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1 The Whispering (original linocut by Heinke Jenkins, 1963)

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**UNDERGROUND HUMOUR IN NAZI GERMANY 1933–1945**

*F.K.M.Hillenbrand*

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To the memory of those
who did not bow the knee to Baal
(I Kings 19.18; St Paul, Romans 11.4)

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**PREFACE**

In 1982 I was given some slender volumes of anti-Nazi jokes collected clandestinely between 1933 and 1945 but published in Germany and Austria only after the collapse of the Third Reich. At the same time I was encouraged to make available to a fairly wide English readership some of these anti-authoritarian responses of ordinary Germans to the régime under which they lived. It soon became clear to me that this would be a difficult undertaking, as it would be necessary to make German humour not just accessible but also acceptable to the English way of thinking. And by degrees the book came to be more than just an accumulation of political jokes. What counts is the motivation underlying them; for many people found in the telling of such jokes their only means of protest against the police state in which they lived—and only a few engaged in active resistance to Hitler.

I wish to thank first of all my publisher, Andrew Wheatcroft, for accepting my book. I am also grateful to him for recommending the book *Between the Wars 1919–1939, The Cartoonists' Vision* by Roy Douglas as a guide to the selection of the best contemporary cartoons which of course add extra punch to the jokes.

I am most grateful to Professor John Hiden of Bradford University for his early interest in my work, for reading the synopsis and for his welcome criticisms. I also wish to thank Dr Jill Stephenson of Edinburgh University, who read part of the book early on, for her valuable comments.

Dr Margaret Whidden deserves full praise for her work with the word-processor, despite many technical adversities, and for the meticulous attention she applied to every aspect of the text.

A lucky find by my son, Dr Peter Hillenbrand, introduced me to the artist, Mrs Heinke Jenkins. Her linocut 'The whispering' most appropriately reveals the 'German glance', i.e. the way in which most anti-Nazi jokes were told during those years, and I therefore chose the print as the book's cover illustration and frontispiece. I am most grateful for the artist's kind permission to make use of her work in this way. My thanks are also due to the publishers of the books from which I selected the illustrations. All of these are contemporaneous with the jokes presented in the text.

Last, but not least, my heartfelt thanks go to my son, Professor Robert Hillenbrand of Edinburgh University, without whom this book would

never have been written. He suggested that I should write it, being well acquainted with my personal experiences during the Nazi years and my sharp memories of that time. His linguistic expertise, his command of literary style, his ever-ready help and his unflagging patience with my shortcomings were indispensable. His continuing interest in getting the book published was crowned by his most generous offer of editing it, for which I am most grateful.

## INTRODUCTION

The principal aim of this book is to draw attention to a half-forgotten aspect of the Third Reich: the varied ways in which widespread popular discontent was expressed.

'Discontent? Widespread? Popular?' some may ask. Didn't Hitler have millions of followers? Weren't the great majority of Germans Nazis at heart even if they were not members of the Nazi party? I would maintain that only someone who lived through the twelve years of Adolf Hitler's 'Thousand Year Reich' in Germany would be able to attempt to answer these questions from firsthand experience, and could explain the purpose of this book.

This is now more than ever a timely undertaking. As the years go by fewer and fewer people remain who can, when recalling their experiences in the course of those years, recollect their own and their friends' criticisms of the régime without having to take recourse to hindsight, the necessary hallmark of studies about the Third Reich which have accumulated since 1945. Although detailed and on occasion very moving studies of *Zeit-* or *Alltagsgeschichte* (the history of everyday life) of this period are plentiful, this book aims to look at Nazi Germany from an entirely different angle, namely humour, in the belief that this reveals most directly the mood of the time.

A brief summary of the contemporary background will put the popular discontent with the new order into context. By the end of 1932 Germany was in a sorry state, with over seven million people unemployed and the aftermath of the Wall Street crash of 1929 affecting the whole country. Banks in Berlin, for example, closed for lengthy periods—as I experienced myself since I was then a student there—and a most disturbing political instability was manifesting itself. There were over three dozen political parties in the *Reichstag,* some of them of minute size with a weak centre, but there were two rather powerful and rowdy ones at the extremes, Nazis and Communists. I witnessed many fights between them, some extending even to the precincts of the University. Most people living in the capital at that time felt some relief when President von Hindenburg entrusted the Chancellor of the Reich, a man of the centre, with emergency powers, since this seemed the only alternative to yet another failed coalition government. During these last few weeks of the Weimar Republic Hitler was, so to

speak, waiting in the wings. Although his party had suffered a serious setback at the last elections—in November 1932—he remained determined to come to power legally, if at all possible, with right-wing and less radical (and therefore more respectable) support. Through the intervention of a former right-wing Reich Chancellor, his friend the aristocrat von Papen, von Hindenburg was eventually, though reluctantly, persuaded to accept Hitler as the nominal head of a right-wing coalition, with von Papen as Vice-Chancellor to serve as a watchdog. (Hitler was duly appointed Reich Chancellor by von Hindenburg on 30th January 1933.)

At first not many Germans shared the old President's serious apprehension about the untried stranger from Austria. After all, it was Hitler's political honeymoon, and everybody wishes a honeymooner well, as did the great majority of Germans at this time. Most people were willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. However, within weeks there occurred the *Reichstag* fire and soon Göring's uniformed stormtroopers, transformed into armed auxiliary police, began hunting down political opponents. In addition, they molested and arrested innocent civilians on the streets of the capital, as I personally experienced. Such oppressive behaviour at street level caused widespread resentment, which worsened as the manifold restrictions issued by the new government began to bite.

This generated the first wave of somewhat tame jokes with a political edge—not a very sharp one at first. Later, as it gradually dawned on people that they were now living in a police state, these jokes took on a much harsher note. Measures like *Gleichschaltung,* the Aryan laws, the Röhm *Putsch,* the *Anschluss* of Austria and the subjugation of Czechoslovakia brought in their wake a flood of cutting satirical comments and jokes. Eventually, after Hitler had led Germany into his war, her defeat and utter ruin, the people reacted with *Galgenhumor* (gallows humour), which was more bitter than witty, often scabrous and with an undercurrent of desperation.

Throughout all these years overt opposition resulted in swift reprisals, but the more common covert variety vented itself in jokes against the régime and its representatives. They whispered their way through Germany with remarkable speed. It was even rumoured that an anti-Nazi joke was actually produced in the Ministry of Propaganda run by Dr Goebbels in an attempt to test the geographical distribution of these anti-Nazi jokes inside Germany. Thus the joke was sent on its way from the foothills of the Alps to the north, and a scant week later had reached the shores of the Baltic—a distance of more than 1,000 miles. A sprinkling of jokes in my book probably stems from the same Nazi source. These were either intended to defame their opponents or reflected the internecine rivalry of those at the top of the Nazi hierarchy.

A good many of the jokes stem from the capital, and are full of the ready wit, repartee and rhyming slang for which the Berliners—like the Cockneys

—were famous. With all due precautions these jokes were told and retold with gusto, as I can personally testify since I heard many of them at their place of origin.
Naturally, people preferred to be safe rather than sorry and went to some lengths to take the proper precautions. Eventually they became conditioned to looking around surreptitiously when whispering such jokes to each other. The term 'German glance' *(der deutsche Blick)* was coined to describe just this habit. Hence, too, the term 'whispered jokes' *(Flüsterwitze),* so vividly illustrated on the cover and frontispiece of this book. People were afraid that their telephones were bugged and thus, in Berlin at least, such conversations were often carried on in some form of code. The same applied to letters and diaries.
Germans by and large were fully aware of the system of informers *(Denunziantentum)* which was in operation—a typical and essential by-product of the Nazi police state. Even tête-à-tête conversations criticizing the régime or telling jokes about leading Nazis were risky, and rendered one liable to end up in a concentration camp. From Berlin alone there are documented instances, involving for example a minister of religion and a deaconess, of those who were denounced, tried and executed for such offences.
Less clandestine criticisms and sarcastic anecdotes were occasionally voiced by a few prominent actors and more especially by one or two daring compères in the nightclubs of Berlin and Munich, who poked fun at the *Prominente* to the delight of their audiences. All of them eventually had to pay for their frankness. Yet of course this kind of opposition, for all that it was risky, was simply not comparable to the active political engagement of the German Resistance.
Nevertheless, this very risk added some spice to the dull intellectual fare dished out to the German people. Moreover, these jokes provided a welcome emotional release from pressure and restrictions 'from above' and from the daily pinpricks of the hordes of Nazi officials of the lesser order, the 'little Hitlers' in their obscene brown uniforms, who got on the wick of so many Germans. Thus underground humour had some therapeutic value for the millions living in the prison-without-bars which Germany had now become, even in peacetime. This became even more true when war broke out.
Since such humour necessarily had to go underground, the bulk of the jokes in the book were collected privately under the code-name *Schmetterlinge* (butterflies), though they could be published in Germany and in Austria only after the collapse of the Third Reich. A few of the jokes stem from German emigrés, from the memoirs of Germans who held office under Hitler, and from foreign correspondents and diplomats who lived in Berlin until 1939.
This book aims to be much more than a stark compilation of political jokes. They make sense only in their contemporary political setting, and are

for that reason constantly interwoven with the very words of prominent Nazis and with my comments on them. Only in this way may one hope that these jokes, witticisms and anecdotes will stand out in their full clarity as a *historical source of the first importance*. They should transport the reader right back into the vanished world of half a century ago, and thus reveal some of the spirit of the age, entirely undistorted by hindsight. Outside Germany itself this precious *primary material* does not seem to have impinged on public awareness to any significant extent, and the present book is a modest attempt to redress the balance.

The cartoons are there to provide extra punch. With one or two exceptions, they are—like the jokes—from contemporary German sources. They bear only brief captions, as the jokes are self-explanatory.

To sum up, contemporary political satire provides some relatively unexpected insights into the attitudes of ordinary Germans disenchanted with the régime. In fairness, more than that cannot be claimed for this account of underground humour as the mouthpiece of a passive opposition, the only alternative to the heroic active resistance of the few.

As better people than I have discovered, the Third Reich is not an easy phenomenon to explain. My point of view is simply that of one who was there and lived in the world which produced these jokes. I laughed at them too, while taking care not to criticize the régime in public, and thus I lived to tell the tale.

Page 1

**1**

## REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OLD ORDER

### PRESIDENT VON HINDENBURG

In 1932, the last year of the Weimar Republic, political jokes began to circulate at an ever-increasing rate. Many centred on the President. In office since 1925, he stood for re-election in March 1932 and on that occasion just failed to get the absolute majority required by the constitution; a month later a second election resulted in an absolute majority for the old President. Hindenburg was then nearly eighty-five years old. By the majority of German moderates he was remembered from the war as a venerable father-figure,1 but by some merely as a man of average ability inexplicably elevated to mythological greatness,2 or as less a man than a national monument,3 or even, in stark contrast to both these images, as a 'Zero paving the way for Nero.'4

2 Hitler—a German fate

Page 2

3 Potsdam, 21 March 1933
The President's frequently vacillating attitude as Head of State during that turbulent year showed his age.5 Despite the now diminishing periods of mental lucidity,6 which became embarrassing toward the end,7 Hindenburg retained his distrust of 'that Bohemian corporal'8 for a very long time. As late as 26 January 1933—only four days before he appointed Hitler Reich Chancellor—Hindenburg declared that he would not think of such a possibility.9 According to another source the President is reputed to have said, 'He can at best be made Postmaster General, then he can...my backside on the stamps!'10
It may well be that most of the jokes about the President's senility originated in Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda, and might have been inspired by Hitler's vindictiveness. When Hitler came to power, what Hindenburg thought of him can hardly have remained a secret to him.
Soon after 30 January 1933 (the day of Hitler's appointment as Reich Chancellor), the following story circulated in Berlin:
[1] On the balcony of his palace the old President is watching the seemingly endless columns of Stormtroopers in their brown shirts marching past carrying their torchlights. Hindenburg, confusing this scene in his memory with his famous victory over Russia in 1914,11 asks his Secretary of State, 'Meissner, is there no end to these Russian POWs?'12
Hindenburg eventually submitted to repeated demands by his immediate entourage13 to sign the document which effected Hitler's chancellorship. This may be the background reflected in the following two jokes:
[2] A lady is waiting in the anteroom for an interview with the President. Before going in, she is about to unwrap a bunch of flowers she has brought along, when Secretary

of State Meissner warns her, 'Please don't leave any paper lying about here, Madam; the old gentleman might sign it otherwise!'
[3] The Wilhelmstrasse14 has to be swept several times a day in order to prevent Hindenburg from signing any wastepaper lying about.
Even nastier:
[4] The Wilhelmstrasse is closed for traffic every morning from eight to nine in order to enable Hindenburg to have some exercise; he enjoys spinning a top without being endangered by traffic.
[5] Hitler has an audience with the old President. After he has left, Hindenburg asks his Secretary of State, 'Tell me, Meissner, how long has Brüning been wearing a moustache?'15
[6] Which is the smallest concentration camp in Germany? Neudeck. It has only one prisoner: Hindenburg.16
This list of jokes about Hindenburg may best be concluded by relating an event which, though it may seem hardly credible, is nevertheless historically correct. When Hindenburg died on 2 August 1934, Hitler seized his chance to use the state funeral to promote his own Nordic fantasies. He gave the official farewell, which was broadcast, with these words: 'And now, old warrior, depart on your journey to Valhalla!'17
And so the funeral of Germany's grand old man, a life-long practising Christian, took place to the musical accompaniment of an orchestra playing Wagner's 'Twilight of the Gods.'18

**SECRETARY OF STATE DR MEISSNER**

Dr Hans Otto Meissner (1880–1953) was the Head of the Presidential Chancellory under Ebert, von Hindenburg and eventually also under Hitler. Together with von Papen he was instrumental in bringing about the appointment of Hitler as Reich Chancellor.19 Although Meissner maintained his influential position as confidant of the aged President he did not attempt to enforce any restrictions on the new masters of Germany during the street excesses of the Stormtroopers in the early weeks of 1933.20 During the war Meissner was critical of Ribbentrop21 and also, in retrospect, of Hitler's spellbinding effect on Oscar von Hindenburg, the President's son and adjutant.22 Meissner was considered by contemporaries alternatively as a careerist23 or as the typical non-political senior civil servant.24 His 'longevity' as the servant of three régimes so utterly dissimilar to each other is reflected in these jokes:
[7] Meissner, the political quick-change artiste, is also known as the Chameleon.25
[8] Although the world has been submerged by another flood, much more devastating than Noah's, someone did survive—Dr Meissner, on the top of the Himalayas.26

Page 4

**VON PAPEN**

Franz von Papen (1879–1969) became the penultimate Reich Chancellor of the Weimar Republic when he succeeded Brüning in June 1932. General Kurt von Schleicher, who succeeded von Papen on 2 December 1932, had been responsible for von Papen's appointment as he had for Brüning's before him, in 1930.27 As the man behind the throne, the General became known, not inappropriately, as the 'field-grey eminence',28 and by the Nazis as 'primo de Schleicheros',29 because they suspected him of playing with the idea of a *coup d'état*.

As the new Reich Chancellor, von Papen soon won the old President's confidence, and before long this confidence developed into a close friendship. Von Hindenburg approved of von Papen's 'cabinet of barons',30 which was to include General von Schleicher as Minister of Defence.

Von Papen's aristocratic background, his excellent horsemanship,31 his military service in an exclusive cavalry regiment before the war,32 and his connections with industry and the Catholic Church33 were all assets for his high office. On the debit side there was his character itself34 and certain aspects of his former diplomatic career35 and these factors caused widespread incredulity that the President should have chosen von Papen as Reich Chancellor.36 After the crushing defeat of von Papen's government in the *Reichstag*37 even von Hindenburg's authority could not have prevented the fall of the 'cabinet of barons'. Yet, when General von Schleicher succeeded von Papen as Reich Chancellor on 2 December 1932 he only managed to hold office for fifty-seven

4 Franz von Papen

days.38 Following this short interregnum von Papen was instrumental in bringing about Hitler's legal appointment as Reich Chancellor on 30 January 1933. Von Papen mistakenly believed that he could keep Hitler under his personal control39 by serving under him as Vice-Chancellor with the support of a majority of conservative Ministers in the new cabinet. However, before long he was himself, in company with the other conservative Ministers, dismissed by Hitler. Nevertheless, von Papen continued to serve Hitler: first in 1933 as envoy to the Vatican,40 then from 1934–8 as Minister in Vienna, and finally from 1939–44 as ambassador to Turkey.
Many of von Papen's political activities remained unknown to the wider public, which may account for the paucity of jokes about him. Nevertheless, a few satirical quips do survive, and these throw some light on this still shadowy and controversial figure.
[9] The cabinet of von Papen called itself a 'government of national concentration', but it might as well have been called a 'government of national consternation'.41
[10] Historically speaking, von Papen acted as the midwife at the birth of the Third Reich.42
[11] General von Schleicher had been warned beforehand about his choice of von Papen as Chancellor in June 1932, to which he is said to have replied, 'I don't need a head, I need a hat.'43
[12] The fact that von Papen, contrary to Schleicher's low opinion of his potential as

5 1932: the New Year

Chancellor, seemed to assume the stature of something like a statesman after taking office showed the General's error of judgement. As he himself admitted, 'Would you have thought it possible—our Francis has discovered himself!'44

[13] What is the difference between Bismarck, Hitler, Goebbels and Papen? Bismarck said what he believed, Hitler believed what he said, Goebbels did not believe what he said, and Papen did not say what he believed.45

**SCHACHT**

Dr Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht (1877–1970), President of the Reichsbank from 1923–30, had managed to stabilize the German currency in 1923. Reappointed in 1933 to his former post, he served in that capacity and also as Minister of Economics until 1937.46 At first he was a fervent admirer of Hitler, and indeed from 1931 he was the Führer's financial adviser. Nevertheless, Schacht came to realize the adverse effect of 'Aryanization'47 on the German economy, and did what he could to stem the tide. His international standing was considerable, and even after his dismissal by Hitler Schacht tried to further Jewish emigration from Nazi Germany.48 By 1938 Schacht seems to have become convinced of the criminal element in Germany's new rulers,49 and soon afterwards he became involved in plans to remove Hitler.50 This led in 1944, after the failed attempt on Hitler's life, to Schacht's arrest and imprisonment in a concentration camp.51 At the Nuremberg trial in 1946 Schacht was, like von Papen, acquitted by the Allied Court, but was later imprisoned following a trial by a German denazification court.52

Jokes about Sacht are few and far between. As one might expect, they refer to his marked thriftiness and his financial wizardry.

[14] 'Did you know that Göring, Goebbels and Schacht recently went to a restaurant on the *Ku-Damm*53 and that nobody recognized them?'

'Oh, really! How was that possible?'

'Well, Göring was not in uniform and had left all his decorations at home, Goebbels didn't say a word all evening, and Schacht paid their bill!'54

[15] Schacht invites Hitler, Göring, Hess and Goebbels for lunch in a restaurant. He makes a bet with them to the effect that each of them can choose a meal to cost less than 13 marks, and that he will manage the total bill with a 20 mark note, which is all he has in his wallet.

This is how he managed to win his bet, and this is the account written down by him:55

| | |
|---|---|
| Hitler | 1/3 mark |
| Göring | 1/3 ″ |
| Goebbels | 1/3 ″ |
| Hess | 1/3 ″ |
| Schacht | 1/3 ″ |

5+15=20 marks

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**2**
**HITLER**
Hitler is unique in world history, alike among the despots of his own time and of the past. Indeed, one has to go far back into antiquity to find anyone obsessed with such a pathological drive towards destruction and notoriety.1
However, Hitler is of course quite without equal in his effect on the fate of millions in Germany and abroad. He was the main protagonist in a drama which engulfed the majority of developed nations in a worldwide war, resulted in the map of Europe being completely redrawn and ushered in many more years of human suffering on a gigantic scale.
The outstanding aspects of his personality were his egocentricity and megalomania. These were, however, masked to a remarkable degree by his mesmeric genius which bewitched the German masses. Likewise, his masterly play-acting time and again duped the representatives of foreign powers.
Like many other autocrats, Hitler came from the periphery of the country he

6 The Third Reich in caricature

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7 Hitler the saviour
was to dominate.2 His Austrian background, behaviour and accent as well as the obscurity and hint of disgrace which surrounded his origins3 were amply reflected in contemporary humour and satire. Similarly, his appearance, his tastes, his cruelty, and his megalomania were the butts of many a joke. Finally, Hitler's close associates from his early days as a politician—men who later formed his 'inner circle'—were ready targets for satirists; indeed they revealed much of the man himself.4 Contemporaneous satire about Hitler concentrated on the following aspects of the man: his background, appearance, path to power, personal traits, 'universal genius' and his decline.

**BACKGROUND**

In Goethe's *The Awakening of Epimenides*5 one can detect an almost prophetic allusion to Hitler's origin, life and end:

[1] Boldly from the depths he's
sprung
By brazen fate endowed with fame;
World-Conqueror—yet he'll be flung
Eventually from where he came.
In that great anguish now he might
Try to resist; but he will fail,
And thus will perish in that fight
All who once followed in his trail.

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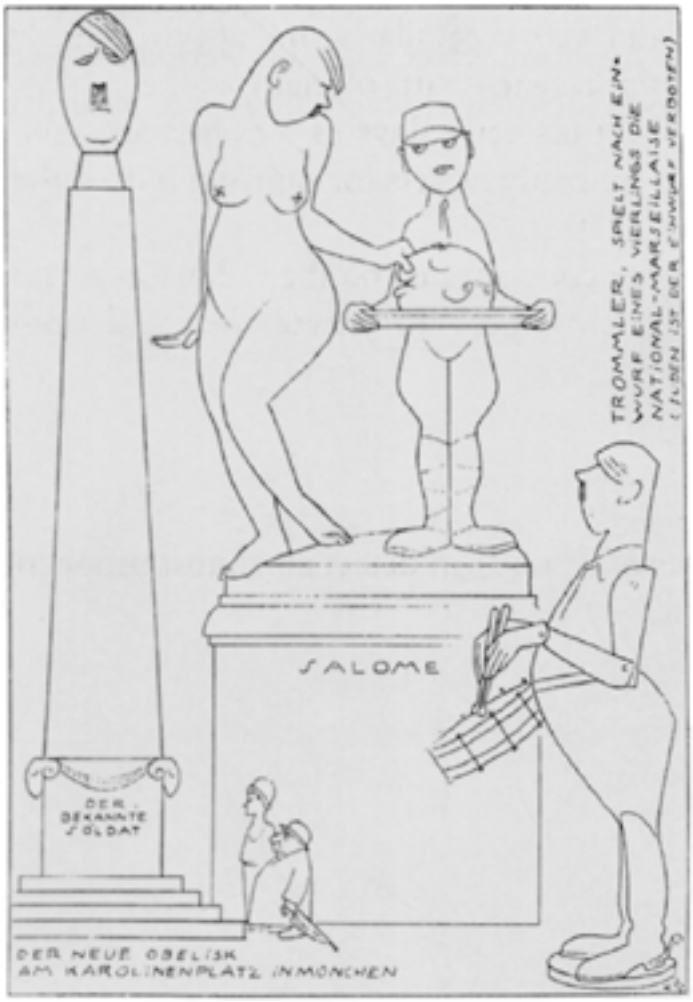
8 The man from Munich




9 Let us build monuments

[2] In his early days in Munich Hitler was sometimes referred to by his admirers as 'the King of Munich', but his opponents dubbed him 'Proletheus unbound'.6
Inevitably, his former career as a painter of sorts became a favourite target:
[3] 'When will the Austrian government move into their new office buildings?'
'Not before the paper-hanger is finished.'
The first meeting between Hitler and Mussolini in 1937 was said to have not been a great success.
[4] When Hitler addresses his fellow fascist as 'dear colleague' Mussolini replies, 'Why colleague? I was once a bricklayer, and I have built up a new Italy. You were once a paper-hanger,7 yet it seems to me that what you have achieved so far doesn't amount to much, despite all your whitewash!'
[5] When in 1944 Churchill toured the Empire he also visited the island of St Helena. When he was shown the house which Napoleon had occupied during his exile, he remarked, 'Fair enough, though it could do with some new wallpaper. Well, he can do that himself!'

**HITLER'S APPEARANCE**

Foremost in contemporary comment, satire and caricature were Hitler's Charlie Chaplin moustache and the Napoleonic forelock.8 His blue, glassy eyes—'the strongest part of his face'9—were variously described as small,10 mournful, 'like raisins'11 glazed and hypnotic.12
It can only have been due to this hypnotic effect that the German masses who fell under his spell could convince themselves when looking at him that

10 Hail Prussian!

11 Hitler: a favourite pose

Hitler was a true representative of the 'master race' he promulgated to his audiences: blond, with 'Nordic' forehead and noble countenance.13

In contrast, those who were unbiased saw him as a 'racially poor type', typically un-Nordic, indeed Slavic in appearance with his low receding forehead,14 dark hair, high cheekbones, and 'unbeautiful' nose.15 Hitler's physique has been described as ignoble,16 insignificant,17 with a disagreeable facial expression; to some, he looked altogether undistinguished. 'You would never notice him in a crowd, and you would take him for the house painter he once was';18 or, even more cutting: 'The commonest little dog I have ever seen.'19

In contrast to the early appearance of critical comments by contemporaries about Hitler's physical characteristics, it took some time before the 'vox populi' seized on Hitler's *mouche*20 and latter-day Napoleonic forelock as subjects of ridicule. By then the negative aspects of the Führer's rule had become obvious to many, as can be seen in these jokes:

[6] The ideal German should be:
As blond as Hitler,
As tall as Goebbels,
As slim as Göring,
And as chaste as
Röhm.

12 Adolf the head-hunter

[7] According to an old German belief the country's fortune has for centuries depended on the quality of the beards of its rulers. Thus old Emperor Barbarossa in his legendary retreat21 would stroke his long beard with the words: '*Long* live Germany!' His more recent successor, Emperor William II, proud of his splendid moustache, would plume it and say, '*High* may the glory of Germany rise!' Then came Adolf Hitler. When he had finished ruling Germany in 1945 he picked at one or two of the sparse bristles on his upper lip and said, 'Short and small!'22

[8] Hitler once visited his barber who tried in vain to straighten the Führer's forelock. After a while Hitler remarked, 'I know my hair is rather difficult to straighten', to which the barber replied, 'If I may suggest a remedy, my Führer? Give the German press its freedom, and you will get some hair-raising news about yourself!'

Hitler's favourite pose when standing on a dais reviewing units of Nazis or soldiers marching past—clasping his hands just below his belt—lent credence to the varying rumours about his peculiar sex life:

[9] Q. 'Why does Hitler always hold his hands on his lower stomach just below the belt of his uniform?'
A. 'Because he wants to protect the last unemployed.'23

[10] New film programme for the week beginning 30th June 1934: 'Thus ended a great love' (Main star: Adolf Hitler).24

[11] The Führer wifeless,
The butcher meatless,
The baker doughless,
The Third Reich
hopeless.25

**HIS PATH TO POWER**

Hitler's early debut as a ranting demagogue is well described in the famous quip:26
[12] 'The man doesn't exist; he's only the noise he makes.'
[13] What is paradoxical?
An Austrian with an American uniform who has Soviet ideas, salutes like the Italian fascists and becomes Chancellor of the German Reich.
[14] Originality:
The Duce brings the uniform and all that Roman pose,
Marx urges, 'Let's collectivize,' while levelling downward
goes,
'Ends always justify the means': the principle of Jesuits,
And Machiavelli's ruling style so well the Third Reich fits;
If thus one cannot separate cause from effect at all,
Where in the whole of Adolf's State is aught original?27
[15] At their first meeting Hitler gives Mussolini the fascist salute with the words: 'Ave Imperator!'28 to which Mussolini replies, 'Ave Imitator!'
[16] A contemporary definition of Hitler's despotism stems from a German emigrant:29 'What does Hitler represent? He is the personification of the mob which has familiarized itself with Nietzsche's writings; a cheap edition of Mussolenin; brutality acquired by imitation.'
[17] In Vienna, in 1938, before the Anschluss, a German Nazi and a Viennese converse: 'Hitler is God's gift to us,' says the German. 'Oh, that Hitler,' replies the Austrian, '*we* have set him on you as our revenge for Sadova!'30
[18] A few weeks later, also in Vienna, but after the Anschluss, a Viennese meets a friend and asks him: 'Tell me, do I really resemble that fellow Hitler all that much?'
'Why do you think so?' replies his friend.
'Because everybody I meet says "Heil Hitler" to me.'
[19] At the Dutch frontier before the war, a Dutch and a German customs officer discuss the merits of their respective countries: The German: 'We have Hitler, and we are satisfied with him.' The Dutchman: 'And we've got your William, but we've also got plenty of pork, butter, milk and eggs, though I'm afraid that we may be getting your Hitler as well!'31
[20] Hitler visits a town and is welcomed by the people. A little girl is about to present the Führer with a bunch of flowers, but in her excitement she stumbles. Hitler prevents

her from falling by steadying her with both arms. Then he mutters a few words, and the reporters clustering around ask the little girl what he had said. She replies, 'Quick, Hoffmann, a picture!'32
[21] When, shortly before the war, Hitler visits Mussolini, the programme includes a visit to the Sybil of Cumae. Hitler asks the ancient lady, 'What will happen to me on my return from the war I am going to wage within the next few weeks?' The Sybil replies, in classical Latin, 'Ibis redibis non morieris in bello.' Hitler, a great believer in prophecies but not a linguist, then asks one of his entourage who assures him that the oracle has a favourable meaning. Before leaving, a confidently smiling Hitler is stopped by the Sybil, who hands him a piece of paper and says warningly, 'Don't overlook the punctuation of the oracle.' This was the text: 'Ibis, redibis non, morieris in bello.'33
Several jokes deal with Hitler's aggressive foreign policy towards other neighbouring countries, especially the smaller ones:
[22] Chamberlain, Mussolini, and Hitler discuss the best way to catch fish. Chamberlain does it the orthodox way, and after two hours of angling he has caught a few fish. Next it is Mussolini's turn. He jumps into the pond and catches one fat pike. Then Adolf orders the pond to be completely drained. All the fish now lie on the dry bottom of the pond and both Chamberlain and Mussolini say to Hitler, 'Well, go ahead and pick up all these fish!', to which Hitler replies, 'They must first beg me if they want me to pick them up.'34
After Hitler subjugated Czechoslovakia he made the country a protectorate of the Reich, with Baron von Neurath as its Reich Protector.
[23] Not long after this event von Neurath asks Hacha, the former Czech President, to make suitable arrangements for the forthcoming visit of Dr Goebbels, a request with

13 The hated swastika

which Hacha reluctantly complies. A week later Göring announces his own forthcoming visit to Prague, and again Hacha has to make sure that the people of Prague show the enthusiasm expected of them. Then, and only a few days later, a visit from the Führer himself is announced. Hacha is summoned again, but this time he demurs. 'Impossible,' he says to von Neurath. 'Twice I have told the people of Prague that Beneš35 will return, but they won't believe me a third time!'
[24] In April 1939 the following joke circulated:
Q. 'What is the difference between Chamberlain and Hitler?'
A. 'Chamberlain takes his weekends in the country, but Hitler takes whole countries in a weekend.'36
[25] Q. 'Why are the new frontier posts in the Third Reich now equipped with wheels?'
A. 'In order to facilitate Hitler's new territorial demands in continental Europe.'

**PERSONAL TRAITS**

The private life of Hitler was kept a close secret, especially after he had become Chancellor. The little which became public knowledge is therefore reflected in only a few jokes.
Hitler was a gambler by nature and was known to be superstitious.37
[26] Hitler has a strange dream, so he consults a soothsayer: 'I stood in a meadow in

14 The dangers of Munich Beer

which there were three cows, a fat one, a lean one, and a blind one. Tell me, what does my dream convey?'
The soothsayer replies, 'The fat cow is Marshal Göring, the lean cow is Dr Goebbels, and the blind one yourself, my Führer.'38.
Hitler's suspicious, superstitious and vindictive39 nature moved him to order a general purge of German astrologers later on in the war, as he accused them of being responsible for the defection of Hess.40
An amusing story about Hitler's teetotalism comes from Baron von Weizsäcker, Secretary of State in the Foreign Office. This was his comment
[27] after a taste of the beer specially brewed for Hitler: 'Anyone who can enjoy this concoction must be in league with the Evil One!'41
Hitler's sweet tooth and his predominantly vegetarian diet, combined with his disdain towards 'meat-eaters' in his entourage, may to some extent have been connected with an almost hypochondriacal concern about his health.42
In 1935 Hitler fell under the spell of a certain Dr Morell who became his personal physician and soon a member of the 'inner circle'.43 Because of the
[28] very frequent injections which the doctor administered to his exalted patient, Göring once deeply offended Morell by addressing him as 'Herr Reich Injection Master'.44
Hitler was unable to make human contacts in an ordinary way even with the men of his inner circle45 and especially with women.46 This failure may also explain his lack of humour.47 He was a superb dissembler and thus had a wide scale of emotions at his fingertips, such as excitement, moral indignation, emotional sympathy, simplicity of mind, compassion or reverence—all these he could simulate as the occasion required. 'You must get Hitler to come along and weep' was an early suggestion of the Führer's potential.48 Hitler himself was well aware of this ability; he once said, with cynical glee, 'I am Europe's greatest actor'.49 It will, however, remain debatable whether his reported outbursts of temper were genuine,50 as will the possibility that the worst of them were modelled by a history-conscious Hitler on a rather distant historical example.51
[29] The new Reich Chancellery has been completed and Hitler wants to select the carpets himself. He does so at the best store in Berlin. The saleswoman asks him, 'My Führer, shall I have it sent straight to the Chancellery, or would you like a little snack of it right now?'

**'UNIVERSAL GENIUS'**

Hitler's hypnotic persuasiveness and his personal magnetism52 were major factors in many of his successes. His superb gift for play-acting53 often paid dividends in his cliff-hanging foreign policy. Not surprisingly his belief in himself as a strategist, encouraged by a few of his more senior generals,54 developed into megalomania.

15 Hitler, the National Marxist
Thus Sir Nevile Henderson, the last British Ambassador to the Third Reich, thought that Hitler 'possibly saw himself as a sort of Mahomet with a sword in one hand and *Mein Kampf* in the other.'55
This example of megalomania comes, so to speak, straight from the horse's
[30] mouth: 'The alternative to me becoming an architect is to be the master-builder of the Third Reich.'
Quite a few jokes about Hitler's megalomania were in circulation:
[31] Hitler and Mussolini discuss whether Berlin or Rome should be the world capital after the war. As there is no agreement between them Mussolini says, 'None other than the Almighty has declared Rome to be the "Eternal City"—therefore Rome should be the world capital.' To this Hitler replies, 'When did I say that?'
[32] The song 'Wir fahren gegen Engelland'56 had to be altered after 'Operation Sealion' was abandoned. Being a great musician, Hitler transformed the song into his 'Unfinished Symphony'.
[33] A teacher has acquired a globe for his geography lessons. He explains the various countries to his pupils—red for the British Empire, green for Russia, purple for the USA. Then a boy interrupts and asks, 'Sir, what does the small blue dot represent?'
The teacher replies, 'That is Greater Germany.'
'Really!' exclaims the boy, 'but does the Führer know that it is that small?'
[34] Early in the summer of 1939 an imaginary speech by Adolf circulated:

Having today been offered the crown of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which I have accepted, I have promoted the *Pgs*.57 Göring to World Marshal, Himmler to Marshal of the Underworld, Goebbels to Marshal of the *demi-monde,* and Rosenberg to Pope.58
[35] After the war has been going on for ten years Hitler makes a speech in which he informs the German people of his conquests: 'As Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, Spain, France, Belgium, Holland and Great Britain have surrendered to Germany—I have no more territorial demands in Europe.'
[36] It is 1944, and food supplies are low in Germany, especially in the cities, so Hitler, Göring and Goebbels embark on a scrounging59 tour of the countryside in the hope of getting some food supplies unobtainable in Berlin. Unfortunately their driver runs over the dog at the entrance to a big farm. Hitler and Göring are quite put out, but Goebbels volunteers to settle the problem, goes into the farm house and returns with a huge ham and other goodies. When asked by the incredulous Hitler and Göring to explain this, he says. 'It was quite simple. I went in and said, "Heil Hitler! The dog is dead!"'
**HIS DECLINE**
The virtual deification of Hitler, which in the end reached alarming proportions, was reflected in increasingly bitter jokes:
[37] One day Hitler orders Göring to take him in a rowing-boat to a lonely stretch of the coast. After Göring has rowed some distance, Hitler asks him whether they can still be seen from the shore. Göring replies in the negative. At this point Adolf gets out of the boat, and promptly sinks, being pulled to safety just in time by Göring. Hitler splutters, 'Now I know for sure that the Other Fellow didn't manage it either!'
[38] After the flight of Hess to Scotland this ditty circulated in Berlin:
What made my day so gay and bright?
It was the dream I had last night:
Some heavenly music touched my
ears,
Made me forget all earthly fears;
For I saw Hitler, stuffed, on show
In London at Madame Tussauds.60
[39] The story goes that after the attempt on Hitler's life in November 1939,61 which was unsuccessful because he left shortly before the bomb exploded, somebody left a piece of paper close in the place where Hitler usually sat. It read: 'This was meant for the alas, too early departed.'
[40] In 1944, after von Strauffenberg's failed attempt on Hitler's life, many Germans replaced the usual 'Heil Hitler' salute with: 'What a pity.'
[41] Weiss-Ferdl, the well-known Munich compère,62 is presented by Hitler with his signed photograph. The next day Weiss-Ferdl tells his audience in 'Platzl'63 about it and muses: 'What shall I do with it? Shall I put him in the corner or shall I hang him?'

[42] In 1933, Goebbels had produced this slogan:
'Führer, lead us, we'll follow!'
In 1939, at the outbreak of the war, this changed to:
'Führer, now we have to follow you.'
In 1945, after Hitler's suicide, the slogan changed again:
'Because we followed the Führer we have to bear what followed.'
[43] Hitler was, as is well known, the greatest artist of all time. Unfortunately he was prevented, because of his premature demise by suicide, from designing the greatest monument of all ages: that of 'The Unknown Fully Contented Man.'
[44] On Hitler's tombstone is this inscription:
'My final territorial demands.'
[45] After his death Hitler meets Frederick the Great, whom he had so often tried to copy when still alive. 'I have always tried to follow your principles, Your Majesty, but the Germans were too stupid for my genius, so I failed!'
'Well, well,' is Frederick's reply, 'I always maintained in my realm that everybody could live according to his own *façon,* and they were all happy. With you it was different. (I presume you weren't so hot on spelling.) You used *SS* instead of my way of spelling "fashion" (with cedilla)—and that's what the Germans didn't like.'
[46] By mistake Hitler gets admitted to Heaven. When Adolf sees the Almighty he salutes him thus:
'Heil Hitler, lieber Gott!' to which he gets this reply:
'Grüss Gott, lieber Hitler!'64
[47] As soon as he gets into Heaven Hitler makes a nuisance of himself. In particular he objects to the appearance of a young man who is most reverently treated by everybody. An Archangel approaches Hitler and tells him, 'Watch your step—he's the Son of the Boss!'
[48] When the spirits of Roosevelt and Churchill arrive in Heaven, the Almighty gets up from his throne and invites them to sit on either side of him. When Hitler approaches, the Almighty takes no notice of him. When St Peter asks God for the reason, he is told: 'I don't dare to get up from the throne. Hitler is quite capable of sitting down there himself—he was always so used to playing God Almighty!'
[49] However, after a while Hitler gets bored with hymn-singing and asks St Peter to take him to the celestial library. St Peter shows him the way, and when he returns later on, he finds that Adolf had taken most of the books off the shelves. Adolf asks the Saint, 'Where is *Mein Kampf*?' and gets the answer, 'Oh, that one? Well, after reading your autobiography we decided it had best be put where we keep the fairytales—in the furthest corner of our attic!'

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**3**

## OTHER PERSONALITIES OF THE THIRD REICH

### GÖRING

Hermann Wilhelm Göring (1893–1946) joined the Nazi movement in 1921. Among the motley band of Hitler's early followers Göring stood out by virtue of his aristocratic background1 and 'ruling class' personality. He was well aware of this and used it to distance himself from other early Nazis close to Hitler, most of whom were of obscure or petty bourgeois origin. By his own account Göring followed Hitler because he was 'a revolutionary and not motivated by any ideological nonsense'.2 It was therefore very much in character that Göring should have become the first commander of the Stormtroopers, and—immediately after the Nazi takeover—the creator of the concentration camps.

'A typical and brutal buccaneer' is a contemporary description of the man;3 Göring's passion for hunting illustrates this aspect of his character and on one

16 We make history

occasion earned him a rather well-turned insult. He had been invited to dinner at the British Embassy, and apologized for arriving late because he had been out hunting. On hearing this his host, Sir Eric Phipps, quipped, 'Animals, I hope.'4 Incidentally, Göring's game laws were a model for the protection and improvement of animal life, and his measures included the introduction of elk, European bison and the near-extinct wild horse on the 100,000 acre estate in the Schorfheide Nature Reserve, which was situated close to his own estate of Karinhall,5 and also on the Darss peninsula on the Baltic.

Göring was of immense propaganda value to Hitler, especially in the early years of the movement, because of his distinguished war record. Later he also became useful through his wide social contacts and *savoir faire*. When Sir Eric Phipps once declared that 'lunching with the Warden of New College, General Göring might pass as almost civilised',6 he was not alone among western politicians. Most of them were willing to distinguish between Göring and other Nazi leaders, and some even had a liking for him as the only real man in Hitler's inner circle.7 Naturally the public did not know him, but they liked him because people like a war hero, especially one as bluff and jovial as 'Unser Hermann', as he was dubbed by Berliners in the very early days of the Third Riech. Göring's other nicknames had rather more edge to them. They tended to focus on his appearance or his vanity, and included 'Fatso' ('der Dicke') and 'Hermann the Magnificent' *('Hermann der Prächtige')*. Others were complimentary, as for example 'Hitler's treuester ("most faithful") paladin', or even 'Scharnhorst8 der Luftwaffe'.

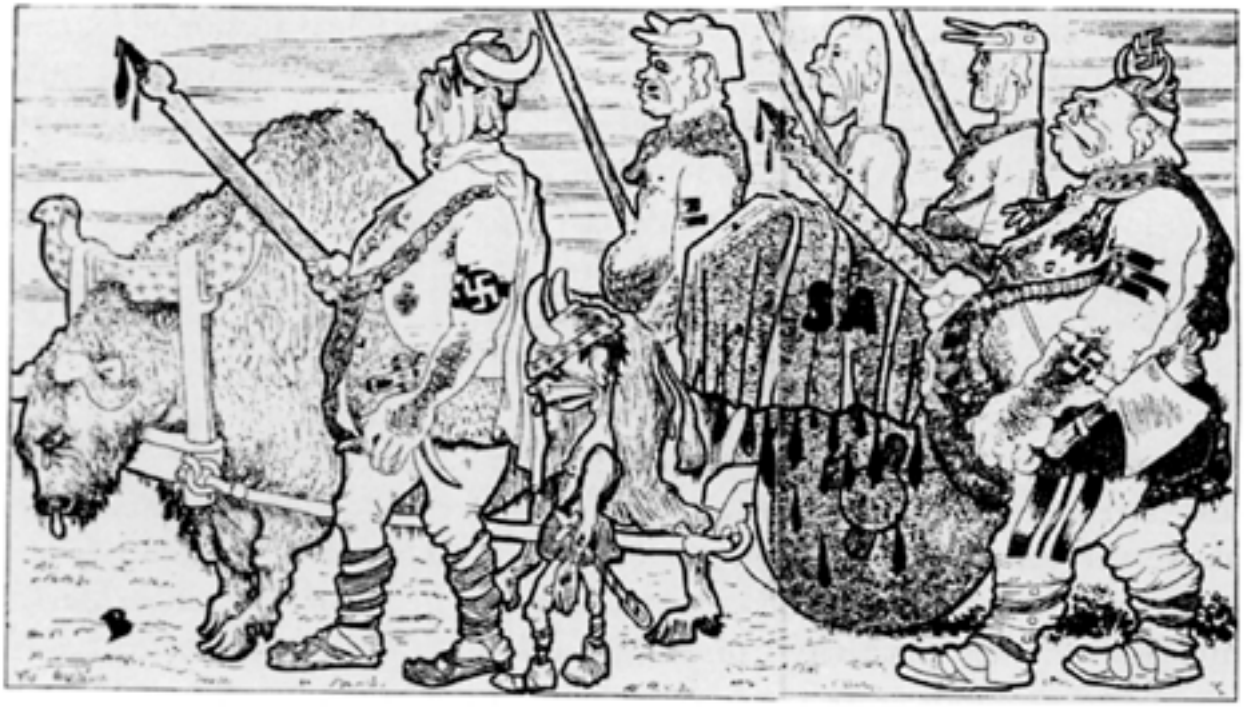
As to Göring's relationship with Hitler, it seems clear that he fell completely under his master's spell and adulated him. Göring was entirely satisfied to be number two in the Nazi hierarchy, and he felt honoured to be referred to as Hitler's *paladin;*9 the term became a cliché to describe his blind devotion to Hitler. This loyalty is reflected in two remarkable statements which Göring made in a speech in 1933: 'What the Führer wishes is law in the absolute sense!' and 'I have no conscience; my conscience is Adolf Hitler.' The mischievous pen of Goebbels described Göring as 'the upright soldier with the heart of a child',10 while his brutality and lack of scruples earned for him the nickname of 'The Iron Man' ('der Eiserne'). These qualities are reflected in a celebrated quip which dates from the time when his power was at its zenith: 'I'm the one who decides who is Aryan!'11

Eventually, of course, it became apparent that the hero of the First World War was a mere mountain of braggadocio,12 and this caused him to lose much of his former power. It was at this stage that Göring found some consolation in his increasingly sybaritic lifestyle. Accordingly he was dubbed 'a scented Nero fiddling while Rome burned',13 and Himmler termed him 'the Black Market Monarch'. His restless pursuit of wealth and *objets d'art*14 became legendary and explains why in 1944 Goebbels called Göring 'more a bourgeois than a revolutionary'. Such contempt had long been general;15 thus some acolytes who

kept him company at Karinhall were nicknamed 'Hermann's Kindergarten' by other air-force officers.16 However, even during the war Hitler tolerated the image of a latter-day *condottiere* which Göring strove to create. This entailed the voluptuousness, vanity, greed and corruption of a bygone age and was worthy of the kind of Renaissance potentate on whom Göring modelled himself.17

Although Hitler eventually deposed, disinherited and cursed Göring, branding him a traitor, the man's loyalty to his Führer never wavered,18 nor did his belief in his place in history. While awaiting his death sentence after the Nuremberg trial, he was still able to say, 'In fifty or sixty years there will be statues of Hermann Göring all over Germany. Maybe they will only be statuettes—but there will be one in every house.'19

Jokes about Göring were among the first to circulate in the Third Reich. To begin with they were invariably good-natured, no doubt because of Göring's early popularity with the people. In contrast to Hitler, who, though an excellent mimic, considered jokes against himself as *lèse majesté,*20 Göring had a good sense of humour. It was even once described as Falstaffian.21 This is apparently borne out by contemporary rumours that Göring collected jokes about himself, and that he paid ten marks for any new joke.22 The vast majority of these jokes ridiculed his mania for decorations and his avid accumulation of more and more new posts. The latter eventually became so numerous that they amounted to a record probably never equalled in history,23 and it has been claimed that the mere enumeration of these posts took about five minutes.24 Jokes about his obesity, his lifestyle and his sexual habits tended to be merely crude; appropriately enough, the bitterest jokes of all were those dealing with his bombast and his empty promises.




17 Faithful Nibelungs

A favourite music-hall song in Berlin early in 1933 contained the following lines:
[1] With his chest dripping
lametta,
Belly getting every fatter,
Prussia's dominance his aim,
Hermann Göring is his name.25
The story is told of how, on the night after the Reichstag had been burned down, the Roman Emperor Nero appeared to Göring in a dream, berating him
[2] as follows: 'You miserable nincompoop! I set the eternal city ablaze and you have managed to set fire to only one miserable building!'26
Another story goes along these lines:
[3] Soon after Hitler has become Reich Chancellor, Göring shows him a new, secretlybuilt aeroplane with four engines. Greatly impressed, Hitler at once gives orders that 10,000 planes of this type are to be built without delay. Thereupon Göring, quite upset, complains, 'For heaven's sake, my Führer, you're not going in for disarmament already, are you?27
At the time of the 1938 crisis the following story, which circulated in Berlin, poked fun at Göring's Air Force:
[4] The English have so many aeroplanes that the sky is black with them; and the French are so numerous that you can't see the sun for them; but when Hermann Göring presses the button, the birds themselves have to walk.
Göring boasted that no enemy aircraft would ever be able to penetrate German airspace. He even vowed that if, against all expectation, this should ever happen, he would change his name to Meier. This boast was not quickly forgotten; innumerable air raids during the war caused the sirens in Germany to be known as 'Meier's hunting horns'.28
[5] The story is told that once during the war Göring had to seek refuge in a private air-raid shelter, which he entered with these words, 'My name is Meier. May I request your kind hospitality here?' If this story is true one may regard this as an example of his sense of humour.
[6] Before the war Göring travelled abroad fairly frequently, and for this reason he was known in England as the 'wandering Aryan'.29 Once, on a visit to Greece, he consulted the Pythia at Delphi as to whether the Third Reich would be on firm ground. The Prophetess replied, 'Nazi Germany is like some ships: she *will* take the ground.'
As Göring was gradually superseded by men like Bormann and Heydrich, he lost esteem in the eyes of Hitler, and with it much of his former power. As noted above, this eclipse caused Göring to retreat more and more often to his country estate and to seek consolation in his hedonistic lifestyle. This resultant intellectual and physical inactivity caused him to gain weight to an extraordinary degree. It was this gross obesity which earned him the satirical nickname, 'bloated maxi-Teuton'.30

[7] Göring pays a visit to his kitchen at Karinhall, his estate in Schorfheide. He notices that the cook, engaged in frying potatoes, is waving a swastika flag over the frying pan. He asks her, 'Why are you doing that?' 'Your Excellency,' replies the cook, 'as I have just run out of fat as well as cooking oil I thought I might try this method; it might just do the trick. So many have got fat under that flag—perhaps the potatoes will get nicely brown and fat too!'
[8] Weiss-Ferdl, the well-known compère in Munich, brings three pigs onto the stage and introduces them: 'Frau Mann, Fräulein Mann and Herr-Mann!' There is much applause, but Weiss-Ferdl is immediately arrested and incarcerated in Dachau concentration camp. On his return, he again brings the three pigs on to the stage, and introduces them: 'Frau Mann, Fräulein Mann, and—because of the fat old pig I've just had three weeks' "holiday" in Dachau!'
[9] Shortly before the war an Englishman visits the nature reserve in the Schorfheide, near Göring's estate of Karinhall. Suddenly he comes across some bearded men clad in bearskins. Back in Berlin, he asks an acquaintance about these men, and is told, 'You know that Göring is having bison and aurochs bred again in the reserve? Well, the men you saw there are Old Teutons, to keep the aurochs company!'31
[10] Göring visits a lunatic asylum. The patients don't seem to take much notice of him, so he asks one of them, 'Do you know who I am? I am Hermann Göring, Minister of the Air Force, President of the Reichstag, Prime Minister of Prussia, President of the State Opera, President of the Supreme Council of the State. I am Marshall...' 'Stop, stop!' shouts a lunatic. 'Get away as quick as you can before they keep you here for good! That's exactly the way it started with me!'32
[11] When visiting another asylum Göring notices that two men standing in the front line of the assembled patients have failed to give the Hitler salute. When he asks them the reason for this omission he is told, 'All these chaps are the crazy ones, but the two of us are the charge nurses.'
[12] The story goes that there is always considerable jealousy among the men of Hitler's 'inner circle' whenever a new post is about to be created. This jealousy is directed especially towards Göring, who always seems to get the job. For this reason he has become known (in addition to all his other titles) as the 'Reich Position Juggler'.33
[13] Charlie Chaplin is annoyed: 'I can't prevent Hitler from copying my moustache, nor can I help it that Goebbels always imitates the way I walk, but it really makes me furious that people laugh more at Göring than at me!'
The vast majority of jokes about Göring, however, poke fun at his vanity, and particularly at his mania for decorations.
[14] St Peter always fears a visit from Göring because when he has been to heaven St Peter is always one star short.
[15] A motorist who has run into Göring's car one dark night is brought before the magistrate and fined for reckless driving. He pleads that it was not his fault but Göring's, who, he said, had forgotten to dim his decorations. The motorist was acquitted.

[16] 'Your Excellency,' reports Göring's adjutant, 'a pipe has burst in the Air Ministry!' Göring, turning to his wife, cries out, 'Emmy, quick! Bring me my admiral's uniform!'
[17] Conversation in the street: 'Have you heard that there is a shortage of white spirit all over Berlin?' 'No, why?' 'Because Göring's uniforms are going to be cleaned.'
[18] Soon after the *Anschluss* a rumour circulates in Vienna to the effect that Pepi, the elephant of the Schönbrunn zoo, will have to be put down. When the Viennese wonder why, the answer comes pat: 'Göring wants to have a pair of *Lederhosen*34 made to measure.'
[19] In 1935 Hitler sends von Papen to the Vatican to win the support of the Pope for the Third Reich. Von Papen returns without having scored any success and Dr Goebbels, the next emissary, achieves only a small contribution for the NSV from the Pontiff. Now it is Göring's turn. Three days after his departure a telegram arrives at the Chancellery: 'Mission accomplished. Pope dead. Vatican in flames. Tiara fits. Your Holy Father.'
[20] When he has to visit a mining area Göring, out of courtesy to the miners, dons his mining uniform.
[21] Göring is walking his dog in one of the main squares of Berlin. A policeman approaches him, salutes, and tentatively asks to be permitted to check the dog's licence badge on his collar. At the last moment he discovers that the badge is on Göring's chest: the eleventh medal on the fourteenth row of decorations. He apologizes profusely.
[22] A military encampment of wooden huts has been pulled down to make way for brick-built barracks. A carpenter is ordered to fashion the surplus wood into a wardrobe for Göring. He cannot complete the order, however; Göring has stipulated that he should make the coat-hangers first.
[23] Travelling through the Teutoburg Forest, Göring notices a huge monument in the distance. When he enquires as to what it represents he is told that it is the Hermann Monument.35 Rather flattered, he says modestly, 'Oh, you needn't have gone to so much trouble for my short visit!'
[24] By 1944 wood for the clothing industry has become very scarce in Germany and it is rumoured in Berlin that the Grünewald will have to be stripped of all its trees in order to supply Göring with a new pair of trousers.
[25] The birthday of Dr Goebbels is being celebrated in style, complete with a birthday serenade by a military band. The bandsman carrying the *Schellenbaum*36 slips on the wide staircase, producing considerable noise. Helga Goebbels, aged four, emerges from the nursery with these words, 'Oh listen! Uncle Hermann has just fallen down the stairs!'
[26] At the State Opera (of which, incidentally, Göring is President) a performance of 'Lohengrin' is taking place. Hitler is having a quick nap when he is suddenly awakened by a loud passage of orchestral music. He looks down at the stage. The knight Lohengrin has just arrived in his gondola drawn by a swan. Turning to Göring, Hitler asks, 'Is that your latest uniform, Hermann?'

[27] Göring is on a visit to the naval base at Kiel. Emmy waits at the quay while Hermann is shown round a frigate. When she sees her husband looking through a porthole Emmy shouts, 'For heaven's sake, Hermann, are you hanging a whole frigate round your neck now, as your latest decoration?'
[28] Göring is going round an armaments factory. Suddenly he disappears, only to be discovered, after a long search, stuck to the ceiling and shouting for help. A giant magnet has pulled him up there because of all the decorations he is wearing.
[29] In 1944, when food supplies, especially in the cities, are becoming increasingly scarce, Göring decides to give the Berliners a treat: he waddles along 'Unter den Linden' in the nude to remind the populace what two sides of ham look like. When it rains he puts on his cellophane uniform.
[30] Tünnes meets Schäl, an old friend he hasn't seen for some time. He learns that Schäl has been in a concentration camp because he has shouted 'Heil Moscow' instead of 'Heil Hitler'. Then Tünnes learns that Schäl has had regular meals in the camp, and that they didn't mind his Communist sympathies all that much. It is 1944 by now, and Tünnes is rather keen to get regular meals—if need be in the concentration camp like his friend. So he goes out into the street shouting 'Heil Moscow', but neither the police nor the Stormtroopers marching past take any notice of him. He therefore decides to travel to Berlin and asks to see Göring whom he promptly greets with 'Heil Moscow'. Göring telephones Emmy: 'Quick, Emmy! My Soviet uniform! It is D-Day!'
[31] A linguistic note: 'During the Third Reich the German language was enriched by the introduction of new terms derived from abbreviations. These included the term *Gör*. A *Gör* was the maximum weight of tin a man could carry on his chest without falling flat on his face.'
[32] Hermann always sleeps with the windows open. He thinks there might always be a chance that the evening star could fall on to his chest!
[33] Göring has had rubber replicas made of his decorations so that he doesn't have to sit unadorned in his bathtub.
[34] After a visit to the famous Meissen china factory Göring is presented by the manager with a magnificent serving dish. He examines it carefully for a long time. When asked whether there is anything wrong with it, he says, 'Oh no, I was only looking for the buckle to fasten it on to my uniform!'
[35] Göring is late for supper. Emmy goes in search of him and eventually finds him walking along the banks of the *Landwebrkanal*.37 'What are you doing here so late in the evening, Hermann?' she asks. 'Well,' replies her husband, 'I have now got almost every available decoration, with the exception of the life-saving medal, and I thought that this was the best time and place to get it!'
[36] Göring's favourite decoration is the *Pour le mérite*. Understandably, therefore, he is rather upset when it is mislaid one day. Eventually his valet has an inspiration and duly finds it on Göring's pyjama jacket!
[37] Göring is grieved that there are two decorations he'll never be able to wear. One is

the Star of David, the yellow badge the Jews have to wear, also known as *Pour le Sémite*.38 The other decoration is the Mother's Cross.
[38] There comes a time when even Göring's enormous chest can no longer accommodate the ever-increasing number of new decorations which come his way. However, he has found a solution. He has had a photo taken of himself in front of a mirror, on the edge of which is placed a notice: 'The other decorations can be seen on the back'.
[39] Eventually the Almighty decides to put a stop to Göring's mania for decorations. So He sends down one of His archangels, who removes all the decorations from Hermann's chest and in their place fastens a label with these words: 'Removed and handed to a scrap-metal dealer'.
By way of epilogue to this theme, it is perhaps worth noting that Göring's mania for decorations is historical fact. In 1939 King Victor Emmanuel III conferred on Ribbentrop, Germany's Foreign Minister, the order of the Annunziata (the highest order of the Kingdom of Italy, which made the bearer a 'Cousin of the King'). Göring had expected this to be his due, as he considered himself to have been the architect of the Axis partnership, and he did not relent from making considerable difficulties for the Italians until he too had received the award together with a personal letter from the King, as was customary.39
Other jokes satirize Göring's acquisitiveness, a habit which later became notorious when he amassed *objets d'art* of all kinds which on his orders had been pilfered from museums and art galleries in the occupied countries and even in Germany itself.
[40] The *Grosse Stern* in Berlin is now under strict observation by the police. This is a purely precautionary measure to prevent the Reich Marshal from appropriating it for his own use. When he visited Trier recently he 'acquired' the Holy Robe!40
[41] Who is the most successful alchemist? Göring. He has managed to extract one billion from 'Grynszpan'!41
The marriage of Göring to Emmy Sonnemann, a former actress, took place with considerable pomp in April 1935. The wedding became known abroad as the *Millionenhochzeit im Eintopfland,* a term which highlighted the contrast with the austerity then expected in Germany which had introduced 'one-dish *(Eintopf)* Sunday meals'. In Germany itself the event became popularly known as 'the Crown-Princely wedding' at a time when Göring was still the first man after Hitler, and thus his official deputy and 'heir apparent'. The lavish spectacle of the wedding led the British Ambassador, Sir Eric Phipps, to remark caustically that 'General Göring would seem to have reached the apogee of his vainglorious career: I see for him and his megalomania no higher goal...unless indeed it be the scaffold.'42
It is interesting to detect in the jokes about Göring and sex that only a couple of years after the *Machtübernahme* (the Nazi takeover) a strain of invective had already become apparent. Göring's bonhomie and his popularity were alike on the wane.

[42] On his wedding night Göring appears in full evening dress. Goebbels asks him, 'Why all this flummery? You're not going to a first night!'
[43] Later, Göring splits his trousers—through strength at the back or joy in front?43
[44] On her wedding night Emmy wakes up and sees her naked husband with his back turned to her performing a weird ritual with his marshal's baton. Challenged by her, he explains, 'I am promoting my underpants to overpants.'
[45] The same night Emmy hopes to experience a *Hermannsschlacht,* but instead has to be content with participating in a *Heldengedenkfeier*.44
[46] After this experience Emmy is justifiably doubtful about the end result. Her friends reassure her that if Hermann will (or can) give her a child it will be 'a triumph of willpower'. On the other hand, she herself (and her husband's enemies) think differently: if Hermann believes that the child on the way is his own, this ought to be described as 'a triumph of faith'.45
[47] Similarly, the compère Werner Finck prognosticates, 'If it's a boy the baby is to be called Hamlet, "Sein oder nicht sein".' In German this famous phrase—'To be or not to be'—can also mean 'His or not his?', and Finck's *double entendre* results in his removal to a concentration camp.
[48] It is during the drive to Paretz46 on the Havel, where the couple are to spend their honeymoon, that Emmy asks Hermann whether he thinks that everything will be all right. Seeing his astonishment at this question, the bride smiles and says, 'Well, I was afraid you might suppress any counter-movement, just as you are always doing in your job!'47
[49] At the Air Ministry the celebrations for the imminent delivery of Emmy Göring (now officially known as 'die Hohe Frau')48 are being discussed. General Milch asks Göring about his wishes:
'Your Excellency, please could you let me know what the plan is if the baby is a girl?'
'One hundred aeroplanes in a fly-past over Berlin will announce her arrival.'
'And if it's a boy?'
'One thousand aeroplanes over Berlin!'
'And in case there is no baby at all?'
'My adjutant is to be court-martialled at once!'49
[50] Hermann is so delighted about the arrival of his daughter that he embraces Emmy. Unfortunately he does so with so much enthusiasm that she has to undergo breast surgery. Why? Hermann has forgotten to remove all the decorations from his uniform first.
[51] People wonder about the name of the little baby. It is to be Edda. Some say that she has been named after Mussolini's daughter Edda, but others suggest that the name is intended to express Emmy's gratitude.50
[52] Despite all military setbacks, Göring remains an optimist. On one occasion it is rumoured that Hermann has gone missing. There is great commotion before he is eventually found in the quadriga on top of the *Brandenburger Tor,* rehearsing the victory parade.51

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[53] The jokes about Göring continued after the fall of the Third Reich. For example, according to rumour, his last words to the International Jury at Nuremberg were these: 'How dare you accuse me of all these horrible crimes! I declared publicly, repeatedly, and many years ago, that my name was Meier!'52

[54] In another story Hitler, Goebbels and Göring have at last been brought to the gallows. Göring turns to Goebbels and remarks, 'I always told you that the issue would finally be settled in the air.'

**GOEBBELS**

[55] Paul Joseph Goebbels (1897–1945) joined the Nazis in 1924, not because of the politics pursued by Hitler, but because he was attracted by the socialist aims of old Party members like the Strasser brothers. At a Party congress in November 1925 at Hanover they tried to launch a new economic programme entailing the expropriation of large estates and the nationalisation of major industries.53 On this occasion Goebbels demanded 'the expulsion from the Nazi Party of the petit-bourgeois Adolf Hitler'.

Goebbels continued to have doubts about Hitler's stand on socialism, though his early impression of Hitler as a spellbinding orator, formed at a

18 Goebbels

Munich rally in June 1922,54 seems to have lingered. Although he still maintained his reservations about Hitler's programme in February 1926 at the Party meeting in Bamberg (when Hitler defeated the ideology of the Strasser faction),55 only a few weeks later Goebbels became a wholehearted convert. On 20 April 1926—Hitler's birthday—Goebbels confided this extraordinary self-
[56] confession to his diary: 'Adolf Hitler, I love you because you are both great and simple—these are the characteristics of genius.'
When a few months later Goebbels publicly dissociated himself from the Strassers Hitler rewarded him by making him *Gauleiter* of Berlin. This was in October 1926.56 The appointment was made despite the hostile attitude toward Goebbels of several prominent Nazis, the *Münchener Bonzen,*57 an antipathy which was cordially reciprocated and was permanent. However, Hitler had no cause to regret having appointed this one-time self-styled 'nationalist Bolshevik'58 *Gauleiter* of Berlin. Chiefly thanks to Goebbels, the city's huge socialist and communist majority had virtually disappeared by 1933. Goebbels had achieved this extraordinary result because of his two principal attributes: powerful oratory and a totally unrestrained pen. With his speeches on the radio, in rallies and on the streets, especially in the poorer districts of the capital, he
[57] attracted the masses. This was because, as he himself stated, 'I can manipulate the psyche of the working class like a pianist his grand piano.'
While his opponents called him 'der Oberbandit von Berlin',59 an epithet
[58] which he regarded as a sort of accolade, he became to his admirers 'the Marat60
[59] of red Berlin' and also a 'Latter-day Pied Piper and a conqueror of souls.'
Occasionally some of Goebbels' speeches would be described less
[60] emotionally and likened to 'a mixture of hydrochloric acid, pepper and vitriol of copper.' Similarly, the journalistic output of Goebbels in his own Berlin daily, aptly named *Der Angriff* ('The Attack'), regularly contained vitriolic sallies against his political opponents. His full qualities as a demagogue eventually became apparent after the *Machtergreifung*. In March 1933 Hitler made Goebbels Minister of the newly-founded Ministry of Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment,61 and it was in this position that he wielded supreme power over the media.
Who, then, was this 'little doctor',62 this slip of a man, so different in looks and mind from the other *Prominente,* this handicapped agitator with a fire in his belly? Of a lower-middle class and strictly Roman Catholic background, a prize pupil at a grammar school, Goebbels gained a Catholic bursary for university entry and took his Ph.D. at Heidelberg when he was only twenty-four years old. His aim of becoming a writer or journalist did not materialize in those years of rising unemployment and rampant inflation. Goebbels' physical handicap—a foot deformity caused by an infection sustained in childhood and not by a congenital club-foot63—resulted in a marked limp. More seriously, it caused perpetual physical frustration and emotional embitterment, a combination of factors which fostered the development of the waspish element in his personality with its consequent

expression in speech and print. The frustrations ruling his life were reflected in his shameless distortions of the truth, in his intraparty intrigues, and in his notorious philandering. On the other hand, and psychologically revealing, was his dependence upon the strongest element in his phantom world—his Führer. In the years to come it was Goebbels, more than any other leading Nazi, who was responsible for the deification of Hitler. For this he had all the facilities at hand—his oratory, his pen, his Ministry of Propaganda and his dominance of the media.

Comments, anecdotes and jokes galore circulated about Goebbels. They concentrated on his club-foot, his short stature, his complexion and his philandering, but above all on his prostitution of the truth in his speeches, broadcasts and writings. Some of these jokes may well have come from his many enemies among *Prominente* of his own Party, though the majority of jokes about Goebbels show that ordinary Germans saw in him an unfamiliar Latin element,64 especially in his propaganda (as many did in certain un-German aspects of Hitler), all of which explains the bitterness of anti-Goebbels jokes and stories.

When in 1933 Goebbels appeared as Hitler's representative before the League of Nations, a newspaper in Geneva produced a caricature of a black-

[61] haired, crippled dwarf accompanied by the caption, 'Who is this? Of course: the representative of the healthy, tall, blond, blue-eyed Nordic race!'

[62] In a barbed reference to propaganda, an entirely unknown phenomenon in Germany before 1933, the *vox populi* now talked of 'Mahatma Propagandi',

[63] and in order to grant Goebbels a place among his fellow Aryans in Hitler's 'inner circle', classified him as an 'unbleached shrunken Teuton'.65 Popular wit

[64] was also responsible for giving Goebbels ranking in a Nazi Valhalla; henceforth he would be known as 'Joseph, Wotan's Mickey Mouse'.66

The short stature of Goebbels gave rise to the following story:

[65] Göring, as Reich Game Warden, likes to take one of his animals for a walk from time to time. One day as he is walking past the Reich Chancellery Hitler looks down from a window and shouts, 'Hermann, are you taking a tortoise for a walk now?' Göring yells back, 'No, my Führer, this isn't a tortoise; it's Goebbels wearing a steel helmet!'

The unimpressive physical appearance of Goebbels is reflected in another story:

[66] Goebbels' parents have been arrested by the SS. On their arrival at the concentration camp, Goebbels' father indignantly complains to the *Gestapo* official, 'This is a horrendous mistake! Don't you realise that we are the parents of Dr Goebbels, Reich Minister of Propaganda?' 'That's exactly why you are here,' replies the official. 'You have produced this miserable little guy and are therefore guilty of *Miesmacherei*!'67

Most of the rumours about the extramarital connections of Goebbels with actresses were products of fantasy. However, there is no doubt about his intimacy with the Czech film star Lida Baarova. It has also been said that his wife was about to divorce him68 when Hitler intervened and had the actress expelled from Germany.69

Shortly before this happened (so it was said) Miss Baarova, about to leave by car for the film studio at Neu-Babelsberg,70 realized that she had forgotten her collapsible umbrella.71 The following scenario ensued:
[67] Miss Baarova calls her maid: 'Do go and bring me my little brolly; I've left it in my bedroom.'
The maid goes back into the house and reappears after a short while, saying, 'I'm sorry, Madam, but the Herr Minister is still in bed!'
[68] It was also true that Gustav Fröhlich, then a popular German film actor, lived with Lida Baarova during the period when she was Goebbels' mistress. When it was subsequently rumoured that Fröhlich had once knocked down Goebbels, Berliners liked this *bon mot:* 'We would all like to be *fröhlich*72 (Fröhlich) once in a while!'73
[69] Much the same spirit can be detected in the oft-quoted lines purporting to be an extract from a speech by Goebbels: 'Before 1933 the career of an actress depended entirely on her granting her favours to her Jewish playwright. This is no longer the case—now it's our turn!' And, in a similar vein, it was rumoured that Goebbels had recently become ennobled for his meritorious services to the film industry. He would henceforth be known as 'Ritter Bock von Babelsberg'.74
[70] As is the case with many legends, truth and fiction are often closely interwoven. And so it was with the oft-repeated but erroneous belief that Goebbels was born with a club-foot. On the other hand, there was nothing legendary about his capacity for telling lies, which became so notorious that Goebbels eventually became known as the 'Reich Master of Lies.'75 His distortions of the truth became so blatant in broadcasts during the war that these were soon satirized as 'Listen with Mother to Club-footsy's fairy-tales'.76
[71] Numerous jokes referred to his excessive talking, which resulted in his mouth getting ever bigger, as in this story:
[72] Dr Goebbels has been made a freeman of the little town of Schwetzingen77 in Baden. Why? He is the only person who can eat asparagus sideways on.
[73] It was repeatedly alleged that Goebbels had interfered with the Constitution of the German Republic. In 1934, immediately after von Hindenburg's death, Hitler united the post of Reich Chancellor with that of President, making himself *Führer und Reichskanzler*. The task of Goebbels as Minister of Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment in this entirely unconstitutional act was to persuade the German people that it had been the late President's last recommendation. However, Goebbels' efforts were unsuccessful as the President's political testament became known as *die Josephslegende*.
The ministry of Propaganda was also responsible for the so-called free elections in the Third Reich. The following true episodes have a bearing on this.
[74] According to Dr Hugo Eckener,78 Goebbels had, at the time of the 1936 election to the *Reichstag,* ordered a publicity stunt. It was arranged that the Zeppelin airship 'Hindenburg' should fly over several German cities. During the flights the passengers

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had the opportunity of voting. The result was forty-two 'yes' votes cast by forty passengers, including the crew.

[75] And at an earlier election to the *Reichstag*—in 1935—the inmates of the large asylum in Berlin-Buch, the majority of whom were *non compos mentis,* were told to vote. The procedure was arranged by one foreman to each section of about eighty patients, the foreman being someone deemed to be less mentally ill than the rest. In this way the customary 99.75 per cent of 'yes' votes was achieved.

The following tale ran along the same lines:

[76] It is 1935. The Berlin police are notified that a burglary has just taken place at Dr Goebbels' house. They search the place and find nothing untoward, but are told that the results of the 1936 election have been stolen.

As mentioned above, Goebbels was an outsider within Hitler's 'inner circle' and a known adversary of Göring and others. After Göring's sumptuous *Millionenhochzeit im Eintopfland* in 1935 Goebbels felt that it was his turn now. This is the report by one of the foreign guests present on that occasion:

[77] In July 1936 a 'Venetian night' was arranged by Dr and Mrs Goebbels in honour of the delegates to the convention of the International Chamber of Commerce. It took place on the *Pfaueninsel,*79 part of which had been converted into a scene from the Arabian Nights.

As we crossed over from the mainland on a pontoon bridge, the path leading to where Dr Goebbels and his wife waited to receive their guests was lined on both sides

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with hundreds of the prettiest girls from Berlin's numerous high schools. All of them were dressed in white silk breeches and blouses, white silk stockings, and white leather slippers; each held a white wand. They bowed as the guests slowly walked several hundred yards to the reception line.

On a beautiful lawn tables had been set for groups of twelve, ten, eight and smaller parties. There were some 3,000 guests, for whom a sumptuous dinner was served, the like of which we had not eaten in Berlin for years, for these were the days of 'Guns before Butter'. Fringing the lawn on one side was the largest bar I have ever seen, with eighty attendants at our service to concoct any drink that might be wanted, or to serve champagne without limit. Every lady guest was presented with a statuette from the Prussian State Porcelain Factory.

Goebbels was in his element in this sort of scenario in 1936, the year of the Olympic Games in Berlin, an event primarily intended to demonstrate Nazi Germany's peaceful aims to foreigners. Although Goebbels himself was not one of the 'hawks'—like his enemies Himmler and von Ribbentrop—his propaganda machine eventually became involved in their policy of war-mongering. Shortly before the war broke out it was said that one of his speeches included this passage:

[78] Treacherous elements in Germany maintain that the German labourer will always remain behind. German labourers, just wait until the Führer begins his war, then you will all be in the front line!

Goebbels had intimated for years that he was a veteran of the First World War, and that he had been wounded in that war. Neither statement was true.80 After war had broken out in 1939 Goebbels created many martial neologisms, like 'total war', 'reprisals', 'miracle weapons' and 'final victory', most of which were in themselves distortions of fact. The evasion of truth in the broadcasts by Goebbels during the war became almost proverbial, as reflected in the following story:

[79] In heaven there is a special strategists' corner. One day Frederick the Great, Napoleon and Hindenburg talk about modern warfare. Frederick: 'If I had had as many aeroplanes as Göring, the Seven Years' War would have been finished in four months!'

Hindenburg, in turn, remarks: 'If I had had as many tanks as Hitler, not a single Russian soldier would have entered East Prussia in 1914!'

Then Napoleon speaks up and says: 'If I had had Dr Goebbels, the French people would never have got to know that I had lost the campaign in Russia!'

By 1944 people in war-torn Germany and elsewhere asked themselves this question:

[80] When will the war be finished?
When Hitler is no longer victorious,
When Göring no longer flies,
and when Goebbels no longer lies.81

Eventually the Third Reich came to its inglorious end, Goebbels committed suicide, and Berlin was occupied by the victorious Allies. Thereupon this story circulated in Berlin:

[81] During the big victory parade of the Allies in the summer of 1945 one of the lids of the Berlin sewer system was suddenly pushed open in the middle of the marching troops. Somebody shouted from below, 'But *we* are the victors!' It was the ghost of Goebbels.

In the period immediately following the collapse of the Third Reich the fantasy of the storytellers produced the following reflections about the fate of Goebbels in the afterlife:

[82] By an oversight of St Peter, Goebbels manages to sneak into Heaven and is permitted to stay. However, as there are only sexless angels and no film stars about, Goebbels gets bored and begs St Peter to let him have a peep through the heavenly telescope to see what's going on in hell. He is delighted with what he sees: busy infernal bar, cocktails galore, semi-nude film stars, and so on. So he leaves, hell-bent, and on arrival is seized by several devils who convey him to the big cauldron where some of his former colleagues, already assembled, are in torment. Goebbels demands to see Satan in person, and he complains that he has been misled by what he has seen through the heavenly telescope. Satan replies, 'All propaganda, Dr Goebbels!'

Another story has it that Goebbels, in company with other notables of his time, gets this infernal punishment:
[83] There is a very deep bog, in the darkest part of the woods, which is being used by Satan, who pushes into it those of his prey who were notorious liers in their lifetimes. When Hitler, Mussolini, Göring and Goebbels get near this bog, Satan first takes hold of Mussolini and pushes him in so deeply that only his bald pate remains visible. Next it is Göring's turn, and he disappears completely, with some fat blobs floating back up on the surface. Yet when Hitler is pushed in he only sinks in up to his belt. Satan, puzzled, asks the grandmother82 to solve the problem, and she says, 'You want to know where Goebbels has got to by now? He is at the very bottom of the bog, and Adolf is standing on Joseph's head.'
[84] These last stories depict the image of Goebbels in the minds of most contemporary Germans as the master-dissembler of Hitler's empire and deeds. Even his valedictory address to his staff, on 21 April 1945 —'When we depart the globe itself will tremble'83—was a hollow prediction, yet true to form.
One can look at the role of Goebbels in the Third Reich as a reversal of the relationship between the sorcerer and his apprentice in the fairy-tale.84 By deification of his master, Goebbels was co-responsible for, if not himself the demonic architect of, the evil actions of the dictator.85 Both their names have since been 'scratched into history' (to use his own phrase)86—like graffiti into a once beautiful but now ruined edifice.

