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THE RESPONSE OF INTELLECTUALS TO HITLER  
AS REFLECTED IN BOOKS AND  
THEIR REVIEWS BETWEEN  
1928 AND 1936

by

Michael A. Oppenheimer

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and  
Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion  
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Referee, Prof. Ellis Rivkin

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## DIGEST

We have attempted to chart the flux of intellectual opinion as it responded to Adolf Hitler. Our sources were books, and reviews of them written in English from 1928 to 1936. Due to the vastness of relevant material (hundreds of books and thousands of reviews), digests were used to focus and form our research.

The Hitler of the abortive 1923 Beer Hall Putsch was given brief mention in a few books between 1928 and 1931, comments ranging from dismissal to a promising future in German politics. Reviewers overlooked the Nazi.

1932 heralded Hitler's entry into true published recognition, four books mentioning him in part and four more in toto. Opinion ran 25% in favor, 50% against, and 25% undecided, with three authors agreed that Hitler was Germany's most logical hope for a satisfying future. Most reviewers were noncommittal, but the remaining few were equally split for and against.

With Hitler receiving the chancellorship in late 1933, his impact on authors grew (thirteen books in 1933, twenty-two in 1934). 1933 book opinion was only slightly more negative than 1932, but the reviewers who made a stand were almost four to one against. While some said Hitler was right for Germany, almost all decried the violence and persecution of the Nazis, and most felt Hitler was a poor choice for Leader. The negative trend among books was accentuated in 1934

(60% against and 20% for) while reviewers relaxed their condemnation (now only two to one against). This surprising phenomenon is partly explained by the rise in propaganda books (15% to 22%), and rise in novels which attacked the State politically because of crackdown against its enemies. Reviewers were reticent to condemn as severely that which obviously-biased authors condemned.

The peak of attack was reached in 1935. 83% of the books were against the Nazis while only 11% saw something positive in the regime. Reviewers reverted to their four to one negativism, now accepting the conclusions implied by the books, 45% of which were definitely propaganda against Hitler. The continued persecutions and increased economic and military threat of Nazi Germany solidified negative opinion among observers.

The peak of negativism passed, and 1936 finds 62% of the books against and 38% in favor (to some degree) of the Hitler government. The 45% negative propaganda of 1935 is matched in 1936, but a 13% positive partisan bias is added. Reviewers, too, change their allegiance (39% in favor and 32% against). The shift is so marked that we now find the Hitler violence securing some well-written justification.

The gamut was run, from dismissal and increased negativism to a decided shift toward approbation. At no time, however, was there lacking someone who saw something good in Hitler or his Party; at no time did Hitler ever command total respect and recognition from his observers. It seems, from our study, that intellectuals, no matter how perceptive, or how vast their fund of knowledge of the past or present, are not assured of learning the truth. Such disparity of intellectual

opinion reveals to us the somewhat amorphous and insecure base upon which interpreters of humanity operate, and the subjectivity and error which enter into even the most strongly supported theories of reality.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND THE METHOD

It has always been an interesting task to look back in history, and note the perceptivity or lack thereof of historians and writers when writing of their own time. It is this task to which we have directed our attention, but our goal is more than amusement. We have attempted to chart the flux and shift of intellectual opinion as it responded to Adolf Hitler. The years of our concern are 1928 to 1936, and the source material consists of books published in English and the reviews of them written in English.

Our desire is not to judge these writers, for men write in their time as they see the truth from the small portion of reality they experience. Hindsight can do no better than sharpen its perceptivity via the efforts of predecessors. We can merely show the trends of changing attitudes. Therefore, our task is not to evaluate the truth or falsehood of facts authors state, but to reveal their attitudes to Hitler as he rose in power and influence.

In an historical study there are several complaints which can always be raised. The first of these is that the total source material is not always available to the writer.

This is, of course, true in our case also. We were not always able to locate a complete list of books published in any one year, nor were we always fortunate enough to locate books or reviews we knew existed. (These problems existed because of the book digest used, and the limited nature of the library used.) A second objection to our historical study might be that those books and reviews which were printed were only the ones which the "establishment" or "power structure" wanted. They, thus, give only one or a few vested-interest points of view. These two objections can be easily disposed of by stating that this is the only way our endeavor could proceed. Our study admittedly is limited by the very nature of the sources, but we must derive a theory of what is taking place within our limited scope of perception.

Our study, then, is of two interrelated lines of endeavor: books, and their reviews. One major aid was used to locate and analyze both these types of writing: the Book Review Digest. Published yearly by the H. W. Wilson Company, these volumes index the books of a particular year, give a summary of each book (some brief, some extended), and list the location of all the reviews of each book along with extended quotes from most of the reviews. In the nine years analyzed, we scanned all those books which the Digest summaries hinted might be relevant to our subject, as well as the quoted reviews. At times we turned to the total review in the original periodical (e.g. magazine, newspaper literary

supplement) to obtain more data. The books used as the prime source for this study number over ninety, but an additional 150 were scanned via the Digest summaries or, at times, the book itself. It is thus hoped that our study has gleaned most of the appropriate material from the many books written in those years from 1928 to 1936.

In evaluating a writer's attitude toward Hitler, the following categories were developed and used: + = a positive attitude toward Hitler or the Nazis; - = a negative attitude toward Hitler or the Nazis; + and - = both positive and negative attitudes expressed by the same writer; 0 = the writer does not mention either Hitler or the Nazis; ? = the writer mentions Hitler or the Nazis, but remains neutral. In both the books and reviews, writers tended to underplay opinions unless they were representative of a certain extreme bias. In evaluating the sources, then, difficulty was often encountered thus necessitating the "0" and "?" categories. Also, writers tended to find both good and bad in Hitler, his actions, his motivations, or his cohorts, thus showing the need for the "+ and -" category.

The material lent itself to statistical analysis, and from this a certain cycle of opinion was seen. It is this cycle which governs the chapter divisions of the rest of the text. The cycle seems to run parallel in the books and reviews, although not always for a particular book and its reviews. This mixing of all the books and all the reviews is justified since the study attempts to explain shifts in the

total climate of intellectual opinion. To avoid added confusion in the study, the years of publication rather than major events in Hitler's rise governed the statistical breakdowns seen from the sources.

It is probable that analysis of total books and total reviews would yield somewhat different results, but the limitations of time and sources prevented such a doctoral analysis. As it stands, the study reflects great searching with some results.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WORLD SEES A FAILURE (1928-1931)

OR

### NOBODY LOVES A LOSER

On November 9, 1923 the Beer Hall Putsch took place with Hitler, Ludendorff, and Kahr as the main actors in the plot. This abortive revolution was followed by Hitler's jail term and the writing of his magnum opus Mein Kampf. During the years 1928 through 1931 ten books appeared in English which referred to Hitler and his National Socialist Party, but none of them devoted more than ten pages to Hitler. In most cases, these references consisted of the plain facts of the Putsch with a curtain being drawn on the future of the would-be dictator. "It is certain that such endeavors, as...the Hitler Putsch of 1923, will fail."<sup>1</sup> "The revolt was so easily suppressed that it has been humorously called the Beer Hall Putsch."<sup>2</sup> "There was a short sharp collision, and the Hitler rebellion was over....The reactionaries defeated themselves."<sup>3</sup> "Hitler fled, and the national revolution which was to have come out of Bavaria miscarried."<sup>4</sup>

Hitler was so strange to the American reading public that the following historical note was provided to a

diary of a German ambassador:

HITLER, Adolf. Son of a petty Austrian official...Rose to notoriety in 1922...Concentrated on exploiting the Semitic and Bolshevik bogies....In the autumn of 1923 he joined with General von Ludendorff in leading the insurrection in Bavaria, but after a temporary escape, was arrested and subsequently tried for high treason, receiving a sentence of five years' fortress. He was finally released after six months and bound over for the rest of his sentence, thereafter fading into oblivion.<sup>5</sup>

Not all reactions however, were limited to facts.

