

Hitler's Political Testament

DR. NATHAN ECK

A FEW hours before committing suicide on 30 April, 1945, in his shelter beneath the Reich Chancellery Building in beleaguered Berlin, Hitler, as it is known, dictated a document entitled "Mein Politisches Testament" (My Political Testament), which was an exhibit before the International Tribunal at Nuremberg. In fact, however, this document was no more than an attenuated appendix to far more extensive and detailed statements Hitler had dictated to Bormann in the same shelter, which constituted his main political testament. These statements were revealed years later and published in France only in 1959.¹

As early as 1952-53 notes taken of talks (in fact: monologues) by Hitler were published in English and French and partly in German. These were views expressed between July 5, 1941 and November 30, 1944. The statements were made by Hitler usually while at meals in the company of his close associates in the Führer's Headquarters. His faithful aide, Bormann, ensured that they be taken down by stenographers who were present at the time. After the statements had been recorded Bormann would go over them, correct them and file them. The notes published in 1959 (which were discovered shortly before in Bavaria) accordingly constitute a new, *third volume*, of Hitler's talks, the last statements he made be-

tween February 4 and April 2, 1945. On April 17, 1945 Bormann placed them in the hands of a trusted aide who was permitted to leave the underground shelter in order to conceal them in a safe spot.

The editor of the volume has with justice entitled it, "The Political Testament of Hitler".

Belief in a "Miracle"

In February, 1945 the Western armies stood on the banks of the Rhine, while those of Soviet Russia had already crossed the Oder. Germany's position was deteriorating daily and it was already clear to every intelligent person that defeat was inevitable. Even the Führer saw this though he refused to acknowledge the fact openly as he hoped for a miracle... Look at Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, the Führer said and Bormann noted. In the Seven Years War in the 18th century, Frederick's situation was desperate. He too was faced by a strong coalition of the East and the West, intent upon destroying him. He could see no way of escape, but did not consider surrender. He decided that he would rather die than surrender. He had already determined the day of his suicide, but at the last moment a miracle occurred. The Tzarina died and her successor did not wish to continue the War. The coalition disintegrated and Frederick was saved. Hitler waited for a similar miracle in 1945. He waited until April 30, when the Soviet Russian armies had almost reached the very entrance to his shelter. In the meantime he spoke aloud "thoughts and ideas" for history—and Bormann noted them.

What he took down from Hitler is a pile of conscious and unconscious distortions, which contradict each other on practically every page, charges against his enemies, against his allies and even against his compatriots; attempts to explain events

and pious efforts to justify certain courses of action, interpolated with tiresome, repetitive opinions and ideas, which had already been thrashed out, thousands of times. These statements, however, were made with resolution and confidence as if they were verities whose truth could not be questioned, statements made *ex cathedra* by a leader drawing upon experience gained in the course of a stormy career for the benefit of future generations. Indeed this volume might serve as a kind of gospel for Neo-Nazis, who surely would be able to expound and reconcile the absurdities and contradictions it contains.

Whose Guilt?

Who was responsible for Germany's defeat? How were victories converted into defeats? Why did Hitler attack Russia, opening up a second front against himself, after having declared upon more than one occasion that Germany would never again fight on two fronts, and had even reached an agreement with Stalin (in 1939) to prevent such a possibility?

The reply is that everybody was to blame except himself. The guilt rested mainly upon his adversaries: Churchill and Roosevelt. They should have known, he complained, that for the good of their own peoples and countries they must support his plans, but they opposed him and fought against him. Why did they do this evil to their own peoples? Because they were no more than tools in the hands of the Jews! Not only did these undefeated adversaries constitute an obstacle in his path, but also foes who had been overthrown and forced to surrender: the French. They had bitterly disappointed him. He should have treated them differently, not as the courteous, humane, trusting victor. His allies were also to blame as we shall see below. The German generals and diplomats were to blame for not understanding National Socialism properly and for holding fast to their traditional views and methods. The entire German people was to blame. The Führer had not had the time to raise a new German generation nourished upon his doctrine. The generation he had led to war was not trained for its mission, its stature was too small.

However the *direct* cause which had upset his most precise calculations and his most brilliant plans, the source of evil, was his teacher, mentor and friend—Mussolini! The fact that Mussolini attacked Greece prematurely without informing Hitler beforehand, the shameful defeats

¹ Le Testament Politique de Hitler, Notes Recueillies par Martin Bormann. Préface de H.R. Trevor-Roper, Commentaires de André François-Poncet, Version Française et Présentation de François Genoud.

(Hitler's Political Testament, Notes taken by Martin Bormann. Introduction by Prof. H.R. Trevor-Roper, Notes by André François-Poncet [French Ambassador to Germany before the outbreak of the Second World War]; French version and presentation by François Genoud). Librairie Arthème Fayaud, Paris, 1959.

suffered by the Italians in this campaign, which compelled Hitler to come to Mussolini's aid, the sudden revolution in Yugoslavia, caused, in his view, by "this foolish campaign", the need to divert so many divisions to save the Italian Army and to conquer the Balkans,—all these combined resulted in that instead of launching the attack on Soviet Russia on May 15, 1941, as he had planned, he was forced to delay it for about six weeks (to June 22). This postponement decided the fate of the Nazi Reich. If it had not been for this loss of time the campaign in Russia could have been concluded before the onset of the early bitter winter of 1941/42, and then everything would have been different. (Talks of February 15 and 17). Needless to say, had Mussolini told him of his intention to embark upon the campaign of conquest in the Balkans he would have known how to dissuade him.