**HESS**

Rudolf Hess (1894–1988) came from a good family;87 born in Egypt of German parents, he lived there until he was in his mid-teens. He served in the First World War, first in an infantry regiment88 and, after having been wounded, as a pilot. Afterwards he took part in the fighting to overthrow the *Räterepublik* established at Munich after the war.89 A little later Hess attended one of the early Nazi meetings, heard and became elated by a speech by Hitler, and joined the Party in 1920. He became Hitler's private secretary in 1923, and after the *Machtübernahme* his deputy in the Party organization. He thus became—after Göring—'number three' in the Nazi hierarchy.
From the start Hitler had inspired boundless admiration in Hess, and the vanity of the dictator was doubtless greatly boosted when he heard that Hess,
[85] then a pupil of the professor of geopolitics at Munich University,90 won a prize for an essay entitled 'How must the man be constituted who will lead Germany back to her old heights?'91 The exaggeratedly idealized image of the coming leader depicted in that essay reveals much of the complete absence of any discrimination in Hess's enthusiasm and is therefore characteristic of the
[86] relationship of Hess with Hitler. As Hess was to say later, 'Adolf Hitler is simply pure reason in human shape.'92
[87] With this adulatory style Hess was well on the way to shaping the

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21 A group of Aryans

*Führerkult,* for which he was responsible, though he was not as effective in its dissemination as was Goebbels. The *Führerkult* had its roots in the submissive personality of Hess, who found fulfilment in his self-appointed role as the most faithful vessel of his idol Hitler. Hitler's attitude, on the other hand, is revealed in the cloying familiarity of 'Ach, mein Rudi, mein Hesserl!'93

Although always referred to as 'der Stellvertreter des Führers',94 Hess

[88] wielded little power. His enemies within Hitler's 'inner circle', who dubbed him spitefully 'the treacherous Egyptian', seem never fully to have realized this. His main position as man-in-charge of Party affairs meant that his office was always thronged with Nazis demanding jobs within the huge Party organization. It

[89] therefore became known as 'The Wailing Wall of the Third Reich'.95 This was a thankless job, like other similar tasks for which Hitler found him useful. Thus it fell to Hess to give the first public apologia for the murders of 30 June 1934.96

[90] However, as Hitler's deputy, and as he happened to be an *Auslandsdeutscher,*97 Hess was chosen for the annual Christmas broadcast to all Germans living beyond the frontiers of the *Reich*. Hess was also privileged to announce the Führer's arrival at the many mass rallies. In his own speeches Hess often used high-falutin phrases98 which, together with his unctuous style of delivery, earned him the nickname 'The Preacher' from his enemies within

the Party. However the origin of the following story of 'The Printer's Error' remains obscure.
[91] Before his flight to Scotland Hess made a speech in Berlin in which he described National Socialism as the 'greatest movement of liberty' in German history. Unfortunately a serious 'printer's error' occurred when the speech was set in type, for Hess's statement appeared in the paper as 'the greatest withdrawal of liberty' in German history, whereupon six members of the technical personnel were incarcerated in a concentration camp.99
Various theories have been advanced as to the motivation for the flight which Hess undertook to Scotland;100 however they do not account for the extraordinary naiveté inherent in this frustrated peace mission. Its timing suggests the realization by Hess that 'Operation Sealion'101 was well and truly finished; and, despite the statement by Hess to his British interrogators that Hitler could destroy the United Kingdom if no agreement could be reached,102 his belief in Hitler's invincibility seems hardly credible in a man who had until his mid-teens lived in a British-dominated environment and must have had some inkling of British determination in war. Thus if one considers the flight of Hess in conjunction with his behaviour during his long incarceration before and after the end of the war the question of his sanity arises pressingly, just as it did after the war.103
At any rate, Hess might be described as the only introvert among his colleagues (and enemies) within Hitler's inner circle. As such he seems to have had little difficulty in convincing himself that he, the only dove among the hawks in Hitler's cabinet, would be the only one from whom an olive branch might be acceptable to the British. It is consistent with this attitude that he should believe that this plan could only succeed if he carried it out alone in utter secrecy.
The belief that Hess cherished in the messianic mission of Hitler as saviour of Germany104 was complemented by his trust in an astrological prediction that he was destined to bring about peace.105 Once this was widely known, it was comparatively easy for Hitler to explain away the flight of his trusted friend and deputy as the act of a madman.106 However the entirely unsuspected flight of Hess confused Hitler and his 'inner circle' and amused the enemy. Thus
[92] Germans who dared to listen to the BBC could hear Churchill's comment, 'It's the worm in the apple.'107
In Germany, on the other hand, it was rumoured that Hess had been brought
[93] before Churchill who had asked him, 'Are you the one who's gone off his head?' To which it was said Hess replied, 'No, I'm only his deputy.'
Hitler's first reaction after he had heard of the flight of Hess—'There are only two possibilities if he comes back: lunatic asylum or execution'108—was commented on by the *vox populi* with this ditty:
[94] They sing all over the
Fatherland,
'Let's have a go at Engelland',

Yet he who gets there is instead
Declared 'completely off his
head!'
Indeed, Hitler even sent von Ribbentrop to Mussolini to inform him of the flight of Hess, 'which could only be explained as the deed of a man who had become insane, following the attentions of magnetists and quacks for trouble with his gall-bladder. They provided herbal nostrums which only made matters worse.'109
This information was true only in so far as Hess believed in, and had even promoted, faith-healing.110 He also trusted in treatment by homoeopathy, magnetism, fortune-telling, so-called earth rays, and in astrology.111 These aspects of the crankiness of Hess were known to Hitler and his men. Moreover, most of them had similar leanings, which, however, did not prevent them from rejoicing in the fall of Hess and ridiculing him for these oddities.112
Given the longstanding unpopularity of Hess with the other leading Nazis it is impossible to determine with certainty the true source of the numerous stories and jokes about his flight to Scotland—whether, that is, they originated from within the Party or from outside it. The following are a few examples:
German
[95] broadcast—'Adolf Hitler's deputy is definitely crazy; he wants to return to
[96] Germany.' This compares with an actual British broadcast—'The deputy of Herr Hitler is the only German who has so far managed to invade Great
[97] Britain.' The topical joke of the month for May 1941 was—'The new title for Hess: "Reich Leader of Emigrants!"'113
The following story is a reminder of how dangerous it then was to speculate about the flight of Hess:
[98] Two friends meet in a concentration camp. One asks the other, 'Why have they brought you here?'
'Because on 5 May I said to someone that Hess was crazy. And why were *you* arrested?'
'Because on 15 May I said that Hess was *not* crazy!'114
The appearance of Hess before the international tribunal at Nuremberg was as pathetic115 as were his seemingly endless years of solitary confinement in the military prison at Berlin-Spandau. There he served his life sentence literally to the end of his life at the age of ninety-four years—decades after the last of his co-defendants had been released.116
[99] Before Hitler committed suicide he said of Hess, 'It was at least possible to leave this memento to history: an idealist of the purest water.'117 This is reflected in Hess's final address to the Nuremberg tribunal:
[100] I have been privileged to serve for many years under the greatest man Germany has produced in her 1000-year history...even if I could I would not want it to have been different...I regret nothing...even if I knew that I would be burned at the stake... eventually I shall have to defend my actions before the Eternal Judge, and I know He will acquit me.118

**HIMMLER**

Like most of Hitler's early followers Heinrich Himmler (1900–45) was a Bavarian, the son of the headmaster of a Munich grammar school. He was one of many ex-servicemen, like Hess, who were engaged in fighting the Lenin-type revolution in the Bavarian capital,119 where it was about to gain a better foothold than in the other German cities. Most of these young men were nationalist fanatics, too young to have experienced any regular employment, or, during the mounting inflation, the possibility of obtaining it. Yet they had also lost their youth during the four years of war which had ended in Germany's utter and humiliating defeat. Many of them either joined *Freikorps*120 or secret societies, most of which championed anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, and often ill-defined standards and aims.121

After a short spell as an agricultural student in his home city, Himmler ran a chicken farm near Munich until his contact with Hitler put him in his subsequent career path as *Reichsführer SS,* Head of Police, *Reichminister des Innern*122 and eventually Commander-in-Chief of the Reserve Army.123 He was ultimately responsible for the running of the concentration camps, for the terror inflicted at home and abroad by his *Gestapo,*124 for the extermination policy in Poland, White Russia and the Ukraine, and eventually for the 'final solution of the Jewish problem'.125

22 Himmler

His expertise as a chicken farmer seems to have encouraged Himmler in experiments in comparative zoology; these were carried out on human beings. His theories in this field found realization in his quite unique foundation of *Lebensbo*rn, e.V.,126 as well as in his orders that SS troops should procreate before being sent to the front.127
Himmler's pedantic obsession with order, obedience and organization128 made him useful to his master almost to the end. He shared with Hitler ice-cold inhumanity. His loyalty to Hitler, though highly valued by the latter,129 was neither altruistic nor enduring.130 These characteristics contrast oddly with Himmler's cranky notions about health, superstition, Nordic mythology, racial and historical theories,131 and even more so with his love for animals132 and his appreciation of *objets d'art*.133
Not remarkable in his appearance,134 but mild-mannered, and beloved by his SS men, Himmler lacked any sense of humour. His men referred to him with a
[101] degree of affectionate familiarity as *'Reichsheini'*. Nevertheless, outside this circle of his SS comrades, Himmler was always surrounded by an aura of dread and fear.135 This may be the reason why, throughout the duration of the Third Reich, when jokes about it and about its leading personalities abounded, the *vox populi* remained almost silent about Himmler, with his Jekyll-and-Hyde personality, and mute about Heydrich, his hangman.
Significantly enough, the very few jokes circulating about Himmler refer exclusively to his monstrous reputation. It will be recalled from an earlier reference136 that in prophesying Germany's final and glorious victory, Hitler
[102] envisaged the promotion of his closest collaborators; Himmler was to become 'Marshal of the Underworld'. And to the question, 'What is a paradox in the Third
[103] Reich?' the only correct answer was, 'When the representative of hell on earth is called Himmler.'137 In much the same vein, the mysterious death of General von
[104] Fritsch (former Commander-in-Chief of the Army) very early in the Polish campaign was said to have been brought about by 'Himmler's Host'.138 Finally,
[105] one may cite the anagram of 'Heinrich Himmler': 'Ich Herr im Himmel.'

**RÖHM**

Despite his background—he came from a family of civil servants in the Bavarian Monarchy—or possibly because of it, Ernst Röhm (1887–1934) never seems to have had any doubt about his calling. These were the opening words of his autobiography: 'From my childhood I had only one thought and wish—
[106] to be a soldier.' Röhm fought as an officer in the First World War, and the wounds he received during that period resulted in a disfiguring series of scars on his face. Immediately after the formation of the *Reichswehr*139 he joined it, but resigned his commission as a captain in 1923.
Fiercely anti-democratic, and in the style of a latter-day *condottiere,* he joined one of the *Freikorps* which were springing up at that time.140 Nevertheless, he maintained his connection with the Bavarian *Reichswehr*

23 Röhm

authorities which made him invaluable to Hitler, apart from which he had also joined the German Workers' Party in 1919, even before Hitler.141

Röhm has to be regarded as the founder of the Stormtroopers—the SA—which in his eyes, in contrast to Hitler's, were to be a paramilitary force. Röhm

[107] despised the ideological eccentricities of some of the men around Hitler142 and showed his contempt by openly emphasizing 'the supremacy of the soldier above the politician.' Eventually this division led to Röhm's downfall and to his murder on Hitler's orders.

Hitler particularly singled out Röhm from among his earliest followers by the use of the familiar form of address,143 a practice which was very rare with him. This signal honour was all the more striking because Röhm—possibly because of his disagreement with Hitler about the function of the SA—had joined the Nazi Party as late as 1925, not long before he found employment as a military instructor to the Bolivian Army. During Röhm's absence in South America Hitler reorganized the SA according to his own ideas, and when he recalled Röhm from Bolivia after his electoral victory of 1930 he made him Chief of Staff of the SA, having promoted himself to *Oberster SA—Führer*. Hitler now demanded from Röhm a personal oath of allegiance.144 Nevertheless, Röhm remained critical of Hitler,

[108] as 'a civilian, artist and fantasist'145 and continued hostile towards the entire ideology and behaviour of the men of Hitler's 'inner circle.' As Röhm also

24 If Röhm were to marry
persisted in imbuing 'his' SA with military tendencies, he also alienated the *Reichswehr*. However, there is no evidence that he or his followers planned a *coup d'état* on that fateful 30 June 1934 as alleged by Hitler.146
Neither the first public apologia issued by Hess,147 nor Hitler's personal and official statements before the *Reichstag* exculpated him from being the sole instigator of an event variously termed the 'blood purge', the 'Night of the Long Knives', and the *'Röhm-Putsch.'*148
Röhm was usually surrounded by young men, as was the case on that day.149 Nobody abroad and not many people in Germany could regard Hitler's professed ignorance and abhorrence of the sexual deviations of one of his
[109] closest friends as anything but sheer hypocrisy. Inevitably, after 30 June 1934, people began to remark: 'Just imagine how upset the Führer will be if he gets to know that Goebbels has a club-foot!'
It was equally to be expected that Hitler too was associated with the widely-known homosexual tendencies of Röhm, as is reflected in this satirical comment on contemporary films:150
[110] 'Worried Mothers' (with Röhm)
'Just for Once To Be a Great Lady' (Röhm)
'His Great Error' (Adolf Hitler)
The numerous jokes about Röhm were without exception scabrous, and many of them are too indelicate to be rendered here. However, as they represent

an entirely new generation of anti-Nazi comments two examples may serve to reflect the mood of the time. It was said that Röhm had a motto, executed in poker-work and framed, hanging on the wall near the desk of his office, with this little ditty:
[111] Stormtroopers' lot is rather rough;
They slave for Adolf hard all day.
Come evening, though, their Chief of
Staff
Loves them as comrades true and gay!
And on the wall of the Hitler Youth premises was posted a notice reading:
[112] Rears to the wall—
Röhm reads roll-call.
Hitler's mendacious statement before the *Reichstag,* in which he tried to justify the killings during the *Röhm-Putsch,* promptly produced this un equivocal comment:
[113] The German constitution is to be simplified. In future it will consist of one sentence only: 'The Führer himself both appoints and executes his Ministers.'151

**VON RIBBENTROP**

Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893–1946), though not one of the Führer's early followers, became involved in the final phase of Hitler's bid for power. A friend of von Papen, he offered his home in Berlin for the fateful meeting on 22 January 1933 during which Hitler's strategy toward *Machtübernahme* was discussed among the 'dramatis personae':152 Hitler, von Papen, Meissner, Göring, Frick, Oscar von Hindenburg (the President's son). One suspects that the host was a mere onlooker.
From the start Hitler seems to have been greatly impressed by von Ribbentrop. Tall and good-looking, wealthy and widely travelled, and the son of an army officer, he had himself served on the Mesopotamian front in the First World War, when he had got to know von Papen.153
Hitler, with his ignorance of foreign languages and his haphazard self-education, was said to have remarked once that he regretted being unable to read foreign newspapers, whereupon somebody had recommended von Ribbentrop154 who was known to speak both English and French almost flawlessly.155 His business connections too were useful to Hitler,156 while his confident familiarity with a world utterly unfamiliar but fascinating to Hitler also worked in his favour.
His late arrival in Hitler's 'inner circle' embarrassed von Ribbentrop, and his response was to display servility of a kind remarkable even in the atmosphere of Hitler's court. With the help of intermediaries, von Ribbentrop developed a scheme by which he got to know Hitler's preconceived ideas about some aims
[114] in his foreign policy which he presented to his master as the outcome of his own

deliberations.157 Not unexpectedly, this resulted in Hitler's declaring, 'Ribbentrop ist ein Genie.'
Hitler's aversion to men with any professional or aristocratic background sprang from his own past, and was exploited by von Ribbentrop. As early as the spring of 1933 the 'Bureau Ribbentrop' came into being, a rival Foreign Office eventually employing three hundred ambitious, committed Nazis situated directly opposite the *Auswärtige Amt*158 in the Wilhelmstrasse. At that time the Amt was headed by Baron von Neurath, who had been installed there by President von Hindenburg as a precaution when Hitler became Reich Chancellor.159 Von Ribbentrop was aware of Hitler's repugnance toward the career diplomats of the *Auswärtige Amt,* which the Führer had called 'that
[115] hotchpotch of scoundrels'160 and so used it to prepare his own way as a diplomat. From 1934 onwards he was entrusted by Hitler with several diplomatic portfolios, including that of Commissioner for Disarmament. By June 1935 he had been appointed head of the German delegation which negotiated the Anglo-German naval treaty. It may have been this much-lauded
[116] achievement which caused Hitler to bestow on von Ribbentrop the epithet 'my own Iron Chancellor, a second Bismarck'161 and to appoint him in 1936 Ambassador to the Court of St James.
In London von Ribbentrop was criticized for the casual way in which he applied himself to his ambassadorial duties,162 and he became known in
[117] England as 'the wandering Aryan'. In 1937 he made himself and the country he
[118] represented ridiculous by saluting King George VI in the Nazi fashion.163 This unique *faux pas* resulted in a cartoon depicting Ribbentrop as a schoolboy and the king as a schoolmaster, interpreting the 'schoolboy's' elevated right arm:
[119] 'You are excused, Joachim!' When asked by some Nazi *Prominente* about his 'Heil Hitler!' salute to King George VI, von Ribbentrop is said to have replied, 'I wanted to demonstrate to the Britons that a "new age" had arrived in Germany.'
As early as 1936, shortly after von Ribbentrop had arrived in London, Lord Woolton, who was visiting Germany as the guest of Dr Todt (the creator of the *Autobahnen)* unofficially expressed the wish to have Todt himself sent as Ambassador to London in von Ribbentrop's place. Lord Woolton said that as long as von Ribbentrop remained, relations between Great Britain and Germany would never improve.164 When Göring once expressed to Hitler his
[120] doubts about von Ribbentrop's qualifications to handle Anglo-German problems, the Führer pointed out that von Ribbentrop knew 'Lord So and So', to which Göring replied, 'Quite so, but the trouble is that *they* know von Ribbentrop.'165 This reference to the inefficiency, arrogance and pomposity of von Ribbentrop helps to explain his insecurity *vis-à-vis* the old Party members of Hitler's entourage which he tried to conceal by his open display of exclusive
[121] ness and his posturing. This soon earned him the nickname 'Ribbensnob.'
Goebbels' assessment of von Ribbentrop was especially devastating, as he
[122] confided to his diary: 'Ribbentrop has bought his name, married his money and

swindled his way into office.'166 And he continued in the same venomous style:
[123] 'Almost all the top leaders of the Third Reich had at least one praiseworthy side, but Ribbentrop had none.'
One may regard assessments like these as dubious because they come from rivals of von Ribbentrop close to Hitler. But there were many other critics whose judgement is less suspect. For instance, there was Baron von Weizsäcker, von Ribbentrop's Secretary of State, who saw more of him than anyone else. In February 1938 Hitler engineered Baron von Neurath's resignation as Foreign Secretary and had him replaced by von Ribbentrop. At the same time the post of Secretary of State at the German Foreign Office had become vacant and von Ribbentrop offered it to Baron von Weizsäcker. Von Ribbentrop was evidently unaware that in 1937, while he himself was still Ambassador in London, von Weizsäcker had been so shocked by von Ribbentrop's bellicose attitude, as
[124] expressed in one of his routine reports to the *Auswärtige Amt,* that he had commented: 'I'd rather pursue a policy of conciliation with England than hasten the arrival of doomsday.'
Both as Hitler's Ambassador in London and as his Foreign Secretary, von Ribbentrop identified himself with his master's warmongering. For this reason,
[125] according to Göring, he was often referred to as 'Hitler's parrot.' Sir Nevile
[126] Henderson, the last British Ambassador to Nazi Germany, likewise regarded von Ribbentrop as the imitator of Hitler, dubbed him as 'Brickanddrop',167 and summed him up as a 'combination of vanity, stupidity and superficiality'.
As to von Ribbentrop's vanity, Baron von Weizsäcker has this to say in his autobiography:
[127] Von Ribbentrop designed a fancy diplomatic uniform for himself. The epaulettes were embroidered with a globe, on which a German eagle perched in proprietary fashion.
Von Ribbentrop was prone to holding monologues, a habit which, incidentally, he shared with his master. This made normal diplomatic intercourse almost impossible, as observed by André François-Poncet, French Ambassador from 1930 to 1938: 'One can't discuss anything with von Ribbentrop; he only listens to himself.' François-Poncet's successor, Robert Coulondre, went even further in his assessment when he recalled his time in Berlin:
[128] Hitler's monologues are passionate but those of Ribbentrop are ice-cold...always condescending, always in pose, he never waits for any reply, but delivers instead his well-prepared speech; in that quite good-looking German there is nothing human apart from the most base instincts.
Von Ribbentrop's posturing habit, somewhat exaggerated by his height, with his head held so high that he must often have missed what was going on at street level, once almost led to his death on the rails of the Gare des Invalides when he visited Paris in 1938.168

[129] Sir Nevile Henderson noted that von Ribbentrop's various resentments and his misconception of the English mentality were a serious bar to better understanding between the two countries. Indeed, in Henderson's view, these factors subsequently led von Ribbentrop, more than any other, to precipitate war.169 This misconception of England and English ways may have been based on a private hatred of hardly credible pettiness.170 It borders, however, on gross stupidity, on von Ribbentrop's part, that he could have misjudged British morale so comprehensively, even a full year after war had been declared. Although by then the German invasion fleet (for the once planned Operation Sea Lion) was already being dispersed, von Ribbentrop, on 19 September 1940, declared in Rome: 'The landing is ready and possible. English territorial defence is non-existent. A single German division will suffice to bring about a complete collapse.'
[130] Hitler had great plans for further promotions for his most faithful comrades. In fact, one of them is not just the fanciful product of anti-Nazi wit (although it does reflect Nazi hubris), but is based on documentary evidence. After a successful conclusion of the invasion of Great Britain von Ribbentrop would have been promoted to 'Reich Commander of Great Britain'.
Von Ribbentrop's personality generated only a very few jokes. It seems that the man with 'the cold metallic'171 and 'empty moon-like' eyes172 and colourless personality offered too little material for humour.
A fitting epilogue for von Ribbentrop was proposed by his Secretary of State:
[131] In any asylum men of this type occur commonly. The fault was in the system as such, which made it possible that an apparition of this kind could become Foreign Secretary and in that capacity serve a nation of seventy million for seven years.
**LEY**
Dr Robert Ley (1890–1945) had served as a pilot during the First World War and had later become a chemist. He was an early (and blind) follower of Hitler; Ley and Gottfried Feder were the only men to support Hitler against the socialist faction at the 1925 Party meeting arranged by the Strasser brothers.173 Ley later became *Gauleiter* of Cologne, but the main reward for his loyalty to Hitler came after the Nazi takeover, when he was entrusted with the task of smashing the trade unions and liquidating their assets. This was a task to which Ley devoted himself with gusto, and as a result of its successful completion he was appointed leader of the Labour Front (an organization intended to replace the former, mainly socialist trade unions), and in 1934 further promoted to *Reichsorganisationsleiter*.174
Ley then created the organization *Kraft durch Freude* ('Strength through Joy'). The working-class members of the new Labour Front could now, for a token charge, travel on specially built ships175 to take their annual holidays in such places as the Mediterranean coast and Madeira. While this was a good

propaganda stunt in the early and fairly prosperous years of the Third Reich, it became obvious by 1939 that Ley's motto 'Riches for everybody'176 was a mere pipedream. This sour realization was reflected in the following quatrain:

[132] Once with Ley we travelled free
To the Mediterranean Sea.
Now he has no more to spend;
'Strength through Joy' is at an
end.177

As leader of the Labour Front Ley was also connected with the *Landdienst,* a compulsory form of agricultural service for female teenagers—though the *Arbeitsdienst* for young men of the same age group remained outside Ley's sphere of power. However, he was known for his encouragement of relations between the two sexes178 in both services; hence this ditty:

[133] In woods and heath and
field
My strength to joy did yield.179

[134] The following episode illustrates Ley's indelicacy as well as his dipsomania. In 1938, at Karlsruhe, Ley, inebriated and stammering, held a conversation with a female Labour Front delegate. 'Are you married?' asked Ley. 'No, *Herr Reichsarbeitsfrontleiter*'. 'Well, then, have you at least got a child?' Ley's low intelligence and moral standards,180 together with his coarse manners, made him the *enfant terrible* as well as a figure of fun at Hitler's court.

25 Ley

His histrionics provided the sort of amusement which for Hitler served as a substitute for the humour which the Führer himself lacked.181
Ley's dipsomania was already a joke among his brother officers during the First World War.182 It continued and became obvious to the public during his speeches after 1933. When in his cups Ley's condition became exaggerated by his pronounced stammer.183 The reminiscences of the Duchess of Windsor throw further light on this predicament, since Ley was the official guide during the visit which she and the Duke paid to Germany in 1937:
[135] Our German guide was Dr Ley...Ogilvie-Forbes (First Secretary at our Embassy in Berlin) had drawn a depressing picture of this strange man. If not an actual alcoholic, Dr Ley was a noisy, chronic drinker. In this respect our guide lived up to his advance billing. We saw a great deal of him—too much in fact. David soon discovered that Dr Ley fortified himself periodically during the day with infusions of schnapps. By evening he was usually what might be described as the schnapps equivalent of the fifth Martini stage—unsteady, emotional and bombastic...He had bright eyes, a florid complexion...To my American eyes he was a four-flusher.
It is difficult to understand why this man was chosen to accompany such distinguished visitors, all the more so as Hitler and von Ribbentrop thought highly of their potential as friends of the Third Reich, both at that time and even as late as 1940, after the fall of France.184
[136] It was inevitable that Ley's behaviour and reputation were reflected in many quips and jokes. He was a sitting target for the popular tendency to satirize the Nazi use of the prefix *Reich* applied both to institutions and to persons. Thus Ley soon became known as the 'Reich Booze Champion'.185 However, Ley was not the only candidate for that title, and, in order to avoid confusion with a competitor, the *vox populi* dubbed Ley—whose speech when he had had too much to drink was barely comprehensible and sometimes even nonsensical—'Reich Gibberish-talker'.186
[137] Ley's enthusiasm for *Gleichschaltung,* which his position as Labour Front Leader made mandatory, was not always shared by the men on the shop floor.
[138] On a visit to a factory (so the story goes) Ley asked the manager about the political views of the factory workers.
Ley: Tell me, have you still got any Social Democrats with you?'
Manager: 'Oh yes, about half the workforce.'
Ley: 'How dreadful! But surely no Commies?'
Manager: 'Oh yes, about a third of the men.'
Ley: Really! What about Democrats etc.?'
Manager: 'They make up the remaining 20 per cent.'
Ley: 'Good gracious! Haven't you got any Nazis at all?'
Manager: 'Oh yes, of course, all of them are Nazis!'
Like the other members of Hitler's 'inner circle'—with the exception of Hess—Ley participated in the power struggle among these latter-day *diadochi.*187 This was long before there was any likelihood of anyone succeeding Hitler

[139] himself, whom Ley had once called 'the only human being who never errs'. Ley's lust for power was in fact inexhaustible. After two failed attempts to take over the post of Hess after the latter's flight to Scotland,188 and a later move to supplant Speer,189 he had himself appointed supervisor of the medical aspects of the Forced Labour Camps. In addition, Hitler entrusted him with the task of creating 'Adolf Hitler Schools' for the elementary education and 'Order Castles' for the secondary education of the so-called 'Junkers', the neo-aristocracy of privileged Nazi youths.190 Even this admittedly abortive scheme was not enough for him. The zenith of Ley's supremacy—at least in his own mind—was his verbal appointment (by Speer) as 'Commissioner for Death Rays',191 referring to one of the spurious weapons about which rumours proliferated at

[140] the nadir of the Third Reich. It was typical of the man that as late as April, 1945, Ley could predict the survival of the régime: 'When the Russians overrun us from the east, the torrent of German refugees will press upon the west like a *Völkerwanderung;*192 they will break through, flood the west and then take possession.'

It seems that none of the men near Hitler ever took Ley seriously—not even the Führer, although he tolerated Ley's moronic193 clowning almost to the end, and, like a potentate of a past age, may have amused himself by retaining his court jester.

# 4
# INSTITUTIONS OF THE THIRD REICH
## THE PARTY

In January 1919 Anton Drexler, a locksmith by trade, merged his 'Committee of Independent Workmen' with a similar group, the 'Political Workers' Circle'. This was led by one Karl Harrer, a newspaper reporter. The new organization called itself the 'German Workers Party', and aimed at achieving a just peace for Germany and combating Marxism in the trade unions. This merger of two minor like-minded organizations might be regarded as the beginning of the Nazi Party.1 It is certainly true that Hitler, with some hesitation (for he had experienced club life at its worst)2 joined this party as the seventh member of its committee. Röhm was already a member.3

Hitler often referred to one poet above all as the spiritual father of National Socialism: Dietrich Eckart, a dipsomaniac journalist. This man was a potent combination of ills. Born a Prussian, he was a Jew-hater, and became an 'Aryan' Bavarian nationalist with a history of mental illness and drug addiction. His idealism appealed to Hitler and he provided vital financial support for the future Führer's needs. In his own book Hitler waxed almost lyrical in posthumous praise of this man, who was some two decades older than himself.4 Through him Hitler got to know not only some leading families in Munich like the Bechsteins, Hanfstaengls and Bruckmanns, but was also put in touch with Gottfried Feder, the economist and theoretician, as well as with Alfred Rosenberg and Rudolf Hess.5

To this weird assortment of men, comprising as it did a homosexual officer, a dipsomaniac drug addict, a writer of political fantasies like Rosenberg, a strange recluse like Hess and a cranky economist like Feder, Hitler—the man who had risen from the doss-house—supplied a congenial addition.

In a way the first Party members were similarly men without roots at a time of national and economic collapse. It was they who became the torchbearers of the masses. Later they were referred to as the 'Old Fighters'6 who proudly wore their 'golden Party badge'. Those among them who were given important positions within the Party or one of its organisations wore gold-braided uniforms. From this detail there stemmed no doubt the popular term *Goldfasanen* ('golden pheasants'), whereby their gold-braided uniform was compared with the gaudy plumage of the cock of that species.7

The following joke, datable to soon after 1933, refers to the fact that some 'Old Fighters' were very young.

[1] Q. What is the difference between the fighters of the First World War and what are now called 'Old Fighters'?
A. The fighting soldiers of 1914–18 lay at the Somme in their tanks, and at that time the 'Old Fighters' of the Party lay in the sun, in their prams.8
Of course, none of these men were, so to speak, born Nazis, and many were not even nationalists; in fact, many who swelled the Nazi ranks both before and after the *Machtübernahme* had been Communists.
[2] Q. What is an 'Old Fighter'?
A. One who followed the flag even before it had the swastika in its centre!9
[3] This is how it began.
At the famous Nazi march on 1 May 1933 two old friends meet. The first one clenches his fist and shouts, 'Heil Moscow!', whereupon the other chap says, 'Not quite so loud—in the seventh row behind us there marches a Nazi!'
[4] Q. What is an 'Old Fighter'?
A. In 1934 the 'Old Fighter' had been against National Socialism for fourteen years and only one year in favour of it, though in 1934 he had been coerced to become a member.10
During the election in September 1930, when the Nazi Party became, with 6.5 million votes, the second largest party in parliament, many more Germans joined it. Again, in March 1933 there was such a massive influx of new members that the Party had to close its ranks for a while.11 These fair-weather followers of Nazism became a favourite target of contemporary satire. Jokes about Party membership, the time of acquiring the Party badge,12 the advantages and disadvantages of Party membership, Party rallies and Party loyalty are all aspects which featured in the jokes circulating at this time. Those who joined the Nazi Party in September 1930 became known as the 'Septemberlinge',13 while the latecomers of March 1933, were referred to as 'March violets',14 'March Victims'15 or 'March hares'.16 Because these late applicants for Party membership were often motivated by fear and not by idealism, their Party badge was referred to us as the 'brooch of fear' *(Angstbrosche)*.17
[5] An ox, a donkey, and a goat meet on a meadow and discuss their mutual fortunes:
'I am going to have a bad time,' says the donkey; 'I have been told that I shall shortly be needed in a Ministry because they need more asses there.'
'No better than my prospects,' retorts the ox, 'I have been told that I shall be needed urgently as the local section leader of the Party!'
'That's nothing,' says the goat. 'I'm no longer allowed to do any bleating whatsoever!'
Then suddenly a small snail, who has been listening to the animals' conversation, pipes up, 'Why don't you three follow my example? I just creep along the whole time.'
[6] The annual Party rallies at Nuremberg all had high-falutin names. The first one was

called 'Victory of Faith', the second 'Triumph of Willpower', and the third 'Liberty'. The following rally, someone suggested, might as well be named 'Force of Habit'.18
[7] In 1933 there were still, so it was said, free elections in Germany. During one of them someone left his bicycle outside the polling booth and had it stolen. Having cast his vote and discovered the theft, the man shouted, 'The damned Nazis have stolen my bike!' Summoned at once to the Nazi mayor and warned that he might be incarcerated in a concentration camp for such slanderous accusations, he replied, 'Mr Mayor, you've told everybody that 99.75 per cent of the people of our village have voted for Hitler, and as neither I nor any of my family have voted for him, it must have been a Nazi who stole my bicycle!'
While the Third Reich lasted it was an advantage to be a member of the Nazi Party, but the opposite was the case when the end of the régime was in sight, and even more so after it had ended. This quatrain echoes the feeling of many:
[8] Nothing will forever
remain,
Be it ever so hale and hearty,
Even Hitler's dreadful reign,
And his awful Nazi party.19
[9] An advertisement in 1943 read as follows:
Offers sought for golden Party badge;
non-Aryan grandmother wanted in exchange.20
[10] It is 1943 and the campaign in North Africa is nearing its end, so Hitler decides to survey the situation personally. Accompanied by Göring and Goebbels, he flies to Libya. Suddenly his Junker aeroplane has to make an emergency landing in the middle of nowhere. Before long a pride of lions approaches the aeroplane and begins to scratch at the cabin window. The rather apprehensive passengers discuss how to get rid of them. Hitler gets hold of a megaphone and directs a thunderous speech at them, but without any success. Göring, in his latest tropical attire, is of no use without his gun. At this point Goebbels decides to lend a hand. He gets out of the cabin window, approaches the nearest lion and whispers something into his ear. The lion starts away in visible shock and runs away as fast as it can. Hitler and Göring, greatly relieved, embrace Goebbels and ask him how he managed to contrive their deliverance. 'It was quite easy,' Goebbels replies; 'I just asked the lion whether he wished to join the Party.'
[11] Early in 1945 the last big drive for getting new members for the Party is announced. New incentives are devised to this end. Anyone bringing three new members along is permitted to wear his Party badge underneath his lapel. Anyone who manages to get five new members is allowed to leave the Party. But anyone who gets ten new Party members is given an official document stating that he has never been a Party member.
[12] *The turncoats*
Into the party we forced our
way,
And day by day we had our say,
With profit too along the line,

Regarding Hitler as divine,
'Heil Hitlering' always, high and
low,
But were we Nazis? Never! No!21

**STORMTROOPERS**

The summer of 1920 saw the first extension of the newly named NSDAP when Hitler entrusted one Emil Maurice with the organisation of an *Ordnertruppe,* a bunch of 'roughneck war veterans' into strong-arm squads. At first he called these men the 'Gymnastics and Sports Division' of the NSDAP. About a year later they got their official name, *Sturmabteilung;* and it is from this that the abbreviation SA derives.22 Whether they rejoiced in the names 'O*rdnertruppe',* 'Gymnastics and Sports Division' or 'S*turmabteilung',* these brown-shirted rowdies—recruited from the flotsam of cities like Munich and later Berlin—quickly justified their *raison d'être*. Essentially this was to break up the meetings, and beat up the representatives, of other parties.

Röhm helped to organize the first strong-arm squad which became the SA and he commanded it—with a gap between 1925–30 when he was in South America—until 1934, when he was murdered on the orders of his friend and Führer. However, it was Hitler himself who personally led his Stormtroopers in a fracas in 1921 when during a meeting of Bavarian federalists a man was beaten up, an incident for which Hitler received his first jail sentence.23

Despite Röhm's temporary break with Hitler (which lasted from 1925 to 1930) the SA continued to play the same strong-arm role *vis-à-vis* other parties. In the years before 1933, it was also active in minor anti-Semitic activities. This state of affairs lasted until Hitler's *Machtübernahme*. Thereafter Göring became Prussian Minister of the Interior and as such was in charge of the police. In February 1933, less than a month after Hitler had become Chancellor, Göring established an auxiliary police force, largely recruited from the ranks of the SA and of course well armed. This force effectively controlled the streets of Berlin and even to some extent paralysed the work of the ordinary police.24 It was never proved that the SA was implicated in the burning of the *Reichstag,* though this was widely rumoured at the time.25 Goebbels, as *Gauleiter* of Berlin, also relied heavily on the SA not as an *Ordnertruppe*26 (as they were originally named in Munich by Hitler himself), but as a force to spread disorder at meetings of opponents, to bully civilians on the streets of Berlin, and above all to perpetrate outrages against Jews and Jewish shops. Although these activities were not likely to entail any danger to life or limb so far as the aggressors were concerned, Goebbels dramatized their somewhat more risky role in street fights against Communists in this little stanza:

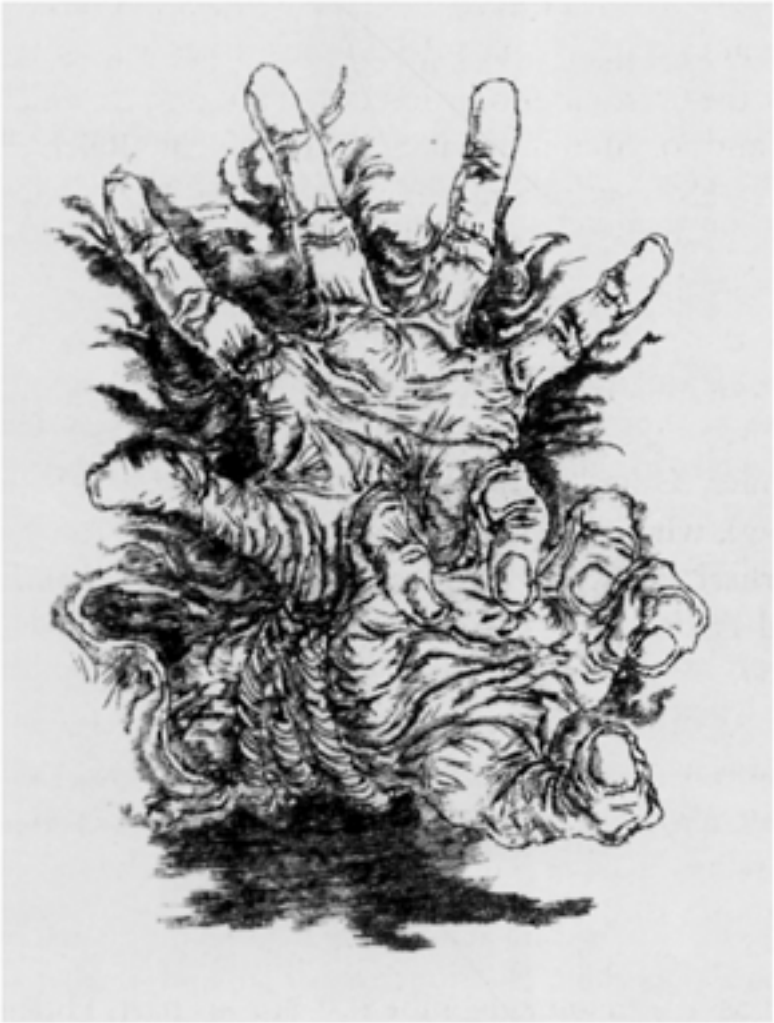
[13] 'So far from
fear,
To death so near—
Hail to thee, SA!'

('Der Furcht so
fern,
Dem Tod so nah',
Heil Dir, SA!')
Röhm, formerly a professional soldier, aimed at making the SA two million strong by 1934 so that it would constitute the largest part of a new People's Army.27 Both Göring and Hitler strongly opposed this proposal, and the resultant discord led to the events of 30 June 1934, the 'Blood Purge' or 'Night of the Long Knives', in which Röhm and other SA leaders were murdered. Thereafter the SA lost much of its former power.
The jokes about the SA frequently reflected the milieu of the early Stormtroopers, for example in the ridiculing of the SA's fighting song which after 1933 became the second official anthem of the Third Reich after the *Deutschlandlied*. The author of this SA song—a down-and-out student named Horst Wessel who had been murdered by Communists in 1930—was similarly ridiculed. Thus, in the typical rhyming slang of Berlin, Horst Wessel became *Wurstkessel* ('Sausage kettle').28
But it was the Horst Wessel song itself which came in for the largest share of satire. The original text of the first verse29 was freely parodied as follows:
[14] Who nowadays in the SA enlists
With both eyes shut and with a turned-up nose?
Reactionaries, true, but mostly Communists30
Now march through fear in step with former
foes.31
The evolution of the SA is tersely explained in this joke:
[15] Hein, a layabout in Hamburg, used to belong to the *Rotfront* before joining the SA in 1933. When he meets his friend Tetje32 the latter comments, 'Well, well! How is it that you already have two stars on your uniform when you've only been in the SA a month?'
Hein: 'Do you think it was for nothing that I served in the *Rotfront* for the past two years?'33
[16] An SA man goes to the pub to have his usual pint, and leaves his bicycle outside. When he gets out of the pub the bike has gone. The thief has left a piece of paper on which is written, 'All wheels must keep rolling for victory34—but SA marches.'
[17] In a Stormtroopers' pub somebody has written on a wall: 'The KPD35 is still alive! Hail Moscow!' Next day somebody has written underneath it: 'Which cowardly dog has written this? He is to report at once!' The following day there is yet another addition: 'I haven't got time to report; I'm on SA duty!'
[18] It is early in 1933. One Stormtrooper whispers to another, 'Have you heard the latest? The *Reichstag* is aflame!' The other Stormtrooper hisses, 'Shhh! Not before tomorrow!'36
[19] Early in 1933, an SA man jumps on to a bus and accidentally steps on the big toe of one of the passengers, who at once clouts him. The Stormtrooper promptly retaliates, but then a third man attacks him. Summoned to defend himself in court, the third

participant in the fight tries to exonerate himself by saying, 'I thought it was already starting.'37
[20] What is the difference between a steak and a Stormtrooper?
Very little: both are brown on the outside, and red inside.

**SS, POLICE AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS**

In Nazi Germany the SS had the reputation of recruiting its members from a physical élite of the young men most loyally devoted to Nazi ideology. In fact, the real origin of the SS was rather different. During the Nazi *Kampfjahre*38 the SS came from the lowest strata of urban society. Hence, perhaps, Henderson's quip that in English, the SS were often referred to as Black Guards, which might also be written as one word.39 The leaders of the SS were to a large extent drawn from a postwar hotchpotch of ex-soldiers, Free-Corps men and frustrated, uprooted types with a criminal past and not infrequently homosexual inclinations. The quarrels and feuds typical of such an environment reduced these men's dependence on Hitler in the early years of his rise to power and he was understandably anxious to obtain a bodyguard bound to him by a special oath of loyalty.40 One of its first leaders when the organization came into being in 192241 was a certain Erhard Heiden, a former stool-pigeon



26 'Concentration camps are no disgrace...'

27 Marched off to be 'shot while attempting to escape'
for the police. It was not until 1929 that Hitler entrusted the mild-mannered Heinrich Himmler, then a chicken farmer in the village of Waldtrudering near Munich, with the leadership of his SS or 'Protective Squad',42 then numbering little more than a couple of hundred men. Since the SS was described as 'an organization of the NSDAP for the personal protection of the Führer', to which definition was later added 'and of the internal security of the Reich',43 Himmler's title of 'Reichsführer SS' was absurdly high-falutin in 1929 when one considers the small number under his command. Yet only four years later, Himmler—by dint of ambition, ruthlessness, and a superb talent for organization—had managed to increase these numbers to six figures. During the war he and his SS 'struck terror throughout occupied Europe',44 and by then his 'Waffen SS'45 had swollen to thirty-eight superbly equipped divisions.
However, it was not Himmler, Grand Inquisitor and petit bourgeois46 (a typical *Spiesser* in German slang), who became the 'Managing Director' of the concentration camps, those earliest and worst manifestations of *Kulturschande* in Nazi Germany, but Reinhard Tristan Eugen Heydrich (1904–42), Himmler's deputy and Chief of the Gestapo.
Heydrich was a former naval officer who was cashiered in 1930 before joining the SS. Despite (or perhaps because of) his rumoured Jewish ancestry he quickly became valuable to Hitler, who recognised his talent for snooping and for a variety of clandestine activities.47 In appearance Heydrich was the exact opposite of Himmler—tall, blond and distinguished-looking. He was also reserved. Göring, who feared him,48 called him 'Himmler's brain',49 while Himmler himself described him as 'suspicion personified'.50 For his part, Hitler

referred to Heydrich as his 'Herzog Alba' when he sent him to Prague, first as von Neurath's deputy and later as his successor.51 It was Hitler too, who after Heydrich's assassination in 1942 called him 'the man with the iron heart', a correct judgement in view of Heydrich's misanthropy and the countless acts of cruelty committed on his orders and after his death in his name.52 Terms like 'the blond beast', 'the Angel of Death', and Burckhardt's phrase, 'a young, evil god of death'53 point in the same direction. On the other hand an eyewitness remarked on the 'sensitive and beautiful hands of an artist'54 which Heydrich had, perhaps his legacy as the son of a noted musician. He was himself a gifted violinist. Not surprisingly, these apparent contradictions have never been satisfactorily resolved.

It is thus in a sense only to be expected that apparently no jokes about this sinister yet controversial man, more a Lucifer than a Mephistopheles, are recorded. The dearth of jokes about the SS as such is also scarcely to be wondered at. However, there were a great many jokes in circulation about the concentration camps. The reason for this is probably because much firsthand information about them became available when former inmates returned to 'freedom', which was often only of short duration.

At first the majority of concentration camp inmates were neither foreigners nor Jews but German 'undesirables'. They were regarded as the arch-enemies of the régime on political, moral and religious grounds, for—either openly or more or less clandestinely—they expressed their opposing views. These people included members of the main Christian denominations, and of sects such as the Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses. There were also astrologers and gypsies, and finally, male homosexuals, a group which was savagely persecuted after the Röhm *Putsch* on 30 June 1934,55 and which increasingly became favourite KZ-fodder.56

Both duration and mode of incarceration varied, at least in some of the camps not predominantly designated as extermination camps.57 The *Gestapo* exercised sole jurisdiction over the camps, though sometimes they had the co-operation of the Ministry of Justice.58 The very existence of extermination camps like Auschwitz, let alone the details of their operation, were kept secret from the populace at large, and as they were deliberately located far away from densely inhabited areas only rumours about them reached the wider public.

[21] Who robbed the Reich's treasury in 1933?

The brothers SASS.59

SS men, usually taller and more presentable than the Stormtroopers, were credited with the following joke:

[22] Q. Who was the first SS man?'

A. 'Joseph (in the Old Testament), because he wore a special uniform and thought himself superior to his brothers.'

[23] Mutual trust in the Third Reich:

'My dear fellow, in case you should think of denouncing me to the Gestapo, I shall declare that you have told me several anti-Nazi jokes!' 'In that case I shall deny that I have ever talked with you!'
[24] When an Englishman visits Germany shortly before the war he is asked by a German friend about his impression of the new regime. After some hesitation he replies, 'When the doorbell rings as 5.30 a.m. in my house in England, I can be quite certain that it can't be anyone but the milkman!'
[25] Short-sighted and far-sighted: during the prescribed exercises around the prison yard the political prisoners run with moderate speed in Indian file, each at six strides' distance behind the next. The elderly and those suffering from some physical complaint walk slowly within a narrower circle around the yard. When a visitor asks the meaning of these two circles he is told, 'The wide outer circle is for the shortsighted prisoners, and the smaller one for the far-sighted prisoners.'
[26] A man meets a friend. 'Any new jokes?'
The friend: 'Yes—for six months in the concentration camp!'
[27] 'Hallo, how are you? Still not in the KZ?'
[28] Weiss Ferdl, the famous Munich compère, appears on stage one night: 'Good evening. I'm sorry I'm late. I've just come back from a little excursion to—Dachau!60 Well, you ought to see that place! Barbed wire fence, electrified, machine-guns; another barbed-wire fence, more machine-guns—but I can tell you, I managed to get in all the same!'
[29] On discharge from Dachau:
Do save me from Dachau, dear Lord, I pray,
And in future no words against Hitler I'll say!
[30] Someone opens his mouth too wide and as a result spends several weeks of 'ideological training'61 in a concentration camp. After his discharge he is asked by a friend what life was like there. 'Excellent!' he replies, 'At 9 a.m. we were served breakfast in our bedrooms: real coffee or cocoa, whichever we preferred. Then some light work for those who wanted to work, and some sport for those who didn't. Next we had elevenses: bouillon and open sandwiches. Lunch was plain but good: soup, meat or fish, and a sweet. After a siesta of two hours, in bed, we had coffee and cake, and afterwards again some light work. For supper we were served some open sandwiches and pudding. In the evening we had lectures or a film, or we played games.' The questioner is much impressed. 'Incredible!' he says, 'All those lies we're told about the concentration camps! The other day I met Meier who had just been released from one; he told me rather different stories about his camp!'
'Well, yes, but then Meier is back in his camp again!'
[31] 'Tünnes' and 'Schäl'62 sit in a restaurant and Tünnes complains bitterly of the *Ersatzkaffee*63 which is served after their meal, comparing it loudly with real coffee, which is no longer available, following Hitler's *Machtübernahme*. He is denounced and arrested because of his defeatist talk and is taken to a KZ. Each morning at roll-call he has to say, 'Heil Hitler, I can perfectly well do without real coffee!' This goes on for about four weeks, and he is then told that he will be discharged the following

day. Highly delighted at his luck and completely lost in his own thoughts, Tünnes shouts at roll-call next morning, 'Heil real coffee, I can perfectly well do without Hitler!'
[32] The following is allegedly a true incident.
At Lörrach in Baden a printer received a jail sentence of seven months after the Gestapo had noticed a printing error. Instead of the normal 'Heil Hitler' there appeared 'Heilt Hitler' ('heal' instead of 'hail').
**JUDICIARY**
Almost to the end of the Weimar Republic the high status of judges in Germany remained inviolate—they could not be transferred, retired or removed without their own consent unless they had committed a felony. This privileged status was founded upon the German concept of the *Rechtsstaat* (that is, a State based on the rule of law). It had evolved under the so-called 'enlightened absolutism' which had characterized the government of Frederick the Great (1740–86).
Before 1933 judges and older jurists in Germany, though known to be authoritarian, were hardly Nazi sympathizers, but before long the peculiar phenomenon of 'bringing oneself into line'64 altered everything; even the Pres
[33] ident of the *Reichsgericht*65 bowed to the new régime. There were of course dissenters among the high judges in the land; one of them quite early on
[34] described Hitler as 'a petty bourgeois gone mad'—but such a man was forced to flee the country without delay.66
Thus the independence of the judiciary was quickly abolished: judges were compulsorily retired and were replaced by the so-called 'Old Fighters' who were often their juniors by decades.67 In 1939 a special provision approved by the Supreme Court enabled the *Generalstaatsanwalt*68 to bring cases directly, thus bypassing the lower courts; in fact, it was this official who determined the sentence.69 The specially created *Volksgerichtshof*70 had a most sinister function in the trying of political crimes; the blood-red gown of its President was a vivid reminder of his invariable verdict. By 1937 beatings (routinely practised in concentration camps from the start) became legalized for 'intensive interrogation'.71 Retrospective legislation now also became the rule, as did 'judicial coordination', by means of which institutional euthanasia was promoted from 1941 onwards.72
Hitler's contempt for the legal profession went far beyond depriving it of its traditional standing and function. In 1942 he declared: 'I'll see to it that no one
[35] will want to become a lawyer.' The logical sequel of this policy was that Draconian punishment became the chief aim and practice of Nazi justice.
The old legal principle, 'innocent until proven guilty' was now reversed;
[36] Thierack, Minister of Justice, could declare, 'It is better to punish nine innocent men than to let one guilty person escape.' To which somebody remarked: 'It's
[37] really a risky business to be innocent.'

Long sentences trebled between 1930 and 1939, and prosecutions of male homosexuals (initiated in the wake of the Röhm *Putsch* in 1934) had increased tenfold by 1939. Before 1933 certain homosexual acts were punishable by
[38] imprisonment under article 175 of the *Strafgesetzbuch,*73 but Hitler went a good deal further, imposing the death penalty in such cases. This policy received an accolade from Goebbels: 'The Führer has issued a decree by which members of the SS who violate article 175 will in future be punished by death. This is a very wholesome decree which will render the SS—the élite organization of the Party—immune to this cancer.'
Death sentences more than quintupled between 1940 and 1944.74 This
[39] figure is not surprising when one realizes what 'crimes' these *Volksschädlinge*75 had committed which now merited the death penalty. These included: telling an anti-Nazi joke,76 committing race defilement,77 theft during blackout, producing a bogus claim,78 and being a marriage-swindler.
By 1944 death sentences were being imposed on fourteen-to-sixteen-year-
[40] olds;79 and a wave of persecution involving Draconian sentences followed the failed attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944. For example, an Evangelical deaconess was executed for describing Himmler, the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Reserve Army, as 'a man of simple background not sprung from the soldierly estate'.
The arbitrary application of the law in Nazi Germany became obvious to everybody when a new term, *das gesunde Volksempfinden,* emerged, a neologism meaning 'the sound feeling of the people'. It could be, and indeed was to be, invoked in more serious, as well as in the most trivial, offences, and criticisms of the régime now became actionable even if made within the family.80
This change of Germany from a *Rechtsstaat*81 to a state in which the rule of law became a mockery gave rise to quite a number of mostly bitter jokes. Apart from the jokes which circulated, certain pronouncements made in all
[41] seriousness by leading Nazis, such as Göring's chilling statement, 'The law and the Führer are one,' may indeed strike the present-day reader as jokes.
Fictitious statements, however, abounded and these reflected the mood of the people:
[42] Since 1933 law and order in the Third Reich have been simplified:
1 The German people consist of the Leader and the Misled;
2 There are no longer any social classes;
3 Anyone who does, or omits to do, anything will be punished;
4 The punishment will be determined by the sound feeling of the people;
5 The sound feeling of the people will be determined by the *Gauleiter*.82
The 'sound feeling of the people' in Nazi Germany had its counterpart in the *Volkswut*83—a phenomenon of the time which was entirely unpredictable. This term described an emotional outburst of the people which always had to be reckoned with by any police officer on the beat. Such an officer had no choice

but to arrest any person suspected of any anti-Nazi remark or action.84
By constantly interfering with the judiciary Hitler set an example for his close associates to follow. In time they even came to anticipate his wishes. Thus in 1937 Himmler had two thousand 'social undesirables'—criminals of various kinds—rounded up and transferred to concentration camps without any protest by the Minister of Justice. In fact, Thierack, who had held this office since 1939, later colluded with Himmler and had any prisoner serving a sentence of six years or more automatically removed to a concentration camp instead of releasing him. Political prisoners were frequently transferred to lunatic asylums.85
[43] The *vox populi* reacted to this state of affairs with the following jingle:
With the muzzle and the stick
Into discipline we lick
People, be they high or low,
Even dogs aren't barking
now86
[44] and with this story of one German's experience on a visit to Switzerland:
Noticing a tall building on the shore of Lake Geneva, the German asks one of the locals about its purpose. He is told, 'This is our Admiralty.'
The Nazi: 'Ridiculous, you haven't got a fleet!'
The Swiss: 'What about your Ministry of Justice in Berlin? *You* haven't got any justice.'
[45] People in Germany could recall nostalgically how in Goethe's time Germany was called 'the land of poets and thinkers', but now had become 'the land of hanging judges and hangmen'87 under Hitler's tyranny.
**CIVIL SERVICE**
Though less exalted than the judges and not as highly regarded as the military, the *Staatsbeamte*88 had become, like the judiciary and the armed forces, one of the pillars of the State. On the whole civil servants served that state loyally
[46] despite being rather underpaid. They lived up to the old adage that 'Prussia had starved her way to greatness'. In 1933, when what one might well call the spring of national rejuvenation (brought about by Hitler) was sweeping across the country, civil servants on the whole mirrored the reactions of most Germans. Civil servants first admired the régime, then they co-operated without asking questions. Later on, they tolerated the régime's objectionable acts; and all but a minority continued to serve silently to the end of the Third Reich. This reverence for the State was traditional in Germany and was considered a virtue, but the new régime expected more. It demanded that its civil servants bow down in blind obedience—in other words *Staatsfrömmigkeit*89 was to be replaced by *Kadavergehorsam*.90
Hitler, presumably because of his ingrained slackness—*Schlamperei*91—was

both ignorant and contemptuous92 of the bureaucratic work done in his Chancellery and by Government officials in general. This aversion continued to the end;93 perhaps it also had something to do with his gambling instinct. At all events, the concept of an apolitical administration soon ceased to exist. While before 1933 one in seventy-seven Germans was a member of the Nazi Party, there were ten times that number at the height of the Third Reich.94 The civil service was more thoroughly penetrated by Nazism than most other sections of German society. After the colossal influx of new Party members in March 1933, admission of new applicants for membership was stopped until 1937. By then 80 per cent of the civil servants in Prussia were in the Party, and by 1939 membership had become a condition of entry into any department of the civil service.95 However, even before this condition had come into force, the
[47] scramble for Party membership by civil servants was that the *vox populi* dubbed the profession at large 'the 150 per cent Nazis'. The overall drabness of the world in which most civil servants in the Third Reich moved was characterized by countless regulations and decrees which in substance were ridiculous enough to give rise to political satire. They also led to quotations and situations in which the farcical element, though strong, was quite unintentional. A good example of this is the Hitler salute. Like the oath of personal allegiance to the
[48] *Führer,* the Hitler salute was made compulsory for civil servants. However, customs and excise officials working on the railways were ordered to maintain their former military salute, because Hitler salutes had been mistaken for signals and had caused accidents. Eventually, the Hitler salute became a robot-like reaction in civil servants. The following anecdote, supposedly recording an actual event, bears witness to this:
[49] The former Emperor William II, who was living in exile at 'Haus Doorn' in the Netherlands, remained a focus for Royalist sentiments in Germany long after Hitler had come to power.
An elderly school teacher decided to pay a visit to the Kaiser during the school holidays; she was notified by the Adjutant that His Majesty would be pleased to grant her an audience on a specified day. In due course she took the train to Holland, and after arrival at 'Haus Doorn' was told to wait in a pavilion as His Majesty was still occupied in sawing some wood in the park, as was his wont.
Deeply sunk in thought she awaited *the* moment in her life: to see her monarch in the flesh.
Suddenly a door opened behind her and the Emperor stood before her. In a flurry she got up, and by a reflex action elevated her right arm to give the automatic greeting, 'Heil Hitler!' One can imagine her mortification when the Kaiser, without saying a word, left the room.
As early as 1935 the *vox populi* in Bavaria satirized the undue compliance of civil servants with Hitler's policies, as is shown by the following advertisement
[50] in a Munich carnival paper: '"Antibyzantinol", an excellent remedy against impotence and lack of backbone'.
However, it was not only people opposed to Nazidom who produced

satirical comments; many Party officials aped their master's contempt for civil
[51] servants, and insulting epithets for the profession multiplied: 'pedantic jacks-in-office, hidebound by routine', 'arteriosclerotics with ink in their veins' and 'pen-pushers divorced from the pulsating reality of the National Socialist struggle'.
It is possible that the following comment also originated within the Party:
[52] Q. 'What is the best way to replace worn-out weather-vanes on church steeples?'
A. 'Put civil servants there instead—they're always the first to know which way the wind is blowing.'
Hitler's prejudice against the legal profession96 rubbed off on to the Civil
[53] Service, especially as most higher civil servants in most government departments were law graduates. When in March 1933 great numbers of them joined the Party, the 'Old Fighters' took up the warning cry, 'The lawyers are diluting the Party'. When the power of the *Gauleiters* became almost paramount in the mid thirties, they interfered at will in the private lives of civil servants in their
[54] *Gau.* One of them, Schwede-Coburg, even decreed: 'By...1937 every civil servant and State employee in my *Gau* above the age of twenty-five must be married.'97

**HITLER YOUTH AND BDM**

German youth had for decades shown a tendency to make its presence felt in public by the *Jugendbewegung,*98 a movement which found expression in a great variety of organizations. These included the *Wandervögel*99 (founded in 1899) who had merged in 1913 with other groups to form the *Freideutsche Jugend,*100 Protestant and Catholic youth groups, and from 1911 onwards, the *Pfadfinder.*101

The main aims they had in common were self-determination, the fostering of a sense of responsibility, telling the truth and cultivating simple pastimes like hiking, folk songs and folk dances. These characteristics stemmed to a large extent from the liberal background of the young people in such organizations, though a little later proletarian youth movements which were Marxist-oriented and were modelled on adult organizations also came into being. Although after the First World War *Wandervögel* and *Pfadfinder* merged to become the *Deutsche Freischar,*102 there was still a great variety of youth groups with largely apolitical or negative attitudes towards the State which determined their eventual fate. As early as 1932 the Hitler Youth numbered over 100,000 voluntary members. Baldur von Schirach, *Reichsjugendführer der NSDAP* from 1931 onwards, was thus able to proclaim that 'the NSDAP is the Party of youth'.103 It was also inevitable that with the Nazi takeover the existing German youth groups should be finished. In April 1933 the *Reichsausschuss der deutschen Jugendverbände*104 in Berlin was seized by fifty Hitler Youths, directed by a senior leader,105 and soon afterwards all the property of these organizations was

28 Baldur von Schirach

appropriated by the Hitler Youth. Incidentally, this served as a model to Dr Ley, who one month later smashed the trade unions and seized their assets throughout Germany.106

Under von Schirach the Hitler Youth increased its membership to six million by the end of 1936, when it became 'State Youth'. As from 25 March of that year, service in the Hitler Youth became compulsory under the law. The Führer placed no value on 'intellectual education' in his *Hitler Jugend,* and as 'conscience was a Jewish invention' to him, his aim was to recreate the 'admirable free beast of prey' in his young followers.107 Hitler's concept of the

[55] *Hitler Jugend's (HJ's)* desirable attributes can be gauged from his own words: 'I want them to be brutal, masterful, fearless and cruel...'108 To this may be added his publicly formulated definition of the ideal Hitler youth: 'As tough as

[56] leather, as fast as a greyhound, and as hard as Krupp's steel!'109

As it happened, neither of these images corresponded with the physical and emotional make-up of Baldur von Schirach. His soft, almost feminine features, his literary inclinations, and his entire background quite naturally separated him from the tough environment of the vast organization he commanded. His speeches lacked the mesmeric quality of Hitler's performances and were equally distinct from the satirical but fascinating demagogic addresses which Goebbels delivered to Berliners. Von Schirach's pallid speeches were well above the heads

[57] of the daredevils among his *Hitler Jugend* 'troops', who regarded them as 'a

mixture of an academic lecture and a lyrical poem'.110 He always found it difficult to adopt a tough image himself.111
When he objected to the anti-Semitic excesses in November 1938 and later remonstrated with Hitler personally about his Eastern policy and about the liquidation of the Jews, his fall from grace was inevitable, although Hitler did make him *Gauleiter* of Vienna in 1940. Eventually, though, when in 1943 an exhibition von Schirach arranged in Vienna included works of 'degenerate art',112 Hitler, the self-appointed judge in all matters concerning art,113 felt himself challenged on his own ground and accused von Schirach of being the 'leader of the cultural opposition'. From then on von Schirach knew, and indeed himself admitted, that he was 'politically dead'.114
As to the organization of the *HJ,* boys aged six to ten years served as *Pimpfe,*115 and up to the age of fourteen they were in the *Deutsche Jungvolk (DJ)*.116 Girls of this older age group were known as *Jungmädel (JM)*.117 Teenage boys aged fifteen and above had to serve in the *Hitlerjugend (HJ)* proper,118 while girls had to join the *Bund deutscher Mädel (BDM)*.119 For older girls aged between seventeen and twenty-one a voluntary organization known as 'Faith and Beauty'120 became available. Hitler often apostrophized his Hitler
[58] Youth: 'You are the guarantors of the future'.121 This was easily parodied to become 'You are the emigrants of the future!'
When it was rumoured that plans were afoot to incorporate a still younger age group—those under six—in the Hitler Youth, the following helpful suggestions were soon forthcoming. In accordance with the general trend of describing all Nazi organizations not exclusively by their proper names but also by their initials, it was proposed that the toddlers might best be known as the
[59] "AA-men".122 In much the same way, a mother scolds her toddler, 'You can say
[60] "Heil Hitler" well enough, but you still can't say "AA"!'123
When a *Pimpf* had passed his initiation test for entry into the *Deutsche Jungvolk* he was given a dagger, part of his official equipment now that he was ten years old. The following story is based on this important ritual:
[61] At school the boy is told by his teacher that his last report is quite inadequate. Furiously, the boy drives his dagger into the top of his desk and shouts, 'And it is for this that we have fought for fourteen years!'124
Then there is the story of the little boy crying because he has lost his way. A
[62] policeman on his beat tries to console him and asks him what he was doing so far from home. Thereupon the boy answers, between sobs, 'I've just been to a leadership conference.'
[63] When the mother of a ten-year old *Jungvolkjunge* asks him to play with the little girl next door she gets this reply: 'Out of the question! I am in uniform!'
[64] The same attitude of the uniformed Hitler Youth is reflected in this new definition of a child. 'The term "Child" describes the non-uniformed creature which has never participated in a group meeting or a routine march.'

[65] The *Bund deutscher Mädel* (BDM) naturally gave rise to jokes based on the initials BDM, all of them with a rather suggestive flavour, such as: 'Baldur, squeeze me!'125, 'Soon-to-be German mother'126, 'Requirement for German men'127, 'German Milchcows' League'128, 'German Mattresses' League'129.
[66] One may conclude with an extract from a fictitious letter from home, which refers to a pregnancy started by a girl during her *Landjahr*.130 It also includes satirical references to some of the abbreviations most frequently used for Nazi organizations—KDF, BDM, NSV: 'Kannst Dich freuen! Bald deutsche Mutter! Nun suche Vati!' ('You can be pleased. You'll soon be a German mother. Now look for the father.')

**THE ARMED FORCES**

It hardly seems justifiable to count the Armed Forces among the institutions of the Third Reich when one recalls the exclamation of General Ludwig Beck,
[67] former Chief-of-Staff of the German General Staff Corps, on being ousted in August 1938: 'What is that dog doing to our beautiful Germany!' The same officer could rightly call 2 August 1934 'the blackest day of my life!',131 because on that day Hindenburg died, and Hitler, having quite unconstitutionally amalgamated the offices of Chancellor and President, immediately afterwards proclaimed himself Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. There was now no one who outranked him, and any potential restraining power the Reichstag might have exercised had been largely swept away by the *Ermächtigungsgesetz*.132

Once a personal oath of loyalty to Hitler was required from each soldier, the German Armed Forces had indeed become one of the institutions of the Third Reich. By tradition, the Army was the Senior Service. It had many more men than both the Navy and the Air Force put together. Moreover, its officer corps, especially the senior ranks, included proportionally a far greater number of opponents of the régime than the other two Services. It is therefore not surprising to note that most of the comments critical of the régime—jokes, quips and even some remarkably cranky statements—can be traced to the Army. In some instances even the circumstances are known: In 1937 an NCO
[68] addressed newly arrived recruits, saying, 'I shall see to it that you'll forget all that Stormtrooper nonsense. I shall cast out that damned SA spirit!'

Nor was it only the officers who were disillusioned with the new régime. In 1935 a Stormtrooper in Braunsberg (East Prussia) struck one soldier and stabbed two others because they had referred to the natives as 'snooty Ox-
[69] Prussians'133 and had said, 'First comes the Army, then a great heap of dung, then nothing, and then, perhaps, the NSDAP.'

In 1936 a certain Lance-Corporal Mandelke was tried for making
[70] derogatory remarks about the régime, such as: 'Dr Goebbels is the greatest blackguard of the twentieth century', and 'If there should be a *Putsch,*134 General von Blomberg would hardly subordinate himself to the former Lance-Corporal

Hitler′, and ‘The Nazis won′t last long—the day is coming when they′ll be overthrown by the Army.′ Mandelke also produced this verse:
[71] Rather a Kaiser, by God′s grace anointed,
Than Berchtesgaden′s Hitler, by himself appointed.135
In 1935 a group of soldiers, enjoying themselves in high spirits in a Berlin
[72] restaurant, applied lighted matches to the tall feathers of the eagle on the badge sewn to their uniform jackets,136 saying, ‘Now let′s incinerate that miserable bird!′137
Many of the senior officers of the Army shared the antipathy of their men
[73] toward the Nazis, which was expressed by one of them in this way: ‘The Army is the aristocratic form of emigration from Hitler′s Germany.′138 Another true incident, this time involving a regimental commander in Silesia, revealed similar
[74] feelings. In 1934 this officer addressed his subalterns as follows: ‘There has been a lot of talk about a certain Herr Hitler recently. I have recently been to Berlin; Herr Hitler is no "Herr" [gentleman], and that is that.′139
During the years before the war quite a number of civilians and also civil servants nourished the hope that the Army would eventually restore normality in Germany and cut the Party′s wild men or its big shots—the so-called ‘Bonzocracy′140—down to size. It was even rumoured that General von Blomberg, the Minister of War, had defined the life span of the régime in a punning acronym: NSDAP, which could be decoded as follows: ‘Nur so lange
[75] *d*ie *A*rmee *p*ariert′.141
However, no such hopes were ever to be fulfilled, and the officer appointed *Reichswehrminister* one day before the old President made Hitler Chancellor—General von Blomberg—may well have suited von Hindenburg′s picture of the non-political soldier who would exert his restraining influence so as to curb the wild schemes of the Nazis. Most unfortunately, von Blomberg′s personality was quite unsuited to such a task. A soldier of great distinction in his military career—he had won the *Pour le Mérite* in the First World War and had been Commander-in-Chief of the Army outpost of East Prussia thereafter, and had also served as Chief of the General Staff of the *Reichswehr*—von Blomberg was a trusting, impressionable, enthusiastic idealist. To make matters worse, Colonel von Reichenau, his second-in-command in East Prussia was personally known to Hitler as one of his most enthusiastic supporters within the Army, a man motivated by ambition just as much as von Blomberg was by emotion. From the start von Blomberg had made a very favourable impression on Hitler, who was impressed by what might be termed his classic physique and by his appearance, his modern military ideas and political inclinations. Thus the stage was set for a tragedy of the first magnitude for Germany, for the army, and ultimately for von Blomberg personally. Like so many before and after him, he ‘fell′ for Hitler to such an extent that he became his leading protagonist among the generals. Even before Hitler′s access to power, during his years at

Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia, von Blomberg mused about his 'great historical mission'—to bring together the *Wehrmacht*142 and the Party.143
Although von Blomberg, in his capacity as *Reichswehrrminister* under von Hindenburg and later under Hitler, never permitted soldiers of any rank to join the NSDAP, his admiration of Hitler soon became so widely known that he was
[76] nicknamed 'Hitlerjunge Quex' after a character in one of the propaganda films of Goebbels, in which the hero displayed the same blind enthusiasm as the
[77] General. His detractors, however—presumably because he never stood up to Hitler—satirically referred to him as 'Blomberg, the rubber lion'.144
Unfortunately, von Blomberg's loyalty to Hitler was not reciprocated. He fell victim to an intrigue organized by his bitter enemy, Göring,145 with the help of Himmler and Heydrich, following the General's marriage to his secretary (a lady with a past), though the man ultimately responsible for this intrigue was Hitler himself. Although he had been the guest of honour and a witness at von Blomberg's wedding, Hitler was motivated in this intrigue by two factors, his vanity and his reckless ambition for conquests. For years von Blomberg had warned him against such ambitions. The General's *mésalliance* gave Hitler the long-desired opportunity of getting rid of any remnants of conservative opposition. Not content with dismissing von Blomberg, Hitler—again with Göring's support—managed to force out of office the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General von Fritsch, who would have been the natural successor of von Blomberg. This was engineered by an entirely unsubstantiated accusation of homosexuality, which left von Fritsch no alternative but to resign.146
When in January 1938 Hitler forced von Blomberg's resignation he pressed
[78] him to name a suitable successor. When the name of Keitel was mentioned by
[79] Hitler, von Blomberg said, 'Keitel is nobody but the man who runs my office', to which Hitler replied, 'That's exactly the man I am looking for!' After this
[80] 'Chef de Bureau' had been nominated 'Head of the High Command of the Armed Forces' his servility to Hitler became so apparent that he was often referred to as 'Lakeitel'.147 Both von Fritsch and his successor von Brauchitsch, the new C.-in-C. of the Army, were, to their own misfortune, entirely
[81] uninterested in politics,148 as were many high-ranking officers. General Udet, of the *Luftwaffe,* was even credited with saying, 'Politics? Only a funny noise in the background!'
There can be little doubt that after 1936—when Hitler sent his troops into the demilitarized part of the Rhineland—the great majority of Germans felt that war was a definite possibility, especially as there was enough evidence of rearmament all over the country. Jokes about the Army began to circulate in ever-increasing numbers. Hitler's rearmament led to 'a watering-down of the officer corps'149 by means of the creation of a 'novel category of people's officer', the *Volksoffizier;* he simply promoted NCOs on a very large scale. It is
[82] therefore not surprising that before long they were referred to as *Vomags*150 (people's officers with proletarian mugs). Uniform mania in Nazi Germany now
[83] came in for satirical comment. A fictitious Army order of the day ran, 'In future

all Army uniforms will be abolished in order to make soldiers more easily distinguished from the rest of the population.'
By 1939 mustering centres had been set up all over the country. Before long these became targets for the *vox populi:*
[84] Count Bobby151 is called up. At the mustering centre he tells the army doctor, 'But I only wish to serve at the Führer's HQ!'
The doctor asks, 'Are you mad?'
Count Bobby replies, 'Is that necessary there?'152
[85] A civilian wearing strong glasses reports, 'I am very short-sighted.'
The doctor writes down, 'Suitable for close-combat duty.'
[86] Shortly before the war it is rumoured that the Army Supreme Command has decided that it will be impossible to issue any gas masks for the civilian population. The reason for this is that their faces are getting longer and longer.
[87] The Navy, in contrast with the Army, attracted only occasional satire. However, the name of the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, Raeder, suited itself to a pun. When Raeder was replaced in the course of the war by Admiral Doenitz, people adapted a wartime slogan: 'Raeder [wheels] musste rollen für den Sieg'.153
[88] After his dismissal he became known as the *Urgrossadmiral*.154
Other 'naval' jokes have a more professional flavour, such as the various references to the inadequate size of the German Navy:
[89] Q. What are we *vis-à-vis* the British Navy?
A. A poisonous dwarf against the Colossus of Rhodes.155
and
[90] Q. What have we got in reality?
A. A *Gartenzwergflotte* [a fleet of garden gnomes].156
As the war on land, in the air and at sea brought in its train a continuous series of defeats, this quip circulated:
[91] Q. What country possesses the most effective man-of-war?
A. Germany, of course. She has the 'Hitler'—the greatest 'destroyer' in the whole world.
Göring, surely the favourite target of the jokes in circulation, appears on occasion in a naval context:
[92] Invited to a naval review Göring gets rather seasick. In the evening, during the festive dinner in the battleship's wardroom, the youngest lieutenant has to make the usual witty speech in honour of the exalted guest. The officer announces that he has been notified by King Neptune that the Reich Marshal has just been promoted to 'Reich Fish Food Supplier' with the right to wear the 'maritime mesh-net vest.'157
The Versailles Treaty of 1919 forbade Germany to have an air force or

indeed to build any civilian aircraft. Thus the creation of the *Luftwaffe* by Göring at the very outset of the Third Reich made it only just that this youngest service of the German Armed Forces should become known as the 'Nazi Service'.158

Jokes about the *Luftwaffe* will be found elsewhere in this book. They refer to the secret building authorized by Göring in contravention of the Versailles Treaty, the huge numbers of aeroplanes that were put into service, and of course Göring's boasts as to the role of the *Luftwaffe* in a future conflict.

The fate of General von Fritsch may serve as a concluding comment on the somewhat ambiguous role of the Armed Forces in the Third Reich. For the benefit, perhaps, of later generations he recorded his indignation about his shameful treatment which ended in his dismissal without any effective rehabilitation. As a man of fatalistic temperament, he refused to participate in any plot aimed at the overthrow of Hitler, saying, 'This man is Germany's fate, and this fate will go its way to the end.'159 Towards the end of the Polish campaign, on 22 September 1939, this same General von Fritsch accompanied a forward patrol, wearing on his greatcoat the red lapels of high rank. It was perhaps these which drew the fire of a sharpshooter—and the General fell, mortally wounded.160

**5**

**THE JEWS**

It is the absurdity of Hitler's anti-Semitism which characterizes many of the jokes given below. They date from the period subsequent to the enactment of the Aryan laws1 which affected millions of Germans of all social and intellectual backgrounds. As they tried to comply with the new laws some people showed that they had misunderstood the meaning of the word 'Aryan' as defined by the Government. Others produced a wide range of stylistic solecisms, non-sequiturs and other oddities in their letters to church and Government authorities, as shown in the first section.

