

## **Book Two**

### **THE ARTIST**



**A WELL RESPECTED MAN**

*The business of  
the Civil Service  
is the orderly management  
of decline.*

William Armstrong

In the Year of the Lord 1889, the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph celebrated his fifty-ninth birthday and forty-first anniversary of his reign over the vast Empire of Austria and Hungary; when he died, in 1916, he had ruled the state for sixty-eight years. The realm was huge - covering over 180,000 square miles or about 450,000 square kilometres. The emperor's domains stretched, in the east-west axis, from Czernowitz on the Dniester River in today's Ukraine to Vorarlberg on the Swiss border, and, in the north-south axis, from the lower Elbe River near Aussig to Ragusa in the Bosnian Hercegovina, two thirds down the eastern Adriatic coast.

Ethnically and thus politically, however, these territories were hopelessly divided. The racial diversity of the Imperial population included Germans in Austria, Hungary and the Sudetenland; Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia; Slovaks to their east; Poles in western Galicia and Ruthenians, Catholic Ukrainians, in the eastern part of it; Magyars in Hungary and Transylvania interspersed with some more Germans and Romanians; Slovenes, Friaulians and Italians south of the Julian Alps; and finally Croats, Bosnians, Albanians, Montenegrinos and Serbs in and around the Balkan mountains.

All these groups fought incessant but mostly inconclusive battles over appointments, representation and influence in the empire and its court, while a laborious civil administration struggled with the actual governance of the multitudes. The exceptionally long reign of Francis Joseph had much aided the ossification of the Imperial structures, which, given the Habsburgs' reverence for tradition, were conservative, to say the least; pre-modern, and reactionary.

Yet on the outside things appeared fit for eternity. Stefan Zweig, one of Vienna's famous sons, describes the peculiar atmosphere of town and country:

*When I attempt to find a simple formula for the period in which I grew up, prior to the First World War, I hope that I convey its fullness by calling it the Golden Age of Security. Everything in our almost thousand-years-old Austrian monarchy seemed based on permanence, and the state itself was the chief guarantor of this stability. The rights which it granted to its citizens were duly confirmed by parliament, the freely elected representatives of the people, and every duty was exactly prescribed.*

*Our currency, the Austrian crown, circulated in bright gold pieces, as assurance of its immutability. Everyone knew how much he possessed or what he was entitled to, what was permitted and what was forbidden. Everything had its norm, its definite measure and weight. He who had a fortune could accurately compute his annual interest. An official or an officer, for example, could confidently look up in the calendar the year he would be advanced in rank, or when he would be pensioned.*

*Each family had its fixed budget, and knew how much could be spent for rent and food, for holidays and entertainment; and what is more, invariably a small sum was carefully laid aside for sickness and the doctor's bills, for the unexpected.*

*Whoever owned a house looked upon it as a secure domicile for his children and grandchildren; estates and businesses were handed down from generation to generation. When the babe was still in its cradle, its first mite was put in its little bank, or deposited in the savings' bank, as a "reserve" for the future. In this vast empire everything stood firmly and immovable in its appointed place, and at its head was the aged emperor; and were he to die, one knew (or believed), another would come to take his place, and nothing would change in the well-regulated order. No one thought of wars, of revolutions, or revolts. All that was radical, all violence seemed impossible in an age of reason.*

*This feeling of security was the most eagerly sought-after possession of millions, the common ideal of life. Only the possession of this security made life seem worthwhile, and constant widening circles desired their share of this costly treasure.*

*At first it was only the prosperous who enjoyed this advantage, but gradually the great masses forced their way toward it. The century of security became the golden age of insurance. One's house was insured against fire or theft, one's field against hail and storm, one's person against accident or sickness. Annuities were purchased for one's old age, and a policy was laid in a girl's cradle for her future dowry. Finally even the workers organized, and won standard wages and workman's compensation. Servants saved for old-age insurance and paid in advance into a burial fund for their own interment. Only the man who could look into the future without worry could thoroughly enjoy the present. (1)*

This peaceful state of bliss, however, did not necessarily embrace the whole empire, as the remark on anarchists and the like in the preceding chapter should have made clear. Neither was the status of the rural poor much to write home about. Yet law and order were generally held in high regard for the safety and continuity of society they implied. Into this world of order, a son, whom she named Alois, was born, on the morning of June 7, 1837, out of wedlock, to the peasant maid Maria Anna Schicklgruber in the hamlet of Strones in the Austrian Waldviertel.

The Waldviertel, which literally translates as the "Wooden Quarter" or "Forest Quarter", was one of the Austrian monarchy's backwaters, a hilly "country of peasant villages and small farms, and though only some fifty miles from Vienna it has a somewhat remote and impoverished air, as if the main currents of Austrian life had passed it by." (2) It is located slightly northeast of Linz, respectively northwest of Vienna, between the Danube and the Czech border in the direction of Brno. It is a borderland and has seen its shares of marauding armies over the centuries. German tribes on the way to the treasures and temptations of the Roman Empire had crossed through the land which the Romans called "Noricum", followed by the Huns, various tribes of Goths, the Hungarians and finally the Turks. It saw armies in the Thirty-Years-War and the Napoleonic wars; only after the Congress of Vienna a century of peace graced its gently rolling hills.

The name "Hitler", variably spelled "Hidler", "Hiedler", "Hüttler", "Hietler", "Hytler" or "Hittler" was one of the more common names in the district. It is documented as early as 1435, when the Abbot of the Herzogenburg monastery drew up a deed granting to Hannsen Hydler and his wife property near Raabs, on the Thaya River. (3) The etymology of the name indicates a possible derivation from the German word "Heide" [in English "heather", relating to a meadow, ¶], of which the Waldviertel was full. All of Alois' life occurred within a radius of one hundred miles of Linz, then as now the capital of the province *ÖBERÖSTERREICH*, Upper Austria.

Little is known about Adolf Hitler's paternal grandmother Maria Schicklgruber. The tiny village of Strones where she lived was far too small to be a parish of its own, and thus baby Alois had to be registered in the slightly bigger village of Döllersheim, a couple of miles to the northwest. It was generally known that the baby was born out of wedlock and therefore was, strictly speaking, "illegitimate". Many theories have been spun and explanations offered in which this circumstance supposedly played the one or other role in Alois Hitler's life or in that of his son Adolf, and they are all bunkum. The reality of the Waldviertel dictated that "legitimacy" was a concept the peasants simply could not afford to pay heed to, and which occasioned no advantages in their daily lives. "Illegitimacy" might have been a significant problem for the heir of a throne or the prospective owner of land, a shop or business, but not to farmhands and sharecroppers. It was a common occurrence, and there is not the slightest indication that Alois ever suffered from an imagined stigma attached to it. There were no empires to bestow on Alois, and his son took them regardless of a court's permission.

Another disparaging theory was circulated in the early 1930s regarding Adolf Hitler's parental grandfather. Alois, the rumours held, was the illegitimate son of a wealthy Jewish merchant from Linz named Frankenberger or Frankenreither, who had seduced Maria, who was working as a maid in his household - in a variation of the theme, the merchant's son was the debaucher, and his father paid for the girl's discretion.

Such a story, if true, would naturally be a feast for Hitler's political enemies. After a few Austrian newspapers had come up with it during the German general election campaign of 1930, the allegations resurfaced when Hitler ran for German president against Hindenburg in 1932. At length, Hitler dispatched his legal counsellor Hans Frank to investigate. The lawyer was told that the nineteen-year-old son of a Mr. Frankenberger from Linz was the culprit, whose father had allegedly paid alimonies to Fräulein Schicklgruber for fourteen years; a variance of the story had Mr. Frankenberger and his lecherous son in Graz, not Linz. There was, however, not a shred of evidence available in either town, no trace of payments, and hence the story slowly died. Research in the Austrian and Jewish records of Vienna and Linz undertaken after 1945 established conclusively that no Jewish families had been allowed to settle in Linz or Graz before the 1860s. Neither were there any Frankenbergers or Frankenreiters at all, and thus the bottom fell out of the story for good.

The first five years of Alois Schicklgruber's life were spent in Strones with his mother, who married, in 1842, a seldom employed millworker named Johann Georg Hiedler from the nearby village of Spital.<sup>1</sup> The marriage seems not to have changed much: the couple lived in abject poverty, and after Maria died five years later of consumption<sup>2</sup> and Johann Georg re-entered the vagrant lifestyle, the child passed into the wardship of Johann Georg Hiedler's brother Johann Nepomuk Hüttler<sup>3</sup> of Spital, House # 36. This wardship gave rise to a fair amount of village gossip: rumour control asserted that Johann Nepomuk was, in fact, the biological father of the boy.

Nobody knows who Alois' father truly was, and it is possible that Maria did not know herself. In this time and place, sexual relations among farmhands were essentially unregulated, babies born out of wedlock numerous and considered welcome additions to the work force if they survived early childhood.

More interesting than idle speculation about the identity of Adolf Hitler's grandfather is the question why Alois' original birth certificate underwent rewriting, tampering and forgery in the summer of 1876, when he was already thirty-nine years old. What had happened in the meantime that could explain such acts?

In 1850, at the age of thirteen, Alois ran away from home, a fact that allows an inference or two about the circumstances or happiness of his childhood. He fled to Vienna, where he quickly found employment as apprentice to a cobbler. He finished, as far as we know, the four years standard apprenticeship and became a shoemaker, but soon quit this profession and enlisted in the Austrian civil service. He passed the entrance examination, which seems quite an achievement since he had enjoyed little schooling at home, and was accepted to serve in the Customs division of the Austrian financial administration. In MEIN KAMPF, son Adolf described his father's arrival in the Austrian capital as follows:

*"As the son of a poor cottager, he [Alois] could not even in those early days bear to stay at home. Before he was thirteen, the youngster laced his tiny knapsack and fled from his homeland, the Waldviertel. Despite all the attempts of "experienced" villagers to dissuade him, he made his own way to Vienna in order to learn a trade.*

*This was in the fifties of the last century. It was a bitter decision to take the road and plunge into the unknown with only three Gulden for travel money. But by the time the thirteen-year-old had grown to seventeen, he had passed his apprentice's examination [as a cobbler, ¶], but was not yet content with his lot - quite to the contrary. The long period of hardship, the endless poverty and misery he had suffered, strengthened his determination to give up the trade in order to become something "better".*

<sup>1</sup> The name "Spital" is a common name for Austrian villages and towns, and the village of Spital in Upper Austria, which plays a role here, must not be confused with the town of Spital in Carinthia, whither, for example, historian Marlis Steinert puts Johann Nepomuk Hüttler.

<sup>2</sup> Tuberculosis

<sup>3</sup> The spelling of names was not yet regulated and hence differed from village to village.

*Once the village priest had seemed to the poor boy the embodiment of all humanly attainable heights, so now, in the great city, which had so powerfully widened his perspective, it was the rank of civil servant. With all the tenacity of a young man, who had grown "old" in suffering and sorrow while still half a child, the seventeen-year-old clung to his new decision - and he became a civil servant." (4)*

These words must be read with the knowledge that Adolf Hitler was on the record to regard his father with feelings closer to hate than love, but here he attempts to draw a picture of success, which was to contrast sharply to the opinions he shared in private, or at his headquarters' dinner tables in the Second World War. More than from the laundered account of his father in *MEIN KAMPF* we can infer, regarding the happiness of the family Adolf grew up in, from the fact that Alois' first son Alois Jr., Adolf's half-brother, left this home at the same age of thirteen as his father had, never to return.

Meanwhile, the stations of Alois Schicklgruber's rise to a somewhat respectable position in the Customs department - the highest to which he could aspire, given his limited education - followed the predictable patterns of civil service careers; that is, moving through the ranks and around the country. Originally attached as a most junior servant to the Austrian Ministry of Finance in 1855, he was relatively quickly promoted. In the year 1861 we find him as a supervisor in Saalfelden, Tyrolia, and in 1864 as an assistant in the bigger Customs office in Linz. In 1870 he was moved again, to Mariahilf, a change that was sweetened by a promotion to assistant collector. A year later he arrived in the small border town of Braunau at the Inn River, with the rank of Senior Assistant; he grew to like the little town and stayed for almost two decades. In 1875, he was promoted to Assistant Customs Inspector. His career was not spectacular per se, but it was a decent calling for a man of his origins and, apparently, that was what his family thought when they concocted a scheme to bestow upon him a dollop of enhanced respectability.

On June 6, 1876, Alois and three of his friends - Josef Romeder, who was one of Johann Nepomuk Hüttler's sons-in-law, Johann Breiteneder and Engelbert Paukh - paid a visit to the public notary Josef Penkner in the small town of Weitra, not far from Alois' birthplace Strones. The notary was paid to prepare for Alois a "*LEGALISIRUNGS-PROTOCOLL*", a protocol of legitimization for his birth. The three friends attested that Johann Georg Hiedler, he of the vagrant lifestyle (whom they had known well, they said), had attested to them at various times that he was, in fact, the biological father of Alois Schicklgruber, whom he planned to legitimize one day. The document was drawn up, the witnesses signed, but for a reason that remains unexplained, the paper featured Alois' new family name in the form "Hitler", not as "Hiedler" or "Hüttler". Beweaponed with this document, the posse made its way to the little town of Döllersheim on the next morning, where they paid a visit to the local priest, Father Josef Zahnschirm, upon whom they played a "cunning peasant trick". (5)

On the power of the notarized document, and perhaps a contribution to the church funds, Father Zahnschirm agreed to make a few changes to Alois Schicklgruber's baptismal record. The original birth certificate featured blanks in the space for the name of the father and the field for remarks. The blanks were now filled by entering "Georg Hitler. Cat.rel., Living in Spital" as the father, and under "Remarks" that

*"The undersigned witnesses hereby confirm that Georg Hitler, who was well known to them, acknowledged paternity of the child Alois, son of Anna Schicklgruber, and they requested that his name be entered in the baptismal register. +++ Josef Romeder, Witness, +++ Johann Breiteneder, Witness, +++ Engelbert Paukh, Witness." (6)*

Speculations about this mission abound. Some private family business may have played a role; rumours tied Johann Nepomuk Hüttler, who had been so conspicuously absent in Weitra and Döllersheim, into the drama; "There was village gossip that Alois was his natural son." (7)

The net result of the clandestine affair was that Alois Schicklgruber was now Alois Hitler. Father Zahnschirm had clearly been lied to when he was told that Johann Georg Hiedler was still alive ["Living in Spital", ¶], but the churchman may have had his own thoughts about the procedure from the beginning, as had, apparently, the witnesses: the priest "forgot" to date and sign for the changes, and the witnesses had turned illiterate, signing with crosses, which could be

explained as errors, should the need arise. The climax of the play came when the improved birth certificate was registered at the nearest Austrian chancery in Mistelbach.<sup>4</sup>

The formerly illegitimate Alois Schicklgruber was now Alois Hitler, civil servant and owner of a gold-buttoned uniform; when he, half a year after Johann Nepomuk Hüttler's death, bought a farm for the proud sum of five thousand florins in cash; the village gossip nodding - conclusions confirmed.

Alois had gone through a number of romantic entanglements in his life, and had sampled experience in holy matrimony as well. He had married for the first time on October 1873 at thirty-six years of age, although it seems that at this time he had already fathered a child in a different relation. (8) At any rate, the marriage seems to have been built on reasons superior to love alone: the bride, Anna Glassl-Hoerer, was the daughter of a high-ranking financial officer, an inspector in the Treasury's Bureau of Tobacco, fourteen years older than her husband and of ill health. Nobody would have been surprised had status and finances played a role in the match.

Due to the frequent changes of assignment, Alois had made it a habit to lodge in Gasthäusern, inns, for the greater part of his life, and these lodgings brought him into daily contact with waitresses, chambermaids, laundresses and tobacco girls, whether he liked it or not. Apparently he did not mind, and he did possess the most important condition to warrant female attention, a steady job and hence a steady income. By the time Anna filed for separation in 1880, perhaps tired of his infidelities, he had quite openly conducted an affair with the waitress of the Gasthaus Streif, a girl named Franziska (Fanny) Matzelsberger, for some time.

Yet the relation to Fanny did not preclude Alois, it seems, from experiencing an urgent need for another maidservant, and he soon installed another young girl of sixteen years in his mansard under the roof of the inn, a slender, attractive girl named Klara Pölzl. This idea met with the furious opposition from Franziska, who had zero doubt about the nature of the services Klara would be asked to perform for Alois, and she succeeded in having the competition thrown out quickly. In due time Franziska bore a son to Alois Hitler, who was named Alois junior, on January 13, 1882. When Anna, who had in the meantime obtained a legal decree of separation, died in the following year of consumption, Alois was free to marry Franziska. She soon bore Alois another child, a girl named Angela.

ALOIS HITLER IN HIS 50S



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<sup>4</sup> Marlis Steinert followed up on the Austrian government's subsequent authentication of the fraud: "A correspondence between the priest, the communal administration and the Financial Office in Braunau confirmed the legal validation of the document *per matrimonium subsequens* [due to Georg's marriage to Maria Anna five years after Alois' birth, ¶], citing a decree of the Ministry of the Interior in Vienna from September 12, 1868, in which such legitimations should be granted as far as possible." (9)

At this time Alois officially decided to accept the paternity of the children and had Alois Jr. and Angela legitimized. It was an outward sign of his striving for recognition and respectability, which were what counted in this deeply authoritative society. He had a gratifying career and money to spend; he earned more than, for instance, the local school principal. He was in his "best years" and loved to have his photo taken, in uniform. A question remains as far as the sympathies of his colleagues at work are concerned; one source describes him as "rigid and pedantic", yet these would be qualities his employer might favour and may explain his success. In a letter to a cousin who had inquired about a job for his son, Alois drew the following portrait of himself and his profession:

*"Don't let him think that the 'Finanzwach' [Fiscal Service, ¶] is a kind of game, because he will quickly be disillusioned. First, he has to show absolute obedience to his superiors at all levels. Second, there is a good deal to learn in this occupation, all the more so if he had little previous education. Topers, debtors, card players, and others who lead immoral lives cannot enlist. Finally, one has to go out on duty in all weathers, day or night." (10)*

Characteristically, Alois' enumeration of "immoral" lifestyles does not include dubious and perhaps illicit contacts to waitresses and chambermaids, nor illegitimate babies. But a shadow soon appeared on his private horizon; a short time after giving birth to Angela, Franziska developed tuberculosis, as Anna had, and was forced to leave Braunau to seek a cure in mountain air. Alois was suddenly left alone with two small children on the top floor of the inn, and since his career as Customs official had not prepared him for the care of toddlers, he reimported Klara as soon as Franziska had left town. Klara Pözl was actually Johann Nepomuk Hüttler's granddaughter, and therefore Alois' niece, in the context of which the closeness of family relations in the Waldviertel may be observed again. One photo of Klara has survived. She was tall and slender, almost as tall as her husband, had very regular and attractive features framed by brown hair; not a beauty but what is called in France a "belle laide", an interesting woman. The outstanding aspect of her face was certainly her voluminous turquoise eyes. By all accounts she was neat, simple, and loving. Her education was close to nil, but, then again, the sources agree that she behaved correctly in public and had no problems with the role of being the common-law wife of a Customs official. In private she was known as a most efficient housekeeper, cook, organizer, and nurse to the children.

The community in Braunau accepted her without qualms, which is somewhat surprising: it was one of these little towns in which the neighbours take an interest in everything that does not concern them. In the summer of 1884, Franziska died of consumption, as Anna had earlier, and Klara was already pregnant. Alois wanted to marry her, but now the manipulation of the birth certificate backfired: since the former Alois Schicklgruber was now Alois Hitler, he was officially Klara's uncle and no marriage was possible under the laws of the Austrian Catholic church unless a dispensation was granted. With the aid of the local priest, Alois composed a letter to the Bishop of Linz, which has survived:

*"Most Revered Episcopate!*

*Those who with most humble devotion have appended their signatures below have decided upon marriage. But according to the enclosed family tree, they are prevented by the canonical impediment of collateral affinity in the third degree, touching second. They therefore make the humble request that the Most Revered Episcopate will graciously secure for them a dispensation on the following grounds:*

*The bridegroom has been a widower since August 10th of this year, as can be observed from the enclosed death certificate, and he is the father of two minors, a boy of two and a half years (Alois) and a girl of one year and two months (Angela), and they both need the services of a nurse, all the more because he is a Customs official away from home all day and often at night and therefore in no position to supervise the education and upbringing of his children. The bride has been caring for these children ever since their mother's death, and they are very fond of her.*

*Thus it may be justifiably assumed that they will be well brought up and the marriage will be a happy one. Moreover, the bride is without means, and it is unlikely that she will ever have another opportunity to make a good marriage. For these reasons the undersigned repeat their humble petition for a gracious procurement of dispensation from the impediment of affinity.*

*Braunau am Inn, 27. October 1884  
Bride" (11)*

*ALOIS HITLER, Bridegroom KLARA PÖLZL,*

KLARA HITLER, NÉE PÖLZL, ADOLF'S MOTHER



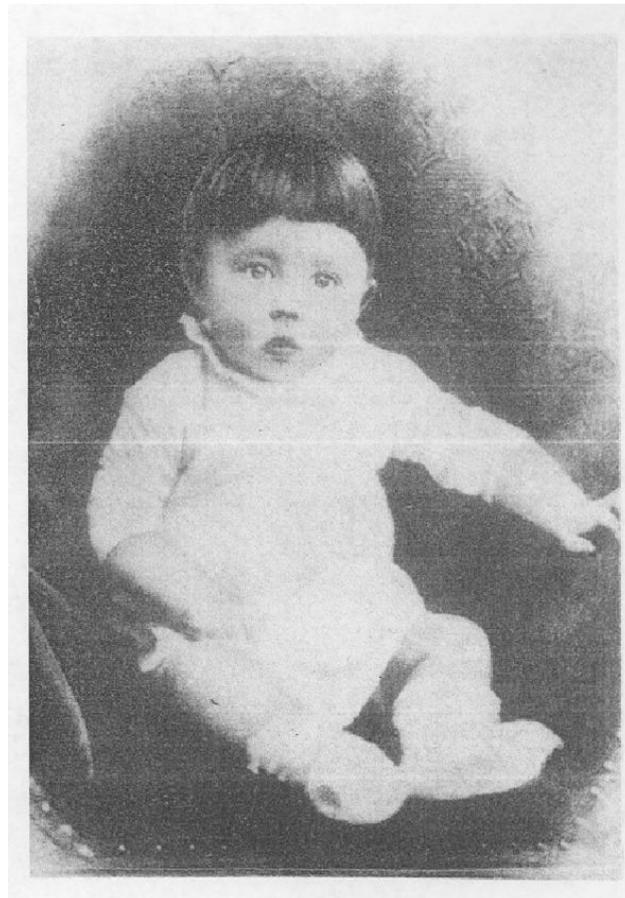
Enclosed was a version of the family tree, which presented Alois Hitler as the son of Johann Georg Hiedler, the vagrant, whose brother Johann Nepomuk Hüttler was the grandfather of Klara Pözl, the bride. We will have the opportunity to encounter a letter or two written by the young Adolf, Alois' son, and they will sound oddly similar in diction and style to the epistle above. Alois' petition for a dispensation reeks of the same sort of not very sublime deception that he had employed in the "improvement" of his original birth certificate; what John Toland had called the "cunning peasant trick". The son was to employ similar tactics in his own time.

The addressee, the Bishop of Linz, hesitated, and decided, following proper bureaucratic procedure, to call upon a higher authority. A short summary of the case, including the original letter, family tree and a "testimonium paupertatis", an instrument of declaring poverty which waived the payment of the usual fees, was forwarded to the Sacra Rota, the department of the Holy See that deals with matrimonial issues. The Vatican apparently cared as much or little about a wee bit of incest in Braunau as the peasants of the Waldviertel cared about legitimacy, and the release was granted three weeks later.

Alois Hitler and Klara Pözl were married on January 7, 1885. The ceremony took place in the morning, in a hurry, it seems: Klara complained that before noon, "my husband was already on duty again." (12) Later in the evening, a small banquet in the company of Alois' Customs colleagues followed at the Gasthaus Pommer.

The marriage hardly changed anything in their lives. The pair had known each other for years, and Klara was accustomed to her duties in the household. She was a simple but quiet, modest and polite woman that never put up demands on her husband, the children, or the community. She was deeply religious and attended services regularly. The family lived without any trace of scandal, even Alois' private investigations into the lives of the local waitresses and chambermaids seemed

#### BABY ADOLF



to abate. Money was not plenty but sufficient to afford the family a proper living standard and they played their parts in the community without fail.

There have been allegations which describe Alois as an alcoholic and abusive husband, but there is no documentary evidence of such behaviour. No police reports mention their names in any context, no suspicious hospital records exist.

If we gaze at Klara's photograph, taken when she was about twenty-six, we look into the face of a simple but pleasant country girl. The most impressive feature of her face is indeed her luminous, expressive eyes. Robert Payne observed:

*In the photograph she looks vulnerable, but not too vulnerable. She was a spirited woman, who could, if necessary, stand up to her husband. She was not beautiful in the conventional sense, but her face suggests an uncommon gentleness and tenderness, an essential goodness. She was one of these women who live for their husbands, their children, and their faith. (13)*

She was to bear six children to Alois, four sons and two daughters, of which one each survived childhood. The elder children Alois Jr. and Angela were joined by Adolf in April 1889 and Paula in January 1896. Four children died young: Gustav at the age of two; Ida at the same age; Otto died in the cradle, and Edmund in his sixth year.<sup>5</sup>

At this point in time and place, such a mortality rate was considered almost normal. Children were born and died by the thousands, of measles, diphtheria, pneumonia and other common childhood diseases; deadly in a time which knew not yet sulphonamides or penicillin. The family was in the care of Dr. Eduard Bloch, a general practitioner, but the science of microbiology was not yet invented and the invisible agents of death prospered unhindered.

In general, however, it was a respectable and orderly family which welcomed, at six o'clock in the evening of April 20, 1889, its newest member, Adolfus.

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<sup>5</sup> It seems that the fate of the Hitler family was no exception. A boyhood friend of Adolf described the early trials of his freshly-married parents as follows:

"At first the young couple lived in the house of my mother's parents. My father's wages were low, the work was hard, and my mother had to give up her job when she was expecting me. Thus I was born in rather miserable circumstances. One year later my sister Maria was born, but died at a tender age. The following year, Therese appeared; she died at the age of four. My third sister, Karoline, fell desperately ill, lingered on for some years, and died when she was eight. My mother's grief was boundless. Throughout her life she suffered from the fear of losing me, too; for I was the only one left to her of her four children." (14)



## CHILDREN OF THE LESSER MEN

*Gnothi Seauton  
(Know Thyself)*

The Oracle of Delphi

*And love's the noblest frailty of the mind.*

John Dryden "The Indian Emperor", Act 2, Sc. 2

Our protagonist thus enters the stage and a few remarks are in order. There is little in the available sources regarding Hitler's childhood and adolescence that has not been subjugated to interpretative efforts in the furtherance of the one or other psychological or political theory. Ian Kershaw observed that

*The historical record of Adolf's early years is very sparse. His own account in MEIN KAMPF is inaccurate in detail and coloured in interpretation. Post-war recollections of family and acquaintances have to be treated with care, and are at times as dubious as the attempts during the Third Reich itself to glorify the childhood of the future Führer.*

*For the formative period so important to psychologists and "psycho-historians", the fact has to be faced that there is little to go on which is not retrospective guesswork. (1)*

That the early familiar environment, the experiences of youth and adolescence, are of paramount importance in the gestation of the adult mind is a commonplace, yet even in regards to the basics of Adolf Hitler's family life a lot of speculation remains. Ian Kershaw, for example, arrives at a more critical judgement of Alois Hitler than many earlier biographers did - the question of course is what he would have expected from a Customs officer in the age of nationalism?

*Family life, was, however, less than harmonious and happy. Alois was an archetypal provincial civil servant - pompous, status - proud, strict, humourless, frugal, pedantically punctual, and devoted to duty. He was regarded with respect by the local community.*

*But both at work and at home, he had a bad temper which could flare up quite unpredictably. ... He took little interest in bringing up his family, and was happier outside rather than inside the family home. (2)*

Our knowledge of early Hitler family affairs experienced an amelioration when Anton Joachimsthaler published "Correction of a Biography - Adolf Hitler 1908-1920", 1989 in Munich.<sup>1</sup> He presented many previously unknown or hard-to-find documents, unearthed police files, personal letters, paintings and drawings, photographs of Hitler's war and post-war friends, their activities and much more. Of particular importance are military documents of the immediate post-war period, which suggest that Hitler developed his political convictions not, as he claimed in *MEIN KAMPF* and some historians have incautiously taken for granted, in Vienna before the war but in post-war Munich, and second, that his initial political

<sup>1</sup> Original Title: "Korrektur einer Biographie - Adolf Hitler 1908-1920". In 2000, he presented an extended version, "Hitler's Weg begann in München" ['Hitler's Path began in Munich'], that provided additional documentation. See Bibliography for details.

sympathies in this era may have belonged to the Social Democrats. These interesting discoveries will be discussed in their proper context.

Most of Joachimsthaler's findings relate to Hitler's period before and after WW I in Munich, but some are relevant to his earlier life. Anton Joachimsthaler published, for example, the *Legalisirungs-Protocoll* of Alois Hitler discussed in the preceding chapter, and there will be a few more references to his work before we follow Adolf Hitler to Munich.

At this point in our account, Baby Adolf is being baptized, two days after he entered this world, by Father Ignaz Probst in the Catholic Church of Braunau. His name was given as Adolfus Hitler, and is so recorded on the birth certificate. The family resumed life in the Gasthaus Pommer, comfortably, as far as we know. It seems that Klara, who has been promoted from chambermaid to nurse, from nurse to mistress, and from mistress to wife, acquainted herself well. At first, she had continued to address her husband as "uncle", and remained shy for a time; but eventually she found contentment in her homely duties, her devotion to the elder children Alois Jr. and Angela, and the care for the younger ones that arrived at regular intervals. The early deaths of her first three children, however, caused a crisis in the household, and Klara needed some time to overcome the successive tragedies. She did not become pregnant for two years after Otto had died, only a few days after his birth, in the autumn of 1887.

Alois' life revolved around the usual quarters very much: the Customs station at the river bank, the inns, and the bee hives that were his hobby since childhood. He continued his work in good standing and was promoted again in 1892, when Adolf was 3 years old. The family moved to his next duty station, Passau, fifty miles downriver.

The change of residence was to exert a significant influence upon young Adolf. Braunau was a provincial, sleepy border town, which had only provided a tiny footnote to German history. During the Napoleonic wars, the book trader Johannes Palm was executed in Braunau by French troops, for having written a pamphlet critical of the French emperor. The tract was titled "Germany in the Hour of her Deepest Humiliation"; Napoleon took umbrage, and the author was fusilladed. The execution remained a fixture of German nationalists and was remembered with a vengeance in 1870/71.

The former Imperial town and Episcopal see Passau was of a different calibre. In the Middle Ages, the Prince-Bishop of Passau had ruled over the important market, bishopric and county at the confluence of the Inn and Danube rivers; splendid churches, castles and palaces bore witness to the glory days of the town. Although Passau was on the German bank of the river and border, the Austrian Customs inspection was located, by mutual disposition of the respective governments, on German territory, where, luckily, the inns closed an hour later at night.

Yet for the family in general, and Alois in particular, the change of posting seems not to have been entirely welcome. Alois had lived seventeen years in Braunau, where he had buried two wives, and had developed affection for the small town. There was also the fact that in Braunau he was necessarily a bigger fish than in the much larger Customs office in Passau, and, in addition, the position in Passau was a provisional appointment only, subject to confirmation by his superiors.

It was perhaps only for the youngest member of the family, Adolf, three and a half years old, that the new town was an unmitigated success; he was in the impressionable age in which a child leaves home for the first time and is unfailingly altered by the first impressions of the new environment, the sight of the buildings, the sound of the language. For the rest of his life, Adolf Hitler would speak the distinctive dialect of Lower Bavaria that was spoken in Passau. He insisted later that, from his time in Passau onwards, he had always felt more German than Austrian, and the old town's cultural and historic pedigree certainly provided a different impression than sleepy Braunau. In all probability, he spent two carefree years in Passau.

When he was almost five years old, his mother gave birth to another son, Edmund. Only a week later, the father, obviously having satisfied the expectations of his peers, was promoted and transferred again: from the provisional appointment at the German border to a new post in Linz, the provincial capital. Because of little Edmund, the rest of the family remained in Passau for another year, which gave Adolf, freed from paternal supervision, lots of opportunities to roam about town. He enjoyed twelve months of freedom, and it was perhaps in this picturesque town, that commanded

buildings in Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance style galore, that his lifelong interest in architecture awoke. Since he was not yet in school, time was on his side.

In addition, he had his mother for himself when his elder siblings were at school. Not only the Freudian faction of psychologists has commented at length upon Hitler's devotion to his mother and hostility versus his father. Hitler was aware of his feelings and never thought of hiding them. All sources agree that he carried photographs of his mother at all times, until the last days of his life. In the cauldron of the final Russian attack on Berlin in April 1945, more than fifty years later, a framed photograph of his mother was the sole decoration of his bunker bedroom. Of his father, he spoke with fury or contempt.

As one would expect, it has been argued that a fixation on his mother as the unattainable ideal of womanhood destroyed his future relations to women; that he would subconsciously compare every other woman to his mother and consequently find them all wanting. A related theory held that he, unable to overcome this frustration, would develop homosexual tendencies. This theory perhaps confuses his friendship with Erich Röhm and the latter's predilection for young and slim SA men with authenticity; anyway, no facts support the meretricious, not meritorious, theory.

Hitler's adult love life, as far as it will surface in this account, was less determined by his actual feelings for the young ladies themselves but his functions as revolutionary, party leader, chancellor and warlord that took up most of his time. Hitler met many women, and some were his mistresses, one of whom he married, in the end. Most, however, are best described as his "fans", ardent supporters of his cause and person, socialites like Winifred Wagner, Unity Mitford or Helene Hanfstaengl, who did him many favours and introduced him to the salons of the "better society". He did go through a somewhat tragic love affair later in his life, which will be discussed in its proper place. Manifestly true is the observation that he was able to mobilize German women in his support as they had supported no other politician before him, but, then again, we don't know how much of this support was based on erotic or maternal instincts. But the female vote was one of the pillars of his eventual success.

When the family followed the father to Linz in 1895, Adolf's carefree life drew to a close. His father practiced education by the standards of authoritative Austria and based his pedagogy on the cane - as it was the custom of the age. His stern character clashed easily and regularly with the imperfections he was wont to observe in the conduct of his two sons. From the spring of 1895 on, after Alois had decided to retire from His Majesty's Customs Service, and spent most of his time at the family home, he had even more opportunity to correct his children's comportment and hence father and sons collided even more often. Alois then bought a farm about thirty miles or fifty kilometres southwest of Linz, in the small village of Hafeld in the community of Fischlham near Lambach in Upper Austria. (3)

Hafeld was a tiny hamlet of about two dozen houses and harboured perhaps a hundred souls. If one remembers the hilly settings of "The Sound of Music", one has a good impression of how the settlement must have looked like. A sub-alpine village high on a crest, between trees, orchards and meadows, accommodated the nine acres of Alois' farm on a gentle ascension. The house was pretty and substantial, laid out on a slight slope; split-level, Californians would call it, and featured a small apple orchard, stables for the cows and horses, and that great prerequisite for kids' play on a farm, a hayloft. A rivulet completed the picture.

There was one problem. Alois was a farmer by heart; he was an ardent beekeeper, loved the physical side of farming and the husbandry of animals. But he lacked a green thumb, or, perhaps, the soil wasn't good. One theory has advanced that his retirement from public service was less than voluntary, but, again, nothing in the record supports such an allegation. He retired with full pension rights, and there is nothing to conclude that he was anything but a well-respected man; no indication that the move to Hafeld might have had ulterior motives. Yet another factor compromised the idyll for his younger son: life handed Adolf a new challenge by his enrolment in elementary school.

From September 1895 on, Adolf and Angela were scheduled to visit the tiny Volksschule, the primary school, in the village of Fischlham, three miles away. For the first time in his life, Adolf was separated from his mother and the village children, who had been his playmates. Adolf and Angela had to walk to school and back every day, a commute of about one hour in fine weather, much longer in winter. Due to the diminutive size of the population it served, the school in Fischlham was divided into two summary classes only, one for the boys and one for the girls.

One of the teachers, Herr Mittermaier, remembered the two children in general, as pupils of the school, and Adolf in particular, because he was one of his students. He could clearly remember, he said, many decades later, that both of them kept the contents of their knapsacks in "exemplary order", and that Adolf was "mentally very much alert, obedient, but lively." (4)

In the first year, Adolf earned the highest marks for deportment, something he was not truly known for later. In *MEIN KAMPF*, he remembered:

*"It was during these times that the first ideas formed in my breast. All that playing around in the open, the long way to school and my companionship with the rugged boys sometimes caused my mother grief and suffering, but that did not prevent me from being the opposite of a stay-at-home boy.*

*And while I had hardly any thoughts of a future career at this time, I definitely had no sympathy for the direction my father's career had taken. I imagine that even my talent for speaking in public came about through the more or less savage arguments that I often had with my school buddies. I had become a little ringleader and learned quite easily and well at school, but in other respects I became quite difficult to handle." (5)*

Indeed, this passage seems to have been written straight from the heart. If true, it might evidence that, even as a boy, he was able to relate and defend his own ideas. What all sources agree on is that he was the ringleader at play, whether it was Cowboys and Indians or Boers versus Englishmen, a boy terror with a fast mouth, and busy with mischief.

To Alois Jr., Hafeld proved a rough environment. The closeness of village life led to frequent arguments with his father. Alois Sr. worked long hours every day, but the barren soil rendered most of his labours fruitless and caused him frustration that all too readily turned to anger. In addition, Klara had given birth to little Paula in the fall of 1898, and the household now comprised five children. The distress over the farm may not have much improved the father's patience.

Since he had given up his profession, Alois was very much of a presence on the farm and in the village, looming over his family with stern and unforgiving authority. As far as physical punishments are concerned, the sources disagree. The sons both complained about the beatings the father supposedly provided, Adolf remarked, "with a hippopotamus whip." (6) On the other hand, Adolf's future warden and burgomaster of Leonding, Josef Mayrhofer, who knew the family well, claimed that Alois' bark was worse than his bite. We must keep here in mind that beatings, in liberal amounts and with frequent repetition, were deemed a disciplinarian's panacea, instilling morale, obedience and character.

Alois Jr. alleged that the punishments happened on an irregular schedule, independent of cause and effect, which, if it were true, would indicate that alcohol played a role. Sometimes, he said, there were beatings for Adolf as well, or the dog, and he alleged that, on occasion, Klara also fell victim to her husband's grim. If such scenes truly happened, they may have had strong psychological implications for young Adolf. Alois Jr. characterized his father as follows:

*"He was imperious and quick to anger from childhood onward and would not listen to anyone. My stepmother always took his part. He would get the craziest notions and get away with it. If he didn't have his way, he got very angry. ... He had no friends, took to no one and could be very heartless. He could fly into a rage over every triviality." (7)*

Yet the elder son had his own opinions, and was in the habit of defending them, and "after fierce fights with his father, fourteen-year-old Alois Jr. left the home in Hafeld and was disinherited." (8) The family house, however, did not remain the only place where Alois Jr. found trouble. Four years later, in the year 1900, he was arrested, convicted of theft and sentenced to five months in jail. He received another such sentence later, this time for eight months. Like his possible grandfather Johann Georg Hiedler, he became a vagrant and earned meagre wages as a waiter in various countries: from Austria to Germany, from Germany to France, and from France, in 1909, to Ireland. Dublin, however, could not hold him any longer than other towns had, and the following year, 1910, finds him in Liverpool, where he became the proprietor of a small restaurant.

It was in this town that he married the buxom Irish lass Elizabeth Dowling, who bore him a son whom he named William Patrick. In early 1924, Alois Jr. went back to Germany, albeit without his family whom he, perhaps, considered an unnecessary burden. He resettled in Hamburg, but the old Hanseatic town got the better of him: a second marriage, undertaken without a prior divorce from Elizabeth, sent him to prison again, for bigamy, six months this time.

After his half-brother Adolf's career had taken off in 1933, Alois materialized in Berlin, where he opened a bar cum restaurant on the Wittenbergplatz, near the heart of the city's nightlife. His eventual clientele, most of them Nazis, SS or SA officers, knew exactly what his family relations were. Although it could never be determined exactly whether these excellent connections now helped or not, the customers of Café Alois believed in them and the establishment was a success. Alois survived the war and his brother, but the prominence of the family name may have got a bit too close to him, or perhaps some of his former wives were on the hunt for outstanding alimony payments: at any rate, Alois Jr. changed his name to Hans Hiller and disappeared from history, although he lived until 1956. Adolf's younger sister Paula was a quiet and docile girl. She never appeared in the limelight, never married, and lived in obscurity until her death in 1960.

The urge to change places Alois Jr. had certainly acquired from his father. A friend remembered what Adolf told him about his family's movements:

*During his [Alois, ¶] period of service in Braunau there are recorded twelve changes of address; probably there were more. During the two years in Passau he moved house twice. Soon after his retirement he moved from Linz to Hafeld, from there to Lambach - first in the Leingartner Inn, then to the mill of the Schweigbach forge, that is to say two changes in one year - then to Leonding. When I first met Adolf he remembered seven removals and had been to five different schools. (9)*

Yet the freedom the elder son now enjoyed came at a high price for the younger, who became the foremost recipient of the father's pedagogic exercises. It was around this time that Alois Sr. conceded defeat in the agricultural campaign and sold the underperforming farm in the hope of finding a more congenial life in the small town of Lambach, about six miles or ten kilometres from Hafeld. The family's first residence there, the Leingartner Inn, was situated on the opposite side of the town's dominant architectural feature, the old Benedictine monastery.

Lambach had a quite modern primary school in which Adolf did well. In the school year of 1897/98, he scored the best mark, a "1", in a dozen subjects. He also participated in the monastery's boys' choir, where he, probably for the first time in his life, saw a swastika. The sign was part of a previous abbot's coat of arms, a huge specimen of which was fastened to the stone arch over the abbey's entrance, which the boys had to pass under on the way to choir practice. The monastery, dating from the eleventh century, was known for well-preserved frescoes and paintings by medieval masters. The second architectural highlight of the town was the Paura church, which featured a triangular design, with three altars, gates and towers.

The school was located just aside of the monastery, and the busy church calendar with its many festivities strongly attracted the youngster. He was fascinated with the monks and priests, the celebrations, and the abbot's presidency over the ceremonial community, the memories of which never left him. In *MEIN KAMPF*, he reminisced:

*"Again and again I enjoyed the best possibility of intoxicating myself with the solemn splendour of the dazzling festivals of the church. It seemed to me perfectly natural to regard the abbot as the highest and more desirable ideal, just as my father [had] regarded the village priest as his ideal." (10)*

Whether Alois Hitler, championing the causes of sexual liberation and, perhaps, alcoholic intoxication, still regarded priests as ideals may be doubted. But since he had been raised in the bosom of the Catholic Church, he paid his respects, at least to a degree, and visited services on Easter, Christmas and on August 18, the emperor's birthday.

One thing his son clearly kept in mind was the swastika he had discovered on the abbot's coat of arms. The original bearer of the coat, Abbot Theoderich von Hagen, had been the prior of the monastery in the middle of the preceding century, and the swastika symbol was not only featured on his coat but was found at many places in the

structure as an element of decoration. The swastika, also known as equilateral cross or crux gammata, is an attribute of prosperity and good fortune, widely used by cultures ancient as well as modern. The word is derived from Sanskrit *swastika*, meaning "conducive to well-being". It was a favourite symbol on ancient Mesopotamian coins and appears frequently in medieval Christian, especially Byzantine, art, where it is known as the gammadion cross. It is also found in South and Central America, used by the Maya, and in North America among the Navajo and related tribes.<sup>2</sup>

The German word for swastika is *Hakenkreuz*, the "Hooked Cross". In the case of the venerable abbot, it was perhaps a pun on his name, for in German his name *Hagen*, and *Haken*, the hook, are pronounced almost identically.

Lambach, however, was not the kind of town to stop Alois' wanderlust, and in the late fall of 1898, he bought a small house in the town of Leonding, a southwestern suburb of Linz. The house stood opposite the church, was not too big but had a nice garden, about one half acre in size, abutting the cemetery wall. Leonding housed perhaps three thousand souls, but its proximity to Linz made it a somewhat livelier place than the number of inhabitants alone might suggest.

Adolf and Angela had to change school again, for the third time in four years, but Adolf did well at the small school in Leonding. Yet the family atmosphere apparently did not change much, for better or worse, and Paula reported that her brother remained the chief target the father's temper tantrums were directed at. She remarked:

*"It was him who challenged my father to extreme hardness and who got his sound thrashing every day. He was a scrubby little rogue, and all attempts of my father to thrash him for his rudeness and to cause him to love the profession of an official of the state were in vain.*

*How often, on the other hand, did my mother caress him and try to obtain with her kindness, where the father could not succeed with harshness." (11)*

Thus, if the sister blamed the father's violence, she also attested to her brother's being a "scrubby little rogue", which we may take as a hint that the father's educational manoeuvres were not entirely unwarranted.

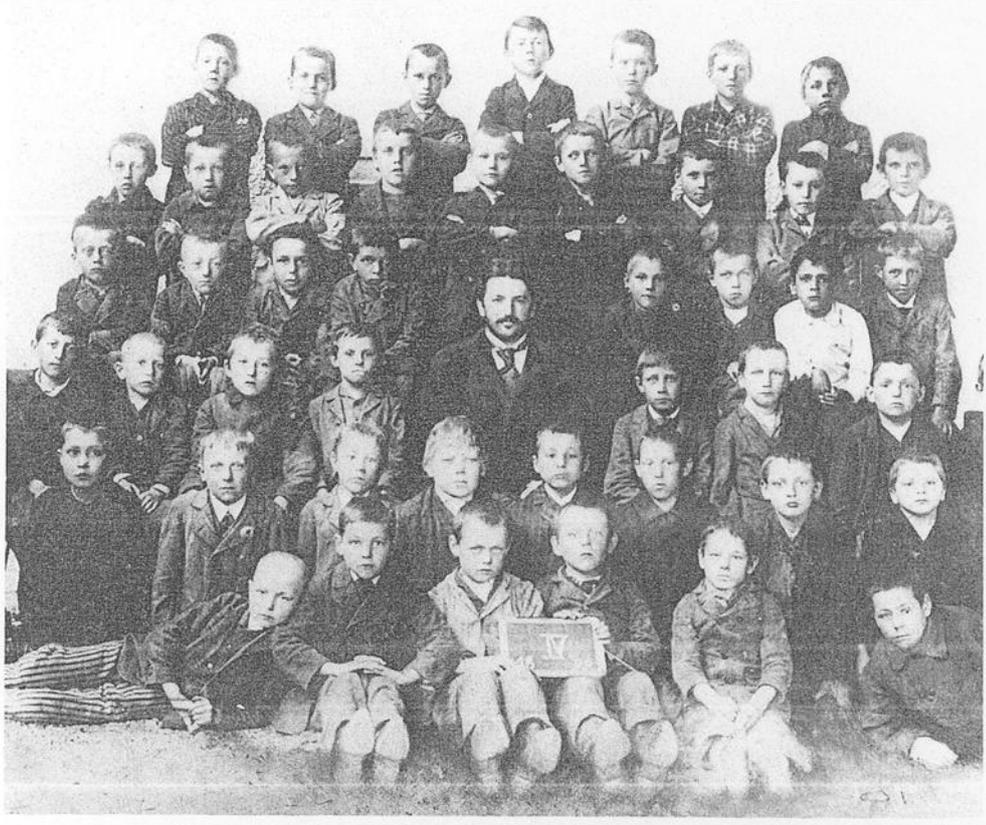
The first two years in Leonding passed by, and Alois seemed to adjust better to the lifestyle of a retiree. He worked in the garden mornings for an hour or two, visited his beloved bees, and then proceeded to pay his dues at one of the inns, for a glass of wine. In the afternoon the schedule repeated itself; the Gasthaus session, however, was finished punctually at the time for dinner at home.

An important witness for this time is the aforementioned mayor of Leonding, Josef Mayrhofer. He portrayed Klara as a most friendly and nicely dressed woman, and explicitly stated that he never saw or heard of Alois beating the children, although he often enough threatened them with the whip. The truth may, as so often, lie somewhere in the middle, for corporeal punishment was widely accepted in this age.

Out of the blue, on February 2, 1900, Edmund, six years old, died of the measles. There are indications that the sudden death of his little brother shocked Adolf to the core, and may have contributed to the school problems which began soon thereafter. It seems that no other event in his young life had a comparable impact on Adolf. His scholarly success diminished dramatically, and problems with his discipline escalated.

One of his best known childhood photographs portrays him, in the school's yearbook photograph of the class of 1899 - his fourth and last at the Volksschule in Leonding. He stands at the top row of his buddies, in the middle, with an expression of "calm self-assurance and conscious ease." (12) The next photograph, taken a year later, in the fall of 1900, in the first grade of the *UNTERREALSCHULE*, the Junior Technical High School in Linz, depicts a strangely mutated child: the boy faces the camera morosely, sullenly sulking, mumpish and dumpish, as if a flame had gone out. During primary school, he had always been near the academic top of the class but now his scholastic efforts and consequently his achievements dropped quickly. By his own account, his personal yearnings for academic laurels were diminished by the sudden discovery of a talent he had been unaware of yet: that of drawing.

