

The Enemy and His Future

Four New Books Dealing with Germany and the German People

1. "Der Fuehrer"

BY KONRAD HEIDEN

Reviewed by Dorothy Thompson

WHEN Thomas Carlyle wrote *finis* under his "History of the French Revolution," the year was 1837 and forty-two years had elapsed since the date with which Carlyle closed his history—1795, the year of his own birth. In near to a generation and a half a historian can win perspective on events. He lives in another epoch, and can look back and down, seeing events fall into their various proportions, relationships, and patterns.

Seldom is it possible for a man to maintain any similar distance and objectivity toward his own times. They pass by him with kaleidoscopic rapidity. Their passions, prejudices, and myths are part of his own life and mood; he is not only observer, but participant. The connections and relationships between events are confused, and proportions distorted. The writer about them may be reporter or commentator. The historical approach can hardly be his.

But Konrad Heiden's "Der Fuehrer"* confounds this rule, and makes his work not only the most notable book to be written about National Socialism, but one of the most remarkable books ever to be written by a contemporary about his own times. In this it has perhaps but one parallel—Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution." Heiden has been involved in National Socialism, as opponent and victim. Yet he seems to have been able to remove himself from the events, as a discerning, critical mind; to remove himself a generation from them, into an air above and beyond them, from which to look down with a view of the coolest disinterestedness. The result is not a journalistic work, but an historical opus—a unique tour de force. Around Heiden has raged—and still rages—revolution, counter-revolution, and a war of the world. Yet out of it Heiden has pulled the kernel, the center of the events.

In the very midst of it, he has recounted, as though from a great distance, what happened, how it happened, what caused it to happen, what characters emerged, influenced events, and grew or disappeared; and at what critical moments history might have taken another course. In short, "Der Fuehrer" is a magnum opus and a contribution to permanent literature.

Only an extraordinary temperament and talent could have produced it—the temperament driving a man to see, to understand, to know, rather than to judge. The judgment comes, to be sure. It is implicit, from chapter to chapter, from event to event. But it is the judgment of light, falling evenly and indiscriminately upon things, placing no theatrical spotlights, creating no artificial *chiaroscuros*. And it is not only a judgment of *Der Fuehrer*. It is a judgment of our times.

Konrad Heiden, in the year 1920, was a law student in Munich, in recently defeated Germany, and a member of the very generation and class who were already beginning to gather around a strange unprepossessing Bohemian, who was making excited patriotic speeches in beer halls. Like all of German youth, Heiden was politically interested. Like all of German youth, the world of his fathers had

crashed. The New Republic had been pulled out of the womb of history by as odd a combination of midwives as ever delivered a child into a disorganized family. Would it be the pride and joy of that family, or the ill-starred weakling who would not live to grow up? At any rate it had solicitous aunts and hostile uncles. In Munich, a handful of fanatics had tried to dress it in scarlet for its christening—but the robe had been torn from it very brutally.

Left and right politics raged in the capital of German art, if not of German power. A popular pretender to the Bavarian throne, Rupprecht of Wittelsbach, was crowned in the hearts of many of his people. An army had been dissolved, but the human material that had composed it lived on, with one overwhelming experience dominating their still youthful lives: Four Years of War. The capital, Berlin, was "Red" to some Bavarians, and not Red enough for others. In this milieu, then, Heiden first discovered Hitler.

HEIDEN was and remained a social democrat, the roots of whose philosophy are in German and European humanism. But unlike most of that German fellowship, he never underestimated Hitler. Perhaps his own youth revealed to him the dangerous seductiveness of the strange man's ideas. Three years after his first encounter with the magician, Heiden had become correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in Munich—assigned to cover the Nazis. When I first met him in the late 1920's he was unique among liberal journalists in warning that Hitler was almost certain to realize his aims. Already Heiden had shut his personal predilections out of his judgments.

And already he had discovered his life work. It was to understand the phenomenon of the twentieth century—the man and movement which would shake the world. Heiden has never done anything else. From 1920 until 1934 in Germany, afterward, in exile, in Switzerland, France, and the United States, he had but one preoccupation: National Socialism. He read every speech, devoured the Nazi press, and began fitting into an ordered picture in his mind, not only the German events but the pertinent happenings in the rest of the world. It is said



*DER FUEHRER. By Konrad Heiden. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1944. 788 pp. \$3.

that Heiden took two and a half years to write this book. That is an error. He took twenty-three years, during which he wrote and published the same book, in a more fragmentary manner, never satisfied that he had gotten at the heart of truth. Now it stands, and henceforth no one can write about our epoch without its meat of fact and interpretation.

