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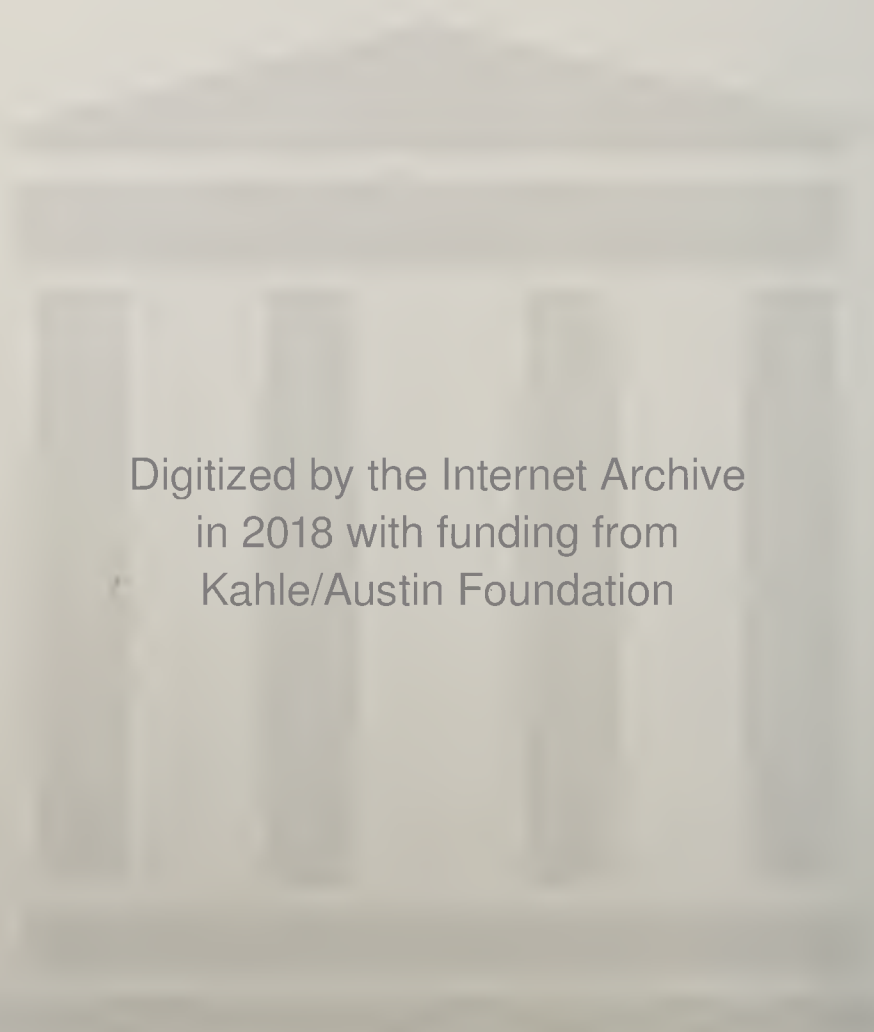
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# **Hitler—Memoirs of a Confidant**

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**Edited by Henry Ashby Turner, Jr.  
Translated by Ruth Hein**

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**Yale University Press: New Haven and London**

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## Editor's Introduction

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### *Hitler's Confidant: Otto Wagener (April 29, 1888–August 9, 1971)*

Otto Wagener is an unknown name to most readers, even those well versed in the history of Nazism. Yet he was a prominent official in the Nazi Party with close ties to Adolf Hitler from the autumn of 1929 until the summer of 1933. Wagener served as chief of staff for the storm troop auxiliary, the SA; headed the Economic Policy Section of the party's national executive (Reichsleitung); worked on special assignment for Hitler in Berlin; headed the party's Economic Policy Office during the early months of the Third Reich; and briefly served as commissar for the economy.

Wagener fell into disfavor with Hitler at the end of June 1933. This cost him his posts in the party and the government—and, until recently, his place in history. In spite of his many earlier activities on behalf of the Nazi Party (NSDAP), Wagener was politically neutralized for the duration of the Third Reich. He retained only his nominal rank as SA group leader and a meaningless seat in the rubber-stamp Nazi legislature, the Reichstag, which rarely even convened.

Otto Wagener became one of the first “un-persons” of Nazi Germany as a result of his fall from favor. His name was seldom mentioned in publications of the Third Reich, which either played down his earlier prominence or rewrote the past to omit his significance altogether.<sup>1</sup> Such efforts to write Wagener out of the history of the Nazi Party long succeeded in misleading those who sought to reconstruct that history after Hitler's regime had collapsed.<sup>2</sup> Only in recent

1. Despite Wagener's having served as storm troop chief of staff, a Nazi history of the SA did not even mention his name: Manfred von Killinger, *Die S.A. in Wort und Bild* (Leipzig, 1933).

2. In most historical studies, Wagener has been referred to only as an advocate of corporatism in the NSDAP: Gerhard Schulz in K. D. Bracher, W. Sauer, and G. Schulz, *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung* (Cologne and Opladen, 1960), p. 396; Raimund Rämisch, “Der berufsständische Gedanke als Episode in der nationalsozialistischen Politik,” in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, n.F. 4 (1957): pp. 265–66; Heinrich August Winkler, *Mittelstand, Demokratie und Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne, 1972), pp. 174, 183–84. Exceptions are provided by Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers* (Munich, 1969), pp. 77, 218–19; Gerhard Schulz, *Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt and Berlin, 1975), pp. 624–33; and Avraham Barkai, *Das Wirtschaftssystem des Nationalsozialismus* (Cologne, 1977), which draws upon the Wagener manuscript memoir.

years have studies of the rise of Nazism and the early phase of the Third Reich begun to acknowledge Wagener's role. But accounts of his political career are often contradictory and sometimes fundamentally wrong. Wagener remains a largely overlooked figure of that key period in the development of National Socialism.

Wagener was born in 1888 in the city of Durlach in Baden, in the southwestern corner of the German Empire. He grew up in Karlsruhe, Baden's capital, in a solidly middle-class Protestant family.<sup>3</sup> His father, originally from Braunschweig in north-central Germany, headed a medium-sized company which manufactured sewing machines and bicycles. The boy completed studies at a classical secondary school, or *Gymnasium*, before beginning the first of his many associations with the military.

Wagener enrolled at a special military school and later attended the prestigious Prussian War Academy in Berlin. As a cadet he participated in the lavish social whirl of the last peacetime years of the imperial capital. When the First World War broke out, Wagener entered the army, where he attained the rank of captain. In 1916 he was appointed to the General Staff, the nerve center of the Prusso-German military establishment.

After the defeat of the Reich, Wagener remained an officer in one of the Free Corps, the mercenary units formed to replace the disintegrating army of the empire. His unit fought in the Baltic region during 1919 in the often ferocious postwar clashes of Germans, Poles, and Russians, as each national group sought to establish or maintain its authority in an area where prewar boundaries were no longer valid and new ones had not yet been defined. Wagener returned to Germany at the end of 1919, and early in 1920 he took part in Free Corps actions against the Poles in Upper Silesia and against German leftists in Saxony and the Ruhr.

In March 1920 Free Corps units, including Wagener's, attempted to overthrow the republic in the rightist Kapp Putsch. When they failed, Wagener served time in prison in Baden. There he wrote a book which described his experiences fighting in the Baltic, revealed his scorn for the new Weimar Republic and its political leaders, and expressed a militant anti-Bolshevik stance. The book fully endorsed the "stab-in-the-back" legend according to which the German army had not lost the war in 1918 but had instead been traitorously struck down from behind on the home front; the traitors had gone on to impose upon Germany a democratic, republican constitution that was

3. This biographical sketch is based on the memoirs and the following: SA questionnaire filled out by Wagener on January 28, 1937, now located in the Sammlung S.A. Personalakten in the Berlin Document Center; Edgar von Schmidt-Pauli, *Die Männer um Hitler* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 141–48; E. Kienast, ed., *Der Deutsche Reichstag 1936* (Berlin, 1936), pp. 340–41; Cuno Horckenbach, ed., *Das Deutsche Reich von 1918 bis heute* (Berlin, 1935), p. 1043; H. A. L. Degener, ed., *Wer ist's?*, 10th ed. (Berlin, 1935), p. 1667.

foreign to its traditions and ruinous for the nation's strength and well-being. Wagener published his book in Stuttgart in the spring of 1920.<sup>4</sup>

After his release from prison in 1920, Wagener entered business. He studied economics briefly, then worked as a junior executive at a factory which produced specialized industrial equipment. Later he moved to his father's firm in Karlsruhe. Wagener soon became a director of the company and a member of the managing board. He was also named to the supervisory boards of a number of other companies.

Wagener took an active role in politics during the 1920s, at which time he described himself as politically on the right although he belonged to no party. In 1920–21 he headed the Baden branch of the Organisation Escherich, a conservative paramilitary group that attracted many former Free Corps men. He also participated in the presidential election of 1925, joining the Baden branch of the rightist bloc which supported the candidacy of Karl Jarres. When Jarres failed to receive enough votes for election on the first ballot, the rightist bloc succeeded in nominating Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, who won the election in the second round of voting.

Wagener's network of contacts expanded significantly during the post-war decade. When he left his father's firm in 1925, he added to his colleagues there the new ones he met as a partner in a wholesale business that dealt in plywood and other specialized wood products. He played an active part, sometimes in a leading capacity, in a variety of associations connected with his business interests. Wagener also retained acquaintances among the social and military circles of his past; his contacts extended even into academic circles, where he was occasionally called upon to give guest lectures. In 1924 the University of Würzburg awarded him an honorary doctorate.<sup>5</sup> By the end of the decade, in 1929, Wagener—relatively prosperous at age forty-one, divorced, and without children—was a man of impressive connections.

Much greater detail is known about the next three eventful years of Wagener's life. In the summer of 1929, he unexpectedly received an invitation to the Nuremberg Party Congress of the Nazis. Beginning with his attendance at that congress and continuing through January 1933, Wagener recounted his experiences in the memoirs that are the foundation of this book. The translated

4. *Von der Heimat geächtet*; a second edition appeared in 1935 in Stuttgart. Wagener also described some of his Baltic experiences in two essays in Ernst von Salomon, ed., *Das Buch vom deutschen Freikorpskämpfer* (Berlin, 1938), pp. 206–213.

5. In the memoirs Wagener attributes the award of the honorary degree to his "services toward rescuing Germany from Bolshevism." Since, according to a communication from Dr. M. Seelkopf of the library of the University of Würzburg to the editor (December 23, 1976), the records of the philosophical faculty were burned in the war, no direct documentation of the award could be found. But two speeches by the rector of the university in 1924–25 reveal that Wagener had made generous financial contributions to the university in the year he received the degree: *Zwei Rektoratsreden von Dr. A. Chroust, o. Prof. d. neueren Geschichte: Mit einer Chronik der Universität für das Jahr 1924–25* (Würzburg, 1925), Sign. Hbk XIV, 1544, pp. 57–59 (citation supplied by Dr. Seelkopf).

excerpts presented here deal with the period when Wagener belonged to Hitler's immediate entourage.

This book does not include the last section of the memoirs because Wagener was by then no longer close to Hitler. Following the events covered herein the memoirs continue, describing Wagener's relinquishing of his position in the Munich national executive of the party in mid-September 1932 and events in Berlin during January 1933 in which he participated. At this point, Wagener's writing ceased, and subsequent events in his life are not as fully understood. His brief term during the spring of 1933 as Commissar for the Economy remains an obscure episode in the early phase of the Third Reich. The same is true of his sudden fall from Hitler's favor at the end of June 1933. It is clear, however, that his dismissal came about as a result of efforts by some of his subordinates to promote him for the post of economics minister when the conservative Alfred Hugenberg resigned that position. Either Hitler took offense at this campaign on Wagener's behalf or he chose to use it as a pretext to rid himself of an associate for whom he no longer felt any need.<sup>6</sup>

The withdrawal of Hitler's backing put an abrupt end to Wagener's political career. In spite of his imposing titles he commanded no power base of his own and enjoyed the support of no other important figures in the Nazi Party. His closest associates in the party, Franz Pfeffer von Salomon and Gregor Strasser, had left the leadership ranks after clashes with Hitler. A well-to-do man of affairs, unattuned to the milieu of the party's leadership and accustomed to operating largely on his own, Wagener remained an outsider to most of the Nazi old guard and thus found no support when his political star declined.

Wagener's independent manner and his special relationship with Hitler won him important enemies among the leading figures of the party. The most implacable of these was Hermann Göring, who apparently played a key role in Wagener's fall from favor. Göring's hostility, along with Wagener's earlier position as SA chief of staff, led to Wagener's arrest at the time of the "blood purge" on June 30, 1934, which Göring carried out with the far-reaching powers granted him by Hitler. According to his widow, Wagener escaped the

6. According to an extensive account written by Wagener, he was summoned to Hitler at the Reich Chancellery on the evening of June 28, 1933. When he arrived, he was kept waiting, whereas Göring, who arrived after he did, was at once admitted to Hitler's office. When he was called in, Wagener found Hitler greatly agitated. At Hitler's instruction, Göring read aloud portions of intercepted telephone conversations in which Wagener's associates had sought to promote him for the post of economics minister. According to Wagener, Hitler said to him after Göring had finished: "I actually called you in to tell you that I wanted to appoint you state secretary in the economics ministry. But that is out now." Hitler then ordered Göring to arrest Wagener's associates and have them interrogated. They ended up in a concentration camp. Wagener himself was interrogated but not arrested. He had no opportunity to tell Hitler his side of the story. He told it, however, in the long account drawn on here, which he submitted to the party court on January 22, 1934, in order to initiate a trial for himself. In its verdict, the court came to the conclusion that the telephone calls and telegrams of Wagener's associates had not been instigated by him (decision of November 17, 1936). Both Wagener's account and the decision are located in the Akten des Obersten Parteigerichts in the Berlin Document Center.



massacre that befell many other Nazis on that occasion only through an extraordinary stroke of luck.<sup>7</sup>

Having seen for himself the terroristic and murderous methods of the Third Reich, Wagener withdrew to a country estate in Saxony, where he pursued agriculture and business during the 1930s. Aside from occasional attendance at the infrequent and inconsequential sessions of the Reichstag, he seems to have avoided any political activity. He encountered Hitler only rarely and fleetingly at large gatherings such as the Bayreuth festivals and, so far as is known, no longer enjoyed any close contact with the man who had become dictator of Germany.

During the Second World War Wagener again served in the army. He entered as a captain and had attained the rank of major general by the end of the war, when he surrendered to the British the remaining German forces on the island of Rhodes. After seven years in British and Italian internment, he returned to Germany in 1952 and settled in Bavaria, where he dabbled in nationalistic politics until his death in 1971 at the age of eighty-three.<sup>8</sup>

### *The Origin, Form, and Location of Wagener's Memoirs*

Wagener wrote his memoirs while interned in the British camp for German officers at Bridgend in Wales during 1946. He filled thirty-six British military exercise notebooks—approximately twenty-three hundred pages—with his narrative. The notebooks contain pages about six by eight inches and bear the inspection stamps placed on them by the British camp officials.

Thirty-four notebooks are open to research. The handwriting, in ink, is by one person who tightly crammed the pages with text. Blank spaces, usually of no more than part of a page, indicate the end of one passage and the beginning of another. Numerous amendments and alterations in the same handwriting appear to have been entered during the initial writing of the memoirs. Apparently after Wagener reviewed what he had previously written, he often decided to make a lengthy amendment. He habitually broke off his narrative and wrote what he wished to add to an earlier section, providing a reference to the earlier page which he was amending. When he finished the amendment, he resumed his interrupted narrative. That is, he engaged in an alternating process of composition and revision.

7. In an interview with the editor at Chieming in Bavaria, on May 24, 1976, Frau Wagener related that her husband was arrested at the time of the purge, placed with other prisoners in a van, and driven toward a location used as an execution site. He survived when the van broke down on the way to the site and his guards placed him in a local jail, from which friends were able to arrange his release.

8. For information on Wagener's postwar political activities, see Kurt Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika: German Nationalism Since 1945*, 2 vols. (Middletown, 1967), 1:176; 2:1082, n. 226. According to Tauber, during the 1950s Wagener was chairman of the Seeckt-Gesellschaft, a neutralist-nationalist organization in West Germany.

There is no indication of any later revision of the memoirs by Wagener. The rare entries in the handwriting of someone other than Wagener are either marginal or interlinear suggestions about the choice of words; they do not intrude on the integrity of the manuscript. Without question, the notebooks comprise an authentic set of memoirs written by Otto Wagener in 1946 while a British prisoner of war and not altered thereafter.

The original memoirs are followed by Wagener's handwritten postscript dated July 16, 1958, entered at the point where his memoirs abruptly terminate. He explains that he had broken off his writing at the end of December 1946 when he was transferred from Bridgend to a prison in London for investigation in connection with war crimes in Italy. Before leaving Wales, he placed the memoirs in a suitcase which he turned over to a representative of the Red Cross with the request that it be sent to his wife in Germany. The 1958 postscript states that after a lengthy period the suitcase reached his wife in damaged condition, but with the notebooks containing the memoirs intact.

In January 1947 Wagener was sent to Italy, where the demanding prison regimen and the need to prepare his defense against war-crimes charges kept him from continuing his memoirs. He finally returned to Germany in 1952, but he did not continue with the memoirs then either. When he did start writing again, in the summer of 1958, he chose to write essays on certain topics rather than pick up the narrative of his memoirs.

Wagener's memoirs are preserved in the archive of the Munich Institut für Zeitgeschichte, which purchased them in 1957 and has made them available to researchers. They form the greater part of the collection entitled "Aufzeichnungen des Gen. Maj. a.D. Dr. h.c. Otto Wagener," which bears the designation ED 60 and the reference number 2103/57. This collection consists of thirty-four of the thirty-six notebooks Wagener wrote while at Bridgend (including a short supplementary notebook on the meeting of rightist groups at Bad Harzburg in October 1931) and a folder containing seven short typewritten essays—198 pages—on a variety of themes or sequences of events. These essays apparently are the supplements to the memoirs which Wagener describes having recently written in the postscript to the memoirs dated July 16, 1958. Because they were written more than a decade later and under very different circumstances from the original memoirs and because they depart so markedly from those memoirs in both form and tone, they have not been taken into account in this volume.

Two of the original notebooks of Wagener's Bridgend memoirs are missing from the collection in the Institut für Zeitgeschichte. They were retained by Wagener at the time of the sale to the Institut on the grounds that they dealt solely with his private life.<sup>9</sup>

9. See the table of contents prepared for the manuscript memoirs, Bestand ED 60, Institut für Zeitgeschichte.

## *The Memoirs as Historical Source*

Wagener's memoirs are a historical source of exceptional richness and breadth, not only for an important period in the life of the future dictator Hitler but also for a formative stage in the development of the Nazi Party and its paramilitary auxiliary, the SA. Contemporaneous documents leave no doubt that Wagener was in a position to observe both Hitler and the party leadership at first hand. The value of his recollections is further enhanced by the rarity of such first-hand reports for the years covered by his memoirs.

In many respects, Wagener's memoirs resemble the well-known account of conversations with Hitler which the renegade Nazi Hermann Rauschning published in 1939 and upon which historians have long relied as an indispensable source of information about the Hitler of the early 1930s.<sup>10</sup> Rauschning's book and Wagener's memoirs belong in the same category of historical sources. Both were written years after the events they describe, and in both cases the authors attempted to reconstruct verbatim long conversations with Hitler.

Both Wagener and Rauschning reported that they had made notations on those conversations at the time, but in neither case are any such notations known ever to have been seen by anyone else. Rauschning maintained that he still had the notations on his conversations with Hitler when he wrote his book in exile in Paris in late 1939, describing meetings with Hitler during the years 1932–34. Whatever Rauschning possessed by way of records did not suffice, however, to enable him even to reconstruct an accurate chronology of his meetings with Hitler, much less to give a verbatim transcript of their conversations.<sup>11</sup> According to Rauschning, he wrote his book on the basis of three components: his notes, his memory, and information from others.<sup>12</sup> As the German historian Theodor Schieder has aptly observed, Rauschning employed direct discourse as a literary form, not as a means of precisely replicating the quoted words.<sup>13</sup> After painstakingly analyzing Rauschning's book, Schieder concluded that it "is not a document in which one can expect to find verbatim, stenographic records of sentences or aphorisms spoken by Hitler, despite the fact that it might appear to meet that standard. It is a document in which objective and subjective components are mixed and in which alterations in the author's opinions about what he recounts become mingled with what he recounts. It is, however, a document of unquestionable value, since it contains

10. Rauschning's book first appeared in French under the title *Hitler m'a dit* (Paris, 1939), then in German as *Gespräche mit Hitler* (Zurich, 1940), and in English translation as *The Voice of Destruction* (New York, 1940).

11. See the analysis by Theodor Schieder, *Hermann Rauschnings "Gespräche mit Hitler" als Geschichtsquelle* (Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vorträge G 178) (Opladen, 1972), pp. 63–65.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

13. *Ibid.*

views derived from immediate experience.”<sup>14</sup> On the basis of his examination of Rauschning’s book, Schieder accorded it, as the testimony of an intelligent witness, a high rating as a historical source. He ranked it alongside Albert Speer’s memoirs as one of the two most informative books of that sort about Hitler.

Much of Schieder’s evaluation can be applied to Wagener’s memoirs, with due allowance for the longer period that elapsed between the events they describe and the time when they were written. Rauschning wrote only five to seven years after the relevant events, whereas Wagener produced his memoirs fourteen to seventeen years later. As source material, Wagener had to rely solely on his memory. Several times in the memoirs, he mentions making notations after talking with Hitler; and after the war he reported having kept an irregular diary during his years in Hitler’s entourage. That diary, he stated, had for the most part been destroyed or rendered illegible during the war. In any case, as a prisoner of war in a foreign country when he wrote his memoirs, Wagener could not have used those notes. He claimed to have looked upon what he wrote in *Bridgend* less as a memoir than as a reconstruction and reworking of his diary from memory.<sup>15</sup> If one assumes that Wagener actually did keep some sort of diary during the years 1929–33 and that he—as does not seem implausible—read it repeatedly during his political exile following his fall from favor and his move to the Saxon countryside, then his point of departure as a memoirist does not differ fundamentally from that of Rauschning.

As in the case of Rauschning’s book, one cannot regard the utterances Wagener attributed to Hitler and others as verbatim quotations. On the other hand, Wagener’s recollections, like those of Rauschning, come from a person who repeatedly experienced Hitler at first hand. Even if one recognizes the impossibility of Wagener’s precisely reconstructing conversations that had taken place years before, his reports on talks with Hitler and others in which he, like Rauschning, personally participated offer an opportunity to establish the topics that were discussed in the inner circle of the Nazi Party, as well as the points of view expressed by Hitler and other top Nazis. That information, which must, of course, be checked against that in other sources, makes Wagener’s memoirs a valuable addition to the historical record.

Compared with Rauschning, Wagener is a better qualified witness. In his analysis of Rauschning’s book, Theodor Schieder reckoned that Rauschning met with Hitler at most thirteen times. In only about half of those encounters was Rauschning alone with Hitler. Wagener, by contrast, maintained an office in the same Munich building which Hitler used as his headquarters, the Brown

14. *Ibid.*, p. 62 (translated by editor).

15. See the memorandum prepared by Martin Broszat of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, dated February 17, 1960, and based on a conversation with Wagener on February 5, 1960: archive of the Institut, Bestand ZS 1732, Aktenzeichen 2589/60. See also Wagener’s postscript to the memoirs of July 16, 1958, manuscript notebook 35: pp. 2212–15.

House.<sup>16</sup> Constantly in the immediate entourage of the Führer, he had many opportunities for confidential talks with him of the sort he recounts in the memoirs. He also accompanied Hitler on the latter's frequent travels through Germany.<sup>17</sup> During his three years as a member of the national executive of the Nazi Party, he undoubtedly found himself together with Hitler literally hundreds of times, often unaccompanied by others. It seems probable, although it cannot be proved, that Hitler would have spoken more openly with such a familiar companion than with a man like Rauschning, who lived in the distant free city of Danzig and visited him only sporadically. By comparison to Rauschning, Wagener was an insider in Nazi leadership circles. He knew far better than did the Danzig politician how to assess such prominent figures as Gregor Strasser, Hermann Göring, Joseph Goebbels, and Gottfried Feder, as well as the then still obscure Heinrich Himmler, Rudolf Hess, and Martin Bormann. As a high party official Wagener knew the organization better than did Rauschning and commanded many more sources of information about it than did the latter, who never belonged to the inner leadership circle. In addition, Wagener was cut off from contact with Hitler earlier than was Rauschning, who remained an active Nazi until the end of November 1934. Thus Wagener's recollections of the period before the "seizure of power" stand to be freer of distortions arising from impressions subsequently gained during the time when Hitler had become the all-powerful ruler of Germany.

Although Wagener demonstrably enjoyed closer and more frequent contact with Hitler and other prominent Nazis than did Rauschning, an evaluation of his memoirs as a historical source must turn upon the reliability of his memory. As in the case of Rauschning's book, Wagener's reports on conversations with Hitler offer only limited opportunities for validation. Where he records Hitler's fundamental political views and intentions, one can compare his versions with those in other sources. But where Wagener records conversations about other subjects, no such means for corroboration exist. On the other hand, Wagener's accounts of public events, his descriptions of organizations, especially those of the Nazi Party, and his identifications of individuals and their positions provide many opportunities to check the accuracy of his memory. Wherever possible, such checks were carried out in the preparation of this volume and the results registered in notes appended to the printed text. In the instances where such checks could be made, Wagener's memory proved highly reliable. Where mis-

16. According to a passage of the memoirs not included here (manuscript notebook 16: p. 1034), his Economic Policy Section, along with Darre's Agricultural Division, had to move to the Reichsadler Hotel in the autumn of 1931 because of a lack of space at the Brown House. Wagener seems, however, to have retained his own office in the Brown House; see Schmidt-Pauli, *Die Männer um Hitler*, pp. 15–17, 141–48; also Wagener's circular letter of May 24, 1932, Bundesarchiv, NS 22/11.

17. See, e.g., Albert Krebs, *Tendenzen und Gestalten der N.S.D.A.P.* (Stuttgart, 1959), pp. 149–50; memorandum by Eduard Dingeldey of the Deutsche Volkspartei on a talk with Hitler at the Deutscher Hof Hotel in Nuremberg on July 28, 1931, at which Wagener had been present: Bundesarchiv, Nachlass Dingeldey, 53 (alte Signatur).

takes occur, as in names, these arose not from invention but from understandable confusions on Wagener's part. In 1960 he maintained in a statement to the Institut für Zeitgeschichte that he had an unusually good memory, a contention that seems borne out by his memoirs.<sup>18</sup> In 1946, for example, he managed to cite, with a deviation of only 1 percent, a statistic arrived at in a publication by an associate in the Economic Policy Section of the party fourteen years earlier.<sup>19</sup> Obviously, Wagener was a man of unusual memory who had an eye and an ear for details. He was also accustomed, as one might expect of a former General Staff officer, to writing down his observations in extensive and precise form.

In the dating of events Wagener's memoirs are frequently unreliable. Since he had only very rudimentary reference materials at his disposal when he filled the British military exercise notebooks with his recollections at the camp in Bridgend, the chronological fixing of events understandably caused him great difficulties.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, he frequently sought to date both occurrences and events, thereby making numerous mistakes. In a few instances, this practice produced glaring anachronisms which are easily spotted, such as a reference to Franklin Roosevelt as president of the United States in a conversation supposedly taking place considerably before his election in 1932.<sup>21</sup> Other errors in dating are less easily established, but insofar as was possible with the aid of other information, such mistakes are noted. In general, caution must be exercised with regard to Wagener's chronology.

Wagener also indulged in a form of literary specificity which probably had little or no basis in fact. For example, in his accounts of occurrences that took place a decade and a half earlier, he specifies days of the week and hours of the day. Factual disregard also applies to his use of patently invented statistics, a practice endemic to Nazi propaganda techniques, especially those purporting to expose the dominance of Jews in certain sectors of German society.<sup>22</sup> These features of the memoirs are easily detected, and no attempt at correction is made. In some cases, the line between memory and invention remains unclear, so that caution is in order when evaluating Wagener's detailed accounts. Those

18. See Broszat's memorandum of February 17, 1960 (n. 15 above).

19. In a passage omitted here but included in the German edition of the memoirs (p. 334; see n. 40 below), Wagener describes citing, at one of the economic policy conferences attended by Hitler, an analysis of the tax structure by a member of the staff of his Economic Policy Section, Hermann Tholens. According to Wagener, Tholens had maintained that 19 percent of national income went to taxes in 1930. In a publication on the same subject, Tholens gave the figure as 18 percent: "Unsere vordringlichste Aufgabe," *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte*, Jg. 3, Heft 38 (July 1932): 309.

20. Wagener obtained from the British officials a not entirely accurate, typed list of the election results and cabinets of the Weimar Republic prepared at Wilton Park Training Centre; it is attached to the end of manuscript notebook 13.

21. See chapter 28. It is not unlikely that Wagener heard Hitler speak of Roosevelt after the latter's election or even inauguration, however.

22. See, e.g., the enormously inflated figures on the purported percentages of lawyers and judges who were Jewish which Wagener quotes Hitler as having cited in one of their conversations (Chapter 11).

accounts must be checked against other available sources on the period in question before they can be regarded as reliable.

Special caution is in order when the memoirs reflect Wagener's personal attitudes. This applies especially to some of his strongly biased treatments of persons he regarded as enemies. The most conspicuous example can be found in his descriptions of Hermann Göring, whom Wagener regarded as his arch-enemy within the party and the person ultimately responsible for his fall from favor and banishment from Hitler's entourage in 1933. The same sort of aversion, if to far lesser degrees, is apparent in Wagener's depictions of Gottfried Feder, Walther Funk, Heinrich Himmler, and, less consistently, of Joseph Goebbels. By contrast, Gregor Strasser, whom Wagener regarded as his closest ally in the party after the fall from favor of Franz Pfeffer von Salomon in the summer of 1930, appears in the memoirs in a very positive light, at least until 1932. In the course of that year, Wagener believed, Strasser's attitude toward him and his economic projects had markedly cooled because of the influence of Walther Funk, whom Wagener regarded as an advocate of economic liberalism.<sup>23</sup> In the earlier parts of the memoirs, Strasser is nevertheless depicted in a thoroughly sympathetic fashion, possibly in part because of his brutal murder at the time of the "blood purge" conducted by Göring in 1934.

### *Wagener's Hitler*

The element of subjectivity must be kept in mind in assessing Wagener's reports on his experiences and conversations with Hitler. In the memoirs, Hitler is unavoidably viewed through Wagener's eyes. The man seen and heard is thus to a considerable extent Wagener's version of Hitler. The problems this poses are essentially those faced in using Rauschnig's book, although with the value signs reversed. Whereas Rauschnig wrote as a renegade Nazi liberated from all illusions about Hitler and implacably opposed to him, Wagener's faith in the Führer survived even the Third Reich's total defeat in the Second World War. When he wrote his memoirs in 1946, Wagener still believed in the tenets of National Socialism, in its rejection of democracy, in its conspiracy theories, and in its racial prejudice. Only on certain aspects of foreign policy, such as the proper posture toward Great Britain on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other, and on the question of socio-economic priorities did Wagener differ with Hitler. And those differences developed, according to his account, well before his expulsion from Hitler's inner circle.

Despite his differences with Hitler, which form the subject of many of the conversations he recorded in his memoirs, Wagener had clearly preserved an unbroken belief in the Nazi leader, whom he saw as misled by unscrupulous

23. Wagener dwells on this development in the final section of the memoirs, which has been omitted from both this and the German edition. See especially manuscript notebook 33: pp. 1958–69 and 34: pp. 2102–03.

advisers such as Göring, Goebbels, and Himmler. These men had, in Wagener's view, falsified Hitler's teachings and, unbeknownst to him, committed the crimes of the Third Reich. If he and men like Gregor Strasser and Franz Pfeffer von Salomon had been allowed to guide Hitler, Wagener believed, everything could have turned out differently. But the triumph of the false Nazis who came to surround Hitler twisted the true national and social ideals of National Socialism into a chauvinistic nationalism that made of the Third Reich a perversion of Hitler's original intentions.<sup>24</sup> Despite this, Hitler himself remained for Wagener a positive, virtually superhuman being. His encounters with Hitler were the peak experiences of his life. In 1946 he confessed "to seeing in Adolf Hitler a phenomenon that had to be accepted just as it was, present among us and somehow set by providence in the human world, and specifically in Germany."<sup>25</sup> To Wagener, Hitler seemed nothing less than a genius possessed of prophetic powers. "Hitler granted one," he wrote in his memoirs, "a glimpse into the dimness of what was to come, which he pierced for moments at a time with something like the beam of a searchlight, illuminating things that ordinarily remained hidden from our human eyes."<sup>26</sup> When Hitler spoke about his "teachings," Wagener detected something godlike. "Hitler no longer sat, and he did not stand; instead, he was merely 'word' and spoke with luminous eyes and a radiant gaze. And I took into myself only the eye and the Logos that spoke from within him."<sup>27</sup> When he wrote his memoirs, Wagener regarded himself as the "guardian of the grail," that is, of the new gospel proclaimed by Adolf Hitler but distorted by false disciples.<sup>28</sup>

Wagener obviously found it very difficult, if not impossible, to come to terms in 1946 with the collapse of the Third Reich and with Hitler's ignominious suicide in his Berlin bunker. Frequently he wrote of Hitler in the present tense, as if he were still alive. There are also several passages in the memoirs which suggest that he toyed with the idea of making it appear that he had written them before the war, when Hitler still seemed a highly successful statesman.<sup>29</sup> Nowhere in the memoirs does Wagener directly address Hitler's ultimately total failure or the appallingly criminal consequences of his political career. That apparently exceeded his capacity for understanding what had, with his complicity, befallen his country and much of Europe. For this very reason, the record of Wagener's mentality which emerges from the memoirs, in part intentionally, in part inadvertently, merits attention. For it provides valuable insights

24. See manuscript notebook 33: p. 1942 and 34: pp. 2108–12 (not included in either English or German edition).

25. See p. 245.

26. See p. 301.

27. See manuscript notebook 34: p. 2139 (not included in either English or German edition).

28. See chapter 52.

29. See especially the final paragraph of chapter 27, where Wagener's use of the date 1936 seems more than a mere error.



into the mind of a German who, like millions of his countrymen, saw in Nazism Germany's salvation and in Hitler its savior.

Wagener's unbroken faith in Hitler found such unmistakable expression in his accounts of conversations with the future dictator that great caution is required in evaluating the historical value of those accounts. Wagener seeks in a number of passages, for example, to create the impression—without actually stating it—that Hitler intended neither war nor the extermination of millions of Jews. He attributed these crimes of the Third Reich to the dictator's false advisers, who—by means Wagener failed to specify—had duped Hitler and overcome his better judgment. These passages deviate sharply from other information about Hitler's intentions in the early 1930s, including that in Rauschning's book.

Wagener did not succeed in consistently retouching his version of Hitler's statements about his intentions, for his account of the Nazi leader's utterances about war and the Jews are full of contradictions. In the statements he attributes to Hitler about the necessity of an alliance with England against the Soviet Union and about the need to conquer the Ukraine, for example, one can see the "Eastern policy" dictated by considerations of Lebensraum which is recorded in countless other sources and which contained the seeds of aggressive war against Russia. In his accounts of their conversations about the "Jewish problem," Wagener obviously strove to dissociate Hitler from the position of such rabid anti-Semites as Julius Streicher; in all likelihood he was concerned about worldwide indignation at the disclosures in 1945 of the atrocities committed in the extermination centers of the Third Reich. Nevertheless, Wagener portrays Hitler elsewhere as a fanatical anti-Semite, whose prejudice against Jews and whose hatred of them emerge clearly from the words attributed to him in the memoirs. Wagener thus failed to whitewash Hitler by retouching his word portrait consistently. Instead, his memoirs on the whole confirm the prevailing consensus that Hitler was, from an early point in his political career, a pathological anti-Semite who had also firmly resolved to conquer vast territories in the East.

Various explanations might be offered for Wagener's failure to carry through a comprehensive retouching of Hitler's opinions and intentions. The simplest seems the most likely: namely, that Wagener could not bring himself to falsify consistently his recollections of Hitler's words. As the memoirs make abundantly clear, his association with Hitler amounted for Wagener to contact with a demigod, an unforgettable experience which in 1946 still exercised an enormous fascination, despite his own political fate in the Third Reich and despite the calamity that regime had brought Germany. In his attempt to reproduce Hitler's utterances, Wagener had to struggle with two contrary impulses. On the one hand, he felt himself called to convey Hitler's thoughts accurately to future generations. On the other hand, he was obviously concerned about

recording remarks he recalled Hitler's having made which might cast doubt upon his belief that the Führer had not been responsible for the crimes of his regime. The memoirs indicate that Wagener never managed to resolve this contradiction. Theodor Schieder's observation about Rauschning's book thus applies, if for somewhat different reasons, to Wagener's memoirs as well: the contradictions in his reports about Hitler's utterances provide in themselves a confirmation of the fundamental genuineness of his accounts.<sup>30</sup>

Wagener believed Hitler had divulged his true thoughts in their conversations. "To scarcely anyone else," Wagener wrote in 1946, "did Hitler disclose his genius so frequently and for so long a period of time."<sup>31</sup> Wagener was convinced that he had repeatedly been permitted to share Hitler's innermost thoughts and feelings. Yet here, too, Wagener involved himself in contradictions. In a revealing passage of the memoirs, he relates how Hitler tested various positions, even diametrically opposing ones, by defending them in his conversations with others. Hitler himself had warned Wagener against regarding his utterances as expressions of his true opinions because of this method of trying out various viewpoints.<sup>32</sup> Throughout most of his memoirs, however, Wagener wrote as though that caveat did not apply to Hitler's conversations with him.

Wagener's conviction that he alone knew the Führer's true positions was in part responsible for his efforts to record Hitler's utterances as accurately as possible. He looked upon his attempt to reconstruct Hitler's views as a high calling that involved nothing less than the recording of a kind of Nazi gospel. That attitude probably explains the often trancelike replication of statements which, in style and tone, resemble to a surprising degree those which one finds in Hitler's own speeches and writings. It also accounts for the often astonishing intensity and length of the conversations with Hitler found in the memoirs.

One problem in assessing Wagener's versions of conversations with Hitler is the difficulty of distinguishing between Wagener's own attitudes and thoughts and those of Hitler. Since the two obviously thought very similarly about many things—especially the fundamental issues of politics, racial theories, and the determinants of human history—it becomes difficult to determine whether Wagener may have unintentionally attributed his own thoughts to Hitler when attempting to record their talks about such subjects. Similarly, it is conceivable that Hitler, in speaking with Wagener, may have deliberately chosen his words to give the impression that he shared the latter's outlook to a greater extent than was in fact the case. In his dealings with others, even his closest associates, Hitler was, after all, an unscrupulous master of manipulatory tactics who

30. See Schieder, *Rauschnings "Gesprache mit Hitler,"* pp. 55–56.

31. See manuscript notebook 34: pp. 2110–11 (not included in either English or German edition).

32. See chapter 24.

possessed the ability to mask his true thoughts when that seemed advantageous for him. On this count, too, a cautious and critical approach is in order when assessing Wagener's accounts of conversations with Hitler.

Although the Hitler who appears in the memoirs does not depart appreciably from the prevailing historical consensus about him, Wagener's recollections provide a considerable amount of supplemental information. For example, his account has Hitler speaking frequently in confidence to his inner circle about the relationship between Christianity and the social order in a fashion not found in the Nazi leader's public statements of that time. Conceivably, Hitler avoided expressing his views on that subject in public because he recognized the danger that a stand on religious issues would pose for a heterogeneous political party such as his. That Hitler did in fact distinguish sharply between the teachings of Christ and those of the Christian churches, as Wagener recounts, seems borne out by confidential remarks of his which were recorded during the Second World War, to which Wagener had no access at the time he wrote his memoirs.<sup>33</sup>

Wagener's accounts of Hitler's participation in extensive economic policy conferences in the Brown House during 1930 and 1931 are particularly informative. Two invitations to such conferences which specify that Hitler would be present exist in the surviving records of the Nazi Party. In addition, some anonymous fragmentary contemporary notes on several such sessions confirm that these discussions actually took place.<sup>34</sup> The memoirs contain very detailed descriptions of what occurred at these conferences, where the economic and social policies of a future Nazi regime were discussed. Especially interesting are Wagener's accounts of Hitler's reactions to the often inventive, if mainly utopian and dilettante, schemes for a synthesis of capitalism and socialism presented by Wagener and his associates in the Economic Policy Section.

Hitler's views on the "socialist" component of National Socialism are also of special interest. Since there is no way to check the accuracy of these views as recollected by Wagener by comparing them to other records of the economic policy conferences, particular caution is in order in assessing them. Nevertheless, the attitudes which Wagener attributed to Hitler correspond to a considerable extent to views about social and economic questions which he expressed on other occasions. For example, Wagener portrays Hitler as vacillating between a wish to alter the existing social order, which he despised, and

33. Cf. Henry Picker, *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941–42* (Stuttgart, 1963), p. 83.

34. Invitations by Wagener to two such conferences in Hitler's presence on April 27, and June 3, 1931, are located in Bundesarchiv, NS 22/11. Sketchy sets of notes for two such sessions of February 16–17, 1931, and March 9–10, 1931, have been located in the East German Zentralarchiv and published in Joachim Petzold, "Wirtschaftsbesprechungen der NSDAP in den Jahren 1930 und 1931," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1982, part 2, pp. 189–223.

a reluctance to restrict the principle of economic competition which formed a key component of the social Darwinism that underlay his worldview.<sup>35</sup>

The memoirs also recount Hitler's repeated admonitions about keeping absolutely secret the ideas and plans discussed in the economic policy conferences. According to Wagener, Hitler regarded this secrecy as necessary in order to prevent the enemies of Nazism from employing those ideas and plans, in distorted form, as propaganda weapons against him and the party. Another explanation for the secrecy seems just as probable: in spite of Wagener's reports of Hitler's approval of many of the plans, the Nazi leader remained unwilling to commit himself to them publicly. He followed a strategy of keeping the economic policy position of the party purposely vague to allow as many voters and interest groups as possible to read their wishes into it. Whatever Hitler's motives, Wagener states repeatedly in the memoirs that he had obediently observed the confidentiality imposed by Hitler on the economic policy discussions at the Brown House. As surviving copies of his own publications of the period reveal, he made no mention there of the plans discussed in those sessions.<sup>36</sup> The other participants apparently also bowed to Hitler's will by keeping the discussions secret, although the rumors of a "plan in the desk drawer" which circulated in high Nazi circles during 1932 may possibly indicate some leakage of information.<sup>37</sup> Given the essential success of the imposed secrecy, however, Wagener's accounts of Hitler's participation in the economic policy conferences constitute, if evaluated with appropriate caution, a unique source of information about an important phase in the development of the future dictator's views about economic and social questions.

Finally, Wagener offers much information about the man Adolf Hitler, his personal habits, and his attitudes toward countless aspects of human affairs, past, present, and future. Most of Wagener's reports confirm or augment the picture of Hitler found in such other sources as Rauschnig's book, Hitler's own wartime *Secret Conversations*, and the memoirs of Albert Speer. Wagener's memoirs present the familiar Hitler, a half-educated, self-taught man laden with prejudices, with a preference for pseudo-science and a penchant for spinning out theories. What he expounded had far-reaching implications but was based on a small, usually very questionable, factual foundation. When he spoke, his words engulfed his listeners like an overpowering flood.

The memoirs present information about Hitler which is either not found at all in other sources or is not as fully developed there. Wagener reports, for example, on Hitler's use of drugs and stimulants, as well as on his attitudes toward

35. Cf. H. A. Turner, Jr., "Hitlers Einstellung zu Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft vor 1933," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 2 (1976): 89-117.

36. See his series of articles entitled "Nationalsozialistische Wirtschaftsprobleme," in *WPD. Wirtschaftspolitischer Pressedienst, Nationalsozialistische Wirtschaftskorrespondenz*, Jg. 2 (1931), nos. 3 (Jan. 21), 5 (Feb. 4), 6 (Feb. 11), and 7 (Feb. 18); see also his pamphlet, *Nationalsozialistische Wirtschaftsauffassung und Berufsständischer Aufbau* (Berlin, 1933).

37. See Rauschnig, *Gespräche mit Hitler*, pp. 25-27.

alcohol and coffee. He provides an explanation for Hitler's becoming a vegetarian, a development about which little is otherwise known.<sup>38</sup> He provides information about Hitler's newspaper-reading habits and about the tracts he read during his obscure youthful years in Vienna. In an intriguing passage, Wagener recounts how Hitler analyzed his own thought processes. He also describes, in a highly naive manner, the manipulative methods Hitler employed to pit his lieutenants against one another in order to keep them under his control.

Wagener provides additional information about Hitler's relationship with Geli Raubal, the niece who apparently committed accidental suicide in September 1931, as well as about the effect on Hitler of his first meeting with Goebbels's future wife, Magda Quandt. The memoirs, in fact, reveal a great deal about Hitler's attitudes toward women.<sup>39</sup> In these and numerous other ways, Wagener's recollections offer opportunities to expand knowledge about this charismatic, repellent, and enigmatic man who so recently unleashed such unprecedented mayhem and slaughter on his fellow human beings.

Wagener's memoirs are a rich treasure-trove of information about Hitler and his party. That information should be used, however, only after carefully taking into consideration the limitations imposed by the circumstances under which the memoirs were written and the political and personal outlook of their author. Before the contents of the memoirs can be employed as sources of historical information, they must be checked against other available sources. The opportunities which Wagener's recollections offer to researchers are thus accompanied by many problems, often of a difficult sort. For the general reader, this volume provides access to some of the raw material of historical scholarship: memories of past events and conversations recorded by an observant, if also subjective and fallible, man. But the general reader, too, must approach Wagener's memoirs cautiously and critically.

### ***This Volume***

*Hitler aus nächster Nähe*, which I edited and published in German in 1978, presented Wagener's memoirs to the public for the first time.<sup>40</sup> That volume constituted roughly half of the lengthy manuscript in Munich's Institut für

38. See chapter 35, where Wagener connects that step with the death of Hitler's niece Geli Raubal. Hitler's private secretary had also linked his becoming a vegetarian to Geli's death, but without the details provided by Wagener: Albert Zoller, *Hitler Privat: Erlebnisbericht seiner Geheimsekretärin* (Düsseldorf, 1949), p. 91.

39. In the final portion of the memoirs, which does not appear here or in the German edition, Wagener mentions that Heinrich Hoffmann frequently took along on electioneering trips in 1932 his laboratory assistant Eva Braun, whom Hitler found it diverting to have at the dinner table, but who, Wagener judged, had "played absolutely no role" at that time; manuscript notebook 34: pp. 2054–55.

40. H. A. Turner, Jr., ed., *Hitler aus nächster Nähe: Aufzeichnungen eines Vertrauten 1929–1932* (Frankfurt/Main, 1978).

Zeitgeschichte. Repetitious passages, those of peripheral significance, some of Wagener's long explanations of his economic schemes, and portions dealing only with his personal life were not included or were summarized in editorial notes. For this English translation of Wagener's memoirs, some additional sections have been omitted, and still more editorial summaries have been employed. Those passages in which Wagener dealt directly with Hitler, however, appear here.

The passages selected for inclusion in this volume are arranged in the same order as both the handwritten manuscript and the published German text. An appendix at the end of this volume will assist those interested in referring to either the German book or the original notebooks. In order to make the material more accessible to readers, the text has been divided into chapters with titles I have provided. The few subtitles Wagener supplied have been omitted. Editorial summaries describing the contents of sizable omitted portions appear here in italic type; ellipses in brackets indicate short omissions. During Wagener's versions of conversations, the identity of the speaker is not always obvious; to avoid confusion, the name of the person whom, in my judgment, Wagener had in mind as the speaker has been inserted in brackets. Untranslated German words are italicized and accompanied by explanatory notes when they first appear. Additional footnotes provide information about references in the text which may be obscure or which can be illuminated by other available evidence. The English translation seeks to preserve not only the meaning and tone of the original, but also its style, including infelicitous choices of words, ambiguities, and lapses of clarity.

Many people helped move the Wagener memoirs from manuscript to print prior to their initial publication in 1978. The introduction to the German volume contains a full set of acknowledgments to those people. One of them was Frau Wendula Wagener, at whose express wish the memoirs were not published under the name of her late husband.

*Hitler — Memoirs of a Confidant*





# 1

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## Wagener Is an Honored Guest at the 1929 Party Congress—His First Conversation with Hitler—His Appointment as SA Chief of Staff

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**T**he memoirs begin with Wagener's account of his experiences at the Nazi Nuremberg Party Congress in early August 1929. His presence there was occasioned by his having unexpectedly received, while on a business trip in southwest Germany, a formal invitation from the party's national executive (Reichsleitung), along with passes for the seats reserved for guests of honor at the various events of the four-day gathering. The militaristic discipline of the participants and their idealistic devotion to their party greatly impressed Wagener, whose favorable reaction was further heightened when he met among the assembled Nazis men he had known and admired in the army and in his home region of Baden.

Toward the end of the congress, Franz Pfeffer von Salomon—head of the party's storm-troop auxiliary, the SA, whom Wagener had known as a fellow Free Corps officer in the Baltic campaign—arranged a meeting with him. Pfeffer asked Wagener whether he would agree to become SA chief of staff if Hitler offered him that position. After considering Pfeffer's question only a few hours, Wagener resolved to abandon his business career and take up an active role in the Nazi Party, of which he was then not yet a member. While indicating his readiness to take on the post of SA chief of staff, he expressed a desire eventually to move on to a position that would allow him to deal with economic and social policy. Upon hearing Wagener's response, Pfeffer at once arranged for him to meet with Hitler at the latter's hotel the following morning.

We were immediately shown into the adjoining room, where Hitler was standing at a small desk. He greeted Pfeffer and me with a handshake.

From the first moment, his eyes caught and held me. They were clear and large, trained on me calmly and with self-assurance. His gaze came, not from the pupil, but from a much deeper source—I felt as if it came from the infinite. It was impossible to read anything in these eyes. But they spoke, they wanted to

speak. They did not ask, they talked. A thin strand of hair fell over Hitler's forehead. He brushed it back as he began to talk without having asked us to sit down.

"Captain von Pfeffer has told me about you. You were at the Reich Party Congress. What was your impression?"

I was a little startled by the question. It could not be answered simply, in a few words. After brief thought I replied, "I am still digesting the wealth of impressions. It is not easy to sum them up in words."

"What effect does such a congress have on someone who takes part for the first time?"

"There is no question that he is deeply impressed, stunned by the grandeur of the whole and by its utter novelty. He cannot help but be, as I was, affected to the core by a realization that here a beginning has been made, with consequences and potential that are wholly incalculable. And most evident is the realization that everything that happens, that is expressed, that is demonstrated is permeated and saturated with a single idea, a single will, a single spirit."

Then, pointing to chairs, Hitler said, "Do sit down." A few moments later he asked, "You were an officer, a General Staff officer?"

"Yes."

"You have seen the storm troops of the movement. Pfeffer is in command. But in the long run he cannot do the job without a staff. That is why he asked me to find out if you would be prepared to establish such a staff for the SA high command." And turning to both Pfeffer and me, he asked, "Did you two discuss it?"

Pfeffer replied, "We discussed the idea, yes. But not how to go about it."

Then Hitler asked me, "Are you available? Can you dedicate yourself to this task? And are you prepared to do so?"

"I'm absolutely free and uncommitted. I'm prepared to assume the task for the present."

"And what are your demands in return?"

Surprised, I answered, "None. I am as eager to have a part in the great task of Germany's resurgence as you are and as I assume your other associates to be."

Hitler allowed a fleeting expression of some relief to cross his face when I refused to make any demands. Then, holding out his hand, he said, "I am grateful to you. Do not underestimate the significance of the SA and its leadership."

When I tried to speak, Hitler continued, "Pfeffer indicated to me that your own goals are different. What are your other plans?"

"I'm an economist, and I have concerned myself specifically with the question of social policy. It is my belief that I can do more for you and the German people in that area than in the SA."

"We'll have an opportunity to discuss these questions. I have my own way of choosing my associates. I do not like to appoint someone to a position simply

because I want him there or because I think he is suited to it. Rather, I give him a chance to busy himself in the general area. If he succeeds, I see that for myself and I hear about it from others. Then he will automatically like the position he is called upon to fill. If he is not successful, someone else—someone who is more productive—will run rings around him just as automatically.” [ . . . ]

“As far as the organization of the staff of the SA Supreme Command is concerned,” Hitler continued, “it is important to understand (1) how the SA came into being; (2) what primarily holds it together; (3) what its purpose is; and (4) what its purposes may be in the future.

“First: The SA was made up of those informal militias that were organized after 1919 by communities and counties as well as by the government as a protection against the Communist terror which, beginning in November 1918, continued to create disturbances in one region or another. When the Baltic venture was brought to an end by the interallied Baltic Commission created for the purpose, the hopes of the Communists—churned up and financed by Moscow—were reawakened.<sup>1</sup> Even the Reichstag parties felt it essential to establish security divisions beyond the army and the police, so that if necessary, attempts at a putsch from the left could be countered. Thus these militias were legalized and supported by the state, and some of them were even provided with arms by the government. I need only remind you of the Organisation Escherich, which acquired something like a hundred thousand guns.<sup>2</sup> Today we have the Reichsbanner Black, Red, Gold as the governmental security troop against the left and the right.<sup>3</sup>

“Since the collapse of the Kapp Putsch the right has ceased to be a threat.<sup>4</sup> November 9, 1923, did not represent a reactionary action. After all, it was discussed and launched in concert with the Bavarian government and the Reichswehr command in Munich. It was based on quite different ideas. And there’s no more reaction to fear from the Stahlhelm either.<sup>5</sup> It’s true that it represents an alliance of the activists among the reactionaries. Some of them are even the old monarchists, who have banded together in that organization. But the Stahlhelm lacks an idea—a new, revolutionary idea. That is why it poses no political danger. It is the alliance of the has-beens. It’s a pity about the splendid young people gathered under its name, partly from ignorance, partly in opposition to the republic, or for reasons of upbringing, as the result of a tradition, or whatever other reason. In the main it incorporates the most worthwhile traits,

1. Baltic venture is a reference to the postwar fighting in the former Baltic provinces of Russia in which Wagener participated as a Free Corps officer; see editor’s introduction.

2. The Organisation Escherich was a South German, rightist, clandestine paramilitary organization in which Wagener had for a time been active; see editor’s introduction.

3. The Reichsbanner Black, Red, Gold was a paramilitary organization that supported the republican government.

4. The Kapp Putsch was the abortive attempt by rebellious military units and reactionaries to overthrow the republic in March 1920.

5. The Stahlhelm was a rightist veterans’ organization.

but in that congregation free of all ideas they must congeal, dry out, thus eliminating these splendid people from the great course of events. Pity. Many of them could have leadership roles among us.

“So, if the Reichsbanner Black, Red, Gold cannot have a front to the right because there is no opponent there, it can have a front only to the left—that is, against communism.

“It was extremely unwise of the Berlin government to designate the Reichsbanner specifically as ‘Black, Red, Gold.’ By so doing, it immediately repelled all those who did not affirm the system of Weimar democracy, although it was precisely they who would have been even more willing than the Black, Red, Gold people to fight against bolshevism and communism. For after all, who was it who liberated Munich from the Red reign of terror? Who restored order in the Ruhr, who saved Upper Silesia, who put down the Communist uprising of Max Hölz in Saxony?<sup>6</sup> Who was it in 1919, who stopped the advance of the Red Army toward our eastern borders and drove it back in the Baltic? It was not the Black, Red, Gold people—it was the activists of the new German popular movements.

“I am not a Latin scholar. But that is precisely why I may be the one who is able to tell you that the *res publica*, the commonweal—that is to say, ‘the republic’—is not a great, electrifying idea for which someone will fight and risk his life. The member of the Reichsbanner is just as unlikely to die for democracy as for any other form of government. There is no need for him to struggle against the right, and he will not struggle against the left. Therefore the activists are looking for another banner under which to rally so that, should it become necessary, they can resist the Red Front. And I gave them that banner when I gave them the swastika flag. Thus the swastika unites the activists who are prepared to defend the welfare of the general public, the Volk.<sup>7</sup> The Reichsbanner Black, Red, Gold, on the other hand, encompasses those who talk a good game, the barroom democrats, the antisocial elements.

“But it is a fact that both exist in one nation, in any nation. We will not be able to change that, it can’t be changed. But it is important to recognize the fact of the disparity of these character types in order to evaluate and properly lead the many platoons under the swastika. If it ever became necessary to put the Reichsbanner Black, Red, Gold on alert, there could be no certainty how many of its members would turn up or when, or whether they would be ready for action. But if the storm troops were to be called up, there is no doubt that every member would come—every single one, even if he had to walk hundreds of kilometers to get there. And they would carry out their leader’s every command.

6. Max Hölz, a Communist, proclaimed a soviet republic in Saxony in the aftermath of the Kapp Putsch and managed to gain control of part of that state until his forces were suppressed by the republican army in April 1920.

7. The German word *Volk*, usually translated as “people” but also sometimes as “nation,” will be used throughout this book because of its untranslatable connotations.

“That is why the staff you will assemble, as well as the chief of staff, will bear a heavy responsibility. Only men of completely reliable character, men able to exercise self-control, can be used in this effort.

“Second: This brings me to my second point—what it is that basically holds the SA together. It is the solidarity of the active will to commitment, the tie of socialist thinking and feeling, the realization that the German Volk community is threatened by an international Communist power which has already demonstrated in Russia that it will tread ruthlessly upon the liberty of nations, their cultures, even their populations.

“Thus the readiness to engage in the struggle against international Communism is primarily the glue that unites the men of the SA and the assault units behind its banner. Every new attempt by the Communists or Bolsheviks to disturb the world tightens the ranks of the SA. Béla Kun’s reign of terror brought more people into the SA than would ever have been possible through its own propaganda efforts.<sup>8</sup> And that is how it will be in future. Communism itself—Moscow—recruits for the SA.

“You’ll therefore need a section in the staff of the SA Supreme Command that concerns itself with replacement and the question of strengthening the units. But what is crucial is the work of quiet enlightenment within the SA and, through its members, in the outside world.

“Third: The third point was the question—what is the mission of the SA? Actually, the answer is contained in what I have already said.

“But let us imagine our way into a situation where the Communists are preparing a putsch, are possibly willing to let it come to civil war. What matters then? The government controls the army and the police—they themselves have clearly stopped counting on the Reichsbanner. Both will not be called in—and normally cannot be called in—until after the revolution has been launched, when the Reds have already seized power somewhere, when they have already set out on their reign of terror. First of all, the revolutionaries will have to eliminate the decent citizens, and of course the activists most especially, before a decision is made to take up arms against the insurgents. And it is questionable whether their preparations will be noticed in time.

“Our SA, on the other hand, lives in the same buildings, on the same streets, with the Reds; they work in the same factories, the same businesses. And there the split between the international Communist traitors to their fatherland and the National Socialists is clear. The SA has already deeply penetrated the factories, the workers’ cafeterias, even their families. The SA, therefore, knows its enemies, it hears their speeches and it sees their activities. Furthermore, it knows the haunts where they hold their secret meetings and forge their plans.

“This fact alone cripples the others’ work. The presence of the SA alone hampers—yes, perhaps even prevents—a Communist attempt at a takeover.

8. The Communist Béla Kun headed the Hungarian soviet republic from March to August 1919.

“That is why our enemies are working to bring about a governmental ban of the SA. So they look for grounds, for cause, for incidents. We must therefore take great care not to play into our enemies’ hands. Nothing must happen that runs counter to regulations, that contravenes the law, that gives even the appearance of illegality.

“Most especially you must on all accounts prevent the idea from arising or being nourished—it must never even be mentioned—that someday the SA itself might be charged with staging a putsch. That is not its purpose. That must not be allowed to be its purpose. Nor can it be. A putsch requires arms. The SA has no weapons and is not meant ever to obtain any, unless they are issued by the government. Even then it is better that the SA not receive weapons, for its members are not at all trained in weaponry. Rather, should things come to such a pass, the SA would simply assign the appropriate men to the army or the police.

“Fourth: This brings us to the fourth point I mentioned—what the purpose of the SA might someday become. It is possible that one day the SA, perhaps jointly with the Stahlhelm, will represent the reservoir of trainable German youth—trainable for the military, perhaps for a completely new military, which we cannot yet imagine clearly. I wish we no longer needed a standing army in the old sense. Everything must be done to prevent that necessity. But unfortunately Germany lies at the center of a Europe without peace. We are not as fortunate as, for example, England, which, on its island, need not expect any sudden surprises. Germany must be prepared for this to a somewhat higher degree than other nations, and it must be in a position to offer resistance and defend German soil. That is why it might be possible at some later date to build up the SA for the purpose of a unique preparation for military service—that is, to toughen Germany’s youth physically and spiritually and to keep them in good health, to train them to hard performance in a comradely spirit of community as well as in voluntary self-discipline—in other words, to foster in them all the soldierly virtues, which are the most reliable bases for the tasks that will then be assigned to the men.

“But these are thoughts for the future and responsibilities for the state, with which we need not concern ourselves today. The only thing is that we must be able to give ourselves an answer when the question arises: What will become of the SA when its present task is accomplished? The shaping of its staff should take such possibilities for the future into account even now.”

During this entire disquisition Hitler had kept his eyes unswervingly trained on me. As he spoke, he repeatedly gestured with his hands or arms, as if to emphasize his words—a characteristic that undoubtedly contributes to the listener’s understanding. After a few moments of silence Hitler continued, rising to his feet. “Well, we’ll have further occasions to discuss these problems. For today, I thank you for your willingness to take on this task. Arrange every-

thing else with Herr von Pfeffer. And when you've settled in, come to see us. When may I expect you?"

"I think in about four weeks."

"Very good. Until that time, then."

We parted with a heartfelt handshake.

In the anteroom several men were clearly already waiting to be admitted to Adolf Hitler's presence. Therefore we could only throw a brief "Auf Wiedersehen" to Hess before going downstairs to the restaurant.<sup>9</sup>

We sat for some while in silence. Then Pfeffer spoke. "The first step is taken. Generally that is the hardest part. But only the future will show if that is the case here."

"I admire the clarity of Hitler's arguments," I remarked. "In what was, after all, a relatively brief statement he gave me a complete picture of his ideas and views concerning the SA."

"Yes, he's good at that," Pfeffer agreed. "It's an extraordinary talent he has. That kind of speech is completely extemporaneous. And yet his deductions reveal such a simple formulation and description of the facts and of his ideas that they are always compelling and convincing."

9. Rudolf Hess, then Hitler's private secretary, later served as deputy leader of the party.

## 2

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# Pfeffer Enlightens Wagener about Hitler's Special Position in the Party— Hitler Discourses on Learning and Democracy

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**W**agener used the month following the Nuremberg congress to wind up his business affairs. He then reported to the party's national headquarters in a small office building on Munich's Schellingstrasse. Pfeffer received him and provided thumbnail sketches of prominent Nazis who worked there. The SA chief then set out to explain to Wagener the relationship between the party and the SA, as well as Hitler's relationship to both. He began by discussing the role of the Gauleiter, the leaders of the thirty-some regional organizations (*Gaue*) of the party. Liaison between the SA and Gauleiter was provided, Pfeffer explained, by his deputies, but the areas assigned to them encompassed two or more *Gaue* rather than being limited to merely one. Pfeffer then continued as follows.

"If each Gau had its own deputy, there's no doubt that over a period of time the Gauleiter would swallow him up, or the Gauleiter would keep digging away at Hitler until he was assigned the deputy most to his liking. As things are, three or four Gauleiter are at each others' throats because of my deputies. And since Gauleiter can never agree, I always keep the upper hand."

"I'm beginning to get the impression," I interrupted, "that you are engaged in a permanent feud with the Gauleiter. Isn't that impractical?"

"It's not very practical. But there's no help for it. Look—every one of the Gauleiter is a little Hitler. Some really are, some just think they are.

"After all, the movement did not originate in Munich *solely and alone*. There was someone in the Ruhr district who gathered honorable men around him; another established an organization in Baden while Hitler was still confined to his fortress prison; a rump party remained in existence in Munich after 1923; and so on.

"But Hitler was the magnet, unequivocally the strongest among all the little



Hitlers. And just as, when the Christian church began, the bishop of Rome was gradually recognized by the others as the foremost—the papa, the pope—so Adolf Hitler gradually became recognized as the head of the movement. Nevertheless, each Gauleiter had his personal pride and his own sense of direction.

“That left the SA as the sole unifying force. They don’t like it, it’s true, because at the outset each had his own SA. But Hitler understood that the final dependence of the Gauleiter on him could be achieved only by creating an SA with a central command. Hitler never speaks about this part of it, because actually he cheated the Gauleiter. Using the justification, with which you are familiar, of the necessity of a unified SA command—in itself perfectly right and valid—he took the SA from the grasp of the Gauleiter, simultaneously subordinating the Gauleiter to himself. A federation turned into a centralized organization. In time we may get to the point where Hitler can even dismiss a Gauleiter if he doesn’t suit him. That was not possible before the SA was combined into one unit under centralized leadership. I’m the guinea pig chosen to perform the thankless task. And it is your job to bolster and secure my work by creating the staff of the SA Supreme Command. That is why you, too, are to some degree vulnerable to the hostility of the Gauleiter.” [ . . . ]

“You are coming to learn one of Hitler’s special tactics, which you may interpret for yourself. He wishes to bring the Gauleiter to heel. He has no choice. The movement can be strong only if it is tightly unified. But what he wants—and he’s absolutely right—is not to burden himself and his relationship with these Gauleiter with the means necessary to the end. And so, as I’ve said, he uses the SA. He gives the Gauleiter free rein to assault me, so that the struggle that should be played out between him and the Gauleiter takes place between them and me. I think it quite possible that he carries this somewhat devious game to the point where he even gives some encouragement to one or another Gauleiter, making me seem more and more of a scapegoat. And one day—I’ll take an oath on it, Wagener—he’ll drop me with the greatest aplomb, sacrificing me to the fury of that mob, after which he can confront the Gauleiter as the great man of justice while they, following this sacrifice, willingly bow to the yoke of his leadership, which has by then been secured.”

“Pfeffer,” I exclaimed, “are you serious or are you joking?”

“I’m very serious. That’s politics—a sour tune. But you have to look at the whole picture. The various little groups *had* to be unified. The party needed firm leadership. And this is what Hitler has achieved. The end justifies the means. It’s not by accident that Hitler is a Catholic. He learned from the principles of the Jesuits.”

“But where does that leave character?”

“What matters is to save Germany. No sacrifice is too great for that objective. Not even my sacrifice. But you will realize that I was right when I tell you that I scent danger. And that’s what we want our job to be, isn’t it—to guard against danger. We cannot change the course of the movement. Versailles and Weimar,

not to mention Moscow, are the unalterable forces in the hothouse of this movement. Don't ever falter, Wagener. It's a matter of Germany, perhaps even more. All of Western culture is at risk! We *must* intervene, look for men, personalities, minds, even if some day we ourselves become pawns in a frivolous game."

I was shaken to the core. In my mind's eye I saw the enormous enthusiasm of Nuremberg; the plight of the people, which I had witnessed once again in Karlsruhe; and the inner dynamic of the movement founded and led by Adolf Hitler, which was meant to be Germany's future. And now this first glimpse into the forge of the future made me doubt. I had to repress my thoughts; for surely Pfeffer was right, and I would have to steep myself more fully in this political frame of reference before I was entitled to pass judgment.

Thank God we were interrupted. Bormann came to announce the arrival of Fräulein Frey.<sup>1</sup> Pfeffer had just finished explaining to me briefly that she was Hitler's secretary when she entered to tell Pfeffer, casting curious glances at me, that "the boss" had arrived and was available.

"I told Hitler you would be here," Pfeffer explained. [ . . . ]

Hitler came up and shook hands with me as I said, "I wish to announce my arrival in Munich and the beginning of my activity as SA Chief of Staff."

"I thank you and welcome you to that position. I look forward to our fruitful collaboration." As he spoke, he offered Pfeffer and me chairs.

The room was of medium size. A desk, placed in front of a window, had some books and newspapers on it. The other half of the room was taken up by a seating arrangement of an average-size round table and four leather arm-chairs. The only other piece of furniture was a bookcase of the same wood as the rest of the furnishings.

When the three of us had taken our seats around the table, Hitler turned his large, unfathomable eyes on me; once again, as they had in Nuremberg, they impressed me with their deep and infinite goodness, as if they constantly wanted to give something without saying anything. I too kept silent at first. But then I thought that he was waiting for me to begin, and I said:

"I was still filled with the days in Nuremberg when I said good-bye to all those with whom I had previously associated. I sought constantly to compare the soul and spirit I had encountered in Nuremberg with the habits and ways of thinking that prevailed among the people with whom I had lived until now. But I found kinship only among my former fellow officers, and especially among my former soldiers and workers."

Hitler continued to maintain his silence, although I paused. So I talked briefly about my visit to those old war comrades in Rintheim near Karlsruhe. Only now did I feel as if a spark were flickering in Hitler's eyes. And when I stopped talking, he picked up the conversation.

1. Martin Bormann, then a minor member of Hitler's staff, later became one of his chief aides during World War II.

"This is the Volk I know and come to know over and over, this loyal, truth-loving, open, honest German Volk, capable of enthusiasm and sacrifice. It is this Volk that harbors greater worth and deeper inner content than the whole stratum of the so-called intellectuals, who claim that, because they know more, they are capable of more, but who for the most part lack all leadership qualities. For those are not to be learned in schools and universities.

"I don't mean to underestimate learning. Quite the contrary. Solid knowledge based on the most serious study is without question the basis of all genuine skill. Scientists in particular have spent years steeping themselves with zealous and generally self-sacrificing industry in their fields of study. They have devoted themselves to their studies and their science has become their life. I can only quote Hans Sachs—"Despise not your master craftsmen!"<sup>2</sup> But the great masses of those who call themselves the 'educated' are a superficial intellectual demi-monde, conceited and arrogant incompetents who are not even aware of the ridiculous figures they cut as they dabble."

Hitler had talked himself into considerable excitement, and without pausing for any length of time, he continued.

"You still have not begun to understand that we live at a turning point of history, which, granted, has yet to reach its apogee. The individualism, which, apparent already in classical Greece, marked the Middle Ages and once more put its stamp on the modern period, has begun to falter. Not because of any changes in mankind or nations or on the basis of a new political or cultural orientation, but primarily through a complete transformation of economic life, through the development from trades to industrialization, from the journeyman and independent master craftsman to the factory hand, from small individually owned businesses to large corporations, from the personal relationship between the employer and his employee to the impersonal condition of dependence of labor on capital.

"These represent the problems of our century. To recognize them is everyone's duty, to solve them is the task of governments. But when governments are made up only of those men who are sent to parliaments by the universal and equal ballot of the great masses, it hardly seems likely that the truly best and most suitable men will be in the government. A very busy, outstanding lawyer or a famous scientist, a great doctor or a leading industrialist simply does not have time to run for office and to devote four weeks of his life to campaigning. And then, he can't spend his valuable time doing battle in the Reichstag.

"That is why the pure parliamentarism of the Weimar stamp seems to me not the proper form of government, nor do the parliamentarians seem to me the right men to master the powerful questions of our day.

"I have no objections to parliaments as such. They give a more exact and more visible picture of the Volk's heartbeat than any other arrangement. But in

2. This is a famous line from Richard Wagner's opera, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, delivered by one of the principal characters, Hans Sachs.

addition to them, another organization would have to be established to capture and select the really good minds, making them available to the government for collaboration or in an advisory capacity. Only then will it be possible to work jointly to find and travel the road from individualism to socialism without revolution, without the destruction of the most precious treasures, without annihilation of irreplaceable lives, and without regression to a lower level of civilization and culture as well as a lower standard of living and life in general.

“Then the highbrows appear on the scene and appeal to the law and the authority of tradition. These legitimists do not see that this law and this tradition were born in individualist thinking and are the pillars of a past time. What counts is to establish new laws and a new authority in place of old traditions. If this is not done, they will find that the road to socialist reconstruction will not be traveled according to plan and peaceably, but that the revolution will topple those pillars, bringing down the structure of individualism. But most of them have never even read Marx, and they view the Bolshevik revolution as a private Russian affair.

“This is where our tasks lie, this is where our duties lie, this is where the lofty objective of our work and will lies. If we do not succeed in bringing the German Volk closer to this goal, thus accomplishing work to benefit all mankind, then we do not deserve to have the Volk place this infinite trust in our movement and its readiness to follow and sacrifice, to bestow upon us that tremendous faith which alone can move mountains.”

Hitler had gone through this entire disquisition virtually without pausing to think and reflect. Visibly excited, his eyes had shown occasional bright flickers, and they were directed steadily and exclusively at me. I was deeply impressed and completely under the spell of his words, which in a few minutes had painted for me the essence of a revolutionary process about which most of humanity may not be clear to this day.

Hitler rose and held out his hand.

“All the best for your work. We shall have to talk more often.” And with this he dismissed me.

Back in Pfeffer’s room, I said, “Hitler’s exposition and his whole manner of speaking are without a doubt very remarkable. Perhaps once in my life I heard a university professor lecture about the past this way. But to have such a clear view of the present and the future—that’s absolutely unusual. I have nothing to add to what he said, nothing to contradict, nothing to question. A rare personality!”

“The same thing happens every time he talks to someone,” Pfeffer replied. “That is, the moment some word or other triggers him, Hitler becomes the only speaker. But each time, you hear something new, something original, giving a sample of the fullness of the realizations brought to consciousness in this genius.”

# 3

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## Hitler Shows Concern for Ailing Nazis and Gives His Views on Individualism and Socialism

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**I**n the next section, Wagener describes the measures he took to strengthen the SA. To obtain a source of income, he arranged for SA endorsement of a special brand of cigarettes in return for a share of the profits realized by the company that produced them. To provide for injured storm troopers, he established an insurance plan and a medical service. To ensure that records were accurately kept, he appointed auditors. He also streamlined arrangements for provisioning the storm-troop units and set up an automobile club to augment the mobility of the SA. In February or March of 1930 he and Pfeffer reported to Hitler on the organization's progress.

We told him what had been accomplished and how matters were proceeding. At the same time Pfeffer was able to report that by the end of 1929 the membership of the SA had risen to around 40,000 and that another sharp increase was evident at the present time.

Pfeffer reported further that his Hanover deputy, Major Dincklage, was very ill with pneumonia.<sup>1</sup> He was always bicycling from one assault unit to another, from one platoon to another. And he didn't eat enough; he shared what food he had with the unemployed. No one looked after him—he was a bachelor. At the age of fifty-two, he must have overdone in the damp cold of winter. The news of Hallermann was not good, either.<sup>2</sup> The doctors had given up hope.

“Who will ever know,” Hitler said, rising, “how much quiet sacrifice, heroism, and greatness have been expended on behalf of Germany and her salvation. There they sit, those characters, feeding at the trough of the state, always

1. Retired Major Karl Dincklage, deputy SA commandant for the northern district, died on October 7, 1930; see Hermann Bohm, *Hitler-Jugend in einem Jahrzehnt: Eine Glaubensbewegung der neidersächsischen Jugend* (Braunschweig, 1938), p. 131.

2. Georg Hallermann served as Pfeffer's adjutant until illness forced him to relinquish that post. He died on September 14, 1930; see Andreas Werner, “SA and NSDAP” (dissertation, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, 1964), p. 459.

greedy for larger per diem allowances and fringe benefits, and what they do for the populace, for their own people, amounts to nothing at all. All their actions and thoughts are directed to their own ends. And these good men, who receive not a penny in the way of salary or compensation, who even give up the pittance of their pension for Volk and fatherland, generously and of their own free will—they ruin themselves by their work, they die for it. How much more admirable they are than those drones of the state and the Volk who, on top of it all, take on the halo of a Reich minister or government official.

“But is there a way we can help Dincklage or Hallermann?”

“If you went to see them, it would mean that their deaths would be transfigured,” Pfeffer replied.

“Fine. We’ll leave first thing in the morning. Come along, Pfeffer. First we’ll visit Hallermann; he’s nearby here somewhere; and then on to Hanover. I presume Frau Hallermann is with her husband?”

“She’s been looking after him ever since he entered the sanatorium. It’s been only a few weeks that he’s been in such a bad way. And now his fate seems irreversible.”

“I hope I will get there in time,” Hitler muttered to himself, thoughtfully sitting down at the table again.

“Here you see the difference between the former age of individualism and the socialism that is on the horizon. In the past—that is, for most people it is still the present—the individual is everything, everything is directed at maintaining his life and improving his existence. Everything focuses on him. He is the center. Everyone is a central figure, as is officially acknowledged in his vested human rights.

“In the socialism of the future, on the other hand, what counts is the whole, the community of the Volk. The individual and his life play only a subsidiary role. He can be sacrificed—he is prepared to sacrifice himself should the whole demand it, should the commonweal call for it.

“Since the introduction of universal military training, this idea has taken concrete shape. Laws have been made to punish anyone who dodges military service by self-mutilation or desertion, even prescribing death for flight in the face of the enemy. Here, therefore, the basic socialist principle prevails. But in the rest of life, individualism, liberalism, egotism continue to triumph. Even during a war someone who is not in the military can fill his pockets and amass a fortune, which he will sooner or later lose to someone else, while the poor soldiers at the front fight and give their lives for the community.

“Aren’t these liberals, these reprobate defenders of individualism, ashamed to see the tears of the mothers and wives, or don’t these cold-blooded accountants even notice? Have they already grown so inhuman that they are no longer capable of feeling? It’s understandable why bolshevism simply removed such creatures. They were worthless to humanity, nothing but an encumbrance to

their Volk. Even the bees get rid of the drones when they can no longer be of service to the hive. The Bolshevik procedures are thus quite natural.

“But that’s precisely the problem we have set out to solve: to convert the German Volk to socialism without simply killing off the old individualists, without destruction of property and values, without extermination of culture and morality and the ethics that distinguish us Europeans from Asians or from other races. But in spite of this, everyone will be opposed to our plans—everyone! For the great masses still accept liberalism, especially all the countries to the west of us, as far as the Pacific. They are eager to preserve individualism—that is to say, their money bags and their freedom to pursue their advantages on the backs of their fellow men. And a smaller group is infected with or won over to Marxism and Bolshevism and believes that the ideology of community can become common property only when individualism is totally eradicated by eliminating its practitioners.

“And there we are, in the middle. Sometimes I grow dizzy to think what it is we have set as our objective. But then, when I see such men as Dincklage and Hallermann—then it comes over me like a premonition: Such a powerful upheaval requires sacrifices, it demands sacrifices, and sacrifices must be brought. I see our goal and our mission so clearly that I would feel like a traitor to Divine Providence, to our Volk, to such as Dincklage, were I to stumble. And besides: the hands of time’s clock cannot be turned back, world history and destiny march on. And all that is left to us is to beseech Providence to be merciful in the sacrifices it demands.”

Hitler rose and went to his desk. Then he turned around briefly to say, “We’ll be leaving at eight in the morning. When we return from Hanover, we’ll talk some more about the SA.”

When we were back in our office, Pfeffer said to me, “Actually we were supposed to discuss something else today. But as I told you before, when Hitler gets a cue that just happens to suit him—and it varies from day to day—he immediately seizes the floor, and the original agenda is tabled.” [ . . . ]

Major Dincklage died the day after Hitler’s visit. He was still conscious at the time of the visit. [ . . . ]

Hallermann’s funeral took place a week later.

# 4

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## Tensions between the SA and the SS— Hitler Deciphers a Map

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**I**n the next section, Wagener reports further on his work as SA chief of staff. He describes how he and Pfeffer reorganized the geographical delineations of the SA to make them correspond to those of the former army regiments of the empire, so as to make it easier to establish ties between the SA and veterans' organizations. He then discusses the tensions that developed between the SA and the regional leaders of the party, the Gauleiter.

In their resentment at the rapid growth of the SA, over which they had no control, the Gauleiter favored Himmler's then much smaller and less significant SS (Schutzstaffel), according to Wagener. Pfeffer, with whom Wagener discussed the resulting frictions with the SS, especially over recruitment of new members, suspected that Hitler welcomed those frictions and saw in them a means to divide and rule. Pfeffer suggested to Wagener that they seek a compromise with Himmler whereby the SA would not obstruct recruitment by the SS in certain urban centers and the SS would leave the field free to the SA elsewhere.

To the relief of Pfeffer and Wagener, Himmler agreed to this proposal. In order to determine the current geographical distribution of the two organizations, Martin Bormann was assigned the task of inserting in a large wall map of Germany a pin with a red head for every hundred SA men and a pin with a black head for every hundred SS men. The uneven distribution, which showed the SA much more strongly represented in northern, central, and eastern parts of the country, baffled Pfeffer and Wagener, who could find no explanation for such a pattern. At Pfeffer's suggestion, they invited Hitler to look at the map.

"Each red pinhead represents one hundred SA men?" he asked.

"Yes. And each of the black pinheads represents a hundred SS men," Pfeffer replied.

"You should have used a pin for every fifty SS men. Then the picture would have been more representative of the true state of affairs. Only the company commanders are located where the pins are stuck," Hitler remarked. He was not entirely in error.



Then, without saying a word, he spent three or four minutes looking at the map while we stood beside him.

“Somehow the picture looks familiar,” he finally said, speaking slowly. “I’ve seen a map like it somewhere before.”

“I hardly think that’s possible,” Pfeffer objected.

“Yes, yes. I do recognize it.” And turning to me, Hitler asked, “Do you happen to have a Debes Atlas? Or another of the larger atlases used in schools?”

When I said no, he countered, “Send out for one. This map here, listen to me, I’ve got it, it’s the religion map.”

Pfeffer and I were nonplussed. Odd, I thought. But true. Wherever I made a comparison, it seemed to apply. Pfeffer told me later that Hitler’s answer had hit him hard. It was as if the scales had fallen from his eyes.

“It’s the map of religions,” Hitler repeated. “Get an atlas in here. The whole movement takes on a new light. An atlas!”

While Bormann was sent to find an atlas, Hitler sat on a chair in front of the map and continued to peruse it.

“Do you see the Roman frontier wall, the *limes*? Up there it runs along the Rhine. Then it turns off here, south of Koblenz, diagonally through the mountains toward the Main. Around Aschaffenburg it must have crossed the river. Then the line clearly turns south of Ansbach, slanting down to the Danube near Regensburg. And then it runs along the Danube. To the south and west of this line the SA is thin; to the north and northeast of it, it is strong. To the south and southwest of this line Germany is predominantly Catholic; to the north and northeast it’s Protestant.

“And can you see the Peace of Westphalia there? There are the territories of Münster, Bamberg, Würzburg, Bautzen. They are Catholic, according to the rule of *cuius regius, eius religio*. And northern Baden is Protestant! And that is why the SA is weak in the former areas and strong in northern Baden.

“A magnificent map! I shall be spending more time with you in the next few days. This map is German history, Germanic history.”

At that point Bormann returned with a large atlas, which he had borrowed from next door, where the Rehse Collection was housed.<sup>1</sup> Hitler opened it to the religion map. Astonished and a little shaken, we faced the reality. The map coincided exactly with the SA map. Only Munich formed an enclave. At a loss for words, we stared alternately at Hitler and our map.

“There you stand, staring at the pinheads,” Hitler said, “and try, with your human logic, to penetrate the secret of this picture. There you see how small and foolish your logic is.

1. The Rehse Collection was an archive of contemporary affairs maintained by Friedrich I. M. Rehse; see Josef Stolzing-Cerny, “Erinnerungsstücke aus der Kampfzeit. Die Sammlung F. I. M. Rehse, Archiv für Zeitgeschichte und Publizistik in München,” in a special issue of the *Illustrierter Beobachter*, *Adolf Hitler* (Munich, 1936), pp. 39–41.

“For centuries, the Romans ruled the south and west of Europe. Here, this line marked out by pinheads, this is their frontier wall. If we had an SA in England, we would find the same line, up there where the island is narrowest, where Hadrian’s Wall extended.

“Everything closer to Rome than the *limes* was ruled by Rome for centuries. It was ruled by a Roman military governor, kept alive by the Roman economy, and drawn into the activities of the Roman commercial organizations, which encompassed all the known world. Administration and justice were handled according to Roman law.

“Beginning in the second century, the Christian Church made inroads in these countries. Ireland, the south of England, Spain, and France were seized, and in Germany the Christian doctrine gained a foothold just to the line we can recognize on this map.

“The Merovingians, who after the fifth century seized the legacy of the decayed Roman Empire in Western Europe, were the first to cross the *limes*, bringing the idea of the Roman authoritarian state to Thuringia and Hesse. And in the year 800, Charlemagne placed the orphaned Roman imperial crown on his head, creating the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. He completed the subjugation of the Germanic tribes beyond the *limes* under his basically authoritarian Roman state and thus opened central and northern Europe to Christianity.

“But this Christianity had a Roman stamp. It had already taken on fixed forms; it was already heavily dogmatized; and most especially, it was tailored to the ideas and feelings as well as the ethos of the people who can be designated by the name Mediterranean race. The people of the Greek geographic area, Byzantium, the entire Balkan peninsula, and as far as the Sea of Azov had already given a particular character to the Christian Church. We call it the Greek-Catholic or Orthodox Church. For the people there had a different attitude toward things, both the things of this world and the transcendent. In the Orient the Christian Church could not establish any foothold at all, although it was conceived in Palestine. There, six hundred years later a Mohammed created a religious movement adapted to the Eastern soul. The Arabic peoples—but also the Semitic family of nations and all its descendants—did not desire self-responsibility toward God. Destiny, fated predestination, suited their nature more exactly. And their family life, too, was different, so that Christianity would not have suited them.

“In half a century the holy banner of the Prophet conquered for Islam all of Asia Minor down into India and then waged powerful campaigns along the coast of North Africa up to Spain, only to run out of steam when in its turn it came up against the entirely different nature of the Vandal-Gothic population layer in Sicily, as well as the Goths and Celts on the Iberian peninsula and in western France. A religion—and especially a church established by human

dogma—cannot simply be forced on other people if they do not conform racially or doctrinally with the ethos that determines this church.

“And so it happened that the Germanic peoples and the tribes related to them could not declare themselves in agreement with certain views and practices of the Roman Church and soon began to protest against them. With merciless brutality the Church of Rome, supported by the nobles and kings who were dependent on it, tried to extirpate this heresy, and they did actually eradicate it among whole nations. In the name of the Inquisition, in Spain everyone was wiped out and tortured to death who, in accordance with the differing ways there, protested against the dogmas of Rome. And these were precisely and primarily the remnants of the old Germanic civilization that had been left behind in Spain, in Italy, in France and Belgium, and so forth—they comprised most of the leading families in those nations. In Germany this extermination was carried out in the name of the witch trials. Actual wars resulted, dreadful destruction, murder and arson, the combat of all against all. That epoch entered history as the time of the Wars of Reformation and the Thirty Years’ War. An English queen inspired by heaven, Elizabeth, preserved England from these wars. But elsewhere, a united Germanic spirit under the great Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus, intervened in the decisions and saved the lands and lives of all those whose more Germanic thoughts and feelings were not prepared to bow to the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church. Only those areas of Europe—aside from the Greek and Orthodox territories—that had lived for centuries under the authoritarian rule of Roman military despotism and had gradually lost their basically democratic Germanic independence remained faithful to Rome. The others, as Protestants, disengaged themselves from the Roman Church and created their own forms of Christianity.

“Where the Germanic breed predominates, the people are Protestants; where Romanism has left its mark, the people are Catholic. The Peace of Westphalia introduced certain revisions. Furthermore, especially in Germany, over time economic and dynastic impulses have produced a strong intermixture. But you can see from this map how clearly the line of demarcation has been maintained to this day. The SA attracts the militant natures among the Germanic breed, the men who think democratically, unified only by a common allegiance. Those who throng to the SS are men inclined to the authoritarian state, who wish to serve and to obey, who respond less to an idea than to a man.”

