speer, we must bear in mind that no momentary whim or fit of temper prompted it. Only twelve days before his end, Hitler most emphatically reaffirmed this viewpoint in a conference with General Carl Hilpert, the Commander-in-Chief of Army Group Courland, who had flown to Berlin to explain the situation to Hitler and to receive new orders authorizing him to conduct operations in a manner appropriate to the changed circumstances. Two days after this conference with Hitler on April 18, 1945, the general made a report of it to his war diarist, Dr. W. Heinemeyer, now an archivist in Marburg, whose written account tells us that "after General Hilpert had expressed his opinions concerning the task of Army Group Courland, Hitler leaned back and began a long lecture on the struggle of the German people. It culminated with the words: 'If the German people loses the war, it will have proved itself not worthy of me [meiner nicht würdig].'" At these words, according to Dr. Heinemeyer, the general felt chills run up and down his spine. He would have liked to remonstrate by reminding Hitler how badly he had underestimated the Americans; but as such a rejoinder would have been absolutely purposeless, he had merely let the statement pass in silence.

"Not worthy of me!" Whoever reviews Hitler's statements during the last year, particularly the fragments of the situation conferences that have been preserved and published, is struck by the way the word "I" replaces, in Hitler's diction, the terms "German Wehrmacht" or "German people." The statement to General Hilpert represents the culmination of this ego-cult, which had, of course, from

the very beginning been now seemed almost to mania. In cases of delusions of inadequacy that torian might well deduce longer able to suppress and that he found no be Germany's catastrophe himself to the German has carried him to the cannot be refused pity. however. He remained in Kammhuber remarked if war was lost, Hitler, in self."

These statements of a confidential conversation would never become public himself at all with public propaganda minister, whose never once faltered. But influence posterity by having a true evaluation of his past would bring. The record of April 14, 1945, and abrupt subsequent fragment from until the very end Hitler's predictions regarding a Judaized declining British Empire worthy that Hitler confronted with a total defeat yet this could not shake him the people had to endure the rebirth of eternal Germany be able to endure living in to follow upon the defeat

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the very beginning been implicit in the Führer-principle, but which now seemed almost to have assumed the proportions of megalomania. In cases of delusions of grandeur, physicians search for feelings of inadequacy that may have provoked the disorder. The historian might well deduce from Hitler's statement that he was no longer able to suppress the realization of what he had perpetrated, and that he found no better way to relieve his own sense of guilt for Germany's catastrophe than to try to shift the responsibility from himself to the German people. A megalomaniac whose psychosis has carried him to the point where he has lost touch with reality cannot be refused pity. Hitler had no claim to such compassion, however. He remained fully aware of the situation. When General Kammhuber remarked in his briefing at the end of March that the war was lost, Hitler, in so many words, replied, "I know that myself."

These statements of Hitler that we have cited were all made in confidential conversations which Hitler could reasonably assume would never become public knowledge. He no longer concerned himself at all with public opinion, leaving it entirely to his propaganda minister, whose voice, even in this unspeakable situation, never once faltered. But Hitler himself did make a last attempt to influence posterity by having Martin Bormann record his retrospective evaluation of his policies and what he expected the future would bring. The record of this series of statements begins on February 14, 1945, and abruptly stops on February 26. However, one subsequent fragment from the beginning of April demonstrates that until the very end Hitler remained entangled in the web of his prejudices regarding a Judaized America, a degenerate France, and a declining British Empire. In our context, it is particularly noteworthy that Hitler conceded that the German people were confronted with a total defeat which would have frightful repercussions; yet this could not shake him in his firm belief in the future. The more the people had to endure, the more magnificent would be the ultimate rebirth of eternal Germany. He himself, however, would not be able to endure living in the transitional Germany that would have to follow upon the defeated Third Reich.

Here we see no pseudo-Darwinism, no inexorable race war, not

even a reproach for the German people, but rather advice as to how they should sustain their racial purity and national unity until their "rebirth." There is really no point in trying to understand the contradictions between these and Hitler's other statements in terms of mendacity, for that would presuppose that the liar somehow knew that he was lying. There can be no doubt that Hitler firmly believed these sentences when he uttered them. To the very end, he remained the consummate actor, completely identifying himself with the role he played until the very moment he shed his costume and makeup. The veracity of his presentation was only heightened by the enthusiastic reception of it by the audience before him. In time, this became so reliable, so real, that it no longer mattered when his audience could no longer hear him because of having had to creep into air-raid shelters, cellars, and bunkers to escape the bombs of the Western Powers and the shells of the Red Army; for Hitler could now be sustained by the imagined enthusiasm of posterity.

Hitler's primary means of exonerating himself of all responsibility for the unfolding catastrophe was to attribute everything to treason, as in the night of April 20-21, 1945, as the Supreme Command was being divided into a Northern and a Southern Staff. While briefing Hitler that evening—in the presence of only a single stenographer—a senior Army General Staff officer asked if Hitler really thought the most recent reverses on the Eastern Front could be attributed to treason. "Hitler," wrote the general several months later on the basis of his still vivid memory, "turned to me with an almost pitying look, as though only a fool could pose such a question, and said: 'All the failures in the East are due to treachery.'" He then cited as alleged proof the conduct of the High Command of the Fourth Army, saying that he had been a fool not to have executed the entire staff. As chance would have it, the general who was briefing Hitler had himself been a member of the Fourth Army Staff during the period in question, and knew exactly what to make of Hitler's preposterous allegations of treason. Yet he realized that it would have been futile to attempt to dissuade Hitler from his opinion.

This same general learned later, from associates who were pres-

ent, that at the situation co Hitler for the first time ac circle that the war was lost erals" and the "worthless p bursts of rage.

The defeated "Führer" w by the hope that the armies closing on Berlin might be 1945, he sent an order to trusted the defense of the struggle for Berlin was the hung, "compared to which a ary significance." A year ear had called the attempt to ho Rome." Now he spoke of t lously and unscrupulously r fate," though he had already of the inevitable outcome. Th in any case, nothing but a pi fices which it cost those inv ceeded in view of the enemy's respite for Berlin would hav ture.² Consequently this last l

²"Here only can I achieve a suc on April 25, 1945. "If I do achiev a moral one, at least that will mee time." On April 27: "I also rem: more of a moral right to act agai moral right. I cannot continually t capital of the Reich at the critica entire Wehrmacht a certain code ways been followed in the navy m binding on every individual: In th now I must obey the orders of fate do it. The captain also goes down

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ent, that at the situation conference on the afternoon of April 22,
Hitler for the first time acknowledged in the presence of a larger
circle that the war was lost, railing against the "treacherous gen-
erals" and the "worthless people" of Germany in uncontrolled out-
bursts of rage.

The defeated "Führer" was, however, still temporarily sustained
by the hope that the armies deployed against the Russian pincers
closing on Berlin might be able to save the capital. On April 25,
1945, he sent an order to Admiral Dönitz, to whom he had en-
trusted the defense of the Northern Area, proclaiming that the
struggle for Berlin was the battle on which the fate of Germany
hung, "compared to which all other tasks and fronts are of second-
ary significance." A year earlier, Hitler—alluding to Felix Dahn—
had called the attempt to hold the Italian capital the "struggle for
Rome." Now he spoke of the "struggle for Berlin," which he cal-
lously and unscrupulously represented as the "German battle of
fate," though he had already acknowledged that he was convinced
of the inevitable outcome. The alleged "Struggle of Liberation" was,
in any case, nothing but a pitiful bluff; despite the very real sacri-
fices which it cost those involved, it could not possibly have suc-
ceeded in view of the enemy's overwhelming strength. A temporary
respite for Berlin would have changed nothing in the overall pic-
ture.² Consequently this last battle for which Hitler was responsible

"Here only can I achieve a success," Hitler said at his situation conference
on April 25, 1945. "If I do achieve a success here [in Berlin], even if it is only
a moral one, at least that will mean the possibility of saving face and winning
time." On April 27: "I also remain here for the reason that I thereby have
more of a moral right to act against weakness. Otherwise I do not have the
moral right. I cannot continually threaten others if I myself run away from the
capital of the Reich at the critical hour. We must introduce throughout the
entire Wehrmacht a certain code of honor. One basic principle which has al-
ways been followed in the navy must be taken over by the party and be made
binding on every individual: In this city I have had the right to give orders:
now I must obey the orders of fate. Even if I could save myself, I would not
do it. The captain also goes down with his ship."

These passages are translated from the text of Hitler's situation conferences
held on April 23, 25, and 27, 1945, in the bunker under the Reich Chancellery,
as published in the Hamburg newsweekly *Der Spiegel*, No. 3/1966 (Jan. 10,
1966), pp. 32-46. These three stenographic protocols, made during the last
days of Hitler's life, had not previously been published because they had not

was the most infamous of all the defeats into which he ordered German soldiers. We can say so without reservations because in the area of strategy it is entirely appropriate—in so clear-cut a case as this—to make an incontrovertible moral judgment.

At 11:00 P.M. on April 29, General Jodl, who, with the Chief of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, Field Marshal Keitel, had been ordered out of Berlin to coordinate the counterattacking columns, received five concise questions from Hitler, who had remained behind in the bunker of the Reich Chancellery. He answered them at 1:00 A.M. on April 30, his brief reply making it clear that none of the thrusts Hitler ordered had the slightest prospect of success. At 3:30 P.M. that same afternoon, Hitler took his own life.

Finally, he brought himself to make the decision that had been due for at least a year. By relinquishing his power, he made it possible to put an end to the bloodshed. That Admiral Dönitz, who unexpectedly succeeded to power, immediately initiated the surrender, remains a service for which he deserves no less recognition than General Weygand in France five years earlier.

Whether there was any other possible end for Hitler is a question that was put to General Jodl during his imprisonment at Nuremberg. Jodl's answer is printed below in Appendix II. After having been sentenced to death in 1946, he dictated an addendum to his original statement, which contained the following passage:

"... [Hitler's] military advisers—today one often hears it said—should certainly have made it clear to him earlier that the war was lost. What a naive thought! Earlier than any other person in the

been among those evacuated from Berlin earlier in April, partially destroyed, and reprinted, so far as there were still legible fragments, by Helmut Heiber. Commenting on these very last protocols (which appeared the year following the second edition of his *Hitler als militärischer Führer*), Schramm is reported by *Der Spiegel* to have said that they are "completely genuine; Hitler's diction and thought are inimitable." He goes on, in the *Spiegel* report accompanying the rambling texts, to explain that "Hitler thinks the way a shepherd dog goes for a walk." The animal has the same goal as his master, but it leaves the path and runs around in loops and circles, often disappearing altogether for a time. "This shepherd-dog thinking," Schramm observed, "is ... shown in these documents" (*loc. cit.*, p. 30).—ED.

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²As head of the Opera subordinate to Field Mars to have surpassed in pro well. Although Keitel at challenge Hitler's judgme Jodl was asked by his de with Hitler:

"JODL: The worst crisis on the Russian Front at Staff General Franz Hal life did I experience such that day on he [Hitler] n

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He was not replaced, ho

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General Jodl, who, with the Chief Wehrmacht, Field Marshal Keitel, to coordinate the counterattacking questions from Hitler, who had the Reich Chancellery. He answered his brief reply making it clear that he had the slightest prospect of the afternoon, Hitler took his own

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world, Hitler sensed and knew that the war was lost. But can one give up a Reich and a people before they are lost? A man like Hitler could not do it. He should have fallen in battle rather than taking flight in death, it is said. He wanted to, and he would have done so if he had been physically able. As it was, he did not choose the easier death, but the more certain one. He acted as all heroes in history have acted and will always act.

"He had himself buried in the ruins of his Reich and his hopes. May whoever wishes to condemn him for it do so—I cannot."

It must be remembered that Jodl had known Hitler as Supreme Commander more intimately than anyone else, and that he had also come to be quite critical of him.³ He had seen Hitler's mistakes. He had counseled him against them where he could, but at best had been successful only in peripheral matters. His relationship with Hitler had always been limited to purely official contact. Moreover, Jodl had reflected a great deal during the months of his imprisonment, as the letters he wrote from prison clearly show, and had become well aware of the consequences of the catastrophe, which had in fact surpassed everyone's worst fears. In short, he had been

³As head of the Operations Staff of the OKW, General Alfred Jodl was subordinate to Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, whom he is generally regarded to have surpassed in professional integrity and probably in intelligence as well. Although Keitel at least once contemplated suicide, he did not dare challenge Hitler's judgment openly. Jodl did. During his trial at Nuremberg, Jodl was asked by his defense counsel to recount the crisis in his relations with Hitler:

"JODL: The worst crisis was in August 1942, in [the Führer Headquarters on the Russian Front at] Vinnitza when I defended . . . [Army Chief of Staff General Franz] Halder against unjustified criticism. . . . Never in my life did I experience such an outburst of rage from any human being. From that day on he [Hitler] never came to dinner.

"DR. EXNER: To your mess?

"JODL: No, he never came to the mess during the remainder of the war. The report on the situation was no longer given in my map room but in the Führer's quarters. At every report on the situation from that day on, an SS officer took part. Eight stenographers were ordered to be there, and from then on they took down every word. The Führer refused to shake hands with me any more. He did not greet me any more, or rarely. . . . He told me, through Field Marshal Keitel, that he could no longer work with me and that I would be replaced. . . ."

He was not replaced, however, for Hitler found him indispensable.—ED.

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able to achieve a certain measure of perspective. Nevertheless, even when faced with death by hanging for having served Hitler, Jodl saw in him an historical hero whom he could not bring himself to condemn.

Had Jodl remained alive, he would hardly have stood by that judgment. In the course of time he would have detached himself further from that field of tension between duty, revulsion, and reluctant admiration, and would have come to see more clearly—as well as we all do now—how heinous, how utterly unheroical was Hitler's end. First the corpse was wrapped in a blanket and carried out of the bunker of the Reich Chancellery; next gasoline, procured only at the greatest pains, was poured over the body and ignited; and then for hours the wretched pyre was guarded by sentries spelling each other in their exposure to the risk of being hit by Russian shells in order to see that absolutely nothing—if possible, not even bones—remained of the Führer, Reich Chancellor, and Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht. Having seen how Hitler thought, how he governed, and how he led the Wehrmacht, we can see that this mortifying death brought his life to its appropriate conclusion.

Jodl's postwar statement was very much conditioned by the atmosphere of the time. But one point still deserves our close attention. Even a year after Hitler's death, Jodl regarded him with a quality of respect similar to that expressed in Field Marshal von Kluge's farewell letter acknowledging Hitler's "genius." In personal style and intellectual background, these two senior officers had nothing in common with Hitler. Much about him they found repulsive. Their training and service in the Army General Staff had cultivated in them a way of thinking that was diametrically opposed to Hitler's. Yet they had submitted to him not simply out of obedience to the Supreme Commander and Chief of State but also because they respected Hitler, despite his flaws and inadequacies, as superior to themselves.

This is one of the keys to Hitler's ability to assert himself as effectively as he did with the Wehrmacht, but it also demonstrates to everyone attempting to deal critically with the historical problem of Hitler what sort of criteria are really relevant. Anyone who speaks

of him as satanic or infernal
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Through suicide Hitler was
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is now irrefutably documented
of the Wehrmacht:

Hitler, who earlier than anyone
and then knew that the war
before witnesses that it could
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defeat sought to exonerate
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"Führer" who in 1934 had not
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gone on, step by step, to make
ineradicable guilt upon himself

* One of the soldiers remembers
him, weeping over a
stinky wood fire that did not
generate enough heat to heat
a pot of soup water

of the Operations Staff and his puppets, blindly carrying out his conflict between Führer Headquarters was indeed only a disagreement of an ill-educated dilettante, simply does General Jodl not only had the chance of misgivings—and made continual added such a counterpoint, for his not to make important military clarify them through long and often dialogue which might last for days. Think of the conflict as having arisen from the distance from the front. Every day at the division level. The problem can be changing staff officers with front-facing the staff frequent trips to the front and men who have had extensive

exercised by the German High Command power in the hands of the Führer Headquarters for even two or three days difficulties. The same leadership. The expedient resorted to was only during major crises, General Staff were sent to the front, could submit oral and written recommendations. The Führer also utilized divisions as an opportunity to hear about their experiences. Though to say or else tended, in view of accorded them, to paint too rosy a picture, with utmost candor, of the front.

to counter the danger of alienation on the front, the basic facts of the situation defined an unbridgeable gap between the reality of the war under fire and the hearsay and from reports

and statistics. And this gap was further widened by the fact that the aerial situation over the Western Front and its rear echelons steadily deteriorated, so that countermeasures ordered by Führer Headquarters often presupposed conditions that no longer actually existed.

But this has not yet brought us to the decisive point. Let us suppose that Adolf Hitler himself, or at least General Jodl, could have gotten away for a time in order to study firsthand the war on the Western Front during the fall of 1944. Assume that they had been able to see, as clearly as the field commanders, that despite remarkable morale and an admirable record of successes—even in cases where they had been hastily thrown into action—the divisions on the Western Front, thinned out by heavy losses of dead and wounded, were no longer the same units that had once been able to win great victories. Let us assume also that it had been made clear that despite the statistically astounding logistical support record, there still remained grave deficiencies in equipment everywhere, with endless and insoluble difficulties in finding replacements, and that rail traffic conditions behind the front had become so hopelessly bad that at best a few trains might still move during the night or during rainy weather, while motorized traffic threatened to break down as well. If in each of these respects the picture had been perfectly clear, would the decision of the Supreme Commander have been any different? Would the Führer, in planning the Ardennes Offensive, then have decided for the "small solution" rather than the "big" one? . . . The answer is clearly no—which brings us to the essential contradiction at the root of the irreconcilable strategic views of the Führer and the commanders in the West. Expressed in conceptual terms, the conflict is between the *General Staff* and a *revolutionary*.²

In the case of the former, we are dealing with an absolutely unique style of military judgment and decision-making. In the final analysis, it cannot be successful without inspiration, and to this extent the term "art of war" remains justified. In the course of time, however, the work of the professionals has more and more come to assume the

²In this context one should not misconstrue the expression "General Staff," for it represents a style of thinking that is common to higher military leadership everywhere (annotation from 1945).

character of a science.

The strength of the German General Staff, in which Field Marshals von Rundstedt and Model had been nurtured and with the style of which General von Manteuffel at least had a strong affinity, had consisted in going just as far methodically as it was possible to go in the craft of warfare, reducing the inevitable imponderables to a minimum. When the question of an offensive emerged, the General Staff would systematically explore all available options. . . . It would then attempt to reconstruct the thinking of the opponent and to consider how he would react, which in turn would make it possible to estimate the prospects of the operation. If the initial proposal turned out to be the best approach, it was time to test out on the map the various conceivable shifts in forces, together with as realistic as possible an evaluation of the condition reports of immediately available units as well as others that might be used. All this was followed by objective calculations in terms of kilometers, ground elevations, depths of streams and rivers, in tons and cubic meters of rail and motorized transportation capacity, and projection of the required effect of artillery and mortar fire and tactical air support. The results of these calculations were then considered, together with the predictable reaction by the enemy and the required additional forces to counter it, and all the positive and negative considerations finally balanced against each other. In sum, an operation involved countless factors, most of which could not be measured with absolute precision, but which, on the basis of long experience, could be more or less accurately estimated. There was no room for imagination and inspiration in these stages of staff work, and the faith and willpower of the leadership or of the troops were, in terms of this realistic appraisal, simply two more factors among others. The final task of such calculations was to reduce everything to a common denominator and reach the conclusion that with so many troops, so many supplies, and so much artillery and air support, it would in all probability be possible to go so far toward achieving the desired goal.

After this type of analysis had been made by the staffs of the Commanders-in-Chief West and Army Group B, and of the three armies involved, the conclusion they came to regarding the proposed Ardennes Offensive was that the area for the attack was correctly chosen, and the breakthrough would be possible. But the

final objective of the attack forces it would be possible yet even to do this work had been successful to re-evaluate the situation positive outcome—try to

Not only did Adolf Hitler in a different manner, but he entirely different basis.

[Hitler] harbored a prejudice that were submitted to him he was able to point out specialists had been unal exhaustively informed of was not accurately informed to take cognizance primarily going too far to say the facts. It was more a matter of reasons why they could countermeasures which them from negative to positive.

If the war had continued of course, this side of Hitler was conspicuous. But ever since "realist" of yesterday became whose accounts refused to be an illusionist, for he still merely underestimated the wish to acknowledge—a were no longer as strong troops, he failed especially worn down by combat operations.

²Schramm excerpted the following (omitted) in the section of the military ability (see pp. 108-109).

³Beside this sentence General Staff wrote: "Very true. J."

⁴Noted at this point in the text after all.

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General Staff, in which Field Marshal had been nurtured and with the staff at least had a strong affinity, methodically as it was possible to gauge the inevitable imponderables to an offensive emerged, the General explored all available options. . . . It was the thinking of the opponent and which in turn would make it possible operation. If the initial proposal it was time to test out on the map sheets, together with as realistic as the reports of immediately available information could be used. All this was followed of kilometers, ground elevations, tons and cubic meters of rail and, and projection of the required and tactical air support. The reason considered, together with the and the required additional forces and negative considerations finally in, an operation involved countless be measured with absolute precision experience, could be more or less was no room for imagination and work, and the faith and willpower was were, in terms of this realistic among others. The final task of everything to a common denominator with so many troops, so many and air support, it would in all probability achieving the desired goal. been made by the staffs of the Army Group B, and of the three they came to regarding the pro- that the area for the attack was rough would be possible. But the

final objective of the attack could not be reached. With the available forces it would be possible to go only half the distance to Antwerp. Yet even to do this would make the offensive worthwhile. Once it had been successful to this limited extent, it would be possible to re-evaluate the situation and—should the calculations suggest a positive outcome—try to go the rest of the way to the original goal.

Not only did Adolf Hitler reach his final decision in an entirely different manner, but he made his fundamental calculations on an entirely different basis. . . .

[Hitler] harbored a perpetual suspicion of the facts and figures that were submitted to him. By virtue of his extraordinary memory he was able to point out mistakes in them that any number of specialists had been unable to catch, and for this reason he was kept exhaustively informed of every detail. Thus one cannot say that he was not accurately informed. But it cannot be denied that he tended to take cognizance primarily of favorable information. It would be going too far to say that Hitler simply brushed aside uncongenial facts. It was more a matter of his chipping away at them, finding reasons why they could not be entirely true, or conceiving of countermeasures which he was sure would be able to transform them from negative to positive factors.

If the war had continued to go as well as it had in the beginning, of course, this side of Hitler's character would not have become so conspicuous. But ever since the tide began to run against him, the "realist" of yesterday became more and more like the bookkeeper whose accounts refused to balance. It was not that Hitler became an illusionist, for he still continued to stand on solid ground; he merely underestimated the power of the enemy—which he did not wish to acknowledge—and overestimated his own forces, which were no longer as strong as they had been.² Far removed from the troops, he failed especially to note the extent to which they were worn down by combat or to accept the fact that no degree of fa-

²Schramm excerpted the following three paragraphs of his study (here deleted) in the section of the first essay in this volume dealing with Hitler's military ability (see pp. 108-109 above).—ED.

³Beside this sentence General Alfred Jodl noted on the copy shown to him: "Very true. I."

⁴Noted at this point in the margin by General Jodl: "Then he is an illusionist after all."

Sold?
Amoral
"Very true."

745
naticism could compensate for what they had lost in physical energy and equipment.

Undoubtedly Hitler was able, by his methods, to get much more out of the German Wehrmacht than even the most sanguine optimist would have believed possible. But Hitler did not recognize its limits in his planning for the Ardennes Offensive. The course of the operation demonstrated that the field commanders had the better grasp of the situation.

That there was no serious leadership crisis over the objectives of the Ardennes Offensive may be explained by the fact that the objective of Antwerp could, for the time being, be left hanging. It would in any case be necessary first to reach the Maas. If, in the event, it proved impossible for the Germans to secure a crossing over the Maas, the advocates of the "small solution" could expect that their point of view would automatically prevail. If it were possible to throw the enemy back beyond the Maas, and if one could by then see more clearly which sort of countermeasures might be expected from the enemy, then the question could be taken up again. At that point it would be possible to determine—rather than, as before, merely estimate—how many German forces would be available for the spearhead toward Antwerp and what forces the Americans and British presumably would have to oppose it.

Moreover, Field Marshal Model was personally inclined, somewhat like the Führer himself, to make the most impossible demands in order to achieve the greatest possible result. If he were opposed to Antwerp as an operational objective, he would still have been inclined to support it as a slogan.

What of those who advocated the "big solution"?

There can be no question but that Hitler supported the goal of Antwerp not only to urge on the generals and, through them, their troops, but that he actually believed it was possible to realize this goal. Whether General Jodl was convinced of this to the same extent, or whether he accepted the Führer's idea because he thought

⁶Underlined by General Jodl, who commented in the margin: "I would say this least of all in the case of the Ardennes Offensive. It was an act of desperation, like the breakout from a fortress threatened with starvation. J. 4/21"

a distant goal would keep them, in their advance, peripheral territory, is with his most intimate a position, but with difficulty else he was obliged to integrity of the High C definition of objectives.

Führer Headquarters the Führer reserved to circumstances made it Command, as soon as it of the Maas, immediate both of the original alter in other sectors of the exposed—first in north basic purpose being to make it impossible for him.

In this respect the Führer more reconciled despite people. It also explains why in the course of the final repeatedly brought up by of Field Marshal von Rundstedt the German leadership.

It would be interesting planned to use the battle departure for the "big solution" change in the projected goal. Field Marshal Model and longer alive.⁸

⁷General Jodl marked this comment on it.

⁸Field Marshal Model could not have been assumed that General Kluge's German Army under Hitler, Russians have now reported bunker.—ED.

what they had lost in physical energy

by his methods, to get much more than even the most sanguine optimistic. But Hitler did not recognize its Ardennes Offensive. The course of the field commanders had the better

leadership crisis over the objectives of explained by the fact that the objective being, be left hanging. It would reach the Maas. If, in the event, it means to secure a crossing over the all solution" could expect that their ally prevail. If it were possible to the Maas, and if one could by then countermeasures might be expected on could be taken up again. At that determine—rather than, as before, German forces would be available for and what forces the Americans and to oppose it.

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that Hitler supported the goal of generals and, through them, their view it was possible to realize this, convinced of this to the same extent. Führer's idea because he thought

commented in the margin: "I would say Ardennes Offensive. It was an act of desertion threatened with starvation. J.

a distant goal would keep the three armies on the track and deter them, in their advance, from dissipating their momentum by taking peripheral territory, is a question that he has not discussed even with his most intimate associates.⁷ . . . If he did support the Führer's position, but with differences in emphasis, then more than anyone else he was obliged to maintain secrecy, in order to preserve the integrity of the High Command and prevent indecisiveness in the definition of objectives.

Führer Headquarters insisted, then, on the "big solution." . . . But the Führer reserved to himself another purpose for the offensive, if circumstances made it necessary. This explains why the High Command, as soon as it knew the offensive had been stopped short of the Maas, immediately switched to a plan that freed itself from both of the original alternatives. It ordered a series of limited thrusts in other sectors of the front that the enemy had been forced to leave exposed—first in northern Alsace, then on the Saar Front—the basic purpose being to use up the enemy's operational reserves and make it impossible for him to mount major new attacks.

In this respect the Führer and the field commanders were once more reconciled despite their basic differences in matters of principle. It also explains why the difference over strategic goals, which in the course of the final weeks before the Ardennes Offensive was repeatedly brought up by Field Marshal Model, with the support of Field Marshal von Rundstedt, did not lead to a graver split in the German leadership.

It would be interesting to know exactly how Army Group B had planned to use the battle in the Aachen area pocket as the point of departure for the "big solution"—but both of the men on whom this change in the projected goals of the offensive would have depended, Field Marshal Model and his Chief of Staff, General Krebs, are no longer alive.⁸

⁷General Indl marked this paragraph in the margin, but made no explicit comment on it.

⁸Field Marshal Model committed suicide on April 21, 1945. For years it was assumed that General Krebs, who served as the last Chief of Staff of the German Army under Hitler, had fallen in the spring of 1945 in Berlin. The Russians have now reported that he committed suicide in Hitler's Berlin bunker.—ED.

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um Dictated in 1946
I Alfred Jodl on
ilitary Leadership

That Alfred Jodl, at the bottom of his heart, no longer believed in victory after the winter campaign of 1941-1942, and certainly not after Stalingrad the following winter, has already been mentioned. His tragedy was that he felt morally obligated, as a matter of official responsibility, not to divulge what he thought. Consequently, he moved sharply against anyone who arrived at the same conclusion. To General Walter Warlimont, his closest associate, he once said, in response to a skeptical remark, that Warlimont really belonged in a concentration camp. *scout*

[To grasp the full implications of Alfred Jodl's role is to perceive the frightful fate of those discerning General Staff officers who felt duty bound to be loyal to their Chief of State and Supreme Commander, who saw through and despised him as an autodidact but at the same time were fascinated by his "sixth sense," and in the end were condemned before the world as his accomplices.²

²Most revealing in this context is a note Jodl wrote on February 25, 1946, while imprisoned at Nuremberg, which was copied and graciously made available to me by his widow. In it he explains the motivation behind a speech which he delivered in autumn 1943 to an assembly of National Socialist party leaders in Munich. The drafts and documents he had assembled for this presentation, presented in evidence as Document L-172 at Nuremberg and reprinted in the *War Diary*, were not the final text of the speech, as Jodl himself pointed out to the court.

"I have the impression," he wrote, "that my speech of November 7, 1943, is causing the defense a great deal of concern.

"How it came about I have already explained.

"Not only I but dozens of officers have spoken before that circle—after my speech, for example, two other officers—because Hitler attached the greatest importance to mutual understanding between party leaders and officers.

"I also explained further that in Document L-172 the core [of the speech] dealing with the purely military presentation is lacking; only the trimmings are there. They had to express courage, confidence, faith, unity of will and action.

"In 1914-1918 I had experienced how front and homeland, soldier and worker, the leadership of the state and that of the people by the political parties had grown further and further apart in their thinking, until finally the state in the homeland collapsed and dragged the armed forces down in defeat and revolution as well. This experience remained so vivid that in the Second World War, I made it a guiding principle to do everything in my power to combat every division, every indication of breakdown—in short, all domestic conflicts insofar as they might affect the Wehrmacht. Each such manifestation at home would have provided fertile soil for effective enemy propaganda and

of the Operations Staff of the dictated this memoir, which he n the Leadership of the War (strategist)," to the wife of his oner at Nuremberg—excepting dictated later to his own wife, h. The tone of the addendum, orthand, is understandable in felt.¹

istory of Alfred Jodl's life will : of the general who was con- al Military Tribunal and exe- 1946. He felt constrained—if I this mask by virtue of the officer, and out of respect for erceived far better than others, ief memoir demonstrates—he i which he awaited execution.

himself did not think his condemna- cript of the proceedings will agree he expected to be hanged in the

43 45

[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, Schmoldt, 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; who in Hitler's opinion Headquarters he defended 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, ther sense that the success fate also. Thus it conc much more clearly than To judge or criticize the doing—even the officer the General Staff. Tha been mounted sooner whether strength shoul left wing, whether one encircled, or perhaps other fronts could have 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 sh tary history, they would same extent as the stra

It be made clear by a passage that assigned to Führer Headquarters 1945-1946 (before Jodl's death was not one of the people who ind openly, bluntly, and often in I did not get through. The very er it was clear to me that Jodl about the real situation. He saw also gave the unmistakable im- fashion that he made no effort onal ability was concerned, he 3 His stance in regard to Hitler he thereby also revealed clearly ching to deaf ears. He did not asionally went so far as to put knowledge that either he himself ld not take him up on it. Every- him with no visible effect. I was at deal of confidence in Jodl and Staff of the OKW. But during

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the battles in the Caucasus, Jodl had once visited Field Marshal List, who in Hitler's opinion had failed, and when he returned to Führer Headquarters he defended him against Hitler. Thereupon Hitler lost confidence in him and also broke off all personal contact with the entire OKW Operations Staff, with whose leaders he had often previously eaten. The only reason Jodl was not relieved at that time was that Hitler was concerned that any successor he could find would be even more 'unreliable.' "]

Among the many concepts more often used than understood is the word "strategy." Almost everyone knows it, almost everyone uses it, but many would have nothing to say if they were asked: "What is strategy, then?" People speak of it because they know or sense that the success or failure of strategy in war decides their fate also. Thus it concerns everyone directly, and everyone sees it much more clearly than he does the operational problems of battle. To judge or criticize the latter [i.e., tactics] is something people enjoy doing—even the officer corps, in fact, insofar as it does not belong to the General Staff. That is strange. Whether an attack should have been mounted sooner with weaker, or later with stronger forces, whether strength should have been concentrated on the right or the left wing, whether one should have broken through rather than encircled, or perhaps not even have attacked at all, whether the other fronts could have been weakened still further, whether one should have remained on the defensive, have ordered the troops to attack in order to pin down the enemy, or perhaps even have had them withdraw behind a sector of the battle front—these are all problems of military leadership, specifically operational ones, which even the carping critics tend to avoid. For in order merely to speak on these matters, one needs military maps, data concerning one's own and the enemy's strength, the condition of the troops, their equipment and armament, and their supply of munitions. But these are secrets that remain hidden in the files and charts of the General Staff, and even if they should later find their way into works on military history, they would never provoke a public controversy to the same extent as the strategic plans and problems of the war. The

manner in which operations are conducted is regarded by everyone as a specialized scientific matter, no different than medical discussion of new methods of surgery.

The protective curtain of a clandestine science is drawn around tactics with an impenetrably secret terrain surrounding it, so that no one will be able to find his bearings who in the course of a diligent life has not combined theory and practice in the auditorium and on maneuver, preparing himself to walk these tortuous paths. But in strategy everything appears simple and direct. Is it not obvious and self-evident to every layman that Hitler should not have attacked Russia, because Russia was stronger than we believed it to be, and because defeat was therefore inevitable? Has the frightful catastrophe that Germany suffered not provided irrefutable proof? In these terms, it does not seem difficult to describe the essence of strategy. But it is not so simple to analyze the basic elements and colors in this picture, which must be done in order to put together this seemingly uncomplicated and self-evident picture with its endlessly complex technological details.

Clausewitz could still define the concept of strategy very simply by saying that it is the teaching of the use of battles for the purposes of the war. The concept has remained, but what it comprehends has changed. Ever since war began to assume an ever more total character, that is, ever since it relentlessly drew the entire state, with all its functions, together with every citizen, regardless of occupation, sex, or age, into its orbit, the strategic leadership of war has developed into so universal a function that it has come to include every aspect of state leadership, thereby exceeding the limits of purely military responsibilities. Thus we see—in this war for the first time—how the concepts of "strategy" and "warlord," which once were identical, began to subdivide. No longer did we see any soldier who led the war as a whole, but only military operations. Roosevelt and Churchill, Hitler, Stalin, and Chiang Kai-shek were the strategists of this war, and—more or less heeding the advice of the soldiers standing at their side—they intervened as warlords only indirectly in the actual conduct of military operations. Only in Japan, which in this respect simply had not kept pace with the times, did the military machinery fight its way to political power and

lead the country—the hand—in a war that with politics being must should have a clear plan to consider in greater campaigns, and on confront the question was it possible for them to permit a layman to dictate to them those who pose this question strategy in the modern

I believe it is necessary terms: Strategy is that comprehends foreign economic mobilization must harmonize these purposes and the political of strategy is understood only a statesman can the possibility that this was the case in China

Hitler was a state Commander of the Chief of the Army as to him and no one else Hitler who gave the plans for the attack attack would take provoked, a war of defensive war could tion and the constant offensive. When the tion on the Polish border indeed quite clear them, but the political secret. Had Hitler had

ose with unbending will what he
ed to comprehend: that one had
ry step backwards was an evil in
he thereby hastened or delayed
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tler to do? He could only fight to
oughout his whole life he had been
rse. Heroism or insanity, opinion
differ on it. Could he not, in order
ffering, have come to an earlier
thought did concern Hitler during
informed me on April 22 [1945]
again but to die there, he added:
decision, the most important in
should never have left the head-

y one often hears it said—should
im earlier that the war was lost.
in any other person in the world,
war was lost. But can one give up
are lost? A man like Hitler could
battle rather than taking light in
he would have done so if he had
did not choose the easier death,
ted as all heroes in history have

ruins of his Reich and his hopes.
him for it do so—I cannot.

[Signed:] ALFRED JODL

plemented by the following pas-

ment which Jodl dictated to his defense
agraphs were dictated to his own wife
death, as explained in the introductory

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

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

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

D.T. Of course, when there is only
half an ~~ethical~~ ethical foundation,
even a mother or a father, then the
child is often ready for us.

poison had been eradicated, unification would have been an easy matter. France and Italy, each defeated in turn at an interval of a few months by the two Germanic Powers, would have been well out of it. Both would have had to renounce their inappropriate aspirations to greatness. At the same time they would have had to renounce their pretensions in North Africa and the Near East; and that would have allowed Europe to pursue a bold policy of friendship towards Islam. As for Britain, relieved of all European cares, she could have devoted herself to the wellbeing of her Empire. And lastly, Germany, her rear secure, could have thrown herself heart and soul into her essential task, the ambition of my life and the *raison d'être* of National Socialism—the destruction of Bolshevism. This would have entailed the conquest of wide spaces in the East, and these in their turn would have ensured the future wellbeing of the German people.

The laws of nature follow a logic which does not necessarily always conform to our own ideas of logic.

We ourselves were disposed to compromise. We were ready to throw our forces into the scales for the preservation of the British Empire; and all that, mark you, at a time when, to tell the truth, I feel much more sympathetically inclined to the lowliest Hindu than to any of these arrogant islanders. Later on, the Germans will be pleased that they did not make any contribution to the survival of an out-dated state of affairs for which the world of the future would have found it

hard to forgive them. V prophecy: whatever the British Empire is at a wounded. The future of hunger and tubercul

British obstinacy and put up by the Reich had first place Britain had nothing forced her to go go to war, but she ac hardly say that the Pole by the British and Fr themselves spurred on I not have felt themselves Even so, and even after Britain could have pulled either after the liquida defeat of France. It wo very honourable on her of this kind, the Britis particular. All she had for her defection squa ex-allies—just as she an 1940, and, furthermore helped her to save face.

At the beginning of North Africa had re-est an even more favourabl from the game and co with us. Why, you ma

obey the orders of her Jewish and American allies, people, indeed, who were more voracious than even the worst of her enemies? I will tell you; Britain was not waging her own war, she was waging that which had been imposed on her by her implacable allies.

Germany, on the other hand, had no option. Once we had declared our desire of at last uniting all Germans in one great Reich and of ensuring for them a real independence—in other words, freedom to live their own lives—all our enemies at once rose against us. War became inevitable if for no other reason that in order to avoid it we should have been compelled to betray the fundamental interests of the German people. As far as our people were concerned we could not and would not be content with the mere semblance of independence. That sort of thing is all right for the Swedes and the Swiss, who are always prepared to subscribe to dubious and tortuous formulae, provided that they can at the same time line their pockets. Nor, for that matter could the Weimar Republic lay claim to any more worthy pretensions. That, however, is not an ambition worthy of the Third Reich.

We were, then, condemned to wage war—some time or other; and our sole preoccupation was to choose the least unfavourable moment. And once we were committed, of course, there could be no question of a withdrawal. It is not to the doctrines of National Socialism alone that our adversaries take exception. They hate National Socialism because through it the qualities of the German people have been exalted.

They therefore seek to people—of that there c once in a way, hatred l hypocrisy. We can on enemies for having thu to us.

To this all-embracing means of total war. Fig are fighting desperately shall fight to the death t emerge from this war s Britain more enfeebled

History shows that : adversity often constitu a great renaissance. Tl people—and in this war ably more than any oth which, if Providence wil to the heady influenc Providence abandon us, our resolute steadfastne. subjecting us to ever gr us the chance to confirm

always hope, and that, surely, should be enough to forbid us to think that all is already lost. No game is lost until the final whistle. And if, in spite of everything, the Fates have decreed that we should once more in the course of our history be crushed by forces superior to our own, then let us go down with our heads high and secure in the knowledge that the honour of the German people remains without blemish. A desperate fight remains for all time a shining example. Let us remember Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans! In any case, we are not of the stuff that goes tamely to the slaughter like sheep. They may well exterminate us. But they will never lead us to the slaughter house!

No! There is no such thing as a desperate situation! Think how many examples of a turn of fortune the history of the German people affords! During the Seven Years' War Frederick found himself reduced to desperate straits. During the winter of 1762 he had decided that if no change occurred by a certain date fixed by himself, he would end his life by taking poison. Then, a few days before the date he had chosen, behold, the Tsarina died unexpectedly, and the whole situation was miraculously reversed. Like the great Frederick, we, too, are combating a coalition, and a coalition, remember, is not a stable entity. It exists only by the will of a handful of men. If Churchill were suddenly to disappear, everything could change in a flash! The British aristocracy might perhaps become conscious of the abyss opening before

them—and might well expect these British, for whom, fighting and who would victory. . . .

We can still snatch victory if we be granted the time to do so.

All we must do is to re-educate the German people, the simple life would be a sufficient justification would not have been in the end unavoidable; the enemies of Socialism forced it upon me in 1933.

III—7TH FEBRUARY 1945

This need to become properly enrooted applies to all continental peoples and particularly, in my opinion, to the German people. And that most probably explains why we have never really felt the urge to become colonizers. A glance at history, both ancient and modern, will show that overseas enterprises have always in the long run impoverished those who undertook them. They have all, in the end, been exhausted by their efforts; and, in the inevitable nature of things, they have all succumbed to forces to which either they have themselves given birth or which they have themselves re-awakened. What better example of this than the Greeks?

What was true for the ancient Greeks remains equally true for all Europeans in modern times. To prosper, a people must concentrate its efforts on its own country. A scrutiny of any reasonably long period of history will reveal facts which confirm the truth of this contention.

Spain, France and Britain have all enfeebled, devitalized and drained themselves in these vain colonial enterprises. The continents to which Spain and Britain gave birth, which they created piece by piece, have today acquired a completely independent way of life and a completely egoistical outlook. Even so, they are but artificial worlds, with neither a soul, a culture nor a civilization of their own; and, judged from that point of view, they are nothing more than excrescences.

It is, of course, possible to make out a case for the

* 14¹⁵ justification for never having been out of German-~~feeling~~ *feeling* ~~country~~

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7th February 1945

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success achieved in peopling continents which before had been empty. The United States and Australia afford good examples. Success, certainly—but only on the material side. They are artificial edifices, bodies without age, of which it is impossible to say whether they are still in a state of infancy or whether they have already been touched by senility. In those continents which were inhabited, failure has been even more marked. In them, the white races have imposed their will by force, and the influence they have had on the native inhabitants has been negligible; the Hindus have remained Hindus, the Chinese have remained Chinese, and the Moslems are still Moslems. There have been no profound transformations, and such changes as have occurred are less marked in the religious field, notwithstanding the tremendous efforts of the Christian missionaries, than in any other. There have been a few odd conversions the sincerity of which are open to considerable doubt—except, perhaps, in the case of a few simpletons and mentally deficient. The white races did, of course, give some things to the natives, and they were the worst gifts that they could possibly have made, those plagues of our own modern world—materialism, fanaticism, alcoholism and syphilis. For the rest, since these peoples possessed qualities of their own which were superior to anything we could offer them, they have remained essentially unchanged. Where imposition by force was attempted, the results were even more disastrous, and common sense, realizing the futility of

such measures, should introduction. One solit to the colonizers: every arousing hatred, a hat awakened from their sl us out. Indeed, it look awakened solely and s anyone assert that co number of Christians ir conversions *en masse* Islam? Here and there Christians, Christians in conviction; and that is t of this magnificent Chris supreme Truth!

Taking everything i policy of colonization ha I have not forgotten th success, but a success tha of that monster which (that I wish to talk. And name for it! At a time v their own mother—is figl the bolshevist peril, the l Jew-ridden Roosevelt, ca do than to place their fa the disposal of these A determined to strangle her distressed at the thought o men of good faith, who en

and who are now the backbone of the country. For these men, mark you, are not merely good Germans, lost to their fatherland; rather, they have become enemies, more implacably hostile than any others. The German emigrant retains, it is true, his qualities of industry and hard work, but he very quickly loses his soul. There is nothing more unnatural than a German who has become an expatriate.

In the future we must guard against these haemorrhages of German blood. It is eastwards, only and always eastwards, that the veins of our race must expand. It is the direction which Nature herself has decreed for the expansion of the German peoples. The rigorous climate with which the East confronts them allows them to retain their qualities as hardy and virile men; and the vivid contrasts they find there help to keep fresh their love and their longing for their own country. Transplant a German to Kiev, and he remains a perfect German. But transplant him to Miami, and you make a degenerate of him—in other words, an American.

Since colonization is not an activity which Germans feel called upon to pursue, Germany should never make common cause with the colonizing nations and should always abstain from supporting them in their colonial aspirations. What we want is a Monroe doctrine in Europe. 'Europe for the Europeans!', a doctrine, the corollary of which should be that Europeans refrain from meddling in the affairs of other continents.

The descendants of the inspire in us nothing but indifference. If their vitality enable them to increase at size of the territories they look out, and it is no use help. For my own part, I seeing the surplus population drawn, as to a magnet, to the all-work out their own salvation—it is nothing to do with us.

They react brutally and finally they revolt. It is an instinctive reaction, a reaction of repugnance against a stranger who refuses to adapt himself and become part of the whole, a parasite which clings to the host, imposes on it and exploits it to the utmost. By nature, the Jew is a parasite which cannot and will not be assimilated. A distinguishing feature of the Jew is that, unlike other foreigners, he everywhere claims all the rights of citizenship in the community that shelters him—and at the same time remains always a Jew. He regards it as his right to be allowed to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds; and he is the only man in the whole world to claim such an extravagant privilege.

National Socialism has tackled the Jewish problem by action and not by words. It has risen in opposition to the Jewish determination to dominate the world; it has attacked them everywhere and in every sphere of activity; it has flung them out of the positions they have usurped; it has pursued them in every direction, determined to purge the German world of the Jewish poison. For us, this has been an essential process of disinfection, which we have prosecuted to its ultimate limit and without which we should ourselves have been asphyxiated and destroyed.

With the success of the operation in Germany, there was a good chance of extending it further afield. This was, in fact, inevitable, for good health normally triumphs over disease. Quick to realize the danger, the Jews decided to stake their all in the life and death

struggle which they like Socialism had to be decided even if the whole world process. Never before has and at the same time :

I have at least come masks. And even if on failure, it will only be a opened the eyes of the world

One of the consequences cause the Jew to become fact, he is less dangerous when he is sly and cunning avows his race is a hurt shameful type which clear in the matter of religion. an end to Jewish world Jews a mortal blow from But if I lose the war, I mean that their triumph themselves will lose their arrogant that they will eventually them. They will, of course hare and hunt with the hare of citizenship in every corner their pride, continue to reject the Chosen Race. The shield disappear and will be rejected and bombastic; and the likelihood as the former—

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struggle which they launched against us. National
Socialism had to be destroyed, whatever the cost and
even if the whole world were destroyed in the
process. Never before has there been a war so typically
and at the same time so exclusively Jewish.

I have at least compelled them to discard their
masks. And even if our endeavours should end in
failure, it will only be a temporary failure. For I have
opened the eyes of the whole world to the Jewish peril.

One of the consequences of our attitude has been to
cause the Jew to become aggressive. As a matter of
fact, he is less dangerous in that frame of mind than
when he is sly and cunning. The Jew who openly
avows his race is a hundred times preferable to the
shameful type which claims to differ from you only
in the matter of religion. If I win this war, I shall put
an end to Jewish world power and I shall deal the
Jews a mortal blow from which they will not recover.
But if I lose the war, that does not by any means
mean that their triumph is assured, for then they
themselves will lose their heads. They will become so
arrogant that they will evoke a violent reaction against
them. They will, of course, continue to run with the
hare and hunt with the hounds, to claim the privileges
of citizenship in every country and, without sacrificing
their pride, continue to remain, above all, members of
the Chosen Race. The shifty, the shamefaced Jew will
disappear and will be replaced by a Jew vainglorious
and bombastic; and the latter will stink just as objec-
tionably as the former—and perhaps even more so.

There is, then, no danger in the circumstances that anti-semitism will disappear, for it is the Jews themselves who add fuel to its flames and see that it is kept well stoked. Before the opposition to it can disappear, the malady itself must disappear. And from that point of view, you can rely on the Jews: as long as they survive, anti-semitism will never fade

In saying this, I promise you I am quite free of all racial hatred. It is, in any case, undesirable that one race should mix with other races. Except for a few gratuitous successes, which I am prepared to admit, systematic cross-breeding has never produced good results. Its desire to remain racially pure is a proof of the vitality and good health of a race. Pride in one's own race—and that does not imply contempt for other races—is also a normal and healthy sentiment. I have never regarded the Chinese or the Japanese as being inferior to ourselves. They belong to ancient civilizations, and I admit freely that their past history is superior to our own. They have the right to be proud of their past, just as we have the right to be proud of the civilization to which we belong. Indeed, I believe, the more steadfast the Chinese and the Japanese remain in their pride of race, the easier I shall find it to get on with them.

This pride of race is a quality which the German, fundamentally, does not possess. The reason for this is that for these last three centuries the country has been torn by internal dissension and religious wars and has been subjected to a variety of foreign

influences; to the influence of Christianity as taught by in today's churches. It is itself in a German, as it is in an aggressive form, it is a compensatory reaction for which so many Germans say, does not apply to Frederick the Great and simple pride which are sure of themselves ostentation to bear with to those qualities which Prussians were able, as a united Germany. Nationalism to all Germans that possessed by the Prussians

The Austrians, too, have been akin to that of the Prussians; that for centuries they have been any other race, but have very long time the ones obeyed. They possess the domination and power, a *panache* of Atticism which

In its crucible Nationalism all those qualities which

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influences; to the influence, for example, of false
 Christianity as taught by the many proselyte preachers
 in today's churches. When pride of race manifests
 itself in a German, as it sometimes does and in a most
 aggressive form, it is in reality nothing more than a
 compensatory reaction for that inferiority complex from
 which so many Germans suffer. This, I need hardly
say, does not apply to the Prussians. From the time
 of Frederick the Great they have possessed that quiet
 and simple pride which is the hall-mark of people who
 are sure of themselves and who have no need of
 ostentation to bear witness to what they are. Thanks
 to those qualities which are inherently theirs, the
 Prussians were able, as they well showed, to create
 a united Germany. National Socialism has tried to give
 to all Germans that pride which hitherto has been
 possessed by the Prussians alone among us.

The Austrians, too, have in their blood a pride very
 akin to that of the Prussians, a pride born of the fact
 that for centuries they have never been dominated by
 any other race, but have, on the contrary, been for a
 very long time the ones who gave orders and were
 obeyed. They possess the accumulated experience of
 domination and power, and to that is attributable that
panache of Atticism which no one can gainsay.

In its crucible National Socialism will melt and fuse
 all those qualities which are characteristic of the

a
Mace

German soul; and from it will emerge the modern German—industrious, conscientious, sure of himself yet simple withal, proud not of himself or what he is, but of his membership of a great entity which will evoke the admiration of other peoples. This feeling of corporate superiority does not in any way imply the slightest desire to crush and overwhelm others. We have, I know, on occasions exaggerated our cult of this sentiment, but that was necessary at the outset and we were compelled to jostle the Germans pretty roughly in order to set their feet on the right road. In the nature of things, too violent a thrust in any direction invariably provokes an equally violent thrust in the opposite direction. All this, of course, cannot be accomplished in a day. It requires the slow-moving pressure of time. Frederick the Great is the real creator of the Prussian type. In actual fact, two or three generations elapsed before the type crystallized and before the Prussian type became a characteristic common to every Prussian.

Our racial pride is not aggressive except in so far as the Jewish race is concerned. We use the term Jewish race as a matter of convenience, for in reality and from the genetic point of view there is no such thing as the Jewish race. There does, however, exist a community, to which, in fact, the term can be applied and the existence of which is admitted by the Jews themselves. It is the spiritually homogeneous group, to membership of which all Jews throughout the world deliberately adhere, regardless of their whereabouts

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V—13TH

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race of the mind. It has Hebrew religion, and th certain influence in m teristics; for all that, hov word a purely religious e terms both the most dete sincere, practising believe the bond that has been i cution—though the Jews they themselves who p Nor does Jewry possess teristics which would stai race. It cannot, however, the world has some drop him. Were this not so, explain the presence of ce which are permanently cc ghetto of Warsaw to the offensive nose, the cruel v

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V-13TH FEBRUARY 1945

JANUARY 1945

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and of their country of domicile; and it is this group
of human beings to which we give the title Jewish
race. It is not, mark you, a religious entity, although
the Hebrew religion serves them as a pretext to
present themselves as such; nor indeed is it even a
collection of groups, united by the bonds of a common
religion.

The Jewish race is first and foremost an abstract
race of the mind. It has its origins, admittedly, in the
Hebrew religion, and that religion, too, has had a
certain influence in moulding its general charac-
teristics; for all that, however, it is in no sense of the
word a purely religious entity, for it accepts on equal
terms both the most determined atheists and the most
sincere, practising believers. To all this must be added
the bond that has been forged by centuries of perse-
cution—though the Jews conveniently forget that it is
they themselves who provoked these persecutions.
Nor does Jewry possess the anthropological charac-
teristics which would stamp them as a homogeneous
race. It cannot, however, be denied that every Jew in
the world has some drops of purely Jewish blood in
him. Were this not so, it would be impossible to
explain the presence of certain physical characteristics
which are permanently common to all Jews from the
ghetto of Warsaw to the bazaars of Morocco—the
offensive nose, the cruel vicious nostrils and so on.