Hitler was seen as a "wild enthusiast."<sup>6</sup> "Though combining sincerity with a gift for glib oratory and more than a touch of megalomania, he was a complete stranger to the realities of politics, and seemed in a world of fantasy as he delivered his harangues, a mixture of anti-semitic hatred, pose, and vanity. In his ecstatic visions he saw a dictatorship."<sup>7</sup> "Hitler has the gift of carrying his hearers with him at the moment, but his words lack any after-effect. The reading of a speech by Hitler leaves one with an insipid taste in the mouth, because his speeches lack intrinsic truth."<sup>8</sup>

Only one of the books gave Hitler any political future: "the strength that remains lies, along with such future as there may be, in the hands of the National Socialists."<sup>9</sup> Despite such optimism, this author saw as a real possibility the replacement of Hitler as the power of the Nazis.

Thus, from 1928 to 1931 only ten of the books which dealt in any way with Germany referred to Hitler, and all of these held their comments to a very few pages. All

ten had a negative or neutral view of Hitler, and only one saw possible bright spots in his future.

Over ninety reviews of these books were read, but none mentioned either Hitler or the Nazis. This is understandable, of course, because of the minor part Hitler played in the actual books. But the tide of Hitler shifted in 1932, and with it intellectual opinion.

### CHAPTER III

#### HITLER GAINS, AND OPINION IS SPLIT (1932)

With National Socialism gaining and losing power at the elections in a seesaw fashion, Americans were presented with a split decision on the nature and future of the German politician. Eight relevant books came out, four of which contained only a few references to the Nazis. Overall opinion ran one to two against Hitler with another one undecided.

Of the four which referred to Hitler only in part, two were novels translated from the German. The hero of one rejected the Hitler philosophy for his life, while the hero of the other heard a Nazi say that Hitler admired the Communist's ideas (a blatant error caught and decried by only one of the eight reviewers of this novel.)<sup>1</sup> The other two books are general surveys of Germany, and see a bleak future for Hitler. One does not evaluate Hitler the person, and feels that: "The history of Germany during the years of crisis has been the history of the sacrifice of the German people to the struggle between Hitler and Brüning for political supremacy."<sup>2</sup> The other book feels kindly toward the Leader, but sees his policies as a poor hodgepodge. Also, Hitler is being guided and used by some secret group for no clearly formulated



ends. Thus he relies on emotions rather than intellect to attract supporters - to support Fascism in opposition to the Communists and Socialists - but he can be replaced by another orator at any time.<sup>3</sup>

Of the twenty-two reviews seen, only two mention Hitler, and then only in passing. The minimal role he played in the books almost precluded a serious consideration of Hitler by reviewers.

The remaining four books considered reveal the same split attitude to Hitler. One is +, three are -; but of the three, two see a bright future for him while one rejects such crystal-ball gazing.

Hubert Knickerbocker felt that Hitler will soon come to power legally with 51% of the popular vote, and is the only hope Germany has for avoiding Communism and regaining self-confidence.<sup>4</sup> Hitler is seen as the evangelist, actor, orator, and liberator supported by millions who now have nothing and the youth who know only poverty.<sup>5</sup> The four reviewers of this book agreed that: "The facts presented are fundamental, but, they are given without clear organic relationship or definite point of view."<sup>6</sup> The predictions and optimism of the author did not carry over to his reviewers.

Two books denounced Hitler, but agreed he would succeed. "Hitler has no real greatness."<sup>7</sup> Hitler is arrogant. "Thoughtless answers to questions by journalists testify to his inability to understand what he really wants."<sup>8</sup> Hitler appeals to the masses, but "logic no longer appeals

to them, and what they want is insanity. A Messiah must come, even if he is a Messiah of Absurdity. It would not be for the first time that mankind has been taken in by a Sabbatai Sebi."<sup>9</sup> To such remarks thirteen reviews responded. Of these two were sympathetic to Hitler while one denounced him. The rest was lukewarm in response: two agreed with the author's ideas, two rejected them, and six said they gave no clear interpretation of the stated facts about Hitler and Germany. "Mr. Lengyel's book furnishes a picture of an exciting personage."<sup>10</sup> "Mr. Lengyel's case would be stronger if the tide had not continued to run so powerfully in Hitler's favor."<sup>11</sup> Nordicus "fills out with great detail the mad outline of the Hitler venture....a picture of a nation in the throes of a psychological seizure, a country where a futile showman plays cunningly upon the worst tendencies of mankind."<sup>12</sup> "Mr. Lengyel's Hitler merely looks at the man and leaves the casual reader to guess for the most part at the true historic, political, and social significance of Hitlerism."<sup>13</sup>

Such vehemence as a reporter can muster went into Dorothy Thompson's I Saw Hitler. "When I walked into Adolph Hitler's room, I was convinced that I was meeting the future dictator of Germany. In something less than fifty seconds, I was quite sure that I was not. It took just about that time to measure the startling insignificance of the man."<sup>14</sup> "If Hitler comes to power, he will smite only the weakest of his enemies, and German intellectuals, disgust on their faces, will move to Switzerland....The testimony of some of his

former followers and intimate coworkers is that he is emotionally unstable."<sup>15</sup> Which such a lambast three out of four reviews agreed. "Dorothy Thompson is, as always, an excellent reporter and a first-class hater."<sup>16</sup> "The book is a vivid portrayal of millions bedeviled in defeat turning to a little man, like themselves, to lead them out of bondage to an impossible Promised Land of security and power."<sup>17</sup> Both author and reviewers demean the man and block an effective future for the Nazis.

Of eight books, two are +, four are -, and two are ?. The reviews of the four major books show four +, five -, and twelve noncommittal. We see that the limited amount of material produced in 1932 yielded a minimal response by intellectuals, and what response there was is only slightly in favor of censorship and pessimism about Hitler and his cause. In most cases of historical searching silence is no argument; but here it is for it shows reluctance to judge or conscious denial of the opportunity to judge. But let Hitler obtain the Chancellorship, and reluctance evaporates.

## CHAPTER IV

### OPINION GROWS AGAINST THE CHANCELLOR (1933-1934)

1933 was the year of transition, when Hindenburg acquiesced to von Papen and shook diplomatic hands with the Corporal. Of the thirteen relevant books of that year three were + Hitler, seven were - Hitler, and three were neutral (23% +, 54% -, 23% ?). Not so with the reviews, however. A sampling of 36 which express some view (over thirty others were noncommittal) finds 28 against and 8 for (12% +, 42% -, 46% 0).

Five books have but a few references to the Nazis. Three were neutral, one favored Hitler's 1933 ideas, and one dismissed the Hitler of the Putsch (not bringing in his activities after 1923). W. Dawson was sympathetic to a Germany breaking under the Versailles yoke, and while advocating the reversal of the Treaty, he saw as a negative but limited factor in 1931 Germany "the intensely Nationalist movement represented by the Nazis..."<sup>1</sup> His reviewers split: two decried such emotional propaganda and two admired the realistic if sympathetic treatment. Rudolf Ditzen, his novel translated from the German, shows pitiful post-war conditions in Germany, but a reviewer noted that though one of the

hero's fellow workers is "a militant Nazi, the young clerk apparently never hears a political speech, reads an editorial, or discusses a current issue."<sup>2</sup> Eight other reviewers applaud the book as a true picture of Germany.