<sup>2</sup> See the relevant article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica.



TOP: 4TH CLASS VOLKSSCHULE, 1899, HITLER TOP ROW MIDDLE BOTTOM: 1ST CLASS REALSCHULE, 1900, HITLER TOP ROW RIGHT (X)

After school hours, if not drawing, he remained the leader of the pack, in all probability neither worse nor better than a typical schoolboy. Since his family had moved to four different locations within the first few years of his life and had thus provided him with an intimate knowledge of faraway places, he became the indispensable authority in all foreign matters. We can imagine him natter to his chums for hours, as he did later to his dinner guests.

He always found topics to talk about. All through his life, the observations agree, he was buried in books and this habit had begun early. He read all the time, and if the latest tome he had ingested was one of James Fenimore Cooper's, he felt like Natty Bumppo, alias Hawk-Eye or Leatherstocking; if the last volume had been one of Karl May's adventures, he was Old Shatterhand or Winnetou, chief of the Apache. Young boys have read adventure books and built fortresses in the woods since the dawn of time, and young Adolf was initially no exception. All boys pass through the heroic age, and so they should, but in young Adolf's case a deviation of the norm occurred. Juvenile obsessions diminish into the background of half-forgotten childhood memories when the ascent of puberty shifts priorities; when girls, cars and beer replace the heroes of the past. For Adolf, however, some childhood dreams persisted, like his veneration for the books of Karl May.

Virtually unknown outside of the German-speaking people, Karl May was the son of a poor family from the Erzgebirge, the Ore Mountains, the low mountain ridge separating Saxony and Bohemia. The son of a weaver, he became an elementary school teacher before a conflict with the law, a conviction for petty theft, sent him for seven years to prison. Upon his release in 1874, he embarked on a career as a writer. He started out with short stories, which eventually grew larger and were serialized; like Alexandre Dumas's "The Count of Monte Christo" had found success in France. May soon graduated to full-length novels, chiefly fictitious traveller's tales.

While he eventually wrote about almost every corner of the globe, most of the stories concentrate upon his and a bunch of trusty sidekicks' fictional adventures in the Wild West of the USA and Mexico of the 1860s and 1870s respectively the Ottoman Empire's Balkan, Arabian and Turkish provinces. His alter ego was, in the case of the Wild West, "Old Shatterhand", a trapper, surveyor and know-it-all, and in the East, "Kara Ben Nemsi", a mixture between Sir Henry Morton Stanley and jack-of-all-parades. In the 1960s a few of his tomes were turned into movies, featuring second-tier Hollywood stars like Stewart Grainger or Lex Barker in hilarious German-Italian co productions, with Yugoslavian extras playing the assorted Indian braves.

In the German-speaking countries around the turn of the century, Karl May became an improbable success and a veritable household name. A whole printing house was dedicated solely to his oeuvre, followed by a museum. An open-air theatre was built to give dramatizations of his yarns, and the movies are a staple of weekend-afternoon child pacification. Total sales of his works exceed 100 million copies.

Most of his seventy novels and story collections follow unpretentious recipes. Mr. May, as trapper Old Shatterhand, accompanied by his friend and blood-brother Winnetou, chief of the Apache, encounters a party of strangers somewhere on the prairie, who, for the one or other reason, arouse his suspicion. After parting from their company, the heroes return, clandestinely, at night, and listen in on the fishy characters' fireside chat, hidden by the bushes that grow handily around the suspects' fireplace. The evildoers invariably engage in a lengthy and detailed discussion of their criminal enterprise, but, armed with the knowledge of their plan, our friends are able to thwart the heinous plot, as the laws of suspense prescribe, in the last minute. They save the prospective victims from bodily and/or financial harm and, at the end of the tale, ride together into the sunset.

For variety, evil Indian tribes may be replaced by Arabian criminals or Turkish gangsters. Books like those of Karl May have, of course, fired puerile imagination for centuries; in literate societies they are an indispensable part of the male coming of age. In Hitler's case, however, Karl May's novels continued to form a part of his reality all through his life, he was unable to outgrow them. By his words, and the reports of his staff, he read the complete seventy novels at least four times in his life. He found time in his first year as chancellor of Germany, in 1933, to read them once again. His ideas of tactics and in particular of military intelligence were partly formed by his favourite literature; he did, in fact, more than once encourage his generals to read Karl May. One may hope they found enough bushes around their opponents' campfires, for cover.

A quite linear way led young Adolf's sense of adventure from the Wild West to the military. He admitted that when he found, by accident, a few illustrated magazines depicting the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71 in the attic, he became an instant fan of the patriotic struggle. At this time, it was official Austrian policy to ignore the events of these years: first, because their army's defeat at Königgrätz in 1866 by the Prussians still rankled, second, because Austria had played no part in the success of 1870/71, and, third, because the Austrian government was unwilling to acknowledge German efficiency in general, and the more so because it contrasted so unfavourably to its own bumbling ways. Adolf himself admitted that:

*"It was not long before the great historical struggle had become my greatest inner experience. From then on, I became more and more enthusiastic about everything that was in any way connected with the war, or, for that matter, with soldiering." (13)*

The fascination with all things military that was to remain with him all his life had begun. The neighbours in Leonding were used to see Adolf and his associates playing war all day and night, the boy with the characteristic forelock urging on the action.

The year that had begun so baneful with Edmund's death brought more trouble to Adolf in the fall. In September 1900, he had transferred to the Unterrealschule in Linz. Comparable to a junior technical high school, it was a four year school with an impetus on science, mathematics and modern languages, preparing its students for careers in the modern industry fields of engineering, design and production. It was a feeder school for industry and trade, not for aspiring university students. For those pupils, Austria, like Germany, had the *GYMNASIUM*, in which the prospective earners of academic degrees were treated to a classical curriculum that included Latin and Greek. The Realschule did not offer ancient languages or courses in philosophy; it taught practical subjects to the children of the lesser men.

How it felt in general to be a student in a contemporary Austrian school we are being told by Stefan Zweig, who remembers his days in a gymnasium in Vienna.

*It was not that our Austrian schools were bad in themselves. On the contrary, after a hundred years of experience, the curriculum had been carefully worked out and, had it been transmitted with any inspiration, could have been the basis for a fruitful and fairly universal education.*

*But because of their accurate arrangement and their dry formulary our lessons were frightfully barren and lifeless, a cold teaching apparatus which never adapted itself to the individual, but automatically registered the grades, "good", "sufficient" and "insufficient", depending on how far we complied with the "requirements" of the curriculum.*

*It was exactly this lack of human affection, this empty impersonality and the barracks-like quality of our surrounding, that unconsciously embittered us. We had to learn our lessons and were examined on what we learned. For eight years no teacher asked us even once what we personally wished to learn, and that encouraging stimulus, for which every young person secretly longs, was totally lacking. (14)*

It was the normal procedure of the age that the father of the student chose in which type of institution to enrol his offspring after he or she finished elementary school, and, not surprisingly, Alois chose the more practically oriented Realschule over the more cerebral Gymnasium for his son; perhaps in the hope that its more utilitarian education would improve, at length, the boy's willingness to pursue the career of a civil servant.

*The virtues of the civil service were proverbial in the Hitler household. It was necessary that one child should be prepared for the bureaucracy, almost as noble sons once were destined for army and Church. Yet, when the actual decision had to be made, the old man ran into unexpected resistance.*

*A serious conflict erupted between father and son because the boy refused to cooperate in Alois' plans. He claimed that he had no interest in an official's life; nothing his father could propose, through either commands or blandishments, succeeded in changing his stand. The struggle between father and son*

*gradually became more serious. Alois became increasingly bitter and intransigent. And Adolf's whole manner of life was profoundly changed.*

*During the years in REALSCHULE (1900-1905), he emerged as a solitary, resentful, and uncooperative youth who sullenly went through the motions at home and failed in school. After compiling an excellent record in VOLKSSCHULE, he slipped from one mediocre term to another, either failing completely (1900-1901) or barely skating by. The whole experience deeply affected his later development. It barred his way to higher education and left him with a full measure of unhappy confusion and resentment about himself, his family and his future. (15)*

It is quite possible that Adolf initially seconded the selection of the Realschule over the Gymnasium, for drawing was part of the curriculum in the former but not the latter. The Realschule closest to Leonding was, of course, in Linz, and on September 17, 1900, Adolf had to report to it for the first time. From his home, it was a walk of about three miles.

At this time the foremost entry Linz had contributed to the annals of German respectively Austrian history was the fact that she bore the ruins of Kuernberg Castle, where, according to folklore, the *NIBELUNGENLIED*, the Song of the Nibelungs, had been written. At the time of our survey, she was a town of perhaps 50,000 residents, on the brink of industrialization, dominated by a German middle class eager to introduce the pleasures of the arts and the comforts of modernity to their habitat. Two recent improvements were the opening of a municipal opera house and an electric trolley line that ran down Landstrasse, the main thoroughfare. The Realschule, a square block of utilitarian dark grey stone, was perhaps a less inspiring sight.

It is evident that Adolf almost immediately ran into problems. A few of his report cards have survived, and they show that the majority of the grades he received in these years balanced precariously between a "3" ['acceptable'] and a "5" ['insufficient']; in "Moral Conduct" he received an "adequate", but his diligence was rated as "erratic", and he missed passing grades in mathematics and natural history [=science, ¶] in the class of 1900/1901. He did better the next year, although it was the same curriculum he went through, for the second time, and between 1901 and 1904 his grade average dropped from 2.7 in 1902 to 2.9 in 1904. Even in his favourite course, drawing, he was poised close to failure, although he liked it and judged himself a talent. While he scored between "1" and "2" in Geometrical Drawing, in Freehand Drawing he was never rated better than a "4". His works consequently never made it to be hung in the classroom, as some other boys' drawings were.

Not only was he in a new scholarly environment, the new year had also changed his social status. He was not anymore, by fiat, the natural leader of the pack; neither worked the relatively high social prestige of his father in Leonding the same way in the big town. Adolf had never faced much competition in the small primary schools he had visited, but in Linz he could not count on being the brightest boy by default, and his mother was not around to help him.

*He seemed incapable of any concentrated effort, disliked the teachers, and was not popular with the other boys. He did so badly that he had to go through the work of the first class all over again the following year. That he was obviously having grave difficulties with his work and that he was completely unable to adapt himself to the Realschule showed that he was suffering from some profound psychological malaise, not that he was stupid.*

*His pride had been assailed, the inner citadel of his life no longer stayed firm, and he was at the mercy of all these accumulative shocks that attack people in a state of depression, leaving them almost defenceless. Edmund's death, his burial in the depth of winter, the whole family in mourning, all this drew a long shadow over his life, but there were many other things that contributed to his misery.*

*For the first time he was living for a large part of the day away from home among strangers who did not care what happened to him. Loneliness, too, played an important part in the sudden change that came over him. (16)*

He was in dire need of aid, and when none was forthcoming, he dove deeply into the reservoir of hope his musings provided. The scholastic decline hurt him, of course, and in his depression he clung more and more to the only talent he thought he still possessed, that of drawing. His father had no understanding for the son's sudden failure, and the teachers were not interested in the quandary the boy presented. Only his mother was able at times to supply the quantum of solace the boy required.

His grades failed to improve. That he had to repeat the first grade of the Realschule he later portrayed as a result of adolescent rebellion.

*"I thought that once my father saw how little progress I was making in the Realschule, he would let me devote myself to my dream, whether he liked it or not." (17)*

Alois was not swayed that easily. Much has been made of Hitler's academic failure in the Realschule, frequently by political enemies who welcomed every chance to belittle their less educated antagonist. It appears obvious, though, that the problem was of psychological nature. Laziness may have played a part; a penchant of his for letting time take care of things will become impossible to overlook in his later career. A pattern might emerge here for the first time; that if he could not tackle a problem right away, he tended to ignore it and retreat into his dream world. Alas, this is a point not easily criticized - who has never taken refuge in dreams?

The botched year had two favourable side effects: in the next year Adolf had the advantage of relearning a curriculum that he was already familiar with, and he was a year older than his classmates, which aided his recently diminished authority. He did better on the second attempt, which eased the situation on the home front. But clashes still did happen, if we believe the scenes he describes in *MEIN KAMPF*:

*"But when it [Adolf's desire to become an artist, ¶] was explained to him [Alois, ¶], and especially when he realized the seriousness of my intentions, he opposed me with all the determination of his nature. His decision was quite simple, and he refused to pay the slightest heed to any talents I might have possessed.*

*'Artist, no! Never as long as I live!' As his son, among various other qualities, had apparently inherited his father's stubbornness, the same answer was given back to him. Of course, the meaning was just the opposite. Thus the situation remained on both sides.*

*My father did not depart from his 'Never!' and I was even more determined with my 'Nevertheless!' The consequences, indeed, were not very pleasant. The old man became embittered, and as much as I loved him, so did I. My father forbade me to entertain any hope of being allowed to study painting. I went one step further and declared that I absolutely would not study any more. Of course, after such a 'declaration' I got the worst of it, and now the old man relentlessly enforced his authority." (18)*

Subsequently, Adolf relates how he attempts to run from home at an even earlier age than Alois and Alois Jr.: the first time, he says, when the family was still living in Lambach, although then the school problem certainly did not exist yet. At any rate, it would seem that the father had somehow learned about the filial plans and locked the boy into the attic. When Adolf attempted to proceed with the absquatulation, a barred window prevented further advance. Plan B called now for a complete disrobing, after which, the boy pondered, he might just fit through the available opening. With unerring paternal instinct, however, the father happened to unlock the door and enter the attic in the very moment when the son was halfway outside the window, stuck, and stark naked. Poised in delicate balance, the boy eventually decided to give up the flight, crawled back into the room and covered his nudity, not completely, as it turned out, with a tablecloth that had hung on the line to dry. This saved him, at least for the day, from physical punishment, for the father took his son's display of nature with humour and called in the rest of the family to watch the "Roman in his toga". (19)

Many years later Hitler confessed to Helene Hanfstängl, the wife of his first foreign press agent, that the ridicule had hurt him more, and longer, than a beating could have. Finally, he claimed, he found a strategy to end corporeal punishments.

*"I then resolved never again to cry when my father whipped me. A few days later, I had the opportunity of putting my will to the test. My mother, frightened, took refuge in front of my door. As for me, I counted silently the blows of the stick which lashed my rear end." (20)*

The resolution of silence worked, he claimed: from this day on the beatings ceased. But we have reason to doubt his veracity, in particular because Josef Mayrhofer later categorically denied that Alois had a special propensity for physical punishment. That he was strict, we can assume with reasonable certainty, and Paula did testify that her brother received some thrashings, but overall, they were probably in line with the pedagogic recommendations of the time.

That Adolf changed after Edmund's death seems definite. Robert Payne observed:

*From being a rather cocky, good-humoured, outward-going boy who found his lessons ridiculously easy, sailing through life as though all things were possible to him, he becomes a morose, self-absorbed, nervous boy, who never again did well in his lessons and continued to wage a sullen war against his teachers until they gave up in despair. (21)*

In the years before the Realschule, Adolf's leadership of the after-school games in Lambach and Leonding had compensated for eventual problems at home. The break of the new century acquainted the boys with a new game: Boers versus Britishers.

Nearly forgotten today, the Boer War was a predecessor of the modern "media" wars; the first conflict outside of Europe from which an international press corps delivered daily updates. The war was contested between the British Empire on one hand and two tiny Boer, or Afrikaners, republics in South Africa on the other. The "South African Republic", also known as Transvaal, and the "Orange Free State", were two modest political entities founded by Dutch settlers whose ancestors had lived on these lands for about two hundred years in relative peace before gold and diamonds were discovered there. As soon as word of the riches spread, British treasure-hunters invaded the land and demanded equal access to the treasures. The Boers refused to grant the sudden "immigrants" equal rights, and hostilities broke out soon thereafter. The London press made clear that nature had erred in placing these treasures on Boer soil, and the British Empire quickly set out to correct the geographical mistake.

The Boers did not have much of an army, but they were hunters and hence familiar with the business end of their rifles. They were not accustomed to parades, nor had they proper uniforms, but they could field between 45,000 and 88,000 men [the number quoted in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th Ed. 1993, ¶], against a British army whose numerical strength at its peak, in early 1902, exceeded 450,000 combatants. They had, however, not battled a European enemy since the Crimean War forty years ago, and never before an enemy who possessed modern rifles. Hence their initial tactics were somewhat outdated, and failed to anticipate that the Boers, conscious of their weak infrastructure, had to rely on guerrilla warfare.

The war dragged on. British units, it was found out soon, were simply not mobile enough to keep up with the Boers, who could hide for days and weeks in the veldt whither the British simply could not follow. Numerically far superior but relatively immobile British forces were trounced at several occasions, and the world opinion followed the cause of the Boers with sympathy.

In the fall of 1900, Whitehall installed a new, the third, commander-in-chief of the South African theatre, Major General Horatio Herbert Kitchener. The new man had collected some African experience in the Sudan, where his forces had exterminated the army of the Mahdi at the Battle of Omdurman on September 2, 1898.

Kitchener's army, about 25,000 strong, possessed breech-loading, precise Lee-Metford rifles, Maxim machine guns and field artillery, all of which they brought to bear against the approximately 50,000 supporters of the Mahdi. About 15,000 of the Mahdi's men had ancient frontloader guns from Turkish stocks, the rest wielded spears in addition to the trusty sabres their ancestors had used for a millennium. They stormed in open attack against the British lines. Max Boot does the math:

*The frontal assault tactic that had worked in the age of flintlocks turned out to be a prescription for machine-gun assisted suicide in the age of Maxim guns.*

*A Napoleonic battalion in 1815 armed with 1,000 flintlock muskets could fire 2,000 rounds a minute to a range of one hundred yards. A century later, a battalion armed with 1,000 magazine rifles and four machine guns could fire 21,000 rounds a minute to a range of 1,000 yards. This meant that, in a bayonet assault, a comparable unit could expect to receive two shots per soldier in 1815 and two hundred shots per soldier in 1915. (22)*

The government in London assumed that a man who had extinguished the Mahdi rebellion could handle a few Dutch guerrillas.

A fresh British army was dutifully dispatched to South Africa under Kitchener's command, and it swiftly occupied the principal towns of the Boers, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria. None of these places were fortified or even defended, for that matter, and the British army celebrated a few nearly unopposed victories. Delighted with his success, Lord Kitchener prepared to return to London, for parties, toasts and lectures on how to defeat Dutch terrorists.

Since the Boers had known from the beginning that they could not fight the British army in unfortified towns or open battle, the guerrilla campaign reignited as soon as Kitchener's ship heaved anchor for Portsmouth. The Boer commandos' great advantage was their ability to live off the land; they were able to appear seemingly everywhere and nowhere, to raid a British post one morning, out of the blue, and be gone by noon. Their speed and versatility played havoc with the orderly but sluggish English chain of command. To add insult to injury, the Boer President Paul "Ohm" Krueger, who had founded the Transvaal state personally, in 1852, told the international press corps at frequent intervals exactly what he thought about the British.

When the Boer insurgency, as the British called it, succeeded in restricting the English troops, who found no way to control the endless bush land, to towns and camps, the war drums sounded alert and Kitchener was recalled from London. A subsequent increase of troops did not help as much as the British government had hoped, and Kitchener felt compelled to add a new strategy to Imperial Britain's military history.

If conventional warfare, he contemplated, failed to address the enemy directly, other incentives might force a decision. A policy of scorched-earth he finally deemed best, and soon Boer farms and villages were torched irrespectively whether they had belonged to, or had harboured, Boer "terrorists" or not, and the complete non-combatant Boer population, women, children and farmhands, were arrested, separated by gender, and detained in what the British called "concentration camps".

The camps consisted of little more than fenced-in grassland; the observation was made for the first time that barbed wire worked for humans just as for cattle. Luxuries like food or medical attention were not necessarily included in the lodging plan, and tens of thousands of old men, women and their children perished of hunger and disease. The number of victims is hard to determine; British computations declare that, at most, 20,000 souls expired in the program, although estimates of the international press came up with numbers two or three times higher.

This was a time, one must remember, when wars were still supposed to be battled out by the respective armed forces, not civilians; but by murdering myriads of their kin Kitchener forced the Boers to surrender for the sake of their loved ones. Their military prowess had brought the Boers respect, and the suffering of their families brought them international sympathy; for the British army, however, it seems that the inclusion of civilians among the legitimate targets of war had become a tactical expedient. In later years, it was the same British general staff that developed, unfortunately, the doctrine of the "strategic" or "carpet" bombing of a civil population, which was used so efficiently in the Second World War. One may keep Kitchener's concentration camps in mind when reading, in a later chapter, British complaints about German atrocities in the opening days of World War One.

As far as young Adolf was concerned, his problem was that none of his playmates wanted to play an Englishman, for the unofficial German sympathies, and some official recognition too, lay with the Boers, a fact that, obviously, was to

complicate German-British diplomatic relations.<sup>3</sup> The Boers, of Dutch descent, are of course a Germanic people, and young Adolf's sympathies were influenced by the pro-Germanism that he claimed in *Mein Kampf* to have developed early. His feelings may have become a matter of strife in the former Customs official's household, for Alois had spent his life in the enforcement of Austrian law, and strove to instil pro-Austrian feelings upon his son. The son, perhaps naturally, opposed the father's support for the Habsburgs, and felt encouraged in his opinion by the teachers in school, who, he claimed, were also Pro-German yet forbidden by legal decree to show their colours openly.

Brigitte Hamann has researched this claim and confirms that the general

*" ... atmosphere at Linz high school was politically turbulent. Together, 'clericalists' and Hapsburg loyalists fought against libertines and German nationalists. Pupils eagerly collected and displayed their colours: while the high school students loyal to the emperor collected black-and-yellow [the colours of the Habsburgs, ¶] ribbons and badges, photographs of the imperial family, and coffee cups depicting Empress Elizabeth and Emperor Franz Josef, the German nationalists collected devotional objects such as Bismarck busts made of plaster, beer mugs with inscriptions of heroic maxims about Germany's past, and, above all, ribbons, pencils, and pins with the 'greater German' colours of 1848: black, red, and gold." (23)*

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler revealed that not the Habsburg "Hoch!", but the all-German "Heil" was the boys' preferred greeting, and that "instead of the imperial anthem we sang 'Deutschland Über Alles,' despite warnings and punishments." (24)

Since the German and the Habsburg anthem were sung to the same melody composed by Joseph Haydn, textual confusion easily occurred. It is true that, by Austrian policy, celebrations of "Sedan Day", September 1, in remembrance of the Prussian victory over Napoleon III were forbidden, yet students and teachers found ways to celebrate in private. A few of the teachers distinctly remembered the adolescent scamp with the prominent forelock; during the Beer-Hall-Putsch trial in 1924, Adolf's former teacher Professor Eduard Huemer testified to his memories as follows:

*"I well remember the gaunt, pale-faced boy who shuttled backwards and forwards between Linz and Leonding. He was definitively gifted, but only in a one-sided way, for he was lacking in self-control, and to say the least he was regarded as argumentative, wilful, arrogant, and bad-tempered, and he was notoriously incapable of submitting to school discipline.*

*Nor was he industrious. If he had been, he would have achieved much better results with his undoubted ability. He reacted with ill-conceived hostility whenever a teacher reprovved him or gave him some advice.*

*At the same time he demanded the unqualified subservience of his fellow pupils, fancying himself in the role of a leader, and of course playing many small harmless pranks, which is not unusual among immature youngsters. He seemed to be infected with the stories of Karl May and the Redskins." (25)*

Professor Huemer then paints a distinctive picture of the artist as a young man, full of sturm, drang and illusions. Hitler always had a soaring fantasy and the Pan-Germanism that he built like an anodyne around his beleaguered ego was soon joined by the advent of a second lifetime infatuation: his fascination with opera in general and with the works of Richard Wagner in particular. As Wagner had done, Adolf incorporated his Germanic preoccupations into the musical medium. Aged twelve, the first opera the boy saw in his life was Richard Wagner's *LOHENGRIN*.

<sup>3</sup> For German-British relations, the war had become a problem even before it had properly begun, on account of the Kaiser himself. Luigi Albertini explains:

"On 3 January 1896 Wilhelm sent President Kruger a notorious telegram warmly congratulating him on the success in re-establishing the peace by his unaided forces against the armed bands of Jameson which had invaded the Transvaal and in maintaining the independence of his country against outside attacks. This telegram, which roused intense indignation in England and brought her isolation home to her, was not an act of impulse on the part of Wilhelm, but was drawn up at a meeting of ministers presided over by him.

The object of this was - as the eminent German historian Brandenburg writes - not only to prevent the Boer State from linking up with Cape Colony and Rhodesia in a big South African Empire, but to give England a lesson that Germany would not allow further extension of the British Empire without equivalent compensations, and that it was to England's own interest to stand well with the Triple Alliance." (26) Bismarck was still alive, and must have cringed at such insolence.

It captivated him at once, the strange and searing tone of Wagner's orchestrations just as the Germanic subject of the work. It is one of the most eerie coincidences of this account that the twelve-year-old boy, who would forty years later give the order to commence Operation Barbarossa, the campaign against the Soviet Union, listened in his first opera to the words of King Heinrich addressing his knights as follows:

*Let the Empire's enemy now appear,  
We're well prepared to see him near,  
From his Eastern desert plain,  
He'll never dare to stir again.  
The German sword for German land,  
Thus will the Reich in vigour stand. (27)*

Eventually, he showed some scholastic improvement; his grade average was slightly better at 2.63 and in conduct and diligence he scored "good" respectively "very satisfactorily". We must, however, keep in mind that this was the second time he went through the identical curriculum. In the following school year, with new courses and new teachers, the old problems resurfaced.

Disagreements with the father continued. Alois' ideas for his son's life were tailored from his own legacy: learn well, enter the civil service, climb the ladder of promotion, and, one day, retire with a pension. He took Adolf to the Customs office in Linz once; the son vowed to die rather than to submit to a second visit.

Alois had caught a bad case of the flu in December 1899 and taken to bed for several weeks, but appeared to recover fully. In August of the following year he suffered a haemorrhage of the lung, but again, seemed to convalesce completely. But on January 3, 1903, apparently feeling unwell, Alois abandoned a chat over the fence with the neighbour and decided to visit the Gasthaus Stiefler. He sat down, called for a glass of wine, and died.

He was buried two days later, only paces from his house, on the cemetery of the Leonding church. As it was common at this time in Austria and still is in some places, a photograph was affixed to his gravestone that shows him looking resolutely ahead, purposeful and serious. His obituary in the Linzer newspaper *TAGESPOST*, the Daily Post, read as follows:

*"Leonding, January 5th. We have buried a good man - this we can rightly say about Alois Hitler, Higher Official of the Imperial Customs, retired, who was carried to his final resting place today. On the third of this month his life came to a sudden end as the result of an apoplectic stroke in the Gasthaus Stiefler, where he had gone because he was feeling unwell, hoping to revive himself with a glass of wine.*

*Alois Hitler was in his 65th year, and had experienced a full measure of joy and sorrow. Having only an elementary school education, he had first learned the trade of a cobbler, but later taught himself the knowledge needed for a civil service career, which he served with distinction, and in addition he achieved success in husbandry.*

*Salzburg, Braunau, Simbach, Linz, were among the places where he saw service. Alois Hitler was a progressive minded man through and through, and as such was a warm friend of free education. In company he was always cheerful, not to say boisterous. The harsh words that sometimes fell from his lips could not belie the warm heart that beat under the rough exterior.*

*At all times an energetic champion of law and order and universally well informed, he was able to pronounce authoritatively on any matter that came to his notice. Fond of singing, he was never happier than when in joyful company of fellow enthusiasts. In the sphere of beekeeping he was an authority. Not the least of his characteristics was his great frugality and sense of economy and thrift.*

*All in all Hitler's passing has left a great gap, not only in his family -he leaves a wife and four children not well provided for - but also in the circle of his friends and acquaintances who will preserve pleasant memories of him." [Emphasis in original] (28)*

There are a few things in this eulogy which may benefit from a translation of the contemporary euphemisms into the vernacular: "progressive minded" at that time meant that he was an anti-Ultramontanist, anti-Papal, and against the political influence of the Austrian Catholic church; "able to pronounce authoritatively" means that he was a smart-ass and know-it-all; "boisterous" indicates that his voice could be heard on the other side of the river, and a "champion of law and order" denotes his being, not surprisingly, a political reactionary. We may speculate what the reference to his frugality must have meant for the tips the local waitresses hoped to collect from his frequent visits. The family paid for the following notice in the *TAGESPOST*:

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*Bowed in deepest grief, we, on our behalf, and on behalf of all the relatives announce  
the passing of our dear and unforgettable husband, father, brother-in-law, uncle*

**ALOIS HITLER**

*Higher Official of Royal and Imperial Customs, retired, who, on Sunday, January 3rd, 1903, at 10 o'clock in the morning, in his 65th year, suddenly fell peacefully asleep in the Lord. The burial will take place on Monday, January 5th, 1903, at ten o'clock in the morning.*

*Leonding, January 3rd, 1903*

ANGELA HITLER

KLARA HITLER

ALOIS HITLER

PAULA HITLER

*Wife*

ADOLF HITLER

*Daughters*

*Sons (29)*

---

It had been a full life for Alois Hitler, who was laid to rest on the clear and cold morning of January 5. He had reached the highest achievements in the history of the family; he was its first member to have successfully made the transition from Waldviertel peasantry into Austria's petit bourgeoisie. He had married three times and fathered nine children that we know of.

He had also been stern and judicious. Now the way was free for his son.

## CARPE DIEM

*Life is thorny; and youth is vain,  
And to be wroth with one we love,  
Doth work like madness in the brain.*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner', Part II, L. 413

The day of his father's death was Adolf Hitler's day of liberation from the choking constraints of paternal ire, the leaden presence of the authoritarian former civil servant; in some respects the first day of a new life. The remaining years of adolescence he spent, essentially, beyond the moderating influence of anyone.

The funeral attracted a good-sized crowd of mourners; not only was the presence of the locals notable but most of the relatives had made the trip from Spital and all over the Waldviertel to Leonding. In attendance were Mayor Josef Mayrhofer, and Alois' colleagues Karl Wessely and Emmanuel Lugert from the Imperial Customs service on behalf of the Austrian government.

The obituary had stated that the orphaned children and the widow were "not well provided for", but it would seem that either the Tagespost writer had failed to check the facts, or the reference to the allegedly scarce family finances was the paper's clandestine way of soliciting charity. Alois had retired on a pension of 200 crowns a month, that is, 2400 per annum, which was more, as mentioned above, than the principal of the Leonding primary school received in active service. The widow was granted half of it, 100 crowns a month, for life, and a lump sum death benefit of 600 crowns. In addition, each of the three minor children was to receive 23 crowns orphan assistance per month until the age of twenty-four or until they were able to support themselves, whichever came first.

The finances of the Hitler family, and of Adolf, later, have been the subject of much speculation. Yet at least for the time immediately after Alois' death, the sums can be closely approximated. Pension plan plus orphan allowances came to  $1200 + [(23 \times 3 \times 12) = 2028$  crowns annually, which was certainly more disposable income than the average family in Leonding had. There were further legacies for the children, from Alois' savings account at the Kreditanstalt Bank: Angela received 1,650 crowns and Adolf and Paula 650 crowns each, which added 2950 crowns, or, at 4% interest,<sup>1</sup> 118 crowns annually to the family's disposition. These approximately 2146 crowns per annum should have secured an acceptable if not exuberant living.

The first change materializing in the boy's life was that he was now permitted to stay at a boarding house in Linz on school days, Monday to Saturday, thus being spared the daily commute. The house was at Grabengasse 9, and the proprietor, Frau Sekira, fed her youngsters well and tried to make sure that they did their homework. She later remembered young Adolf as a reserved, almost shy boy, who always used the formal address "Sie" instead of the informal "Du". Her charge, she noticed, spent inordinate amounts of time reading or drawing at night. She also recalled his particular interest in maps. We know the name of at least one of Adolf's roommates at Frau Sekira's, Fritz Seidl, whose letter to his old friend Adolf on October 11, 1923, four weeks before the Beer Hall Putsch, has been found in the party archives by Anton Joachimsthaler.

<sup>1</sup> Brigitte Hamann cites four percent interest as a reasonable contemporary rate, and adds that [following Franz Jetzinger's estimate in "Hitler's Youth", Vienna 1956, p. 125 ff.], the eventual sale of the Leonding house in 1905 brought in, after all expenses, circa 5,500 crowns, which, if saved, would yield another approximately 220 crowns in annual interest. (1)

The summer of 1903 saw a repetition of the report card drama. Adolf flunked mathematics again, and a letter from the principal informed Klara that her son would not be allowed to advance unless he were to successfully pass a repeated examination on the subject in the fall, after the school holidays. The notice caused the mother some grief, but we may speculate that the effect did not hold on too long: in June, the whole family left Leonding, following an invitation to spend the summer in Spital with Aunt Theresia and their relatives.

In Aunt Theresia's family, the Schmidts, hunchbacks appeared from time to time. Johanna Pölzl, Klara's mother, who lived with the Schmidts at the time the Hitlers came to visit, was one, and Eduard, one of the two sons of Anton Schmidt, was another. Nothing, however, indicates that this was a problem at any time, or that other abnormalities occurred; but then, industrious psycho-historians have argued that a congenital defect somewhere in the family might explain the flaws in the character of its most notorious member.

To some extent Adolf joined in the other children's summer play, but spent far more time reading and drawing, activities which kept him much to himself. Maria Schmidt, one of Adolf's infrequent playmates, remembered:

*[Adolf had to stay in the other childrens' room when it rained] "On such occasions, he often paced up and down or drew and painted and was very angry if he was interrupted. He pushed me out of the room and if I cried outside, he tried to get his mother to give me some tea or something else. We often teased Adolf Hitler or threw something against his window when he was inside, whereupon he quickly jumped out and chased us." (2)*

Despite such disturbances of the son's creative eruptions, the family enjoyed the holiday on the farm so much that they returned three more times to Spital and the Schmidts. In 1908, Adolf went alone. But as Wilhelm von Humboldt had commanded, the beginning of September indicated the new school year was to start soon and the family returned to Leonding.

On September 14, 1903, the twenty-year-old Angela married a young assistant tax collector from Linz named Leo Raubal. Angela was by far the livelier and more independent-minded sister; Paula, as mentioned, was very quiet. Adolf's feelings for his new brother-in-law were not up to par; he disliked both the groom's character and his being a civil servant and had no qualms about making his opinion known. While the distaste for Leo's occupation was clearly a result of Adolf's loathing of the civil service per se, Leo personally seems to have been on the overbearing side as well: he admitted freely that he had chosen his career for security of employment and the financial benefits; not because he thought the work worth his while.

Much later, Angela became the family member, who stayed in her brother's proximity for the longest time; that is, without her husband. Leo died only a few years into the marriage, despite the government's pension plan, after having fathered three children; one girl was to carry on the name of her mother, Angela; "Geli" - she was called, in the Austrian diminutive, and became Adolf Hitler's only true love.

Shortly after the wedding, the grey school building reoccupied the boy's attention, and demanded his presence. He passed his math exam, and was allowed to enter the third grade but, for reasons unknown, the experiment with Frau Sekira's boarding house was not prolonged and Adolf had to return to the twice daily commute. Scholastic trouble soon returned, and, by his own confession, he thought that many teachers were slightly mad, a feeling the professors, perhaps, reciprocated. As to the ten pedagogical commandments of imperial Austrian education, Stefan Zweig remarks:

*Above all else we were to be educated to respect the existing as perfect, the opinion of the teachers as infallible, our fathers' words as uncontradictable, the provisions of the State as absolute and valid for all eternity. A second cardinal principle of the pedagogy of those times, which was also applied within the family, directed that young people were not to have things too easy.*

*Before any rights were allowed to them they were to learn that they had duties, and above all others the obligation of complete docility. It was to be impressed upon us from the very start that we, who had not yet accomplished anything in life and were without experience, should simply be thankful for all that was granted*

*to us, and had no right to ask or demand anything. In my time that stupid method of intimidation was practiced from earliest childhood. Servants and ignorant mothers frightened three- and four-year old children with the threat of calling a "policeman" if they did not at once stop being naughty.*

*When we were still in the Gymnasium and brought home a poor mark in some unimportant subject, we were threatened with being taken out of school and put to learning a trade - the worst threat in a middle-class world, a return to the proletariat. When young people, in an honest desire for education, sought explanation of some earnest, timely problem from adults, they were rebuffed with a haughty "you can't understand that yet". Everywhere this technique was utilized, at home, in school, and in the state.*

*They never tired of drilling into a young person that he was not yet "mature", that he did not understand anything, that he was merely to listen credulously but never to enter into a conversation or to contradict. And for this reason also the poor devil of a teacher, who sat up at his desk, had to remain an unapproachable idol, and to confine our entire feelings and conduct to the curriculum.*

*Whether we were happy at school or not was unimportant. Its true mission, according to the spirit of the times, was not to advance but to retard us, not to form us inwardly but to fit us with as little opposition as possible into the ordered scheme, not to increase our energy but to discipline it and to level it off. (3)*

At that time, not a soul in the Austrian Ministry of Education had ever heard of psychology; and even if a teacher were, by accident, privy to the new science of understanding man, the subject would be deemed far too proximate to that other great mystery of Victorian times: the human sexuality.

Only recently had Sigmund Freud, in collaboration with the famous Viennese physician Johannes Breuer and following up on the studies of his mentor Jean-Martin Charcot, the father of neurology, published his first treatise, titled *STUDIEN ÜBER HYSTERIE*, Studies on Hysteria. The essay dared to expose that there was a direct relation between the human mind and the human *vita sexualis*; worse, that the beastly nature inherited by man from his mammalian predecessors commands much of his "unconsciousness", a term Freud invented, and, more shockingly, many of his actions.

It is hard to make clear, nowadays, that such simple and obvious, say, "facts of life" at that time were considered not only as dangerous but positively revolutionary, threatening the decorum and hence the volatile existence of bourgeois morality in the 1900s. Even if the Austrian school authorities had been aware of Freud's work, perhaps of the 1905 study "DREI ABHANDLUNGEN ZUR SEXUALTHEORIE", Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, they would have rather called the police than attempted to look for improvements in the understanding of young people during puberty. The Austrian society dealt with sexuality in the same way all other Victorian societies did, that is, by ignoring it as far as possible. It was hard enough to conceal unwanted sexuality in adults, as the persistent questions of the students in regards to the ubiquitous prostitution proved; to concede that adolescents, or even children, have sexual feelings the better society was not prepared for.

But Adolf's struggles at school were not yet complicated by the opposite gender; his was a general opposition to the very existence of schools and the desirability of education, that is, with the exception of history, and the professor who taught it, Dr. Leopold Pötsch. Of him Hitler wrote in *MEIN KAMPF*:

*"Even today I think back with gentle emotion on this grey-haired man, who by the fire of his narratives, sometimes made us forget the present; who, as if by enchantment, carried us into the past and, out of the millennial veils of mist, molded dry historical memories into living reality. On such occasions we sat there, often aflame with enthusiasm, and sometimes even moved to tears." (4)*

On the example of the good Professor Dr. Pötsch the problem manifests itself which we encounter in our sources when each side of a political conflict claims the support of the past. In *MEIN KAMPF*, Hitler portrayed him as anti-Habsburg, arguing that he became, under the teacher's influence "an enemy of the [Habsburg] state which, through its ruling house, exerted so disastrous an influence on the destinies of nations? And who could retain a loyalty to a dynasty that betrayed the needs of the German people again and again for shameless private advantage?" (5). A friend of young Hitler remarks that Pötsch

was not an armchair strategist but "an active politician. On the municipal council he led the Volksdeutsche [pro-German, ¶] group. He hated the Habsburg multi-national empire.... " (6) Yet it seems that, in 1936, Dr. Pötsch declined to participate in a congratulatory missive a few of the former teachers sent to their former student, now German chancellor, on the grounds that "he did not agree with Hitler in his defamation of Austria; he had sworn an official oath for Austria." (7) It would appear obvious that all of these claims have to be taken cum grano salis.

Nonetheless, the record insofar agrees with Hitler's memories as that his marks in History between 1902 and 1904 were "2"s. i.e. "good". The same notch he scored in these grades in Religion, although the subject was not one of his favourites. The following story, related by Robert Payne, may still be of apocryphal character:

*One of the teachers whom Adolf baited unmercifully was Father Franz Sales Schwarz, who taught Religion, not one of the more popular classes. Father Schwarz was short and fat and rather ugly. He kept an enormous dirty, snot-stained handkerchief in the folds of his cassock, and one day, during class, the handkerchief dropped to the floor.*

*After class, Adolf scooped it up, held it at arm's length, and approached the teacher, who was talking to some other teachers. "Here is your handkerchief, Sir," he said. Father Schwarz grabbed the handkerchief and glared at Adolf and his fellow mischief makers, who burst out in wild laughter. Adolf enjoyed taunting any teacher who showed signs of weakness, and Father Schwarz, who had difficulty maintaining order in his classes, was his chief victim.*

*Hitler had learned that insolence can be a formidable weapon against a teacher, and insolent answers to simple questions were likely to draw applause from the schoolboys. At Easter the religious lessons turned on the subject of confession, and the schoolboys were asked to give examples of sin. One boy announced that he had been having evil thoughts about his teacher, another that he was troubled because he had caused the teacher to suffer, and so on. Father Schwarz said that they were obviously not being serious and were sinning gravely by not going deeper into themselves.*

*So the students agreed that they would all confess to appalling sins. Adolf wrote out on the blackboard a horrendous confession: "I have committed fleshly sin, outside of marriage." But when the whistle blew to announce the beginning of a new class he lost courage, knocked the blackboard on the floor, and went back to his bench. When the blackboard was righted, the words were at the back, hidden from view, and some months passed before anyone saw the words Adolf had written.*

*Father Schwarz recognized Hitler's characteristic handwriting and said: "You, Hitler, keep your examples to yourself; otherwise I will have to teach you a lesson." (8)*

Father Schwarz must have assumed that he had already lost the battle with the devil over this particular soul. Hitler loved to narrate this one and similar anecdotes in later years, especially during table conversations. He despised religion not so much per se, for he clearly understood the power that superstition and mysticism confer upon the Church, but he disdained the absurdities of Catholic doctrine. He had amused himself with anti-clerical pranks early, because even as an adolescent he had no problems in making up his mind about such holy mysteries as the occurrence of miracles, transubstantiation, the incarnations of the trinity, immaculate conceptions, virgin births, infallible popes, divine omnipotence or the enigma of predestination. When he found out that many people lack the critical ability to doubt what they had been told often enough, he made use of this discovery in his later life.

His schoolboy pranks were of the ordinary puerile variety: moving chairs or benches in the classroom, smuggling in cockroaches, employing the cohesive qualities of glue; hoaxes that pupils have found hilarious at all times and everywhere. Yet, like his penchant for Karl May, the pranks were not forgotten by the next year or, alternatively, at the onset of puberty; they lived on in his memory and formed a staple of his need for public acclaim.

Throughout his life, from the trenches of war, the smoky beer cellars in Munich to the chambers of the Chancellery, from the Berghof, his alpine retreat near Salzburg to the various headquarters he was to inhabit during World

War II, in fact everywhere, he warmed up schoolboy stories as long as he had an audience. In clandestine reproach of himself for having squandered his school years, it satisfied him highly to be lauded as the nemesis of teachers, this most despised order of man. He still recalled and reiterated old quips about his professors when Russian artillery shells hit the top of his last hideout.

It was a classic case of overcompensation, the companion of mania: Hitler knew very well that the professors, and with them most of his early social environment, had considered him a failure; in the belief of having transcended the game he now heaped scorn upon the umpires.

Yet outside of the Realschule and its daily frustrations, life took very much its ordinary course. Given young Adolf's opinions about the Catholic Church, it comes as no surprise that his confirmation fails to be ranked among the most distinguished events of canonical history. On May 22, 1904, the young Customs official Emmanuel Lugert, who had been a mourner and pallbearer at Alois' funeral, was entertaining his habit of standing as sponsor for the confirmations of his friends, and accompanied Adolf to the great Linz cathedral where the solemn ceremony was to be held. Herr Lugert also presented the youngster with the traditional confirmation gifts: a catechism and a bank savings book in a nominal amount; the gifts symbolizing that both secular and spiritual needs were to be taken care of.

The unwilling boy, however, sulked through the ceremony in church as well as through the formal lunch that followed, and did not even thaw when Lugert took him home in a Fiaker, one of the charming traditional Austrian carriages driven by two horses. Adolf failed to be impressed by all the ado; as soon as the party arrived in Leonding he jumped out of the coach and collected his playmates for a new round of Cowboys and Indians. Herr Lugert did continue his standings as sponsor, but observed, in passing review of all the boys he had confirmed:

*"... none was so sulky and surly as Adolf Hitler. I had almost to drag the words out of him. ... It was almost as though the whole business, the whole confirmation, was repugnant to him, as though he only went through it with the greatest reluctance." (9)*

After the metaphysical interlude, school problems returned to occupy the family's attention. In the school year 1903 to 1904, Hitler had flunked French and was required to pass another examination in the next fall lest he would have to repeat the whole grade, again. An interim professor gave him a passing mark, but "only on the condition that he not return to the Linz Realschule for the fourth term. The years of dallying and passive resistance had finally caught up with him, or so it seemed." (10) Klara had to devise a Plan B.

The Realschule closest to Linz was in the town of Steyr, an industrial municipality about twenty-five miles to the south. Klara took the boy there and found him lodging at a boarding house at Grünmarkt 19, which was managed by a lady of Italian descent, Signora Petronella Cichini. The room was nice, if on the small side, and he had to share it with another boy.

What neither mother nor son were initially aware of was that the Cichinis were the sort of Italian family one might encounter in an opera buffa: the lady of the manor, at thirty-three years of age a quarter century younger than her husband, fluctuated between the amorous double play of Suzanna in "Cosi fan tutte" and the hysterical treason of Othello's Desdemona, and the husband, a member of the minor and impoverished Italian nobility, lived in a sorry state of daily feud with his young wife, to the amusement of the neighbourhood.

*The most spectacular quarrel began one morning over breakfast when Adolf remarked mildly that the landlady was always late with the coffee and it was always too hot, so that he often had to run off to school without any. At this point, the old nobleman carefully opened his watch and announced that it was indeed very late, and immediately his young wife turned on him, saying it had nothing to do with him, he had no right to talk, and in the future he had better be quiet. The boys crept out of the house with the certain knowledge that the old man was in for serious trouble, and when they returned to the apartment on the Grünmarkt in the evening their expectations were fulfilled.*

*Petronella Cichini had not calmed down; on the contrary, her temper was at flash point. Once more the old man was humiliated in front of the boys, and for self-protection he decided to leave the apartment, first asking the boys to accompany him down the dark stairs with a lamp, because he was mortally afraid of rats.*

*Then, realizing that he would be in even more serious trouble if he did not make his peace with his wife, he climbed up the stairs and implored her forgiveness. Petronella had bolted the door and refused to listen to his pleas. The old man begged Adolf to intercede for him. "Your wife has forbidden me to speak with you," Adolf announced triumphantly from behind the door.*

*The old man spent a miserable night on the stairs and was permitted to enter the apartment only with the morning milk, the two boys rejoicing in his downfall. Henceforth, the old impoverished nobleman, who worked in some obscure department of the municipal government, was reduced to nothingness. Cowed, pitiful, absurd, he was stripped of the last vestiges of self-respect. (11)*

Thus we encounter one of Adolf's more typical sentiments, *Schadenfreude*, pleasure derived from the mishaps of others. A basic incapability of feeling compassion for fellow human beings will accompany him through life like a leitmotiv of his character. It explains a lot about him.

His marks in school, alas, failed to improve. On the first Steyr report card, his grade average dropped, from a not truly satisfactory 2.9 in his last year in Linz, to a catastrophic 3.77. He failed to obtain passing grades in German, Mathematics, Stenography and Handwriting, and in five other subjects his results were no better than barely "sufficient". Klara received another letter from the principal and went to see him. We do not know exactly what measures were taken as a result of the meeting, but in the following months the boy improved a bit, and in June the family was informed that Adolf would be allowed to graduate on the condition that he would return again, in the fall, for one more re-examination. With a feeling of relief, the boy delivered the card to his mother's attention in July 1905. Klara had meanwhile cold the house in Leonding and moved the family to a rented apartment in a brownstone in the middle of Linz, at Humboldtstrasse 31.

The year of living apart from the family, in particular apart from his mother, had visibly changed Adolf. He was not exactly a boy anymore, but not yet a man; and this ambiguity, a study in adolescence, was caught once by the pencil of a classmate, Franz Sturmlechner. He produced a very distinctive portrait of a young man in the throes of *sturm und drang*. The drawing is eerily poignant, showing Hitler as a "youth with unruly hair, the rudiments of a moustache and the dreamy expression of a romantic young bohemian." (12) Although the subject of the sketch is clearly still in the teens, Sturmlechner's pencil caught Hitler's intensity; Robert Payne commented that the "drawing ... shows him wearing a high stiff collar and a patterned necktie. He is flat-chested, with a pointed nose, sharp chin, receding forehead, and high cheekbones. He has thick, unruly hair and wears a shadowy moustache. The lips are thin, and he looks undernourished. Nevertheless, it is not the portrait of a nonentity." (13)

That the re-examinations would not come due before mid-September gave the Hitler family the opportunity to enjoy another extended holiday with the Schmidts in rural Spital. There was brief concern over an ailment Adolf seemed to have caught there, but after the doctor gave the green light, Klara and her son returned to the farm and the summer passed in harmony.

