

Father of the Black Front

HITLER AND I. By Otto Strasser.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1940.
249 pp., with index. \$2.50.

Reviewed by HEINZ POL

OTTO STRASSER is the founder and Führer of the Black Front, an organization which seceded from the National Socialist movement and since 1931 has been waging a bitter guerrilla warfare against Hitlerism. He was one of the earliest disciples of National Socialism, and he was thrown into intimate contact with Hitler at a time when the latter still gave much more unrestrained play to his passions and desires than later, when increasing power made him more aloof and disciplined. It is now, to be sure, ten years since he has seen Hitler, but he has continued to observe the German Führer from a distance and to fight him strenuously.

Strasser believes that Hitler has become the "incarnation of the principle of destruction." According to him the motive power that drives Hitler is hate—a hate that is all-encompassing and renders him incapable of loving Nature, man, or beast. From this hate stem all his other qualities, such as contempt, arrogance, greed for power, viciousness—qualities that can never serve a constructive but only a destructive purpose.

On the other hand, Hitler, he says, is a magically contrived bundle of nerves, enabling him, sometimes almost unconsciously, to uncover the most secret stirrings and desires of men, both individually and in the mass. It is this, as Strasser correctly points out, that makes him one of the most effective orators of our times. He senses and gives expression to what the masses feel.

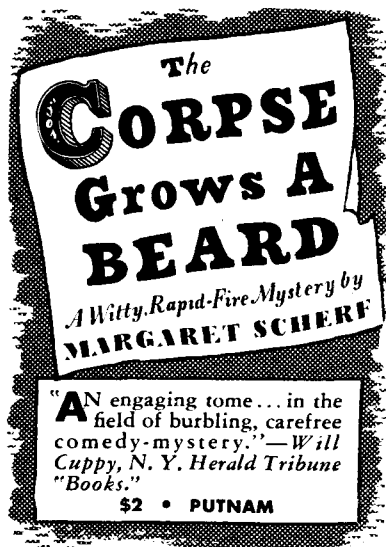
Strasser gives a wealth of interest-

ing observations and conversation that lay bare Hitler's impulses and reactions down to the most intimate sphere of his meager, repulsive, and sinister love affairs. But the material is insufficient to explain Hitler completely. It leaves wholly unanswered the most important problem: How could this man with his urge for destruction and his numerous weaknesses and defects (he is cowardly, reads no books, cannot be brought to work systematically) nevertheless succeed in gathering so much power in his hands, in realizing his plans to an extent which no one, least of all Strasser, regarded as possible?

Did Hitler become a different man after 1930? Has he learned to think constructively? Are his victories so far merely a consequence of the inferiority of his enemies? Or has his ability to act as a "seismograph" grown so im-

measurably that he intuitively grasps events better than anyone else? Strasser does not examine this problem. Much in his book remains mere outline, and occasionally there are even misinterpretations. It is worth reading because its highly personal and colorful style throws much light on the beginnings of National Socialism — its ideological and organizational development, to say nothing of the methods, compounded of cowardice and brutality, with which Hitler for years has persecuted and threatened a personal enemy like Strasser. These methods accord with Hitler's infernal hate complex, and more than once Strasser presents them in such graphic form that the reader closes his eyes in horror.

Heinz Pol is a well-known German journalist who a few weeks ago made good his departure from a French concentration camp. He is the author of a book on the fall of France which Reynal & Hitchcock will publish early this Fall.