A race of the mind is something more solid, more
durable than just a race, pure and simple. Transplant
a German to the United States and you turn him into

V—13TH FEBRUARY 1945

* an American. But the Jew remains a Jew wherever he goes, a creature which no environment can assimilate. It is the characteristic mental make-up of his race which renders him impervious to the processes of assimilation. And there in a nutshell is the proof of the superiority of the mind over the flesh! . . .

The quite amazing ascendancy which they achieved during the course of the nineteenth century gave the Jews a sense of their own power and caused them to drop the mask; and it is just that that has given us the chance to oppose them as Jews, self-proclaimed and proud of the fact. And when you remember how credulous the Germans are, you will realize that we must be most grateful for this sudden excess of frankness on the part of our most mortal enemies.

! I have always been absolutely fair in my dealings with the Jews. On the eve of war, I gave them one final warning. I told them that, if they precipitated another war, they would not be spared and that I would exterminate the vermin throughout Europe, and this time once and for all. To this warning they retorted with a declaration of war and affirmed that wherever in the world there was a Jew, there, too, was an implacable enemy of National Socialist Germany.

Well, we have lanced the Jewish abscess; and the world of the future will be eternally grateful to us.

* *It is this mind, said H. H. that must be excised from civilization³⁰ before we are polluted to the roots*

Too soon and too late—
lack space—A revolution
bourgeois policy—Collaboration
mistake—We should have
proletariat and liberated
right in *Mein Kampf*

The disastrous thing about Germany it began both to the purely military point of view as us better if it had started seized the initiative in 1933 to be forced into war in case, unavoidable. However if the British and the French every demand I made of them

As things stand at the moment a little too late. But from moral preparedness, it has

JANUARY 1945

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VI

Too soon and too late—We lack time, because we
lack space—A revolutionary State, pursuing a *petit
bourgeois* policy—Collaboration with France was a
mistake—We should have emancipated the French
proletariat and liberated the French colonies—I was
right in *Mein Kampf*

14th February 1945

The disastrous thing about this war is the fact that for
Germany it began both too soon and too late. From
the purely military point of view, it would have suited
us better if it had started sooner. I ought to have
seized the initiative in 1938 instead of allowing myself
to be forced into war in 1939; for war was, in any
case, unavoidable. However, you can hardly blame me
if the British and the French accepted at Munich
every demand I made of them!

As things stand at the moment, then, the war came
a little too late. But from the point of view of our
moral preparedness, it has come far too soon. My

disciples have not yet had time to attain their full manhood. I should really have had another twenty years in which to bring this new *élite* to maturity, an *élite* of youth, immersed from infancy in the philosophy of National Socialism. The tragedy for us Germans is that we never have enough time. Circumstances always conspire to force us to hurry. And if at this point time is lacking, it is primarily because we lack space. The Russians with their vast expansion can afford the luxury of refusing to be hurried. Time works in their favour, but against us. Even if Providence had allotted to me a span of life sufficiently long to allow me to lead my people to the complete degree of development that National Socialism desires, you may be quite sure that our enemies would never have permitted me to take advantage of it. They would have done their utmost to destroy us before they found themselves face to face with a Germany, cemented by a single faith and National Socialist in body and soul, which would have been invincible.

Since we lacked men moulded in the shape of our ideal, we had perforce to make what use we could of those whom we had. The result has been obvious. Thanks to this discrepancy between conception and realization, the war policy of a revolutionary state like the Third Reich has of necessity been the policy of petty bourgeois reactionaries. Our generals and diplomats, with a few, rare exceptions, are men of another age; and their methods of waging war and of conducting our foreign policy also belong to an age

that is passed. This is just us in all good faith as former serve us ill through enthusiasm, and the last malice aforethought.

Our greatest politicalament of the French collaborated with them. them in good stead a thought he was being ve champion of this idea a He thought he was t whereas in reality he wa to think that we were Napoleon, with a nation appreciating the import of a noble gesture. He fi fact, namely, that during has changed completely. and she is now a raddler ceased to swindle and to left us to foot the bill.

Our obvious course the working classes and to implement their own brushed aside, rudely at bourgeoisie, as devoid patriotism. Just look at t of the Wilhelmstrasse h: petty, calculating little

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that is passed. This is just as true of those who serve
 us in all good faith as it is of the rest of them. The
 former serve us ill through lack either of aptitude or
 enthusiasm, and the latter do so deliberately and of
 malice aforethought.

Our greatest political blunder has been our treat-
 ment of the French. We should never have
 collaborated with them. It is a policy which has stood
 them in good stead and has served us ill. Abetz
 thought he was being very clever when he became the
 champion of this idea and persuaded us to pursue it.
 He thought he was two moves ahead of events,
 whereas in reality he was well behind them. He seemed
 to think that we were dealing with the France of
 Napoleon, with a nation, that is, which was capable of
 appreciating the importance and far-reaching effects
 of a noble gesture. He failed to see what is an obvious
 fact, namely, that during the last hundred years France
 has changed completely. She has become a prostitute,
 and she is now a raddled old strumpet, who has never
 ceased to swindle and to confound us, and has always
 left us to foot the bill.

Our obvious course should have been to liberate
 the working classes and to help the workers of France
 to implement their own revolution. We should have
 brushed aside, rudely and without pity, the fossilized
 bourgeoisie, as devoid of soul as it is denuded of
 patriotism. Just look at the sort of friends our geniuses
 of the Wilhelmstrasse have found for us in France—
 petty, calculating little profiteers, who hastened to

make love to us as soon as they thought that we were occupying their country in order to safeguard their bank balances—but who were quite resolved to betray us at the first possible opportunity, provided always that no danger to themselves was involved!

We were equally stupid as regards the French colonies. That, too, was the work of our great minds in the Wilhelmstrasse! Diplomats of the old, classic mould, soldiers of a bygone régime, petty country squires—of such were those who were to help us to revolutionize all Europe! And they have led us into waging war as they would have waged it in the nineteenth century. Never, at any price, should we have put our money on France and against the peoples subjected to her yoke. On the contrary, we should have helped them to achieve their liberty and, if necessary, should have goaded them into doing so. There was nothing to stop us in 1940 from making a gesture of this sort in the Near East and in North Africa. In actual fact our diplomats instead set about the task of consolidating French power, not only in Syria, but in Tunis, in Algeria and Morocco as well. Our 'gentlemen' obviously preferred to maintain cordial relations with distinguished Frenchmen, rather than with a lot of hirsute revolutionaries, with a chorus of musical comedy officers, whose one idea was to cheat us, rather than with the Arabs, who would have been loyal partners for us. Oh! you needn't think I don't see through the calculations of these Machiavellian professionals! They know their job and they have

* D.T. : This had been my advice
and he ignored it then and
paraded it forth now as it

their traditions! All the trick they were playing still under the ban of and rivalry between B. field. What I'm saying living in the reign of Queen Victoria and named Poincaré and rivalry has ceased to still seems to exist is d some diplomats of the adversaries too. In n associates, each of w with considerable asp any appeal to friends again against a com deep-seated hatred of and different. Therein do well to ponder in th

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VI—14TH FEBRUARY 1945

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their traditions! All they thought about was the dirty
trick they were playing on the British, for they were
still under the ban of the famous alleged antagonism
and rivalry between Britain and France in the colonial
field. What I'm saying is perfectly true—they are still
living in the reign of Wilhelm II, in the world of
Queen Victoria and that of those artful sharpers
named Poincaré and Delcassé! In actual fact this
rivalry has ceased to be of any significance. That it
still seems to exist is due to the fact that there are still
some diplomats of the old school in the ranks of our
adversaries too. In reality, Britain and France are
associates, each of whom is playing his own game
with considerable asperity, neither of whom react to
any appeal to friendship, but both of whom unite
again against a common danger. The Frenchman's
deep-seated hatred of the German is something deeper
and different. Therein lies a lesson on which we should
do well to ponder in the future.

As regards France, there were two courses open to
her. Either she could have abandoned her alliance
with Britain, in which case she would have been of no
interest to us as a potential ally, since we knew that
she would also abandon us on the first opportunity;
or she could have pretended to make this change of
partners, in which case she would have been of even
more dubious value to us. On our side, some of the
wishful thinking about this country was quite ridicu-
lous. In reality there was only one possible policy to
adopt *vis-à-vis* France—a policy of rigorous and rigid

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VII

The gravest decision of the war—Peace with Britain
not possible till the Red Army had been annihilated—
Time works against us—Stalin's blackmail—Settle-
ment with Russia as soon as the weather became fine

15th February 1945

No decision which I have had to make during the
course of this war was graver than that to attack
Russia. I had always maintained that we ought at all
costs to avoid waging war on two fronts, and you may
rest assured that I pondered long and anxiously over
Napoleon and his experiences in Russia. Why, then,
you may ask, this war against Russia, and why at the
time that I selected?

We had already given up hope of ending the war
by means of a successful invasion of Britain. Further-
more that country, under the guidance of its stupid
chiefs, would have refused to recognize the hegemony
we had set up in Europe as long as there remained on
the Continent a Great Power which was fundamentally

hostile to the Third Reich. The war, then, would have gone on and on, a war in which, behind the British, the Americans would have played an increasingly active role. The importance of the war potential of the United States, the progress made in armaments—both in our own camp and in that of our enemies, the proximity of the English coast—all these things combined to make it highly inadvisable for us to become bogged down in a war of long duration. For Time—and it's always Time, you notice—would have been increasingly against us. In order to persuade Britain to pack up, to compel her to make peace, it was essential to rob her of her hope of being able still to confront us, on the Continent itself, with an adversary of a stature equal to our own. We had no choice, we had at all costs to strike the Russian element out of the European balance sheet. We had another reason, equally valid, for our action—the mortal threat that a Russia in being constituted to our existence. For it was absolutely certain that one day or other she would attack us.

Our one and only chance of vanquishing Russia was to take the initiative, for to fight a defensive war against her was not practical. We dared not allow the Red Army the advantage of the terrain, place our *Autobahns* at the disposal of its swiftly on-rushing armour, and our railways at the disposal of its troops and its supplies. But if we took the offensive, we could, indeed, defeat the Red Army on its own ground, in the swamps and in the vast and muddy

expenses; but in a civilized done so. We should simply with a spring-board with view of Europe and destroy it.

Why 1941? Because, in the power of our western at all, we had to do so. Well, Nor, mind you, was Stalin fronts, time was against us therefore: 'Why 22 June? 'Why not earlier still?' But for us by the Italians and Greece, I should have acted earlier. For us, the main Russians from moving for their own personal nightmare would take the initiative before us.

Another reason was that the Russians were withdrawing. In spite of their obligations decreased steadily, and that they might suddenly cease prepared to give us of that we had to have, then we would and take them, *in situ* and decision immediately after in November, for it was then sooner or later Stalin would turn to the enemy. Ought I to order that our preparation

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JARY 1945

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VII—15TH FEBRUARY 1945

expenses; but in a civilized country we could not have
done so. We should simply have been providing it
with a spring-board with which to leap upon the whole
of Europe and destroy it. ✱

Why 1941? Because, in view of the steadily increas-
ing power of our western enemies, if we were to act
at all, we had to do so with the least possible delay.
Nor, mind you, was Stalin doing nothing. On two
fronts, time was against us. The real question was not,
therefore: 'Why 22 June 1941 already' but rather:
'Why not earlier still?' But for the difficulties created
for us by the Italians and their idiotic campaign in
Greece, I should have attacked Russia a few weeks
earlier. For us, the main problem was to keep the
Russians from moving for as long as possible, and my
own personal nightmare was the fear that Stalin might
take the initiative before me.

Another reason was that the raw materials which
the Russians were withholding were essential to us.
In spite of their obligations their rate of delivery
decreased steadily, and there was a real danger that
they might suddenly cease altogether. If they were not
prepared to give us of their own free will the things
we had to have, then we had no alternative but to go
and take them, *in situ* and by force. I came to my
decision immediately after Molotov's visit to Berlin
in November, for it then became clear to me that
sooner or later Stalin would abandon us and go over
to the enemy. Ought I to have played for time in
order that our preparations could have become more

*✱ P.T. He would wake up with
these nightmares. I would soothe
him by saying: "You attack first."*

conflict. To ensure her abstention, no sacrifices, no presents on our part would have been too great. Had she steadfastly maintained her neutral role, we would have overwhelmed her with our favours. In victory we would have shared with her all the fruits and all the glory. We would have collaborated with all our hearts in the creation of the historic myth of the supremacy of the Italian people, the legitimate sons of the ancient Romans. Indeed, anything would have been preferable to having them as comrades in arms on the field of battle!

Italy's intervention in June 1940, with the sole purpose of aiming a donkey-kick at a French army that was already in process of disintegration, merely had the effect of tarnishing a victory which the vanquished were at the time prepared to accept in a sporting spirit. France recognized that she had been fairly defeated by the armies of the Reich, but she was unwilling to accept defeat at the hands of the Axis.

Our Italian ally has been a source of embarrassment to us everywhere. It was this alliance, for instance, which prevented us from pursuing a revolutionary policy in North Africa. In the nature of things, this territory was becoming an Italian preserve and it was as such that the Duce laid claim to it. Had we been on our own, we could have emancipated the Moslem countries dominated by France; and that would have had enormous repercussions in the Near East, dominated by Britain, and in Egypt. But with our fortunes linked to those of the Italians, the

pursuit of such a policy vibrated at the news of the Iraklis and the who ready to rise in revolt. J done to help them, even been both our duty and presence of the Italians created a feeling of *mala* who inevitably saw in unwilling, of their oppre parts of the world are r than either the British of the barbarous repris are still vivid. Then ag of the Duce to be rega evokes the same sneez before the war. This Mahomed and a great co caused to be conferred brutes whom he had ei doing so. We had a splendid policy with reg the bus, as we missed i thanks to our loyalty to t

In this theatre of ope vented us from playing c of the French subjects a of revolt in the countr Such a policy would ha the whole of Islam. It is

X—17TH FEBRUARY 1945

which was always possible, if not probable. From our point of view this means that there would have been a considerable number of British troops, immobile and acquiring neither the experience of battle nor the fillip derived from victory—in short, a sort of 'phoney war', and the longer it continued, the greater would be the advantage that we gained from it.

A war that is prolonged is of benefit to a belligerent in that it gives him the opportunities to learn to wage war. I had hoped to conduct this war without giving the enemy the chance of learning anything new in the art of battle. In Poland and Scandinavia, in Holland, Belgium and France I succeeded. Our victories were swift, were achieved with a minimum of casualties on both sides, but were yet sufficiently clear-cut and decisive to lead to the complete defeat of the enemy.

If the war had remained a war conducted by Germany, and not by the Axis, we should have been in a position to attack Russia by 15th May 1941. Doubly strengthened by the fact that our forces had known nothing but decisive and irrefutable victories, we should have been able to conclude the campaign before winter came. How differently everything has turned out!

Out of gratitude (for I shall never forget the attitude adopted by the Duce at the time of the Anschluss) I have always abstained from criticizing or passing judgment on Italy. I have on the contrary always been at great pains to treat her as an equal. Unfortunately, the laws of nature have shown that it is a mistake to

X—17TH FEB

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treat as equals those who are not your equals. The
Duce himself is my equal. He may perhaps even be
my superior from the point of view of his ambitions
for his people. But it is facts and not ambitions that
count.

We Germans do well to remember that in circum-
stances such as these it is better for us to play a lone
hand. We have everything to lose and nothing to gain
by binding ourselves closely with more feeble elements
and by choosing into the bargain partners who have
given all too frequent proof of their fickleness. I have
often said that wherever you find Italy, there you will
find victory. What I should have said is—wherever
you find victory, there, you may be sure, you will find
Italy!

Neither my personal affection for the Duce nor my
instinctive feelings of friendship for the Italian people
have changed. But I do blame myself for not having
listened to the voice of reason, which bade me to be
ruthless in my friendship for Italy. And I could have
done so, both to the personal advantage of the Duce
himself and to the advantage of his people. I realize,
of course, that such an attitude on my part would
have offended him and that he would never have for-
given me. But as a result of my forbearance things
have happened which should not have happened and
which may well prove fatal. Life does not forgive
weakness.

* D.T.'s note

opposition in his own country. He had done all in his power to provoke the Japanese. It was only a repetition, on a vaster scale, of the tactics employed with such success by Wilson at the time of the first war: the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, provoked with diabolical skill, prepared the Americans psychologically for the entry of their country into the war against Germany. Since the intervention of the United States could not be prevented in 1917, it is obvious that their intervention now, twenty-five years later, was both a logical premise and unavoidable.

It was only in 1915 that World Jewry decided to place the whole of its resources at the disposal of the Allies. But in our case, Jewry decided as early as 1933, at the very birth of the Third Reich, tacitly to declare war on us. Furthermore the influence wielded by the Jews in the United States has consistently and steadily increased during the last quarter of a century. And since the entry of the United States into the war was quite inevitable, it was a slice of great good fortune for us to have at our side an ally of such great worth as Japan. But it was also a slice of great good fortune for the Jews. It gave them the chance they had so long been seeking to implicate the United States directly in the conflict, and it was a master stroke on their part to have succeeded in dragging the Americans unanimously and enthusiastically into their war. The Americans, mindful of their disillusionment in 1919, were by no means anxious once again to intervene in a European war. On the other hand

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18th February 1945

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they were more obsessed than ever with the idea of the Yellow Peril. Trying to teach the Jews a trick or two is like carrying coals to Newcastle, and you can be quite sure that all their plans are conceived with Machiavellian astuteness. I myself am quite convinced that in the case we are discussing they took a very long view which envisaged the overthrow by a white Power of the Empire of the Rising Sun, which had risen to the status of a world Power and which had always sternly resisted contamination by the race of Jewry.

For us, Japan will always remain an ally and a friend. This war will teach us to appreciate and respect her more than ever. It will encourage us to draw more tightly the bonds which unite our two countries. It is of course regrettable that the Japanese did not enter the war against Russia and at the same time as ourselves. Had they done so, Stalin's armies would not now be besieging Breslau or squatting in Budapest. We should have liquidated Bolshevism by the time winter came, and Roosevelt would have hesitated to take on adversaries as powerful as our two selves. In the same way I am sorry that Japan did not capture Singapore as early as 1940, immediately after the defeat of France. The United States was then on the eve of a presidential election and would have found it impossible to intervene. That, then, was one of the turning points of the war.

In spite of everything, we and the Japanese will

remain staunchly side by side together. Should we be the first to see the Russians continuing to 'Asiatic solidarity' for the sake

XII

We should have occupied Gibraltar in 1940—Congenital weakness of the Latin countries—The British duped by the French—Misunderstandings with the Duce—The disastrous campaign in Greece

20th February 1945

Taking advantage of the enthusiasm we had aroused in Spain and the shock to which we had subjected Britain, we ought to have attacked Gibraltar in the summer of 1940, immediately after the defeat of France.

At that time, however, the awkward thing was that it would have been difficult to prevent Spain entering into the war on our side—and particularly so as we had failed, a few weeks previously, from preventing Italy from flying to the rescue of our victory.

These Latin countries bring us no luck. Their overweening conceit is in direct proportion to their weakness, and that always confuses the issue. We failed entirely to curb the Italians' desire to shine on

XII—20TH FEBRU

the field of battle, even themselves willing to confer upon it for heroism, to bestow upon military glory and all the advantage that has been won—pro took no part in it at all.

The British, of course, were completely by their Latin ally than obviously, would never have realized the full extent of French inadequacy. For the British France to bear the whole burden on the Continent. For Chamberlain have been easier than to shed for Poland and then to have country up at our leisure.

To material weakness the quite fantastic pretentiousness of hostile France—it makes no sense. Both of them will have been enemies.

The only disagreements between the Duce and myself were the pretensions which from time to time he took to take. In spite of the complete confidence in him personally, I felt complete ignorance of my intentions in the matter of creation might have prejudiced his complete confidence in me. He had complete confidence in me. He had complete confidence in Ciano—no secrets from the pretty lady.

the field of battle, even though we had shown ourselves willing to confer upon them an honour degree for heroism, to bestow upon them all the fruits of military glory and all the advantages accruing from a war that has been won—provided always that they took no part in it at all.

Talk to Brown

The British, of course, were duped even more completely by their Latin ally than we were. Chamberlain, obviously, would never have declared war, had he realized the full extent of French demoralization and inadequacy. For the British undoubtedly expected France to bear the whole brunt of the land campaign on the Continent. For Chamberlain nothing would have been easier than to shed a few crocodile's tears for Poland and then to have left us to carve the country up at our leisure.

To material weakness the Latin countries add a quite fantastic pretentiousness. Friendly Italy or hostile France—it makes no odds. The weakness of both of them will have been equally fatal to us.

The only disagreements that have ever occurred between the Duce and myself arose from the precautions which from time to time I had felt constrained to take. In spite of the complete confidence I had in him personally, I felt compelled to keep him in ignorance of my intentions in any case where indiscretion might have prejudiced our interests. Just as I had complete confidence in Mussolini, he had complete confidence in Ciano—and he, of course, had no secrets from the pretty ladies who fluttered like

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Gibraltar in 1940—Contin countries—The British misunderstandings with the paign in Greece

20th February 1945

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butterflies around him. That we know to our cost, and as the enemy were anxious for information regardless of costs, they learnt a goodly number of secrets through this channel. I had good reasons, therefore, for not telling the Duce everything. I am only sorry that he did not appreciate the fact, that he resented my attitude and paid me back in my own coin.

There's no doubt about it—we have no luck with the Latin races! While I was occupied, first in Montoire, buttoning up a futile policy of collaboration with France, and then in Hendaye, where I had to submit to receiving fulsome honours at the hands of a false friend, a third Latin—and one, this time, who really was a friend—took advantage of my preoccupation to set in motion his disastrous campaign against Greece.

XI

Third Reich's need of peace man and the Utopian doctrine a realistic doctrine, applicable war occurred in 1938, it was war—What would have happened for the West

We had need of peace in programme. I always desire have been jockeyed into war enemies. In practice, the three since January 1933, from power.

On the one hand, there are those who march in step with those who adopt a realistic attitude. And throughout history families of wholly irreconcilable

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XIII

Third Reich's need of peace to consolidate—Abstract
man and the Utopian doctrines—National Socialism
a realistic doctrine, applicable only to Germany—Had
war occurred in 1938, it would have been a local
war—What would have happened—a double coup
for the West

21st February 1945

We had need of peace in order to carry out our
programme. I always desired to maintain peace. We
have been jockeyed into war at the desire of our
enemies. In practice, the threat of war has existed ever
since January 1933, from the time that I came to
power.

On the one hand, there are the Jews and all those
who march in step with them. On the other, there are
those who adopt a realistic attitude towards world
affairs. And throughout history we have had these two
families of wholly irreconcilable outlook in the world.

On the one hand, there are those who strive for the

happiness of mankind in the abstract and who pursue the chimera of a formula applicable all the world over. On the other, there are the realists. National Socialism is interested only in the happiness of the German race and strives only to secure the wellbeing of the German man.

The universalists, the idealists, the Utopians all aim too high. They give promises of an unattainable paradise, and by doing so they deceive mankind. Whatever label they wear, whether they call themselves Christians, Communists, humanitarians, whether they are merely sincere but stupid or wire-pullers and cynics, they are all makers of slaves. I myself have always kept my eye fixed on a paradise which, in the nature of things, lies well within our reach. I mean an improvement in the lot of the German people.

I have restricted myself to making promises that I knew I could keep and that I had every intention of keeping. Hence the universal hatred which I have aroused. By refusing to make impossible promises, as do our enemies, I was not playing the game. I was holding myself aloof from the syndicate of the world's leaders, whose aim, unavowed but tacitly accepted, is the exploitation of human credulity.

The National Socialist doctrine, as I have always proclaimed, is not for export. It was conceived for the German people. All the objectives at which it aims are, of necessity, limited—but attainable. It follows, then, that I can put as little credence in the idea of universal peace as in that of universal war.

It was on the eve of Munich that the enemies of Germany were determined to have our hide at all no possibility of coming to that arch capitalist bourgeois deceptive umbrella in his trouble of going all the way matters with that upstart, Hitler, that he really intended to win us. He was quite prepared that he thought might serve to lure and only object in undertaking time. What we ought then to have struck at once. We ought to have taken it was the last chance we had.

But they gave way all alone poltroons that they are, cowards. Under such conditions it was no initiative and commence he had lost a unique opportunity of winning a war that was in any case inevitable.

Although we were ourselves were nevertheless better prepared September 1938 would have been the date. And what a chance we had.

We ought then and then the disputes by force of arms and the action of our opponents to meet we solved the Sudeten question Czechoslovakia at the same

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XIII—21ST FEBRUARY 1945

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It was on the eve of Munich that I realized beyond doubt that the enemies of the Third Reich were determined to have our hide at all costs and that there was no possibility of coming to terms with them. When that arch capitalist bourgeois, Chamberlain, with his deceptive umbrella in his hand, put himself to the trouble of going all the way to the Berghof to discuss matters with that upstart, Hitler, he knew very well that he really intended to wage ruthless war against us. He was quite prepared to tell me anything which he thought might serve to lull my suspicions. His one and only object in undertaking this trip was to gain time. What we ought then to have done was to have struck at once. We ought to have gone to war in 1938. It was the last chance we had of localizing the war.

But they gave way all along the line and, like the poltroons that they are, ceded to all our demands. Under such conditions it was very difficult to seize the initiative and commence hostilities. At Munich we lost a unique opportunity of easily and swiftly winning a war that was in any case inevitable.

Although we were ourselves not fully prepared, we were nevertheless better prepared than the enemy. September 1938 would have been the most favourable date. And what a chance we had to limit the conflict.

We ought then and there to have settled our disputes by force of arms and disregarded the inclination of our opponents to meet all our demands. When we solved the Sudeten question by force we liquidated Czechoslovakia at the same time—and left all the

59
* Waken up in the middle of the night.
* They tricked me, they gyped me. "u

them. Germany, remember, has made a massive contribution to the peopling of America. It is we Germans who have made by far the greatest contribution of Nordic blood to the United States. And it is also a fact that Steuben played a part which decided the issue in the War of Independence.

The last great economic crisis struck Germany and the United States at more or less the same time and with the same force. Both countries rode the storm in much the same way. The operation, though extremely difficult, was crowned with success on our side. In America, where, after all, it presented no difficulty at all, the operation achieved only a very mediocre success under the guidance of Roosevelt and his Jewish advisers. The failure of the New Deal is responsible in no small measure for their war fever. The United States as a matter of fact could survive and prosper in a state of economic isolation; for us, that is a dream which we would love to see come true. They have at their disposal a vast territory, ample to absorb the energies of all their people. As far as Germany is concerned, my hope is one day to ensure for her complete economic independence inside a territory of a size compatible with her population. A great people has need of broad acres.

Germany expects nothing from the United States, and the latter have nothing to fear from Germany. Everything combines to ensure the possibility of peaceful co-existence, each in his own country and all in perfect harmony. Unfortunately, the whole business

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I am prepared to wager that well within twenty-five years the Americans themselves will have realized what a handicap has been imposed upon them by this parasitic Jewry, clamped fast to their flesh and nourishing itself on their life-blood. It is this Jewry that is dragging them into adventures which, when all is said and done, are no concern of theirs and in which the interests at stake are of no importance to them. What possible reason can the non-Jewish Americans have for sharing the hatreds of the Jews and following meekly in their footsteps? One thing is quite certain —within a quarter of a century the Americans will either have become violently anti-semitic or they will be devoured by Jewry.

If we should lose this war, it will mean that we have been defeated by the Jews. Their victory will then be complete. But let me hasten to add that it will only be very temporary. It will certainly not be Europe which takes up the struggle again against them, but it certainly will be the United States. The latter is a country still too young to have acquired the maturity conferred by age and exaggeratedly lacking in political sense. For the Americans, everything has so far been ridiculously easy. But experience and difficulties will perhaps cause them to mature. Just think for a moment what they were when their country was born

—a group of individuals earth hastening forward finding at their disposal their hunger and all the conscience is a thing which especially in vast territory it be forgotten that these from a variety of races are the bonds of a national the Jews!

The excesses in which country are as nothing in in which they have indulged continue to indulge in their new hunting ground before the Americans realize they have adored is an idol this Jew-ridden man is idol from the point of view humanity as a whole. His path on which they have particular he has forced in a conflict that does not they possessed even a nation they would have remained content in this conflict to they been a little more experienced, they would their best course in their have been to have entered

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RY 1945

XIV—24TH FEBRUARY 1945

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—a group of individuals come from all corners of the
earth hastening forward in pursuit of fortune and
finding at their disposal a vast continent to appease
their hunger and all theirs for the taking. National
conscience is a thing which develops very gradually,
especially in vast territories such as these. Nor must
it be forgotten that these individuals had been drawn
from a variety of races and had not yet been fused by
the bonds of a national spirit. What an easy prey for
the Jews!

The excesses in which the Jews indulged in our
country are as nothing in comparison with the excesses
in which they have indulged and in which they will
continue to indulge in ever increasing measure on
their new hunting grounds. It will not be very long
before the Americans realize that the Roosevelt whom
they have adored is an idol with feet of clay and that
this Jew-ridden man is in reality a malefactor—both
from the point of view of the United States and of
humanity as a whole. He has dragged them along a
path on which they had no business to be, and in
particular he has forced them to take an active part
in a conflict that does not concern them at all. Had
they possessed even a minimum of political instinct
they would have remained in their splendid isolation,
content in this conflict to play the role of arbiter. Had
they been a little more mature and a little more
experienced, they would doubtless have realized that
their best course in their own major interests would
have been to have entrenched themselves firmly with

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* This is the undermode of the
American isolationism in the
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welcomed with the Soviet as Jewish.

XV

The Germans always, inevitably, in a hurry—Time fights on Russia's side—A people with a tragic past—Not the work of one man, or even of a generation—Germans have never ceased to fight for their existence

25th February 1945

It is a fact that we always bungle everything through being forced to act in a hurry. With us, to act swiftly is always to act with precipitation. To acquire the gift of patience, we should have both time and space, and at the moment we have neither. The Russians are lucky in possessing both, quite apart from that inclination towards placidity which is a characteristic trait of the Slav temperament.

Furthermore, thanks to the Marxist religion, they have everything required to make them patient. They have been promised happiness on earth (a feature which distinguishes Marxism from the Christian

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as irreplaceable.

XV—25TH FEBRUARY 1945

religion)—but in the future. The Jew, Mardochée Marx, like the good Jew that he was, was awaiting the coming of the Messiah. He has placed the Messiah conception in a setting of historic materialism by asserting that terrestrial happiness is a factor in an almost endless process of evolution. 'Happiness is within your reach,' he says, 'that I promise you. But you must let evolution take its course and not try to hurry matters.' Mankind always falls for a specious trick of that sort. . . . Lenin did not have the time, but Stalin will carry on the good work, and so on and so on...Marxism is a very powerful force. But how shall we assess Christianity, that false leadership has Judaised to the extent that it will no longer fight the Anti-Christ Jew? Believe me, it is incomparably stronger!

I myself am fated to being compelled to try to accomplish everything in the short space of a human lifetime. To help me I have but a realistic idealism, based on tangible facts, from which flows promises that can certainly be fulfilled, but which forbids me to promise the moon. Where others have all eternity at their disposal, I have but a few short, miserable years. Those others know that they will be succeeded by yet others who will carry on where they left off, ploughing with precision exactly the same furrow with exactly the same plough. I have now reached the stage where I wonder whether among my immediate successors there will be found a man predestined to

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people with a tragic past—
or even of a generation—
to fight for their existence

25th February 1945

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* H had always ⁶⁹thought of himself
as irreplaceable. I had confirmed it.

raise and carry on the torch, when it has slipped from my hand.

It has also been my fate to be the servant of a people with so tragic a past, a people so unstable, so versatile as the German people, and a people who go, according to circumstances, from one extreme to the other. From my own point of view, the ideal thing would have been, firstly, to ensure the future existence of the German people, then to form a youth imbued deeply with the National Socialist doctrine—and then to have left it to the generations of the future to wage the inevitable war, unless, of course, our enemies recoiled when they found themselves faced with the newly acquired might of the German people. In this way, Germany would have been well equipped both materially and morally. She would have at her disposal an administration, a foreign policy and an army all moulded from infancy in the principles of National Socialism. The task I have undertaken of raising the German people to the place in the world that is their due is unfortunately not a task that can be accomplished by a single man or in a single generation. But I have at least opened their eyes to their inherent greatness and I have inspired them to exaltation at the thought of the union of Germans in one great indestructible Reich. I have sown the good seed. I have made the German people realize the significance of the struggle they are waging for their very existence.

One day the harvest earth will be able to p
German people is a youn
with its future before it.

I had implemented without any trouble, would bring them inestimable advantages.

Even by the end of July, one month, that is, after the defeat of France, I realized that peace was once again eluding our grasp. A few weeks later I knew that we should not succeed in invading Britain before the advent of the autumnal gales because we had not succeeded in acquiring complete command of the air. In other words, I realized that we should never succeed in invading Britain.

The attitude of the Russians during the summer of 1940, the fact that they had absorbed the Baltic States and Bessarabia while we ourselves were busy in the west left me with no illusions regarding their intentions. And even if I had retained any, Molotov's visit in November would have been sufficient to dissipate them. The proposals which Stalin submitted to me after the return of his Minister did not deceive me. Stalin, that incomparable and imperturbable black-mailer, was trying to gain time in order to consolidate his advanced bases in Finland and the Balkans. He was trying to play cat and mouse with us.

The tragedy, from my point of view, was the fact that I could not attack before 15th May, and if I were to succeed in my first initial onslaught, it was essential that I should not attack later than that date. Stalin, however, could have launched his attack much earlier. Throughout the winter of 1940, and even more so in the spring of 1941, I was haunted by the obsession that the Russians might take the offensive. In the

26th February 1945

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know that in every field of endeavour, and more so in
peace than in war, we shall everywhere outclass them.

The explanation of this patience which the Russians
exhibit is to be found in their philosophy, which
allows them to avoid taking risks and to wait—a year,
a generation, a century, if necessary—until the time
is ripe for the implementation of their plans. Time
means nothing to them. Marxism, certainly, has
promised them a paradise on earth—but certainly not
today, not even tomorrow, but some time in the dim,
indefinite future.

Notwithstanding this patience which is the back-
bone of their power, the Russians could not stand idly
aside and watch the destruction of Great Britain, for
in that case, with the United States and Japan can-
celling each other out, as it were, the Russians would
find themselves face to face with us—and alone. And
that would mean without any doubt that, at a time
and a place of our choice, the long-outstanding issue
between us would be settled in our favour.

If I felt compelled to decide to settle my accounts
with Bolshevism by force of arms, and, indeed, arrived
at my decision on the very anniversary of the signing
of the Moscow pact, I have every right to believe that
Stalin had come to the same decision even before he
signed the pact.

For a whole year I adhered to the hope that an
entente, at least honestly sincere if not unreservedly
friendly, could be established between the Third Reich
and Stalin's Russia. I imagined that after fifteen years

of power Stalin, the realist, would have rid himself of the nebulous Marxist ideology and that he was preserving it merely as a poison reserved exclusively for external use. The brutal manner in which he decapitated the Jewish intelligentsia, who had rendered him such signal service in the destruction of Tsarist Russia, encouraged me in that belief. I presumed that he did not wish to give these same Jewish intellectuals the chance of bringing about the downfall of the totalitarian empire which he had built—that Stalinist empire which, in all its essentials, is only the spiritual successor to the empire of Peter the Great.

In a spirit of implacable realism on both sides we could have created a situation in which a durable entente would have been possible—by defining precisely the zones of influence to be attributed to each party, by rigorously restricting our collaboration to the field of economics and in such a manner that both parties would have derived benefits therefrom. An entente, in short, watched over by an eagle eye and with a finger on the trigger!

* But it matters how he
hated, feared and detested
Stalin, he always felt obliged
to like him, to respect him, to
value his actions—Stalin
knew how to ⁷⁶ deal with the Jews

XV

Europe's last chance—Nap
peace—Napoleon's agony ar
bars our way—Those who th

I have been Europe's last hope
of refashioning herself by me
She showed herself impervi
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JANUARY 1945

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XVII

Europe's last chance—Napoleon and winning the
peace—Napoleon's agony and mine—Britain always
bars our way—Those who thrive on discord in Europe

26th February 1945

I have been Europe's last hope. She proved incapable
of refashioning herself by means of voluntary reform.
She showed herself impervious to charm and per-
suasion. To take her I had to use violence.

Europe can be built only on a foundation of ruins.
Not material ruins, but on ruins of vested interests
and economic coalitions, of mental rigidity and per-
verse prejudice, of outmoded idiosyncrasy and narrow-
mindedness. Europe must be fashioned in the common
interest of all and without regard for individuals.
Napoleon understood that perfectly.

I, perhaps better than anyone else, can well imagine
the torments suffered by Napoleon, longing, as he was,

for the triumph of peace and yet compelled to continue waging war, without ceasing and without seeing any prospect of ceasing—and still persisting in the hope eternal of at last achieving peace. Since the summer of 1940 I have myself been suffering the same torments. And always it has been this Britain who barred Europe's way to prosperity. But now she is aged and enfeebled, though not less vicious and wicked. Finally, she is being supported in this negative and unnatural attitude by the United States, themselves inspired and urged on by the whole forces of international Jewry, which has flourished and hopes long to continue to flourish as the result of our dissensions.

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XVIII

A defeat which must inevitably be complete—The Reich hacked to pieces by the conquerors—A Germany in transition—The resurrection of eternal Germany—Lines of conduct for the faithful—The premier people on the Continent—Britain and Italy, if only . . .—A France degenerate and implacably hostile—Waiting for the rise of the African and Asiatic peoples—The U.S.A. and Russia face to face—A Russia rid of Marxism—The frailty of the American colossus—The rights of famished peoples—The chances of survival for a courageous people

2nd April 1945

If we are destined to be beaten in this war, our defeat will be utter and complete. Our enemies have proclaimed their objectives in a manner which leaves us no illusions as to their intentions. Jews, Russian Bolsheviks and the pack of jackals that follows, yelping at their heels—we know that none of them will lay aside their arms until they have destroyed and annihilated National Socialist Germany and reduced it to a heap of rubble. In a ghastly conflict like this,

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What advice can we give, then, what rules of conduct can we recommend to those who survive, with their souls untarnished and their hearts unshaken? Battered, left alone to work out its own salvation, existing solely as a custodian during the grim darkness of the night, the German people must strive its very utmost spontaneously to respect those racial laws which we laid down for it. In a world which is becoming more and more perverted through the Jewish virus, a people which has remained immune to the virus must in the long run emerge supreme. From this point of view, National Socialism can justly claim the eternal gratitude of the people for having eliminated the Jew from Germany and Central Europe.

Post-war Germany's second preoccupation should be to preserve indissoluble the union of all the German races. It is only when we are united that our qualities expand to their full stature; only when we cease to be Prussians, Bavarians, Austrians, Rhinelanders and become just Germans. The Prussians were the first to gather the Germans into one Reich under Bismarck, and by so doing gave the German people their opportunity to show that they were the premier people in Europe. I myself, by uniting them all in the Third Reich, set them on the path to become the architects of a new Europe. Whatever the future holds, the German peoples must remember that it is essential that they should cast out all elements that make for discord among them and should indefatigably pursue

every measure which contributes to the maintenance of their unity.

As far as foreign countries are concerned, it is not possible to lay down rigid rules, for the situation is in a constant state of change. Twenty years ago, I wrote that there were only two possible allies in Europe for Germany—Britain and Italy. The course of events during this period has not been such as to permit the implementation of a policy which would have been the logical sequence to my statement. The British, admittedly, still wielded imperial power, but they no longer possessed the moral qualities requisite for the preservation of their empire. They seemed to dominate the world; in reality they were themselves dominated by the Jews. Italy had tried to emulate ancient Rome. She had all the Roman ambitions, but she lacked the two essential adjuncts of a determined spirit and material power. The only trump card she had was the leadership of a true Roman. What a tragedy for that man! And what a tragedy for that country! For a people, as for an individual, it is tragic to have ambitions and to lack both the means essential to their fulfilment and any hope of acquiring those means.

There remains France. Twenty years ago I wrote what I thought of France. She was and is the mortal enemy of the German people. Her steady degeneration and her frequent *crises de nerfs* have sometimes led us to minimize the importance of her actions. Should she continue to become more feeble, as seems

probable, that will be no distrustful of her. The memory of nothing but a memory, a view you may be quite sure cause us a moment's anxiety on the issue of it, this war has no category to which she belongs. Power. Even so, thanks to corruption and her inimical mail, she can still be a watchword therefore must. Let the Germans take care to be lulled by the voice of

While, therefore, it is in principles in dealing with must always be prepared to changing conditions, it is with confidence that Germany's staunchest friends from actively resistant to Jewish the Japanese, the Chinese will always be closer to in spite of the fact that the tragedy that France has the course of centuries has been perverted by the Jews to the pursuit of a Jewish

With the defeat of the emergence of the Asiatic the South American nation

the world only two Great Powers capable of confronting each other—the United States and Soviet Russia. The laws of both history and geography will compel these two Powers to a trial of strength, either military or in the fields of economics and ideology. These same laws make it inevitable that both Powers should become enemies of Europe. And it is equally certain that both these Powers will sooner or later find it desirable to seek the support of the sole surviving great nation in Europe, the German people. I say with all the emphasis at my command that the Germans must at all costs avoid playing the role of pawn in either camp.

At this juncture it is difficult to say which, from the ideological point of view, would prove to be the more injurious to us—Jew-ridden Americanism or Bolshevism. It is possible that under the pressure of events, the Russians will rid themselves completely of Jewish Marxism, only to re-incarnate pan-slavism in its most fierce and ferocious form. As for the Americans, if they do not swiftly succeed in casting off the yoke of New York Jewry (which has the same intelligence as a monkey that saws through the branch on which it is perching), well—it won't be long before they go under, before even having reached the age of maturity. The fact that they combine the possession of such vast material power with so vast a lack of intelligence evokes the image of some child stricken with elephantiasis. It may well be asked whether this

is not simply a destiny destined to vanish.

If North American doctrine less pueril serves as a kind of based on lofty but Christian Science, it long remain a pre soon become appar clay has, after it strength left to br what a fine chance the yellow races! justice and history arguments (or lac invasion of the Europeans in the undernourished m right that history people to assuage their claim is well b

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XVIII—2ND APRIL 1945

is not simply a case of a mushroom civilization, destined to vanish as quickly as it sprang up.

If North America does not succeed in evolving a doctrine less puerile than the one which at present serves as a kind of moral *vade mecum* and which is based on lofty but chimerical principles and so-called Christian Science, it is questionable whether it will for long remain a predominantly white continent. It will soon become apparent that this giant with the feet of clay has, after its spectacular rise, just sufficient strength left to bring about its own downfall. And what a fine chance this sudden collapse will offer to the yellow races! From the point of view of both justice and history they will have exactly the same arguments (or lack of arguments) to support their invasion of the American continent as had the Europeans in the sixteenth century. Their vast and undernourished masses will confer on them the sole right that history recognizes—the right of starving people to assuage their hunger—provided always that their claim is well backed by force!

And so, in this cruel world into which two great wars have plunged us again, it is obvious that the only white peoples who have any chance of survival and prosperity are those who know how to suffer and who still retain the courage to fight, even when things are hopeless, to the death. And the only peoples who will have the right to claim these qualities will be those who have shown themselves capable of eradicating from their system the deadly poison of Jewry.

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

Fretful worries about his own image alternated with glowing assertions of indispensability, historic greatness, and immortality. Thus, to the same valet, Linge: "My life is worth more than one or two divisions. Without me the army and Germany would collapse." He told the Austrian chancellor, "I have made the greatest achievement in the history of Germany, greater than any other German." Ever since his youth, Hitler was convinced that he alone understood the real meaning of world history. Thus, when an intimate asked him the most revealing statement he had made about himself in his memoirs, Hitler replied at once: "A short sentence at the very beginning of the book [actually it appears on p. 11] in which I say that as a youth I learned the meaning of history." His feeling that he had mastered all history led him, in 1919, to set forth detailed plans for a book he planned to entitle *Die Monumentalgeschichte der Menschheit* (Monumental History of Humanity).¹³³

In a speech to the commanding generals of the Wehrmacht on 23 November 1939, he laid particular stress on the special importance of his own person: "I must in all modesty say that my own person is indispensable. Neither a military nor a civilian personality could replace me. . . . I am convinced of the strength of my brain and my resolution. . . . The fate of the Reich is dependent entirely upon me." As the war progressed, Hitler saw himself as the personification of Germany, and the single focus for all the attacks of the enemy. That he believed the entire world was personally against him was made clear in a speech of 15 February 1942:

Today I have the honor of being this enemy because I have created a world power out of the German Reich. I am boundlessly proud that I was blessed by Providence with the permission to lead this battle. . . .¹³⁴

And at the very end—with his world crashing about him as he cowered in the air raid shelter and planned his own suicide—he still saw himself as a genius with nerves of steel. In his last political testament, he observed that during his lifetime he had made "the most difficult decisions that ever confronted mortal man." And when a secretary, Traudl Junge, asked him as she was typing up this last testament on 29 April 1945 if National Socialism would survive after his death, Hitler answered emphatically in the negative: "The German people have shown that they are not worthy of my movement. Perhaps in a hundred years another genius will take up my ideas and National Socialism like a phoenix will arise again from the ashes." He assured himself that a special place was reserved for him and the other immortals, saying, "I shall feel I am in my proper place if after my death I find myself, together with people like me, on some sort of Olympus. I shall be in the company of the most enlightened spirits of all times."¹³⁵

But the pendulum kept swinging back. After making assertions of

1911, 1945

The Image and the Man

omnipotence and infallibility. His memoirs recall how man "I had forebodings and was fit him after he attained power, nervous apprehension" that I himself by insisting that he necessary to say, for example Cities will become heaps of ruins forever. . . . But I am not afraid into a familiar disjunctive with "There are two possibilities: all my plans or to fail. If I fail history, If I fail I shall be content."

At the very height of power On 10 November 1938, for example, what should have been a triumph against the Jews in the Kristallnacht the acquiescence of the German a series of other victories: winning; occupation of the Rhineland proving his withdrawal from Austria; and most recently, And yet this speech of 10 November words *Angst, Rückschlag*, and ing:

I must tell you that I become almost anxious. what would happen if I even that can happen. had a failure? Formerly I built up a Party through me. . . .¹³⁷

Even in the Declaration was thinking of the defeat of word "capitulation." He also

Once again I have put on dearest of all. I will outlive the end. If any successor will be [Field pen to [him] his successor never learned and that will never be repeated. mental goal; it is common necessary that our people

1945

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GOD: ADOLF HITLER

The Past As Prologue: Hitler and History

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od incident which was typical
William, before retiring for the
kiss him. One day the little
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son was publicly whipped, im-
aded at his father's orders. An
g ordered that the decapitated
ig until two in the afternoon.

in his dislike of spying on other people. During one of his nightly con-
versations he told "a delightful little story" of how Frederick the Great
had refused to use secret police to ferret out the thoughts of his
subjects. The Führer concluded by saying that he too found the idea of
spying completely "repellent" (*abstossend*). Hitler's own comparisons
with Frederick were not always flattering to himself, however. In an un-
guarded moment he remarked that the level of conversation at Sans
Souci between Frederick the Great and Voltaire was such as "to make
one ashamed of the depths of our present day conversations." (Anyone
who has struggled through Hitler's "Table Conversations" is constrained
to agree with him.) Hitler also suggested—indirectly—that Frederick
was the greater military commander. On 28 January 1942, in his
headquarters at the *Wolfsschanze*, he observed:

When one recalls that Frederick the Great was confronted by a
force twelve times greater than his own, one realizes what a
shithead [*Scheisskerl*] one is! We ourselves this time have numeri-
cal superiority! Quite frankly, isn't it a disgrace? ¹⁰

As he hid in his shelter in Berlin in 1945, Hitler may have re-
called that Frederick had also viewed the collapse of his country with
equanimity. Finding himself in desperate circumstances during the
Seven Years War, the Prussian king wrote in 1757, "If everything
collapses, I should calmly bury myself beneath the ruins." ²⁰

The royal absolutism established by the early Hohenzollerns pro-
vided efficient government. Indeed, it was too good for the future
political health of the people. Nations may have reason to look back
with a feeling of gratitude for the bad governments they experienced
in their historic past. America owes a good deal to George III and Lord
North; Frenchmen are indebted to the errors in judgment of Louis
XVI; and Englishmen continue to be blessed by Bad King John, who
gave them the Magna Carta, by James II, who inspired the Glorious
Revolution, and by the kind of government provided by the first four
Hanoverian Georges. With rulers like these, parliamentary government
was not merely possible, it was downright necessary.

The Prussian kings left a different legacy to German history: the
conviction that the best government is authoritarian government, and
that those in authority must be obeyed. Religion demanded obedience
to the *Obrigkeith*, but experience had also shown that paternal gov-
ernment was good government—so good, so efficient, and so just that
there was need neither for revolt nor for political participation. Thus
it came about in Prussia that a religious assertion of the Lutherans
became a political statement of faith that was to resound in the future:
"Everything comes down from above" (*Alles kommt von oben herab*).

It was a political legacy upon which Hitler drew heavily.

age. My list
-this in plain
words

All comes from
the top and down

April 21,

1945

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

From Private Neurosis to Pul

defeat in 1918 was that America entered the war—that and the Jews.”¹⁸⁷

But now—very late in 1941—the Jews were no longer available to provide this kind of explanation. They were, as the horrifying euphemism had it, about to “go up the chimney.” Only America could guarantee the *total* destruction of Germany. And it worked out that way.

As America's power was asserted and the Second Front advanced, as the Soviet Union and the United States—the two powerful enemies he had created—closed in on him, his passion for destruction increased. He wanted everything destroyed: not only positions of military value but churches and art galleries, hospitals, nursery schools, farm animals and pets, statistical records, marriage certificates—everything he could think of. On 21 April 1945, for example, he yelled at the startled chief of staff of the Luftwaffe that “the entire leadership of the Luftwaffe is to be hanged immediately.” He thought of announcing the shooting of all RAF war prisoners in order to ensure the retaliatory saturation air raids that would level German cities. He thought of giving orders—indeed, he apparently gave them—to kill German soldiers wounded in the war, for they were no longer “useful” to him.¹⁸⁸

Again, when one asks the obvious question about this planned holocaust, namely *why*, the answers are either very difficult or too easy.

“It was because he was evil,” it is said, “completely evil.” But he had been evil all along—though never completely so. Others have explained his conduct by saying, “He was seized by demons.” One must ask, *what kind*? “Well, he was just crazy,” it has been asserted by those who agree with the ancient Greeks that “whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad.” But *what kind* of madness was his?

Evidence of Hitler's last days—as we shall see—does not indicate that he had become psychotic. He was a physical wreck by April 1945, but he talked coherently enough as he dispensed to his admirers cyanide capsules and autographed pictures of himself. He had not suddenly become “mad” or seized by demons. His behavior during the last months of his life was not an aberration; it was deeply rooted in his early life. It illustrates Erikson's observation that every basic conflict of childhood lives on, in some form, in the adult. The child, Adolf, was the father of this man.

Hitler's desire to punish and destroy was a part of a persistent pattern of his life. We should not try to make the pattern too clear, too neatly assembled. But into it fits, somewhere, the childhood conviction that evil had been done to him; he would do evil in return. Into it belongs the searing memory of being beaten and hurt and unable to get revenge; he would get it now. Very early in his life he had learned to mistrust; he would now destroy those who had abandoned him. He had been made to feel inadequate and guilty; he would show them all that he had power—if no longer to conquer and create, then to destroy. He was still omnipotent; he could order the death of a nation.

There was, we have life: the unconscious imp he had tried to direct th others. The juxtaposition in December 1941 suggests punishment of others. On by declaring war on the U on the next day, 12 Decer upon others the most terrifi it the *Nacht und Nebel* de that meant that any persc loyalty to him could be an be informed of the pris would never be learned— night and fog. But even tl different way: he would guilty and unworthy. Thus [*meiner nicht würdig*]; let)

But what did these v he was, in a sense, destrc “*Ich bin das deutsche Vo* Germany with his mother Motherland now because : Klara, had abandoned him to punish him? “Let her pe Or was it something else?

He had tried to blame guilt. He had repeated over of him; he had killed the could not be exorcised. Per) *let him perish*. Perhaps. A) thus fulfilling the promise) he would kill himself.

TRIUMPH THROUGH

During his last days, mem discover that their once in broken old man, his once ir

Dehr. 24,

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

and stained by sweat, vegetable soup, and chocolate-covered cherries. Hitler was aware of his physical condition and even called attention to it in order to demonstrate once again how hard and cold he really was, and how much he resembled his hero, Frederick the Great. He delivered his last speech to his *Gauleiter* on 24 February 1945, while sitting at a table; his left hand shook so violently that he could not control it. After an hour and a half of turgid oratory, he concluded with these words:

As you see, I am at the moment not in the best of physical condition. My left arm trembles. . . . I hope it doesn't go into my head so that I also waggle my head. Anyway, come what may, my heart remains *ice-cold*. . . . Now for the first time, I understand Frederick the Great so completely who, after the end of his military campaigns, came back home a sick and broken man. . . . Just as Frederick the Great lived out his last years with bowed upper body and plagued by palsy and all other possible sufferings, so this war has also left its deep marks on me.¹⁰⁰

Although several writers have insisted that Hitler's physical decline was accompanied by a remarkable psychological transformation, the evidence shows no radical departure from previous patterns, but rather reinforcement and intensification of lifelong personality traits and habits. Even in the last months, when his physical condition deteriorated rapidly, we note an intensification rather than a change of behavior patterns. As an infant, he had learned to mistrust people; now he said that he could trust no one except his dog—and, perhaps, Eva Braun. Both as child and man he had liked to stay up very late at night; now, in the spring of 1945, he often did not go to bed before six or seven o'clock in the morning. As an adolescent he had wanted to tear down buildings and build them anew; destruction and reconstruction now became a mania with him. He had always liked to talk about the same things; now he "told the same stories at lunch, dinner, and supper and at nighttime tea." At least once a day, he would say, word-for-word: "That animal, Blondi, woke me up again this morning. . . . When I asked her 'Do you need to do a business?' she put her tail between her legs and crawled back to her corner. She is certainly a clever animal." Or he would repeat daily: "Look, my hand is getting better. The trembling is not so bad—I can hold it completely still." He had always been a bore in private conversation, but now his monologues grew longer and duller. Increased volubility was also shown in his military briefings (*Lagebesprechungen*). In 1942 the average length of the briefings recorded each day by stenographers was 89 pages of typescript. As defeats mounted, so did Hitler's oral aggression. By the spring of 1945 the average number of daily pages had grown to 150.¹⁰¹

He had always been inordinately fond of sweets and the childhood delights of candy and cakes, but now, after his *Lagebesprechungen*, at about 6:00 A.M. he would "lie back fully exhausted, apathetically filled

1945

From Private Neurosis to P

only with the thought the chocolate and cakes. . . pieces, he now had his that he didn't eat much While he greedily satisfied observed that he simply to eat sweets."

