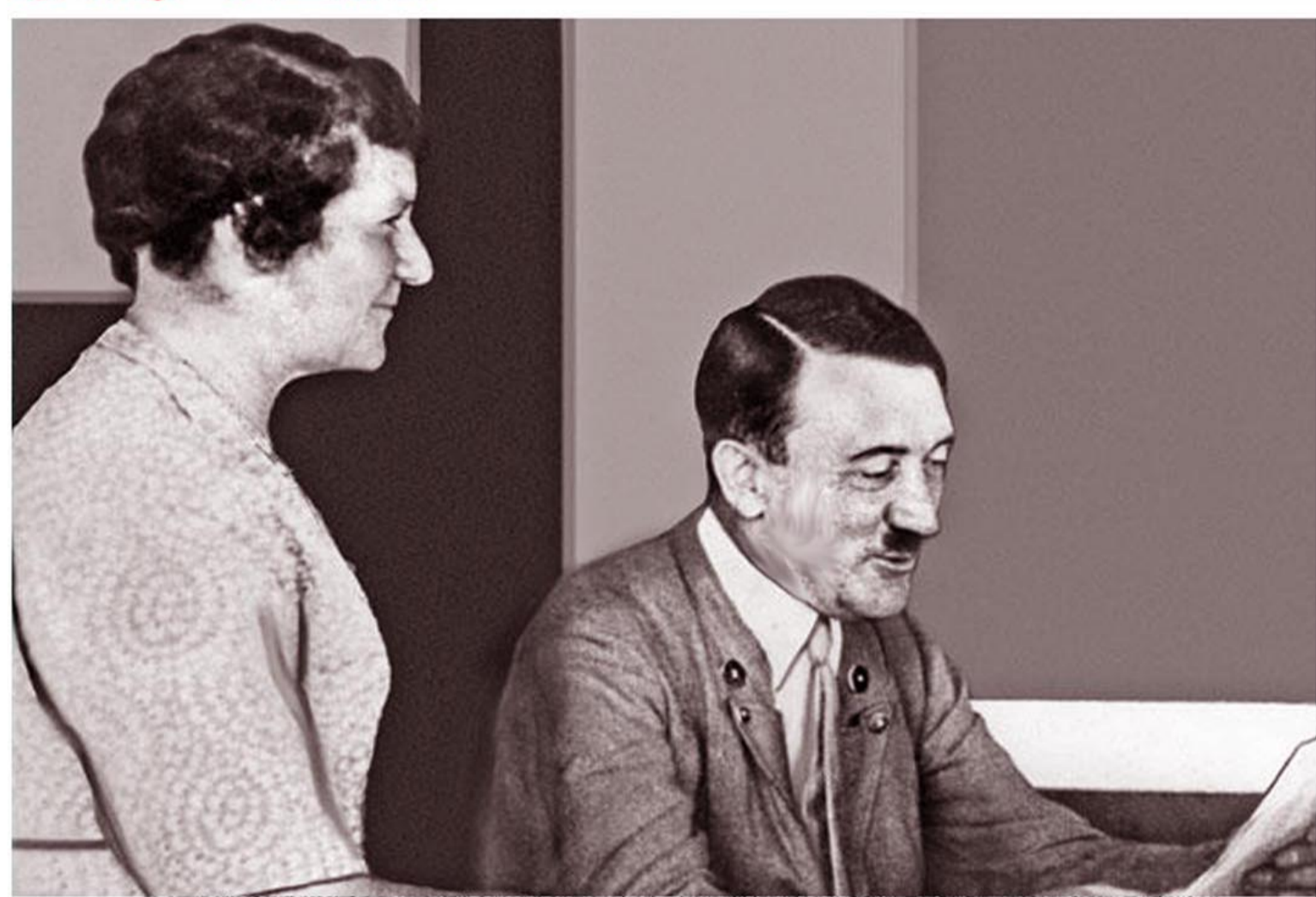


THE SECRET OF ADOLF HITLER'S SISTER



Sister Ida was proud of Adolf, but not Sister Paula

For 20 years Ida and Paula Hitler lived in a Vienna garret, never hearing from their lost brothers, Gustave and Adolf. Ida was a war widow; Paula a stenographer. When Adolf became chancellor, he at last wrote to them. Ida joined him at Berchtesgaden, but Paula, embittered by his long desertion and the loss of her youth, declared he was no longer her brother. She gave out an interview revealing that their father was an illegitimate child. The Fuehrer's emissaries told her to keep quiet. She refused. But finally when Hitler came as ruler to Vienna, there was a reconciliation, and family anschluss.

