

THE  
ANSWERS

OF

ERNST VON  
SALOMON

*Book Society  
Recommendation*









## THE ANSWERS



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OF  
ERNST VON SALOMON

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TO THE 131 QUESTIONS IN  
THE ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT  
'FRAGEBOGEN'

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## PREFACE

THE appearance of a new book by Ernst von Salomon, after an interval of over fifteen years, is an event of considerable literary and political importance. And in his own country, the success of *Der Fragebogen*, which is translated here under the title *The Answers of Ernst von Salomon*, has shown that his own countrymen have not failed to recognise its significance.

Since its publication in 1951, over 250,000 Germans have bought *Der Fragebogen*, despite the fact that some of Germany's most distinguished critics have condemned it violently both on political and moral grounds. It is difficult not to sympathise with such critics. They represent that class of humane and liberal Germans who still dare to believe, even after the disasters of the last fifty years, that Germany may yet redeem the errors of the past. They believe that, with the help of Europe, she can cure herself of her wounds; they believe that she may even help Europe to cure her own; they believe, in short, that to be a German is not necessarily to be a barbarian. To those who cherish such beliefs *Der Fragebogen* must seem like a calculated blow in the face, and its popularity in Germany a proof that even now their countrymen have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

The future of Europe may well depend on whether, in fact, this is true or not; and one of the strongest reasons for recommending *Der Fragebogen* to the attention of English readers is that it provides alarming evidence of how deep seated, perhaps ineradicable, certain tendencies are in the German character. However, some explanation may be necessary if the English reader is to judge that evidence fairly or grasp its significance fully.

First of all, the very form of the book may offer some obstacle to understanding. It follows, with scrupulous fidelity the form of those questionnaires, the *Fragebogen*, which the Allied Military Government in Germany issued by the thousand at the end of the last war. The *Fragebogen* were served on all those Germans who were suspect of having directed, assisted, or collaborated with the National Socialist regime; their authors entertained the somewhat naïve hope that by such means it would be possible to divide the German sheep from the German goats, and to exclude all who bore any responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism from the administration or future government of Germany.

The climate of opinion about Germany and Germans has so changed since those days that it is difficult now to remember the motives which gave rise to the *Fragebogen*; and it is easy to see that there was a funda-

mentally false assumption in the idea of conducting a written examination, of 131 questions, of the conscience of a people, and on the basis of the replies calculating the degree of responsibility of each individual. Such an idea ignored the very nature of political responsibility, and moreover, at one and the same time, it did too great an honour and too great a dishonour to the German people; an honour because it implied that though many were guilty, even more were not, and a dishonour because it implied that to be convicted of National Socialism was necessarily to be convicted of guilt.

It has been easy for Salomon to seize upon the naïveté and the falsity of the assumptions underlying the *Fragebogen*, and by taking that document at its face value to turn the examination into a farce, a procedure admirably adapted to his literary talents. And the effect of his treatment is that the questionnaire recoils upon its authors, and that it is the accusers and not the accused who stand in the dock; one may be quite sure that in his countrymen's enjoyment of *Der Fragebogen* there is a strong element of the *Schadenfreude* which is one of their less amiable traits. Moreover, the very frankness of Salomon's answers, with their cynical indifference to his own reputation, gives an air of sincerity and conviction to his confessions which a more cautious, or a less skilful, witness would scarcely have achieved. By answering naïveté with cynicism, pedantry with mockery, and ignorance with a brutal avowal of unpleasant but undeniable facts, he brilliantly succeeds in imposing his own view of the case under enquiry, the case of Ernst von Salomon, so that even his accusers could hardly fail to bring in a verdict of *Not Guilty*. And since, in his own case, a completely frank statement of the facts leads to acquittal, it is implied that in the case of every other German also, however unpromising at first sight, no other verdict could follow so long as the facts are exposed in all their complexity and detail.

It is not merely the case of Ernst von Salomon which is being tried, but the case of the German people; and the implication of *Der Fragebogen* is that if only the German people would face their accusers with the same cynical indifference, the same contemptuous frankness, as von Salomon himself, the proceedings against them would very soon become farcical, as farcical for instance as the proceedings against von Salomon for the attempted murder of Wagner, of which he gives so brilliant an account.

Yet the English reader should not be deceived into taking *Der Fragebogen* at its face value. He should remember, firstly, that he is in the hands of an extremely gifted writer, with a wonderful command of narrative, a savage sense of humour, and beneath and beside his humour a profound psychological insight into the predicaments of contemporary life. *Der Fragebogen* is not a *procès verbal*, or an interrogation report; nor is it merely an autobiography; it is a carefully and



elaborately constructed work of art, composed with enormous literary skill, in which the tone and treatment of each episode are carefully calculated in relation to those of every other, and to the effect of the whole.

And, secondly, the English reader should remember that von Salomon is not merely a brilliant writer, and an artist; he is also, or was, a man of action, indeed of violent action, and has played a not insignificant part in the recent history of his country. He is indeed an outstanding example of the type of man of action as artist, or artist as man of action, which is one of the most characteristic products of this century, of men who can find complete satisfaction neither in art nor in action, and express in both the violence of their frustration.

Now in one sense, certainly, von Salomon's career needs no further commentary; for what is *Der Fragebogen* except an autobiography, an *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, in which the facts are all there to speak for themselves? Yet many episodes in the book are by no means self-explanatory; they imply a certain background of knowledge which is missing unless the reader is acquainted both with von Salomon's previous writings, especially his autobiographical novel, *Die Geachteten* (*The Outlaws*), and with some of the more obscure, and repellent, aspects of recent German history. Some words of explanation and amplification may therefore be helpful.

Ernst von Salomon was born in Kiel in 1902, of a family of Huguenot extraction, and was educated as a cadet in the Royal Military Academies at Karlsruhe and Berlin—Lichterfelde. He was still a cadet at the date of the Armistice in 1918, which at one blow destroyed the hopes, ideals, and ambitions of all those, who, like him, could conceive no other future than as an officer in the Imperial German Army. In his novel, *The Outlaws*, he has described the feelings of bitterness, despair, and savage resentment with which he watched the march back to Germany of the field-grey armies; and it was under the influence of such emotions, combined with a determination to save what could be saved from the German defeat, that he enlisted in one of the volunteer units that were being raised to defend Germany's eastern frontiers.

As a member of a *Freikorps*, a volunteer company, von Salomon took part in the street fighting against the Spartacists in Berlin in January, 1919, in the campaigns against the Russians, Letts and Esthonians in the Baltic States, and against the Poles in Upper Silesia. In the course of these campaigns the *Freikorps* developed a peculiar and special *esprit de corps*, based partly on the traditions of the specialised shock troops, the *Sturmbataillone*, of the 1914-18 war, and partly on the desperate conditions under which they fought. They despised the ordinary forms of military discipline, but were held together by the consciousness of having rejected the normal conventions of civilised life, and by obedience to their chosen leaders, and to no-one else. The fighting

in which they took part was characterised by extreme ruthlessness and savagery; they fought in a kind of ecstasy compounded of a patriotism which was akin to nihilism and of a conscious barbarism. Two sentences from *The Outlaws* are worth quoting: "We were a band of fighters drunk with all the passions of the world; full of lust, exultant in action. What we wanted we did not know. And what we knew we did not want! War and adventure, excitement and destruction. An indefinable, surging force welled up from every part of our being and flayed us onward." And: "Anyone who judges the *Freikorps* fighters by the standards of the civilisation it was their task to help to destroy is utilising the standards of the enemy."

In the summer of 1920 the *Freikorps* were dissolved by the Ebert government. Some of the formations entered directly into the Reichswehr; others continued to enjoy a semi-legal existence; others turned to subversive activities, and especially to the assassination of the leading politicians of the Weimar regime. It is estimated that between 1919 and 1923, 354 political murders were carried out in the name of German patriotism.

Of these murders, perhaps none attracted wider attention than the assassination of the German Foreign Minister, Walther Rathenau, on June 24th, 1922. For his part in the murder von Salomon was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. On his release, he helped to organise, with the support of the revolutionary nationalists of the German right, the peasant revolts in Schleswig-Holstein; this was his last direct adventure in politics. In 1930 he had written his first novel, *The Outlaws*, and this was followed by two further novels, *Die Kadetten*, and *Die Stadt*. He also wrote a valuable account of the *Freikorps* movement in *Nahe Geschichte; Ein Überblick*, and edited a collection of essays, *Das Buch vom deutschen Freikorpskämpfer*, which is one of the most valuable documentary sources for its history. In the Third Reich his writings received official approval as 'documents of the struggle for the rebirth of the Nation'. Salomon however had by now retired from politics, become a script writer for the German film company, UFA, and as such survived the war. In 1945 he was arrested, 'in error', by the Allied Military Government and interned until 1946 in an American camp.

It has been necessary to insist, at some length, on Salomon's relations with the *Freikorps* movement for several reasons, each of which throws some light on *Der Fragebogen*. For there is some reserve in the *Fragebogen* about Salomon's part in the *Freikorps*, partly no doubt because he has written at length about it in his earlier books. But one cannot help suspecting that this discretion is also partly due to the fact that any undue emphasis on his identification with the *Freikorps*, both as a soldier and an assassin, as a writer, propagandist and historian, would make a serious breach in Salomon's rebuttal of the charge of sharing in the guilt of National Socialism. For historically the direct influence of the

*Freikorps* on the National Socialist movement is too well attested to need further proof; it was largely responsible for supplying it with an ideology, a spiritual outlook, with a political and tactical technique, and to a very significant extent with its personnel; the number of *Freikorpkämpfer* who played a prominent part in the National Socialist regime is sufficient evidence of this.

The truth is that for a person of Salomon's past, and beliefs, to dissociate himself, as he does in this book, from all responsibility for the triumph, and the crimes, of National Socialism, is a piece of effrontery which only so brilliant a writer could have attempted with success.

Yet such criticisms hardly diminish, they may even increase, the value and the interest of *Der Fragebogen*, if not as a work of literature, as an historical document. For they raise the question why Salomon should have chosen, for all his parade of cynical frankness, to evade rather than answer the fundamental question to which the *Fragebogen* was so naïvely directed; the question of responsibility. They raise the question also why, in practising this evasion, Salomon should have done so much violence to his past self; for upon the image of himself which he created in his earlier works, the image of an adolescent who, despite or perhaps because of, the overpowering tumult of his feelings, the savagery and ferocity and the hatred of everything we know as civilisation, still retains something which is touching and innocent, Salomon has now superimposed, as in a double exposure, the new image of a detached dilettante, the *Lebensmann* who enjoys the good things of this world, the gay seducer, Bohemian and gourmet, too refined for the brutalities of politics but still retaining an old fashioned faith in the Prussian verities and virtues which he has done as much as anyone to destroy. One admires the trick. One is almost blinded by the brilliance with which it is done. And one does not understand, because one is not meant to understand, how that child became this man; until one realizes with dismay that now, just as then, Salomon retains that supreme virtue of a writer which is founded on a deep sympathy with some of the most secret and profound instincts of his people. And just as in *The Outlaws* he reflected the terrible and convulsive efforts of a mortally wounded organism to survive its own death blow, so in *Der Fragebogen* what is revealed is that even more terrible moment when, all passion spent, the final compromise is made with the corruption and decay which are death itself.

Such forebodings may seem out of place at a time when Germany appears to be enjoying a renaissance of political and economic power, shortly perhaps to be transformed once again into military power. Yet for those who read his earlier books as they should be read, von Salomon has previously given such accurate warnings of what was to come as to make them read *Der Fragebogen* with anxious attention.

He has the wonderful eye of the artist which sees the truth whether he wills it or no; but perhaps we must find the significance of *Der Fragebogen* on a deeper level of truth than von Salomon would wish.

*January 1954*

GORONWY REES

## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

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## MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY

### FRAGEBOGEN

*WARNING: Read the entire Fragebogen carefully before you start to fill it out. The English language will prevail if discrepancies exist between it and the German translation. Answers must be typewritten or printed clearly in block letters. Every question must be answered precisely and conscientiously and no space is to be left blank. If a question is to be answered by either 'yes' or 'no,' print the word 'yes' or 'no' in the appropriate space. If the question is inapplicable, so indicate by some appropriate word or phrase such as 'none' or 'not applicable.' Add supplementary sheets if there is not enough space in the questionnaire. Omissions or false or incomplete statements are offences against Military Government and will result in prosecution and punishment.*

I HAVE now read the entire Fragebogen or questionnaire carefully. Although not specifically told to do so, I have even read it through more than once, word for word, question by question. This is not by any means the first questionnaire with which I have grappled. I have already filled in many identical Fragebogens, and a great number of similar ones, at a time and in circumstances concerning which I shall have a certain amount to say under the heading *Remarks*. Apart from that group of Fragebogens there were others: during the period January 30th, 1933, to May 6th, 1945, which is usually called the 'Third Reich,' or with cheap wit 'the Thousand-Year Reich,' or briefly 'the Nazi Régime,' or correctly the period of the National-Socialist Government in Germany—during those years, too, I was frequently confronted with Fragebogens. I can confidently assert that I invariably read them through with care.

In order to satisfy any doubts on the matter let me say at once that the perusal of all these questionnaires has always produced the same effect upon me: a tumult of sensations is let loose within my breast of which the first and the strongest is that of acute discomfort. When I try to identify this sensation of discomfort more exactly, it seems to me to be very close to that experienced by a schoolboy caught at some mischief—a very young person, on the threshold of experience, suddenly face to face with an enormous and ominous power which claims for itself all the force of law, custom, order and morality. He cannot yet judge the world's pretension that whatever is is right; at present his conscience is good when he is in harmony with that world, bad when he is not. He cannot yet guess that a happy moment will one day come when he will weigh the world and its institutions in the scales

of that still dormant conscience of his, will weigh it and will find it wanting and in need of rebuilding from the foundations up.

Now in view of the matters which I have had to discuss in my answer to Question 19 of this Fragebogen, I am clearly nowise entitled to express my opinions on matters of conscience. Nor is it I who wish to do so. Yet how am I to account for the tone and arrangement of this questionnaire if its general intention is not a new incitement to me to examine this conscience of mine?

The institution which, in all the world, seems to me most worthy of admiration, the Catholic Church, has its system of confession and absolution. The Church recognises that men may be sinners but does not brand them as criminals: furthermore, there is only one unforgivable sin, that against the Holy Ghost. The Catholic Church seeks to convert and save the heathen, who is striving to be happy according to his simple lights; but for the heretic, who has once heard the call and has yet refused to follow it, there can be no forgiveness. This attitude is straightforward and consistent and entails certain sublime consequences. It leads directly to the secrecy of the confessional. It also means that each man, in his search for grace, is very largely dependent on his own, innermost determination. A fine attitude, and one that I might myself embrace did I not fear that the very quintessence of the Church's teaching—yes, the Ten Commandments themselves—were in painful contradiction to a whole series of laws that I have recently been compelled to observe.

For it is not the Catholic Church that has approached me and requested that I examine my conscience, but another and far less admirable institution, Allied Military Government in Germany. Sublimity is here at a discount. Unlike the priest with the poor sinner remote from the world in the secrecy of the quiet confessional, A.M.G. sends its questionnaire into my home and, like an examining judge with a criminal, barks its one hundred and thirty-one questions at me: it demands, coldly and flatly, nothing less than the truth; it even threatens twice—once at the beginning and once at the end—to punish me, and the nature and scope of the punishment envisaged I can only too vividly imagine. (See *Remarks*, at the end of this questionnaire.)

It was representatives of A.M.G., men in well-creased uniforms with many brightly coloured decorations, who made it unambiguously clear to me that every man worthy to be called a man should study his conscience before deciding whether or not to act in any specific way. They sat in front of me, one after the other, those agreeable and well-groomed young people, and spoke with glibness and self-assurance about so great a matter as a man's conscience. I admired them for their apodictic certainty: I envied them their closed and narrow view of the world.

Whenever I have attempted to reconcile any proposed action with



any type of conscientious judgment, I have invariably found myself confronted with a hoary dilemma: either I must doubt the legality of conscience or I must give up the very idea of doing anything at all.

Neither the tone nor the content of the Fragebogen reveals the reasons for my being asked all these questions. I have approached many a representative of Military Government, and always without success, in an attempt to find out what could possibly be the purpose of, say, Question 108. When I examine my conscience to see whether I am justified in filling out the questionnaire, I am bound to decide that to answer some of the questions—for example, No. 18 or No. 25 or Nos. 102–120 or Nos. 126–128—would entail flagrant damage to the rights of others and would therefore involve me in something that I regard as basically immoral. In view of the general tenor of the Fragebogen, and knowing that almost every German—at least in the Western parts of my country—has been compelled to fill it in, I can, after searching my now fully aroused conscience, reach only one conclusion: I must fear that I am taking part in an act which, in these uncontrollable circumstances, may result in damage to a country and a nation to which I unquestionably belong, damage done in the interest of foreign powers whose supremacy is based solely on two facts, the military collapse of Germany and an agreement made with men who were assumed by their co-signatories, at the time the agreement was signed, to be criminals.

These foreign powers won, in war, the right to every supremacy save one—supremacy over the law in the name of which they set out to conquer Germany. By so doing they created a vacuum into which we may now move, we, who surrendered our claim to every sort of right save only one—the right of the law.

But enough. I shall fill out this Fragebogen, even as I have filled out others.

## A. PERSONAL

1. *List position for which you are under consideration (include agency of firm)*

**I** BEGIN MY statement advisedly with the remark that a woman was connected with the decisive turning point of my life. That is unlikely to surprise either myself or anyone else. Statistics show that the relative numbers of men and women are everywhere approximately equal, except after major wars when the number of women is apt to exceed that of men. So men who unashamedly admit that they find pleasure in female company are unlikely to be frequently deprived of it. But the woman whom I have in mind belonged to that species or sub-division of the female sex which cherishes a certain preference for me, an emotion which, I may say, I cordially return. This is not the motherly type; I hasten to add that I have nothing against that type nor against the manifold blessings which they scatter indefatigably wherever they go; but somehow I have managed to live my life without them. Nor am I referring to those young girls, infinite in their variety as the flowers of the fields, whom a man must surely treasure more and more with advancing age. No, I mean rather that type of woman whom every man of our time should occasionally consider. It is well known that once a type has been found it is a simple matter to mass-produce it in series—a discovery, incidentally, of our century. And the type of woman to which I refer is also an invention of the twentieth century. Incidentally, I would remark here that I have yet to come across a type of man of which the same could be said.

There was a whole generation of those girls, born towards the turn of the century—that is to say at about the same time as myself—who rebelled against a world of prejudice, determined to assert the political, economic and ethical rights of their sex. Now, grey-haired and sensibly shod, in a severe dress with only a touch of friendly colour at the throat, their clever heads enclosed in a shapeless felt hat which is yet worn at a deliberately personal angle, they march steadily forward. And still above their heads there seem to float the invisible banners of our century. They are just the people to meet at the crossroads of one's life. Who better than they can seize the poor lost traveller by the coat-tails and show him the proper path?

These women all have one experience in common. They broke away from the moral certainties and the security of their bourgeois surroundings because they had the wit to sense which way the wind was blowing and to realise that, beneath society's crust, events were in pre-

paration with which they must one day be able to cope. Sometimes this breach with their background took a curious, even obscure form: often it was the heart that led while the head only followed later with unsteady, uncertain steps: but no matter what the impetus, they leaped and they nearly all landed safe and sound, determined to seize the hem of God's mantle should it pass their way and, equally important, to accept the world with humour when there was very little question of God or his mantle abroad in that world.

One such woman was Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt. I know not what impulse sent her to Paris, where she executed on linen as virginal as herself pictures of brightly coloured flowers, of a slice of cheese beside a lobster beside a wineglass. Harmless as this expression of her being may appear, its origin was undoubtedly overshadowed by violent domestic scenes complete with maternal tears and the old paternal thunder: "What will they say?" Fräulein Querfeldt's profound indifference to what people might say cannot be over-praised. At the time in question the people all said the same thing, namely that Fräulein Querfeldt would come to no good end; but the people also said that there could not possibly be a war in the twentieth century.

War broke out—neither the first nor the last of the twentieth century—and Fräulein Querfeldt decided to give up every sort of still life; this was surely a good end. She set off from Paris, on foot, marched straight through the fighting armies, and joined the German troops. The mantle of God can take many forms; now it assumed the shape of a field hospital tent. For four years Fräulein Querfeldt served as an assistant nurse, and by the time the war was over she had learned more uses for linen than she would have dreamed of during her Paris days. She resumed her studies and took a medical degree. When I met her, ten years after the end of that war, she was a fully qualified doctor, grey-haired, sensibly shod, in a severe dress with only a touch of friendly colour at the throat, standing at a decisive turning point of my life.

I had no idea that it was, in fact, a turning point. At the moment I was preoccupied with the petty pleasures of being driven in a car. My boyhood dreams had always culminated in a scene in which I, leaning back in the rear seat, was driven up a carefully gravelled drive between tall trees until the car stopped with a slight and agreeable jolt before a terrace.

The car stopped. On the terrace, grey-haired and sensibly shod, stood my destiny.

"Good morning," said my destiny in a rather harsh voice. "You will not be living in the main building but in the doctors' villa."

I jumped out of the car. There I stood, thin, of medium height, twenty-six years old and perpetually concerned with the knowledge that I was wearing the wrong clothes. I did everything I had decided I

would not do. I bowed stiffly from the waist, clicked my heels, announced my name, my whole name and all that goes with it.

“Querfeldt,” said the harsh voice. “Come in.”

A few steps led to the front door of what had obviously been built as a country house. I stopped in front of the closed door, thinking: “This is the doctors’ villa, not the main building. Apparently my case is not a serious one.” Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt came up the steps beside me and stopped when I did. Then she said:

“Ah, well!”

That was all. She opened the door and I walked through thinking, even as I did so, that I should have stood back and let her go ahead. But I had no time to luxuriate in the melancholy knowledge that on this day I was condemned to do everything wrong. I found myself at once in a small and poorly lit ante-room, filled with a confusion of strangers to whom I had to make myself known.

I do not know whether it is the same for others: I myself know only too well that awful moment when I realise that all my actions, despite the most careful preparations on my part, are going awry. My initial behaviour in this house could hardly have been worse—and it seemed to me vitally important that here, of all places, I should appear as inconspicuous and normal as possible. I shared in the popular misconception that a sanatorium for nervous maladies was really nothing more or less than a sort of camouflaged asylum for wealthy lunatics. Though I obviously had no reason to fear that I would be clapped into a strait-jacket and bundled off to the ‘main building’ should I offend against common usage and etiquette, I was yet certain that it was very important that I use the right glass of the three that stood by my plate at luncheon. I could well imagine that medical science attached far more significance to incidents such as this than to expressed opinions. I would never be capable of explaining in words that I was almost entirely healthy, even if I were suddenly gifted with the tongues of angels; anything I might say would only serve to make my situation worse. Undoubtedly all those present knew all about my case: the stately, dark-haired lady whom the others addressed as *Frau Sanitätsrat*: her daughter, a remarkably pretty girl with a glowing complexion: her son, a tanned young man in a magnificently rough and woolly jacket: above all Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt, who, from time to time, gave me a look that I described to myself as ‘scarching’: not to mention all the other persons present, whose names I had not caught but who doubtless filled some position or other in the establishment. They obviously all had great confidence in one another, and they discussed various subjects among themselves with fluent ease. When, however, one of them addressed me, as for example to comment on the qualities of the new motor car which had met me, I took care to reply in completely non-committal terms, simply agreeing that it was a handsome machine, at

least for my taste. Certainly any reference to the slight and agreeable jolt would have aroused extreme astonishment.

Thus I ate in silence. When, immediately after the soup course, a young girl to whom I had not yet been introduced entered the room I jumped to my feet as is the custom, bowed stiffly from the waist, clicked my heels, and announced my whole name and all that goes with it.

"That's our Louise," said Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt casually.

Fräulein Louise, somewhat disturbed, set about clearing away the soup plates, while the Frau Sanitätsrat continued without pause in her descriptions of the upholstery patterns she had seen that day. There was no way I could tell that Louise was a serving girl. I could not know that artichokes were usually eaten in this confusing fashion, nor that a man of culture was supposed to enjoy them none the less in consequence. I could not guess that parsley was only for decoration. And if there had been as many plates in front of me as there were glasses I should doubtless not have taken so enormous a helping of the first dish offered me. All this was inevitably unknown to me, and I resolved, beneath Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt's searching glance, to make this fact the starting point of my operations against her.

Later, in the library where coffee was served, I armed myself against the expected, and doubtless unctuous doctor's question: "What's the matter, then?" I assumed that that question, designed to put the patient in a position of inferiority, would be directed at me as soon as the others had finished their small talk and left the room. But Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt sat in silence by the stove, puffing at a cigarette. I handed her an ashtray and she said:

"It's a Sèvres bowl and very valuable. It's purely ornamental."

I decided to plunge at once into the middle of the business and said: "I'd no way of knowing that. I'd like to tell you right away that there are very simple explanations for all the things you've doubtless noticed about me after looking at me in that way of yours. One is that in most cases I really have no way of knowing."

Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt stubbed out her cigarette in the Sèvres bowl and said:

"Don't let that worry you. It seems to me a very good idea to use the thing as an ashtray."

I said:

"Please don't try to detect special reasons for all my actions. Naturally I make an effort to behave normally at all times. But I simply can't always know what normal behaviour is. Artichokes or whatever those things are called—I didn't learn about them at my mother's knee. Parsley I've always seen chopped up small and meant to be eaten. Probably I eat altogether too much for your taste, but not for mine. And when I find three glasses beside my plate, maybe it's obvious to

you but for me I've got to work it all out before I can decide which one to use."

"You always filled the biggest," said Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt.

"Exactly," I replied. "Now we're getting near the point. I'm here because people whom I believe to be well-meaning advised me to come here. They were worried about my health, a subject on which I cannot form an opinion. Since I am here it would be foolishness on my part not to do what you tell me. If you think I'm sick, cure me. Do whatever you think is best for me. But please believe me when I say that there is no point in your forbidding me alcohol. From personal experience I know that that would be quite senseless."

Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt got to her feet, saying:

"Alcohol is a frightful word. I can't think why one of the finest things in life should have so awful a name."

She walked across to a cupboard which she opened, saying:

"This is the Frau Sanitätsrat's liquor cabinet. Come and have a look."

In the cupboard were serried rows of bottles, some thin, some squat, some square, some of strange baroque shape.

"There are the glasses," said Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt. "Would you care for a Kirsch? or the Marie-Brizard isn't at all bad."

The Marie-Brizard was delicious. The cupboard contained a positive battery of noble drinks, pure spirits, some clear and sharp, some thick and oily, some flavoured with aromatic roots, others redolent of sweet-scented fruits. We tried them all and were fully agreed that a succession of drinks was in every way superior to a mixture of drinks, that the modern cocktail was a regrettable and barbaric invention, that vermouth was not worthy of the name of drink, that it would be wrong to despise gin for its slightly putrid taste, and that soda destroys the best in whisky (namely its delicate, smoky flavour), which has the unique property of being equally efficacious against heat or cold, the only drink that can refresh a man whether he be at the North Pole or on the Equator.

"You really know something about these matters," said Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt with admiration.

I looked at her distrustfully, but her glance was far from searching. I said:

"You mustn't imagine I drink in order to get drunk."

"Course not," she replied. "We drink because we love the stuff."

"Course!" I said. "Besides, it agrees with me."

"No ill effects?" she asked, pouring herself a glass of Cointreau.

But I was not to be caught that way.

"Never, Fräulein Doktor," I said. "Never seen pink elephants. No trace of bad dreams or anything of that sort."

"I know," she said with sudden eagerness, gripping my arm with one hand and stretching out the other for the gin bottle.

"I know," she repeated, somewhat more loudly. "I know. Out like a light, eh?"

"On the contrary," I replied, holding the glass more firmly so that the neck of the gin bottle would not rattle against it. "On the contrary. Wide awake. Can't sleep nights. Don't matter how much I drink."

"Can't sleep?" Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt's voice was loud with horrified astonishment. Taking a firmer grip of my arm and staring me straight in the face she erupted with the single word:

"Milk!"

Anxious to be of assistance, I cried:

"Right away, Fräulein Doktor! I'll get Louise."

But Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt held me back. She spoke with difficulty.

"Milk! Thing for insomnia!"

I said soothingly:

"Yes, yes."

She shook my arm to underline the intensity of her opinions:

"Every time you wake up. One glass."

"Yes, yes," I said. "Now drink a Fernet-Branca. It's the best thing if you're feeling sick."

Obediently she swallowed a Fernet-Branca. The unexpected bitterness of this most valuable of all medicines made her shake her head. She gave me a searching look and insisted:

"Don't forget! Wrap your nerves in fat! Plenty of milk! As much as you like! Always milk! After every glass of wine or beer or . . . or . . ." She finished her sentence with a vague gesture that embraced the whole liquor cabinet.

I took her by the arm and said, somewhat loudly:

"All right, but wouldn't you like to sit down?"

She shook her head again.

"Doctor's orders!" she said. Then, reaching for my hand with her free one, added:

"Promise?"

"Yes, yes," I said in despair. "I promise."

She sat down suddenly, murmuring:

"Tastes like . . . like . . . nuts."

Louise helped me get the Fräulein Doktor upstairs.

The Fräulein Doktor did not appear at dinner. However, Louise placed a jug of milk beside my three glasses. After each glass of wine I obediently drank one of milk. The milk really did taste like nuts.

"The Fräulein Doktor is not feeling quite herself," announced the Frau Sanitätsrat, "and asks that you forgive her her absence."

Genuinely upset, I asked:

"I hope it didn't disagree with her?"

"What?" asked the Frau Sanitätsrat.

I said:

"The schnaps."

They all stared at me.

With quiet assurance the Frau Sanitätsrat replied:

"The Fräulein Doktor never touches alcoholic liquors."

That night I found a jug of milk beside my bed. For a long time I walked up and down, as was my custom, six steps one way and six the other. Finally I drank the milk, and for the first time in many, many months I fell into a sound sleep.

Any man who has ever followed a herd of cattle returning from pasture to cowshed will understand my feelings during the next few weeks. I lived in a sort of permanent cloud of milk. Wherever I went, wherever I stopped, there was Louise in her starched blouse holding in her hand a fat jug of fresh, foaming, full-cream milk. I was committed to my milk, without even the possibility of refusing it, ever since the occasion of Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt's reappearance at table. Seeing the glass of milk beside my place she had remarked, in an even harsher voice than usual:

"I knew you wouldn't be a spoilsport!"

I accepted this remark as though it were a decoration and determined to drink my milk even as a man wears an order across his chest, a life-long proof that he is a hero. In truth milk is to strong waters as renown is to heroism. It does not kill the enjoyment of finer drinks but simply the longing for them.

Meanwhile in the days that followed Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt had little time to devote to me. She was very busy in the 'main building' and I usually saw her only at breakfast; she sat opposite me and gave me searching looks while I attempted each morning a new method of eating my breakfast egg without making a mess. Since the other inhabitants of the house did not pay any particular attention to me I spent most of my time in the library, reading and playing patience. I walked in the park and along the country roads. The sanatorium was near a small, East Holstein country-town and its surroundings had few exciting prospects to offer. As a result, when I went for my walks I was alone with my thoughts, which, in the circumstances, was not an unmitigated pleasure. Wherever I looked I was confronted with property; everything I saw belonged to somebody, though at that time not often to the person who claimed ownership. I wandered through all this property on thin-soled shoes with a very light pack on my shoulders—a state of affairs that I had more intention than prospect of changing.

My laziness had by this time assumed the most onerous form of all: I did nothing while longing to do something. And this inactivity of mine had an intensity which ended by well-nigh stupefying me, whether I was eating, drinking, smoking or playing patience; so that I became quite incapable of thought. Finally it led me into the kitchen of



the doctors' villa, where I found Louise, with a blue apron over her starched dress, busy at the sink.

I asked her if I might help with the drying. My request must have offended her deeply, for she felt bound to inform Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt.

After dinner in the library, when Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt reached for the Sèvres bowl and stubbed out her cigarette, I realised that fate, grey-haired and sensibly shod, was standing once again at a turning point in my life, as inescapable as the jug of milk which Louise had carefully placed upon the table by my elbow. Since my predicament had, in my opinion, no connection with medical matters, I had no hesitation in describing my situation to Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt. Indeed I felt a certain pleasurable anticipation in the thought that what I had to say must surely perplex this most self-confident person.

I told Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt everything. I paraded my hopes, those gallant skirmishers; I showed her my doubts, those marauding mutineers; I even alluded in an indirect fashion to the matter of the slight and agreeable jolt.

Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt gazed at me thoughtfully throughout. When I had finished, she said, in her harsh voice:

"You're a typical case of occupational neurosis."

I cannot find terms to express the relief I then felt. What worried me was nothing special, it was typical. It could be classified in medical terms and therefore dissipated by medical means. The diagnosis made it all quite clear, and I happily drank my glass of milk while awaiting the therapy.

Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt did not hesitate for a moment.

"Have you," she asked in a tone that seemed to me not entirely devoid of sarcasm, "have you," she asked, "ever considered the possibility of working?"

"Indeed I have," I replied, "but Louise was against it."

"Don't be silly," said Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt. "Have you ever in your life done any real work?"

This was an easy one. If I did not immediately reply, it was because I needed a little time to collect and collate the manifold activities that lay behind me in all their variety.

"I have," I said eagerly, "glued paper bags, woven nets, spun flax. . . ."

"That's not what I'm talking about," said Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt.

"I have," I continued, hurrying on to what I hoped would be more pleasing fields of activity, "polished hammer shafts, made felt boots, hemmed sheets. . . ."

In her harsh voice, and giving me a penetrating and significant look, Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt repeated:

"Hemmed sheets!!!"

She rose to her feet and walked out of the room, leaving me alone in this forest of exclamation marks.

The next day Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt invited me to come out on to the veranda. It had been cleared of furniture, and instead of the usual chairs and tables there now stood, in a row, six sewing machines. At five of these were seated five rather disconcerted-looking young girls from the nearby country-town, each staring perplexedly at her machine. Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt led me to the sixth and said:

“The Frau Sanitätsrat has decided that our stock of linen is in poor shape. She has ordered that it be all re-hemmed. You know how to hem sheets, don't you?”

Indeed I did. For a week I hemmed sheets. The supply seemed endless, enough to fill an army depot, all of the finest linen such as our grandmothers might have been proud to own, though all somewhat worn through long years of use. Basket after basket of them was set before us, and I sewed the hems as I had been taught to do, carefully, each hem a single, long, straight line, the stitches small and regular, using many needles and the finest 44 thread. Since for obvious reasons I was unaccustomed to the company of young, rosy, giggling country girls, I sat in morose silence at my machine, working with the intensity I had been taught, only glancing up from time to time when Louise, with a slightly mocking smile about her lips, replaced the jug of milk at my elbow. After a week the apparently inexhaustible supply of sheets had all been hemmed. The girls and I were paid for our work at the customary rate.

That evening, to celebrate the fact that I had, for the first time in my life, earned some money by my own endeavours, the Frau Sanitätsrat produced a bowl of pineapple punch which we all drank, seated around the stove. Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt, who had not failed to examine my labours with the eye of an expert seamstress, freed me for this one evening from my promise to drink a glass of milk after each glass of punch. I enjoyed the drink as much as I did the fruit which remained in the bottom of my glass and which I carefully spooned out and swallowed. Amidst much general hilarity Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt was urged at least to take a sip of the punch. When I said something about not being a spoilsport she agreed to do so. She knocked her cigarette ash into the Sèvres bowl, shuffled her sensibly shod feet and began to talk excitedly about her life. Not to be outdone, I too recounted incidents from my past. Thus we capped each other's anecdotes until at last I fell silent. Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt then told us what it was that most interested her from a medical point of view: it was the first reactions to the free world of a man who had lived in solitude for many years. Some time, she said, I must describe to her my first day of freedom: the whole day, in strict chronological sequence, from the moment I awoke until the moment I fell asleep.

“For five long years,” I said, “I awoke each day with the same feeling; this, I felt, is to be the dreariest, the most wretched, the most hopeless day of my life. For five long years,” I went on, “each day had only one purpose—that it be got over with as quickly as possible, so that I should be one day nearer the first day of freedom. For five long years my thoughts revolved about that first day of freedom, those first twenty-four hours, with their unutterable fullness of sun and space and life. . . .”

By the time I stopped talking the fire in the stove had gone out, the bowl of punch was finished, the last morsel of pineapple eaten, the Sèvres bowl full of cigarette butts. Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt was exhausted and wished to sleep. Since for this one evening I had been excused my milk diet, I walked up and down for a long time in my bedroom, always six paces, as was my custom, and I thought with embarrassment and shame that once again I had been taking myself far too seriously. I was well aware that this pitiful tendency was an inevitable product of my imprisonment. A man who has been compelled, for years on end, to be the absolute centre of his world, is affected in ways far removed from those envisaged by the philanthropic penologists who propose the modern aim of re-educating the convict and attempt to carry this out by means of most un-modern penal methods. During my years in prison I had been given the chance to become a specialist on prison life. I had not only observed what was around me but had also studied. For a long time I had worked as librarian in the prison officials' library. From morning till night I had sat in the little cell among the shelves of uncut green volumes issued by the Essen Prison Society, waiting for some official, anxious to progress in his chosen career, to come and select an important and useful tome. Apart from one or two who were interested in Wulffen's *Sexual Criminality*, none ever came. I, however, returned to the free world with a profound knowledge concerning the theory of the reintegration of the ex-prisoner into normal society, together with an iron determination never, on any account, to let any power on earth compel me to make use of the Essen Prison Society's institutions.

The constant and universal chorus of all those who pursued the humane science of penal life and prisoners' rehabilitation was this: the released prisoner must, above all, not return to Society with the brand of his sentence upon him. One and all insisted that no shadow of his past must lie across the ex-convict's difficult future. The police and other official bodies must, they said, be urged to co-operate in concealing the fact that a man has once been in gaol. Now it may be that my case had already had too much publicity, or possibly that the well-meaning penologists and so on had formed a false impression of the moral reflexes of the general public. Be that as it may, I was asked, with irksome frequency and in a manner that, though usually friendly, made

evasion difficult, to describe my experiences. If I became increasingly unwilling to do so, it was not because I feared my social life would suffer in consequence, but rather because I was well aware that I could not yet view these matters objectively, and because the danger existed that I might be tempted to accept being the object of an interest which had no connection with my deserts.

It is true that all this took place at a time when not many men could boast of several years' imprisonment. Today the whole problem facing a man in my situation must appear quite incomprehensible; a few judicious questions among any group of my compatriots whom you may care to mention will soon lead to the joyous conclusion that everybody, man or woman, young or old, has been in gaol at least once—and should one person or another for some reason have escaped this national experience, his embarrassment will soon make plain his shame at this omission on his part and his determination to put it right with all speed.

When, next morning, Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt asked me, in her harsh voice and with tactful casualness, whether I knew how to use a typewriter, I realised at once that the hour had struck. I said I could not type. Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt informed me that in her quality as my physician she must prescribe that I learn immediately. She explained to me the mechanism of her little portable machine and said that it would be best if my studies were based on typing some definite piece of prose. With indescribable cunning she proceeded to draw my attention to my dissertation of the night before and advised me to type it exactly as I had spoken it. I went zealously to work and attempted to produce as neat a typescript as possible, my major difficulty being to remember to press or release the shift-lock at the proper times.

I devoted three days to this labour, and was undoubtedly far more preoccupied with the difficulties of using the typewriter than with the difficulties of expressing my true feeling and emotions. Finally, with just pride, I delivered the completed typescript to Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt, who read it without comment and took it away with her.

A few days later, when I came down to breakfast, I found several wrapped copies of a newspaper together with a letter beside my plate. Judging by the regular battery of significant looks which the Frau Sanitätstrat threw in the direction of Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt, I realised the whole scope of this medical conspiracy. I therefore deliberately resisted the temptation to open my mail with eager haste. Instead I made a series of teasing remarks such as: "Well, I wonder who can have sent me these?" or: "Bound to be all a mistake," while I pushed the papers to one side. In fact I was well-nigh trembling with anxiety lest it should, in fact, be a mistake. Finally I opened the letter, read it, and handed it to Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt, while the Frau Sanitätsrat happily slit the wrappers around the newspapers. They were proof

copies of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, and the letter was from Paul Fechter, one of its editors. He expressed interest in seeing any further articles (though not about my prison experiences) which I might care to write, and he enclosed his paper's cheque for 150 marks.

The Frau Sanitätsrat, as soon as she had digested the contents of this letter, began to calculate: the article had taken me three days to write, therefore in a month I could produce ten, giving me a monthly income of 1,500 marks. *Pure profit*, she went on enthusiastically, and without any *capital investment*. In a dreamy voice she added:

“What a profession!”

Such was the first step which led, ultimately, to my becoming a professional writer.

## 2. Name

*Surname:* von Salomon. *Fore Names:* Ernst.

I have no way of knowing whether I am in any way connected with the original Solomon, or if so, how. My friend C. W. Ceram (author of the archaeological novel *Götter, Gräber und Gelehrte*) informs me that the only thing that prevented Solomon from marrying the otherwise delectable Queen of Sheba was the fact that she had hair on her legs. Should this be true I am inclined to think that I would just as soon have no connection with the first bearer of my name.

For the rest, see my answer to Question 18.

## 3. Other names which you have used or by which you have been known

If it must be, it must. In my earliest youth I was universally known as ‘Nini.’

## 4. Date of birth

September 25th, 1902, 0215 hrs.

## 5. Place of Birth

Kiel.

At the time of my birth there were some 100,000 people living in the town at the far end of the long bay which the Baltic has bitten deep into the mainland. Most of them lived at the south-west extremity of this bay or fjord, rather close together in the small, narrow, old-fashioned houses of the ancient township or in the fairly new and fairly horrible blocks of dwellings in that part of the town called Gaarden. The central portion of the town was of charming aspect, particularly the northern shore of the fjord; there lay the quarter called Düsternbrook, where the increasing number of financially independent families built their homes, each divided from the next by a most respectable and well-kept garden. I was not born in that so-called ‘better’ part of town, but to the north of Kiel's centre, near a public park, the Hohenzollernpark, with its fine

ornamental lake or fishpond, in the Jahnstrasse, No. 14, third floor, a typical rented house of the place and age. It was my mother's custom to hang a cloth from the window of the room in which I was born when the midday meal was ready: this was a signal to our servant girl, Rosa, at whose side I would be toddling hand-in-hand through the Hohenzollern park.

That is my earliest memory: flowers and birds, bushes and trees, a rough, strong, red fist gripping my hand, a red-and-white striped dress at my side, a white cap above a glowing face that looked up to a white cloth fluttering far above the treetops. And then Rosa would let go my hand and grip my arm, saying:

"The cloth's out. Time to go home!"

The red-and-white striped dress reminds me that to the three dimensions of space must be added the fourth dimension of time, in accordance with Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. Indeed he was busily engaged on working out his celebrated theory at this very time and had already reached the point where he could decide to publish it—which he did just three years after my birth. Red-and-white striped dresses, starched as were their white caps or coifs, such was the dress of servant girls in those days; servant girls they were and servant girls they were called. Any term such as 'domestic employée' would have brought a bitter and derisive smile to the tight lips of masters and mistresses, reeking as it must have done of the terminology used by those dreadful and greedy people called Social-Democrats. The Social-Democrats, it seemed, planned to rob their betters of their well-earned money and were prepared at all times to throw bombs and murder princes. Was it not incredible the way the police allowed them to march through the streets on May Day, beneath their blood-red flags and singing their bloodthirsty songs, through the respectable streets of our very own city? Ah, but we had our Kaiser, he would look after us, our Kaiser to whom Kiel owed so much!

For many years Kiel had been a simple provincial town; since 1864 it had been the capital of the Prussian province of Schleswig-Holstein, with its own university (1665) and a fair volume of trade with Denmark and Sweden, though it was somewhat hampered in this by its more fortunate neighbours. It also possessed a few fish-curing plants from which went forth to all the world, as tokens and heralds of Kiel's craft and industry, the well-known Kiel sprats, little, golden fish which taste exquisite, particularly if eaten fresh. But then Bismarck founded the Empire and our young Kaiser prepared a proud future for Kiel. It was he who built the Kaiser-Wilhelm Canal (opened in 1895), thus joining our town to the North Sea and the oceans of the world. Nor was that all. It was the Kaiser who built the proud German Navy, the Imperial Navy, be it noted, our Navy, the Navy of all Germany, and there, on the still waters of our fjord or bay, they lay, the beautiful

ships, one next to the other, each made fast to its buoy. And through the streets of our town came the boys in blue, red-cheeked and bare-throated, and one of them sat in Rosa's kitchen too.

The Secretary of State for the Navy, the Kaiser's paladin, that Admiral Tirpitz known by his long and slowly greying fork-beard, had his seat in Berlin, it is true. But Kiel was the seat of the Commander of the Baltic; Kiel was the Empire's finest naval base; and on the far side of the fjord or bay, in Kiel-Gaarden, the scaffolding and the cranes of the ship yards arose where the proud ships were being built. Money flowed into the town. And each year (since 1895) in the month of June, trim, slim, tall-masted, sharp-sailed yachts from all the world slipped into the harbour for the 'Kiel Week' races. What nobler, what finer sport than a yacht race? The Kaiser himself, aboard his *Meteor*, would open the festive gathering, and his loyal people, bursting with dynastic pride, frequently had a glimpse of the Emperor himself at the wheel while Prince Henry pulled on the clew-lines. Above it all fluttered the black-white-and-red, the symbol of the new Empire and a caution to all its enemies, for our future lay upon the water.

As for our enemies, our Kaiser, though he loved peace (had he not telegraphed his congratulations to the president of the plucky Boer Republic, Ohm Kruger, on the occasion of the defeat of the British invaders under Jameson?), was forced to summon his people with shining eyes to safeguard their most cherished possessions: in the far East the Chinese, busy with their Boxer Rising, had murdered the German Ambassador von Ketteler (1900). At the very hour of my birth the last German soldiers were returning from China, among them the naval battalion of the Kiel garrison: they were filled with pride because the local commander-in-chief, the British Admiral Seymour, had, on the occasion of an attack on the Chinese positions, issued the stirring order: "The Germans to the front!" This historic moment was immortalised by a gifted artist. Reproductions of his picture were to be seen everywhere. One hung in the room where I was born.

At the time when I walked through the Hohenzollern park, clutching Rosa's hand, the Russians and the Japanese had just tested one another's strength, to use the current expression (1905), at the fearful battle of Tsushima. We children knew all about this owing to a highly prized toy or gadget which was then on sale. This was a sheet of specially prepared paper which portrayed the Russian and Japanese warships in action. They strongly resembled those other ships we knew so well from our fjord. When a match was applied to a clearly marked corner of the paper a spark would travel along a predetermined track, hissing and spluttering and simulating explosions aboard the rival ironclads. It was usually the ships flying the flag of St. Andrew which thus exploded, though this did not altogether accord with the Kaiser's intentions, for his sympathies lay with our Russian cousins. Our

other cousins were beginning to cast envious and unfriendly looks in our direction; slowly proud Albion became perfidious Albion.

But there lay our fleet, ship by menacing ship, each made fast to its buoy; the boys in blue, red-cheeked and bare-throated, walked through the streets of our town; the inns flourished; the pastry cooks, the *Konditoreien*, were filled with midshipmen and sub-lieutenants; and the men of the 85th, the poor but brave officers and men of the 85th Royal Prussian Infantry Regiment, minded their own business. In Kiel everybody minded his own business, the University minded its own business, the businessmen minded theirs and so did the officials. The Empire was still young.

We children of Kiel, when we went to play at Laboe, the beach opposite Holtenau on the other side of the fjord, we did not grub about in the sand building castles. No, we formed ourselves into a 'Beach Company.' Off we marched in the morning, neatly and uniformly dressed in our sailor suits, which were like the suits of real sailors except that ours were blue-and-white striped instead of plain blue, armed with bamboo sticks for guns, a black-white-red band about our left arm and on our heads the shiny black hat which had been worn in the navy's early days when it was simply the Prussian and not yet the Imperial Navy.

My grandfather was the first and only man of my blood—if I may use so fine a word to describe my family—who was neither officer nor official nor landowner nor member of some respected profession. He was a merchant and he had duly gone bankrupt in Liverpool. Now he worked as a confidential clerk in the Diedrichsen Coal Company, whose stately offices and depots lay beside the harbour of Kiel. Yet he counted as a *grand seigneur* and lived like one, even though his means were limited. Not that he inhabited some proud castle; his little rose-embowered cottage at Laboe was only just big enough for himself and his aged housekeeper. Yet his splendour was apparent when he sat with my father over a bottle of wine on a summer's afternoon outside a Laboe tavern. Then he would wear a black jacket and a hat of genuine Panama straw, while my father was correctly and unostentatiously dressed in a high-buttoned, full-skirted coat made of a stuff that was known, I think, as pepper-and-salt. My father would sip the good wine with care and forethought. My grandfather would raise his glass to his nose, twisting the stem between his fingers as he savoured the fine bouquet before tasting it, while with his eyes he followed the fluttering skirt of some shapely passer-by, perhaps even catching a glimpse of a well-turned ankle. My grandfather was a lady's man and never, if he could help it, did he miss a dance; he would spin the prettiest ladies about indefatigably.

My last childhood memory is of a dance at which my grandfather had been exceptionally high-spirited. I stood alone on a terrace, behind



me the gaiety and the music, before me the glittering waters; the sunshine poured down on the town and on the serried ships of the Imperial Navy, each made fast to its buoy, anchored out there in the fjord.

Twenty years later, when I was beginning my life anew, I returned to the city of my birth. The sun was glittering on the waters of the fjord and on the town. But no longer was ship after ship made fast to its buoy. My grandfather had long been dead, my father too, and strangers now lived in the rose-embowered cottage in Laboe. Our boys in blue, red-cheeked and bare-throated, still hurried through the streets, but there were few of them now. The innkeepers complained that they were so scarce. In the *Konditoreien* the midshipmen and the sub-lieutenants were still occasionally to be seen among the students whose appetites had not been satisfied by a 60-pfennig meal at the 'Seeburg.' Everyone continued to mind his own business; the navy, no longer Imperial, was now our splendid if small Reichsmarine, and for many years there had been no 85th of Foot. The university minded its own business, as did the merchants and the officials and the dentists. Many former naval officers had taken up dentistry as their new career. Germany was not yet really unified, in fact less so than before. On May Day the Social-Democrats marched through the streets of the town, with many a domestic employee among their ranks, and above their heads fluttered an occasional red flag. Most of their flags, however, were black-red-gold, the colours of the Republic; nor were they themselves at all bloodthirsty, rather the contrary; indeed nothing was now farther from their minds than to throw bombs or to assassinate princes. The Kaiser existed no longer, the peoples of Europe had failed to safeguard their most cherished possessions, and though it was hard to say where our future lay it was certainly not upon the water.

Yet in Kiel the navy was still our pride and joy, our small though gallant Reichsmarine, which retained and recalled its former smartness. Kiel lived for and with the navy. The republican workers had named their ship the *Deutschland*; the Communists had no ships, but at least in Kiel their 'Union of Red Front Fighters' was called, briefly, 'the Red Fleet'; and the SA of the newly created party, the National-Socialists, was called the 'Marine SA.' And so they marched through the streets. The Red Fleet with their trumpets and the Marine SA with their drums. Perhaps if they had marched together all would have been for the best. As it was, they preferred to fight when they met. And our small but gallant Reichsmarine stood aloof from their battles. Our navy was above politics. It preserved its organisation and saw to it that the pirate flag, the black-red-gold, was never flown on the high seas, but only the proper flag with the small, just tolerated, black-red-gold jack.

Such was Kiel, a town among towns.

The last time I saw Kiel was in the spring of 1928. I was seated on the terrace of that inn at Laboe, where twenty years before, my grandfather had danced so merrily with the prettiest girls, and I gazed over the waters of the fjord, and the town was bathed in sunshine.

6. *Height*

5 foot  $8\frac{3}{4}$  inches (decreasing with advancing age).

7. *Weight*

Variable.

I am fortunately in a position to give very exact information about my weight both past and present. This is a subject to which I have always devoted great attention. Nothing has given me greater satisfaction than the calculation, made by an American scientific organisation, that global food supplies, if sensibly handled and fairly distributed, will suffice to feed the population of the world until A.D. 3000. Although the victuals provided by Prussian prisons in the nineteen-twenties were incomparably better than anything which has come my way since 1945, my weight, when I was released from my first term in gaol in 1928, ran only to approximately 8 stone 4 pounds, which in relation to my height was far too little. I do not know how much of my increase in poundage must be attributed to Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt's milk treatment, but I do know that when I left her care I proudly tipped the scales at 10 stone 2. I made sincere efforts to continue her therapy and to achieve even further progress. But, although I presume that the world reserves of milk have not appreciably diminished, for the last nine years I have failed dismally to maintain my consumption at the sensible and fair level which is assured to each of us until A.D. 3000. I managed to keep at 10 stone 2 for about a year. Then, in the autumn of 1929 and for reasons which will be made apparent in my answer to Question 29 of this Fragebogen, I slipped back to 9 stone. Here I remained until the year 1931, when I easily succeeded (see Question 125) in increasing my weight to 10 stone 11. The years 1933-1935 marked a further decline (see Question 41) to a low point of 9 stone 6. From 1935 I gradually put on weight again (see Questions 118 and 119).

It was my ambition at one time to achieve a net weight of 14 stone 4. I never succeeded in doing so. By August of 1939 I had arrived at 13 stone 10, and I deceived myself with the false hope that the remaining 8 pounds would not present a serious problem. But from that time on my weight steadily declined. In May of 1945 my records show that I weighed 12 stone 7, and I thought then that in view of all the circumstances I had achieved a nadir; but when, in September of 1946 (see Remarks), I next stood upon the scales they showed me that I weighed only 9 stone 3, and the scales, unlike a great many other things, were still intact and functioning correctly. Today I once again weigh 11 stone

7. I have achieved this increase by using all lawful methods at my disposal, and some unlawful ones too, but I do not believe that I am capable of maintaining this figure. I have finally had to abandon once and for all my ambition of tipping the scales at 200 pounds.