Throughout his life he took his greatest pleasure "Wolf." After the two-hour kennel in the bunker allowed to touch. "He str sweetly repeating his name

Hitler had always been considerate of others; now a whim, ordered people to could twaddle with then euphoric expectation and he heard that the U.S. at Elbe River on 26 April 1945

as if electrified. His "Gentlemen, that is: mies! Wouldn't the criminal if I signed) became disunited. . . the Bolsheviks and the

Psychologically, it is a reality saying, all will be back soon as something out the

But the saving battle Red Army under Marshal rounded Berlin with 2,542,000 artillery pieces, 6,420,000 available 44,600 units, and 3,500 boys of years of age. There was 0 Hitler leaned back from contemplated glorious new he said, "we must see to

Hitler's lust for killing death in 1945; but he had of others. During his absence as leader of a new Germany "all the November Criminals" in a speech made at his

GOD: ADOLF HITLER

chocolate-covered cherries. I even called attention to it and cold he really was, like the Great. He delivered in 1945, while sitting at a table could not control it. After he ended with these words:

the best of physical concept it doesn't go into my way, come what may, my first time, I understand the end of his military broken man. . . . Just years with bowed upper lip possible sufferings, so on.¹⁰⁰

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only with the thought that soon would come his favorite meal of the day: chocolate and cakes. . . . Whereas in earlier days he ate at most three pieces, he now had his plate heaped high three times. . . . He said that he didn't eat much for supper, so that he could eat more cakes. While he greedily satisfied his craving . . . by way of apology he always observed that he simply couldn't understand anybody who did not like to eat sweets."

Throughout his life he had expressed affection for animals; now he took his greatest pleasures in one of Blondi's pups, whom he called "Wolf." After the two-hour morning tea, he would personally go to the kennel in the bunker and fetch the little dog that no one else was allowed to touch. "He stroked the animal interminably, all the while sweetly repeating his name, Wolf."¹⁰²

Hitler had always been both cruel and kind, thoughtful and inconsiderate of others; now he heaped flattery on his secretaries and, upon a whim, ordered people to risk their lives flying into Berlin so that he could twaddle with them about trivia. He had often swung between euphoric expectation and deep despair. He continued to do so. When he heard that the U.S. and Soviet troops had met, historically, at the Elbe River on 26 April 1945, he seemed

as if electrified. His eyes flashed again. He leaned back and cried "Gentlemen, that is another clear proof of the disunity of our enemies! Wouldn't the German people and history stamp me as a criminal if I signed peace today . . . and tomorrow . . . our enemy became disunited. . . . Cannot daily, yes hourly, the battle between the Bolsheviks and the Anglo-Saxons begin?"¹⁰³

Psychologically, it is a revealing statement. All will yet be saved, he is saying, all will be back in its proper order and brought together, as soon as something *out there* splits apart.¹⁰⁴

But the saving battle never took place. Instead, by 27 April, the Red Army under Marshals Zhukov and Koniev had completely surrounded Berlin with 2,500,000 well-equipped and battle-tough men. 42,000 artillery pieces, 6,250 tanks, 7,560 airplanes. To oppose them, Hitler had available 44,600 soldiers, 42,500 old men in home-guard units, and 3,500 boys of the *Hitlerjugend* ranging from 12 to 16 years of age. There was one rifle for every two defenders. On that day, Hitler leaned back from his military maps, smiled confidently, and contemplated glorious new conquests. "When I get this thing solved," he said, "we must see to it that we get back all those oil fields."¹⁰⁵

Hitler's lust for killing reached its apogee just before his own death in 1945; but he had always enjoyed contemplating the death of others. During his abortive coup of 1923, he had promised that as leader of a new Germany he would hang on the highest gallows "all the November Criminals and arch-traitors" of the Weimar Republic. In a speech made at his Party rally in Nuremberg in 1929 he pro-

claimed that ideally 70 to 80 percent of the babies born in Germany every year should be killed off in order to strengthen the blood line.¹⁰⁶ He had promised in 1932 that when he came to power, "heads will roll in the sand." In 1934 he ordered the "Blood Purge" which killed hundreds of people he suspected of personal disloyalty. Prior to the war he told a British diplomat that the best way to deal with political opponents was to shoot them in groups of 12; if that was unsuccessful, they should be shot in groups of 200. In 1935 he had planned a sweeping "euthanasia" program to kill off the physically and mentally defective. His plan was implemented, in 1939, with instructions that action "should cover any category of 'unworthy' persons." Beginning with patients in mental institutions, the program was later extended to include senile and tubercular patients and those with birth defects. Within five years, some 100,000 people were killed.¹⁰⁷

In 1945 he sought the destruction of Germany in the greatest planned *Götterdämmerung* of history. But had he not foretold even that? Was that the meaning of a curious and little-noted sentence of a speech he made in 1932, in the electoral district of Lippe, before he became chancellor? It was then that he uttered strange words which later events would make ominous. "We are the last people," he said, "who will make history in Germany. [*Die letzten, die in Deutschland Geschichte machen, sind wir.*]" What do these words mean? Is it not conceivable that Hitler, from the very beginning—perhaps unconsciously—had been working for the total destruction of Germany?¹⁰⁸

His mind, to the very end, was no more irrational—or rational—than it had ever been. Reports of his staff conferences from December 1944 through 27 April 1945 show a familiar pattern: an incredible memory for detail used both as a crutch and as a weapon against those who disagreed with him; long disquisitions on his career as a soldier in World War I and the "battle years" after the war; a compulsive need to dominate every conversation. On 28 December 1944, to take one example, in a conference with his generals, he delivered a monologue which went on for the equivalent of eight single-spaced, typewritten pages. The speech was as coherent as any of its predecessors.¹⁰⁹

Prior to destroying himself, Hitler performed one of the genuinely kind acts of his life. He married Eva Braun, the woman who had loved him devotedly for years and who had risked death to be with him at the end. Hitler now granted her most cherished wish: to commit suicide with her bridegroom. There was a minor contretemps at the wedding, which was held between one and three o'clock on the morning of 29 April. The ceremony was performed by a hastily summoned city official who was so flustered by the honor that he misspelled his own name on the wedding certificate. The name was Wagner.¹¹⁰

After the wedding, Hitler withdrew with a secretary, Frau Junge, to dictate the personal will and political testament which would blame the war and all the evils of mankind upon "the universal poisoner of all

peoples, international Jew Hitler. The style, phraseology have come from almost a the preceding decade.¹¹¹

Having signed these bride, and together they pla

The way Hitler died ha about his life. For many ye solved by Hugh Trevor-Rop in British Intelligence, was out exactly what had happen many of the survivors of H in 1946. Published the folk still be considered a master the excitement of a myste tingished historian who is a

In solving this mystery two formidable obstacles: th and key witnesses at the de family were dead, as was L had pronounced his Führer dead and certainly missing w edgeable and influential pri Party Chancellor. Also una sonal adjutant, Otto Günscl whom had been captured by t

Nevertheless, by careful stantial evidence, Trevor-Rope that was so persuasive it wa —including the writer of the ler had entered his sitting roor at about 3:30 on the afterno himself by a shot through hi of self-administered cyanide wrapped the bodies in blankets courtyard, where they were b two-and-a-half hours; and that

If Trevor-Roper's eminent all we had to go on, the mys There would be, as Lord Tedde possibility of distortion in thi new testimony has appeared anew that clarity—if not accu by a paucity of evidence than b In 1950, for example, Eri

the babies born in Germany strengthen the blood line.¹⁹⁰ came to power, "heads will 'Blood Purge' which killed disloyalty. Prior to the war way to deal with political 12; if that was unsuccessful, in 1935 he had planned a the physically and mentally 1939, with instructions that 'worthy' persons." Beginning program was later extended and those with birth defects. killed.¹⁹⁷

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formed one of the genuinely , the woman who had loved death to be with him at the id wish: to commit suicide ontretemps at the wedding, lock on the morning of 29 istly summoned city official misspelled his own name on ter.²⁰⁰

h a secretary, Frau Junge, to ament which would blame the universal poisoner of all

peoples, international Jewry." The two documents are quintessential Hitler. The style, phraseology, content, and thought processes could have come from almost any one of his speeches or conversations of the preceding decade.²⁰¹

Having signed these historic documents, Hitler returned to his bride, and together they planned their funeral.

The way Hitler died has become one of the most disputed questions about his life. For many years it was assumed that the problem had been solved by Hugh Trevor-Roper, an Oxford historian who, as an officer in British Intelligence, was charged in 1945 with the task of finding out exactly what had happened to the Führer. Trevor-Roper interviewed many of the survivors of Hitler's air raid bunker and wrote his report in 1946. Published the following year, Trevor-Roper's little book must still be considered a masterpiece of historical literature, combining all the excitement of a mystery thriller with the scholarship of a distinguished historian who is also a master of English prose.

In solving this mystery, however, the author was confronted by two formidable obstacles: the body of the victim had not been found, and key witnesses at the death scene were missing. Goebbels and his family were dead, as was Ludwig Stumpfegger, the SS physician who had pronounced his Führer dead and helped to burn him. Presumed dead and certainly missing was Martin Bormann, the immensely knowledgeable and influential private secretary to Hitler and head of the Party Chancellery. Also unavailable for interviews were Hitler's personal adjutant, Otto Günsche, and his valet, Heinz Linge, both of whom had been captured by the Soviets in May 1945.

Nevertheless, by careful use of hearsay testimony and circumstantial evidence, Trevor-Roper reconstructed a version of Hitler's death that was so persuasive it was accepted by most subsequent historians—including the writer of these lines. Trevor-Roper concluded that Hitler had entered his sitting room in the air raid shelter with his new bride at about 3:30 on the afternoon of 30 April 1945; that *he had killed himself by a shot through his mouth*; that Eva Braun-Hitler had died of self-administered cyanide poisoning; that Linge and others had wrapped the bodies in blankets, and carried them up to the Chancellery courtyard, where they were burned with 180 liters of petrol for some two-and-a-half hours; and that *"these bones have never been found."*²⁰²

If Trevor-Roper's eminently readable and persuasive account were all we had to go on, the mystery of Hitler's death would be solved. There would be, as Lord Tedder wrote in his foreword to the book, "no possibility of distortion in this case." Since its publication, however, new testimony has appeared to muddy the issue and to remind us anew that clarity—if not accuracy—in history is often achieved more by a paucity of evidence than by a plenitude.

In 1950, for example, Erich Kempka, Hitler's chauffeur, the man

April 30, 1945

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His attention was caught by a gray blanket. He began to look at a man and a woman. Gradually they brought the body into the room. He had already found the body in a picture taken 3 weeks before the Reichschest. It was only when the police director, Karl Schneider, told him that Hitler had been found on 4 May.* The autopsy had been performed, and he understood the doctors had been poisoning. She was directly wounded by the Red soldiers and he and a Soviet colonel. But he had already fled. Fräulein Käthe Heusermann said X rays of Hitler's teeth placed in the Führer's teeth from memory days and sketches which she questioned her again, which they had brought Fräulein Heusermann identification was followed with had actually made the result was the same. He said, "Rzhevskaja concluded, the irrefutable proof of his death to Moscow." 209 In the publication, first in the autopsy performed and others found hastily as we have noted, the auditing pathologists of the

Hitler's corpse was badly damaged, gone from the face and as missing and the brain

over the caption "False Body" in 1973, accepted the photograph. In an inventive passage he wrote enough for someone to take a mother's picture against his Hitler (New York, 1973), 568.

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cavity visible; that the lower cheekbones and upper and lower jaws were preserved; that glass splinters from the wall and bottom of a thin-walled ampule were found in the mouth; that the scrotal sac was burned but intact and the left testicle missing (see Chapter 3, pp. 150-151). They determined that "no visible signs of severe lethal injuries or illnesses could be detected." There was a distinct smell of bitter almonds emanating from the body; forensic chemical tests of internal organs established the presence of cyanide. The commission of Soviet doctors concluded that death was caused by poisoning with cyanide compounds.

The Soviet journalist who published the official autopsy report asked the chief of the Medical Commission specifically about the presence or absence of a pistol wound. Dr. Shkaravski replied:

The fact of the poisoning is incontrovertibly established. No matter what is asserted today, our Commission could not detect any trace of a gunshot on May 8, 1945. Hitler poisoned himself.

The Soviet author was greatly relieved by this statement, for it supported his conviction that the fascist dictator had sought a coward's death through poisoning rather than shooting himself "like a man." 210

Since the facts of Hitler's death are so confusing, how are we to tell what happened in his Berlin bunker on the afternoon of 30 April 1945?

It is a truism of history—as it is of traffic accidents, divorce courts, and judgments about pass interference on football fields—that eyewitnesses give conflicting testimony. But the reconstruction of this historical event is further complicated by unusual circumstances. Everyone who cowered in the air raid shelter that day was frightened to the point of hysteria by the Red Army. One thought spread through the Russians: the Russians are coming! Soviet artillery had already zeroed in on the Chancellery and was shaking the bunker; advance platoons of the Red Army were within a few blocks of the shelter. Hitler's entourage was confronted by an awful choice: to stay and be captured and, they believed, tortured or raped and killed; or try to "escape" to the blazing hell of a city that was now a battlefield, there, in all probability, to suffer the same fate.

Furthermore, the man who had just died was no ordinary mortal. Children had prayed to him, women had swooned upon hearing him, soldiers had died whispering his name. To the people in the bunker he was the Messiah. And now this god had killed himself. Small wonder the minds of these witnesses to history were confused and contradictory.

There is another reason why the testimony is conflicting. Wit-

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER

more likely, folded characteristically over his crotch. If so, it is unlikely that he had shot himself.

The shot could have been fired through the mouth, except that the same problem of timing arises, and the Russians found no evidence of a wound in the oral cavity, a part of the skull that was preserved. It also seems likely that an explosion in the mouth would have precluded finding glass shards from the ampule. The top of the cranium was missing—the part that, presumably, would have shown bullet wounds. It had probably been blown off by the steam generated from a brain that had been bubbling in the heat of petrol fire.²¹⁶

Thus, we conjecture, that at about 3:30 on the afternoon of 30 April 1945, Adolf Hitler swallowed a lethal dose of cyanide, clasped his hands over his crotch, and waited for his dutiful bride who, following his orders, shot him through the left temple either with her own 6.35 Walther pistol or with his 7.65. She then tucked her feet beneath her as she liked to do when listening to phonograph records, took poison herself, and died seated beside the man she loved.

Hitler's body was badly burned but not completely consumed. Apart from the evidence of the Russian autopsy, there is another reason for believing that the bodies were not totally destroyed. Linge stresses the lack of effective planning and the confusion surrounding the whole incident. He and his helpers had collected enough petrol, they thought, to do the job; but they had not planned on where they would burn the bodies. Hence, with Russian artillery bursting about them, they hurriedly placed the corpses in a shallow indentation in the sandy soil of the courtyard. That, of course, was a mistake, for the soil rapidly absorbed much of the petrol. Both Linge and the chauffeur, Kempka, recalled that it was a windy day. The men had trouble relighting the bodies with petrol when the flames died down. Thus the bodies burned, off and on, for perhaps two or three hours. It was not enough. Having failed to fulfill their promise to Hitler that his body would be utterly destroyed, they tried to bury it. Again the job was botched, for no shovels were available; and with the Russians coming closer by the minute, there was little desire to risk lives for a now thoroughly dead Führer. He was covered as well and as quickly as possible with loose earth and rubble. A few days later the charred body was found by the Russians. An autopsy was performed after identification had been made by a careful examination of his rotting teeth.

The finale had not been as Wagnerian as Hitler might have wished, but it was not an inappropriate ending to his career.²¹⁷

Having attempted to answer the traditional historical question of "what actually happened," let us call upon psychology to help us with the more difficult question of *why* Hitler killed himself.

One might quickly conclude that suicide, given the external conditions, was the obvious way to end his life. But deliberate self-destruction,

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tion, we are told by those completely logical act. Indeed, survival—a drive that is not in the concentration camp rafts at sea testifies. Once of the rational and irrational:

On the rational level, 1945 the military situation guish unbearable. Certainly that he planned to put a thing to do. But he may a parent yet equally compellir

The act of suicide has of their findings may help u and death.*

Freud thought he had by deriving its dynamics from problem has shown, a great clinical symptoms of depression are deeply depressed are not

It is popularly supposed from reality. And indeed, to perate that "normal" people does not preclude the possible conditions psychological me usual circumstances would o

There is something else a rational decision, a logic: humiliation, ill health, discom or loved one. The idea assum are wholly external. In the w push from within is often me

Suicide may be seen as of an unconscious desire for

* The clinical literature on specifically, to the following studies (1917), in *Collected Papers*, (London: "Longing to Die," *International Hending*, "Suicide," *Psychiatric Quarterly*, "Wish-Fulfillment," *Psychiatric Quarterly of Suicide* in *Clues to Suicide*, ed. Siegal and Jacob Friedman, "The System 16 (February 1955); *Charl of the Menninger Clinic* (May 195 Suicide," *International Journal of Himself* (New York, 1961); *Grego can Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 3 first suggesting this line of approach 226-227.

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1945

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have found, that Hitler had displayed throughout his life: he had often threatened to kill himself. It should be emphasized that to the masochist, suicide is not seen as defeat; rather, it is a twisted sort of triumph. Indeed, after years of clinical experience with masochism, Theodor Reik concluded that the essence of the masochist's attitude toward life can be summarized in three words: "Victory through Defeat." Others may view the suicide of such a person as an obvious admission of failure, but he himself feels vindicated and triumphant.²²¹

Suicide may also gratify feelings of hostility and aggression. One way to externalize masochism is to inflict punishment on others. The suicide punishes his survivors—parents or spouse and anyone else who has abandoned the sufferer.²²² Certainly Hitler felt that he had been deserted by everyone. As his country lay in rubble, the Führer's thoughts turned inward. "Nothing is spared me," he lamented on 26 April 1945. "no allegiances are kept, no honor lived up to . . . no betrayals I have not experienced. . . . Nothing remains. Every wrong has already been done me."²²³

Karl Menninger has shown a different facet of the problem which reflects an important aspect of Hitler's personality. Menninger has found in suicide a connection between fear of examination and feelings of omnipotence. People who consider themselves unique, who refuse to be examined physically or to have their beliefs questioned, may find in suicide a confirmation of their omnipotence. "To kill oneself instead of being executed or slain by fate," Menninger has written, "is to retain for oneself the illusion of being omnipotent since one is, even by and in the act of suicide, master of life and death." Thus, paradoxically, the instinct for life may be fulfilled through death.²²⁴

Another psychiatrist agrees: "Through the primitive act of suicide, man achieves a fantasied immortality . . . it is another method of restating and reasserting one's own immortality." Such fantasy, according to most observers, is a reversion to infancy.²²⁵

It will be remembered that all his life Hitler—like other borderline personalities—was given to infantile fantasizing. In his boyhood he delivered impassioned orations to the trees on lonely hills near Leon-
ding; in his teens, he saw himself winning lottery sweepstakes, rebuilding entire cities, and establishing a new Reich; as an adult, he was convinced that he was the German Messiah to whom it was proper that the prayers of children be addressed. Sometimes he thought of himself as Christ; at other times, he said, he was one of the immortals who would live forever among his fellow Olympian gods.

But at the end, he saw himself as a different kind of deity. He was really like neither Jesus nor one of the serene and radiant company on the azure heights of Olympus. Rather, he was a darkly brooding Teutonic god enthroned in Valhalla, the shadowed hall of the dead. Especially as he hid in his Berlin bunker, he may have reverted to a childhood fantasy that he was Wotan, dread ruler of the universe. The two had much in common. Wotan appears in German mythology as a

From Private Neurosis to Publ

deeply split deity, the god I worker who—like Hitler—ple, he was the all-knowing runes. But he was also the demanding human sacrifice:

Wotan was also the V ravaging horde of the Furir said, saw himself in preci: *Die wilde Jagd*, by his favo identified so completely with blance to himself so striki suggest that he would see in of himself: "Hitler as Wota vinced that the "Hand of Wc Eagle's Nest in the Obers: talisman.

Hitler and Wotan also s will recall the curious fact c wolves, but these were the ei Munin, perched on his shou of chaos and destruction, c from his hand alone. (In h himself to touch or feed Blon time of *Ragnarok*, the end of and "appalling deeds of mur vances, his great gaping jaws relentlessly, hideously, he dev

In ordering the *Götterdän* Hitler envisaged himself as know that one of his most) "with which he never parted We know, also, of his lifelong recast by Richard Wagner. Th tion of the world in a tremen sumed by flames. Hitler was Wotan as "rising to the tragic It seems likely that in the end ever-present refuge and stren and creative genius who had ir began" with Wagner. And thus

Fantasy was often confus est actor in Europe." For his c role of Wotan-Siegfried, a coi

"He may have reinforced this Nordic legend who, though vanquish splendid defiance as they cut his he *Mythology* (New York, 1942), 444.

Jan '45

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The second conference between Himmler and Musy was at Wildbad in the Black Forest on January 12, 1945. The following agreement was then reached through my active intervention:

- (1) every fourteen days a first class train would bring about 1,200 Jews to Switzerland;
- (2) the Jewish organizations with which Herr Musy was working would give active support in solving the Jewish problem according to Himmler's suggestions. At the same time, the beginning of a basic change in the world-wide propaganda against Germany was to be brought about;
- (3) according to my suggestion, it was agreed that the money should not be paid over directly to the International Red Cross, as had originally been decided, but should be handed to Musy as trustee.

The first transport went through at the beginning of February and everything functioned very well. Musy acknowledged the receipt of the five million Swiss francs, which were paid to him as trustee at the end of February 1945, and also saw to it that the fact was made known to the press, as had been agreed, while an article was published by President von Steiger of Berne, and another appeared in the *New York Times*.

Unfortunately a decoded message referring to these arrangements, which came from one of de Gaulle's centres in Spain, was brought to Hitler's notice. It was alleged in this message that Himmler had negotiated with Musy through his representative, Schellenberg, to secure asylum in Switzerland for 250 'Nazi leaders'. This obvious nonsense, cunningly circulated by Kaltenbrunner, had the most uncomfortable consequences for me. Hitler immediately issued two orders: that any German who helped a Jew, or a British, or an American prisoner to escape would be executed instantly: any such attempt was to be reported to him personally.

Musy was desperate and shed tears of rage and bitter disappointment. During his last visit to Berlin we both decided to make a final attempt to see if some sort of plan could be worked out. I suggested to Himmler that a four days' truce on land and in the

air be requested from the western Allies in an organized manner. I brought the chief of the Pr gruppenehrer Berger, into to pass on many of Hitler's orders of hundreds of people.

Herr Musy and I felt that the Allies through official and accepted. Further negotiation promise, which would benefit but indeed all men. However place this proposal before Himmler turned instead to the leader Kaltenbrunner, who himself gave you head?' This was on April 12, 1945.

Musy and I agreed after that was done. In view of the continued existence of Himmler must be made to inform the Allies of all concentration camps. After a long discussion matter Dr Kersten, who was considerable influence on Himmler. I was able to tell Musy on April 12, 1945 that we would not to evacuate any concentration camps. His decision be conveyed to the Allies as possible. In spite of being ordered to leave in his car that same night that Washington had received favourably.

He then sent his son back to the Jews whose release from Buchenwald Himmler personally. The young man was very badly that preparations had been made and at once came to see me in Berlin.

I had been quite certain that the plan would be carried out. However, after

Himmler and Musy was at January 12, 1945. The following began my active intervention:

that this train would bring about

with which Herr Musy was working in solving the Jewish problem. At the same time, a basic change in the world-wide way was to be brought about; on it was agreed that the money would go to the International Red Cross, but should be handed

at the beginning of February. As well, Musy acknowledged the money which were paid to him in 1945, and also saw to it that the money had been agreed, while an agent was Steiger of Berne, and another was

referring to these arrangements. de Gaulle's centres in Spain, was alleged in this message that Musy through his representative, in Switzerland for 250 'Nazi' consequences for me. Hitler that any German who helped a prisoner to escape would be reported to him

of rage and bitter disappointment. In Berlin we both decided to make a plan could be worked out. I was days' truce on land and in the

April '45

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air be requested from the western Allies and that this period should be used to bring all Jews and foreign internees through the front lines in an organized manner, and thus show Germany's goodwill. I brought the chief of the Prisoner of War Administration, Obergruppenfuehrer Berger, into this plan. He accepted my advice not to pass on many of Hitler's orders, and by doing so saved the lives of hundreds of people.

Herr Musy and I felt that if such a truce was brought to the Allies through official and responsible channels it would be accepted. Further negotiations might then lead to a general compromise, which would benefit not only those directly involved, but indeed all men. However, Himmler lacked the courage to place this proposal before Hitler. Favouring the plan himself, he turned instead to the leader of the circle around Hitler, to Kaltenbrunner, who himself gave me his answer: 'Have you gone off your head?' This was on April 3, 1945.

Musy and I agreed after this that there was only one thing to be done. In view of the continually worsening military situation, Himmler must be made to issue an order to prevent the evacuation of all concentration camps which might be overrun by the Allies. After a long discussion Himmler finally consented (in this matter Dr Kersten, who was then in Stockholm, exerted considerable influence on Himmler and was of great help to me) and I was able to tell Musy on April 7, 1945 that Himmler had agreed not to evacuate any concentration camp, and especially asked that his decision be conveyed to General Eisenhower as quickly as possible. In spite of being over seventy years of age, Herr Musy left in his car that same night, and three days later informed me that Washington had received the message and had reacted favourably.

He then sent his son back with the car in order to fetch several Jews whose release from Buchenwald had been promised him by Himmler personally. The younger Musy went to the camp commandant and was very badly received. He was horrified to notice that preparations had been made for the evacuation of the camp and at once came to see me in Berlin.

I had been quite certain that Himmler's original order would be carried out. However, after hearing Musy's story, I decided to

Chancellery, and would often be alone with the Fuehrer for hours afterwards. However, in order not to risk a personal rejection, he also requested Gruppenfuehrer Fegelein (whose wife was Eva Braun's sister) to ask Hitler about the Count's visit. Fegelein reported Hitler's reaction the next day and repeated his comment: 'One cannot accomplish anything with this sort of nonsense in a total war.'

In the meantime, Count Bernadotte had already arrived in Berlin. I spoke to Himmler on the telephone and begged him earnestly not to miss this opportunity to receive the Count, and emphasized that various points of political interest would be bound to come up during their discussions. After talking back and forth for a long time, Himmler finally agreed to a suggestion that would still leave a line of retreat open to him: Kaltenbrunner should speak to Ribbentrop, while I at the same time should speak to Wagner. Both of us should try to persuade Ribbentrop to receive Bernadotte, but not to inform Hitler, and Ribbentrop should not be told that Hitler had already expressed objection to the visit. If Ribbentrop agreed, then Kaltenbrunner and I could receive the Count immediately afterwards. Himmler would thus have time to see how the affair was developing before committing himself officially. What actually happened, however, was that Count Bernadotte telephoned to me from the Swedish Embassy. First he was received by Kaltenbrunner and myself, and went to see Ribbentrop immediately afterwards.

Though I was reserved during this first conversation, I felt that I had established good relations with the Count. In this visit I saw the possibility of pursuing my original plan—to end the war for Germany. Contact with Sweden could be extremely important in this connection, for she would have a special interest in the pacification of northern Europe. Thus my original effort to do something for Denmark and Norway would be in line with the Count's aims. The next step would be to secure Sweden as a mediator for a compromise peace. At the close of our conversation the Count again told Kaltenbrunner that he wished to speak to Himmler, having something which he wanted to say to him personally and alone.

I decided to make a bold move to try to win Kaltenbrunner

over, in spite of his personal had left, I praised Kaltenbrunner in which he had responded to that he had handled this delicate old Austrian school of diplomacy fully, and I continued by telling to Himmler that it was now and appoint him, Kaltenbrunner thinking Kaltenbrunner took hardly hold him. In the substance Himmler he became the most meeting between Himmler and orders forbidding it. Himmler the Count, on condition that I meeting. Disillusioned and Kaltenbrunner soon returned to his

The meeting between Count place at Hohenlychen two days to offer him some advice about prepare him for some of his original plan had been to turn prisoners to Sweden and interwar. I knew that this would be a compromise proposal—that there a central camp in north-west fact, the basis of an agreement. Himmler during their meeting

I had an opportunity of speaking after his conversation with me, and was deeply impressed by him, and with him. He wanted me to stage an agreement, which, as he very considerable difficulties from Kaltenbrunner from Ribbentrop too. I was tired of the conversation and he could present them to the Count

First, I informed Kaltenbrunner of my suggestion. He began to reproach me

March '45 #

XXXIX

HIMMLER SHIRKS THE ISSUE

The struggle for Himmler's soul—I try to persuade him to act—His fear of Hitler—His bodyguard degraded—Pressure on Himmler to end the war

AFTER THE meeting with Count Bernadotte I talked very seriously to Himmler, and told him clearly that the collapse of Germany was inevitable. I begged him to avail himself of the good offices of Sweden and attempt to steer the wrecked German ship of state into the harbour of peace before it capsized. I suggested that he should ask Count Bernadotte to fly to General Eisenhower and transmit to him his offer of capitulation.

I also tried to make it clear that his proper place as the Commander of an Army Group was in Berlin, and not in Prenzlau. He should have realized that it was Hitler's advisers who, for the second time, had succeeded in removing him from the Fuehrer's side. He ought to return to Berlin at once and arrange preparations for peace. If need be, he must use force. It was a very stormy conversation, but Himmler finally gave in and granted me the widest authority for negotiating with Count Bernadotte. But the next day he revoked everything. He would only permit me to retain superficial contact with the Count and perhaps influence him to fly to Eisenhower on his own initiative. From that day on—it was at the beginning of March 1945—there was an almost daily struggle between Himmler and me in which I wrestled for his soul.

I had already told Count Bernadotte about this struggle. In our talks we had agreed that I was to notify him as soon as Himmler finally made up his mind (I had planned to accompany the Count myself on his flight to General Eisenhower) and we also arranged that in case the Reich Capital itself was cut off by the enemy, I would fly with Himmler to South Germany and make contact with Bernadotte by way of the Swedish Ambassador in Switzerland.

April '45

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Though in the first place Count Bernadotte had undertaken his mission on behalf of the Danes and the Norwegians, he also tried to intervene on behalf of the Jews, and through his intelligent handling of the situation he had already been able to save the Danish Jews. Of special importance were the conversations between Bernadotte and Himmler which started at the end of March, when Himmler had promised the Count not to evacuate the internment camps at the approach of the Allied armies, but to surrender them in good order—especially Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald and Theresienstadt, and the camps in southern Germany.

I kept on reminding Himmler how desperate the situation was, and warned him that one day history would hold him responsible for his lack of decision. He replied that the order of the SS had been built on the principle of loyalty and he could not violate this. If he did, he would threaten the very basis of his own position. I told him that compared to the existence of the whole nation the SS represented only a small minority, and after their long period of suffering the German people would expect a release from their ordeal. They looked to Himmler, for he was a man who had not sought to profit personally from the regime. To this kind of talk he would merely say, 'So you want to remove the Fuehrer?' And such was his changeable nature that there were days when it would have cost me my position to have answered, 'Yes.'

Hitler's appearance as seen in the newsreels confirmed my impression that he showed increasingly obvious symptoms of Parkinson's Disease, so I arranged a meeting between Himmler and Professor de Crinis, to which Himmler asked Reich Health Leader Conti, to discuss this. De Crinis told me later that Himmler had listened with great interest and understanding.

Several days later, on April 13, Himmler asked me to go and see him at Wustrow. He took me for a walk in the forest and during it he said, 'Schellenberg, I believe that nothing more can be done with Hitler. Do you think that de Crinis is right about him?' I said, 'Yes, though I haven't seen the Fuehrer for quite a while—but everything he has done lately seems to indicate that now is the time for you to act.'

On this occasion I pointed out the danger of proving the treatment of the Jews a success. Then we discussed Kersten's proposal for the course of the next few days of the World Jewish Congress of about the Jewish problem with Himmler. As the matter drew nearer, Himmler was still evasive. I told him that for Kersten's proposal to be the basic problem, arrangements for it must be put off.

Himmler was well aware that the situation was still alive while Hitler was still alive. The symbolic importance which would result from his relations with his own association with the Jews. I too felt the symbolic importance, and for this reason I strongly to agree to it. Himmler, however, found out he would immediately refuse. As I pointed out, Kaltenbrunner was willing to take place at Kersten's proposal. Himmler finally agreed to this, but only on condition.

He was very greatly troubled by the Fuehrer, which by this time was a given orders that Himmler's (as a bodyguard) were to have the stripes and the mark of dishonour.

Himmler said to me that I was the only man to whom he could trust completely. He would not shoot Hitler; he could not go and arrest him in the Reich Chancellery. The machine would come to a standstill. Only two possibilities existed: either Hitler and tell him frankly all that had happened in the last years and force him to resign; or force. Himmler objected that if Hitler were forced to fall into a violent rage, I said, 'That is just what you must do. You still have enough higher SS leaders to take over the government.'

April '45 #

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On this occasion I pointed once again to the necessity of im-
proving the treatment of the Jews, and of his promise to Herr
Musy. Then we discussed Kersten's plan to come to Germany in
the course of the next few days with Hilel Storch, a representative
of the World Jewish Congress of New York, who wanted to talk
about the Jewish problem with Himmler personally. As this visit
drew nearer, Himmler was still unable to decide on a definite
reply. I told him that for Kersten's sake, and even more because of
the basic problem, arrangements for this meeting could no longer
be put off.

Himmler was well aware that to have a conversation with Herr
Storch while Hitler was still alive would be an action of funda-
mental importance which would have the greatest consequences
for his relations with his own associates in the Party and in con-
nection with the Jews. I too felt that such a meeting would be of
symbolic importance, and for that very reason urged him most
strongly to agree to it. Himmler was afraid that if Kaltenbrunner
found out he would immediately report the matter to Hitler, but
as I pointed out, Kaltenbrunner was going to Austria, so the meet-
ing could take place at Kersten's estate without his knowledge.
Himmler finally agreed to this, but not without reluctance.

He was very greatly troubled about his rupture with the
Fuehrer, which by this time was almost complete. Hitler had even
given orders that Himmler's special SS Leibstandarte (Body-
guard) were to have the stripes removed from their sleeves as a
mark of dishonour.

Himmler said to me that I was the only one, apart from Brandt,
whom he could trust completely. What should he do? He could
not shoot Hitler; he could not give him poison; he could not
arrest him in the Reich Chancellery, for then the whole military
machine would come to a standstill. I told him that all this did not
matter; only two possibilities existed for him: either he should go
to Hitler and tell him frankly all that had happened during the
last years and force him to resign; or else he should remove him by
force. Himmler objected that if he spoke to Hitler like that the
Fuehrer would fall into a violent rage and shoot him out of hand.
I said, 'That is just what you must protect yourself against—you
still have enough higher SS leaders, and you are still in a strong

April 19, 45

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enough position to arrest him. If there is no other way, then the doctors will have to intervene.'

Our talk lasted about an hour and a half, but Himmler was still unable to arrive at a decision. Instead he wanted to confront Bormann with Professor de Crinis, Professor Morell, Hitler's personal physician, and Dr Stumpfegger, another of Hitler's doctors, who was also an SS Leader.

Two days later I asked Professor de Crinis what the decision had been. He was very disappointed. The doctors had refused to commit themselves, and nothing that they permitted themselves to say would have been of any help with Bormann. When I reported this to Himmler he begged me to maintain silence about the whole matter. I then pointed out to him the senselessness of the Wehrwolf organization, which was being formed to carry on the struggle after Germany's defeat. This plan, I said, would bring nothing but suffering to the German people. Opportunities would arise for every sort of crime to be committed, as each individual would take it upon himself to decide what he considered justified in the national interest. Yet these grave measures were being lightly and irresponsibly advocated by the German leaders. They were even announcing over the German radio that they would repudiate the Hague conventions. I ended with the words 'criminal and stupid', but Himmler was obviously too exhausted by this spiritual struggle with me. He merely said, 'I will try to think of some way to finish this business.'

During the first week of April I had established contact with the Reich Minister of Finance, Graf Schwerin von Krosigk. We had a long conversation and von Krosigk agreed with me that the war had to be ended quickly in order to save as much of Germany's resources as possible. I had been talking about this with Himmler too for quite a time. Himmler had gradually become estranged from von Krosigk, and therefore I brought the two of them together again for a discussion, which took place on the afternoon of April 19. Once again Himmler jibbed at the last moment, and it was touch and go whether the meeting would take place. However, when we finally arrived at von Krosigk's office, we found that the Minister of Labour, Seldte, was also there.

Von Krosigk and Himmler while I had a conversation should seize power himself to the German people, the formation of a second Courts. He elaborated this me what my opinion was pine area (known as the F at all in any further milita the political level could ar

In the meantime, the c Himmler had ended. Von knew that it was really a success remained. He t Himmler so that he might Hitler.

After the meeting Himmler told him that I was convinced in Germany who could be

After we arrived in Holstary situation made a sad p tically not to drive into E A message had come that come in Herr Storch's Jewish Congress, had arrived on to Kersten's estate at expected in Berlin at the these two meetings might cult military situation. Th Kersten that night and Masur, and also arrange a

I had dinner at Hohenz send Berger to southern counterpoise to Kaltenb much so indeed that I f Himmler defended Kalte cally intelligent and far-s perceived my opposition

midnight, just as Himmler, ordered another bottle of birthday at twelve o'clock.

we were held up on our raft which were dropping Hartzwalde estate at two-asleep.

in the morning. He was Masur, and doubted whether Masur could still be brought. Himmler should show his difficult my whole situation. I tried all possible means to

April 22, 1945

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XL

NEGOTIATIONS WITH COUNT BERNADOTTE

Himmler gives assurances concerning the Jews—An all-night discussion—Himmler confers with Count Bernadotte—A plan to contact President Roosevelt—The Count is asked to transmit a declaration of surrender—Himmler and the Count confer again—The Allies refuse to negotiate with Himmler—I renew discussions with the Count—Terms agreed for our evacuation of Scandinavia—Kaltenbrunner dismisses me from my posts—Admiral Doenitz nominated to succeed Hitler

ON THE morning of April 20 I was awakened at nine by the noise of planes overhead, and while I was shaving a bomb dropped about a mile away—an unpleasant surprise for Herr Masur. I breakfasted with him, and immediately afterwards we had our first discussion. He insisted that nothing could be accomplished without a meeting with Himmler, but he would have to leave Berlin by Monday at the latest. As I knew that Himmler intended once again to put off meeting him, I had got to get him to keep to the agreed date.

At this point a telephone call came through from Count Bernadotte, who was staying at the Swedish Embassy in Berlin. He told me that he would like to speak to Himmler once more before leaving for Sweden at six o'clock the next morning. Somehow or other I had to get Himmler to see Masur, and arrange for a meeting with Count Bernadotte, who was coming to Hohenlychen for this purpose that same night.

At about nine in the evening I went to Wustrow to wait for Himmler, who was delayed by heavy air attacks. When he eventually arrived, I managed to persuade him to drive with me to meet Herr Masur. Accompanied by a driver and Himmler's secretary, Brandt, we left for Hartzwalde at a quarter-past one. On the way Himmler told me what he intended to say to Masur. In essence it was a chronological summary of the past with a clever attempt at justification. I asked him not to speak of the past at all,

1945

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Geor or to expound his astrological and philosophical theories, but to determine precisely what had to be done in the future. Now and then we had to take cover from low-flying aircraft, and we arrived at Hartzwalde around three in the morning.

Masur and Kersten were waiting for us and after a brief greeting their conversation began. It was conducted for the most part by Himmler who wanted to prove that he had tried to solve the Jewish problem in terms of expulsion, but that this could not be done because of the outside world's resistance on the one hand, and on the other, the opposition within the Nazi Party. Masur did not embark on any long discussion of the various points, but said after about three-quarters of an hour that although Himmler's account had been very interesting, it was not in any way conducive towards changing the situation. That, however, was his main purpose for coming here, and he wanted the following assurances: that no more Jews would be killed; that the remaining Jews—and their numbers were very uncertain—should remain in the camps and under no circumstances be evacuated. He asked for lists of all the camps in which Jews were still being held to be given to him.

On these points agreement was reached, Himmler repeating every time that he had already given such orders. He was, in fact, ready to free the Jewish women in Ravensbrueck camp and turn them over to Masur, for he had received permission from Hitler to free all the Polish women from that camp. Therefore, if there were any questions about it afterwards, he could say the Jewish women were Poles.

I then went into another room with Masur in order to decide on other points to be discussed, but when the conversation was resumed it tended to become more and more vague, dealing with completely unimportant side issues. I was anxious to bring it to a conclusion in order to be able to arrive at Hohenlychen with Himmler by six o'clock in the morning, so after briefly saying good-bye, we left Hartzwalde; it was now half-past four. I assured Masur once more as we left that I would do all in my power to arrange for his departure the next day.

We arrived at Hohenlychen punctually at six o'clock—this was on the morning of the 21st—and had breakfast with Count Berna-

dotte. I hoped that the frank count the Count, which I had desired for. Himmler told the Count of the Polish women in Ravensbrueck t

In fact, I had made all preparati list of all the Poles in Ravensbru children or young girls, I was det I impressed most strongly on Hi situation, and emphasized the hi people by pointing to my own wi him greatly and he seemed con question, for he constantly referre much later that he took any actio

Count Bernadotte asked whetl transport the Danish and Norw Himmler was unable to grant I agreed that should the Allied a Neugamme camp there would be

The Count thanked him for hi dence shown him in previous coi came to an end and they said goo to accompany the Count part of once more beg him to fly to Ger range for him to have a conferenc

However, at our parting on th burg, Count Bernadotte said to m understands the realities of his ov any more. He should have taken hands after my first visit. I can hol And you, my dear Schellenberg yourself.'

I did not know what to reply t it was as though we would neve filled with a deep sadness.

I drove back to Hohenlychen, sl called to Himmler at about twelve picture of misery, and said that he there was nothing more I could d

and philosophical theories, but to be done in the future. Now and low-flying aircraft, and we are in the morning.

for us and after a brief greeting conducted for the most part by that he had tried to solve the problem, but that this could not be world's resistance on the one hand, within the Nazi Party. Masur did mention of the various points, but said in a hour that although Himmler's opinion, it was not in any way confirmation. That, however, was his opinion, and he wanted the following would be killed; that the remaining very uncertain—should remain in places be evacuated. He asked for were still being held to be given

was reached, Himmler repeating given such orders. He was, in fact, in Ravensbrueck camp and turned received permission from Hitler to that camp. Therefore, if there afterwards, he could say the Jewish

with Masur in order to decide on when the conversation was more and more vague, dealing with was. I was anxious to bring it to a to arrive at Hohenlychen with morning, so after briefly saying it, it was now half-past four. I left that I would do all in my the next day. actually at six o'clock—this was had breakfast with Count Berna-

dotte. I hoped that the frank conversation between Himmler and the Count, which I had desired for so long, would now take place. Himmler told the Count of the possibility of transporting all the Polish women in Ravensbrueck to Sweden.

In fact, I had made all preparations for this and had drawn up a list of all the Poles in Ravensbrueck camp. As they were mostly children or young girls, I was determined to free them at all costs. I impressed most strongly on Himmler the shameful situation, and emphasized the high racial qualities of the Polish people by pointing to my own wife as an example. This impressed him greatly and he seemed considerably preoccupied with the question, for he constantly referred to it, although it was not until much later that he took any action.

Count Bernadotte asked whether it would not be possible to transport the Danish and Norwegian internees to Sweden, but Himmler was unable to grant permission for this, though he agreed that should the Allied armies threaten to overrun the Neugamme camp there would be no evacuation.

The Count thanked him for his willingness and for the confidence shown him in previous conversations. The discussion then came to an end and they said good-bye. Himmler, knowing I was to accompany the Count part of the way, hoped that I would once more beg him to fly to General Eisenhower and try to arrange for him to have a conference with the General.

However, at our parting on the road near Waren in Mecklenburg, Count Bernadotte said to me: 'The Reichsfuehrer no longer understands the realities of his own situation. I cannot help him any more. He should have taken Germany's affairs into his own hands after my first visit. I can hold out little chance for him now. And you, my dear Schellenberg, would be wiser to think of yourself.'

I did not know what to reply to this. When we said good-bye it was as though we would never see each other again. I was filled with a deep sadness.

I drove back to Hohenlychen, slept for two hours, and was then called to Himmler at about twelve-thirty. He was still in bed, the picture of misery, and said that he felt ill. All I could say was that there was nothing more I could do for him; it was up to him. He

April 21, '43

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had got to take some action. At lunch we discussed the military situation in Berlin, which was steadily growing worse.

At about four o'clock, having convinced him that it would be unwise to drive to Berlin, we drove towards Wustrow. In Loewenberg we were caught in a traffic jam, troops having become involved with the unending columns of fleeing civilians which blocked all the roads between Berlin and Mecklenburg.

April 21, '43
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As we drove on, Himmler said to me for the first time, 'Schellenberg, I dread what is to come.'

I said that this should give him the courage to take action. He did not answer. Just before we got to Wustrow we were attacked by low-flying planes. However, their main target was the column of refugees and troops through which we had passed.

After dinner, when we were alone again, we spoke of various problems, of food supplies, the danger of epidemics, reconstruction, prisoner of war administration, and so on. I told him of Kaltenbrunner's blind and unrealistic attitude in insisting on the evacuation at all costs of all the concentration camps. Himmler grew very nervous when I called this a crime, and said, brusquely: 'Schellenberg, don't you start too. Hitler has been raging for days because Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen were not completely evacuated.'

At that moment Fegelein telephoned to say that Hitler and Goebbels were raging because Berger had not remained in Berlin—he had in fact just left Berlin to fly to southern Germany in Himmler's place. He was needed by Hitler to carry out the sentence passed on Dr Brandt, Hitler's former personal physician, who had just been condemned to death for smuggling his wife into the hands of the Americans in Thuringia. Apparently this was a complex intrigue among Hitler's entourage involving Hitler's 'friend' Eva Braun, and her sister, who was Fegelein's wife. Himmler did everything he could to prevent the doctor's execution and immediately gave instructions over the telephone to the Gestapo chief, Mueller. Dr Brandt was transferred to Schwerin, which was safer from air attacks, and Fegelein was told that Berger was on his way south by plane. For this reason sentence could not be executed at the moment, unless Bormann and Goebbels wanted to do the job themselves.

When Himmler returned he had complete power in Germany name for the new alternative: I suggested National Unity though only in the vaguest terms missed me—it was now about 1

The next morning—it was \$ the military situation had become four Waffen SS Divisions, which had been ordered by Hitler to Russians. Himmler was convinced though both his military adjutants mean unnecessary bloodshed.

After breakfast Obergruppenleiter to drive back with us to Hohne evacuated because it was threatened by

We discussed the case of Van der general who had formerly been was at this time a prisoner of war gested that Vanamann, together Force colonel, should be got Switzerland to the United States try to get better supplies for prisoners of war, and at the same desire for peace with the westers ago, having in mind the freeing war so that they might work to their country and Germany. He given strict orders against this.

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April 22, 1945

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When Himmler returned he told me what he would do once he had complete power in Germany, and asked me to think about a name for the new alternative party which I had suggested to him. I suggested National Unity Party. After referring once more, though only in the vaguest terms, to Hitler's removal, he dismissed me—it was now about four-thirty—and went to bed.

The next morning—it was Sunday, April 22—it appeared that the military situation had become so much worse overnight that four Waffen SS Divisions, under Obergruppenfuehrer Steiner, had been ordered by Hitler to make a suicide attack on the Russians. Himmler was convinced that this order was necessary, though both his military adjutant and I agreed that it would only mean unnecessary bloodshed.

After breakfast Obergruppenfuehrer Berger came in. He was to drive back with us to Hohenlychen and Wustrow was to be evacuated as it was threatened by the enemy.

We discussed the case of Vanamann, an American Air Force general who had formerly been Military Attaché in Berlin, and was at this time a prisoner of war in Germany. Berger and I suggested that Vanamann, together with another United States Air Force colonel, should be got out of Germany and flown via Switzerland to the United States to contact Roosevelt. He was to try to get better supplies and conditions for the American prisoners of war, and at the same time tell Roosevelt of Himmler's desire for peace with the western Powers. I had planned this long ago, having in mind the freeing of influential British prisoners of war so that they might work towards an understanding between their country and Germany. Hitler and Himmler, however, had given strict orders against this.

I had had long conversations with Vanamann, and we were in full agreement. As Himmler had refused his permission, I arranged with friends in Switzerland and with the United States Military Attaché in Berne, General Legg, for Vanamann to cross the border illegally. I did this on my own responsibility and arranged for a car to bring him and the Air Force colonel to the frontier near Constance.

As I had had no news of them, I asked Berger to attend to the matter. By this time Himmler was in agreement with the plan.

May 1, 1945 #

him of my authorization concerning the peaceful lifting of the German occupation of the Scandinavian countries and of Himmler's assumed succession to Hitler. As I had foreseen, Dr Best agreed to everything.

At noon I met Herr von Post, of the Swedish Government, and Count Bernadotte. All went very smoothly. The Swedish Government asked for the whole plan to be arranged through me, with clear and binding proposals on the part of the German Government. At the close of the meeting the Swedish Ambassador at Copenhagen, von Dardel, gave a lunch to which Dr Best was also invited.

Immediately after lunch I drove to Korsor to take the ferry, which had been held up for me for two hours. I arrived at Flensburg at night and there met a member of my organization, Sturmbannfuhrer Dr Wirsing, who informed me that Kaltenbrunner had dismissed me from all my posts, and had appointed Obersturmbannfuhrer Wanck Chief of the Political Sector of the Secret Service, and Obersturmbannfuhrer Skorzeny chief of the Military Sector.

After a short telephone conversation with Himmler, Dr Wirsing and I drove on to Luebeck, as I wanted him to be able to fly back to the south with Himmler's counter-orders in connection with my dismissal. Our journey, which was only thirty miles, took us three and a half hours because the roads were completely blocked by troops streaming back from the Mecklenburg area. We arrived at four o'clock in the morning on May 1, and I was conducted to Himmler's new quarters at Kalkhorst, near Travemuende, by one of his adjutants.

As Himmler had not gone to bed until three o'clock, I went to Brandt, who told me the startling news that Hitler had committed suicide and Admiral Doenitz, not Himmler, had been made his successor.

X

MY LAST

Count von Krosigk replaces Ribbentrop as German representative—A man, a dangerous journey—Von Krosigk's assistant—Doenitz remains adamant—Doenitz's Envoy appointed von Krosigk's Envoy—Peace discussions in Stockholm—Germany surrenders

HIMMLER AND Admiral Doenitz, German Reich, had met the night on the immediately adopted. Himmler had prevailed first act, the removal of Ribbentrop. Count Schwerin von Krosigk as Admiral and his entourage, consisting had shown no understanding of the demands of the western Powers, and was in the worst possible mood. resigning, and was even talking of

I tried to rest for half an hour, and then I called me to join him for breakfast. My conversations with Herr von Post, I found him very nervous and distracted, and incapable of taking action in the night. The only thing he had been able to do was the removal of Ribbentrop and the appointment of Himmler. Himmler wanted to take me to the next day. I could act as von Krosigk's assistant. It would also be an advantage if I could get the German government on my efforts regarding the peace. I could persuade them to agree to the terms of the German government, or, if not, someone else should remain with the government.

1945

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which I had just emerged. However, I arrived at five o'clock in the afternoon, reporting to the Foreign Minister and

Afterwards I spoke again to von Krosigk and advised him to induce Doenitz to follow my suggestions to dissolve the Party, the Gestapo and the SD as soon as possible. We then discussed in which capacity it would be best for me to go to Stockholm. Von Krosigk offered to make me Ambassador, Special Plenipotentiary, Representative, or whatever I preferred. I suggested that he should appoint me Envoy, for this corresponded accurately to the tasks upon which I was embarking. That night Secretaries of State Steengracht and Henke were called over by the Foreign Minister, and together they prepared the documents authorizing my appointment as Envoy. Doenitz signed these the next morning, May 5, and after reporting to Krosigk at ten o'clock, I bade farewell to Himmler and left for Copenhagen.

A few days later Himmler committed suicide.

Arriving at Copenhagen, I went to the Dagmarhus, for I wanted to inform Dr Best of my mission. While I was waiting for him, a huge crowd gathered in the town square in expectation of the impending surrender of Germany. Shots were fired and police vans and ambulances drove up, the crowd growing meanwhile until it must have reached tens of thousands. It was obvious that Dr Best would not be able to make his way through the tumult. I could not wait as it was imperative for me to get to the Swedish Embassy right away, for apparently they had not received my telephone message from the frontier.