Adequately to review this work, of nearly eight hundred pages, compact of events, documents, penetrating selection, and profound analysis, is quite beyond the scope of this essay. That it reads like a novel; that characters are painted in with swift and colorful strokes; that a symphonic form, which introduces a theme, drops it, and turns to another, to bring them together again in a recurrent *leit-motif*, does not detract from the fact that it is a work of immense erudition, demanding great scope for discussion.

BUT the *leit-motif* is clear. "Der Fuehrer" is Heiden's version of "Mein Kampf"—not as written by Hitler himself, in a Landsberg prison cell, but as *lived* by Hitler in the preceding and ensuing years. Hitler's struggle was, in essence, the struggle of the leader of armed intellectuals to gain control of the German Reichswehr. It was that struggle, via the conquest of the state—and for which the conquest of the state was but a means—which opened up the prospect for the conquest of the world.

Hitler's struggle was to forge out of the chaotic democratic mass the power with which to control and direct what the Republic was unable or unwilling to control—that State within a State, the German army. In a perverse, fantastic sense, Hitler's was the triumph of a new form of democracy, the democracy of consciously—even scientifically—directed masses. Only democracy, poised above a traditionless void and emptied of faith, democracy, with its forms intact but its content evaporating, made it possible for a foreign Bohemian finally to press into the service of world conquest that aloof order of the elite—the German generals. Hitler conquered the generals by means of the German people, and made people and generals his tools.

Heiden does not say this. He *shows* this. He describes, documents, and authenticates, and leaves the conclusions to the reader.

The point of departure for Heiden's history is not in Germany but in Moscow. There, in the summer of 1917, a Russian stranger entered and laid upon the desk of a student a message concerning the Anti-Christ, "the man who would come to the fore in a dying epoch." This man, like Dostoevski's

"demon," would know how to poison and destroy civilization by the seduction of the people. A blueprint of the "Revolution of Nihilism" was outlined. "By all these methods we shall so wear down the nations that they will offer us world domination."

Who was this "we"? The "we", in the pamphlet, were Jews, engaged in a world plot for the exploitation of democracy for its own ruin. The student in Moscow was Alfred Rosenberg. The pamphlet was the "Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion." These protocols had started their life in France, three generations before, as a satire against the popular tyrant, Napoleon III, monarch-dictator of France. Its original title had been "Dialogue in Hell between Machiavelli and Montesquieu." It was, as its subtitle indicated, a New Machiavelli. After years of oblivion it had been unearthed by Russian conspirators—agents of the Ochrana, the Czar's secret police. They had counterfeited it as a Jewish document in order to frighten the Czar into oppressive measures. From there it had spread over the world.

These protocols were, therefore, historically, both a base for anti-Semitism, and a working blueprint for counter-revolution. The German-Balt of Russian citizenship recognized them for both purposes. The Nazi revolution thus started in the mind of one of its philosophical inciters as the revolution which the Jews had been accused of plotting.

Hitler and his followers learned not only from the New Machiavelli—they learned from the Russian Revolution. The fascination of opposites for enemies is a hatred only a hair's breadth from love. But a revolution without revolutionary content is Iago-like. It is means without end; action without motive. It is its own motive—continual reaction. If, however, the end—as revolution—is lacking, the means—as revolution—can be mastered. Hitler admired the allied war propaganda and the Marxian tactics; Himmler admired the G.P.U.—and studied it;

Rosenberg admired the forged but brilliant plot of the Elders of Zion. All were instruments, ready to hand, for the great Iago-hoax—the capture of the masses through their virtues and their weaknesses, by daring and ruthless men.

Where were these men to be found? Among the disinherited intelligentsia—the armed intellectuals.

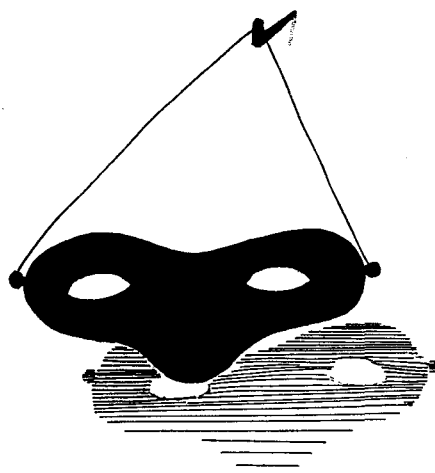
All drastic revolutions are made by such men. They were the authors and movers of the French Revolution—its Dantons, Marats, and Robespierres. They were the makers of the Russian Revolution—its Lenins, Trotskys, Bakunins. None of these men, who have led masses, has been of the masses.