I like being fat. Only in my corpulent periods have I had no difficulty in obtaining credit; I have never worked so easily as when I was comfortably well-covered; and I have discovered by personal experience that women place far greater trust in stout men than in thin. In politics fat men are the objects of general sympathy; they are assumed to be less fanatical and therefore the public is inclined to believe in their feeling for humanity. The lines which that great expert on human nature, William Shakespeare, put into the mouth of Julius Caesar, are familiar to all:

Let me have men about me that are fat;  
Sleek-bearded men, and such as sleep o' nights.

The allegorical figure of John Bull, in contrast to America's Uncle Sam, is habitually portrayed as a noticeably stout man. I imagine that this, as much as anything else, has contributed to the universal affection which the nations of the world feel for the English.

#### 8. *Colour of Hair*

Hamlet teaches us that it is in the interest of those in power to arouse men's conscience, for power is safest when exercised on cowards. Its best means to this end has always been the arrogance of officialdom.

Officials in their turn have always known how best to use the magic of power, how to bewitch and thus to seize individuals. Registration is the subtlest form of terrorism, the basis without which systematic torture is impossible. A man in a file-index is already as good as dead.

Officialdom inevitably inclines towards terrorism whenever it is sufficiently powerful to be able to do so. Every blank form which leaves an office that has any real power is a warrant of arrest in thin disguise. But if madness has its methods there is yet a point at which the methods themselves are patently mad.

In this particular questionnaire I am asked to give the colour of my hair. Nothing discloses more plainly the true nature of the Fragebogen as a disguised warrant than this question. Simultaneously, nothing shows more clearly how contemptible that nature is.

Furthermore the question is, from a statistician's point of view, valueless. The last question, the one about weight, may offer the possibility for certain deductions concerning the graph of increase or decrease in relationship to the events of the age. Any attempt to do likewise with the colour of a man's hair is doomed from the start, since everybody's hair changes with the passing years, and, what is more, changes identically, viz. to grey or to white. Once when I was confronted with this

question in the past and was incapable of finding an intelligent answer, the official responsible for the form, after glancing quickly at my skull, wrote with inexplicable frivolity: 'Dark blond.' Now I should undoubtedly be guilty of making a false statement—and therefore, I am told, be liable to punishment, an experience I have very good reasons for wishing to avoid—should I answer this question with those two words today. I am definitely not dark blond. In my opinion I never have been dark blond, though I cannot produce any documentary authority for this belief of mine. Nowadays my hair is of an indefinable hue, a sort of dark and dusty colour, though each hair when examined individually shows a tendency towards grey. This tendency—as I notice each day with growing dismay—looks as though it will conquer. But the victory, when it comes, seems likely to bring with it the dissolution of that which is conquered. Like all conquest it has a plainly nihilistic side to it.

### 9. *Colour of Eyes*

If I must expect some unpleasant classification to ensue from the colour-of-hair question (particularly in view of its proximity to No. 6, the height question), I can yet be entirely reassured by the connection between No. 8 and this question.

Frivolous officials may have cheerfully described me as "dark blond": the fact of my height being an adequate 5 foot 8 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches is beyond dispute: but the colour of my eyes is not blue. It is every other shade except blue. When I examine my eyes closely in a glass—which I assure you is not a frequent habit of mine—I can detect in them every gradation of the spectrum save only blue.

Perhaps it will decrease this questionnaire's resemblance to a warrant for my arrest if I write that, after close and careful study, the predominant colour of my irises is brown, grey or green; they vary continually. They become lighter and brighter when I think of my answer to Question 125; when I recall what I have had to write under the heading *Remarks* they grow noticeably morose and piercing. Friends who had long lived in North Africa once advised me never to try to have any dealing with Arabs, for I would be sure to fail in the attempt. The relative juxtaposition of my eyes, it seems, results in my possessing what is known in those parts as 'the evil eye.' Any Arab, as soon as he saw me, would at once extend the index and little fingers of his right hand as protection against my supernatural powers and would do all he could to escape my company with the shortest possible delay. Now I have never had any intention of doing any sort of business with Arabs. If I were ever involved in gun-running that was many years ago, and my interest in such activities has long evaporated. Besides, in the current struggle between Arab and Jew my sympathies are, for reasons of principle, entirely with the latter. This 'evil eye' business is something I do not

pretend to understand. But I do recall with pleasure the culminating sentence of a report penned by a gifted journalist some twenty-eight years ago when I was facing trial in a court of justice:

“The narrow-set eyes and receding forehead of the accused are sufficient evidence that this young man would have embarked on a career of crime even without the spur of politics.”

I have no hesitation in affirming that the author of this remark was no Arab.

10. *Scars, marks or deformities*

(a) None.

(b) None.

(c) See under Remarks.

11. *Present address (City, street and house number)*

Only the overwhelming arrogance of officialdom prevents me from giving a very curt answer to this question. My address is as fleeting as the passing moment, the present that is for ever becoming the immediate past: even before I have finished answering this question my answer might become untrue. Nor is that the worst: this question is twin to No. 12, and here too I cannot give a true and honest answer. It is not defiance on my part that compels me to leave these spaces well-nigh blank. With shame and all due humility I must declare:

I have no home!

12. *Permanent address (City, street and house number)*

See answer to Question 11.

13. *Identity card, type and number*

German Identity Card No. B.78561.

This so-called German Identity Card is a four-sided document made of grey calico. The printed words are in four languages, German, English, French and a collection of letters which I take to be cyrillic. On the front of the Identity Card, beneath the heading *Attention*, are a few lines which, in both tone and content, are most definitely German. I note with interest that according to my Card I am by nationality ‘German,’ a statement which is surely either out of date or premature, that my stature is described as small, and that the official who filled in the card gave the colour of my eyes as light brown—at the time in question I must have been thinking about foreign travel.

The Identity Card is enlivened by a picture, a photograph of myself. I do not look like this photograph, I never have and I never will. The card also carries the impressions of my right index and left index fingers.

In contrast to the vast majority of my compatriots I know what this

finger-print business is all about: my father, in his capacity of a high police official, was connected with the introduction of dactyloscopy into Germany. It serves to help the police in their work of identification. For a long time it was only criminal's fingerprints that were taken. Indeed, only in the case of criminals has the procedure any purpose, for only burglars and such are liable to leave prints behind them connecting them with their illegal activities.

It is well known that for certain races every part of the human body has its own magical significance. Shorn hair or the parings of finger nails are taboo among the Polynesians, since they are thought to possess magical powers. The ancient Teutons believed that it was a dishonour for a man to lose his long lock of hair, that to cut it was to brand him as a serf. The Arabs to this day are forbidden by Islam to have pictures made of themselves. The Chinese say of a man who has offended normal susceptibilities, by acting in a dishonourable or unworthy way, that he has lost face, and this they regard as of prime importance. Small children who have lost a milk tooth can only, with difficulty, be persuaded to give it up or throw it away. And Greta Garbo does not like being photographed in private life. All these facts hang together. When dactyloscopy was introduced the men responsible took care to avoid offending humanity in one of its principal characteristics, namely its feeling of shame. They quite consciously limited the taking of finger-prints to those social groups who, by their own actions, might be assumed already to have sacrificed that noble emotion.

The finger-prints on my Identity Card prove that either 78,560 persons before me were regarded as criminals or else that the times are past when such subtle distinctions are drawn as were still current in my father's day.

The Identity Card in its present form was introduced during the period of the National-Socialist Government in Germany (though at that time the printed portion was of course in one language only), and is revelatory of the totality of present-day police methods.

Here in Germany the possession of an Identity Card is compulsory. So far no person has been able to obtain a ration book unless he first has an Identity Card. But the Identity Cards were only issued to those who could prove that they had already handed in their *Meldebogen* or Report Form. This Report Form was demanded according to the law of March 5th, 1946, the Law for the Liberation from National-Socialism and Militarism. Concerning this law I shall not argue since I know of nobody whose attitude towards it is not identical with my own. Owing to my careful demeanour before the tribunal it did not cause me personally any ill effects. Nevertheless I believe it to have been politically stupid, humanly infamous and legally impossible. I am firmly convinced that by handing in a Report Form, which alone made it possible

to put this law into effect, I was participating in an act which, in view of its nature (politically stupid, humanly infamous and legally impossible), can only be regarded as a crime. Should I have failed to hand it in, however, I would have been automatically condemned by the splendid prescience of authority to death by starving, a fate that I could only have avoided by indulging in a whole series of prolonged illegal activities. This seems to me to pose a nice problem of conscience and one that I would recommend to the respected gentlemen with the thunderbolts.

Needless to say I handed in my *Meldebogen*. I know nobody who, with a similar attitude to this law and its originators, did not do likewise.

#### 14. *Wehrpass* No.

Unfortunately I am not in a position to give the number of my *Wehrpass*. Obviously, like every other German of my age, I did at one time possess this military document. During the period of the National-Socialist Government in Germany I was never once called upon to produce it, but with the arrival of the Americans all this changed. My *Wehrpass* became an important document, since it was my only means of proving that I had not been a soldier and was therefore not liable to incarceration in a prisoner-of-war camp. Every American military post, at every street corner, asked to see my *Wehrpass*. It was my passport which allowed me in those days to move about freely—in so far as freedom of movement was at all possible. Whenever and wherever I saw an American uniform I would automatically reach for my *Wehrpass*. Close to my house, at a crossroads which I had to pass in order to go to the village, an American post had been set up in a tent. Since I walked that way several times each day, the soldiers must have known me quite well by sight. Nevertheless they insisted each time that I show my *Wehrpass*. Thus one day as I approached the tent and saw a man seated on a stool I automatically put my hand in my breastpocket. Sitting there outside the tent, his eyes glued on a plump girl leaning on a fence, he was whistling a tune of the type the Americans called 'long haired.' This man in his tight-fitting American uniform attracted my attention because on his left lower arm he wore no fewer than three wrist-watches, while his lapels were decorated with a great number of those little gold brooches containing brightly coloured stones such as peasant and servant girls wear in this part of the world. As I drew near him, this man, scarcely taking his eyes from the plump girl, signalled me with an inclination of his head to approach. He took my *Wehrpass*, glanced through it in bored fashion for a few seconds, and then, with a slow and satisfied gesture, tore it in four pieces which he proceeded to drop into the gutter. While doing this he did not for a moment interrupt his long-haired whistling.

I realised at once how any upstanding American must react to such behaviour. I had seen enough similar situations in enough American films to know that there was only one thing to do, namely to knock the fellow cold with a well-directed uppercut to the chin and then to walk on. Such a course of action was manly, simple, satisfactory and morally quite unexceptional.

Yet I must admit that I made not the slightest attempt to act according to the American concept of the way a man should act in such a situation. Without in any way embellishing the hour I simply walked on and went home, and from that day to this I have done my best to avoid all contact with Americans.

#### 15. *Passport No.*

My passport expired in 1938 and was not renewed. Nor did I make any attempt to obtain a new one. At that time many people were dying in a way that was officially described as suicide. A group of my friends swore an oath never to do two things: never to commit suicide and never to emigrate. I subscribed to this oath. It is very hard to establish whether or not my friends all kept their promise. Some are now dead, others missing, and if they too are dead there is no way of knowing the circumstances of their death. Two of those friends of mine were caught in Austria by the collapse of the Reich and have as yet apparently found no way of returning home. Another is an Austrian and is at present still in Western Germany. When I reminded him the other day of his promise never to emigrate he replied that he was not an émigré but an Austrian.

#### 16. *Nationality*

I am a Prussian. My national colours are black and white. They mean that my ancestors died for freedom, and they serve to remind me that I am still a Prussian whether the sun is shining or the skies are heavy with cloud.

This is not always easy.

Being a Prussian, I am accustomed and bound to face facts sensibly and soberly. I have noted with attentiveness the statement of the Allied Military Government that Prussia is dissolved. But the exercise of similar attentiveness has made it plain to me that this Allied Military Government is in error when it assumes that the dissolution is of its doing.

It is only natural that so great a nation, and one so supreme in the sphere of international trade, as the United States of America should, in its busy pursuit of world-encompassing affairs, lose sight of a few not altogether unimportant details, details which have led me, in my attempt to answer this exceptionally difficult question, to consult my favourite encyclopaedia.



At the time when the brave pioneers and tradesmen, who then lived only on the very fringe of an unmeasured and empty continent, were arming in order to deprive their distant English motherland of a flourishing colony by means of a long and bloody war, at that time, in the centre of an overpopulated and impoverished Europe, one small state, Prussia, had by means of a long and bloody war asserted its rights against three great powers. At that date there were fewer Germans within the borders of Prussia than are now to be found in the United States of America. Prussia was then ruled by a king called Frederick II, who was recognised as the most enlightened of the European princes and who—I dare not say ‘as everyone knows’—was the first monarch of the old world to establish a friendly relationship with the great George Washington’s freedom-loving and independent republic.

In the decades that followed the United States forced the indigenous inhabitants, the Red Indians, farther and farther west in an exceptionally brutal struggle; by 1823, the year of the Monroe Doctrine, the original thirteen independent States had been increased to twenty-six. Meanwhile Prussia, like the other states of Europe, had been overrun by a man named Napoleon, who had succeeded in making himself Emperor of France; then, like the other states of Europe, Prussia rose in what has been universally called the War of Liberation, and did not again lay down her arms until the tyrant had been overthrown. In this war—I dare not say ‘as everyone knows’—the United States of America fought on the side of Napoleon.

The universal desire for freedom that affected all the peoples of Europe after this war took the form, among the Germans living on our continent, of a wish to establish equality with the other countries and to build a unified nation. The achievement of this wish necessitated a power sufficiently selfless to sacrifice an important part of its sovereignty and independence in the interests of national unity, and willing with this end in view to take certain risks which were not immediately profitable. The name of this power was Prussia. The Prussian Minister-President, a man called Bismarck, succeeded, at the time of the outbreak of the war between the States, in resisting the temptation offered by the other side, a side that included great powers: he refused to become involved in the internal struggle in America and to speculate on the collapse of the great nation called the United States by recognising the Confederacy as a belligerent power. He disdained to take part in any undertaking of this sort, and is not without responsibility for the fact that no such attempts were indeed made.

Bismarck had a profound understanding of the aims of the great American president, Lincoln, in his desire to establish the unity of the American nation by means of his highly idealistic action in setting free the negroes. He would have been astounded had he known that one day the Americans would reproach him for having, at the same time,

established the unity of the German nation by means of his highly idealistic action in setting free the Germans. Prussia's sentiments for that great nation, the United States of America, were never cool. If they were perhaps not sufficiently expressed, the reason may be that it is truly hard to find more to say in praise of the Americans than the Americans have already said in praise of themselves.

Every state attempts to justify its existence in a higher sense. In its strivings it allots itself a specific task; it then aspires to create the circumstances in which it can carry out that task. A state's intentions can thus always be recognised by the form of organisation that it builds for itself.

The German Empire, thanks to the efforts of Bismarck and thus of Prussia, took a form that, by means of a complicated and delicately balanced triple division of authority, was intended equally to prevent any unjustified grab for power by any one section of society and to stop any imperialist tendencies in a country that was striving for centralisation. The German Empire was a constitutional monarchy subject to triple control: control by the German people in the *Reichstag* and in the parliaments of the *Länder*: control by the states that composed the Empire in the *Bundesrat*, or Federal Council: and control of the monarchy by Prussia. Bismarck himself always regarded the office of Prussian Minister-President as more important than that of German Chancellor. According to the constitution of the Reich the Prussian Minister-President was automatically chairman of the *Bundesrat*, that is to say of the body through which the various *Länder* constituting the German Empire could, by means of their princes, exert their influence on national policy and could establish and control the extent of the rights they were prepared to vest in the central government. So even when, as in Bismarck's case, the Prussian Minister-President was simultaneously German Chancellor, the internal balance of power was ensured, since the Chancellor could not carry out a policy that he was unable to justify in his capacity as Minister-President to Prussia, the leading constituent unit of the Empire. In Bismarck's phrase Prussia's task was to provide the ballast for the ship of state, a task which was ascribed it by the nature of the Empire's organisation. There can be no doubt that this was a worthy task if hardly a particularly glorious one.

No evil moment marks the beginning of Prussia's dissolution. In the Prussian consciousness the dynastic principle was inextinguishable. When Kaiser William II, by nature and by his talents a glittering phenomenon, began to take the reins of power into his own hands, a dilemma faced each Prussian: on the one side was the Prussian duty of providing the ballast for the ship of state: on the other, Prussian loyalty to its royal family. The dynasty broke Bismarck and simultaneously deprived Prussia of the one task the Kaiser's ancestors had left to it in the German Empire. The passing of laws and the control of the admini-

stration and of policy belonged to the *Bundesrat* and to the *Reichstag*, not to the Kaiser. The latter, just like any other prince, could only make proposals and suggestions for passing laws in the *Bundesrat*, that is to say in his capacity as King of Prussia, for in the *Bundesrat* he was nothing more than this. But there was another course open to him. By appointing some non-political figure as Chancellor and Prussian Minister-President—some general brought up in the tradition of unquestioning obedience—he could ensure his personal rule. This was a possibility which Bismarck, in view of his strict concept of the dignity and duties of the Prussian crown, had so little considered that in the construction of the national state no allowances had been made for its occurrence. In the interests of the German cause as a whole Bismarck had had to overcome a strong tendency to Prussian particularism on the part of his king, William I, a monarch, who to the day of his death, morosely referred to his title of German Emperor as being that of a tiresome 'fancy dress major.' Yet this king's grandson compelled Bismarck to declare to the Prussian Ministry that he must regard it as approaching treason for responsible ministers silently to acquiesce while the sovereign found ways to circumvent the constitution—ways that they must realise were dangerous to the state—so that he became the adviser of his ministers rather than they his. In the person of William II the King of Prussia had surrendered to the Emperor of Germany. The Kaiser's tragic figure—only in the hour of his fall did he attempt to recall that he was also the King of Prussia—is in striking contrast with all that Prussia had, by its nature and its being, contributed to history. With Bismarck's dismissal Prussia's task lost its validity. The Empire fell not because Prussia had played too great a part but because its role had been too small.

The constitution of the German Reich after the fall of the monarchy, that is to say the constitution of the German Republic, included a *Reichsrat* in place of the *Bundesrat*, which to a lesser extent than its predecessor represented the various *Länder* in the legislative and executive fields. The chairman of this *Reichsrat*, however, was no longer the Prussian Minister-President in his capacity as representative of the largest German *Land*, nor the Minister-President of some other German *Land*, which Bismarck had also at one time envisaged as a constructive possibility, but a minister of the central government. Thus was the federal character of the Reich as a union of states abolished, and with it was abandoned Prussia's influence and Prussia's historic task. Prussia no longer existed as a state among states but as a *Land* among *Länder*, none of which retained its sovereignty; the only way Prussia could still affect national policy was through the mass of its electoral votes which, together with the votes cast in the other *Länder*, elected the representatives to the *Reichstag*. No longer did the *Länder* control the Reich; now the Reich controlled the *Länder*.

In these circumstances it was only logical that the non-Prussian

Chancellor of a National-Socialist German government should, on April 7th, 1933, appoint himself *Reichstatthalter* of Prussia in accordance with the so-called *Gleichschaltung* or Standardisation Act: that he should appoint his henchman, the non-Prussian Hermann Goering, Prussian Minister-President: that the latter should immediately set to work to dissolve the Prussian state as the first to go in the interests of national unification, the so-called reform of the Reich: and that the last bastions of an indigenous Prussian administration, the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Religion and Education, and finally all the Prussian ministries save only that of Finance, should be merged in the national ministries. This was the end of Prussia as a state. Prussia did not rise but fell in a unified Germany.

What must shock every good Prussian when he contemplates the fall of Prussia as a state is the fact that this calamity attracted so little attention. Nobody took any particular notice of what was happening. In the consciousness, not only of Germany but also of the rest of the world, Prussia in its true sense was no longer even a concept. It had become merely the name attached to a series of catch-phrases.

The question of nationality is a question of life or death. It implies not only certain legitimate links between the individual and his community; it is also indissolubly connected with the assumption of very specific duties. One of these duties is military service in time of war. A man can thus easily be placed in the desperate position of possibly being killed for the nation to which he belongs, or of himself killing others on its behalf. Of these alternatives the first is obviously appalling, but it is one over which the individual cannot exert any power of will; every man must die one day and no man can alter this fact, nor can he specify the exact hour of his death. The other alternative is something quite different. It is not uncommonly even more appalling than the first, since it requires the active participation of the individual. The individual must therefore be allowed the right at least once basically to consider for what form of state he might perhaps be willing to perform so atrocious a deed as killing another man.

Generally speaking a man obtains his nationality—a very necessary business, incidentally; it is rare to find a man who can achieve lasting contentment without one—by the simple matter of his birth, that is to say by chance. I was born in Kiel: at the time when I happened to be born Kiel was part of Prussia: therefore I chanced to be a Prussian by nationality. I was a Prussian but since I happened to have no ties with the local population, I never felt that I was a Schleswig-Holsteiner, even though Kiel was at that time the capital of the Province, as it is now of the *Land*, Schleswig-Holstein. Of the numerous local German stocks the two for whom I have always felt the greatest affection are the people of Schleswig-Holstein and those of Bavaria. But since I have no biological connection with either the one or the other, it would be as

foolish for me to call myself a Schleswig-Holsteiner, merely because I was born in Kiel as it would be silly to say I am a Bavarian simply because I have lived in Bavaria for many years and with great enjoyment.

According to the law that now regulates these matters my nationality is, briefly, German. Thus is it entered on my Identity Card: thus was it written by an official who may be assumed to know. This law—or perhaps it was merely an order—was a creation of Hermann Goering's. I know not whether in the sharp eyes of contemporary international lawyers and such people the National-Socialist Reich is considered to have been a proper state with all that that implies; I do know that nowadays to use the word 'German' as descriptive of nationality is ridiculous.

For well-nigh all the pre-requisites are lacking. Germany is not a national state. If it is still a geographical idea, then that is already far more than we Germans can hope for today.

My father was born in Liverpool, my mother in St. Petersburg. But my father did not therefore become English, nor my mother Russian. My parents were Prussians. I do not know what their motives were, but I do know that I should elect to become Prussian were I not already so by birth.

The decisive factors are the maxims that determine the structural organisation to which I would belong. Here the United States of North America have left no room for doubt. They constructed their concept of their nation on principles that, at the time they were first pronounced, were in direct contradiction to all previously accepted principles that had up to then been conceived or accepted as valid for the existence of a nation. The United States declaimed these principles of theirs so loudly, so forcefully, and so frequently that everybody became aware of them; they are summed up in those rights of man which are epitomised by the basic axioms of human liberty and of freedom of opinion. These worthy and fecund axioms are well suited to the possibilities offered by a country that calls itself the land of unlimited opportunity. They are axioms that would enable the peoples in America to co-habitate without a state at all, without the essential requirements that necessitate the creation of a state.

The prospect of living in the United States, or western hemisphere, as an American citizen would have considerable attractions for me. But they would not suffice to make me tolerate the alternatives of dying or killing for the U.S.A. It would be quite intolerable to me to accept those alternatives in order to force the basic axioms of the United States of America on nations with limited opportunities.

The first attempt on German soil to escape from the shadows cast by the histories of others into the sunshine of self-determination was made by Prussia. A glance at the map of Prussia in the time of Frederick

William I reveals why precisely here the idea of the state as an abstract creation was bound to achieve a primary and central importance. That map shows a confusion of states and racial groups, split up into fragments and stretching in all its chaos from Lithuania to the Alps, without coherence or plan, fortuitously bound together or at loggerheads owing to accidents of birth, dynastic marriages or death. No one countryside was militarily secure, no single racial group safely ensconced within fixed frontiers. The stability of the state was exactly proportionate to the vitality of each individual's consciousness of the state.

Prussia brought the state into existence. There is no moment of Prussian history in which the person responsible for Prussia's destiny was not preoccupied with the state, with the ideal of the state. Each day Prussia was face to face with harsh reality. The dangers and the duties were both enormous. Perhaps that is why a whole collection of fine names from all parts of the Germanies was drawn to Prussia. They became Prussians by choice, recognising the fact that the Prussians were not so by reason of their ancestry or by the accident of birth. There was a mystery about Prussia that produced great quantities of written material; examination of these shows that they are all connected with a specific concept of duty, a concept on which alone internal and self-reliant order can be based. Prussia brought the state into existence.

This is extraordinary: the Prussian ideal of the state had nothing to offer the individual save strict demands. It required that the king be the first servant of the state, it valued performance and not intention, it cared nothing for interest and advantage but only for ideals and forms, it prized fulfilment above success. Taken all in all this ideal of the state—made visible in figures and documents, audible in laws and prohibitions—undoubtedly laid more stress on virtue than have the manifestations of any other concept of the state. It was certainly more ethical in its nature than metaphysical or idealogical, and in its insistence on the pursuit of practical and sensible ends it is closer to Confucianism than to Christianity. Indeed the Prussians, viewed in terms of the virtues that the state prescribed they should practise, are the Chinese of Europe. It is, incidentally, well known that the Confucian Japanese have been called the Prussians of the Orient.

Undoubtedly it is not unthinkable that the German people could be happy without the state. From time to time men have dreamed a pleasant and thoroughly desirable dream: they have envisaged the Germans, amiable, modest and above all obedient, pursuing the even tenor of their days in their smiling valleys and upon their gentle hillsides, gratefully watching the lambs skipping in the meadows, harvesting the fruits of their fertile fields, working industriously, producing with skill and energy in countless workshops the necessities of civilisation, finally sending out into the world poets, thinkers and scientists of a becoming

modesty, the children of a contented and simple land. For such a people a state is obviously not necessary, nor an army; a kind and helpful controlling administration would suffice. Such happiness for the German people is not unthinkable, provided, first, that the Germans are willing to ignore the problems of the world and, secondly, that the world agrees not to intrude its problems upon the Germans. It is not unthinkable if the Germans are prepared to forget their history, to regard their past efforts as senseless, their deeds and thoughts as errors, their great men as fools and their beliefs as illusions. The state is in any case hostile to such happiness. It would be hostile to the people themselves were this dream of happiness all that the people cherished.

It is a vision of exhaustion, a pipe dream in which the world suddenly appears simple, easy and filled with translucent bliss. Such dreams endure for only brief seconds in the history of the world, like that other dream when the Americans and the Russians shook hands on the banks of the Elbe and a deep sigh of relief passed around the exhausted globe: "Yes—this is it! It is all so simple, so right, so clear. Get rid of the nations! Get rid of the states! All of them—and then all will be for the best."

Far be it from me to underestimate the intentions and appreciations of the victor powers. I am well aware that Allied Military Government, in its capacity of regent for the new order, could at any time crack me like a louse between finger and thumb for the very reason that I—yes, yes, human rights are all very fine—that I can produce no national status other than that which is the object of this question. The victor powers, the Big Four or the Little Fifty-six or Fifty-seven, have no doubt very good reasons to explain why, at the one moment when nationality could really have been abolished, this was not done. On the contrary, very much on the contrary. . . .

Whatever sublime axioms may rule the world from now on, the nations will still serve as the pots into which those axioms are distilled in earthly reality.

Every spirit seeks a body. If there is even the remotest intention of allowing the German people to participate in that spirit which shall determine the political destiny of mankind, then the German people must willy-nilly become a nation once again: a nation with its proper sovereignty and with other choices besides the agreeably passive ones of being violated or corrupted: a nation whose future form no man can now foresee save that recent experience has taught that it is neither of the West nor of the East, neither of heaven nor hell, but of the earth itself: a nation that must incorporate the will to statehood, since that will is the only cement which can hold it together.

I have nothing more to say on the subject save this. I wish with all my heart that it may be a true state, a state in the greatest sense of that word: so long as I am not in a position to declare my nationality as German, I

will proclaim this as my faith: I am a Prussian and I wish to be a Prussian.

17. *If a naturalised citizen, give date and place of naturalisation*

Not applicable.

18. *List any titles of nobility ever held by you or your wife or by the parents or grandparents of either of you*

Americans can scarcely be blamed if they appear to be somewhat in the dark when dealing with the involved practices, origins and ambitions of our nobility. After all, the founders of the German and Austrian systems of government of 1919 were not really at home in this field either. The German Weimar system of government laid down that a title of nobility was an intrinsic part of a proper name. As such it could, of course, not be altered. This led to results that kept whole families in a state of protracted hilarity and darkened the lives of the authorities. For example a distant cousin of mine, called Aunt Traudchen, the canoness of a religious foundation and an already somewhat eccentric old lady, suddenly and stubbornly began to refuse payment of taxes. All requests, all communications from the financial authorities were either returned unanswered or consigned to her waste paper basket. Finally, after a considerable amount of unpleasantness and under pressure from her family, she agreed to put these matters in the hands of a solicitor. To him she declared that she did not feel in any way bounden to open letters that were not addressed to her. According to the new regulations, she said, her name had once and for all been fixed as 'Edeltraut Graf von Trips.'

I have never bothered much about the history of my family. The Almanac de Gotha, that standard work which the nobility created and in which each noble family can find an excellent summary of its ancestral tree, so far as this is known and recorded, has very little to say about the Salomons. There is a certain amount about a mysterious Venetian nobleman who emerges surprisingly from the mists of history, establishes his claim as founder of the family, and disappears again without giving any more detail about himself. I also know that our coat of arms is curiously enough surmounted by a nine-pointed crown, that is to say a count's coronet, which fact for a long time induced my brother Günther to refer discreetly to certain ancient privileges, though he modestly never attempted to invoke them. Few splendours from our ancestral past have filtered down to us save for an occasional anecdote, culled heaven knows where, and repeated with as great pleasure by myself as by my grandfather in his rose-embowered cottage in Laboe.

During the years of the National-Socialist government in Germany I had, it is true, ample cause to make researches into the history of my family—if simply because of the suspicious sound of my name. But it



was in fact my brother who undertook this task. He began by carrying on an extensive correspondence with obscure parish clerks and distant registrars; next he had to grapple at length with the currency exchange officials in order to secure the necessary foreign money to carry out his researches abroad; and then he well-nigh paralysed the machinery of our Foreign Ministry which he persuaded to disturb peaceful cemeteries at the far ends of the earth and, amid the amazement of sympathetic foreigners, to blow the dust from long-forgotten bundles of family archives.

Finally an opportunity arose for him to impart to me, with the due solemnity suitable to the importance which he attached to his research, the results of his activities.

My brother had been called up into the army, and he came dressed in the uniform of his Traunsteiner Infantry Regiment (which was now entitled to call itself a Grenadier Regiment, though I doubt if this honour had done much to increase the soldiers' martial ardour). He was wearing a new recruit's jacket, much too large for him, trousers likewise too big but far from new, a pair of shapeless army boots, which, lavishly hob-nailed and smelling strongly of fat, banged against his thin calves with every step he took. We praised his bloodthirsty appearance. Ille declared him the very epitome of a warrior and remarked on how his eyes had recently acquired a hard and steely look. I, for my part, expressed my satisfaction that a member of our glorious family should once again be about to sally forth to daunt the foe.

He spread a sheaf of papers, straightened a few handsomely coloured coats of arms, unrolled a carefully drawn family tree, and said: "Please spare me your cheap sarcasm for once!" Then he began:

"It seems, so far as my researches have taken me, to be definitely established that our family originated in Italy."

"Aha," said I. "The Venetian nobleman?"

"Yes," said my brother. "I got in touch with the National Archives in Venice and learned from that source that a family 'Salamon' or 'Salomone,' which produced many branches—one even going to Crete—is referred to in Barboro's monograph *Arbore de Patrizi veniti* and other works. Barboro writes that two members of the Salomon family—one called Felippo di Gasparo, born 1530, died 1578, the other Simon di Giulio, born 1547, died 1606—held certain public offices but were later banished, though neither the reason for nor the exact date of their banishment is known."

"Disgraceful!" said Ille.

My brother looked at her sadly, but she went on:

"What I'd really like to know is how your family got such a funny name."

"That's easily explained," replied my brother eagerly. "It dates from the Crusades. As a sign that they had fought the infidel the Crusaders

used to add a name taken from the Old Testament to their family name when they got home."

"When were the crusades?" Ille asked.

"The first was about 1096, the fifth and last somewhere around 1220," I said modestly.

"And you mean to say that during the whole of the intervening period, some three hundred years, nothing whatever was heard of so illustrious and chivalrous a family of Crusaders? It's incredible!"

"Perhaps," suggested my brother, "there's just no record of them."

"What was he called, your Venetian nobleman? I mean what was his first name?" Ille asked.

"Felippo," said my brother.

"The other one, the other one," said Ille.

"Simon," said my brother.

"Aha!" said Ille meaningly.

My brother blinked and fingered his signet ring and said:

"Don't be unkind to me. You know I'm a Party member."

"Well, what comes next?" I asked.

My brother sighed, and his voice became more assured:

"One of the two—I assume it was Felippo de Gasparo—fled to France and settled at Mirecourt. There he must have succeeded in achieving a certain position. Our coat-of-arms dates from that period."

My brother went on to describe at length the story of our ancestors in Lorraine. They had been soldiers and officials of the French kings, a somewhat quarrelsome tribe, quick to go to law. One Etienne-Ignace de Salomon played a small part in the French Revolution, but managed to make his peace both with Napoleon and with the restored Bourbons. Another took part in Pichegru's conspiracy against Napoleon. A third left Lorraine in the late eighteenth century to become the founder of the Prussian branch of the family and our direct ancestor.

Friedrich-Cassian von Salomon, the founder of what my brother called 'the Prussian line,' was born on October 12th, 1759, and began his career as cornet in a regiment of German cavalry from Nassau that formed part of the French army. Owing to some real or imagined slight, however, he left the French army (much to the annoyance of his father) and took service with the Prussians. This was in 1779 or 1780. He joined a Prussian volunteer battalion at Wesel, and married an heiress with house and property at Grotelaer near Geldern.

My brother had visited this place and had noted a fine picture of the Duke of Marlborough constructed entirely from the feathers of little birds. This house passed to Ernst von Salomon, our great-grandfather. He married an alleged heiress, a Bavarian, which was all to the good since Grotelaer was never a paying concern. But, alas, owing to a badly drawn will she inherited nothing save a small estate near Rheinberg called 'Kleine Spey.'

In February 1942 the place suffered the fate my brother had feared for Grotelaer. It received a direct hit from a bomb and, together with its inhabitants, Gräfin Gerghe von Trips and her family fell victim to the Duke of Marlborough's descendant.

Our great-grandparents lived the life of modest land-owners and produced eight children, of whom four reached maturity. The Salomons did not do particularly well in the nineteenth century, achieving neither wealth nor fame. If they managed to preserve their status in society that was as much as could be hoped for. So at least I gathered from certain remarks that my brother, perhaps inadvertently, let fall.

"Our grandfather Felix, though the eldest son of Ernst, did not inherit Grotelaer. Nor did he become an officer or a lawyer. For reasons which I have not succeeded in establishing he embarked on a career which was hitherto unknown in our family. He became"—my brother hesitated; the word seemed to stick in his throat—"a merchant. He was the first member of the family to be a merchant, as I," said my brother, "am the second and probably the last."

At this point I felt bound to offer him my congratulations.

"But grandfather," I said, "went bust. Which is something that, for some inexplicable reason, you have never done."

"Yes," said my brother, "he speculated rashly. He lost money on the stock-exchange."

"I knew him," I said. "He cut a great swathe considering how little money he had."

"He married Marie Roeffs, and they set about squandering his fortune. Grandfather travelled a lot. He had connections in America and Africa. He lived with his wife in Liverpool, where his firm was located, though the fog and damp disagreed with her. She developed an inflammation of the lungs from which she died at an early age. Grandfather then sent his three children—Felix, our father, Karl and little Gerda, who did not live long—to Grotelaer to be looked after by his sister, Theresa. She was a widow and owned Grotelaer. Grandfather only very rarely bothered about his sons' upbringing."

My brother stopped and glanced thoughtfully at his own son, Michael, who was happily playing with a toy train on the floor. Then he went on:

"I can easily imagine what life at Grotelaer was like. Grandfather on the occasion of his rare appearances, must have seemed a breath from the wide and busy world, laden no doubt with presents for the sons of whom he was so proud. Meanwhile he had been speculating, and one day Aunt Theresa realised that while she had been looking after his children, he had taken advantage of this to sell his part of the family inheritance. This was a small but valuable property called 'Kelderhof,' which she would willingly have bought herself to round off her estate.

She was furious. Meanwhile he continued to speculate, again he lost all his money, his debts assumed formidable proportions, and finally Aunt Theresa washed her hands of him. He disappeared and no one knows what happened to him. I hear that as an old man he turned up in Kiel—”

“In a rose-embowered cottage in Laboe. That was before you were born. I understand that friends arranged for him to be given a job with Diedrichsen, the coal company.”

“In that case,” said my brother with evident satisfaction, “he obviously was not a dishonest bankrupt. In any event Felix and Karl remained in the care of Aunt Theresa. I went to see her once when I was a boy. She was a formidable old lady, nearly eighty, but still very active. She refused to talk about my father. ‘Both my nephews were a great disappointment to me,’ she said: ‘I hate lies. I disinherited them.’ She impressed me greatly. She seems to have been particularly fond of Uncle Karl. He must have been talented; he was commissioned into the 57th Regiment, but he appears to have inherited a certain instability of character from our grandfather. He ran up debts which he concealed from Aunt Theresa; telling her about them can hardly have been an agreeable prospect. He must have told her eventually, though, because she refused to pay them, with the result that he had to leave the army. He cannot have been much of a success in civilian life. Finally one day he disappeared. Later Aunt Theresa read in the newspaper that a former Prussian officer, Karl von Salomon, had enlisted in the French Foreign Legion. Among our father’s papers I found a picture of him, taken at Oran. It shows a big fellow, splendid looking, carrying the flag at the head of a battalion of legionaries.”

I asked:

“Tell me, why actually did Aunt Theresa disinherit Father?”

“It’s all very obscure,” said my brother. “I once asked Mother but she wouldn’t say. I imagine Aunt Theresa disapproved of their marriage. Mother was a Protestant and Aunt Theresa a very devout Catholic. Besides, Mother’s family was not noble and also she had no money. When Father wanted to become an officer, Aunt Theresa was strongly opposed to the idea. But I think the final breach was occasioned by Father’s secret marriage. Our parents were wed in England, at Greenwich, where I understand that there’s no need to produce certain papers before getting married. When I was collecting evidence of our Aryan blood I secured a copy of their marriage lines. On this document Father gave his profession as ‘circus-rider.’ I asked Mother about this. She told me that because Father was born in Liverpool, and therefore entitled to British citizenship, he did not wish to disclose the fact that he was a Prussian officer, which he still was at the time. He was a first-class horseman and he often said, jokingly, that he would always be all right since if the worst came to the worst he could get a job as a circus-rider. I suppose that’s why he gave it as his profession.”

19. *Religion*20. *With what church are you affiliated?*21. *Have you ever severed your connection with any church, officially or unofficially?*22. *If so, give particulars and reasons*23. *What religious preferences did you give in the census of 1933*

I was baptised a Roman Catholic. My father was a Catholic, my mother a Protestant. I never had any cause to believe that my parents' decision to bring me up in my father's faith was based on any considerations other than purely practical ones. I have not succeeded in discovering the names and addresses of the god-parents who promised, before the Almighty, to make themselves responsible for my Christian conduct.

From the age of eleven I was seldom in my parents' home. I received religious instruction as part of the normal curriculum of the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, but my first communion was postponed for one year on the grounds that my moral attitude did not yet warrant my taking the sacraments: while serving as acolyte I had secretly drunk all the wine. When at last I was confirmed, the day—which, according to the divisional padre, was 'the finest in Napoleon's whole life'—turned out for me to be a disappointment; instead of being given the pocket watch which I keenly desired and eagerly expected, my mother presented me with a picture of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg.

After reading Wilhelm Bolsche's *Love-life in Nature* I was convinced that I possessed a perfectly adequate philosophy of life. At thirteen I surprised my mother by giving her a detailed lecture on the organic procedure of reproduction. Nor did it occur to me that so sensible and logical a business could in any way be connected with the concepts of sin or of morality. The voice of conscience only ever spoke to me in connection with real eventualities, as for example the disobeying of clearly formulated orders which, I knew, entailed specific punishments. For the rest I was brought up strictly in accordance with the code of 'what is done' and 'what is not done.'

In my nineteenth year I found myself compelled to examine, for myself, the whole problem of guilt. But no prayer welled up within my heart. In the years that followed I made a zealous attempt to educate myself, by reading, in religious matters. I studied. But I was not attracted towards that peace of the spirit which presupposes the acceptance that certain matters are beyond the realms of human understanding; this was perhaps because from the very beginning doubt has seemed to me a more fruitful state of mind than certainty. What is more, despite all my zeal, religious writing inspired me with a sensation of boredom that I was quite incapable of overcoming.

The Bible impressed me because of the extraordinarily objective

strength of the pictures it paints in those stories which have had such a remarkable influence on Western art. Admiration for the clear and objective style, which I ascribed to Martin Luther, vanished when I attempted to evaluate the Bible tales, particularly those of the New Testament, from a literary standpoint—a crude and callow one, I admit, but I had no other. The story of the Nativity, which ever and again attracts modern man and moves him to tears, seemed to me to be a failure; its grandeur did not, I thought, correspond to the implications of its theme. Similarly the miracles struck, for me, a false note; the contrast between the enormity of the concept—the possibility of action beyond and above the laws of nature—seemed to me in pitiful contrast with the pettiness of the actual miracles performed. When I became aware of how extremely narrow-minded my attitude was I stopped reading the Bible. I have never again felt any urge to take it up. Later I made a further attempt to find belief, a resolute effort supported by the Fathers of the Church and the modern theologians. It was a failure. Thus, at the relatively early age of twenty-eight, I reached the conclusion that there may be men who lack all sense of religion.

For me this was not a cheerful conclusion to reach. It was in contradiction to what I claimed, correctly or incorrectly, as my spiritual rights. Besides, such an explanation of this personal phenomenon forced me into a position of close proximity to that sort of materialism which—at least in the jargon of its intellectual representatives—debases the profundities and splendours of spiritual life to the lowest level and in the dreariest fashion. But I had long been compelled to resign myself to one fact: there were a number of ‘senses’ that I lacked, concerning three of which, at least, I can speak with certainty.

I have no sense of music. I am completely unmusical, a state of affairs that distresses me, since it means that I am totally excluded from a not inconsiderable sector of that world in which, by the nature of my career, I live.

I have no sense of mathematics. Many men with a similar deficiency tend to laugh or even boast about it. For myself, on the occasions when I find myself confronted by this blind spot, I am compelled to ask myself whether it does not simply mean that I am just a fool.

I have no sense of lyric poetry. As a result I doubt whether I shall ever be capable of establishing a satisfactory relationship with the language in which I choose to write.

The fact that I also lack a sense of religion is, I must admit, the deficiency in myself that distresses me the least.

24. *List any crimes of which you have been convicted, giving dates, location and nature of the crimes*

As soon as I was released from prison in 1928 I went to see Hartmut Plaas. He was at that time working in Kapitän Ehrhardt's office in

Berlin. Actually it was with the Kapitän himself that I wished to re-establish contact, but I knew that Plaas was working for him and I was also looking forward to seeing him again. Of all our comrades he was the one with whom my relations had been the closest. We were of almost identical age—I was slightly the younger—and during the main proceedings before the State Court for the Defence of the Republic, Plaas had sat next to me on the bench allotted to the accused. When, after sentence had been pronounced, we were led away, both in handcuffs, he was the last of the comrades whom I saw. He was standing in the doorway of the National Law Courts at Leipzig, between two police officials, waiting for the vehicle that was to carry him off. He tried to smile, nodded in my direction, and shrugged his shoulders regretfully.

Now he was to be found in the Steglitzer Strasse in Berlin, a grey, gloomy, characterless street near the approaches to the Potsdamer Station. The office was on the fourth floor of a dirty, inconspicuous house; both stairs and windows were thick with dust. The door leading to the office was open. I felt my way along a short, unlighted corridor and suddenly found myself in a large, almost bare room. Brighter patches on the faded wallpaper showed where heavy furniture had once stood. Against the walls lay rolls of paper, large bundles of old newspapers and piles of placards. The only piece of furniture was a big table, dirty brown in colour and covered with papers. Behind this table sat Plaas.

In the old days we had called him 'Fatty.' The Kapitän had been in the habit of telling him: "One of these days you're going to burst out of your *Spanier*." A *Spanier* was a dark blue cloak with gold fastenings which officers of the Imperial Navy used to wear when the weather was mild and damp. The man who now came towards me, with a somewhat awkward smile on his pale face—a smile reminiscent of that which he had attempted the last time I had seen him—was thin, almost bony, as indeed I was myself. His blond hair had lost its former glossiness, as had mine. We both laughed a little.

"Well?" he asked. And tapping him on the arm I asked:

"Well?"

He said regretfully:

"The Chief's not here. He's gone to eat but will be back this afternoon."

"That's all right," I said. "I'm certainly pleased to see you again, you old so-and-so. Tell me this, why did we call you 'Fatty'?"

Plaas laughed again, more softly than before.

"Funny, isn't it? It didn't really suit me in there, but the younger Techow actually became fat in clink, he's as round and plump as a little porker. And it seems it's had the same effect on the elder Techow too. He's the only one of us who's still inside."

"Yes," I said, somewhat roughly. "And Kern and Fischer, how are they getting on? I imagine they're turning a bit in their graves, what?"

“Yes,” said Plaas, sadly rubbing the backs of his hands together. He went on in his North German accent: “And well they may.” Then he asked: “How was it?”

“All right,” I said. “What are you up to these days?”

Plaas gestured towards the table with its piles of paper. “You can see for yourself.” He picked up one sheet. “I’ve just finished an article on the necessity of divorcing Christianity from the State. Now I’ve got to get the Kapitän to put his name to it.”

“Well, well,” I said. “Still riding your old hobby horse?”

“It’s grown wings,” said Plaas, half laughing. “Shall we go and get something to eat? There’s a place just near here that’s not too bad.”

The “place” was on the first floor of a drab grey office building. It was a vegetarian restaurant. The tables were too close together, and the tablecloths bore the marks of past meals. The waitresses wore dirty white aprons and seemed tired and listless.

We ate, in silence and without enjoyment, a dish that seemed to be a sort of stew made of stringy plants. It smelt vaguely of straw and did not satisfy the appetite.

Plaas then ordered a dish of raw vegetables.

He ate these, too, in silence, and when he had finished said, with a laugh:

“The food here’s fit for pacifists.”

“Bloodthirsty as ever?” I asked.

“More than ever.”

“In that case if I were you I’d find another place to eat.”

“This one’s the cheapest.”

I said calmly:

“Listen, if you think I came to see you in order to be a financial burden on you you’re quite wrong.”

This remark had no effect on Plaas. He said:

“If we can help you we’ll do so. That goes without saying. The Chief said to me at once, as soon as we heard you’d been let out, that we must do everything we can for you. We’ve started something called the Nationalist Assistance Fund, a sort of equivalent to the Communists’ Red Relief—only of course not on the same scale—”

“Thank you very much, but no. I’d tell you if I really needed your help: it would be ridiculous to refuse it from affectation—but it’s all part of the system I worked out for myself when I was first inside. I’ll sort my affairs out entirely on my own. Forgive me.”

Plaas stared in front of him with a troubled expression on his face.

“You’ll find it hard. What do you know? Can you get a job?”

I said, grandly:

“No, but that doesn’t make any difference. I’ve made up my mind that within ten years I’ll have succeeded.”

Plaas looked at me critically.



"Maybe—if you join the Party."

"Which party?"

"The National-Socialists, of course."

"Of course," I said. "Are you a member?"

Plaas laughed aloud.

"Of course not."

"Why of course not?"

Plaas stared first at me and then at the countless stains on the tablecloth.

"I don't want to advise you one way or the other. You'll see for yourself. None of us has joined it. I mean none of us old putschists of the O.C. Except Killinger. The Chief expressly ordered Killinger to join so as to have contacts there. I'm sorry to say Killinger is now more one of theirs than one of ours."

Plaas laughed again rather awkwardly.

"Don't be cross with me. Of course you're quite right to want to choose your own way. But keep out of all the rubbish I'm involved in. I can't get away from it myself. I can't walk out on the Chief. Do you understand?"

"I understand. You needn't worry about me."

We left. Up in the office Kapitän Ehrhardt was reading Plaas's article on Christianity.

He was exactly as I remembered him to have been. Only his little, pointed, nautical beard had grown somewhat greyer.

He gave me a hearty greeting:

"Well, so there you are! Can't tell you how pleased I am to see you back. Plaas already discussed everything with you?"

"Yes, Herr Kapitän," I said, almost against my will assuming once again my old manner towards him. 'I must break that habit,' I thought. 'That's all over.' But I never managed to adopt a different manner with the Kapitän.

"Then everything's in order," said the Kapitän. "Now first of all you must have a good rest and get your health back. I was lucky, myself; as soon as I got out of gaol I went shooting in the Tyrol. Incidentally, I'm going out to my place in the country this evening. Like to come along? You do shoot, don't you?"

"No, Herr Kapitän."

"No? Why not?"

"If the animals could defend themselves . . ."

"Really? H'm, remarkable point of view. . . . Still, I've got some wild boars over on the far side of the potato fields . . ."

"No, thank you, Herr Kapitän."

Kapitän Ehrhardt stared at me in amazement. He exchanged a rapid glance with Plaas.

Finally the Kapitän said:

“Well, if shooting doesn’t amuse you any more, come along as a beater. Plaas often does that. He’s another comical sportsman like yourself. He’d rather watch the animals than shoot them.”

“No, thank you, Herr Kapitän,” I said.

“How about you, Plaas?”

Plaas said:

“I can’t, Herr Kapitän. There’s such a lot still to be done. There’s the article about Christianity and the State I’ve got to get off. . . .”

“Yes, right, listen, Plaas, what are you actually getting at in that article? You were a naval officer, after all, if my memory is correct. Or was it customary in the big battleships when the order to attend divine service was given for any man who just didn’t feel in the mood, to say: ‘No concern of mine!’? Hang it all, hardly a good precedent for the crew’s behaviour when the order came to clear for action.”

Plaas glanced helplessly in my direction. He said:

“Herr Kapitän, it’s so important!”

“I don’t see it,” said the Kapitän. “Here’s something more important. In the last number of the *Stahlhelm* some goat has written a violent attack on Minister-President Braun for going shooting on the Schorfheide and potting a buck on a neighbour’s land. Write in my name that I never could stand Braun, the old Socialist so-and-so, but shooting’s something else again. I’m a sportsman myself.”

“If I might make a suggestion, Herr Kapitän,” I said, “it seems to me that the Herr Kapitän’s attitude towards shooting could be very well combined with Plaas’s towards Christianity.”

“You’re becoming impertinent, Salomon,” said the Kapitän in a pleasant tone. “In a moment or two I can see I’ll have to throw you out of here.”

“I’m going now,” I said. I made my farewells and left. Plaas accompanied me as far as the street.

I said:

“Well, good-bye, Fatty. In a few years’ time there will be a car waiting for me to step into.”

Plaas laughed.

“Well . . .” he said. “Well. . . .”

“Care to bet on it? Ten bottles of cognac? I’ll have a fine big motor-car fairly glittering with chromium.”

I saw a great deal of Plaas in the years that followed, but never did he refer to our conversation of 1928. He let the ten years go by and even added one for good measure. But when, eleven years later to the day, he had occasion to telephone me, he caught me at a good moment. Laughingly he reminded me of our bet, and I agreed that I had lost. “I’ll come out to your place within the next few days,” I said into the telephone, “and we’ll celebrate your victory.”

I was working at the time on the last scene of the script for a film called *The Sensational Casilla Case*. In the icebox was the bottle of champagne that Ille and I planned to drink, as was our custom, as soon as I had dictated the words: "The End." The next instalment of my pay for this job was due. A few days earlier I had signed a contract to write another script. This one was for the film of *Congo Express*. Ille, who had gone out, returned just as I was dictating the words: "The End." We drank the champagne. I felt easy and comfortable and washed clean, as it were, by work. There was still plenty more ahead, and hard work, too, but the skeleton of the film was there and could not be altered much now. There was a ring at the door and Ille opened it. It was a messenger from UFA, bringing me my advance on *Congo Express*. I stuffed the big bundle of notes into my pocket and said:

"Now we'll go and have a damned good dinner!"

We drank a couple of glasses of schnaps and set off. We walked past the Renault display window, and because we were held up at a red light we looked at the motor-cars in the shop. Right in the front stood a large, shiny, black machine with red leather upholstery.

"Look," said Ille. "Fairly glittering with chromium."

I said calmly:

"Would you like to have it? I'll give it to you."

Ille stared at me dumbfounded, but I took her by the elbow and propelled her into the shop.

We were silly and excited and rather drunk. I told the salesman, who kept smiling indulgently, to wrap the thing up in paper as I wanted to take it with me. With the customary insistence of drunks I kept on repeating this joke long after it had lost its original faint element of humour. Ille spoke to the car in French, addressing it as 'Monsieur.' It was all exactly the way I had once dreamed that it would be.

I slapped down my bundle of notes and let the salesman count out the correct amount. I signed the receipt and Ille hiccuped once more, loudly, and we walked out. The rest of my money we drank with our dinner.

In the interests of domestic peace I had promised Ille that I would not learn to drive if she could manage to pass her test after not more than ten lessons. While I polished the script she was to be taught by a professional driving school.

In order to get a learner's licence she had to fill up a form at the police station in the Grolmann Strasse. She was always very nervous of all such places, but I could not go with her.

"See the nice policeman with the Baltic Cross," I said.

I had once had to deal with this police station and I had noticed a police sergeant wearing the Baltic Cross on his lapel. I had spoken to him, and it transpired that he had served with a *Freikorps* in the Baltic States which had held the next sector in front of Riga to that occupied

by the *Freikorps* in which I had been. Ille went. When she came back her eyes were red and she began at once to busy herself in the kitchen—which was quite unlike her. When my secretary had left, I asked Ille if something had gone wrong.

Ille said:

“It was abominable.”

“Tell me all about it,” I said quickly.

“I can’t stand it. Is there really no possibility of our getting out of this country?”

“Tell me what happened.”

Ille twisted her handkerchief between her fingers. Her eyes were swollen.

“It was nothing. Nothing at all. It’s no concern of ours. Is it?”