Next, a significant number of the jokes produced by Jews themselves testifies to the inimitable quality of Jewish humour. This sense of humour enabled the Jews to become virtually the only nation, during a long history of persecution, to laugh not only at their oppressors but at the same time occasionally at themselves.2

Intolerance, bureaucracy and ignorance are shown as the besetting Nazi sins and are contrasted with an intelligent and occasionally ingenious response on the part of the Jews towards repression.

**THE ARYAN GRANDMOTHER**

[1] Please send me, by return of post, my grandmother, being required for marriage; stamped addressed envelope enclosed.

[2] I am of Arabian descent; please, will you confirm this.

[3] I can't give you any particulars, as my grandmother died in 1882, and has left me as her only heirloom. But she is said to have been very Aryan.

[4] An Austrian needs his Aryan documentation3 and applies to the appropriate parish. When he goes to collect the result of his enquiries the priest in charge seems rather put out. 'I have to tell you something rather awful,' the clergyman says, 'about your grandfather.' 'Well, what was the matter with him?' asks the Austrian. 'He was a robber and murderer,' says the priest, full of pity. 'Oh, is that all?' says the man. 'I was afraid he might have been a Jew!'

[5] Please send me the particulars of my agrarian grandmother with birth and death, as I require them urgently.

[6] Because of the general upheaval I require the official proof of my birth.

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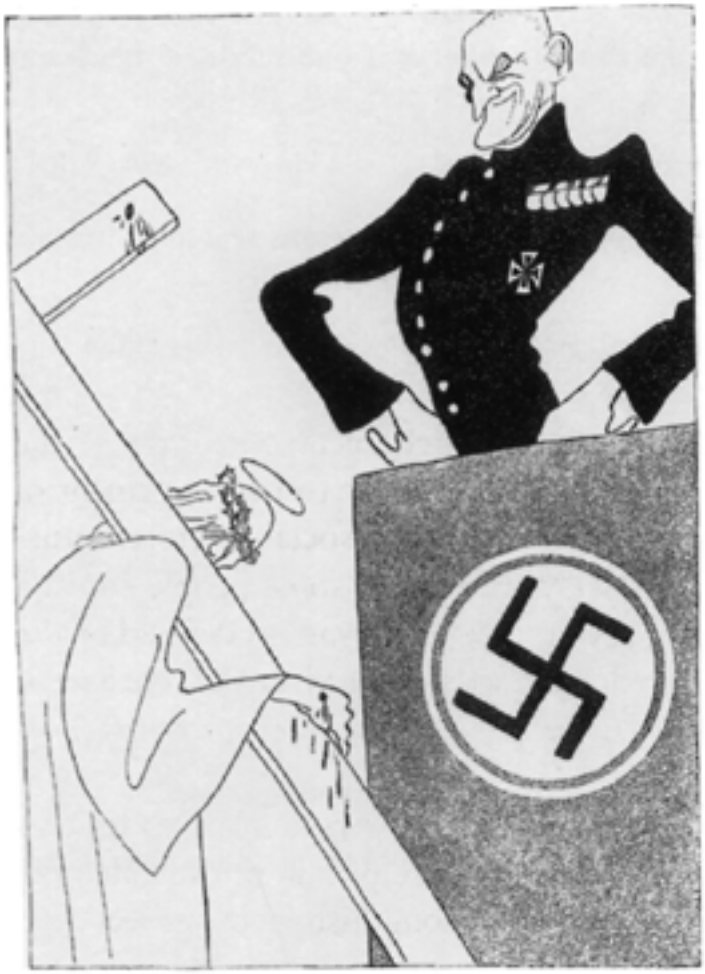


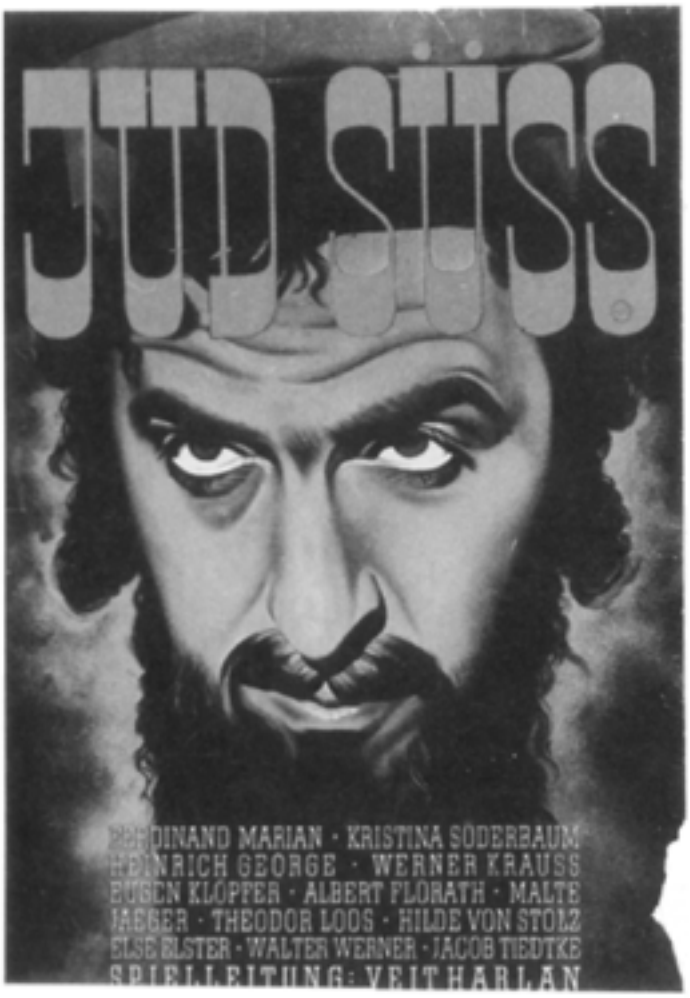
29 Can you prove you had an Aryan grandmother?
[7] Will you please send me my afterbirth,4 with reference to 18 April 1875. I am required to produce it for my Aryan descent.
[8] My birth took place in your church. Will you therefore certify it?
[9] I require my marriage certificate most urgently, because I am the nine-headed father of a family.5
[10] Today I come to you about a matter which has really nothing to do with you.6 It is because I need my grandmother, but she has not yet been officially required.7
[11] Further, I want to ask you for your kind reply as to whether my grandfather appears in your burial register. He died from8 1821–1859.
[12] I ought to state further that my parents forgot to get married.
[13] In the year 1880 Mr X married, died of jaundice, and had a military funeral.
[14] As I have no knowledge9 here where I live, I come to you with my birth.10
[15] In the search for the connections suggested by the Führer I unfortunately lack the connections.11
[16] My Aryan grandfather must be with you, and this is the reason why I ask you to send him to me. Stamps are enclosed.
[17] I respectfully request you to supply the birth certificate which has been born in your town on 10.6.1915, for the purpose of Aryan descent.12

[18] My grandmother maintains that she was very13 Aryan. One can't be sure about that on word-of-mouth evidence,14 but one cannot doubt it if one sees it in black and white.
[19] Please send me my birth15 in order that I can get married.
[20] Thank God my grandmother was illegitimate; that saves me searching for the marriage.16
[21] I am a wedding child: I was born on my parents' wedding day, when they were married and I was baptized.
[22] My grandmother had already been born in the old 'garden church'. As I believe that this doesn't exist any more, I am writing to you to ask how she17 can now be traced.
[23] All I know of my grandparents is that they died of cholera in the fifties—in reality they died of smallpox in 1870.
[24] I have looked up the Aryans in the Encyclopedia: they come from Asia. We have no relatives there; we come from Prenzlau.18
[25] Because of the new law for civil servants I require my great-grandmother.19
[26] I have been labouring for a very long time with the birth of my grandmother; please give me a hand with it.20
[27] To conclude my letter I would like to mention that my husband is an unborn Aryan.21
[28] Who is the most sought-after woman in Germany? The Aryan granny!
[29] One could also praise the Jewish great-grandmother. She has brought the money into the family yet doesn't harm one's career.22
[30] A fairytale revised:
Little Red Riding-Hood, having lost her way in the forest, encounters the bad wolf. 'Now, what are you looking for here?' he asks her. 'I am trying to find my granny,' she replies. 'Yes, I know,' says the wolf. 'Quite a few people are looking for their Aryan grannies nowadays!'
[31] A woman in a Jewish cemetery is busy pouring water from a watering can onto several graves. An attendant comes along and asks her what she is doing. 'I am baptizing my ancestors,' she replies.23
[32] Advertisement in 1933:
'Swap genuine Van Dyck painting for Aryan grandmother.'24
[33] Advertisement in 1943:
'Swap golden Party badge for non-Aryan grandmother.'25

**JEWISH WIT IN THE THIRD REICH**

[34] The Aryan test.
The rueful Jewish question was: 'Are you an Aryan or are you learning English?'
[35] Question: 'What is an Aryan?' Answer: 'The rear part of a proletarian.'

30 Poster for the exhibition ‘The Eternal Jew’. Munich 1937




31 Poster for the film 'Jud Süss', *c.* 1940

32 The girl who had a Jewish boyfriend

[36] Shortly before he came to power Hitler made one of his famous speeches. In the front row sat a little Jew who shook his head and smiled the whole time. Hitler had the Jew brought to him afterwards and asked him why he had behaved as he had. 'I was amazed and asked myself some questions,' said the Jew. 'To remember Pharaoh we eat matzos. To remember Haman26 we celebrate Purim and eat three-cornered poppy-seed cakes. I wonder what holiday we will celebrate and what we will eat after your exit!'

[37] Early in the Third Reich a deputation of Jews asks for an audience with Hitler, during which they beg him for better treatment for their co-religionists. He agrees, on one condition: once a week all Jews in Germany must observe a day of prayer on which they must pray for Hitler's eternal youth. They gratefully accept this proposal. Hitler, remaining suspicious, has the main synagogue bugged by the Gestapo. To his horror he hears the Jews imploring Jehovah, 'May the Führer of the Third Reich never get old!'

[38] At about the same time a Catholic priest, a Protestant pastor and a Rabbi meet privately and muse about how long Hitler's government is likely to last. Neither the Catholic nor the Protestant want to commit themselves, whereupon the Rabbi says, 'Never mind whether it turns out to be Christmas, Easter or Whitsun—it'll be a feast day whenever it ends!'

[39] During the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin the obvious manifestations of persecution of the Jews were much reduced. For this reason the wits of Berlin said that the Jews now had a new patron saint: St Olympiade.27

[40] A Jew is asked what the difference is between a catastrophe and an accident. His reply is: 'If Hitler and his cabinet are sitting on the balcony of the Reich Chancellery and are all killed when the balcony collapses, I would call it an accident, but not a catastrophe by any means!'

[41] Bitter jokes in 1935.
Old Goldstein meets his friend Cahn in Berlin. 'What's the matter with you? You look so miserable!' says Goldstein. 'How can one be happy?' replies Cahn. 'And apart from that, old Davidsohn has just died!' 'Well,' responds Goldstein, 'what about it, if he can now improve his position!'
[42] Old Davidsohn, lying in his home dying, and surrounded by his family who believe that he has breathed his last, opens his eyes once more and says, 'I could laugh if it were the same shlamassel28 on the other side!'
[43] In the Berlin underground a labourer offers his seat to an old Jewess who is wearing the prescribed Star of David on the lapel of her coat, with the words, 'Do take my seat, you little *Sternschnuppe*!'29 When another passenger makes a disparaging remark about the workman's act of compassion and courtesy the latter replies, in a strong Berlin accent, 'I can still do what I like with my Aryan behind!'
[44] Early in 193330 a teacher asks his pupils, 'Do you know who wrote *Mein Kampf*?' Nobody answers except Maurice Goldstein who lifts his index finger and says, 'Not me, sir!' The teacher, greatly annoyed at this example of Jewish impudence, summons the boy's father and gives him a severe telling-off. Old Goldstein apologizes profusely for his son's forwardness and precociousness and even has to admit that Maurice might (though very rarely) be impudent. The teacher is by no means satisfied, but then old Goldstein says, 'I can't conceive that my son was lying when he said that he had *not* written *Mein Kampf*. But should I really be wrong in my assumption, please forgive him; Maurice is but a little child.'31
[45] *Der letzte Hirsch*32 may now be shot in the province of Franconia. Any sportsman interested should apply to 'Str. Nuremberg'.33
[46] Two frightened Jews in Vienna meet shortly after the *Anschluss*.34
'How are you?' asks one of them.
'So-so,' replies the other.
'And how is your brother?'
'Oh, he is wonderful. He's the Chief Rabbi of Berlin!'
'My, my,' exclaims the other admiringly. 'And that as a Jew!'
[47] Two Jews in Berlin discuss their sad plight. 'Terrible,' says one of them, 'persecution, discrimination, not enough food, air raids—and then Hitler to cap it all. Sometimes I think we'd be better off if we hadn't been born!' 'Sure, sure,' his friend replies, 'but who can be so lucky? Not one in twenty thousand!'
[48] A Jew is arrested during the war, having been denounced for killing a Nazi at 10 p.m. and even eating the brain of his victim. This is his defence: In the first place a Nazi hasn't got any brain. Secondly, a Jew doesn't eat anything that comes from a pig. And thirdly, he could not have killed the Nazi at 10 p. m. because at that time everybody listens to the BBC broadcast.35
[49] Albert Einstein: 'If my theory of relativity is proven correct, Germany will claim me as a German, and France will declare that I am a citizen of the world. If my theory should prove to be false, then France will say that I am a German, and Germany will say I am a Jew.'36

[50] Very early in 1933 a Jewish baker sends his non-Jewish apprentice to one of his customers. The boy rings the bell at the customer's house addressing him thus: 'Heil Hitler, Mr Cohen. Here are your matzos!'37
[51] At about the same time Blumenthal travels to Berlin. When he comes back he tells his friend, 'I have seen Goebbels. He looks like Apoll...'
'Are you crazy?' exclaims his friend. 'That miserable cripple!'
'Don't interrupt me. I was going to say he looks like a Polish Yid!'38
[52] Two Jews meet on the street.
'I have good news for you,' says the one, 'partly good and partly bad.'
'Please tell me the good news first.'
'Hitler is dead!'
'Excellent! Now the bad news?'
'It's not true.'
[53] It is 1933. A Jew appears at a register office with an urgent request to be permitted to change his name. The official seems very reluctant at first but eventually asks the Jew his name.
'My name is Adolf Stinkfoot.'
Well,' says the official, 'in that case I think I can accede to your request. Which new name have you chosen?'
'Maurice Stinkfoot.'
[54] Two Jews meet in their favourite café in Berlin.
'You know, Samuel, come to think of it, Moses was a real nincompoop!'
'How can you insult our great prophet, Isaac? After all, he did manage to get us out of Egypt.'
'That's just it. If he hadn't done that we would both have British passports now!'39
[55] Soon after Hitler comes to power well-established Jews in Berlin begin to convert their ready cash into valuable antiques. One day an antique dealer contacts an old customer, Mr Pfeffer, a wealthy banker.
'I have something rather special for you today, a death mask of Franz Liszt.'
Pfeffer examines it for some time, and then asks, 'Have you got something like that of Hitler?'
[56] At a German school early in the Third Reich a teacher takes the roll-call.
'Hinrichs, what is your Christian name?'
'Balduin, sir.'
'And yours, Hartwig?'
'Knut, sir.'
'And yours, Rosenzweig?'
'Would you believe it, sir? It's Adolf!'40
[57] From an essay at a German school:
'The Jews tried to suck the German people dry, but Adolf Hitler beat them to it.'
[58] Early in 1933 a Jew passes by a beggar who is wearing dark glasses and sitting by the roadside.41 On the beggar's chest is a placard with the inscription, 'Completely blind.

I don't accept any handouts from Jews.' The Jew approaches the beggar nervously, whispering, 'Here are five marks, but please remove your placard.' To which the 'blind' Nazi replies, 'Don't give me any of your *ezes*!42 Are you trying to teach *me* how to beg from these bandits?'
[59] Pg-43 Müller meets Cohn, an old acquaintance of his, on the street. Sarcastically he greets him with 'Heil Hitler!' 'Am I a psychiatrist?' replies Cohn.44
[60] A Jew from Galicia45 is being attacked by an Alsatian and defends himself by hitting the dog over the head with a stick before being bitten by the animal. The next day the headline in the paper reads: 'Jewish hawker bites German dog.'
[61] A Swiss visits his Jewish friend in Germany.
'How do you manage in the Third Reich?' he asks him.
'I feel like a tapeworm,' answers the Jew. 'Day and night I am on the move among the brown masses and am waiting to be purged!'
[62] Adolf Hitler, the fire brigade and the SS all have equal right of way. Not surprisingly there is a collision of the three vehicles. Who is at fault? The Jews.
[63] Some Nazis surround an old Jew and ask him who is responsible for the war. 'The Jews,' he answers. And then he adds, 'and the cyclists.'
'Why the cyclists?' ask the puzzled Nazis.
'Why the Jews?' replies the old man.
[64] Two Jews, imprisoned in a concentration camp not far from the Dutch border, manage to escape. Although they are being pursued by guards on motorbikes, they just manage to cross the Dutch frontier. The Dutch customs officers hand them over to some Dutch soldiers who march with them to the nearest town where they are to be given shelter as refugees from Nazi tyranny. During their march one of the Jews remarks to the other in a whisper, 'And that's what the Dutch call marching! Compare that performance with *our* stormtroopers!'46
[65] An SS officer who has just arrested a Jew says to him, 'I have one glass eye. If you guess correctly which it is, I'll let you go.' To this the prisoner replies, 'It is the left one.' 'Correct', exclaims the officer. 'How did you manage to guess?' 'Oh,' says the Jew, 'your left eye has such a human, compassionate expression!'
[66] 1937 in Vienna—one year before the *Anschluss*. Grün to a Jewish friend: 'I don't think that Hitler will ever march into Austria. If he did there would certainly be war. Just look at the globe. There is little Germany in the centre, and all the rest belongs to some other nation—France, England with her Empire, Russia—not to mention America.' 'Yes, yes, Grün,' replies his friend, 'but does Hitler know it?'
[67] 1938 in Vienna. One night a very drunk Nazi encounters Naftali walking along and looking rather frightened.
'You, you...are...a Yid!' shouts the Nazi. 'And you,' replies Naftali, defensively, 'You are completely drunk!' 'Yes, yes,' agrees the Nazi, 'but that will only last until tomorrow.'
[68] At Innsbruck Railway Station in 1939:

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SS officers have arrested several Jews and drag them into a waiting train. On the platform two Tyroleans in their *Lederhosen*47 observe the scene. 'Aren't those Jews rather stupid?' remarks one of them. 'Why don't they wear *Lederhosen* like the locals? Then nobody would take them for Jews.' 'Who do you think you are talking to?' replies the other 'Tyrolean'.48

[69] In the notorious concentration camp of Treblinka, where the prisoners were employed to carry the gassed corpses of inmates to the crematorium, prisoners who ate too much would be told by their fellows, 'Oy, Moische, don't overeat! Think of those of us who will have to carry you!' And slackers were known as 'child specialists'.

[70] At Treblinka, too, the sad consolation to friends whom one had to leave was: 'Come on, cheer up, old man. We'll meet again some day in a better world—in a shop window as soap.' The usual reply to this last remark was: 'Yes, but while they'll make toilet soap from my fat, you'll be a bar of cheap laundry soap!'49

These macabre examples of Jewish wit are probably very rare indeed. Therefore it is appropriate, as indicative of the general trend of Jewish humour which has survived, for this chapter to conclude with a number of jokes dealing with Jews who escaped the holocaust by emigrating.50

[71] There are two kinds of Jews in the Third Reich: optimists and pessimists. The pessimists have emigrated, and the optimists are in Hitler's concentration camps.

33 Ritual Murder Season at Streicher's 'We have no time just now. We are celebrating the Passover...'

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Der Stürmer

Deutsches Wochenblatt zum Kampfe um die Wahrheit

HERAUSGEBER: JULIUS STREICHER

Nummer 11 | Nürnberg, im März 1940 | 18. Jahr 1940

# Verjudete Aristokratie

Warum Frankreich dem Untergang preisgegeben ist

Bis zum Endsieg

Was dem Debatt

Die Juden sind unser Unglück!

34 *Der Stürmer,* cover of March 1940

35 War Times

[72] Two Jews have emigrated. The Jewish community in the foreign country which has accepted them asks about their profession. One of the newcomers, a doctor, is not yet qualified in his adoptive country. However, he is permitted to work as a male nurse in the Jewish hospital.
The other immigrant states that he is a cantor.51 As this profession is a religious one he is not expected to do any menial work and is given a small pension. However, after some time, the elders of the synagogue feel that he should show his gratitude by occasionally acting as a cantor. In desperation the man goes to see his doctor friend. 'What shall I do?' he begs. 'I can't sing!'
The doctor has an idea about how to solve the problem. 'Just get up during the service,' he advises. 'Shout one note, and then fall down. Let me handle the rest.'
And this is what happens. From his place in the middle of the congregation the doctor pushes his way to the front where his friend is lying on the floor, and then reveals himself as a doctor, saying, 'He will live, fellow Jews. But I'm afraid he has lost his voice completely and forever!'
[73] An American addresses a recently arrived Jewish immigrant in New York on a warm day in March. 'Spring in the air!' he remarks. The Jew understands very little English and replies, 'Why should I? Spring yourself!'52
[74] Pinkus is one of the lucky ones—he has managed to get out of Hitler's Germany. After his arrival in New York he goes for a stroll, enjoying his newfound freedom. There are no placards, 'Not for Jews', etc. anywhere, nor any swastikas in sight either. Feeling happy, he enters a greengrocer's shop to buy some oranges. The salesgirl asks him, 'For juice?' Horrified, Pinkus cries out, 'What! Here too?'53
[75] Two Jews, old friends and both emigrants, meet by mere chance near the Upper Amazon region. 'What are you doing now?' asks one of them.
'I collect snakes, extract their poison, and sell it.'
'And I have started a rubber factory in the centre of the forest. But what has happened to old Nafziger who emigrated with us?'
'Oh, him. He has become an adventurer; he has gone back to Germany!'54
[76] Another emigrant, with a reputation for being rather work-shy, remarks to his friend, 'I am lame.' The friend, aware of his companion's weakness, but also irritated, says 'Are you *meschugge*?55 Pull yourself together. Just think what might happen to you if you persist in pretending to be lame—you might eventually become lame!' 'That won't be a problem,' returns the other. 'Whenever I have had enough of being lame, I can always join a pilgrimage to Lourdes!'
[77] A Jew has survived the gas chambers, but has lost every single one of his relatives. The resettlement officer asks him where he would like to emigrate. 'To Australia,' replies the man. 'But that's so far!' says the officer. 'From where?' asks the Jew.
[78] The purser of a British liner has to visit the cabin of a Jewish refugee. On the table he notices a photograph of Hitler. 'Gosh!' says the purser, 'What are you, a refugee, doing with Hitler's portrait here?' 'Ah,' replies the refugee, 'it's a wrench to leave one's country. I keep the picture as an antidote for homesickness!'
[79] Two Jewish immigrants meet on a street in New York.

'So tell me, are you happy?'
'Sure, I am happy. *Aber glücklich bin ich nicht*.'
[80] A recent immigrant to New York has opened an ice-cream parlour. Above the entrance he puts up a sign: 'No Jews!' Not surprisingly this causes an uproar in the local Jewish community. The Rabbi comes along and complains about this anti-Semitic outrage, whereupon the owner of the shop asks him drily, 'Have you tasted my ice-cream?'
[81] Three Jewish immigrants reminisce in New York. One of them says, 'You may find it difficult to believe, but at home in Vienna I owned the largest department store in the city!'
'And I once owned the most splendid palace there!'
Then the third man, who has a Yorkshire terrier on his lap, says, 'You know, as far as I'm concerned, I was exactly the same sort of *nebochant*56 at home as I am now, here in New York. But my tiny terrier here—he was a great St Bernard then!'
[82] Two Jewish emigrants from Vienna talk about the future, when the war will have ended and they'll both be back in Vienna. 'In ten years' time,' says one, 'I'll take my Rebecca to the Prater.57 There I'll come across an old man who is very shabbily dressed. I shall say to Rebecca, "You just look at him; there goes Hitler!"' The other Jew says, 'I have always known that you are a coward! I'll tell you what *I* shall do in ten years' time. I shall sit in my old café in Vienna reading my paper. Suddenly a chap will come along, lift his hat, and ask most politely, 'Excuse me, sir, but could I borrow your paper when you have finished reading it?' Then I shall hardly look at him, and simply say, "No, the paper is not for you, Herr Hitler!"'
[83] After the war a Jew sits down in his old café in Vienna and asks for the *Völkische Beobachter*.58 The waiter tells him that the paper no longer exists. This scenario is repeated for several days running. Eventually the waiter asks why the customer asks the same question again and again. The Jew replies, 'Just to hear that the paper is no longer being printed.'
[84] The notorious Adolf Eichmann is awaiting execution for his crimes.59 He asks the president of the Israeli court in Jerusalem to be permitted to convert to Judaism before his death. When asked the reason for this odd request he replies, 'Then we'll have one Jew less!'
[85] Vienna, 1946. At a crossroads an American and a British officer are in conversation, when a French major passes by. The American says to his British brother officer, 'Oy! Old Teitelbaum is in Vienna again!'60
[86] London, 1947. After great difficulties Isaac has escaped from Nazi Germany but has not so far been successful in establishing himself in England. One day he sees his former neighbour Samuel alighting from a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce. He greets him excitedly. 'Is it really you, Samuel? And is this your car? You seem to be doing well! You must be very happy.' 'I can't complain,' replies Samuel, 'though you know, Isaac, how can an Englishman be happy when we've lost India?'
[87] West Germany, 1947. At the denazification court61 in Frankfurt a man is being tried because he has been a member of the Stormtroopers. In his defence he pleads that he

is Jewish and that he entered Hitler's Brownshirts in order to save his life. Neither his name nor his appearance seem to have been suspect when he joined the Nazis. However, he has now been denounced by his cousin who fled Nazi Germany in 1933, emigrated to the USA, and later enlisted with the American forces, with whom he has now re-entered Germany, serving with US Intelligence. The former Stormtrooper is acquitted. Perhaps judge and jury appreciate this unique example of *chutzpah*!62
While this incident must be unique, there were quite a few Jews in Germany who escaped Hitler's 'final solution'63 by going into hiding. They became known as *Jüdische U-Boote* (Jewish submarines) and were among the 5,000 Jews in Berlin who, with the help of gentiles, survived the régime in the capital alone.64

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**6**

**ASPECTS OF THE THIRD REICH**

**GLEICHSCHALTUNG**

This neo-German term has a considerable variety of meanings, quite apart from the official definition supplied by the régime itself.1 *Gleichschaltung* (a term which defies literal translation but may be rendered as 'accomplishment of a uniform attitude') was such a unique feature of Nazi Germany that terms like coordination, levelling, equalization or adaptation do not fully convey either the true meaning or the implications which were part of this process. Yet it was this process which determined life in the Third Reich. If one divests the concept of *Gleichschaltung* of its implied benevolence and tries instead to define the overwhelmingly coercive element inherent in its practical application, the term 'complete Nazification' suggests itself as a useful equivalent. *Gleichschaltung* was the logical sequel of Hitler's rise to power. It applied equally to individuals, institutions, organizations and any ideology active against the new creed or even merely suspected of not conforming to it.

36 Germany, the tidiest country in the world

The idea behind it was the determination to extirpate any independent, liberal and unbiased way of thinking which might contain a germ of criticism directed against the régime. Within a few months this aim was reached by levelling down intellectual standards on a wide front to the *niveau* of Röhm's Stormtroopers. This was partly achieved by inventing more and more Party organizations, all with specially designed (and mostly brown) uniforms. In this new country-wide equality there were, quite naturally, a few leaders and many more led; or, in the Orwellian phrase, 'All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.'2

[1] *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer!* was the slogan which highlighted the process of attempted universal equalization. This particular phrase, reiterated all over the country again and again, easily lent itself to ridicule, as when the Dietrich Eckart Theatre3 in Munich installed a huge new curtain with the inscription 'Ein Volk, ein Führer, ein Theater'. The curtain had been designed and the inscription worded by an anti-Nazi, but it took some time before it dawned on the Nazi in charge that the last word, *Theater,*4 might in this context be misinterpreted and had best be replaced by *Reich*.

The thoroughness with which *Gleichschaltung* was carried out became apparent in the following ditty recited by the compère in a cabaret:

[2] A little tree stands in the
wood
With other trees around,
All in the Nazi-foresthood
Forever safe and sound.5

This was followed by applause from the audience, but the compère was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. After his discharge from the camp he reappeared on the stage and recited:

A little tree stood in the
wood,
With other trees around,
None in the Nazi-foresthood,
So I'll be safe and sound.6

A very early victim of *Gleichschaltung* was, of course, the press. When in 1933 one German newspaper after another became *gleichgeschaltet* one experienced old journalist remarked:

[3] How fortunate the trees are! In autumn they just dye their leaves brown.
If only we knew the best way to dye our leaves...

By 1937 newspapers in Nazi Germany showed very little variation, as can be seen from this observation by Sir Nevile Henderson, the last British Ambassador to Germany before the war:

[4] Personally, I used to see three morning papers and two evening editions. But, as the wife of a Nazi official once said to me, 'What on earth do you do that for? If you read one of them, you've read the lot.'

In his search for absolute uniformity in the German press, Dr Goebbels, as Minister of Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment, was credited in the popular imagination with a new method:
[5] In future the printing presses would be constrained to use a much more congested type of print. This would prevent the reader from reading as much between the lines.
A much more bitter view of the situation emerges from a story about a man who has committed high treason:
[6] Hitler advocates a life sentence in a concentration camp. Göring prefers to have the man shot. But Goebbels has a still better idea: 'Give him a printing press; then he will perish slowly but surely.'
The touchstone of one's true adherence to the régime was the Hitler salute. Yet this was also very often ridiculed, and not only in the fantasy world of satire. This is apparent in true stories such as the following:
[7] In 1935, in the resident doctors' dining room of a Berlin hospital, a young doctor, a Party member of long standing, entered the room with the words, '"Heil Hitler!" to you, if you agree, and "Good afternoon" to the other gentlemen.'7
[8] In much the same vein, if one were to ask why everybody in the Third Reich shouted "Heil Hitler" all the time, the obvious answer was, 'Because they no longer have a "good day".'8
[9] One story tells of a health shop where the wares were displayed on a board outside the entrance as follows: '*Heil-Kräuter*—for cooking;9 *Heil-Tee*—for your breakfast'.10 Whereupon some wit had written underneath: '*Heil Hitler*—to make you throw up!'11
The limited enthusiasm engendered in many Germans by the introduction of this salute is reflected in a ditty which circulated early in 1933:
[10] 'Good Morning, Mr Hitler'
Nazis, as is now the norm,
Shout 'Heil Hitler!' (for their gain).
Civil Servants, too, conform.
(In their posts they thus remain.)
Yet others obstinately say
Their 'good morning' and 'good
day'.12
[11] In another story a German greets a Swiss tourist with 'Heil Hitler!', to which the Swiss, with lightning repartee, retorts: 'Heil Hodler! We too have a painter!'13
The political implications of this Nazi greeting emerge clearly enough from the following imaginary conversation in the Third Reich:
[12] 'Hello, Charlie! How are you?'
'Heil Hitler!'
'How are you getting on, old man?'

'Heil Hitler!'
'How's business? How's the family?'
'Heil Hitler!'
'Do give me a sensible answer, for Heaven's sake!'
'No, my dear fellow; do you think I'd like to land myself in a concentration camp?'
Despite the danger which faced those who failed to greet people with 'Heil Hitler!', some people, especially in Bavaria, still preferred the old-fashioned 'Grüss Gott'.14 This led to the Bavarians suggesting that one of Hitler's war aims was the introduction of the Hitler salute—a clear pointer to the popular dislike for this mode of address. While the Hitler salute was by no means universally popular, it was difficult to avoid it on the street and in crowds. As early as 1933 it thus became a feature of daily life in the Third Reich.
One story relates that in the autumn of 1933 a woman in Dresden was
[13] observed telling her little daughter: 'Go over to that auntie on the other side of the road and perform your "Heil-Hitler"-kins like a good little girl!'15
To this might be added the story of how a little boy asks his mother: 'Tell
[14] me, how does the Führer salute himself? Does he say, "Heil ich!"?'16
Others alleged that when greeted with the Nazi salute and the words 'Heil
[15] Hitler!', Hitler himself replied with 'Heil Hitler!'.
As mentioned above, *Gleichschaltung,* though applicable to everybody, by no means amounted to a concept of absolute equality. In order to achieve that one needed to join the Party by acquiring that magic badge, the *Parteiabzeichen*—henceforward known as the *Angstbrosche* (the 'brooch of fear'), unless one had acquired it before the Nazi takeover. The latter category included many who had joined the Party in the 1920s and were known as *Alte Kämpfer* ('Old Fighters'). They were entitled to wear the *goldene Parteiabzeichen* and gold-braided uniforms (see Chapter 4, above). Such men were popularly known as *Goldfasanen* ('cock pheasants') or *Bonzen*17 and were the subject of quite a few jokes:
[16] Who were the first *Bonzen*?
The Three Magi: they saw the Star, stopped work, were dressed in costly garments, used camels for carrying their loads, and marched straight to the crib.18
[17] Tegernsee, in Upper Bavaria, a favourite holiday resort in Nazi times, has changed its name: it is now known as 'Lago di Bonzo'.
[18] The *Bonzen* were also a favourite target in the cabaret. Karl Valentin, the well-known Munich compère, reminisces about German history:
Do you remember what we had before the war, when the priests were in power?
*Bonzen*.
And later, after the war and the revolution of 1918?
The Marxists and their *Bonzen*!
Then, at long last, came the Nazis! And what do we have today? Wednesday.19

Family life after *Gleichschaltung* is summed up by the profile of the ideal Nazi family:
[19] 'My father is in the SA, my eldest brother in the SS, my young brother in the HJ, my mother in the NS women's league, and I am in the BDM.'
'But how can your family manage to meet, considering all these commitments?'
'Oh well, we meet once a year at Nuremberg, during the Party rally.'
The degree to which things changed during the *Gleichschaltung* process becomes apparent in this ditty:
[20] Our roads are getting better,
The big shots daily fatter.
The people suffering great malaise
Shout, 'Adolf, Heil' and give him
praise.20
The introduction of the *Eintopf-Sonntage* was yet another milestone on the path of *Gleichschaltung*. All households, hotels and restaurants were directed to give a one-dish stew on certain designated Sundays instead of the usual three-course meals. The surplus was to be donated to the *Winterhilfswerk* ('winter relief or WHW) of the Nazi Party. The popularity of this innovation can be judged from the following piece of doggerel:
[21] On Saturday evenings, when the Chancellor
speaks,
It's a one-dish meal, one-dish meal: cabbage.
Then old Göring will pull a long face,
One-dish meal, one-dish meal: cabbage.21
This Spartan fare would of course not be to Göring's taste. The contrast between the Lucullan eating habits of the *Prominente* and the *Gleichschaltung* expected of ordinary people is reflected in this parody of a grace commonly said in Germany22:
[22] Come, Adolf Hitler, and hear what we crave:
The food you have promised and not what you
gave.
We can't go on living on spuds and on herring,
But we do want to live like Goebbels and Göring.23
The annual collection for the WHW was one of Goebbels' inspirations—allegedly to put an end to the hardships suffered by the poor in winter-time. For this reason it evoked the ironic motto that 'nobody has to go hungry without
[23] the cold as well!'
This survey of *Gleichschaltung* would be incomplete without some reference to the highly organized system of extricating money from everybody in the Third Reich. It was mainly carried out by Party officials in uniform. One of the best known ploys was a lottery for the WHW for which tickets were sold in restaurants and on the streets by men in grey uniforms. These men, in their almost military uniforms—grey jackets, red collars and peaked caps—were
[24] jocularly referred to as 'dud dragoons'24 *(Nietendragoner)* for the obvious

reason that they sold more duds than winning tickets. Public reaction to them can be gauged from the story of how, when an English policeman visited Berlin before the war, he asked his German counterpart how he would deal with an unruly crowd all on his own.
[25] 'It's quite simple,' replied, the German policeman, 'I just take my shako25 off, turn it upside down and begin collecting for the WHW. You'd be surprised how quickly they all disappear!'
Another story going the rounds at this time explained why Tünnes and Schäl26 went to collect for the WHW.
[26] As the *Blockwart*27 has little confidence in their efficiency, he follows them from a distance and is highly surprised when he sees them surrounded by a crowd of people who all seem to be eager to put some money in their collecting boxes. When he gets nearer he sees Tünnes holding a placard on which is written, 'For the new government'!
[27] In 1938 the *Volkswagen* ('People's Car') project was launched28—a brainchild of the Führer. In Austria soon after the *Anschluss* it became known as the 'Jesus-car'29 and, as nobody ever obtained a car and didn't know what it looked like, it was rumoured that it had to be as austere as possible:
[28] It would not need to be equipped with indicators: one WHW collecting box on either side would ensure that all pedestrians would get out of the way as quickly as possible.
Predictably enough, the advent of the war provided new inspiration for such wits. In one story a Berliner asks a policeman on the street whether he could show him the way to the nearest *Sammelschutzraum*30:
[29] The policeman, nonplussed, asks: 'Why? There's no air raid on at the moment.' 'Well,' the man replies, 'I'd like to get away from all those WHW *Sammler* (collectors)!'
It was of course inevitable that sooner or later a story would surface that involved those responsible for this daily irritant. The story goes that Hitler, Göring, Goebbels and Himmler, anxious to learn more about the morale of the German people, agree that the best way to get a true picture might be to summon Weiss-Ferdl, the very popular compère from Munich.
[30] So he comes along and asks Goebbels to give him a collecting box. He then approaches one after another of these prominent Nazis with his box, asking them to donate generously for the WHW, the Red Cross and so on. At first the Prominente donate freely, but when Weiss-Ferdl returns again and again Göring objects, 'When are you going to stop begging?', to which Weiss-Ferdl replies, 'That's what all the other people say!'
[31] Sometimes this resentment took on a distinctively local colouring. Thus in the old university town of Rostock a brewery named Mahn & Ohlerich was well known, and its name had been abbreviated by generations of students to

'M & O'. In the Nazi years, however, the meaning of these initials became: 'Maul halten und opfern' ('keep your mouth shut and pay up').
In this town and in railway stations all over the province before 1933 posters had been provided which advertised the charms of Mecklenburg on the Baltic coast. This province possessed several of Germany's favourite holiday resorts, and the publicity jingle ran:
[32] Mecklenburg, dreifach gesegnetes
Land:
Wald, sonnige Seen und Meeresstrand.
(Mecklenburg, triply blessed land:
Woods, sunny lakes and ocean strand.)
In 1933, though, the year of *Gleichschaltung* the *vox populi* changed this to:
Mecklenburg, dreifach verhitlertes
Land:
Puffpaff, Volgmann und Hildebrandt.
(Mecklenburg, triply hitlerised land:
Puffpaff, Volgmann and Hildebrandt.)
31
**WOMEN**
It has been said that 'the kernel of Nazi thinking on the women's question was a dogma of inequality between the sexes.'32 It is not surprising, therefore, to find that one of the earliest Nazi Party ordinances (of January 1921) excluded women forever from all leading positions in the Party33 and that *Gleichschaltung,* however all-embracing, did not extend to all women in the Third Reich. The pronouncements by leading Nazis in this respect varied in degree but were uniformly anti-feminist in essence. Some of them are so absurd that one wonders whether they could have been taken seriously by Nazi devotees, even in the climate of the Third Reich; half a century later they appear hardly credible. To Hitler the emancipation of women was a symptom of depravity. His Minister of Agriculture, Darré, thought that the desire to achieve it could be attributed to malfunctioning sex glands. Frick, Minister of the Interior, talked of grading women according to their 'child output,'34 while Goebbels assured women that they were respected too much to be exposed to the miasma of
[33] parliamentary democracy (which by then had ceased to exist anyway). Yet other propagandists 'tended to see women as dreamily ruminating domestic creatures rather than Amazons of the labour ward.'35 Despite this derogatory attitude toward women shown by leading Nazis in general and by Hitler in particular, many women supported him, both early on and in later times, to an amazing degree. Perhaps Hitler's early attempts at social life deserve to be considered in this respect. As mentioned earlier, in 1920 he had met Dietrich Eckart, a nationalist writer who was also quite a shrewd psychologist. This man had prophesied a
[34] year earlier that a national saviour would arise in Germany, 'a man of working-

class origin, and not an officer; not afraid to be shot at, loud-mouthed and good at repartee; but above all he would have to be a bachelor. Then we will get the support of the women!'36 With this uncanny prediction of the latter-day Messiah from the upper Austrian Innviertel Eckart had given Hitler the blueprint for his *Sendung*.37 Hitler, then a still unknown and uncouth Austrian whom the older man had introduced to Munich society,38 considered Eckart as his 'fatherly friend' and himself as his disciple.
At that time Hitler felt most relaxed in the company of older married or widowed women, whose maternal ministrations meant security for him. One of them made a sort of home for him and was thus, not inappropriately, known as *Hitler's Mutti*.39 Later on, the wives of his close collaborators received his respect and courtesy.40 Other women merited the Führer's special attention because of their intellectual or artistic notability,41 although his relationship with his aristocratic English admirer, Unity Mitford, seems to have been a superficial one.42 Likewise, even before he assumed power, Hitler seems to have been little impressed by the adulation, or even infatuation, directed at him by
[35] women.43 Perhaps he thought that such reactions were merely his due, as he believed himself to possess a powerful sexual appeal for women.44 This was often demonstrated at mass meetings 'by the eyes of women filming over and glazed with a religious sort of exaltation' and by their *Kontaktsucht*.45 This irresistible appeal was in Hitler's view strengthened by the fact that he was, and remained right to the very end, unmarried.46 Quite possibly, being very superstitious, he may never have forgotten the relevant prophecy of his idol Dietrich Eckart. It is most remarkable that Hitler managed to keep the existence of his mistress a well-kept secret from the majority of Germans.47 His callous and contemptuous treatment of Eva Braun is well documented,48 and is proof of his innate misogyny—a trait which may have adversely affected the role of women in Nazi Germany in general.
Hitler's flawed personality49 is readily detectable in his often equivocal attitude toward women. As Führer he had, as a matter of necessity, to stress the biological importance of women in the context of his programme of encouraging both large families and superior (that is, pure Aryan) offspring. His concept of the ideal German woman is reflected in this contemporary poem:
[36] 'The Redemption of the German
Woman'
We want our Women tried and true,
Not like a decorated toy;
The gifts of German wives and mothers too
No foreign female can enjoy.
The German woman is noble wine,
When she loves, there blooms the earth;
The German woman is bright sunshine
alike to home and hearth.
Worthy of respect she must always be seen,

Not of strange races the passion and game!
The people must ever remain pure and
clean:
That is the Führer's exalted aim![50]
The poet's idyllic vision of womanhood in Nazi Germany is somewhat removed from the martial parlance of the address given by the Nazi Women's League Leader, Frau Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, at the Nuremberg Party Rally in 1937:
[37] Even though our weapon is only the soup ladle its impact should be as great as that of other weapons.
And the Führer's pronouncement on parturition:
[38] Woman has her battlefield too; with each child that she brings into the world for the nation she is fighting her fight on behalf of the nation.
It is rather pathetic that Eva Braun, who remained childless, occasionally referred to herself as 'Mother of the Country'.[51] Nevertheless, in her company Hitler found the rest which he never sought elsewhere; she appealed to the trivial tastes and the conventional domesticity of the petit-bourgeois element in Hitler's character.[52] This may also have been the motivation for his decision to legitimize their relationship in that strange and macabre ceremony—the wedding in the bunker—followed by mutual suicide.
The well-kept secret of her existence during a friendship of at least twelve years[53] fits well with Hitler's own admission in his earlier years that he could not marry because his celibate state was the decisive factor in catching female votes. He presumably concurred with Goebbels' mendacious statement:
[39] Our displacement of women from public life is intended solely to restore their essential dignity to them.
Although even Hitler seems to have been aware of Goebbels' cynicism towards women[54] the fact remains that in 1933, before Hitler created the one-party state, there were thirty-six female MPs in the *Reichstag,* none of them Nazis.
In the uniform- and decoration-minded Third Reich German mothers were no exception either. Annually on 12 August (the anniversary of the birthday of Hitler's mother), the *Mutterkreuz* ('mother's cross') in one of its three grades[55] was awarded to women with four or more children.[56] It also seems that it mattered little to them whether children were born in or out of wedlock, as became obvious by the order of Dr Gürtner, Minister of Justice, of May 1937, according to which unmarried mothers, like married ones, had to be addressed
There was little unanimity among Party leaders as to the ideal type of German woman. Early in 1933 a German Fashion Bureau was opened in Berlin; its honorary President was Frau Magda Goebbels. This was in line with the 'Faith and Beauty' section of the BDM for girls between seventeen and twenty-one, with a programme of physical culture, eurhythmics, health

instruction, and domestic science, but also of fashion consciousness and feminine aesthetics.58 At first the BDM required its members to wear the *Gretchen* wreath of braids; girls who permed their hair could have it ceremoniously shaved off as a punishment.59 In 1936, however, this changed. During the Olympic Games in Berlin a new hairdo, the 'Olympic Roll,' took its toll of thousands of plaits. By 1939 calf-length boots were becoming popular, another indication of fashion-consciousness in Germany.60

Both Hitler and Goebbels favoured elegance in women's dress and gave their approval to make-up, the use of lipstick and painting of fingernails.61 Yet the view of the Party in General and also of Himmler remained opposed to women dressing fashionably, as this was considered dressing in an 'anti-procreative' way.62 An illustration of this viewpoint is given by an advertisement which actually appeared in 1935 in the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten:* it vividly evokes the 'ideal' type of German Nazi woman:

[40] Doctor, purely Aryan, aged fifty-two years, veteran of Battle of Tannenberg, intending to settle in the country, desires male descendants by marriage—via registry office—with a wife, a pure Aryan, who is a young virgin, healthy, modest, suitable for rough work, economy-minded, not wearing any earrings, but shoes with flat heels; preferably having no dowry. No marriage broker. Assuring strictest confidence. Letters under AEH151094 to Münch. N. N.63

In a similar vein the *Völkischer Beobachter* castigated make-up as blatantly unGerman:

[41] The most unnatural thing we can encounter in the streets is a German woman, who, disregarding all laws of beauty, has painted her face with oriental warpaint.

[42] As early as 1933 the slogan 'Die deutsche Frau raucht nicht' ('the German woman does not smoke') appeared on posters in restaurants and elsewhere all over Germany. Women who disregarded this decree in restaurants ran the risk of being publicly reprimanded by uniformed Nazis.64

Yet one of the features of this totalitarian state was the role a few female personalities played. Apart from the fashion-conscious Magda Goebbels, there was Emmy Göring, ex-actress of 'Wagnerian proportions'65 and demeanour; she was to be addressed officially as *hohe Frau* ('exalted lady'). There was also Hanna Reitsch, the first (and possibly only) German woman to be made a *Luftwaffe* captain66 and to be decorated with the Iron Cross. Leni Riefenstahl, film idol and producer of the 1934 Nuremberg rally and the 1936 Olympic commentaries, was rumoured to be an intimate friend of Hitler. This led to a rather scabrous joke:

[43] After the 1936 Olympics, when Leni Riefenstahl was honoured by being given a Nazi brown shirt, she is said to have replied, 'I shall always hold my brown shirt high and shall never forget the movement.'

The imagination of anti-Nazi wits occasionally ran wild, as in the following joke. As procreation was such a priority in the Third Reich it was said that not

only women—who, after all, got their *Mutterkreuz*—but men too were to be given new distinctions: [44] A man who fathers one child will now be called 'Ordinary Procreator'; a man with five or more children, 'Extraordinary Procreator'; and a man with an illegitimate child, and who also dodges paying alimony, 'Truly Extraordinary Procreator'.67

**RELIGION**

The mighty wave of patriotism which swept through Germany early in 1933 engulfed most Germans, among them many representatives of the Christian denominations. Even men like the Cardinals Count Galen of Münster and Faulhaber of Munich, and Archbishop Conrad Gröber of Freiburg—who for some time was known as 'brown Conrad'68 on account of his Nazi sympathies—were at first taken in by Hitler's pretensions before they all became his pronounced opponents.

While the Nazi concordat with the Vatican in June 1933 provided a certain amount of protection for Roman Catholics, no such provision was possible for Protestants. This soon became apparent with the emergence of the so-called *Deutsche Christen* who were spearheaded by the former Army padre Ludwig Müller, soon to become *Reichsbischof*. This led to a split within the Protestant Church, and the formation of a strong minority calling themselves *Bekenntniskirche* ('Confessional Church'), led by men like Niemöller, Barth and Bonhœffer, as well as by many provincial bishops.

The general trend of Nazi ideology took from the start an entirely different course from Christianity, and in this it reflected Hitler's own *Weltanschauung*.

37 The new German heathen

38 Reich Bishop Müller

Hitler's beliefs have been well summarized by an outsider, Sir Nevile Henderson, the last British Ambassador to Nazi Germany:

[45] Hitler himself in his speeches constantly referred to the Almighty. He was not an atheist, but merely pro-Hitler and anti-Christian...His own National-Socialist religion, as he conceived it with its German God... was all he cared for.

This, then, was the creed a true Nazi was expected to adhere to; and statements

[46] like 'National Socialism and Christianity are comparable in so far as both demand the whole being of their followers' clearly indicated where the sole

[47] allegiance of the individual in Nazi Germany was to lie. Others were even more

[48] explicit: 'National Socialism is like Catholicism without Christianity' and 'National Socialist and Christian concepts are irreconcilable: the Christian churches are based on human ignorance but National Socialism on scientific fact.' One may compare with this Rudolf Hess' pronouncement, made in 1934 just before the 'Blood Purge': 'We believe that the Führer follows a higher call to shape German destiny', a statement which contains unmistakable Messianic overtones.

It was inevitable that the régime should have reacted strongly against both Catholic and Protestant Church leaders as it did to any other opponents of Nazism. Some, like Cardinal Faulhaber and Professor Barth, were forced into

exile; others, like Niemöller and many more, were sent to concentration camps, where many perished. Yet others, like Dietrich Bonhœffer, were imprisoned, condemned and executed. In addition to this, as early as 1936 and 1937, the so-called currency and homosexuality trials against hundreds of monks and nuns gave Goebbels a welcome opportunity to publish in the press unabridged accounts of the trials in his widespread anti-clerical campaign.69

Simultaneously, the foundations of a new surrogate religion were laid. Goebbels and Himmler played an important part in this campaign. This religion was called the *Deutsche Glaubensbewegung* ('German faith movement') and its adherents were officially registered as *Gottgläubige* ('believers in God'). They were openly neo-pagan, and were mostly recruited from professions materially dependent on the régime. By 1939 they numbered 3,500,000.70 Many were members of the SS. Their rituals connected with birth, marriage and death were systematically de-Christianized. A *Weihwart* ('votive warden') performed the blessing at marriages where 'Mother Earth' and 'Father Sky' were solemnly evoked. SS 'Christenings' were performed with the baby being carried on a Teutonic shield and surrounded with Nazi emblems, such as oak leaves, runes and swastikas. German archaisms were substituted for the usual names of the months with their unwelcome Latin etymologies, and 'Christmas' became 'Yuletide'. A fashionable 'Yuletide' present for SS officers' wives was a replica of a newly excavated Germanic fibula.71

The deification of Hitler was achieved well before the war. It was intended to give substance to this new religion. The pronouncements by men of Hitler's inner circle were aimed in the same direction. Thus to Göring Hitler was 'his very conscience',72 to Hess 'pure reason in human form', and to the Bavarian Gauleiter Wagner 'the greatest artist', while Himmler went one better by declaring him 'the greatest man of all time'. Somehow Goebbels managed to surpass even this *ne plus ultra* of sycophancy by declaring: 'When the Führer speaks it is like the divine service.' Goebbels also exhorted all Germans to pray for Hitler during the war, and to light candles in the so-called 'Hitler corners' of their homes.73

There is no need to rely on underground satire for illustrations of these processes, since there are abundant true stories which are relevant in this context. This prayer was used in a National Socialist nursery:

[50] Führer, my Führer, by God given to
me,
Defend and protect me as long as may be;
You rescued Germany in her deepest need,
I give you thanks who dost daily me feed.
Stay by me forever and never take flight,
Oh Führer, my Führer, my faith and my
light!
All hail to my Führer!74

There was a 'Hitler corner' in the cottage of a certain farm-hand on an estate in Pomerania; in the living room:

[51] An altar-like arrangement was provided on a chest of drawers: a picture of Hitler in the centre, flanked by two Alsatian dogs and by two candles.
[52] Equally authentic was the declaration by the leader of the expatriate Nazis in Switzerland, one Wilhelm Gustloff: 'Should the Führer order me to jump out of the window into this river I'd do it without the slightest hesitation.'
[53] According to one report75 several Upper Austrians—close compatriots of Hitler—travelled to the *Berghof*76 to pay their respects. They were told that the Führer happened to be asleep and was not to be disturbed. However at that moment a voice boomed out, 'I never sleep.' It was Hitler's voice.
While the last two anecdotes imply that many people attributed supernatural gifts to Hitler, the following remark, recorded by Sir Nevile Henderson, though true, might have to be taken with a grain of salt and just be explained as the pledge of one of the Führer's most fervent admirers:
[54] Field Marshal von Blomberg once said to me that if Hitler were to order him and his army to march the next day to the North Pole they would do it without a moment's hesitation.
Some people were so mesmerized by Hitler that they would go so far as to ascribe to him powers traditionally the preserve of saints. Thus even the personality of St Francis77 served the purpose of highlighting Hitler's saintly qualities, as the following story shows:
[55] At a course arranged by the Nazi party in Jena in the summer of 1935 the lady lecturer recounted an experience with a talking dog of which she had been told a few days earlier. 'The lady of the house prompted my husband to put a difficult question to the dog. My husband asked, "Who is Adolf Hitler?", and we were deeply moved to hear the answer, "My Führer!" out of the mouth of this dog.' At this point the lecturer was interrupted by an old Party member in the audience who shouted, 'This is in abominably bad taste. You are misusing the Führer's name!' To this the lecturer—on the verge of tears—replied, 'This clever animal knows that Adolf Hitler has caused laws to be passed against vivisection and the ritual slaughter of animals by Jews, and out of gratitude his small canine brain recognizes Adolf Hitler as Führer.'
Apparently this was not the only Nazified dog:
[56] Göring wishes to give his little daughter a dog as a companion. The salesman in the pet shop offers him a small, specially trained *Dackel,* who, on the word of command, will raise his right front paw and bark, 'Heil Hitler!' Göring, greatly impressed, asks the man whether he can perhaps provide an Alsatian for the little girl's protection. When an Alsatian dog is produced Göring asks, 'Can this dog also bark "Heil Hitler!"?' 'No, your Excellency,' is the answer, 'only *Dackel*78 can do that.'
[57] In his position as 'Minister for Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment' Goebbels also controlled the media. In February 1937, in his campaign for the deification of Hitler, he ordered a special prayer to be relayed and chanted over all German radio stations. This referred to 'Hitler, God's revelation to the German people' and 'their redeemer'.

At about the same time a sermon by a layman, delivered during a Hitler Youth service in church,79 contained the following passage:
[58] We are looking for prophets as an example to us in our holy faith! But, behold, here stands before us the most German of Germans, our Führer, Adolf Hitler! He, in his innermost being, got rid of the demons of class hatred, snobbery, and the greedy mentality of moneymindedness and profit-making. He has subdued the original German sin. His crown of victory Hitler had to win by fighting for it; he did not acquire it by subterfuge and trickery. During the fifteen years of his fight his path was a perpetual *via dolorosa*. So many who constantly talk of the cross did not make the carrying of the cross any easier for Adolf Hitler. On the contrary, they did everything possible to make the load heavier for this cross-bearer. They mocked and jeered him, just as Christ was mocked. Hitler is now God's representative in Germany; whosoever does not believe in Hitler cannot believe in God either! He who betrays Hitler is like Cain, a traitor to his country and a man who despises God. We, the youth of Germany, as we follow Hitler, believe in the unknown and German Christ.
Dr Krause, the predecessor of *Reichsbischof* Müller, had this to say when he addressed a mass meeting on November 1933 at the Berlin Sports Palace: 'The
[59] Gospels will have to be cleansed of all un-German traces, such as the scapegoat and the inferior theology of Rabbi Paul.'
The following anecdotes—all of them authentic, like the previous two, are still more blasphemous in their denial of Christ, and thereby of the Christian Church.80
This was the creed the Hitler Youth representatives proclaimed:
[60] No evil priest can prevent us from feeling that we are the children of Hitler. We follow not Christ, but Horst Wessel. Away with incense and holy water! The Church can rot for all we care. The swastika brings salvation on earth. We want to follow it all the way. Baldur von Schirach, take me along!
When at Munich University one education official81 praised Hitler's efforts for the WHW ('Winter Relief'), he took this opportunity of mocking the Lord's Supper:
[61] Hitler took the bread, broke it, and having given thanks, gave it to his disciples to distribute among the people. Adolf Hitler—yesterday, today and in eternity!
And from the capital came this extraordinary 'Version of the Apostles' Creed, Berlin, 1938':
[62] I believe in Germany, God's other beloved son, conceived of God himself beneath the Nordic heavens, born between the Alps and the Sea, suffered under Popes and worshippers of Mammon, mishandled and impoverished, tortured by devils of all varieties to the gates of hell; after decades of poverty and misery it has arisen again from political and national death, ascended into the spiritual and intellectual community of Eckhart, Bach and Goethe, and sitteth between the great brother of Nazareth and the right hand of God the Father Almighty. Thence it shall come in its sacred character to judge the quick and the dead.

Against this overtly anti-Christian policy followed by the Nazi state was set the Pope's encyclical, 'Mit brennender Sorge' ('With burning concern'). Issued in 1937, it protested against the coercive transfer of Catholic pupils to interdenominational schools. Cardinal Count Galen,82 Pastor von Bodelschwingh83 and Colonel Mölders84 openly protested against Hitler's 'mercy killing'85 programme (the latter also protested about discrimination against Catholics in the Armed Forces), while the *Bekenntniskirche* ('Confessional Church') in Prussia protested against the outrages inflicted upon the Jews.86

The opposition of the more or less silent majority of Christian lay people against the régime's policy gave rise to a great number of often very bitter jokes:

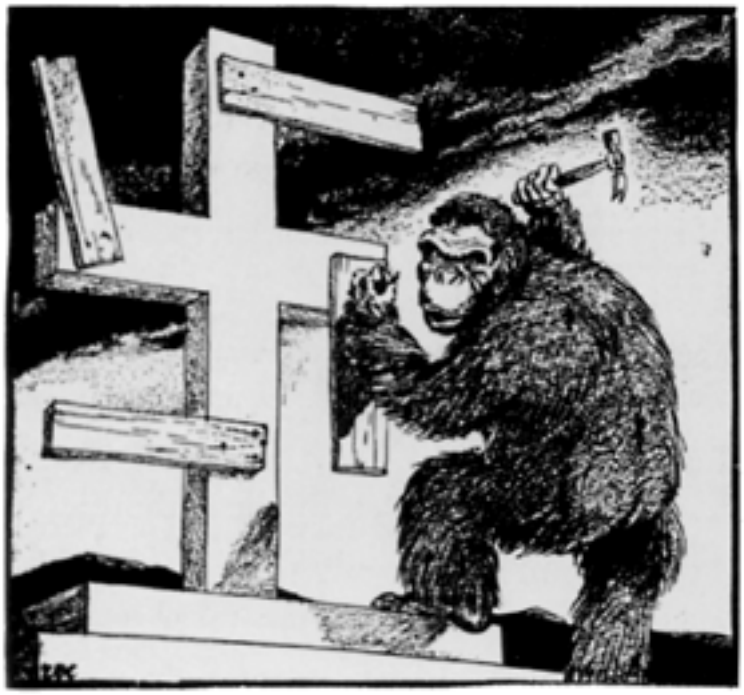
[63] In order to conform to Hitler's new policy the Latin version of the Lord's Prayer will have to be altered. The line in the 'Paternoster' which at present reads, 'et ne nos inducas in temptationem' will from now on read, 'et ne nos inducas in concentrationem.'

[64] The calendar of the Catholic Church will have to be altered as well, in order to adapt itself to the new climate of the Third Reich—in particular with regard to the *Nächstenliebe* ('loving your neighbour as yourself'): 'Lady's Day', also known as 'Annunciation Day', will now become 'Denunciation Day'.

The day-to-day work of Catholic priests in the predominantly Catholic areas of western and southern Germany suffered much Nazi interference. This is reflected in numerous jokes and stories of which the following is only a small selection:

[65] When Hitler demanded one day that his name should be included when the Lord's Prayer was said during a church service, a priest found a way of complying by ending the prayer with, 'and deliver us from evil Adolf Hitler!'

[66] When a woman asked the priest in the confessional whether it was sinful to wish a



39 The New Christianity. See? 100 per cent Aryan

person to die, the priest strongly affirmed that it was. When, however, he asked whom she had in mind, and she whispered a name, the priest replied, 'Perhaps in this particular case it is not sinful, as in that way the lives of many innocent people would be saved.'87
[67] Occasionally a member of the Catholic clergy would adopt a daring attitude *vis-à-vis* the régime, as for example a parish priest in Westphalia who made fun of the Aryan laws by putting the rhetorical question to his congregation, 'Why do some people adore the Mother of God?', and then answering for them, 'Perhaps because she is not of Aryan descent.'
An apocryphal story highlights the gift of quick repartee which Cardinal Count Galen is said to have possessed:
[68] When, during a sermon, the Cardinal protested against Nazi interference in the upbringing of children, he was heckled by somebody shouting, 'How can a celibate voice an opinion of that kind?' to which the Cardinal replied, 'I cannot tolerate such criticism of the Führer in my church'"
This discussion of Catholic opposition to Nazi politics may be concluded with two stories:
[69] While walking in the Bavarian mountains Hitler and Göring come across a peasant who accosts them with the customary greeting, 'Grüss Gott!' This annoys them greatly. As it is a very hot day, they make the man stand in the sun for three hours. 'Afterwards,' says Göring jokingly to him, 'you will be brown.' When they return three hours later, the peasant has still not moved, yet he again greets them with, 'Grüss Gott!' whereupon Göring says to Hitler, 'See, my Führer, what has happened; instead of being brown he is black now!'88
[70] In one last, and unlikely scenario, Cardinal Faulhaber and Goebbels are on a walk in the Bavarian mountains when they pass one of the crucifixes *(Marterl)* which are still to be found there by the roadside.89 Both the Cardinal and Goebbels doff their hats, both adding, 'Heil Hitler!' Goebbels, greatly delighted by the Cardinal's apparent *Gleichschaltung,* asks, 'What would you say if *I* were hanging there?' To this the Cardinal replies, 'Gelobt sei Jesus Christus!' ('Blessed be the name of Jesus!')
Like the great majority of the Catholic clergy, the Protestant *Bekenntniskirche,* led by Niemöller, fought Nazi ideology and actions from the mid-1930s onwards. Niemöller himself was arrested, tried and imprisoned in 1937, and then held in concentration camps until the collapse of the Third Reich. Hundreds of pastors of the *Bekenntniskirche* shared his fate. Opposed to them were the *Deutsche Christen,* headed by *Reichsbischof* Müller. However, as early as 1935 Müller's credibility had deteriorated to such an extent that Hitler
[71] created a special Ministry for Church Affairs under a lay Minister.90 Despite this, the Prelate refused to resign, and was therefore left by the authorities 'to rot away in full regalia' as was said at the time. His obstinacy is reflected in the following story:
[72] The scene is the platform of one of Berlin's railway stations. A train is about to enter

the station. The stationmaster shouts, 'Step back, step back!'91 and everybody obeys, with one exception. The stationmaster approaches this person and asks, 'Why didn't you step back? You might have fallen on to the track!' The answer comes pat: 'I am Reichsbischof Müller; I never step back!' ('Ich trete nie zurück!').
The *Reichsbischof*—ironically and familiarly abbreviated to *Reibi*92—was known for his over-eager compliance with Hitler's demands. Hence, there
[73] circulated a rumour that a new animal had been discovered with such a thick skin that it did not require a backbone; for that reason it was dubbed *Reibi*.93 It was further rumoured that, in order to distinguish the pastors of the
[74] *Bekenntniskirche* from Müller's *Deutsche Christen,* the latter should now exchange their black gowns for white ones—quite understandably—since they were *Müller's Knechte* ('Miller's servants'). The final reference to the Reichsbischof can perhaps be best delivered in dialogue form:
[75] Q. What is the difference between a missionary and the *Reichsbischof*?
A. A missionary makes the wild savages pious, but the *Reichsbischof* makes the pious wild.
Several bishops of the *Bekenntniskirche* frequently got into trouble with leading Nazis. This was the case with Bishop Theophil Wurm of Württemberg, who fell foul of Murr, the *Gauleiter* of that province. Their names gave rise to a contemporary pun:94
[76] Murr hat es gewurmt,
weil Wurm gemurrt hat.
However, sarcastic comments of this kind circulated no more than occasionally in the Nazi police state. Numerous men of the cloth of all denominations remained true witnesses to their Christian faith against an atheistic ideology, for which they were prime targets; but their plight generated surprisingly little satirical comment from opponents of the régime.
**THE ARTS**
Hitler, once extolled as the 'greatest artist,'95 regarded himself as the final court of appeal in all artistic matters. In that capacity he inaugurated the 'Haus der deutschen Kunst' ('House of German Art') in Munich in 1937; he 'expressly forbade any painter to use colours different from those perceived in nature by the normal eye.'96
Hitler's past as a failed art student, whose attempts with the brush remained restricted to some sketches and to the painting of postcards, moved a German emigré to comment:
[77] 'A postcard-painter hardly gleans
the scope of art, nor what it means.'97
[78] Some wit once suggested that a suitable inscription for the main entrance of the 'House of German Art' might be 'Paintbrush, awake!'98 because it ought to

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40 Art has become very spontaneous and sincere under the supervision of National Socialism please the Führer's artistic sensibility, and at the same time remind him of the Nazi battle-cry, 'Germany, awake!'99

Professor Adolf Ziegler, one of Hitler's protégés, was made *President der Reichskammer der Bildenden Künste* ('Reich Chamber of Fine Art'). He contributed to the 'House of German Art' his own over-life-size nudes, painted with every anatomical detail, though rather lifeless. The models were said to have been former fashion models, and the paintings were much to Hitler's taste.

[79] This *Fleischbeschau-Kunst*100 earned Ziegler the titles 'Reich Chastity Guardian' and 'Reich Master of Pubic Hair'.101

When in 1938 François-Poncet, the French Ambassador, took some friends

[80] to this exhibition, he is said to have pointed at the four huge nudes (symbols of the four elements) and remarked, 'These, gentlemen, are the five senses,' whereupon one of his guests had said, 'But there are only four of them here.' 'Quite so,' replied François-Poncet, 'Taste is missing!'

As a matter of course Hitler's closest friends, and early Nazis too, would be expected to put in an appearance at this exhibition. One of them was Christian Weber, a former bouncer and horse-dealer, and the Führer's bodyguard in the early days. Weber was known for his bad manners and also for his ignorance. The story goes that when going along a passage he stopped an attendant, saying 'What the hell is this, a face or a...?' to which the official retorted, 'This sir, is

[81] a mirror.'

Another visitor was the painter Christian Rohlffs, whose work was considered to fall under the category of *Entartete Kunst* (‘degenerate art’) according to Nazi definition. On that occasion, it is said, Rohlffs was accompanied by Furtwängler. The latter asked Rohlffs’ opinion about the exhibition and got this reply:
[82] Be glad, Furtwängler, that Hitler didn’t learn to play the mouth-organ in his youth! You never know what he would then have done in your field. After all, he had this house built because he had painted postcards in his young days, and he made himself Generalissimo because he had been a Lance-Corporal during the war! Otherwise he might have played the Ninth Symphony on the mouth-organ!
Indeed, Hitler’s past as a failed artist had far-reaching consequences. It affected, for example, the work of those contemporary German architects and painters who did not comply with his taste or with the régime as such. Sanctions included being deprived of the right to teach *(Lehrverbot)* and, in the case of painters the right to exhibit *(Austellungsverbot),* or even to paint at all *(Malverbot)*. The latter punishment was monitored by *Gestapo* raids on their studios.102 The only way out of this dilemma was either emigration or death. Early on in the Third Reich two celebrated German artists died: Ernst Barlach, the painter, sculptor and dramatist, and Max Liebermann, the leading German
[83] Impressionist. He was also known to his fellow Berliners as a great wit; his immortal comment shortly before his death, when asked about his appetite, was, ‘I cannot eat as much as I would like to throw up.’103
Headed by Professor Ziegler, a four-man ‘purge tribunal’ toured German galleries and museums. They ordered the removal of any work of art these judges considered ‘degenerate’ in comparison with the official Nazi *Blut und Boden* (‘blood and soil’) art. Of 16,000 ‘modern’ paintings by foreign masters like Van Gogh, Cézanne, Picasso, Matisse and Kokoschka, and by German painters like Corinth, Klee and Rohlffs (to mention but a few) which were ‘withdrawn’, about 4,000 were actually burned in 1939 in the courtyard of the headquarters of the Berlin Fire Brigade. It remains debatable whether the survival of some especially valuable paintings, confiscated earlier and transferred to Karinhall, were proof of Göring’s appreciation of modern art or of his cupidity.104
It seems entirely appropriate that the perpetrators of this holocaust of
[84] modern art were subsequently referred to as ‘the four Norsemen of the
[85] Apocalypse’105 and their leader, Professor Adolf Ziegler, as ‘the aesthetic Torquemada’106 of the Third Reich.
The ‘House of German Art’ in Munich had been designed by Professor Troost, Hitler’s favourite architect, later to be succeeded by Speer. The style of this edifice was neoclassical and rather austere, in fact ‘a compound of ancient Hellas and severe Prussian classicism’,107 with its colossal free-standing columns not supporting any roof. It was thus inevitable that a contemporary
[86] pun described the style of the two architects as ‘troostlos’ and ‘speerlich’108 and

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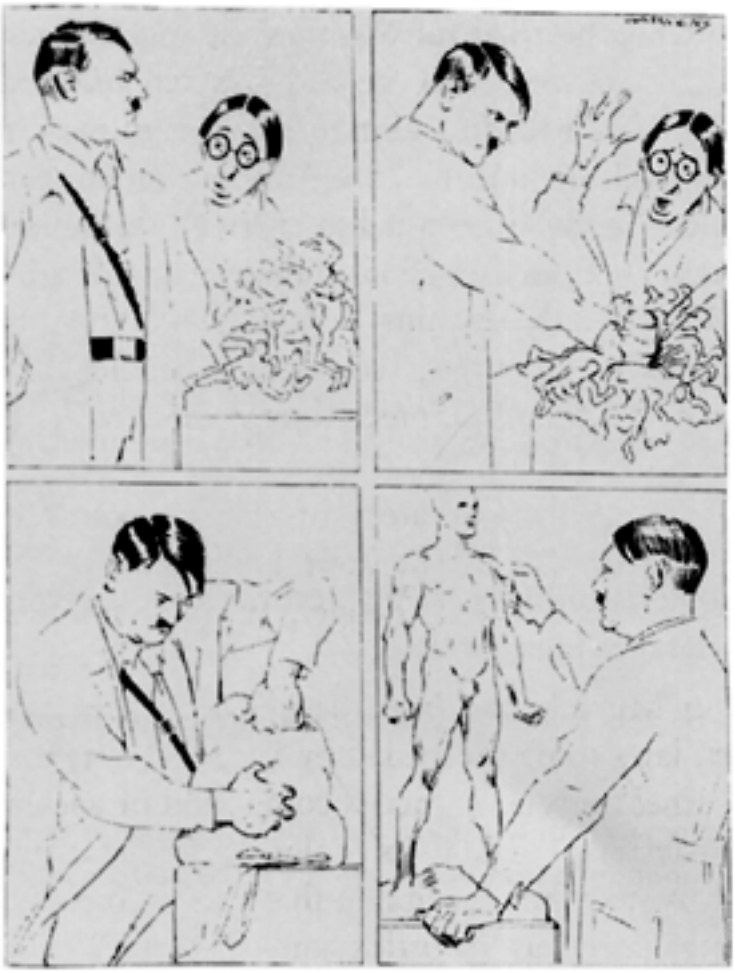
[87] the building, which so closely resembled a railway station, as the 'Munich Art
[88] Terminal'109 or, because of its contents, 'Palazzo Kitschi'.110
It was also said that during his tour of Germany in 1937 Mussolini—himself a former bricklayer—visited the 'House of German Art', accompanied by
[89] Minister Hans Frank, and commented, 'This building is not yet finished.' The following contemporary quatrain refers to the building and to Ziegler's nudes inside:
[90] Behold this house: though columned, without roof,
Where 'blood and soil's' perfumes pervade the sky,
While Ziegler's models (starkers) amply prove
True Art's demise to every passer-by!111
[91] The gigantomania of the Third Reich was the visual equivalent of Hitler's megalomania; it also extended to sculpture. Its torchbearer was Professor Thorak who, because of his preoccupation with Herculean masculinity, was nicknamed 'Professor Thorax'. The following story poked fun at his gigantomania:
[92] When a visitor asked a studio assistant about Thorak's whereabouts he was told, 'The Herr Professor is up in the left ear of the horse.'
Despite his patronage of Troost and Speer, Hitler's real preference was for the neo-Baroque style (of the period between 1890–1910) which had impressed him



41 Memorial to the 'Sculptors of Germany'

as a young man in Vienna.112 In Germany a similarly inflated style of the same period was sometimes referred to as 'William the Magnificent.'113
We have heard that Hitler regarded himself as the 'master-builder of the Third Reich',114 but this is not to be understood only in a metaphorical sense. His massive building programme before and even during the war caused much adverse comment by the people. A number of hitherto unknown architectural styles were said to have been created by Hitler in his role as architect:
[93] the 'barracks' style—to make more room for the soldiers;
the 'Dictatoire' to describe his power;
the 'Louis-même' to denote his greatness;
and the 'ruinaissance'—his very own style, to commemorate him as 'the great architect of the 1000 years' Reich' and to be left as his memorial to Germany in 1945.
During the war a number of fantastic building projects were continued, like those for Ley's *Ordensburgen* (see Chapter 3, Ley) and for the *Totenburgen* ('Dead Heroes' Castles' or mausolea), which were to be erected throughout Europe after Hitler's ultimate victory. The architect chosen to build the latter was one Wilhelm Kreis. He had built the Museum of Prehistory at Halle,115 which so impressed him that he described his own work thus: 'This building reminds me of a fugue by Johann Sebastian Bach.'
Musical life in Germany had, in fact, become stagnant after 1933. As everything modern was condemned, there was now a very large exodus of musical talent, both non-Aryan and Aryan. It was Furtwängler who, as early as April 1933,116 showed constancy when he tried to retain for Germany Jewish artists like Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer and Max Reinhardt by approaching Goebbels, the *Kulturpapst*117 of the Third Reich. His efforts were fruitless, as was also the case when he intervened on behalf of the 'Aryan' but modern composer Hindemith.118 When Hitler made him a *Staatsrat* (Privy Counsellor), Furtwängler fully realised that this 'honour' was meaningless, as this story reveals:
[94] After his elevation to *Staatsrat,* when asked by a friend how he felt in his new position, Furtwängler replied, 'Well, yours truly has, like his sit-upon, a position, but neither is allowed to utter a sound.'119
The following apocryphal conversation between Furtwängler and Speer, which is clearly a variant on the Furtwängler/Rohlffs exchange recorded above, refers yet again to Hitler's mode of interference in every field:
[95] Furtwängler: 'It must be great to be able to design and to build according to one's own ideas and quite unhindered.'
Speer: 'All right, then: just imagine somebody telling you that *"because it is my unskakeable will"*120 the Ninth Symphony is from now on *only* to be performed on the mouth-organ!'