He fell silent. We had listened virtually motionless to his discourse, which he had delivered without any hesitation, without even the slightest interruption, as if he had prepared the topic for a long time.

He rose abruptly. “Pfeffer. I shall send Himmler here. He must look at the map. I’ll be back once more myself. No one else is to see it. It must be covered up. And from now on the concept of a community of the Volk must serve as a

slogan throughout the entire SA and SS. The Peace of Westphalia must be rescinded. North and South and East and West must be forcibly fused. *One Reich, one Volk*—that must be our watchword. Otherwise we can never transcend the vestiges of past periods of history.”

Then he shook hands with us, looking at each for almost a quarter of a minute, and left.

Pfeffer and I stood facing each other for a while. Then I said, “Once more I have felt a touch of his spirit. Where does the man get it all?”

And Pfeffer replied, “And we thought he would find the map a riddle.”

# 5

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## Hitler Discourses on the Rise and Decline of Monarchy—He Gloats over a Hohenzollern Mismatch

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**I**n describing the growing estrangement between Pfeffer and Hitler, Wagener seeks to refute charges of insubordination on the part of the SA chief, which he alleges Göring had presented to Hitler. Among many other things, Wagener charges that Göring had led Hitler falsely to believe that the SA intended to restore the monarchy after President Hindenburg's death by installing the former Hohenzollern Crown Prince, Wilhelm, as Kaiser. Wagener then reports on observations about monarchy made to him by Hitler in one of their conversations.

“In such considerations, it is not primarily a question of the *person* to whom the German people might one day offer the imperial crown, but *whether* it is logical and appropriate to do so at all, to restore any sort of monarchy.

“We are living in an age of great radical change, as I have said before—an evolution from individualism to socialism, from self-interest to the public interest, from the ‘I’ to the ‘we.’ In every instance this ‘we’ begins by encompassing very particular groups of people who in some way, because of historical evolution, live together in a particular area. And in this area communities for living have formed, which we call states.

“But how did these formations, these state structures, come into being? Since individualism has reigned in the Old World for the last two thousand years, it was also primarily individualistic interests that shaped these states.

“At the beginning, when the settlement of the various extended areas was not yet so dense, the families, clans, and tribes lived together or alongside each other in specific territories, which they required and claimed in order to secure their subsistence. So the purest concept of communism prevailed. But when other families or tribes came into their preserves, they were ousted. We can observe the same thing to this very day among the deer—and surely other animals as well—in the wild.

“Now, when a tribe increased, it proceeded on to ‘seizure of land,’ as it was called among the Germanic tribes. The living space was expanded to corre-

spond to the numerical strength of the tribe. In the process it could happen that conflicts with other tribes arose. Then they were simply invaded in private warfare, and the new land was taken by force.

“The tribes needed leaders to administer tribal matters and especially to conduct warfare. Among the Germanic peoples, these leaders were elected by an assembly of all qualified members of the tribe at their *thing*, or place of public assembly. For such a diet was called the *thing*. Norway still has the Storting—the large national council, the country’s parliament. [ . . . ]

“So now this *thing* elected the tribal leader, usually for a year. This made him ‘the first’ among the tribe. Among the old Germanic peoples this man was called first or *Fürst*, just as in English the word *first* still exists. The Latin word for it was *prinzepts* [sic], from which the word *prince* is derived in Romance languages. Thus, princes were elected on a purely democratic basis, chosen best of the tribe.

“In the same way, the best were chosen and elected war leaders. Since they had to march at the head of all the others in battle, they were called dukes. The concept of *duke* is therefore also purely democratic. Occasionally, an especially able prince or duke was elected to a life term. And when special dangers or threats to several tribes were present, these tribes frequently united and elected one of the tribal leaders king. This word, in turn, is of purely Germanic origin. We find it again in English, but in the Romance languages we only know *rex*, the regent, the one who rules—*roi* in French.

“It is well known how the natural democratic essence was gradually eradicated in those parts of Europe dominated by the Romans. And after the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Merovingians—and then, after Charlemagne, the German emperors—further limited and abolished the autonomous customs of the old tribal democracies outside the Roman sphere of control. Only in those places the imperial power did not reach—such as Britain, Scandinavia, Ireland, Iceland, and so forth—did the traditional democratically structured commonwealth remain in effect or could it be reestablished.

“But in Germany we were given the imperial sovereign state of Roman origin. It replaced the elected princes with its officials, or it accepted the princes’ oath of fealty. It is true that this put an end to the warfare among tribes, which had already ceased within the limes under Roman rule. But now the princes separated themselves more and more from their tribes and their people; they intermarried and began to form what could be called a special class, which laid claim to special privileges.

“These marriages frequently led to dynastic conflicts, which gave rise to wars from which the people themselves were entirely excluded; rather, these wars were fought only by the princes with their knights and horse soldiers and, later, with mercenaries. In this way those parts of nations where a tribe or a people had heretofore lived in self-containment became subject to another state under another prince. I think it is safe to say that, except for the religious wars and the great incursions from the East, almost all the wars of the Middle Ages and

subsequent ones up to the modern period were wars of succession among the European princes.

“It is therefore not surprising if in the long run the borders of countries cease in large measure to coincide with tribal boundaries. And there are unfortunate populations—in Alsace, for example—who actually no longer know whether they should belong to Germany or to France. For in the meantime so much mixing has occurred in families and through economic ties, now here, now there, that it has become quite impossible to arrive at an ultimate solution that satisfies everyone. Nevertheless, I anticipate such a solution—that is, in the healthy Europe to come, which will transcend such boundaries.

“Because of this princely class and its social separation from the people, a condition resulted on the European Continent which drastically emphasized what was unnatural and alien in this institution: only that man could be a ruling prince who was a member of a recognized noble family. This went so far that even Napoleon had to give up his Josephine in order to marry an acknowledged princess. Otherwise his progeny would never have been recognized as belonging to the proper class. As long as he had power, Napoleon was not worried about personal recognition. In the Austrian imperial family the question of marriage within the proper class is well known to have played a part several times. Only the Swedish royal house of Bernadotte could defy the stigma of not belonging to the right class. Nevertheless, every Bernadotte who was a candidate for the throne married a princess, and for a long time none of the daughters of the house of Bernadotte was able to marry a ruling prince.

“This princely clique, however, was given unqualified acceptance by the people of Europe. When Romania, for example, wished to have a new king, it had to send to Germany for the favor of a Hohenzollern or a Coburg descendant or some other scion of a recognized noble house. Bulgaria, Greece, Portugal—whatever country comes to mind—time and again had to fall back on a prince from this clique; no one else would have been accepted as their king.

“There is no doubt that this kind of royalism is out of date in a modern nation. Ever since the French Revolution there can be no denying it. And where kings still rule, they are no more than puppets. Only England is a special case. There the crown is an integral component—yes, one would even have to say the cement—of the Empire. That is also why it must be nurtured and protected by the mother country. Should it fall, the danger exists that the Empire will fall with it.

“So if we touch on the question of monarchy, we must note that the previous form of princedom is now out of the question; at most, what is possible is the return to a royalty arising from democratic popular sentiment. Nevertheless, royalty would have to be deeply rooted in tradition. But what is crucial in this is whether a nation actually encompasses one Volk or whether we are no longer dealing with a self-contained, blood-related people within a nation but with a construct that extends beyond one Volk.

“Let’s take America, for example. I’m sure anybody would find the idea

absurd that America could give itself a hereditary monarchic head. Or take Czechoslovakia. In the Czech territories alone there live three and a half million Germans. What kind of king should be elected there? A German, a Czech, or a Slovak? We've seen that even in Germany, which is still cohesive along blood lines, the question remains of whether a German emperor—if he is considered at all—should be from the South or the North.

“Only where a truly unified, consciously blood-related Volk controls a state—only there does it seem to me possible to consider the idea of a monarchy. Where that is not the case, the idea of a monarchy must founder from the outset, or it cannot be lasting, even if a monarch were perhaps able to restore the missing cohesion. Generally the reverse will be the case—that a monarch will tear open wounds which may have just begun to form scars and heal.

“Besides, today the question of socialism adds a further complication. In Germany the socialists overthrew the Kaiser. Whether that was clever and appropriate is not something I wish to examine here. Their whole ideology prevents the Communists from tolerating an emperor. But if at the present time one wanted to defend the monarchic idea in Germany, one would be driving socialists and Communists into the most extreme political opposition.

“But we National Socialists wish precisely to attract all socialists, even the Communists; we wish to win them over from their international camp to the national one. Therefore we must take no actions that result in the opposite course. For this reason propaganda in favor of monarchy is out of the question for us.

“This fact does not exclude the view that at heart the idea of monarchy is more congenial to the German Volk than is the republic, especially as the latter was so warped from the outset by Weimar parliamentarianism. But even so, one cannot simply *impose* a monarch on such a Volk as the Germans; rather, the Volk must want him and so elect him.” [ . . . ]

During another discussion of this topic with Hitler, I raised the question, “Whom could we consider? Should Hindenburg no longer be available one day, whom could we recommend to the German Volk as his successor?”

“The question is a difficult one. Personalities such as Hindenburg's are rare,” Hitler replied. “It would have to be a man whom the people can look up to without reservations and who is also able to represent the people and the German Reich in every respect. Do you know anyone who qualifies?”

“I don't know of anyone in the party. And an opponent of the party would not be appropriate. But if we had an outstanding ruling prince who enjoys genuine esteem among the German Volk, who has already had some success, and who also has some influence abroad, then such a solution would not appear mistaken to me.”

“And whom did you have in mind?”

“Grand Duke Friedrich Adolph of Mecklenburg,” I replied.

Hitler glanced at the ground. “I don't know him. I've only seen him once. At



least it would be an advantage that he is not a South German, one of those Max of Baden types, or worse yet, a Bavarian.<sup>1</sup> Do you know him well?"

"No," I said. "I've only met him a few times myself, at the National Club and the General Automobile Club, and years ago, before the war, at official receptions given by the diplomatic corps in Berlin."

"What brought you there? You can't have been more than twenty-five."

"Yes. When I was at the war academy, I attended the balls given by the foreign office as part of my official duties. That, in turn, led to invitations from almost all the foreign embassies and legations."

Hitler thought for a moment. Then he said, "I'd like to get to know the Grand Duke better. How can that be arranged?"

"Through the Duke of Coburg," I answered.

"Fine. Arrange it. As soon as possible."

Thereafter Hitler met several times with the Duke of Coburg as well as once or twice with the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg. I was never present. But I have reason to believe that their conversations dealt with the topic we had discussed.

Once Hitler also arranged to be introduced to Prince Wilhelm of Hohenzollern, the eldest son of the German crown prince, who was then about twenty-two years old. This, too, was a meeting Hitler never talked about to me. Especially after Göring's suspicious reproaches, the subject of the monarchy was never broached again.

Hitler did once return to the subject of Prince Wilhelm. When his marriage to a Fräulein von Salviati was announced, Hitler came to my office.<sup>2</sup>

"Did you hear about Prince Wilhelm's marriage? A Fräulein Salviati? Not a princess! Are those Hohenzollerns completely out of their minds? If there had ever been a chance of offering this Prince Wilhelm to the German Volk in an election, it could only be with the support of the centuries-old tradition of this foremost German ruling house. Once the tradition is thrown overboard, the idea has to be abandoned as well. The concept of a monarchy in Germany is dead and buried."

Before I could reply, Hitler left. I had the feeling that he was only seizing the opportunity to tell me that he had definitely abandoned the idea of restoring the monarchy in Germany and probably had done so some time before. He simply had never found a suitable opportunity to inform me.

1. This is a reference to the last imperial chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, who surrendered his office without resistance to the Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert at the time of the November revolution of 1918.

2. The engagement of Prince Wilhelm to Dorothea von Salviati was announced in April 1933, when Wagener was still in touch with Hitler; see "Prinz Wilhelm hat sich verlobt," *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, no. 183 (April 20, 1933).

# 6

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## Hitler Explains His Decision to Dismiss Pfeffer and Head the SA Himself—Wagener Wonders about Hitler's Concept of Political Necessity

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**W**agener then recounts how, having noticed a growing coolness toward Pfeffer on Hitler's part, he asked him what he had against the SA leader. After expressing his loyalty to Pfeffer, Wagener warned Hitler that if Pfeffer were dismissed, he too would leave the SA. To this, he recalls, Hitler replied as follows.

“Wagener, I thank you for your remarks. I want to be completely candid with you. Pfeffer has not failed, nor do I mistrust him. To be sure, accusations and insinuations about him are constantly reported to me, though they really tell me nothing new. Indeed, insofar as I learn anything from them, I have come to realize that if they involve any matter of importance, you and Pfeffer have already informed me. Those who convey them to me have merely picked up things and used them to plant insinuations. I've listened to those insinuations and then forgotten them.

“We are both agreed that the SA has a solid, imposing structure. It not only looks formidable from the outside but actually represents the backbone of the party. Since the Gauleiter and others in the movement fear this power of the SA, they struggle against it and seek to do away with it. I don't think they realize that such a move would mean depriving me and the party of a mighty asset. That fact explains those complaints and insinuations. And those will not stop but instead will lead increasingly to open conflict if I do not undertake something sufficient to allay the fears of the Gauleiter and others once and for all.

“And there's only *one* solution: I myself must become supreme commander of the SA. No one will complain about that power if it's in *my* hands. I shall not allow the splendid structure of the SA to be broken up or alienated; I shall not endanger it by giving in to the wishes of the Gauleiter! No! I'll take over the command myself, and the complaints will cease.”

Since Hitler paused, I remarked:

“These considerations make sense to me. But they should have made sense to Pfeffer, too, if you had explained them to him.”

“I believe that. But that’s not enough. On the one hand, I don’t want to make Pfeffer my chief of staff after his having already been supreme commander. That would be seen as a camouflaged action or self-deception on my part. On the other hand, I can’t put Pfeffer into a newly created higher post. That would open the way to the suspicion that I was under his domination, and agitation against him would continue.

“Pfeffer must therefore be sacrificed, without any guilt on his part and contrary to my true opinion. If he is sacrificed on some pretext or other, the mutiny by his opponents will be stilled. The SA will remain completely intact, and I shall take over the leadership and thereby give to the party the guarantee that the SA can never revolt against the political organization.”

“Such considerations have never previously occurred to me,” I interjected, since Hitler again paused for a moment. “And how will the sacrifice of Pfeffer take place?”

“Wagener, politics is a peculiar business. But without politics one doesn’t get anywhere. So I practice politics even within the movement.”

“But Herr Hitler! That’s really not right. Look, people cling to you with glowing enthusiasm, with trusting love. They sacrifice themselves and their free time, sometimes even their entire livelihood, to you and to the movement. And you advance them or let them drop—out of political considerations!

“But you don’t need to do that; it’s not necessary! You said earlier that you’d listened to the insinuations against him and forgotten them. And what did you do about those insinuations? Instead of confronting Pfeffer and me with them, you want to sacrifice Pfeffer, as you say, contrary to your own opinion! Then those intriguers will think that they have won and been successful! And they *will* have succeeded! You must sacrifice the *intriguers* and keep Pfeffer! How can you expect in the long run that people will continue to commit their hearts to you if you do not also unconditionally give yours to them?”

Hitler interrupted me with a nervous gesture but spoke in a completely calm manner. “My heart belongs to the German Volk. To it alone. We all have only a single task and duty: to serve our Volk. And the only thing I ask myself is: how can I best serve it? The fate of an individual, even my own, cannot make me so soft as to transgress against the destiny of the Volk. Therefore, if I believe I must sacrifice Pfeffer, it will happen solely in the interest of the great cause, in the interest, at bottom, of the Volk.

“How will that sacrifice take place? I still don’t know. For the time being I’ve asked Pfeffer to restrain himself, so as to present no opportunities for complainers. Pfeffer’s not inept, either. He’s always somewhat cutting and sarcastic with his opinions; and he lets everyone know them, even when he’s not asked for them. And because he’s more than a match for most others, they feel a

needle, even if it's not intended, and regard themselves as slighted and insulted. I've told him this frequently. Recently even I experienced such a slight from him.

"But I cannot and will not do without such a man as Pfeffer. I'll always be able to make use of him one way or another. Except where rough-and-tumble business is involved. Something will turn up. I intend to place him on the list of Reichstag deputies. So the sacrifice involves only his position as supreme commander. Do you understand me?"

"I understand you now, although I've previously been accustomed to work in a different fashion. May I on some other occasion ask you a few more questions about this approach?"

"Please do," said Hitler. "I'm so delighted to have a person in whom I can confide. I myself wanted to discuss with you some questions regarding politics and economic policy. Please come whenever you want."

With that, he extended his hand and gave me a firm and prolonged handshake, gazing into my eyes. Then we parted.

I thought about this conversation for a long time without being able to solve the riddle which his entire being posed for me. This "practicing politics" with people seemed somewhat alien to me, somewhat repellent. I might also say diabolic. But I could not refute his considerations and was not even convinced that I wanted to succeed in doing so. At the time I thought: I'm just not a politician.

*In the following passage Wagener describes the resignation of Pfeffer as SA supreme commander in the wake of a rebellion of SA units in Berlin in late August 1930. Hitler thereupon assumed that post himself on September 2. Wagener reports that he and other party leaders marveled at Hitler's skillful handling of the Berlin revolt and his decisive action in placing himself at the head of the SA, which turned the affair into a triumph for him. On the day Hitler returned from Berlin, Wagener relates, the party leader summoned him and gave him a brief report on the events in the capital. Then, he recalls, Hitler said to him:*

"Such occurrences are like thunderstorms that clear the air. They are necessary and salutary. The lightning doesn't ask who is guilty and who is innocent. We have only to keep our eyes fixed on the great transcendent goal.

"Now that I have myself taken over the Supreme Command of the SA, I ask you to be my chief of staff. But make arrangements with your staff, so that you'll have some time. I want you to work with me not just in connection with the SA, but on other matters as well. And I have not lost sight of your wish to devote yourself to questions of economic policy."

I asked, "And what about Pfeffer?"

"Talk to him. I shall also speak with him again. Suggest something to me. He should remain near me."

“On those conditions,” I replied, “I’ll agree to work directly with you as chief of staff.”

He thereupon extended both hands to me and looked me firmly in the eye: “I thank you, Wagener.”

*Wagener then describes his friendly parting with Pfeffer, to whom he reported on his talk with Hitler. Pfeffer, who had decided to move to Berlin, urged Wagener to forge close ties to Gregor Strasser, who was in charge of the party’s organization.*

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## Hitler's Private Life—His Relationship with His Niece Geli Raubal—His Renunciation of Marriage and Children—He Adopts the Theory of Odic Force

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*A*fter a short depiction of his personal circle of acquaintances in the Munich of the early 1930s, Wagener continues with his memories of Hitler.

At that time, Hitler never asked people to his home. Later, on days when all the deputy commanders of the SA or all the Gauleiter were in Munich, he occasionally invited them to his home for sandwiches and beer. But those occasions were always stiff and inhospitable.

In general, Hitler's way of life was extremely colorless. He kept entirely to himself. He had rented two apartments of five rooms each on Prinzregentenstrasse, east of the Prinzregenten Theater. He occupied the right-hand apartment, while his sister, a Frau Raubal, lived in the other.<sup>1</sup> She was a widow and kept house for him. Her daughter Angela, called Geli, lived with her—a true Viennese—stylish, lively, dark, always jolly, and totally carefree. She took singing lessons in preparation for an operatic career—to Hitler's great distress, since he did not like the idea of her performing in public.

Once Hitler talked to me about her. "These women are so oddly primitive. A hairdresser, clothes, dancing, theaters can distract them from any serious activity. The only things they're willing to read are magazines and novels. Yet Geli can follow the serials in twelve magazines and newspapers simultaneously, one or two different installments a day. And she always knows how the stories fit together, she even notices when an installment is missing."

1. Angela Raubal, who shared Hitler's apartment, was his half-sister. In the manuscript memoir Wagener wrote the name Winter, an understandable confusion with Amy Winter, Hitler's housekeeper.

Ever since Geli had come to live with her mother in Munich, Hitler's friendship with the Prinzesserl had lain dormant, and Geli's cheerful enjoyment of life, her exuberance, made up for it.<sup>2</sup>

Women played a peculiar role in Hitler's life. He always scorned the idea of marriage.

"Marriage makes sense only if one wishes to establish a family. The family is the meaning of marriage," he said to me on one occasion, when we were spending a long evening together in the Deutscher Hof [hotel] in Nuremberg. "I condemn anyone's entering into marriage if the idea of founding a family is not connected with it. How very much I too would like to have a family, children, children! Oh, God, you know how much I love children, those creatures who as yet have no knowledge of good and evil, who are always ready to give and to take all at the same time, in whom laughter and tears are as close as sunshine and rain in the spring. What can be more beautiful than the beaming eyes of a child who has been made happy by some insignificant little gift, a seashell, a block of wood, a pebble! And how happy parents become through such happiness!

"But I have to deny myself this happiness. I have another bride—Germany! I *am* married: to the German Volk, to its destiny! I see the Volk suffering, tormented by the accursed provisions of the Versailles Treaty, tyrannized by enemy occupation and by foreign rule in the east and the west. I see how it is despised, defamed, and depraved, this good, sturdy Volk, these honest and industrious people, these heirs to a proud past who are undemanding and willing to make endless sacrifices! This is the Volk to whom I have given my heart, all my thinking and planning, my work, my self! Many a time I have stared at the Gospels and, reading, muttered to myself, Who are my sisters, who are my brothers? No, I cannot marry, I may not.

"And another thing. Should I be called to lead Germany out of her plight, should I succeed in becoming a hero of the German Volk, then the Volk should not be burdened with a son of mine. For you see, wherever great personalities rose from nowhere to some accomplishment of genius—be it in art, be it in science, be it in statesmanship—their sons have never attained a stature even approximating that of their fathers, they have always turned out to be inferior or nonentities. Where is there a son of Goethe, a son of Schiller, a son of Beethoven? What would Siegfried Wagner have been if, besides being his father's son, he had not also been the heir to Bayreuth and if he had not had his mother Cosima as well as his equally distinguished helpmate Winifred at his side? Or take Kant, or Napoleon. Any son of mine would also be nothing more than an encumbrance and thus an unhappy person or a danger.

"That is why I *may* not marry. I *must* deny myself that joy."

2. The Prinzesserl was a young woman mentioned without name in an earlier passage of the memoirs not included here, who had purportedly enjoyed Hitler's attentions at the time Wagener first went to Munich.

But Hitler denied himself even more. Early on, he had given up smoking and, soon after the war, any enjoyment of alcohol.

“People sometimes think,” he told me on the occasion of a trip we took together, “that I don’t *like* beer or wine. Oh! I really do like them. But every time I saw a bottle of wine, or even a quarter-bottle, or a mug of beer, I was reminded of my time in Vienna and later in Munich, when I had wanted it so much, I as well as my comrades—but we had not been able to afford it. All of us had had to think twice, three times, before we spent so much as a penny. And even then I had often enough put the money back into my pocket *once more*, because somewhere I had seen a book that I wanted to borrow or buy because I felt an inner urge to have read it. And today, when there are so many people out of work who are living now as I lived in those days, I cannot bring myself to take a glass of wine or a mug of beer, since behind the glass I always see the sobbing expression of a head of a family or the satanic grimace of the plight afflicting the Volk.

“And so I gradually gave it up.”

When he was traveling, Hitler very much liked some young girl to come along. In the evenings, when we spent time together in the hotel, weary of talking, she would help him and his companions pass the time by telling plain, trifling stories or by reading aloud. The daughter of Hoffmann, the photographer, often came along on trips to Nuremberg or Weimar.<sup>3</sup> She generally traveled with her father in the second car or by train. She had a charming way of entertaining us by picking up a newspaper and reading from the advertising section, adding her own remarks and comments. But regularly, as the night wore on, Hitler fell into brooding and meditation. Then the cheerful chatter—in which he had stopped taking part, to which he had stopped listening entirely—gradually died down. As most of the others said good night, he asked one or another to stay and keep him company. So we sat together for several hours, over coffee or tea, just two or three of us, discussing matters that touched on everything and everyone and had nothing to do with the day’s work and current problems. Sometimes, in order not to disturb the others’ companionability, Hitler rose and went to his room to finish out the day. There he read newspapers and magazines, books and gazetteers, or he asked one of us to his room.

One time we were together like this well after midnight in the Hotel Zum Elefanten in Weimar, after all the others had gone. Thoughtfully he asked, “Can you explain why it is that one feels strengthened, refreshed, revived when one has spent time with young people? It is as if they imparted to us an invisible strength, which is transferred from them to us like an aura. Haven’t you felt this yourself?”

Since I had already given a great deal of thought to that question, I was able to

3. Henriette Hoffmann was later the wife of Reich Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach.



tell Hitler about the theory of Odic force developed by Baron Karl von Reichenbach, who had written up his observations and conclusions in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

“According to this theory,” I explained, “every human being has an unknown source of power that produces rays. These not only inhabit the body but also radiate from it, so that a person is surrounded by something like a field laden with this Odic force, as Reichenbach called it. The body absorbs these forces entirely or in part, depending on the one hand on the strength of the source of power and, on the other, on the person’s own consumption.

“Reichenbach or other researchers after him determined through observation and experiments that youthful and healthy bodies produced disproportionately more Odic force than they needed for themselves, while older bodies over time had difficulty satisfying their own requirements of Odic force. Further, the consumption of Odic force is smaller in healthy persons than in weak ones or in people suffering from a disease. Furthermore, consumption also naturally depends on the greater physical, and especially the mental, activity of the person in question. Once someone reaches a certain age, therefore, and if his work and activity demand a heavy consumption of Odic force, his own source of power may no longer be sufficient, and he begins to decline—we say that he is getting old—or he has to find other ways of satisfying his requirement for Odic force.

“If he is with young people, who can’t possibly use up their excess, a purely mechanical process sets in whereby the excess force flows in the direction where it is needed.”

At this, Hitler grasped my arm and looked at me as if he were facing a glittering Christmas tree.

“And so he absorbs until he is filled,” I continued. “He works with the other’s strength, and he develops a yearning to be near such sources of power. But something happens to the other person as well, just as unconsciously and with precisely the same effect. For the healthy young body gives off its excess of force only to those who are worthy, only to people who are equally healthy and to those who know how to do something creative with the transferred force.”

At that, Hitler, deeply excited, interrupted me to say, “That is why a baby cries and resists when his grandmother wants to keep hugging him; he doesn’t want to pass his powers on to a dying person. And the only reason the grandmother picks up the baby is that she wants to draw to herself the child’s excess force. Unconsciously, of course, on her part as well as the child’s.

“Wagener, it’s as though scales fall from one’s eyes when one hears this theory for the first time. I must read the writings of this Reichenbach.

“That is why an officer remains so youthful—because he is constantly among

4. See Karl Freiherr von Reichenbach, *Odisch-magnetische Briefe* (Leipzig, 1921), a new edition of Reichenbach’s article, “Untersuchungen über den Magnetismus und damit verwandte Gegenstände,” in *Annalen der Chemie und Pharmacie*, vol. 53 (1845), Beilage.

the young! And that is the reason for the solidarity among a company, a Free Corps, a storm-troop division—because the whole forms an Odic community. No, that can't be imitated by any political party in which either the leaders are too young or the members are too old. It can never become an Odic community—that is, we'll change all that! Wagener, the mystery of political organization and the organization of the SA has been solved! It is not racially determined, it's grounded in this problem!"

"I believe, Herr Hitler," I interrupted, "that the matter is not quite so simple, nor should we generalize quite so much from this finding. But even in that regard, a study of the Reichenbach theory will give you greater understanding.

"After all, these rays have to be transmitted somehow. Such an aura—it has to be something. Either something like electrical currents, or helium rays, or something entirely different that we just don't understand yet. But one thing is certain: the intensity of the rays or—let's call it, for example, the transmission of wavelengths—they differ from person to person. Whether that is also the case among peoples, among races, that's something I haven't thought or read about. But it will not be possible for everyone in the force field of another to absorb that person's rays or to pass on his own. Just look at the various wavelengths in radio! Someone may have an antenna very close to a broadcasting station. If he turns to another frequency, he won't receive anything—at most, he will get static."

"You're right again," Hitler interrupted once more. "I can sit next to young women who leave me completely cold, who arouse no feeling in me—yes, who even upset me, although surely they too have some Odic force to give off. And then there will be another girl—like the little Hoffmann girl, for example, or Geli—with whom I grow light-hearted and cheerful. When I've listened to their chatter, which may be foolish, for an hour—or they just need to be sitting next to me—then all my weariness and melancholy is gone, and I can throw myself into my work again.

"By the way, it's the same when I spend time with young men. I have always said that I draw strength to continue my work from the beaming eyes of my young storm troopers. It's the very same thing.

"But stop! With the storm troopers I have the feeling that all the wavelengths must be the same. No glance there ever disturbed me yet, no radiation. Could it be that all these men have the same waves?"

He stopped, allowing me to say, "That's entirely possible. The secret of the Free Corps spirit, as I came to know it in the Baltic and outside Thorn, or the secret of the elite shock troops during the war was without a doubt that volunteers joined only *that* leader whom they felt drawn to as a model and a human being—"

Once again, Hitler seized the word. "Drawn to! That's the key word. The differentiation in the waves, or whatever we imagine the means of transmission

to be, either evokes sympathy—which is to say, a correspondence of feeling—or antipathy—which is to say, rejection—or no feeling at all. Then one remains indifferent.

“Now if the supreme commander of the SA chooses his deputies, and they choose their platoon and squad leaders, and if all of them then go on recruiting, more or less, then it happens all by itself that only such men join together who are similarly motivated, men of *one* wavelength, *one* perception, *one* intention. Even when these choose their own leaders, they are the same sort, and the corps spirit and discipline are maintained.

“And then it is easy to understand that there can be only two other groups besides the SA—the hostile group and the indifferent. We must search for them in every political camp, and we will find them. And conversely, we shall draw our storm troopers—those who share our feelings—from all the camps, even from those of our enemies, the Communists as well as the reactionaries.

“What a rage that must arouse among those who are left behind! For then again, these are similarly motivated among themselves, insofar as they are not indifferent! What antipathy must develop there, an enmity—yes, even hatred! Not in our storm troopers against the others, but in the others against us! And this will be so not only in all the political camps, but also in all the professions, in all occupations, in the whole Volk!

“Do we understand clearly, Wagener, what that means? Isn’t it evident that we need a community of the Volk? Haven’t we taken the wrong road? Haven’t opponents already appeared even within our own party?”

Hitler paused. I too was silent.

“And when I think: the wavelength of the SA is that of the supreme commander.\* Supposing I had a different wave? Then the SA either has to become estranged from me or fall apart. Both are still a danger now—or I have to put in new leaders.”

He fell silent again. I had a feeling that he had become possessed by a subject which might do more harm than good. I therefore tried to distract him.

“Herr Hitler, I’m almost sorry that I told you about the Odic-force theory. I only meant to focus on the deepest meaning of constant association with the young. And actually I meant to tell you that the great king, Old Fritz, also had his Barbarina, who was nothing more for him than a kind of Leyden jar.<sup>5</sup>

“I believe that it is not necessary to pull apart all of life’s secrets and to try to fathom them. That way one loses one’s inner freedom, one’s innocence, the instinctive view. One should prevent such ideas, even if they were scientific discoveries, from becoming known and discussed in wider circles. Somewhere

\*This conversation took place soon after Pfeffer’s downfall.

5. Barbara Campanini, known as “la Barbarina,” was an Italian dancer whom Frederick the Great allegedly caused to be abducted in order to make her his court dancer: Gustav Berthold Volz, “Die Barbarina-Legende,” a chapter in his *Aus der Welt Friedrich des Grossen* (Dresden, 1922).

in the Bible it says that a people perished—I believe it was the Babylonians—because the Lord had ‘confused their tongues.’ The same outcome will result if we confuse their hearts and minds.

“Let us stop this conversation and give it no further thought. Instead, let’s see to it that we always have a Barbarina for the king.”

Hitler laughed. Gently he shook his head, as if to banish his thoughts. Then he gestured dismissively and said, “It’s true. I brood too much. And whenever I hear something that is new to me, I try immediately to extract an application from it. But this theory will nevertheless remain incorporated in the body of my knowledge. I am grateful that you communicated it to me.”

We stood up and separated to go to bed after waking the headwaiter, who was sleeping behind the bar, and paying up. As usual, it was two o’clock in the morning.

Sometimes, as subsequent events occurred, I thought back to this conversation. This theory became more deeply rooted in Hitler’s store of knowledge than I might have wished.

# 8

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## The Economic Policy Conferences Begin—Wagener Presents His Plans for a “Social Economy”—Hitler Senses the Philosopher’s Stone in His Hand

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**W**agener reports that early in the summer of 1931, Hitler asked him to conduct a conference on economic policy, to be attended also by Strasser and Gauleiter Adolf Wagner of Munich. At the first session, held in the party leader’s office in the Brown House, Hitler asked Wagener to set forth his ideas about socialization. Wagener recounts that he began by stating that he knew quite well what the Nazi Party program said on that subject, but that since Hitler had asked for his views, he would pay no heed to the program.

In wide-ranging remarks on the problem of the conflict between capital and labor, Wagener then rejected both nationalization and a direct takeover of enterprises by workers. A “direct socialization” by workers would be impractical in the long term, especially with regard to future investment. Nationalization would merely replace the private entrepreneur with the state, while leaving the worker in subservience to capital. In the latter case, the state would become involved in the conflict between labor and capital, a development that could have dangerous political consequences. Nationalization also left unanswered the question: Who is the state? Its final result would be domination by those groups which controlled the state. Nationalization would also eliminate the “automatic self-healing mechanisms” of the “healthy competitive struggle.” Wagener therefore warned against the nationalization of those enterprises the state did not absolutely need to possess. Wholly different means, he indicated, would be necessary to effect the transition from individualism to socialism. At that point, Wagener writes, Gauleiter Wagner objected to his having ignored the party program’s commitment to the nationalization of incorporated enterprises. Hitler thereupon interrupted the Gauleiter.

“Wagner, if our program contains ideas that seemed correct to us in the year 1920, at a time when our thinking was influenced by the thought of the socialist revolution, that fact does not prevent our reexamining their present correctness if we are to prepare ourselves for translating these thoughts into actions. Strasser, what comments do you have on the Chief of Staff’s remarks so far?” Strasser spoke. “Finally here is a man who has an opinion of his own and is

prepared to state it. I have nothing to add to what he has said so far. It accords with my views. But now I am curious to hear what Herr Wagener will present *next*. The solution, the solution—that is what matters.”

“What seems to me incontestable first of all,” Hitler then began, “is the fact that collectivist solutions cannot lead us to our goal. Everywhere in life only a process of selection can prevail. Among the animals, among plants, wherever observations have been made, basically the stronger, the better survives. The simpler life forms have no written constitution. Selection therefore runs a natural course. As Darwin correctly proved: the choice is not made by some agency—nature chooses. That is *election*. But the animals and other forms of life have a further process of *self-selection*. Weaklings, runts, sick individuals are cast out of their communities by the healthy ones; some of them are even killed, disposed of.

“That is the will of nature. What is healthy abhors that which is sick, the productive abhors the life of the drone, purposeful striving abhors indifferent depravity.

“By now we humans, whether we want to or not, have long since degenerated to the point where we can no longer rouse ourselves to self-selection. Just look at the institutions for the wayward, for the insane, for incurable epileptics, kept in handsomely furnished buildings resembling hotels and palaces, with central heating and hot and cold running water, surrounded by the most splendid gardens. That’s where these people are cared for and cherished. Dozens of saintly nurses look after them, to make sure that their sick lives are preserved, to make sure that they will be a burden to others for the longest possible time. Meanwhile, outside, hale and hearty men and women, who can and want to be productive, stand idle, unable to obtain work and not knowing where to turn for even the most meager nourishment for themselves and their poor children. Even the prisons and penitentiaries are day nurseries for criminality and subhumanity. Once, it was even suggested in the Reichstag that musical performances, lectures, and movies be brought to the prisons, to entertain the convicts. And on the outside, hundreds of thousands—and soon it will be millions—of decent workers are starving, without pay, without work, without prospects, innocent—but without films and concerts!

“In antiquity, the Spartan constitution was the only one that required and enforced a healthy selection. And today there are still a few states in the USA which also, at least to a certain extent, support human self-selection.

“When I examine the concept of collectivism, it occurs to me that it entails egalitarianism, which it cannot help but bring about. For a whole Volk that means nothing other than what is being practiced in the insane asylums and prisons.

“To that extent the whole idea of socialization in the form in which it has been attempted and proposed until now seems to me wrong. I arrive at the same conclusion as Herr Wagener.

“A process of selection must be introduced in some way if one wishes to

arrive at a natural, healthy, and satisfactory solution to the problem—a selection process for those who have or should have a claim and right to ownership and proprietorship of any business.”

As he spoke, Hitler looked at me and made a sign for me to continue. But first I had to think about the thought he had tossed out, which I was now compelled to deal with. True, that idea had repeatedly been the object of my economic studies. But unprepared as I was, it was not so easy to give lucid and comprehensible expression to this line of reasoning—which was, after all, quite difficult. I repeat my thoughts here more or less as I stated them then. At the time I would dearly have loved to light a cigar. But as a matter of principle, Hitler had requested that there be no smoking in his room and, if possible, in his presence anywhere.

“This idea,” I began, “would mean that not all the people who work in a business can acquire a claim to ownership of it, but only the best of them, the most productive. On the other hand, a business proprietor can, in the long run, keep his property only if he continually reacquires, as it were, his claim to it through skill and achievement.

“Thus there would be no socialization, but a permanent, gradual, continuous transfer of ownership of any business into the hands of the most capable, the best—under certain circumstances, into the hands of the one best man.

“This idea, which is without a doubt completely novel, seems to me in fact workable. I even have the impression that it is fully congruent with ideas I have been systematically developing for some time concerning the overall financial and capital structure. I would ask you to let me present those ideas at some other time.

“But for the moment, one ought to try to determine which businesses are suitable for shifting ownership and which are not. The criterion is, on the one hand, the divisibility of ownership in any particular enterprise and, on the other hand, the economic feasibility of distribution. A joint-stock corporation, for example, is a business whose ownership is already divided. The thought might arise that the distribution of ownership and the shift of ownership I have in mind can therefore be undertaken in the case of all businesses that can be turned into joint-stock companies. But that is not really the essential principle.” [ . . . ]

“The fundamental principle that conclusively emerges from the overall reasoning is that a business can belong only to someone who works in it. Until now, it has been possible for someone to own a business and to allow a manager or director to run it, while he himself spent his time in Berlin or Monte Carlo, living on the earnings of his business, which are sent to him once a month. If we carry out the idea of transfer of property, we must see to it that such a case cannot occur.”

“Very good!” Hitler interrupted. “That means the abolition of income without work or effort.”

“For every business,” I continued, “—for the moment I will only consider

industrial enterprises—a certain percentage would have to be set aside each year—that is, expropriated from its present owner. Let's take as an example—but, let me make it quite clear, only as an example—a yearly reduction in ownership of five percent. If, then, a factory has a book value of a hundred thousand marks, at the end of the year five thousand would have to be credited to a special account, leaving the owner only ninety-five thousand marks.

“Now, to keep to the terms we have been using, the most capable and best workers in this factory—which, of course, may also include the owner, to the extent that he participates in the work of the factory—must have the opportunity to acquire this ownership share of five thousand marks. They are not to be given shares for nothing. Goethe said, ‘Earn it if you would own it.’ This rule alone already leads to a selection—a self-selection. The man who is not interested, the man who does not want to regard the factory as his life's meaning, the man who is frivolous, the man who is lazy—all these will not have saved up anything, or they will be unwilling to invest their savings in a share of the concern in which they work. Only the industrious man, the enterprising fellow, the purposeful, the proficient will systematically lay aside what he needs to acquire shares.

“Even the present owner can take part in the acquisition—in his case, reacquisition. But only if he actually holds a leading position in the business or is one of the more capable workers. If he does not work, in our example of a five-percent annual contraction of ownership, he will have lost his property completely after twenty years, and it will be in the hands of the staff and workers who were hard-working, competent, and thrifty.

“The contraction continues with each new owner. So, in our example, anyone who does not continually acquire or reacquire forfeits his share in twenty years, and it will always be the single-minded and proficient who continue to increase their holdings.”

“Very good,” Hitler interjected. “That is not collectivism. That is the process of selection.”

“How, then, is the transfer of property to be carried out legally and according to proper accounting methods?” I continued my reflections. “If the new applicants to ownership are to buy the shares, it would seem practical to involve the state or a special agency established by the state—let us call it the managership—to which the amounts by which the capital holdings diminish yearly—in our example, five thousand marks—will be credited. So by the end of any year the managership becomes the owner of this share of the business. When it sells the shares to the applicants, it receives cash amounts, available to be passed on to the state treasury. I will refer here only briefly to the effects of such an arrangement on the country's total tax-structure, but I can return to the topic on another occasion.”

Again, Hitler interrupted by speaking to Dr. Wagner, the Gauleiter. “You see, we will, after all, arrive at a nationalization of the corporations, if only temporarily.”



Wagner nodded, adding, "I am following these remarks with increasing interest and astonishment. The Chief of Staff turns out not to be a liberal and capitalist after all."

"Legally," I continued, "the managership—or, after the sale, the new purchaser—is a sort of limited partner in the business. Thus he participates in the profits according to his capital investment, and he is liable for the losses only to the extent of his share and percentage.

"Since it will usually be a number of people who will acquire shares, it would be simplest for them to form a cooperative represented by one of its members, who is elected. He or the cooperative is then the limited partner of the former sole owner.

"In the case of a joint-stock corporation, the diminution of ownership would be reflected in the stock. Each single share, in our example, would decrease by five percent yearly. Partial shares of, say, two hundred or five hundred marks could be issued, to facilitate acquisition by the workers. To prevent further subdivision, the contraction of these partial shares could subsequently be achieved through deductions from profits. These details will have to be researched and worked out. Today it is only a matter of thinking through and drawing conclusions from your idea, Herr Hitler, of applying the process of natural selection to the problem of socialization."

*Wagener then elaborated on how formulas for the contraction of capital and the shift of ownership could be varied for different kinds of enterprises. He proposed that the formula might be calculated on the basis of normal depreciation in various fields of production. He further proposed that administration of his plan be assigned to corporatist bodies composed of spokesmen for entrepreneurs, white-collar employees, and workers, none of whom would be so strongly represented as to dominate the others.*

When I ended my speech, all three of my listeners remained silent. Strasser and Wagner looked at Hitler. And Hitler, who had been staring steadily at me as I spoke, now lowered his eyes.

Finally he spoke. "Wagener, what you have told us is full of so much that is new and original that I did not absorb all of it sufficiently to be able to take a clear position. Please, come to see me again tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock, and give me the same report again, if possible in the same words you used just now.

"And you, gentlemen"—he turned to the other two—"think about the subject also. We'll continue the group discussion in two or three days.

"Prepare yourself," he said, turning back to me, "to discuss with us in detail, one after the other, all the problems you have only touched on today, until the picture is complete. If my feelings are right, today is the birth date of a completely new economic theory, which will be capable of explaining and resolving the enormous problems of the conversion to socialism. The significance of this

moment is so enormous, however, that it would be frivolous to desecrate it with petty arguments.”

We took our leave, and when we shook hands, Hitler held on to mine a little longer than usual.

I immediately jotted down the necessary notes about this conversation, not only for myself, but also for the following day, so that I would really be able to repeat for Hitler exactly what I had just told him.

And it happened. Hitler listened to me without interrupting and without taking his eyes from me. When I had finished, he said, “I am not an economist. I have never involved myself in detailed economic questions, and I realize that I used to conceive of even the major aspects of economics differently in some measure than I do now, as I follow your presentation.

“I could ask many questions. But I believe I will wait until I have heard all you have to say. Otherwise, we will only waste time talking about matters that may be cleared up anyway. If it’s all right with you, we will continue tomorrow afternoon at three. I will get a message to Wagner and Strasser. What will you talk about tomorrow?”

“I think I should begin with the concept of money and capital,” I answered.

“Have you studied the subject?” Hitler asked.

“Studied may be putting it too strongly. I’ve attended lectures on it and read a number of things. And I gave some lectures on aspects of economic policy. But what I want to present is something which, if it is correct and realizable, will profoundly shake the present bases of economic policy.”

“Wagener, there is no way we can avoid such shocks. That is precisely the most profound secret of the entire revolution we are living through and whose leadership it is our mission to seize: that there has to be overthrow, demolition, destruction by force! The destruction must be meaningful, not senseless, as under Bolshevism. And it can only become meaningful if we have understood the goal, the purpose, the necessity.

“Science, economics, and traditional practice—but also the entire concept of law, all the way to universal human rights—all are erected on the individualistic approach of the thousand-year-old past—erected and contrived by men of this ideology. It has colored all the feelings, perceptions, even the ethics and religious beliefs of these people.

“*They* will not understand our logic; they will condemn our thinking; they will convict our new ethics; and they will shower and persecute us with all the hatred of which an ideology doomed to destruction is capable in order to fight off, to suppress, to strangle an awakening ideology that will overthrow everything that existed previously. The execution of this great transformation must be left to youth. And if the old should succeed in restraining us and hindering our work, then there is no help for them, then Bolshevism will descend on them—the Bolshevism which it is our sacred goal to save the world from. With brutal

ruthlessness it will crush underfoot and stamp out everything their incompetent egotism attempts to defend. A Sodom and Gomorrah will rise, such as we have already seen in Russia! Only after decades of suffering will the new come into being and rise from the ruins of that collapsed ideology and world—the new of which we have a presentiment and which it is our hope to see more clearly.”

He fell silent, visibly agitated. Then he briefly shook hands with me, saying, “Tomorrow, then, we shall continue.”

*Wagener then relates how the next day he attacked the idea that money had intrinsic value. That notion led, he explained, to the “serfdom of interest payments.” Since money was merely a token to facilitate the exchange of goods constantly depreciating in value, it also perpetually lost value, he contended. Thus, no grounds existed for fixed interest charges on capital or loans. Invested or loaned money was entitled only to participate in the profits or losses of enterprises in which it was invested or to which it was loaned. Similarly, he rejected repayment of the initial amount of a mortgage loan, since buildings also depreciate. Yet, according to the laws of the day, he observed, even heirs were liable for the full amount of a mortgage, although the building may have fallen greatly in value.*

“The justification of our programmatic commitment to break the serfdom of interest payments has never been clearer to me,” Hitler called out at this point.

Dr. Wagner objected. “But the heirs can refuse the legacy.”

“That they can.” Hitler grew heated. “Yes, they can! And with it, give up everything they hold dear and valuable, the last memento, the last ring, the chair where as children they played on their old grandfather’s lap, the chest where mother, in careful work, cared for and kept the homespun linens, the memories, all of them, of childhood, of the family home—and *how much* these little things mean to a person who owns *nothing* besides such memories! They have to renounce all of it, for no other reason than that otherwise, as a result of the entirely erroneous capitalist attitude of the official world, they will fall victim to the serfdom of interest payments, under which they may have to languish to the end of their days.

“Oh, I foresee the costly struggle to persuade the pigheaded and stubborn world, to break the power of this swindle perpetrated upon the working man, which has become law, and to awaken the conviction that it is just as easy to do things right! However, it is essential to jettison that which is old and traditional and no longer suited to the changing times.”

Then Hitler looked at me, waiting, and after a few moments I continued.

*Here Wagener tells of having to set forth his plans for implementation of a “just profit.” To provide the foundation for it, a unified system of bookkeeping would establish the “appropriate capital” for productive units of the same or related types. Then an “appropriate profit percentage” would be determined*

for the various branches of the economy. By applying that standard, it would become clear where more than normal profits were being realized. Once the principle of “appropriate profit” went into effect, such above-normal profits could be attributed only to labor—not to capital. These would thus become subject to profit sharing among the workers. The whole process would be administered by a corporatist system of self-administration, which Wagener promised to describe later.

I fell silent. And for the moment, the others also remained silent. Finally, Hitler spoke. “What do the other gentlemen have to say about these arguments?”

Strasser responded first. “When you listen to this, everything sounds so simple and natural. But then, one asks oneself how it could happen that no one has come upon these ideas before now. I, at least, have never heard of them before.

“And besides, I have the feeling that the execution of these ideas also contains the solution to so many other problems—economic and social problems—that this fact makes the ideas seem even more correct.

“I am thinking, for example, of the problem of subsidiary plants. Anyone who does not work in a business gradually loses it to those who are competent and do work in it. In the Reichstag, we are constantly running into the problem of how to deal with subsidiaries. This proposal solves it.

“Or: Lending money stops being a *sine cura* and becomes a participation, with a higher chance of profit, but also with a risk of loss. We’ve racked our brains how to do away with income not based on work and effort. This puts an end to it.

“And then again: Agriculture will once more be granted loans because it poses the least risk. Mortgages on agricultural property will be practically gilt-edged. Until now, the reverse has been the case.

“Also: There is no longer any need of inheritance taxes. Real and capital property will contract as it is; and as Wagener already mentioned, the quotation from Goethe will be realized: ‘What you inherit from your fathers, earn it if you would own it.’

“But I’ll have to think the whole matter through in peace and quiet. I’d prefer to have it in writing, to be able to study it properly.”

Dr. Wagner declared, “The idea concerning appropriate capital and appropriate profit makes a great deal of sense to me. In determining appropriate capital, I also finally see a chance to create bases for the purchase prices of businesses. For actually, the appropriate capital would have to be the normal purchase price, even if the actual invested capital is greater or smaller.

“But I still have a number of questions and doubts about the contraction of capital and property, which cannot help but bring about a diminution of the entire money supply. How, for example, are the banks to work, to keep accounts and make settlements?”

Then Hitler said, "Wagener's perceptions make us face up to realizations we have already almost instinctively utilized in our party program, before these matters were really clear to us.

"When, subsequently, I hear a logical explanation of something that I have instinctively felt in advance, an explanation that reveals to me a natural development and justification, the correctness of this explanation is a dead certainty for me personally.

"All of us must readily agree that these perceptions, as Wagener himself has pointed out, require the most thorough examination and discussion over a period of years by leading theoreticians and practitioners, whose skill and experience can guarantee that the result of their work is unquestionably correct and can be converted into actuality. When one is dealing with a thousand-year-old notion, which has become so firmly rooted in the heads and legal systems of all peoples and nations that no one any longer has the slightest thought that it might possibly be false and erroneous—then it would be reckless and irresponsible to even try to demolish it without having tested a hundred times, without having deliberated, thought through, and even tried out in practice those new perceptions one wants to set in its place.

"That will be the task of the economic policy section, which we must establish within the national executive of the NSDAP. And at the proper time I shall ask you, Wagener, to head this section.

"There is one thing I consider important and absolutely necessary—that is, not to mention for the present any of these trains of thought and problems outside a narrow group. Any distortion, any false presentation, even partially making public this entirely new set of problems, which is still being worked on, could only do harm to the cause of our plans.

"I therefore enjoin you, gentlemen, for the present, from letting a word of what we heard day before yesterday and today reach anyone beyond our immediate circle. Even when the economic policy section has begun its work, you, Wagener, must see to it that no mischief can be made with these crucial subjects in the area of economic as well as social policy.

"I, too, am not yet entirely clear on some details. But in my mind I foresee the solution to all the problems Marxism and Communism have tried in vain to solve. The perceptions are so powerful, so subversive, so revolutionary, that the French Revolution seems child's play by comparison to the upheaval that cannot help but be brought about by the introduction of the consequences of these perceptions.

"The implications of these ideas is enormous. Wars have broken out, internal battles have been fought, revolutions have turned the world upside down, in order to solve the one and only major problem of our time: to replace the 'rule of capital over labor' with the 'rule of labor over capital.'

"Now I feel as if we are holding the philosopher's stone. Let us make good use of it rather than throw it away. Today I realize even more clearly than usual that

it must be the task of politics to prevent the leaping across to Germany and other nations of the world of Russian Bolshevism, that false and, in its own way, criminal solution of the problem, until we are in a position to sponsor the total program of a new social economy and to make a gift of it to our German Volk and to all mankind.”

After a brief silence, Hitler dismissed us with grave handshakes and pointed out that the further explanation of my perceptions would have to be postponed for one or two weeks, since he was about to take a trip to Berlin and Hamburg. We would hear from him again upon his return. As he said good-bye, he added to me, “Wagener. I have gained additional solid ground under my feet.”

# 9

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## An Emissary from Warsaw Calls at Nazi Headquarters—Hitler's Views on Central Europe, the East, and Alliance with England

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**W**agener continues by relating how, in the fall of 1930, a Polish lawyer, whose name he could no longer remember but who had lived in Poznan before the war and had thus been a German citizen then, called at the headquarters of the party executive in Munich. Since both Hitler and Hess were away, Wagener received the caller and had a long talk with him. The Pole identified himself as an unofficial emissary from Marshal Pilsudski, the strongman of the Polish regime. His mission, he explained, was to establish contact with Hitler. To prove his identity, he showed Wagener a letter of introduction.

In their conversation, the visitor from Warsaw reported that Pilsudski, a nationalist himself, was following Nazism's development with sympathy because of his own experiences in achieving Poland's liberation. However, the dangers of the chauvinism that Pilsudski regarded as an unavoidable accompaniment to a "national rebirth" caused him concern. The Marshal therefore wanted to prepare the way as soon as possible for a peaceful accommodation between Poland and the new nationalistic Germany. He regarded the "Polish Corridor" as a provision of the Versailles Treaty that would, in the long run, prove unbearable for Germany and which thus posed a potential cause of armed hostilities. In order to avert this peril, Pilsudski's emissary explained, the Marshal had commissioned him to propose to Hitler that Poland and Germany conclude a ten-year treaty of peace and friendship immediately after a Nazi takeover. The treaty should contain a secret clause to the effect that, within its time span, East Prussia would be reunited with Germany in such fashion as not to imperil Poland's free access to the Baltic Sea. Pilsudski further hoped that, within those ten years, economic ties and interdependencies would lead to a customs treaty and open frontiers. He envisioned in such an arrangement the core of a Central European federation.

For Poland, the caller from Warsaw explained, Russia posed the greatest danger, since Poland could expect no effective protection against Russia from

the Western powers. Since Pilsudski understood this, he had turned his eyes toward Germany. Upon his departure from Warsaw, the emissary stated, the Marshal had instructed him, "Tell Herr Hitler that he should act quickly. I'm already quite old!" The Polish visitor, who was on his way to the resort of Baden-Baden, gave Wagener his address there and expressed his readiness to return to Munich to deliver his message directly to Hitler. Upon Hitler's return, Wagener reported to him about the visit. He recounts Hitler's reaction as follows.

"So, developments are forging ahead. The SA isn't yet fully structured; so far as leadership talent is concerned, the party is still in its adolescence, our economic policy ideas are just beginning to become clarified, our social policy is in an embryonic condition, and we haven't given even a thought to the future form of government—and already the head of a foreign country approaches us with foreign policy problems we can't avoid taking a stand on.

"I spend all my time advancing the movement, winning over the Germans by recruiting members and preparing for election campaigns. And all the while those matters which it is the very purpose and meaning of our work to assume and resolve go unattended.

"Whom do I have to advise me on foreign policy? Who in my entourage has expert knowledge about Poland, who understands the significance of the Corridor question, who has studied the possibilities for resolving it beyond what we learn from the press and a few books and other publications?

"We must reshape the whole national executive of the party, even if it takes years, to prepare for the takeover of governmental power. We must not find ourselves so stupidly confronting a vacuum as did the Social Democratic Party when, to its complete surprise, the November revolution of 1918 succeeded.

"Think about how we should reshape the national executive, draw up a plan. And then we'll talk about it again as soon as possible."

Later I heard that Hitler had summoned the editor of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, Rosenberg, who had lived for a long time in Estonia.<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether he discussed the Polish question with him. He did not, in any case, say another word to me about the matter until the Pole arrived.

In that regard, Hitler was often somewhat peculiar. Sometimes he discussed the most important and most secret matter in the inner circle of his retinue, which encompassed only Schaub, Hoffmann, and Sepp Dietrich.<sup>2</sup> Then, this or that person with whom the matter was at the moment to be clarified was included. On such occasions Hitler expressed himself in such an unconcerned and open fashion that one feared someone who did not know him well—and such persons were naturally sometimes present—would arrive at completely

1. Alfred Rosenberg was born in Estonia and grew up there while it was under the rule of czarist Russia.

2. Julius Schaub was one of Hitler's "adjutants" and a bodyguard; Heinrich Hoffmann was Hitler's photographer; Josef (Sepp) Dietrich was one of Hitler's bodyguards.



false impressions of the man's method of working. One feared the visitor would hear things that he could not understand and would thus interpret them falsely and pass them on to others in misleading form. And then again, Hitler said nothing at all to his closest co-workers about matters on which they absolutely needed to be informed or on which it would have at least been very valuable for them to be informed.

So it happened that one occasionally heard something of decisive importance from the photographer Hoffmann or from a Gauleiter or county leader, or that one worked on the same task as someone else or even worked at cross purposes, all because Hitler did not inform one, despite the fact that the matter in question belonged to one's sphere of responsibility.

In this case, no consultation with me was necessary. But since I had conducted the first talk with the envoy, it would have made sense to pursue the matter further with me, if anyone. I later came to attribute this peculiarity of Hitler's to an innate mistrustfulness and to a penchant for reserving important matters solely for himself.

When the envoy arrived, I did not even see him again. Hitler received him alone, in private. He was dismissed after a two-hour talk, and at the time I heard nothing about the content or results of the conference. As far as I know, Hitler spoke to no one else about it either.

Not until I myself spoke to him about it several days later did he say to me:

"The emissary told me almost precisely the same thing you told me. I'm determined to follow Pilsudski's advice and conclude a ten-year pact with Poland immediately after taking over the government.<sup>3</sup> What reverberations such a treaty will evoke in Germany and the whole world! Once more Germany is in a position to make treaties! Germany extends the hand of friendship to those who were her enemies! The NSDAP wishes to accomplish peaceful work. It will be a good beginning for our foreign policy.

"This Central European concept engages me deeply. And I am firmly convinced of England's support. What could England welcome more warmly than a loyal partner on the Continent, one who will also represent England's interests? We cede the ocean to England. In exchange, England cedes Central Europe to us and leaves it to us to establish order in the East."

Since he paused for an instant, I had a chance to break in. "Herr Hitler, it is not quite so simple to do politics with the British. I do not know whether Pilsudski's ambassador told you about his Marshal's reservations about England. Pilsudski's fears concerning England's attitude about plans for Central Europe seem to me sound *just so long as* Russia does not reach for the Dardanelles or the Persian Gulf. If we can do anything to make Russia come to that point a little sooner, we, too, will be able to come to an agreement with Central

3. On January 26, 1934, Germany entered into a ten-year treaty of conciliation with Poland, but without the sort of secret clause proposed, according to Wagener, by the emissary who had visited Munich.

Europe a little sooner. As long as Russia keeps its hand in its pocket and restricts itself to social policy, even if of a Bolshevik sort, England will see a risk to the European balance of power in an economic or even federational collaboration of Central Europe. And it will use all the means at its disposal to cross our plans, no matter how peaceful and appropriate they are.”

“What have you got against England?” Hitler replied curtly.

“Nothing,” I assured him, “nothing at all. But as far as England is concerned, for the present there is only *one* policy in Europe, one policy alone: that of balance of power! England doesn’t *want* anyone on the Continent to take up the cudgels for England. For history has taught that the same cudgels can just as readily be wielded *against* British interests. That is why it wants no one to have any cudgels at all. Or rather, it would like to be the one who hands out cudgels—now to this one, now to that one, in order to keep in line anyone who threatens to grow too powerful.”

“But surely you share the view that we must collaborate with England?” Hitler asked.

“*We must want to*, as I’d prefer to put it. But whether *England* wants to is another question.

“Herr Hitler, in *Mein Kampf* you expressed the belief that England will be interested in us only when, in England’s eyes, we are capable of entering into alliances. You ventured the view that once we are again strengthened enough internally and externally, we could be a valuable friend to England.

“But if you look at balance-of-power politics, you will notice that something like the reverse will be the case. If Germany is strengthened to the extent that, in your view, it must be a valuable ally to another nation, that is precisely when it will threaten the European balance as far as England is concerned. And at that point, England will do everything it can to cut Germany back down to size.”

At that, Hitler stared at me for a time incredulously and ventured:

“But surely that cannot be! What is the point of such balance-of-power politics? Surely alliances are best made with someone who is strong?”

*In the following passage, Wagener reports that by way of answering Hitler, he told of a talk he had heard Kaiser Wilhelm II deliver shortly before Christmas 1917 to the staff of the supreme command of the fifth German army in Montmédy, France. The Kaiser had identified England as Germany’s foremost foe and attributed this to the industrialization of Germany, which had made necessary a merchant marine and a battle fleet to protect it. England had perceived this growth in German strength as a threat to its primacy on the sea, which had led to war.*

Hitler stared straight ahead, silent.

“When Germany collapsed,” I therefore continued, “the Kaiser’s words proved to have been true. The whole German fleet had to be handed over, the

merchant navy as well as the war fleet, and Scapa Flow became the graveyard of the last German Kaiser's glorious life's work."<sup>4</sup>

Then Hitler said to me, "Wagener, the rendering given by the Kaiser is dramatic. It was truly the history of his life's work. And it was tragic that he understood the destiny whose victim he himself became.

"But look, Wagener, instinctively—once again, instinctively—without knowing anything about the Kaiser's persuasive explanations, I turned away from a naval policy, even from a colonial policy, to return to a Continental policy such as Bismarck pursued. I do not *want* to fight against England, nor do I want to *act* against England.

"Rather, I look to the East for work and bread for the excess millions living in Germany. There is room in the East! There are opportunities in the East! The danger of Bolshevism even requires us to man the front to the East. A Central Europe, a Ukraine, all under German domination, solve all the problems of the plight of the peoples of Europe. Who could reject such an idea? What objection could England have to it? Even the Near East is secured by German influence along the coast of the Aegean and the Black Sea.

"No, Wagener. Your recital confirms me in my conviction. The treaty with Poland is the first step toward the consolidation of Central Europe. And you will see that England will even then offer us help, in order to remove the universal danger represented by Bolshevism."

4. On June 21, 1919, the crews on the German battle fleet which was interned by the British after the war at Scapa Flow off Scotland scuttled their ships.

# 10

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## Strasser's Plans—Hitler on the Limitations of Organization and the Need for a Spiritual Revival of the Nation

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**I**n the next section, Wagener reports on another conference on economic policy in which he participated along with Hitler, Strasser, and Gauleiter Wagner. He explained to them his proposals for economic self-administration by means of corporatist representative bodies. He called for a pyramid of economic chambers, beginning at the local level and rising to the national level, for each of five branches of the economy: (1) agriculture, (2) artisanry, (3) industry, (4) commerce, (5) banking and the professions. Employers on the one hand and white- and blue-collar workers on the other would be equally represented at each level.

In addition to supervising the system of capital contraction and shifting ownership Wagener had outlined earlier, these chambers would regulate such matters as wages and welfare measures. The whole structure would be capped by a Reich economic council that would serve as a kind of economic parliament. This Reich economic council would be anchored in the state and work with the national government.

Such a system of self-administration, Wagener assured Hitler, Strasser, and Gauleiter Wagner, would also serve as a mechanism for identifying men with leadership qualities and advancing them to national prominence. Hitler voiced special approval of this last point. After the session, Strasser confided in Wagener his impression that Hitler knew too little of economics to follow his presentation in that sphere and took an active part in the discussion only where Wagener touched upon political themes.

Strasser then invited Wagener to dine with him and his wife at home. After the meal, as the two smoked cigars and finished a bottle of wine, Strasser warned Wagener about Göring's influence over Hitler. He urged Wagener to visit Göring in Berlin as soon as possible and win his confidence. Strasser then proposed to Wagener the division of the party's national executive into two parts, one to manage the day-to-day operations of the party and one to prepare for the takeover of the state. He intended to head the first himself and

suggested Konstantin Hierl for the second. He and Wagener then made a list of nominees for cabinet posts, specifying the Nazis Wilhelm Frick as interior minister (a post he in fact received in 1933) and Walter Frank as justice minister (Frank later became Reich Commissar for Justice). They agreed that the foreign minister must be drawn from the foreign ministry and that generals should head the defense ministry and a ministry of culture. Strasser also proposed the creation of a new economic chancellor, to whom the economics ministry, the agricultural ministry, the transport ministry, and the labor ministry would be subordinated. He nominated Wagener for this new post. Pressed by Wagener about his own role, Strasser indicated that he would continue to devote himself to the party when the Nazis initially came to power but speculated that afterward Hitler might move up to the presidency and make him chancellor.

Strasser urged Wagener to explain their plans to Hitler, as would he. When Wagener next saw Hitler about two weeks later, he was at once asked whether he had come about the party organization. When he replied in the affirmative, Hitler asked him to take a seat and then said:

“I completely agree with the suggestion Strasser mentioned to me. There are only two points I do not fully understand: what gave you the idea, first, to suggest a general to head the ministry of culture and, second, to wish to hand over the tasks of the SA chief of staff to a general. What are your reasons?”

“The idea,” I replied, “to name a general as minister of culture was actually Strasser’s. But it made sense to me. After all, the ministry of culture encompasses five principal divisions that must be run by specialists—education, physical fitness, art, science, and religion. It will probably be best to name these five specialists to the positions of under secretaries.

“Now, all five must be radically different personalities. By their nature they cannot actually be anything but antagonistic. At the very least, there is a risk that each will become so absorbed in his area that he comes to see the others as upsetting, troublesome, even hostile to his own goals and will reject them. The desk-bound educator hates sports, the athlete hates being penned into a school bench, the artist is opposed to science, and science regards the arts as dangerous to precise knowledge. And finally, theology, unless it is very modern, is anxious to capture the free developmental drive of stormy youth and confine it in a narrow chamber, so that it will repent and waste away.

“None of the five can be the minister. Only two types of persons seem to me suited for the post—a politician of broad scope or a specially qualified general.”

“Your reasoning isn’t bad,” Hitler said. “It makes sense to me. But I’d like to give preference to the politician.

“What is at stake at the present great turning point? An individualistic worldview is being replaced by a socialistic one! A thousand-year-old attitude toward life is being thrust aside by completely new concepts.

“Such a change cannot be decreed by legislation! Nor can it be brought about by a ministry, no matter how homogeneously it is put together and how saturated and filled it is with the new ideas.

“Such a transformation requires an *inner* conversion! A mental, a spiritual, an ethical, even a religious one! Do you think that your minister of labor is capable of that, or your minister of transportation, or the minister of justice, or even the minister of culture? Of course, they are necessary and must make an effort to work in the new spirit. And that is why I approve your plans and Strasser’s proposal. But all the officials you will encounter at some later time, all the regulations, the entire closely interwoven and entangled conditions of collaboration with other ministries and offices, and finally the pure mammoth strength of the factor of inertia—all these will paralyze you, will stall your work. Your honest and industrious ambitions will be frittered away in petty conflicts and in open and covert resistance, until you and your men are yourselves confused and lose heart and, prematurely gray, collapse in the face of deficient human insight and knowledge.

“That is why you must go ahead and set up your Organizational Section II—it has to be, that’s obvious. But do not overestimate it. That’s not what counts.

“What is crucial is the internal conversion of the people, of the Volksgenossen, of the Volk!<sup>1</sup> And that is a political task! As yet, almost everyone is imprisoned in the liberalistic attitude. Do you think that a confirmed industrial entrepreneur is prepared suddenly to admit that his property is not a right but a duty? That capital should no longer rule but be ruled? That it is not the life of the individual that matters but the totality? That the principle of the soldier’s sacrificial death should be transformed into the readiness of every working person—whether he be active in the economy or elsewhere—to sacrifice himself for the community?

“It is such a far-reaching and complete conversion that the adult is no longer capable of it. Only youth can be converted, newly aligned and adjusted to the socialist sense of obligation toward the community. For almost two thousand years the Gospel of Christ has been preached, for two thousand years the sense of community has been taught: love one another, care for one another, respect and help one another! But today, at the end of these two thousand years, economic liberalism flourishes as never before! During a world war lasting almost five years, the nations slaughtered one another, and in a sadistic delirium the victor tramples on the liberty and lives of the vanquished—while in their temples they pray, ‘Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.’ The mendacity, the infamy, and the hypocrisy of mankind have become a downright blasphemy!

“And in a couple of years we are supposed to make up for all this and to restore order where millenia have sinned? We’re to believe that we can restore

1. In Nazi usage, Volksgenosse meant literally a “comrade of the folk,” that is, an ethnic German. No attempt is made to translate the term in this volume.

the value of the word of God, the teaching of Christ, the truth of a holy religion, where generations upon generations, nations upon nations, the entire lifespan of a human cultural epoch, all were unable even to recognize the deep abyss in which they wandered or sojourned!

“True, this misinterpretation of the Christian faith has become clearly evident only recently, through the mechanization of manual labor and the industrialization of the economy, which allowed the condition of pre-Christian slavery to be revived in new forms. But where were the high priests, where were the scribes? They turned away, as they did that time in Jerusalem, from the plight of the people, and with a sanctimonious gesture they folded their hands and prayed, ‘We thank you, God, that we are not like them!’ And they drove the hungry and unemployed masses back into the dust of their despair.

“No, Wagener, you will not change that with your Organizational Section II, nor with a general as minister of culture.

“But when you see the masses streaming to join the SA, when you observe the enthusiasm of youth, when the cheerful hands of an innocent child reach for you, then you will sense the inner conversion; then you will realize that a new faith is awakening out of the lethargy of a corrupt epoch and taking to the march—the faith in divine justice, in heavenly truth; the faith in an unworldly, paradisiacal future, where the lust for power, force, and enmity gives way to equality and fraternity, the spirit of sacrifice, love and loyalty, and the will to stand before the throne of the Almighty with the open heart of one ready to believe in God. And they will have sufficient greatness to stammer out the prayer for their brothers and fathers, ‘Forgive them, Lord, for they knew not what they did.’

“It is on this basis alone that the new world can be built! To lay this groundwork is our task. Our own hopes can aim no further. We must leave some things to be done by those who come *after* us. Your work will be a signpost for the future, a witness to our great intention, but in *our* time it will not be crowned with realization.”

He fell silent. His inner enthusiasm had driven the blood into his cheeks. His eyes glowed like bright lights. I thought of Strasser, of our plans. And I felt: Our thinking is so puny.

Then Hitler rose to his feet and shook hands with me.

“You still owe me an explanation of why you want a general as chief of staff. Come to see me tomorrow at eleven.”

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## Wagener Fails to Gain a General as SA Chief of Staff—Hitler’s Views on Destiny, Jews, and Parasitism

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**W**agener proceeds by recounting that on the next day he reported to Hitler on the measures he had taken to develop the organization of the SA. He found himself repeating much that he and Pfeffer had communicated earlier, since Hitler had obviously forgotten much of what they had told him. When he had finished, Wagener continues, Hitler replied as follows.

“You mustn’t be annoyed with me for having let these matters slip my mind. My memory automatically jettisons any unnecessary ballast whenever things are going well and there’s no need for me to involve myself.

“You are right, of course, in thinking that the chief of staff of the SA must become the minister for the armed forces, but whether the job requires a general is another question.

“If we wished to rearm, if we had to fear a war in the immediate future—then, of course, military points of view would have to prevail in filling this post and in all the preparatory work.

“But the very aim of our political work must be precisely to prevent war! Nor do I fear war from Russia. Bolshevism works with the Comintern organization. It lays the groundwork for the revolutionizing of the mind, and its task is to initiate Communist uprisings, subversion—and the rule of the proletariat in the other nations of the world as well. And since, next to Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary, we are closest to the Bolshevik borders, the danger to us Germans is especially great. You yourself were instrumental in the Baltic region not long ago in keeping the wave of the Bolshevik conflagration far from Germany. You helped make it possible to root out and exterminate the Spartacist cadres, which were the earliest strongholds of the Communist International. I don’t have to tell you the further course of world history.

“But that is why we must always be so strong that we can strike down—or, better still, prevent—this Communist insurrection. Once the ruling power is in



our grasp, we must seize the evil in Germany by the root and tear it out, to make way for true socialism, for the new faith, for the new religion.

“To that extent, a general might well be an appropriate chief of staff. For collaboration with the army and its supplementation to the required strength is, of course, more assured when some person known and recognized by the army heads this organization than when it is headed by a man, even if he was a career officer, who is burdened with the stigma of party.

“I also admit that we must not completely bury our heads in the sand in the face of those forces in the world which will try to defend liberalism and individualism. For they, too, have made a religion of those concepts. As long as only those with a vested interest in economic liberalism are at the helm in the authoritarian democracies—which are really not democracies at all—and in nations dominated by capitalism—where the word democracy is derived, not from *demos*, the people, but from *daemon*, the devil: until then they will wage war against socialism; and when there is no other choice, they will drive their peoples and their youth to the slaughtering block for the sake of their economic power, for their money bags, for base mammon. And the peoples will be stupid enough, and will be kept stupid enough, to go to war in the belief that they are fighting for their fatherland. But they are fighting only to maintain the domination of capital over labor and for the interest paid on that capital.

“If, however, the liberalistic countries should threaten war against us, then the preparedness of the SA, even with a general as chief of staff, would no longer suffice to repel an attack. At such a time, then, much as we wish to prevent it and must avoid it, we would have to rearm. We would have to try to secure the peace and the unhampered execution of our sacred goals by building up combat-ready armed forces. But I cannot imagine that other nations would not realize that Bolshevism, and only Bolshevism, would profit from a military confrontation, and that there is a risk that instead of fulfillment of the sublime Christian idea of a socialist sense of community, which these nations wish to prevent—from selfish and un-Christian motives—the grotesque visage of rule by inferiors will wave its diabolical scepter over humanity.

“The task of the SA, therefore, lies primarily in another area—in political education, in reawakening the political faith that was lost after the terrible collapse of the World War and the deprivation of Versailles, and in inspiring the rising generation of German youth with the spirit of a national socialism, which makes them strong enough to reject international Communism and overcome international economic liberalism—that is, the domination of capital over man and his vitality.

“Thus, the storm trooper is something quite novel, something there has never been before: a political soldier! He combines the virtues of the military tradition with the belief in a political duty, a political mission. Yes, if we would find *such* a political general—a personality who would embody the training of an officer and at the same time have a clear view of the greatness of the time and its

meaning, who would be filled with a belief in Germany's future and at the same time in the deliverance of humanity through socialist truth, and who by his warm heart and the nobility of a proud soul would be in a position to lead youth and to rouse youth to enthusiasm—then I would agree to the choice.

“But do you know of such a person?”

*Wagener writes that he suggested retired Lieutenant General Alexander von Falkenhausen as SA chief of staff. He qualified that recommendation by adding that he did not personally know Falkenhausen, who had a short time previously stepped down as commander of an infantry school in Dresden, but had heard good reports about him. Hitler responded, according to Wagener, by authorizing him to offer the post of SA chief of staff to Falkenhausen and to promise him the defense ministry as well.*

*Wagener then describes his trip to Dresden, where he had arranged, through the local SA adjutant, Georg von Detten, to meet with Falkenhausen. He was invited to tea at the general's house but broke off the talk when he noticed that someone was eavesdropping on them through a partially open door to the next room. Later, Wagener writes, he learned from the Dresden SA that the person in the next room had been the wife of the former chief of army command, Hans von Seeckt. Wagener found it significant that Frau von Seeckt had a Jewish family background.*

*Upon Wagener's return to Munich, Hitler invited him to accompany him in his car on a trip to Berlin via Nuremberg. He describes the fast ride in Hitler's hundred-horsepower Mercedes convertible, which was driven not by the regular chauffeur, Julius Schreck, but by a substitute.*

We arrived in Nuremberg about five in the afternoon. We drove to the Deutscher Hof Hotel, where rooms had been reserved for us. Hitler asked the desk clerk about the evening's program at the theater. “*La Forza del Destino*, by Verdi.”

“Splendid,” Hitler said. “Wagener, will you join us?”

“Of course. I'd be delighted.”

“Hess, see to it that we get good seats—you, Wagener, and I. What time does it start?”

“At six thirty,” the desk clerk replied.

“Fine. We'll leave here at six fifteen. Perhaps you'll come to my room in a quarter of an hour,” Hitler said to me.

After I had unpacked a little and washed up—the dust had done quite a job on us—I went to Hitler's room, where, to my surprise, he had spread out on one of the beds—his was a double room—a large ordnance survey map of northern France, showing the position of the Battle of the Somme.

“Someone just sent me a work about the Battle of the Somme. You were also there, I think. It's enormously interesting to have an overview of the larger situation and to understand only now why at the time, as a corporal, I lay in a mudhole and held out.

“But we had planned to talk about something else.”

With this he led me to the room's bay, which formed the corner of the building, so that we had a view on two sides. The six-cornered, slightly protruding window allowed us to see as far as the large square in front of the railroad station. A waiter had just brought two orders of coffee with bread and butter, so that we could sit down cozily at the window table.

“You want to tell me that your plan failed,” Hitler said to me.

“How did you know?” I asked, astonished.

“Because it *had* to. Fate works its own way with us. We are only its tools. Granted, not from lack of will power. There is that kind, also. But *we* are not among them. It is precisely *with our will* that we are the tools of fate. But when we do want something that may not suit fate—or, to put it more precisely, Providence—we run into resistance and do not attain our goal. It is a great talent to recognize such resistance and to come to the proper decision: either to overcome it by attack or to obey fate's sign and step aside in order to search for another path.

“But tell me all about it.”

I reported on my visit to Falkenhausen and what I had learned. I thought Hitler would fly into a fit of temper about the general and grow scornful. But to my astonishment, such was not the case. When I finished, he gave me a smiling look and said:

“Fate has made it easy for us to realize the mistake we intended making. But why was it a mistake?” Hitler went on, as if asking himself. “Apparently we were about to abandon our revolutionary line. A general as chief of staff would have connected, would have linked, our uprising with the vested powers of the present day, perhaps even with the reactionaries. That was not what should have been. It was wrong. I was never easy about it. There is no such thing as a political general. In such a case, he is either a bad general or a bad politician. Napoleon and Frederick the Great are the exceptions that prove the rule. And even Napoleon foundered, since in the end the soldier in him ran away with him, causing him to lose sight of the political measure of the facts.

“But what is interesting is that fate made use of a Jewess to sound its ‘*Quo vadis?*’ to us—or rather, to call our attention to it by tapping its spoon against its saucer. [ . . . ]

“Look here, I have nothing against the Jews as such, no more than did Luther or Queen Elizabeth of England, or whoever else was a genuine anti-Semite. It's a fact that the Jews exist in the world, and the Divine Creator allowed *their* mothers to bear children as well.

“What, then, is the true nature of the peculiarly isolated life the Jews live? For they do live a peculiar life. They do not, like other nations, live within the clear borders of one country; rather, they live within other nations—alien plants, as it were, among other plants.

“That fact, too, would not in itself be cause for objection. On the contrary. A

variety of plants utilizes the soil much better, it livens up the picture, it increases the harvest.

“We can make the same comparison with the animal kingdom. Why shouldn’t goats be raised alongside of cows, foals and calves graze alongside each other, deer and rabbits and foxes live in the same woodland preserve? What kind of park would it be in which there were only nightingales or only thrushes? Diversity and variety are the strength and at the same time the beauty of nature.

“Among these animals, as among the plants, those that are stronger, healthier, more capable of life prevail in the struggle for existence. In the course of this effort, it does, of course, happen that one devours another or, among the plants, is choked.

“Now, in the animal world as in the plant world, there are also creatures we call parasites. It is characteristic of parasites that they do not use the same personal strength as do others to take their nourishment, their vital force, straight from the soil or from nature or, as the occasion arises, simply to kill other creatures in the process; instead, they strive to make use of the work of others in order to live as well and as effortlessly as possible. Take mistletoe or orchids—they do not live from the soil into which they laboriously drive roots to dig out their nourishment and drive it upward; rather, they clamp their talons somewhere into the bark of a tree, where there is a wound into which they can settle; they drive their suckers way down beneath the bark to divert to themselves the host tree’s vital fluids, so they can live on them themselves. They are sadists, bloodsuckers, devils. And the tree works and digs deep into the soil to draw up nourishment and blood for itself—for itself *and* for its lodger, who sucks and demands and who sits *below* the uppermost branches, so that the crown of the tree suffers unless the tree can work that much harder.

“These parasites have a special sense that allows them to detect where easier and better nourishment may be found. Look at ivy, a plant that begins by living on its own roots but then also becomes a parasite. It creeps up the side of a building or a rock. There you will soon see one strand branching off and trailing away to some other site. If you follow it, you discover a moldy spot, or a moist crevice. And that is where the ivy lets down new suckers and uses that starting place to develop with new and rampant driving force. How could the ivy know ahead of time that up above and to one side there would be a new and more favorable source of nourishment? That precisely is the parasitic instinct, which plants that are *not* parasitic do *not* have. A special talent! A sixth sense! A business sense, though of sadistic origin, but an advantage to the parasitic creatures.

“Once *one* parasite has settled on a tree, others soon follow. They sit arrogantly enthroned on the host tree and proliferate, while it works and groans because it must feed its guests before anything is left over for its own flowering!

“And soon the tortured tree becomes stunted here and there. It can no longer

manage it all. Now the parasitic trash really begins to fall on the moribund parts, which can no longer offer resistance; the parasite is no longer content with the host's vital fluids alone but devours it altogether. In the process, the veins of the parasite release a mysterious poison into the body of the victim. This venom has a degenerating effect, gradually making the host grow sick and languish, increasingly weakening its power of resistance.

“When you see such ruined trees standing in old parks, everywhere overgrown with ivy and other climbing plants, only the trunk and bare branches showing through, while the parasites hang on them in dense, blossom-laden clusters, then you see what happens to a once proud oak when it becomes unable to withstand the parasites, unless some gardener frees it in time from the dangerous intruders.

“Even when the rotting trunk collapses and falls to the ground after one or two centuries, these sadists churn up even the last remnant of the cadaver. But at the same time, creeping along the ground, they begin to proliferate in the direction of new victims intended to donate another century to their lives.

“Such a parasitic genus—among mankind—is Jewry.

“In some way it comes among a people, first individually, then severally, as Moses described it in the case of Joseph, who summoned first his father and his brothers, then the clan, and finally the whole nation of Israelites into Egypt. We ourselves can observe the process constantly, as one man draws another after him across the eastern border.

“Then they settle wherever they find a soft spot, especially in commerce. It is rare for a Jew to become a factory worker, even less an agricultural laborer. He is not willing to earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. Even in commerce he does not burden himself with perishable goods. For they involve a risk, and he would have to hawk the goods, he would have to work so that they would not remain in stock and perish, representing a loss to him. Rather, he deals in living cattle, which nourishes itself; in horses; in grain, which represents the work of others; in cloth; in garments. And he attracts people with advertising and with display windows, so that they will come to him and deliver to him a portion of the results of their work. Or he lends money and demands interest—thus, once again, sharing in the vital fluids the work of others has produced and promoted.

“They take root everywhere. When wholesome national sentiment resists, they infuse a degenerating poison, a fiendish poison, into the nation; they speak of individualism, of universal human rights, of loyalty and good faith, of democracy! In reality, these are only the corrosive drops of the same poison that is used by the vegetable parasites to paralyze their victims, to destroy their ability to resist, to infect their bodies with disease and rot.

“Then comes the final spurt, the grasp for positions in public life and the state, to quench once and for all the tree's own will to live and to devour the still living corpse. With sadistic lust they burrow into and pervade the tormented

victim, which, defenseless, surrenders to them, allowing itself slowly to be gnawed and sucked dry. By now sixty percent of all lawyers in Germany are Jews, more than thirty percent of the judges in some regions are of Jewish origin. They push their way into the highest positions in the police, in the government, so as to expropriate and possess the economic body of the Volk unconditionally and with ever greater impunity.

“But these Kutiskers and Barmats are deceived! The Rathenaus and Hirsches are mistaken!<sup>1</sup> The tree has not yet been made to fall. Even Versailles was not able to break its will to live! The powers of order were still in place, gardeners were still at work who clearly saw the looming danger! And it is our task to stir up the German Volk, so that this will to live will never again be submerged and the will to resistance will remain alive to the end of all that is mortal!

“Nothing upsets Jewry more than a gardener who is intent on keeping his garden neat and healthy. Nothing is more inimical to Jewry than order! It needs the smell of decay, the stench of cadavers, weakness, lack of resistance, submission of the personal self, illness, degeneracy! And wherever it takes root, it continues the process of decomposition! *It must!* For only under those conditions can it lead its parasitic existence.

“It is not for nothing that time and again the Jews have been driven out of countries where they settled—from Babylonia, from Egypt, from Rome, from England, from the Rhineland, and elsewhere. In each of these a gardener was at work who was incorruptible and loved his people.

“But since Weimar, you can once again see an enormous acceleration in the proliferation, the taking root, the stripping of corpses. Truly, if something does not happen soon, it may be too late!

“You look to France, to England, to America, to Russia! What do I care about these nations and their people! Let them cast themselves as fodder before Jewry! Then it becomes all the more important to cleanse Germany and to strengthen it against the danger in its own land and against a repetition of it. For it *will* repeat itself, it will always return, as long as people live on this earth. And the last ones, God help us, who will proliferate even when the end of man has come—that will be, in spite of everything, the Jews, until they breathe the last of their miserable parasites’ lives on the piled cadavers of their victims.

“To postpone this point in time as far into the future as possible is our duty, our God-given mission—yes, it is the substance of Divine Creation altogether.

“With shameful cynicism the Jewish priests read from the Books of Moses the

1. Iwan Kutisker, a Jewish businessman, was convicted during the mid-1920s of misusing credits obtained from the Prussian State Bank for speculative purposes. The brothers Henri and Julius Barmat, both Jewish, were convicted of bribing state officials and sentenced to prison in 1928. Emil Rathenau founded the Allgemeine-Elektricitäts-Gesellschaft (AEG); his son and successor, Walther Rathenau, organized the mobilization of raw materials for the German war effort, became after the war reconstruction minister, then foreign minister, the post he held when he was assassinated in 1922. The last name is probably a reference to Paul Hirsch, a Jewish Social Democrat who became the first prime minister of republican Prussia after the 1918 revolution.

promise that it shall be given to the Jews by Jehovah one day to rule over all mankind: All peoples shall be subject to you, their kings shall serve you, their wealth, their work shall be thine!

“In vain the prophets warned against this vile blasphemy, in vain Christ called out to the Jews: ye are all brothers! They have even succeeded within the Church of Rome in falsifying this high Christian teaching of the community ordained by God, and they have taken the name of Christ in vain for the restoration of the Mosaic teachings of the promise [sic]. Even Protestantism did not protest against *this anti-Christian doctrine*, but only against the crassest manifestations of Jewry’s battle of decay and destruction in the Catholic Church, which was directed against everyone who tried to resist the talons of parasitism.

“And the struggle which the world and those churches that falsely designate themselves Christian wage against National Socialism—against us, who want only the fulfillment of Christ’s lifework—is nothing more than the continuation of the crime of the Inquisition and the burning of witches, by which the Jewish-Roman world exterminated whatever offered resistance to that shameful parasitism.”

Hitler paused. He emptied his cup and paced the room. Muttering to himself, he said:

“That is the situation. And we must structure our attitude to Jewry according to that understanding.”

I myself was deeply impressed by his presentation and did not know immediately what to say in return. I therefore waited until he continued.

“But the Jews are *here*, in the world, whether or not we deplore their vile, sadistic parasitism and their will to destroy and exterminate us. And they deplore us as well, because we resist them, and they call us militarists and barbarians because we are prepared to take up arms, if need be, to keep them at bay. They are eager to draw the fangs and pull out the claws of a lion or a tiger—no, of all the lions and tigers—so as to harness the animals’ strength to their own purposes. And they call it militarism and barbarism when the lions do not submit to this but lash out?

“It does no good merely to despise them and to mock their ‘Jewish fear,’ which arises from their naturally guilty consciences. The gardener *must* intervene, and he must do so soon—as soon as possible!”