But was it his, Hitler's custom to inform Mussolini of his own plans? Did he inform him of his intention to attack Soviet Russia on May 15? Far from it. "Notwithstanding my complete confidence in him I did not inform him of my plans", because of the fear of leak-

ages. Mussolini would have told his son-in-law Ciano, who could not keep a secret from the women surrounding him.

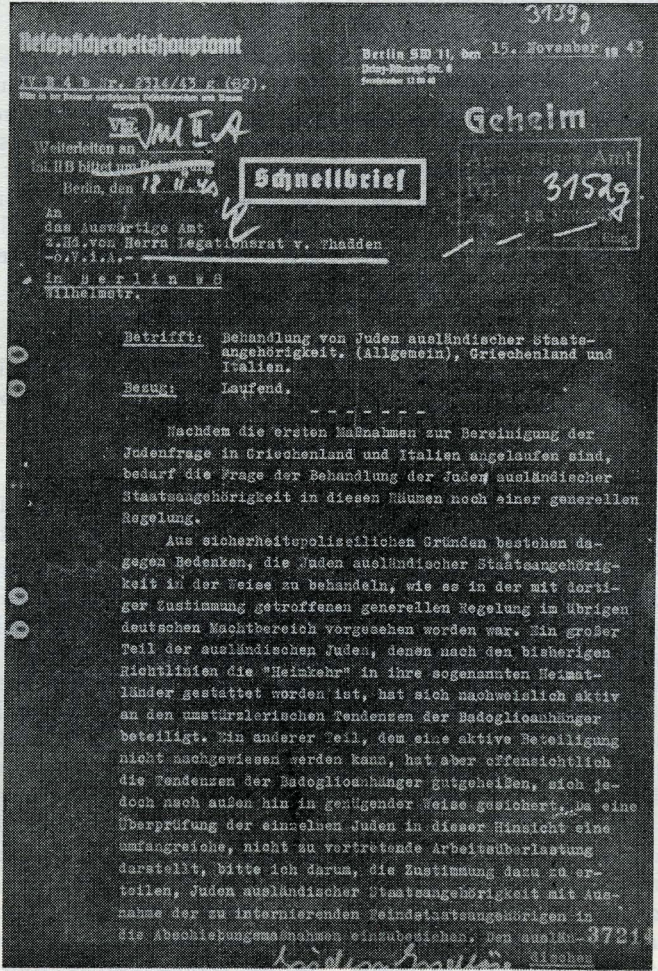
Why did He Attack Soviet Russia?

Why did Hitler decide to attack Soviet Russia? Alas, "this was the most difficult decision in this war!" Let no one think that he had for-

gotten that at all costs "he must prevent a war on two fronts." He had also pondered deeply "the Russian experience of Napoleon." But the attack was vital for these reasons:

Firstly: After all hope of an invasion of England had been lost as "the foolish leaders of that country refused to accept our hegemony in

THE TURN OF THE JEWS OF GRECE AND ITALY

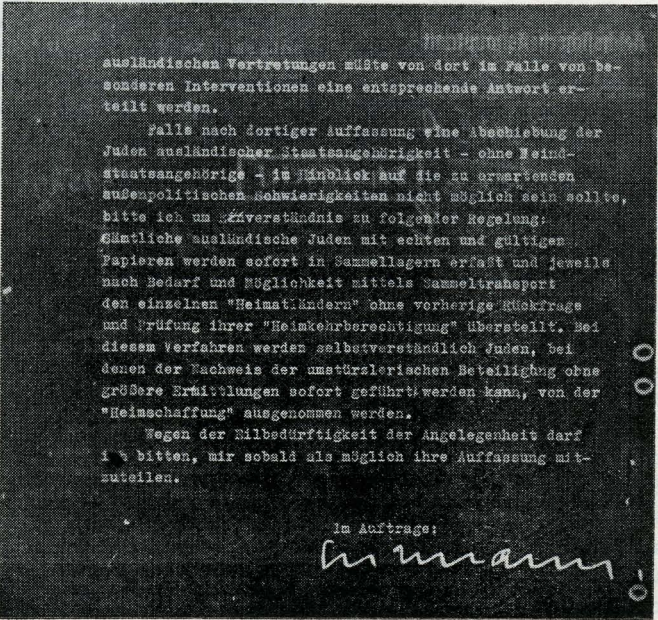


On 5 November 1943 Eichmann addressed an enquiry to the German Foreign Ministry: how must the Jews holding foreign citizenship, living in Greece and Italy, be treated? The question had arisen because "a settlement of the Jewish question in Greece and Italy is beginning."

Eichmann maintained that these Jews were participating in the "destructive operations" of the Badoglio Movement and that they were at least among the sympathizers of this Movement... For that reason they must be deported... Eichmann, accordingly, asked for the Foreign Ministry's consent to the deportation of these Jews together with the local Jews (in other words, their despatch to the death camps). Should the representatives of the countries of which these Jews were citizens intervene, some excuse could always be found.