“Did you see the one with the Baltic Cross?”

Ille nodded.

“He was very nice. He was particularly nice to me and filled in my forms himself. ‘You’re certainly an Aryan,’ he said and laughed. ‘I don’t need to ask you that.’ I signed and there was a small fee to pay. I only had a fifty-mark note and he had no change. None of the other officials had any change either. I said I’d run across to the tobacconist on the other side of the street. Then a man who’d been standing all this time against the wall said, in a friendly voice: ‘I can easily change it for you.’ He had a good face, you know, a—spiritual face, and I thought: ‘That man’s got a fine head.’ I said: ‘That’s very good of you. Thank you very much.’ Then suddenly the sergeant, the one with the Baltic Cross, shouted: ‘What do you think you’re doing, you filthy yid?’ and he turned to me and added: ‘The man’s a Jew.’ I swallowed and said: ‘But it’s very nice of him to offer to change my note.’ Then the sergeant said: ‘You don’t want to accept any favours from the yids, do you?’ And he shouted at the man: ‘Get back in your corner!’ I said: ‘I’d best run over to the tobacconist.’ The man had gone back to his place by the wall. He was holding his wallet in his hand and was smiling. He was smiling!” Ille shouted. Then she went on: “He said, quite softly, ‘If you like I’ll willingly change it for you all the same.’ And I—yes, I just slapped down the fifty-mark note on the policeman’s table and screamed: ‘There—pour the change down your throat or give it to the Winter Relief.’ The Jew had gone quite pale. All I could say to him was: ‘Thank you,’ and I seized the form and ran out. All the way home I’ve been crying and praying that he understood why I only said: ‘Thank you.’”

“He understood,” I said.

“I don’t want to learn how to drive.”

I said:

“Now listen: you promised me that you’d do whatever I told you.”

“But I’m almost at the end of my tether.”

"You're not. Do you understand? I've made an appointment for you with the driving instructor. He's called Kirchhof [Graveyard]. Isn't that a fine omen? Well? Now smile, smile as the man at the police station smiled."

Ille contorted her features, but it was no smile. After a while she said: "I'm curious to know . . ."

"What?"

"Whether they'll drink the money or give it to the Winter Relief."

"Drink it," I said. "Of course they'll drink it."

Plaas lived in a small house at Finkenkrug, outside Berlin. When Ille had passed her test we drove out there. We threaded our way through the confused city traffic, Ille driving carefully and slowly—the car was not yet run in—and I sitting silent and happy on the red leather seat beside her. From time to time Ille would speak to the car in French. The engine purred contentedly. I day-dreamed, the sun shone, my work was going well. There seemed no reason for anything to finish or even to change. The car stopped with a small, agreeable jolt. We were there.

Ille blew the horn, Plaas came out of his house, and Ille waved to him. He walked through his little front garden while Ille was getting out of the car. Plaas came up, and I said:

"Well?"

Plaas smiled.

"Fairly glittering with chromium," he said.

"That's right," I said. "You've lost the bet after all."

Ille went indoors to see Sonya and the children.

I was still sitting in the car. Plaas walked all round and was impressed.

I said, proudly:

"I did it."

Plaas looked at me now. He said:

"Yes, you did it. *Pourvu que cela dure*, as Napoleon's mother used to say."

"What do you mean?" I asked, getting out of the car.

"Come on in."

To the walls of Plaas's room were affixed the antlers of some rather inferior stags. We sat down.

"Yes," said Plaas, "you did it, and I'm glad for your sake."

"Good old Plaas!"

He grinned weakly.

"The next thing is children and an estate in the country."

"Yes," I said, "and look how splendidly fat I've become, really plump, like a porter. Oh, how I eat! What else were you going to say?"

He shook his head.

I said:

"I'm pleased it happened this way, decently and properly. And I'll

go on this way too. What can a man wish to be save Kaiser, Pope or Lifeguardsman?"

"Tank gunner," said Plaas.

There was silence, deadly silence. Ille was doubtless with Sonya and the children upstairs.

"Poland?" I asked.

"I don't know."

"You don't know? What do you actually do in your office all day?"

"I stick pins into maps."

I knew now that I'd get nothing out of him. He held an official position in some special air research institute. I told Plaas about Ille's experience at the police station.

He looked at me calmly and said:

"You're surprised? Everything that's happening now to the Jews will happen one day to us. It'll be the same people, incidentally, who'll do it. It's starting in a small way, but it will finish on a gigantic scale. They're not allowed to have a servant girl any more. Have you got one? There's your car outside. Enjoy it while you can. They're not allowed to choose the work they'll do. Are you?"

"Yes," I said. "I still am."

"I'm not," he said. "A man who breaks windows and sets fire to churches and insults whole groups of human beings gets a taste for that sort of thing and keeps on doing it."

I said:

"They'll be eliminated, rubbed out."

Plaas said:

"We'll be eliminated, rubbed out. What do you want from me? Pity? Nobody's going to feel any pity for us. Ernst Jünger always says: 'There is an immanent justice.' That is the only divinity in which I too believe. It has absolutely nothing to do with pity."

"You and your apocalypse," I said. "But please keep off it when Ille's about. She couldn't stand it."

"Where is Ille?" Plaas asked. He got up, went to the foot of the stairs, and shouted: "Ille!"

I heard Ille's voice answering:

"Don't go telling the children any more of those stories of yours," shouted Plaas. "They make them over-excited."

Ille said something and laughed. She came down at once, and I had to go upstairs to see the children, Sontje and Gerd. I walked down again with Sonya and for a while we sat together.

"Look here," said Ille, "you've got a tremendous number of uniforms upstairs."

"Three," said Plaas. "My SS uniform, my Air Force uniform and my official's uniform. When it comes to the show-down I'll have to get myself shot three times over."

"Will there be a show-down?"

"There will," said Plaas. "And I'll get myself shot."

"How can you talk that way?" said Sonya heavily.

"I don't like it," said Ille. "We can complain, Ernst and I, because we're not part of it. But you are. You've no right to complain."

"Let it pass," I said to Ille.

"As a matter of fact I'm not complaining," said Plaas.

"All right, children," I said. "Quarrel over."

Sonya fetched wine and brandy and we drank. Plaas relaxed a little and said to me:

"I'm glad you've got your chromium job. I want to go to see Pauly in Silesia. He's invited me to a shoot. You can drive us out there."

"But I haven't been asked."

"Doesn't matter. Pauly will be delighted to see you. I'll tell him you're coming. All right?"

"If we can manage to spare the time."

"Good," said Plaas. "I'll telephone you."

On the way home Ille said:

"I'm not all that crazy about Plaas."

I said:

"He's a thoroughly decent sort."

"What does he actually do?"

"He won't say, not even to me. And I think that's very decent of him, too. He trusts me but he doesn't want to burden me with his secrets."

"On his Air Force uniform he has a little decoration. Sonya told me it was for the Sudetenland. What's it all about? He was here the entire time."

"I think he works for Canaris."

"Who's he?"

"Admiral Canaris, chief of intelligence, espionage and counter-espionage."

Ille frowned.

"I don't like any part of it."

"Nor do I. It's a damnable business and it's bad for a man's character. But what I feel is that it's better Plaas should do it than some anonymous bastard. Canaris is an interesting chap. He was a lieutenant in the light cruiser *Dresden*. After the Battle of the Falkland Islands he was interned on the Chilean island of Quiriquina. He escaped and sailed across the Atlantic in a sailing-boat, arriving just in time for Jutland. After the revolution he was Noske's naval adjutant. He was also one of Ehrhardt's people."

"That makes up for a lot in your opinion, doesn't it?"

"For almost everything. He knows the whole wide world. In his office they call him 'The Levantine'. He doesn't look like a particularly

Aryan-Grecian-Nordic type, though he's certainly of Greek origin. He's a fine chap, the best we've got. I'd like to make a film of his life."

Ille laughed.

"Do it, then," she said. "I'd rather you did that than what Plaas does."

"I don't know what Plaas does. I'm just guessing. Incidentally, what did he mean about your telling the children stories and getting them over-excited?"

Ille whooped with joy.

"Sonya told me the children are being brought up as strict heathens. You know, without any sort of religious instructions and just the sagas and all that stuff about gods and heroes and the rest. At Christmas, when Plaas and Sonya were away and I was looking after the children, I told them the story of the Nativity. They thought it was terrific. They'd never heard it before. It absolutely thrilled them. Plaas must have found out about it."

"And what story did you tell them today?"

"I didn't. They told me one: the story of the Nativity."

We telephoned one another and fixed a date for our drive to Silesia. When we picked up Sonya in Finkenkrug she told us that Plaas had called and had said we were not to meet him at his office but at a street-corner. We parked the car there, and almost at once Plaas appeared. He hurried towards us, jumped into the car, and said:

"Quick, let's go before anybody sees me."

Ille drove off at once.

"What's up?" I asked.

"I haven't got leave. All leave's been cancelled, because tomorrow's a collection day for the Winter Relief and we're supposed to take part."

I said, with satisfaction:

"Do you remember Massow von Prince? When he arrived from Africa in 'thirty-three he was enormously enthusiastic about the victory of the National-Socialists, like almost all Germans who lived abroad. He had come on purpose all the way from his African veldt in order to live through that experience. After six weeks he decided that he was crazy and the world topsy-turvy. Once I was walking along with him when he saw a man standing at a street-corner busily rattling a collection box. Massow was extremely irritated. 'Just look at that,' he said: 'quite a decent-looking man, wearing the ribbon of the Iron Cross first class on his coat!' And Massow went up to the man and said, in a loud voice: 'You were an officer, I presume?' The man replied at once: 'Of course,' and held out his collection box to Massow. Massow said: 'And you're not ashamed to stand here at a street corner and beg?' I was deeply shocked: I expected the very houses to collapse. But the man just bowed slightly and said: 'What else can I do? I work for the Government.'"

We laughed.

I said:



"Don't drive so fast, Ille. There was a regulation published yesterday that it's against the law to drive at more than forty-five outside the city."

"What does it matter?" said Ille. "They're all driving fast."

But Ille had to slow down. There was a solid line of cars ahead of us. Then she saw a gap far ahead. Ille stepped on the gas in order to show what Monsieur could do. We passed a large number of cars, but suddenly Ille pulled in behind the leading one.

"What's up?" I asked.

Ille replied laconically:

"Patrol car."

Plaas said:

"They're driving at exactly forty-five. Anybody who passes them gets a ticket."

We drove behind the police car, our speedometer registering a steady forty-five m.p.h. The cars behind us kept blowing their horns furiously. We had our work cut out explaining by pantomime to the cars that wanted to pass that they must not. After a while the whole column understood and drove at a careful, steady forty-five.

There was the wailing of a police siren. We glanced back. A big, silver-grey two-seater was rapidly overhauling the column. At the wheel, a long, silver-grey scarf streaming out behind, sat an exceptionally beautiful, blond girl. Beside her was seated a fat man with white hair who held his silver-grey, broad-brimmed hat to his head with a hand encased in a yellow glove. We signalled to them forcefully not to pass, but their siren continued to wail. The policeman in the car ahead turned to look, and the silver-grey car shot past. One of the policemen rose in his seat and gestured, ordering the car to pull in and stop. Then the fat man took off his hat, waved his gloved hand and pointed to his face.

"That's Ley!" cried Plaas.

For a moment the policeman obviously did not know what to do. Then he shrugged his shoulders and repeated his energetic and unambiguous gesture. He plainly felt that even Ley must do what the police told him.

Ley waved back in a disgusted sort of way and replaced his hat. The siren wailed and the car shot forward and away.

In the patrol car we could see the policemen putting their heads together.

"Well," said I, "that's a hard nut for the official mind to crack."

Suddenly the police car pulled in sharply to the right and decreased its speed. One of the policemen stood up and waved us on with his truncheon. The road was clear.

Ille blew the horn as though she were crazy. All along the line of cars other horns immediately replied. Ille cried: "*En avant, Monsieur!*" and

stepped on the accelerator so hard that the Renault seemed to jump forward. The road ahead lay deserted. "Now we'll catch Ley!" cried Ille, but the silver-grey car had already disappeared.

I said:

"My sister-in-law Hilde, the wife of my brother Horst, was had up before a special tribunal in 1934. As a girl she'd attended a school at Wickersdorf. It was the custom of the girls who'd been at this school to meet for dinner occasionally; they called it a 'Fledglings' Evening.' At one of these Fledglings' Evenings Hilde had occasion to make a not very witty joke to the effect that Ley had lost a 'v' from his name. Another girl present, a dear little egg from the same nest, happened to be engaged to one of Ley's adjutants, and she told him about Hilde's witticism. The summons was grotesque. All the rubbish of the whole Fledglings' Evening had been written down—how Hilde had been wearing a hat that cost forty marks—you can imagine what it was like. I went with Hilde to the court. The atmosphere was damnably oppressive, far worse than I had guessed it would be. The prosecutor said: 'You meant to imply that State Secretary Dr. Ley's real name is Levy?' Hilde said: 'Yes.' The prosecutor said: 'So you admit to having perpetrated a severe slander?' Hilde said: 'No.' The president of the court said: 'Now listen: you were trying to make people believe that State Secretary Dr. Ley is really a Jew.' Hilde said: 'My name is Salomon and I'm not Jewish.' She was acquitted. When this was announced she curtsied, snatched her old beret from her head, threw it in the air, and sang out: 'My forty-mark hat!'"

We laughed.

Plaas said:

"All the same, you've got a funny name."

I said:

"When Kern sent me to Hamburg, back in 1922, to find a chauffeur—because the naval officers could all drive torpedo boats but not cars—I went to Warncke. He couldn't drive either, but he took me to a bar where his people were in the habit of going. There were a lot of young men there, almost all ex-sailors, and while Warncke was finding a chauffeur I had a good look at them. I recognised one who'd been at Cadet School with me, a chap called Winzer. We used to call him UXB, because we never knew when he was going to blow up. I couldn't help going up behind him, slapping him on the shoulder and saying: 'Well, UXB?' He spun round and bellowed: 'Good Lord! *Salomon!*' This shook me, because of course I was travelling under a false name. 'Quiet!' I said: 'I'm called Schievelbein these days.' He understood at once and we sat down together and had a talk. Later, when the police had traced my movements as far as Hamburg, they interrogated all the young men who'd been in the bar, including Winzer. They got nothing out of any of them. Their questions kept

revolving about a young man who'd come from Berlin. One of the ex-sailors, who wanted to have a bit of fun with the police, and who in fact knew nothing, laughed when they questioned him. "The young man from Berlin? He certainly had nothing to do with the Rathenau murder. He was a Jew!" The police followed this up at once: how did he know the young man was a Jew? Winzer had called him Salomon. Winzer was then asked what the name was of the young man who'd come from Berlin. Winzer was absolutely unable to remember his name; he was somebody he'd known very slightly, years before, at Cadet School, and there'd been so many cadets. The police found out very easily that Winzer had been at the Karlsruhe Cadet School. They made enquiries whether there had ever been a cadet there called Salomon. And that was that. They had me."

We laughed.

I said:

"Ille, don't drive so fast! On the first day of the 'Vehme' trial, in 1927, in Giessen, when I was summoned from my cell to appear in court I hadn't finished my breakfast. I was about to leave my piece of bread when it occurred to me that I'd have to sit through the whole, interminable business; so I took the bread with me. When I walked into the courtroom in my brown convict's suit I was nonchalantly chewing my crust. I suddenly realised that by so doing I had made what actors call a good entrance.

"The courtroom was packed; this was the first of the series of so-called post-war 'Vehme' trials and as such was pretty sensational. But that wasn't all. As I say, it took place at Giessen, which is no great distance from Frankfurt-am-Main, where my father had been well known in his time. I was the first person to be examined and therefore had to stand with my back to the public. During the whole of my examination I could hear noises behind me, people coming and going, and the president threatened more than once to clear the court if these disturbances did not stop. All this din worried me considerably, and I had a hard time concentrating. As soon as I'd entered the room I'd noticed that most of the spectators were women—as is always the case at sensational trials—and this didn't improve my temper either. At noon my examination was not yet over, but the president ordered it adjourned for the midday break. He said that I was not to be taken back to prison. I was to rest in one of the temporary cells of the law-courts building where I would be given my luncheon. These cells were simply rooms with wire mesh over the windows: the mesh was removed when the rooms were not being used as cells. The police sergeant who accompanied me led me through the middle of the gaping crowd and threw open the door of the first cell.

"I walked in and was amazed. Now I realised why there had been so much coming and going in the court during my examination. My

crust of dry bread had worked a miracle. The table in the cell was piled high: cakes, fruit, pies, chocolate, sandwiches, flowers, there was scarcely room for anything more on the table. 'This is a splendid prison,' I thought, and I went over to the table. Then I saw that on each plate there lay a visiting card. I read the names: Frau Dr. Frankfurter, Frau Lilly Oppenheim, Frau Ruth Beyfuss. The only explanation I could think of was that the whole of Frankfurt's Jewish society had reached the same conclusion: 'Perhaps he's one of our people after all . . . perhaps, who knows?' I was very moved and experienced a strong inclination to admire them: 'What loyalty! What a people!'

We laughed.

Plaas said:

"I'm like you. When I try to remember events of long ago it's always the comic incidents that come to mind first."

"Yes," said I, "that seems to be a fundamental human characteristic. You know when the *Stahlhelm* was first founded, in the old days when it was simply called 'The League of Front-line Soldiers,' it was intended to be a sort of club for discussing 'war experiences,' neither more nor less. We went once. There was tremendous enthusiasm, and we all marched around the hall till the walls threatened to burst and we drank gallons of beer. One man would slap another on the shoulder and say: 'You remember Chemin des Dames? Boy, what a shit-house of a place that was!' And that was 'war experiences.' No, don't interrupt me, I know what you're going to say—that I'm being unfair. True enough, but what in fact did it produce? A couple of publications—not the official one—which made an effort. I mean *Arminius* and the *Standarte*, in which Ernst Jünger and Franz Schauwecker wrote, and one or two others; and Hans Zehrer's *Tat*, in which he tried to account for sociological changes by war experiences. And for the rest—marching and flags and brass bands and of course firework displays. War experience! It was a good-fellowship movement and as such more important in its proceedings than in its results, so far as these were supposed to be a sublimation. Ernst Jünger thought that with his books he could pull the teeth of war out of the heads of the bourgeoisie. Well, the teeth held fast, the sublimation remained so much paper, the proceedings a private matter, and the results are with us today. The comic incidents of those days—that's our war experience."

Plaas looked at me attentively.

"Ille, will you please stop driving like a lunatic!"

"I'll drive the way I like," shouted Ille.

I leaned forward and said softly:

"Ille!"

Ille slowed down. After a while she said:

"Plaas?"

"Yes?"

“Is that true?”

Plaas looked at me. He said to Ille: “It’s partially true, like everything else.” And then to me:

“And now?”

“Now,” I said, “now the comic incidents are the truth.”

“Pretty,” said Ille, “very, very pretty. And Rathenau had to die.”

After a while Plaas said, laboriously:

“You shouldn’t see things that way, Ille.”

Ille said softly:

“I know. Forgive me.”

Plaas said:

“I think there are two things which it’s important not to confuse. First of all there was the plan, the concept that inspired the deed—and then there were the personal motives that induced the individuals to take part in it. The plan itself, how did that arise? Actually there was only one political common denominator that held the whole ‘national movement’ together at that time, and it was a negative one: it amounted to this: ‘We must make an end to *Erfüllungspolitik*, to the policy of accepting the Versailles Treaty and co-operating with the West.’ That was the one point on which all the groups and sub-groups were agreed, though they might and did argue about everything else. We had no wish to become a political party with mass support and all that that implies. We did not wish to use the devil to drive out Beelzebub. But we did, from the very beginning, desire basic change, a ‘national revolution’ that would free us from the material and ideological supremacy of the West as the French revolution had freed France from its monarchy. So our means had to be different from those of the political parties. I think it was Kern himself—it agreed with his logical temperament—who finally said, during a heated argument, that in that case the only course open was to ‘eliminate’ every *Erfüllungs* politician. To eliminate in that context is, of course, to kill. What other means were there at our disposal? None of those who were repelled by Kern’s conclusions could think of any. And once a group was in existence, a very small group, which was so far in agreement, the rest followed more or less automatically, as it were. The atmosphere in which we proposed to carry out a series of assassinations was not unlike that in which the Russian Revolutionary Socialists planned theirs—except for the great difference that their deeds were based on belief in a well thought out political and economic doctrine whereas ours were the product of an emotion. Well, the theories of the Revolutionary Socialists have been only very partially fulfilled. There, as here, subsequent developments were almost automatic. There, as here, ‘lists’ were drawn up. And on one of our lists, among many others, was Rathenau’s name.”

“That list!” I said. “It was, in fact, a single dirty sheet of paper with names scribbled all over it in pencil, some crossed out, some written in

again. Many of the names meant absolutely nothing to me, and I had to take quite a lot of trouble to find out who the people were. Incidentally, Theodor Wolff was on the list. I remember thinking that there were a lot of Jewish names. One name, Wassermann, I crossed out myself because I thought it meant Jacob Wassermann, the writer: in fact it was Oskar Wassermann, the banker, a man of whom I knew nothing. The whole thing was drawn up in a fantastically casual way. I didn't set eyes on it until very much later on, in Berlin, when we were in the midst of our preparations for assassinating Rathenau. Kern had left it lying on the table in the boarding-house on the Schiffbauerdamm, which was where we were staying at the time. It was pure chance that I took part in the murder of Rathenau; it happened quite 'automatically', because I had become so attached to Kern. Later, when I had written my book about it all, *The Outlaws*, and was correcting the proofs, I noticed that the whole book contained not one single word of anti-semitism. In fact Rathenau was the only Jew whom we murdered."

"But we were anti-semitic," said Plaas.

I said:

"Indeed we were. The whole nationalist movement was anti-semitic to a greater or lesser degree. I was very impressed by Rathenau's attitude towards the Jewish question. He wrote about it himself. He spoke of hordes of Asiatic nomads on the soil of Brandenburg. He defined his attitude thus: the Jews, for him, were a German race like the other German races. I think he said that he felt less close to them than to Brandenburgers or Schleswig-Holsteiners, but closer to them than to Saxons or Bavarians. Well, it sounded to me like an intelligent and enlightened attitude, but then my feelings for or against people have never been based on biology. When my book appeared I was very eager to see what Ernst Jünger would have to say about it. He said nothing. I was shameless enough to ask him. He replied, in his drawling, Lower Saxon accent: 'Why didn't you have enough courage just to say that Rathenau was killed because he was a Jew?' I received letters, some even from Palestine, containing the same question. In each case I answered: 'Because it was not so.'"

I said:

"After it was done I drove to Munich to organise help for Kern and Fischer, who were on the run. Of course I went to see the Kapitän. He was in the most appalling rage. He wanted to know who had had the idea of carrying out this assassination. When I told him about the list he wished, above all, to have 'that crazy list.' He said: 'You've wrecked my entire policy.'"

We fell silent.

I said:

"But looking back it all seems quite uncanny. A group of youths,

children, almost . . . I was nineteen at the time. . . . How old were you, Plaas?"

"Twenty-one."

"Yes. And Kern was twenty-four. All young people from good families—the term 'good families' still meant something in those days—and there they sat and discussed murder in cold blood, not just one murder, a whole series of murders. It's sinister and uncanny."

Plaas laughed silently.

I said:

"Erwin Kern! He was the only one of us all who was quite clear about it, who really knew what he was doing. That's what gave him such complete leadership and authority over the rest of us. Do you remember how we fell on Rathenau's writings? Do you remember how we argued about his theory of 'Men of Courage and Men of Fear'? The more we discussed it, the more taken we were with it. Finally Kern said: 'Forget it, it only weakens us.'"

Plaas said:

"Rathenau was a fascist."

"Now, really!"

"Yes, really. Read his books again. I'm not referring to his proposal for a *Levée en masse* at the end of the war, nor even to his economic and political ideas. I mean precisely his theory about courage and fear. Starting from psychology he goes on to produce what is exactly the new contemporary morality. He distinguishes, it's true, between 'good' and 'evil'—but the next step is completely modern. The next step is the new American theory of 'men who develop' as opposed to 'men who adapt'; from the standpoint of people who believe in progress the first is regarded as good, the second as bad. On the other hand, from the standpoint of those concerned with order based upon the state, the next step is the phrase: 'Right is that which is of use to the people.' That is a straight line drawn through the attempt to establish a new morality; and it's a fascist morality, if not a bolshevist one."

I said:

"The fact is that Rathenau was regarded with considerable scepticism within his own camp—if you can speak of a 'camp' in his connection. When I was set free, in 1928, I went to Kiel after I saw you in Berlin, Plaas. Professor Walter Schücking at that time taught international law at Kiel University; for this reason he had been attached to the delegation that went to Versailles. Somehow or other he had heard that I was in Kiel and he found out my address. He wrote me a note, an invitation to come and see him. I went. He received me in his magnificent library. He was standing in front of his books, a colossus with a gigantic head on a powerful, heavy body. He had splendid eyes. He greeted me in a most friendly fashion. I was distrustful to start with because I couldn't see what he wanted from me. He said he had heard

of my case and he regarded it as his duty to do all he could to help me; he said he would do the same for any man who found himself in a situation such as mine. I felt it only decent to tell him at once what my attitude towards Rathenau was. There were only two ways open for me to free myself from my involvement with that man and with his fate, one humanitarian, the other cynical. I had decided on the latter since nobody would accept the other as coming from me. He surprised me, then, by saying that he had never been a friend of Rathenau's. He was a convinced pacifist and Rathenau exactly the opposite. He went on to tell me, without any shade of bitterness I may say, what had caused the breach between Rathenau and himself: first, of course, his appeal for a *Levée en masse*: but also his behaviour as creator of the Raw Materials Department at the War Ministry: above all his standpoint on the question of drafting Belgians to work in the German armaments industry during the war: further, his ambiguous attitude, after the war, towards all problems connected with a sensible social policy: and finally his refusal to contribute a single penny to the work of the pacifist organisations.

"A grotesque state of affairs arose in which I found myself compelled to defend Rathenau against Schücking. We spoke of Rapallo, and Schücking was horrified by the possibilities of Bolshevism to which Rathenau wished to open the door during the Genoa conference and by means of the Rapallo Treaty. I told him that at the time it was precisely the good faith of his Russian policy that we doubted; we thought, on the contrary, that the agreement was intended to shock the Western Allies into a frame of mind that would make them accept Rathenau's proposals for political collaboration—and I still think that that was really the case. I wondered whether or not I should tell Professor Schücking that he too had been on our list, but after a certain amount of shilly-shallying had been struck off it again. I was crude enough at that time to do so, too. Then he said something which startled me. He said: 'In that case it would have been better if I had been shot instead of Rathenau.' Our conversation ended with an offer on his part of a job as a librarian. He had heard that I had not yet decided what career to adopt and I had expressed my admiration for his priceless collection of books. My immediate impulse was to accept, but after a moment's thought I refused. After being in gaol for so many years I wanted to return to 'life,' not books. I have often wondered whether I would not have done better to accept his offer."

I said:

"We were a collection of idiots. We went into the court like small boys, swallowing nervously. Then, when we realised the incredibly factual objectivity of all the legal business and when we were allowed to talk ourselves we became loud-mouthed and arrogant. The trial was inhuman in so far as only facts, things done, were touched on. But then



there came the moment when the nurse took the stand, the nurse who had jumped into the car where Rathenau lay as soon as the shots were fired. That nurse, a small, pale woman, no longer young, had just happened to be nearby at the time. She had not so much as glanced at the car with the murderers, and she was therefore quite useless to the prosecution. She had simply realised that here was a man in need of help. She spoke in a soft, emotionless voice. And all she said was: 'The dying man was no longer capable of speech—he only looked at me once.'"

After a while I went on:

"And then there was the letter from Rathenau's mother. Techow's uncle, his mother's brother, was the architect, Peter Behrens, the man who built the A.E.G. halls, I think, and the administration building at the Lehrter Station. Behrens, of course, knew Rathenau well and his sister too. During the course of the trial the president, Hagens, read out a letter that Rathenau's mother had written to Techow's mother. It started: 'Most unfortunate of mothers . . .' and went on to the effect '. . . if your son had known my son he would rather have aimed his gun at himself than at the noblest of sons . . .' and proceeded to console her with the words: 'May your son confess to his earthly judge and repent before the Divine One. . . .' Which was why Hagens read it out. This humane and noble letter from Rathenau's mother was our crowning shame."

"Yes," said Plaas, "Techow was sitting in front of me. I leaned forward a little and asked: 'Techow, what's all this letter business?' He turned his head slightly and said: 'It's quite right—only it happens to have been published in the *Vossische Zeitung* before my mother received it.' When the court adjourned for lunch and we were taken up to the cell under the roof of the Law Courts building I urged Techow to say that in court. But he thought the police had probably intercepted the letter and given it to the Press. Evidently the letter had been misused politically; and I told Techow that if so it was another trump that he could play in his defence. But Techow just laughed and said: 'Really! We wander around murdering people. Are we to pretend to be shocked by a couple of irregularities on the part of the police in their fight against us?' Of course he was quite right."

I said:

"And then there was *Landgerichtsdirektor* Cramer, the president of the court at the 'Vehme' trial in Giessen."

"The Giessen trial!" said Plaas. "What a lot of trials there were, each one breeding the next. It really was like the curse of evil, the promise that evil must produce more evil. The original evil was the *Baralong* case. Because the first English Q-ship, the *Baralong*, had sunk a German U-boat, Captain Patzig of *U-27* was convinced that the English hospital ship *Llandoverly Castle* was another Q-ship and torpedoed it. As

a result the English put him on their list of war criminals, but as he was later missing presumed killed in action it was his two officers of the watch, Boldt and Ditmar, who were tried by a German court and found guilty. We rescued them by force from prison. The driver of our car, Wagner, then attempted to blackmail us, and since he was threatening to wreck all our plans of assassination it was decided that he'd have to die."

I said:

"It was a nasty blow for me when it all came out, five years later. There were many unexplained stories hanging over my head during my time in gaol, but that was the one which had worried me most. I assumed that Wagner was still alive—at least I knew that he'd been alive when I last saw him—and I couldn't understand why nothing had happened. My prison governor at Striegau, fat, old Dronsch, had arranged off his own bat for me to get remission of sentence. If the prisoner behaved well during his term of imprisonment he could be released after serving only three-quarters of his time. Now I had certainly not behaved well. Dronsch once told me I was the most stubborn and unco-operative convict he'd come across in twenty-five years of prison duty. But since I refused to apply for a remission of sentence he did it on my behalf. So there I sat, at the beginning of 1927, expecting to be let out any day. And then this blew up! The next thing I knew I had to face trial for the attempted murder of Wagner.

"I was taken to the prison at Butzbach and immediately cross-questioned for fourteen hours by *Landsgerichtsdirektor* Keller; he really put the heat on me. Having been absolutely cut off for years, I had naturally no idea what might already have been said and known. In the end it seemed to me safer to dictate a statement myself. It was only a couple of pages, but I didn't wish anything to be put in the evidence that I had not said myself in my own words. Keller almost danced for joy, because what I dictated was a complete and thorough confession. Then I was moved to Giessen, to the prison there.

"My time in Giessen passed pleasantly enough, except for the fact that I was worried about my defence. I had written to Dr. Luetgebrune at once, asking him to handle my case, and he had telegraphed me immediately saying that he would. But time was getting short and I hadn't heard anything more from him. Meanwhile mountains of evidence were being piled up: the case against me assumed the proportions of a small book: one hundred and twenty witnesses had been subpoenaed. And no sign of Luetgebrune. It was the last day before the main trial was due to open, and still he did not come—I spent the whole day pacing my cell in complete despair. I was already in bed when I heard footsteps in the corridor: the door of my cell was thrown open, and there stood Luetgebrune.

"He was very amused by my agitation; when I described the moun-

tains of evidence that had been amassed he brushed it all aside, with a wave of his hand. 'I'm relying,' he said, 'on your memory. Is it still as good as it used to be five years ago?' I didn't know, but I hoped so. He said: 'Now tell me exactly what you said in your statement.' When I had finished he said: 'There are seven cardinal points.' Then, without having made a single note, he began to enumerate those points one by one, telling me what questions the president of the court would put to me in connection with each and asking me what I intended to reply. I told him, and he corrected my replies with great care. When we had gone through the seven points he got up and announced that he proposed to make my statement the basis of the whole trial. He wished me a good night and left. He had been with me no more than half an hour.

"The next day I was the first person to be examined, and it all went superbly. Whenever I reached one of the seven cardinal points Cramer would interrupt and ask exactly the question for which Luetgebrune had prepared me. I had, in fact, the best barrister in Germany behind me. The trial went smoothly and quickly. Cramer was completely in control and steered it well, always extracting what was purely factual and relevant from the hundreds of mutually contradictory witnesses. That wasn't easy, either, because in political trials the evidence of witnesses is almost invariably misleading, being dictated by passion or sympathy or antipathy. Luetgebrune's favourite drink—it was mine too—was champagne and stout (or pilsen) mixed. He once told me that whenever he discovered a witness committing perjury his throat would go dry and he would automatically raise one hand to his moustache as though to wipe away imaginary foam. The Giessen trial was Luetgebrune's jubilee; it was the fiftieth political trial at which he had been defence counsel. And as one witness after another stepped into the box Luetgebrune wiped his moustache well-nigh incessantly."

Plaas laughed:

"I can't remember whether I committed perjury when giving my evidence, but I do know that I'd have done so without a moment's trepidation in order to get you off."

I said:

"Thanks very much! Let's hope you never have another opportunity. But at that time it was a real shock to me when you all trooped in, all my former comrades in your best dark suits with stiff white collars, and I, sitting in the dock, in my brown convict's uniform."

"Cramer," said Plaas, "was extremely nasty to me."

"Quite rightly so," said I. "Ille, Plaas thought to do me a good turn by preaching a sort of sermon all about what a splendid fellow I was, utterly harmless and interested solely in artistic matters. I thought he made me appear a complete cretin. What did you actually have in mind when you announced that all I'd ever really cared about was Rainer Maria Rilke and Stefan George?"

Plaas laughed:

“All the time I was giving my evidence Cramer kept banging with his knuckles on the table and saying: ‘Get down to facts! Answer my questions! Did you or did you not see bloodstains on the coat which the accused gave you to take to the cleaners?’ Then I’d begin again about Stefan George. It was true enough what I said. You were always quoting him.”

I said:

“The public prosecutor, an old man with snow-white hair called Weidemann, suffered badly from ill-fitting false teeth. He also had a strong Hessian accent. When, in his final speech, he came to Plaas’s evidence, he said, whistling and spluttering: ‘I didn’t know who thish Shephan Sheorshe ashually wash. Sho I shent for his booksh. And I must shay that thish Shephan Sheorshe ish nushing more nor lesh than a lunatic!’ Nobody took him seriously. But they should have. He knew what he was doing. He let the defence run its course—and then he produced as witness Wagner, Wagner himself, the victim.

“Wagner had been in hiding. He had not even come forward when the trial began. They had had to hunt for him, and finally the police had arrested him. And now there he stood, a pillar of strength for the prosecution, for he was indeed my crime personified. My defence was naturally based on paragraph 46 of the Penal Code, on the fact that I had abandoned my intention to kill Wagner. There could be no argument about that, and I had admitted it to Keller in so many words.

“The fact that Wagner was not killed was, according to Kern, simply a mistake, Kern had been afraid that the report of a gun fired at night in the Kurpark at Bad Nauheim must attract attention. He had therefore told me not to use the revolver which I carried in my pocket; he himself had with him a sort of cosh, a steel rod with a leaden end. But Wagner possessed a similar weapon and a frightful, revolting struggle took place during which Wagner fell into the lake. There was nobody to be seen in any direction. Only at the far end of the lake was there a solitary light. When Wagner began to crawl up out of the water Kern told me to shoot him. But I couldn’t. I stood there, my pistol in my hand, and Wagner saved his life by weeping and beseeching and promising to do anything we wanted. I just stood there and I couldn’t shoot. I had been prepared for anything, yet at this moment everything within me revolted. I had simply not reached the stage I was to reach two months later when, driven by precisely this emotion of refusal, I leaped a fence, a barrier inside my own being. I shouted at Wagner; it was something atrociously moral in tone, something about how he should become a better man. I was quite unconscious of irony as I did this. Then I put my revolver back in my pocket and walked away. My knees were weak as I tried to explain to Kern why I had

behaved as I had done. Later it was only with reluctance that Kern agreed to let me take part in the Rathenau business. And now five more years had passed and there stood Wagner.

"It transpired that he had made his way to the light at the far end of the lake; it was the Nauheim Waterworks. Streaming with blood, he had told the nightwatchman that he had been set upon by a gang of thieves. The watchman took him to hospital and notified the police. Next morning, when the police came to the hospital to question him, they found that he had stolen a suit of clothes from a trunk that belonged to one of the doctors who was about his size and had fled. He went to ground, somewhere or other he recovered from his frightful wounds, he assumed another name—Wiegelt—and he began a new life; he told us so himself during the course of the trial.

"In the past five years he had done quite well for himself, as they say. He had been a flying officer during the war, had a certain knowledge of engines and automobiles, and also knew a bit about engineering. When the police arrested him he was employed with an insurance company as consulting expert on motor-cars. The arrest was a severe blow to him; his career, and indeed his freedom, were in jeopardy once again, for he had taken part in the freeing of Ditmar, the 'war criminal.' But Weidemann had known how to make this witness talk; he had overcome all his fears and had persuaded him that the time had come for him to make a clean breast of all his past.

"Wagner talked. He talked without hatred or vindictiveness. There he stood, and he looked at me calmly, unemotionally, full face, and I noticed that that face had been somewhat altered by the severe injuries he had received. The medical expert declared those injuries to consist of broken collar-bone, broken arm, severe cerebral shock resultant from a broken skull—the atmosphere in the court suddenly changed. And Wagner maintained that I had not given up my intention to kill him. He said that a car had driven along the road near the scene of the assault and I had been caught in the beam of the headlights: that, he said, was what had stopped me from shooting him, a purely external occurrence and in no wise an inner decision.

"Luetgebrune looked at me with intensity. I had not so much as mentioned this car to him. I think that at that moment he really doubted the truthfulness of my statement. He tried to save what could still be saved. He cross-examined Wagner closely, but Wagner stuck to his story. My position was really hopeless now. When Luetgebrune, completely exhausted, had finished his cross-examination, Cramer asked: 'Are there any more questions to be put to the witness?' Weidemann shook his head and smiled. Cramer was beginning to say: 'In that case the testimony is closed . . .' when I interrupted, jumping to my feet; it was a last, desperate effort. I asked if I might myself address a question to the witness. I then asked the president of the court to enquire

of the witness whether he had not, as a result of the head injuries he had sustained, suffered a partial loss of memory.

“The public began to titter. Luetgebrune plucked at my sleeve in an attempt to make me resume my seat. Weidemann laughed aloud. Cramer gave me a displeased glance, but he said: ‘Witness, you have heard the question: please answer it.’ Wagner turned towards me, looked me full in the face, and said: ‘The accused has no need to worry about my health. The cerebral shock I sustained has had no effect upon my mental capabilities.’ There was once again laughter in the court, and Cramer signalled me to sit down. But I remained on my feet and said: ‘Mr. President, please—it’s so important for me—please, I ask you once again to enquire of the witness whether he does not suffer from partial loss of memory, at least on occasions.’ Cramer said, amid renewed bursts of laughter: ‘The witness has already answered your question quite plainly. Sit down!’ I remained standing, and I shouted: ‘This question is a premeditated one, it’s an essential part of my defence. I beg you don’t limit me in my means of defending myself!’ Cramer banged on his table, and for the first time during the course of the trial I saw that he was angry. He said sharply: ‘Accused, you have no right to complain of being limited in your defence, you of all people. God knows, you’ve used every possible means at your disposal. Sit down!’

“But now Luetgebrune, who had been watching me attentively while all this was going on, rose to his feet. He said, with great politeness: ‘Since my client apparently attaches so much importance to his question might I suggest that he sees it as being connected with some specific occurrence? And might I, in consequence, also pray that the question be put to the witness? Perhaps the accused might put it in more precise form?’ Weidemann was trying to protest, but Cramer waved him into silence. I swallowed with difficulty and said: ‘I certainly make no pretence at medical knowledge, but one thing I do know: severe cerebral shock sometimes results in a partial loss of memory. For example, people suffering from it may remember perfectly clearly certain events but may have no recollection whatever of specific details connected with those events. They may, perhaps, suddenly forget *where* something happened—or, for example, they may be unable to recall a name. . . .’

“Luetgebrune laid his hand on my shoulder and whispered: ‘Sit down!’ He himself remained standing, smiling pleasantly at the president of the court. Cramer stared at him. Suddenly, turning to the witness, Luetgebrune said: ‘Now, sir, step a little closer—closer still. That’s right. Now, sir, you are testifying under oath. You have sworn to tell the truth and the whole truth, even in matters that may seem to you of secondary importance or perhaps irrelevant. I’m putting the question to you once again in the same form employed by the accused: *Have you ever forgotten anything, for example what your name was?* . . . Don’t answer at once, think it over. Think it over carefully.’

“The courtroom was utterly still. The public prosecutor had no idea what was going on and was starting to get to his feet, but Cramer, without taking his eyes from Wagner, signalled him with his left hand to be quiet—and all at once Wagner turned and looked at me. Then, slowly facing Cramer once again, he said softly and with difficulty: ‘Yes—I must admit I have.’ ‘Thank you,’ said Dr. Luetgebrune loudly. And Cramer, becoming businesslike once more, announced: ‘The testimony is closed. The court will adjourn to the scene of the deed.’

“There was much excitement. Luetgebrune said, with a smile: ‘You see how valuable a good memory is? I doubt if the public prosecutor realises even now what it’s all about.’ It was so simple. Of course Wagner, when appearing under oath in cases connected with his job with the insurance company, had repeatedly given a false name, that of Weigelt. The president grasped this, and Luetgebrune, and Wagner—but not the public prosecutor. It was not Cramer’s job to encourage Wagner to commit perjury, but on the contrary to hold him back from it, and so he helped him to extricate himself from the impasse into which he had been led. But meanwhile by so doing Wagner’s testimony was, of course, shaken in its very essence.

“My memory had to get to work again, for I would have to reconstruct the entire scene on the spot. The whole court went by train to Nauheim, judge, jury, counsel for the prosecution and for the defence, Press, witnesses and public. We arrived in the late afternoon and set off, as on a pilgrimage, through the park to the lake. It was almost five years to the day since last I had been here. Once again in the gathering dusk I saw the distant light in the waterworks. The fight had taken place on a little parapet installed, no doubt, for the convenience of fishermen. And there Wagner and I had to demonstrate what had occurred. We punched one another and wrestled. Wagner pretended to strike me on the nose, as he had once done when he broke it for me: I pretended to break his arm. We were surrounded by a crowd of people from the court, women, witnesses, everybody—and they must have found it all very impressive, for suddenly Weidemann lost his temper. He waved his arms about, he protested. He jettisoned whole portions of his case against me by maintaining that it was impossible to base the proceedings on my unsupported testimony. The reason it was impossible, he said, was that a man who had been in prison for five whole years could certainly not have preserved so exact a memory as I was pretending to have done.

“Cramer was of the opinion that it should be possible to put my memory to the test. He asked me to state whether anything on or about the scene of the deed had been changed. I glanced around and said that so far as I could recall there must have been more trees along the side of the road that ran through the park. The president then asked

whether any of the company present was a native of Nauheim. One of the jurymen stepped forward. Cramer asked him whether, in his opinion, there had been any change in the number of trees. The man said: 'Oh, yes. You see, I'm in the forestry business. When that road there, the one up the top of the slope, was built we had to cut down a few trees.' 'When was the road built?' Luetgebrune asked at once. The forester thought for a while before saying he reckoned it must have been in 1924. Luetgebrune said: 'That's the road along which the witness saw the car drive—and it was only built two years later.' And thus was everything made quite clear.

"After a tremendous final speech by Luetgebrune—into which he insinuated a phrase for use in the other forthcoming 'Vehme' trials, 'emergency assistance,' meaning direct action by a third party when the state was in peril—I was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for inflicting severe physical injuries with a dangerous instrument. The public prosecutor had asked that I be given five years, but the court had accepted my defence of having abandoned my intention to murder Wagner. My total prison sentences now amounted to six years and three months.

"When the verdict was announced a great crowd of people pressed about me, offering their congratulations. Even Weidemann came across and slapped me on the shoulder. Then, suddenly, he pushed Wagner forward. Wagner held out his hand and said that he really felt a debt of gratitude towards me. At the time he had been on the skids, and the scene by the lakeside had brought him to his senses. I felt as though the Giessen trial marked the end of a part of my life—but when it was over there I was, in gaol again. They didn't send me back to Striegau but to the Hessian prison called Marienschloss-Rockenbergl, a building which has nothing beautiful about it except its name."

Ille said:

"Plaas, what's happened to the others? I mean the men who were your comrades in those days."

Plaas said:

"The older Techow, who was freed shortly after Ernst, wouldn't accept any help from us. During the so-called Stennes putsch, the mutiny of the Berlin Storm Troopers against Goebbels, Techow was in the building in the Hedemannstrasse where it all took place. Meeting Goebbels there, he gave him a terrific clout on the side of the head and informed him: 'It wasn't for swine like you that we shot Rathenau.' Then he disappeared. He avoids everybody. They say he lives a very simple life somewhere in Berlin. He's supposed to be a photographer on a small scale, with a little shop. The younger Techow went back to school after serving his four-year sentence. He passed his examination, studied for the law and is now a solicitor. Warncke went abroad. He's said to have a job with a railway company in Mexico. Oelschlägel, the



man who assassinated Scheidemann, emigrated too. During the Gran Chaco war he commanded a Bolivian company and was blown up by a mortar shell. The other Scheidemann assassin, Hustert, I last saw on January 30th, 1933. He was sitting in a bar near the Zoo, listening to a broadcast of the great torchlit procession. I asked him, nodding towards the radio: 'Well, how do you feel now?' He said: 'Rather like a man whose wife has just given birth to triplets.' I don't know what's happened to him since then. Günter Brand is a doctor in Kiel. The older Tillessen. . . ."

"I know about him," I said. "He married a distant relation of mine, a girl called Pfeffer, and has a job in the cement industry, somewhere in Westphalia. How about the younger one, the Erzberger assassin?"

"They hunted him across half Europe, through Hungary and Spain, and finally he got to North Africa. There Hünefeldt, the long-distance flyer, found him and persuaded him to come home. His case fell under the general amnesty. He's now living a very retired life somewhere in South Germany and is trying, I hear, to effect a compromise between his former actions and the doctrines of the Catholic Church. But that's one institution that doesn't fit too easily into a compromise solution. So Tillessen must repent and repent. . . . Actually," Plaas went on, "of all our former comrades there are only two who are still in contact with one another."

"Yes," said I, "and we drive along Adolf Hitler's *autobahnen*."

"Yes," said Plaas, "in a private car fairly glittering with chromium—and you write film scripts!"

"And you stick pins in maps."

We were driving through the huge, dark forest on the far side of Forst. Suddenly Ille turned sharply off the road and stopped the car in one of the parking places that are built along the *autobahnen*.

"Time for lunch," said Ille. "You two go and lie somewhere in the grass, I mean you two in the back. Sonya and I will see to everything."

We clambered up the bank of rubble and found a sunny spot in a little clearing beside a stream. Plaas threw himself to the ground. I stretched myself out beside him. We chewed the juicy stalks of grass. Ille and Sonya were unpacking the food from the car, running hither and thither.

After a while Plaas said:

"You know I don't just stick pins into maps in my office. . . . I also learn a great many things that you never even hear about."

"Something up?"

Plaas spat out a blade of grass.

"Something was up. It had gone pretty far too, six months ago. Then came Munich, a tremendous triumph for him. And the generals cried off."

"Of course," I said, "did you expect them to do anything else?"

What could they have against him? Never has an army been treated so lavishly as ours. In any other country the generals have to quarrel with their parliaments for every penny spent, while here it's just poured into their laps."

Plaas said:

"That's not quite it. Of course it's hard for any man to see things from outside the perspective of his own particular interests. But the Seeckt tradition is still very strong. Fundamentally the whole future is dependent on one man—and so long as he's still there. . . . Canaris told me that the generals, at least the ones over which he has any influence, insist on a fifty-one per cent certainty of success. And since Munich they don't think they've got it. It would be a revolution without any aftermath. I've talked a lot with Canaris on the subject. It's essential to be logical about it. Finally I told him I was willing."

"Plaas!" I cried. "Plaas!"

"Yes," he said, "I'm completely determined. Canaris felt I should get in contact with some of our former comrades so that we could hold ourselves in readiness. Needless to say it's not a question of days and it's equally obvious that I can't do it on my own. Up to now the two Muthmanns have agreed, and Erdeler, and Goetz—and I also thought you might."

"No!" I cried.

Plaas fell silent. He stared at the *autobahn*, at the parking place, at the car shining and glittering in the sunlight.

I said:

"That's not the point . . . it's not a question of the comfortable, bourgeois life I lead . . . that's always seemed to me a bit of a fraud on my part."

I knew at once that what I had just said was not true, or was only partially true, that that life had me in its grip and that I wished to go on living, and living as I was doing. And then there was Ilie. But I could see no sense in attempting to talk about these matters to Plaas.

"The concept," I said, banging on the ground. "Plaas, the concept!"

"Yes," said Plaas, "I knew you'd ask about that right away. In the old days, too, you always wanted to know what it was. Canaris, of course, desires a military dictatorship."

"Of course! With the same generals who've just cried off. The ones who won't stir without a fifty-one per cent certainty of success. Wonderful, wonderful!"

"Yes," said Plaas. "I wasn't alone with Canaris. One of the generals was there, a very young one whom you don't know. It was he who turned the conversation into those channels. He wanted to sound quite casual and he said, in his usual off-hand way: 'Well, Plaas, you've done this sort of thing before.' I said: 'After you, Herr General!'"

"Good," I said. "Excellent."

"It wasn't excellent. The generals should do it, but afterwards, when he's out of the way. Who else is there apart from them? There's no other power but theirs when it comes to a question of acting responsibly. If one of the generals were to do it, or even a soldier who wasn't a general, the whole thing would be tainted. Canaris explained that to me, and he's right. He told me that if we did it, and managed somehow to survive, he'd have to prosecute us mercilessly and throw us in gaol and condemn us. And he's right."

"Plaas!" I cried. "Old Plaas! Don't do it!"

"We must do it. For who else is there apart from us? I don't believe it will come to war. He's a fox who'll always try to slip out of the sack when it comes to the point. In the Sudetenland business the neck of the sack was left open. Do you believe there'll be a war on account of the Polish Corridor? It was always a preposterous thing, even the Western Powers think so. They'll leave that particular sack open too. And that's the whole thing. He'll have another tremendous triumph and everything will go on as before."

"As before?"

"Living a lie!" said Plaas. "You said that once and I've never been able to forget it. In those days we didn't want to live a lie, at least I didn't and neither did you. And now that's just what we're doing. Worse, we're part of the lie, we helped in a way to bring it about like everyone else living in Germany today, and not only in Germany. We're all involved in it. You know that this isn't what we wanted to create in the old days. It most certainly isn't! So who is there to do what has to be done if not us? I can't demand that anyone else do something that I must do myself. Do you imagine it's easy for me? I've got a wife too, and children, and in a few years' time I'll own my house. But I can't live this way. In terms of what is to be done our lives are simply a corruption. *We* must do it, because we've already done it once, because we've leaped the barrier once, because we know. We're in it, my friend, we're in it, that's what it all means, and if you're honest with yourself, you know that too."

Ille was crouching nearby, over the spirit stove, coaxing it to work. Plaas was lying on his back, letting the sun shine full on his face.

I said:

"Plaas! It's a lie, another lie, that you've never been able to see beyond. It's the worst lie of all, the lie of murder. If the assassination of Rathenau was a murder, a foul, common, sneaking murder, and we know now that that's what it was, you and I—then the murder of Hitler would be just such another. It's worse than a lie, it's a betrayal, a betrayal of life, of development, of everything. That man is our destiny more than ever Rathenau was. It would be a betrayal of our destiny, and be it what it may it's nonetheless ours."

"Then it's also our destiny if he dies."

“Plaas! Old Plaas!”

Suddenly Ille was standing over us. She held out her hands, which were red from the heat of the fire, and said:

“Come and eat.”

I jumped to my feet at once.

Plaas did not move, staring at the sun with open eyes.

Ille walked over to where he was lying, raised one foot, placed it on his stomach, and said calmly, though in a soft and sharp voice:

“*Apage Satanas!*”

Plaas sat up and looked straight at Ille. Then he rose to his feet in silence.

We ate in silence and drove on.

As we approached Liegnitz, Castle Walstatt rose up in the evening light. I said:

“That’s where Hindenburg lived as a cadet.”

At the fork that lead to Striegau I said:

“That’s the road to Striegau where I was for five years.”

As we drove through Breslau, along the Kaiser-Wilhelm Strasse, I said:

“This is where Kern used to live.”

When we reached Jaeschdorf, Pauly gave us a hearty welcome and we went into dinner at once. The first course was a marvellous pie, the best I’d ever tasted: Ille said so too. Frau Pauly said:

“Yes, it’s a great pleasure for us to have you here.”

Herr Pauly laughed and said:

“You mustn’t think we always feed like this. But I told my wife that the Salomons appreciate good food so we’ve hired the chef from the Savoy Hotel in Breslau for your visit.”

After dinner we went out to the kitchen and congratulated the chef.

We spent the days tramping over the fields. Pauly’s pride and joy were his ill-smelling installations for drying flax. I trailed along with the others and felt uncomfortable, which I put down to being bored, a state of affairs I cannot endure.

Ille kept on urging me to take her to Striegau. She wanted to see the prison in which I had spent so much time. To begin with I had no great wish to go there, but finally one morning we set off in the car.

