

version of the Kubelwagen called the Schwimmwagen, for amphibious operations. It had a sealed, waterproof body and a retractable propeller (in the rear).

The factory also produced airplane parts and at one point was assembling sixty V-1 "buzz bombs" a day. The V-1, the first of Hitler's "Vengeance Weapons," was the pilotless robot jet used against London.

A series of Allied bombing raids succeeded in putting the VW factory almost completely out of operation by August 1944. It was only after the war that bomb disposal experts discovered how close one particular bomb had come to putting an end to the Volkswagen forever. It had scored a direct hit, falling right between the two great turbines which powered the factory. An explosion would have destroyed them and the Volkswagen car would probably have become one of the "might have beens" of history. But there was no explosion. The direct hit had been a dud.

By the summer of 1945, the plant was back in production, assembling a small number of Kubelwagens for the occupying British. At the very end of the year, the production of VW Beetles began. By March 1946, a thousand cars a month were coming off the assembly line.

The original three hundred thousand subscribers never got anything for their money, but by 1948, the VW was finally being offered through a regular dealership network.

By the time production of the basic model was discontinued in the middle of 1985, more than twenty million had been sold . . . none of them called KdF-Wagens, but all of them shaped like beetles.

EIGHT

Backstage Hitler

Agitation, moral indignation, sympathy, shock, sincerity, condolence, reverence—he had a posture for everything.

—ERNST VON WEISZACKER,
NAZI DIPLOMAT

Hitler wanted to be seen as impulsive, emotional, inspired. In fact, he was a cool manipulator who carefully planned for maximum effect. He even had himself photographed after buying new clothes so he could study his appearance from all angles. If the result was unsatisfactory, the new clothes were discarded.

When Hitler decided to change the style of his military hat, someone had an ingenious idea which spared him the modeling sessions. A wax sculpture of his head was made and sent to the hat factory, where the various styles were placed on it and photographed. But when the pictures were delivered to Hitler, he suspected a plot.

There was nothing wrong with the hats. It was the wax head; the mustache on it was too broad—rather like Stalin's, in fact—and Hitler suspected he was being insulted.

The thorough investigation which was immediately undertaken failed to establish that anyone had intentionally tried to belittle the Fuehrer by suggesting a similarity with the Soviet dictator.

Rehearsing

Before an important meeting with someone he was to see for the first time, Hitler often had an associate meet the other party in advance and make an assessment so he could prepare himself accordingly. This was not a matter of organizing arguments or facts and figures, but of deciding which Hitler *persona* to present—which role to play.

The gist of one of these rehearsals has been preserved. In this particular case, Rudolf Hess was the advance scout. Hitler asks if the man he is to meet “can be used.” Hess replies that he can. Hitler then asks, “What does he expect?”

Hess: Authority, of course. You can speak at length. Your will is unshakable. You give laws to the age.

Hitler: Then I'll speak with the firm voice, without yelling?

Hess: Of course.

Having decided that the appropriate impression for this interview ought to be firmness but not fanaticism, Hitler then practices for several minutes until he finds just the right style and tone. Finally, he concludes his

conference with Hess by saying, “Good, now I think we have it.” The meeting can now be scheduled.

Carpet Chewing

Hitler commonly sucked his fingers and chewed his nails, habits he was careful to refrain from in public. He was, however, famous for a behavior in which he never indulged.

Even Nazis sometimes referred to him as the “teppichfresser,” which means “carpet chewer,” because a common rumor had him throwing himself to the floor and chewing on the carpet during his famous rages. There is no recorded instance of Hitler ever actually doing this, perhaps because it would have been going too far. Indeed, Hitler was in complete control of himself most of the time. Many of the famous Hitler tantrums were just part of the act.

Sometimes, of course, they were deeply genuine, and there was no way of telling which of the rages were assumed and which were authentic. They were always impressive. Even associates of long standing were intimidated as Hitler stamped his feet and pounded his fists on tables and walls. Literally foaming at the mouth, he would roar: “I won't have it! Get rid of them all! Traitors!” and so forth. His eyes became fixed, his face reddened and darkened to purple, a large blue vein running down his forehead bulged.

It was as much the unpredictable onset of these rages as their passion that threw everyone into helpless confusion. And of course for hours or days afterward, there was the tension, the waiting to learn whether this partic-

ular storm would pass off without incident or had been the prelude to new terror and murder.

Preparing a Speech

In the early days, until about 1930, Hitler prepared for a speech by scribbling out key words and phrases on small sheets of paper. He generally used between ten and twelve of these, with no more than fifteen or twenty words to a sheet. A typical effort began with the words, "Jewish domination and starvation of the nation" and ended with "Germany will be free notwithstanding." The notes in between included such promptings as "Want-Misery-Scarcity-Famine," "The Jew as fission fungus" and of course, "the world under one master."

As the Party became more affluent and able to afford secretarial staff, Hitler changed his procedure and began dictating his speeches to typists, often working without any notes at all. Teams of typists had to be kept ready on round-the-clock standby as he brooded and mulled until the last possible moment. Then, not one but two of the typists were summoned—nothing must interrupt the Fuehrer as he spewed forth words in a session that usually lasted for hours.

Oratorical Poses

In the early 1920s, Hitler may or may not have taken lessons in public speaking from a sometime actor, sometime astrologer who went by the name of Erik Jan Hanussen (and whose real name was Herschel Steinschneider). The facts are obscure. It is certain, though, that in 1925 Hitler

posed for a remarkable set of photographs as part of perfecting his overall oratorical style.