Summer and harmony, however, ended in September. Adolf showed up for his by now almost routine re-examination in Steyr between September 1 and 15, but we are told that he acquired "an extra 'unsatisfactory' in geometry to go with his customary 'unsatisfactory' in mathematics," (14) and he was given a passing grade only on the proviso to end his career at this particular institution.<sup>2</sup> Worse: it was plain to see that Adolf would have to overcome an enormous amount of scholarly deficits before he would be able to apply for the next schooling level, the *OBERRREALSCHULE* or Higher Technical School.

<sup>2</sup> There is a famous story that he used the school-leaving certificate for hygienic purposes, but it has become obvious that the story is apocryphal - at best.

Adolf's interest in attending this school was zero. The problem remained how to explain to his mother that he wanted to drop out of school in order to become an artist? It appears that he used a reference to his health, or lack of it, a recurrence, perhaps, of the malady that he had suffered in Spital; in *Mein Kampf* he cheekily admits that "suddenly an illness came to my help." (15)<sup>3</sup> Being a consummate manipulator of her maternal instincts, it is completely possible that he made everything up, and some commentators have alleged that the whole lung business, since Spital, was a swindle from A to Z. Yet Paula testified later that some lung problem seemed to have been genuine. But, at any rate, the outcome of his complaint was successful; Klara surrendered, and allowed him to quit school. The sixteen-year-old boy was free, at last, to do what he wanted.



STURMLECHNER'S DRAWING OF THE 16-YEAR-OLD HITLER (1905)

What did he want? He was sixteen and free of obligations: father dead, school nullified, and the mother under his spell. Yet he found inspiration hard to come by and became, essentially, a drifter. The extracurricular activities which already had taken inordinate amounts of his time in earlier days, reading, drawing, visiting museums and the opera house, now became full-fledged obsessions. His escapist existence obviated the need for teachers, and the triumph over father and school allowed him absolute devotion to his egocentricity.

<sup>3</sup> Kubizek described the events of this fall as follows:

"In that dark autumn of 1905, things were on a knife edge for Adolf. Outwardly, the decision which he had to face was whether to re-sit Class 4 at the Steyr Realschule, or abandon formal education altogether, but in reality he had to decide between continuing, for his mother's sake, on a path he held false and purposeless, or accept that he must strike her a hard blow and choose 'the other way' of which all he could say was that it led to art. All things being equal, there was no decision in the real sense because he had already elected to leave school and follow the second path. So far as his mother was concerned, I know that it tore him apart. Adolf survived a severe crisis in those autumn months of 1905... . This found its outward expression in a serious illness. In *Mein Kampf* he talks of a respiratory disease. His sister Paula described it as a haemorrhage; others maintain the problem was in his stomach. To the best of my recollection it was a pulmonary infection, probably pneumonia." (16)

In the nights, he dreamed of becoming a famous painter or architect. In the days, he wandered through the streets of Linz for days and weeks without end. His imagination pondered upon the rebuilding of the town after the triumphal end of the war he was convinced was soon to occur. Thoughts of this rebuilding accompanied him to the last days of his life, forty years later.

Human contact he scarcely had and seldom sought. He had found a way of life that he was content with, at the time being, and was not to change it lest the outside world were to interfere. He read or drew until early in the morning, came out of bed for a late and leisurely lunch, and hung around the apartment waiting for dusk, the signal to commence another long and lonely stroll about town or visit the opera. In these years he liked to dress and put great importance on his appearance, speech and accessories. He was as independent as his money allowed him to be; his mother gave him as much as she could spare, and on top of it he still received the monthly 23 crowns orphan's assistance from his father's pension fund.

Very much unlike the father, however, who had been most happy in the company of friends, drinking and singing the night away, the son embraced solitude. In his deluded, venal, vengeful loneliness, he planned retaliation against his teachers in particular and society in general. One way or another, he was sure that he would become a "Künstler".

The German word "Künstler" can be translated, technically correct, as "artist", but it has different, chiefly romantic connotations. "Künstler" may equally describe a musician, a painter, a composer or writer, a poet or an architect, any combination thereof, or all in one. It has a strong implication of the "bohemian" lifestyle, and alludes to the concept of the "Renaissance Man", a prime example of which Adolf considered himself: a universal genius, waiting to be discovered by a grateful world. Aristotle, Leonardo da Vinci, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and, naturally, Richard Wagner had been among these superb examples of the human race, who were not, as Nietzsche taught, bound by the profane laws of society: "Künstler" were "supermen".

On the question of his real talents, we find that his school report cards agree that geometrical drawing was one of his stronger suits, and indeed he drew and painted all day: from pencil to watercolours, and finally to oil, which gave him initially, as he admitted, technical problems. In the manner of the autodidact by choice, not necessity, he persisted in doing things his own way. Consequently, his knowledge of the world was little formed by instruction, rather rooted in trial and error. This is not necessarily bad: independence from dogma was to become one of the secrets of his success. He had no trouble to think in grand dimensions, ignoring obstacles, slighting doctrine. Characteristically, many of his memorable actions took the form of *faits accomplis*, the effects of surprise. At his core, he was a stick-up artist.

Some of the sketches and drawings Adolf made in Linz have survived, and we can identify at least one of his favourite spots: from the bridge across the Danube that leads to the "bohemian" suburb Urfahr, the traditional artists' quarter, a hill called the Postlingsberg rises over the town and provides good views. Hitler often took advantage of this spot.

While he passed up and down the streets of Linz, drawing and dreaming, a courteous Fortuna must have shepherded his steps, and to assist her favourite in fighting windmills, she directed Don Quixote to meet his Sancho Pansa.

## THE ROAD TO VIENNA

*Deine Zauber binden wieder  
was die Mode streng geteilt,  
alle Menschen werden Brüder  
wo dein sanfter Flügel weilt.*

Joy, your miracles unite  
what customs irately divide,  
to love one's brother never fails,  
where your gentle sway prevails.

Friedrich Schiller "Ode an die Freude" [Ode to Joy], Str. 2

Not only does Schiller's poem combine the universal themes of joy and friendship in perfect harmony, immortalized in the fourth movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, it also demonstrates practical insight. Man is a social animal: not by accident is the harshest penalty barbarism can inflict upon a detainee the state of solitary confinement; proscribing social interaction, negating human dignity.

A proper friend often appears as if he were the complementary piece of a puzzle that has belatedly been found, the missing segment of a duality sought unconsciously by the soul; a remedy for feeling incomplete. On any road, Bob Hope was not complete without Bing Crosby, nor was Stan Laurel without Oliver Hardy, and where Walter Matthau showed up, Jack Lemmon could not be too far. It seems that female friendship may occur in triplicate, as with the Graces, or in groups, as with the Muses or the Pleiades. The joy of companionship was acknowledged even by the Gods: on Mons Olympus, Zeus paid homage to the human and, perhaps, also divine need of companionship by giving Castor and Polydeukes, the Dioscuri, an eternal place in the night sky and in human memory as the constellation Gemini, the Twins.

For a few years in the first decade of the twentieth century, Adolf Hitler was not complete without August Kubizek.

One late autumn night in 1904, around All Saints' Day, Adolf visited the Linz Opera House, as it was his wont if he could get one of the few but cheap tickets to the Standing Area. He came early so as to get a spot on one of two wooden columns, where one could prop one's back up and still have a full view of the stage. On this evening, he observed another young opera buff that had availed himself the use of the second pillar. (1) He may have seen the young man before, perhaps they had exchanged a word or two during an intermission, or on the staircase; at any rate, on this evening they began a conversation. In these years, Adolf's attempts at extra familiar communication were often awkward or ambiguous: his way was either gloomy sullenness or exultant monologues: silence or tirades. Something about the other boy must have induced his trust. August Kubizek was the son of an upholsterer and worked as apprentice in his father's shop, an occupation he truly despised, and complained that:

*"It is a repulsive job to re-upholster old furniture by unravelling and remaking the stuffing. The work goes on in clouds of dust in which the poor apprentice is smothered. What rubbishy old mattresses were brought to*

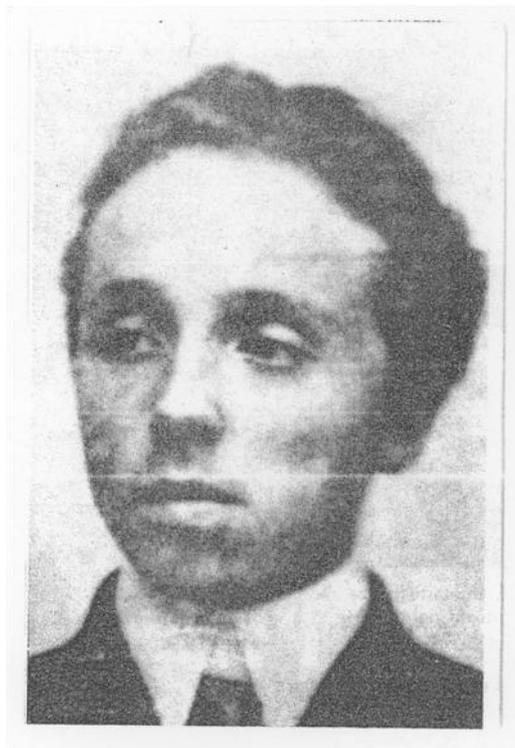
*our workshop! All the illnesses that had been overcome - and some of them not overcome - left their mark on these old beds. No wonder that upholsterers do not live long." (2)*

The surviving photographs show a sensitive young man with an artist's forehead, huge eyes, and a somewhat unreal air of innocence, or perhaps unworldliness. Gustl's [the southern-German diminutive of his name August, ¶] interests centred on music: he had begun to play the violin with nine and a few years later entered the respected local school of music where he was taught by Professor Dessauer. In the course of the lessons he added the viola, trombone and trumpet to his repertoire, and aspired to become an orchestra player, preferably with the Vienna Philharmonic. He was a busy student, gifted, dreamful, and naive. Adolf was dreamful as well, but certainly not naive and questionably gifted. Soon they were inseparable and visited every opera performance they could afford or, if they were broke, took long walks together.

Adolf's knowledge of music at that time had been solely obtained by listening to operatic scores over and over, but great music does not give up her secrets all too easily, and he could not yet analyse what he had heard. He had not received musical education for some time and was happy to have found a patient instructor in August, who summarized his task as follows:

*"Hitler's musical education was very modest. Aside from his mother, pride of place goes to Father Leonhard Gruner of the choir of the Benedictine monastery at Lambach, who trained Adolf as a chorister for two years. The boy was eight when he joined, and therefore at a highly receptive age. Those who know the culture level of these old Austrian institutions will appreciate that there was scarcely a better musical training to be had than that in a well-led choir: The boy's primary school reports were always endorsed 'outstanding' for singing, but the Realschule offered no musical instruction at all. Whoever wished to pursue it had to pay for private tuition or go to music school. Because he spent more than two hours daily on the trek between Leonding and the Realschule, Adolf would have had no time for private musical tuition even if his father had been in favour of it." (3)*

Soon they established a routine. Since August was still working in his father's shop, Adolf would collect him there around five in the afternoon and they would be off to "saunter through the city like a pair of conspirators taking secret notes and calculating to a hairbreadth the exact degree of absurdity reached by the inhabitants." (4) Hitler did not understand the



AUGUST KUBIZEK

relaxed way in which the Austrian bourgeoisie faced the future; to his earnest, if slightly hypocritical, mind, idle entertainment was a sin. Kubizek remarked that "when we passed by the Café Baumgartner he would get wildly worked up about the young men who were exhibiting themselves at marble-topped tables behind the big window panes and wasting their time in idle gossip, without apparently realising how much this indignation was contradicted by his own way of life." (5) For when Kubizek was still busy in his father's shop, and the more so on his own in later years in Munich and Vienna, Hitler was the first to enter the coffee house to read the international newspapers; that is, if he could afford the twenty Heller that were charged for a cup of coffee. In the beginning, the friends' discussions invariably orbited around art and music, hence foremost around the opera. Adolf was not one to talk much about his inner self, and listening was Gustl's forte in any way. Kubizek described their rapport as follows:

*"Nevertheless, it was at first a difficult friendship because our characters were utterly different. Whilst I was a quiet, somewhat dreamy youth, very sensitive and adaptable and therefore always willing to yield, so to speak a 'musical character', Adolf was exceedingly violent and highly strung. Quite trivial things, such as a few thoughtless words, could produce in him outbursts of temper which I thought were quite out of proportion to the significance of the matter.*

*But, probably, I misunderstood Adolf in this respect. Perhaps the difference between us was that he took things seriously which seemed to me quite unimportant. Yes, this was one of his typical traits; everything aroused his interest and disturbed him - to nothing he was indifferent." (6)*

Since Gustl was a gentle soul, collisions with the strong-willed Hitler were the exception; usually the orator-to-be and the one-man-audience harmonized well. They promenaded endlessly through Linz and its bucolic surroundings, visited every slightly famous place or building at least twice and climbed the towers of the churches and the hills that formed the backdrop of the town. A frequent target of excursions was the famous Baroque monastery of St. Florian, where Anton Bruckner was laid to rest, and the ruins of Kuernberg Castle, where the boys tracked the Song of the Nibelungs.

With Gustl as the straight man, Adolf fabulated nonstop about God and the world. Kubizek did not mind the monologues, for they "made me realize how much my friend needed me." (7) He soon understood, from his friend's less than amused reaction to a few aberrant opinions, that Adolf courted approval, not critique. This approval August duly provided, amazed by the intensity of his friend's soliloquies.

*"These speeches, usually delivered somewhere in the open, under trees on the Freinberg, in the Danube woods, seemed to be like a volcano erupting. It was as though something strange, other-worldly, was bursting out of him. Such rapture I had only witnessed so far in the theatre, when an actor had to express some violent emotions, and at first, confronted by such eruptions, I could only stand gaping and passive, forgetting to applaud. But soon I realised that this was not play-acting. No, this was not acting, not exaggeration, this was really felt, and I saw that he was in deadly earnest.*

*It was not what he said that impressed me at first, but how he said it. This to me was something new and magnificent. I had never imagined that a man could produce such an effect with mere words." (8)*

When rain or heat obstructed their outside activities, they reposed to locations suited to yield motives for Adolf's drawing and watercolours. From the painting of the favourite buildings of Linz, Adolf soon graduated to tearing down and rebuilding them - according to the plans he had designed. One of these was a blueprint for the villa he would build for Gustl and him, where the internationally renowned conductor Kubizek and the famous architect and painter, Adolf Hitler, could reside in status-conscious splendour. It was to be a birthday present.

*"On my eighteenth birthday, 3 August 1906, my friend presented me with a sketch of a villa. ... By good luck, I have preserved the sketches. They show an imposing, palazzo-like building, whose frontage is broken up by a built-in tower. The ground plan reveals a well-thought out arrangement of rooms, which are pleasantly grouped around the music room. The spiral staircase, a delicate architectural problem, is shown in a separate drawing, and so is the entrance hall, with its heavy beamed ceiling. The entrance is outlined with a few brisk strokes in a separate sketch.*

*Adolf and I also selected a fitting site for my birthday present; it was to stand on the Bauernberg." (9)*

The palace would be paid for by the money the friends were going to win in the town lottery. Adolf asked August for a contribution of five crowns to the ten crowns the ticket was to cost, and took him to the lottery office to witness the ceremonial selection of the important certificate. After some time scrutinizing the available tickets, Adolf chose one: "'Here it is!' he said, and put the ticket carefully away in the little black notebook in which he wrote his poems." (10) Yet when Hitler calculated the amounts necessary to build Gustl's birthday present, he suffered an attack of thrift and proposed to his friend that they should instead rent an apartment they could fit to their needs. The boys went hunting, and after careful inspection of the town they agreed on the second floor apartment of Kirchengasse # 2 in Urfahr. They snuck in clandestinely and Adolf made a grounds map. He proposed, reasonably enough, that their respective studios were to be on opposite ends of the floor, so that his drawing would not be disturbed by August's piano or viola practice.

*"Although simplicity was the keystone of our home, it was nevertheless imbued with a refined, personal taste. Adolf proposed to make our home the centre of a circle of art lovers. ... A refined lady should preside over our home and run it. It had to be an elderly lady, to rule out any expectations or intentions which might interfere with our artistic vocation. ... This image remained with me for a long time to come: an elderly lady, with greying hair but incredibly distinguished, standing in the brilliantly lit hall, welcoming on behalf of her two young, gifted gentlemen of seventeen and eighteen years respectively, the guests who formed their circle of select, lofty-minded friends.*

*During the summer months we were to travel. The first and foremost destination was Bayreuth, where we were to enjoy the perfect performances of the great master's music dramas. After Bayreuth, we were to visit famous cities, magnificent cathedrals, palaces and castles, but also industrial centres, shipyards and ports. 'It shall be the whole of Germany,' said Adolf." (11)*

When the publication of the lottery results in the newspaper evidenced the whole extent of the government conspiracy that denied the boys first prize, or any other, Adolf "screamed and cursed." (12) Not only was the lottery an obvious fraud, designed to exploit the humble citizen, the state itself, this hodgepodge of Slavic minorities gnawing on the German Oak, was in cahoots with the abusers of credulity who "insulted good artists by taking their money." (13) It took weeks until Adolf resurfaced from the depths of his frustration.

Yet the lottery incident symptomizes both sides of Hitler's idiosyncratic powers of self-suggestion: they became a major weapon but ultimately a lethal weakness. All through his life, he later admitted, he simply believed in things and they would occur; and he was not always wrong. For someone who will become a messianic leader of men, sound faith can be an enormous tactical advantage, particularly in a crisis. If some of his divinations actually came true, so much for the better.

He was convinced, in the meagre late 1920s that, in due time, he would become chancellor of Germany, and he did. He believed in 1936 that the weak French "popular front" government, paralysed by conflicts between socialists and communists, dared not to oppose the military reoccupation of the Rhineland, his reckless breach of the Treaty of Versailles, with force, and he was right, against the odds. He predicted that Chamberlain and Daladier would submit to his demands at the Munich Conference of September 1938, and they did. He believed Manstein's plan to attack France through the Ardennes Forest would beat the Allies in May 1940, and so it happened. Only the most cherished of his dreams remained a chimera: the *Endsieg*, the Final Victory.

If events failed to follow his auguries, if reality disobeyed his commands, his wrath knew no quarter. In the dying days of the Third Reich, thousands of soldiers and civilians were tried, found guilty and executed by roving court martials for such exquisite crimes as failing to stop, in person, the four million soldiers of the Red Army on their advance to Berlin - which constituted High Treason. There were many similar crimes, and a simple joke about a Nazi potentate could easily provoke a death sentence. During the last months of the regime, from the ill organized assassination attempt of July 20, 1944, to the eventual end in Berlin on April 30, 1945, Hitler revived the supposedly ancient, bloodthirsty practice of *Sippenhaft*, the automatic arrest of a suspect's complete family. Nobody will ever know the number of people that perished, in the dying days of World War II, without any other trace than a corpse hanging from a tree.

Kubizek's account of his friendship, *ADOLF HITLER, MEIN JUGENDFREUND*, "The Young Hitler I Knew", published in 1953, delivers a fascinating view of the future Führer as a work in progress, even if some of the more colourful episodes have to be taken on faith. Illuminating, and sometimes involuntarily funny, are Kubizek's descriptions of the boys' gradually germinating awareness of the opposite gender. Puberty reaches our protagonists, the sudden influx of strange sensations.

The delicate matter was not one the society they lived in was well prepared to handle. Stefan Zweig remembered:

*"During the eight years of our higher schooling, something had occurred which was of great importance to each of us: we ten-year-olds had grown into virile young men of sixteen, seventeen or eighteen, and Nature began to assert its rights.*

*The awakening of puberty appears to be a purely private matter which each growing person has to fight out in his own fashion, and at first glance does not seem all suitable for public discussion. So far as we were concerned, that crisis grew beyond its proper sphere. At the same time it brought about an awakening in another sense: for the first time it taught us to observe more critically the social world in which we had grown up, and its conventions.*

*Children and even young people are at first inclined to adapt themselves respectfully to the laws of their surroundings. But they submit to the conventions demanded of them only as long as they see that these are honestly observed by everyone else. A single untruthfulness on the part of the teachers or parents invariably leads a young man to regard his entire surroundings with a suspicious and therefore sharper eye.*

*It did not take long to discover that all these authorities in whom we had previously confided - school, family and public morals - manifested an astonishing insincerity in this matter of sex. But what is more, they also demanded secrecy and reserve from us in this connection." (14)*

The first contact with the opposite gender invariably determines much of the future effectuation of the fragile issue. On occasion, lovers are intertwined into the very fabric of their destiny - Romeo and Juliet or Orpheus and Euridice come to mind. In his friend's case, Gustl recounts that Adolf's cautious approach found a subject ideally suited to his need for discretion. One day he and August ambled down the Landstrasse, Linz's main avenue, as it was their wont before, or instead of the opera. A thing much like a Spanish paseo was playing out in the street: in the evening hours, the young girls of the town's better families walked up and down, guided and protected by chaperones, their mothers or an aunt, perhaps, seemingly shopping; but when they peered into the display windows they tried to catch the views of the young men idling about, and then decided whether to flutter their eyelids or to drop a handkerchief. Young Adolf was smitten with one of the apparitions.

*"One evening in the spring of 1905, as we were making our usual stroll, Adolf gripped my arm and asked me excitedly what I thought of that slim, blonde girl walking along the Landstrasse arm-in-arm with her mother. 'You must know, I'm in love with her,' he added resolutely.*

*Stefanie [so the name of the girl, ¶] was a distinguished-looking girl, tall and slim. She had thick, fair hair which she mostly wore taken back in a bun. Her eyes were very beautiful - bright and expressive. She was exceptionally well-dressed and her bearing indicated that she came from a good, well-to-do family.*

*The photograph by Hans Zivny, taken in Urfahr, on her leaving school was somewhat earlier than this meeting and Stefanie could only have been then seventeen or, at the most, eighteen years old. It shows a young girl with pretty, regular features. The expression of the face is completely natural and open. The abundant hair, still worn in the Gretel fashion, serves to strengthen this impression. A freshness and lack of affectation show in the girl's healthy countenance." (15)*

Many societies know forms of organized yet unofficial courtship, essentially, like the Spanish paseo, concours d'élégance, and Imperial Austria had made a science out of it. Even nowadays the annual Wiener Hofball, the Vienna Court Ball, introduces the debutantes of the better families into society, with a lot of ado and white frills on the former royal

dance floor. Adolf, however, was not the man to address his longings directly; he pointed out that he had not been introduced to her. Gustl was mystified:

*"It is most revealing that the young Hitler, who so thoroughly despised bourgeois society, nevertheless, as far as his love affair was concerned, observed its codes and etiquettes more strictly than many a member of the bourgeoisie itself. The rules of bourgeois conduct and etiquette became for him the barricade behind which he built up his relationship to Stefanie.*

*'I have not been introduced to her' - how often have I heard him say these words, although in the ordinary way he would make light of such obstacles. But this strict observance of social customs was part of his whole nature." (16)*

What could be done? August was sent on an intelligence-gathering mission and returned the next day with more information on the object of Adolf's sleepless night. Secret Agent Kubizek revealed that the Love Goddess lived in Urfahr, the same quarter as the boys, was a half-orphan due to her father's, a former government official, recent death, and lived with her mother and brother, who was a student of law in Vienna. Stefanie had already finished school, was beautiful, well-to-do and nubile - which explained the enormous number of admirers that orbited around her. Her maiden name was Stephanie Isak, which has led some psycho-historians to believe that she was Jewish and construct hair-rising implications out of this assumption, but this seems impossible - Jews were not accepted in the better society of Linz, did not live in Urfahr and certainly were not given jobs in the government.

Adolf became hopelessly infatuated and composed poem after poem in her honour, including one that bore the archetypical if somewhat generic title "Hymn to the Beloved". Gustl could not escape the fate of becoming the guinea pig for his friend's romantic recitations, and one day Adolf recited the opus. In it, not surprisingly, the Goddess, "in a dark-blue, flowing velvet gown, rode a white steed over the flowering meadows, her loose hair fell in golden waves on her shoulders; a clear spring sky was above; everything was pure, radiant joy." (17)



HANS ZIVNY'S PHOTOGRAPH OF STEFANIE



A SECOND PHOTO OF STEFANIE WHICH RECENTLY SURFACED

Adolf's condition was serious. Not only did he suffer from an acute attack of adolescent adoration of a pretty pair of legs and a shapely bosom; according to Gustl's report he instantly developed a neurosis. His sense of reality, which was not his strong suit in the first place, abandoned him completely. He declined to talk to her, or send a letter; he never even waved to her when he saw her in the street; his exertions were limited to sending her enquiring glances.

When August, in a sudden attack of practical thought, suggested that becoming introduced to her might expedite matters, Adolf chickened. "What am I to say if the mother wants to know my profession?" (18) Indeed, what could he say? That he was an unemployed painter or architect-to-be, a rural hayseed, compared to the young men that orbited Stefanie, who were officers, or heirs to shops or factories?

Adolf's ideas of love were to a great degree formed by the operas he had seen. In a society which, to maintain decorum, did not shrink from beclothing piano legs, one could not expect that the opera, or for that matter any other form of art, would be permitted to realistically reflect sexuality. It is true that Frank Wedekind had written FRÜHLING'S ERWACHEN ["The Awakening of Spring", ¶] in 1891, and the great Max Reinhardt dared to bring it to a Vienna stage in 1905, causing the biggest theatre scandal in Austrian history, but all these things had happened in Vienna, not Linz. As far as culture was concerned, the Austrian provinces remained in arrested development.

While Hitler, due to his partial growing-up on a farm, was aware of certain basic principles of reproductive biology, such awareness was not necessarily in the public domain, as, again, Stefan Zweig, explains:

*"That a man could experience desires, and was permitted to experience them, was silently admitted by custom. But to admit frankly that a woman could be subject to similar desires, or that creation for its eternal purposes also required a female polarity, would have transgressed the conception of the 'sanctity of womanhood'.*

*In the pre-Freudian era, therefore, the axiom was agreed upon that a female person could have no physical desires as long as they had not been awakened by a man, and that, obviously, was officially permitted only in marriage. But even in those moral times, in Vienna in particular, the air was full of dangerous erotic infection, and a girl of good family had to live in a complete sterilized atmosphere, from the day of her birth until the day when she left the altar on her husband's arm.*

*In order to protect young girls, they were not left alone for a single moment. They were given a governess whose duty it was to see that they did not step out of the house unaccompanied, that they were taken to school, to their dancing lessons, to their music lessons, and brought home in the same manner.*

*Every book which they read was inspected, and, above all else, young girls were constantly kept busy to divert their attention from any possible dangerous thoughts. They had to practice the piano, learn singing and drawing, foreign languages, and the history of literature and art. They were educated and overeducated.*

*But while the aim was to make them as educated and as socially correct as possible, at the same time society anxiously took great pains that they should remain innocent of all natural things to a degree unthinkable today. A girl of good family was not allowed to have any idea of how the male body was formed, or to know how children came into the world, for the angel was to enter into matrimony not only physically untouched, but completely 'pure' spiritually as well. 'Good breeding,' for a young girl of that time was identical with ignorance of life; and this ignorance oftentimes lasted for the rest of their lives.*

*I am still amused by a grotesque story of an aunt of mine who, on the night of her marriage, stormed the house of her parents at one o'clock in the morning. She never again wished to see the horrible creature to whom she had been married. He was a madman and a beast, for he had seriously attempted to undress her. It was only with great difficulty that she had been able to escape from this obviously perverted desire." (19)*

In this account, the question of Stephanie's knowledge of the realities of life must remain academic, for Adolf never mobilized the courage to introduce himself. He was analyzing her behaviour from a distance: if she walked down the street without glancing at him, he concluded that she must be mad at him. That a girl who is not aware of his adoration still might

spurn it was a theory his neurotically love-induced brain perceived as entirely possible. He waited and waited, patiently, for the moment of rapture. Gustl remarked:

*"He used to insist that, once he met Stefanie, everything would become clear without as much as a word being exchanged. For such exceptional human beings as himself and Stefanie, he said, there was no need for the usual communication by word of mouth; extraordinary human beings would understand each other by intuition. Whatever the subject we might discuss at any time, Adolf was always sure that Stefanie not only knew his ideas exactly, but that she shared them enthusiastically.*

*If I dared to comment that he had not spoken to Stefanie about them, and to express my doubts as to whether she was at all interested in such things, he became furious and shouted at me: 'You simply don't understand, because you can't understand the true meaning of extraordinary love.' In order to quieten him down, I asked him if he could transmit to Stefanie the knowledge of such complicated problems simply by gazing at her. He only replied, 'It's possible! These things cannot be explained. What is in me, is in Stefanie too.' Of course, I took great care not to push these delicate matters too far. But I was pleased that Adolf trusted me so much, for to nobody else, not even to his mother, had he talked about Stefanie.*

*He expected Stefanie to reciprocate his love for her to the exclusion of all others. For a long time he put up with the interest she took in other young men, especially the officers, because he regarded it as a sort of deliberate diversion to conceal her own tempestuous feelings for him. But this attitude often gave way to fits of raging jealousy; then Adolf would be desperate when Stephanie ignored the pale youth who was waiting for her, and concentrated her attention instead on the young lieutenant escorting her. Why, indeed, should a lively young girl have been satisfied with the anxious glances of a secret admirer, whilst others expressed their admiration so much more gracefully? But I, of course, would never have dared to express such a thought in Adolf's presence." (20)*

But at some times Adolf suffered under the failures of the telepathic network that communicated his desires to her: as of yet, Stefanie had not declared for him. When he followed her to the dances she and her mother visited during the very festive and protracted season of "Fasching", the Austrian Mardi Gras, Gustl submitted that taking dancing lessons might provide his friend with a way to address the beloved in an unobtrusive manner.

But then the suitor realized that the Goddess was only visiting the dances because society forced them upon her; once "she is my wife," Adolf screamed, "she won't have the slightest desire to dance." (21) The next idea Adolf developed was a plan to kidnap her and ride away, on the aforementioned white horse, perhaps, while Gustl was to deflect the mother's attention by a conversation. The idea, alas, failed to survive the planning stage when Gustl pointed out that the prospective happy couple would have nothing to subsist on.

One day the Love Goddess passed the Schmiedtoreck, the corner where the boys waited for her to appear, without looking at her suitor; at times like these, when his dreams seemed to falter in the harsh light of reality, Adolf contemplated suicide. On other occasions, he confided to August that he would, after the completion of his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, on the way of becoming a famous painter, return to Linz with glory and claim her.

What, one might ask, did Stephanie think of the whole affair? Had she even noticed the young man with the burning eyes?

The little we know about Stefanie other than from Kubizek was obtained by Franz Jetzinger, and we'll come to it in a minute. But first we shall follow Gustl's narrative of THE MIRACLE:

*"For Adolf came that happiest of days in June 1906, which I am sure remained in his memory as clearly as it did in mine. Summer was approaching and a flower festival was held in Linz. As usual, Adolf waited for me outside the Carmelite church, where I used to go every Sunday with my parents; then we took up our stand at the Schmiedtoreck. The position was extremely favourable, as the street here is narrow and the carriages in*

*the festival parade had to pass quite close to the pavement. The regimental band led the string of flower-decked carriages, from which young girls and ladies waved to the spectators.*

*But Adolf had neither eyes nor ears for any of this; he waited feverishly for Stefanie to appear. I was already giving up hope of seeing her, when Adolf gripped my arm so violently that it hurt. Seated in a handsome carriage, decorated with flowers, mother and daughter turned into the Schmiedtorstrasse. I still have the picture clearly in my mind.*

*The mother, in a light grey silk dress, holds a red sunshade over her head, through which the rays of the sun seem to cast, as though by magic, a rosy glow over the countenance of Stefanie, wearing a pretty silk frock. Stefanie has adorned her carriage, not with roses as most of the others, but with simple, wild blossoms - red poppies, white marguerites and blue cornflowers. Stefanie holds a bunch of the same flowers in her hand. The carriage approaches - Adolf is floating on air. Never before has he seen Stefanie so enchanting. Now the carriage is quite close to us. A bright glance falls on Adolf. Stefanie sends him a beaming smile and, picking a flower from her posy, throws it to him.*

*Never again did I see Adolf as happy as he was at that moment. When the carriage had passed he dragged me aside and with emotion he gazed at the flower, this visible pledge of her love. I can still hear his voice, trembling with excitement, 'She loves me! You have seen! She loves me!'" (22)*

How deeply this claim was rooted in reality will remain a mystery, but through prolonged research in Linz, Franz Jetzinger was able to track down the flower festival committee, found Stefanie in their files, and contacted her. The Love Goddess had eventually married one of the officers, and showed considerable surprise at being interviewed about a boy she barely remembered, and professed not to have any idea of the young man's infatuation. But after some time she remembered a small but instructive detail: in this summer she had received a letter from an admirer, who had not only declared his undying love but also informed her that he was going to study at the Academy of Arts in Vienna. After his graduation he would return to Linz and ask for her hand. Unfortunately, the letter was not signed, and so she had remained ignorant of the suitor's identity.

When he was not dreaming of the beloved, he worked on his art. His interests had changed somewhat during the love-laced summer days, from painting, which Kubizek is convinced was never more than a hobby, to architecture, that is, drawing. He still liked to paint watercolours here and there, but produced architectural drawings in increasing numbers. In these he could express his methodical approach, and John Toland gives us a summary of Adolf's ideas:

*His architectural designs ... gave expression to an irresistible urge to create as well as a sense of order that was almost obsessive. He was driven to alter the shape of Linz. He would stand in front of the new cathedral, praising some features, criticizing others. He redesigned structure after structure in a passion of improvement. "He gave his whole self to his imaginary building and was completely carried away by it", as Kubizek explained.*

*As he ranged the streets with his one-man captive audience, Hitler pointed out features that must be changed, then explained in detail what had to be done. The town hall was uninspiring and he envisioned in its place a stately modern structure. He would also completely remodel the ugly castle, restoring it to its original grandeur. The new museum did please him and he returned time and again to admire its marble frieze, which depicted historical scenes. But even this had to be changed; he would double the length to make it the longest frieze in Europe.*

*His plans for a new railroad station showed a flair for city planning; to rid the growing Linz of tracks that were ugly as well as a traffic hindrance, he set his station at the edge of town, running the tracks under the city. The public park would spill over onto the old station site.*

*His imagination was boundless. He planned to run a cog railway to the top of the Lichtenberg where he would place a spacious hotel and a three-hundred-foot steel tower which, in turn, would look down upon a magnificent new high-level bridge spanning the Danube. (23)*

A subject of permanent review was the municipal opera house, whose productions the boys attended religiously, funds permitting. They bought the cheapest tickets, for the standing room in the Promenade, and had to come early, for only those visitors standing on the Promenade's front had an unobstructed view of the stage. The opera house was, compared to Vienna, a provincial affair but it had local charm and pride, even if the orchestra was so small that the parts of some instruments had to be eliminated. "To attempt a Wagner performance with a twenty-man orchestra was thus something of an adventure," as Kubizek admitted. (24)

Technical difficulties notwithstanding, the theatre was a busy place, and if here or there sheer artistry was lacking, it was compensated for by the enthusiasm of the performers and the audience's allegiance. The house was known for the staggering number of productions it offered despite its size; a season might feature as many as four dozen different pieces, and while it is clear that so much quantity must have corresponded with a variable level of quality, the public was always delighted with the renditions. In his account, Gustl narrates the tale of a particular evening, one which appeared to have a deep impact on his excitable friend.

The friends turned up when Richard Wagner's early and relatively rarely given opera *RIENZI* was to be performed. The advantage for the theatre was that it required a smaller cast and orchestra than Wagner's later dramas. It is the story of a Roman tribune, (Ni)Cola di Rienzi, who becomes a leader of the Roman people in AD 1347, only to be killed, seven years later, by the same fickle mob that had lifted him to power in the first place.

One may recall in this context that Richard Wagner was a revolutionary and a suspected criminal himself: he was wanted in Prussia and a few smaller North German principalities very urgently by the political police, for his role in the uprisings of the years 1848/49 in Dresden, Saxony: the warrant alleged "terrorist activities". He had initially fled to Zurich and then to Vienna, before he found, in 1864, patronage and protection in Bavaria on the behalf of his fan King Ludwig II.

Wagner began to compose *RIENZI* in 1838 and the work premiered in Dresden two years later. The subject of a populist's rise and fall attracted Wagner's interest, or sympathy, and he composed a few stirring revolutionary anthems for the score. The plot itself is rather thin; Rienzi attempts to liberate the plebs from the yoke of nobility and clergy, but, as usual, concern turns into neurosis and power into hubris and he is stoned to death on the cinders of his house.

August reports his friend being highly impressed.

*"When at last it was over, it was past midnight. My friend, his hands thrust into his coat pockets, silent and withdrawn, strode through the streets and toward the outskirts. Usually after an artistic experience that had moved him he would start talking straight away, sharply criticizing the performance, but after *RIENZI* he remained quiet a long while. This surprised me, and I asked him what he thought of it. He threw me a strange, almost hostile glance. 'Shut up!' he said brusquely.*

*The cold damp mist lay oppressively over the narrow streets. Our solitary steps resounded on the pavement. Adolf took the road that led up to the Freinberg. Without speaking a word, he strode forward. He looked almost sinister, and paler than ever. His turned-up collar increased this impression.*

*I wanted to ask him, 'Where are you going?', but his pallid face looked so forbidding that I suppressed the question. As if propelled by an invisible force, Adolf climbed up to the summit of the Freinberg, and only now did I realise that we were no longer in solitude and darkness, for the stars shone brilliantly above us.*

*Adolf stood in front of me and now he gripped both my hands and held them tight. He had never made such a gesture before. I felt from the grasp of his hands how deeply moved he was. His eyes were feverish with excitement. The words did not come smoothly from his mouth as they usually did, but rather erupted, hoarse and raucous. From his voice I could tell even more how much this experience had shaken him.*

*Gradually his speech loosened and the words flowed more freely. Never before and never again have I heard Adolf Hitler speak as he did in that hour, as we stood there alone under the stars, as though we were the only creatures in the world.*

*I cannot repeat every word that my friend uttered. I was struck by something strange, which I had never noticed before, even when he had talked to me in moments of the greatest excitement. It was as if a second ego spoke from within him, and moved him as much as it did me. ... I will not attempt to interpret this phenomenon, but it was a state of complete ecstasy and rapture, in which he transferred the character of Rienzi, without even mentioning him as a model or example with visionary power, to the plane of his own ambitions." (25)*

As we will see, the Rienzi story had probably more of an a posteriori importance for the subsequent legend than roots of existence in reality. Kubizek's observation that his friend seemed to be the first convert of his own religion was, however, correct and was noted frequently in the future; in essence, Hitler's tirades appeared to convince himself first and the audience en suite. Leadership is a matter of conviction, not truth, and that, of course, pertains to both leader and led. The matter of Rienzi was easily made a part of the legend: when Kubizek met Hitler and the Wagner family in Bayreuth 1939 and recounted the Rienzi story, Hitler solemnly told Frau Winifred Wagner that "In that hour it began." (26)

Whether a single visit of *RIENZI* convinced Hitler that he was cut from the cloth that heroes are made of may be doubted. Even when his political ideas took more certain shape in Munich after the Great War, he seemed to content himself with a supporting role. Until the days of the Beer Hall Putsch, he was still unsure of his exact standing, and more often than not likened himself to a *TROMMLER*, a drummer, for the national cause, in deference to General Ludendorff who was then the idol of the Right. But like an insect develops from larva to pupa to adult, Adolf Hitler, the drummer, became the Pied Piper of the German nationalists and, at last, their leader.

It is instructive to note that even in the early stages of his political persona, Hitler perceived the intrinsic duality of a successful populist: the combination of quasi-religious, spiritual guidance, promises of redemption and salvation, with the requirements of manifest, practical leadership. After the death of Germany's president Hindenburg in 1934, Hitler underwent his final metamorphosis of which he emerged as Führer and Chancellor; this was how he preferred to be addressed, leader and prophet, both spiritual shepherd and temporal steward.

It has been noted that his role resembled that of the "Mahdi", the Messiah figure of popular Islamic belief. The "Mahdi" is saviour and restorer in one; cataclysmic and apocalyptic, revealing and destructive, the Mahdi restores faith and justice at the end of time. Hitler found his own eschatological Endzeit vision, not surprisingly, in one of his idol's Richard Wagner's works, in *GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG*, the "Twilight of the Gods", the final part of the "Ring of the Nibelungs" tetralogy. Once Hitler found himself in the position to lead the nation, the grandiose dreams of his youth returned as veritable obsessions.

Yet for the moment, Rienzi did not help with the Stephanie impasse. Whether Adolf was painting watercolours or designing a new opera house, she was always on his mind. The Hitler family still resided in the apartment on the third floor of Humboldtstrasse 31 in Linz and, perhaps for the absence of school reports, the atmosphere had quietened. On April 20, 1906, his seventeenth birthday, Klara presented her beloved son two gifts: a small sum of money and her permission to visit Vienna, and stay for a few weeks with relatives.

For a young artist-to-be, this was an almost magical opportunity. For six weeks Adolf was able to visit as many opera performances and museums as his budget allowed. It was, of course, his first visit to the Imperial capital, and he was to be overwhelmed by its history and beauty. Stefan Zweig describes his hometown:

*"Within [the town], the old palaces of the court and the nobility spoke history in stone. Here Beethoven had played at the Lichnowsky's, at the Esterhazy's Haydn had been a guest; there in the old University Haydn's CREATION had resounded for the first time, the Hofburg had seen generations of Emperors, and Schönbrunn had seen Napoleon. In the Stefansdom the united lords of Christianity had knelt in prayers of thanksgiving for*

*the salvation of Europe from the Turks; countless great lights of science had shone within the walls of the University.*

*In the midst of all this, the new architecture reared itself proudly and grandly with glittering avenues and sparkling shops. But the old quarrelled as little with the new as the chiselled stone with untouched nature.<sup>1</sup> It was wonderful to live here, in this city which hospitably took up everything foreign and gave itself so gladly, and in its light air, as in Paris, it was a simple matter to enjoy life.*

*Vienna was, we know, an epicurean city, but what is culture, if not to wheedle from the coarse material of life, by art and love, its finest, its most delicate, its most subtle qualities? ...*

*Making music, dancing, the theatre, conversation, proper and urbane deportment, these were cultivated here as particular arts. It was not the military, nor the political, nor the commercial, that was predominant in the life of the individual and of the masses. The first glance of the average Viennese into his morning paper was not at the events in parliament, or world affairs, but at the repertoire of the theatre, which assumed so important a role in public life as hardly was possible in another city.*

*For the Imperial theatre, the Burgtheater, was for the Viennese and for the Austrian more than a stage upon which actors enacted parts; it was the microcosm that mirrored the macrocosm, the brightly coloured reflection in which the city saw itself, the only true cortigiano of good taste." (28)*

The first few days, we may assume, Adolf spent in perplexity, brought close to sensory overload by the abundance of attractions. He had to be wary of the sheer multitude of automobiles in the capital, 1458 in 1907, as Brigitte Hamann established, lest he be caught in one of the 354 accidents they caused in this year. (29) He wrote four postcards to Gustl which have survived. The first read:

*'In sending you this postcard I must apologize for not writing to you for such a long time. I arrived safely, and I have been moving around industriously. Tomorrow I shall see 'Tristan' at the Opera, and on the following day 'The Flying Dutchman', etc ... Although I find everything very beautiful here, I am longing for Linz. Tonight Stadt-Theatre. Greetings from your friend*

ADOLF HITLER" (30)

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<sup>1</sup> Zweig may be guilty here of an overindulgence in local pride. J. Sydney Jones has the story of the Ringstrasse in more prosaic terms: "The Ringstrasse [Ring Street] had been created from the old city wall and the buildings built onto the open space, the glacis, surrounding the wall. The ostensible reason for this flurry of building was to glorify the city. Actually, though, the project, begun ten years after the 1848 revolution that unseated the Habsburgs for a time, had more practical considerations. When the Habsburgs had been ousted in 1848, they had had an extremely difficult time getting back into their city because of the very walls they had built over the years to defend it against the Turks. As with Haussmann's renovation of Paris at the same time, which eliminated many of the narrow, cobbled lanes that had provided such strong fortresses for the Parisian mob, so did the Ringstrasse building spree have political and military considerations at its base. All the buildings that resulted from this project were 'Neo' this or 'Neo' that - products of unbridled historicism. There were the Neo-Gothic City Hall, the Rathaus; Grecian-columned Parliament; the Renaissance museums; Neo-Baroque imperial palace; Renaissance Opera and Burgtheater. Architects were brought in from all over Europe to transform the Ring into one of the most famous boulevards of Europe. The writer Hermann Bahr was moved by the facade quality of the Ringstrasse to remark that 'if you walk across the Ring, you have the impression of being in the midst of a real carnival. Everything masked, everything disguised.' Whether it was in good taste or not was most definitely another question. That the buildings were not functional was made apparent from the start. In their haste to fit symbolism into their designs, the architects of the Ring too often forgot function. The Viennese were moved to joke that 'in the Parliament one could hear nothing, in the Rathaus one could see nothing, while in the Burgtheater one could neither see nor hear. Not long after opening, the auditorium of the new Burgtheater had to be altered. The lyre-shaped room had been a fine symbol and tip of the hat to Greece as the ancestral home of drama, but its acoustics were nonexistent. The Rathaus was lovely Neo-Gothic, but the clerks had to work by candlelight all day long behind its windowless facade. The twin museums that house the Habsburg art and natural history treasures were mere backdrops for the square around which they were built. The army barracks looked impressively like a medieval fortress, but there were no lavatories for the men who lived there. All this was Hitler's guideline against which to judge other architectural creations." (27)

The frontispiece of the card showed the Karlsplatz and the Karlskirche. It was addressed, as all the others were, to Herrn *Gustav* Kubizek at Klammstrasse 9 in Linz, and dated May 7, 1906. Apparently Hitler himself reflected that the one postcard was a somewhat meagre representation of all his impressions, and he decided to send another one the same day. It depicted the view of the opera stage.

*"The interior of the edifice is not very stirring. If the exterior is mighty majesty, which gives the building the seriousness of an artistic monument, the inside, though commanding admiration, does not impress one with its dignity. Only when the mighty sound waves flow through the hall and when the whispering of the wind gives way to the terrible roaring of the sound waves, then one feels the grandeur and forgets the gold and velvet with which the interior is overloaded.*

ADOLF H." (31)

The very next day he wrote another postcard, which showed the interior of the building. Its message, however, differs completely from the earlier two cards.

*"I am really longing for my dear Linz and Urfar [sic!]. Want or must see Benkieser again. What might he be doing, so I am arriving on Thursday on the 3.55 [train] in Linz. If you have time and permission, meet me. Greetings to your esteemed parents!*

Your friend, ADOLF HITLER." (32)

Kubizek was unable to decipher the complete meaning of the card, although he figured out a few of the riddles. Urfar, misspelled, perhaps deliberately, was, of course, Urfahr, the suburb Stefanie lived in, and "Benkieser", originally the name of one of Adolf's former classmates at the Realschule in Linz, was simply the code name for the Love Goddess. The message still fails to make sense, for, in the event, Hitler did not return to Linz on Thursday. He stayed in Vienna at least until June 6, 1906, as we know from a fourth postcard. The picture shows the Parliament building by Theophil van Hansen, and the text states simply:

*"To you and your esteemed parents, I send herewith best wishes for the holidays and kind regards.*

Respectfully, ADOLF HITLER." (33)

When Hitler finally returned to Linz after about four weeks, he was melancholy and depressive, and at times wandered around town alone. He seemed conflicted about the direction his life was to take, and for a few weeks Gustl was unable to help his friend. Even the renewed sight of Stefanie failed to introduce a rapid healing, for Adolf at length seemed to accept a quantum of reality. He told Gustl that "If I introduce myself to Stefanie and her mother, I will have to tell her at once what I am, what I have and what I want. My statement would bring our relations abruptly to an end." (34)

Kubizek realized that his friend only saw one way out of the situation - flight, and it would appear that Hitler at this time first contemplated to move to Vienna for good. It perhaps aided in this feeling that the situation at home burdened him as well. Paula informed Adolf that his brother-in-law, Leo Raubal, was constantly in his mother's ears, advising her, "with his revenue official's limited horizon", (35) that Adolf should immediately begin to learn a trade. At this time Gustl often kept Klara company when Adolf was taking solitary wanderings about town and country.

On January 14, 1907, Klara Hitler called on Dr. Bloch, the family physician, in his practice on Landstrasse. Dr. Bloch was well liked in town and an experienced doctor. He was known to have a heart for the poor, whom he treated without regards of their financial capabilities, and knew the Hitler family well: for years he had treated them for all the small emergencies a family goes through. He was a kind man, from the small town of Frauenburg in Southern Bohemia, not far away from the Waldviertel. He had studied at the renowned University of Prague and served as a military physician before settling in Linz in 1889.