At this point, Hess entered to announce that it was time to go to the opera. Unfortunately, the conversation had to be interrupted at this of all moments. But Hitler said:

“We will continue tonight. You think about it, *too*.”

# 12

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## Hitler's Reading of Newspapers—His Views on a Jewish State and "Social Economy"

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**T**he municipal theater of Nuremberg is a comparatively modern structure, large, spacious, with excellent stage facilities—but in an unfortunate architectural style, if the aberrations of art nouveau can be called a style at all. The personnel of the playhouse, and especially of the opera, were outstanding at that time, and if the occasion arose, Nuremberg could afford to engage the leading actors and singers for guest appearances.

Our seats were in the seventh or eighth row of the orchestra, fairly close to the center—very advantageous, therefore, for the eye and ear. So we could truly relish the production, which was performed by the leading voices and one guest artist from Berlin. The large orchestra so filled the gigantic shell of the auditorium that it was as if we were living, rather than hearing, the music.

Each time the fate theme was played, I noticed that Hitler, who sat to my right, made a gesture, which became particularly pronounced in the next-to-last scene, when the splendid aria ended in this theme, solemnly accompanied by the grave melody of the monks; he looked as if he were pressing his hands together in prayer.

During the intermission, we walked through the corridors and the lobby, where it was evident that Hitler was recognized by a few people. We met no one we knew. Only one man came up to Hess and asked for an introduction to Hitler. He had some job or other in the management or administration of the Germanic Museum in Nuremberg, but I no longer recall his name. Hitler talked with him for a while, and he offered a guided tour through the museum, which Hitler actually knew inside and out but which had just been reorganized.

After the performance, we returned to the hotel, where Schaub and Hoffmann occupied the customary table in a recess. Gauleiter Streicher and Party Comrade Liebel were with them.<sup>1</sup> The two had only waited to report to Hitler.

1. Julius Streicher, the notoriously anti-Semitic Gauleiter of central Franconia, published the pornographic anti-Semitic magazine *Der Stürmer*. Willy Liebel, owner of a book-printing firm in Nuremberg, had been elected a member of the city council in 1929 and became mayor during the Third Reich.



After a short report, they left. Hoffmann and Schaub also asked for permission to leave, so that only the three of us remained for supper, which was actually quite late.

The hotel, which was familiar with Hitler's habits, had already prepared the meal: cream of tomato soup followed by scrambled eggs with peas and carrots and fried potatoes. Hitler refused the dessert of fruit compote and asked to have it sent to his room. Hitler and Hess had nothing to drink with their supper. I had ordered my usual aquavit and after-dinner coffee.

"I love the smell of it. But if I drink it, I can't sleep *at all*," he told me.

"On the whole I react to caffeine, too," I replied. "But since you are in the habit of staying up until two in the morning, that's exactly what I need."

"I have never," Hitler interjected at this, "forced anyone to stay up with me. Let each one do as he likes. The only time he does not have that freedom is in his relations with the German Volk. But if you wish to go to bed earlier, don't let me keep you."

"No, I'll be glad to keep you company. I always come well rested from home; I can make a night of it now and again."

"Make a night of it!" he said to Hess. "You see, that's how they talk. And if someone overhears, he imagines wine and women."

Hess laughed. And I, also laughing, replied, "The danger of such gossip about you and your circle must be almost nonexistent."

In the meantime, Hitler had reached for the newspapers spread on the table. He had his own way of reading them. His eyes scanned the lines—three or four at a time. Sometimes it seemed as if he had only cast a single glance at a paragraph, a whole article; yet afterward he was familiar with the contents.

He seldom looked to see who the writer was or in which newspaper the piece appeared. He simply took in whatever interested him and registered it in his brain, in the nook where it fit and served to confirm or perhaps even justify his own ideas and opinions. Whatever refuted his ideas he rejected out of hand and never even absorbed.

This was noticeable by his talk and the remarks he let fall while reading the papers.

Once, referring to an article from the *Vorwärts*—which he read as dutifully every day as *Die Rote Fahne* and the bourgeois papers—he said, "One should read the opposition press much more carefully, and I regret especially that I cannot read any foreign papers.<sup>2</sup> For the friendly papers and pamphlets allow you to understand what you may do, but the hostile ones tell you what you must do."

So on this evening as well we sat reading the papers and drinking tea, into which I poured a little rum. Beer makes one tired as well as filling one with too much liquid. Tea, on the other hand, is stimulating—and in my case, with the addition of rum, all the more so.

2. *Vorwärts* was the official daily newspaper of the Social Democratic Party; *Die Rote Fahne* was the official daily newspaper of the Communist Party.

"It seems Litvinov has gotten himself in the news again," Hitler broke the silence.<sup>3</sup> "That Finkelstein. Does anyone know how all these Jews got to Russia in the first place?"

"I can tell you," I answered. "In the sixteenth or seventeenth century, the Jews were expelled from the Rhineland, from Mainz down to the mouth of the Rhine. And at that time a Polish king, deeply influenced by his Jewish bankers, took in the refugees. They were settled in southeastern Poland and the western part of the Ukraine, which at that time was part of Poland, and from there they spread over the whole of Russia in the course of the centuries.

"That is also the reason why all the Russian Jews speak German. In Russia it is called 'Yiddish.' The Jews there retained their German language down to this day."

"How do you know all that?" Hitler asked then. "It's quite new to me. But it must be true. And that may also be the reason why these Eastern Jews have such a drive to *return* to Germany."

"How I know," I replied, "I can no longer tell you precisely. But in years gone by, I studied all manner of things, and I also spent time with all sorts of people. It may be that I even learned this from Jews themselves. But history books report the same events."

"These are precisely the problems we did not finish talking about this afternoon." Hitler continued to pursue the subject. "The expulsion of the Jews has actually always been the universal remedy whenever they threatened to grow too numerous. But later, they always returned."

"They returned only after long passages of time, and then usually one by one," I pointed out. "In the Rhineland the percentage of Jews in the population is still very small—though, granted, in the lowlands it is higher."

"But nowadays one can no longer simply expel Jewry from a large nation," Hitler noted. "Where should they go? Others are not eager to take them in, either."

"The British idea of establishing a Jewish state seems to have a great deal to recommend it. But whether Palestine is the right country in the first place and whether, in the second place, it is large enough to absorb ten to fifteen million Jews—that is still a major question."

"But there will not be ten to fifteen million all at once [Hitler replied]. The United States, for example, will not go along, that is certain. After all, the Jews in America have already seized almost all the key positions. They have achieved dominance and dominion. Their promise has already been realized in the United States: All nations shall be subject to you! All right, then, the American Jews will not leave America.

"And actually, it is difficult for me to imagine that any Jews are serious about

3. Maxim Maximovitch Litvinov (originally Meier Wallach) served as foreign minister of the Soviet Union from 1930 to 1939.

a Jewish state in the sense that you meant just now and the way it is discussed in the newspapers. Have you ever seen a forest that consists entirely of parasites? There is no such thing. A parasite must always have a victim off whom he *can* freeload. And parasites can always exist only as a certain maximum proportion of the victim population.

“Of course, parasites always congregate where the sap flows and can be tapped. In Hungary, they settle in Budapest and in the other cities from which the country’s products can be shipped—that is, at the Danube and the Theiss rivers. Budapest already has, I believe, more than sixty percent Jews. But in the countryside, the percentage is minimal.

“The same is the case in North America. New York, for example, has about three million Jews already. There, they sit like tapeworms at the source.”

“But this finding just goes to prove,” I pointed out, “that Palestine is not the place for a Jewish colony. Where are the outlying regions that could be devoured?”

“I share your view completely, Wagener. That is why the idea of a Jewish state there, in my estimation, has a quite different meaning.

“The Jew notoriously likes to remain anonymous so long as he is not in power. He takes off his mask only when he has gained domination—or at least when he believes he has. After the war, it seemed as if, thanks to the war, Jewry had won the upper hand throughout the white world. So the time seemed ripe for the Jews to pose as the masters. In Germany that was, as it is now, indisputably evident. Then, when he has succeeded in seizing the leadership in all the white nations, all that remains is the establishment of a headquarters to truly dominate the world. And that would correspond to the Jewish state. Any sooner, such a state would make no sense, have no significance—it would even be a mistake.

“The fact that now it is to be situated in Palestine, the Promised Land, the source, three or four thousand years ago, of the migration that would conquer the world—that is not only conceivable, but even proof that my train of thought is correct.

“It also proves, however, that our struggle and our mission, which only *we* regard as the struggle and mission for Germany, is perceived by worldwide Jewry as if it were directed against its totality—*against the Jews as such*. Therefore, wherever they wield power, they will use it to paralyze and prevent our work.

“That is why no nation would take in the Jews as a whole if they were to be expelled from Germany, nor would the Jews agree to a Jewish state in the sense of a concentration of the entire Israelite tribe. For in so doing, they would be betraying their faith in the promise; they would be giving up the struggle at the very moment when they thought they had, in fact, won it.”

“It is quite certain,” Hess said, “that we will have the entire Jew-dominated world against us if we simply throw the Jews out of Germany. This they *cannot*

accept, because of the consequences. For in such a case, another nation will do the same, and others will follow in their turn.”

“We had already reached that point,” Hitler resumed, “when we established the party program. And to this day, I have been unable to find a better solution than the one we foresaw at the time.

“We must be very clear about the fact that we cannot remove *the Jew* as such. Rather, *we must make it impossible for parasites to exist*; we must prevent them from continuing to gain a foothold on the body of our Volk, from infusing poison into that body or attempting to gain power over it. At that point, the Jews will leave Germany of their own accord. For when it becomes impossible for a parasite to live its parasitic existence in a certain place, it wanders off elsewhere, where conditions are more favorable to it, or it perishes.”

“I truly believe,” I agreed, “that this is the only possible way to achieve our goal.

“But it seems to me that the solution of the social question as *we* conceive it, and as I would like to bring to fruition and to success in my social economy, also contributes to the possibility of removing this parasitism.”

“This is contradicted,” Hess interposed, “by the fact that socialist movements all over the world are run precisely by Jews and were founded by them.”

“No!” Hitler said. “That is not a contradiction. The error of the economic order until now, and the error that exists in the general concept of the monetary system, has long been discovered by a few clever Jews, perhaps without their finding a solution. And that the industrialization of the economy and its worldwide expansion will bring it all the more into view—that, too, they have understood. Therefore they could not help but fear that in time the world will come to the realization that the existing order must be changed—which will certainly also narrow the chances for parasitism, if it does not obliterate them.

“Your presentation the other day, Wagener, did much to open my eyes on this matter.

“The Jew’s parasite brain works quickly with its sixth sense. It thinks: if I can no longer engage in my parasitism in its previous form, then I must simply look for some opportunity in the new, the coming form. Until now, it was my highest aim to gain power in the state in order to secure my domination and my way of life. Now, if new forms of government develop, we must simply try to seize power in the newly formed state. Since the new form will be brought about by revolution and the industrialization of the subjugated working masses, it will be simplest to start by assuming leadership during the revolution. Then we will be able to use the revolution to bring about, by straightforward means, both the new state and our new domination: the state of the working masses, whom *we* command and which *we* rule!

“It is hard for me to believe the Jew so purposeful and intellectually superior that he actually submitted these considerations so systematically in the councils of the Elders of Zion; that from the first he thought them through in the way I

just elaborated—that would be uncanny.<sup>4</sup> But his sixth sense guides him instinctively and unconsciously along the correct path, where, admittedly, consciousness has long since come to him.”

“But then you are dealing with two different methods of the Jews, which must oppose each other and are actually mutually exclusive,” I objected.

“As long as the Jews use them,” Hitler explained, “they will not hamper each other. A crow does not scratch out another crow’s eyes. But if *we*, for example, wanted to implement such a social economy and establish a state along those lines, resembling the dictatorship of the proletariat, as they call it so splendidly, then you’d be surprised how both groups would pounce on us, the liberalistic parasites who employ the methods of the past as well as the Marxist-Bolshevik parasites who practice the new method. And since they have a firm grip on their populations, although they make up only two to five percent of their number, they will sic these people on us! For now we are dangerous to both: to the one group because we want to free ourselves from them, and to the other because our social economy once again cuts the ground from under them.

“That is why I am still not at all clear about this social economy. Not that I think it wrong. On the contrary! I’ve already told you as much. But I ask myself whether it is expedient to burden oneself with two enemies at once. And that is a political consideration.

“Which is the more dangerous enemy—I mean, the one that threatens us most immediately? Without a doubt it is Bolshevism—we can safely call it Jewish Bolshevism. For if it were not Jewish, it could be given a different format. In that case, we might even be able to come to terms with it at some later date. But we will never be able to come to terms with Jewish Bolshevism without signing our own death warrant.

“Once we have recognized *it* as the primary enemy, however, we must avoid rousing the remaining Jews in the world against us *until* the Bolshevik danger has been removed. That is why we may *not* expel the Jews who live in Germany, we may *not* expropriate their goods, we may not harm a hair on their heads; and that is why we may not go public with our social economy and with other problems and plans, with which we would rouse liberalistic world Jewry and the entire liberalistic world against us. *Rather, we must live peacefully with them!* We can keep liberalism in check—indeed, we must do so—but it must be done very cautiously, sensibly, with economic expediency. And when we arrive at systematic economic control through the state, which is the problem everyone else is also fiddling with, we must manage it in such a way that private property also survives for economic transactions and that private initiative is harnessed for our program.

4. The “Protocols of the Elders of Zion” was a fraudulent document fabricated, probably by the czarist secret police, to awaken fears of a Jewish plot to dominate the world. See Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (New York, 1966).

“This by no means signifies that we must relinquish or even betray our socialist aims. The *aims* remain firm and unshaken. But the *means* must be chosen and executed according to the dictates of reason and expediency.”

Hitler fell silent and picked up another newspaper, as if he were determined forcibly to tear himself away from his thoughts. But after a few minutes, he put it down again and said, “Tomorrow morning at ten, departure for the old parade grounds at the Luitpoldhain.<sup>5</sup> At eleven Streicher is arriving, we must be back by then. And now—good night.”

He shook hands with Hess and me and went upstairs. We followed at once. I sat up a long time in order to fix in my mind the train of thought that was to overturn my entire economic program.

5. This was the parade ground outside Nuremberg used by the Nazis for their party congresses.

# 13

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## Hitler Survives an Automobile Accident—His Thoughts on the Universe, Ice Ages, and the Swastika—“Twenty Millennia of Nordic History”

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**W**hen, the following morning after breakfast, we drove out to the Luitpoldhain, we did not know what Hitler intended. He probably had no precise idea himself. But what he had in mind was some grandiose development, the construction of a party congress grounds which, as he said as we stood there, would serve “one day and for all time as a witness and monument to an unprecedented communal achievement of the German Volk—not the work of slaves, as were the Pyramids and the Sphinx, which sheltered dead kings, but a voluntary great exploit that yearly and repeatedly will exhort the youth of Germany to its mission and obligation to the eternal life and the health and welfare of their national identity.”

We got out of the car at the Luitpoldhain and stood on the slight rise where, the previous year, I had gained my first powerful impression of this national movement. We also drove to the Dutzendteich, which would have to be included in the expansion of the site. Next we drove to several other spots along the site, some overgrown with fir trees, others barren.

“The possibilities are awesome. The ideas and plans lie in wait in my imagination. An everlasting monument must arise here. Several great epochs have had their Homer. But the songs of only a few have been preserved. But what is built from squared stones that cannot be moved by man’s hand—that can bear witness after thousands of years to the greatness of a time and its significance. And even if, at some later time, the archaeologists’ spades dig here and encounter granite blocks, then let them stand, heads bared, before the massive sight of an idea that shook and unsettled a world.”

In silence we got back in the car for the return drive. We sat as we had the day before: Hitler to the right in front, behind him Hess and myself, and on the left, behind the driver, Schaub and Hoffmann.

Shortly before eleven o'clock, as we were about to cross the wide avenue in the southeast of the city that led to the center from the stadium—a crossing that widened into a small triangular open space—from the right a monster of a truck, hauling an equally overpowering trailer, came rushing ahead at a fairly rapid rate, only ten or fifteen meters away from us. We ourselves had slowed down to a speed of about twenty kilometers. Our driver at first stepped on the accelerator, and if he had only driven on, nothing at all would have happened. But—the devil knows why—he braked abruptly in an effort to let the truck pass. Its driver, however—we subsequently learned that he did not even have a license, while the man who was the nominal operator sat next to him—though he braked as well, at the same time stepped on the gas and, while the real driver grabbed the wheel to rectify the situation, turned left—that is, straight at us, assuming that we would simply drive on. And so this monster of a vehicle came rushing at our almost immobile car. I can still see the large letters “Magirus” over me as the powerful radiator pushed its way over our car body, pressing Hitler, Hess, and myself to the left inside the car. Then the truck’s frame and springs must have taken hold of our Mercedes and shoved it diagonally across the open triangle, a distance of about twenty meters, as far as the street corner, only to come to a stop at last at the instant when our left wheels were already touching the curb. Only a short stretch more, and the left wheels would have broken, and the monster would have run over and crushed car and passengers.

After a few moments, the truck, with a terrible grinding of the motor, which was on top of us, reversed for a few meters and pulled its projecting radiator off us, and we could sit up again. Hitler, Hess, and I came away with several scratches on our faces and contusions on our right shoulders. Except for that, it seemed, we had not sustained any injuries. The others had suffered no more than a fright.

Hitler was the first to regain his voice.

“Everyone still alive?”

When I called out my assurance, he said:

“In fact, nothing could have happened to us. We have not yet completed our task.”

Hoffmann whispered to me, “Just the same, by a hair it would have been the end of us.”

We left the others and the car at the scene of the accident, since the police had to finish their report. Then Hitler, Hess, Schaub, and I took a taxi back to the hotel, where Streicher was waiting for us.

“Streicher,” Hitler said. “We all need to rest our weary bones first. Come and look us up at three o'clock this afternoon. And Hess, have another car come out to us from Munich, with Schreck at the wheel. I won't let today's ditherer drive me ever again.”

Then we went to our rooms. Hess and I had suffered lacerations on the upper



arm and neck, which bled freely, so that we required bandaging. Hitler was as good as whole.

I lay down on the bed, since my head was aching considerably and since—just as with the others, by the way—a fever set in which the doctor ascribed to lacerations sustained in the crash. Half awake, half dozing, Hitler's final words at the site of the party congress went through my head, as did the approaching monster, which seemed to me like an enormous tank with the word "Magirus" emblazoned on its side. And while I tried to figure out whether "Magirus" might be a derivative of *magic*, I fell asleep.

It was close to three o'clock when I awoke. I ached all over. My head felt as if it would burst. But I wanted to find out how Hitler and Hess were faring. The telephone stood on the night table, so that I could call Hess immediately. He, too, was awake and feeling just as bad as I was. Hitler had told him that Streicher should wait until the following morning. He himself would be getting up later in the afternoon. I could call him any time after five. Hess would be leaving for Munich on the evening train, since the other car was not in running order and he therefore had to stop at the Mercedes repair works.

So we had two days in which to rest up in Nuremberg—a situation much to my liking.

But I could not go back to sleep. The conversations of the last few days churned through my brain. I could not bring myself to accept the idea that all my economic plans, down to the last detail, were to be tabled, perhaps *sine die*. That would mean I had gone to Munich in vain. And my entire lifework since 1918 would be in vain! That could not happen. I had the feeling that there had to be some flaw in Hitler's deductions.

Nothing had struck me while he was speaking. But that was how it usually was when one was in a discussion with him. First there was undirected chatter, then came the moment when Hitler somehow caught fire—Pfeffer had already referred to it as the cue—and then a speech flowed from his lips, supported by gestures and by his gaze, which at such moments was absolutely clear and totally compelling. His words expressed a wealth of ideas and a view of things and their connections that at times sounded as if they came from another world. In fact, one was forever enthralled by his discourse and followed his logic with an inner conviction that almost lacked all will, since it came from a quite different viewpoint than one was used to, and everything was developed so clearly that a doubt could hardly arise, an objection was unthinkable.

I can imagine that it would never occur to someone speaking with Hitler for the first time that he might have made a mistake, an error. But even if they worked together constantly—yes, perhaps especially then!—the other person was forced to assimilate whatever was discussed, to give instructions himself and to follow up on them, so that he had no time to ponder the matter; he simply dissolved in Hitler's conception and, without noticing or becoming aware of it, he turned into the pure tool of Hitler's thoughts.

At that time, I knew only three people who were prepared and in a position to tell Hitler their own views when they contradicted his: Pfeffer, Strasser, and Buch.<sup>1</sup> That was also the reason we met time and again to consider how Hitler might be turned in a particular direction and diverted from his course. [ . . . ]

So there were only four of us who were prepared to defend our opinions. And Pfeffer had already been eliminated from our ranks. It seemed to us all the more important to test and to raise objections when we thought something was wrong. I therefore kept turning over the ideas expressed the previous day. Several times I believed that I had found an arguing point. But then it always turned out to be wrong, unsuited to getting across to a man like Hitler something that differed from *his* conviction.

Then the telephone rang. It was four o'clock in the afternoon. Hitler was on the line, asking, "Do you feel like going to the Germanic Museum with me?"

Although the last thing in the world I felt like doing was to take my aching head to a museum, I accepted.

"Schaub will let them know that we will be arriving at four-thirty. We'll meet in the hotel lobby at four-twenty."

As I got up, I became aware that my body was aching in several more places besides those I had felt while lying down. But even as I got dressed, I found that my head was clearing. Perhaps, I thought, it was quite the *wrong* thing to do to lie down; perhaps one should keep moving and distract oneself.

At four-thirty we were at the entrance to the Germanic Museum; the man who had asked to be introduced to Hitler the night before at the opera was waiting for us. I must admit that in the course of this guided tour a great deal passed before my eyes for which I could not summon up the necessary concentration. But some things did stick in my memory, particularly as they became the object of intense discussion and a bridge to the discovery of the error I had been searching for.

A graphic representation showed the migrations of the Nordic and Germanic peoples in prehistoric times and antiquity.

"Seeing this," Hitler said, "one would have to assume that the nations with Germanic populations feel the same sense of solidarity as is the case for the Germanic tribes. Granted, it has taken a long enough time for the will to political union to come to the fore. But the blame for that lies less with the people than with their governments, especially the princes."

"But Tacitus teaches us," our guide responded, "that it is a particular characteristic of Germanic tribes and kinship groups to feud with each other, and that they went so far as to make alliances with the enemies of the Germanic world in order to inflict damage on a blood brother."

"And yet Bismarck succeeded in uniting the Germanic tribes," Hitler ob-

1. Walter Buch, retired major, headed the *Uschla*, the party office charged with investigating and resolving internal problems and disputes.

served. "Don't you think that the English, the Danes, the Swedes, the Finns, and so on, feel that in the final analysis they are Germanic?"

At this, the museum curator replied, "I believe, Herr Hitler, that several known factors make it unlikely.

"Language is the most obvious one. But it is of far-reaching significance. The English language has only a single term to translate 'German' [*deutsch*] and 'Germanic' [*germanisch*]<sup>—</sup>it is always 'German.' So, if we are to speak of a Germanic feeling of solidarity, the Englishman will translate it as 'German.'

"Anyone reading that, then, will read 'German feeling of solidarity.' And of course the Englishman does not have that. Nor does the Swede or the Dane. They laugh, shake their heads, and say, 'How conceited those Germans are.' If we speak of a Germanic race, the Englishman hears 'German race.' And there is no such thing. He considers any such assumption an affront or foolishness. And if we go so far as to speak of a Germanic master race, or of Germanic superiority in the world, any Englishman, any American, and altogether everyone who reads English-language newspapers and speaks the English language, reads 'German master race and German superiority.' And that alone is felt as aggressive effrontery. At the beginning, I was surprised at a number of English reviews of Spengler's work, *The Decline of the West*. But when Oswald Spengler writes that the Moorish style was given to splendid monuments only where the Teutons had settled, the English translation has 'where Germans settled.' And yet, Spengler meant the Goths and the Vandals. It is not surprising, therefore, that Spengler is considered abroad as a typical arrogant German."

"Yes, but what do the English call what we mean by Germanic peoples?" Hitler asked in irritation.

"Aryans or Nordics. It varies. Anything that is as unspecific as this matter the English also leave unspecific in linguistic usage. When it is a matter of descent, the English language refers to Germans as Teutons."

"Then actually your museum should be called the Nordic Museum!" Hitler exclaimed.

"For the most part, yes. Whenever we show Englishmen around, we must always use the English expressions, because otherwise a great deal is misunderstood.

"And now the second factor. The English are not, in fact, Germanic in our sense of the word."

"Why not?" Hitler exclaimed.

"They are Celts, Welsh, Bretons, and Irish, some theories even allude to Phoenician settlements in southern England, especially along the Channel and at the mouth of the Thames. Then the Romans brought all kinds of Mediterranean tribes to England. Eventually, a migration from lower Saxony took place, and the Saxons gradually gained the upper hand over the other inhabitants. Their number nevertheless remained small—it still is. They may *still* believe that they are ruling England. But the labor movements have already forced

England to introduce extensive democratic principles and may perhaps one day lead to socialist measures. Then the upper class will quickly be absorbed or removed.

“And how can these Bretons, Celts, Welsh, and Irish, and so on, be expected to feel as related species to the Germanic peoples, let alone us Germans?”

Hitler looked at him in disbelief and asked, “How do you happen to be so familiar with English conditions?”

“I spent several years in England, studying and doing research.”

Since Hitler remained silent, he continued. “In the third place, England has amassed an empire that has unquestionably made it the strongest world power. England’s interests lie solely and alone in the area of protecting and maintaining this world power. Germanic feelings and sentiments—insofar as they might exist at all—can only hinder or disturb these English interests. England *must* side with its empire *against* the ‘Germanic’ states—and that means only Germany—rather than *with* the Germanic people against the empire.

“And the other Nordic nations depend more on England, with its domination of the sea, than on Germany. They are, therefore, tied to England and profess the same views as England.

“A Germanic spirit of solidarity is therefore quite unthinkable. To hope for it or even to build on it is a utopian notion.”

I found these remarks as interesting as they were surprising, particularly as they so rudely challenged Hitler’s preconceived notions about England. This man was a pragmatist. I would dearly have loved to put him on our list of foreign-policy advisers. But when I made inquiries about him later on, he had left the museum. Apparently he was there only briefly, working as an assistant curator, before leaving for the United States and one of its universities.

His presentation of the language problems seemed to me of particular significance. I had never before realized that the odd fact of the impossibility of translating the word *Germanic* could frequently give rise to misunderstandings, and especially to the view of the British and Americans that we Germans were arrogant and strove for world domination—while in truth the exact opposite is the case. I was also aware that Hitler, too, had shown a keen interest in all these remarks.

As we continued the tour, our guide called our attention to how widespread the swastika was. “We find it not only in the records of the old Germanic people, to whom it can be attributed, probably correctly. For it must be the Nordic sun wheel, with four spokes but with a broken rim, the preliminary stage of the correct, common wagon wheel. But we also find it in Russia, in the Ukraine, in Asia Minor—to this day it is knotted into Persian rugs—in the Near East in general, down into the interior of India, and finally, we encounter it in ancient Egypt and, later on, in Crete and Greece.”

“Do you have a diagram of the Indo-Germanic family of languages here, or one that shows the kinship of the various Indo-Germanic languages?” Hitler asked.

“We have some works on the subject, but no charts. Except for one map, which shows the countries that belong to this language area.”

He led us to it. The map lacked all detail. But Hitler said, “If one were to correctly combine maps of the Nordic migrations, the Indo-Germanic language areas, the swastika, and other mutualities, and to represent them by millennia and later by centuries, to the extent that research results make this possible, it might result in a conception of the world that would allow us to understand many things which are not comprehensible today.

“Do you have an idea which people has the myth of the giants in its tradition?”

The museum director looked at Hitler in some astonishment and said no.

“But there is a map that shows how far south the last ice age in the northern hemisphere penetrated, eliminating all human life—I noticed it earlier. Let’s go back to it.”

The director led us to the map on which large arcs showed the presumable boundaries of the permafrost as well as the cold and temperate zones over the span of the entire glacial period, according to the latest findings. The line of the eternal ice ran from the coast of Ireland through the south of England, over to the mouth of the Rhine, and then diagonally across Germany, holding steady fairly far north of the Black and Caspian Seas and disappearing in the Urals and central Siberia.

I had the feeling that Hitler was eager to make up for the rebuff he had experienced and so brought up something new, something on an entirely different subject.

Pointing to the map, Hitler presented something along the following lines.

“We cannot know how many thousands of years have passed since our world looked like this. Here it says thirty to fifty thousand years. Perhaps it is no more than fifteen to twenty thousand. But we do know one thing: that *before* this ice age the warm and temperate zones were situated considerably farther north, perhaps rather like the present situation. And that, in turn, there was a still earlier ice age, and probably several, many. A geology professor, whom I asked to talk to me last year about the current state of geological study on the composition of the earth’s crust, said that it was now possible to document seven ice ages, and that we must probably count on their periodic recurrence.

“This assumption makes sense to me. For everything in the world is subject to periodic change. Atomic research has even shown, as I read just recently, that the atom consists of a nucleus about which electrons revolve. And the relationship of size and distance is assumed to be something like that between sun and earth, with the earth corresponding to one such electron.

“Naturally the origins and relationships are quite different and in no way comparable.

“But why shouldn’t the sun with its planetary system also somehow circle around some nucleus in the universe, around a central point, a focal point? I believe it would make less sense to assume the contrary than it is to believe, for

the present, that this is the way it is. By the way, the other day the director of the Munich planetarium told me that there can be no doubt that the solar system moves through the universe.

“Just as, in its course around the sun, the earth goes through summer and winter because of the elliptical form of its orbit and the tilt of its axis, why should not the sun and its planets in their course around point X travel through warmer and colder regions? Here, too, I am of the opinion that it is more natural to postulate this as probable than to assume that the conditions of temperature and light are uniform throughout the universe. Or can anyone suppose that, for example, the mist of Orion does *not* send out its own heat—which exceeds the heat of the sun a hundred and a thousand-fold—into the farthest reaches, so that it *must* be warmer in that section of the universe than, for example, where we are now.

“And since we observe circular or elliptical courses everywhere in nature and in life, we should also assume a circular or elliptical course for our solar system, so that the colder and warmer periods will always recur at regular intervals. That means a constant alternation between ice ages and warmer ages for us, the inhabitants of the earth, in fairly equal epochs. Astronomy may not yet be able to calculate how far apart they are. But perhaps geology could work it out. Their assumptions are very unreliable. In my opinion, the time span cannot be as great as is assumed here. For we can also draw some conclusions about the length of the periods from the effects the ice ages exercise on the earth’s human inhabitants.

“Now, if the solar system, and thus also the earth, lives through such ice ages, and if we take a look at the map, it means that at present we find ourselves in an intermediate period. And just as at the beginning of this interim period people migrated northward from the territories which, according to this map, are still free of ice, in the same way before, when the ice age set in, people escaped the pressure of cold by moving southward.

“This did not happen with moving vans and in systematic journeys. This pressure lasted for thousands of years and was never consciously felt by any living being.

“Here and there, during the last ice age—or even in earlier ice ages—not everyone apparently succeeded in getting away. Perhaps some people clung to the land too long and then, for example, they could not manage to get across the Alps. They were overrun by the ice age. Their winter was increasingly long; their life grew increasingly primitive; their houses and huts could not withstand the climate; they had to take refuge in caves, where, more and more like animals, they vegetated and reproduced. Their culture and their civilization were lost; the simplest tools and hunting weapons remained their gear; and so, although they did not become extinct, they gradually reverted to the lowest level of human existence.

“Only when the ice and cold receded after millennia did humanity reawaken

in them. First they made new tools of stone, then they found bronze and used it for their purposes. But when some lucky chance allows a modern explorer to discover such a cave, or even to come upon an old skull in the Neanderthal Valley that exhibits the form of a regressive human type, then we are taught: these are our ancestors! As recently as five thousand years ago, they had lived in the 'stone age'—and other such teachings. But that thirty thousand years before that, they might have had a high culture, whose repercussions we find later on in the Orient and in Egypt—no one thinks of that possibility, nor would anyone believe it, and surely science would refute it, since it cannot be proven! But to me, the contrary cannot be proven, either!”

Both of us had been listening attentively, and when Hitler fell silent, it is probable that neither of us could think of the right thing to say. The museum aide remarked, “A completely novel but very plausible interpretation!” And after a while, I asked, “Earlier on, you mentioned giants. What connection do they have with your theory?”

“Let’s go back to the hotel,” Hitler replied. “It’s almost dark, and we can sit more comfortably there.”

He was right. We had continued to stand before the map, which by now we had committed to memory. Hitler invited our guide to join him, and we returned to our hotel. Since we had not eaten at noon, we immediately ordered a supper of eggs, boiled ham, and bread and butter. We drank tea, to which our guest and I added rum.

As we ate, Hitler continued to develop his train of thought.

“What enormous migrations those must have been, carried out over centuries and millennia by those inhabitants of northern Europe and Asia—which probably also had a different geography than they do today. What battles must have taken place as tribes decided to spread out toward the south, when the increasing cold threatened them from the north. Such times also generally breed great leaders among peoples, whose clairvoyant insights and presentiments occasionally far outdistance the course of events. Thus, I can imagine that an outstanding personality with great military power once invaded the extensive territory that is now Russia to turn it into a billet, as it were, for his tribes and people for centuries to come.

“I am not familiar enough with the history of the earliest—that is, actually, the prehistoric—period to be able to point to this or that to support such ideas. But the fact that up there in northern Russia and in Siberia the ruins of powerful cultural epochs still lie buried under forests and debris has been proved by various excavations of the past and by accidental finds. And northern peoples migrated and settled much farther down, as far as the shores of the Black Sea—yes, even past the Caspian, to the place where later we find the realm of the Medes—as is proven by the blond types with blue eyes and white skin in White Russia, in the Ukraine, and even south of the Caucasus. One arm of this northern invasion that crept slowly toward the south clearly also pushed into

the southwest, into the narrowing spaces of central and western Europe, and this arm met its final barriers at the Alps and the Pyrenees.

“At the present time none of this can be proved. I know. But it *must* have been like that. No other way is possible.

“And these Nordic peoples, who had long since lost all memory of their past, carried within themselves only one remnant: their idea of the gods, their longing, and their ethical philosophy and way of life. These were transmitted in legends and songs, they were handed down in signs and pictorial representations. The idea that the sun is depicted as a deity, circling the earth on a chariot with fiery horses, can only have originated in the north. Only there does the sun circle the rim of the horizon, only there can such a concept be born. And the same holds true for the swastika. It is the wheel of the sun that rolls from east to west—that is, from left to right—around the surface of the earth, which is inhabited by humans. That is why it seems wrong to you at once when the swastika’s hooks point to the right rather than the left [sic].

“Wherever the sun god is represented in a chariot, and wherever we find this swastika used as a symbol—there we can assume Nordic peoples to have lived after the ice age drove them southward from their homes.

“These people never found rest, ultimate rest. Even if they were settled in one place for a thousand, for two thousand years. From one direction or another a new pressure always arose, even after the advance of the ice halted. This fact may also have some bearing on all the migrations of nations that lasted into the beginnings of known history.

“It must, therefore, be assumed that the northern troublemakers were not popular either. Especially since they were larger in structure than the southerners, stronger, and—as is always the case with conquerors—more ready to fight. And so we have an absolute explanation for the circumstance that among all the peoples who ever lived through the invasion of these Nordic peoples the myth of the terrible giants arose. They impressed the southern natives into slave labor and all sorts of services, except military duty and hunting, which they reserved to themselves. The militarists of prehistoric times! That is why earlier I asked whether it had ever been determined which peoples have the myth of the giants.

“The people of Israel, as we know from the Bible, had the story of David and the giant Goliath. It is, of course, symbolic. But at the same time it is typical. To combat the northerner who, by virtue of his superior strength, relies on his fists, David employs a tool whose invention stemmed from his clever brain—the slingshot, which he operates from a safe ambush.

“Throughout the entire Near East, the Semitic family of nations resided precisely at the point where the last advance parties of the great southward migration penetrated. The Semites’ aversion to the North is thus fully understandable.

“We tend to believe too readily that our repugnance to the Jews is one-sided.



In nature such things are *never* one-sided. The Jew has just as little liking for Nordics as is the case in reverse. Except that, as long as he does *not* have the power, the Jew is smart enough not to let his feelings show. But *once* he holds power, he no longer makes a secret of his aversion, and his aversion can easily be intensified to the point of fanatical hatred and acts of sadism. At that point his attitude becomes evident to those who were not aware of it before.

“Let us return to our observations. If we pursue our investigations, for which we unfortunately have only very negligible clues—science would call my thinking ‘unscientific,’ and with justification—we might conclude that especially bold, determined, and enterprising Nordics moved even farther south and southeast—namely, down into Egypt and across the Euphrates and the Tigris as far as India.

“Once again, the swastika points the way. But here, other factors begin to enlighten us as well. The Indo-Germanic language family, the history of geometry, the history of astronomy, the erection of monuments, the cult of ancestors, and all manner of other things.

“In any case, *if* Nordics penetrated as far as Khartoum and Ethiopia, as well as to the Persian Gulf and India, then they surely seized the reins there. I hardly need to explain the significance it would have for our larger knowledge of history if proof of this could be obtained. But the building of the Tower of Babel, the erection of the Pyramids, and the structuring of Gothic cathedrals—all with the same upward striving, seeking a connection with eternity, in every case employing grandiose designs that could not possibly be carried out within any one lifetime—are parallels that never found their equals among the people of the Near East at any time and in any form.

“Better clues to testify to this enormous movement down to the equator appear only when we examine the swing in the other direction. When the solar system and the earth emerged from the winter epoch of their orbit through the universe, and when the increasing temperatures caused the ice fields to retreat on earth as well—at that time the warming trend from the equator also began to increase. The temperate zones became tropical, the frigid zones changed to a temperate climate.

“The wealth of Egypt shrank more and more down to the narrow plains on either side of the Nile, which could be irrigated by the river. The lush prairies of Arabia grew arid and gradually turned into deserts, the highly cultivated shores of the southern Mediterranean were increasingly covered and hemmed in by the sand of the Sahara.

“The Nordics, who must have become somewhat inured to the southern climate, which was quite temperate at the time, gave way before the increasing tropical heat, especially as growth and wealth receded in the same measure. Gradually, they retreated northward, while the native peoples and races, whose body build and entire way of life had from time immemorial been better suited to endure the tropical sun and heat, gained new vigor.

“The pharaohs moved their capital from Khartoum to Memphis; the nomads of Arabia retreated into the regions of the Euphrates and the Tigris, where they first found themselves in Babylonian captivity. Such names as Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Croesus, and Darius the First are milestones in this course of events, which by that time constituted recorded history. The Persians ventured as far as the Caucasus and, east [sic] of the Caspian Sea, advancing northward, they crossed the Hellespont and invaded the Balkans, moving on to Greece. But in Greece the Nordic remnants, pushed out of Egypt, had, a few centuries earlier, erected and moved into solid bulwarks.

“For from Memphis-Cairo we can, in the last millennium before Christ, follow the changeover of the cultural leadership stratum—which is northern in its earliest origin—across Crete and the Egyptian islands to the coast of Asia Minor and to Greece and, a few centuries later, over Sicily to Rome and over Thessaly to Thrace, where Philip of Macedon established a new empire. Unprecedentedly, this group now came into contact with tribes that were probably *also* of Nordic origin but had survived the ice age at the edges of the frigid zones.

“Examine the Greek edifices! The mere idea of an Acropolis! *Never* before this era of the Nordic reverse migration, and never at any later time, were such monuments of the highest culture built on the rocky outcroppings outside the big cities! Even the architectural style itself, the material that was used, the artistic appointments were reserved for this epoch alone. Graves, too, are found only from this period. Only the Nordics knew the cult of ancestors. The Semitic peoples and the indigenous tribes of the eastern Mediterranean area never tended the resting places of their dead—not before and not after.

“We can also find specific proof for this return route in the development of the sciences of geometry and astronomy. Egyptian lore spread through Greece and Syracuse by way of Crete and was given its highest refinement for the time by the Greek philosophers and mathematicians.

“Greece was once more threatened by the crushing advance of the masses of the Persian Near East, who were thronging northward and northwestward. At that point the culture of antiquity came into being, and with it Europe’s only savior, in the son of King Philip of Macedon, only twenty years old at the time—Alexander the Great. Educated and, during his early years, accompanied by one of the greatest philosophers in the world, Aristotle, he first secured his line of retreat by subduing the Greek democracies, which were unable to keep up with his flight of thought. Then he turned against the great power to the east, Persia. In a gigantic triumphal march that joined enormous personal bravery to superior cleverness, he subdued the satrapies of Asia Minor. Then, in 333 before Christ, he destroyed the large army of Darius the Third at the Battle of Issus. Immediately following, he advanced into the untamed regions east of the Caspian Sea, only to reappear soon thereafter before Babylon, to take possession of that city as well as the cultural center of the Asian Minor world, Susa, in a surprise move.

“But then he married Greek culture to the Persian Empire, thus removing once and for all the Asian peril that had threatened this culture and its people.

“In the meantime, in the western Mediterranean region, the Nordic reverse migration from Rome had begun with the creation of a new empire, which was brought to completion by Julius Caesar and his successors.

“If you examine the statues of a Caesar, of an Augustus—but also of a Cicero and, earlier still, of a Socrates—I ask you, do those heads bear any resemblance whatsoever to the indigenous inhabitants of Italy or Greece? Might they not rather, unchanged except possibly for a frock coat, have a place today in the Prussian senate or the British House of Lords? No, *these were not natives*, these were the last great return wanderers of Nordic blood after the epoch of the last ice age.

“The return migration to the north, however, can be followed even farther. Several generations later, we already see a Roman emperor in Trier, from which western Europe will be ruled for centuries. And in the year 800 after Christ—again a little farther to the north—Charlemagne was crowned emperor in Aachen, ‘Roman Emperor of The German Nation’!

“That was twenty thousand years of Nordic history. *I no longer say Germanic history*. An Englishman might think I was trying to lay claim to Nebuchadnezzar and the Egyptian pharaohs as Germans.

“But *this* is how *I* see the course of history—though it may be unhistorical. And this perception nourishes my current mission and my goal.”

Hitler might have been speaking for an hour. Both of us listened with the utmost astonishment. As he fell silent, his words continued to ring in my ears and my head, as if Hitler were still speaking.

Our guest, too, sat at the table quiet and almost stunned and stared into space. Finally he broke the silence.

“Herr Hitler, you should give your lecture to the most eminent professors and scholars in all the world. Then they should be sent out, to all the places where research is being done and it can be proven that it is the way you see it, the way you presented it, so uniquely, so completely new.”

“That will only be possible,” Hitler replied, “when we have something like the Kaiser Wilhelm Academy for other branches of science and research. But perhaps it remains for *us* to found such an institution.”

With this he rose and said good-bye to his guest. Since I, too, wanted to go to my room, the three of us parted. But *now* I believed I had found the key to the area where I hoped to uncover the error in the views Hitler had expounded the day before. When I arrived at my room, the memory of that morning’s automobile accident returned. And immediately, with it, pain and headache. Nevertheless, I stayed up a long time to fix in my mind what had been said and to forge my own battle plan.

# 14

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## How to Influence Hitler—Discussion of the “Jewish Question,” Russia, and England

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**H**itler was in the habit of getting up relatively late, since he never went to bed before two o'clock and then frequently read for a while longer. Almost always he took his breakfast in his room between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, and Schaub was always at hand to run errands, make telephone calls, and finally, to pack for Hitler. That is why, whenever Hess was absent, everyone turned to Schaub if we wished to be announced to Hitler or if we needed something from him.

Schaub was his master's loyal servant. Deep down, he had a decent nature and was not at all interested in politics and science. If one wanted to make certain that Hitler would read a particular item, one gave or sent it to Schaub. He did not check the contents but only the person who had sent the document or the newspaper. Then he placed the item in question on Hitler's night table, and one could be certain that Hitler would read it before going to sleep. Schaub was quite clear in his mind about the responsibility that rested with him. For *he* too knew his master and knew that in his way he was serving, not only the man, but also the cause.

How much might have been prevented or corrected if subsequent associates and cabinet secretaries had done the same!

It is not by chance that such ways and means were important in dealing with Hitler. It is the same with all great men, and especially with people of the highest rank and highest responsibility. Many have permanent advisers. If they are strong personalities—as, for example, Bismarck—they seize work, decisions, and responsibility. If they are weak, they become the tools of men acting behind the scenes, and in such a situation, it is generally not the best but the most pushy or even selfish family cliques that prevail. And the man who has the real responsibility ends up being falsely advised and falsely informed.

Hitler wished to keep free of both possibilities. He wanted to form his own judgments and make his own decisions, and he felt that he was strong enough

to do so. Nor is it a fact that Hitler did not accept advice. Granted, he was not overly fond of being corrected when others were present, with the possible exceptions of Hess and Schaub. He especially hated being put into an awkward position in the presence of others. Then he might well lose his composure! At such times, he might rage like a tiger who suddenly finds himself caged and tries to break through the iron bars. And the bars were the men who had put him in the awkward position.

Anyone who wants to work with a personality like Hitler's must understand these traits in him. The ministers of Wilhelm I and Wilhelm II, as well as those of Napoleon and Frederick the Great, carefully studied their chiefs and adapted to their peculiarities. That is necessary, not for one's personal career, but as regards the Volk! Whoever has been granted the honor of being called to a position where he works, not for himself, but for the people, must be ready always to take the road that is most expedient for the cause at hand and for the people.

If, furthermore, just as was true for Hitler subsequently, someone is occupied all day long with such various and invariably important matters and questions, a process during which one minister or other visitor simply succeeds the last, for hours on end, he *cannot* find time for reflection! And if, in the course of this activity, he is, in addition, badly advised and fed false information by men who contradict each other—in part out of foolishness, in part out of an eagerness to be of service, and in part intentionally and out of mean spirits—he will in time be unable to find any way at all out of the confusion of what he can no longer deal with in his mind.

A Hitler then finds himself back in that animal cage, furiously shaking the iron bars. Then, with superhuman strength, he breaks them, those iron bars—that is, the men whom he believes to be the ones to blame. Thus, it can happen that his closest associate, such as Röhm, or other men he values highly, such as Pfeffer or, later on, Colonel-General von Fritsch, must step aside.<sup>1</sup>

But at night, when such a man really wants to relax, he will always want to have something to read. If at such a time he finds a letter or a short memorandum or a newspaper article on his night table, then he *does* have the peace of mind to concentrate on the subject. We frequently witnessed how, the following morning, he was a changed man concerning the particular matter, because he had had a chance to think it through undisturbed during the night.

It is even worse when Hitler senses that someone or a group is working against him. For this, too, the cases of Röhm and Fritsch, as well as Stennes, are graphic examples.<sup>2</sup>

I sometimes asked myself whether it was more properly in the interest of the

1. Baron Werner von Fritsch was forced to resign his post as chief of the army command in 1938 because of false charges of homosexual activity.

2. Walter Stennes, deputy to the supreme commander of the SA, rebelled against the leadership and was expelled from the party in the spring of 1931.

Volk to act for or against Hitler. I always came to the conclusion that someone who is designated to work with such a unique personality as Hitler's would commit a crime against the Volk if he were to act *against* him. Rather, he must see it as his mission to guide Hitler, to expound his own opinions to him, to supply him with the information he needs, and then join with him in solving the unending important problems of the present day in the service of the German Volk and for the benefit of humanity.

Sensitive natures like Hitler's have a very fine and unerring sense of whether someone is inwardly prepared to work for or against them. To recognize the latter, no overt action need yet have taken place. Given Hitler's generally slight talent for judging character, he will not be clear about where the aversion or rejection of the man in question is located or on what it is based. That is why Hitler acts carefully toward the particular person. He does not tell him everything he ought perhaps to tell him; he even employs evasiveness, which the other feels as dishonesty. And through this behavior, an aversion that is already present only increases.

A man who could not work with Hitler, or who realized that the association was no longer viable, had to decide to tell him so, to substantiate his reasons, and then to leave. To work *against* him would be proof of unworthiness to work *with* him.

Therefore that particular morning around nine o'clock I asked Schaub to inquire when I might call on Hitler to talk to him about something. Hitler himself immediately called me on the telephone to say, "Why don't you come and have breakfast with me, at nine fifteen or nine thirty?" Although I had already breakfasted, I agreed to nine thirty.

"Do you bring me something new?" Hitler asked after we had exchanged good mornings.

"No fresh news. But everything you talked about and developed yesterday and the day before gave me some new ideas. The image of the world I saw before me until now is substantially altered, it has been clarified, and as a result, certain ideas have also become clearer to me than perhaps they ever were before. It is in regard to these that I wanted permission to discuss some things with you."

"Of course," he said. "After all, I do not say such things just to hear myself talk—although each time, talking makes me feel clearer about the connections and consequences for us. You know that I have said over and over again that we must learn from world history. It's true that somewhere or other Hegel says that the main thing we learn from world history is that we never learn anything. And of course, he is right. But I believe that those who should have learned from it were not familiar with it or had penetrated its secrets too little.

"For many people, even for most schoolteachers, world history consists of the dates of wars and battles and the names of treaties and kings. That seems to me

rather as if someone were to believe that he can understand the nature and contexts of higher mathematics by learning Gauss's logarithm tables by heart.

"But *you* wanted to talk. Go ahead."

*Wagener then relates how he told Hitler that, within twenty years, the Russian people would have turned out the Jewish Bolsheviks who had displaced the old czarist elite, which had not really been Russian either. That development would, he predicted, turn the western democracies against Russia, since those countries were controlled by Jews. When that happened, he argued, the hostility of the Western powers against both Germany and Russia would bring those two countries together against common foes.*

*As for the Jewish problem in Germany, Wagener proposed to do away with it in the long run by forbidding Jewish immigration. The low birth rate of the German Jews would then condemn them to gradual extinction. In the meantime, a National Socialist regime would need to do nothing more than exclude Jews from government jobs and educate the younger generation of Germans to true German attitudes and ways.*

*England, Wagener reports he warned Hitler, did not regard itself as a Germanic or Nordic country; it was too involved in its worldwide empire for that. It would also not tolerate a dominant power in Europe. And through the Masonic lodge, England controlled the governments of all of Germany's neighbors, so that it could mobilize them against any German attempt to dominate Europe. If Germany tried to rearm, England would act preemptively. There was only one solution, Wagener recounts explaining to Hitler: Germany must use the next ten to twenty years to implement Hitler's plans for a renewal of the country's political, economic, and social life. Its successes would make it attractive to its neighbors and to Russia, all of whom would gravitate to it as friends. Once it occupied such a position, Wagener argued, Germany could extend the hand of friendship to Britain, which, he predicted, would seize it eagerly. Under such circumstances, the English would be only too glad to return to Germany its colonies and to allow it to build ships and airplanes once more in order to live with it in peace.*

When I finished, Hitler stared straight ahead with a sober expression. He, too, was silent as he rose to pace the room. Then he came to a stop before me and said in a calm voice:

"Wagener, we will not have so much time. We cannot maneuver between England and Russia for twenty years."

"England has been maneuvering for centuries! That is precisely its superiority and the secret of its power!"

"But England has been a world power for hundreds of years [Hitler replied], and we are just beginning to hold up our heads again. We *must* try to win over England."

"We will win it over when it realizes that we are about to extend our hand to Russia!"

“Then you intend to deceive Russia?”

“No, Herr Hitler, I don’t want to deceive anyone. For both of them need us, or might need us; and we, too, need both of them.”

“England has three enemies in this world [Hitler said]; they are Russia, America, and Japan. England knows as much, it cannot help but know. And that is why it will be ready to side with us, once we appear worthy of entering into reciprocal treaties.”

“Russia will be able to be England’s enemy only in twenty years [Wagener answered]. America cannot yet afford to appear as England’s enemy, because for economic conquest of the world it requires sole dominion of the seas. And at present, England still successfully disputes its claim to that. And Japan is the enemy, not only of England, but also of America. Perhaps the joint enmity might be the very thing to bring the two nations together in a common attitude toward Japan.”

“Then we will be even more tightly caught between the two worlds that grow all-powerful [Hitler answered]. And if we were then to want to decide, we would probably fall between two stools.”

“Seventy million Germans are too many [Wagener said] not to be patient and be watched with interest by both worlds. And our socio-political and socio-economic ideas are too strong not to evoke a response in both worlds. *We* do not need a ‘Comintern’ to win the working masses of the world over to our side. The rightness of our actions and their successes will blaze the trail for our socialism, thus preventing a hostile attitude, culminating in action, among the liberalistic circles still ruling in the Western democracies.”

At that, Hitler said:

“Wagener, I admire England. I admire its lucid and far-sighted politics. I love England as a fraternal Volk, and not even the remarks of the museum director last night have changed any aspect of that feeling.

“Why should it not be possible to come to an agreement, even without an 1866!<sup>3</sup> If we do *not* engage in any activity that could upset England’s interests, if we do not omit any activity that will make our intention clear to England, then we must succeed in persuading this nation, which has always been able to boast of the greatest statesmen and diplomats in the world, of what must be obvious:

“The world’s oceans need a police force that will preserve order, a power that can compel order. That power is England, should be England, and must remain England. And *we* need space for our people, and without that space we always represent a threat to the others, politically and economically. For in order to be able to feed the people within our narrow boundaries, we must export in exchange for the foodstuffs we lack, and that means exporting at any

3. This is an allusion to the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, which was followed by a conciliatory peace settlement at the insistence of Bismarck, with the result that the two former rivals became allies.



cost! If we have the space, this compulsion disappears, and we no longer need to upset the economic interests of England and America. Is there any aspect of this that would be counter to England's interests? A free hand in the East for us means final peace in the world. And in exchange, we are prepared to renounce our old colonies and a battle fleet.

"Then England and Germany together would be the guarantors of peace and order in the world. What the League of Nations failed to accomplish, and what any other federation, no matter how cunningly organized, will never be able to accomplish, that can be brought about by a brotherly pact between England and Germany.

"That is the foreign policy goal I have in mind and for which I want to do battle."

With this, Hitler concluded our conversation—which, however, seemed to me one of the most significant I ever had with him. His attitude toward England and his belief in England were so crystal clear that a counterargument was not possible. And yet, I felt that an inner untruth and a self-delusion lay in this obviously unshakable sacred conviction of Hitler's.

How frequently Hitler had expressed the idea that we were living in a time of radical and worldwide change, a transformation from individualism to socialism, from a sense of *I* to a sense of *we*, from liberalistic individual rights to the commitment of obligations and responsibilities toward the community. Now, England, on the other hand, is the typical representative of liberalism and individualism, while Russia represents socialism, though in a foolish and extreme form.

If Hitler's great basic idea is correct, world history proceeds from the English attitude toward the Russian—which will, of course, have to be refined in much the same way we were planning for our own socialist ideas. Then it would be wrong to cling to the representative of the waning idea. Rather, our sights must be set on the new, the coming world! The history of the world runs its inexorable course, like the transit of the stars. Great personalities in history have only been successful and proven their greatness when they placed themselves at the helm of natural evolution, where they unfold the banner of the new worldview and carry it forward in the direction in which the evolution was heading anyway. Anyone who marched in the opposite direction was always overcome by events, was toppled and trampled underfoot, and generally all those who marched with him fell with him.

For to fight *against* the natural course of events is a sin against the spirit.

It seemed to me incomprehensible that such a genius as Hitler could commit such a basic error. There must be some kind of preconceived notion or a completely different kind of connection which I, in turn, could not imagine. I was determined to seize the first opportunity to bring up this topic with Hitler one more time.

# 15

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## An Encounter with Julius Streicher— Hitler Refuses to Travel Abroad— Continuation of the Economic Policy Conferences

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**H**itler then took his leave, Wagener recounts, explaining that he was going to visit the headquarters of the local Gau, but that Wagener need not accompany him. In departing, Hitler told Wagener that he intended to tell the Gauleiter, Julius Streicher, to use his anti-Semitic publication, *Der Stürmer*, only to alert Germans to the pernicious influence of the Jews, not to attack the latter in unseemly fashion. Wagener reports that he attributed this view on Hitler's part to his own earlier remarks about the way to deal with the German Jews.

That evening, Wagener recalled, Hess arrived from Munich with a second car, driven by Julius Schreck, Hitler's regular chauffeur. Hess reported that several Gauleiter wanted to speak with Hitler in Munich about the worsening unemployment problem and that reports from Berlin indicated that the government intended to ban the SA. Upon hearing this news, Hitler decided to abandon his trip to Berlin, which had been interrupted in any case, so as to return to Munich the following day.

That evening, we spent some time with Streicher, who had come to say goodbye, since he had heard we were leaving. This gave me a chance to get to know him a little better.

He did not seem to me unpleasant. He was a determined fellow, who happened to ride his hobbyhorse of anti-Semitism hard and who had made it his life's mission to unmask the Jew, as he put it. If one systematically collects all the atrocities committed by Jews; if one exposes the cynicism that marks the actions of individual Jews, and which without a doubt also characterizes the actions obviously initiated by the Jewish headquarters; if one keeps in mind the thousands upon thousands of Germans driven to suicide after being bled dry, dispossessed, and forced into interest serfdom by Jews, and then looks at the Jews and their women, grown rich in the process, wearing the stolen jewelry,

their filthy fingers and fat hands adorned with gems paid for by the sweat and blood of their victims—then Streicher's attitude is easy to understand.

But such an attitude cannot and must not be allowed to determine political decisions. Not revenge but removal and prevention are the tasks of a people's leadership! But Streicher obviously also realized this.

"It was my intention," he said, "merely to strip the sheep's mask from the satanic faces of these Jews, this nation of parasites. The German Volk must learn not to be deceived by this mask any longer. To recognize the Jew is half the battle. And, of course, that is why the Jew always tries to avoid being recognized. Even the Bible makes that clear more than once. On the flight from Sodom and Gomorrah, it is written, they were doomed if they were 'recognized.' Not being recognized played a large role in their existence. A proof of their guilty consciences. It is not for nothing that they seek to introduce conformity in hats, eyeglasses, even suits! Because a Jew-cranium is stuck so deep down between the raised Jewish shoulders, they've seen to it that others, too, must have the same ugly high shoulders. In every jacket and coat, and especially in women's dresses and blouses, the shoulders are systematically raised with cotton and other padding. And then the Jewish outfitters persuade their customers that this is the fashion, that this is beautiful! And the stupid people—the Germans no less than the French and the English, and of course the Americans most of all—dutifully believe them, and in time they actually come to find it beautiful. And they never have an inkling that they have to allow their God-given noble Aryan figures to be so pathologically disfigured, merely to make it harder to recognize the Jew's back on sight!"

Streicher is a fanatic. And in his fanaticism he sometimes goes too far. Since the sexual problem plays a large role in the life of the Jew, Streicher tried to give expression to the significance of this question in his *Stürmer*, although such discussions were hardly suitable fare for a newspaper available to the youth of the land. "But," he continued, "the sadism peculiar to every parasitic being is, of course, expressed, not only in the slow economic bleeding of a victim, but also in producing sexual pliancy—not to mention the beastliness of ritual murder, which Jewry in general certainly rejects in other ways."

"It is important not to go too far," Hitler objected at this point. "It would be a mistake to generalize from individual incidents of an ugly nature, carried out by criminal types. There is a further risk that the intent to enlighten will create an atmosphere that you may not at all have intended but which at the critical moment may lead to excesses, the political consequences of which will have to be borne by the entire German Volk."

Unlike some other Gauleiter, Streicher did not, even after the seizure of power, live like a lord. He went so far as to avoid any sort of display. He continued to live in his schoolteacher apartment long after he might have laid claim to a more lavish style of living. He made nothing of himself, nor did he have the least desire to make anything of himself. Nevertheless, he lacked the

ethical basis for maintaining the balance that was essential for him and that Hitler expected of him.

When he had left, we remained together some time longer, reading the papers and occasionally chatting.

As we happened to be talking about the correct evaluation of foreign affairs, I said to Hitler:

“You have read so much and taken such a deep look into world history that now it has really become essential for you to get to know the world at first hand. You know only your own home—Vienna and Munich, and beyond that the German cities and Gaue. But you really know only a special segment, even of the Germans, and the rest of the world is foreign to you.

“When a soldier is supposed to carry out an attack or any other kind of action, surely he studies the map and his enemy, but the most important preparation, in the end, is a personal view of the battle site. If he forgets about that, there can be errors on his map or his orientation can be in error. If he had looked over the site, even briefly, he might have arrived at a quite different decision.

“That is why you must make up your mind to get to know the world outside Germany. *Now* it’s still possible. *Today* you can still travel as a private person, and you can examine whatever *you* want to see. From year to year, that becomes more difficult. Once you are in one way or another a member of the government, it will no longer be possible at all.

“Then, you will have to rely on descriptions and reports given you by others, by people who may be quite lacking in imagination and deeper insight. And you yourself will not be in a position to judge whether what you are told is correct—you won’t even be able to figure out what someone is trying to tell you.”

“Wagener, that’s all well and good. And I agree with you completely. But you just heard Hess say how tense the situation continues to be. Believe me: if our enemies knew that I happened to be somewhere in France, for example, they would exploit my absence to strike a blow of their own.”

“But the world is not so large that you could not be back in twenty-four or forty-eight hours. And a democratic government isn’t that quick on the trigger, anyway.”

“True. But I also feel that I have no right to take a pleasure trip while the people, while my followers, are out of work and in need.”

“That is not the point, Herr Hitler. First of all, it would not be a pleasure trip, and besides, the party members will fully understand that you need to get to know the neighboring countries and people. Furthermore, there is no need to shout the news from the rooftops.”

“Our political enemies will see to that!”

“Nevertheless, inspection of the battle area, militarily speaking, is your duty. You must not shirk it. How can you learn from world history without knowing the world itself?”

Hitler must have seen the sense of this. He too wanted to go abroad. Nor was it the fear that in his absence something might happen that prevented him. This was simply a pretext he chose to cite. Rather, without a doubt, it was a kind of insecurity. He was unable to speak any foreign languages; he did not enjoy foreign hotels or places; he had no feeling at all for foreign conditions that were unfamiliar; he shrank from any society to which he was not accustomed; and he must have been afraid that during such a trip he would end up in tow to someone else, on whom he would be dependent. It was this that he felt as a predicament! And it was against this that his inner self rebelled.

Subsequently, I tried repeatedly to persuade him to come along on trips abroad that I was undertaking. He looked for and always found reasons why he was unable to get away at that particular time.

It was a pity. Perhaps many things would have turned out differently if he had come to know other nations, seen other customs and attitudes, heard the language and the music, heard the vital melody of other peoples. A man like Hitler would have learned more and taken in more on one such trip than another person would have during years of study.

It was not to be. This gap in his education, and most especially this total blind spot in his character, must not go unnoticed. It is one explanation for the unhappy choice of his subsequent foreign-policy advisers.

In the fall of 1930, another discussion of economic problems took place with Hitler, Strasser, and Adolf Wagner, the Munich Gauleiter—a continuation, as it were, of the lectures I had begun early that summer.

*There follows a lengthy presentation of Wagener's economic theories which repeats much of what he had said earlier. He added, however, the stipulation that profit sharing should be tied to the amount of work the individuals in question actually accomplished. A yearly ceiling equivalent to one month's wages should be set, he also added. Profits beyond that would not be shared out but would, instead, go to the appropriate occupational chambers of self-administration. These would thus be able to take over from the state most welfare programs, a step that would remove that sensitive set of issues from political life. In order to bring the currency into line with his system of capital contraction, Wagener proposed a contracting currency as well, one that would lose each year a certain percentage of its value. Thanks to modern bookkeeping and banking techniques, he maintained, that measure would cause no difficulties.*

When I finished, some time passed before Hitler began to speak, remarking that, although the ideas and projections were risky at certain points, they were so tempting that he, who was no expert, was astonished that these or similar ideas had not occurred to anyone until now. That was why he would, of course, have to listen to some other people as well. But it was to be the mission of the

economic policy section that was going to be established within the party's national executive to begin by dealing thoroughly with these topics and committing them to paper. He requested once more—and said he would hold me personally responsible—that I make sure that none of these ideas became public.

“If they are correct and can be translated into action, then no one needs to know about them until we begin to put them into effect. If they turn out to be incorrect or unworkable, then their becoming known could inflict endless damage on us. For in that case, our goals would be called utopian, and we ourselves, dreamers.

“Besides, I understand one thing more and more clearly—I believe I mentioned it to you at the time: that such ideas can be realized only when one has undisputed power in the state—so that no one can interfere and water down the plans—and only when one has the backing of the entire Volk, imbued with the faith and the conviction that what one does is truly right and serves the totality of the Volk.

“Therefore, attaining undisputed governmental power would seem the precondition for the realization of all your plans, as well as many other political tasks. Preparation for this, working toward it, the ceaseless struggle to expand our movement, with the objective of entering the Reichstag as the strongest party of the German Volk—there lies our primary mission. Therefore, gentlemen, be very clear about the fact that everything that brings us closer to our goal is right and must be pursued with increasing energy, and that everything that makes our way to this goal more difficult must be omitted or prevented. When that day comes, we *must*—we *must!*—obtain the reward for our perseverance and our loyalty to our idea. Then we will also have the right people, who know how to evaluate such problems and translate them into action.”

Strasser stared at me. In leaving, he said, “Wagener, have you been to see Göring? I have renewed reason to believe that around him an enemy camp is forming, not only against you, but against your whole social policy.”

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## Wagener Retroactively Becomes a Party Comrade—Hitler on Democracy and the Leadership Principle—His Use of Reasoned Arguments

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**W**agener then describes the so-called Brown House, the villa in a fashionable district of Munich which the party purchased in the spring of 1930 and fitted out, at Hitler's direction, as its national headquarters, which was officially opened at the beginning of 1931. His office, Wagener reports, was situated directly over Hitler's. As Party Treasurer Franz Xaver Schwarz was showing Wagener through the newly reconstructed building, he pointed out that Wagener had never become a party comrade. According to Wagener, when he agreed he should join the NSDAP, Schwarz proposed to assign him a very low membership number recently left vacant when one of the early Nazis had died. Wagener tells of objecting that he did not deserve such an honor, with the result that he received instead a vacant number first issued at about the time he became SA chief of staff. Wagener further relates that the reorganization plan he and Strasser had devised was implemented. Wagener then tells of explaining to Hitler his concern about the low quality of men willing to take on full-time party jobs and about their often self-serving attitudes. After listening for a while, Wagener recounts, Hitler interrupted as follows.

“I'm quite clear about the weaknesses of our organization. You said yourself that those who are well-fed, who are sated, all those whose lives are secure, are not prepared to risk their basic existence. They may be prepared occasionally to support us with donations of money. But who knows whether they don't give the same amounts to other parties, even to the Communists. Thus, even financial support is no proof of conviction.

“But after all, we mean to work, to build! We must expand our organization, structure it! Only a broadening of the party allows us the chance to grow into a position where we can carry out our most secret plans. Democracy demands the masses! Numbers make the difference. It will be *our* mission at some later time to ennoble parliamentary democracy—the most primitive of all ruling forms

for a self-governing people—by giving the Volk a constitution that will enable the people to bring to the forefront the best, the most competent, the *aristoi*.

“That is why our first task is to woo the masses. What use are a hundred scholars to me, a thousand professors, what use are the so-called intelligentsia, who are not even intelligent enough to recognize the triviality of parliamentarianism?”

“As for the British form—which, as I have come to realize, is predominant also in America and in all other democracies of the Western stamp—it exploits democracy only as a mock organization while, through the Masonic lodge and similar secret and public societies, or even directly, with money, it puts those names on the parties’ candidate lists that make up the equally secret executive committee, which in turn represents the actual power interests. I cannot reconcile myself to this form. For at heart it is nothing but a betrayal of the people. I do not *want* to betray the people. And in the long run, they cannot be betrayed, at least not the German Volk! For at bottom, the German Volk is truly democratic.

“How else should we have conceived the idea that we can seize the German government without violence and without treachery, if not from the conviction that in its democratic will the German Volk assigns the government to those from whom it hopes to gain its salvation and a better future? I don’t need a lodge, I don’t need any secret societies that pretend to the Volk that it is electing *its* men, while in reality they put *their* men on the lists and get them elected. I’d be ashamed of abusing the trust offered me by this Volk, which has been so severely downtrodden and betrayed, which looks to me with a last glimmer of hope.

“That is why I must work to win over the masses. And what we are doing right now is nothing more than courting the masses, courting the Volk for the benefit of the Volk. And in performing that task, I have to take everyone who makes himself available to me. If, in the effort, I find some who have foundered, what’s the harm? They are surely more ready and determined than others to build a new future for themselves, to fill their poor lives with new content. Yes, frequently they even make the best fighters, the more wholehearted supporters of our ideas, the more fanatical standard bearers of our faith.

“Who, I ask you, would you rather see in the political organization than such fighters?”

*In the following passage, Wagener reports that he and Strasser both lamented the low quality of those available to fill political offices in the middle and lower echelons of the party. Hitler then responded to their concerns as follows.*

“You see. That is why I am in favor of the leadership principle. You are both right. We are dependent on volunteers. And unfortunately, those are not always the best. That is why we must not allow them to say whatever they like. They can



only support those views that have been communicated to them from above. Only one man can lead. They have just enough strength to obey.

“We would not be a party, we would not be a movement, if we allowed each man to say what he thinks. That has nothing to do with democracy, either. Anyone unwilling to follow us will stay away. But *our organizations must follow us*. Where would a man end up if one of his legs wanted to run backwards while the other runs on ahead?”

“But isn’t there an obvious danger,” I asked, “that these people demand of their co-workers, their fellow travelers—yes, of all party members, and in the last resort of the entire Volk—that they have no opinions of their own? The smaller a man is, the narrower is his horizon; and the more he himself is forced to obey, the less tolerant he is of others—especially when he has a certain amount of power over them. I’m thinking, for example, of our noncommissioned officers. In the army, there are limits to what they can do because there is an officer above them. But woe if the restraints on noncommissioned officers were ever to be loosed and they were to gain domination over the army! At one blow, the army would no longer be a superior German fighting force but a phalanx of hoplites, capable of winning and dying, but having relinquished the most valuable mark of our German army—the leadership principle.”

“But why?” Hitler exclaimed at this point, and an indignant reproach was audible in his question.

“Because the leadership principle consists of the idea, not that *one* Führer leads, but that *all* leaders lead—each in the area of his responsibility. If it were otherwise, a puppet theater would be the most graphic example of the leadership principle.”

“Strasser,” Hitler asked sternly, “do you think it possible that we might give every Gauleiter and district leader authority to exert leadership as he deems fit?”

“Impossible! That would mean the dissolution of the party!”

“And would you allow,” he asked me, “every troop or unit leader to deal with his SA as he pleases, without heeding your orders?”

“*Without heeding my orders*—I wouldn’t allow that. But engaging his own head and heart *within the framework* of my orders—that I demand of him. Otherwise he is not a leader.”

Since Hitler looked at Strasser inquiringly, he remarked:

“We cannot take the same approach with our political leaders. Political leadership is something quite different from leadership of a group which is, after all, erected on the basis of a certain discipline.”

“True!” Hitler said in a calm but resolute tone.

“Political leadership is a matter that belongs in the area of philosophy more than anywhere else. Democracy brings a man to the forefront and transfers political leadership to him. We National Socialists intend in future to aid him with the best and most capable men, the elite of the entire Volk and all its

professions, as advisers and collaborators; but *leading* is something *he* must do once the Volk has chosen him for the job. He is responsible only to the Volk and to his conscience, and that has been given him by God, that is the divine voice inside him. I will further acknowledge the authority of a secular court of law above him—a people's court or a supreme court or a senate. But not the Reichstag or any other parliament. It is their obligation to offer the scepter in the name of the Volk, on the basis of the elections by the entire Volk, to the man whom the election chose as the leader of the political affairs of the state—that is, as the leader of the state. And if he is prepared to accept it, and if it is handed to him by the Reich president, again in the name of the Volk, it is their obligation to work with him in dispatching the affairs of state—that is, to consult with him in drafting laws, to agree to them or reject them, or to make suggestions of their own. But they may not recall him. They may only invoke the court against him. And a new popular election can bring about new circumstances.

“But political leadership by one man alone requires a talent for the highest ethical responsibility, the highest human virtues, and the highest skill in leading the government and the people.

“That is why he cannot and must not tolerate men in responsible positions who act against the leader's wishes. For they are acting against the will of the Volk. They can set to work and try, at the next election, to get *their* own way. And if they win over the majority of the Volk, then they have achieved what they want. In any election contest, one party opposes another. The stronger man wins! And he will be the better man, too!

“But if groups form within a party, if one or another thinks he can win followers and lead them along his own ways, such a party is not an instrument that the people can give their trust to. And the people will not follow such a party and give it their votes.

“Therefore, in our party, there may be only *one* direction, *one* voice, *one* Führer. The rest is discipline, discernment, or faith.”

*Wagener then relates having proposed a special party training school for potential leaders. Persons of promise would be given five to six months of instruction to prepare them for positions in the leadership structure, to which Strasser's Organizational Section I would then assign them, either as assistants or as chiefs of staff to the Gauleiter or the county leaders. Those who proved themselves in such posts would then be given another five to six months of more advanced training, which would include trips abroad to gather information on special topics. Upon successful completion of such assignments, they would themselves become eligible for appointment as county leaders and, later, as Gauleiter. The party, Wagener recalled having proposed, should be used as a training school for positions in the state.*

“It seems to me,” said Hitler, “that we are entering on a different topic. Here, I believe, we would quickly be of one mind. Because I agree with you abso-

lutely. But first you argued for placing a kind of auxiliary government alongside the Gauleiter—co-workers who are engaged, not by them, but by a central authority; therefore, men who, if the occasion arises, are prepared and in a position to meddle in the affairs of their Gauleiter. I reject that. It reminds me of the arrangements of the general staff in the army. Behind every commander of a higher organization stands a chief of staff or some other officer of the general staff, who has the right to interfere with his authority. Under Ludendorff, the general staff was frequently given directives, instructions, and orders before the commander heard of them. It was the general staff that was doing the leading, and not the generals.

“This is a principle I consider mistaken and damaging. That is why I reject it for the political organization of the party as well. Such an arrangement would result in a party *within* the party. Who would be the leader then? The party leader or the head of this general staff—who is probably the leader of Organizational Section I? Or even his own chief of staff!

“We *may* not tolerate an auxiliary government within the party, and I *will* not tolerate it! There is plenty of time for training personalities for governmental tasks. Perhaps some time in the future, we can think about some such training. Now it is a matter of winning the masses! For this we need fighters! We will have a use for clever administrators only when we have created that which is new, which must then be administered.”

Such discussions occurred repeatedly, until the purposes and tasks of the various divisions of the national party executive, which was to be reorganized, had been clarified. Hitler listened carefully to all views and objections, and he always arrived at very firm decisions. In this, he frequently referred to the presentations of his associates, though it was not clear whether he had already held that opinion. Sometimes, on the other hand, his attitude was the result of an intuitive insight, for which it was difficult to find rational grounds. He himself would search for a logical reason to justify his view, which might at times appear to us to be a preconceived notion.

I remember that once, in connection with some matter I no longer recall, he made a remark more or less to the effect that the solution of the problem in question must be such and such. He could not explain his reasons, but he would find them. A few days later he ran into me somewhere in the Brown House and said that now he had found the reason that had led to his view. But when he expounded it to me, we came to the realization that this so-called justification would have to lead to quite other conclusions. He laughed as he shook his head and declared, “In that case, the reason is wrong.” But nothing could shake his conviction. And subsequently, it became evident that he had been right.

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## Hitler Recalls the Beer Hall Putsch— His Choice of Röhm as SA Chief of Staff—His Views on Homosexuality— His Political Prescription: “Do Nothing”

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**W**agener reports that when they discussed his replacement as SA chief of staff, Hitler revealed his intentions of appointing as Wagener's successor former captain Ernst Röhm, then serving in the Bolivian army. In explaining how he had come to know Röhm, Hitler told of events at the time of the Munich Beer Hall Putsch of November 1923. As adjutant to General Otto von Lossow, Röhm had accompanied the General to the Bürgerbräukeller to meet with Hitler, Colonel Hans von Seisser, who headed the Bavarian police, and Bavarian State Commissar Gustav von Kahr. There, Röhm had witnessed the handshakes with which those men sealed their agreement to collaborate in the “struggle against Communism” and against the republican government in Berlin, which they charged was too weak to keep the Communists from subverting and subjugating Germany.

“Everything was settled,” Hitler told me. “The proclamation we had drawn up is well known. None of us thought of betraying the others. Even today I do not believe that Kahr, Lossow, or Seisser harbored traitorous thoughts when they took part in that handshake. Röhm confirmed as much to me at the time.

“Not until the devoutly religious Kahr and Seisser contacted Cardinal Faulhaber right after leaving the Bürgerbräukeller did their attitude change.

“I can't reproach the Cardinal. For a long time, he had been seeking to use the Communist movement in Prussia to separate South Germany from North Germany. And what had failed to take place at the time of the Orgesch now seemed possible.<sup>1</sup> However, the plan to take over the Berlin central government, under the military command of Ludendorff, to whom it was expected the

1. Orgesch was the abbreviation for the Organisation Escherich.

whole army would go over, ran directly counter to the plans of the Catholic authorities. I don't reproach Kahr and Seisser either, for being too weak to keep their word in the face of Faulhaber's unquestionably extraordinary personality. They just weren't the men of resolve they were believed to be and for which we took them. The word of a priest carried more weight with them than their own freely arrived at agreement with us for action on behalf of Germany. But I do hold it against them, and despise and indict them, for not letting us know about their altered decision and for firing at us with machine guns when we believed we were marching with them. And since that betrayal cost so many brave Germans their lives, these two are common criminals.

"Even the commanding general joined the traitors. But Captain Röhm refused to obey him. He branded it as villainy to first agree on a common plan and then, when the others turned their backs, to set up machine guns to frustrate that plan. He agreed to hold to our agreement and occupy the staff area on the Von-der-Tann Strasse and await the arrival of our column.

"In fact, he barricaded himself with his men in the building and on the street, and he was still holding his position when Seisser's machine guns broke up our column, completely taken by surprise, at the Feldherrenhalle. Röhm even told his general over the telephone that he would lay down his weapons only on receiving a written order from Ludendorff or from me.

"That's why I have unlimited trust in Röhm."

These facts were completely new to me. At the time, one read in the press only what the public was supposed to hear, and there were then no newspapers that took Hitler's side. I therefore expressed my unqualified admiration for Röhm and my understanding of Hitler's confidence in him.

*Wagener then relates that Pfeffer, whom he met soon thereafter, expressed admiration for Röhm's military abilities but voiced concern about his homosexual tendencies. When he met Hitler the next day, Wagener continues, he relayed this information to him. Hitler replied that he had already heard such reports. That, however, had been ten years previously, and people did grow up. Still, he would speak directly to Röhm about the matter. Wagener then quotes Hitler again.*

"This inclination in some people is a problem that previously I was quite unable to understand. Your theory of Odic force, which you recently explained to me, and reading Reichenbach's book about his observations, have brought me somewhat further.

"If it is true that people with similar Od rays are attracted to each other, then of course that applies not only to men and women, but also to women among each other and men among each other. And if it is true that the healthy young body has an urge to give off its excess of Od energy to older ones, who can utilize it for their own performance, it is understandable that not only will younger women and girls feel attracted to such a man, but so will young men and boys.

In my judgment, this has nothing at all to do with sex. But since the transference of Od energies occurs with greater force and more immediately through physical touch—shaking hands, caressing, even kissing—the urgency of the Od contact also releases a desire for this kind of touch.

“So, if this desire exists in a younger person toward an older one, that should at the same time be proof that he considers him worthy of the gift of Od. Between a man and a woman, it is true, there can also be purely sexual reasons for such an approach, for cuddling, for embracing. In the case of a younger man or even a boy in relation to an older man, however, that actually does not arise. It seems to me all the more abominable if the older man allows this cuddling on the part of the younger man to seduce him into lewd acts or even to go so far as to exploit him for that purpose.

“By the way, history gives us repeated clues which show that it is precisely the especially outstanding personalities who are subject to such tendencies—a factor that might support the theory of worthiness, but also points to the danger implicit in this matter. We must therefore take the view that any sexual involvement between persons of the same sex is unnatural, it runs counter to the meaning of pairing and of the divine command: Be fruitful and multiply. That is why any such activity, no matter of what sort, is to be forbidden and punishable as soon as a boy has reached puberty. Besides, pure pederasty seems to me entirely un-Germanic. I feel that it is filth of the lowest order. Pederasts should be expelled from the community of the Volk.”

It surprised me how Hitler had absorbed a short conversation on the theory of Od rays and had digested it. I was astonished at the clear conclusions he had drawn from it, and I thought to myself, it cannot be all that difficult to guide into the proper direction a man who is so accustomed to evaluating what he has heard only once. True, it requires a clear objective and systematic study. But woe if such a man is provided with false information which he believes to be genuine, given false news which he trusts, if false advisers arise on whom he relies!

In mid-November, Hitler told me that he had received a cable from Röhm announcing his return and his arrival in Munich by mid-December.

In the meantime Hitler had acquired an SA aide, Brückner.<sup>2</sup> I was not pleased at the news.

“If you mean to have an SA aide, it would surely be correct to tell me, as the SA chief of staff, so that I can pick out and introduce several men to you. Brückner has never even been in the SA. So he has no contact with the SA at all.”

“On November 9, 1923, Brückner was a member of the Oberland Free Corps, and so he was already one of us even then,” Hitler countered sharply.

2. Friedrich Wilhelm Brückner had participated in the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 and, following his release from prison after conviction for his part in the incident, served as one of Hitler's “adjutants.”

Since I happened to know the circumstances of Brückner's life, I continued. "But he did not prove himself as an officer on active duty during the World War. He must be the only one who was already in the field at the outbreak of the war—as a lieutenant, I believe—and who does not have even the Iron Cross. And at present, he is a tennis pro here in Munich; he lives separated from his wife, who is a dressmaker; and he allows young girls to believe that he is a bachelor."

Hitler looked at me sharply and broke off the conversation with the words: "He has my confidence."

"Nevertheless, he is the wrong man for you. He has no occupation, and he finds one through you. He will do everything to expand and perpetuate it."

"That is precisely what I'm looking for."

"But he will never be able to give you an opinion or a piece of advice."

"That is precisely what I don't want. I use him only as a tool. Besides, I want to have someone close to me whose mere robust body build and height offer a certain security, so that no one will dare to come near me."

I could see the validity of this last argument. I myself had once been present when, right in the center of Leipzig, two unsavory characters jumped up on the left running board of our car and, with raised fists and downright bestial expressions, shouted at Hitler, "Death to Hitler!" Only because he was sitting in front on the right were they unable to reach him with their fists, and by accelerating sharply, the driver shook them off.

As announced, Röhm arrived in Munich in mid-December. I myself did not get to see him. He did not come to my office, nor did I meet him elsewhere. It was not until February 1931 that I encountered him for the first time, when he had long since become my successor.

I soon understood the reason. Not long after his arrival, Hitler told me:

"I spoke to Röhm about the question of his tendencies. At first he was taken aback, but then he said that when he was younger, he might have had feelings along those lines, but that his time of aberrations has been overcome."

If I knew Hitler, he told Röhm during this interview that the warning had come from me. In this, Hitler was somewhat naive. I experienced another, similar situation later on.

*Wagener relates that, in view of Röhm's past, he advised Hitler to remove the Hitler Youth from its previous subordination to the SA. When Hitler asked him to nominate someone to head the youth organization, Wagener proposed Kurt von Ulrich, who had for a long time served as the SA supreme commander's deputy for the western region and in 1930 had been promoted to general inspector of the SA. But because Ulrich was about fifty years old, Hitler regarded him as too elderly for the post in question. Instead, Hitler appointed Baldur von Schirach, previously head of the Nazi organization of university students. Wagener mistakenly states that Schirach took over the Hitler Youth*

*at the time Röhm assumed his post as SA chief of staff—that is, at the beginning of 1931—whereas in reality Schirach did not enter upon his new appointment until October 1931. The separation of the Hitler Youth from the SA, which Wagener also reports as coinciding with Röhm’s installation, did not take place until May 1932.*

“But the SS is already independent. So Röhm will have dealings only with the SA,” Hitler continued. “Do you still have reservations?”

“No. There is only one thing I’d like to point out to you. When it becomes known that Röhm has been made chief of staff, evil tongues may begin to wag. For just as *I* had some hint of his confused tendencies, others may have heard. The opposition press, in particular, may try to make capital of it. What will your position be if a newspaper makes such an accusation?”

“True, that would be a problematic development.”

*Wagener then recalls telling Hitler about the Eulenburg affair of 1907–08, when Prince Philipp zu Eulenburg, a longtime confidant of the Kaiser’s, was accused of having homosexual relations, with the result that he was banished from court. Wagener contended that thereafter the Kaiser’s enemies in the press could force him to part with advisers who displeased them simply by reporting that those advisers were homosexuals.*

“I’m very grateful to you for this piece of advice [said Hitler]. Of course, I recall those events, but I never knew their inner content and their rationale.”

“But something else is necessary in this case: at some point, in the *Völkischer Beobachter* or on the occasion of a speech, you will have to repeat more or less the same things you said to me about your attitude toward this pathological or unnatural sexual orientation. In this way, at least, one thing will be clear—the party’s view on such matters.”

“The situation will have to arise for that. If I do it, I would be expected to proceed against Röhm and expel him. Surely your first advice is better: to do nothing. In politics, that is generally a medicine that is always effective. Somehow, politics is always a struggle, a pressure one side tries to exert. If one pushes back, the attack becomes reinforced. If one evades it and offers no resistance whatsoever, then the push stops being a push and becomes a gust of air. But as such, it cannot pull down anything, it has failed of its purpose and in time it will give up.”

“But you will have to call in Röhm and appeal to his conscience. Otherwise he will interpret your indulgence as *carte blanche*.”

“Enough of that.” Hitler put out his hand and said, “Wagener, let us remain friends. It’s true that soon you will stop being the SA chief of staff. But in return, I would like you to continue regarding yourself as *my* chief of staff, though without title.”

I broke in with the words, “I thank you. You can count on my always telling



you my opinion and nevertheless complying when the welfare of the German Volk requires it.”

January 1, 1931, was set as the date for Röhm’s assuming the job of SA chief of staff.<sup>3</sup>

3. Röhm took over as SA chief of staff on January 5, 1931.

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## Wagener's Agrarian Program—Hitler: “Remember Faust”—Himmler's Reservations

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**W**agener next recounts his presentation of his plans for agriculture at an economic policy conference in the Brown House attended by Hitler, Strasser, Himmler, Gottfried Feder, and Gauleiter Adolf Wagner. He denounced the policies that had led during the empire to an expansion of industrial production and of exports. Far more had been produced for export than had been necessary. During the war, he maintained, more than fifty billion gold marks worth of German capital abroad had been lost through expropriation. He charged that this meant the people had been swindled out of that much money by the government and industry.

In the future, it would be essential to break with the policy of forced industrialization and exports. Instead, the productivity of domestic agriculture must be raised. This would be easily possible through mechanization, large-scale cultivation of grains, and specialization in other areas of agriculture. Wherever grain could be grown, small farmers and large landholders would have to cooperate on the basis of the most modern techniques. Property rights would be beside the point. Large-scale agrarian operations could be conducted by means of cooperatives or some completely new system of organization. The essential point was to increase the grain yield by 15 to 20 percent while lowering the costs by 25 to 33 percent.

Since only a quarter to a third of the land fit for farming was suitable for grain cultivation, there was no danger of doing away with the small farmers. By applying his system of “ownership transfer” through a yearly “contraction” to all agrarian units above a certain minimum, the advancement of capable small farmers would be assured.