There are no crowds in these pictures, no swastika banners or uniforms—just Hitler, in an ordinary suit against a plain background in a series of oratorical poses. The photos allowed him to study his appearance as he practiced the emphatic gestures: one depicts the upraised fist; another, the admonitory pointing finger; a third, the openhanded appeal to reason. Clearly, Hitler understood oratory as melodramatic theater.

Last Minute Preparations

He manipulated his audience in every way that he could. During the days when he was still speaking to comparatively small crowds, building popular support on his way to the seizure of power, he sent advance scouts to the hall in the hours before he was scheduled to appear. These scouts supplied a steady stream of telephone reports: the size of the audience . . . were people still arriving . . . what was the overall mood of the crowd, would there be any opposition or argument?

Hitler was always preceded by other speakers and as each prepared to take the platform, Hitler telephoned last minute instructions on how he wanted the crowd worked up—whether they were to be moved toward good humor or rage.

Hitler made one last preparation before finally setting out for the hall himself—pep pills. About fifteen minutes before speaking, Hitler took two Kola-Dallmann tablets, a stimulant compounded of cola, caffeine and sugar.

Later, particularly during the war years, he would become increasingly dependent on a wide variety of drugs (see chapter 13, "Hitler the Hypochondriac"). While he was still on the way to power, though, the Kola-Dallmann tablets sufficed to provide just the kick he needed as he approached the platform and his audience.

NINE

Hitler Speaks

Hitler's voice sounds tremendously sincere and convincing.

—WILLIAM SHIRER

DIARY ENTRY, MAY 1935

Hitler's voice was a powerful instrument; when enraged about one thing or another, his shouting could rattle windows in their frames.

He could erupt at any time. On one occasion, during dinner at an acquaintance's home, he was sitting quietly enough until someone was so unwise as to say something in defense of Jews. (This was well before Hitler was in power. After that, no one would have dared make such a remark.) Hitler immediately launched into a tirade, pushing back his chair and speaking with such force that a child sleeping in another room woke and began to cry. This went on for more than half an hour.

When he was finally finished, Hitler bowed to his hostess, kissed her hand, and left without further ado. The guest who reports all this also notes that Hitler's remarks were "quite witty."

He did have an extraordinary verbal range. When he

wished to impress a visitor with his sweet gentility, he spoke with his "cooing voice," the voice of the dove, and the visitor came away thinking he had been granted a privileged insight. Surely, he thought, he had met the real Hitler, a reasonable man with no intention of carrying out the threats he made in public.

The War Voice

Hitler could do more with his voice than just speak. He sometimes entertained his intimates with vocal impressions of automobiles and other kinds of machinery, but his favorite subject was warfare. He was able to accurately mimic the sound of machine-gun fire, or a particular kind of howitzer, or the roar and screech of vast artillery barrages.

Indeed, war had helped shape his voice. Serving as a foot soldier in the First World War (see chapter 10, "Hitler in Combat"), he had been caught in a gas attack which temporarily blinded him and permanently damaged his throat, leaving his voice hoarse and rasping.

He had to learn to speak again, and this process helped confirm an idea that was to become a central Hitler concept—that in some real sense, he was Germany. His voice had nearly been destroyed by the war, but through his will it had become stronger than ever. And so, he said, the German nation would recover from its defeat and—through him—revenge itself upon the world.

The Orator

One of Hitler's schoolteachers later claimed he had witnessed his young pupil talking to trees. Perhaps this was because the trees did not talk back. Hitler was never much interested in conversation. By the time he was a teenager he was confirmed in his habit of talking on and on like a phonograph record once a favorite topic got him started. Oratory became an essential part of his ordinary life.

When he entered into his political career after the First World War, his oratorical ease allowed him to automatically employ the language of the common citizen rather than the stilted, abstract imagery of conventional German political speakers. When he talked of economic difficulties, for example, he used the terms and phrases housewives used.

He made his audience think he was their man.

The Performance

Observers, even when they had taken notes, often found it impossible to summarize a Hitler speech. Although Hitler had mapped its course in advance, there was little logic to the structure, and he compounded the incoherence by digressing into prolix tangents as they occurred to him. His audiences did not care. This orator persuaded not with reason but with emotion. His speeches were performances.

The performances began with music. As Hitler entered the hall or stadium where he would be speaking, it was always to the accompaniment of the music he had

adopted as his personal motif—a banging, swinging military tune called the “Badenweiler March.”

When he took the podium and started to speak, his manner was tentative, for he was still gauging the exact emotional climate of his audience, attuning himself like a nightclub performer.

He usually opened with the historical background of the issue at hand, and no matter the specifics of this review, the theme was almost always the same. An outrage had been committed against the German nation, the German people. The perpetrator was usually the Jews, although sometimes it was the Capitalists, or the Communists, or the Poles, or President Roosevelt.

Soon Hitler was well into the pace of his speech, moving briskly, confidently. Anger was always an important component of his style, expressed in every conceivable form—scorn, ridicule, threats, insults. Crude humor was also abundant in vulgar jokes, mockery, exaggerated impersonations of the enemy.

The audience was not passive through all this. Far from it. They were encouraged—expected—to participate with frequent applause, laughter and shouts of agreement. Even members of the Reichstag, the rubber stamp legislature, played “hiss the villain” when Hitler mentioned an arch fiend like Winston Churchill. Churchill’s name was greeted with what the official German news agency reported as “catcalls and cries of ‘Pfui’.”

Always, near the end, there was a distinct shift in the mood of a speech, toward the rhapsodic. Hitler’s outspread hands rose high and he looked toward Heaven, transported by exaltation. He was not merely speaking; he was acting out a promise—the coming triumph and

redemption of the German people, usually through an act of vengeance.