Klara complained of chest pains; in her quiet, hushed manner she confessed that the pain was so great that it kept her from sleep some nights. She had been too busy with the family, but her torment had become too overbearing and the

practice visit could not be delayed any longer. The doctor performed an examination, and arrived at the glum conclusion that she suffered from an extensive tumour of the breast. Dr. Bloch was not only a skilful diagnostician but a good psychologist besides. He did not inform Klara of the diagnosis until he had called her children into his office on the next day, and informed them of the facts. In his opinion, only an immediate operation might save her. The doctor later reported Hitler's reaction:

*"His long, sallow face was contorted. Tears flowed from his eyes. Did his mother, he asked, have no chance? Only then did I recognize the magnitude of the attachment that existed between mother and son." (36)*

The children informed their mother, and the family decided on an immediate operation. Two days later, on January 17, Klara Hitler entered the hospital of the Sisters of Mercy in the Herrenstrasse, and was operated by the Chief Surgeon Dr. Urban. (37) Dr. Bloch wrote later:

*"I shall never forget Klara Hitler during these days. She was forty-eight at the time, tall, slender, and rather handsome, yet wasted by disease. She was soft-spoken, patient; more concerned with what would happen to her family than she was about her approaching death. She made no secrets of these worries, or about the fact that most of her thoughts were for her son. 'Adolf is still so young,' she said repeatedly." (38)*

She was actually forty-six years old at the time, and Adolf almost eighteen. From Spital Aunt Johanna arrived to help with the children and the household. At first, the doctors deemed the operation a success - relatively little was known then of the formation of metastases. Klara recuperated for nineteen days in the third-class ward of the hospital. The bill amounted to a little over two hundred crowns: the operation was billed at one hundred crowns, bed and station for nineteen days came to fifty crowns, and Dr. Bloch billed sixty crowns for services and visits.

Klara was fully aware of her condition, and it appears that at this time she began to settle her worldly affairs and drew up a new will. In the preceding year the family had moved from Humboldtstrasse 31 in Linz to a three-room apartment at Blütengasse 9 in Urfahr, then still a separate township. One reason that recommended Urfahr was that the community charged no sales tax, as Linz did, and hence victuals, especially meat, were cheaper than in the big town. Perhaps incidentally, the new place was also closer to the Love Goddess. In hindsight, the decision to move much benefitted Klara, for she now only had to climb a single staircase instead of the three flights of stairs at the Humboldtstrasse house. The Blütengasse building was a nice two-story brownstone with a balcony over the arched doorway and stately window mouldings.

Dr. Bloch, who continued to visit and take care of Klara's treatment, was touched by her housekeeping skills: even in her illness, he reported, the apartment was spotless. We do not know how much of this was Aunt Johanna's work, but the family strove to keep up a facade of apparent normality despite the mother's burden. In the article Dr. Bloch wrote three decades later for the American magazine *COLLIER'S*, he repeatedly pointed out how deeply he was impressed by the closeness of the family, in particular by the bond between mother and son, despite the incidental discussions about Adolf's future. She adored him, and he suffered with her.

Yet Adolf was torn between his mother's ordeal and his own passions, and after some protracted arguments persuaded her to allow him to withdraw his patrimony, on the order of almost 700 crowns, from the Mortgage Bank of Upper Austria, and to return to Vienna for his studies. The amount was easily enough for at least a year's sojourn, including room, board and Adolf's tuition fees as a student at the Academy of Arts. Yet he could not leave for Vienna without the family problems exacting a toll on everyone: when Kubizek went to visit the Hitlers on the day Adolf left, to help with the luggage, he noticed the women weeping and his friend not far from it. (39)

Unfortunately, the friends' correspondence of the following months has been lost, but Gustl remembered that, for the first few weeks of Adolf's absence, he received no news, no card or letter. When he went to visit the Hitlers one day, to inquire about his friend's whereabouts, "Frau Klara opened the door to me and greeted me warmly, and I could see that she had been longing for me to come. 'Have you heard from Adolf?' she asked me, still at the door." (40) Gustl realized that things were far from normal. Klara looked sick and helpless, pale and gaunt, and, for the first time in August's presence, complained about her son: about his scholarly failures, which she knew were not due to a lack of intelligence but

of interest, his unwillingness to learn a trade or profession, or to share in the responsibilities of bringing up little Paula; instead of spending his patrimony on silly trips to Vienna in the pursuit of impossible dreams. The worries took a visible toll on her health. (41)

In the meantime, Adolf had found a frugal domicile in the 6th District, the Mariahilf quarter of Vienna, near the Westbahnhof, the Western railway station, where the trains from western Austria, Linz and southern Germany arrive. It was a room in the back building of Stumpergasse 31, Second Staircase, Door # 17, about ten square metres small, which rented for ten crowns a month.<sup>2</sup> His landlady was an elderly Czech woman, Frau Maria Zakreys.<sup>3</sup> In his new dwelling, he began to prepare himself for the annual entry examination that took place at the Academy in the fall. The institute was located in a beautiful Renaissance building designed by Theophil Hansen at the Schillerplatz square. Hitler passed a pre-admission test in early September and showed up for the second, decisive, examination on October 1 and 2. This procedure was exhaustive, lasted for the better part of two days, and presented "a mixture of Christian, mythical and classical themes of which the conservative Academy so heartily approved." (42)

On the first day, the students could choose among the themes of Cain kills Abel, Adam and Eve find Abel's Body, the Return of the Prodigal Son, Expulsion from Paradise, Death, Mourning, and Farewell. On the second day, the subjects included the Magi, the Blinding of Samson, the Good Samaritan, Pilgrims, Prayer, Peace, Evening Rest, the Flood, Night, the Fishermen, and the Storyteller. Within limits, the students could choose which themes to draw or paint and which to exclude. Hitler was convinced that he had evidenced his talent and waited "impatiently but hopefully for the results of the entrance examination." (43)

Yet the result, published a week later, came as a shock. On the "Classification List of the General Painting School 1905-1911" we find, under the heading "The following took the test with inadequate results or were not accepted ... Adolf Hitler, b. in Braunau on the Inn, Upper Austria on April 20, 1889, German, Catholic senior official of the Dual Monarchy (father), few heads", and the remark: "Drawings exam unsatisfactory." (50)

Perhaps Adolf had been too optimistic,<sup>4</sup> but it was still a rude awakening. The petrified young man marshalled all his courage and succeeded in being granted an interview with the director of the institution, Siegmund l'Allemand, who told Adolf that his drawings conclusively demonstrated his unfitness for a painter's career, although, perhaps, the geometric precision of his drawings might suggest a talent for architecture. (51) But we may be aware that the young painter-in-spe was not the only figure in the annals of art or science to be misjudged by so-called "experts". His painter colleague Marc Chagall was rejected by the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, and in regards to science, the Swiss Patent Office denied Albert Einstein's promotion from Patent Clerk 3rd Class to Patent Class 2nd Class in 1905, the same year in which Einstein wrote the thesis about the Photoelectric Effect that won him the Nobel Prize in 1921. In more recent times, say, the fall of 1962, a label manager of Decca Records in London refused to sign an obscure band from Liverpool on his judgement that guitar bands were on the way out. Unfortunately, Decca Records failed to notify the musical proletariat of this earth that guitar bands were on the way out, and the ignorant plebs bought a few hundred million Beatles records; from EMI, though, not Decca.

Having not much of a choice at the moment, Adolf contemplated the dean's advice. But he soon found out that one of the conditions for acceptance into the Academy's School of Architecture was the possession of a graduation diploma from the Building School. To apply for the Building School, however, demanded proof of the completion of the *OBERREALSCHULE*, the Higher Technical School, which in itself required the successful completion of the *UNTERREALSCHULE*,

<sup>2</sup> In his memoirs, Kubizek has the address at Stumpergasse 29, (44) J. Sydney Jones concurs, (45) and also provides two photographs of the house. (46) Frau Brigitte Hamann cites the house address at # 31, as per the Vienna Registrar's Office. (47)

<sup>3</sup> Kubizek has Frau Zakreys as hailing from "Stanislau or Neutitschein", which would make her Polish. (48) This is widely found in the literature, but Brigitte Hamann traces her name and origin to Policka in Bohemia, which would make her Czech. (49s) This, and the preceding example, illustrates the problem with our sources, and the reader may forgive the author's decision to forego mentioning every minor discrepancy in the continuing narrative.

<sup>4</sup> Frau Hamann comments: "Of 113 candidates who showed up, only 28 were accepted into the painting school, which approximately equals today's admissions percentage." (53)

which, we know, Adolf had flunked. Evidently, this way was blocked, and the youth went through a protracted period of doubt, depression, and rage. Yet, at the end of October, he received word from Linz that his mother's condition had much deteriorated and he returned home, albeit keeping news of the Academy fiasco to himself; partly because of the chagrin of rejection but also as not to cause his mother unnecessary grief.

Klara's health was falling apart rapidly. When Adolf arrived home, she was barely able to sit up in bed. He immediately consulted Dr. Bloch, who informed him that the tumour had spread and revealed that, in his opinion, only a drastic treatment, which in addition had to begin immediately, might save her. Metastases had already developed in the pleura, and the treatment Dr. Bloch advocated - and he made it clear that it was but a desperate measure - was not only exceedingly dangerous and painful -dripping caustic iodoform into the open chest wound, to cauterize the growth away -- but also expensive.

The family did not hesitate: Adolf made a down payment on the iodoform and pledged to reimburse the costs as they went along. Dr. Bloch administered the regimen in daily visits to the family, whom he found clustered around the sickbed. Aunt Johanna was still helping with the household chores, Adolf and Paula would sit on the bed, and Angela would drop by as often as she could. Kubizek reports how hard it was on his friend to realize that, by all chances, his mother appeared to be doomed. August also mentions several diatribes Adolf directed at the address of medical science, but none at Dr. Bloch, and he realized that his friend simply had to blow off steam. Adolf resolved to stay in Linz with his mother as long as necessary, and, as Kubizek relates, did not inquire about the Love Goddess even once.

The treatment was desperate indeed. The daily dose of iodoform was applied in the form of fluid-saturated gauze strips, directly into the open chest wound. The caustic agent literally burned away Klara's flesh and caused a bestial odour. A side effect of the iodine was the blockage of the swallowing reflex, so that the patient could not cool her burning throat with chilling liquids. In these last weeks, Adolf devoted himself entirely to the care of his mother, and took over the household chores, cleaned, and cooked. Gustl was amazed: "I was really immensely surprised and I must have shown it, for Frau Klara smiled in spite of her pain and said to me: 'There, you see, Adolf can do anything.'" (52)

Yet the desperate treatment proved ineffective, and, shortly before Christmas, Klara's burden drew to a close. Kubizek, who visited the Hitlers, was shown in, and the dying woman whispered to him: "'Gustl, she said - usually she called me Herr Kubizek, but in that hour she used the name by which Adolf always called me - 'go on being a good friend to my son when I'm no longer here. He has no one else.' With tears in my eyes I promised, and then I went. This was the evening of 20 December.'" (54)

When Dr. Bloch came to visit later that evening, he found Klara sitting up in bed for the last time, held up by her son. At midnight, the end drew near, but the family decided not to summon the doctor again. In the small hours of the morning of December 21, 1907, Klara Hitler died as she had lived, quiet but determined, by the candlelight of the Christmas tree. At noon, Angela visited Dr. Bloch and asked him to sign the death certificate.

He found Adolf; face wan, at his mother's side. On a sketchbook was a drawing of Klara, a last memory. Dr. Bloch tried to ease Hitler's grief by saying that, in this case, "death had been a saviour." But Adolf could not be comforted. "In all my career," recalled Dr. Bloch, who had witnessed many deathbed scenes, "I never saw anyone so prostrate with grief as Adolf Hitler." (55)

Two days later, the burial procession left the apartment on the Blütengasse for the family grave at the Leonding cemetery. The requiem was held in the little church by the house where the family once had lived and Klara was buried beside her husband. At 370 crowns, the funeral cost was surprisingly high: perhaps it included the fee for the requiem mass. The execution of the will occurred on January 18, 1908, and assembled the witnesses Adolf, Paula, Aunt Johanna, Angela and her husband. Alois Jr., then a waiter in Paris, was listed as absent. The testament was unremarkable. Klara's personal possessions had no monetary value, and the funeral expenses were paid by Adolf, as was Dr. Bloch, who was visited by Adolf, Angela and Paula, thanked for his efforts and reimbursed for his expenses. His bill charged 359 crowns and, while not exactly low, was eminently reasonable, for it included seventy-seven visits and forty-seven treatments with the expensive iodoform. After having squared the bill, Adolf took the doctor's hand and bowed. In his later article for Collier's, Dr. Bloch wondered "if today he [Hitler] recalls the scene. I am quite sure that he does, for in a sparing sense

Adolf Hitler has kept his promise. Favours were granted to me which I feel were accorded to no other Jew in all Germany and Austria." (56)

After completion of the formalities, Adolf quickly tired of spending time with his relatives. He hated the daily harangues of Leo Raubal, who could neither resist nor stop preaching Adolf the virtues of the civil service compared to the nonsense of becoming an artist. Vienna beckoned, and only two further administrative details prevented Hitler's instant return: a warden had to be appointed for the minors and the inheritance, from Klara's bank savings account, was to be divided. Josef Mayrhofer, the mayor of Leonding, was approved as guardian, but in regards to the monetary issue no records exist: a fact that has invited much speculation. Bradley F. Smith researched the matter and came to the following conclusions:

*Unfortunately, we have no documentary evidence for one important step in the process [of the will's execution, ¶] - the division of the money. We do know that up through October 1907 the family had paid out approximately 250 Kronen [=Crowns, ¶] to meet the direct costs of Klara's illness. An additional 300 Kronen was owed Dr. Bloch for his treatment during the last stages of the illness, and this amount was paid in cash on December 24th, the day after the funeral. If one adds 200 or 300 Kronen for incidental expenses associated with the illness, the total cost, including the funeral, could not have exceeded 1,200 Kronen.*

*Since she [Klara, ¶] had been in possession of a lump sum of 5,000 Kronen some two years earlier [the rest of the proceeds from the sale of the Leonding house, ¶], and her income had remained constant during the intervening years [100 Kronen widow's pension and 46 Kronen monthly orphans' assistance, ¶], it is difficult to see how the amount available at the time of her death was less than 2,500 to 3,000 Kronen. ...<sup>5</sup>*

*All of this shows that, prior to any consideration of pension rights, Paula and Adolf were not left penniless by their mother's death. Since Paula was not quite twelve, provisions had been made for Angela to raise her. The portion of the estate set aside for Paula was used to offset some of this expense. There is reason to believe that the available money was not divided evenly between Adolf and his sister and that the larger portion went for Paula's future support. It seems reasonable to conclude that Adolf's portion was between 500 and 1,000 Kronen.*

*Information concerning the childrens' pensions is much more precise. Paula and Adolf were eligible for a combined pension of 50 Kronen a month until each reached the age of twenty-four. As soon as one of the children reached this age, the total amount of the pension dropped to 25 Kronen. The children applied for the pension on February 10, 1908, but the application was prepared incorrectly and a second application had to be made through their guardian, Josef Mayrhofer, on February 25th.*

*By this time, Adolf had already left Linz and was once again in Vienna. The reply that Mayrhofer received to the second application stated that the orphans would be granted the annual sum of 600 Kronen and that Mayrhofer was authorized to divide the money between them as he saw fit. He allowed each child 25 Kronen per month, treating little Paula, who was dependent on Angela's generosity, and Adolf as if they were equally deserving.*

*Mayrhofer undoubtedly had gained the impression from Adolf that he was studying in Vienna and needed the money for this purpose. Angela and her husband paid the price for Adolf's deception, for they had to make up the difference between the pension, Paula's legacy, and the costs of her maintenance. (58)*

Adolf left Linz around mid-February, 1908, after all documents had been filed, stamped and sealed, except for the second pension application. He had some cash, between 500 and 1,000 Kronen seems most likely, and was to receive the 25 Kronen of the orphan's pension in Vienna every month. Time would tell for what it was enough. Gustl, the faithful adlatus, accompanied him to the train station. In passing, Adolf mentioned Stephanie, musing that he might send her a letter. He

<sup>5</sup> A different computation, by Brigitte Hamann, takes into account other expenses: Angela's dowry, Adolf's tuition fees in Steyr and two visits of Vienna, plus three household moves, and hence arrives at a residue of no more than 2,000 crowns. (57)

talked to Gustl through the open window of the train compartment, and when the steam engine started its pull, he cried "Follow me soon, Gustl!" (59)

The fare, third class, was 5 Kronen 30 Heller, and out he rode like a character of a Horatio Alger novel. Three hours later the youth arrived, for the third time, in the town he chose to be his muse.

### THE HUM OF HUMAN CITIES' TORTURE

*We have seen  
Good men made evil wrangling with the evil.  
Straight minds grow crooked minds.  
Our peace betrayed us, we betrayed our peace.  
Look at it well. This was the good town once.*

Edwin Muir "The Good Town"

In the midst of February 1908, Adolf Hitler arrived for the third time in the imperial capital, the city in which, he believed, would spend most of his life. By the time of his arrival, however, the social and political undercurrents which besieged the empire's peace already drew dark shadows - if one was in the mood to face them. Yet the perceptions of the casual visitor were blinded by the town's laissez-faire, charms and bonhomie, which Stefan Zweig described in "The World of Yesterday":

*"There is hardly a city in Europe where the drive towards cultural ideas was as passionate as it was in Vienna. Precisely because the monarchy, because Austria itself for centuries had been neither politically ambitious nor particularly successful in its military actions, the native pride had turned out more strongly toward a desire for artistic supremacy.*

*The most important and the most valuable provinces, German and Italian, Flemish and Walloon, had long since fallen away from the old Habsburg empire that had once ruled Europe; unsullied in its old glory, the capital had remained, the treasure of the court, the preserver of a thousand-year-old tradition.*

*The Romans had laid the first stones of the city, as a castrum, a fortress, an advance outpost to protect Latin civilization against the barbarians; and more than a thousand years later the attack of the Ottomans against the west shattered against these walls.*

*Here rode the Nibelungs, here the immortal Pleiades of music shone out over the world, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms and Johann Strauss, here all streams of European culture converged.*

*At court, among the nobility, and among the people, the German was related in blood to the Slavic, the Hungarian, the Spanish, the Italian, the French, the Flemish; and it was the particular genius of this city of music that it dissolved all the contrasts harmoniously into a new and unique thing, the Austrian, the Viennese.*

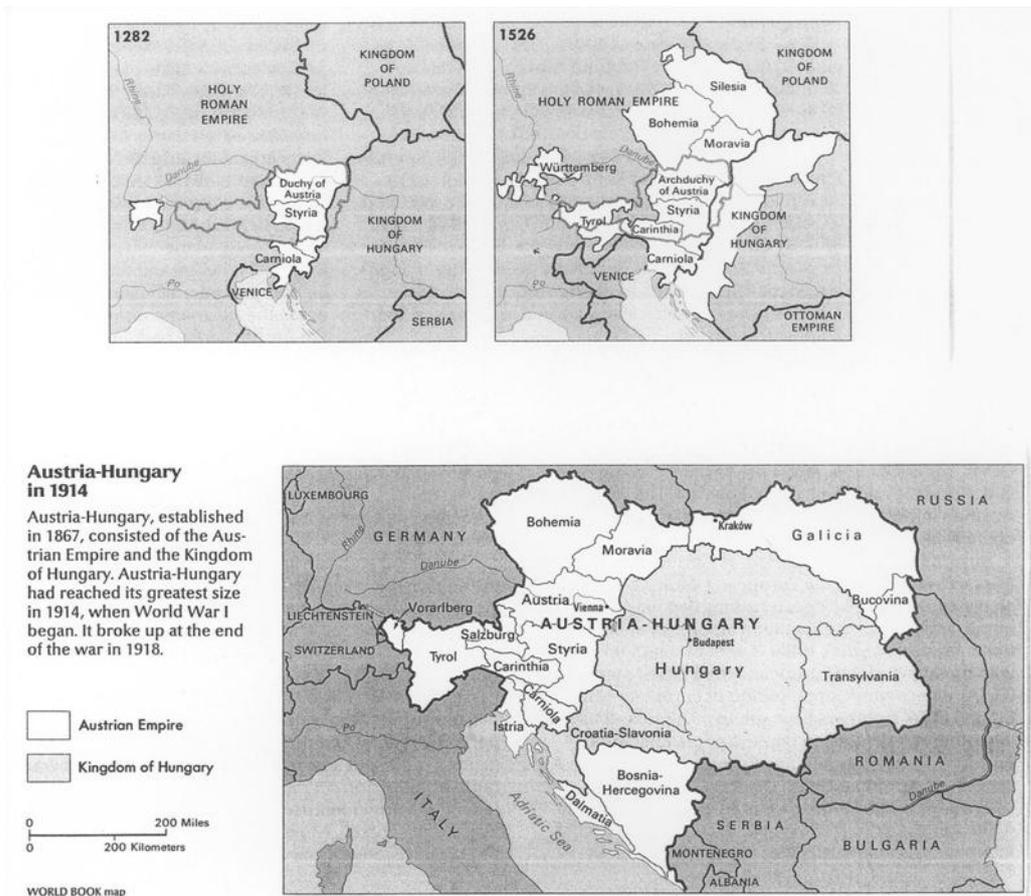
*Hospitable and endowed with a particular talent for receptivity, the city drew the most diverse forces to it, loosened, propitiated, and pacified them. It was sweet to live here, in this atmosphere of spiritual conciliation, and subconsciously every citizen became supranational, cosmopolitan, a citizen of the world. (1)*

Yet the rise of nationalism should have made clear to everyone that the empire lived on borrowed time and Hitler's adolescent vision, unhampered by political or social affiliation, had no difficulty to discern Vienna's fundamental weakness. And while Vienna led the world, perhaps, in concerts per capita, the national performance as far as the economy was concerned, tangible figures, was not up to par.

This realm of ten major ethnic communities, and a greater number of minorities, hung in a fragile equilibrium, held together by the venerable emperor Francis Joseph in the sixtieth (!) year of his reign and a civil service that often valiantly attempted but frequently failed to coordinate in an orderly way the wishes, demands and needs of the various communities. The imperial provinces were culturally divided and politically alienated from each other; and the chequered assemblage that had been elected to the Reichstag, the parliament, was unable to find answers to the modern challenges of nationalism and socialism. If one asked people on the street which nationality they belonged to, they defined themselves as Czechs or Poles, Hungarians or Croats; no one, with the exception of the people born and living in the old German heartlands of the Habsburg realm, called oneself Austrian.

To illustrate the imperial inertia, we may recall that when Alois Schicklgruber had come to Vienna to begin his cobbler's apprenticeship, almost sixty years earlier, the same man, Francis Joseph, had been occupying the throne. He was now 78 years of age and had not even in his best years amounted to being more than an uninspired plodder, without imagination, inspiration or an understanding of modern times. He seemed to fit into the tradition of late leaders of the House of Habsburg, of which the people said that it had not produced a real man since Empress Maria Theresia, more than one hundred and forty years ago. It was well known that the emperor was allergic to every form of art and culture, and rumour had it that the only two books he had read in his long life were the catechism and the army manual. Others doubted that he was so well-read. His free-spirited wife, Empress Elizabeth ["Sisi", ♀] of Bavaria, withered at his side; driven to desperation by a joyless marriage and the perpetual repetition of empty ceremonies, she spent most of her time off-court until she was murdered in 1898.

MAPS XXXI, XXXII AND XXXIII: GROWTH OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY



AUSTRIA-HUNGARY IS HOME TO GERMANS, HUNGARIANS, CZECHS, SLOVAKS, POLES, RUTHENIANS, UKRAINIANS, ROMANIANS, SLOVENES, CROATS, BOSNIANS, SERBS, MONTENEGRINOS, FRIAULS, ITALIANS, A FEW KRACHOVIANS AND ALBANIANS, AND, OF COURSE, SINTI AND ROMA [KNOWN AS 'GYPSIES', ♀]

The government work in the capital suffered not so much from corruption itself: many of the civil servants were painstakingly *korrekt*, but from inefficiency. The higher positions at the court, in the military or the diplomatic corps, and they alone counted as far as prestige was concerned, were heirlooms of the aristocracy, and ability did not figure in the selection process.

The most loyal elements of the populace were the two ruling ethnic groups, the Germans and the Hungarians; the latter had achieved full political equality in 1867 by a complicated scheme of power sharing called the "*Ausgleich*" or "Parity". The system essentially instituted a geographical division of the government, that is, self-rule for the Hungarians, and elevated Francis Joseph, who with respect to the other parts of the realm remained Austrian emperor, to the dignity of King of the Magyars. Hence the empire became called the "Dual Monarchy".

This arrangement suited the Hungarians, but Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Ruthenians, i.e. Catholic Ukrainians, Orthodox Ukrainians, Romanians, Slovenes, Croats, Bosnians, Serbs, Montenegrinos, Friaulians and Italians felt short-changed and demanded political emancipation and a share of power. It was suspected that they all would declare their independence should a reasonable opportunity occur.<sup>1</sup>

To the outsider, however, the capital retained its charms.

*Vienna was the capital of an Empire in its final years of flowering, a polyglot centre with no common tongue and a population gathered from the four corners of Austria-Hungary. It was a brilliant, cosmopolitan city where joy of life ran hand in hand with a sense of impending doom. This seat of the Habsburgs was German in tradition, yet unique among metropolises. It was a capital city not only of banking and finance but also of fashion and culture. ...*

*It was the golden age for opera and music. Gustav Mahler had just quit the Royal Opera for the Metropolitan in New York City but had left behind magnificent productions, many designed by [Academy Professor] Roller. Particularly noticeable were their collaborations on RIENZI and the first two parts of the RING OF THE NIBELUNGS.*

*The new director, Felix Weingartner, while causing some furor by making cuts in certain Mahler productions, was already carrying out his predecessor's plan to complete the RING with new Roller scenery. (2)*

The resignation of Gustav Mahler was at least partially a result of Vienna's legendary anti-Semitism, whose main political representatives were the extremist Georg Schönerer and the populist Karl Lüger. In the realm of culture, the biggest crash between anti-Semites and liberals arose through von Weingartner's decisions to cut the scores of some Wagner works, fire Mahler-appointed singers and institute a hiring ban for Jews in the opera. (3) When tumult broke out between the camps during a June 1908 performance of Wagner's *WALKÜRE*, the *ALLDEUTSCHES TAGBLATT*, the German anti-Semitic, nationalist newspaper, reported that:

*"A number of crooked-nosed Wagnerians, their nice thick skulls (cat heads) delicately and charmingly bedecked with black negro wool (homo negroides), thought it was a good opportunity to indulge in boisterous demonstrations. The members of the orchestra, on the other hand, who revere Mr. Weingartner as a first-rate conductor and are happy finally to have got rid of that Jewish trickster Gustav Mahler, celebrated their director by getting up from their seats as one man and applauding him warmly." (4)*

<sup>1</sup> The parliament was a show by itself and fisticuffs not unheard of. Brigitte Hamann lists the following parties and numbers of their seats in the Reichstag of 1907:

96 German Christian-Socialists, 86 German Social Democrats, 31 German People's Party, 21 German-Agrarians, 17 German-Progressives, 12 German-Radicals ("Wolfians") and 3 Pan-Germans ("Schönerians");

28 Czech-Agrarians, 18 Young Czechs, 17 Czech Conservatives, 7 Old Czechs, 2 Czech Progressives ("Realists"), 1 "non-affiliated" Czech and 9 Czech National Socialists;

25 Polish National Democrats, 17 Polish People's Party, 16 Polish Conservatives and 12 Polish Centre;

4 Zionists and 1 Jewish Democrat; 10 Italian Conservatives and 4 Italian Liberals; 18 Slovenian Conservatives and 5 Slovenian Liberals; 25 Ruthenian National Democrats and 4 Old Ruthenians; 12 Croats; 5 Romanians; 2 Serbs; 1 Radical Russian; 1 Free Socialist; 1 "Independent Socialist"; 1 "Social Politician"; 2 non-affiliated members; 2 seats vacant. (5)

Thus the cultural fronts were set. For Adolf, a fortunate accident became important to his plan to return to Vienna because it provided a connection to the famous Professor Roller, director of scenery at the Burgtheater. A resident of the Hitler family's domicile in Blütengasse 9 in Urfahr, Frau Magdalena Hanisch, had a friend in Vienna, a Frau Johanna Motloch, who herself knew Roller, and Frau Hanisch offered to and in fact did write a letter to her friend on February 4, 1908, and asked her to recommend the young artist Adolf Hitler to the professor. Roller replied two days later, on February 6, as if he had nothing else in the world to do:

*"Dear Madam,*

*I will be happy to oblige you. Do tell young Hitler to call on me and to bring some of his works so I can see how he is doing. I surely will advise him as best I can. He can meet me every day in my office at the Opera, entrance Kärntnerstrasse, Principal Office's staircase, at 12:30 and at 6:30 pm. Should I happen not to be in the office, the servant will call me by phone. It is rare that I am not around at those hours. Should Hitler be unfortunate enough to come at one of those times he shouldn't let himself be discouraged and call again the following day."* (6)

Via Frau Motloch and Frau Hanisch the reply reached Adolf in Linz, who directed a thank-you letter of his own to Frau Motloch on February 10. The connection to the famous professor aided Hitler in convincing tough Herr Kubizek Senior to allow his only son to accompany his friend Adolf to Vienna, to study music. Gustl, who knew his father's tenacity, was in raptures when he received permission within a few days, astonished that Adolf had "managed to win over my father to our plan in so comparatively short a time. ... I was blissfully happy as never before in my life, for now I had achieved my purpose [to study music] without upsetting my father, and my mother shared my joy." (7) Adolf went ahead, described by Robert Payne:

*Alois Schicklgruber had brought to Vienna his talents as a cobbler and a fierce determination to succeed. Adolf Hitler brought more complicated talents. Among his ill-assorted gifts were a fervent imagination, an undisciplined intelligence, some skill in drawing and painting, an enthusiasm for Wagnerian opera, a wide knowledge of architecture, a ferocious spirit of independence and an exalted opinion of himself.*

*He had strange ideas of extra-sensory communication and believed he could communicate with Stephanie across all obstacles, his unspoken word penetrating the walls of houses and soaring across space. Meanwhile he was determined to go his own way, at whatever cost to himself and others, but he had no idea what he wanted to do with his life.*

*He was thinking, reading and dreaming furiously, and for the present was content to be a dilettante. He wore a wide-brimmed hat like an artist and sported a small, downy moustache, but he was not yet grown to manhood. He was a conundrum to the few people who met him, and he was probably a conundrum to himself.* (8)

He returned to his old room at the second floor of the annex of Stumpergasse 31, and was in high spirits for the time being, as the following postcard to Gustl sent on February 19 suggests:

*"Dear Friend, am anxiously expecting news of your arrival. Write soon so that I can prepare everything for your festive welcome. The whole of Vienna is awaiting you, therefore come soon. I will, of course, come and meet you.*

*Now the weather here is improving. I hope you will have better weather too. Well, as I said before, at first you will stay with me. Later we shall see. One can get a piano here in the so-called Dorotheum [the municipal pawn-shop, ¶] for as little as 50 to 60 florins. Well, many regards to you and your esteemed parents, from your friend, Adolf Hitler. Beg you again, come soon."* (9)

Three days after Adolf sent the postcard, Kubizek arrived in Vienna toting "a brown canvas bag ... overflowing with food," prepared by his mother to save the lads from immediate starvation. (10) Gustl was somewhat surprised at the sight of his friend at the station: in a "dark, good-quality overcoat, dark hat and the walking stick with the ivory handle, he appeared

almost elegant." (11) Adolf helped with the luggage and they headed for the Stumpergasse. At first, Gustl was delighted with the stately building he saw, but the view of the small room in the annex lowered his spirits somewhat. They ate up Mama Kubizek's food, and then Adolf introduced his friend to the landlady, Frau Zakreys.

After the formalities had been observed, Adolf insisted on taking Gustl through a preliminary examination of the opera house; Gustl could not possibly go to sleep on this first evening without having seen it, Adolf argued. Kubizek duly admired the building and then indulged in a bit of revenge and schlepped Adolf, who was now tiring himself, to St. Stefan's cathedral. After having added the delicate little church Maria am Gestade to the list of places to be visited urgently, the boys returned to their domicile past midnight.

The next morning saw the beginning of the quest for a habitat and piano for August. On this trip, Gustl wrote, he encountered "this alluring city, Vienna, from the 'other side'. Gloomy courtyards, narrow, ill-lit tenements and stairs, ever more and more stairs. ... I was very depressed and low-spirited, full of homesickness. What kind of a big city was this Vienna? Full of indifferent, unsympathetic people - it must be awful to live here." (12) Although the alleviation of his friend's potential disappointments was not necessarily Adolf's long suit, he realized Gustl's frustration, and proposed that they should room together. After reviewing a few more small dark rooms in other houses, they eventually returned to the Stumpergasse, where Adolf persuaded Frau Zakreys to switch rooms: she would move into the small one and the boys take over the bigger one, which could harbour a pianoforte, at twenty crowns monthly rent. An instrument was soon acquired, at another ten crowns' monthly fee. With these provisions, the boys felt that they had established themselves in the capital's art and music scene.

Gustl visited the conservatory the next morning, his friend still asleep. The industry with which he had practiced in Linz and his understanding of harmony paid off handsomely when he was able to register as a student the very same day and in addition was accepted as a viola player in the conservatory's orchestra.

THE BURGTHEATER (ROYAL OPERA HOUSE) - INSIDE





VIENNA - THE BURGTHEATER (ROYAL OPERA HOUSE) - STREET VIEW

When Hitler came home that evening - he had not told Gustl of his Academy fiasco, neither had he called on Professor Roller - he commented on his friend's success, "I had no idea I had such a clever friend." (13) Sour grapes, perhaps. Yet Kubizek soon realized the tensions his friend suffered from, but since he left for the conservatory every morning and came home only late, he could not initially explain Hitler's moodiness. He could see, however, that money was at least one issue. We do not know exactly whether Josef Mayrhofer had permitted Adolf to take all or parts of his share of Klara's estate with him to Vienna, but chances are that he would permit his ward only a small stipend. At special occasions like Christmas or Easter, he may have augmented the allowance, as it was the custom in Austria. But it cannot have amounted to much; Gustl relates that his friend often lived off nothing but bread and milk. As a registered student, Kubizek could eat in the canteen and he often smuggled Adolf in.

Of course, Adolf had a mistress far more expensive than a street girl: the Opera. Kubizek dedicates a whole chapter of his memoirs to their consuming love for the stage. The friends attended performances as often as funds allowed, but apparently at least once a week. The tickets were not cheap - after all, this was Vienna. As in Linz, they subsisted on Promenade tickets, standing room only, but, at two crowns, still expensive. They saved money by coming without hats and coats, which were prohibited in the auditorium and had to be left at the cloakroom, and frequently had

to leave early to arrive at home before the main gate of the house was locked at 11 pm. Latecomers had to wake up the janitor and pay a small fee.

But whatever their finances, opera they did see, foremost Wagner. From Kubizek's record we know that they saw *LOHENGRIN* and *DIE MEISTERSÄNGER VON NÜRNBERG* more than ten times; at least once or twice they saw the *FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER*, *TANNHÄUSER*, *TRISTAN AND ISOLDE*, "even *PARSIFAL*", Kubizek comments, and, of course the complete *RING DES NIBELUNGEN* tetralogy: *RHEINGOLD*, *WALKÜRE*, *SIEGFRIED* and *GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG*, the 'Twilight of the Gods'.

From the standard repertoire, we know that they saw Mozart's immortal quartet, *DIE HOCHZEIT DES FIGARO*, *COSI FAN TUTTE*, *DON GIOVANNI* and the *ZAUBERFLÖTE*, Beethoven's *FIDELIO*, the standards of Rossini, Puccini, Bellini and Donizetti AND at least five of Giuseppe Verdi's war horses, *UN BALLO IN MASCHERA*, *IL TROVATORE*, *RIGOLETTO*, *LA TRAVIATA* and *AIDA*, which Hitler liked best, no doubt because of the triumphal march. He didn't like Gounod, Tchaikovsky or Smetana. (14)

Since the funds for opera tickets were limited, even at two crowns apiece, Gustl frequently took his friend to the Conservatory concerts, for which, as a student, he received free passes. These were some of Hitler's earliest encounters with symphonic music, and Gustl reports that, aside from the symphonies of Beethoven, Brahms and Bruckner, "Adolf took great delight in hearing the works of the romantic composers Carl Maria von Weber, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann." (15) Yet, very interestingly, with the exception of a few of the great symphonies and piano concertos, Mozart left him cold.

Through some admittedly speculative reflection, one might find clues to this strange fact in Hitler's character; his diametrical opposition to the humanity and gentleness that is a constant expression in Mozart's works. Hitler's soul was a tortured, aggressive and violent animal, unsuited to relish in the opposite scale of feelings elicited by Mozart's genius. Hitler's was a heart estranged from its fellow beings and unable to establish rapport with Mozart's innate kindness. Beethoven was a fighter, a struggler of music, as even a less experienced listener like Hitler could hear; Mozart was a wooer, and a flirt; even in its darkest moments, his music is an expression of love and humility. Love, alas, was not Hitler's strong suit.

It was perhaps unavoidable that Adolf, under the influence of so much opera, added the careers of poet, dramatist and composer to the list of his future accomplishments. Kubizek narrates a scene in which he returned home later than usual one evening, to find his friend hulked over the table, feverishly scribbling in the light of the small kerosene lamp. Gustl was curious about the nocturnal effort, and Adolf confessed to being occupied with the opening act of a major Nordic drama of his own composition. Gustl bowed over the paper and read:

*"Holy mountain in the background, before it the mighty sacrificial block surrounded by huge oaks: two powerful warriors hold firmly by the horns the black bull which is to be sacrificed and press the beast's mighty head against the hollow in the sacrificial block.*

*Behind them, erect in light coloured robes, stands the priest. He holds the sword with which he will slaughter the bull. All around, solemn, bearded men, leaning on their shields, their lances ready, are watching the ceremony intently." (16)*

Gustl asked his friend what the setting of the drama was. Adolf explained that the opus takes place in a hypothetical parallel universe, in a time when Christianity was first brought to the mountains of Bavaria. The mountain men resist the missionaries and sacrifice them, plus one bull, black, to the ancient Teutonic gods.

The scene gives us an idea about Adolf's preoccupations with the ancient Teutons. His favourite subjects were taken from Nordic mythology and/or pseudo-history: no one knew where the one ended and the other began. Gustl tactfully brought to his friend's attention that, given his relative literary inexperience, the composition of a full-blown historical drama that satisfied his penchant for epic scales might exceed his present abilities as an author and he should consider to start with something smaller, a comedy or two, perhaps.

Hitler's ideas were different. One day Kubizek mentioned to him in passing that "an outline of a musical drama about Wieland the Smith had been found amongst Wagner's posthumous writings." (17) When August returned from the

conservatory the next evening, he found his friend hunched over the pianoforte, and was told that he witnessed the creation of the first act of Adolf's opera on the Wieland story. Not only would Adolf write the libretto, but would compose the score as well, that is, "I shall compose the music, and you will write it down." (18) As his idol Richard Wagner had, in the *RING*, he planned to use musical motifs ["leitmotifs", ¶] for each of the main characters of the work. He would then have Gustl transpose the music into orchestral notation, arrange it, and adapt it where necessary. Initially, Hitler wanted the score to be played on old Germanic instruments, until Gustl argued, for the sake of the audience, to use the customary instruments.

In the next few weeks, Adolf came up with little melodies or themes, which he asked Gustl to transform into the great symphonic prelude he heard in his head. That did not work, and they argued about everything: the plot, libretto, melodic turns and harmonic sequences, which were the issue Adolf was most ignorant of. August attempted to put Adolf's rough melodic outlines into proper metric and harmonic form, but it was hard for him to find notes that represented what Adolf professed to hear in his head. The same, almost endless disputations accompanied the creation of the dialogue and the plans for scenery and stage effects. Gustl remembered the opening:

*"I have still before my eyes Wolf Lake, where the first scene of the opera was laid. From the EDDA, a book that was sacred for him [Adolf, ¶], he knew Iceland, the rugged island of the north, where the elements from which the world was created meet now, as they did in the days of creation: the violent storm, the bare dark rock, the pale ice of the glaciers, the flaming fire of the volcanoes.*

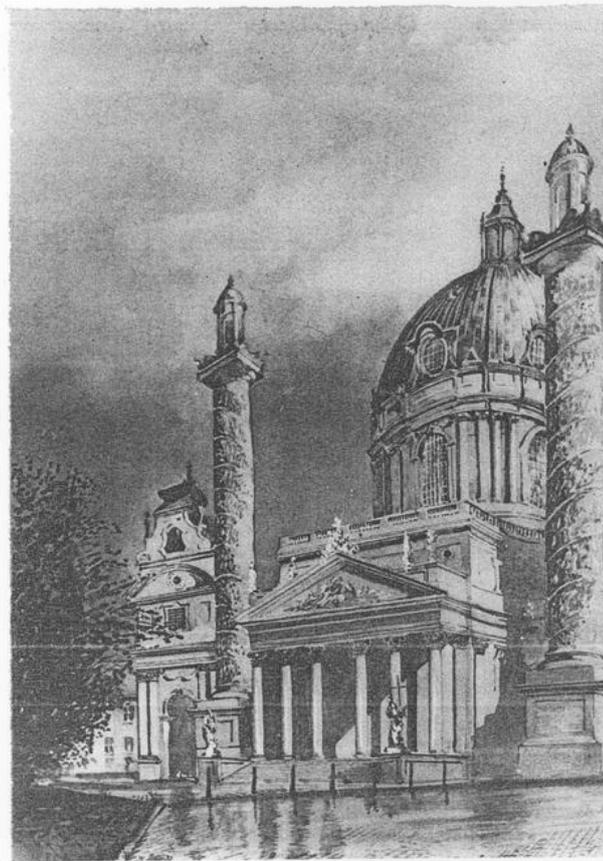
*There he laid the setting of his opera, for there nature itself was still in those passionate convulsions which inspired the actions of gods and human beings. There, then, was the Wolf Lake on whose banks Wieland and his brothers were fishing when one morning three light clouds, borne along by the winds, floated towards them, three Valkyries in glittering coats of mail and shining helmets. They wore white fluttering robes, magic garments which enabled them to float through the air. I remember what headaches these flying Valkyries caused us, as Adolf categorically refused to do without them.*

*Altogether there was a lot of 'flying' in our opera. In the last act, Wieland too had to forge himself a pair of wings with which to fly, a flight on wings of metal which had to be accomplished with the utmost ease in order to remove any doubts as to the quality of his workmanship." (19)*

The plot of the opus followed the old tale of Wieland the smith: he works faithfully for King Nidur, producing magic swords and armour, but, although innocent, is accused and found guilty of a crime, and, as a punishment, is lamed. Inflamed over the injustice he decides upon revenge, he rapes the king's daughter, kills his two sons, the princes, drinks from beakers fashioned from their skulls and finally flies away, on the aforementioned silvery wings he made for himself in the smithy.

Yet once again, Hitler showed no stamina. Like the piano lessons he had taken for a few months in Linz under the tuition of Josef Prewratzky but abandoned soon, he abandoned the opera project as well when, Gustl explained, other "pressing problems requiring immediate solution confronted my friend. *WIELAND DER SCHMIED*, Adolf's opera, remained a fragment." (20) Hitler now returned to the same activities that had dominated most of his last two years in Linz: reading, drawing and talking. Kubizek admitted that he spent considerable time thinking about his friend's lack of direction. When he returned from his daily studies at the conservatory, at dusk, he found Hitler busy with the reconstruction of Vienna or Linz, designing public buildings in that grandiose style of his that confused size with greatness.

Eventually Gustl realized that his friend's world had little in common with reality. If anything in his colossal plans went wrong, Adolf erupted in flames of rage; his capacity to endure criticism or accept deviant opinions was negligible. Still, his behaviour might change all of a sudden: the maniac being replaced by a charming Viennese courtier, full of the Austrian mix of enticement and allure. On the other hand, he did have some talents no one could deny and he tried to educate himself further by incessant reading. He read everything, an omnivore of letters, from history to philosophy and from mythology to geography. Kubizek reported that his friend was inscribed in several public libraries, and numerous volumes took away space in their little household at all times. Being a child of romanticism, the mainstays of Adolf's literary diet were mythology and military matters.



THE KARLSKIRCHE (ABOVE) AND THE CHURCH OF THE MINORITES, PAINTED BY HITLER IN VIENNA



Romanticism had become the prevalent mood of the nineteenth century, and spread the notion that, in the daily struggle for survival, feelings like stress, pain, grief or rage were not simply temporary states of the soul's equilibrium but necessary, in fact desirable elements of life. Nietzsche's popularity was an expression of this romantic view of life, which had found its early manifestation in the works of Goethe and Schiller. Robert Payne explains the arguments of Goethe's *FAUST* and the young *WERTHER*:

*Since Faust and Mephistopheles rage, then everyone must rage; and since the creation was an act of violence, then all creation must continue in this path of violence. Excess and exaggeration were the law of life.*

*The young Werther had pointed out the way with an apparently innocent question: "If energy is strength, why should excessive energy be the opposite?" he asked. It was the young Werther too, who observed: "I have come to appreciate how it is that extraordinary people who have achieved something great, something apparently impossible, have been derided as drunkards or madmen." Adolf was determined to become an 'extraordinary' man. (21)*

Kubizek went home over Easter 1908, partially to register with his draft board in Linz, and Adolf was left alone in the capital musing over his latest projects. August informed him by letter that he had developed a bout of conjunctivitis, perhaps by constantly staring at music sheets in candlelight, and warned Adolf that his treatment by an ophthalmologist might include the fitting of spectacles. He might not be recognizable at the train station on his return to Vienna, where, this time, he would be accompanied by his father. Adolf replied:

*"Dear Gustl!*

*Whilst thanking you for your letter, I must tell you immediately how pleased I am that your dear father is really coming with you to Vienna. Providing that you and he have no objection, I will meet you at the station on Thursday at 11 o'clock. You write that you are having such lovely weather which almost upsets me as, if it were not raining here, we too should be having lovely weather.*

*I am very pleased that you are bringing a viola. On Tuesday I shall buy myself two crowns' worth of cotton wool and twenty Kreuzers' worth of paste, for my ears naturally. That - on top of this - you are going blind affects me deeply: you will play more wrong notes than ever. Then you will become blind and I gradually mad. Oh dear! But meanwhile I wish you and your esteemed parents at least a happy Easter and send them my hearty greetings as well as to you.*

*Your friend, ADOLF HITLER" (22)*

When Kubizek returned to the Stumpergasse, he noticed some political pamphlets in a corner, which his friend apparently had collected in the meanwhile. Apart from the *RIENZI* evening in Linz, politics had not been much of a theme in their discussions, or, rather, Adolf's monologues, but recently Gustl found his friend's interest much broadened. As adolescents are wont to do, Adolf developed a campaign to save the world. In *MEIN KAMPF* he wrote about the Vienna of 1908, now that he was familiar with the town:

*"In the time of my bitter struggle between spiritual development and cold reason, the view of life on the streets of Vienna provided me with invaluable insight. The time came eventually when I no longer wandered like a blind man through the city, but with open eyes saw not only the buildings but also the people." (23)*

Under the influence of the age, Adolf began to advocate a strange mixture of nationalism, anti-Ultramontanism, anti-Monarchism, socialism and Vienna's notorious anti-Semitism. This particular assemblage of populist ideas was expressed in pre-war Vienna to great effect by the "Christian Socialist Party," led in the capital by its mayor, Dr. Karl Lüger.

Lüger was by far the best-known and most popular politician of the Dual Monarchy in the early twentieth century. Not only was he locally born and raised, he "attended the prestigious Theresianum Gymnasium," then studied law at the municipal university and after his graduation joined a law firm as a junior partner. (24) He rapidly gained popularity by taking up the cause of the "little people" who became his favourite clients. As Brigitte Hamann relates, he "went to taverns and beer parlours and from one popular assembly to the next to deliver his political speeches. He listened to people's complaints and acquired a reputation as an advocate of the disadvantaged." (25)

His hour struck during yet another economic crisis, the crash of 1873. Public opinion held Jews and capitalists, who reaped the favours of unlimited liberalism, responsible for the downturn and Lüger used these popular sentiments against big business as his coattails to high office and added two more scapegoats to the list of villains: the Social Democrats, who, he alleged, were out to steal "whatever little property the good citizens had away from them," and the immigrants from the East, the "foreigners". (26) In 1875 the franchise was extended to legal residents who paid at least ten crowns in taxes annually, which is to say, the petty bourgeoisie, and they elected Lüger, the local favourite, into the City Council. (27)

Although in later years Lüger was often characterized as a populist without principles, his attention for the problems of the "little people" had roots not only in his own descent from a small-bourgeois family, but his clear awareness that unbridled capitalism might cause one day a universal revolution. By 1893, he

*... had befriended Catholic aristocrats wary of what laissez-faire liberalism might eventually incite in the masses. There were men such as Baron Liechtenstein who had moved away from nineteenth-century liberalism which had created the horrors and the disruptions of the Industrial Revolution. They were developing their own brand of socialism, which would involve a cooperation between state control and private initiative. In this mixed system, insurance would be provided for the workers, the accumulation of huge amounts of private property would be stopped, as would child labour, and provision would be made for the old.*

*These men tied such social reform to the Catholic banner, ultimate symbol of order and the foe of Marxism. It was an effective combination. When Lüger joined the ranks he brought with him a third selling point - anti-Semitism. (28)*

It did not take long until Lüger took over the leadership of this movement, and with his nose for opportunities and organizational experience turned it into a modern political party quickly. Thus, despite its martial name, the Christian Social Party, which retained the by-line "The Anti-Semites", was a right-wing, conservative, even reactionary party and must not be confused with genuine socialists. It was, as Joachim Fest said, a congregation of "the Catholic working class and the petty bourgeoisie: white-collar workers and lower-rank government officials, small shopkeepers, the concierges and lower clergy, all of whom industrialization and changing times threatened with social downgrading or poverty." (29) It will be eerie to see how much the early NSDAP was to approach the same tactics and the same social groups.