“You mustn’t imagine, Ille,” I said, “that my life in prison was consistently horrible. To begin with I thought that I had come from the wild and unorganised orderliness of the free world into a desiccated and deadly atmosphere where I must surely dry up. But in fact I was simply entering another sort of orderliness. The worst was not the loss of freedom—a man loses his freedom easily, without even being aware that he has done so. Every soldier has lost his freedom and every official to a certain extent—no, that wasn’t the worst. The worst was the loss of dignity. To be handed over like a parcel, to be a number, that

was the worst. Man is not abominable by nature: he only becomes abominable if, an inferior spirit, he is given power over other men. True sovereignty is invariably tolerant; and it is in consequence a rare occurrence. Everywhere, in every walk of life, men capable of exercising true sovereignty constitute a tiny minority, perhaps three or four out of a hundred. They have to carry the whole burden of sense and humanity for their fellows. In the Baltic, when I was with the *Freikorps*, I reckoned that a company was a good company if it could count three or four such figures, while the others, with a few exceptions both upwards and downwards, consisted of a tolerable average. Outstanding swine are equally rare: in my whole life, including my years in gaol, I've only known five or six. Prison, in this, was no different from the rest of the world. I don't know what it's like today, but at that time a prisoner had certain specific rights, and they were not contemptible ones either. He could assert his rights, he could demand them if he thought he were being unfairly treated. Once I fought for months on end concerning my right to a pencil and a book, and in the end I won. But fighting for one's rights poisons the atmosphere; which is why justice is indispensable."

We drove on. I said:

"The old lags used to tell me that justice in our country was very uneven. Punishment handed out varied considerably in different localities. In the big cities, Berlin or Hamburg, sentences were always very light; in the country, on the other hand, and in the small towns it was another story. Criminals would far rather face trial in Protestant than in Catholic districts. It was the same with the individual prisons. Each one had its special qualities. Striegau was famous for the high standard of its food. Lichtenburg in Saxony, on the contrary, was notorious for the miserable rations that the prisoners received.

"Now Lichtenburg was a Protestant institution and Striegau a Catholic one. One day some twenty convicts in Lichtenburg announced that after much soul-searching and inner struggle they had decided to become Catholics. The Weimar Republic was very punctilious about such matters. The twenty men were moved to Striegau, and our chaplain set about giving them religious instruction. He went to a great deal of trouble and devoted a lot of time to finding the right answers for the many questions of conscience—which were invariably tricky ones—which his new sheep put to their spiritual shepherd. He wished to celebrate this mass conversion with all due pomp; as the time approached he decorated the chapel lavishly; much to the annoyance of the inspector of work, the choir was continually being called together during work periods in order to learn new hymns and chants; the archdeacon was invited to attend the ceremony, and there were rumours of a high cleric coming all the way from Breslau.

"On the evening before the conversion the twenty pious convicts

from Lichtenburg asked that they have one last discussion with the chaplain. Then they told him that they had decided not to abandon their childhood faith after all; transubstantiation, it seems, was more than they could swallow. Also the Protestants gave wine with the Communion. In Striegau the food, it's true, was celebrated for its high quality: on the other hand discipline was strict and life in general was far less pleasant than in Lichtenburg. So back they went to Lichtenburg, weighing several pounds more than when they had left."

I said:

"The nature of a penal institute is almost always determined by its governor. The first time I came into contact with Prison Director Dronsch, at Striegau, I was alarmed. I felt certain, at once, that here was a man who must be my enemy. He was small and fat, with so thick and short a neck that he could scarcely turn his head. He had a ridiculous pair of steel-rimmed spectacles with very thick lenses; when he walked through the building he wore a black coat with a silk collar; the buttons did not meet across his belly. On his head was balanced a hard, black hat. When a newly arrived prisoner, a cheeky Berlin boy, was first taken to the director's office he said in his Berlin accent: 'You supposed to be governor here? You look like an apple dumpling with an ulcer.' Dronsch had him taken off to a punishment cell at once.

"Dronsch was at the time, I think, the only prison governor without a legal background. I never once heard him raise his voice. Comical-looking as he was, he yet had an inimitable way of giving an order and then of replacing his hard hat on his thick skull so that it made a sort of thumping noise. I annoyed him whenever I got an opportunity to do so. I protested against everything, I wrote one complaint after another and I constantly encouraged my fellow-prisoners to resist his will. He, for his part, punished me relentlessly. But one day—it was during my third year in gaol and I'd just come back from the punishment cell—he came to see me. He was never alone: the Chief Warden always accompanied him. He said: 'Well? Had enough?' I said: 'Far from it, Herr Direktor. If you think you can break my spirit you're wasting your time.' He said: 'Really?' and turned on his heel and walked out.

"But within two hours he was back. He said: 'I've been looking through your records again. It seems to me you're probably not such a bad sort.' I said: 'Very good of you, Herr Direktor!' He said: 'Skip the sarcasm. I want to make an experiment with you, one I've never tried on a prisoner before. I can break your spirit. You know perfectly well that I can smash you to bits if I wish. But I believe that you have a sense of honour. I'll make you a proposition. If you'll give me your word of honour not to do anything to undermine discipline among the other prisoners, I, for my part, will give you the maximum amount of freedom that lies within my power. If you agree every door in this building will be open to you save only one, the gate.' I was completely

taken aback. But I couldn't help saying: 'I see. A savage dog gets an extra crust?' He looked up at me with that expression which I knew so well and which I particularly hated. He said: 'Remember that outside nothing has changed. Your political ideas haven't a hope any longer. But perhaps you'll be set free in the normal way. I can only recommend a remittance of one quarter of your sentence if I am really convinced that I wasn't mistaken in imagining that you had a sense of honour. Think it over carefully. I'll be back in a week.' He thumped his hat on his head and left.

"A week later he was back. I said: 'Herr Direktor, there is one thing I cannot promise. I can't say that I'll stop smoking.' Smoking was absolutely forbidden, but it seems that tobacco, like oxygen, is a fundamental necessity to human life. The ban simply didn't work. Every prisoner could get hold of it. The warders bought sewing cotton and shirting and other such things with which the prisoners worked and which a skilful man had little trouble in stealing, and they paid in cigarettes. The warders' salary was so small that the temptation to do little deals of this sort was always present. Of course the director knew all about it. He laughed. It was the first time I had seen him laugh. He said: 'Good. If you're caught smoking you will be punished in the normal way, but it won't go on your record and we'll regard it as outside our agreement.' He offered me his hand and I shook it. He called: 'Chief Warder! This door will not be locked. The prisoner has liberty to go where he wishes throughout the building, except through the gate. He can have his light on whenever he wants. He will be put on hospital diet and may write as many letters as he chooses. He can do what work he pleases and is no longer to be bound by the schedule.' Then he walked out and left the door open behind him.

"It was unheard of. Nothing of the sort had ever happened in the institute. Later the political prisoners were all to receive similar treatment, but at that time there were no political prisoners and I was technically just an ordinary convict. Of course I kept my side of the bargain. Within the walls of the prison I was as good as free: I sent at once for books, cases of books. I wrote to everybody I could think of who possessed a decent library and asked for books. I got them too. Much to the annoyance of the man in charge of the mail I had a regular stream of parcels, cases of books were constantly arriving and others being sent back. I read the whole General Staff study of the World War, all the publications of the Foreign Ministry, the complete works of Jean Paul, Dickens, Raabe, Stifter, Dostoievsky, Thackeray and of course everything that Rathenau had ever written. I read and read and read."

I said:

"Good old Dronsch. During the Giessen trial the public prosecutor, Weidemann, sent to Striegau for my disciplinary records. They looked pretty bad, and Weidemann subpoenaed old Dronsch to give evidence

about my unruly and fractious character. Dronsch came and bore witness. When he had finished Wiedemann looked considerably put out. The public was clearly moved, and a certain amount of feet-shuffling took place. Handkerchiefs appeared and noses were discreetly blown. I myself felt my eyes fill with tears, not only because I was touched by what Dronsch had said, but also because, according to his statement, I was a decent human being after all. Good old Dronsch! I'd very much like to know what's become of him. Presumably he's lost his job; he was a convinced Social-Democrat."

We were nearing Striegau. I said:

"So far as the town of Striegau is concerned I'm rather like the Georgian prince in *Tartarin de Tarascon*. He lived for four years in Tarascon but knew only a tiny section of the town; that bit, though, he knew in complete detail. It was the section of the town visible from the window of his prison cell. I was brought to Striegau in one closed car and taken away in another."

I said:

"There—that must be it! There are the gas works. The tops of the gasometers were visible over the prison wall. There—there's the wall! And now we're past it. Pity there wasn't more to see."

I said:

"We'll drive to Graul's Hotel. Once, at the beginning of my time here, the director came to my cell carrying a potted plant, a fuchsia with a mass of blooms. Dronsch asked me if I knew a certain Graul who lived in Striegau. I'd never heard the name before. It was this Herr Graul, the owner of Graul's Hotel, on the Ring, who'd sent me the fuchsia. The porter at the gate had accepted it in error, all such presents being usually refused. The director was prepared to make an exception and to allow me to keep the plant in my room. I put it on the windowsill, but scarcely had the door of my cell closed behind Dronsch before all the blooms withered and dropped. The gas works immediately behind the wall would not tolerate the existence of any living plant. Still, I've never forgotten Graul's name. There was somebody in the city who thought about me! That's the Ring, over there, and look: there's Graul's Hotel."

We drew up in front of it. It was an old, unprepossessing building. We got out and entered a dark and gloomy lounge. A large, very blond man came towards us. I asked for Herr Graul. He was Herr Graul. I told him who I was. Herr Graul became very excited. He hurried into another room, which I took to be the one he kept for his more favoured guests, and reappeared at once with a number of men, all smiling in most friendly fashion. They all raised their hands in the Hitler salute. I returned it and cast a sidelong glance in Ille's direction. She saluted too, smartly and with feeling. To look at her anyone would think that she'd been doing it all her life.



We all sat down, and Herr Graul began to reminisce. I asked him what had happened to Dronsch. He had been pensioned off shortly after my release. He had a frightful end. He lost both his legs in a car smash and lingered on in pain for a long time before he died. His wife died when he did. I drank a glass in honour of his memory and asked my host and the others present to do likewise. They did, even though Dronsch had been a Social-Democrat.

The prison itself had been scrapped in 1932. It was simply out of date. Herr Graul said:

"The authorities made fools of themselves, as usual. They just handed the building back to the Church. We weren't in power yet. We'd have liked to have put the Finance and Taxation Offices in there."

"I'm delighted to hear it," I said. "That was a noble and praiseworthy idea."

I expressed a desire to revisit my dear old gaol. Herr Graul frowned heavily and said, with regret:

"Can't be done. It's full of monks, now, oblate brothers they call themselves. We'd all have liked to look round, but they won't let anybody in. Least of all us old militant Nazis."

I said:

"Ring them up and try. Tell them that a writer's arrived from Berlin who's interested in Silesian art. Say he's heard the cloisters contain romanesque heads and he'd like to have a look at them."

Herr Graul went to the telephone. In the underground passage that led to the punishment cells there had been two romanesque heads, carved in the naked rock of the walls and dating from about the year 1100. I knew them well, for I had often passed that way.

Herr Graul came back.

"All fixed!" he cried. "The reason it took me so long is . . . you see. . . ." He blushed deeply: it was possible to watch his skull go red beneath his almost white hair ". . . I took the opportunity of asking if I could bring my wife along too. She'd so much like to see it. First of all he wouldn't agree, but at last he said it would be all right. There'll be a man waiting at the gate to be our guide." Herr Graul went on: "I talked with the top priest himself. I kept calling him 'Holy Father.' I don't know if that's right."

We laughed. Ille said:

"Oblate brothers are a lay society, they call themselves Fratres. But we'll address our guide as 'Pater,' it's sure to please him."

I said:

"I'll call him 'Venerable Pater'."

Herr Graul's wife arrived, and we set off. We turned out of the Ring, took the first side-street, and there was the gate. Above it were carved the words *O Maria*. I pointed this out to Ille. The building had previously

been the Convent of St. Hedwig, for nuns of the Benedictine order, though originally intended, it was said, as a large church. The main part of the building, which would have been the nave, had just been completed when the Mongols captured the town. At the Battle of Liegnitz the Mongols were defeated and driven off by St. Hedwig's spouse, but the church was never completed and was turned into a convent instead. After secularisation it was transformed into a prison. The walls, particularly in the main building, where I had spent so much time, were unusually thick, regular cliffs of stone, and the cells and workrooms were carved out of them. The other buildings were all additions of later date, built in the more sensible style that appeals to public authorities.

The guide who met us at the gate was a very young man with a limp, dressed in black. He led us at once up a narrow stone staircase. We soon reached the porter's lodge; it was practically unchanged, and I commented at once and with knowledge of an old, worm-eaten, wooden statue that had formerly stood beside the altar in the chapel and which now decorated a corner of the lodge. While opening the door of the corridor that led to what had been the administrative offices the brother told us the history of the monastery. He said he was afraid we would be disappointed by its artistic contents. He explained that for centuries the building had been occupied by dangerous criminals.

Yes, these were the corridors I knew so well—and at once I was plunged again into their peculiar, unmistakable smell, an atrocious compound of dust and sweat, and bugs and bad plumbing. I stopped. This was where I had so often stood, outside the door of the director's office my face to the wall—for thus we had had to stand while we waited. And there was the grating that had separated the administration from the prison proper, but now the door was open. I followed in the brother's footsteps and did not dare glance round at Ille, whom I could hear close behind me. I had difficulty in lifting my feet, for I felt as though I were once again wearing heavy, coarse, iron-shod boots or ill-fitting wooden shoes. Now we had emerged into the courtyard. How small it was! Could it ever have contained as many grey figures as I recalled walking about it? I glanced timidly about me, and Ille came and stood at my side. Suddenly I dared not speak aloud. I let my eyes travel along the lower row of cell windows in the main building. There was mine, half underground, with the thick iron bars, fixed vertically and horizontally and behind them the grill of tough, strong wire and behind that again the glass of the panes, cheap, bad glass that was scarcely transparent. I nodded towards that window, and Ille understood.

Our guide informed us that everything here was in the same state in which his order had acquired it. There was no point in changing much or attempting to rebuild. Only the chapel had been renovated, and the

cell block. Yes, there was the cell block, tucked away behind the main building and separated from it by a passageway leading to the rear courtyard. Some of the dividing walls between the cells had been removed and the windows enlarged, so as to make schoolrooms, very large schoolrooms. These lay brothers were teachers.

And there was the wall, huge, grey, massive. The tops of the gasometers were just visible above it, and the upper branches of a few trees that I had not seen before. The trees had grown.

I felt my throat contract. It was all exactly as I remembered and yet it was different; it was so pathetic, so enormously depressing, so filled with shadow, with dark shadow. I glanced up towards the sky, and the little square of it that I saw was blue, it really was bright blue.

And then I saw the almond tree. There it stood, immediately in front of the steps that led into the main building. How often had I walked by that tree! I had told Ille of its beauty in the early spring, of how it would suddenly blossom, becoming shell-pink overnight, a mass of blossom like shell-pink foam. There it had stood, a thin, small tree, and suddenly it would produce its parched, brave little flowers. I stared at it, and Ille, leaning forward, stroked its branches. It was more than I could stand. I walked away, staring about me, and the brother gave me a strange look. Herr Graul and his wife were motionless, side by side. Occasionally they whispered something to each other. And I heard Ille say, in a loud and angry voice:

“What’s the matter with the air here? It’s unbreathable.”

The brother said regretfully:

“Yes. It’s because of the gas works. It always smells like that here. Sometimes it’s quite unbearable.”

Ille said sharply:

“The prisoners who took their exercise here had to breathe it every day, some of them for years on end, nothing but this all the time.”

The brother said:

“Yes, the dangerous criminals.”

I said quickly:

“Should we not go into the big building?”

We walked down the corridor that led to the punishment cells. There were the two romanesque heads. They seemed to thrust forward from the bare rock, dark and threatening. The brother switched on a torch, and by its flickering light we examined the heads; they glistened with damp, roughly carved, cold, stark guardians of the entrance to the punishment cells. Ille had walked across and pulled back the bolt of one. She recoiled. The brother had noticed, and he said:

“That’s where they put the really bad ones. They’re absolutely dark. In one of them there’s a cage in which they used to lock them up. Bread and water they got.”

Then he strode on again.

We were approaching the cell in which I had lived. I tried to recognise the door. It should be easy, because mine had had a double bolt. There it was. I made a sign to Ille, and she said, in her clear and carrying voice, which sounded so surprisingly light in this corridor:

“Dear venerable Pater, I’d so much like to see inside one of the cells.”

She stopped before my cell. The brother looked at her strangely, as he had looked at me in the courtyard. He muttered something about dangerous criminals, shook his head slightly as though in disapproval of sensation-lovers and worldly females, but he unlocked the door.

He unlocked it and drew back the bolts. That sound, which I knew so terribly well, re-echoed painfully in my ears. He threw open the door, and we walked in.

It was my cell, and it was exactly as I had left it. Here I had lived for five years. I could no longer even grasp that fact myself. How young I must have been, and how resilient! I couldn’t do it again, I couldn’t spend another five years in this room. It was bad. It was far worse than I had remembered. The window, the tiny window on the sill of which a fuchsia had once, suddenly, lost all its flowers. The bed, raised now and hooked flat against the wall, the hateful, chalky wall. When the bed was lowered there was just enough room for me to stand beside it. The table, also hooked up, the minute table on which had once been piled my books. The pail beside the basin, the disgusting pail which I never used and which I yet had to clean, with revulsion, each morning. And the brown, earthenware pot that still stank. These walls and this ceiling threatened to crush me. This cell was a hole in space, a sinister, loathsome hole filled with evil thoughts. Were I to close my eyes it would all seize hold of me.

It was nothing. It was what I knew it to be, exactly what I knew it to be. A quite ordinary cell, one among many, in which human beings spend long years of their lives. It was nothing. It was frightful.

There stood Ille, weeping. The tears ran down her cheeks. Herr Graul wept and Frau Graul held her hands over her face. I looked for the place on the wall where I had scratched a calendar in the whitewash. The wall had obviously been repainted, but the calendar was still visible. And beneath the calendar I had scratched a swastika. On November 9th, 1923.

I turned and walked out.

As we passed through the gate the brilliance of the sunshine was like a sudden blow.

I said to Ille:

“I’m longing to get back to work.”

We drove off.

It was a beautiful day, the beginning of that splendid spring of nineteen hundred and thirty-nine, a year which promised to be one of incomparable beauty.

## B. SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

<i>Name and Type of School (If a special Nazi school or military academy, so specify.)</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Dates of Attendance</i>	<i>Certificate, Diploma or Degree</i>	<i>Did Abitur Permit University Matriculation?</i>	<i>Date</i>
Muster School	Frankfurt-am-Main	1909-12	No	Yes	None
Lessing Gymnasium	Frankfurt-am-Main	1912-13	No	Yes	None
Cadet School	Karlsruhe	1913-17	No	Yes	None
Chief Cadet School	Berlin Lichterfelde	1917-18	No	Yes	None

AT THE AGE of six and a half, in Easter, of 1909, I entered the Muster School at Frankfurt-am-Main. This school did not owe its name to some worthy Herr Muster but to the fact that *Muster* is German for 'model' and the school wished to be generally regarded as a model of its type. I think that the German educational system was even at that time so well lubricated with social oil that anyone who could afford the not excessive fees was at liberty to send his children to this first-class establishment. Though, as I say, the school fees were not above the average, I do not believe that my father had an easy time paying them. But I had to have "proper training" so that later I might be "capable of facing life's problems" and "entering a decent profession." My father could certainly not have ascribed my acceptance into the Muster School to his social position, for he had only just been transferred from Kiel to Frankfurt, where he was the most junior Criminal Commissioner at Police Headquarters. He was, in fact, an unknown official; nobody save himself could have guessed that within a short time he would be in charge of all the Criminal Police in the area.

The great success that my father made in his career was due to exceptionally hard work, consuming ambition, a punctiliousness that verged on the pedantic—which I imagine to have been a deliberate pose on his part—and, more important, an excellent memory. That memory is the only quality of his that I think I have inherited. It is difficult with certainty to make any pronouncement about one's own qualities, but I believe I can safely assert that my memory is excellent.

I do not know whether the possession of an excellent memory is in itself an excellent thing. It undoubtedly hampers the full development of the imagination without supplying any completely adequate substitute; but it offers the means of control and reinforces the sense of what is real; it enables its possessor to substantiate his statements, and in this it resembles a well-stocked archive on which he can draw at will in order to clarify any doubt about past action; for it is a treasure chest of pictures and words, of figures and scenes, illuminating equally the inter-connection of events and mental or spiritual change.

Now there can be no doubt that a child's first days at school are not only an important event when considered retrospectively but continue also a most vivid experience from the child's own point of view. This period of his life marks the beginning of his entry into the great realm of the Holy Ghost, and with every step he takes he is automatically confronted by novelty, by the unknown; it presents him with prospects and the opportunity for insight; it shows him that compulsion and purpose are necessary and inevitable; the snares and pitfalls into which he falls—and they are more frightening to the childish mind than are the misfortunes of practical life to the more placid spirits of grown persons—must alone be enough to cause him deep internal disturbances that will be engraved indelibly upon the tablets of his memory.

On the first day of my first term my mother presented me with a luncheon basket which she proposed should last me during all my school years. It was made of straw, was hung about my neck by a leather strap, and contained a sandwich and an apple. I was immensely proud of this basket, which seemed to me a token of my new and more dignified status. But when I noticed that no other child save me possessed a basket of this sort the natural instinct of all small creatures to conform, the natural fear of being different, was aroused. And so my first school-day ended, when I was home again, in tears and slaps, for my mother could not begin to understand my loud and insistent refusal ever to make use of my luncheon basket again.

The headmaster of the Muster School was a gentleman by the name of Herr Direktor Walter, a small, plump individual whose bald pate was surrounded by white and bristly hair. On one occasion our studies were interrupted and the whole staff, together with all the children, were summoned to the hall. There the Herr Direktor informed us joyfully that our splendid and beloved Kaiser had been presented with yet another grandchild. "Now," he cried, "our proud dynasty is assured for generations to come!"

Our religious teacher was named Fries. I admired him immensely because he wore rimless pince-nez attached to his left ear by a little gold chain.

In my class there was a boy called Werner Richards who wore long trousers.

And that is all. Search as I may through the archives of my memory, delve as I will in that treasure chest: that is all. I was a pupil at the Muster School, this model institute of learning, for the whole of three eventful years: and that is all.

In Easter, 1912, I went to the Lessing Gymnasium in Frankfurt-am-Main. The headmaster was Direktor Neubert, a small, thin, leathery-looking man with sharp features and close-cropped grey hair. My form-master was named Professor Ankel. He too was rather small and thin, though with bushy white hair and a short, blond moustache. He invariably wore a grey suit with yellow socks, and the latter used to fall down about his ankles and over his shoes. He taught Latin, a subject in which I must have proved exceptionally incompetent; I once forged my mother's signature beneath a Latin composition which contained as much red ink as blue and this led to my having my ears boxed by my mother, during the break, in the presence of all the staff and of the whole, delighted body of my fellow pupils. A secondary result of this act of forgery was my father's decision to pack me off forthwith to Cadet School. And that exhausts my fund of memories concerning the year and a half that I spent in attempting to acquire a humanistic education.

But from this same period of my life my memory has preserved very exact pictures of bloody street battles between the boys of the Rothschild Allee and those of the neighbouring Egenolff Strasse.

The Rothschild Allee and the Güntersburg Allee, which crossed it at right angles, were well-kept and tidy streets, and behind their bushes and trees and sanded drives lay the apartment houses where 'the better people' lived: officials lived there, and the more highly paid employees and small tradesmen with their own businesses. They were four-storied houses, with balconies, their gables much decorated with sandstone figures. In their little front garden, separated by iron railings from the Allee itself, stood plaster dwarfs and plaster deer and plaster cranes and large plaster mushrooms among the tulip beds and the beds of pansies; there, too, stood little model castles made of tufa. In the summertime the balconies were protected against the sun by red-and-white striped awnings, and the display of window-boxes was splendid.

The surrounding streets, the Egenolff, the Rotlint, the Rohrbach and the Luisen Strasse, were inhabited by members of the lower-middle and working class. In those streets there were no balconies with awnings nor flowers nor ladies whose complexions must not be ruined by the sun. There were, instead, long rows of flat, blank windows out of which, in the morning, eiderdowns were hung to air. There were no front gardens with dwarfs and plaster deer, but instead dark, secretive doorways. And there were children, hordes of children, filling the streets with their din, while the noticeably smaller number of children who lived in the two Allees played quite decorously and quite quietly around a specially built sand-pile.

If class strife in those pre-war years cast its shadow even over the world of childhood, at least the children fought a more respectable and chivalrous war than did their elders—that is, if the testimony of the social literature of the period can be relied upon. Nor were our battles caused by a desire on the part of the poor children to seize our sand-piles and a determination on our part to defend them. On the contrary. We 'Allee' children were consumed by a constant and burning ambition to play in their dark gateways—from which we were invariably and roughly ejected.

In general there was no real cause for the opening of hostilities, but someone, either on our side or on theirs, would decide that it was time battle was resumed: a barbarically decorated announcement would be sent to the enemy, a declaration of war with all the customary trimmings. Moreover an 'Allee' child walking through the Egenolff Strasse or an Egenolff child passing along the Allees was never attacked or even insulted save during the established and recognised hours of battle. But once war had been declared the rival hordes fell upon one another with sticks and stones and straps and catapults and bows and arrows. At such times grown-ups would make lengthy detours to avoid crossing the battle-field. Then would the baker—who lived at the corner of the Egenolff Strasse and of the two Allees, and who served both camps—summon his baker's boys to his side and prepare to intervene should the tide of battle sway too near his shop-front. Then would the chemist in the Luisen Strasse make ready his rolls of bandages, while the policeman would mysteriously disappear.

A broken arm or a cracked head was not a rare occurrence on either side, while bloody noses, torn ears and gashed knees were everyday affairs. The Egenolff Strasse always won. So sure were they of their own strength that sometimes, out of pure generosity and high-mindedness, they would lend the troops of their natural allies, the Rotlint Strasse or the Rohrbach Strasse or the Luisen Strasse, to support their natural enemies, the Allees.

Now it may be imagined that this blind spot in my memory so far as school goes can be accounted for by the simple fact that I was a wild boy, far more interested in rough games and fighting than in the gentle pursuit of knowledge. But it's just not so. According to my parents and relatives I tended to be a quiet, shy child, and reports from both my schools as well as from the Cadet School bear this out. Phrases abound such as: "shows keen interest in his studies," or: "tends to avoid the company of his fellows," or: "reads serious books of his own choosing with praiseworthy diligence." Apart from Latin I was a good scholar, if not actually a model pupil, even at the Lessing Gymnasium. If I did not aspire to be top of my class I was nevertheless well above the average. At Cadet School I always held an honourable position among the first ten. But I have no recollection of the keen interest ascribed to



me nor of my elementary intellectual and spiritual processes at school. I cannot help assuming that there is something wrong here. Psychologists may remark that I was probably one of those boys who are so compelled by their consciousness of awakening life that they have no time for spiritual experience, which is thus pushed into the background. From the moment I first encountered the methods of the psychological science I have been unable to suppress one feeling: namely, that psychology, to use a rough and rather embracing word, is crap. Up to the age of sixteen I kissed three girls, once each: Erna Wiedemeier, who wore a red sweater and was the daughter of a policeman in the Egenolff Strasse: Toni Rathgeber, who lived opposite me in the Rothschild Allee and had blond plaits that hung down to her knees: and the girl who subsequently became my first wife. Trespassing psychologists will be prosecuted!

From the autumn of 1913 until the autumn of 1917 I attended the preparatory school of the Cadet Corps at Karlsruhe, Baden; from there I went to the Chief Cadet School at Berlin-Lichterfelde, where I remained until the end of the war. In later years I wrote a book about my cadet period. (See the answer to Question 118.) Of this book, *The Cadets*, some 80,000 copies were printed, and since it may be reckoned that each copy found at least one reader apart from its original purchaser there must be a minimum of 160,000 harmless and impartial witnesses in a position to inform Allied Military Government that, of this fairly comprehensive book dealing with my experiences while a member of the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, only some ten or twelve pages are specifically devoted to the actual school curriculum. This, incidentally, was in no wise a deliberate intention on my part. I was trying to describe in all its essentials the internal and external nature of a very Prussian and very logical education. I felt that there was an obvious need for such a book. The literature dealing with so remarkable a pedagogic phenomenon as the Cadet Corps is surprisingly limited; as the Cadet Corps no longer existed I believed that that literature should be amplified before it was too late. However, none of the previous works on the subject really dealt with the question of the pedagogy of the corps, which after all inevitably took second place to the training of cadets. The curriculum was not based on the humanities. It derived from that employed in the type of German school called a *Real-Gymnasium* and was therefore—as was only logical in an institution of this type—more inclined towards the practical. But even this took second place in comparison to the building of character and the mastery of those qualities necessary in military life. Before leaving cadet school the pupil had to pass an examination based on the same curriculum as that employed in the civilian schools and very little different from those schools' 'final examination.' But this examination assumed far less importance in the life of the cadets than in that of their fellows at other

schools. Since the cadets were practically dedicated to a career already, the passing of examinations was much less essential than the development of character or rather the development of one particular type of character; the Prussian Army had established itself as at once the objective and the model.

Of the numerous young men who have passed out from the Cadet Corps a great number have achieved fame and honour and respect, although admittedly it is hard to name any who have reached the heights in fields other than the military. Of the cadets of my year all who remained true to their chosen career, and who survived the Second World War, ended up as Generals. A disproportionately high percentage of former cadets fell in action. And I would be failing to complete the picture of the last developments among members of the Cadet Corps if I were to omit the fact that again a disproportionately high percentage of the men involved in the tragic events of July 20th, 1944, had been cadets.

Deeds such as those of that day have a peculiarly magical quality. They suddenly reveal how questionable are concepts which have, up to then, been believed to be as solid as the *rocher de bronze* of the King of Prussia's sovereignty. What appeared, when the curtain was drawn aside to reveal the events of that day, was not so much a moral crisis: that had been played out long before. It was the climax of a crisis in education.

Within the breasts of those men who decided in favour of murder—as in the breasts of those who decided against it—a struggle must have taken place comparable to that within the human body when a fever attains its crisis. This was not a question of death's presence such as every soldier knows it, but of the totality of more than his own existence. The life of each one of those men was formed by a training that claimed his whole being as a self-contained totality. The moment of decision was the moment when that totality was smashed. It was brought about by the fact that the power of training had proved inadequate to cope with the demands of external phenomena.

July 20th, 1944, marked the final collapse not only of the Prussian Army but of the whole educational world of the nineteenth century.

In my country, people, at least those of my generation, have not had an easy time. They have, if I may use a cliché, been harried from pillar to post. Meanwhile the inhabitants of other and more fortunate lands have been privileged to sit comfortably at their firesides and to cultivate those spiritual virtues which, as we know, make for a full and joyous life. And it is purely an interest in facts, a desire for knowledge without any alloy of spite or envy, that makes my compatriots wonder how a Swiss gentleman of character and education would react to certain circumstances. What would he do, seated in his well-ordered home among those whom he honourably loves, when the door opens and an

external phenomenon called Pavel Michaelovitch from Svierinogolovskaia appears, a smiling phenomenon with a loaded tommy-gun in his hand and two words on his lips: "Come, woman!"

25. *List any German University Student Corps to which you have ever belonged*

I am indebted to the wisdom and experience of the worthy Professor Schücking (of Kiel) for the knowledge that the first traces of change of mental attitude always appear in that social group called students. Professor Schücking complained at the time—it was 1928—that students no longer showed that interest in the greater values which he and his generation were prepared to hand on like an heirloom. "They are a different type of young man from those of 1848!" he cried and I, mortified, held my peace. The famous scholar was standing, his powerful body leaning against one of the book-shelves that lined the room, shaking his great head and gazing at me perplexedly from out of his dark eyes.

"They are a different type of young men from those of 1848!" cried the professor. At last, I said:

"I'm surprised to hear you say that. I'd always imagined the chief difference was beards."

The professor said:

"The students of those days, even if they failed to make themselves properly heard in the Frankfurt parliament, provided the spirit from which that splendid movement drew its sustenance. Yes, their colours became the symbol of the age—the colours of the student corps, black and red and gold."

"Yes," said I, "those were the colours of the Freikorps Lützow."

The professor shook his great head and gave me a searching look. I said:

"Judging by my limited historical knowledge, it seems to me that up to the time of the War of Liberation the students never played any actual part in politics. The Prague students defended the Charles Bridge against the assault of the Swedes and for centuries they were involved in constant skirmishings against the Czech students—but they were surely an exceptional case. I've never heard of any other occasion on which students provided a unified political force. The wandering scholars of the Middle Ages were scarcely involved at all in the political activities of their time, or at least they certainly never formed any sort of a party—and I cannot help envying them when I read about the way they would study now in Salamanca, now in Paris, now in Bologna and now in Prague. I don't think it's fair to blame today's students for their lack of a consistent attitude towards the world when they are denied the means of getting to know the world. But forgive me," I added. "I'm holding forth. . . ."

"Please, please," said Professor Schücking.

"In any case," I went on, "up to the time of the War of Liberation, the German students at their various universities knew only one sort of student community, the *Landsmannschaften*. So far as I know they were the original type of students' unions and were, in intent, social rather than political. It was not until the students' corps were founded that German youth began to assume political shape. But that happened as a result of the War of Liberation which affected the whole grandiose development of the nineteenth century, at least in its political aspects. The students of that period were young men who felt dissatisfied with the feeble politics of their age—and the students who were my comrades a few years ago were of exactly the same type."

"But—you never attended a university?" The professor sounded surprised.

"No, though I should have liked to do so very much if circumstances had permitted it. But I lacked all the necessary qualifications, including matriculation, which I never took because by the time I was old enough to do so I was already a soldier. I didn't meet the students whom I call my comrades in the lecture halls of any university, but in a student company."

"Oh," said the professor, who belonged to the executive committee of the admirable League of Human Rights. "Oh," he said and shook his head.

"Yes," I replied, "in Upper Silesia, in 1921. If I may express myself bluntly, it seems to me senseless to blame the students of today for doing exactly what is held up as praiseworthy when it was done by other students a hundred years ago. I remember a whole series of pictures: *Fichte Addressing the Youth of Germany*, or *Professor Steffens Inciting the People of Breslau to Rise*, or *The Swearing-in of the 1813 Volunteers*. To use the historian's jargon, the students of that time 'sprang to arms with selfless enthusiasm,' and they were aware that in so doing they had behind them the heartfelt approval of their professors. Goethe, it's true, disapproved strongly."

"Ah, Goethe," said Professor Schücking with a smile. "Who would dare measure his mind against the sublimity of Goethe's thought?"

"But Fichte's German idealism lasted for over a century, until Langemarck to be exact."

He doesn't like it, I thought: he's shaking his head again.

I said:

"The students with whom I served in that rifle company had all been at Langemarck, if not actually, then, if I may so put it, without a doubt symbolically. They belonged to that generation of students which fought at the front. In 1914 they sprang to arms with selfless enthusiasm and they knew that they had their professors' heartfelt approval. I cannot forget one scene that made a deep impression on me.

"We were at Leschna, an obscure little village in the oak forest of Upper Silesia, somewhere between Rosenberg and Guttentag. We had a very hot May in 1921, a great year for grapes. The village was in a little sun-filled clearing among the oaks which stifled any breeze. It was really hot. As a result we lay about, on the sand banks beside the trenches we had dug for the defence of the village, stark naked."

"Naked!" cried Professor Schücking.

"That's right," I said. "As I say, it was extremely hot. A single sentry had been posted. I was the sentry. I sat there, with a machine gun, as scantily dressed as the others, in an emplacement which we had built on a slightly higher piece of ground behind a ruined wall. The heat had affected me too. I was half dozing and neglecting my duty. Suddenly the Poles were there.

"They had come up under cover of the trees and were now attempting to creep through a field of corn that lay in front of our position. The corn was already quite tall, and if the insurgents had possessed a little more skill in military matters they would undoubtedly have overrun our company. But as soon as they saw our people lying about they began to fire. Shots seemed to come from all sides, and when that happens it means that the attackers have won the great advantage of surprise. Before I could grasp what was actually happening—let alone pick out a target for returning the enemy's fire—the naked figures had sprung to their feet and seized their rifles. They hadn't time to get dressed. It was the tried and true instinct of soldiers schooled in the Great War: instead of making for the shelter of our trenches they immediately charged: they counter-attacked at once, as they were.

"This did not suit me, for they ran straight into my field of fire, so that I could not make use of my machine-gun without endangering my comrades' lives. Therefore I just sat behind the gun, doing nothing and highly agitated, and watched their attack go in.

"I saw the whole line of naked bodies run forward, and from the buildings of the village came others, equally naked, with rifle in one hand and cartridge pouches in the other, hurrying to support their comrades. And then I noticed something I had never had occasion to observe before. There was not one of those bodies that was not well-nigh criss-crossed with scars.

"Of course I was well aware that the company contained many men who had been wounded in the war and that one or two of them limped. But now I saw those wounds. There were legs and arms in supports. There were stumps. There were deep scars on back and shoulder, some white, some red, some wrinkled and deep, so deep that they could contain a man's whole arm. There they ran, the students, and the last one had not had time to tie on his leg support. He used his rifle as a crutch, hopping on his good leg, levering himself forward as fast as he could on his rifle-butt.

“Do not misunderstand me, Professor,” I said. “Those were the men who were fortunate enough to have been wounded for the first time at Langemarck and, after a rapid convalescence, had gone back to the front. They were the young students who had deserted their lecture halls to go to war. For four years they had been soldiers. When the war was at last over, they went back to their lecture halls. Then, when they had scarcely begun their studies again, they went to war once again, to Upper Silesia.

“It was easy for me. I felt myself to be a soldier. I had been brought up as one, and it seemed to me quite natural that I should be soldiering once again. I did not get to the front during the Great War. I was too young, and by the time I was old enough to carry a gun it was over. What made me volunteer for a *Freikorps*, three years after the war was over, was something quite simple. Apart from youthful, patriotic enthusiasm—I was eighteen years old at the time—the military life appealed to me, and particularly this sort of warfare with its romantic, cowboys-and-Indians atmosphere. Also I undoubtedly felt an urge to escape from the oppressive conditions in which I had been attempting to lead a civilian life, or if not to escape at least to postpone the unpleasantly inescapable. I was so young, I had so much time, everything lay before me. But they? Hardly had they returned to their normal lives before they dropped it all again and went off to be soldiers once more.

“There was no fame to be won in Upper Silesia. Our battles were anonymous, forbidden, as it were, and so far as the official publications were concerned they simply didn’t exist. Nor could it have been a love of their homes that had sent them here. Upper Silesia was a distant province for the students of that company, who all came from Western Germany. The desire for the aura of military glory? These men, who had commanded companies and batteries in the Great War, were here simple privates. The appeal of wearing a uniform? They wore the clothes that they had had on when they volunteered, tattered old suits, relics of their pre-war student days, badly patched shooting jackets, stained riding breeches, thin and worn-out civilian shoes—a ragged body of men only distinguishable from their opponents by their yellow-and-white armbands. The Poles wore a red-and-white armband, and they too consisted of student companies, young men from Warsaw and Lemberg and Cracow.

“Of course I asked them what it was that had brought them to Upper Silesia. I was so much younger than they, the baby of the company, and as I’d not been in the war I was really rather frightened of what they’d say: I was scared lest in their rough and martial answer there should be audible the music of the spheres, the echo of the spirit of Langemarck. But I’ve always been quite brazen when my curiosity is aroused. Now those whom I questioned did indeed mention Lange-

marck, but in a manner quite other than what I had expected; they spoke of it soberly and, it seemed to me, with an undertone of bitterness. Langemarck, in their opinion, was tactically senseless, because the assault failed; it was strategically senseless because as a result of the race to the coast the fronts stiffened into rigidity; it was military senseless because there all the officer replacements, later to be so urgently needed, were decimated. At Langemarck German idealistic philosophy encountered facts and circumstances with which it could only deal by destroying itself: at Langemarck Fichte died, and died finely. Later, as the war went on, it was quite plain that the professors' approval was no longer so heartfelt: it became a doubtful approval, dubiously given and dubiously received. What was it all about in those later years of the war? I wasn't there and can only rely on the testimony of those men who fought till the last day: according to them it was simply the will to defend the bare continuity of the nation, regardless of whose guilts and errors had so terribly endangered it. And if that was true, then did not the same motives apply in Upper Silesia? The frontier was in flames. A man accustomed to dealing with fires knows that there is only one way to treat flames, and that is to beat them out. And nations whose young men react like that can be considered fortunate. The Poles are fortunate, for they have such young men."

The professor shook his head. He said, in a troubled voice:

"Perhaps what those young men really lacked was guidance. The problem of Upper Silesia was a problem of political responsibility, as indeed were all the difficult questions that so bedevilled us at that time. But when I addressed the Marburg students they just laughed at me."

"A large proportion of the students in our company came from Marburg University. Undoubtedly the audience you addressed contained many of them. Perhaps they went to Upper Silesia precisely because they could see no trace of political responsibility at work, or perhaps because they knew that those men who were politically responsible had no idea what to do. The students had a simple point of view. They wished to defeat the Polish insurgents, to prevent Silesia from being detached from a crumbling Germany, and then to go home as quickly as possible and get on with their studies. If the students of that company ever betrayed anxiety and worry, it was not because of the country's critical condition nor because of the lack of political responsibility in high places. No, what worried them was that they had wasted so many years of their lives in those fatuous wars and that they had in consequence fallen far behind their contemporaries who had stayed home during the Great War and who were at home now. These students were all in their mid-twenties. Their problem was a simple one: eventually, somehow they must study and pass the examinations which would enable them to become magistrates and professors and engineers and chemists and dentists. As for what was left of the high idealism of

the nineteenth-century student corps, I came across that in Haselbach's brewery."

"Haselbach's brewery?"

"When we arrived in Namslav, a little town in Central Silesia where we had been sent to rest, there was suddenly a rumour that Haselbach's brewery sold full-strength beer. In 1921 full-strength beer had still not come back. I don't think it was even being brewed down in Bavaria. Unfortunately I had drawn guard duty at the stables so I could not hurry, as was my burning desire, straight to Haselbach's. When at last I managed to enter the brewery's tap-room a remarkable and surprising scene confronted me. Despite various internal tensions I had always believed that my company formed a tight and homogeneous unit. The men all seemed to be pretty much alike, they all wore the same tattered clothes and affected the same rough soldierly speech. But now the company had suddenly been split up into little groups. At each table was seated such a group and they were easily distinguishable from one another, because over their old shooting coats and stained wind-jackets the students were wearing brightly coloured ribbons, and the ribbon of each group was different from that of the others.

"It was plain that the student societies were celebrating in dark and foaming beer their original, happy state. A few hours ago they had been company runners or platoon commanders or machine gunners. Now a quite different hierarchy applied. The company commander, I remember, was the junior member of his group and had to do the others' bidding. Some university big-wig would bang his mug on the table and shout in stentorian tones: '*Silentium!*' an order that his group obeyed, but no other. At another table they were hoarsely singing a song: *Tempora mutantur. O quae mutatio rerum.*

"There were groups that wore colours and groups that didn't. There were groups whose members were no longer called Meier or Schulze or Zimmermann, but who were simply men who had previously studied medicine or law or philology and who therefore, apparently, were transmuted into Teutons or Normans or heaven knows what. And then, too, they were split up into Catholics or Protestants. And each university had staked its claim, and they were split up according to the faculties, law, medicine, philology, economics. The mathematicians stuck close together; they knew that everything could be divided save only themselves.

"Instead of attack and defence, equipment and rations (normally a very popular subject), patrols and billets, the talk in each group and sub-group was now all about exams and courses and credits and much else that was totally incomprehensible to me. The tap-room no longer contained a company of volunteers for the defence of Upper Silesia. It was a picture in miniature of the confused and confusing student life of Germany, a highly specialised and very complicated world.



"Mugs were banged on the tables. The perspiring waitresses struggled in with load after heavy load of foaming tankards and glasses. The din increased, and with it the merriment and laughter. Now remarks began to be shouted from table to table in the students' jargon, half German, half Latin, which I could not always understand. The room was full of smoke and singing and shouting, challenges were offered and accepted, and still the waitresses struggled through it all with fresh tankards and glasses."

"It's appalling!" groaned Professor Schücking. "That's just the way they behave at the university here. Even today!"

"I can't say I think it's appalling," I said. "It seems to me quite right that the old student traditions should be kept alive, even if it's only the empty form. At the time I'm talking about I thought it all a lot of fun. Though I did feel that the gaiety could be brought a little up to date by the introduction of modern methods. I remember asking one of my student comrades what his subject was. He said he was a *stud. math.* My reply was obvious: I told him he looked like one. Three minutes later a ceremonious-looking gentleman appeared at my table and informed me that I had grievously offended his friend's honour. He required satisfaction. Since the choice of weapon was mine I decided on heavy mine-throwers."

"But . . . but that's a sort of cannon, isn't it?" asked the professor.

"Not quite," I said. "It's like a cannon but the principle is different." I explained the difference.

"And with this . . . this murderous weapon . . . you actually . . ." Professor Schücking seemed out of breath.

"Yes," said I. "It seemed to me just the thing. And up to date, too. I'd been trained in the use of mine-throwers whereas I'd never so much as handled a sabre. One used to hang on the wall of my father's study, but I was strictly forbidden to touch it. Apart from that a heavy mine isn't really so dangerous. It's a big thing, you can see it coming through the air, and if you're quick enough you can dodge into a safe place."

"And then . . . then you really . . ."

"No, of course not. I merely wanted to carry out a *reductio ad absurdum* of students' customs and habits, and to do it in my own fashion. But, Professor, what is noteworthy about the incident is this: my proposal did not end in general laughter and amusement. Quite the contrary. A council of honour was called at which the matter was debated at length and in all seriousness. The final decision was that the duel was in order. . . ."

"In order!" cried the professor.

"Yes, but it was simultaneously decided that it must be postponed. My joke resulted in a sort of general armistice. It was agreed that no duels were to take place between members of the company so long as the fighting in Upper Silesia continued. They were all to be settled

later. But later, of course, I could no longer get hold of two heavy mine-throwers. So, much to my embarrassment, I have never been in a position to give satisfaction to my mathematical opponent.”

The professor shook his head, more forcefully than ever. At the moment I was glad I was not a student in international law undergoing a *viva voce* examination. He peered at me attentively and then began to talk of other matters.

Never has Vienna seemed more remote than that day, in the South of France, when I received the letter with the Viennese postmark. I studied the handwriting and decided it must have been written either by a small child who was top of his orthography class or else by a retired equerry. When I opened it, however, I found that it was from Othmar Spann, the professor of social economics at Vienna University. I only knew Professor Spann from his writings, and he could only have known me from mine. He asked me in this letter to come to Vienna. He wished to make my acquaintance, and he offered me the opportunity of working with him in the Sociological Institute of Vienna University.

It was in a spirit of grim humour rather than of earnestness that I replied. This in itself was against my usual custom, which is to leave all letters unanswered. I told him that I would willingly have come to Vienna but that unfortunately I did not possess the price of a ticket. Even if that difficulty were somehow overcome I would still be quite unable to leave France owing to the debts I had contracted in that country.

Professor Spann's reply was a draft for ten thousand francs, which was enough to pay half my debts and to buy me a ticket. I dropped everything and set off at once.

Now, as I write these lines, I am once again far from Vienna, for I am on the island of Sylt, in the North Sea. I have just been to see Hans Zehrer, I might say my friend Hans Zehrer, who lives in a little house on the edge of the salt flats.

“Do you remember,” I said to him, “once asking me to write a ‘Letter from Austria,’ for your newspaper, the *Tägliche Rundschau*?”

“Of course I do,” he replied. “That must have been, let me see, yes, that must have been 1932.”

“It was,” I said. “I'd just arrived from France and intended to go on to Vienna the next day.”

“Rowohlt had told me you were passing through,” said Zehrer. “I took the opportunity to have a word with you. I was very eager to see what your opinions about Austria would be.”

I said:

“Do you remember, Zehrer, the first speech that Dollfuss delivered as Austrian Chancellor to the League of Nations in Geneva? It made an

ineradicable impression on me, if only because of its opening sentence which seemed to put the whole Austrian problem in a nutshell. Dollfuss began: 'The situation of Austria is a singular one.' And how true. It always was singular, it always will be, and it was never more so than in that year, 1932, when I was in Vienna. I could observe its singularity in one tiny sector, in Vienna University, but there it was intense, in essence as it were."

"Go on," said Zehrer.

I went on.

The situation in Austria was indeed singular (I said). It has been said that the Weimar Republic collapsed in 1932 because a multiplicity of political parties was scrambling for shreds of power. In Austria there were only two parties. Here the development had been something else. Eventually in Germany every possibility and permutation of coalitions among the very small, the small, the medium, the large and the very large parties was exhausted because they had exhausted the people's patience. In Austria, since 1918, the division had been clear-cut: black and red. Here it was the permanency that was exhausted, not the possibility of change, and sooner or later the country was bound to come to blows.

There could be no doubt that Vienna was on the brink of civil war.

I had no idea why Othmar Spann had written urging me to come to Vienna, nor did I know what he expected of me now that I was there. I told him so at once. He laughed and said I must be satisfied to begin as a student among students, attending, under his guidance, classes and lectures, and that while so doing I would work closely with him.

Othmar Spann was a small, thin man with the head of an actor. And to start with this strange mixture of ascetic scholar and cunning politician seemed to me really to be an actor. Grey-haired and clean-shaven with lines of mimicry on his face, if he had no affectations it was surely because an absence of pose is the hall-mark of the highest histrionic talent. He was Catholic, Catholic throughout, in the Austrian style that makes no great business of religion though permeated with Catholicism through and through. In this connection it may be remarked that an admixture of scholarship, politics and histrionics is no rare attribute of the Catholic cleric. Spann's teaching has been frequently reproached with being insidious Catholic propaganda, but this reproach—if it be one at all—does not really hit the mark; in any case, it was not as Catholic as all that. Far more characteristic of the man is the fact that his wife—engaged in a field of activity which is for me unfortunately for ever closed, that of lyric poetry—was a descendant of Martin Luther.

I went to Othmar Spann's next lecture, in the largest of the University's lecture halls, and found a seat on a bench much carved by penknives. On my one side sat a general wearing the uniform of the

Austrian army, on my other a girl in Bohemian clothes. From the very first moment I was enthralled. Spann, who was greeted by a deafening, thunderous ovation, was lecturing on social economy. I believe that in those realms of abstract knowledge, which consist of opinions and not of facts, and where original research in the true sense of the word is therefore an impossibility, instruction usually follows a more or less standard pattern. The teacher produces the recognised theories, both contemporary and historic, in their broader outlines first of all and then proceeds to examine them in detail with objectivity and warmth. Finally he skilfully torpedoes them from behind.

Othmar Spann was a past-master at this art. I cannot deny that I derived an indescribable pleasure from watching him at work. He would produce the major theories of social economy like Father Christmas taking so many bright and pretty balloons from his toy-sack: he would blow them up so that they floated, round and handsome, until it seemed that at any moment a friendly up-draught would carry the elegant things towards the ceiling: but no: with a prick of his own sharp theory he would burst them, and with a sad squeak and a *pyfff* noise they would slowly collapse until nothing was left save a little, ugly, shrivelled piece of damp rubber: and this Spann would disdainfully push aside with his toe. Nobody could accuse him of not mastering his material or for failing to give justice where justice was due. It was just that over everything that lived and moved he would pop his own teaching like a glass bell. There was nothing that he would not, with the greatest readiness and self-assurance, insert into this bell of his. And if he in no wise failed to expose in the greatest detail the remarkable efforts that had been made by others to fit all human existence comfortably into a single theory—his own teaching itself pretended to just such universality.

I had to work hard. Never in my life have I worked as hard as I did in Vienna. Spann did not limit himself to any one subject. In his lectures and classes, and particularly in the Sociological Institute, he kept us in a state of breathlessness. With gay insouciance he would plunge into the jealous preserves of his easily mortified colleagues. Nor was he satisfied with making himself quite at home in fields far removed from his own. He expected his pupils to be equally ready to dabble in history and geography, philosophy and theology, literature and jurisprudence. The written material we were expected to master was almost greater than the instructional material of his faculty, and the list of books which he pressed into my hand—giving me at the same time a date in the near future by which he expected me to have read them—was very long. It contained every documented manifestation of the German spirit of the past two thousand years, with the testimony of every great man, from Plato to Othmar Spann. The phalanx of quarrelsome divines marched solidly forward, as did the squadrons of noble Olympians, each saying

his piece. There were Meister Ekkehard and the mystics: there was the whole romantic movement from Novalis to Eichendorff. They provided, as it were, the citadel from whose battlements Spann's forces sallied forth. And of course there was Goethe, the stately sage of Weimar. His life had not been in vain, for it seems that every word from his pen was pure social-economic doctrine.

I was with Othmar Spann by day and by night. He was one of the most stimulating people I have ever met, and also one of the most exhausting. His desire to include everything into his all-embracing system had really become a sort of mania with him. This was his greatness and, at the same time, his danger. His system culminated in a modern conception of the state and its economy. The conception visualised the arranging of all social life as an organic whole based on the class structure. The principles of this social organism were those which had reached their highest point of fruition in the Middle Ages and which survived into our age. But I shall not attempt here to describe his whole doctrine in all its well-rounded and logical beauty.

It is certainly easy enough today to laugh at all this, though at the time it seemed clear and simple and deceptively attainable. Othmar Spann's system and concepts contained the secret of the 'third force.' Why should it not have been possible to find a solution other than day-to-day compromises—a solution that would really have extricated us from our actual appalling situation in which two mutually irreconcilable forces were bent on one another's destruction? Did not Othmar Spann's system include everything for which the parties longed and dreamed and which neither could realise simply because the other fought against it? Could not the state really decide both in religious and in social matters? Could not the classes and the state be reconciled? The peasants and the workers? The industrialists and the politicians? Culture and civilisation? Authority and liberty? The masses and the individual? Did it not all follow, logically and smoothly, all fitting necessarily together like a well-constructed machine? Was not this the solution, the reconciliation, the power and the glory, amen? And Germany? Why not Germany too? Germany?