Paul Kosok, in his Index, listed: "Hitler, Adolf. see: Nazis," and felt that although Hitler and Fascism have triumphed in Germany: "The future of the 'Nazis' depends upon how cleverly they can conceal their reactionary basis with their appeals to the lower and middle classes by means of revolutionary slogans."<sup>3</sup> Herbert Kraus, on the other hand, saw the existence of Hitler as a heartening sign that liberalism is alive in Germany. Granted the Nazis are a national movement, but only of a minority of the people; the curve of this movement will correspond inversely to the curve of German misery and despair.<sup>4</sup> One reviewer applauded such a viewpoint, but none for Kosok or Kraus mentioned Hitler.<sup>5</sup>

The eight books which dealt at some length with the Nazis were mostly against Hitler (six to two), but we now see some discrimination made in evaluations, and propaganda literature begins appearing.

An anonymous German author attempted an impartial study. He felt that although the terror while achieving power and the subsequent persecution of the Jews must be deplored, Germany can use the Nazis to establish its stability and pride.<sup>6</sup> The book "while not overlooking the more obvious and violent manifestations of the Hitlerist Revolution, makes an attempt to get below the surface and explain its more

abiding significance....The total effect of the book on the unprejudiced foreign reader would not be entirely unfavorable to the Nazi movement."<sup>7</sup> "It is surprisingly detached... disclosing the way in which Germans who are not swept away by idolatry of Hitler but who yet remain proud of their nation regard the present situation."<sup>8</sup>

Calvin Hoover came out in favor of Hitler. "If anyone doubts the political acumen of Hitler, he has only to study the early months of his chancellorship to find a classic model for the conquest of political power."<sup>9</sup> The problem in Germany is communism, and if the Nazis need a dictatorship to function, alright. The violence against the Jews, Communists, Poles and Czechs is unfortunate, but it is less than usually accompanies a revolution, less because there was no real resistance to Hitler coming to power. "Hitler has never hesitated to give almost any assurance to anyone in whenever it seemed necessary in order to win a difficult position or to gain time....It would be futile to attempt a moral or ethical assay of these tactics. Certainly it is quite in the vein of the great conquerors of history."<sup>10</sup> As Hitler said in Mein Kampf, Germany will go to war.

The reaction to the Hoover book show how reviewers can misunderstand material and easily give conflicting opinions. Two of ten were against Hitler and Germany which reverted "to barbarism,"<sup>11</sup> but all except one agreed with what they thought were Hoover's conclusions. However, most saw Hoover as objectively damning. Two saw the true Hoover, and

reacted according to their bias. "Hoover's book is a misleading interpretation of the regime dominating Germany."<sup>12</sup> Hoover writes "in a temper of judicial fairness which only those partisans and propagandists who are vociferous in denunciation and prediction but weak in facts and insight, will question or resent."<sup>13</sup>

The remaining six books were negative to Hitler, but for various reasons. Josef Frank's German novel portrayed a teacher whose attempt to keep out of current political struggles ended in death.<sup>14</sup> Hitler is bad because Hitler represents the real world outside the classroom. One reviewer maintained the book is anti-Nazi propaganda while three others said it holds no political views and is therefore an unreal story.

The propaganda of Matthew Josephson and the World Committee for the Victims of German Fascism yielded mixed reactions. Most decried the emotionalism and exaggeration while agreeing with the major ideas negative to the Nazis. Josephson assailed the persecution of Jews and culture.<sup>15</sup> The World Committee agreed, and added general violence and terror.<sup>16</sup> "A contribution of heat rather than light....It is essentially a pamphlet of propaganda, written by a Jew, spitting-mad."<sup>17</sup> "Its historical value is slight. It is a work of propaganda and not of sober inquiry....A restrained work written by someone better acquainted with the rules of evidence, and carrying conviction on every page

might have been a powerful weapon against some of the present policies of the German rulers."<sup>18</sup> "A scathing indictment of the Hitler regime, published under communist auspices and in parts clearly colored."<sup>19</sup> Five out of ten felt the books' bias detracted from their truth, but none felt the truth was totally gone. The Nazi abuses are facts, and censure is appropriate, but moral rather than political censure. (One exception is Dorothy Thompson: "Without the Reichstag fire there would be no dictatorship of Adolph Hitler in today's Germany."<sup>20</sup>)

Hamilton Armstrong, advocating democratic liberalism denounced Hitler's abolishing of these, and was in part denounced for his bias (he inclines to old-fashioned democratic conservatism).<sup>21</sup> The reviewers ignore or reject his conclusions by referring to "the proud resurrection of an older Germany,"<sup>22</sup> or saying "he takes too little account of the idealism -- which, though perverted, began by being idealism none the less -- underlying the Nazi movement."<sup>23</sup>

Edgar Mowrer and Oswald Villard both viciously attack Hitler and his policies. "The hysteria of Adolf Hitler."<sup>24</sup> "He is a fanatical reactionary...thought to be the true Holy Ghost."<sup>25</sup> "His is a humorless mind that excludes the need for consistency."<sup>26</sup> "Hitler attracts the middle and lower classes, but gets the support of the rich by saying his words are only to get into power."<sup>27</sup> "Hitler is a poor political thinker."<sup>28</sup> "He is always twisting and



turning. It is amazing that anyone takes him seriously."<sup>29</sup> On his antisemitism: "it is easy to say these are the ravings of a mad man."<sup>30</sup> "His economic views are vague and contradictory, not to say childish and subject to change without notice."<sup>31</sup> Both men feel his 1932 setback will continue via a recession of his forces.

As to the ideas of the authors, seventeen reviewers agree while only about three challenge their validity. "Its weakness lies in its lack of constructive analysis, its sentimentality and bewilderment."<sup>32</sup> "It contains a wealth of facts which are not only well ordered but are interpreted in the spirit of heartfelt sympathy without which no man can tell the story of another nation."<sup>33</sup> "A clear and convincing analysis and explanation."<sup>34</sup> Witness, also, the extreme negativism: "There is probably nothing published in America which gives a clearer picture of the hollowness, dishonesty, demogogy and political chicanery of the Hitler movement."<sup>35</sup> "His analysis of the counter-revolution and the forces behind it falls short of the indictment warranted by the facts."<sup>36</sup> The authors' sympathies toward Germany and the feeling of betrayal by Hitler, carries over only partially to the reviews, the former being lacking in most. No review, however, attempts a pro-Hitler opinion to offset the book's position.

1933, then, saw Hitler gain leadership in Germany. Opinion began a gradual swing away from support of the dictator, a swing seen both in published books and their reviews.

While some said Hitler was right for Germany, almost all decried the violence and persecution, and most viewed Hitler as a poor choice for leadership. The reviews accentuated the trends of books along those lines of opinion even though many reviewers (46%) were noncommittal.

1934 saw a sharp increase in relevant books: 19 full works and three with some references. The three had one +, one -, and one ? while the 19 had two +, two + -, one ?, and 14 -. The percentages are approximately 60% -, 20% +, and 20% ?. A closer analysis of the books will clearly explain the rise of negative opinion.

The three minor books consist of one novel having descriptions of Nazi violence but giving no value judgment, and two books evaluating the conflict between Hitler and the Christian religion in Germany. Reviewers accept the validity of the novel's facts, but also do not evaluate them.<sup>37</sup>

Charles Macfarland foresees an acceptable solution of the conflict because of his faith that Hitler has the good of all Germans in mind.<sup>38</sup> Adolf Keller, however, fears that Hitler's desire to have the Church imitate the State will be detrimental to the integrity and future of German Christianity.<sup>39</sup> Reviewers of the Macfarland book, for the most part, felt that his ideas were correctly derived from the facts at hand, but two out of nine did not agree. "In its evaluation of the situations and in its sense of proportion it is distinctively weak. Of an American intellectual, one demands both

objectivity and courage in stating conclusions -- both are lacking here."<sup>40</sup> "As a picture of what the situation really is this book is disappointing."<sup>41</sup> These were well offset by the other reviews. "In purpose, it is diplomatic....It is as a constructive effort, not as an indictment, that the value of the volume must be appraised."<sup>42</sup> The author describes "a land ruled by the most cruel and powerful dictatorship of modern times....commendably impartial...states both sides of the issue."<sup>43</sup> Keller's book is seen as "centering its attention upon the thought side of this tragedy as Dr. Macfarland centered attention upon events."<sup>44</sup> As a unit, the reviewers were four -, six +, and five non-committal (four of which accepted the truth about Nazi violence.)