To reduce Germany's dependency on imported foodstuffs, finishing industries should be relocated in rural areas. If small and medium-sized factories were transferred to the countryside, the workers could maintain vegetable and fruit gardens, keep chickens, goats, pigs, even cows. They would thereby be able to free themselves partially. In order to make possible such a relocation of industrial production, the state would have to overcome the “egotism of large-

*scale and heavy industry” by ordering that the high and uneven prices set by industry for coal, electricity, and gasoline be equalized throughout Germany, so that no economic advantage would attach to operating a factory in one of the existing industrial centers.*

Hitler interrupted me by hitting the table and saying, “This is what I have always said: From the beginning, economic leadership was lacking, planning! Yes, even considerations of anything of the sort, the will to think about it, was absent. The ministers of economics and the governments stumbled into this vast chain of events like bulls in a china shop. Yet in a mere three decades, it completely changed the face of Germany and entirely altered its social structure. But can it be changed now? Will we be able to afford to dismantle the industrial centers and to distribute the factories in the countryside? It is possible to direct new establishments. But in view of the current economic recession, we can hardly count on new enterprises. And if we consider what you just said about the recovery of agriculture and its increased productivity, we might despair at the criminal neglect of the past and at recognizing the compelling necessity for the future! A god should take a mighty hammer and smash all the industrial centers, and with them the musty living quarters in the large cities! Only then would it be possible to undo the wrong that has been done, only then would we be in a position to build for the German Volk, for the working man, for German youth the homes they need, the homes they have the right to demand and we have a duty to give them!”

As he spoke, Hitler’s shining eyes looked past us in a strange transfiguration that for the moment kept us from finding words.

“Nevertheless, it will work,” Adolf Wagner said after a while. “Machines and industrial buildings are very quickly worn out. And once the workers throng to the villages and the search for suitable settlements begins, then the great rush to the countryside will set in with a force and speed that we cannot yet even imagine.”

“And at the same time,” Gottfried Feder remarked, “this represents an enormous wave of employment creation! If the state helps with tax abatements, the number of the unemployed will dwindle in practically no time, until a new export situation or internal economic boom depletes the unemployment market in any case.”

“And this resettlement,” Strasser added, “will be supported by the dissolution of the big combines, the mammoth industries, and the trusts, which will come about by itself once the principle of ownership migration that is part of Wagener’s plans has begun. I sense the dawn!”

Hitler continued: “I have no further fears for the recovery of a new peasant estate—or let us more properly call it an agricultural estate—or for the rescue of the industrial worker and his reclamation for the Volk community. In my mind’s eye I see a flourishing land before me, more beautiful than it has ever

been. A coming century will steer the plow of forgiveness and a new life over the ugly sites of black factory chimneys and narrow mass living quarters.”

After a few moments of silence, I resumed my presentation.

*Wagener then recounts an exchange he had with Himmler, who had a degree in agriculture and maintained a farm not far from Munich. Himmler raised objections to agricultural specialization, and especially to encroachments on the property rights of large landowners. The latter were indispensable to the provisioning of the cities, and experiments in agriculture would only lead to chaos, emergencies, and collapse. Wagener countered by emphasizing the necessity of adapting to new circumstances, even if that made painful sacrifices unavoidable.*

“Both of you are right, partially right,” Hitler intervened. “From a recognition of what is better to carrying it out is, after all, a long step. In such significant questions, nothing can be rushed. But then, it shouldn’t be, either. Let us begin by sending agricultural study commissions to Canada, to Australia, and to wherever they have already made a beginning with new forms of farm management. It would even be interesting to study the Soviet collective farms. And then, let us make a start somewhere. That can go on for ten years, easily. I have no doubt that what is better will be successful of its own accord.

“Once we have introduced ownership migration, then the step to more radical and swifter measures concerning the large estates will no longer be so difficult.

“I feel that your thoughts and plans are correct. But they are not yet suited to public discussion. Therefore, what I already said about dwindling ownership also applies to this: for the moment these ideas are to be discussed and clarified only behind closed doors. Once we have the responsibility for the state, then we also have the people and the possibility for technical development and experiments.”

*Wagener proceeded to denounce the republic’s policy of importing agricultural products and maintained that the implementation of his plans for economic self-administration would prevent faulty planning in the future. He then asked for Hitler’s approval of his proposals.*

Hitler replied, “You have already heard me say that, on the whole, I agree with you. The goal you have set is absolutely correct. Whether the measures you indicate can always be taken must be determined by further study and by the situation we will encounter. But for the present, I suggest you work along the lines we have laid out. On some future occasion, I will ask you to report to me.

“I do want to point out two further aspects. Germany must surely contain an infinite amount of land still waiting to be cultivated, waiting to have agricultural goods extracted from it, thus raising Germany’s domestic productivity.

All the measures you cited are constructive. They are right and necessary. But only such action will be truly creative that discovers virgin soil, new opportunities for settlement. I read somewhere that about a hundred million hectares of uncultivated land are still available for such a venture, aside from meadows and grazing land that could be tilled, accounting for twice as much more.<sup>1</sup> What enormous opportunities are implicit in this fact. It amounts to a whole Prussian province! Check out this question, and make suggestions. Another possibility that should be investigated is wresting land from the sea. That is a goal, not for the next few years, but for decades, for generations.

“Remember Faust! A Faustian will, a Faustian grasp of nature and its powers, the possibilities of technology and the German genius—these must be the authentic signs of a resurging new epoch.

“And this brings me to the second point. We are spending millions on all sorts of things that serve civilization and scientific progress. But the most important thing—the higher development of breeding and growing of man’s primary life needs—that we have neglected. It is true that we know all about the elements and the forces that awaken the plant world and allow it to flourish and that furnish the nutrients for animals; but aside from artificial fertilizer and some artificial fodder, no major inventions aim to emulate nature, to outdo her.

“That, too, is an area you must tackle, Wagener. I am convinced that, if we pursue new avenues with persistence and consistency—to speed up, for example, the length of time it takes for vegetables to grow, to double the fruit harvest and increase the size of fruits—our efforts will succeed! We must capture all the powers of the earth in greenhouses! We must pull the sun down from the heavens! We must improve seed production and animal breeding! The most outstanding chemists and technologists, biologists, and agriculturalists must be enlisted in the effort, until they have wrested from German soil its manifold yield, from trees and shrubs a multiple harvest, and from cattle and barnyard animals, double weight and yield!

“A world going through an upheaval such as the one in which we find ourselves today will witness even more. The impossible will become possible, miracles will happen! But they will come to pass only when they are wished and worked for. This is the point where we must locate the center of our primary work for the future. How intensely posterity would scorn us if we declared ourselves satisfied with mere petty reorganizations, no matter how grandiose these may seem today. We must uncover and exploit the forces to shake the world to its foundations! That, Wagener, is your mission!” [ . . . ]

A few days later, Hitler came to my office to tell me that my presentation was constantly on his mind. He could not stop thinking about the erroneous export

1. Within the boundaries established by the Versailles Treaty, Germany comprised 48,864,800 hectares of land of all sorts: Statistisches Reichsamt, *Deutsche Wirtschaftskunde* (Berlin, 1933), p. 63.

and production policy in industry and the neglect of agriculture that was a consequence of it.

“If it is true that during the thirty years or so before the World War, fifty billion worth of foreign assets were created for Germany for which nothing was imported—and surely that was only because it was not needed—then it must also be true that during that period we produced . . . [sic] billion marks’ worth of iron and steel more than were needed. So we might have been able to supply the actual demand with a production of only three-quarters or four-fifths—the actual amount could be worked out. [ . . . ]

“Tell me,” Hitler continued his questioning, “does an increase in the production of eggs, for example, or butter actually make a great difference, compared to a production increase of steel and iron by heavy industry and a growth in exports?”

I reached for the yearbooks of the Institute for Economic Research, headed by Privy Councilor Wagemann, which listed precise figures for all these questions.<sup>2</sup> We found that for both of the last years for which yearbooks were available the importation of eggs alone into Germany had reached just about the same volume as the export of the entire chemical industry, and that in the same period German butter production, counted in millions of marks, was considerably higher than the total of German iron and steel production over the same period. Astonished, Hitler shook his head.

“We see here,” I said, “that on the scale of significance for the German economy these supercilious Ruhr industrialists rank even *lower* than the dairymaid who squats on her milking stool, holding her pail to the cow’s udder. Here is the source of the crime that has made our people increasingly unfree and dependent on foreign countries. And the excessive zeal with which the German iron and machine industry waged the *export* war on foreign countries—at the cost of internal food production—contained, in addition, the seeds of the *World War*.”

“It’s outrageous—and quite incomprehensible! Nobody knows. What were the government officials doing?”

“They sat on the supervisory boards of the major concerns,” I replied.

“We have to set all this to rights once we take over! The worm is everywhere! The stench of decay is everywhere. But clearly, stupidity is the greatest evil.”

“Establishing economic self-administration such as I have proposed, and economic direction by the state, that becomes possible only as its consequence—these measures will regulate matters all by themselves. I’m curious to see when the first industrial magnate will come to you, up in arms against this structure and against the planned economy—as they call it—and, in the long run, against me.”

2. Ernst Wagemann was the director of the Berlin Institut für Konjunkturforschung and publisher of the periodical *Vierteljahrshefte zur Konjunkturforschung*, which dealt with contemporary economic questions.

“That is why it is good [Hitler replied] that we clear up these questions before we engage in confrontations with these people. And it is equally advisable to keep our plans secret until we are installed in the government. Otherwise, they would sic the whole pack of uncomprehending industrial workers on us beforehand, and we would never attain power.

“How sad it is that there are so few people who have a view of the whole. Everything is always interest cliques, all of them interpret things to *their* advantage and according to *their* chances of profit. Is there anyone who can be believed?”

“Of course there is! The figures in these books, good common sense, and the compelling proofs the divinity sends us in the guise of events. The cancellation of the German foreign assets after the World War and the present high unemployment are such unmistakable proofs that one cannot go wrong.”

“But you saw that even Himmler rejected your very persuasive argument.”

“Has the SS perhaps recently received financial aid from the owners of great estates? I don’t know. But—perhaps it’s so.”

“I can’t imagine that.”

“But the SS did just recently establish a circle of paying members. And now and then I meet SS members with good names.”<sup>3</sup>

“There are other reasons for that. Leave that to me. I know all about it. But you should speak with Himmler. We must arrive at a unified approach.”

*Wagener then tells of initiating a conversation in which Himmler defended the efficiency of large agricultural estates and expressed concern that a Nazi endorsement of their breakup would attract the political opposition of their owners. Himmler also recommended the agronomist Walther Darré to Wagener, who claims to have arranged for the future agricultural minister of the Third Reich to join his Economic Policy Section of the party’s national executive.*

3. The SS had begun accepting passive (“supportive”) members in the autumn of 1926: Hans Volz, *Daten der Geschichte der NSDAP* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1939), p. 96.

# 19

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## Wagener Launches the WPD—Hitler between “Socialism” and Social Darwinism

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**I**n the following section, Wagener tells of Hitler’s concern over articles about economic questions in the Nazi press which offended businessmen and other persons of influence. Commissioned by Hitler to find a remedy, Wagener in 1930 founded the Economic Policy News Service (Wirtschaftspolitischer Pressedienst—WPD), a twice-weekly newsletter sent to all party newspapers and spokesmen as well as to all Gau headquarters. The future economics minister of the Third Reich, Walther Funk, eventually became the editor of the WPD.

Wagener reports that he also decided the NSDAP should have at least one high-toned newspaper. He therefore set out, in the fall of 1930, to establish a party paper in Essen, where the Gau as yet had no press organ. Since neither he nor the Gauleiter, Josef Terboven, had any experience with financing or printing a newspaper, Wagener reports deciding to appeal for guidance to the man who would be their chief competitor, Theodor Reismann-Grone, publisher of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung of Essen.

I was well aware of how unusual this step was. It is generally believed that competitors must be totally hostile to each other and constantly at each other’s throats. I hold the reverse to be true. We are accustomed to believe that struggle is necessary for that which is healthier and stronger—in this case, better—to prevail. That is said to be the case in the animal kingdom and the vegetable kingdom. And it cannot be otherwise, the belief holds, among men and in men’s work.

I often talked with Hitler about this question. He was radically committed to that view. Even applied to economics, he saw in the struggle for assertion of self and for preeminence the surest guarantee for progress and the general weal.

Clearly he had conflicting feelings. He was a socialist and determined to remain one. But his inner attachment to nature led him time and again to observe and acknowledge as a law of nature the struggle for existence, the struggle to defeat the other.



“But that is liberalism, pure and simple,” I told him on the occasion of one such discussion. “Man has been thinking and acting this way for two thousand years. With this watchword he overcame absolutism and created the system that today we call democracy, which put an end to the struggle of the individual for economic and spiritual freedom. But it is exactly this economic freedom that created new autocracies, in the factories and the large concerns, where the workers and clerical personnel were turned even more directly into slaves than they ever had been under the scepter of a feudal lord.”

“I know myself,” he answered, “that here is an intersecting point in the lines of my natural feelings and my logical and historical perception. In our program, we have even given expression to this hurdle by coining the maxim, ‘public need before private greed.’ Individual striving—yes, individual acquisitiveness—is the driving force that animates the world and the economy and that has engendered all major inventions and discoveries. If we eliminate it, the drive slackens and progress stagnates. But to stand still is to regress.

“That is why we must preserve this driving force, we must nurture it, even reward it! We must take this striving, which is in itself selfish, and place it in the service of all, in the service of the whole nation—yes, perhaps in time in the service of all mankind.”

“If you believe [Wagener replied] that mankind can be trained to this end without very far-reaching interventions by the state, then, I believe, you have too high an opinion of mankind. Man’s aspirations are evil—we should say, selfish—from childhood; the Bible tells us something of the sort. Perhaps Christ was one of the first to contrast man’s liberalistic attitude with the socialist stance. But his teachings, which can still be found in pure and noble form in St. Paul and others, soon became falsified, even turned upside down, and little of Christianity remains in the churches that use its name today.”

“I know that, Wagener. I’m quite clear on that point. But perhaps it is easier to preach and find prophets for a socialism that corresponds to Marxist ideas or present-day communism than for the synthesis of reason that has the goal of putting the given traits of humanity in the service of the people.

“For if we permitted our Gauleiter and speakers to preach pure socialism of the customary order, we would be doing nothing different from the Bolsheviks. In that case, we would not have to do battle with them. But what we want is precisely to keep this destructive Bolshevism, which annihilates culture and economy, from taking further root, so that it destroys our life as well!

“**Communism results in a welfare state where the standards are averaged downward.** We want a state that allows for free development of the personality, but in the last analysis, this must also be for the needs of the people—that is, in the service of the community, where the standard is to be raised as high as possible, and then higher yet.

“This state, however, can come into being only in the fight for existence, in a competitive struggle that is as free as possible, connected purely and simply to

the promotion of the commonweal—that is, gain for all: for the Volk community, for humanity.

“You see, that’s what doesn’t quite make sense to me in your plans for economic organization, for a system of economic self-administration. It is too likely that these economic councils, this multiplicity of opinion, this chaos of interests, might inhibit, or even stifle, the development of individuality and personal initiative. This structure is necessary for the present, as long as the economy is in a slump, as long as millions of people cannot find work, as long as systematic state control of the economy must occur just to bring it back to full production. But the closer we come to normal times, the more the shackles and restraints that hinder the free play of the natural struggle must be loosened. The state must be, not a nursemaid, but the incarnation of the ethical conscience of a people and of each individual.”

I frequently heard Hitler voice this lofty concept. But most of the time, I was more likely to understand it as a religious statement of faith rather than judge it as a political party program.

For always when one sought its practical application to any economic or other basic question, one arrived *either* at the socialistic *or* the liberalistic solution. At the time, it always seemed to me—and it seems to me still—that corporatist political and economic self-administration was the most organic and most reliable means of finding the synthesis between the two basic directions, to control and oversee their collaboration, and to facilitate their mutual complementarity.

*Wagener goes on to describe how he founded a party newspaper, the National-Zeitung, in Essen, which first appeared in December 1930. He reports receiving encouragement and guidance from Reismann-Grone of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung (who later became the first Nazi mayor of Essen) and financial help from a wealthy party comrade in Dortmund. Hitler regarded the paper so highly, Wagener relates, that he soon installed one of its two chief editors, Reismann-Grone’s son-in-law Otto Dietrich, as party press secretary.*

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## Göring in Toga and Turkish Slippers—His Claim to Funds from Ruhr Industry

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**W**agener then tells of receiving an invitation from Göring to visit him when next in Berlin. Not having seen Göring since the 1929 Party Congress, Wagener was very curious about him and his relationship with Hitler. On his next trip to the capital, he therefore had Martin Bormann arrange for him to call at Göring's fifth-floor apartment in Schöneberg, a fashionable district of Berlin.

When the elevator let me off upstairs and I rang the bell, a young man opened the door and led me into a very cosily furnished room with many rugs, comfortable seating, a divan heaped with pillows under a canopy that also extended over a small table which, with two armchairs and the divan, formed an attractive grouping. Two pictures on the wall seemed to portray ancestors; some prints in gold frames and a landscape further adorned the walls. I took a chair by the window after it became clear that some time would pass before Göring arrived.

Then the folding doors at the right, leading to an adjoining room, opened, and Göring came toward me, wearing a red dressing gown, his feet in red slippers with turned-up toes, such as were worn in the harems of old Turkey. His corpulence actually did give him the semblance of a sultan—or a eunuch.

I was somewhat taken aback and forced to laugh—and I said to Göring: “Apparently I’m a little early. Please take your time and finish dressing. I don’t mind waiting, and perhaps you won’t object if I light up a cigar.”

Göring grew somewhat embarrassed, but only for an instant. Then he replied:

“Oh, I’ll stay as I am. I enjoy wearing this toga.”

But, as I now realized, this toga was a very ordinary dressing gown—though its color was an unusual one for men. And looking at the red slippers, on which I noticed, besides the sharply upturned toes, gold-brocaded buckles that looked

almost like pom-poms, I got the feeling that I had been mistaken when I assumed that Göring had not finished dressing.

“May I ask you to join me in my den,” Göring continued, leading me into the adjoining room, where he offered me an armchair which, together with a second one, was placed before a massive desk, where he himself sat down, facing me.

My amazement continued to grow. This room was also furnished in extraordinary taste. Basically it was done in a rich scarlet. The desk, the chairs, and above all the paneling were designed in a heavy Renaissance style of brown stained oak, which allowed the red to glow through only occasionally. The wall behind the massive desk chair was finished off with an open wall of books. Immediately behind the chair, however—that is, at the center of the wall—the bookshelves were interrupted for perhaps a meter and a quarter. A huge sword hung on the scarlet cloth of the wall covering—a sword such as is normally depicted in old church paintings as worn by the archangel Gabriel, the kind of two-handed sword wielded by the old knights.

On the plate rail at the upper edge of the wall covering and the bookcase stood twenty to thirty photographs of well-known people, all personally signed. There were pictures of the Kaiser; of the Crown Prince; of the King of Bavaria; of the Bavarian Crown Prince; of Hindenburg; of Ludendorff; of the famous flying ace von Richthofen, whose squadron Göring had taken over after von Richthofen had plunged to his death; of other officers; and finally a large portrait of Mussolini and Starace,<sup>1</sup> as well as photos of the King of Italy and Crown Prince Umberto.

On the desk, right in front of the chair, lay a thick book and a container, clearly meant to hold pens and pencils. The principal decorations on the desk were a large photograph of Carin Göring and a sizable old-fashioned clock.<sup>2</sup> To the right and the left were two large candelabra with thick candles, over a meter high, both of them burning as I stepped into the room.

The desk and the space behind it were slightly raised on a dais, so that, if one sat on the other side of the desk, one had to look upward while Göring, as if from a throne, looked down from a little way above.

The window was half covered by a cardinal-red drape, muting the light in the room and exerting a mood that was sure to put most people under its spell—but that was also likely to make anyone a little more knowledgeable of the world hesitate between admiration and wry amusement.

On this throne, softly illuminated by candlelight, Göring sat in overpowering corpulence, clad in his red wrapper and Turkish slippers.

I felt as if I were in the cell of a mental patient.

After sitting down, Göring opened the thick ledger that looked like a Bible

1. Achille Starace was secretary of the Italian Fascist Party.

2. Carin Göring, a Swedish woman who had divorced her first husband, married Göring in 1922.

and picked up a fat red pencil, about fifty centimeters long, its tip possibly adorned with a coronet.

Then he began to talk. His speech sounded like a supreme court judge exhorting a delinquent. I listened for a while, then I took a cigar from my case, stood up, tried to light it at one of the tapers—a move that miscarried, unfortunately, because I could not reach that high—and then sat down on the broad arm of my chair, so that I was raised slightly higher than Göring. He watched my activities without a word, then he pushed a heavy brass ashtray about thirty centimeters in diameter toward me and invited me to sit back down. But when I answered, smiling, that I would stay where I was, since I was accustomed to sitting somewhat higher than the people with whom I was talking, the blood rushed to his head, turning his face beet red, and his eyes shot poisonous darts up at me.

He made a notation in his book with the red pencil and then resumed speaking. But I realized that I had disconcerted him. For his speech was somewhat rambling—and surely not carefully thought out, either.

“I am not a socialist. I never was and never will be. But I am a nationalist—a determined, unyielding nationalist! And that is another reason why I saw to it that in the Reichstag we occupy *those* seats where *I* belong.”<sup>3</sup>

“What is meant by ‘Workers’ Party’? Are *you* a worker? Are you trying to tell me that, as a former member of the general staff, as an industrialist, as a rich man, you identify with the workers? *I*, for my part, make no such claim.”

My astonishment grew and grew. What was the point of this conversation? What did Göring hope to gain by it? Surely he could not be spouting idle chitchat.

“It is a major error on Hitler’s part,” he continued, “that he believes he has to base his movement on the workers. How do I elicit storms of applause and jubilant ovations when I speak? Surely not by saying that the workers ought to earn five pfennigs an hour more, but rather by proclaiming that we want to free Germany from the chains of Versailles, that we want to raise it back to the position of a great power, respected and envied by the world! Once we have achieved that, then the worker will automatically get his additional five pfennigs, and probably *more* than that.

“But perhaps it’s not a bad idea for Hitler to beat the socialist drum. *I* beat the nationalist one. He attracts the troops, the masses, for me to use.

“Do you think that the Duce or the King of Italy would receive a workers’ leader and take him seriously? A trade-union secretary? But a man who knows how to hold high policy in his strong hands—the policy of a great new Germany, which will be and must be decisive for all of Europe—that is the man they receive, *that* is the man with whom they hold discussions, he is the one

3. Göring decided to have the Nazi Reichstag deputies occupy seats on the far right of the chamber after the 1930 election, a choice that occasioned some dissension in the party.

with whom they are prepared to investigate the bases for a new arrangement and distribution of power in Europe.”

*Wagener then relates how Göring took an Italian newspaper—he remembered it as the Corriere della sera—from a drawer and read from an article in Italian and then provided a rough translation for Wagener. The article, which had appeared on the occasion of a visit by Göring to Rome, portrayed him as the coming man in Germany, for whom the NSDAP was merely a tool. According to Wagener, the article also reported that Göring had received a medal from King Victor Emanuel III on the occasion of his visit. This is, however, an obvious mistake, since prior to 1933 the King of Italy would scarcely have bestowed a medal upon a prominent figure in an oppositional party dedicated to destruction of the German Republic, with which Italy enjoyed good relations. Since Göring had, however, mixed with Italian court circles since 1924, it is not improbable that he would have boasted to Wagener about his contacts with the ruling house. The visit to Rome to which Göring referred was most likely the one he made in May 1931.*

He refolded the newspaper and carefully replaced it in the drawer. Then, his gaze directed at me, he said, “*They* know how to judge Hitler—and they’re well aware that there’s someone else in Germany!”

I was completely baffled. So that’s Göring, the man who has so much influence over Hitler! But he’s nothing but a criminal! Or—my eyes fell on the red toes of his slippers, which I could see under the desk—or, I thought, is he ready for the lunatic asylum? Perhaps—that thought, too, crossed my mind—he is testing me. But he had been deadly serious as he read from the *Corriere della sera*. And even now he was looking at me with a triumphant expression. I tried to change the subject by remarking:

“Do you consider it advisable for a reawakened Germany to cement its first friendship with the very people and the particular king who broke earlier treaties to stab us in the back during the Great War?”

“Italy was not interested in making war on *us* but on Austria,” Göring objected.

“But Austria, too, was a member of the Triple Alliance.”

“At the time, Austria was already done for. After Franz Josef, its dissolution was overdue.”

“But surely the Triple Alliance was intended to be an alliance of trust.”

“History frequently disregards even pacts of fidelity [Göring answered]. When one member dies, the thing that matters is no longer fidelity but the inheritance.”

“So this becomes a Middle European question, in which Italy could take part even if it did *not* break its treaties beforehand. And besides, the question was never one to be solved *in opposition to us*, but always and only *with us*.”

“And Italy realizes that. That is why it is seeking a connection with the new Germany.”

“But such a joining of interests between Germany and Italy, which in time might also include Austria—the new, small Austria—besides Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and perhaps Poland as well: wouldn’t that bring England on the scene?”

“But that’s just it! England is our enemy [Göring replied]. The World War weighs on its conscience, and it will flare up *again* when *we* grow stronger. But if we dispute its right to the Mediterranean by Italy’s building a fleet that is stronger than the English Mediterranean squadron, and if we threaten Malta by means of Italy, and perhaps some day Gibraltar by means of Spain, and the Suez Canal by means of Egypt, then we’ll see whether England stays on its high horse, where it still feels secure.”

“But Italy has no war potential whatever. It has no coal, no wood, no iron, no ore—it has none of those things that are required if a state intends to build and maintain a strong war fleet of its own. And besides, the Italian is no soldier, neither on sea nor on land. There is not even a single battle in modern history in which an Italian army was victorious over another country’s.”

“But there is no war in which, in the end, Italy was not on the side of the victors!”

“Precisely! If there was no other way, then by treachery!”

Göring was silent for a moment. My seat on the arm of the chair became uncomfortable. That is why I rose to my feet, but then I sat back properly in the chair. Göring continued in resignation:

“But with whom should we conclude alliances? England, France, Poland, Russia—which of these countries is available to us? Only Italy might be prepared for such a step. For it received nothing of what the others had promised in exchange for its entry into the war.”

“Against us! And now you want to help it to its reward!”

Göring fell silent again. I had the impression that he was growing tired, as if he were suddenly losing buoyancy, as if our conversation had particularly exhausted him. Then he said calmly:

“Actually, I meant to talk to you about quite other matters. I suggest that we get to our topic. By the way, do you have time to lunch with me?”

I declined, though I had no other engagement. I would have to spend some time by myself first, to think about everything that had happened to me this morning. But there were to be still more surprises.

“Please excuse me a moment,” Göring said as he went to the door. I almost felt as if he were staggering. In any case, his hands lightly felt along the edge of the table before he reached for the doorknob.

I was left alone for five minutes. But I could not organize my thoughts. What was it that I had just witnessed? Had Pfeffer, had Strasser or Buch ever experienced a similar interview? Impossible. They would have told me. They would

have told Hitler as well. And why was Göring saying these things to me? I got no further in my thinking.

Göring returned. His expression had changed again. His eyes looked large and shining as, staring at the window, he walked past me, apologizing once more for having left me. I noticed that his pupils were very small—tiny. And this gave his gaze a piercing element that had not been so clearly evident to me before. Only later—though, coincidentally, it was that very same evening—was I reminded that Göring was a morphine addict. I therefore assume that he left the room to give himself another injection. That would also explain his overall behavior, which I only understood after the second part of our conversation was ended.

He began anew.

“I hear that you intend founding a newspaper in the Ruhr district.”

I nodded.

“You realize that you will need money—a great deal of money.”

I nodded again.

“And perhaps you are thinking that the easiest way to raise it is from the major industrialists in the district itself.”

“Perhaps I could do that. But I do not want to. *Any other* party comrade can more readily allow himself to be financed by the Ruhr industrialists than I can, if I intend to lead the party’s economic and social policy.”

“You see, that is what I think, too. But you’ve already accepted fifty thousand marks from the Ruhr people.”

“You’re referring to the advance for repairs to the printing shop of the *Bergwerks-Zeitung*?”

“I don’t know what the official purpose was. I only know that you received it.”

“And why does that matter to you?” I asked.

“I intend speaking openly to you. I require money for my travels, for my appearances, for myself, but also for jobs within the party and the Reichstag delegation. Every politician needs reliable financing. If it is lacking, or if it is not assured, then politics suffers, political work suffers, the politician’s freedom to act suffers. That is why I secured the Ruhr, the mining industry and heavy industry, as a financial source for myself. What money is given to the Gaue of Westphalia North and Westphalia South, to Essen and Düsseldorf, doesn’t concern me. Those are smaller sums. But all the large amounts come to me. That has been my agreement with the Ruhr people. And so far, all has gone off without a hitch.

“So the fifty thousand marks you were given for your newspaper had been earmarked for me. The money was already put aside. I was expecting it to be transferred. Now it will not be sent. Can you imagine the position you have put me in? I am renovating a house here on Bismarckstrasse, two floors, as a suitable residence for myself, where I can hold receptions and give parties. The



architects are waiting for their money. For the fifty thousand marks! And now, the money will not be forthcoming.

“I believe that my representation of the rising new Germany is more important than another newspaper! Even though I admit that a great deal could be achieved, even for me, by a good, new newspaper in the Ruhr district!

“But I also use the money I receive from the Ruhr to finance Hitler—him personally, and occasionally the party as well.”

And then it flashed through my mind! So *there* is the root of Göring’s power position with Hitler! *That* is the reason for Göring’s occasional flying visits to Munich and Hitler’s to Berlin. *That* is the reason he was kept away from me? That is why any mention of Göring was avoided in conversations with me. And that is the basis of Göring’s influence over Adolf Hitler!

“I am speaking to you in confidence. No one else needs to know. Nor do I ever tell Hitler where the money comes from.”

He was silent for a moment. Since I said nothing, he resumed.

“Now you’ll upset my plans and Hitler’s financing if you begin to make use of the Ruhr as a source of financing for yourself as well.”

“That’s quite out of the question for me,” I interrupted. “These fifty thousand marks were not even given to *me*; rather, they are being built into the printing plant—which, after all, is owned by the mining industry itself. And it was only a loan!

“If the donors name me as the recipient, as I infer they did from what you said, this is quite incorrect, and I shall rectify it at once. Personally I do not *need* financing—and I would refuse it even if I did need it. I would simply work or write books. My views on this matter differ from yours. A politician who does not stand on his own two feet financially is not making policy freely, in the interest of the Volk—that is, the totality—but implements the policies of his donors.”

“What party is not financed by one group or another? Where is a party to get the means for its organization, for its work, and especially for an election campaign? Let’s forget the question. Not everyone is in the same fortunate position as you seem to be, able to make a hobby of politics.”

“I do not *engage* in politics for pleasure [Wagener replied], but from a deep sense of duty and the realization of the responsibility that can overtake a person who by chance—or perhaps by Providence—happened to be drawn into the world of politics and who sees that he can no longer be allowed to withdraw.”

“I did not mean it that way. But *you* will return to your business or go elsewhere if someday you should give up your political career. Most politicians do not have that choice. For them, *politics* has become their *profession*.”

“Then they cannot be political leaders, that’s all; rather, they are the hirelings of political leaders, flunkies who carry out orders. And the actual political leadership is exerted by the member or the committee of an industrialists’ association that has the signatory power for the political-support funds.”

Göring made a gesture as if to dismiss the topic, and in an altered tone he said:

“I would therefore like to request that we come to some agreement to the effect that, now as before, the Ruhr will not be used by anyone else for purposes of financing, aside from local contributions and donations, but that, now as before, I am the only one who requests and accepts subventions from that source for the party and for Hitler, as well as for additional purposes—which in the last resort, after all, are also political purposes. Should your newspaper need money at some future time, it’s quite in line with your own philosophy for you to receive such sums from me and not directly from the Ruhr businessmen.”

“As I have already told you, I would never consider that. So you will never find me poaching on your preserve.”

“I’m very grateful to you for your promise.” He spoke with evident relief. “But I do have another question. Through whom did you receive the recent fifty thousand marks? With whom did you conduct your negotiations?”

“First with Herr von Loewenstein, the secretary general of the mining association, and then, at his suggestion, with a Dr. Grauert in Düsseldorf, whose precise title I do not know.”<sup>4</sup>

Göring made a note of the names.

“I’m glad,” he repeated once more, “that we are in agreement. I will report it to Hitler as well, so that there is no need for you to speak to him about this matter. He, too, prefers and is obliged to take the view that he does not accept money from industry or businessmen. That is another reason I hold his finances in my hands.”

In parting, Göring invited me to come to see him again the next time I was in Berlin.

As I left the room and the building, I felt as if someone had hit me over the head with a wooden mallet.

4. Hans von Loewenstein was manager of the principal organizations of the Ruhr coal industry, the Bergbauverein and the Zechenverband. Ludwig Grauert was manager of the chief employers’ association of the Ruhr iron and steel industry.

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## Hitler's Weakness at the Hands of Intriguers—His Relationship with Göring—Hitler: Social Reorganization Must Await the Takeover of Full State Power

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Göring had long since recognized that Hitler was so naive that he saw only what was good in others. He could see the bad only when it was obvious; but even then, he judged it as bad only if it limited or damaged the freedom of his thoughts and the pursuit of his aims. When someone else called his attention to something bad, he generally began by refusing to believe it—unless, that is, he was reminded at the same time that it was specifically in opposition to his own thoughts and goals. When this was not the case, the matter did not usually bother him; he excused the failing as a human foible.

When it seemed to him worth determining whether a claim was based on fact, he generally spoke to the person in question about it—and he named the person who had made the allegation. In the case of Brückner, I had personal experience of this method, as well as in the case of Röhm; and many other instances had been related to me.

This trait could be interpreted as the expression of a sense of justice on Hitler's part. But that was not necessarily what it was. Rather, Hitler never stopped to consider that his actions were turning the two people in question against each other and that the accused would naturally refuse to shoulder the blame, refuse to admit anything, instead leveling accusations of his own against the attacker. So, in the end, the victory went to whichever of the two was better at making the other look bad or at casting aspersions or who was better at persuading Hitler. If someone managed to arouse suspicion that his opponent held Hitler in low esteem or that he was working against Hitler's best interests and his views, his game was won.

Hitler had to have special reasons to give up his method of direct inquiry. A clever schemer who, aware of this, from the outset laid the mines that would

keep Hitler from personally checking out his stories could therefore inject his poison even without Hitler's granting the other party the right to speak. I learned subsequently, for example, that on various occasions Göring reported to Hitler that he—Göring—enjoyed so much trust in the party and most especially within its national executive that everything that happened was reported to him. Göring insisted that Hitler must know this, for he could be quite certain that Göring learned everything that might at one time or another be intended to injure Hitler's person and his aims. Göring would always report this to him. But Hitler would have to keep such information in the strictest confidence, since otherwise attention would be aroused and discussions would be moved out of the office, thus jeopardizing Göring's news-gathering system.

No doubt this point was one of Hitler's great weaknesses. He did not see through any scheming—not Göring's and not others'. He had grown up in too small a world, he had spent too long with people like himself, and he had used his time too exclusively for learning and reading in the scientific and specialized literature to even begin to suspect in life its malevolence, its weaknesses, its falseness, and its devilry. He remained naive about people.

But at the same time he was wary and distrustful. That may well have been the characteristic of a genius who went unrecognized for a time. But Hitler had also learned it from history. He was fascinated by the assassination of Caesar, with breathless zeal he studied the history of Queen Elizabeth of England. The means by which Napoleon secured his power, the era of Peter the Great and subsequently of the two Catherines: he absorbed all that and saw the same daggers and the same methods directed against himself—although, on the other hand, he did not think anyone capable of such behavior. It was precisely this that made him unsure and suspicious.

Thus he lapsed into the habit of lending greater credence to and feeling more comfortable with *those* who agreed with whatever he said, who had no minds of their own nor were intent on voicing their own ideas, and who even warned him against others and urged caution toward them. For, so he believed, they were acting this way solely for his sake and could not have any real personal motives.

Once, when I told him that we should try to attract the best minds, the great personalities, in order to have their assistance in the awesome task whose fulfillment Providence might demand of us, he replied, "Too many cooks spoil the broth. These best minds, these great personalities, all have their own individual attitudes, their own will and their own aims. In this I side with Ptolemy—I think it was the First or the Second—who was once asked how he managed to prevail and deal with all the opponents with whom he had to reckon. At the time he was out walking and passed a poppy field. He took his whip or his riding crop and slashed off the heads of the poppies that rose above the otherwise very evenly grown field. 'That,' he said to his questioner, 'is how

I do it.' By the way, I once found the same anecdote told somewhere about the Eastern Roman Emperor Septimius Severus."

At the time, I could not help but think of the case of Pfeffer and, as I am writing this, of Strasser, of myself, of Röhm. What a brilliant fraud Göring must be, not to have been broken by the whip.

Even if, at the time, this way of proceeding on Hitler's part was not yet understood in wider circles, Hess and Schaub—who, after all, controlled access to Hitler—nevertheless tried to keep from him those people whose tendency to scheming was evident. By the same token, more than one decent person refrained from speaking up when he detected genuine faults and weaknesses, which it was necessary to eliminate, in someone else who belonged to the party. Conversely, a reckless schemer could manage to greatly prejudice Hitler against someone else, without the truth of his assertion being tested.

However, for the sake of truth, I must stress the fact that, until the end of 1930, aside from that instance when Göring warned against the growing power of the SA and agitated against Pfeffer, I witnessed or heard nothing of the sort. Since everything proceeded well, since all of us were inspired by the same goal and the same interests, schemes did not develop. Everyone was kept busy with himself and his own task and concerned himself little with the others. Only much later did this sort of thing become much more widespread—actually, not until just before the seizure of power and especially afterward.

*Wagener continues with reflections on Göring's influence over Hitler. He attributed it in part to Göring's ability to raise money. Unlike most men who gained political power after an impoverished youth, Hitler attached no importance to obtaining money for his personal use, according to Wagener. But he esteemed those, like Göring, who could find money for the party. The trouble with Göring, in Wagener's estimation, was that he was a nationalist but not a socialist. Once, Wagener relates, he relayed to Hitler an acquaintance's prediction that the dynamism of Nazism would find its expression only in nationalism, since the National Socialists were unwilling to tear down the existing socio-economic order in order to make way for a new one. Hitler responded as follows.*

"But the nationalistic upsurge of this dynamic is, in any case, necessary if we are to achieve full power in our own country! Until we have shaken off the chains of Versailles, the restrictions, the occupations, the reparations and contributions, as well as our opponents' right to intervene in even the most internal of matters—until that is achieved, we can't even commence with the replacement of economic liberalism with socialism. Whatever happens before then is half-baked shoddy work—it can only be!

"But *from that time on* we can rebuild, foundation by foundation, storey by storey. I wouldn't be an architect if I didn't know it is possible. But we must, in

political terms, have *complete* authority: total political power. Otherwise, it naturally won't work. There can be no compromises there."

*Wagener then observes that, whereas Hitler regarded nationalism as the means to the end of socialism, Göring looked upon nationalism as an end in itself. He reports finding Göring quite candid about this. On one occasion, Göring said to him:*

"I realize that I can easily face a dilemma if people want to talk with me about economic questions. But I evade that—yes, I turn them away. I answer: Until the political questions are resolved, it is pointless to discuss economic problems. We must not fragment our strength. Everything must be mobilized to free Germany from its political chains. Once that is done, the economic chains will, in any case, cease to bind."

And when I pointed out to him the danger, for that later time, of financial dependency upon the Ruhr, he replied:

"Once we have the government in our hand, we won't need such financing any more. I'll shake off these people then, just as Napoleon shook off the bourgeoisie when he had progressed far enough to place the imperial crown on his own head."

*Wagener closes this section by recalling that he decided, upon reflection, to remain in the party and fight against Göring's influence rather than depart and leave the field free for him to dominate Hitler. He eventually lost his battle, he notes.*

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## Hitler's Finances—He Defends Göring—Henriette Hoffmann as “Ballerina to the King”—Approaches to Italy

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Some days later, I called on Reich Treasurer Schwarz in order to breach the question as unobtrusively as possible of how Hitler was actually being financed.

At first he refused to discuss the subject with me. Not, he said, because he had any secrets to keep, but because Hitler himself had always refused to discuss the question with Schwarz.

But then he did grow somewhat more communicative and told me that Hitler's only source of income consisted of the royalties from his book, *Mein Kampf*, the exact figures being, however, known only to the Eher publishing house, and there only to Amann himself.<sup>1</sup>

“But surely that sum cannot suffice to cover rent, food, car, driver, escort, and then the constant hotel stays in addition,” I demurred.

Schwarz replied that he himself had frequently brought the matter up with the Chief—as the old party members in Munich were still calling Hitler—and that he had suggested that Hitler let a specified monthly sum be paid to him out of the party coffers.

“But every time, he rejected the idea, with outright disapproval. Party contributions, the Chief said, should be for the party organization, for the party's combat missions, and for the party headquarters, as well as for other party activities, and they should cover the salaries and wages of those men who were needed to direct the party apparatus and keep it functioning. He, as the leader of the party, could not and would not claim for his own use so much as a penny of the contributions which many a poor, perhaps even unemployed party comrade had scraped and scrimped to give.

1. Max Amann had been the director since 1922 of the Nazi Party publishing house, Eher Verlag.

"But I assume," Schwarz continued, "that the Eher publishing house compensates the Chief for the editorials he writes—which he does frequently, sometimes under an assumed name—as is customary in the newspaper world."

"All the same, that cannot be enough," I insisted. "Might it not be a good idea to try to speak to Hitler again about starting a special-purpose fund, 'Chief,' which would be earmarked exclusively for him?"

"He is sure to refuse."

"He must be getting the means he needs from *somewhere*. Surely it is better for you, as treasurer, to supervise his funds than for Hitler to allow some financier or other to give him money, so that in time he becomes dependent on them."

"I won't make another move in this matter," Schwarz said in a determined tone.

"Do you know how the profits of the *Völkischer Beobachter* are apportioned?"

"Since the *Völkischer Beobachter* does not own its own press but has a contract with another printing plant to produce it, the net profit is very small. The Eher publishing house is owned by the party. Party enterprises are generally known to be registered as a corporation, and Bouhler is the manager.<sup>2</sup> Profits are taxed according to the corporation tax laws. What is left is spent on expanding the enterprises, to support other newspapers, and, at the present time, for the acquisition and improvement of the building. The building is itself a kind of party enterprise.

"The tax authorities keep a sharp eye on our books. They would dearly love to catch us out just once. But they will find no cause. And that is why the Chief never wants to be recorded in the books."

I understood that I would get nowhere with Schwarz. I was unwilling to tell him the real reasons behind my questions. They were none of his business, after all.

Next, I turned directly to Hitler. It happened that Hitler himself furnished me with an opening. Shortly after my visit to Berlin, Göring came to Munich again. Once again he did not call on me. I only happened to hear of his visit from Schaub.

One afternoon, I was sitting with Hitler in his corner at the Café Heck at the Residenzgarten, where he spent many an afternoon. Suddenly he asked me:

"Tell me, did you know Göring before?"

I told him that during the years 1908 to 1910, I had seen him as a cadet in Karlsruhe a few times. But you could hardly call that "knowing." Except for

2. Philipp Bouhler, business manager of the NSDAP since 1925, headed the Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Arbeiter-Verein, e.V., the non-profit corporation in whose name the material holdings of the party were registered.



that, I had first laid eyes on him in Nuremberg at the party congress, and just recently I had looked him up in Berlin.

"That I've got *that* man is surely a piece of great good fortune," Hitler commented. "Do you know his wife?"

"No."

A little hesitant and reflective, Hitler continued:

"Providence ordained it that way. She must be very wealthy, she must have millions."

"Oh," I threw out, "I had no idea. I always thought she was divorced and simply received child-support payments for her son Thomas, who also lives with Göring."

"No. She's a millionairess. I've seen a picture of the family castle. She's the Countess Something-or-other; I've forgotten the name.

"That's the reason I asked Göring to show himself in Berlin as much as possible. It makes a difference whether a man who is used to living well represents the party or whether it's Schaub or somebody. And without his wife's money, that would not be possible at all. Besides, she has relatives and friends in the circles that set the political tone, here and abroad. The woman is of special value to us."

"But surely he obtains some funds now and again from the Ruhr," I was roused to say, in order to lead the conversation gradually to the point where I wanted it.

"Yes, he was just telling me about that. It shows you what a position Göring has already gained among the most outstanding German businessmen that they ask *his* advice about supporting your Essen newspaper. In a way, you owe it to Göring that your newspaper got off the ground. And on that occasion, they also offered to put means at his disposal if the party requires anything."

I must have looked dumbfounded at these words.

Surprised, I stared at Hitler.

"Herr Hitler," I replied, "that is simply a false picture. Of course it represents support of the *National-Zeitung* of Essen that we were able to lease the printing shop of the *Bergwerks-Zeitung* and were given an advance loan to boot. But Göring has nothing to do with that! His only interest in the matter, as he told me himself, was that he had expected this sum of fifty thousand marks for his own purposes and that it was lost to him when it was made available to the newspaper."

At this point, Hitler interrupted. "Don't misunderstand me. I'm not reproaching anyone. Really, I think it's marvelous that the newspaper has received a printing press and money."

He must have missed the important part. And thus we were back on the wrong track. I would have to become even more blunt.

"As I heard from Göring himself, he allows himself to be financed by the Ruhr industry. So it is a matter, not of a new offer made to him, but of an old

custom. And if the party coffers—though I don't know that they do—or anyone else in the party receives money from Göring, then it is more likely to originate in those funds from the Ruhr industry than from Carin Göring's child-support payments!"

"And why shouldn't Göring also have received money from Ruhr industrialists? I don't ask any Gauleiter where he gets his funds, nor do I question Göring on the matter. But that his wife has access to millions, and that *he* has the use of that money, even at a time when it is quite certain that he received nothing from the Ruhr—I know more about that." And with this he picked up his newspaper again and lost himself in it. Schaub looked at me with almost lifeless eyes.

No further conversation took place that afternoon. We said brief good-byes, and Hitler's words expressed a deliberate coolness.

The following day Schaub said to me:

"Why on earth did you bring up such a topic? I have never concerned myself with that. I don't like Göring, either. But he does have money!"

"Schaub," I answered, "if he has money, that is still not proof that it comes from his fortune or that of his wife or that he got hold of it from some other source."

"Do you have to concern yourself with that? I don't care."

"But I do. For if Hitler is given money by Göring and it originated with the Ruhr industrialists, then in time there will be an end to our National Socialist goals. Because he who pays the piper calls the tune."

Schaub stared at me, as if he had not understood. Then he said, "I've never heard anything about the Chief getting money from Göring."

Here, too, I had reached a dead end.

Some days later, I was traveling with Hitler and, as usual, we spent the night in Nuremberg. We had not left until the afternoon, and we were planning to continue on to Weimar the following morning. After an outstanding performance of the opera *Carmen*, we were in the Deutscher Hof, eating, reading the papers, and chatting.

A young girl, about seventeen years old at the time, the daughter of Hoffmann, the photographer, was with us. She enlivened the conversation with her free and easy girlish prattle.

Hitler had already grown accustomed to having this very intelligent and spirited girl occasionally brought along by her father. He used the total distraction that lay in her lightheartedness and her gift for flighty conversation to get the better of the low point that set in during the evening hours after an exhausting day, much as most men usually tackle it with a couple of drinks or a card game. Then, when Fräulein Hoffmann went to bed around eleven o'clock, we would stay behind one or two hours more, in serious conversation. The "King's Ballerina" had already become an institution.<sup>3</sup>

3. This is an allusion to Frederick the Great's Italian ballerina; see n. 5, chapter 7.

I took advantage of the opportunity to steer the conversation back to Göring. This time, I intended to go about it differently. I told him that I had read an essay in a French newspaper in which National Socialism was labeled an imitation of Fascism and which cited Göring's visit to Mussolini as proof of the assertion.

"People are so stupid!" Hitler laughed. "What is the imitation supposed to consist of? Most of the time they say: the Fascist salute. They don't know anything about history. If they did, they would know that the Fascist salute—that is, the old Roman salute, dating from the imperial period—was really a Germanic salute. The Germanic people saluted in this manner in order to show that they were not holding any weapons, or that they had no intention of using them; that is, that they were coming in friendship. Tacitus, after all, described it down to the last detail, and he added that even at the time of Varus, the number of Germanic soldiers in the Roman legions was so large that the Roman armies used Germanic war whoops when they went on the attack.

"So we imitate nothing; rather, we return to the old customs. After all, the military custom of touching one's cap is simply another variant on this Germanic salute. The discipline of the mercenaries—who did not come into being until the late Middle Ages—requiring peacetime uniforms as well as armaments, called for a regulation on how to salute. Placing a hand against the head covering was a simpler solution than regulating at which angle and in which direction and with what motion of the elbow the old salute was to be executed. So, all we are doing is taking the hands away from the caps again!

"And what else are we supposed to be imitating? The SA is said to correspond to the Blackshirts. Here in Germany, we had civic militias, volunteer units, and other auxiliary organizations long, long before the Blackshirts were organized in Italy. I need only remind you of the Oberland Free Corps, the Technical Emergency Organization, the Stahlhelm, and so forth. The SA is a continuation of these various German organizations, but not an imitation of the Blackshirt troops.

"And what else are we supposed to have imitated?"

"Of course that's all nonsense," I said. "Mussolini or whoever may think so. But then, if Göring, representing our movement, turns up in Italy, it is natural that the world assumes we seek our model there."

"And if one of you were to take a trip to England, would our model then be supposed there? We cannot worry about what the world says at this moment. Besides: the more they concern themselves with us, the greater the propaganda that makes for us, even in our own country. The worst that can happen to a person, to a party, to a people is that it is ignored to death, that no one anywhere talks about it or reads about it.

"But that's the odd thing! Our political enemies at home and abroad are our best propagandists. Even if we make mistakes, the others make the error of not exclusively harping on our mistake but instead use it to pull into the mud everything they want to oppose about us. In this way, they arouse the rejection of all those who, while they also condemn the mistake, are not willing to let ill

be spoken of that which is positive and right, and which provides the high ideal that fulfills and inspires them.

“If those great thinkers who, even as they criticize, give themselves airs like Pharisees, fatuously casting their eyes toward the heavens in self-loving hypocrisy, proclaim, ‘We thank God that we are not like them!’—if only they knew how terribly stupid they are and how by their behavior they are performing precisely *our* work, they’d almost die of shame. But they are *so* stupid that they do not even realize it. May God preserve them for us! Without them, we would never attain power.”

“There is no doubt [said Wagener] that Göring’s visits to Mussolini and the King make us talked about. But they make him talked about as well.”

“Are you jealous?”

“Me? For heaven’s sake! How could I be jealous of the fact that someone chooses to visit that very people and that particular king among all others that betrayed Germany during the Great War?”

“Göring went to visit, not the King, but Mussolini! Mussolini had no part in that treason. He condemns it. Perhaps he is the man who is prepared to atone for it.”

I reflected for a moment. For I was still on the wrong road. Then I asked bluntly:

“Did Göring undertake the trip at your instigation?”

“He informed me beforehand that he would be going. He had an invitation from Mussolini.” Hitler spoke in a somewhat resigned manner.

“Strange that Mussolini is so interested in Göring. If he intended to establish contact with our movement, he really should have invited you.”

“Perhaps he would have considered that too official. He probably wanted to keep the meeting secret.”

“In that case, it is astonishing that it was precisely the Italian papers that turned Göring’s visit into such a sensation. Apparently, secrecy was not intended.”

Hitler said nothing. I therefore continued.

“And if the King wanted to express his or the Italian people’s sympathy for the National Socialist movement by bestowing a medal, then surely, once again, *you* were the first who should have been considered—”

Hitler interrupted:

“I would have refused the medal!”

“And I assumed as much. One does not accept a medal from someone who betrayed the German people!”

Again Hitler was silent. I noticed that something was happening inside him that kept him from giving me the reply that he would have considered appropriate. I therefore continued my questioning.

“So it isn’t that I am jealous, I simply hold a different opinion. And I am convinced, Herr Hitler, that you do also.”

“But what did Göring *want* with Mussolini and the King?”

“It would have been unwise to refuse an invitation,” Hitler replied calmly.

“And it would probably not have been possible. For this invitation to Göring can surely have been only a matter of prearrangement.”

“In what way, a prearrangement?”

“Otherwise, how would Mussolini have picked on Göring, of all people? He doesn’t work in the party’s national executive, he has no particular field of operation within the party. He is merely a Reichstag deputy. But so are others. There has to be someone who called Mussolini’s attention to Göring *and* perhaps to his desire to be received by Mussolini.”

“And who might that be?” Hitler asked.

“That’s just what I’m wondering. I only know that Göring spends quite a bit of time with the young manager of the Italian chamber of commerce in Berlin, who is said to be popular among the diplomatic corps because of his pretty wife, who is even younger than he is. Every three or four months, he goes back to Italy, and each time he must render a personal account to Mussolini about conditions in Germany.

“I can well imagine that on one such occasion, he talked about Göring and let it drop that by chance Göring would be traveling to Rome soon and would surely be prepared, should Mussolini extend an invitation, to pay a call at the Palazzo Venezia.

“That’s more or less how invitations come about among diplomats.”

At that Hitler said very drily:

“And how does that strike you?”

“It strikes me that such a diplomatic action may take place only after consultation with you or on instructions from you. When that is not done, *individual* aims and intentions are clearly present, even if it is no more than the intention of making oneself talked about. And after all, this intention was thoroughly satisfied.”

“What are you trying to say?”

“That at one blow, Göring has become the best-known man in the NSDAP at home and abroad. Until now no one had heard of him.”

“Wagener, I can’t help but think that there is a personal sensitivity speaking here.”

“That may well be. But there are no underlying personal motives, no jealousy, no envy, no injured ambition.

“Rather, I foresee three things that cannot be matters of indifference even to you and to the party, and thus to the German Volk.

“First: Göring is by no means the man in a position to represent the National Socialist German Workers’ Party.

“Second: By means of further extension of such diplomatic visits on Göring’s part, the German Volk and people abroad will come to consider him at least the second man in the party—a position he has never held and must never hold.

“And third: Göring’s visits to Rome—which took place without your consent and in spite of German feelings—pave the way for a rapprochement between Germany and Italy, which can have only—and exclusively—negative consequences for Germany.”

At this Hitler tossed his head and asked:

“What is it you have against Göring?”

“Perhaps I would have nothing against him if I did not feel that you have a great deal *for* him.”

“I’ll freely admit the latter. But I don’t understand your logic.”

“If he had no influence over you, I might not care about him. But since you value him, I raise objections about him. Chiefly, I am wondering about your reasons for bestowing such confidence on him.”

This indirect question obviously irked Hitler. He became somewhat more frosty and said:

“They are not so much reasons as feelings.”

“There are men who have a special talent for evoking feelings of liking, appreciation, even admiration by the way in which they *present themselves* and less by the way they *are*. Their natures are rather like those of confidence men.”

Indignant, Hitler countered:

“Do you call anyone who plays a part in politics or who wants to play such a part a confidence man? No politician is born to his occupation. The age of monarchy is past, the age of divine right, of determination by the location of someone’s cradle. The calcified institution of medieval feudal rule has made way for healthy democracy, the selection of the best among the broad mass of the Volk.”

Equally indignant, I parried and insisted:

“There’s no question about that. If I did not share your view that a people must govern itself and must elect its own leaders, I would not be sitting here with you. But until Germany becomes accustomed to this democratic institution, the wrong man can easily rise to the top! The Weimar constitution is still lacking the paragraphs that provide for a selection of the most capable men in helping to run the state. And because of this, the door is left wide open to swindlers.”

“The Volk has a very healthy democratic sense [Hitler replied]. Perhaps the Volk might have been spared quite a few disappointments if it had always elected its own leaders.

“Of course, the centuries-long habit of allowing itself to be governed has weaned it away from the thought—I’d say the natural duty—of elevating its own statesmen. Since the Roman occupation in Germany and Gaul, the healthy original Germanic idea of democracy has been lost, suppressed.

“The surest means to cure a Volk of democratic feeling and thinking has always and ever been despotism. To be sure, the Volk will then scream for

freedom, but it wants a leader who will capture this freedom for it! So it screams, not for democracy, but for leadership.

“For despotism must always be foreign to democratic aspirations. We’ve seen as much in the occupied Rhineland, in the Palatinate, in the Saar! If democratic principles had been followed there, the occupation authorities and the occupation troops would have had to put up with all sorts of things. But they were not willing to have that happen, nor would it have agreed with their intentions. But in this way they also suppress democracy. It is not possible to combine democracy and enemy occupation in one country. Enemy occupation provokes resistance, hatred, rebellion, and, as I said, the yearning for a strong personality that will send the enemy occupiers packing! But no democracy! Democracy under enemy occupation can arouse only those creatures who are prepared to become roundworms crawling around the enemy’s anus, spying out a chance to slip inside. But even then, all that happens is that they get as far as his excrement and are eliminated with it.

“Just look at those who are always in the forefront, the profiteers and the separatists! They claim to be representatives of the Volk, while in reality they are traitors to the Volk.

“So, in the occupied territories, we have suffered very considerable setbacks in our democratic ideas, and those who call themselves democratic are helot-like creatures who try to use the surrender of their democratic rights to obtain the favor of the enemy despots. But the true democrats are the others, who are harassed and persecuted by the enemy for that very reason.

“But, as I said, the Volk has a very healthy, natural, and correct sense of who can lead and who will mislead. It will march over the false leaders and follow the true ones, just as soon as the despotic conditions are at an end. And the longer the despotism lasts and the harsher it is, the stronger and more powerful will be the awakening that will help the democratic will of the Volk to gain victory.

“I too am a man of the Volk. My senses are just as natural, and therefore as correct, as those of the Volk. That is why I am not mistaken in Göring. I only need to see the way people acclaim him whenever he happens to make an appearance and deliver a speech anywhere.

“You believe that he is not the man to represent the National Socialist Workers’ Party? I hold the opposite opinion—that he is one of the most suitable men we could promote.

“You believe Göring should not be allowed to hold second place in the party? I believe that he will hold whatever position the vote of the Volk calls him to.

“And as far as the policy of rapprochement with Italy is concerned, rapprochement does not necessarily mean friendship, one visit to Rome by Göring is still far from entente, one medal bestowed by the King is still far from an alliance.

"I myself was born and raised in Austria, so that with my mother's milk and in school I absorbed a strong aversion to the macaroni eaters. And for the present, I see nothing but centers of friction between Italy and ourselves wherever the two nations' foreign policies touch: the Austrian question, the Tyrolian question, the question of Trieste.

"But just as we must seek a way of peaceably resolving with Poland the differences created by the crime of Versailles—and I believe, since the visit of Pilsudski's emissary, that we shall find it—so we must seek it with Italy. Göring's reports on his visits allow me to hope for success here as well.

"So let us drop the question of Göring. I will not allow personal animosities to deflect me from my line."

With this Hitler broke off our conversation and retired to his room.

I saw that I could not prevail against Göring by a simple conversation. He had already secured his position too well. I would have to look for other ways. And everything Hitler had replied to me was, as always, so clear, so correct, so irrefutable, that there was nothing I could say in opposition. It did not touch on the gist of the matter, however, but was beside the point.

I decided to pay another visit to Göring as soon as possible to get to know him better.

There was no mistake on my part concerning his character—I was quite certain of that. Perhaps I would have to wait until he showed a weakness to Hitler. In addition, I confided in Strasser and Buch, as well as in Pfeffer, who was spending most of his time in Berlin. But they, too, could not, at present, see a way to successfully attack Göring's position, nor were they willing to take on this difficult task.



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## Hitler on Christ and Socialism, Intellect, Knowledge, and Ability

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**I**n the next section, Wagener tells of his indignation at discovering, upon returning to Munich from a trip, that in his absence Darré's agricultural office had been separated from his own Economic Policy Section and made an independent part of Organizational Section II, which, under the leadership of Konstantin Hierl, was charged with laying plans for the policies of a Nazi government. Only the pleas of Strasser kept him from resigning in protest against such a major step's having been taken behind his back.

Wagener then tells of inviting to his office Gottfried Feder, the party's early economic theorist, whom Hitler had designated in *Mein Kampf* as the programmatic spokesman of the NSDAP. He portrays Feder as anxious to preserve his paramountcy in economic policy matters and concerned about Wagener's increasing stature in that area. From an associate who had accompanied Feder and was also an engineer, Wagener reports, he heard of their plans for solving Germany's energy problems. Through construction of numerous dams and hundreds, possibly thousands, of hydroelectric power plants, they proposed to harness great amounts of cheap energy from even the country's smaller and slower-moving rivers and thereby create many new employment opportunities. The hydrogen captured at the hydroelectric plants could without difficulty be transformed into gas for lighting and heating. The coal thus saved could then be transformed into gasoline. At the end of their conversation, Wagener writes, he believed he had achieved a *modus vivendi* with Feder.

Turning again to his efforts to arrive at economic and social policy guidelines for a future Nazi regime, Wagener recalls that his efforts in that direction found Hitler's full support. Nevertheless, he reports, Hitler refused to grant primacy to economics, regardless of what was involved.

"Socialism is a political problem. And politics is of no concern to the economy," he once said to me in the course of one of our conversations. "Socialism is a question of attitude toward life, of the ethical outlook on life of all who live together in a common ethnic or national space. Socialism is a *Weltanschauung*!

"But in actual fact there is nothing new about this *Weltanschauung*. Whenever I read the New Testament Gospels and the revelations of various of the

prophets and imagine myself back in the era of the Roman and late Hellenistic, as well as the Oriental, world, I am astonished at all that has been made of the teachings of these divinely inspired men, especially Jesus Christ, which are so clear and unique, heightened to religiosity. *They* were the ones who created this new worldview which we now call socialism, they established it, they taught it and they lived it! But the communities that called themselves Christian churches did not understand it! Or if they did, they denied Christ and betrayed him! For they transformed the holy idea of Christian socialism into its opposite! They killed it, just as, at the time, the Jews nailed Jesus to the cross; they buried it, just as the body of Christ was buried. But they allowed Christ to be resurrected, instigating the belief that his teachings, too, were reborn!

“It is in this that the monstrous crime of these enemies of Christian socialism lies! With the basest hypocrisy they carry before them the cross—the instrument of that murder which, in their thoughts, they commit over and over—as a new divine sign of Christian awareness, and allow mankind to kneel to it. They even pretend to be preaching the teachings of Christ. But their lives and deeds are a constant blow against these teachings and their Creator and a defamation of God!

*“We are the first to exhume these teachings! Through us alone, and not until now, do these teachings celebrate their resurrection! Mary and Magdalene stood at the empty tomb. For they were seeking the dead man! But we intend to raise the treasures of the living Christ!*

“Herein lies the essential element of our mission: we must bring back to the German Volk the recognition of those teachings! For what did the falsification of the original concept of Christian love, of the community of fate before God and of socialism lead to? By their fruits ye shall know them! The suppression of freedom of opinion, the persecution of the true Christians, the vile mass murders of the Inquisition and the burning of witches, the armed campaigns against the people of free and true Christian faith, the destruction of their towns and villages, the hauling away of their cattle and their goods, the destruction of their flourishing economies, and the condemnation of their leaders before tribunals, which, in their unrelenting hypocrisy, can only be described as blasphemous. That is the true face of those sanctimonious churches that have placed themselves between God and man, motivated by selfishness, personal greed for recognition and gain, and the ambition to maintain their high-handed willfulness against Christ’s deep understanding of the necessity of a socialist community of men and nations. We must turn all the sentiments of the Volk, all its thinking, acting, even its beliefs, away from the anti-Christian, smug individualism of the past, from the egotism and stupid Phariseism of personal arrogance, and we must educate the youth in particular in the spirit of those of Christ’s words that we must interpret anew: love one another; be considerate of your fellow man; remember that each one of you is not alone a creature of God, but that you are all brothers! This youth will, with loathing and contempt,

abandon those hypocrites who have Christ on their lips but the devil in their hearts, who give alms in order to remain undisturbed as they themselves throw their money around, who invoke the Fatherland as they fill their own purses by the toil of others, who preach peace and incite to war!

“If we want to see the reasons for any war, we need only glance at the measures taken by the victor after the suppression of his adversary and to which, usually with hypocritical mien, he gives the name of ‘peace treaty’! By this, too, we can judge his Christianity!

“Let us take the World War: appropriation of the German merchant marine, exploitation of the total German economy for reparations, and enslavement of the German Volk through forced labor for decades to come! What we see is that the elimination, the destruction of purely economic competition was the purpose of the war! And accompanying this, the hypocritical litany: blame for the war lies solely and alone with Germany and German militarism! Yet surely every single German can stand before God and confess: I feel free from all guilt.

“Let us take the War of 1866 by contrast: Austria’s withdrawal from the Germanic Confederation—and nothing more! In this case, we see, it was not a matter of economic competition, of the enslavement of a people! Rather, it concerned only the exclusion of the Austrian imperial family from the Reich, whose life and unity was hampered by this same family.

“Or let us take the War of 1870: the return of Alsace-Lorraine, which had been stolen from the Reich during its time of weakness, the payment of five billion francs, which France was able to hand over within the year—nothing more! It was not a matter of economic destructiveness, of the enslavement of the French people. Rather, it was purely a matter of putting out of action the adversary who was intent on preventing the reestablishment of the unified German Reich.

“And that is why there need be no hypocrisy about 1866 and 1870! The peace treaties were true peace treaties, and the question of guilt did not arise.

“These are the Christians whom it is important to unmask, whom our youth must learn to recognize in order to grow strong for all time against the foreign lie and against the perfidy that conceals the poisoned dagger under a cloak studded with the emblems of the Christian churches.

“You see, Wagener: our mission is not an economic one. Of course, the economy and its ethics must also be adapted to the conditions of this socialism. I agree with all your plans. But they are not primary. To fill the Volk with the reborn faith and the Weltanschauung of Him who once before was a savior in the peoples’ deepest hour of need—that is primary! And since the old people are usually inextricably enmeshed in their economic interests and egotistical petty shopkeepers’ mentality, we can, in the main, seek support only from the young people. It is youth that will once more conquer the true kingdom of heaven for its Volk and for all mankind!”

Hitler reiterated these ideas whenever there was discussion of economic

problems that he considered correct and worthwhile but nevertheless not crucial. Therefore, in hiring and training my staff, I not only looked for professional and intellectual aptitude, but also tested and determined their ethical and temperamental attitudes.

“Intellect!” Hitler exclaimed when we spoke about the difficulties of making these choices. “What is it, anyway! If you take a close look, it is the atrophy of natural instinct.

“Intellect has nothing whatever to do with human intelligence and knowledge, much less with ability. Most people confuse them. Of course one can simply give a different meaning to a word. Just as things and objects are often given a different meaning. Who, in speaking of a soldier’s, an officer’s epaulets, remembers that originally the term referred to a covering of the shoulders made of iron or steel, to protect against enemy sword blows? Or the braid at the collar and cuffs—that it used to be the buttonhole ornamentation? I believe that hardly any generals are aware that the golden embroidery on their collars has such prosaic origins. Or when we find the pentacle on horsebarns and cowbarns in the country, generally right in the middle, over the door. The farmers say that it’s protection against illness and epidemics. Who remembers that it was the alchemists’ sign for a quicksilver solution that was already prescribed in ancient Egypt, three thousand years before our reckoning, against leprosy and against syphilitic diseases, and also against infectious influenza in cattle? Today once again, as before, Salvarsan is used both against syphilis and to cure cattle.

“In the same way, one can give a different meaning to the word *intellect*, one that is far removed from its original meaning.

“I frequently hear, for example, that people are indignant when we mock ‘intellectuals.’ In this we see precisely: they have so little intellect that they never even notice that it is nothing more than mockery. For those who generally call themselves ‘intellectuals’ are seldom more than a bunch of diseased brains who toss scraps of disconnected and purely synthetically amassed knowledge in dialectically exaggerated and overly subtle formulations back and forth to each other. Jewry is especially strongly represented in this activity. It has a unique capacity for it and at the same time the boldness to serve up such undigested mishmash to other people under the pretext of the most profound wisdom.

“Pick up any book. After two or three pages you’ll be able to say without any doubt whatever whether it is written by an intellectual Jew or by a writer who is to be taken seriously. The Jew cannot refrain from showing off his supposed intellect. Sometimes what he says sounds quite brilliant, sometimes it even is brilliant. But it is never creative, always destructive. To be brilliant at the expense of others, that is the infinitely beloved game of the intellectuals. They cannot do otherwise than to try ‘to blacken what is shiny and to pull the lofty into the dust.’

“No! Knowledge and ability require other bases than this pseudo-brilliant intellect. First of all, they require a healthy body! It is the precondition within

which a healthy mind can develop. Greek culture, Greek philosophy would be unthinkable if special care of the body and even of its symmetry and beauty had not been at the heart of it. Degenerates *have* no high culture, they *are* not creatively elevated in their thoughts and in their actions.

“Right away these ridiculous popinjays start to laugh, pointing out to me that the physically deformed and even weaklings and sick people have at times been great thinkers. Of course, that does happen. And yet I would make so bold as to point out to a cripple his clubfoot. Shakespeare lets his Richard III say this so well himself: because he is so deformed and the others jeer at him, he is ‘determined to prove a villain.’ The fact that even a stopped clock tells the right time twice a day is not to say that stopped clocks are always more reliable timepieces than ones in good running order.

“So be sure to include only healthy men on your staff.

“And the second point is that someone who is expected to do original, creative work must have been raised in an atmosphere of harmony. Where young children are compelled to watch as their parents constantly bicker, insult each other, and even cheat on each other, there even a young person cannot grow up with the inner harmony required to bring about the balance of the evil and good urges that lie dormant in every human being. He, too, is handicapped. He, too, will be a cripple all his life. He, too, is easily prone to becoming a scoundrel.

“Do not, therefore, give a responsible position to anyone of whom it is known that his parents are not living in a happy union, let alone that they are divorced.

“The third point is that a person must be racially flawless. Let him be Germanic, or Roman, or Chinese, or a Jew, or an Indian, or a Negro, and so on. I respect all equally. We can work with and count on all of them. Each has his established traits. Depending on what one is looking for, this one or that one is to be preferred for the job in question. It is no different with people than with horses or dogs. Once one has established the proper race for a particular task, one can rest assured that the task will be resolved.

“But if one takes racial mixtures, no matter of what kind, one can never know what racial traits will predominate at times when it counts, and especially when decisions have to be made. The work of a mongrel will always give evidence of both the races whose blood he bears. If you confer a responsible and prominent position on him, you will find that the unconscious struggle his discordant blood wages within him will be expressed in all his endeavors, in his judgments and in his decisions. Lenin furnishes the best example of this. His father was a Slavic high-school principal with a Western European education. His mother was a Tartar with an Asiatic cast of mind. The whole Bolshevik Revolution seems like the struggle in Lenin’s blood: the struggle between the Asiatic will to destruction and the European will to culture.

“So do not confer important tasks upon any racial half-breed, not even one who has a mixture of East and West.

“These three things are the bases on which genuine knowledge and ability

can be erected. If these bases are present, then a clever person, who has some education and who has the ambition to achieve something, can develop into a creative worker. If they are lacking, he might be clever, knowledgeable, and well read, but his ability will always remain patchwork, and the best he can do is to become a leading light in some unproductive and thus all the more arrogant intellectual club.”

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## Hitler on Birth Control, Abortion, Compulsory Sterilization—“Unviable” Infants—Individualism’s Death through Industrialization—Its Rebirth through “Our Socialism”

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**W**agner proceeds by recounting remarks of Hitler about the bourgeois parties’ practice of justifying social welfare measures in terms of humaneness and Christian neighborly love.

“In reality, that’s not the way they think at all,” Hitler said. [ . . . ] “But they no longer have the honesty and the courage, they can no longer summon up the natural strength to draw the consequences from the realizations of truth. Their ‘education’ no longer allows them to recognize the demands of nature and to adapt to them. And so, they would rather let a whole people degenerate and go to the devil than summon up the resolve to cultivate only what is healthy and strong and to leave what is sick and weak to the poorhouse. Hypocritically casting their eyes heavenward, they speak of divinely ordained acts of charity even as they blaspheme by scraping a couple of tinny pieces of silver from their gold-filled purses and casting them at the feet of the unfortunate, trumpeting their good deed in the newspapers.

“Of course it is not appropriate for humankind to act like animals. We cannot simply eliminate what is sick and weak, abandoning it as wild animals do, killing it as the bees do with their drones. Whatever has entered human society must somehow be placed in the service of this society and cared for. But Providence has allowed us to find the means to prevent—or at least to limit—the sickly and the weak from entering human society in the first place.

“Now that we know the laws of heredity, it is possible to a large extent to prevent unhealthy and severely handicapped beings from coming into the world. I have studied with great interest the laws of several American states concerning prevention of reproduction by people whose progeny would, in all

probability, be of no value or be injurious to the racial stock. I'm sure that occasionally mistakes occur as a result. But the possibility of excess and error is still no proof of the incorrectness of these laws. It only exhorts us to the greatest possible conscientiousness. When I think of all the means that have been invented and constantly used to prevent conception or even to kill and abort the beginnings of life, it seems to me the ultimate in hypocrisy and inner untruth if these same people—and it is them, in the main—call the sterilization of those who are severely handicapped physically and morally and of those who are genuinely criminal a sin against God. I despise this sanctimoniousness in the world, as I despise all those who carry it in their faces and on their lips.

“The physicians I gathered recently and consulted on these questions for my own inner confirmation and instruction told me, furthermore, that when a child is born, it is not really fully matured. If we compare the gestation period of a rabbit, a dog, a horse, a cow, a pig, and so on, with that of a human being, it becomes obvious that the gestation period of the human fetus would have to be much longer. We see that as soon as an animal is born, it can immediately stand on its own feet and can drink, and it rushes to its mother's udder. The human infant, on the other hand, is completely helpless, it is unable to walk or to crawl or to search for its mother's breast. The degeneration of the human physique is simply so great by now that the child can no longer be carried to term in the womb, because it would grow too large and would no longer be able to get out. When a child is born, it is therefore not really ‘in the world.’ It takes several months more before it reaches the point where it can actually move by itself and also absorb or express impressions other than the mere sensation of hunger, which is the pure expression of the will to live, just as it already exists in the fetus, simply taking on new form after the umbilical cord is cut and the previous form of food intake has been broken.

“But if that is so, then the infant does not actually take its place in human society until several months *after* its birth. So the question arises whether it runs counter to the basic principles of humaneness and to the divine laws if one refuses to rear a newborn infant, which is clearly unviable when it emerges from the womb, but imposes on it the fate that would probably have befallen it anyway if the human gestation period, corresponding to natural requirements, had been longer.

“Of course, such a decision cannot be left to the parents. That would open the door to criminality. Such judgments should only be made by a medical commission, which examines the question with the deepest moral gravity. But without the mother's consent, the extermination of the child is impossible under any circumstances. The child belongs to the mother, not to the state. But a healthy and vigorous mother—acting precisely out of the feeling of maternal obligation which nature, which the Divinity bestowed on her—will, if the necessity arises, arrive at this harsh and difficult decision—especially if she already has several healthy children and can have more. For God and nature cannot want a mother



to give birth to sickly, deformed human beings, useless for life! It is not in vain that more than one ancient civilized nation accompanied this action with sacerdotal rites of sacrifice and religious observances.”

Too frequently Hitler’s thinking along this line was misunderstood and rejected as un-Christian and pagan. Yet it is imbued with a deep, religious sense of responsibility, which is essential to a statesman or the creator of a new, socialist worldview.

“And if,” Hitler continued, “a body can no longer summon up the will and the strength to remain healthy or to become healthy, it runs a risk and *must* sooner or later fall victim to some infection, in itself perhaps trivial, or it succumbs to its own endemic weakness. A people is a body, too. A people, too, must have the will to live and to preserve bodily health and muster up the strength to overcome illness and infectious diseases. And a people must have this will *consciously*, with complete clarity and unerring precision! Only then will Providence consider it worthy to survive and grow strong.” [ . . . ]

Working with Hitler in defining our economic and socio-political aims was inordinately stimulating. He never issued binding instructions on any matter. Rather, one had to take directions for our economic policies and socio-political efforts from discussions with him and from his occasional presentations such as I just referred to. He simply had a quite different way of working from what is common in most professions. Nevertheless, anyone who would conclude from such a discussion that, for example, Hitler had ordered the killing of children would have to be an idiot, and only a criminal mind could interpret his clear and logical thought as *carte blanche* to commit murder.

I do not remember even a single occasion when Hitler gave any instructions that ran counter to the true Christian spirit and to humaneness. Perhaps it could be said that he should have taken a little more account of the denseness of his listeners, who heard such philosophical or religious remarks pertaining to population policy as orders and then set out to act accordingly, instead of assimilating them, interpreting them, and translating them into action according to their own minds and hearts.

It should always be remembered that it was a peculiar habit on Hitler’s part never to outline, set down, or put his name to anything in writing that did not represent his final and absolute decision or, later on, the law. His desk top was always bare. Occasionally, he doodled in lead pencil or colored pencils while someone else was speaking. But I never saw him actually writing. He developed his ideas as he talked. He thought matters out even as he spoke. He pursued a suggestion made to him or a question that had arisen with words that sometimes turned into lectures, speeches. And yet these were no more than reflections, which he set forth out loud; that was why he disliked being interrupted.

“Please let me finish *thinking*,” he told me once when I was about to interrupt. “I *am* of one mind with you, but I am *thinking* through the opposite view.”

And yet at the time he was *speaking* so forcefully that I believed he really held

the view he was expounding. When anyone had to work with him who was unfamiliar with this habit, therefore, serious misunderstanding could arise. And if, in addition, the person was overzealous and took immediate action after having been present at one of these disquisitions on Hitler's part, then, convinced that he was realizing Hitler's intention, he might even act in total opposition to it. How often someone or other told me that he was no longer certain what Hitler really wanted—that Hitler had said one thing one time, another thing another time.

I will never forget one occasion, when Feder, wearing a supercilious smile, came to my office to explain that Hitler completely disavowed my socialist ideas and plans. He was, Feder claimed, an admitted follower of individualism and economic liberalism. When I remonstrated, Feder assured me that he had just been talking with Hitler and that in a half-hour discourse Hitler had expounded to him the correctness of the principles of individualism.

I immediately went down to Hitler's office—we were still in the Brown House on Brienner Strasse—and no sooner did he see me than he called out, "I'm glad you're here. I was just weighing the pros and cons of liberalism with Feder. And I made an astonishing discovery.

"Individualism, which is in the process of being replaced by socialism—and we're determined to lend a helping hand to abolish and replace it—is actually already being buried by industrialization. Yes, it's already in its grave. For, thanks to growing industrialism, with all its consequences—associations, corporations, trusts, and monopolies—actually only a very few people are left who might imagine themselves to be living their individual lives. But even they are under a misapprehension. For they, too, are slaves of those who wield power. All the others, anyway, have become merely working links in the universal enterprise. From early to late, men toil on perpetual treadmills. And when all is said and done, when they fall, exhausted, into bed at night, they have worked for no more than preserving their primitive slaves' lives, perhaps at one time or another a little bit enhanced. But even then their life has no other meaning.

"So all that is left of individualism is legislation, civil law, as well as the piles of paragraphs in the democratic constitution, with their mentions and guarantees of universal human rights and fundamental rights that, economically speaking, have long ago ceased to exist.

"Industrialization has deprived the individual of all liberty, placed him in thrall to capital and the machine. The state is not the organization for self-rule by free individuals who call themselves citizens, but the central organization for the mills of labor growing out of industrialization, in which any independence or individualism is ground to dust. This is most crudely evident in the Bolshevik state, with its state capitalism.

"But if we realize our social economy exactly as we discussed more than once, we will come to liberate the individual from the domination of capital and all its institutions. To begin with, labor will seize possession of capital. But

what is ethically most significant is the following: when the purchasing power of wages increases—when, as you say, it might even double—the initial effect will be that production will have to increase, since the demand will be greater. But next comes the great era of increasing personal gratification, with the result that the worker will still earn a sufficiency if, instead of working eight hours a day, he puts in only seven or even six.

“This moment signifies the rebirth of individuality, of the possibility of living for oneself outside the hours that serve material needs, and of devoting oneself to hobbies, cultural interests, art, science, life in general, and the family.

“To this extent, then, socialism—*our* socialism—leads back to individuality, and with it to the strongest impetus to a personal, racially defined, and altogether universal human evolution.”

When I told Hitler that this view without any doubt confirmed us in our systematic elaboration of our socio-economic tasks, he replied:

“Without a doubt in the world. The more we examine the conclusions to be drawn from our ideas and plans, the more surely we arrive at the conviction that they are correct and represent the genuine solution of the problems of socialism, which appear so difficult. What Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism failed to accomplish we shall be in a position to achieve. And our synthesis is not a compromise—I should reject any such thing—it is, instead, the radical removal of all the false results of industrialization and unrestrained economic liberalism, and the redirection of this line of development to the service of humanity and the individual.”

When I went back to Feder, I told him that he had obviously misunderstood Hitler, and I repeated the presentation Hitler had made to me. Feder was unwilling to believe me and went to see Hitler once more. After his return, he admitted his error, but he remarked that at first Hitler had actually discussed with him all the advantages and disadvantages of individualism and in the course of the discussion had realized that the advantages outweighed the drawbacks. Admittedly, his current conception was an irrefutable view that agreed with me and with my ideas and thus, in the end, led the individual back to the possibility of free development of all the ethically correct and positive aspects of individualism.

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## Hitler's Thought Processes—Einstein's Theories Confirm His Views on Intuition—Inspiration as the Tool of Providence

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**W**agener reports next on a talk he had with Hitler at the Elephant Hotel in Weimar during one of their political trips. When he warned that Hitler ran the risk of misunderstandings by speaking in conversational fashion about important matters, he recalls drawing the following reply.

“You may be right. But that’s the way it is. Actually, I’m now and then aware that it is not *I* who is speaking, but that something speaks through me. On such occasions, I frequently feel as if there were a mistake in human logic or as if it had limits of which it is not aware. Now and then ideas, concepts, views occur to me that I have read nowhere, heard nowhere, and never before thought, nor can I justify them by logic, and they do not even seem to me capable of being logically justified.

“Just the other day I attended a private lecture on Einstein’s theory of relativity. I did not understand all of it. And it would be strange if a one-hour lecture could explain to a layman everything that scientists have thought about and studied for decades, until one special mind succeeded in bringing clarity into these tangled problems. But I did absorb one idea: that the principal significance of Einstein’s theory lies in the recognition—no, in the proof—that our human thinking machine has its limits but that beyond it other means—in this case, higher mathematics—allow thinking—or rather, calculations—leading to precise results that once again lie in the realm of human consciousness and in part were recognized as facts and known before, but which cannot be arrived at by logical bridges.

“In past times, science would probably have rejected the possibility of the existence of things that were not logically provable and would have banished them to the realm of mysticism or religious faith. But when the existence of such things was demonstrated beyond any doubt, science saw itself confronted by a riddle. At that, Einstein, with an unprecedented achievement of thought and

calculation, turned to dimensions other than those that are conceivable to three-dimensional man and that were common in science for such purposes, to find the method to demonstrate proof for what until that time seemed unfathomable.

“Thus, as it was explained to me and as I understood it, I owe to Einstein the scientific proof that there are things which, recognized by man’s senses, nevertheless cannot be understood and justified, though they are true and could form the basis for a new way of thinking, perhaps even of a new conception of the world.

“In future, I will know how to console myself when some perception comes to my mind to which I am lacking a logical bridge. I shall nevertheless have the courage to build on it.”

I objected that such a course might well be very dangerous. Especially considering that he would have to take the responsibility for others, for a great movement, perhaps one day even for a whole people, surely major decisions could not be based purely on intuition. For the human senses are so incomplete that their perceptions, to the extent that they could not be proven, could be deceptive.

“But I do not,” Hitler continued, his eyes glowing, “receive such perceptions through the human senses at all! If it were that sort of perception, it would be amenable to logical proof. And if it were not, it would undoubtedly be false. Rather, in such cases I feel as if I were taking my perceptions from that super-dimensional world Einstein has looked into, not with his eyes or conscious mind, but with his mathematics.”

“But do you always know whether such a perception comes from the beyond or through the agency of the human senses within this world?”

“I do know each time, without question. But I don’t always take that fully into account. That is also why sometimes I heedlessly pass over such transcendental inspirations. In general, at such moments I have a sensation like an inner vibration, as if I were being touched by an invisible charge. Whenever I have seized the impulse, what I said or did as a result of that feeling always turned out to be correct. Whenever I have let it go, almost invariably it turned out later that it would have been right to follow the inner voice.”

“I believe,” I interrupted Hitler, “that you are not the only one to whom this happens. All human beings, more or less, have this faculty. Some say that they are having a good day or a lucid moment. The merchant has a lucky hand. The gambler insists that somehow he felt he should risk a larger bet. Folk wisdom suggests that it is always best to act on one’s first thought. But most of the time we do not hold on to it—”

“—and damnable logic intervenes!” Hitler continued my sentence, “and human reflection! And then one works up a view or an opinion that is marvelously proven and justified, and we let ourselves be influenced by others who lack any divine spark—and in the meantime, the chance passes and we hit our heads in exasperation and say, ‘If only you’d followed your first impulse!’”

“Exactly! That is how it is most of the time. Nevertheless, one cannot generalize from this. If it’s merely a personal matter, there’s no harm done. Then one simply has to work it out by oneself. But when responsible decisions are at stake—”

“That is precisely when such an inspiration is of the greatest significance. Of course practical conditions do play a fundamental part. But do you think that the decision of an Alexander to initiate the Battle of Issus with a reversed front and, of all things, to attack the strongest position of the Persians at its center and to break through it was the result of desk work? A Frederick the Great, a Napoleon—don’t you think that they frequently acted according to inspiration? I am even convinced that the secret of the greatest successes in history was that they were based, not on human logic, but on inspirations of the moment.”

“It’s precisely by looking at Napoleon that we see that inspiration can lead to error. Someone who becomes accustomed to basing his actions and decisions primarily on inspiration cannot help but lose solid ground under his feet. That process can be quite clearly traced in Napoleon.”

“Who can prove that the reverse was not the case? Might it not even have been carefully reasoned decisions, was it not logical consequentiality that persuaded him to quash first Prussia and then even Russia, in order to lead a united Europe against his enemy, England? The Russian campaign, in particular, was in all certainty *not* an inspiration. It was a human endeavor, built on logical deduction, but containing a mathematical error: leaving out of consideration the equal strategic genius of Gneisenau. If Gneisenau had not beseeched and persuaded the czar to lure Napoleon into the interior of Russia and the Russian winter by a huge evasive maneuver, where he had to perish from lack of supplies, the Russian armies would have stood at the borders and would have been defeated by Napoleon in the same way as the Prussians at Jena and Auerstädt.

“You will not confuse me. In every invention and discovery, intuition, originating in some unknown way, plays a major part. The same holds true for politics, statecraft, and military strategy. A military commander who does not dare to bring the conviction of his own good luck, along with other considerations, to bear on his decisions remains a procrastinator or an amateur, who will never lead his armies and his people to historic victories.”

“Believe me, I am not trying to confuse you, Herr Hitler. On the contrary, I’m fully persuaded by the correctness of your presentation. But I am aware of the danger to every strongly intuitive person that lies in the fact that in the course of time—and particularly when there has been a string of great successes—he grows accustomed to rely on his intuitions, and perhaps *exclusively* on them. In the last analysis, permanence has always been achieved only by *that* which was worked for, honestly struggled for, wrested from nature and the world.”

“Without a doubt! But if you investigate further, you will find that at the beginning, there was almost always first an intuition, an inspiration, the idea!