After a long discussion with the SS guard at the Dagmarhus, an opening was made in the barbed wire barrier, and I was able to drive through in Count Bernadotte's car. Though the driver tried to avoid the crowded streets, we suddenly found ourselves surrounded by thousands of people. They recognized the Count's car and pressed round it until we could move neither forwards nor backwards. Fortunately I had locked the door from the inside and closed the windows, otherwise they would have pulled me out. I ordered the driver to push on, come what may, and slowly we inched our way through the solid mass of human beings. Those immediately next to the car began to cry out as those behind them kept on pushing forward, gesticulating with wild enthusiasm. By now there were about thirty people all over the car, on the running boards, on the roof, on the bonnet, and only the

site of the continuing deterioration of the Scandinavian area, through the help of the greatest importance. Then I spoke to him and told me that if I would stay with him, I would be his assistant. On the other hand, he convinced me to go to Stockholm. We agreed on the importance, for a total capitulation was the only thing that was holding it up was the Bohemian-Moravian area the army groups of Generaloberst Rendulic, consisting of divisions supplied with munitions and provisions remained intact. They were doing a more than adequate job on the eastern front.

In the evening I reported to Admiral Doenitz. I heard nothing about lifting the occupation of German troops in Sweden. Doenitz had pointed out to him the excellent position of General Boehme's army. Even after I pointed out the importance of a peaceful solution, Doenitz of Sweden, he still demanded to know what would bring for Germany. I explained to him the long-term political prospects, apart from the loss of a large number of German lives. It was my opinion towards us, and in the near future the importance for a defeated Germany to have a friendly country like Sweden. In view of German fighting in Norway and Denmark it was utterly futile.

The meeting was broken off, and I went to dinner with Count Bernadotte and Jodl. At the table we continued the discussion and Jodl wanted me to remain with them, but I insisted on the importance of my mission to Stockholm, and they seemed to understand.

21,000 captured and missing, 733 tanks and tank destroyers. Even in its last gasps, mortally wounded, the German Army still had fierce clout.

That was Hitler's last military adventure. It was mounted against the advice of Günther Blumentritt, Walther Model, Hasso von Manteuffel, some of his best generals. Even SS General Sepp Dietrich, commander of the SS Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, a man who began as one of Hitler's street toughs, was reluctant. Hitler ignored them all. "I need no advice from you, gentlemen," said a bent and shaking Hitler, his left arm twitching, one leg dragging. "I have commanded the Army for five years. I have read Clausewitz and Moltke." General von Manteuffel reported these words, according to William Shirer.

During the last days of January, some of Marshal Zhukov's troops reached the Oder River. The Russians were now a short peacetime car trip from Berlin, about fifty miles away.

To study the Wehrmacht reports for the time between Christmas 1944 and February 1, 1945, is to learn the art of creative writing. While history tells us that American and British troops advanced toward Germany, each day's *Wehrmacht Berichte* brought news of thousands of burned American tanks, tens of thousands of prisoners. Each attack by the Allies, east or west, was "beaten back in a bloody manner." Only the map shows that each "victory" was closer and closer to the heartland of Germany. No doubt Germany's soldiers and airmen were courageous, but the writers at the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht matched them in sheer audacity. One detects the usual "kill the messenger bearing bad news" syndrome of all dictatorships.

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Von Schlabrendorff was one of the few plotters who survived. Most lost their lives even though Freisler was dead. Hitler could not win a war against Germany's enemies, but he defeated many patriotic Germans.

At the end of January 1945, von Ribbentrop screwed up his courage to ask Hitler for permission to establish unofficial contact with the Russians. He even offered the services of Annelies, who would fly to Stockholm to make contact with Madame Alexandra Kollontay, the powerful Soviet ambassador to Sweden. Annelies would claim to be a divorcée to gain the Russian woman's sympathy and then would offer to make contact with the Führer. When Hitler rejected the scheme, von Ribbentrop offered to take his family to Moscow and to leave them there as hostages while peace was being negotiated. Hitler again shook his head. "Ribbentrop, don't give me any troubles like Hess!" he said.⁶

Von Ribbentrop should have remembered the time after Mussolini's final visit to the Wolfsschanze, when the Italian received his "instructions" as a puppet dictator. For some reason, Hitler told Mussolini he might make peace with Moscow. Later, an amazed von Ribbentrop tried to see Hitler to pursue this idea, but he was rebuffed for even mentioning it. Later, Hitler came to his quarters, seemingly contrite, and said, "If I made peace with them today, I'd fight them again tomorrow. I can't help myself" (*Ich kann halt nicht anders*).^{*} For Hitler, the idea of another treaty with the Soviets was too repugnant to consider.

The world outside became more and more remote from the Führer, von Ribbentrop, and most of the others in their bunkers. Hitler would occasionally take his Alsatian dog, Blondi, for a walk in the shattered gardens, but he always came back grim-faced.⁷ He took refuge in his dreams. Speer and he often studied the model of a redesign of his hometown of Linz that had been set up in a nearby room.⁸ By now, the truth had penetrated. Hitler knew that the end was near, and his brain was beginning to create the scenes to come.

Although von Ribbentrop could now clearly see into the grim future, his ministry still functioned, and his Department II, successor to Luther's Department Deutschland, was more helpful to the SS than ever. It had full charge of "Jewish matters," and, until the final days, it helped to hurry the remaining Jews to their fiery death. The machinery of hatred and destruction continued to function until the very moment

^{*}This seems contrary to the pre-emptive theory about Barbarossa.

Jan 1945

when an Allied soldier, American, British, Russian, or French, stood at the gate of a concentration camp or the door of a Gestapo prison.

Department II of the Foreign Ministry, under Eberhard von Thadden and Horst Wagner, had condensed its immediate task into:

1. The delaying tactics or rejection of all neutral intervention regarding deported Jews.
2. The blocking of enemy reports as "horror propaganda."
3. Refusal to give information to chargés or to international organizations, like the Red Cross, about the fate of deported Jews.
4. The prevention of the emigration of several thousand Jewish children to Palestine.
5. Personal and propagandistic support for the deportation of Slovakian, Greek, Hungarian, Romanian, and stateless Jews into Auschwitz.⁹

After the German defeat, Horst Wagner outlined the duties and responsibilities of Department II for the American authorities without even mentioning its close association with the SS. When his outline was uncovered as a lie, Wagner fled to South America. He returned to Germany in 1952 under a false name as correspondent for an Argentine newspaper and was finally indicted by a court in Essen for complicity in the murder of 356,642 Jews. Legal maneuvers and illnesses postponed his trial. He died of natural causes in Germany on March 13, 1977, without having been prosecuted.

To prove how crushing was Himmler's continuing machinery of Hitler's revenge, on February 2 Goerdeler, the former mayor of Leipzig and resistance fighter, was executed at the same time as Himmler tried to make contact with Sweden. Goerdeler's younger brother was executed on March 1, 1945.

Even the trial of von Kleist-Schmenzin continued. Freisler had died on February 3 and was buried without ceremony. Hitler himself insisted that there be no semblance of state funeral. But von Kleist-Schmenzin was convicted and on April 9 was executed while Hitler and his entourage cowered in their bunker and their enemies were within artillery range.

Equally harsh retribution was handed out by kangaroo courts of hastily convened Army field police or roving SD and Waffen SS. Many soldiers or officers who were deemed deserters or civilians whose identification papers were suspect were hanged on the spot from trees or lampposts. According to Wehrmacht figures, the number of execu-

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the period of post-Hitler shock was lengthy. He became, in turn, a boulevardier in Hamburg, a frazzled and frayed wreck as a prisoner in Nürnberg, and, at the very end, a man of some courage and bearing.

After Berlin, his first destination was north, toward Hamburg and Kiel to be near Dönitz's headquarters. Those weeks in Hamburg he tried to live a strange return to the international world of business and the boulevards. Was he looking for old friends from his business days?

As a businessman I was interested in politics but not anxious to take an active part. But when I saw that Germany was aiming for the abyss during 1931 and 1932, I tried hard to help with the formation of an alliance between the conservative (*Bürgerlich*) parties and the National Socialists.¹⁷

Annelies von Ribbentrop, in her notes to his memoirs, wrote, "He joined the Nazi Party after his first meeting with Adolf Hitler."¹⁸

The enormity of his decision to join Hitler can be gauged only when in context. Joachim von Ribbentrop was wealthy and successful, on the threshold of social acceptance by the snobbier people of the capital. No doubt he was desperately eager to show an impeccably conservative face and to conduct his life in a most conventional manner. But the Nazi Party was seen by most upper-class Berliners as a radical group of dangerous and violent men who brawled and pushed their way into national prominence. Their figurehead and leader was a former Austrian, a nobody. Some people of "good" family joined the Nazi Party, but most were black sheep. To make common cause with this boisterous and rowdy mob from the beer cellars of Munich was not the best way to reassure Berlin society and its industrialists. Yet Joachim von Ribbentrop joined the Nazi Party and jeopardized his standing as a successful man of commerce in order to take his place alongside these revolutionaries. He explained: "Even on my first meeting him, Adolf Hitler made such a strong impression on me that I was convinced only his party could save Germany from Communism."

Thirteen years had passed since that first meeting on the Obersalzberg, when von Ribbentrop was a handsome, well-groomed, self-assured thirty-eight-year-old entrepreneur. Now he was a worn-out fifty-two, deserted by everyone but his wife and children. Von Ribbentrop gave a hint about how he left Berlin after that final meeting in the bunker: "I often thought it would have been better if they had sent back the Storch to Nauen, and I could have taken part in the final battle for Berlin."¹⁹

ein niemand

Aug 1945

of the SS who "had to steel themselves to do the Reich's foul work to save the German people from mongrelization and moral decay?"

There is a curious passage in a 1943 book about von Ribbentrop by the former ministry official Dr. Paul Schwarz, an exile living in New York. The book was completed long before the Nürnberg War Crimes Trials and their consequences, and it was uncanny in its forecast. This is the final paragraph of the final chapter.

My sleep is usually undisturbed. But in the days when I finished this manuscript [1942-1943], the old German Foreign Office appeared in my dreams. I was walking along beside the old Chancellery, and finally I reached the entrance to Number 76, the entrance which is called the *Ministertreppe*, the staircase reserved for the minister and his visitors of diplomatic rank. Old Schmidt, the doorman with the white beard, greeted me. He was friendly, as he had always been. He pointed to the tall lamppost which flanked the entrance on its left, and there I saw a body hanging, Ribbentrop's body, dressed in the uniform he had introduced for the Foreign Service. I woke up, shuddering. But thinking it over, I must confess that I knew this lamppost would do!¹⁵

The arrested von Ribbentrop was taken to Luxemburg, where a large number of the Reich's surviving Nazi leaders were interned at the Palace Hotel in Bad Mondorf, a spa on the French border. It must have been cold comfort to see that men he had despised were now his fellow prisoners. Göring, Frank, von Papen, Daluge, Darre, Frick, Funk, Marshals Jodl and Keitel, Kesselring, Speer, Ley, Rosenberg, Streicher, and even Admiral Dönitz, who "could not use him as foreign minister." For years he had looked down on nearly all of them as drifters, opportunists, dreamers, or, in the case of Streicher and Ley, vulgarians. They had always heartily reciprocated. Only von Papen came from von Ribbentrop's old Berlin circle, and they had often fought.

The old luxury hotel was stripped of most comforts. It was a quasi-prison under the command of a U.S. Cavalry colonel named Burton C. Andrus, a heavyset, mustachioed, bespectacled, spit-and-polish American career officer and an imitation George Patton. Some prisoners were held at Neuheim in the Taunus Mountains at Kransberg, a castle that had once been renovated for Göring by Speer, but the Palace Hotel at Mondorf, nicknamed the Ashcan, held most of the senior Nazis. Around August 16, 1945, the Allies began to transfer them to Nürnberg for arraignment before the International Military Tribunal for what came to be known as the War Crimes Trials. The

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actual prosecutors were provided by each of the victorious Allied powers, as were members of the panel of judges. The trials were held in the city's restored and patched Palace of Justice, which had large, attached prison wings. The Nürnberg cells were sparse, cold, and uncomfortable, but the food was adequate. Many in defeated Germany were starving, but not those accused of war crimes. The prison guards were young American soldiers, filled with Hollywood ideas about these evil Nazi bosses, and sometimes they became petty tyrants. In the middle of the night they made as much noise as they could, and they used contemporary cartoon descriptions for the prisoners. ("Send up Fat Stuff" meant Göring was needed.) They were good-natured but disrespectful, and the Nazi prisoners, all men of standing in their own dubious world, were often more upset by the disrespect than they would have been by stern treatment. There were classic German complaints about treatment "unsuitable to a field marshal or to a senior minister." The oil of American military informality and the water of German military and bureaucratic pomposity failed to mix.

Most of the prisoners were accustomed to comfort if not luxury. They were not young men, and even the soldiers among them had led the cosseted lives of generals, with military servants, aides, and adjutants. For Joachim von Ribbentrop, who had continued to live as the internationalist *homme du monde*, with custom-made clothes and haberdashery in the care of good valets, the change must have been acute. The cell walls were covered with stained, peeling whitewash. There was one small, barred window about five feet from the floor. A cot covered with a brown U.S. Army blanket stood against one wall, flanked by a small wooden table. It was too weak to carry the weight of a potential suicide. Against the other, shorter wall stood a rickety wooden chair, cushioned with another folded blanket. This chair was also purposely flimsy. Göring usually sat on his cot. One wall contained a small alcove, like a narrow fireplace, that housed a toilet. A window and peephole in the heavy wooden door guaranteed that each prisoner could be under twenty-four-hour surveillance. Most prisoners kept their washing gear and personal books and papers on the small table or on the narrow ledge over the toilet alcove. It was a spare and probably foul-smelling life, yet von Ribbentrop wrote few complaints in his memoirs. By contrast, Speer, the only one of the prisoners who acknowledged his criminal guilt by association with the actions of the Nazi regime, complained of discomfort and occasional maltreatment. Yet he had been a young architect, with few of the luxuries of life, when Hitler first reached out for him.

April 1945

April 1945

in a war in which two so completely irreconcilable ideologies confront one another, the issue can inevitably only be settled by the total destruction of one side or the other. It is a fight which must be waged, by both sides, until they are utterly exhausted; and for our part, we know that we shall fight on until victory is achieved or until our last drop of blood has been shed.

It is a cruel thought. It fills me with horror to think of our Reich hacked to pieces by the victors, our peoples exposed to the savage excesses of the Bolsheviks and the American gangsters. Even this prospect, however, does not shake my invincible faith in the future of the German people. The more we suffer, the more glorious will be the resurrection of eternal Germany! That characteristic of the German mind, to plunge into lethargy when it seems certain that the very existence of the nation is at stake, will once more stand us in good stead. But as far as I personally am concerned I could not bear to live in Germany during the transition period that would follow the defeat of the Third Reich. The ignominies and the treachery we experienced in 1918 will be as nothing in comparison with what we may now expect. It is beyond comprehension that, after twelve years of National Socialism, such a thing could happen. My imagination boggles at the idea of a Germany, henceforth deprived of her *élite* which led her to the very pinnacles of heroism, wallowing for years and years in the mire.

What advice can we give, then, what rules of conduct can we recommend to those who survive, with their souls untarnished and their hearts unshaken? Battered, left alone to work out its own salvation, existing solely as a custodian during the grim darkness of the night, the German people must strive its very utmost spontaneously to respect those racial laws which we laid down for it. In a world which is becoming more and more perverted through the Jewish virus, a people which has remained immune to the virus must in the long run emerge supreme. From this point of view, National Socialism can justly claim the eternal gratitude of the people for having eliminated the Jew from Germany and Central Europe.

Post-war Germany's second preoccupation should be to preserve indissoluble the union of all the German races. It is only when we are united that our qualities expand to their full stature; only when we cease to be Prussians, Bavarians, Austrians, Rhinelanders and become just Germans. The Prussians were the first to gather the Germans into one Reich under Bismarck, and by so doing gave the German people their opportunity to show that they were the premier people in Europe. I myself, by uniting them all in the Third Reich, set them on the path to become the architects of a new Europe. Whatever the future holds, the German peoples must remember that it is essential that they should cast out all elements that make for discord among them and should indefatigably pursue

every measure which contributes to the maintenance of their unity.

As far as foreign countries are concerned, it is not possible to lay down rigid rules, for the situation is in a constant state of change. Twenty years ago, I wrote that there were only two possible allies in Europe for Germany—Britain and Italy. The course of events during this period has not been such as to permit the implementation of a policy which would have been the logical sequence to my statement. The British, admittedly, still wielded imperial power, but they no longer possessed the moral qualities requisite for the preservation of their empire. They seemed to dominate the world; in reality they were themselves dominated by the Jews. Italy had tried to emulate ancient Rome. She had all the Roman ambitions, but she lacked the two essential adjuncts of a determined spirit and material power. The only trump card she had was the leadership of a true Roman. What a tragedy for that man! And what a tragedy for that country! For a people, as for an individual, it is tragic to have ambitions and to lack both the means essential to their fulfilment and any hope of acquiring those means.

There remains France. Twenty years ago I wrote what I thought of France. She was and is the mortal enemy of the German people. Her steady degeneration and her frequent *crises de nerfs* have sometimes led us to minimize the importance of her actions. Should she continue to become more feeble, as seems

probable, that will be no reason for us to become less distrustful of her. The military might of France is now nothing but a memory, and purely from that point of view you may be quite sure that she will never again cause us a moment's anxiety. Whatever may be the issue of it, this war has at least put France in the category to which she belongs—that of a fifth-class Power. Even so, thanks to her unlimited powers of corruption and her inimitable skill in the art of blackmail, she can still be a source of danger to us. Our watchwords therefore must be: mistrust and vigilance. Let the Germans take care never to allow themselves to be lulled by the voice of this syren!

While, therefore, it is not possible to adhere to rigid principles in dealing with foreign countries and one must always be prepared to adapt one's policy to the changing conditions, it can nevertheless be asserted with confidence that Germany will always recruit her staunchest friends from among those peoples who are actively resistant to Jewish contagion. I am sure that the Japanese, the Chinese and the peoples of Islam will always be closer to us than, for example, France, in spite of the fact that we are related by blood. It is a tragedy that France has consistently degenerated in the course of centuries and that her upper classes have been perverted by the Jews. France is now condemned to the pursuit of a Jewish policy.

With the defeat of the Reich and, pending the emergence of the Asiatic, the African and, perhaps, the South American nationalisms, there will remain in

the world only two Great Powers capable of confronting each other—the United States and Soviet Russia. The laws of both history and geography will compel these two Powers to a trial of strength, either military or in the fields of economics and ideology. These same laws make it inevitable that both Powers should become enemies of Europe. And it is equally certain that both these Powers will sooner or later find it desirable to seek the support of the sole surviving great nation in Europe, the German people. I say with all the emphasis at my command that the Germans must at all costs avoid playing the role of pawn in either camp.

At this juncture it is difficult to say which, from the ideological point of view, would prove to be the more injurious to us—Jew-ridden Americanism or Bolshevism. It is possible that under the pressure of events, the Russians will rid themselves completely of Jewish Marxism, only to re-incarnate pan-slavism in its most fierce and ferocious form. As for the Americans, if they do not swiftly succeed in casting off the yoke of New York Jewry (which has the same intelligence as a monkey that saws through the branch on which it is perching), well—it won't be long before they go under, before even having reached the age of maturity. The fact that they combine the possession of such vast material power with so vast a lack of intelligence evokes the image of some child stricken with elephantiasis. It may well be asked whether this

is not simply a case of a mushroom civilization, destined to vanish as quickly as it sprang up.

If North America does not succeed in evolving a doctrine less puerile than the one which at present serves as a kind of moral *vade mecum* and which is based on lofty but chimerical principles and so-called Christian Science, it is questionable whether it will for long remain a predominantly white continent. It will soon become apparent that this giant with the feet of clay has, after its spectacular rise, just sufficient strength left to bring about its own downfall. And what a fine chance this sudden collapse will offer to the yellow races! From the point of view of both justice and history they will have exactly the same arguments (or lack of arguments) to support their invasion of the American continent as had the Europeans in the sixteenth century. Their vast and undernourished masses will confer on them the sole right that history recognizes—the right of starving people to assuage their hunger—provided always that their claim is well backed by force!

And so, in this cruel world into which two great wars have plunged us again, it is obvious that the only white peoples who have any chance of survival and prosperity are those who know how to suffer and who still retain the courage to fight, even when things are hopeless, to the death. And the only peoples who will have the right to claim these qualities will be those who have shown themselves capable of eradicating from their system the deadly poison of Jewry.

der meisten heilige Besitz

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weapons which will take the place of the full commitment of the individual soldier!" I said, among other things. We had not destroyed the industries of the occupied territories, I continued, and now I regarded it as our duty to guard the foundations of civilized life in our own country also. "All those overzealous people who refuse to understand this need must be punished with the utmost severity. For," I went on, using the characteristically bombastic language of the time, "they are sinning against the most sacred possession of the German people: the source of our nation's vitality."

I paid lip service to the theory of recovering the lost territory, then dwelt a bit on the phrase "transportation wasteland," which our chief of transportation had used: "The people must do everything in their power to make sure such plans are thwarted. If we act prudently and with common sense in this emergency, supplies can be made to last until the next harvest."

I finished my reading. Equably and stoically, Milch commented: "The meaning comes out clearly, but the Gestapo will see it too."

On April 11 the radio recording truck was already at the door of the Ministry and workmen were laying cable in my office when a telephone call reached me: "Come to the Fuehrer and bring the text of the speech with you."

I had prepared a special version for the press which blurred the strongest statements. Although I fully intended to read the original text aloud. I took the less dangerous version with me. Hitler was sitting in his bunker office having tea with one of his secretaries. A third cup was brought for me. It was a long time since I had sat opposite him and seen him in so intimate and relaxed a mood. He ceremonially adjusted his thin metal-framed glasses, which gave him the look of a schoolteacher, took a pencil, and after the first few pages began cutting whole paragraphs. Refraining from any discussion, he occasionally remarked in a quite friendly tone: "Let's leave that out," or, "But this passage is superfluous." His secretary freely picked up the pages Hitler laid aside. She read them through and remarked regretfully: "A pity, such a nice speech." Hitler dismissed me amiably, with what sounded like a piece of very friendly advice: "Do make a new draft."**

* Saur told me during our imprisonment in Nuremberg that Hitler had said at the time: "Speer is still the best of them all."

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In the cut version the speech had lost all point. And unless I had Hitler's approval I could not use the broadcasting facilities of the Reich network. Since Naumann, too, did not mention the matter again, I let it be forgotten.

In December 1944 the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra gave its last concert of the year. Wilhelm Furtwängler had invited me to come to the conductor's room. With disarming unworldliness he asked me straight out whether we had any prospect of winning the war. When I replied that the end was imminent, Furtwängler nodded; he had come to the same conclusion. I felt he was in danger, since Bormann, Goebbels, and Himmler had not forgotten many of his frank remarks as well as his defense of the blacklisted composer Hindemith, and I advised him not to return from an impending concert tour in Switzerland. "But what is going to become of my orchestra?" he exclaimed. "I'm responsible for it." I promised to look after the musicians during the coming months.

Early in April 1945, Gerhart von Westermann, the general manager of the Philharmonic, informed me that on Goebbels's orders the members of the orchestra were to be conscripted in the last call-up for the defense of Berlin. I telephoned Goebbels and gave all the reasons why the musicians should not be drafted into the People's Militia. The Propaganda Minister reproved me sharply: "I alone raised this orchestra to its special level. My initiative and my money made it what it has become, what it represents to the world today. Those who come after have no right to it. It can go under along with us."

Remembering the system Hitler had used at the beginning of the war to save favored artists from being drafted, I had Colonel von Poser go to the draft boards and destroy the papers of the Philharmonic musicians. In order to give the orchestra financial support as well, my Ministry arranged a few concerts.

"When Bruckner's *Romantic Symphony* is played, it will mean the end is upon us," I told my friends. That final concert took place on the afternoon of April 12, 1945. The Philharmonic Hall was unheated and everyone who wanted to hear this last concert in the imperiled city sat huddled in overcoats. Electricity was usually cut off at the hour of the concert, but for this one day I ordered the current to be kept on so that the hall could be lighted. The Berliners must have wondered. For the beginning I had ordered Brühnilde's last aria and

the finale from *Götterdämmerung*. The choly gesture pointing to the violin concerto came the Bru for its architectonic final move hear for a long time to come.

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the finale from *Götterdämmerung*—a rather bathetic and also melancholy gesture pointing to the end of the Reich. After Beethoven's violin concerto came the Bruckner symphony, dear to me especially for its architectonic final movement. That was the last music I would hear for a long time to come.

When I returned to the Ministry, I found a message from the office of the Fuehrer's adjutant to telephone at once. "Where in the world have you been? The Fuehrer has been waiting for you."

When I arrived in the bunker, Hitler caught sight of me and rushed toward me with a degree of animation rare in him these days. He held a newspaper clipping in his hand. "Here, read it! Here! You never wanted to believe it. Here it is!" His words came in a great rush. "Here we have the miracle I always predicted. Who was right? The war isn't lost. Read it! Roosevelt is dead!"

He could not calm down. He thought this was proof of the infallible Providence watching over him. Goebbels and many others were bubbling over with delight as they exclaimed how right he had been in his reiterated conviction that the tide would turn. Now history was repeating itself, just as history had given a hopelessly beaten Frederick the Great victory at the last moment. The miracle of the House of Brandenburg! Once again the Tsarina had died, the historic turning point had come, Goebbels repeated again and again and again. For a moment this scene stripped the veil from the deceitful optimism of the past several months. Later on, Hitler sat exhausted, looking both liberated and dazed as he slumped in his armchair. But I sensed that he was still without hope.

Innumerable fantasies burgeoned in the wake of the news of Roosevelt's death. A few days later Goebbels suggested to me that since I had so much credit in the bourgeois West, what would I think of using one of our long-range planes to fly to meet Truman, the new American President? But such ideas vanished as rapidly as they cropped up.

On yet another of these early days of April, I happened into Bismarck's former sitting room and found Dr. Ley surrounded by a sizable group, among them Schaub and Bormann, several adjutants and orderlies. Ley came rushing toward me with the news: "Death rays have been invented! A simple apparatus that we can produce in large quantities. I've studied the documentation; there's no doubt

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about it. This will be the decisive weapon!" With Bormann nodding confirmation, Ley went on, stuttering as always, to find fault with me: "But of course your Ministry rejected the inventor. Fortunately for us he wrote to me. But now you personally must get this project going. Immediately. At this moment there's nothing more important."

Ley went on to rail at the inadequacy of my organization, which he said was calcified and overbureaucratized. The whole thing was so absurd that I did not bother to contradict him. "You're absolutely right," I said. "Why don't you take it over personally? I'll be glad to give you all the powers you'll need as 'Commissioner for Death Rays.'"

Ley was delighted with this proposal. "Of course. I'll take charge of it. In this matter I'll even be glad to act as your subordinate. After all, I started as a chemist."

I suggested an experiment, recommending that he use his own rabbits; all too often results were faked by using doctored animals, I said. A few days later I actually received a telephone call from Ley's adjutant. He gave me a list of electrical equipment needed for the experiment.

We decided to carry on with this farce. My friend Lüschen, the head of our entire electrical industry, was told the story and asked to hunt up the devices the inventor wanted. He soon returned and informed me: "I was able to supply everything except one circuit breaker. We don't have any with the particular circuit-breaking speed requested. But the 'inventor' insists on this particular item. You know," Lüschen continued, laughing, "you won't guess what I've found out. This particular circuit breaker has not been made for about forty years. It's mentioned in an old edition of the *Graetz* [a physics textbook for secondary schools] from around 1900."

Such wild notions flourished as the enemy approached. In all seriousness Ley also advanced the following theory: "When the Russians overrun us from the east, the torrent of German refugees will be so heavy that it will press upon the West like a migration of the nations, break through, flood the West and then take possession." Even Hitler mocked such crackpot theories on the part of his labor leader, but during that last period he liked to have Ley close at hand.

In the first half of the month of April, Eva Braun unexpectedly and unbidden arrived in Berlin and declared that she would not

leave Hitler's side again. Hitler too offered her a seat in the bunker, but she refused, and everyone in the bunker was lively and in reality, with Hitler, into the bunker.

Hitler's physician, Dr. B. Salzberg, had been in the circle since 1934, and he was to be "rolled over"—as the jargon was—by Hitler. Hitler appointed a summa summarum, Goebbels, the youth leader, to take over. Hitler dominated the case, and he wrapped the charge into one and formulated the charge. He could have brought his wife there, but there was suspicion that he was using his wife as a cover, and he burst into tears. "I no longer see Himmler," he said. Before the court-martial came to be interrogated, he told me he was going to be found."

This incident had placed me in a difficult position. On April 6 I had moved from Kappeln in Holstein, far from Berlin, and suddenly become a criminal. Where my family was, I lie in the vicinity of Berlin. I promised that we too would be there. At that time he still lived in the so-called Alpine Redoubt.

Even if Hitler left Berlin, his end in Berlin. "My wife and I will stay in Berlin. The Americans would not be able to take us."

* The plan for the division of Germany had been assigned to the British. I was to be assigned to the families of prominent men in the command sector assigned to Doe. I was to be assigned to Doe upon us.

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leave Hitler's side again. Hitler urged her to return to Munich, and I too offered her a seat in our courier plane. But she obstinately refused, and everyone in the bunker knew why she had come. Figuratively and in reality, with her presence a messenger of death moved into the bunker.

Hitler's physician, Dr. Brandt, a permanent member of the Obersalzberg circle since 1934, had left his wife and child in Thuringia to be "rolled over"—as the phrase of the day had it—by the Americans. Hitler appointed a summary court-martial, the judges to consist of Goebbels, the youth leader Axmann, and SS General Berger. But Hitler dominated the case, acting both as prosecutor and supreme authority wrapped into one, as it were; he demanded the death penalty and formulated the charges against Brandt: that Brandt had known he could have brought his family safely to Obersalzberg. In addition there was suspicion that he had sent secret documents to the Americans, using his wife as courier. Hitler's chief secretary of many years burst into tears. "I no longer understand him," she said of Hitler. Himmler came to the bunker and reassured the troubled entourage. Before the court-martial could take place an important witness had to be interrogated, he told us, and added slyly: "This witness is not going to be found."

This incident had placed me in an embarrassing situation also, for on April 6 I had moved my family to an estate in the vicinity of Kappeln in Holstein, far from big cities on the Baltic.* Now that had suddenly become a crime. When Hitler had Eva Braun ask me where my family was, I lied, saying that they were on a friend's estate in the vicinity of Berlin. This satisfied Hitler, but he wanted me to promise that we too would go to Obersalzberg when he retreated there. At that time he still intended to lead the final struggle in the so-called Alpine Redoubt.

Even if Hitler left Berlin, Goebbels declared, he wanted to meet his end in Berlin. "My wife and my children are not to survive me. The Americans would only coach them to make propaganda against

* The plan for the division of Germany was known by now. Holstein had been assigned to the British. I was certain that the British would behave fairly to the families of prominent Nazis. Also, the estate was situated in the command sector assigned to Doenitz, whom I planned to join when the end was upon us.

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me." But when I visited Frau Goebbels in Schwanenwerder in the middle of April, I learned that she could not face the thought that her children were to die. Nevertheless she apparently gave in to her husband's decision. A few days later I proposed to her that at the last moment a barge of our transport fleet be tied up at night at the landing stage of the Goebbels property in Schwanenwerder. She and the children could hide below deck until the barge had been moved to a tributary on the western side of the Elbe. We would supply food enough so that she could remain there for some time undiscovered.

After Hitler had stated that he would not survive a defeat, many of his closest associates vied with each other in protesting that there would be nothing left for them but suicide too. But I felt that they had a moral duty to face trial by the enemy. Two of the most successful air force officers, Baumbach and Galland, worked with me during the last days of the war developing a weird plan for laying hands on the most important members of Hitler's entourage and preventing them from committing suicide. Every evening, we had discovered, Bormann, Ley, and Himmler drove out of Berlin to various suburban villages that were spared air raids. Our plan was simple: When the enemy night bombers dropped white parachute flares, every car stopped and the passengers fled into the fields. Flares fired by signal pistols would undoubtedly produce similar reactions. Then a troop of soldiers armed with submachine guns would overpower the six-man escort squads.

Flares were actually brought to my home, the selection of soldiers discussed, details considered. In the general confusion it would have been possible to bring the arrested men to a secure place. To my surprise Dr. Hupfauer, Ley's former chief assistant, insisted that the coup against Bormann be carried out by party members seasoned by experience at the front. No one in the party was so hated as Bormann, Hupfauer said; Gauleiter Kaufmann was claiming the privilege of personally killing "the Fuehrer's Mephistopheles."

But after hearing about these fantastic schemes of ours, General Thomale, chief of staff of the Armored Forces, convinced me in a nocturnal conversation on the open road that it was not for us to intervene in the judgment of God.

Meanwhile, Bormann was pursuing his own schemes. After Brandt was arrested, I was warned by State Secretary Klopfer that the arrest had been engineered by Bormann and that it was also meant as

a blow against me. Brandt the way—that Brandt with Hitler. Klopfer suggested careless remarks.

The enemy radio also me. One story was that I sentenced by a court-martial to regain his freedom.³ At Hettlage, who had always been on the verge of arrest. And claimed that von Brauchsch was the army, and I were then deal on the terms of a surrender spreading such reports to help that they were rumors.

During these days of several reliable frontlines took up quarters in my wheeled armored reconnaissance presumably have escaped learned on whose orders done.

The assault on Berlin General Reymann to be Chief of the army group in the Oder River to about Heinrich was a man I trust only recently he had helped nicker coal basin intact. every bridge in Berlin for quarters near Prenzlau. I beginning of the great Russian reinforcement I brought with of roads, Langer, and the my request Heinrich ordered

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a blow against me. Bormann evidently thought—quite wrongly, by the way—that Brandt was the chief mainstay of my influence with Hitler. Klopfer suggested that I be very careful about making any careless remarks. ³ p 668

The enemy radio also broadcast several news items that worried me. One story was that I had helped a nephew of mine, who had been sentenced by a court-martial for reading some of Lenin's writings, to regain his freedom.³ Another report said that my associate Karl Hettlage, who had always been in bad grace with the party, was on the verge of arrest. And a Swiss newspaper was supposed to have claimed that von Brauchitsch, the former Commander in Chief of the army, and I were the only people with whom the Allies could deal on the terms of a surrender. Perhaps the enemy was deliberately spreading such reports to produce dissension in the leadership; perhaps they were rumors.

During these days of disintegration the army quietly assigned me several reliable frontline officers armed with submachine guns who took up quarters in my home. For emergencies they had an eight-wheeled armored reconnaissance vehicle ready, with which we could presumably have escaped from Berlin. To this day I have never learned on whose orders or on the basis of what information this was done.

The assault on Berlin was imminent. Hitler had already appointed General Reymann to be commandant of the city for the battle. At first Reymann remained subordinate to General Heinrici, the Commander in Chief of the army group which extended from the Baltic Sea along the Oder River to about sixty miles south of Frankfurt an der Oder. Heinrici was a man I trusted, for I had known him a long time and only recently he had helped me to surrender the industry of the Rybnicker coal basin intact. So when Reymann insisted on preparing every bridge in Berlin for demolition, I drove to Heinrici's headquarters near Prenzlau. That was on April 15, one day before the beginning of the great Russian offensive against Berlin. For technical reinforcement I brought with me the Berlin municipal superintendent of roads, Langer, and the Berlin chief of the Reichsbahn, Beck. At my request Heinrici ordered Reymann to attend the conference.

The two technicians demonstrated that the planned demolitions would mean the death of Berlin.⁴ The commandant of the city re-

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myself whether this intangibility, this insubstantiality, had not characterized him from early youth up to the moment of his suicide. It sometimes seems to me that his seizures of violence could come upon him all the more strongly because there were no human emotions in him to oppose them. He simply could not let anyone approach his inner being because that core was lifeless, empty.

Now, he was shriveling up like an old man. His limbs trembled; he walked stooped, with dragging footsteps. Even his voice became quavering and lost its old masterfulness. Its force had given way to a faltering, toneless manner of speaking. When he became excited, as he frequently did in a senile way, his voice would start breaking. He still had his fits of obstinacy, but they no longer reminded one of a child's temper tantrums, but of an old man's. His complexion was sallow, his face swollen; his uniform, which in the past he had kept scrupulously neat, was often neglected in this last period of life and stained by the food he had eaten with a shaking hand.

This condition undoubtedly touched his entourage, who had been at his side during the triumphs of his life. I too was constantly tempted to pity him, so reduced was he from the Hitler of the past. Perhaps that was the reason everyone would listen to him in silence when, in the long since hopeless situation, he continued to commit nonexistent divisions or to order units supplied by planes that could no longer fly for lack of fuel. Perhaps that was why no one said a word when he more and more frequently took flight from reality and entered his world of fantasy, when he spoke of the clash between East and West which must be on the point of erupting—when he bade us realize that it was inevitable. Although the entourage could scarcely have been blind to the phantasmal character of these ideas, his constant repetitions had some sort of hypnotic effect—as when, for example, he claimed he was now in a position to conquer Bolshevism by the strength of his own personality and in alliance with the West. It sounded believable when he assured us that he was continuing to live only for this turning point, that he personally wished his last hour had come. The very composure with which he looked forward to the end intensified sympathy and commanded respect.

In addition he had again become more amiable and more willing to drop into his private mood. In many ways he reminded me of the Hitler I had known at the beginning of our association twelve years before, except that he now seemed more shadowy. He centered his

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amiability on the few women who had been with him for years. For a long time he had shown special liking for Frau Junge, the widow of his servant who had been killed at the front; but he also favored his Viennese diet cook. His longtime secretaries, Frau Wolf and Frau Christian, also formed part of this private circle during the last weeks of his life. For months now he had shown a preference for taking his teas and meals with them. Scarcely any men still belonged among his intimates. I too had long since ceased to be invited to his table. The arrival of Eva Braun also introduced a number of changes in his habits, although it did not put a stop to his probably innocent relations with the other women about him. He must have been motivated by some simple belief that women were more loyal in misfortune than men could be. Indeed, he sometimes seemed to distrust the show of faith by the men of his staff. The exceptions were Bormann, Goebbels, and Ley, whom he seemed still to be sure of.

Around this shadowy Hitler the apparatus of command continued to run mechanically. Apparently there was still some momentum here which went on operating even when the motor was running down. This residual force seemed to keep the generals moving along the same track even at the very end, when the radiations of Hitler's will were beginning to weaken. Keitel, for example, continued to press for the destruction of bridges even when Hitler was now willing to spare them.

Hitler must have noticed that the discipline in his entourage was also slackening. Formerly, whenever he had entered a room everybody had risen until he sat down. Now conversations continued, people remained seated, servants took their orders from guests, associates who had drunk too much went to sleep in their chairs, and others talked loudly and uninhibitedly. Perhaps he deliberately overlooked such changes. These scenes affected me like a bad dream. They corresponded to the changes which had been taking place for several months in the Chancellor's residence: The tapestries had been removed, the paintings taken down from the walls, the carpets rolled up, and valuable pieces of furniture had been stowed away in an air-raid shelter. Stains on the wallpaper, gaps in the furnishings, scattered newspapers, empty glasses and plates, a hat that someone had tossed on a chair, added up to an impression of a place in the midst of moving day.

For some time Hitler had abandoned the upper rooms. He claimed

that the constant air raid had lessened his ability to work. In this he was probably right, as he said. And so he had continued to work.

This withdrawal into his private quarters was of great significance as well. The walls were lined with concrete and steel, and the room was far from the tragedy which was now being played out. He no longer had any relation to the world outside. He meant his own and his last station in his flight from the world. He was to acknowledge since his death the unreal world of the bunker.

Even during this last period he was occasionally sat with Hitler in the bunker. In Linz, mutely contemplating the world, he was roofed with more than six feet of earth, was under heavy bombs exploded in it, and it fortunately passed the storm. Hitler would give a start. He was a corporal of the First World War, a man whose nerves who could no longer

Hitler's last birthday was celebrated. The day lines of cars had driven to the Chancellery, dignitaries of the Reich had come to offer congratulations. Now all was over. The truth, moved from the bunker, was a neglect provided a fitting end. A delegation of Hitler's friends had presented to him in the garden the last of the boys. He had died abruptly. Probably he sent his last thoughts as an object of pity. The moment of a celebration by candlelight was as usual. No one knew the circumstances of good wishes could be given in the circumstances.

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that the constant air raids disturbed his sleep and interfered with his ability to work. In the bunker he could at least get some sleep, he said. And so he had converted to an underground life.

This withdrawal into his future tomb had, for me, a symbolic significance as well. The isolation of this bunker world, encased on all sides by concrete and earth, put the final seal on Hitler's separation from the tragedy which was going on outside under the open sky. He no longer had any relationship to it. When he talked about the end, he meant his own and not that of the nation. He had reached the last station in his flight from reality, a reality which he had refused to acknowledge since his youth. At the time I had a name for this unreal world of the bunker: I called it the Isle of the Departed.

Even during this last period of his life, in April 1945, I still occasionally sat with Hitler in the bunker bent over the building plans for Linz, mutely contemplating the dreams of yesteryear. His study roofed with more than sixteen feet of concrete, then topped with six feet of earth, was undoubtedly the safest place in Berlin. When heavy bombs exploded in the vicinity this massive bunker shook, as it fortunately passed the shock waves on to the sandy soil of Berlin. Hitler would give a start. What had become of the formerly fearless corporal of the First World War? He was now a wreck, a bundle of nerves who could no longer conceal his reactions.

Hitler's last birthday was not actually celebrated. Formerly on this day lines of cars had driven up, the honor guard had presented arms, dignitaries of the Reich and of foreign countries had offered their congratulations. Now all was quiet. For the occasion Hitler had, it is true, moved from the bunker to the upper rooms, which in their state of neglect provided a fitting framework to his own lamentable condition. A delegation of Hitler Youth who had fought well was presented to him in the garden. Hitler spoke a few words, patted one or another of the boys. His voice was low. He broke off rather abruptly. Probably he sensed that his only convincing role now was as an object of pity. Most of his entourage avoided the embarrassment of a celebration by coming to the military situation conference as usual. No one knew quite what to say. Hitler received the expressions of good wishes coolly and almost unwillingly, in keeping with the circumstances.

Shortly afterward we were standing, as we had done so often, in

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH 562 L

the confined space of the bunker, around the situation map. Hitler had taken his seat facing Goering. The latter, who always made such a point of his attire, had changed his uniform quite remarkably in the past few days. To our surprise the silver-gray cloth had been replaced by the olive-drab of the American uniform. Along with this his two-inch wide gold-braided epaulets had given way to simple cloth shoulder strips to which his badge of rank, the golden Reich Marshal's eagle, was simply pinned. "Like an American general," one of the participants in the conference whispered to me. But Hitler seemed not to notice even this change.

The impending attack on the center of Berlin was being discussed. The night before the idea had been bandied about of not defending the metropolis and, instead, transferring to the Alpine Redoubt. But overnight, Hitler had decided to fight for the city in the streets of Berlin. At once everyone began clamoring that it was essential to shift the headquarters to Obersalzberg, and that now was the last moment remaining.

Goering pointed out that only a single north-south route through the Bavarian Forest was still in our possession and that the last escape route to Berchtesgaden might be cut off at any time. Hitler became indignant. "How can I call on the troops to undertake the decisive battle for Berlin if at the same moment I myself withdraw to safety!" Goering in his new uniform sat pale and sweating opposite him, his eyes wide, as Hitler talked on, whipping himself up by his own rhetoric: "I shall leave it to fate whether I die in the capital or fly to Obersalzberg at the last moment!"

As soon as the situation conference was over and the generals dismissed, Goering turned to Hitler, utterly distraught. He had urgent tasks awaiting him in South Germany, he said; he would have to leave Berlin this very night. Hitler gazed absently at him. It seemed to me that he was deeply moved by his decision to remain in Berlin and stake his life on the outcome. With a few indifferent words, he shook hands with Goering, giving no sign that he saw through him. I was standing only a few feet away from the two and had a sense of being present at a historic moment: The leadership of the Reich was splitting asunder. With that, the birthday situation conference ended.

Along with the other participants in the conference I had left the room in the usual informal way, without bidding good-by to Hitler

personally. Ignoring our Poser urged me to leap and launched the final attack swiftly. For days all the important baggage had been moved to mobile homes belonging to the railroad. The train had been set up at Plön.

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That same night Kaufman and the technical staff of the Hanford Laboratory. After passing through decontamination, he introduced me to two people who knew what I was up to. They were there a few minutes I would have been to strangers. In order to cover the meeting, I told them before beginning to decide whether they agreed to destroy the disks. Then I read my speech from the book. Perhaps they were frightened, though not to the point of fleeing. In any rate they raised no objections.

Kaufmann took the risk that he could broadcast this speech and conditions throw light on Third Reich: If I were in my shoes, among whom I chief actions and condemned in successor continued his desperate

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 bitterness at personal tragedy and national disaster—both centered
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To this day I am glad that I succeeded in carrying out my inten-
 tion to see Hitler one last time. It was right, after twelve years of
 association, to make this gesture in spite of all antagonisms. At the
 time, it is true, I acted under an almost mechanical compulsion when
 I set out from Wilsnack. Before my departure I wrote my wife a few
 lines both to encourage her and to let her know that I did not intend
 to join Hitler in death. About fifty-five miles from Berlin a stream of
 vehicles heading toward Hamburg blocked the entire road: jalopies
 and limousines, trucks and delivery vans, motorcycles, and even Berlin
 fire trucks. It was impossible to thrust on in the face of these tens
 of thousands of vehicles. It was a mystery to me where all the fuel
 had suddenly come from. Probably it had been hoarded for months
 for just this crisis.

There was a divisional staff in Kyritz. From there I telephoned the
 villa in Berlin where Dr. Brandt was being held prisoner, awaiting
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 I went to the large Rechlin Airport in Mecklenburg, which was used
 for testing planes. Here I was well known, for I had been present
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burned beams, walked under collapsing ceilings, and came to the sitting room in which, a few years ago, our evenings had dragged on, where Bismarck had held social gatherings and where Hitler's adjutant Schaub was now drinking brandy, in the company of a few people, few of whom I knew. In spite of my telephone call they had ceased expecting me and were astonished to see me turn up. Schaub's cordial welcome was reassuring and seemed to indicate that no one at headquarters knew anything about my Hamburg recording. Then Schaub left us to announce my arrival. Meanwhile, I asked Lieutenant Colonel von Poser to enlist the aid of the Chancellery telephone switchboard to locate Lüschen and ask him to come to the Chancellery.

Hitler's adjutant returned: "The Fuehrer is ready to see you." How often in the past twelve years had I been ushered into Hitler's presence with these words. But I was not thinking of that as I descended the fifty-odd steps into the bunker, but if I would be ascending them with a whole skin. The first person I met below was Bormann. He came forward to meet me with such unwonted politeness that I began feeling more secure. For Bormann's or Schaub's expressions had always been reliable guides to Hitler's mood. Humbly, he said to me: "When you speak with the Fuehrer . . . he'll certainly raise the question of whether we ought to stay in Berlin or fly to Berchtesgaden. But it's high time he took over the command in South Germany. . . . These are the last hours when it will be possible. . . . You'll persuade him to fly out, won't you?"

If there were anyone in the bunker attached to his life, it was obviously Bormann, who only three weeks earlier had enjoined the functionaries of the party to overcome all weaknesses, to win the victory or die at their posts.⁸ I gave a noncommittal reply, feeling a belated sense of triumph at his almost imploring manner.

Then I was led into Hitler's room in the bunker. In his welcome there was no sign of the warmth with which he had responded a few weeks before to my vow of loyalty. He showed no emotion at all. Once again I had the feeling that he was empty, burned out, lifeless. He assumed that businesslike expression which could be a mask for anything and asked me what I thought about Doenitz's approach to his job. I had the distinct feeling that he was not asking about Doenitz by chance, but that the question involved his succes-

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sor. And to this day I think that Doenitz liquidated the hopeless legacy that unexpectedly became his lot with more prudence, dignity, and responsibility than Bormann or Himmler would have done. I voiced my favorable impression of the admiral, now and then enriching my account with anecdotes which I knew would please Hitler. But with the wisdom of long experience I did not try to influence him in Doenitz's favor, for fear that this would drive him in the opposite direction.

Abruptly, Hitler asked me: "What do you think? Should I stay here or fly to Berchtesgaden? Jodl has told me that tomorrow is the last chance for that."

Spontaneously, I advised him to stay in Berlin. What would he do at Obersalzberg? With Berlin gone, the war would be over in any case, I said. "It seems to me better, if it must be, that you end your life here in the capital as the Fuehrer rather than in your weekend house."

Once more I was deeply moved. At the time I thought that was a piece of good advice. Actually it was bad, for if he had flown to Obersalzberg the battle for Berlin would probably have been shortened by a week.

That day he said nothing more of an imminent turning point or that there was still hope. Rather apathetically, wearily and as if it were already a matter of course, he began speaking of his death: "I too have resolved to stay here. I only wanted to hear your view once more." Without excitement, he continued: "I shall not fight personally. There is always the danger that I would only be wounded and fall into the hands of the Russians alive. I don't want my enemies to disgrace my body either. I've given orders that I be cremated. Fräulein Braun wants to depart this life with me, and I'll shoot Blondi beforehand. Believe me, Speer, it is easy for me to end my life. A brief moment and I'm freed of everything, liberated from this painful existence."

I felt as if I had been talking with a man already departed. The atmosphere grew increasingly uncanny; the tragedy was approaching its end.

During the last months I had hated him at times, fought him, lied to him, and deceived him, but at this moment I was confused and emotionally shaken. In this state, I confessed to him in a low voice, to my own surprise, that I had not carried out any demolitions but

had actually prevented them. F But he did not react. Such weeks before, were now remot- tered out my offer to stay in E sensed that I did not mean it. I he had not always known instinc him during these past months : from my memoranda; also whe orders he had not provided a in his mysterious personality. I st

Just then General Krebs, the He had come to give the situat had changed. The Commander i ceiving the situation reports fro days before the situation room i crowd of high-ranking officers, c of the Wehrmacht and SS, but n time. Along with Goering, Doer air force Chief of Staff Koller, an staffs were now outside of Berli cers had remained. And the natu ing but vague scraps of news we. of staff could offer little more tha out in front of Hitler covered only dam. But even here the data on ti longer corresponded with the obs before. The Soviet troops had long indicated.

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Just then General Krebs, the army chief of staff, was announced. He had come to give the situation report.* In that respect nothing had changed. The Commander in Chief of the armed forces was receiving the situation reports from the fronts as always. Only three days before the situation room in the bunker could hardly hold the crowd of high-ranking officers, commanders of various departments of the Wehrmacht and SS, but now almost all had left in the meantime. Along with Goering, Doenitz and Himmler, Keitel and Jodl, air force Chief of Staff Koller, and the most important officers of their staffs were now outside of Berlin. Only lower-ranking liaison officers had remained. And the nature of the report had changed. Nothing but vague scraps of news were coming from outside. The chief of staff could offer little more than conjectures. The map he spread out in front of Hitler covered only the area around Berlin and Potsdam. But even here the data on the status of the Soviet advance no longer corresponded with the observations I had made a few hours before. The Soviet troops had long since come closer than the map indicated.

To my astonishment, during the conference Hitler once again tried to make a display of optimism, although he had only just finished talking with me about his impending death and the disposition of his body. On the other hand, he had lost much of his former per-

* Krebs was acting for the "ill" Guderian. Hitler had officially assigned the supreme command of the armed forces to Keitel and limited himself to commanding the troops in Berlin. But I had the impression that he did not want to recognize this as a fact. Even as commander of Berlin, Hitler did not leave his bunker; he issued all his orders from his desk. Apparently this meeting on April 23 was what was called a "minor" situation conference, since neither the commandant of Berlin nor the other troop commanders attended.

* D.T. Until this moment, I had not understood his feelings for Speer. I had seen them as the feelings of a putative lover. But now - Speer was his son

Hitler's son.
See notes

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suasiveness. Krebs listened to him patiently and politely. Often in the past, when the situation was clearly desperate but Hitler continued undeterred to conjure up a favorable outcome, I had thought he was the captive of obsessional ideas. Now it became evident that he spoke two languages at once. How long had he been deceiving us? Since when had he realized that the struggle was lost: since the winter at the gates of Moscow, since Stalingrad, since the Allied invasion, since the Ardennes offensive of December 1944? How much was pretense, how much calculation? But perhaps it was merely that I had just witnessed another of his rapid changes of mood and that he was being as sincere with General Krebs as he had earlier been with me.

The situation conference, which ordinarily went on for hours, was quickly ended. Its very brevity revealed that this remnant of a headquarters was in its death throes. On this day Hitler even restrained from swooping us off into the dream world of providential miracles. We were dismissed with a few words and left the room in which so dreary a chapter of errors, omissions, and crimes had been played out. Hitler had treated me as an ordinary guest, as if I had not flown to Berlin especially for his sake. We parted without shaking hands, in the most casual manner, as if we would be seeing each other the next day.

Outside the room I met Goebbels. He announced: "Yesterday the Fuehrer took a decision of enormous importance. He had stopped the fighting in the West so that the Anglo-American troops can enter Berlin unhindered." Here again was one of those mirages which excited the minds of these men for a few hours and aroused new hopes which as quickly as they had come would be replaced by others.

Goebbels told me that his wife and six children were now living in the bunker as Hitler's guests, in order, as he put it, to end their lives at this historic site. In contrast to Hitler, he appeared to be in fullest control of his thoughts and emotions. He showed no sign of having settled his accounts with life.