There were nineteen works which dealt with Hitler throughout the work. Their breakdown is quite dramatic: two +, two +-, one ?, 14 - (21% +, 5% ?, 74% -). The fourteen negative books include five written by people who were, or could have been, labeled "enemies of the Reich," -- Jews, Catholics, and Communists. In this fourteen are found six novels, this being a relatively safe and effective means of communication, especially of atrocities. Finally, three of the fourteen are translations from the German (two being propaganda and one the diary of a "secret" general of the Reich). 1934 was the year when the negative feeling of authors was firmly stamped on books about Germany. Reviewers of these books, however, were not so staunchly against: 15 +,

32 -, and 35:0. In addition thirteen said Germany would go to war while six said she would not. Eighteen accepted the existence of Nazi persecutions. But on to the details.

Ewald Banse, a German professor of military science, set down explicit plans for the impending armed conquest of the world by Germany.<sup>45</sup> Eight reviewers responded, one saying it was dull and could only be the basis for defeat.<sup>46</sup> Two others discount any war: the book is "so fantastic a mixture of fictitious history and race mysticism that one cannot help feeling that French and British general staff officers must breathe much easier for this evidence of the childish naivete opposing them."<sup>47</sup> Banse is one "genuinely unable to distinguish between primary elements in their own thought and verifiable external facts."<sup>48</sup> The remaining five agree that Germany will go to war, and some feel that Germany will lose the war, the situation is quite dangerous, and that the Nazis are deluded. Five to three in favor of taking the book seriously; not an overriding majority.

George Shuster (see his book of 1932) saw Hitler as an astute politician who may be guilty of some hypocritical political acts, but who was at the same time forced by circumstances into positions and actions against his will.<sup>49</sup> (Here we again have expression of the feeling so often held by authors we have viewed, that Hitler is inconsistent and contradictory in policy and action; this rather than seeing him tending toward a goal by using the most effective means

available at the exact times he must act.) All four reviewers agree with his conclusions; "His analysis of National Socialist racial policies and his picture of the economic background of neo-German anti-Semitism and Nazi imperialism carry conviction because they show these policies as the logical outcome of well-nigh intolerable conditions."<sup>50</sup> Hitler is a good but normal government leader.

Leland Stowe, journalist, realized from a German visit, that Hitler will go to war. He came to power and will stay in power by his private army. He has built a state militaristic in ideas without needing the weapons yet.

That Hitler is a sincere man animated by a flaming patriotism and a great mysticism few people can deny, and none, I imagine, with fairness. But it is equally recognized throughout Germany that Hitler's nature is most explosive, that he has certain blind spots and aversions which it is impossible for anyone to discuss with him rationally, and that he is subject to sudden fits of uncontrollable anger. Of late, declare men in Berlin who have occasion to know, the Chancellor has become extremely excitable and on occasion flies into fits of temper whose violence creates dismay.<sup>51</sup>

Three reviewers concur in his facts, one saying he has not penetrated to the underlying motives. Five others agree with his facts and evaluations of Germany: the author "has avoided the error, into which many writers on the new Germany have fallen of thinking that impartiality is incompatible with condemnation."<sup>52</sup>

Attempting a fair testimony, Edward Powell saw that Germany has a valid case against an unfair world, and Hitler, firmly in power, will try justifiably to bring about

a change for the better.<sup>53</sup> All three reviewers felt his positions were untenable, and two saw the book as Hitler propaganda. "The author himself suspects that he has leaned over backward to be fair to the Nazis, and most American readers will feel that he has indeed deviated noticeably from the perpendicular."<sup>54</sup> "He himself makes enough scathing denunciations of the Hitlerites to make one feel, when he begins to praise them, as though he were saying: 'Well, Herod was really very fond of children.'"<sup>55</sup>

Harlow Heneman felt that Hitler's dictatorial powers as well as his coming into power were due to Hindenburg's prior precedent of a tyrant President, and his reviewers agreed.<sup>56</sup>

We turn now to the fourteen negative treatments which divide themselves into neat categories.

The Berlin Diaries of a secret German general show how the German Republic was betrayed by secret intrigues so Hitler could appear to seize power legally.<sup>57</sup> Two of five reviews felt the documents (and, therefore, the claims) were unauthentic. Three others, however, were convinced of the validity of the book, and felt its charges were justified. One must "condemn the Reich's transition from a class ailment to a national disease."<sup>58</sup> Germany has fallen "into the hands of political gangsters and sadists."<sup>59</sup>

Three translations (one a novel) and two other books might be termed biased propaganda. Of the authors, one

was a Communist, one an exiled Catholic, one a Jew, and one a set of Jews, liberals, and sympathizers. The reviewers wavered between pro- and anti-Hitler, and pro- and anti-propaganda.

Ernst Henri, the Communist, claimed Hitler was a pawn of Thyssen, the Nazis were ruled by the Ruhr magnates, and Hitler will soon war.<sup>60</sup> Two reviewers rejected his claims, four questioned their total validity, and four agreed with the claims. "To dismiss his book as a scare story would hardly be wise."<sup>61</sup> "The details are put together with great skill, with the effect that the whole takes on that aspect of plausibility which made so successful a bit of propaganda of the 'Protocols of Zion'."<sup>62</sup>

The exiled Catholic government official decried the persecution of enemies of the Nazis, and claimed National Socialism was not effective or proper for Germany.<sup>63</sup> Three reviewers agreed with his facts but were noncommittal about his conclusions while one other rejected his comments as out of touch with reality. One of the former blamed Germany's problems on its lack of political unity and moral equilibrium.

Heinz Liepmann and Lion Feuchtwanger wrote novels depicting antisemitism using vivid and horrible imagery.<sup>64</sup> Thirteen reviewers were impressed by the books, and all but four agreed with the facts and deduced condemnation (seven against antisemitism and one against the Nazis totally). One questions the author's interpretations and another

applauds the swift Nazi tempo. "He does not always attempt to distinguish between facts and a possible or probable interpretation of the facts."<sup>65</sup> "It is addressed to the world bearing the message: 'Wake up! The barbarians are upon us!'"<sup>66</sup> "It will undoubtedly disturb the complacency of any who yet remain indifferent to the present course of events in Germany."<sup>67</sup> "A vivid, haunting picture of a land in dread and unrest."<sup>68</sup> Several reviewers were disappointed that the authors demeaned their art by writing propaganda. Some felt this detracted from the validity of the books, but most still saw much truth in the works. It seems the drive of the novel allows some exaggeration.

The final piece of overt propaganda was a book of eighteen papers edited by Pierre Van Paassen and James Wise which attacked all the persecutions and the basic philosophy of the Nazis.<sup>69</sup> Four reviewers defended the attacks while one rejected them: decried were National Socialism in general, the Nazis' destruction of liberty, their violence and persecution, and the certainty that Germany will go to war. Two felt that propaganda distorts reality terribly: "Nazidom is not rendered actual."<sup>70</sup> "This symposium can hardly serve as a reliable guide to Nazi Germany....Even when one has made due allowance for the bitterness and revulsion of this group of writers...the record as they reveal it is sufficiently appalling."<sup>71</sup> Propaganda repels some reviewers, but for most the Nazi



record is horrible enough to still warrant condemnation. This, however, is against the violence rather than National Socialism as a whole political philosophy.