Needless to say, Spann was in favour of the Anschluss. Did not his system offer endless possibilities for this? It was so sensible, so organic, the magical key that opens every door. Once this solution for Austria had been thought out, and prepared and completed, the Anschluss must follow. There was only one possible way for the Anschluss to take place: it could not—hup!—be the incorporation of Austria into the German Reich, it must be—hopla!—the incorporation of Germany into the Austrian Reich.

In October Raffael and Adalbert, Spann's two sons, asked me if I would care to accompany them to a gymnastic festival at Leitmeritz in Bohemia, where they were driving for the day. Since I did not know

the neighbourhood I willingly accepted their invitation. Raffael and Adalbert informed me that in Leitmeritz a united front of all the Sudeten Germans was to be formed, a union of all the various Sudeten German groups. Konrad Henlein was awaiting us.

As we drove up, there he stood, a great, gaunt, bony man with a somewhat wooden face who nearly crushed my hand when he shook it. He looks like a gymnastics instructor, I said to myself, and at the time I had no idea that that was in fact his profession. It was a hard face, lined by the intensity of his thought: where other men have wrinkles he had runes. Yes, he was a gymnastics instructor like old Jahn, and was indeed head of all the Sudeten German gymnastic clubs. Now gymnastics are something quite different from sport. Sport is passionate, while gymnastics are an attitude towards the world, the racial metaphysics of the body. The Sudeten Germans held their gymnastic displays and those who took part in them provided, as it were, the bodyguard of the threatened national existence. The Czechs and the Poles had kept up their *Sokols* from the period when they too had been oppressed peoples. They were all exactly the same, save that the national characteristics expressed were different. In the Sudetenland, then, the gymnastic clubs constituted the real German opposition to the Czechs, as in the Hapsburg period the *Sokols* had been the true Czech opposition to the Germans. Also present at this particular festival were representatives from Moravia, clean, well-fed, upstanding and impressive men, spokesmen for the peasants in the rich Moravian lands—they were the outposts of the Germans in that province.

The purpose of the festival was to unite the Bohemian Germans and the Moravian Germans in one organisation. This was a critical moment, as Henlein informed us at once, in a conspiratorial whisper: a few days before, the Czech authorities had suddenly pounced on the Sudeten National-Socialists, had seized their homes and offices and had arrested all their leaders indiscriminately. In a few brief words I expressed my regret at this occurrence; but after overcoming his momentary surprise Henlein made it clear to me, in an even more sinister whisper, that this was on the contrary a golden opportunity. It seemed that the Sudeten National-Socialists, acting on orders from the Party in Germany, had constantly opposed any union of the Bohemian and Moravian Germans which would not be led by themselves and incorporated in their organisation. "Aha!" said I, and Adalbert and Raffael nodded and smiled significantly.

We went into the hall where the constituent representatives of the Germans in Bohemia and Moravia were gathered together. It was the biggest hall in the town. On the tables, covered with red cloth, were mats with the trusty trade-mark of the Pilsen brewery, and on the chairs sat the gymnasts in their dark grey jackets buttoned up to the neck—Konrad Henlein wore one too—and the representatives of the

Moravian peasants in their sombre civilian clothes. They talked in whispers only, for on the platform at the end of the room there stood a gigantic Czech police officer, twisting his remarkably round helmet between his fingers and gazing out majestically over the hall. When Henlein stepped up to the lectern at the side of the hall, this police officer sat down, took out a weighty notebook, and produced a pencil, the end of which he proceeded to lick significantly. Then the chief orator of the festival got up to speak. This was Walter Heinrich, the Peter among Spann's apostles, his closest colleague, friend and confident, a pale, thin, fanatical man, incredibly learned, a wild and deadly intellectual.

As soon as Heinrich began I concentrated my attention on the police officer. Heinrich spoke of the doctrine of social economy, of the class structure, of universality and of Othmar Spann. It was a most carefully prepared lecture in the best academic tradition. The police officer stared threateningly about the room, then at the ceiling, then at his helmet and finally he put his notebook away and sank into a passionate reverie no doubt connected with his post-prandial game of cards. I wondered what thoughts could have passed through his head and I decided he must have said to himself: "This is a different sort, not nearly so dangerous as the People's Sport lot." For beneath the flag of People's Sport, the Sudeten National-Socialists had carefully launched their iron-clad which was to sail against and, if possible, torpedo the Czech ship of state. I imagine that the police officer regarded sport as far more subversive than gymnastics, and no doubt he believed the Police Sports Union to be much more important than the Czech *Sokols*.

The Bohemian Germans and those from Moravia, however, sat bolt upright and stared at Walter Heinrich in dead silence. I asked myself what it could be that made these men, these good men with their good, patient, attentive, willing faces, sit so still. I had then neither enough imagination nor enough experience to realise that what they were hearing, beneath the dry crust of academic learning, was a prophecy, a promise of salvation, which to them was like rain in the desert, a rain for which the parched earth yearned. When Heinrich had finished his speech, which was the dullest lecture I'd ever sat through either inside or out of a lecture-hall, the Sudeten Germans all stood up and sang. The police officer awoke with a noticeable start, but he got to his feet and remained standing until they had finished. Singing for me is lyric poetry mixed with music and religion, three realms from which I am excluded. I cannot remember a tune, but I do know that this song swelled in volume as it neared its end and that the text expressed longing and hope, a true cry from the soul. The words were something like: "When will the saviour of our country come?" or "Where is the man who will free our bonds?" And I watched those willing eyes, those tense, devoted faces, and I felt ashamed to be standing there, apart from

it all, cold and yet moved, thinking to myself: "So that's it: you've been told about doctrine, but you're waiting for a man."

And then in a few minutes it was over. Henlein spoke for the gymnasts, and a representative of the Moravians spoke, and a brief resolution was passed calling for an amalgamation of the two organisations. Hands were raised in its support. An executive committee was appointed and Walter Heinrich was in it, Spann's representative. It had been neatly done. Spann's sons glanced at one another and smiled.

I thought: "I imagined that the Spanns have some reason or other for bringing me here. But now what's up?" It seemed to me that it would not be honest on my part to join in their game. I'm no spoilsport, but still it seemed to me that I could not decently play a part in this one. I knew that whatever might be expected of me—not by the Spanns, but by these upright, loyal Sudeten Germans—whatever it might be, I could never fulfil those expectations. I was here as a private individual. There was nothing behind me, no power or body of opinion nor, damn it all, was I anybody's mouthpiece. If I spoke it was in my name only; my presence at this meeting was no sort of promise and offered no sort of hope. But I'd been taken by surprise. I couldn't say that here: in the first place for the technical reason that the meeting was over: in the second place, because I would by so doing have destroyed too much honest belief: in the third place because my words would have been misunderstood and would finally have been regarded as a particularly low and dirty trick.

Later, when a few of us were sitting in Konrad Henlein's little hotel room—without the police officer—and were getting down to the real work of building an organisation, I said what was on my mind. I felt wretched, as though I were abusing a confidence, whereas in fact it was my confidence that had been abused. And I discovered that what I had suspected was indeed the case: in accounting for my presence at this meeting they had assumed that I was a secret representative of the forbidden National-Socialist movement. After all, I came from Germany, and they knew that nobody in Germany bothered about the Sudeten Germans except the National-Socialists. The two Spanns smiled to themselves, but Henlein was honestly upset when I told him I could not take part. In fact Henlein's concept was both simpler and more honourable than I had originally believed it to be. The Sudeten Germans should form an organisation which, according to the requirement of the time, would be sufficiently solid and representative to withstand the pressure from the Czech majority within the country and to force the state to grant at least a considerably greater degree of autonomy than they had at present. In case of future incorporation into Germany, which was not regarded as a practical consideration at that time, this organisation should be strong and well established enough to be able to resist the political tendencies of National-Socialism, tenden-



cies which Henlein both knew and feared. I doubted whether he would succeed in this undertaking. But at this time all the ingredients had only just been thrown into the pot, the fire was lit beneath it, and the mixture was beginning to steam and bubble: what the dish would taste like when done was anybody's guess. I regretted that I had been so uselessly dragged into the matters of which I was now told. They envisaged small but attractive future jobs for me in connection with their projects. But I feared that if I once said A I should find myself inevitably going on to B and, before I knew where I was, I'd be reciting the whole alphabet. And that I was not prepared to do.

We had a long, and at times bitter, discussion. We'd doubtless have gone on talking until the break of day if suddenly a young gymnast had not burst into the room crying:

"Police! The Czechs are here!"

The police were indeed there, the Czech police. On the square in front of the hotel, within the circle of parked cars, I saw the glitter of steel helmets, and already heavy footsteps were hurrying towards us along the corridor.

"Police!" said Konrad Henlein. "So that's it. . . ."

Having got to know the inside of so many Prussian prisons I felt absolutely no desire to repeat the experiment with Czech ones. That sort of thing becomes monotonous eventually. But there were the police. They burst into the room, with the enormous police officer, an expression of triumph on his face, at their head.

"Who owns the black Mercedes down there in front of the hotel?" His voice was hoarse and tense.

"I do," said Adalbert Spann, going pale.

In a voice of thunder the police officer shouted:

"You? Then you must pay a fine. It's parked in the wrong place."

From that time on I steered clear of the Spanns' extra-curricular activities and confined myself to my studies.

Then, in early 1933, when what I had never regarded as unavoidable appeared to be unavoidable, I spoke to Othmar Spann. He was dumbfounded when I told him I feared we must separate.

"But why?" he asked in amazement.

I said, laboriously enough, that I had read all the books he had told me to read, that we had spent days and nights together and had discussed everything we had to discuss, that I'd listened to his lectures and attended his classes, that there had even been reports on my scholastic progress—"Very good reports too," he remarked, which made it even more difficult to say what I had to say. I said that I did not believe myself to be below average in intelligence, which made it all the harder for me to admit that I had never succeeded in grasping what he actually meant when he talked about "class structure."

"But . . . but . . ." said Spann and he was hurt. I was extremely

fond of him, yet I had to say that even if I never succeeded in understanding it, his doctrine seemed to me a good doctrine, an exceptionally fine doctrine, superbly adapted to the needs of, say, Lower Austria, but not suitable to the Ruhr.

Othmar Spann was upset. He told me he had felt we worked so well together, that I had been a great help to him, and I was ashamed somehow when he said he could understand that I was unwilling to work and fight for a cause in which I no longer believed. With that extraordinarily stupid clumsiness that comes over me when I attempt to offer anybody consolation, I replied that that wasn't it at all: I was quite prepared to fight for a cause even though I did not believe in all its aspects: that worse doctrines than his had achieved power and realisation and had endured for hundreds of years. No, that was not it, that was not what I meant. I knew something that he did not know, that he could not know since he had never concerned himself with what was going on up north. I said that I could not believe in his political concepts, in the realisable consequences of his doctrine, because I knew that they were wrong in one decisive point, that is to say in their political reality.

"Whether your doctrine of the class state be true or false, Herr Professor, the existence of National-Socialism destroys it."

"But really . . . really . . ." cried Spann. "Are we to be frightened by the handful of Nazis in this country, by Frauenfeld and his gang? They're . . . subhuman."

I attempted to explain to him that here, in Austria, everything must be smashed by the existence of National-Socialism—everything, that is, which did not take the existence of National-Socialism into its calculations as a primary factor. Brüning's solution for Germany, I said, had been a real one, and feasible too, with every possibility of success save for one fact which broke it, the fact that the National-Socialists were there, the fact that they had built a movement beneath the surface, so powerful and so blind, so narrow-minded and so aggressive, that even the most sensible solution could not stand against it. Schleicher's solution too, I said, was fundamentally sound, and even Papen's, but all had been smashed as they all must be smashed by the fact that the National-Socialists existed: that alone sufficed to destroy them.

"No, no," cried Spann. "They could never govern a country. What's their policy, their scientific doctrine? What is it? It just doesn't exist. The stuff Rosenberg writes, it's . . . it's rubbish!"

I said that what Rosenberg wrote was undoubtedly rubbish, but I added that that would affect the National-Socialists as little as their lack of scientific doctrine. And then I said, and this I thought was my trump card, that when the National-Socialists came to power in Germany—and I had no doubt that they would do so—the men who had inscribed on their banners the slogan of *Greater Germany* would surely make an Anschluss immediately, would certainly seize Austria at once.

“Yes, and then we’d have it at last, the Anschluss,” said Spann.

I was in despair. He would not see what was coming and I could not explain it to him. He didn’t know National-Socialism, nobody in Austria did; the little groups which had up till then been formed were scarcely noticeable and had certainly had no effect on Austria’s internal struggle for power. How could I, a Prussian, make it clear to Spann, an Austrian, that apart from the few Austrian National-Socialists no group in Austria, no matter how much it might desire an Anschluss, could possibly welcome it in this form?

“Well, if it’s to be the Prussians,” said Spann, “we’ll know how to get along with them. After all, they’ve no scientific doctrine.”

We parted the best of friends, as they say, but distressed as though we had insulted one another.

Zehrer said:

“I’d have enjoyed at that time reading anything you had to say about Austria. Why didn’t you write it down?”

I said:

“I did, Zehrer. It’s all at home, in my house up there on the heath, in a green notebook entitled *Letter from Austria*. I got it out the other day because there are quite a lot of blank pages and I’m always short of something on which to scribble ideas. The paper shortage, you know. I wrote it, Zehrer, but it’s unreadable, useless, it’s a hash of dozens of false starts, a pot-pourri of remarks, crossed out, put back in, crossed out again. It’s as unusable as the diary I kept at the time, full of resentments, stylistically impossible—it’s no good, I was too close to it all. I wanted to swallow Austria like an oyster, but I had to look out that Austria didn’t gobble me up instead. On one page, scribbled in a corner and almost illegible even to myself, I found the sentence: ‘Universality is a pest.’ Badly put, of course, but I know now what it was that I was trying to say: all the great movements in the world, Christianity or Humanism or Marxism, all become infected with a sort of sickness, call it a divine sickness if you like, the sublime plague of universal pretensions. That makes everything so easy for him who accepts and so hard for him who observes. I, I’m not an accepter, I’m a passionately involved observer. That’s why I never became a National-Socialist, and that’s why I had to leave Othmar Spann.”

Zehrer said:

“You did it all wrong. From the very beginning you observed Austria as though it were Prussia.”

I said:

“Yes, I did. I went back to Berlin, not in order to watch the glory of the National-Socialist seizure of power, but because I wanted to talk to Rowohlt about my book, *The Cadets*. I’d been working at it all the time I was in Vienna. I had to, I had to give myself the counter-weight

of Prussia. I've no idea how I ever managed to get it done. I'd sit over my manuscript in the evening, and outside the musicians would sing their sad songs . . . about how there'd be a Vienna and we'd be dead, there'd be girls and we'd be dead . . . and when I stopped writing towards dawn I could be sure that outside somebody would be singing about how one day it'll all be over and about tombs and coffins. . . . I had to have *The Cadets* as an antidote to the whole macabre atmosphere down there.

"I went to Berlin by way of Munich, where I had to change trains. On Munich station I acquired a powerful escort of brown-shirts, headed by Ernst Roehm. He was going to Berlin, so I went with him. Roehm recognised me, though we had not met since August, 1922, shortly before I went to gaol.

" 'Where have you come from?' he asked, while his clanking escort gazed at me respectfully.

" 'France, Spain and Austria,' I replied smartly. He took me into his compartment and I admired the handsome overcoat he was wearing, and his brown silk shirt, and his perfectly tailored breeches.

" 'Yes,' he said with satisfaction, 'the days are over when we had to run about dressed like scarecrows.'

"Roehm and his people were drunk with the assurance of victory. Later they became drunk on something else. Bottle after bottle was respectfully passed into the compartment with the remark: 'For the chief of staff.' We knocked the necks off them and drank.

" 'You'll be joining us, of course!' Roehm said.

" 'Who is us?' I asked.

" 'You must come in with me. I need your sort.'

" 'For what?'

" 'I appoint you an SA—*Standartenführer* here and now.'

" 'That's a fine appointment. But what I want is something to do.'

" 'Well, in that case how about an appointment at supreme SA headquarters?'

"It was quite hopeless to attempt to show Roehm that an appointment and something to do were not identical. He spoke of deployment and *Gleichschaltung* and the seizure of power and I gave up.

" 'Have a look at this man,' he finally said in irritation to his adjutant who had sat there, with a cold and expressionless face, occasionally leaning back while he raised a bottle to his lips or leaning forward to say: 'Right, chief of staff!' The adjutant leaned forward and said:

" 'Right, chief of staff!'

"Roehm nodded in my direction:

" 'Man's an intellectual. Nothing to be done with him.' Then, turning to me and with the intention of being polite, he added: 'We can't do without you intellectuals altogether. You'll be made a counsellor and you'll keep your trap shut.'

"I leaned forward and said:

" 'Right, chief of staff!'

"Then I slapped him on the back and took a swig from the bottle.

"It was utterly hopeless. But I had, as you might say, come home."

Zehrer said:

"What happened to Othmar Spann?"

I said:

"Shortly after the National-Socialists seized power he came to Berlin. I met him in the Radio Building where, for the first and last time in my life so far, I had been reading a passage of my works, a chapter from *The Cadets*, skilfully beamed for reception only in Africa. But Spann had actually spoken on the wireless, about Austria and the Anschluss, I think. Spann told me he was most enthusiastic about everything in Germany: he said I mustn't oppose the Anschluss, everybody in Austria desired it. I remarked cautiously:

" 'Would you really approve if your Gauleiter Frauenfeld were to be in power in Austria?'

"He replied angrily:

" 'But please, please . . . those people are subhuman!'

" 'Yes,' said I, 'and the ones up here are superhuman. But different as they may be in all other matters, they have one thing in common: you can't get around them.'

"We said no more, since we were seated in the underground at the time. When I left Spann I felt that everything between us was over now.

"We know what happened to Austria. In 1934 Fey and Stahremberg, the leaders of the *Heimwehr*, just pressed the button, and the artillery of the army and the *Heimwehr* blew the republican *Schutzbund* to pieces. and with it the workers' homes. Whether in fact garbage trucks disguised as tanks raced through the streets of Vienna, I cannot say. And then the National-Socialists just pressed the button and Dollfuss was dead. Next came Schuschnigg to give Austria a new form, its own. The situation of Austria was indeed a singular one. Austria had to have its own brand of Fascism, which was looked at askance by the 'genuine' or 'orthodox' fascists and was curtly dismissed as Austro-Fascism—just as Austro-Marxism was looked at askance by the 'genuine' or 'orthodox' Marxists.

"Othmar Spann played no direct part in Schuschnigg's Austro-Fascist government, though he knew Schuschnigg well; whether he would not or could not I do not know. But Schuschnigg's concept of Austro-Fascism was in fact Othmar Spann's concept of the Christian state based on the class structure. What we students at the Sociological Institute had heatedly discussed and brooded over till our backsides ached became, under Schuschnigg, political reality. It was only the existence of National-Socialism that smashed it.

"I heard later that on the day the German troops entered Vienna

Othmar Spann assembled his family about him, drew the cork from a bottle of champagne, and announced: "This is the happiest day of my life!" Two hours later he was under close arrest and began a lengthy stretch inside. Later, it seems, he was allowed to retire into the mountains and live what I believe is called a life of rustic solitude."

Zehrer said:

"I have always regarded the Anschluss as a major political blunder. The sensible solution was so obvious and simple. We should have kept the ball tossing between Berlin and Vienna—a political ball-game between the Wilhelmstrasse and the Ballhausplatz. That was the answer."

"Yes, Zehrer," said I, "you're quite right, that would have been the sensible solution. The world is crammed with sensible solutions. It is a great pity that they are as inapplicable to political problems as are ethical judgments to the study of history."

"I don't agree with you," said Zehrer.

"You," said I, "are both a Christian and an Austrian."

Zehrer said:

"Those last two years of the Weimar Republic were intellectually one of the most fruitful periods of our history. Never before had there been so much thinking and planning in Germany. The shell was suddenly broken as the old figures of the Weimar period began one by one to disappear. Above the clouds of stale jargon, heads suddenly began to appear on all sides, talking in a language which, in quite a new sense, was common to them all. Suddenly the old, outworn divisions no longer existed, the foolish distinctions derived from parliamentary seating arrangements of 'Left' or 'Right,' suddenly the ideological flood subsided and it was possible to talk sensibly. It was like a draught of fresh air. Everything seemed possible if only we set about it the right way, and everywhere there was the strength to do just that. What had for years on end been preached as the ultimate wisdom no longer seemed to apply, and it all assumed a new meaning. But then it became apparent that in every discussion a silent guest was present, who was usually invisible and yet who controlled it; for he posed the theme, prescribed the methods and decided on the direction. And this silent guest was Adolf Hitler. His silence was weird if not actually sinister. And since he was not to be grasped and pinned down in argument, the discussion circled through ideas and projects, worries and anxieties about itself, broke down, struggled to its feet and finally began all over again from the beginning. Even as early as the late twenties men of all parties were meeting and talking, from 'Right' to 'Left.' Yes, even the Communist intellectuals were sociable and sparkled in conversation for the amusement and titillation of the others. Only the National-Socialists never took part. To begin with everybody

thought that eventually they too would turn up and would enjoy the excited and exciting talk: their absence was put down to the fact that they had, as yet, no intellectuals amongst them. But they didn't come, they've never come, even today they don't. And while the talk went on between the fish course and the meat and arguments were heatedly set up and heatedly demolished over the teacups or the whisky, the SA marched with steady tread through the streets of the cities. Of all the weeds which sprang up so gaily, none was a match for the rise of National-Socialism. None, that is, until the advent of Schleicher. He had the right idea!"

"A general like many others and a chancellor like many others, and smashed like them all."

"He had the concept," insisted Zehrer. "It was possible, even in 1932 it was still possible, to cut the Gordian knot of interminable discussion and to turn out the silent guest."

"In order to start the discussion again?"

"Yes, good God! And why not, if the discussion could now take place on a different, positive level, without the permanent, frightful, deadly threat that was offered by the rising tide of faceless power? Schleicher wished to give the National-Socialists absolutely no power; he wanted to fight them; he desired the *ultimo ratio*. I knew him and he left me in no doubt whatever about that. Once when I was with him—he was Chancellor at the time—the changing of the guard took place in the courtyard below. The old guard was marching off, drums and bugles in front, and Schleicher, as was the tradition, got up and walked over to the window. He gazed down for a short time and then he turned to me and said: 'That is finally all that is left us. That is the only real power.'"

"But the concept! Power for what?"

"I was pleased that he did not look further. What more should he have desired? Yet another new *Weltanschauung* with which he in his turn could bewitch the masses? Calling in Beelzebub to drive out the Devil? He had no illusions. He knew perfectly well that perhaps for ten, fifteen, perhaps even for twenty years, his government must rely on bayonets, but eventually that state of affairs was bound to pass. After all, the National-Socialists had already surrendered once when confronted by the old Reichswehr. It was a tough business. But Schleicher had no hesitation in being as tough as need be."

"Yet he wasn't."

"That was not his fault nor the Reichswehr's. The commanders of the military districts were behind him. The generals at that time weren't at all a bad lot. They were far better than we are nowadays led to believe. They were products of Seeckt's training and had all been young General Staff Officers at the end of the first World War. They'd been captains and majors, clever, quick and not worn out. Nor did the

Seeckt period wear them out; it trained them. Maybe their advancement had been somewhat too rapid and life made a bit too easy for them, and perhaps one or two of them were already satiated with their professional success—but there can be no doubt that they would have fought for the Reichswehr, which after all was *their* Reichswehr, created and formed by them. As for the younger officers, it was harder to say. It was not possible to be so certain of them, but of the generals, yes. Unconditionally! They were ready to shoot; rather, they were eager to do so.”

“It is well known that military men believe war to be the father of everything. But I have yet to meet one who admits that if this is so, then civil war is the mother.”

“Schleicher realised it. It was precisely this which elevated his readiness to act to the level of a concept. He planned to rely on forces which had not yet reached their full development and fruition. In foreign policy close co-operation with Russia was, so to speak, a tradition of the Reichswehr handed down from the time of Bismarck. In internal politics there was one force that had not exhausted itself in the parliamentary system. The parties were finished, but not the trade unions. Schleicher wanted socialism! He wanted a serious, rigorous form of it: he wished, he said, to organise the German economy on the basis of poverty, which he said was the true economic basis in Germany. His concept of socialism was a far more serious one than that of the unions themselves. Leipart, the president of the unions, was actually frightened of his courage. He was all prepared to co-operate, but over his shoulder there was always the question: ‘What will Bumke say?’ Bumke was president of the *Reichsgericht*, the national supreme court. Leipart, willing as he was, was scared of Schleicher’s logic, for Schleicher was ready if need be to rule without the constitution. The tragedy of the Weimar system is that it was shipwrecked on legality.

“This,” said Zehrer, “was the characteristic feature of 1932. A man who says A must also say B. Severing’s people had already reached Z. Schleicher wanted to begin the alphabet again from the beginning. He wished to establish the law anew, to draw up a fresh constitution which would really be a constitution for Germany: for many years nobody had been able to say this about the Weimar document. The chief reason for the Left opposing his proposals was their distrust of the phrase ‘military dictatorship.’ The worthy, second-rate politicians had seen the bogey painted on the wall too often. This was no real threat to his concept, but it counted against him all the same: it was the legacy of seventy years’ constitutional development in Germany, beginning with the constitutional conflict of 1862 to 1866. And the circumstances were almost exactly the same as then. When Bismarck, supported by the confidence of his king and by Moltke’s and Roon’s army, governed despite the *Landtag* and the majorities, it seemed to be the only way of



realising the unity of the Reich. In 1932 it seemed to Schleicher the only way of preserving the Reich.

“It wasn’t the existence of National-Socialism that smashed Schleicher, it was quite different things, which he could not have reckoned with since they were of a personal nature. He was the epitome of a type which even then was becoming rare, the artistic military man. He was unusually well educated, of wide interests, and clever; he had a Protestant sobriety and energy as well as a very quick mind. One might almost say that it was his positive virtues that wrecked him. His ideas relied on a single and, as it seemed, very fortunate circumstance—his relationship with the old gentleman, with Hindenburg. He too was a general, he had belonged to the same regiment as the field-marshal, and they had both been brought up with the same point of view—if ever there was a chance for the reestablishment of that extraordinarily productive mutual trust between head of the state and chancellor which had marked the relationship between Bismarck and King Wilhelm I, this seemed to be it. When Schleicher assumed the office of Chancellor of the Reich he was naturally entirely confident of having Hindenburg’s complete trust.

“It is extraordinarily hard to establish what went on in the old gentleman’s head at the period. As time went by Schleicher came to the conclusion that what appealed less and less to the old gentleman was Schleicher’s socialism. The old man could stomach socialist views when they were presented to him by the proper people, by professional socialists, as it were. He could accept it and indeed expect it from such people—and, besides, there was no need to fear them. After all, there was the constitution—Hindenburg knew it by heart—and it was basically incompatible with socialism; there was the inherent legality of those people; and there were ample, available counter-weights. But now along comes Schleicher and talks as though he were in earnest! A man from his own old regiment! A deserter, you might almost say, and a dangerous one at that! Energetic, industrious, clever and plainly without legal scruples if it should come to blows, in a word a soldier. Schleicher seemed to him sinister and made him feel uncomfortable. And so it happened that when Schleicher went over to the offensive he did not get proper support from the old man—finally when Schleicher sent him papers to sign he would hesitate, and by the end he would not sign them at all.

“Once things had reached this stage, and once the knowledge of what was going on began to leak out, it was clear that everybody who could smell what was happening would begin to veer off, because it wasn’t a very nice smell—the intellectuals, the originally compliant bourgeoisie, on the lower level weathercocks and creatures like the Jewish businessman who told Kurt Tucholsky that he was ready to make do with the National-Socialists, ‘since at least they won’t go round tapping peoples’

tills' . . . but they did tap the tills . . . and on the highest level men like Meissner and Papen who kept whispering in the old gentleman's ear: 'They're coming, the National-Socialists, they're inevitable, and anyhow it's quite constitutional that they should get in, in fact it's high time that things were made easy for them so as to save what is still to be saved, so as to avoid the worst,' and so on and so forth. No, it was personal things that smashed Schleicher. Nor was it unavoidable that that should happen."

"That's a tragedy, certainly, but a tragedy for Schleicher alone. History keeps no record of opportunities missed."

"I daresay, but politics do. And today we're being confronted with the bill, item by item. Today we're all held responsible. Today we are asked not only: 'What did you do?' but also: 'What did you fail to do?'"

And with that we had reached the end of our conversation. Who in fact was responsible if not each one of us? The president and the handful of men in his immediate environment? For a hundred years there had been a mounting outcry against government by cliques: the result had been not to do away with that sort of rule but to multiply it until every parish, every village, had its ruling junta. The demonisation of 'the people' had been going on for a hundred years. But in 1932 the people were tired, worn out, with seven million unemployed to whom any solution was acceptable. The demonisation of socialism, too, was a process a century old. But no one had a positive belief in that particular demon, since demons are not susceptible to positive belief—they simply allow men to give in to them and be mastered by them. The Germans of 1932 accepted the demon of National-Socialism, whose essence was compulsion, and they gave in to it.

Zehrer said:

"During those months in 1932 when I wanted political information I didn't go to see the politicians: nor did I visit the ministries where men sat in office after office whispering together and basing their wisdom on what the valet had overheard or on the remark that a certain very important person had let slip at breakfast: I did not ask the German journalists because they knew even less than usual and, besides, if they were smart they went to the same source as myself: no, I talked to the foreign correspondents. They knew everything, their information was exact and up to date: they had come from all four corners of the earth and they burrowed into German politics like a mite into a cheese—with evident relish. They were cynical young men, utterly unemotional and nothing affected them: all doors were open to them and all tongues loosened. There was Knickerbocker, the subtlest newspaperman in the world, writing one book after another about Germany and about Russia."

"All published by Rowohlt," I said, "all Rowohlt books, handsome, very readable, the diagnosis invariably exact, the prognosis never."

“So far as I was in a position to check up on it the prognosis seemed to me to be exact too,” said Zehrer. “When it was all decided, after the Nazis had seized power, I once walked through the city with Knickerbocker. No man looking at him as he trudged along beside me would have guessed that he was far and away the only person who knew exactly what was going on. He was small, untidy, thin, red-haired, freckled and—I think he was of Irish origin—with a most macabre sense of humour. As we passed the old Chancellery I nodded towards the window behind which Bismarck had once sat and where now was Hitler’s office. I asked: ‘What do you think will happen?’ Knickerbocker said: ‘Oh—either the man up there will die or Germany will lose the next war.’ I knew that these alternatives were true. But at the time I was confronted with the ruin of my own smashed career. ‘What,’ I asked, ‘do you think will happen to us?’ and I meant to me, to myself in the most personal sense. Knickerbocker grasped this at once and said: ‘Oh—you’ll freeze to the ground.’”

“And that’s what you did,” said I, “for twelve years. Still, you found it very pleasant there.”

After making a few false starts Zehrer had finally settled on Sylt, that curious stretch of sand surrounded by sea and marsh at the extreme northern tip of Germany. He had found a place on the northern side of the most northerly village, Kampen, on the very edge of the swamp, where the brackish waters of the bay stretch in handsome curves to the dunes of Vogelkoje. There, on the rough heath which was the ultimate dry land, he had built a tiny house, a sort of square mushroom, which the skill of the architect had made to appear far larger inside than out: in any case it was big enough to house Zehrer’s library.

And Zehrer sat for twelve years in his library, whose modifications reflected the changing opinions of its owner. To begin with the shelves were loaded with literary and antiquarian works. Then came the books on military science, on economy and on politics. After a while the classics disappeared, to be followed, piecemeal, by the philosophers: the men of enlightenment were the first to march off, then the humanists, then, in a body, the German idealists: Hegel was the non-commissioned officer who brought up the rear, casting a disapproving glance at the malingeringer, Nietzsche, who remained behind in the form of a single volume of aphorisms. Finally only Dostoievski, Kierkegaard and the fathers of the church were left—apart from the detective stories which filled the second shelf.

I remarked sceptically that Zehrer’s decision to withdraw from the world was one not entirely of his own choosing. I also commented on his refusal to participate in current events, which for a man of the world and a man of action like himself must have cast something of a shadow over his life here in Sylt. He replied:

“You’re wrong, my friend, dead wrong. Schleicher’s ideas were the

last. We resisted the demon up to the end. But eventually it became clear that it was not we who had the responsibility but he, the enemy. And he had been given it not by the people alone! Something had here been decided against which I had fought to the last—and finally there is no decision save that of individuals. Now the decision had gone against us, not against him. The task was his now, not ours. We had to—I had to—respect that, if I were not altogether to deny the value of decisions taken. I could not accept this particular decision for myself, but neither could I fight against it. So of course I had no option but to lie low, though knowledge of danger and the seduction of action grappled within me. Do you understand what I'm talking about?"

Zehrer (I said), you talk about 'tasks' and 'decisions.' Those are words that belong in a world where I cannot follow you, the world of metaphysics. When I told Roehm that I didn't wish for an appointment but wanted something to do, he didn't ask me what task I desired. I'm glad he didn't, because if he had I wouldn't have known what to say. But Roehm didn't ask. Nobody did. Only one person put such a question to me during that fateful January of 1933 when so many 'decisions' were taken, and that man was Ernst Rowohlt. "Well," he said, "what now?" I replied: "Stirring times are coming." Rowohlt denied this. We talked at length about stirring times before we realised that we were not, in fact, discussing the same thing. For Rowohlt, stirring times meant times in which he could sell a great many good books: for me, exactly the opposite. On January 30th, the day of the seizure of power, while the huge, torch-lit procession was streaming through the Brandenburg Gate, I was seated at Rowohlt's reading the last chapter of *The Cadets* aloud to him. Rowohlt had a cold. Being an experienced hypochondriac he had brewed himself a camomile inhalation: he sat over the steaming bowl, his head invisible beneath a napkin that belonged to his baby daughter, and listened. Every now and then a face, dripping with sweat and the colour of a boiled lobster, would appear from amidst the swaddling clothes, a glance from streaming, walrus eyes would be vouchsafed me—which I took for a sign of approval—and I would read on while the head vanished again. When I had finished Rowohlt switched on the radio and we learned that we had just passed through a moment of history, a turning point for the whole wide world.

But it was precisely the insistent—and justified—boast of the National-Socialists that they had made a revolution legally and without bloodshed which succeeded in making a deep and comforting impression on me. At the beginning I may have been inclined to think that the 'Seizure of Power' was not a revolution but merely a spectacular event like, say, a harvest festival organised by some small-holders' association; soon, however, I came round to Ernst Roehm's point of

view and decided that for intellectuals such as myself, who in their political judgments were stubbornly and invariably wrong, the only possible post open was that of counsellor. My only objection was that I felt absolutely no inclination to go to an office at eight a.m. each morning and to spend my days preoccupied with nothing but thoughts of how best I could undermine the man in the office next door.

So there was nothing for me to do save concentrate on my private affairs. Perhaps the statement that the National-Socialist seizure of power really was a 'revolution' is best borne out by the fact that these private affairs of mine suffered an immediate and noticeable change, and one for which public affairs were solely responsible.

I became popular. I cannot help admitting that I 'profiteered.' Perhaps I may be partially spared the worst insinuations in that horrid and insulting word, if I hasten to assert that my popularity lay not with the National-Socialists. The Government and the Party had their hands full during those first few months of power. Whenever they could spare a few minutes from their victory celebrations they had to roll up their sleeves and get to work. No, they were far too busy with the welfare of the nation as a whole to do anything for private individuals, except, of course, for the purveyors of bunting and torches to whom they handed out such meaty contracts.

However, you could almost hear the great German book trade—both literature and the Press—come to a halt, draw breath, and then grind noisily into action once again, setting off more vehemently even than before, though now, of course, in a new direction. This was a machine with which I had so far had only occasional, sporadic contact. Rowohlt took my manuscripts—complaining, as he did so, about how bad a time it was for business, particularly, it seemed, for publishers—and whenever he spoke of my books to me it was principally in order to praise the binding. Press-clippings of reviews went to the publishing house and not to me, and all I ever saw of them were the extracts which Rowohlt saw fit to include in his advertising matter. It never occurred to me to write for the newspapers or for any magazines except those thin and short-lived publications whose contributors were all very young and who, like me, combined a lack of technical knowledge with a sublime certainty in the justness of their political and literary judgments. No history of literature spoke of my work, no illustrated weekly printed my picture and if I was forced to spend a night at Bitterfeld, there was no mention in next day's local paper of the distinguished guest who had honoured the worthy town with his presence.

Be that as it may, it would have ill become me to have desired recognition from the machine which I had frequently and emphatically described as rotten from tip to toe. Indeed, the surprising and almost inexplicable willingness of the more cliquey magazines to give me an encouraging pat on the back seemed to me to be at bottom but another

damnable manifestation of the literary world's corruption: I suppose it filled me with an emotion that must be familiar to a proud cavalryman who finds that he is charging across soft ground.

But the great machine called the publicity business—that prayer-wheel of our age, that blessed invention that allows such a disproportionately large and relatively useless slice of our human society to enjoy the good things of this earth—runs not on the oil of good will but on the hot gases of expediency. So no one will be surprised that from one day to the next, from the 30th to the 31st of January 1933 to be precise, the great machine began to hum with activity. For some time to come it was the same men who held the controls and now they were, of course, as busy as beavers. The temple of fame had to be swept clean, the bay-crowned busts taken from their sockets, and in the storage rooms and attics new heads found, thick with mildew, which they must quickly bring to a high polish to fill the vacant spaces. Booksellers prudently rearranged their shop windows, publishers thoughtfully thumbed through dusty old catalogues in search of authors unjustly forgotten, art-dealers were sunk in contemplation of those realistically painted landscapes which show so well the beauty of the German homeland, and it even happened that the hard-boiled editors of world-famous newspapers, meeting some young poetaster or litterateur in the streets, would not simply pass him by with a nod but would stop, saying: “Why don't you send us something? We're doing a series on the art of letter-writing throughout the centuries. . . .” Literary societies which had yesterday delighted their members with *The Dirge of the Unemployed* now burst into the brassy strains of *We believe in the pastures we sow, We trust in the sheaves that we mow*. If someone pointed out to them that pastures are not usually sown and that the existence of a sheaf proves *ipso facto* that the mowing has already been done, they regarded it as ridiculous niggling: after all, they'd been singing about asphalt not so long ago. The gramophone industry scrapped the records of the *Dreigroschenoper* which had been selling so splendidly and turned out a series of stirring military marches. The radio delighted its listeners with dialogues about the historic townships of the German Rhineland (specially beamed for South America). And I? My dream of once appearing, with photographs, in the pages of the *Berliner Illustrierte* nearly, very nearly, came true.

I'm afraid it was thanks to a remark dropped by Rowohlt that a young photographer came to see me one day and told me about a series of photo features which the *Berliner Illustrierte* was planning—to be entitled *German Poets in their Homes*. I let him show me the photographs he had already taken of my fortunate colleagues. Yes, there they were, seated before their rose-embowered cottages in Bavaria or Westphalia or on the Rhine or beside the stately ocean; their formidable heads might be slightly bowed, yet their glance wandered free and untram-

melled over the fertile countryside: there they stood, in saucy *Lederhosen*, their wrinkled throats emerging from open-necked shirts, leading a life of rural seclusion beneath impressive bookshelves, or carefully scattering corn against the wind for their hungry hens—and the whole photograph seemed to be enriched by the aroma of the coffee which the poet's lady, dressed in her dirndl, was busily preparing on the domestic hearth. Yes, there they were, and my breast swelled with pride at the thought that I, too, was to be included in this festive band.

However, my home at that time was with a Fräulein Antonia Uebel in the Eisenbahn Strasse, at the corner of the Kurfürstendamm. There was nothing worth looking at, except perhaps the grandfather clock in which it was my custom to imprison my landlady's pekingese when I could stand its yapping no longer. I invariably drank my coffee at the *Romanisches Café* by the *Gedächtniskirche*, but when I suggested to the young man that he accompany me there and take some photographs he stubbornly refused. My work room, where I was accustomed to receive the inspiration of my muse, was the so-called 'Berlin Room' of Rowohlt's publishing house at No. 7 Eislebener Strasse: this was really the back part of the entrance hall, and when I looked up from my creative labours my eyes encountered either the sleeve-protectors of Fräulein Siebert—a grey-haired lady in flat-heeled shoes without whom Rowohlt's whole business would have floundered in hopeless chaos—or else the red eiderdowns which hung from the windows across the court and which were occasionally banged energetically by other ladies armed with carpet-beaters. No matter what I proposed as suitable subjects for his photographs, I failed to win the young man's approval. So eventually, in despair, I felt compelled to say that I would buy the prints from him myself, should the *Berliner Illustrierte* not accept them for its series. And that is exactly what happened.

I would not have mentioned this little incident had it not been typical. To one observing it from without the German literary scene must have appeared as a homogeneous concern, a solid phalanx of writers marching steadily towards the future, a body of men in which each had his own place and rank. But this was deceptive. There was in fact no unity of direction, no common impulse and no non-commissioned officers to set the pace and keep the dressing. There were great gaps in the ranks, and whole files were out of step. In fact basically it was every man for himself, and to one who knew the manifold interests and ambitions of the individuals concerned the picture must indeed appear as one of almost utter confusion. My pitiable attempts to find some sort of order in it all did, however, enable me to draw one simple and fairly satisfactory distinction among the more or less anonymous crowd. I divided the phalanx into writers with cars and writers with cottages. It was the former who had, until recently, thriven on the blessed rewards of that *perpetuum mobile*, public opinion.

But now, thanks to the throbbing publicity machine, the nation was becoming aware of those others, living in the peace of the countryside, working and writing in their simple cottages. Needless to say most writers possessed neither motor-car nor country cottage, but still their ambitions ran either to the one or to the other. Now if by my heritage I should have inclined to the former group, by temperament I was drawn to the latter. Thus I was enabled to observe with a certain detachment the struggle which soon broke out and which swayed backwards and forwards on many a battlefield, in literary salons, in the Union of German Writers, even in the German Academy of Literature. The groups and the splinter groups unfurled their flags to the wind, and it was soon apparent from which direction it was blowing. It was a wind which brought with it large-calibre letters, printed on the most expensive paper—skilfully lithographed invitations to social gatherings presided over by highly placed personages, by powerful patrons of the arts, by revolutionary organisations in full bloom, by greatly respected establishments both national and foreign. And in the corner was written: lounge suit or uniform. Since I possessed neither the one nor the other I was sadly compelled to forego my entry into society for which I had been longing these many years: only the American and Russian embassies omitted the sartorial *sine qua non*, and thither I went. The Americans entertained me with faintly opalescent and thin-blooded cocktails as well as with little pieces of bread covered with butter and chopped herbs: the Russians gave me clear vodka, caviar and trout in aspic. I can confidently assert that as a representative of German literature I behaved with a modesty and discretion suitable to the achievements of that literature, and that unlike Rowohlt I only very rarely got drunk.

But during all that period, during those months, nay years, in which the nation—what am I saying? in which the world—saw fit to twine the laurel crown about my brow, I regarded myself as a complete fraud and I lived in a constant state of apprehension lest this be one day, horribly, revealed. Undoubtedly the world awaited something significant from me, words of Orphic wisdom, a statement, perhaps, concerning the future of Germany: were I to write so much as one line, though it be of my best, the whole swindle must come out.

The writers with cars soon had a car no longer: they disappeared, they emigrated, or they sought to earn their living in some other profession. The writers with cottages, on the other hand, were now bathed in the full searchlight of fame. For years they had lived in rural solitude, hoeing and planting their vegetable gardens with quiet persistence, selling their produce in the markets of small country towns, providing the people with good, healthy, solid nourishment; it was not for them to dish up the titivating trifles that appeal to the satiated gourmets of an urban civilisation.

I had long admired Hans Grimm, the author of a novel entitled *Volk*



*ohne Raum* and of numerous shorter pieces, usually with an African background. It seemed to me fortunate that here at last was a man who could express an extensive knowledge of the world for reasons other than those of intellectual ambition, who really had struck roots in wide and distant places. I admired the broad scope of his novel, his real understanding of the connection between political and social matters, and his skilful and original sentence-structure. His themes were not a subject of discussion—they did that for themselves—but of argument, which is the best thing that can happen to a writer: learned scholars wrote studies of his work, students produced theses: the University of Göttingen gave him a doctorate, *honoris causa*: public honours were poured upon him: youth cherished him and age listened to his words. But since Hans Grimm's basic attitude towards the questions connected with the creation of a proper, salubrious political and social order invariably culminated in a clear and repeatedly expressed admiration for the *haute bourgeoisie*, I could not believe that he could possibly appreciate my sort of writing—even if he found time to glance at it; for I had always expressed in noisy and hateful terms my contempt for that particular portion of society which, against all expectations, continues to cling so tenaciously to life.

I was therefore all the more surprised to receive a letter from Hans Grimm inviting me to a private 'Writers' Meeting' which he was arranging. The whole tone of his note, brief but uncommonly cordial, proved that the invitation was not tendered in a spirit of mockery and sarcasm; I could assume that he did not plan to use me as a butt for the skilful witticisms of men cleverer and more learned than myself, but that on the contrary this really was the accolade that entitled me to take my place at his round table. Since there was no mention of lounge suit or uniform I took my courage in both hands and set off.

Hans Grimm, having spent the best years of his youth and manhood moving in large curves and circles while looking for opportunities to sell or to consume whisky, had now pitched his tent on his ancestral heath. He was living in Lippoldsberg, a small, attractive village on the Weser, which could only be reached after a lengthy struggle with the railway time-table.

I had best say it at once: in this peaceful and remote abode there dwelt the spirit of contumacy. I would have had no hesitation in relating in detail the whole story of the Lippoldsberg 'Writers' Meeting' as part of my answer to Question 110 of this Fragebogen, had I not realised beyond the possibility of doubt, within half an hour of my arrival, that what was here on foot was a useless attempt to achieve a useless object. Hans Grimm, this thin, headstrong man burned brown by African suns, found himself caught, in all integrity but unexpectedly, in the mesh of a net which the experts had now begun to spin between the multiple new offices and organisations created for the

advancement of German literature. It was not the desire for fame that had lured him into the net: that costly bait was so familiar to him that he was hardly likely to be tempted by it now. Nor was it an urge that the force of his opinions should be yoked to the plough that was ploughing up our country: he pulled, if he pulled at all, the other way. No, it was his intolerable urge to take really seriously the many appointments connected with the public well-being which had been thrust upon him at so many a festive ceremony. And so he floundered about in the well-arranged net of multiple honorary positions on the multiple committees connected with German writing: he fought fiercely but with visor up at one board table after another, even in that obscure farce which called itself the 'German Academy of Literature': he was unwilling to believe that what was there being threshed was not the corn of folly but simply dry straw. And so he tilted at the revolving windmills of officialdom until at last, in desperation, he cried out: "I can't think what this man Goebbels can have against me!"

"I can't think what this man Goebbels can have against me," he cried, and he said that long before the seizure of power he had personally and publicly intervened on behalf of the national movement and precisely on Goebbels' account. At the time, he explained, he had been at Koenigsberg in East Prussia, reading his own works aloud to an enthusiastic literary society. That evening, while waiting for his train at the station, he had been amazed to see a group of policemen, all armed to the teeth, dash on to the platform and fall upon a little group of harmless and entirely peaceful men who were also waiting for the train. Only after the shocking, bloody spectacle was over did he discover that the objects of this brutal and unprovoked assault were Goebbels and Prince Auwi, who had been addressing a meeting at Koenigsberg that day. Filled with indignation, he immediately sat down and wrote an open letter to President von Hindenberg—whom he knew personally—and, with all the vitriol at the disposal of his pen, branded the cowardice of people prepared to assault men who were not only unarmed but who also included a royal prince and a poor cripple. "I can't think," said Hans Grimm, "what this man Goebbels can have against me."

Nobody will blame me if I say that this story alone was enough to endear Hans Grimm to me. I was quite incapable of explaining what it was that Goebbels might possibly have against him. I did, however, give him a rather smug piece of advice in telling him that an author's job is to write books, not letters; an exhortation which, I'm afraid, proved quite unacceptable to this upright man. So I was not surprised later to learn that on the occasion of one of those frequent plebiscites in which the German people announced its 99.75 per cent approval of its Führer, Hans Grimm had written a letter to Minister of the Interior Frick in which he said that—for reasons which he was willing at any

time to explain—he had not felt capable of voting *Ja* in the plebiscite; so imagine his astonishment when the figures were published and he saw that Lippoldsberg had cast a solid 100 per cent vote in favour of the Führer's policy! Something, Hans Grimm concluded, must be wrong.

In fact there was quite a lot that must be wrong, a discovery that induced Hans Grimm to grip the reins of his Rosinante all the tighter and to glance hither and thither in search of his Sancho Panza. The 'Writers' Meeting' at Lippoldsberg was intimately connected with this search.

It was a first-class idea and one that did honour to the sharpness of our host's mind. For realising that for a crusade of this sort it was not profound knowledge that was needed, nor a polished understanding, nor a respected name, nor even a large private fortune, but courage and nothing but courage, Hans Grimm turned neither to the glittering stars in the literary firmament, nor to the poets of the eternal peasant's soil, nor to the drunken prophets of the word nor again to the bards who sang of the mythical, *primaeval* forest. No, the writers he turned to were those heroic individuals who could only strike the lyre after experiencing life in all its bloodiness; they were the spokesmen of a generation that lived in the reflection of years at the front: in a word, the war poets.

These must be the right men. Every line of their books showed that they had frequently seen death face to face, that they had not hesitated to daunt the foe, that there could be nothing left in the world to frighten them. But unfortunately the men whom Hans Grimm had chosen were those writers of the war generation whose ambition it had been to depict life at the front with the utmost realism. They had not been content merely to describe the tremendous event which was the war; they had attempted to show the effect of that event on the minds of the men involved; and one of those effects was the remarkable change that the idea and nature of heroism suffered on the shattered battlefield or beneath a creeping barrage. These were men who had fought a long and stubborn battle on the side of reality and against that species of patriotic utterance, full of sublime emotionalism, which for a long time had sought—and was now once again seeking—to portray the dying hero as a man sinking to his knees on the battlefield with the spirit of glory fluttering about his head. They were against the market-place-war-memorial concept of war. To put it briefly, they were men who had reached the conclusion that it's quite possible to take cover without thereby being a coward.

I at least had no difficulty in understanding these men. They sat around the long table sipping black coffee and smooth brandy, from time to time uttering a few well-chosen words such as: "Really some day someone should . . ." or, "Actually there's very little sense in . . .", or, "I've always felt that . . ." I understood them very well, and

I knew that they had all lived through that remarkable moment, that split second, that tremendous climax in which a martial and fortunate century came to an end and the bravest of the brave suddenly began to dig in as quickly and as deeply as ever they could. I believed that I could fully understand the depths of that psychological moment: these men had watched so many things go smash in whose value their heritage had led them to trust implicitly, that it must have become very hard for them to decide henceforth where lay the unstable boundary between what was superficial and what was real.

There they sat—Benno von Mechow, Paul Alverdes, Joachim von der Goltz, Werner Beumelburg, and Bruno Brehm—there they sat and though I understood them perfectly I was not one of them. Nor was Hans Grimm. He had, it is true, been a bombardier during the war, but he was inextricably involved in an entirely different concept of Germany from that which lived in the consciousness of the war generation. He could not attach so little worth to any value that he would be prepared to give it up. For him everything was real, nothing superficial. And he certainly could never understand men who were prepared to fight for every hundred yards of French soil and yet were suddenly ready to surrender the whole of Germany to strangers provided only they be allowed to save that which glowed in their hearts as the true picture of their country.

Nothing much glowed in my heart save an intractable desire for life. That psychological moment had come very much later for me; it had occurred neither on the battlefield nor within the framework of a picture that could be said to represent a generation. Perhaps that is why I had so different an attitude to the current events which Hans Grimm deplored in such moving terms. The destruction of those values for which Hans Grimm was fighting so desperately—tradition, dignity, decency and that curious thing he called the priceless boon of individual freedom—did not fill me, as it did him, with violent rage: but neither was my attitude towards this matter the same as that of the ex-soldiers—I was not simply resigned to it. Rather was I inclined to approve of that destruction in so far as it applied to those circles for which Hans Grimm spoke. This was not because I failed to value such things as tradition, dignity, decency and what for me too was the priceless boon of individual freedom, but because I tended to doubt the real existence of those abstractions or rather to doubt their existence as forces affecting the business of the world about us. It therefore seemed to me more logical to watch the insubstantial shadows vanish than to act in the name of those shadows, better to let a vacuum be created than to shore up an old construction which had shown itself to be a falsehood.

I felt it only right that I should say this. I was, however, greeted with a burst of merriment when I added that in these circumstances I feared that every line I might write was bound to be misunderstood and that I

had therefore decided for the time being entirely to abandon the writing of books—the others had all reached exactly the same conclusion a considerable time before. To anticipate a little, the only result of this ‘Writers’ Meeting’ was a unanimous decision on our part not to take part in the so-called *Dichtertagungen* or ‘Writers’ Congresses,’ those awful, official functions held at Weimar and other such places impregnated with the spiritual grandeur of German literature where some of our brothers in Apollo, more dithyrambic than critical, were wont to appear beneath the flags and banners, secure in the love and honour of their nation, for the delectation of the Press photographers. (Lounge suit or uniform compulsory.)

I know not whether Hans Grimm continued to spin his webs of intrigue with the other writers he had invited to the ‘Meeting’: I imagine that he was congenitally incapable of not doing so. But he no longer attempted to inveigle me into his sinister plots, though he did not therefore treat me in any less friendly fashion. Indeed we have gone on being friends to this day. He continued to invite me to his ‘Writers’ Meetings,’ despite the fact of it soon becoming apparent that my only contribution was my out-and-out clownishness, which certainly did not add tone to these otherwise dignified gatherings. I used these meetings as an opportunity to catch up on my literary gossip—and since one writer’s books cannot really stand in the way of another’s, of all types of professional gossip the literary is surely the least malicious. I also tried to satisfy my burning curiosity on one point: how did my colleagues manage to get possession of country cottages, when, since 1933, they had for all intents and purposes written no books at all?