Seduction

Hitler’s performances contained an undeniably erotic element. A contemporary witness saw the Fuehrer as an insignificant little man stiffened by his own words as a hose is stiffened by its stream of water. The conclusions of his speeches are described as orgasmic. In one instance, he beamed at the audience and said, “Aren’t you as enthralled by me as I am with you?”

It was not uncommon for women to swoon during a Hitler speech. When discussing propaganda theory, Hitler described the public in general as a feminine mass waiting to be conquered, overwhelmed. This may really have been his perception, and the idea was certainly useful to Germans after 1945. They had been seduced, they said, by Hitler’s hypnotic influence. Contemporary accounts say something else. They suggest that in fact Hitler was a kind of human radio, picking up a signal from his audience and, with little modulation, amplifying it. One Hitler associate, Otto Strasser, saw him as a kind of loudspeaker “proclaiming the most secret desires, the least admissible instincts, the suffering and personal revolts of a whole nation.”

Perhaps the most frightening thing about Hitler’s career is not that he was successful at imposing himself on general public opinion but that he was so good at representing it.

TEN

Hitler in Combat

Then a bullet tore off my right sleeve but by a miracle I was saved.

—HITLER, 1915, IN A LETTER
HOME, DESCRIBING A
W.W.I EXPERIENCE

What a tantalizing vision—Hitler killed in the First World War. Unfortunately, he not only survived the fighting; he thrived on it. It offered him a fulfillment he could find nowhere else, and it inspired some of his most dangerous ideas.

Ironically, Hitler first came to the attention of military authorities as a draft dodger. He was an Austrian, and Austrian law required that he register for the draft when he reached his twentieth birthday, in 1909. He failed to do this and it is thought by many historians that his need to elude the authorities accounts for his frequent changes of address after this date.

A popular legend has him spending some months in England during this period, visiting his brother-in-law (see chapter 13, "William Patrick Hitler"). This story, though intriguing, has been discredited by historians

who have painstakingly tracked Hitler's actual whereabouts through his wandering years.

In 1913, he left Austria altogether and for the first time in his life entered Germany. The Austrians tracked him down in Munich and in February 1914, had him returned. It soon developed, though, that his efforts at evasion had been unnecessary. He failed the physical. Judged too weak for military service, he was allowed to return to Munich.

A German Soldier

Because Austria (actually, the Austro-Hungarian Empire) was comprised of a variety of nationalities, Hitler regarded it as a mongrel nation. He considered himself a German and, as it turned out, was more than willing to fight for Germany.

When the Great War erupted in 1914, people on both sides thought the fighting would be short and glorious, but the prospect generated a special enthusiasm in Hitler. By chance, his reaction was captured in an extraordinary photograph. The picture is of a huge crowd assembled to hear patriotic speeches the day Germany declared war on Russia. Hitler was only an anonymous figure in this vast throng, but with the aid of a magnifying glass his face can be seen. It is transfigured by wild excitement, joy.

(The photograph was taken by Heinrich Hoffmann, who later became Hitler's personal photographer. Reminiscing as to where each had been on that historic day quickly led to the realization that Hitler had been in the crowd Hoffmann was shooting.)

Almost immediately after the war began, Hitler joined a German unit. One of his fellow enlistees noticed something curious about him when rifles were issued. Hitler, he said, regarded his weapon "with the delight that a woman looks at her jewelry."

Within two months Hitler was under fire at the front, serving first as an ordinary soldier, then as a dispatch runner. Whereas most soldiers quickly grew to detest life at the front, Hitler enjoyed it. Another of his comrades later said, "We all cursed him and found him intolerable. There was this white crow among us that didn't go along with us when we damned this war to hell."

Perhaps the violence and danger slaked some twisted need in Hitler's soul. That is speculation. What is certain is that the war had a profound effect on his thinking.

He developed a profound admiration for the command structure of the German Imperial Army, and later imposed its essence on the Nazi Party and then on all German life. As he formulated it, the Fuehrerprinzip—the Leadership Principle—entailed absolute obedience by the lower ranks to the higher; the man on the top was the ultimate source of authority, without qualification or restriction. In Nazi Germany, the ultimate court, the fundamental law, was Hitler.

During the First World War, Hitler got little chance to exert authority over anyone because he was never promoted beyond the rank of lance corporal (private first class in the American system). His superiors judged that he lacked leadership potential. There was the matter of his not being much liked by his fellows, and he was certainly a crackpot. On one occasion he gave a lecture in the trenches about a new social order that would

emerge after the war, but the audience he addressed was a row of clay figures he had made and set up on the parapet.

Hitler seems to have been content with things as they were. There is no record of his applying for advancement or complaining about the lack of it. Perhaps he had no interest in being a leader if he could not be *the* leader.

He did get something else from his Army experience besides the Fuehrerprinzip, something far more peculiar. Although he was wounded by shell splinters and debilitated by poison gas, he found enormous significance in all the incidents in which he was not wounded. There was the "miracle" of the bullet that only tore off his sleeve. On another occasion, he was sitting in a trench eating with his fellow soldiers when, he claimed, an inner voice impelled him to get up and move away. Moments later, a shell burst over the group, killing everyone.

Hitler was a habitual liar and it is entirely possible he invented stories about close calls. The fact remains, though, that he did survive four years on the Western front and was involved in approximately fifty major and minor battles. This survival confirmed his belief that what he called "Providence" had reserved a special destiny for him. In his post-war political career, there were a number of occasions when all seemed lost, but because he was confident of his Providential destiny he persevered in his effort to fulfill it, to make himself one of the most important men in history. His belief fueled his role as Messiah and helped him radiate that immense self-assurance many found so persuasive.