Another composer, Hans Pfitzner, by then an octogenarian, applied for a State pension to Göring when the latter was the President of the *Staatsoper*. This was rudely refused as *Schnorrerei*121 by Göring. Pfitzner retorted: 'I shall preserve your letter as a cultural document of inestimable value and as a companion piece to the kick the Bishop of Salzburg could administer to Mozart
[96] with impunity. Heil Hitler!'
Given the cultural attainments of Ley, it is not surprising that his choice for bringing culture to his 'Strength-through-Joy' disciples was sometimes the wrong one, and it is good to learn that some musical experts122 were not afraid to comment adversely:
[97] Last Easter, courtesy of a 'Strength-through-Joy' organization, a great number of workers were taken to a performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion...During the second part of the performance they unwrapped their sandwiches, unscrewed potato-salad containers, and enjoyed the last part of the Passion as a musical accompaniment to their supper.
[98] One aspect of the Nazi social experiment was the lowering of standards for dress and decorum in the larger theatres.123 This provoked the term *Stullenopern* ('sandwich operas'). Very understandably, though, this sort of *Gleichschaltung* did not extend to Hitler's very own domain, the Bayreuth *Festspielhaus,* where evening dress remained obligatory. Incidentally, the Bayreuth 1938 Festival Handbook contains some gems of sycophancy:
[99] Wagner's work teaches us hardness in the figure of Lohengrin...through Hans Sachs it makes us respect and honour all things German...In the 'Ring of the Nibelungen' it brings to our consciousness with unexampled clarity the terrible seriousness of the racial problem...In Parsifal it shows us that the only religion a German can embrace is that of struggle toward a life made divine.124
However, certain aspects of the 'Ring', like the gross abuse of hospitality by adultery and the glorification of incest, are of course absent in this simplified apotheosis of the world of Wagnerian opera. Yet another instance of *Gleichschaltung* in the musical field—or rather of Aryanization in particular—
[100] involved Handel's oratorio, *Judas Maccabeus*. It was renamed 'A Hero's Death' and its libretto, now totally rewritten to deal with 'Wilhelm von Nassau', was the work of the Nazi writer, Hermann Burte.
The manager of the Weimar theatre, Severus *nomen est omen* Ziegler, arranged an exhibition of 'degenerate music', holding up to public scorn composers like Mahler, Stravinsky and Schoenberg. He tried to emulate his brother Adolf, the President of the Reich Chamber of Fine Art, who had done similar 'work' in his field, as noted above. Naturally the *vox populi* had something to say about the musical preferences of the *Prominente*. Hitler, Göring and Goebbels each had their favourite operas:
[101] Hitler liked *Meistersinger* best (although not a singer he was a 'master of many trades'). Göring, because of his military background, preferred *Waffenschmied* ('The

Armourer′), and Goebbels, always on a collecting spree, felt most at home with the *Bettelstudent* (‘The Student Beggar′).
If one agrees with the view that ‘Nazism was the tainted progeny of German Romanticism′125 one can appreciate both the importance of music and its manifold uses in Nazi Germany—for marching, radio announcements, wartime *Sondermeldungen*126 and all the way down to orchestras in the extermination camps. Martial music in particular became a large part of the daily musical fare in the Third Reich. It was constantly transmitted by loudspeaker radio and was thus inescapable. This was already the case during the years preceding the war,
[102] and people got heartily sick of it. ‘At long last, a good old German military march again!′ would be one sarcastic comment.
Nazi symbolism even extended to dance as an art form, as is explained in this pseudo-mystic definition:
[103] In the dance we relive the great primeval laws of nature. The male partner′s thrust and blow tends toward the soldierly...the female′s instinctive vibration of a circular character is connected with the swastika, the rune of life, with its circular motion.
It is understandable that adepts of this transcendental Nazi revelation in the dance considered modern dance forms—like swing—as unacceptable ‘Negroid excrescences′; hence the saxophone was ‘purged′ and the use of percussion instruments was much reduced.127
As for the theatre, the economic depression in the early 1930s had already led to hardships for actors and the advent of the Third Reich exacerbated these to an even greater extent than was the case with other art forms. After 1933 about half the leading actors and actresses, and most directors, emigrated.128 On the other hand, the classics (including Shakespeare in translation) were still represented and well produced in the Third Reich. This was a field where opposition to the régime could still make itself heard with impunity. Thus the
[104] famous line spoken by the Marquis de Posa to the King in Schiller′s *Don Carlos,* ‘Sire, grant us freedom of thought′, often produced such applause that several theatres had to switch the house lights to full strength to inhibit such hostile reaction to the régime.129
The stage also enabled some prominent actors to poke fun at leading Nazis in other ways. *Die Räuber* (‘The Robbers′) by Schiller, written clandestinely and in exile in 1782, and with the appropriate sub-title *In Tyrannos,* gave a golden opportunity to the director Gustav Gründgens, who also played the anti-hero in a 1944 production of the play. Gründgens appeared as the villainous Franz
[105] Moor, with a hairstyle like Hitler′s. Similarly, in Fehling′s production of Shakespeare′s *Richard III,* Werner Krauss was given the opportunity of choosing Goebbels as a target when in the leading part the actor dragged himself club-
[106] footed across the stage, his henchmen wearing brown and black shirts under their cloaks.
Independence and remarkable courage were shown by Heinrich George, a prominent stage and film actor as well as a theatre manager. Once, when

[107] addressing his stage-hands and usherettes, he mentioned Hitler's name, then stopped short in mid-sentence, bellowing: 'I'm talking about the Führer, do you hear? Get down on your knees, everybody!'
By contrast, in 1942 Lothar Müthel, a well-known producer at the time, was commanded by Baldur von Schirach, then *Gauleiter* of Vienna, to put on *The Merchant of Venice* in a form adapted to the Nazi race laws. The result was an atrocious example of propaganda:
[108] While Shylock (Werner Krauss) gave his 'unsurpassed anti-Semitic performance', Jessica emerged as the product of Shylock's wife's adultery with a non-Jew. Thus Jessica became, under Aryan law, an acceptable partner for the 'Aryan' Lorenzo.
The stage designer Benno von Arent was chosen by Hitler to design new uniforms for diplomats. These frock-coats, laden with gold braid, reminded the Führer of the operetta *Die Fledermaus* ('The Bat'), but this kind of pomp was not universally appreciated.130 When, however, Hitler also got von Arent to
[109] design medals which would have looked well on any stage, von Arent promptly received the nickname *Reichsblechschmied* ('Tinsmith of the Third Reich').
To conclude this survey of the theatre in Nazi Germany, it may be noted that the following plays were actually performed at the *Staatstheater* in Berlin and provided the *vox populi* with ample opportunity for poking fun at some leading Nazis by the simple device of substituting their names for those of the actual playwrights:
[110] 1st week
Monday: 'My Dream'—by Adolf Hitler
Tuesday: 'The Big Lie'—by Joseph Goebbels
Wednesday: 'If Only I Could Be King'—by Hermann Göring
Thursday: 'One Too Many'—by Robert Ley
Friday: 'Sorrowing Mothers'—by Ernst Röhm
Saturday: 'New Peasant Dances'—by Walter Darré
2nd week
Monday: 'The Ancestress'—by Alfred Rosenberg
Tuesday: 'My Mouth Never Lies'—by Joseph Goebbels
Wednesday: 'My Last Tanner'—by Dr Schacht
Thursday: 'Thus Ended a Great Love'—by Ernst Röhm
Friday: 'The Con-man'—by Walter Darré
Saturday: 'His Great Mistake'—by Adolf Hitler
Sunday: 'The Robbers'—with the whole cast.131
The *Reichskulturkammer, w*hose President was Goebbels, controlled all
[111] theatre and film productions, performances and artistes, from 1933 onwards. It soon became known as *Reichskulturjammer*—a pun which can be translated either as 'Reich Chamber of Cultural Misery' or 'Reich Chamber of Miserable Culture' or even 'Miserable Reich Culture Chamber'. By virtue of his position as President, Goebbels wielded tremendous influence and could either ruin, or—

as a notorious philanderer (see Chapter 3 on Goebbels)—further the career of an actress in whom he was interested. Hitler officially disapproved of his Minister's behaviour in the Lida Baarova affair, and had the Czech actress expelled from Germany.132 Other actresses like Olga Tschechova, Zarah Leander, and the actress and film producer Leni Riefenstahl were very much in Hitler's good books and became targets of popular jokes:
[112] Zarah Leander, in the film *La Paloma,* used to sing 'Einmal wird das grosse Wunder gescheh'n' ('a great miracle will happen some time') and was said to be Hitler's inspiration to fight for victory in 1945. She had to sing the song to him in person at his headquarters.
Apart from Hitler's alleged romance with Leni Riefenstahl, Olga Tschechova was for some time a favourite. When a press photograph showed Hitler kissing the actress's hand during a State reception, she received an enormous amount of fan mail from other women, of which a few samples must suffice:
[113]—'It is good to know that you are going to marry the Führer.'
—'At last he has found the right partner.'
—'May God save and bless you.'
—'Make him happy, he has deserved it.'
Many stars less privileged than this left Germany in 1933. Among them were Marlene Dietrich, Elisabeth Bergner, Grete Mosheim, Albert Bassermann, Oskar Homolka, Conrad Veidt and Peter Lorre, as well as great directors like Fritz Lang and Josef von Sternberg.133
Film-going quadrupled in Germany during the Third Reich: from an annual 250 million attendances in 1933 to 1 billion in 1942. The reasons for this increase were employment, modest affluence and—after the beginning of the war—a hankering for escapist entertainment.134
On the other hand, there were now increased opportunities for indoctrination, which were fully recognized by Goebbels. Even in the talkies, which had reached Germany in the late 1920s, language was reduced to a minimum and to clichés, which suited Nazi propaganda perfectly, as did dream projection and both the sentimental and the monumental effects of the cinema.135
Examples of those aspects of the cinema were films of the so-called *Führertyp:*136 biographical films showing the triumph of the 'untutored genius over formal learning or philistine forces'.137 It was self-understood that the careers of men like Paracelsus, Schiller, and the inventor Diesel should be compared with that of the self-taught Adolf Hitler by the cinema-goer. Similarly, the tragic solitude of Frederick the Great, who was after all virtually celibate, was reckoned to impress female cinema-goers in particular, especially as the existence of Eva Braun was not only unknown to but also quite
[114] unsuspected by the wider public.138 In such a context one may derive a certain amusement from the fact that in 1934 Goebbels had the film *Tarzan and Jane* censored because both hero and heroine appeared to him to be too scantily dressed.

The purpose of Goebbels' Ministry was to promote the Nazi gospel in peacetime, and to maintain morale during the war in Germany's struggle for survival. The memory of Horst Wessel, whose song became the second national anthem, was honoured by the film *Hitlerjunge Quex*. Its timing, however—not long after the Röhm affair—was rather unfortunate, since the film extolled the cult of comradeship to an inordinate degree. This was expressed by the HJ
[115] leader, who went so far as to say 'Lads are something wonderful, after all.'
As a compensation for the vast heterosexual majority of the war-sick audience there was always the Number One sex symbol, the Swedish star Zara
[116] Leander. She has been called 'the Nazi cinema's flesh-and-blood monument to feminine allure'. Another Nordic star, Christina Söderbaum, was fatally accident-prone and when she drowned herself was promptly dubbed
[117] *'Reichswasserleiche'* ('Reich Floating Corpse'). As it happens, drowning had also been her fate—after being raped—in the anti-Semitic film *Jud Süss*.139
With *Jud Süss*140 a new generation of heavily slanted movies was presented to the wartime cinema-goer in Germany. This particular film was also shown in a Dutch translation in occupied Holland. Films celebrating Hitler's victories had begun with the early campaigns against Poland and France and were of course *de rigueur* as long as things went well. However, when the reverse became obvious, Goebbels fell back on showing films of Germany's heroic past or of her traditional military virtues.141 It is not surprising that Goebbels himself did not feel quite at home in this atmosphere; all the same, in the film *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* ('Leave on parole') he excelled himself in a crudely formulated eugenic message. The lieutenant exhorts his soldiers who are about to go on
[118] leave: 'Make sure you give your wife a child during these few hours' and this exhortation was given not only on the screen but in reality too (see Chapter 4, SS, police and concentration camps). Perhaps the most objectionable of films shown during the war were those aimed at making acceptable to the public the 'mercy killing' practised by the régime since 1940. This was done by dressing it
[119] up as being humanely motivated. In the film *Ich klage an* ('I accuse') a doctor kills his wife who suffers from multiple sclerosis. He does so at her request, but he is accused of murder. The implication of the film is clear: he acted ethically, compassionately and honourably. One voice utters the suspicions of many:
[120] In this film the same thing happens as in the asylums where they are finishing off all the lunatics right now. What guarantee have we got that no abuses creep in?
The film *Münchhausen,* shown late in the war, was of no propaganda value at all. The sole aim was to pander to escapism at a time when the end was less than a year off. The film was very 'artistic', and was good entertainment; in fact it was an excellent and quite advanced extraterrestrial extravaganza. It related the exploits of the famous Baron and compulsive liar.142 It was based on a script written by Erich Kästner, a Jew who had emigrated. However the ban was lifted by Goebbels,143 which shows once more that the *Prominente* in Nazi Germany had their own interpretation of *Gleichschaltung* and the Aryan laws.

Cabaret survived longer than other art forms in providing a platform from which vocal opposition to the régime could reach an eager public. Its several forms varied from subtle innuendoes, addressed to a sophisticated audience in the capital, to more down-to-earth and often crude jokes to listeners in a Bavarian beer-cellar-cum-stage. The compère who best represented this type of cabaret was the vociferous Weiss-Ferdl in the *Platzl* at Munich, while in Berlin the compère Werner Finck delivered his anti-Nazi sallies somewhat more subtly from the *Katakombe* in the capital. From his self-appointed stage Weiss-Ferdl tackled in his uniquely direct way a wide range of aspects of life in the Third Reich. He frequently poked fun at the personalities of Nazi Germany, for which he was often imprisoned in the nearby concentration camp at Dachau. After one such spell in the camp he referred to Dachau when he next appeared on the stage:

[121] Good evening! I′m sorry I′m so late. I′ve just come back from a little excursion to—Dachau! Well, you ought to see that place! Barbed-wire fence, electrified, machine-guns; another barbed-wire fence, more machine-guns—but I can tell you, I managed to get in all the same!

However, realizing that the Gestapo had their eyes on him and that his freedom was probably only of short duration, Weiss-Ferdl gave notice in advance:

[122] Ladies and gentlemen, until yesterday this stage was closed, but tonight it′s open again. However, if *I* were to be too open tonight, this stage might be closed down again tomorrow!

One evening he appeared, in high spirits:

[123] Can you imagine, my friend Adolf has given me his picture, and he has even signed it! Now I′ve got a problem—shall I hang him, or shall I put him against a wall?

Karl Valentin, another witty Munich compère, satirized the absence of freedom of speech in Nazi Germany as early as 1934. His partner, Lisl [124] Karlstadt, asked him on stage what he had to say about the Party Rally in Nuremberg, the Stormtroopers, and so on. ‘You know,′ he replied, ‘I′m saying nothing at all. I just hope *that* at least will be allowed.′ And, in a similar, though unmistakably visual way, another compère dealt with the same subject (he had been too ‘open′ as well and had just been released from a spell of re-education in a concentration camp):

[125] He appeared on the stage wearing a very large dog′s muzzle. Taking it off, he thus addressed his audience: ‘Now that the political part of our programme is finished, we can enjoy the entertaining part of it!′

The satirist Werner Finck, who from the mid-thirties was a contributor to one of the still surviving (and at least partly independent) dailies, was a master of political *double entendre*.144 One of his contributions to the *Berliner Tageblatt* read:

[126] Ladies and gentlemen, the window is open and we are talking very loudly. Maybe we had better shut it. 'If I may be quite open,' the window wanted to say at this moment, as if to intervene in the conversation, but it only creaked! Walls can join in more readily; at least they have ears.
Finck became much more widely known as a compère of the cabaret *Katakombe* in Berlin. His audience consisted chiefly of intellectuals, many of whom presumably had had first-hand experience of anti-Semitic outrages by the SA. When Finck made some anti-Nazi gags onstage someone shouted at him, 'Lousy Yid!' to which Finck replied, 'I only happen to look intelligent.'145 On one occasion Finck came on stage giving the Hitler salute. The audience responded with loud laughter, whereupon the compère coolly enquired, 'Why [127] are you laughing? That's how much snow has fallen since midday!' Finck's best sketch, however, was the one when he got his tailor to measure him for a suit:146
[128] Tailor: 'What sort of jacket shall it be? With chevrons and stripes?'
Finck: 'You mean a strait-jacket?'
Tailor: 'How would you like your pockets?'
Finck: 'Wide open, in the current fashion.'
As Finck kept his right arm extended in a gesture resembling the Nazi salute, the tailor took sleeve measurements, mumbling, 'Nineteen-thirty-three suspended rights.'
After this last exercise Goebbels closed the *Katakombe* cabaret and had Finck thrown into a concentration camp. Released through the intervention of Göring, Goebbels' rival, Finck continued with his former activities but was eventually forbidden to work as an actor after Goebbels had him expelled from the *Reichskulturkammer,*147 possibly after Finck had produced this joke:
[129] Have you heard the latest? Joseph has come and caught the Finck!148
Eventually Finck found refuge of a sort by working at the front, in the Army's *Truppenbetreuungsamt* ('troop welfare office').149

**HEALTH**

Like everything else in Nazi Germany, health was fundamentally affected quite early on by the totalitarian policy of the régime. As early as 1933 the *Erbgesundheitsgesetz* ('Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased [130] Offspring') formed the basis of a programme of enforced sterilization which soon became known as the 'Hitler-cut'. The list of hereditary diseases affected by this law included hereditary physical deformities, one of which was club-foot. The most prominent Nazi with this handicap was of course Dr Goebbels. It is now known that his club-foot was not the result of a hereditary disease, but was caused by an infection in his leg. However, this was not general knowledge at the time and it was widely believed that he too should in justice have

undergone the 'Hitler-cut'. For this reason the following story began to circulate soon after 1933:
[131] Professor Sauerbruch, the leading contemporary surgeon, is wooed by the Nazis, and, though no friend of the régime,150 is made a *Staatsrat* (Privy Counsellor). On being urged repeatedly to make a speech in the Reich Chancellory, he suggests a lecture on 'The heredity of the club-foot', whereupon the requests cease.
The *vox populi* had this to say about the *Erbgesundheitsgesetz:*
[132] If Hitler hadn't made that law about hereditary disease we would all be idiots today.
And, with enthusiasm, but unintentional *double entendre:*
[133] Only Hitler himself has to be thanked for our hereditarily healthy offspring!
As mentioned before (see this chapter, Religion (p. 95) and The arts (p. 102)), the *Erbgesundheitsgesetz* had been operating for about seven years when rumours of so-called 'mercy killings' began to circulate all over Germany. This was due to the régime's attempts to extend the scope of this law to the elimination of incurable mental defectives151 living in institutions. Apparently the place selected to put this scheme into practice first was 'Bethel', a famous asylum in the Westphalian town of Bielefeld. Its director, known as the 'Father of Mercy', Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, was a member of the Bekenntniskirche (see Religion), and he successfully prevented the implementation of the plan in his asylum. Cardinal Count Galen in Münster (also in Westphalia), and the Protestant Bishop Wurm in Württemberg, also fought openly against the régime's intentions.152
Nevertheless, the scheme was not abandoned. The régime naturally needed nurses 'steeped in Nazi eugenic ideology'153 not only for euthanasia but also in order to carry out the sterilization programme. Thus there came about the founding of the *Braune Schwesternschaft* ('Brown Nurses' League'), as nurses like Catholic nuns and Protestant deaconesses found such work unacceptable.
There was a fourth nursing organization in existence in the Third Reich—the Red Cross *(Rotes Kreuz)*—and at first it operated as it did in other countries. However, it too very quickly became *gleichgeschaltet*. From a school essay (so it is said) stems this joke:
[134] 'Beim Roten Kreuz widmen sich Herren und Damen ganz der Liebe; manche tun es umsonst, andere bekommen es bezahlt.' ('In the Red Cross men and women devote themselves to love;154 some do it for nothing, others get paid for it.')
Despite many public protests the 'mercy killing' continued, though more clandestinely. In one town, when the people protested, they were told by a Nazi Party official that they could now expect larger allocations of food rations.155 Perhaps the most successful way which the régime found to promote its own concept of euthanasia to the public was via the cinema.156
Nazi doctors made it clear to the medical profession at large that 'death on

demand' was wholly acceptable ethically and that dissenting would be frowned upon.157 In this manner the German people were brainwashed into accepting 'mercy killing' as a patriotic necessity during the war (see also Chapter 9). The following true episode illustrates the circumstances which surrounded one attempt at 'mercy killing':

[135] An elderly couple, having heard that their feeble-minded daughter was to be 'transferred' from the asylum where she had been an in-patient to 'some other place', decided to travel to the asylum, collected the girl and took her home with them. A day or two later they were notified by the clerk of the asylum that their daughter had suddenly died there.158

In contrast to the practice in other professions, doctors were not compelled to join the Nazi Party. However, married status, many children, and membership of the Party were prerequisites for most medical appointments, particularly those of specialists.159 This policy was pursued by the Medical Board *(Aerztekammer),* all of whose members were trusted Nazis, as might be expected.

After the lapse of half a century it would be impossible to ascertain how many of the 50,000 or so doctors in the Third Reich160 were Party members and/or active supporters of the régime. As to their mode of employment, the Armed Forces, which had been greatly expanded during the first decade of the Third Reich, absorbed a large number of doctors. Others entered either government health services or the medical branches of the various Nazi organizations. In addition, the implementation of Nazi laws against the Jews resulted, by 1938, in about 5,500 Jewish doctors in Nazi Germany being forbidden to practice; their registration had simply been annulled.161 This meant that there had been a considerable reduction in the number of general practitioners by the time war broke out in 1939.

Despite growing shortages in the number of doctors, and shortcomings in therapeutic facilities, there were no major breakdowns of health in the Nazi period.162 However, a callous disregard for the sanctity of life quickly became apparent in the statements of Dr Conti, *Reichsärzteführer* ('Reich Chief Medical Officer'). In 1938, in a medical journal, he advised against general practitioners [136] sending terminally ill patients to hospital: 'Death, like birth, is a natural event, one of the most significant in family life.'163

The preoccupation of the Nazi health authorities with population increase [137] was expressed in the slogan 'battle for births'. As in the war, there were casualties in this battle too. More than half the number of girls serving their *Landjahr* (one year of compulsory service on a farm) had disturbed hormonal cycles due to psychosomatic causes, such as separation from their home environment and to unaccustomed heavy work on the farm164 for which the appropriate term *Landjahr-Amenorrhoe*165 came into being.

It was the misfortune of doctors practising in the Third Reich to be measured by the standards adopted by men like Conti, Gebhardt and Morell. Conti is

now regarded as 'perhaps the completest charlatan of all the Nazi doctors'.166 Gebhardt, an orthopaedic surgeon and the personal doctor and intimate friend of Himmler, was considered Himmler's 'evil genius'167 and a man with a 'sinister personality'.168 Morell, who became Hitler's personal physician *(Leibarzt),* was a notorious quack, who in addition seems to have had a hypnotic effect on Hitler,169 as indeed the latter had on so many others. This medical trio, with their cupidity and craving for power, excelled in sycophancy and intrigue.

It was remarkable, given the example set by such men at the top, that the general nutrition and health of the population were on the whole satisfactory, even during the war. There were exceptions, however, such as the loss of twelve million working hours in factories because of gastric disorders. The official commentary on this was couched in a somewhat naive imitation of martial [138] terminology: 'The army of sufferers from stomach diseases has greatly increased in this war.' It is debatable whether nutritional deficiency or psychosomatic causes were to blame. Rationing of foodstuffs on the whole worked well, probably because it had been in operation to some degree since the mid-thirties.

A curious by-product of some shortages was observed when some poorer people in the capital asked for more than the usual amount of prescriptions for digestible medicines: these could be used as substitutes for foodstuffs in short supply.170 On the other hand, the shortage of a wide range of goods gave rise to misunderstandings:

[139] Woman to friend: 'Well, normally I don't say anything against the government, but now this sterilization business, that is just too much!' Friend, in reply: 'What! Are the Party after the *Sterilisiertes*171 in our larders?'

or:

[140] Two women friends meet. 'You know I've got haemorrhoids!' says the first woman. Her friend, eagerly: 'What! On ration cards?'

Gradually anonymous wits began to detect a rash of new diseases. Among [141] these was *Bräune*172 ('brownchitis'); some people became 'browned off', for [142] which they were likely to be *abgeführt*173 by the *Gestapo*. Then there was [143] *Flüsteritis* ('the whispering disease') which was easily diagnosed by *der deutsche Blick* or *Rundschau*174 ('the German glance') as outbreaks were so common. A new orthopaedic disease became very common indeed and soon received an [144] appropriately high-sounding name. This was 'Salutitis', caused by perpetual elevation of the right arm and eventually leading to inflammation of the armpit, said to need massage at Nuremberg.175 Another new illness, first observed in [145] March 1933, and mainly seen in civil servants, was 'Party psychosis', which resulted either in the afflicted person becoming 'a 150%er' or showing 'withdrawal' symptoms.176

Naturally, despite their privileged status, the *Prominente* too had some

[146] medical problems. 'Goebbelitis' or 'chronic logorrhoea' was the condition peculiar to the Minister of Propaganda, though others thought him chiefly [147] responsible for a new form of plague from which the whole population suffered; it was known as *die braune Pest* ('the brown plague'). People also asked each other whether the Führer was or was not immune to disease:
[148] Question: What is the difference between Adolf Hitler and the appendix?
Answer: None whatsoever. Both are frequently in a state of irritation; moreover, both are quite superfluous.
Even severely handicapped Germans showed their opposition to the régime, as the following story shows:
[149] During the winter two men in a tram car amaze the other passengers by engaging in peculiar manipulations under their long overcoats. It takes an expert to find out what they are doing. They turn out to be deaf-mutes exchanging some anti-Nazi jokes.
The Third Reich, could, however, boast some miracle cures: 'Germans can now [150] walk upright, even if they have no backbone left', a condition for which, as observed earlier, 'Anti-Byzantinol' was considered a remedy. The representatives of the various European countries and of the USA met late in 1933 at a surgical congress. They discussed the latest discoveries in their fields. The [151] German surgeon topped it all: 'Earlier this year I operated on quite a few of my fellow countrymen. I removed their brains—and they never noticed it.'

**AGRICULTURE**

For many centuries Germany's geopolitical structure was based on the land, and this situation continued into the 1930s—longer than in any other economically advanced western country.177 About two-thirds of all arable land consisted of medium-sized farms and the remaining one-third comprised, in about equal proportions, smallholdings and large estates. The latter were mainly situated in the provinces east of the river Elbe,178 and hence were often referred to as *Ostelbien*. The Nazi ideology was on the whole not shared by the estate owners there.179 Hitler was aware of this, and he therefore chose, as *Gauleiter* of *Ostelbien,* men with a particular ideological make-up, the *Radikalinskis* of the Nazi hierarchy.180 One typical representative of this group was a certain Hildebrandt, a former farm labourer. He was imbued with class hatred, but after his elevation to *Gauleiter* of Mecklenburg (see *Gleichschaltung,* p. 85) he aped Junker customs such as giving shooting parties.181
In order to harness agriculture to the régime's requirements the *Reichsnährstand* ('Reich Food Supply Authority') was created. It comprised over three million of the country's farms, as well as several hundred thousand food-processing enterprises and food and drink retail stores.182 In 1939 the official SS journal, *Schwarzes Korps,* expressed in threatening style the sentiments of the 'plebeian big shots'183 in high office by predicting that 'in order to have as many

people as possible work the land independently it is necessary to carve up the mammoth estates.'184 It seemed not to have occurred to the editor of the journal that the very creation of the *Reichsnährstand* itself amounted to a mammoth organization, and that this made individual enterprise in the widest sense impossible. It was not long before the *vox populi* commented adversely on this and other anomalies:
[152] At school:
Teacher: 'Please form the comparative and the superlative of "organization."'
Pupil: 'Organization, superorganization, *Reichsnährstand*.'
The Nazi boss in charge of the *Reichsnährstand* was Dr Walter Darré, an Argentinian-born *Auslandsdeutscher* like a number of leading and lesser Nazis.185 Originally a pig breeder, he was a civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture186 when he attracted Hitler's attention by his book *The Peasantry as the Life Source of the Nordic Race*.187 When the Minister of Agriculture, Hugenberg (then a member of Hitler's first cabinet) was dismissed in June 1933 Hitler made Derré head of his Ministry—presumably because he thought that this man was preferable to one of the Junker-class estate owners normally chosen for the post.188 Hitler also made Darré *Reichsbauernführer* ('Reich Peasant Leader').
Darré was the man responsible for such pseudo-socialist Nazi experiments in [153] agriculture as 'the scheme to divide all the women of the Reich into eugenic classes, like cattle, for breeding purposes'. Darré, as an expert in breeding animals and as an amateur in comparative anatomy, planned to utilize his [154] knowledge by 'recreating the Nordic man by cross-breeding aimed at [155] displacement of undesirable racial characteristics'.189 This attempt soon resulted in the following comment: 'The Party's and the government's efforts toward racial improvement and "Nordifying" the Germans were noticeable as early as 1934; more people with "long faces" were about.'190
Darré was, if not the inventor, certainly the chief promoter of the *Blut und Boden* ('Blood and Soil') concept, the Nazi slogan quoted *ad nauseam* and applied to many aspects of life in the Third Reich. He was so enamoured with the ideology that, only a few months after taking office, he had a monument erected to himself at Wiesbaden; this was inscribed *Blut und Boden*. His superiors were somewhat annoyed at this act of self-aggrandisement, especially as he also made a speech when the monument was unveiled.191
We have referred to the effects of the *Blut und Boden* ideology in Himmler's 'settlement' fantasies in the eastern territories occupied by his SS during the war. There was a similar impact on the arts, as in the so-called *Blubo* plays in theatre and cinema. However, in very real terms *Blut und Boden* formed the basis of the *Erbhofgesetz,*192 the law by which medium-sized farms were transformed into entailed holdings, which could only be inherited by male descendants, or alternatively by related male cousins.193 This law interfered with long-established modes of inheritance, but was also anachronistic, as it

copied the then still existing primogeniture by which the large estates of the German landed gentry were inherited—that very class of *Junkers* which the *Erbhofbauern* were supposed to replace. Finally, in individual instances the law could and did cause much distress to holders of smaller farms.194
Satirical comments about both the ideology and the practicality of Nazi agrarian policy were manifold. There was, of course, first and foremost the [156] person of the Minister. His name gave rise to an unfortunately untranslatable pun: 'Besser dreissig Jahre Dürre als ein Jahr Darré.195 This shows the farmers' reaction to many rulings emanating from the Ministry of Agriculture. Some of his own responses to complaints by Bavarian farmers resulted in Darré being beaten up there.196 Having been a pig-breeder himself, and being also steeped in *Blut und Boden* ideology, Darré had written a book entitled *Das Schwein als Kriterium für nordische Völker und Semiten* ('The critical importance of the pig [157] for Nordic and Semitic people') which soon became parodied as 'Das Schwein als Vertreter der nordischen Rasse' ('The pig as the representative of the Nordic race'). In a similar vein were such bogus announcements as:
[158] The Minister of Agriculture has summoned the farmers as the pigs have consumed too much.
Or, from an edict by the Ministry of Agriculture:
[159] In particular, one has to make quite sure that all left-over food will be given to the NSV pigs *(Nationalsozialist-Wohlfahrts-Schweine)*.
Darré's experiments with pig fodder containing an excessive proportion of barley roughage also attracted satirical comment, since this fodder was thought to be the reason for the unexpectedly high rate of pigs dying in wartime. These events were to be recorded in this epitaph:
[160] I too died a hero's death;
I died from Darré's barley-bran.197
Altogether, the competence of Darré as a practical farmer was never accepted by the majority of German farmers, possibly because he had studied agriculture. This is reflected in the following joke:
[161] Darré was a child prodigy. At the age of four years he knew as much about agriculture as he does now.
Agricultural policies and measures attracted comments from a wide variety of sources. These included school essays from which the following gem is taken:
[162] 'Healthy farmers create healthy domestic animals.'198
or eugenic exhortations:
[163] No horse would ever dream of marrying a cow, yet Aryan men, despite their intellect, sometimes marry non-Aryan women.

Or contemporary *double entendre:*
[164] My aunt has been awarded a silver beaker by the *Reichsnährstand* in recognition of her milk production, the best in the *Gau*.
Because certain food supplies had become rationed since the mid 1930s, some shopkeepers tried new ways to attract custom, like the greengrocer who [165] put this notice in his shop window: 'Germans, buy German *Kamerun-Bananen* here!'199 This prompted a neighbouring greengrocer to get rid of a large supply [166] of pears by putting the following notice in his window: 'Germans, buy German fruit only in my shop; German pears are the softest!'200 Shortly afterwards he was arrested. On the other hand, the public were also exhorted by the [167] authorities to be more austere in their culinary habits—in fact to develop 'a political stomach' as an extension of the *Eintopfsonntag,* as the nation's 'Lenten sacrifice'.201
Another symptom of relative food shortage before the war was the habit, noticeable among quite a few grocers, of selling foodstuffs in short supply by compelling the customer to buy additional items. These [168] 'coupling transactions'202 were satirized in this quip: 'Der deutsche Gruss ist "Pflaumenmuss"'.203
During the war Darré decided to inspect some farms in person, to make quite sure that his directions concerning the most economical way of saving supplies of fodder in wartime were being followed:
[169] At the first farm in the village he asks the farmer, 'What do you feed your chickens?' 'Wheat,' replies the farmer. 'What!' shouts Darré. 'Treasonable waste in wartime! You'll go to a concentration camp!' At a neighbouring farm he gets the answer," 'Potato peelings', which are not at all suitable in Darré's eyes either. 'They are reserved for human food!' Naturally these happenings are widely discussed in the village, and when Darré turns up again after a few weeks and asks one farmer how he feeds his chickens he gets this reply: 'I don't feed the birds anything at all; every morning I throw one mark into the hencoop and tell- them, "That's your ration for today. Go and buy your own grub!"'
A considerable number of types of food and other goods was no longer available, and substitutes *(Ersatz)* appeared in the shops, such as 'German coffee', 'German tea', 'German cocoa', virtually fat-free *Ersatz*-soap, and adulterated beer. When a dissatisfied drinker sent a sample of the brew to a [170] laboratory, he received this reply a few days later: 'Your horse suffers from diabetes.' Not unnaturally Nazi beer with its excessive diuretic effect soon [171] became known as 'bladder irrigation à la Conti.'204
During the war a black market developed in which Party and government [172] officials also participated. These activities were known as 'under-the-counter work'. As disciplinary measures remained ineffective, a wit commented: 'Fifteen thousand Lilliputians are required in Berlin for under-the-counter [173] work', while customers frequenting the shops asked for *Bückware* (lit. 'goods obtained by stooping').

**EDUCATION**

Like any other field of human activity, education in the Third Reich was *gleichgeschaltet*. Yet at first, after the Nazi takeover, Hitler achieved many of his successes in this field, as in others, largely by using the existing organizations without at first radically changing them. However, Jewish teachers—like other Jewish civil servants—were dismissed at an early stage. As mentioned earlier, Jewish children still had to attend schools (seated on separate benches) until 15 November 1938, when all Jewish pupils were expelled from the schools. (For comments on the unenviable position of Jewish schoolchildren after 1933 see Chapter 5.)

Bernhard Rust (1883–1945), who from 1933 was Minister of Education in Prussia and then Reich Education Minister, had by 1934 'completely Nazified the schools',205 although this could not have been too difficult a task. Only a little over a year later one third of the total number of teachers had become Party members, while 97 per cent of them had already enrolled in the Nazi *Lehrerbund* ('Teachers' Association'). By 1935 only about half that number of other civil servants had joined the Party.206 As many teachers had been Social Democrats before 1933, this quip was not unexpected:

[174] Q. What is the shortest measurable unit of time?

A. The time it takes a primary-school teacher to change his political allegiance.

Some years later changes in the curriculum did take place. A great deal of emphasis was now put on sport; all teachers below the age of fifty had to

42 Suffer the little children to come unto me

participate in compulsory physical training courses, and such courses for school children had increased—at the expense of religious instruction—from two courses in 1933 to five in 1938. This either coincided with or followed Nazi propaganda in the mid-1930s and the show trials of monastic houses instigated by Goebbels, which led to a secularization of Roman Catholic schools in Bavaria. These became interdenominational schools.207 Goebbels was not the only Nazi leader responsible for such educational changes. Ley had been entrusted by Hitler with a complete reorganization of the educational system: 'Adolf Hitler' schools for the primary grades and *Ordensburgen* ('Castles of the Orders') for higher education. These latter were intended for the Nazi élite of the future.208

However, this was not all. The Minister of Education's main rival in the upbringing of the young in the Third Reich was Baldur von Schirach, the *Reichsjugendführer*. He enjoyed Hitler's confidence, at least in the early years, because he saw to it that the Hitler Youth were brought up in the Party spirit, while Rust and his disciples were in Hitler's eyes merely schoolmasters to whom political instincts were of secondary importance. Hitler seems to have encouraged rivalries in this as in other fields, possibly in order to shine as a mediator209 (and ultimate arbiter?), with the result that on questions of education Rust usually had to give way, so that his position weakened and his decisions vacillated a great deal. This became almost proverbial, as in the acronym based on his name:

[175] Q. What does *Rust* (R-u-s-t) stand for?
A. *R*eich*su*nruhe*st*if*t*er ('Reich Master of Restlessness').
As a result of the frequent changes in school timetables, the phrase *rollender* [176] *Stundenplan* ('perpetually changing timetable') came into currency.
However, it was not only interference on the part of Rust's Nazi colleagues (all of them amateurs in matters concerning education) which damaged the educational system, for the policy of the Third Reich amounted to education phobia. This was evident from the systematic reduction in the number of Gymnasium (grammar school) pupils by one fifth and of university entrants by about two-fifths by 1939.210 It was apparent, too, in the educational standard of Hitler's top administrators, the *Gauleiter,* of whom it was said that only a small minority had had any secondary education, and an even smaller number had attended a university.211
Nazi misogyny was expressed in the fact that only a little over ten per cent of girls who had matriculated in 1934 were allowed university entry; in Dr Ley's *Napolas* ('National Political Education Establishments') for the future Nazi élite, only two out of thirty-nine such institutions offered any places for girls.212 Girls who were candidates for eventual university entry had to take either a language or a domestic science course, both of which were academic dead ends, [177] and which became known as *Pudding-Abitur*213 ('Pudding matriculation').
In all ordinary schools in Nazi Germany the conflict between the maintenance of a reasonable standard of learning and intense political commitment led inevitably to a considerable lowering of educational standards.214 An official army statement says so in bald terms:
[178] Many of the candidates applying for commissions display a quite inconceivable lack of elementary knowledge.
Similarly, when in 1942 a Hamburg newspaper asked, 'Is our youth getting more stupid?' it based this rhetorical question on evidence of semi-literacy in the majority of young men taking part in a local apprentices' examination. It was now thought to be also partly due to the lack of qualified teachers.215
Actual episodes, apocryphal stories and satirical comments characterize the declining standards of education in the Third Reich. Frau Thomsen, wife of the German Envoy to Sweden, related the following experience she had in Berlin during the war:
[179] When I was leaving the Underground station a policeman came up to me, and as I pulled off my old kid gloves he shouted at me, 'Haven't you heard Dr Goebbels' latest speech? In wartime one cannot touch anybody with kid gloves!'
Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55), Danish philosopher and writer, was actually considered unacceptable by the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* ('Reich Chamber for [180] Literature') because in the 1840s he had written his *Kritik der Gegenwart* ('Criticism of the Present Time'). It was also said that several publishers had [181] applied to the Nazi Censor for permission to reprint certain German classics.

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44 He is a writer

45 Book burning

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46 German academics

The authors in question were Jakob Grimm (1785–1863: of fairy-tale fame) and Adalbert Stifter (1805–88) the novelist. The Censor enquired whether the two authors were members of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer*!

Then there was the story, also in circulation about this time, appropriately entitled 'Schiller in France″:

[182] During the war a German officer is travelling in occupied France, and he greets the only other passenger in the railway compartment with 'Heil Hitler!′ The Frenchman replies with 'Bonjour, Monsieur!′ The officer, somewhat annoyed, notices that the Frenchman is reading a volume of Schiller′s works. He reproaches him: 'You know German, you read a book by a German poet, yet you don′t accept the German salute!′ The Frenchman replies: 'I must correct you, Monsieur. Schiller must be considered an international poet.′ 'Well, I′ve never heard such nonsense!′ exclaims the German. 'I′ll explain,′ says the Frenchman. 'Schiller wrote *Wilhelm Tell* for the Swiss, *Don Carlos* for the Spaniards, *Maria Stuart* for the Britons, *The Maid of Orleans* for the French, *The Bride of Messina* for the Italians, *Wallenstein* for the Austrians...′ 'Stop, stop,′ interrupts the German, 'but, surely, Schiller must have written at least one play for the Germans?′ 'Oh, yes, indeed,′ replies the Frenchman, '*The Robbers*′.216

Not even school essays in the Third Reich escaped the taint of contemporary politics, or so the following story would have one believe:

[183] A young male teacher, eager to climb up the educational ladder, gives his class the

47 Hitler has no use for intellectuals like Einstein
following essay: 'Would Goethe's Werther217 have committed suicide if he had been a member of the Hitler Youth?' Thereupon his lady colleague, trying to emulate him, sets her girls' class this essay question: 'Would the "Maid of Orleans" (Schiller's heroine)218 have remained a virgin if she had been a member of the BDM (League of German Maidens)?'
A concluding picture of the intellectual level of some *Prominente* is given by the following story:
[184] An official high up in the Party requests the Rector of Munich University to invest Himmler and Ley with the degree of *doctor honoris causa* in history. He has to agree, but nevertheless considers a short *viva voce* examination necessary for both candidates.
The Rector to Himmler: 'Who assassinated Wallenstein?'
Himmler, rather put out: 'I am quite certain I didn't do it.'
When the same question is put to Ley he assures the Rector that with all his work as *Reichsleiter, Arbeitsfront* and *Kraft durch Freude* he can't possibly be held responsible for every dead Jew.
The Rector is at a loss as to what to do after these two results. So he asks Hitler for an audience and suggests to the Führer that the question of a doctoral degree for the two gentlemen had better be shelved. However, Hitler replies, 'Ley is quite right. The main thing is that the Jew is dead. The two gentlemen are to be given their doctoral degrees in history.'

As a companion-piece to this story the following parody may conclude this section on education in Nazi Germany. The quip circulated during the first winter of the war and was called 'A Beatitude of the Third Reich':
[185] 'Selig sind die Halbgebildeten, denn das Dritte Reich ist ihrer.'
('Blessed are the semi-literate, for theirs is the Third Reich.')

**NAZI LANGUAGE**

A new dialect of German became noticeable in the Nazi Press several years before 1933. Dr Goebbels was to a large extent responsible for this. We are indeed fortunate in having an expert witness for the whole duration of the Third Reich: Victor Klemperer, Professor of German at the *Technische Hochschule* ('Technical University') of Dresden, who described in his diary, *Notizbuch eines Philologen,* the impact Nazism had on the German language. In the sub-title of this diary, *Lingua Tertii Imperii,*219 he describes the process in some detail. Unfortunately, changes in syntax and some Nazi neologisms make translation unrewarding or too cumbersome to the English reader in many cases, and numerous examples have had to be omitted for this reason.
Klemperer calls Goebbels *den Sprach-und-Gedankenformer der Massen* ('the shaper of the language and thoughts of the masses').220 In this capacity Goebbels takes precedence over Hitler whose role as Führer was to some degree formed by Goebbels.221
Nazified German makes tedious reading, with its strong tendency toward [186] tautological superlatives, as in Goebbels' wartime *cri de cœur:*222 'The situation can only be retrieved by wild fanaticism', which shows that the word *fanatisch* ('fanatical') had taken on a new meaning in Nazified German. It was hammered [187] into people's minds often enough for them to believe that 'a fanatic is a virtuous hero and that heroism is impossible without fanaticism'.223
The process of emotionalizing Nazi speech was furthered by the use of nouns with hallowed or primordial associations like 'Providence', 'the Almighty', 'cathedral', 'altar', as well as 'grail', 'earth' and 'womb'.224 Thus Goebbels would comment on a speech by Hitler:
[188] Now Germany is transformed into a single place of worship in which her advocate steps before the high throne of the Almighty.
The 'Ministry of Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment' lived up to its name by trying to popularize composite words with patriotic or martial connotations such as 'folk', 'blood', 'soil', 'earth', 'war', 'battle', 'hero', 'victory'.
However, when the war ceased to continue on its victorious course, new ways to enlighten the people had to be found. Again it was Goebbels' Ministry that could be relied on to produce ever new euphemisms for defeat and retreat, such as 'shortened [or 'elastic'] front-line' *(Frontverkürzung),* or 'mobile defensive warfare' *(beweglicher Verteidigungskrieg),* but also *Wunderwaffe* ('miracle weapon').225 Another new term, *Luftschutz* ('protection against air

raids′), was the noun from which an adjective, *luftschutzmässig,* was formed. [189] Thus ‘going into the air-raid shelter′ (or simply ‘into the cellar′) became in Nazi German *luftschutzmässiges Benehmen* (lit. ‘shelter-entering behaviour′).226
Nazi propaganda commonly used inverted commas to convey a pejorative [190] meaning, as in: *Heine, ein ‘deutscher′ Dichter*.
As to the role of Hitler himself in the development of Nazi German, one finds that many of the phrases he used in his speeches were culled from his book *Mein Kampf*—and these were faithfully imitated by the lesser Nazis. Some of the sentences are both high-falutin and hypocritical. Thus it is stated that on *Heldengedenktag* (National Remembrance Day, 13 March in Germany) ‘Hitler [191] hofft demütig auf die Gnade der Vorsehung′ (‘Hitler humbly hopes for the grace of Providence′). On the other hand, when speaking of the Nazis killed at the failed *Putsch* of November 1923, which was annually commemorated, he [192] proclaimed blasphemously: ‘Meine Apostel—ihr seid auferstanden im Dritten Reich′ (‘My Apostles—you have been resurrected in the Third Reich′).
Hitler′s pathetic *Hausknechtsdeutsch*227 (‘gutter jargon′) becomes apparent [193] in such phrases as ‘Die harte Faust des Schicksals öffnete mir das Auge′ (‘The [194] hard fist of Fate opened my eye′), or, when attacking the media: ‘Dieses journalistische Pack fabriziert zu mehr als zwei Drittein die sogenannte öffentliche Meinung, deren Schaum dann die parlamentarische Aphrodite entsteigt′ (‘These rascally journalists fabricate more than two-thirds of so-called public opinion, from the foam of which there emerges the parliamentarian Aphrodite′). This matches his blunder as an orator, when, attacking Churchill, he once addressed him (on a radio transmission to a German audience) as *Herr* [195] *Mister Churchill*. But the illogical imagery of Hitler′s semi-educated mind reaches new depths of bathos when he reflects on the *Notzeit* (‘hard times′) he had experienced as an inmate of various doss-houses:
[196] ‘Wer sich nicht selber in den Klammern dieser würgenden Natter befindet, lernt ihre Giftzähne niemals kennen′ (‘He who has not himself experienced the fetters of that suffocating viper will never get to know its poisoned fangs′).
Hitler′s shocking orthography when he occupied himself as a postcard painter228 recalls the adage *le style c′est l′homme*.229
In view of Hitler′s literary attainments (and of his opinion of himself in that respect) the following entry in Goebbels′ diaries is amusing:
[197] The Führer sent word to me that he really does not propose to become a schoolmaster at this stage. He was very angry about the draft of Ley′s appeal for National Labour Day, 1 May 1942. He was especially annoyed by the style which was like that of a schoolboy. Would I please take a hand in this matter in future and see that such exercises are not submitted to him until they comply with the most elementary rules of grammar.
After the appointment of Goebbels as *Gauleiter* of Berlin in the autumn of 1926 his hate-filled incantations were shouted by the Stormtroopers on the streets of the capital:

[198] *'Deutschland erwache, Juda verrecke!'*
('Wake up, Germany—die in the gutter, Judah!')
These were merely the forerunners of the articles in his own paper, *Der Angriff* ('The Attack'), in other papers of the Nazi press, and not least in Julius Streicher's pornographic weekly, *Der Stürmer,* published in Nuremberg.
From 1933 onwards, the *SD* or *Sicherheitsdienst* (later led by Heydrich) operated a thorough censorship. It is therefore hardly credible that the following gem of sense-distorting tautology escaped the censor:
[199] In the 1937 carnival issue of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* one could read: 'Dies hat zu dem weithin geäusserten Wunsch nach der Liberalisation der Pressefreiheit geführt' ('This has led to a widely expressed desire for the liberalization of the freedom of the press').
Apart from the composite words mentioned above, others were now given a new meaning—like the infamous *Gleichschaltung*. Originally used in electrical engineering, it now came to mean 'compulsory coordination', in fact 'complete Nazification'.230 Eventually the term was used as a verb:
[200] During an excursion of 'Strength-through-Joy' workers, a courier told the coach party at a picnic site in the woods: 'Jetzt sind wir mit der Natur gleichgeschaltet' ('Now we are coordinated with nature').
In the course of Hitler's territorial conquests new terms emerged. We have heard of *Ostmark* and *Ostmärker* (Austria and Austrians, respectively). In the east the former German province of Posen, which had been Polish from 1919 to 1939, was now renamed *Warthegau* (after the river Warthe, a tributary of the river Oder. This resulted in a punning joke, because *warten* ('to wait') might also be applied to a country next on Hitler's list of territorial conquests in [201] Europe. It was rumoured that Switzerland might be that 'waiting' country, hence 'Switzerland, the new *Warte-Gau*'. The traditional term for the Swiss as members of their Federal Republic is *Eidgenossen* ('fellow Swiss'), hence this joke:
[202] Q. Why don't the Swiss dare to go to bed these days?
A. They are afraid they may fall asleep as *Eidgenossen* and wake up next morning as *Volksgenossen* ('fellow Nazis').231
Nazi language encroached further on the régime's judicial terminology, hence *Volksgerichtshof* ('People's Law Court'), A*hnennachweis* ('proof of Aryan ancestry'), and *Erbgesundheitsgesetz* ('Law for the prevention of hereditary disease'). The habit of using antiquated, or specifically Nordic, terms was popular with Himmler and the SS. However, Goebbels too tried to oust long-[203] established German words of foreign derivation with oddities like *Grünfleck* ('patch of green') for *Oase* ('oasis') and the culinary *Seezunge zur guten Frau* for 'sole bonne femme' although neither these nor, understandably, linguistic [204] monstrosities like *Zeitunger* ('journalist') and *Zieh*232 ('locomotive') ever came

[205] into practical use. On the other hand, the word *Vandalismus* ('vandalism'), though indicating an activity widely practised by Stormtroopers on many occasions, was officially declared *unberechtigt* (lit. 'not justified') and banned on the grounds of racial piety.
Goebbels' Ministry directed its exhortations at the German people by [206] finding neologisms like *Kohlenklau* ('coal thief' or 'coal waster')233 and [207] *Groschengrab* (lit. 'penny tomb'; 'spendthrift'). Not surprisingly, the habit of coining new words spread beyond that Ministry. One neologism, which had a [208] distinct anti-Nazi flavour, began to circulate in 1943, namely *Heldenklau* (lit. 'hero-grabbing'234)—which will be discussed later. It was also the *vox populi* which contributed the following new inventions which characterized the Führer [209] and the two top Nazis. From Hitler came *der freiwillige Zwang* ('voluntary coercion'); from Göring *die schlichte Pracht* ('simple splendour'); and from Goebbels *die wahre Lüge* ('the true lie').
In many of his speeches Hitler tended to substitute incorrect words for correct ones. One of his favourite phrases was: 'Ein starkes Deutschland ist der beste Garant für Frieden in Europe'235 ('A strong Germany is the best guarantor for peace in Europe'). The correct German word is *Bürge,* not *Garant,* a rather obsolete derivative of 'guarantor'. In the following paraphrase the misuse of the word *Bürge* is satirized at the same time as the 'Four Year Plan':236
[210] 'I am,' said he, 'quite ready to die,
Nor beg you to let me live,
But I ask you merely one favour to give:
Four years in which I'll ardently try
To acquire the citizens' money supply;
Schacht I'll leave as my guarantor,
Him you may kill, should you see me no
more.'237
The following story almost amounts to a glossary of Nazi neologisms; it is a contemporary attempt to retell the well-known fairy-tale of Little Red Riding Hood *(Rotkäppchen),* had she lived in the Third Reich:
[211] A long time ago there was a forest in Germany which had not yet been tidied up by the *Arbeitsdienst* ('Labour Service'); in it there lived a wolf. It just happened to be *Erntedankfest* ('National Harvest Festival') when a little *BDM* ('League of German Maidens') girl walked through the forest. She wore a red hat, and she intended to pay a visit to her *arische* ('Aryan') grandmother, who lived in a *NSV* ('National Socialist *Volkswohlfahrt*') Home for old people. She had a little basket with her with a bottle of *Patenwein* ('wine as a charitable gift'). Suddenly the bad wolf stood in front of her. He wore a brown coat, so nobody could possibly guess at his *artfremde* ('un-German') intentions. *Rotkäppchen* was therefore not at all suspicious; moreover, she knew that all *Volksschädlinge* ('enemies of the German nation') were safely tucked away in a *Konzentrationslager* ('concentration camp'); also she thought she had a very ordinary *bürgerliche* ('bourgeois') dog in front of her.
'Heil, Little Red Riding Hood!' said the wolf, raising his right front paw, 'Which way are you going?' 'I am going to visit my granny in the NSV Home.' 'Well,' said

the wolf, 'in that case why don't you pick some of these nice flowers which the *Amt für Schönheit des Waldes* ("Department for Forest Beautification") have planted here?' She immediately bent down and picked some flowers for a posy. The wolf, however, quickly ran off to the *NSV* Home, gobbled up the grandmother and dressed himself in her clothes; he didn't even forget to put on the *NS Frauenschaftsabzeichen* ('NS Women's Badge'), and then he got into her bed. Very soon Little Red Riding Hood got to the Home, entered her granny's room and said, '*Heil Hitler, Oma!* ("granny"), how are you?' The wolf tried to imitate the *volksnahe* ('genuine folksy') voice of the grandmother and answered, 'I am well, dear child', but Little Red Riding Hood asked, 'Why is your voice so strange today?' 'Because the *NS-Kurs* ("course") for *Pg.* ("Party members") speakers which I attended has been very strenuous.' 'But, Oma, why do you have such big ears?' 'All the better to hear the *Meckerer* ("bleaters") with, my dear!' 'And why do you have such big eyes?' 'All the better to detect the *Wühlmäuschen* ("fifth columnists") with, my dear!' 'And why do you have such a big mouth?' 'I need that,' said the wolf, 'because I am a member of the *NS Kulturgemeinde* ("Nazi cultural debating society"),' and then he gobbled her up, went straight back to bed, fell asleep and snored loudly, in a most irresponsible manner.
Just then the *Kreisjägermeister* ('District Master of the Hunt') passed by and thought to himself, 'Is it really possible that an *arische* grandmother can be snoring in such a *rassenfremde* ("non-Aryan") manner?' So he went in, saw the wolf, and shot it dead—on his own responsibility—although he did not possess the special wolf-hunting licence *(Jagdschein für Wölfe)*. Then he cut open the wolf's belly and found both the *arische* grandmother and *Rotkäppchen* alive and well!
There was now great rejoicing in the *NSV* Home. The wolf's carcass was handed to the *Reichsnährstand* ('Reich Food Estate') where it was processed and potted as *Fleisch im eigenen Saft* ('venison in its own juice'). The *Kreisjägermeister* was decorated: he was permitted to wear *einen goldgestickten Wolf* ('a gold-embroidered wolf badge') on his uniform jacket. *Rotkäppchen* was promoted to *Unterführerin* ('NCO') in the *BDM,* and her grandmother was invited to a *Kraft-durch-Freude* ('Strengh-through-Joy') *Reise* ('trip') to Madeira, in one of their new ships.238
While this updated fairy-tale cleverly depicts the Nazi parlance, the *vox populi* also paid tribute to the *AKÜFI,* the *Abkürzungsfimmel* (the current fashion to abbreviate everything), by 'playing the standard unit game'239 which was thus applied to several Nazi *Prominente*. The latest standard units in the Third Reich were:
[212] 'Hit'—the number of promises a man can make in a time-span of fourteen years without keeping any of them;
'Gör'—the maximum amount of tin a man can wear on his chest without falling flat on his face;
'Goeb'—the minimum amount of energy required to switch off 100,000 radio receivers simultaneously, or, alternatively, the maximum extent to which a person can pull his mouth open without actually splitting his face;
'Ley'—the maximum time during which a man can speak without saying a single sensible thing;

'Rust'—the minimum time-span between the promulgation of a decree and its cancellation.
However, the trend towards abbreviating official terms in fact by far exceeded those created by ironic imagination. To begin with, many of the abbreviations were those of military terms and included *OKW,* which stood for *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (Army High Command), 55, SA, *Gestapo* (an acronym for *Geheime Staatspolizei*), *Stuka* (*Stürzkampfflugzeug,* meaning dive-bomber), to mention but a few. Similarly, a military ambulance became a *Sanka (Sanitätskraftwagen),* while acronyms like PKW (*Personenkraftwagen,* 'private car') and LKW (*Lastkraftwagen,* 'lorry') indicated the increase of motor traffic during those years. Quite a number of these abbreviations have continued in use today, while others, like POPO and KAKFIF240 have vanished like a bad dream. On the other hand, Nazi euphemisms such as *Lebensraum* (lit. 'enough living space' though in Henderson's apt translation 'unlimited elbow room for Germany, regardless of others'),241 and *Sammellager* ('collection camp') for concentration camps, *verschärftes Verhör* ('intensified interrogation') for beatings ordered by a court, *Betreuung* ('to look after') for incarceration, *Aktion* ('action') for massacre, *Endlösung* ('final solution') for holocaust and *Untermensch* (lit. 'a subhuman creature', but then applied to any person inferior to a fellow German *[Volksgenosse],* such as Jews or any subjugated people in the occupied eastern territories) now belong to history as a linguistic documentation of man's inhumanity to man.242 Although they are untranslatable, punning anagrams of three of the most notorious representatives of the Third Reich fittingly describe some aspects of their role in the history of the times, and can serve as a suitable conclusion to this chapter.243

# 7
# THE *ANSCHLUSS*

When German troops marched into Austria on 13 March 1938 they were hailed by the Austrians lining the streets. Moreover, as this remained an entirely bloodless invasion, the Nazi neologism *Anschluss*1 found acceptance. To this euphemism (for what was in fact the outright annexation of an independent country) was straight away added another new term: *Grossdeutschland*.

From Vienna came this comment on the megalomania apparent in this new word:

[1] Graf Bobby2 is looking at a globe. He asks his friend Rudy to identify for him the countries indicated in various colours.

Q. Which is the country with all that green?

A. Soviet Russia.

Q. And the large blue area?

A. The USA.

Q. And what about the big patches of red on the globe?

A. That is the British Empire.

Q. And where is *Grossdeutschland*?

A. There, that little yellow spot.

Q. (Bobby, whispering): Tell, me, Rudy, does the Führer know how tiny it is?

On 10 April 1938 Hitler arranged a plebiscite in the former Austria—now called *Ostmark*3—and soon afterwards it was officially announced that 99.75 per cent of votes cast had been in favour of the *Anschluss*. The Viennese had this to say about the result:

[2] Q. Why was the YES column on the voting form printed in capital letters and the NO column in small ones?

A. The YES was meant for the short-sighted and the NO for the far-sighted.

As in the *Altreich*4 after Hitler's accession to power in 1933, there was plenty of enthusiasm for the new order in Austria, and this gave rise to the following joke:

[3] Q. Which part of the world has the hottest climate?

A. Austria, of course; lots of people turned brown5 there overnight.

Much of this early pro-Nazi sympathy in Austria can be explained by her geographical proximity—before the *Anschluss*—to the *Reich,* and a great deal

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48 Living space
was also due to the Third Reich's positive achievements—such as full employment and an expanding programme of building and road construction. The less attractive aspects of Nazi rule in Germany were not so readily perceived in the neighbouring country. It must also be added that many Austrians had a strong leaning toward their large and powerful German neighbour. This attraction was based on historical events in the nineteenth century and, as it turned out, was destined ultimately to be frustrated in the twentieth.6 In the event, Austria's honeymoon with Nazi Germany was even more fleeting than the enthusiasm of Germans in the *Altreich,* as is shown by the plethora of anti-Nazi comments emanating from Austria. Only a small selection can be given here.
[4] A Viennese meets a friend soon after the plebiscite of 10 April 1938. 'You know,' he says, '99.75 per cent of us voted for the *Anschluss*. Isn't it strange that everyone I meet in town these days belongs to the other 0.25 per cent!'
Many anti-Nazi comments by Austrians show an animosity towards Prussians, who were referred to as *Piefkes*.7 In 1939, when an Austrian was called up to serve in a German regiment in the *Altreich,* this was his reception there:
[5] German soldier: 'At least 50 per cent of you *Ostmärker* are stupid!'
Austrian recruit: 'Well, it seems we are improving; in April last year8 the percentage was 99.75!'
It seems that the Austrians became tired of the war even before Hitler had

started it. This is apparent from the following story from a school where the concept of *Grossdeutschland* had become an important element of the curriculum:
[6] After the teacher has told the boys that they ought to regard Adolf Hitler as their spiritual father and *Grossdeutschland* as their mother, he asks them what they intend to do when they grow up. One boy says, 'I want to serve my father Adolf Hitler as a pilot in the *Luftwaffe,'* while another boy says he wants to be a civil servant and serve in the government of his mother, *Grossdeutschland*. The teacher is very pleased with these sentiments, so he asks Sepperl, a true little Viennese, what he has in mind. 'I want to be an orphan,' declares Sepperl.
As soon as the war broke out this 'official' announcement from Berlin shocked the Austrians:
[7] There will be no Christmas celebrations during the war, because:
1 Joseph has been called up.
2 Mary is in the NS Labour front.
3 The Christ Child has been evacuated to the country on account of the air raids.
4 The Holy Spirit is ceaselessly, though ineffectively, busy trying to enlighten the German High Command.
5 The three wise men will not get an entry visa.
6 The shepherds are employed in the armaments industry.
7 The star of Bethlehem is not permitted to shine during the blackout.
8 Hay and straw have been confiscated by the Army.
9 The crib is needed by the NSV.
10 The stable is required by the Flak.
11 The sheep have been used to provide iron rations.
12 And it is not worth celebrating Christmas just for the ass alone9
The following jingle10 represents the feeling of many Austrians after they had become part of *Grossdeutschland:*
[8] We *Ostmärker*
Maybe we Austrians are not all that clever
But don't call us stupid—then we say 'Never!'
For soul, culture and humour together we stand,
We cherish in turn our art, nature and land. In
science as well some experts we've had,
All bred at home, and that can't be too bad.
From us came Mozart, Strauss, Schubert and
Ziehrer,
And—more's the pity—from us came the Führer.
Diligently working, we're making our way,
Which just goes to prove that we must be O.K.
The *Piefkes* and us—are we one of a kind?
No: they do the talking and we use our mind.
And if they continue to find fault with us—well,
We'll just quote their Goethe11—which means:
Go to hell!

As in the *Altreich,* prominent Nazis became a target for Austrian satire, especially of course after the *Anschluss*. There was a story that Göring once visited the eastern front:
[9] As befits his exalted rank, the Reich Marshal is welcomed everywhere by the soldiers in their bunkers in the front line, and he is pleased with his reception. Then he comes to a bunker from which there explodes the rude expletive mentioned above. Göring withdraws promptly and murmurs, 'There must be *Ostmärker* in that bunker!'
During a visit to Vienna, Göring notices a hill near the city and asks its name. [10] When he is told that it is called *Hermannskogel,*12 Göring remarks, rather flattered, 'You needn't have gone to all that trouble for my short visit to Vienna!'
Being aware of Göring's decoration mania and of the reputation of Goebbels as [11] a philanderer, the Tyroleans are apprehensive of a visit from either of the two men, fearing that Göring might 'acquire' the Nordkette13 in order to decorate himself with it, and that Goebbels might seduce Frau Hitt!14
Hitler's first visit to Austria very soon after the *Anschluss* was said to have included an inspection of the wine-growing town of Grinzing. The story is told that the Führer, being a teetotaller, disapproved of a man he saw drinking more than was good for him:
[12] 'With all your boozing don't you ever think of all the *Reichsmark* it costs?' asks Hitler.
'No,' retorts the man, 'it's the *Ostmark* I'm thinking about all the time!'15
Before long the Austrians had noticed the peculiar way in which Hitler himself performed the salute named after him:
[13] Q. Why does Hitler, when he gives this salute, first raise the right arm a little way and then lift it a little higher still?
A. It is a remnant of his former trade: 'The wallpaper up to here, and the whitewash above that line!'
Ribbentrop, too, was not forgotten by the Austrians. It was said in Vienna that he had had a problem when he had visited Moscow in August 1939:
[14] Ribbentrop was about to give the Hitler salute and was slowly lifting his right arm when he suddenly noticed Molotov's disapproving look. So he spread the fingers of his right hand, looked skywards and said, 'It seems we are going to get some rain!' To this Molotov, with clenched fist, retorted, 'That wretched weather!'
Six years later Stalin tried to emulate Hitler as an author. He simply changed [15] the title of the book from *Mein Kampf* to *Sein Kampf, mein Sieg*.
And, as a final comment from the Austrians about the Nazi leaders, here is a story about Mother Germania:
[16] Mother Germania has given birth to triplets—all boys. 'How can you distinguish them?' she is asked. 'It was a bit difficult at first, but I am used to their

peculiarities now. Hermann eats all the time, Joseph can't keep his mouth shut, and Adolf stands in the carriage most of the day.'
As mentioned before Graf (Count) Bobby and his friend Rudy had been fictitious, rather inane Viennese characters for decades. Naturally they re-emerged after the *Anschluss:*
[17] As there is a lot of telephone bugging going on in Vienna now, Graf Bobby and Rudy decide to use abbreviations when telephoning each other. Next day Bobby rings Rudy. 'Just imagine, I've got a pou...of bu...from under the counter, but that isn't all; I've roasted the co...beans you got me the other day. By the way, did you listen to that idiotic speech by Hi...last night?'
The *Gestapo* pay a visit to Graf Bobby and order him to inform them about what the Austrian aristocrats he knows think about the Third Reich; he is told that he himself can make a citizen's arrest whenever he encounters a dissenting [18] individual. Rather flattered at the idea of the new task, Bobby asks his friend Rudy, 'What is your view about the end of the war?' 'I feel exactly the same about it as you do,' says Rudy. 'In that case I must have you arrested at once!'
[19] Rudy to Graf Bobby: 'I've just heard that the world's most famous magician is coming to Vienna. He can make thirty people in his audience disappear at one go.' Bobby: 'Excellent! Do you think we could arrange for a special performance and invite the *Reichsregierung*?'16
As Austrian, and especially Viennese, cuisine had long had a high reputation in continental Europe, the new austerity accompanying the *Anschluss* attracted many critical comments there:
[20] Graf Bobby to Rudy: 'Have you heard the latest? Hats will be abolished!'
Rudy: 'But that's impossible in this cold winter weather!'
Bobby: 'But here it is, in today's paper—"One ration card per head"'
[21] After a little while Rudy has this to say on the same topic: 'It is really quite a good thing that I've got those ration cards now—we couldn't exist just on the food one gets under the counter!'
[22] The wholemeal bread the Viennese were getting in those days was said to be 'brown like the uniform of the Party, meagre like Goebbels, and after you have eaten it, it disappears as quickly as Rudolf Hess.'
[23] This was the Austrian recipe for *Eintopf*17 ('one-dish stew'): 'Plenty of tongue and only a very little brain, to be cooked in a thick brown sauce'.
The *Gestapo* had a busy time after the *Anschluss*.
[24] A priest was arrested. Why? He had performed extreme unction18 without producing a fat-ration card.
[25] They also arrested the first dairy manager in Vienna: he was found guilty of adding goat's milk to the normal skimmed milk, with the result that the Viennese are 'bleating' all the time.

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[26] A boy in Vienna is eating a dry piece of bread, and at the same time singing the 'Horst Wessel Song'. When asked the reason for this strange behaviour he replies, This is a Horst-Wessel-bread-and-butter song because, like the comrades in that song, the butter is there in spirit only!'19

[27] When a Prussian on holiday in the Tyrol goes into a butcher's shop to buy some sausage he is told that he must produce his ration card. 'Ridiculous!' exclaims the Prussian, 'Don't you know that we Germans have pulled you semi-starved Austrians out of the mire?' 'Nobody asked you to,' replies the butcher. 'If you had left us *in* the mire I could have sold you a whole ham today!'

[28] When in 1944 a Berliner visits Salzburg during a short holiday he enjoys his stay so much that he asks his hostess at the inn whether he might come back during the following summer. 'It's all the same to me,' replies the Austrian woman, 'but the question is, will you get your entry visa by that time?'

[29] In 1945 the Viennese had a problem: should they take language lessons in English, in French or in Russian?20

[30] But one particular Austrian individual was really a *Pechvogel,*21 because in 1937 he used the Hitler salute, whereupon he was arrested, and imprisoned in the Austrian Republic. Released in April 1938, he saluted with clenched fist and 'Heil Moscow!' but was promptly taken to a concentration camp in the *Reich*. When he was released, late in August 1939, Hitler had just made his alliance with Stalin, but the Austrian did not know this and cried, 'Down with Moscow!' so he was straight away re-arrested, this time for the duration of the war. Finally released in 1946, the Austrian thought all would now be well, so he saluted with 'Heil Hitler!'

**8**

## THE THIRD REICH AS SEEN BY OTHERS

The advent of the Third Reich resulted in a considerable variety of reactions abroad, ranging from admiration to condemnation. The Swiss historian Walther Hofer1 summarized the positive and negative aspects of the régime, as perceived by outsiders:

[1] From the very beginning there was a bright side and a dark side to Nazi Germany: there were the festivals, receptions and parades, the Olympic Games and the *KdF*-travels, the monumental buildings, *Autobahnen* and the social institutions, success in foreign policy, national enthusiasm, and later stunning military victories; and, behind this brilliant exterior a nationally united, industrious and disciplined people with a genial leadership, moving from success to success and erecting a glamorous *Reich*.

Yet there was, on the other hand, and right from the beginning, a brutal police force, ill-treatment of political opponents, the Jews being deprived of their civic rights and being persecuted, there was the odious and despicable fight against the Church, there was repression and persecution of any liberal utterance—unless it was bent under the yoke of the State's official ideology. Further, there was the deliberate planning of a war of aggression aimed at the subjugation of other nations and their eventual complete suppression and elimination.2

On one very special occasion the régime took inordinate care to preserve that brilliant exterior, at least in the capital, and that was in the summer of 1936, when the public relations exercise was undertaken solely for the benefit of the many foreign visitors who had flocked to Berlin to attend the Olympic Games. During that period the persecution of the Church was temporarily suspended, and the Stormtroopers were ordered to refrain from anti-Semitic excesses.3 However, the respite for the Church and the Jews did not last very long, and so [2] gave rise to the English pun about the 'barb-Aryans being the inhabitants of Nazi Germany'.4

A small number of foreigners, especially diplomats and press correspondents, were resident in Berlin until the war, and thus had an ideal vantage point from which to observe the régime in action. Hitler's link man with the representatives of the foreign press was E.F.Hanfstaengl. Half-American, and Harvard-educated, he was at the same time an ideological follower of Hitler. He had promoted the Führer socially in his early days and had even given him financial support in the early 1920s. Hanfstaengl used his privileged position and background to counteract foreign criticism of Hitler and his régime. In 1933 he compiled a selection of anti-Nazi cartoons and slogans, both from

Germany and abroad, and contrasted these with a long list of all the good deeds Hitler and the Nazis had done and the wicked lies told about them by their enemies. This book, *Hitler in der Weltkarikatur* ('Hitler seen by caricaturists from all over the world'), had the sub-title *Tat gegen Tinte* ('fact versus fiction'), but it was far too obviously biased to be an effective antidote to any anti-Hitler point of view. At the same time, it was too näive to be acceptable to Hitler, who lacked any sense of humour. Although Hitler had officially approved of the publication of the book, it contributed to Hanfstaengl's downfall. This became apparent to him by 1937, when Hitler increasingly found fault with his [3] *Auslandspressechef,* who was by then nicknamed *Reichslückenbüsser*.5 Hanfstaengl did not foresee Hitler's attempt on his life in 1937, but in any event he fled Germany shortly afterwards and found refuge in the USA.6

**THE BRITISH**

Comments by British travellers to Nazi Germany which appeared in print after their return home were not always welcome in the Third Reich. This was certainly the case with Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth,* which was publicly burned in 1934 by the Hamburg *Gestapo*.7 Early in 1933 George Catlin, Vera Brittain's husband, had visited the historic, very plain home and counting-house of Meier Amschel Rothschild, the founder of the dynasty, in the *Altstadt* of Frankfurt. He met the old Jewish caretaker there, who commented on the [4] change in Jewish fortunes and also on the economy in the new Germany: 'Once a little office and great business, now great office and no business'. In 1936 Vera Brittain attended a Nazi rally in Berlin in the company of her husband. [5] The main speaker was Göring, whom they found 'even bulkier than his photographs indicated, a heavy masculine type with no particle of Hitler's neurotic femininity'.

It is surprising, though, that as late as 1937 Hitler was still being considered a figure of fun even by some well-connected British observers like Arnold [6] Toynbee, who described the Führer as: 'to the highest degree exotic, one of these political "mad mullahs", non-smokers, non-drinkers of alcohol, non-eaters of meat, non-riders on horseback, and non-practisers of blood sports in their cranky private lives'.

An anonymous story which circulated in Nazi Germany can be traced to its London origin:8

[7] 'You ought to say grace before every meal,' a German father tells his son. 'Here is what you must say: "I give thanks to God and to my Führer for the food I am about to receive".' 'But,' inquires the boy, 'What do I say if the Führer dies?' 'Then,' replies the father, 'all you have to say is "I give thanks to God!"'

From England, too, comes this contribution about an event which is said to have happened in 1939, shortly before the outbreak of war:

[8] At Pixton, in Somerset, Mr Auberon Herbert, who then owned the estate, had

designed his park in the shape of the Union Jack. The abstract conformation of the flag meant that it could only be recognized as such from the air, but this particular design had been selected in response to an action on the part of one Otto Gardiner, Mr Herbert's neighbour, who belonged to the 'Cliveden set'.9 Assuming that aerial war was a possibility, Gardiner had had his exquisite eighteenth-century deer park cut into the shape of a swastika, in the hope that the *Luftwaffe*—in the course of its intensive bombardment of North Somerset—would be deflected from his estate on to that of his more patriotic neighbour.

The last two British Ambassadors to Nazi Germany put on record some interesting observations. We have referred earlier to Sir Eric Phipps' famous quip to Göring, that inveterate hunter. Lady Phipps, though no friend of the Nazis either, said that she got on with Hitler rather well, although she may not [9] have been aware that Hitler had referred to her as *die heilige Betschwester* ('that sanctimonious cow'). Lady Phipps seems to have resented the fact that the [10] Ambassador's help was frequently invoked by 'those sloppy English girls always having affairs with dreadful SS types'. Unity Mitford came in for particular criticism from Lady Phipps:

[11] Lord and Lady Redesdale, lunching at the Embassy, were accompanied by their daughter Unity. She came as *Deutsches Mädchen,*10 a battleship of a woman, walking upstairs into the drawing room, and giving the Nazi salute. Eric was a small man; he stood on tiptoe and reached up to shake her hand, which made it a bit ridiculous.

[12] In a postwar interview Lady Phipps recalled: 'Unity was determined to meet him, which was unlikely to work, as Hitler was prudish, and afraid of girls.'

Sir Eric's successor, Sir Nevile Henderson, came to Berlin in April 1937. His impressions of the Third Reich are reflected in his memoirs which cover the two and a half years he spent in Germany immediately before the outbreak of the war. No stranger to Germany, he liked the country and her people and was prepared to judge Nazism according to its merits. This he planned to do by meeting as many ordinary Germans as possible and not only the leading Nazis with whom his position as Ambassador brought him into contact. That his mission to ensure peace did not succeed was expressed in the title *Failure of a Mission* which he chose for his book, published in April 1940. Henderson had this to say about Hitler:

[13] During that first visit of mine to the 1937 Party Rally at Nuremberg I kept asking myself how any human brain could keep its sanity amid all the adulatory worship his followers accorded to him.

*A propos* Hitler's mesmerism and the radiance of his remarkable eyes, the Ambassador commented:

[14] When I looked into them they were generally hot and angry. There was no impression of greatness, he was a spellbinder for his own people. His capacity to charm was part of his stock-in-trade. For me he was a sort of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde—so full of tricks, a skilful mixer of fraud with force.

