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Bonfils, Tammen, and their Merry Men

TIMBER LINE. By Gene Fowler. New York: Covici-Friede. 1933. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

THIS is an adventure story of the journalism that battens on the "dark, unfathomed caverns" of the moron mind. The startling and terrible thing about this story is that it is true. The synopsis of the story is this:

A generation ago, at the close of the old century, Harry Tammen, a bar-keeper in Denver, met Fred Bonfils of Kansas City, who had been running a "policy shop" or local lottery. He did not use the mails. A "policy shop" was a gambling device designed to mulct the poor. Bonfils had made some money, perhaps a million dollars, perhaps less, out of his gambling device; Tammen, living in Denver, had some experience with the underworld and a rough, working knowledge of the Colorado plutocracy. The two formed a partnership, bought a dying newspaper in Denver called *The Evening Post*, and started out to amass fame and fortune. Their valuable idea was that they could break down the sales resistance of advertisers by high pressure methods which gave them perhaps an unmerited reputation as blackmailers, a reputation which they themselves cherished rather than deserved. It added to their power in selling advertising. They accumulated subscribers to their newspaper by applying the showman's methods. The broad ethical principle upon which they worked was that a sucker is born every minute. With big headlines they exploited sensational news. They appealed directly to the moron mind, being vendors of local stories of sex and violence. Because Denver and Colorado were filled and still are filled with men who have got rich quick, who have the vast power that comes with riches with no great sense of social responsibility, and with a seven devils lust for cheap notoriety, the *Denver Post*, tapping obvious sources of quick and easy money, became a financial success. Later it became a political power in the wide

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The Lens

By GRACE STRICKLER DAWSON

NEVER completely whole,
Oh, never clearly
Do I discern these passing by.
Even the soul
Of him most dearly
Close to me
Remains a stranger. For I cannot see
The world around me save
Through this intrinsic I,
A strange, translucent thing,
Convex, concave,
Fused in my suffering,
Marred by fine flaws
That blur the colors, flex the sight
And let me never quite
See clear, see true,
Perceive the intimate cause.
And there is nothing I can do.
For I must gaze
"Through a glass darkly" all my days.
Never shall I behold the clean
Exquisite outline of the truth until
Nothing is left between
And I can look my fill,
When the last word is spoken
And the lens—the lens lies broken.



"THE GREEN TABLE" OF INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY
Final scene of a Geneva Conference, satirically presented by The Jooss Ballet in "The Green Table." The ballet opens in New York October 31, after successful seasons in London and Paris.

Making of a Demagogue*

BY MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

ADOLF HITLER'S impresarios would seem to have done him a disservice on the whole in pruning down his eight-hundred-page "autobiography" to the skeleton form in which it is now offered to an American audience. In its original dimensions this work had the abandon, the histrionic frenzy of one of Dostoevsky's garrulous sinners; it had, despite its turgid and atrocious German, literary qualities which were unconscious and all its own. These have been lost, and also such logical organization as existed in the original, which was never much. At the same time it has plainly been impossible to "tone down" the book, to amend all the things which would presumably be incomprehensible, alarming, or offensive to Americans. To do this it would have been necessary to amend all.

One's first impression of Hitler's memoirs—approximately nine-tenths propaganda—is apt to be of marked disappointment and incredulity. The author tells us little enough about himself; his tracts on Pan-Germanism are neither new nor apt to be favorably seen on this side of the Atlantic; his anti-Semitism, too, seems scarcely up-to-date, since he and his cohorts seem to have taken the upper hand over the Israelites so decisively that there is no more sporting excitement in the affair. Is this all, one asks? Is this the Word of the great captain of the Nazis, the bible of the party which has effected the most important political upheaval in Europe since 1919? One reads here scraps of world history intermingled with fairy tales, invocations to humanitarianism and to sadism, pæans to chivalry and to bullying, shots of international politics, modern publicity, and medieval superstition. Here shrewd, worldly observations are mingled with colossal nonsense, daring notions with beetling-browed ignorance and incitements to riot. When was there ever such a wonderful crazy-quilt of ideas gotten up by the "actual head of a great European State?" The writings and memoirs of a Churchill, a Clemenceau, a Lenin, and a Trotsky make Hitler's resemble

nothing so much as the drivellings of an intoxicated schoolboy.

I have no wish to speak with impropriety; the new political dotage may gain over us here too. But before we become unhinged by the present state of the world and lose once for all our sense of proportion, let me record that in the period between 1919 and 1933, a modern dictator rose to triumph by choosing the mental age of ten or twelve as his frame of reference, the age at which "bogeys" and devils can be conjured up to terrify and enrage. Other German leaders thought that Hitler had pitched his key too low; but he has shown by his great lesson in politics that they were wrong.