War Hero?

Hitler was awarded a number of decorations during the War, the most important of which was certainly the Iron Cross, First Class, which he received in 1918. This and only this was the medal he wore throughout the war he started twenty-one years later.

Hitler frequently reminisced about his First World War experiences, but said strangely little about how he had earned this important commendation. It was assumed by many, therefore, that he had not earned it but had managed to buy it or connive for it. Subsequent scholarship has cleared up the mystery.

He earned the medal fairly, risking his life carrying a vital message under particularly dangerous circumstances. What he was trying to cover up, it turns out, was nothing more or less than the fact that the medal had been recommended and pushed through by a company adjutant who was a Jew.

After the War

Hitler's Providential luck did not save him from the poison gas attack which sent him to the hospital in October 1918. He was still recuperating there less than a month later when the staggering news arrived that Germany had surrendered. The war was over. Hitler wept bitterly.

He remained in the Army, returned to Munich and there managed to keep clear of a chaotic sequence of Communist and anti-Communist uprisings and repressions.

After the Army finally reestablished order, the Gen-

erals resolved to keep a close eye on all political activity. Hitler became one of the men assigned to this duty.

On September 12, 1919, he was sent to observe a meeting of an obscure, very small group with an impressive name: the German Workers' Party. It had about fifty members.

Hitler sat through a speech he found boring, but the subsequent discussion was another matter. After someone advocated a position he disagreed with, he leapt to his feet and delivered a fiery impromptu reply.

This so impressed the membership that a few days later he was sent a postcard admitting him to the Party, even though he had not applied. After attending one more meeting he agreed to join. It was the very weakness of the group, its small size and lack of direction, that appealed to him. This was a group he could dominate. Here he could begin at the top and exercise the Fuehrerprinzip, with himself as the Fuehrer.

Six months later, he resigned from the Army.

ELEVEN

Hitler's Women

*Despite censorship, police, and denouncement,
Berlin society could not help but gossip.*

—ANDRE FRANCOIS-PONCET,
FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO
BERLIN

A number of factors gave rise to contemporary rumors that Hitler was homosexual. There was his overall manner—exaggerated and self-dramatizing, even when he was not on the podium. And there was the way he walked. Although it is not particularly apparent in newsreels, William Shirer noted in his diary that Hitler's gait was "very ladylike . . . dainty little steps."

One of Hitler's closest associates, designated as the Deputy Fuehrer, was Rudolf Hess, who was known in homosexual circles as "Fraulein Hess" and "Fraulein Anna."

Hess played a prominent role in Hitler's 1923 attempt to overthrow the government. Because he was not sentenced until some time after Hitler, he remained in jail for months after Hitler's release. Hitler was not happy about this. He could not be happy, he said, until "mein

Rudi, mein Hessler!" was also free. "Hessler!" is fairly translated as "dear little Hess."

The homosexuality of another important Hitler associate, Ernst Roehm, is well established, and may have specially qualified him in Hitler's mind for his appointment as head of the Storm Troopers. The principal function of this army-like organization was beating up anyone who opposed the Nazis, and Hitler believed this was a job best undertaken by homosexuals. "No one with family responsibilities," he said, "is any good for street fighting."

There is no evidence, though, that Hitler ever had a homosexual relationship with Hess, Roehm or anyone else.

Purge

Four years after making Roehm head of the Storm Troopers, Hitler had him murdered in the Blood Purge, the massacre that consolidated his political position. When he made his explanations to the German public, he said one of the reasons he had acted was his shock at learning Roehm was homosexual and had been encouraging "degenerate" practices among the Storm Troopers.

Thereafter, the full power of the Nazi state was unleashed against homosexuals with a ferocity and thoroughness approaching that directed against Jews.

The OSS and Hitler's Perversion

Hitler may not have been homosexual but his relations with women were almost certainly peculiar.

with their dogs. Then, Hitler's dog disobeyed a command and Hitler demonstrated what he considered manly attractiveness by using his whip to beat the animal savagely.

Their walk concluded, Hitler asked Maria for a kiss. Maria declined, whereupon Hitler stepped back, shot out his arm in the Nazi salute and snapped, "Heil Hitler."

Strangely, this pair had a few more dates, but the affair came to nothing. Hitler broke it off on the advice of associates who pointed out that it was unseemly for a thirty-seven-year-old man to go around with a teenage girl.

This was not an isolated incident. Hitler also managed to get himself involved with Henny Hoffmann, the teenage daughter of Heinrich Hoffmann, the Nazi photographer. According to subsequent gossip, Hitler persuaded Henny to gratify his masochistic perversion; she then reported the episode to her father.

Enraged, Hoffmann went to Hitler, but came away with the exclusive right to take and license photographs of the Fuehrer, a privilege that subsequently earned him a fortune. This arrangement (see chapter 24, "Private Finances") was evidently quite satisfactory on both sides, because Hoffmann was never assassinated, a fate that frequently befell people who might be in a position to make trouble for Hitler.

As for Henny, she was subsequently married to Baldur von Schirach, head of the Nazi Youth and generally reputed to be a homosexual.

Hitler was also supposed to have had an involvement of some sort with Jenny Haug, the sister of one of his chauffeurs, but the overwhelmingly important relation-

ship of this period is that which he had with a young woman named Angela Raubal. He called her "Geli," and she called him "Uncle Alfi." With good reason. She was the daughter of his half sister.