Under Lüger's charismatic leadership, the Christian Socialists won majorities in Vienna and other Austrian towns while simultaneously working to extend their voter base into the rural population. Lüger was not met with applause in every corner - Emperor Francis Joseph disliked him so much that he declined three times to confirm the appointment of Lüger to the mayoral office despite the election results - but if young Adolf had any idols, Lüger was one of them. In a monologue in December 1941, he admitted that, when he heard Lüger speak for the first time in 1908, "I had to wrestle with myself inside, I wanted to hate him, but I couldn't help myself, I felt compelled to admire him; he had absolutely outstanding talent as an orator." (30)

The mayor was a good-looking man - the female side of the capital called him "den schönen Karl", 'Gorgeous Charlie' - and he combined high intelligence with witty rhetoric and a punchy sense of humour. He was a born manipulator, wheeler-dealer, opportunist, populist and demagogue, but what perhaps counted most was his uncanny knack to know what was politically possible and what was not. If the situation warranted it, he was able to throw overboard holy party ideals in a minute, and Hitler much admired his tactical, expendable use of ideas, election promises or slogans. Thirty-one years later, in the most famous of his political about-faces, Hitler borrowed a page from Dr. Lüger's political manual with

the sudden signing of the German-Russian Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939, repealing twenty years of anti-Bolshevik propaganda overnight in favour of a tactical advantage.

What discerned Dr. Lüger from all his bourgeois political colleagues, and impressed Hitler so thoroughly, was his willingness and ability to address the masses, a faculty extremely rare in conservative politicians. He was as flamboyant - even in his anti-Semitism - as his opponents were dull. Vienna's anti-Semitism before the Great War was different in tone from Eastern Europe, not as feverish and violent as, say, in Russia. It was one more expression of Austrian middle-class angst, which worsened because, as Joachim Fest points out

*... the surging nationalism of the various peoples of the empire was no longer countered by the traditional calmness of a self-assured German leadership. Rather, the epidemic spread of nationalism had seized the ruling class of Germans with special intensity from the time that Austria was excluded from German politics in 1866.*

*The Battle of Königgrätz had turned Austria's face away from Germany toward the Balkans and forced the Germans into the role of a minority within their "own" state. They felt themselves being swamped by alien races and began to grumble at the monarchy for ignoring that danger. They themselves compensated by a more and more immoderate glorification of their own breed. "German" became a word with a virtually moralistic cast, carrying strong missionary overtones. It developed into a concept imperiously and pretentiously opposed to everything foreign.*

*The anxiety underlying such reactions can be fully understood only against the broader background of a general crisis. In the course of a creeping revolution "old, cosmopolitan, feudal and peasant Europe" - which had anachronistically survived in the territory of the Dual Monarchy - was going down to destruction. No class was spared the shocks and conflicts connected with its death.*

*The bourgeois and petty bourgeois in particular felt threatened on all sides by progress, by the abnormal growth of the cities, by technology, mass production, and economic concentration. The future, which for so long had been imagined in hopeful terms, in the form of pleasant private or societal utopias, became associated for greater and greater numbers of people with uneasiness and dread. In Vienna alone, in the thirty years after the abolition of guild regulations in 1859, some 40,000 artisans' shops went bankrupt.*

*Such troubles naturally gave rise to many contrary movements that reflected the increasing craving for an escape from reality. These were chiefly defensive ideologies with nationalistic and racist overtones, offered by their advocates as panaceas for a threatened world. Such doctrines gave concrete form to vague anxieties, expressing these in familiar, hence manageable, images.*

*One of the most extreme of these complexes was anti-Semitism, which drew together a variety of rival parties and leagues, from the Pan-Germans under the leadership of Georg Ritter von Schönerer to the Christian Socialists under Karl Lüger. There had been an outbreak of anti-Jewish feeling at the time of the depression at the beginning of the 1870's. This emerged afresh when the stream of immigrants from Galicia, Hungary, and Bukovina increased.*

*In the temperate atmosphere of the Hapsburg metropolis, Jews had made considerable progress toward emancipation. But for that very reason the Jews in the East flocked in greater numbers to the more liberal zones of the West. In the interval from 1857 to 1910 their proportion of the population of Vienna rose from 2 per cent to more than 8.5 per cent, higher than in any other city of Central Europe. There were some districts of Vienna where Jews formed about a third of the population. The new immigrants retained both their customs and their style of dress. In long black caftans, tall hats on their heads, their odd and alien-seeming presence strikingly affected the street scene in the capital. (31)*

Compared to the excesses of the future, the "normal" anti-Semitism in Vienna was a typically Austrian affair, helter-skelter, confused, restricted to campaigns and electioneering. Even Dr. Lüger's political enemies testified to his personal honour

and the actual government work of his party in Vienna was free from discrimination. Anton Joachimsthaler summed up his research into Hitler's professed anti-Semitism in Vienna as follows:

*"[Living in Vienna] ... Hitler was certainly aware of poverty and knew the problems resulting from the mixtures of ethnic minorities and races; undoubtedly he recognized the 'make-believe anti-Semitism' of Karl Lüger. But nothing in Hitler's behaviour before June 1919 points to the existence of noteworthy anti-Semitism. To the contrary: he had various Jewish acquaintances in Vienna, so Josef Neumann, various cohabitants of the Männerheim [Hostel, ¶] and art dealers. The same is true about his relation to the Jewish Dr. Bloch, who had treated his mother, many declarations of witnesses, Jewish officers in the war -- Hugo Gutmann, a Jewish officer, proposed Hitler for the Iron Cross 1st Class in 1918 -- they give an unopposed impression that Hitler's flagrant anti-Semitism did not materialize before June 1919". (32)*

For the purposes of this account, we should determine how much Hitler was actually influenced by the town's anti-Semitism. In *MEIN KAMPF*, he describes at length his presumed awakening to the dreadful Jewish influence, but we have reason to doubt his word. Except for Kubizek, the few other witnesses of his days in Vienna do not report any particular anti-Semitic words or actions,<sup>\*</sup> and Kubizek relegates himself to report Adolf's purported anti-Semitism on no more than two and a half pages of his manuscript. August describes three actual meetings of Adolf with Jews: one was but a brief affair of meeting a journalist contacted by Gustl, who had apparently been ready to publish, and pay for, some of Hitler's writings if they were good enough. The project was, however, swiftly abandoned when Hitler professed to recognize - August had not - that the man was a Jew.

The second incident featured Adolf breathlessly returning from a police station. He told Gustl that he had been a witness of a grand scene that had played out in the Mariahilferstrasse, one of Vienna's main thoroughfares, in which a Jewish man, a Handelee, had been apprehended. "Handelee" was a Viennese moniker for fresh Eastern Jews, who wore the long caftan of the fundamentalist Jewish communities and lived by begging, thieving, or selling *krimskrams*, knickknacks, on the street. Selling *krimskrams*, shoe laces, matches or trinkets, was legal, but begging was not. A policeman had arrested the man, who had "whiningly approached passers-by, his hand outstretched, and had collected some money." (33)

The detainee swore that he had been selling stuff, not begging, and thus a cavalcade of witnesses accompanied the man and the officer to the next police precinct. Adolf had been a bystander, and excitedly reported Gustl that three thousand Kronen in cash, a small fortune, was found on the untidy entrepreneur; proof, at least for Adolf, of "the exploitation of Vienna by immigrant Eastern Jews." (34)

The last episode relates that the friends visited, apparently on Adolf's decision, a synagogue in Brigittenau, a working-class district only recently incorporated into the capital. A wedding was taking place, and at least Kubizek admits that the rite impressed him in its religious transcendence. That a few days later Adolf announced that he had entered his and Gustl's name on a petition to join the Anti-Semitic Union, must be based on some misunderstanding, for this organization did not exist then. (35)

The above is the full extent of Hitler's anti-Semitism as reported by Kubizek, and it seems that Adolf had not yet made up his mind completely about the Jews in the capital. He did, as most of his contemporaries did, despise the Handelees and other orthodox Jewish sects but was in awe of the artistic endeavours of men like the composers and directors Gustav Mahler and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, who had led the renaissance of the works of Bach in the first half of the nineteenth century. While we thus remain unsure of the exact degree of attention Adolf dedicated to anti-Semitism,

We know from Gustl that he busied himself with sex, or, rather, the theories he had about the subject. As mentioned above, the Austrian empire was not a welcoming place for young people discovering their sexuality; the two principal ways Vienna's society devised to deal with the distasteful subject were bigotry and hypocrisy. Of utmost importance was the concealment of the problematic matter as far as the public sphere was concerned, so that the necessary decorum could be maintained.

The topic could not be addressed directly; no such thing as sexual education existed. As a child that had grown up for some time on a farm, Adolf was informed about certain principles of reproductive biology, but his knowledge of the more romantic or supernatural issues was slim and mostly deduced from the opera; the erotic universe as seen by troubadours or rapists. Vienna's reality was different, and Stefan Zweig explains it to us:

*"The present generation has hardly any idea of the gigantic extent of prostitution in Europe before the World War. Whereas today it is as rare to meet a prostitute on the streets of a big city as it is to meet a [horse-drawn] wagon in the road, then the sidewalks were so sprinkled with women for sale that it was more difficult to avoid than to find them. To this was added the countless number of "closed houses", the night clubs, and the cabarets, the dance parlours with their dancers and singers, and the bars with their "come-on" girls.*

*At that time female wares were offered for sale at every hour and at every price, and it cost a man as little time and trouble to purchase a woman for a quarter of an hour, an hour, or a night, as it did to buy a package of cigarettes or a newspaper ... .*

*The official attitude of the State and its morality towards this shady affair was never a comfortable one. From the moral point of view, the State did not dare acknowledge the right of a woman to sell herself, and from the hygienic viewpoint; on the other hand, prostitution could not be spared because it canalized the troublesome extra-marital sexuality. And so the authorities sought to avail themselves of an ambiguity, in that a distinction was made between private prostitution, which the State prosecuted as being immoral and dangerous, and legalized prostitution, which it supplied with a sort of trade license and which it taxed.*

*A girl who had decided to become a prostitute was given a particular concession by the police and received her own book as qualifying certificate. Inasmuch as she submitted to police control and complied with her duty of being examined by a physician twice a week, she had acquired the business to lease out her own body at any price she saw fit.*

*Prostitution was recognized as a profession among the other professions; but - and here is the rub of morality - it was not quite fully recognized. So, for example, if a prostitute sold her wares, that is, her body, to a man and later did not receive the price agreed upon, she had no right to sue him. For then, suddenly, her suit - OB TURPEM CAUSAM, as the law saw it, had become an immoral one and stood without the protection of the law."* (36)

Hence the chances of our two friends to find true love in the streets of Vienna were slim to begin with. But the erotic atmosphere of the town was ubiquitous and intense. Gustl admits that, in the opera foyer, "I was struck by how much attention the girls and women paid to us." (37) He soon found out, to his dismay that his friend appeared to be the principal target of this attraction.

Adolf was aware of the young girls fluttering their eyelids and the older women slyly glancing at him, but when he walked with Gustl up and down the opera foyer or the great Viennese promenades, he ignored them all in his juvenile frightfulness. He had little practical experience in conversations with women, and these women that found him attractive were exactly those he disdained. Stefanie was unattainable, but she held captive his erotic impressions, and thus he was restricted to philosophic contemplation of what he had identified as *Die Flamme des Lebens*, "the flame of life". (38) Night after night, he preached Gustl his strictures regarding women and morals, love and procreation. The state should make it its business to promote early marriage, assist girls in acquiring trousseaux and, perhaps, a small dowry by means of loans, and provide young families with cheap domiciles and financial assistance. Only in this way could the genuine "flame of life" be retained, "the symbol of sacred love which is awakened between man and woman who have kept themselves pure in body and soul and are worthy of a union which would produce healthy children for the nation." (39)

But Adolf also remembered the scholarly importance of scientific experimentation, practical field work and critical observation, and thus one day resolved to face the scene of the crimes together with his friend. It was general knowledge in town that a central red-light district branched off the main Ring road near the Siebensterngasse into a narrow and

intentionally bad-lit back alley. The working girls showed themselves in the windows of small houses and the prospective customers could enter the financial negotiations right over the windowsill. If an agreement was reached, the customer slid through a door into the chamber and the light was extinguished. Proper decorum was maintained by the custom that no one could approach an unlit window. The lane was called the Spittelberggasse, and "no one had any trouble finding it, because it led out into the Burggasse, one of the main thoroughfares of Vienna." (40)

One day, Gustl remembered, the friends undertook a field trip.

*"There was one evening that I have never forgotten. We had been to a performance of Wedekind's FRÜHLING'S ERWACHEN [in itself a clear indication of the friends' interest in procreation, ¶] and, as an exception, had stayed for the last act. Then we made our way across the Ring homewards and turned down into the Siebensterngasse. Adolf took my arm and said unexpectedly, 'Come, Gustl, we must the sink of iniquity once.' I do not know what had given him the idea, but he had already turned into the small, Spittelberggasse.*

*So there we were. We walked along past the low, one-storey houses. The windows, which were on street level, were lighted so that passers-by could see directly into the rooms. The girls sat there, some behind a window pane, some at an open window. A few of them were still remarkably young, others prematurely aged and faded. In their scanty and slovenly attire they sat there, making up their faces or combing their hair or looking at themselves in the mirror, without losing sight for one moment of the man strolling by." (41)*

It has been a delicate temptation to identify a possible connection between Hitler's years in Vienna and the extreme reaction prostitution elicited in him. While the Vienna vice police might agree that prostitution was one of the many problems of a big town, they might disagree that it was, as Hitler was prone to see it, the most important issue of the empire and human civilization in toto. Many speculations have been woven, not surprisingly, that his relation to the oldest profession was based on some personal experience; that he had been infected with syphilis by a - perhaps - Jewish prostitute, that he had a violent encounter with a Jewish bordello owner, or, maybe most likely in regards to his character, that he tried to save a girl from her fate and failed; but all of these funny or abstruse theories have in common a complete absence of evidence.

Absence of evidence is, of course, not evidence of absence, and it cannot be denied that there was a certain Jewish business tradition in Eastern European white slavery; the most active acquisition of "assets" took place in the Eastern provinces of the realm, where Jewish criminal gangs participated substantially in every kind of illegal enterprise. In the case of prostitution, they converted the "raw materials", simple country girls, into alluring birds of paradise and transported them to the West, where they walked the streets of the bigger towns, spas and garrisons, making money for their pimps. It was an excellent business.

After the investigation of sin, the boys returned to their studies. Kubizek had done very well at the conservatory: he had passed his first-year examination without any trouble and had conducted the season-ending concert of the student orchestra. On the next evening, three of his songs were performed as well as two movements of the sextet for strings he had composed the same year. (42) After the event, Gustl went to Linz for a few weeks, to bake in fresh-earned glory and afterward fulfil his two-month obligation with the army reserve. At the Westbahnhof, as usual, the friends parted, and Adolf remained alone in Mahagonny. He went back to the redesigning of Linz and read the rest of the books in the imperial library. But without his one-man audience, his inspirations dulled. He sent a couple of postcards to Linz, but no letter until July 21, 1908, some three weeks after August's departure.

*"Dear Friend!*

*Perhaps you will have wondered why I haven't written for so long. The answer is simple. I didn't know what I could dish up for you and what would be of particular interest to you. Firstly, I am still in Vienna and will stay here. I am alone because Frau Zakreys is at her brother's. Nevertheless, I am getting on quite well in my hermit's life. There is only one thing I miss. Until now, Frau Zakreys always banged on my door early in the morning and I got up and started work, whereas now I have to depend on myself.*

*Has anything fresh happened in Linz? One doesn't hear any more of the society for rebuilding the theatre. When the bank [the new building for the Bank of Upper Austria and Salzburg, ¶] is finished please send me a picture postcard. And now I have two favours to ask of you. First, would you be so good as to buy for me the 'Guide to the Danube City of Linz', not the Wohrl but the actual Linz one published by Krakowitz. On the cover there is a picture of a Linz girl, and the background shows Linz from the Danube, with the bridge and castle. It costs sixty Hellers which I enclose in postage stamps.*

*Please send it to me immediately, either postage paid, or collect. I will repay you the expenses. But be sure that the timetable of the steamship company, as well as the map of the town, are both there. I need a few figures which I have forgotten and which I can't find in the Wohrl. And secondly, I would ask you, when you go on the boat again, to get me a copy of the guide you had this year. This 'pay-what-you-wish' cost I will refund to you. So, you will do this for me, won't you?*

*There is no other news except that this morning I caught an army of bugs which were soon swimming in my blood, and now my teeth are chattering with the 'heat'. I think there have been few summers with such cold days at this. It's the same with you, isn't it? Now with kindest regards to you and your esteemed parents, and once more repeating my requests, I remain your friend,*

ADOLF HITLER" (43)

Gustl spent a most enjoyable summer at home, his mother happy, his father proud, and did not forget to obtain the city guide, timetable and map and send it on to Vienna. But then the Kubizeks did not hear anything more for a month. The next letter Gustl received was dated August 17, 1908.

*"Good Friend,*

*First I must ask you to forgive me for not having written for so long. This has its own good - or rather bad - reasons: I didn't know what I could find to tell you. That I am writing you now only shows how long I had to search before I could collect together a little news.*

*Firstly, our landlady Zakreys thanks you for the money. And secondly, I want to thank you heartily for your letter. Probably Frau Zakreys finds writing letters difficult (her German is so bad) but she has asked me to thank you and your esteemed parents for the money.*

*I have just got over a sharp attack of bronchial catarrh. It seems that your Musician's Union is facing a crisis. Who actually published the newspaper that I sent you last time? I had already paid the money long since. Do you know anything more about it? We're having nice fine weather now: it's pouring with rain. And this year, with the baking heat we've had, that's really a blessing from heaven. But I shall only be able to enjoy it for little while now. Probably Saturday or Sunday I shall have to leave [to visit the Schmidts in Spital, ¶]. Shall let you know exactly. Am writing quite a lot lately, mostly afternoons and evenings.*

*Have you read the latest decision of the council with regard to the new [Linter] theatre? It seems to me they intend to patch up the old junk-heap once more. It can't go on like this any longer because they won't get permission from the authorities. In any case, the whole clap-trap of these highly respected and all-powerful people shows that they understand about as much about building a theatre as a hippopotamus does of playing the violin.*

*If my architect's manual didn't look so shabby, I would like to pack it up and send it to them with the following address:*

*'Theatre-Rebuilding-Society-Committee-for-the-Execution-of-the-Project-for-the-Rebuilding-of-the-Theatre'  
[written as one word in the original German].*

*To the local, highly well-born, most strict and arch-laudable committee for the eventual construction and required decoration!*

*And with this I close. With kindest regards to you and your esteemed parents. I remain, your friend,*

ADOLF HITLER" (44)

This was the last letter August received from his boyhood friend for twenty-five years. A couple of days later a postcard arrived, depicting Weitra castle in the Waldviertel, but their communication almost dried up. Adolf had gone to Spital for another summer holiday but we have indications that this time his visit was less pleasant than usual. It would also be his last. Aunts Theresia and Johanna criticised him openly for his unproductive ways and attempted, again, to persuade him to a career in the civil service. This was not exactly what Adolf had come to hear, and in addition, he came across with twelve-year-old Paula.

*"Naturally he was a great brother to me, but I submitted to his authority only with inner resistance. In fact, we were brother and sister who did frequently quarrel, but we were fond of each other, and yet spoiled each other's pleasure of living together." (45)*

As it had been the case with Alois Jr. and Angela, fondness and affection could not bridge the family gaps. Perhaps the harsh criticism of the summer marked the true end of Hitler's youth, the final jettisoning of the family cocoon. His adamant refusal to consider a civil service career alienated him from his remaining relatives; Spital ceased to be a Midsummer's Dream. He sent one last postcard to Gustl, then, for the fourth time, set out to Vienna.

While Gustl was playing soldier - and much hated it - Adolf returned to Vienna for the next Academy examination date, having worked all summer on his artistic abilities. The applications for admission had to be delivered in mid-September and he dutifully supplied examples of his works in the order to be admitted to the second, more formal test, in November. When the results of the preliminary assessments were announced in late October, he found his name under the following column heading:

*The following Gentlemen performed their test drawings with insufficient success or were not admitted to the [November] test: ... No.24: Adolf Hitler, Braunau am Inn, 20th April 1889, German, Catholic, Father senior official. 4 classes in Realschule. Not admitted to the test." (46)*

The second rejection finally shattered his dream world. The hated Habsburg state denied him a place among the immortals of art. He was defeated.



**HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER**

*Everything that lives, lives not alone, nor for itself.*

William Blake "The Book of Tel", Pl. 3, L. 26

*What reinforcement we may gain from hope; if not, what resolution from despair.*

John Milton "Paradise Lost", Bk. 1, L. 190

Sometimes a man feels as if the very fortunes of his life are hinged upon a fragile pendulum, which follows wholly foreordained yet enigmatic movements. It is a mystery, the more confusing since we cannot determine, at any given time, our own position on this cosmic scale without invariably changing the oscillation's period or direction. In other words, we may find out where we presently are, but not whether we are moving up or down on the scales of fortune, for each of our actions or omissions has an impact on our future that we cannot truly calculate. When Adolf Hitler quit on his friend August Kubizek in the fall of 1908 and disappeared in the capital's uncounted crowds, he challenged Fortuna by his personal defiance.

Robert Payne portrays the impact of being on one's own in a big town:

*When a man sinks into poverty and misery in a vast city, many strange things happen to him. If he is without family or friends and has no roots, he very quickly becomes the prey of delusions.*

*Mysterious voices speak to him, a stranger suddenly glancing at him in the street will fill him with panic, and he believes that a scrap of newspaper blown by the wind to his feet conveys a message from some higher powers.*

*In his loneliness and terror, he learns that he has entered a savage country of strange customs and inexplicable cruelties, a country in which he is a foreigner possessing no right or privileges, at the mercy of everyone and most of all at the mercy of officials, a hunted creature who feels no security even when he is alone at night in the darkness of his own room.*

*We know much more about these lonely, alienated people than we did fifty years ago, perhaps because modern society creates more of them. We know the complicated contrivances they invent to maintain a sense of human dignity, and we can trace step by step how the shreds of human dignity are torn from them or salvaged in unpredictable ways.*

*Such men are on the mercy of the seasons, for warm days give them a spurious courage and winter reduces them to shivering incoherence. They talk interminably to themselves, and cling desperately to their fantasies.*

*The blue stain on the wall, the stone picked up long ago, the string tied round the middle finger, all these become fetishes without which life would become unendurable.*

*We know too that poverty has its own in-built compensations. In DOWN AND OUT IN PARIS OR LONDON, George Orwell describes the strange, dull euphoria that comes with extreme poverty.*

*You discover boredom and mean complications and the beginnings of hunger, but you also discover the great redeeming future of poverty: the fact that it annihilates the future.*

*Within certain limits, it is actually true that the less money you have, the less you worry. When you have a hundred francs in the world you are liable to the most craven panics. When you have only three francs you are quite indifferent, for three francs will feed you till to-morrow, and you cannot think further than that.*

*You are bored, but you are not afraid. You think vaguely, "I shall be starving in a day or two - shocking, isn't it?" And then the mind wanders to other topics. A bread and margarine diet does, to some extent, provide its own anodyne.*

*But there are many consolations to poverty, and even apathy becomes exhausting in time. For a nineteen-year-old youth who dreamed of becoming a great artist, the consolation was more likely to be found in fantasies of his own towering eminence in the arts, to the discomfiture of all those who had hindered his progress. (1)*

After having participated in the autumnal manoeuvres of his regiment, Kubizek returned to Vienna in late November 1908. He had of course informed his friend of his arrival and thus was baffled when Adolf never showed up at the train station. Gustl concluded that only something of utmost importance, without doubt some sort of emergency, could have compelled his friend's absence and rushed to the Stumpergasse.

Frau Zakreys had no idea where Adolf was. He had given her notice on November 18, paid up the rent until the end of the month and disappeared without leaving a forwarding address or a message. She had already taken in another lodger. Gustl found a new domicile, in an inn, and heard nothing more from his friend for many years to come. When he was in Linz over the Christmas holidays, he visited the Raubals, but Angela almost brusquely informed him that they had no idea where Adolf lived and blamed August for supporting Adolf's artistic dreams. After this Kubizek had no more contact with the Hitler family until, twenty-five years later, his boyhood pal had become the new chancellor of Germany.

At this time, and still today, every change in address had to be brought to the attention of the police,<sup>1</sup> essentially as a means to keep track of the men of military age. Adolf registered his new address with the police on November 19, 1908, as Room # 16, Felberstrasse 22, c/o Frau Helene Riedl, in the XVth District, right at the Westbahnhof, where he lived until August 21, 1909, as a "Student". (2)

It was obvious that the second Academic rejection had put Hitler in a funk, and it is quite possible that he simply did not have the nerve to tell Gustl of the repeated failure. One thing about the move, however, remains a mystery: the new room was bigger and thus cost more than the habitat at Frau Zakreys. It has been speculated that the sudden flight from the Stumpergasse was pursued to hide something or someone from Gustl, perhaps a girl. But for a dearth of proof we can only hypothesize about Hitler's reasons, as we must when we face the question whence the money came for the higher rent.

This is the period in Hitler's life we know least about. Something decisive must have occurred in addition to the second Academy fiasco. We do know that he spent about eight months in the Felberstrasse room, including his twentieth birthday on April 20, 1909. Decades later, a few of his neighbours have come forward with dim memories of a polite young

<sup>1</sup> Franz Jetzinger et al. have argued that Gustl could have easily found out Adolf's new address via the Meldeamt, the Registration office. This is not entirely accurate, because these files were not public and generally available only to the police, courts and military. Cf. J. Sydney Jones, p. 291.

man who appeared somewhat distant, occupied with his own affairs. There was a café nearby he used to visit, the Café Kubata, and from there we have some vague indicators that, at least some time, he spent in female company. Maria Wohlrab, née Kubata, said that she saw him often in the company of a girl which was, perhaps, named "Wetti" or "Pepi". Frau Christa Schröder, from the 1920s on Hitler's long-time secretary, insisted that her chef had mentioned to her, more than once, that he had a "beloved" at that time in Vienna named "Emilie". The cashier at the Café Kubata later remembered that she liked the young man because "he was very reserved and quiet, and would read books and seemed very serious, unlike the rest of the young men." (3)

The cost of the Felberstrasse apartment, whether he used it alone or not, may have put too much of a strain on Hitler's finances, which were by now most probably limited to the twenty-five crowns orphan assistance he still received each month. He moved again, on August 21, 1909, this time as a "Writer", to Sechshausenerstrasse 56, 2nd Floor, Room 21, c/o Frau Antonie Oberlechner, in the XIVth District. It was very close to the Felberstrasse but probably cheaper, for the Sechshausenerstrasse was a thoroughfare with lots of street noise and trolley traffic. (4)

Things did not improve, it seems. Less than four weeks later, on September 16, 1909, he left Sechshausenerstrasse without registering a forward address. He must have been close to the end of the rope: for about three months his tracks are lost within the multitudes of Vienna's poor, in the anonymity of the homeless and indigent.

The days of his vagrancy forced him, alike the myriads that shared his fate, to seek shelter from the cold of the impending winter in parks, alleys, doorways and ditches. A favourite place was, as mentioned earlier, the Prater amusement park, which was mostly inactive in winter and provided lots of benches for which the competition was intense. He may well, as many others did, have tried to sleep in coffee houses, bars or flophouses, in the waiting rooms of the train stations or the warming rooms of the city's charities. In *Mein Kampf*, he admitted that "[even now I shudder when I think of these pitiful dens, the shelters and lodging houses, those sinister pictures of dirt and repugnant filth and worse still." (5) So arduous was his pecuniary distress that he had to sell his art materials and most of his clothing; a sale that was ill-suited to the falling temperatures. To add insult to injury, the winter of 1909/10 turned out the most frightful since decades and one day Hitler had to admit defeat to Vienna's weather gods: one cold December evening, he showed up in the workers' suburb of Meidling; more precisely in the long row of derelict wretches who waited for admission to the *Asyl für Obdachlose*, the "Asylum for the Homeless".

The asylum, "which in consideration for the decent citizens was built behind the Meidlinger cemetery, far from the residents", (6) but near the southern railway station, had only been opened in 1908. Together with a similar institution in the 3rd District, it was operated by the "*Shelter Association for the Homeless*", a charity which financed itself by private donations and received an annual subsidy from the city. (7) Yet the association had to fight windmills in their constant struggle against the three related issues that plagued the poor: poverty resulted in homelessness, homelessness resulted in disease, and disease resulted in loss of employment. Imperial Vienna, we mentioned it, was at that time a metropolis of over two million inhabitants, the sixth-biggest town on earth, and certainly more than a quarter million of its denizens was relegated to perpetual poverty. Many of the losers had come from the outer provinces of the empire, the East or the South, and lacked a suitable command of the German language, which in turn decreased their chances of employment. For worse, they lacked the kind of survival instincts that apply to a city, as opposed to those applicable at their rural origins.

The Meidlinger shelter was a sturdy affair, offering refuge for around one thousand souls. Unlike other charities it allowed occupants to stay for a week only (a stipulation that could be circumvented), but it offered an advantage most other places lacked: it would take in whole families and their children, not only single men. It promoted self-help as well: everybody, health permitting, was called upon to aid in the cleaning and maintenance of the building, to keep operating costs at a minimum. The building was not too dreary, thanks to its recent pedigree; there were washing facilities, showers and numerous toilets, all of them kept spotlessly clean. Two meals a day were supplied, soup and sandwich, for breakfast and supper; the dormitories featured the usual military-style cots, lined up with the precision of a battalion on parade. During daylight hours the occupants were expected to leave the shelter, preferably in search of employment; loitering was frowned upon and could easily lead to permanent eviction.

**Meldzettel.**

Anzahl 1909 1909

Gasse Sechshausenstr. Nr. 56 Stock II Tür Nr. 27

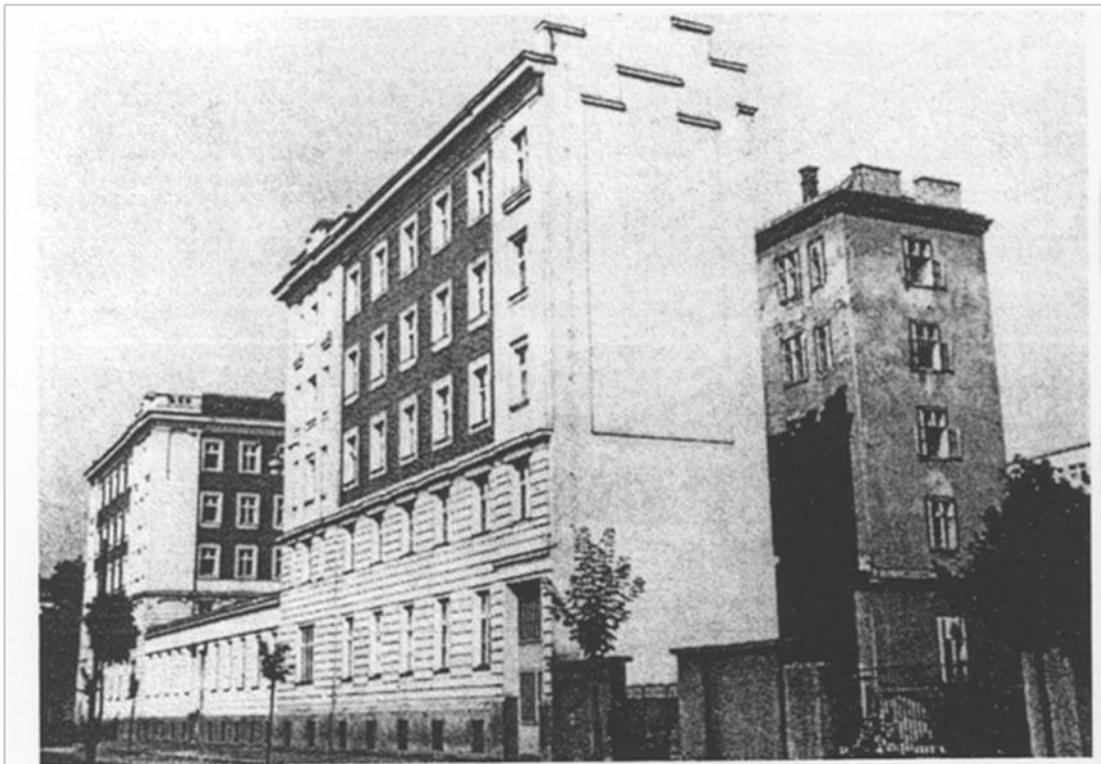
Vor- und Zuname	<u>Groß Hitler</u>	Abmeldung
Charakter (Beschäftigung)	<u>Schiffsteler</u>	Ist ausgezogen (abgereist) am
Geburtsort und -land	<u>Braunau a. d. N. Österreich</u>	<u>16/IX 09</u>
Heimats (Zuständigkeits)ort und -land. (Nicht zu verwechseln mit Geburtsort.)	<u>Linz a. d. N. Österreich</u>	Wohin?
Alter (Geburtsstag, -monat und -jahr), Religion und Stand (ledig, verheiratet, verwitwet)	<u>geboren 20 April 1889. (Oberbairisch)</u> <u>ledig</u> <u>römisch-katholisch</u>	Bezirk <u>IX</u>
Namen und Alter der Gattin und Kinder	<u>2</u> <u>Wolfgang</u> <u>Helene</u>	Gasse <u>m. b.</u>
Frühere Wohnung	Bezirk <u>XV</u> Gasse <u>Sechshausenstr.</u> Nr. <u>22</u>	Nr. _____

Wien, 22. August 1909. Anton Oberlechner

**Anmerkung:** Die An- oder Abmeldung hat binnen 24 Stunden zu geschehen und wird die Ruheraumzahlung nach den bestehenden Vorschriften mit Geld bis zu 200 K oder mit Arrest, dessen werden folgende Angaben nach § 205 St. G. B. mit Arrest von 1 Tag bis 1 Monat verbunden.

Verkaufspreis für 3 Meldzettel mit 1 Kupert 2 h. K. u. Z. 1909 und 1909, P. P. in Wien. (A.)

ON SEPTEMBER 16, 1909, ADOLF HITLER LEAVES SECHSHAUSERSTRASSE 56, XIVTH DISTRICT, C/O FRAU ANTONIE OBERLECHNER, WHERE HE HAD LIVED AND WAS LOST AMID THE HOMELESS OF THE CAPITAL.



ONLY ON FEBRUARY 8TH, 1910, HITLER FILED AS HIS NEW ADDRESS MELDEMANNSTRASSE 27, THE "MÄNNERHEIM" IN XXTH DISTRICT, SHOWN ABOVE.

Much as he disliked it, Hitler had to pass through the ritual of admission; to establish membership in the community of misery. The shiverlings began to line up outside of the main gate when darkness fell, around 5 pm, and when the doors of the institution opened, two rows of bodies filed in quietly: men to the right, woman and children to the left. Hitler received, as everybody else did, a ticket that entitled him to the statutory one-week lodging and was assigned a brass cot in one of the dormitories. It must have been exceedingly onerous for a man who was used to his privacy as much as Hitler was to face one's first experience with public shower and delousation procedures. His proud sense of individuality must have vanished at the latest when he joined the herd of occupants heading to the mess hall for dinner. As John Toland observed, "it would be difficult for anyone but another recipient of institutionalized charity to understand the shame suffered by a proud young man on his first day within the gates of such an establishment." (8)

For a man so much accustomed to his freedom, the asylum certainly felt like a prison. One can imagine how he sat, completely lost, on a cot in a large hall with hundreds of strangers, each of whom was more familiar with the situation than he was. It was perhaps his impersonation of a lost kitten that convinced his cot neighbour, an on-and-off servant and waiter named Reinhold Hanisch, to take care of him, to show him the ropes. Although Hanisch by himself is a problem as a witness - when he met Hitler he had already been to jail more than once, lived habitually under false names, with doctored birth certificates and in later years counterfeited Hitler pictures - some parts of his memoir that the American magazine *THE NEW REPUBLIC* printed in 1939 - posthumously - under the title "Reinhold Hanisch: I was Hitler's Buddy", ring true, among much that has been proven false or at least misleading.<sup>2</sup> Unlike Hitler, Hanisch was a professional utilizer of charity-assisted lifestyles, was familiar with the inner workings of the asylum and every other such house in Vienna and also an expert in the general survival strategies of vagrants. He proved his value instantly: one of the first tricks he taught Hitler was how to circumvent the lodging limitation; all one had to do was buy, for a few pennies, the unused portions of the admittance cards of those occupants who, for a variety of reasons, left without having used up their allotments. Thus the first danger of having to return into the cold was banned and Hitler began to appreciate his new acquaintance.

Reinhold Hanisch came from the Sudetenland, the northern, German part of Bohemia -at least we believe so, for he often listed himself as being born in Grünwald near Gablenz - but had travelled extensively and thus was able to tell his new friend many stories about Germany, Adolf's promised land. Hanisch also hedged a few dreams of becoming an artist and immediately recognized a related soul in Hitler. Hanisch had seen and could relate the tales of towns and castles, cathedrals and monasteries, mountains and rivers. He taught Hitler the unofficial national anthem, the song of the defenders of the Rhine River, die *WACHT AM RHEIN*, the "Guard on the Rhine".

*Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall, wie Schwertgeklirr und Wogenprall,  
Zum Rhein, zum Rhein, zum Deutschen Rhein - wer wird des Stromes Hüter sein?  
Lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein, lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein,  
Fest steht, und treu, die Wacht am Rhein.*

*A roar is heard, like thunderstorm, like swordfight, like the waves of doom,  
Quick, to the Rhine, the German Rhine, alert the river's sentry line,  
Hush, my dear Fatherland, be still,  
Firm stands the watchmen's' strength and will.*

To make things more entertaining for Adolf, it turned out that Hanisch had worked in Braunau for some time, and they began to exchange reminiscences of the town. As it frequently happens, common knowledge and common interests breed trust, and soon they talked incessantly. That is, until Hanisch found a new job and moved, on December 21, 1909, to Hermannsgasse 16 in the II<sup>nd</sup> District, and, on February 11, 1910, on to Herzgasse 3/4, in the X<sup>th</sup> District. (9)

<sup>2</sup> Brigitte Hamann provides an excellent overview about the sources on Hitler's years in the Men's Hostel, and discusses in which instants Hanisch can be trusted and when not ("Hitler's Vienna", see Bibliography, p. 184 ff.).

After a few days of listening to Hanisch, Hitler had memorized the basic rules of street life and they made up a kind of daily routine. In the morning they set out on the rather long walk to St. Katherine's Convent near Adolf's old haunts at the Westbahnhof to queue up for the soup the nuns passed out at noon, then on to one of the warming rooms operated by the philanthropic societies or into the relative warmth of a railway station. In the afternoon, they would be trying to sneak up on some food at the Salvation Army before heading back to the asylum in time to be among the first in the waiting line. Occasionally men were sought for a day or two of work in ditch digging, snow shovelling or luggage handling at a train station, but Hanisch had quickly realized that Hitler was too weak for these incidental jobs. Neither did Adolf have any talent for begging, although he acquired from an asylum comrade the addresses of "soft touches", prospective donors. He received "specific instructions for each customer; for example he was to greet an old lady on the Schottenring with a "Praised be Jesus Christ", and then say he was an unemployed church painter or a woodcutter of holy figures. Usually she gave two Kronen for such a story, but Hitler only got religious platitudes for his trouble." (10) The nuns of St. Katherine's were one of the few reliable addresses in town.

A la longue, Hanisch realized that, while practically all the outcasts of the capital did beg, very few did paint, and derived a plan how to profit from Adolf's artistic abilities. We do not know exactly when the idea came up; either during the two months Hitler spent at the Asylum in Meidling or later at the Men's Hostel in the Meldemannstrasse, but, at any rate, Hanisch convinced his friend that the best way to make some dire needed cash was to paint small scenes or postcards and sell them. When Hitler objected that he had no more painting utensils, was too shabbily dressed to sell anything and not a great salesman to boot, the plan was amended and the labour divided: Adolf would do the painting and Hanisch the selling, for a fifty per cent commission. (11)

There was the tricky issue that the two prospective entrepreneurs did not have a license, but Hanisch assured his friend that such petty regulations could be outflanked by moving their point of sale into the dim and grey, smoke-filled taverns of the city, of which Hanisch, having worked in many, had an encyclopaedic knowledge. In regards to the painting materials, Hanisch proposed to apply to the generosity of Adolf's family. The Cafe Arthaber, conveniently located near the Meidling train station, was known to provide pen and paper for the vagrants if they paid the universal entry fee - the price of a cup of coffee. Adolf wrote a letter, either to Aunt Johanna or to Angela, and a few days later a fifty crown note arrived poste restante. (12) "The money probably saved his life, for it gave him renewed hope at a time when he had little to hope for." (13)

All the petty possessions he had accumulated in the preceding years had long since disappeared. It is quite possible that an irate landlady seized some in lieu of rent, but in his pitiful state of existence before the asylum, he may simply have lost most of them, out of sight, out of mind. All the books, manuscripts, paintings, sketches, maps and drawings were lost; gone were the dressy overcoat, top hat and walking stick. Has August met this destitute figure, he might not have recognized him. The young, almost elegant Bohemian had vanished; all that was left was a piece of human flotsam, the debris of the young boy that had urged his playmates to chase the redskins. Only fragments remained of the son Klara had so loved.

The crash of his dream world sent pulses, like ripples, to the outer rims of his consciousness; the remnants of his former self may have caught glimpses of unfamiliar surroundings, seeing but not realizing how he had arrived there. As if arising from hibernation, Adolf found himself in a place of perplexing strangeness and laboured to re-establish the mental cohesion of time and place. In a 1913 letter he wrote: "The autumn of 1909 was for me an interminably bitter time. I was a young man with no experience, without financial assistance, and too proud to accept it from just anyone, let alone beg for it." (14) The bitter feeling was real enough, but the last clause was a lie: his true problem with begging was that it did not work for him.

Yet in a sense the marks of this winter never vanished. In the description of their friendship, August had painted the portrait of a slightly strange, somewhat exotic, a little awkward and sometimes violent young man, who was nonetheless permanently active, if only in a self-centred way; writing, composing an opera, drawing, painting and rebuilding Linz. Now, less than twelve months later, his friend was destitute of mind and body. He had lost weight and his health was doubtful. It has been advocated and indeed seems likely that the innumerable ailments, big and small, that

plagued him in later years were rooted in this cold winter, which exacerbated his earlier affliction of the lung and may have weakened his immune system as well.

But not only was he physically exhausted, his spirit had suffered as well. For long spells he retained the stare common to visionaries and beggars; concentration was sporadic, reason elusive, his passions dull, unless something bothered him. Then he could still erupt in flames, in fierce and biting crescendo arguing, ranting, raging; only to sink back quickly into the comforting anodyne of apathy. He was on the verge of defeat when Hanisch picked him up, but he eventually adapted to the outcast life and gradually things improved.

The Meidlinger asylum however, while having provided a safety net in the days of calamity and ire, was no place to start Hitler & Hanisch, Postcards Un-Incorporated. A location had to be found which not only allowed long-time tenure but also provided a space where Hitler could paint during the day. Hanisch identified such a place in the *MÄNNERHEIM*, the Men's Hostel, in Brigittenau, Vienna's newest, the XXth District. Brigitte Hamann introduces us to the facility:

*The six-story men's hostel in Vienna-Brigittenau, 27 Meldemannstrasse, was among the most modern in Europe. Opened in 1905, it was funded by the private Emperor Franz Joseph I Anniversary Foundation for Public Housing and Charitable Institutions, which was financed through donations, receiving significant contributions from Jewish families, particularly from Baron Nathaniel Rothschild and the Gutmann family. The hostel was administered by the City of Vienna. The first blueprints caused a stir during an exhibition in the Künstlerhaus (Artists' House). The hostel was not to have common sleeping areas but individual compartments for each of its up to 544 guests, excellent hygienic conditions, and many social events to enhance "education and sociability."*

*Brigittenau, at the outskirts of the city, had many new industrial plants, a great need for labourers, and the most rapid population growth in all of Vienna's districts. Its population increased from 37,000 in 1890 to 101,000 in 1910. Most new residents were young single men who worked in the new factories and, because there were no cheap apartments, found places to spend the night as lodgers in overcrowded workers' apartments.*

*This new men's hostel was supposed to decrease the number of lodgers and thus protect the compromised morals of their host families. The foundation's principal trustee, Prince Carl Auersperg, pointed this out on the occasion of Emperor Franz Josef's visit in 1905: "In particular, this men's hostel seeks to give an actual example of the ... chance to effectively fight the pernicious phenomenon of lodging, to offer single labourers a home instead of the dull and overcrowded emergency quarters, providing not only an affordable place to stay but also providing the opportunity to nourish body and mind."*

*Rent for one sleeping place was only 2.5 Kronen per week, an amount a single handyman or craftsman with an annual income of 1,000 Kronen could afford. In Vienna the hostel was thus praised as "a miracle of a divine lodging place on earth" and "a marvel of elegance and affordability."*

*Viennese journalist Ernst Kläger, disguised as someone seeking shelter, spent a night at the hostel and wrote an article about it. The area between downtown Vienna and Brigittenau, beyond the Danube Canal, was desolate. ... Finally Kläger found the new hostel.*

*"A large electric arc lamp over the gate guides those who are stumbling up the hill of dug-up soil. Compared to the other, smaller houses around and the bare factory buildings in the back, the shelter looks proud. I open the door and to my surprise find myself in a vestibule which no good hotel would put to shame. I am embraced by comfortable warm air." The men's hostel had both electric and gas lights and was heated by a modern, central low-pressure steam heater. At the counter the reporter had no difficulty in obtaining a ticket for one night for thirty Kreuzers (sixty Hellers). Kläger described the dining room in the upper mezzanine: "Again I am pleasantly surprised by the elegance of the room, which is lighted by two arc lamps and whose walls are covered halfway up with pale green tiles."*

*Then he tried the dirt-cheap food and found the meals "all very good." The occupants spent only an average of half a Krone per day for food in the hostel - for breakfast, dinner, and snacks - in other words, only approximately fifteen Kronen per month.*

*Kläger watched the lodgers: "The door opens constantly, and someone in a bad suit, usually a bag under his arm, enters. One could tell that most occupants were incredibly tired." Because most of them worked during the day, it was quiet in the afternoon. Yet in the evening "it was lively, gregarious, but by no means boisterous, until around ten-thirty."*

*There were kitchenettes with gas rings and kitchen utensils for those who wanted to prepare their own food. Cooking teams were formed: one of the unemployed would remain in the hostel, go shopping, and cook for some of the labourers, and in return could eat for free. Initially Hitler tried to cook, but with little success, for according to Reinhold Hanisch, the Upper Austrian milk soup he proudly offered had curdled and turned out more like cheese.*

*Kläger made his rounds through the shelter and reported: "Right next to the dining room is a large, very nicely furnished reading room with two sections, one for smokers and one for non-smokers. It has dailies and a nice library which is available to the lodgers. Most books are easy-to-digest novels and writings on popular science. There are also desks with the necessary utensils for doing one's correspondence." On Sunday afternoons there was entertainment plus the opportunity for continuing education through concerts and lectures. On the lower mezzanine there were laundry and shoe-shining rooms, luggage and bicycle racks, and a cobbler and tailor room.*

*Hygienic conditions were exemplary: a house doctor practiced for free, offering outpatients services in a "sick room" for minor illnesses. As in all shelters, there was a disinfection room for delousing the newcomers. Apart from lavatories, there were also a shaving room and a shower room with sixteen showers, twenty-five footbaths, and four bathtubs. One bath was twenty-five Heller, about a third of the price in a public bath. All this bore fruit in the cholera year of 1910; the dreaded disease spared the fully occupied men's hostel.*

*The sleeping wing, comprising the four top floors, was opened at 8:00 pm and had to be vacated by 9:00 am. It consisted of long rows of tiny, separate sleeping compartments, each measuring 4.6 x 6.9 feet. There was enough room for a bed, a small table, a clothes rack, and a mirror. Permanent guests had their sheets changed every seven days, and one-night guests every day, as in hotels. As an extra convenience, each compartment had a door with a lock and a light bulb. It was probably the first time Hitler had electric light in his room. (15)*

Hitler, however, was not prone to sing the praises of the hostel in his later years, for the Führer legend had him sleeping in parks and ditches, which he had done, but only for a few months before moving into the hostel and soon doing comparatively well. For the basic difference between the asylum and the hostel was that the former was the last step, perhaps, before starving or freezing to death, while in the latter, at least in theory, a man could convince himself that he was on the way to a better future. One might be poor but still harbour a ray of hope.

Here we must return to the problem of Reinhold Hanisch's veracity. He claimed that he followed Hitler into the hostel a few days later, and since Hitler had filed his new address at the Männerheim with the police on February 9, Hanisch would have to have arrived soon afterwards. We do know that Hanisch was frequently seen in the hostel, and did indeed pick up Hitler's paintings to sell them, but he was still registered at that time at Herzgasse 3/4 in the distant Xth District. The records for Adolf are clear: with one small interruption, he stayed at the Männerheim from February 9, 1910 to May 24, 1913, thirty-nine months. He might have left on errands here and there, but for more than three years the building on Meldemannstrasse was his home - for 2.80 Kronen a week.

Poor as the occupants undoubtedly were, the administration tried hard to keep up their dignity. The men could take correspondence courses, apply for the Social Democratic Party's job placement program, or read the bibles provided by the Catholic Homeless Association. "Ruhe and Ordnung", silence and order, were strictly enforced, as was a dress code.