By this time it was late afternoon. An SS doctor informed me that Frau Goebbels was in bed, very weak and suffering from heart attacks. I sent word to her asking her to receive me. I would have liked to talk to her alone, but Goebbels was already waiting in an anteroom and led me into the little chamber deep underground where she lay in a plain bed. She was pale and spoke only trivialities in

a low voice, although I could over the irrevocably approach. Since Goebbels remained persuaded she was limited to the state of her leaving did she hint at what she said that at least Harald [her son] felt confined and could scarcely say in this situation? We said band had not allowed us ever

Meanwhile, there was a fit telegram had arrived from Goebbels to Hitler. I trailed informally a In the telegram Goering merely the decree on the succession, the entire Reich if Hitler remained claimed that Goering had launched Bormann's last effort to induce take control there. At first, His same apathy he had shown all given fresh support when another I pocketed a copy which in the bunker. It read:

To Reich Minister von Ribbentrop

I have asked the Fuehrer to resign April 23. If by this time it is decided he is deprived of his freedom of action by the decree of June 29, 1941, becoming Reich heir to all his offices as his deputy, you receive no other word either. You are to come to me at once.

Here was fresh material for Bormann!" he exclaimed excitedly. "He will assume your office at twelve. Bormann's resignation has arrived, Bormann now won his

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a low voice, although I could sense that she was in deep agony over the irrevocably approaching hour when her children must die. Since Goebbels remained persistently at my side, our conversation was limited to the state of her health. Only as I was on the point of leaving did she hint at what she was really feeling: "How happy I am that at least Harald [her son by her first marriage] is alive." I too felt confined and could scarcely find words—but what could anyone say in this situation? We said good-by in awkward silence. Her husband had not allowed us even a few minutes alone for our farewell.

Meanwhile, there was a flurry of excitement in the vestibule. A telegram had arrived from Goering, which Bormann hastily brought to Hitler. I trailed informally along after him, chiefly out of curiosity. In the telegram Goering merely asked Hitler whether, in keeping with the decree on the succession, he should assume the leadership of the entire Reich if Hitler remained in Fortress Berlin. But Bormann claimed that Goering had launched a coup d'état; perhaps this was Bormann's last effort to induce Hitler to fly to Berchtesgaden and take control there. At first, Hitler responded to this news with the same apathy he had shown all day long. But Bormann's theory was given fresh support when another radio message from Goering arrived. I pocketed a copy which in the general confusion lay unnoticed in the bunker. It read:

To Reich Minister von Ribbentrop:

I have asked the Fuehrer to provide me with instructions by 10 P.M. April 23. If by this time it is apparent that the Fuehrer has been deprived of his freedom of action to conduct the affairs of the Reich, his decree of June 29, 1941, becomes effective, according to which I am heir to all his offices as his deputy. [If] by 12 midnight April 23, 1945, you receive no other word either from the Fuehrer directly or from me, you are to come to me at once by air.

(Signed) Goering, Reich Marshal

Here was fresh material for Bormann. "Goering is engaged in treason!" he exclaimed excitedly. "He's already sending telegrams to members of the government and announcing that on the basis of his powers he will assume your office at twelve o'clock tonight, *mein Fuehrer*."

Although Hitler had remained calm when the first telegram arrived, Bormann now won his game. Hitler immediately stripped

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Goering of his rights of succession—Bormann himself drafted the radio message—and accused him of treason to Hitler and betrayal of National Socialism. The message to Goering went on to say that Hitler would exempt him from further punishment if the Reich Marshal would promptly resign all his offices for reasons of health.

Bormann had at last managed to rouse Hitler from his lethargy. An outburst of wild fury followed in which feelings of bitterness, helplessness, self-pity, and despair mingled. With flushed face and staring eyes, Hitler ranted as if he had forgotten the presence of his entourage: "I've known it all along. I know that Goering is lazy. He let the air force go to pot. He was corrupt. His example made corruption possible in our state. Besides he's been a drug addict for years. I've known it all along."

So Hitler had known all that but had done nothing about it.

And then, with startling abruptness, he lapsed back into his apathy: "Well, all right. Let Goering negotiate the surrender. If the war is lost anyhow, it doesn't matter who does it." That sentence expressed contempt for the German people: Goering was still good enough for the purposes of capitulation.

After this crisis, Hitler had reached the end of his strength. He dropped back into the weary tone that had been characteristic of him earlier that day. For years he had overtaxed himself; for years, mustering that immoderate will of his, he had thrust away from himself and others the growing certainty of this end. Now he no longer had the energy to conceal his condition. He was giving up.

About half an hour later Bormann brought in Goering's telegram of reply. Because of a severe heart attack Goering was resigning all his powers. How often before Hitler had removed an inconvenient associate not by dismissal, but by an allegation of illness, merely to preserve the German people's faith in the internal unity of the top leadership. Even now, when all was almost over, Hitler remained true to this habit of observing public decorum.

Only now, at the very last hour, had Bormann reached his goal. Goering was eliminated. possibly Bormann also was aware of Goering's failings; but he had hated and now overthrown the Reich Marshal solely because he had held too much power. In a way I felt sympathy for Goering at this time. I recalled the conversation in which he had assured me of his loyalty to Hitler.

The brief thunderstorm staged by Bormann was over; a few bars of

Götterdämmerung had left the stage. To my mine, though I made it managers of the Skod from the Russians became probably right about the relations with America safety on flying to America would have strictly ordered prepared to sign an order fly to safety.

While I was discussing him that Ribbentrop was nervously: "I've already him." For some reason.

Bormann insisted: "I threshold, that he'll wait

This figure of speech moned. They talked about escape plan of the Czech the Foreign Minister the corridor he grumbled Office." In a somewhat I have no objection if the Foreign Minister." tent, and Hitler signed ler's last official dealing with

In the meantime my poor rich Lüschen, had arrived persuade him to leave good-by. Later, in Nuremberg suicide after the fall of Bormann

Toward midnight Eva small room in the bunker. It was pleasantly furnished with furniture which I had designed rooms in the upper floors and the pieces selected

April 1945

To complete the irony, one of the inlays on the doors of the chest was a four-leaf clover incorporating her initials.

We were able to talk honestly, for Hitler had withdrawn. She was the only prominent candidate for death in this bunker who displayed an admirable and superior composure. While all the others were abnormal—exaltedly heroic like Goebbels, bent on saving his skin like Bormann, exhausted like Hitler, or in total collapse like Frau Goebbels—Eva Braun radiated an almost gay serenity. "How about a bottle of champagne for our farewell? And some sweets? I'm sure you haven't eaten in a long time."

I was touched by her concern; she was the first person to think that I might be hungry after my many hours in the bunker. The orderly brought a bottle of Moët et Chandon, cake, and sweets. We remained alone. "You know, it was good that you came back once more. The Fuehrer had assumed you would be working against him. But your visit has proved the opposite to him, hasn't it?" I did not answer that question. "Anyhow, he liked what you said to him today. He has made up his mind to stay here, and I am staying with him. And you know the rest, too, of course. . . . He wanted to send me back to Munich. But I refused; I've come to end it here."

She was also the only person in the bunker capable of humane considerations. "Why do so many more people have to be killed?" she asked. "And it's all for nothing. . . . Incidentally, you almost came too late. Yesterday the situation was so terrible it seemed the Russians would quickly occupy all of Berlin. The Fuehrer was on the point of giving up. But Goebbels talked to him and persuaded him, and so we're still here."

She went on talking easily and informally with me, occasionally bursting out against Bormann, who was pursuing his intrigues up to the last. But again and again she came back to the declaration that she was happy here in the bunker.

By now it was about three o'clock in the morning. Hitler was awake again. I sent word that I wanted to bid him good-by. The day had worn me out, and I was afraid that I would not be able to control myself at our parting. Trembling, the prematurely aged man stood before me for the last time; the man to whom I had dedicated my life twelve years before. I was both moved and confused. For his part, he showed no emotion when we confronted one another. His words were as cold as his hand: "So, you're leaving? Good. Auf

Wiedersehen." No regards farewell. For a moment I I coming back. But he could e his attention to something elc

Ten minutes later, with I left the Chancellor's reside the neighboring Chancellery, no longer functioning, I cor utes in the Court of Honor against the night sky. I sense was an almost ghostly quie mountains. The noise of a gr trated to here even during 1 long intervals I heard the d my last visit to the Chancellor prospects, and dreams for th of my building, and of the mos

"How was it?" Poser asked.

"Thank God, I don't have Baden,"* I answered with r ler's coolness at our parting, : ment, he excluded me and : time, as my successor.

The road between the Bran had been converted into a run squads had filled the holes f without incident; I saw a shade the Victory Column. Then we and around Berlin we saw ma flares that looked like fireflies, pared with that produced by a headed toward a gap in the ring was still tranquil. Toward five o' we arrived back at the Rechlin ai

* Prince Max of Baden was appoin First World War. In that capacity he ated the Armistice, and turned the go ists—for all of which acts he was m

April 1945

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Wiedersehen." No regards to my family, no wishes, no thanks, no farewell. For a moment I lost my composure, said something about coming back. But he could easily see that it was a white lie, and turned his attention to something else. I was dismissed.

Ten minutes later, with hardly another word spoken to anyone, I left the Chancellor's residence. I wanted to walk once more through the neighboring Chancellery, which I had built. Since the lights were no longer functioning, I contented myself with a few farewell minutes in the Court of Honor, whose outlines could scarcely be seen against the night sky. I sensed rather than saw the architecture. There was an almost ghostly quiet about everything, like a night in the mountains. The noise of a great city, which in earlier years had penetrated to here even during the night, had totally ceased. At rather long intervals I heard the detonations of Russian shells. Such was my last visit to the Chancellery. Years ago I had built it—full of plans, prospects, and dreams for the future. Now I was leaving the ruins of my building, and of the most significant years of my life.

"How was it?" Poser asked.

"Thank God, I don't have to play the part of a Prince Max of Baden,"* I answered with relief. I had correctly interpreted Hitler's coolness at our parting, for six days later, in his political testament, he excluded me and appointed Saur, his favorite for some time, as my successor.

The road between the Brandenburg Gate and the Victory Column had been converted into a runway by the use of red lanterns. Labor squads had filled the holes from the latest shell hits. We started without incident; I saw a shadow rush by the right side of the plane: the Victory Column. Then we were in the air, and undisturbed. In and around Berlin we saw many large fires, the flashes of artillery, flares that looked like fireflies. Still, the scene could not be compared with that produced by a single heavy air raid on Berlin. We headed toward a gap in the ring of artillery fire, where the darkness was still tranquil. Toward five o'clock, with the first glimmers of dawn, we arrived back at the Rechlin airfield.

* Prince Max of Baden was appointed Imperial Chancellor at the end of the First World War. In that capacity he declared the Kaiser's abdication, negotiated the Armistice, and turned the government of Germany over to the Socialists—for all of which acts he was much criticized.—*Translators' note.*

April

1945

I had a fighter plane readied to deliver the Fuehrer's order concerning the Skoda managers to Karl Hermann Frank, Hitler's deputy in Prague—I never did find out if the messenger arrived. Since I wanted to avoid being chased along the roads by low-level English fighters, I postponed driving to Hamburg until evening. Himmler, I heard at the airfield, was staying only twenty-five miles away at the hospital that had sheltered me a year before under such curious circumstances. We decided to visit him, landing in our Stork on a nearby field. Himmler was quite surprised to see me. He received me in the very room where I had lain during my illness, and to make the situation even more grotesque, Dr. Gebhardt was also present.

As always, Himmler displayed that special brand of cordiality toward a fellow official which effectively cut off all intimacy. He was interested chiefly in my experiences in Berlin. Undoubtedly he had heard of Hitler's treatment of Goering by now, but he passed over it. And even when I somewhat hesitantly told the story of Goering's resignation, he maintained that it meant nothing. "Goering is going to be the successor now. We've long had an understanding that I would be his Premier. Even without Hitler, I can make him Chief of State. . . . You know what he's like," he added with a conniving smile and without the slightest embarrassment. "Naturally I'll be the one to make the decisions. I've already been in touch with various persons I mean to take into my cabinet. Keitel is coming to see me shortly. . . ." Perhaps Himmler assumed that I had come to see him to wheedle a post in his new government.

The world in which Himmler was still moving was fantastic. "Europe cannot manage without me in the future either," he commented. "It will go on needing me as Minister of Police. After I've spent an hour with Eisenhower he'll appreciate that fact. They'll soon realize that they're dependent on me—or they'll have a hopeless chaos on their hands." He spoke of his contacts with Count Bernadotte, which involved transfer of the concentration camps to the International Red Cross. Now I understood why I had seen so many parked Red Cross trucks in the Sachsenwald near Hamburg. Earlier, they had always talked about liquidating all political prisoners before the end. Now Himmler was trying to strike some private bargains with the victors. Hitler himself, as my last talk with him had made apparent, had put such ideas far behind him.

Finally, Himmler after all held out a faint prospect of my becom-

ing a minister in his government. I offered him my plane so. But Himmler waved that aside. Unemotionally, he explained. And besides, my personal safety was not my primary concern. Many for me to risk the flight.

The arrival of Keitel put out I heard the Field Marshal so frequently addressed him now assuring Himmler of that he was entirely at his disposal.

That evening I returned to my speech to the people by that is, even before Hitler's must be taking place during the bunker, I realized that I had been in a position. Once more Hitler had turned to myself, and perhaps to the grounds that it would be now in the course of the tragedy.

I said good-bye to Kauffmann. We moved into our trailer. Doenitz or members of the staff stood still, awaiting further orders. Present on May 1, 1945, the message* significantly curtailed

* The first radio message, dated May 1, 1945.

Grand Admiral Doenitz:

In place of the former Reich President, you as his successor. Written instructions required by the present situation.

The radio message sent on May 1, 1945.

Grand Admiral Doenitz: (continued)

Fuehrer deceased yesterday. You Reich President, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Justice, instructions the testament sent.

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ing a minister in his government. For my part, with some sarcasm
 I offered him my plane so that he could pay a farewell visit to Hitler.
 But Himmler waved that aside. He had no time for that now, he said.
 Unemotionally, he explained: "Now I must prepare my new govern-
 ment. And besides, my person is too important for the future of Ger-
 many for me to risk the flight."

The arrival of Keitel put an end to our conversation. On my way
 out I heard the Field Marshal, in the same firm voice with which he
 so frequently addressed high-flown sentimental declarations to Hitler,
 now assuring Himmler of his unconditional loyalty and announcing
 that he was entirely at his disposal.

That evening I returned to Hamburg. The Gauleiter offered to have
 my speech to the people broadcast by the Hamburg station at once,
 that is, even before Hitler's death. But as I thought of the drama that
 must be taking place during these days, these very hours, in the Ber-
 lin bunker, I realized that I had lost all urge to continue my opposi-
 tion. Once more Hitler had succeeded in paralyzing me psychically.
 To myself, and perhaps to others, I justified my change of mind on
 the grounds that it would be wrong and pointless to try to intervene
 now in the course of the tragedy.

I said good-by to Kaufmann and set out for Schleswig-Holstein.
 We moved into our trailer on Eutin Lake. Occasionally I visited
 Doenitz or members of the General Staff, who like me were at a
 standstill, awaiting further developments. Thus, I happened to be
 present on May 1, 1945, when Doenitz was handed the radio mes-
 sage* significantly curtailing his rights as Hitler's successor. Hieler

* The first radio message, dated April 30, 1945, 6:35 P.M. read:

Grand Admiral Doenitz:

In place of the former Reich Marshal Goering the Fuehrer has designated
 you as his successor. Written authorization on the way. Immediately take all
 measures required by the present situation.

Bormann

The radio message sent on May 1, 1945, at 3:18 P.M. read:

Grand Admiral Doenitz: (Top Secret! Only via officer.)

Fuehrer deceased yesterday at 3:30 P.M. Testament of April 29 appoints
 you Reich President, Minister Goebbels Chancellor, Reichsleiter Bormann
 Party Minister, Minister Seyss-Inquart Foreign Minister. On the Fuehrer's
 instructions the testament sent out of Berlin to you and to Field Marshal

April, May 1, 1945

Goebbels

April '45

59: The Man of the Century

As he looked at his family now Goebbels can have seen them only as actors in a drama, in which he had cast himself in the leading role. Their approaching end inspired no horror in him. Once he had hoped for a peaceful death, a private funeral, and burial in some open space in Berlin. 'I'd prefer to die quite alone somewhere,' he had remarked in 1941, 'and be buried only by those who really love me.'¹ This now seemed an unlikely circumstance. Lord Vansittart of the British Foreign Office had only recently declared that the only issue remaining on war criminals was 'the site of the gallows and the length of the rope.'²

In January 1940 when a conversation with Hitler had lightly turned to methods of suicide Goebbels had agreed that the pistol was best.³ Later he inclined toward cyanide and asked Ley to obtain enough for his entire family.⁴ By 1943 he had resolved that suicide *in extremis* was the only way to lasting glory. Had he not expected General Paulus to 'forfeit fifteen or twenty years of his life' to earn a thousand years of immortality?⁵ He told the swashbuckling S.S. Major Otto Skorzeny that he could not figure out why Mussolini had not killed himself after his arrest that July: 'He did not lack the means—we know he had the poison on him. . . . Why didn't he swallow it the moment he found himself in captivity and his life's work in ruins?'⁶ 'If all our efforts, work, and struggle should lead nowhere,' Goebbels commented a few days later, 'then I should not find it hard to die. In a world where there was no room for my ideals there would be no room for me.'⁷ He added weight to his memorandum to Hitler in July 1944 by promising something that his rival Speer never could, the mass suicide of his entire family if they lost the war. 'Each time I am out at Lanke with my six children, then I realize all over again that neither I nor my entire family could, or should, live on into an era that is not our own.'⁸

The more he read the letters of Frederick the Great the more Dr Goebbels took note that the great monarch was never without his poison capsule during the critical years of the Seven Years War, and that he aspired to be 'buried beneath the batteries of his artillery.'⁹ The death of his old friend Eugen Hadamowsky, of which Goebbels learned on March 2, 1945, 'leading his company into action . . . a bullet through the heart,' also affected him deeply.¹⁰ After this, said S.S. Gruppenführer Berger, Goebbels tapped his breast pocket and said: 'I and my whole family will commit suicide.' 'I have the right,' the minister intimated to him, 'not to

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April '45

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March + April '45

die alone if I commit suicide, but for a whole lot of my followers to die with me.' The S.S. general contradicted him—he personally had no intention of dying with Goebbels: 'You have had nothing but good out of National Socialism. I have had only worry and work, so I don't feel the same moral obligation.' Goebbels just looked at him blankly.¹¹

Magda was at one with him on this matter. She was fatalistic and perhaps even callous about it all. Looking across the room at her at a Berlin society function back in 1933 the French ambassador had remarked, 'I have never in my life come across a woman with such cruel eyes.'¹² Death did not frighten her. After Werner Naumann lit a cigarette for her in March 1945, with a special-agents' lighter, she expressed curiosity about it; Naumann opened it to reveal a poison capsule concealed within, and at her request—in front of Dr Goebbels—gave it to her.¹³ Once she had leaned over tipsily to the family major-domo Wilhelm Rohrsen and confided to him how she imagined her family would die. 'We shall all be invited to the Führer's,' she slurred. 'And there we shall drink chocolate. This chocolate will taste good, and it will be our last.' She raised her glass to Rohrsen. 'The Führer will not die without my husband,' she promised.¹⁴ 'We shall all die—even you.' Shortly she would have Joseph to herself, and there would be no contenders.

OF course even after Roosevelt's sudden death the British and Americans did not have one bomber less, nor the Russians fewer tanks; but as Goebbels told Krosigk on the phone that morning, the news would cause a sea-change in morale. 'We can and must see in it the dispensation of an all-powerful history and justice,' he explained.¹⁵

'Why not just say of God?' rejoined the finance minister. He wrote to Goebbels an hour or two later, arguing that Roosevelt's death was a divine gift—but one that we've got to earn.' The president's death removed the last obstacle to dealing with the United States. In this letter Krosigk also sowed the idea in Goebbels' mind that the Americans and the Russians were really making for Prague now, not Berlin.¹⁶

GOEBBELS' diary as recorded on the glass microfiches in Moscow ends with April 12, 1945; the plates also record several hundred pages of shorthand notes, and there is reason to believe that these contain his final diary dictation, which Otte had no more time to transcribe.¹⁷

Hitler's desk diary shows only one appointment at this time with Goebbels, at midday on April 15.¹⁸ Magda evidently came too—it was a Sunday—because Hitler's pilot Hans Baur saw her stepping in through the back gate just as Hitler was inspecting the outside of the three-storied bunker which Speer had now completed beneath the garden. Hitler was shocked to see her and offered her Baur's plane to fly down to the Obersalzberg. 'Berlin will be a rat trap!' he said.¹⁹

'Mein Führer,' she replied, 'my husband is gauleiter of Berlin. Life without my husband would have no purpose for me—nor did I bear my

scene on March 2

scene March 4

April 12

April 15

April 1945

children to have them put on display in the Soviet Union and America as the children of the propaganda minister Goebbels.

FINIS Germaniæ was the spirit of the leading article that Goebbels published that day. The 'bloodthirsty and vengeful' enemy coalition was wasting away; it had 'to triumph swiftly or triumph not at all.' The article displayed a confidence bordering on complacency: 'I know for certain that the Führer will find a way out of the dilemma,' he soothed his readers. The rest was written purely for posterity. 'We have no cause to hang our heads before the enemy,' he wrote. 'What the German people has achieved in this war is already history. No filthy hand of foe shall ever fling aside the crown of laurels that already adorns our nation's brow.' Now, he recommended, was a time for all to fight—'And what life is too precious to sacrifice *pro patria*!' So let each and every one of us swear a private oath, devoid of any pathos, to choose to die rather than accept the yoke of servitude.' They were traversing the final phase of this war, he wrote. 'One cannot humanly conceive of how it can last much longer.'

Indeed it could not. At dawn on the sixteenth Marshal Georgii Konstantinovich Zhukov and Marshal Ivan Stepanovich Koniev threw eighteen Soviet armies at Berlin—not Prague. At night the children looked out of their window and asked why the flashes lighting the horizon produced no rain. Dr Goebbels was in hourly contact with General Busse. He commandeered a fleet of Berlin omnibuses to rush soldiers to the battlefield.²¹ To Hitler's anger Goebbels sent five of the Volksturm battalions, although they were supposed only to be used for immediate neighborhood defense.²² Goebbels suspected however that this was already the last battle. He asked Lieutenant von Oven to help him burn his private papers—including pictures of parents, yellowing and mounted on thick card, snapshots of the little Joseph in a sailor suit, school reports, a letter of the Rheydt Cotton Trading Association, academic diplomas, and hotel bills. 'Look at this one,' he said, holding up a studio portrait photograph. 'Now there was a woman of perfect beauty!' The portrait of actress Lida Baarova, joined the others in the flames.²³

He dedicated to Hitler, on the eve of his birthday, a last brilliant broadcast honoring him as the man whom the German nation had in free elections chosen as their leader. 'If Germany still lives today,' he thundered, 'if Europe and the cultured and civilized Occident have still not been swept away for ever into the fathomless maelstrom that yawns black and ominous before us, then they owe it to him alone. He will be the Man of the Century.' What, he continued, had the enemy to offer? 'Nothing but their superiority in numbers, their brutish mania for destruction, their diabolical rage that masks the chaos of mankind in dissolution. An entire violated continent stands testimony against them. In every country of Europe once flourishing cities and villages have been turned into cratered wastelands.' Now however the final act of this mighty tragedy had begun. 'The chief of the hostile conspiracy has been crushed by Fate, the same Fate which left the Führer on July 20 standing erect

April 20 + 21, '45

and uninjured amid the dead and dying and rubble so that he might complete his works.' 'Pay heed, ye Germans!' he declared into the microphone. 'Millions of people, in every country on Earth, are looking to this man, wonderingly and perplexed: Does he know a way out of this mighty misfortune that has beset the world? He will show it to the nations.'

The underlying message was vintage Goebbels: Blind, self-sacrificing loyalty to his Führer. A message went to Magda to have the children brought to No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse ready to brighten the Führer's birthday the next day. At midnight he went over to the chancellery bunker. With glazed and red-rimmed eyes Hitler spoke to them of his hardening resolve to hold northern Germany and Norway if the Reich should indeed be sliced in two, and to defend the Alps and Bohemia-Moravia. To Dr Ley he hinted that he would move into this southern 'fortress' himself.²⁵ Goebbels however had already decided to defend Berlin to the last, since the army generals had proven incapable. Ley urged him at least to send his family to safety. Goebbels was obstinate. 'I shall die here, if I have to, and Magda has decided to do likewise.'²⁶ Not for him the humiliating surrender of a Paulus. 'What does he do, this man who has ordered and exhorted his men to stand and die?' he had said in 1943. 'He trots off into captivity, not forgetting to pack his little suitcase on the way!'²⁷

At midday on April 20 there was a small birthday parade. Goebbels followed Hitler up the winding staircase into the garden. The Führer turned up the collar of his gray greatcoat and walked down the line of youngsters, handing out medals to the teenagers who had fought the Russians off with flak guns or bazookas. At four P.M. he went back down into the bunker, never to come out again alive, and Goebbels returned to his residence.

The High Command and war department evacuated Berlin, traveling to Bavaria, leaving skeleton staffs in Berlin. Dr Friedrich-Wilhelm Kritzinger, Lammers' Staatssekretär, broke it to Goebbels that every other ministry had now left for the northern 'fortress'. Infuriated by this news Goebbels demanded to know how he was expected to defend Berlin without them.²⁸ Thus his own ministry staff found that they, like their minister, were hemmed into the Reich capital. (Most of the women, around three hundred in all, went into Russian captivity and were not seen again.) When Otto Meissner, Hitler's pettifogging old Staatsminister, phoned later that day from the safety of Mecklenburg to explain that 'the Reich government' had withdrawn from the danger zone 'to preserve its freedom of action' Goebbels snarled at him, 'The Reich government is where the Führer and I are, not where you are! For twelve years I have had the urge to spit in your eye. For twelve years I have suppressed that urge—and today I regret it.'²⁹

That night Bormann sent a telex down to the Obersalzberg, reading: 'Wolf [Hitler] is staying here as situation can only be restored by him if at all possible.'

The dawn of Saturday April 21 came with Russian artillery lobbing

Apr 2

April

shells at extreme range into Berlin.³⁰ White-faced, Goebbels presided over one last eleven o'clock conference at No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse, one long tirade against the traitors who had talked Hitler out of actually invading Britain in 1940, who had lost their nerve in Russia, who had failed again in Normandy in June 1944, and who had finally shown their colors on July the Twentieth. When Fritzsché suavely objected, the minister snapped, 'What can I do with men who won't fight even when their womenfolk are being raped?'³¹ Then an evil leer spread over his face, as he paced up and down behind his big desk. 'It's up to the German people,' he murmured softly. They had literally asked for National Socialism. In November 1933 after Hitler quit the League of Nations 40.5 million Germans had voted for his policies and only 2.1 million against. Hitler had not forced himself on them; and now, God help them. He folded his arms, and almost spat out the final words: 'Well, what were you working with me for, gentlemen? Now they're going to slit your pretty little throats.'³² According to Werner Naumann, he said: 'Gentleman, we hung together and we'll be hanged together.'³³ He stalked out, pausing only to fling them a Hitler salute.

At noon-fifteen a Russian shell burst only a hundred yards away, shaking the whole structure. Unshaken, Goebbels read out over cable radio the dramatic 'emergency speech' that he had long prepared, pausing only to shake splinters off the pages as another shell burst blew in several panes of glass. He had intended to send the metal boxes containing the glass-plate microfiches of his diaries into the southern 'fortress' but that road was now closed. That same Saturday afternoon he entrusted to Rudi Balzer his latest diaries and the shorthand notes and told him to carry them out to the north. Then he told his secretary Otte to bring him all the secret papers from the two ministry safes to the Reich chancellery. 'Go to ground,' he told Otte. 'When Berlin is liberated report back to me again.' Otte rendezvoused at the Adlon with Balzer and they set out in an army staff car for Hamburg. About halfway, for no good reason, the two men halted and buried the precious diary notes in a preserving jar outside Perleberg.^{34*}

Goebbels made his final dispositions. His staff was now reduced to Naumann, Heinz Lorenz—the unobjectionable former deputy of Sündermann, who had been dismissed with Otto Dietrich—and perhaps thirty others. He told them that he proposed, when it was all over, to poison his children.³⁵ In Berlin itself the only newspaper still being printed was an emergency news-sheet, the *Panzer-Bär*. His last leader for *Das Reich* was a shrill call for Germany's women and children to fight from the rear against these insolent invaders who had wasted entire cities with the cruel air warfare. Some, he wrote, might think nothing of living

* Armed with the map drawn by Balzer and aided by a proton magnetometer team from Oxford university, the author searched for this jar in the heavily wooded area in the then communist eastern Germany in 1970, without success. Otte, at the time still a serving west German government official, was unable to accompany us.

'under the knuckles of the Anglo-American banker-Jews,' but the true German would be hurling hand grenades, laying Teller mines, and sniping from rooftops and cellar windows.³⁶

AROUND six o'clock the next evening, April 22, he received a shocking telephone call from Hitler who asked him, voice breaking, to go over straight away. 'It's all over,' was all that he would say.³⁷

In a few brief words Goebbels disbanded the propaganda ministry. He handed out poison capsules to his staff. He told Otte to get Rach and a second driver for Magda and the children. 'We're moving into the Reich chancellery. No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse will not be defended. It's to be abandoned. The Volkssturm and S.S. men are to transfer to the chancellery gardens. My staff are to join the troops.' Magda asked if she should pack her toilet articles, and dismissed her children's nanny with the words: 'We're driving over to the Reich chancellery. We've all got to take poison.'³⁸

Hitler's midday war conference had broken up with him on the verge of a nervous breakdown after learning that S.S. Obergruppenführer Felix Steiner had not even begun the counter-attack from the north on which everybody was banking. He had slammed down his bunch of colored pencils and declared that the war was lost. 'But you're very wrong, gentlemen, if you believe that now I'll leave Berlin after all. I'd sooner put a bullet in my brains'—and with that he had pushed through them into his private quarters saying, 'Get me a line to Dr Goebbels.'

They stood aside as Goebbels limped into Hitler's study. What followed, perhaps his finest speech, was delivered to an audience of only one frightened dictator bent on killing himself within the hour. Setting the ultimate seal on his personal loyalty, he told Hitler that he would move into one of the recently vacated bunker rooms himself at once and bring Magda and the children with him too.³⁹

Back outside, Bormann begged him to talk the Führer into flying out while he still could. Goebbels blinked around, his eyes searching out Traudi Junge; he briefed the young, slim secretary to be so kind as to meet his family when they arrived. Taking General Jodl aside, he revealed that Hitler had made up his mind to stand and fight in Berlin. Was there, he asked, no means of preventing the encirclement?

'There's only one way,' replied the general. 'And that's to denude the Elbe front and deploy all our troops in the defense of Berlin. It's just possible then that the Americans won't press their offensive.'⁴⁰

Surprisingly, Hitler agreed to this at once and ordered Keitel and Jodl out of the bunker to take personal command of this historic about-face by Wenck's Twelfth Army.

Moving into Morell's old quarters directly across the gangway from Hitler's rooms and the map room—the physician took one of the last planes out that same night—Goebbels sent out a 'Führer Order' for *Panzer-Bär* to print the next day. 'Anybody who encourages or approves any move that weakens our power to resist is a traitor! He is to be shot

April
22

secret

out of hand or hanged! This order stands even if his moves are alleged to have been ordered by the gauleiter Reich minister Dr Goebbels or by the Führer himself.⁴¹ Berlin's cable radio announced that Hitler was staying in Berlin.⁴²

That evening Goebbels fetched his family. Rach drove him and Magda, the children followed in a second car. They passed Ribbentrop's car: He was leaving Berlin for the north.⁴³ Down in the bunker Magda moved with her children into adjoining rooms, not caring that her matrimonial separation from her husband—whose room was one floor below—thus became obvious to everybody. Traudl Junge took the children to the store-room, where Hitler's birthday presents still lay in a heap, while their mother went to work her magic on the Führer.⁴⁴ Later she wrote to Harald that Hitler had told her to flee Berlin. 'But you know your mother,' she wrote, 'we're of the same blood. That was out of the question.'⁴⁵ She sent Rohrsen back to pick up a few things at Schwanenwerder, then released him from his duties.⁴⁶

From now on Goebbels directed what was left of the propaganda battle by telephone from the bunker. His old gau HQ had been converted into an emergency hospital, as had the Adlon and the chancellery's main Voss Strasse bunker, connected by a short tunnel to the Führer bunker. In the Voss bunker surgeons operated in semi-darkness on casualties from the increasingly close battle areas. The stench in the bunkers was overpowering, but through it all came the laughter and chatter of the six Goebbels children as they collected round their table perched on one of the landings and waited for the two armies that their father and 'Uncle Führer' had promised were coming to rescue them. Many people offered to take Magda and the children to safety under a Red Cross flag. Shortly before midnight on the twenty-second Professor Karl Gebhardt, head of the Red Cross, knocked on Goebbels' door; Schwägermann, the adjutant, inched it slightly ajar and Gebhardt called out to ask if he should take the children out of the city. Goebbels said sleepily, 'No, we're staying here,' and motioned for Schwägermann to shut the door again.⁴⁷

AT midday on April 23 Keitel and Jodl were back. Those two armies were making only slow progress. At 12:40 P.M. Berlin's radio broadcast that Hitler, Goebbels, and his family were still in Berlin.⁴⁸ 'The propaganda ministry has been turned into a fortress,' it was announced. 'The staff has been collected into a Volksturm battalion under Staatssekretär Nauemann's command. Even women staff members have been trained to use the Panzerfaust bazooka.'⁴⁹ The following day all German shortwave propaganda transmissions to the world ceased.⁵⁰

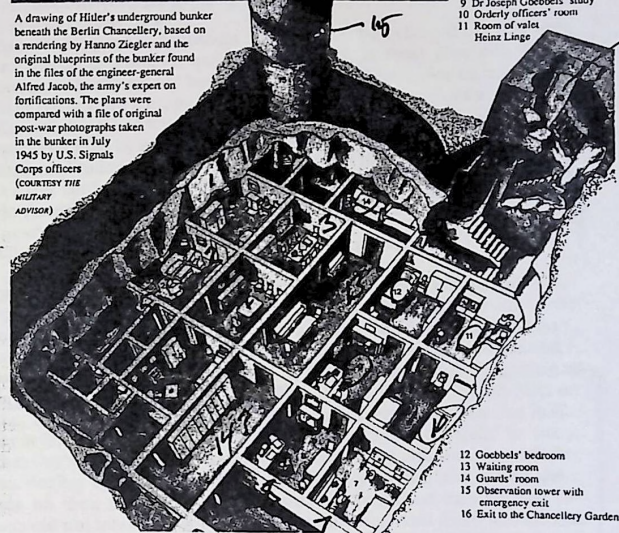
In the afternoons Hitler went to drink chocolate with the children. His favorite was still the eldest daughter Helga, now twelve. Her long blonde tresses were demurely plaited—a truly Aryan maiden. She stood 1.58 meters in her socks, and beamed all over her pretty, oval features. When her little brother Hellmut read out his latest essay on 'The Führer's Birthday,' she chirped, 'You pinched that from Pappi!'



Hitler's Bunker

- Key:
- 1 Hitler's bedroom
 - 2 Hitler's living room
 - 3 Conference room
 - 4 Anteroom to Hitler's quarters
 - 5 Eva Braun's bed-sitting room
 - 6 Heating installation
 - 7 Telephone exchange
 - 8 Martin Bormann's study
 - 9 Dr Joseph Goebbels' study
 - 10 Orderly officers' room
 - 11 Room of valet Heintz Lange

A drawing of Hitler's underground bunker beneath the Berlin Chancellery, based on a rendering by Hanno Ziegler and the original blueprints of the bunker found in the files of the engineer-general Alfred Jacob, the army's expert on fortifications. The plans were compared with a file of original post-war photographs taken in the bunker in July 1945 by U.S. Signals Corps officers (COURTESY THE MILITARY ADVISOR)



- 12 Goebbels' bedroom
- 13 Waiting room
- 14 Guards' room
- 15 Observation tower with emergency exit
- 16 Exit to the Chancellery Garden

$$1.58 \text{ meters} \quad 1.6 = 39$$

$$\frac{23}{62}$$

'Or Pappi from me!' the eight-year-old retorted, to everybody's delight. The children told Hitler they were all looking forward to the new soldiers who were going to chase the Russians away.⁵¹

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 'We're all waiting for Wenck,' he grimly advised an officer that day.⁵² Doing what they could to lighten the descending gloom, Eva Braun was delicately made up and coiffed and wore a different dress each day, while Magda had carefully brushed her own blonde hair and the hairpiece which she had elaborately woven in. Once she had a young S.S. doctor from the Voss Strasse bunker attend to her teeth; she liked this young man—Helmut Kunz—and found it easy to confide in him as the final days approached.

Hermann Göring, now in safety on the Obersalzberg, began acting as though Hitler were already dead. Hitler ordered his arrest.⁵³ Traudl Junge glimpsed Goebbels afterward outside the map room, raging about the Reichsmarschall's treason. 'That man never was a true National Socialist,' he exclaimed. 'He just basked in the Führer's reflected glory. He never lived the life of a National Socialist or idealist. It's thanks to him that we are down here now, in this bunker, and about to lose the war.'⁵⁴

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 Not that either he or Hitler had given up even now. Lorenz's shorthand notes of the remaining bunker conferences show Hitler on April 25 reasoning to Goebbels, 'I can only win a real triumph here,' meaning Berlin. 'If I do that—even just a moral victory—then it is at very least a way of saving face or gaining time.'⁵⁵

Unwilling to let anybody rob him of the glamour of sharing Hitler's fast-approaching Götterdämmerung Goebbels used every argument to keep him in the city. 'In Berlin,' he agreed, 'we can score a world-scale moral victory. Such a victory can be obtained only at the one point on which all the eyes of the world are riveted. The world will not take it half as hard that the Soviets are marching into Brandenburg as if they get Berlin. But if they are thrashed at Berlin that will teach the whole world a lesson.'

'If only!' responded Hitler. 'I hear that the talks between Eden and Molotov have broken down. The Russians are demanding the whole [of Poland]. And that will mean that Britain has lost the war. . . . I think,' he added, 'that the time's coming when the rest of them, out of sheer self-preservation, will have to stand up to this insatiable Moloch, this proletarian-bolshevik monster. If I were to duck out like a coward today . . . then National Socialism would be done for and the Reich with it. But if I fight on to victory and hang on to the capital, then maybe hope will spring in British and American breasts that it's possible to stand up to this whole peril, side by side with Nazi Germany, after all. And the only man for the job is me.'

'Leave this city,' emphasized Goebbels in this surreal conversation deep beneath the chancellery, 'and you lose the rest as well.'

Hitler speculated further. Might not the west now turn to him as the only force capable of holding back the bolshevik colossus? 'I would think

it one thousand times more craven to finish myself off down on the Obersalzberg than to make a last stand and die in battle here.'

Reverting to his own leitmotif, Goebbels reminded him that the Russians too might yet prefer to strike a bargain with Nazi Germany. 'Once Stalin sees this trend among the western powers resulting from a German victory in Berlin, he may well say to himself, "If I'm not going to get the kind of Europe I had in mind, I'm just throwing the British and Germans into each other's arms. So let's cut a deal with the Germans."' He predicted that Stalin would shortly start a propaganda campaign against the Allies, accusing them of having ravaged Germany's cities with their air raids. 'He is a far better propagandist than the British,' said Goebbels. 'Hitler was still pondering his own image in history. 'Better,' he growled, 'to fight honorably to the bitter end than to live on a few months or years in disgrace and dishonor.'

This was very much Goebbels' philosophy; he enlarged on this sepulchral theme, as though it were still an entirely abstract prospect. 'If the worse comes to the worst,' he mused, 'and the Führer dies an honorable death in Berlin, and Europe goes bolshevik, then in five years at most the Führer will have become a legendary figure and National Socialism a mythus sanctified by a last grand finale—and all of its mortal errors that are criticized today will have been expunged at one fell swoop.'

At a war conference later that day he remarked optimistically that the Anglo-American press had already coined the phrase 'Third World War' in uneasy anticipation of the coming clash with Russia. An impregnable Berlin might just be the last straw for the enemy coalition.

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 LATE on the twenty-sixth Luftwaffe general Robert von Greim arrived as Göring's successor. The renowned aviatrix Hanna Reitsch, who accompanied him, helped Magda with bedtime duties with the children. Once Hitler came in, took off his own golden party badge and pinned it onto Magda.⁵⁶ Goebbels often stood by his children's bedside, gazing at their sleeping forms. In November 1940, during the first British blitz on Berlin, he had seen them all sleeping in each others' arms like this in the cellar at Schwanenwerder—'all looking as sweet as little angels,' he wrote in that day's diary.⁵⁷ Once Traudl Junge heard the children through the door, singing in sixfold chorus. 'I went in,' she wrote, 'and found them sitting on their three bunk beds, tightly holding their ears so that the others did not interfere with their three-part song. And there was Hanna Reitsch singing with them and conducting.'⁵⁸ 'The children,' wrote Magda two or three days before the end, 'are wonderful. They manage all by themselves in these more than primitive conditions. . . . There's never a word of complaint or the trace of a tear from them. When the bunker trembles under the artillery bombardment the bigger children shield the smaller. Their presence here is a boon to us all, as they even coax a smile from the Führer now and again.'⁵⁹

Philosophizing in their bunker fastness, Hitler and Goebbels waited for those relieving armies. Lorenz heard Goebbels interrupt the war

conference on the twenty-seventh, 'Gau HQ reports that Wenck's group has linked up with our bridgehead at Potsdam.'

'The really crippling thing is,' said Hitler soon after, 'that one doesn't know for certain what is going on.' Phone calls dialed at random established which streets were now in Russian hands.

'God grant that Wenck gets here,' murmured Goebbels. 'Just suppose: Wenck gets to Potsdam, and the Soviets are right outside here in Potsdamer Platz!'

'And I'm not in Potsdam,' chimed in Hitler, 'but here in Potsdamer Platz.'

Later that day Soviet tanks flying swastikas broke right through to Wilhelm Platz before being shot down. Hitler, who had once directed army groups of a million soldiers and more, was listening to reports on the placing of individual howitzers and self-propelled guns in the streets above.⁶⁰ For a while he and Goebbels reminisced about the mistakes they now realized they had made in not liquidating their enemies in 1933. That was the hidden snag about being elected legally to office. In Vienna too, in 1938, the sheer peacefulness of the revolution had robbed them of the chance to liquidate all their enemies. Next time, they both resolved in this grotesque conversation, if there ever was a next time, they would not act Mr Nice Guy with their opponents.⁶¹

SHORTLY before dinner Magda collared the S.S. dentist Dr Helmut Kunz and asked him to help when the time came. She led him upstairs to where her children were preparing for bed, and introduced the Sturm-bannführer to them, without saying why. Goebbels looked in briefly and said goodnight to the children too. The dentist chatted easily with them all for a while, before returning to his bunker surgery.⁶²

On the twenty-eighth, as the bombardment increased, Greim left the bunker. Both the Goebbels parents took the opportunity to write a last letter to Harald in British captivity.⁶³ Magda's was defiant. 'Our magnificent ideology is all for naught,' she wrote, 'and with it everything beautiful, admirable, noble, and good that I have come to know in my life. Since there will be nothing to live for in the world that will endure after the Führer and National Socialism, I am taking the children with me. They are too good for the kind of life that will ensue, and a merciful God will understand me for delivering them.' The rest of the letter betrayed a no less hardy fanaticism. 'We have only one aim—to keep faith with the Führer unto death. That we are to be allowed to end our lives together with him is a favor from Fate that we never dared to hope for.'

Dr Goebbels' own farewell letter to his stepson was couched in the same unrepentant vein. 'We are confined to the Reich chancellery's Führer bunker, fighting for our lives and honor. . . . I think it unlikely we shall ever meet again.' Justifying the cruel pact that he had agreed with Magda, he continued, 'We do not have to be present in flesh and blood to have an impact on the future of our country. It may well be that you

are left alone to continue the family tradition. Germany will survive this terrible war, but only if our people have examples they can look up to for inspiration.' Seized by his own distorted sense of history, he added: 'The lies shall one day come tumbling down, and truth shall triumph over all.' 'Farewell, my dear Harald,' the letter ended.

THAT afternoon the news agencies announced that Heinrich Himmler had offered to the Allies the unconditional surrender of Germany.⁶⁵ To Hitler and Goebbels it now seemed obvious why there was still no news of the relieving armies. They had been betrayed.

The six children came as usual to see 'Uncle Führer' and stroke his Alsatian, Blondi; as they filed back to their room Schwägermann heard them call Eva Braun 'Frau Hitler' in passing, which rather startled him.⁶⁶ But Hitler had already revealed to Goebbels and his adjutants his intention to marry the mistress who had shared his isolation for fourteen years.⁶⁷ 'At her own wish,' Hitler dictated that night, 'she will meet death with me as my wife.'⁶⁸ He asked Goebbels to find an official empowered to solemnize the marriage—no easy charge, given that Russian snipers were now only a few hundred yards away. Presently however a short, slim, fair-haired official of thirty-four wearing the brown party uniform with a Volkssturm armband was brought down into the bunker.⁶⁹ Goebbels, Naumann, and Bormann acted as witnesses at the little ceremony in the tiny map room. Goebbels described it to Traudl Junge afterwards as 'very moving'.⁷⁰ The official quietly said, 'In the presence of the above-named witnesses I ask you, mein Führer, whether you are willing to take Miss Eva Braun in marriage.' Momentarily forgetful, she began signing with a 'B,' then crossed it out and wrote Eva Hitler instead.⁷¹

Afterward Hitler invited Goebbels, Magda, and Naumann to an intimate champagne dinner along with a few others.⁷² For a while he reminisced about World War One. Fourteen years before, he then recalled, he had been best man at the Goebbels wedding. 'What a contrast!' he wryly observed. 'For me, marriage and death are to be somewhat more closely linked in time.'⁷³ he confirmed once more that he did not intend to fall into Soviet hands alive. Death would be almost welcome, he said, now that so many had betrayed him.⁷⁴

Hitler went next door to dictate his political testament to Traudl Junge. After a while he called in Goebbels to discuss a new Cabinet. The most important question was who should succeed Hitler as head of state. Himmler had disqualified himself. Göring was in disgrace. For weeks Goebbels had been selflessly canvassing the name of Grand Admiral Dönitz—he was upright, military, and incorruptible.⁷⁵ Hitler agreed that the admiral should be the nominated as Reich president and supreme commander. He named the trusty Dr Goebbels himself as his successor as Reich chancellor, and Bormann as party minister. Werner Naumann would succeed Goebbels as propaganda minister.⁷⁶ The rest of this document, like a final shuffling of non-existent armies across long-obsolete maps, was a global settling of scores. Himmler, Göring, Speer,

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* D.T. Splendid rhetoric belonged to us as much as to the angels — it is one of the of history secrets of history

April 30, '44

and even Ribbentrop—Hitler's 'second Bismarck'—were all dismissed from office. Probably at Goebbels' recommendation Hitler appointed Karl Hanke, still holding out in Breslau, as the new Reichsführer S.S. The testament ended with a final gratuitous outburst against the Jews and those international statesmen who had sold out to Jewish interests. Hitler rejoiced that the 'culprits' had paid for their sins, 'albeit by more humane means than war'—whatever that might mean. He signed at four A.M. and Goebbels and the others witnessed his signature.

The document had formally commanded Goebbels and his family to leave Berlin 'to take part in the nation's struggle.' But the minister knew that even as Reich chancellor his miserable existence would be prolonged only by as many weeks as would separate his capture and the opening of the gallows trapdoor beneath his feet. He exclaimed that as defense commissioner for Berlin he could not in conscience leave. Weeping profusely he rushed next door and interrupted Traudl Junge's typing of the document to dictate his own defiant 'annex' to it.

'For the first time in my life,' he declared, as her pencil flew across the pad, 'I must categorically refuse to obey an order of the Führer. My wife and children join me in this refusal.' It was not just that he could not bring himself to desert the Führer in his hour of need—I should appear for the rest of my life as a dishonorable turncoat and common scoundrel,' he wrote, with no right to the respect of his fellow citizens! 'In the delirium of treason which surrounds the Führer in these most critical days of the war there must be some people at least willing to abide by him unconditionally until death.' He ended, 'For this reason, together with my wife and on behalf of my children who are too young to speak for themselves but would, if old enough, approve this decision unreservedly, I utter my unalterable decision not to leave the Reich capital even if it falls, and at the side of the Führer to end a life which will be of no further value to myself if I cannot spend it in the service of the Führer and next to him.'

By five-thirty A.M. all the documents had been signed. Three couriers slipped out of the bunker at noon-fifteen, carrying copies to the outside world. Hitler told Goebbels that he would wait for word that at least one copy had reached its destination before departing on his own, more distant journey. Shortly he was brought a news agency report describing the ugly end of Benito Mussolini and his mistress, 'hanging from the Standard Oil kiosk in [Milan's] Piazzale Quindici Martiri.' A dozen of the Duce's staff had been 'shot in the back' as well.⁷⁷

Hitler handed out cyanide capsules. Goebbels had sent Schwägermann back to the deserted No. 20 Hermann-Göring Strasse a few days earlier to fetch the 6.35-millimeter pistol with which he intended to kill himself; he kept this and his poison capsule with him all the time.⁷⁸ He gave to Heinz Lorenz copies of Hitler's testament and his own annex. 'Make for British- or American-occupied territory,' he briefed him, 'and publish the testaments as and when you think fit for the purpose of the historical record.'⁷⁹ Hitler held three more situation conferences that day. Sharp-

April 30, '44

shooters of the Russian 301st Guards Division were less than five hundred yards from the barricaded windows of the chancellery. At one-thirty A.M. on April 30, the Soviet High Command ordered heavy artillery to bear on the building. Within minutes the upper floors were ablaze. There were no more conferences. Fifty feet below ground Goebbels heard toward midday that the Russians had broken into the subway system between the ruined Kaiserhof and Potsdamer Platz, and had overrun the Tiergarten bordering on the chancellery.

At lunch time he glimpsed Hitler and Eva going into their private quarters. She was wearing a dark-blue dress with white trimmings. They invited only the two secretaries—but neither Goebbels partner—to join them. After a while Traudl Junge slipped out to see Magda and smoke a cigarette. Magda was in even more somber mood than Hitler. 'I prefer my children to die rather than survive as the objects of mockery and scandal,' she woodenly said. Around three-thirty P.M. Hitler and Eva emerged for one last time, shook hands wordlessly with Goebbels, and then retired, closing the padded doors behind them. Artur Axmann arrived to request orders for his young tank-killer squads. Goebbels intercepted the one-armed Hitler Youth leader and told him curtly that the Führer was 'seeing no one.'⁸⁰ In the old bunker Traudl Junge found the children waiting restlessly and giggling each time the bunker shook. She busied herself spreading bread and butter until a shot rang out, so close that their giggling stopped. It echoed through the concrete labyrinth, and Hellmut exclaimed, 'That sounded like a direct hit.'⁸¹

Otto Günsche went to investigate. He returned to the map room, where Goebbels and the others were waiting. 'Der Führer ist tot,' he announced.⁸²

Thus, if only by fiat of the departed Führer, Joseph Goebbels became the last chancellor of the Third Reich. His brief dominion extended one mile from north to south, from the Weidendamm Bridge to Prinz-Albrecht Strasse, and rather less than that from east to west.

April 30

Epilogue: 'Ever at your Side'

REICH Chancellor Joseph Goebbels nodded to Otto Günsche, Hitler's broad-shouldered, blond S.S. 'bulldog,' to go ahead.

Hitler had commanded Günsche to ensure that he and Eva were truly dead, and then to cremate their remains. They all trooped into Hitler's private sanctum. The sight of their Führer lifeless, the fountainhead until now of their own power and influence, slumped on the sofa with blood oozing from his head and mouth, had a numbing effect on them all. Eva's head rested on his shoulder. Ludwig Stumpfegger, Hitler's wiry young S.S. doctor, stooped briefly and confirmed that they were both dead, which relieved Günsche of a last distasteful duty with which Hitler had also charged him.¹

While the valet wrapped Hitler's corpse in a blanket and carried it out with Stumpfegger's assistance, Bormann picked up Eva's and followed them to the spiral staircase with Dr Goebbels a few paces behind. Schwägermann reported the scene to Magda. 'He ought not to have done this to us,' she wept.²

Upstairs Russian artillery was bracketing the building. Shrapnel was flying around the gardens. Storms of mortar dust and smoke whipped past. The little funeral party unceremoniously tipped the Führer's body into a hollow a few yards from the bunker exit where Goebbels remained, taking shelter. Hitler's corpse lay face upwards with Eva's next to him. A rude gust of wind hoisted her blue dress to reveal her garter-belt. Then, sodden down with the gasoline that Günsche and Hitler's chauffeur slopped out of five jerricans, the cloth wrapped itself limply round her limbs. Goebbels handed Günsche a match, a lighted rag was tossed onto the bodies, a sheet of flame enveloped the couple, and Bormann, Goebbels, Günsche, and the doctor raised their right arms in a farewell salute.

Goebbels led the way back down into the underground map room. Günsche and Axmann cleaned up in the death chamber. 'Bormann—Burgdorf—Krebs—Mohnke,' Goebbels ordered. 'Please come to an immediate situation conference.' (Wilhelm Burgdorf had succeeded Schmuntz; Krebs had replaced Guderian; Wilhelm Mohnke was the citadel's commandant.)

Hitler was dead. The Greatest Warlord of All Times had deserted them. For the last six years Germany had effectively been a Führer state without a Führer. Now Goebbels was Reich chancellor without a Reich.

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The men clustered round as Goebbels told them of Hitler's testament appointing him.