The exact nature of their physical relationship—if any—will never be known but it was obvious that Hitler dominated her life with a suffocating possessiveness. She could go nowhere, see no one without Uncle Alfi's permission.

On the afternoon of September 17, 1931, Geli shot and killed herself.

Hitler was devastated by her death, brooded for weeks, and talked of killing himself. Unfortunately, he eventually recovered from his depression and found the strength to go on. His revolting self-centeredness manifested itself in remarks he made to a friend at this time: "Now I am altogether free, inwardly and outwardly. Perhaps it was meant to be this way. Now I belong only to the German people and my mission. But poor Geli! She had to sacrifice herself for this."

He continued going to the theater, though, including music halls and light opera. He particularly relished performances featuring nearly—and sometimes completely—nude young women, and made frequent use of opera glasses for a close-up look.

After he became Chancellor, he continued to visit theaters, but also had dancers perform at private Chancellery parties.

Stage and screen actresses were regularly invited to both the private parties and official receptions. One of these women, Renate Mueller, later told a friend that after one of these affairs, the Fuehrer had gotten her

alone in a room, and it had seemed clear to her they were on their way to bed. Both undressed. Then Hitler threw himself to the floor and begged her to kick him. She refused but he, insisting on his utter unworthiness, begged for his "punishment." Mueller finally gave in and kicked him repeatedly, which, she says, greatly excited him.

During this period, Hitler reportedly had liaisons, presumably of a similar nature, with a number of other women. Throughout, however, he maintained a relationship with the woman who ultimately became his wife—Eva Braun.

Eva

Hitler frequently expressed the opinion that important men like himself did not need or want intelligent women for company, a remark he made even in the presence of women guests. Eva Braun filled the bill perfectly. She was young, athletic, and had no intellectual interests whatsoever.

Hitler had met her in 1929 when she was working as an assistant to Heinrich Hoffmann, the photographer father of Henny.

Eva's involvement with Hitler was an on and off matter, entirely at his whim, a situation which drove her to two suicide attempts. Perhaps these had some effect on Hitler because in 1936 he allowed her to move in with him. She was given her own room in his mountain villa, with a door leading to his bedroom.

As to what went on in that bedroom—Eva reportedly told a friend, "I have nothing from him as a man." Hitler

himself once said, "It is true I have overcome the urge to physically possess a woman." He may have been impotent, or able to gratify himself only through his masochistic perversion. On the other hand, after examining the evidence—primarily the memoirs of aides and associates—some historians conclude Eva and Hitler had a conventional sex life. All in all, although an immense amount has been written about Hitler's sex life, it must be pointed out that all is reconstruction and speculation.

It is certain that Eva Braun eventually became Frau Hitler. The marriage took place shortly after midnight on April 29, 1945, barely an hour after Hitler had Eva's brother-in-law shot on a charge of treason.

Approximately thirty-six hours after the wedding, to avoid capture by the Russians, Hitler and Eva killed themselves.

Klara

It may seem grotesque to include Hitler's mother, Klara, among his "women." She did, however, have an unusual presence in his life, a fact of which Hitler's other women must have always been aware. She died in 1907, but Hitler carried her picture with him throughout his life and always hung her portrait in his bedroom, over his bed.

TWELVE

William Patrick Hitler

People are not to know who I am. They are not to know where I come from or about my family background.

—HITLER

Hitler wanted the world to regard him as unique in every respect, a remote “historic” figure without ties to a mundane life, such as relatives. He had them, though, and some of their stories shed a revealing light.

Paula Hitler

Hitler’s sister, Paula, was his one full-blooded sibling. She told him he was crazy when he set out on his political career, and predicted he would wind up with his neck in a noose. This led to cool relations but not complete estrangement.

Paula eked out a meager living as a stenographer, working for an insurance company. As Hitler became successful, he began to send her a small monthly allowance, asking only one thing in return. As part of his effort to keep his relatives as anonymous as possible, he

requested that she adopt the name he used when he wished to be incognito. Paula Hitler became Paula Wolf.

Hitler’s household was managed by Angela Raubal, his half-sister (see below) until they quarreled, sometime in the autumn of 1936. There are different accounts as to the cause of the quarrel, but the upshot was that Angela left and her place was taken by Paula.

Although generally regarded as dull to the point of stupidity, Paula is probably unique among the members of Hitler’s inner circle in that she managed to do some good. After the war, it was learned that on a number of occasions she had interceded with her brother and saved the lives of people scheduled for execution on anti-Nazi charges.

Angela Raubal

Hitler’s father had been married twice before he married Klara Poelzl, who became the mother of Adolf and Paula. Angela was a daughter by the second marriage and was therefore Adolf’s half sister. (She eventually married a man named Raubal.)

Despite the quarrel between them, Hitler came to her aid during the war, when her son Leo was taken prisoner on the Russian front. As it happened, the Germans had captured one of Stalin’s sons. Through intermediaries, Hitler proposed an exchange but Stalin turned him down, saying, “I cannot do it. War is war.”

Leo survived Russian captivity and eventually returned home. Stalin’s son was not so fortunate; the Germans shot him.

Alois Hitler, Jr.

Angela's brother, and Adolf's half brother, was Alois Hitler, Jr. He became a waiter but was also a thief who was sent to jail at least twice.

In 1909, Alois emigrated to Ireland and then England, where he married and fathered a child, William Patrick Hitler (see below). In 1913 he abandoned his English family, returned to Germany and started another family. (He was later convicted of bigamy but was spared jail when his first wife dropped the charge.)