THE 14th of April last, the Fuehrer made his solemn entry into Vienna. He passed the morning of the following day at his headquarters, set

up in a luxurious apartment in the Imperial Hotel, receiving the chiefs of the local Nazi movement. In the crowd of visitors of note, attired for the most part in glittering uniforms, no-one paid any attention to a woman about 35 years old, shy and modestly dressed, whose almost masculine face however, acknowledged a striking resemblance to that of Adolf Hitler.

Only a few intimates of the chief knew that this woman with large blue eyes, no longer exactly young, who left 20 minutes after her arrival, alone, as she had come, was none other than Miss Paula Hitler, the Fuehrer's sister. And even those who knew the identity of the visitor did not know that the brief scene which took place behind the closed doors of Adolf Hitler's apartment brought to a close a "disagreement" between brother and sister which had covered 20 years.

A little more than a year ago, when the author of these lines went to see Adolf Hitler's sister for the first time, she still lived at No. 52 Schonburggasse in Vienna. This is a huge three-story building, built, like most of the houses in the quarter in which it is situated, near the end of the last century. The first floor is occupied by a dressmaker's salon. The building also houses two doctors and the widow of a former high official of the monarchy. But the little apartments are occupied by families of varying numbers, variously employed.

The service stairway of the apartment house does not end at the third floor but mounts to the garret, where, according to the general custom in Vienna, the lodgers hang their washings. There, directly under the roof, before the padlocked entrance of the great drying-room, is a little door:

that of the miserable garret lodgings, consisting of a tiny room and a kitchen in which lived, for a score of years, Adolf Hitler's two sisters.

Paula Hitler was only 14 years old when she went to live in this little apartment. Her half-sister, Mrs. Ida Raupal, ten years her senior, had lodged there with her husband. When Raupal was killed at the front, the widow had her little orphan sister, bereft of all resources, come to live with her.

And in these humble surroundings, under the roof of No. 52 Schonburggasse, the Widow Raupal and Paula Hitler lived for 20 long years, the monotonous life, full of privations, of the Viennese proletariat.

They have two brothers, Gustave, the elder, before the war was a restaurant waiter, Adolf, the younger, a house painter. Since the hostilities, both had completely disappeared.

Sometimes the two sisters heard that their brothers were working in Germany, but no one ever knew their address. Were they really still alive? What had become of them?

For 20 years, the two women did not receive the slightest indication the two men were living.

"They have certainly been killed, like your husband," Paula said sometimes to her sister. "It is impossible that they have so completely forgotten our existence."

The meager pension which Mrs. Raupal received each month from the Austrian state did not suffice for the two. Life was so hard in Vienna, the capital become too large for a little, conquered country.

Young Paula Hitler became a stenographer in an office. Every evening,

after her work, she trudged home to the attic in the Schonburggasse. And thus the years rolled by, to be passed by these two women poverty-stricken and in seclusion.

One day—it was at the end of the year 1923—the Austrian newspapers published an item: in Munich, a little group of extreme nationalists had attempted an army uprising against the Weimar Republic. But the coup had failed. The German authorities announced that the leader of the mutiny, a certain Adolf Hitler, was imprisoned in Sandborg fortress.

The two sisters watch the news anxiously. Adolf Hitler . . . is it their brother or a namesake?

And in the office of the insurance company where Paula works, people ask questions:

“Say, this Adolf Hitler—are you by any chance his sister?”

But the young stenographer protests:

“No, don’t you see—I am called Paula Hietler, not Hitler.”

The years pass. More and more frequently Adolf Hitler’s name appears on the front page of newspapers. Then, one day, the incredible happens. Hitler is named Chancellor of the Reich.

Events rush forward. Several weeks later the former house painter is elected President of the Reich. More than 60 million Germans unite in one cry: “Heil Hitler!”

And the echoes of these acclamations come even to the humble retreat in the Schonburggasse. The two sisters receive a letter from Gustave, established as a restaurant owner in Berlin. And this letter confirms at last what the two sisters had scarcely dared formulate in their dreams: the

master of Germany, the adulated Fuehrer, is their brother Adolf!

Several weeks more pass. One morning a young man in S. A. uniform knocks at the door of the little apartment. He bears a letter to Mrs. Raupal.

The letter comes from Adolf. A few simple, kindly lines. A brother writes to his sisters, whom he has not seen for many long years:

"My dear Ida and Paula,

"As you certainly must already know, I have established a residence at Berchtesgaden. I should like very much to have both of you come here to live. A governor's household without women is not a real household . . ."