The main point on his agenda was to secure Moscow's formal recognition for his new government before the Soviet High Command had crushed his tiny Reich.³ Together with Martin Bormann he dictated to secretary Gerda Christian a letter addressed to the Soviet military commander Marshal Zhukov, informing him that the Führer was dead and asking on behalf of the new government for an immediate ceasefire to enable the injured to be evacuated from the chancellery area.⁴ He detailed Krebs, a Russian speaker, to carry this letter to Zhukov's HQ under a flag of truce.⁵ But the preliminaries for this dangerous expedition took longer than planned. Else Krüger recalls that a radio signal went first to the Russian command, then a junior officer went to inquire if they would receive Krebs. It was close to midnight before the general set off, accompanied by a colonel, General Weidling's chief of staff, in an armored car flying a white flag.⁶

What was Goebbels' intent? Krebs' remarks to the Soviet officers, of which due record was taken, show that Goebbels had perceived only one hope for his own salvation: If Stalin would cut a deal with him at the expense of his western allies.

For several hours there was no word from Krebs. Goebbels and his men hung around the bunker's lowest level drinking endless cups of coffee and knocking back tots of schnapps. Goebbels had authorized a mass breakout for that night, and the cooks upstairs had packed all their pots and pans in anticipation; but now that Krebs was still absent the cooks had to unpack and prepare more meals. Upstairs meanwhile a burial party tried in the darkness to complete the cremation work, but the Hitler couple's corpses were scarcely charred. They were buried in a shell crater with the bodies of their two dogs laid out one layer above them as a decoy. Hitler's Alsatian Blondi had a collar-tag engraved 'Immer mit dir'—ever at your side.⁷

Several efforts were made to persuade the new chancellor even now to spare the lives of his six children. Axmann offered to take them out of Berlin. Goebbels went through the motions of consulting Magda, but returned and said he did not want the children to live to see him branded as a war criminal.⁸ Hitler's chauffeur made a similar offer. Goebbels told him that, if Krebs failed, his course was clear.⁹ The night passed but General Krebs did not return. Pondering what to do now, Goebbels asked Traudl Junge for a copy of Hitler's testament: But she had destroyed both her own shorthand and the remaining carbon copies.¹⁰

At seven-forty the next morning—it was now May 1, 1945—Martin Bormann sent a succinct message to Dönitz in Flensburg, northern Germany: 'Testament in force,' it said. 'I shall join you as rapidly as possible. My advice is to delay publication until then. BORMANN.'¹¹ At about the same time Goebbels was dressing punctiliously for this day's probable meeting with his Maker, choosing his finest underwear, his light-brown party uniform, dark silk socks, a brown silk necktie clasped

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playing the role which subsequently fell to its lot in the nineteenth century. It was a policy designed to preserve the existence of his country. Churchill, by refusing to come to terms with me, has condemned his country to a policy of suicide. He has made the same mistakes as those generals make who wage a war according to the principles of the preceding war.

There are now elements which it is impossible to fit into such a scheme of things. The crucial new factor is the existence of those two giants, the United States and Russia. Pitt's England ensured the balance of world power by preventing the hegemony of Europe —by preventing Napoleon, that is, from attaining his goal. Churchill's England, on the other hand, should have allowed the unification of Europe, if it wished to preserve that same balance of power.

At the beginning of this war I did my utmost to act as though I believed Churchill to be capable of grasping the truth of this great policy; and in his lucid moments he was, indeed, capable of grasping it. But for a long time now he has been bound hand and foot to the Jewish chariot. My object in trying to come to terms with England was to avoid creating an irreparable situation in the West. Later, when I attacked eastwards and lanced the Communist abscess, I hoped thereby to rekindle a spark of common sense in the minds of the Western Powers. I gave them the chance, without lifting a finger, of making a contribution to an act of catharsis, in which they could have safely left the task of disinfecting the West in our hands

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alone. But the hatred felt by these hypocrites for a man of good faith is stronger than their sense of self-preservation. I had underestimated the power of Jewish domination over Churchill's England. They preferred, indeed, to perish by default, rather than to admit National Socialism to their midst. Under pressure, they might have tolerated a façade of anti-semitism on our part. But our absolute determination to eradicate Jewish power root and branch throughout the world was far too strong meat for their delicate stomachs to digest!

Pitt's genius lay in the implementation of a realistic policy, in harmony with the conditions of the epoch, which allowed his country to make a truly extraordinary recovery and which ensured for it world supremacy in the nineteenth century. The servile imitation of this policy which Churchill is now pursuing—and with a complete disregard for the fact that conditions are not in the least the same—is a sheer absurdity. The fact is that the world has progressed since Pitt's day! For a whole century, changes, it is true, came slowly; but the first war increased the pace, and this war has led us to a presentation of the bills and a final settlement!

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, from the point of power, Europe alone counted. The great Asiatic empires had fallen into a sleep that resembled the sleep of death. The New World was still nothing more than an excrescence on the end of the old, and no one could reasonably have foreseen the prodigious

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destiny which awaited the thirteen British colonies which had just gained their freedom. . . . Thirteen! I'm not superstitious, but that story tempts me to become so! That new State of four million inhabitants, which grew so immeasurably in the course of a hundred years that at the beginning of the twentieth century it had already become a world Power . . .!

During the decisive period between 1930 and 1940, the situation was quite different from that which obtained at the time of Pitt and Napoleon. Europe, exhausted by a great war, had lost her pride of place, and her role as leader was no longer recognized. It was still one of the centres of attraction on earth, but one which was steadily losing its importance in the face of the growing might of the United States of America, of the Russo-Asiatic colossus and of the Empire of the Rising Sun.

If fate had granted to an ageing and enfeebled Britain a new Pitt instead of this Jew-ridden, half-American drunkard, the new Pitt would at once have recognized that Britain's traditional policy of balance of power would now have to be applied on a different scale, and this time on a worldwide scale. Instead of maintaining, creating and adding fuel to European rivalries Britain ought to do her utmost to encourage and bring about a unification of Europe. Allied to a united Europe, she would then still retain the chance of being able to play the part of arbiter in world affairs.

Everything that is happening makes one think that

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Providence is now punishing Albion for her past crimes, the crimes which raised her to the power she was. The advent of Churchill, at a period that is decisive for both Britain and Europe, is the punishment chosen by Providence. For the degenerate *élite* of Britain, he's just the very man they want; and it is in the hands of this senile clown to decide the fate of a vast empire and, at the same time, of all Europe. It is, I think, an open question whether the British people, in spite of the degeneration of the aristocracy, has preserved those qualities which have hitherto justified British world domination. For my own part, I doubt it, because there does not seem to have been any popular reaction to the errors committed by the nation's leaders. And yet there have been many occasions when Britain could well have boldly set forth on a new and more fruitful course.

Had she so wished, Britain could have put an end to the war at the beginning of 1941. In the skies over London she had demonstrated to all the world her will to resist, and on her credit side she had the humiliating defeats which she had inflicted on the Italians in North Africa. The traditional Britain would have made peace. But the Jews would have none of it. And their lackeys, Churchill and Roosevelt, were there to prevent it.

Peace then, however, would have allowed us to prevent the Americans from meddling in European affairs. Under the guidance of the Reich, Europe would speedily have become unified. Once the Jewish

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poison had been eradicated, unification would have been an easy matter. France and Italy, each defeated in turn at an interval of a few months by the two Germanic Powers, would have been well out of it. Both would have had to renounce their inappropriate aspirations to greatness. At the same time they would have had to renounce their pretensions in North Africa and the Near East; and that would have allowed Europe to pursue a bold policy of friendship towards Islam. As for Britain, relieved of all European cares, she could have devoted herself to the wellbeing of her Empire. And lastly, Germany, her rear secure, could have thrown herself heart and soul into her essential task, the ambition of my life and the *raison d'être* of National Socialism—the destruction of Bolshevism. This would have entailed the conquest of wide spaces in the East, and these in their turn would have ensured the future wellbeing of the German people.

The laws of nature follow a logic which does not necessarily always conform to our own ideas of logic.

We ourselves were disposed to compromise. We were ready to throw our forces into the scales for the preservation of the British Empire; and all that, mark you, at a time when, to tell the truth, I feel much more sympathetically inclined to the lowliest Hindu than to any of these arrogant islanders. Later on, the Germans will be pleased that they did not make any contribution to the survival of an out-dated state of affairs for which the world of the future would have found it

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hard to forgive them. We can with safety make one prophecy: whatever the outcome of this war, the British Empire is at an end. It has been mortally wounded. The future of the British people is to die of hunger and tuberculosis in their cursed island.

British obstinacy and the desperate resistance being put up by the Reich have nothing in common. In the first place Britain had a freedom of choice, and nothing forced her to go to war. Yet, not only did she go to war, but she actually provoked war. I need hardly say that the Poles, had they not been urged on by the British and French warmongers (who were themselves spurred on by the Jews), would certainly not have felt themselves called upon to commit suicide. Even so, and even after having made this initial error, Britain could have pulled her chestnuts out of the fire, either after the liquidation of Poland or after the defeat of France. It would not, of course, have been very honourable on her part to do so; but in matters of this kind, the British sense of honour is not too particular. All she had to do was to place the blame for her defection squarely on the shoulders of her ex-allies—just as she and France did with Belgium in 1940, and, furthermore, we ourselves would have helped her to save face.

At the beginning of 1941, after her successes in North Africa had re-established her prestige, she had an even more favourable opportunity of withdrawing from the game and concluding a negotiated peace with us. Why, you may well ask, did she prefer to

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obey the orders of her Jewish and American allies, people, indeed, who were more voracious than even the worst of her enemies? I will tell you; Britain was not waging her own war, she was waging that which had been imposed on her by her implacable allies.

Germany, on the other hand, had no option. Once we had declared our desire of at last uniting all Germans in one great Reich and of ensuring for them a real independence—in other words, freedom to live their own lives—all our enemies at once rose against us. War became inevitable if for no other reason that in order to avoid it we should have been compelled to betray the fundamental interests of the German people. As far as our people were concerned we could not and would not be content with the mere semblance of independence. That sort of thing is all right for the Swedes and the Swiss, who are always prepared to subscribe to dubious and tortuous formulae, provided that they can at the same time line their pockets. Nor, for that matter could the Weimar Republic lay claim to any more worthy pretensions. That, however, is not an ambition worthy of the Third Reich.

We were, then, condemned to wage war—some time or other; and our sole preoccupation was to choose the least unfavourable moment. And once we were committed, of course, there could be no question of a withdrawal. It is not to the doctrines of National Socialism alone that our adversaries take exception. They hate National Socialism because through it the qualities of the German people have been exalted.

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They therefore seek the destruction of the German people—of that there can be no shadow of doubt. For once in a way, hatred has proved to be stronger than hypocrisy. We can only express our thanks to our enemies for having thus clearly exposed their minds to us.

To this all-embracing hatred we can retort only by means of total war. Fighting for our very survival, we are fighting desperately; and, whatever happens, we shall fight to the death to save our lives. Germany will emerge from this war stronger than ever before, and Britain more enfeebled than ever.

History shows that for Germany misfortune and adversity often constitute an indispensable prelude to a great renaissance. The sufferings of the German people—and in this war they have suffered incomparably more than any other people—are the very things which, if Providence wills, will help us to rise superior to the heady influence of victory. And should Providence abandon us, in spite of our sacrifices and our resolute steadfastness, it only means that Fate is subjecting us to ever greater trials, in order to give us the chance to confirm our right to live.

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always hope, and that, surely, should be enough to forbid us to think that all is already lost. No game is lost until the final whistle. And if, in spite of everything, the Fates have decreed that we should once more in the course of our history be crushed by forces superior to our own, then let us go down with our heads high and secure in the knowledge that the honour of the German people remains without blemish. A desperate fight remains for all time a shining example. Let us remember Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans! In any case, we are not of the stuff that goes tamely to the slaughter like sheep. They may well exterminate us. But they will never lead us to the slaughter house!

No! There is no such thing as a desperate situation! Think how many examples of a turn of fortune the history of the German people affords! During the Seven Years' War Frederick found himself reduced to desperate straits. During the winter of 1762 he had decided that if no change occurred by a certain date fixed by himself, he would end his life by taking poison. Then, a few days before the date he had chosen, behold, the Tsarina died unexpectedly, and the whole situation was miraculously reversed. Like the great Frederick, we, too, are combating a coalition, and a coalition, remember, is not a stable entity. It exists only by the will of a handful of men. If Churchill were suddenly to disappear, everything could change in a flash! The British aristocracy might perhaps become conscious of the abyss opening before

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them—and might well experience a serious shock! These British, for whom, indirectly, we have been fighting and who would enjoy the fruits of our victory. . . .

We can still snatch victory in the final sprint! May we be granted the time to do so!

All we must do is to refuse to go down. For the German people, the simple fact of continued independent life would be a victory. And that alone would be sufficient justification for this war, which would not have been in vain. It was in any case unavoidable; the enemies of German National Socialism forced it upon me as long ago as January 1933.

III

Colonial enterprises exhaust a nation's strength—The new worlds are only excrescences on the old—The white races suffer a set-back—Materialism, alcoholism, fanaticism and syphilis—Unnatural sons—Germany's sole possible direction for expansion eastwards—Europe for the Europeans—The super-abundance of prolific Asia

7th February 1945

Any people which desires to prosper should remain linked to its own soil. A man should never lose contact with the soil upon which he had the honour of being born. He should not go away except for a short while and always with the intention of returning. The British who became colonizers of necessity, and who, indeed, were great colonizers, have generally obeyed this rule.

As far as continental people are concerned, I am sure that it is important that they should expand only in those directions where it is certain that the soil of conquerors and conquered are contiguous.

This need to become properly enrooted applies to all continental peoples and particularly, in my opinion, to the German people. And that most probably explains why we have never really felt the urge to become colonizers. A glance at history, both ancient and modern, will show that overseas enterprises have always in the long run impoverished those who undertook them. They have all, in the end, been exhausted by their efforts; and, in the inevitable nature of things, they have all succumbed to forces to which either they have themselves given birth or which they have themselves re-awakened. What better example of this than the Greeks?

What was true for the ancient Greeks remains equally true for all Europeans in modern times. To prosper, a people must concentrate its efforts on its own country. A scrutiny of any reasonably long period of history will reveal facts which confirm the truth of this contention.

Spain, France and Britain have all enfeebled, devitalized and drained themselves in these vain colonial enterprises. The continents to which Spain and Britain gave birth, which they created piece by piece, have today acquired a completely independent way of life and a completely egoistical outlook. Even so, they are but artificial worlds, with neither a soul, a culture nor a civilization of their own; and, judged from that point of view, they are nothing more than excrescences.

It is, of course, possible to make out a case for the

* An justification¹⁵ for never having been out of German-~~speaking~~ countries.

success achieved in peopling continents which before had been empty. The United States and Australia afford good examples. Success, certainly—but only on the material side. They are artificial edifices, bodies without age, of which it is impossible to say whether they are still in a state of infancy or whether they have already been touched by senility. In those continents which were inhabited, failure has been even more marked. In them, the white races have imposed their will by force, and the influence they have had on the native inhabitants has been negligible; the Hindus have remained Hindus, the Chinese have remained Chinese, and the Moslems are still Moslems. There have been no profound transformations, and such changes as have occurred are less marked in the religious field, notwithstanding the tremendous efforts of the Christian missionaries, than in any other. There have been a few odd conversions the sincerity of which are open to considerable doubt—except, perhaps, in the case of a few simpletons and mentally deficient. The white races did, of course, give some things to the natives, and they were the worst gifts that they could possibly have made, those plagues of our own modern world—materialism, fanaticism, alcoholism and syphilis. For the rest, since these peoples possessed qualities of their own which were superior to anything we could offer them, they have remained essentially unchanged. Where imposition by force was attempted, the results were even more disastrous, and common sense, realizing the futility of

such measures, should preclude any recourse to their introduction. One solitary success must be conceded to the colonizers: everywhere they have succeeded in arousing hatred, a hatred that urges these peoples, awakened from their slumbers by us, to rise and drive us out. Indeed, it looks almost as though they had awakened solely and simply for that purpose! Can anyone assert that colonization has increased the number of Christians in the world? Where are those conversions *en masse* which mark the success of Islam? Here and there one finds isolated islets of Christians, Christians in name, that is, rather than by conviction; and that is the sum total of the successes of this magnificent Christian religion, the guardian of supreme Truth!

Taking everything into consideration, Europe's policy of colonization has ended in a complete failure. I have not forgotten the one instance of apparent success, but a success that is purely material, and it is of that monster which calls itself the United States that I wish to talk. And monster is the only possible name for it! At a time when the whole of Europe—their own mother—is fighting desperately to ward off the bolshevist peril, the United States, guided by the Jew-ridden Roosevelt, can think of nothing better to do than to place their fabulous material resources at the disposal of these Asiatic barbarians, who are determined to strangle her. Looking back, I am deeply distressed at the thought of those millions of Germans, men of good faith, who emigrated to the United States

and who are now the backbone of the country. For these men, mark you, are not merely good Germans, lost to their fatherland; rather, they have become enemies, more implacably hostile than any others. The German emigrant retains, it is true, his qualities of industry and hard work, but he very quickly loses his soul. There is nothing more unnatural than a German who has become an expatriate.

In the future we must guard against these haemorrhages of German blood. It is eastwards, only and always eastwards, that the veins of our race must expand. It is the direction which Nature herself has decreed for the expansion of the German peoples. The rigorous climate with which the East confronts them allows them to retain their qualities as hardy and virile men; and the vivid contrasts they find there help to keep fresh their love and their longing for their own country. Transplant a German to Kiev, and he remains a perfect German. But transplant him to Miami, and you make a degenerate of him—in other words, an American.

Since colonization is not an activity which Germans feel called upon to pursue, Germany should never make common cause with the colonizing nations and should always abstain from supporting them in their colonial aspirations. What we want is a Monroe doctrine in Europe. 'Europe for the Europeans!', a doctrine, the corollary of which should be that Europeans refrain from meddling in the affairs of other continents.

The descendants of the convicts in Australia should inspire in us nothing but a feeling of supreme indifference. If their vitality is not strong enough to enable them to increase at a rate proportionate to the size of the territories they occupy, that is their own look out, and it is no use their appealing to us for help. For my own part, I have no objection at all to seeing the surplus populations of prolific Asia being drawn, as to a magnet, to their empty spaces. Let them all work out their own salvation! And let me repeat—it is nothing to do with us.

They react brutally and finally they revolt. It is an instinctive reaction, a reaction of repugnance against a stranger who refuses to adapt himself and become part of the whole, a parasite which clings to the host, imposes on it and exploits it to the utmost. By nature, the Jew is a parasite which cannot and will not be assimilated. A distinguishing feature of the Jew is that, unlike other foreigners, he everywhere claims all the rights of citizenship in the community that shelters him—and at the same time remains always a Jew. He regards it as his right to be allowed to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds; and he is the only man in the whole world to claim such an extravagant privilege.

National Socialism has tackled the Jewish problem by action and not by words. It has risen in opposition to the Jewish determination to dominate the world; it has attacked them everywhere and in every sphere of activity; it has flung them out of the positions they have usurped; it has pursued them in every direction, determined to purge the German world of the Jewish poison. For us, this has been an essential process of disinfection, which we have prosecuted to its ultimate limit and without which we should ourselves have been asphyxiated and destroyed.

With the success of the operation in Germany, there was a good chance of extending it further afield. This was, in fact, inevitable, for good health normally triumphs over disease. Quick to realize the danger, the Jews decided to stake their all in the life and death

struggle which they launched against us. National Socialism had to be destroyed, whatever the cost and even if the whole world were destroyed in the process. Never before has there been a war so typically and at the same time so exclusively Jewish.

I have at least compelled them to discard their masks. And even if our endeavours should end in failure, it will only be a temporary failure. For I have opened the eyes of the whole world to the Jewish peril.

One of the consequences of our attitude has been to cause the Jew to become aggressive. As a matter of fact, he is less dangerous in that frame of mind than when he is sly and cunning. The Jew who openly avows his race is a hundred times preferable to the shameful type which claims to differ from you only in the matter of religion. If I win this war, I shall put an end to Jewish world power and I shall deal the Jews a mortal blow from which they will not recover. But if I lose the war, that does not by any means mean that their triumph is assured, for then they themselves will lose their heads. They will become so arrogant that they will evoke a violent reaction against them. They will, of course, continue to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, to claim the privileges of citizenship in every country and, without sacrificing their pride, continue to remain, above all, members of the Chosen Race. The shifty, the shamefaced Jew will disappear and will be replaced by a Jew vainglorious and bombastic; and the latter will stink just as objectionably as the former—and perhaps even more so.

There is, then, no danger in the circumstances that anti-semitism will disappear, for it is the Jews themselves who add fuel to its flames and see that it is kept well stoked. Before the opposition to it can disappear, the malady itself must disappear. And from that point of view, you can rely on the Jews: as long as they survive, anti-semitism will never fade

In saying this, I promise you I am quite free of all racial hatred. It is, in any case, undesirable that one race should mix with other races. Except for a few gratuitous successes, which I am prepared to admit, systematic cross-breeding has never produced good results. Its desire to remain racially pure is a proof of the vitality and good health of a race. Pride in one's own race—and that does not imply contempt for other races—is also a normal and healthy sentiment. I have never regarded the Chinese or the Japanese as being inferior to ourselves. They belong to ancient civilizations, and I admit freely that their past history is superior to our own. They have the right to be proud of their past, just as we have the right to be proud of the civilization to which we belong. Indeed, I believe the more steadfast the Chinese and the Japanese remain in their pride of race, the easier I shall find it to get on with them.

This pride of race is a quality which the German, fundamentally, does not possess. The reason for this is that for these last three centuries the country has been torn by internal dissension and religious wars and has been subjected to a variety of foreign

influences; to the influence, for example, of false Christianity as taught by the many proselyte preachers in today's churches. When pride of race manifests itself in a German, as it sometimes does and in a most aggressive form, it is in reality nothing more than a compensatory reaction for that inferiority complex from which so many Germans suffer. This, I need hardly say, does not apply to the Prussians. From the time of Frederick the Great they have possessed that quiet and simple pride which is the hall-mark of people who are sure of themselves and who have no need of ostentation to bear witness to what they are. Thanks to those qualities which are inherently theirs, the Prussians were able, as they well showed, to create a united Germany. National Socialism has tried to give to all Germans that pride which hitherto has been possessed by the Prussians alone among us.

The Austrians, too, have in their blood a pride very akin to that of the Prussians, a pride born of the fact that for centuries they have never been dominated by any other race, but have, on the contrary, been for a very long time the ones who gave orders and were obeyed. They possess the accumulated experience of domination and power, and to that is attributable that *panache* of Atticism which no one can gainsay.

In its crucible National Socialism will melt and fuse all those qualities which are characteristic of the

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German soul; and from it will emerge the modern German—industrious, conscientious, sure of himself yet simple withal, proud not of himself or what he is, but of his membership of a great entity which will evoke the admiration of other peoples. This feeling of corporate superiority does not in any way imply the slightest desire to crush and overwhelm others. We have, I know, on occasions exaggerated our cult of this sentiment, but that was necessary at the outset and we were compelled to jostle the Germans pretty roughly in order to set their feet on the right road. In the nature of things, too violent a thrust in any direction invariably provokes an equally violent thrust in the opposite direction. All this, of course, cannot be accomplished in a day. It requires the slow-moving pressure of time. Frederick the Great is the real creator of the Prussian type. In actual fact, two or three generations elapsed before the type crystallized and before the Prussian type became a characteristic common to every Prussian.

Our racial pride is not aggressive except in so far as the Jewish race is concerned. We use the term Jewish race as a matter of convenience, for in reality and from the genetic point of view there is no such thing as the Jewish race. There does, however, exist a community, to which, in fact, the term can be applied and the existence of which is admitted by the Jews themselves. It is the spiritually homogeneous group, to membership of which all Jews throughout the world deliberately adhere, regardless of their whereabouts

*In A. H.'s speech, in regard
a big positive build-up of the
Hitler Chamberlain Collaboration*
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and of their country of domicile; and it is this group of human beings to which we give the title Jewish race. It is not, mark you, a religious entity, although the Hebrew religion serves them as a pretext to present themselves as such; nor indeed is it even a collection of groups, united by the bonds of a common religion.

The Jewish race is first and foremost an abstract race of the mind. It has its origins, admittedly, in the Hebrew religion, and that religion, too, has had a certain influence in moulding its general characteristics; for all that, however, it is in no sense of the word a purely religious entity, for it accepts on equal terms both the most determined atheists and the most sincere, practising believers. To all this must be added the bond that has been forged by centuries of persecution—though the Jews conveniently forget that it is they themselves who provoked these persecutions. Nor does Jewry possess the anthropological characteristics which would stamp them as a homogeneous race. It cannot, however, be denied that every Jew in the world has some drops of purely Jewish blood in him. Were this not so, it would be impossible to explain the presence of certain physical characteristics which are permanently common to all Jews from the ghetto of Warsaw to the bazaars of Morocco—the offensive nose, the cruel vicious nostrils and so on.

A race of the mind is something more solid, more durable than just a race, pure and simple. Transplant a German to the United States and you turn him into

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an American. But the Jew remains a Jew wherever he goes, a creature which no environment can assimilate.

* It is the characteristic mental make-up of his race which renders him impervious to the processes of assimilation. And there in a nutshell is the proof of the superiority of the mind over the flesh! . . .

The quite amazing ascendancy which they achieved during the course of the nineteenth century gave the Jews a sense of their own power and caused them to drop the mask; and it is just that that has given us the chance to oppose them as Jews, self-proclaimed and proud of the fact. And when you remember how credulous the Germans are, you will realize that we must be most grateful for this sudden excess of frankness on the part of our most mortal enemies.

!! I have always been absolutely fair in my dealings with the Jews. On the eve of war, I gave them one final warning. I told them that, if they precipitated another war, they would not be spared and that I would exterminate the vermin throughout Europe, and this time once and for all. To this warning they retorted with a declaration of war and affirmed that wherever in the world there was a Jew, there, too, was an implacable enemy of National Socialist Germany.

Well, we have lanced the Jewish abscess; and the world of the future will be eternally grateful to us.

* It is this mind, said H. H.
that must be excised
from civilization³⁰ before we are
polluted to the roots

C
VI

Too soon and too late—We lack time, because we lack space—A revolutionary State, pursuing a *petit bourgeois* policy—Collaboration with France was a mistake—We should have emancipated the French proletariat and liberated the French colonies—I was right in *Mein Kampf*

14th February 1945

The disastrous thing about this war is the fact that for Germany it began both too soon and too late. From the purely military point of view, it would have suited us better if it had started sooner. I ought to have seized the initiative in 1938 instead of allowing myself to be forced into war in 1939; for war was, in any case, unavoidable. However, you can hardly blame me if the British and the French accepted at Munich every demand I made of them!

As things stand at the moment, then, the war came a little too late. But from the point of view of our moral preparedness, it has come far too soon. My

disciples have not yet had time to attain their full manhood. I should really have had another twenty years in which to bring this new *élite* to maturity, an *élite* of youth, immersed from infancy in the philosophy of National Socialism. The tragedy for us Germans is that we never have enough time. Circumstances always conspire to force us to hurry. And if at this point time is lacking, it is primarily because we lack space. The Russians with their vast expansion can afford the luxury of refusing to be hurried. Time works in their favour, but against us. Even if Providence had allotted to me a span of life sufficiently long to allow me to lead my people to the complete degree of development that National Socialism desires, you may be quite sure that our enemies would never have permitted me to take advantage of it. They would have done their utmost to destroy us before they found themselves face to face with a Germany, cemented by a single faith and National Socialist in body and soul, which would have been invincible.

Since we lacked men moulded in the shape of our ideal, we had perforce to make what use we could of those whom we had. The result has been obvious. Thanks to this discrepancy between conception and realization, the war policy of a revolutionary state like the Third Reich has of necessity been the policy of petty bourgeois reactionaries. Our generals and diplomats, with a few, rare exceptions, are men of another age; and their methods of waging war and of conducting our foreign policy also belong to an age

that is passed. This is just as true of those who serve us in all good faith as it is of the rest of them. The former serve us ill through lack either of aptitude or enthusiasm, and the latter do so deliberately and of malice aforethought.

Our greatest political blunder has been our treatment of the French. We should never have collaborated with them. It is a policy which has stood them in good stead and has served us ill. Abetz thought he was being very clever when he became the champion of this idea and persuaded us to pursue it. He thought he was two moves ahead of events, whereas in reality he was well behind them. He seemed to think that we were dealing with the France of Napoleon, with a nation, that is, which was capable of appreciating the importance and far-reaching effects of a noble gesture. He failed to see what is an obvious fact, namely, that during the last hundred years France has changed completely. She has become a prostitute, and she is now a raddled old strumpet, who has never ceased to swindle and to confound us, and has always left us to foot the bill.

Our obvious course should have been to liberate the working classes and to help the workers of France to implement their own revolution. We should have brushed aside, rudely and without pity, the fossilized bourgeoisie, as devoid of soul as it is denuded of patriotism. Just look at the sort of friends our geniuses of the Wilhelmstrasse have found for us in France—petty, calculating little profiteers, who hastened to

make love to us as soon as they thought that we were occupying their country in order to safeguard their bank balances—but who were quite resolved to betray us at the first possible opportunity, provided always that no danger to themselves was involved!

We were equally stupid as regards the French colonies. That, too, was the work of our great minds in the Wilhelmstrasse! Diplomats of the old, classic mould, soldiers of a bygone régime, petty country squires—of such were those who were to help us to revolutionize all Europe! And they have led us into waging war as they would have waged it in the nineteenth century. Never, at any price, should we have put our money on France and against the peoples subjected to her yoke. On the contrary, we should have helped them to achieve their liberty and, if necessary, should have goaded them into doing so. There was nothing to stop us in 1940 from making a gesture of this sort in the Near East and in North Africa. In actual fact our diplomats instead set about the task of consolidating French power, not only in Syria, but in Tunis, in Algeria and Morocco as well. Our 'gentlemen' obviously preferred to maintain cordial relations with distinguished Frenchmen, rather than with a lot of hirsute revolutionaries, with a chorus of musical comedy officers, whose one idea was to cheat us, rather than with the Arabs, who would have been loyal partners for us. Oh! you needn't think I don't see through the calculations of these Machiavellian professionals! They know their job and they have

* D.T.: This had been my advice and he ignored it then and paraded it afterwards as if it

their traditions! All they thought about was the dirty trick they were playing on the British, for they were still under the ban of the famous alleged antagonism and rivalry between Britain and France in the colonial field. What I'm saying is perfectly true—they are still living in the reign of Wilhelm II, in the world of Queen Victoria and that of those artful sharpers named Poincaré and Delcassé! In actual fact this rivalry has ceased to be of any significance. That it still seems to exist is due to the fact that there are still some diplomats of the old school in the ranks of our adversaries too. In reality, Britain and France are associates, each of whom is playing his own game with considerable asperity, neither of whom react to any appeal to friendship, but both of whom unite again against a common danger. The Frenchman's deep-seated hatred of the German is something deeper and different. Therein lies a lesson on which we should do well to ponder in the future.

As regards France, there were two courses open to her. Either she could have abandoned her alliance with Britain, in which case she would have been of no interest to us as a potential ally, since we knew that she would also abandon us on the first opportunity; or she could have pretended to make this change of partners, in which case she would have been of even more dubious value to us. On our side, some of the wishful thinking about this country was quite ridiculous. In reality there was only one possible policy to adopt vis-à-vis France—a policy of rigorous and rigid

✓ which was

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distrust, I know I was right about France. With prophetic foresight I gave an accurate picture of France in *Mein Kampf*. And I know perfectly well why, in spite of all the representations that have been made to me, I have seen no reason at all to change the opinions I formed twenty years ago.*

* Hitler was frequently urged to suppress or to change the passage on France in the later editions of his book, *Mein Kampf*, but he consistently refused to do so—even after Munich. It is to this that he is alluding here.

VII

The gravest decision of the war—Peace with Britain not possible till the Red Army had been annihilated—Time works against us—Stalin's blackmail—Settlement with Russia as soon as the weather became fine

15th February 1945

No decision which I have had to make during the course of this war was graver than that to attack Russia. I had always maintained that we ought at all costs to avoid waging war on two fronts, and you may rest assured that I pondered long and anxiously over Napoleon and his experiences in Russia. Why, then, you may ask, this war against Russia, and why at the time that I selected?

We had already given up hope of ending the war by means of a successful invasion of Britain. Furthermore that country, under the guidance of its stupid chiefs, would have refused to recognize the hegemony we had set up in Europe as long as there remained on the Continent a Great Power which was fundamentally

hostile to the Third Reich. The war, then, would have gone on and on, a war in which, behind the British, the Americans would have played an increasingly active role. The importance of the war potential of the United States, the progress made in armaments—both in our own camp and in that of our enemies, the proximity of the English coast—all these things combined to make it highly inadvisable for us to become bogged down in a war of long duration. For Time—and it's always Time, you notice—would have been increasingly against us. In order to persuade Britain to pack up, to compel her to make peace, it was essential to rob her of her hope of being able still to confront us, on the Continent itself, with an adversary of a stature equal to our own. We had no choice, we had at all costs to strike the Russian element out of the European balance sheet. We had another reason, equally valid, for our action—the mortal threat that a Russia in being constituted to our existence. For it was absolutely certain that one day or other she would attack us.

Our one and only chance of vanquishing Russia was to take the initiative, for to fight a defensive war against her was not practical. We dared not allow the Red Army the advantage of the terrain, place our *Autobahns* at the disposal of its swiftly on-rushing armour, and our railways at the disposal of its troops and its supplies. But if we took the offensive, we could, indeed, defeat the Red Army on its own ground, in the swamps and in the vast and muddy

expenses; but in a civilized country we could not have done so. We should simply have been providing it with a spring-board with which to leap upon the whole of Europe and destroy it. C

Why 1941? Because, in view of the steadily increasing power of our western enemies, if we were to act at all, we had to do so with the least possible delay. Nor, mind you, was Stalin doing nothing. On two fronts, time was against us. The real question was not, therefore: 'Why 22 June 1941 already' but rather: 'Why not earlier still?' But for the difficulties created for us by the Italians and their idiotic campaign in Greece, I should have attacked Russia a few weeks earlier. For us, the main problem was to keep the Russians from moving for as long as possible, and my own personal nightmare was the fear that Stalin might take the initiative before me.

Another reason was that the raw materials which the Russians were withholding were essential to us. In spite of their obligations their rate of delivery decreased steadily, and there was a real danger that they might suddenly cease altogether. If they were not prepared to give us of their own free will the things we had to have, then we had no alternative but to go and take them, *in situ* and by force. I came to my decision immediately after Molotov's visit to Berlin in November, for it then became clear to me that sooner or later Stalin would abandon us and go over to the enemy. Ought I to have played for time in order that our preparations could have become more

to P.T. He would wake up with these nightmares. I would soothe him by saying: "You attack first."

conflict. To ensure her abstention, no sacrifices, no presents on our part would have been too great. Had she steadfastly maintained her neutral role, we would have overwhelmed her with our favours. In victory we would have shared with her all the fruits and all the glory. We would have collaborated with all our hearts in the creation of the historic myth of the supremacy of the Italian people, the legitimate sons of the ancient Romans. Indeed, anything would have been preferable to having them as comrades in arms on the field of battle!

Italy's intervention in June 1940, with the sole purpose of aiming a donkey-kick at a French army that was already in process of disintegration, merely had the effect of tarnishing a victory which the vanquished were at the time prepared to accept in a sporting spirit. France recognized that she had been fairly defeated by the armies of the Reich, but she was unwilling to accept defeat at the hands of the Axis.

Our Italian ally has been a source of embarrassment to us everywhere. It was this alliance, for instance, which prevented us from pursuing a revolutionary policy in North Africa. In the nature of things, this territory was becoming an Italian preserve and it was as such that the Duce laid claim to it. Had we been on our own, we could have emancipated the Moslem countries dominated by France; and that would have had enormous repercussions in the Near East, dominated by Britain, and in Egypt. But with our fortunes linked to those of the Italians, the

pursuit of such a policy was not possible. All Islam vibrated at the news of our victories. The Egyptians, the Irakis and the whole of the Near East were all ready to rise in revolt. Just think what we could have done to help them, even to incite them, as would have been both our duty and in our own interest! But the presence of the Italians at our side paralysed us; it created a feeling of *malaise* among our Islamic friends, who inevitably saw in us accomplices, willing or unwilling, of their oppressors. For the Italians in these parts of the world are more bitterly hated, of course, than either the British or the French. The memories of the barbarous reprisals taken against the Senussi are still vivid. Then again the ridiculous pretensions of the Duce to be regarded as The Sword of Islam evokes the same sneering chuckle now as it did before the war. This title, which is fitting for Mahomed and a great conqueror like Omar, Mussolini caused to be conferred on himself by a few wretched brutes whom he had either bribed or terrorized into doing so. We had a great chance of pursuing a splendid policy with regard to Islam. But we missed the bus, as we missed it on several other occasions, thanks to our loyalty to the Italian alliance!

In this theatre of operations, then, the Italians prevented us from playing our best card, the emancipation of the French subjects and the raising of the standard of revolt in the countries oppressed by the British. Such a policy would have aroused the enthusiasm of the whole of Islam. It is a characteristic of the Moslem

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which was always possible, if not probable. From our point of view this means that there would have been a considerable number of British troops, immobile and acquiring neither the experience of battle nor the fillip derived from victory—in short, a sort of 'phoney war', and the longer it continued, the greater would be the advantage that we gained from it.

A war that is prolonged is of benefit to a belligerent in that it gives him the opportunities to learn to wage war. I had hoped to conduct this war without giving the enemy the chance of learning anything new in the art of battle. In Poland and Scandinavia, in Holland, Belgium and France I succeeded. Our victories were swift, were achieved with a minimum of casualties on both sides, but were yet sufficiently clear-cut and decisive to lead to the complete defeat of the enemy.

If the war had remained a war conducted by Germany, and not by the Axis, we should have been in a position to attack Russia by 15th May 1941. Doubly strengthened by the fact that our forces had known nothing but decisive and irrefutable victories, we should have been able to conclude the campaign before winter came. How differently everything has turned out!

Out of gratitude (for I shall never forget the attitude adopted by the Duce at the time of the Anschluss) I have always abstained from criticizing or passing judgment on Italy. I have on the contrary always been at great pains to treat her as an equal. Unfortunately, the laws of nature have shown that it is a mistake to

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treat as equals those who are not your equals. The Duce himself is my equal. He may perhaps even be my superior from the point of view of his ambitions for his people. But it is facts and not ambitions that count.

We Germans do well to remember that in circumstances such as these it is better for us to play a lone hand. We have everything to lose and nothing to gain by binding ourselves closely with more feeble elements and by choosing into the bargain partners who have given all too frequent proof of their fickleness. I have often said that wherever you find Italy, there you will find victory. What I should have said is—wherever you find victory, there, you may be sure, you will find Italy!

Neither my personal affection for the Duce nor my instinctive feelings of friendship for the Italian people have changed. But I do blame myself for not having listened to the voice of reason, which bade me to be ruthless in my friendship for Italy. And I could have done so, both to the personal advantage of the Duce himself and to the advantage of his people. I realize, of course, that such an attitude on my part would have offended him and that he would never have forgiven me. But as a result of my forbearance things have happened which should not have happened and which may well prove fatal. Life does not forgive weakness.

* D.T.'s voice

XI

A cast-iron excuse for Roosevelt—Nothing could have prevented the entry of the U.S.A. into the war—The Yellow Peril obsession—Solidarity with the Japanese

18th February 1945

Japan's entry into the war caused us no misgivings, even though it was obvious that the Japanese had made a present of a cast-iron pretext to Roosevelt for bringing in the United States against us. But Roosevelt, urged on by Jewry, was already quite resolved to go to war and annihilate National Socialism, and he had no need of any pretexts. Such pretexts as were required to overcome the resistance of the isolationists he was quite capable of fabricating for himself. One more little swindle meant nothing to him.

The magnitude of the Pearl Harbour disaster was, I am sure, balm to his soul. It was exactly what he wanted in order to be able to drag his countrymen into a total war and to annihilate the last remnants of

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opposition in his own country. He had done all in his power to provoke the Japanese. It was only a repetition, on a vaster scale, of the tactics employed with such success by Wilson at the time of the first war: the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*, provoked with diabolical skill, prepared the Americans psychologically for the entry of their country into the war against Germany. Since the intervention of the United States could not be prevented in 1917, it is obvious that their intervention now, twenty-five years later, was both a logical premise and unavoidable.

It was only in 1915 that World Jewry decided to place the whole of its resources at the disposal of the Allies. But in our case, Jewry decided as early as 1933, at the very birth of the Third Reich, tacitly to declare war on us. Furthermore the influence wielded by the Jews in the United States has consistently and steadily increased during the last quarter of a century. And since the entry of the United States into the war was quite inevitable, it was a slice of great good fortune for us to have at our side an ally of such great worth as Japan. But it was also a slice of great good fortune for the Jews. It gave them the chance they had so long been seeking to implicate the United States directly in the conflict, and it was a master stroke on their part to have succeeded in dragging the Americans unanimously and enthusiastically into their war. The Americans, mindful of their disillusionment in 1919, were by no means anxious once again to intervene in a European war. On the other hand

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they were more obsessed than ever with the idea of the Yellow Peril. Trying to teach the Jews a trick or two is like carrying coals to Newcastle, and you can be quite sure that all their plans are conceived with Machiavellian astuteness. I myself am quite convinced that in the case we are discussing they took a very long view which envisaged the overthrow by a white Power of the Empire of the Rising Sun, which had risen to the status of a world Power and which had always sternly resisted contamination by the race of Jewry.

For us, Japan will always remain an ally and a friend. This war will teach us to appreciate and respect her more than ever. It will encourage us to draw more tightly the bonds which unite our two countries. It is of course regrettable that the Japanese did not enter the war against Russia and at the same time as ourselves. Had they done so, Stalin's armies would not now be besieging Breslau or squatting in Budapest. We should have liquidated Bolshevism by the time winter came, and Roosevelt would have hesitated to take on adversaries as powerful as our two selves. In the same way I am sorry that Japan did not capture Singapore as early as 1940, immediately after the defeat of France. The United States was then on the eve of a presidential election and would have found it impossible to intervene. That, then, was one of the turning points of the war.

In spite of everything, we and the Japanese will

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remain staunchly side by side. We will conquer or die together. Should we be the first to succumb, I can't see the Russians continuing to maintain the myth of 'Asiatic solidarity' for the sake of Japan!

XII

We should have occupied Gibraltar in 1940—Congenital weakness of the Latin countries—The British duped by the French—Misunderstandings with the Duce—The disastrous campaign in Greece

20th February 1945

Taking advantage of the enthusiasm we had aroused in Spain and the shock to which we had subjected Britain, we ought to have attacked Gibraltar in the summer of 1940, immediately after the defeat of France.

At that time, however, the awkward thing was that it would have been difficult to prevent Spain entering into the war on our side—and particularly so as we had failed, a few weeks previously, from preventing Italy from flying to the rescue of our victory.

These Latin countries bring us no luck. Their overweening conceit is in direct proportion to their weakness, and that always confuses the issue. We failed entirely to curb the Italians' desire to shine on

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the field of battle, even though we had shown ourselves willing to confer upon them an honours degree for heroism, to bestow upon them all the fruits of military glory and all the advantages accruing from a war that has been won—provided always that they took no part in it at all.

Telling to Benito

The British, of course, were duped even more completely by their Latin ally than we were. Chamberlain, obviously, would never have declared war, had he realized the full extent of French demoralization and inadequacy. For the British undoubtedly expected France to bear the whole brunt of the land campaign on the Continent. For Chamberlain nothing would have been easier than to shed a few crocodile's tears for Poland and then to have left us to carve the country up at our leisure.

To material weakness the Latin countries add a quite fantastic pretentiousness. Friendly Italy or hostile France—it makes no odds. The weakness of both of them will have been equally fatal to us.

The only disagreements that have ever occurred between the Duce and myself arose from the precautions which from time to time I had felt constrained to take. In spite of the complete confidence I had in him personally, I felt compelled to keep him in ignorance of my intentions in any case where indiscretion might have prejudiced our interests. Just as I had complete confidence in Mussolini, he had complete confidence in Ciano—and he, of course, had no secrets from the pretty ladies who fluttered like

butterflies around him. That we know to our cost, and as the enemy were anxious for information regardless of costs, they learnt a goodly number of secrets through this channel. I had good reasons, therefore, for not telling the Duce everything. I am only sorry that he did not appreciate the fact, that he resented my attitude and paid me back in my own coin.

There's no doubt about it—we have no luck with the Latin races! While I was occupied, first in Montoire, buttoning up a futile policy of collaboration with France, and then in Hendaye, where I had to submit to receiving fulsome honours at the hands of a false friend, a third Latin—and one, this time, who really was a friend—took advantage of my preoccupation to set in motion his disastrous campaign against Greece.

XIII

Third Reich's need of peace to consolidate—Abstract man and the Utopian doctrines—National Socialism a realistic doctrine, applicable only to Germany—Had war occurred in 1938, it would have been a local war—What would have happened—a double coup for the West

21st February 1945

We had need of peace in order to carry out our programme. I always desired to maintain peace. We have been jockeyed into war at the desire of our enemies. In practice, the threat of war has existed ever since January 1933, from the time that I came to power.

On the one hand, there are the Jews and all those who march in step with them. On the other, there are those who adopt a realistic attitude towards world affairs. And throughout history we have had these two families of wholly irreconcilable outlook in the world.

On the one hand, there are those who strive for the

happiness of mankind in the abstract and who pursue the chimera of a formula applicable all the world over. On the other, there are the realists. National Socialism is interested only in the happiness of the German race and strives only to secure the wellbeing of the German man.

The universalists, the idealists, the Utopians all aim too high. They give promises of an unattainable paradise, and by doing so they deceive mankind. Whatever label they wear, whether they call themselves Christians, Communists, humanitarians, whether they are merely sincere but stupid or wire-pullers and cynics, they are all makers of slaves. I myself have always kept my eye fixed on a paradise which, in the nature of things, lies well within our reach. I mean an improvement in the lot of the German people.

I have restricted myself to making promises that I knew I could keep and that I had every intention of keeping. Hence the universal hatred which I have aroused. By refusing to make impossible promises, as do our enemies, I was not playing the game. I was holding myself aloof from the syndicate of the world's leaders, whose aim, unavowed but tacitly accepted, is the exploitation of human credulity.

The National Socialist doctrine, as I have always proclaimed, is not for export. It was conceived for the German people. All the objectives at which it aims are, of necessity, limited—but attainable. It follows, then, that I can put as little credence in the idea of universal peace as in that of universal war.

It was on the eve of Munich that I realized beyond doubt that the enemies of the Third Reich were determined to have our hide at all costs and that there was no possibility of coming to terms with them. When that arch capitalist bourgeois, Chamberlain, with his deceptive umbrella in his hand, put himself to the trouble of going all the way to the Berghof to discuss matters with that upstart, Hitler, he knew very well that he really intended to wage ruthless war against us. He was quite prepared to tell me anything which he thought might serve to lull my suspicions. His one and only object in undertaking this trip was to gain time. What we ought then to have done was to have struck at once. We ought to have gone to war in 1938. It was the last chance we had of localizing the war.

But they gave way all along the line and, like the poltroons that they are, ceded to all our demands. Under such conditions it was very difficult to seize the initiative and commence hostilities. At Munich we lost a unique opportunity of easily and swiftly winning a war that was in any case inevitable.

Although we were ourselves not fully prepared, we were nevertheless better prepared than the enemy. September 1938 would have been the most favourable date. And what a chance we had to limit the conflict.

We ought then and there to have settled our disputes by force of arms and disregarded the inclination of our opponents to meet all our demands. When we solved the Sudeten question by force we liquidated Czechoslovakia at the same time—and left all the

* *Waken up in the middle of the night.
* They tricked me, they gyped me.*

XIV

The tragedy of war with America—Contribution by Germans to America's greatness—The failure of the New Deal and the war—Possibility of peaceful co-existence between Germany and U.S.A.—The Americans will become anti-Jew—Roosevelt, a false idol—No colonial ventures, but a grand Continental policy

24th February 1945

This war against America is a tragedy. It is illogical and devoid of any foundation of reality.

It is one of those queer twists of history that just as I was assuming power in Germany, Roosevelt, the elect of the Jews, was taking command in the United States. Without the Jews and without this lackey of theirs, things could have been quite different. For from every point of view Germany and the United States should have been able, if not to understand each other and sympathize with each other, then at least to support each other without undue strain on either of

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them. Germany, remember, has made a massive contribution to the peopling of America. It is we Germans who have made by far the greatest contribution of Nordic blood to the United States. And it is also a fact that Steuben played a part which decided the issue in the War of Independence.

The last great economic crisis struck Germany and the United States at more or less the same time and with the same force. Both countries rode the storm in much the same way. The operation, though extremely difficult, was crowned with success on our side. In America, where, after all, it presented no difficulty at all, the operation achieved only a very mediocre success under the guidance of Roosevelt and his Jewish advisers. The failure of the New Deal is responsible in no small measure for their war fever. The United States as a matter of fact could survive and prosper in a state of economic isolation; for us, that is a dream which we would love to see come true. They have at their disposal a vast territory, ample to absorb the energies of all their people. As far as Germany is concerned, my hope is one day to ensure for her complete economic independence inside a territory of a size compatible with her population. A great people has need of broad acres.

Germany expects nothing from the United States, and the latter have nothing to fear from Germany. Everything combines to ensure the possibility of peaceful co-existence, each in his own country and all in perfect harmony. Unfortunately, the whole business

is ruined by the fact that world Jewry has chosen just that country in which to set up its most powerful bastion. That, and that alone, has altered the relations between us and has poisoned everything.

I am prepared to wager that well within twenty-five years the Americans themselves will have realized what a handicap has been imposed upon them by this parasitic Jewry, clamped fast to their flesh and nourishing itself on their life-blood. It is this Jewry that is dragging them into adventures which, when all is said and done, are no concern of theirs and in which the interests at stake are of no importance to them. What possible reason can the non-Jewish Americans have for sharing the hatreds of the Jews and following meekly in their footsteps? One thing is quite certain—within a quarter of a century the Americans will either have become violently anti-semitic or they will be devoured by Jewry.

If we should lose this war, it will mean that we have been defeated by the Jews. Their victory will then be complete. But let me hasten to add that it will only be very temporary. It will certainly not be Europe which takes up the struggle again against them, but it certainly will be the United States. The latter is a country still too young to have acquired the maturity conferred by age and exaggeratedly lacking in political sense. For the Americans, everything has so far been ridiculously easy. But experience and difficulties will perhaps cause them to mature. Just think for a moment what they were when their country was born

* best the
Daily Double here.

—a group of individuals come from all corners of the earth hastening forward in pursuit of fortune and finding at their disposal a vast continent to appease their hunger and all theirs for the taking. National conscience is a thing which develops very gradually, especially in vast territories such as these. Nor must it be forgotten that these individuals had been drawn from a variety of races and had not yet been fused by the bonds of a national spirit. What an easy prey for the Jews!

The excesses in which the Jews indulged in our country are as nothing in comparison with the excesses in which they have indulged and in which they will continue to indulge in ever increasing measure on their new hunting grounds. It will not be very long before the Americans realize that the Roosevelt whom they have adored is an idol with feet of clay and that this Jew-ridden man is in reality a malefactor—both from the point of view of the United States and of humanity as a whole. He has dragged them along a path on which they had no business to be, and in particular he has forced them to take an active part in a conflict that does not concern them at all. Had they possessed even a minimum of political instinct they would have remained in their splendid isolation, content in this conflict to play the role of arbiter. Had they been a little more mature and a little more experienced, they would doubtless have realized that their best course in their own major interests would have been to have entrenched themselves firmly with

* this is the underside of the
American isolationism in the
Atlantic and the Pacific

XV

The Germans always, inevitably, in a hurry—Time fights on Russia's side—A people with a tragic past—Not the work of one man, or even of a generation—Germans have never ceased to fight for their existence

25th February 1945

It is a fact that we always bungle everything through being forced to act in a hurry. With us, to act swiftly is always to act with precipitation. To acquire the gift of patience, we should have both time and space, and at the moment we have neither. The Russians are lucky in possessing both, quite apart from that inclination towards placidity which is a characteristic trait of the Slav temperament.

Furthermore, thanks to the Marxist religion, they have everything required to make them patient. They have been promised happiness on earth (a feature which distinguishes Marxism from the Christian

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religion)—but in the future. The Jew, Mardochee Marx, like the good Jew that he was, was awaiting the coming of the Messiah. He has placed the Messiah conception in a setting of historic materialism by asserting that terrestrial happiness is a factor in an almost endless process of evolution. 'Happiness is within your reach,' he says, 'that I promise you. But you must let evolution take its course and not try to hurry matters.' Mankind always falls for a specious trick of that sort. . . . Lenin did not have the time, but Stalin will carry on the good work, and so on and so on...Marxism is a very powerful force. But how shall we assess Christianity, that false leadership has Judaised to the extent that it will no longer fight the Anti-Christ Jew? Believe me, it is incomparably stronger!

I myself am fated to being compelled to try to accomplish everything in the short space of a human lifetime. To help me I have but a realistic idealism, based on tangible facts, from which flows promises that can certainly be fulfilled, but which forbids me to promise the moon. Where others have all eternity at their disposal, I have but a few short, miserable years. Those others know that they will be succeeded by yet others who will carry on where they left off, ploughing with precision exactly the same furrow with exactly the same plough. I have now reached the stage where I wonder whether among my immediate successors there will be found a man predestined to

* Achad always thought of himself as irreplaceable. I had confirmed it.

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raise and carry on the torch, when it has slipped from my hand.