But if the Foreign Ministry refused to agree, Eichmann had another suggestion: to imprison these Jews in special camps and to deport them to "their own countries" when suitable, provided it transpired that they had not "participated in destructive activities."

This did not apply to Jews with the citizenship of enemy countries (not occupied by the Germans!), such as America and the British Commonwealth. In this case the Nazis feared reprisals against Germans living in those countries.



Europe,” and relied upon the fact that as long as there was another great power in Europe Hitler would not divert all his strength against Britain—there was the danger that the war would be prolonged interminably. Germany could not permit herself a long drawn-out war. Her prospects of victory depended upon blitzkrieg. For that reason he resolved “to deprive Britain of the hope that another great adversary would confront us on the European continent.” In other words: By attacking and destroying Russia he hoped to persuade Britain to make peace with the Reich.

Secondly: Soviet Russia would become steadily more powerful, and one day certainly would attack Germany. It was better accordingly to anticipate her and get in the first blow.

Thirdly: Germany stood in need of the raw materials available in Russia, while the latter would have increasingly reduced the supply of these materials notwithstanding her commitments.

But all these “reasons” are thoroughly false. In his talk of February 4 he “explained” that inestimable good would have accrued to the whole world and particularly to Great Britain, had the latter agreed to make peace with the Reich in the beginning of 1941. “England, freed of its European concerns, would have devoted herself entirely to the development of her Empire. On the other hand, Germany, secure against any danger in her rear, could have plunged herself into her main task, *the task that is my life’s goal, the raison d’être of National Socialism: the destruction of Bolshevism. And in this act in any case is involved the conquest of the territories in the East which are necessary for securing the future of the German people.*”

This statement too is only a half-truth. It was not just the destruction of Bolshevism that was his life’s aim and the basis of National Socialism. That was only the means, the road leading to the true objective. The great objective was the occupation of the Eastern territory.

From the time of “Mein Kampf” to the last talks in the shelter under the Reich Chancellery Hitler repeatedly disclosed that the essence of his ambitions and aspirations was to create a large empire for the German people. Not an empire “scattered over the seven seas”, as experience had shown overseas operations resulted ultimately in the impoverishment of nations engaged in them...” All of them finally, were compelled to bow to pressure of

forces which they themselves had encouraged or roused.” (February 7). The historical examples proving this, in his opinion, were the ancient Greeks and in modern times Spain, France and England, who “wasted their strength and their energy in idle colonial projects.” Thus Germany must seek to win a contiguous continental territory for an Eurasian Empire. “Eastwards, always eastwards!” he cried out. “That is the direction given by nature for the expansion of the Germans.”

The Germans must not confine themselves to small things, such as amassing wealth, and give up great ambitions. This attitude suits nations with narrower horizons such as Sweden or Switzerland, or a contemptible State like the Weimar Republic, but not the Third Reich. But—an empire, cannot be established by peaceful methods. That is why war was inevitable.

“The war was essential for this simple reason, for avoidance of war would have meant betraying the interests of the German people” (February 4).

The Great Mistake: The Munich Agreement

Since war was the destiny of the German people the question that remained was only: When? Hitler wanted to declare war as soon as possible. While in the shelter, he voiced his regret that he had not taken the initiative in 1938 instead of waiting for another year. But “I could do nothing as the English and the French had accepted all my demands at Munich” (February 14).

To this day it is generally thought that Hitler won a brilliant victory at Munich and that the French and British representatives suffered defeat, shamefully surrendering. This was not the view of the “victor”. He regarded the Munich Agreement, accepting all the demands he made, resolving the crisis through peaceful methods and preventing — or rather deferring — war, as a disaster for the Reich. “When that grand bourgeois and capitalist Chamberlain with his lying umbrella took the trouble to come to Berghof (Hitler’s residence in Berchtesgaden) in order to negotiate with Hitler, that plebeian who had become a celebrity, he already knew that he would wage a merciless war against us. He was ready to say anything to me in order to put me to sleep. His only objective in that trip was to gain time. Our interest, however, was to strike immediately. We should have declared war in 1938. That was our last chance to localise the war.”

(February 21). When Hitler speaks of “localising the war” he is of course not thinking of any moral aspect, of minimising the number of victims and human suffering, but of the possibilities of waging the “inevitable war” under the most favourable conditions, on one front, as in 1938 the Western Powers were not yet ready. It is true that Germany, too, was not yet fully armed and equipped, but it was superior, as Hitler says, to other countries.

The great, historic mistake he made, accordingly, was that he agreed to a peaceful solution at Munich. “We should have forced an armed decision without taking into account our adversaries’ willingness to concede everything” (February 21), for then it was still possible to embark upon the conquest of the eastern territory without interference on the part of the West.

“The Jewish War”

But even later the Western Powers might have allowed him a free hand in the East had it not been for the Jews. “I did not correctly estimate the extent of Jewish power in Churchill’s England.” (February 4). The fact that in this fateful period the “drunkard Churchill” ruled England was a divine punishment upon that country, Hitler claimed. Had Britain in Hitler’s time, had a leader of the stature of Pitt in the Napoleonic era (frequently Hitler made comparisons between himself and Napoleon) he would have understood that the interests of his country demanded that he do not oppose the unification of Europe and the man who would and could implement it.