Four novels, not blatantly propaganda, depict the antisemitism and other Nazi persecutions.<sup>72</sup> Two used the vehicle of mixed marriage, one realised that Hitler effectively appeals to the youth, and one showed the process of disillusionment with Hitler. Seven reviewers were sympathetic to the author's disenchantment with the Nazis, but fourteen others were noncommittal; they felt that either the books gave no clear evaluation of the Nazis or the evaluations given were capricious or superficial. Only two believed the facts given to be exaggerated. "A clear, if much too simplified, exposition of a difficult and complicated matter."<sup>73</sup> "The story is told without exaggeration -- unless indeed, the Nazis are right and all the books and all the reports of foreign correspondents are lies."<sup>74</sup> "Her presentation of her theme is as superficial as it is vivid."<sup>75</sup> Reviewers refer to Nazi brutal excesses and Germany's mass paranoia. "It is a book of sadness that a nation which the author has loved, should so forget brotherliness, all the mellowness of life, for a cold nationalist ideal."<sup>76</sup> Novels, it seems, do not carry with them automatic holds on valid interpretation of known facts, but some of our reviewers, nevertheless, agreed with the stated viewpoints.

Finally, three books by professional observers (political scientists, lecturers, reporters) felt, for

various reasons, that Hitler is firmly in power and will certainly go to war. Paul Einzig, an economist, realized Hitler's masterful leadership and political perceptivity, but reviewers felt that the unjustified political theories in the book marred its usefulness. "It would be self-deception to pretend that Hitler is a fool."<sup>77</sup> Henry Steed loosed a volley of venom at the Nazi leader: "Psychologically this section (from Mein Kampf) reveals at once an advanced state of persecution mania -- the persecution of mankind,...by the sinister machinations of Jewry -- and the belief, amounting almost to religious mania, that in defending Germanism against the Jews he was doing godly work. There is no reason to doubt Hitler's sincerity -- no more reason than to doubt that his mind was falling into a condition of chronic hysteria."<sup>78</sup> Reviewers (three out of five) questioned the validity of statements like these, and felt Steed had found only fragments of the true situation ignoring the economic realm entirely. Celia Strachey and John Warner compared statements from Mein Kampf with quotations from German leaders and the German press, and deduced that Hitler speaks lies while being guided by the truths of Mein Kampf.<sup>79</sup> All three reviewers saw the value in such a study, and two felt its conclusions were correct. One saw it, however, as only "up to a certain point valuable."<sup>80</sup>

1933 and 1934 saw Hitler become Chancellor.

Authors took notice of the Leader, and came out over two to one against him or the violence of his persecutions. The

propaganda of vested-interest groups increases as Hitler's actions become more definite (two in 1933, five in 1934). Reviewers, however, are less anxious to judge. After the initial shock in 1933 (over 30 against with less than ten in favor), reviews settled down (30 against, 15 for, 35 noncommittal). Almost always violent persecution was abhorred, but this did not always lead to a general condemnation of Hitler or his party.

But the bombshell exploded in 1935.

## CHAPTER V

### THE BOMB EXPLODES (1935)

The steady swing of author opinion negative to Hitler took a sharp leap in 1935, and the opinion of reviewers followed to a limited degree. Eighteen appropriate books were located, two of which had minimal references. Totally, the authors yielded the following: 13 -, 1 ? (-), 1 +, 2 +(-), 1 ?. Grouping these together in percentages we find: 83% -, 11% +, 6% ?. Reviews which were scanned numbered 87: 47% -, 12% +, 20% 0, 21% ?. Authors came out eight to one against Hitler while reviewers were only four to one against him (compared to two to one against in 1934.) One prime element in this jump in condemning opinion is the existence of eight authors who might be considered biased. This is 45% as compared to 22% in 1934 and 15% in 1933. The reviewers, then, show a more stable reaction to Hitler and his atrocities. 15% of them came out explicitly against the persecutions and violence cited in the books.

Emil Ludwig, in a biography of Hindenburg, felt Hitler appealed to the emotions while rejecting the intellect,

and duped Hindenburg to get the chancellorship.

Hitler's outstanding success was not due to his program, half of which was practically identical with that of the nationalists, and the other half with that of his socialist rivals; neither did it come from his very remarkable discovery of the virtues of Jew baiting. It resulted from the seductions of oratory and from the generous use of promises. Instead of trying to console the masses with nothing more than talk of a war against France in some distant future, and instead of wailing about the twilight of mankind, he launched a definite program of 'immediate demands.'<sup>1</sup>

Because of his limited analysis of Hitler, eight of nine reviewers made no mention of the Nazi. One, however, said: "The analysis of Hitler, Hitlerism, and their rise is good."<sup>2</sup>

N. Hill and H. Stoke presented a source book on European governments, and provided a few impartial connecting historical comments. Over seventy pages were devoted to Germany, much of that to the Nazis, but only this opinion was given: "the German people were emotionally responsive to the extreme doctrines advocated so fervently by Hitler."<sup>3</sup> Reviewers did not comment on the Nazis.

Sixteen books dealt, to a substantial degree, with Hitler. The first two we consider were mostly, but not totally, positive toward Hitler. Mildred Wertheimer was convinced that Hitler came to power in a logical sequence of events, and stayed in power through education, propaganda, and terror.

The fact that there was no alternative to the Leader's rule forced many people to vote 'yes' from desperation rather than conviction; pressure and intimidation played

their part as well, but the outcome of the election (August 19, 1934) must be considered as a personal triumph for Hitler rather than a test of the popularity of National Socialism.<sup>4</sup>

Germany, however, will not war because of the split in domestic power between Hitler, the Reichswehr, and Dr. Schacht -- the head of the Reichsbank, and the economy will tend toward state capitalism. Two reviewers agreed with her evaluation.

Ethan Colton felt Hitler had unified Germany, given it self-pride, and attempted to restrict the brutality the foundations for which he himself laid. "Beyond being stupid, the physical mistreatment of the Jews must be rated cowardly."<sup>5</sup> Reviewers thought the book to be interesting!

The American Catholic George Shuster (see his books in 1932 and 1934) evaluated the battle between the dictator and religion. Although "the Nazis shrewdly based their rule on the assent of the people," and came to power as the logical choice at that point in history, the old monarchy will ultimately be restored.<sup>6</sup> Hitler's record in office has not been overly impressive, but his hold on the nation is so strong it will have to be broken by force. The myth of militarism will never support a German war of conquest. Reviewers agreed with Shuster's attacks on Nazi religious persecution: "a stinging arraignment of things Hitleresque... the world's injustice to the Jew."<sup>7</sup> But note the objective impartiality by some: "Particularly impartial is the chapter on the Jews: their evident faults and follies, the horrors of

their persecution."<sup>8</sup> Three of five agree with his political evaluation, one sees usual but not total soundness (Manchester Guardian), and one is noncommittal.

Shuster was more negative than positive, and so was Paul Douglass writing on religion in Germany.<sup>9</sup> Douglass saw a new paganism arising, but only two of seven reviewers agreed: "a totalitarianism that is only the old tyranny in a new dress."<sup>10</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr felt: "His single interpretive chapter is quite inadequate."<sup>11</sup>

Turning to the dozen books exceedingly negative we find eight translations into English and six authors who are actual "enemies of the state:" Communists, Socialists, etc. Of the non-enemies, R. Braun held that fascism necessarily leads to world war by maintaining imperialistic finance-capitalism.<sup>12</sup> His prognosis of Hitler Germany was, in effect ignored, a mere 250 words being written by two reviewers. They admired the argumentation, however.