For a foreigner, Henderson's assessment of Hitler's *modus operandi* was most astute, and it was typical of his perceptiveness to note:
[15] Hitler is an Austrian...their best-known trait is *Schlamperei*—a sort of happy-golucky and haphazard way of doing things. He combined his *Schlamperei* with an amazing mastery of opportunism.
Equally shrewd is a comment he made in 1940, when his book was published:
[16] 'Hitler will prove a fascinating study for future historians with a psychological leaning.'
When Henderson was asked at a stag party at Field Marshal von Blomberg's house, soon after his arrival in 1937, how he would respond to the Nazi salute or to anyone who said 'Heil Hitler' to him, he replied:
[17] I bring my right hand, with fingers closed and palm to the front, to a position one inch above my right eyebrow, click my heels, and say, 'Rule Brittania!'
Henderson is honest enough to admit that his gift of repartee once failed him:
When Miss Mitford greeted me with 'Heil Hitler' in the middle of a big crowd at Nuremberg, I was so surprised and dumbfounded that I forgot 'Rule Britannia' and said nothing at all.
Incidentally, this is the only reference to Unity Mitford in Henderson's book, and he makes no mention of her sister Diana (later Lady Diana Moseley), an equally enthusiastic visitor to the Third Reich. Another sister, Jessica, who was not a Nazi, had come over for a visit; the SS escorts of her Nazi sisters [18] nicknamed her *die lustige Kommunistin,*11 perhaps because her uninhibited way of ridiculing her sisters' Nazi fervour and Hitler worship was a welcome change in their daily routine.
Like his predecessor in Berlin, Henderson seems to have regarded the English aristocratic Nazi sympathizers as political lightweights; none of them seems to have played any role in the basic purpose of his mission, which was to preserve peace. This mission, as Henderson states repeatedly in his book, was frustrated mainly by one man—von Ribbentrop,12 with whom the ambassador had more contact than with any other leading Nazi, apart from Göring. Henderson considered Goebbels and Himmler to be supporters of Hitler's warmongering,13 but attributed to Göring a rather more restraining role, certainly during the period when the Ambassador held office in Berlin. He even admitted to a personal liking for Göring, though he had no illusions about his brutality.14 It may have been their shared interest in wildlife which drew Henderson to Göring; moreover, the latter possessed a sense of humour, which was generally absent in other Nazi leaders.15 In contrast to von Ribbentrop himself, Baron von Weizsäcker, Secretary of State under von Ribbentrop, had Henderson's respect and confidence.16
Finally, in the context of this book, it may be interesting to note one further [19] observation which Henderson made: 'Some people say that the Germans have

got no sense of humour. That is certainly not true of the Berliners.' One can concur with him in this respect if one realizes that many—perhaps the majority—of the anti-Nazi jokes circulating at the time, and especially in the war years, originated in the capital.
Another contemporary British view of Hitler comes from Lady Diana Cooper, who met the Führer in 1936, when Duff Cooper was Ambassador to France:
[20] His dark complexion had a fungoid quality, and the famous hypnotic eyes that met mine seemed glazed and without life—dead, colourless eyes. The silly mèche of hair I was prepared for. The smallness of his occiput was unexpected. His physique on the whole was ignoble.
Surprisingly, any German eager to inform himself about contemporary English views on the Third Reich could buy *Punch* at some German kiosks right up to the mid-1930s, despite the journal's anti-Nazi views expressed by such men as A.P.Herbert, J.E.Know and B.K.Knox, or the witty cartoons contributed by B. Partridge and E.H.Shephard. Others, like David Low, Osbert Lancaster and Distros published their cartoons in other journals after the war had started.

49 Principles of Nazi education

The following is an excerpt from *Punch* on Hitler's restrictive measures in Germany:
[21] Herr Hitler recently announced a new decree which forbids Germans
1 to assume a non-Aryan expression;
2 to assume any expression;
3 to express any assumption;
4 to sneeze after or before 5 a.m.;
5 to make a crunching sound when eating celery.
Current rumours that Balbo, one of Mussolini's Fascist lieutenants, had fallen into disgrace awakened reminiscences of the Röhm purge:
[22] Hitler to Mussolini:
'You had to kill your Balbo.17 Never mind;
Troubles of this sort occur at home.
The pathways of dictators' dreams are lined
With fallen comrades. All roads lead to Röhm.'
*Punch* also commented on certain aspects of the Third Reich in cartoons with small captions like the following:
[23] 'Ribbentrop's Nazi salute';
'Göring, the "wandering Aryan"';
'Goebbels with *Veritas-Ersatz*';18
'St Adolf as a latter-day St Francis'.
On the eve of the war A.P.Herbert reflected on von Ribbentrop's trip to [24] Moscow in an article called 'Russiprussity and Ribbentrop', which, only a week [25] later—on 5 September 1939—*Punch* followed up with a cartoon called 'The human ostriches', that is, Stalin and von Ribbentrop.
A little later *Punch* commented on Hitler's megalomania in the following terms:
[26] '1939 And All that'
According to the *National-Zeitung* as quoted by one of our morning papers, the Führer has told his intimates that when he has conquered England he will have himself crowned King.
There follows a lengthy poem (by J.E.Know), the first stanza of which ends with the lines;
[27] And over us shall reign
the Father of his people,
Adolphus the Insane.
On the opposite page appears the cartoon 'Adolf the Conqueror', an extended witty pastiche entitled 'The Berchtesgaden Tapestry'.
In 1940 Peter Fleming produced a story, *Flying Visit,* which has Hitler flying to England and descending by parachute—a scenario of some interest as it predates the flight by Hess by less than a year. There is another macabre angle

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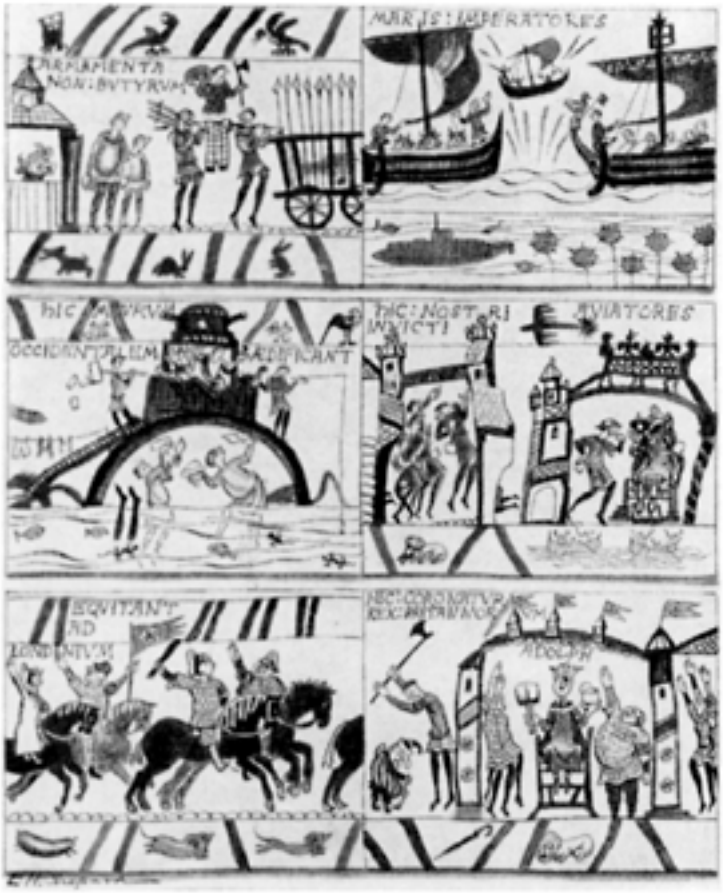

50 Adolf the Conqueror. A piece of Berchtesgaden Tapestry

in this otherwise genially nonsensical piece of fiction: Hitler tries to commit suicide by shooting himself, but fails as his revolver has been loaded with blanks. Thereupon Churchill sends him back to Germany where he can do more harm. The book was illustrated by David Low.

During 1940 and 1941 David Low also produced and illustrated *Europe at War* and *The World at War,* and *History in Sixty Cartoons* with a narrative text. One of these cartoons incorporates an anti-Nazi pun: Hitler's magnetic mine, *Mein* (mine) *Kampf,* is dropped from aeroplanes by parachute. Incidentally, some satirical sketches by David Low were rediscovered as recently as 1986. He produced them some forty years ago to illustrate a satirical edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.19

About ten years ago much of British anti-Nazi feeling and propaganda during the war, as expressed in print, on the wireless, in music, in the cinema and in commerce, was collected, compiled and reissued by Dennis Gifford under the title *Run, Adolf, Run*. These are a few excerpts:

[28] Hitler, depicted as a baby, holding a large paintbrush, is described as follows:

No birth has ever been obscurer
Than that of Adolf, little Führer;
His parents—we presume—were there,
A most regrettable affair.

[29] Göring appears as a rather fat baby:

When baby Hermann was a tot,
They say he weighed an awful lot;
And even at that early date
The title 'gross' described his
weight.
[30] And, as the last of the trio, a completely bald baby represented Julius Streicher, owner of the pornographic anti-Semitic weekly, *Der Stürmer:*
No child was so unruly as
The infant Streicher, Julius.
It's said—though it may not be true—
His Ma was frightened by a Jew.
In 1944 *Punch* poked fun at Hitler's slogan, *Festung*20 *Europa:* a bedraggled Hitler is shown sitting hunched up on a chair in a miserable hut, getting soaked by rain pouring through the leaking roof. On the outside is displayed the hut's name—Festung—while on a wall inside is a framed slogan, *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*21 and Hitler is musing, 'I wonder where it will come from next!'
And finally, to close this section, here is some down-to-earth British humour:
[31] There was the 'chamber of delight' from Lady Lucinda Lambton's collection, which shows Hitler depicted at the bottom of a 'jerry' with the inscription on its rim: 'Have this on "Old Nasty", another violation of Poland'. When one lifted the lid 'Rule Britannia' played.

**THE FRENCH**

It was von Ribbentrop who very nearly came to grief in 1938 during a visit to Paris when his notorious nose-in-the-air posture almost caused him to fall on to the rails from the platform at the Gare des Invalides.22 He also seems to have cut very little ice when, two years earlier, he partnered Lady Diana Cooper at dinner while her husband was Ambassador to France. This was the gist of their conversation:
[32] Von Ribbentrop: 'Have you been to Berlin lately?'
Lady Diana: 'No, but I am going to Paris tomorrow.'
Von Ribbentrop: 'To buy dresses?'
Lady Diana: (with a brave stare into his treacherous little eyes): 'No, from there to Flanders to see the war cemeteries.'
As compared with the material from which the British contributions to this chapter have been taken, the recorded French reactions to the Third Reich are not nearly as numerous, though nonetheless very witty. This is particularly true of the comments attributed to the penultimate French Ambassador to Berlin, André François-Poncet, who had excellent German. We have referred earlier to his visit to the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* and to his *bon mot* on that occasion in reference to 'missing Taste'.23 However, on the same occasion, when looking at another painting which represented the back of a female nude, François-

[33] Poncet is said to have remarked: 'This, Messieurs, is la Duchesse de Berlichingen.'24
Secretary of State Baron von Weizsäcker frequently refers to François-Poncet in his memoirs, often in connection with his own predecessor in the *Auswärtige Amt*.25 This was von Mackensen, the son-in-law of Baron von Neurath, Foreign Secretary from 1933 to 1938. They had the best intentions of maintaining a peaceful German foreign policy. However François-Poncet may have had his doubts about their efficacy. Anyway, this near-blasphemous quip was [34] attributed to him: 'I have seen the Father and the Son—but the Holy Spirit?'26
According to von Weizsäcker, François-Poncet was the only foreign diplomat acceptable to Hitler. Perhaps for that reason the French Ambassador was instrumental in achieving the peaceful solution of the Sudeten crisis in September 1938. Soon afterwards he left Berlin and became his country's [35] Ambassador at Rome, at the *Palazzo Farnese,* where he quipped, 'I've slithered on the "Axis"27 to Rome, to the *Palazzo far niente*.'28 However, according to von Weitzäcker, François-Poncet got on less well with Mussolini than he had done earlier with Hitler.
The devastating assessments of von Ribbentrop by François-Poncet and by his successor, Coulondre, have been referred to in Chapter 3 (Röhm). The following apocryphal, but rather witty, pun is said to have been produced by a French Jewish diplomat, who applied the famous 'le chevalier sans peur et sans [36] reproche' tag29 to Göring, calling him 'le chevalier sans beurre et sans brioche.'30
There were a number of jokes circulating in the Third Reich which were said [37] to have originated in France, like the pun, 'Hitler est un bon Aryen' which [38] sounds like 'Hitler est un bon à rien'31 or the story of the Frenchman visiting Germany in 1938 who remarked to his host, 'Most things are forbidden to you Germans, but whatever is still allowed you have to do!' Immediately after war [39] was declared the Alsatians found the correct meaning of NSDAP for their land: '*N*ous *s*ommes *d*es *A*llemands *p*rovisoires.'
One may cite, too, the French definition of their neighbours and of themselves:

| | |
|---|---|
| [40] Un Italien: | patriot; |
| Deux Italians: | demonstration; |
| Trois Italiens: | défaitism. |
| Un Français: | esprit; |
| Deux Français: | l'amour; |
| Trois Français: | revolution. |
| Un Allemand: | poète; |
| Deux Allemands: | organisation; |
| Trois Allemands: | la guerre. |

And, after the disastrous French campaign of 1940:
[41] 'Veni, vidi, Vichy.'

Meanwhile a discerning Gallic voice was declaring:
[42] Qu'est-ce que c'est que la victoire des Nazis?
C'est la victoire des Boches sur les Allemands!
This section can appropriately end with an apocryphal comment made by a Frenchman to a German in occupied France after Italian defeats in Greece and North Africa:
[43] You Germans are lucky; you can enjoy not only your own victories but also the defeats of your allies!
**THE ITALIANS**
Military co-operation between Hitler and Mussolini in supporting Franco during the Spanish Civil War led to their alliance, the 'Axis' *(Berlin-Rom-Achse)*. It further resulted in Italy's non-intervention in 1938 during the *Anschluss,* and eventually in her participation in Hitler's war. Germany's Ambassador to Italy had been von Hassell until 1938, when he was dismissed by Hitler. However, as he had family and friendship ties with that country, his diary contains a fair amount of information about Italy, its leaders and the public. Throughout those years a general hostility towards the Third Reich manifested itself in Italy.
[44] The negative attitude of the Italians toward their new ally north of the Alps was reflected in this statement: 'Si stavo meglio sotto Mussolini' ('We were better off under Mussolini'), while the dictator's Foreign Secretary (and son-in-[45] law) commented: 'Mussolini is now the *Gauleiter* of Italy.' Ciano left a diary of the years 1939 to 1943, from which his own true sentiments—and Mussolini's—emerge. They are in stark contrast to the dictator's reiterated affirmations of eternal friendship with Hitler:
[46] Mussolini to Ciano, commenting on the Fröhlich-Goebbels incident: 'Goebbels is wrong, not because he seduced Fröhlich's wife, but rather because he permitted his face to be slapped.'
[47] Ciano goes on to reveal in his diary that 'Mussolini has introduced the *passo Romano,* which is a genuine imitation of the German *Parademarsch.'*32 [48] Several pages of Ciano's diary deal with Nazi leaders. Von Ribbentrop, whom he had met only weeks before the war broke out, seems particularly to have antagonized Ciano because of his warmongering: 'The madness of the Leader has become the religion of his followers.'
Göring's mania for decorations is likewise revealed in the diary:
[49] I am thinking about gifts for Göring on his fiftieth birthday. The Duce is giving him a gold sword carved by Messina (it was originally meant for Franco, but times have changed); I will give him a star of San Mauricio, studded with diamonds (originally meant for King Zog of Albania; it has been kept in the safe all this time).

Also, Martin Franklin—Italian Ambassador to Vichy France—handed Göring the first gold star of the Roman Eagle, Göring expressing his thanks so vociferously that his childish joy was obvious.
Ciano mentions further French-German relations after the establishment of the Vichy government:
[50] Signor Buti, Italy's special Envoy to France, said that he noticed a mule driver whipping his beast and crying repeatedly, 'Collaboration, collaboration!'
As one might expect from Ciano's vitriolic comments on all and sundry, even his own countrymen are not spared:
[51] Roberto Farinacci, General Secretary of the Fascist Party and owner of the Fascist press, is now called 'the Streicher of Italy'.
And this was Ciano's comment on Germany and Austria:
[52] In Germany they talked about everything being finished by October [1940], and in fact the Viennese, who always have their witticisms at the ready, said, 'They were right; oil, butter and meat are finished!' Austrian morale is low.
In 1942, when Mussolini celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Fascists' March on Rome, Hitler sent Ley as head of the German mission. These were Ciano's remarks in his diary:
[53] Ley is vulgar, both in appearance and in the way he thinks. In fact, he is so coarse that I ask myself how he was ever able to obtain a position of leadership. He says nothing new, but adds a new lie to the propaganda line: the whole Stalingrad action has cost the Germans only 3,000 dead. I wouldn't believe it even if he multiplied it by ten.
To conclude this section, here is a story which originated in Ciano's diary, although it circulated in some variations in the Third Reich too:
[54] Hungarian uneasiness is expressed by this little story which is going the rounds in Budapest. The Hungarian Minister declares war on the United States, but the American official who receives the communication is not very well informed about European matters and hence asks several questions:
'Is Hungary a Republic?'
'No, we are a Kingdom.'
'Then you have a King?'
'No, we have an Admiral.'
'Then you have a fleet?'
'No, we have no sea.'
'Do you have any claims then?'
'Yes.'
'Against the USA?'
'No.'
'Against Great Britain?'
'No.'

'Against Russia?'
'No.'
'Then against whom do you have these claims?'
'Against Romania.'
'Then will you declare war on Romania?'
'No, Sir; Romania is our ally.'
There is a great deal of truth in this series of paradoxes.

**THE AMERICANS**

The USA was perhaps the best equipped of all nations to observe the Third Reich, as it had, over the years, sent several correspondents to Germany who became residents there. Among the best known of these were John Gunther, Dorothy Thompson, Hubert R.Knickerbocker and William L.Shirer. In his book, *Inside Europe,* first published in 1936, Gunther encapsulates the results of his long-term observations of Hitler and his lieutenants, as well as his views on politicians in power during the last year of the Weimar Republic. In the chapter entitled 'The Squire of Neudeck' Gunther paints a pathetic picture of the old President, and what Gunther calls his palace *camarilla*—Dr Meissner, who had been Secretary of State in succession to Ebert, von Hindenburg and eventually Hitler (and who managed somehow to survive them all); Oscar von Hindenburg, the President's only son; and the latter's friend General von Schleicher. Gunther goes on to say that in Berlin in 1932 the health of the President—then almost eighty-five years of age—was of paramount importance and interest, and this gave rise to 'a cruel miscellany of jokes at his expense, hinging on the question of his competence'. It was said that von Hindenburg, being himself aware that his health and mind were failing, appealed to Meissner 'to be an efficient watchdog, to "protect" him from breaking his oath to the constitution of the Weimar Republic.'33

When von Papen became Chancellor in the summer of 1932, General von Schleicher became Defence Minister in von Papen's so-called *Junker-Kabinett*. Although von Schleicher managed to engineer the downfall of von Papen in December 1932, he remained Chancellor for less than two months, neither his sympathy for the trade unions nor his distrust of Hitler having helped him to gain the support of the old President. The latter, so it was said, once barked at [55] him, 'General, when are you going to mobilize the Army against me?' While this apocryphal remark merely suggests the President's resentment and possibly justified suspicions of von Schleicher's ambitious plans, other stories (as related in Chapter 1) are little more than gossip about the old President's failing mental powers while he was still in office.

Gunther's assessment of Hitler—in 1936—was quite astute:

[56] Adolf Hitler, irrational, contradictory, complex, is an unpredictable character; therein lies his power and his menace...Only an Austrian could take Germanism so seriously.

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Gunther bestowed on 'Hitler the Orator' the epithet of 'Demosthenes in a Brown Shirt'; Gunther also disagreed with the statement by Konrad Heiden that 'Hitler's power is based on intellect and his intellect on logic' by maintaining his own opinion of Hitler's intellect and logical thinking:

[57] Hitler's 'intellect' is that of a chameleon who knows when to change its colour; his 'logic' that of a panther who is hungry, and therefore seeks food. He has said—proudly—that he is a 'somnambulist'.

In an attempt to explain the phenomenon of the fascination exerted by Hitler on the German masses, Gunther cites a psychiatrist's opinion:34

[58] A psychic epidemic of adoration floods the country...the people identify themselves with the Leader and share in his 'authority complex'.

This complex eventually became the *Führerprinzip* which hundreds of thousands of sub-Führers—little Hitlers—down to the lowest Party official followed slavishly.

Gunther searched exhaustively for the truth of the events of 30th June 1934—the Röhm purge, i.e. 'the Night of the Long Knives'—and he concluded that they had begun with acts of terror, later 'justified' by Hitler's megalomaniac statement [before the *Reichstag*] that he had, for twenty-four hours, himself been the Supreme Court of the German people. Not long afterwards—in fact on the day after the death of President von Hindenburg on 2 August 1934—Hitler

THE NAZI WHO HAD RHEUMATISM IN THE SHOULDER.

51 The Nazi who had rheumatism in the shoulder

took the unprecedented and unconstitutional step of combining the offices of President and Chancellor of the German Republic. At the same time he promoted himself to Supremo of the Armed Forces, and this last act had to be [59] fortified by a personal oath, which was demanded from soldiers of every rank. And, Gunther adds, 'Hitler could now only dismiss himself or be removed by God; and God—so Hitler claimed—was on his side.'

[60] Gunther next writes about 'the two G-men'—Göring and Goebbels—and says that in addition, 'surrounding Hitler are fantastic congeries of sub-Hitlers'; and he goes on to say:

In the early days in Berlin I heard one of the shrewdest observers of affairs in Germany say, 'No top Nazi is perfectly normal or perfectly sincere; they are either cynics, on-the-make, or hysterics.'

It did not escape Gunther's observation (or inside information?) that Hitler had made a definite policy of playing one sub-leader against another. Perpetually jealous of each other, they competed for Hitler's favour. Gunther's enumeration of their formidable rivalries shows his remarkable insight into the animosity among Hitler's *Prominente* toward each other, while he is equally familiar with the jokes circulating in the capital about Göring's abnormal size, his uniform, his mania for decorations and his vanity.

Most of what Gunther himself had the opportunity of observing about Goebbels has been mentioned earlier, though it is his conviction that Goebbels took over control of press and propaganda in direct imitation of the example furnished by the USSR. As to the role of Goebbels as Reich Minister of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment, Gunther comments as follows:

[61] Ruler of the press and radio, he controls theatre, cinema, most musical, artistic, cultural and scientific activities; he made the Reich a cultural prison, a Nazi vacuum, a country in a mental strait-jacket for sixty-five million Germans. He is also stage manager to the Nazi party.

According to Gunther, Goebbels was the 'spiritual source' of such publications as the recently published Nazi tract called 'New Bases of Racial Research' by one Hermann Gauch, which contains the following statements:

[62] Generally speaking, the Nordic race alone can emit sounds of untroubled clarity, whereas among non-nordics the pronunciation is impure, the individual sounds are more confused, and are like the noises made by animals, such as barking, sniffing, snoring, squeaking. If non-Nordics are more closely allied to monkeys and apes than are Nordics, why is it possible for them to mate with Nordics and not with apes? The answer is this: it has not been proved that non-Nordics cannot mate with apes.

To this one might add that it has also not been proved that Nordics cannot do so—unless, of course, Gauch had carried out personal experiments. To further illustrate such extraordinary anti-evolutionary fantasies Gunther adds an example of Teutonic xenophobia from Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda, actually later published in England:35

[63] Farewell, lemon, we need thee not! Our German rhubarb will take thy place fully and entirely. It is so unpretentious that we overlooked and despised it, occupied by infatuation for foreign things. In all our shires we can have it in abundance the whole year round. We get it for almost nothing; its tartness will season our salads and vegetable dishes. Slightly sweetened it provides us with delicious refreshment, and what is more, it is a blood-purifying and medicinal agent true to German type. Let us make good with German rhubarb the sins we have committed with the alien lemon.
In Gunther's translation Goebbels 'whose appearance is un-Aryan, to say the least' becomes 'a dwarf-like German who grew dark'.36
Gunther's observations on 'the other little Hitlers' largely tally with those of other sources. He makes an interesting point about Hess: despite his rigorous anti-Semitism Hess was chosen as the German official who, during the Moscow treason trial in January 1937, collaborated with Trotsky for the overthrow of the USSR.
For Julius Streicher, the notorious leading Nazi anti-Semite, Gunther coins the epithet 'The Nuremberg Jew Fancier', and he states that Hitler supported this old comrade of his despite his bloodthirsty brutality. Gunther also reveals that Streicher's general knowledge was not too brilliant, because when he spoke at [64] the Berlin *Sportpalast*37 in August 1935 he had said, 'The great Jew who lived in England, Benjamin Disraeli, became Premier. Later he was elevated to the peerage under the name of Lord Gladstone.'
Gunther counts Ley and Darré as the radicals among the Nazi leaders. He describes Ley as 'grandiloquent and somewhat unbridled in character', and refers to Darré, Reich Minister of Agriculture, as 'the author of the celebrated scheme to divide all the women of the *Reich* into eugenic classes, like cattle, for breeding purposes'.
While Gunther recognizes Himmler, despite his schoolmasterly appearance, with pince-nez, as 'one of the most sinister personalities of the new Germany', he rather surprisingly describes von Ribbentrop as a 'pleasant man with an attractive personality'. Nevertheless, he mentions von Ribbentrop's blunder at Buckingham Palace,38 and admits that 'most people would not consider von Ribbentrop's first year in London as a success'.
Gunther further alleges that the army padre Ludwig Müller had recommended von Blomberg to Hitler, after which his reward was to be appointed [65] *Reichsbischof* by Hitler. One of his first feats was his Nazi version of a portion of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5.9): 'Blessed are they who keep the peace with their fellow nationals; they do God's will'. Gunther contributes the following joke about Nazi rearmament, which was concealed until October 1933 when Germany left the Geneva League of Nations: [66] Frau X asks her husband, a worker in a pram factory, to get her a pram free of charge. He promises to try to filch the components, piece by piece, from the factory. Some months later, when he has managed to steal all the parts, he sets to work to assemble them. Finally, in puzzled despair, he turns to his wife: 'I have put this thing together three times, but each time it turns out to be a machine-gun.'

On Rosenberg Gunther's views are devastating. He refers to him as 'the director of philosophical outlook for the *Reich*', the 'nightmare dreamer of Nazism', and, like Hitler, a bachelor and a 'moral athlete'. He goes on to say that 'the Leader probably got fifty per cent of his ideology from Rosenberg'. Rosenberg's only political adventure abroad was in 1933, when on a solo goodwill visit to England he laid a swastika flag at the Cenotaph. This infuriated the British, and henceforth Rosenberg stayed at home. His *magnum opus, Der Mythus des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts,* was, according to Gunther, 'an enormous book, a torpid, florid, gusty, grandiloquent discourse on race, politics and Germanism; pages and pages of it hardly make sense'. Soon anti-[67] Nazis in Germany made fun of the book by calling it *Der Mikosch*39 *des 20ten Jahrhunderts*. In view of later events, it is of interest that Gunther observed as early as 1937 (and possibly even earlier) that the so-called 'Rosenberg plan'—the projected eastward expansion by Nazi Germany—really did exist, and this was never repudiated by Hitler. Disliked by many Germans, and particularly by Göring, Rosenberg planned to erect a monument in honour of the more than four thousand Saxon hostages slain by order of Charlemagne.40 The monument was to be composed of a very special sort of rare granite. This crazy plan, which Gunther referred to as 'The Aryan principle applied to Petrology' was, however, [68] thwarted by the intervention of Göring.
Gunther pays tribute to Dr Schacht, who stopped the galloping inflation in Germany in 1923. Originally a co-founder of the German Democratic Party, Schacht admitted in 1931 to Dorothy Thompson—then another American correspondent in Berlin—that 'he was going Nazi', as he was in favour of German nationalism, adding 'that he was going to run the country financially and economically, as the Nazis were incapable of doing so'.41 A Berlin saying [69] which Gunther quotes (and which, in fact, remained a pious wish) presumably dates from this time: 'Germany is Hitler and Hitler is Dr Schacht.'
Gunther concludes his fascinating pre-war study of the leading men of the Third Reich by saying:
[70] Hitler is all-powerful; real rivals do not exist. Göring, Goebbels, and all the rest of them—as H.R. Knickerbocker once expressed it—are no more than moons to Hitler's sun. They shine, but only when the sun shines on them.
When William L.Shirer arrived in Berlin in August 1934 he learned from his colleague Knickerbocker that Dorothy Thompson, a fellow American correspondent in Berlin, had been deported, with only twenty-four hours' notice. This was because of her recent book on Hitler, to which Putzi Hanfstaengl had objected. Shirer is best known for two books: *Berlin Diary,* which covers the period from 1934 to 1941, during which time he was, with only short interruptions, in Germany; and his well-known history of Nazi Germany, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,* which first appeared in 1959. Naturally, it is his *Berlin Diary,* with its contemporary notes of events experienced and impressions gained, which is by far the more relevant source with

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52 Strip cartoon based on quotations from *Michael,* Goebbels' only novel

which to gauge contemporary American views about the Third Reich. Thus, when Shirer attended the Nuremberg Party Rally in 1934, he understandably took amiss the remarks of Hanfstaengl, Hitler's watchdog, about the foreign [71] press, which Hanfstaengl thought 'only reported on affairs in Germany without attempting to interpret them'. 'History alone,' said Hanfstaengl, 'can evaluate the events now taking place under Hitler.' About the rally Shirer had this to say:

About ten o'clock tonight I got caught in a mob of ten thousand hysterics who jammed the moat in front of Hitler's hotel, shouting, 'We want our Führer!' I was a little shocked at the faces, especially those of the women, when Hitler finally appeared at the balcony for a moment. They reminded me of the crazed expressions I saw once in the back country of Louisiana on the faces of some Holy Rollers who were about to hit the trail. They looked up at him as if he were a Messiah, their faces transformed into something positively inhuman. If he had remained in sight for more than a few moments, I think many of the women would have swooned from excitement.

In 1935 Shirer related:

Many Jews come to us these days for advice or help in getting to England or America, but unfortunately there is little we can do for them.

I have taken a great liking to Captain Koehl, a German flying ace in the World War, and the first man—with two friends—to fly the Atlantic from East to West. He is one of the few men in Germany with enough courage not to knuckle down to Göring and the Nazis. As a result, he is completely out, having even lost his job with the *Lufthansa*.

The election of March 1936, after the re-occupation of the Rhineland, resulted, according to Goebbels, in the approval of ninety-five per cent of the electorate. Shirer reported as follows:

On Goebbels' orders, Dr Hugo Eckener had to take his new Zeppelin 'Hindenburg' into the air for election propaganda purposes—the idea being to drop leaflets exhorting people to vote 'yes'. A few days later, at a lunch at the American Embassy, Dr Eckener was the guest of honour. He told one joke after another about Goebbels, for whom he had nothing but contempt. When someone asked him about the balloting on the

'Hindenburg' which was taken while it was still aloft, Eckener confirmed that, with forty passengers and crew on board, forty-two 'yes' votes were counted. Goebbels has now forbidden the press to mention Eckener's name.
A year earlier, after the reoccupation of the Saar on first March 1935, Shirer had stood in the stand next to General Werner von Fritsch, Commander-in-Chief of the *Reichswehr, s*aid to be the brain of the growing Germany army. Shirer says, 'I was a little surprised at his talk. He kept up a running fire of very sarcastic remarks, about the SS, the Party, and various Party leaders as they appeared; he is full of contempt for them all.'
Shirer's diary contains no further relevant new information until the Godesberg conference in September 1938 between Chamberlain and Hitler. Shirer muses about 'Hitler's dainty, lady-like walk' and about a nervous tic which was made the more apparent when Hitler cocked his right shoulder. Shirer also mentions rumours about Hitler's having gone 'on the rampage' about Czechs and Beneš in particular, when he would throw himself on to the floor and bite into the edge of the carpet—hence the name *Teppichfresser* ('carpet-eater').
In 1937 Shirer left Germany, first going to Vienna, where he worked for the American Columbia Broadcasting System, and where, in 1938, he witnessed the *Anschluss*. After the Czech surrender he worked in Prague, but later returned to Berlin. After war had broken out he worked in various places in countries recently occupied by Germany. Since he was closely watched all the time, and his broadcasts rigorously censored, it is only from his *Berlin Diary* that one can glean his anti-Nazi sentiments.
Shirer's assessment of the 'mild looking and mannered' Himmler tallies with that of his colleague Gunther. The Reichsführer SS, quite early in the war, had Germans executed 'for damaging the people's interests in war-time'. On Himmler's orders these executions were arranged simply by changing prison sentences to death sentences.
In the second year of the war the far-reaching nature of Nazi ambitions became [72] apparent; so Shirer noted, on 17 July 1940: 'Three hundred SS men in Berlin have started learning Swahili.'
When Shirer returned to Berlin during the autumn of 1940 he had experienced for himself the British response to Göring's air raids on London and on other British cities. In October 1940 he remarks that the Nazi press has been harping on so much about the *Luftwaffe's* attacks on Great Britain being 'reprisals' that the public is already becoming nauseated by that term. The story [73] around town is to the effect that 'the average Berliner, when he buys his ten-pfennig evening paper, now says to the newsboy: "Give me ten-pfennig worth of reprisals."' Shirer goes on to say:
Radio news is no better and of late I have noticed that more than one German shut off a news broadcast after the first couple of minutes with that expressive Berlin exclamation, *'Ach, Quatsch!'* which is stronger than, 'Oh, nonsense!'. 'Rubbish!' is probably a better translation.

And when Shirer visited Munich on 25 October 1940 he noticed the complete absence of the *Heil Hitler* salute in restaurants, cafés and beer-halls he visited. He left Berlin for good early in December 1940, and the last entries in his diary for those final weeks are full of references to the Nazi 'mercy killing' programme, which are largely based on rather peculiar death notices in the German provincial press. Louis P.Lochner, also an American correspondent in Berlin at the time, must be mentioned in this context, as he translated and edited the wartime diaries of Goebbels, discovered after his suicide. In this translation Lochner adds his own experience of the 'Venetian night' at the *Pfaueninsel* arranged by Goebbels in July 1936 in honour of the delegates to the convention of the International Chamber of Commerce, where Lochner was also a guest.42

To conclude this section on Americans and their attitude toward the Third Reich a contribution from an English visitor to the USA in 1934 reflects the American concern about anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany. George Catlin writes in a letter from the USA:

[74] I hear that Hitler consulted an astrologer about the date of his death. He gets this reply: 'It will be a Jewish holiday.' 'Which holiday?' he asks. The astrologer: 'I cannot say which—but if it is not a Jewish holiday now, it will be afterwards!'

**THE RUSSIANS**

One can hardly expect to obtain any reliable individual point of view about other countries from people living in a police state like Soviet Russia. Instead one has to make do with government-inspired responses. An example is the Soviet reaction to Hitler's hatred for Communism in Germany and Russia which he expressed from his early days as a politician. This Soviet reaction was to a large extent expressed by cartoonists.43 In 1930 Viktor Deni showed the Soviet régime's anti-Semitic, anti-capitalistic, and anti-Nazi policy in a poster depicting a Jew holding a swastika on his palm, and a workman attacking both Jew and swastika with a hammer-blow. The caption reads: 'Proletarian counter-attack will destroy the beast.' After Hitler had come to power, two posters appeared in a Leningrad paper, the first attacking 'Hanging and Shooting' as the Fascist programme carried out by a Stormtrooper, and the other poster showing a huge meat-mincer in the shape of a swastika, being operated by a Stormtrooper. In 1936 the Soviet cartoonist Boris Efimov caricatures the Berlin-Rome Axis by drawing Mussolini as a dwarf-sized lackey sitting on the goose-stepping leg of a steel-helmeted Hitler.

This was the year of the Spanish Civil War in which Hitler's *Legion Condor*44 fought with Mussolini's soldiers on Franco's side against the Soviet-led International Brigade. Yet, despite these antecedents, Hitler concluded his non-aggression pact with Stalin on 23 August 1939. In Germany itself this feat of Nazi foreign policy was widely felt to be an unnatural act and was duly satirised. It was also said that when von Ribbentrop left Moscow after signing

the non-aggression pact on Hitler's behalf, he was serenaded by his Soviet hosts with this farewell chorus:
[75] Lebe wohl, du deutscher Michel,
's geht doch nichts ohne 'Hammer und Sichel.'45
In fact, von Ribbentrop was 'greatly impressed by Stalin and the men with strong faces'.46 He returned to Moscow on 29 September 1939 for the drawing up of the new German-Soviet frontier after the successful German campaign against Poland; this amounted to the fourth partition of Poland.47 By now von Ribbentrop felt so comfortable among Stalin and his 'inner circle' that he declared to Hitler after his return to Berlin that he had never felt so much at [76] ease there: 'As if I were among old Party comrades of ours, *mein Führer*!'
Over a year later, in November 1940, Molotov visited Berlin. Unfortunately there happened to be a British air raid on the capital at the time, so von Ribbentrop had to take his Russian guest into an air-raid shelter. The following conversation ensued:
[77] v.R. This is now the beginning of the end of Great Britain!
M. If England is really so powerless why do we have to converse in an air-raid shelter?
A story which began to circulate in Berlin soon after Molotov's visit throws some light on Soviet xenophobia and suspiciousness of her new German ally: [78] 'Molotov's staff had all plates and silverware boiled before using them, in apprehension of German germs.'
A comprehensive and implacable hatred for Hitler and Nazi Germany was the result of the sudden invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941 by Hitler's forces. Nazi leaders were generally termed 'Hitlerites' in Soviet Russia. Artists like Kukryniksy—a team of three caricaturists—dealt in their cartoons and posters with the Nazi menace. The Russian winter, Hitler and Goebbels were favourite [79] subjects. In 1941 a cartoon by Boris Efimov depicted Goebbels as Mickey Mouse, with the English text, 'What is an Aryan? He is handsome.'

**THE CZECHOSLOVAKIANS**

It has been reported that before the subjugation of Czechoslovakia by Hitler a large collection of anti-Nazi anecdotes and jokes was published by one Jörg Willenbacher at the Graphia Publishing Company in Karlsbad (now Karlovy Vary). Unfortunately this book did not reach the Third Reich.48 However, after the surrender of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and its transformation into the *Reichsprotektorat Böhmen und Mähren* the sentiments of these new Germans towards the new order were reflected in various experiences, anecdotes and jokes.
This is the recollection of Dr Chvalkovsky, former Czech envoy to Berlin:
[80] On 15 March 1939, in Prague (the day Czech President Hacha surrendered to

Hitler's bullying) a German officer with a troop of soldiers was about to cross a bridge but had to stop as a large crowd of incensed people blocked the road. They declared that they would only leave if he gave the command to shoot them. Then they sang their national anthem. Thereupon the German officer ordered his men to present arms, after which the crowd dispersed peacefully.
The same Czech diplomat related a personal experience soon after the surrender of Czechoslovakia. He was walking in a Prague street with his wife (who was not a Czech) and as usual conversing with her in French, when a young man who happened to pass by spat at both of them. Such was the Czech's hatred for the French who—so the young man said—had betrayed them.49
Chvalkovsky stayed on in Berlin—now as Envoy of the *Reichsprotektorat*—and remained there for the duration of the war, possibly in order to be of more use to his fellow countrymen in this way. His wife had a curious experience in November 1941. In a northern suburb of Berlin she met a labourer who had [81] attached a huge yellow star to the lapel of his jacket, on which he had written, 'Ick heesse Willy'.50
The long historic connection of *Böhmen* (Bohemia, the Czech homeland) with the *Reich* was not entirely abandoned, even after the Nazi invasion. Thus the *Reichsprotektor,* Baron von Neurath, was affectionately referred to by some Czechs as 'Papa Neurath'. Similarly, when, soon after the surrender, a squadron of *Luftwaffe* aeroplanes flew over Prague, and a man in the crowd cried, 'Look! German aeroplanes!', he was promptly corrected by a bystander who said proudly, 'What are you saying? *Our* aeroplanes!'51
Admittedly these were probably exceptions, as a number of stories, especially those circulating near at hand in Vienna, testify:
[82] Hacha, now the *Staatspräsident von Böhmen und Mähren,* has been invited to have breakfast with Baron von Neurath, the *Reichsprotektor*. When Neurath hands him the menu Hacha asks, 'Where am I to sign?'
[83] Secretary of State Frank (a Sudeten52 German) discovers on the main bridge in Prague a slogan, daubed in red paint: *Smrt Nemcum*! ('Death to Germans!'), so he complains to the *Reichsprotektor,* who summons Hacha. 'Oh, these stupid Czechs!' exclaims Hacha, 'Everything must be written in both languages, and always German *before* Czech!'
[84] Hitler visits Prague and is greeted with great enthusiasm. When he gets back to Berlin he tells Göring all about it, so Hermann wants to visit Prague too, and notifies Hacha: 'Impossible!' replies Hacha in despair, 'I can't tell my people yet again that Hitler has abdicated and that Beneš is coming back!'
The Czechs apparently had great difficulty in appreciating the German national anthems.53
[85] When asked how he was getting on with life in the *Reichsprotektorat,* one Czech replied, 'I have already learned the "Horst Wessel Lied", but not yet "Deutschland, Deutschland nimmt sich alles!"'54

To conclude this little sketch of life in the new *Reichsprotektorat,* one may cite a letter said to have been written by a Prague Jewish lady to a friend:
[86] Dear Lisl,
Since Hitler took over life is wonderful. We are all very happy and everything is fine.
Love from
Maria.
PS Uncle Rudia, who did not agree, was buried yesterday.

**THE DANES**

It took about three years after the invasion of Denmark, which took place in April 1940, before the Danish resistance began to operate in earnest. The reason for this was that German policy during the early years of the occupation allowed most Danish institutions—including the monarchy—a remarkable degree of freedom. Even the Danish Jews, who numbered about seven thousand, were at first not molested.55 For this reason Denmark was sometimes [87] jocularly referred to as 'the model protectorate' and even as 'Hitler's pet canary [88] bird'. Moreover, Nazism found in Denmark itself, as in neighbouring Norway, some local support. Unsavoury elements under one von Schalburg56 initiated their own reign of terror in the country. When Best became *Reichsbevollmächtigter* for occupied Denmark he tried at first to stem these excesses, but he proved powerless against his Nazi superiors and their Danish collaborators.57
When members of the Danish Resistance scuttled the ships of their Navy on 29 August 1943 it signified the beginning of their activities against their Nazi oppressors, and what the German occupation force had jokingly called [89] 'Denmark, the whipped-cream front' came to an end. Hitler's one-time 'pet canary' now became 'the savage canary'.58
The clandestinely printed journal, *Besaettelse Tegninger,* with its cartoons by Østerberg of Copenhagen, served as a substitute mouthpiece for the Danes from 1940 to 1945, with satirical comments on Nazism, on Germany's changing fortunes in the war, and on Danish collaboration.
Best, as Hitler's deputy in Denmark, naturally became the butt of Danish [90] underground satire and anti-Nazi propaganda. He was nicknamed 'baby-faced Best' and when, in April 1945, Denmark was flooded by refugees from across [91] the Baltic—ahead of advancing Soviet troops—it was said that 'Best might find it easy to hide among those many refugees if he wore female disguise'.

**THE SWISS**

Switzerland was the only direct neighbour of Germany which was spared both occupation and war, and thus Swiss reactions to the Third Reich are of particular interest. Baron von Weizsäcker, the German Consul General in Basel from 1921–4, and Envoy to Switzerland 1933–6, got to know the country well

during those years. His *Erinnerungen* (‘Memories’) are, therefore, a valuable source for Swiss sentiments about the Third Reich.
Francophile tendencies had long been pronounced in Switzerland59 and in 1938 they were strengthened by the *Anschluss,* which in fact lengthened the Swiss border with Germany and thus increased her vulnerability to her northern neighbour. The anti-Semitic and anti-Church policies of the Nazi régime caused further apprehension, and the fear of an invasion from the north was rarely far away, as is evident in this true story:
[92] A Swiss forest official admonishes a woodsman to stack some cut timber in a proper manner, and receives this answer: ‘Why should I take the trouble? Before long Hitler is going to invade us anyway, and he’ll collect the wood.’
We have referred earlier to the sarcastic remark to the effect that the Swiss were only waiting to be *angeschlossen* (like Austria).60
In Germany, Party officials showed their contempt for the Swiss in various ways and on occasion even in public. Thus Göring once remarked: ‘The Swiss [93] have nothing but rubbish in their brain-boxes’61—an utterance unlikely to [94] promote Swiss sympathy for the régime. In Germany at that time people quipped, ‘Switzerland is the nature reserve for German emigrants’.
A few Swiss youths formed their own Nazi organization, the ‘Grey Shirts’, and they were supported by German Nazis resident in Switzerland. They had their own *Landesgruppenleiter,* one Wilhelm Gustloff, who then lived in Davos for health reasons. An inveterate admirer of Hitler, Gustloff used to sit in front of a photograph of Hitler for many hours *um sich Kraft zu holen* (‘in order to [95] gather strength’),62 and he once assured a high Swiss official, ‘If the Führer should order me to jump out of the window into the river below I’d do it without giving it a second thought.’ It was perhaps such fanaticism that led to Gustloff’s death by assassination. A German Jewish emigré by the name of Frankfurter killed him and thus made him a martyr in the eyes of the Nazis. A triumphant cortège wended its way from Davos to Gustloff’s home in Mecklenburg, in the north of Germany. Soon afterwards new retaliatory outrages were perpetrated against the Jews then still living in Germany.63
The Swiss press remained critical of the Third Reich, and this resulted in Goebbels preventing the distribution of some Swiss newspapers in Germany, although this may have been in part due to a personal reason. In 1933 Germany participated—incidentally for the last time—in a session of the League of Nations in Geneva, and Goebbels was the representative of the Third Reich. On that occasion a Swiss paper produced a cartoon showing a black-haired [96] crippled dwarf and this caption: ‘Who on earth is that? Isn’t that the representative of the tall, healthy, blond and blue-eyed Nordic race?’ A year later ‘the Röhm purge’ left a lasting impression on the Swiss, particularly the [97] murder of Röhm, about which a senior Swiss official commented, ‘A Head of State doesn’t himself act as executioner’, a sentiment which was widely expressed in a similar vein in Germany at about the same time.

Several stories shed light on the neutrality of the Swiss and their lively apprehension of Nazi Germany:
[98] A German is travelling in Switzerland before the war. He remarks enthusiastically to a Swiss acquaintance, 'You know, in the whole world there is only one Germany!', to which the Swiss replies, 'Thank God! That is very reassuring.'
[99] In 1942 an American bombing squadron flies over Swiss airspace. A Swiss anti-aircraft battery radios to warn the US planes that they are violating Swiss airspace. The pilots reply, 'We know', to which the Swiss respond with a salvo. 'You are shooting far too low', answer the Americans. 'We know, we know', say the Swiss.
Numerous other countries showed their hostility to Nazism in cartoons, both before and during the war. As mentioned above, Hanfstaengl's book, *Tat gegen Tinte,* which was intended as an apologia of a sort, contains a selection of such lampoons. They depict Hitler as a despot, as a warmonger aiming at world domination, and show the chief symbol of his movement, the swastika, in various forms.
When Baron von Weizsäcker became Germany's Ambassador at the Vatican in 1943, he took the post in the hope that he would be able to achieve an end to the war. Soon after his arrival in Rome he was welcomed by an Italian Cardinal [100] who remarked: 'You know, I am rather fond of you Germans; I only wish you'd do away with that Wotan business in your country!'64 This was an opinion which Baron von Weizsäcker, as a practising (Protestant) Christian, fully shared.
During the war many formerly neutral countries, now annexed or Nazi-occupied, expressed their anti-Nazi feelings in a variety of ways, mainly in slogans and cartoons.65

**9**

## HITLER'S WAR

The main phases of the war1 were of course the subject of comment in the form of unofficial satirical anecdotes and jokes by a wide range of contemporaries from both sides.

[1] One of the earliest incidents in the war to evoke such comment was the mysterious death of General von Fritsch, who had been Commander-in-Chief of the Army from 1936–8, when, like his predecessor, von Blomberg, he was shamefully dismissed by Hitler.2 On 22 September 1939 von Fritsch, wearing his uniform as a General, was killed while accompanying a forward patrol near Warsaw.3 Very soon it was rumoured that the General had been murdered by the SS, a view reflected in the remark, 'Von Fritsch has become a victim of the *Himmlersche Heerscharen*'.4 The fact that Hitler did not attend the funeral of his former Commander-in-Chief naturally lent credit to such rumours at the time,5 although they were never substantiated.

## THE FÜHRER'S VOLKSHEER

The numerical increase of the Army from the old *Reichswehr*—with its 100,000 men allowed under the Treaty of Versailles—to a regular army of millions, recruited by universal conscription, had largely been the work of General von Fritsch. This, however, was not the case with the officer corps. The 'watering down' of the latter from 3,700 officers in 1934 to 99,000 in 19396 had led to the creation of the so-called *Volksoffiziere* ('people's officers'). This term may well have been chosen by Hitler himself. The only way by which the Army could be increased to such a degree within the short time-span of five years was by promoting huge numbers of NCOs. This served two purposes from Hitler's point of view: the much enlarged Army needed more officers, and the *Volksoffiziere* substantially reduced the influence of the traditional officer class with their military and aristocratic backgrounds.

The *Volksoffiziere* were, before long, nicknamed *Vomags*—a reference to their backgrounds7 and, as it happens, an example of the mania for abbreviations which flourished in the Third Reich. We have referred earlier8 to the lack of enthusiasm noticeable during the increased mustering which continued throughout the first year of the war. The following story enjoyed a wide circulation at this time:

[2] A row of men is waiting to be examined for medical fitness.
The doctor asks the first one, 'What is the matter with you?'
'I am short-sighted, sir.'
The doctor: 'What! Short-sighted? We are all short-sighted. I am short-sighted, many officers are short-sighted, and even the Führer is short-sighted. Nevertheless, we all have to do our duty. *K.v.* Dismiss!'
The next soldier to be examined complains of headaches.
'What nonsense!' retorts the doctor. 'This is pure imagination! I have headaches, the officers have headaches, and certainly the Führer has a good many headaches, yet we all have to do our duty. *K.v.* dismiss!'
The next man complains of stomach-ache.
'Sheer rubbish!' snaps the doctor, by now quite irate. 'I have stomach-ache, the officers have stomach-ache, and even the Führer has stomach-ache. *K.v.* Dismiss!'
The fourth soldier-to-be approaches, smiling broadly. 'Don't trouble yourself, sir,' he says to the doctor, 'I'm daft.'
An apocryphal story may serve as an example of the propaganda-enforced morale among troops serving in Norway:
[3] Hitler visits a fall-back military hospital in Norway. He begins by touring a ward in which the soldiers have only minor complaints. He asks the first soldier about his illness and the man tells him, 'I have haemorrhoids, mein Führer.'
Hitler: 'What does the doctor give you for them?'
Soldier: 'He applies tincture of iodine with his brush, three times a day.'
Hitler: 'Is there anything I can do for you?'
Soldier: 'I want to be discharged as soon as possible, so that I can do my duty and fight for you, mein Führer.'
Hitler moves to the soldier in the next bed. 'And what's the matter with you?' he asks.
'I have haemorrhoids, mein Führer.'
'And what is your treatment?'
'Tincture of iodine applied by the doctor with his brush, three times daily.'
'And what is your wish?' asks Hitler.
'To get well quickly, so I can fight and die for you, mein Führer.'
Hitler moves on and asks the next soldier, 'And what is your illness?'
The soldier, very hoarse indeed, just manages to croak, 'Very sore throat, mein Führer.'
Hitler: 'And what is your wish?'
'To have iodine applied by the doctor's brush before he does the other two!'
The period after the defeat of Poland, Denmark and Norway—the so-called 'phoney war'—was described in similar ways by the soldiers on both sides. The German *Landser*10 behind the *Westwall*11 called it *der verfluchte Sitzkrieg,*12 his counterpart in the British Expeditionary Force called it 'this damned twilight war', and the *poilu,*13 behind his Maginot Line, called it *drôle de guerre*.
At the same time this joke circulated among the men of the *Organisation Todt*14 who were then still working at the *Westwall:*
[4] Q. 'Why does the Führer no longer visit us here?'

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53 Idyll at the Western Wall

A. 'Because he is afraid that when he leaves we might shout at him, "Führer, wir folgen dir!"15 or "Heim in's Reich"'16

When the German offensive started on 10 May the tank strategy of General von Manstein against the northern and weakest section of the Maginot Line proved so effective that Hitler eventually believed this spectacular strategic move to have been his own brainchild. Presumably it was at this time that one of the most damaging anti-Hitler acronyms began to circulate; it became one of the most popular nicknames for the Führer, both among the soldiers and at [5] home. *Hitler der Gröfaz* was short for *Grösster Feldherr aller Zeiten* ('greatest strategist of all time').

*Invasion plans*

Prompted by Churchill's rejection of his so-called peace offer,17 Hitler now resumed his old plan to invade England.18 The campaign was to be carried out on a grand scale, with a huge force of forty divisions and (as German naval support was limited after severe losses at Narvik) on a narrow corridor across the Channel. This suggestion evoked a sarcastic retort from General Halder [6] (Army Chief of Staff): 'In that case I might just as well make my troops march through a meat-mincer as soon as they land.'19

Nevertheless, Göring remained convinced that his *Luftwaffe* would solve all problems, boasting that:
[7] When my *Luftwaffe* ascends, the sky above London will be obscured by its numbers ...With my *Luftwaffe* I shall ferret out the English fleet in its hideouts...and the English fighters out of their hidey-holes and shall destroy them.
He went so far as to announce that since it was so unlikely that any enemy plane would violate German airspace, he, Göring, was quite willing, in the [8] event of being proved wrong, to be known as 'Meier'20—a rash promise which [9] quickly led to the *Luftwaffe* being referred to as 'Meier's air force'.
The Royal Air Force's first air raid on Berlin took place on 7 September 1940 and massive air attacks followed, especially in the spring of 1942, when German cities on the Baltic coast were bombed. Hitler retaliated by ordering a massive air raid on Coventry and other cities, for which the sinister verb [10] *coventrieren* was coined. However, these 'tit-for-tat' air raids did not alter the fact that by the end of 1940 Göring had lost the 'Battle of Britain'. Even earlier, in mid-September 1940, Hitler had already decided to postpone *sine die* his *Unternehmen Seelöwe* ('Operation Sea Lion')—his planned invasion of England—although then and for some time to come rumours about an invasion were still rife on the front and at home. No countermeasures by the Ministry of Propaganda could prevent low-key criticism and satire about the invasion although it never took place:
[11] Announcement: In order to facilitate *Unternehmen Seelöwe,* our ever-resourceful Propaganda Minister has decided to appeal to German housewives for help. Accordingly, all available bottles will be collected from every German household and will be filled with water from the Channel. When the Channel has been completely dried up, the transport problem will be solved and the German infantry can march across.
A rather different method of solving the problem of draining the Channel was said to have been improvised by German soldiers who, now that France had fallen, were standing idle on the coast of Normandy:
[12] The Army is lined up along the coast of Normandy, every man equipped with a large rubber pipe. At the Führer's command all the men suck mightily on the Channel water and continue work all day long. However, no reduction in the water level is noticeable despite the strenuous efforts of some fifty-thousand men, all sucking up sea water, so Adolf orders a pilot to reconnoitre on the other side of the Channel to find out what is happening. The pilot reports that all along the coast of Kent British soldiers are lined up, entirely unarmed, but attentive to Churchill's command, 'One, two, three, pee!'
At about the same time people in England began to realize that Hitler's threats of an invasion were just threats and nothing more. In mid-September 1940 some topical lines appeared reflecting this feeling:
[13] Napoleon tried. The Dutch were on the way,

A Norseman did it—and a Dane or two.
Some sailor-king may follow one fine day;
But not, I think, a lowland rat like you.
When even the generally uninformed German public realized that *Unternehmen Seelöwe* was dead and buried, the *vox populi* voiced its epitaph: [14] 'It will now be appropriate to give a new title to that famous First World War song, revived in 1939, "Und wir fahren gegen Engelland" (by Hermann Löns), namely "The Unfinished" (by Adolf Hitler).'

*More conquests?*

The year 1941 was marked by a series of crazy exploits developed by Hitler's strategy, when German troops fought in the Balkans, in the Aegean, in North Africa, and in their invasion of Russia. The expansion of the war to such far-flung frontiers was marked by some spectacular early successes, but in Russia it was not long before the German armies began to suffer the same fate that had overtaken Napoleon's *Grande Armée* in 1812; 'General Winter' came to the aid of the Russians once more. The complete lack of adequate winter clothing for the troops and the severe shortages of provisions led to many largely avoidable casualties. The failure to provide adequate clothing for the Russian winter now had to be put right by a general appeal to German housewives to part with their fur coats. In these circumstances it was entirely understandable that Hitler's latest decoration, specially intended for the participants in this campaign—the *Winterfeldzugsorden* ('winter campaign medal')—should come under biting criticism by the soldiers in the field. Before long it became known as [15] *Gefrierfleischorden* ('deep-freeze medal') and the extra pay which all soldiers on [16] the eastern front got was dubbed the *Zittergroschen* ('trembling tanner'). Yet another decoration then came into being, the 'German Cross in gold', a massive cross with a swastika on top of it, to be worn on the right side of the chest, an innovation in Germany. This medal was soon popularly referred to as the [17] *Parteiabzeichen für Kurzsichtige* ('Party badge for the short-sighted') or as the *Gesinnungsrückstrahler* ('reflector of Nazi ideology'). Such propaganda devices were of course powerless to arrest the rapid collapse of the Russian campaign, which reached its nadir with the disaster at Stalingrad. Shortly before this crucial defeat Hitler, determined to sacrifice yet more Germans on the eastern front, ordered a certain General Unruh to comb factories for the necessary cannon fodder. Just as formerly the word *Kohlenklau* had been invented to exhort people to save coal, so General Unruh became known by the nickname *Heldenklau* ('hero-snatcher') as commemorated in these lines:

[18] Oh Adolf, think of Stalingrad
And follow the advice you've had—
Make peace and stop this senseless killing;
And send us home—we're more than
willing.

Victory's a dream fit for a sow—
No last-ditch heroes can help you
now.21
By now confidence in Hitler's strategical expertise had reached rock bottom for most soldiers and civilians, as was reflected in the story that somebody had [19] fastened a piece of paper on to a statue of Field Marshal (later President) von Hindenberg, bearing the words
'Descend, once more, old warrior,
your NCO's had his k.o.!'22

**THE ALLIES**

*A problematic union*

The first meeting between Hitler and Mussolini in 1934 at the Brenner Pass did not augur well for a close future relationship between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Moreover, the recently deceased President von Hindenburg had warned against such an alliance in his political testament.23 Hitler distrusted the Italians, though he had an ideological affinity for his fellow dictator and a gradually developing—though in all probability one-sided—personal tie with Mussolini. Popular rumour distilled their meeting into four words:
[20]
Hitler (to Mussolini): 'Ave, Imperator!'
Mussolini (to Hitler): 'Ave, Imitator!'
Despite the 'Berlin-Rome Axis' of 1936 and the active support by both Mussolini and Hitler of their fellow dictator Franco during the Spanish Civil War (1936–9), it was not until May 1939 that Germany signed a formal treaty of alliance with Italy.24
The reasons for this are worth considering. Mussolini was widely believed to hate Hitler because he could not tolerate a second dictator within his orbit. Perhaps the reason for this lies partly in the fact that both men resembled each other in many ways. Both had risen from obscurity; both were utterly egotistical self-made men, intuitive, suspicious, superstitious, touchy and vindictive. They shared powerful gifts of oratory and both dictators had physical magnetism which brought them the mastery of the masses; both were consummate actors. While Mussolini publicly declared his admiration for Hitler, many of the feelings about the Nazis and their leader which he expressed in private25 were anything but flattering. The same is true of Mussolini's son-in-law Ciano and of [21] other Italian Fascists, as typified by the famous description of Hitler as 'a clown, a Julius Caesar with a Tyrolean hat.'
When early in 1938 the Duce gave Hitler the green light for the planned *Anschluss,* Hitler was keen to show his appreciation for Mussolini's promise that Italy would not intervene if Germany invaded and annexed Austria.26 Accordingly Hitler planned to name a square in Berlin after Mussolini as a testament to his friendship. The Führer discussed the project with his architect

Speer, who suggested that the *Adolf-Hitler Platz* in the capital could be [22] renamed *Mussolini-Platz*. Hitler did not disguise the fact that he disliked the architectural style of the buildings surrounding that square. 'If we rename it *Mussolini-Platz* I shall be rid of it and it will look like an exceptional honour if I cede my own square to the Duce. I have already designed a Mussolini monument for it.'
Mussolini, ever anxious to encourage the Italians to be a warlike people, 'invented' the *Passo Romano,* a copy of the German *Parademarsch* ('goose-step'),27 but for all his warlike posturing he took care to stand aside during Germany's campaign against Poland. Indeed, he only declared war on France after Germany's victory was complete, and not before he had cynically [23] remarked, 'Each delay now would have been a mistake...I shall require a few thousand dead soldiers in order to secure my place as a belligerent leader—later, at the conference table.'
When, on 10 June 1940 Italy's Foreign Secretary, Ciano, handed his country's declaration of war to François-Poncet, the French Ambassador to the [24] Quirinal, the latter retorted, 'This is like stabbing a man lying prostrate on the ground.' A number of new jokes now underlined the French Ambassador's remark:
[25] It now becomes necessary to alter the famous Latin tag 'veni, vidi, vici'. In Mussolini style it reads: 'I came, when I saw that he had been victorious.'
Or, as the Berliners put it:
[26] 'Mussolini, der Reichserntehelfer'
(the helper who gathers in the imperial harvest).
According to some rumours, German military circles knew that Italy had declared war, but not who the enemy was:
[27] 'I hear Italy has declared war; in that case we'll have to confront them with ten divisions.'
'Oh no; they've joined us as our allies now that we have defeated France.'
'Well, in that case we'll need at least twenty more divisions.'
The 'Berlin-Rome Axis' had become unstable quite early on in the war. Italy had failed to supply Germany with raw materials, but had at the same time continued to trade with the enemy in these commodities, while for its part Germany had omitted to send one million tons of coal to Italy every month, as promised. When this supply was resumed, German civilians commented, 'At [28] long last we know who the real *Kohlenklau* is28; it's Mussolini himself!'
*African enterprise*
In the summer of 1940 Italy's forces in their colony Libya numbered about 250,000 as against 36,000 British troops stationed in Egypt. In September 1940

Marshal Graziani, successor to Balbo (who had been killed in a British air raid on Tobruk), began his offensive against the British, but stopped half-way owing to supply problems and then retreated when General Wavell counter-attacked in December. Graziani explained his failure to Mussolini by saying that he had been 'like a flea fighting an elephant', to which the Duce replied, 'A peculiar [29] flea, with more than a thousand guns!'

After four Italian divisions had been routed Mussolini accepted Hitler's offer of help, and on 11 February 1941 Rommel disembarked at Tripoli with the first units of the German *Afrika Korps,* beginning his offensive six weeks later despite the protests of his Italian superior officer. Although Rommel was critical of many of the Italian officers (for example, his direct superior in the [30] field, General Bastico, whom Rommel himself nicknamed 'Bombastico', or the [31] Quartermaster-General, Count Cavallero, whom Ciano in his diary described 'with the loving care one Italian gangster is always ready to lavish on another') he had a good relationship with the men. This is implicit in the perhaps apocryphal remark addressed to him by one of the Italian soldiers: 'Why don't [32] you Germans do the fighting, General, and let us Italians build the road?'

Mussolini's relationship with Rommel see-sawed with the winds of fortune throughout the North African campaign. Although Rommel at first imagined that Mussolini was his friend, he soon realized that this was not the case. Thus in 1942, when summoned to Rome to discuss supplies with the Duce, he noticed the insignia of the Italian order for valour lying on the immense desk in front of the Duce. He guessed that it was intended for him. However, the discussion grew heated, and when Rommel said something disparaging about the Italian navy, Mussolini glared at him, seized the order, pulled open a [33] drawer, flung the decoration into it and locked the desk.29 'It was a beautiful thing,' recounted Rommel later. 'Why couldn't I have kept my silly mouth shut for another ten minutes? He couldn't very well have asked me to hand it back.' Rommel was rightly called the 'Desert Fox' by his own men and by the British because of his resourceful strategy against the famous British Eighth Army. He had to cope continually with supply problems, particularly with regard to water, which was often brackish and inadequate in quantity. At Girabub, for example, an oasis near the Egyptian frontier in southeast Libya, the available [34] water had the exact composition of Epsom salts.30 This explains the saying in the British army that 'at Girabub Mr Eno would have starved to death and Mr Bromo made a fortune.'31

During the first few months of the campaign the diet supplied by their ally to the German soldiers of the *Afrika Korps* was rather monotonous. It consisted chiefly of Italian tinned meat, and as the tins had 'A.M.' marked on them in [35] large letters, the troops used to call the contents 'Asinus Mussolini.'32

However, Rommel's chief concern was the Italian failure to eliminate Malta, the principal enemy base in the area; it constantly threatened his route of access for more tanks and supplies. This failure was an obvious butt for satire:

[36] The Duce asks the Führer why he has given up 'Operation Sea Lion'. Hitler, dodging the question, asks Mussolini, 'Why, Duce, haven't you been able to take a little place like Malta? I am very disappointed about that.' Screwing up his face, Mussolini responds, 'Führer, don't forget that Malta is an island too.'
From 1940 onwards Mussolini's soldiers attracted increasing derision. The following jokes postdate their defeat in Greece:
[37] The Italian High Command has issued the following order:
'In future all decorations will have to be worn on the back.' This is because they have been awarded for valour displayed in advancing backwards.
[38] A much appreciated Italian desert innovation was the *Rückzugstanz* ('Ballo de retirata'), the instructions being 'one step forward, two steps back, one more around the "axis", then push your partner forward and repeat as before'.
The following is an account of one-upmanship with a sting in the tail:
[39] A German and an Italian officer get into conversation.
The Italian: 'We've got more submarines than you.'
The German: 'And we've got more aeroplanes.'
The Italian: 'But we've got the better ally.'
And more news from the desert campaign:
[40] Our troops under General Pompolini33 have achieved remarkable results on the right flank of the front near Audjila. A British bicycle has been surrounded. We have definitely captured the handlebar; hard fighting for the pedals is continuing; the back wheel has retired as planned, and the frame has been destroyed.
The 'Berlin-Rome Axis', the symbol of the Italo-German alliance, was referred to in numerous jokes, like the following.
[41] It was said that over a century earlier the German poet Goethe had predicted the fatal outcome of 'the axis' when he wrote:34
The axis many a push can take,
Though long immobile, at last 'twill break.
[42] And the German soldiers who fought alongside the Italians had so much 'stiffening'35 to do in order to provide the necessary support that they modified an old drinking song:36
As long as the Axis thrives in Rome
German soldiers can't go home.
In much the same spirit, the frequently quoted war slogan, intended to prevent [43] civilians from travelling: 'Alle Räder müssen rollen für den Sieg' ('all wheels must roll for victory') was replaced by 'Achsenbruch beendet bald den Krieg' [44] ('when the "axis" breaks it will be the end of the war'). After Sicily had been captured by the British and American forces, the story went that Italian railway carriages which had been used for transporting German POWs were to be reconstructed: the lavatories were to be sited directly above the axles.

Eventually the ill-fated campaign in North Africa provoked a song from the *Deutsche Afrikakorps* which was a broad parody of Goethe's 'Mignon-Lied'37 and may be freely translated as follows:
[45] You know the land which poets did proclaim
Telling in books about its ancient fame,
Painted by painters (who were never there)
In gorgeous technicolour everywhere,
You know it then?
That is the place from where
We want to leave as quickly as we dare!
You know the land?
Burnt dry on every side,
Hills, sand, and nothing else for far and wide,
The cruel sun allows no sheltering glade
For your scorched head to rest there in its shade;
You know it then?
That is the place from where
We want to leave as quickly as we dare!38
The end of the *Afrikakorps* came even sooner than that song might have suggested. When Rommel reached El Alamein—a mere sixty miles from Alexandria—at the end of June 1942, he had only fifty tanks left and faced a vastly superior enemy. Yet two months later he managed to break through and to get within striking distance of the city. Then his attack foundered for mere lack of petrol, and in October came General Montgomery's counter-offensive with a much superior tank force. Rommel now had to retreat, and it was at this time that some very bitter jokes—mainly of Austrian origin—began to circulate. They reflected the end of the Italo-German campaign in North Africa. [46] One ironic advertisement proclaimed, 'Marshal's baton offered in exchange for seven-league boots'. Other jokes followed thick and fast:
[47] Q. 'What is the difference between a clock and Rommel?'
A. 'A clock's tic-tack is a forward movement, but Rommel uses tactics for his retreat.'
[48] The pictures of St Joseph are going to be removed from all churches. Why? They are to be replaced by pictures of Rommel, who knows more about the 'flight from Egypt'.
[49] Hitler is going to visit North Africa. Why?
He wants to watch the race to Tunis.
[50] Rommel is now going to change his name to 'Romm'. Why?
Because he has lost all those 'El's'.39
The end of the campaign came on 13 May 1943, when Tunis, the last bridgehead in North Africa, fell. The reaction of the troops was expressed *inter alia* in satirical terms reminiscent of those directed at earlier misadventures of

[51] Hitler's strategy.40 They spoke of 'Tuniskirchen' and of 'Tunisgrad', and they saluted with 'Heul Hitler'.41

*Fall of Mussolini*

The next blow of fate to befall Hitler occurred two months later when the Duce was dismissed by his King, arrested and eventually held prisoner in the Abruzzi Appenines. A raid by a German commando force set him free, but from then on he was merely a pawn in the hands of Hitler.

Thus ended the ill-starred German alliance with Italy; but as far back as 1936 the writing was on the wall, when Hitler's *Legion Condor*42 and Mussolini's troops had fought for Franco in the Spanish Civil War. The following story illustrates both the heroic and the rhetorical elements in the reputation which the Italians had at that time:

[52] Three officers of Franco's army are watching the progress of a battle; one is Italian, another German, and the third Spanish. The German, looking through his field-glasses, says in a tone of surprise, 'But they're fleeing; our friends are fleeing! Look! The Italians are running away!'

'Let me have the binoculars,' says the Italian to the Spaniard, somewhat agitated. As he peers through the glasses, his face, a little troubled before, begins to clear, and a large smile breaks out. Describing a broad gesture in the air with his free hand, he cries, 'Yes, they are retreating, but proudly—like lions!'

Franco had remained unimpressed by Hitler's assurances that Great Britain was already defeated, and that Gibraltar could be taken by a German force.43 He flatly refused to enter into an alliance with Hitler, but as a gesture of thanks for Hitler's help in the Civil War, Franco sent his 'Blue Division' to Hitler's front in Russia. Otherwise he remained uninvolved in the Führer's grandiose plans, while managing to turn the relationship to his own advantage. A contemporary pun makes this point rather neatly:

[53] Q. 'Who is the most efficient export merchant?'

A. 'Adolf Hitler—er liefert alles franco.'44

Thus the Spanish 'Blue Division' fought alongside Italian, Romanian and Hungarian divisions on the eastern front—a really motley collection of Hitler's allies.

*Aryans in the Far East?*

On 27 September 1940 the *Dreimächteabkommen*45 between Germany, Italy and Japan came into being. Von Ribbentrop trumpeted this as 'das [54] Militärbündnis der drei mächtigsten Staaten der Erde' ('the military alliance of the three most powerful states on earth'). This new accord had an unexpected [55] by-product in that it benefited Puccini fans in war-torn Germany. Performances of Puccini's opera, 'Madame Butterfly', hitherto banned in the Third Reich

because the libretto was based on *Rassenschande* ('racial defilement'), were permitted once the *Dreimächtepakt* had come into effect. One might therefore conclude that from 27 September 1940 the Japanese were considered honorary Aryans.

**BROADCASTING**

On the first of September 1939—two days before the Second World War started—Hitler forbade the German people to listen to foreign broadcasts on pain of death.46 An American journalist living in Berlin noted in December 1939:

[56] Many long prison sentences for Germans who listen to foreign radio stations, yet many continue to do it...I passed an afternoon with a German family the other day, who were a little apprehensive when they turned on the 6 p.m. BBC news...the porter is the official Nazi spy for the apartment house and they had to be very careful. They played the radio so low that I could hardly catch the news, and one daughter kept watch by the front door.

Denunciation had by then become a by-product of life in Nazi Germany, having been encouraged earlier by many leading Nazis. The emotional tension brought about by the war now led to an increase in denunciations. Some were motivated by misconceived patriotism, as the first of the following true stories shows:

[57] A soldier on the Russian front was reported missing, but a neighbour told his mother that she had heard his name read out among other prisoners while she was listening to Radio Moscow. Thereupon the soldier's mother denounced her neighbour for listening to an enemy broadcast.

[58] Fear of punishment for so-called 'radio crimes' caused another family to go through a bogus funeral ceremony for their son. He had been serving in a submarine, and they had been notified by the German Admiralty that he was missing, presumed dead. They had listened to the BBC and had learned that he was alive and a prisoner of war. The family knew better than to express their joy.

Many Germans listened to the radio habitually, despite the potentially Draconian punishment which threatened them, and in this way gained [59] otherwise unobtainable information. Thus, for instance, the flight of Hess to Scotland on 10 May 1941, as well as Winston Churchill's comment on his expedition, became known in Germany within a week.

A number of jokes and specially invented stories exploited this situation:

[60] Tünnes is notified by the High Command of the *Luftwaffe* that his son has not returned from a bombing raid over London. His friend Schäl arranges for a requiem mass to be held at Cologne Cathedral, but when they both listen in to the BBC the same evening, they learn that the young man is alive and a prisoner. Schäl now wants to cancel the mass, but Tünnes wisely objects for fear of getting into serious trouble

as a *Schwarzhörer*.47 So they both turn up next day at the Cathedral—but neither the priest nor any of the friends invited have put in an appearance.
[61] In this connection, it was also suggested that certain dates in the Church's calendar of saints should be adapted to the changed times; for instance the name of one church feast might be changed from 'annunciation' to 'denunciation'.
[62] On the stage of his cabaret one evening Weiss-Ferdl is demonstrating his new wireless set: 'What an excellent set this is! If I turn the dial this way I get Vienna... and this way, Salzburg...and this way Berlin—and if I turn a little further—I'll get to Dachau!'
[63] On 19 July 1940, the day that Hitler made his speech at the *Reichstag* in which he combined his assessment of his victory over France with his 'final peace appeal' to Great Britain, the BBC scored a special hit. Within an hour of his speech Hitler's plea for peace was rejected—in German—in the 6 p.m. BBC broadcast.
*Black Boomerang***48**
The man responsible for this off-the-cuff rejection of Hitler's offer was Sefton Delmer, an Australian who had gone to school in Berlin and had afterwards lived there for many years. He combined his refusal of Hitler's offer with an accusation, against Hitler, of aggression and murder, and he even prophesied that conquest would be the death of Hitler *(sich zu Tode siegen)*.49
Delmer became the creator of the *'Gustav-Siegfried-Eins'-Sender,* which first went on the air on 23 May 1941 and continued until October 1943. Its signature tune was the second line of an eighteenth-century German folk song as played on the carillon of the *Potsdamer Garnisonskirche:*
Üb' immer Treu und
Redlichkeit
bis an dein kühles Grab,
und weiche keinen Finger breit
von Gottes Wegen ab.50
This was a melody dear to many German listeners, and by its very words the song was a reminder of a better past and a defiance of the ethical standards associated with the country's present régime.
*Fifth column via the wireless*
Delmer was also the announcer on that same station, under the pseudonym *Der Chef*. He chose that name because he had often heard the men of Hitler's entourage refer to their leader by that term in 1932, when they were among themselves. Delmer himself had travelled around with them as a correspondent for the *Daily Express*. A great many Germans listened to Gustav Eins, for

Delmer based his broadcasts on factual events mingled with imaginary elements but presented in faultless German. In this way he persuaded many of his listeners into believing that there was a well-informed German speaking to them who—in contrast to Dr Goebbels—might tell them the truth. Delmer deliberately avoided the word 'Nazi' but spoke of 'The Party', 'SS' and 'Gestapo' as the truly villainous institutions of the Third Reich, and he also attacked the 'little Hitlers' rather than specific Nazi leaders, as most Germans had an axe to grind with the lesser fry anyway. Some of the ideas contained in the fictitious homilies of *Der Chef* originated, not from Delmer's imagination, but from a specially constituted 'Rumours Committee' which sifted information—often gathered by illegal means—and then handed it on to secret agents in neutral cities. By such indirect routes they at last found their way into Nazi Germany.

Eventually Delmer extended the range of his 'black radio' messages, and thus it was that in February 1943 the *Deutsche Kurzwellensender Atlantik* came into being. Its original targets were the submarines *(U-Boote)* of the German Navy. The latest American dance music, including special recordings by Marlene Dietrich, became popular; the band of the Royal Marines supplied some music. In a programme specially made for the Navy, this station broadcast the catchy Berlin music-hall song, 'Es war in Schöneberg im Monat Mai'. This turned out to be a favourite with the men of the German submarine base at St Nazaire.51

There was one further 'black station' which became the most effective of all: the *Soldatensender Calais* which operated from October 1943 onwards. Under Delmer's direction it presented its transmissions in German, in a crisp soldierly voice, and was particularly effective because it used the same wavelength as *Radio Deutschland*. Some notion of its effectiveness may be gleaned from Dr Goebbels' description of it as 'the poison-transmitter Calais'. When Count von Stauffenberg made his unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944, Delmer ridiculed the Nazis' allegation that von Stauffenberg's bomb was of British manufacture and that the attempt was a British plot. In a clandestine broadcast he stated:

The British and the Americans and the Russians are the last people to rid us of the Führer—on the contrary! The enemy can wish for nothing better than to have us led by a man who has never learned a soldier's trade, who relies on mystic inspiration, who in his conceit and ignorance interferes in everything and everywhere. For the Allies a fellow like that is an ally!

Not inappropriately, Delmer had now recruited as his announcer a certain René Halkett, who happened to be the nephew of General von Fritsch, the former Commander-in-Chief of the German Army so shamefully ousted and mistreated by Hitler.