HITLER was, himself, a bohemian artist, dreaming of the Artist-Princes, who in happier days had been arbiters of nations, as advisers to kings. Wagner remains to this day the prototype of himself. Given a disintegrating society in which men with university degrees, real or imagined talents, and a past or imagined position of influence or power commensurate with their own opinions of themselves, see life slipping from them, denying them recognition, they become a strange proletariat—the proletariat of the intelligentsia. They are men accustomed to deal in ideas. Unemployed ideas feed upon themselves. The intellectual or half-intellectual gone berserk finds it easier to write ideas into action than into books. A book needs a publisher. A chair in a beer-hall is easier to find.

The backwash of a lost war—and possibly of any war—produces the armed disinherited. Civilian society in postwar Germany had to absorb thousands of demobilized officers. These men, lieutenants, captains, officers to the rank of major, had led the lives of an elite, commanding men, waited on by orderlies. Now they were demobilized into grayness, but with guns stored away here and there, and always with their old personal connections to those superiors and comrades in arms, who were still in the diminutive professional army.

There was the stuff out of which to make the revolution against the people in the name of the people! The true "proletariat" are not the organized workers, protected by their unions and disciplined by the realities of work. The soldier who has known no other occupation, in a disarmed country; the youth, whether of the middle or working class, who has no prospect of a job; the unemployed—outcasts of the working class—these were the men whom Hitler armed and manipulated as the dynamite between right and left.

It is the greatest of errors to attribute this movement or this war to

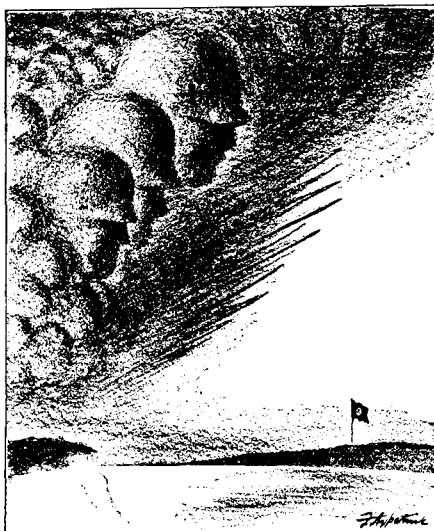


"Prussian militarism" or to "a capitalist plot." Hitler's struggle, from 1920 to 1934, was precisely against "Prussian militarism." Its apotheosis, General Von Seeckt, head of the post-war Reichswehr, emerged from the war with philosophical and intellectual contempt for modern wars of armed masses. Had any nation either won or lost the last war? He doubted it. When masses of millions are set in motion one can never foresee the end. An army of the state, yes. But the smaller, the more cohesive, the more brilliant, the better. An armed nation? Armed masses? What follies might they not undertake!

The capitalists believed that Economics is Destiny. Let others worry about a bit of territory shaved off here or there, or about the provisions of peace treaties. A sound budget, a contented working class, and rationalized industries were what Germany needed. German capitalists wanted reconciliation—with investors or with markets, whatever language they might speak. Peace is the best business.

BUT as both Satan and Savior know, who are seers into men's souls, man does not live by bread alone. There is a more awful insecurity than the lack of bread—the insecurity of not knowing what one lives by. When the lack of bread is added to a lack of higher purpose, man is adrift, open to savior or seducer. Mr. Heiden has probably never read Henry George, who wrote in "Progress and Poverty," in 1879:

To turn a republican government into a despotism the basest and most brutal it is not necessary formally to change its constitution or abandon popular elections . . . forms are nothing when the substance is gone, and the forms of popular government are those from which the substance of freedom may most easily go . . . a government of theoretical



—Fitzpatrick, St. Louis Post-Dispatch.
Gathering Storm

equality may, under conditions which impell the change, most readily become a despotism. For their despotism advances in the name and with the might of the people. The single source of power once secured, everything is secured. There is . . . no privileged orders who in defending their rights may defend those of all. No bulwark remains to stay the flood . . . a mere aristocracy of wealth will never struggle while it can hope to bribe a tyrant.