More successful at garnering readers was the novel by Ernst Glaeser which showed how the madness of National Socialism finally swept all Germany before it.<sup>13</sup> Two reviewers accepted the Nazi disaster: "National Socialism is an evil growth, a monstrous wickedness in the hands of terrible though disgusting men."<sup>14</sup> Two more accepted his interpretation of the horrible facts: "He has compressed into a novel the tragedy of a nation, and the tragedy of a youthful generation lured into dark ways by a demon piper."<sup>15</sup> Only two withheld

approbation, not allowing melodrama to pervert truth. Glaeser seems to have made his point that the Nazis satisfy individual needs by sweeping them aside for the State.

Another novel by the exiled Jew Lazar Herrmann portrays the antisemitism terrors, and elicits total support from reviewers who felt it was an unexaggerated work by a necessarily biased person.<sup>16</sup> "Nazi barbarity," "a simple, objective and persuasive account of the terror that reigns in Germany," "horrifying picture of a people depressed in the mud."<sup>17</sup> The underplayed novel is extremely effective for it elicits added sympathy for the atrocities reviewers know were omitted. Hitler is rejected because of his means of achieving ends.

Konrad Heiden, another exile, wrote a hostile but objective history. It presented Hitler as the realistic choice of 1933 Germany who uses any means to advance, especially the eradication of competition, and consolidation of power. This English abridgement of two German volumes of 1932 and 1934, most reviewers felt, omitted too many important facts and interpretations. Nevertheless, seven of eleven agreed with the author's basic position, while the others remained non-committal: the most dispassionate, comprehensive, and revealing English commentary on Hitler which, of necessity, forced the exile of the author.

A man of outstanding intellect but unstable character -- Adolf Hitler....His is the recognition of the fact that a movement depends for its success upon causes rather than aims, and that mankind values leadership above



moral codes....Each Nazi is left under the illusion that the Party's only aim is to realize his own pet theory....What will happen when one day the march comes to an end and the marchers realize that not a single one of them has attained his aim?<sup>18</sup>

Karl Billinger, a Communist, added fuel to anti-fascism in the United States, and three of four reviewers accepted his testimony: "Buy a dozen copies of 'Fatherland' and pass them out to people who are on the verge of accepting the idea of the necessity of some form of fascism in the United States."<sup>19</sup> The weapon of anti-Communism used so effectively by Hitler to gain initial widespread support is now turned around: the words of a Communist preaching anti-Fascism are wielded by patriotic Americans.

Claiming that many Germans are dissatisfied with Hitler and want to overthrow him, Wolfgang Langhoff vividly describes the "protective arrest" of the concentration camp, the location of most of those rebels.<sup>20</sup> All seven reviewers rebuked the Germany of the camps, and appreciated the hidden secret Germany which "speaks to us, cries out for understanding, sympathy, and help. May it be read by many Americans, particularly those who visit Germany and return with grandiose tales of National Socialist achievements."<sup>21</sup> "Growing opposition to the Third Reich," "a terrific indictment of a regime which bolsters up its political position by repudiating all humane considerations."<sup>22</sup> The liberals rebel, and the liberals respond.

The Catholic exile of 1934, Löwenstein-Scharffeneck, sees Hitler as falling, and being replaced not by the

Communists but by a Holy Roman Empire based on Christian ideals and universal social justice.<sup>23</sup> The young prince elicits split opinions: four reviewers feel it is possible to overthrow Hitler, and four think the idea is impractical or absurd. "Insufficiently acquainted with economic as well as political facts and problems."<sup>24</sup> "There has emerged again a Germany in which one may believe."<sup>25</sup> "Sloppy metaphysics are not enough to make a liberal revolutionary program."<sup>26</sup> "The cynic may sometimes be inclined to smile; but let it be remembered that the confident way in which Prince Löwenstein describes the future of his country is not unlike the detailed planning in which men, such as the Zionist Theodor Herzl, indulged years before there was any prospect of a fulfillment of their ideal."<sup>27</sup> Hitler falls as Yehuda Ha-Levi is vindicated.

Finally, Socialist Reichstag deputy Gerhart Seger describes his six month imprisonment in Oranienburg concentration camp.<sup>28</sup> He escaped and lived to tell the tale, a story which two reviewers agreed rang true, but they made no evaluation of it beyond its horror.

The remaining four books of 1935 were English language originals. One, a novel by Philip Gibbs, "is a denunciation of greed, fear, violence and jingoism no matter where they erupt."<sup>29</sup> Gibbs shows the internal struggle of high-minded honor-loving Germans, and he feels that some Germans are as disillusioned with Hitler's violent policies as he is. Five out of six reviewers agree, and see hope

for a peaceful Germany.

Louis Snyder (who is Nordicus, the pseudonym author of a 1932 book) presents a modern German history which is a balance of anti-nationalism and pro-Germanism, and his two reviewers applaud the balance.<sup>30</sup>

From material gathered on a visit to Germany in 1933, Frederick Schuman was convinced that the support of the Nazis by the Germans was an instance of social pathology.<sup>31</sup> Ten of thirteen reviewers see his book as providing excellent valid source material, but five feel his interpretations are not wholly justified. "Serious limitations of historical perspective."<sup>32</sup> "Although the book is not entirely objective in language, the descriptions which he gives and the analyses which he offers conform to the records which are available."<sup>33</sup> "The author's hostility to Hitler violates every canon of impartiality."<sup>34</sup> "It is imperfect in detail and biased as a whole."<sup>35</sup> "This is the definitive work on Hitlerism."<sup>36</sup> "The pathology of Hitler's dictatorship ...the German people's most terrible affliction."<sup>37</sup> "His deeper diagnosis of causes and sources of the trouble, and therefore some of his judgments on symptoms and processes of this disease, remain to be questioned."<sup>38</sup>

Professor Schuman's greater preoccupation with the psychological than with the economic approach, the candid omission of any attempt to establish the organic connection of the Nazi movement with Germany's past history, and a style with the dramatic quality of an active participant in the struggle rather than of a detached observer -- these elements go far to make one distrust the connections by which the author seeks to link the separate events that mark the rise of the Nazi

dictatorship. The book's novelty lies in its use of psychology....To explain Nazi activity in such terms without more attention to past history, the Versailles Treaty, and the economic consequences of the peace and the depression is somewhat like the attempt to explain the tides by merely analyzing sea-water and paying no attention to the pull of the moon.<sup>39</sup>

Such diverse opinion on such an opinionated book reveals the subjective predilections of reviewers, predilections undoubtedly known by the periodicals which sponsored and published each review. Such a phenomenon should be examined more closely using an accurate breakdown of periodicals and reviews -- a problem for another place and another time.

Finally, Dr. Jacob Rader Marcus published his The Rise and Destiny of the German Jew. A monumental work of immense scholarly achievement it conveyed a spirit of optimism about the future of his German compatriots, and objectively attempted to disprove the myths behind anti-semitism of any age. Highly sensitive evaluation of the socio-political economic situation in Germany led to this conclusion:

The implacable logic of internal, economic decline and foreign encirclement would seem at the date of this writing (August, 1934) to presage the speedy and almost inevitable fall of Hitler....The millions in Germany who fail to see Hitler in quite this (exalted) light, the socialists, the communists, the liberals in general, are held firm in the grip of the most efficient terrorism of modern times....Hitler's power in Germany is not yet broken. For these reasons it would seem that the Nazi regime will continue to maintain itself for the present.<sup>40</sup>

Dr. Marcus sees the only solution for German Jews (assuming the greater possibility that Hitler will remain for at least some time) is to adjust to whatever position the Nazis assign them.