Had Britain made peace with the Nazi Reich she could have been the “mistress of nations, a deciding Judge of the world.” But this was not to be because the Jews did not want it to be. Indeed there was never such a Jewish war as this war!” (13 February).

“I was Europe’s last chance,” he cried in helpless anger (February 26). And now, he complained, it could have been possible to unite Europe rapidly and easily, “seeing that the Jewish poison has been removed.”

The true meaning of the term, “unification of Europe” as used by Hitler, was, of course, reduction to servitude, exploitation, conversion into part of the German world empire which he schemed to establish. “The Jewish poison” was a stumbling block. So he removed it, in other words he immediately destroyed the Jews. He regarded the Jews as an obstacle preventing the estab-

ishment of the Nazi Empire between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Prior to the outbreak of war, in one of his speeches, he discussed the "disintegrating" function of the Jews in the ancient Roman Empire. He drew upon what he had read (but had not understood or did not want to understand) in the work of Theodor Mommsen on the Roman Empire. Mommsen stated that the Jews were a "decomposing" element in the Roman Empire. This element of decomposition—as Hitler termed it, "the Jewish poison"—must be removed in order to facilitate "the unification of Europe", which of course meant the establishment of a Nazi Empire².

In these talks, likewise, we encounter the term "decomposition" in regard to the Jews and empires.

On February 26, Hitler suddenly said, contrary to the views he had expressed all his life (this, as stated, is not the only contradiction in these talks) that at one time he "hoped that it would be possible to maintain a serious, if not friendly agreement between Stalin's Russia and the Third Reich." As a "sober realist" he assumed that "we could create conditions for a lasting agreement."

Upon what was this hope founded what persuaded him to assume the possibility of compromise with the hated Bolshevik state? This is what he replied:

"The ruthless method Stalin adopted in destroying the Jewish intellectuals, notwithstanding the fact that they were so effective in accelerating the decomposition of the Tzarist Empire, could have strengthened our hope. I thought that he, Stalin, did not wish to permit the Jewish intelligentsia to cause the decomposition of the totalitarian empire he had created..."

Thus it was not only in the Roman Empire that the Jews constituted a disintegrating element, but also in the empires of the Tzar and Stalin... All the more they would be a decomposing element in the world empire which Hitler sought to establish. That is why "he did wisely" in decreeing that they should be exterminated in all territories he occupied.

It may be asked in spite of this: Why did he not wait until after victory, after he had established his empire? The reply: Because he did everything in a hurry. He dare not lose time. "Fate had decreed that I must do everything in the course of the short span of one man's life..."

² I discussed this problem in my article "European and Jewish Resistance" Yad Washem Bulletin No. 8/9.

PLANS AND OPERATIONS OF THE HUNGARIAN HANGMEN

Telegramm
(G. Schreiber)

B u d a p e s t, den 25. Mai 1944 18.30 Uhr
Ankunft: " 25. " 1944 18.30 Uhr
Nr. 14/4 v. 25. V. Gebel

25 MAI 1944

Im Anschluß an Drahtbericht Nr. 1308.1) vom 11. Mai:

Abtransport Juden aus Karpato-Raum und Siebenbürgen verläuft reibungslos wie vorgesehen. Bis heute rund 150.000 nach Zielort abgefertigt. Durch stärkere Belegung der Waggon wird Evakuierungsaktion aus bestimmten Zonen bereits am 7. Juni abgeschlossen.

Am 5. Juni wird mit Konzentrierung der Juden in Gegend nördlich Budapest - von Kaschau bis Reichsgrenze (Zone III) begonnen. Erfasst werden voraussichtlich rund 65.000 Juden, die in der Zeit vom 11. bis 16. Juni nach Zielort abgefertigt werden.

In einer heute im Innenministerium unter Vorsitz Staatssekretärs Baky stattgefundenen Besprechung, an welcher Obergespan Gendarmerie und Polizeiführer aus Zone III und Führer Sonder Einsatzkommandos des SD, Oberstleutnant Eickmann mit seinen Sachbearbeitern teilnahmen, sind alle Einzelheiten für Konzentrierung und Abbeförderung in Zone III festgelegt worden. Mitte Juni wird mit Konzentrierung im gesamten bisher nicht bearbeiteten Raum ostwärts der Donau - mit Ausnahme Komitat und Stadt Budapest - (Zone IV) begonnen. In diesem Gebiet werde schätzungsweise 100.000 Juden erfaßt.

Veesenmayer.
E422036

K213809 H325028
Juden Transport

Handwritten notes:
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ZDA S. Waga
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Verf. Nr. 4
Inl. II (Arb. St.)
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Nr. 3) - S. S.
Nr. 4) - BRAM
Nr. 5) - Botsch. Ritter
Nr. 6-14) - Abt. Leiter:
6) Pol. 7) Reint.
8) 1a) Pol. 9) dt. Pol.
10) Presse 11) not. 12) Ra.
13) Inl. I. 14) Inl. II
Nr. 15) an Dg. Pol.
Nr. 16) Dg. Arb. Abt. (weitere Nachr.)
Pol. Arb. Abt. (Inl.)
Nr. 17) - Saumig. Tolk.
Bosch. in Nr.