But Mr. Heiden saw what George foresaw. The prophecy came true in Der Fuehrer. Such capitalists as supported Hitler did so when his power with the masses was formidable. They "hoped to bribe." And, in the end, the Reichswehr did, too. Hitler kept his movement balanced between left and right, able to swing it in either direction. By 1934, it possessed a formidable trained force clamoring to turn the Seeckt army into "a people's revolutionary force." Then the Reichswehr bribed the tyrant, though the bribe was in the form of a threat. "Do away with this menace or we will revolt." The inference was plain, "Do away with it and we will serve."

That was the climax of "Mein Kampf." Hitler murdered the leaders of the armed intellectuals who had elevated him to power. With it he captured the last outpost of dangerous aristocratic resistance: the German Army with its aloof Prussian spirit. It was the cheapest bargain he ever struck, costing him only the heads of some of his most intimate friends. By what gigantic irony should it later turn out that one of his most valuable generals in the war of the armed masses should be Field Marshall General Ritter von Leeb, who had shot down Hitler's revolution in Munich before Der Fuehrer had mastered the art of oppressing the masses by the masses themselves!

But Der Fuehrer did not rise to power in a Germany in an historic and diplomatic vacuum. The years of his rise are years of unparalleled diplomatic frivolity, incompetence, and folly. Years when France, bled weak by her victory, was constantly locked in indecision, unable in the dilemma between fear and reality to pursue a policy of rearmament or disarmament, security or reconciliation; and while England, also dominated by the concept of Economics is Destiny, contributed to destroy even the ramshackle structure that the treaties had built, putting nothing better in their place.

WHAT profits did Hitler not reap from the Treaty of Versailles! The catchword "Self-determination of all nationalities," with which to spring open the neighboring states; the device of the popular plebiscite to secure "democratic" ratification in situ-



—Knox, Memphis Commercial-Appeal.

"Go, ahead, Adolf, tell the German people where you stand."

ations where no democratic concepts could have a reasoned hearing; the exclusive War Guilt charge, festering when allied scholars had blown it sky-high; the undefined reparations bill, under the pretext of which the French occupied the Ruhr, provoking the only genuine and spontaneous popular rising in German postwar history. For then, not the "armed intellectuals," the "Revolution of the Disinherited," sprang to Germany's defense, but the solid social-democratic workers of the great industrial valley, who laid down their tools as a man, demoralized the economy of Europe, precipitated the inflation, and won against all the French armies—because the French people would not stomach it—and overthrew Poincaré. This was one of Hitler's most dangerous moments. Did he support the resistance? No, he feared its success, and with success the collapse of his movement. In the moment when the Republic sprang to defend the country he launched new and virulent attacks on it. For the anti-Christ must not allow anything to consolidate; everything must be kept in ferment. No victories must be won except his victories.

And Hitler won from Versailles that little professional army of 100,000 highly selected men, trained for twelve full years—"imposed" upon Germany by the treaty. The Republic had asked for a militia and been refused. Fifteen years later at the Geneva disarmament conference the French offered Hitler a militia, and Hitler refused. The force created by Versailles was now his army, and he could ask no better one.

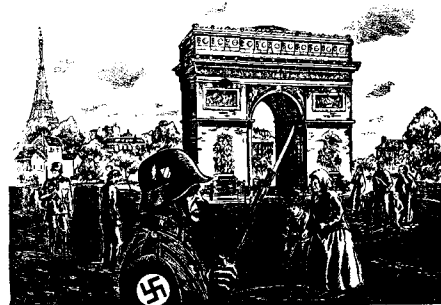
And finally what saved Hitler was the Great Depression, again the result of a world-wide economic crisis. Heiden graphs the rise and fall of the Nazi Reichstag seats with the curve of un-

employment. The world had handed Hitler what he needed. A new ferment. A new frustration of the masses.

I greatly wish that every statesman concerned with the future peace would read this book. I fear that none of them, any more, have time. If they would read it they would put little faith in disarmament provisions and occupation armies. Only the rebirth of our civilization in honesty, decency, intelligence, and truth can save democratic society. Only the creation of the

leadership of the democratic nobleman can supplant the armed adventurer. Otherwise Der Fuehrer will live as a fascinating spectre, luring men to the dream that, though he failed, next time the anti-Christ who has learned from his mistakes can win.