In the penultimate year of the war the methods of the 'black radio' had to be altered; the Nazi leaders were now vilified. A few weeks after the failed attempt on Hitler's life Delmer met Dr Otto John, the only member of the German

Resistance who had managed to escape to neutral Spain—and that on the very day of the attempted assassination. As Dr John knew of Himmler's wish to replace Hitler—in the hope of thus persuading the Western Allies to conclude a separate peace treaty by 1943—Delmer used this information to mount a rumour campaign called 'Himmler for President' which was broadcast by the *Soldatensender*.
Delmer also directed a clandestine station named 'Christ the King', through which a young Austrian Roman Catholic priest condemned the Nazi crimes against the Jews, and against concentration camp inmates and the victims of the 'mercy killing' campaign.52
Such, then, were the activities of 'black' broadcasting from Great Britain to Germans at home and to German troops on their many fronts.
*Radio propaganda by Dr Goebbels*
On the German side, propaganda by radio against Great Britain was chiefly carried out by William Joyce, a British Fascist who had arrived in Germany just before war was declared. In Germany he used the name *Froehlich,* but the radio commentator of the *Daily Express* dubbed him 'Lord Haw Haw', and in the summer of 1940 a revue called 'Haw Haw, a new laughter show' had a successful run at the Holborn Empire. According to an American observer then resident in London, boredom caused by the non-events of the first winter of the war may have accounted for the large English audience 'Lord Haw Haw' had in the beginning, when the British were amused by his arrogant and grating voice and unrealistic manner. Interest in his broadcasts waned after the 'miracle of Dunkirk', although he included short lists of names of British prisoners of war. He had by this point become, to women in particular, an object of odium rather than of curiosity, and in the new temper of the country he stiffened rather than diluted the British fighting spirit.53 Eventually Haw Haw himself realized that he had lost his hold on most of his audience in Great Britain, as he had by then discovered that Goebbels had been making him utter the most inane nonsense.54
At about the same time a German station beamed at Britain operated in a similar manner from Hamburg, while another, calling itself 'La Voix de la Paix' and broadcasting in French, purported to be run by Frenchmen from French territory. It spread its messages of alarm and defeatism during the 'phoney war', and also during Hitler's *Blitzkrieg* in the west.55 Its counterpart destined for Great Britain was called the 'New British Broadcasting Station'—a brainchild of Dr Goebbels. The 'NBBS' used as its signature tune 'The bonny, bonny banks of Loch Lomond' and it ended its transmissions with the national anthem. These broadcasts postulated the existence of a widespread Fifth Column in Great Britain—in fact just such a picture of the country as Hitler, in the summer of 1940, would have liked her to be. Disunity, demoralization, hatred of its leaders and a passionate yearning for peace were the main characteristics of this cloud-cuckoo land.

The transmissions of the 'NBBS' were closely linked with Operation Sea Lion. There were now vague threats about the coming invasion, including the suggestion that the attack would be utterly inhuman, that new weapons would be used, and that the civilian population should take to the road and make for north Wales and northwest Scotland. In addition, the transmissions preached class hatred and invited the average Briton to use physical force against the ruling class.56

An adaptation of the well-known hymn, 'Onward, Christian soldiers' was so full of anti-Semitic phrases put together by the Nazis that one must assume that they hoped to sow some mischief in Great Britain even if they failed to kindle any anti-Semitic feelings there:

[64] Onward, British soldiers, onward without
fear:
Samuel Horeb Elisha57 leads you—from the rear.
Clad by Monty Burton, fed on Lyon's pies.
Fight for Yiddish conquest, while the Briton dies.

There were several other 'black' German stations: 'Workers' Challenge', which was anti-capitalist and used coarse terms of abuse, 'Caledonia', with 'Auld Lang Syne' as its signature tune, suggesting—with an imperfect Scottish accent—a separate peace treaty for Scotland, and the 'Christian Peace Movement', preaching against any help for the war effort. The response to all these stations was poor.58

In Berlin itself two British Nazi sympathizers had joined 'Lord Haw Haw' after the war had begun. These were Jack Trevor, an actor, and Baillie Stewart, a former British officer. There were also three Americans, none of whom seemed to have much of an audience in this country.59 The Ministry of Propaganda employed local residents from various European countries for their foreign-language broadcasts; they even used Arabs and Hindus in their propaganda efforts. Once in a while one of these speakers turned out to be unreliable. Such a one was the Yugoslav speaker who began his broadcast (in [65] the autumn of 1940) as follows: 'Ladies and gentlemen, what you are about to hear from Berlin is a lot of nonsense, a pack of lies, and if you have any sense you will switch stations.' Not surprisingly, he got no further, for there were always 'checkers' listening at the Propaganda Ministry. The last seen of this man was when SS guards carried him off to jail.60

During the last few weeks of the war Dr Goebbels operated *Radio Werwolf,* an entirely spurious undertaking, not backed by any irregular Nazi military force in existence, as it purported to be; it probably hastened the collapse of the régime.61

In Munich, the Nazis transmitted—in Italian—broadcasts on the so-called 'Fascist Republican Radio' after the fall of Mussolini. Its messages, however, were soon made ineffective by a British transmitter with a neighbouring short-wave frequency.62

As a curious appendix to this section on broadcasting, mention should be

made of the emergence in 1942 of the Danish singer Lale Andersen at the Army station of Belgrade in German-occupied Yugoslavia. It was for the so-called *Belgrader Wachtposten* ('Belgrade Sentinel')63 that she produced her sentimental 'Lili Marleen' song, which was adopted by the British in the desert war and also by the Americans after their landing in Italy. This song, with its catchy tune and nostalgic first line:
[66] 'Vor der Kaserne, vor dem grossen Tor, steht eine Laterne'
('Underneath the lamp-post, by the barrack gate')
became so popular on both sides that when—after Tobruk was retaken—a gramophone record of it fell into British hands, it resulted in a massive production of half a million records by 1944. After the war, views about the 'Lili Marleen' phenomenon varied significantly. John Steinbeck, the American [67] writer, felt that 'it would be rather amusing if 'Lili Marleen' remained as the only contribution the Nazis gave to the world, after all the hubbub, heil shouting, marching and indoctrination', while Professor Carlton Jackson thought that 'Lili' made soldiers on both sides realize how like each other they really were.64 In the postwar period German opinions likewise differed—some saw in the song a reflection of the soldiers' longing for home and peace, some thought of it as providing consolation, while others felt that a song like 'Lili Marleen' could only be written in the environment of war with its pronounced despair. One modern view is that the song, although it is essentially harmless, nevertheless deserved criticism because it sentimentalized death.65 On the other hand, all the emotions portrayed in the song—sentimentality, longing and war-weariness—found a ready outlet in parody of a special kind generated by the all-male environment of soldiers at war. On the German side different (and mostly coarse) versions were produced in the various theatres of war,66 with one exception, this political version. In the original it runs as follows:
[68] Unter der Laterne,
Vor der Reichskanzlei,
Da hängt unser Führer
Und der Robert Ley.
Und alle, die vorübergeh'n
Woll'n auch die andern hängen seh'n
(Under the lamp-post,
By the Chancellery,
There hangs our Führer,
And also Robert Ley.
And everyone who passes by
Would love to see them hanging high,
The others, of the Party.)
This version of the 'Lili Marleen' song shows yet again the fighting men's concurrence with the widespread hostility to the régime felt by Germans at home.

**THE WAR AND THE GERMAN PEOPLE**
The lack of enthusiasm apparent in the German people when war was declared on 3 September 1939 did not pass unnoticed, either by foreign tourists (as mentioned above), or by Nazi watchdogs from the departments of Himmler and Goebbels. Despite the bellicose utterances of the Nazi leaders, like Goebbels (with his neologism 'home front') and of countless 'little Hitlers', the reluctance of the German people to get involved in yet another major war was quite understandable. It was, after all, only two decades since the end of the First World War with its disastrous results for Germany. Accordingly, despite initial victories, a new generation of anti-Nazi jokes began to emerge:
[69] Q. 'Will Germany lose the war?'
A. 'Of course not—now we've got it we're bound to keep it!'
Three years earlier, during the Spanish Civil War, a new weapon had made its appearance behind the line of battle—the Fifth Column.67 In England a patriotic movement was created in June 1940 by Duff Cooper, Minister of Information. The movement consisted of a corps of honorary vigilantes who were officially known as 'the silent column' and popularly termed 'Cooper's snoopers'. Their purpose was to foil the activities of any Fifth Columnists in the face of the threatened invasion.68
In Nazi Germany the situation was rather different. It seems very doubtful whether any German agent then operating in Great Britain could have been effective in setting up a Fifth Column there, if the following statement by one of Goebbels' lieutenants is to be taken seriously:
[70] Dr Goebbels saw one report from an agent in London, transmitted in September 1940. It disclosed that the state of emergency in the capital was such that titled ladies had to relieve themselves in Hyde Park.
Ciano, on the other hand, seemed to have had considerable trust in the efficiency of German Fifth Columnists in Great Britain. He writes:
[71] We Italians have not a single informant in Great Britain...the Germans have many. In London alone one German agent transmits his messages up to twenty-nine times a day.
While in the Nazi police state, and especially so after Hitler's victorious *Blitzkriege* in Poland, Norway and France, no effective enemy action by Fifth Columnists offered much prospect, there was some smouldering disaffection present even before the war. Though it eventually culminated late, on 20 July 1944, in Count von Stauffenberg's failed attempt at Hitler's assassination, this was by no means the first of such attacks. There was an attempt on Hitler's life during an anniversary rally on 8 November 1939, at the Bürgerbraükeller in Munich. The German people were told by Dr Goebbels that the Führer's miraculous escape from the bomb which exploded only minutes after he had left was due to intervention by Divine Providence. Nevertheless, many remained

54 Night alarm

sceptical. A few days after the explosion it was rumoured that a written note had been found near the place in the beer cellar where Hitler had stood. It bore [72] the inscription, 'To him who sadly departed too early!'

*The making of the still greater Germany*

Hitler's notorious disregard for the neutrality of Germany's neighbours and his conquests of several of them by a mixture of force and trickery was reflected in several jokes current at the time:

[73] Q. 'What is the difference between Hitler and Chamberlain?'

A. 'Chamberlain takes his weekends in the country, while Hitler takes countries over the weekend.'

It was clearly more than a coincidence that Hitler found it easiest to attack a country over a weekend, when nobody expected such a move. Hence, no doubt, the following tribute to Hitler's methods: on Hitler's fiftieth birthday the NS [74] Motorcycle Corps (NSKK) presented him with a large set of movable frontier posts.

There was also a story of three Swiss who in August 1939 discussed their plans for a holiday in Germany:

[75] One of the Swiss planned to visit Munich, another Berlin, whereupon the third man said, 'I'll go to Warsaw.' When his two compatriots pointed out to him that Warsaw wasn't in Germany, he replied, 'But I don't take my holiday till October!'

*Early rationing measures*

There can be little doubt in retrospect that soon after the Nazi takeover both the production and the distribution of food in Germany was planned with an eye to its importance in a war in the not-too-distant future. The well-known slogan, 'guns, not butter',69 had given the German people a foretaste of what to expect about food supplies in general in the event of war. The *Reichsnährstand* ('Reich Food Authority'), headed by Darré, the Minister of Agriculture, had been set up principally for this very reason. In spite of its shortcomings (already mentioned in Chapter 6) the supply of foodstuffs was on the whole under closer Government control when war broke out in 1939 than had been the case in Germany during the First World War. This was all the more remarkable because the country's population had by now increased to about eighty million, since even before the war the people of the Saar territory, the Austrians, the Sudeten Germans and those from Memelland, ceded by Lithuania, had become incorporated into the Reich.

Long before the war the shortage of butter had become one of the prime [76] targets of anti-Nazi jokes; it was often referred to as *Brotaufstrich der Systemzeit* ('Weimar spread'), while margarine received the honorific name, [77] 'Hitler-Butter'. People also had long memories:

[78] The Führer always keeps his promises. He promised us that we'd always have enough bread to eat, but he didn't mention butter.

As mentioned earlier, *Eintopf* ('One-pot-stew') Sundays were introduced before the war. These meals were compulsory for restaurants too. Their price was the same as that of a three-course meal, the difference going (so it was maintained) to the *Winterhilfswerk*. Restaurateurs even received guidelines as [79] to what to do with left-overs: 'Left-overs which would induce nausea in a normal person are unfit for use, but no account need be taken of the requirements of gourmets.'

Inevitably, neo-Germans—like the Austrians with their reputation as gourmets—produced quips about food restrictions. One example must serve:

[80] 'The stomach has a new name: "der grossdeutsche Raum"' ('Greater Germany's empty space').

*The oratory of Dr Goebbels*

The task of making unpleasant measures acceptable to the German population fell primarily to the Ministry of Propaganda. There the *vox populi* had ample opportunities to detect *doubles entendres* said to have occurred in the numerous speeches made by Dr Goebbels:

[81] Treacherous elements here maintain that the German workers always come last—but German labourers, just you wait until the Führer begins his war—then you'll all be in front!
With the outbreak of the war it was Dr Goebbels who was responsible for vilifying the enemy in the Nazi press and in his speeches. Churchill was his favourite target; and Goebbels dubbed him *Lügenlord* ('lying lord') and frequently referred to Churchill's initials—W.C.—as the letters painted on the doors of every German public lavatory.
Goebbels may also be considered as the originator of the term *Heimatfront* (home front). In February 1943, after the catastrophic defeat at Stalingrad, he asked his audience, 'Wollt Ihr den totalen Krieg?' ('Do you want total war?'). Eighteen months later, in July 1944, he started another 'home front campaign' and asked the German people for 'still more total war'.70 This received a predictable response:
[82] Goebbels now asks us to work for sixteen hours a day; but, should he increase his demand to twenty, twenty-four, or even twenty-eight hours a day, we will all surely respond with a thunderous 'Yes, we will!'
The lies, exaggerations and absurdities with which so many of Goebbels' speeches were peppered as the war went on were reflected in the following sarcastic comment:
[83] Today we read in *Der Angriff* (the paper of the Gauleiter of Berlin and Reichsminister, Dr Goebbels): 'England has been warned that if she does not stop her piratical air raids on defenceless German cities by 30 September 1943, Dr Goebbels will make an "annihilating reprisal speech" *(eine vernichtende Vergeltungsrede)*.'
Goebbels' martial terminology extended to the 'home front' and inspired such [84] parodies as 'The *NS Frauenschaft* ("NS Women's League") is now to be known as *Krampfaderngeschwader* ("varicose veins squadron").' And the term *Jüdische U-Boote* ('Jewish submarines') was used for Jews who had remained in Germany after the war had broken out and who had gone into hiding.
As early as 1940 serious shortages of raw materials, especially metals, necessitated a special appeal by Göring, as Minister of Economy. The 'Home Front' was asked to contribute to this *Metallspende* ('metal donation') as a present for the forthcoming birthday of the Führer on 20th April. It was said that nobody minded responding voluntarily to this appeal, and that 'children were given the honour of parting with their lead soldiers'.
Wool was another item which became very scarce. The shortage was already [85] noticeable in the mid-1930s, and became acute when the war broke out. By [86] 1943 the manufacture of civilian clothing had ceased completely; the demand for more and more uniforms took precedence. Substitutes for wool, usually derived from wood, had become the rule, and this was reflected in various jokes:
[87] Weiss-Ferdl appears on stage in his cabaret, completely naked, and carrying a large

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Goering's oath

55 Göring's oath

piece of wood under his arm. Ladies in the audience are just getting up and making ready to leave when he says, consolingly, 'What are you so upset about? In wartime everybody ought to be allowed to wear his suit in the shape he likes best.'

[88] It was also said that after a man had ordered a suit he was charged in court with 'wilful destruction of timber reserves'.

Shortages of food, and especially of meat, are reflected in a joke dating from 1943:

[89] In the pet shop.

Customer: 'What kinds of dogs have you got for sale?'

Salesman: 'Pekinese, dwarf poodles, Yorkshire terriers...'

Customer: 'Stop, stop—haven't you got a dog big enough for a family of five?'

The need to secure additional food supplies 'by other means' was unceasing, though perhaps it was most pronounced in Austria. This contemporary quip came from Vienna:

[90] It is really a good thing that we've got ration cards, because what one manages to 'arrange' otherwise wouldn't be enough to exist on.

[91] And in the *Altreich*71 a wit divided people into two categories: *Unterernährte* and *unter-der-Hand Ernährte* ('undernourished' and 'under-the-counter nourished').

[92] Food supplies were often less adequate in the cities, and especially so in the capital, which was increasingly subjected to heavy air raids. After a particularly heavy bombing raid each Berlin household received a small amount of coffee beans. The Berliners soon referred to this allowance as *Zittermokka* ('coffee to stop you shaking'). Altogether, the air raids were responsible for a large number of jokes:
[93] In any scene in the *Luftschutzkeller* ('air-raid shelter', in the majority of cases simply one's own cellar),72 there were said to be three types of people:
1 those who say, 'Good evening'—they haven't been to bed yet;
2 those who say, 'Good morning'—they have had a good sleep;
3 those who say, 'Heil Hitler!'—they aren't awake yet.
When the air raids began to increase and to occur regularly, by day as well as at night, people said:
[94] It is no longer permitted to look up into the sky.
Why?
It has become American airspace.
[95] After the 'all clear' they rejoiced, 'We have regained our air supremacy.'
Official reports minimized damage to buildings, a fact which gave rise to the following story:
[96] After a heavy air raid a whole block of houses had collapsed, though one wall had remained relatively undamaged, and with it a bird cage with a live parrot in it. The poor bird had lost most of its plumage and looked only just alive, yet it piped up loudly, 'Only negligible structural damage!' ('Nur geringer Sachschaden').
The following conversation allegedly took place in 1943, in Cologne:
[97] Tünnes meets his friend Schäl, whose head is all bandaged up.
Tünnes: 'What happened to you?'
Schäl: 'I got hurt after an air raid.'
Tünnes: 'What? How's that possible? Only your head is injured!'
Schäl: 'Well, it *was* actually *after* an air raid! I met Köbes73 yesterday after the "all clear" and said "Heil Hitler!"'...
To sum up the effects of the air raids on the civilian population the following adaptation of a poem by Goethe74 reflects the helplessness of millions of these latter-day troglodytes:
[98] Who never ate his rationed bread
Nor suffered nights with raging flak
While freezing in his cellar bed—
He knows you not, you Axis-pack!
(Wer nie sein Brot auf Marken ass,
Wer nie die flakdurchtobten Nächte

Im kalten Keller frierend sass,
Der kennt Euch nicht, ihr Achsenmächte!)
The mania for uniforms which afflicted Nazi Germany led to the following allegedly true occurrence:
[99] A British flying officer had to bail out on a day raid over Cologne. It happened to be a Sunday afternoon, so after getting rid of his flying kit, he walked into the city in order to give himself up. He expected that some soldiers and police he encountered would arrest him, but they just clicked their heels and saluted him.
Like all British pilots flying over Germany, he had some German money on him. Accordingly he went to a cinema and asked for a two-mark seat, paying with a ten-mark note, but was given nine marks back and was told by the cashier that as a soldier he need only pay half price.
After the film show had ended he walked the streets of Cologne until he found a police station where he could give himself up. When he told the station sergeant how difficult it had been for him to be recognized as a British pilot, they summoned the cinema cashier, who remembered him and said, 'I sold him a ticket, and as he was in uniform I told him that he'd get his ticket for half the usual price.' Then, proudly, pointing at the initials 'RAF' on the pilot's uniform jacket, the woman added, 'It isn't everyday that I can welcome the *Reichsarbeitsführer* ("Reich Labour Leader"), but then I know what "RAF" stands for!'
As the 'home front' continued to have to suffer air raids throughout the war and indeed right to the very end of it, this parody of Christmas celebrations in Germany in 1943 may conclude this section:
[100] At Christmas the British supplied the 'Christmas trees', the flak the 'balls'. Everybody sat in the cellar, listened to the fairy-tales told by Dr Goebbels, and waited for the 'presents'.75

**MILITARY DECLINE**

*Waging war by unconventional means*

As far back as the summer of 1940 the magnitude of the war he had begun a year before was not comprehended by Hitler. This became obvious during the planning of the proposed invasion of England, 'Operation Sea Lion'. Hitler and his High Command discussed various novel devices in this context, such as enormous submersible tanks, made of ferroconcrete, ninety or more feet long, with the capacity to transport no fewer than two hundred men with their arms and equipment. The inventor of these 'war tortoises' (or 'war crocodiles') was one Gottfried Feder,76 one of Hitler's earliest followers. He was an engineer by training, though by this time he was employed in the Ministry of Economics, perhaps because for years he had promoted some rather absurd theories in that field.77
Even more fanciful than Feder's mechanical monsters, and coming to the fore about the same time, were the announcements of the 'New British

Broadcasting Station′ (see the previous section, The War and the German people). According to this ‘black station′, during the forthcoming German invasion of England airborne troops dropped over the country would be provided with ‘fog pills′ which would conceal them in a small cloud.78
Equally fantastic was the rumour that the German glider-borne troops who had landed on the roof of Ebn Emael (near Liège), the fortress captured during the French campaign, had achieved their objective by using an ‘electromagnetic ray′.79 However, it took three more years before these imaginary though widely rumoured ‘new weapons′ were replaced by others; this time real ones.
*Miracle weapons*
Intended as the German answer to the devastating Allied air raids against German cities, these new devices were referred to (in Nazi-inspired rumours) as *Wunderwaffen* (‘miracle weapons′) and hailed by Dr Goebbels as *Vergeltungswaffen* (‘reprisal weapons′).
The first of the *V-Waffen,*80 the V1, was a jet-propelled aircraft without a pilot. It was developed at Peenemünde, on the Baltic coast. In England it became known as the ‘doodle-bug′, from which term the German *Dödel* derived.81 The second such weapon, the V2, was a rocket.82 These two were, in fact, the only ‘miracle weapons′ which ever became operative—and late in the war at that, in 1944. Their effect was chiefly psychological, but it did not fulfil Nazi expectations, largely because their launching sites had been detected by reconnaissance aircraft and had gradually been eliminated. They infuriated British civilians rather than frightening them.
There can be little doubt that the unceasing propaganda of Dr Goebbels was itself enough to provide the stimulus for the creation of the various satirical stories which soon abounded, both about *Vergeltung* and *Wunderwaffen*. Not surprisingly, the *vox populi* concentrated on Goebbels, the originator of all the *Vergeltung* propaganda, as in a fictitious ‘press notice′, according to which Goebbels′ very own ‘reprisal weapon′ was to be a speech (see the previous section, The war and the German people). And one alleged comment after such [101] a speech is worth noting: ‘Goebbels is always talking about *Vergeltung;* I thought we were going to *win* the war!′ The following was a conversation at about the same time:
[102] ‘I′ve just heard that there has been a burglary at the Obersalzberg.′83
‘Really! Do you know what was stolen?′
‘Yes; the *Vergeltung*!′
In 1944 this story reflected the general distrust of the German people as regards *Vergeltung:*
[103] The effects of *Vergeltung* will be awful. Anyone who is affected by it will straight away fall asleep and not wake up for the next six months. Naturally the inventor of *Vergeltung* had to test this invention on himself first of all, and this is the reason why we′ll have to wait for *Vergeltung* until he wakes up again in six months′ time.

As for *V-Waffen,* the credibility of the German people had worn thin after five years of war, deprivation and empty promises by the Nazi government. Hence the deflating humour, itself a kind of antidote, which became detectable in references to these ever-new V-weapons. Such satirical comments reveal the desperate situation which reigned in the country:
[104] Q. 'What does V1 stand for?'
A. 'Either *Volksverdummungsmittel No. 1* ('people's stupifier No. 1') or '*Versager No. 1* ("dud No. 1") or *Verzweiflungsmittel No. 1* ("desperate measure No. 1").'
[105] Q. 'What does V2 stand for?'
A. 'It is a two-man submarine with a rubber hull one and a half yards thick.'
Q. 'Is the rubber hull to be a protection against radar detection?'
A. 'Oh no; the submarine will continually circle the British Isles and rub them out.'
[106] 1st speaker: 'Have you heard that V4 is under construction?'
2nd speaker: 'Oh no; what is it like?'
1st speaker: 'It is a mammoth tank with a crew of a hundred men.'
2nd speaker: 'Really! Why so many?'
1st speaker: 'Four men inside and ninety-six outside to push it along!'
[107] Q. 'Are there any more *V-Waffen* to be developed?'
A. 'Oh yes—V5. Whenever V5 hits its target everything within a distance of half a mile is destroyed. The moment V5 detonates two smaller bombs are released, which first destroy everything within a distance of 400 yards, but then continue their flight and return to base with five hundred prisoners.'
[108] 1st speaker: 'I've just heard that we'll have V15 before long.'
2nd speaker: 'What does that one look like?'
1st speaker: 'It is just a huge white sheet, to be waved vigorously at the Allies' approach.'
This concluding joke about V-weapons is attributed to the two old faithfuls from Cologne, Tünnes and Schäl:
[109] Schäl: 'Why aren't you in uniform like everybody else?'
Tünnes: 'I am *u.k.*84—I'm doing the most hush-hush work in the whole armaments industry; you must not tell a soul about it. Just imagine: oak stems, 2 ft thick, hollowed out, and then filled with dynamite—can you imagine that bang?'
Schäl: 'Oh well—but what is your job?'
Tünnes: 'I must plant these oak saplings, though in utter secrecy!'
*Conscription of young and old*
In the autumn of 1944 it was rumoured that a general levy might be decreed in the near future, for women had been called up to build the so-called *Ostwall* in West and East Prussia, and even children were being employed in digging ditches behind the eastern front line. The latter project became known as the 'Children's Crusade'85 and people quipped:

[110] These ditches will hold up the enemy by one hour and two minutes: one hour to get over the laughing fits the Russian soldiers will have when they first notice them, and two minutes to get across.
A factual comment by an observer in East Prussia highlights the situation:
[111] We've just learned that the Russians are already approaching the Deime-Line. How grand that sounds!86 I'm asking myself whether they'll even regard it as a defence once they've reached that small valley. Last autumn the *Ostwall* was built there; just ditches, meant to be used as *Igelstellungen*.87 Now they are probably occupied by *Volkssturm*—men with leg prostheses, armed with shotguns.
On 14 October 1944 rumours that there would be a general conscription in the near future were substantiated when Bormann, for some time now the Führer's closest confidant, publicly announced: 'Old men, boys from the age of [112] fourteen, and any German whose legs still carry him, will soon be required for this service.' In the same spirit Dr Conti, the chief Nazi doctor, instructed his lieutenant in Vorpommern to address all doctors of the area, now summoned [113] for service in the *Volkssturm*. Conti pronounced: 'Even invalids in their wheelchairs [thus going one better than Bormann] must claw themselves into the native earth of Pomerania and defend it against the Soviet hordes.'
Hitler may well have borrowed the term *Volkssturm* from a poem written in 1813 during the wars of liberation against Napoleon.88 While the Führer had often expressed his admiration for Napoleon,89 he had recently experienced a very similar fate during his Russian campaign. Indeed, among the German soldiers of the eastern front the massive retreat of the German armies was aptly described as 'The Emperor Napoleon Memorial Race' *(Kaiser Napoleon* [114] *Gedächtnis Rennen).*
Hitler combined the general call-up of the *Volkssturm* with his New Year speech on 1 January 1945. This was transmitted over the *Grossdeutsche Rundfunk* and parts of it catch the pervasive spirit of non-reality which characterised him at this time:
[115] Like the phoenix out of the ashes, German willpower has recreated itself out of, and in spite of, the ruins of our cities. Millions of Germans have gripped spades and shovels. Thousands of *Volkssturm* batallions have been formed or are in the process of being formed. More and more divisions have come into being; ever more *Volksartilleriekorps,* flame-thrower and motorised storm-gun brigades and new tank units are being conjured up, and fighter squadrons (equipped with new engines) re-emerge. The hour will come when victory will finally incline toward that side which deserves it most—greater Germany.
One month later, on 30 January 1945, Hitler declared: 'Ich aber prophezeie [116] den totalen Sieg!' ('But I myself prophesy total victory!'). The majority of Germans failed to be impressed by empty phrases and promises of this kind. Bitter sarcasm was the norm for the numerous stories now circulating about the *Volkssturm:*

[117] An army doctor examines recently-recruited *Volkssturm* men. He first sees Müller, who is about to take off his leg prosthesis and then to remove his artificial eye, when the doctor tells him that he'll be excused service in the *Volkssturm*. Müller puts back the glass eye and leg prosthesis, limps to the door, turns and salutes with 'Heil Hitler!'. The doctor comments, 'Good gracious, he's crazy as well!'
[118] Since the *Volkssturm* consisted entirely of undernourished, poorly trained, and inadequately armed old men and young boys, people jocularly called it the *Volkswind*. The following little ditty—a parody of an old nursery rhyme90—recalled the earlier promises of *Vergeltung* (reprisals):

| | |
|---|---|
| [119] May-bug, take flight, | (Maikäfer, flieg! |
| Father's gone to fight; | Vater ist im Krieg, |
| Grand-dad too's in uniform— | Opa zieh'n sie auch noch ein, |
| Is that the reprisal-storm? | Soll das die Vergeltung sein?) |

The age distribution throughout the *Volkssturm* continued to be the main target for satirists:
[120] All prams are to be confiscated by the government.
Why?
Vintage 1943 will need them, to be transported to the front.
[121] It is the first *Volkssturm* assembly at some unspecified location. The officer in charge has been delayed but has notified his unit that he will come one hour later. When he appears, only a third of the company is present. The second third has gone to the post office to collect invalidity pensions and the other third has had to attend confirmation classes.
At Heidelberg air-raid wardens report for the roll-call of the *Volkssturm* company, a scenario repeated all over Germany:
[122] No one in the company shows any enthusiasm at all, and all are hoping for the next air-raid alarm to come, so that they can go back into the shelter. One of the men in the back row whispers to his neighbour, 'So you too have joined this Hitler Youth *Spätlese*!'91
A bogus announcement about the *Volkssturm* ran as follows:
[123] Men serving in the *Volkssturm* who are over fifty years old may be released if they can prove that their fathers are already serving in the *Volkssturm*.
And there was this contemporary riddle:
[124] Q. 'Who has gold in his mouth, silver in his hair, and lead in his limbs?
A. 'A *Volkssturmmann*.'
[125] Then there was the story that the Almighty has just sent von Hindenburg down to earth to put things right in Germany. When the old President meets an old friend he is told, 'Get back to where you came from, Paul, and as quickly as possible. They're just about to call up the 1847 vintage!'
A macabre joke typical of the reaction of most German civilians to the

general levy may aptly conclude this section:
[126] In a cemetery two men with spades are approached by a visitor who asks, 'Are you about to get reserves for the *Volkssturm*?'

**MILITARY AND CIVIL COLLAPSE**

*Generalissimo Hitler*

Hitler's unconstitutional promotion of himself to Supremo of the German Armed Forces immediately following the death of President von Hindenburg in 1934 had fatal results for Germany. From the beginning of the war he constantly interfered, not only in military planning and occasionally in specific tactical decisions, but more disastrously in overall strategy. This tendency gathered momentum after some of his hunches had paid off during the French campaign. Looking for a scapegoat for the reversal of German success during the first winter in Russia, he dismissed General von Brauchitsch, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, in December 1941 and took over command himself.

A little over a year later the disaster of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad (see The Führer's *Volksheer* in this chapter) was marked by Hitler's complete disregard of any professional military advice, when he demanded of the commanding officer, General Paulus, that the men should fight to the end, exactly as he had ordered Rommel to do in North Africa. After the capitulation of the Sixth Army on 31 January 1943, Paulus, like Rommel promoted Field Marshal *ad hoc* by Hitler, was taken prisoner, as were all those who remained of his battered army. Paulus and his senior officers had for some time been disaffected with the régime and in particular with Hitler. In September 1943 General von Seydlitz founded the *Bund deutscher Offiziere,* later to join with the formerly Communist *Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland,* which had its own radio transmitter and newspaper, based in Moscow. So many generals of the old Sixth Army contributed to its columns that the German prisoners nicknamed it the *Generals-Anzeiger*.92

*The aftermath of the failed attempt on Hitler's life*

The failure of Count von Stauffenberg's attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944 contributed to the disintegration of the Army, chiefly because the influence of the SS became ever more marked after Himmler was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Reserve Army. General von Treskow, Chief-of-Staff of the *Heeresgruppe Mitte* (central army sector of the eastern front), had originally inspired von Stauffenberg's action; he now took his own life at the front line, having written in his testament:
[127] Now all the world will attack and insult us, yet I remain as convinced as ever that we have done the right thing. I regard Hitler not only as the arch enemy of Germany but

of the whole world. As God once promised Abraham that he would not destroy Sodom if He could find even ten just men inside that town, so I hope that for our sake God will not let Germany perish.
The General's fears were justified, in so far as the 'men of the 20th of July' have often been called traitors. Originally this was no doubt due to the Party's *Flüsterpropaganda*93 as well as to public utterances like Ley's article in Dr Goebbels' paper, *Der Angriff* ('The Attack'):
[128] Degenerate to their very bones, blue-blooded to the point of idiocy, nauseatingly corrupt, and cowardly like all nasty creatures—such is the aristocratic clique which the Jew has inflicted on National Socialism...we must exterminate this filth...root and branch...the entire breed.
*No time for joking*
[129] 'Es gibt keine Zeit mehr für Witze' was the *dictum* of a leading politician and former German diplomat, summing up the military situation of Germany on 10 July 1944. He foresaw a catastrophe on land, in the air and in submarine warfare; he also expressed doubts about the efficacy of the V-weapons.94 By then the Allied invasion was in full swing and Germany's military dissolution was proceeding apace on all fronts, with German troops on the defensive, captured or in retreat.
It was at this juncture that Hitler cast the blame for all these troubles on the people at large:
[130] If the German people succumb in this fight, they will have proved themselves to be weaklings, and they will have failed the test of history. ('Falls das deutsche Volk in diesem Kampf unterliegt, hat es sich als zu schwach erwiesen und die Prüfung vor der Geschichte nicht bestanden.')
In March 1945 Hitler, prompted by Goebbels, briefly contemplated officially revoking Germany's participation in the Geneva convention. This would have had the result that German soldiers could not have become conventional prisoners of war and would have had to fight to the death. Fortunately neither this plan, nor Hitler's 'scorched earth' decree (dated 19 March 1945) ever materialized. Both plans demonstrate Hitler's utter contempt for the fate of millions of German soldiers and civilians.95
*Fight for survival*
The German people living in the eastern provinces experienced civil breakdown before their compatriots in the west. Yet many of them showed right to the end an almost childlike trust in the Nazi creed and above all in the exalted person of the Führer. A few contemporary cases reflect this hardly credible fact:
[131] A painter from Königsberg had made his way to Pomerania, several hundred miles to

the west, fully aware that his city, the capital of East Prussia, was under Russian artillery fire. Yet he was not in the least worried and saw no reason to move his family to safety.
The naiveté of this man has its counterpart in the following story, also a true one, which echoes Hitler's mercy-killing programme of 1939–40. An East Prussian surgeon related this personal experience of the last days of January 1945 in Königsberg:
[132] A recently arrived woman refugee from the eastern part of the province was more interested in getting some non-essential treatment than in trying to escape to the west. 'We are all supposed to go to the *Reich* [i.e. the west],' she explained, 'but in my kind of case the Führer will not let us fall into Russian hands—he'd rather gas us.'
To some Nazi officials such flight to the west was sheer defeatism. Thus, the previously mentioned Nazi doctor in Pomerania threatened the present author with court martial and probable execution if he relinquished his place of work and tried to escape with his family to the west.96
The opposite attitude was taken by the two *Gauleiter* of the eastern provinces Warthegau and East Prussia. The former found comfortable refuge at Karlsbad (Karoly Vary) in Bohemia97 and the latter succeeded in making his way to Flensburg, near the Danish border, where after Hitler's suicide Admiral Dönitz established his short-lived government. Here the *Gauleiter* tried unsuccessfully to requisition a submarine to take him to South America.98 By this time there was no *Volkssturm* left in East Prussia (although the *Gauleiter* had vowed to stay at his post to the end); moreover, Hitler had dismissed the General commanding the Fourth Army and thus frustrated its ordered retreat to the west. He had done the same a little earlier for the German army in Courland. This policy dashed the hopes of hundreds of thousands of civilian fugitives. Some faced a gruesome flight99 over the frozen *Frische Haff;*100 many perished on the way and the remainder stayed behind.
Despite being callously abandoned in this way, these German civilians from East Prussia probably contributed very little to the spate of anti-Nazi satire which now ensued. Insensitive, panicky and frequently downright ridiculous decrees issued by the régime during the last phase of the war and affecting the civilian population in every respect provoked much gallows humour. Thus, the Führer's 'omnipotence' was ridiculed:
[133] *Decree:* Because of the high losses we have sustained in our struggle against the subhuman Bolsheviks I have decided, as a countermeasure, that with immediate effect the duration of all pregnancies in the *Grossdeutsche Reich* will be reduced from nine to six months.
After American troops had crossed the Rhine, and large parts of Greater Germany had already fallen into the hands of the enemy, people aptly [134] remarked, 'Mother Germania is in labour—she is expecting little Germany'

*(Klein-Deutschland)*. The increasingly severe shortages of food during the last phase of the war were the subject of many satirical comments:
[135] 'Every tummy rumbles for victory—anyone who eats helps the enemy'
('Alle Mägen knurren für den Sieg-wer isst, hilft dem Feind').
And Germany's second national anthem, the 'Horst-Wessl-Lied', now had to be changed:
[136] Die Preise hoch, Geschäfte fest
geschlossen,
Die Not marschiert in ruhig, müdem Schritt.
Kam'raden Hitler, Göring und Genossen
Hungern (im Geist) in unsern Reihen mit.
This, freely translated, might read:
With climbing prices and shops firmly
shut,
Famine advances with tired, steady trot.
Comrades Hitler, Göring & co. 'starve',
but
In spirit only; *we're* the famished lot.
Again and again the Orwellian *dictum* that in the animal kingdom 'all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others' was demonstrated in the Third Reich—now more than ever before. This was certainly the case when it was announced that Victor Lutze, Chief-of-Staff of the SA since Röhm's murder in 1934, had died in a traffic accident. A pompous state funeral took place but people doubted whether this was justified when it was rumoured that he had died in a rather undignified manner: the car in which he was travelling on a foray to commandeer food illegally had a large cargo of fresh eggs on board.101
The black market was part of the wartime economy. Earlier in the war its goings on had been officially considered as a form of sabotage, but they now became accepted practice, as some popular catchphrases showed. 'He who has [137] one thing has everything', it was said, or 'Everybody swaps with everybody else'. Eventually the black market extended to many other items than simply food, although that remained its most important commodity. In the last winter of the war it was possible to obtain—at a price—the full range of documents which legitimised a person's existence in the Third Reich, namely passport, army pass, work book, ration card and *Volkssturm* card.102 During the spring of 1945 hammer-and-sickle emblems and badges with the Star of David were likewise being traded on the black market in the capital as portents of coming events.103
In the general atmosphere of despair, need and serious food shortages, defeatist attitudes became widespread. The man at the top of the Reich Food Authority, Minister Darré, was said to have been alarmed when he learned that egg production in many farms had dropped drastically:
[138] Darré, suspecting sabotage, now summons the 'Reich Hen Leader' *(Reichshennen-*

*führerin),* and gives her a severe reprimand. He tells her that the hens have got to lay eggs even when brooding. To this the *Reichshennenführerin* objects vehemently. 'In the Third Reich,' she clucks, *broodality* takes precedence over *laygality*!'104
By 1944 the scarcity of food was satirized in doggerel like the following:
[139] Life's getting harder,
No food in the larder,
No paper in the loo—
Führer, call us; we follow you!
(Nichts auf dem Boden, nichts mehr im
Keller,
Nichts auf dem Tisch, nichts auf dem Teller.
Auf dem Lokus gibt's kein Papier:
Führer, befiehl—wir folgen Dir!)
Inevitably Göring's obesity and Goebbels' lean frame once again became targets of contemporary witticism:
[140] Q. 'When will the war end?'
A. 'When Goebbels' trousers fit Göring.'
*Kriegsmüdigkeit* lit. 'war fatigue') was universal by 1944. It was responsible for bringing about a new generation of jokes. These were rather inadequate attempts to alleviate the general misery. All of them concentrated on one question only: 'When will the war end?' People now recalled Hitler's statement [141] in 1939 that he had been forced into war, and turned it upside down: 'If only we hadn't started this war which was forced upon us.'
In August 1944, in Hamburg, two friends converse about the Allied invasion of two months previously:
[142] Q. 'How are you? How are things?'
A. 'Far too slow...'
Views about the end of the war varied widely; there were both optimists and pessimists:
[143] Optimist: 'We are going to lose the war.'
Pessimist: 'Yes, but when?'
Optimist: 'We are going to win the war.'
Pessimist: 'Yes—but we shall have the same government.'
Others had fanciful or macabre notions about the duration of the war:
[144] Q. 'How long will this war go on?'
A. 'For another twelve years.'
Q. 'Why?'
A. 'Because by then Hitler will be sixty-five years old, will have reached retirement age, and then (hopefully) he will have to be pensioned off like everybody else.'
[145] Q. 'When will the war end?'
A. 'When Hitler is no longer victorious, Göring has stopped flying, and Goebbels

has stopped lying' ('Wenn Hitler nicht mehr siegt, Göring nicht mehr fliegt, und Goebbels nicht mehr lügt').
[146] Q. 'Will the war ever end?'
A. 'Yes, when the English resort to eating rats, and we to *Rattenersatz*.'105
[147] The war will most certainly be finished when Göring's widow attends the funeral of Franco and wonders why Hitler shot himself when he heard that Mussolini had been killed by partisans.
*Panic-stations at Hitler's headquarters*
In mid-February 1945 Hitler ordered Thierack, the Minister of Justice, to set up mobile court martials *(fliegende Standgerichte)* in parts of Germany 'threatened by the enemy'—which within weeks meant the whole of the country. Summary executions were to be carried out at or near the place where the courts had been held. Anyone now reported to have told any anti-Nazi joke ran a much greater risk than ever before. Nevertheless the *vox populi* did not let itself be muzzled, and was apparent in the following jokes originating in Berlin:
[148] 'Ick jlobe am deutschen Siech, solange ick noch forn Jroschen von de Westfront and de Ostfront106 fahrn kann!'
('I shall continue to believe in the German victory as long as I can travel for a tanner from the western to the eastern front!')
Or even more drastically:
[149] 'Eher det ick mir meine Riebe abhacken lasse, jlobe ick am Siech!'
('Rather than have my block knocked off I shall believe in victory!')
And shorter:
[150] 'Kopf hoch oder Kopf ab!'
('Hold your head high or lose it!')
In Cologne Schäl and Tünnes uttered similar sentiments:
[151] Schäl: 'Why have you painted a figure "1" on your forehead?'
Tünnes: 'I want to survive. Haven't you heard that every second person will be shot?'
[152] Schäl meets Tünnes who is cutting down all the trees and uprooting all the bushes in his garden.
Schäl: 'What on earth are you doing that for?'
Tünnes: 'Haven't you heard that "every bush and tree must be defended"?107 I thought I'd better get rid of mine now!'
[153] Tünnes has just returned from a spell in a *KZ*. Schäl wants to know why he had been imprisoned there:
Tünnes: 'I only said that we haven't got enough ammunition.'
Schäl: 'And are you convinced now that you were wrong?'
Tünnes: 'No, I'm quite sure that I was right; if they'd had enough ammunition they'd have had me shot instead of just taking me to the KZ.'

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56 The fatal scythe

Despite the terror which the régime unleashed during the last few weeks of its existence, people continued to the very end of the war—and occasionally of their own lives—to make critical comments about their oppressors:

[154] A Nazi *Blockleiter*108 makes an encouraging speech to the members of a household assembled in the cellar-cum-air-raid-shelter:

'Where would we be if we didn't have the Führer?'

A voice from the back of the cellar answers, 'In our beds.'

As exceptional situations require exceptional measures, Dr Goebbels felt it advisable to launch yet another drive to canvass Party membership early in 1945, or so it was rumoured. This was how it was to be done:

[155] Anyone who could bring along three new members could wear his Party badge underneath his lapel; anyone who could find five new members was allowed to resign from the Party; and anyone who could manage to recruit ten new members would receive an official document stating that he had never been a Party member.

[156] Two friends are talking about their holiday plans for after the war. One of them says, 'I shall cycle through Greater Germany,' to which his friend responds, 'And what are you going to do in the afternoon?'

[157] Eventually, when the greater part of the capital is in ruins, it is rumoured that Dr Goebbels, *Gauleiter* of Berlin, intends to hand over his post to Field Marshal Rommel. Why? 'Because,' comes the reply: 'Rommel is an expert in deserts.'

[158] Others think that Dr Goebbels ought to be canonised. Why? 'He will be known as the *Schuttpatron*109 ("St Rubble") of Berlin.'
The following felicitations and admonitions also originated in Berlin:
[159] 'Stay alive and look after my grave' and, as a premonition:
[160] 'Enjoy the war, because our peacetime will be worse!'
*Twilight of the troglodytes*
The sudden death of President Roosevelt in mid-April 1945 created a string of fantastic expectations among the men assembled in the *Führerbunker,* while Hitler himself was engaged in summoning to the relief of Berlin armies that no longer existed.110 Goebbels even suggested to Speer that he should use one of the long-range planes to fly and meet Truman, the new American president, but this plan of a 'diplomatic coup' was not seriously considered by the others.111 However, Ley had some ideas of his own. He had read, for instance, about some rather antiquated electrical circuit-breakers which he thought could be used as yet another new weapon—the 'Death Rays'. With his tongue firmly in his cheek, Speer thereupon suggested to Ley that he get himself appointed 'Commissioner for Death Rays.'112
In all seriousness, Ley now also advanced the following theory:
[161] When the Russians overrun us from the east, the torrent of German refugees113 will be so heavy that it will press upon the west like the great migrations114 did. It will break through, flood the west, and then take possession.
This statement, essentially crazy though to some degree true, had its counterpart in underground humour; the following comment was attributed to a Nazi *Blockleiter:*
[162] 'Don't worry; the Russians won't find it so easy to get over the Pyrenees!'
[163] However, people could not help wondering what new weapon Hitler might have up his sleeve. Surely it would be his very own invention, the *Volkssturm*. And if all failed, what would the Führer do?
[164] He will simply summon Zarah Leander115 to the *Führerbunker to c*heer him and his entourage with her famous song, 'Einmal wird ein grosses Wunder geschehen' ('Some day a great miracle will occur'). However, this imaginary scenario remained unfulfilled, as did all hopes in a reversal of the fortunes of war, even though the court astrologers, at great cost to that profession,116 had predicted that such a reversal would occur.

**NAZI WAR AIMS: REALITY, FANTASY AND SATIRE**

*The Nazi dream of world conquest as Hitler saw it*

A little over a week before he invaded Poland, Hitler had addressed the Commanders-in-Chief of his Army, Navy and *Luftwaffe* and had reassured them that he intended to maintain peace. Two years later—on 11 June 1941, a fortnight before he attacked Russia—he revealed his further plans *after* that campaign, 'Operation Barbarossa', had been successfully completed. His speech makes bemusing reading:

[165] After the annihilation of the Russian forces Germany, together with Italy, will be, at first without the Iberian peninsula, masters of the European continent. There will then be no possible threat by land to the European land mass. Afterwards the newly won territories in the east must be properly organized and made use of economically. Sixty divisions will remain as a garrison of the territory. Gibraltar will be eliminated as a power base, and the siege of England will be renewed by our Navy and the *Luftwaffe*. We'll lean on Spain, on Turkey, and on Iran, so that they will participate in the fight against England, a fight which will comprise a series of offensive actions against British positions in the Mediterranean and in the Near East. It is too early to determine when these operations will take place, but the best result would be achieved by a simultaneous attack on Gibraltar, Egypt and Palestine.

Surprisingly, part of Hitler's megalomania—the extent of the planned operations in the Mediterranean—even infected a man like Admiral Raeder. Early in 1942 he supported Hitler's interest in the capture of Malta, and the simultaneous renewal of Rommel's offensive against Egypt, Suez and beyond, to Iran, all as a prelude to the 'Great Plan'.117

After Japan's entry into the war in December 1941, the concept of the 'Great Plan' became an obsession with many Nazis. The basic aim became a vast encirclement of the British Empire in Asia. To this end predictions like 'before long we shall be able to reach India by land' were frequently made by Goebbels and his Ministry. Yet the Führer's hubris reached even further. Barely three months after his surprise attack on Russia he spoke of:

[166] The Cyclopean task which the building of an empire means for a single man...what India is for England, Russia will be for us. We must no longer allow Germans to emigrate to America. On the contrary, we must attract the Norwegians, the Swedes, the Danes and the Dutch into our eastern territories. They will become members of the German Reich...the German colonists will live on handsome, spacious farms... beyond that will be another world in which we mean to let the Russians live as they like. It is merely necessary that we rule them...we shall not settle in the Russian towns and we shall let them go to pieces...we are absolutely without any obligation to these people...for them the word 'liberty' means the right to wash on feast days ...there is only one duty: to Germanize this country by the immigration of Germans and to look upon the natives as Redskins...to exploit the Ukraine properly—that new Indian empire—we need only peace in the west...130 million people in the *Reich* and 90 million in the Ukraine.

However, even this flight of fancy was not the whole story. Hitler's dreams even acquired a touch of the 'Arabian Nights' with the appearance on the scene of such worthies as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, then the leader of the Palestinian Arabs, Rashid Ali from Iraq and Mossadegh from Iran, and finally, the former President of the Indian National Congress, Sabhas Chandra Bose. All of them were anti-British and to some degree Nazi sympathizers. The Mufti and Bose even visited Hitler in Germany during the war. When Bose recruited the 'Indian Legion' from his fellow Indians who had become POWs,118 Hitler did not seem to place great value on this addition to his own forces, for he remarked:
[167] The Indian legion is a joke. There are Indians who can't kill a louse, who'd rather let themselves be eaten up by them. They won't kill an Englishman either. I consider it nonsense to make them confront the English...If we used Indians to turn prayer wheels, or something like that, they would be the most indefatigable soldiers in the world.
Like the 'land-bridge to India', which had probably sprung from Hitler's personal apprehension of any maritime operations, the sheer dimensions on which the 'Great Plan' was predicated, and the physical obstacles which desert, mountainous terrain and rivers involved for men and supplies, did not seem to have occurred to him at all.
This discourse on the megalomaniac quality of Hitler's aims is essential to this book, for it shows that right to the end his contempt for the lives of his *Volksgenossen* remained. It had been the same earlier, for when Hitler was warned about the senseless sacrifices in Russia during the first ill-starred winter [168] campaign of 1941–42, he retorted, 'Aber dafür sind die jungen Leute doch da!' ('But that's what the young men are there for!').
*The Nazi dream of world conquest as parodists saw it*
When the German people had to pay for the hubris of Hitler and his dreams of [169] world conquest, this was reflected in the references to him as 'Adolf Genghis Khan, the genial politician'. The same mood can be detected in the take-off of the favourite song of the Hitler Youth, 'Heute gehört uns Deutschland und morgen die ganze Welt' ('Today Germany is ours, and tomorrow it will be the whole world') which became 'Yesterday Germany was ours and today we have 170] nothing at all' ('Gestern gehörte uns Deutschland und heute nichts auf der Welt').
Even after his suicide Hitler's megalomania fired the imagination of some satirists:
[171] Latest army news, 1947: German troops under the command of Field Marshal Kesselring yesterday occupied the Isthmus of Panama, while other units under the command of Field Marshal von Manstein are besieging Washington, the capital of the USA. The Führer has made Reich Marshal Hermann Göring Reich Protector of South America. The aeroplanes of our Italian allies have again successfully bombed the harbour of La Valetta in Malta.119

57 German autumn

Hitler's final victory was now satirized as follows:

[172] When I, an unknown Lance-Corporal, decided thirty-two years ago to become a politician, I knew that Providence had become determined that I should achieve greatness. Now at long last I have achieved it.

I am standing on the steps of the White House in Washington. Next to me stands my beloved friend, *SS Standartenführer* Hearst, who has just handed me a message from the newly appointed *Gauleiter* of the USA, Truman, who has asked me to let the American people at long last return to the *Reich*. The swastika flag has been hoisted to the mast on the roof of the White House. I wish to express my special gratitude to my old, trusted friend, *Pg.* Tenno, who, as *Gauleiter* of German Greater East Asia has proved a true comrade to me. I now promote him to the post of *Blockwalter* 'honoris causa' of the NSV.120 I also wish to thank our trusted and brave *SS Obergruppenführer* Joseph Stalin for his inestimable meritorious service in the incorporation of the Greater Russian Empire. It will now be his task to carry out the resettlement of large parts of the population, as he had to replace *Reichsführer* Heinrich Himmler, who has been taken ill, owing to causes connected with the war. Further I shall have to thank well-beloved Winston Churchill, whom I have made my deputy, for the happy way in which he has managed to bring back all the English-speaking people into the Greater German Empire—and that without any bloodshed! My deepest gratitude goes to the recently appointed Holy Father, Pope Alfred I (formerly Rosenberg) because we have to thank him alone for the fact that *Gottgläubigkeit* has by now become well established in Rome, the Eternal City; now

its messages are being broadcast from Vatican Radio with his blessing to the people of the whole world. Both the North and the South Pole have sent telegraphic requests to be admitted to the National Socialist family of all people on the earth. In the cities of Moscow, New York, London, Rio and Berlin swastika flags are waving in the wind. The world is free at last—thanks to me, the Gröfaz!
At this very moment a *Gefolgschaft*121 of the *HJ* is entering Switzerland, the only country which has until now stood aside, but which is now freed from the pressures of neutrality. We have been victorious—there won't be any more surprises.
World Germany—*Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!*
The following shorter version of Hitler's final victory speech paid tribute to some of his favourite phrases:
[173] *Volksgenossen und -genossinnen!* I am speaking to you today from the naval base of Vladivostok. By my side stands the King of all Latin Nations, Joseph Goebbels,122 and the new Pope Hermann I (formerly Göring). We have just had a historic discussion and I have arrived at the unalterable123 decision to forego the conquest of Australia.
Another wit produced a less imaginative version of the end of the war which, in this account, had lasted several decades in all:
[174] The last of Hitler's victorious armies are marching through the *Brandenburger Tor* and along the *Unter den Linden*. First, in long rows,124 the Field Marshals, goose-stepping. They are followed by the World Marshal in his plain gold uniform, at the wheel of a gun carriage. This is required to accommodate his Mammoth Cross of the Knights' Cross, with laurel trees. Next come the various somewhat dilapidated army units,125 and, at the very last, in the place of honour, the Army's very symbol, the 'unknown lance-corporal'.126 He does not wear his parade uniform, as he has come direct from the Russian steppe, far beyond the Ural mountains, where he has spent most of the last few decades. He shows his age, with his bushy long white beard (a wise precaution as a source of warmth during those long Russian winters). He staggers along, bent nearly double with all his equipment: steel helmet, gas mask, rifle, sten-gun, side-arm, revolver, cartridges, hand-grenades, bazooka, flame-thrower, entrenching tools, cooking pot and tent. When one of the spectators asks him what he is doing at the parade with all his gear, he grunts, 'Nix ponemayou'—the poor chap has had no time to keep up his German during all those years in Russia.
Although men with the rank of lance-corporal had at one time been regarded as the back-bone of the German Army, after this last war the problem arose as to what to do with the surviving lance-corporals. Eventually someone suggested:
[175] 'Alle Gefreite müssen jetzt erschossen werden. Die Schweinerei mit dem "unbekannten Gefreiten" darf uns nicht noch einmal passieren' ('All lance-corporals will now have to be shot, because we must make quite sure that the sort of mess the "unknown lance-corporal" got us into will never happen again.')
Hitler's own conviction, expressed in his political testament, that the Nazi

ideology ought to live on, in fact inspired the following weird vision of a contemporary novelist127 who was a die-hard supporter of Hitler. Even so, his words are hard to take seriously:
[176] In a disused coalmine in the heart of Germany is the secret centre where the eternal flame of German will to resist continues to burn in all-absorbing purity; there the great tradition of the European art of leadership has been preserved. On the devastated continent the Second World War is exhausting itself in the paralysing equilibrium of offensive and defensive weaponry; there the last divisions of the belligerent nations are being destroyed in hopeless trench warfare. Since our new flak artillery has become operative the enemy's aircraft has disappeared; the last 'Sherman' and 'T34' tanks128 are rusting along the banks of the Rhine and the Elbe. But here, labouring day and night, hundreds of yards underground, the intellectual weaponry is being forged which will indubitably be listened to by the Allied heads of state. These new formulae will be the force which will break up their already shaky coalition. This will then pave the way for a new German foreign policy. In gigantic laboratories entirely new weapons are nearing completion. They are capable of reaching targets at immense distances. One will of course have to employ S.,129 as we just can't manage without men like him. Special troops, recruited from the élite of the remaining men, are being trained in subterranean camps, where the abundant experience acquired in seven years of war is being utilized. There will in future be no question of hastily recruiting inadequately trained units of people's grenadier divisions; any mistake of this sort will be avoided.
The author of this disturbing imagery of continued warfare with its troglodyte armament industry is believed to have been a soldier who did not survive the war. He was, however, not alone ideologically, to judge by a true story from the very last phase of the war:
[177] Königsberg, the capital of East Prussia, is besieged by Soviet forces. In a hospital which is under artillery fire, several wounded German soldiers are waiting to be operated on. When a mortar missile explodes in their vicinity one soldier remarks in the native dialect, 'Na, nu wern se uns ja wohl besiejen, awer jeistich nie!' ('Well, I suppose we've had it now—but they'll never conquer our spirit!').

# 10
# THE END OF THE THIRD REICH, YEAR ZERO AND AFTERMATH

Various attempts were made at the time to find a term which best described the chaotic condition of Germany after the collapse of the Third Reich. The most apt term, oddly enough, coined by two French authors, was rendered into German as *Jahr null*.1 It is hard to find an adequate description of that anticlimatic year in all its human, material and historical aspects. The determination to survive was paramount and was reflected in bitter and often crude satire.

## THE FÜHRER'S LEGACY TO BERLIN

The following comment—the groan of a Berlin woman—typifies the recollections of survivors after the city had fallen on 1 May 1945, following intensive Russian artillery bombardment, street fighting and continuous [1] American air raids: 'I'd rather have ten Russians *in* my bed than one American bomb *under* it'.2

Almost at the same time as the capital fell, German Communist emigrés, led by Walter Ulbricht,3 arrived by aeroplane from Moscow. Under the direction of the Soviet commandant they set about reorganizing Berlin's administration along Communist lines. In such a chaotic situation anything seemed possible. The following episode, which is historically accurate, bears this out.

The Wittenau asylum in a suburb of Berlin had been emptied by Russian soldiers who had simply addressed the inmates with the words, 'Hitler finished, war over, you free!' The patients would have preferred to remain in their sheltered environment, but their protests were ignored. This event had a bizarre sequel. A former inmate of the asylum began to pose as Commandant of Berlin, and issued his 'orders' in the name of 'the workers and soldiers of Berlin'. However his role was terminated when in July 1945 Berlin was partitioned into four sectors following the entry into the city of British, American and French [2] troops.4

The case of the bogus Berlin Commandant had a parallel about the same time in the small town of Damgarten in Pomerania. The Russians had arrested the burgomaster and had appointed a trusted local Communist, who had surprisingly remained undetected as such throughout the whole duration of the Third Reich. In the chaotic environment of early May 1945, following the Russian invasion, he did not, however, last long in his new position of trust. He

made outlandish promises to the local people, who had been deprived of the most elementary food supplies. He aroused the suspicion of the town's Soviet Commandant by announcing, 'A shipload of bananas has just landed at our little harbour', and then unveiled a plan to build an underground railway linking this little western Baltic town directly with Moscow. It now became clear that his mind was deranged.

As in the previous dozen years, many of the jokes directed against the régime originated in the capital—the Berliners being known for their sarcasm, ready wit and clever gift of repartee. Not surprisingly, another crop of mostly fantastic stories emerged from this source:

[3] Early in May 1945 a human arm was found among the rubble of what had been the Reich Chancellery. Its clenched fist still held a piece of paper: 'I, Adolf Hitler, am in no way guilty of the dreadful crimes attributed to me. I had to join the Nazi Party, otherwise I would have fallen victim to Kaltenbrunner.'5

According to another version of the tale, it was said that Hitler had survived the Russian siege of Berlin. When British troops arrived in the capital early in June the following story began to get around:

[4] A small British detachment, led by a major holding a pistol, enters the *Führerbunker*. Approaching Hitler, the major declares, 'In the name of the Allies, you are my prisoner.' Everyone stands spellbound as Hitler smilingly pulls a document out of his pocket and says, 'Pleased to meet you! I am agent No. 2015 of MI5. Germany is finished. My task has been completed.'6

The Austrians imagined Hitler as an enemy agent in a slightly different way:

[5] Hitler has been arrested and appears before the International Tribunal at Nuremberg. There he removes his moustache and wig and declares, 'Agent No. 24 present and correct. Mission accomplished; Germany destroyed.'

As it took well over a year before the International Tribunal began to operate, people fantasized about how the accused might spend their time in prison.7 Since, according to some wits, those on trial expected to be acquitted, they were said to be writing their memoirs so as to present them to the German people in time for Christmas 1946. These were the titles of their literary *œuvres:*

[6] Göring, alias Meier, wrote: 'Butter Instead of Guns';
General Keitel: 'I Was Only Following Orders';
Rosenberg: 'The Obscurantists of the Twentieth Century';8
Von Schirach: 'I and Goethe'—special edition on handmade paper';9
Von Papen: 'Memoirs of an anti-Fascist';
Streicher: 'My Dear Jews' (a voluminous manuscript);
Hess: 'When They Told Me that I was Off my Head'.

When the tribunal eventually had its opening session, Göring, as Nazi No. 1, was the first to be interrogated. His statement allegedly ran as follows:

[7] How dare you accuse me of these crimes? My name is Meier, as every German knows by now!
A fictitious account of a last exchange between Göring and Goebbels after they had been sentenced by the Nuremberg Court is worth quoting again here:
[8] Göring to Goebbels, as both are approaching the gallows: 'Didn't I always tell you that it would be settled in the air?'
In actual fact, however, the proceedings at the International Tribunal did not end with the sentences passed against the leading Nazis, since millions of Germans, 'Little Hitlers', *Mitläufer* ('fellow travellers') and even opponents of the régime came under suspicion after the *NSDAP* had been declared a criminal organization by the International Court at Nuremberg.

**HITLER'S BEQUEST TO HIS 'VOLKSGENOSSEN'**

In the three western zones of occupied Germany the military authorities now issued questionnaires with the aim of scrutinizing every adult German about any affiliation he or she had had with the Nazi Party or one of its sections. At the same time they appointed Germans considered to be 'good democrats' as judges at newly constituted denazification courts *(Entnazifizierungsgerichte)*. These judges were empowered to fine, to imprison or to acquit any fellow-German summoned to their courts. They were not, however, empowered to impose the death penalty, and thus a familiar Nazi slogan which wits had [9] adapted to the post-war situation remained purely theoretical; the original slogan, 'All wheels must roll for victory' lent itself ideally to parody: 'Nazi heads must roll after the war'.10
Naturally, many former Nazis now tried to establish their innocence before the denazification courts. This development was reflected in a popular jingle of the time:
[10] *The Turncoats*
In '33, all hale and hearty,
Most eagerly we joined the Party.
Then, making profits all the way,
'Heil Hitler' all of us would say.
Divine he seemed to high and
low,
But were we Nazis? Never! No!11
The advent of the questionnaires issued by the military authorities in the [11] three western zones led to this quip: 'As we live in the Fourth Reich in Germany's history some people now call it *Fragebogenreich* ('Questionnaire-*Reich*').12
The following story about the industrialist Dr Carl Bosch illustrates the position of leading personalities in the Nazi police state if they chose not to co-operate in the way expected of them:

[12] Bosch was repeatedly interrogated by officials of the American military authority in the US Zone of Germany. They taxed him with the fact that the Germans had tolerated the Nazis for over a decade without doing anything about it. Although he was well known not to have been a supporter of the régime, none of Bosch's explanations were accepted by the Americans. Eventually, Bosch lost his temper and burst out at them, 'And now, will you clear out!' When they warned him that he'd better remember that now *they* were in power, he remarked drily, 'Well, gentlemen, that was precisely our position in the Third Reich!'

Even rather remote associations with Nazidom became disadvantageous now, or at least embarrassing to many individuals. Thus the first name 'Adolf' [13] had understandably lost the popularity it had had before 1933, as the following remark (actually made) shows: 'Unfortunately my name is Adolf, but my friends call me Alf'.

On the jocular side, many old Nazi slogans were altered so that they would acquire quite a different meaning. After the majority of houses in the centre of Hamburg had been destroyed in bombing raids, a wit had put this note on the [14] door of a recently established denazification court: 'Thanks to the Führer *you* have work to do here'. The original slogan during Hitler's massive building programme had read, 'We thank the Führer that *we* have found work to do here.'

Very occasionally, though, apparently convinced Nazis would have to be acquitted. A bizarre but true episode illustrates this. It concerns a Jew, who in order to save his life had become a Stormtrooper, the secret of his Jewishness coming to light only after he had been denounced by a relative who had fled Germany in 1933.13 On the other hand, it was alleged that some of the judges who presided over the denazification courts were known to be particularly lenient and even bent over backwards to acquit known Nazis, as this story illustrates:

[15] At X, a town in Hesse, the judge goes out of his way to help *Pg.* Müller by asking him, 'Have you ever been harassed or imprisoned by any Nazi official? Have you ever been active in the resistance movement? Have you ever had to suffer in any way under the régime?' 'No,' replies Müller. 'On the contrary, I always did very well under Hitler. I always had enough to eat, and in my cellar I had quite a stock of very good hock.' 'Excellent,' says the judge; and turning to the secretary, 'Please write, "Herr Müller, just an ordinary *Pg.,* has kept a certain Oppenheimer14 hidden in his cellar, and did so throughout the whole duration of the Third Reich. He is to be acquitted, with our congratulations for his courage".'

**NEW LIFE OUT OF THE RUINS?**

The far-reaching political, social and emotional changes brought about by the partition of Germany were often reflected in the stories that circulated at that time. It is easy enough to determine from which side of the Iron Curtain they originated. As mentioned earlier, Berliners were again in the forefront in producing satirical comments about life in the former capital.

The Kaiser Wilhelm *Gedächtniskirche* had been very badly bombed, though its spire had been preserved. Because of its odd appearance it was promptly [16] nicknamed—and is still known as—*der hohle Zahn* ('the hollow tooth'). In addition, Berliners suggested that if the edifice should ever be rebuilt, it should be built *versenkbar* ('submersible').
The apocalyptic five weeks after Berlin had capitulated on 1 May 1945 were recalled three years later by Berliners who produced this jingle during the [17] blockade and the Allied airlift: 'I'd rather get my daily spuds than have to hear once more that awful "Woman, come!"'15 And, in a similar vein, people would say, 'Rather one grim winter here than ten in Siberia!'16
From the same period comes a fictitious account of a telephone conversation between two Berliners, one living in one of the western sectors and the other in the eastern sector. It typifies the situation:
[18] East Berliner: 'I feel sorry for you—your food supply must be bad!'
West Berliner: 'I don't think so. I think we are better off.'
East Berliner: 'How can that be possible?'
West Berliner: 'Well—we get our food supplies from the air, and you only get hot air!'
Postwar satire was also used to poke fun at the inventiveness of various people in adverse circumstances.
[19] During one of the last air raids on Berlin a man ran back into his flat to save a bust of Hitler. When asked by his neighbour why he didn't save some valuable object instead, this was his reply: 'This bust will shortly be the main asset of the fairground where I intend to work. I'll charge ten *Pfennig* to anybody who wants to spit in Adolf's face—I bet they'll be queuing up for that treat!'
It is of interest to note that the atmosphere in the three western zones of occupation was entirely different from that in the former capital, something also recognizable in satirical comments and jokes originating there.
[20] Two painters meet in the west and compare their prospects. One of them is doing very well, the other less so. The poorer one asks his colleague the reason for his success, whereupon he is invited to visit the other's studio. Here he finds the place full of portraits of the late Adolf Hitler. 'How on earth can you sell such rubbish?' he asks. 'I sell them to the refugees from East Prussia—they've never heard of Adolf Hitler!'17
Living standards for Germans in the French-occupied zone immediately after the war were below those in the other two western zones, the British and American sectors. This prompted the following comment:
[21] Q. 'Why is our food supply so poor?'
A. 'Because nothing grows properly on our black soil.'18
And when in the next year, 1946, the food situation did not improve, Germans who had suffered under Hitler and had been known as *Opfer des Faschismus* (*OdF,* 'victims of Fascism') changed their nickname to *Opfer der Franzosen*

[22] (*OdF,* 'victims of the French').
In the British zone the military authorities pursued a policy of fairness, though at first with strict avoidance of 'fraternization'. This did not last very long, however, as one jingle shows:
[23] Let's go fratting, *Fräulein,* or gatting,
ATS or WAAFS or lovely WRENS—
Anything will do.
In the American zone, on the other hand, there was less talk of fraternisation, or none at all, and the GIs had a great time with the *Fräuleins*. German children referred to them as '*Frau* Sergeant, *Frau* Lieutenant or *Frau* Captain'.19 When the American soldiers of the zone eventually and inevitably adopted 'Lili Marleen' the song went as follows:
[24] Down by the bahnhoff
American soldat
Haben cigaretten
And beaucoup chocolat.
Das ist prima, das ist gut,
A zwanzig mark for fumph
minute.
Vie fiehl, Lili Marleen?
Vie fiehl, Lili Marleen?
This unmistakably reflects the *mores* of the *Jahr null* and its 'sink-or-swim'20 motivation, and at the same time it refers to the black market based on 'cigarette currency' *(Zigaretteniwährung)*. This flourished after the Reichsmark had become practically valueless. Against a background of housing restrictions, physical deprivation, national annihilation and emotional disillusionment, widespread lowering of normal standards was highlighted in biting verse:
[25] The Landser's21 in a mass grave
now,
In a stranger's bed his *Frau*.
While he fell for the fatherland
She fell for cigarettes in hand.22
In the *Ostzone*—central and eastern Germany—the Soviet military authorities did not bother a great deal about detailed questionnaires, although one might be asked by an *NKVD*23 officer or his newly-installed German [26] Communist confidant: 'Have you been imprisoned in a KZ, and if not, why not?'
It was revealing how many 'little Hitlers' became 'anti-Fascists' overnight, simply by removing the swastika from their Nazi red armbands. As their fervour for Communism was now as keen as their enthusiasm for Nazism had been a little earlier the Soviet Commissars had no need to screen the 'anti-Fascists' for their Nazi past.24 As had been the case in Hitler's Germany in 1933, turncoats were now to be found in every walk of life. A deplorable example was demonstrated by the speech by a doctor25 who, in an address to colleagues,

referred to the violation of women (often followed by pregnancy and VD) as [27] 'war pregnancies' *(Kriegsschwangerschaften)* which, in his opinion, had to be readily accepted, as a just compensation for the crimes committed by German soldiers in Russia.
In May 1945, and for weeks afterwards, especially in the country, expropriation of both mobile and immobile property occurred on a huge scale, compounded by the intrusion into one's home of Russian soldiers at any hour, an inadequate supply of food, the absence of control of communicable disease, lack of military discipline, arbitrary arrest, looting and robbery.26 This chaotic situation is reflected in the following story:
[28] A lawyer, a doctor, an architect and a Communist are having an argument about which is the oldest profession. 'The law, of course,' says the lawyer. 'Without law there is no safety.' 'Nonsense!' retorts the doctor. 'How could Cain and Abel have been born without obstetrical help?' 'No,' states the architect. 'We have brought order out of chaos.' 'Aha!' cries the Communist. 'And who created chaos?'
*Uhri, Uhri und Kultura*27—this slogan, coined by Germans in the *Ostzone,* soon augmented by the word 'liberation', described the acts of lawlessness committed by soldiers of the Red Army, beginning in May 1945. The following comment came from a German in the province of Brandenburg: 'We might just [29] survive World War III, but hardly another "liberation"!'
From quite early on Germans would disappear from the *Ostzone,* never to be heard of again, as would chattels like rings and watches (*uhri,* from the German word *Uhren*), and yet warmth and generosity was often detectable under the rough shell of the occupying Soviet soldiers.28 The following story may amuse contemporaries:
[30] It has been learned in the *Ostzone* that its great friend in the Kremlin has just become a father again. Both to him and to Mrs Stalin the event is a happy afterthought. However, the obstetrician notices that the right hand of the newborn infant remains firmly clenched, despite the efforts of several consultants. All efforts to open the mysteriously clenched little fist meet with failure until a German specialist is called in (from the *Ostzone* naturally). He takes one look at the baby's fist, pulls out his own watch from his pocket and shows it to little Joe, who straightaway tries to grab it. In doing so he has to let go of the ring he has been holding in his hand—a ring belonging to the midwife.
The following allegedly true story comes from East Berlin:
[31] In a cinema the newsreel *(Wochenschau)* currently running shows the German Communist leader Wilhelm Pieck being embraced by a Soviet officer—and somebody in the audience shouts: 'Willy, watch your watch!'29
As to *Kultura,* its concept in the mind of the ordinary Red Army soldier differed widely from that of culture as understood in the west, as this conversation in Leipzig shows:
[32] Russian: 'Leipzig beautiful town but nix *kultura.*'

German: 'But Leipzig is the centre of book publishing and many other trades and of much musical life!'
Russian: 'Leipzig nix *kultura*! Moscow *kultura*! Leipzig one delousing centre, Moscow fifty-six!'
The following story also made the rounds in the *Ostzone* at the same period:
[33] The great victory parade is taking place at the Kremlin in honour of the soldiers who took Berlin. Three of them are selected to appear before *Väterchen* Stalin.30
Stalin asks the first man, 'Comrade, how was it in Germany?' 'Marvellous, Comrade Stalin, Germany is beautiful.' (Stalin in an aside to the Chief of the MVO: 'Send him to Siberia for twenty-five years!')
Stalin, to the next soldier: 'How was it in Germany?' 'Very good, Comrade Stalin. Much *kultura*!'
(Stalin, in an aside to the MVO Chief: 'Give him fifteen years coalmining in the Caucasus!')
Stalin to the third soldier: 'Comrade, I want to decorate you; tell me, how was it in Germany?'
'Nix good, Comrade Stalin. All rubbish!'
'Good, Comrade soldier! You may have a wish. What would you like best?'
'Comrade Stalin, I'd like to go back to Germany!'
Another story, originating in East Berlin and possibly based on fact, reflects the sentiments of the locals toward the occupying power:
[34] Two labourers notice an inscription written in chalk on a fence: 'Go home!' One of them asks, 'Do you know what this means?' 'Yes,' replies his friend, 'it is in English, and it means, *Geh' heim!*' 'What nonsense!' is the other's reply, 'Why in English? The Russians don't understand any English!'
A meeting between two brothers, one living in the American zone and the other in the *Ostzone,* is taking place in Berlin, then the only possible place where the two of them can meet. They compare their experiences with the soldiers of the occupying sectors:
[35] 'In general we are not too badly off with the *Amis*',31 says the brother from the west.
'Only I don't like their habit of always going round with their hands in pockets.'
'That's precisely the case in the *Ostzone,*' says the other.
'Really, the Soviets also go around with hands in pockets?'
'Yes, unfortunately—in *our* pockets!'

**NO LAUGHING MATTER**

While both the production and the distribution of satirical comments about the Communist régime in the *Ostzone* were moulded on the pattern prevalent in the Third Reich, they were more effectively suppressed now than in Nazi times. As mentioned earlier, the two leading German communists, Pieck and Ulbricht, ex-emigrés of 1933, had on their return from Moscow been given a free hand to transform the zone according to Stalinist doctrine, style and methods. It

58 'You will laugh—I know nothing about it'

follows, therefore, that not only the occupying Russians but even more so their German confidants became targets of bitter satire, which in many ways resembled anti-Nazi jokes and invective. Many of them, however, came to their full fruition only after 1948 when the *Ostzone* had become the *GDR,* and for that reason lie outside the scope of this book.

Jokes 'grown' in the *Ostzone* and circulating there reflected either wishful thinking or were the expression of hopelessness and of the inability to bring about any change; others were sarcastic comments on the behaviour and standards of occupying soldiers who remained unacceptably alien. Apart from jokes similar in their bitterness to those circulating during the last phase of Nazi Germany, many stories now created fantastic scenarios, because the reality of daily existence had become too triste and monotonous to allow for true humour and wit. The element of fatalism, only now and then recognizable in satirical comments in this book, became a regular feature, as if to predict the future of what was the *Ostzone* in 1945–6.

Before 1939 the *Ostzone* was the main agricultural region of Germany. Nevertheless, in the first eighteen months after the war had ended there were more underfed people there than in the other three zones. In the summer of 1945 a system of food rationing was introduced in the city of Rostock on the Baltic; for well over a year neither fat of any sort nor any meat was available [36] and people asked, 'Why don't we get any meat?' 'Because,' came the reply, 'the sheep have to do all the work, the oxen do the governing, and the pigs have moved in with the Soviet officers.'32 As to the rationing system in this particular

city, there were six groups of ration recipients, the quantity of the ration decreasing to Group VI (housewives, teenagers and old people), 'the odds and ends', who received *per capita* rather less than 1,000 calories a day.33 It was therefore not surprising when one day in 1946 a large poster was to be seen attached to a beam above the entrance gate of the Rostock cemetery:34 [37] 'Welcome, you odds and sods!'35

East German propaganda frequently aimed at blaming 'the West' for the shortcomings in the *Ostzone,* as is reflected in this story:

[38] *Frau* Müller becomes utterly frustrated when she goes shopping because eggs, butter and margarine are unavailable. The saleswoman notices her customer's disappointment, so, remembering her last *Schulungsabend* ('indoctrination evening'), she tries to console her: 'You see, *Frau* Müller, this deplorable shortage is entirely due to sabotage by Adenauer36—do help us to fight the capitalists in the west; then you'll get eggs, butter and margarine again!' *Frau* Müller, infuriated, retorts, 'I can only tell you what I'll do when I get hold of that scoundrel—I'll pull his goatee off!'37

At one point in the grim winter of 1945–6 it was officially announced in Rostock that potatoes were no longer to be issued to the population, any contravention being punishable.38 Among the jokes prompted by this 'potato famine' was the following:

[39] The potatoes grown by the village's smallholders all have to be stored in a large communal pit. Before long, the little hillock is marked by a post to which a cardboard notice has been attached bearing the inscription, 'Here lies the last free smallholder'.