Most often it was not granted to the person who raised it, who began to translate it into action, to live to see its triumph. And frequently the major significance of an intuitive decision—as only posterity was able to determine and realize—did not even lie in the area or the line of the discoverer's operations. Alexander the Great's victories did not result in a Greco-Persian empire. But Greek culture conquered and fertilized the entire Middle East, and around the most significant settlement, the city of Alexandria, there developed the kingdom of the Ptolemies as the last great—yes, the most significant—rallying point of antique art and science, destined to pass on to posterity, and thus also to us, the enormous values and ideas of this culture. That is why today Alexander appears to us as God's tool, destined to prevent the destruction of Greco-Egyptian culture by the savage Asiatic hordes which once before, under Xerxes, had penetrated to the Peloponnesus, and to break the tempestuous Persian power through an alliance, a marriage of the Greek spirit and Western civilization." I was about to interrupt to point out parallels with the present day, but Hitler stopped me with a gesture and continued:

"Charles V's intentions also differed from what actually happened, or Luther's, or even Robespierre, or Napoleon. If these men had not followed their intuitions, the events that would have taken place might have been much more catastrophic for mankind. But that is the sphere of Providence, the sight of which is refused us. We can and may only view ourselves as the tools of Providence, some of us more, some less. And no one has the right to evade the task that has been set for him."

Suddenly a bright light glowed in Hitler's eyes, and staring into space, he continued: "I, too, may be predestined to march before the rest of you with the torch of perception. Behind me, you must carry out the work. *I* must follow my inspiration and my task. But *you*, behind me, can see and recognize things as they are. The torch only occasionally casts its flickering flame on the path before me. But those of you who come behind me march in its light. That is why we belong together, the rest of you and I! I, the one who leads through the dark, and you who, seeing, are meant to complete the task."

Hitler fell silent, and I, too, did not speak. At the time, it never occurred to me to interpret these remarks as an "inspiration" pointing to the future or a "clairvoyant premonition." Hitler himself must have been the last to take it that way. This very conversation on the subject, as later became clear, represented an instance of someone heedlessly passing up an intuition! That was why, when he looked at me after a while, I said:

"So long as *we* are together, those of us who know each other, I have no fears. But whether *strangers* will be able to follow you, or even understand you—that is my great concern."

In reply he said, without a moment's hesitation:

"That is why you must keep strangers away from me."

# 26

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## Hitler Compares the Zeiss Works to England—“England Needs a Sword on the Continent”

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**W**agener continues by reporting on how an industrialist explained to Hitler and to him the way the Zeiss optical firm operated. The last businessman to own the firm, Ernst Abbé, left a will bequeathing the company to its employees. Abbé stipulated that the company's operations be overseen by a self-perpetuating governing board charged with ensuring that it was run in the best interests of the employees but that it also continued to prosper and grow. As a result, the firm functioned, as Wagener puts it, socialistically in its internal operations but just like any other capitalistic firm in its outward transactions. Thus, Zeiss had fought such competitors as the Goerz and Hensoldt optical firms and subdued them, ultimately taking them over, Wagener recalls.

“He has been describing England!” Hitler said after the speaker left. “What he said about the Zeiss workers could be said, word for word, of the British people! The governing board is the government—or rather, the Masonic lodge organization behind the government.

“The English are always making such a to-do about their democracy. But if we read up on their history, we find that they could hardly be said to have used democratic means to build up their empire. That is exactly how it is with the Zeiss Works. The Zeiss workers claim socialism only for *themselves*. To the outside world, they behave as economic liberalists. And in the same way, the British claim democracy only for themselves and, like Zeiss, call themselves the model of democracy. But outwardly, they are imperialists to the highest degree.”

This perception on Hitler's part perfectly suited my purpose. That is why I said:

“And should a Goerz or Hensoldt spring up alongside, the appropriate means of power will be used to checkmate him or buy him up—which could



also be called conquer—and put him out of commission, make him subservient to one's own enterprise!”

“Shouldn't we,” Hitler replied, taking me very much by surprise, “take this English democracy as a model? That's the very thing that impresses me so much about England and what we must learn from it. Just as a Zeiss worker is proud of being a Zeiss worker, an Englishman is proud of being English! Because his personal interests, down to the purely practical ones, are exactly the same as those of the totality! Each time the Zeiss Works has an economic success, each Zeiss worker benefits; every time England has a political success, each Englishman benefits—and in saying so, I am fully aware that in this pronouncedly economic-liberal commonwealth, the leaders (and, of course, primarily the lodge leaders united in the governing board) benefit more from the successes than does the little man. When competitors to the Zeiss Works are bought up and incorporated, the Zeiss worker's pride grows, and his economic basis is improved. When England's competitors are conquered and taken in tow or put in chains, then the Englishman's pride grows along with his national economic basis.

“It is this very thing I dream of for Germany! The only difference is that we must stop contenting ourselves with a national-democratic state; rather, we must begin to establish the national-socialist one—that is, improved Zeiss bylaws.

“I believe,” I interrupted Hitler, “that we are here using the words ‘democracy’ and ‘socialism’ as if they were opposites. But the actual front line is between ‘economic liberalism’ and ‘socialism.’ The word ‘democracy’ encompasses a concept of a state that can be structured liberalistically as well as socialistically. The opposite would be ‘autoocracy,’ ‘dictatorship,’ or ‘despotism.’ After the fall of the German monarchies, which preserved a modicum of autoocracy, we now have democracy, the Volk-state that governs itself—or in which the Volk governs itself. And this Volk-state can either embody economic liberalism or it can reflect economic socialism.”

“But the Zeiss Works and England, you see, have a governing board placed over them—in the case of Zeiss, open but not open to recall, in England secret and for that very reason equally safe from recall. For the ordinary English voter does not know that the lodge has any influence on the selection of electoral candidates and that it in this way also influences the composition and form of his government.

“I don't care if you call it ‘national-liberal democracy’ in the case of England and ‘national-socialist democracy’ in our case. But there or here, the governing board still has to have a place! In England, it is, as we said, the lodge; in America, it has been reduced to the plutocrats in the lodge; in Russia, it is the Communist Party; and for us, it would have to be the National Socialist Party—or rather, its senate.

“For the rest, I find it dreadful to use only words that end in ‘ism’—liberalism, socialism, communism, Marxism, nationalism, and so on. I have a great horror of all these ‘isms.’ Generally, they are meant to express a heightened intensity, sometimes perhaps something characteristic, most often, it’s true, something exclusive. But frequently they are no more than ‘sophisms!’” Hitler threw in, smiling. “A great deal of misuse is made of such expressions. I will remind you only of the ‘heroism’ of a people and the ‘idealism’ of a person, or the industrialism of the present century. The church uses the horrible coinage ‘catechism’! The most foolish expression among all the isms, which actually did not exist until our adversaries invented it in the World War, is ‘militarism.’

“No one can say what the word actually means. If one defines it to mean a nation’s unremitting preparedness in order to assert its will to power through warlike actions if there is no other way, then England is the prototype of a militaristic state. The will to power is what counts. If the will to power is lacking and a state is prepared only to defend itself against attack, one can hardly speak of militarism—at most of permanent military preparedness.

“If, for example, the German states had not practiced such preparedness, the Huns, the Magyars, the Tartars, and the Turks—and, on the other side, the Moors—would never have been expelled from Western and Central Europe. The Continental peoples of Europe, especially Germany, which was almost always the first to be threatened, needed constantly to be prepared to defend their freedom, their soil—yes, even their lives. That does not make them militarists but poor, harassed peoples, who unfortunately had no choice but to be on constant guard.

“Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, as well as most of the territories situated at a distance from the flashpoints, had it very easy. *We* did the work for them—yes, we were forced to do it, in our own best interests. Any Englishman who reads history without prejudice would *have* to admit as much! And it is on this that I base my conviction that in future we will be able to work with the English.”

“You are using human logic here, Herr Hitler. Perhaps this would be the place for a little more intuition! To go back to your comparison of the Zeiss Works with England: for England, Germany is, for example, like the Hensoldt firm. If it is destroyed by the Tartars or the Turks, that can’t help but be wonderful for England—for the Zeiss Works! In this way England is spared the trouble of doing the job itself. Just as the Zeiss governors bludgeon their competition—if not with the strength of weapons, nevertheless, with economic and other means of power—or are glad when others do the job for them—so England will fight and bludgeon the nations and peoples that it sees as competitors or will be delighted when that is done by others!

“The fact that, because of the threats to it that have recurred throughout recorded history, Germany has had to be in a constant state of relatively strong military preparedness is a thorn in England’s side. Because of this circum-

stance, the competition Germany represents can be eliminated only with great difficulty, making the attempt risky; and besides, Germany always represents a power that might draw other nations into its orbit. For the long education of the German Volk in constant armed preparedness involuntarily brings with it a certain military manner and bearing among the Volk, an inward military attitude, with all its consequences, as well as a special feeling of pride and the will to defend this pride even with arms, if need be! This, then, is where the main difference lies between English thought and actions and German ones. In England, a governing board rules, as it does over the Zeiss Works, and reckons in a purely commercial and calculating way. In Germany, moral, ethical, and even pride-associated motives can lead to political decisions.”

“That’s right!” Hitler cried. “Completely right! That’s the very strength of English policies! We must become just as matter-of-fact as the English! Just as sensible as the governing board of the Zeiss Works! That is the way we can serve the German Volk the best! Until now we *were not* militarists, that’s all, nor are we now—we only appear to be! But *England* is militaristic, to the bone! The will to power is there. And the military preparedness is there. No sooner does anything start up anywhere in the world that doesn’t suit England than the English fleet begins to demonstrate, and even in the midst of peacetime, it lobs its shells into the unruly city. That is true militarism! If it becomes necessary to suppress an unruly country, England lands its forces and invites its friends to join the campaign for freedom and peace, for justice and humanity, and against the aggressors and militarists who will not leave their neighbors alone. Then, too, it fights recklessly and singlemindedly—to its allies’ last soldier.

“That’s what we must learn from England! We Germans are always careful not to offend foreigners. Peace, peace, peace was the slogan and prayer of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Politeness will open all doors—that’s what the people say. England would not have conquered the world with peace and politeness!

“If we want peace and quiet, we must show our teeth! We have to do as England does. And what would be best would be to do it together with England.”

“But, Herr Hitler,” I interjected, as I customarily did, “that would not work! We would then have to become one of Great Britain’s dominions. Just as Hensoldt or Goerz became branches of Zeiss! England will never tolerate another strong power at its side, at least not on the European Continent!”

“Wagener, this is where we part company. On this point we hold different opinions. England *also* recognizes the danger Russia presents. England *needs* a sword on the Continent. Thus our interests are the same—yes, we are even dependent on one another. If *we* are overrun by Bolshevism, England falls as well. But together we are strong enough to counter the international danger of Bolshevism.

“I want to and I must preserve the German Volk from the hardship of Bolshevism. That can only be done *with* England!”

With this, Hitler broke off the discussion.

It is strange that this genius, who in every other way saw so clearly, was so blind on this point. I never succeeded, even later on, in dissuading him from the idea of marching *alongside* England, at the same time being strong himself. I once spoke to him about his presentation of this topic in *Mein Kampf*. In the book, he stated his belief that he could only count on concluding a treaty of alliance with England when Germany was ‘suitable for alliances,’ by which he meant internal order, economic power, and military strength. That it was precisely these three conditions, taken together, that would evoke England’s enmity, leading to encirclement and the employment of every possible means by England’s friends to achieve Germany’s defeat—this he simply would not believe.

Obviously, Hitler judged the English politicians quite incorrectly. He believed that they were “far-seeing,” that “they will foresee the dangers of Bolshevism.” But the dangers of Bolshevism were not acute for them. In fact, Bolshevism was a more likely ally for them *against* Germany than a common enemy! If we wanted to have peace and friendship with England, we would have to extend our hand to Russia! Then, and only then, might England pay the price to win us over!

For in that case, England could not have come to a resolution with Russia, unless it might be over the price of oil from Persia and the Persian Gulf or over the price of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles and thus of the Mediterranean. And both would mean England’s giving up its empire.

“Germany has a mission in Europe,” Hitler replied to me on another occasion when I presented these ideas to him. “We cannot and must not sell out Europe to Bolshevism. It is quite all right to act cleverly in politics—to the point of dishonesty, if you will—but one cannot draw one’s sword against one’s own race! One can try to get the better of the other economically—to the point of cheating, if you will—but it is not allowed to become a traitor to the shared destiny of the European peoples! It is possible to enter into treaties—to the point of hypocrisy, if you like—but they must ever and always in the last analysis serve the one grand goal: the salvation and preservation of Europe and its culture! I would not be able to look a German in the eyes if I, too, lost sight of this goal for even a single moment!

“And I believe this, not out of some pan-European sentimentality, but because the times are past when nations so narrowly crammed into their borders as the European ones—with the exception of Russia—can make their own policies, possibly quite contrary to their neighbors’ interests. Thanks to the World War, great communities of nations have emerged, and their development can no longer be checked even by that ridiculous structure, the League of Nations. They are America, Russia, perhaps China, and—perhaps—Western and Central Europe with Africa. If England goes along with Europe, it will survive and join us in taking the leadership role. In that case, it will even be able

to keep its dominions. If it does not go along, then our grandchildren will hear nothing about Great Britain in their geography lessons—it will be mentioned only in history class. But these children will be attending Russian schools.

“That is why it *will* go along. England *will* be quite clear about the fact that Germany’s existence is crucial to its own survival and to that of a united Europe. If Germany is defeated by Bolshevism, then the rest of Europe is nothing more than carrion, good for nothing but to be thrown in the Russian bear’s path. That is why *on the one hand* the survival of Europe depends on Germany’s betrayal of, or loyalty toward, Europe. But *on the other hand*, Germany’s future also depends on the preservation of Europe. And England is a part of Europe. My political attitude is shaped accordingly. That, furthermore, we must travel the road to the socialist reorganization of things—of that I never had any doubt. But socialist experiments are better made once order has been established. Otherwise, they slide all too smoothly into Bolshevik channels.”

## Hitler Condemns “Excessive Industrialization” and “Americanization”—A Central European Economic Bloc as Core of a Greater European Union—The Ukraine as Indispensable Supplement—Hitler Does Not Let Facts “Overpower” Him

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**W**agner describes how, on a visit to Hamburg, he spoke with Hitler about the city. He recalls Hitler’s saying the following.

“Hamburg appears to me a model of how the highest cultural life can be stifled and destroyed by industrialism—I am deliberately using this frightful word—yes, cannot help but be destroyed. If one visits the splendid sections of the city near the Outer Alster, one can still recognize the garb remaining from an earlier time, which Hamburg wears to this day. But it has already come to cover a quite substantial amount of proletarianism. And this is progressive, unless we oppose excessive industrialization and Americanization by offering something new.

“The World War had as one of its consequences that, wherever capitalism reigns, America has supremacy. And since America suffers from industrial overproduction, it will exploit this supremacy to dispose of its overproduction. That concerns everyone—Germany as well as France, England as well as South America, China, and Japan. Only where capitalism has been broken, abolished, replaced by something new does America’s power stop.

“Herein lies our greatest mission and at the same time our best chance! Here is the bedrock where we may cast anchor. From there an anti-industrial world can be erected.”

Since Hitler stopped for an instant, I asked: "What would that look like?" Whereupon Hitler continued:

"Placing capital at the service of work, just as your offices are planning at present—that is the prerequisite. But at the same time the economy—and with it, primarily industry—must be placed at the service of the Volk. That we will achieve through a structure of economic self-administration and supervisory state planning. Then, to start with, *we* will have a closed social economy, a national-socialist economy. With this we would already have overtaken England. True, England also has a national economy—the oldest, even. But its economy is not socialist, and therefore it is vulnerable to the Americans.

"Next, we must form economic communities of interest with the countries around us—with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, and the Balkans; further, with Denmark and Holland, and perhaps with Belgium and Luxembourg; and with Switzerland as well. Thus, a Central European economic bloc would be created, which would connect these nations more and more firmly and closely through the advantages it offers to each separately. Hand in hand with it goes a monetary union, followed by a customs union. With this, the ridiculous customs barriers, which here in Europe defy any reason, would topple, and the creation of a confederation of states that is also political would be the consequence. In this way, Europe would at last be given a strong heart, which would assume in whole or in part the principles of our social economics—and this would happen all the sooner the more successfully this form develops among us and the more severe is the Communist pressure from the East, on the one hand, and the economic-imperialist pressure from America, on the other.

"When we reach that point, the time should be ripe to approach England, and then probably also the remaining European nations, with the exception of Russia, in order to join all of Central, Western, and Southern Europe into a grand union.

"I know that you are about to tell me that before that day comes, England will put a spoke in our wheel—"

"No!" I exclaimed. "Not if we do it that way! What coalesces economically cannot be torn asunder even by the English! It is an old English insight: the flag follows trade! By *this* route we can certainly achieve our goal in twenty or thirty years!"

When I said twenty or thirty years, Hitler squinted and grimaced slightly. Then he continued:

"It will not take so long. It must happen sooner. The Russians won't give us so much time."

"I believe [Wagener said] that eternal Russia *has* time and *gives* us time. And if we carry out our social economic policies, the program will spread to Russia and rub off."

"Let me continue spinning my ideas, please [replied Hitler]. Once this Eu-

rope has been created, it is true, all of Africa, India, Australia, and the Dutch island empire will be in the alliance. But even so, Europe will still not be self-sufficient as far as foodstuffs are concerned. The Ukraine should also be part of it! Only then would the eastern Mediterranean also be absolutely secured for Europe.

“It might even turn out that the Ukraine will have to be included even in the preliminary *Central* European alliance. Otherwise, Central Europe could still be starved out. For Central Europe is a complex of a hundred forty to a hundred sixty million people with the highest standard of living. Neither the United States of America nor Russia shows a greater population. But the space is too small to guarantee the required foodstuffs. That is why it would be advisable to make sure of the Ukraine as soon as possible. In the effort, England would shield us against America, and then, in alliance with us, reconquer undisputed naval supremacy.

“You’re shaking your head again, Wagener. Surely England *must* appreciate that this plan is in its own best interests. Its statesmen *cannot* be so shortsighted as to prefer giving up the role of a major power on the world stage and ceding the future to America and Russia by maintaining their obstinate balance-of-power policies—which are already outdated.”

“Herr Hitler, England *thinks* differently! Should we march against Russia—God forbid!—England will stab us in the back. For it does not *want* a strong continental state in Europe, not even in Central Europe. Perhaps England cannot prevent such a nation’s coming into being if it is structured on a purely economic and peaceful basis. But it *will* be able to prevent it as soon as weapons are drawn.

“In *Mein Kampf*, you already wrote about the necessity of winning space to the east. A few minutes ago you spoke quite to my liking when you developed the idea of an economic consolidation of Central Europe. Why should it not be possible to extend economic treaties even farther to the east, especially when our social economics has solved the major social problem, the solution for which Soviet Russia is also searching with all the means at its disposal! Weapons can only destroy what the economy has built up. To *avoid* armed conflicts—at least those that will involve *us*—that is our task and the way to grow great! And that, too, is why I, just as you told me when I was chief of staff of the SA, am *opposed* to military rearmament.”

“I am no longer so firmly of that view [replied Hitler]. Look here. When Dr. Curtius wanted to conclude a customs union with Austria, France thwarted him at once.<sup>1</sup> If he had started by setting up thirty divisions, France might have thought better of it!

“It is precisely if we do want to make our economic treaties, with the ultimate

1. Julius Curtius, whose project for an Austro-German customs union collapsed in the face of French opposition in September 1931, served as German foreign minister from 1929 to 1931.



intention of a closer consolidation, that we run the risk that France will again try to stop us. Either everyone else will *also* have to disarm, just as we are disarmed, or we must rearm to their level. This fact becomes increasingly obvious to me, the more I familiarize myself with this question. And do you think that France will voluntarily disarm, or Poland or Czechoslovakia?

“So we will not be able to avoid rearmament. Not because we want to wage a war, but because the others force us to rearm, and because without military power, any attempt at even a policy of economic treaties would be fruitless, as it was for Curtius.”

Hitler paused. Secretly I had to agree with him. It was truly tragic that, time and again throughout history, a German policy of peace was possible only with the protection of a strong arsenal, and that such an arsenal usually became the occasion of war, most often with all Germany’s neighbors attacking it.

The thought recurred to me again and again that making common cause with Russia could guarantee peaceful development, and I made up my mind to investigate this possibility more closely, from an economic as well as a political point of view.

“We began with Hamburg,” Hitler resumed after a while, “and we ended with international affairs. The outcome is the realization that the victory of American economic imperialism is assured if the unification of Europe cannot be brought about. And then it remains for some future century to cast a decision between Russia and America. But by that time, the victory will be on the side of Russia, and the peoples of Europe will be marching under the red banner in the sign of the Soviet star!”

*In the following section, Wagener reports on the research one of his assistants in the Economic Policy Section, Hermann Cordemann, had conducted on the Soviet economy. With the help of statistics, Cordemann had demonstrated that the Soviet and German economies were to a very high degree complementary. The Soviet Union could supply the raw materials Germany needed from abroad, and Germany could deliver to the Soviet Union the machines and other finished products it needed. Wagener reports he recognized at once that Cordemann’s findings provided support for his argument that Germany should ally with the Soviet Union. He therefore arranged for Cordemann to present those findings to a group that included Hitler. After Cordemann’s talk, Hitler left the room without saying a word. Wagener reports that when he spoke to Hitler later about his reaction, he received this reply:*

“Do you expect me suddenly to say the opposite of what was previously my program and even the content of our propaganda? I either had to doubt the documentation and the view presented by Cordemann—but I lack all figures and points of reference for doing so—or I had to leave. You wanted to overpower me. But I will not let myself be overpowered. The extent to which we will be able to carry on further exchange of goods with Russia—we shall see. On no

account will I make myself economically dependent on a nation about which I am not politically sure. That would be reckless, wicked, stupid, and irresponsible.

“For the rest, I gathered from Cordemann’s maps that an enormous part of the assets important to us lie in the Ukraine and the region of the Caucasus. You know my thoughts on the Ukraine. Cordemann’s lecture only reinforced them!”

I was crestfallen. For the first time, I understood clearly the difference between *my* way of thinking and *his*. I was a socialist, an advocate of cooperation, a Christian, even in reference to the relationship and cooperation among nations and peoples beyond their own borders; and he was a national socialist, a “Zeissist,” a nationalist of the English stamp, whose socialist thinking was only *for his Volk* and *within his own Volk*. Toward the rest of the world, however, he was, in the last analysis, a crass economic liberalist, egotist, and imperialist. From this angle, his Central Europe took on a quite different significance from the one that had appeared during the Hamburg discussion. At that time, granted, rearmament was also a prerequisite for such plans. Who was it who repeatedly induced him to accept the idea of such power politics?

It is, I admit, hard to say which concept is correct. At the time I did not dare, and to this day (1936) [sic] I do not dare, simply to reject Hitler’s view. On the contrary, I must admit that all Hitler’s actions and successes in foreign affairs are such as to make his view appear the better one and to seriously shake mine. Furthermore, the respect paid to National Socialist Germany abroad and the rehabilitation of the Germans’ standing among other nations prove that the world appreciates Hitler and the road he has taken. In the final analysis, it will have to be left to events to show which road would have been the better one—though even then, there is no way of testing whether the pursuit of *my* way of thinking could have led to the desired goal.

[OPPOSITE] Otto Wagener, Nazi storm troop chief of staff, 1929–30; head of the Economic Policy Section of the party, 1931–32; and head of its Economic Policy Office and commissar for the economy, 1933. Reproduced by permission of Ullstein Bilderdienst.





Wagner (with light-colored hat) leaves the Leipzig courthouse with Hitler in September 1930 after having given testimony in the treason trial of the "Ulm lieutenants," three army officers who were prosecuted and convicted for Nazi agitation among the troops. Reproduced by permission of Ullstein Bilderdienst.



When Hitler was named chancellor, Wagener (left) still belonged to the inner leadership circle of the Nazi movement. The others in this photo taken on January 30, 1933, are, from the left: Kube, Kerrl, Frick (sitting), Goebbels, Hitler, Röhm, Göring, Darré, Himmler, and Hess. Reproduced by permission of Zeitgeschichtliches Bildarchiv Heinrich Hoffmann.

Wagener (left) introduces a delegation to Chancellor Hitler, 1933. Courtesy of U.S. National Archives.





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As chief of staff Wagener expanded the storm trooper's economic activities, which included sponsoring a special brand of cigarettes.

[OPPOSITE] The impact of the Nuremberg Nazi Party congress in August 1929, which Wagener attended as an invited guest, led to his decision to accept appointment as storm troop chief of staff. Here Hitler and storm troop supreme commander Pfeffer review a Nazi parade at the old market square (see chapter 1). Reproduced by permission of Zeitgeschichtliches Bildarchiv Heinrich Hoffmann.



Increasing tensions between the storm troop organization and the party led in August 1930 to a break between Hitler and supreme storm troop commander Pfeffer, who resigned. Hitler himself assumed Pfeffer's post, but as chief of staff Wagener served as its de facto head until Ernst Röhm became chief of staff in January 1931 (see chapters 6 and 17). Reproduced by permission of Zeitgeschichtliches Bildarchiv Heinrich Hoffmann.



In his new position as head of the Nazi Economic Policy Section Wagener allied himself with Gregor Strasser, at the time in charge of party organization (here left next to Goebbels) (see chapter 10). Reproduced by permission of Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Gregor Strasser, a former pharmacist, was concerned about Hitler's use of stimulants, including "Kola Dallmann."

**Der Vielbeschäftigte**



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During the "Kampfzeit" Hitler was always surrounded by taciturn chauffeurs and "adjutants" who acted as bodyguards and servants; Hitler's then foreign-press spokesman, Ernst Hanfstaengel, nicknamed them the "Chauffeureska." Hitler's favorite chauffeur at the time, Julius Schreck (shown here with the Führer), happened not to be driving when Hitler and Wagener were involved in an auto accident (see chapter 13). Reproduced by permission of Zeitgeschichtliches Bildarchiv Heinrich Hoffmann.



Hitler's constant companion, Julius Schaub, was also a member of the "Chauffeureska." Here he stands with a bouquet next to Hitler at the burial of a "Martyr of the Movement" in the fall of 1932.

When Wagener wanted Hitler to read something, he gave it to Schaub, who placed it on Hitler's night table (see chapter 14). Reproduced by permission of Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz.





Hitler's relationship with his young niece Geli Raubal, who lived in his Munich apartment until her suicide in September 1931, remains a mystery. Wagener reports on the effect of her death on Hitler in chapter 35.

Photographs above and far right are reproduced by permission of Zeitgeschichtliches Bildarchiv Heinrich Hoffmann. Photographs at right and opposite left are courtesy of U.S. National Archives.







Magda Quandt (center, between Hitler and Goebbels), who became Goebbels' wife in December 1931, by Wagener's account made an extraordinarily strong impression on the Führer at their first meeting (see chapter 38). Reproduced by permission of Zeitgeschichtliches Bildarchiv Heinrich Hoffmann.



According to Wagener, Harald Quandt (right, next to Goebbels at his wedding to Magda Quandt in December 1931; behind them, Hitler), later a prominent industrialist in the Federal Republic of Germany, introduced himself to the Führer at the Hotel Kaiserhof in Berlin while wearing a musical-comedy uniform, which caused Hitler to contemplate the importance of uniforms (see chapter 38). Wagener claimed that he played an important role in arranging this marriage (see chapter 41). Courtesy of U.S. National Archives.





Wagner regarded Hermann Göring, who had idiosyncratic tastes for furniture, as his main rival in the Nazi hierarchy (see chapter 20).

Walther Funk (here in conversation with Hitler in 1931) began his career in the Nazi Party as Wagner's subordinate, but soon outmaneuvered him and became influential in his own right among Hitler's advisers (see chapters 37, 41, and 43). Courtesy of U.S. National Archives.



Wagener's Economic Policy Section was housed on the second floor of the "Brown House" in Munich, the national headquarters of the Nazi Party. Wagener reports that his office was directly above Hitler's, who wanted to connect the two rooms with an elevator. This idea, however, proved impossible because of architectural difficulties (see chapter 16).

This elaborate chamber was constructed for a Nazi "senate" at the time the "Brown House" was refurbished for the party's use. But for reasons Hitler explained to Wagener, he decided against constituting such a body, so that the chamber remained unused, and seldom pictured, throughout the Third Reich.





According to Wagener, Hitler expounded his thoughts on family, education, and child-rearing in conversations with the Upper Franconian Gauleiter Schemm (left) (see chapters 45, 46, and 47).

Wagener's loss of influence on the party's economic policy is revealed by the stamp on the title page of his 1932 pamphlet. At the request of Gottfried Feder and with Hitler's approval, this pamphlet was never published, causing Wagener to resign as head of the Economic Policy Section and to move to Berlin as Hitler's representative in the capital (see chapter 52). Courtesy of Henry A. Turner, Jr.

# Das Wirtschafts- Programm der N.S.D.A.P

Rednermaterial!  
Als Manuskript gedruckt.  
Von

**Dr. h. c. Otto Wagener**

Leiter der wirtschaftspolitischen Abteilung  
der Reichsleitung der N.S.D.A.P.

Zusammengestellt nach zwei öffentlichen  
Versammlungsreden 1931/32.

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## Hitler's Foreign-Policy Credo— Smashing Bolshevism at Its Center of Power—One Europe from Gibraltar to the Caucasus—The American Peril

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**I**n the next section Wagener summarizes six postulates on foreign policy at which he had arrived by the early 1930s: (1) no military action on the part of the Soviet Union need be expected during the coming ten to twenty years; (2) collaboration with Italy would be a mistake, since it would nourish the belief in the Soviet Union that the Nazis were mere fascists, and since it would attract the hostility of England and France, which stood opposed to Mussolini's imperialistic aspirations; (3) in order to make possible an ideological rapprochement with the Soviet Union, Nazi plans for a "social economy" should be emphasized; (4) Germany should undertake no rearmament or other military preparation beyond that required for self-preservation, so as not to stir up England and France or bring the Russians to alter their policies with regard to armaments; (5) by means of economic agreements and collaboration, Germany's neighbors in Central Europe should be won over to a federation that could serve as a bridge between East and West by means of which socialist conciliation could take place; (6) eventually, a Germany freed from the chains of Versailles could demand the return of its colonies and proceed to economic understanding and collaboration with the Soviet Union, so as to make possible the birth of a great new Slavic-European culture.

Choosing what seemed to him a propitious moment when Hitler was relaxing after attending the opera in Dresden on one of their trips, Wagener decided to present these ideas to Hitler, even though he realized that he was calling for a reversal of the foreign policy Hitler had hitherto set forth. When he had finished, Wagener recounts, Hitler calmly responded as follows.

"I did not take the road of politics to smooth the way for international socialism, much less to preach a new, socialist religion. I am not made to be the founder of a religion, I am not one and have no desire to be one. Rather, I am a politician. I bring to the German Volk national socialism, the political doctrine of the Volk community, the solidarity of all who are part of the German Volk

and who are ready and willing to feel themselves an inextricable but co-responsible particle of the totality of the Volk, having responsibility for it.

“A Volk in the current political sense has ceased to be a racial unit, a racially pure community. The great migrations of world history, the military expeditions, the times of enemy occupation, and also, of course, the admixture that became ever more frequent as the result of international trade relations, have seen to it that all sorts of races and racial mixtures live side by side within the borders of any state.

“Nevertheless, most nations—the United States of America forming the most notable exception—are the structures within certain areas where either the old tribal system has survived or a community has come into being over time that was consolidated into a Volk, possessing its own style, its own language, its own attitudes on ethics and morality, and its own culture. Such groups of people who feel that they belong together continue to unite under economic, political, and even purely geographic influences, and these groups rightly designate themselves a Volk. In this same way, America will in time turn into one Volk.

“Such a Volk now possesses a quite natural instinct for whatever is of benefit and advantage to it and for what is potentially harmful. In the same way, it also feels quite instinctively which individuals belong to it and which do not. In nature, we see the same thing in a flock of sheep, for example, or among a herd of deer. If foreign animals stray into the community, they are attacked and expelled. Nature knows nothing of what we call humanitarianism and socialism. With brutal ruthlessness, the one who does not belong to the community is chased away from the herd, even out of the herd’s territory, or it is simply massacred.

“Such peoples have their own leadership class, which was created through an anonymous will of the Volk, and they have their leader, also chosen by the Volk. The growing numbers of those who comprise each Volk, the impossibility of every member’s knowing all the others, and geographic distances compel a special kind of organization to develop and express the will of the Volk as well as national opinion in general. We have grown beyond absolute monarchies. These vestiges of earlier times neglected, or perhaps deliberately omitted, developing the will of the Volk. The peoples were knowledgeable and conscientious enough to create for themselves fixed structures to elect the leadership group and the leader. We call such structures ‘constitutions.’ Every Volk has *the* constitution it deserves. Otherwise, it would have found ways and means to change it.

“Our Weimar constitution, for example, is a legalistic, mechanical system, lacking in organic qualities. It deals only with individuals, not with a Volk. It was not born from the conscious will of the German Volk, but under the pressure of enemy occupation and threats. I do not question the good intentions of the lawyers and foreigners who worked it out and who wrote it down; their

product could, however, be nothing other than mechanical. Our movement has adopted the mission of enabling the German Volk to change the Weimar constitution, so that it will correspond to the essence and will of the Volk. And this essence of the German Volk is socialist in the most profound sense. Any Volk community is, in the last analysis, always socialist.

“Earlier, you mentioned the situation of the Jews in Soviet Russia. You call the Jews’ participation in the Bolshevik Revolution ‘midwifery.’ Let us make no mistake! Thanks to the Jews, socialist movements all over the world have turned into mechanisms of battle *against* the organic development of the peoples! Their influence on nations is not constructive but destructive. They love the socialist idea, not for the sake of the idea, but for the possibility of using the concept to win over the discontented masses to the struggle against the indigenous Volk leadership. Since, on the basis of the Biblical promise made to him, the Jew strives for power within all peoples, the indigenous leadership in every nation is his enemy! But when it has successfully been removed by a revolution, then the Jews do not actually introduce genuine socialism as they have promised—because it would wrest power from their hands again. Rather, they establish the rule of the proletariat—or, as happened in Weimar, the rule of the revolutionaries—and they themselves take over the safeguarding of the attainments of the revolution and the representation of the proletariat.

“The Jew is not a socialist! *Once before* he nailed to the cross the great Creator of the concept of socialist redemption! He will do so again whenever he can! For he is an individualist, an economic liberalist, an egotist—yes, he is a parasitic creature. In Russia, the Jews succeeded in directing the will to freedom of oppressed Slavic peoples against allegedly alien rulers. But then, themselves alien, they set themselves in the former rulers’ place. They still occupy it, and I have no reason to believe that the Slavs are making any attempts to oust them again. But as long as that is not the case, a National-Socialist Germany cannot enter into alliances with Russia. Rather, I see Jewry’s determination to use Russia as a springboard from which to direct the removal of the existing order in other nations as well! For the organization of the Comintern is purely Jewish!

“That is why it becomes necessary to strengthen the peoples of Europe and all the world against this germ of destruction. But that effort *can* succeed only if we have the help of England, which at the present time is still the strongest and most firmly established world power. Only in concert with England is it possible to structure a Europe that consists of independent states, stable and ready to defend themselves, free of the poison of international destruction. Furthermore, it seems to me—and history tells me the same thing—that especially the Germanic, the northern peoples—that is, England, Scandinavia, Denmark, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Iceland, Canada, and, presumably, a part of the United States of America—are called upon to repel the Jewish-Bolshevik attack and then to create a new world order.

“I *am* no follower of Oswald Spengler! I do not *believe* in the decline of the

West. No, I consider it my task, with which Providence has charged me, to contribute to its prevention. I do not *believe* in the emergence of a new Slavic culture. No cultures have ever been born under Jewish leadership, though some have been destroyed! On the contrary, I believe that the old Aryan culture, which has begun to falter as a result of industrialization, will experience a rebirth under the direction of the Nordic peoples. It will evolve on a socialist basis and then conquer the world.

“But even aside from their Jewish leadership, the Slavs are not suited to be the bearers of a new culture. The Slavs are long-suffering, but they are not creative people—herd animals, not individuals! Furthermore, in the long run the entire Soviet band is much too heterogeneous to be able to make common cause and align themselves as a unified people.

“And one thing more. The new culture will bear the stamp of industrialization, although industrialization is in the deepest sense anticultural. The resolution of this dilemma holds the *greatest* secret of our National Socialist plans! Now it just so happens, however, that all the great industrial states—with the exception of Japan, which has a special skill at emulation—are Germanic or Nordic, whatever you want to call it. Whenever other nations were intent on establishing industry, they had to fall back on their Nordic elements, or they imported them from abroad—Englishmen, Germans, Americans. So you see, the capability of industrial organization is also race-specific. The Jew, too, is quite unsuited to industrial activity. He merely holds the stock, or he trades in it, and he deals in industrial products. But he cannot produce, and wherever he makes the attempt, he fails.

“And that is why it is especially in the Nordic countries that we are more likely to find the will to free economic development, feeling for work, and striving for achievement and success. The soil of these countries was ripe for economic liberalism, and its consequences, in turn, brought the enslavement of labor under capital. Just the other day, I was reading that someone wrote: How wonderful life must be in such countries as France and Italy, and in the Orient. What prevails there is not hustle and bustle, excessive industrialization, no chasing after work and gain! What prevails there is leisure and calm, settled labor relations, a feeling for pleasure, song, art, self-contemplation, family, and love.

“The liberalism of the industrial states—their claim to freedom and independent control of property and jobs on the part of the employers—has been converted into its opposite! Nowadays, the only beneficiaries of liberalism are the elite; the masses have sunk to a level where they are the servants and slaves of the few. The quest for profit is supreme even in the organizations and chambers of government in the democracies. The owners of private capital, the great industrial magnates, the trusts control the state.

“Furthermore, the industrialization of states unfortunately brought in its wake the standardization of humans and the trivialization of all of life and its

cultural content: flattening out of the popular arts, conformity of style, conformity in music, conformity in collars, eyeglasses, and so on. If we want to achieve a cultural rebirth, we must end the enslavement of the broad mass of people under the yoke of industrialization.

“Thus we are faced with one of our most fundamental tasks. Not an international one! What do we care about the others? This task is ours alone in Germany, a task for our German Volk! What the others do need not concern us. But all of them will have to follow suit. Where democracy prevails, the will of the popular majority will prevail. How else could we National Socialists arrive at the belief that we can accomplish our aims, if the Weimar constitution did not furnish us with such an option? For any revolution, any putsch, would be suppressed by the army and the police. What is wrong is not Weimar’s democratic idea, but the form of Weimar’s parliamentarianism! Therefore I have no doubt that gradually, but with absolute certainty, a socialist reorganization will take place in all democratic countries. Except in Russia! There the herd will be increasingly governed with the whip.

“I fully respect your thoughts about the fructification of Russia. And it *will* happen sooner or later. But not with the aim and the result that a new culture, replacing the West, will be engendered, but because Russia cannot forever work with the wooden plow and shoot with bows and arrows in the midst of the industrial world.

“The international element of the communist movement that emanates from Russia is not really Russian, or Slavic; it is Jewish. And we must not make the mistake of believing that it is supported by a Russian-Slavic idea, which might even have some creative content. The current activities of the Comintern members are purely destructive.

“There also exists a constructive international socialist idea. But it is altogether different. For, look here, once nations have begun to carry out a socialist and socio-economic reorganization within their own borders, the time is ripe for the totality of nations—that is, *all* the peoples and states—to give up fighting each other for power and supremacy, enslavement and exploitation, according to liberal principles—that is, acting according to imperialist principles. Then, even among them the time has come for giving pride of place to consideration, communal spirit, even ‘socialism.’ What first occurred on a small scale within the individual nations will then take place among the worldwide community of nations. Even the smallest of them will enjoy equal rights, even the have-nots will be able to share in the goods and the surplus of the elite’s international property. That is *socialism of the nations!* But it is quite different from the international socialism of a Marx or a Lenin!

“If, for example, acting out of a higher discernment, industrial plants decide not to compete with each other, establishing instead a community of interests, each enterprise remains independent in itself. The only change is that each will be integrated into the totality according to a higher plan, taking into account

considerations of production and market conditions and according to principles of reason and profitability. So each must give up *something* of its sovereignty, in the interest of the whole—but consequently also in its own best interest. It is equally true within a nation that each individual citizen must surrender something of his own sovereignty—what is colloquially spoken of as ‘personal liberty’—to the organization of self-administration, the state. All rights originate primarily with the people. The Weimar constitution understands this quite clearly. The Volk, each separate person, however, yields as much as necessary—but not more than necessary—to the state it has created or the government it has established according to its constitution.

“The same thing will happen with the socialism of nations. Each nation remains independent. It yields to the community, to the organization of self-administration, to the world state only as much of its sovereignty as is necessary to enable the execution of the tasks that are in the interest of all and each separately.

“But first, there will have to be national socialism. Otherwise the peoples and their governments are not ready for the socialism of nations. It is not possible to be liberal in one’s own country and demand socialism among nations. Education about and firm belief in national socialism must precede that change. But if we do not succeed in taking this road, we will either be given a world empire headed by a single state—the strongest, the most powerful, which will, in the end, have to resort to military methods to secure and maintain its power—or end up with international Bolshevism, which can equally be nothing but despotism. The first goal is obviously being striven for at present by North America, while Russia aims at the latter. Perhaps neither of them yet realizes what is happening. But, as I said: If we do not succeed in paving the way for the socialism of nations, then one or another of these two *must* set in!

“But here, too, I carry within me the conviction—and I see myself as a trailblazer—that humanity will find the right way. For the peoples and their states are natural creations, divinely ordained, they are associations of men, all of whom are created by God and therefore stand side by side, with equal rights, judged only for the totality, each according to his abilities and achievements for the totality. The international powers that are at work to penetrate the unanimity of the national bodies, the states, the nations, to dissolve and undermine them, are therefore contrary to nature and hostile to the divine order. Among them are primarily Jewry, but next in line are the Catholic church, the internationally oriented trade unions, international communism, the major international trusts, and many more. Such organizations can, at times, be stronger than the states! And herein lies their danger! Not only for the individual state, but especially for the possibility of creating the great socialist community of nations.

“So, if we pursue the goal of such a community of nations—and it *must*, as I said, be pursued, and it *will* be the final goal of human politics on this earth—

then we must first reconstruct the independence and autonomy of the nations, even the smallest, and drive the large international organizations back to their purely technical sphere of operations, eliminating every last possibility of their influence on governments and governmental organizations. This is a further basic perception.

“Furthermore, the principle in power politics of always oppressing smaller nations, annexing them, occupying them, dissolving their statehood, divesting them of their autonomy, their divinely ordained sovereignty—this is a useless and foolish undertaking, a sin against nature. Even after Poland had for centuries ceased to exist as a state, it continued to harbor the will to form into a nation. Yes, one can say that the suppression of a people, the forced incorporation in artificial borders, or military occupation of a particular country only heighten the will to freedom and the urge to liberation of the people in question! Gaul, Britain, Germania, all became firmly defined states only as the result of centuries of Roman despotism. Russia was unified by Mongolian and Tartar domination, in France national consciousness emerged from the English occupation of northern France. Prussia became Prussia only in response to the Napoleonic occupation! Before that, it consisted of separate provinces, held together only by the crown. A people can be removed only by killing the people, as the Americans did with the Indians or the Spanish with the indigenous people of South and Central America.

“Even if one expels the members of a Volk from a country or scatters them all over the world, the Volk does not cease to exist. Even after generations, it continues to harbor the longing for the native soil from which it was driven or the yearning for reunification. Although Wilson recognized this fact and made it the subject of his Fourteen Points, he subsequently bowed to the others’ blind psychology of hate and the naive idiocy of those hidebound statesmen.

“On this point, too, the Jewish people furnish us with graphic examples. The Jews who were driven from the Rhineland and settled in Poland centuries ago still have the urge to return to Germany. To this day, the Eastern Jews have preserved their German language—Yiddish—and all the Eastern Jews who migrate to the West always begin by going to countries where German is spoken. Another example is the longing for reunion in Palestine. Even though higher, political considerations have come to play a crucial part in this after almost two thousand years of dispossession, Jewish policy could not have forged this plan with any hope of success if it were not for that dormant longing.

“How often we see German emigrants eager to spend their last days in their old homeland. Or trying to take their homeland with them by cultivating the language, the songs, the customs and age-old habits. They name their settlements after their places of origin, they hold their church festivals as they did at home, the emigrants from Munich have their Oktoberfest, those from Dresden their ‘Vogelwiese,’ the Berliners their excursions to see the trees in bloom, and all have their German Christmas tree.

“The application of this realization is a further great task of the future. Here lie the roots of true religion, the link to divinity! There are those poor creatures, bending their knees and wringing their praying hands before carved wooden figures, and those great hypocrites hoodwink them into believing that, thanks to this behavior, their souls will sizzle a few days less in the fires of hell. But the true link to God, the elevated consciousness of being a divine creature—that is driven out of them and forbidden them! *Here* is where I see the λόγος of St. John, which Luther unfortunately translated as ‘word.’ Goethe tried to rectify the error with the critical lines: ‘I cannot possibly place such a high value on the word, I must translate it differently,’ and he said: ‘In the beginning was the deed.’ But I say: ‘In the beginning was the *urge!* And the urge existed from eternity! And the urge was a creation of God, and God himself was this urge.’ And the urge was the spark of life, which resides in us as well. And though it rose to consciousness in man, we pass it by, as Christ already bemoaned. The peace on earth Christ wanted to bring is the very same socialism of nations! It is the new great religion, and it will come because it is divine! It awaits the Messiah!”

Hitler stopped for a moment before continuing calmly:

“But *I am* not the Messiah. He will come after me. *I* only have the will to create for the German Volk the foundations of a true Volk community. And that is a political mission, though it encompasses the ideological as well as the economic.

“It *cannot* be otherwise, and everything in me points to the conviction that the German Volk has a divine mission. How many great prophets have foretold this! Once, in deep sorrow, Goethe wrote: ‘The German Volk will fulfill its universal mission only when it is compelled to do so by God’s sword!’ I hope that the World War was God’s sword! Should Providence have another reminder by God’s sword in store for us, that would be a terrible ordeal.”

Once again, Hitler paused briefly. Then he straightened his shoulders and declared, louder than before:

“I cannot believe that the civilized nations of the world are so blind that they will lacerate each other to smooth the way for Bolshevism. The contrary is essential: coalition, by groups, into confederacies of states, into families of nations, perhaps even here and there into federal states.

“And that, too, is why my view of Mussolini’s Italy differs from yours. It has conquered international bolshevism and communism within its borders. It is in the process of creating a Volk community. It works with every possible means to realize the internal strengthening of its own national characteristics. I am not personally familiar with Italy. But what I hear from there and what I see in pictures is great and significant for the national development of Italy! How much Italy has already changed under Mussolini! Its imperialist goals are wrong if they do not remain within the limits of existing treaties. But the Italian



mentality has a need for foreign-policy successes as well. And Italy still has to pay back a wrong or two committed by the entente of the World War. The foolishness of those statesmen, the amateurish shortsightedness of their goals, the implacable smallness of their vision are to blame for the fact that there is no peace in the world.

“It is all the more important that we work at coalition. And on that point I will tell you over and over again: without England it is not possible! *England* has the necessary power. We bring along only the *idea* and the will. I cannot imagine that England will not decide to climb down from its pedestal of arrogance and imperialism, which has been made outmoded by history, and to extend its hand to a community of nations. England cannot ignore present-day events *to such an extent!* It cannot discard the world mission of the Aryan race in the world *to such an extent!* It *must* surely recognize the danger of international Communism, even if its island realm might be the last to fall into its hands. And it *must* notice that for the world, and therefore also for it, a new great adversary has arisen across the Atlantic—America. As a result of excessive industrialization, which received its latest impetus precisely during the Great War, America has no choice but to wage an imperial policy all over the world. For the moment, Roosevelt hopes only to achieve ‘prosperity.’ But if he cannot make it come into being by peaceful means—and in this he will fail—then it can be coerced only by a war—a war intended to permanently eliminate economic competition from Europe and possibly also from Japan, securing for America the international markets of the future: South America and China, perhaps Russia as well.

“Now England is simply part of Europe, even if it was unwilling to admit it before this. Its front is against Russia and against America. The struggle has already begun in the oilfields of Persia, it will continue in India and the Far East. And in the end it will encompass the whole Empire!

“What you told me earlier about Russian armaments serves only to make us realize that the sooner we can make up our minds to shatter the universal danger of Russian Bolshevism at its center of power, the easier it will be got rid of. Furthermore, if Europe is to prevail in the decisive battle with America, it must have the grain, the meat, the wood, the coal, the iron, and the oil of Russia. That is in England’s interest as well as in ours, it is in the interest of a United States of Europe! England and Germany are equally threatened. But they are also the backbone of the West, the old world, the cultural source of mankind. And a Europe that stretches from Gibraltar to the Caucasus includes all the spheres of interest of the countries that belong to it in other parts of the world—especially all of Africa, India, the Malayan archipelago, Australia, and New Zealand. Canada will also remain loyal to such a concentration of power, which would otherwise fall to America; and the Arabic family of nations will complete the circle of these United States of the old world.

“This is the prize we offer England! World peace would be assured for all

eternity. No earthly power could sow discord into such a community, and no army or navy in the world could shake such power.

*"It cannot be that England does not recognize and understand this. In any case, I am prepared, even at the risk of failing to persuade England, to take this road, and I will never betray Europe to bolshevism and Jewry."*

Hitler raised his voice for the final words. It was a last, and without a doubt a final, rejection of the policies I had proposed. But this rejection was at once so impressive and so convincing that, after long internal struggle, I decided to bow to it. Only *two* goals remained absolute for me: to smooth the way to the East, using economic negotiations and treaties that would avoid and make unnecessary armed confrontation; and the realization at the earliest possible moment of a socio-economic reorganization that might prompt even Russia to imitation and abandonment of its Bolshevik ideology.

Hitler's presentation, which represented the clearest foreign-policy program I had ever heard from his lips, therefore now determined the future policy guidelines for the work of my section, and it became the basis for all the political conferences I conducted later on.

It is not possible to work with two policy programs controlling one movement. Either I had to resign from the party's national executive, and therefore also from the party, or I had to cooperate in my special field within the framework of Adolf Hitler's program. There was no middle ground. At the time I made the latter choice, and I must confess that gradually, under the influence of the inflexible will of his personality and the persistence of his efforts to persuade me, I actually did come to share his view that it must be possible to win England over to this total concept.

# 29

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## Hitler's Reticence and Aversion to Decision Making—His Power of Suggestion—Göring, Himmler, and Goebbels as Corrupters of His Intentions—His Tantrums—How He Reacted to a Practical Joke

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**A**lthough my sphere of operations was not concerned with either domestic or foreign policy, as head of the economic and socio-political section, I had to keep myself constantly informed about those areas as well. That is also why Hitler frequently enlisted me in discussions that were not absolutely limited to the economy. This procedure was not quite in keeping with his customary practices. For Hitler espoused the view that ideas and plans, most especially actual intentions and decisions, must be tightly restricted to the heart of the person involved or to the smallest of groups, where they had been conceived and hatched and from where orders for their execution must emanate. Even those who would subsequently be charged with the execution of the ideas were not to be informed until they actually had to know, and even then they were to be told only as much as was absolutely necessary to carry out the particular task.

That was why Hitler discussed foreign policy only with whichever person he had selected for this task, domestic policy only with his domestic adviser, economics only with me. If he consulted others, he talked to them only about details of the matter under consideration. In this process he might also elaborate on ideas that he himself did not subscribe to. Only in this way, he believed, would he be able to hear contrary opinions.

This attitude can be viewed in different ways. Since, for the most part, Hitler was surrounded by very crude people—even most of the Gauleiter were men on a very low level—everything Hitler uttered was quickly leaked. Some details were stressed out of all proportion, other aspects were omitted, and probably

most of what he said, without being understood, was passed on with embellishments and misinterpreted. Hitler *could* therefore on no account confide his innermost intentions and goals to these people. This fact, however, served only to increase the temptation to snap up words and expressions from him, in order—perhaps for reasons of vanity and an individual need for recognition—to pass them on to others under the seal of secrecy. What distortions we experienced by this route! But since Hitler did not sketch out his ideas at his desk but elaborated them in the course of conversations, discussions, and lecturelike explanations, it happened again and again that on such occasions remarks were uttered in the presence of one or another person for whose ears they were not intended. These bad experiences increasingly taught Hitler when he was in larger groups either to remain silent or to pursue only very general conversation, in which he was more likely to hint at the opposite of his real opinions than at the opinions themselves. Because of this, truly serious people sometimes got the impression that he was less than honest.

Beyond this outcome, however, his methods also ran the risk that genuinely worthy and active men, who believed Hitler's ideas—of which they learned only fragments—to be irrelevant, impractical, even incorrect, either thought that they could not work with him or dissociated themselves from him. Outstanding personalities cannot be fobbed off with partial ideas, much less can they be led astray. One can do that only with limited persons, with one-sided fools and wholly subservient types.

So it came about quite naturally that truly outstanding men did not tarry long in Hitler's entourage and that inevitably he found himself surrounded by simpletons, mindless scum, and flatterers whose vanity was satisfied only by a sojourn among giants, being shown as often as possible with Hitler in the photographs the ubiquitous and commercially very adept Hoffmann manufactured in assembly-line fashion.

Hitler, unfortunately no judge of human nature—a fatal omission on the part of Providence—therefore increasingly came to believe that, at heart, people were incredibly stupid and that he himself towered above all others.

"I never would have thought," he once said to me, "that the average level of people's knowledge and ability was so low."

And I replied, "That is only because of you. You only know the people around you, and you keep away or even repel clever people and outstanding men."

"How?" Hitler asked, astonished.

"Because your way of proceeding can tolerate no great men! Anyone with some education and competence requires defined spheres of work, trust, and autonomy. It's true that you will grant the sphere of work, but the feeling of trust cannot arise when you keep people in the dark about your ultimate intentions and aims. Autonomy requires a clear mission, the determination of a particular goal, and usually the definition of limits as well. When these are lacking, any work begins to flounder, turns unsatisfying, with the result that either the worker's interest wanes or he looks for rewarding work elsewhere."

“I cannot reveal my innermost thoughts to my associates [Hitler said], for they are not absolutely clear even to me. Nor am I so much in favor of being rigid. Everything is too new, everything is in a state of flux, everything is still forming. It is difficult to find outstanding men who are selfless enough to work without knowing what can be gained by it, what can be accomplished in the future; men willing to meditate, to discover and invent, without expecting that their achievement will ultimately find recognition and application in their former profession; men willing to give up their assured high income in order to live in penury in Munich and to travel all through Germany like hunted animals, without any reward other than the inner satisfaction of an altruistic martyr.”

I had to agree with Hitler. Although I had succeeded in finding men of at least some substance for my economic policy section, it was hard to say how long I would be able to hold on to them, once the tasks I had set them were accomplished. Since I kept up a running exchange of ideas with Strasser, who was dealing with the political sector, and since Hitler was considerably more open with me than with others, I personally did not feel those constraints others could not help but feel, and I could set myself clear directions and goals in my sphere of work.

In the years 1931 and 1932, I accompanied Hitler on most of his very frequent trips. This was a heavy burden on my new marriage, especially as my wife never knew where we were or when she might expect me back. In 1931, the first year of my marriage, I spent only forty-two days in Munich. All the rest of the time, I was traveling with Hitler, usually by car. But it had to be, in the interest of the whole, of the movement—yes, of the socialist ideal and the national rallying and rising of the German Volk after the collapse and humiliation of 1918–19. At the time, we gave no thought whatever to ourselves. Hitler exemplified this life, and we emulated it. “Germany” was our only thought—the German Volk and the German future.

On these trips the long evenings always furnished the best opportunity for discussions. There cannot have been a single field of knowledge or of practical life, of politics or of governing, that was not a frequent topic of the evening’s conversation. We were joined by whatever scientists, scholars, physicians, or artists Hitler had met earlier in the day—some by arrangement, others by chance—and had invited for the evening.

Hitler can be understood only if he is known through such conversations. The same holds true for working with him—but also for the misunderstandings and errors that showed themselves over and over again after his takeover of the government.

Not only did he have enormous knowledge in every area; he also read every book and most newspapers, and he devoured the lines with unimaginable swiftness. Yet he had the gift of picking out what was essential and immediately finding the proper place for it in the storehouse of his previous knowledge. But I believe that his greatest skill lay in his ability to express and verbalize with

altogether admirable distinctness and clarity any theme that happened to suit him or that an external occasion pulled into the sphere of the discussion—an ability such as others were able to develop only after long preparation and in the form of a carefully considered lecture.

Perhaps it was precisely this special gift that was part of the reason Hitler actually never issued instructions. He wanted, as I mentioned, to refrain from making decisions. He avoided—yes, he refused—saying: I want it to be this way or that. Rather, he outlined his ideas—which were usually formulated along more philosophic and general lines—to the person in question or the particular group and explained that the matter must be seen in such or such a light, viewed from this or that angle, decided according to this or that principle, and that in the process some aspect or other was to be considered. Then it was up to the individual to issue his instructions in his area and to work in such a way that the general direction laid out by Hitler, the great goal crystallized from these conversations, was striven for and, in time, attained. Occasionally, Hitler would say, “If all of us could work this way, if everyone could strive toward a shared, long-range goal with firm, conscious insistence, then the highest aim could not help but be achieved some day. It is only human that errors occur. It’s too bad. But it will be overcome if only a common goal is adopted again as a principle.”

When people, be they ministers or other co-workers, have to work with Hitler without knowing him and his ways, then it can, of course, easily happen that either they do not know what to do with his presentations or they take up as an instruction or order any fragment that just happened to suit their purposes or that they happened to understand or thought they understood as a direction or order, and then they doggedly carried it out, in part perhaps without being personally persuaded of the initiative’s necessity or correctness. It is worst when officers are forced to work with him, especially, as was the case later on, when as commander in chief of the Wehrmacht he is their superior. For the officer is accustomed to obedience; the more he is schooled in discipline and the less practice he has in independent exploration and solution of a particular task, the more the officer waits for an order. But Hitler is not prepared to issue orders, nor is he accustomed to issuing them. Thus, matters can be interpreted as orders that were in actual fact ideas, and their critical evaluation and execution would rightly have been the first task of the responsible men.

Hitler also had a weakness that was grounded precisely in this manner of working. Whenever anything was carried out on the basis of such conversations and general remarks, he claimed its success for himself. And there is no doubt that to some extent he was right. After all, when he held the discussion, he had some idea that the project in question would have to be executed in such or such a way. If something went wrong with such a task that had been performed the way he wanted it to be, he was equally willing to assume the responsibility, and for the same reason. But if it was carried out along a different line, he mer-

cilessly put the responsibility on whoever had committed the action. Furthermore, depending on the importance and significance of the matter, especially if it damaged the public welfare or even just public opinion, he drew the necessary conclusions. The person in question was transferred to another position, was let go, or was chided. And if the welfare of the state or Hitler himself seemed compromised in any way, the dressing down was administered publicly. The perpetrator was quite simply branded as the guilty party responsible for the resulting setback. Unfortunately, in later years Hitler made exceptions to this consistent policy whenever early followers committed such errors. At the proper place, I will have more to say about this issue.

Still, it was very easy to draw wrong conclusions from Hitler's running conversations, especially for people who were unfamiliar with his methods and his whole ideology and because at times he systematically endeavored to leave obscurities unresolved.

Finally, however, there was also something highly fascinating in his manner of speaking, perhaps even something hypnotic to some listeners. Men who were easily influenced would turn off their own thinking apparatus while they listened, so that they acted under a psychological compulsion, which they might not be in any position to understand themselves.

How strong this power of suggestion was I was able to observe on one occasion when Hitler attended an SA athletic meet. He followed the various events with burning interest and the determination to see extraordinary feats.

What happened is almost inconceivable. From the moment Hitler entered the stadium and was greeted with universal cheering, men who at other times were given to average performances began to improve their speed in the hundred-meter dash, increase their distance in the javelin throw, and in the relay race, in swimming, and even in sharpshooting attain scores that approached top international records and on occasion even topped them. These performers were simply under the spell of Hitler's personality. During the competitions he himself strained forward and visibly concentrated mentally and physically. When each event was finished, he collapsed, seemingly exhausted, for a few moments. [ . . . ]

Whenever he addressed large meetings—always improvising and speaking without the preparation we normally assume—he lost three or four pounds. His only preparation consisted of a quarter of an hour or so of mental concentration on the intended topic. During that time he occasionally took one or two Kola Dallmann pills.<sup>1</sup>

Small wonder, then, that Hitler was in the habit of giving himself some of the credit for major successes with which he was linked.

1. Kola Dallmann was a mild stimulant widely obtainable without a physician's prescription. In a passage of the memoirs not included here, Wagener reports that Hitler took sixteen Kola Dallmann tablets before going to meet with President Hindenburg in 1932: manuscript notebook 34, pp. 2072–73.

“While I work”—by this phrase he meant making speeches, participating in discussions, attending rallies, as well as his presence at some sports event, for example, or a military demonstration—“I gather renewed strength from the glowing eyes, the applause, and the enthusiasm of my listeners, the audience, the entire mass, and I concentrate it in myself for the *sole* purpose for which I happen to be present or which I am pursuing.”

This is why some people, quite understandably, say that there is something uncanny, dynamic, in his personality. Occasionally, this trait is also called despotically overpowering. But such an opinion can be formed only by people who do not know Hitler well and who attempt to determine his nature on the basis of outward behavior. Furthermore, it is absolutely wrong and misguided to try to label this sort of thing diabolical. The diabolical involves intention, and a satanic mentality or a satanic will. Both were entirely missing from Hitler’s makeup. But since he usually lived in an intellectual universe that differed from what we are accustomed to, his conclusions, his utterances—yes, even his instructions, when he found himself forced to issue them—could, in the hands of those who had to execute them, lead to consequences he neither intended nor foresaw.

We will see subsequently that, aside from several Gauleiter and other insignificant personalities, such as Ribbentrop, Funk, Frank, Bormann, and so on—in the main three men, acting according to their own diabolical characters, assumed the terrible guilt of taking Adolf Hitler’s thoughts and conversations as well as his actions and distorting or interpreting them quite unnaturally and covertly exploiting them for immoral and illegal, even criminal, actions, at times even for their personal advantage. These three men are Göring, Himmler, and Goebbels. Göring’s pathological delusions of grandeur grew into megalomania, accompanied by a persecution complex, which allowed him to turn to fraud and the killing of hundreds. Himmler’s mongrel mentality and purely mechanical intelligence interpreted his task—which was to safeguard the regime and the person of the Führer—as *carte blanche* for orders and actions that ran counter to every legal concept and bordered on the barbarous—yes, in the end even culminated in inconceivable mass murders. And Goebbels covertly worked as an agitator, whose scheming mind knew how to influence the Führer falsely. He turned the deliberate lie and defamation into legal methods of propaganda and national delusion, thus making sure that the incompetence and errors of the regime and of his men were veiled from the public by a mist of verbiage and statistics. Since, as we shall see, these three felons were the only remaining representatives of the party in the government of January 30, 1933, he could not rid himself of them so easily.<sup>2</sup> Rather, in one sense he had become their unwitting prisoner and saw himself confronted by their united front, which they used over and over again to shield each other.

2. On January 30, 1933, the cabinet in which Hitler served as chancellor took office.



In the years 1931 and 1932, however, there was no way to foresee this turn of events, and the role these three men were to play could not even be dreamed of. But in order to make the outsider understand what happened, I must anticipate events to point out the hidden reasons and motives. At the time, Strasser and I, at least, still hoped to be able to push Göring into the background. Himmler appeared only as Reich commandant of the SS, and hardly at all otherwise. And Goebbels was Gauleiter of Berlin; without a doubt he had achieved great successes in his post, but without distinguishing himself more than any other Gauleiter. Besides, he was subordinate to Gregor Strasser, the leader of Organizational Division I—that is, the party organization proper. He was recognized to be outstanding only as a popular speaker.

So it came about that Strasser and I, with our increasing number of associates, continued steadfastly on the road that was marked out for us. Time and again we extended a hand to each other and made mutual promises to expend all our energies on work with Hitler and for the NSDAP, to complete all the preparations necessary for meeting the tasks that would by rights fall to the party once it attained the required strength in the Reichstag. At the same time, we naturally also actively participated in the cooperative efforts toward attaining this political goal.

I have mentioned that Hitler was prepared to assume blame for, or at least to overlook, errors for which he felt even indirectly responsible and that he blamed others only when such errors or the resulting unfortunate consequences occurred *in opposition* to his instructions or utterances. In such cases, however, the personal relationship between himself and the man in question was not impaired, since he saw the error only as evidence of the unfortunate instability and insufficiency of human reason. But the desire not to violate his intentions, and the identification of his ideas with the welfare of the Volk—two impulses that grew increasingly intertwined—resulted in his followers' gradually becoming more reluctant to arrive at independent decisions. Their readiness to assume responsibility, the most valuable asset in working with others, withered and shriveled, and each one sought to support his actions with some direct or indirect shield—a word or, if at all possible, a signature from Hitler.

He himself felt this as a further proof of the insignificance of mankind and his own superiority. In time, he came to believe that he would really have to do everything himself and that without him there would be no such thing as the possibility of a decision. When, in addition, his sycophants and yes-men exploited every opportunity offered when mistakes were made or failure occurred to point out that once again the occasion was the result of an independent decision on someone else's part and that his opinion—that is, the Führer's—had not been solicited, then, even if he was unaware of it, he felt further confirmed in his belief that, in fact, *he alone* could do everything correctly and that he was above human weaknesses.

It was precisely this overbearing ego—gradually instilled in him by others

and not evident earlier, at least not in this form—that caused him to see as an offense which could not be punished severely enough any lack of respect for his person or any attempt in the presence of others to point out to him an error or mistake he himself had made. The worst, of course, was any activity or preparation for activity that deliberately ran counter to his ideas and intentions, let alone an organization and arrangement with others that resulted in sabotaging his plans or forcing him into some position against his will. In such cases, he could fly into an indignant rage, whereby the vein on his forehead from the top of his nose to his hairline swelled and grew blue in a most terrifying way, and his voice cracked, so that it seemed that we should fear for his life—and for our own as well. Thus, out of respect for this man who was otherwise so unusual, we avoided causing such an outburst, or we let it break over us in silence. For that very same reason, on the other hand, it was all too easy for scheming characters to arouse him against someone else, in that way depriving the victim of his influence and position over time.

These attacks, however, were infrequent, and it is an odd fact that Hitler himself was afraid of them—particularly since afterward he always collapsed and had to take medication to calm himself. Frequently this trait was characterized as the expression of a despotic will. With a personality like Hitler's, it could not help but appear that way occasionally. But in reality I am certain that it was more the expression of a morbid compulsion, connected somehow with a glandular malfunction that cancels all the constraints of upbringing, good manners, and, in Hitler's case, an otherwise boundless good nature. In my opinion, therefore, these truly disturbing occurrences are not to be judged as a character trait but as the symptom of a biological deficiency.

But there is no doubt that it was part of his character that Hitler had a very highly developed sensitivity to respect of his person. This may be justified to some extent by complexes that grew out of his origins and the past events of his life or, on the other hand, through a *prima donna*-like vanity not infrequent in artistic temperaments. But I always had the feeling that there was more behind it, and that, quite simply, Hitler's whole being was born to accomplish a special mission, which required respect of his person. An incident from 1930 throws light on this very graphically.

One time, when we were about to return from Nuremberg—Hitler in his new 200 HP Mercedes, and Pfeffer and I in our old 35–60–120 car—Pfeffer claimed that the two-hundred-horsepower engine could not be put to full use in curves and settled districts. Hitler maintained that the reserve implicit in two hundred horsepower nevertheless allowed him to attain significantly higher average speeds than were possible in a lesser car. Pfeffer challenged the assertion. It thus was decided that Hitler would give us a fifteen-minute headstart. He assured us that by Ingolstadt he would have caught up with us.

At first, we drove at our car's top speed. But we had no doubt that Hitler would be faster still. And sure enough, after an hour we caught an occasional

glimpse of a dust cloud behind us that indicated the approach of the bigger car. I believe that it was near Eichstätt when we had to admit that we would soon be overtaken. Then it occurred to us to drive a lap around a church in Eichstätt and let Hitler drive past us without his knowing it. The ruse worked. When we left Eichstätt by way of the Altmühl Bridge, we could see him already on the other side, rushing along the valley road like an arrow and disappearing into the forest. And we imagined him continuing to try to chase us, demanding the utmost from his car in order to catch us.

When we met again in Munich and Pfeffer, in his dry way, explained our trick, Hitler took immediate offense. He said not another word, and he rose as soon as we had finished eating to retire, barely saying goodnight.

Then I remembered that more than twenty years earlier, when I was a cadet training officer, I had always taught one thing to the young officers in my regiment: you could play tricks—we called it “teasing” at the time—only on those of equal rank and equal standing. Generally, both superiors and subordinates were offended when a joke was played on them; they felt either held in low esteem or despised altogether. Just so, Hitler did not feel “of equal rank.” At the time I wondered why. Today I understand that he already harbored within himself his vocation as “Führer,” in much the form as this position actually evolved subsequently. It certainly was not a matter of his having an inferiority complex!

If one wanted to call his attention to a mistaken view, an error in reasoning, or a contradiction with basic concepts of his own program or the law, morality, or ethics, it was essential to avoid doing so in the presence of outsiders. Only the presence of the people closest to him—Hess, Schaub, Sepp Dietrich, and the rest—could be tolerated in such a situation, though even then Hitler did not like to be spoken to in a way that might appear as instruction, let alone as a reprimand. On occasions that did not seem to allow for delay, he preferred that a request be made to impart an “important message” to him in private.

If one spoke to him about errors, mistakes, even the possibility of a different opinion, in private or in the strictest confidence, he was, in fact, usually open to the idea. He also willingly listened when he was told something that, in the presence of others, would have aroused his deepest outrage.

Once, in 1932 in Nuremberg, Hitler attacked the aged Reich President in a speech: although the party had emerged as the strongest in a new Reichstag election, the Reich President had not charged Hitler with forming a national government, as both democratic principles and parliamentary order would have required; instead, Hitler was expected to let himself be fobbed off with the position of vice-chancellor. In the course of his address, Hitler used turns of speech that might have been taken as insulting and ridiculing the old gentleman. As soon as I read newspaper reports of the proceedings, with corresponding commentary, I drove from Berlin to Munich and up to the Berghof near Berchtesgaden, to which Hitler had already returned, to tell him that such

presentations were a mistake that could only bring discredit on him. I found Hitler in the living room of the weekend cottage—which was still modest at the time—just about to sit down to breakfast with the people closest to him.

At my entrance, he sent away all those present—even his sister, who kept house for him in the mountains—as if he could read from my expression that I wanted to have a confidential interview. When I briefly reported to him why I had come, concluding with the words, “One should never deprive the Volk of its gods, but most especially one must not insult them!” he extended both hands to me and answered, “Wagener, I thank you. I’ve had the same realization myself. You are right. One should never deprive the Volk of its gods.” After a short pause he continued, “I won’t do it again.” And then, after briefly pressing my hands, he let go and said, “But now, go.”

Thus, my visit lasted no more than three minutes. For three or four weeks afterward, however, he avoided meetings with me. But when, in March 1933, outside the Garrison Church in Potsdam, I saw Hitler bowing deeply to Hindenburg, the faithful Ekkehard<sup>3</sup> of the German Volk, in response to the older man’s extending his hand—perhaps the only time Hitler ever bowed to anyone, a gesture preserved in innumerable photographs—I could not help remembering my admonition.

Hitler *could* be guided. Hitler *was willing* to change. But one cannot deal with such an unusual person in the way one commonly deals with people. One had to know him—his strengths, his weaknesses, his ingenious abilities, and his human foibles.

Thus, in 1931 and 1932, in Munich, traveling, and especially during the evenings in the hotels and other quarters where we frequently sat alone together while Schaub and Schreck, as well as Sepp Dietrich and Hoffmann, who almost always accompanied us, sought conversation and diversion elsewhere, I came to know Hitler in a way hardly anyone else had come to know him—yes, I think I am justified in saying that no one else could have come to know him in this way. It was a crime—committed by those responsible for the decision—that on January 30, 1933, Hitler *alone* was singled out from the circle of those who had worked with him for years, had fought with him, and had joined with him; that he was forced into accepting a cabinet consisting almost entirely of his political opponents; and that this group contained no one prepared or even aware of the necessity or in a position—to act as a catalyst between the opposing representatives of the national government, who were mistrustful of each other, did not understand each other, and would always remain strangers to each other.

3. The faithful Ekkehard, a loyal, steadfast, elderly servant, appears frequently in German folktales.

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## Hitler on the Goals of Zionism—He Is Instructed on War as a Losing Business Proposition

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**A**fter telling of his part in the maneuvers that brought the NSDAP into the state government in Thuringia in 1930, and after giving further examples of Göring's influence over Hitler, Wagener returns to the economic policy conferences he conducted for Hitler in the Brown House. He recounts how, following the British devaluation of the pound in the fall of 1931, his assistant Adrian von Renteln delivered a talk on the gold standard, which the British had just abandoned. Employing pseudo-historical arguments, Renteln described the gold standard as an invention of the Jews. Having no political power, he contended, they had invented the power of money.

“Here I must point out,” Hitler interrupted “that through its domination of the monetary system, Jewish power was always situated outside, among other peoples, never within the borders of its own Volk.

“This is a remarkable phenomenon. The power a person or a Volk has abroad or in relation to the outside world is usually in inverse proportion to its own internal consolidation or its domestic power, unless we are speaking of a despotism based purely on military strength. The latter is, in my opinion, more powerful than financial might, but more dangerous, more easily attacked, and therefore vulnerable.

“The Jewish people, however, possessed practically no proper state organization after its deportation into Babylonian captivity. Domestically, there no longer existed any kind of power concentration, and on the military level, Jewry had never had any significance. On the other hand, outside, among other peoples, we see the Jews everywhere as traders, merchants, and bankers—and in the main as moneylenders. And when they control the money, they control the financial power.

“If Jewish power had been centered in a strong mother country, the enemies of Judah could have destroyed the state and its power. They actually *did* destroy the state when it existed, they even razed the temple. But the financial power

every single Jew possessed and wielded abroad was not touched by this act. And so this power went on nomadizing. There was no place where it could be touched, attacked, removed. For it had no vital center and did not lie in the area that was dominated by a military ruling power.

“Therefore, it is also clear that Jewish financial power in the individual countries would, at one time or another, inevitably come in conflict with the relevant authorities and that the states would seize the means either of locking up the Jews or expelling them. But the nations never act in concert. On the contrary, most often a majority of the other states—usually under the very influence of Jewry, which was never miserly with its financial resources and their effectiveness to accomplish this purpose—took a stand in opposition to the nation that had decided in favor of expulsion. And therefore such limited expulsions never broke the international power of Jewry; more often, they only served to strengthen it.

“The financial power of Jewry can be broken only by the creation of a large Jewish state to which all the Jews are deported. But since such a project cannot be undertaken unless the people of the world, without exception, form into a solid, closed union, there is no need to hurry.”

“What I find particularly interesting in your presentation,” I added, “is that you say that in fact, only military power can threaten Jewry, but only when Jewry lives together in a finite state. But at the present time, efforts are under way precisely on the part of Jewry to create a new Jewish state, and the Jews’ great hopes are focused on Palestine.”

“That very fact shows you that the Jews do not genuinely care about an actual Jewish state. For the cunning Jew would not situate his national home in a place that just happens to be a desert and where there is a lack of all the raw materials necessary to a modern Volk.

“Therefore, the reestablishment of the Jewish state of Palestine has quite other motives.

“The Great War allowed Jewish power to increase quite incredibly. It takes money to conduct a war. And so, through the Great War, which in fact in some way united all the people of the world in shared suffering, the Jews got the greatest chance they ever had. All the financing of the war, whatever nation was involved, went almost exclusively through the hands of the Jews. Read the signatures on issuances of war loans. Not only German loans, but also English, French, American, and whatever other countries. You will see the names of Jewish banking houses almost exclusively. They raised the money, and the good citizens scraped together their last pennies, signing them over to the consortium of Jew banks in the form of war loans. To those people who happened to have no cash at the moment, the banks even extended credit on tangible property, so they could subscribe to war loans above their own real assets. Then this consortium of banks put the collected amounts at the disposal of the particular state, in exchange for a high agent’s commission. Hundreds of billions of the people’s

assets flowed through the coffers and ledgers of the Jew banks in this way, and each time hundreds of millions got stuck there in the form of commissions. The whole deal held no risk whatever for the banks. The banks added nothing from their own assets. Rather, as I said, they only loaned them to others against securities, so that the others might be the fools and take the risk; or they used their liquid assets to carry out the financing of the wartime economy, to which most of the loan fund flowed for war orders. This financial participation was at least as profitable and free of risk as the loan transaction.

“By the end of the war, in any case, the nations and the economy had without exception become the major debtors of the Jew banks or were in their possession. Private citizens in large part held their war loans, which were either devalued or frozen. But the banks satisfied themselves with their securities. The financial power of the Jews was thus consolidated as never before. The promise of the Old Testament seemed to have reached fulfillment: ‘All nations shall be subject to you, their kings shall serve you,’ and so on. Jewish power in the world appeared to have become unassailable, absolute, perfect.

“Now all that remained to be done was to prop up this power spiritually, politically, and, as much as possible, even religiously. But this required a visible concentration of the Jewish people. Where this center was situated was in itself of no consequence whatever. For it was not meant to be a proper political or economic power center. This power would have to continue to reside abroad, among other nations. But we can see from the propaganda—for example, for the idea of the chosen people of Israel—the goal that is being pursued. If one has seen the greasy, threadbare, scheming Polish and Galician Jews, as they come into Vienna and Berlin, wearing their vermin-ridden caftans and carrying bundles of soiled clothes, one can acquire a proper taste for God’s chosen people! But the chosen people must connect with its old tradition. It *had* to go to Jerusalem. No other place in the world was as well suited and as significant. At the same time, Christianity—which also has its roots in Jerusalem, the site where its great Creator performed his works—was drawn into the power circle of the newly discovered people of God.

“The establishment of the Jewish state of Palestine is thus not the reunification of the Jewish people in one state, but the attempt to create a worldwide Jewish headquarters, intended—in time, using international financial power—to seize absolute control of the destinies of all the peoples in the world. In order, furthermore, to eliminate any possibility of a military display of power by any state, all that is required is the expansion of the League of Nations into a kind of world state. Then, if this world state might even be allowed to wield military might more or less as a world police—then Judah will finally have stabilized its financial power in the world, guaranteed and secured by the universal international military force, into which the oppressed are conscripted to serve their oppressors. That is the meaning of Palestine!”

“This financial power would be broken once and for all by our idea of

currency and ownership transfers. There is no doubt that world Jewry will make every effort to prevent its being put into practice—even its publication,” I said.

“It follows, then, as I have always stressed, that this idea may in no way be made the subject of propaganda or even of a discussion outside your most intimate working group. Anyway, it cannot be put into practice until we have seized political power. And even then, not only the Jews, but all of private industry, especially heavy industry, will oppose us, as well as the medium-sized and large landowners, and of course the banks. And how the army will react, the devil only knows.

“There is no one we can depend on except the middle class, the workers, and the farmers. Granted, they constitute the mass of the Volk. But we can carry out our plan only with the support of the intelligentsia. And they are the others. That is the dilemma we face. If we proceed with the masses against the intelligentsia, then, whether we wish it or not, our program will degenerate into Bolshevik forms. But if we try our luck with the intelligentsia, the idea will be boycotted and sabotaged. So, our only chance is to train a new generation in the socialist idea of responsibility for the community of the Volk and in faith in the rightness of our directions and aims.

“It is to be hoped that international Jewry, which is intent on leading all the peoples of the world in battle against us, grants us the time of *one* generation. Otherwise, we and the German Volk will be cheated of our hopes and preparations, and Bolshevism will have its way, turning Europe into a field of rubble and setting the culture of the world back by centuries. For its control, too, lies in Jewish hands. Even if the Jews do not succeed in building their world dominion on financial power, and securing it by international military might, they can still use the method of bolshevizing the world, removing the peoples’ natural leadership class, and enslaving their masses. To secure *this* domination, no military power at all is needed. Sufficient for that is the Inquisition—currently called the GPU.”<sup>1</sup>

Hitler fell silent. We were somewhat confused. But once again his presentation had been so compelling and clear that it had drawn all of us completely under its spell. I therefore proposed a short recess of five minutes, so that we might get back to the topic of the currency.

Such discussions in Hitler’s presence were always deep experiences, even for someone who was often in his company. But it was very difficult to make certain that the topic was adhered to. Time and again his genius rushed ahead of any logical sequence of thought, or he digressed on subjects more concerned with the political consequences of a perception or description than with the intended purely material consequences!

*Wagener here continues his lengthy recapitulation of Renteln’s discursive presentation on the subject of money. Like Wagener, Renteln rejected a fixed*

1. GPU are the initials of the Soviet secret police, 1923–34.



*interest rate for loaned money, endorsing instead participation by the creditor in the profits and the losses of the debtor. Renteln also rejected court-ordered foreclosures in cases of defaults on loans.*

“Here I share your opinion completely,” Hitler interrupted. “The state must try to figure out, not everything it can organize and regulate through laws, but rather what it absolutely *must* organize and regulate. The state should be as invisible as possible. The economy is sure to find the right way by itself. And the education of the people to morality and respect for the law, as well as to a higher ethical relationship among one another and to the community—these are the paths a state must take among a highly developed people, which deserves freedom and trust, such as the German Volk.”

*Renteln continued by contending that the invention of bills of exchange and the development of the whole system of banking and credit had made possible an unnatural “self-propagation” of money, with the result that money no longer stood in a correct relationship to the available goods. Gigantic profits had gone to moneylenders, and a massive swindle had been carried out against the peoples of the world. All this had, moreover, been successfully concealed by the prevailing economic orthodoxy. Only the united strength of all the socialists of the world could overcome this delusion, Renteln maintained.*

“All that sounds so simple and correct,” Hitler commented, “that it is hard to believe the world is actually caught in a utopian delusion, is in the grip of what amounts to a hypnotic obsession.”

“Occasionally, Herr Hitler,” I replied, “we may even become irresolute, because it truly does seem quite unimaginable that humanity voluntarily surrenders itself to a deception under which it suffers as under the lash.”

“Marx, even Lenin and Stalin, cannot be understood until one has recognized these things,” Hitler offered. “But is there really no other way out of the labyrinth of this delusion that originated in a Jewish exploit? I know you think you’ve found a way, and at the time it made sense to me, too. But the subject is too foreign for me to be able to arrive at my own judgment.”

“But that is precisely what makes the situation so bad—that the subject is too foreign to almost everyone. Only this makes it possible to keep up the world-wide deception.”

“But how did it happen that Marx and the Bolsheviks did not find a method other than total destruction, when there must surely be a more reasonable course?”

“Because men are so caught up in this hypnosis [Wagener replied] that they will not permit the necessary change unless it is forced on them by the most radical means—that is, by those of destruction.”

“But you think that *we* can take another way?”

“Once we have acquired one hundred percent of the power in the state.”

“And the world?”

“It will unite all the armies and navies of Europe and America to vanquish us and to remove this deadly peril to the world dominion of financial capital—that is, of Jewry. And they will kill anyone, they will burn all the books and documents that might serve as witnesses of the truth of the perception.”

Hitler fell silent. After a while he said,

“And you believe that we would find no support even in England?”

“England and America are the ones most strongly interested in preserving the hypnosis. The only nation that might possibly be prepared to follow our thoughts is Russia.”

“We cannot go with Russia. The Russian isn’t ready yet. He is clearly a compromise creature—between child and beast of prey. The Russian Volk wouldn’t even begin to know what to do with our perceptions. If we find it hard going even with the German Volk—how impossible it would be in Russia!”

“I’ll admit that much. It will take generations before Russia is in a position to give its Volk self-administration, not to mention entrusting it with organically establishing an economy.”

“I’m delighted to hear you finally agreeing with me on that point. But now, Renteln, continue.”

*Wagener goes on to describe how Renteln compared the role of money in an economy with that of blood in the human body. Just as in a healthy person the amount of blood must correspond to the size of the body, money must be covered by goods in order to maintain a sound equilibrium in an economy. Credit arrangements had, however, disturbed this equilibrium. Money had become something in its own right instead of remaining a mere function of the economy. This situation had been aggravated by war, which “blew away” most war production. Thus war loans, which the enormous costs of modern war made unavoidable, remained uncovered by goods. The result had to be a devaluation of currency that would restore the equilibrium between the amount of money and the available goods. This was what had happened in England, after a thirteen-year delay, through the break with the gold standard and the devaluation of the pound.*

“Then it is your opinion,” Hitler asked, “that no war can ever be won economically?”

“A war on the dimensions of the Great War—never [Renteln replied]. And since new wars are always waged with new weapons—that is, with more expensive means of destruction—in future the disproportion will only grow greater.”

“But if the victor seizes and expropriates for his own uses all the land and all the factories and all the mineral resources of the vanquished—or at least a large part of them—it should be possible to obtain collateral for the war obligations?”

“To some extent—yes. For if the state resells the confiscated assets—that is,

those taken from the vanquished—to private parties, it brings in money with which it can cover its obligations. It can even let itself be paid in war loans. But if, instead of selling them, it nationalizes them, as it were, that imposes an additional financial commitment on the state. Of course, it can put the population of the conquered state to work, as was done in antiquity, in slavery or at half-wages; it can even sell them into slavery. Such procedures could absolutely be wrapped in the cloak of Christian charity—for example, by allowing the workers among the vanquished, so long as they are prisoners of war, to work in private industry, while the employers pay the wages, not to the workers themselves, but to the state treasury, giving the workers an amount sufficient only to keep them fit to work.

“That can be done. It isn’t German, but after the Great War some of the civilized nations behaved no differently. All the same, these are just drops of water in the sea of existing obligations and debts.

“Furthermore, in general, war causes such heavy devastation in the land of the vanquished, or at least in the areas where the war was fought, that the resumption of economic profitability in the country in question is delayed for years. If one keeps the land, it becomes merely one more burden, therefore, and in the last analysis, it drains the purses or the income of one’s own citizenry. If one doesn’t keep it, one is saved the additional burden—true. But since international economic relations rest heavily on reciprocity, even the victor suffers from the indisposition of the vanquished.

“From the economic point of view, therefore, a war of the extent of the Great War is always and in every case sheer folly, an absolutely catastrophic losing business, a setback for every participating nation for decades. And if, to boot, a state starts a war for economic reasons—that is, with the purpose of improving its own economic situation—it is absolutely certain that such a state achieves precisely the opposite. It might just as well impose a special tax on its citizens for one-third to one-half of their assets and destroy the proceeds in one glorious fireworks display—in the process making sure that some hundreds of thousands of people lose their lives.”

At this, Hitler turned to me with the words:

“Is that true?” To which I simply replied,

“Yes.”

“Then let us discuss this point further at our first opportunity.

“I thank you, Renteln, for your presentation. I’ve understood the English currency slump. That was what I was looking for. But I have another question: What will be the effect of the English currency decline?”

“None at all, in England. For there the adjustment between reciprocal indebtedness—that is, the money supply—and the national wealth has already taken place. It was precisely this that forced England to devalue the pound. The purchasing power of the pound in England itself had already fallen by about one-third, everything had become more expensive by one-third. Because of this,

England naturally choked off more and more of its exports. By and by, everything had become too expensive, especially compared to the price of German goods, where the mark was pegged to gold, as were prices. So England had to lower the pound by one-third, to get back to normal prices abroad.

“That is why I say: internally, in England itself, the devaluation of the pound will not have an effect on either prices or wages. And since the entire sterling bloc participates in the lowering, and England gets most of its imports from the sterling-bloc countries, the essential imports will not become more expensive, either.

“But as concerns the rest of the world, in future, England will more easily be able to export goods again. It will once again be able to take a competitive place in the world market, a change that will be of particular significance for the German export economy. Our exports will dwindle even more, unemployment will become even more severe!”

“Would you also devalue the mark now?” Hitler asked me.

“No. I would carry out the new economic measures we planned. That assures—it’s child’s play, in fact—that we can export enough to allow us to import whatever we need. And to export more than that is nothing but provocation to war, and cheating the people and stealing them blind besides.”

“What will others do?”

“America will follow England’s line. Reluctantly. But it has no choice! Since it depends on exports.”