Veesenmayer, the Reich representative in Hungary, reports on the progress of death transports in that country: The evacuation of the Jews of Carpatho-Russia and Transylvania was proceeding without friction. Up to the present (May 25, 1944), 150,000 have been sent to their "destination."

On June 5, the concentration of the Jews of the northern environs of Budapest ("the third district") will commence. About 65,000 Jews will be rounded up and will "be sent to their destination" by the June 15...

On the day of the despatch of the

telegram a joint meeting of Eichmann and his aides on the one hand, and members of the Hungarian administration and police on the other was held in the office of the Deputy-Minister Baky. At this meeting all details of the rounding up of the Jews of this district were settled and the organization of the dispatch of 100,000 other Jews from east of the Danube ("the fourth District") was decided upon.

Baky was sentenced to death and hanged after the war.

Veesenmayer spent three years in gaol and today is a free man.

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"compared to others who have before them limitless time, I have only a few years before me." Prior to his attack on Russia the destruction of the Jews had been conducted indirectly and relatively slowly. With the launching of war against Soviet Russia his imperial plans—in his view—entered the phase of implementation. For this reason the destruction was accelerated and carried out directly,—by the massacre of millions.

Verily, "There has never been such a Jewish war as this war!"

America Declared War for the Jews

An entire talk (or more correctly monologue)—of 24 February—was devoted by Hitler to the United States. Against the latter he made charges similar to those directed against Britain: Why should the United States join the enemies of the Reich? The war waged by the United States against the Reich was "unreasonable, devoid of any real basis." Germany wanted nothing from the United States, while the latter had nothing to fear from Germany. "The United States has vast territory, which gives her adequate outlet for her energy. We, too, all we hope for is to ensure complete economic independence for ourselves on an area necessary for the potential German population. A great people stands in need of a great territory." Underlying this remark is his constant striving to win an entire continent, to establish the world Reich from ocean to ocean. If only Germany could consummate this ambition, the two giants—he claimed—could live tranquilly side by side in complete harmony. But because of the Jews this was not to be.

"World Jewry chose that country in which to establish its strongest fortress!" But the time is not far, at most within 25 years, Hitler prophesied, when the Americans will realise what "this parasitical Jewry" has done to them. It dragged America into "adventures which have nothing to do with her, for interests which are not hers." To Hitler it was clear that within twenty five years the Americans would develop into the most violent anti-Semites. The population of America is still made of millions of individuals of various races, not integrated by any national consciousness. Up to the present they have had an easy, comfortable time but "in the course of time difficulties and experiences are in store for them which will assist them in maturing"; a national spirit will be created within them and

Abtschrift

Geheime Reichsangelegenheit

Budapest 24.7.1944

An das RSHA, IV, Stubaf. Guenther.

Betrifft: Endloesung der Judenfrage in Ungarn.

Bezug: hiesiges PS. Nr. 4206 vom 15.7.

Aufgrund der der ungarischen Regierung übermittelten Zustimmung der deutschen Reichsregierung mit den von den neutralen Staaten - Schweden und Schweiz - betriebenen Auswanderungsmöglichkeiten für ungarische Juden gehen die ausländischen Missionen bereits dazu über, Auswanderungspapiere zu erteilen. In der deutschen Antwortnote ist nicht mit aller Schärfe die Palästinaauswanderung untersagt worden, es heisst dort vielmehr, dass nach Möglichkeit von einer Palästinaauswanderung abgesehen werden soll, ohne dass bisher erkennbar geworden ist, dass eine andere Auswanderung als nach Palästina von den betreffenden ausländischen neutralen Missionen versucht worden wäre, betreiben sie gleichzeitig von Anfang an die Auswanderung nach Palästina. Die hiesige deutsche Gesandtschaft hat bisher diesen Bestrebungen sich nicht entgegengestellt, da sie der Meinung ist, dass die Palästinaauswanderung deutscherseits nicht grundsätzlich abgelehnt worden sei. - Es ist von hier dafür Sorge getragen, dass auch seitens der hiesigen Gesandtschaft alles nur Mögliche getan wird, um die Auswanderungsbestrebungen in die Länge zu ziehen und schliesslich nach Fortsetzung der Judenevakuierung ganz zu unterbinden. Dies ist umso eher möglich, als jeder auswandernde Jude über die deutsche Gesandtschaft von den deutschen Wehrmachtstellen für die Anreise aus Ungarn ein deutsches Visum bzw. einen besonderen Durchlaß-Schein haben muss. - Um die Palästina-Auswanderung wirksamer verhindern zu können, wird es von hier für zweckmässig gehalten, dass die ursprünglich erteilte Zustimmung der deutschen Reichsregierung in diesem Punkte klarer und schärfer gefasst wird, indem eine Auswanderung nach Palästina im Rahmen dieser Aktion deutscherseits nicht gebilligt wird. -

Weiterer Bericht folgt am 25.7.1944

K209323

Eichmann.

H322165

Eichmann's letter from Budapest (dated July 24, 1944) to the head office of his service in Berlin—the notorious "Fourth Department."