It has also been my fate to be the servant of a people with so tragic a past, a people so unstable, so versatile as the German people, and a people who go, according to circumstances, from one extreme to the other. From my own point of view, the ideal thing would have been, firstly, to ensure the future existence of the German people, then to form a youth imbued deeply with the National Socialist doctrine—and then to have left it to the generations of the future to wage the inevitable war, unless, of course, our enemies recoiled when they found themselves faced with the newly acquired might of the German people. In this way, Germany would have been well equipped both materially and morally. She would have at her disposal an administration, a foreign policy and an army all moulded from infancy in the principles of National Socialism. The task I have undertaken of raising the German people to the place in the world that is their due is unfortunately not a task that can be accomplished by a single man or in a single generation. But I have at least opened their eyes to their inherent greatness and I have inspired them to exaltation at the thought of the union of Germans in one great indestructible Reich. I have sown the good seed. I have made the German people realize the significance of the struggle they are waging for their very existence.

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One day the harvest will come, and nothing on earth will be able to prevent it from coming. The German people is a young and strong people, a people with its future before it.

XVI

Churchill's lack of appreciation—The irreparable could have been avoided—Essentiality of forestalling Russian attack—Italy prevents the opening of the campaign in good time—Catastrophic consequences of the delay—My illusion of a possible *entente* with Stalin

26th February 1945

In actual fact, my decision to settle the issue with Russia by force of arms was taken as soon as I became convinced that Britain was determined to remain stubborn. Churchill was quite unable to appreciate the sporting spirit of which I had given proof by refraining from creating an irreparable breach between the British and ourselves. We did, indeed, refrain from annihilating them at Dunkirk. We ought to have been able to make them realize that the acceptance by them of the German hegemony established in Europe, a state of affairs to the implementation of which they had always been opposed, but which

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I had implemented without any trouble, would bring them inestimable advantages.

Even by the end of July, one month, that is, after the defeat of France, I realized that peace was once again eluding our grasp. A few weeks later I knew that we should not succeed in invading Britain before the advent of the autumnal gales because we had not succeeded in acquiring complete command of the air. In other words, I realized that we should never succeed in invading Britain.

The attitude of the Russians during the summer of 1940, the fact that they had absorbed the Baltic States and Bessarabia while we ourselves were busy in the west left me with no illusions regarding their intentions. And even if I had retained any, Molotov's visit in November would have been sufficient to dissipate them. The proposals which Stalin submitted to me after the return of his Minister did not deceive me. Stalin, that incomparable and imperturbable black-mailer, was trying to gain time in order to consolidate his advanced bases in Finland and the Balkans. He was trying to play cat and mouse with us.

The tragedy, from my point of view, was the fact that I could not attack before 15th May, and if I were to succeed in my first initial onslaught, it was essential that I should not attack later than that date. Stalin, however, could have launched his attack much earlier. Throughout the winter of 1940, and even more so in the spring of 1941, I was haunted by the obsession that the Russians might take the offensive. In the

event, the Italian defeats in Albania and in Cyrenaica had roused a minor storm of revolt in the Balkans. Indirectly, they also struck a blow at the belief in our invincibility, that was held by friend and foe alike.

This alone was the cause of Yugoslavia's *volte-face*, an event that compelled us to drag the Balkans into the war; and that was something which at all costs I had desired to avoid. For once we had become involved in that direction we might well have been tempted to go still further ahead. I need hardly say that in the spring of 1941 we could rapidly have liberated the Near East with only a small fraction of the forces which we were about to employ against Russia. But to have removed the necessary forces from their place in our order of battle at that juncture would have been to incur the indirect danger of giving Russia a signal to attack. They would have done so in the summer, or at the latest in the autumn, and under conditions so disastrous from our point of view, that we could never have hoped to win the day.

Where the Jew-ridden democracies are concerned, the Russians have the patience of an elephant. They know with absolute certainty that sooner or later and without recourse to war, they will succeed in establishing dominion over them, thanks to the internal dissensions that rend them, the succession of economic crises from which they seem unable to escape and the powerful lure of Marxism to which they are particularly vulnerable. But they also know that in the case of the Third Reich the situation is very different. They

know that in every field of endeavour, and more so in peace than in war, we shall everywhere outclass them.

The explanation of this patience which the Russians exhibit is to be found in their philosophy, which allows them to avoid taking risks and to wait—a year, a generation, a century, if necessary—until the time is ripe for the implementation of their plans. Time means nothing to them. Marxism, certainly, has promised them a paradise on earth—but certainly not today, not even tomorrow, but some time in the dim, indefinite future.

Notwithstanding this patience which is the backbone of their power, the Russians could not stand idly aside and watch the destruction of Great Britain, for in that case, with the United States and Japan cancelling each other out, as it were, the Russians would find themselves face to face with us—and alone. And that would mean without any doubt that, at a time and a place of our choice, the long-outstanding issue between us would be settled in our favour.

If I felt compelled to decide to settle my accounts with Bolshevism by force of arms, and, indeed, arrived at my decision on the very anniversary of the signing of the Moscow pact, I have every right to believe that Stalin had come to the same decision even before he signed the pact.

For a whole year I adhered to the hope that an *entente*, at least honestly sincere if not unreservedly friendly, could be established between the Third Reich and Stalin's Russia. I imagined that after fifteen years

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of power Stalin, the realist, would have rid himself of the nebulous Marxist ideology and that he was preserving it merely as a poison reserved exclusively for external use. The brutal manner in which he decapitated the Jewish intelligentsia, who had rendered him such signal service in the destruction of Tsarist Russia, encouraged me in that belief. I presumed that he did not wish to give these same Jewish intellectuals the chance of bringing about the downfall of the totalitarian empire which he had built—that Stalinist empire which, in all its essentials, is only the spiritual successor to the empire of Peter the Great.

In a spirit of implacable realism on both sides we could have created a situation in which a durable entente would have been possible—by defining precisely the zones of influence to be attributed to each party, by rigorously restricting our collaboration to the field of economics and in such a manner that both parties would have derived benefits therefrom. An *entente*, in short, watched over by an eagle eye and with a finger on the trigger!

* Dr. K. D. matter how he hated, feared and detested Stalin, he always felt obliged to tell him, to repeat him, to love him as a man—Stalin knew how to deal with the Jews

XVII

Europe's last chance—Napoleon and winning the peace—Napoleon's agony and mine—Britain always bars our way—Those who thrive on discord in Europe

26th February 1945

I have been Europe's last hope. She proved incapable of refashioning herself by means of voluntary reform. She showed herself impervious to charm and persuasion. To take her I had to use violence.

Europe can be built only on a foundation of ruins. Not material ruins, but on ruins of vested interests and economic coalitions, of mental rigidity and perverse prejudice, of outmoded idiosyncrasy and narrow-mindedness. Europe must be fashioned in the common interest of all and without regard for individuals. Napoleon understood that perfectly.

I, perhaps better than anyone else, can well imagine the torments suffered by Napoleon, longing, as he was,

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for the triumph of peace and yet compelled to continue waging war, without ceasing and without seeing any prospect of ceasing—and still persisting in the hope eternal of at last achieving peace. Since the summer of 1940 I have myself been suffering the same torments. And always it has been this Britain who barred Europe's way to prosperity. But now she is aged and enfeebled, though not less vicious and wicked. Finally, she is being supported in this negative and unnatural attitude by the United States, themselves inspired and urged on by the whole forces of international Jewry, which has flourished and hopes long to continue to flourish as the result of our dissensions.

XVIII

A defeat which must inevitably be complete—The Reich hacked to pieces by the conquerors—A Germany in transition—The resurrection of eternal Germany—Lines of conduct for the faithful—The premier people on the Continent—Britain and Italy, if only . . .—A France degenerate and implacably hostile—Waiting for the rise of the African and Asiatic peoples—The U.S.A. and Russia face to face—A Russia rid of Marxism—The frailty of the American colossus—The rights of famished peoples—The chances of survival for a courageous people

2nd April 1945

If we are destined to be beaten in this war, our defeat will be utter and complete. Our enemies have proclaimed their objectives in a manner which leaves us no illusions as to their intentions. Jews, Russian Bolsheviks and the pack of jackals that follows, yelping at their heels—we know that none of them will lay aside their arms until they have destroyed and annihilated National Socialist Germany and reduced it to a heap of rubble. In a ghastly conflict like this,

Aug '45

German atom bomb by 1947, but certainly we could not beat the Americans, whose bomb was ready by August 1945. And on the other hand the consumption of our latest reserves of chromium ore would have ended the war by January 1, 1946, at the very latest.

Thus, from the start of my work as Minister of Armaments I discovered blunder after blunder, in all departments of the economy. Incongruously enough, Hitler himself used to say, during those war years: "The loser of this war will be the side that makes the greatest blunders." For Hitler, by a succession of wrong-headed decisions, helped to speed the end of a war already lost because of productive capacities—for example, by his confused planning of the air war against England, by the shortage of U-boats at the beginning of the war, and, in general, by his failure to develop an overall plan for the war. So that when many German memoirs comment on Hitler's decisive mistakes, the writers are completely right. But all that does not mean that the war could have been won.

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Jan 1945

Nauheim, a mile northwest of Ziegenberg. Hidden in woods, camouflaged as blockhouses, the bunkers had the same massive ceilings and walls as all the other places at which Hitler stayed.

Three times since my appointment as a minister I had tried to deliver my New Year's wishes to Hitler personally, and each time something thwarted my intention. In 1943 it had been the icing of an airplane, in 1944 motor damage on the flight from the coast of the Arctic Ocean when I was returning from the front.

Two hours of this year of 1945 had passed when I at last, after passing through many barriers, arrived in Hitler's private bunker. I had not come too late: adjutants, doctors, secretaries, Bormann—the whole circle except for the generals attached to the Fuehrer's headquarters, were gathered around Hitler drinking champagne. The alcohol had relaxed everyone, but the atmosphere was still subdued. Hitler seemed to be the only one in the company who was drunk without having taken any stimulating beverage. He was in the grip of a permanent euphoria.

Although the beginning of a new year in no way dispelled the desperate situation of the year past, there seemed to be a general feeling of thankfulness that we could begin anew at least on the calendar. Hitler made optimistic forecasts for 1945. The present low point would soon be overcome, he said; in the end we would be victorious. The circle took these prophecies in silence. Only Bormann enthusiastically seconded Hitler. After more than two hours, during which Hitler spread around his credulous optimism, his followers, including myself, were transported in spite of all their skepticism into a more sanguine state. His magnetic gifts were still operative. For it was no longer possible to produce conviction by rational arguments. We ought to have come to our senses when Hitler drew the parallel between our situation and that of Frederick the Great at the end of the Seven Years' War, for the implication was that we faced utter military defeat.⁴ But none of us drew this conclusion.

Three days later, in a grand conference with Keitel, Bormann, and Goebbels, we were given a further dose of unrealistic hopes. Now a *levée en masse* was to bring about the turnaround. Goebbels became insulting when I spoke up against this; I argued that total conscription would strike our remaining programs to such an extent that it would be equivalent to the total collapse of whole industries.⁶ Dismayed and indignant, Goebbels stared at me. Then, turning to Hitler, he cried

out solemnly: "Then, loss of the war for the don't you say yes for we all stood there free favor of Goebbels and"

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* *Führerprotokoll*, Jan tested to Hitler that Hi interfering with the syste try. When he heard the placed.

Jan 24, 1945

low, my liaison man to that night. The previous that since the Ruhr had the loss of Upper Silesia ic collapse. In a teletype Hitler's attention to the mission to ship "at least on" to Schörner's army

support Guderian, who ie offensive efforts in the armored forces into the pointed out that the Rus- asks in close formation, snowy landscape. Since s in the West is yielding o apply this weapon con- cealed." Below reported are my remark was to titler think that his real with, let alone sympathy y earlier remarks of his nse and which might be ime.

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eslau Gauleiter, showed g by the great architect d. "The Russians will emotionally. "I'd rather sisted. He didn't give a

damn about Breslau if it were about to fall into the enemy's hands, he said. But finally I succeeded in convincing him of the artistic importance of at least this building and in talking him out of his vandalism.*

Back in Berlin, I tried to show Hitler some of the innumerable photos I had taken during my trip of the miseries of the refugees. I had the vague hope that the pictures of these fugitives—women, children, and old men, trudging painfully toward a wretched fate in the bitter cold—might stir Hitler to pity. I thought I might be able to persuade him at least to stem the advance of the Russians by sending some troops from the West. But when I presented the pictures to Hitler, he roughly pushed them aside. It was impossible to tell whether they no longer interested him or affected him too deeply.

On January 24, 1945, Guderian sought out Foreign Minister Ribbentrop. He explained the military situation to him and declared bluntly that the war was lost. Ribbentrop hemmed and hawed, and tried to slide out of the affair by informing Hitler at once, with an expression of astonishment, that the chief of staff had formed his own opinion of the military situation. Two hours later at the situation conference Hitler spluttered that any defeatist statements of this sort would be punished with the greatest severity. Each of his assistants, he said, was at liberty to speak to him directly. "I most emphatically forbid generalizations and conclusions in regard to the whole situation. That remains my affair. In the future anyone who tells anyone else that the war is lost will be treated as a traitor, with all the consequences for him and his family. I will take action without regard to rank and prestige!"

No one dared say a word. We had listened silently; just as silently we left the room. From now on an additional guest frequently appeared at the situation conferences. He kept in the background, but his presence alone was exceedingly effective. He was Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the Gestapo chief.

* But not for long: A few months later he waged the battle of Breslau without regard for human lives or historic buildings and even had his old friend, the mayor, Dr. Spielhagen, publicly hanged. Then, as I heard from the designer Flettner, shortly before the surrender of Breslau he flew out of the besieged city in one of the few existing prototype helicopters.

Jan 30, 1945

In view of Hitler's threats and his increasing unpredictability, on January 27, 1945, I sent the three hundred most important members of my Industry Organization a concluding report on our armaments work during the past three years. I also called together my former associates in my architectural work and asked them to collect photographs of our designs and store them in safe places. I had little time to spare, nor did I want to bare my feelings and my cares to them. But they understood: This was my farewell to the past.

On January 30, 1945, I had von Below, my liaison officer, hand Hitler a memorandum. By sheer chance, the date it bore was the twelfth anniversary of his taking power. Realistically, I declared that the war was over in the area of heavy industry and armaments and, given this situation, food, household heating, and electricity should have priority over tanks, airplane motors, and ammunition.

To finally dampen Hitler's wild dreams of future armaments achievements in 1945, I included a chart of the scanty production of tanks, ordnance, and ammunition to be expected in the next three months. The memorandum concluded: "After the loss of Upper Silesia, the German armaments industry will no longer be able even approximately to cover the requirements of the front for ammunition, ordnance, and tanks. . . . From now on the material preponderance of the enemy can no longer be compensated for by the bravery of our soldiers." Hitler had again and again asserted that our lacks would be balanced out by miracles of courage from the moment the German soldier was fighting on German soil for the possession of his native land. My memorandum was intended as a reply to this theory.

After receiving this memorandum, Hitler ignored me and even pretended not to notice my presence during the situation conference. But on February 1 he finally summoned me, ordering that Saur come along also. After everything that had passed I was prepared for an unpleasant clash. But the very fact that he received us in his private study in the Chancellery residence indicated that I was not a candidate for the punishment he had threatened for "defeatism." He did not make Saur and me stand, as was his habit when he wanted to show his anger, but very pleasantly offered us the upholstered easy chairs. Then, he turned to Saur, his voice sounding tense. He seemed constrained; I sensed an embarrassed attempt simply to overlook my opposition and to talk about the everyday problems of armaments

manufacture. In a deterrability of the next few factors, tried to offset Hitler's optimism did not so casts had quite often pr the enemy rarely proceed tions were based.

I sat by sulkily, without toward the end that Hitler to let me know your estimation to convey such information permitted to give anyone your last paragraph"—at—"you cannot write that yourself the trouble of conclusions I draw from very softly, without any between his teeth. The effort more dangerous than one could easily be taken back hearing Hitler's last words was curt to me, cordial to

On January 30, I had memorandum to six departments formally with Hitler's order told Guderian and other safe unread.

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Saur writhed like an statement, but he did finish at our next conference

Jan 1945

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manufacture. In a determinedly calm manner he discussed the possibilities of the next few months. Saur, by mentioning favorable factors, tried to offset the depressing tone of my memorandum. Hitler's optimism did not seem entirely unfounded. After all, my forecasts had quite often proved mistaken during the past years, since the enemy rarely proceeded with the consistency on which my calculations were based.

I sat by sulkily, without participating in the dialogue. It was only toward the end that Hitler turned to me: "You are perfectly entitled to let me know your estimate of the armaments situation, but I forbid you to convey such information to anyone else. You are also not permitted to give anyone a copy of this memorandum. But as for your last paragraph"—at this point his voice became cool and cutting—"you cannot write that sort of thing to me. You might have spared yourself the trouble of such conclusions. You are to leave to me the conclusions I draw from the armaments situation." He said all this very softly, without any sign of excitement, whistling somewhat between his teeth. The effect was not only much more definite but far more dangerous than one of his furies, for whatever he said in a rage could easily be taken back next day. Here, I felt quite distinctly, I was hearing Hitler's last word on the subject. Then he dismissed us. He was curt to me, cordial to Saur.

On January 30, I had already had Poser send out six copies of the memorandum to six departments of the army General Staff. To comply formally with Hitler's order, I asked to have these returned. Hitler told Guderian and others that he had placed the memorandum in the safe unread.

I promptly began preparing still another report. Saur, I knew, basically shared my views of the armaments situation. I decided that this time Saur was to write and sign the report, that this was the only way to make him declare himself. It indicates my nervousness at the time that I had our conference take place secretly in Bernau where Dieter Stahl, who was in charge of our ammunition production, owned a factory. Each of the participants at this conference agreed that Saur must be made to send in a report which echoed my declaration of bankruptcy.

Saur writhed like an eel. He would not venture as far as a written statement, but he did finally agree to confirm my pessimistic forecast at our next conference with Hitler. But the next meeting with Hitler

Early 1945

ran its usual course. As soon as I finished my report, Saur began trying to balance out the somber note I had struck. He spoke of a recent consultation with Messerschmitt and drew some first sketches of a new four-motored jet bomber from his briefcase. Although building a plane with a range sufficient to reach New York would have taken years even under normal conditions, Hitler and Saur went into raptures over the dire psychological effects of an air raid upon the skyscraper canyons of New York.

During February and March of 1945, Hitler occasionally hinted that he was contacting the enemy by various means, but he would never go into details. My impression was that he was trying to create an atmosphere of utter irreconcilability which left no roads open. At the time of the Yalta Conference, I heard him giving instructions to Lorenz, the press secretary. He was dissatisfied with the reaction of the German newspapers and demanded a sharper, more aggressive tone: "Those warmongers in Yalta must be denounced—so insulted and attacked that they will have no chance to make an offer to the German people. Under no circumstances must there be an offer. That gang only wants to separate the German people from their leadership. I've always said: Surrender is absolutely out of the question!" He hesitated: "History is not going to be repeated!" In his last radio address Hitler took up this idea and assured "these other statesmen once and for all that every attempt to influence National Socialist Germany by empty phrases of the Wilsonian type presumes a naïveté that is foreign to present-day Germany." The only one who could release him from his duty of uncompromisingly representing the interests of his people, he continued, was he who had appointed him. He meant the "Almighty," to whom he repeatedly alluded in this speech.⁷

During the years of military victory Hitler had associated largely with the circle of generals around him. With the approaching end of his rule he visibly withdrew into that intimate clique of old party members with whom he had launched out on his career. Night after night he sat with Goebbels, Ley, and Bormann for a few hours. No one was admitted to these gatherings; no one knew what they were talking about, whether they were reminiscing about their beginnings or talking about the end and what would come after it. I listened in vain for at least a single feeling remark about the future of the de-

* D.T. - By whom, of course, he meant me

feated nation. They grasped vaguest signs of a turning point regard the fate of the entire own. "We will leave nothing and Russians"—this was the matter. Hitler agreed, although radical terms as Goebbels, later it turned out that Hitler While the others were talk pose of statesmanship, but it in the foundation of the nation

At a situation conference catastrophic picture of inner I drew Doenitz aside: "Some

Doenitz replied with unwarranted resent the navy. The rest is know what he is doing."

It is significant that the general, facing a Hitler never considered taking any long since become corrupt from the day the war broke who saw, realistically and yet which Hitler had wrought by second man in the state, he derian, and me in presently demanded to know his plan been forced to declare him from confrontations of this afford to give up this fiction

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Fols. 1945

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feated nation. They grasped at every straw, made much of even the vaguest signs of a turning point; yet they were in no way prepared to regard the fate of the entire nation as nearly so important as their own. "We will leave nothing but a desert to the Americans, English, and Russians"—this was the standard close to any discussion of the matter. Hitler agreed, although he did not express himself in such radical terms as Goebbels, Bormann, and Ley. Actually, a few weeks later it turned out that Hitler was more radical than any of them. While the others were talking, he concealed his attitude behind a pose of statesmanship, but it was he who issued the orders for smashing the foundation of the nation's existence.

At a situation conference early in February the maps showed the catastrophic picture of innumerable breakthroughs and encirclements. I drew Doenitz aside: "Something must be done, you know."

Doenitz replied with unwonted curttness: "I am here only to represent the navy. The rest is none of my business. The Fuehrer must know what he is doing."

It is significant that the group who gathered day after day around the map table, facing a Hitler who sat there exhausted and obstinate, never considered taking any joint action. Undoubtedly Goering had long since become corrupt and increasingly unnerved. Nevertheless, from the day the war broke out he had been one of the few persons who saw, realistically and without illusions, the fundamental change which Hitler had wrought by bringing on the war. If Goering, as the second man in the state, had joined with Keitel, Jodl, Doenitz, Gu-derian, and me in presenting Hitler with an ultimatum, if we had demanded to know his plans for ending the war, Hitler would have been forced to declare himself. But Hitler had always shied away from confrontations of this sort. And now he could less than ever afford to give up this fiction of a unanimous leadership.

Around the middle of February, I called on Goering one evening in Karinhall. I had discovered from studying the military map that he had concentrated his parachute division around his hunting estate. For a long time he had been made the scapegoat for all the failures of the Luftwaffe. At the situation conferences Hitler habitually denounced him in the most violent and insulting language before the assembled officers. He must have been even nastier in the scenes he had with Goering privately. Often, waiting in the anteroom, I could hear Hitler shouting at him.

Febr. 1945

That evening in Karinhall, I established a certain intimacy with Goering for the first and only time. Goering had an excellent Rothschild-Lafite served at the fireplace and ordered the servant not to disturb us. Candidly, I described my disappointment with Hitler. Just as candidly, Goering replied that he well understood me and that he often felt much the same. However, he said, it was easier for me, since I had joined Hitler a great deal later and could free myself from him all the sooner. He, Goering, had much closer ties with Hitler; many years of common experiences and struggles had bound them together—and he could no longer break loose.

A few days later Hitler shifted the parachute division concentrated around Karinhall to the front south of Berlin.

At this time a high-ranking SS leader hinted to me that Himmler was preparing decisive steps. In February 1945, the Reichsführer-SS had assumed command of the Vistula Army Group, but he was no better than his predecessor at stopping the Russian advance. Hitler was now berating him also. Thus what personal prestige Himmler had retained was used up by a few weeks of commanding frontline troops.

Nevertheless, everyone still feared Himmler, and I felt distinctly shaky one day on learning that Himmler was coming to see me about something that evening. This, incidentally, was the only time he ever called on me. My nervousness grew when Theodor Hupfauer, the new chief of our Central Office—with whom I had several times spoken rather candidly—told me in some trepidation that Gestapo chief Kaltenbrunner would be calling on him at the same hour.

Before Himmler entered, my adjutant whispered to me: "He's alone."

My office was without window panes; we no longer bothered replacing them, since they were blasted out by bombs every few days. A wretched candle stood on the table; the electricity was out again. Wrapped in our coats, we sat facing one another. Himmler talked about minor matters, asked about pointless details, spoke of the situation at the front, and finally made the witless observation: "When the course is downhill there's always a floor to the valley, and once that is reached, Herr Speer, the ascent begins again."

Since I expressed neither agreement nor disagreement with this proverbial wisdom and remained virtually monosyllabic throughout the conversation, he soon took his leave. I never found out what he wanted of it, or why Kaltenbrunner had called on Hupfauer at the

same time. Perhaps the were seeking allies; per

On February 14, I set turn over "the entire si the year 1933 for the be to help stabilize the ma difficulty only by coerciv lapse as soon as the cc Count Schwerin-Krosigk countered eloquent oppo: been particularly affecte example.

Another idea of mine calling it today makes me mind I was in during tha the hopelessness of the sit Werner Naumann, state conversation arose by cl gether in the Ministry air- was capable of lucidity a final stroke. What I had government, the party, a issue a proclamation tha prepared to surrender vol people would be grante existence. Reminiscences surrendered to the British gled in this rather operat sacrifice and redemption.

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Feb. 14, 1945

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same time. Perhaps they had heard about my critical attitude and were seeking allies; perhaps they merely wanted to sound us out.

On February 14, I sent a letter to the Finance Minister offering to turn over "the entire sizable increase of my personal fortune since the year 1933 for the benefit of the Reich." This action was intended to help stabilize the mark, whose value had been maintained with difficulty only by coercive measures and which would inevitably collapse as soon as the coercion ended. When the Finance Minister, Count Schwerin-Krosigk, discussed my offer with Goebbels, he encountered eloquent opposition. The Propaganda Minister would have been particularly affected had he felt under pressure to imitate my example.

Another idea of mine had even smaller prospects of adoption. Recalling it today makes me aware of the romantic and fantastic state of mind I was in during that period. At the end of January, I discussed the hopelessness of the situation very cautiously, feeling my way, with Werner Naumann, state secretary in the Propaganda Ministry. The conversation arose by chance; we happened to find ourselves together in the Ministry air-raid shelter. Assuming that at least Goebbels was capable of lucidity and logic, I sketched the outlines of a grand final stroke. What I had in mind was a joint undertaking by the government, the party, and the commanding generals. Hitler would issue a proclamation that the entire leadership of the Reich was prepared to surrender voluntarily to the enemy if in return the German people would be granted bearable conditions for their continued existence. Reminiscences of history, memories of Napoleon who had surrendered to the British after the collapse at Waterloo, were mingled in this rather operatic notion with Wagnerianisms about self-sacrifice and redemption. It was good that nothing ever came of it.

Among my associates recruited from industry, Dr. Lüschen, head of the German electric industry, member of the board of directors and chief of research and development in the Siemens concern, was particularly close to me personally. He was a man of seventy on whose experience I gladly leaned. He foresaw difficult times for the German people but had no doubts about eventual recovery.

Early in February, Lüschen visited me in my small apartment in the rear building of my Ministry on Pariser Platz. He took a slip of

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3. Instructions dispatched by circular letter, March 12, 1945.
4. I quoted this remark of Hitler's in the letter I wrote to him on March 29, 1945. At that time I softened it with, "If I did not misunderstand you. . . ." But this phrase was merely intended to give Hitler a chance to pretend he had not made the statement. In the same letter I summarized the impact Hitler's words had on me as follows: "These words shook me to the core."
5. The Fuehrer's order for the destruction that was to be purposefully carried out in the Reich read in full:

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The struggle for the very existence of our people forces us to seize any means which can weaken the combat readiness of our enemy and prevent him from advancing. Every opportunity, direct or indirect, to inflict the most lasting possible damage on the enemy's striking power must be used to the utmost. It is a mistake to believe that when we win back the lost territories we will be able to retrieve and use these transportation, communications, production, and supply facilities that have not been destroyed or have been temporarily crippled; when the enemy withdraws he will leave us only scorched earth and will show no consideration for the welfare of the population.

Therefore, I order:

*

1. All military, transportation, communications, industrial, and food-supply facilities, as well as all resources within the Reich which the enemy might use either immediately or in the foreseeable future for continuing the war, are to be destroyed.

2. Those responsible for these measures are: the military commands for all military objects, including the transportation and communications installations; the Gauleiters and defense commissioners for all industrial and supply facilities, as well as other resources. When necessary, the troops are to assist the Gauleiters and the defense commissioners in carrying out their task.

3. These orders are to be communicated at once to all troop commanders; contrary instructions are invalid.

This decree was directly contrary to the requests I had made in my March 18 memorandum: "If the war advances farther into Reich territory, measures should be taken to assure that no one has the right to destroy industrial installations, coal mines, electric plants, and other facilities, nor transportation installations and inland waterways. Demolition of bridges as planned would do more lasting damage to

* D.T. I had ceased edown infirm.
So this is how he saw it: to scorch
the earth would suggest his readiness
to return.

March 12, 1945

April 27, '45

March 19, 1945

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH 666 L

the transportation network than all the bombing of the past few years."

6. Kesselring had added the notation: "To be implemented by the Commander in Chief of the army group," thus placing all responsibility for disregarding the orders on the shoulders of his subordinate, Field Marshal Model.

CHAPTER 30: *Hitler's Ultimatum*

1. See my letter, March 3, 1945, to Minister of Justice Thierack and his reply, March 6.
2. See the "Minutes of the Conference with the Fuehrer, March 22, 1945," signed by Saur.
3. So far as I know, Florian decided not to publish the proclamation after all. It is possible that he made his remarks about the worthlessness of the German people during some earlier discussion.
4. Hitler had ordered that the army command was to be responsible for demolitions within a five- to nine-mile-wide "war zone."

The "implementation instructions for the Fuehrer's order of March 19, 1945 (re: communications facilities), "issued at 4 P.M. March 27, read:

Communications facilities are to be destroyed by dynamiting, fire or demolition. Items to be rendered totally unusable are: telephone, telegraph and amplification stations and centrals (wire lead-in points, switchboards, junction boxes, pylons and, if sufficient time is available, above-ground lines and long-distance cables), stocks of telegraph equipment of all types, cables and wiring, factory records (cable layout plans, wiring diagrams, descriptions of devices, etc.), the major radio facilities (broadcasting and receiving stations, towers, antennas. Efforts should be made to remove beforehand especially valuable parts. . . . Special orders follow for the national capital and its immediate environs, in particular for the radio stations in Nauen, Königswusterhausen, Zeesen, Rehmate, and Beelitz.

6. After my release from imprisonment Seebauer, who at the time had been one of my department heads, informed me that during my illness in the spring of 1944 Hitler had already picked Saur to be my successor.

(7.) In his last situation conference on April 27, 1945, Hitler reacted more sharply: "Failure to obey one of my orders would mean imme-

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- mediate annihilation, a man can scarcely believe would dare not to c
Der Spiegel, No. 3 [
8. The order, transmitt forwarded on March mann.
 9. These instructions ar *Reichssache* (a "class
 10. My teletype message t tion read: "On the ba destruction of locks, s tions is strictly forbidd trary.—Copy, for inf request transmission t
 11. Hitler's decree of Apr Hitler crossed out in i

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1. Operatively im way that they cannot parts of the autobahr will be determined fr armed forces. The) bridges are not destr

2. All other bridg commissioners along of Transportation an duction determine the to halt production or

To assure that pro ment, I ordered in m tion must be maintai the enemy's rapid m the exception of those before it can be dest

3. All other objec movement (other m last, and repair shops the postal system, th are to be effectively

Febr 1945

paper from his pocket and handed it to me, saying: "Are you aware of the passage from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* that is most often quoted by the public nowadays?"

I read: "The task of diplomacy is to ensure that a nation does not heroically go to its destruction but is practically preserved. Every way that leads to this end is expedient, and a failure to follow it must be called criminal neglect of duty." He had found a second fitting quotation, Lüschen continued, and he handed me another slip: "State authority as an end in itself cannot exist, since in that case every tyranny on this earth would be sacred and unassailable. If a racial entity is being led toward its doom by means of governmental power, then the rebellion of every single member of such a *Volk* is not only a right, but a duty." 9.6.44

Lüschen took his departure without a word, leaving these quotations behind. Uneasily, I paced back and forth in my room. Here was Hitler himself saying what I had been trying to get across during these past months. Only the conclusion remained to be drawn: Hitler himself—measured by the standards of his own political program—was deliberately committing high treason against his own people, which had made vast sacrifices for his cause and to which he owed everything. Certainly more than I owed to Hitler.

That night I came to the decision to eliminate Hitler. My preparations, to be sure, went no further than the initial stages and therefore have a touch of the ridiculous about them. But at the same time they are evidence of the nature of the regime and of the deformations in the character of its actors. To this day I shudder at the thought of what that regime had led me to—I who had once wanted nothing more than to be Hitler's master builder. Even at this late date I still occasionally sat opposite him at table, occasionally even leafed through old building plans with him—all the while I was thinking how to obtain poison gas to destroy the man who in spite of our many disagreements still felt some liking for me and treated me with more forbearance than he did anyone else. For years I had lived in his entourage, where a human life meant nothing; but all that seemed to be none of my affair. Now I realized that this atmosphere had not left me untouched. I was not just entangled in a thicket of deceptions, intrigues, baseness, and killing. I myself had become part of this perverted world. For twelve years, when you came right down to it, I had lived thoughtlessly among murderers. Now, at the moment of the

regime's doom, I was on the of all people, the moral impuls

At the Nuremberg Trial, (second Brutus. Several of the broke the oath you swore to oath was empty; it was simply independently. If nothing else, ment of its rationale, as he did

On my walks in the Chance tion shaft for Hitler's bunker with the ground and covered the air intake. The air that w no filter worked against our po

Chance had brought me int of our munitions production, tioned him about a defeatist war. The penalties were all to I knew Gauleiter Stürtz of quash the affair.

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regime's doom, I was on the point of receiving from Hitler himself, of all people, the moral impulse to attempt murder against him.

At the Nuremberg Trial, Goering ridiculed me and called me a second Brutus. Several of the defendants reproached me with: "You broke the oath you swore to the Fuehrer." But this appeal to the oath was empty; it was simply a way to escape the obligation to think independently. If nothing else, Hitler himself robbed this sham argument of its rationale, as he did for me in February 1945.

On my walks in the Chancellery gardens I had noticed the ventilation shaft for Hitler's bunker. Camouflaged by a small shrub, level with the ground and covered with a thin grating, was the opening of the air intake. The air that was drawn in passed through a filter. But no filter worked against our poison gas tabun.

Chance had brought me into closer personal relations with the head of our munitions production, Dieter Stahl. The Gestapo had questioned him about a defeatist remark on the impending end of the war. The penalties were all too serious. He had asked my help. Since I knew Gauleiter Stürtz of Brandenburg quite well, I was able to quash the affair.

About the middle of February, a few days after Lüschen's visit, I was sitting with Stahl in a small room in our Berlin air-raid shelter. Outside, a heavy air raid was in progress. The situation promoted candid conversation. In that dreary room with its concrete walls, steel door, and plain chairs, we talked about conditions in the Chancellery and the catastrophic policy being pursued there. At one point in our talk, Stahl gripped my arm and exclaimed: "It's going to be frightful, frightful!"

I began discreetly asking about the new poison gas and whether he could obtain it. Although the question was extremely unusual, Stahl answered readily enough. There was a pause in the conversation. I found myself saying: "It is the only way to bring the war to an end. I want to try to conduct the gas into the Chancellery bunker."

In spite of the confidential relationship that had arisen between us, I was myself shocked by my own frankness. But Stahl showed no signs of either consternation or excitement. Soberly, he promised that in the next few days he would look around for ways to obtain the gas.

A few days later Stahl told me that he had got in touch with the head of the munitions department in the Army Ordnance Office,

March 1945

Major Soyka. Perhaps, he had said, there were ways of rebuilding artillery shells, which were made in Stahl's factory, for poison-gas experiments. Actually, every medium-level employee in the poison-gas factories had easier access to tabun than the Minister of Armaments or the chief of the Directing Committee for Munitions. In the course of our discussions, it turned out that tabun became effective only after an explosion. This made it impracticable for my purpose, for an explosion would have shattered the thin-walled air ducts. By this time it was the beginning of March. But I continued to pursue my plan, for this seemed the only way to eliminate not only Hitler, but Bormann, Goebbels, and Ley at the same time, during one of their nocturnal chats.

Stahl thought that he would soon be able to obtain one of the traditional types of gas for me. Ever since the building of the Chancellery, I had been acquainted with Henschel, the chief engineer of the building. I suggested to him that the air filters had been in use too long and needed renewing; for Hitler had occasionally complained in my presence about the bad air in the bunker. Quickly, much more quickly than I could possibly act, Henschel removed the filtering system, so that the bunker was without protection.

But even if we could have obtained the gas immediately, those days would have passed fruitlessly. For when I invented some pretext at this time to inspect the ventilation shaft, I found a changed picture. Armed SS sentinels were now posted on the roofs of the entire complex, searchlights had been installed, and where the ventilation shaft had previously been at ground level there now rose a chimney more than ten feet high, which put the air intake out of reach. I was stunned. My first thought was that my plan had been discovered. But actually the whole thing was the operation of chance. Hitler, temporarily blinded by poison gas during the First World War, had ordered the building of this chimney because poison gas is heavier than air.

Basically I was relieved that my plan had been finally thwarted. For three or four weeks more I was beset by fears that our plot might still be uncovered. Sometimes I became obsessed with the notion that my intention could be read in my face. After all, since July 20, 1944, there was always the risk that a man's family would be called to account—my wife and above all our six children.

The building of the chimney had done more than ruin this particular plot. The whole idea of assassination vanished from my considera-

tions as quickly as it had to eliminate Hitler but too, relieved me, for all ment, rebellion, loyalty, c I could never have confr magnetic power over me v

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In addition I felt fear. I send in a report dealing v cided to accompany it with the green ink which was began drafting it. Not entire sheet on which my secret *Kampf* in the special large. By this mechanism I was rebellion in a time of lost w

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At this point the draft, had also put a line through cast entirely in Hitler's h possibly have grave consequ

* D.T. My intercession: "You need a chimney three meters high or higher."

Poison gas is

March 1945

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tions as quickly as it had come. I no longer considered it my mission to eliminate Hitler but to frustrate his orders for destruction. That, too, relieved me, for all my feelings still existed side by side: attachment, rebellion, loyalty, outrage. Quite aside from all question of fear, I could never have confronted Hitler pistol in hand. Face to face, his magnetic power over me was too great up to the very last day.

The total confusion of my emotions can be seen in the fact that however aware I was of the amorality of his conduct, I could not suppress a pang at his inexorable decline and at the collapse of a life built so entirely on self-assurance. From this point on, I felt toward him a mixture of abhorrence, pity, and fascination.

In addition I felt fear. In the middle of March, when I again had to send in a report dealing with the taboo subject of the lost war, I decided to accompany it with a personal letter. In a nervous hand, using the green ink which was the prerogative of a government minister, I began drafting it. Not entirely by hazard I wrote it on the back of the sheet on which my secretary had copied the quotation from *Mein Kampf* in the special large type used for communications for Hitler. By this mechanism I was trying to remind Hitler of his own call to rebellion in a time of lost war.

"The enclosed memorandum," I began, "is something I have had to write. As Reich Minister of Armaments and War Production it is my duty to you and to the German people." Here I hesitated and recast the sentence, placing the German people before Hitler. Then I continued: "I know that this letter must necessarily have grave consequences for me personally."

At this point the draft, which has been preserved, breaks off. I had also put a line through this sentence. In its new form, my fate is cast entirely in Hitler's hands. The change was trivial: ". . . may possibly have grave consequences for me personally."

You need a
on legals. —

— Poison gas is heavier than air! —

Febr. 1945

29

Doom

DURING THIS LAST STAGE OF THE WAR, I FOUND DISTRACTION AND relief in being active. I left it to Saur to worry about armaments production, which was winding down anyhow.¹ For my part I kept in as close touch as possible with my industrial associates so we could discuss urgent problems of provisioning and of transition to a postwar economy.

The Morgenthau Plan was made to order for Hitler and the party, insofar as they could point to it for proof that defeat would finally seal the fate of all Germans. Many people were actually influenced by this threat. We, on the other hand, had long since taken a different view of what lay in the future. For Hitler and his henchmen had pursued aims similar to the Morgenthau Plan, only far more drastically, in the occupied territories. But experience showed that in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Norway, and France industries had developed again, even contrary to German intentions, since the temptation to reactivate them for our own ends was greater than the manias of embittered ideologues. And once anyone began to revive industry, he found he

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had to maintain the economy and clothe people and to pay

Such, at any rate, had been territories. We thought the many was that the production intact. My work toward the undoing my plan to assassinate toward saving the industrial and without ideological or the very reverse of official policy lies, deception, and schizophrenia.

At a situation conference foreign press report. "You could be destroyed. How is it possible proaching its prewar production indignantly at me.

"Probably it's a propaganda knew all about false propaganda

In February 1945, I once region, to the remaining coal and to Czechoslovakia and I from the local representatives generals, too, indicated their

In the course of this journey Lake Balaton in Hungary. I number of SS divisions which scale offensive. But the plan of secrecy. It seemed all the more wore badges on their uniform. But even more grotesque than offensive was Hitler's belief could overthrow the newly Soviets in the Balkans. He thought were already tired of Soviet repression mood of these weeks of successes would change every uprising against the Soviet Union common cause with us against won. It was fantastic.

Feb. 1945

had to maintain the economic fundamentals that underlay it, to feed and clothe people and to pay wages.

Such, at any rate, had been the course of things in the occupied territories. We thought the one prerequisite for a repetition in Germany was that the productive mechanism should remain relatively intact. My work toward the end of the war, and especially after abandoning my plan to assassinate Hitler, was directed almost exclusively toward saving the industrial substance, in defiance of all difficulties and without ideological or nationalistic bias. But since this was the very reverse of official policy, it led me further along the course of lies, deception, and schizophrenia on which I had already embarked.

At a situation conference in January 1945, Hitler handed me a foreign press report. "You know I ordered everything in France to be destroyed. How is it possible that French industry is already approaching its prewar production only a few months later?" He glared indignantly at me.

"Probably it's a propaganda report," I replied calmly. Hitler knew all about false propaganda reports, and the affair was dismissed.

In February 1945, I once again flew to the Hungarian petroleum region, to the remaining coal area of Upper Silesia which we still held, and to Czechoslovakia and Danzig. Everywhere I extracted pledges from the local representatives of my Ministry to follow our line. The generals, too, indicated their sympathy with my efforts.

In the course of this journey I made an interesting observation at Lake Balaton in Hungary. I witnessed the open deployment of a number of SS divisions which Hitler intended to commit to a large-scale offensive. But the plan for this operation was subject to strictest secrecy. It seemed all the more grotesque, therefore, that these forces wore badges on their uniforms identifying them as elite formations. But even more grotesque than this open deployment for a "surprise" offensive was Hitler's belief that with a few armored divisions he could overthrow the newly established, strong position of the Soviets in the Balkans. He thought the peoples of southeastern Europe were already tired of Soviet rule after only a few months. In the desperate mood of these weeks he persuaded himself that a few initial successes would change everything. There would surely be a popular uprising against the Soviet Union, and the populace would make common cause with us against the Bolshevik enemy, until victory was won. It was fantastic.

I FOUND DISTRACTION AND worry about armaments production.¹ For my part I kept in as trial associates so we could nd of transition to a postwar

der for Hitler and the party, of that defeat would finally ple were actually influenced I long since taken a different and his henchmen had pun, only far more drastically, ce showed that in Czecho-lustries had developed again, the temptation to reactivate n the manias of embittered evice industry, he found he

Edgar. 1945

My subsequent visit in Danzig brought me to the headquarters of Himmler in his capacity of Commander in Chief of the Vistula Army Group. The headquarters was a comfortably equipped special train. By chance I was present at a telephone conversation between him and General Weiss, and heard Himmler cut off all arguments for abandoning a lost position with a stereotyped reply: "I have given you a command. You'll answer with your head for it. I'll call you to account personally if the position is lost."

But when I visited General Weiss the next day, the position had been abandoned in the course of the night. Weiss appeared unimpressed by Himmler's threats. "I am not committing my troops for insane demands that cost heavy casualties. I am doing only what is possible." Hitler's and Himmler's threats were beginning to lose their effectiveness. On this trip, too, I had my Ministry photographer take pictures of the endless lines of refugees trekking in mute panic toward the West. Once again Hitler refused to look at the photos. With resignation rather than vexation he pushed them far away from him on the large map table.

On my trip to Upper Silesia, I met General Heinrici, a sensible man with whom I had to collaborate confidentially during the last weeks of the war. At that time, in the middle of February, we decided that the railroad installations which would be needed in the future for distributing coal to southeast Germany were not to be destroyed. Together, we visited a mine near Ribnyk. Although the mine was in the immediate vicinity of the front, the Soviet troops were allowing work to continue there. The enemy, too, seemed to be respecting our policy of nondestruction. The Polish workers had adjusted to the change in the situation. They were working as efficiently as ever, in a sense repaying us for our pledge that we would preserve their place of work if they refrained from sabotage.

Early in March, I went to the Ruhr for a survey of what would be needed for the impending end and the new beginning. The industrialists were most anxious about the transportation question. If the coal mines and steel works were preserved but all the bridges destroyed, then the circulation among coal, steel, and rolling mills would be broken. That same day I went to see Field Marshal Model about it.*

* That same day Model decided not to use the largest pharmaceutical plant

He was in a state of fury. He wanted Hitler to attack the enemy, to retain specified divisions, and to have lost their weapons and would be less effective than a again: At headquarters they had course, I'll be blamed for the orders, Model was all the more promised that in the fighting it dispensable bridges and especially

To forestall the blowing up of the future, I arranged with General Model that any demolitions in our own area would be "limited." Certain demolitions were to be kept to a minimum; the demolition of traffic were to be undertaken on his own responsibility for it. I tried to persuade General Model to theater, to sign it, he was referred to the draft and said he would do as predicted: At the next situation scene over Guderian's proposed destruction.

In the middle of March, I again frankly expressed my opinion that the demolition must be taken at this stage of the war. The taboos he had set up in recent days before I had convoked them in Bernau and told them that the demolitions from being demolished, the situation deteriorated. At the same time I wrote a letter to all my branch offices on the principle.⁸

To coax Hitler into ordering

in Germany, Bayer-Leverkusen, as an enemy and request him to spare the

March 1945

March 1945

March 1945

production. But by the the armaments factories needs precedence: food, to say that "the final col- expected "with certainty" rd the war "could not be dealing directly to Hitler, viewpoint that the fate of te." The primary obliga- war must be "to help the memorandum: "At this to undertake demolitions "

y a pretense of optimism that factories should not : them back in operation

plete plans. On February 19, tribute all the transportation istry, agriculture, and indus- r of priorities for shipments" oncerning the Transportation the strength of the German else. As far as possible food the population." The trans- ince freight-car loadings had

ate secretary in the Ministry lanning Bureau on March 2, ruption to provide the food- nts with electricity and coal e the hydrogenation plants. ities. I did not even mention

urgent armaments transports ched to deliver the seed for ced that it could no longer out a special program to fill veral months. A special offer of Education was accepted, ts from the Berlin museums is thus saved today form the

quickly after the reconquest. Now, on the contrary, I declared for the first time that the material substance of the nation had to be preserved "even if a reconquest does not seem possible. . . . It cannot possibly be the purpose of warfare at home to destroy so many bridges that, given the straitened means of the postwar period, it will take years to rebuild this transportation network. . . . Their destruction means eliminating all further possibility for the German people to survive."*

I did not dare hand this memorandum to Hitler without prepara- tion. He was too unpredictable, and an instant order to have me shot was quite conceivable. I therefore gave the twenty-two-page docu- ment to Colonel von Below, my liaison officer at the Fuehrer's head- quarters, with instructions first to summarize it for him at a suitable moment. Then I requested Julius Schaub, Hitler's adjutant, to tell Hitler that I would like to have a photograph of him with a personal dedication for my impending fortieth birthday. I was the only close associate of Hitler's who had not asked him for such a photograph during the entire twelve years. Now, at the end of his rule and of our personal relationship, I wanted to let him know that although I was opposing him and had had to face up to the fact of defeat, I still re- vered him and valued the distinction of a dedicated photograph.

Still I was apprehensive and took steps to put myself out of his reach immediately after handing over the memorandum. That same night I planned to fly to Königsberg, already threatened by the Soviet armies. I was to have a conference with my assistants there, where I would again urge my plea against needless demolitions. At the same time, I thought, I would bid Hitler farewell.

And so on the evening of March 18, I went to the situation con-

* In this memorandum I used Berlin as an example of what would happen if bridges were blown up: "The planned demolition of the bridges in Berlin would cut off the city's food supply, and industrial production and human life in this city would be rendered impossible for years to come. Such demolitions would mean the death of Berlin." I also pointed out to Hitler the consequences for the Ruhr area: "If the numerous railroad bridges over the smaller canals and valleys, or the viaducts, are blown up, the Ruhr area will be unable to handle even the production needed for repairing the bridges." In my March 15 memorandum, I also demanded of Hitler that preparations be made so that when the enemy approached only a code word need be issued to assure that civilian and army stocks, including food stocks, would immediately be distributed among the people.

March 18, 1945

ference with my fateful document. For some time the conferences had no longer been taking place in Hitler's resplendent office, which I had designed seven years ago. Hitler had transferred them to his small study in the deep shelter. With melancholy bitterness he commented to me: "Ah, you know, Herr Speer, your beautiful architecture no longer provides the proper frame for the situation conferences."

The subject of the March 18 conference was the defense of the Saar, now hard pressed by Patton's army. As he had done once before in the case of the Russian manganese mines, Hitler suddenly turned to me for support: "Tell the gentlemen yourself what a loss of the Saar coal will mean to you!"

Completely off my guard, I blurted out: "That would only speed up the collapse." Stunned and embarrassed, we stared at each other. I was just as surprised as Hitler. After an awkward silence, Hitler changed the subject.

That same day Field Marshal Kesselring, the Commander in Chief in the West, reported that the populace was playing a negative role in the struggle against the advancing American forces. More and more often the people did not allow our own troops to enter the villages. Deputations would go to the officers to beg them not to cause the destruction of localities by defending them. In many cases the troops had yielded to these desperate pleas.

Without a moment's compunction, Hitler turned to Keitel and told him to compose an order to the Commander in Chief and the Gauleiters: The entire population of the threatened areas was to be forcibly evacuated. Dutifully, Keitel sat down at a table in the corner to draw up the order.

One of the generals present tried to persuade Hitler that it was impossible to carry out the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of persons. There were no longer any trains available. Transportation had long since broken down completely. Hitler remained obdurate. "Then let them walk!" he replied. That, too, could not be organized, the general said. Provisioning would be needed; the torrent of humanity would have to be led through less populated areas; and besides the people did not even have proper shoes. He was not given a chance to finish. Imperviously, Hitler turned away.

Keitel had drafted the order and read it to Hitler, who approved it. Its text ran:

* A. M. - My last hope

D. i. Yes, his last romantic hope

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Impulsively, I said that I
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March 19, 1945

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The presence of the population in the battle zone threatened by the enemy imposes difficulties upon the fighting troops, as it does on the population itself. The Fuehrer therefore issues the following command: West of the Rhine, or in the Saar Palatinate, as the case may be, all inhabitants are to be evacuated at once from the area, beginning directly behind the main battlefield. . . . Removal is to take place in a general southeasterly direction and south of the line formed by St. Wendel, Kaiserslautern, and Ludwigshafen. Details to be settled by Army Group G in association with the Gauleiters. The Gauleiters will receive the same order from the Chief of the Party Secretariat. Chief OKW (signed), Field Marshal Keitel.*

No one objected when Hitler concluded: "We can no longer afford to concern ourselves with the population." Together with Zander, Bormann's liaison man to Hitler, I left the room. Zander was in despair. "But that's impossible. It will be an utter disaster. No preparations have been made!"

Impulsively, I said that I would give up my flight to Königsberg and drive west that very night to see what I could do to help.

The situation conference was over, it was past midnight, and my fortieth birthday had begun. I asked Hitler whether I might see him for a moment. He called his orderly: "Bring that picture I've signed," and handed me, with cordial birthday wishes, the red leather case stamped with the Fuehrer's emblem: This was the usual container in which he presented his silver-framed photos. I expressed my thanks and set the case down on the table as I prepared to hand him my memorandum. But Hitler was saying: "Lately it's been hard for me to write even a few words in my own hand. You know how it shakes."

* Here we have an example of the chaos created by Hitler's sudden reactions. Shortly before this, on the same day, March 18, Keitel had sent a teletype message saying: "The Fuehrer has unequivocally (!) decided to carry through the disengagement and evacuation measures wherever necessary in those western sectors directly threatened by the enemy." But those who did not obey this order were completely "covered": "During the disengagement and evacuation, military operations, food transport and coal transport must not be impeded."

The next day, March 19, 1945, Bormann issued implementation instructions for Hitler's latest order. These provided that "in case transportation is not available, evacuation should be undertaken in horse- or ox-drawn wagons. If necessary the male part of the population should proceed on foot."

fc

March 1945

Often I can hardly complete my signature. What I've written for you came out almost illegible."

At that I opened the case to read the inscription. It was in fact scarcely legible, but couched in unusually cordial terms, joining thanks for my work with the assurance of lasting friendship. It was hard for me at this point to respond to the gift by presenting him with the memorandum in which I dryly set forth the collapse of his whole mission.

Hitler received it without a word. To bridge the awkwardness of this moment, I informed him that I would be driving to the West instead of flying to Königsberg that night. While I was still in the bunker, telephoning for my car and driver, I was again summoned to Hitler. "I've thought it over. It will be better if you take my car and have my driver Kempfka drive you." I objected on various grounds. Finally, Hitler agreed that I could use my own car, but that Kempfka must drive me. I felt rather uneasy, for the warmth Hitler had shown when he handed me his photograph, a warmth to which I had almost succumbed, was now gone without a trace. I could feel his ill humor as he dismissed me and was already at the door when he said, as if cutting off the possibility of any answer: "This time you will receive a written reply to your memorandum!" He made a brief pause, then in an icy tone continued: "If the war is lost, the people will be lost also. It is not necessary to worry about what the German people will need for elemental survival. On the contrary, it is best for us to destroy even these things. For the nation has proved to be the weaker, and the future belongs solely to the stronger eastern nation. In any case only those who are inferior will remain after this struggle, for the good have already been killed."

