

PATHFINDER

DIGEST OF WORLD AFFAIRS

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Adolf Hitler

Adolf Hitler, potentially, is one of the most dangerous men on earth.

He commands a peace-time army of 1,000,000 men, the second largest in the world. He rules 69,000,000 Germans with an absolutism that even Hirohito, deified emperor of 90,000,000 Japanese, cannot rival. Hitler is both President and Prime Minister of the Reich. As Der Fuehrer—"The Leader"—he heads every civil, judicial and military function of the nation. A single nod of his head might plunge Europe into war.

All this is the fantastic dream that came true. In the beginning it was Hitler's father who was ambitious. The illegitimate son of an Austrian peasant girl, Alois Hitler began his career as a cobbler and wound up as a fairly well-to-do minor customs official.

On April 20, 1889, at Braunau, Austria, his third wife bore him his fifth child, a boy who was christened Adolf. By the time the child was ready to go to school, the family had settled in Linz, in Upper Austria.

Alois told his son to study hard, so that some day he, too, might become an honored servant of Emperor Franz Josef. Adolf would have none of it. A good part of the time he played truant.

At home he read popular histories of Alexander the Great, Charlemagne and Julius Caesar, or spent his night hours drawing by lamplight—"wasting good oil," his father grumbled.

When Adolf was 12, his father died. The boy never was graduated from elementary school, and spent five years after his father's death as the idle, spoiled pet of his devoted mother, Klara Poelzl Hitler.

Finally, when he was 18, Adolf stirred himself. With a packet of drawings under his arm and \$15 in his pocket, he went to Vienna. First at the Academy School of Art, and then at the Architectural School, he was denied admittance.

These two snubs were succeeded by tragic news from home. Klara Hitler was dead. Adolf, who had been ardently devoted to his mother, was stranded in the Austrian capital without funds. For the next three years his home was a flop-house, a one-room dormitory crowded with steel-mattressed beds. He earned a meager existence as a hod-carrier and factory assistant.

Hitler Referees a Dangerous Race



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Wherever he went, Hitler saw Jews, "and the more I saw, the more clearly did I perceive how apart they were from the rest of humanity."

In the Austrian capital, Hitler began to hate not only the Jews, but the whole racial hodge-podge of Czechs, Magyars, Ruthenians and Serbians that made up the polyglot Hapsburg empire.

For the first time, he began to dream of a mighty country, composed of one race only—the blonde, blue-eyed Germans. At night, black-haired, grey-eyed Adolf Hitler began visiting beer taverns and talking vaguely of the party he would some day found.

Two years before the war, Hitler moved across the Austrian border to the German city of Munich, where he earned a fairly comfortable living as house-painter and limner of picture-postcards.

War came in 1914. In spite of his Austrian citizenship, Hitler eagerly volunteered and was accepted as a member of the Bavarian (south German) army. He served as a message-runner, and was at no time in the trenches. His superiors never advanced him beyond the rank of lance corporal, one step above a private.

Hitler emerged from the war with a slight wound from an exploding shell, and a decoration, the Iron Cross, First Class. His own story, that he won it for the single-handed capture of 15 Frenchmen, has never been verified.

On the eve of the Armistice, the Kaiser fled. A German republic was set up under the socialist Friedrich Ebert. The country teemed with hundreds of small groups, some violently Communist, some reactionary.

As a spy for the reactionary army, Hitler was under orders to discover a political party which soldiers and ex-soldiers could use to further their own ends—destruction of the peace treaties and possible restoration of the monarchy.

In 1919, Hitler became Committee Member No. 7 of the 60-man German Workers' party. He was made "drummer," or chief propagandist of the movement. Gaunt, and with a now-forgotten pointed beard, he screamed himself hoarse against the humiliating post-war treaties in as many as 14 speeches a day.

Soon the army was convinced of the party's reliability. Soldiers and ex-soldiers swelled the party's ranks, and the organization name was changed to The National Socialist (Nazi) German Workers' party.

Hitler, as the most conspicuous figure of the movement, became its head. Money poured in from expatriate Germans, who dreamed of the day when the Fatherland would once more be the equal of other nations. Other funds came from capitalists, who feared the growing power of the Communists.

Capt. Ernst Roehm, afterward for many years Hitler's best friend, began to organize the Storm Troop, recruited from the unemployed and armed by industrialists. Fitted out with pistols, bludgeons and knife-rings,

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Roehm's forces brawled in the streets with Jews and Communists. By 1931, the number of casualties on both sides had risen to as high as 15,000 a year.

In November, 1923, Hitler was ready for his first attempt on the life of the German republic. He headed a revolution of Storm Troopers in Munich. The revolution was crushed by the local police after one day and Hitler fled, leaving behind him 16 dead comrades.