The Swedish and Swiss Embassies made representations to the Hungarian Government to allow a number of Jews to leave Hungary. From Eichmann's letter we learn that Hungarians contacted the Government of the Reich in the matter, which had given its consent. Eichmann complains that on the basis of this consent the embassies were already preparing exit visas for the Jews, but only emigration to Palestine and not to any other country was dealt with... He complains that in the letter intimating the consent of the German Government the strongest opposition to

emigration to Palestine was not stressed, as it was only stated that all efforts must be made to prevent emigration to Palestine." He requested Berlin to dispatch an explicit and stringent warning not to include in the "emigration" referred to any emigration to Palestine. In the meantime—Eichmann stated—steps were in any case being taken to frustrate the emigration operations. Since for the departure of any Hungarian Jew a transit permit from the German Army also was required it was possible by procrastination "to continue the evacuation" (the deportations to the death camps) until the problem was "solved" in any case...

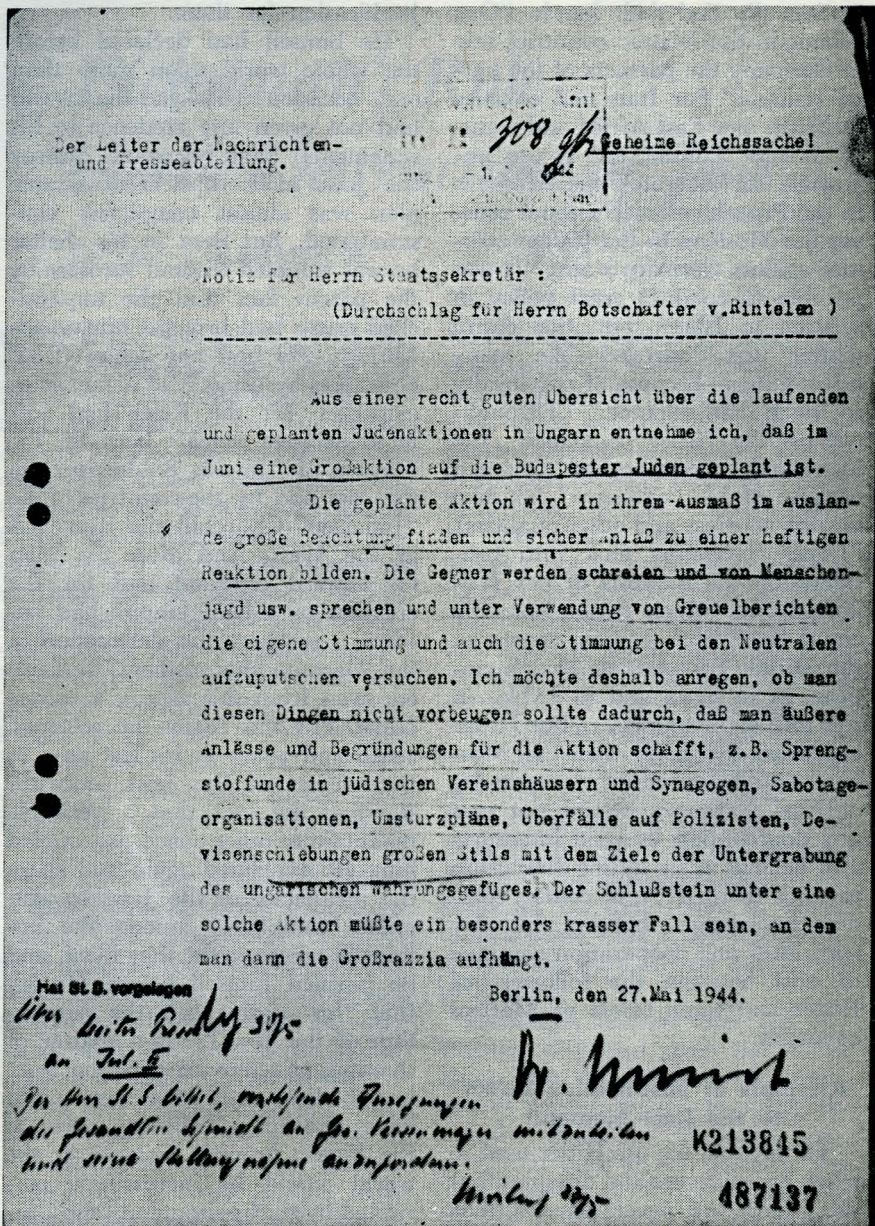
Here also the influence of the Mufti is recognizable.

will unite them, and then their eyes will be opened. For "the tricks that the Jews allowed themselves in our midst until National Socialism put an end to them are as nothing compared to what they are permitting themselves now and will yet permit themselves in that new field of exploitation." The time will come when the Americans will realize that the Roosevelt whom they admire so much, is no more than an idol with feet of clay, an evil man who has sinned against his own country and all Mankind because "he dragged them along a road which is not theirs, and compelled them to take part in a quarrel which is none of their concern." Had they had anything at all of a political instinct they would have remained in their "splendid isolation". It was a fatal disaster for America that at such a time it was not headed by a great President of the calibre of Lincoln, but by "the criminal Roosevelt." The United States, it seems, was unlucky... But so was Hitler. "It is a tragic disaster that at the time that I reached power in Germany, the United States was headed by Roosevelt, the Jews' choice. Had it not been for the Jews and Roosevelt their creature, it could have been otherwise..."