Hitler was pondering something. Then he said to me:

“That, too, is something I’d like to discuss with you at another time.”

And to the group he added:

“I see that your work is proceeding smoothly. To bring about clarity is our first task. Everything in the world is stale, brittle, worn-out. Only new, revolutionary ideas can save us! But only the ideas should be revolutionary, not the form in which they are realized.”

With this Hitler took his leave. We ourselves, after a short pause, continued our deliberations on currency.

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## “Export Mania” as the Cause of the World War—Plans for Creating Jobs—Prerequisites: Faith, Love, and Hope—A Financing Scheme—Hitler Insists on Secrecy

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**W**agener proceeds by telling of a presentation delivered at one of the economic policy conferences by his assistant Bernhard Köhler on the subject of a program to combat unemployment. According to Wagener, Köhler began by denouncing industrialization and a reliance on exports, which he said characterized the economic policy of the Republic. Germany's success in applying that prescription during the imperial period had, Köhler argued, aroused the hostility of the other industrial countries, especially England and the United States. Since they saw no other way to combat German competition, they had resorted to militarism. At that point, Wagener writes, Hitler interrupted Köhler.

“You're quite right. The others are the militarists. The fact that Germany made the military defeat so difficult for them makes them, first, revile Germany as the typical military state and, second, demand the demilitarization of Germany in perpetuity. Simply so that next time it will be easier for them to destroy the German economy, should it become a thorn in their side again.

“The Kaiser was quite right to think it necessary to secure the German economy by a strong army and a strong navy.”

“The only question is,” I replied, “whether economic imperialism is ever right and whether it is necessary to the welfare of a nation.”

“And that's precisely the gist of the topic I wish to discuss in general terms today,” Köhler said.

“The fact that after the Great War Germany fell back into its old ways at once: export, export!—that, it must be said, was in the main the fault of our opponents and the dictate of Versailles. For the war indemnities and reparations that were called for were simply a way to stimulate German industry's produc-

tion and export in a way that would never have been possible with free competition. In their complete blindness, the opponents—who had started the war and waged it in order to eliminate German economic competition from the world market once and for all—forced Germany back into the world market and at the same time established dumping prices for it, made even softer by the great devaluation process of the German currency, so that their own economies became simply incapable of competing. They had waged the entire war for nothing. German industry was working at full speed, the world market was more open to the expansion of German exports than ever before.

“Only now did they decide to take the actions necessary to rectify their errors. Since, as a result of their military victory, they had all the power, they simply closed their countries to German exports and rescinded the stipulation concerning reparation payments in kind.

“These measures brought about the setback in Germany. Exports shrank, production had to be restricted, the blast furnaces were shut down in ever greater numbers, and transatlantic shipping almost came to a standstill. Unemployment set in; economic collapse, want, hunger, and hopelessness replaced the prosperity of the German economy, which had originally been set in motion by our opponents’ foolishness.

“This is the situation we find ourselves in today. Now we see how completely unnatural industrialization is. If one reads the business press, listens to industrialists, examines governmental measures, even if one talks to the worker, the citizen, the man of the people—all of them gaze beyond our borders as if they were bewitched: How can we start up our exports again? That is the alpha and omega of every consideration. Brüning capped this delusion with his fourth emergency decree.<sup>1</sup> He issued this insane decree only because he believed that lowering prices by ten percent would start exports up again.”

“So *that* was what it was all about,” Hitler cried. “You mean Brüning actually had something in mind when he committed his criminal mindlessness?”

“This export mania is a sickness, pure and simple,” Strasser observed.

“And it will not be easy for us,” I added, “to cure big business and heavy industry especially, but also the Hamburg exporters, of this disease.”

Köhler continued:

“But only one way is left open to us, which also happens to be the right way: to adjust everything to the domestic market, to bring order into it, to stimulate domestic demand, and to export only as much as is absolutely necessary to cover the essential imports. If we carry out this principle and respect it in perpetuity, the other nations of the world, especially America, will also lose this crucial reason to draw their weapons against us. We might even be able to have America as an ally rather than an enemy.

1. The Brüning cabinet’s fourth emergency decree was issued on December 8, 1931.

“But if we return to the lunacy of wanting to export in every possible way, in time the nations that opposed us during the Great War will have no choice but to draw again the sword they have only just sheathed. But next time, they’ll do right what they did wrong in 1918–19. They will destroy our export industry completely, demolish and eliminate it; they will take away our raw-materials industry and administer it themselves; and they will destroy our fleets except for medieval coastal vessels. We can count on that happening with a hundred-percent certainty. For *that* is the instigation to a world war. In their foolishness, they deprived themselves of the fruits of their victory through their own dictated peace. But if we give them cause to strike once more, they will make up with ruthless brutality for what they neglected to do the first time.”

Here Hitler turned to me, saying:

“I never realized before in the same way that this export mania is an ‘addiction’ that forms one of the principal causes of war.” [ . . . ]

“But can Germany survive without exports?” Hitler asked.

“No [Wagener replied]. It has to export. But, as Köhler quite correctly pointed out, it need export only enough to pay for the necessary imports.”

“But surely more than that was never exported?”

*Here Wagener repeats, by way of answering Hitler’s question, his earlier claim to the effect that fifty billion marks worth of German capital in other countries had been confiscated because of the war. The accumulation of those holdings abroad proved, Wagener explained to Hitler, that more had been exported than was necessary. Wagener then continued.*

“The Great War put an end to these fifty billions of German foreign assets. The betrayers of the Volk are already shouting, ‘Export, export!’ again.

“I warn you, Herr Hitler, against the Ruhr industrialists, against industry in general, and against those who are addicted to export! They are the real enemies of Germany and of the German Volk! And I must also warn you against those they have bought and paid for!”

For a moment Hitler looked at me in silence and astonishment. Then he said:

“I thought you yourself had been an industrialist who had exported a great deal?”

“That’s right! And that is how I know,” I countered.

There was another short pause. Then Hitler asked:

“Yes, but can the domestic market employ the German Volk?”

Here, Dr. Köhler asked to be allowed to continue, since he was about to touch on this point.

“During the war no repairs were undertaken, there were no replacements, nothing was updated. So, a great deal was made inoperable. And afterward, there was the devaluation period, during which the Volk lost its savings, its property to the extent that it consisted of money. After that, it was even more

impossible to make repairs and replacements. Now there is absolute and widespread want, even among those who still have some property. No one any longer has the courage to start on anything. Everyone just draws on his substance or his nest egg and calculates when it will be used up.

“The opportunity for work, the demand, the orders would thus exist aplenty. To these could be added the larger projects that can be undertaken at any time: the building of large electric plants at the rivers, the control structures and power networks that go with them, the conversion of the railroads to electricity, as well as the electrification of industry, small-scale shops, and homes. Further, motorization of transport—automobile production, highways, renovation of the old road network, truck traffic, bus traffic. Finally, residential construction, which is so crucially needed, not only in the cities, but also in the countryside and in the proposed suburban settlements.

“All those are projects that could be begun at once, at any time—that is, even before the economic system has been adapted to our National Socialist principles. Once *that* is under way and carried out, there will never again be a crisis of unemployment.

“If we consider the question of why current governments do not tackle these projects, we can come up with three answers:

“One: They are deficient in the ideas, the understanding, the love of the Volk, and the will to do anything that runs counter to their previous interests.

“Two: The Volk lacks the faith, hope, trust, and courage needed for any undertaking, since it must fear that no good will come of anything.

“Three: People who are in a position to place job orders lack the cash or the credit to carry out the work.

“So the problems are in an area quite different from industry, or foreign exports, or demand. Faith, love, hope—these three form the ethical prerequisites, and the question of financing is the only practical consideration that must be solved beforehand. To solve the first three is the responsibility of the movement, the political leadership; we must solve the question of financing, and subsequently it must be implemented by the state.”

At this, Hitler rose abruptly from his chair and, his eyes shining, said:

“Quite right! I share your view completely! People keep talking about how economic situations can be changed and improved only by economic measures. No! There are two ways to alleviate hardship—perhaps even to abolish it: either by actually abolishing the hardship—but that is not always possible, at least not right away—or by *abolishing the feeling of hardship!* And *that is possible* if one goes about it the right way! To inspire faith, love, and hope—you’re right, that is our first responsibility. It can be accomplished, or at least attacked, even before we can be active within the government. The greater the faith, the more trusting the love; and the more conviction resides in the hope that unites us and our movement with the whole German Volk, the more powerful grows the readiness and the will and the whole dynamic with which



we will seize the government! Then we need only give the right kind of support. The *sense* of having overcome will itself bring about the miracle of abolishing hardship!" [ . . . ]

Köhler continued along these lines:

"I'm not worried about the psychological and ethical stipulations. The second point—the process of creating trust, creating new courage and new confidence—is already under way.

"Nor need there be any further concern about the first point—the ideas, the understanding, the love for the Volk, and the will of the leaders—once we are in a position to act. I shall return briefly to details of the projects later on.

"The big question mark applies to the third point—financing. This is what will be crucial.

"According to the prevailing economic theories, no avenue has been left unexplored. None of them has led to the objective. There simply is not enough money! Because of the lack of liquid assets, orders cannot be placed! And according to the current scholarly conceptions and according to the principles—thus far incontestable—of monetary and fiscal policy, there is no way to create more money, except, at most, through foreign credits.

"Only since I have belonged to this staff have I realized that the current theories of scientific economics are simply nonsense and that the unassailable principles of internationally accepted monetary policies are just plain wrong!

"I have come to recognize that money is not a thing in itself but a function of the industrial sector, and that a state has, not only the right, but also the duty, to see to it that the economic sector is sufficiently supplied with money—and with good money."

*In the following passage, Wagener details Köhler's proposals for stimulating both public and private economic activity, and thus employment for the jobless, by means of state credits for construction projects. When Köhler paused, Wagener reports Hitler's interjecting the following.*

"That's the kind of news I like to hear! But where does the money come from?"

"It is created," Köhler answered. "Newly brought into being out of thin air; if you like, fabricated!"

Smiling, Hitler shook his head and said to me, "If it were just him and me, I'd have to think: the poor crazy fool."

To which I could only reply, "And yet he's right. The only thing that's new about his idea is that the state is the originator. The Jewish banks have always done the same thing when they saw an advantage to themselves in it and found enough security."

"I do not understand that," he said again, still shaking his head. Which is why I continued:

“Pretend for a moment, Herr Hitler, that a plane flies over Germany and at intervals lets a thousand-mark note flutter to the ground, where it is picked up by someone or other. Let’s pretend that a message is attached to each thousand-mark note saying that it is a gift from you—or from the government—and that the finder may use it immediately—that he must use it immediately—that is, that he must buy something with it that he needs for himself and his family.

“What happens? Wherever such a thousand-mark note is found and used as purchasing power, a thousand marks are spent. Some people pocket these thousand marks as the profits of labor or goods. In the final outcome, somewhere and somehow work is created for about a thousand marks. That means: taken all in all, *one* unemployed worker is put back to work for six to eight months. But since he, in his turn, will be spending the thousand marks rather than hiding them under his mattress, a second unemployed worker is put back to work for about six months, or someone who has been working short hours can go on full time, or however you want to look at it. And the demand for goods created by the buying power of new fully employed workers stimulates the production of these goods. One could perhaps say that every thousand-mark note thrown from the plane puts two to three workers into full employment for half a year each.”

Hitler interrupted with a question:

“But that’s exactly what the present regime has been doing. After all, *it* pays unemployment benefits with no strings attached!”

“Yes and no! That is, it pays each worker only as much as he needs to eke out his meager existence. What can an unemployed worker buy with his dole? Just barely what he and his family need in the way of food. Nothing more. So he employs only agriculture and the food industry and keeps up the import requirements for food. If the unemployed were paid their full wages, they would also buy clothes, dishes, shoes, and so on. So they would activate business and industry—that is, draw the unemployed out of the market. This is where the arithmetic has been wrong!” [ . . . ]

Hitler, who had listened with great interest, now said, his eyes shining:

“It seems to me as if these superbrains are standing before a stopped clock, and it never occurs to them that all that’s wrong with it is that it hasn’t been wound!”

*Wagner then recounts how he explained to Hitler that the state had the right to create new money. So long as it was used for constructive purposes and gave rise to new goods, there was no problem. Within a few years, the expended sum could be drawn back into the government treasury by means of the additional tax revenues which it would generate.*

“I have one more question about the problem of financing,” Hitler said. “If it is as simple as your description makes it sound, then it seems to me more and

more incomprehensible that our political opponents themselves haven't discovered these ways. Why don't they take that route?"

"First, I do not believe," I replied, "that these people—at least not those who hold responsible positions in the state—have yet recognized these ways. Second, taking this route would mean abandonment of the money and capital economy practiced until now, and with it the dethronement of those who hold in their hands the worldwide power of money and therefore dominate the world's economies. And, third, those who are responsible in the government as well as the leaders of the Reichstag parties, not to mention most Reichstag delegates, are directly or indirectly paid out of the coffers of the money magnates—let's be blunt about it, they are bribed." [ . . . ]

"Do you consider it appropriate [Hitler asked] for us to publicize the ideas presented here?"

"No. We would rally the united opposition of the leaders who control capital throughout the world and their governments. Even now, there are some who suspect that we are obsessed with jettisoning the gold standard and the idea of gold backing, a matter we already consider completely settled, so that we no longer bother to discuss it. But that alone is enough to give the mighty in the Ruhr, heavy industry, the banking world, and especially the Masonic lodges cause to sound the alarm against us and our economic principles.

"We will see that once we, as the strongest party in the Reichstag, can claim the right to form a government, these people will manage to assign us to those ministries that have nothing to do with the economy and especially to eliminate the influence of precisely those persons who gave birth to our socio-economic ideas and who could realize them."

"I am of the same opinion [Hitler remarked]. So what I have always said about our economic projects and ideas applies to these matters too: they must not be leaked to the public."

Strasser then asked: "What shall we say in the Reichstag when we have to speak about job-creation programs? I'll have to say something."

"If public statements are to be made [said Hitler], then it's appropriate that you talk over the matter beforehand with Wagener and agree with him about what can and should be said. In no case should the revolutionary monetary system we have discussed here today be mentioned."

*Wagener then spelled out the proposals Köhler had made at the meeting for projects designed to create job opportunities. These included such undertakings as the repair and renewal of houses and business buildings; the construction of new houses for agricultural workers; procurement of new machines for industry and the repair of old ones; development of transport; energy development; intensification of exploitation of domestic raw materials; state organization and planning of foreign trade; rationalization of agriculture; creation of new arable land for settlers by draining marshes and swamps and making other previously useless land suitable for cultivation. Köhler proposed to*

*finance all such projects through various forms of state loans or subsidies. At the conclusion of the conference, Wagener reports that Hitler took his leave with the following words.*

“Now I can anticipate taking over the government with calm and confidence. If the hopes the German Volk places in us are fulfilled by the facts in the way it seems to me was outlined here, the desperate hardship of this sorely tried Volk will be replaced by a well-being and a firm faith that also form the basis for internal and cultural renewal. Then we will succeed in preventing the decline of the West.”

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## Hitler Finds a Key to Saxon Politics in Tribal Migrations—His Views on Racial Theories—Jews as the Only “Pure” People

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It may have been three months after our entry into the Thuringian government when Hitler called me in to tell me that joining the government of Saxony might also be possible.<sup>1</sup> Gauleiter Mutschmann, he explained, had informed him that the bourgeois parties—with the exception of the Democrats—might presumably be won over.<sup>2</sup> The position of the Order of Young Germany was admittedly also still in doubt.<sup>3</sup> This group held three seats in the state parliament and had recently linked itself closely to the Democrats.

Hitler asked me, as he had previously done in regard to Thuringia, to conduct the necessary discussions.

“In Saxony, too, I’d prefer to fill the ministry of the interior,” he said. “Given the prevailing hostility of the Reich and state authorities in opposition to us, it is always best if we control the ministry of the interior. Then we’ll control the police and the executive. At that same moment, all the difficulties that still bar civil servants from party membership will disappear.”

*After a passage in which he presents observations by Hitler about the falsification of democracy by the Weimar Republic, which closely resemble those in Mein Kampf, Wagener continues by recounting a conversation he had with Hitler at the Bube Hotel in Bad Berneck. On that occasion, he relates, he again discussed with Hitler preparations for Nazi participation in the Saxon government.*

1. These events appear to have taken place in the aftermath of the Saxon election of June 22, 1930, in which the NSDAP increased its seats in the state parliament from five to fourteen.

2. Martin Mutschmann, proprietor of several lace factories, was Gauleiter of Saxony from 1925 to 1945.

3. The Order of Young Germany—Jungdeutscher Orden—was an attempt to mobilize young Germans politically in an organization similar to a crusading order. In 1930 it briefly merged with the Democratic Party to form the unsuccessful State Party.

“I’d consider it risky to envisage Mutschmann as minister of the interior in Saxony,” I said. “He is neither an outstanding personality nor clever nor competent. At most, he is opinionated.”

“You are right. The job of minister is out of the question as far as he is concerned. Nor did I have that in mind. Rather, this time I intended using Strasser for the post.

“You see, Mutschmann’s personality allows us to understand, on the one hand, the prodigious mixture of tribes and even races in Germany and, on the other, the importance of the correct choice of party leaders in the various Gaue.

“Until the twelfth century Saxony was settled by every possible tribe, of which I will mention only the Wends—that is, a Slavic tribe—in the east and the people of the Erz Mountains and inhabitants of the Vogtland in the west and southwest. Both of these are originally Germanic tribes, which we can put on a par with the inhabitants of the Bavarian Forest, as well as with the indigenous people at the northern slopes of the Alps, in the Swabian Alps, or in the upper Black Forest. At one time, these people were absolute masters of their land, they lived in their clan and tribal communities, and they elected their leaders according to democratic principles. They did not in the least hunger for expansion or domination.

“Then, out of nowhere, alien Germanic tribes moved in from some other place, some of them ousted from their homelands, others marching out in search of ‘land seizure,’ as they called it, still others as part of the wider migration of nations, the causes of which we will not stop to explore here.

“Thus Thuringians and Saxons came marching eastward, just as a millennium earlier Alemanni and Swabians had penetrated the area farther to the south, between the Rhine and the upper Danube, and Franks and Bavarians had penetrated the fertile plains of the Main region and the great basin of the Bavarian Danube and its tributaries. Whether events happened exactly the way I just indicated, as concerns time and place and tribes, doesn’t matter. The only thing that is certain is that the intruders had a higher level of culture than the natives and that they possessed better weapons and a stronger will to rule.

“Wherever they went, they seized the plains that were agriculturally valuable and parceled them out among themselves and settled them, and they drove the natives back into the infertile slopes of the neighboring mountains and forest areas, or they impressed them into serfdom.

“And that is why these displaced, downtrodden former owners of the land came to harbor a secret hatred in their hearts against the intruders. And this resentment, astonishingly enough, is more or less flagrantly evident to this day wherever no interbreeding took place. [ . . . ]

“The colonization of Saxony by more highly developed Germanic tribes did not begin until the twelfth century. It’s quite easy to follow the time periods, if only we take the trouble to compare the dates chiseled into the stone portals of the larger fortresses and castles in Saxony to indicate the year of construction. [ . . . ]

“So, in Saxony we are dealing with two groups of inhabitants: the resentful, abused, and sometimes dispossessed natives and the conquerors, the interlopers, and those who immigrated later. The first group has a sense of homeland, pride in the land, consciousness of soil, and a tradition of its own, and it feels an inner disapproval of the others. The ‘intruders,’ for their part, don’t like the indigenous people, because they are mistrustful, deceitful, uncommunicative, and malicious. And all that simply because they are unaware of their history and therefore do not understand it.

“There is no other reason why in peaceful, diligent Saxony the Communist leader Max Hölz—who, I’m certain, hasn’t an inkling what real communism is—could succeed in leading the natives in the Erz Mountain region into overt battle against the interlopers who now control the territory in their capacity of estate owners, lords of the manor, and industrialists and who put the properly entitled inhabitants of the land to work in their enterprises at starvation wages, as the slogan puts it. The Hölz uprising was not a struggle of communism against capitalism, but a campaign of vengeance by the indigenous population against their conquerors, who now feel themselves to be the ruling class.

“Until recently, Saxony had the largest number of Communists and Independent Social Democrats. All of them indigenous. The few who went over to the camp of the immigrants were only those who had risen in business or the civil service.

“Now, if we aim to restore peace and order in Saxony and once and for all to bury the hatchet between the original and the new population—from which camp must we take the Gauleiter? There can be no doubt: from the natives! If a representative of the others were the Gauleiter of our movement, then from the outset the mass of the Volk would take a stand *against* the movement. For the natives feel themselves to be the oppressed even within our movement. We would deepen a chasm which, as socialists, we must abolish. But if we lead *them* back to liberty and equal status, then they will be our most loyal followers. That is why a native must be chosen to be the Gauleiter: Mutschmann, who is himself a native of the Vogtland.

“The immigrants pose no danger. They know nothing about the situation and give it no thought. They feel entitled to their property or secure in their commercial profits. If we do not attack them, they will hold nothing against us. They live in fear of the indigenous population, whom they see only as left-radical Communists; if they realize that we draw these people to our side and reeducate them in a peaceful way, they will even welcome us as their saviors.

“That is why I had to and could name Mutschmann as Gauleiter in Saxony. Success was not long in coming. In a few years the NSDAP became the strongest party in Saxony. And we draw our voters primarily from the ranks of the Communists, Social Democrats, and, most importantly, people who did not vote before, who felt torn, since, in fact, they belonged to one group but did not want to spoil their chances with the other.

“Today we see that the right-wing parties wish to include us in the govern-

ment. But we must be careful here. Mutschmann is all well and good as Gauleiter; he is not suited to be minister of the interior. But under no circumstances can I take someone from the other camp—that is, one of the conquerors, the intruders, the immigrants. The natives would consider this a breach of faith, a betrayal, the manifestation of a deception, and the party would lose ground in Saxony.

“That is why I must take someone who is a complete outsider—though it can’t be a Prussian, it must be a South German, and, at any rate, someone who has greater standing with them and in the party than Mutschmann does—that is, someone whom the party comrades in Saxony see to a greater extent as a leader in their effort at liberation and whom even Mutschmann recognizes as ‘qualified.’ Only Strasser fits that bill.”

These presentations by Hitler once again allowed a deep insight into the infinitely reflective, sensitive inner life of Adolf Hitler, with such a strong sense of responsibility toward the German Volk and its mission. What a profound understanding, a clear comprehension of the overall context, what a noble, exalted, and completely selfless intention lay behind such decisions! How many ideas were brought to bear on such a ministerial nomination, which in itself seems so simple; how many considerations played a part—surely at the time hardly anyone, even among party comrades, had any inkling. [ . . . ]

How frequently in later years I remembered in particular the rest of this conversation in Berneck, in which we touched on the racial question.

I had mentioned that such problems of population settlements as existed in Saxony must make the excessive propagation of racial theories seem questionable, perhaps even dangerous and harmful.

“The way these racial theories are usually understood, interpreted, and applied, they are actually quite wrong,” Hitler answered. “To start with, quite primitive theories of biological reproduction and heredity are carelessly mixed up with racial theories and put through the grinder of this desire to get to the bottom of everything. Then this completely undigested porridge, disguised as scientific findings, is preached or even committed to paper, so that anyone can pick out whatever suits him. Small wonder, then, that truly cunning people go to great lengths to pick out the nonsense in order to reduce the whole racial rubbish to absurdity.

“The only people entitled to discuss racial questions are those who have read Gobineau and Chamberlain.<sup>4</sup> Anyone who can’t manage to summon up time and understanding for such reading proves that he does not have the right to take part in debates on this deeply serious problem. In this form, the research is completely new and shows history in quite another light. What nowadays is

4. Joseph Arthur, Count of Gobineau (1816–82), was a French diplomat and writer, the author of *Essai sur l'Inégalité des races humaines*. Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927), son of an English admiral, settled in Germany, married a daughter of Richard Wagner, and became a right-wing writer on philosophy and politics.



frequently blathered about these matters reminds me at times of Freudian bad taste and artful destructiveness, which also, in essence, rest on quite correct and simple psychiatric findings that have so far gone unacknowledged by science. It may even be that Freud is the destructive and distorting interpreter—mainly in the area of sexual psychology—of the physical and spiritual confusion brought about by racial mixtures.

“That there are various races among humanity, just as there are among plants and animals, is obvious. Sooner or later, science may determine once and for all *where* one should begin to apply the technical term ‘race’ as a designation of differentiation. But that cannot happen until scientists have thoroughly researched and examined this idea and clarified and proven it in all areas of science and the humanities. Before that day comes, decades, perhaps centuries, may pass.

“At present, besides applying the term ‘race’ to the white, yellow, and black races—which cannot scientifically be justified and grounded as a valid categorization—it is customary within the white race, for example, to designate the Semites and the Aryans as ‘races.’ Among the Semites, one counts the Arabs, the Israelites, the Egyptians, perhaps also the Persians, and possibly several other tribes. Among the Aryans are the Germans, the Romans, the Slavs, and several others—for example, the Celts.

“It is also customary to designate these subgroups with the name ‘nations.’ Perhaps the phrase ‘families of nations’ would be more accurate. For during the millennia these nations have continued to increase and split off. But on the basis of their hereditary factors they can surely still be considered families.

“Thus, among others, Italians, Spaniards, southern Frenchmen form one family of Romance nations; Danes, Swedes, Germans, and Anglo-Saxons form a Germanic family; Ukrainians, White Russians, Bulgarians, Yugoslavs, and others constitute the Slavic family of nations.

“But then again, it’s not quite as simple and clear-cut as I am making it sound. For through the migrations of nations; through Roman military despotism; through the major campaigns of conquest carried out by such groups as the Huns, the Magyars, the Tartars, and the Turks; through medieval dynastic measures and contemporary economic intertwining of interests; displacements and admixtures occurred that have hardly preserved ‘pure’ races, generally speaking. At the very least, within the families of nations and within the major races—that is, the Aryan, the Semitic, and so forth—strong reciprocal actions occurred, even biologically.

“Of special interest in this regard is the development of the Jews. They are one tribe of the nation of Israel. According to the Old Testament, there were twelve tribes once. All the others disappeared from the world stage; only the tribe of Judah survived. And we can say that in great measure it has retained its purity. Of course it lent elements of itself through admixture with other nations. Abroad, its members fell or rose among the others. But the core of the tribe of

Judah, which today is properly called 'the Jewish people,' may be the only people of our history and our Mediterranean region that has remained pure.

"How was this possible, what are the reasons for it, and what advantages and disadvantages attach to it?

"If one wishes to pursue these questions, one easily gets lost in detail and goes astray. If one reads the Old Testament alone, one quickly loses one's way in uncertainties—quite aside from the fact that it is hard to read for ourselves, since it is written in a style and a language that strike us as outlandish and since it is suffused with a materialistic ethos that is not our ethos.

"But one aspect seems to me crucial. Because the Jews had a religion of their own—a God of their own, as it were—because they formed a closed community of faith and followed their own customs and laws—they kept their racial peculiarities, their ethics, their worldview, and, most important of all, their blood, their clans, their families completely pure and unadulterated.

"It was not the political Volk community that made it possible for them to keep themselves racially immune, but the community of religion. And the strength of their religion is that it is not merely their religion, it is also their law. Their god is their lord and leader, the promise made to them is their faith, which encompasses all of them and allows them to live and strive in a single, straightforward, and unwavering direction. But the promise made to them isn't a religious matter at all; rather, it is a political promise, a completely worldly objective, the prophecy of a purely earthly seizure of power, beyond which there is nothing—not eternity, not something divine, not something exalted that might transcend this material seizure of power, raise itself beyond the goals of the tribe proper, and lead or develop mankind to a higher level. No, the promise only reads: 'All nations shall be subject to you, their kings shall be your servants!' It is the crassest form of materialism and the most despotic imperialism, encapsulating all the sadism of parasitic nomadism.

"Here we find clarification of how it was possible and how it came about that this tribe could keep itself racially pure. Through Moses and the men who recorded and transmitted the Mosaic Law, it preserved a set of rules for their lives and how to lead them. These regulations were a religion, which was strictly tailored to the nature of the race and which simply and clearly, without dogma and dubious rules of faith, objectively and quite realistically contained whatever served the future and the self-assertion of the Children of Israel. Everything is focused on the welfare of its own Volk, nothing on consideration for others. Everything is born from the instinctual drive of the original nomadic tribe. With its herds, its 'capital,' it led a parasitic existence on the prairies of far-flung Arabia, but in the meantime, it was forced by the progressive transformation of those plains into steppe and desert to invent a different form of 'capitalism,' that of monetary capitalism. Now, continuing their parasitic ways, they grazed the blessed fields and workplaces of the rest of the world's peoples. And wherever they came, those who had been sent ahead, the bellwethers,

began putting down roots by adopting the customs, laws, and even the religion of the host nations. They refer to themselves as 'assimilationists.' Then, like Joseph in Egypt, they called in their elite troops, who had remained racially pure; in their synagogues, they had the sources of energy for the preservation and consolidation of their race, and all this under the protection and with the approval—even the support—of the people who were later to be their subjects. To this day, they also call themselves 'Zionists.' The marriage laws of Jewry are particularly clear-cut and strict. The Jew has no need to use the term 'race.' For him, there is only the 'Jew' and the 'non-Jew.' Moses calls the non-Jew simply the alien. I have read these concepts in even greater detail in one of the Prophets or in the Talmud, I don't remember where. There it says that marriage even with a different Israelite tribe is forbidden.

"Whoever offends against this law is excluded from the community of the Jewish people proper and loses the advantage of mutual material help and support. Besides, the Jew knows that, as it is written, in such cases his seed is cursed and, sooner or later, becomes barren.

"All this bestows tremendous strength on the preservation of the Jewish race. There is no doubt that we must acknowledge it with admiration.

"If we are now to ask ourselves about the advantages or disadvantages that accrue to such a preservation of racial purity, the answer is still more difficult than that to the first question. On the one hand, we see that in our historical region the Jews seem the only ones who succeeded in remaining pure; but on the other, it is impossible, without further investigation, to draw any conclusions from the results of Jewish racial breeding that apply to the people and tribes of other races.

"Without a doubt, there are great advantages for Jewry in maintaining such purity. By exploiting and advancing its parasitic nomadic instinct, it has practically fostered in its people down through the generations an almost acrobatic skill at finding those points in the total life process of the host nations that allow it the easiest opportunity to graft on and to secure domination and control of the total life cycle. The Jews' completely materialistic way of thinking makes this takeover even easier, and the higher the ideals of a people are, the more promptly they fall prey to the Jews' realistic economic penetration.

"This process is completely different from anything that happens among all the other peoples known to us. For all of them are settled, farming and raising cattle—that is, they do not live off others in a nomadic way. They lack the very traits that characterize Jewry. They do not graze the fertile stretches of the free prairies, rushing on when the pasture is bare; rather, they till and they sow, and they harvest and live on their own permanent land. It belongs to them, they were born and raised on it, and its weather and plant life have left their mark on them and on their lives. They belong to the soil and cannot be separated from it.

"Strangers who come to the domain of their tribes and tribal property are considered intruders. A battle ensues for the land and soil, for the workplaces

and the fruits of the natives' labor. Only *one* can own the space. Either the inhabitants retain domination, or the conqueror seizes possession of land and men. In the latter case, both remain in the country, with the one as victor, the other as vanquished. And generations, centuries pass while this relationship remains in force.

“Only the Jew knows how to avoid appearing as the intruder intent on doing the natives out of their land. He keeps his fingers out of any land acquisition! He merely uses his monetary capital to graze bare the results of the others' labor by putting it at the disposal—of course with interest, against collateral—of a chosen few. He is not loved. But he is needed; at least he is used. In fact, the natives as well as the conquerors use him. And so he knows how to win the confidence of one against the other, and the reverse.

“We see how enormous the differences are between the ethics, the philosophy of life, the attitude toward others between the Jews and the settled peoples. One cannot possibly say that the latter should imitate what the former do, or that the former should accept what is considered correct among the latter. They really are two completely different ‘races.’ In the same way, the concept of keeping the race pure can never be transferred from the Jewish example to, for example, the Aryan. And what was right and possible there may and can be completely incorrect as well as impossible here.”

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## Hitler Explains the German Parties— Christ as Harbinger of the Community of the Volk—Racial Theory as “Poison” for the General Public— Educating the Young for Selective Breeding

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“**T**here is no doubt that within the Aryan race, the will and the readiness to mix is present. And reproduction surely does not suffer. Yet we find—and that brings me back to my first remarks concerning Saxony, the Bavarian Forest, and southern Germany—that in spite of multiple mixtures and intermarriages, an absolute mingling of the natives and the conquerors could not occur during the era when princes ruled. For the immigrants claimed the aristocratic position, and it was granted them by the princes, who were of their kind. This priority was harshly enforced by law and justice, the police, and even foreign mercenaries.

“At the end of the eighteenth century, when the French Revolution began to liberate the indigenous population from the rule of the aristocracy, and democracy proclaimed and legalized the equal rights of both groups, what happened was not that from that day forth the tensions were removed and both sections shook hands; rather, the reverse took place: it became possible to express mutual animosities, the democratic right to do so now existed. No wonder that, from then on, the groups formed separate parties, which attacked each other. They believed they were acting from political conviction, but in reality, they had dug up the old war hatchet that had seemed buried for centuries.

“Wherever intermixtures occurred during the times of the migrations of nations, the Roman Empire, and the medieval struggles for power and national wars, we see today that the political party conflicts express the deepest roots of the old dispute. It is not primarily democratic, political, or economic opinions that confront each other in the framework of German party argument; rather,

the primal feud of these strata—today called class hatred—has risen anew! The Weimar party state gives us a graphic illustration of this situation.

“Let us begin on the right, with the *conservatives*, who nowadays call themselves German Nationalists. In large sections of the country they are the intruders, the immigrants, the colonizers, the conquerors, wishing unconditionally to preserve their ruling relationship to the indigenous population. The farther we move into the eastern part of Germany, the more strongly does this claim to domination become evident. Without a doubt, these people’s ancestors were once pioneers of the German character and bearers of a higher and superior Western culture. Owners of landed estates and large farms, the aristocracy, tradition-bound officialdom, and the representatives of the Protestant Church support this party. In the economic sector, it draws on those who are in a position to derive their capital assets from old landed property.

“Next come the *German People’s Party*, the *Economic Party*, and the *Homeowners’ Party*, a swarm of ants scurrying busily back and forth from morn till night along the paths of business, occasionally pausing to exchange a word, before scurrying on, sometimes bearing heavy loads—at the very least a briefcase that contains, along with a sandwich and toilet paper, wholly useless papers. To the person in question, however, these appear to be valuable bonds for the satisfaction of his ludicrous addiction to profit, which is completely irrelevant to the affairs of the world. That is the racial mixture of the generally accepted common sort. These people are quite harmless, insignificant, unpolitical, weak. They merely vegetate. They control neither conquered property nor hereditary claims. They live in big cities and small towns, in apartments or single-family homes, they engage in wholesale or retail trade with exchange-rated goods for the sake of profit, or they work for wages and secure their old age by pensions or some kind of life insurance. They long for the time when they can cash them in with the cheerful barroom credo: retirement is what it’s all about.

“Then we have the *Center Party*: those people who have kept the servile slave mentality inculcated during the period that lasted from Roman military despotism to Ultramontane papal dominance. Precisely as the German Nationals allow us to recognize the Germanic will to rule and the spirit of Protestantism against dogmatization of faith and the stifling of conscience, so we see here those people and tribes that were gradually trained in passive obedience to authority under Sudanese and other legions. These same people automatically obeyed the cardinal’s or bishop’s miter worn by a papal legate, replacing the war helmet of the centurion. The *limes* is the geographic border of the Center Party’s power. Such true warriors as might have survived in this region were killed or banished from the land by inquisitions and witch burnings. This party is not, therefore, a group of proud German men with political convictions and intellectual orientation. Rather, it is the large, subservient herd of Rome’s sheepfold—grown unfree by virtue of its history.

“Can you see the racial problem among these parties, Wagener? I can’t explicate it any other way, I can’t prove it either, I can only *see* it. But I see it as clearly as I see you standing there! Are you following me? You *must*, or you will not be able to regulate matters in Saxony.”

“I can follow your every word. Please continue,” I said.

“Now I come to the *Democrats*. Once more, a racial stratum: the Jews and the artificial Jews. For every single Democrat of this party orientation is actually nothing but an artificial Jew.

“This party, which has absolutely no right to be called ‘democratic,’ has international connections and international interests. It exploits the label of democracy to conceal the lack of any national idea. The concept ‘Volk’ is something these people despise, something they consider either petty bourgeois or chauvinist, even militaristic. All these three characteristics are attacked and contemptuously rejected by the Democratic Party. And yet, they are only slogans they themselves have invented for whatever they, in their spiritual and moral decay, lack and therefore attack. They speak of themselves as Europeans and cosmopolitans, they claim Goethe for themselves. Actually, they seem to me nothing more than a stinking abscess within the Volk, living off the work and diligence of the Volk, as it were. They exploit for their own aims and ends the achievements of the Volk in every sphere.

“Most of them are half-castes, to the second or third degree, mixed not only with Jews, but also with every possible bloodline of other nations and continents. But they dominate the banking system and the corporate and trust system, they control the best and most immediate connections to foreign countries, and they prove their contempt for Germans by constantly pointing out how the British do it and what the Americans consider to be right, and what is bad, inferior, proletarian, and simply ‘typically German’ about the Germans. And they unconditionally cling to Jewish leadership.

“Thank God the overwhelming mass of the German Volk has a finely attuned sense for who counts himself among the Volk and who distances himself from it. That is why this party has no support whatever among the people. It has such support only outside the Volk. On the basis of this realization, the grand master of these aliens also decided to change their name. Nowadays they call themselves the State Party. This change is quite in line with their thinking. For as far as they are concerned, the state is not the organization for the self-administration of a people, but simply a management which, for reasons of economic prosperity, seeks to conclude pacts consolidating interests with other managements. They pursue this aim with greater zeal than they devote to concern about their own followers, their joys and sorrows, their high points and their future.

“But some of the sons of these men, the young people, are *nevertheless* influenced by national events and turn with loathing from their fathers. School, sports, and youth movements bring them into contact with the sons of German-thinking parents. In this way, an exodus soon makes itself felt. The party leaders

therefore applied their mechanical thinking to seeking a means to offer the young people similar advantages as are available, for example, in the SA or the Stahlhelm or the Rotfront.<sup>1</sup> So they assumed financing and leadership of the Reichsbanner Black, Red, Gold along with the whole Order of Young Germany.

“What dolts! They haven’t the faintest idea of racial instincts! Any young person among them who develops into a self-assured, German-feeling, freedom-loving, and community-directed youth will go where *those* values are cultivated. Those who intend merely to feign a national conviction, who are inwardly alien and of an inferior character—those people will get together where hypocrisy prevails. This is the point at which people divide! Some follow the glowing banners inscribed with ‘Faith,’ ‘Loyalty,’ ‘Heroism’; the others crouch behind the black-red-gold tatters of self-abuse and deceive each other with lies, cowardice, and hypocrisy! And those are the ‘Democrats’!

“Now I come to the *Social Democrats*. That is where we find the great mass of the decent, striving, industrious German Volk from all tribes and levels. These are the people I have taken so much to my heart, whom I love, with whom I feel at one, closely united down to the last fiber; to them I have given my life and my strength, my work, my will, my hope, and my faith! This large, imposing mass of the Volk—it really is the essence of the Volk! I have stood on the construction site with it, I have hungered with it as a man out of a job, I have lain in the trenches with it, I know it, this splendid Volk! But at the present time, it follows false leaders! Instead of those on the right extending their hands to the Volk—the hand of a brother, the hand of the racial comrade—instead of *those* people offering their leadership to the Volk who share the same blood, the same tribe, the same history, they pushed it away, they merely exploited it as slaves are exploited, and they turned away when they saw the misery of the Volk, so that it had no choice but to seek refuge with other leaders, even those of alien races. These leaders only fill the Volk with hatred of its own racial comrades, so that the people can see them only as exploiters, as slave drivers, as capitalists, as overbearing masters, with whom nothing unites them other than the demeaning wage contract that grants the working man only enough for him to keep up his strength to serve others.

“What a sin against the blood have these foolish politicians on the right committed!

“But we must release these misled people from foreign allurements! These people who feel abandoned by the Volk even though they themselves are the Volk—we must reunite them with the other racial comrades! A united Volk must come into being! *One* faith! *One* will!

“In the Social Democratic Party, the racially purest and best German people live side by side. Unfortunately, as I said, under the wrong leaders. But that is not their fault!

1. The Rotfrontkämpferbund was the Communist paramilitary organization.



“And now, lastly, the *Communists*. Their members, too, are in large part simply deluded. We find three groups that, almost without exception, come from the stratum of the indigenous population—that is, the dispossessed. They are, one, the idealists. They dream of something splendid, but either their feet are not firmly on the ground or they are stupid. Then, two, there are the desperate. They see no possibility of bringing about a genuine life community for the Volk, and they hope for a final rescue from the international struggle of the proletariat against the ruling classes, with the aim of removing them. And, three, there are the racially degenerate who, if they had any property, would have joined the Democratic Party. As it is, they look on themselves as unappreciated geniuses, as neglected, and as pariahs; therefore, they have become nihilists and criminals. The first two of these groups can be rehabilitated. By nature they really have good characters; they have simply fallen prey to either their ideology or their history. The last group consists of the dregs that can be found everywhere in life. It need not itself be to blame for its degeneracy. It can be the victim of others’ fault, even of the fathers. But it is of no use to the struggle for reconstruction. It can only destroy, demolish. Later on, we will have to see how this group can be incorporated and possibly restored to the community after all. Solving our problem of acquiring the right to property through work can win them all back. For this problem represents the solution of the socialist question and at the same time the redemption of those who feel eternally damned.

“That is how I see the parties of today’s Germany from the racial standpoint.

“If, starting from this realization, we examine the advantages and disadvantages of keeping the races and tribes apart in our German fatherland, we can see nothing but disadvantages! The German Volk would only be more splintered, set against one another, atomized by stirring up the racial problems; so it would be rendered insignificant as far as foreign policy goes. That is why I have forbidden more than once—and at the next Gauleiter conference I shall unequivocally repeat my prohibition against—any talk or writing about racial theory and the racial problem. We must do precisely the opposite! The community of the Volk, the community of the Volk, the community of the Volk—that must be our battle cry! Everything that unites and allies the strata must be brought out, cultivated, and promoted, and everything that separates them, everything that serves to awaken the old prejudices must be avoided, fought against, removed. We must make good the mistakes that were made on both sides. Like Christ, we must preach, ‘You are all brothers! Love one another!’

“Only *we* alone can and must think clearly about racial questions. You, and I, and Rosenberg, and one or two others. For to us, these questions are a key and a signpost. But for the public at large, they are poison! Besides, such discussion would only rouse superiority and inferiority complexes. And these are the surest way to destroy a Volk community.

“Much as I gaze in awe at the Jews’ laws for maintaining and preserving the

purity of their race, I must nevertheless proceed from my belief that racial theories, should they become the subject of public discussion, may prove a national disaster rather than a blessing.

“We must accept the mixing of blood as it is. We must not call one blood worse than another, one mixture better than another. Rather, we must employ other means to breed a higher form from this gray mass. We must try to bring to the surface the valuable traits of the people living in Germany, to cultivate and to develop them, and we must find ways and means to prevent the propagation of all the bad, inferior, criminal, and decadent tendencies and all the congenital diseases so damaging to the Volk.

“Furthermore, we must educate the young people in the beauty of movement, the beauty of the body, and the beauty of the spirit. Athletics, personal grooming, physical training, public performances of competitive games and contests, and a revival of the performing arts along the old Greek models will contribute to making a girl see *how* the man who is worthy of her should look and appear, as well as letting a boy know *what* his ideal woman is like. Then he will voluntarily turn away from the games coquettish puppets play, from dyed hair, painted faces, rouged lips, and red fingernails.

“And such selective breeding will become all the more a matter of course the more we bring the German Volk together and weld it into one. In their earliest childhood, in kindergarten, in elementary school, in the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, all classes must meet. No distinction should be *allowed* to be made between the rich and the poor, between high and low, between city and country, between employer and employee; rather, there is only the distinction between respectable and disreputable, between companionable and uncompanionable, between aboveboard and furtive, between truth and lies, between courage and cowardice, and between health and sickness.

“Then, when these children grow up, they will use their feet to cast aside all this party rubbish, and in every district they will elect the man, the only one, who represents them and goes to the Reichstag on their behalf. Only then will we see true democracy! And it is ridiculous to think that among these elected candidates there would be even a single one who is not a genuine paragon and prototypical representative of the German spirit, a German person—representative, in short, of this German Volk that from generation to generation rises ever higher from the oozing slime in which Europe, in which the Old World is still wading.”

Suddenly, his voice somewhat subdued, Hitler said:

“Sometimes I have the feeling that it is not granted us to experience this great future, that only a coming generation will be mature enough to translate our ideas and plans into action. But it is our mission to bring about the basis for such a community of the Volk, and especially to guide the young people of Germany along the paths that lead to this goal. It will not come about without a

struggle! We must make no mistake about that. Not everything we tackle will be successful. There will be setbacks, such as we also saw in the party. Hammer blows will rain down upon us. But under them and through them the iron and bronze of which the German Volk is fashioned will be pounded and forged, and it will grow hard, hard as steel, steely! That is the way to make that magnificent sword with its bluish gleam that nevermore breaks and nevermore misses its mark: Germany, the German Volk! And this Volk will be the Sword of God!"

If we compare those actions subsequently carried out or at least initiated by the so-called National Socialist Racial Department, under Himmler and Darré, with Hitler's actual intentions, we are just as astonished as we are on so many other occasions when *he* grasped the situation correctly but others turned it into pure nonsense.

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## Hitler Draws a Lesson from *Rienzi*— He Favors a Mass Party over an “Order”—His Principal Targets: German People’s Party and Economic Party

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**I**n the next section Wagener reports that his mission to Saxony ended in failure. Nazi participation in the government there would have been possible only in combination with all the rightist parties, and part of the Saxon NSDAP, led by Gauleiter Mutschmann, refused to collaborate with the conservative German National People’s Party. Wagener then reports Hitler’s response upon being informed in Berlin about this development.

“That’s just what I thought. Only Brüning’s threats of a prohibition force me to put down roots in state governments. But Saxony happens to be the wrong target.

“Besides, that is the place where the *particular* dilemma we will be facing more than once is especially evident: instead of being able to come to an agreement with the Social Democrats, we must make deals with the parties of the right. That is always a mistake. And that is why we must not make it too often. Instead, we must unconditionally and with renewed vigor work for our objective—to win the majority in the Reichstag *alone*. Only then will we remain true to ourselves internally, without needing to take into account groups whose nature is alien to us and which therefore can only hamper us.”

*When they made their plans to return to Munich, Wagener recalls, Hitler asked him to find out which operas would be performed the next evening in Nuremberg, Weimar, and Dresden, so that they could plan their route accordingly. Wagener writes that he had Julius Schaub telephone the Nazi headquarters in those three cities. He established in that way that there would be no performance in Nuremberg, but that Richard Wagner’s *Rienzi* would be performed in Weimar and Richard Strauss’s *Der Rosenkavalier* in Dresden. He informed Hitler of this, Wagner relates, adding:*

"You probably attach less value to *Rienzi*."

"But why? It's a special favorite of mine! Why did you think so?"

"I thought it might make you uncomfortable to be in the audience while the stage action shows a man—particularly a man of the people, who has risen to be the leader of his people—in the end nevertheless falling victim to the intrigues of those around him."

He gave an odd laugh as he said:

"On the contrary, perhaps I always see the mistakes that can be made—so as to avoid them later on."

"*Rienzi* was betrayed by the conservatives, by the aristocracy, by the important owners of land and industry, to whom he had extended the hand of friendship," I replied.

"But he did not have the backing of a party of his own," was his answer.

We did not pursue the topic further. We drove to Weimar and there attended a truly first-rate performance of *Rienzi*. Afterward, as we were sitting in the *Elephanten*, where Frick and Sauckel had joined us,<sup>1</sup> Hitler said:

"We must strengthen the party even more, we must secure it internally and immunize it, not only against the international influences of destructive communism, but also against reactionary nationalism from the right. This nationalism, which has nothing in common with National Socialism, brings false leaders, false advisers, and false ideas to the surface. And the distance between these false ideas and reactionary subversion is no greater than from the communist ways of thinking to the Bolshevik Revolution. Reactionary overthrow would mean and would have as a precondition a betrayal of us, of our understanding, of our objectives, and thus also of the German Volk. I really am glad to have heard *Rienzi* again. Because you talked about it yesterday, I paid special attention.

"No doubt about it: we are walking along the razor's edge. But the more we broaden the base of the party, the easier and simpler our way will be, and the less dangerous it will be for the German Volk."

"Will you abandon the idea of limiting the number of party members to two and a half to three million at most?" asked Frick.

"I haven't quite decided. Actually, in time the party should become a community of the best, the most dedicated, the ideologically pure. That was my aim. It was to be what the Masonic lodge is for British and American—let's not mince words, for universal—democracy: an 'order.'

"But the way the political situation in Germany is shaping up, that can hardly be done. Perhaps it will have to be a long-term goal. For the time being, we do not even hold governing power. To achieve it must be our primary objective. And so we cannot get around the fact that we must obtain an absolute majority

1. Fritz Sauckel, Gauleiter of Thuringia from 1927 to 1945, became Nazi governor of that state in 1933, then general commissar for labor mobilization in 1942.

in the Reichstag. This task, however, can't be solved by an order, but only by a party—that is, a mass movement.”

“But the lodge *also* rules absolutely in the Western democracies, in spite of limited numbers,” I pointed out.

“But they've been working at it for centuries!” Hitler countered. “We don't have so much time. We live at the center of the turn of events that leads from individualism and economic liberalism to socialism. Already in the East the pendulum has swung leftward far beyond the objective.”

“Since it is a pendulum—and all such movements throughout the world run their course in waves or in pendulum form”—Frick interjected—“it comes back again, it *has* to come back again. So we must be prepared to catch it.”

“Do we want to make ourselves dependent on the pendulum?” Sauckel asked.

“Whether we want to or not, the pendulum swings to and fro [Frick answered]. There's no point in running after it, and we can't speed up its motion, either. We can only arouse understanding for the action of the pendulum, to prepare for it, to bring it about. Then, when it comes back, it will find an energy field that might be in a position to hold it fast, like a magnet. In my opinion, that is where our task lies.”

“But beyond this pendulum, which swings back and forth between individualism and socialism,” Hitler said, “the course of history also continues. And it has placed Germany in a position that calls for an alternative, a solution, and a salvation.

“The creation of an energy field is all right with me, Frick. But there must be political action as well. If no strong leadership, which can set up the energy field, emerges in Germany, the moment of the pendulum's return will surely be missed. Then we will first have to live through another period of reaction. And we cannot be sure that the men and the realization are there for the pendulum when it swings back to the left. In any case, some decades will have passed, and enormous damage can be done.”

“That both must happen,” I threw in, “is beyond any doubt. But at present, all over Germany we can form governments only with the right—with those who betrayed Rienzi. The energy field can hardly be created with them. Rather, they will encourage the pendulum to swing back all the way to the right, and then, if we have different goals, they will stab us in the back.”

“But that is exactly why the party must become so strong that it can assume power all by itself,” Hitler asserted. “And that is our task for the next few months: we must rob the other parties of so many voters that we gain the majority.”

“Until now,” Frick noted, “we have managed to win over three groups of voters: first, the frontline soldiers and all those who are filled with the spirit of frontline soldiers; second, the large mass of the non-voters—that is, those people who were not stimulated to register their vote by the weak programs of

the old parties; and third, the young people just coming to voting age, who place a large part of the blame for our national disaster on the failure of the old parties and who are eager to entrust their future, no longer to a party committee, but to a Führer."

"At the same time, this trust imposes an obligation on us," Hitler continued. "That is why we must not fold our hands and wait for still more young people to grow up and for our current voters to grow gray. Instead, we must work toward the day in the not too distant future when we take over the government, so that we can act. The higher unemployment goes, the more impossible the Weimar system proves itself to be, the more quickly must we take over the reins.

"We must tailor our tactics to this objective. We must systematically prepare our campaign for the next election, in order to take voters away from the other parties. Until now, we've avoided doing that. We directed our attacks only against Communism and Marxism, as well as against the Weimar system and whatever government was in power. Now we must attack the parties, and we must do so on the principle of least resistance. Our first attack must be directed at the weakest of them."

"That would be the German People's Party and the Economic Party," Frick said.

"Fine. Let's turn to the German People's Party first. What slogans do we need to shake their faith in their leadership and their program?"

"Since the People's Party is behind the government, it won't be hard to point out that it shares in the blame for the failure of government procedures. Locarno, the Dawes agreement, and the Young Plan are the works of the leading men in the party. The failure of the customs pact with Austria must be borne by Dr. Curtius. The Brüning emergency measures, especially the fourth emergency decree, are also proof of the unfitness and economic dilettantism of the advisers from the German People's Party.

"Furthermore, it seems to me that the party has lost its internal strength in any case. In the Reichstag, party representatives frequently come to me to discuss an alliance with us. Provided we wage our propaganda campaign properly, in the political and the economic sector, I am certain we'll succeed."

"I shall," Hitler concluded the discussion, "issue the necessary instructions in Munich. Wagener, you will start working in the economic sector at once. Topics for press conferences and open meetings must be especially tailored to members of the People's Party. But we must never deviate from our goals, we must never say so much as a word, make any commitment that we cannot justify in good conscience! For our only strength lies solely in uncompromising lucidity and in the unalterability of our program."

In order to picture the result of this decision and consequent actions, I will cite the following figures. The parliamentary elections of September 14, 1930, resulted in 30 seats for the German People's Party and 107 for the NSDAP. The new elections of July 31, 1932, left the People's Party with only 7 seats, while we

had 230. The People's Party lost roughly three-fourths of its seats. Clearly, the voters turned to us.

After this parliamentary election, we proceeded to attack the Economic Party. At first it held on to 23 seats. Our systematic campaign of enlightenment achieved an absolutely astonishing result: after the next election, the party dwindled to 2 seats, and on November 6, 1932, it disappeared from the Reichstag altogether.<sup>2</sup>

2. Wagener errs here, since the Economic Party retained one seat in the election of November 1932. He also gave the number of seats won by the German People's Party in the 1930 election incorrectly as 26 (corrected in the previous paragraph to 30). The erroneous figures stem from the typewritten statistics provided Wagener by the British authorities at Bridgend; cf. n. 20 of editor's introduction.



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## The Death of Geli Raubal—Hitler on Marriage, God, and Industrialism—He Turns Vegetarian

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In the spring of 1931, an event occurred that had a deep impact on Hitler and his entire outlook on life.<sup>1</sup>

His niece, Geli Raubal,<sup>2</sup> who, with her mother, ran Adolf Hitler's household and whose unquestionably excellent taste and bubbling personality had become for Hitler an absolutely indispensable factor in the house on Prinzregentenstrasse, died by her own hand from a gunshot wound.

At that time, Hitler always kept a loaded pistol on his night table or desk. He had to be constantly on guard against the possibility that some desperado of the left might, as had happened to Horst Wessel, one day burst into his home in order to assassinate him.<sup>3</sup> There was no lack of verbal and written threats.

When Hitler was away, he always gave the pistol to his niece for safekeeping, and she had gotten into the habit of placing it on her desk or night table.

One night, while Hitler was on the sleeping-car train to Berlin, a telegram was brought to his compartment during the early hours of the morning in Saalfeld. It announced that Geli had shot herself. He left the train at the next station and hurried back to Munich by train and car, arriving just in time for the autopsy. The coroner was to rule on whether this was a case of murder or suicide, and in the latter case, whether death was intentional or accidental. The physician allowed Hitler to attend.

Anyone who is present for the first time when a corpse is dissected cannot help feeling a certain horror and dread. The fact that a person who until that moment was the closest and dearest being to oneself turns out under the knife of the dissecting physician to consist only of dismembered flesh and lifeless limbs is enormously repulsive. The experience burrows into one's feelings and sensa-

1. Here, as so often, Wagener's dating is inaccurate. Geli Raubal died in mid-September 1931.

2. In the manuscript Wagener wrote "Winter"; see n. 1, chapter 7.

3. Horst Wessel, a young Nazi storm trooper, was killed in an altercation with Communists and was made into a martyr of the movement; the party hymn was the "Horst Wessel Lied."

tions so deeply that for years afterward, perhaps for the rest of one's life, it cannot be forgotten.

The bullet's trajectory indicated that Geli had apparently held the weapon in her left hand, the muzzle pressed against her body. Since Geli was sitting at the desk writing a perfectly harmless letter, which remained unfinished, it had to be assumed that she had had a sudden impulse to bring out the pistol and to check whether it was loaded. In the process, the gun must have gone off, the bullet lodging right in her heart. Still holding the gun, she had toppled from the chair to the floor; this was how her mother found her. There was no doubt, therefore, that it was a most unfortunate accident.

For several days, Hitler completely shunned all company. He felt responsible, since he was the one who had entrusted the pistol to his niece.

When I met him a week later in Nuremberg, it came to my attention that he ate no meat. Unfortunately, I myself had ordered goulash. I noticed Hitler fighting off nausea as I put the meat on my plate, though I did not make the connection. Suddenly he rose and said:

"I'll sit over there. Please join me when you've finished."

That evening, his depression was evident. No conversation developed. He alternated between staring at the paper and silent brooding. Only very late did he ask some terse questions and make small talk. Until he finally seemed to get hold of himself and said:

"It turns out that women play a larger role in a man's life than we are inclined to suppose when we are not deprived of their presence. It is true that I have overcome the urge to physically possess a woman. But the value I placed on the loving hand of a female being who was close to my heart, and how much the constant solicitude she shed on me meant to me—that I am learning only now, when they are lost to me. The greatest void, a yawning emptiness, though, comes over me in the mornings, when I sit down to my breakfast, or when I return home at noon or in the evening and find myself essentially alone—quite, quite alone. And yet, my sister is there, as she has always been, trying to replace what Geli was to me.

"But there's no getting around it, Geli was even more to me than that. Her cheerful laughter always gave me hearty pleasure, her harmless chatter filled me with joy. Even when she sat quietly by my side working a crossword puzzle, I was enveloped in a feeling of well-being that has now given way to a chilly sense of loneliness."

Hitler paused again, and when he resumed, it was as if he were talking to himself.

"Until now, I still had ties to the world—apparently I still had them, though I was unaware of it. Now everything has been taken from me. Now I am altogether free, inwardly and outwardly. Perhaps it was meant to be this way. Now I belong only to the German Volk and to my mission. But poor Geli! She

had to sacrifice herself for this.” As he spoke, his features took on such a deeply human expression of sorrow and pity that one quite forgot the genius in him and saw only Adolf Hitler the man.

“I’ve also gained a different view of marriage. Only now do I have an inkling of what I am giving up by abandoning the idea of marriage. But I must do without it. It is precisely now that I understand that it cannot be otherwise and why it cannot be otherwise.

“Marriage is a tie which, if it is genuine, requires governmental legitimation only for legal reasons, the blessing of the church only for reasons of faith or symbolism. For a genuine marriage is a religion unto itself. But since many marriages are marriages of convenience, or makeshift marriages, or shotgun marriages, or sexual marriages, it really is necessary and right that church and state concern themselves with marriages in order to direct them in positive ways and to further them to the point where they are what they might not have been at the outset but really should be.

“If I were ever to marry, I could only have a genuine marriage. But it would be a link to another direction than the one in which my mission lies. One or the other would have to suffer—yes, one would even have to be put in second place: either my mission or my marriage. But that way, I would be deceiving all those who have followed my ideas and objectives, I would be betraying the movement I created, and in the long run I would betray the entire German Volk, and I would feel like a traitor; or I would cheat my wife of her rights, my marriage of its holy meaning, the divine world order of its demand, and I would feel like an adulterer.

“For in the eyes of the divine world order, the first purpose of marriage is, looking at it very primitively, the joining of two cells in order to create new cells for the purpose of preserving the construction and expansion of the divine creation. The higher the development of an organism, the greater is the added task of rearing, educating, and promoting the new, young being, so that it may fulfill the mission in the world, in the universe, of which it is capable. And its task arises from inheritance, upbringing, education, awakening in it its inherent ethical, moral, and decent powers; it may also arise because it is ordained or determined by a vocation.

“Upbringing and training are the parents’ full-time occupation. For what the father’s work accomplishes and what the mother’s work contributes to it can serve only two basic aspects: first, fulfilling their own task in the world; and second, fulfilling the duty of bearing and rearing a new young life for the divine creation and its preservation.

“If I use the word ‘divine,’ I am not visualizing a god in human form with a long white beard. You know perfectly well what my thinking is on that subject. Somewhere or other Goethe says, ‘ ’Twould be no kind of god who only moves from the outside, letting the circle of the universe course round his fingertip!’

For me, God is the Logos of St. John, which has become flesh and lives in the world, interwoven with it and pervading it, conferring on it drives and driving force, and constituting the actual meaning and content of the world.

“Perhaps the adherents of the Roman Church would call this ‘paganism.’ That may well be so. In that case, Christ was a pagan. I call pagan their distortions of Christ’s ideas and teachings, their cults, their conception of hell and purgatory and heaven, and their worship of saints. None of the religions of antiquity, no Negroid idolatry, not even the most primitive sects of the Moham-medan, Indian, or Chinese religions has created so many gods and auxiliary deities as the Roman Church. And yet their choirs join in singing from the Book of Moses: ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me.’ But let’s drop it; it’s too stupid.

“Anyone who does not see marriage as the fulfillment of a divine task and is not prepared to adjust his entire life and thinking to it will himself become a traitor to those who conceived him and handed him over to the world, and he becomes a traitor to the duty he owes the divine creation.

“But when I see the misery of the German Volk, the futility of its existence as a result of Versailles and Weimar—and on the other hand I envision the chance of leading the Volk out of this affliction into a new life worth living and to renewed qualification to fulfill the duty of the Volk, along with each individual, toward the divine creation—then I consider it a higher mission and vocation to work for this and to commit myself fully and dedicate myself to this task. So I must deny myself the obligations of marriage.

“But when I examine the marriages I see around me and hear about, I find most of them far removed from what they should be in meaning and content. Here, too, I blame the misery of the time, the totally wrong direction the world has taken because of its increasingly materialistic attitude. It seems to me that the scientific and technical inventions of the last few centuries have given particular impetus to these developments. Industrialization, the chase after profit, the call for increased production, the absurd battles over exports and competition—in short, everything that can be expressed by the word ‘industrialism’—in the last analysis have also destroyed marriage, robbed it of its meaning and content, and debased the paired living of people to the exclusive satisfaction of physical needs in the widest sense—and possibly to vanity. Just to think of the ten- or twelve-hour workday that sends the man home in the evening dirty, tired, and bad-tempered, where his wife is anxiously waiting for him because his wages were not sufficient to provide a proper supper—or when I imagine the working wife, herself with an eight- or ten-hour workday, from which she returns home to unmade beds, no fire in the stove, the dishes from the previous evening still sitting around, carrying the bread and bologna meant for that evening’s meal sloppily wrapped in newspaper—and when I think of children taken to the day-care centers every morning, no different from

geese driven out of the village and cattle to the meadow, to return in the evening honking and lowing to fill their accustomed stables—then I really feel the pernicious consequences of this industrialized economy.

“*Here* lies the blame for the fact that nowadays marriage has ceased to be marriage! But what has the church done to put a stop to it? It merely demands that these pitiful human beings pay an additional church tax, so that the edifices and bishops’ palaces—in themselves grand, no doubt about it—and the power structure of the church may be maintained! What has the state done to alleviate this misery? It merely takes measures that serve to increase it by the hardship of unemployment! What have the parties done to bring relief? They merely rant and accuse one another, and cast stones at the only movement that is prepared to act!

“Once we have brought about full employment and [verb missing] Germany from the constraints of enemy strictures systematically imposed on us *for the very purpose* of making us suffocate and perish—then once more we will get the opportunity, though also the obligation, of bestowing on marriage the meaning and content ordained by God.

“What is important is not regulations for breeding in the form of a studbook, as those idiots—and we have a few of them in our ranks as well—want to impose. Rather, the important thing is the restoration of the potential and development of married life, its ethics and its divine mission. Protecting children and young people, protecting women, restricting the working week to thirty-six to forty hours, establishing a two-day weekend—for it is impossible to enjoy one day of leisure until there are two—and assuring an income that, beyond mere subsistence, provides for the pursuit of play and entertainment, of art and learning—*those* are the conditions we must bring about in order to lead marriage back to what it must be in a higher sense.

“Only in this way will there be true ‘families’ again. In their strong matedness, their cohesion, their commitment to progress, and their self-education, they can be the mainstay of Volk and state, bearers of the evolution of the entire community and conquerors and safeguarders of a greater future, not only for Germany, but for the whole world and for all of humanity.

“It is not individuals—who at one time might have rocketed from the mass of the Volk and whom Providence chose to head revolutionary movements, do extraordinary things, and blaze new trails to new destinations—who can guarantee that great and new matters consolidate themselves and that ideas which can overturn conditions become the communal property of an entire Volk. Rather, it is families that are the core of nature and nurture, even of a new kind of knowledge, a new social will, and a new worldview.

“Families can last forever; individuals die. To this day, some old Roman senatorial families are among the leading citizens of Italy. The Sforzas, the Colonnas, the Medici, the Borgheses—for two thousand years they have passed

on the Roman spirit and designed a superior Italian culture and art. Had they not observed the sanctity of marriage, these families could not have survived the great political and military collapses of antiquity and the Middle Ages.

“To establish such families, to give them the chance to stabilize and take economic root—that is one of our missions, stretching far into the future.”

After Geli's death, Hitler never ate meat again. But gradually he became accustomed to the fact that those around him did so. After some months, he even began to make an occasional joke on the subject. But he did not like others to mention it.

The only outward sign Hitler gave was that his clothing was not always as carefully tended as before. But even that was soon corrected.

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## Hitler's Views on Arabs and Englishmen—Gaining a “Free Hand” in the East through Concessions to England

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**W**agener then tells of a visit paid to Hitler by an Arab emissary. The emissary informed Hitler that he and his movement were held in high regard in the Arab world and expressed the hope that Germany might free itself from the chains of its oppressors. The Arabs, he reported, were especially impressed that the NSDAP was the first political movement in modern Europe to recognize correctly the dangers of Jewry. His commission was to ask Hitler not to send the Jews of Germany to Palestine or any other part of the Arabic world if he expelled them from Germany.

“Strange,” Hitler said to me after the conference. “Until now I never considered the idea of expelling the Jews from Germany. And since our objective is peace, I don’t even think such a move is necessary. If we were to be entangled in a war, as in the First World War, one would have to make sure of the Jews. Because they were the ones who at that time sharpened the dagger which the elected representatives of the German Volk plunged into the back of the government of the Volk and its fighting men at the front.

“But the Semites seem to recognize their racial compatriots. Furthermore, it seems to me that they understand and know more about race than Europe does. The whitewashed good manners of our continent have seen to it that everything that might contribute to lucidity and truth was overlaid with a coat of uniform gray.

“Let us not lose sight of an alliance with the Arab League. We Germans have gotten into the habit of looking for friends only in Europe—if possible, among people of the same race. Perhaps that’s a mistake. Perhaps it’s much easier to find friends among other races. If the Arabs know that we—that is, a new Germany—can offer them understanding, support, and firm backing in their own struggles for freedom, and that we consider them competent to enter into

alliances—welcome them, in fact—such a realization might have significant repercussions on our position in Europe as well. Furthermore, an alliance of interests between Germany and the Arabic-Semitic race might also have far-reaching significance for our relations with the millions of the African, Indian, and yellow peoples.

“A whole new perspective is opening up for me!”

But then Hitler rubbed his hand across his eyes and continued in a calmer voice:

“I’ll have to sleep on it. It seems to me that it will have to be a long-term goal. Practical politics ties us to England.”

“Nor would England sit idly by,” I interjected, “while we begin to sympathize with the very nations England has always considered its vassals. Either we pursue a joint policy *with* England—in which case we would have to drop the idea you just presented or at least let it take a back seat, tempting and appropriate to our socialist thinking though it might be. On the other hand, if we could and should pursue a purely socialistic policy, these trains of thought would present prospects that could offer a different picture to the whole world.”

*Wagener continues by writing that at about this time, an old war comrade had informed him that an English colonel who worked for British intelligence was coming to Munich and wanted to talk with him about the ideas and goals of the NSDAP.*

When I had filled Hitler in on this visit, he said, “Now England, too, is starting to take an interest in us. Let’s be cautious. I have no personal knowledge of the British. What I’ve read and heard about them is not altogether favorable. I am sure of only one thing: they are a practical people, exclusively preoccupied with their own advantage and their own security.

“They seem slow to act. They allow a subject to develop its own momentum, and they watch from afar to see what will happen next. The advantages of living on an island have affected their whole politics—even their whole way of being.

“Since they think only of themselves when they act and speak, a certain amount of insincerity has become second nature to them.

“But if I know that someone is looking out only for himself, I can negotiate with him better than if his objectives and ideas are unclear to me. After all, it is the specific object of any country’s foreign policy to search out and protect its own advantage within the framework and under the conditions of the overall international situation.

“The ideal situation arises when I and another can draw a *common* advantage from a matter. Then common interests can smooth the way for joint action. In your discussions, therefore, you must make a special effort to stress precisely these common opportunities—necessities, actually.

“But it would be senseless to do this and nothing more. The Englishman



would have to take us for helots and toadies if we failed at the same time to put our cards on the table about the one objective that is most important to us: restoring the absolute sovereignty of Germany and its respect in the world. Actually, not until that is achieved will England consider us suitable for an alliance.

“I can imagine that the English mistrust us somewhat. They do harbor a hatred of us, systematically cultivated, especially during wartime, and openly expressed. Such people usually assume that the object of their hatred hates them in return. They simply cannot imagine that, in spite of war, occupation, oppression—and in spite of *Baralong* on the one hand and Northcliffe’s propaganda of lies on the other—we Germans do not hate the English.<sup>1</sup> People who feel free of guilt and who are intellectually and culturally superior do not *hate*. Hatred is always connected with inferiority complexes. Though I have absolutely no idea where these might come from in the Englishman, he must suffer from them, since he is able to hate us. There’s a gap here somewhere in my understanding of the English. Something or other isn’t right. Freud would say that their arrogant manner gives further proof that such complexes really are present. I hope to be meeting with Neurath soon. Perhaps he can enlighten me.<sup>2</sup>

“In any case, this would also result in England’s mistrusting us.

“I therefore consider it correct to be completely open with the British from the outset. Nothing must be allowed to be unclear, nothing must give rise to suspicion. We must say manfully what we want and how we think. Only then, I believe, can the way be cleared for us to join hands toward a common objective.”

“Would you like to speak to the British colonel yourself?” I asked.

“No. Nor will he expect me to. *He* has been sent ahead in order to begin merely to sound out what is going on. Then the British will continue to observe and—simply, to watch. No good purpose can therefore be served by my appearance. On the contrary. Someone other than a colonel in the secret service would have to come if he wished to speak with me or negotiate with me.

“I would do the same if I were in the place of the British, and I would be surprised if my first envoy were to meet with the leader of the new movement right away.

“So you will report to me on the course of your discussion.”

*There follows Wagener’s version of the meeting with the British colonel. After he had made clear that Germany did not recognize the Versailles Treaty as a peace settlement, he explained to the colonel how the Nazis looked upon the three possible allies of Germany: France, Russia, and England. They did not,*

1. The German government charged during the First World War that the British auxiliary cruiser *Baralong* had fired on the crew of a sinking German submarine. Lord Northcliffe was publisher of several English newspapers, including the tabloid *Daily Mail*.

2. Baron Konstantin von Neurath, German ambassador to Italy, then, from 1930, to England, became foreign minister in 1932 and held that post under Hitler until 1938.

he stated, regard France as an independent factor, since it was manipulated by the headquarters of the Masonic lodge in England. Although the Nazis were resolved to combat bolshevism, Russia was a potential ally if the Western countries assumed a hostile posture toward Germany. He added that Russia posed a peril to British interests in the Persian Gulf and the eastern Mediterranean. He further pointed out that in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had made clear his preference for cooperation with England and his readiness to concede control of the world's oceans to it. The colonel nevertheless remained unimpressed and stated that England had no reason to fear either Russia or bolshevism.

The following day, Wagener writes, he reported on this conversation to Hitler. In the course of his report, he expressed the opinion that the English neither understood Germany's situation nor had any interest in its improvement. He added that Russia was so distant from them that bolshevism seemed no peril. Germany, on the other hand, remained for the English a beaten, but potentially still dangerous, adversary. As a result, the English felt no inclination to help it to its feet again.

"That's entirely possible," Hitler expressed his opinion. "But England won't do anything if we strengthen ourselves on our own. It will simply watch. Your English visitor is the first sign of such watching. We must alert England and its leading statesmen to the danger from the east, we must *keep on* alerting them, and we must not do anything ourselves that might provoke England. If we make it clear that we will renounce Alsace-Lorraine in France's favor, the border area south of Aachen in Belgium's favor, the section of Schleswig that Versailles assigned to Denmark in the latter's favor, our colonies in England's favor, and that we merely wish to have a free hand in the east and southeast—then England actually *cannot* do better than to say to us: at least we want to make treaties with you that determine our mutual interests down there—and it's all right with me if they set some additional conditions that serve the security of England and its empire."

"To me [Wagener replied] it continues to seem crucial to win over our neighbors to the southeast and east by way of economic exchange and economic treaties of the kind Pilsudski proposed to you. In these countries, too, the Masonic lodge rules. Pilsudski himself is perhaps the only statesman all around us who is not dependent on the lodge. But when he dies, Freemasonry will hold sway in Poland as well.

"The lodge brothers are tied to the lodge by economic interests and the privileges the lodge offers them. If we offer economic advantages to these countries, even the lodges' interest in us will be aroused, and the ties with the secret centers in England will become shaky in view of the greater potential inherent in treaties with us. The world is for sale. Economic interests tip the balance. Even the most high-minded intellectual constructs concerning population policy, culture, and religion are based on economic objectives.

"If we do not even mention politics, but pursue and develop only the ex-

change economy that results purely from *import* necessity, we *cannot* offend anyone, not even England, and will quietly consolidate our own position at the same time that we promote that of our neighbors. And this will take a form that may at times astonish watchful England but never frighten it.

“Sooner or later, the moment will arrive that can bring the final decision for us—for joint action and a closer tie by treaty with France, which is the same as to say with Western Europe; or with England, which is the same as with the British Empire; or with Russia, which means with the emerging great power, socialism!”

“I very much fear,” Hitler said, “that in the first instance, we would be only a part, in the third only a cog. But in the second instance, we are a partner!”

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## Hitler Worries about the Danger of a Putsch from the Right and Rebellion from the Left—Funk as Intermediary with Business—First Stay at the Kaiserhof Hotel—Millions Subscribed in Event of Civil War

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**A**round the middle of 1931, Hitler once again unexpectedly came to see me on a Sunday morning to talk over an idea that had kept him from getting any sleep the night before.<sup>1</sup>

“After the outcome of the last elections—after all, with a hundred and seven seats we are the second-largest party—the rules by which the democratic powers play should have made them invite us to participate in forming a government. They did not invite us. They refused to have any discussions with us on the question. They broke parliamentary custom, the most basic principles of democracy, the simplest rules of logic, which should place greater weight on a growing party than on a dwindling one.

“Putting it bluntly: democracy has been abolished de facto, elections have become nothing more than outward show, they disregard the results, and in order to govern, they form a cabinet composed more or less by fiat and simply for the purpose of legislation, to the extent that laws are not the result of Article 48.<sup>2</sup> In each instance they wheel and deal to fashion majorities in the Reichstag. Such coalitions are therefore totally unstable; at any moment, they can call for a vote of no confidence as easily as they can draft a positive law.

1. The events described in this chapter can be dated with the help of a party-approved Nazi publication, which states that Hitler first stayed at the Kaiserhof Hotel on February 3, 1931: Julius Karl von Engelbrechten and Hans Volz, *Wir wandern durch das nationalsozialistische Berlin* (Munich, 1937), pp. 16, 63.

2. Article 48 of the Weimar Republic’s constitution invested the presidency with sweeping emergency powers, which were routinely used to legislate, even on ordinary fiscal matters, from 1930 on.

“They are willing to grant us the presidency of the Reichstag. But they keep us at a distance from the government.

“The principle resembles a latent coup d’état. The longer they stick to it, the more it becomes established, the more it can become evident, and the greater the chances are of eliminating once and for all any possibility of our governing.

“This attitude raises two dangers for Germany: first, that of a reactionary dictatorship of the right and, second, that of an uprising from the left, led by the Communists. Both mean civil war! To avoid it—yes, to make it impossible—is our duty to the German people and our mission in the sense of our movement.

“Therefore, the following must happen:

“One: There surely exists a secret group of men who are the intellectual leaders of the reaction. Göring believes it to be a group of generals, including Schleicher, Stülpnagel, and Hammerstein, as well as both Hindenburgs—father and son.<sup>3</sup> Papen, Hugenberg, strong elements among the Ruhr industrialists, and the entire cadre of estate owners are said to be backers.<sup>4</sup>

“It is essential to get to know this group better, to observe it and penetrate it.

“Two: Politically, this group is primarily supported by the German Nationalist Party, the Stahlhelm, and probably also the middle-class parties, perhaps even the Center Party, as Brüning’s method of government indicates.

“It is therefore necessary to establish contacts with these parties, especially as they cannot attain a majority in the Reichstag without us. But our aim is not to encourage them in their reactionary putsch, but to prevent it.

“Three: Speaking from the standpoint of power politics, the group also has the backing of the army. It is true that we have many sympathizers among the younger officers and the group of noncommissioned officers, and especially among the enlisted men. But military discipline is still a very powerful factor in the hands of the generals. And they back the Hindenburg-Schleicher-Stülpnagel group.

“The only organization that can be set up in opposition to the army is the SA. The Stahlhelm would take the side of the army to a man.

“But the SA has no weapons. And without weapons, even a tenfold superiority in manpower avails nothing, even if here and there the troops would refuse to shoot.

“So the question arises of how to arm and appropriately train the SA.

“Four: At the moment of the putsch from the right, the workers would

3. General Kurt von Schleicher, a powerful figure in the defense ministry, became minister of defense in June 1932 and then Hitler’s immediate predecessor as chancellor in December 1932. It is unclear whether Wagener had in mind General Edwin Stülpnagel or General Joachim von Stülpnagel. Baron Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord served as general and chief of the army command beginning in the fall of 1930.

4. Franz von Papen, Catholic aristocrat, former diplomat and renegade member of the Center Party, became chancellor in June 1932 and later played an important role in Hitler’s appointment to the chancellorship, serving as vice-chancellor in Hitler’s cabinet. Alfred Hugenberg was the leader of the conservative German National People’s Party.

respond with a general strike, while the Social Democrats and the Communists would engage in rebellion and resistance.

“In time, the police and the army could gain the upper hand. But there would be a terrible bloodbath, which would not end even when order had been re-established. In this struggle, we ourselves would be split into nationalists and socialists. Most people do not understand the true nature of National Socialism in the first place; and second, we could not choose either to march with the reactionaries against the German workers or with the Communists against the nationalistic German middle classes. Thus, we too would go under in the maelstrom.

“We can only prevent such confusion by making sure that our SA is armed and so strong that neither the army nor the right-wing parties nor the group of reactionary power politicians dare to undertake any action against us or even without us.

“Thus, the necessity of arming the SA is clear from this aspect as well. So it continues to be our urgent task. We must keep in mind, however, that such a move must not be understood or interpreted by the groups on the right and the government—and on the left as well—as meaning that *we* are preparing for a putsch. I do not *want* a putsch, I do not want *any* internal armed confrontation. What I want is for the decision to be made by *the will of the Volk* as it is expressed in parliamentary elections.

“So that is the problem.”

Since Hitler was silent and clearly waiting for my response, I answered:

“As far as the first point is concerned, it is not so easy to penetrate the Schleicher-Hindenburg group. Of course it’s quite possible to get to know them. All the generals you named come from the Third Footguard Regiment. That is probably the way these officers found each other.

“As to the second point, it is a political matter that cannot raise any difficulties as I see it. I could arrange a meeting with the chairman of the German People’s Party, Dr. Dingeldey, at any time;<sup>5</sup> also with the chairman of the Economic Party. As far as the German Nationalists are concerned, the head of the party in the Prussian diet, former Major Borck, and I are on a first-name basis,<sup>6</sup> and I have a great many acquaintances in the Stahlhelm.”

“At the moment these two points are not so important to me. Göring and Strasser also have connections among these people. Actually, I came to see you about the third and fourth points: arms.”

“This question raises two problems [Wagener replied]. First, training the SA and preparing its divisions for action; and second, the acquisition and allocation of weapons.

“Tricksters must be given a dose of their own medicine. That’s why the following occurs to me:

5. Eduard Dingeldey was the leader of the German People’s Party, 1930–33.

6. Eldor C. Roman Borck was a German Nationalist deputy in the Prussian state parliament from 1924 to 1933.

“You or Röhm will establish contact with the army, while Strasser or Frick—or again the SA—gets in touch with the police to ask that training commandos of the army and police be made available to serve as instructors to the SA. The reason and occasion to be given is that we fear a putsch from the left and wish to help prevent it. That way, we kill two birds with one stone: the army and the police help us in the training process, and at the same time we establish a closer link between the SA and these state organizations.”

“I’ve talked to Röhm about this, too. He shares your opinion, and he too sees no difficulty. The SA and the army, in any case, have friendly relations with each other through the veterans’ organizations, and there is also a good understanding with the police in most places—granted, rather more covertly. [ . . . ]

“Röhm wants to establish a training staff [Hitler continued], and he already has active officers and police officials in mind for the purpose. There won’t be any hitch.”

“So all that’s left is the allocation of weapons and financing their acquisition. As far as allocation is concerned, I recently heard that the army has ordered the manufacture and storing of great quantities of weapons from the appropriate industries, apparently on the grounds that in case of a putsch from the left—which always has to be expected—an immediate reinforcement and arming of auxiliary military organizations could take place. How large these stores are I don’t know. But I could find out easily enough.”

“But now to the crucial question: how do we get hold of the stores?” Hitler then said.

“We must buy them!” I replied.

“What an insane idea!” Hitler exclaimed. “They’ll cost millions! Where do you expect to get that kind of money?”

“From industry. From business in general.”

“To tell the truth,” said Hitler, speaking somewhat more calmly, “you’re only telling me what I’ve already been thinking. I could not see any other option, either. But how we are to go about it—that’s what I could not figure out. And that is why I came to see you.

“Do you know a way we can get these millions from business leaders and firms?”

“We wouldn’t need the money until the need is urgent—that is, when a putsch or rebellion is under way or can be seen as inevitable. Only then do the weapons need to be distributed. Until that time, they stay in the factories and warehouses. If the factories need money, they can put up a certain amount of these supplies as collateral.

“The business community knows that in a civil war everything is lost. When labor and the Reds let loose, no stone will remain standing. The same will happen even with a putsch from the right.

“If business sees a chance to avoid such devastation by making funds available, it will give whatever we need. So we must demand assurances—unconditional ones, not ones that can be revoked. In case of upheaval, a joint committee

will give a pre-arranged signal. Certain major banks will make available to us sums for the purpose of procuring weapons and mobilizing the SA. So the money does not have to be paid out or deposited now. It need merely be available in case the signal is given.

“We enter into contracts with the armament factories and any other appropriate plants, to the effect that the weapons or the materiel in question is to be laid aside for us against such a time and purpose. Perhaps we can even persuade the army to take us under its wing on this. But since business counts on our subsequent entry into the government, there will be no difficulties even without backing from the army.”

“Everything you’ve expounded so far is something I either figured out already or that I could have somehow deduced. The only thing I still can’t work out—how we are going to get the funds in the first place—that you haven’t told me.”

“I’m just getting to it. We won’t have to run from pillar to post. We will simply turn to the top businessmen. All you have to do is agree to my entrusting the arrangement of such meetings to a man whom you unfortunately do not value very highly but who, in my opinion, is the one most suited to this task: Walther Funk, the editor of my *WDP (Economic News Service)*. As financial editor of the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, Funk built up the best of connections with all German businessmen, especially in the Ruhr and in heavy industry, as well as among all the conglomerates and associations. He enjoys an excellent reputation.

“The way I envision it, he will extend invitations in your name to two or three leaders at a time for a meeting with you. You will talk to these men about your view of the political developments of the future and the danger of a putsch from the left, and you will briefly explain your intentions. Then you ask for the required millions. Funk will have to do the rest. Possibly, I’ll make myself available to him in this regard. I shall try to reach him by telephone right away, to ask him to come here.”

“I planned to go to Berlin tomorrow anyway. So we can talk to him there. If you think he can be useful to us in this task, I have no objection to giving him a try. I don’t care for him, though.”

“Fine. I’ll report back to you after I’ve spoken with him.”

At this, Hitler left.

I reached Funk twenty minutes later by telephone. Since it was Sunday, my call found him at home.

Over the telephone I could only give him brief hints about the topic. But I was aware that he was quite interested and clearly saw his big moment at hand.

“But if Herr Hitler wants to speak with industrialists and other business leaders,” Funk said, “he cannot possibly receive them in the Sans-Souci Hotel. There’s only one place that is suitable: the Kaiserhof Hotel. It makes the best impression and is situated right across from the Reich Chancellery. If you agree, I’ll reserve the appropriate rooms there. When will you get here?”

“We’re leaving by car in the morning. I think we might be able to get there on



Tuesday, around two in the afternoon. I agree absolutely with the choice of the Kaiserhof. I'm sure Hitler will, too."

"Then I'll arrange everything, and I'll be in the hotel lobby starting at two o'clock."

And this course was followed.

For the first time, we moved into the handsome rooms in the southwest corner of the third floor of the Kaiserhof. The corner room was a large, very handsomely appointed sitting room. Next to it was Hitler's bedroom with private bath, and Schaub's was next door. The rest of the entourage was quartered on the other side of the sitting room.

I instructed Funk, who was waiting for us, on the meaning and purpose of the upcoming discussions. Of course I did not mention our ultimate intention—namely, that these preparations should avert a putsch from the *right*!

Funk had already issued an invitation for the same afternoon to the two leaders of the Allianz-Konzern, whose executive offices were situated across from the Kaiserhof. These were Dr. Schmitt, who subsequently served briefly as minister of economics, and von Finck, at the time president of the board of directors of the firm and of the Stuttgarter Verein.<sup>7</sup> The two made excellent impressions; both were physically and intellectually outstanding.

When they arrived at four o'clock, Hitler presented his ideas in a speech that lasted about half an hour. This was followed by a short discussion, during which both gentlemen indicated that they took a dim view of the political situation, in view of the apparent impossibility of alleviating unemployment. They were absolutely convinced, therefore, of the eventual eruption of riots and a major shift to the left.

Funk saw them out and returned five minutes later to announce that the Allianz-Konzern would make five million marks available if the foreseen eventually occurred.

Hitler was left speechless. Funk further reported that the following morning the leaders of the managing board of the potash syndicate—Privy Councillor Dr. Diehn and Herr Rosterg—would come by, to be followed by Günther Quandt, the industrial magnate.<sup>8</sup>

When Funk had left us, Hitler asked if I had expected such an amount. When I answered in the affirmative, he said, "This sort of thing is needed to make us understand the kind of power big business wields. For these millions represent power. And if they make the millions available to *us*, they cannot simul-

7. Kurt Schmitt, general director of the Allianz und Stuttgarter Verein Versicherungs-AG insurance firm, served as economics minister under Hitler from June 1933 to August 1934. August von Finck, banker and landowner, was chairman of the supervisory board of the Allianz und Stuttgarter Verein Versicherungs-AG insurance firm.

8. August Diehn was a member of the managing board of the German potash syndicate. August Rosterg was a member of the managing board of the German potash syndicate and of the Kali-Bank. Günther Quandt was chairman of the mining board of the potash firm Wintershall.

taneously make them available to another party or organization. So they are giving us their power!”