They no longer wrote, they read. On rainy days, when digging potatoes offered no delight, they would sit down with a map of Germany and a railway time-table and work out an agreeable trip: (Unless they let the agents, who had come into existence to handle this new business, do it for them.) A few letters would be exchanged with the ever-ready literary societies that had sprung up in every country town throughout Germany; then, with a small suitcase containing a change of linen and a book or two written before 1933, the writer would set off for the station, safe in the assurance that for the next few months all his needs would be taken care of. Each evening would find him in a new town: he would read aloud for an hour or so: there would follow a pleasant dinner with the local dignitaries: the mayor would make a short speech in his honour: and the next morning, after a glance at the time-table, he would set off again, while his brief-case gradually swelled with the honorariums received. Up and down Germany he would travel, and Bruno Brehm assured me that this method of earning one’s living had one incontestable advantage, in that it allowed the writer to acquire a really first-hand knowledge of his fatherland.

For me, unfortunately, this career was barred. Some young person,

whom no doubt the gods were planning to destroy, had suggested to *Geheimrat* Planck—the world-famous scholar and president of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for the Advancement of Science—that he might vary the society's programme of learned addresses with an occasional 'Literary Evening'—the idea being presumably to make the dry bread of science more palatable by coating it with the butter of true insight into the secrets of existence. With a smile the *Geheimrat* agreed to this suggestion, and it was thanks to a word from Hans Grimm that I too was invited to make a spectacle of myself before the society's distinguished audience. Nor was there any mention of lounge suit or uniform.

Now it was the custom among the learned members of the society to give their tickets to their employees, tradesmen or less learned friends when the address was one unconnected with their special subject. I knew this and I therefore hoped for a more-or-less uncritical audience. I had never before faced that beast, the public. When I stepped on to the platform it seemed to me, however, that the hydra-headed monster had only one head, that of the *Geheimrat*, who as president of the society made a point of sitting through every lecture in the centre of the front row. When at last I dared to look beyond him, I saw grey, nothing but grey: from the third row to the back of the hall a soldier sat in every seat, all young soldiers in their grey walking-out uniforms. Rank after rank, uniform by uniform, and above each grey collar was the same blond, young, expressionless face. I read nervously, too fast and without proper concentration, and by the time I had finished my shirt was clinging to my body. I had scarcely left the platform before an officer hastened towards me. He was a red-faced, jovial and rather elderly captain. With both hands outstretched he cried: "You remember me, old man, don't you? Captain Müller of the War School Döberitz—we used to sit on the same bench at the Chief Cadet School!"

I had no recollection of him whatsoever, but I bared my teeth in what I hoped would pass for a beaming smile and said:

"Of course I do, Müller. Damned nice of you to have come!"

"Matter of honour, old boy!" shouted Müller with a roar of laughter. "Saw your name on the society's programme, and since there'd just been a violent attack on Planck in the *Schwarze Korps* I rang up and ordered seats. Then I sent for my cadets and said: 'All passes cancelled for today: any man who doesn't want to hear a speech by a former cadet comrade of his captain's—one pace forward!' So of course they were all keen as mustard to come."

"Of course," I stammered, and I promised Captain Müller that I'd join him for a drop of beer in the refreshment room a little later.

I looked for *Geheimrat* Planck in order to thank him, and I found him in a small room off the back of the auditorium, talking to *SS-Sturm-bannführer* Rolf d'Alquen. This was the brother of Gunther d'Alquen,

editor-in-chief of the official SS publication *Das Schwarze Korps*. He was saying:

“*Herr Geheimrat*, I hope you are not cross with us for having had to attack you so strongly in the last number of *Schwarze Korps*?”

Old Planck laid his hand paternally on d’Alquen’s shoulder and said: “Not at all, dear boy, I had a thoroughly good laugh.”

I had the rare good fortune of seeing the blood rush to the young man’s ears, which promptly went deep purple.

Then the *Geheimrat* caught sight of me. He held out his hand and said:

“Dear boy”—my blood ran cold, but he went on—“I must thank you for giving yourself so much trouble.”

And I had the rare good fortune of feeling what it is like when the blood rushes to one’s ears and they go deep purple. All I could do was to assure the *Geheimrat* that never again, in any circumstances, would I read aloud from one of my own books. This assurance seemed to please him greatly. And I may say I have kept my promise.

By this time the ‘Writers’ Meetings’ at Hans Grimm’s in Lippoldsberg had lost all point owing to the joyous readiness of all participants to do nothing whatsoever, and there would have been no purpose in our continuing to go there had we not come to derive so much mutual pleasure from one another’s society. But really our days there were almost too agreeable. Grimm’s hospitality was overwhelming, as the meals alone showed, and he also arranged for every other sort of entertainment. We admired the romanesque frescoes in the convent church: we swam in the swiftly flowing waters of the Weser: we gazed pensively at the silent woods: we counted the remote hamlets and villages which lined the river’s bank, gable after gable, like pearls strung along the Weser. It was easy to see how the concept of a people without space had filtered into the poet’s blood.

Year after year we went there. Hans Grimm, a fanatical believer in organic growth, knew how to make a virtue of necessity and gave our meetings a new moral significance. Hardly a day passed without some visitor arriving at the Klosterhaus, anxious to establish personal contact with the writer: whole classes of school children, with or without their teachers, would make the Klosterhaus the objective of their rambles: groups of young people, student societies, and also young workingmen’s and apprentices’ clubs—in fact the whole youth of the nation from all groups of society poured through the gates of Lippoldsberg. It is perhaps not surprising that the army high command—intent as it was to harness the entire national strength to its military chariot—should have chosen the Lippoldsberg area as the place in which to hold large-scale manoeuvres.

Like a forest fire, or, to be more exact, like an electric current, the news soon spread that on certain days of the year not only the venerated

poet Hans Grimm but also many another well-known ornament of the German literary scene was prepared to entertain a large audience, free of charge, by readings aloud, and that all these colossi were ready later to mix with the crowd in the most affable manner. Our 'Writers' Meetings' came to resemble pilgrimages. After a while it was necessary to draw up a proper programme so as to ensure that no group was disappointed and all tastes catered for. To enrich the programme, the chamber orchestra from Göttingen University gave a concert at noon in the old convent church: and in the intervals between the readings the schoolgirls from the Oberlyzeum in Kassel, graceful and gay in their fluttering summer dresses, would twitter merrily to the delighted authors. There were even photographers present to immortalise the festive occasion, and our 'Writers' Meetings' drew a crowd such as was never seen at the official 'Writers' Congresses.'

But it was not only the size of the audience that grew; the number of writers present also increased. No more was it only war poets who turned up. Famous writers no longer in their first youth also came, particularly when it grew apparent that the authorities did not regard these obviously successful encounters between Germans writers and the German people with the joyful enthusiasm that might have been expected of them. Men of high repute appeared, among others Rudolf G. Binding, who had written a whole series of short books filled with noble thoughts and deeds, and Rudolf Alexander Schroeder, a dignified figure, the Nestor of the German Literary world, a substitute not so much for Thomas Mann—with whom we had no contact except that anything we might know about writing we had learned from him—as for Goethe, with whose works we all claimed to have the closest affinity, and from whom we had learned absolutely nothing at all. Another one was Börries von Münchhausen, whose ballads and chivalrous songs of hearsay were to be found in the knapsack of every self-respecting soldier who fought in the last world war, along with *Faust* and *Zarathustra*, and which were not to be found in any knapsack in the next world war, because in that one the knapsacks came on behind.

Hans Grimm did more. He invited Englishmen to his meetings, yes, English—or to be more correct British—writers, genuine sons of proud—no longer and not yet perfidious—Albion. They were supposed to be given this opportunity of learning by the most personal contact what their German colleagues had to say to them and to the world; they were delighted when they arrived and puzzled when they left.

I remember well the last of these meetings that I attended. (I had by then quietly slipped my moorings from the slowly rotting pier in the fishing village which was contemporary German literature and was sailing with the spanking breeze of the film-world in my sheets, a performance which my Lippoldsberg colleagues had no hesitation in roundly denouncing as plain treason. Though I may add that their



expressions changed from rank disapproval to gloomy thoughtfulness when I mentioned casually what the pay was.) At this meeting (which was not the last: there were several more before Minister Goebbels intimated to Hans Grimm in unmistakable terms that he had had enough of these farces) everything went on as normal. We had a refreshing swim in the Weser early in the day: we listened to the chamber orchestra in the convent church: we sat down to an impressive meal at the long table beneath the oaken beams: we mixed affably with the crowd, which on this occasion consisted mainly of students from Göttingen University: and then Rudolf G. Binding sat down in the courtyard and read us his *Legende von St. Jörgs Stellvertreter*, a short novel packed with noble emotions and noble deeds.

We had once again posed in a group for the photographers and were already beginning to disperse and to make ready our departure when the leader of the Göttingen students came up and invited three of us, Rudolf G. Binding, Joachim von der Goltz and myself, to address a student society at the university that evening. I cannot say that this invitation took me by surprise, but nevertheless I felt flattered. It seemed to me only right that as the youngest of our group—I was only ten years older than the senior students, and had myself been attending lectures in Vienna not so long ago—I should be the one to infuse the right tone into our relationship with the young men. Besides, I was filled with pride at the thought that youth, with its natural and healthy instincts, had chosen me to make the third in such distinguished company. Was not Rudolf G. Binding the best known of our writers, and was not Joachim von der Goltz the only one of us who really knew how to create poems?

So we took the train to Göttingen. On the way the senior student, a sharp-featured young man with an alert manner, told me something about the students to whom we would be speaking. They were, it seemed, the pick of the whole university, the very choicest available, selected not only for their 'racial qualifications'—though that went without saying—and not simply because of their high character level, but also—and here the young man shot a deep and conspiratorial look at me as though to draw my attention to this hitherto unheard of consideration—but also his society had established, after careful and scientific investigation, that they possessed a high intelligence quotient.

It was a gay sight that met our eyes when the students filed into the back room of a most respectable inn on the Göttingen Platz, arranged for this evening as a conference hall; I had already noticed at Lippoldsberg that unlike soldiers—who apart from a different haircut seemed unchanged from what they had always been—the typical student was nowadays quite another sort from the ones I had known in years gone by. The young men seated before me in long ranks with their closed faces—yes, that is exactly what I mean, closed faces—were all blond, all

dressed alike, and all so filled with inner gaiety that it was startling when one or other of them, by moving slightly, destroyed the impression of stubborn attentiveness. I was uncommonly curious to find out at last what the students were thinking, what the answer would be this time to the riddle which they had been setting their friendly and well-meaning fellow-citizens for over a century. Nevertheless I was somewhat taken aback when, in answer to Binding's invitation to them that they tell him what they would like him to talk about, one of the students, after a visible and painful inner struggle, came out with his question.

"What," he asked, "is art?"

Binding was brilliant. He crossed his long heron's legs over one another; his ice-cold, age-old eyes strayed back and forth above the heads before him; and he recited, so that each word rang clear and true, Goethe's poem: *Über allen Gipfeln ist Ruh.*

"That," he said, "is art."

He went on to show that there was not a single, superfluous, decorative word in the poem. He explained that up to the time when Goethe wrote his poem men had felt exactly the same emotion when confronted with stillness and peace that they feel today, but that since Goethe's poem the world had been given a new awareness of that emotion and hence of its reality.

"Art," Binding concluded, exactly ten minutes after he had begun: "Art is the creation of new reality."

This definition, so simple and so effective, struck me, amidst the students' applause, as being remarkably true, particularly so far as the art of war is concerned.

Then Binding read from his book *Erlebtes Leben*. He chose the description of Kaiser Wilhelm I's funeral, which is the best thing he has ever written, so fine is the form and so noble the language and the sentiments expressed. The impression he made was so great that the senior student voiced the general opinion when he suggested that the occasion should not be profaned by further readings and that we should all meet again tomorrow morning in the garden of the society's house. This decision prompted me to take a seat at the lower end of the hall—Binding was at the upper—and, side by side with a silent and somewhat frightened Joachim von der Goltz, to become slowly and quietly intoxicated. For I had seen a frightening vision which I hoped the alcohol would dispel. It was this. One day some young man, after a visible and painful inner struggle, might shoot a question at me.

"What," he might ask, "is murder?"

Now I am the possessor of a not particularly rare talent, in that when drunk I can usually foresee the approach of disaster: this I can almost always do whenever I drink for any reason except for pleasure. True, I was well aware of the curious fact that a German author, on publishing

his first book, was described as promising and on production of his second was hailed as an old master—a fact which cast more light on the condition of the German literary world than on that of the German people. Nevertheless I could well imagine that it would not be literary enlightenment that the young men would desire from me. So when, next morning, we assembled once again in the garden of their student house, I was fully prepared. The young men grouped themselves decoratively on the lawn around Binding, Goltz and myself. Following Binding's example, I asked what they would like me to talk about, and after a visible and painful inner struggle one of them said I should tell them something about the *Freikorps* war in the Baltic states.

I thought it would be cleverer of me to turn this suggestion down. I said those were just old cowboy-and-Indian stories, and that I'd written all I had to say about them in my book *The Outlaws*: I suggested they buy a copy, which would have obvious advantages both for them and for me. By taking this line I hoped that I was making them feel that I was not a remote personage. I was, metaphorically, sitting down on the table and swinging my legs. I went on to say that the present and the future were far more interesting than the past. I thought to myself that this was a good beginning, both adequate and agreeable, and I waited confidently for what might come next.

The young men stared at me, a great volume of inner gaiety no doubt carefully hidden behind those closed faces.

I said, without a trace of annoyance, that it was not so long since I had been living with the students of a student company in Upper Silesia. I could vividly remember how we would have then felt if some well-meaning old gentleman had come and lectured us about our future: our reaction would doubtless have been an acute desire to set off a charge of dynamite beneath his chair, and I could well understand if I produced the same reactions here. Indeed, I said, I more or less expected to do so. . . . Their faces did not move. Were they perhaps wondering whether my removal in this fashion would be worth endangering so many irreplaceably valuable lives? I now proceeded to attack them from all sides: I shot off whole salvos of anecdotes: I sapped and mined with indirect questions: I outflanked them with skirmishing illusions: I laid down a heavy barrage of bold assertions: I fired off a whole arsenal of witty rockets: I brought up the howitzers of the soul and the heavy artillery of friendly heartiness. They held their ground. There they sat, gazing at me seriously and gloomily, and beside me sat Binding, his long heron's legs crossed the one over the other, and on my other side sat Joachim von der Goltz, silent and somewhat frightened and doubtless working out within himself how best to put this curious experience into sonnet form—until at last I cried out in annoyance:

“All those studying law, raise the right hand!”

This they understood. This they were accustomed to, for it happened

frequently. I counted the upraised hands and told them that they were the torch-bearers of the future, the destined leaders of Germany, that the study of justice was the best guarantee of justice which always had been and always must be the foundation of the state. And I went on to talk about the state, I said how they were getting ready to rebuild it, from the ground up, an entirely new edifice, and I expressed my curiosity about their ideas concerning the new state they were going to build because damn it all they must have *some* ideas about it, they must have given it some thought, after all a man undertaking a task of that magnitude surely stops for a moment to sort his ideas out. . . . And then I saw that behind the closed face of one young man the heavy struggle was beginning: I watched while his features became slowly and painfully loosened by his inner efforts: his eyes gradually lit up, his cheeks began to flush: and I listened while he cleared his throat, which took a considerable time, and at last, in a pure Saxon accent, the words came out:

“We don’t think much of Carl Schmitt.”

This surprised me. I thought quite a lot of Carl Schmitt. He had been councillor of state in Prussia—not that he had ever offered the state any counsel—and was incorrectly regarded as a theorist of National-Socialism. I thought him the only important modern authority on civic rights. Nevertheless, happy as I was to have made some sort of a breach, to have stormed one fort, to have captured one redoubt, I asked eagerly:

“Why not?”

And behold! The features of yet another student began to defreeze: his eyes lit up: a shaft of enthusiastic honesty was hurled in my direction: and the young man told me:

“You see, we don’t want a state anyhow.”

Hallelujah! Glory be! This, at last, was it! The spirit of youth, the mastery of earth, the assault of heaven, anarchy! And like a fanfare came my question:

“What do you want, then?”

It was the student leader, the sharp-featured young man with the alert manner, who answered. His head was bowed and a slight smile was playing about his lips as he replied:

“A national community, of course.”

Surely nobody will be angry with me if I did not, even then, give up? I cannot surrender so easily. We were dealing with the most treasured possession of my nation, with the future in its simplest and least adulterated form, with the real essence of my people. Surely nobody will dispute that my question was the product rather of logic than of my boundless astonishment? I asked them:

“But, children, why do you bother to study at all?”

And behold! it was a third who replied. I’m telling the truth: still

another student, whom no doubt the senior student had quite left out of his calculations, now spoke up. He managed to enunciate his words quite easily, too. He said:

“You see, our teachers are all the products of Jewish materialism, and we learn from them how not to do things.”

This meeting of mine with the young did not lead to gaiety, at least not on my part. Later, when seated with Binding and Goltz in the train, I made no attempt to conceal my depression. I talked, I’m afraid, for several hours, fluently and without pause, about the youth of Germany, about the mass-production of intolerable voices repeating unreadable leading articles. Meanwhile Binding’s ice-cold, age-old eyes moved from one end of the luggage rack to the other, and finally Goltz, shaking himself like his celebrated tree after a storm, remarked:

“My friend, those young men made a monkey out of you.”

However, Rudolf G. Binding said:

“The youth of every generation is what the age has wished it to be. And that is the best part of both.”

He then closed his eyes as though exhausted. A moment later he opened them again to add:

“Why should you expect young men to live for their country when they’re prepared to die for it?”

“I think,” said Zehrer, “that I saw that coming.”

26. *List (giving locations and dates) any Adolf Hitler school, Nazi Leaders College or military academy in which you have ever been a teacher*

Not applicable.

27. *Have any of your children ever attended any such schools? Which ones, where and when?*

Not applicable.

28. *List (giving location and dates) any school in which you have ever been a Vertrauenslehrer (formerly Jugendwalter)*

Not applicable.

## C. PROFESSIONAL OR TRADE EXAMINATIONS

<i>Name of Examination</i>	<i>Place Taken</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Date</i>
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The deeper I plunge into this Fragebogen, the more I find myself compelled, against my will, to make unpleasant confessions. Though Question 25 appeared, at first glance, comparatively harmless, it yet forced me to admit that I was at one time guilty of the serious crime called profiteering. As for this rubric—which, I notice, fails even to achieve the honourable status of a numbered question—it leaves me no choice but to confess that I once found myself for a time leading a double life. I can, however—and I thank heaven for it—immediately produce two weighty excuses for this unusual state of affairs: in the first place, it occurred at a time when I was myself in circumstances so far beyond my control that I might well have led not two but at least a hundred different lives, and the fact that I confined myself to a simple double life seems to me to show great restraint on my part: secondly, I was involved with a frivolous group of people, whom I should be inclined to regard as my friends even now, did not these probing questions make it clear that, to my horror and dismay, they were undoubtedly my worst enemies.

Apart from prison officials, most people, if they think about it at all, believe that a man emerging from prison is a better person than the same man when he went in. The prisoners themselves incline strongly to this belief, as do the judges. My own wide experience of these matters has led me to the fairly firm conviction that the criminal returns to society with excellent projects and prospects: furthermore, since in general he is neither particularly broken in character by his imprisonment nor washed limp by the punishment he has suffered, he actually comes back to normal life with a strong reserve of strength: these two remarkable facts must be recognised as a triumph for modern penal methods.

At this point I cannot help complaining about the evilness of the times in which we live. Modern civilisation has produced so complicated a social order, so subtle a masterpiece of apparent checks and balances, that any man, attempting with more than respectable energy to do good, will inevitably find himself unwittingly tearing at least part of the social web, and the persons who form those strands will, of course, suffer in consequence. Only very rarely does need drive the criminal to a relapse; far more frequently it is an exaggerated vitality, or

what might even be called an excess of virtue. After all, he must attempt to discover what his capabilities still are.

From this point of view my position was even more difficult than that of many another man similarly placed. When I found myself back in the world, in 1928, I was still very young and not at all worn out. Furthermore, during the five preceding years that world—or at least the part of it that was my fatherland—had undergone most surprising changes. It was extraordinarily different both from the place I had left and from the place I had imagined it to have become while I was sitting in my cell. On the day I left prison I went with one single step, as it were, from the middle ages straight into the American century.

Now I cannot honestly pretend that the taking of this step was for me a painful experience. Let me enlarge on my metaphor a little. Undoubtedly a man of the middle ages suddenly confronted by the American world of appearances would, after a moment's confusion, accept that world with something like resignation: he would quickly realise that he possessed an inner certitude which was obviously lacking in his surroundings. He would not be content simply to break out in loud cries of astonishment, but would rather feel a need to examine what was about him in terms of its true meaning—that is to say in terms of his own certitude.

Now I thought that I could be fairly sure of my own certitudes. Almost as soon as I arrived in Berlin I went to see that tree in the Königs Allee which had become for me, as for so many of my friends, the token of fate. Then, having refreshed myself by taking an inventory of my good intentions, I rode along the Kurfürstendamm, sitting on the front seat of the upper deck of a No. 1 bus. When last I had seen this street, in 1922, all its ostentatious splendour appeared as though shrouded in widow's weeds: there was a layer of gloom and soot on the sandstone statuary: the stucco was peeling: and the light of dawn mercilessly revealed the mouldering shard of an age whose poverty was nowhere more shameful than here, among the echoes of its former glory. Now this too had all passed away. My eye was skilfully caught at the very bottom of the buildings by the concrete façade which was so foreign to the sandstone up above: there were wide, glittering shop windows, garishly lit by neon tubes of arsenic-green or ice-blue or cochineal-red, beneath which was displayed a new and aggressive wealth, while only the threatening finger of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church recalled the past. Once again this street bore witness to prosperity, with its shops, its people, its hubbub of trade and its stream of cars that seemed to follow one another along the curve that circles the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church like a herd of beasts circling an elephant in their flight from some forest fire—and indeed the reflection of the brilliant advertising in the damp asphalt did glitter like tongues of flame.

Now I had been brought up in the household of an official, and I very well remembered the constant, unpleasant discrepancy between a small income and the considerable expense of behaving in a manner becoming to one's position. More, I remembered many a very unambiguous remark of my father's, a man of uncommonly strong moral principles and one who hated nothing more than the ever-growing urge to 'live beyond one's means,' an urge which according to him led inevitably to self-deception and thence, with the greatest of ease, to the deception of others. I was consequently taught at an early age to despise what my father sourly called "bourgeois sham," and later I extended this contempt to include the bourgeoisie as a whole, for I came to believe that it functioned only through sham.

So the spectacle of the automobiles circling about the Memorial Church did not cause me any particular astonishment. Rather did I proceed to calculate the extent of the fortunes here to be seen on well-greased wheels and to wonder to whom this fortune might really belong. And when I thought of the compound interest due on dishonoured bonds, on the formidable reparations that had not been paid, on the money owing for American credits, I was inclined not to believe my eyes and to regard the Memorial Church as the only reality. Not that I felt no desire to possess one of these morally non-existent automobiles myself. But my respect for the American miracle of booming commerce was declining rapidly, and I could not help thinking that a man would be more worthily employed in attempting to take this bogus world of appearances off its hinges than in trying to adjust himself comfortably to fit it—but that would be no easy task, I thought, as I contributed my fifteen pfennigs fare to the support of the BVG company, a concern which was no more solidly established than was the well-dressed old gentleman whom I saw stepping with lazy self-assurance from his two-seater sports model.

Still, I was by no means as certain of my future as I was of my judgment. I do not know whether there are many men, who, like myself, become involved in what might be called pre-determined periods, periods in which one apparent accident succeeds another to produce a chain reaction that will result in events full of significance for the future. The accident of my seeing the black two-seater on that day, for me so crammed with significance, had a strong effect upon me. Later, in Kapitän Ehrhardt's office and while I was with my friend Hartmut Plaas, I could not get the idea out of my head that in some unspecified way my future destiny was indissolubly bound up with the sight of that car and with the thoughts that had come to me while driving in the bus around the Memorial Church. (For my visit to Hartmut Plaas may I draw the reader's attention to my answer to Question 24 of this Fragebogen?) Then, just as I was leaving Plaas and saying for no apparent reason that in ten years I too would possess such a car (and



with an unspoken but unshakeable promise to myself that I should also have paid for this expensive piece of merchandise honestly), I met on the steps a certain young man, the first of a series of men who were to shape my future life and whom for a long time I considered to be my friends—though now that I have gained a deeper insight I am prepared to admit to the public prosecutor that they were in truth my enemies.

He was a young man of about my own age, and one glance sufficed to tell me that he was probably not a member of that dwindling band which followed the resolute Kapitän. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, horn-rimmed spectacles and a somewhat intellectual expression. Plaas addressed him as Bogumil, a name that struck me as entirely suitable. Standing there on the steps, they immediately began an animated discussion about the article on Christianity and the State which Kapitän Ehrhardt had just turned down for nautical reasons. Bogumil's attitude to Christianity was simple and straight-forward. He was against it. There could be no two opinions about that. He uttered sentences of an almost berserk fury which contrasted oddly with his somewhat sloppy manner of speech. I was able to understand an occasional phrase, such as: "Probity demands a refusal to believe in God," or: "Morality belongs in the realm of appearances," or: "It is indecent to be a Christian nowadays," or: "The church is a sort of state, and indeed the most dishonest sort"—phrases which struck me as remotely familiar, though their origin escaped me, particularly as the young man repeatedly interlarded them with the remark: "As old Nitschke puts it." It was only when he let drop the key phrase, "Will to power," that I realised he was quoting the celebrated Polish philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, whose *Zarathustra* I had read years before and many years too soon: its only effect on me had been that for some time, and much to the horror of my fellow cadets, I had felt compelled to express my ideas in dithyrambics.

While I was going down the steps Hartmut Plaas must have told this Bogumil who I was: I had not reached the curb before the intellectual giant-killer caught up with me and asked what he could do for me. By recollecting a few sayings of Friedrich Nietzsche I managed to smother an incipient wave of self-pity which threatened to engulf me at the thought that in all this fairly large and fairly strange city I had nowhere to sleep that night: and as I did not believe that I needed any metaphysical consolation on Bogumil's part, I simply asked him for what, at the moment, was closest to my heart, namely for the exact figures of Germany's debits (with particular relationship to the financial structure of the automobile industry). Without a moment's hesitation Bogumil replied:

"Salinger!"

No doubt I looked nonplussed, for he quickly added:

"Hans Dieter Salinger, *Industrial and Trade Review*, my economics expert. He'll know exactly. We'll go there at once."

And so we did. Sitting on the front seats on top of a No. 2 bus my No. 1 friend told me his name. He was called Friedrich Hielscher ("Friedrich der Grosse, Friedrich Nietzsche, Friedrich Hielscher—that is my spiritual family tree," he said), and he was doubly a doctor of law (though he made no use of this, preferring "for reasons of propriety not to have a job"). He began at once to impart a whole mass of invigorating information. It was his habit, he said, to classify all men according to the colour of their aura, and mine was yellow; I replied that for my part I regarded his as bluish, which he acknowledged with a tremulous laugh. When I asked him why he called himself Bogumil, he explained that he also classified human beings according to their animal aura and, of course, similarly animals according to their human aura. It seems that once, when walking with a friend, they had seen a dachshund. He had remarked spontaneously that the dog looked as though it should be called Bogumil. At exactly the same moment his friend had said: "That dog looks like you." Thus had he acquired his name.

Since it was less than a hundred hours ago that I had been sitting peacefully in my cell mulling over my good intentions for the future, I naturally found Bogumil's whole behaviour extraordinarily silly and I ascribed his manner of speech to an excess of beer. So I endured it patiently when he set to—on the basis of a few petty and jejune remarks which I had let fall—to cut up into tiny fragments my whole carefully worked out attitude towards the world. He went to work with zeal and a razor-sharp dialectic and proved to me, in detail, that my attitude was in fact quite other than what I had previously supposed it to be. It was, indeed, no different from his own. He proceeded to explain with masterly skill that he was neither a reformer nor a prophet—they were two a penny—but that he had discovered an entirely new type of thought as well as also something called "heroic realism" (as old Nitschke put it): this consisted of a way of viewing the world that revolved around a crystallisation of the concept "self-mastery." He embellished this theme with many a quotation from Goethe, whom Bogumil briefly described as "a not unintelligent sort of chap."

I observed with curiosity this unusual man who had no hesitation, on top of a No. 2 bus, in describing Plato as a coward. There he sat, this Bogumil, in his thin and threadbare brown suit with his brief-case full to bursting point, this Frederick III who kept an "economic expert" purely for his private convenience and who refused "on grounds of propriety" to earn a lot of money and buy himself a new hat. And I thought to see in his familiar method of referring to great thinkers—most of whom he too accepted as such—not so much a lack of respect as an almost exaggerated wonderment and shyness. Thus will some men attempt to protect their spiritual beliefs behind a smoke-screen of fatuity—a style that I grant is only tolerable when tinged with a power-

ful injection of self-irony. I was therefore considerably relieved when Bogumil, while announcing: "The body is a political structure—an aristocracy! as old Nitschke has it," removed his slouch hat to reveal a pointed skull as bald as an egg.

When we arrived at the Halensee home of Bogumil's economic expert, Dr. Salinger, and my new friend had been given a hearty and respectful greeting by the assembled company, he set to at once to unpack his brief-case. This brief-case, so full and apparently so heavy, had not failed to impress me, since I had imagined it to be stuffed with learned books. From it he took, first of all, a long pipe with a cherry-wood stem and a porcelain bowl, then a huge lighter, then a gigantic pouch of dark tobacco, then a sort of tool-kit consisting of wires, tweezers and hooks, all of which he laid out carefully on the table before him. Next he produced a hat like a night-cap with which he covered his pointed, shiny skull. Finally he reached forward and took a piece of bread covered with sliced tomato from the dish on the table and remarked: "Even the old Araucarians made a cult of eating," a statement which was immediately disputed. The Araucarians, said a gentleman present, were a race of Indians from Terra del Fuego who were celebrated precisely for their extreme asceticism.

Their cheerful habit of regarding everything as being equally important (and therefore, by inference, taking nothing whatever seriously) was in the true Berlin style to which I was not, as yet, accustomed. So I devoted a little time to studying the company in which I now found myself. My host was sitting on a sofa with his legs tucked under him, a pose that accentuated his oriental appearance. I now went over and asked him who these gentlemen were who sat around his tea-table and who ate his vegetable sandwiches with the same enthusiasm that they devoted to discussing the cults of the ancient Araucarians.

They were what one might call Berlin's *jeunesse dorée* of the period. These young people—they were all about my age—had already achieved the positions in society to which their talents entitled them. They had all, except Bogumil, jobs that they regarded as important; and if those jobs were not actually the top ones, they nevertheless believed themselves to be better qualified than the boss himself. The young man with the lines of pessimism deeply etched on his otherwise young and blooming face was a certain Hans Zehrer: he was allowed to write a column on foreign affairs on page four of the world-famous *Vossische Zeitung*, a column that was invariably in flat contradiction to the leading article written by his editor-in-chief. The man who sucked so busily at his pipe, while dropping an occasional wild and confused remark into the discussion or reeling off statistics which turned out to be surprisingly correct, was Dr. Edwin Topf, the agricultural correspondent of the universally renowned *Berliner Tageblatt*, a paper that held

views on all subjects—except agriculture—that were at all times interesting. The sleek-looking gentleman with the carefully modulated voice was a young don called Albrecht Hausliofer: his father produced the periodical on 'geopolitics,' which is a method of studying political matters on a large and fertile scale and one that has been applied practically by others for several thousand years but which in Germany, owing to a lack of real opportunity, has been treated strictly as a science. The man arguing with Bogumil about the old Araucarians was Ernst Samhaber, Professor of Assyriology at the University of Santiago de Chile; his presence at this gathering gave rise to the painful surmise that the Chileans might be less interested in his enthralling subject than were, say, the Germans. And there was Franz Joseph Furtwängler, a young and keen trades-unionist, the right hand of Leipart, the unions' leader. Meanwhile Salinger himself was the left hand of one of those contemporary ministers, countless as the leaves of the trees and like those leaves blown away now and forgotten. All these gentlemen, together with one or two more of the same kidney, had—with the exception of Bogumil—one quality in common: they all took a gloomy view of the future.

I must face the facts. I now realise that the chain reaction of accidents in which I had been involved all day had at last deposited me, fair and square, in the very middle of a nest of conspiracy. Looking back on it I now see that it was a very modern sort of nest. Resistance over the teacups—this was where it was invented. The general attempt to shake the bases of power by aesthetic discussion—this was for the first time put into practice here.

I admit that at the time I had as little idea of the precedent that was being established as did the other gentlemen who met every Friday evening for constructive talk in the Salinger-Mirabeau salon. Certainly it wasn't we who wanted something, but Something in us that wanted to be out (as old Nitschkte more or less has it). Clearly our thoughts trod carefully, on tip-toe as it were. It was all so wonderfully uncompromising until the moment that Power, with bared teeth, rose up and struck.

This happened exactly a year and a half later, in September of 1929. Then the whole appalling truth was revealed. Suddenly the headlines of all the newspapers were filled with the 'Salinger Salon,' even as the cells of the Moabit prison were filled with its habitués. Our tea-table was suddenly elevated to the status of a revolutionary nest of vipers. We had, it seems, dared to lay our hands on the very foundations of civilisation. And we were uncommonly amazed when we heard about it.

I am prepared to admit joyously that without my co-operation things would never have reached so pretty a pass. My only excuse is this: could even the sharpest conscience have guessed that a conversation which began so harmlessly with the cults and habits of the old Araucarians might yet contain the seeds of future criminal activity?

No, I acted in all innocence. Scarcely had we disposed of the old Araucarians when I brought up the nice question of Germany's indebtedness. I pursued the subject with that obstinacy that repeatedly involves me in the most complicated ventures (as for example in the filling out of this Fragebogen). But the immediate success of my question was in itself disconcerting. I had, apparently, hit the very bull's-eye of the whole German problem. I was immediately overwhelmed in a flood of statistics (all incorrect save those of Dr. Topf): I was deluged with information concerning the most obscure details of our nation's fiscal policy.

If I should attempt to sum up in a few sentences the results of the discussion which began in this fashion, which went on until four a.m., and which was resumed Friday after Friday, I should say that they were roughly as follows. The German economy, bled white by the obligation to pay constant and practically limitless reparations, was being supported by vast American credits. This resulted in a real American boom in Germany, but one which, because of the Americans' arrogant though entirely justified desire to get back their money together with appropriate interest, was in fact nothing but an enormous mirage. One practical result of this was that our reparations were increased by the extent of the interest on the American loans. Another was that German industry had to flood the world markets with its products in order to pay the interest on the American loans at the expense of American industry and hence of American prosperity. So the question arose: what did America want, what did the Americans want, what, in a nutshell, did 'Wall Street' think it was going to get out of it all? There seemed only two alternative explanations of the phenomenon. Either the Americans were playing a devilishly clever game with the object of gaining complete control of Germany's economy, which they could then use as they saw fit according to their own self-interest. Or else their actions were the result of a planless and unfathomable stupidity.

I inclined, against my will, to the first explanation. Let me say in my favour that I could produce a witness and confederate who was certainly above suspicion. Oh, I knew my Rathenau. His collected works filled a long shelf in Salinger's bookcase. I reached for a volume and soon found the passage:

"When, of two nations, one produces all its own requirements, while one must rely on the other's production to fill its needs, in the long run a curious relationship is bound to come into existence between them. The receiving nation will begin by attempting to pay in goods. But since the supplying nation does not require these goods, other means of payment will have to be devised. It will meet its payments by means of loans: but the interest on the loans will have itself to be met by further borrowing, and the national credit is not limitless. It will pay in industrial stock, in mortgages, in shares. But the tangible goods that

these papers represent must always remain in the land of the nation which pays, for the nation which supplies has no use for them. So in the paying country everything remains as it was: agriculture, the railways, industry, the merchant marine continue to function, to produce goods and to prosper; but in the supplying country live the owners of the soil, of the factories, of the means of transport. They control the accounts, they say who shall hold positions of authority, and it is they who decide the form in which their profits shall be re-invested. It is true that even these profits will remain in the country of their origin, because there is no suitable export industry to be found, but with every re-investment the influence of the owners grows wider.

“This phenomenon can be defined as follows: the debtor nation pays in power. The creditor nation assumes the position of owner and landlord. And this power relationship is all the more frightful in that almost every member of the creditor nation will personally experience the domination of foreigners.”

Perhaps I really sowed the seeds of crime in the Salinger Salon when, nothing daunted, I insisted on quoting the following sentence of Rathenau's—which well-nigh took my breath away:

“Military revolt is the only answer to this peaceful enslavement.”

(In view of similar events that are taking place today, I hasten to affirm that my opinions have changed. I believe that Rathenau's definition is incorrect. I adhere now to my second alternative. Stupidity is the norm. No power in the world will succeed in forcing me to adopt a point of view that could easily stir up deep international ill-will: no, I firmly maintain that the Americans are not abnormal.)

Now shortly before the Salinger Salon broke up at four a.m. on that first day, and when I had just regretfully told Dr. Salinger that I had alas! nowhere to sleep, and he was busily fixing me up a bed, I overheard a remark which Dr. Topf let drop. He said that the results of the American credit policy must first appear among the peasants, since these latter received no credits and it was precisely the peasant proprietors who had to carry the burden of interest payment by means of taxes and imposts. . . . In Schleswig-Holstein, where the west coast grazing was a speculative form of agriculture, forced sales had already begun and there had been civil disturbances.

I happened to be a Schleswig-Holsteiner by birth. In my home province a development had started, a vital one, the outlines of which were more clearly to be seen there than elsewhere. God's mantle had passed by me: in accordance with all that is best in my nature I immediately leaped and caught its hem.

The next day I set off for Kiel.

I should be guilty of falsifying my Fragebogen were I to give the impression that in Kiel I was exclusively engaged in swallowing hard liquor. In fact I devoted only about the half of each day to this pursuit,

while the other half I spent in learning something about the living conditions, the economic circumstances and the structural changes of the Schleswig-Holstein peasant-farmers. But I only achieved a certain degree of activity in this field after Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt, that friendly grey-haired lady so sensibly shod, had succeeded by her therapy in making me into a writer. The sale of my first article produced one unexpected result. I not only received a letter from Bogumil in which he expressed his satisfaction that I could apparently string together sentences which, despite their inordinate length, did not actually fall apart, and in which he also informed me that he and Ernst Jünger were planning a periodical to which I would be expected to contribute. By the same post there arrived a letter from my brother Bruno.

My parents brought four sons into the world, whom they successively christened Bruno, Ernst, Horst and Günther. A careful calculation reveals that the four have so far spent a total of some twenty years within prison walls or behind barbed wire. I would add that in every single case the loss of freedom was consequent upon a marked longing for freedom, a circumstance which casts less light on my family character than on the age in which we live. He who will achieve freedom must reckon on losing it once or twice to begin with. This is by no means uncommon in Germany, yet it is a phenomenon that cannot be in any way tied in with the German national character: apart from German penal institutes, prisons and concentration camps, our names have appeared on the registers of French and Belgian prisons, in the files of one Free French and one Vichy French concentration camp, and in no less than six American and two British internment camps. I dare not assert that our family name has also graced the records of Russian camps, because I know not whether the Russians keep such records. In any case our mother learned gradually to practise resignation when one or other of her sons was once again in trouble. I only ever knew her really lose her temper on this account once: that was in this same September of 1929, when all four of her sons were in gaol at the same time.

Now it might be assumed that all four of us brothers had sworn allegiance to the same colour. Nothing could be further from the case. True, I am convinced that we are basically of the same opinion as to what a man has to do in this world, but how to set about doing it is something that up to this day we have never managed to agree on. My brother Bruno hoisted, early and unambiguously, the blood-red flag of revolution; but beneath that flag there lives an object known as the Party Line: I am not quite clear whether it was that that changed or whether it was my brother Bruno. My brother Günther, on the other hand, fought from his early years beneath the sign of the Cross. Despite the buffetings of the age he has remained true to that plain and unshakable symbol; that is why he was the only one of us to join the Party—yes, I had better admit it quite openly—and was also the only one to be

put in a concentration camp. My brother Horst, however, has never cared for Cross or swastika. As for myself, it makes little difference to me what flag may wave over my country so long as all and every one of my compatriots is at liberty to travel from Saarbrücken to Tilsit without some bearish young man from Oklahoma or Svierinogolovskaia or Dumbarton or Tarascon attempting to stop him.

I had neither seen nor heard from my brother Bruno for many years. He had as good as vanished. Our last quarrel had been shortly after the Kapp Putsch. He approved of putsches, but not of Kapp, whereas I thought that in those troubled times any man who wished was entitled to make his own putsch. My brother, who knew nothing save, as he put it, how to lead a company in close formation through a sewage farm, was making diverse efforts to lead an honourable, civil life; the question of loss of social rank worried him not in the slightest, and for a long time he lived in Hamburg as a workman in a woolcarding factory—until he at last realised that he would have more chance of changing the world than of altering himself. He recalled that no German can ever really go down so long as he continues to make use of the knowledge acquired at his elementary school. And so he succeeded in persuading the owner of a small printing press in Blankensee, who published a feeble and patriotic weekly paper, that under his editorship the subscriptions would be doubled. The periodical was called *Die Deutsche Front*, neither more nor less.

It did not occur to my brother that he might change his periodical's name. It corresponded to a deeply felt need. This was a period when suddenly and everywhere men remembered that they too had served in the war. Feelings of personal dignity had long lain fallow, overwhelmed in the wreckage of the collapse; later each individual had been fully occupied in trying to hack a path through the ruins of civilian existence. But obviously during the din of battle every soldier had dreamed of a beautiful world such as could never come true. And obviously, too, when compared with the emotions of war-time those of peace seemed relatively ineffectual. Any ex-soldier was bound to feel that life had been filled with a starker intensity during the few seconds which decided whether or not a salient could be held than during those Homeric struggles for large, medium or small coalitions which constantly placed the same small band of worthies on page one of the morning papers. So it is hardly surprising that as soon as this generation had recovered from its physical and psychological exhaustion a positive torrent of war books began to appear, books in which the authors attempted to put down on paper what had once been such very real experiences. It made no difference whether the war was seen from a positive or a negative attitude: the common experience was affirmed in all its power: and many a man who had previously maintained that his military service had been nothing but one long, atrocious martyr-



dom, now began to assert that he too had always been a good soldier—or alternatively to boast that he at least had had the guts to stand up to a bully of a sergeant-major. In a word, no matter what virtues a man might possess they seemed to find expression in a sudden general respect for martial matters. Even those political mass-movements, which since 1918 had been carefully avoiding any possible suspicion of harbouring ideas that were not the acme of a gentle love of peace, now began to take lessons in the sounding of fanfares while attempting to assemble the nation's youth in uniformed columns to march beneath their banners. Ernst Jünger, suitably enough, entitled his new periodical *Der Vormarsch* [*The Advance*], and Ernst Niekisch called his *Der Widerstand* [*The Resistance*]. Indeed scarcely a publication appeared that did not, by its name, announce itself as prepared for some sort of struggle. The titles threatened and trumpeted and clanked through the forest of German letters, and even Hans Zehrer contemplated joining in the fray: he decided to call his paper neither *Faith* nor *Love* nor even *Hope*, but simply and briefly *Deed*, and thus he proceeded to publish *Tat*.

So my brother had in principle no complaint to make when the staff of his newly acquired *Deutsche Front* assembled for its first conference under his direction, and he found that what he was addressing was less like an editorial board than a group of officers carrying out a tactical exercise without troops. The room was crammed with generals and majors and lieutenant-commanders, all retired. My brother greeted them in the assumption that a man who enjoys the profession of arms will face all the circumstances of life with the same martial ardour and will know how to keep his weapons clean and pointed the right way even though the battle be one of words. Soon, however, my brother discovered that the *Deutsche Front* only took on the appearance of a cavalry charge when the question was that of the well-earned rights and pensions due to those passionate and inflammable champions of the nation's spiritual values. He soon disgusted his staff colleagues, as well as the greater part of the subscribers, by writing an article in which he proposed that in order to encourage a higher degree of pugnacity the pensions of men still in robust health should be discontinued. This led to an immediate mass protest on the part of his staff and a flood of readers' letters which contained every reaction of the wounded human spirit from peevish insults to threats of death by hanging. So it will be readily seen how pleased my brother was when he saw my article, "The First Day," in the *D.A.Z.* He wrote to me at once saying that he was prepared to publish this article, although it was against his paper's custom (circulation 600) to reprint material that had already appeared elsewhere. He also asked me for further articles dealing with my "attitude towards matters of topical interest."

Now I have long been absorbed in a problem which I have entitled 'The Writer's Task in our Age,' and of which I had already written a

part. My brother's interest in this fragment was so slight that even my mentioning the theme—one that will fascinate me until the day I die—seemed likely to lead once again to a definite cooling off in our relations. But when I showed him my written report on my investigation into the conditions of the Schleswig-Holstein peasantry he grabbed it with both hands.

I was in the editorial office, a very small room separated from the printing press by a wooden partition, when a large, broad-shouldered man wearing a black suit and with a bowler hat upon his head came in. With heavy steps he walked across to the table, put down the latest number of *Die Deutsche Front*, pointed with a vast and knotty forefinger at my article, and asked, in a strong Lower-Saxon accent:

“Who wrote this?”

I had occasion to notice the visitor's exceptionally massive fists, and I withdrew towards the far end of the room, where I thumbed through some galley-proofs. My brother, too, was staring at those powerful knuckles which now rested on the table. He glanced quickly in my direction, but soon pulled himself together and with determination and brotherly affection replied:

“I did.”

The visitor brought down his fist with a tremendous crash upon the table and shouted:

“That's the first sensible thing that's ever been written about our peasants' struggle!”

This was Claus Heim, a peasant from Dithmarschen, who was soon to be called “the peasant-general” by his fellows in Schleswig-Holstein, and if nobody had appointed him to this honourable position at least no one had elected him to it either. He proposed to my brother that he should take over the editorship of a peasant's paper, a daily which would belong to the peasants and would serve their interests. My brother immediately agreed to do so.

What was the situation?

The beautiful province of Schleswig-Holstein is divided into three sorts of country, each with its own type of agriculture, which is quite different from those of the other two.

There is the east coast, a rich soil much indented by bays, washed by the gentle waves of the Baltic, fruitful, hilly, a country of large estates. Even in the best years, when the harvests are good and the tariffs protect the farmer, these estates scarcely ever earn more than three per cent profit. But owing to the great variety of produce, the extensive credit facilities available and not least of all the proprietors' skill in reinforcing their agricultural economy by means of their industrial and political interests, the estates manage to survive from one crisis to the next—not infrequently at the expense of the other agricultural areas.

There is the Geest. The province is divided from north to south by a

backbone of heath, with a sandy soil, covered with a rough scrub broken here and there by patches of fir or pine and an occasional stretch of moor. This soil offers the Geest peasants a scanty sustenance and little else. But poverty can usually adjust itself best to bad times. The thin soil can always support the Geest peasant and his family, even if he has scarcely anything left over to contribute to the needs of the rest of the population.

And there is the Marsh. The west coast, built up of the alluvial deposits washed down by the rivers and of land reclaimed from the North Sea, is fat pasture, and the agriculture is based on grazing. The peasants live by breeding and raising their beasts, which are exceptionally fine both as milch and as fatstock animals, the most important breed of cattle in all Germany. The peasants of the western Marsh are rich if you count the money that tinkles into their money boxes after the autumn markets or, again, if you count the oxen grazing on the lush grass of their pastures. But the Marsh peasants are also the first to suffer when times are bad. Their economy is a speculative one; it is based on one type of produce only; it feels at once the effects of fluctuations on the exchange rate or in prices; it is dependent on the cost of cattle feed and hence on the strength or weakness of the country's position in international trade. And at times, when the wisdom or otherwise of Governments is dependent on parliamentary majorities, this particular branch of agriculture has no great weight of votes to throw into the scales. And it was here, on the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein that men such as Claus Heim of St. Annen-Österfelde and the peasant Hamkens of Tetenbüll had to stand up and fight to save their farms. They could, you see, find nobody else to do it for them.

"Fact is," said Claus Heim, "that state, government, parties, agricultural organisations, agricultural boards and societies—all failures. Fact is for years the peasant has been paying all sorts of taxes and hearing about how everything's been done for him and all he sees is the way he gets poorer and poorer. Fact is the taxes are the only contacts between us peasants and the authorities. Fact is we just can't meet them all out of current income, and we've got to pay by selling stock. But we don't want to pay by selling stock. It's nonsense, and it affects everybody. Who wants to kill his best milch cow?"

The conclusions Claus drew from these simple facts were equally simple. Every peasant, every single farmer, should do what any man and any peasant has the right to do, he should try to save his farm. He should refuse to surrender his stock and should support his neighbours—without fuss or organisation—to do the same. To discuss this proposal a meeting attended by sixty thousand peasant proprietors was held at Rendsburg, a small town in the middle of the province. To reach these sixty thousand each day after they had returned, crook in hand, to their isolated farms, and thus to hold the movement together,

was to be the task of the peasants' newspaper. It was to be published in Itzehoe. My brother was anxious to call it *Die Grüne Front* [*The Green Front*] while I preferred *Die Sturmglocke* [*The Storm Tocsin*]. Claus Heim decided the matter by bringing his fist down on the table with a crash and announcing:

"It's called *Das Landvolk* and that's that."

My brother and I discovered a bankrupt printer at Itzehoe and bought his business. This was in a tumbledown old house containing a broken composing machine, a hand-press in working order and a pile of boxes into which the letters had been thrown higgledy-piggledy. But my brother, whose technical talents were as limited as my own, set to work at once. Our first number was marked by countless typographical errors and by a style the like of which the adult population was only accustomed to hear from the mouths of its Reichstag representatives. The name of the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Gresczynsky, occurred six times, with a different spelling on each occasion until at last it consisted of nothing but consonants. Within a few weeks the paper was facing some twenty legal actions for libel and abusive practices. Since Claus Heim stubbornly refused to pay the fines, my brother asked me to replace him as editor, first, because I was used to being in gaol, and secondly because in his capacity as editor of *Die Deutsche Front*—which he was still carrying on—he considered himself to be quite irreplaceable. But I maintained that I too was irreplaceable, and I pointed out that on many a day I wrote the whole paper single-handed. So we fetched from Berlin an old, hard-boiled putschist, a man who clung with affection and tenderness to his memories of the many prisons in which he had lingered. When he joined our editorial staff it was all we could do to prevent him indulging in a positive orgy of libel and abusive practices, so great was his longing for a return to a life filled with order and sense.

Of course it was not only the law that interfered with our management of the paper. The politicians, too, soon took a hand. The *Oberpräsident* of Schleswig-Holstein, a man named Kürbis (which is German for pumpkin) forbade its publication: it appeared the next day, entitled *Die Westküste* [*The West Coast*]. This too was banned, and for a short time my brother's wish was fulfilled and we edited *Die Grüne Front*. I, too, had the gratification of seeing my original suggestion realised when it became, in due course, *Die Sturmglocke*. Finally the *Oberpräsident* forbade us from publishing any paper at all which was not purely concerned with technical agricultural matters. So we rechristened it *Der Kürbis*, and the leading article consisted of variations on the subject of pumpkin as given in the encyclopaedia: we expatiated on how pumpkins flourish best in plenty of dung and on the disagreeable nature of their blossom's scent. Thenceforth the paper resumed its original name of *Das Landvolk* and that was that.

Since my brother and I had to produce practically the whole of the paper on our own, day after day, I soon knew the business backwards. I became an expert type-setter, and an authority on the fluctuations of the pig market: I studied land-reclamation as well as the German-Yugoslav trade agreement. I also recaptured what might be called the writer's pristine innocence. This was thanks less to the fact that I had to dictate my articles and observations, my comments and maxims, straight into the composing-machine than to the emblem of the Red Front Fighters' League which my printer wore in his buttonhole. This printer did not hold with elegant turns of phrase or conditional clauses. "The people don't want to hear that sort of stuff," he said. He was a believer in the direct method, and he helped me out with many a current, racy, full-blooded expression.

Needless to say I inferred that the agricultural slump was intimately connected with the reparations payments. When a man's capital shrinks until it is too small to fulfill its functions, it becomes apparent that his fight to preserve his stock is part of, and equivalent to, an identical struggle by the whole German economy—and must logically culminate in a demand for a reparations strike.

Now this was no new demand. No one groaned more beneath the burden of reparations than the Government itself. The Foreign Minister, Dr. Stresemann, went from one conference to another in an attempt to secure a remission of these political debts. What was new was that a portion of the population—and in these circumstances the peasantry was the most important and the hardest-hit portion—was being urged seriously to act. Dr. Stresemann, so we thought, could make use of our perhaps rather crudely formulated demands when he went on his trips abroad, and my brother saw to it that he regularly received his copy of *Das Landvolk*. But apparently in the press of public business Dr. Stresemann forgot to read it. The peasants didn't. The circulation rose, and with it the echo that soon reverberated from every peasant's cottage in Schleswig-Holstein. And the echo was a question: how could a reparations strike be put into practice? So there we were. I fought a long inner struggle. Filled with good intentions as I was, and more anxious to listen to the icy voice of logic than to the promptings of passion which urged me towards the jungle of more romantic, criminal emotions, I yet finally had no choice but to agree with Claus Heim's pronouncement. The answer was a tax strike.

The effect was overwhelming. Judging by its joyous reception it was an idea that appealed directly to the German heart. And it was plain that the administrative machine of the German Weimar Republic would have to gird up its loins and be prepared to react, with all the power at its disposal, against the first manifestations resulting from so reprehensible a challenge.

This happened at Beidenfleth, a little, scattered village in the Wilstermarsch. There lived two peasants, by name Kock and Kühn, who owed taxes to the extent of approximately three hundred and five hundred marks respectively. They had never before been in arrears in their tax payments, but now they simply did not have the money. A distraining order was issued against them. They hurried to see the head of the local administration as well as the finance office, and asked for a delay of execution. But it seemed that "an example had to be made." Five days later the bailiff appeared at their farms, accompanied by two unemployed men to act as his assistants and drovers. They planned to take one distrained heifer from each of the two peasants. The peasants did not attempt to stop them. But they blew the fire-horn, and on the road they lit a fire of straw, the age-old sign that help is needed. Peasants ran from all sides towards the smoke.