It cannot be denied that in these statements the Führer has bequeathed to his followers explosive propaganda material for use in America.

Friendship for the World of Islam

The "bad luck" of Hitler and the German Reich was to be found elsewhere too. We have already mentioned the pretext presented to history by the Führer to explain its defeats in Soviet Russia: The Italians upset his plans by their "foolish attack" on Greece. But his Italian allies caused another complication. How? By the very fact that they joined in the war. Italy's participation in the war served Germany's enemies more than it did Germany itself. "The Italian ally interfered with us practically everywhere." It would have been extremely worthwhile for Germany—explains Hitler—to adopt "a revolutionary policy" in North Africa, in the Middle East and in Iraq, indeed in the Islamic world generally. But such a policy was made impossible because of the Italians. "Had we remained alone we could have liberated the African countries under French rule." This, Germany could have done easily and would have evoked powerful repercussions in the Middle East and throughout the Islamic world. Everywhere the Moslems



This document is an internal letter written on 27 May 1944 by the Director of the Press Office of the German Foreign Ministry, Dr. Schmidt, to "the Secretary of State" (a deputy-minister) whose name is not specified.

The Press Officer in question, Dr. Paul Schmidt (not Hitler's translator of the same name) thought up a "brilliant" idea which he submitted to the deputy-minister in all haste describing his letter as a "Reichsecret." Schmidt had learnt—thus he wrote—that within a short time, in the month of June, a major operation against the Jews of Budapest would be launched. (It must be noted that at that time most of the Hungarian Jews had either been massacred or sent to hard labour and torture). As a member of the press, he was sensitive to public opinion. For that reason he feared that the "operation" in Budapest would evoke a reaction in the world. "The enemies will protest against the hunt of human beings and the like, will spread reports of atrocities

and will try in this manner to rouse opinion in their own countries and among the neutrals." For which reason he proposed the following idea of "genius."

"Perhaps it is advisable to prevent all these things (i.e. the reaction abroad) by providing a reason and motive for the operation. For example: the discovery of explosives on the premises of Jewish organizations and synagogues, of sabotage organizations, plans for revolution, attacks on the police, the smuggling of money on a large scale with a view to undermining Hungarian currency. In conclusion, a signally grave incident would be necessary to be followed by the launching of the great hunt..."

The reaction of the deputy minister is given below in script: "The proposal of Herr Schmidt must be transmitted to Veesenmayer with a request of his opinion."

Edmond Veesenmayer was the diplomatic representative of the Reich in Hungary in March-November, 1944.

were ready to rise and to become the allies of Nazi Germany. But the Italian ally tied their hands. "Our friends in the Islamic countries saw in Germany the partners of the hated Italians." For Italy had colonies in North and East Africa and wanted to seize Tunisia, etc. It was impossible to "liberate" the Moslems in the French colonies without rousing the Moslems in the Italian colonies against Germany's ally. "It was possible to conduct great policy in relation to Islam, but the entire matter was destroyed—like many other things—because of our loyalty to the Italian alliance." (Throughout his life Hitler bemoaned the losses and defeats he had sustained because of his "excessive" honesty, loyalty, courtesy and other qualities) "Loyal" Germany took into consideration the interests of her Italian ally, for which reason not only could the British remain secure in the Middle East, but could even appear, as in Syria and in Lybia, in the role of liberators . . . But Hitler expressed the hope that the Moslems would appreciate the quandry of Nazi Germany, would not cast any doubt upon its good intentions and believe in its lasting friendship towards them. It is, of course, common knowledge that to this day friendship and cooperation continue to exist between the followers of Hitler and some rulers of Moslem countries.

Attempts at Justification Down to the Last Moment

Throughout his life Hitler used to teach his followers and disciples that the victors are never asked if they were justified or not, if the methods they adopted were honest or dishonest. In March-April 1945, however, buried in his shelter under the ruined Reich Chancellery building everything he uttered was practically intended to exonerate and justify himself. Reviewing the more important events of his rule and the problems confronted he blamed—needless to say—only others for his failures. He himself had never erred, his plans had been correct and logical but others—both near and far, foes and friends—had upset and frustrated them, or his plans had failed because of objective causes, which could not be foreseen and could not be surmounted by any human being.

Among his criminal acts, however, there were two—acts of the most wicked folly—for which by no manner of means could others be made responsible. For this reason indeed he would speak of them more than of any other matter, and try by in-

cessant talk to lend them the appearance of reason, and find some justification for them.