“True,” I answered. “On the one hand, we see the respect the NSDAP, and especially yourself, already enjoys in the business community. I don’t believe that any other party leader could have succeeded in obtaining such sums after a half-hour’s lecture.

“But on the other hand, this willingness involves some danger. We are socialists, we want to introduce a new social order, we have plans that are sure to be rejected by these very people. Let us take care not to let business buy us. We must not fool ourselves into believing that their generosity in granting us money means they approve of our movement. Perhaps it is much more an expression of their conviction that this is the way our movement—or at least the people gathered in it—can be won over to the purposes of liberalistic economics—that is, liberalism and capitalism.

“I must speak out in warning! The future of our movement lies solely and alone in its new socialism! The strategic objective of our work is the replacement of the egotistical spirit of profits of the individual with a communal striving directed to the interests of the entire community. I have mentioned more than once that in this I see the revival of Christ’s basic idea, the social community of all people, brotherly love, tolerance, humility.

“What the businessmen want is something quite different; they want to earn money, nothing but money, filthy money—and they don’t even realize that they are chasing a satanic phantom.

“That is why I am glad that you specifically did not ‘ask’ these people for money, but that you ‘demanded’ it; and that you did not demand it for the movement and at once, but in the eventuality of an uprising.”

“You’re perfectly right in what you say. I have no doubt whatever on this score. The military putschists of Schleicher’s ilk want to deceive us; in the same way, these businessmen believe that their money can silently lead us astray.

“But the path that leads to the altar of the Fatherland is a steep one; time and again, we must use an occasional foothold in order to advance. What we are doing right now is simply making use of a foothold. It’s possible to continue in the wrong direction even so. But we will not. But now I view the future calmly. We will never need these millions! But the fact that they were so readily given proves to me that our position is already so secure that no one will dare to start a putsch *against* our will.

“Take this consciousness of strength as the basis for future political negotiations. In the Reichstag, too, the day will soon come when no one can do *without* us. And that is why, once we are the strongest party, we can actually *demand* the formation of the government and need not come as supplicants.”

All that evening, Hitler was in the highest of spirits. His good mood was reinforced the following day, when the subscription list reached a level of thirteen million by noon.

# 38

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## Harald Quandt Reports to His Führer—His Mother’s Effect on Hitler—A Midnight Encounter between Goebbels and the “Chauffeureska” at Frau Quandt’s—Hitler Is Shocked

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**W**agener recalls that they ordered opera tickets for the evening and had lunch served in Hitler’s Kaiserhof suite at about two in the afternoon. At about four, Julius Schaub, one of Hitler’s adjutants and bodyguards, came in to report that a boy was outside and wanted to speak with Hitler. Upon learning of this, Hitler asked that the boy be admitted. Wagener then continues his narrative.

He was a decidedly good-looking youngster, slender, blond, wearing a blue musical-comedy uniform, with a dagger buckled on one side, his forage cap at a jaunty angle on his head. While raising his arm smartly in the German salute, he said:

“The youngest Hitler Youth in Germany is reporting to his Führer!”

“What’s your name?” Hitler asked as he shook hands with the boy.

“Harald Quandt.”<sup>1</sup>

At the moment of hearing the name, Hitler no more than I connected it with Quandt, the industrialist who had visited us that morning.

“How old are you?”

“Ten!”

“And who made you this beautiful uniform?”

“My mother.”

“And how does the uniform make you feel?”

1. In the manuscript, Wagener mistook the boy’s first name for his father’s: “Günther.” That mistake has been corrected here throughout. Harald Quandt later became a prominent industrialist in the Federal Republic of Germany.

At that, the boy stood even straighter and said: "Twice as strong!"

Hitler threw me a telling look and said to me, "Twice as strong! Did you hear that: in uniform, twice as strong!" And to the boy he said:

"I think it's nice that you came to see me. Who told you I was here?"

"My mother."

"And where is your mother?"

"Down in the lobby, having tea."

"Then give my best regards to your mother, and come back again soon."

After the boy had left, Hitler said:

"Often children speak great truths without knowing it. In uniform, the little fellow feels twice as strong. We'll have to remember that, Wagener. Anyone who is chosen to perform a special task should be given a uniform. Either he will be reluctant to put it on and call attention to himself—in which case he would never accomplish what is expected of him anyhow. Or he will feel twice as strong in uniform, and therefore perform twice as well."

The fact that soon after, the party organization was assigned uniform dress was entirely due to Harald Quandt.

A few minutes later Goebbels came to welcome Hitler. He suggested that we come down to the lobby for five-o'clock tea; he had reserved a corner table.

"I was thinking of it, but there's a woman downstairs who sent her little boy up to see me a little while ago. I don't know whether I would be obligated to ask her to join me. Because I really should speak to her."

"You need have no worries on that score. The woman is Frau Quandt,"<sup>2</sup> Goebbels said, "the divorced wife of the industrialist who called on you today."

"Oh!" Hitler laughed with a glance in my direction. "So that's why the name seemed so familiar! But why is she divorced?"

"It's all perfectly proper. She is not the guilty party. And the boy spends much more time with her than with his father," Goebbels replied.

"You know the woman? So much the better. Then I will come downstairs at five. You will introduce me to Frau Quandt—and please arrange the business about the table. I want the boy there, too. Wagener, Schaub, and Sepp Dietrich will be with me."

Hardly had Goebbels left than Göring arrived. Rushed, as he always was, he immediately told Hitler that he had to speak to him alone briefly and would be leaving again at once. I knew what he wanted. This was always his way when he brought Hitler money—the money that ostensibly came from Carin Göring but in reality originated in the Ruhr.

When Hitler and Göring returned from Hitler's room, where they had retired, Hitler mentioned that later on, at tea, he would be meeting a Frau Quandt. "Oh," Göring exclaimed, "Goebbels' Madame Pompadour!"

2. Johanna Maria Magdalene Quandt was married to the industrialist Günther Quandt from 1921 until their divorce in 1929; she later became the wife of Joseph Goebbels.

“What’s that? What are you saying?”

“Goebbels spends a great deal of time at her house. He knows her from when she was married to Quandt. I believe he was the ten-year-old boy’s tutor or something. He always supplemented his income that way. After all, he could hardly live on his earnings as Gauleiter, and as a Reichstag deputy he was left with a mere five hundred and fifty marks.

“I believe that occasionally Frau Quandt also helps him out with secretarial chores.”

Hitler looked at me with some astonishment. Then he asked Göring:

“But are there any misgivings about my sharing a table with her?”

“No,” Göring replied with some reserve. “But one must be careful with any Pompadour.”

Shortly after five, we went down to the lobby. What a picture was offered to our eyes! Closely ranked, table by table, the large lobby was crowded with people. Everyone looked at Hitler as we entered and Goebbels came to meet us. At various tables people stood up to greet Hitler.

Goebbels led us to a table where he introduced us to Frau Quandt and another lady who was with her. The boy saluted smartly, and Hitler pinched his bright-red cheek. Then Hitler asked the ladies to join us at the corner table reserved for us.

Even at first glance, Frau Quandt made an excellent impression, which only increased in the course of our conversation. She was of middle height, well proportioned, blond, with bright-blue shining eyes and manicured hands. She was dressed well but not excessively, calm in her movements, assured, self-confident, with a winning smile—I am tempted to say: enchanting.

I noticed the pleasure Hitler took in her innocent high spirits. I also noticed how her large eyes were hanging on Hitler’s gaze. And whenever the conversation ground to a self-conscious halt, young Harald always served as the catalyst to restore contact.

I had to call Hitler’s attention to the fact that it was time to get ready for the opera before he would tear himself away. No specific next meeting was arranged. But there was no doubt that a closer tie of friendship and veneration between Hitler and Frau Quandt had begun to take shape.

After the opera, the two of us sat in Hitler’s living room. Hitler was lost in thought. There was no doubt that he was still under the spell of the afternoon’s meeting.

“I believed that, for myself, I was finished with the world and human influences. But surely what touched me today and still holds me in thrall was not what they call worldly impulses. There is something higher that unites people and can influence them mutually.

“Even your Od emanations—which, since I first heard the theory, I find at every turn and which explain some things I might otherwise find incomprehensible—are too closely tied to matter for me. There must be something unearthly

that lives and acts in us. Perhaps those people are right who call it a touch of the divine.

“During my solicitous friendship with Geli I felt it when I was with her, but never with other women. Since her death, I have missed it, and I believed that I had buried these feelings with her. Today they are all around me again, surprisingly and very powerfully.”

We fell silent. What could I say? Look, Adolf Hitler the man is stirring once more, the same Adolf Hitler who at other times seemed only the shell of his genius.

“Might it be that man is nothing when he is alone? That he only achieves equilibrium in a union with another? A man and a woman? The male being and the female being, the one who engenders with vigor and the one who gives birth in pain and suffering?”

So his mind pondered while it was his heart that was speaking. No real conversation developed.

Shortly after midnight, Schaub, Sepp Dietrich, and Schreck came back, somewhat noisily. Schaub looked in on us, apparently to check whether Hitler was in.

“Where have you been?” Hitler asked.

“At Frau Quandt’s,” was the answer. It struck like a bolt of lightning.

“How did that happen?”

“After you left, Herr Hitler, we ran into her downstairs. She asked us to visit her sometime, and we accepted for this very evening. She has a large apartment on the Reichskanzlerplatz. We drove there after supper. Her friend was there too, and gradually we drank up everything she had in the icebox.

“We were just about to leave, around midnight, when the door opened and Goebbels appeared. He looked astonished and said, ‘I’m surprised to find such merry company here so late at night. How do you happen to be here?’ I answered, ‘We’re even more surprised to have a chance to welcome such a late guest at this hour of the night. And how did we get here? By taxi; and then we rang the bell, and then the door was opened. But how did *you* get here? You did *not* ring the bell, and no one opened the door to you.’ And then Sepp gave his opinion: ‘He has a key. We’d better leave.’”

Hitler was shocked. He grimaced, and it seemed that he was about to laugh. But no laughter emerged. Schaub left, and I also said good night. Hitler shook hands with me, saying in a sad voice:

“So it turned out to be a short relapse. But Providence was gracious to me. We’ll see each other in the morning.”

# 39

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## Hitler's Plans for Career Military Officers—His Views on the Efficacy of War and the Effect of a Surprise Fait Accompli

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**W**agener reports that the following morning, Funk brought in four additional prominent businessmen, whose names he does not provide. By noon the subscription list in case of civil war had reached twenty-five million marks, according to Wagener. At that point, Röhm arrived to visit Hitler. In conversation with Hitler and Wagener, Röhm expressed contempt for the hundred-thousand-man army of the Republic. Once the NSDAP had power and he had become defense minister, Röhm told them, he would, through a rigorous selection process, replace the “barracks types” of the republican army with hand-to-hand warriors who would be leaders, not merely executors of orders. The task of the SA would lie in providing pre-military training that would enable the army to make men into soldiers in a short time.

Rising to his feet, Hitler said: “I would go significantly further here. During the war, the company commanders in the infantry were almost exclusively reserve officers. Toward the end of the war, only a few of the batallion commanders were regulars. If reserve officers can handle the job in wartime, they can certainly manage it in peacetime. Actually, I need officers on active duty only for experimental detachments and special troops—which is not to say that reserve officers cannot be used there as well. On the contrary! But a certain cadre does have to be on active service.

“For the rest, an officer must never be *merely* an officer. In fact, in a socialist army, it is desirable for an officer to have made some kind of mark in a civilian profession before he can join the reserves. And every reserve officer can be a candidate for a career in the higher officer corps. If he is judged suitable and accepted, this nomination can only bring him additional advantages in his civilian profession.

“If, on the basis of aptitude and choice, he enters active service at the age of

thirty or thirty-five, he must be given such additional training and education in war colleges and academies—and intermittently as batallion commander, higher aide-de-camp, and officer on the general staff—as is required by the high command.

“But even then, an officer must be more than a *mere* officer. Between times, he would, for example, have to work as a district administrator for three to five years, or as mayor or as manager of a large industrial plant, of an export firm, or of a bank—depending on his previous civilian profession. And he must spend time abroad, preferably in foreign armies, but at least among people whose language, customs, and ethical and economic strengths he must study and understand. And afterward, he should write a kind of doctoral dissertation that would earn him the rank, for example, of colonel.

“A general would have to have spent several years as president of an administrative district or head of a chamber of commerce, or an envoy or general consul abroad, or a university professor, something that presupposes commitment, accomplishment, and proof of worth of the whole personality, something that requires him to arrive daily at decisions and resolutions.

“Such a system would not cause these other professions to feel inferior. On the contrary, they would have the same pride in seeing as many men as possible from their ranks in leading positions in the higher officer corps as regiments have always felt when the maximum number of general-staff officers have come from among them. For the initial civilian profession is the primary one. Only the best from all the other professions will be chosen to be career officers. This is where the great change takes place!

“Röhm, I really do believe that we are approaching the right way. Now that I have seen the confidence business bestows on us and our SA, my conviction is strengthened that financial difficulties will never hold us back from doing what is right.” [ . . . ]

That night, Hitler turned the conversation to the subject of war, evidently stimulated by Röhm’s presentation.

“Recently, during your economic conferences, you claimed that war must wreak such havoc on all participants that it invariably proves to be a losing proposition. [ . . . ] I wanted to ask you to explain this to me in greater detail.”

“Allow me,” I said, “to collect my thoughts for a few minutes. It is not the kind of topic I can expound on without preparation.”

Hitler looked at me, at first astonished, but then clearly satisfied. For he understood that I took such discussions more seriously than tea-table chatter.

I realized quite clearly that he only assimilated and incorporated into the mosaic of his store of knowledge whatever happened to fit. But that was precisely the reason why the form in which one presented an idea to him was extraordinarily important. If one succeeded, it was possible to change the overall appearance or design of the mosaic and its colors. What this required was to destroy, to the necessary extent, some of the mosaic pieces he had



previously amassed and to replace them with others that revealed a new point of view to him.

I had long made it a habit to see in Adolf Hitler a phenomenon that had to be accepted just as it was, present among us and somehow set by Providence in the human world, and specifically in Germany.

*In the following passage, Wagener relates how on this occasion he took the position that in the era of technical weapons and mass armies, war had become so extravagantly costly that all participants—the victorious as well as the vanquished—could expect from it only heavy and long-lasting economic losses. He ventured the opinion that it would be nothing less than criminal for any government to pursue foreign-policy goals in the future by waging war.*

“That would mean,” Hitler interjected, “that any revision of the stipulations set down in the dictated Versailles Treaty has become quite impossible. Is that really your opinion?”

“Not at all. The understanding that war can bring *nothing but* damage and losses, even to the victors, involves a significant guarantee that one can accomplish all sorts of things without other nations’ reaching for their guns. It is only a matter of preparing and carrying out an action in a manner that allows world opinion to consider it justified, the restoration of a basically natural situation, the expression of the will of the affected nation, and not an act of violence motivated by a spirit of conquest that lusts for the use of arms.

“If, for example, by restoring an exemplary order and a promising rise in Germany, we succeed in returning the Saar to Germany, or in having Austria, as a federal state, seek annexation to the Reich, there will not be a single foreign nation that will call this an act of violence. We will simply have helped those territories to achieve their justified desires, expressed in free elections. Under the impression of the rise we wish to bring about—and will assuredly bring about—for Germany, the questions of Memel, Danzig, and the Corridor can also find a quicker and easier solution than we can foresee at present.

“But the best solution will always be union with other Central European nations—beginning with economic alliances, proceeding to customs agreements, and finally involving currency. In such negotiations, the question of a claim to leadership need never be raised, since in such a union, whichever element controls economic leadership will, in the long run, also control political leadership. But it seems to me absolutely expedient to form a political union on the basis of equal rights—that is, of democratic parliamentarism, on the practical model of the American Congress and the overall structure of its constitution and of the German federal state as established by Bismarck.

“Once that end is achieved, then the Corridor borders and similar obstacles collapse automatically. Nowadays, does anyone still care whether he lives in Baden or in Hesse or in Prussia? He lives in Germany! Does anyone feel that he is

crossing a frontier when the train or his car takes him from one to another state of the USA? The same will come about in Central Europe. And Europe will develop out of Central Europe quite spontaneously and in a relatively short time.

“During all this time, to be sure, we must pursue only *one* policy, with every means at our disposal and with the greatest prudence: the policy of avoiding any war and any incitement to war. Then we can be assured of ultimate victory over our enemies of the Great War—more precisely, over the mistakes of our Great War enemies. And the real peace treaty will be determined in a congress that establishes the ‘United States of Europe.’”

“You quite ignored the Russian-Bolshevik danger. Is it your opinion that Russia will stand by and watch these developments without taking any action?” Hitler asked.

“What protects us from this danger are our socialist measures and our reorganization. For side by side with the economic and political procedures we establish, social reform will occur in Germany.

“We need not care whether and when the neighboring states imitate us. And all of them will copy us, without a doubt! Even Russia will do as we do. Except that it will take longer there. In Russia, the herd animals will first have to be retrained to individual behavior. That alone—once the state sets about it—will require two to three generations. But our socio-economic solutions and socialist principles of self-administration will conquer the whole world—no doubt about it. And Russia will see in this, not a danger, but a fulfillment of a dream.

“If, furthermore, we succeed in joining hands with England, we will no longer need a League of Nations; the next step is a world parliament that assumes central control of numerous tasks that can be accomplished only in concerted action in any case. It will also pave the way for expanding the United States of Europe and of America into a union of these federations of states.”

Hitler thought about this for a few moments. Then he said, “I cannot close my mind to your views. To be sure, it makes no sense to me that I should give priority to economic considerations.

“But I gather three things from your presentation. The precondition is that, after taking over the government, we will succeed in leading Germany to a powerful inner exaltation by assuring law and order, by abolishing unemployment and establishing economic affluence, and by the unconditional recognition of our government and its purposeful nature on the part of our neighbors, our former enemies, and the world in general. These three things are the following:

“One: Whatever political measures must be taken to correct the dictated Versailles Treaty and restore German national sovereignty must not be begged for, long prepared for, or regarded as the object of diplomatic negotiations. Otherwise, hostile sentiments will be reawakened, there will be saber rattling as happened in France when Dr. Curtius tried to conclude his customs agree-

ment with Austria, and the only results are sham compromises that do not clear the air but cloud the issue. But if the world is confronted with an unexpected *fait accompli*, firmly backed by the closed ranks of the German Volk—and to which we have a further claim on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points—then the thought 'war' never arises—not with us, not with our opponents.

"Two: Should it become necessary to adjust to the military intervention of an opponent, then he must know that the entire German Volk, in arms, is against him. To this end, the plan Röhm presented today seems to me the right approach.

"Three: And third, we can avoid war if we have England as an ally. That is why I keep returning to the necessity of reaching an understanding with England. Establishing a relationship of trust between England and Germany is the surest way. And we need not pretend to England. We can lay our cards on the table with England. For there is nothing in our objectives that could disturb or even threaten England.

"These three points are the sum I arrive at as a result of our discussion. And your suggestion that every nation and every statesman must and will think twice before instigating a war—since, even if it ends in victory, it will bring more harm than good—is correct and crucial.

"You may be right. The time of large-scale wars is over. Armed combat will be increasingly replaced by economic agreement, to be followed by political treaties. The only struggle left is the struggle for worldviews: on one side, liberalism! on the other, socialism! But it can be waged more advantageously with revolutionary ideas than with cannons and bombers."

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## Hitler's Plan for a Rapid Subway Connection between Hamburg and Berlin—His Views on Architecture and Art—He Rejects Spengler's *Decline of the West*

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**W**agener goes on to tell of economic policy discussions in Hamburg with the Gauleiter there, Karl Kaufmann, as well as with shippers and import merchants. He took the position, he relates, that for the time being, Germany's export had to be subordinated to development of the home market, a reorientation that would require Hamburg to turn to new tasks. That could best be accomplished, he contended, by making Hamburg the focus of import and transit trade for the central and eastern European countries. German merchants should, he urged, look to those countries so that Hamburg could become the gateway to Central and Eastern Europe.

When, several days later, I made a report to Hitler about these ideas, he immediately sent for maps and photographs of Hamburg. He began, at this early juncture, to draft the construction of this "Gateway to Europe."

"What New York represents on one side of the Atlantic, Hamburg must become on the other," he explained. "But in place of the mechanical vertical structure of America's cosmopolitan center, with its skyscrapers and its bustling functionality and impersonality, in Hamburg incoming liners will gradually be embraced by the green riverbanks of the enchanting Elbe landscape, with its half-timbered houses along the shore and with blossoming gardens. Little by little, the picture will solidify into the image of a city, a metropolis, 'Germany,' which must exemplify Europe's culture wherever the eye turns!

"There is no question that Hamburg can attract all passenger traffic. And if we lay a subterranean express railroad from Cuxhaven to Hamburg and on to Berlin—a monorail with speeds of two hundred kilometers—Hamburg and Berlin will be riveted into a single unit. No one will want to fly if he can go from

an ocean liner to the heart of Central Europe by traveling amid comfortable upholstery in the same amount of time.”

Hitler’s instant grasp of the situation was astonishing, as was the way his mind immediately projected an image of the future that might not be realized until the next century.

“I can easily imagine,” I added, “that such an economic perspective can also have political repercussions. The more we turn our interests to the Central and Eastern European markets, the less chance we run of friction with England. A gradual rapprochement between us and Russia also seems more likely.”

“Since these plans extend far into the future,” Hitler assured me, “I have no wish to reject those thoughts. Bismarck’s continental policy will continue to furnish the most solid basis for Germany’s healthy progress in the immediate future, and probably for all time to come.”

In Munich, I introduced Hitler to two men so that they might form their own impression of him. I had high hopes of their influence in America and abroad in general. They were Dr. Edmund Stinnes and Dr. Ludwig Roselius.<sup>1</sup>

Stinnes was just leaving for a months-long visit to the United States, to meet with most of the leading men. He moved widely in the clubs and in society, giving him an opportunity to answer the questions which, as he recalled from a previous trip, were constantly put to him: “Who is Hitler? What does he want? What is National Socialism?”

Hitler spoke with Stinnes for more than half an hour. Afterward Stinnes told me:

“There’s no doubt about it, I’m deeply impressed. What he says is clever, how he says it is convincing. But I do not believe that Hitler lives in our world. I’ve gained only *one* human impression of him: he is vain.”

I was extremely interested in Dr. Stinnes’s opinion. After all, he was a leader in the business community, he had traveled all over the world, he had many and varied interests, and he was above time and space. His wife was the daughter of von Schulze-Gävernitz, a renowned professor at Freiburg University, who at the time was a Reichstag deputy of the Democratic Party, to which Stinnes also belonged.<sup>2</sup> The word “vain” took me aback. Those of us who were constantly around Hitler were conscious of certain of his traits—for example, that he could not bear to be corrected if a third party was present; or that one could never allow oneself to joke with him; or the garish spectacles staged at any gatherings or parades in which he took part; or even his gesture of brushing his hair back from his forehead. But they did not appear to us as vanity.

1. Edmund Stinnes was elder son of the industrial magnate Hugo Stinnes. In a letter of August 15, 1932, to Chancellor Papen’s deputy commissar for Prussia, Franz Bracht, Edmund Stinnes mentioned knowing Wagener: Bracht Papers, vol. 2, East German Zentralarchiv, Potsdam. Ludwig Roselius was head of the Bremen coffee processing firm, Kaffee Hag.

2. Gerhard von Schulze-Gävernitz served as a deputy in the National Assembly of 1919–20 but not in the Reichstag.

Nevertheless, Stinnes might be right in believing the underlying motivation to be a pronounced vanity. After the seizure of power, granted, there could be no question that vanity was clearly in evidence.

*Wagener then tells of a conversation Hitler had in his presence with Ludwig Roselius, Bremen coffee merchant and art patron. Questioned by Hitler about the Böttcherstrasse, the street in Bremen recently reconstructed with his financial backing, Roselius explained that he had only instructed the architect to abide by two principles: that the form of the buildings should suit the region, and that their exteriors should be made of local materials, which in the case of Bremen meant bricks.*

“What you say about adapting the style and method of building to the region and to the available materials,” Hitler replied, “is one of the secrets of architecture. But there are still other secrets, which are no less crucial.

“All cultures that, as far as we know, are active and fully formed have always found their earliest expression in architecture. And since every culture goes through a youthful period beginning with awkward childhood, which is soon replaced with a storm-and-stress period—we also find that after childish beginnings, the architecture of a newly emerging culture precisely represents this storm-and-stress period, much more strongly than do painting, poetry, and music. Thus, in the Germanic-Celtic settlement area, after the first millennium we see Gothic cathedrals rising high into the sky—an expression of surmounting the narrowly defined concept of finality, a spiritual upheaval that demolished the columned halls of Hellenic classicism, high-flown, revolutionary!

“The storm-and-stress period is followed by the prime of life of Germanic-European culture, growing stronger, taking possession, creative and mature. This spirit is expressed in the period of the Renaissance, as well as in the Baroque, and it ends in the splendid classicism of Schinkel’s and Semper’s styles.

“Like architecture, painting goes through all of life’s stages. But it lags behind, developing its strongest creative force in the fourteenth century, and in the cinquecento—in the fifteenth century—it is at its most magnificent. In subsequent centuries, individual geniuses may emerge now and again, but they can be understood to be no more than epigones. Painting thus advanced more quickly to maturity, although it awoke later from the dreaminess of youth, and it seems to have passed its age of creative virility at a time when architecture was still in the developmental stage.

“You are familiar with *The Decline of the West*, in which Oswald Spengler takes note of the current decadence of painting, as well as literature and music, and concludes that the end of our cultural epoch has arrived. He is a philosopher, but one descended from the natural sciences. He *arranges* observations, he *records* insights and knowledge. He takes a graphic view of history. And if he sees that a line curves downward, he considers the trend a proven fact, so

that zero must be reached at a particular time and place. And that moment represents the end, the decline of the West!

“But his graphing has no bearing on any of my ideas and plans as architect and politician. I study the reasons *why* the line curves downward, and I try to remove the causes. But at the same time, I examine the reasons why at an earlier time the line curved upward! And then I set out to restore the conditions of that day, to awake *anew* the creative will of that time, and to bring about a new crest in the constantly fluctuating curve of history.

“No doubt about it! Our culture has entered on stagnation, it looks like old age. But the reasons for this state do not lie in the fact that it has genuinely passed its manhood, but rather that the upholders of this culture, the Germanic-European peoples, have neglected it and have turned their attention to material tasks, to technology, industry, to hunger for material possessions, to rapacity, and to an economic egocentrism that overwhelms everything else. All their thinking and striving reaches its only climax in account books and in the outward show of the worldly goods they possess.

“I am overcome with disgust, a vexing scorn, when I see the way such people live and behave! [ . . . ] But thank God, it is only the top ten thousand who think along these lines. It is true that the whole of the bourgeoisie is already strongly infected and sickly. But bourgeois youth are still healthy and can be shown the way back to nature, to a higher development, to new cultural will, provided only that they do not become enmeshed in the treadmill of meaningless and wholly materialistic contemporary life, only to drown either in the cupidity of business or in the tedium of the middle-class workaday routine or in the corruption of the big city.

“If we succeed in replacing the egocentric cupidity of business with a socialist communal will and a work-affirming responsibility for the commonweal; in abolishing the tedium of middle-class workaday monotony by substituting for it the potential enjoyment of personal liberty, the beauty of nature, the splendor of our own Fatherland and the thousandfold diversity of the rest of the world; and if we put an end to the corruption of omnipresent degeneracy, bred in the warrens of buildings and on the asphalt streets of the cities of millions—then the road is clear to a new life, to a new creative will, to a new flight of the free, healthy spirit and mind. And then, my dear Herr Roselius, your bricks will form themselves into entirely new shapes all by themselves. Temples of life will be built, cathedrals of a higher cult will be raised, and even thousands of years later, the walls will bear witness to the exalted times out of which even more exalted ones were born!”

When Roselius had left Hitler's room with me, he took my hand and said:

“Wagener, I thank you for having made this hour possible. What a man! And how small we feel, concerned as we are with those things that preoccupy us! But now I know what I have to do! In spite of my sixty years, I have only one goal: to join in the work of helping the young people and the German Volk to find internal and external freedom!”

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## Funk's Understanding of National Socialism—His Subsidization by Ruhr Industry—Wagener as Marriage Broker for Goebbels

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**I**n the meantime, Hitler and Funk had concluded their campaign to assure preparedness against a “putsch from the left.” As we heard from Strasser and Frick, the outcome was that plans for an army putsch were tabled. [ . . . ]

Through his successful financial scheme, Funk had significantly consolidated the esteem in which Hitler held him. I realized what had happened from the fact that Hitler met more frequently with Funk, without mentioning the meetings to me, and that he no longer spoke with me about the scheme unless I brought up the subject. Furthermore, he had recently begun to receive from Funk a sort of news service to keep him continuously informed on questions of economic policy. Since Funk sent me neither carbons or offprints of these, while Strasser did receive copies, I understood that Funk was intent either on influencing Hitler and Strasser in questions of economic policy in a direction different from the one I considered advisable or, on the other hand, on insinuating himself into a position closer to Hitler and the whole party leadership by bypassing me.

The significance of Funk's work in this area was obvious to me at once. Since Funk had a very clever writing style and since, as a journalist and the financial editor of a newspaper of the significance of the *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*, he also knew exactly how to formulate what he wanted to convey to his readers in the appropriately suggestive wording, I could not underestimate the effect of his covert press orientation. I therefore demanded that Funk—who was, after all, on my staff, though without salary—submit to me beforehand his reports for Hitler.

Funk refused and at the same time resigned his job with the *WPD*. I asked him once again to come to Munich for an interview. He came, and it seemed that we would be able to iron out our differences.



But first we had supper together in the Neue Börse restaurant, at which time Funk did rather more justice to the alcohol than was apparently good for him. At eleven, though the place was still quite full, he began to sing. He gave the leader of the very pleasant and decent band a hundred-mark note to play an accompaniment. This was done, with the result that we were requested to take our business elsewhere.

Funk was now absolutely determined to go to the Maxim-Bar [?] at the Karlsplatz. In spite of strenuous efforts, there was no way I could stop him; I therefore went along, feeling responsible for my "guest." Once there, Funk immediately ordered two bottles of champagne, but hardly had we finished one glass when he disappeared into the ladies' room and returned with the attendant, in her black dress and white apron and cap, in order to dance with her. This move outraged the rest of the patrons, and a great commotion ensued. Thereupon Funk pressed another hundred-mark note into the hand of the woman—who was no doubt very nice but who had unquestionably been hired to perform in the ladies' room. Funk was then grabbed by the male patrons and helped to the door. He left the bar with the cry: "So that's National Socialism!" Totally horrified, I paid for the champagne and left as well.

When I asked the doorman if he knew the whereabouts of the gentleman who had just been thrown out of the place, he said:

"There's a real gent for you. I got him a taxi, and he asked the cabbie to drive to the Malkasten. And he gave me fifty marks."

I took another taxi to follow him, drag him out of the bar—one of Munich's best-known and most heavily frequented artists' hangouts—and take him to his hotel. But by the time I got there, he was already seated at a table with two Negresses, in itself a rare sight in Munich, thus doubly attracting the public's attention to Funk's table. He was in the process of embracing one of the ladies, preparatory to kissing her. At that, I turned on my heel, went out the door, and made off, overcome by lively pangs of conscience.

Unfortunately, Hitler and Hess were away from Munich the following day. I did not see Funk again and was told at his hotel only that he had been brought there in the morning and had made first-class sleeping-car reservations to Berlin for the same evening.

Later, I learned that such bouts of drunkenness were quite frequent for Funk and that he had the reputation of a habitual drunkard. The money that he threw around so freely, about which I had never worried before, came from the Ruhr industrialists, who sent him a monthly subsidy of three thousand marks, along with an occasional larger grant for special purposes. The funds were funneled through the Mining Association.<sup>1</sup> He was, by the way, the recipient of the same

1. There is abundant evidence that Funk in fact received subsidies from Ruhr industrial sources: H. A. Turner, Jr., *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (New York, 1985), pp. 148–52; He also received for a time regular subsidies from minor officials of the IG Farben chemical corporation; *ibid.*, p. 262.

monthly subsidy even later, when he served as Reich press secretary, and even when he was Reich minister of economics.

Actually, I did not know the full extent of these details at that time. But what happened in Munich was enough to make me demand of Hitler that he separate from Funk at once.

But we [Hitler and Wagener] did not meet until about a week later, in Berlin, when we were about to leave for Braunschweig for the SA parade.<sup>2</sup> Thus, valuable time had passed, and my narrative no longer bore the full brunt of the outrage that had inspired me the first day. In any case, I told Hitler about my adventure with Funk, whereupon he laughed and said:

“Wagener, you’re exaggerating. By the way, Funk has been to see me since, and he told me about your shared adventure. Why is it that lately you’ve turned against him? First you recommend him to me, after you used him for three months in your *WPD*, and now that I’ve accepted him and he helps me win successes that no one else could have achieved, you want to take him away from me again?”

“But Herr Hitler!” I said. “If I employed him in the *WPD*, that is not to say that I’m prepared to employ him in other matters. And if I recommended him to you because you wanted the business community to supply the wherewithal for special purposes, that’s not to say that I consider him suited to be your advisor on economic policy. And if I tell you now that in Munich he behaved in a manner that makes me question whether you should burden yourself with him, that does not mean that I want to ‘take him away.’ I only want to issue a clarification and a warning, in your own best interest and in the interest of the movement.”

“Talk to him again about the incident. I *cannot* show him the door now, when, for me and with me, he has just established perhaps the most significant contacts I have made for a long time. You’ll have to agree on that score.

“He told me that you and he had a confrontation and that he has given up working for the *WPD*. He doesn’t seem to agree entirely with your economic policy, he thinks it is highly theoretical. I find it very valuable, now and then, to hear from him views of a different sort.”

It is to be imagined what fright overcame me. So the work of the Ruhr region was already starting!

“Herr Hitler! Funk does not *have* an economic policy of his own. When I engaged him for the *WPD*, he demonstrated a strong inclination toward our socialist ideas and aims and a great interest in them. It seems to me that, in the meantime, he has turned more to the views of his financial backers and friends in business, most of whom you met through him, after all. But they are the *enemies* of our economic policy!”

2. This is probably a reference to the gathering of the northern branch of the SA in the city of Braunschweig, October 17–18, 1931.

“Once,” he replied, “you lectured me on strategy and tactics. You told me that the highest military leader, the general, must grasp and understand the strategic long-term aim in order to win the tactical battles that bar his way to that end.

“The same consideration applies here. I know what the ultimate objective is. The tactical battles might seem to be leading me astray. But once they are won, I return unerringly to the direction that leads to the strategic goal. In 1870, Moltke, too, turned to the right, away from his strategic goal, Paris, in order to win the tactically crucial battle of Sedan. And when MacMahon and Napoleon had been captured, he continued the march on Paris.”

At that moment, it was pointless to continue pressing Hitler. I had always expected that, sooner or later, the reactionary business circles would express their conditions for continued financial support. And since they thought entirely in terms of economic liberalism, there was no question that they would veto our socialism. What I had not foreseen was that it would be my own associate, Funk, who would be the shield bearer of heavy industry and the mining interests.

I decided to speak to Strasser once more. I saw a crisis of confidence rising on the horizon, though I could not yet imagine what form it would take. But I understood that a new opponent for me and my economic policy had come into being in Funk. Now, besides fighting Göring, I had to combat Funk as well!

The day before our departure for Braunschweig, Goebbels came to see me at the hotel. He told me that Frau Quandt would very much like to go to Braunschweig with us, but that he could not take her in his car. Would I be willing and able to take Frau Quandt and her friend—the woman whom I had already met—in my car? A place to stay in Braunschweig had already been arranged. And on the way back, he himself would be able to transport the ladies.

I agreed readily.

Hitler had more than once talked to me about Frau Quandt, asking if I had seen her again and whether I had any other news of her. After that first evening, Goebbels had avoided any meeting with Hitler. No progress had therefore been made in the matter.

That evening, too, Hitler brought up Frau Quandt’s name. He said:

“This woman could play an important role in my life, even without my being married to her. In all my work, she could represent the feminine counterpart to my single-mindedly male instincts. She could be a second Geli to me. Too bad that she isn’t married.”

The following day around noon, I called for Frau Quandt and her companion at her apartment on the Reichskanzlerplatz. Since I was using a large hundred-horsepower Horch, my driver, the two ladies, and I, along with the luggage, had plenty of room.<sup>3</sup>

3. A Horch was a rather expensive German make of car.

Around two o'clock, we stopped for a picnic in a little wooded area. Frau Quandt had brought along a well-appointed picnic basket, so that we had everything we could possibly want.

After our repast, she and I took a short walk. I asked her:

"May I take the liberty of discussing a serious problem with you, though I will be intruding on your most private affairs?"

"Since I assume it has something to do with Herr Hitler, I wish you would," she answered just as earnestly.

"You're right. It does have to do with Hitler. I do not have to explain to you what my relationship to him is and that I know him very well."

"I know. Goebbels has told me more than once."

"All right, then. Hitler is a problem in himself, which only a few will succeed in solving, which probably no one will be able to master—except, perhaps, a woman.

"Not that such a woman should follow his genius, arouse it, stimulate it, control it, or bridle it. Hitler will never grant that right to any woman. Nor would that be a woman's job. But to put Hitler the *man* in touch with life, in touch with other people, with the world, to provoke in him the Hellenic balance: *that* is something a woman—and again, *only a woman*—might succeed at. For when men, the people around him, have tried, he has always rejected the attempts. And men aren't good at it, either.

"Hitler has discarded the idea of marriage for himself. We could talk for hours about the reasons for his attitude, and whether it is good and appropriate. In any case, that's how it *is*. And we won't be able to change it."

I paused briefly, allowing Frau Quandt to say:

"I can imagine that quite easily. I might go so far as to say that it is quite right for Herr Hitler not to marry. For such a marriage would never be a real marriage. And when I observe his features, I can easily imagine that he might be quite difficult at times. He's been a bachelor too long to do anything but unconditionally put himself first. Sometimes, perhaps even frequently, his wife would be nothing but a piece of furniture, a wardrobe that occasionally bars his way, or a dictaphone into which he likes to talk without getting an answer, or a phonograph on which he likes to hear some particular records and that he can turn on and off at will."

"I think it's fantastic how you have observed and understood him. You are saving me a great deal of explanation and argument. And I find it easier to speak frankly.

"With all his genius and singularity, Hitler is still a human being—and a male. And males must always form an alliance with someone—more specifically, with a female, with a woman.

"If their alliance is with a man or with other men in general, such bonds result from working together, from professional life, from shared interests and views, or from chance. Such bonds can allow some men to grow stronger

through feelings of the heart. They might be fatherly feelings or, conversely, feelings of childlike affection—or they are feelings that we call simply friendship. There are also instances in which such feelings go further. We call them abnormal. World history tells us that abnormal people also demonstrate abnormal abilities, about which the normal person may not be in a position to judge. But since everything that is abnormal is diseased, and since nature attacks and eliminates disease, the healthy person has the right and the duty to abhor abnormalities in this respect as well.

“But none of that is the case with Hitler. In fact, as far as men are concerned, he does not even allow those feelings of the heart which we call friendship to speak. Only reason, expediency, possibly necessity dictate his attitude to other men. And since expediency and necessity are fickle, according to the given circumstances, Hitler’s relationships with other men are equally fickle. That is why he might enter on the closest collaboration and most intimate exchange of views with a man to pursue a common goal today, and tomorrow this supposed friendship might already be shaky. Yes, it can turn into absolute rejection, into attack, into elimination. Nothing more than the goal Hitler is concerned with might have changed, or he might have decided to adopt different means to that end. This is a trait that many do not understand and therefore find alarming, unpleasant, insincere. I’ll return to that point.

“But he is not concerned with expediency and necessity for *himself*, for *his* advantage, or for *his* own convenience. No! He cares exclusively for his *life’s goal*, which he identifies with Germany’s future, and which he feels to be a mission, a calling.

“Since Hitler sees and judges everyone—I mean all men—solely from this point of view, he is at first almost entirely unconcerned with anyone’s inner life. He is not aware of it and does not give it a thought. He does not notice whether the man he is talking to is a sycophant or an intriguer, a true friend or a fraud. He only notices whether at that moment the man is of use to him or not. So, according to our concepts, he is a poor judge of human nature, no judge at all really. In reality, he brings an entirely different viewpoint to human relations. That is why some people say that Hitler’s character is bad. And from our point of view, from that of his ally at any particular time, of the people who work with him, it really does seem that way. But he himself has another attitude. He does not *intend* to be bad. For just as he adapts himself, his life, his work, all his thoughts and wishes completely to the one objective, his objective, so he takes it for granted that he can require the same from everyone around him. In the history of the kings of England we find several similar examples. The most flagrant is Queen Elizabeth—although in her case female sexuality played an added role. For a long time this attitude was even the principle of government in England, and it may to some extent still be so today.

“But decent people, men of character and self-assurance, do not allow themselves to be treated that way—that is, used and then put back on the shelf,

called upon for meaningful work and then pushed aside. In this way Hitler *cannot help* but lose his best friends and associates in time, he cannot help but offend the most valuable men around him. And in this way he will increasingly attract a circle of people without any character, toadies, flatterers, dunderheads, hypocrites, who in the long run will bring even his genius to dishonor.

“And that is what we must prevent. *But only a woman can do it!* A woman who binds him, the man Adolf Hitler—to the extent that he lets himself be bound—who enters into a relationship with him such as he cannot establish with men and does not want to establish with men, a woman who now and again can say something to him that is not derived from the field of reason, who can tear him away from his brooding, his daydreams, from his constant concern with himself, his own intuitions, ideas, plans, dreams of the future, and reflections reaching into the coming centuries, in order to show him the workaday world, the present, all that is beautiful and ugly in life, who will go with him to the theater, to the opera, to concerts, and afterward spends a little more time with him, who occasionally drinks tea with him at handsomely set tables, sups with him off exquisite china, and who enjoys good music in her own home—I will sum up: who turns him into a human being!”

Frau Quandt had come to a standstill and was staring at me with her large, blue eyes, which held a velvet glow of compassion, love, and restrained rapture. I went on:

“And *you* could be that woman!” At that, she looked down at the ground while a shy blush flitted across her beautiful face.

We walked a little farther in silence. Suddenly she stopped with the words: “But in that case, I would have to be married.”

“True,” I replied and immediately burst out, “preferably to Goebbels.”

“How did you come up with that?”

“Because you already know him quite well, and because Hitler is fond of him too, and because Goebbels is a decent fellow. With him, you would have to, and could, accomplish the difficult task you would be assuming, not merely for Hitler personally, but for the whole movement—yes, for the welfare of the German Volk.”

Hesitantly, she gave me her hand, and equally hesitantly, she spoke.

“Herr Wagener.—No one has ever talked to me like this.—I understand fully,—and yet it’s all going around in my head.—Let’s go back to the car.—You mustn’t overestimate me. I work at not doing that myself.—But for Adolf Hitler, I’d be prepared to take everything on myself.”

We continued our trip to Braunschweig, where I dropped Frau Quandt and her companion at the Kaiserhof Hotel while I stopped with relatives in the house where my father was born, Alschlagen 38, an old, half-timbered building with a towering gable and low stories jutting out over the street.

The following day I accompanied Frau Quandt to the parade on the large

grounds outside the ducal castle, where forty thousand SA and SS men, as well as Hitler Youth and League of German Girls marched past their Führer in ranks of twelve.

We did not mention the previous day's conversation again. Only in parting did Frau Quandt say to me:

"I promise that you'll be the first to hear if I get engaged to Goebbels. You will know that I've made a greater commitment at the same time."

One day, two weeks later, Frau Quandt telephoned us at home in Munich from Berlin to tell us that she would visit us the following Sunday at eleven thirty in the morning. At the appointed time, Goebbels and Frau Quandt arrived together.

"I have come to honor my pledge," she said. "You and your wife are the first to whom we are herewith announcing our engagement."

And Goebbels said:

"I found out right away in Braunschweig what you discussed with Frau Quandt. I thank you. Let me shake your hand."

We immediately toasted the engagement with a bottle of champagne. At one o'clock, the engaged couple left to visit Hitler, to bring him the news. And that evening, there was a small celebration at the Hotel [name missing]. Besides the happy couple, it was attended only by Hitler, Hess and his wife, my wife and myself, and Schaub, Sepp Dietrich, and Schreck. Hitler was my wife's dinner partner and sat across from the engaged couple. I sat with Frau Hess next to Frau Magda. The mood was so cheerful, relaxed, and elated that I came to the certain conclusion that three people had found happiness.<sup>4</sup>

Later on, even after an estrangement from my wife had set in, Frau Magda kept her word in every respect. She really did become *the one* woman with whom Hitler took refuge from the nerve-racking grind of his obligations, from the irresponsible tug of war of those around him, and not least from himself. And she took on a great deal, denied herself a great deal, arranged a great deal, and smoothed the way for many. She became something like the man Hitler's other half, joined and held to him by boundless and trusting respect and affection on his part and on hers by a consecrated will to serve and to fulfill a higher obligation.

4. The wedding took place on December 19, 1931.

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## Hitler Rejects Othmar Spann's Corporate State—He Considers Schacht as Reichsbank President—Wagener Opposes Hitler's Berlin Advisers—The "Hitler Problem"

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**W**agener continues by recounting his efforts, at Hitler's behest, to comprehend the theories of the Austrian corporatist Othmar Spann. He reports inviting Spann's disciple, Professor Walter Heinrich, to come to Germany and deliver talks about Spann's plans for a corporatist state. Spann called for the replacement of a parliament based on geographical representation with one based on occupational representation. Wagener found this scheme incompatible with National Socialism, since it relied on the rule of an oligarchy.

"Such a state," Hitler said, "cannot open the way to a new, great, socialist awareness. It can only be reactionary. Although the idea of choosing the best is good, that plan represents regression, not progress. The format through which we intend to give a voice to the professional groups and their representatives, so to speak alongside the parliament, the great forum of the will and the opinions of the Volk, is unquestionably more advantageous, more suited to the times, more democratic, and more socialistic.

"Spann's plan is better suited to the formation of a consistory or a synod for a religious community, but not for the revolutionary organization of new governmental structures for a world that finds itself in a period of radical change."

*At about this time, Wagener reports, Hitler came into contact with the former Reichsbank president Hjalmar Schacht, whom Wagener regarded as an exponent of cosmopolitan economic liberalism and an enemy of National Socialism. He recalls Hitler's saying the following after apparently speaking with Schacht about the devaluation of the English pound.*



“Schacht shares your view. The fall of the pound will have an effect on the price structure within England only to the degree that imported goods from countries outside the sterling bloc reach the English market.”

“On that score,” I answered, “Schacht can hardly hold any other opinion. Besides, that has already proved to be true. But Schacht arrives at his conclusion on the basis of quite other trains of thought than I do.”

“Now what is it that you have against Schacht? Are you trying to say that he is wrong?”

“Who is right and who is wrong—that will be decided only by future centuries. At present, Schacht still represents an economic doctrine universally considered valid, while I advocate a new doctrine. From the economic point of view, Schacht is conservative and reactionary, I am revolutionary. Schacht speaks for the standpoint of the ruling banking and capitalist class: ‘The rich get richer!’ I represent the standpoint of the Volk, of people who have in part been robbed of property, in part had it withheld. In short, I am a socialist, as you yourself are.

“Schacht and I, we are antagonists. And Schacht and you, you are antagonists as well. If you ask an antagonist for his opinion and engage him in discussion, you have to be aware of *that* fact from the outset and remind yourself of it over and over.”

“But surely Schacht is the outstanding mind we have in Germany in the area of monetary and fiscal policy.”

“That’s what he believes himself to be. The economic liberals think he is because he carries out their work. And the Jews and the lodges see to it that he is recognized as such. He *is*, in fact, enormously skilled and enjoys great respect, even among the foreign, and especially among the Jewish-American international bankers.

“And that is why I, too, think highly of him. But perhaps he is nevertheless somewhat *overrated*.

“Actually, he is not a banker by profession. He used to be a newspaper correspondent, and at some point, some time before the Great War, Jakob Goldschmidt took him into his bank as an archivist.<sup>1</sup> But that’s unimportant. In fact, working for Goldschmidt, he probably had the best possible training in understanding the power of money and how to invest it most profitably.

“I assume that it was Funk or Göring who introduced him to you?”

“Both told me about him, and I wanted to meet him.”

“Both Funk and Göring are given advice by heavy industry and the Ruhr. And both are given funds from those sources. If both of them recommend Schacht to you, I see the fine hand of the Ruhr businessmen at work.”

1. Schacht began his career not with the bank headed by Goldschmidt, but rather with the Deutsche Bank.

"I want to hear, not merely what *you* think, but also what your opponents think," Hitler said brusquely.

"And I welcome that opportunity. I'd like to be present, that's all!"

"But I want to speak with them precisely when you are *not* present."

"I cannot stop you. But I fear that very little good will come of it."

At that point, Hitler broke off the discussion. But a while later, when we were spending the evening together, I brought up the subject again. I said:

"A few days ago I read a very interesting treatise by the Englishman Keynes.<sup>2</sup> Over there, he is regarded as the greatest scholarly expert in the area of monetary and fiscal systems. He is also recognized elsewhere. If one follows his thinking, one has the feeling that he is moving steadily in our direction—though he knows nothing about us and our position. He has already tossed overboard the idea of the gold standard as the unshakable and irreplaceable basis for currency. Would you like to read something by him?"

Hitler refused, on the thoroughly convincing ground that the discipline was too foreign to him for him to be able to summon up the concentration required for the proper study of such reading.

"At the present time there is another outstanding man in this area, a Swedish professor named Cassel.<sup>3</sup> He is closer to the position Schacht represents. But both Keynes and Cassel have no doubt that at the present time one simply *cannot* make any alterations in the international laws and regulations that govern overall monetary transactions or in the principles of the capitalist financial system."

"You see," Hitler said, "that's what Schacht also tells me. And that is why he thinks all the plans and ideas constantly proposed by laymen and semiprofessionals are unrealizable and utopian."

"I understand that completely. And if the whole world believes it and parrots it, that is the surest way of maintaining the old order, and with it the rule of capital over labor. But in that case we need not be surprised if the masses rush to join Marxism and in the end use Bolshevism to smash the capitalist prison—a destruction that, unfortunately, also includes the bricks with which *we* wish to erect our social economy."

Hitler looked thoughtful.

"So you believe that, in any circumstances, we must fight against Schacht and against the prevailing conception in the area of monetary and fiscal policy?"

"The *fact* that we must fight is irrefutable as far as I'm concerned. But *when* to fight—that is another question. We cannot overturn an existing order from one day to the next and replace it with a new one. On the occasion of a discussion in the economic policy section last spring in Munich, you yourself

2. Keynes's "A Treatise on Money" appeared in German translation in October 1931: *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes*, vol. 5 (London, 1971): XX, n. 1.

3. This was Gustav Cassel.

said that such an upheaval—because that is what we are talking about—has to be preceded by preparation and education lasting years, perhaps even decades. I will go further. Training in general will have to take place, and training in every field, according to the rules, cultural, instinctive, scientific, even religious, in order to convert the perception and thought of the coming generation of the Volk from capitalistic liberalism to an understanding of the exigency and the necessity of socialism, so that this new order will be ever more strongly and ever more loudly desired, demanded, and carried out to the finish by the whole Volk.

“For the introduction of a socialist economy is more than a ‘decree’! It requires a moral understanding, an ethical conviction, a religious profession of faith! For in its innermost essence, it is a turning away from the idolatry of previous millennia, the overcoming of a monetary system already attacked by Moses and Christ, which could be maintained to the present day only by keeping people stupid and terrorizing them, and by a mendacious sanctimoniousness. To bring about this powerful revolution is our mission; to prevent it, on the other hand, is the intention and perhaps already the task assigned to Schacht.”

“But if it will take us several decades to prepare for this revolution, surely we will have to work within the old system until then?”

“There’s no help for that. But a certain bias in the management of the monetary and credit systems, especially through the Reichsbank, could be introduced quite promptly. And besides, judicial rulings on economic matters can begin to modify somewhat the attitude of ‘I demand my documented rights’ in the direction of social justice.

“But for the rest, if we intend to alleviate unemployment, we are forced in any case to deviate from the old system and set out on new paths.”

“And Schacht would also be prepared to do so?”

“Reluctantly. But he is clever enough to know that there is no other way. And when he realizes that it would happen through us, with or without the consent of the banking fraternity that concurs with him, he would surely prefer to be part of it, and possibly even to hold the reins. That way, he could show that it was *not we*, with our revolutionary measures, who became masters of the situation, but that he too, acting on the principles valid until now, has the necessary flexibility to salvage a muddled situation. Once the danger is removed, he would be in a position at any given moment to change course again.”

After giving the idea some thought, Hitler asked:

“What would happen if *we*—or rather, a National Socialist Reichsbank president—were to begin with our way of financing employment the moment we take over the government?”

“The international financial world would stand on its head and attack our currency with all the means at its command.”

“And would they succeed?”

“The mark would fall abroad, and it would lose the trust it now enjoys. And of course, that would also shake all trust in us. Within Germany, however, our measures would not have the least damaging effect on the buying power of the mark. And since we would be abolishing unemployment and the economy would take an upturn, the attack of the international financial world on the exchange rate of our mark would end in a defeat. So that would be the first victory of a new National Socialist concept of finance and currency.”

“Are you absolutely sure about that?”

“Absolutely!”

“But if, for example, someone like Schacht, as president of the Reichsbank, were to finance the creation of employment opportunities according to our basic principles, would that also result in an attack on German currency?”

“Since Schacht would get in touch with the crucial authorities abroad beforehand, presumably not. Only at the moment when he intends to return to the old system—because that would be his covert task—would the international financial world support the steps Schacht would have to take for this purpose within the National Socialist government. They would exert gentle pressure on the mark.”

“If you’re correct, that means that it would be better to start by naming someone like Schacht to the presidency of the Reichsbank—provided that he is prepared to carry out the financing necessary to create employment according to our methods, or something similar. Once we have overcome the problem of unemployment, and once the Volk stands united behind us and our movement, any threat against the mark by the international stock exchange can’t harm us any longer, as you yourself have pointed out.”

“True,” I confirmed.

“So we need have no qualms about allowing Schacht to decide either to continue to pursue *our* monetary and fiscal tactics or, quite simply, to resign. The Moor would have done his duty.”<sup>4</sup>

“There can be no argument here, Herr Hitler. But it is always risky to turn the fox loose in the chicken coop. And he will always be biased in favor of the opposite of whatever corresponds to our attitude.”

“What mattered to me was to think the matter through. We still have time before the moment arrives. But this course seems to me not entirely impractical. For at the same time, we would reassure the entire business community, which fears nothing more than currency experiments.”

Once again it was masterful the way Hitler assembled and arranged the reasons to create something different from what he had previously intended. I was only too keenly aware that, in this case, the subversive activity of Göring and Funk was at the bottom of it; and it was equally obvious that it, in turn, was paid for by the representatives of capitalism and the established economic

4. This is an allusion to an often quoted line from act 3, scene 4 of Friedrich Schiller’s tragedy, *Die Verschwörung des Fiesco zu Genua*: “The Moor has done his work; the Moor can depart.”

system. In itself, Hitler's idea was thoroughly convincing. But it was not straightforward. And it really was unnecessary. Besides, the same logic could be applied just as easily to all the other aspects of national leadership and national government. Hitler was clearly torn between the influences of his Berlin advisers and myself. In this effort, the Berliners were in a stronger position. For they were at the same time the financial backers or financial agents for Hitler and could always mention that these sources of money would cease to flow if the revolutionary plans were stressed too strongly, and they could constantly introduce him to new people with famous names who would influence him further in this direction.

It was revolting to realize how these two men—Göring and Funk—betrayed genuine socialism for the sake of the pitiful bribes that made it possible for them to constantly raise their standard of living at the expense of the gradual elimination and distortion of the movement's great historical mission.

I began to grow confused, began to have doubts, not about our goal and the German Volk, but about our fate, into the threads of which the Norns over and over again introduced knots, which could not help but destroy or at least endanger all that was great and noble in the work that had been erected and prepared for and was still being accomplished.<sup>5</sup> I, too, had devoted myself to the German Volk and to our high purpose. That was why I was determined: I would take up the struggle against the forces of darkness.

Sometimes the problem of Hitler made my head spin. I had constant evidence of his superior genius, and time and again, I saw his surprising ability to take an objective view of even the most complicated circumstances and to reduce them to a common denominator. I heard—sometimes with my own ears, sometimes through third parties—how clearly his own intuitive understanding drew on areas of knowledge and facts that, until that moment, had been unknown even to him, how he used them with confident self-assurance to lecture on ideas, to voice opinions, and to draw conclusions that caused complete astonishment even among serious experts.

And then there was his cold calculation of how to make use of the people and personalities available to him for the purpose that happened to seem correct to him, his complete heartlessness toward the individual, his way of using people to solve a particular task, casting them off again when it was completed. He acted in this way, not for personal advantage or to enrich himself, but exclusively in his conscious concern for the interest and well-being of the German Volk!

And then again, in contrast, there was his touching love and benevolence toward children, poor people, those in need of help, the Volk as a whole, all of whom experienced his sentiment and responded in the same way.

Something or other, I felt, did not tally. But what it was or what it could possibly be—that I could not figure out. At the time, it remained a riddle for me.

5. The Norns are the three Norse goddesses of fate.

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## Strasser Explains Funk's Strong Position and Hitler's Faith in Authorities—His Conjecture concerning Hitler's Use of Stimulants

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**W**agner relates that when he went to Strasser to speak with him about Funk, Strasser himself broached that subject as follows.

“What you’ve told me about Funk,” Strasser said, “has no significance for Hitler at present. Thanks to Funk, he has established a connection with the leading businessmen, and he believes that he needs Funk to keep the contacts going. The large subscription list is not the only thing that plays a role in this relationship. It was only a kind of prologue. Rather, what is crucial is the cumulative power of the Ruhr and big business, which Hitler sees as interested in and committed to the movement and himself, thanks to Funk.

“You know yourself that in certain areas Hitler likes to look to authorities. He sets himself the goal of winning them over to his side, to arouse them. The significance of the particular person for the great mission we all pursue need not play an immediate part. It is almost as if it gave Hitler personal satisfaction to have ‘vanquished’ such an outstanding person. It raises his self-confidence, his self-assurance, and the conviction that he is truly a match even for ‘authorities’!

“But if he does not succeed in influencing the particular person by his power of suggestion, then he rejects him, no longer recognizes him as an authority, and ignores him.

“We must understand that we, his closest associates, must also, at some time or other, come to terms with this trait of Hitler’s. We are constantly walking a tightrope. He would never consider us authorities in any case. We speak much too openly and too frequently with him for that, so that he is also aware of our shortcomings. Furthermore, he sees us only as co-workers, tools, extensions of himself. And besides, we occasionally tell him what we think, we differ with him, we even contradict or lecture him. He can no longer put us under his

hypnotic power, as he can new people. Therefore we *cannot* be authorities in his eyes, even if he might have considered us such at the beginning. It may be that what he would prefer now is to be rid of us. But he still needs us as tools and extensions. That is why he prefers avoiding us now and then, while he meets with more suitable subjects.

“And now you want to deprive him of the one man who constantly introduces him to such new subjects. You’ll never manage it.”

At this, a new peculiarity of Hitler’s became obvious to me. It is true that I had already noticed his faith in authorities. But Strasser’s presentation threw a whole new light on Hitler, and I could not help but remember Dr. Edmund Stinnes’s remark—“He is vain!”

“Anyway, continued Strasser, “I’ve already made friends with Funk. He plays the piano well, with a marvelous touch, he has a wonderful voice, he’s a champion cardplayer, and he goes along with the rest when it’s time to tipple a bit. The incident you experienced was perhaps only an exception. You’d do well to forget it.”

“You can’t forget something like that. You can’t understand it, either. But I shall try to forgive him. The only thing I can no longer do is work with Funk.”

“But that’s foolish of you. That way, you’ll turn Hitler over to him completely!”

“That may be so. But no one can change his nature. And I don’t want to change mine.

“I had thought that I might win *you* for an alliance against Funk. But it seems that it’s already too late even for that.”

Strasser hesitated for a moment. Then he said:

“We have already formed an alliance. We should maintain *it*. How would it be if we took Funk into it?”

“Strasser,” I replied, “an alliance such as *we* have concluded, with Funk as a third member, is impossible for me. You’ve got to exclude him at least *there*.”

“Time tends to alter one’s views,” Strasser voiced the opinion. “How are you getting along with Hitler?”

This question, coming out of the blue, took me completely by surprise.

“I don’t know what you mean,” I said.

“Wagener,” he continued, “don’t you sometimes feel uneasy in his presence?”

“No. Never *then*. But sometimes afterward!”

“You see. You’re still in the thrall of a certain kind of hypnotism on his part, a certain mesmerizing influence. But clearly it no longer has a very long-lasting effect. *I* am quite free of it by now.”

“What are you trying to say?”

“That we must work together even more closely than in the past. I used to be a pharmacist. And the grand masters of my guild were close to being doctors. Hitler does not seem to me an entirely healthy man. Though I have not yet been

able to figure out exactly what is amiss with him. His glassy eyes with their luminous glow, his enlarged pupils, the occasional expression of transfiguration that these eyes impart to his features and that impresses others, wins them over to his side, makes them look at him admiringly—but then again, his sauntering gait, his occasional outbursts of complete lack of restraint, which appear like attacks when he flies into one of his rages, but which occur only when he feels ignored or offended—all these give me pause.

“On the other hand, his intellectual vigor and flexibility, his genius, his instant and sharp comprehension, his phenomenal memory for numbers and events, his gift for lecturing and discoursing, and especially his enormously strong will, all seem to me proofs of positive good health, so that the other phenomena could hardly originate in an unhealthy disposition.

“It therefore occurs to me that he might use some substances that would produce the phenomena I have noted.”

“Morphine?” I asked.

“No. That’s out of the question. But there is one substance that is very common in the Mediterranean countries, especially among women. It is considered quite harmless—but, as has been determined by the latest findings in pharmacology, it is not harmless at all. It is called ‘belladonna.’ Women take it to recreate the appearance of youth, to acquire an open and winning facial expression, large, glowing eyes with enlarged pupils. But as a result, they always have a look of spiritual suffering and appear a little lethargic. That is why it is called ‘bella donna.’

“But how could Hitler have come across this substance? I’ve been puzzling about that. I suspect that his niece Geli, who aspired to a singing career, might have used it. Singers and actresses make frequent use of it. And Geli, too, had such large, glowing eyes and the characteristic deep stare—thoughtful and at the same time somewhat sensuous. Perhaps that was how Hitler discovered belladonna. But as I said, it’s only a guess, a possibility, an explanation I, as a pharmacist, could give to myself.

“I do know that Hitler uses Kola Dallmann in large quantities. He takes it whenever he wants to be particularly alert mentally, before discussions, important meetings, when he goes to parties, and, as a matter of principle, whenever he is to speak in public.”

“I’m aware of that,” I threw in.

“That substance is *also* harmless—it really is. But when taken regularly, one has to take larger and larger quantities as time goes on. And then even the most innocuous substance begins to produce side effects. If my supposition about belladonna is correct, there is the additional consequence that the two substances negate each other to a certain extent, but they may also produce a reciprocal effect. That would explain a number of the things we notice in Hitler, such as his staggering on occasion, his reluctance to make a decision, the sudden flicker in his gaze when he catches fire and gives his genius free rein in



speech, though until that moment, and again after it, he can be sitting in stoical silence and stare into space, brooding or seemingly dreaming.”

Strasser rose to start pacing the floor and to say:

“Perhaps that is all part of the riddle called Hitler. But the incomprehensible contrast still remains: the ‘super-genius’ and something else which, in the average person, we would call ‘lack of character.’ The combination is what I feel is uncanny.”

*At the end of this section, Wagener relates that Strasser urged him to move to Berlin, so as to counter the influence there of Göring. Strasser also suggested that such a move would render Wagener less dependent on Hitler and make it easier for him to oppose the party leader if he should succumb to the influence of false advisers like Göring and betray the true principles of National Socialism. Wagener writes that, after considering the matter carefully, he decided in the autumn of 1931 to establish a base in Berlin by opening an office there for his Economic Policy Section and by publishing the section’s WPD there. He further resolved to move to Berlin altogether in the spring of 1932.*

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## Hitler Resolves to Create a Party Senate—He Abandons That Resolve—He Regrets Having Published *Mein Kampf*

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**J**ust before Christmas 1931, Wagener continues, he visited Hitler at his Munich apartment, where he was confined by illness. Hitler told his visitor that he had realized during his sickness that something might happen to him. He had therefore resolved to proceed with establishing the party senate for which an elaborate chamber had been constructed in the Brown House at the time it was refurbished for use as national headquarters.

“You know that this party senate is to be responsible—and answerable to the party—for seeing to it that the party’s national and socialist principles are honored and furthered at all times and, specifically, that there will be no breaches against them from any quarter.”

I pricked up my ears! Suddenly, there was a chance to preserve and insure the correct course of the movement! Odd that, because of an illness, in itself so slight, Hitler had been compelled finally to seriously consider such a supreme authority in the party! That more democratic-oligarchic body had been envisaged as early as the time when the building in the Briennerstrasse was being refurbished.

“Without such a party senate, should I depart this life prematurely, there would be a struggle for the leadership succession. I am aware of this potential whenever I realize how varied the views and thoughts of my associates are. The struggle would be, not only about leadership, but also about the goals, about the program.”

“I would,” I interposed, “consider the senate practical even without any thought of your premature retirement. Only such a leadership group can enable the intentions and plans you occasionally discuss with one or another person—as well as the work and suggestions of such departments as mine—to achieve a

broad basis and be conveyed to a larger community as certainty. The senate would also greatly lighten your own burden. For its regular—and surely frequent—sessions, at which you would always preside, would gradually allow it to develop to the point where it could also occasionally take care of routine business without you in the chair—without, of course, deciding basic questions.”

“True. That is precisely why the old National Socialists must be members of the senate. From the beginning they have firmly absorbed our ambitions and the aims of our program, and they are in a position to support them.

“But there is still another purpose I hope to accomplish by this decision. In some of the Gaue we have Gauleiter, and in some of the counties we have county leaders, who may well be old party fighters, but who are leopards who cannot change their spots. They do not keep up with the progress of the party. But faced by our own party members, and especially the followers of old, I cannot simply relieve these men of their offices and replace them with others. But if I nominate them to the party senate, such a move represents a promotion, the highest recognition, the greatest vote of confidence. And in this way, they can at the same time relinquish their current positions.

“The formation of the senate would thus at one and the same time allow a shakeup such as Strasser has so frequently suggested to me.”

“If these highly desirable changes could also be made at this opportunity, then the formation of the party senate would have consequences for more than the ultimate work of the party and the unswerving preservation of its aims. The party would also experience a considerable upswing, since many reasonable men are reluctant to join only because they see the political leadership represented by some men who are quite unfit for their positions.”

“I’ve often had the same impression in individual instances, here and there. But I am very cautious in these matters. I cannot name anyone to the position of Gauleiter who is not accepted as a proven National Socialist by the party comrades in his Gau. It’s quite a different matter among the newspaper editors or, for that matter, your associates. *Incumbent political leaders* must enjoy unqualified respect. And there the choice is meager. In most cases, the most suitable man is already county leader or Gauleiter. Therefore, the party would first have to attract truly outstanding personalities. And they, of course, would have to prove themselves before I could entrust them with the position of county leader or Gauleiter.”

“That is unquestionably correct, but this question cannot, unfortunately, be solved so easily. But when the Gauleiter begin to realize that they can be relieved, and if the outsiders realize it as well, that knowledge alone exerts a very favorable and positive influence.

“We must also consider whether the senate might not, as one of its first resolutions, decree that all Gauleiter and county leaders, and all other influen-

tial men in the movement, be called together forthwith—in any case before we join the government—for a semester-long course of advanced education, instruction, and training. The course would cover, not only detailed discussion of our aims, plans, ideas, and theories, but also the philosophical bases of genuine leadership: ethics, morality, law, religion, and so forth.”

“We do not need a senate for that purpose. Strasser would have to arrange it, the same way the SA and SS are already doing in their leadership courses. But the Gauleiter will not go for that sort of thing. I think any such attempt would fail. Therefore, we can expect that kind of training only for the next generation.

“In the case of our current Gauleiter, there is something quite different that worries me. First of all, they must be unconditionally loyal to the movement. They must be tough in demanding that our basic principles be observed, they should be the cream of the crop when it comes to persistence and the gift of understanding National Socialism clearly—polished social conduct is not a criterion—just as the party is to be made up of the cream of the crop from the Volk when it comes to loyalty to the Volk, love of truthfulness, frankness, capacity for sincere enthusiasm, and willingness to make sacrifices. It is by no means intended to become a nobility!

“The Gauleiter are responsible for insuring that none of the wrong people joins the party. For even the most perfect organization will not pass the test of time if a large number of the people of which it is composed are inwardly opposed to its aims or to the party itself.”

Hitler concluded the discussion by saying that over the Christmas holidays he would talk to Strasser about the list of senate members. When I returned, he wanted me to call on him again.

I immediately informed Strasser about my conversation with Hitler, whereupon Strasser said:

“Compilation of the list has come a step closer. But only one step. Hitler will not take the final one.”

“What makes you think so?”

“Such a senate would be a choice collection of old, proven fighters, each of whom has a mind of his own. Though all of them are loyal to Hitler, they also expect *him* to be loyal—to them, to the movement, to the program.

“Hitler would have to declare himself to such a senate. He would have to commit himself. He would have to reckon with the possibility that, at any time, the senate may call him to account and pin him down. And he knows that *I*, for one, would not keep my mouth shut whenever I held a contrary opinion. The sentiment of the senate—even if it does not come to a vote—would, as Hitler would have to assume, eventually force him into actions and decisions ungenial to him at the moment.

“That is why he will arrange for the senate to take effect only *after* his death. If he talks about it now, that simply shows that he believes himself to be gravely

ill. Once he is well again, the thought of the senate will also return to its Sleeping Beauty dream world. You'll see that I'm right."

And Strasser *was* right. [ . . . ]

When I returned early in January and called on Hitler, he was in the best of health. He replied to my question about the senate with the words:

"Relieving Gauleiter and replacing them is the problem we still cannot solve at this time. But you know my belief that in politics, one must never say beforehand what one is doing or is going to do. Only when there is no way of proceeding without making one's action public—only then may one do so. But even then, one should reveal one's purpose only to those who absolutely must know, and even to these people one should say only as much as is absolutely necessary to attain the intended objective. The best thing is surprise action! If there is a lot of talk beforehand about some great plan, it is generally flogged to death, and the action never occurs. At the very least, its success is jeopardized.

"That is why the senate is pointless or even dangerous so long as we have not carried out and succeeded in our plans, our program, our goal."

"But if what you say is true, you should not have written *Mein Kampf* beforehand," I objected.

"Quite right. And I frequently regret that I did. But at the time, when I was in Landsberg after November 9, 1923, I thought everything was over. I was in captivity, I was deprived of my freedom, the party was expropriated, dissolved—everything seemed at an end, even worse than Germany after the Great War. I wrote *Mein Kampf* as a kind of report to the German Volk, chiefly in memory of the martyrs of November 9. I wrote it out of the narrowness of my cell.

"When I was released, I had *Mein Kampf* printed. Perhaps, I hoped, it would serve to rally my old friends. And that really happened! That is how it came about.

"But gradually, I saw that many things were, after all, different from the way I had seen them through prison bars and from the way I had figured them out. And soon I set out to draft changes, improvements. But they only turned out to be changes for the worse. I thought about withdrawing the book. But it was too late. It made its way through Germany, it was even spread abroad, and what was right and positive about it did not miss its mark. So I kept hands off. I made no more changes. The book even gave me the financial basis for reconstructing the party. If I were to write it today, a lot would be different. But today, I would not write it at all!

"For I have learned from that experience. That is why I tell myself: if I were to communicate to a senate all my most secret plans and purposes, not only would they not remain the secrets of the senate, but they would make their way into the world in a distorted and splintered form. They would be doing battle with *Mein Kampf*, at times even with the Party program. Where is the sense in that? But if I

fail to communicate everything to the senate, it starts to become a farce from the moment of its founding and will remain a farce even later on, when it is meant to be a true senate!”

When I left Hitler, deep in thought, I told myself, “Strange. He’s right again. Is it the power of suggestion that makes him seem right, or is he really right?”

And today I say, “How is it for some others, who do not know him well! They *cannot* but bow to his spiritual might.”

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## Hitler on Education and Race—He Denounces Nordic Cultists—Tasks of the Hitler Youth

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**W**agener continues by recounting a conversation he and Hitler had at the Bube Hotel in Bad Berneck with Gauleiter Hans Schemm, who had come from Bayreuth to be with them. Schemm, an elementary school teacher, became Bavarian minister of education in 1933. On the evening of his visit, Wagener recalls, Hitler spoke about education as follows.

“A movement such as ours,” Hitler said, “the work we all wish to feel ourselves called to do, must look far beyond the present into the future. You must not allow politics to confuse and influence your planning. When I think about questions of education and schooling, two souls always dwell in my breast: that of the politician, and that of the philosopher. But I *am* no philosopher! That is why my political soul tends to win quite easily.

“It has a desire to create, and it wishes to be around to see what has been created. But we ourselves will not live long enough to experience the effects and effectiveness of such a new system of education and training. Nor can they be determined in the same way that the outcome in other fields of endeavor can be determined, with figures, graphs, or even proof of financial profit.

“For these effects and successes must lie *in the fact that* future generations will *think* differently, that people will have a different relationship to one another, and that in this fashion a whole new way to organize life, to conceive of the purpose of life and thus of the will to live and the striving for accomplishment, will come to the fore. All this is heavily in the province of philosophy. Though I may occasionally clearly comprehend the most salient points, as if they were lit up by the flash of a searchlight, the details are too abstract for me to be able to make head or tail of them. That, after all, is *your* area, *your* task, *your* duty.

“It cannot be done by one man alone. Nor need you be a philosopher. You need not be among the elect of the professional faculty of a university to bran-

dish the flag of a prophet and to lead the staffs of the German school and educational system along the paths that lead to the new life.

“In saying this, I am not denigrating scholarship. Nor do I have any desire to underestimate it in any way. Quite the opposite! The great minds of the scholarly world are the brightest stars in the firmament of the universe of the intellect. We are not even in a position to fathom how their light and their power—some of which we cannot even perceive—mysteriously but forcefully affect the other planets, our earth, even our wind and weather, our growth, and in the last analysis even our personal, human sentiments, our minds, our actions, and our whole life! Schemm! In the words of Hans Sachs I exhort you: ‘Despise not your master craftsmen!’ You must teach the young people to respect scholarship’s greater knowledge and supreme achievement.

“Yet even scholarship is regenerated over and over only by life! And *you* are closer to life than the scholar who spends a good deal of his time in his study, buried behind his books, and whose knowledge and learning have put him at such a great distance from real life that frequently, he himself has given up living. The precondition for directing the educational and school system, however, is closeness to life! In this field, only that man can be a leader who can not only teach and instruct, but who can also serve as a model by the way he leads his own life, who himself is educated and knows the school system from the ground up.

“There is one *further* requirement. Racially, he should be as pure and unmixed as possible. But we should not harbor the idea, so often advanced and incredibly narrow, that every teacher must be a blond Germanic type. That’s the most arrant nonsense! We actually *need* Roman types, Celts, Slavs—and theoretically I would not even be opposed to Jews—so that our education and instruction can be as varied as possible. But it is inadvisable to employ people as teachers and educators who come from mixed marriages—for example, between someone from Lower Saxony and someone from the south of France, or between Rhinelanders and Slavs, or between Celts and Italians. Mixtures of Aryans of any kind with Jews or other races are, of course, completely out of the question. For each race has its own ethical approach. And *these* cannot be mixed. Among racial half-breeds, now one, now the other ethic predominates. And such a person cannot educate.

“But the other mixtures—such as Germanic and Roman combinations, and the others I mentioned before—also have the disadvantage of being unstable. Their performance may at times be outstanding. That it is precisely such mixed marriages that have produced the greatest artists, the most ingenious inventors, the most respected scholars cannot be dismissed out of hand. Such people can even perform outstandingly at the university lectern. But in the schools, in the task of primary education, they fail all too easily. For they are vacillating, inconsistent, illogical, and the students are extremely sensitive to this. Even if they could learn something from such a teacher, they do not *like* him, they



consider him dishonest, capricious, and unfair. And that usually puts an end to the joy of learning and to learning itself. Besides, such teachers also make bad models.”

Since Hitler paused briefly, Schemm noted:

“I’m very glad, Herr Hitler, to hear you say this. There’s such a lot of nonsense talked about blond men, about the Nordic race, about the cult of Wotan and the spirit of the Edda, as if no one else on the globe had any right to exist, or at best to exist only in a second-class position, as subhuman creatures. These idiotic windbags have no idea what harm their spouting causes. For all they do is arouse inferiority complexes and hatred in those who don’t happen to be lucky enough to be blond, and so they divide the German Volk into two racial halves: the Germanic and the non-Germanic people.”

“I’ve expressly and repeatedly forbidden this sort of thing!” Hitler interrupted, flaring up. “All that rubbish about the Thing places, the solstice festivals, the Midgard snake,<sup>1</sup> and all the rest of the rubbish they dredge up from German prehistory! Then they read Nietzsche with fifteen-year-old boys and, using incomprehensible quotations, paint a picture of the superman, exhorting the boys: ‘That is you—or that is what you are to become.’”

“I’m grateful to you, Herr Hitler,” Schemm said, “for agreeing with me in this. It’s true that I’ve participated in some of the solstice celebrations. But I always feel that those people whose origins are nearer the south have no feeling for the festivals. Such a celebration does not speak to them. Even among the inhabitants of the German north, the memory of a still more northerly origin is also less atavistic than it is propagandistic. And this propaganda jeopardizes the Volk community.”

“We Germans in particular,” Hitler continued, “must avoid anything that works to create even more divisiveness. We already have the *limes*, with all its effects in the religious, political, and ideological spheres. If we go on to tell people that they are different, then we will be working, not to *unify* all Germans, but to bring about the final separation and dissolution of the concept of Germany.”

“But if that is so,” I interjected, “the Hitler Youth will also have to change its tactics. I very much fear that these so-called Old Germanic festivals are increasingly developing into functions that give this youth organization a quite different mission from the task envisioned at the outset.”

“That, too, is a subject I’ve repeatedly discussed with Schirach. But he sees these celebrations from a different standpoint. And there I have to agree with him. The young people, after all, are familiar only with church holidays—such fatuous, and in some cases completely farfetched, festivals as the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, St. Joseph’s Day, and Corpus Christi Day—a horrible

1. The Midgard snake, or, in German, *Mittgard-Schlange*, was the world serpent, Thor’s adversary in old Norse poetry.

word formation, by the way, which no one knows how to interpret correctly. Hardly anyone now remembers that Christmas was taken over from the Germanic legionnaires and settlers in the old Roman Empire. Only if he happens to travel abroad does he learn, to his astonishment, that Orthodox Christianity does not recognize the celebration of Christmas at all, and that even the Roman Catholic Mediterranean area celebrates a proper Christmas only in those places that were settled by the descendants of the Goths and Vandals, the Normans and Lombards, and so forth.

“I have nothing against celebrating Christmas. I even give high marks to the clever thinking of the Roman Church fathers, who did not abolish the most solemn holiday of the Nordic world, the day when the sun is at its lowest point and from that moment on begins to rise on the horizon. Instead, they moved the birth of Christ to this day, turning a nature festival of the Old Germanic people into Christ’s day. By the way, this shows us that a high percentage of Germanic tribes were part of Roman Christendom and that Rome found it necessary to win them over in particular by using this device.

“Now, why shouldn’t our young people be led back to nature? After all, in nature, this turning point is a day that presents a truly momentous event: the vanquishing of the night, which has grown ever longer and darker, by the rebirth of daylight, awakening new hope, new life, new strength! And since today’s elementary schools already teach the motion of the planets and the causes of summer and winter, the midnight sun and the yuletide festival are cosmic concepts already familiar to young people. But no one can say with certainty whether Christ was or was not born on this particular day. At least, there is no mention in the Bible of when and if he celebrated his birthday. And it is certain that he knew nothing of this Christmas holiday.

“But we do not want to rob the church of its holy days. The mere fact that schools are closed on such days gives children much pleasure. But this does not prevent us from leading children, not into churches fragrant with incense, but into the great outdoors, to show them the powerful workings of divine creation and make vivid to them the eternal rotation of the earth and the world and life, where the struggle against the powers of darkness is constantly repeated, culminating in the victory of the forces of light, which are creative, awakening a budding spring from frosty winter, bringing new joy in life, new life, and renewed creative forces.

“Let’s not worry about letting young people have these festivals. On the contrary! Everything is good that brings them closer to the godhead, and everything is wrong that comes between them and the godhead, even if it is a Catholic priest.”

I could not help but agree with Hitler. “The only thing is, the youth leaders must not fall into the error of wanting to turn this into a religion.”

“Don’t worry, they won’t. Nor does it have anything to do with race. It’s true that once the Hitler Youth boys grow a little older, they will think back with

pleasure on the nights when they ardently worshiped the wreath of fires blazing all along the horizon, which puts them in touch with a higher being. But these are simply childhood memories—beautiful, marvelous childhood memories, and more valuable than if they had spent the nights in saloons and airless dives.

“Nor should we be anxious about whether this or that is or is not a hundred percent ideal. Go among the young people when they have just returned from attending one of these solstice celebrations. Then you will see whether or not it has had a positive effect. Of course, if we wanted to lead these young people up a mountain merely to sing the same kind of stupid songs women and men sing in the churches to this day, and if we then wished to worship these fires in the same way old people worship carved wooden figures and painted pictures or even fake relics in those same churches—then *those* people would be right who say: it would be better to let the children go to the enclosed houses of God; at least they won’t catch cold.

“The mission of the Hitler Youth is neither religious nor racial, nor is it philosophical, political, or economic. It is entirely natural: the young people should be led back *to nature*, they should recognize nature as the giver of life and energy. And they should strengthen and develop their bodies outdoors, making themselves well and keeping themselves well. For a healthy mind can develop only in a healthy body, and it is only in the freedom of nature that a human being can also open himself to a higher morality and a higher ethic. The consciousness of the growing young man and young woman absorbs those ethical bases that distinguish them from animals and that mark the individual and, over time, the entire Volk with its racial characteristics.

“This brings me back to the choice of teachers. Whether Nordic or Germanic, south German, Romance, or Slavic does not, therefore, matter in itself. Of course, an East Frisian will rarely be competent to teach French. Someone from Baden or Hesse or the Rhineland is probably more suited to that subject. On the other hand, a north German will generally be a better English teacher, and someone who comes from the east may well be better suited to teach Russian. Thus, I can also imagine that a man who grew up in the south and the west—that is, more solidly on the historical soil of our German culture—is a more likely candidate for the teaching of cultural history than is the son of an East Prussian peasant.

“But that requires no law or special state regulation. These things work themselves out all by themselves. For everyone will study only that subject that is congenial to him and for which he has innate ability. And the more healthfully his body develops in his youth, the more freely he has been educated, and the more independence he has gained through free movement outdoors, the more surely he will recognize his proper calling and make the right decision.

“A selection must be made only in regard to race because, as I said, the ethical concepts of the various races differ. And youth may and must be educated in a single ethic. But even that is not something we can generalize about.

For among every race, there are assimilationists whom you can no longer distinguish from the race within which they live. Who is to say that a Huguenot has not assimilated in Germany? And the same thing is true for a number of Jews. Conversely, you cannot help but wonder about some Germans who, from an ethical standpoint, seem to belong elsewhere and politically may even be closer to our enemies than they are to their own Volk.

“So you see that the criterion is quite different from the one these race theorists preach. To the departmental and university examinations—that is, the academic qualifying exams—you must add tests for characterological aptitude, and you should further require certain athletic feats that can be performed only by someone who is in good physical health, who is courageous, enterprising, and self-confident, and who also has the necessary ambition to carry out this feat. In this way, racial weaklings are eliminated quite automatically, no matter what their blood is or what descent they claim. Should a Jew manage to meet all these requirements, he will also be able to hold his own as a teacher and educator. I know Jewish soldiers and reserve officers who in the war were proper daredevils.

“For the rest, Old Germanic history shows that even our distant forebears thought the same way. As a rule, the tribes elected their princes—that is, their leaders—from among the free men. But they could elect even a serf if he was a half-breed and had proven himself in the face of the enemy. The bravest among the free men were called ‘heroes,’ the bravest of the half-breeds were called ‘retainers.’ Just read the *Nibelungenlied* and other sagas, and you will realize that one can find just about as many retainers as there are heroes.”

The discussion was broken off briefly. When I was alone with Schaub and Schemm, the latter said, “One should write down such a conversation. It contains such an inordinate amount that you’re kept busy for quite a while digesting it. Where does Adolf Hitler get it all!”

I told him that I myself always made notes of what had been said. “Once I begged Hitler to let me publish such conversations. But he refused. ‘After I’m dead, you can publish anything you want. But any sooner, it can do no good. It would only be pulled to pieces by our political enemies. In the same way, the publication of Rosenberg’s *Mythus*, which happened without my knowledge, was inadvisable.’<sup>2</sup> That is why my notes remain locked in my desk. But they are carefully preserved.”

2. The book by the Nazi Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, was first published in 1930.

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## Hitler on Family and School in a “Socialist Democracy”—His Plans for National Political Training Schools

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**W**hen Hitler returned, Wagener writes, he took up the subject of school organization as follows.

“In a socialist state—but what I’m about to say holds true for every sort of state!—we must start with the principle that every child and young person is entitled to the education and training best suited to his abilities and particular aptitudes.

“But that is not to say that the state is supposed to take education and the stimulation of growth out of the hands of parents and families. Such a thing would be entirely wrong. If we believe at all in the eternal value of man—and that belief is the strongest positive element in all higher religions—then it can above all be only through preserving the species and its development to a higher level, and for this, the family is the basic unit. Everything a person is and can be he is and can be only on the ground of his inheritance, which he is given by his father and mother. He is shaped and awakened first of all by his surroundings and the conditions under which he grows up, as well as by the education and training lavished on him in his home, in school, among his friends, and in practical life. In this, those who live closest to him provide the most influential models.

“Thus, if a father or mother lays claim to the eternal value of their own being, the creative force of their own soul, and the heritage of their own ancestors, which they have increased, strengthened, and ennobled, then they must themselves have the will to take in hand the establishment of the bases for the education and development of their children.

“But current living conditions, which have become wholly unnatural and absurd—thanks to the misery of the last twenty years, but most particularly because of the ever accelerating erosive motion of the machinery of a liberal-capitalist economy—in many cases prevent both mother and father from look-

ing after their children's education and upbringing in the way they should and as they themselves might wish. In the cities and most especially in the allegedly 'great' ones, the pursuit of pleasure, show, vanity, purely materialist thinking geared exclusively to the present, and a completely stupid and decadent arrogance frequently make such a strong claim on time and money and every form of energy altogether, that there is nothing left over for the children's education.

"In the liberalistic state, this may be a matter for each individual to resolve alone. That is what they call human rights, free control of one's own person, democratic liberty! In reality, it is slovenliness, decadence, a tendency to snobbish gangsterism and nihilism, which cannot help but eventually lead to the decline of Volk and state. [ . . . ]

"The secret of an enduring and successful education is that the educator does not rule and act with the power of his rights as a teacher, nor the father with the force of his legal responsibility. Rather, they must themselves become servants of an idea, and clearly present themselves as such. And this idea must culminate in the socialistic—that is, serving all—common goal established by the deity, desired by the entirety of the Volk, and transmitted by educators and teachers. Instinctively, the young people will grow closer to each other, once they realize the magnitude of the compelling task set for them all. Each one, they will see, has the religious, moral, and socialist duty to work together on it, each according to his strength and his ability to bring about its completion.