All in all, the Männerheim provided a calm, monastic atmosphere in which Hitler nicely fit in, except for some political arguments.

Whether residing in the hostel or not, Hanisch set up their business. The first step was to place Adolf and the art materials recently obtained through Angela's or Aunt Johanna's charity into the reading room, non-smoker section. There was a long oak table close to the window, which provided the natural light Adolf needed. The company now supplied the "market for postcard-sized paintings to be sold in taverns or to art dealers, who acquired them not so much for their artistic value as for filling empty frames." (16) Soon Hitler had realized which motifs were in demand, mostly local sights and nature, and his postcards and small paintings sold rather quickly.

For a few months, the partnership blossomed. Hanisch was easily able to find buyers in the maze of the backstreets, the lanes that meandered between dark taverns and paltry shops, newsstands and tobacconists, but also in the wine gardens of the Prater, and the art shops in the better quarters of the capital. The sums realized initially hovered between five and ten Kronen, which were split fifty-fifty. A business routine slowly established itself and Hitler's life stabilized, although he still possessed only a single change of clothing.

The reading rooms were the place where the more educated occupants met, of which there were quite a few, former students of the Austrian schools and colleges. They discussed politics and art, money and women, as lonely men do. Some tried to entice neophytes to whatever political cause they believed in, and workers were tolerated in the discussions if they appeared salvageable from the poison of socialism. Sometimes Hitler tried to moderate the debates, as arbiter elegantiarum; this was perhaps a family trait, for we remember his father's obituary mentioning that Alois went to "pronounce authoritatively on any matter that came to his notice." At other times he just listened, hulked over his work on the long oak table.

While there are still conflicting views about the extent Hitler was influenced by the local anti-Semitism, and we will discuss his personal relations to Jews below, there are two other idées fixes he later professed to have picked up mostly in Vienna: his disdain of socialism, the organized worker movement, and his Pan-Germanism, which was formed decisively by two Austrian pamphleteers and politicians - Georg Ritter von Schönerer, the founder and leader of the Pan-German party, and a former Cistercian monk named Josef Adolf Lanz. In 1900 the latter founded

*... the Order of the New Templars, whose cornerstones were the myth of the Grail, men's rights, and the ideal of racial purity. As a Knight Templar he gathered honourable, rich, and "racially pure" men around himself and with their money bought a castle just for his order, the dilapidated Werferstein in the Nibelung District in Wachau.*

*In 1902 Lanz gave himself a new identity. He changed his date and place of birth, claiming that he was born in Messina, Sicily, in 1872. He assumed a fake doctorate and in all documents changed the names of his parents, who were still alive. The teacher Johann Lanz [his father, ¶] became "Baron Johann Lancz de Liebenfels" of allegedly old Swabian nobility. Lanz entirely obscured the identity of his mother Katharina, who lived until 1923, by giving her the name Katharina Skala.*

*[Guido 'von'] List [another fraudster, ¶] backed his disciple by publishing his fabricated family tree with a detailed description of "Lanz von Liebenfels" allegedly "genuine heraldic figures of the Armans and Femans", [who were entirely invented as well, ¶]. (17)*

As it is plain to see, the one or other improvement of a plebeian pedigree was not esteemed too serious a sin in the colourful capital of an even more colourful empire, and we shall return to these most colourful German nationalists after a quick look at Hitler's anti-socialism that he too, purportedly, acquired in Vienna. Kubizek reports that the friends once observed a workers' demonstration on the Ring, and Adolf asserted his sympathy for the downtrodden and hungry. Yet, back in their room at the Stumpergasse, he argued:

*"Yes, he was on the side of the hungry, the under-privileged, but he was also against the men who organized such demonstrations. Who are the wire-pullers standing behind these doubly-betrayed masses, guiding them according to their will? None of them appeared on the scene. Why?"*

*Because it suited them better to conduct their affairs in obscurity - they did not want to risk their lives. Who are the leaders of the wretched masses? Not men who had themselves experienced the misery of the 'little man', but ambitious politicians, lusting for power, who wanted to exploit the people's poverty for their own benefit." (18)*

In MEIN KAMPF, Hitler dedicates quite a few pages to his alleged study of Marxist theory and practice, his reading of the Social Democrat newspapers, and observation of the party's tactics, which, to him, seemed the most brazen terror.

*"I understood the infamous spiritual terror which this movement exerts, particularly on the bourgeoisie, which is neither morally nor mentally equal to such attacks; at a given sign it unleashes a veritable barrage of lies and slanders against whatever adversary seems most dangerous, until the nerves of the attacked persons break down ... This is a tactic based on precise calculation of all human weakness, and its result will lead to success with almost mathematical certainty ..."*

*I achieved an equal understanding of the importance of physical terror toward the individual and the masses ... For while in the ranks of their supporters the victory achieved seems a triumph of the justice of their own cause, the defeated adversary in most cases despairs of the success of any further resistance." (19)*

In which form, exactly, did the spiritual and physical terror occur? In his writings, we will have ample opportunity to observe Hitler's habit of generalizing topoi without giving examples, and indeed, we must ask what kind of terror could the rather civilized Vienna labour leaders inflict upon their prospective victims? Nobody could be forced to read the Socialist newspapers, and "lies and slanders" were not necessary to show the world the inhuman work- and living conditions of the industrial ghettos. Fisticuffs and worse might occur during strikes, it is true, but seldom would the average burgher partake in such undertakings. Perhaps the brass bands that accompanied the Sunday parades might qualify as noise, hence acoustic terror, but then, this was a matter of musical taste. Therefore we must remain ignorant what exactly the terror was that the Austrian socialists used to break down the "nerves of the attacked persons".

The true reasons why Hitler disliked Austrian socialism in the 1900s were his elitism as an artist and son from a bourgeois, not a proletarian family,<sup>3</sup> and that socialism struck him as too international, un-German. He suspected the labour leaders of exactly the sort of machinations that he would employ, if he commanded a mass party, which was, incidentally, exactly what he did two decades later with the NSDAP.

We shall return to the question of Hitler's pre-NSDAP relations to the Social Democrats in the chapter that will follow him to München in early 1919. Much less in doubt than the extent of Hitler's anti-Semitism and anti-Socialism in the Vienna years is his rabid German nationalism. In his early desire to learn more about parliamentary procedures, Hitler dragged Kubizek a few times into the Reichstag and later spent a few weeks in its library; hunched over legal volumes, statutes and ordinances, in a quest to make sense of the apparent chaos. At this time, nationalism and socialism were, of course, antitheses; the nationalism of the German minority in Austria-Hungary included a strong disaffirmation of socialist internationalism. When a local (German) worker congress in Bohemia 1904 founded the "German Workers' Party" [DAP - Deutsche Arbeiter Partei, ¶], its aim was not to support the cause of socialism but to advance the interests of the German workers against cheap Czech and Slovak labour competition that poured in from the countryside.

In regards to the local political situation, it stands to reason that Hitler easily recognized Lüger's anti-Semitism as simply providing a whipping boy for his potential clientele, as well as the purely utilitarian use of the word "Social" in the

<sup>3</sup> Gustl had this figured out pat: "Perhaps he felt that he belonged to a different social class. He was the son of an Austrian state official, whose rank was the equivalent of captain in the Army. He remembered his father as a much-respected customs officer, to whom people raised their hats, and whose word carried much weight amongst his friends. His father had absolutely nothing to do with these people in the street. Greater even than his fear of being infected by the moral and political decadence of the ruling classes was his fear of becoming a proletarian. Undoubtedly he lived like one, but he did not want to become one." (20)

party's name; employed solely as a catchphrase, political window-dressing. It would appear that Hitler also resented the "atheism" of the true socialist movement; not because he was religious, which he was not, but because he knew that no pragmatic political movement could afford to ignore or alienate the empire's largest organized congregation, the Catholic Church. It became the effective end of Schönerer's Pan-German Party when he engaged, from 1900 on, in a fight with Catholicism that served only to alienate his former followers, and when he made "conversion to Protestantism a requirement for being accepted into the Pan-German Party, its fate was sealed." (21) Like Bismarck, Hitler regarded the liberal parties as hopeless cases: their century had been the nineteenth; the twentieth was to relegate them to insignificance.

Yet it would appear that it was in Vienna that Hitler developed, by way of observing the ability of the Left to mobilize and energize the masses, the conviction that truly effective policies could only be accomplished with the people, not against them; a conclusion the Right was apparently unable to draw. Lüger's Christian Socials in Vienna were a local phenomenon; everywhere else the Right remained elitist, a club of nobility, industry and clergy. In Austria-Hungary, the nationalist German Right actually split over the topic of anti-Semitism.<sup>4</sup> It was a mainstay of Schönerer's and Lanz' Pan-Germanics but not a big topic for Karl Hermann Wolf's German-Radical Party, whose nemeses were the Slavs of the empire in general and the Bohemian Czech in particular. Wolf saw Germans threatened everywhere:

*"... [I]n the North, where German strength is protecting its rights against Czech arrogance, in the imperial capital, where the national idea frequently still knocks on the doors of the Phaeacians who, nationally indifferent and politically insignificant, aren't listening, in the valleys of the Alps, where the clergy's lust for power tries to keep the people in the fetters of ignorance, and even here at home, where we are building the German guard against Slovenians and fanatical darklings in the South of Styria." (22)*

The anxieties of his onetime colleague Georg Ritter von Schönerer developed much along the identical lines, improved or complicated by his fervid anti-Semitism. Although he had been born in Vienna in 1842, his family traced back to the Waldviertel, where, after graduation from Vienna's agricultural college, he took over the huge family farm at Rosenau, near Zwettl, only miles from Alois Schicklgruber's place of birth, in 1869. He was not the typical Baron: he set out to improve the lot of his farmhands, for whom he founded an agricultural community, and engaged in philanthropy, sponsoring fire departments, libraries, schools and health care. A witness of Austria's loss to Prussia in the battle of Königgrätz in 1866, he opposed the subsequent development of Bismarck's "Small German" solution, for he was convinced that "the timely 'perfecting' of the German Reich by an Anschluss of Austria's German parts was in the natural cause of events." (23)

He was elected to the Austrian Reichstag in 1873, initially as a liberal, but he left the faith after only three years, embarking on a pro-German, Prussophile course. He secured the political support of the German student fraternities in Austria, who had been some of the most vocal supporters of the 1848/49 German unification movement, and was instrumental in the foundation of the "German School Association", which provided money for German schools and textbooks in the empire's bi- or multilingual provinces. Soon after the maestro's death, he usurped Richard Wagner's paranoid mixture of Germanism and anti-Semitism, and began to recommend the study of Eugen Dühring's infamous book *THE JEWISH QUESTION AS A RACIAL, MORAL, AND CULTURAL ISSUE*; an opus that contained opinions as lucid as "It is the duty of the Nordic man, who has ripened under a colder sky, to eliminate the parasitic races, just as one simply has to eliminate dangerous poisonous snakes and wild beasts of prey." (24) The Jews, needless to say, were such a parasitic race. Schönerer also invented a new reckoning of time, which defined 113 BC, the year of the victory of the German tribes Cimbri and Teutones over the Romans at the battle of Noreia as year zero and developed a subsequent new calendar which would count the years "n.N." [nach Noreia, i.e. 'after Noreia', ¶]; this would turn, say, AD 1900, into 2013 n.N. As the French Revolution had done, he also invented new names for the months, but had even less success in this respect than Marat and Robespierre.

He gathered sycophants and sympathizers from the early 1880s on, but it was not until 1901 that the "Schönerians", his followers, constituted themselves properly and adopted the name *ALLDEUTSCHE VEREINIGUNG*, "Pan-

<sup>4</sup> Cf. note 288 for seats in the Austrian Reichstag of 1907, 12 German-Radicals or "Wolfians" compared to only 3 Pan-Germans or "Schönerians". Among the German nationalists, empire-wide, the anti-Semites were thus in the minority.

German Association". It was in the following year that Karl Wolf and his German-Radicals separated; initially they were a minority but soon eclipsed the Pan-Germans in numbers. Yet both factions retained the idea of the Anschluss: the old German heartlands of the Habsburgs and the rich, that is, industrialized provinces of Silesia, Bohemia and parts of Moravia, would be retained as parts of the new "Greater German" empire, while the rest of the realm, Slavs and Hungarians, would be left to their own misery. Eventually, one might think of adding the heavy industry belt of northern Italy, Genova, Torino and Milan, to the empire. This unified "Greater German" solution, the egg that Bismarck had refused to hatch, would - naturally - become the master of the continent.

Yet by 1909, Schönerer was much a man of the past; a prison term for assaulting journalists in 1888 had led to his losing his parliament seat exactly when his two former colleagues Karl Lüger and Viktor Adler formed two new mass parties, the Christian Socials and the Social Democrats. Although he returned to the Reichstag in 1897, his anti-Catholicism cost him much of what had remained from his power, and the elections of 1907, the first under a general franchise, reduced the Pan-German faction from twenty-two seats to only three.

But the ideas of German supremacy prevailed in different disguises. A somewhat eccentric manifestation of the same old ideas was provided by Herr Lanz, the former monk whose improved genealogy we have met above. Joachim Fest gives us an introduction to the philosophy of "Lanz von Liebenfels":

*Lanz considered Hitler his disciple; he named, among other disciples who had early seen the importance of his doctrines, Lord Kitchener and Lenin! This fact sheds considerable light on Lanz himself and the pathological structure of his thought. His principal work, published in 1905, bore the illuminating title:*

*THEOZOLOGIE ODER DIE KUNDE VON DEN SODOMS-ÄFFLINGEN AND DEM GÖTTER-ELEKTRON. EINE EINFÜHRUNG IN DIE ÄLTESTE AND NEUESTE WELTANSCHAUUNG UND EINE RECHTFERTIGUNG DES FÜRSTENTUMES AND DES ADELS ["Theo-zoology or the Lore of the Sodom-Apelings and the Electron of the Gods. An Introduction into the Oldest and Newest Philosophy and a Justification of Royalty and Nobility"]*

*The blue-blood "Arioheroicans" were in his view "masterpieces of the gods," equipped with electric organs and even transmitters. By eugenic concentration and breeding for purity the Arioheroic race was to be redeveloped and once again provided with the divine electromagnetic-radiological organs and powers it had lost. (25)*

This truly electrifying theory, however, was not the total extent of Lanz' message to the world; in addition to his electromagnetic research, Herr Lanz was also editor, sole reporter, main feature writer and publisher of a strange magazine called *OSTARA*, after the Germanic goddess of Dawn, which was sold on every newsstand in Vienna. The pamphlet's educational mission was the "practical application of anthropological research for the purpose of ... preserving the European master race from destruction by the maintenance of racial purity." (26) In its pages, the self-appointed Baron Liebenfels unveiled the startling fact that the Aryan master race was endangered in its number and "purity" by the higher birth rates of Jews, Slavs and other sub-humanoids. To maintain and secure their control over the global resources, the master race must not shrink from exterminating the parasites.

All this sounded very simple, clear and logical to Adolf Hitler and the rest of the pamphlet's readers. The danger is even greater, as Baron von Liebenfels lamented, for the fairer sex: innocent, young, and blonde Aryan women fall prey to the advances of dark-skinned creatures. To make certain that no one, by any chance, might overlook the alarming development, every issue of *Ostara* featured lurid illustrations of scantily clad blondes in the lustfully erected claws of dark, apelike men. The magazine's headlines advised the public about the danger:

*Are you Blond?*

***Then you are a Culture-Creator and a Culture Supporter!***

*Are you Blond?*

***If so, DANGERS THREATEN YOU! (27)***

This sort of journalism attracted many a soul in the imperial capital, the lonely men to whom Ostara "provided a cosmic system that could explain life, death, and all the phenomena that had so baffled its readers before their enlightenment." (28) The crude mixture of pornography and racial angst fell on a particularly fertile soil in ethnically divided Austria-Hungary, for it addressed the Germans' anxiety of becoming a racial minority. The pamphlet also informed its readers that subhuman Jews were in control of the world's money, and thus politics, arts and women as well. One may easily imagine how sexually repressed young men in Vienna seethed with anger at the illustrations that depicted nubile young women in the vile embraces of dark-skinned Jews. It does perhaps not come as a surprise that this kind of magazine found readers in the men's hostel reading rooms.



JEWIS IN VIENNA 1915

After a couple of months in which the postcard operation worked as planned, something went wrong, but, alas, we do not know what truly happened. Out of the blue, one day Hanisch failed to find his associate at the oak table. Hitler had left the building accompanied by his (Jewish!) friend Josef Neumann: rumour had it that they planned to emigrate to Germany. When they eventually returned, a week later, Hitler avowed that they had only been on a protracted sightseeing trip through the capital. It would seem possible that Hitler and Neumann had tried to open a business sideline: due to the latter's familiarity with the Jewish side of Vienna's art trade, Neumann might have been a better business agent than Hanisch. After a week they were back, but Hitler appeared penniless and self-absorbed, as if shocked. His personal relations to both Hanisch and Neumann, who left the hostel on July 12, 1910, were to end soon. (29)

Could the incident be explored, it might offer tantalizing insights. Helene Hanfstängl, society-sage and wife of Hitler's first foreign-press agent, and a no-nonsense woman in her own right, reported that Hitler told her more than once that his loathing of Jews was "a personal thing", and that the genesis of this hate occurred in Vienna. His sister Paula later testified to her opinion that his "failure in painting was only due to the fact that trade in works of art was in Jewish hands." (30)

Perhaps this is the proper place to inquire into the reality of Hitler's anti-Semitism during the Männerheim years. Hanisch reports, not happily, that at least three Jewish hostel occupants were Hitler's friends, the aforementioned Neumann, Simon Robinson, born 1864 in Galicia, a locksmith's assistant, and Siegfried Löffner, born 1872 in Moravia, a salesman. (31) Another witness from the men's hostel, Karl Honisch [with 'o', not to be confused with Hanisch, ¶] mentions another Jewish man, Rudolf Redlich from Moravia, as an acquaintance of Hitler. (32) Hanisch's discontent was clearly

based upon the fact that they all helped Hitler in selling his paintings. Even worse, Hitler soon began to sell his works directly to art dealers, and thus Hanisch was out of game and money. Many of the traders who bought Hitler's paintings were Jewish (or of Jewish origin): Jakob Altenberg, who converted to Christianity in Vienna and eventually became a rich frame manufacturer, (33) Samuel Morgenstern, who always dealt directly with Hitler and also introduced him to the lawyer Dr. Josef Feingold, who became a steady buyer, and another dealer, named Landsberger. (34) As Brigitte Hamann sums it up, it would appear that Hanisch was the anti-Semite in these years, not Hitler. It is true that from *MEIN KAMPF* onward, Hitler knitted the legend of his early discovery of the damnable role of the Jews, and the hagiography of the Third Reich elevated this doctrine to the status of Holy Writ, but, indeed, the sources before 1919 are either silent on Hitler's presumed anti-Semitism or actually contradict the dogma. It is true that Hitler learned from the socialists that political propaganda cannot allow for ambiguity: there must be one enemy and only one. Yet it would appear, as we will see later, that Hitler did not begin to develop a coherent anti-Semitic concept until 1919 at the earliest.

It would seem that in this autumn of 1910 Adolf gave the Academy another shot. He secured an appointment with Professor Ritschel, the curator, and brought examples of his work, but nothing came of it; either because the professor denied him entry or because Adolf did not have the funds for a renewed application. (35)

From the little we know, the third rejection perhaps did not surprise him anymore, but for a time deepened his funk; he became even more of a recluse, neither liked nor disliked by the other hostel occupants, living in a dissonant universe of his own design. When Hanisch disappeared once again, with Neumann gone, Hitler's sales temporarily tanked and it took him a few days to adapt to the new situation. In *MEIN KAMPF*, he invariably describes his financial situation as desperately poor, but, again, there is reason to doubt his word. Bradley Smith has investigated the matter and arrived at the following conclusions:

*The rent in the hostel was only three Kronen a week. He usually cooked his own meals as a member of a cooking cooperative using the kitchens provided by the home. This substantially reduced his expenses. ...*

*As he discovered from his fellow lodgers, there were numerous places where he could pick up acceptable, clean clothing at moderate prices. His only extravagances were visits to the opera or an art gallery from time to time, but these were now well within his means.*

*All together, his monthly living expenditures probably came to about 35 or 40 Kronen, allowing 13 Kronen for rent and 20 to 25 Kronen for food and incidental expenses. His income probably averaged over twice this amount. He received his 25 Kronen orphan's pension until mid-1911 and had a gross income from his paintings of 80 to 100 Kronen a week when he worked regularly. The latter was not clear profit, since he had to pay for art supplies and carry himself over periods when business was slow or when he was distracted. Nevertheless, his painting must have netted an average of 50 to 75 Kronen a month, a sum which greatly exceeded his living expenses, even without the orphan's pension.*

*This does not cover all of Hitler's income in 1910 and 1911. He apparently also benefited from a substantial inheritance. In December 1910, his Aunt Johanna Pözl withdrew her life savings of 3,800 Kronen from the bank without having made any public or legal disposition of the money. In March 1911 she died without leaving a will. A survey of bank records made forty years later suggests that none of her logical heirs received sizeable sums between December 1910 and March 1911.*

*In April 1911, Adolf's half-sister Angela began an action to claim Adolf's share of the orphan's pension which he and Paula had received since Klara's death. Angela insisted that Adolf had no right to the money and that it should be used to help defray the cost of raising Paula. In a ruling by the Linz court on May 4, 1911, it was stated that Adolf had agreed that his share go to Paula because he was then "able to maintain himself." In*

*addition, the judgement concluded on the basis of "inquiries" that Adolf had received "considerable sums of money for the purpose of his training as an artist from his Aunt Johanna Pölzl." (36)<sup>5</sup>*

Meanwhile he had become an institution himself, a part of the hostel's inventory. His demeanour had changed somewhat and he had recovered some of his old confidence: to the fellow occupants that clustered around the oak table and admired his work in statu nascendi, he confessed that he was only toying around; that he had not yet learned how to paint properly, that they should not take these efforts too seriously. In 1944, he admitted to photographer Heinrich Hoffmann that "Even today these things [i.e. paintings, ¶] shouldn't cost more than 150 or 200 Reichsmark. It is insane to spend more than that on them. After all, I didn't want to become an artist, I painted the stuff only to make a living and afford going to school." (37)

If he sought artistic pleasure, he did architectural drawings, not watercolours. In some way, the work gave his life back the element of structure that it had lost when he ditched school; now he spent his days in the sort of dependability developed by men who neither fear nor hope for change. Yet occasionally the tranquillity was interrupted. One of the reasons for Hanisch's temporary disappearance from the hostel had been money: Hitler had finished a better than usual painting of the parliament building, which Hanisch, as usually, did sell but, inexplicably, forgot to give Hitler his share and vanished without a trace. On August 4, 1910, Siegfried Löffner, who knew about the affair, recognized Hanisch on the street, and, after attempting to convince Hanisch to pay his debt, an argument ensued. Eventually, the police arrived, and Hanisch was detained because he could not establish his identity. Löffner then filed the following statement at the Wieden, IVth District, police station:

*"Siegfried Löffner, Agent, XXth District, 27 Meldemannstrasse, states:*

*I learned from a painter at the men's hostel that the arrested man [Hanisch, ¶] sold pictures for him and had misappropriated the money. I do not know the name of the painter, I only know him from the men's hostel, where he and the arrested man always used to sit next to each other." (38)*

A day later, August 5, 1910, Hitler was asked to appear at the local police station in Brigittenau to give a statement. Meanwhile the police had found forged identity papers in Hanisch's possession that gave his name as Walter Fritz. Adolf testified:

*"Adolf Hitler, artist, b. 4-20-1889 in Braunau, resident of Linz, Cath., single, XXth District, registered at 27 Meldemannstrasse, states:*

*It is not true that I advised Hanisch to register as Walter Fritz, all I ever knew him as was Walter Fritz. Since he was indigent, I gave him the pictures I painted so he could sell them. I regularly gave him 50% of the profit.*

*For the past approximately two weeks Hanisch has not returned to the hostel and misappropriated my painting PARLIAMENT, worth c. Kronen 50, and a watercolour worth Kronen 9. The only document of his that I saw was his workman's passbook issued to the name Fritz Walter. I know Hanisch from the hostel in Meidling, where I once met him. Adolf Hitler." (39)*

The trial took place on August 11. It was the first time Adolf Hitler was present in a criminal court as a witness. His beef with Hanisch, however, had been over the alleged embezzlement, not a false identity. That he did testify against Hanisch in the false papers matter was simple retaliation, and his testimony played a material role in the identity count of which Hanisch was convicted and received a seven-day jail sentence. But on the embezzlement charge Hanisch had to be acquitted, perhaps because the money trail or its absence could not be proven either way, which raises the suspicion that Hitler may have lied in his statement of August 5. Summa summarum, Hitler first engagement in a court of justice included perjury and fraud, not an auspicious beginning to his relation with the law.

<sup>5</sup> Werner Maser gives the following examples of salaries: "At that time a lawyer's salary, after one year's practice in court, was 70 crowns per month, that of a teacher during the first five years of his career, 66 crowns. A post office official earned 60 crowns, while an assistant teacher in a Vienna secondary school before 1914 received a monthly salary of 82 crowns." *ADOLF HITLER: LEGEND, MYTH AND REALITY*, NY 1971, p.43. (40)

By now he sold everything he painted. His choice of subjects had always been classically conservative, some might say boring, and this taste remained with him all through his life. There are few instances in which his small bourgeois outlook on the world becomes as obvious as in his taste in art, and although he lived in a time that revolutionized the arts, he did not pay any attention. He despised or was ignorant of the Secessionist painters, Egon Schiele, Gustav Klimt, or Oskar Kokoschka; he disliked the compositions of Arnold Schönberg, Anton von Webern or Alban Berg, who introduced twelve-tone music and serialism; he never read Rilke, Zweig or Hofmannsthal. All his life he remained a captive of the artistic perceptions of the nineteenth century. Yet his taste coincided with what the good burghers of Vienna coveted, and so his paintings followed the eternal laws of demand and supply.

WATER COLOUR BY ADOLF HITLER - UNDATED



As one would assume, the part of the conversation in the hostel's reading rooms that did not revolve around women centred on politics. As far as the former topic is concerned, Stefanie might still haunt his dreams, or perhaps the elusive Emilie, but he had no interest to mingle in the conversations of lonely men fabulating about the women they've known and the monies they've squandered, ingredients of fading memories, solitary men mourning irretrievable losses. Politics was a different thing altogether. Since Brigittenau was a worker district, the Social Democrats commanded a clear majority and their sympathizers were well represented in the Männerheim. Yet as far as Hitler's political ideas, if any, in Vienna are concerned, the little our sources report is contradictory, and Hitler's assertions in *MEIN KAMPF*, again, not truly credible. He claimed to have "learned to orate less, but listen more to those with opinions and objections that were boundlessly primitive," (41) which would seem to characterize his opinion of the socialists. But no documents suggest that Hitler was at this time truly interested in politics, and, except for his Pan-Germanism, what he truly thought of Jews and socialists we do not know.

PAINTING BY HITLER - "THE COURTYARD OF THE OLD RESIDENCY IN MUNICH.", CA. 1914



In early 1913, a young man from Moravia, Karl Honisch, took up residence at the hostel and became acquainted with Hitler. He was approached by the NSDAP in the 1930s to write up his memories. Clearly, the result must be taken cum grano salis, for he could not allow himself to write anything negative. As it would be expected, he portrays an abundantly politicizing Hitler, yet is silent on details.

*"But if finally the opinions he heard really rubbed him the wrong way, he all of a sudden had to contradict. It then frequently happened that he would jump up from his chair, throw brush or pencil across the table, and explained his views in an extremely hot-tempered way, not even shying away from strong expressions; his eyes were ablaze, and again and again he threw back his head to throw back his hair, which kept falling over his forehead." (42)*

Honisch felt called upon to point out the good sides of his then-comrade, who was now head of the government and certainly not a man one would want to affront.

*"[Hitler] ... used to sit in his place day by day with almost no exception and was only absent for a short time when he delivered his work; and because of his peculiar personality. Hitler was, on the whole, a friendly and charming person, who took interest in the fate of every companion." (43)*

And further:

*"Nobody allowed himself to take liberties with Hitler. But Hitler was not proud or arrogant; on the contrary, he was good-hearted and helpful ... and [if a comrade needed a short-term loan, ¶] I saw him several times starting such collections with a hat in his hand." (44)*

It was perhaps in late 1912 that several circumstances caused Hitler to contemplate a change of residence. One reason was the new army law that, although reducing the obligations of new draftees to two years of peacetime service,<sup>6</sup> increased the yearly intake of recruits from 103,000 in 1912 to 159,000 in 1914 and thereby was likely to prompt increased activities of the local draft boards. (45) It is clear that, by moving to Vienna, Hitler had evaded his draft board in Linz since 1909, when, at twenty years of age, he had been required to present himself for military service. It is obvious that he had no intention to serve in the forces of the detested Habsburg monarchy, and it seems that in this period his plans for an eventual emigration to Germany in general and to München in particular - he had talked about such a move as early as 1910 to Hanisch and Neumann - approached maturation.

Another reason was that he was through with Vienna; he knew the city inside out, like the face of a long-time lover, from the polished elegance of the buildings along the Ring to the slums of the outer districts. He saw the Sword of Damocles hanging over the Habsburg Empire, kept from descending only by the emperor's fragile health. But why not set out for the Holy Grail right now? Hitler had a third, excellent reason to wait; as Ian Kershaw reports, at the occasion of his twenty-fourth birthday on April 20, 1913, he became eligible to receive his patrimony.

*On 16 May 1913 the District Court in Linz confirmed that he should receive the sizeable sum, with interest added to the original 652 Kronen, of 819 Kronen 98 Heller, and that this would be sent by post to the "artist" ('Kunstmaler')<sup>7</sup> Adolf Hitler at Meldemannstrasse, Vienna. With this long-awaited and much-welcome prize in his possession, he needed to delay his departure for München no longer. (46)*

In February 1913, the nineteen-year-old pharmaceutical apprentice Rudolf Häusler took up residence at the Männerheim and made Hitler's acquaintance in the reading room. (47) Häusler was interested in music and the arts, had painted himself, and Hitler took the youth under his wings. As Adolf had, Häusler had suffered under a tyrannical father who, in the bargain, was a Customs official, as Alois Hitler had been. The sire had thrown the offspring out of his house and Rudolf could only visit his mother, whom he, like Adolf had, adored, and his siblings in the old man's absence. To these sneaky visits he eventually brought his older friend Adolf, who, it would appear, made a good impression upon the mother, as Brigitte Hamann found out:

Ida Häusler, who was fifty at the time, a self-confident, educated woman from a good family, was glad that her unruly son had found a well-bred older friend, trusted Hitler, and was supportive of their friendship. Furthermore, she generously invited the obviously destitute young man to eat with them. Häusler's seventeen-year-old sister Milli [Emilie, ¶] soon had a crush on Adi, who liked the comfortable, clean bourgeois atmosphere which resembled that of his former home in Linz. Father Häusler remained invisible. (48)

That we knew little about Rudolf Häusler until 1999, when Brigitte Hamann located his daughter Marianne Koppler, nee Häusler, interviewed her and published her finds in the book "Hitler's Vienna" [see Bibliography], shines the proverbial light on the completeness and reliability of our sources on the early years; all the more so for Häusler apparently was the closest friend Adolf had since August Kubizek.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, the fact that Hitler met an Emilie in the

<sup>6</sup> Plus ten years in the reserves.

<sup>7</sup> "Artistic painter", as opposed to a house painter.

<sup>8</sup> Anton Joachimsthaler discovered the earliest record of Rudolf Häusler in articles written by Thomas Orr for the München "Revue" Magazine, vols. 37/1952 to 8/1953. (49) Orr had learned of and interviewed a few alleged witnesses in Hitler's old München neighbourhood and mentions Häusler but did not make the connection to Frau Koppler.

For reasons that are not clear until today, Hitler never mentioned Häusler, nor did the Popp, the landlords of the room in which he lived together with Hitler in München for almost nine months. This has prompted Brigitte Hamann to speculate whether the two friends and the Popp, for unknown motives, concluded a pact of silence. (50) Häusler had early contacts with the Nazis: Joachimsthaler has him as a member of the NSDAP since June 1933 [the Austrian NSDAP since September 1, 1938, ¶], (51) although Frau Hamann cites an affidavit from the Austrian Ministry of the Interior that he had only been a membership candidate from 1938 to 1944. (52) Clear is that he

Häusler household, Rudolf's sister, has led to speculation whether this Emilie could be identical with the girl Hitler's secretary Christa Schroeder referred to in her memoirs; when she once opined that Emilie was an ugly name, Hitler allegedly said: "Don't say that. Emilie is a beautiful name; that was the name of my first love!" (53)

If true, this could indicate that the relation with Emilie was somewhat more, say, substantial than his earlier infatuation with Stefanie; on the other hand, given his penchant for telepathic love affairs, conceivably any Emilie in Vienna could have been the target of his supernatural affections. Frau Koppler reported that Emilie was the most shy, quiet and sensitive of the siblings, and "gave the impression of being fearful and in need of protection." (54) That she, seldom outside of the house and not making many acquaintances, developed a crush on her brother's elder friend seems entirely possible; reportedly she asked him to draw something for her scrapbook and received, as Frau Koppler, who saw the drawing in her youth, remembers, a Germanic warrior in front of an oak tree, signed "A.H.". (55)

Two reasons, however, argue against Emilie having been Hitler's physical lover. One, the girl would not be allowed to leave the house without a chaperone, and it seems unlikely that Hitler were to breach the trust he received from the mother. Two, the time frame seems to be the wrong one, for Frau Wohlrab's and the Café Kubata cashier girl's memory place the relation with the mysterious girlfriend into the time when Hitler lived at Felberstrasse, from November 1908 to August 1909, not the early spring of 1913, when he met the Häusler's.

Eventually, Adolf convinced Rudolf to accompany him to München, or, rather, Rudolf's mother, as he had five years earlier convinced Herrn Kubizek to release August to Vienna. Around May 20 Hitler must have received the patrimony and around this time they paid a farewell visit to the Häusler family. On May 24 they informed the Vienna police of their leaving the men's hostel, without, however, providing a forwarding address. More likely than not this was Hitler's idea, a cautionary measure to evade the attention of his home draft board in Linz. But because he had not only not registered in the fall of 1909, but also failed to present himself for recruitment in the spring of 1910, when due, nor in 1911 or 1912, the Linz police issued a warrant for evasion of his military service duty on August 11, 1913. (56)

The next day, Sunday, May 25, 1913, Karl Honisch and a few old hands from the Männerheim accompanied the two friends to the Westbahnhof, where not only the trains to Linz originated but those to Bavaria and thus München as well. Quite probably, the two friends bought the cheapest tickets, third class, *WIEN WESTBAHNHOF - MÜNCHEN HAUPTBAHNHOF* (Vienna, Western Railway Station — München, Central Railway Station), 5 Kronen 80 Heller each. (57)

Adolf Hitler left nothing and no one in the city that he felt had betrayed him, and set out for Germany - the Promised Land.



## OUR PLACE IN THE SUN

*All of you know nothing.  
I alone know something.  
I alone decide.*

Kaiser Wilhelm II to his Admirals

*I have the feeling  
that we are governed  
by a herd of lunatics.*

Max Weber

The scene of our narrative shifts to Germany, and a short summary of the new Empire's governmental structure and political, social, and economical development since 1871 is required. For a majority of the new Reich's citizens, the significant difference between the German and North German Federations that had graced the continental map since the end of the Napoleonic wars and the new state expressed itself less in practical terms than in a psychological evolution, for as a result of unification, a new national consciousness arose and begot a new nationalist movement. Except for the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine as a consequence of the war of 1870, nothing much had changed geographically or politically: kings, grand dukes and princes continued to rule thirty-one of the new Reich's thirty-two political entities as they had ruled before 1870, with the League of the Hanseatic Towns thrown in as the sole non-monarchical domain of the newly constituted nation.

But unlike the movement of 1848/49, which had been established by the elites of the haute bourgeoisie and promoted a liberal and democratic agenda, this new nationalism reflected the anxieties of the petite bourgeoisie over social change and modern times, and was hijacked by conservatives, chauvinists and reactionaries.

New parties had appeared in the parliamentary arena of the Second Empire: the political vanguard of the labour movement, the Social Democrats of the SPD, and, as a result of the integration of the southern, Catholic states, the *ZENTRUM* (Centre), the Catholic party. Yet the former were excluded from all governmental responsibility on account of their presumed or genuine revolutionary leanings, and the latter, over time, tended to adopt the positions of the nationalist Right. The political influence of the Reichstag, the federal diet, was minimal to start with, for it could not enact laws on its own authority; the princes had retained in their local governments both legislative vetoes and executive powers. Although they had agreed to invest the Hohenzollerns with the hereditary imperial dignity, they maintained all their traditional monarchical prerogatives and administrative authorities; only foreign policy and supreme command over the military in times of war had been ceded to the emperor and the unbeloved Prussians.

The organization of the federal government, however, centred on the person of the monarch to an almost medieval degree. The emperor had the right of appointment and dismissal of all federal officials, from chancellor to lowest scribe. Although the constitution made the chancellor "responsible" to the Reichstag, the parliament could neither censure nor sanction him, and thus this responsibility remained a formality, a mere smoke screen. The sole true political influence the parliament was able to exert was its right to accept or reject the budget, but since it could do that only *in toto*, i.e. all

or nothing, and its refusal could be circumvented by imperial emergency decree, it was easy for the chancellor to plan budgets by the stick-and-carrot method, which the parliament could not truly afford to refuse.

Changes in the person of the chancellor thus might result from situations in which the cooperation of the diet was essential, say, military bills, and could not be secured except for the appointment of a new chancellor more agreeable to whichever party was to be wooed. The constitution explicitly reserved for the crown the control over foreign policy and questions of war and peace, and the federal government was responsible to the monarch, not the parliament or the people. (1) This was of utmost importance in the military sphere, as Fritz Fischer points out:

*Another factor which strengthened the position of the crown and was calculated to restrict the Chancellor's power to determine policy was that the Prussian army (in time of war, also the armies of the other federal states) and the imperial navy were under the direct authority of the monarch. He exercised this authority through his military and naval cabinets (for questions of personnel) and through the general and naval staffs; the Chancellor had no voice in these questions, nor was there any co-ordinating machinery (the person of the monarch excepted) whereby the political aspects of military decisions could be given their proper weight.*

*The Prussian Minister of War (who also represented the armies of the other federal states vis-a-vis the Reichstag) and the Secretary of State of the imperial Naval Office were concerned only with the recruiting and equipment of the armed forces, and with sponsoring the vote for them in the Reichstag; that body's influence over the army and the navy was limited to the indirect control which it enjoyed through its right to be consulted over the budget, but this right was restricted by the fact that the vote was not annual, but was given for seven years at a time from 1874 to 1893 and for five years after 1893. (2)*

Hence ye olde autocratic Prussian regime lived on in the guise of a modern, constitutional monarchy and thwarted the establishment of western-style parliamentarism in Germany. But it also reflected Bismarck's relation to his own emperor, Wilhelm I, which was characterized by the monarch's prudent restraint and trust in his chancellor. In the ideal case, the chancellor was to exercise the wishes of the emperor in the way he thought best and act as a sort of interface between the monarch, the princes, and parliament.

That a system that gave so much influence to the crown would be sensitive to abuse Bismarck must have been aware of, although it is likely that he saw the danger in the wrong corner, in the person and entourage of the rather liberal crown prince Friedrich. Fate, however, interceded. The crown prince reigned only 99 days as Emperor Friedrich III in 1888 before dying of throat cancer, and was followed on the throne by his twenty-nine-year old son Wilhelm II.

Soon it transpired that the young emperor combined in his person a deep belief in the God-given rights of a monarch with a distinct antipathy toward anything he considered un-Prussian, as there were Catholicism, democracy, liberalism, socialism, and many other manifestations of modern times. In the long run, most dangerous was that Wilhelm's "views on foreign policy," over which, unfortunately, the constitution gave him sway, "at times bordered on infantilism. With utter fatuousness he laid down the law on problems and situations of which he was profoundly ignorant." (3) This did not bode well for the future.

A future that Wilhelm thought was endangered anyway, by democrats, socialists and Jews. As Peter Watson observed, "the immediate consequence of the post-1815 world was that, in an effort to avoid a repeat of the French Revolution, the re-established monarchies of Europe kept a much firmer political grip on their subjects." (4) Thus, when the ghost of a new insurrection returned in 1848, it prompted the bloody repression of the liberal and democratic movements in Germany and Austria and rigid crackdowns on anything that could remotely be interpreted as a critique of the status quo. The bourgeoisie reacted with a flight into the sphere of family and privacy, for "the world outside was politically dangerous, so private life, home, and social contacts were restricted to a circle of true and reliable friends." (5)

The political rights of German citizens ranged, on a sliding scale, from the strictness of Prussia to the relative liberality of the southern kingdoms Bavaria and Württemberg and the Grand Duchy of Baden. Richard Wagner himself, terrorist on the lam, found refuge in Bavaria at the court of King Ludwig II. The general flight into privacy, the "Biedermeier" era, lasted, to an extent, until and past 1871, when it became obvious that unification did not include

political liberation. Retreat into the realm of family and friends became the *petite bourgeoisie's* anodyne against political oppression from above and, on account, of industrialization and socialism, economical jeopardy from below.

But the princes found themselves in a bind: to suppress nationalism completely was undesirable, for it was too closely related to patriotism, without which one could not do. Nationalism had to be limited in scope and directed toward a useful purpose. Thus, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the continental monarchies tried and largely succeeded in transferring nationalism from an originally Left, anti-imperial issue, to the ideological domain of the Right, but in fusing it with theories of racial superiority and anti-Semitism they involuntarily created the satanic concoction that was to kindle two world wars.

Although most European societies in the second half of the nineteenth century developed some notions of racial superiority, the situation in Germany became more acute. Precisely because unification had not been won by a national effort but has been presented as a gift from above, the national consciousness lacked the element of success that would have resulted from the struggle; the satisfaction that might have given it the courage to develop its own true identity. Instead, the German middle class fell prey to the machinations of the formerly elitist Right, and a lethal trinity of popular nationalism (or Pan-Germanism), anti-Semitism and fear of the socialist revolution came into being. Fritz Fischer explains its genesis:

*This new German self-consciousness was, in contrast to that of 1848, conservative and dynastic. After 1878 [the Congress of Berlin, which seemed to suggest a leading role for Germany in Europe, ¶] the liberal element in the German national movement was overshadowed by the dynastic and military elements. The popular consciousness regarded the foundation of the Empire itself, almost exclusively, as the fruit of three "victorious wars". The national festivals, the anniversary of Sedan symbolizing victory over France, and the Emperor's birthday (he was born on January 27, 1859) were living expressions of this unreserved acceptance of the Empire.*

*One other factor, besides the military, coloured the nature of the new German national consciousness. In the '70s, the campaign against liberalism and socialism led to the mobilisation of the *petite bourgeoisie* under the slogan (an old one, but re-furbished) of "throne and altar" [i.e. the Old Prussian duality of crown and Lutheran Church, ¶]. This was the class which had been hardest hit by the new industrial developments, and it was now hoping for help, especially help from the state, in its struggle to compete with the new big business.*

*This mass feeling linked up with an anti-Semitism which was at first religious, then racial, and the fusion brought into being an entirely new kind of nationalism, which from 1890 onwards gave a wishful and emotional content to *völkisch* and racial conceptions which did not stop at the frontiers of the Prusso-German dynastic state. In 1881 the Union of German Students came into being as a part of this anti-Semitic movement, of which it soon became the most important mouthpiece. (6)*

It seems to be an eternal principle that the loudest affirmers of the supremacy of race X are this superiority's least obvious examples, and this rule also applied to the German students' union. But then, overheated nationalism in concert with anti-Semitism occurred in other countries as well - viz. the Dreyfus affair in France. But by joining the new nationalist German movement, one could finally break out of the passivity of the Biedermeier age, and this fact only served to fire the intensity of the new persuasion. The basis for European claims of racial superiority had been laid in the second part of the nineteenth century already; by the writings of Count Joseph-Arthur Gobineau in France and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, a born Englishman who resided in Germany where he had identified the master race. Around the turn of the century, the ill-famed "*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*" further poisoned the atmosphere. The obvious canard purported to be a protocol of twenty-four secret meetings of Jewish leaders, i.e. the "Elders of Zion" in Basel, Switzerland, where the cabal had met to discuss the conquest of the world. While many, among them Hitler, easily recognized that it was simply a propaganda stunt, and a rather stupid one to boot, the "amateurish forgery ... had been accepted as gospel by both Wilhelm II and Nicholas II." (7)

This sort of anti-Semitism was published widely throughout Europe, and was far worse in Russia and Eastern Europe than in Germany, but in the latter anti-Semitism coincided not only with the national chauvinism that resulted from

the recent unification but also with the most dynamic period of industrialization and economic success. These mutual reinforcements not only made the new form of German nationalism meretriciously attractive to an anxious middle class, but also shaped politics: it enabled, for example, Germany's ill-advised naval build-up: before, say, the 1890s, the industrial capacity for it simply had not existed.

The following statistics, which give us an idea of Germany's industrial and political developments versus her competitors, are provided by Paul Kennedy:

**Table 1: Total Population in millions, 1890 - 1913 (8)**

	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1913</b>
1. Russia	118.6	135.6	159.3	175.1
2. United States	62.6	75.9	91.9	97.9
3. Germany	49.2	56.0	64.5	66.9
4. Austria-Hungary	42.6	46.7	50.8	52.1
5. Japan	39.9	43.8	49.1	51.3
6. France	38.3	38.9	39.5	39.7
7. Great Britain	37.4	41.1	44.9	45.6
8. Italy	30.0	32.2	34.4	35.1

It is immediately visible that France is the odd man out in regards to her population growth; while the United States increased its population between 1890 and 1913 by 56.5%, Russia by 48.6%, Germany by almost 36% and Great Britain by a somewhat more modest 23%, the French population remained almost constant, growing only 3.5% in these twenty-three years. Another indicator for economic and industrial development is the percentage of urban versus rural population:

**Table 2: Percentages of Urban Population (9)**

	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1913</b>
1. Great Britain	29.9	32.8	34.9	34.6
2. United States	15.3	18.7	22.0	23.1
3. Germany	11.3	15.5	20.0	21.0
4. France	11.7	13.3	14.4	14.8
5. Italy	9.0	9.6	11.0	11.6
6. Japan	6.3	8.6	10.3	12.8
7. Austria-Hungary	5.6	6.6	8.2	8.8
8. Russia	3.6	4.8	6.4	7.0

Great Britain, whose industrialization had started some fifty years earlier than that of any other country, not surprisingly leads the world, although percentagewise, her urban population grew only by 15.7% between 1890 and 1914, while Germany's grew by 85.8% and that of the United States by 59.8% France looks better here, with 26.5% growth, while Japan more than doubles its urban population. Italy, Austria and Russia are in between as far as percentage change goes, but their low absolute shares of around or under 10% depict them as underindustrialized as of yet.

The following view centres on the sine-qua-non of early industrial development, the production of steel:

**Table 3: Iron/Steel Production (10) (millions of tons, pig-iron for 1890, steel thereafter) (10)**

	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1913</b>
1. United States	9.3	10.3	26.5	<b>31.8</b>
2. Great Britain	8.0	5.0	6.5	<b>7.7</b>
3. Germany	4.1	6.3	13.6	<b>17.6</b>
4. France	1.9	1.5	3.4	<b>4.6</b>
5. Austria-Hungary	0.97	1.1	2.1	<b>2.6</b>
6. Russia	0.95	2.2	3.5	<b>4.8</b>
7. Japan	0.02	n/a	0.16	<b>0.25</b>
8. Italy	0.01	0.11	0.73	<b>0.93</b>

These numbers depict the state of the respective country's industrialization most consequentially, for without steel neither consumer goods nor arms could be built. Taking France's small population growth into consideration, her increase of steel production between 1900 and 1913 is, percentagewise, an impressive 307%, although her total production of 4.6 million tons in 1913 is dwarfed by the USA's 31.8 and Germany's 17.6 million tons. Trendwise, both Great Britain and France lag behind them in industrial expansion, while Russian steel production is beginning to take off. It approximately doubles between 1890 and 1900, and again between 1900 and 1913, although, in absolute numbers, the 1913 output of 4.8 million tons was still meagre if compared to the country's size. We now take a look at the total energy consumption:

**Table 4: Overall Energy Consumption (11) (in millions of metric tons of coal equivalent) (11)**

	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1913</b>
1. United States	147	248	483	541
2. Great Britain	145	171	185	195
3. Germany	71	112	158	187
4. France	36	47.9	55	62.5
5. Austria-Hungary	19.7	29	40	49.4
6. Russia	10.9	30	41	54
7. Japan	4.6	4.6	15.4	23
8. Italy	4.5	5	9.6	11

If one were to combine the data above, and add a few other parameters, the result would describe the changes in relative industrial strength of the Great Powers:

**Table 5: Industrial Potential as Relative Percentages:** (Great Britain in 1900 = 100%) (12)

	1880	1900	1913
1. Great Britain	73.3	100.0	127.2
2. United States	46.9	127.8	298.1
3. Germany	27.4	71.2	137.7
4. France	25.1	36.8	57.3
5. Russia	24.5	47.5	76.6
6. Austria-Hungary	14.0	25.6	40.7
7. Italy	8.1	13.6	22.5
8. Japan	7.6	13.0	25.1

This picture depicts the relative change in the potentials of the powers, which must be taken in their economic, as related to size and population, and geostrategic contexts, that is, related to their location. Italy and Japan remain struggling to catch up, while Russia is handicapped by her lack of infrastructure and Austria-Hungary by internal tension.