The dogmas, the arguments in Hitler's book do not teach us anything about the social question or even the Nazi revolution—whose historic causes and implications have been widely discussed. They do tempt us to reflect specifically upon the nature and mechanism of a Fascist demagogue. By his confession of faith, world history to this successful demagogue is the affair of a few brilliant autocrats, Cæsar, Frederick the Great, and Bismarck. Behind the great autocrat is the great race from which he stems, and which he leads to glory: the Germans, for instance, "the highest culture-race." "But all the wisdom of this earth is as nothing unless served, covered, and protected by force." Hence Germany was at its apex under Bismarck and the rule of the Prussian army. The finest education for a man is German army life, and "the greatest and most unforgettable period" of Hitler's life was that of the World War. As compared with the "pure" Germans, the French are a race chiefly given to "bastardizing" the colored races which are under their dominion. The treaty of Brest-Litovsk forced upon the Russians by the victorious German army was a work of Christian mercy, "truly immense and humane," and in no way justified the harsh terms of Versailles. What caused the Germans finally to lose the war was not Allied and American power, or naval blockade and hunger, but the conspiracy of Jewish Marxists. Democracy and all representa-

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The Collapse of Internationalism

THE INTELLIGENT MAN'S REVIEW OF EUROPE TODAY. By G. D. H. Cole and Margaret Cole. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1933. \$3.

Reviewed by EDGAR ANSEL MOWRER

THIS is an ambitious title, but the book justifies it. For these English authors have produced the best existing handbook of contemporary Europe. One so good that it caused this reader to overlook an inveterate prejudice against handbooks. Just now we are undergoing an epidemic of Baedeker for the inner life. Mr. Wells with his trilogy, Mr. Shaw with his clues leading the "intelligent woman" to an understanding of socialism and the "black girl" straight to God, Mr. Cole himself with his charts through contemporary economic chaos and the mysteries of money—all have taken a shot at supplying a world presumably gasping for information with appropriate manna. It is probably a mistake to believe that what this age needs is more information; more wisdom and more honesty would perhaps be closer to the point. None the less this latest invitation to the "intelligent man" to read through over six hundred pages of closely packed information and discussion without any anecdotes, witticisms, or lollypops for additional enticement is worthy of acceptance. This book deserves readers and many of them.

The Coles' encyclopædia of information concerning contemporary Europe in the bewildering present consists of six parts, with a brief foreword (why not preface?) The first consisting of two chapters describes the Balkanized Europe that emerged from the war—none the less, "the area where slowly the new ideas of peaceful and constructive internationalism are taking root"—emphasizing the fact that numerically speaking the Europeans are still primarily engaged in agriculture rather than in industry and trade. Furthermore Europe, judged by an American or even an English standard of wealth, is poor. As a result of economic depression

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This Week

SLANTING LINES OF STEEL

By E. ALEXANDER POWELL
Reviewed by John Palmer Gavitt

THE AMERICAN PROCESSION

By AGNES ROGERS and FREDERICK LEWIS ALLEN
Reviewed by William Rose Benét

WINNER TAKE NOTHING

By ERNEST HEMINGWAY
Reviewed by Henry Seidel Canby

AH, WILDERNESS!

By EUGENE O'NEILL
Reviewed by John Corbin

RADETZKY MARCH

By JOSEPH ROTH
Reviewed by Fred J. Ringel

BORIS GODUNOV

By STEPHEN GRAHAM
Reviewed by Grand Duchess Marie

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE CHINESE

By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Next Week or Later

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

By VINCENT STARRETT
Reviewed by Elmer Davis

*MY BATTLE. By Adolf Hitler. Abridged and translated by E. T. S. Dugdale. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1933. \$3.

Making of a Demagogue

(Continued from first page)

tive forms of government are the inventions of international Jewish conspirators. Jews are possessed of superhuman cunning, and are devils who have long been plotting "the breakdown of human culture and the devastation of the world." To those who believe in socialism, lying is a daily necessity. If your enemies don't agree with you, or oppose you in print, wipe out their publications with a thirty centimeter grenade. Karl Marx was really working in the interests of international capitalism and stock exchanges. Trade-unionists who strike are also working for international capitalism. Further:

On the one hand he (the Jew) is making use of his capitalist methods for exploiting humanity to the very full, and on the other he is getting ready to sacrifice his sway and very soon will come out as their leader in the fight against himself. "Against himself" is of course only a figurative expression, for the great master of lies knows very well how to emerge with apparently clean hands and burden others with the blame.

We now see that Marxism is the enunciated form of the Jewish attempt to abolish the importance of personality in all departments of human life and to set the mass of numbers in its place. In politics the parliamentary form of government is its expression. . . .

In other words, the Jew is both exploiting and protecting humanity, and the Jew, to whom Hitler accords so much exceptional personal power, seeks to abolish the "importance of personality" and by having a majority rule relegate himself to a helpless minority!