"And that is why each one must be able to enjoy the *kind* of education that corresponds to his moral and intellectual abilities.

"The current organization of the school system is unsuited to that end. In my view, it starts from a basically false premise. That is, it tailors its demands and its design to the average—that is, to stupidity—instead of addressing those who are above average—that is, pupils endowed with greater ability.

"Understand what I'm saying, Schemm. You'll have to discuss the matter with your colleagues and turn it over in your mind. What I mean is: the curriculum of a class and a school is now determined in such a way that the average pupil can master it. Those who are below average lag behind and obstruct the teacher's efforts. Those who are above average loaf and waste time. But it is precisely *these* young people who matter! Seen from the point of view of the Volk, the socialist community!

"Of course, no harm is done if a boy is educated for a year or two at a slightly slower rate than his abilities would allow. But this must not be allowed to go on too long.

"At present, we require eight years of *Volksschule*. True, in the fourth year those who pass on to the *Mittelschule* become separated from the rest. But at that time many have not yet been awakened. They go on being bored by the *Volksschule* until the age of fourteen.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Volksschule* is the general term applied to primary schools. *Mittelschule* is literally "middle school."

“Wouldn’t it be better to limit the Volksschule to six years and make it mandatory for all students? And just as happens now in the *Realschule*, teaching of a foreign language—French, English, or Russian—would begin in the fifth year. But of course *only one*, and it would not be optional. French would be taught in the west, English in the north, and Russian in the east.<sup>2</sup>

“In my system, those who cannot keep up would be identified in the fifth and sixth years. Such pupils will then be excused from the subjects that are not appropriate to them, and during the periods that have thus been freed up, they will be given additional tutoring in the other subjects. In this way, I provide a greater number with the opportunity for secondary schooling, and I eliminate those who are unsuited to it. Thus, I am reversing the current practice.”

Schemm interrupted by saying:

“What you propose may work in the cities. But it won’t do in the villages, where *one* teacher has two or three grades in one classroom.”

“I myself attended such a village school.<sup>3</sup> That’s exactly what prompted my suggestion. When I was in the first grade, I listened to the students in the second grade recite, and later in the third, and then the fourth grade. Thank God, I left after that. Otherwise, I would have had to sit through the top grade two or three times.”

“That sort of thing may be possible in the case of individual pupils. On the average it is—”

Hitler interrupted:

“There you go again, talking about the average! A top-notch education is needed by only the cream of the crop! The identification and grooming of this cream is already a concern of the Volksschule—and from the very first day! Think up some methods for doing this in the Volksschule, and especially in the village schools; but it *must* happen!

“For I am absolutely convinced that it is more correct to set the achievement levels of any grade at the point where only a third or a half of the pupils will master it—though the others are by no means to be left behind. Rather, they will be limited to learning the most basic subjects, and to pursue these twice as intensively. We might consider two sets of classes from the fourth year on. We’ll have to see about that. Experience will have to instruct us.

“After the sixth year, I would consider a division into *Mittelschule* and *Fortbildungsschule* advisable. The *Mittelschule* would correspond to the *Gymnasium*, the *Fortbildungsschule* to the seventh and eighth grades of the Volksschule. But both must be organized and planned along quite different lines.<sup>4</sup>

2. *Realschule*, sometimes called *Realgymnasium*, is a somewhat more practical high school, where modern languages were taught instead of Greek and Latin, as in the classical high school, the *Gymnasium*, which prepared its graduates for university study.

3. Hitler’s first school was the Volksschule in Finkelham bei Wels: NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Hoover Institution microfilm edition, roll 25A, folder 1760, Munich police report of May 8, 1924; roll 13A, folder 65, Matrik der Volksschule Leonding, 1895.

4. *Fortbildungsschule* is literally “school for further education.”

“If compulsory school attendance begins at the age of six, this division would come when the child is twelve or thirteen. By then, one can see a little more clearly what a pupil is capable of than is possible when he is nine, ten, or eleven.

“In the Gymnasium, too, we would have to observe the principle of demanding more in order to facilitate selection.<sup>5</sup> If, for example, Latin is started in the lowest grade of the Gymnasium—something I consider advisable—then it will be shown during this and the next grade who has the brains for it and who does not. A second selection could then take place after the second grade of the Gymnasium—that is, at the age of fourteen or fifteen—dividing the students into the humanistic Gymnasium and the Realgymnasium.<sup>6</sup> It will not hurt someone to have spent a year or two struggling with Latin in vain. At one time or another, he will derive some benefit from the experience, even if it is only the realization that he is not cut out for it. I’m certain that four years are enough for the final Gymnasium stage.

“So, altogether, I make it eight years of schooling for the pupils who attend the Volksschule and the Fortbildungsschule, and twelve years for Mittelschule students. The more effective the selection process is, the more rapidly will the students make progress. I therefore believe that we can do without the current ninth year of the Gymnasium.”

“Might it not happen,” Schemm asked, “that eliminating the poorer students from the class average would arouse displeasure, discontent, and inferiority complexes, which would have their own drawbacks?”

“Life is always a struggle, in which only the better and stronger rise to the top. The sooner a youngster learns this, the sooner he adjusts to it. Your misgivings are neither socialist nor liberal; they are humanitarian. But in most cases, that is only a fancy way of saying ‘insincere.’ We are to act, not from humanitarian points of view, but from socialist ones! Whatever is of advantage for the total community of the Volk is right. The individual is a member of the totality, and he incorporates himself, or is incorporated, wherever he can be most useful to the total community. If he is incompetent, he should know as much. Even more! He *must* be made to know it. The way things are at present, we drag the biggest blockheads through the Gymnasium and *Hochschulen*,<sup>7</sup> merely because their fathers happen to occupy exalted positions or because they have money! Since when is it a disgrace to be a carpenter’s apprentice, or a mason, or a shoemaker? All work is equally honorable. People distinguish themselves as men and Volksgenossen, not by the work they do, but only by the *way* they do it!

“That has nothing to do with wages, with the size of the pay envelope. Work is compensated according to its economic, cultural, and general value to the community. That has nothing to do with what we are talking about.

5. See n. 2 above.

6. See n. 2 above.

7. *Hochschulen*, a generic term, covers all post-secondary institutions of learning.



“So this is *another* task of education—to arouse respect for the work of others!

“For the rest, I have another reason for feeling that your misgivings are groundless: children and young people have a very good idea of what they are capable of and where they fit in—frequently a much better idea than do their teachers. It is much more likely to cause bad blood when an incompetent is admitted to higher schooling than when he is placed somewhere where the course of study corresponds to his abilities.

“So far, we have been talking about the organization of the school system in the socialist state. Now we come to the financial question.

“If it is our objective to give to every youngster the *kind* of education that corresponds to his abilities, we must also create the financial conditions to that end.

“One could take the position that the entire school system should be free. But that may prove to be a mistake in its consequences. We are dealing with human beings. And it is only human to take lightly whatever does not cost anything—that is, whatever does not have to be won by hard work. If a father has to pay tuition for his son, he may take a greater interest in seeing to it that his boy learns something than if the school were free. Because he has to save up for it. Because it comes out of his own pocket.

“That is why I hold the view that a specific basic tuition should be charged. It need not be very much. Then it becomes the responsibility of the professional organizations to lend a helping and supporting hand where individual families are in financial straits because of the large number of children, illness, or any other reason. Granted, this provision necessitates establishing a special economic system”—Hitler said this as an aside, looking at me all the while—“which would enable the trade unions, the farmers, the guilds, and other professional groups to take such action. Until that is implemented, the matter would have to be in the hands of the communities, but only as a last resort and to compensate for the state.

“Here we have a clear example of the difference between the socialist and the communist state. In the socialist state, the individual or his professional community retains the individual and joint responsibility for himself or his professional associates. In the communist state, all responsibility and care is assumed by the state and shifted onto it.

“We must take great care not to slip into communist lines of thought. For basically, they are not socialistic. And in the last analysis, your objections, based on the mania for leveling in the village schools, also grow from the same soil as the communist stock of ideas, and not from socialist ones! Socialism preserves individual liberty with a view to the welfare of the general public. Communism abolishes this freedom through collectivization—that is, by creating herds and herd animals, whom the state drives to work and to the pasture.

“When, therefore, pupils distinguish themselves exceptionally through ap-

titude, hard work, and skill, scholarships in significant amounts should be made available, in part to be given to the youngsters themselves, in part to their parents.

“Nothing is a greater incentive to achievement than praise and criticism. And when praise is supplemented with a two-to-four-weeks’ stay at the seashore or in the mountains for the child, and when his parents are given a sum of fifty to a hundred marks to help with clothing or other supplies for the child, the miraculous event has an effect on the future of even fellow pupils and their parents.”

“Might such a method not give too much pride of place to the material sense and stimulate it too strongly?” Schemm asked.

“That’s another question out of your communist bag of tricks,” Hitler replied. “Let’s not fool ourselves! Why is it that the Jew so frequently has an advantage over us Germans? Because in every transaction, his materialistic sense is geared to his benefits from the outset! How was England able to conquer the world? By acting exclusively on business viewpoints and working primarily with economic means toward material advantage.

“We Germans take pride in being the ‘nation of poets and thinkers.’ And yet, for as far back as we can remember, our enemies again and again wrested another piece of land from us! We ‘make poetry’ and we ‘think,’ while the others partition the world between them! And we are incomparably more pleased by any approval from abroad than we are by a favorable trade agreement with a foreign country involving a hundred thousand pigs.

“We do not need to cultivate and heighten the idealistic sense of our Volk any further. On the contrary, we should see to it that the sense of business becomes a little better developed. Of course, there are higher things than economic advantage. But the fact that medals and titles of nobility have a higher currency than a bonus or a raise in salary—that is no more than a remnant from feudal times. It has already lost its validity except in the officers’ corps, the last relic of that time. In saying this, I am, of course, excepting recognitions of bravery in war or in life-saving deeds, even though I would still consider it right to couple the awarding of medals for such actions with some material advantage.”

After pausing briefly to draw breath, Hitler continued: “As far as school fees for students in the Mittelschulen are concerned, a different procedure will have to be employed, insofar as a farmer, a worker, and even a lesser artisan is in no position to support a son or a daughter for longer than eight school years, paying tuition to boot. In that case, children who are *not* qualified for the Mittelschule would be worth more to their parents than the gifted ones. You’re laughing?” Hitler interrupted himself. “But unfortunately, that’s the way things are. And God knows, it can’t be any other way, given the minimal earnings of simple people. For the farmer can’t help but count on his boy’s or girl’s cheap labor by his side in the fields and the barns once they are fourteen. And even a working man, especially one who has to raise a large number of children, must assume that at fourteen, the older children will begin to contribute a little something to the household.

“So it is not enough to allow such a father to pay *nothing* to the Mittelschule to educate his son. He must be given additional aid. Since the totality, the Volk as a whole, has an interest in seeing to it that the gifted members of the coming generation are promoted, it is justifiable that in such a case it is the general public—that is, the state—which supplies such aid. It could consist of a food and clothing allowance of perhaps thirty marks a month—the same amount such a boy would be paid as an apprentice in a factory, a trade, or an office. For in school, he is also serving an apprenticeship. Allowances would therefore be possible, starting in the ninth year—that is, before the separation into humanistic Gymnasium and Realgymnasium.

“Furthermore, the state would have to provide all school supplies—books, notebooks, pens and pencils, and the like—free of charge. This should begin in the seventh year and in all schools, even in the Fortbildungsschulen. We might consider whether school supplies could be made available free of charge from the very beginning. But here again it is significant that people take better care of things they have to pay for than they do of something that is free. We can talk about this point some more at another time.”

“Would you consider it proper to waive tuition in the Mittelschule for all fathers, even board chairmen and government ministers?” Schemm asked.

“That’s a fair question. But I’d like to answer it in the affirmative.

“First of all, nowadays, after the great devaluation period, we find many people who are impoverished and ashamed of it, especially among those men who are highly educated. They must stint and scrape considerably more than does a working man to let their children have the education suited to their capabilities. Next, someone who receives a higher salary usually also has greater expenses and responsibilities, arising from his position. Often, therefore, he has no more left over for his children than does the man who is paid less. Finally, in times to come, especially when the next generation has grown old enough to go to work, many more people who own nothing besides their learning and their determination will enter more highly paid professions; they must not be penalized for their advancement by being forced to spend greater sums on their children than do other people.

“Furthermore, it would run counter to socialist principles for us to divide people into two categories: those who pay tuition and those who are exempt from it. And where would we draw the line?

“But there is something else that I do consider practical: that well-to-do families be urged, and if need be requested, to look after the impecunious schoolfellows of their own children by inviting them to occasional weekday or Sunday meals, or entertaining them during vacations, or taking them along on excursions or on a summer trip. But that is a double-edged sword! It can happen all too easily that the very poorest children will not find a friend or a friendly family. Think it over. Somehow, it seems to me, such a plan should be possible, and it would be particularly advantageous for strengthening the organization of the large and all-encompassing Volk community, which is the alpha

and omega of true socialism. After all, that's exactly why we call ourselves National Socialists! We want to start by implementing socialism in our nation, among our Volk! It is not until the individual nations are socialist that they can address themselves to international socialism. Here, too, you see again how National Socialism differs from international Marxism and from communism.

"Now I have something quite different in mind, which I've borrowed from the Roman educational system. One should be able to seek out the most exceptional pupils—here we are talking only about boys—from the whole population, in order to lavish on them an exceptional form of schooling. These students must be educated for a particular leadership career at an early age.

"Here lies the crucial difference between an aristocratic or economic-liberalist monarchy or oligarchy and a socialist democracy. In the former, the sons of upper-class families automatically receive the kind of schooling and upbringing that qualifies them for advancement in the career that is set aside for them in the higher government administration as well as the senior civil service in general. Newcomers have a chance only if they are independently wealthy or if they have good 'connections and recommendations'—in addition, of course, to the necessary qualifications, at least usually. Otherwise they merely hang around as 'quota-tokens,' objects of derision to themselves and others. In the officer corps, it seems to me, we find this type more frequently since 1919.

"A democracy, and especially a socialist democracy, however, requires the training and education of the best *from the entire Volk* for the senior civil service! And the entire school system must, therefore, take this goal into account. The omission of this reorganization is the most profound reason for the gradual failure of the Weimar state. For the selection of the best at the present time simply does *not* extend to the entire Volk but, just as before, is limited in the main to the circles who have always been 'at the top,' who can afford it, and who have the necessary connections. And since these circles are naturally reactionary, leading governmental positions are increasingly held by reactionaries. Small wonder, then, that the forces of reaction are growing strong. It is precisely the quota-tokens I mentioned earlier who are the most vocal. For they cling to their position and go to great lengths not to display their origins. Rather, they put on ultra-reactionary airs and bluntly reject the concepts of socialism and the Volk community in their effort to outdo those who embody the reactionary attitude through birth and upbringing.

"It is precisely *we* who will feel and who must work through the consequences of Weimar's sins of omission in the field of education and the school system, once we hold the decisive reins of government. For *we* too are considered 'upstarts' and 'leftists' by those same reactionaries. They are only too eager to apply such terms as 'enemies of the fatherland,' 'Bolsheviks,' and 'inferiors.' And yet they are the very ones who are prepared to betray their fatherland.

"Two groups in any Volk are entirely lacking in the feeling for 'Volk' and 'fatherland,' much as they mouth such sentiments. One consists of the pre-

viously mentioned descendants of the feudal age, who today call themselves reactionaries. The other is made up of those who call themselves democrats. They established a political party which they hypocritically named 'Democratic Party' and relabeled 'State Party.' Both groups, however, pursue and recognize only purely personal, egotistic interests and aims. They care nothing for the fatherland except insofar as they take it to mean their fathers' landed estates. And they despise the Volk, seeing it only as hired hands and day laborers for their capital.

"To turn this into a triumvirate, we need only mention the Communists. They, however, officially reject the concept of 'Volk,' and therefore, the idea of treason to the fatherland does not apply to them. Only one thing distinguishes them from the other two groups: at least they are honest. That is why they will subscribe to our principles concerning education and schooling. The reactionaries and democrats, on the other hand, will not. For *they* are concerned solely with the advancement of their own children. But *we* care about the flower of the entire Volk.

"That is why, as soon as possible, we must make the effort to rectify what has been neglected.

"The Romans gathered the best students from their whole empire in boarding institutions. There they were taught and trained by the best teachers. This effort did not take the fathers' profession into consideration. Only foreign races—Negroes and Jews—were excluded. In all other areas, Jews enjoyed Roman liberties; Negroes, on the other hand, were granted them only in exceptional cases, when they had made themselves deserving through especially outstanding achievements for the Empire. Jews could even become 'Roman Citizens,' as we see in the case of Saint Paul. But the school for pages—that is, the training school for the young men intended to enter public service—was not open to them.

"I have a similar institution in mind for Germany.

"I calculate that these schools would encompass the fifth to the twelfth years—that is, the two final years of the Volksschule and all of the Gymnasium. The schools would have to be boarding institutions, with carefully selected educators and teachers. The form of education might take as its model the German Cadet Corps, though especially in the higher grades, national-political education would be stressed considerably more and directed to other objectives. The curriculum would have to place the requirements far above the assignments demanded in the Gymnasium. And the hearts of the young students would have to accept a special motivation—one that Christ already stressed as the ethical obligation of the individual in the socialist community: 'He who has been given more talents, of him more will be demanded.' So he has no superior rights, only superior obligations. That, then, must also be the ethos governing such a national political educational center.

"And with this, I direct your attention to a second consideration, Schemm,

that must always be kindled in young people, wherever they may find themselves—Fortbildungsschule or Realgymnasium, humanistic Gymnasium or national political educational center. Every new generation must 'want' more than the previous one 'could'! They must be instructed in all the changes that have occurred during the past two generations, progress in all technical fields, in chemistry and in all the sciences, and it must be pointed out to them that these changes impose on today's youth the obligation to march ahead on the road of progress and not to stand still! In this way, they will, in the natural course of events, be taught both respect for the previous generations, for their parents and forefathers, and readiness to feel rather ashamed if the present does not lead to higher achievements than the past, and the future in its turn to more than the present. In this way, we awaken a new storm-and-stress phase among the young people of our Volk, which will rejuvenate the entire Volk and overcome the stagnation of Western culture! In this way, the lie will be given to the defeatist prophecy of Oswald Spengler concerning the decline of the West!"

Since Hitler paused, Schemm asked:

"But how are the pupils for these schools to be selected?"

"Here I'd like to build a bridge between the past and the future—between, on the one hand, the families who even in the past supplied the Volk and the government with responsible leaders and, on the other hand, the leadership that grows directly and newly from the Volk. That would also mean a bridge between the feudalism of the past and the socialism of the future. We must not underestimate the fact that sons from families who have been used to being 'leaders' for generations also carry in themselves genetic traits that predispose them more strongly to this purpose than is generally the case among sons of working-class families and simple peasants. For if, acting on family tradition, people are raised with a sense of a more exalted destiny, they can turn their minds and souls to views and aims that differ from those generally prepared for in the more straitened circumstances and living conditions of lower class standing. It can happen at the same time that such sons do not distinguish themselves at all in the ordinary subjects during their early school years. For in some cases their strength does not unfold and come to the fore until later years.

"I therefore consider it proper that, first, every father be given the right to enroll his son in such a special institution. The decision about whether the boy is accepted will be based on an entrance examination which, though not overwhelmingly rigorous, will nevertheless require a predisposition *above* the average. *Those* fathers will have to bear the costs of schooling and training, as well as clothing, housing, and board. An acceptable rate would have to be determined.

"Second, however, the best and most qualified students from all the Volksschulen are to be selected. The parents of students so chosen will be informed that their sons are designated for this special education. The parents then are to decide whether they want to send their son to the boarding school or

whether they want to keep him at home and thus continue ordinary schooling. Room and board, all clothing, shoes, and so on, in the boarding school, however, must be supplied free of charge to *these* sons—and that includes travel expenses between school and home at the beginning and end of the school year and during vacations.

“Of course, a further running selection will take place in the boarding school. Anyone who is not impeccable as to character and ability must be eliminated eventually. At times, that decision may seem harsh. But higher considerations rule here. In the same way, those who show greater aptitude must also be given greater advancement.

“Then, if the son of an old aristocratic family, or of an industrialist, or of a professor, does *better* work than the others, his fellow students will surely acknowledge his superiority. For as I said earlier, children among themselves always realize most clearly what someone is capable of and what seeds he bears for the future. And this acknowledgment creates, not envy, but approval; not ill will, but an affirmation of the leadership qualities of the boy in question. And if, conversely, the son of a worker or a peasant, or whatever his antecedents may be, surpasses the others in knowledge and ability as well as in athletic prowess and character, they will express cheerful approval of him as well and consider him the head of their class, all the more readily as they know that it was truly by his *own* powers that he accomplished those things that made him their leader.

“Furthermore, when such boys not only distinguish themselves in classwork, but also stand out as classroom monitors and teachers’ aides to the lower grades, they cannot help but develop into maturity by the time of their final examinations. This growth will also enable them to assume a leadership profession in real life, be it as a lawyer or a teacher, as an industrialist or a businessman, as a politician or a diplomat. Furthermore, every one of these young men, without exception, would have to serve a term as an officer.

“If we proceed along these lines, it would be ridiculous to doubt that a greater number of the very sons of families with a heritage of leadership would graduate with honors than the sons of parents who have only just begun their upward climb. Perhaps *the children* of these sons will outstrip the others! But once a particular genius comes from any family—a Moltke, a Scharnhorst, a Wagner, or a Beethoven, a Bismarck or a Metternich—he is sure to be discovered and will make his way; he will never be lost in the mass and go to waste.

“Such a school system will and must bring to the top the unbridled force of knowledge, ability, and desire, all the way into the colleges and the professions, and especially into the self-administrative mechanism of the Volk: the state. And once two, three generations have been schooled and trained in this way, and when the responsible people after us carry out further improvements in the whole educational system, then the result *will* be, *must* be an increasingly steep

rise in the level of the German individual and the German Volk. This will become evident, not only in the fields of scientific, technical, and economic achievement, but also in artistic and cultural progress. In the last analysis, this is the fulfillment of the meaning and mandate of divine creation, given to all the peoples and races of the world. Its accomplishment is the true religion, as was once acknowledged and taught by Christ; we must shape it anew.

“That is your task, Schemm, for the educational and school system.”

Hitler rose and took his leave. Subsequently, Schemm said to me:

“After we take over the government, will there be men who recognize the magnitude of this idea and who are in a position to help realize it?”

“I, too, worry about that. But I have another, more serious worry. The moment the party assumes power, the hundreds and thousands of little Hitlers, as I call the Gauleiter and county leaders and the special consultants everywhere, may simply disregard the great ideas—all the more so as they do not even know them and would not understand them—in order to execute their own amateurish plans to the extent of their influence.

“And a particular danger lies in the inner rejection and lack of instinct among those circles Hitler earlier called reactionaries. You won’t have an easy time of it, Schemm, trying to put into practice the task assigned you today.”



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## Hitler: Separate Boys from Their Mothers and Let Them Fight with Each Other—Government Scholarships and Communal Residences for University Students

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**A**fter breakfast the following morning, while he and Hitler awaited a visit from Gauleiter Streicher before traveling on to Dresden, Wagener continues, he again raised the topic of the previous evening.

“There are two points,” I mentioned, “that we did not discuss yesterday: first, the question of whether it is right to take boys away from their homes as early as the age of ten and put them in a boarding school; and second, the question of higher education.”

Without hesitation Hitler answered:

“I can answer the first question. As far as the second one goes, I can only tell you my fundamental attitude. I am reluctant to deal in the areas of specialists if I can avoid it. I prefer—and most times, that is my strength—merely to point out the direction in which I see the goal to lie. Then it is up to the specialists to find and pave the way to that end, and they must be the first to lead us along that road. I must admit that it frequently seems that the specialists do not even see the goal to which I am pointing—perhaps they do not want to see it. That is why, occasionally, I have to get involved in details after all, even though reluctantly, and although it really represents virgin territory for me. Then I may, to my own astonishment, see eyes opened wide and expressions of surprise. And almost always, I have the feeling when people leave me, that obviously I was right, and that they, too, have been convinced.”

“Could it be that at times a certain hypnotic power, emanating from you, has a part in this effect?” I questioned.

“I used to believe that. And perhaps it’s true that a power of suggestion is involved in the proper grasp and in going along with the psychology of others,

just as holds true for any crowd. But experiences and successes show me that, more frequently, it is merely a matter of most people's being unused to training their mental eye to sweep far enough into the distance, and straight ahead. Therefore, they simply do not take cognizance of certain things I see quite clearly, and their thinking is in error.

"But the university system is too foreign even for me. In that area I *must* rely on the good sense of others.

"As far as the boarding schools are concerned, it is my belief that young lads belong with other young lads, and away from their mothers. A mother's love is too great to keep her from constantly making every effort to help the boy, to pamper him, look after him, and even do his thinking for him. On the other hand, the laziness of youth is too natural to keep the youngsters from willingly letting themselves be pampered by their mothers. What mother would allow her son to sew on his own buttons, darn his socks, mend his linen, and wash the dishes? Of course, the result is nicer when Mother does it, and there's less breakage. But such a rascal grows into a 'master,' and his mother becomes his 'slave' or his 'maid.' In boarding school, he will have to do all these things for himself. There will be a daily period for cleaning and mending, as there is in the army. And in later life, the boy will know no other way but to be responsible for himself. Independence and self-sufficiency are the bases of personal freedom. To achieve them is our task.

"To continue. Boys also occasionally need to beat each other up. That is part of mutual self-education. A boy who grows up entirely in his own home, or surrounded only by sisters and their girlfriends, is like a hothouse plant. Later on, he trembles at every harsh word, recoils from another's attack, and has a nervous breakdown if fate administers a good thrashing. It is much better for him to get used to such treatment early on.

"Nor can he learn at home to do things for himself quickly, to keep himself and his own advantage in mind, and to assert himself. I would almost say that the better he is raised, the greater grows his willingness to be reserved, to avoid being in the limelight, not to hurt others. And later we see that everywhere *the others* get the larger and tastier morsels. No! He must learn from childhood on to recognize his rights and to fight for his rights, and it is better for him to knock out another boy's teeth when he realizes that the other is bullying him than for him to stand there like a lamb, wagging its tail, or possibly run to his mother to cry his heart out to her.

"And every adolescent goes through a certain awkward age. In the boarding school, he can let off steam. If he does so at home, and if his parents permit him to tyrannize them, as frequently happens, then the boy becomes useless his whole life long, unless destiny makes good what his father omitted. But if his parents do not permit such behavior and repress the son's adolescent urges, even though with loving hand and increased concern, then more than ever this

lump of dough cannot turn into a decent loaf—for all bread must be allowed to rise. But in the boarding school, all of them go through their adolescence more or less simultaneously, and they take it out on each other. The only outward signs of this period are rather more broken arms and legs, and a ledger that shows a few more demerits. But afterward, these scamps grow into independent, free chaps, genuine democrats, who know their rights and their liberty, demanding and defending them.

“Let us go on. Young people need to spend a great deal of time outdoors, in the fields and meadows, in forests and mountains. They must exercise their muscles, for that is the only way to develop fully. Lungs and hearts must be enlarged; that is the only way they will be adequate to a fully grown body. Young people must be inured to sun and cold, storm and rain, wind and weather; for only then are they toughened for life and will not wedge themselves behind the warm stove at times of fog and darkness, practicing for a life of cringing servility and ostrich courage.

“The boarding school can cultivate all this systematically. Mothers have neither the time nor the nerve for it, and most fathers are themselves exhausted by the time they come home from work. That is where the Hitler Youth—or any other existing youth organizations of a similar nature—has to step in to help the children left at home.

“Even when it comes to schoolwork, the boarding school is superior to the home. When the boys gather in the classroom, as well as in their free time, they talk constantly about their schoolwork and their homework. And if they do no more than gripe about their teachers, they nevertheless occupy themselves exclusively with school and their assignments. But if the boys live at home, they’ve forgotten all about school by the time they get to their houses. Many of them even leave their books in school because they do not *want* to study at home. Domestic concerns, domestic interests, visitors, entertainments, birthdays, holidays, and whatever else might be going on, divert the young person’s attention and distract him away from school.

“Of course there are exceptions, both among students and among parents. But many times school becomes an extraneous element for any young person, diminishing the child’s inner grasp of the subjects he is taught and his store of knowledge. Oh, if, in the main, our teachers were first of all outstanding human beings! People who can enthrall the boys and forge an intellectual bond! But such personalities are few and far between!

“So you see that I can find nothing to argue against boarding schools; everything speaks in their favor. Of course it is obvious that bad habits will crop up and blunders will be committed in the boarding schools as well. The school administration, the school physician, the school board, the student council, and the parent council must safeguard and try to prevent this situation. For even in school, the interplay of governance and self-administration, of leadership and

freedom, of responsibility and self-development must be exercised, so that they can be transferred to the students' total sensibility and their adaptation to the great Volk community.

"There are always grumblers who spout sanctimonious cant about alienation from the parental home and health being jeopardized. I can respond to them by saying that a boy who is in a boarding school feels only *one* great longing, and it grows as he grows: the longing and love for his home. When he is on vacation, he knows only one thought: going home! And even in later years, when he is an adult, his parents' home will draw him like a magnet. But those who grow up at home are more likely to feel a different longing: away from this place, rush into independence, into freedom, into life! And even later on, the attraction of home will never be as strong for them as for the others.

"The same is true for the pedagogic influence of home. Any boy who grows up apart from his parents and sees them only occasionally, during school vacations—though that amounts to nearly two and a half months out of the year—and who is, furthermore, united with his parents through longing, can see nothing but what is good, noble, positive, lovable, ideal in his parents' home. But the boy who hangs around the house day in, day out and is included in whatever the monotony of domestic togetherness brings in its train, is much more likely to see what is bad, ignoble, negative, and ugly, and he much prefers to find his models on the outside, away from the domestic circle.

"Now let no one try to hold up to me the few favorable examples that might contradict my general view. Parents and children are human beings, too, and everything that passes between them is human. But what is exalted *above* the human is the bond of love and longing the child experiences for his home. And that is brought out by the boarding school.

"As far as endangering the children's health is concerned, there is very little point to addressing this reservation. It cannot be the task either of the families or of the Volk to nurture weaklings and runts. More correctly, a socialist state needs healthy, strong men who can perform some service for the community rather than become a burden on it. Pampering and rearing the weak and those who have no resistance is part of a sentimental humanitarianism that is not the mark of a Volk that manfully strives upward, in the full awareness of its maturity; rather, it is an attendant symptom of decadence and degeneration, and thus the expression of the ultimate extinction of a Volk and its exit from the stage of history.

"And now to the institutions of higher learning. First, in order to continue with the thoughts I just expressed, there are three possible ways for a young student to relate to the Hochschule from the outside: he may live with his parents or with friends and relatives—that is, as a member of a well-regulated household; he may live in communal homes—that is, a kind of boarding institution; or he may live alone in rooms, as the students call it. That choice may seem trivial. It is not so by any means. For in the Hochschule itself,

academic freedom must prevail. But *it* has quite different aspects, depending on whether I look at it from the outside or experience it from the inside.

“A university, like any Hochschule—it might just as well be a forestry school, a technical college, a school of mines, a business school, a music conservatory, an art academy, or the like—should, and I have no doubt that it already is in large part, be something like a miniature democracy, a miniature autonomous system, a miniature republic. The teaching staff and the students should maintain a mutually binding reciprocal relationship that preserves freedom of progress, freedom of opinion for teachers, and choice of curriculum for each student. For young students are old enough to know and to decide for themselves whom and what they want to listen to and learn. There must be clarity on only *one* point: no industrial enterprise or any other private employer is *unconditionally required* to employ a young man who has fulfilled his academic requirements; *not even the state is required to do so!* Herein lies a crucial difference between current practices and the foregone conclusions set for a socialist democracy.

“For if a student has swallowed hook, line, and sinker the entire stock of ideas proclaimed by, for example, professors who are profoundly reactionary in every respect, then a progressive-minded democracy, striving for the goal of the socialist Volk community, cannot incorporate this young man in its civil-service machinery.

“The intentions and requirements of the profession to which a young person aspires must, therefore, determine his choice of the university in which he enrolls and of the professors whose courses he plans to take. A further question is involved here of whether and to what extent the state should participate in examinations. In principle, however, the most far-reaching—I am tempted to say, the complete—freedom of teaching and learning should prevail. If the young people have gone through proper elementary and middle schools and have absorbed a sense of freedom and self in their youth organizations, they will know how to handle academic freedom as well.

“The upholders of the mind in a higher institution of learning are, after all and in the last analysis, again only the few—but already in the German past, striking—outstanding personalities in science, technology, and art, who occupy the academic chairs. But the more outstanding such personalities are, the more freedom do they require and are entitled to, in order to achieve the fruitful development of their work, their research, and their teaching. So, if we intend to attain the maximum, our road can only lead along the paths of maximum freedom.

“Now I will return to the three ways a student can relate to his college. Since we are dealing with people who are already adults, there cannot be any regulations in this area, either. But the entire new structure a socialist state brings in its train by way of selecting students, the variety of their circumstances, their previous living arrangements, and their financial resources, nevertheless

makes it necessary for the state to concern itself with these matters, which are in the main of a practical nature.

“Students who graduated from middle schools with particular success overall or in special areas must be enabled to dedicate themselves to studying their particular fields, even if their fathers are simple workers or farmers. This requires scholarships to cover, not only the cost of the course of study and the books, and so forth, necessary to it, but also housing, clothing, and food. As a consequence, the idea of communal homes suggests itself. I am thinking of boarding homes or even boarding schools somehow connected to the institution of higher learning. I am reminded here of the English universities. Here, too, the students should be completely free to decide for themselves whether to join such a communal home or to lead a private life. But the existence of communal homes is absolutely essential.

“This draws our attention to the student associations. I’m sure some such idea was at the heart of it when they were first established. But they developed and emancipated themselves very strongly into class organizations, and at the present time, they bear a stamp that no longer fits the new spirit of a socialist Volk community. I am not denying the sizable educational gains accomplished by these dueling societies and fraternities, or whatever they call themselves, and what they may be able to accomplish in future. But they require internal and external restructuring on the basis of concepts similar to those I mentioned yesterday in connection with national political educational institutions. The positive forces, the tradition, and the values that are intrinsic to the ‘old boys’ societies’ alone can surely be utilized with special benefit in the new sense.

“Here, too, it is my belief that at the beginning, the universities and other Hochschulen must be given the job of finding the form suitable to the new times. Changes do not come about overnight, and questions of instinct and experience will point the way in this area as well, leading from the blinders and the egotism of outmoded class arrogance to the new libertarian spirit of a socialist community.”

With this, Hitler concluded his presentation—for me a memorable one. If his theories had been put into practice, a further powerful step forward into the liberation of the German Volk would have been taken, away from the antiquated chains of an epoch that was in reality already dead.

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## Crosscurrents in Nazi Economic Policy—Hitler Worries about the Power of Big Business—He Wants His “Socialist” Program Put Aside ‘til Long after Taking Power

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**T**here follows a passage in which Wagener complains about the growing number of prominent Nazis who encroached on what he regarded as his authority over the party's economic policy. Three of these men—Göring, Himmler, and Wilhelm Keppler—had, he believed, been subsidized by business interests. When he pointed this out to Hitler and argued that such a situation could only lessen the weight of their ideas, Wagener reports that Hitler responded as follows.

These ideas are not yet ripe for the Volk—or the Volk is not yet ripe for the ideas. You cannot believe how often and to what extent people want to speak to me about the fears of businessmen that we might destroy in this field precisely what we are constructing in others.”

“I understand that completely,” I replied. “These businessmen, and the people in their pay, *are*, of course, opposed to our social economy. They always were, and they always will be. And since all of them—really, quite clearly, all of them!—are too stupid to realize that major progress cannot help but move toward socialism, they ally themselves with the political reactionaries and are dead set against progress, though it is quite inevitable.”

“But you underestimate the political power of these men, Wagener, and the power of business as a whole. I feel that, for the time being, we will not conquer the Wilhelmstrasse *against their opposition*.<sup>1</sup> So, no matter how much I feel that your plans—which are also mine, after all—are correct and necessary, it nevertheless seems to me expedient to hold back entirely as far as those plans

1. The chancellery, foreign ministry, and other major government buildings were located on the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin.

are concerned until we have secured our place in the Wilhelmstrasse and until we truly and surely have the backing of at least two-thirds of the German Volk.”

“Herr Hitler, I have no objections that could appear to be *against* that. But it is still not right to carry the battle into one’s own ranks. And compromises in this area are very dangerous. Two worldviews confront each other here. One is the socialist view, which recognizes human rights, the sense of community, natural selection and the possibility of progress, a sense of responsibility, and an ethical mandate. And then there is the liberalistic-reactionary outlook, which bases its actions on the right of the stronger, egotism, unnatural privileges and their preservation, a lack of responsibility to the Volk and the masses, and a completely immoral and unethical selfishness. These two worldviews reject each other, no compromise is possible, they cannot be cooked up together. The solution of social economy which you suggested and which we worked out is fully grounded in socialism, even as it makes use of and incorporates the positive strengths of individualism, which are the most valuable aspect of liberalism. It is the only form, the only idea of a solution I have been able to see, and the only one that will lead to our objective. It may be that, here and there, improvements will become necessary and will be carried out. But they will not alter the basic principle.”

“True, Wagener, true.” Hitler tried to mollify me. “But something that is so wholly new, something that touches the personal interests of each individual so closely, must first be made real to the understanding of the masses. But if we start on it today, we attract all the resistance and rejection of business—and that means all the political parties, from the German Nationalists to the Democrats. And since the Social Democrats are, unfortunately, entirely against us, we would be completely *alone*. And we would never get a majority in the Reichstag.

“Therefore, my thinking here has to be quite pragmatic and political. And it is your job—through written materials, lectures, speeches, and through your organization in the Gaue—to create understanding for our idea and to pass it on to posterity. But you cannot begin to do that until we control the machinery of government!

“And when you have done your work for ten, fifteen years; and when a new generation has grown up that will come to these ideas with a more open mind—then the time may *dawn* when the realization of the magnitude of our idea may allow the call of the Volk for a new order to ring out. Then *political* maturity and your informational efforts will allow a new kind of economic thinking to come of age. Then your son and his generation may seize the torch we shelter, glimmering, behind closed doors, nurturing it to keep it from going out; your son may then place himself at the head of this, the greatest revolution in all of world history. It is at *that point* that the contrary shouts of the superannuated and numerically weakened reactionaries will no longer evoke a response, and knowledge of the bolshevistic solutions to these problems will



cause misgivings to fall silent. *Then* the situation will be a quite different one, and the dawning new age will bring the fulfillment of those things that must remain denied to us. First the entire Volk must 'want' the new order. Only *then* will the rotting timbers of the past collapse like straw, and a single blow will demolish the structure of the capitalist-liberal rule of compulsory labor, which until then had seemed made of granite. Only when the dust of our ashes can no longer be seen, only then will the outcome of our ideas and strivings be recognized and honored by the world. Then it will form the permanent meaning and the basis of individual and shared life of all men and nations."

Hitler impulsively took my hand and held it in his for a long time, looking at me intently. Finally he said:

"It sounds like a eulogy. That must be hard for you. But you will, you must, understand me."

I understood—but did not want to understand. It meant my enemys' victory. But, on the other hand, an inner voice whispered to me that Hitler was right.

I could not help but think of Strasser, of the hypnotic power emanating from Hitler. Was that the reason I agreed with him, though his words meant the end of my plans for the future in the party and the state? Or did the reason lie instead in the grandeur of his conception, his altogether clairvoyant realization of the necessities of the present and the eventual shape of the future? In the latter case, there would be no power of suggestion. Rather, Hitler granted one a glimpse into the dimness of what was to come, which he pierced for moments at a time with something like the beam of a searchlight, illuminating things that ordinarily remained hidden from our human eyes. In that case, one was under the spell, not of deliberate suggestion, such as a psychiatrist might use, but of what one had been vouchsafed to see! And because of what one had seen, everything seemed so straightforward, so simple, natural, and right. But without the beam of this searchlight, one would never have recognized these things and would have gone on groping in the dark, just as most people grope in the dark all their lives.

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## Admiral von Levetzow Advises Hitler on Naval Strategy and England—Hitler Holds to a Continental Policy and an Anglo-German “Fraternal Pact”

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**W**agener then relates how, a short time later, Hitler telephoned to invite him to join him for a train trip to Berlin. On the trip, they were accompanied by retired Admiral Magnus von Levetzow. Wagener recalls their conversation as follows.

“We must ask ourselves whether, in future, Germany needs a battle-ready navy at all, or whether such a fleet represents a pure luxury, an imperial toy,” Hitler said when the admiral had completed his presentation, which took about half an hour. “If every country intended having a strong fleet, there would be so many battleships that a purely naval war might break out again after all.”

“Actually,” Levetzow said, “only the two strongest powers would ever be able to wage a purely naval war against each other. For all the others, war means merely annihilation of the weaker. Granted, at times the weak also have interests and conflicts of interest that could lead to confrontation at sea. But without the consent and assent of one of the two strongest powers, such skirmishes would hardly lead to momentous decisions.”

“Would that mean that we would have to make sure of England’s consent before we could wage war, for example, in the Baltic against Russia?”

“Well, the Baltic represents a special case, not unlike the Black Sea, since it is almost landlocked. Actually, it has military importance only to the abutting nations. But let us assume that the enemy is France or Norway. In those cases, England would never stand idly by and watch Germany win a hundred-percent naval victory.”

“Given its situation as an island, and on the basis of its history, I fully grant England this claim. I will go even further. One power or another must be given

police surveillance on the seas. It requires possessions, coal stations, oil stations, repairing docks, and so on, all over the world. The British Empire is, therefore, almost predestined for this role—it is simply the only power in question. Why should we try to dispute this capability?”

“But surveillance of the seas also includes the possibility of exercising *dominance* over the seas. And since the trade routes crisscross all the oceans, international commerce—that is, all international trade and international shipping—is subject to the law dictated by whoever rules the waves.”

“Do you think that England would arbitrarily abuse the power of its supremacy without good reason?” Hitler asked.

“Perhaps not without good reason, and not arbitrarily. But *if* it feels there is good reason, and *if* it wants to, it will assert its dominion over the seas unconditionally and ruthlessly, in order to attain its objective.”

“In what area could we come into conflict with England?”

“In the area of commercial exports, just as was true before the Great War, or in the area of our European continental policy, as was also true before the war.”

“We must go in for exports, to the point where we can pay for the goods we intend to *import*. I cannot imagine that England is so unworldly not to understand as much. Quite the reverse. Germany’s *imports* also serve to stimulate *British* foreign trade. It was a different situation before the war. At that time, we pursued a policy of export imperialism. Neither England nor America could tolerate that course.

“And German continental policy could rouse England to action only if it were directed against England—as was the case, for example, under Napoleon. Therefore we must give guarantees to England that this will not happen with us.”

“But such guarantees are inconceivable with respect to any continental policy unless we are willing to give up any thought of advancement for Germany. There is no getting around the fact that Germany is a nation of seventy million, the strongest in Europe with the exception of Russia. And it happens to be situated right at the center, so that it cannot ever forego friendly relations with at least the neighboring nation on one side in order to avoid attack from two fronts at once.

“But as soon as Germany concludes treaties of friendship with only *one* of its neighbors, the two together will have supremacy in Europe. As a result, sooner or later, the other neighbor will also have to try to establish a friendship with Germany. And over time, the certain outcome is the creation of a United States of Europe, with Germany assuming a central position in the federation of states.

“What would England’s attitude about such an alliance be? It would be the worst thing that could happen to England! For it cannot join. It must choose between a European policy and an empire policy. Since the empire is the basis of England’s power and wealth, as well as the precondition for control of the seas, England can never abandon its empire policy. But even should it decide to

take part in a European policy by joining the European federation of nations, within the federation it would always have to bow to the majority—and, therefore, primarily German—policy. But this would also bring the empire into a certain dependence on Europe, and as a result, the empire would gradually decay and disintegrate into its component parts. But if England remains outside the United States of Europe, it becomes even more dependent on Europe—economically, politically, and most certainly militarily. And even its supreme position on the oceans would be constantly threatened by Europe. In an era of submarines and airplanes, a united Europe would always be master of the situation, even in England.

“Therefore England *must* make sure early on that it does not come to this. Any movement in Germany that allows such a federation to loom, marking a crucial change in Europe, must therefore be resisted by England. Especially Germany’s continental policy along Bismarckian lines will, from England’s point of view, represent a threat to England. For it is hardly possible to conceive of a continental policy that would curb Germany, weaken it and deprive it of influence. For such a government would, *if* it should ever come to power, be swept away in no time by the will of the German Volk. That is why England is, and always will be, the unconditional foe of Germany and German progress. That situation will never change.

“So we *cannot* give England any guarantees to the effect that English interests will not be affected adversely. Unless, that is, we were prepared to betray Germany!”

“Your calculations left out Russia. Russia—most especially Bolshevik Russia—is a threat to England, a danger, even a worldwide danger. Russia is preparing for world revolution! A revolution intent on destroying all the values of the past, in order to organize Soviet states along the most primitive lines, erecting them on the ruins of the revolution, after removing all leadership personalities of all the nations, down to the mayors and owners of the tiniest factories, the teachers and the preachers, and of course all politicians of different persuasions. These Soviet states will recognize only *one* headquarters and *one* will: Moscow.”

Admiral von Levetzow interrupted Hitler to say:

“England does not yet see this danger. And if it did, it would nevertheless consider the danger from Germany more acute than the threat of Russia. England knows that every nation will defend itself against international Communist agitation—Germany included. And since Germany lies closest to the Russian danger, it will be the first to be forced to such resistance, and this fact gives England special gratification and reassurance.

“England is much more afraid that Germany might ally itself with Russia and is pleased to see that we are using all possible means to incite *against* Russia. For if it were otherwise, England would truly be in danger! This bloc would not

only assure Germany's preeminence in Europe, but also sharpen the threat to the English Mediterranean route, including the Dardanelles and the Suez Canal. England is, therefore, more likely to try to come to an agreement with Russia against Germany, despite the two countries' ideological differences, than to extend the hand of friendship to Germany against Russia, which would result in the certain rise of Germany."

"You take the line I've heard argued so often," Hitler noted with a smile. "According to this view, we would have the choice, either of walking forever in sackcloth and ashes, becoming resigned and giving up—or, on the other hand: of rearming posthaste and with all military means, to the extent that England will not have time to lodge a veto against our awakening. For to make common cause with Russia, with Bolshevism, and thus to open the borders of Germany to communism—we cannot do that."

"England would probably stand by and watch us rearm up to a point, both on water and on land. It might be a little disturbed by armament in the air, even though there is no precedent for the deployment of an air force against warships. But from the first day of our awakening, England would begin to initiate all the steps to set every nation in Europe against us, and jointly with them, it would attack us as soon as a favorable occasion offered itself.

"From the standpoint of naval strategy, therefore, we would also have to start by pursuing a policy that allows for the appropriate countermove."

"What policy do you have in mind?" [Hitler asked.]

"England's reputation and England's position of strength lie in its fleet. The English display of power is contingent on the supremacy of this fleet on the oceans of the world. Those oceans, as it happens, have a wasp waist—the Suez Canal. If, as a countermove, we could contest England's right to the use of the Suez Canal, England's display of power would be severely curtailed, perhaps even voided. For sailing around the Cape of Good Hope requires an expenditure of tonnage and of fuels that would have an immediate catastrophic effect on overall English strategy."

"And how could you blockade the Suez Canal?"

"By making an alliance with Mussolini's Italy."

"Do you hold such a high opinion of the Italian fleet?"

"Not so much at the moment. But Italy is full of Normans, Venetians, and Genoese, all of them seafaring people for centuries. So we can assume that a man like Mussolini is in a position to reawaken the old seafaring hearts of these segments of the population. And Mussolini's building projects point to the fact that he actually does want to make Italy strong enough to at least hold England's Mediterranean fleet in check and to preclude the use of the Mediterranean as a military route."

Hitler stared silently into space. Which is why the admiral continued:

"And in the Far East, England's natural enemy is Japan. If, at the same time,

Japan contains English naval forces in the Far East, the situation is such that England will not deliberately strike a blow against us. And we have no reason to attack England.”

“And what would be the objectives of a German battle fleet?”

“To contain the home fleet in England. Otherwise, Italy cannot, of course, carry out its task.”

“How strong would it have to be to do this?”

“It is not so much a matter of capital ships. They are too vulnerable to submarines in our narrow sea territory. Some will be needed as backups for their own larger operations with submarine destroyers or auxiliary cruisers and to be sure to contain the English home fleet. Otherwise, we need only submarines and as many swift small ships as possible.”

“And how much time would pass before the desired strength is reached?”

“We might *reach* the necessary strength in ten years or so. But we could keep it up for only a little while in case of war.”

“Why?”

“Because the raw materials for additional vessels and replacements are lacking, and because new vessels as well as repair of battleships always require several years.”

After a short pause, Hitler said:

“I thank you, Admiral. I have come to understand once more that we must avoid any entanglement with England under any circumstances. Furthermore, I would consider any war with England a fraternal war. An 1866 is not always *necessary* to conclude a dual alliance.<sup>1</sup>

“But the foreign-policy ideas that you worked out for me from the viewpoint of naval strategy coincide with my plans, derived from quite other considerations. What unites us with Italy is a shared ideology concerning domestic affairs. And Japan is the natural enemy, not only of England in the Far East, but also of Russia and America—as is not the case for China.

“But we *must* succeed in proving to England that we are not its enemy and have no desire to undertake anything that could impair England or even merely threaten it. Just as the blood-related people of Austria and Prussia arrived at a treaty of peace and friendship that in time became a fraternal pact, we must also succeed in dispelling the mistrust between Germany and England and in extending the racially related hand of friendship.”

*When they returned to the train compartment they shared, Levetzow and Wagener continued the discussion, Wagener writes. When he asked the Admiral whether an overseas colonial policy on the part of Germany might be less likely to provoke England than a continental policy, Levetzow responded in the affirmative. The Admiral warned, however, that conflict with England could be*

1. This is an allusion to the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 and the alliance formed between Austria and Prussia in 1879.

*avoided only if Germany did not construct a high-seas fleet, but relied instead upon England to protect its colonial holdings, an arrangement which he, as a German admiral, did not find attractive. When Wagener later broached this possibility with Hitler, he reports, it drew a negative response. Hitler held instead to his plans for a continental policy and explained his position as follows.*

“We can keep the colonies only if we are strong in Europe. In any case, that is our first challenge in every instance. For we cannot take a nation of seventy million that is unable to live from its own soil and turn it into a Holland. In that case, we are just as likely to turn into a British dominion.

“Furthermore, I am convinced that our social policy—which we would apply to the colonies as well—could expect to meet promptly with a veto from England. For National Socialism in German Southwest Africa, in the Cameroons, in East Africa, or wherever it might be, would awaken the whole Black Continent and turn it upside down. England could never tolerate such a move.

“The consequences of a colonial policy, therefore, would be the same for the relationship between Germany and England as those *you* fear from a continental policy. But then, it seems to me more straightforward to secure and strengthen the German state and German interests on the Continent and keep hands off the colonial question. Conversely, I consider it possible that at some future time, our colonies will even be offered to us unasked, especially if we were to declare ourselves prepared for an arrangement of the kind Admiral von Levetzow has in mind.

“But the prerequisite for any of this is an understanding and a relationship of trust with England. I can come to no other conclusion. That is why my entire foreign-policy effort will be in the service of this objective.”

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## Hitler on Modern Painting—A Return to True Art through Propaganda—Artists Should “Hunger Their Way to the Top”—Traditional Art as the True Soul of the Volk

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**A**fter describing a series of political maneuvers, Wagener gives an account of a dinner party at Goebbels's apartment in Berlin. After the meal, Magda Goebbels told her guests about a visit she planned to make to the art galleries and collections of Munich. Her remarks, Wagener writes, drew the following response from Hitler.

“If one visits the museums—the Pinakothek and the Glyptothek—and then goes to the Glass Palace to see the exhibition of the younger Secession artists, one is overcome by the wholly deplorable state of contemporary art.” [ . . . ]

“The perfect lines and the designs they form, the magnificent colors and their contrasting interplay, the realism and tangible nature of the works of the Great Masters seem to belong in an entirely different universe from the one that produced the daubs and distortions of today's Dadaist dilettantes. Their figures, misshapen as if by rickets, and their blobs of quite unrelated colors indicate that infantile paralysis still lodges in their brains and in their bones. It seems that the only reason they have not been confined in the padded cells of the madhouse is because they are so totally harmless.

“But it is more interesting to view, not the exhibited results of this degenerate art, but the people who admire and gape at these abominations and to observe their expressions and remarks. You will find that it is precisely the so-called intellectuals who pretend to adoring rapture when they view a canvas depicting one contorted human eye, spread over almost the entire canvas, from which an electric train drives straight into a crowd of people, while a shop window, painted beside it, displays grotesque sexual perversions. And the whole painting is entitled ‘Metropolis.’



“After all, that sort of thing bears no relation to art. This is the mental excrement of diseased brains, daubed by means of thumbs and brush strokes onto some poor piece of canvas that might have been put to better use covering the freezing nakedness of starving children.

“Goebbels, give some thought to how we can put an end to this dreadful state of affairs once you are in charge of the entire propaganda apparatus in the Reich government. It is true that art has nothing to do with propaganda; rather, it is the deepest expression of the true soul of any people. But this soul has been defiled by Jewish and Secessionist propaganda, it has been confused and has lost its bearings. It needs a renewed period of rest, reflection, confidence. It must find new faith in itself and the courage of its own convictions.

“For the healthy Volk carries in its heart a sentiment and a discernment that is much clearer and closer to art than do these big-city types, who are morally and mentally unnatural, who confuse intelligence with intellect, art with mental monkeyshines, beauty with studied deformity, who think it necessary to produce faces painted green and blue, lips smeared with brick red, Jewish raised shoulders achieved by sewing and stuffing the cloth with whole sacks of cotton and wool, and pink and scarlet fingernails, to prove that at least in some ways they differ from the apes.

“To this extent, it is one task of propaganda to help the healthy Volk sensibility back to freedom and justice, true art back to the possibility for development, and the classical representation of beauty and harmony back to expression and recognition.”

“To the extent that this is a matter for propaganda, my Führer,” Goebbels replied—he was already using that form of address, which was gradually being introduced into the party, having started in late 1931 at the suggestion of Hierl, then head of [Organizational] Section II of the party—“I am not worried, we will succeed. But art, and especially painting, needs another kind of pollination, some encouragement that somehow comes from inside, along with the material preconditions—that is, financial support.”

“That is why both are a further task set for us. But it would be wrong to believe that an artist’s development is greater if he is blessed with worldly goods and has no financial worries. The reverse is the case. Almost all great artists had to begin by making a conscious effort to accept their poverty. When art pursues bread, an artist’s creation is not the work of a genius determined to satisfy its own perfection, grown spiritual through bitter self-denial, which in its perfection itself wears the face of genius and works like a revelation for humanity, an act of liberation for the deepest sensibility, a still unformed idea, an experience not yet experienced. Rather, it is paid labor commissioned by the consumer, of no more value than the artful cake of a pastry chef or the hot rolls the baker sends over for breakfast.

“Genuine artists are a race of tragic giants. Artists must scrimp and scrape their way to their great vocation, they must hunger their way to the top! If they

break in the effort, then they may well have been called, but they were not chosen. But if they remain victorious in this tragic struggle of giants, they can win the crown of eternal life. There is no other way! No other way is possible!

“But we must create patrons who will adopt the cause of the artists among our young people, aided by the advice of teachers and artistic masters. This requires that the patrons themselves have a sure feeling for art. And not only such a feeling for art, but also the ethical will to awaken a new generation of artists, and they must be prepared to use their abundance to put paint and brushes into the hands of someone who shows a promising gift. They must make a preliminary sketch, whose ultimate execution they both make possible and turn into a springboard for the young artist. The *state* is not suited to patronage. This ability lies with individuals who have to be no more than outstanding personalities, great families like the Medici or the Schönborns, merchants like the Fuggers, and noblemen like the ruling princes of old. Why shouldn't guilds and trade unions be patrons of art? The Masters of Nuremberg furnish an example here. The new era that is dawning brings with it new possibilities! The state can bestow titles and medals on such patrons, in recognition of what they have accomplished to benefit the entire Volk as concerns art.

“And then, too, the state can mount exhibitions and can purchase the most valuable works of the new artists in order to assure a fitting place for the works and to give a young master new courage and new incentives. And the state can bestow major commissions, as the secular rulers and the church did in the fifteenth century. It was only with the help of these that a Michelangelo, a Rembrandt, and whatever all the other names were, could become the heralds of God's glory and of his people. Men open their souls to these works as they do in prayer, using them to approach a higher being and their own higher strivings.

“The Middle Ages drew their inspiration from worldly events, wars, heroic deeds, voyages of exploration, and the discovery of foreign lands. The church drew on Bible stories and the will to glorify God. We must derive our subjects from the new spirit stirring in our time, from the will to community, the sense of sacrifice for the Volk and the faith of the Volk in the fulfillment of its longing for freedom and equality, for work and greatness, and for justice before God and man.

“In addition, we must also turn our attention to cultivating tradition. You cannot imagine all the things I have found in my travels in the way of artistic interest and skill among the simple Volk, in small towns and villages, in the lowlands and most especially in the mountains. I recall the carvings in the Black Forest, in the alpine villages, or in the Erz Mountains, pottery in the Fichtel Mountains and elsewhere, cottages where they were weaving and hooking rugs and so much else. Painting, of which we have been speaking, has already become a ‘German culture.’ But tradition is the handing down of the feeling for art possessed by the old native and immigrated tribes, hallowed by

centuries of shared history, shared misery, and shared joy, consecrated by atavistic instincts from prehistory, and blessed by the practices of an endless chain of ancestors, whose spirit and essence resides in the tradition like a legacy. Confronted with it, the voice falls silent, the heart trembles, and the eye grows moist. There we find the true soul of the Volk. It is the birthplace of a new development, a new artistic growth, it will give rise to the natural stimulation of new German art, and with it, the future flowering of a mature German culture.

“So you see the scope of your duties, Goebbels, as they relate to art, especially painting. Here lies your greatest obligation to the movement, to the German Volk, and to its future.”

When Hitler ended, an awed silence hung in the room for a considerable time. Only gradually did the discussion resume in fits and starts, until Hitler departed, to return to the hotel. Sitting beside him in the car, I thought: has any man ever given his future minister such instructions? In general, has there ever been a man alive who spoke like this, with such universal sensitivity, instinct, and knowledge? And how few men will there ever be who derive their life's work from such an evening, and who are in a position to shape their tasks accordingly and pass on the details to others.

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## “Earth-Electricity” as the Source of Life—Hitler’s Conception of the Origin of Religion—Slave Insurrections against Oppressors

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**W**agener continues by recounting a conversation he had with Hitler in the spring of 1932 on the terrace of the Dreesen Hotel in Bad Godesberg, on the bank of the Rhine. They began by discussing the refusal of the leaders of the Republic to entrust Hitler, as the leader of the most rapidly growing party, with forming a government. On that score, Wagener writes that Hitler expressed the following views.

“The last few nights, I have thought a great deal about what might be the innermost reason for these political moves and countermoves. They simply turn their backs on reason and responsibility, in favor of what can only be selfish but shortsighted reasons. They do not *want* to concede self-government to the Volk. The groups who acquired their power during earlier times, times now past and gone, consider themselves predestined and uniquely qualified to govern. And incidentally, most of these people seem merely stupid, obtuse, and arrogant. They have no goal beyond restoring the old authoritarian state, and with it the relationships between master and slave, the upper ten thousand and the lower millions, the haves and the have-nots, the bosses and the laborers. The industrialists, the mine owners, the leading heads of corporations naturally share this aim with all their heart and soul. For *they* are entirely guided by the spirit of profit. ‘Fatherland’ is nothing but a word to them. Except, that is, that the fatherland is a kind of theater, on whose stage politics and church paint the scenery and provide the members of the cast, while the Volk constitutes the applauding audience, paying its entrance fee to fill the pockets of the entrepreneurs.

“As I was thinking, I remembered that once, when I was still living in Vienna, before 1910, I ran across some pamphlets by a Viennese engineer

named Hans Goldzier.<sup>1</sup> Given his name, he might have been a Jew, and perhaps that was why he began writing under the name Th. Newest. I was deeply impressed by Goldzier's ideas, but subsequently I never heard anything more about him or his theories. I only know that, as an engineer, he was involved in the building of the Simplon Tunnel."

I interrupted. "I know his writings. I also read them around 1910, when I was a lieutenant in Rastatt. The scientific community ridicules them or passes over them in silence."

"You're the first person I've ever met who is familiar with them," Hitler said, pleased. "So much the better. I, too, am fully aware that Goldzier's writing was quite unscientific. And since he attacked the dogmatic wisdom of the academicians, and since he constructed unproven, and perhaps even unprovable, theories, his views could not help but meet with the same fate that was handed out to Galileo and others.

"So I do not really care—and I did not care then—what is true or mistaken about his theories. I only took in the fact—and that is the part I remembered—that electricity is, in Goldzier's words, 'latent heat,' held back by pressure or by preventing its expansion. The great pressure the cooling, and therefore contracting, outer layers of the earth exert on the still glowing, and perhaps still liquid, core of the earth also prevents this core's taking on the volume corresponding to its temperature. In this way, according to Goldzier, parts of this heat are transformed into electricity, which then seeks to diffuse out of the earth and into outer space.

"Now Goldzier says—and this is the essence of his theory—that electricity always chooses the best conductors to reach the earth's surface, and that appropriate mechanisms develop to take over the consumption and the transmission of electric power.

"In short, you may remember the pamphlets: this is the way plants, animals, and, in the end, man come into being.

"It may all be nonsense. But who is to judge? And who has suggested a better theory, before or since? Science cloaks itself in silence, claiming, along with Faust, 'I know that we cannot *know*.' And the churches offer up creation myths that may, by the way they are presented, have been convincing to the simple Volk of an earlier day. But the thinking man of the modern age must consign them to the realm of tall tales, though we do enjoy telling them over and over to our children. Even today, the child finds it altogether plausible that on the first day of Creation, in the darkness of the void, God's voice resounded in thunder: 'Let there be light!' For time and again, if his father or the child himself turns on the light by flipping the electric switch, he thinks, 'That's the way God did it in the beginning.'

1. Hans Goldzier used the pseudonym Th. Newest; a popular Austrian pseudo-scientific writer, he published eight pamphlets under the overall title *Einige Weltprobleme* in Vienna in the years 1905–11.

“So, if I assume for the sake of argument that Goldzier was somehow correct, it follows that the task assigned to the creatures of the earth is: to consume and pass on earth-electricity.

“In this connection, I am repeatedly reminded of the Gospel of St. John, which begins with the words, ‘In the beginning was the “Logos”’—which is why I translate it as ‘urge.’ Quite simply, in the beginning was the urge to fulfill this purpose of earthly life. From it, the instinct of self-preservation developed logically, as did the instinct to be fruitful and multiply. They are meant to carry out this task presented by nature, this meaning of all life, as long and as abundantly as possible—that is, to the greatest conceivable extent.

“Just look around you at the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Aren’t these the only instincts that drive these creatures? And let’s look around in the world of man. Basically, isn’t it the same way? The only new kind of instinct is that of squirreling away. But it, too, was already developed in the animal kingdom, as the name indicates. But even squirreling things away is only an expression of the drive of self-preservation. The squirrel gathers up and stores its provisions for the winter. He knows there is enough left over for the other squirrels. So his squirreling is not intended to deprive the others of anything; it is a simple and foresighted—and therefore natural—act of stockpiling. Man as such also practices stockpiling—at least that is what he should do. But his ‘squirreling away’ is not a natural process. Rather, he hoards, and he acts on quite different motives. He does not squirrel away his winter provisions; he hoards gold and riches, without regard to others! On the contrary! He hoards in order to gain power over others, so that *they* will work harder—including doing his share—on the job of consuming and emitting earth-electricity, just so that *he* can live comfortably without engaging in this activity.

“Here we find ourselves deeply in politics! We realize that the ‘masters,’ the ‘superiors,’ the ‘factory owners’—except insofar as they themselves work in their factories—are actually squirrels only in that they have personally become untrue to nature, cheating nature as well as their fellow man. Of course, human progress and increasing overpopulation demand an organization, which must encompass leaders and those who are led; the regulation of instinctive life, requiring laws; an economic order; and the formation of states, and therefore a constitution. But the fundamental element in all this, nevertheless, is and remains the constant task of absorbing and diffusing the earth-electricity that rises from the earth’s surface. And in nature, everything that truly serves this purpose is preserved, because it fulfills the function of its essence. But whatever does not serve this purpose will wither away and, in time, become extinct.

“It is, therefore, a quite natural process that the ‘masters,’ the ‘superiors,’ those who let others do their work for them, degenerate. And it is just as natural that the ‘slaves,’ the ‘inferiors,’ act on their feeling and healthy awareness of the conditions intended by nature, unconsciously recognizing everyone’s obligation to Mother Earth; they therefore repudiate and try to remove these ‘masters’

and these 'superiors.' In the autumn, the worker bees kill the drones, once these have fulfilled their life's purpose for reproduction and procreation and would from then on be nothing but, simply, drones, in the same way the Bolsheviks simply killed all the drones in their state. For drones invariably coerce others to do additional work, in order to preserve their drone existence. It is true that a bee and a man are both willing to work—they are not willing to be slaves!

"The elimination of worthless life is therefore dictated by nature, a consequence of the purpose of human existence, as well as the existence of all life.

"Now higher human development and the side-by-side existence of families and tribes—as well as the evolving division of labor and organization of work among all peoples—gradually made the necessity of a governmental order more and more obvious, not only among the 'superiors,' but among the entire Volk. To begin with, this realization created what today we call the laws of ethics, which allowed the concepts of right and wrong, morality and custom, to grow out of the necessity of mutual consideration. But for all these laws, the meaning of existence remained the same. Though no man's mind is conscious of it, it worked in him instinctively—that is, the duty toward the earth, the fundamental idea. But because as such it did not rise to consciousness even among the lawgivers, a Moses—or a Confucius or the founder of the Buddhist religion, or Christ or Mohammed—moved away from viewing these ethical laws as the link to the earth, and postulated a new otherworldly link for the inward experience of this Logos, this urge; they established a 'religio,' they set 'God' in the place of the unconscious urge. That is why St. John, that great Christian philosopher, continues, 'And the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God.'

"From that time on, then, mankind lived with two simultaneous experiences. One is the unconscious, but completely real, obligation to the natural body, which we call earth, with which we are inseparably connected, and of which we are infinitesimal particles with a very particular purpose. The other is the link with a godhead, which has become an article of faith. It is, in fact, an unreal entity, an idea as impossible for us to grasp as the natural obligation. Nevertheless, it can more easily be given graphic and conceptual shape.

"Now, since the more highly developed men quickly set themselves up to be 'masters,' 'superiors' over the others, they became, on the one hand, as I mentioned, traitors to their real mission, turning others into their work slaves, rather as if the drones were to rule over the worker bees. On the other hand, they exploited the 'religio,' which also arose out of common inner experience, to present their more exalted position in relation to their fellowmen as divinely ordained, to let it enter men's God-given consciousness as an inevitable condition.

"In vain the prophets preached, in vain Christ came and taught: 'All men are equal in the sight of God. Whoever possesses more in the way of worldly goods has greater responsibilities toward his fellowman. No one is what he is on his

own merits, but only through the grace of God!’ Christ was intent on returning religion to the natural urge, the Logos, the true obligation. But what developed in the name of Christianity was a perversion of the Christian idea, its misrepresentation to the point of the exact opposite, and the recurrence and renewed consolidation of the teachings of the ‘superiors,’ the ‘masters.’ Put in political terms, it was ‘reactionary.’

“Since that time, we have seen a constant shifting back and forth between reaction and the true teaching of Christ, between the will of the upper classes to subjugate and the revolt of the masses, which is aroused and constantly replenished by an inkling that is perhaps only intuitive but may possibly also arise from an instinctive recognition of the true cosmic context.

“Immediately after the death of Christ, whom the reactionaries crucified, they set about exterminating, at least imprisoning and depriving of their rights, all those who had accepted Christ before his death. Christ’s body was removed from the tomb, to keep it from becoming an object of veneration and a tangible relic of the great new founder of a religion! In all the larger municipalities, commissions were established, special courts, to pass judgment on Christ’s followers. The Gospels report in graphic detail the expropriations, forced labor, two years or more of prison, and even death penalties that were inflicted in order to exterminate the plague of true Christianity. The Roman occupation forces aided in this effort. And a major re-education program was initiated to reconvert—or rather, force to reconvert—those who might have gravitated to Christ or were vacillating.

“The apostle Paul himself relates that at one time he headed such a special court and imprisoned or tortured to death the poor victims, who had committed no other crime than giving their faith and their hope to this God-sent man, whom posterity goes so far as to call ‘the son of God,’ until Paul himself began to suspect, and then to realize, that the truth was not with the forces of reaction but with the socialist teachings of Christ! He himself was therefore thrown into prison and handed over to the Roman slaves acquired in war.

“Subsequently, as we have learned, in Rome the reaction continued in the persecution of Christians and the extermination of the socialists! But even later, when Christ’s movement took on ever greater proportions, the forces of reaction even appropriated his name and, as previously mentioned, reversed and corrupted his teachings and turned them into their own tool!

“During the Middle Ages, a new movement of inner liberation and the establishment of the natural link of man to his God began, which fell back on the true teachings of Christ and the instinctive apprehension of the truth. The reaction was not long in coming. The Inquisition and the witch-hunts rooted out all aspects of the heresy, as the hypocritical priesthood called it. In this way, all the Germanic people, who were the upholders of the idea of rebellion, were wiped out in Spain, Italy, France, and the southern Netherlands. Those who were able to escape sought help and asylum in England, which regarded itself



as Germanic, and in central and northern Germany, as well as in Denmark and Scandinavia. In vain the forces of reaction tried to press forward into these territories. A divinely inspired woman on the English throne, Queen Elizabeth, preserved her land from spiritual enslavement. A thirty-years-long war ravaged poor Germany. Only a fourth of the population survived this period of genocide. And if the Swedish king had not come to the aid of his Germanic brothers, all of the German Volk who protested against the reactionary despotism of the Roman church would have been obliterated without a trace and would have perished from the face of the earth. By means of lies and forgeries, the history books—always controlled by the church and the secular powers—try to gloss over these incidents of terrible cruelty and brutality and to cloak them in a mantle of Christian love. But they were nothing other than criminal genocide. History kept particular silence about the fact that, precisely in the church, Jewry played a special role in this struggle of the oppressors against the desire for freedom of the enslaved, the violators against the violated, the parasites against purity and self-esteem. [ . . . ]

“The role of Jewry is hard to realize *because* the Jewish Volk is *the* parasitic race among the human races. Jewry always marches with those who live as parasites—that is, who are intent on having others work for them, so that they can lead a carefree existence. Parasitism and squirreling things away in the sense of hoarding are thus more or less one and the same as exploitation by force. That is why we will always find the Jews among the reactionaries, to the extent that these are prepared to use Jews and, in return for their services, to grant them the favors they demand—a position that allows the Jews to exercise their parasitism more easily. Since, furthermore, a parasite is always a sadist—a connection between the intention to bleed others dry and pleasure in the suffering of those who are being bled, who find themselves helpless under the power of the violators—within the major reactionary movements of a political and clerical nature, the Jew always pushes his way especially to those positions where sadism and parasitism can be practiced simultaneously and can, without restraint, be given full vent in reciprocal interplay.

“But where the ‘superiors’ and the church reject Jewry, where they combat it or even eliminate it, there the Jew wanders over to the masses, to the lower classes, to those who are equally oppressed. And because of his greater intelligence as compared to theirs, he puts himself at their head, in order to assume the leadership in the struggle against the authorities and against the church. This is most clearly seen in Bolshevik Russia. But even the democratic revolution of 1789 in France and the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth century—and not least the pseudo-revolution of 1918—always and without exception saw Jews either in the immediate key positions of the uprising or as its instigators.

“Since the French Revolution, a new kind of struggle against the ‘superiors’ is under way. It is no longer centered in the clerical area. Rather, this time the

insurrection began in the field of politics. But the inner incentive is always the same: liberty, equality, fraternity! True Christianity! Universal acceptance of man's earthly lifework, each according to his ability and aptitude! Once again, the great idea perishes! It is buried by a Napoleon, whom the forces of reaction—which began by cloaking themselves in affirmation of the revolutionary idea—put in as their leader. And in the Congress of Vienna, the reactionaries celebrate their victory over the French Volk, who only wanted to free themselves from the unnatural ways of a despotic Sun King.

“But the revolution kept expanding. In 1830 and 1848, it broke out anew. And since, in the intervening years, the first stirrings of industrialization had moved the unnatural disproportion between the ruling classes and the mass of the working people into a new, still more glaring light, a new movement was born. In its deepest essence, this, in turn, called only for the establishment of equality of rights for all; it was eager to take up the true doctrine of Christ and, consciously or unconsciously, to establish the natural condition that corresponds to the Logos, the urge, that has its source in the life of our earth and its powers.

“Once again, we see a Jew assuming control—Karl Marx. He realized that industry, strongly developing from the trades, was rushing to seize the reins of economic power in England—as, I have no doubt, in other countries as well. In this way the dominion of Jewry over finance and international economic life, uncontested until that time, was placed in serious jeopardy. The capitalist measures of the lords of industry made the economy largely independent of the Jewish money market. If Jewry tolerated such a situation, it had reached the end of its power.

“That is why Marx, in sage understanding and acting on his racial instincts, placed himself at the head of the movement *against* the superiors! He assumed the leadership of the working masses against parasitic capital and called into being a movement that is all around us at the present time.

“Bismarck was the first who used social legislation to tread the path of conciliation—that is, actually *against* the Jews. But, by the same token, he ran afoul of the conservative party of which he himself had been a founding member. For oppositional reaction promptly stirred within it once more. German socialism, however, was on the march, and even the fall of Bismarck could no longer turn back the clock.

“Foolish blindness and a shortsightedness not schooled by instinct, such as are always the characteristics of reactionaries, allowed the Great War to ignite. Its end placed the threads of fate in the hands of the socialists. However, they were not ready and did not know what to do with them. Quickly the Jews were on the scene. But the crucial moment had been missed, and only bourgeois revolution was possible. It found its expression in the Weimar constitution.

“And now we see the forces of reaction once more reaching out for these threads, which the Weimar system holds only loosely. No, the forces of reaction

have already seized them! But they do not yet dare to say so and let this truth become evident.

“That is the moment in which we live! The National Socialist movement is the harbinger of the return to the will and mission of nature and the upholder of the socialist idea, as it corresponds to the Christian doctrine and the true religion, and it rejects all Jewish leadership. The reactionaries and the Jews are the enemies of the movement, and thus of the Volk. They think only of winning back—that is, salvaging—their power, of securing their control over capital, and the suppression of the broad masses, keeping them poor and at forced labor. And both enjoy the complacent protection and support of the Christian churches, who see the ultimate success of their mass murders after Christ’s crucifixion and at the time of the Inquisition and the Thirty Years’ War threatened by the definitive victory of socialism, which calls for freedom of conscience!

“Woe if the forces of reaction should succeed in becoming our masters! The atrocities and the destructive urge of the victors will wreak havoc worse than anything meted out by the special judges in Palestine, as well as by Nero and the Grand Inquisitor in Spain!”

Hitler had been speaking for more than half an hour. I could never have followed him if I had not by chance been familiar with the writings of Hans Goldzier, so that the train of thought was familiar to me. But Goldzier originated only the theory about the origin of life on earth and its purpose. All the rest were Hitler’s ideas. They bubbled out of him, so that I hardly felt that he was speaking on the basis of thought; rather, the words seemed to come from him by themselves.

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## Wagener as Mediator between Hitler and Schleicher—Hitler’s Plan for Forming a Cabinet—Wagener Steps Down as Head of the Economic Policy Section—Hitler: “Become the Guardian of the Grail”

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**A**fter describing a number of political developments during the spring of 1932, Wagener writes that Hitler asked him to go to Berlin and attempt to establish contact with General Schleicher, whom Hitler regarded as the key to the political situation.<sup>1</sup> By drawing on his own ties to military men, Wagener relates, he succeeded within a few days in arranging for Hitler to meet with Schleicher. The meeting went well, Wagener writes, leaving Hitler in the best of spirits.

“Papen is isolated! His chancellorship won’t last more than a few months,” Hitler said. “But it will not be easy to come to terms with Schleicher. There is something in his eyes that’s intelligent and at the same time lurking. I do not believe he is candid.

“How would it be, Wagener, if you moved your residence to Berlin? You already have an office here. The connections with Papen are assured. And as far as Schleicher is concerned, you are the only one who can keep the connection going. Over a period of years Göring couldn’t manage what you accomplished in hours.”

The request that I move to Berlin came at an opportune moment for me. Since the autumn of 1931, on the basis of my conversation with Strasser, I had

1. Wagener’s role in arranging the first meeting between General Schleicher and Hitler was confirmed in 1946 or 1947 by a Major Eberhardt, who served as liaison between Wagener and Schleicher: see Kunrat von Hammerstein, “Schleicher, Hammerstein und die Machtübernahme 1933,” in *Frankfurter Hefte*, 11 (1956): 17.

planned such a move, and I had merely been waiting for the right occasion. Now it was at hand. I was therefore happy to agree.

“And when you have your discussions, keep the following objectives firmly fixed in mind. We demand the chancellorship, the ministry of the interior, and the ministry of education. We further insist that the foreign ministry and the defense ministry be headed by men acceptable to us. The ministries of agriculture and economics can serve as negotiating points, as can the ministry of labor. In return, I require the creation of a ministry of propaganda, which must be staffed by us.”

“But surely the creation of employment must be in our hands,” I suggested.

“I will take it in hand, in my position as chancellor!”

“And social legislation, price and wage controls?”

“Those, too, are laws that I will personally propose and implement.”

“But my preliminary work can be of great help to you in this!”

“And I am counting on that. That is exactly why I can afford to let the ministry of economics go. We will be determining its salient features anyway. And in regard to the creation of jobs, I’m sure the others won’t engage in sabotage.”

“What are your thoughts on the president of the Reichsbank?”

“I’m hoping to be able to get Schacht. We’ve already talked about it. What is crucial is whether he can agree to finance the jobs-creation program along our lines. He seems willing. After all, he has no choice. If he refuses, and we put another man in the post who manages to solve the problem—and we have no doubts that the program will succeed—then the aura of infallibility in which the great men of the banking world have enveloped themselves so far dissolves into thin air. And they will not incur this risk. They prefer to swallow the bitter pill and allow Schacht to perform the magic.”

“And what is the situation with the ministry of justice? Forgive my many questions. But if I am to carry on discussions, I have to understand the reasons why I am to demand the one thing and can afford to do without the other,” I added.

“Of course. That is why we are having this conversation, after all. The worst thing that can prevail in a nation is absence of law. Now, the transition from the individualistic-liberal ideology to the socialist one brings with it change in the area of the law. The old-liners say, ‘What I possess, no one can take from me. Is it my fault that the others came too late?’ The socialist says, ‘I do not reproach the propertied classes. But it is time to find a way by which even the non-propertied segments can arrive at property through work and effort.’”

“That is what *we* say,” I interrupted. “But not the Marxists, and not the Communists.”

“I mean us, of course—once we are part of the government. So the legal concepts shift. If we were to make a National Socialist minister of justice, it could easily happen that he would start by coming out with the new concepts before the new way of thinking has become entrenched in the entire Volk and

before a new penal code and civil code have been prepared. The judges would still base their decisions on the old law, while a new interpretation of the law is already being promulgated from the top. The National Socialists would expect to be able to act according to their socialist ideology and be judged according to it; the others, however, would still follow the conception based on Roman law.

“That situation must be prevented at all costs. That is why, at first, a man of the old type must become minister of justice. He must facilitate the formulation of a new set of laws, he must even make the best minds of his school available to this task. Until the new legal system is worked out, the old laws *must* remain in effect. More or less on the model of English adjudication, in very complex cases judges should be given the freedom to treat the case and hand down a penalty according to common sense within the paragraphs of the valid law. The surest guarantee that lawlessness will not occur under these circumstances is a minister of justice who follows the old legal interpretations.”

“But difficulties will arise over the question of the defense ministry. Schleicher will on no account allow Röhm to hold the post.”

“I have no illusions on that score. I shall speak to Röhm. Here I find myself in a predicament. Röhm will understand, he must understand. And as to the position of foreign minister, Neurath is important to me. Since he is in England’s good books and is widely known there, and since his basic ideas concur with mine about collaboration with England—I believe that *he* is the right man. He is fully aware of the difficulties England puts in our way. He has a better understanding of the situation and the attitudes over there. But he, too, believes that it is possible to persuade England that we wish to make common cause.

“Any other questions?”

“If I am now to function in Berlin, I must have backing, it must be known that I am acting in your name. Your representative in Berlin, however, has always been Göring.”

“Nothing needs to change. I’d like you to limit yourself to the connection with Schleicher.”

“But even that requires an occasional public appearance on my part. I really don’t want to come into direct conflict with Göring.”

“Göring has his particular tasks, and he is kept quite busy with the Reichstag in particular. It even suits me very well that a man from the national executive of the NSDAP is coming here to take up connections through his contacts outside pure politics and to make social appearances. Göring, after all, keeps completely to himself. And Goebbels, too, after he’s worked with the Gau all day, can’t be expected to put on a tuxedo at night and start a double life.

“But it is time, in any case, to make a different impression on those who are used to judging us only as socialists and who look down their noses at us. Of course, once we’re in the government, we’re immediately ‘presentable at court.’ But it can only benefit our acceptance in the government if we prove that we are

presentable ahead of time. I leave that entirely to you. I'm sure you'll know what to do."

"I'll try very hard to represent the party here in your spirit and to maintain constant contact with Schleicher."

Hitler ended the conversation with the remark:

"Actually, I much prefer to form a government with a soldier such as Schleicher. It does not burden us so heavily with the reactionary parties. For a soldier is always seen as apolitical. But when we have the army on our side, then any danger of a putsch is over, and our political and military position of strength can forestall any attempt at dictatorship, whether from the left or from the right. Democracy, and with it the implementation of our tasks and objectives, seem to me assured from this time on."

*Wagener then tells of his preparations to wind up his operations in the Economic Policy Section in anticipation of his move to Berlin. Among other measures, he had printed as a pamphlet the essays on Nazi economic policy which he had, as chief of the section, written for his staff and its representatives in the Gaue, excluding those points which Hitler had decreed confidential. To his dismay, however, Hitler informed him that Gottfried Feder, who had already published several pamphlets on the party program, objected to Wagener's publishing one. When Wagener informed Hitler that he was only proposing to publish material that had long since been in circulation, and that he had never before answered to Feder for his economic policy statements, Hitler responded as follows.*

"But I don't think it advisable to publish such a work just now, when battle lines are drawn over the formation of the government," Hitler objected.

"But the reverse could be just as true. It might be that this publication—which, by the way, is available to only a few of the party comrades at present—could considerably strengthen the hopes the Volk has for us!"

"But it need contain only *one* word that is incorrect or open to misinterpretation. All our enemies will throw themselves on that word and will use it to drag, not only your publication, but also our entire party and all its goals, through the mud."

"Have you read the pamphlet?" I asked.

"No."

"Perhaps you might want to do that first. If Feder wants to stop publication, he is surely acting out of personal vanity, nothing more."

"You may be right. But my reasons are valid all the same. I want to appoint a commission to read the book and then report to me on it. I'd like the commission to be made up of Hess, Funk, and Feder."

"All three will consider the pamphlet unsuited to publication. The only one whose reasons will really be based on economic policy is Funk. For he is not a National Socialist but, by nature, an economic liberal. Besides, his ties to the

Ruhr industry would keep him from promoting any socialist ideas within the NSDAP.”

“It’s true that I *am* a socialist. But you know that, at the present time, political reasons also force me to take into account the businessmen,” Hitler declared.

“I will bow to this reason once you have read the pamphlet yourself and repeat your opinion to me.”

“But I want to hear the opinions of a completely unprejudiced commission.”

“Feder isn’t unprejudiced. On the contrary. He will be opposed to publication, and he’ll find some reason or other to justify his feeling. And Hess knows what *you* think—and he will think *the same*.”

“Wagener, you know what is important right now. I must avoid any kind of trouble. And that way, I also avoid any possibility of causing trouble.”

*He and Hitler parted somewhat sourly after this conversation, Wagener writes. Strasser, whom he consulted about the matter, suspected that Hitler was merely using Feder as a foil. Hitler was actually afraid, Strasser reasoned, that the pamphlet would result in the credit for Nazi economic policies going to Wagener rather than to him. Strasser urged Wagener to resolve the issue by proposing to Hitler that “Only for internal use” be printed on the pamphlet and that distribution be limited to restricted circles within the party. When he made that proposal, Wagener writes, Hitler readily accepted.<sup>2</sup> He had, however, resolved, Wagener continues, to ask Hitler to relieve him of his post as chief of the Economic Policy Section. When he made that request soon thereafter as they traveled by train to Berlin, Wagener reports that Hitler looked at him tentatively and then extended his hand, saying:*

“I owe you thanks for joining the SA as chief of staff at the time you did, and for subsequently taking on the section for economic policy. And there are so many instances that unite me to you in gratitude.

“But today, I want to thank you for laying down your office in the economic-policy sector. You’ve become superfluous in that position, and at the present time, we have more important tasks for you. But I beg you to remain, as before, one of my closest associates, and to promise me that nothing will weaken our relationship of trust.

“And one thing more. During so many nights we discussed so many things, and I have revealed to you my innermost thoughts and my most fundamental ideas, as I have done perhaps to no one else. Please keep this knowledge to

2. The pamphlet, printed and bound but never published, bore the title *Das Wirtschaftsprogramm der N.S.D.A.P.*, the date 1932, and the imprint of the Nazi publishing house, Eher Verlag. The surviving copies bear on the cover the overprint: “Rednermaterial! Als Manuskript gedruckt. Zusammengestellt nach zwei öffentlichen Versammlungsreden 1931/32. Nur für den Dienstgebrauch!” (Speakers’ material! Printed manuscript. Put together on the basis of speeches at two public rallies, 1931/32. For internal use only!) Feder’s opposition to publication of Wagener’s pamphlet is recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the party’s Economic Council on April 27, 1932: Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, NS 22/11.



yourself, and thus become the guardian of the grail, whose innermost truth can be disclosed to only the few.”

All this time, he held my hand and looked at me with that gaze of his, inscrutable but nevertheless spellbinding. Then, shaking my hand firmly once more, he concluded:

“We are not saying good-bye to one another. And yet, this moment feels something like a parting. Each time I come to Berlin, I’ll make sure that you are informed ahead of time. You’ll always come to visit me in the Kaiserhof. And each time you come to Munich, I’m sure, we’ll see each other there.”

“Of course, Herr Hitler,” I assured him, “my work continues to be dedicated to the movement and to you. But I do want to urge something else upon you at this moment: do not underestimate the importance of economic policy! The creation of employment is the central problem when we take over the government. If it succeeds, then the Volk will stand behind you unconditionally and faithfully, and the way will be open to all further plans. Besides, social economy is the deepest content of the coming socialist reorganization. Only when it has been achieved can true socialism be realized. And then it will be the prevailing religion!”

Thus closed a chapter of my life, the one I can surely call the most interesting and for me most productive since the schooling of the Great War. I, too, felt something like a sense of parting. I really did not understand why. By stepping down as head of the Economic Policy Section of the NSDAP national executive, I was also stepping down from the national executive itself. I was free. Whatever I did from that time on, I would do as the upholder of a deeper knowledge, which it seemed my life’s mission to formulate. I felt myself committed to this knowledge for all time. It remains untouched by all that was to come, untouched also by my subsequent separation from Hitler. This knowledge had given birth in me to a worldview that struggled for realization. And I felt, as Hitler had said, like the guardian of the grail that holds the secrets of that worldview.



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# Appendix

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