If one compares the change of percentage over time, the USA expanded its capacity by 635%, Germany by 501%, and France by 228%, while Great Britain's industrial power only grew 173%, an indication that her imperial splendour was beginning to fade even before 1914. We now shall compare the absolute market shares, which, over time, indicate relative ascent or decline:

**Table 6: Percentages of World Manufacturing Output** (13)

	1880	1900	1913
1. Great Britain	22.9	18.5	13.6
2. United States	14.7	23.6	32.0
3. Germany	8.5	13.2	14.8
4. France	7.8	6.8	6.1
5. Russia	7.6	8.8	8.2
6. Austria-Hungary	4.4	4.7	4.4
7. Italy	2.5	2.5	2.4

This table strikingly reveals the weakening of Western Europe, Great Britain and France, compared to the United States, across the Atlantic Ocean, and Germany, in the middle of the continent. England's portion in 1913 is only 59% of her share in 1880, that is, a decrease of 41%. France fares a bit better but still loses 27% of her world market percentage of 1880, while the USA increase their ratio by 117, 6% and Germany by 74.1%. The quota of Russia, Austria and Italy remain largely unaltered. If a European war was in the cards, Germany's continental enemies would be best advised to rush it before they fell further back. Speaking of war, we now shall turn our attention to the military:

**Table 7: Military and Naval Personnel 1880 - 1914 (14)**

	<b>1880</b>	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1914</b>
1. Russia	791,000	677,000	1,062,000	1,285,000	<b>1,352,000</b>
2. France	543,000	542,000	715,000	769,000	<b>910,000</b>
3. Germany	426,000	504,000	524,000	694,000	<b>891,000</b>
4. Great Britain	367,000	420,000	624,000	571,000	<b>532,000</b>
5. Austria-Hungary	246,000	346,000	385,000	425,000	<b>444,000</b>
6. Italy	216,000	284,000	255,000	322,000	<b>345,000</b>
7. Japan	71,000	84,000	234,000	271,000	<b>306,000</b>
8. United States	34,000	39,000	96,000	127,000	<b>164,000</b>

Even a cursory review of the table above sends the bells ringing for the burial of a few cherished prejudices. Not only is the German army, the presumptive menace of the continent, smaller than Russia's, which one might take for granted given the latter's vastness, it is smaller than France's, too. In the case of Austria-Hungary, her men, who are dispersed to cover a hostile border of some 1500 miles length, number only 100,000 more than Italy's, who, after her entry in the war in 1915, had to defend or attack on a border of far less than a hundred miles; in essence the sites of a few Alpine passes. If we take the hostile coalitions of 1914, the Entente has 2,794 million men under arms, more than twice the number of the Central Powers' 1,335 million men. All these numbers and many more will, of course, be discussed at length in the section on the Great War, from Chapter XIII on.

A comparison of the great powers' total military personnel in 1914 vis-a-vis 1890 shows us that, in less than a quarter century, the number of servicemen increased from 2,9 million to almost 5 million, by more than two thirds. How does this compare to the much-made-of naval races of these years?

**Table 8: Warship Tonnages 1880 - 1914 (15)**

	<b>1880</b>	<b>1890</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1914</b>
<b>(Entente warship tonnage 1914: 6.476 million tons)</b>					
1. Great Britain	650.000	679.000	1.065.000	2.174.000	2.714.000
2. France	271.000	319.000	499.000	725.000	900.000
3. Russia	200.000	180.000	383.000	401.000	679.000
4. United States	169.000	240.000	333.000	824.000	985.000
5. Italy	100.000	242.000	245.000	327.000	498.000
6. Japan	15.000	41.000	187.000	496.000	700.000
<b>(Central Powers warship tonnage 1914: 1.677 million tons)</b>					
7. Germany	88.000	190.000	285.000	964.000	1.305.000
8. Austria-Hungary	60.000	66.000	87.000	210.000	372.000s
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1.533.000</b>	<b>1.955.000</b>	<b>3.084.000</b>	<b>6.121.000</b>	<b>8.153.000</b>

It would seem almost beyond belief, but the naval tonnage of the great powers more than quintupled from 1,533,000 tons in 1880 to 8,153,000 tons in 1914 - growing by 532%. Fish must have begun to feel claustrophobic. As the figures for Japan and the USA make clear, the naval race was not limited to the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea; the latter found it necessary to almost triple the size of her navy in the fourteen years between 1900 and 1914 from 333,000 tons to 985,000; that is, *after* the Spanish-American War and the annexations of the Philippine, Cuban and Hawaiian islands, not before it.

As it would be expected, the different geostrategic locations of the powers decided which service was to become the primary beneficiary of the increasing budgets: the naval power Great Britain had little use for much infantry; her temporary apex in 1900, with 624,000 men under arms, was a result of the ongoing Boer War, not of a sustained increase in army spending. Her senior service, the Royal Navy, primary power instrument and *conditio-sine-qua-non* of her imperial grandeur, launched into a protracted building spree against the German and American navies (1812 was by no means forgotten) that resulted in a quadrupling of her size between 1880 and 1914.

There is a rule of thumb in history which holds that the more arms are being stacked upon each other the greater the probability that they will go off one day. It is true that this rule did not pan out during the Cold War, to our all survival, but this was more the result of the impracticability of nuclear warfare than of a sudden increase in human wisdom. In the early twentieth century, however, the focus of our inquiry, every new battleship launched and each new army corps established precariously challenged the balance of power. Between 1870 and 1890, this equilibrium was maintained principally by Bismarck, whose intended guarantor of peace was the "Triple Alliance", a covenant between the three reactionary emperors of Austria, Germany and Russia, "with the further idea of bringing into it monarchical Italy," as the Iron Chancellor explained. (16)

But this concept, also called the *DREIKAISERBUND*, the "Three Emperors' League", suffered, at least as Luigi Albertini saw it, from a big faux pas:

*Such an alliance accorded with the Chancellor's conservative views and with the necessity of preserving for Germany the fruits of her great victories. These victories had been rendered possible by the close bond between Prussia and Russia,<sup>1</sup> which latter had not only remained neutral in 1870 but had restrained Austria from going to the aid of France and avenging Sadowa.<sup>2</sup>*

*Bismarck therefore had to take measures for the maintenance of an intimate relationship between Wilhelm I and Tsar Alexander II, his nephew, while at the same time cultivating the friendship of Austria whom he had had the wisdom not to humiliate by territorial annexations [after the 1866 Prusso-Austrian war, ¶].*

*Only by coming to understandings with both Austria and Russia could he hope to escape the consequences of his gross blunder, the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine,<sup>3</sup> which by mutilating France filled her with an overpowering thirst for revanche. While Bismarck remained in power, his acts were always inspired by the need to keep France isolated, a need resulting from this blunder. (17)*

The Triple Alliance was eventually concluded in October 1873 and renewed in June 1881. It was clear to everyone that the divergent interests of Austria and Russia in the Balkans, where both sought to inherit the legacy of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire, would put the treaty sooner or later to a test it might not survive. Yet for the moment, until 1890 or so, the continental situation stabilized.

<sup>1</sup> Bismarck had much aided in forging this bond during his own service in St. Petersburg as Prussian ambassador in the 1850s.

<sup>2</sup> Sadowa is the Austrian name for the Battle of Königgrätz, which decided the outcome of the war of 1866 in favour of Prussia.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, the language-wise German provinces of Alsace and Lorraine had only become French in the aftermath of the Thirty-Years-War, respectively after the last Duke of Lorraine, Franz Stefan, had married Maria Theresia and thus become Holy Roman Emperor, albeit somewhat hen-pecked by his strong-willed wife. Still, France quickly forgot whence the acquisitions had come in the first place and were upset when the Germans took them back after the fortunes of war had changed.

But Bismarck's understanding of Germany and the role she could play, and which ones to avoid, had been formed in a pre-industrial era, and her prospects were dramatically altered, improved, and imperilled, by her rapid economic expansion. Issues of global trading and "world power", which before 1870 had commanded little attention and thus had not been given much consideration in Bismarck's model of the post-1871 continental equilibrium, shifted to the forefront of political discussion. The economic boom outgrew the limitations of Bismarck's vision, and the new German nationalism eagerly embraced its farthest-reaching geopolitical consequences.

Fritz Fischer surveys the connection between Germany's economic expansion and the growth of her monarchist-nationalist Right's "world power" aspirations:

*Germany was developing more and more into a highly industrialized exporting country and the problem of finding markets and raw materials to support her population was growing increasingly urgent. Industrialization had concentrated the population in certain areas - the Ruhr, Saxony, Silesia, Berlin, the Rhine-Main area - and had within a few years totally transformed the face of the country: the numbers living in large towns had doubled and the occupational distribution of the population had changed radically. ...*

*The world-wide activities of Germany's entrepreneurs were strongly supported by an official policy aptly described as one of "neo-mercantilism". It had become axiomatic that the state should support economic enterprise, both at home and abroad; in nationalising the postal, telegraphic and railway services the state had already made itself an important factor in Germany's economic life, and its social legislation, its protective tariff policy and its system of export premiums had laid the foundations of Germany's economic expansion, and therewith the transformation of her economic structure ...*

*The development of Germany's steel production was unparalleled anywhere in the world. Tomas's new processes and Siemens' and Martin's inventions enabled the production of steel to rise by 1,335 per cent, from 0.9 million tons in 1886 to 13.6 millions [in 1910, ¶]. ...*

*While the expansion of her heavy industries was the foundation on which the economic transformation of Germany rested, a number of entirely new industries also came into being: the chemical, electrical and optical industries and others. ... The advance of the heavy and electrical industries would, however, not have been possible without the simultaneous development of communications and the rationalisation of trade and business, of which the concentration of the banks is the most striking example.*

*In 1870 the German capital market was entirely in the hands of the private merchant bankers. By 1913 a complete change had come about; the world of German credit was dominated by the four "D Banks" - the Deutsche Bank, the Disconto Gesellschaft, the Dresdner Bank and the Bank für Handel and Industrie, commonly called the Darmstädter Bank. On the eve of the World War these huge institutions, each of which was represented on the boards of the main industries, controlled 65 per cent of the capital resources of all German credit institutions, thus typifying the advanced degree of concentration which the German economy had achieved.*

*Amalgamations, foundations of subsidiary branches and so on, had enabled the joint-stock banks, in partnership with the old private banking houses of Rothschild, Bleichröder, Warburg, etc., to go into business abroad. The Deutsche Bank, for example, financed the construction of the Anatolian Railway and the St. Gotthard road, and floated a number of issues in both North and South America. The great banks succeeded in establishing themselves securely in the main bourses and the chief centres of world trade - London, Paris, Brussels, New York, Vienna and Madrid.*

*By founding foreign subsidiaries, such as the Banca Generale Romana, the Brazilian Bank, the German East African Bank, the German-Asiatic Bank, etc., they secured the financing of the Otavi Mining and Railway Company in South-West Africa, the Baghdad Railway in Asia Minor, the Shantung Railroad and Mining Company in China, the New Guinea Company, oil enterprises in Rumania and Iraq, the Tientsin-Puckow Railway and the Venezuela Railway. Combination between the banks enabled them to act as issuing houses*

*for a large number of loans in Germany, both Reich and Federal, and also in Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Russia, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Italy, Switzerland, the Argentine, Brazil and China.*

*To free herself from dependence on British ships for moving the increasing volume of her merchandise, and to enable her to bring her exports, financed by her own capital, to their markets abroad without British middlemen, Germany had to have her own merchant marine. Its construction was accompanied by the expansion of the great ports of Bremen and Hamburg. Here, too, the trend towards concentration was apparent: in the Hapag and the Norddeutscher Lloyd, the biggest of many shipping companies which sprang into existence within a few years, Germany possessed for the first time merchant lines of international calibre...*

*[Representatives of big business soon joined the bodies which could guarantee business-friendly legislation, that is, the parliaments:]*

*A glance at the list of deputies in the Reichstag - even more, in the Prussian House of Deputies - belonging to the Conservative, Free Conservative, National Liberal and Zentrum parties will show how high a percentage of them were so intimately connected by business interests with agriculture, industry, commerce, etc., as to make a distinction between business and politics almost unreal (the officers of the business associations, for example, nearly always sat in parliament, usually as National Liberals).<sup>4</sup>*

*The link between business and politics grew progressively closer in the opening years of the new century, as the basic political outlook of the leading industrialists, bankers and officers of the employers' associations came to conform more closely with that of the intellectual bourgeoisie, the higher bureaucracy and army and navy officers ...*

*[This concord's outward manifestation] ... was the widespread support given to the Emperor's and [Secretary of the Navy] Tirpitz's naval programme. The chorus was led by the Navy League (FLOTTENVEREIN). In its origin a purely business creation founded by the CENTRALVERBAND DEUTSCHER INDUSTRIELLER [the "Central League of German Industrialists", ¶], whose first reaction to a naval programme was the thought that it would provide them with safe orders for years ahead, the League developed into the first great example of state-controlled propaganda [this has, perhaps, to be taken cum grano salis, ¶]. The presidents of the Prussian provinces and the princes of the non-Prussian states were its patrons; its members included the senior bureaucracy and junior civil servants, such as teachers. Provincial and local school councils carried its ideas into every village; public opinion in return influenced the political parties. ...*

*A German navy would, as the Navy League convinced the nation, protect German shipping, force Britain to regard Germany as an equal, a desirable ally and a friend, and thus become a symbol of Germany's claim to world power. (18)*

Whether this was a sensible policy and threat analysis or not, time would tell. Yet, as amply demonstrated by Table 8 above, Germany was by no means the sole nation to seek her protection in a bigger navy; all great powers engaged in obsessive warship building from about 1895 on. But most countries could not build their own ships but had to buy them abroad, and thus the nations that built them retained the control over supply and demand. In addition, some shipbuilding countries were either industrially too weak to build a fleet that could challenge the Royal Navy in the foreseeable future, say, France or Russia, or expanded in a different direction, as the USA. It appeared that Germany was the sole European power that might successfully defy Great Britain on the oceans, and this eventuality allowed British admirals in turn to clamour for an even greater expansion of the Royal Navy.

In 1906, a technical factor entered the equation. A revolutionary prototype of future British battleships, the *DREADNOUGHT*, obsoleted all other capital ships in the world virtually overnight. Only a hundred years earlier, Admiral Nelson's ships that defeated the combined French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar, on October 21, 1805, had depended on

<sup>4</sup> In Germany's representative parliament, the parties received seats according to the percentage of votes they scored in the election. A party that won, say, 12% of the votes in an election for a 200-seat body would get 24 seats, which would be given to the first twenty-four names on the party's election list. By placing important members first on the list, the party ensured that they received seats.

the vagaries of wind and were armed with full bore iron cannons, whose effective firing range was measured in the hundreds of yards and whose precision had to be taken on faith. The *DREADNOUGHT* carried only the heaviest artillery then available, ten 11-inch (28 cm) guns in five twin turrets, which could accurately deliver shells over ten miles and more, and she could reach a speed of 21 knots. The distribution of her armour had been changed from earlier designs to cover only the vital areas of the ship, and thus could, in these places, be thicker than that of any other vessel. Thus *DREADNOUGHT*, which did not have to carry the dead-weight of useless small artillery and armour covering inconsequential areas, outclassed the conventional ships of the line in speed, firepower, and protection.

The need for improving warship technology had been demonstrated as recently as 1905, when the Imperial Japanese Navy destroyed all but one Russian battleship of a flotilla that had sailed around half the world to meet its destiny in a battle near Tsushima Island in the Korea Strait. The Tsar's conventional ships, thinly but overall armoured, had proven exceedingly vulnerable to modern artillery fire, and every nation that could find the necessary funds either built new, Dreadnought-type, big-gun, fast battleships, or ordered a few in London.

Germany was in the position to compete with Great Britain precisely because she was, in a sense, her closest kin. As Corelli Barnett pointed out...

*... the power of a nation-state by no means consists only in its armed forces, but also in its economic and technological resources; in the dexterity, foresight and resolution with which its foreign policy is conducted; in the efficiency of its social and political organization.*

*It consists most of all in the nation itself, the people; their skills, energy, ambition, discipline, initiative; their beliefs, myths and illusions. And it consists, further, in the way all these factors are related to one another. Moreover national power has to be considered not only in itself, in its absolute extent, but relative to the state's foreign or imperial obligations; it has to be considered relative to the power of other states. (19)*

Both Great Britain and Germany commanded skills and resources; that the former's industrialization had started earlier, in fact earlier than that of any other nation, had provided her an edge in the race for Africa and India. German nationalists hurried to establish their own colonization movement in the 1880s (in addition to the Navy League); what for, no one truly knew, for it was clear that the more interesting parts of the world, the commercially valuable ones, had long since been spoken for, and, indeed, the areas Germany was able to eke out from the other powers' leftovers were not only exceedingly unattractive but remained unprofitable forever.<sup>5</sup>

As far as the dexterity and foresight in foreign policy quoted by Barnett go, it is true that one could easily diagnose some startling German shortcomings in this respect, the aforementioned naval race, colonization movement and "world power" aspirations may suffice as examples here; yet the British record regarding, say, the Boers or the USA was not necessarily better, and knowledge, resources and organizational ability abounded in both countries. If, lately, Germany seemed to have gained an edge, technology wise, this only served to stoke "a powerful, mutually reinforcing paranoia." (20) In this context, one must not forget that all the great powers of the epoch attempted to engage in "world power" and "world politics"; precisely because of this desire, the second half of the nineteenth century had become the great age of imperialism.

Since the Seven-Years-War, one hundred and fifty years ago, in which "Prussia had done the really hard fighting while Britain wildly snatched up chunks of the rest of the planet," (21) Great Britain and Prussia, or, later, Germany, had either been allied or remained benevolent neutrals; in fact, before August 1914, the respective armies had never fought each other. But the industrial, naval and colonial rivalry led to a steady worsening of relations (much aggravated by Kaiser Wilhelm II's chronic insensibilities), and to an alienation that, as Simon Winder observed,

*... turned out, to everybody's surprise, to be the disastrous main theme of the first half of twentieth-century European history. Nobody involved in any of the fighting from 1914 onwards was in a position to think like*

<sup>5</sup> The precious acquisitions [cf. Chapter IV] were in Africa: Togo, Cameroon, German West (now Namibia) and East Africa (now Tanzania), Tsingtao in China, Northeast New Guinea and assorted Pacific Islands in the vicinity of Australia.

*this, so it is a useless supposition: but nonetheless if Britain had been neutral in 1914 it is hard to see how Germany could not have won the war in a fairly conventional way in a couple of years, thereby sparing Europe the unlimited disasters that followed. After all, in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War almost everyone just got on with their lives, buying stuff and having families - and a Europe dominated by the Germany of 1914 would have been infinitely preferable to a Europe dominated by the Germany of 1939.*

*British planners had spent generations planning a war with France, just as Germany had in substantial part become united out of fear of France. It took only a superficial interest in history to notice that at regular intervals France appeared to go crazy and attack everyone. The British continued to pour resources into a navy specifically aimed at France. As had been the case in previous wars, Britain's natural allies were Prussia and Austria (ideally both of them if they were not at each other's throats).*

*In the nineteenth century this relationship remained a complex and almost unthinking tangle of assumptions. These were fed by the great Allied moments of the past - the British and Austrians crushing the French at Blenheim in 1704, the British and Prussians crushing the French at Waterloo in 1815. The establishment of a new European order after Waterloo was mainly the work of British and Austrian negotiators ... [while] the British were both instrumental in building Prussian power in Western Europe and benevolent neutrals in the German wars of unification. There was also a shared monarchical, ideological disgust with France - with its fake kings and emperors, turbulence, revolutions and implied continual affronts to the legitimist (and closely intermarried) British and German royal families.*

*The speed of the alienation was breathtaking. Neither side had a convincing strategy for fighting the other. Britain's main naval stations at Plymouth and Portsmouth had developed over centuries to fight France, and the new North Sea bases needed to fight Germany were always provisional, half-hearted and vulnerable. Even Britain's continuing commitment to defend Belgian neutrality [which to do Prussia had signed on in 1839 as well, ¶] had always been meant to be a tripwire against some future French eruption - a tediously traditional strategy for over two centuries, left over in part from when Belgium had been ruled by Austria. Nobody had really thought through the mad implausibility that Belgium might be invaded from the east, as now happened.*

*Within moments of war existing between Britain and Germany both sides became utterly invested in the destruction of the other. The British public was appalled by the German "rape" of Belgium and was fed a diet of bizarre stories of Belgian nuns being tied to the clappers of church bells and squelched to death when these were rung. The German army was undoubtedly brutal in Belgium, but only to a degree that the British should have found familiar from their own behaviour in, say, China or South Africa.*

*The German public (and leadership) felt that they had gone to war confident of British neutrality and that they were now being stabbed in the back by repulsive and hypocritical "shopkeepers", using the excuse of Belgium's neutrality to try to destroy their patent successors as Europe's leaders. This confidence was reckless and almost infantile - a feeling that if you could only wish hard enough Britain would not stand by France and German war plans might work; therefore it was necessary to assume Britain would stay neutral. But Britain gave out chaotic, dithery signals and its tiny army did not seem relevant to even a year-long war. ... This is a fiendishly difficult issue ... (22)*

Yet between 1890 and 1914, one element was truly Germany's homemade problem: her leadership.

The old-fashioned, almost medieval, monarch-centred constitutional provisions under which the imperial government of the recently unified nation worked lingered far behind the modernism of her economy. Friedrich Stümpfer, editor of *VORWÄRTS*, the national Social Democratic newspaper, famously opined that Wilhelmine Germany was the most successfully industrialized and most effectively administered, but, sadly, worst governed nation in pre-war Europe. Max Weber agreed, as cited above. The fish stank from the head, and the head, of course, was the Kaiser himself, Wilhelm II, King in Prussia and German Emperor.

He was born in Berlin on January 27, 1859, as the first child of the crown prince and future emperor Friedrich and the Princess Royal Victoria, the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria of England.

Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and King George V of England, two of Queen Victoria's other grandchildren, were his cousins, and he was related by blood to almost every other reigning house of the continent.

Unfortunately, he suffered from a birth defect that had a huge impact on his nascent personality. John C.G. Röhl, who examines Wilhelm in his book "The Kaiser and His Court" [see Bibliography], introduces us to mother and child:

*It is well known that Wilhelm suffered organic damage at birth, although the full extent of the damage is still not fully appreciated. Apart from his useless left arm, which was eventually about fifteen centimetres too short, he also suffered from the alarming growths and inflammations in the inner ear already referred to. As a result of his condition he underwent a serious operation in 1896 which left him deaf in the right ear.*

*The possibility that he also suffered brain damage at the time of his birth cannot be ruled out. In Germany in 1859, the year in which Wilhelm was born, no fewer than 98 per cent of babies in the breech position were stillborn. The danger was of course greatest in young mothers having their first child, and it stemmed above all from the possibility of suffocation as the baby's head squeezed the umbilical cord running up alongside it. If the air supply was cut off for longer than, say, eight minutes, the baby was sure to die.*

*And indeed, the royal baby with which we are concerned was "seemingly dead to a high degree", as the doctor's report put it, when he came into the world on the afternoon of 27 January 1859, over ten hours after the waters had broken.*

*Whatever damage was done to Wilhelm's brain in those hours, it is certain that the left arm was crippled not locally, as the doctors assumed, but rather as a result of damage to the brachial plexus, that is to say the nerves which ensure the innervation of the shoulder, arm and hand muscles were torn from the vertebral column in the neck during the final stages of the delivery.*

*The entire experience was a ghastly one for Vicky, the Princess Royal. Despite the fact that she had inhaled chloroform for hours on end, the birth was extremely painful. She had married only a year before at the age of seventeen. During the long, complicated birth of her first child, "poor Dr. Martin" had to work under her long flannel skirt so that royal decency prevailed.*

*Vicky's response to giving birth to a crippled boy was, it would seem, ambivalent. If she had been male, as the first child of Queen Victoria she would have been able to stay in her beloved England and in due course become its sovereign. As things stood, however, all that was open to her was to bear a son, and through him to do what she could to remodel the country into which she had married along the lines of the country of her birth.*

*But this son had a crippled arm, he was not particularly talented, and he exhibited from a very early age a stormy, hyperactive temperament which gave growing cause for concern. Sigmund Freud himself put the finger on Vicky's sense of narcissistic injury as one of the root-causes of Wilhelm's later psychological disturbance. In 1932 he wrote:*

*"It is usual for mothers whom Fate has presented with a child who is sickly or otherwise at a disadvantage to try to compensate him for his unfair handicap by a super-abundance of love.*

*In the instant before us, the proud mother behaved otherwise; she withdrew her love from the child on account of its infirmity. When he had grown up into a man of great power, he proved unambiguously by his actions that he had never forgiven his mother."*



KAISER WILHELM II

*Once the doctors were set loose on the young Wilhelm with their "animal baths", their electric-shock treatment and their metal contraptions and leather straps for stretching his arm and his neck, once his education was placed in the hands of the unsmiling, never-praising Calvinist Hinzpeter, whatever slender hope there still remained for his emotional and mental stability lay in his mother's hands. But she was unable to establish that bond of unconditional love and trust which he so desperately needed.*

*Small wonder, then, that he felt drawn precisely to those elements who depreciated his mother above all else - to Bismarck, to the "kind nice young men" of the Potsdam guards regiments, to the Byzantine "Liebenberg Round Table"; small wonder that he felt one could not have enough hatred for England.*

*When he came to the throne, at the age of twenty-nine, Wilhelm could use the whole apparatus of the army, the navy and the state, the whole arena of world politics to prove his worth. (23)*

And here the flip side of Bismarck's monarchical constitution came up: nobody could reign in the imperial chatterbox when he travelled through the world, informing everybody who asked, and all who did not, of his personal and his country's power. It seemed that Germany had become a hermaphroditic affair with a top-notch industry, a relatively free press, an impotent parliament, and a mixture of Don Juan and medieval brigand, right out of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, on top; it was, as John Röhl noted, as if the country's "development towards a modern unitary constitutional state had stopped at the half-way mark." (24) The perception of Germany in the world depended too much upon the opinions Wilhelm gave out freely, and Foreign Office and diplomatic service were frequently unable to correct the unfavourable impressions the Kaiser left wherever he journeyed and to whomever he spoke.

In addition to his capricious politics, his private pleasures aroused suspicion and received publicity; for example in the juicy scandal of the "Liebenberg Trials":

*Even before his accession, Wilhelm had announced his intention to do "battle against vice, high living, gambling, betting etc.", against "all the doings of our so-called 'good society'". This battle was not particularly successful, however. Soon after he came to the throne, hundreds of obscene anonymous letters began to circulate around the court, and although this went on for years the author was never discovered, even though (or perhaps precisely because?) the culprit must have been a member of the close circle surrounding Wilhelm and the empress.*

*A decade later the Wilhelmine court experienced its greatest scandal when Philipp Eulenburg [Wilhelm's best friend, ¶] and his "Liebenberg Round Table" were publicly attacked on the grounds of their homosexuality [which was technically a criminal offense, ¶] and finally had to be banned from the court. [Dozens of court and administration officials turned out to be involved in the scandal, ¶] Embarrassing questions were asked even about the Kaiser.*

*The German system of government, already inefficient, suffered an immediate collapse into "complete disequilibrium at the top". Nationalist circles inclined to the view that they must press either for an external war or else for the abdication of Wilhelm II.*

*"To clear ourselves of shame and ridicule," wrote Maximilian Harden [newspaper editor and the driving force behind the prosecution, ¶] in November 1908, "we will have to go to war, soon, or face the sad necessity of making a change of imperial personnel on our own account, even if the strongest personal pressure had to be brought to bear." As Maurice Baumont has rightly remarked in his study of L'AFFAIRE EULENBURG, "la réalité pathologique des scandales Eulenburg doit prendre parmi les causes complexes de la guerre mondiale". (25)*

Certainly, many other countries had had monarchs in their history who had provided topics for satire or salacious jokes, but the German classes that profited most from Wilhelm's government, the Prussian Junkers and the high civil and military bureaucracy, all of them noble, showed not only an astounding ability to forgive and forget, but outdid themselves in applauding the Kaiser's putative designs on the globe. John Röhl narrates the story of a Prussian officer in Brazil who, at the important news of the outbreak of war, wrote to a friend that, finally, the German people could see that the Kaiser impersonated "more greatness than Bismarck and Moltke put together, a higher destiny than Napoleon I"; that Wilhelm, indeed, was the *Weltgestalter*, the "shaper of the world." (26) He wrote:

*"Who is this Kaiser, whose peacetime rule was so full of vexation and tiresome compromise, whose temperament would flare up wildly, only to die away again? ... Who is this Kaiser who now suddenly throws caution to the wind, who tears open his visor to bare his Titanic head and take on the world? ...*

*I have misunderstood this Kaiser; I have thought him a waverer. He is a Jupiter, standing on the Olympus of his iron-studded might, the lightning-bolts in his grasp. At this moment he is God and master of the world." (27)*

Salutations of this kind contrasted sharply to the reality of the Emperor's foreign politics in the post-Bismarck era, which caused war to become a possibility that could not be ruled out. Wilhelm fired the old chancellor in 1890, and the latter's system of treaties quickly fell apart. Luigi Albertini comments on the significance of this falling-out between the old practical hand and a green monarch.

*Bismarck's position became critical when on 9 March 1888 the death took place of the nonagenarian Emperor Wilhelm I whose support he had always enjoyed, and when, three months after the untimely decease of Wilhelm's son Frederick III, his grandson Wilhelm II mounted the throne. The latter had at first been pro-Russian and anti-British; but under the influence of General Waldersee he had been won over to the view of the General Staff that Germany must stand solidly with Austria and wage a preventive war on Russia.*

*The Chancellor sought to persuade him that, on the contrary, it would be better to seek a pretext for a war with France in which Russia would remain neutral, whereas if Germany made war on Russia, France would snatch the opportunity to attack Germany. He almost seemed to have succeeded inasmuch as Wilhelm II some days after his accession announced to the world his intention of paying a visit to the Tsar at once before visiting any other sovereign. After it, at the request of Giers [the Russian Foreign Minister] with the Tsar's approval, he agreed to the renewal of the Reinsurance Treaty<sup>6</sup> with Russia due to lapse in June 1880. But by the time the Ambassador Shuvalov presented himself armed with the necessary powers to renew it for another six years, Bismarck had resigned.*

*The Kaiser, having received from Baron Holstein,<sup>7</sup> a high official of the Wilhelmstrasse [site of the German Foreign Office], reports apparently revealing hostile preparations on the part of Russia which he thought Bismarck had withheld from him, wrote to the Chancellor that Austria should be warned and had copies of the reports sent to Vienna, disregarding Bismarck's explanations that they had no importance. This convinced Bismarck that their differences were insurmountable and on 18 March 1890 he handed in his resignation.*

*Wilhelm II accepted it and Shuvalov thereupon expressed doubts whether the Tsar would be willing to renew the secret treaty with another Chancellor. Perturbed, Wilhelm II sent a message to him by night and told him he had been obliged to "retire" Bismarck for health reasons but that nothing was changed in German foreign policy and that he was ready to renew the treaty. But Holstein manoeuvred in such a way that the new Chancellor General Caprivi and the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg persuaded the Kaiser to change his mind, alleging that the treaty with Russia was incompatible with the Austrian alliance and that, if St. Petersburg divulged it to Vienna, the Triple Alliance would be broken and England estranged from Germany. The Kaiser surrendered to this advice without much resistance and the German Ambassador was instructed to inform St. Petersburg that the Reinsurance Treaty would not be renewed.*

*[Meanwhile in Paris, the popular leader of the Revanchists, General Boulanger, was nominated for the post of French Minister of War in 1886; he advocated war with Germany as soon as practicable and formed his own, short-lived, but for a time very active Boulangist movement, ¶]*

*In August 1888 Boulanger, who had already won a seat in the Chamber, was elected by three other constituencies and in January 1889 he was also elected in that radical-republican stronghold, the Seine department. The Government seemed powerless against him and a coup d'état appeared imminent. Bismarck thought that in such circumstances he must seek a defensive alliance with England until Germany and Austria*

<sup>6</sup> The Reinsurance Treaty was a tricky piece of Bismarckian diplomacy. Given the priority that Russia must be kept off France at all costs, Bismarck realized that the 1879 Dual Alliance Treaty between Germany and Austria might lead to a scenario in which Germany would be bound to support Austria in the case of Austro-Russian tensions in the Balkan, which were guaranteed to arise by next Wednesday or so. This might throw a wrench into Russo-German relations and in turn might draw Russia to France, which had to be avoided. Hence a solution had to be found which gave both Russia and Germany a face-saving way out if Austria behaved badly in the Balkans, but neither Germany nor Russia wanted to let it come to war. Whatever Austria's designs in this region, it was clear that she could never afford to attack Russia without German aid. Bismarck and Shuvalov thus developed "a formula binding the two parties [Germany and Russia, ¶] to benevolent neutrality in a war of one of them against a third Power except in the case that one of the contracting parties directly attacked Austria or France." (28) That was to say that as long as neither Germany nor Russia attacked Austria or France unilaterally, they would remain mutual benevolent neutrals and since Austria could not afford to attack Russia on her own, no big war because of a Slavic or Turkish issue in the Balkans could arise.

<sup>7</sup> Albertini remarked about Holstein: "Baron Holstein, the eminence grise of the German Foreign Office, head of the political section, was one of the most powerful personages in the Empire, 'a man before whom more than one Ambassador and more than one Minister trembled.' His will often 'decided in important matters the direction of the whole foreign policy of Germany' and exercised a great influence on three Chancellors, Caprivi, Hohenlohe and Bülow (Alexander von Hohenlohe, *Aus meinem Leben* (Frankfurt, 1925) pp. 300-16).

The German ex-Ambassador in London, Lichnowsky, describes him as 'a master of intrigue' who 'knew not only how to impress his superiors but how to intimidate and even completely dominate them'; further on he adds that Holstein was 'in short a national misfortune and the real begetter of the World War'. (Prince Lichnowsky, *Heading for the Abyss*, London, 1928, pp. XIX-XX.)" (29)

could complete their armaments and in January 1889 instructed Hatzfeld, the German Ambassador in London, to negotiate one with [Prime Minister] Salisbury.

Bismarck was not held back by considerations of colonial policy. In December he told the explorer E. Wolf: "My map of Africa lies in Europe. Here lies Russia, here lies France and we are in between; that is my map of Africa." Later in the Reichstag on 26 January 1889 he spoke of England as "the old traditional ally with whom we have no conflicting interests". This did not mean an "ally" in the diplomatic sense, he explained, since Germany had no agreement with England, but in the sense of an old friend; and he sent his son Herbert to London to talk with Salisbury.

The latter, who in August 1888 had written to the Queen: "France is and must always remain England's greatest danger", agreed that an Anglo-German alliance would benefit both countries but objected that for parliamentary reasons it was not then possible. "Meanwhile let us leave it on the table without saying yes or no; that is unfortunately all I can do at present". And there the talks ended. But even if the Anglo-German Alliance had been concluded it was not intended to impair German relations with Russia, but solely to keep France in check.

In the next chapter it will be seen how these fundamental principles of Bismarckian policy were thrown over during the reign of Wilhelm II to the detriment of Germany and of the peace of the world. (30)

Bismarck's policy was guided by the principle to make impossible any coalitions of powers that could result in a general European war. This completely rational policy, which took notice of the special requirements and individual sensitivities of Russia and England, was completely upended by a succession of four chancellors that did not understand foreign policy or, in general, didn't care much about it,<sup>8</sup> a catastrophe that was only aggravated by the monarch's capricious personality.

What were the particulars of Wilhelm's character that led to the acts of political lunacy that so much destabilized Europe from 1890 on? In his essay "Kaiser Wilhelm II: a suitable case for treatment?" John Röhl presents his observations:

*Any sketch of his character must begin with the fact that he never matured. To the end of his thirty-year reign he remained the "young" emperor with the "childlike genius". "He is a child and will always remain one," sighed an astute court official in December 1908.*

*Wilhelm seemed incapable of learning from experience. Philip Eulenburg, who knew him better than anyone, remarked in a letter to Bülow at the turn of the century that Wilhelm had, in the eleven years since his accession to the throne, "become very much quieter as far as his outer being is concerned. ... Spiritually however there has not been the slightest development. He is unchanged in his explosive manner. Indeed even harsher and more sudden as his self-esteem has grown with experience - which is no experience. For his 'individuality' is stronger than the effect of experience."*

*More than thirty years later, when both Eulenburg and Bülow were dead and the Kaiser exiled and seventy-two years old, his adjutant Sigurd von Ilsemann wrote in his diary at Doorn:*

*"I have now almost finished reading the second volume of the Bülow memoirs and am struck over and over again by how little the Kaiser has changed since those times. Almost everything that occurred then still happens now, the only difference being that his actions, which then had grave significance and practical consequences, now do no damage. The many good qualities, too, of this strange, peculiar person, of the Kaiser's so very complicated character, are repeatedly stressed by Bülow." (31)*

We will rediscover, almost eerily, many of Wilhelm's other traits, perpetual travelling, the inability to listen, a penchant for monologues about topics imperfectly understood, and the constant need for company and light entertainment, in the character and habits of the young Austrian painter who, in a sense, became his heir. They express a mixture of immaturity,

<sup>8</sup> These were: General Leo von Caprivi, 1890-1894, Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, 1894-1900, Prince Bernhard von Bülow, 1900-1909, and Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, 1909-1917.

egocentrism and megalomania; understandable, perhaps, in a young man, but hazardous in the leader of the globe's second-biggest industrial power who, in the bargain, had a medieval understanding of a monarch's rights and duties.

*However, another of Wilhelm's character traits, his notorious overestimation of his own abilities, dubbed by contemporaries "caesaromania" or FOLIE D'EMPEREUR, similarly inhibited his responsiveness to constructive criticism.*

*For how could the monarch learn from experience if he despised his ministers, rarely received them and seldom listened to what they had to say; if he was convinced that all his diplomats had so "filled their pants" that "the entire Wilhelmstrasse stank" to high heaven; when he addressed even the War Minister and the Chief of the Military Cabinet with the words "you old asses"; and announced to a group of admirals: "All of you know nothing; I alone know something, I alone decide."*

*Even before coming to the throne he had warned, "Beware the time when I shall give the orders." Even before Bismarck's dismissal he had threatened to "smash" all opposition to his will. He alone was master of the Reich, he said in a speech in May 1891, and he would tolerate no others.*

*To the Prince of Wales he proclaimed at the turn of the century: "I am the sole master of German policy and my country must follow me wherever I go." Ten years later he explained in a letter to a young Englishwoman: "As for having to sink my ideas and feelings at the bidding of the people, that is a thing unheard of in Prussian history or traditions of my house! What the German Emperor, King of Prussia thinks right and best for his People he does."*

*In September 1912 he chose Prince Lichnowsky to be ambassador in London against the advice of Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg and the Foreign Office with the words: "I will only send an ambassador to London who has **My** trust, obeys **My** will and carries out **My** orders." And during the First World War he exclaimed: "What the public thinks is totally immaterial to me." [Emphases added] (32)*

The "iron will" to be the master of the nation or, perhaps, the world, was assisted by his ability to contemplate reality according to the dictates of his imagination. Even in his seventies, exiled in the Netherlands, he was able to arrive at the most surprising conclusion concerning the racial identity of his enemies:

*"At last I know what the future holds for the German people, what we shall still have to achieve. We shall be the leaders of the Orient against the Occident! I shall now have to alter my picture 'Peoples of Europe'. We belong on the other side! Once we have proved to the Germans that the French and English are not Whites at all but Blacks then they will set upon this rabble." (33)*

Thus Wilhelm had made the amazing discovery that, in fact, the French and English are Negroes. Another reason for the ongoing decay of the human race, the retired emperor maintained, was a lack of proper respect for the authorities, in particular for himself. The news of the Boxer rebellion in China he took as a personal insult and ordered Beijing to be "razed to the ground". In his fear of the impending socialist revolution, he dwelt in fantasies of hundreds of demonstrators "gunned down" in the streets of Berlin, and occasionally recommended as the proper treatment for prisoners of war to starve them to death.

Not only did he long to inflict revenge for slights in his own lifetime, in a desire to, literally, expunge history - to undo the Second, perhaps also the First French Revolution - he thirsted to "take revenge for 1848 - revenge!!!" (34)

His sense of humour was peculiar, too.

*While his left arm was weak due to damage at birth, his right hand was strong in comparison, and he found amusement in turning his rings inwards and then squeezing the hand of visiting dignitaries so hard that tears came to their eyes. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria left Berlin "white-hot with hatred" after the Kaiser had slapped him hard on the behind in public. Grand Duke Wladimir of Russia [Tsar Nicholas II's brother, ¶] was hit over the back by Wilhelm with a field-marshal's baton. (35)*

Aware of His Majesty's sense of humour, his friends practiced creative imagination. At the occasion of a hunting expedition at Liebenberg in 1892, General Intendant Georg von Huelsen proposed to Count Goertz ["who was on the plump side"] (36):

*"You must be paraded by me as a circus poodle! - That will be a 'hit' like nothing else. Just think: behind **shaved** (tights), in front long bangs out of black or white wool, at the back under a genuine poodle tail a marked rectal opening and, when you 'beg', **in front** a fig leaf. Just think how wonderful when you bark, howl to music, shoot off a pistol or do other tricks. It is simply **splendid!!**" [Emphases in original] (37)*

Courtiers and bureaucrats soon found out that to offer such exquisite entertainment was a tried and true way to the monarch's good graces, but, on the flip side, it aided to the proliferation of rumours. What, then, can we say about Wilhelm's love life? As Edward Gibbon noted about Charlemagne, the two emperors had in common that chastity was not their most conspicuous quality. Officially, Wilhelm was able to have his court reporters belabour his marital fidelity, in the furtherance of which the Empress delivered sons in regular intervals, all in all six of them. Yet Wilhelm also had a certain propensity of writing hazardous letters, some of them to a well-known procuress in Vienna, and because of his willingness to sample the offers, the further maintenance of his public virtue was entrusted to the ministrations of his privy councillors, who bought the ladies' discretion, took care, confidentially, of royal alimonies or, perhaps, arranged abortions.

But it seems that these extramarital activities were purely of biological nature, so to say; sympathy, comfort and repose the monarch found with his male friends, although it appears that he did not participate in the more intimate expressions of these friendships.

*"I never feel happy, really happy at Berlin," he wrote in his idiosyncratic English. "Only Potsdam [the station of his Guard Regiment, ¶], that is my "El Dorado" ... where one feels free with the beautiful nature around you and soldiers as much as you like, for I love my dear regiment very much, those such kind nice young men in it." In his regiment, as he confided to Eulenburg, he found his family, his friends, his interests - everything which he had previously missed. Over were the "terrible years in which no-one understood my individuality"...*

*The voluminous political correspondence of Philipp Eulenburg leaves no scope for doubt that he (Eulenburg) and the other members of the influential "Liebenberg Circle" who in the 1890s stood at the very centre of the political stage in the Kaiser's Germany were indeed homosexual, as their destroyer, Maximilian Harden, believed.*

*This of course raises the question where to place the Kaiser on the "heterosexual - homosexual continuum." If he ever did have anything approaching a homosexual experience, it almost certainly occurred in the mid-1880s, in the same period, that is, as his numerous extra-marital affairs with women. After interviewing Jakob Ernst, the Starnberg fisherman whose testimony in 1908 damaged Eulenburg's case irreparably, Maximilian Harden became convinced that he was in possession of evidence which, if laid before the Kaiser, would suffice to cause him to abdicate.*

*What information Harden received from Jakob Ernst, we can only guess at. In several letters written at this time, Harden linked Wilhelm II not only with Jakob Ernst but also with Eulenburg's private secretary, Karl Kistler. But these are only straws in the wind, not proof. On the evidence presently available to us, it is probably wiser to assume, as Isabel Hull has written, that Wilhelm remained unconscious of the homoerotic basis of his friendship with Eulenburg and thus failed to recognize the homosexual aspects of his own character. (38)*

In addition to these private distractions, the Kaiser's medical afflictions gave reason for concern. From the pure medical point of view, the frequent infections of his right ear and sinus threatened to implicate the brain, and complications regarding the monarch's moods and faculties of reasoning could not be ruled out. In 1895, the British diplomat M. Gosselin, who was employed in the British Embassy in Berlin, wrote to Lord Salisbury that the consequences for the peace of the world might be enormous "if a Sovereign who possesses a dominant voice in the foreign policy of the Empire is

subject to hallucinations and influences which must in the long term warp his judgement, and render Him liable at any moment to sudden changes of opinion which no-one can anticipate or provide against." (39)

There was general agreement. Lord Salisbury himself thought the Kaiser "not quite normal"; Prime Minister Herbert Asquith saw a "disordered brain" at work; Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Minister, regarded Wilhelm as "not quite sane, and very superficial"; Grand Duke Sergius of Russia thought the Kaiser "mentally ill"; and the doyen of the Berlin Diplomatic Corps, the Austrian Military Attaché Freiherr von Klepsch-Kloth, diagnosed that Wilhelm was "not really sane" and had, "as one says, a screw loose." (40) John Röhl collected a few more statements of witnesses:

*In 1895 Friedrich von Holstein complained that the Kaiser's "glow-worm" character constantly reminded Germans of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia and King Ludwig II of Bavaria, both of whom had gone mad.*

*Early in 1896, after a violent row with the Kaiser, the Prussian War Minister, General Bronsart von Schellendorf, said "that H.M. did not appear to be quite normal and that he [Schellendorf] was deeply concerned about the future". In the following year Holstein wrote that the Conservative Party thought the Kaiser was "not quite normal", that the King of Saxony had declared him to be "not quite stable" and that the Grand Duke of Baden had spoken "in a very worrying way about the psychological side of the matter, about the loss of touch with reality". Reich Chancellor Prince Hohenlohe also once earnestly asked Bülow [his eventual successor, ¶] whether he "really believed that the Kaiser was mentally normal".*

*Such views became commonplace after the Kaiser's notorious speech of February 1897, in which he referred to Bismarck and Moltke as "lackeys and pygmies". Count Anton Monts, the Prussian Envoy to Bavaria, wrote from Munich that the emperor was clearly no longer of sane mind. "I gather from the hints of the doctors that the Kaiser can still be cured, but that the chances grow dimmer with each day." (41)*

Now the complete absence of meaningful checks and balances in the federal constitution came to harm the nation. There were no procedures for a transfer of power except for the death or the voluntary abdication of the monarch, an act Wilhelm clearly would not consider. Thus he continued to utter the abstruse opinions the world press by now expected from him, and it was easy enough for Germany's opponents to profit from the uninterrupted chain of public relation debacles the Kaiser left in his wake. Soon a theory developed that explained Wilhelm's recklessness as the result of a specific German inclination towards authoritarian government, militarism, and general unfriendliness.

We ought to pause here for a moment and recall that German unity had never ranked particularly high in Prussian politics during the first half of the nineteenth century. The country had begun to acquire bits of lands in the west essentially only after the Congress of Vienna. No Prussian king then entertained the thought that a mythical connection should be sought between the medieval Holy Roman Empire and a newly-to-be-established German Empire. Prusso-centrist nationalism only came into being after 1871, and basically orbited around the glorification of the Hohenzollerns, whose rise to fame, so to say, was to imply "a sort of inevitability in the creation of a single Germany." (42)

To everybody with an interest in history, the Holy Roman Empire had been characterized by its disunity, a particularity the Hohenzollern mythologists were not likely to acknowledge. But once the chimera of the new "Reich" was established in 1871, mythologizing began to sweep the nation. Ian Kershaw observes:

*All nationalisms need their myths. In this [Germany's] case, a powerful one was the "Reich myth". The very name of the new nation-state, "German Reich", evoked for many the mystical claim to reinstate the first Reich of Frederick Barbarossa - sleeping, according to the saga, in his holy mountain beneath the Kyffhaeuser in Thuringia until the rebirth of his medieval Reich. The new aesthetics of nationalism [that followed the victory of 1870/71, ¶] called for the continuity to be symbolized in the gigantic monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I, mainly funded by veterans' associations, erected on the Kyffhaeuser in 1896.*

*The "Reich myth" linked national unity and the ending of division to heroic deeds and individual greatness, interpreting previous German history as the prelude to the ultimate attainment of national unity. Schoolbooks glorified the exploits of a pantheon of national heroes, filled with warriors reaching back to the*

*legendary Hermann the Cherusker, the name attached to Arminius, the Germanic leader who inflicted a crushing defeat on three Roman legions in 9 AD. His colossal monument in the Teutoburger Wald, and that of Germania on the Niederwald Monument near Rudesheim on the Rhine, which so impressed Hitler when he saw it for the first time in 1914, en route for the battlefields of Flanders, gave granite expression to the "Reich myth".*

*And once the foundation of the German Reich itself passed from current politics into history, and its architect's contentious career had been peremptorily ended by the new Kaiser, Bismarck himself became the focal point of a cult which eulogized him as the greatest hero of all, statesman and warrior combined.*

*Hundreds of "Bismarck Towers" initiated by student bodies and erected the length and breadth of the country, represented the national hero as the intended symbol of nation, state and people. And the more, after Bismarck's departure, the Reichstag - initially, together with the monarchy, the embodiment of national unity - came to be seen as the barometer of national division, a house of squabbling politicians and competing parties, the more there appeared to be the need for a new Bismarck, a new national hero.*

*A claim to such a role was initially advanced by no one less than the Kaiser himself. The caesaristic tendencies, increasingly a feature of German nationalism towards the end of the nineteenth century, were deliberately furthered after 1890 by the promotion of a Hohenzollern cult, focused on the new and ambitious Kaiser, Wilhelm II, and intended to represent in his person "the two images of the governing statesman and the sleeping Hero-Kaiser".*

*The new Kaiser, it was implied, would lead Germany to external greatness and eliminate divisions within. Increasingly shrill voices on the nationalist Right demanded nothing less. However, the gap between words and deeds was too great. (43)*

The young Kaiser's less than stellar performance eventually split the nationalist Right: one faction that remained committed to the monarch and another that, as splits are wont to do, only escalated its patriotic demands to pursue a policy of maximal "German power and greatness through expansion and conquest of inferior people." (44) In practice, this super-nationalist cabal tended to narrow the political options of the government, which at the same time was hysterically engaged to suppress anti-Prussian socialists and Catholics as much as was legally possible. The administration's demographic basis of support was in danger of shrinking; parts of the "old order ... were prepared even to contemplate war as a way of holding on to their power and fending off the threat of socialism." (45)

As Politics 101 teaches and Machiavelli recommends, the proper answer to internal problems is to point out external dangers. The problem with Wilhelmine Germany at this time, however, was that no believable enemy could be identified on the nation's border. After the successful war of 1870/71 no one was afraid of France, and Russia and Austria were allies respectively benevolent neutrals. Because, in reality, behind the ado and hysteria of the nationalists lurked nothing but "la grande peur", the bourgeoisie's dread of revolution, the Great Dread could be usefully employed in identifying the threat to the nation; not only were the reactionaries able to suggest that democratic pluralism was in itself something un-worthwhile, improper, un-German, but that it was but the first step into the socialist takeover, and by asserting this danger the Right turned the German bourgeoisie into a mixture of willing co-operators in the suppression of socialist activities and impotent hostages of the nationalist credo that promised not only law and order but power and glory as well.