Reviewers accepted the validity of his facts, and some of the five decried the atrocities. "The effects of intolerance upon the intolerant are more insidious and deadly than upon its victims."<sup>41</sup> In fact, the reviewers were amazed that this work, potentially propaganda, was not used as such. "His spirit is impartial, objective, detached, to a degree astonishing in the case of an author who is himself a Jew."<sup>42</sup> "The sense of tragedy is all the more clear for its impersonal and courageously scholarly portrayal."<sup>43</sup> Dr. Marcus made his point with greater impact by couching his appeal in objectivity rather than sensationalist exaggerated propaganda, and his reviewers applauded his efforts.

1935 was the year of the bombshell, partly accounted for by a doubling from 1934 of biased authors (45% in 1935). Reviewers were four to one against Hitler, and many of these were condemnations of either Nazi atrocities and imprisonments of "enemies of the state, or the Hitler predilection for a military solution to Germany's problems."

In 1936 the pendulum begins a return sweep -- away from the extreme negativism of 1935. The storm subsides considerably.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TIDE SEEMS TO TURN (1936)

After the deadly effect of 1935, Hitler's lot in the eyes of reviewers seems to have taken a decided step for the better. Sixteen books were examined, one with minor references (plus two I was unable to locate, and one special case to be discussed later) and the percentages were: 19% +, 6% +-, 13% ? (+), 6% -+, 56% -. Grouped together this totals 62% - and 38% +, a decided swing away from 1935 (83% - and 11% +). The reviews show an even more striking shift of opinion. Out of 69 scanned, 32% -, 39% +, 12% ? and 17% 0. Thus, reviewers inclined toward a more or less positive attitude toward Hitler rather than condemnation by almost four to three. The fifteen major books reveal six (47%) of the authors definitely biased with another two (13%) probably biased. Hitler seems established by now, and reviewers are inclined to treat him with the sympathy due a head of state in troubled times.

J. Bernstorff, a former German diplomat, wrote his memoirs, and his one mention of Hitler saw him as a dictatorial phase soon to give way to the type of democracy seen in

Western Europe.<sup>1</sup> Strange that Hitler is so greatly ignored by this man.

A biography of Hindenburg absolved the wooden titan of knowledge of Hitler's potential or atrocities.<sup>2</sup> The author recognizes that Hitler had the support of the masses of Germans, and thus came to power with some justification. Once in Power, Hitler, to the dismay of Hindenburg, solidified his position in the Nazi Party and Germany through terror and education. Only one of six reviewers caught the few Hitler references, and he agreed with the author's evaluations.

Six of fifteen major works are more or less positive toward Hitler. Of these two are written by British diplomats and one by an exiled German journalist. Reviewers, by a two to one margin, agreed with the ideas of these books.

Henry Phillips said:

Hitler is a simple man....He is quite the ordinary man, until he begins to speak; then he is a very eloquent man....I met few actual Jew-haters. Curiously, the lower I got down in the strata of society, the less they liked the Jews...and the moment they (the Jews) step off the stones of the street -- all of which are "foreign" and unfriendly, save those of the Promised Land...let any Goy try to pass the threshold of a Hebrew household on a Sabbath eve. How futile and ephemeral, how pigmy and callow he will be made to feel....There may not always be at the helm a Leader as level-headed -- despite almost universal reports saying he is an illogical demagogue -- as Hitler.<sup>3</sup>

The one review seen maintained that Phillips was disorganized, presenting an indistinct picture of the situation, because of its haphazard method of obtaining information.<sup>4</sup>

The British diplomats Willert and Wilson were impressed by all except the Nazi violence and persecutions, and only three of ten reviewers disagreed with their interpretations.<sup>5</sup> Willert shows that most Germans feel Hitler's present actions are not perfect (e.g. the violence), but they will improve greatly once German stability is established. To offset demands made in Mein Kampf, Hitler has publicly felt war is not needed if he is given a fair chance in the world market. Reviewers saw "the author's faith in the ultimate sanity of ordinary peoples."<sup>6</sup> "He registers the quiet, orderly exterior, but senses and soon discovers the terror underneath."<sup>7</sup> "As a study of contemporary Continental Europe it is interesting rather than important, but as an analysis of the composed English mind confronted by an Old World on the threshold of convulsion it is of real value."<sup>8</sup>

Wilson echoed Willert:

I abhor the persecution of the Jews in Germany....But I cannot refuse to recognize that the Nazi government has in the past three years achieved much and secured and maintained in face of great difficulties, a far more ample measure of public acceptance and approval, than any of its predecessors....I am confident that the present regime will survive: I believe that the structure of the Nazi state will grow in strength and will endure because it has behind it the passionate support of many....The German nation is undergoing very severe stresses; it is making immense sacrifices of material comfort and personal liberty in the cause of a unity which is sought not only for its own sake, but as a step towards equality of national status, authority, and opportunity in the counsels of the world. To deny them this, to refuse all their demands, means that war must come.<sup>9</sup>



A reviewer felt the book is "an admirable statement of 'the other side,' and any Englishman who reads it will be convinced that there are really a great number of people who quite honestly dislike democracy and tolerance and freedom as we know it."<sup>10</sup> "One of the most reassuring things about Fascist propaganda, such as Sir Arnold's book, is that it is so dull."<sup>11</sup> A third review applauded the accurate reporting of the book, but saw its conclusions as necessarily dated as the weeks pass.

The exiled German reporter Heiden saw Hitler the person as a little man who created Hitler the Führer, and the tension between true and artificial self makes Hitler so unpredictable.

It is a case of two personalities, neither of which can be held responsible for the other. In plain terms this signifies that Herr Hitler is not accountable for his actions.... All this does not diminish Hitler's achievement; it merely explains it. He shaped the movement; He bewitched men's minds; he erected the mightiest supremacy over Germany that has ever existed -- mightiest because magical...he possesses considerable intellectual gifts....Hitler is a child of solitude; the Führer is a child of the masses....(He has the masses because they see only the Führer messiah.) If this ruin (of Germany) persists, this rulership will be swallowed up and dispersed within it; if the nation is restored to health, it will peel off like the scab from a wound. IN NO CASE WILL IT LAST.<sup>12</sup>

The bias of Heiden's past did not yield a totally negative opinion of Hitler, and this disarmed his reviewers: a work is condemned propaganda only if its author yields to his obvious biases. "Hitler is not as great as an agitator, but a great political leader."<sup>13</sup> "This man who combines the most rigid fixity of aim with apparently monstrous

divigations....In the book impartiality is tantamount to an indictment; deriving from it emotions of awe, incredulity, and downright fright."<sup>14</sup> Four other reviewers split, two agreeing with the book's ideas, one being noncommittal, and one challenging them: "His interpretation of Hitler as a phenomenon -- a split personality...has too little precise information to guide it."<sup>15</sup>

Two ? books had tinges of + in them. Their eleven reviewers had only one denouncing fascism while seven agreed with the books and three felt they had some error.

Ermath saw that the transfer from Weimar Republic to Third Reich was inevitable and Hitler was the right man at the right time.<sup>16</sup> Hitler has seen that "the leader-state is not based upon the consent of the masses, but it must work continually and consistently to acquire the consent of the people" via education and propaganda.<sup>17</sup> "Because he gives to many that which they need or think they need, he is loved; because he does not bring to others that which they expect or because he destroys that which they value, he is execrated."<sup>18</sup> He is hated by the world because he destroyed civil liberties, but he has full control in Germany. All six reviewers agreed with the evaluation: "It is wholly free from the bitter partisanship and flatulent psychonalysis that spoiled such books as Schuman's Nazi Dictatorship. It is not concerned with secret history, or the tangled story of intrigue. It is, in brief, a dispassionate and sober book."<sup>19</sup>

Michael Florinsky saw Hitler as the master of oratory and politician supported by all of Germany.