Finally captured, he was sentenced by a pro-Nazi court in April of 1924 to serve five years in the comfortable model prison of Landsberg. Jailed, Hitler penned laboriously at his political and philosophical autobiography, "My Struggle" ("Mein Kampf"). Written in more than 800 pages of script, it was later to sell over 1,000,000 copies, and to serve as the Bible of the nationalist, pro-German, anti-French, anti-Russian, anti-Jewish, anti-Democratic Nazi party.

Out of jail nine months later, Hitler despaired. In his cell he had told frequent visitors: "It will take me five years to get things going again."

Opportunity, indeed, arrived just five years later. In 1930, the whole world tumbled into an economic abyss. Germany's internal structure, weakened by reparations payments, was in a state of near collapse. To keep the republic alive, Chancellor Bruening was forced to adopt socialistic measures. There was talk of a division of landed estates. Property owners, big industrialists and small farmers alike, became fearful.

Nazis did all in their power to profit by the difficulties confronting the government. Financed by arms-makers as well as by others, Hitler furiously attacked "weak democracy," reparations and the Jews. The latter, whom he attacked with almost irrational anger, he blamed with responsibility for all of Germany's troubles. Above everything, he promised to protect property and to win back Germany's place in the sun.

Street fighting went on. Nazi pamphlets and broadsides were distributed by the ton. Organizing and propaganda for the party cost an estimated \$8,000 a day. Hitler, a genius in the field of demagogic oratory, spoke everywhere. To millions of bewildered Germans, he seemed the personification of the abused German people—"The Little Man."

Finally, the Nazis won a great victory in the Reichstag elections of 1932. On January 30, 1933, four years ago this week, President Paul von Hindenburg made Hitler Prime Minister of the Reich.

For the Nazi leader it was a dream come true. For his enemies, it was the beginning of a nightmare. On April 1, 1933, a docile parliament voted Hitler in as dictator of the "republic."

Democratic forms of government withered and died. Jews were hounded at every turn. Youths in Germany were taken from the school room to the military training camp.

Then, in 1934, the 2,500,000-man Storm Troop became too powerful, threatening the army itself. Hitler, the one-time Reichswehr spy, decided

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quickly. On June 30, murder by his command raged through Germany.

Ernst Roehm, leader of the Storm Troopers, was routed out of bed at 6 A. M. and shot, not improbably by Hitler himself. Der Fuehrer had been best man at Roehm's wedding scarcely six weeks before.

And so it went. Brutality followed brutality in the "blood purge." In the end, executions prevailed on a larger scale than Hitler himself had either dreamed of or intended. When the massacre was over, more than 250 were dead, some shot, some chopped to death with axes.

After his friend Ernst Roehm died, there was no one in all the world to call Hitler "Adolf." To this day, even his highest lieutenants never address him as anything but "Herr Chancellor" or "My Leader."

Hitler exists today as a supreme contradiction. The leader and idol of millions of Germans, he is a man without friends.

The supreme exponent of nationalism, he was a man without a country from the time of the Munich revolt in 1923, when his German citizenship was revoked, until 1932, when he automatically became a German by accepting a small post in the government of Bavaria.

Holder of one of the biggest jobs in the world, he seldom begins work before 10 o'clock, and works only four days a week. When occasion demands, he works for 12 or 18 hours at a stretch, but such efforts leave him exhausted for days afterward.

Born a Catholic, he is at the head of a party that favors a new form of paganism.

In a land flowing with beer, he touches no liquor. He lives in seeming simplicity, does not smoke and eats practically no meat.

His amusements are few. Before he became dictator, he went to as many as two or even three moving pictures a day. Now he goes but little less often.

He needs music "like a drug." He has been known to interrupt even the most important cabinet sessions to attend the opera or a musical comedy.

Although he was definitely a "lady's man" before 1923, he is seldom seen with women. Most of his biographers attribute his bachelorhood to the fact that he has come to devote all his energies to the revivification of Germany. Konrad Heiden, a German journalist, holds that Hitler practices celibacy simply because he cannot make any woman love him, in spite of his great prestige. John Gunther, a veteran American foreign correspondent, asserts that Hitler's undoubtedly tremendous affection for his mother left him cold to other women.

Despite his scientifically ridiculous racial theories and his infamous Jew-baiting, Hitler's claims to fame are many. He has restored the German people to a place of equality among nations. One by one, he has repudiated the clauses of humiliating post-war treaties. Aided and abetted by German munitions interests, he has

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created a first-class army. He has reduced unemployment in Germany from 6,000,000 to 1,500,000. As an organizer and propagandist he probably has no equal anywhere in the world.

But the cost has been terrific. He has alienated all democratic European countries. Perhaps even Mussolini, his ally, does not trust him. At home, the German people are undergoing tremendous sacrifices to maintain Germany's gigantic army budget. Food is notoriously scarce. Taxes are high, and getting higher.

Foreign correspondents assert that Hitler is refereeing a dangerous race between rebellion at home and the only thing that will forestall it—war with some foreign power. Which will win? Hitler says: "There will be no revolution in Germany in the next 1,000 years."

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