The heifers obviously did not know the meaning of this old country custom. They were frightened by the fire. They broke loose from the drovers, and with rolling eyes they ran back into the warm darkness of their stalls—back to their places by the hay rack where the distraining seals were still to be seen.

Such was the Beidenfleth riot: breach of the peace, concealment of distrained property, resistance to authority. Writs were issued against fifty-seven peasants. But some two or three hundred more had come to the fire and were not among the accused. Nor was I—I had not been at Beidenfleth—though I believed all the same that I too had lit a fire of straw. So I got in touch with those peasants who, much to their surprise, were not among the accused and proposed that I should surrender myself and, in their name, themselves to the public authorities as accomplices. The public prosecutor, however, could see nothing wrong in my actions. He was a Rhinelander and knew no more about the customs of the country than did the heifers.

We were not satisfied. Peasants came forward who had not been present at the fire but who had heard the fire-horn. They had set off: they had had, however, too far to go. They now announced themselves guilty of attempted breach of the peace; Heim and Hamkens struck their breasts and proclaimed themselves guilty of incitement. And soon a fever seemed to grip the countryside. From far and wide the peasants poured into Itzehoe, where the case was to be tried, with wild cries of self-accusation. The public prosecutor could not walk down the streets without being at once mobbed by powerful, earnest men begging him to lift the heavy weight of guilt from their shoulders and to restore their inner peace of mind by issuing a writ against them.

The Beidenfleth Heifer Case developed into a regular popular festival. Maidenly hands strung garlands about the necks of those enviable peasants who had achieved the honour of receiving a writ. A whole company of policemen was brought up from Altona and enlivened the

scene there with decorative uniforms. From all sides came the representatives of greater or lesser newspapers, anxious to see how justice was done in the German countryside. The judges with their assistants, the jurymen and the witnesses walked with dignity the narrow streets of the little town, a cynosure to all. And there, too, was Dr. Luetgebrune, who had come to defend the accused.

Oh, the Beidenfleth Heifer Case! I love trials: they never cease to fascinate me. Even the pettiest contains within itself a fragment of the great world drama. Here I sat, for the first time, not on the bench of the accused but on that of the Press. So far as comfort was concerned the former seemed to me definitely to have the advantage. My colleagues who sat beside me, shuffling their feet, playing with their pencils, yawning and stretching, were all men who claimed to know the world, representatives of the great—yes, and of the greatest—newspapers. They gazed mockingly about them, picked their teeth and watched me with amusement as I feverishly covered sheet after sheet of paper with my notes.

The president of the court seemed to be in a way an accomplice of the journalists. He cross-examined the accused with a sort of irritating calmness, all fifty-seven of them, one after the other. During the first three cross-examinations I enlivened my report with clarion-calls concerning the mounting burden of indebtedness and the macabre atmosphere of despair among the suffering agricultural population; and whenever I wrote down the pitiful debts of each of the accused I followed the figures with a positive hedge of exclamation marks. With the fourth witness I began to flag a little, with the twenty-third to change my tactics, and by the time the thirty-fifth stepped into the box I was bathed in perspiration. When the forty-eighth was being cross-examined I was simply babbling: the rest of their evidence I just summarised.

I am sorry to say that my attitude towards the meaning of this trial also led to a certain estrangement between myself and Dr. Luetgebrune. For me human beings were never as interesting as circumstances. I was quite certain that there is no possibility of changing men and that therefore a man's duty lies in changing the circumstances. But Dr. Luetgebrune, himself of peasant stock, was to my great amazement really doing everything in his power to help the peasants, all fifty-seven of them. When I remarked that a condemnation would hardly be a tragic matter, since it must be a pleasure to be martyred in a good cause, he explained to me the attitude of a peasant proprietor who might be compelled to waste the most important part of his working year, the harvest season, in a prison cell. He went on to interfere most high-handedly with the sacred principle of a free Press by flatly forbidding me to quote so movingly the individual debts of each peasant: had I not the wit, he asked, to see that by so doing I was destroying what wretched personal

credit those poor men still had? So I switched my zealous attention to the public prosecutor.

In spite of Dr. Luetgebrune's efforts the two principal accused were sentenced to eight, and twenty-three others to six months' imprisonment.

It must not be imagined that Kürbis had instigated this case simply out of spite. In the interval between the lighting of the straw fire at Beidenfleth and the trial much had happened which would make any state feel it time an example was made. Everywhere bailiff's orders were being disobeyed. Heifers were repeatedly shying away from fires. Compulsory sales could not be held: when the young peasants of the riding club appeared at the scene of the auction of their horses and with music, nobody seemed willing to make a bid. The carters refused, even with police protection, to carry off the distrained cattle, for they knew that if they did they would never again be able to do business with the peasants. One day three peasants even appeared in the slaughter yards at Hamburg and announced that unless the distrained cattle disappeared at once from the yard's stalls the gentlemen in charge of the slaughterhouse could find somewhere else to buy their beasts in future—they wouldn't be getting any more from Schleswig-Holstein. In brief, on the flat lands something new had come into existence, a weapon of our civilisation that had previously been the monopoly of the workers, the employers and the officials—solidarity. A peasant solidarity was there, which nobody had ever dreamed could exist, and which was a far more decisive weapon than that of the workers or the employers or the officials, for it was pointed at the basic requirements of the nation. Furthermore, those others could only use their solidarity for bargaining purposes and that only at a certain cost to themselves. But if it were to come to an out-and-out fight the peasants could live longer on their farms than could the towns deprived of agricultural produce. And it was in the towns that the authorities lived and ruled. This was proved in the case of Neumünster, a small but bustling industrial centre surrounded by agricultural land. During a demonstration on behalf of some arrested peasants other peasants were hurt, only one seriously, the standard-bearer, but still the peasants wanted compensation. (Do read Hans Fallada's book about all this, *Bauern, Bonzen und Bomben*.) The civic pride of the town was aroused and the town authorities refused. The peasants declared a boycott. No peasant entered the town: no produce was delivered to the town: and for three-quarters of a year the civic pride of Neumünster endured. Then it broke, and the peasants received the compensation they had demanded.

Then things began to happen of which even the most tolerant burghers could no longer approve. Once again it began at Beidenfleth. The official there—the same man by whose orders Kock's and Kühl's heifers were to have been removed—was awakened, in the middle of the night, by a tremendous detonation and the sound of glass breaking in



his windows. Something, which the police called a bomb, had exploded in his shed. Investigations were begun, and the efforts of the authorities were soon to be categorised by the appropriate officials as 'feverish,' for bombs began to go off all over the place. The police collected fragments of the exploded bombs, specialists reconstructed them, and the Press, anxious to help the police in their work, published impressive pictures of the fragments as well as a drawing of a reconstructed bomb together with a very detailed description of how it had been made. The police had done a really first-rate job. Even my brother and myself, both of us extremely untalented men in technical matters, could easily grasp how the bomb-makers had gone to work. A large quantity of ordinary black gunpowder, such as is to be found in the cartridges sold for shot-guns, was encased in plasticine: in it was embedded an explosive cap, of the type used in hand-grenades during the war, at the end of a thin wire: the other end of the wire was joined to the battery of a pocket torch—obtainable at any village store—and thence to the alarm mechanism of an ordinary alarm clock. The whole contraption was packed into a soap box.

Of course my brother did his duty as a journalist. He published the police report, together with the illustrations, on page one. It was not my brother's doing that this copy of the paper had a most spectacular success and that for weeks men were still buying it; no, the credit for that must go to the police; they had done their bit to ensure that the peasantry of Schleswig-Holstein would have a healthy occupation during the long winter evenings. Instead of just sitting and indulging in stupid thoughts, or doing crossword puzzles, or assembling to hear inflammatory speeches, the peasantry was henceforth quietly and busily engaged in procuring soap-boxes and alarm clocks and flashlight batteries.

And then the bombs really began to go off.

The National-Socialist Party had, by this time, abandoned its original intention of forcibly securing power in the state through a 'hard minority'—this had officially occurred when its leader made a declaration to that effect, under oath, at the so-called 'Ulm Reichswehr Trial.' Now it had embarked on the stupendous and well-nigh incredible task of winning power 'legally,' of using Beelzebub to drive out the Devil, as it were, of overwhelming all the other parties and party-constellations with ever greater majorities and thus of achieving complete mastery of the state. Meanwhile it naturally regarded any alternative attempt to create a new order as a hostile force that was likely to damage its own prospects. The danger and importance which it attached to the Schleswig-Holstein Peasants' Movement is shown by the fact that the Party deemed it expedient to publish its second daily paper—the *Völkischer Beobachter* being the first—in our comparatively thinly populated province. It was not in Berlin or Hamburg or Kiel that this Party

paper appeared, but in Itzehoe; it was edited by one of their most radical and gifted journalists, a man named Bodo Uhse; and the immediate effect of the Party's unlimited propaganda was to endanger the peasants' newly won solidarity.

The Peasants' Movement under Heim and Hamkens would hardly have refused the unexpected help of the Party's great propaganda machine, if they had been able to find out what the Party's tactics were to be and what plans the Party had made in its 'new order' for the peasants. But this they could not learn: these were secrets tucked away in the cupboards of the appropriate Party offices. All they did hear was that the agricultural experts of the Party, in a burst of irritation at the distrust and stubbornness of the west-coast peasants, had announced that after the seizure of power the Schleswig-Holstein peasants would be driven from their farms with whips. And that was no way to talk to our peasants. The Party demanded not only complete support at the polls: it not only insisted on unconditional obedience from its peasant members: it also made it plain that it expected to be kept informed concerning all acts of peasant solidarity and that its approval must be obtained for all decisions taken. That was enough for Claus Heim. He brought down his fist on the table with a tremendous crash and announced:

"No part of it! And that's that."

And the bombs were going off. It now seemed that the Peasants' Movement had abandoned legal methods. And the Party held trumps. The authorities, misinformed as usual, had announced that the National-Socialist Party was behind the Peasants' Movement: the Press of the various other parties, anxious as ever to place tactical advantages before accuracy, had loudly repeated this. And thus the Party was in a position to kill two birds with one stone. It could simultaneously eliminate an uncomfortable rival while swathing itself in a cloak of innocence, in its newly found legality. The Party Führer offered a prize of not less than ten thousand marks to any Party-comrade who succeeded in proving that the bomb outrages were not the work of National-Socialists; and certain Party functionaries considered it not beneath their dignity to give the authorities the names of some of the men who had laid the bombs.

Every movement reaches a critical point of growth: that is when it is so big that its most active part can no longer hear its leader's order to halt. It was in vain that Heim and Hamkens publicly condemned the bomb-outrages. One explosion followed another, in government buildings and those of the local authorities and above all in the finance offices, of which there was one in every district. It was in vain that the *Landvolk* published heart-rending articles in which I attempted to point out that the finance officials were fine and honourable men, sadly underpaid, and only trying to do their duty, their duty . . . (At the time I

could not guess that by so saying I was furthering a thoroughly pernicious misconception. Now of course I realise that the excuse of simply having done one's duty is unacceptable. It leads, in fact, to the gallows.) In vain did I entreat the rash-looking young men, who came to our editorial office, to drop their conspiratorial manner and to abandon their evil practices: the young men simply winked at me, slapped me on the shoulder and announced mysteriously as they left:

"But it's fun!"

One day, when I noticed my communist printer gazing thoughtfully at his old alarm clock, I asked him point-blank what was passing through his mind. But he assured me that his party absolutely forbade acts of individual terrorism. (I later heard that he was busily engaged on the mass-production of infernal machines: terrorism on a somewhat larger scale was not, it seems, forbidden.)

I participated actively in the misery of the country folk, because in my own case, too, capital had turned out to be too small. Claus Heim handled the peasants' money with a tight fist. There was no question of my drawing a salary. For my work with the *Landvolk* paper I received a total remuneration of seventy-five marks. Since the *Deutsche Front*, now split into three rival camps, paid only five pfennigs a line, I could not even keep body and soul together despite the butter and eggs and sides of bacon which the peasants brought to our editorial office in their bulging baskets to infuse fresh heart into us. So I had to divide my time between Itzehoe and Berlin.

Thus my double life had also a spatial significance as well. Now at that time nobody, motoring through the rich, fertile, fruitful meadows of Schleswig-Holstein and seeing the peaceful thatched cottages of the peasant proprietors would have guessed that those cottages, from cellar to attic, were filled with anger and bitterness. In Berlin, similarly, anyone observing the infinitely lively and vivid city with its glittering shop-windows and its elegant women and its business activity and its humming social life—anybody passing through this city must have assumed that life here was both comfortable and solid. I knew that one day I must study this city from the bottom up, but the time was not yet. However, I did get a distant whiff of what was happening from the various salons I frequented, of which Salinger's was the principal one. In these pretty rooms the Berliners were in the habit of assembling in the evening for tea and snacks: there they would discuss, with astonishing knowledge of statistics and considerable information, the general situation, though there was no intention shown to do anything about it. Nobody ever asked me what I was actually doing in Schleswig-Holstein, save perhaps Dr. Hirschfeldt, a high official in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, who had recently taken to frequenting Salinger's salon. Occasionally, and casually, he would glance at me with his green eyes and honour me with a question, such as:

“And what are the peasants up to in the north?”

To which I could usually only reply:

“Thank you for your interest. According to the statistics, the standard of living is going up—in particular there has been an increased demand for alarm clocks.”

Bogumil was at that time working with Ernst Jünger on his new periodical, *Vormarsch*, and I too joined them.

Needless to say even then I knew about Ernst Jünger. I had read his book, *The Storm of Steel*, in prison; as a man who took part neither in the first nor in the second of the great wars, I can maintain that I know no better description of war. So I was very anxious to meet Ernst Jünger and very excited when Bogumil took me to see him. He was wearing a dressing-gown, with a brightly coloured cap on his head and felt slippers on his feet and smoking a long cherry-wood pipe with a porcelain bowl. I had time to observe him carefully, for he took no notice of me, being fully engaged in discussing a cartoon that was to appear in the next number of *Vormarsch*.

Listening to him, I decided that here was a man to whom one might talk. And so in the course of this, our first, conversation I attempted to tell him something about my work with the peasants. Ernst Jünger listened carefully to my enthusiastic description of what was happening up there, but at last he said that he regarded it as most surprising for me to expect him to break into loud cheers at the news of what he called our “nocturnal fireworks.”

Nor was it, of course, surprising. This man, a warrior from tip to toe, a man who had fought in the trenches throughout the war, a knight of the order *Pour le Mérite*, many times wounded and much accustomed to the company of corpses, such a man, as I saw, could hardly be impressed by explosions that simply resulted in noise and smoke.

That first conversation of mine with Ernst Jünger was for me a very important event. The few minutes of our talk were completely characteristic of that remarkable man, the only one from all the various circles extant at that time who was to achieve a definite world renown. The secret of Ernst Jünger’s style seemed to me, to put it in simple terms, that he combined in himself the qualities of warrior and naturalist. I thought to see that this man must suddenly, in the midst of the storm of steel, have awakened to a consciousness of the world about him: that thanks to the brilliant strength of his intellect he was able soon to project his mind above it all and to observe the battlefield, on which he was himself engaged, as a flyer high above it all might see it: from a great altitude the bloody business must appear a senseless scrabbling of tiny dots, of microscopically small living organisms, forming columns, fanning out this way or that, while some, stopped in their path by a higher power, suddenly became motionless and thus uninteresting.

I asked myself even then what real interest Ernst Jünger could have in me. And I concluded, correctly, that he was too intelligent to assume that I would rapturously spend the rest of my life perforating estimable ministers with revolver bullets or tossing home-made bombs until at last, a fiery old man with silvery locks, I spent my declining years planting flags on barricades. He seemed to regard my activities with the Peasants' Movement as the compulsive effects of an urge to assert myself reinforced by an occupational neurosis. He encouraged me in my efforts to study the nature of war, but in this I did not, like him, start from the great battles of *matériel* but from the post-war *Freikorps* campaigns. He did not seem at all surprised that I should therefore reach conclusions quite different from his own as expressed in *Total Mobilisation*. I thought that wars in the future should be fought by small, highly trained bodies of military specialists, such as General von Seeckt had envisaged. I believed that vast armies formed by universal military service were out of date, and here I was in disagreement with General von Seeckt, who had simply been making a virtue of necessity; I thought that these huge armies were too expensive in relation to the attainable objects and to the general purpose of war. In fact I reached conclusions that were in almost exact contrast to Jünger's. He accepted my views as logical, but did not hesitate to give me his low opinion of the existential strength of logic.

Now it happened that a man called Arnolt Bronnen, a real writer in the forefront of contemporary German literature, and who, of course, had never heard of us, chose, as the subject for his latest novel, events in Upper Silesia in the year 1921. This bronze lion of the German literary world handled his material with all the virtuosity of the skilled novelist. Nor did he take sides. In the inferno he portrayed, his Poles and Germans, French and English, nationalists and communists, men and women were all equally unsympathetic. He called his novel, briefly, *OS*. It bore all the hall-marks of a writer whose work usually appeared in the glossiest magazines with the largest circulations. So far so good; but suddenly the uproar began. Arnolt Bronnen might look horrified; he might polish his monocle to his heart's content: but there it was written, in black and white—Arnolt Bronnen was a traitor, a fascist! (And later: His novel was a bad one, naturally. He didn't know how to write. Never had.) Bronnen, who up to this point had lived in the heady atmosphere of effortless success, now felt the icy wind of failure whistling about his ears. He took down from his shelves his literary productions, plays, novels, essays, and read them through carefully, one by one. The conclusion he reached was that if that was fascism, then he was a fascist. And since people kept telling him that he was a member of a group that revolved around this man Jünger, whom he'd never heard of, he went to see Jünger.

I had met Bronnen once, briefly, and he had made no impression on

me. This sort of literary squabble did not interest me any more than it interested the dog by the stove in the Itzehoe finance office. But I did read his book. His way of seeing things was not mine. Unlike him, I had actually been in Upper Silesia at the time and I had found Poles and Germans, French and English, nationalists and communists, men and women, all equally sympathetic. But the book aroused my curiosity about Arnolt Bronnen and I was therefore pleased, when I had occasion to make a brief trip to Berlin in late August, 1929, to hear that I was to meet him at Bogumil's.

Bogumil lived at that time in a small room on the lower Friedrich Strasse, a horrible, dark hole in one of those horrible dark houses of that faded street. The Friedrich Strasse, once upon a time a centre of elegance, was now nothing but an amusement centre for gaping provincials. But Bogumil had managed, with books and hangings, to make his room habitable and adequate.

One thing I had in common with Ernst Jünger was a fondness for long walks. It had become our custom whenever we visited each other for the host to accompany his guest home on foot, which involved, from his home to mine, a walk straight across Berlin, from the Warsaw Bridge in the east to the Pariser Strasse in the west, and then back again if it was late and the metropolitan railway no longer running. We had both walked from afar in order to visit Bogumil and, since his house was a hard one to find, we had arranged to meet beneath the lights of the *Oasis*, a sort of nightclub in the Friedrich Strasse, much bedizened with photographs of the naked girl dancers to be seen within and also right opposite to where Bogumil lived. At the sight of the ice-blue and cochineal-red neon tubes Jünger let himself go on the subject of this sort of illumination, which he described as the hell-lights of civilisation: he added a few more pertinent and instructive remarks. My curiosity being aroused, I expressed a naïf desire to see the inside of the place, and Jünger, with a sarcastic smile on his lips, went off to Bogumil's on his own. Naturally I visited the *Oasis* merely as a 'student,' and my studies were indeed repaid. The chairs in the dancing girls' undressing room must have had seats of woven cane, for when the pretty but somewhat unskilled creatures appeared on the small stage their naked little back-sides were criss-crossed in the most amusing patterns. Apart from this discovery I learned nothing concerning the phenomena of our civilisation.

The Bronnen phenomenon had meanwhile attracted a great number of friends to Bogumil's room. Hans Dieter Salinger, who had taken over the economic side of *Vormarsch*, was seated on the sofa, as was his custom, with his legs tucked under him: Hans Zehrer gave the room an atmosphere of soigné elegance: Otto Strasser, wearing a dinner jacket and black silk shirt, was there with Herbert Blanck. Samhaber was present, and Friedrich Georg Jünger, Ernst's brother, and of course

a number of Jünger's disciples grouped about the master's feet. All eyes were fastened, as it were, on Arnolt Bronnen's monocle.

Now to the general uproar about Bronnen there had recently been added a new, shrill voice. This belonged to a fairly well-known Viennese litterateur with the name of Anton Kuh. He casually announced that during his time at the Schiller Gymnasium in Vienna there had been on the staff a respectable but Jewish teacher named Bronner: Kuh took the liberty of enquiring whether this man might not perhaps be the father of the celebrated neo-fascist, Arnolt Bronnen. This question had been accepted with glee on all sides, and I knew Ernst Jünger well enough to realise what he was getting at when he remarked to Bronnen, in his lower Saxon drawl:

"I mean, it's beginning to be a bit disagreeable. You'll have to take a stand, as you might say."

Bronnen thereupon rose to his feet and began to explain the whole business in detail. He kept polishing his monocle, and his voice—already somewhat hoarse as a result of a throat wound received on the Tyrolean front when fighting with the Imperial Jaegers against an Italian force that included a non-commissioned officer called Benito Mussolini—his voice seemed in danger of breaking. The assembled company stared at him without moving. Only Salinger kept wiggling his ears, a habit of his when listening to gentiles and one that gave his features an even more oriental cast. Bronnen assured us, with detailed proof, that his name was and always had been Bronnen and that Kuh's suggestion was without the faintest shadow of reason, that there could be no possibility of even the tiniest drop of Jewish blood running in his veins. Finally he fell silent, exhausted.

Nobody said a word, gazing at him. He sat there, nervously playing with his monocle. Finally Salinger rose to his feet—a lengthy and tricky business, since it involved untangling his legs—walked across to Bronnen, slapped him on the shoulder and said:

"Na, my dear Bronner—in that case. . . ."

We all talked a lot that evening and only Bronnen remained silent. Only right at the end, towards dawn, did he speak again.

A book had recently appeared which had had a great literary success. This was Ernst Glaeser's *The Class of 1902*. The author, clearly a member of that class himself, described, through the adventures of a single character, the whole tragedy of those young people swindled out of their share of the world's beauty and goodness. In most artistic fashion he portrayed the spiritual, intellectual and physical hunger of the age as well as the despair of love beneath the shadow of war or in the senselessness of a collapsing society. Hans Zehrer said to me that since I too belonged to the class of 1902 I should write a refutation. I replied, adopting the same casual tone as he had used, that I was by no means typical of my age-group. But Zehrer insisted:

“Glaeser is a unique character too, neither more nor less typical than yourself.”

Jünger said:

“Types are mass-produced.”

All this made me feel somewhat uncomfortable. I attempted to bring the conversation to an end by saying, in a voice of assumed boredom:

“First some publisher would have to be found to support me for a year. And none of them is that stupid.”

Then Bronnen, looking at me attentively through his monocle, remarked:

“Who knows?”

As we left in the first light of dawn the newsboys were already crying their headlines in the streets:

“Reichstag bombed! Reichstag bombed!”

Fancy that, I thought. I bought a paper and saw that a bomb had been planted inside entrance No. 4 of the Reichstag building some time during the preceding evening. It had caused considerable material damage, but nobody had been hurt. A high official of the Ministry of the Interior had been entrusted with the police investigation.

I made my way home, thinking of my breakfast. At that time a sleepless night meant nothing to me. But before I had even finished my coffee my landlady called out from the hall that I was wanted on the telephone.

“Hullo! Hullo!” a voice roared out of the earpiece. “Rowohlt here!”

“Who?” I asked. “Who is it, please?”

“Rowohlt of Ernst Rowohlt, publishers.”

I was to come to see him, in his office, at five that afternoon. In some confusion I agreed to do so, hung up, and immediately telephoned Bronnen. Yes, he had got in touch with Rowohlt at once. What sort of man was this Rowohlt, I asked; and Bronnen said he’d always found him a satisfactory publisher.

“Thank you, my dear Bronner,” said I.

“Don’t call me Bronner,” said he, “or I’ll call you Schlome.” And he hung up.

When, at five that afternoon, I was standing outside the publisher’s office in the Passauer Strasse I had as good as made up my mind to mutter a few polite phrases, to take my hat and to walk out. I had no real desire to enter into the sort of arrangement Bronnen had in mind. Then Rowohlt opened his door, roaring:

“Come in, maestro!”

He was a giant of a man, with reddish-blond hair and the graceful movements of a rogue elephant. He seized my hand and with a single, expansive gesture pulled me across his threshold.

It was love at first sight. It was an immediate involvement with a



brilliant personality, a relationship which, as I realised at once and with certainty, would not quickly fade away.

“Try not to bang yourself,” the man said, “there’s not much room here.”

He was leading me through a room filled with deal tables on which stood typewriters. But there was plenty of room. It was only that the place seemed small in comparison with Rowohlt. He took me into his workroom, the walls of which were covered with books from floor to ceiling. He pushed me into a low chair and I watched while he drew the curtains, switched on a lamp that shone full in my face and then in a dark corner of the room busied himself between a table covered in books and a small cupboard from which he finally produced two glasses, a bottle and tobacco.

I knew that a marriage must take place and he would be the wife and I the husband, though it was plain that he would be the sort of wife who wears the trousers. So I moved the lamp until it shone full on his face and observed with satisfaction how he filled the glasses, how he stuck his lips out like a fish while drinking and how he threw back his round sealion’s head when swallowing. I felt thoroughly at home here: these books were my books: and on his desk, among a mass of papers through which Rowohlt was now hunting, lay my manuscript, a copy of that unfortunate ‘First Day’ which I had given Bogumil and which he had doubtless passed on to Bronnen. Rowohlt took the manuscript, rolled it up, gave me a crafty smile, and said:

“I haven’t read it. I never read my authors’ manuscripts.” He banged the back of his head with the roll of paper and said: “I bang my head with them, and that’s how I know what’s in them.”

I didn’t believe a word of this, but I’m no spoilsport. Of course I knew he read his manuscripts, though no doubt in secret. I congratulated him and said that the books he published had the most handsome jackets. Eagerly he reached for one, it was Bronnen’s OS, stood it on the desk and gazed at it lovingly.

“What do you think of it?” he asked.

The jacket, he said, was entirely his own idea. It consisted simply of the general staff map of Upper Silesia with, superimposed in red, the letters OS. I said I thought it a brilliant idea but that the red should be even redder and that the letters should run a little, as though it were blood trickling across the map. He shifted his torso from side to side, drank another schnaps, gave me a satisfied look, and said:

“We could do that with your book. What are you going to call it?”

I had no idea what I was going to call it. I had given no more thought to the book’s title than to its contents, and here I was suddenly confronted with the greatest test I had ever faced. I wanted to join this publishing house; I stood at a crossroads and with one word this man could change the whole course of my life. It was really just an accident

—if there is such a thing as an accident, and I remembered with amusement that according, roughly, to old Nitschke there isn't—that I was here at all. I was jealous of the authors whom Rowohlt published. Rowohlt had corrupted me simply by telling me a pack of lies, and as a result I was determined to tell him the truth. I said I had come to tell him that I didn't want to write a book. While he carefully tipped his chair backwards and forwards and filled up the glasses and we drank, I told him everything. I praised the peasants of Schleswig-Holstein and spoke contemptuously of Rowohlt's books. I urged Rowohlt not to risk publishing a book which could have nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with the world that was reflected in Rowohlt's publications, which would indeed be directly hostile to that world. I said everything that was on my mind, and when I had finished he filled up his glass and mine, thrust out his lips like a fish, threw back his head, swallowed, and said:

“In that case come along at ten tomorrow morning and we'll draw up a contract.”

But next morning at six there was a knock at my door and a rough voice shouting:

“Open up! Police!”

D. CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF  
FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT AND MILITARY SERVICE

29. Give a chronological history of your employment and military service beginning with 1st of January 1931, accounting for all promotions or demotions, transfers, periods of unemployment, attendance at educational institutions (other than those covered in Section B) or training schools and full-time service with para military organisations. (Part time employment is to be recorded in Section F.) Use a separate line for each change in your position or rank or to indicate periods of unemployment or attendance at training schools or transfer from one military or para military organisation to another.

From	To	Employer and Address or Military Unit	Name and Title of Immediate Superior or C.O.	Position or Rank	Duties and Responsibilities
					Reasons for Change of Status or Cessation of Service
1933	1938	Rowohlt Publishing House, Berlin	Ernst Rowohlt, Publisher	Reader	See below
1933	1944	'Reiter gen Osten' Berlin	H.O. Hauenstein, Editor	Editor	See below
1936	1945	UFA, Berlin, Bavaria, Munich	Not known Not known	Script writer Script writer	See below See below

**I** RAISE MY right hand and swear: "I didn't do it." Of all forms of political activity the most dangerous have always been those of a bureaucracy suddenly gone mad and thrashing about in senseless fashion. The enormous, shirt-sleeved agitation in the police headquarters on the Alexander Platz, the feverish interrogations by day and by night, the hysterical scuttlings hither and thither of officials with contemptibly thin brief-cases tucked beneath their arms, the nervous telephoning to other officials in next-door offices—all this led an experienced observer to guess that the police were well aware of the illegality of the measures they had taken. The nights in the police prison were, moreover, exceptionally instructive. The higher levels of the bureaucracy must long ago have lost all awareness of what was brewing among the broad masses of the people: the lower-level officials, and in particular the worst-paid warders, made a point of avoiding any disadvantageous bureaucratic prejudices. They lent me their newspapers—

which were not those politically most acceptable to the administration—and gave me ample opportunity to find out all I wished to know. I wished to know a great deal.

With one stroke the police had arrested everybody who had even the remotest contacts with myself. In Berlin alone over two hundred people had been taken from their beds, and now a whole wing of the prison was filled with 'politicals.' In Schleswig-Holstein the police had simultaneously gone into action. Up there every person who had been in any way involved in the events that I have described was now in gaol. It's a wonder they didn't arrest the heifers as well. My brother Bruno was, of course, inside. But my two other brothers had also been clapped into prison in Berlin and were now sitting in cells no great distance from my own. There they sat, with gloomy expressions on their faces, unable even to launch a ringing protest since they really had only the haziest notion of what was going on. They contented themselves by astonishing the poor prison doctor with the statement that it was their custom to bathe daily and that they did not intend to abandon this excellent habit simply because they had been arrested. In the shower-room they soon met all those men for whom this sort of experience constituted no novelty. Salinger, on the other hand, was not really capable of coping with prison life. He crouched in his cell observing with agitation and disgust the bugs which had also taken up residence there, and murmuring furiously: "That Hirschfeldt! Na, wait!" He had decided that on the first available opportunity he would expose the full extent of this scandal to 'his' minister. Apart from Hans Zehrer—who had hastily thrown a quantity of suspect manuscripts down the lavatory: he'd had to pull the plug seven times—the whole Salinger Salon had been gaoled: in spiritual martyrdom they were now expiating their tea-table resistance. I observed all this with a regret that was not untinged by a certain mournful satisfaction. According to my calculations, the worse the police behaved, the better our position before the law. I did not regard the law as even beginning to approach the police force in corruption.

So in agreeable equanimity I awaited my transfer to the Moabit prison, where the examinations would take place. Meanwhile I attempted to establish contact with the world outside, and particularly with that portion of it that interested me the most, but it was not until I was in Moabit that I heard what had taken place at Rowohlt's. Of course he had told people that he was thinking of publishing me. Now his telephone was ringing every few minutes, and malicious people would ask him questions such as: "Rowohlt, what's happened to your bomb terrorist?" Rowohlt would roar: "He's doing some explosive advertising!" and bang the receiver back on to its rest. I had scarcely arrived at Moabit before I received a contract, which he had already signed, a general contract giving him exclusive rights, the first contract I ever

saw. It seemed to me a magnificent document, and when I showed it to men who knew all about that sort of thing they assured me that it was far and away the worst contract that any author had ever signed with any publisher. But I put my name to it nevertheless, nor have I ever protested against its terms.

I got Rowohlt to send me several pounds of Dutch tobacco, a ream of paper and my typewriter, and I was not at all pleased when Dr. Luetgebrune insisted on interrupting me in order to discuss my defence. He dispensed an aroma of costly cigars and laughed heartily when I assured him that all I desired was to be left in peace. He should, I said, devote his thoughtful attentions to the other accused: as for myself, I would tell him, as soon as I had finished my book, the date on which I desired to be released from prison.

I now had no need to worry about food, clothes or lodging: I had a pleasant, quiet period of work ahead of me: and by way of relaxation I could look forward to conversations with the examining judge, Dr. Masur, a polite and courtly gentleman. I was accused of having planted the bomb in the Reichstag building, neither more nor less, and nobody was accused of this except me. The Reichstag bomb was the cornerstone of the whole process. The Prussian administration must long have wanted an excuse for removing the complex Schleswig-Holstein case from the provincial atmosphere—inevitably advantageous to the peasant proprietors—to the national capital. The Reichstag bomb finally provided this excuse: by changing the place of trial, the Government managed to arrange that numbers of the accused would not now be facing their regular judges. The Government seemed to attach great importance to this.

In a praiseworthy attempt to refute any possible alibi that I might later produce, Dr. Masur spared no pains to establish once and for all where I had passed the decisive night. When he sent for me to impart the results of his research he would show every sign of being delighted with the progress he had made or, with pleasing variety, of being utterly downcast: it seemed to confuse him that no matter what his mood, I clearly shared it. He informed me enthusiastically that he had scarcely begun his preliminary cross-examination of the people who had formed the little circle at Bogumil's, before he realised that there were considerable gaps in my alibi—particularly during those early hours, when the bomb had been planted and when I had not been present in Bogumil's room: I shared his enthusiasm. I did not know what actually happened when Ernst Jünger was being interrogated, but since Dr. Masur invariably blinked and pursed his lips when referring to this witness, I could form a pretty shrewd idea: and I assumed an appropriately sorrowful and sympathetic expression. When I brought up the "hell-lights of civilisation" Dr. Masur sank into a sort of despond, so I hastened to assure him that I doubted whether any witness from the

*Oasis* could be found to swear that I had been there all the time. In fact, and this flattered my manly pride no end, the third lady from the left of the naked ballet did remember me. I had been particularly taken with the criss-cross design on her backside, and no doubt my obvious interest had caused my image to become engraved in her delicious little memory. In any event, when shown my photograph she declared that she remembered the gentleman very well, that he had sat all through the show at the small table on the left of the stage. I demanded categorically that I be allowed to interview the ladies from the *Oasis*, but Dr. Masur assumed, correctly enough, that my motive was not just a burning desire to clear up the mystery surrounding the crime. Dr. Masur beamed with pleasure when, under his razor-sharp cross-examination, the third lady from the left burst into tears and said I might very well have gone out for a few minutes, to visit the men's room, for example. Dr. Masur glowed with self-confidence when he established, after complicated chronological calculations, that in the time period in question I could have got from the *Oasis* to the Reichstag building and back. But obvious signs of worry appeared on his hitherto serene brow when he put the matter to a practical test and found that though I could have done it, I'd have had to run both ways.

At last, after several months during which the mood of the examining judge had been now up, now down, I began seriously to worry—for Dr. Masur was abandoning his running theory and I had only reached my fifteenth chapter. Then, in the nick of time, a new witness was produced, a splendid, first-rate, archetype, super governmental witness, the witness Luck. From out the undergrowth of the great city there crawled this thin, rather hungry-looking little man with a ratty face and no doubt a deep respect for the property of the nation: he announced that exactly half an hour before the bomb was placed in the Reichstag entrance he had observed, in the public convenience opposite the Reichstag building, a young man carrying a parcel. The witness Luck was able to give an exact description of the man he had seen (small, blond moustache, one gold tooth in his left lower jaw) and was then confronted with me. "That's him!" he said. In everlasting honour to Dr. Masur and to Prussian Justice it must be stressed that Dr. Masur immediately voiced his doubts concerning this statement. He did not hesitate to point out to the witness—who unshakably maintained his identification—that I possessed neither a small, blond moustache nor a gold tooth. I hastened to assure him that though I did shave I did not do so every day—and I added that approximately where my gold tooth should even now be glittering there was a fairly fresh gap. And that concluded my examination.

Of course the arbitrary arrest of two hundred citizens of Berlin could not last; one after the other they had to be released. But they were continually replaced by fresh suspects. The police had succeeded—through

information supplied by a National-Socialist functionary acting in obedience to his Führer's instructions—in discovering the identity of the powder factory that had supplied a high proportion of the gunpowder used in the manufacture of the bombs. But it quickly became apparent that the peasant proprietors were not the only customers of this obliging and useful concern: the Moabit prison soon sheltered all sorts of accused persons, National-Socialists of the Stennes and Strasser groups, Communists, utterly apolitical middle-men, and a gatekeeper employed by the national railways who had been planning to blast a rabbit-hutch out of the arch of a bridge.

In this prison, too, the change of attitude on the part of the minor employees was very plainly apparent. The warders sympathised quite openly with the enemies of the state whom they guarded: they even preferred the Communists to those supporters of the Weimar system who had somehow stumbled from the straight and narrow path. The chief warder in my part of the prison was a former sergeant-major of the *Garde-Jaeger* regiment whose sole remaining interest in life seemed to be the annual outings of the 'Spandau Social and Thrift Club' which he organised and at which pigs' trotters were regularly consumed. The club members saved up for this outing throughout the year, and on this particular one the ex-sergeant-major caused a considerable stir and won his club's acclaim by reciting a poem of some twenty-five verses, an original composition in honour of the occasion written by myself. Needless to say I was his favourite from then on. My political views he held to be "dead right," and whenever I was taken to be interrogated he would give me the thumbs-up sign. Of course he was firmly convinced I had, in fact, planted the bomb in the Reichstag—an action which he regarded as "top hole." He only regretted—while imparting to me his extensive knowledge of explosives culled at the front during the war—that I hadn't succeeded in blowing "the whole caboosh" to smithereens, along with its inhabitants. Claus Heim impressed him even more deeply than did I. Claus Heim sat, almost motionless, in his cell. He didn't go out to exercise, he ate only dry bread, for him the chief warder was "a representative of the system" and he neither spoke to, nor apparently saw, representatives of the system. The chief warder completely understood this point of view; indeed, he sympathised with it. I told him that we called Claus Heim "the peasants' general," and from that time on he treated him with even greater respect, addressing him with military correctitude, standing smartly to attention when in his cell, and politely urging him to take a little soup; he would, he said, himself ladle out a good spoonful of stock. Having been at one time a mess sergeant, he knew what was what.

I wrote all day long and was very annoyed when I was disturbed for meals. The chief warder soon realised this and would tiptoe into my cell and put a bowl of soup (with plenty of stock in it) silently on the corner

of my table. It made me very proud to think that it was I who had taught him respect for intellectual matters.

In such favourable circumstances my book made rapid progress. It was no easy task that I had undertaken. I wished to extricate the events, in which I had been at one time so deeply involved, from the fog of confusion which the resulting publicity had created around them; but now I found it difficult to avoid another mist, created by my own insight and opinions formed during the intervening eight years. For an historian my undertaking was a difficult one. Were I to renounce showing significance and giving explanations, so I would be confined to recording little more than superficialities. Were I not to make such a renunciation, however, I ran the almost unavoidable danger of visualising truth as only complete if it had a point and thus assumed an artistic, plastic form. In fact, my book, *The Outlaws*, which I wrote in Moabit prison, is weak because I attempted to make the best of both worlds. It is not history in the accepted sense, nor is it a memoir: Rowohlt called it a document, and so it is, a document that says a certain amount about the events it describes and also, somewhat painfully, about the man who describes them. (I've never felt happy about this book. It is my worst: it is also the one that has had the greatest success.)

I had decided to divide my material into three parts, of which the last was to be a description of my five years in prison. But it soon became clear to me that a man can't write about former imprisonment while actually in gaol. The order in prison is a reflection of the order in the outer world: this latter had changed, and I could not succeed in recapturing the atmosphere of the former while living in circumstances that were apparently identical and which yet had a quite different tinge to them.

On the day when I finished the second part of the manuscript, and before putting the cover back on my typewriter, I wrote a few lines to Dr. Luetgebrune asking that he come to see me. He came at once. I told him about the witness Luck, and Dr. Luetgebrune laughed heartily. Then, stroking his white moustache, he dictated my request for a release from custody, which I typed out at once.

Three days later I appeared before the court. The proceedings were remarkably brief. Dr. Luetgebrune, dispensing an aroma of costly cigars, spoke only a few sentences. He seemed to shake the evidence from the wide cuffs of his black silk robe, as though he was too good to touch such filth. He mentioned the profession of the witness Luck. Luck was a professional witness. He lived on the money he received as expenses. Dr. Luetgebrune was not the man to let a word like 'copper's nark' or 'stool-pigeon' so much as pass his lips. Finally, however, he did say that even the high court must see that the witness Luck knew considerably more about the Reichstag bomb outrage than the accused, but also considerably less than the Berlin political police.



Then Dr. Luetgebrune sat down, and simultaneously the judges got up. They were gone for five minutes only, during which time Dr. Luetgebrune invited me to dine with him that evening at the Hotel Fürstenhof.

I enjoyed an uncommonly rich meal. In memory of my chief warder I ate a dish of pigs' trotters, followed by roast goose, and we drank champagne and Pilsen mixed until daybreak, despite the occasional gentle admonitions of his secretary. This was Dr. Luetgebrune's farewell dinner. Immediately my release from custody had been ordered by the court the doctor had submitted a request that the peasants' case be once again placed under the jurisdiction of the regular judges in Altona. But he advised me not to go back to Schleswig-Holstein. The Peasants' Movement was dead—that, at least, the Berlin political police had achieved. With flags flying the National-Socialist German Workers' Party had moved into the vacuum created. Instead of the peasants' general, Claus Heim, it was now Gauleiter Lohse who gave the orders. And so on, down the line. Yes, the Berlin political police had indeed managed to achieve that.

"Good health!" said Dr. Luetgebrune, as he informed me that my release from custody did not mean that the case against me had been dropped. The case against me, he said—"Good health!"—never would be dropped.

(It never has been. It still hangs over my head. Nobody has ever been punished for the Reichstag bomb outrage. Even to this day. I very occasionally experience a faint twinge of desire that justice might finally be done. It's true that the Reichstag building no longer exists, or at least not in a condition that makes it usable for its original purpose—but my basic study on 'The Writer's Task in Our Age' has still not been completed. For tackling a theme of this sort absolute freedom from worry concerning food, clothes and lodging is an essential pre-requisite.)

Rowohlt greeted me in his usual booming fashion. He took me at once into his private room, where he gave me all sorts of drinks. Then, pressing a bundle of galleys into my hand, he asked:

"And when do I get the third part?"

I asked in an astonished tone what third part he had in mind. I had, said Rowohlt, though somewhat uncertainly, spoken of a third part. I denied having done anything of the sort.

"Where's the contract?" roared Rowohlt, and a few minutes' uncomfortable silence ensued before Fräulein Siebert, a grey-haired lady in flat-heeled shoes, appeared with a thin folder in her hand.

"Where was the contract?" roared Rowohlt.

She raised her eyebrows.

"In its usual place, of course."

Rowohlt glanced through it, then shot a cunning look in my direction and said:

“Well, well, Fräulein Siebert must have left out that paragraph.”

Fräulein Siebert raised her eyebrows once more and walked out. I was determined to hold fast. But since I was now compelled once again to find my own food and lodging I reminded Rowohlt gently of the paragraph referring to advances.

“An advance?” asked Rowohlt, and with an expression of astonishment on his face began to re-read the contract.

“It actually says you get one,” he remarked at last. Then he rang for the accountant, a friendly and gentle man whose face seemed as though covered with a fine web spun by the spiders of anxiety. With muttered half-words and allusions the two discussed my case. I received the very exact impression that the accountant would willingly have stuck to the letter of the contract, while Rowohlt would rather not: I was also quite sure that Rowohlt was attempting to create precisely the opposite impression. Finally, with a bland smile, Rowohlt boomed at me:

“You’ll get your money—and when do I get the third part?”

Then Rowohlt, roaring and swaggering, led me through his publishing house and introduced me to his employees. He presented me as though I were some especially costly jewel which he had discovered and which, thanks to his efforts, might once again glitter in the world. He presented his colleagues with an expansive gesture to show the value he attached to each. He had, of course, the best production man in the German publishing world, the cleverest advertising manager, the most talented young man learning the business (“The world will hear of him one of these days!”), and then there was Fräulein Ploschitzky, a delicately built girl no longer in her first youth with dark and gentle eyes who rose shyly to her feet and who, it seemed, was the only person who understood the ramifications of Rowohlt’s far-flung empire in all their complicated detail. Rowohlt walked straight past a modest young man, thin and colourless with somewhat slanting eyes behind rimless glasses. Only as he reached the door did he turn back, as though the matter had temporarily slipped his memory, and said:

“That is Herr Ledig . . .” Then, turning to Herr Ledig:

“Herr Ledig, on the fifteenth you’ll get two weeks’ salary in lieu of notice.”

Herr Ledig said, in a resigned voice:

“Right, Herr Rowohlt!”

The more I visited the publishing house—and I came almost daily—the more clearly I saw that our contemporaries’ gloomy predictions about human society becoming like that of the ants simply ignored the existence of persons such as Rowohlt. Rowohlt’s character and personality showed absolutely no signs of ever becoming ant-like. Indeed, if it were possible to compare Rowohlt at all with any creature other than himself, then it was some monster of the deep that he recalled to me, a giant squid, say, a huge pink octopus that was never still, crawling

along on its eight sucker-covered arms, searching the depths for its prey, willingly concealing its tracks by the expulsion of inky clouds, feeding through the one solid portion of its anatomy, its large parrot-like beak, while the fishes seemed to await its arrival and fell almost voluptuously into its complicated and mortal embrace.

He told me one day that he would like me to meet his chief reader, Paul Mayer. I replied that I should be delighted. Rowohlt looked somewhat sheepish as he said:

“Incidentally, he is in fact a very decent man.”

I pondered for a moment over the significance of “incidentally,” and said I had no doubt of this. Then Rowohlt, with a shrug, leaned forward, laid a soothing hand on my shoulder, and whispered:

“You know, he’s the author of *Ahasvers Wanderlied*.”

Now this really aroused my curiosity. I had read *Ahasvers Wanderlied* many times. It had received tremendous publicity from the lowest papers of the anti-semitic gutter Press; indeed they frequently reprinted it amidst cries of shocked horror. It had always struck me as a first-class poem, the high-spirited and triumphant song of the eternal wanderer, who despises all those who plague and maltreat him. The final verse ended with a shout of mockery and derision rising above all persecution and contempt:

*And in me your brides rejoice  
Me, the outcast of the desert. . . .*

“Ha!” I cried, and I quoted the verse: “That’s a man I must meet!”

Rowohlt pushed open a door and boomed:

“Let me introduce you: the notorious bomb terrorist—my friend Paulchen Mayer.”

In the centre of the room stood a very small man who, in comparison to Rowohlt, seemed no larger than a grey fieldmouse. With his head on one side he rubbed his delicate little hands together and looked up at me from quick, bright eyes.

I was so surprised that I said, loudly and heartily:

“My dear Herr Mayer, how do you manage with all those brides of yours? I find it runs me into such enormous expense—all that champagne.”

Rowohlt boomed:

“Rowohlt pays for everything!”

Paul Mayer glanced opaquely at Rowohlt, then turned towards me and said, with a smile:

“It’s not that bad. I give them coffee and cakes and then I read to them for an hour or so—usually from Arnolt Bronnen’s novel OS.”

At this point Rowohlt walked out, because he can’t bear to hear anything derogatory about his authors.

The literary quality of the publishing house was undoubtedly

Rowohlt's doing, and it was manifold; the literary level, on the other hand, was maintained by the two readers, Paul Mayer and Franz Hessel. By this I mean that in Rowohlt's literary vineyard his two exceptionally well-read and well-educated colleagues performed a function similar to that of the sieve in the wine-press. They were both writers themselves. Paul Mayer had produced a little collection of exquisite essays and lyrics, and connoisseurs in such matters praised his poems very highly indeed. Franz Hessel, a quiet, friendly and elderly man, wrote in a graceful, delicate and careful prose about the two most beautiful cities in the world, Paris and Berlin. At his touch Berlin became a magical place, full of hidden joys. It was not that these two men brought much that was exciting into the publishing house, but they stopped a lot that was inferior from going out. Rowohlt, in his enthusiasm, would often have to be prevented from entering some new discovery in the literary stakes by these two who, far better than he, could distinguish between a thoroughbred and a hack; though it was he and not they who brought the great Derby winners into the stables. Rowohlt had to be very confident of his own judgment before he decided to take on an author against the advice of his two readers—in any case he would never admit that he had made a mistake. (They were both, incidentally, very unhappy about my manuscript. It wasn't 'literature.' As a 'document,' however, it might get by.)

It was Rowohlt's custom at that time to hold what he called an 'Authors' Dinner' at his publishing house every two weeks. The authors were soon lost among the guests, who sometimes amounted to over a hundred: authors from other publishing houses, editors of well-known papers and magazines, painters, sculptors, book-sellers, musicians and other celebrated eccentrics, even strange publishers, calm and solid businessmen who attempted to maintain the dignity of their profession until shortly after midnight—in a word everybody of any sort who could possibly be of use to the authors or to the publishing house itself. If in Rowohlt's company and at these Authors' Dinners I expected to learn about literary matters or to hear the profound views of the guests on intellectual subjects, I was soon disillusioned. The conversation was never about books and always about politics.

Now it was in fact hard to escape the impression that since the end of the war German literature had been confined to a single, small intellectual-political area. The few authors who were conscious of the malignity of this somewhat shameful state of affairs, and who refused to toe the line, were not taken seriously by their contemporaries, by what might be called the official and all-powerful point of view; they created their own certainties in the solitude of their country cottages, and they earned their daily bread from respectable provincial papers or from publishers who did not appear at Rowohlt's parties. So I thought that here I would be entering a well-guarded, well-disciplined camp, where in closed ranks the authors would drill beneath the banners of intellec-

tual liberalism, and where the impertinent newcomer would doubtless be confronted by a solid line of primed and loaded fountain-pens. I found, instead, an army in rout, a disintegrating and demoralised horde interested only in wine and dice and ready, at the sentry's warning that the enemy stood without the gates, to cry *Sauve qui peut!*, to throw away their arms and take to their heels, to dash off anywhere into the darkness.

I had every reason to suppose that each time Rowohlt introduced me to a fellow guest he would whisper to the new arrival that I constantly carried a bomb in my overcoat pocket but that I was incidentally quite a decent sort of man; for I was treated with that respectful politeness which is given to the dusky representatives of distant peoples who, though half savages, have suddenly obtained ominous and threatening power. But I was somewhat hurt by the general eagerness to worm out of me, of all people, the well-guarded though rumbling secrets of the Obersalzberg, and when I expressed my astonishment accordingly I soon found myself left alone in my corner—just another intellectual who'd gone wrong. (Which gave me occasion to observe that no sooner had I begun to live a bourgeois life than I suffered a considerable loss of respectability.)

Of all the circles in which I had moved this was undoubtedly the cleverest. It was the first to feel which way the wind was blowing, and the loudest to announce what must happen, but, like the others, it had not the faintest idea what to do about it all. I was certainly a great disappointment to Arnolt Bronnen, who, far earlier than I, was convinced that the National-Socialists would come into power and who did his best, in his hoarse voice, to prove that they were entitled to do so. Rudolf Olden was another disappointment; he insisted on addressing Bronnen as Bronner, to which the latter replied by invariably calling him Oppenheimer. So Bronnen had to look about him for new allies. He appeared, one evening, arm in arm with Otto Strasser and Herbert Blanck, who were just about to leave the Party altogether, and with a bang that could be heard from afar. Now they were wearing their dinner jackets and black silk shirts, and as they downed vast quantities of Pilsen they attempted to explain the inscrutable and mysterious hyphen that linked Nationalism and Socialism to an eager chorus of young writers, of thoughtful artists, smiling publishers, and sharp-witted journalists. Later, over the Moselle, they told each of the guests, one by one, with affectionate indiscretion, that sooner or later he was almost certain to be hanged.

To my surprise neither Rowohlt nor my new friends seemed particularly impressed by the events of October 23rd, 1929. I had spent that day—on which, it will be recalled, the New York bankers jumped in rows from the upper windows of skyscrapers—in prison, and I imagined that when I got out I would find entirely different conditions prevailing.

But life in the city seemed hardly touched by those far-off occurrences. Everything went on as before. Perhaps more brown-shirted columns marched through the streets, and perhaps more healthy young men were to be seen sunning themselves on the benches, but these were generally regarded as the symptoms of other causes.

Nor did I realise what was afoot when I came to the publishing house to collect the next instalment of my advance and the accountant assured me that there was none. It seemed to me a purely personal misfortune. My book had appeared by this time, together with part three, and the accountant informed me—without raising his eyes to mine—that the profits it had made had nowhere approached the advance I had already received. Rowohlt set about consoling me for this with all his usual tactful charm. The reason my book hadn't sold, he said, was the price. People just couldn't afford to pay that much for a book nowadays. Times weren't easy for a poor publisher, he continued, what with the crisis. (He actually used the phrase "world economic crisis" and assumed meanwhile a dignified and noble expression—as though those words really meant something to him.) But I wasn't to be discouraged; he'd look after me. And what was my new book called?

So that was it! I said I was no contract coolie, and had no intention of producing an uninterrupted stream of manuscripts. Furthermore he knew perfectly well that I was absolutely devoid of imagination and could only write about my own experiences, and what had I done since my last book? I'd just been fooling about in this crazy Berlin atmosphere, this hectic literary and political decadence, this curious transitional period between two ages, this intellectual cacophony, this hullabaloo of crashing values. So what was there for me to write about in the city?

"*The City*," said Rowohlt. Quite a good title, he already had an idea for a jacket, send a man up on top of the Passauer Strasse building to photograph Berlin's roofs. "You know, the gables and the towers and the neon advertisements, against a gentle background sky just as dusk is falling. . . ."