The enthusiasm for colonial expansion took a temporary dive when, except for the aforementioned parts of fever-infested Africa and a few islands in the Pacific, no useful territory was to be had. But then it redirected itself, or was redirected, ominously, to the medieval colonization of the East, the old dream of the Teutonic Order: living space in Poland, Russian and the Ukraine, in tandem with suppression of the domestic opposition. Such projects were sponsored, among other dubious designs, by the PAN-GERMAN LEAGUE, as introduced here by Ian Kershaw:

*The leader of the Pan-German League, Heinrich Class, writing in 1912 under the pseudonym of Daniel Frymann [= "free man", ¶], advocated in his polemical tract WENN ICH DER KAISER WÄR ("If I were the Kaiser", ¶),*

*franchise restrictions, press censorship, repressive laws against socialism, and anti-Jewish legislation as the basis of national renewal.*

*Not least, given the widespread profound disappointment in the Kaiser, he demanded a "strong able leader", whom "all who have remained unseduced by the teachings of ungerman democracy yearn for ... because they know that greatness can only be brought about through the concentration of individual forces, which again can only be achieved by the subordination of a leader." (46)*

These were the musings of people who found Wilhelm too soft. As a result, the Kaiser's compensatory exercises in braggadocio produced even bigger media disasters, which overtaxed the limited abilities of the Foreign Office to correct public opinion in the numerous countries that felt slighted by His Majesty. Caution is the noblest duty of the diplomat, it is said, but was the monarch's least concern.

The future chancellor Bernhard von Bülow wrote from Rome, where he was Ambassador in 1895, to Philip Eulenburg: "Mistakes in internal administration can be rectified by a change of minister. Financial errors can normally be put right within a few months, economic errors within a few years. Even defeats on the battlefield can be compensated for, if usually only after decades. But gross, flagrant errors in the field of foreign policy can often never be made good." (47)

The foreign problems were aggravated by the fact that the professionals failed to do much better than their excitable superior. The Wilhelmstrasse completely neglected its duties; unprofessionalism and internal strife ran rampant; no coherent policy could be established or even formulated. John Röhl gives us a summary:

*... the Auswärtiges Amt of the 1890s presents a unique picture of conflict. Eulenburg saw the Wilhelmstrasse as a veritable "witches' kitchen".*

*Under a Chancellor-General (Caprivi) who understood nothing of foreign policy, and a Foreign Secretary (Marschall) whom Bismarck [then retired, ¶] called "ministre étrangé aux affaires", the imperial German diplomatic corps intrigued against the "Bismarck fronde", against the army (which was establishing a dangerous independence, not least in matters of foreign policy and espionage, by the creation of the system of military attaches), against the Prussian ministers (who despite this title were for the most part nothing other than worthy civil servants), against the governments and the envoys of the German middle states, against the Kaiser's Secret Cabinets and against other influential elements at court. Above all, however, the diplomats intrigued against each other.*

*The Auswärtiges Amt itself intrigued against the ambassadors, ministers and secretaries, both within the Reich's boundaries and abroad. The ambassadors with Bismarckian affiliations - Radowitz, Stumm, Rantzau, Schweinitz, and Reuss - were dismissed and replaced by Holstein's people. The "grey eminence" of the Wilhelmstrasse did not shrink from telling some of them what they should report, thus confirming the despairing words of a Russian ambassador that one had to bring to bear more diplomatic skills when dealing with one's own government than with foreign ones. (48)*

As a result, the Wilhelmstrasse was far too busy to either reveal or obscure - depending on policy - the intentions of the German government. Not unlike Whitehall at certain times, German diplomats delivered strange concoctions of loquaciousness and opacity; easily misunderstood, perhaps fatal, if clarity was required.

Foreign policy is not necessarily over-complicated. In many respects, a nation's foreign relations are predetermined by her resources and geostrategic situation; as in the famous example in which Lord Palmerston explained for England that "We have no eternal allies and we have no eternal enemies; we have eternal interests." (49) In her European policy, Great Britain had two interests and they were simple: not to let any power dominate the continent nor to allow any fleet to threaten the Royal Navy. France had pursued simple if grandiose interests: gain Spain and the Netherlands, fight Habsburgs and British, and keep the German states separated. Yet what after 1890 were the true aims of Wilhelm II or his country, no one could tell, and this was of fatal consequence in the summer of 1914.

For those who listened, it was quite clear from the 1890s onward that the Kaiser's idea of war was that it was a rather normal occasion - he believed and so publicly admitted - that "war" was a "royal sport, to be indulged in by hereditary monarchs and concluded at their will". (50) In the age of machine guns, this was an atavistic attitude. And here the Kaiser's authority in appointments and dismissals fired back: soon no other counsels were waged than such that were sure to meet His Majesty's approval; no one dared to oppose him, and his brown-nosed sycophants, who at length populated the upper crust of the civil and military leadership, became used to and most efficient in anticipating the monarch's desires.

In a speech in Hamburg, on June 18, 1901, which was reported by the London *TIMES* on June 30, 1901, Wilhelm had defined his imperial obligation as follows:

*"We have ... fought for our place in the sun and have won it. It will be my business to see that we retain this place in the sun unchallenged, so that the rays of the sun may exert a fructifying influence upon our foreign trade and traffic." (51)*

It was the word "unchallenged" that led to some consternation in Europe's press offices and foreign ministries: as far as it was known, nobody had recently thrown the gauntlet at Germany. What, then, or whom, did the Kaiser mean - who were the enemies he saw at work, that he had to labour to defeat?

We shall return to the bigger picture of European politics after we have checked on young Adolf Hitler and Rudolf Häusler, who arrive in Munich on a train from Vienna on Sunday, May 25, 1913.



**WHERE EAGLES DARE**

*Every night and every morn,  
Some to misery are born,  
Every morn and every night,  
Some are born to sweet delight,  
Some are born to sweet delight,  
Some are born to endless night.*

William Blake "Auguries of Innocence", L. 119

Then as now, the town of München is the capital of Bavaria, one of the oldest German self-governing states, first as a duchy, then as a kingdom. As European states go, she is of fair to middling size, about 27,000 square miles or 70,000 square kilometres big, slightly smaller than modern Austria or South Carolina, larger than Belgium, Switzerland or West Virginia, and forms the south-eastern part of modern Germany. She shares borders with the Czech Republic, Austria and Switzerland, and reaches, in the northwest, close to Frankfurt in Hesse. In the south, she harbours a part of the great central European mountain range, the Bavarian Alps, with the Zugspitze peak, at 9270 ft. or 2960 metres her highest elevation (Germany's too), where, as the saying goes, only eagles dare to fly.

The earliest population of the land which plays a role in this account was of Celtic origin. They left signs of their presence in Bavaria since approximately the fourth century BC, and were a part of the multitude of Celtic tribes who migrated over the continent and populated, from the fifth century BC on, the length and breadth of Europe, from Ireland to Anatolia. Towns like Paris or Belgrade are named after Celtic tribes, and the Macedonians, a Celtic tribe who had settled in the north of Greece, conquered most of the known world under their soldier-king Alexander in the second half of the fourth century BC.

When Germanic tribes from today's northern Germany, Scandinavia and the Baltic began the great migration south- and westward - which took place chiefly from the first century BC to the sixth century AD - they often journeyed through Bavaria, following the Danube southward. The earliest tribes to meander along the river and to carry on to the southlands were the Cimbri and Teutones, around 108 BC, who were eventually destroyed as a people by the legions of Gaius Marius. Such mostly tumultuous experiences with Germans convinced the Romans at length to prevent their reoccurrence by conquering Bavaria south of the Danube and west of the Rhine, using the rivers and the fortifications they eventually erected along their banks as their principal shield against Barbaric invasion.

One result of the constant migration was that Bavaria's indigenous Celtic population was squeezed between the occupying Latins and the advancing Germans and soon found itself assimilated. On the northernmost point of the Danube the Romans built a stronghold, which eventually became the temporary base of the III Italica Legion and then the town of Castra Regina, today's Regensburg. About fifty miles southwest, another principal Roman settlement developed, Augusta Vindelicum, today's Augsburg, which served as the military headquarter of the region. In the later years of the empire, the famous Legio X, the Tenth Legion, was stationed there, a unit that traced its victorious history back to the days of Julius Caesar.

To guard their possessions between the Upper Danube and the Lower Rhine, the Romans built the Limes, which we encountered earlier, as a secondary line of defence against the "furor teutonicus", German ferocity. The wall did a

decent job for centuries until the overall contraction of the empire in the fifth century AD led to its abandonment. While the Rhine border had been transgressed by more or less peaceful German tribes since about AD 250, the Danube was not crossed with impunity until a century later.

Some of the wandering tribes decided to stay in Bavaria while others moved on, predominantly southward. The most important of the people who chose to settle were the BAIUVARII, who came from Bohemia, Bavaria's eastern neighbour. Eventually, the region was named after her new inhabitants, and "BAIUVARIA" slowly came to be recognized around AD 500. The Baiuvarii had been able to take advantage of the fact that the Ostrogoths, who had taken over the control of the lands south of the Danube from the Romans, had to fight Belisarius and Narses and thus had to recall their Bavarian garrisons to Italy. In the late sixth century, Bavaria was already an independent duchy.

In AD 788, she was incorporated, quite involuntarily, into Charlemagne's Franconian Empire and fell, after the breakup and the battle of Fontenoy, to the titular reign of Louis the German, king of the new realm of Eastern Franconia. Since this day, Bavaria forms a part of the German heartlands.

In the next millennium, the history of Bavaria becomes a part of the greater picture, the history of the Holy Roman Empire. Military threats arose mostly in the east, where invasive Hungarians or Turks had to be fended off in the 10th, 12th, 16th and 17th centuries. In AD 1180, Emperor Friedrich I "Barbarossa" handed Bavaria to his ally Otto von Wittelsbach, and the same family still ruled Bavaria when the train from Vienna carrying Hitler and Häusler rolled to a stop in Munich's Railway Station.

As mentioned above, in the course of Bismarck's unification drive of 1870/71, the support of the Bavarian King Ludwig II - the same who built the famous, or demented, castles of Neuschwanstein, Linderhof and Herrenchiemsee - had to be procured with remarkable concessions regarding Bavaria's autonomy. To her misfortune, however, the country had fallen on hard times lately as far as the royal family was concerned. King Ludwig I [1842-1864], while personally popular and renowned for his building program, which changed the formerly drab town into a respectable city, had been caught spending a surprisingly large part of the national income upon the entertainment of the famous dancer - and part-time spy for France and Russia - Lola Montez. While the Bavarians acknowledged their monarch's taste in female beauty, the future safekeeping of military secrets was deemed important enough to convince the King to retire in favour of his son.

The new king, Ludwig II, did not spend any money on beautiful female spies, because his tastes ran - as it turned out after a big scandal involving Sophie of Bavaria, sister of Empress Elisabeth of Austria - more to his own gender and could apparently be satisfied by the local crop. But then, his peculiarity occasioned the question of how to get, in due time, an heir to the throne. That was, if, in fact, a kingdom remained to be inherited: the son spent the country's fortunes faster than the father, albeit on dream castles and lavish Wagner performances. The advantage of his reign was, by the concerned citizens' consensus, that he did not give away military secrets to ballerinas.

Unfortunately, appearances could no more be kept indefinitely. He was eventually dethroned and had the decency to drown - or was drowned - in a nearby lake a few days later.<sup>1</sup> His apparent replacement was his brother Otto, who, alas, continued the family tradition of having several screws loose. As soon as the by now rather thin-worn patience of court and burghers was exhausted, he was put away in a castle, where he spent the days playing with his 15,000 tin soldiers. The business of the nation was entrusted to Otto's uncle Luitpold, a popular prince of normal intelligence, who was installed as Prince Regent and provided satisfactory government. He was still in office in 1913, when Hitler arrived in München.

The town of München is located on a plain formed by the outer rim of a northern Alpine moraine, on a median elevation of 1,740 feet, and has an agreeable climate: enough snow in the winter to satisfy the ski and wintersport community, and well-tempered summers, in which the townspeople enjoy late evenings in numerous beer gardens, socializing under old chestnut trees, warmed by a sun that does not set until 9:30 pm in mid-summer.

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<sup>1</sup> There is a very good article in German about the current evaluation of Ludwig II at [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig\\_II.\\_\(Bayern\)](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_II._(Bayern))

The name of the town derives from the mixed Latin/Old German expression AD MUNICHEN, which translates as "At the Monks" or "To the Monks", and is derived from its proximity to the well-known Benedictine Abbey on the Tegernsee Lake, about thirty kilometres southeast of the city and a smaller friary the order operated where the old city centre now stands. When a bridge over the Isar River was erected in the eleventh century, many travellers on the important trade and salt route from Salzburg in Austria to Augsburg in Swabia, the town of the Fugger banking clan, chose to rest at the monastery; hence the bridge became known as the place where the road forked, and one could take a rest at the inn operated by the monks, who not only prayed but also brewed a potent porter beer.

The settlement which eventually sprang up near the bridge around AD 1100 was first mentioned in a document in 1158, officially founded by Duke Henry the Lion in 1188, and was elected in 1225 as the new residence for the House of Wittelsbach, whose princes were the Dukes, Electors, and finally Kings of Bavaria. The family reigned over the land from AD 1180 to 1918, 738 years.

The nineteenth century bestowed on the somewhat sleepy town a protracted period of modernization, a side effect of the industrialization that much accelerated from the 1830s on. The land changed within two generations from its former, almost exclusively rural character into a modern industry state. The first German railway line had been opened between the Bavarian towns of Nürnberg and Fürth in 1835, and only half a century later, in Baden and Württemberg, slightly to the west, Nikolaus Otto, Gottfried Daimler and Karl Benz worked on building horseless carriages. The company founded by the latter two, Daimler-Benz, is still one of the finest names in automobile manufacture; Bavaria, of course, is home to the fast cars of BMW and Audi.

Cultural cross-fertilization and a strong artistic inheritance from the Italian Renaissance gave München an almost Italian charm: compared to Prussia, Bavaria was almost anarchy (the royal family was proof enough), but a lovely one and people from near and far came to settle there. The Bavarians still pursue an almost southern tradition of easiness of living, a very un-Prussian flair of *dolce far niente*. The country prides herself, reminiscent of her tradition, as the purveyor of *LIBERTAS BAVARIAE*, Bavarian Liberty; and the land honoured her commitment when, although staunchly Catholic, she provided refuge to over ten thousand French Huguenot, i.e. Calvinist, families, who fled France and the wrath of Catharina de Medici in the seventeenth century after the Edict of Nantes, guaranteeing freedom of worship, had been revoked. The industrious newcomers were an important gain for Bavaria in general and München in particular; a number of streets named after prominent Huguenot families reminds of the benefits they brought to town.

In the fourth decade of the nineteenth century, the early reign of Ludwig I, the town began to lose her provincial character; before he had met Lola, the King had sponsored a public building program in neo-classical style - the results can still be seen on the boulevards of Ludwig Street and Maximilian Street. The genius of architects Leo von Klenze and Friedrich Gärtner remains visible in the great number of their designs adorning the town which we all rebuilt according to the original plans after the bombing damage of the Second World War.

With Bavarian charm and a much more gregarious social climate than stiff-necked Prussia, provincial Berlin or mercantile Hamburg, München became a centre of international art and culture by the end of the nineteenth century, second only to Paris; leaving Vienna's imperial fatigue and London's faux colonial grandeur easily behind. The city possessed, and still does, a multiplicity of cultural institutions and one of the great accumulations of art in the world. Half a dozen of remarkable theatres, two opera and five operetta houses, ranging from the Bavarian State Opera to the People's Theatre, as well as three world-class symphony orchestras and a couple of lesser ones were devoted to the world of the stage alone.

The town harbours museums dedicated to the art of every epoch and culture; among them are five major collections, the Old and New Pinakothek, the Propylees, the Glyptothek, and the "House of Art", for modern works. München is home to the world's greatest museum of technology, the "Deutsches Museum", and innumerable smaller art houses, collections and galleries.

This was apparently not enough, and so two more major museums were built and filled at the end of the nineteenth century, the State Gallery and the National Gallery. Old heirlooms were conserved or restored, the most impressive of which is the singular CUVILLIÉS THEATRE, a snug little stage tacked on a side of the Wittelsbach town palace, an

intimate rococo dream made of white marble, gold and velvet. Another major stage was dedicated to Thalia, the Muse of Comedy, in 1909 with the opening of the PRINZREGENTENTHEATER, the "Prince Regent's Theatre", in honour of Prince Luitpold.

The highlights of stonemasonry include the royal palace of Nymphenburg, an architectural nod to Versailles and seat of the Royal Bavarian Porcelain Manufacture, and the palaces of Schleißheim on the northern fringe of town. In the centre of the city stand the aforementioned town palace, simply called the "Residence" and the "Feldherrnhalle", the Hall of the Generals, dedicated to the memory of battles won.

Second only to Paris, München, then harbouring about 600,000 inhabitants, attracted artists from all countries and walks of life, and became in particular a vortex for the avant-garde. As far as painting goes, the year 1909 alone had witnessed the establishment of four new artist groups, one of which called itself simply the "New Artists Association" and included Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky. In the Café Stephanie in the Amalienstraße, one could meet, at any time of day or night, radical intellectuals like Kurt Eisner, Erich Mühsam or Ernst Toller, all of whom rose to prominence after the war. While these artists and philosophers were far too progressive for Hitler's bourgeois taste, they brought to München artistic flair and fervour unsurpassed until, twenty fateful years later, Berlin entered into the Roaring Twenties. But in 1910, Berlin was a cultural graveyard.

*Schwabing, the pulsating centre of Munich's artistic and bohemian life, drew artists, painters, and writers from all over Germany and from other parts of Europe as well. They turned Schwabing cafés, pubs and cabarets into experimental hothouses of "the modern". "In no city in Germany did old and new clash so forcefully as in Munich," commented Lovis Corinth, one celebrated artist who experienced the atmosphere there at the turn of the century.*

*The theme of decline and renewal, the casting off of the sterile, decaying order, contempt for bourgeois convention, for the old, the stale, the traditional, the search for new expression and aesthetic values, the evocation of feeling over reason, the glorification of youth and exuberance, linked many of the disparate strands of Munich's modernist cultural scene.*

*The Stefan George circle; the scourge of bourgeois morality, playwright and cabaret balladeer Frank Wedekind; the great lyric poet Rainer Maria Rilke; and the Mann brothers - Thomas, famous since the publication in 1901 of his epic novel of bourgeois decline, BUDDENBROOKS, and whose vignette of bourgeois decay, DER TOD IN VENEDIG (Death in Venice) had been published the year that Hitler arrived, and his elder, more politically radical brother Heinrich - were but some among the galaxy of literary luminaries in pre-war Munich.*

*In painting, too, the challenge of "the modern" characterized the era. Around the very time that Hitler was in Munich, Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Paul Klee, Alexej von Jawlensky, Gabriele Muenster, and August Macke were leading lights in the group DER BLAUE REITER, revolutionizing artistic composition in brilliant and exciting new forms of expressionist painting. The visual arts would never be the same. (1)*

The "Nomads", as Munich's citizens fondly called the long-haired creatures, many of whom were hailing from easterly countries of which nothing much was known, streamed into Schwabing, Munich's equivalent of the Montparnasse. Schwabing was the northern and most recent part of the city, where the streets, according to a popular adage, were straight east-west only to provide good light for the artist's studios, and where every street corner housed a café or restaurant providing nourishment, rest, and sometimes inspiration for the artists between their creative eruptions.

Despite his ignorance of and general distaste for modernism, Hitler was a Bohemian by nature and shared the need for liberty and license. Here in München, his idol Richard Wagner had composed DAS RHEINGOLD, the MEISTERSÄNGER VON NÜRNBERG and TRISTAN AND ISOLDE; here Richard Strauss created a scandal with his opera SALOME in 1905, the DANCE OF THE VEILS scene particularly shocking the Munichers, and another with ELEKTRA, but had become a true celebrity with the outrageously popular ROSENKAVALIER; the latter two works featured librettos by the young genius Hugo von Hofmannsthal. And in a little room atop of another café, Oswald Spengler scribbled away on what would become the first volume of THE DECLINE OF THE WEST.

At one of the many cabarets, the "Eleven Executioners" waged political satire, and Frank Wedekind portrayed the Erinyes of illicit sex in gloomy ballads. Here revolutionaries of any ilk and calibre peddled their doctrines and, at the Ludwig-Maximilian University, moved to München in 1826 from Landshut where it had been founded in 1471, a complete spectrum of political designs was brought to the attention of students and burghers alike. The main campus happened to be in Schwabing as well, providing the students, always on the prowl for new and exotic sensations, with a stage for every imaginable and some unlikely forms of artistic impression. The light-hearted spirit in which even the most outrageous or ridiculous doctrines of art or politics found an attentive audience became the modern articulation of Libertas Bavariae. In the juxtaposition of William Blake's verse, Schwabing was clearly born to sweet delight, and unconventional souls from all over the globe flocked to München.

One such unconventional soul was Herr Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov, who was hearing law and politics at the University, where he had inscribed himself as Herr Meyer. Herr Meyer was domiciled in Schleißheimerstraße 106, only a few blocks west of the campus and was better known in his native Russia under the alias "Lenin".

Another unconventional soul, Adolf Hitler, soon frequented the same cafés, pubs and beer gardens in Schwabing, reading newspapers while slowly sipping on a cup of coffee, or peddling his paintings in art shops or simply on the street. Opposite the main University building, a hundred yards past the Siegestor, a quarter-mile of the Leopoldstraße serves as the artists' outdoor gallery, and until this day the resident painters sell their works there. Adolf was, as we will find out, a bit of a revolutionary himself, but the year 1913 saw him half-frightened and half-intoxicated by the sheer rush of the artistic scene.

As mentioned above, the friends had arrived from Vienna on Sunday, May 25, 1913, and immediately set out to find accommodation. They walked down Schleißheimerstraße, northwest of the railway station, and, in the window of a small tailor shop at # 34, noticed a small sign advertising a room to let. They went in, and quickly closed a deal with the tailor's wife, Frau Anna Popp, to rent a tiny mansard on the third floor. On May 26 respectively 29, they registered with the Munich police, with Hitler estimating the duration of their visit at two years. (2) In Vienna, Hitler had alerted the police to his leaving, as he was required to do, but had left no forwarding address; the police file dryly states „destination unknown", indicating that Hitler was not keen on his whereabouts becoming known. This would concur with the fact that his earlier "disappearance" in the autumn of 1909<sup>2</sup> magically coincides with the exact period in which he was obliged to report to the Austrian army.

The third floor of Schleißheimerstraße 34 was divided: to the left was the apartment of the Popp, to the right lived the Schmidt family. A separate entry led into a room within the Popp's side that was clearly built for renting out, and the two friends took it. The room was rather small, about 10 x 15 ft. but had a window facing the street. By Frau Popp's memory, the rent was six marks each per week, three marks each, but after Häusler moved out and rented the identical room on the Schmidt side for himself on February 16, 1914, Hitler's rent was reduced to five marks. (3)

He had now arrived in the town that would become his principal residence for the next twenty years; the town he was to christen later the HAUPTSTADT DER BEWEGUNG, the "Capital of the [Nazi] Movement". For a while, the Popp's became his family; Robert Payne gives us a *mise en scene* of life at Schleißheimerstraße 34:

*Many years later, when the National Socialists were in power, Frau Popp was asked what she remembered about her lodger. Naturally, she remembered many things to his advantage: he was kind to the children, Peppi and Liesel, and was modest, well-mannered, and self-effacing. He spent the day painting and drawing, and he studied every evening and every night. ...*

*She was one of these inquisitive landladies who examine the possessions of their tenants, and she remembered that his books were "all political stuff and how to get on in Parliament." She also remembered something that others had observed: his solitude.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter X. He left Sechshausenstrasse 56, c/o Frau Antonie Oberlechner, on September 16, 1909, without providing a forwarding address, and did not re-register with the Vienna police until February 8, 1910, the day he resurfaced and moved into the men's hostel at Meldemannstrasse.

*He seemed to have no friends, lived completely alone [as mentioned above, for reasons unknown, nobody mentioned Rudolf Häusler before Thomas Orr investigated the neighbourhood in 1952, ¶], refused the Popp's invitations to share their supper, rejecting all their overtures, and spent whole days in his room without stirring outside. He lived on bread and sausages and sometimes knocked politely on their kitchen door to ask for some hot water for his tea.*

*"He camped in his room like a hermit with his nose stuck in these thick heavy books," she said. It puzzled her that he should be both a painter and a voracious reader, and one day she asked him what all this reading had to do with his painting. He smiled, took her by the arm, and said: "Dear Frau Popp, does anybody know what is and what isn't likely to be of use to him in life?" (4)*

The Popp liked him. He knew how to behave, which impressed them, for it seemed to imply that, in reality, beyond the mask they were sure he was wearing, he was someone different, someone better than who he professed to be. He lived on his own planet, not necessarily in the known universe, and had no contacts we know about except that a former resident of the men's hostel claimed to have met him once in München, in a chance encounter at the railway station.<sup>3</sup>

He did paint, though, and he did sell his works; we have a good handful of reports by his customers. The physician Dr. Hans Schirmer remembered:

*... I was sitting one summer evening in the garden of the Hofbräuhaus, nursing my beer. Around 8 p.m. I noticed a very modest and somewhat coarsely clad young man, who looked to me like a poor student. The young man went from table to table, offering a small oil painting for sale.*

*Time lapsed, and it was around perhaps 10 p.m. when I saw him again and realized that he still had not sold the picture. When he came near me, I asked him whether I could buy it, since his fate troubled me somewhat. He answered: "Yes, please," and when I asked for the price, he put it at five Marks.*

*My fortunes at that time ... were not great, and since I had in my pockets only the little cash one needed to buy the beer, I gave the young man three Marks and my address, on a prescription form, and asked him to come back, with the painting, to my practice the next day, where I would give him the rest.*

*He handed me the painting right away and told me he would see me tomorrow immediately after the transaction was finished, he went to the buffet and bought two Frankfurters and a roll, but no beer." (5)*

A merchant in hats, Josef Würbser, was visited in his store.

*"It was in April 1914. I was manning the cashier post, in the hat shop Zehme at Marienplatz and Dienerstraße, when a young man came in and asked me whether I would be interested in buying two of his paintings. He needed to sell them in order to buy books for his studies.*

*Since I dabbled in painting a bit myself, my interest was immediately aroused, and I studied the two paintings, one of which showed the "Old Mayor's Office" and the other "The Old Courtyard". I liked the pictures, which showed the beautiful motives in the brightest of colours and bought both of them. I cannot recall the price exactly, but it must have been between fifteen and twenty-five marks." (6)*

The jeweller Otto Paul Kerber recalled:

*"A young man came into my store one day in 1912 [it must have been 1913 or early 1914, ¶] and offered me a watercolour of the Munich Residence. I liked the painting and bought this and subsequently a few more paintings of the young man, who came by regularly. As far as I remember, I paid, depending on size and quality, between 15 and 20 Marks per picture." (7)*

<sup>3</sup> The name of the man was Josef Greiner, who seems to have been a welsher and a blackmailer. In 1939 and 1947, he published books describing his supposed friendship with Hitler in München and Vienna. Both books were banned, the 1939 one by the Nazis themselves, the 1947 opus by the occupation authority. Cf. Joachimsthaler (8)

Little did they know it then, but most of his customers made the deal of their life, for, in the Third Reich, the paintings sold for up to 5,000 Mark. It remained clear, however, that the attraction was the artist, not the work. Joachim Fest remarks about Hitler's artistic fancies and idols:

*His standards had remained unchanged since his days in Vienna, when he paid no heed to the artistic and intellectual upheavals of the period. Cool classicist splendour on the one hand and pompous decadence on the other - Anselm von Feuerbach, for example, and Hans Makart - were his touchstones. With the resentments of the failed candidate for the academy, he raised his own taste into an absolute.*

*He also admired the Italian Renaissance and early Baroque art; the majority of the pictures in the Berghof belonged to this period. His favourites were a half-length nude by Bordone, the pupil of Titian, and a large coloured sketch by Tiepolo. On the other hand, he rejected the painters of the German renaissance because of their austerity.*

*As the pedantic faithfulness of his own water colours might suggest, he always favoured craftsmanlike precision. He liked the early Lovis Corinth but regarded Corinth's brilliant later work, created in a kind of ecstasy of old age, with pronounced irritation and banned him from the museums. Significantly, he also loved sentimental genre paintings, like the winebibbing monks and fat tavernkeepers of Eduard Grützner. In his youth, he told his entourage, it had been his dream someday to be successful enough to be able to afford a genuine Grützner. Later, many works by this painter hung in his Munich apartment on Prinzregentenstraße.*

*Alongside them he put gentle, folksy idylls by Spitzweg, a portrait of Bismarck by Lenbach, a park scene by Anselm von Feuerbach, and one of the many variations of *Sin* by Franz von Stuck. In the "Plan for a German National Gallery," which he had sketched on the first page of his 1925 sketchbook, these same painters appear, together with names like Overbeck, Moritz von Schwind, Hans von Martes, Defregger, Boecklin, Piloty, Leibl, and, finally, Adolph von Menzel, to whom he assigned no fewer than five rooms in the gallery. (9)*

His business increased slowly, he obtained steady customers, and some actually ordered in advance. The chemist Dr. Schnell, who had a shop at Sendlinger Straße 42 near the city centre and a chemical manufacture in the northern district of Milbertshofen, (10) remembered that one day a poor young painter came in...

*... who apparently had been told by somebody that I had previously helped poor artists. He asked for a bit of support. "I am an architectural painter," the young man said and offered to paint a small picture for me. On inquiry, he stated his name as Hitler, he was Austrian and in town to become a painter.*

*"Well then, please paint me the Asam Church next door," Dr. Schnell said. "After eight or ten days, Hitler brought a small painting of the Asam Church, which was surprisingly well done. I paid him the agreed-on Twenty Marks and bought a few more of his paintings, which he always delivered on time. I was also able to pass on further orders, which I received from my acquaintances that saw the picture of the Asam Church. ... Then the First World War intervened, and Hitler and the paintings were forgotten. ...*

*When Hitler entered the political scene after the Great War, I wanted to find out whether the politician Adolf Hitler was indeed identical with the pre-war painting student. So once I briefly went to the Hofbräuhaus, where Hitler was addressing a rally, and established that he was indeed the same man whose paintings I had bought. ...*

*Much later, after the Nazis came to power, I was once invited by Hitler to the Four Seasons Hotel. He asked how I was doing and how the paintings were, and whether he could do me a favour. One time, between 1934 and 1936, a man from the staff of the "Führer's Deputy" Hess visited me in the office by the shop, in which Hitler's town paintings hung, and inquired whether Hess, who was interested in the paintings, could come and see them. Hess then did show up, with two or three other gentlemen, and viewed the pictures. ... Later some party office asked for my permission to make photocopies of the paintings, for the party archive, which I granted." (11)*

Based on the testimonies of Hitler's customers and Frau Popp, who said that he produced a painting every two or three days, Anton Joachimsthaler computed that if he sold, say, ten paintings a month, he could live rather well. In his municipal sales license, which he needed to peddle his paintings legally and which doubled as a tax form, he entered sales of approximately one hundred Marks per month, which probably was the lowest number he could get away with. Even if he initially earned less than the fifteen or twenty marks that seem to have become the norm after a few months, he must have earned between 150 and 200 Marks per month soon. This was rather decent, compared to the wages of a normal worker, who at this time in München earned between 96 and 116 Marks but had to provide for his family, too. (12)

As in Vienna, it seems that Hitler had more money than he let on, and his professions of poverty in MEIN KAMPF ought to be taken with a large spoonful of salt. Even if it is true that he, as he later claimed, often had only one Mark for his lunch or dinner, this amount must be set in relation to the prices of the time, which were very low. A litre of beer, approximately two pints, was 30 Pfennige (pennies), one egg 7 Pfennige, a pound loaf of bread 16 Pfennige and a litre of milk 22 Pfennige. One Mark went a long way.

As far as we know, his way of life did not deviate much from that of Vienna, which may teach us caution about the tales Hitler later spun of his studies of politics, philosophy and history in pre-war München. In one of the table monologues during the Second World War, he professed art, not politics, as his reason to go to München.

*"[I wanted to continue] ... to keep working as an autodidact and to add on a period of practical work once I was in the Reich. I went to Munich happily: I had set my goal to learn for three more years and then, at 28 years of age, to apply as a designer at Heilmann & Littmann [a Munich construction firm, ¶].*

*I would have entered their first competition, and, I believed, they would realize my talent and acknowledge my faculties. I had contributed, privately, to all the current architectural competitions, and when the designs for the new Opera House in Berlin were publicized, my heart started beating, and I told myself, that they were much worse than what I had delivered. I had specialized in stage design." (13)*

None of the orderly archives of these competitions preserved any of the entries Hitler had, privately, contributed, so that, alas, we are precluded from a proper judgement of their artistic value.

His repose in München provided him with a less conspicuous benefit: that he, as he believed, has escaped being drafted into the Austrian army. It was the standard in Austria as in all other European countries, that the young men of a certain age, twenty, in Austria, were called up for the military which kept them, after two or three years of active service, at the beck and call of the reserve units for the next twenty years or so. Hitler had been required to register in the autumn of 1909, exactly when he disappeared. Even if he had had a valid excuse, say, illness, he was required to reregister in 1910 or 1911. Given Hitler's unfavourable opinion of the Habsburg state, it cannot surprise us that he felt no urge to serve it.

On August 11, 1913, the Linzer police issued a warrant for Hitler, alleging draft-evasion. From Hitler's remaining relatives, perhaps the Schmidts, they found out that he lived in the men's hostel in Vienna. On inquiry, Vienna reported back to Linz that Hitler had flown out, leaving no forwarding address, but that a few occupants of the hostel remembered that Hitler had spoken of going to München.

Linz thus inquired in München, and on January 8, 1914, was notified that Hitler was indeed registered in München, c/o Popp, Tailor, Schleißheimerstraße 34/111. In the afternoon of January 18, 1914, a troop of the Munich police was sent there to serve Hitler with an Austrian summons for military inspection.

*"Herr Adolf Hitler, born 1889, domiciled Linz an der Donau, presently staying in Munich, care of Popp, Schleißheimerstraße 34/111, is hereby summoned to present himself for military registration in Linz, at 30 Kaiserin Elisabeth Quay on January 20th, 1914, and in the event of his failure to comply with this summons, he will be liable to prosecution under Paragraphs 64 and 66 of the Law regarding Military Service of the Year 1912." (14)*

This was no joke. According to the Austro-Bavarian Extradition Treaty of 1831, he could be arrested and delivered to the authorities in Linz in iron fetters if he did not heed the call. Hitler talked to the officer in charge of the delegation,

Constable Herle, who demanded a signature for the receipt of the summons. For the benefit of the constable and his crew, Hitler composed an impromptu apology:

*"I missed to register myself in the autumn of 1909, but corrected this oversight in February 1910. At this time I reported to the Conscription Office IB in the Mayor's Mansion, and from there was directed to my home precinct, the XXth. I asked to report right there in Vienna [instead of Linz], signed some protocol or affidavit, paid one Krone and never heard again of the affair.*

*It never entered my mind, however, to evade registration, neither is this the reason for my residing in Munich. I was always registered with the police in Vienna, <sup>4</sup> as I am here in Munich." (15)*

The Austrians must have forgotten him, he said, for he was clearly no deserter. We do not know what Herle thought of the story, but in all probability it was not the first time in his career that he encountered a suspect blaming an error on the authorities. The story Hitler concocted was fishy in itself, and maybe he counted upon the Bavarian officer's ignorance of Austrian military laws and procedure; the European nations of this age very carefully kept track of their prospective recruits and did not simply "forget" them; the requirement of registering every change of address had been, in fact, created exactly for this military purpose.

Herle arrested Hitler and took him to the police headquarters. On the next morning, the prisoner was presented to the Austrian Consulate General. It appears that he was assisted there by a consular officer or perhaps a paralegal, for he was allowed to present his case in a written statement. This was not quite the normal procedure; perhaps Hitler's sangfroid began to work.

By then he had fleshed out his tale. First he claimed, untruthfully, that he had received the summons too late; then he contended that the problem was the fault of the Austrians, who had mistakenly looked for him in Linz when he was actually in Vienna or vice versa. Eloquent in excuse, and strangely lachrymose in tone, his statement reminds the reader of the wheedling style of his father's letter to the bishop of Linz in the marriage affair, when it describes his toilsome life in München. Fortuna has conserved the document, which allows us a look into the young man's vexations:

*... In the summons I am described as an artist. I bear this title by right, but it is only relatively accurate. I earn my living independently as a painter, being totally deprived of an income (my father was a civil servant), and I work only in order to further my education. Only a small portion of my time can be spent in earning a living, for I am still educating myself to become an architectural painter.*

*My income is therefore very modest, just enough to cover my expenses. As testimony I refer you to my income tax statement, which is enclosed, and I would be grateful if it could be returned to me. It will be seen that my income is estimated at 1200 Marks, which is rather more than I really earn, and does not mean that I actually make 100 Marks a month. Oh no. ...*

*With regard for my failure to report for military service in the autumn of 1909, I must say that this was for me an endlessly bitter time. I was then a young man without experience, receiving no financial assistance from anyone, and too proud to accept financial assistance from others, let alone beg for it. Without support, compelled to depend on my own efforts, I earned only a few Kronen and often only a few farthings from my labours, and this was often insufficient to pay for a night's lodging. For two long years I had no other mistress than sorrow and need, no other companion than eternally unsatisfied hunger. I never knew the beautiful word youth.*

*Even today, five years later, I am constantly reminded of these experiences, and the remainders take the form of frost blisters on my fingers, hands and feet. And yet I cannot remember those days without a certain pleasure, now that these vexations have been surmounted. In spite of great want, amid often dubious surroundings, I nevertheless kept my name clean, had a blameless record with the law, and possessed a clear*

<sup>4</sup>This was an outright lie; we know he was not registered from September 16, 1909 to February 8, 1910. He repeated the lie in the letter to the Austrian authorities (n. 458), but, luckily, nobody checked the false claim.

*conscience - except for that one constantly remembered fact that I failed to register for military service. This is the one thing I feel responsible for. It would seem that a moderate fine would be an ample penance, and of course I will pay the fine willingly.*

*I am sending this letter independently of the testimony, which I have signed today at the Consulate. I request that any further orders should be transmitted to me through the Consulate and beg you to believe that I shall fulfil them promptly.*

*All the declarations made by me concerning my case have been verified by the Consular authorities. They have been exceedingly generous and have given me hope that I may be able to fulfil my military duties at Salzburg. Although I cannot dare to hope for such a thing, I request that this affair may not be made unduly difficult for me.*

*I request that you take the present letter under consideration, and I sign myself, Very respectfully,*

ADOLF HITLER

Artist

Munich

Schleißheimerstraße 34/111 (16)

This letter is an early and excellent insight in the mind of a person who would go on to become a professional deceiver. It is not only the sheer bending of the facts that surprises, it is also the style of the missive; it reveals that Hitler knew exactly what to write and how.

The letter reeks of the specific style of the age, of the servile lachrymosity employed when one has a problem with the authorities. The submissive, sometimes brown-nosed and sometimes cajoling tone is, by today's standards, an all too obvious attempt to induce sympathy for one's pleadings in the face of a stern bureaucrat, who has the power to take drastic measures. It may well be true that bureaucrats in general expect Byzantine flattery, and antecedent obedience from the public they serve (and which pays their salaries), but Hitler's letter almost sounds as if he were trying to poke fun at the addressees. The style is hither awkward and yonder familiar, eerily intimate at times, as if to beg money from a rarely-seen uncle.

Strikingly effective, however, is his argumentation: even before the judgement is cast, he appeals to a higher court, beyond the transient character of Austrian military justice. His crime is not desertion, he claims, his bane was poverty. He will be using a very similar tactic of confessing to a nonexistent charge eleven years later, when facing trial for the Beer Hall Putsch. As he will then, he now proclaims his guiltlessness; in the words of Robert Payne, "the higher court [eternal justice, perhaps, ¶] will pronounce him innocent, for his only crime is poverty; his name is clean, his record blameless, his conscience clear. He claims that his sole ambition in life is to serve the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and as we read the letter we know that he despises this monarchy and all its works, and has not the least intention of abiding by its orders." (17)

In the event, his attempts to enlist the sympathies of the consular staff were successful: the consul himself agreed to forward Hitler's letter to Linz, along with one of his own, in which he states that he personally as well as the Munich police believe that Hitler was honest and missed the registration by mistake, not criminal intention. Furthermore, the Herr Consul recommended that Hitler should be allowed to face the military examination board in the border town of Salzburg rather than to have to travel all the way to Linz. Showing rare generosity, the consulate even paid for Hitler's train fare.

The military command in Linz agreed, and on February 5, 1914, Hitler took a train to Salzburg. In a brief examination, the doctors found Hitler unfit for combat or auxiliary duty and dismissed him without further obligations. That was exactly what Hitler had hoped for, and he went back to Schwabing and his books and paintings with a lighter heart. In MEIN KAMPF, he later claimed that the lively political discussions in the cafes and beer gardens trained his intellect and improved his adeptness of argument. Of paramount importance, he wrote, was his repeated study of Marxism.

*"I again immersed myself in the theoretical literature of this new world, attempting to achieve clarity concerning its possible effects, and then compared it with the actual phenomena and events it brings about in political, cultural and economic life. Now for the first time I turned my attention to master this world-plague."  
(18)*

Three considerations may cause us to doubt the veracity of the statement. Since Hitler had never been "employed" in the sense that a factory worker is employed, one may doubt how much he truly understood of the realities of collective bargaining, of accident insurance, workman's compensation, health care or pension plans, the bread-and-butter tasks of labour unions. Second, at the time he supposedly "immersed" himself in the study of Marxism, the Russian October Revolution, or any other communist revolution were still years in the future, and no country in the world had a socialist government. Thus one may wonder how exactly Hitler formed his opinion of the "world-plague" and where the "actual phenomena and events" occurred which he said he observed. It appears much more likely that these parts of MEIN KAMPF - written not before 1924 - represent hindsight, and that he afforded himself prescient clairvoyance of the evils of Marxism as early proof of his political genius. Thirdly, it is questionable how much free time painting and selling the pictures left him.

But he came to like Munich as much as he of late despised Vienna. The townspeople had an easy way of living, Hitler liked the Bavarian dialect, which he had picked up as a child in Passau, and the racial and lingual hodgepodge of Vienna that he had learned to detest was completely absent. Even in the very cold winter of 1913/14, when fewer customers than usual could be found on the snow-covered streets and empty beer gardens, he was still high in spirits; Munich continued to shine.<sup>5</sup>

Yet it is clear that he did not partake in the social or political life of the town; not a single document, no newspaper clip mentions his name. With the exception of Rudolf Häusler, we know of no other acquaintances. In the last sixty years, all likely archives have been searched: we have, for example, even a letter of a friend, Fritz Seidl, who knew Hitler during the one year at the boarding-house of Frau Sekira in Linz, when they were in first grade at the Unterrealschule; but nothing from Munich. (19) In a well-known paragraph of MEIN KAMPF, Hitler praised the town:

*"If today I am more attached to this city than to any other spot on earth in this world, it is partly due to the fact that it is and remains inseparably bound up with the development of my life; if even then I achieved the happiness of a truly inward contentment, it can be attached only to the magic which this miraculous residence of the Wittelsbachs exerts on every man who is blessed, not only with a calculating mind but with a feeling soul." (20)*

But when he sat in the cafés and read the newspapers, he could not fail to become informed of the latest international tensions. The Balkans occupied the headlines again, as they had when war had erupted there in 1912 and 1913. In one of the literarily more recommendable passages of Mein Kampf, Hitler describes the peculiar atmosphere of early 1914:

*"As early as my Vienna period, the Balkans were immersed in that livid sultriness which customarily announces the hurricane, and from time to time a beam of brighter light flared up, only to vanish again in the spectral darkness.*

*But then came the Balkan War and with it the first gust of wind swept across a Europe grown nervous. The time which now followed lay on the chests of men like a heavy nightmare, sultry as feverish tropic heat, so that due to constant anxiety the sense of the approaching catastrophe turned at last to longing: let Heaven at last give free reign to the fate which could no longer be thwarted. And then the first mighty lightning flash struck the earth; the storm was unleashed and with the thunder of Heaven there mingled the roar of the World War batteries." (21)*

<sup>5</sup>"Munich Shines!" was the title of a popular cabaret program.



MUNICH, CITY CENTRE

IN THE FOREGROUND, [ST.] MARY'S SQUARE, THE TOWN CENTRE, WHERE, ON NOVEMBER 9, 1923, THE MORNING OF THE BEER HALL PUTSCH, JULIUS STREICHER TRIED TO ENLIST THE AID OF THE CROWDS IN FAVOUR OF A NATIONAL REVOLUTION AND A MARCH ON BERLIN. THE GOTHIC BUILDING IS THE MAYOR'S AND TOWN COUNCIL'S RESIDENCE, WITH THE FAMOUS CLOCK TOWER AND GLOCKENSPIEL.



MUNICH - LUDWIGSTRASSE AND ALPS

THE SIEGESTOR, OR VICTORY ARCH, IN THE FOREGROUND, BEHIND IT ON THE RIGHT THE UNIVERSITY, IN ITS BACKGROUND THE TWIN TOWERS OF THE DOME. THE STREET IS LUDWIGSTRASSE, ONE OF THE TOWN'S MAIN THOROUGHFARES, BEFORE THE WIDER BACKGROUND OF THE ALPS.



SCHLEISSHEIMER STRASSE 34

THIS IS THE HOUSE IN MÜNCHEN IN WHICH ADOLF HITLER LIVED FROM MAY 1913 TO AUGUST 1914. THE X IN THE THIRD FLOOR WINDOW MARKS HIS ROOM. IN THE THIRD REICH, THE HOUSE WAS DECORATED WITH THE MEMORIAL PLATE SHOWN IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH.

The steady worsening of Europe's international relations since about 1906 will properly be the subject of the following chapters. But in a strange way, all the accounts we have of June and July 1914 agree on its perfect weather, which contrasted so starkly with what was to follow. On these long summer nights, Hitler was still selling the fruits of his brush and pencil in the beer gardens unless he was busy painting the glow of the sunsets. But he was in his mansard, alone, immersed in a book, on the afternoon of June 28, 1914, when his landlady stormed up the stairs and entered his room without knocking on the door.

In tears, Frau Popp informed her lodger that earlier in the day the heir apparent to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Habsburg and his wife Sophie had been assassinated in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, by a young man called Gavrilo Princip, an anarchist with presumed connections to Serbia.

The archduke, a nephew of Emperor Francis Joseph, had arrived in Bosnia three days earlier to inspect the annual military manoeuvres. After the conclusion of the exercise, the prince insisted on paying a visit to the Bosnian capital, although the local administration had received warnings of a plot. Half a dozen conspirators, dispersed over the town's main thoroughfares, had been waiting for the royal couple, but it was only dumb luck that Princip met the open royal carriage backing out slowly from the wrong end of a one-way street, unguarded. He fired a pistol twice and killed both the archduke and his wife.

Hitler ran down the staircase and joined the crowds that assembled on the streets. In Vienna, a mob already beleaguered the Serbian Embassy. The news from Sarajevo was the sensation of the year.



PARIS BORDONE, VENUS AND AMOR - ONE OF HITLER'S FAVOURITE PAINTINGS. IT HUNG AT THE BERGHOF AND REMAINS NOW AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM, WARSAW.