When, in 1933, Adolf became Chancellor, Alois opened a Berlin cafe with souvenir menu cards featuring the name of the proprietor: "A. Hitler." Adolf tried to put a stop to this by declaring the place off-limits to Nazi Party members. The issue was finally resolved by Alois closing the cafe and opening a new one, called the "Tea Room Alois."

In May 1945, Alois fell into the hands of the British occupying forces but was released after it was determined he had had no involvement in Nazi politics or atrocities. The official British statement concludes with the observation that Alois was "absolutely scared stiff of being associated in any way with the Fuehrer's activities."

William Patrick Hitler

William Patrick was Adolf's English nephew, the son left behind by Alois when he returned to Germany in 1913. He grew up to become an inconspicuous London bookkeeper.

By 1931, Adolf had become an international figure about whom the world was developing an insatiable curiosity; William was given a contract by the Hearst newspaper chain for a story about Hitler's family and childhood.

In fact, William knew little about Adolf, so he wrote to his father in Germany, asking for information and anecdotes. The reply came not from Alois but from Adolf—tickets and a summons to Munich for him and his mother.

In a stormy meeting, Adolf told William it was essential that nothing about the family background be disclosed. He did not seem to fear anything in particular; he just did not want the family written about. To settle the matter, he offered William and his mother money (which William later claimed was diverted by Alois). That left the problem of what to tell the Hearst reporters.

Hitler's solution was to concoct a particularly improbable lie. He got William to agree to say there had been a mix-up and that his uncle, although named Adolf Hitler, was not *the* Adolf Hitler. There is no record of William having told the Hearst people this, or their reaction.

William and his mother returned to England, but after Hitler became Chancellor in 1933, William came back to Germany. This time, Hitler tried to convince him that Alois had only been adopted into the Hitler family, and therefore William really was not his nephew.

William checked up on this story and was able to quickly disprove it. Hitler thereupon ordered a job found for him.

He was placed in a minor position at the Opel Auto-

mobile Company but continued to appeal to Hitler for help from time to time. Finally, in 1938, Hitler decided he had had enough. Word was passed to William to leave Germany while he still could.

William returned to England and then went on to the United States, where he took to the lecture circuit, speaking about Hitler and Nazi Germany. In 1944, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, from which he was honorably discharged in 1946.

There is a final, peculiar twist to his story. According to the historian John Toland, William did not change his notorious surname until after his return to civilian life, when he married. The couple produced a child, a boy, and named him Adolf.

Hitler's Children

In 1977, the historian Werner Maser announced he had found Hitler's son, a fifty-nine-year-old man fathered by Hitler when he was a soldier fighting in France in the First World War. This claim is not generally accepted, and none of the other occasionally circulated stories about a Hitler son or daughter have ever been substantiated.

Throughout his career, Hitler repeatedly asserted that he would have liked to have had children of his own, and he was energetically affectionate to those he knew, hoisting the small sons and daughters of associates onto his lap and watching indulgently as they romped on the great terrace of his mountain villa.

He may have been looking at the children but as usual, Hitler was thinking of himself. His remarks on

the subject reek with his characteristic self-serving sentimentality. For example:

How very much I too would like to have a family, children, children! Oh, God, you know how much I love children . . . But I have to deny myself this happiness. I have another bride—Germany!

It is hardly necessary to point out that his love for children did not extend to Jewish children or, for that matter, to anyone of any age whom he hated or who simply had the misfortune to be in his way. On the other hand, some suffered precisely because Hitler thought they might be useful.

As the Germans overran Europe, they engaged in systematic kidnapping. Children judged to be racially "pure"—with blue eyes and blond hair—were taken from their families and brought to special camps, to be raised as super-Nazis.

Likewise, women who happened to meet the crackpot Nazi criteria were also kidnapped (although some actually volunteered) for the breeding program. But these baby factories were also extermination camps. If a newborn child fell short of Nazi-defined perfection, it was likely to be killed.

Surviving infancy did not assure that the child would be spared pain and death at the hands of Nazi doctors. It is not uncommon for the blue eyes and blond hair of a child to darken within its first year. To diagnose what was "going wrong" in such cases, gruesome surgeries and other medical experiments were performed by sadistic perverts like Dr. Josef Mengele.

These abominable atrocities were entirely consistent with Hitler's philosophy, even when the victims were German children. He did not mean it affectionately when he said, "For my part, I must say that when I meet children, I think of them as though they were my own. They all belong to me."

On another occasion he said that a sacrifice of eighty to ninety percent of all German children was acceptable if the result were the purifying of German blood and the strengthening of the German race.

One of Hitler's last public appearances involved children. As the Russians were fighting their way through the rubble of Berlin, he ventured into the yard just outside his bunker to award medals of valor to the child soldiers—some only twelve years old—enlisted in the last ditch defense of the city.

He knew that in encouraging these children, he was sentencing them to almost certain death. But their efforts would postpone the end by some small degree, and there was always the chance of an intervening miracle. And when the end finally did come, to Hitler the children were just Germans who had failed him, and for whom he had no further use.

THIRTEEN

Hitler the Hypochondriac

Open the windows quickly, it smells here!

—PRINCESS CECILE,
ABOUT HITLER'S FLATULENCE

Terror, warmongering, mass murder on a scale almost beyond comprehension—but when it came to himself, Hitler was a whining hypochondriac.

For years, the problems he complained loudly and constantly about were relatively minor digestive disorders, mainly stomach cramps and chronic flatulence. The "man of destiny" could, and often did, fill a room with his odor.