Can such reasoning be answered? Hitler represents a revolt against reason. He himself urges an "intolerant fanaticism" as the answer to opposition. Does Adolf Hitler believe all this weird farrago? One would think not, judging by his successful career. Hitler is far more intelligent

as well as resourcefulness. No, all this extravagance is purely propaganda after Hitler's fashion, the only propaganda he knows. For aside from his political strategy, he has won his chief fame as a platform demagogue, and is reputed to be one of the greatest natural orators of his kind. The unfortunate thing is that his genius is largely limited to the field of extemporaneous speech, before vast throngs, under torchlight and in the atmosphere of a revival camp; the hypnosis of those hours he cannot translate to the measured terms of the printed page. Where in a meeting he might shout down an opponent with an effect of thunderous magnificence, his "autobiography" expends itself in infantile abuse, in profanity, and in baseless calumny.

Those who doubt Hitler's cleverness, his capacity to be rational in the most worldly manner should note the passage where he explains his notion of propaganda:

All propaganda . . . should adapt its intellectual level to the receptive ability of the least intellectual of those whom it is desired to address. Thus it must sink its mental elevation deeper in proportion to the numbers of the mass whom it has to grip. If . . . the object is to gather a whole nation within its circle of influence, there cannot be enough attention paid to avoidance of too high a level of intellectuality.

With this clue, we may understand better the expediency of his rantings, of his self-contradictions, of his diversified appeal to crowd passions, including those of blood-thirstiness or sadism. But for himself he holds other views, other beliefs in which he has been superbly consistent, however shifting his day-to-day tactics may have been.

We are familiar with the aspirations of Nazi as well as non-Nazi patriots to restore Germany's national self-respect, to render her self-sufficient and arm her against surrounding enemies, while unifying her people after years of internal dissension or class struggle. In these views, the officer caste, the Junkers, the Hugenberg industrialists as well as the Centrists of Brüning saw eye to eye with Hitler. But Hitler, from the very beginning, over a decade ago, as one of his

German biographers relates, had more to offer than all the other parties.

What have you to give to the people in the way of Faith? he says to the other parties of the Right in 1923. "Nothing. For you no longer believe in your own formulas. That is the all powerful thing that our movement should create: for these vast, questring and bewildered masses a new, firm Faith, so that they may find at least one place that gives their hearts repose. And that we will bring about!"

This ruling idea of Hitler's—to conjure up faith in Race, or arms, or Wotan, or anything that might serve—drew the attention of the officer caste, the old-fashioned bureaucrats, police officials, and royalists who sheltered and nourished him in his early Munich days. Perhaps he seemed mad to them; but certainly "this unknown soldier who never died" seemed abler than all the Ludendorffs, Kapps, and even Hohenzollerns to rally the masses around himself by his evangelistic, and, indeed, "convulsive" tactics.

This man exudes hate and passion, fascinates the crowd like the priest of some sinister cult. Look at him, speak to him in person, and he seems mediocre; but bring together a mob of ten thousand or a hundred thousand and he seems to magnify himself in proportion to the multitude he



he jumps up and down, his gestures grow more and more extraordinary. A German observer of his great days of agitation relates:

The man on the platform no longer debates, but gives battle. The crowd does not see the enemy; this fighter has the enemy, the devil in himself. He fights against the disintegration of the nation, against the inertia of the people, the guilt of present and past rulers—against the very Marxist in himself, the bad student, the blunderer of 1922, 1923, and 1930, and 1932. He fights his own fear, his own devil, like an old anchorite—it is no longer agitation . . . but exorcism, revival. He can say whatever he wishes. . . . The walls shake. . . . The State trembles.

But Hitler, as his own autobiography reveals, was always one of those evangelists and dervishes, who immediately upon returning from trance or transport, inquired after the effect of the show upon the customers, the receipts in the box office. A born demagogue on the one side, on the other he was a shrewd hunter of political fortune, keeping his accounts, drawing money from all sides, utilizing his followers and lieutenants to the full as well as the chances presented by the times or by the mistakes of enemies. He himself was capable of growing and learning from misfortune. Around him the legend of an *instinktmensch* was created, yet his impromptu appearances have often been fiascos. He is more likely, as it is claimed in certain quarters, a neurasthenic who in sleepless nights prepares his scenes. Thus he atoned for grievous blunders again and again. The march of the Brown Fascists of Germany has been a long one, so long that many experienced observers held that they had missed their hour of destiny by 1932. Hitler's successful bid for power in 1933 was the last of six desperate strokes during the course of eleven years.

Invested with power, Hitler will tend more and more to be a pure politician whose measures, under the surface at least, will appear to be dictated by the logic of events rather than by his nightmares. Yet the accidents of his personal orientation, as they have left their stamp upon his

counter-revolutionary movement, are of the utmost significance for the Third Reich.