Mismanagement, combined with bad harvests, presented the *Ostzone* propaganda machine with a welcome opportunity to attack the USA, and the Americans were actually accused of having dropped the pernicious Colorado beetle *(Kartoffelkäfer)* over the *Ostzone's a*gricultural land.

[40] Conversation between two housewives:

'Do you know that some Canadian potatoes are being sold here?'

'Really? But, you know, I think they have just sent them to us so that our own potato-beetles won't starve!'

[41] In the village the children are assembled in the fields to destroy the potato-beetles. Otto picks up the first one and shouts, '*Ami,* go home!', whereupon the beetle retorts, 'Nix ponemayou!'39

Inadequate nutrition in the *Ostzone* was aggravated by several sharp epidemics40 during 1945–6, and a widespread feeling of hopelessness arose, including fear for one's personal safety. Chaotic conditions continued in parts of the zone41 and this last-mentioned fact was reflected in the following contemporaneous story, which might well have taken place:

[42] It is night in East Berlin. On a quiet street a civilian is stopped by a Soviet soldier who forces him at pistol-point to divest himself of his clothes and the contents of his pockets. As he stands there in shirt and underpants and minus socks and shoes, the

citizen shouts after the departing soldier, 'Tovarich, at least give me back two marks!' 'Why do you want two marks?' 'My contribution to the German-Soviet friendship fund is due tomorrow!'
Very occasionally jokes created in the Soviet Union itself found their way to the *Ostzone:*
[43] In a suburb of Tiblisi, the capital of Georgia, lives an old, old lady42—the mother of Stalin. Two heavily armed soldiers are on guard duty outside the main door of her house. A passer-by asks one of the soldiers why they guard the old lady; is she in any danger of being assassinated? 'Oh, no, Comrade,' is the answer, 'we have to make quite sure that the old thing doesn't present the country with another Stalin!'
And from Radio Yerevan, in Soviet Armenia, came this:
[44] Q. 'What is a Communist?'
A. 'A Communist is a person who has given up hope of ever becoming a capitalist.'
**TWO GERMANIES**
[45] At the doctor's in the *Ostzone:*
Having examined his new patient the doctor says, 'Well, my dear chap, I don't think I can help you.'
'Why?' asks the patient. 'Is it that bad with me?'
'I wouldn't say that,' replies the doctor, 'but I am at a loss what to prescribe for you. If I give you one of the medicaments made in our zone it won't do you any good, and if I give you one from the west *it* won't do *me* any good.'
[46] At the western frontier of the *Ostzone* two dogs meet—one from the east, the other from the west.
Dog from the west: 'Why do you want to come over here? Are you hungry?'
Dog from the east: 'Not at all—any *Ostzone* dog can scrounge enough food any day.'
Dog from the west: 'Then why are you trying to get away?'
Dog from the east: 'I just want to bark at my leisure, when, where and as loud as I like!'
Before the *Ostzone* was 'protected' against the west by ditches, mines, observation towers and frontier guards with dogs, the frontier in some areas was marked by nothing more substantial than some wire netting. This created a major problem for pig farmers:
[47] All pigs in the *Ostzone* will in future undergo selective breeding: they will have to have especially long tails which can be knotted to prevent them from slipping through the net and escaping to the west.
Escaping to the west was a subject which came by degrees to be reflected frequently in *Ostzone* satire.
[48] At a school in the *Ostzone* the *Neulehrer*43 (newly trained teacher) asks his pupils

how long it will be before the two Germanies will be reunited. Ottocar, good at arithmetic, raises his hand: 'In 1975, Sir.'
'How did you arrive at that figure?' asks the teacher.
'It's quite simple,' replies Ottocar, 'given that 2,000 people flee to the west every day.'44
Some people tried to leave the *Ostzone* by a roundabout way. One such was a certain Cohn who had survived the holocaust but had so far not been able to escape to the west. As an alternative, he applied for a visa for Outer Mongolia. This is what happened to him:
[49] After waiting for several months Cohn is summoned to the Mongolian consulate in East Berlin, where he is told that with the name 'Cohn' he cannot get a visa; he'd better change his name. At first he is rather annoyed, but then he hesitates, and eventually says, 'Please change it in my passport to "Genghis-Cohn".'
[50] In order to stop the continuing and alarming exodus from the *Ostzone* to the west Ulbricht has a novel idea, which he reveals to his masters in Moscow: 'At various intervals on the frontier, invisible from our side, I have placed guillotines, so that anyone who manages to crawl through a hole in the fence will be decapitated!' declares Ulbricht proudly. 'What a stupid plan, Ulbricht!' says the Russian. 'In that case all the heads will get to the west, and the bums will stay on your side!'
One final postwar contribution comes from Berlin, where the immediate future appeared bleak. This was true even in West Berlin, because the loss of life throughout the city had been relatively higher than in other German cities. In particular, the shortage of men (due to the substantial number of war casualties) was expected to deprive the majority of women of the chance of ever having children.
[51] Two women, old friends who haven't seen each other for some years, meet on the *Ku-Damm*.45
'How nice to see you! Goodness, you're expecting! How on earth did you manage that?'
'Well—like everything else nowadays—it's a matter of having the right connections!'
Another postwar story was contributed by Billy Wilder, the well-known American film director and writer, who was himself born in Austria. He served with the Psychological Warfare Section of the US Army during the war and subsequently with the US occupation authorities in the American zone of Bavaria:
[52] After the war the natives of Oberammergau wanted to put on their traditional Passion Play once more46 and so they had to apply to the US authorities for permission to do so. A local carpenter asked to play Jesus, and after we had screened him, we found that he had been a Stormtrooper and that six of the Apostles had been *Gestapo* men. I agreed to his request, but added, 'You can do it, so long as the nails are real.'

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And so to the last anecdote in this chapter. Although it comes from a period long after the war had ended, it reflects the political climate in a divided Germany—and thus in turn reveals another and most decisive legacy of Hitler:

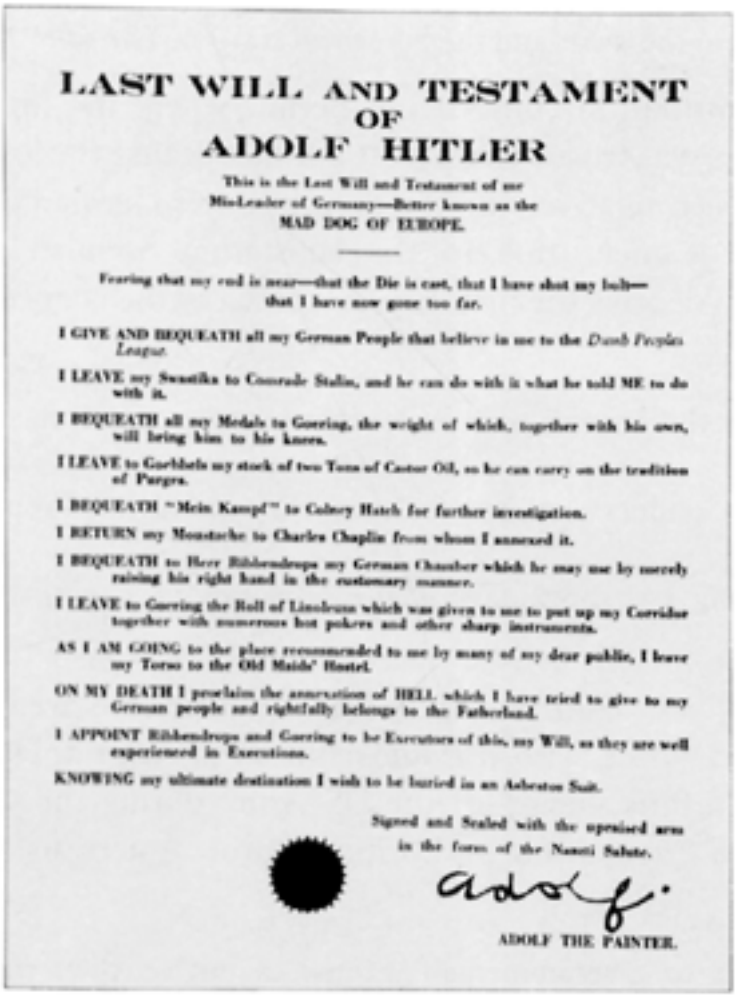
[53] Walter Ulbricht and Willy Brandt47 in conversation:

'Do you have a hobby, Herr Brandt?' asks Ulbricht.

'Yes, I collect jokes about myself,' says Brandt. 'And you?'

'I collect people who collect jokes about me,' says Ulbricht.

But perhaps the very last word should not go to Hitler's successors in West and East Germany, for of course his malign influence extended far beyond the borders of German-speaking territory. For that reason it is perhaps appropriate to allow the *envoi* to come from Hitler's most persistent enemy, and the one that applied the first crucial check to his plans for world domination, namely Britain.



LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF
ADOLF HITLER

This is the Last Will and Testament of me
Mis-Leader of Germany—Better known as the
MAD DOG OF EUROPE.

Fearing that my end is near—that the Die is cast, that I have shot my bolt—
that I have now gone too far.

I GIVE AND BEQUEATH all my German People that believe in me to the *Dumb Peoples League.*

I LEAVE my Swastika to Comrade Stalin, and he can do with it what he told ME to do with it.

I BEQUEATH all my Medals to Goering, the weight of which, together with his own, will bring him to his knees.

I LEAVE to Goebbels my stock of two Tons of Castor Oil, so he can carry on the tradition of Purges.

I BEQUEATH "Mein Kampf" to Colney Hatch for further investigation.

I RETURN my Moustache to Charlie Chaplin from whom I annexed it.

I BEQUEATH to Herr Ribbendrops my German Chamber which he may use by merely raising his right hand in the customary manner.

I LEAVE to Goering the Roll of Linoleum which was given to me to put up my Corridor together with numerous hot pokers and other sharp instruments.

AS I AM GOING to the place recommended to me by many of my dear public, I leave my Torso to the Old Maids' Hostel.

ON MY DEATH I proclaim the annexation of HELL which I have tried to give to my German people and rightfully belongs to the Fatherland.

I APPOINT Ribbendrops and Goering to be Executors of this, my Will, as they are well experienced in Executions.

KNOWING my ultimate destination I wish to be buried in an Asbestos Suit.

Signed and Sealed with the upraised arm
in the form of the Nazzi Salute.

adolf.

ADOLF THE PAINTER.

59 Last will and testament of Adolf Hitler

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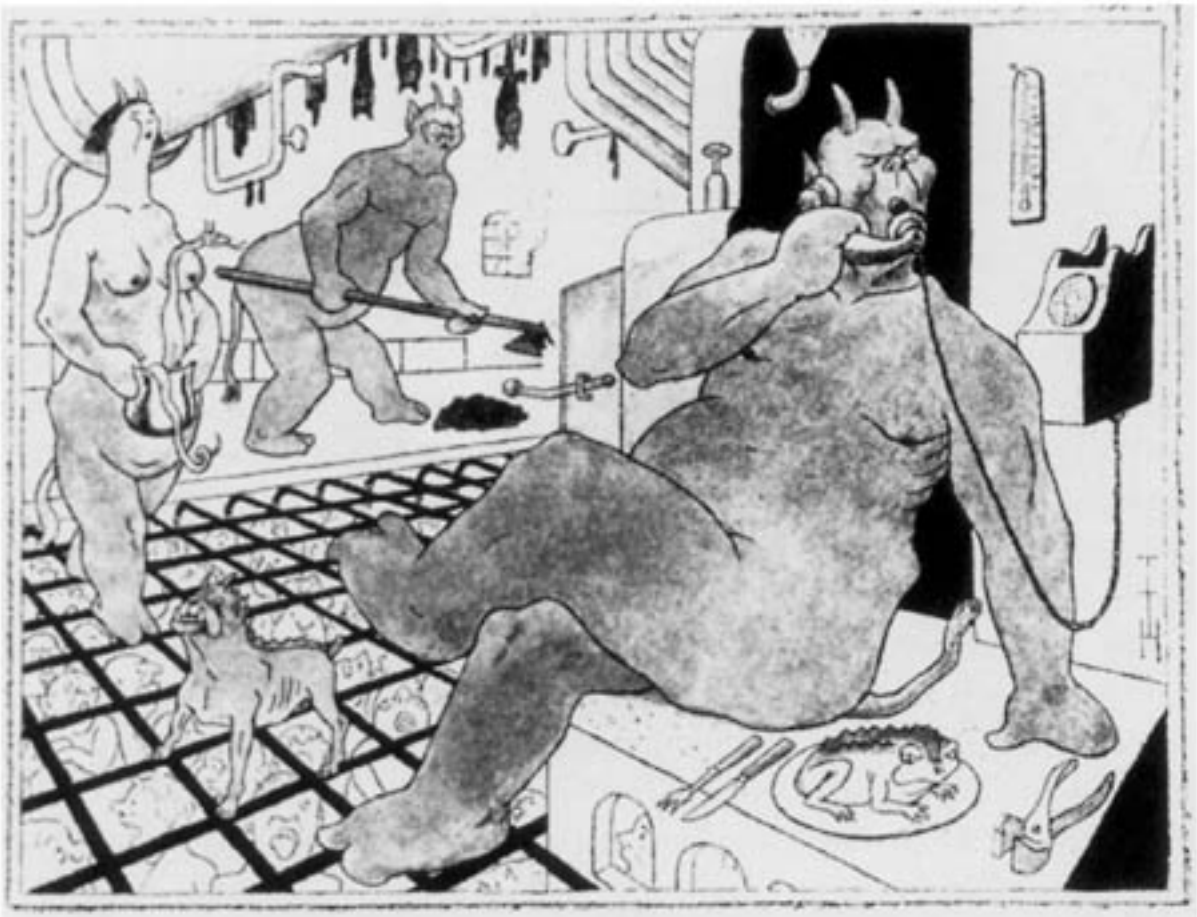

Call from Hell: 'Do stop looking for Hitler. He's here all right, but we'd be glad to get rid of him. He's always making speeches and wants to reorganize this place on the model of Belsen'

60 His ultimate destination

**EPILOGUE**

The diaries of Ulrich von Hassell, German ambassador to Italy, were posthumously entitled 'Vorn Andern Deutschland'.1 In those diaries he commented on the events in Germany from September 1938 to September 1944 when, as a leading member of the German Resistance, he was executed for his active opposition to Hitler.

The present book, on the other hand, deals chiefly with what might be termed the 'sub-resistance', the reactions of many ordinary put-upon people whose opposition against the régime was restricted to venting their grievances in grumbling, satire and humour. In that sense von Hassell too was typical of the period, for he enriched his diary by recording anti-Nazi witticisms which he sometimes called 'jokes of the month'.2

George Orwell has described political jokes as 'tiny revolutions',3 and—as all revolutions have their victims—so the average German living in the Third Reich might literally risk his or her head if denounced for having told anti-Nazi jokes.4

Foreigners resident in Germany at the time who did not run such risks often thought it worth their while to record such jokes in their reports or memoirs.5 The relevance of these examples of humour to current events was therefore readily appreciated by outsiders as well as by those living under the Nazi régime.

The invention of anti-Nazi jokes, 'butterflies',6 was very popular in Nazi Germany, as was the retelling of them. In some bizarre way the risks involved added to the attraction. As mentioned before, the type of jokes fluctuated with the fortunes of the régime, from tame and mild in the early years to bitter, sarcastic and despairing as the end drew near.

When the 'home front' began to suffer under heavy bombing raids and from increasing shortages of vital supplies, survival became the primary concern of civilians. As Hitler's war drew toward its end it must have seemed to many that the time for joking was gone for good. Surprisingly, however, this was not the case, for a rich crop of anti-Nazi jokes appeared in the twilight phase of the Third Reich, and continued right up to the spring of 1945. To some extent these jokes bear witness to the *Götterdämmerung* atmosphere then prevailing everywhere in Germany, but their unrealistic or futuristic flavour introduced an element which had hitherto been absent in anti-Nazi humour.

The problem of how dictatorships counteract propaganda has recently been

explained by a rumour, according to which a special department of the KGB is said to manage this by producing anti-Soviet jokes.7 In 1933 this had a parallel of a sort in Nazi Germany when Hanfstaengl, Hitler's foreign press chief, published his book on anti-Nazi caricature,8 a naïve attempt at an apologia. It did not have the desired effect but nearly cost the author his life.9 It was also rumoured in Germany during the war that, in order to trace the culprits and check the speed with which anti-Nazi jokes travelled, some were issued by Dr Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda. They were traced by *Gestapo* men who found that they had taken less than a week to make their way from the capital to the Bavarian Alps.10

Humour has a short life-span, and while during the Third Reich anti-Nazi jokes circulating in Bavaria or in the north of Germany would have been appreciated to an equal degree, the present-day reader of these same jokes will often find them boring, childish and not at all funny. Any English reader familiar with Victorian issues of *Punch* will agree with the emphemeral quality of political jokes, especially those produced in wartime. In addition, humour in general varies both geographically and ethnically, and a further difficulty may arise for the English-speaking reader, in that English collections of anti-Nazi jokes have so far been few and far between,11 which means that people with no knowledge of German lose a vital dimension in their view of the Third Reich.

The framework of this book has been constructed according to the rise, the aspects, the institutions and the decline of the Third Reich, the attitude of other countries towards it, the war and the personalities who played a role within it. The last-mentioned group occupies the largest single section of comments and jokes, a circumstance brought about by the personality cult which flourished in the Third Reich, applicable above all to Hitler but aped by some of his 'inner circle', about whom individual jokes circulated.

The author's own experience of the whole period is reflected both in comments and composition. They appear in the footnotes and in the lists of sources for each chapter as 'personal communications', 'observations', 'recollections' or 'experiences'. They are the outcome of personal recollections of life in Germany during the Third Reich.

It is the professional historian's task to evaluate the causes and effects of the events in the period under consideration. The often differing points of view of such historians are discussed in the informative survey of the subject by Hiden and Farquharson.12 All a layman may hope to achieve is to present to the reader impressions gained on the spot and at the time of the Third Reich, impressions which may thus contribute some useful information about the period.

In 1940 Sir Nevile Henderson, the last British Ambassador to Nazi Germany, wrote of the 'two Germanies, the passive majority of decent Germans allowing themselves to be governed by a brutal and unscrupulous minority'.13 And in March 1943 an emissary of the German Resistance was asked in neutral Sweden, 'Is there such a thing as a secret Germany, and [if so,] why does it tolerate what is happening there?' ('Gibt es das heimliche Deutschland, und

warum duldet es alles was geschieht?')14 Yet even the ceaseless efforts of a man like Dietrich Bonhœffer as spokesman for the Christian ethos under Nazi attack remained fruitless,15 presumably because Henderson's 1940 concept of the 'two Germanies' was unacceptable to Britons fighting for survival two years later.16

Von Hassell, aristocrat and career diplomat, tried to unite in his 'band of brothers'17 those Germans willing to destroy Hitler's régime, regardless of their background. When in November 1942 he wrote in his diary, 'We are the most peculiar combination of heroes and slaves' ('Wir sind die sonderbarste Mischung von Helden und Sklaven') he was referring in particular to those Generals on the eastern front who had utterly failed to maintain their authority *vis-à-vis* Hitler.18 While von Hassell does not comment on the motives behind that failure, one of these motives seems clear from the attitude of von Rundstedt, the most senior officer in the Army. When approached by the conspirators he declined to break his oath to the Führer.19 Later, at the Nuremberg trial, when asked whether he had never thought Hitler 'ought to be done away with' *(zu beseitigen)* he answered unequivocally that that would have been to him, as a soldier, quite out of the question; he was not a traitor.20

One should also remember that von Fritsch, when invited to join the German Resistance in 1938, shortly after his shameful dismissal by Hitler, refused and prognosticated, 'This man is Germany's fate which will take its predestined course' ('Dieser Mann ist Deutschlands Schicksal und dieses Schicksal wird seinen Weg zu Ende gehen').21

On the other side of the divide were the heroes among the Generals, like Stieff22 and von Tresckow. Both considered it essential to try to kill Hitler, irrespective of the outcome, because it must be made apparent to the whole world and to posterity that the German Resistance had accomplished or at least tried to accomplish this deed, even if in the process the conspirators had had to forfeit their lives.23

The role of von Hassell was intended to be even further-reaching. His 'band of brothers' comprised men and women of all social strata united in a 'revolt of conscience' *(Aufstand des Gewissens)* against 'Hitler who has made the German the most despised savage brute in the whole world' ('Hitler hat den Deutschen zum verabscheuten wilden Tier in der ganzen Welt gemacht'). After a 'spontaneous purification—not a cleansing imposed from the outside' ('selbstvollzogene, nicht von aussen auferlegte Reinigung')—he had plans for the construction of a socially united Germany.24 Von Hassell's idealism was matched by that of Count von Stauffenberg who, shortly before he was executed for his attempt on Hitler's life, cried: 'Long live our holy Germany!' ('Lang lebe unser heiliges Deutschland!')25

It is only fitting that this book should close with a tribute to the heroes of the German Resistance whose opposition to the evils of Nazism was an inspiration to many lesser people destined to live under that dictatorship.

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[146] ibid.
[147] Hermes, op. cit., p. 163.
[148] Gamm, op. cit., p. 131.
[149] Von Hassell, op. cit., p. 309.
[150] Gamm, op. cit., p. 130.
[151] Sellin, op. cit., p. 138.
[152] ibid.
[153] ibid., p. 134.
[154] ibid., p. 137.
[155] Hermes, op. cit., p. 167–8.
[156] Sellin, op. cit., p. 134.
[157] ibid., p. 136.
[158] ibid., p. 55.
[159] ibid., p. 136.
[160] ibid., p. 131.
[161] Speer, op. cit., p. 621.
[162] Gamm, op. cit., p. 129.
[163] Sellin, op. cit., p. 140.
[164] Hermes, op. cit., p. 157.
[165] Kühner, op. cit., pp. 287–8.
[166] A.Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London, 1962), pp. 656–7.
[167] W.L.Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1964), pp. 991, 1309 n.
[168] J.C.Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1980), pp. 87, 429 n. 23; and J.C. idem, *Hitler,* p. 654.
[169] Von Hassell, op. cit., p. 171.
[170] Hermes, op. cit., p. 173.
[171] ibid., p. 166.
[172] Gamm, op. cit., p. 149.
[173] ibid.
[174] ibid., p. 119.
[175] ibid., p. 120.
[176] ibid., p. 153, citing F.Hartlaub, *Im Sperrkreis* (Hamburg, 1955), p. 154.
[177] Lehndorff, op. cit., p. 61.

**10 THE END OF THE THIRD REICH, YEAR ZERO AND AFTERMATH**

[1] R.Hermes, *Witz contra Nazi* (Hamburg, 1946), p. 168.
[2] Personal experience.
[3] Hermes, op. cit., p. 172.
[4] W.Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder* (Cologne, n.d., after 1949), p. 340.
[5] M.Schwarz, *Flüsterwitze 1938–45, Lachen Verboten* (Vienna, 1947), vol. IV, p. 3.
[6] K.Hirche, *Der 'Braune' und der 'Rote' Witz* (Düsseldorf/Vienna, 1964), p. 194.
[7] K.Sellin, *Geflüstertes. Vox Populi—Die Hitlerei im Volksmund* (Heidelberg, 1946), p. 45.
[8] ibid.
[9] ibid., p. 132.
[10] Hermes, op. cit., p. 173.
[11] Hirche, op. cit., p. 195.

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[12] Sellin, op. cit., p. 81.
[13] H.Graf von Lehndorff, *Ostpreussisches Tagebuch* (Munich, 1973), p. 58.
[14] Hermes, op. cit., p. 174.
[15] S.Landmann, *Jüdische Witze* (Munich, 1984), p. 239.
[16] Hermes, op. cit., p. 169.
[17] Hirche, op. cit., p. 266.
[18] ibid., p. 254.
[19] ibid., p. 191.
[20] Gamm, op. cit., p. 152.
[21] Hirche, op. cit., p. 197.
[22] ibid., p. 195.
[23] *Radio Times,* 'Zone of Occupation', 1 November 1981.
[24] *Der Spiegel,* 1982, no. 29, pp. 173–4.
[25] Hirche, op. cit., p. 195.
[26] ibid.
[27] Personal experience.
[28] Hirche, op. cit., p. 292.
[29] ibid., p. 266.
[30] ibid., pp. 266–7.
[31] ibid., p. 211.
[32] ibid., p. 267.
[33] ibid., pp. 267–8.
[34] ibid., p. 266.
[35] ibid., p. 271.
[36] ibid., p. 254.
[37] Personal observation.
[38] Hirche, op. cit., p. 260.
[39] ibid., p. 252.
[40] ibid., p. 264.
[41] ibid.
[42] ibid., p. 272.
[43] ibid., p. 283.
[44] ibid., p. 294.
[45] ibid., pp. 256–7.
[46] ibid., pp. 246–7.
[47] ibid., p. 253.
[48] ibid., p. 265.
[49] ibid., p. 301.
[50] ibid., p. 277.
[51] Gamm, op. cit., p. 133.
[52] L.Cowan and M.Cowan, *The Wit of the Jews* (London, 1978), p. 104.
[53] S.Lukes and I.Galnoor, *No Laughing Matter: A Collection of Political Jokes* (London, 1985), p. 45.
[54] Sefton Delmer, in A.Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion in World War II* (London, 1984), p. 113.

**NOTES**

**1 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OLD ORDER**

1 R.Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (London, 1983), p. 16.
2 J.C.Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1980), p. 11.
3 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 16.
4 ibid., citing Theodor Lessing, the Marxist academic.
5 U.von Hassell, *Vom Andern Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1964), p. 221: 'Hindenburg was at the end only a shadow of his former self' ('Hindenburg, der zum Schluss nur noch Atrappe war').
6 W.L.Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1964), p. 192.
7 F.Sauerbruch, *A Surgeon's Life* (London, 1953). Sauerbruch was Hindenburg's doctor and states that he was present when the dying President addressed Hitler as 'Your Majesty' during his last audience.
8 J.C.Fest, *Hitler* (London, 1982), p. 781:
Hindenburg habitually called Hitler the 'Bohemian corporal' because he mistakenly assumed that Hitler came from Braunau in Bohemia. But it is also possible that he intended simultaneously to stress a certain foreignness and un-Germanness in Hitler, who struck him as 'Bohemian' in both senses of the word.
9 P.Hoffmann, *The History of the German Resistance, 1933–1945* (London, 1977), p. 24; Hindenburg apparently expressed these sentiments during an interview with General von Hammerstein, who was the C.-in-C. of the Army, and another general.
10 E.von Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen* (Munich, 1950), p. 103.
11 Hindenburg's victory over the Russians in August 1914 near Tannenberg in East Prussia, when he took over 90,000 prisoners. They wore olive-brown coloured uniforms. The joke depends on the fact that this was more or less the colour of the uniforms worn by the SA.
12 Shirer, op. cit., p. 17; according to his version Hindenburg addressed 'an old general' and not Meissner, who was constantly at his side.
13 ibid., pp. 227–8: von Papen, Oscar von Hindenburg (the President's son and adjutant), and Meissner.
14 The most important government buildings, as well as the President's palace and the Reich Chancellory, were situated in the Wilhelmstrasse.
15 Heinrich Brüning, Reich Chancellor from 1930–32, was cleanshaven.
16 Neudeck, Hindenburg's hereditary estate in East Prussia, had for years been his favourite residence. He was there for the last months of his life until he died. Geographically the estate was so far removed from the seat of government that, once installed there, Hindenburg lost contact with the day-to-day events in Berlin and his influence became negligible.
17 'Und nun, toter Feldherr, ziehe ein in Walhall!'

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18 Fest, *Hitler,* pp. 475–6.
19 A.Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London, 1962), p. 185.
20 Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 10.
21 Von Hassell, op. cit., p. 219.
22 Meissner's affidavit at the Nuremberg trial; see Shirer, op. cit., p. 228.
23 ibid., 211–12.
24 H.-J.Gamm, *Der Flüsterwitz im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1984), p. 142, n. 20.
25 R.Hermes, *Witz contra Nazi* (Hamburg, 1946), p. 124.
26 Gamm, op. cit., p. 55.
27 Shirer, op. cit., p. 173.
28 Field-grey *(feldgrau)* was the colour of the German Army uniform since the First World War. The historical 'Grey Eminence' refers to Father Joseph (François Le Clerk de Tremblay), counsellor to Cardinal Richelieu and a power behind the throne. Originally a Capuchin monk, Father Joseph wore the usual grey habit of that order. Incidentally, Defence Minister General Groener, whose right-hand man von Schleicher had earlier been, called the latter 'my cardinal in politics'; see Shirer, op. cit., p. 190.
29 A reference to Primo de Rivera (1870–1930), a Spanish general who in 1923 assumed power in his country by a *coup d'état*.
30 Shirer, op. cit., p. 207; five members of the cabinet were aristocrats.
31 ibid., p. 206.
32 Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 211.
33 Shirer, op. cit., p. 206.
34 Fest, op. cit., p. 212, citing André François-Poncet, then French Ambassador in Berlin.
35 Shirer, op. cit., pp. 206–7; see also Fest, op. cit., p. 211.
36 Fest, op. cit., p. 212.
37 ibid., p. 215; von Papen was defeated in the *Reichstag* by 512 votes to 42.
38 Shirer, op. cit., p. 221.
39 Fest, op. cit., p. 217: 'Ich habe das Vertrauen Hindenburg's. In zwei Monaten haben wir Hitler in die Ecke gedrückt, dass er quietscht' ('I have Hindenburg's confidence. In two months' time we shall have pushed Hitler into a corner so that he squeals').
40 On 20 July 1933 von Papen concluded the concordat with Cardinal Pacelli, the Papal Nuncio to Germany and later Pope.
41 Von Weizsäcker, op. cit., p. 91.
42 H.Fraenkel, *The German People versus Hitler* (London, 1940), p. 33.
43 Fest, op. cit., p. 213.
44 ibid., 'Was sagen Sie nun, Fränzchen hat sich selbst entdeckt!'
45 Hermes, op. cit., p. 136.
46 W.Carr, *Hitler: A Study in Personality and Politics* (London, 1978), p. 41.
47 Carr, op. cit., p. 71.
48 ibid., p. 73.
49 Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 223.
50 Hassell, op. cit., p. 299.
51 Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 513.
52 Shirer, op. cit., p. 1356.
53 Ku-Damm is an abbreviation of the Kurfürstendamm, a fashionable street in Berlin's West End.
54 Hermes, op. cit., p. 125.
55 ibid.

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**2 HITLER**

1 In 356 BC Herostratos set fire to and destroyed the temple of Diana in Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the world. It was believed that he was motivated by a pathological self-aggrandisement, and his name became a byword for similar acts of destruction.

2 J.C.Fest, *Hitler,* (London, 1983), p. 14.

3 ibid., pp. 15ff.

4 Cf. the saying often (but inaccurately) attributed to Goethe:
'Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are' ('Sage mir, mit wem du umgehst, und ich sage dir wer du bist').
In fact, it originates from the fragment *Phoenix* by Euripides: cf. G.Büchmann, *Geflügelte Worte* (Stuttgart, 1957), p. 331.

5 Translation from Goethe, *Des Epimenides' Erwachen,* Act II, scene 4:
Doch was dem Abgrund kühn
entstiegen
Kann durch ein ehernes Geschick
Den halben Weltkreis übersiegen,
Zum Abgrund muss es doch zurück.
Schon droht ein ungeheures Bangen,
Vergebens wird er widerstehn!
Und alle, die noch an ihm hangen,
Sie müssen mit zugrunde gehn.
(Epimenides, semi-legendary, a Greek seer and poet in antiquity, was reputed to have slept for fifty-four years and to have reached an extreme old age.)

6 A pun on Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Apart from his own antecedents Hitler inspired the erection of monumental buildings in Munich and elsewhere in the ugly, proletarian and pretentious style typical of the Third Reich.

7 J.C.Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1980), pp. 20ff. (as a house-painter in Vienna and Munich).

8 P.Ziegler, *Lady Diana Cooper* (London, 1981), p. 216.

9 W.L.Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (London, 1941), p. 23.

10 Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 53, citing M.von Gruber.

11 D.Pryce-Jones, *Unity Mitford—a Quest* (London, 1981), pp. 201–2, citing F. von Reck-Malleczewen, *Tagebuch eines Verzweifelten* (Stuttgart, 1947).

12 Ziegler, op. cit., p. 216.

13 Fest, op. cit., p. 53, citing A.Richter, *Unsere Führer im Lichte der Rassenfrage und Charakterologie* (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 17ff.

14 ibid., p. 53, citing M.von Gruber.

15 ibid., p. 421, 'unschöne Nase', citing M.von Gruber.

16 Ziegler, op. cit., p. 216.

17 Pryce-Jones, op. cit., p. 201.

18 J.Hiden and J.Farquharson, *Explaining Hitler's Germany* (London, 1983), citing K.Feiling, *The Life of Neville Chamberlain,* (London, 1946), p. 366.

19 Fest, *Hitler,* p. 554, citing Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget* (London, 1953), p. 229.

20 The rudimentary, toothbrush moustache of Hitler.

21 The Kyffhäuser legend relates the story of how Emperor Frederick I (1152–90) Barbarossa, or alternatively his grandson, Frederick II (1194–1250), known as *stupor mundi,* fell into a deep sleep in his subterranean castle deep below the Kyffhäuser mountain in Thuringia, where his long red beard grew through the marble plate of the table at which he sat asleep. He will wake when his people call him to restore the country's former glory.

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22 *Kurz* ('short') und *klein* ('small'), when used in combination with *schlagen* ('to hit', 'to smash up'): to destroy, utterly—a triple reference to Hitler's rudimentary moustache, to the short duration of his disastrous régime, and to its destructive dénouement.

23 A *double entendre,* referring both to Hitler's rumoured impotence and to his remarkable record in abolishing unemployment.

24 This is a reference to the intimate relationship between Hitler and Röhm, whom Hitler had murdered on 30 July 1934 during the so-called 'blood purge' (or 'Night of the Long Knives').

25 This refers both to Hitler's celibate state and to the shortage of certain foodstuffs from the beginning of his régime.

26 Fest, *Hitler,* p. 277, citing the satirist Kurt Tucholsky.

27 Translated from *Original* ('*frei nach Goethe';* see below):
Vom Duce hat er die Montur, die römischen Allüren;
Von Marx die Kollektivnatur, die Lust am Nivellieren.
Am Staat, der über Leichen geht, ist Machiavell beteiligt,
Und Sankt Ignatius Pate steht beim Zweck, der alles heiligt.
Da man die Attribute nicht von der Substanz kann trennen,
Was, frag' ich, ist am grossen Licht noch Original zu
nennen?
Goethe's original poem, which this parodies, refers to the qualities he has inherited from his parents
Vom Vater hab' ich die Statur,
Des Lebens ernstes Führen,
Vom Mütterchen die
Frohnatur,
Die Lust zum fabulieren.

28 In 1936 Mussolini waged war against Abyssinia, subjugated it and made Italy's King Victor Emmanuel III Emperor of Abyssinia.

29 H.-J.Gamm, *Der Flüsterwitz in Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1984), 84, citing A.Kerr, *Die Diktatur des Hausknechts* (Brussels, 1934): 'Hitler: das ist der Mob, der Nietzsche gelesen hat; Das ist Mussolenin im Ausverkauf...Das ist die Brutalität per Nachahmung.'

30 Sadova in Bohemia was the scene of Austria's capitulation to Prussia in 1866 after a short war which established Prussian hegemony in Germany.

31 The Dutch customs officer implies that if and when Hitler grabs the Netherlands they will have the same food shortage as the Germans in the Third Reich.

32 Hitler was extremely photo-conscious, and his court photographer Heinrich Hoffmann (who was later made a professor by Hitler) was well aware of this, as this anecdote suggests.

33 Translation: 'You will depart and not return, and you will die during the war.' Alternatively, with the comma put after *redibis:* 'You will depart and return, but not die during the war.'

34 This refers to the historic 'request' by President Hacha for Hitler to grant Czechoslovakia admission to the Reich as a Protectorate. This political blackmail was achieved by Hitler's threat to bomb Prague if the old President refused Hitler's demand.

35 Hacha was the successor of Eduard Beneš who was forced to resign in 1938.

36 This refers to the speed with which Hitler managed to subdue or annex territories of several small countries bordering on Germany.

37 A.Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1971), p. 89.

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38 *Blinde Kuh-Spiel* is the German equivalent of 'blind man's buff'. This is a refer-ence to Hitler's inefficiency as a political leader.
39 Speer, op. cit., pp. 188–9, relating Hitler's joke played on Hanfstaengl. See ibid., pp. 273, 416 for Hitler's suspicious nature.
40 C.Wilson, *The Occult* (London, 1971), p. 326.
41 E.von Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen* (Munich, 1950), p. 200: 'Wem so etwas schmeckt, der muss mit dem Bösen im Bunde sein.'
42 Speer, op. cit., pp. 159ff.
43 ibid.
44 ibid.
45 ibid.
46 ibid., pp. 144–6, 156–7. See also E.P.Hanfstaengl, *Zwischen Weissem und Braunem Haus* (Munich, 1970), pp. 37, 61ff.
47 Speer, op. cit., pp. 143–4, 184. See also Von Weizsäcker, op. cit., pp. 111, 200.
48 Von Weizsäcker, op. cit., p. 199: 'Seine ganz ungewöhnliche Gabe der Verstellung.' See also Gamm, op. cit., p. 52, quoting Göring (during difficulties with the Stormtroopers): 'Der Hitler muss her und weinen!'
49 L.Graf Schwerin, von Krosigk, *Es geschah in Deutschland* (Tübingen/Stuttgart, 1950), p. 200, cited by Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 76.
50 According to U.von Hassell (*Vom Andern Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1964), p. 111), Hitler is said to have ripped off his shoes and used them as missiles. Shirer (p. 115, and *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,* (London, 1964) p. 478), relates how Hitler used to fling himself to the floor and chew the edges of the carpet, hence earning the satirical title 'carpet eater' *(Teppichfresser)*. As to the questionable authenticity of this story, see V.Klemperer, *Notizbuch eines Philologen,* LTI *(Lingua Tertii Imperii)* (Berlin, 1947), p. 69. See also Gamm, op. cit., p. 87.
51 According to F.Heer, in *The Mediaeval World* (London, 1962), p. 349, 'Wrath and displeasure *(ira et malevolentia)* were legitimate royal traits...cf. King Henry II (1154–89), who threw himself to the ground and bit the carpet in his rages.'
52 Speer, op. cit., pp. 44–5, 99–100, 109ff.
53 ibid., p. 55.
54 Von Hassell, op. cit., p. 252, quoting a conversation he had with General Fromm on 10 December 1942, during which the General declared, 'Ja, aber unser Führer hat in seinem kleinen Finger mehr strategisches Können als alle Generale zusammen' ('Yes, but our Führer has more strategic know-how in his little finger than all his generals put together').
55 Sir N.Henderson, *Failure of a Mission* (London, 1940), p. 177.
56 See Chapter 3, Hess.
57 *Pgs.* stands for *Parteigenossen,* meaning 'members of the Party'. It was a frequently used abbreviation.
58 This joke circulated widely in Germany a few weeks before the outbreak of the war.
59 To obtain rationed foodstuffs illegally.
60 This is a free translation of:
Ich hab' geträumet diese Nacht
Und bin aus meinem Traum
erwacht:
Es klang wie ein *Te Deum*!
Mir hat noch lang das Herz geklopft,
Ich sah Herrn Hitler ausgestopft,
Im Britischen Museum!

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61 An attempt on Hitler's life by one Georg Elser, on 8 November 1939, at the anniversary of Hitler's attempted *coup d'état* of 1923, occurred at the very same site, the *Bürgerbräukeller* in Munich.

62 For Weiss-Ferdl, the anti-Nazi compère in Munich, see Henderson, op. cit., pp. 84–5 and K.Heiden, *A History of National Socialism* (London, 1934), p. 140 (cited by W.Carr, *Hitler: A Study in Personality and Politics* [London, 1978], pp. 2–3). These authors state that Hitler studied and utilized for his oratory the histrionic gestures of Weiss-Ferdl.

63 The 'Platzl' was a well-known cabaret and beer-cellar in Munich, frequented by people anxious to hear Weiss-Ferdl's latest jokes against the system, for which he was often incarcerated. (See Henderson, op. cit., p. 85.)

64 *Grüss Gott* (lit. 'Greet God') was the usual salute among the predominantly Roman Catholic population of southern Bavaria.

**3 OTHER PERSONALITIES OF THE THIRD REICH**

1 J.Gunther, Inside Europe (London, 1937), p. 75.

2 J.C.Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1980), p. 105.

3 Sir N.Henderson, *Failure of a Mission* (London, 1940), p. 80.

4 Fest, op. cit., pp. 105 and 434, n. 28, citing Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, *The Inner Circle* (London, 1959), p. 90.

5 Named after Göring's first wife, Baroness Karin von Fock; Henderson, op. cit., p. 86.

6 R.J.Overy,Göring: *the 'Iron Man'* (London, 1984), pp. 236 and 291, n. 31.

7 Henderson, op. cit., pp. 80, 87f.

8 Because Göring secretly masterminded the build-up of the *Luftwaffe,* just as General von Scharnhorst (1755–1833) had done with the Prussian Army during the wars of liberation against Napoleon.

9 Fest, op. cit., p. 108. In the French *Chanson de Roland,* an eleventh-century epic, the term is used of the paladins, the legendary followers of Charlemagne.

10 ibid., p. 111.

11 This quip may have originated in the rumour that General Milch, Göring's second-in-command, was half Jewish.

12 'An empty idle boaster'. Cf. Spenser, *The Fairie Queene,* vol. II, p. 111.

13 H.R.Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler* (London, 1947), p. 16.

14 Fest, op. cit., p. 112.

15 ibid., pp. 113 and 435, n. 35, citing C.J.Burckhardt, *Meine Danziger Mission 1937–1939,* 105; S.Kordt, *Nicht aus den Akten: die Wilhelmstrasse in Frieden und Krieg 1928–1945* (Stuttgart, 1950), p. 303.

16 Overy, op. cit., p. 219.

17 Fest, op. cit., p. 103, quoting Göring: 'Ich bin, was ich immer gewesen bin, der letzte Renaissance-Mensch, mit Verlaub zu sagen.'

18 ibid., pp. 116–17.

19 Fest, op. cit., pp. 118 and 437, n. 53 and 54.

20 Henderson, op. cit., p. 64.

21 ibid.

22 ibid.; see also M.Unger, *The Memoirs of Bridget Hitler* (London, 1979), p. 158.

23 Gunther, op. cit., p. 76: 'Göring holds an imposing galaxy of posts.'

24 Henderson, op. cit., p. 84.

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25 In the original Berlin dialect the text ran:
Rechts Lametta, links
Lametta,
Un′ der Bauch wird imma
fetta,
Un′ in Preussen is er
Meester,
Hermann heest er!
(Lametta, in German—as in English—is the term for silver or gold wire of a type often used in Christmas-tree decoration, though in Berlin jargon it also means an excess of decorations—an area in which Göring excelled.)

26 Göring, as the first commander of the Stormtroopers, was rumoured to have instigated the *Reichstag* fire.

27 A jocular reference to Göring′s rearmament—the creation of a German Air Force—forbidden under the Versailles Treaty of 1919.

28 *Hifthorn* (hunting horn) was an old-fashioned musical instrument for huntsmen in medieval times—and also a reference to Göring′s passion for hunting, hunting costume and hunting weapons, like the spear and the bow and arrow.

29 As was his rival von Ribbentrop; cf. Fest op. cit., p. 249.

30 A translation of *Schwellgermane;* see J.Roy and P.Cotet, *Deutsche erleben ihre Zeit 1942–1962* (Paris, 1963), p. 81.

31 Aurochs *(Auerochsen),* a species of wild ox *(bos urus),* extinct in central Europe for many centuries.

32 Göring′s vanity approached insanity; cf. Gunther, op. cit., pp. 76–7.

33 *Reichspostenjägermeister.* The joke was inspired by the fact that Göring was actually *Reichsjägermeister* (‘Reich Master of the Hunt′), and as such he was also forever ‘hunting′ for new posts.

34 *Lederhosen:* short leather breeches, worn in Bavaria and Austria; for Göring an outsize pair would be needed.

35 The *Hermannsdenkmal* was located in this wooded region of Lower Saxony, where in AD 9 the German tribal chieftain Arminius (Hermann) ambushed and annihilated a Roman legion. The outsize monument was built in 1873–6 to commemorate the victory over the Roman invader.

36 *Schellenbaum:* the centrepiece of a German military band, it had numerous bells attached to it. Originally it was the centrepiece and rallying point of Janissary military bands, and was adopted following the wars with the Turks in the seventeenth century.

37 A canal in Berlin with a sinister reputation for attracting those of suicidal intent.

38 A world-play on *Pour le Mérite,* the German equivalent of the VC in the First World War.

39 Overy, op. cit., p. 233, citing G.Ciano, *Diaries 1939–43* (London, 1974), pp. 205, 238, 253–4; see also E.von Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen* (Munich, 1950), p. 229.

40 Trier, one of the oldest German bishoprics, has as its main treasure a relic widely believed to be part of Christ′s robe—the Holy Robe *(der heilige Rock)*.

41 This joke is most difficult to translate because it contains a palimpsest of puns. Grynszpan is a Yiddish surname. It derives from the German *Grünspan,* which is also the common term for verdigris (copper acetate). Copper is an acceptable symbol for money in general. Thus, when Göring made gold (money) out of copper, he achieved the great goal of alchemy (in the Middle Ages).

42 Overy, op. cit., p. 34, citing Phipps Papers, vol. I, 1/13 (17 April 1935).

43 A jocular reference to Ley′s ‘Strength through Joy′.

44 *Hermannsschlacht:* see note 35, above; hence ‘the battle of Hermann′.

45 Another double entendre and also a take-off punning on the official name of one of the Nuremberg Party rallies.

46 Favourite centre for honeymooners from Berlin; formerly a royal country residence.

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47 A double entendre, based on Göring's position as Prime Minister of Prussia, a post which carried with it the duty of suppressing any counter-movements by anti-Nazis.
48 Lit. 'Exalted Lady'—an address never before used in Germany.
49 Unfortunately the punchline of this joke is largely lost in translation. In German *fliegen* can have a double meaning. In correct German it means 'to fly', but its slang meaning is 'to be dismissed' or, in this case, 'to be court-martialled'.
50 Again untranslatable, as EDDA is here intended as an acronym: '*E*mmy *d*ankt *d*em *A*djutanten' ('Emmy is grateful to the adjutant').
51 The quadriga on top of the Brandenburg Gate had been taken away by Napoleon after the Battle of Jena (1806), but it was restored after Waterloo. It was and has long been a symbol of victory.
52 This refers to the speech made early in the war by Göring and repeatedly quoted thereafter, in which he vowed that he would be willing to be known by that rather undistinguished name if he were unable to prevent the enemy from violating German airspace.
53 W.L.Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1964), p. 161.
54 ibid.
55 ibid., p. 163.
56 ibid., p. 164.
57 Fest, op. cit., pp. 127 and 440, n. 30: men like Hess, Rosenberg, Frick and Amann.
58 ibid., p. 440, n. 28.
59 ibid., p. 441, n. 48, citing *Vossische Zeitung* of 12 February 1931.
60 Jean Paul Marat (1744–93), French revolutionary.
61 *Ministerium für Propaganda und Volksaufklärung.*
62 Henderson, op. cit., p. 76.
63 Shirer, op. cit., p. 158.
64 H.R.Trevor-Roper, op. cit., p. 18.
65 *Nachgedunkelter Schrumpfgermane: schrumpfen m*eans 'to shrink'.
66 The epithet is believed to have been coined by Röhm, a bitter enemy of Goebbels; cf. R.Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (London, 1983), p. 424.
67 *Miesmacherei:* a German word of Yiddish origin. It usually means 'pessimism' *(Schwarzseherei)*. However, this joke conveys a different meaning by separating the two components of the word: *mies* ('miserable') and *Macherei* ('the making of, low slang for 'procreating'). Like the preceding joke, this one too may have come from one of the enemies of Goebbels in the 'inner circle', possibly from Himmler.
68 A.Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1971), p. 214.
69 H.-J.Gamm, *Der Flüsterwitz im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1984), p. 67.
70 Near Berlin, the centre of the German film industry at that time.
71 The German word for 'mini-brolly' ('small umbrella') is *Knirps,* which has the additional meaning of *Zwerg* ('dwarf').
72 In German *fröhlich* is used both as an adjective (meaning 'merry') and as a surname.
73 Herr Fröhlich is said to have declared in an interview after the collapse of the Third Reich that he would have loved to have knocked down Goebbels but that he had preferred to stay alive. See K. Hirche, *Der 'Braune' und der 'Rote' Witz* (Düsseldorf/Vienna, 1964), pp. 101–2.
74 *Bock* ('billy-goat') is a low colloquial word for a philanderer, a reference to the extramarital activities of Goebbels at Neu-Babelsberg, the centre of the film industry at that time.
75 *Reichsspruchbeutel,* alternatively: *Reichslügenmaul, Reichslügenbold*.

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76 The 'veracity' of the broadcasts by Goebbels during the war was satirized by terms like *Klumpfüsschen's Märchenstunde* or *Humpelstilzchen's Märchenstunde;* see Gamm, op. cit., p. 69. The latter term is an allusion to Rumpelstilzchen (Rumpelstiltskin), the malevolent dwarf in Grimm's fairy-tale. *Humpeln* means 'to limp'.

77 An area known for its asparagus.

78 The well-known Zeppelin aeronaut.

79 A picturesque little island in the river Havel, southwest of Berlin, on which was formerly located a country residence of the Kings of Prussia. The name derives from the *Pfauen* ('peacocks') which were and are still kept there.

80 Fest, op. cit., pp. 125 and 440, no. 23.

81 In German these lines read:
Wenn Hitler nicht mehr
siegt,
Göring nicht mehr fliegt,
Goebbels nicht mehr lügt.

82 In German folklore this is a common attribute of the devil.

83 Fest, op. cit., pp. 137 and 443; n. 67, citing H.Springer, *Es Sprach Hans Fritzsche* (Stuttgart, 1949), p. 31: 'Wenn wir abtreten, dann soll der Erdkreis erzittern!'

84 Goethe, *Der Zauberlehrling (The Sorcerer's Apprentice)*. In this poem the apprentice usurps the master's skilful tricks but fails.

85 By his superior intellect and mephistophelean influence Goebbels frequently out-hitlered Hitler—thus reversing the traditional role of the sorcerer and the apprentice.

86 Fest, op. cit., pp. 138 and 443, no. 69, citing J.Goebbels, *Michael: Ein Deutsches Schicksal in Tagebuchblättern* (Munich, 1933), p. 119: 'Aber unsere Namen einkratzen in die Geschichte, das werden wir.'

87 Gunther (op. cit., p. 85) states that Hess was 'the first gentleman' to join the Nazi Party.

88 In the regiment 'List' in which Hitler also served; see Shirer, op. cit., p. 69.

89 ibid., p. 51; on 7 November 1918, Kurt Eisner, a Berlin-born Jewish writer, had proclaimed a Republic at Munich. His assassination three months later led to the proclamation of a Soviet Republic *(Räterepublik)* which was dissolved on 1 May 1919 by regular and volunteer troops dispatched from Berlin and Bavaria.

90 The former General Karl Haushofer.

91 'Wie muss der Mann beschaffen sein, der Deutschland wieder zur Höhe führen soll?'

92 'Hitler ist die menschgewordene Vernunft schlechthin.'

93 This is a play on both the first name and the surname of Hess and is indicative of his close relationship with Hitler. *'Hesserl',* in particular, is a very familiar usage, since it makes an affectionate diminutive of the surname Hess; it has a recognizably Austrian flavour and may be intended to be mildly suggestive of gay talk.

94 Deputy of the *Führer*.

95 *Die Klagemauer,* a reference to the sole remaining 'west wall' of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. In view of the outspoken anti-Semitism of Hess it was a particularly incongruous image.

96 The *Röhm-Putsch;* see Gunther, op. cit., p. 85.

97 A German living or born abroad.

98 Like Göring's often-quoted 'guns before butter' speech, this is a phrase which was in fact coined by Hess (See E.Kordt, *Wahn und Wirklichkeit* [Stuttgart, 1948], p. 48). However, Göring adopted the phrase as a slogan to make his rearmament policy popular.

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99 The 'error' hinged on four wrong letters, *Freiheitsberaubung* ('withdrawal of freedom') being used instead of *Freiheitsbewegung* ('liberation movement').
100 Shirer, op. cit., pp. 999–1002.
101 P.Fleming, *Operation Sea Lion* (London, 1975), which chronicles Hitler's planned invasion of England.
102 Shirer, op. cit., pp. 1000–1.
103 Fest, op. cit., pp. 266–8; 471, n. 34–46 and 53; and p. 270, n. 54.
104 ibid., pp. 265 and 470, n. 29.
105 Hitler and Himmler too were strong believers in astrology; see H.R.Trevor-Roper, op. cit., pp. 25, 93–4, 107–10, 181.
106 ibid., p. 101; Fest, op. cit., p. 265.
107 U.von Hassell, *Vom Andern Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1964), p. 181; from the date of the entry in von Hassell's diary—18 May 1941—it is obvious that he must have got this information by listening to the broadcast by the BBC.
108 Fest, op. cit., p. 265.
109 ibid., pp. 265 and 471, n. 32, citing K.Anders, *Im Nürenberger Irrgarten* (Nuremberg, 1948), p. 24.
110 Gunther, op. cit., pp. 85–6; 'His only outside interest is faith-healing, and he has founded a hospital in Dresden devoted to cures by means that scientific medicine does not recognise.'
111 Fest, op. cit., p. 265, and Speer, op. cit., pp. 252f.; cf. note 105 above.
112 Fest, op. cit., pp. 265 and 471, n. 33, citing R.Semmler, *Goebbels: The Man Next to Hitler* (London, 1947), p. 35, diary entry of 21 May 1941.
113 *Reichsemigrantenführer.*
114 Hess had flown to Scotland on 10 May 1941.
115 Fest, op. cit., pp. 268–9.
116 The military prison at Berlin-Spandau, though situated in the British sector of Berlin, was governed by the four powers. The motivation of the persistent refusal by the Soviets to release Hess any earlier remains obscure, unless it is connected with the role Hess played as the German negotiator in the Trotsky trial in 1936. See Gunther, op. cit., p. 500.
117 Fest, op. cit., p. 269; information given to Hess by Hitler's driver, Erich Kempka.
118 The final address by Hess to the judges at the Nuremberg trial was a long monologue which culminated with these words, in German: 'Dereinst stehe ich vor dem Richterstuhl des Ewigen. Ihm werde ich mich verantworten, und ich weiss, Er spricht mich frei' (Fest, op. cit., p. 269).
119 See note 89 above.
120 Paramilitary organizations which flourished from November 1918 to about 1920 in the early years of the Weimar Republic, which they strongly opposed.
121 Like the *Thule* society, of which Himmler became a member, or the *Artamanen* (Chapter 4, Hitler Youth and BDM). See Fest, op. cit., p. 381.
122 The equivalent of Home Secretary.
123 After Count von Stauffenberg's failed attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944.
124 '*G*eheime *Sta*ats*poli*zei'.
125 The extermination of all Jews remaining in Germany and in German-occupied foreign countries, also known as *die Endlösung,* namely the Holocaust.
126 'Fountain of Life, Ltd', an institution which might be defined as a novel kind of human stud farm, since it lacked the mercenary aspect of a brothel. It was controlled by the SS. Its purpose was the procreation of 'Aryan' babies by soldiers of the *Waffen SS* and selected 'Aryan' women, either via marriage or outside marriage. Unmarried girls would also be impregnated by such soldiers, who were known as 'procreation assistants' *(Zeugungshelfer);* see Fest, op. cit., pp. 368–9).

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127 SS officer to his men in Pomerania in 1943: 'See to it that there will be something in the cradle before you join your SS comrades on the eastern front' (personal communication).

128 In 1920 Himmler had founded the SS, an abbreviation for *Schutzstaffel* (lit. 'protective squad'), originally to act as Hitler's bodyguard. This Nazi militia of specially selected young men, trained to absolute obedience, had the motto, 'Your honour is trust' ('Eure Ehre heisst Treue').

129 In the same vein, Hitler conferred on Himmler the epithet 'Mein treuer Heinrich' after the legendary constancy and devotion of a figure from one of Grimm's fairytales. On the other hand, Hitler often made fun of Himmler's mythological historical fantasies. See Speer, op. cit., pp. 147–8, 183.

130 In contrast to Hitler's absolute trust in him, Himmler (in April 1945) employed the good offices of the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte and of Norbert Masur, representative of the Jewish World Congress (Fest, op. cit., p. 172), to arrange a separate peace treaty with the British and Americans. Cf. also H. R.Trevor-Roper, op. cit., pp. 19–20, 114–15, 125–6 and 241–9.

131 Himmler demanded that his SS men should prove 'Aryan' (here meaning non-Jewish) descent as far back as 1750, a requirement he himself was unable to fulfil; cf. Fest, op. cit., p. 169. Himmler further required that his men had to withdraw from any Christian denomination of which they were members. As a substitute, they were to be knowledgeable about the history and practice of Nordic ritual. In his own historical fantasies he revelled in the celebrations held at Quedlinburg in Lower Saxony to honour the millennium of the Emperor Heinrich, with whom Himmler claimed to share some sort of kinship. See Fest, op. cit., p. 163. His interest in fringe medicine may have led Himmler to order that pseudomedical experiments be carried out on the unfortunate inmates of the concentration camps, all of which were under his control. See Fest, op. cit., p. 170.

132 Fest, op. cit., pp. 169–70. Though formerly a chicken farmer, Himmler objected to the killing of deer for sport.

133 Himmler was a keen collector of valuable China figurines.

134 To Gunther (op. cit., p. 86) he looked 'like a schoolmaster'. His petit-bourgeois appearance, entirely unmilitary, was underlined by his wearing pince-nez while in uniform.

135 Fest, op. cit., pp. 156ff.

136 Cf. Chapter 2.

137 A German pun: Himmler sounds similar to *Himmel,* meaning 'heaven'.

138 See R.J.O'Neill, *The German Army and the Nazi Party 1933–39* (London, 1968), pp. 288–9, and sketch. See also R.Hermes, *Witz contra Nazi* (Hamburg, 1946), p. 52, which is based on unsubstantiated rumour. The German translation is 'Himmlersche (instead of *Himmlische*) Heerscharen'.

139 The army, numbering 100,000 men, permitted to Germany under the Treaty of Versailles in 1919.

140 *Freikorps Reichskriegsflagge,* recruited from ex-soldiers who had recently been disbanded.

141 The German Workers Party *(Deutsche Arbeiterpartei)* was founded in January 1919, and was a forerunner of the Nazi Party. Its founders, Drexler and Harrer, were never prominent in the Nazi Party later on.

142 Like Rosenberg, Himmler and Darré; cf. Fest, op. cit., pp. 194–5.

143 The German *Du;* cf. Speer, op. cit., p. 156.

144 Fest, op. cit., p. 201.

145 ibid., p. 204: 'ein Zivilmensch, ein Künstler, ein Spinner'.

146 A.Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London, 1962), pp. 301–2; Fest, op. cit., p. 205.

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147 Gunther, op. cit., p. 85.
148 Fest, op. cit., pp. 205–6, citing M.Domarus, *Hitler, Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945* (Würzburg, 1962), vol. I, p. 411.
149 Bullock, op. cit., p. 303.
150 'Sorgende Mütter', 'Einmal eine grosse Dame sein', 'Sein grosser Irrtum'.
151 Especially appropriate, as Hitler had appointed Röhm as a Cabinet Minister, and on 30 June 1934 he had personally had him arrested and had then ordered his execution.
152 Shirer, op. cit., p. 227–8.
153 ibid., p. 227.
154 Fest, op. cit., p. 244.
155 Gunther, op. cit., p. 101.
156 ibid., pp. 53, 102.
157 Von Weizsäcker, op. cit., p. 155.
158 The German Foreign Office.
159 Gunther, op. cit., p. 100.
160 'Dieses Samelsurium von Kreaturen'; see Fest, op. cit., p. 247.
161 The epithet applied to von Bismarck, Chancellor of Imperial Germany from 1871 to 1890.
162 He waited for three months before taking up his post, and even then he left London for frequent visits to Berlin. It was said at the Foreign Office (in London) that 'Herr von Ribbentrop seems to regard his post as Ambassador as a part-time job'; cf. Fest, op. cit., pp. 249 and 466, n. 22, citing Paul Seabury, *Die Wilhelmstrasse. A Study of German Diplomats under the Nazi Régime* (London, 1955), p. 91, and E.Kordt, *Wahn und Wirklichkeit* (Stuttgart, 1948), p. 100; also by Kordt, *Nicht aus den Akten* (Stuttgart, 1950), p. 151.
163 Gunther, op. cit., p. 102; Fest, op. cit., p. 249.
164 Speer, op. cit., p. 166.
165 Fest, op. cit., p. 249.
166 He acquired the prefix 'von' after he had been adopted by a titled aunt, allegedly in payment for marrying the daughter of his wealthy boss and for entering the diplomatic career for which he had no previous training. He worked for his father-in-law's firm—Henkell—which involved selling champagne and importing 'Johnnie Walker' whisky. When he founded his own firm von Ribbentrop named it IMPOGROMA. This name has no obviously ominous sound in German, merely standing for '*Impo*rt *gross*er *Ma*rken'.
167 Henderson, op. cit., pp. 235–6.
168 Fest, op. cit., pp. 246 and 465, n. 9, citing R.Coulondre, *Von Moskau nach Berlin 1936–1939: Erinnerungen des französischen Botschafters* (Bonn, 1950), p. 329.
169 Henderson, op. cit., p. 111, adding: 'For that there is no hell in Dante's Inferno bad enough for Ribbentrop.'
170 P.Ustinov, *Dear Me* (London, 1977), p. 59. Ustinov states that Rudolf von Ribbentrop, the Ambassador's son, had been refused admission to Eton, which put the father into a rage.
171 According to G.Ciano's *Diaries 1939–43,* cited by Fest, op. cit., p. 252.
172 ibid., pp. 245 and 464, n. 4, citing Coulondre (see note 168), p. 313.
173 Shirer, op. cit., pp. 161 and 401, n. 31. See Fest, op. cit., p. 127 on the role of Goebbels at that meeting.
174 In this he had the power to interfere in other spheres of the Nazi hierarchy—a favourite stratagem used by Hitler to encourage rivalries.
175 The so-called *KDF*-ships would be used as troop transport ships before the decade came to an end.

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176 In 1938 Hitler's brainwave, 'a car for every German', was promptly taken up by Ley, who then began to build the factory for Volkswagen with his labour force. He was said to have used the occasion to comment on the Bible: 'The parable of the camel and the eye of the needle (Mark 10.25) is quite wrong; all of you shall be rich!'

177 In the original German couplet *Mittelmeer* (Mediterranean Sea) and *keine Mittel mehr* ('no more funds') form a very funny anagram which, alas, is lost in translation:
Einst fuhren wir mit KDF durch's Mittelmeer,
Doch jetzt gibt's weder Kraft noch Freude
und
auch keine Mittel mehr!

178 By placing houses for the accommodation of the *Landdienst* girls within easy reach of the barracks for the young men of the *Arbeitsdienst*.

179 In German:
Im Wald und auf der Heide
Verlor' ich Kraft durch
Freude.

180 P.J.Goebbels' *Diaries 1942–3,* vol. XXV (London, 1948): 'Hitler says that Ley has a style like a schoolboy...In any letter to him he must learn to comply with elementary rules of grammar'; Ciano op. cit. 'Ley...in Rome; he is vulgar both in appearance and in the way he thinks—in fact he is so coarse that I ask myself how he was ever able to obtain a position of leadership.'

181 Speer, op. cit., pp. 210–11: Hitler laughed until he cried over Ley's depraved notions. (He was planning to build a huge fashion house with a brothel attached.)

182 'Ley war immer voll, wir haben ihn aber nie für voll genommen.' This quip, which the author heard with his own ears, contains an untranslatable pun; it means 'Ley was always in his cups, so we never could take him seriously.'

183 Shirer, op. cit., p. 327, quoting Fritz Thyssen (the steel tycoon) who referred to Ley as 'the stammering drunkard'.

184 ibid., pp. 940–8.

185 *Reichstrunkenbold.*

186 *Reichsdreckschwätzer.*

187 H.R.Trevor-Roper, op. cit., p. 13, quoting Speer: 'The "War of the Diadochi"—originally the successors of Alexander the Great—started very early behind the scenes.'

188 Speer, op. cit., p. 251.

189 ibid., p. 501.

190 Shirer, op. cit., pp. 317–18.

191 Speer, op. cit., p. 620.

192 The Barbarian migrations AD 375–568), comprising mainly Germanic tribes moving from Eastern to Western Europe.

193 Goebbels, op. cit., vol. XXV: 'Dr Ley is a moron and possibly an intriguer'; Speer, op. cit., p. 621.

**4 INSTITUTIONS OF THE THIRD REICH**

1 Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1964), pp. 55ff.

2 ibid., p. 6, citing K.Heiden, *Der Führer* (London, 1945), p. 36.

3 ibid., p. 57.

4 ibid., p. 58.

5 ibid., pp. 58ff.

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6 In German: Alte Kämpfer.

7 H.-J.Gamm, *Der Flüsterwitz im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1984), p. 57.

8 In German this joke appears as a four-line stanza, in which the similar pronunciation of 'Somme' and *Sonne* ('sun') adds extra punch:

Als wir ewig *jungen* Kämpfer
Schmachtend an der Somme
lagen
Lagt ihr ewig *alten* Kämpfer
Schnullernd noch im
Kinderwagen!

9 The 'Red Flag' of Communism.

10 This joke refers to the fact that many 'Old Fighters' had previously been Communists, and in 1945 they swore that they had joined the Party only under duress.

11 R.Hermes, *Witz contra Nazi* (Hamburg, 1946), p. 52; R.Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (London, 1983), p. 82.

12 *Parteiabzeichen.*

13 In September 1930 membership of the Nazi Party would have seemed advantageous because it had just become the second largest party, but by March 1933 the applicants were, more than ever, opportunists.

14 The German word *Märzenveilchen* refers to the flower's appearance in March.

15 *Märzgefallene,* however, has a historical connotation, for the people killed in March 1848 during the civil disturbances in Germany were known as *Märzgefallene*. In quite a different way, the Germans who joined the Party in March 1933 could ironically be termed 'fallen'.

16 *Märzhasen:* in Germany, as in England, March madness is associated with hares. In Germany hares are also considered cowards (hence *Angsthasen*), and the term is deliberately applied to those seeking membership of the Party at this time.

17 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 427.

18 The German names of the Nuremberg Party rallies were, in fact, *Sieg des Glaubens, Triumph des Willens* and *Freiheit,* while the last-mentioned title is, of course fictitious: *Macht der Gewohnheit*.

19 A free translation of:

Es geht alles
kopfüber,
Es geht alles vorbei,
Erst fliegt Adolf Hitler,
Dann seine Partei!

20 See Chapter 5: The Jews, joke [40] and n. 25. This apologia, for all its jocular form, was essentially that uttered by the defendants in the so-called denazification courts set up in the occupied zones under British, American and French administration after the war.

21 Freely translated from:

Die Wetterfahnen.

Wir drängten uns in die Partei
Wir waren überall dabei
Wir waren gierige Profitler
Wir schrien immer nur 'Heil Hitler'
Und sah'n in ihm ein höh'res
Wesen,
Doch Nazis sind wir nie gewesen!

22 Shirer, op. cit., p. 63.

23 ibid.

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24 ibid., p. 239.
25 ibid., pp. 240–3.
26 *Ordnertruppe* (literally 'troop to keep order') was a rather cynical name for Stormtroopers, who were notorious for making disorder and trouble, both before and after 1933.
27 ibid., p. 267.
28 Hermes, op. cit., p. 53.
29 This read:
Die Fahne hoch, die Reihen fest geschlossen,
SA marschiert mit ruhig, festem Schritt,
Kam'raden, die Rotfront und Reaktion
erschossen,
Marschier'n im Geist in uns'ren Reihen mit.
30 A good many former Communists joined the SA in 1933 to save their skins after the Nazis had come to power.
31 Die Nasen hoch, die Augen fest geschlossen,
SA marschiert mit ruhig festem Schritt,
Kam'raden, die Rotfront und Reaktion entsprossen,
Marschier'n aus Angst in uns'ren Reihen mit.
32 'Hein' (Heinrich, Henry) and 'Tetje' (Theodore) are typical Hamburg names, and for many years two characters with these names usually figured in jokes originating in Hamburg, a city which formerly had a large concentration of Communist voters.
33 The *Rotfront* ('Red Front') was a Communist paramilitary force active in the years before 1933.
34 'Alle Räder müssen rollen für den Sieg' ('All wheels must keep rolling for victory') was a typical wartime slogan designed to discourage any unnecessary travelling at home. The thief suggests that the Stormtrooper, in accordance with his 'marching' tradition—a tradition expressed in the Horst-Wessel song—should be well able to dispense with his bicycle, especially in wartime conditions.
35 The initials KPD stand for *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*—the German Communist Party.
36 A reference to the allegation that the *Reichstag* fire had been started by Stormtroopers on Göring's orders.
37 'Ich dachte es ginge schon los': namely, another revolution during which the SA would, he hoped, be eliminated.
38 A typical Nazi term: literally 'years of struggle' (for political power) from 1919–33.
39 Sir N.Henderson, *Failure of a Mission* (London, 1940), p. 33.
40 Shirer, op. cit., p. 153.
41 ibid.
42 ibid. 'SS' stands for *Schutzstaffel* ('Protective squad').
43 F.A.Brockhaus, *Der Sprach-Brockhaus* (Leipzig, 1944), p. 619.
44 J.C.Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1980), pp. 161–2.
45 In the aftermath of Count von Stauffenberg's failed attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944, Himmler became Commander-in-Chief of the Reserve Army.
46 Fest, op. cit., p. 156: *Kleinbürger* and *Grossinquisitor*.
47 ibid., p. 143.
48 U.von Hassell, *Vom Andern Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1964), pp. 33–4.
49 Fest, p. 146.
50 ibid., p. 145: 'das verkörperte Misstrauen...der Oberverdachtsschöpfer'.

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51 Fernando Alva, Duke of Toledo, was known for his cruelty while he was Governor of the Low Countries (1567–73); Hitler's remark is recorded in O. Meissner, *Staatssekretär unter Ebert, Hindenburg, Hitler* (Hamburg, 1950), p. 593; also Fest, op. cit., p. 151.
52 Fest, op. cit., p. 153.
53 ibid., p. 142.
54 Personal communication.
55 Although it was no secret that Röhm and several leading SA men were homosexuals, the Röhm *Putsch* was the start of this persecution.
56 Prisoners in concentration camps (*Konzentrationslager,* hence the abbreviation KZ).
57 *Vernichtungslager;* see also E.von Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen* (Munich, 1950), p. 207.
58 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 165.
59 The brothers Sass, Berlin criminals, were notorious safe-crackers in the 1920s and early 1930s.
60 Dachau, near Munich, is a small town which was the site of one of the first concentration camps.
61 *Weltanschauliche Schulung:* a euphemism for the kind of indoctrination to which an inmate of a concentration camp was subjected.
62 'Tünnes' (Anthony) and 'Schäl' (Michael) are fictitious citizens of Cologne.
63 *Ersatzkaffee: c*offee substitute.
64 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 157.
65 The German Supreme Court, situated in Leipzig.
66 Personal information.
67 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 157–8.
68 The Supreme Public Prosecutor.
69 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 158.
70 The People's Court.
71 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 168: *verschärftes Verhör,* citing I. Staff, *Justiz im Drittem Reich* (Munich, 1964), p. 119.
72 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 159ff.
73 Penal Code.
74 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 165.
75 ibid: 'Traitors to the nation, comparable to vermin.'
76 ibid., and p. 610, n. 47, citing the *Guardian,* 4 July 1967, which prints an account of the execution of a Berlin pastor for telling an anti-Nazi joke.
77 ibid., pp. 163–5; sexual intercourse between Germans and Jews carried a prescribed prison sentence of ten years, which was sometimes changed to a death sentence.
78 This refers to claims for war-damage compensation.
79 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 164.
80 ibid., p. 160.
81 *Rechtsstaat:* state based on the rule of law.
82 *Gauleiter:* Nazi head of *Gau* ('province').
83 Literally: 'people's rage'.
84 A photographer who was taking a picture of people queuing for foodstuffs in Berlin during the war was arrested by a policeman on his beat, who was prompted to do so by some remark from a bystander. The policeman justified his action with the words, 'Der Volkswut musste Genüge getan werden' ('The "rage of the people" had to be satisfied'). Personal information.
85 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 164–5.

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86 This is a free translation of the following lines:
Der Maulkorb und der Knittel
Das sind die besten Mittel
Die Ruhe herzustellen
Kein Hund wagt mehr zu
bellen!

87 "'Das Land der Dichter und Denker", jetzt "Das Land der Richter und Henker'".

88 Civil servant.

89 *Militärfromm:* 'filled with a sense of awe before things military'. See Grunberger, op. cit., citing Fest, op. cit., p. 329.

90 *Kadavergehorsam:* blind obedience, based on the constitution of the Jesuit Order. Ignatius de Loyola (1491–1556), the Order's founder, demanded that Jesuits should submit totally to Divine Providence and obey their superiors blindly without a will of their own, viz: 'perinde ac si cadavera essent'. See G. Büchmann, *Geflügelte Worte* (Stuttgart, 1957), p. 405.

91 Being disorderly, unpunctual, happy-go-lucky, haphazard—well-known Austrian traits. See Henderson, op. cit., p. 189.

92 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 167.

93 ibid., pp. 176–7.

94 ibid., p. 81.

95 ibid., p. 170.

96 ibid., p. 167; A.Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1971), p. 107.

97 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 171 and 611, n. 6, citing *Frankfurter Zeitung,* of 14 April 1937.

98 Youth Movement.

99 'Hikers'.

100 A fusion of several German youth organizations.

101 Lit. 'path-finders', loosely based on Baden-Powell's Scouts.

102 Fest, op. cit., pp. 303ff., 480.

103 ibid., pp. 300 and 479, n. 1, citing von Schirach: 'Die NSDAP ist die Partei der Jugend.'

104 Reich Committee of the German Youth Organizations.

105 A coup carried out early in April 1933 by fifty Hitler Youths under his command; see Fest, op. cit., p. 308.

106 This took place on 2 May 1933.

107 Gamm, op. cit., p. 156: 'intellektuelle Erziehung...das Gewissen...eine jüdische Erfindung...das freie, herrliche Raubtier in der Jugend wieder heranzüchten'.

108 Fest, op. cit., p. 316: 'Eine gewalttätige, herrische, unerschrockene, grausame Jugend will ich'.

109 'So zäh wie Leder, so schnell wie ein Windhund, und so hart wie Kruppstahl.'

110 Fest, op. cit., p. 309: 'Eine Mischung aus akademischem Referat und lyrischem Gedicht'.

111 ibid.

112 ibid., p. 317.

113 ibid; Hitler then accused von Schirach of leading the cultural opposition against him.

114 ibid.

115 An Austrian word, adopted in Germany during the Third Reich: *Jungvolkjunge;* cf. *Der Sprach-Brockhaus,* p. 476.

116 Lit. 'German young folk'.

117 Lit. 'young maiden'.

118 Hitler Youth.

119 League of German Maidens.

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120 *Glaube und Schönheit,* sponsored by Frau Magda Goebbels.
121 *Garant* was one of Hitler's favourite words, though the German word *Bürge* is much better German; hence *Garanten-Emigranten*.
122 *AA* is German baby-talk for faeces, and the whole is a play on the words 'SA men'.
123 That is to say, the toddler has disgraced himself or herself.
124 This refers to Hitler's reiteration of his fourteen-year struggle before coming to power.
125 '*B*aldur *d*rück' *m*ich!' See Grunberger, op. cit., p. 424.
126 '*B*ald *d*eutsche *M*utter!'; see Hermes, op. cit., p. 55.
127 '*B*edarfsartikel *d*eutscher *M*änner!' Grunberger (op. cit., p. 424) is the source for this joke and for the two which immediately follow it.
128 '*B*und *d*eutscher *M*ilchkühe.'
129 '*B*und *d*eutscher *M*atratzen.'
130 Shirer, op. cit., pp. 316–7: compulsory year's service for every BDM girl, either as a domestic in a town household or as a farm labourer. In the latter capacity the girl would be accommodated in a camp which was often located near a labour service camp for young men of the *Arbeitsdienst*.
131 Fest, op. cit., p. 330.
132 'Enabling Act' of 23 March 1933, which removed all powers of legislation from the *Reichstag* and handed them to Hitler's Cabinet 'for a period of four years'; cf. Shirer, op. cit., p. 248.
133 R.J.O'Neill, *The German Army and the Nazi Party 1933–1939* (London, 1968), p. 253: 'Ox-Prussians' *(Ochs-Preussen),* instead of *Ostpreussen*.
134 A widely-hoped-for *coup d'état* by the Army.
135 O'Neill, op. cit., p. 253. The lines are freely translated from:
Lieber ein Kaiser von Gottes
Gnaden
als einen Hitler aus Berchtesgaden.
136 ibid., p. 252. Immediately after the death of President von Hindenburg, when Hitler had made himself Supremo of the German Armed Forces, he decreed that the eagle emblem of the Nazis was to be worn as standard issue on the uniform jackets of all men serving in army, navy and air force.
137 Although an eagle—replacing the Imperial crown—had been part of the cockade worn by the men of the *Reichswehr* before 1933, this innovation was widely resented by the military. Hence the 'new' eagle was commonly referred to by soldiers as the *Pleitegeier* (lit. 'bankrupt vulture'), a reference also to Germany's precarious economy. *Pleite* (from the Hebrew 'flight to safety') is German slang for bankruptcy.
138 Grunberger (op. cit., p. 438) attributes it to the writer and former officer Gottfried Benn.
139 Based on an interview with Ewald von Kleist; cf. Grunberger, op. cit., p. 613, n. 28.
140 O'Neill, op. cit., p. 221. *Bonzen* was a derogatory epithet used of Nazi 'big shots'; cf. *Goldfasanen* (and refer to note 7, above).
141 A German acronym: 'Only as long as the Army co-operates.'
142 The Armed Forces.
143 O'Neill, op. cit., pp. 33–6.
144 'Rubber lion' is the literal translation of the German *Gummilöwe,* though perhaps 'paper tiger' would be a happier translation, in keeping with the General's attitude towards Hitler.