And, at the end of the letter, a few words about the elder brother:

". . . as for Gustave, thank God, he is content with his fate. His restaurant in Berlin is doing well. . . ."

After the reading of that missive, Mrs. Raupal cried enthusiastically:

"My goodness! What happiness! Come, Paula, pack the bags! We are leaving!"

But the younger woman shook her head!

"Go alone. If he could forget us for 20 years, if he could leave us in misery without caring what became of us, it is now I who wish to forget! Adolf is no longer my brother!"

All Mrs. Raupal's efforts to persuade her sister to follow her to Berchtesgaden were in vain. Paula Hitler stayed alone in the little apartment in the Schonburggasse, determined not to abandon the life she had led for 20 years.

There is another fact which has helped to poison the conflict between

Adolf Hitler and his sister.

Paula Hitler once allowed herself to be interviewed. She gave a journalist who questioned her revealing details on her relatives.

It was thus that it became known that Adolf Hitler's father was named Aloys Schuckelgruber and that he was a non-commissioned officer in the Austrian custom house. He was married three times.

His successive wives were named:

1: Anna Glaser-Hoyer

2: Franciska Malzenberger

3: Klara Polzl.

Twice a widower, Mr. Schuckelgruber was not exactly young when he became acquainted with the girl who was to become his third wife. Old Polzl was opposed to this marriage, believing his daughter too young to marry a retired custom-house officer. But before the great love of his daughter—and young Klara was indeed infatuated with the elderly Aloys—the father had to yield.

The date of the marriage was already fixed when the father-in-law one day had occasion to look over the identity papers of his future son-in-law. To his great astonishment, he discovered that the latter was an illegitimate child. Indeed, the birth certificate of the custom officer carried after the words: "Father's name," the answer, "Unknown." His mother was named Mathilde Schuckelgruber and the future husband of Klara Polzl bore his mother's name, as is customary for children born out of marriage.

So although old Polzl could no longer do anything to prevent his daughter from marrying the man of her choice, he set this final condition:

"That he abandon that bastard's

name!" he cried.

But what name to take? Old Polzl went about choosing it himself. His own wife, Klara's mother, was named Johanna Hitler.

The custom officer raised no objection. A name mattered little to him, so long as he could marry the woman he loved. They accomplished the formalities demanded by the law, and the union was celebrated shortly after.

And this is the reason the children of old Schuckelgruber, Gustave, Adolf and Paula, bear the name Hitler.

When this interview appeared, Paula Hitler was visited by an emissary of her brother, come to beg her never to give any more and especially to maintain an absolutely discreet silence on the origins of the Fuehrer.

Miss Paula Hitler, a religious old maid, even a puritan, refused flatly to comply with this demand, because she was convinced that there was absolutely nothing to hide in the family history.

Mrs. Raupal departed for Berchtesgaden. Paula Hitler believed that in the future nothing would disturb her peaceful retreat. She soon saw she was mistaken.

From the day after the departure of her sister, Paula became the object of a veritable siege. She could not leave the house without being nabbed in the passage by newspapermen, halted by photographers, applauded and insulted by passers-by, according to their political convictions. She could not open a newspaper without finding an article on herself in it. In the office where she had worked for almost 20 years, she became the object of manifestations in turn hostile and enthusiastic on the part of

her colleagues, so frequent and so intense that she had to resign herself to abandoning her post.

Her life became a hell. The house in the Schonburggasse resembled a besieged fortress. Soon Paula Hitler found herself obliged not to open her door, nor to read the newspapers, not even to open her mail.

It was the Viennese National Socialist Party, a perfectly legal organization at that time, which brought to the Fuehrer's attention the hellish situation in which his sister struggled. Several days later Mrs. Ida Raupal returned to Vienna, charged by her brother with correcting the situation.

"You are Adolf Hitler's sister," she said to Paula. "You must not forget what you owe to your brother. It is vital that you leave this tenement immediately!"

But Paula remained inflexible:

"For 20 years he completely forgot what he owed us. My youth was ruined through his fault. No, I will not leave this attic. . . ."

At last Mrs. Raupal, deciding that it was useless to struggle against her sister's obstinacy, found a convincing argument:

"Listen, Paula," she said, "since you don't want to accept any money from Adolf, I'll send you some. Over there I have a salary much too high. I will send you a money order every month. This will be my money and not his, but promise me you will leave this impossible tenement. . . ."