Despite a staff of doctors, he treated himself with patent medicines which probably did more harm than good. He was persuaded to give up one of these when it was discovered to contain poisonous wood alcohol, but remained faithful to another nostrum, "Dr. Koester's Antigas pills." This contained small amounts of atropine and strychnine.

The manufacturer recommended taking three pills, three times a day. Having somehow been separated from them for two days, Hitler tried to catch up by downing

eighteen at once, to the horror of his doctors. Unfortunately, nothing much happened.

Hitler was possessed of a robust constitution and, at least until the early 1940s, his general health was excellent. He was, however, seized by fits of hypochondria and kept doctors on standby at all times.

He particularly feared cancer, the disease that had killed his mother, and was terrified when, in May 1935, a polyp was discovered and removed from his larynx. It proved benign.

A new complaint appeared—a leg rash so severe he had to give up wearing boots. Because his regular doctors were unable to cure this, he turned to Theodor Morell, a successful society doctor who nevertheless struck at least one Hitler associate as “a bit of a screwball.”

Morell concluded that Hitler’s skin and stomach problems were both caused by the same thing—a deficiency of the bacteria normally found in the intestine. The cure would take a year, he told Hitler, but he promised success.

Hitler regularly swallowed the capsules Morell prescribed, knowing full well they contained bacteria cultivated from human feces. Sometimes the capsules dissolved in Hitler’s stomach instead of his intestine, and this caused him severe nausea.

Fortunately for Morell, Hitler’s leg rash disappeared and his stomach cramps abated. Although they were to return later, the success was sufficient to assure Morell preeminence among Hitler’s doctors.

Decline

Hitler remained vigorous through the early phase of the war, but as his armies began to meet defeat in Russia and elsewhere, his health deteriorated. Always something of an insomniac, he now did not even try going to bed before four or five in the morning, then tossed and turned until getting up again around eleven.

Formerly given to long trips in open cars and spur-of-the-moment picnics, he began to insist on staying indoors as much as possible, to protect himself from what he called “fresh air poisoning.”

The stomach cramps intensified. Hitler had enough insight to recognize his affliction might be psychosomatic, a view he expressed with characteristic savagery, saying he was sure his gut would feel better if only he could execute the generals who had betrayed him. (The betrayal he referred to on this occasion was the fact that they had been defeated by the Russians.)

Drugs and Other Treatments

According to Ernst Schenck, another doctor on Hitler’s staff, “Hitler was not a drug addict in the strict sense of the term . . . But he was psychologically dependent upon the *idea* of drugs as magic.”

Schenck’s records indicate that through the war years, Hitler was medicated with a staggering total of ninety-two different kinds of injections, pills and lotions. He took drugs to sleep and to stay awake. After 1943, Morell gave him an almost daily energy boosting shot, a mixture of vitamins, glucose and caffeine. Morell also

It seems clear his medical decline followed his military failures, rather than causing them.

And it is certain that his character was unaffected by his medical history, for he remained ruthless, vindictive and murderous to the very end.

FOURTEEN

Hitler's Diet

First Great Victory of German Vegetarians: Hitler Becomes Chancellor!

—HEADLINE IN A GERMAN HEALTH FOOD
MAGAZINE

In Hitler's biography, even commonplace details have pathological significance. His diet is no exception.

He began experimenting with vegetarianism in early adulthood, but for years was far from absolute in his adherence. In the early, frantic days of Nazi organizing, he was often too busy to sit down to a full meal. He ate on the run, gnawing chunks of sausage and slices of bread he carried in his pockets.

Suddenly, in September 1931, he manifested an active loathing for meat, saying, "It is like eating a corpse!" Revolted by the sight of stew, he had to leave the table.

The onset of this loathing followed the suicide of Geli Raubal, the niece with whom he had been in love. After she shot herself, Hitler took the extraordinary step of attending her autopsy. That marked the end of meat eating for him, with very few exceptions.

In time, his revulsion subsided sufficiently that he was

able to eat his vegetarian meals while others at the table had their goulash or sauerbraten. He thought it amusing, though, to try to spoil their pleasure with morbid jokes. He called beef broth corpse tea, and offered to have a pudding made from his blood.

His breakfast, lunches and dinners all tended to be made up of more or less the same foods. A typical day's consumption included eggs prepared in any of a number of ways, spaghetti, baked potatoes with cottage cheese, oatmeal, stewed fruits, and vegetable puddings. Meat was not completely excluded. Hitler continued to eat a favorite dish, *leberkloesse* (liver dumplings).

Vegetarian meals can be dull but Hitler's cook, Marlene Kunde, created non-meat dishes he found delectable. She had formerly been employed by the Rumanian dictator Atonescu, who had sung her praises and earned Hitler's gratitude by suggesting he hire her.

All went well until Heinrich Himmler, head of the S.S., informed the Fuehrer that he would have to disperse with Fraulein Kunde. Himmler had discovered she was a Jew.

Hitler told Himmler he had to be wrong. She was too good a cook, and she was respectful. In any event, he could not do without her.

Himmler persisted, producing irrefutable evidence.

Hitler countered by ordering the Kunde family "ary-anized," declared non-Jewish . . . but a story this striking could not be contained. Rather than have it generally known he had a Jewish cook, Hitler finally fired her. No record exists of her ultimate fate.

Sweet Tooth

Hitler was always worried about gaining weight. "Imagine me going around with a potbelly," he said. "It would mean political ruin." Nevertheless, he consumed pastry and candy, particularly chocolates, in enormous quantities. He ate two pounds of chocolate a day, sometimes interrupting a conference to leave the room and eat a few chocolates before resuming. He also drank hot chocolate, topped with what one observer described as "a floating iceberg of whipped cream."