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145 Because von Blomberg has resisted Göring's attempts to convert the *Luftwaffe* into a private force; cf. O'Neill, op. cit., p. 35.
146 O'Neill, op. cit., pp. 197–205.
147 A play on the name of the General: 'lackey' *(Lakai)*.
148 General von Fritsch, in a letter of May 1937: 'Zur Politik fehlt mir alles'; cf. Fest, op. cit., pp. 326 and 483, n. 14.
149 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 182ff.
150 *V*olksoffizier *m*it *A*rbeitergesicht.
151 Count *(Graf)* Bobby had for decades been a fictitious character from Vienna, noted for his näiveté.
152 According to Hassell (op. cit., p. 317), this joke was circulating as late as July 1944.
153 The war slogan ran: 'Alle Räder müssen rollen für Sieg!' The slogan was coined in order to discourage private travel.
154 This refers to Admiral Raeder's reluctance to participate in any plot unless Army officers were involved, since they alone would have to carry out any active moves.
155 One of the seven wonders of the ancient world.
156 Lit. 'a fleet for garden gnomes'.
157 The last sentence reads in German: 'Reichsfischfuttermeister mit der Berechtigung zum Tragen des Netzhemdes'.
158 R.Overy, *Göring the Iron Man* (London, 1984), p. 165.
159 Fest, op. cit., p. 128: 'Dieser Mann ist Deutschlands Schicksal, und dieses Schicksal wird seinen Weg zu Ende gehen'.
160 O'Neill, op. cit., p. 262, and sketch between pp. 288 and 289.

**5 THE JEWS**

1 On 15 September 1935 all Jews were deprived of German citizenship. Marriages as well as extramarital relations between Jews and non-Jews were prohibited. Aryan descent over two generations was by now a prerequisite in the civil service and other spheres of professional life—hence the term 'search for the Aryan grandmother'.
2 Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten* (Frankfurt, 1958), p. 91; and Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), art historian: 'Like the ants, the Jews never lose faith in life. Hamans and Hitlers everywhere, yet they live and enjoy life.' Cited by L.Cowan and M.Cowan, *The Wit of the Jews* (London, 1978), p. 16.
3 Also required in Austria after the Anschluss in May 1938.
4 *Nachgeburt* (placenta) has been confused with *Geburtszeugnis* (birth certificate).
5 *Neun-köpfiger Familienvater.*
6 'Heute komme ich zu Ihnen in einer Angelegenheit, die Sie eigentlich garnichts angeht.'
7 'Es ist wegen meiner Grossmutter, die bisher noch nicht amtlich angefordert wurde.'
8 'Er starb von 1821 bis 1859.' This is nonsense in both German and English. The meaning is probably that he died sometime between the years stated.
9 Meaning: 'I have no access to the records here.'
10 'Ich komme zu Ihnen mit meiner Geburt' ('I come to you with my birth'), meaning: 'I request my birth certificate.'
11 'I am searching for the connections (documentation) required by the Führer, but unfortunately I lack the necessary influential connections to achieve this.'
12 The applicant has omitted to supply the name of the person born in 1915, required for the *Ariernachweis*.

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13 'Meine Grossmutter versichert mir, dass die sehr arisch sei'—a nonsense phrase meaning *rein* instead of *sehr* (in English 'pure', instead of 'very').
14 'Man kann desssen nicht ganz sicher sein, wenn man das nur mündlich erfährt.'
15 The usual mistake: 'birth' for 'birth certificate'.
16 Illegitimacy did not exonerate the applicant from proving Aryan descent—in such cases often an impossible task.
17 'She' (grandmother) and 'it' (garden church) are synonymous in German; both are *sie.*
18 Prenzlau is a small town in Prussia.
19 Civil servants and holders of hereditary farmsteads had to prove their Aryan descent as far back as the year 1800; hence, great-grandmother.
20 This sounds rather contrived. The bulk of the jokes dealing with 'Aryan descent' have the ring of authenticity.
21 This also sounds contrived.
22 Any career other than a civil servant's career; see note 19, above.
23 This one is also a rather contrived joke, as baptism does not, of course, connote Aryan descent.
24 This and the following jokes are rather artificial. They underline the necessity to prove 'Aryan' descent in the Third Reich, though ten years later, when the end of that government was in sight, some people may have thought the opposite to be an advantage.
25 See note 24, above.
26 Haman, Minister to the Persian King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), ordered that all Jews be put to death. Esther, a Jewess whom the King had married, interceded for her people, and Haman was executed. The Bible story is found in *Esther:* 3–7.
27 Because of the large number of foreign visitors to the capital during the Olympic Games of 1936, comparatively few outrages against Jews took place in Berlin at that time.
28 *Shlamassel* is a Yiddish word meaning 'great disorder'.
29 *Sternschnuppe* (lit. 'shooting star'): a pun on the 'Star of David' the Jews had to wear in Germany. As one of several decrees supplementing the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, from 1 September 1941 every Jew in Germany, including children of both sexes 'after completion of the sixth year of life' had to wear a 'yellow Star of David'; it had to be worn visibly on their clothing. It was further stipulated that from the same date each Jew had to use the name 'Israel', and each Jewess the name 'Sara', as their middle names.
30 In 1933 Jewish children could still attend school with other children, though sitting on separate benches.
31 A great deal of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* betrays the author's infantile concept of history.
32 *Hirsch* ('stag') was a Jewish surname common in Germany.
33 'Str. Nuremberg' is none other than the notorious Jew-baiter and editor of the sado-pornographic anti-Semitic weekly *Der Stürmer,* Julius Streicher, also known as the 'King of Franconia' (Advertisement in *Münchener Faschingszeitung,* 1935).
34 *Anschluss:* the annexation of Austria, May 1938.
35 Accusations such as the first appeared in *Der Stürmer*. As to the third, listening to the BBC carried the death penalty, but was nonetheless widespread.
36 Cited by L.Cowan and M.Cowan, op. cit., p. 29.
37 That a Jewish baker should employ a non-Jewish apprentice, and the latter use the Hitler salute (without intended malice) *vis-à-vis* a Jewish customer may seem incredible now but could well have happened very early in the Third Reich.

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38 The fact that Goebbels was short, swarthy, and hardly 'Aryan' in appearance, as well as being club-footed, frequently made him the butt of jokes of this kind.

39 Until 1922 Egypt was a British protectorate, and the Suez Canal Zone was also British. This was roughly the area of the 'exodus' described in the Old Testament.

40 Unusual Nordic and hyphenated Christian names became favourites in German families in the 1930s; Adolf, on the other hand, was both commonly used and particularly inappropriate for a Jewish boy in the Third Reich.

41 There were hardly any beggars about in Germany during the Third Reich, but there was abundant evidence of money-collecting by Nazi officials of various kinds.

42 *Ezes:* Hebrew for 'advice'. The beggar of this joke is of course neither blind nor a Nazi, but a Jew imitating the ubiquitous collecting of money by Nazis.

43 'Pg.' stands for *Parteigenosse* ('member of the Nazi Party'), abbreviations of a similar kind being popular during the period of the Third Reich.

44 *Heil* has a double meaning in German. It can mean simply the salute, like 'hail' in English, but it can also mean 'heal' (*heilen* in German). Thus *Heil Hitler* could convey an invitation to 'heal Hitler'—quite a job even for a psychiatrist!

45 Galicia, a province of Poland, had a high percentage of poor Jews who often made a living by hawking after having emigrated to Germany or Austria.

46 Many Jews in Germany had become well assimilated to German customs and traditions, and when drafted into the Forces in peace and war were as patriotic as their non-Jewish fellow soldiers. This joke is not as unlikely in origin as it may appear to be.

47 *Lederhosen* (see Chapter 3, Göring, note 3) are to this day typical Bavarian and Tyrolean costume.

48 One of the 'Tyroleans' is, of course, a Jew in disguise.

49 J.F.Steiner, *Treblinka* (London, 1967), pp. 204 and 304. Cited by R.Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (London, 1983), p. 430.

50 'Between 1933 and the outbreak of the war roughly half the Jewish population of Germany emigrated, about 250,000 people (largely to the United States, the United Kingdom and Palestine). Of the remainder no more than a few thousand survived' (Grunberger, op. cit., p. 579).

51 Cantor: a liturgical soloist who sings sacred music in a synagogue.

52 *Spring* in German and Yiddish: 'jump'.

53 Immigrants to English-speaking countries with little English would know the word 'Jews', and mistake for it the similar-sounding word 'juice'.

54 The comparison seems absurd, but to a Jew who has escaped from Nazi Germany, life in the Amazon jungle appears less dangerous than a return to Germany even after the war.

55 *Meschugge:* Yiddish for 'crazy'.

56 *Nebochant:* Yiddish for 'a poor devil'.

57 A famous Viennese amusement park.

58 The largest Nazi daily newspaper.

59 Eichmann, Chief of the Jewish Office of the Gestapo, was responsible for the extermination of millions of Jews. In 1980 he was discovered in the Argentine by Israeli agents, kidnapped, and brought to Israel for trial and execution in Jerusalem (1 June 1962). See J.Roy and P.Cotet, *Deutsche erleben ihre Zeit 1942–1962* (Paris, 1963), p. 302.

60 In 1946 Vienna was governed by the so-called 'Four-Power-Control': the USA, Great Britain, France and the USSR. Among the personnel of the three western occupation forces were a number of Jewish officers, former emigrants from Vienna, who now served with units of their respective new countries.

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61 After the war the civilian courts established in West Germany were empowered by the American, British and French occupying authorities to fine, imprison or acquit any former Nazis summoned by them. The case of the acquitted Jewish Stormtrooper was quoted in 1947 in the recently relicensed *Frankfurter Zeitung* (personal recollection).

62 *Chutzpah* (or *chutzpe*): Yiddish for 'brazen effrontery', 'incredible guts', according to L.Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish* (London, 1972), p. 94. 'Impertinence' is the meaning given by S.Landmann, *Jüdische Witze* (Munich, 1963), p. 185.

63 *Endlösung:* the liquidation of all Jews in Germany and in the German-occupied countries, the Holocaust.

64 See Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 151, 584.

**6 ASPECTS OF THE THIRD REICH**

1 F.A.Brockhaus, *Der Sprach-Brockhaus* (Leipzig, 1944), p. 229: 'Die Gleichschaltung, nach der national sozialistischen *Machtübernahme: einheitliche Ausrichtung.*' The term *Machtergreifung,* used unofficially, renders more strongly the element of force, which so soon became apparent after the advent of Hitler.

2 G.Orwell, *Animal Farm* (London, 1945), p. 87.

3 Named after a minor playwright, idolized by Hitler, whom Eckart had supported before he obtained power. See Chapter 2.

4 *Theater* also has a pejorative meaning in German slang: 'big hullabaloo'.

5 Ein Bäumlein steht am Waldesrand,
Es ist organisiert, (viz. labelled as a Nazi tree)
Es ist im NS-Waldverband,
Damit ihm nichts passiert.

6 Ein kleiner Baum am Wege stand,
War *nicht* organisiert,
War *nicht* im NS-Waldverband,
Damit *mir* nichts passiert!

7 Heil Hitler, wem's recht ist,
Und für die andern Herrn
Guten Tag!
(There is no German equivalent for 'Good afternoon'.) The author personally experienced this incident in 1935.

8 The original was:
Guten Morgen, Herr Hitler!
Bonzen und Parteiprofitler
grüssen zackig mit 'Heil Hitler',
Beamte und der Mittelstand,
kriegen auch noch hoch die Hand;
Der Mann im Volk mit seinen Sorgen
sagt ganz bescheiden: 'Guten
Morgen'.

9 A reference to culinary herbs.

10 A reference to herbal tea.

11 *Heil Hitler zum Kotzen* is a slang phrase meaning 'to vomit'.

12 *'Guten Morgen' und 'Guten Abend'.*

13 Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918), Swiss painter.

14 Lit. 'Greeting to God', the salute common in southern Germany.

15 'Mach' jetz hübsch dein Hitlerchen, wie es sich gehört.'

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16 The English translation, 'Hail I' or 'Hail to myself' lacks the German pun; *heilig* ('holy') is occasionally, though incorrectly, pronounced 'heilich'.

17 *Bonzen,* originally Buddhist priests, had the ironic meaning in German of 'big shots' in a Party—both in the Weimar Republic and in the Third Reich.

18 *Bonzen* compel ordinary people to carry *their* loads like camels, and the 'crib' (satirically *Futterkrippe*) is the source of their wealth.

19 It would have been a punishable offence to suggest there were any *Bonzen* in Nazi Germany also.

20 Free translation:
Die Strassen werden immer
schöner,
Die Bonzen werden immer dicker,
Das Volk wird immer dünner,
Wir danken unserem Führer!

21 Jessica Mitford recalls the following song, which was based on a hit tune of the time ('Wenn am Samstag Abend die Dorfmusik spielt'), which became:
Wenn am Samstag Abend der Reichskanzler spricht:
Eintopfgericht, Eintopfgericht, Grünkohl...
Macht der alte Göring ein schiefes Gesicht,
Eintopfgericht, Eintopfgericht, Grünkohl...

22 Komm, Herr Jesus, sei unser Gast
Und segne, was Du uns bescheret hast.

23 Komm, Adolf Hitler, sei unser Gast,
Und gib' was Du uns versprochen hast,
Gib' uns aber nicht nur Pellkartoffeln und Hering,
Sondern lass' uns leben wie Goebbels und Göring!

24 A famous Prussian cavalry regiment was called the *Ziethenhusaren,* hence the similar-sounding *Nietendragoner,* a Berlin-type parody of the officially-named *Graue Glücksmänner* (lit. 'good-luck men').

25 The shako—in German *Tschako*—was the helmet German police wore at the time.

26 Fictitious Cologne characters.

27 A low-grade district official of the Nazi Party.

28 W.L.Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1964), p. 332. The car was Hitler's idea, though designed by the Austrian automobile engineer, Dr Ferdinand Porsche. Dr Ley had the ingenious plan that the workers themselves should put up the capital for the production of the *Volkswagen* by means of an instalment plan (a minimum of five marks per week), qualifying for a car (which cost 990 marks) after they had contributed 750 marks.

29 Suggested by Jesus' words, 'You shall hear of me but not see me'.

30 Lit. 'communal air-raid shelter', a German pun on the word *sammeln,* which can be used either to mean 'togetherness' or 'collecting'. In this case the man wants to hide from the ubiquitous Nazi money collectors.

31 Puffpaff was the Attorney-General of the province, Volgmann the Lord Mayor of the city of Rostock, and Hildebrandt the particularly objectionable *Gauleiter* of Mecklenburg. See R.Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (London, 1983), pp. 88, 202.

32 ibid., p. 322.

33 ibid.

34 ibid.

35 K.Rosten, *Das* ABC *des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1933), p. 198, cited by Grunberger, op. cit., p. 628, no. 13.

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36 J.C.Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1980), p. 357; Eckart in 1919: 'Es muss ein Junggeselle sein, dann kriegen wir die Weiber!'
37 J.C.Fest, *Hitler* (London, 1983), p. 133.
38 ibid., p. 133.
39 ibid., p. 135.
40 A.Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1971), p. 139.
41 Fest, *Hitler,* p. 328. The sister of the philosopher Nietzsche thought of Hitler 'more as a religious than as a political leader'.
42 D.Pryce-Jones, op. cit., *Unity Mitford: A Quest* (London, 1981), pp. 119ff.
43 According to the *Münchener Post* of April 1923; and see Fest, *Hitler,* p. 328, quoting a Hamburg schoolmistress who witnessed 'scenes of moving faith—Hitler the helper, rescuer, redeemer from overwhelming need' at an election meeting in April 1932, attended by 120,000 people.
44 Speer, op. cit., p. 145.
45 'Contact-craving', an uncontrollable urge to touch Hitler physically. See Grunberger, op. cit., p. 339, citing H.Rauschning, *Gespräche mit Hitler* (Zurich/ Vienna New York, 1940), p. 240.
46 Speer, op. cit., p. 145.
47 H.R.Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler* (London, 1947), p. 102.
48 Speer, op. cit., pp. 145–6.
49 J.W.Hiden and J.Farquharson, *Explaining Hitler's Germany* (London, 1983), p. 30.
50 L.Rosten, *The Joys of Yiddish* (London, 1972), p. 199.
51 Speer, op. cit., p. 155.
52 Trevor-Roper, op. cit., p. 101.
53 ibid., p. 102.
54 Speer, op. cit., p. 220.
55 Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 365.
56 ibid., p. 493, n. 33.
57 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 354–5.
58 ibid., p. 355.
59 ibid.
60 ibid., p. 337, and P.Hoffmann, *The History of the German Resistance 1933–1945* (London, 1977), pp. 141–2.
61 J.Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society* (London, 1975), p. 65.
62 ibid., p. 190: *fortpflanzungsfeindliche Kleidung*.
63 Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 366.
64 Personal experience.
65 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 339.
66 Trevor-Roper, op. cit., pp. 161–4 and 166, describes her role from 26 to 29 April 1945, in the *Führerbunker*.
67 R.Hermes, *Witz contra Nazi* (Hamburg, 1946), p. 79: 'Die Nazis führten wieder die Titel für Privatleute ein; wer fünf Kinder hatte, bekam den Titel "Erzeugungsrat"; ein Mann mit einem unehelichen Kind, "Geheimer Erzeugungsrat", und jemand, der es fertig brachte, keine Alimente für ein uneheliches Kind zu bezahlen, "Wirklicher geheimer Erzeugungsrat"'.
68 U.von Hassell, *Vom Andern Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1964), p. 208.
69 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 557–8.
70 ibid., pp. 559–60.
71 ibid., p. 561.
72 Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 108.
73 ibid., p. 121, and Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 120–1.

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74 ibid., p. 469, n. 4.
75 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 116.
76 Hitler's house on the Obersalzberg, near Berchtesgaden.
77 St Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), founder of the order of the Minorites (i.e. Franciscans), the saint also known for his love for animals.
78 *Dackel,* or *Dachshund* ('badger dog'), had an unfortunate reputation for being stupid, a slur now known to be quite false.
79 Hermes, op. cit., p. 90.
80 They were delivered at the 1934 Nuremberg Party Rally.
81 Hermes, op. cit., p. 90.
82 Bishop of Münster in Westphalia.
83 Director of Bethel in Westphalia, the well-known home for the incurably mentally ill.
84 Colonel Mölders, Germany's foremost *Luftwaffe* ace, had written the so-called 'Mölders letters' which were circulated clandestinely and for the discovery of which *Reichsleiter* Bormann, known as the 'Brown Eminence', offered a reward of 100,000 marks.
85 Hassell, op. cit., pp. 158, 197 (referring to a protest made in February and September, 1941).
86 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 570.
87 Shirer, op. cit., p. 1246 n., citing the Bishop of Berlin, Cardinal Count Preysing, who, being privy to Count Stauffenberg's plan to assassinate Hitler, did not feel justified in attempting to restrain him on theological grounds.
88 As mentioned earlier, Brown was *the* Nazi colour and black was the contemporary term for Catholics, predominant in Bavaria and Austria.
89 These crucifixes were usually erected at places where mountaineers had met with fatal accidents.
90 Hans Kerll (1887–1941), *Reichskirchenminister*.
91 *Zurücktreten* has two meanings in German: 'to step back' and 'to resign'.
92 Speer, op. cit., p. 148. Hitler himself had given the *Reichsbischof* the nickname *Reibi,* by which name the Prelate became widely known.
93 As the Prelate refused to resign, he was later also called *Bleibi,* an untranslatable pun, derived from *bleiben,* meaning 'to stay put'. See H.-J.Gamm, *Der Flüsterwitz im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1984), p. 111.
94 This is an unfortunately untranslatable play on the surnames *Wurm* ('worm') and *Murr* (from *murren,* meaning 'to grumble' or 'to rebel').
95 He was given this accolade by the Bavarian *Gauleiter* Wagner; see Grunberger, op. cit., p. 120.
96 ibid., p. 532.
97 Gamm, op. cit., p. 81 citing Alfred Kerr (1867–1948), the theatre critic:
Was in der Kunst erlaubt ist,
Und was ihr Sinn überhaupt
ist
Bestimmt ein provinzialer
Ansichtskartenmaler.
This is a reference to Hitler's occupation in Vienna and Munich before the First World War.
98 *Pinsel, erwache*!—a double wordplay on Hitler's past as a painter and on the slogan, *Deutschland, erwache*!
99 Originally from a poem by Dietrich Eckart (see Chapter 2: Hitler), which became the battlecry of the Stormtroopers.

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100 *Fleischbeschau* means a vet's inspection of meat to determine its fitness for human consumption, but here, with the addition of *Kunst,* it is a slang expression for the examination of paintings of nudes.
101 *Reichskeuschheitswart; Reichsschamhaarmeister.*
102 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 545.
103 ibid.: 'Ich kann nicht soviel essen wie ich kotzen möchte.'
104 ibid., pp. 535, 543.
105 ibid., p. 535; 'Norsemen' (for 'horsemen') stands for 'Aryans'—a double play on words.
106 ibid., p. 534; Tomás de Torquemada (1420–98), from 1483 the dreaded head of the Spanish Inquisition.
107 ibid., p. 541.
108 Gamm, op. cit., p. 81; a pun on the names *trostlos* ('cheerless') and *spärlich* ('sparse').
109 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 536; *Münchener Kunstbahnhof*.
110 ibid.; *Kitsch* is a slang word meaning a 'trashy' work of art or design.
111 This verse is a parody of Goethe's 'Song of Mignon' ('Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blüh'n...')
Kennst du das Haus, auf Säulen ruht kein
Dach,
von Blut und Boden strotzet das Gemach,
und Ziegler's nackte Mädchen sehn dich an,
Was hat man dir, du arme Kunst, getan?
112 Speer, op. cit., pp. 78–9.
113 ibid., p. 79; *'Wilhelm der Prächtige' Stil.*
114 According to his friend the court photographer 'Professor' Heinrich Hoffmann.
115 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 542.
116 Gamm, op. cit., pp. 138–41, quotes the correspondence of Furtwängler with Goebbels.
117 ibid., p. 138.
118 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 513–14; Speer, op. cit., p. 618.
119 Gamm, op. cit., p. 37; the German pun on *wert* and *Allerwertester* (lit. 'most valued') is even more suggestive.
120 'Mein unerschütterlicher Wille'—a phrase Hitler repeated *ad nauseam* in his speeches.
121 *Schnorrerei:* a very offensive German word derived from the Yiddish, and meaning 'scrounging'. See Grunberger, op. cit., p. 515.
122 Peter Rabe, *Die Musik im Dritten Reich* (Ratisbon, 1934), p. 12.
123 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 427, 523, 645.
124 ibid., p. 519.
125 ibid., p. 512.
126 Special victory announcements by radio.
127 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 528–9.
128 ibid., p. 458.
129 ibid., p. 467.
130 E.von Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen* (Munich, 1950), p. 206.
131 The plays satirize the activities of leading Nazis, such as Hitler's fantastic plans, Goebbels' lies, Göring's vanity, Ley's boozing, Schacht's economic problems, Röhm's homosexuality, Darré's conning the farmers *(Bauernfänger),* and 'the whole cast' robbing the German people.
132 Gamm, op. cit., p. 67; see also the section in Chapter 3 on Goebbels.
133 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 478.
134 ibid.
135 ibid.

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136 ibid., p. 479.
137 ibid.
138 ibid.
139 ibid., p. 482.
140 ibid., pp. 488–90.
141 ibid.
142 Baron Karl Friedrich Hieronymus von Münchhausen (1720–97), whose alleged exploits were of such a fantastic nature that they became proverbial as *Münchhauseniaden*. Since the last war they have even been identified in psychiatry as 'Münchhausen's syndrome'.
143 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 491.
144 ibid., p. 497.
145 ibid., p. 469.
146 ibid.
147 ibid.; based on Goebbels' remarkable dictum: 'Grumbling is defecation of the soul.'
148 This joke is based on a pun: Finck here means 'finch' *(Fink)* and Joseph (Goebbels) is the birdcatcher.
149 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 469; the German equivalent of ENSA. Finck, wearing army uniform in this army welfare organization, hoped to be relatively safe from Nazi snooping.
150 Von Hassell, op. cit., pp. 185, 243, 250; F.Sauerbruch, *A Surgeon's Life* (London, 1953), pp. 392ff.
151 ibid., p. 145 (dated 22 September 1940).
152 ibid., pp. 145, 155, 197.
153 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 284.
154 'Love' *(Liebe)* here takes the form of *Nächstenliebe* ('charity').
155 Von Hassell, op. cit., p. 197.
156 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 486; in the film *Ich klage an* ('I accuse') a doctor kills his wife at her request, since she suffers from multiple sclerosis.
157 Personal experience at a medical meeting held in Stralsund, early in 1945.
158 Von Hassell, op. cit., p. 158; W.L.Shirer, *Berlin Diary,* pp. 401, 444–5, 447, 449–51; also personal communication.
159 Personal experience of the Rostock Medical Board, 1937.
160 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 282.
161 ibid., p. 283; a few Jewish doctors were for a short time permitted to help to treat Jewish patients in the very few remaining Jewish hospitals. Professor Arthur Israel, at Berlin-Reinickendorf, was one example. However all Jewish doctors were classified by the pejorative term *Jüdischer Krankenbehandler* ('Jewish handler of the sick'—a Nazi neologism) and not as *Arzt* ('doctor'), as was normal.
162 ibid., pp. 282, 292–7.
163 ibid., pp. 290–1.
164 ibid., p. 296.
165 Personal observation.
166 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 291; Trevor-Roper, op. cit., pp. 97, 256.
167 Trevor-Roper, op. cit., pp. 25, 28; Speer, op. cit., pp. 443, 447–8, 663. In May 1945, in Flensburg (near the Danish border) Gebhardt exchanged his uniform as an SS General for that of its ranking equivalent in the Red Cross.
168 Speer, op. cit., pp. 160–3; Trevor-Roper, op. cit., pp. 64–9, 76–7.
169 Fest, *Hitler,* pp. 672ff.; Morell's excessive polypragmasy pandered to Hitler's hypochondriac traits. He aggravated these by giving his patient almost daily injections; hence his nickname—coined by Göring—of 'Reich Injection Master'.

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170 Personal information. Cod-liver oil (for frying potatoes) and cherry-flavoured cough syrup (for spread) were sometimes used by people as food in the mid-thirties. Grunberger, op. cit., p. 296, mentions similar occurrences at times of war shortages.
171 *Sterilisiertes* means 'preserves'.
172 Although there is no German equivalent for getting 'browned off' the word *Bräune* is used in this way; it is now regarded as a rather old-fashioned term for throat infection, especially diphtheria.
173 *Abgeführt* has two meanings: 'to be purged' and 'to be arrested'.
174 *Rundschau:* normally the name of a newspaper, e.g. *Tägliche Rundschau* (lit. 'Daily Look-around'), though here it is used in the sense of looking around to see whether one's conversation might be overheard.
175 Pryce-Jones, op. cit., p. 196, quoting Hanfstaengl: 'These maidens [Diana and Unity Mitford] have salutitis, an inflammation of the armpit...needing massage for it at Nuremberg.'
176 The 150% Nazi is a cut above the normal 100% Nazi. His extraordinary zeal in Party matters may lead him to go too far and thus to be expelled from the Party. 'Withdrawal' here means 'dismissal'.
177 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 197ff.
178 ibid., p. 199.
179 ibid., p. 202; also personal observation.
180 ibid., p. 88.
181 ibid., p. 202.
182 ibid., p. 201.
183 ibid., p. 202.
184 ibid.
185 Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 461.
186 J.Gunther, *Inside Europe* (London, 1937), pp. 88–9.
187 W.L.Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,* p. 188.
188 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 202.
189 Gamm, op. cit., pp. 75, 143, citing Rauschning, op. cit., p. 36.
190 'Long faces': a *double entendre,* as apart from the disillusionment with Nazi practices on the part of the German people, the characteristic of the so-called Nordic race was a somewhat elongated skull.
191 Gunther, op. cit., p. 89.
192 Hereditary Farm Law of 29 September 1933.
193 W.L.Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,* pp. 320–1.
194 Personal observation: in an *Erbhof* in Pomerania the farmer's wife, having two daughters but no son, became overanxious and afraid to lose the family's livelihood (to her husband's cousin); she eventually developed a phantom pregnancy.
195 A play on the name Darré and the word *Dürre* (drought).
196 Hassel, op. cit., p. 46.
197 Auch ich starb den Heldentod,
Schuld hat Darré's Gerstenschrot.
198 'Gesunde Bauern erzeugen gesundes Vieh.'
199 *Kamerun* (the Cameroons) in West Africa, until 1919 a German colony.
200 'Deutsche Birnen sind die weichsten'; *weiche Birne* is Berlin slang for a simpleton—a *double entendre* here.
201 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 270.
202 ibid.
203 ibid. 'The German salute is "plum jam".'
204 Dr Conti, Reich Health Leader, and Nazi Chief Medical Officer.

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205 Shirer, *Berlin Diary,* p. 29.
206 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 364.
207 ibid., pp. 365ff.
208 Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 376–81.
209 Gamm, op. cit., p. 55.
210 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 369.
211 ibid.
212 ibid., p. 363.
213 ibid., pp. 363–4.
214 ibid., pp. 370–2.
215 ibid., pp. 371–2.
216 Schiller's revolutionary play (written when he was in his early twenties); here the play *Die Räuber* is a *double entendre,* a Frenchman's comment on the Germans occupying France and their conduct there.
217 *Die Leiden des jungen Werther,* a novel by Goethe.
218 *Die Jungfrau von Orleans,* a play by Schiller.
219 V.Klemperer, *LTI (Lingua Tertii Imperii) Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Berlin, 1947).
220 ibid., p. 245.
221 Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches,* p. 120.
222 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 411.
223 Klemperer, op. cit., p. 21.
224 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 412.
225 Fest, op. cit., p. 134; Grunberger, op. cit., p. 414.
226 Personal experience during the war.
227 Alfred Kerr, *Die Diktatur des Hausknechts* (Brussels, 1934).
228 Fest, op. cit., p. 21.
229 G.Büchmann notes that the original version of this epigram, delivered by G.L. Leclerq de Buffons (1707–88) in a lecture at the Académie Française (*Recueil de L'Académie,* 1753, p. 337), was '*Le style est l'homme même.*' (*Geflügelte Worte,* rev. H.M.Elster [Stuttgart, 1956]).
230 See Chapter 6, *Gleichschaltung*.
231 Hitler always addressed his German audience as *Volksgenossen*.
232 The vocative form of *ziehen* ('to pull'), now transformed into a noun.
233 Some people put about the rumour that the real coal thief was Mussolini—Italy being entirely dependent on German coal. See Hermes, op. cit., p. 153.
234 See Chapter 9 for origin.
235 Personal recollection.
236 Hitler had put Göring in charge of this undertaking, for which full co-operation on the part of Schacht, President of the Reichsbank, and *Reichswirtschaftsminister* (Minister of Economics), from 1934 until 1937, was essential.

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237 The German parody of Schiller's poem, 'Die Bürgschaft', goes like this:
'Ich bin,' spricht jener, 'zu sterben
bereit
und bitte nicht um mein Leben;
Doch willst du Gnade mir geben,
Ich flehe dich um vier Jahre Zeit,
Bis ich die Bürger vom Gelde befreit:
Ich lasse den Schacht dir als Bürgen—
Ihn magst du, entrinn' ich, erwürgen.'
There existed another version which referred to Hitler's favourite phrase *Garant* (instead of *Bürge*) which ended like this:
'Ich lasse ihn dir als Garanten,
Entwetz' ich, häng' meinen
Bekannten.'

238 This 'reformed' fairy-tale was a quite remarkable, and very daring, parody of Nazi language in general and of *Gleichschaltung* in particular.

239 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 414.

240 ibid., p. 415: POPO (*Penne ohne Pause oben*—'wishing you a night undisturbed by air raids'); KAKFIF (*kommt auf keinen Fall in Frage*—'it is quite out of the question') are both virtually untranslatable acronyms, and scabrous too.

241 Sir N.Henderson, *Failure of a Mission* (London, 1940), p. 210.

242 ibid., pp. 415–16.

243 The anagram of Heinrich Himmler is *Ich Herr im Himmel;* for Herman Göring there is *Nero Magenhirn;* and the sinister anagram of Adolf Hitler is *Folterhilda* (and also *Rolf Eidhalt*), all of which defy any sensible translation.

**7 THE** *ANSCHLUSS*

1 *Anschluss* means *Verbindung mit etwas Vorhandenem, wie Österreichs mit dem Deutschen Reich* ('Union with something already existing, like that of Austria with the German Reich'): F.A.Brockhaus, *Der Sprach-Brockhaus* (Leipzig, 1944), p. 23.

2 Fictitious Viennese character.

3 New Nazi term for Austria, lit. 'Eastern March'.

4 Germany before the *Anschluss*.

5 Brown: *the* Nazi colour, in both the real and the abstract sense.

6 Attempts at unification of both countries failed in 1848, and again in 1919, at the peace treaty of St Germain-en-Laye.

7 *Piefke:* Austrian derogatory term for *Reichsdeutsche,* i.e. Germans from the *Altreich* (see note 4), and for Prussians in particular; the origin of the word is obscure, although the '-ke' ending, a patronymic, occurs frequently in North German surnames.

8 The *Anschluss* plebiscite of 10 April 1938.

9 Amtliche Bekanntmachung. Das Weihnachtsfest fällt während des Krieges aus folgenden Gründen aus:
1 Josef ist bei der Wehrmacht.
2 Maria ist im Arbeitseinsatz.
3 Das Christkind ist wegen Fliegergefahr evakuiert.
4 Der Heilige Geist ist unablässig, aber erfolglos, bemüht, die deutsche Führung zu erleuchten.
5 Die Weisen aus dem Morgenland haben keine Einreise-Erlaubnis.
6 Die Hirten sind in der Rüstungsindustrie dienstverpflichtet.
7 Der Stern von Bethlehem darf wegen der Verdunklung nicht leuchten.
8 Heu und Stroh sind von der Wehrmacht beschlagnahmt.
9 Die Krippe befindet sich bei der NSV.
10 Im Stall liegt die Flak.
11 Die Schafe sind in eiserne Rationen aufgeteilt worden.
12 Und für den Esel allein lohnt es sich nicht, Weihnachten zu feiern!

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10 *Die Ostmärker*

Dass wir Ostmärker nicht die Gescheit'sten mag
sein,
Doch dass wir die Dümmsten, da sagen wir 'nein'.
Wir haben Humor, Gemüt und Kultur,
Wir lieben die Heimat, die Kunst und Natur.
Die Wissenschaft zählt unter ihren Gelehrten
In unserem Land gar manchen Experten.
Von uns kamen Mozart, Strauss, Schubert und
Ziehrer,
Und Deutschland bekam von uns—leider—den
Führer.
In Arbeit und Fleiss sind wir allen voran,
Ein Zeichen, an uns ist doch etwas dran.
Wir passen zusammen—im Ganzen und Grossen—
Wir haben den Geist, die andern die Goschen;
Und sollte ein Piefke uns dennoch verglimpfen,
Wir denken an Goethe—und lassen ihn schimpfen!

11 The well-known quotation from Goethe's play, *Götz von Berlichingen,* which is the German equivalent of the English 'victory sign in reverse'.
12 A hill near Vienna; incidentally, Hermann was also Göring's Christian name.
13 A mountain in the Tyrol; *Kette* ('chain' or 'necklace') refers to Göring's mania for decorations.
14 'Frau Hitt' is the name of another mountain (and the *Frau* refers, of course, to Goebbels' philandering).
15 A German pun: *Reichsmark* meaning German currency, and *Ostmark,* Austria.
16 Hitler and his government.
17 See Chapter 6, *Gleichschaltung*.
18 *Letzte Olung,* the last rite required for Roman Catholics (who constituted almost 100 per cent of Austria's population).
19 In the first stanza of the song—which became the second national anthem in Nazi Germany—the spirits of fallen comrades march along with the living men.
20 A reference to the four sectors of Vienna, which in 1945 were occupied by the forces of the four Allies.
21 *Pechvogel:* a person pursued by misfortune.

**8 THE THIRD REICH AS SEEN BY OTHERS**

1 Walther Hofer, Professor of Modern History at Bern University.
2 J.Roy and P.Cotet, *Deutsche erleben ihre Zeit 1942–62* (Paris, 1963), citing W. Hofer, *Der Nazionalsozialismus* (Frankfurt and Hamburg, 1957), 80.
3 W.L.Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (London, 1941), p. 45.
4 H.-J.Gamm, *Der Flüsterwitz im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1984), p. 79.
5 Lit. 'Reich scapegoat'.
6 A.Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1971), pp. 188–9; E.P.Hanfstaengl, *Zwischen Weissem und Braunem Haus* (Munich, 1970), p. 334.
7 V.Brittain, *Testament of Experience* (London, 1981), p. 101.
8 Gamm, op. cit., pp. 91, 146, n., citing R.S.Davies, *Hitler's Crazy Gang* (London, n.d.), p. 14.
9 In the 1930s Cliveden, Buckinghamshire, then home of Lord and Lady Astor, was a famous political centre; see J.Gunther, *Inside Europe* (London, 1937), pp. 240–1.
10 Lit. 'Teutonic Maiden'—presumably dressed in some sort of Nazi uniform.
11 Lit. 'the jolly Communist girl'. Lady Jessica Mitford's sympathies indeed lay in that direction.
12 Sir N.Henderson, *Failure of a Mission* (London, 1940), pp. 74, 110–11, 163.
13 ibid., pp. 163–4, 251, 274–5; E.von Weizsäcker, *Erinnerungen* (Munich, 1950), p. 164.
14 Henderson, op. cit., pp. 84–8, 227.
15 ibid., pp. 84–5.
16 Von Weizsäcker, op. cit., pp. 163–5, 180–1, 237, 252; Henderson, op. cit., p. 235.

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17 Balbo, one of the earliest collaborators with Mussolini, fell out with him. He was not executed by Mussolini, however, but exiled to Libya to be Governor of that Italian colony, and was killed in 1940 during a British air raid on Tobruk. (See Gunther, op. cit., pp. 213ff.)
18 This is a reference to Goebbels' mendacious broadcasts and statements in the German press.
19 See *Sunday Express Magazine,* 8 December 1985, p. 27.
20 'Fortress Europe'—a favourite slogan of Hitler's.
21 Lit. 'World power or decline'.
22 J.C.Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1980), pp. 246, 465, n. 9, citing Coulondre, op. cit., p. 329.
23 See Chapter 6, The Arts.
24 Another reference to *Götz von Berlichingen,* the German equivalent of the reverse V-sign in this country.
25 German Foreign Office, at the Wilhelmstrasse.
26 'Ich habe den Vater gesehen und den Sohn, aber den Heiligen Geist?' (attributed to François-Poncet after one of his visits to the *Auswärtige Amt*).
27 Reference to *Berlin-Rom-Achse* (German-Italian Alliance).
28 Pun on Palazzo Farnese (French Embassy) and *Palazzo far niente* ('doing nothing').
29 Attributed to Pierre Seigneur de Bayard (1475–1524), valiant soldier.
30 Referring to Göring's austerity measures imposed by him on the German people, i.e. 'Guns instead of butter'.
31 Lit. 'a good-for-nothing'.
32 'Goose-step.'
33 Gunther, op. cit., p. 47.
34 Dr Wilhelm Stekl, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in Vienna.
35 *Times,* 29 July 1935, cited by Gunther, op. cit., p. 83.
36 *Schwarzhaariger Schrumpfgermane.*
37 The largest assembly hall in Berlin at the time.
38 When he offered the Hitler salute to King George VI.
39 Formerly a fictitious Hungarian humourist.
40 Massacre in AD 782 at Verden in Lower Saxony; the numbers killed are uncertain.
41 Gunther, op. cit., p. 110.
42 See Chapter 3, Goebbels.
43 All these cartoons were collected and reproduced in A.Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion in World War II* (London, 1984).
44 A unit of the German Air Force, especially formed by Göring to participate on the side of Franco against the Soviet-backed 'International Brigade'.
45 *Deutscher Michel*—a rather old-fashioned personification of Germany, with a slightly pejorative connotation, referring to the qualities of being guileless and honest. Translated, the text runs something like this: 'Farewell, silly Michael; you won't be able to do without "hammer and sickle"' (the Soviet emblem).
46 Fest, op. cit., p. 245.
47 Partitions of Poland had occurred in 1772 (Russian, Prussian and Austrian gains), 1793 (Prussian and Russian expansion) and in 1795 (the dissolution of Poland).
48 R.Hermes, *Witz contra Nazi* (Hamburg, 1946), pp. 21–2.
49 U.von Hassell, *Vom Andern Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1964), p. 125.
50 'My name is Willy.'
51 Personal communication.
52 Germans from the mountainous area to the north and northeast of Czechoslovakia.

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53 Early in the Third Reich the *Horst Wessel Lied* officially became the second national anthem.
54 A sarcastic take-off. 'Deutschland nimmt sich alles' means 'Germany takes everything away'.
55 Von Hassell, op. cit., p. 278.
56 ibid., p. 318; Von Schalburg, a former Danish Guards' officer, was the leading Danish collaborator with the Nazis.
57 ibid. Dagmar House, a former Danish Royal palace, accommodated the office of Best on the top floor, the SS police on the first floor, and the Nazi prison on the ground floor.
58 In fact, this became the title of a book published in 1976 relating the activities of the Danish Resistance: David Lampe's *The Savage Canary* (London, 1976). On 21 June 1944 Best had ordered a curfew for Danish civilians in Copenhagen. This was followed on 26 June by the *Schalburgtaget* when Danish collaborators went on a rampage in the Tivoli amusement park in Copenhagen. As mentioned above, the scuttling of the ships of the Danish Navy in 1943 was the beginning of active resistance, with the help of the SDE (Special Operations Executive) which led to the overthrow of the collaborationist Danish government.
59 Von Weizsäcker, op. cit., p. 111, quoting Napoleon Bonaparte.
60 See Chapter 6, *Gleichschaltung*—'Warthegau'.
61 Von Weizsäcker, op. cit., p. 110; he comments that in fact Göring had used an even stronger expression.
62 ibid., p. 113.
63 Hermes, op. cit., p. 132.
64 Von Weizsäcker, op. cit., p. 358: 'Ich mag die Deutschen ja so gern, aber lassen Sie doch das mit dem Wotan!'
65 A.Rhodes' book quoted in note 43 above contains a wide range of cartoons from many countries.

**9 HITLER'S WAR**

1 O.-H.Kühner, *Wahn and Untergang, 1939–45* (Suttgart, 1956).
2 R.J.O'Neill, *The German Army and the Nazi Party 1933–39* (London, 1968), pp. 198–203.
3 ibid., text and sketch, pp. 288–209.
4 A play on the similarity between 'Himmler' and *Himmel* (Heaven). Thus *himmlische Heerscharen* primarily means 'heavenly host', but could be interpreted to mean 'Himmler's host', i.e. the SS.
5 Owing to the enmity between the Army and Himmler's SS.
6 Kühner, op. cit., p. 25.
7 Mostly of so-called 'blue-collar' or working-class background.
8 See Chapter 4, The armed forces.
9 *K.v.* is short for *kriegsverwendungsfähig* ('fit for front-line service').
10 General term for German soldier serving at the front (probably derived from the late medieval word *Lanzknecht* or *Landsknecht*).
11 Hitler's new line of fortifications along the western border of the Reich.
12 'damned sedentary war'—when nothing happens.
13 General term for French front-line soldier (lit. 'hairy').
14 Nazi workforce for the building of *Autobahnen* and also of fortifications in the west.
15 Typical Nazi slogan.

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16 The same—often applied to *Volksdeutsch* (ethnic Germans living outside the frontiers of the *Reich*).
17 W.L.Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1964), pp. 895–7.
18 ibid., pp. 901f; Kühner, op. cit., p. 59.
19 Kühner, op. cit., p. 65.
20 Shirer, op. cit., p. 627 n.; on 9 August 1939 Göring, boastful about the *Luftwaffe's* air defences, said 'The Ruhr will not be subjected to a single bomb. If an enemy bomber reaches the Ruhr my name is not Hermann Göring; you can call me Meier!'
21 K.Hirche, *Der 'Braune' und der 'Rote' Witz* (Düsseldorf/Vienna, 1964), p. 177. In 1942–3 Hitler ordered General Unruh to find more and more new soldiers for the eastern front by inspecting factories not absolutely essential for the armament industries and thus releasing more men for the front. Unruh is of course close to *Unruhe* ('restlessness') which was what resulted from the General's inspections. He was nicknamed *Heldenklau* ('hero-snatcher'). This was the original version of the ditty:
O Adolf, denk' an Stalingrad
Und befolge unsern Rat:
Mach Frieden, stell' das Morden
ein
Und lass' uns Frontsoldaten heim.
An Sieg glaubt nicht mal eine Sau,
Da hilft dir auch kein Heldenklau.
22 In German this reads:
Steig' hernieder, greiser
Streiter,
Dein Gefreiter kann nicht
weiter!
23 Shirer, op. cit., pp. 283–7.
24 ibid., pp. 587–9; 'The Pact of Steel'.
25 ibid., p. 622.
26 ibid., pp. 372, 398, 411–25.
27 See G.Ciano's *Dairies 1939–43* (London, 1974), p. 19.
28 Lit. 'coal thief or 'coal grabber'; a figure created by Goebbels with the purpose of admonishing people to save coal. As Italy was entirely dependent on Germany for her coal, there was some justification for giving Mussolini that epithet.
29 D.Young, *Rommel* (London, 1950), pp. 145–6.
30 ibid., p. 133.
31 ibid.; 'Eno's Fruit Salts', then a popular laxative, used here in contrast to 'Mr Bromo', which presumably stands for the sedative bromide.
32 ibid.: *asinus Mussolini*—possibly a reference to the practice of Italian butchers in using asses' meat for making salami.
33 'Pompolini': a fictitious name with a pejorative flavour suggesting pomposity.
34 Goethe's 'Zahme Xenien', fifth stanza:
Der Achse wird mancher Stoss
versetzt,
Sie rührt sich nicht—und bricht zuletzt.
35 Adding some German units to the largely Italian front line.
36 Nach Hause, nach Hause geh'n wir nicht
Bis dass die 'Achse' bricht.

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37 Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blüh'n,
Im dunklen Laub die Goldorangen glüh'n,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht,
Kennst du es wohl? Dahin, dahin,
Möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, zieh'n.

38 Kennst du das Land, von Dichtern ausposaunt,
Auf dem Papiere höchlichst angestaunt,
Gemalt von Malern, die es nie geseh'n.
Mit bunten Farben, herrlich, wunderschön!
Kennst du es wohl? Von dort, von dort
Woll'n wir so bald wie möglich wieder fort!
Kenst du das Land, verbrannt vom Sonnenstrahl,
Gebirge drin, verödet, dürr und kahl,
Da ist kein Baum, der seinen Schutz dir gibt,
Wenn heiss die Sonne auf den Schädel glüht.
Kennst du es wohl? Von dort, von dort,
Woll'n wir so bald wie möglich wieder fort.

39 Like El Agheila and El Alamein.

40 The 'miracle of Dunkirk' *(Dünkirchen)* and the Battle of Stalingrad.

41 German pun: *heul* ('howl') instead of *Heil*. The official communiqué issued when the North African campaign had ended in disaster contained the remarkable statement: 'Die schützende Flanke Afrika ist zwar gefallen, aber stärker denn je steht die Festung Europa' ('Although Africa, the flank which protected us, has failed, Fortress Europe is now all the stronger'). This elicited a dry rejoinder from Roosevelt: 'The shortcoming of that fortress is that Hitler has forgotten to provide it with a roof'. (Cf. Kühner, op. cit., p. 210.)

42 A unit of Hitler's air force fighting for Franco.

43 Shirer, op. cit., pp. 78–99.

44 In English: 'free of charge'.

45 Three Power Agreement.

46 The death sentence, though threatened, was in fact not always carried out on offenders of this sort.

47 Anyone who listened in to foreign broadcasts.

48 Also the title of Sefton Delmer's book on 'black' wartime stations.

49 Lit. 'Despite being—or pretending to be—always victorious, eventually overcome by death'. It is thus a *conradictio in objecto* although it makes sense as a satirical statement.

50 'Be always truthful and honest, and never move an inch from God's ways, until your death.'

51 Who produced a special, rather bawdy version of it: 'Ich war in St Nazaire in einem Puff'.

52 For the whole section, see S.Delmer, *Black Boomerang* (London, 1962), pp. 18–187.

53 P.Fleming, *Operation Sea Lion* (London, 1975), p. 107.

54 W.L.Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (London, 1964), pp. 210 and 411–13.

55 Fleming, op. cit., p. 118.

56 ibid., p. 119.

57 A distortion of the name of Sir Leslie Hore-Belisha, Secretary of War in Chamberlain's government of 1937, former Minister of Transport and the man who introduced Belisha beacons.

58 Fleming, op. cit., p. 118.

59 Shirer, *Berlin Diary,* p. 414.

60 ibid., pp. 414–15.

61 H.R.Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler* (London, 1947), pp. 48–52, 55–6.

62 Delmer, op. cit., pp. 104–6.

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63 Name of the station in German-occupied Belgrade and also the name of a ficti-tious soldier to whom 'Lili Marleen' addressed her song.

64 Jackson was author of the book *The Great Lili*.

65 For information about 'Lili Marleen' see the German journal *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg, 1982), no. 29, 173–4.

66 One such was the version sung by soldiers in northern Norway:
Über dem Polarkreis ist es bitter kalt,
Da gibt es keine Mädchen, nur Sumpf und Moor und
Wald.
Drum woll'n wir wieder heim in's Reich,
Zu Fuss, per Bahn, das ist uns gleich—
Zu dir, Lili Marleen.
And the one from the Afrikakorps:
Aus der Oase klingt ein dumpfer Ton:
Hier ist alles Scheisse, wisst ihr schon
davon?
Wenn die Kamele durch die Wüste geh'n,
Dann kannst du mich darunter seh'n,
Pass' auf, Lili Marleen.

67 Fleming, op. cit., pp. 57–8.

68 ibid., p. 123.

69 The slogan often used by Göring—though incorrectly attributed to him, as it was first used by Hess.

70 Kühner, op. cit., p. 295.

71 The territory of Germany before the annexation of Austria.

72 Most houses in Germany had cellars.

73 *Köbes* is Cologne dialect for Jakobus (James), who is also a fictitious denizen of Cologne like the other two characters.

74 Goethe's poem:
'Lied des Harfners' (1st stanza):
Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen
Mächte!

75 This is a parody of the traditional German Christmas celebration which takes place on Christmas Eve: The Christmas tree, decorated with candles and multicoloured balls, the children being entertained by the adults telling them fairy-tales while they are waiting for their presents (also given on Christmas Eve), and the handing over of the presents, which is called *die Bescherung* (the latter word having a *double entendre* here).
During the last war Allied bombers dropped lighted markers which illuminated the sites to be bombed, and were called 'Christmas trees' by the German population; the 'balls' were the German anti-aircraft (flak) ammunition, the children had to wait (in the cellars during the air raids). Goebbels told fairy-tales over the wireless, and the detonating bombs were the *Bescherung* (cf. *eine schöne Bescherung*—a 'mishap' or 'trouble').

76 Fleming, op. cit., pp. 246–7.

77 Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich,* p. 325.

78 Fleming, op. cit., p. 119.

79 Delmer, op. cit., p. 170.

80 Shirer, op. cit., p. 1199 n.

81 Delmer, op. cit., p. 170.

82 Invented by Wernher von Braun, then in charge of the establishment at Peenemünde.

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83 Hitler's residence near Berchtesgaden.
84 *u.k.* stands for *unabkömmlich* ('indispensable', 'exempt from military service').
85 A reference to the ill-fated Children's Crusade of AD 1212; see S.Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (London, 1980), vol. III, pp. 129–43.
86 Deime, a minor river in East Prussia, tributary to the Pregel.
87 Lit. 'hedgehog positions'. The soldiers enclosed and besieged there for some time nursed the hope that any relief could only come from the *Luftwaffe,* which they therefore sarcastically dubbed 'die Feuerwehr der Ostfront' ('the fire brigade of the eastern front').
88 The poet was Theodor Körner who fell fighting against Napoleon; the poem includes the lines: 'Das Volk steht auf,/ der Sturm bricht los' ('The nation rises,/ the storm is unleashed').
89 After the victorious campaign against France in 1940 Hitler visited Napoleon's tomb at the Dôme des invalides.
90 The original nursery rhyme goes as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Maikäfer flieg' | (Fly away, May-bug, |
| Vater ist im Krieg, | Father's in the war, |
| Mutter is in Pommerland, | Mother's in Pomerania, |
| Pommerland ist abgebrannt. | Pomerania has been burned down). |

91 *Spätlese* means 'late vintage', a term normally used in viniculture.
92 A pun: *General-Anzeiger normally* means 'general advertiser' (a paper), but here it means 'advertiser of the Generals'; cf. W.Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder* (Cologne, n.d., after 1949), pp. 287–91.
93 'Whispering propaganda'.
94 U.von Hassell, *Vom Andern Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1964), p. 317.
95 Kühner, op. cit., p. 277.
96 Personal expereince.
97 Kühner, op. cit., p. 269.
98 A.Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1971), p. 661.
99 Personal report to author.
100 A lagoon off the Baltic, south-west of Königsberg.
101 H.-J.Gamm, *Der Flüsterwitz in Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1984), pp. 155–6; R. Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (London, 1983), pp. 137–8; personal information.
102 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 275.
103 ibid., pp. 276, 622 n. 60.
104 A German pun: *Brutalität* ('brutality'), sounding similar to *brüten* ('to brood'), and *Legalität* ('legality'), sounding like *legen* ('to lay' [eggs]).
105 A take-off of the substitutes so widely used during the war.
106 As Berlin was by then virtually encircled by Russian troops, the western and eastern fronts were only a few miles apart.
107 A slogan frequently used by Goebbels after the general levy had been proclaimed.
108 Low rank in the Party hierarchy.
109 A pun: *Schutz* sounds similar to *Schutt;* hence *Schutzpatron* ('patron saint') becomes *Schuttpatron* ('patron of rubble').
110 Trevor-Roper, op. cit., pp. 127–8.
111 Speer, op. cit., p. 619.
112 ibid., p. 620.
113 By now amounting to millions; see J.Roy and P.Cotet, *Deutsche erleben ihre Zeit 1942–1962* (Paris, 1963), p. 306.
114 The barbarian migrations during the Dark Ages, *c.*AD 375–*c.*658.
115 Popular Swedish singer and actress.

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116 Hitler and most of his inner circle believed in astrology, and the sudden death of Roosevelt raised new and entirely irrational hopes that a reversal of the Führer's misfortune was just around the corner; see Trevor-Roper, op. cit., pp. 106–10. At the same time, as soon as it became obvious that all these expectations were mere flights of fancy, Hitler found a scapegoat in the astrologers, all of whom were put in concentration camps. The most prominent of them, a certain Krafft, was put to death, being suspected by Hitler of having had a hand in the flight of Hess to Scotland; see C.Wilson, *The Occult* (London, 1971), p. 326.

117 Kühner, op. cit., pp. 78–86, 95–9, 108 and 129.

118 J.Morris, *Pax Britannica* (London, 1982), vol. III, pp. 442–3.

119 The last sentence is a dig at the lack of success of the Italian ally in contrast to the remarkable progress made by the Germans.

120 A dig at the Japanese, by 'promoting' the Emperor of Japan to the low Nazi post of *Blockwalter*.

121 A reference to the insignificance of Switzerland in the eyes of Nazi Germany, which will be able to conquer it by a mere *Gefolgschaft,* the smallest unit of the Hitler Youth.

122 This is a dig at the swarthy complexion of Goebbels.

123 A favourite expression of Hitler, reiterated *ad nauseam*.

124 Hitler promoted very large numbers of Generals to Field Marshals.

125 A dig at the decoration mania in the Third Reich. Hitler not only reconstituted the Iron Cross, First and Second Class, early in the war, but later—in ascending order of merit—the Knight's Cross, the Knight's Cross with oak leaves, the Knight's Cross with diamonds, and the German Cross in gold.

126 Another favourite expression of Hitler, referring to the rank he held during the First World War, and also reiterated by him *ad nauseam*.

127 Felix Hartlaub.

128 American ('Sherman') and Russian ('T34') tanks in the last war.

129 Presumably a reference to Speer.

**10 THE END OF THE THIRD REICH, YEAR ZERO AND AFTERMATH**

1 J.Roy and P.Cotet, *Deutsche erleben ihre Zeit 1942–1962* (Paris, 1963), p. 103.

2 'Lieber zehn Russen auf dem B..., als eine Bombe unterm A...!'

3 Walter Ulbricht, leading Communist, later Prime Minister of the GDR; see W. Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlässt ihre Kinder* (Cologne, n.d., after 1949), p. 340.

4 ibid., p. 373–6, also referring to *Spalinger, der falsche Kommandant von Berlin*.

5 Ernst Kaltenbrunner (1904–46) succeeded Heydrich as Chief of the SD, the police of the SS; a man of the most sinister reputation, later executed as a war criminal.

6 Leonhard, op. cit., p. 340; according to him, this joke was told during a farewell party given to Pieck (later President of the GDR) and Ulbricht before they left Moscow for Berlin in early May 1945.

7 In fact many of the men imprisoned and awaiting their trial at Nuremberg wrote their autobiographies or apologiae at this time. Speer did this, and so did Schacht, von Papen, von Weizsäcker and several others.

8 Rosenberg wrote his *Mythus des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts* before the war; 'obscurantists' (*Dunkelmänner,* 'viri obscuranti') refers to polemical treatises against the Papacy written in AD 1515 by unknown humanists. Rosenberg too attacked the Papacy in his *Mythus*.

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9 Von Schirach, *Reichsjugendführer,* wrote somewhat effeminate poems in praise of Nazidom and Hitler; his personality too was in contrast to the image of masculinity promoted by his *Hitlerjugend*.

10 'Alle Räder müssen rollen für den Sieg' was changed to 'Naziköpfe rollen nach dem Krieg'.

11 *Die Wetterfahnen!*
Wir drängten uns in die Partei,
Wir waren überall dabei,
Wir waren gierige Profitler
Und schrien immer nur 'Heil Hitler!'
Wir sah'n in ihm ein höh'res
Wesen,
Doch Nazis—sind wir nie gewesen!

12 This is a German pun which turns on the word *Reich* ('Empire') and *reich* ('rich', 'many') used as a *double entendre* here, i.e. rich (many, *viele*) *Fragen* ('questions') about former Nazi affiliations.

13 See Chapter 5.

14 A *double entendre:* Oppenheimer, a Jewish surname, is derived from the town of Oppenheim in Rhenish Hesse, where a well-known Hock is produced.

15 *Berliner Sprüche während der Blockade:*
'Lieber täglich etwas Pom (Berlin slang for *pomme de terre*)
als noch einmal: "Frau, komm!'"

16 and
'Lieber einen Winter
frieren
als zehn Jahre in Sibirien!'

17 Most refugees from East Prussia arrived in the west without any documentary proof of their former association with the NSDAP of which many had been ardent supporters.

18 A *double entendre:* the French-occupied zone was to a large extent in the Black Forest and consisted of poor agricultural land, and the German politicians there belonged to the centralist ('black') party.

19 Personal recollection.

20 German: 'Vogel friss' oder stirb'!' The adapted song is rendered here in the very crude original GI, rather unorthographical, version.

21 From *Landsknecht,* or *Lanzknecht* (a German foot soldier in the fifteenth century), a term often used for German soldiers in the Second World War.

22 Der Landser liegt im Massengrab,
die Frau in fremden Betten.
Der Landser starb für's Vaterland,
die Frau für Zigaretten.
(*Frau* in this context means 'wife'.)

23 NKVD—'Commissariat of the Interior'—was the Soviet equivalent of the *Gestapo*. Its personnel served in uniform with the Red Army during the war.

24 Personal experience in Damgarten/Pomerania and elsewhere in the *Ostzone*.

25 A local paediatrician in Rostock (personal experience).

26 Numerous personal experiences and communications with several people who had those experiences too.

27 *Uhri, uhri*—Russian slang for German *Uhren,* meaning 'watches'.

28 Personal, often moving experiences.

29 The German version is 'Willi, halt' die Uhr fest!' 'Willy, watch your watch!' actually sounds better in English than in the original.

30 German translation (lit. 'Little Father') traditionally used in Russia for the Czar and now Stalin.

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31 Common German term for American soldiers.
32 Personal observation: in a neighbouring house in Rostock, which had been requisitioned by a Soviet General, a pig was kept in one of the living rooms.
33 Personal experience.
34 *Sonstige* was the official term applied to the large majority of food-ration group VI.
35 *Willkommen, ihr Sonstigen!*
36 West German politician, later the first Prime Minister of West Germany.
37 Adenauer was clean-shaven, but Walter Ulbricht wore a goatee (*Spitzbart* in German), by which nickname he was also known.
38 It was widely rumoured that potatoes were now needed mainly for the distillation of raw spirit, of which there was an excessive consumption by the occupying Red Army in the *Ostzone*.
39 Russian for 'I don't understand'.
40 Scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid and typhus, but especially widespread VD; there were no antibiotics to combat them in the *Ostzone*.
41 It was rumoured that the 'debagging' of men walking on quiet streets occurred because Russian soldiers needed civilian clothes to desert to the west; personal experience of colleagues and neighbours who underwent such ordeals even during the winter in Rostock.
42 Longevity has been claimed to be more common in Georgia, and in the Caucasus generally, than in any other part of the world.
43 Newly appointed teachers in the *Ostzone*. They underwent cramming courses of no longer than six weeks (as did judges!) and were selected regardless of their previous schooling but according to their 'political reliability'.
44 It was said that during 1946 the daily exodus to the west was more like 3,000.
45 Kurfürstendamm—fashionable street in West Berlin.
46 A village in Upper Bavaria where, since 1634, Passion plays, in memory of the Black Death, have been performed every ten years.
47 Willy Brandt, the well-known West German politician, one-time Mayor of West Berlin.
48 See Figure 59 for facsimile.

**EPILOGUE**

1 U.von Hassell, *Vom Andern Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Hamburg, 1964).
2 ibid., p. 183.
3 S.Lukes and I.Galnoor, *No Laughing Matter—a Collection of Political Jokes* (London, 1985), p. xii.
4 R.Grunberger, *A Social History of the Third Reich* (London, 1933), quoting the instance of a Berlin Lutheran pastor who was executed after he had told an anti-Nazi joke to a plumber employed by him, who had then denounced him.
5 Sir N.Henderson, *Failure of a Mission* (London, 1940, pp. 84–5; J.Gunther, *Inside Europe* (London, 1937), pp. 16f.; W.L.Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (London, 1941), pp. 411, 440–1.
6 'Butterflies' *(Schmetterlinge),* presumably because of the ephemeral nature of both butterflies and these jokes; see K.Sellin, *Geflüstertes. Vox Populi—Die Hitlerei im Volksmund* (Heidelberg, 1946), p. 143.
7 Lukes and Galnoor, op. cit., p. xii.
8 E.P.Hanfstaengl, *Hitler in der Karikatur der Welt: Tat gegen Tinte* (Berlin, 1933).
9 A.Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* (London, 1971) 188–9.
10 Personal communication.

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11 L.Cowan and M.Cowan, *The Wit of the Jews* (London, 1978); Lukes and Galnoor, op. cit.
12 J.Hiden and J.Farquharson, *Explaining Hitler's Germany* (London, 1983).
13 Henderson, op. cit., p. 26.
14 ibid., p. 271; the emissary was the theologian Dr Gerstenmaier.
15 E.Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer—Theologian—Christian—Contemporary* (London, 1970), pp. 839–40.
16 ibid., p. 676.
17 'Hassell liebte es, von einer "Band of Brothers" zu sprechen'; see von Hassell, op. cit., p. 7.
18 Von Hassell, op. cit., p. 250.
19 W.L.Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (London, 1964), p. 1223.
20 J.C.Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches* (Munich, 1980), p. 331.
21 O.-H.Kühner, *Wahn und Untergang, 1939–45* (Stuttgart, 1956), p. 13.
22 Fest, op. cit., p. 331.
23 ibid., pp. 330, 485.
24 Von Hassell, op. cit., pp. 5–8.
25 P.Hoffmann, *The History of the German Resistance, 1933–1945* (London, 1977), p. 508.

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**GLOSSARY**

NB: the definitions in German given in inverted commas appeared in the German dictionary *Der Sprach-Brockhaus* (F.A.Brockhaus, [Leipzig, 1944]) and are most significant for the period.

*Abitur* University entrance examination
*Abkürzungsfimmel* Current fashion to abbreviate everything—AKUFI
*Abwehr* Counter-intelligence
*Achse* Axis; 'Verbindungslinie, z.B. von Berlin nach Rome', i.e. the alliance between Germany and Italy
*Abnennachweis, arischer* Proof of Aryan descent
*–, einfacher (ordinary)* Documentary proof of non-Jewish descent as far back as one's grandparents
*–, grosser (extended) 'Der Angriff'* The same, though as far back as 1750, as required by the SS Berlin daily newspaper, edited by Goebbels
*Anschluss* Union; 'Verbindung mit etwas Vorhandenem, z.B. Oesterreichs an das Deutsche Reich', a Nazi euphemism for Austria's annexation in 1938
*Arbeitsdienst* Compulsory national labour service for men under the age for conscription into the armed forces; domestic service for women of the same age group was called 'Landjahr'
*Arier* '1. völkerkundlich: Indo-Iranier; 2. rassenkundlich: Angehörige der alteinheimischen europäischen Hauptrassen' ('1. ethnologically: Indo-Iranians; 2. racially: members of the principal indigenous European races')
*Arische Gesetzgebung* 'The laws by which the political and cultural influence of members of alien races, especially of the Jews, have been eliminated in the German Reich'; Nuremberg laws of 15 September, 14 November 1935, and 1 September 1941, the last making it compulsory for Jews of both sexes after the completed sixth year of life to wear the yellow patch with the Star of David
*Auswärtiges Amt* German Foreign Office
*Bekenntniskirche* Confessional Church

*Betreuen* 'Sorgsam pflegen' ('taking care of), but in the Third Reich widely used to describe the activities of a Nazi or a Nazi institution toward individuals hostile to the régime, thus reversing the original meaning. See Chapter 4, SS, police and concentration camps
*Blut und Boden (abbreviated to 'Blubo')* Lit. 'blood and soil'; Nazi concept of the identity of 'blood' with 'soil', i.e. of the German people with the Fatherland; a catchphrase used in the context of agriculture, the press, literature, entertainment, music and the visual arts. See Chapter 6

*Bonze* Originally: a Buddhist priest in Japan; 'Parteigrösse der marxistisch-demokratischen Zeit', prominent functionary of a ruling party in the Weimar Republic; term used clandestinely in the Third Reich to denote Nazi Party bosses
*BDM (Bund Deutscher Mädel)* Nazi girl aged fourteen to eighteen, a member of the HJ ('Hitler Youth')

*DAF (Deutsche Arbeitsfront)* German Labour Front; Nazi organization after the liquidation of the German trade unions in May 1933. See Chapter 3, Ley
*Deutsche Christen* 'German Christians' who conformed with Nazism. See Chapter 6, Reich Bishop Müller
*Deutsche Glaubensbewegung* Non-Christian movement; see Chapter 4, SS, police and concentration camps, and Rosenberg

*Einsatzkommando* SS units, mainly deployed in Poland and Russia for punitive raids against Jews and other civilians
*Endlösung* 'Final solution' (of the Jewish problem), i.e. the extermination of the Jews; the Holocaust. See Chapter 4, SS, police and concentration camps
*Entnazifizierung* 'Denazification'; the process by which German courts assessed the involvement in the Nazi régime of any adult German living in any of the three western zones of occupied Germany after the collapse of the Third Reich
*Entwarnung* The 'all clear' after air-raids
*Erbgesundheitsgesetz* Law promulgated in 1933 with the aim of eradicating hereditary diseases and deformities by means of compulsory sterilization
*Erbhofbauer* The only farmer in future to be known as 'Bauer', as a member of the 'neuer Blut-und-Boden-Adel' ('the new nobility of blood and soil') owning and managing an Erbhof (medium-sized farm of up to 300 acres)
*Erbhofgesetz* Law instituted in 1935 selecting some 600,000 farms (Erbhöfe) to be passed intact from father to eldest son or nearest male relative—a Nazi adaptation of the rights of primogeniture practised as law by the German landed aristocracy, which the Erbhofgesetz was to replace. See Chapter 6, Agriculture

*Flak* Originally abbreviation of 'Flugzeugabwehrkanone' ('anti-aircraft gun') in the First World War; now generally referred to as anti-aircraft unit
*Fragebogen* Questionnaire which had to be answered by all adult Germans in the three western sectors. See 'Entnazifizierung' above
*Führer* '1. Adolf Hitler in seiner Stellung an der Spitze der NSDAP und als Oberhaupt des Deutschen Reiches' ('Adolf Hitler in his position as Leader of the Nazi Party and as Head of the German Reich')
'2. Eine überlegene Persönlichkeit, in der andere die Verkörperung ihres Willens wiederfinden' ('a superior person in whom others rediscover the embodiment of their own willpower')
*Führergrundsatz* 'Im Deutschen Reich seit 1933: der organisatorische Grundsatz aller Erscheinungen und Organizationsformen des Volkes: Verantwortung nach oben und Autorität nach unten'

('Führer principle, in Germany since 1933: the fundamental principle on which the organisation of all manifestations and institutions of the people is based—namely the maintenance of responsibility toward those in charge and of authority toward those below')
*Führerstaat* 'Ein vom Vertrauen des Volkes getragener Führer vereinigt in sich die gesamte Staatsgewalt; autoritärer Staat z.B. Deutsches Reich, Italien'
('A Führer supported by the confidence of the people represents in himself the whole authority of the State; authoritarian state, e.g. Germany, Italy')

*Gauleiter* Highest Party leader in a region (province or part of a province)
*Gestapo* Abbreviation of 'Geheime Staatspolizei'; 'die deutsche Polizei zur Verfolgung von Anschlägen und zur Abwendung von Gefahren gegen den Staat' ('German Secret Police responsible for the pursuit [investigation] of attempts against the State and for the safeguarding of the State [against traitors]')
*Gleichschaltung* 'Nach der nationalsozialistischen Machtübernahme erfolgte einheitliche Ausrichtung' ('After the Nazi takeover complete adaptation to the régime was achieved'); complete Nazification

*Hamstern* To hoard—especially foodstuffs, and illegally
*Hiwi's* Abbreviated form of 'Hilfswillige' (lit. 'willing helpers'): Russian deserters and prisoners of war pressed into the German army during the war
*HJ* Abbreviation for 'Hitler Jugend' ('Hitler Youth'), comprising both sexes over fourteen years of age

*Jungmädel* Girls of the Nazi Youth aged from ten to fourteen
*Jungvolk (DJ)* Boys of the same age group ('Pimpf')

*KDF* Abbreviation of 'Kraft durch Freude' ('Strength through Joy'). See Chapter 3, Ley
*Kampfzeit* Nazi term for the period of struggle for political power before 1933, the participants being later referred to as 'Alte Kämpfer' ('Old Comrades')
*Kristallnacht* Lit. 'crystal night', 'night of broken glass'; nationwide anti-Semitic pogrom of 9–10 November 1938. In the cities the excesses resulted in the breaking of the shop windows and the looting of the contents.
*KZ* Abbreviation of *Konzentrationslager* ('concentration camps'): 'Anhaltslager, Sammellager für Sicherzustellende' ('camps for the detention and surveillance of unreliable individuals')
*Kreisleiter* District Party leader

*Landflucht* Leaving (lit. 'fleeing') the country for the towns
*Landjahr* See above: 'Arbeitsdienst'
*Lebensborn, e. V.* 'Fountain of Life, Ltd.' See Chapter 3, Himmler
*Lebensraum* Lit. 'living space': Nazi propaganda slogan, aimed at the justification of Hitler's 'Drang nach Osten' (lit. 'urge toward the east'), that is, his aggressive expansion policy, especially eastwards
*Luftschutzraum* Air-raid shelter, usually the cellar

*Luftschutzwart* Air-raid warden
*Luftwaffe* German Air Force (after 1935)

*Marine (Kriegsmarine)* German Navy
*Machtübernahme, Machtergreifung* The takeover of the entire power of the State on 30 January 1933 after Hitler became Chancellor

*Napola* Training school for future Nazi leaders. See also 'Ordensburgen'
*Nationalhymnen* National anthems—2-: 1. Deutschland
2. Horst-Wessel-Lied
NSDAP-Struktur Structure of the Nazi Party, in ascending order: *Block, Zelle, Ortsgruppe, Kreis, Gau, Reich,* headed by *Leiter* ('leaders')
*NS Frauenschaft* Women's auxiliary of the NSDAP
*NS Lehrerbund* Nazi teachers' organization
*NS Volkswohlfahrt (NSV)* Nazi People's Welfare

*Ordensburgen* Another term for special training schools for future Nazi élite ('Junkers'); 'Erziehungstätten für Führernachwuchs'. See Chapter 3, Ley.
*Organisation Todt* Organization constructing the *Autobahnen* and the *Westwall*
*Ortsgruppenleiter* Nazi leader of the ward of a city, or of a small town
*Ostarbeiter* Eastern slave workers (Russians, Poles and others)
*Ostmark* Nazi term for Austria after the annexation
*Ostwall* Primitive fortification erected in 1944 in West and East Prussia
*Ostzone* Russian-occupied part of Germany

*Pimpf Jungvolkjunge.* See above: 'Jungvolk'

*Reichsnährstand* Reich Food Authority. See Chapter 6, Agriculture
*Reichswehr* The German Army established after the Treaty of Versailles. It consisted of 100,000 men. Term used up to 1935
*Röhm-Putsch* The 'blood purge', also called 'Night of the Long Knives': 30 June 1934
*Rosinenbomber* Anglo-American aeroplanes dropping food supplies during the Soviet blockade of West Berlin in 1948–9

*SA* Abbreviation of *Sturmabteilung* ('Stormtrooper'); 'Brown Shirts', the Nazi militia. See Chapter 3, Röhm
*'Schwarzes Korps'* Weekly newspaper of the SS
*Schwarzhörer* Germans listening-in to enemy broadcasts during the war
*Schwarzsender* Subversive broadcasting station during the war, situated abroad. See Chapter 9, Broadcasting and Black Boomerang
*SD* Abbreviation of *Sicherheitsdienst* ('security service'); military police within the SS
*Seelöwe Unternehmen* Operation Sea Lion, Hitler's planned invasion of England
*Sippenhaft* Persecution of 'kith and kin', i.e. of relatives of members of the German Resistance after the failed attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July 1944
*SS* Abbreviation of *Schutzstaffel* ('security force') 'zum persönlichen Schutz des Führers und des Reiches im Innern' ('for the personal protection of the Führer and for the internal security of the Reich'); also known as 'Black Guards'. See Chapter 3, Himmler, and Chapter 4, SS, police and concentration camps
*SS Verfügungstruppe* Militarized SS (chiefly used in raids)
*Stuka* Abbreviation of *Sturzkampfflugzeug* ('dive-bomber')

*'Stürmer, Der'* Anti-Semitic, sadistic, pornographic weekly newspaper, edited by Julius Streicher
*System, Systemzeit* Nazi term for the Weimar Republic

*U-Boot* Submarine

*'Völkischer Beobachter'* Largest official Nazi daily paper
*Volksgerichtshof* People's court. See Chapter 4, Judiciary
*Volkssturm* The general levy of October 1944.

*Waffen SS* Armed units formed during the war, fighting alongside the Army, but under the command of the SS
*Wehrmacht* The German Armed Forces, consisting of *Heer* (army), *Marine* (navy) and *Luftwaffe* (airforce)
*Werwolf* Werewolf; name given to spurious irregular military units once planned for active operation after Germany's capitulation. See Chapter 3, Goebbels
*Westwall* Fortifications in the west, opposite the French Maginot Line and begun before the war. Later also known as the 'Siegfried Line'
*WHW* Abbreviation of *Winterhilfswerk* ('Winter Relief'); 'Werk der tatgewordenen Volksgemeinschaft im Kampf gegen Hunger und Kälte' ('the work carried out by the embodiment of the Volk community in its fight against hunger and cold')

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