In the end Paula Hitler accepted this last proposition. She left the apartment house in the Schonburggasse to take up residence at Döbling, the loveliest suburb of Vienna, on the second floor of a luxurious house surrounded by a beautiful gar-

den.

It was there that we went to pay her a visit, for the second time, several weeks before the anschluss. It was not a long visit.

On the second floor, before No. 13, we rang the bell. After several seconds of waiting, the peep-hole of the door opened from the inside with a sharp noise and through the little opening thus created, we recognized the face of Hitler's sister.

"What do you want?" she asked us in a voice that carried little welcome. And when we had stated our names and occupations, the response came, prompt and almost hostile:

"I receive no one!"

The peep-hole closed again immediately. There was the noise of footsteps, then silence.

The concierge, very reticent, finally consented to give us some information on his celebrated lodger.

"Miss Hitler never receives anyone," he told us, "except some women friends, in whose company she takes trips almost every Sunday. Mornings, she does her housekeeping alone, then, shopping bag in hand, she goes out to do her marketing.

"Three times a month, the postman always comes to deliver a money order of fifty marks to Paula Hitler.

"It is because of the law," the concierge explained to us, growing more loquacious. "She has explained to me herself that no one can send more than 50 marks at a time. So she receives her monthly allowance in three parts. *Because it is necessary to respect the law, even when one is Chancellor!*"

We succeeded in meeting one of the Sunday visitors of the Fuehrer's sister,

who really wanted to advance some confidences concerning her friend, always on condition of preserving the strictest anonymity. We agreed to respect this very comprehensible desire. And here is what we succeeded in learning:

“To be quite sincere,” she tells us as a sort of preamble, “I should have preferred that you go to someone else. . . . Paula Hitler, who is one of my childhood friends, always has been a modest and reserved being, almost shy, having a horror of publicity. She always has had a great love for her brother, with whom she shared the dreams of childhood. And later she never was able to resign herself to believing him dead, although he gave no sign of being alive for almost 20 years.”

“Does she talk much of him now?”

“Never in the presence of strangers, of course. However, sometimes she recalls memories of their childhood with me. It is thus that she once said to me that Adolf at the age of 15 often had interminable discussions with his father. Old Schuckelgruber was a fervent Austrian patriot, yet Adolf proudly wore the red and black insignia of the pan-Germanist movement of Schonenerer, which was at that time almost high treason.”

And our amiable informer added:

“You must be at a loss to explain why Adolf Hitler was so long unconcerned with his sisters. Well, here is a story that will help you to understand. You certainly are not unaware that the Fuehrer has numerous relatives living in Upper Austria. His family is very large, due to the fact that the elder Schuckelgruber, the Fuehrer’s father, was twice a widower before he married his third wife, the woman

who was to bear Adolf and Paula. Most of his relatives live in little villages near Leonding and Spital-am-Weitra. In the latter city lives Therese Polzl, an aunt of Hitler, married to an honest farmer named Anton Schmidt. They are so poor that they did not have enough money to buy their eldest son, Edward—who is no less than the Fuehrer's first cousin—the S. A. uniform indispensable to his entry in the local brigade. So they wrote a letter to Adolf Hitler asking him for a little money. Here is what Adolf answered. I quote from memory:

“ ‘Edward should take an example from me. He is a vigorous and healthy young man. I succeeded without the help of anyone whomsoever, thanks to my own strength and will’ ”

The conversation we have related took place some weeks before the anschluss. Since, everything has changed in Vienna.

Adolf Hitler has visited “his good city.”

He visited Vienna, and Paula Hitler, who was determined never again to speak a word to him, could not escape the general fever which seized all the Fuehrer's partisans.

So a woman no longer exactly young, shy and modestly gowned, that morning crossed the luxurious hall of the Imperial Hotel. To the great astonishment of everyone, she was immediately admitted to the Fuehrer's apartment, and she left half an hour later.

The next day Adolf Hitler left Vienna. But all the great newspapers of the world told that at the moment of leaving he gave a gorgeous bouquet of flowers to his aide-de-camp. No one

knew for whom these magnificent flowers were destined.

They were a present of reconciliation.

And, for the third time, we tried to pay a visit to Paula Hitler. The concierge of the house in Döbling recognized us from a distance.

"Fräulein Hitler has left!" he told us with a meaningful wink.

And, smiling, he added:

"She is at Berchtesgaden . . . at her brother's home."

Thus Adolf Hitler succeeded in realizing, after the Austrian Anschluss, the family Anschluss. Which of the two was the more difficult, only he could say. ●

KEH

October 20, 1938