This expression of confidence in Hitler (August 19th vote of 39 million for Hitler and 4 million against) was certainly not lacking in impressiveness, even if full allowance is made for possibilities of direct and indirect pressure....Even more puzzling, perhaps, is the attitude of some of Hitler's warmest admirers (in Germany) who completely disagree with his anti-Jewish policies.... Assuming that National Socialism will continue to maintain its power, the only solution of the Jewish question one can suggest is that, by degrees, Germany's Jews may drift away to other countries. But this is hardly any solution at all.<sup>20</sup>

Florinsky accepts fascism for Germany, but likes democracy better here even with its difficulties, and one reviewer agrees with him on this. Another accepts his evaluations, but three others see only limited usefulness for the book: "Many statements are based upon what German officials told him....The lapsed time has changed the picture in many ways since he wrote."<sup>21</sup>

The nine negative books include four translations, six biased authors, and two novels. Seven reviewers decried the propaganda, and others questioned the facts and interpretations of the books.

Ernst Henri and Andre Malraux, Communists, attacked the Nazi persecutions of political prisoners, and the former internal Party problems and the certain war on Russia as the high points of Hitler's future.<sup>22</sup> Henri was attacked by all four reviewers: "But the confusion is there -- the result of a weird medley of facts, surmises, rumors, and hypotheses, all of them pathetically characteristic of much writing done

by Germans in exile."<sup>23</sup> "Just as lurid and sensational. The author prophesies the Great War between Fascism and Socialism (as though these were opposites) with inward smug complacency though in the outward manner of a bad German-American film."<sup>24</sup> "His apocalyptical vision has nothing to do with either history or truth."<sup>25</sup> "Logically it is on the same level as attempts to define the future by the aid of the Great Pyramid or the Book of Daniel."<sup>26</sup>

Malraux evoked quite a different set of reactions. His faith in the Germans despite his imprisonment found five reviewers in his favor, two decrying his propaganda, and two seeing only poor literature and confused ideas. "Partisan pamphleteering...of fallacious or vitated premise and inference."<sup>27</sup> "Among the rare prophetic works of our age. We can steer clear of the precipices of despair."<sup>28</sup> "A burning commentary on contemporary conditions."<sup>29</sup>

The World Committee for the Victims of German Fascism published an exposé of the Nazi world-wide conspiracy against peace.<sup>30</sup> "A terror-striking picture."<sup>31</sup> Germany bears watching; the danger is real. "Unless the German government succeeds in finding more competent agents and allies than those it has mustered so far, it will end by being nearly the loneliest entity of which history knows."<sup>32</sup> The facts are accepted, despite the obvious propaganda bias..

From Nazi sources the history of the three year persecution of the German Jews was told entitled Yellow Spot.<sup>33</sup> All reviewers accepted the facts, but only two of

four saw the book "justify and carry farther the terrific condemnation of the Hitler regime."<sup>34</sup> "Shows how persistent the persecution has been and how little so far foreign protests and indignation have moderated the cruelties of the 'cold pogrom!'"<sup>35</sup>

Another novel by Heinz Leipmann, a moral and not a political treatise, exposed the underground movements in Germany which were against the Nazis and for freedom.<sup>36</sup> All five reviewers accepted his facts, but felt only those already convinced of the value of freedom above nationalism would accept the book: it had no power to sway disbelievers.

Nineteen year old Ivy Gellichsheimer saw, in her autobiography, the demeaning value of Hitler's ideas and the violence of nationalism.<sup>37</sup> Half her reviewers agreed ("The most arresting portions are not those which are physically the most terrible, but those which offer glimpses of moments of transition and those which show Hitler's power over the German mind."<sup>38</sup>), but half saw her impressions as immature and muddled.

A translation of Hitler by the exiled anti-Nazi Rudolf Olden found mixed reactions (see book of 1930):

He is a man who has remained in the child-stage, in the barbaric state of the nursery -- a child whom an evil spirit has given the form and intellect of an adult, and the force of powerful temperament as well.... The feature that characterizes him most strongly, therefore, is volatility, lack of balance....The Leader does not lead....To rule a great country, to master so many divergent forces, to keep such conflicting interests balanced, requires an inner sense of proportion that Hitler does not possess....Since Hitler cannot feed

his people, he requires enemies if he wants to relieve the aggressive impulses of the hungry masses. Any minority serves this purpose.<sup>39</sup>

"An insufficiently defined perspective. It reflects a trend of political thought that has no margins.... The author has been too thoroughly shaken to see even the past clearly."<sup>40</sup> Two other reviewers agree with Olden's evaluations, one is noncommittal, and one approves of it as a biography but questions its political aspects.

A former German official, Fritz Morstein-Marx, leveled his attack on the Third Reich with relentless vigor. January 1936 is compared with August 1932:

Today the Third Reich's helmsman no longer figures in most people's minds as a perfect fool but rather a perfect villain. Even his irreconcilable foes are now ready to credit him with ingenuity, if only that of a sadist; with shrewdness if only that of a reckless gambler; with consistency, if only that of a fanatic; and with resourcefulness, if only that of a demagogic spellbinder....At the threshold of 1936 the people are awakened to the full recognition of the complexities of the Third Reich's economic status. The resultant general uneasiness has brought to the fore again the weak ideological foundations on which the German one-party system rests.<sup>41</sup>

Such negativism met with mixed reviews. Two agreed with the facts and interpretations while two felt the volume was timely and informative, but not necessarily true in toto.

Finally, we examine the book by John Brown Mason which set down the history of the conflict between National Socialism and Catholicism.<sup>42</sup> A lucid volume, mimeographed at private expense, it received this reaction: "The principal fault is a lack of awareness of what was happening behind the scenes....The treatment Professor Mason accords pro-Nazi

Catholics suffers from a failure to reckon with significant hidden factors."<sup>43</sup> The objectivity of the author grated against a reviewer who had vested interests, who in turn devalued the worth of the book.

1936 was the year of recovery, from the devastating blow of the previous year's books and reviews. Hitler rallied in reviews dramatically, from four to one against, to a stand-off of + and -.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS AND SENTIMENTS

The gamut has been run, and scholars and other intellectuals expressed their opinions on Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany. Throughout our time period of nine years opinion was never wholly of one persuasion, neither in the books published, nor in the reviews of those books. It seems, from this study, that intellectuals, no matter how perceptive, or how vast their fund of knowledge of the past or present, have no monopoly on truth. In any given year of our analysis there were men who disagreed as vehemently as possible, and who represented contradictory positions on the same facts and their interpretation. At no time was there lacking someone who saw something good in Hitler or his Party; at no time did Hitler ever command total respect and recognition from his observers. Such disparity of intellectual opinion reveals the somewhat amorphous and insecure base upon which interpreters of humanity operate, and the subjectivity and error which enter into even the most strongly supported theories of reality.

Our study has areas which should be expanded at some future date. It would be of great interest to do as detailed an analysis of the reviewers and periodicals as has been for the books. This would move the footnotes into the text, and expand the quotes from reviews considerably.



Also, Hitler's Mein Kampf was published in English in 1933. A study of the reviews of his book would add much to our understanding of the feelings of intellectuals that year.

The shift of opinion from year to year must have had some set of reasons behind it. Perhaps an analysis of American foreign policy during those years would help in explaining the statistics of the present study and any future one.

And finally, our present analysis extends from 1928 to 1936. To extend it to 1939 would be of great help in seeing the total picture of American intellectual involvement in the political issues of the world.

With these hopes for an expansion of our study, and an appreciation of the difficulties facing all who search for the truth, we close.

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