The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, and Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
MADE UP TO KILL <i>Kelley Roos</i> (Dodd, Mead: \$2.)	Morphine fails to extinguish one actress; dagger does for another. Third lady in cast and space-salesman turn sleuths successfully.	Climax in darkened theatre has its points, the rest is pretty much like other light, readable, and artificial drammer-murders.	Time-killer
LAST ACT IN BERMUDA <i>David Burnham</i> (Scribner's: \$2.)	Bloody slaying on Bermuda's pink sands involves restless theatrical crowd. Inspector Hopkins leaves solution to Sis, but he gets his girl. (Northwest Mounties: Please copy.)	Bright, inside talk on art and stage. Exception: over-long exposition speech (by woman).	Hood-winker
DRY TORTUGAS <i>Whitman Chambers</i> (Doubleday, Doran: \$2.)	Florida reporter wilfully embroils self, for sake of mysterious damsel, in welter of killings by land and by sea.	Subversive plotsters, bibulous comic relief, cold blooded Cuban villain, and other double-crossing characters, give yarn considerable movement.	Slap-bang
DEATH ON THE CLOCK <i>Gertrude Knevels</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Nurse Lobbets' arrival at curious N. J. lake community signal for several violent deaths. Nursie and sleuth from Boston reveal horrid secrets.	Enough hair-raising ingredients for several stories. Although not too well mixed they offer pungent dish for them as likes creeps.	Extra spooky
THE CORPSE WORE A WIG <i>George Bagby</i> (Crime Club: \$2.)	Bullet hole beneath dead physician's false hair makes N. Y. police Insp. Schmidt forget aching pedal extremities in search for triple slayer.	Moves smoothly and swiftly through sequence of puzzling, amusing, and exciting situations to convincing solution. Best Schmidt yarn to date.	Good stuff
DOOWINKLE, D.A. <i>Harry Klingsberg</i> (Dial Press: \$2.)	Knowledge of stars in their courses assists John Doowinkle in solution in nine snappy and sensational cases.	Crooked police and conniving lawyers of American city "100 miles from Baltimore" get come-uppance in deftly constructed short stories.	Interesting

American English

A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES. Compiled at the University of Chicago under the editorship of Sir William A. Craigie and James R. Hulbert. Part X. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1940. \$4.

Reviewed by LOUISE POUND

THE second volume of the historical dictionary of American English has now appeared, with the completion of fascicles VI to X. The descriptive label, Corn Pit—Honk, like that of the first volume, A—Corn Patch, has something of an American flavor. As in the first volume, the editors have selected for inclusion words significant as accessions to the American vocabulary or having associations with characteristic features of the country, its occupants, and its history. The adventurer in words who leafs through its pages finds testimony to the growth of the language, from its importation in the seventeenth century through the nineteenth, and comes upon interesting matter reflecting the development of the nation and the customs of its inhabitants.

Among the miscellany of entries in the new volumes are topographical terms such as *divide*, *gulch*, animal names such as *cougar*, *coyote*, pioneer terms such as *dugout*, *forty-niner*, *grubstake*, political terms such as *gag rule*, *gerrymander*, Indian expressions such as *bury* (*take up, lay down*) *the hatchet*, *ghost dance*, and Spanish terms such as *frijole*, *hacienda*. Occasionally slang terms of persistent vitality are recorded, e.g., *discomboberate* from the 1830's, and *highfalutin* and *dingbat* from the middle of the century. *Enthuse* appeared as early as 1859 in the *Congressional Globe* but remains sub-standard upwards of a hundred years later. Bits of information concerning the history of American life may be found under such entries as *Dunkard*, *faith cure*, *fire eater*, *Free Will Baptist*, *greenback*, *hard money*.

Those fascinated by word histories find good reading on nearly any page. *Emporium* was grandiloquently applied to a shop or store as early as the 1830's. *Grapevine telegraph* came into currency in the Civil War period. *Geerwhillikins* was a popular exclamation a little earlier and *crackerjack* emerged somewhat later. The fictitious number *forty-seven* is recorded from as far back as 1860. *Hello girl* was used by Mark Twain in 1889. *Graft* in the sense of illicit gain became current at the border of the centuries. *Hamburger steak* and *hamburgers* have descended from last century. *Doughboys*, it seems, take their name

from a small round sailor's doughnut.

For the familiar American expletive *darn*, the dictionary editors repeat (erroneously, I think) the old derivation proposed by Professor G. P. Krapp, from a Middle English adjective *dern*, secret, hidden. Now this adjective was probably the source of the verb *darn*, mend, as to *darn hose*; but I maintain that the better etymology for the exclamation is that which I once suggested in the periodical *Language*. For one thing, expletives do not seem to arise from adjectives; and, for another, citations of intermediate steps between the Middle English word and the nineteenth century verb are curi-

ously lacking. A likelier history is the following. The more or less profane adjective *'tarnal* was popular in the eighteenth century, coming from *'tarnal* (eternal) *damnation*. Thence arose the conflated form *tarnation*, which soon became *darnation*, obviously taking its initial sound from *damnation*. The American *darn*, recorded from about 1837 in New England, the form latest to appear, was a natural derivative, *darnation* and *darn* serving as milder substitutes for *damnation* and *damn*. Surely the strong old noun and verb seem more appropriate in the ancestry of *darn* than the harmless Middle English adjective *hidden*.

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