Hitler is also recorded as regularly putting seven teaspoons of sugar in his tea, and his friend Hanfstaengl once noticed him adding sugar to a glass of wine.

Teetotaler?

For purposes of propaganda among the German people, Hitler was depicted as living a sparse, ascetic life. This was entirely untrue. As part of the myth, it was said he abstained entirely from alcohol. This also was untrue, although his drinking was moderate. He sipped wine and beer occasionally; the beer was often a custom brew made for him with an alcohol content of less than 2 percent. Sometimes he added cognac to his tea.

He gave different reasons for his moderation. In one conversation, he cast himself in a martyr's role, claiming he refrained out of respect for the poor, who could not afford liquor.

On another occasion he explained his abstinence with a peculiar story from his adolescence. To celebrate the

end of final exams, he had gone carousing with schoolmates, gotten drunk for the first and only time in his life, and passed out in a field.

The next morning, he realized he had lost the certificate given him on completing the exams. When he went back to the school to get a duplicate, he learned he was in deep disgrace. The original certificate had been found in a field, torn into four squares and soiled. He had used it as toilet paper.

The school's director gave Hitler a dressing-down which remained a humiliation to him throughout his life. Nearly forty years later he said of that day, "I made a promise to myself that I would never get drunk again and I've kept my promise."

According to his valet, Hitler's favorite drink was tea, particularly peppermint and camomile. He refrained from coffee, saying he loved the smell of it but that it kept him from sleeping.

Eating with Hitler

Hitler's mealtime guests were served meat courses while he had his vegetarian dishes, but there were other constraints that made eating with him something less than a relaxing experience. Conversations between guests were conducted in a half whisper because everyone was on guard, ready to fall silent the moment the Fuehrer might open his mouth to speak. That would mark the end of conversation and the beginning of a Hitler monologue about almost anything other than the current political or military situation. Hitler forbade discussion of these topics over meals.

Another cause for mealtime tension was Hitler's fear of being poisoned. He felt safe enough at home, even with a Jewish cook, but at his field headquarters and elsewhere he had food tasters sample every dish.

This fear of poisoning was not a new obsession. In 1923, when Hanfstaengl visited him on his birthday, he found Hitler's room filled with delicacies sent by admirers, including cakes decorated with whipped cream eagles and swastikas. Hitler had sampled nothing, explaining to Hanfstaengl that these tempting delicacies might be poisoned . . . though not by the people who had sent them. The building he lived in was owned by Jews, and Jews, said Hitler, had ways of dripping poison down the walls and into the food.

No Smoking!

Smoking was forbidden in the Fuehrer's presence. Somehow he had become unalterably opposed to tobacco in any form but it is unclear how he reached this conclusion because he had bizarre ideas about human anatomy. When he tried to persuade his housekeeper, Anni Winter, to give up smoking, she suggested nicotine couldn't be worse than all the medical injections he was getting (see chapter 13, "Hitler the Hypochondriac"). He replied by patiently explaining these shots did no damage because "the fluid goes directly into my veins."

At his order, cigarettes were removed from the Christmas packages distributed to German soldiers and replaced with candy, and he considered requiring that in the future all cigarettes be manufactured without nicotine.

No More Rules

In the last few days of April 1945, as the Russians closed in on Berlin, the people around Hitler began to smoke quite openly. Eva Braun (see chapter 11, "Hitler's Women") puffed on a small cigar. It was as significant a sign as any that they all knew the game was up and Hitler would soon be dead. Someone served him a meat meal, and he ate it.

FIFTEEN

I Was Hitler's Dentist

I was the big man.

—DR. HUGO BLASCHKE

After the war, Allied and Russian investigators interviewed everyone they could find who had had anything whatsoever to do with Hitler. Even his barber, Arthur Wollenhaupt, was interrogated and he obliged his questioners by reporting that the savage dictator was frightened by haircuts. According to Wollenhaupt, Hitler sat "still as a lamb," nervously tensed as his hairline was trimmed. He also testified that Hitler always shaved himself because he could not bear the thought of anyone near his throat with a razor. Although stories like these may seem too satisfying to be true, Hitler's valet, Heinz Linge, happened to confirm the latter detail by mentioning Hitler's fear of the razor in an entirely separate interrogation.

Blaschke

Hitler's dentist, Hugo Blaschke, reported that Hitler maintained his composure during treatment. The problem was getting him in the chair.

The models were subsequently lost, but the interrogation report survived and a quarter of a century later became a vital piece of evidence in resolving the question of when and where Hitler died (see chapter 32, "Hitler's Corpse").

SIXTEEN

Hitler's Wardrobe

It was with great reluctance that I had definitely to give up wearing leather shorts.

—HITLER

Even in the choice of his clothes, Hitler manifested his violence, calculation, and selfishness.

He felt comfortable in *lederhosen*, the leather shorts which are part of the traditional south German country costume. He thought so highly of them as emblematic of the national identity that he suggested to Himmler that special units of the S.S. might wear them, a recommendation this devoted sycophant managed to overlook.

Hitler abandoned *lederhosen* because in the cities of northern Germany they would have made him look like a country bumpkin. But he would not have been himself if he had not complained repeatedly about having had to do this. Quoted out of context, it might appear as though he were joking, but he was serious when he said that giving up *lederhosen* "was one of the biggest sacrifices I had to make."

With the possible exception of his leather shorts, all of Hitler's pants had one thing in common—an extra