He himself had declared before the whole world upon more than one occasion (though the world had not given any credence to his statements) that he would destroy the Jews of Europe. This satanic plan was almost completely consummated. But here in his shelter he was troubled without surcease by the patent fact that the unparalleled crime had brought him no advantage. He had not achieved his objectives by using it as a means of extortion, for the Reich had suffered decisive defeats both by the country of "Jewish Bolshevism" in the east and by the countries of the "Judaized" Churchill and Roosevelt in the West. And after the plan for eastern conquest and for the creation of a Nazi empire had become a mockery the destruction of the "decomposing element" remained, even from this aspect, a useless crime. For this reason he returned again and again in his last days to the subject of the Jews, notwithstanding the fact that a veritable mountain of other concerns troubled him. He explained again and again the incapacity of the Jews to assimilate completely among the nations in whose midst they lived, and he justified himself before History that "for us this (i.e. the destruction of the Jews) was a matter of therapy, of removing a poison from our bodies;—otherwise we might have choked" (February 13). If the Jews proved victorious, the world would be increasingly corrupted by that poison, but "the German people is immune to it and in the end will overcome it." "From this point of view it could be said that for the expulsion of the Jews from Germany and from Central Europe National Socialism was worthy of gratitude." He "foresaw" terrible dangers in store for the white races in Europe and in America. The black and yellow races would subjugate them and dominate their countries. Only those white races "capable of rooting out from their midst the lethal Jewish poison" would be able to withstand the trials in store. Thus he continued in order to lend rhyme and reason to this act of folly and crime. Now, incidentally, he turned the Nazi racial doctrine in regard to the Jews inside out. He explained that "only as a matter of lingual convenience do we speak of a Jewish race as there is really no Jewish race in the genetic sense. The Jews are primarily a spiritual race." At the time every Jew probably has "some drops of Jewish

blood," otherwise it would be difficult to explain the special physical characteristics which distinguish them, throughout the world. But that is not the most important thing. "A spiritual race is something more stable and enduring than just a race. Hence, the spirit is more powerful than the flesh . . ."

The other crime which he endeavoured to explain and justify by all sorts of contortions was committed against his own people and country. He would continue to speak about this crime daily for hours, seated in his shelter, as he shed words of wisdom into the ears of Bormann. At that time, already, no reasonable person could see any purpose in the continuation of the war. In February, 1945 Silesia was already lost and the Ruhr ruined. The production of coal had declined to one fifth of what it had been a year before. The sources of natural oil—Rumania—had been blocked some months before. The synthetic oil refineries had been destroyed and stocks were declining from hour to hour. Germany still had thousands of planes but they could not take off because of the lack of fuel, and the enemy air force destroyed them on the ground. As early as January 30, 1945 Alfred Speer, who was in charge of arms and ammunition supplies, submitted a memorandum which opened with the words, "We have lost the war." and continuing: There are supplies of coal for the railways and factories sufficient for only a fortnight, etc. etc. We must finish. But Hitler, who had resolved to commit suicide before surrender, put off the final decision. Everyday and every night the enemy planes sowed death and destruction in the cities of Germany. Tens of thousands were killed, unnecessary suffering was caused to millions but the crazed Führer remained raving in his shelter and did not give the liberating signal. On the contrary, he continued to give mad orders to military divisions that were already non-existent, issuing orders which the recipients either could not or would not carry out.

Thus, on March 19-20 he ordered the destruction of factories, power stations, water works, food and clothing stores, trucks, locomotives, etc. etc.—in a word to destroy what remained in Germany to ensure that the invaders would not benefit. But Alfred Speer did not carry the order out, and boasted of the fact after the war.

At this time the Führer engaged in "rationalization," "explaining" in "prophetic style" his behaviour and his crazed orders, putting off the

end. "The more we suffer the more brilliant will be the revival of eternal Germany." "I have sown good seed, I have implanted in the heart of the German people a proper understanding of its war of survival." (25 February). "In this cruel world, in which we have been plunged into two wars, only those white races will survive and prosper who know how to suffer, *who have the courage to fight, even without hope, until death . . .*" This was the explanation offered by the criminal. But at that time others were explaining it quite differently.

Among the handful of Jews still surviving in these last months of the war, and who were still capable of thought, some pondered the reasons for the delaying of the end and of death and destruction which that delay spelt. They came to this conclusion:

"It is only right and just that the Germans should prove obstinate and carry on the war. Only thus will they feel what it is like to be without a roof, to be expelled and forced to wander, to fear. Only if they prove obstinate will their cities be destroyed, their houses burnt and their factories ruined,—and thereby they will suffer a modicum of punishment."

These Jews recalled the tale of Pharaoh of Egypt whose heart was hardened by God lest he submit to the command, "Let my people go!" It is a story that has always aroused astonishment and doubt. After hardening Pharaoh's heart, could God punish him for that same hardness of heart? But at that time the Jews appreciated the essential justice of the tale:

Sometimes the only way whereby a little justice can be realized in the world, the only way whereby the world can be saved from being converted into Sodom and Gomorrah lies in that Pharaoh's heart continued to be hard and obstinate . . .

The tale of Pharaoh of Egypt has repeated itself. Without any prospect whatever, without the slightest vestige of faith, without any hope, Germany's blood was being shed.

"Indeed sometimes history develops in such a fashion that there is no other way to salvage a last spark of honesty and justice in the world, but by the criminals themselves becoming the instruments of their own punishment."*

* The above quotations are from an article "In those days" printed in the *Yiddischer Kempfer*, New York, in March 1947, and reprinted in my book, "Wanderings on the Roads of Death," Yad Washem, Jerusalem, 1960.