I was relieved when I at last sat at the wheel of my car in the fresh night air, Hitler's chauffeur at my side and Lieutenant Colonel von Poser, my liaison officer to the General Staff, on the rear seat. Kempfka had agreed that we would take turns driving. By this time it was about half past one in the morning, and speed was of the essence if we were to cover the three hundred odd miles of autobahn to the headquarters of the Commander in Chief, West, near Naumburg, before daybreak—for then the enemy hedgehopping fighters appeared. We had the radio tuned to the broadcaster for the night fighters and kept the grid map on our knees: "Night fighters in grid

Number—. . . Sever in grid—. . ." This If a formation were parking lights and feel As soon as our square switched to high beam with our supercharge morning we were still air activity to a standstill for a few hours sleep.

Toward noon I had fruitless. He behaved inclined to discuss Hitler tentative on his staff As we paced back and me that he would do the population which m

During a simple me brief toast to my fortie planes suddenly descended sound. At the same me the windows. Everyone the alarm siren sound. vicinity. While the exploded through the smoke and

This attack was obvious. The bombs continued swayed but was not hindered our conferences Röchling, the Saar independent of the conversation Kempfka lost in the next few differently. "We have lost as I am, I shall see it return

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* This headquarters was with bunkers by a stairway 1940 which he had rejected

March 1945

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Number—. . . Several Mosquitoes in grid—. . . Night fighters
in grid—. . ." This way we knew exactly where the enemy was.
If a formation were approaching us, we would switch to our
parking lights and feel our way slowly along the edge of the road.
As soon as our square on the grid map was free of the enemy, we
switched to high beam and foglights, turned on the big jacklight, and
with our supercharger howling, roared down the autobahn. By
morning we were still on the road, but low-lying clouds had brought
air activity to a standstill. At headquarters,* I first of all lay down
for a few hours sleep.

Toward noon I had a meeting with Kesselring, but our talk proved
fruitless. He behaved as a soldier pure and simple and was not in-
clined to discuss Hitler's orders. On the other hand, the party repre-
sentative on his staff proved surprisingly more amenable to reason.
As we paced back and forth on the terrace of the castle, he assured
me that he would do his best to suppress reports on the behavior of
the population which might affect Hitler badly.

During a simple meal with his staff, Kesselring had just offered a
brief toast to my fortieth birthday when a formation of enemy fighter
planes suddenly descended on the castle with a high-pitched whining
sound. At the same moment the first burst of machine-gun fire struck
the windows. Everyone threw himself to the floor. Only now did
the alarm siren sound. The first heavy bombs crashed in the immediate
vicinity. While the explosions boomed on either side of us, we rushed
through the smoke and plaster dust into the bunkers.

This attack was obviously aimed at the western defense headquar-
ters. The bombs continued to fall without a pause. The bunker
swayed but was not hit directly. When the attack was over, we con-
tinued our conferences, at which we were now joined by Hermann
Röchling, the Saar industrialist, a man in his seventies. In the course
of the conversation Kesselring told Röchling that the Saar would be
lost in the next few days. Röchling accepted the news almost indif-
ferently. "We have lost the Saar once before and won it back. Old
as I am, I shall see it return to our possession again."

The next stage in our journey was Heidelberg, where the Arma-

* This headquarters was located in a small castle atop a cliff, connected
with bunkers by a stairway. It was the headquarters I had built for Hitler in
1940 which he had rejected at the time.

March 1945

ments Staff for southwest Germany had been transferred. This was a chance for me to pay a brief birthday visit to my parents. By day the autobahn could not be traversed because of the planes. Since I knew all the secondary roads from my boyhood, Röchling and I drove through the Odenwald. It was warm, sunny spring weather. For the first time we talked with complete frankness. Röchling, formerly an admirer of Hitler, made it quite clear that he thought it senseless fanaticism to continue the war.

It was late evening by the time we reached Heidelberg. The news from the Saar sounded good; scarcely any preparations for demolitions had been made. Since it was now only a matter of days before the area fell into Allied hands, even a command from Hitler could no longer do damage.

Then, during a toilsome drive over roads blocked by retreating troops, we were furiously sworn at by tired and battered soldiers. It took until midnight for us to reach the army headquarters, situated in a wine-growing village of the Palatinate. SS General Hausser was more sensible in the interpretation of insane orders than his Commander in Chief. Hausser thought that the ordered evacuation could not possibly be carried out and that blowing up the bridges would be irresponsible. Five months later, a prisoner of war being taken from Versailles, I rode in a truck through the Saar and the Palatinate. Both the railroad installations and the highway bridges were largely intact.

Stöhr, the Gauleiter of the Palatinate and the Saar, declared flatly that he would not implement the order for evacuation which he had received. A rather curious conversation developed between the Gauleiter and the Minister of Armaments and War Production.

"If you cannot carry out the evacuation and the Fuehrer calls you to account, you can say I told you the order had been canceled."

"No, very kind of you, but I'll take it on my own responsibility."

I insisted: "But I'll gladly put my head on the block for it."

Stöhr shook his head. "No, I'm doing it. I want to take this on my own shoulders." That was the only point on which we could not agree.

Our next destination was Field Marshal Model's headquarters, a hundred and twenty-five miles away in the Westerwald. In the morning hours the American low-level planes appeared. We abandoned the main roads and by way of secondary roads finally reached a small, peaceful village. Nothing indicated that this was the command head-

quarters of an army group motorcycle courier was in by day.

In the village inn I sat we had begun in Sieburg-lations in the Ruhr area. V with a teletype message. "J" barrased and perplexed. I s

It was Hitler's "answer i point it ordered the exact March 18. "All military, t and supply facilities, as we to be destroyed. The messe people; it called for appli its most sweeping form. T powers; all my orders for i revoked. Now the Gauleit destruction. ⑤ p 666

The consequences would period there would have l no coal, no transportation. ships, and locomotives de demolished, it could not tricity, gas, and water. No tions—in short, a country t

It was obvious from Fi tion had changed. He no ness and avoided all fu safeguarding of the Ruhr to sleep in a farmhouse. the fields and climbed a the sunlight under a thir hills of Sauerland, the l rivers. How was it pos transform this land into seemed unreal. But the s sprouts of plants were s the sun was setting. I h:

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March 18, 1945

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quarters of an army group. Not an officer or soldier, not a car or
motorcycle courier was in sight. All automobile traffic was banned
by day.

In the village inn I sat with Model and took up the discussion
we had begun in Siegburg about preservation of the railroad instal-
lations in the Ruhr area. While we were talking, an officer came in
with a teletype message. "This concerns you," Model said, both em-
barrassed and perplexed. I sensed that it was bad news.

It was Hitler's "answer in writing" to my memorandum. On every
point it ordered the exact opposite of the things I had called for on
March 18. "All military, transportation, communications, industrial,
and supply facilities, as well as all resources within the Reich" were
to be destroyed. The message was the death sentence for the German
people; it called for application of the scorched earth principle in
its most sweeping form. The decree further stripped me of all my
powers; all my orders for the preservation of industry were explicitly
revoked. Now the Gauleiters were put in charge of the program of
destruction. *Q 666*

The consequences would have been inconceivable: For an indefinite
period there would have been no electricity, no gas, no pure water,
no coal, no transportation. All railroad facilities, canals, locks, docks,
ships, and locomotives destroyed. Even where industry had not been
demolished, it could not have produced anything for lack of elec-
tricity, gas, and water. No storage facilities, no telephone communi-
cations—in short, a country thrown back into the Middle Ages.

It was obvious from Field Marshal Model's attitude that my situa-
tion had changed. He now talked to me with a distinct air of aloof-
ness and avoided all further discussion of our actual subject, the
safeguarding of the Ruhr industries.⁶ Tired and distraught, I lay down
to sleep in a farmhouse. After a few restless hours I walked across
the fields and climbed a hill. The village lay peacefully below me in
the sunlight under a thin veil of mist. I could see far out over the
hills of Sauerland, the land lying between the Sieg and the Ruhr
rivers. How was it possible, I thought, that one man wanted to
transform this land into a desert. I lay down in the fern. Everything
seemed unreal. But the soil gave off a spicy fragrance; the first green
sprouts of plants were springing from the ground. As I walked back,
the sun was setting. I had taken my resolve. The execution of that

* D.T. His love affair with the Soviets!
He was like a used-up boxer who for
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March 18, 22, 1945

At this time two decisions by Hitler proved to me that he was resolved on the utmost ruthlessness. In the Wehrmacht communiqué of March 18, 1945, I read of the execution of four officers charged with not having blown up the Rhine bridge at Remagen in time. Model had just told me that they were completely innocent. The "shock of Remagen," as it was called, kept many of the responsible men in a state of terror until the end of the war.

That same day I heard, or rather had it hinted to me, that Hitler had ordered the execution of General Fromm. A few weeks before Minister of Justice Thierack had remarked to me, offhandedly and completely unmoved, between two courses of a meal: "Fromm's going to lose his bonnet soon too!" My efforts to speak up for Fromm that evening remained fruitless; Thierack was not in the least impressed. Consequently, a few days later I sent him a five-page official letter in which I refuted most of the charges against Fromm, insofar as I knew what they were, and offered to appear before the People's Court as a witness for the defense.

That was probably an unprecedented request on the part of a Reich minister. Only three days later, on March 6, 1945, Thierack wrote me curtly that I would have to obtain permission from Hitler in order to testify. "The Fuehrer has just informed me," Thierack continued, "that he has no intention of issuing an exceptional permission to you in the case of Fromm. I therefore will not include your statement in the records of the court."¹ The executions also made me aware of the nature of the risk I was running.

I was stubborn. When, on March 22, Hitler invited me to one of his armaments conferences, I again had Saur represent me. From his notes, it was clear that he and Hitler had frivolously ignored the realities. Although armaments production had long since come to an end, they occupied themselves with projects as though the whole of 1945 were still at their disposal. For example, they discussed the totally nonexistent crude-steel production and also decided that the 8.8 centimeter antitank gun for the troops was to be produced in "maximum quantities" and the production of the 21 centimeter mortars was to be increased. They gloried over the development of entirely new weapons: a new special rifle for the parachute troops—with "maximum ejection speed," of course—or a new supercaliber 30.5 centimeter mortar. The minutes also recorded an order of Hitler's that five new variants of existing types of tanks were to be

demonstrated to him with investigate the effect of C and he wished to have out as quickly as possible as he was tacitly conceding before, when he had persis

I had returned to Berlin days later I received the Rhine on a broad front, resistance. Our troops were late. As late as September 1944 had made it possible to erect of weaponless armies. They were being overrun.

I drove to the Ruhr at a crucial question for the people to stop. Unrecognized in to the farmers. To my surprise hammered into their mind could never lose the war, something in reserve turning point will come. I so far into our country." I still encountered this new weapons that at the last moment advancing into the country have a special weapon, do thing?"

That very night, I began of the Ruhr staff, and his terrifying. The three Gaul to carry out Hitler's demands assistants who was, unfortunately, had drawn technical office, had drawn command. Regretfully, but hence, he explained the development of the Ruhr for technical masterpiece: Ev

March 21, 1945

527L Hitler's Ultimatum

demonstrated to him within a few weeks. In addition, he wanted to investigate the effect of Greek fire, known since classical antiquity, and he wished to have our jet fighter-bomber, the Me-262, rearmed as quickly as possible as a fighter plane. In ordering this last action, he was tacitly conceding the error he had made a year and a half before, when he had persistently refused the advice of all the experts.²

I had returned to Berlin on March 21. Early in the morning three days later I received the news that British troops had crossed the Rhine on a broad front, north of the Ruhr, without meeting any resistance. Our troops were helpless, as I had already heard from Model. As late as September 1944 our strenuous production of armaments had made it possible to erect a new defensive front in a short time out of weaponless armies. This could no longer be done. Germany was being overrun.

I drove to the Ruhr area once more. Saving its industry was the crucial question for the postwar era. In Westphalia a flat tire forced us to stop. Unrecognized in the twilight, I stood in a farmyard talking to the farmers. To my surprise, the faith in Hitler which had been hammered into their minds all these last years was still strong. Hitler could never lose the war, they declared. "The Fuehrer is still holding something in reserve that he'll play at the last moment. Then the turning point will come. It's only a trap, his letting the enemy come so far into our country." Even among members of the government I still encountered this naive faith in deliberately withheld secret weapons that at the last moment would annihilate an enemy recklessly advancing into the country. Funk, for example, asked me: "We still have a special weapon, don't we? A weapon that will change everything?"

That very night, I began my conferences with Dr. Rohland, the chief of the Ruhr staff, and his most important assistants. Their report was terrifying. The three Gauleiters of the Ruhr region were determined to carry out Hitler's demolition order. Hörner, one of our technical assistants who was, unfortunately, at the same time chief of the party technical office, had drawn up a plan of destruction at the Gauleiters' command. Regretfully, but with the air of a man accustomed to obedience, he explained the details of his scheme that was to eliminate the industry of the Ruhr for the foreseeable future. The plan was a technical masterpiece: Even the coal mines were to be flooded, and

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March 21, 1945

their restoration prevented for years to come by destruction of the lift machinery. Barges loaded with cement were to be sunk to block the transshipment ports and the canals of the Ruhr. The Gauleiters wanted to begin their first demolitions next day, since the enemy troops were advancing rapidly in the northern part of the Ruhr. But the Gauleiters had so little transportation at their disposal that they were dependent on aid from my armaments organization. They hoped to find an ample supply of explosives, blasting caps, and fuses in the mines.

Rohland immediately summoned some twenty reliable coal-mining men to the former Thyssen castle of Landsberg, the seat of the Ruhr staff. After a brief conference it was jointly decided, as though this were one of the most natural acts in the world, that all dynamite, blasting caps, and fuses were to be thrown into the sumps of the mines. One of our men was instructed to use what meager fuel was available to drive all the trucks under our command out of the Ruhr area. If necessary, trucks and gasoline were to be placed at the disposal of the fighting troops, which would make them absolutely unavailable to the civilian sector. Finally, I promised Rohland and his associates fifty submachine guns—we were still producing thousands—to be used for guarding power plants and other important industrial installations against the Gauleiters' demolition squads. In the hands of determined men defending their own places of work, these weapons represented considerable force, since the police and party functionaries had only recently been compelled to deliver their weapons to the army. What this amounted to, really, was open revolt.

Gauleiters Florian, Hoffmann, and Schlessmann were at this time meeting at the Hotel Bleibergquelle near Langenberg. Disobeying all of Hitler's injunctions, on the next day I made another effort to win them over to my view. I had a heated dispute with Gauleiter Florian of Düsseldorf. He took the line that if the war were lost, it was not the fault of Hitler or the party, but of the German people. Only miserable creatures would survive such a catastrophe anyhow. But I was able to make Hoffmann and Schlessmann see some reason. In spite of this, they were in a quandary: The Fuehrer's orders must be obeyed, they said, and no one could relieve them of their responsibility. They were altogether perplexed, all the more so since Bormann had meanwhile passed on a new order from Hitler even more radically

calling for destruction of again commanded that "whose occupation by the forestall any objections, scriptions he has received, involved in implementing based on precise and cog evacuation is not open to

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The assembled Gauleit power to carry out these Florian read aloud the te

* The decree read as folk

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On March 19, 1945, th you have already received the Fuehrer unequivocally hold, and whose occupatio

The Fuehrer has impos the solemn obligation to do tion, that is the withdrawa German [Volksgenosse; a descriptions he has receiv involved in implementing

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We must improvise in e situation in each region.

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tionaries of Düsseldorf, which he intended to have posted throughout the city. It called for: setting fire to all remaining buildings of the city upon the approach of the enemy, evacuation of all the inhabitants. Let the enemy march into a burned out, deserted city!³

The two other Gauleiters had meanwhile become uncertain of themselves. They were ready to accept my interpretation of the Fuehrer's order—that the Ruhr's industry was still important for armaments production, all the more so since in the struggle for the Ruhr we could supply the troops with ammunition directly from the factories. Therefore the destruction of the power plants, which was to have begun next day, was postponed, and the order for demolition was transformed into an order to temporarily paralyze the factories.

Immediately after this conference I again called on Field Marshal Model in his headquarters. He proved to be willing to keep the fighting as far from the industrial area as possible and thus reduce demolitions to a minimum. He would also refrain from ordering the destruction of any factories.⁴ For the rest, he promised to keep in close contact with Dr. Rohland and his associates during the next few weeks.

From Model, I learned that American troops were advancing upon Frankfurt. A precise front line could no longer be determined, and Kesselring's headquarters had just been shifted farther to the east. About three o'clock in the morning I arrived at Kesselring's old headquarters near Nauheim. After a talk with his chief of staff, General Westphal, I was satisfied that he too would interpret the demolition order in a merciful sense. Since even the chief of staff had no idea of how far the enemy had advanced in the course of the night, we detoured to the east, driving through the Spessart and the Odenwald to Heidelberg, and thus passed through the small town of Lohr. Our troops had already withdrawn; a curiously expectant mood hovered over the silent streets and squares. At one intersection stood a solitary soldier with a couple of bazookas. He looked at me in surprise.

"What in the world are you waiting for?" I asked him.

"For the Americans," he replied.

"And what will you do when the Americans come?"

He hesitated only a moment. "Get the hell out of here."

Here as well as everywhere else I had the impression that people thought the war was over.

At the Armaments Staff office for Baden and Württemberg in

Heidelberg lay orders for the destruction of the waterworks in other cities in Baden. We went ahead and put the orders into the mailbox occupied by the enemy.

The Americans had already moved away, and were slowly advancing. I had a personal discussion with Mayor Gumbel, service to my native city—already knew from my work in Heidelberg a hospital city. He bade my parents good-bye, they, too, had displayed themselves over the suffering door of our house as I got into the car once more, and I went silently into my eyes. We each other again.

Retreating troops with the road to Würzburg. A wild half-light of morning and night. In Würzburg I called on Gau Gauleiter Gumbel for breakfast. While we did just as the eggs, the Gauleiter explained that to carry out Hitler's Schweinfurt ball-bearings authorities were already working. The plan was well conceived: to be set afire. Experience showed that such fires would reduce the city. I could not convince him. He asked me when the Fuel weapon. He had heard, from the mouth of this weapon was in the city.

As I had done so often before, I did not exist. I knew that and pleaded with him not to. Given the situation, I argue

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Heidelberg lay orders from Gauleiter Wagner of Baden commanding the destruction of the water and gas works in my native city, as in all other cities in Baden. We found a simple method of thwarting these orders. We went ahead and prepared the written copies but put the letters into the mailbox of a town that was on the point of being occupied by the enemy.

The Americans had already taken Mannheim, only twelve miles away, and were slowly advancing toward Heidelberg. After a nocturnal discussion with Mayor Neinhaus of Heidelberg, I offered a last service to my native city—by writing to SS General Hausser, whom I already knew from my work in the Saar, and asking him to declare Heidelberg a hospital city to be surrendered without a fight. At dawn I bade my parents good-by. During the last hours we spent together they, too, had displayed that uncanny calm and composure which had come over the suffering people. Both were standing at the front door of our house as I got into the car. My father came quickly up to the car once more, and while clasping my hand one last time looked silently into my eyes. We had a premonition that we would never see each other again.

Retreating troops without arms or equipment were blocking the road to Würzburg. A wild pig had ventured out of the woods in the half-light of morning and was being noisily chased by soldiers. In Würzburg I called on Gauleiter Hellmuth, who invited me to an ample breakfast. While we did justice to the excellent country sausages and eggs, the Gauleiter explained with the greatest matter-of-factness that to carry out Hitler's decree he had ordered destruction of the Schweinfurt ball-bearings industry. The factory heads and the party authorities were already waiting in another room for instructions. The plan was well conceived: The oil baths of the special machines were to be set afire. Experiences in the air raids had already shown that such fires would reduce the machinery to useless scrap iron. At first I could not convince him that such destruction was foolish. He asked me when the Fuehrer intended to apply the decisive secret weapon. He had heard, from Bormann and Goebbels, that commitment of this weapon was impending.

As I had done so often, I had to tell him that this secret weapon did not exist. I knew that this Gauleiter was one of the sensible ones and pleaded with him not to carry out Hitler's scorched earth order. Given the situation, I argued, it was madness to deprive the people of

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the foundations for a continued national life by demolishing industrial facilities and bridges. I also mentioned the German troops that were being concentrated east of Schweinfurt to counterattack in the center and recapture our armaments industries. In saying this I was not even lying, for the top leadership was actually planning a counterattack in the near future. The tired old argument that Hitler could not continue his war without ball bearings finally had its effect. Convinced or not, the Gauleiter was not eager to win immortal fame for having ruined all chance of victory by destroying the Schweinfurt factories.

After Würzburg the weather cleared. Only occasionally did we now encounter small units marching on foot, without heavy arms, to meet the enemy. These were training units which had been raised for the final offensive. The inhabitants of the villages were busy digging pits in their gardens; they were burying their family silver and other valuables. Everywhere we encountered the same friendly, obliging attitude on the part of the rural populace. However, nobody wanted us to take cover between houses from low-flying planes, since this might endanger the houses. "Herr Minister, would you mind moving on to the next house, down the road a piece?" someone called out of a window.

Precisely because the populace was so peaceable and resigned and because well-equipped troop units were nowhere to be seen, the large number of bridges prepared for dynamiting struck me as even more insane than it had at my Berlin desk.

In the towns and villages of Thuringia, party formations, chiefly SA units, were tramping aimlessly about the streets in their uniforms. Sauckel had called up the "great levy," mostly elderly men or children of sixteen. This was the *Volkssturm* that was supposed to confront the enemy, but nobody could supply them with weapons. A few days later Sauckel issued one more noble injunction to fight to the last, then took off in his car for southern Germany.

Late in the evening of March 27, I arrived in Berlin. I found a changed situation there.

In the meantime Hitler had issued orders that SS Gruppenführer Kammler, already responsible for the rocket weapons, was to be in charge of the development and production of all modern aircraft. Thus I had lost my jurisdiction over air armaments. What was more, since Kammler could employ my own assistants in the Ministry, an

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March 1945

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impossible organizational and bureaucratic snarl had been created. In addition, Hitler had explicitly commanded that Goering and I accept our subordination to Kammler by countersigning the decree.

I signed without objecting, furious and insulted though I felt at this latest humiliation. That day I stayed away from the situation conference. Almost at the same time Poser informed me that Hitler had sent Guderian on leave. Officially this was a furlough for health reasons, but everyone familiar with the inside story knew that Guderian would not return. Thus I was losing one of the few men in Hitler's military entourage who had not only supported me by action but constantly encouraged me to continue my present course.

On top of everything else my secretary brought me the orders issued by the chief of the Signal Corps in accordance with Hitler's edict of total destruction: the wires and installations of the post office, the railroad system, the waterways, the police, and electric-power transmission lines were all to be smashed and severed. By "explosion, fire, or dismantlement," all telephone, telegraph and relay offices, the switches of the long-distance cables, the masts, antennas, and broadcasting and receiving facilities of the radio stations were to be rendered "thoroughly useless." To prevent the enemy from making even temporary repairs in the communications network of the occupied areas, all stocks of spare parts, all cable and wire, even the switching diagrams, cable diagrams, and descriptions of equipment, were to be fully destroyed. But General Albert Praun intimated to me that he would use judgment in carrying out this brutal order. 166

On top of all this I received confidential information that armaments were to be turned over to Saur, but under the direction of Himmler, who was to be appointed Inspector General for War Production.⁶ This seemed to mean that Hitler intended to drop me. Shortly afterward Schaub telephoned and in an unusually acid tone let me know I was to see Hitler that evening.

I felt considerable apprehension when I was led into Hitler's office deep underground. He was alone, received me frostily, did not shake hands, scarcely replied to my greeting, and in a sharp, low voice immediately came to the point: "Bormann has given me a report on your conference with the Ruhr Gauleiters. You pressed them not to carry out my orders and declared that the war is lost. Are you aware of what must follow from that?"

As if he were reminded of something remote, his voice softened as

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he spoke, the tension lessened, and almost in the tone of a normal person he added: "If you were not my architect, I would take the measures that are called for in such a case."

Partly in a spirit of open rebellion, partly from sheer exhaustion, I answered impulsively rather than courageously: "Take the measures you think necessary and grant no consideration to me as an individual."

Apparently Hitler had lost the thread; there was a brief pause. He continued in a friendly manner, and I had the impression that he had already carefully considered and determined this course: "You are overworked and ill. I have therefore decided that you are to go on leave at once. Someone else will run your Ministry as your deputy."

"No, I feel perfectly well," I replied resolutely. "I am not going on leave. If you no longer want me as your minister, dismiss me from my post."

Even as I said this I remembered that Goering had already rejected this solution a year ago. Hitler now answered decisively, and in a tone of finality: "I do not want to dismiss you. But I insist that you begin your sick leave immediately."

I remained stubborn: "I cannot keep the responsibility of a minister while another man is acting in my name." Then, with a shade of conciliation, and almost as if I were taking an oath, I added: "I cannot, *mein Führer*." That was the first time in the course of the conversation that I had used this form of address.

Hitler appeared unmoved. "You have no choice. It is impossible for me to dismiss you." And then, as if likewise wishing to make a gesture hinting at his own weakness, he added: "For reasons of foreign and domestic policy, I cannot spare you."

Encouraged, I replied: "It's impossible for me to go on leave. As long as I am in office I must conduct the affairs of the Ministry. I am not sick!"

There was a lengthy pause. Hitler sat down, and I did also, unasked. In a relaxed tone, Hitler continued: "Speer, if you can convince yourself that the war is not lost, you can continue to run your office."

From my memoranda, and no doubt from Bormann's report, he knew quite well how I regarded the situation and what conclusions I had drawn. Evidently all he wanted from me was lip service, a verbal statement that would bar me from saying otherwise in the future.

"You know I cannot without defiance." The

Hitler launched into situations in his life, since he had mastered by then on and on, forever, it was the early days of struggle of 1941-42, the tremendous achievements from him many times could have continued changed the tone of his sermon more completely the teahouse, when I had

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"You know I cannot be convinced of that," I replied sincerely but without defiance. "The war is lost."

Hitler launched into recollections. He spoke of the other difficult situations in his life, situations in which all had seemed lost but which he had mastered by perseverance, energy, and fanaticism. He went on and on, forever, it seemed to me, carried away by his memories of the early days of struggle. He drew on such examples as the winter of 1941-42, the threatening transportation crisis, even my own stupendous achievements in armaments production. I had heard all that from him many times, knew these monologues almost by heart, and could have continued them myself almost word for word. He scarcely changed the tone of his voice, but perhaps the very drone of it made his sermon more compelling. I had had a similar feeling years ago in the teahouse, when I had tried to resist his hypnotic eyes.

Now, since I remained silent and only looked steadily at him, he surprisingly lowered his demand: "If you would believe that the war can still be won, if you could at least have faith in that, all would be well." He had passed into an almost pleading tone, and for a moment I thought that in his piteousness he was even more persuasive than in his masterful poses. Under other circumstances I would probably have weakened and given in. This time, what kept me from submitting to his spell was the thought of his destructive plans.

Agitated, and therefore probably speaking a shade too loudly, I said: "I cannot, with the best will in the world. And after all, I do not want to be one of the swine in your entourage who tell you they believe in victory without believing in it."

Hitler did not react. For a while he stared into space, then again began talking about his experiences in the *Kampfzeit*, the days before the party had come to power. He reverted once again, as he had often done during these weeks, to Frederick the Great's unexpected salvation. "One must believe that all will turn out well. . . . Do you still hope for a successful continuance of the war, or is your faith shattered?" Once again Hitler reduced his demand to a formal profession of faith that would be binding upon me: "If you could at least hope that we have not lost! You must certainly be able to hope . . . that would be enough to satisfy me."

I did not answer.

There was a long, awkward pause. At last Hitler stood up abruptly. Now he was very unfriendly again and declared with the sharpness he

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had shown at the beginning of the interview: "You have twenty-four hours to think over your answer! Tomorrow let me know whether you hope that the war can still be won." Without shaking hands, he dismissed me.⁷

As if to dramatize what lay in store for Germany after Hitler's command, immediately after this discussion a teletype message came from the Chief of Transportation. Dated March 29, 1945, it read: "Aim is creation of a transportation wasteland in abandoned territory. . . . Shortage of explosives demands resourceful utilization of all possibilities for producing lasting destruction." Included in the list of facilities slated for destruction were, once again, all types of bridges, tracks, roundhouses, all technical installations in the freight depots, workshop equipment, and sluices and locks in our canals. Along with this, simultaneously all locomotives, passenger cars, freight cars, cargo vessels, and barges were to be completely destroyed and the canals and rivers blocked by sinking ships in them. Every type of ammunition was to be employed for this task. If such explosives were not available, fires were to be set and important parts smashed. Only the technician can grasp the extent of the calamity that execution of this order would have brought upon Germany. The instructions were also prime evidence of how a general order of Hitler's was translated into terrifyingly thorough terms.

In my small emergency apartment in the rear wing of the Ministry, I went to bed, exhausted, and let my mind cast about for how I was to answer Hitler's twenty-four-hour ultimatum. Finally I got up and began writing a letter. At first the text moved inconsistently between a desire to make Hitler see reason and an attempt to meet him halfway. But then it continued bluntly: "When I read the demolition order (of March 19, 1945) and, shortly afterward, the stringent evacuation order, I saw these as the first steps toward carrying out these intentions." At this point I gave my answer to the question he had posed as an ultimatum: "But I can no longer believe in the success of our good cause if during these decisive months we simultaneously and systematically destroy the foundations of our national existence. That is so great an injustice to our people that should it be done, Fate can no longer wish us well. . . . I therefore beg you not to carry out this measure so harmful to the people. If you could revise your policy on this question, I would once more recover the faith and the courage to

continue working with the good hands," I continued my response. How Fate will turn. Only a future. We can only make our unshakable faith in the eternal.

I closed not with the *Heil*, letters, but used my last word hope that still remained to us:

As I reread this letter, I found Hitler decided that anything I

* Further excerpts from this letter

My feeling is that if I should your orders, I would be guilty of my loyal associates. Nevertheless without embellishment how the the possible consequences for me always spoken frankly to you,

I believe in the future of the is just and inexorable, and thus the victorious days of 1940 to their inner integrity. This was to ourselves to Providence by our have been on our side. But during and found too light for us time luxuriating in our easily ourselves for battle. This is with years of 1944 and 1945. If all lie, we would be in a very warned by Providence, from dogged by unprecedented ill luck as the weather played such a dramatic technological of all wars: The and the blue sky above the world

I can continue to carry out my mission, and with faith in the future hold our life as a people. I shall orders of March 19, 1945, will potential and produce panic among are of the highest importance concerns me here. . . . You throw myself into my work while I am urging my workers to destroy the very foundations

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continue working with the greatest energy. It no longer lies in our hands," I continued my response to Hitler's ultimatum, "to decide how Fate will turn. Only a higher Providence can still change our future. We can only make our contribution by a strong posture and unshakable faith in the eternal future of our nation."

I closed not with the *Heil, mein Führer*, customary in such private letters, but used my last words to further my point and invoke the one hope that still remained to us: "May God protect Germany."*

As I reread this letter, I found it a weak performance. Perhaps Hitler decided that anything I wrote at this point would express a re-

* Further excerpts from this letter:

My feeling is that if I should quit my post at this critical moment, even at your orders, I would be guilty of deserting the German people, not to speak of my loyal associates. Nevertheless I am duty-bound to tell you bluntly and without embellishment how the course of events looks to me, irrespective of the possible consequences for me. Unlike so many of your co-workers I have always spoken frankly to you, and I shall continue to do so. . . .

I believe in the future of the German people. I believe in a Providence that is just and inexorable, and thus I believe in God. It pained me deeply during the victorious days of 1940 to see how many among our leaders were losing their inner integrity. This was the moment when we should have commended ourselves to Providence by our decency and inner modesty. Then Fate would have been on our side. But during those months we were weighed in the balance and found too light for ultimate victory. We wasted a year of precious time luxuriating in our easily won success when we could have been girding ourselves for battle. This is why we were caught unprepared in the decisive years of 1944 and 1945. If all our new weapons had been ready a year earlier, we would be in a very different position now. As if we were being warned by Providence, from 1940 on all our military undertakings were dogged by unprecedented ill luck. Never before has an outside element such as the weather played such a decisive and devastating role as in this, the most technological of all wars: The cold in Moscow, the fog around Stalingrad, and the blue sky above the winter offensive in the West in 1944.

I can continue to carry out my duties with a sense of honor, with conviction, and with faith in the future, only if you, *mein Führer*, continue to uphold our life as a people. I shall not enter into a discussion of the way your orders of March 19, 1945, will inevitably crush our last remaining industrial potential and produce panic and horror among the population. These matters are of the highest importance, but they do not involve the principle that concerns me here. . . . You will understand my inner conflict. I cannot throw myself into my work or generate the necessary confidence if even while I am urging my workers to supreme efforts I know that we are planning to destroy the very foundations of their lives.

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bellious attitude which would force him to take stern measures against me. For when I asked one of his secretaries to type the letter—which since it was meant only for him I had written almost illegibly by hand—on Hitler's special typewriter with its oversized letters, she telephoned back: "The Fuehrer has forbidden me to receive any letters from you. He wants to see you here and have your answer verbally." Shortly afterward I was told to come to Hitler at once.

Toward midnight I drove down Wilhelmstrasse, now shattered by bombs, the few hundred yards to the Chancellery, still without knowing what I was going to do, or answer. The twenty-four hours were up; I had not arrived at an answer. I left it to the moment of confrontation to decide what I would say.

Hitler stood before me, not at all sure of himself, seeming rather anxious. He asked tersely: "Well?"

For a moment I was confused. I had no answer ready. But then, simply to say something, without reflection and without completely committing myself, my lips spoke the words: "*Mein Führer*, I stand unreservedly behind you."

Hitler did not answer, but he was moved. After brief hesitation he shook hands with me, as he had not done when he received me. His eyes filled with tears, as they so often did nowadays. "Then all is well," he said. He showed plainly how relieved he was. I too was shaken for a moment by his unforeseen rush of feeling. Once again something of the old relationship could be felt between us.

I quickly saw a way to profit by the situation: "If I stand unreservedly behind you, then you must again entrust me instead of the Gauleiters with the implementation of your decree."

He authorized me to draw up a document which he would sign at once; but when we talked about it, he yielded not an iota on the destruction of industrial installations and bridges. And on this note I took my leave. By now it was one o'clock at night.

In one of the rooms of the Chancellery I drafted my instructions "to assure uniform implementation of [the] decree of March 19, 1945." In order to avoid any further discussion, I did not even try to undo its provisions. I merely made sure of two things: "Implementation will be undertaken solely by the agencies and organs of the Ministry of Armaments and War Production. . . . The Minister of Armaments and War Production may, with my authorization, issue

instructions for implementation of procedures to the Reich Defense

Thus I was reappointed. A gave me significant leeway: "industrial installations by crippling"

* The decree read as follows:

THE FUEHRER

To assure uniform implementation hereby order as follows:

1. The orders given for destruction conclusively at preventing the enemy to increase his fighting strength.

2. No measures may be taken to increase strength. Production must be continued even at the risk that a factory may be destroyed. Industrial installations, plants, may not be destroyed unless they are of military importance.

3. Although bridges and other structures destroyed to deny the enemy their use can be achieved with industrial installations.

Total destruction of particular installations by the Minister of Armaments and War Production, essential chemical plants, essential chemical plants.

4. The signal for crippling or destruction of plants will be given by the Gauleiters to supervise the process.

Implementation will be undertaken by the Ministry of Armaments and War Production, the state and the armed forces of Armaments and War Production for implementation. Instructions for implementation. Orders to the Reich Defense Corps.

6. These guidelines apply to the zone.

The decree pertained only to industrial installations, communication

March 1945

added another provision that total destruction of particularly important plants would be ordered by me. I never gave any such orders.

Hitler signed this decree in pencil, almost without discussion, after he had made a few corrections in a trembling hand. He showed that he was still on top of the situation by one revision he made in the first sentence of the document. I had framed it as generally as possible, explaining that the purpose of the destructive measures was to prevent "the enemy from using these installations and facilities to increase his fighting strength." Seated wearily behind the map table in the situation room, Hitler limited it just to the industrial installations.

I think Hitler realized that he was making some important concessions. We talked a bit after he affixed his signature, and I found him willing to grant "that the scorched earth idea had no point in a country of such small area as Germany. It can only fulfill its purpose in vast spaces such as Russia." I made a note of this point and filed it away.

As usual, Hitler's actions were double-edged. That same evening he had ordered the commanders in chief "to intensify to the most fanatical level the struggle against the enemy who is now in movement. The nature of this struggle permits no consideration for the population to be taken."⁸

Within the hour I gathered together all available motorcycles, automobiles, and orderlies and descended on the printing plant and the teletype offices, determined to halt, by virtue of my restored authority, the destruction that was already in progress. By four o'clock in the morning I was having my implementation orders distributed—without, as was provided, bothering with Hitler's authorization. I boldly renewed all my previous instructions on the safeguarding of industrial installations, power plants, gasworks, and waterworks as well as food plants—the same instructions that Hitler had declared invalid on March 19. I promised that detailed instructions for the total destruction of industry would be forthcoming—and never issued them.

Again without authorization from Hitler, I ordered ten to twelve food trains to proceed to the immediate vicinity of the encircled Ruhr area. Together with General Winter of the Wehrmacht Operations Staff, I drew up an edict which was intended to stop the destruction of bridges; but Keitel frustrated this. I made an agreement with SS Obergruppenführer (Lieutenant General) Frank, who was respon-

sible for the Wehrmacht to tribute the supplies representative in destruction of bridges.

The next day a prisoner of war sioner General Frank practiced using a machine gun on one. After carefully examining it, he admitted that he did not want to use it. He wished to prevent it from coming to a similar fate to whom I visited on March 19.

On April 3, in the morning, during the blowing of the wind, More and more things were being requested in requesting answers each other crippled.*

* For instance, a

Radio message—
To Reich Minister
Berlin W 8

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My answer re

To Gauleiter Ullrich

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March 1945

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(Signed) Speer

Even in the situation conferences at the beginning of April, Hitler was still talking about counteroperations, about attacks upon the Western enemy's exposed flanks—the Allied troops were now beyond Kassel and moving forward at a swift pace toward Eisenach. Hitler continued to send his divisions from one place to the other—a cruel, phantom war game. For when I would come back from a visit to the front and check the previous day's movements of our troops on the map, I could only note that I had seen nothing of them in the region I had driven through—and what troops I had passed consisted of soldiers without heavy weapons, armed solely with rifles.

I, too, was now daily holding a minor situation conference at which my liaison officer to the General Staff gave me the latest information—contrary to an order of Hitler's incidentally, for he had forbidden the military to brief nonmilitary government authorities on the military situation. Poser was able to tell me with fair exactness from day to day which area would be occupied by the enemy in the next twenty-four hours. These sober reports had nothing in common with the deliberately misty situation reporting that went on in the bunker underneath the Chancellery. There, nothing was said about evacuations and retreats. It seemed to me that the General Staff under General Krebs had finally abandoned giving Hitler accurate information and had settled for keeping him busy with war games. When, contrary to the situation report of the evening, cities and whole areas proved next day to have already fallen, Hitler remained perfectly calm. Now he no longer flew at the members of his entourage, as he had done only a few weeks before. He seemed resigned.

At the beginning of April, Hitler had summoned Field Marshal Kesselring, the western Commander in Chief, to him. By chance I happened to be present at this ridiculous conversation. Kesselring tried to explain the hopelessness of the situation to Hitler. But he had spoken no more than a few sentences when Hitler seized the floor and began lecturing the Field Marshal on how he intended to annihilate the American wedge advancing toward Eisenach by attacking it on the flank with a few hundred tanks. He would create a colossal panic and thus drive the Western enemy back out of Germany again. Hitler went off into long explications of the notorious inability of American soldiers to accept defeats, although the Battle of the Bulge had just proved the opposite. At the time I was angry with Kesselring for agreeing, after only briefly demurring, to these fantasies and en-

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tering into a discussion of Hitler's plans with seeming seriousness. But I realized later that there was no point getting excited about battles that would never be fought.

At one of the subsequent conferences Hitler again explained his idea of a flank attack. As dryly as possible I interjected: "If everything is destroyed, the recovery of these areas will do me no good at all." Hitler said nothing. I ventured a step further: "I cannot rebuild the bridges so quickly."

Hitler, obviously in a euphoric mood, replied: "Don't worry, Herr Speer, not as many bridges have been destroyed as I have ordered."

Just as good-humoredly, almost jokingly, I replied that I felt rather odd at being pleased with the disobedience of an order. To my surprise, Hitler was prepared to look at a new decree I had prepared.

When I showed Keitel the draft, he lost his temper for a moment. "Why still another change! We already have the demolition order. . . . No war can be waged without blowing up bridges!" Finally he agreed to my draft, though making minor emendations in the text, and Hitler signed the new instructions. It was now official policy to do no more than cripple transportation and communications facilities and to postpone destroying bridges until the last moment. Once again, three weeks before the end, I extracted Hitler's consent to this final statement: "With regard to all measures for demolition and evacuation, it must be borne in mind . . . that when lost territory is recovered these installations should be usable for German production."¹¹ Hitler did, however, strike out a clause that destruction should be postponed "even if the enemy's rapid movement creates the risk that a bridge . . . may fall into his hands before it can be destroyed."

That same day General Praun, the chief of the Signal Corps, revoked his order of March 27, 1945, canceled all demolition instructions, and even quietly ordered the safeguarding of the stockpiles, since they might be handy after the war for restoring the communications network. Hitler's reason for destroying communications was in any case senseless, he commented, since the enemy carried his own cable and radio stations with him. I do not know whether the Transportation Chief canceled his decree on laying waste to all transportation facilities. Keitel, in any case, refused to issue new instructions on the basis of Hitler's latest decree since this might be subject to further interpretation.¹²

Keitel quite rightly took me to task for having created unclear com-

mand relationships by eliciting nineteen days between March and twelve contradictory decrees, the chaotic command situation to limit chaos in the future.

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with a swastika badge, and the special orthopedic shoes.¹² The sounds of combat had almost died away—it was the Russian labor day.

TOWARD mid-morning the colonel came back from the Russian HQ, his uniform torn by barbed wire. He reported that General Krebs had been conducted to the Eighth Guards Army command post on the edge of Tempelhof airfield. The commanding officer, General Vassili Ivanovich Chuikov, had heard him out; but after conferring by phone with Marshal Zhukov the Russians had refused to discuss anything but unconditional surrender. There could be no talk of a limited armistice. Krebs had argued, as instructed, that it was in Stalin's interest to recognize the new Goebbels government at once. General Chuikov had repeated the Soviet refusal. Krebs had sent the colonel back to the chancellery with a Soviet signals team to run a field telephone line in to the bunker. But the cable had proved too short by several hundred yards.¹³

With his Führer dead, all the stuffing had gone out of Bormann. The colonel later said that while Bormann was falling apart, he saw no sign of fear in Goebbels. 'Goebbels was calm, clear spoken, and polite. I did notice red blotches in his face—they betrayed his emotions.'

Goebbels asked how long 'Berlin' could hold out.

'Two days, maximum,' replied the colonel. 'Just pockets of resistance after that.'

'Do you think Krebs has any chance of doing a deal?'

'I believe not,' said the colonel, and repeated: 'The Soviets are insisting on total surrender.'

'Never!' exclaimed Goebbels. 'I shall never, never, never give them that.'

Toward eleven A.M. he ordered: 'Fetch Krebs back. I want to hear what he has to say.'

The record shows that Krebs left the Soviet HQ at 1:08 P.M. It must have been after two o'clock before he arrived in the chancellery bunker. He found officers scurrying hither and thither, many smoking cigarettes and clutching bottles in their hands. Goebbels accused Krebs of having failed to state his terms forcefully enough to the Russians. Instead he had allowed them to take him in with worthless assurances about treating any prisoners according to the conventions.

That was his last official conference. For a while he sauntered up and down, softly whistling two Nazi marching songs.¹⁴ He had given up hope. Krebs' negative report had been the death sentence on the Goebbels family. He authorized the remaining bunker occupants and propaganda ministry staff to stage their mass breakout attempt after dark, around nine P.M. To Dönitz he sent this explicit message at three P.M.:

Führer deceased yesterday at 3:30 P.M. Testament of April 29 confers office of Reich president on you, office of Reich chancellor on Reich minister Dr Goebbels, office of party minister on Reichsleiter Bormann, office of Reich foreign minister on Reichsleiter Seyss-

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Inquart. Upon Führer's orders copies of the testament were dispatched to you, to Field Marshal Schörner, and conveyed out of Berlin for public safekeeping. Reichsleiter Bormann will try to get to you today to explain the situation. Manner and time of announcement to public and troops are at your own discretion. Acknowledge receipt. GOEBBELS.¹⁵

He and Bormann sent an officer to tell the Russians that their terms were refused and to repudiate any assurances that General Krebs might have given them.¹⁶

Magda phoned her young S.S. dentist friend in the other bunker. 'Time's running out,' she said.

Kunz hurried over, though not bringing any 'medicines' with him yet. He arrived outside the Goebbels' quarters as Axmann was asking, 'Have you decided, Herr Reich minister?' Magda, who also momentarily forgot to refer to her husband as Chancellor, replied: 'The gauleiter of Berlin and his family are staying in Berlin and will die here.'

'Doctor,' said Goebbels in a matter-of-fact way to the dentist. 'I'd be grateful if you would help my wife to put the children to sleep.'¹⁷

It was about five P.M.¹⁸ Magda had changed into a yellow and brown knitted dress; she had her platinum-blonde hair swept up, and held in place with hairpins and clips. Anxious to get the awful deed behind her she plucked at the dentist's sleeve. 'Our troops are pulling out,' she said. 'The Russians may get in at any moment. We've got to hurry.' She selected a syringe from a cupboard, and handed it to Kunz. 'Morphine,' she explained, and led the way to the other bunker.

'Not to worry,' Magda said brightly to her children, giving each a chocolate. 'The doctor here is going to give you each a little jab that all the other children and soldiers are getting.'¹⁹

That was all. Choking, she turned and left the room. Rach the chauffeur stepped in briefly to say good-bye to the children: Lying, he told them he was going on a journey. Helga, the eldest, wearing a light-blue night-dress with lace trimmings, would be first. Hands trembling, the dentist began to inject the narcotics—into Helga, twelve, Hilde, eleven, then nine-year-old Hellmut, who was wearing white pajamas decorated with a turquoise and red flowered pattern, and the three little sisters Holde, Hedda, and Heide, aged eight, seven, and four.²⁰ It took nearly ten minutes.

'We'll have to wait ten minutes until they're asleep,' the dentist told Magda outside. But there was one hitch—he refused to administer the actual poison himself. She snapped at him to fetch Dr Stumpfegger.²¹

Three or four minutes later the S.S. surgeon found her in the children's room silently watching over her drugged family. Stumpfegger, a family man himself, meticulously laid out six ampoules—each a phial of bluish glass with a red dot in the middle. While Magda gently prized open each mouth, Stumpfegger gingerly crushed the phial with his long, slender fingers and tipped it and its contents in. Young Hellmut still had the wire

brace around his upper teeth—they had always protruded just like his father's.²²

She would have had a heart of ice not to be riven asunder by what she had done. She rushed outside as soon as the sixth child, the youngest, had been dispatched and threw her arms around Günter Schwägermann's neck. The burly six-footer steadied her in his strong arms for a moment. Stumpfegger came out and nodded to her meaningfully. She fainted in their arms.²³ When Rach came in, a few minutes later, he found her closing the dead children's eyes and kissing each one tenderly on the forehead. 'It's so wretched for me,' she said, sobbing loudly. 'It was so painful bringing each one into the world.'²⁴ They led her downstairs to her husband. 'It's done,' she said. 'The children are dead. Now for ourselves.'

IN the other bunker Günsche and Mohnke briefed the several hundred people who had gathered for the breakout. The women buckled on helmets and side arms too.²⁵

At first the new chancellor instructed Rach and Schwägermann to bury the children's, Magda's, and his own bodies properly in the gardens; reluctant to risk lives needlessly in such an effort, the adjutant talked him out of it and promised to see that the bodies were completely cremated.²⁶ Goebbels told Naumann that he and Magda would kill themselves as soon as the mass breakout began: 'I don't want to survive just to put my signature on a surrender document,' he said.²⁷ It was 7:55 P.M. when Naumann returned to the ruined ministry building.²⁸

For the next half-hour Joseph Goebbels paced restlessly up and down smoking, like a party host discreetly waiting for his last guests to leave. Hitler's remaining staff said their farewells. He pulled a wry grin at Traudl Junge and wished her well. 'You might just make it,' he appraised. He told Hans Baur, the pilot, 'If you should reach Dömitz, tell him of our life down here these last few days.' At eight-fifteen he called in Schwägermann, as the last squads of men and women, bristling with machine pistols, carbines, and grenades, made their way past to the breakout assembly point in the coal bunker, and told him, 'We've got to hurry now, there's very little time.' He added, 'Schwägermann, this was the worst treachery of all. The generals have betrayed our Führer. It's the end of everything.' Again he implored his adjutant, 'You *will* burn our bodies—are you capable of that?' He gave him the silver-framed Hitler portrait that had stood on his desk for nearly twenty years. Magda took the S.S. Hauptsturmführer's hand and said, 'If you ever see Harald again, greet him from us and say that we went honorably to our deaths.'²⁹

Schwägermann directed Rach to fetch the gasoline. The stocky, dark-complexioned driver returned with an orderly, probably S.S. Scharführer Ochs, carrying several canisters and a small swastika flag.

Magda turned to her husband. 'Don't let's die down here in the bunker,' she said.

'No, of course not. We'll go up into the garden.'

With a greater sense of history than of the realities of the situation outside, Magda said: 'Not the garden. Wilhelm Platz—that's where you have spent your working life.'

He went to the coat-rack, took his trench coat, adjusted the dark-blue spotted scarf round his neck, carefully pulled on his yellow-leather gloves, and donned his light-gray snap-brimmed fedora. He put the pistol into his pocket, offered Magda his arm. The couple emerged wordlessly from their room and passed Schwägermann and Ochs as though already ghosts.

THE rest can only be pieced together from the uncertain evidence of the Soviet autopsies.³⁰ These afford no real clue to who died first or even how. The Russians found the splinters of a poison phial in the right side of Dr Goebbels' jaw. Magda too had swallowed poison. Like Hitler, he had probably also shot himself. Schwägermann certainly heard one shot—others heard two; on Schwägermann's orders Ochs fired two *coups de grâce* into the motionless bodies.³¹ The S.S. officers made only cursory attempts to burn the remains. A Walther pistol was found near them a few days later when the Russians tipped the two corpses onto a red and gold door ripped out of the chancellery building. The corpses were loaded onto a truck and driven away.

There was one feature about the little Doctor, even in death, that caught the Soviet pathologist's attention. His fists were raised, as though spoiling for a fight.³² Perhaps, somewhere, for Dr Joseph Goebbels the dialectical battle was already beginning anew.

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It was a ghostly experience to find all those who at the end had scattered like chaff in the wind reassembled here. I kept to one side, eager to absorb as much as possible of the quiet of the place. Just once I spoke to Kesselring, asking him why he had continued to blow up bridges instead of sparing them after the command communications to Hitler had been broken. With his inflexible military mentality he replied that bridges had to be destroyed as long as fighting was going on; as Commander in Chief nothing concerned him but the safety of his soldiers.

Soon quarrels over rank began. Goering was Hitler's proclaimed successor of earlier years, Doenitz the Chief of State whom Hitler had appointed at the last moment; but as Reich Marshal, Goering was also the highest-ranking military officer. There was a muffled battle between the new Chief of State and the deposed successor over the question of who should take precedence in the Palace Hotel of Mondorf (which had been emptied of all persons but ourselves and our guards) and who in general was top dog of us all. No agreement could be reached. Soon the two principals avoided meeting at the door, while each took the presiding seat at two different tables in the dining room. Goering especially never forgot his station. When Dr. Brandt once casually referred to all he had lost, Goering interrupted snappishly: "Oh, come, don't you talk! You haven't any reason to complain. After all, what did you have! But I! When I'd had so much. . . ."

Barely two weeks after we were taken to Mondorf I was told that I was going to be transferred. From then on the Americans treated me with just a shade of respect. Many of my fellow prisoners interpreted this transfer overoptimistically as a call to assist in the reconstruction of Germany, for they were not yet used to the idea that things really could be managed without us. I was delegated to bring regards to friends and relatives. A car waited outside the entrance to the Palace Hotel, not a truck this time but a limousine, and my guard was not an MP with a submachine gun but a lieutenant who saluted courteously. We drove westward past Reims toward Paris. In the center of the city the lieutenant got out at an administration building and soon returned equipped with a map and fresh orders. We headed upstream along the Seine. In my confusion I thought that we were making for the Bastille, quite forgetting that it had long ago been torn

down. But the lieutenant until I realized with my school English, I offer station that he told me in Versailles. I knew it 1937 when I was desig Fair.

Luxury cars and hotels was no prison camp but was actually Eisenhower side while I sat quietly. I offered driving up. After avenue. We drove past a place whose gates opened

For several weeks I on the third floor of the army cot and a chair. An armed guard was present

The next day I had to the front. Surrounded by beyond whose high walls Versailles could be glimpsed an idyllic atmosphere. An armed soldier followed the other prisoners, but they were almost exclusively cultural and railroad staff. I recognized Pils as one of his assistants, with whom I had worked. The guard was withdrawn, so that, the monotonous psychological state improved by my Ministry, among technical officers of the expanded their knowledge, agreed that we ought to armaments at their disposal

I could not contribute