There are two signal facts about his early life which may be drawn from his own account. Adolf Hitler was born in 1889, a South German, in a small village of Upper Austria, at the Bavarian frontier. In this region, the Germans on both sides of the border express their religious emotion still in the most primitive manner. If we are to accept anything of Hitler's doctrine of race heritage, the mystical or fanatical force in the man may be attributed, in part, at least, to his "hill-billy" environment.

The second significant fact that emerges from his autobiography is that Hitler was a member of the middle class, the petite bourgeoisie, who was *déclassé*, but who refused all his life to become a proletarian.

Hitler's father was a petty customs official, nationalistic and pious, who died when he was young and left his son in poverty. The family name had been Schicklgruber, according to reliable accounts, and had been changed by his parents. (In Germany it is: *Heil Hitler*; but in the United States we may say "Hail Schicklgruber" if we wish.) A "wayward son," as he confesses, a poor student who never matriculated as an architect, Hitler's studies were

imposing upon them no self-denying, educational process such as the Communists attempted. Instead he professed to appeal to all their immediate, clashing interests. The class that wanted more dividends, the class that wanted higher farm prices or simply jobs, the elements that wanted action, or strengthening of the foreign policy—all those who wished their special interests served "without leaving the table"—he appealed to. And in the end, after the virtual break-down of the parliamentary system, he canalized the unrest which had gained over all Germany into his huge organization. The satisfactions and the dangers of futurity are now his. In the meantime, to effect union among fatally conflicting classes, Fascism must proceed with mounting violence.

In recent years our philosophers have often warned us of the dangers of exporting modern technical knowledge, with its telephones and machine guns to the more savage races. Hitler, in his crusade against civilization, we must note, has used every modern instrument with daring: airplane, radio, press, the methods of American advertising, and those of Chicago gangsterism. He epitomizes our modern dilemma. Adolf Hitler's autobiography, written in 1924, is already obsolete to him. What effect will it have upon American readers? Are they men of reason, or will the instigations, the monotonously repeated propaganda take sway over them? The test should be instructive to us, and the American version—even with its attacks on the church and on foreign powers "toned down"—was in my opinion worth publishing here. It is better for us to know soon whether Hitler's direct propaganda against the type of democratic political institutions we own here, and his incitements to riot will reach their mark, so that we may determine what part we must take.

In the terms of Adolf Hitler's unique dialectics, this review is only too patently "a shameful Jewish trick."

service or free-lance corps which periodically disturbed the early years of the Republic with their clamor and their repeated insurrections, Hitler's band became a spearhead of terror and Hooliganism. These ex-soldiers, and also the high army officers who secretly or openly encouraged them, had appetite only for conquering the streets, for the beating now of Jews, now of Reds. Recruits, such as the émigré Russian-German, Alfred von Rosenberg, brought the tactics of the Black Hundreds, or the notions of the rising Italian Fascism. At no time were the reactionary Guards or free-lance corps effectively put out of business in Bavaria. They were "murder organizations," it was protested; but nothing was done.

The day came when these ex-soldiers, ex-officers wanted a political movement, a party to represent the actual or potential force of arms they possessed. The leader, Hitler, emerged at first from a world of *franc-tireurs* and Hooligans. As his stage was broadened by making alliances with other elements of discontent, peasants and "Christian Socialists," his tactics changed; he became something of a politician as well as a Hooligan. There were fewer of the deliberate exhortations to murder or massacre or riot—though they were never missing. Gottfried Feder, Röhm, Gregor Strasser, and Goebbels, men of superior education, brought him new devices and ideas, and an improved dialectic for his credo, as they brought him recruits and money. There follow, then, all the picturesque and daring maneuvers, circus-meetings, provocations, street fighting, mass agitation, and press propaganda which were tolerated in Germany for a decade.

The Nazi movement made strange alliances as it groped toward power. Hitler took money from foreigners as well as from generals and capitalists. He promised much; to his followers, constantly trained for spectacular action, always secretly

imposing upon them no self-denying, educational process such as the Communists attempted. Instead he professed to appeal to all their immediate, clashing interests. The class that wanted more dividends, the class that wanted higher farm prices or simply jobs, the elements that wanted action, or strengthening of the foreign policy—all those who wished their special interests served "without leaving the table"—he appealed to. And in the end, after the virtual break-down of the parliamentary system, he canalized the unrest which had gained over all Germany into his huge organization. The satisfactions and the dangers of futurity are now his. In the meantime, to effect union among fatally conflicting classes, Fascism must proceed with mounting violence.

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Matthew Josephson, who was at one time both literary and finance editor of the Newark Ledger, has written books on Zola and Rousseau. He recently published a pamphlet on Hitler.