In 1932, Dorothy Thompson wrote "I Saw Hitler." At that time she had been a foreign correspondent in Europe for twelve years and had had a ringside seat at the growth of Nazism and Hitler's rise to power.



might be lost. Thus the generals decided, according to Miss Schultz, to "prepare for the battles-in-peace before the open war can fail." According to her, the best brains of Germany were already in 1940 assigned the task of devising undercover strategies. "Miss no detail of plotting the chart of intrigue, speculation, exploitation, vilification, fake love and fraternization, revolt, arson, class warfare, race riots, bribery, murder and general Kultur with which to carry on the German battle for domination when the world shall trustingly lay down its arms again, as it did in 1918," writes Miss Schultz.

Then she proceeds to enumerate all the maneuvers which the Germans are ready to carry out once more to fool the world. She describes the future German Trojan horses: the call for the "leader" in days when apparently everything is in a state of chaos, and then this "leader," approved by a frightened outside world, can do what Hitler has been doing since 1933. The Germans will claim to protect private enterprises and thus win the sympathy of capitalists abroad; they will emphasize the "Soviet danger" everywhere; they will create racial hatred wherever they can; they will convince the world once more of German superiority over other Europeans; they will use Christian shibboleths to attain their crooked aims; they intend to create distrust between the Allies, and they will try to convince the United States and England that only German industries can rebuild Europe.

Miss Schultz warns us that if we do not watch out we will have it all over again. One more defeat will not be enough, she argues, "But defeats must not be military. A set back on the war-in-peace front will tell fully as much as the loss of a fighting war salient." She tells us that if we do not believe this we should talk to some German soldiers interned in this country. When she asked some prisoners what they would do in case of failure, unanimously they replied: "We will go home; pick up our guns and fight again."

Within the limited space of a book review one cannot tell all about the extremely valuable observations and

2. "Germany Will Try It Again"

BY SIGRID SCHULTZ

Reviewed by M. W. Fodor

No matter who is the master of Germany after World War II, Hitler's Nazi ideas will still live on in some greedy hearts within Germany and without. Eager carriers of the Nazi disease, of the pan-German fever, are merely hibernating. It is up to us to keep them impotent.

For they know how the racket is worked—from inside. And they'll try it again.

THESE lines* were not written by an American radical such as Martha Dodd; this supreme warning comes from staid Sigrid Schultz who for twenty-two years—from 1919 to 1941—was correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* in Berlin.

Sigrid Schultz probably knew Germany better than any other correspondent, not only because this American girl probably spent the longest part of her life in Germany—she lived in the Reich with her American parents during the First World War—but also because she was extremely intelligent. Besides she was eager to learn about the country on which it was her duty to report back to the United States. Through the influence of her personality and through her connection with the newspaper, she was able to meet every leading German in the postwar period and came to know every leading Nazi in the Hitler regime. She also had excellent connec-

tions with the Reichswehr. At the same time she had good sources of information with the "left" parties. She was as well acquainted with the views of the communist underground as with the Nazi underground, the same organization which later was to become the ruling class of Hitler's Germany.

All the newspaper correspondents in and around Germany were always pleased to meet Miss Schultz in Berlin, Prague, or The Hague, or wherever she was to report for her paper. I remember meeting her, amongst others, in the Fall of 1939 in the Dutch capital. She learned from a high Reichswehr officer, and told me confidentially, that Germany was constructing 50,000 collapsible rubber boats. She was wondering what the Nazis needed so many rubber boats for. We finally put two and two together and came to the conclusion that apparently Germany intended to invade Holland and wished to overcome the Dutch water defenses by crossing them in rubber boats. I know that Miss Schultz's information came generally from the best sources, a fact which increases the value of her book.

Her warning is serious and definite. She shows, on the basis of her experiences after the last war, that Germany intends to repeat her camouflaged attempt to rearm once more in order to start a new war at the first possible occasion. Miss Schultz asserts that the evacuation from Dunkerque, the bombing of Berlin by British planes in 1940, and the loss of a "rehearsal" invasion force on the English Channel suddenly made the generals remember the days in 1914 when the Kaiser's troops were turned back in the battle of the Marne. The generals immediately realized that the present war, like the one in 1914-18,

*GERMANY WILL TRY IT AGAIN. By Sigrid Schultz. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1944. 238 pp. \$2.50.



DAS HERRENVOLK —