I was to come back next morning at ten to sign the contract.

Now at this time I was expecting any day to be subpoenaed as a witness at the Peasant Trial in Altona. The idea of bearing witness, under oath, concerning the activities of so many of my good friends distressed me deeply.

When next morning, at ten-thirty, I put the signed contract for my book *Die Stadt* in my pocket, picked up my hat and walked out, I did not, as was usually the case, feel that I had performed a symbolic action. Rather did I remark, with equanimity:

"Good-bye, maestro. I'll be back in eight weeks."

I came back in two and a half years. (See my answer to Question 25, second part, and also to Question No. 125.) Rowohlt by now was living

at Grünheide, near Erkner, in a small house on the edge of Lake Peetz, though he was only there for weekends; from Monday to Friday he slept in his bedroom off his new office, which was now in the Eislebener Strasse, a slightly grander street than the Passauer Strasse. I went to see him in his office, and he advised me to move out to Grünheide so that I might have the peace and quiet I needed in order to finish my new book, *Die Kadetten*. The profits of my book, *Die Stadt*, had nowhere near paid off the advance I had received, and Rowohlt went on to point out how we must keep a sense of proportion, mustn't we? Furthermore, he had to take his business associates into consideration: as a result of October 23rd, 1929, the publishing house had had to be reorganised as a limited liability company and Rowohlt was no longer capable of the handsome gestures to which we had become accustomed. Finally he dug into a trunk and presented me with a somewhat baggy black suit; the material however, was in excellent condition, and he pointed out that the little tailor at Grünheide would soon alter it to fit me quite cheaply.

"What's going to happen?" he asked me, and I replied:

"Stirring times are coming, Rowohlt, stirring times!"

Before Rowohlt made up his mind to publish a book, which, when he banged the manuscript against the back of his head, did not produce an absolutely unambiguous echo, it was his custom to ask everyone he met for his opinion. Thus a sort of collective judgment was created which invariably corresponded exactly with Rowohlt's own initial views. Now, when he arrived from Grünheide, he was crammed with political predictions based on the careful opinions of the cigar vendor at the corner, Peter Suhrkamp, the Erkner taxi-driver, Hans Fallada, the head-waiter at Schlichter's and Hitler's latest speech.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

He replied:

"Fräulein Siebert feels the same way as I do—we'll just carry on."

It was a period when everyone was saying:

"Don't do it! Don't do it! You'll go smash like everyone else!"

Rowohlt carried on, as Fräulein Siebert had advised him to do. True, there was no longer any question of gay Authors' Dinners. But Rowohlt spent his weekdays seated behind his desk, planning new books as busily as ever.

"What do you think of this?" he would ask me when he came back to Grünheide. "I've been offered an anthology of Jewish fairy tales, extremely interesting. Do you think I can publish it?"

"Atrocity fairy tales?" I asked cautiously.

He gave me a reproving look:

"Do you think I'm planning to dig my own grave? No, genuine old fairy tales, straight folklore, just the sort of thing that's fashionable these days."

I pointed out to him that his publishing house had never dealt in folklore.

“Leave it,” I said, “to Eugen Diederichs.”

And he shifted his torso from side to side.

Rowohlt was not the man to drink out of despair but out of a joy in living. Now he seldom drank at all. I took it as a bad sign when one day, entirely sober, while staring out over his neat little garden towards the lake, he remarked:

“If I had a steady hundred and fifty marks a month I’d chuck everything and raise poultry.”

Something, I felt, must have happened which distressed him deeply. I made enquiries in the publishing house, and Franz Hessel told me what it was.

It was mid-morning. The bell had rung, and since Franz Hessel had been standing near the door he had opened it. On the threshold stood two frowning gentlemen who announced:

“Secret state police!”

Hessel was horribly frightened. He told them to come in and hurried with shaking knees to inform Rowohlt.

“Rowohlt was terrific,” Hessel said. “He invited the two officials into his office, boomed at them heartily in his usual fashion, offered them cigars—which they refused—suggested they take a chair and asked: ‘What good news do you bring me?’ They said that they had come to seize all copies of *Babbitt*. On their lips it sounded like ‘*Bahbiet*.’ Rowohlt poured himself a glass of schnaps—without offering them one—leaned back in his chair, put his finger-tips together, and said dreamily: ‘A publishing house is not a place where books are written, typed, printed, bound, packed and sold, but rather what you might call the administrative headquarters which controls all these disparate activities, or the roof which covers a host of specialised forms of production. So if you wish to seize *Bahbiet* you must go to the place where it is to be found, namely to the printers or to the book-shops, but not to me. Apart from that *Bahbiet* is not published by me but by the *Transmare-Verlag*, which was wound up some years ago. Furthermore *Bahbiet* is not the book you are after. It is by Sinclair Lewis. The author you have in mind is Upton Sinclair, who is likewise not published by me. Nor has he been published in Germany these many years.’ At that the two officials rose to their feet and said in their rusty voices: ‘In that case we must first telephone.’ ‘Please do,’ said Rowohlt. They telephoned from the next office. Then they went away and they didn’t come back.”

“But,” I said, “Rowohlt does publish Sinclair Lewis!”

Hessel replied:

“Of course he does. But he hasn’t published *Babbitt* yet. He’s planning to bring it out next year.”



When *Die Kadetten* appeared the profits fell far short of my advance, and Rowohlt asked me:

“What are you going to call your next book?”

I simply shook my head. He said I was lazy by nature. I said that three books in three years didn't seem to me to prove laziness. Rowohlt shifted his torso from side to side and chewed his cigar butt. Finally he said, heavily:

“Don't imagine that I have to rely on you. Paulchen Mayer and Franz Hessel are swamped with manuscripts.”

He stared in front of him for a while, like a broody hen, before he said:

“There's a new law. The names of publishers' readers have to be reported to the Propaganda Ministry. I can't send in the names of Paulchen Mayer and Franz Hessel, can I?”

I said nothing, and he stared at me with visible dislike and distaste. He said:

“I'll send in your name, you lazy creature.”

The ash of his cigar dropped on to his thick thigh, and he did not even bother to brush it off. He said:

“It's in a circular or whatever they're called. The German Writers' Protective Association has been made the authoritative body. I can only print authors who are members of the association. Non-Aryan authors have to find two Aryans to vouch for them. Of course I'll vouch for my authors.”

He looked at me and said grimly:

“Are you Aryan?”

I said:

“No.”

His jaw dropped. Pearls of sweat appeared on his forehead, something that usually only happened when he ate several plates of pickled pork and carrots or gammon with haricot beans. I said:

“I've consulted my encyclopaedia. Aryan is a philological term applied to linguistic roots. I'm not a word, am I?”

Rowohlt breathed deeply:

“Arse-hole is a word too, but that doesn't stop you being one.”

It all seemed quite harmless to begin with. The first measures they took were so stupid and so naïf, that it was child's play to get around them. But day by day they tightened the net. And if the giant squid could easily snap the threads at the start and, later, could still wiggle his long tentacles through the holes in the net as though he were free, eventually the moment came when he had to spurt out his cloud of ink, tauten his muscles, and attempt heavily to start moving. But whichever way he went he banged into the net. Again and again he was forced to retreat into his corner, where with angry eyes he would look about him for another escape route.

Our vouching was quite useless. To begin with a few books were banned, as was only to be expected. There was Herbert Blanck's *Adolf Hitler, Wilhelm III*: its author, an old renegade National-Socialist, was now in a concentration camp. Rowohlt had published it, and it was seized at once. Konrad Heiden's book about the beginning of the Hitler movement, of which only a few copies had not been sold, was also seized, and Heiden emigrated at once. And then came the regulation against 'non-Aryan' authors.

To start with Rowohlt and I went and lodged 'personal protests.' We said that in full consciousness of our responsibility we had vouched for these authors. We said that if a ban was to be imposed then we, as the men who had vouched, should first be questioned, since otherwise the whole system of vouching became quite pointless and unnecessary. The gentlemen listened to us with serious expressions on their faces and declared that they were prepared to make a special concession in our favour and in future to advise us concerning our choice of authors. So we didn't go there any more.

As many manuscripts as ever continued to arrive, but curiously enough scarcely one of any literary merit. The list of banned writers grew longer and longer—new additions to it were published almost daily—and Rowohlt counted the names until he reached the figure of seventy, whereupon he stopped counting. And in the evening at Grünheide, when he sat by his radio turning the knobs, his cigar butt rammed into his mouth, the pearls of sweat could be seen glistening on his forehead. He had a mania for listening to every speech.

One day when Rowohlt had asked me to accompany him to his office, Franz Hessel took me aside and enquired:

"What's up with the old man? He asked me today what I thought of the next war. When I said that with the best will in the world I couldn't tell him since I'd never given the matter any consideration, he pressed a book by some Italian general into my hand and told me to read all about it."

"What's the book like?" I asked, and Franz Hessel replied:

"I don't know. But I've got to translate it, and I know absolutely nothing about military matters."

Strangely enough Rowohlt always gave such manuscripts to Paul Mayer or Franz Hessel, while I got the more literary ones. One by one books began to appear with Rowohlt's colophon that one would have expected to see published by Mittler and Sohn, the traditional and respected house for such books: *Wings over the Ocean* by Italo Balbo, *The Bombing War* by Rougeron, books by Rocco Moretta, Drouet and General Fuller.

"I shall be interested to see," remarked Rowohlt, "whether the Propaganda Ministry will ban books that have been recommended to me by the Armed Forces Supreme Command."

They were books by recognised military authorities. The authors were all foreigners, which was an indication of how much leeway we had to make up in the study of modern war.

“What do you actually think of Ledig?” Rowohlt asked me one day.

Ledig was the pale, squashed-looking young man with the somewhat slanting eyes to whom Rowohlt was continually saying that on the fifteenth he could draw two weeks’ pay in lieu of. I said:

“He has more knowledge of literature and the publishing business in his little finger than you in your whole carcass.”

Rowohlt cleared his throat—a noisy procedure—and said:

“Well, well!”

I said:

“Why are you always so nasty to him?”

“He’s lazy by nature,” said Rowohlt and cleared his throat again. I laughed and said:

“The other day I was sitting in the readers’ office when somebody opened the door behind me and cleared his throat noisily. Without turning round I said: ‘I’m just finishing it, Rowohlt.’ Then Ledig walked up to my table and said: ‘It’s me, Ledig.’”

Rowohlt’s face went red. He said:

“I’ll tell you something, something I’ve never told anybody else before. But first you must swear to me not to repeat it.” I swore, and Rowohlt said: “Ledig is my son!”

What could I say? What I did say was:

“How nice! And what a good idea to call him Ledig\*!”

“No,” said Rowohlt, “that’s his real name. Do you know, when I realised there was something to the lad I went to considerable trouble to have him trained in the book trade. I sent him to England. I thought the experience might prove useful to him some time.”

Rowohlt sank into a reverie from which he roused himself to say:

“Of course he’s got no idea that he’s my son. You must swear to me to keep your trap shut about it!”

I swore.

Some time later I had occasion to visit Ledig at his little house and I noticed a photograph of Rowohlt on the table. I asked:

“Why is the old man always so nasty to you?”

Ledig stared at the photograph, clenched his fists and said:

“I hate him!”

“Well, well,” I said. Then Ledig said:

“I must tell you something, something I’ve never told anybody else before. But first you must swear to me not to repeat it.” I swore and Ledig said: “Rowohlt is my father!”

\* Cassell’s German Dictionary (1937 edition) gives the following translations for *ledig*: “Empty; free, unencumbered, untrammelled; idle, unoccupied; vacant; unmarried, single.”  
Translator.

I said:

“How nice! And what a good idea to call yourself Ledig!”

“No,” said Ledig, “that’s my real name. Do you know, when I first began to work for him, I didn’t know it myself? I only learned the truth bit by bit.”

He sank into a reverie from which he roused himself to say:

“Of course he’s got no idea that he’s my father. You must swear to me to keep your trap shut about it!”

I swore.

“Did you know,” Hans Fallada asked me, “that Ledig is Rowohlt’s son?”

“Surely not!” I said.

Fallada said:

“It’s the truth. Rowohlt told me himself. He thinks that Ledig doesn’t know. Then Ledig told me and he thinks Rowohlt doesn’t know. I had to swear not to repeat it. But everybody in the business knows. The whole firm thinks it’s a terrific joke that neither of them should realise everybody knows.”

It wasn’t hard to grasp what Rowohlt had in mind when he said that Ledig’s English training and knowledge of the English language might one day prove useful to him. Rowohlt’s had always published a number of translations, principally the books of Anglo-Saxons or of French authors. In choosing English or American authors, and in dealing with English or American publishers, Ledig’s knowledge of the language and his unusually extensive reading of the literature stood him in very good stead. The powerful and growing new American literature, which suddenly appeared after the Great War, had quickly found a German home in Rowohlt’s. Now these books helped to fill the vacuum caused by the virtual disappearance of German literature. Ledig, who had long been harried through the dusty corridors of the publishing house, now came into his own, and Rowohlt, who could scarcely read a word of English, simply signed the contracts. Sinclair Lewis, Hergesheimer, Faulkner, Hemingway, Nathan, Asch—the list was a long one. Ledig’s spectacles seemed to flash when he learned, as he occasionally did, that some rival publisher had got in ahead of him and nobbled a new American author. Then, too, would Rowohlt roar:

“Ledig, you’re lazy by nature. On the fifteenth two weeks’ pay in lieu!”

Meanwhile the various cultural organisations had been consolidated into the *Reichsschriftumskammer*, or Chamber of German Writing, which now firmly and finally took Germany’s literature in hand. Long had I asked for a concept: here was one, and it was ill luck that it seemed to me a meaningless one.

As time went on Paulchen Mayer stayed more and more in his little home, buried among his books, and came less and less frequently to

Rowohlt's. Indeed he had grown increasingly reluctant even to go out into the streets. Now he came in with his wife, as small a person as himself with the same bowed head and the same quick, dark eyes, to say good-bye. He was emigrating, like almost all the Jewish authors. (He now lives in a little house in Mexico, buried among his books.) But Franz Hessel neither could nor would emigrate. He was equally at home in Paris or in Berlin, and he drew his sustenance from Paris and Berlin as a man draws oxygen through his two lungs; the old man clung with quiet obstinacy to his two cities, to the grey and silky mists of the Seine and to the chestnut leaves falling above the Landwehr Canal. He travelled from Berlin to Paris, driven by urgent homesickness, and it was homesickness that sent him back to Berlin. In Paris, Jules Romain was writing his monumental work, *Men of Good Will*, which, if ever finished, would amount to twenty-eight volumes.

Rowohlt bought the German rights.

"You know," he said, "it's crazy. It'll never sell. But I think it's terrific. And may lightning strike old Rowohlt dead if he ever lacks the guts to do something just because it's crazy! Besides," he said, giving me a crafty look, "Jules Romain is president of an association for promoting Franco-German understanding. The Foreign Ministry people here are mad about him. He's on his eighth volume now. There are twenty more to come, so I reckon he'll have it done in twenty years. Do you think there'll still be a Chamber of German Writing twenty years from now?"

I said:

"According to the latest calculations we'll have one for nine hundred and eighty years longer than that."

Rowohlt said:

"Do you think our Franz Hessel will live for another twenty years?"

"What a crude and ridiculous question," I cried, and Rowohlt grinned. He said:

"Somebody has given Jules Romain the idea that nobody can translate his books properly except Franz Hessel. And now he insists that Franz Hessel do them. I'll be interested to see if the Chamber of German Writers tries to ban a translator recommended by the Foreign Ministry."

And Franz Hessel translated Jules Romain and his future seemed secure. In 1939, driven by homesickness, he went to Paris. He was there when the war broke it. His son was serving with the French Army. But neither this nor all the efforts of Jules Romain sufficed to stop the signing of an order on May 10th, 1940, by which Franz Hessel was thrown into a concentration camp. There, of course, he soon died of misery and neglect.

Rowohlt had frequently heard my thesis to the effect that politics and literature are two subjects which can only be controlled by taste,

and that in consequence we must accept the fact that everybody knows something about them. Now, no doubt feeling an urge to make sure that my judgment was not solely dependent on my own particular tastes, he introduced into the firm, to replace Paul Mayer, a young writer from Bremen called Friedo Lampe. This man, who had a real feeling for the smaller forms, for lyrics and short novels and essays, was considerably more capable than myself of nurturing for the publisher a type of literature which, as time went on, needed ever greater cherishing. Friedo Lampe contradicted my thesis, which he called barbaric, even though for him the only valid laws were those of aesthetics. But those seemed to be more solidly binding. He suffused me with a truly human pity when I told him on one occasion that I had no feeling for lyrics or poetry.

So everything seemed in order once again, and the giant squid propelled himself slowly and majestically through the depths. Rowohlt was one of the founders of the society entitled 'Friends of the Soviet Union,' by this time banned and long dissolved, and it was thanks to this that he was annually invited to a celebration in honour of the Russian Revolution on November 7th (where there was no question of uniform or lounge suit). I too received an invitation owing to my former connection with the *Vormarsch* group (*Vormarsch* had quietly disappeared as a result, not of the events of January 30th, 1933, but of those of October 23rd, 1929.) This group of writers had acquired the reputation not so much of being inclined to the philosophy of the East as of treating its Western counterpart with unconcealed contempt. To begin with I assumed that it was the crystal-clear, ice-cold vodka, so lavishly provided, which made Rowohlt hasten each year to the reception at the Soviet Embassy, and a closer examination of his behaviour once he arrived did not fail to reinforce this assumption; he could, after all, hardly hope to acquire the German rights of Russian authors, while if the Russians chose to print German writers in their country they did so joyfully but without bothering too much about contracts and such. Rowohlt, as soon as he arrived, forced his way through the crowd, greeting an occasional acquaintance with a joviality that was somewhat too heartily loud to be truly courteous, and his objective was always the same—the Press attaché of the Czecho-Slovak Legation, a certain Dr. Hoffmann. Once there, he and Rowohlt would retire with a flagon of crystal-clear, ice-cold vodka to a quiet spot immediately beneath the bust of Lenin. It was not Rowohlt's custom to discuss questions of internal business policy with his employees or colleagues. I respected his reticence and did not enquire how it happened that manuscripts that I had firmly turned down—because I did not wish to see so fine a hunk of flesh as his mouldering away in a concentration camp—appeared one by one as books printed by Jules Kittl's successor at Mährisch-Ostrau in Czecho-Slovakia. I simply knew that Julius Kittl's was a first-rate firm

of printers that had at one time done a considerable amount of work for Rowohlt's. But enough.

Around the long table in the Soviet Embassy's great reception hall, and beneath Lenin's mocking smile, there were to be seen hundreds of illustrious guests: foreign diplomats of every type and every nationality: businessmen interested in the Russian trade: professors of all the faculties save only theology: half the German generals: though not, so far as I could see, any Party members. They jostled and pressed about the board, using their elbows and reaching over each other's shoulders in an attempt to get at the caviar, a great crystal bowl of caviar resting on a block of ice, or the long, low dishes of trout in aspic, or the smoked sturgeon, or the slices of bread loaded with delicacies, or the flagons of vodka and the bottles of red Crimean wine. Meanwhile along the walls officers of the Red Army in their unusually simple, dark-grey uniforms with the plain red piping stood upright and patient, and observed the pushing and jostling without expression. When I saw Ernst Jünger here for the first time I went up to talk with him. He examined the stampede for a long time and thoughtfully before saying, in his Lower Saxon drawl:

"Really, they're quite right. Here you do see lemurs at work. Look at the faces! Absolutely subhuman! Particularly that long thin one over there with the chain around his neck!"

"Pst!" I said. "That's Salm, the Mayor of Berlin."

The last of these receptions that I attended was held on November 7th, 1937, a few days after Dr. Goebbels had blown a blood-thirsty blast on his trumpet, a battle challenge directed against the "Judaeo-Bolshevik World Menace" in general and the Soviet Union in particular. It did Rowohlt credit that after turning the invitation card between his fingers for some little time he finally just muttered: "Ah, shit!" and went anyhow. Rowohlt was a man devoid of abstract imagination but with very highly developed powers of observation; and even he was startled when we entered the great hall with the bust of Lenin. Apart from Ernst Nickisch and a pale, distraught-looking young man named Harnack, Rowohlt and I were the only Germans in the room. No sign of the generals, the professors, the businessmen, the magistrates, or the diplomats whose countries were within Germany's orbit. There was no crush around the table now, and we could comfortably eat our fill of delicacies more exquisite even than usual. In a few scattered groups stood the diplomats from south-east Europe, whispering together and glancing nervously about them.

(We were never invited by the Russians again. Not until 1940 did Germans once more attend their receptions, and by that time, apart from the generals, it was a very different type of guest who savoured the caviar. By then Dr. Hoffmann had already been done to death in a concentration camp in the 'Protectorate,' Ernst Nickisch was rapidly

going blind in a German prison, Rowohlt was an émigré in Brazil, and Herr Harnack did not yet suspect that two years later he would be hanged.)

Meanwhile Ledig, too, had been enrolled in the Rowohlt diplomatic corps. He had been duly accredited to the American Embassy. The American ambassador, Mr. Dodd, had for many years taught at a university. When I asked one of his colleagues in the diplomatic service what sort of a man Dodd was, he replied:

“Back home they say he knows more than anybody else about German history—up to 1870.”

Ledig’s ideas concerning a diplomat’s activities were different from mine. I was like a mole, pursuing grubs in dark, underground corridors. Ledig fluttered like a butterfly about that dewy apple-blossom, Martha Dodd. She was the ambassador’s young daughter, kept house for him, and fulfilled her duties as his hostess with gentle grace. I dedicated to Martha Dodd the English edition of *Die Stadt*, which Jonathan Cape had just published with the title . . . *It Can’t be Stormed*. Martha Dodd thanked me for the friendly dedication but insisted on knowing why precisely I had dedicated the book to her. With the best will in the world I couldn’t tell her, though for an evil moment I was tempted to do so. At last, however, recalling the climax of every American film, I said, loudly and emphatically:

“I love you!”

As a proof of Martha Dodd’s finely developed diplomatic instincts I may say that she firmly refused to believe this.

Martha Dodd invited me to her receptions and parties, where dignified servants in white gloves passed mildly opalescent and mildly intoxicating cocktails together with little slices of white bread covered with pale, chopped vegetables and herbs. These parties were attended by the capital’s *jeunesse dorée*, smart young men with perfect manners and an imperfect knowledge of languages: some wore the elegant black uniform of the Foreign Ministry, which so discouragingly resembled that of the SS; a great number of the guests were real SS men, from Rosenberg’s Office of Foreign Policy, who saw to it that their colleagues from the rival organisation did not utter any foolish opinions. In fact these gatherings were lustrous with sharp-featured and brilliant young Germans, smiling attractively or laughing gaily at Martha Dodd’s witty sallies. Standing alone and more or less out of it all in my corner, I decided gloomily that though these young jackanapes had undoubtedly moral characters far inferior to my own they were also, indisputedly far easier, on the eye.

But Ledig, believe it or not, fairly sparkled as he sipped the honey in the blossom. He and Martha Dodd would put their heads together for hours and talk with ecstatic expressions about a certain Tommy. This Tommy I took at first to be some dearly beloved friend whom



they had, perhaps, both known as children, and it was a long time before I realised that the man was in fact that famous American writer, Thomas Wolfe, whom neither of them had yet met. Rowohlt's had published his novel, *Look Homeward, Angel!* and was about to bring out *Of Time and the River*, and Wolfe had announced that he would be visiting the German capital in the near future.

I had read Wolfe's books with absorbed fascination. In him the rising tide of American literature seemed to reach its flood. It was as though a giant, arising from the Rocky Mountains, had swallowed the whole, huge American continent and was now spewing it out again. (More even than the other great American story-tellers, Wolfe aroused in me a boundless admiration for the Americans' art and an equally heartfelt wish that I might never be compelled to live in their country.)

Thomas Wolfe arrived, and the effect was explosive. He was indeed a giant of a man, broad-shouldered and no doubt conscious of his tremendous height, for he had a tendency to stoop slightly. His great head was covered with a shaggy mass of hair, his craggy chin was thrust forward, and his dark eyes were unusually penetrating. Bony and loose-limbed, he trod our city's streets as though he were striding over the great Western prairies. He complained that everywhere he went the beds were too short. And the first question he asked Rowohlt was to explain how he had reached the figure for royalties on the paper-backed edition in the statement he had sent Wolfe; Wolfe had enquired from a number of booksellers and had discovered that Rowohlt had not sent out any paper-backed copies, but only bound ones. Ledig had to translate and Rowohlt, pearls of sweat glistening on his forehead, attempted—much to my delight—to explain his excessively complex methods of book-keeping to the foreigner. This was something that he only very rarely succeeded in making clear to people such as myself.

I had assumed that Rowohlt and Wolfe would take to one another at first sight. But it seems that, while attempting to swallow America, Wolfe had been forced to absorb too much indigestible slag—and Rowohlt's business methods were frequently categorised as American, with this difference, that American publishers sometimes got somewhere, Rowohlt never. It was a long time before these two representatives of their respective continents found that they had sufficient in common to accept one another as friends. I think I was present when the moment occurred. Rowohlt had been trying, in vain, to awaken in Wolfe an enthusiasm, comparable to his own, for dirty songs. After a while Wolfe thoughtfully raised his glass and said:

"Life is strange and world is bad!" a statement that brought about a wild burst of sympathy on the part of Rowohlt, who declared that this sentence was the key to his whole past life.

Ever since reading *Nachsommer*—in prison—I had been filled with admiration and respect for Adalbert Stifter. Now a writer named

Urban Roedl produced a biography of that author. It was excellent and Rowohlt bought it. Whenever a publisher accepted a new author he had to inform the Chamber of German Writing.

The first question put to Rowohlt by the Chamber of German Writing was this: why wasn't Adalbert Stifter a member of the Chamber?

With a gentleness which made me fear the worst for his spiritual condition, Rowohlt told them.

The next question from the Chamber of German Writing was this: why wasn't Urban Roedl a member of the Chamber?

Rowohlt explained. The Chamber had laid down that foreign authors were not required to prove that they were Aryan, since they could not in any case join the Chamber. Urban Roedl lived at Aussig and possessed a Czecho-Slovak passport.

The Chamber fell silent, and Rowohlt published Urban Roedl's book. It was extremely well received.

When the German troops marched into the Sudetenland it very soon came out that Urban Roedl's real name was Bruno Adler.

The Chamber of German Writing refused to accept Rowohlt's statement that he saw no reason why he should be more royalist than the king.

The Chamber of German Writing asked Rowohlt when he proposed finally to dismiss Fräulein Ploschitzky.

Rowohlt replied that Fräulein Ploschitzky had worked for him for eighteen years to his entire satisfaction, and that Fräulein Ploschitzky's activities in his firm were in no way connected with "Germany's cultural heritage." Fräulein Ploschitzky was engaged purely on the accountancy side. No law, not even the Nuremberg Laws, could compel him to dismiss Fräulein Ploschitzky.

The Chamber of German Writings presented Rowohlt with the alternative of dismissing Fräulein Ploschitzky or of being himself expelled from the Chamber of German Writing.

Rowohlt did not dismiss Fräulein Ploschitzky.

Rowohlt was expelled from the Chamber of German Writing.

The captain of the ship was washed up on the Brazilian shore. Ledig carefully piloted a life-boat to Stuttgart, and in a back room of the Institute of German Publishers the firm slowly revived. Ledig carefully—and at last acting on business principles—avoided books that could bring the house neither fame nor fortune; carefully he cherished the old authors who, even in these altered circumstances, remained true; carefully he found new writers. So business went on, slowly but surely, so surely that after a while Ledig could himself—and nothing could save him from it—abandon the word for the deed. This utterly unmilitary man performed at least one feat of heroism of which scarcely the doughtiest warrior can boast: he greeted his sergeant-major by

removing his military headdress. He survived this as he survived a severe spinal wound caused by blast.

I am proud to think that I was able to contribute a little to the support of the firm during its most difficult period. Rowohlt, having lost all interest in pushing my books after the original edition of *Die Geächteten* had finally been exhausted, had disposed of the rights to that book and to *Die Kadetten* by selling them on a percentage basis to the *Bertelsmann Verlag* at Gütersloh, a capable firm which produced very cheap reprints. Each year, punctually, Ledig received a very welcome cheque of which he kept  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. while I regularly used the rest to pay my taxes. The Propaganda Ministry thoughtfully forbade a new edition of *Die Stadt*, but then neither Ledig nor I had had the faintest intention of bringing one out.

Friedo Lampe remained in Berlin. During the battle for the city a Russian soldier demanded to see his identity card. The photograph, taken in earlier and happier days, showed a round-faced man. Since then Friedo Lampe had lived through Berlin's worst days. The Russian soldier looked at the photograph, looked at Friedo Lampe, said: "Not like you. You SS!" and shot him.

In the middle of the war I heard that Rowohlt was back in Germany. He had worked his passage as a sailor on a blockade-runner. Walther Kiaulehn and Erich Kästner both claimed credit for an epigram concerning the rats boarding the sinking ship. I understood the old man. There were no books to be sold in Brazil.

Now he looked at me craftily and said:

"I shall be interested to see if the Propaganda Ministry has the nerve to stop a Luftwaffe captain from joining the Chamber of German Writing."

It had.

One day, shortly after January 30th, 1933, when I was on my way back to Grünheide, I met in the train a man whom I had last seen in 1921, in Upper Silesia. This man, Heinz Oskar Hauenstein, though only a little older than myself, had made a considerable name for himself there. Though merely an ensign-cadet, he had seen that the area for which Poles and Germans were struggling had no sort of protective authority to safeguard its inhabitants; he had therefore, in secret agreement with the Prussian government, formed a 'Special Police,' a group of men who acted in these circumstances not, it is true, on their own account, but at their own risk. One member of this Special Police was Albert Leo Schlageter. Hauenstein was remarkable for his almost incredible personal courage, his great *sang-froid* and his outstanding talents as an organiser. When the third Polish uprising took place, in connection with the plebiscite, he expanded his Special Police into a 'Storm Regiment' for the protection of Upper Silesia. By its successful

assault on the Annaberg this Storm Regiment played a not inconsiderable part in ensuring that the final settlement of the Upper Silesian question was as favourable to Germany as it turned out to be. In 1923 his organisation was the backbone of the 'passive resistance' movement in the Ruhr.

Later Hauenstein founded the first groups of what he christened the 'Volunteer Labour Service,' which consisted almost exclusively of men who had previously served in the *Freikorps*. He and his people, among whom was an unemployed sailor named Prien, were employed by the public authorities to lay out Dresden aerodrome, and he also began to drain the Emsland marshes. In later years he appeared as a witness at many of the so-called 'Vehme' trials; he was now a shipping accountant by profession, and he managed to save the lives of a number of the accused. During the years he had been carefully and patiently collecting all the documents he could find that dealt with the utterly confused and confusing events of the German post-war. He had in consequence gone to considerable trouble to maintain contact with any individual who had played any part in those events. Finally he assembled together, in his house on the Hildebrand Strasse in Berlin, souvenirs and papers connected with Albert Leo Schlageter, who had been condemned to death by the French for carrying out acts of sabotage in the Ruhr. With these he formed a small 'Albert Leo Schlageter Memorial Museum' to which he added a records library and a publication which first appeared in the post-war period, which was called *Der Reiter gen Osten* (*The Rider to the East*), and which was to act both as a centre and as a link among former *Freikorps* members.

He had joined the National-Socialist German Workers' Party very early—in 1922—and he had left it very early—in 1927—after having attempted to settle certain political differences with a high Party functionary by using his fists. Now, in 1933, he had been forbidden to continue editing his rather pathetic little paper, which might be described as the society journal of a non-existent society. He asked me to take over the editorship in his place.

In my book *The Outlaws*—which is only comprehensible if viewed within the framework of the post-war spirit—and even more in various pieces that I had written for various publications connected with the 'New Nationalism' circle, I had reached certain definite conclusions. One of these was that the German post-war must be regarded as something on its own, as an epoch between two ages, as an attempt to work from certain political and military premises valid for the time towards a certain political and military concept. The only documents available concerning the post-war were in the hands of the *Wehrkreise* or Army Area Commands, which had replaced the old Imperial Army's District Corps Headquarters. But the point of view of these headquarters, like that of the Army itself, was directly contrary to the

point of view of the endemic military formations of the post-war, the *Freikorps*.

So there was no alternative but for ourselves carefully to prepare the material necessary for writing a history of the years 1918–1923 so far as that history was connected with the operations of the *Freikorps*. I said that I would willingly edit the periodical if that periodical were henceforth to be exclusively concerned with collecting the material needed for the eventual writing of the history. Hauenstein reserved the last page of his paper for printing news of his association, since only by maintaining contact with former members of the *Freikorps* and with their organisations would there be any prospect of our obtaining material at present in the possession of private individuals. Every individual subscriber to the paper, and every affiliated organisation, was told what was now the paper's main purpose and was asked not only to arrange that we be sent material at present in private hands but also to see that where possible such material be amplified by personal reminiscences. The simple prospect of appearing in print acted as a great inducement. Within two years we were in possession of hundreds of thousands of documents, papers, memoirs, diaries, memoranda, sketches, photographs and addresses. The 'Museum' had become an archive.

In view of the singular nature of the post-war, each document had to be registered many times. Units, hardly formed, had been broken up, merged into others, had disappeared, reappeared, turned up simultaneously in two or more places far apart, changed their names, and were split up among the most diverse succeeding units. The more we studied the documents the more clearly the improvised nature of the German post-war appeared.

The most important part of our work, and the most laboriously detailed, was the drawing up of a 'time index' into which to fit the fluctuating events of the post-war. By so doing we saw that the subject sub-divided itself automatically into various sectors and campaigns.

There was the 'Battle for Germany.' This consisted of the actions and the struggle for power of the so-called 'Government of the People's Deputies' against the rule of the 'Workers' and Soldiers' Councils.' It lasted through December 1918 and January 1919 until, with the meeting of the National Assembly, the political parties established their mastery over the revolutionary groups. A tail-piece to this was the March uprisings in Berlin, in 1919.

There was the 'Frontier Defence in the East.' This consisted of the fighting, in 1919, in Posen and West Prussia, which came about when the social revolution there was transmuted into a Polish nationalist revolution. It ended with the signing of the Versailles Treaty and the handing over to Poland of the former German provinces.

There were the 'Campaigns in the Baltic.' In the first one German,

Baltic, Latvian and Lithuanian volunteer formations resisted the advance of the Russian Red Army. In the second, German and White Russian volunteer formations fought against Lithuanian and Esthonian units backed by England. Towards the end of 1919 the latter succeeded in establishing the sovereignty of the Baltic states, which had formerly been part of Russia.

There were the 'Campaigns in Upper Silesia.' The first was the Polish uprising of 1919 and involved the German-Polish Suffrage Police, the German Special Police, the Polish insurgent formations and the Allied occupation troops. The second was the Polish uprising of 1920, with on one side the German protective organisation and on the other the Polish insurgent formations supported by the Haller Army. The third was the Polish uprising of 1921.

There was the 'Kapp Putsch,' the effects of which were felt all over Germany in 1920.

There was the 'Battle of the Ruhr,' in 1920. Here a private 'Red Army' fought against properly organised military formations under Reichswehr command.

There was the 'Battle in Central Germany.' From 1920 to 1923 the *Freikorps*, and later police formations and the army, were in action in the Vogtland, in the Saxon industrial belt and in the Leuna works.

There was the 'Resistance in the Ruhr and on the Rhine' which took place in 1923 and ended in 1924. A distinct part of this was the fight against the separatists in the Pfalz and the Rhineland.

And finally there was the 'Struggle for Carinthia' of 1919, which in view of its causes and effects corresponds very closely with the fighting in Germany proper.

A quick glance at the time-index showed that in order to do our material any sort of justice the history of some eighty-five individual *Freikorps* would have to be written. Also, of course, in describing the battles on each sector we needed access to the sources of our former enemies. We attempted to establish contact with those few Poles whose names were known to us. These were those leaders of the insurgents who had achieved fame not only among their own people but amongst their enemies as well. Only in rare cases were our attempts successful. Currency difficulties were our greatest problem. But at least we were fortunate in being able to enrich our picture of the assault on the Annaberg from Polish sources.

We had considerably better luck with the French. One day there appeared a book entitled *From the Imperial Army to the Reichswehr*—a history of the German army covering exactly that period into which we were carrying out our research. Its author was a man named Benoist-Mechin, only a few years older than myself, who had served as a young officer in the French occupation forces. When he came to see us we worked out that we had met once before. This was in 1921, on Breslau

station. He, as rail transport officer for Upper Silesia, had forbidden a group of volunteers arriving from western Germany to enter the sealed zone. I had been a member of this group and was now able to explain how we had got there despite his prohibition. Benoist-Mechin had studied most carefully the material available in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* at Versailles as well as that of the German Army Area Commands now collected together in the newly formed Military Archives at Potsdam. He placed his original French material at our disposal, and we likewise let him use our German sources. Documents of the 'Spartacus League' and of the 'Red Army' proved absolutely untraceable, apart from a few papers which had been captured during the actual course of the fighting. Nor did I succeed in establishing any worthwhile contacts with former members of those organisations: by now they had quite other things to think about.

After making a thorough estimate it transpired that an accurate history of the German post-war would run to six volumes of approximately five hundred pages each and would entail six years' work, and that the editors would require financing to the extent of sixty thousand marks. I proposed to Rowohlt that he make a contract on the basis of these excellent calculations. He shifted his torso from side to side, pearls of sweat appeared on his forehead, and before he could say anything I stole silently away.

All the same, by the end of 1935 we had made so much progress with our work that, after producing several extra numbers of the periodical dealing with specific sectors during particular campaigns, we decided to go ahead and bring out a book. In this we included the best and most impressive documents and individual reports together with a thousand odd photographs. I contributed a foreword in which I discussed the nature of our proposed history. It was entitled *Das Buch vom Deutschen Freikorpskämpfer* and was published by Wilhelm Limpert of Berlin.

To our great chagrin we did not succeed in securing access to the documents of the best-known Bavarian *Freikorps*. In a final attempt I went to Munich, but General von Epp's only answer to my request was a sardonic smile; he intended to hang on to his material and to guard it carefully, for he was frightened of any diminution to his fame. I assured him that the material's publication could only serve to underline his role as the unique saviour of his land during the hour of its need, but when I left the 'Lion of Verdun' I had to admit that my labours had been quite in vain.

But in the Residenz, the palace of the Bavarian kings in Munich, there was the famous 'Rehse collection.' Herr Rehse was a small, snappy, red-nosed man with a straggly grey beard. He had a real collecting mania, and during his life, entirely on his own initiative, he had assembled a unique museum of contemporary documents, among

which, of course, were a number relating to the German post-war. It was some time before he consented to receive me, and when at last he did so it was with noticeable distrust, which to start with he attempted to conceal by feigning deafness. At the expense of a flood of flattery and of massive praise for the Bavarian national character, I managed to persuade him that I only wanted to look at his material. At last he went over to an enormous filing cabinet, took one or two documents from the mass that it contained and held them up in front of me, though at a considerable distance from my nose. There could be absolutely no question of getting anything away from this man. He informed me repeatedly, with a disagreeable, side-long glance, that both he and his collection were under the Führer's personal protection. Triumphantly he informed me that not even the people of the National Archives had managed to rob him of a single item. He showed no interest in the possibility of exchanging documents for others of equal value—indeed he seemed well-nigh convinced that nothing which was not in his collection could have any real value. When at last, reluctantly enough, I left, he cried after me, with petulant triumph, that I should remember this: people lived on the other side of the hill too. This remark puzzled me for a considerable time.

Although Hauenstein always pointedly and deliberately refrained from publishing material dealing with the early history of the Party, even when it had a definite bearing on the German post-war, I nevertheless thought it would be amusing to visit the National Party Archives as well. We possessed only a few items that could interest them, but among these were Schlageter's letters from the Ruhr. Schlageter, whom the Party now acclaimed a national hero, had, in these letters, complained bitterly about the part the National-Socialists were playing in the Ruhr. They alone, he said, were prepared to sabotage the solidarity of the resistance for purely selfish party reasons (for in 1923 they had not wished to see the Party's centre of gravity shift from Munich to northern Germany). We also had the letter which the former *Freikorps* officer, Captain Rickmer, mortally wounded in the National-Socialist march to the Feldherrnhalle, had dictated to a hospital nurse shortly before his death; in this he spoke his mind in forceful and unambiguous terms concerning the behaviour of the National-Socialist Party leaders when the police fell upon the marchers. And finally, among other curiosities, there was a name-card, inscribed 'Herr Hitler,' which had been used at a reunion dinner attended by former *Freikorps* leaders in 1922. On the back of it he had scribbled a few words, key phrases that he intended to use in his speech: they were quite meaningless, out of context, consisting of such things as, "Our road," and, "Preparedness is everything." What always interested me about the card was that, doubtless during other men's speeches, Hitler had drawn absent-mindedly on the back of his card and, if observed with



charity, the marks he had made might appear as the profile and outline of an *autobahn*. These items Hauenstein kept under lock and key. I had difficulty in getting him to promise that I might have them when our history of the post-war was finally completed.

Now I learned in Munich that the president of the National Party Archives was one of the so-called 'March casualties,' that is to say one of those people who had joined the Party after the seizure of power in March, 1933, when the Party was accepting new members. I also learned that he had previously been the business manager of a newspaper which, in its time, had been closely connected with the Foreign Minister, Stresemann. I went to see him and he turned out to be a quick, adaptable man with polished manners and the sort of glittering spectacles that never allow you really to see the eyes behind them. He proposed to me at once that he should conduct me all over the building, which was a huge one on the Barer Strasse that had formerly housed an insurance company. He was exceedingly proud of his whole establishment: of the endless corridors with series of rooms opening off them, filled with countless employees hard at work: of the serried ranks of cabinets in which I assumed the material was stored—and in the basement stood packing-case by packing-case, some piled on top of one another, not yet opened and beginning already to rot: of the complete library of the German trade-unions, a priceless library that was quietly collecting mildew and to which the president referred with faint contempt.

The president seemed to know me only by name. He had, as he said, heard of me or read about me from time to time. When I asked him if I might, at some convenient time, be allowed to glance at his documents dealing with the post-war, he readily agreed. He added, casually, that he too would some time like to be allowed to glance at Schlageter's letters from the Ruhr. I swallowed once or twice and then quickly launched into an exposition of my views concerning the purpose and nature of writing history. He was extremely delighted to find that our opinions on this interesting subject were identical. History, he said, could obviously only be written about periods that were definitely over and closed. In his field he hoped that in some nine hundred and ninety-eight years the time would be ripe, and he was determined to do all in his power to make sure that when the moment arrived the historians would have all they needed for an objective and truly historical study. When I asked him what use was being made of his material meanwhile, he rose to his feet, walked over to the door, beckoned me to follow him, and hastened down a corridor with his coat-tails flying out behind him, up a staircase, into a distant room, and stopped before a filing cabinet that bore a capital S. He unlocked it, reached in and, without having to search, selected a thick bundle of documents which he threw with a crash on to the table.

“This,” he said.

They dealt with myself. I glanced through the file. Nothing had been forgotten. There was my whole life in the form of stenographer’s notes, newspaper articles, photographs, photostats of personal documents, letters, statements, reports—all carefully studied, with cross-references and underlinings in red.

The president stood beside me and watched me without moving. I looked up and made a point of speaking slowly and carefully. I said that I admired him and that perhaps he would allow me to express my admiration. At a time when I had been solely preoccupied with my private affairs and with my family, he had apparently spared himself neither time nor trouble to serve the worthy cause which had now triumphed and which had in consequence quite rightly rewarded him by bestowing on him the important and honourable appointment he now held.

He stared at me fixedly. Then, from behind his glittering spectacles, he said in a soft, somewhat strained voice:

“You’re a fool. With a past like yours you could easily be in my place now! But you think you’re too good for it, you want them to come and ask you! But nobody’s going to ask anybody. To get something you have to shout—shout!” And suddenly he bellowed: “*To shout!*” His voice immediately became soft again. “I shouted. And now I’m here—and you have to come to see me, you have to ask favours of me. It could have been the other way about. Thank God it isn’t!”

I picked up the file and carefully replaced it where it belonged. Then I said:

“Yes, thank God it isn’t!”

And I left.

I took the next train to Berlin and went to see Hauenstein at once. He listened to me in silence, and when I had finished rang for a taxi. Late though it was, we motored straight to Potsdam and got Dr. Rogge, who was in charge of the State Archives, out of bed. We had already had dealings with this official concerning the handing over to the State Archives of military unit nominal rolls. Hauenstein now offered to present all our material to the State Archives, as a gift, since there was no mechanism by which the Archives could purchase it from us. The state archivist expressed an immediate and delighted readiness to accept our gift, which included not only the documents that we already possessed but also whatever else might come to us in the future through our periodical. It would all go into the Army Archives. He immediately completed a deed according to which all our material was now the property of the state.

Early next day Hauenstein telephoned me. At six that morning three trucks had drawn up in front of his house in the Hildebrand Strasse. Gestapo officials had forced their way in and had insisted on the im-

mediate handing over of all his documents. Hauenstein, only too anxious to be of service to these gentlemen, had immediately shown them Dr. Rogge's deed. The officials were dumbfounded. First, they said, they must telephone. They went into the next room and telephoned. Then they left, without the documents. Hauenstein had immediately informed Dr. Rogge, who had assured him that the material would be collected for the State Archives in the course of that same day.

"What now?" I asked.

Hauenstein declared that he intended to leave Berlin at once for a short holiday in the country and advised me to do likewise. I went to Kampen, on the island of Sylt, and there I wrote from memory a brief résumé of the German post-war, an essay entitled *Nahe Geschichte*, which Ernst Rowohlt published.

The Army Archives on the Brauhaus-Berg at Potsdam, the former War Academy, built a solid, square tower to house our material which was at last complemented by the documents from the Army Area Commands. The money that was not available to buy our stuff was doubtless spent on this. Forty retired staff officers were able to supplement their pensions by working zealously and energetically on the historical study that Hauenstein and I had hitherto carried out on our own. An occasional enquiry that we received concerning the whereabouts of a particular document led us to suspect that they weren't working zealously enough—or alternatively that something was wrong with their filing system. We finally asked them how they were actually dealing with the material, and we learned that it was being filed according to its origin: that is to say if a document had been sent to us by a former Private Müller it would be filed under M. When Hauenstein and I heard this we could do nothing save gaze silently into each other's eyes. The Army Archives were at that time being run by General von Rabenau, whom I had known well when he was on the staff of the 2nd Guards Reserve Division in the Baltic. He later produced a two-volume biography of General von Seeckt (and was later still condemned to death as a result of the events of July 20th, 1944). It was thanks to him that fragments of the history of the German post-war were eventually published. These were first-rate books in which every unit was correctly described and the date and hour of every action accurately given, and which left the reader with the impression that he had been learning about events which had perhaps taken place on the moon.

At the very period when the good sense in my continuing to work at our history of the German post-war began to appear problematical, my labours on this subject served as qualifications for activities in quite another field. These began when UFA engaged me as technical adviser on matters connected with the *Freikorps*.

Although from a very early age I had assiduously and eagerly attended performances at, successively, nickelodeons, cinemas, moving picture theatres, picture palaces and the movies, I shared at this time the faintly contemptuous attitude that my literary colleagues were later to show when they heard of my activities in the film world. I, like they, tended to regard the movies as an occasionally entertaining but basically pernicious and sham art-form, a potentially dangerous by-product of civilisation.

On the way from Babelsberg station to UFA's front gate I was filled with that readiness to scoff with which modern man arms himself before entering the heavenly realms: realms populated by goddesses and stars and angelic creatures untouched by the needs of the real world, moving among the clouds to the music of the spheres, accompanied by celestial choirs and the cheerful chirruping of fat-cheeked cherubim: realms in which, despite the inhabitants' firm protests, nobody willingly believes that any hard work is actually done: realms where those who pass out through their portals seem as though covered with a thin layer of snow flakes, flakes that melt at the contact of the real world, or rather that are transmuted into dirty bank-notes. But scarcely had I passed through the ceremony at the front-gate, which was somehow unpleasantly reminiscent of a customs inspection, than a new realisation came to me and one that was to be constantly reinforced during the years to come: this magic film world was another country, it was neutral territory.

Indeed, whenever I passed through the gate at Babelsberg, or later that at Geiseltal, I invariably experienced the very precise sensation of having crossed a frontier. Everything was suddenly so different, suddenly so untrue. It was exactly as belligerent, suffering nations in wartime imagine life to be in neutral countries: *they've* still got everything! Occasional, distressing rumours did, from time to time, percolate through to the film world about the crazy events that were taking place 'outside,' but they had little effect. The German film world was neutral. It had to be. To sacrifice its neutrality would have meant to sacrifice itself. This young, uncertain art-form needed all its energies for its own purposes and had none to spare for other causes. And if it had required a motto, it might well have been: 'I'm only interested in the industry' (uttered in a strong Hungarian or Austrian accent).

This remarkable industry, the newest twig on the age-old tree of art, displayed at all times the immutable laws that govern growth. Though carefully pruned back from time to time by the sharpest and harshest censorship in the world—the German public's taste—the twig continued to shoot up in the most surprising and individualistic fashion. The laws of its dramaturgy, usually based on very short-lived experiences, were only ever valid for a day. Only one endured, the law that maintains that movies and politics won't mix.

Certain directors and actors were constantly preoccupied by one problem, and, apparently, one only. This was connected with the so-called German greeting, which was the method of hailing a friend by raising the right arm straight out with the hand extended at, or slightly above, the level of the shoulder. This greeting had very definite political implications: it was employed daily by millions: and the directors and actors saw no reason why it should not be done on the films in a simple and life-like fashion. They failed. Even when shown in the rushes the effect on the select and professional audience was simply to produce uncontrollable hilarity. The cinema can do a great deal. It can entrance, it can tell fairy tales, it can be realistic or surrealist—but it cannot portray a gesture that is false without underlining in the most brutal way its basic falseness. The German cinema could not reproduce the German greeting; it was the greeting that was to blame, not the cinema.

That the German cinema could not express political tendencies was the fault not of the cinema but of the tendencies. Perhaps the most spectacular attempt to do so was a film about the Boer War. There was a scene in this in which the concentration camp doctor, examining a piece of meat crawling with maggots, declares that it is good enough for the inmates. The build-up and the acting of this scene were modelled on a similar scene in a modern Soviet movie. The attempt to achieve political significance was as ridiculous in the Russian as in the German version. The result of attempts to introduce political tendencies into the films was to produce an effect as absurd as that of those films made abroad with a German setting on a German audience, or of German films with a foreign setting when shown to the inhabitants of the foreign country in question. Almost all German realistic films, even those that were free of political tendentiousness both in form and substance, struck foreigners as ridiculous. The reason for this may be that German political reality seemed to those foreigners barbarous and evil; or it may be that the efforts of the German film to portray German political reality produced an effect that was barbarous and evil.

The German film world was neutral territory.

Let me for a moment digress about the fortunes and hardships of that small national minority, the concern of no United Nations Organisation and protected by no Atlantic Charter, those cheerful little people of the film world! Throughout global cataclysms they bravely defended their traditional neutrality, they fought to the end to protect their pleasant customs and habits, their own morality and their own culture.

The pressures were of course great. To begin with, a high proportion of those very people to whom the German film industry owed most in ideas and initiative had to emigrate. They might change country and language but their home remained the same; most of them continued to make films abroad, in a foreign version, as it were.

Those who remained behind did not in general surrender to the pressure. A fifth column was introduced but was soon recognised as such. Around it there arose a wall of silence, a barrier of smiling, oriental politeness. The fifth column was not recognisable by any distinguishing mark or badge, but the fact that it never mastered the jargon, that clipped manner of speech that derived from personal as well as from technical sources, a natural conciseness and artistic terseness that a man either possessed or didn't and which could not be learned.

Then a few old women straggled out across the frontier and complained that they had been persecuted in film land. This was the moment to establish domination over the little country that had hitherto run its own affairs so splendidly, a protective domination, a most honourable protection. And a Protector was ready to hand, a *Reichsprotector*, and so were the janissaries to carry out his orders, a group of director-generals. These latter began by listening to the Protector's plans—elaborate, fantastic plans—with tolerant smiles; they twiddled their thumbs and commented:

“First the Herr Minister will have to change the laws!”

Soon enough their faces fell, indeed turned grey, when they realised to their horror that this was exactly what he intended to do. Indeed the Protector was a dangerous man. The cheerful little film people wished that if they must have a Protector he might be a different man, a fatter and altogether cosier individual, much bedizened with glittering ornaments, himself a sort of film figure. He at least would have left the films alone, because he knew nothing about them and had the courage to admit as much. But the Protector they got lacked that sort of courage, and in any case he did know something about films. He knew, to be precise, exactly what he wanted. And he had taste, a very active sort of taste. If up to this time the film industry had lived by satisfying the tastes of thousands, now all was changed, now one man's taste was all it had to concern itself with. All this was bad enough, but it was not the worst. Suppose the Protector proposed to write the films himself? And he proposed. . . .

It was not the new tables of the law, the bronze ones. It was not the thick network of orders and memoranda that spread across the land, nor the diabolical maze of language regulations, of thought control, of artistic censorship. It was none of these. It was the minister's green pencil. Everywhere it was to be seen, in all the plans of the executives, in every author's script it left its mark; astonishingly clever it was, and quick to detect any evasion. And where it had passed there remained only confusion, distortion and counter-sense. Around the marks of the green pencil there was fought a bitter and desperate fight: was the purpose of all our activities to be success or accomplishment? The Protector was an advocate of success, and this was simultaneously his triumph and his weakness. It was a basic problem concerning the nature of life

itself, and it was the attitude of the Protector and his like which everywhere created resistance, the maquis, the powerful, simmering underground movements, the war in the night, the partisan bands. All praise to the heroic forces of the spirit in their struggle against the perversion of successful power!

There were a thousand opportunities for fighting, and each man fought in his own way. The great leaders of the film maquis, the magnates, fought with figures and bank balances, with capital and statutes, with international connections and interests—and with a single stroke of his green pencil the aggressor removed them from the seats of power, chased them from the hillocks whence, with their staffs about them, they had surveyed the fray. The general staff officers of the underground, the production managers and directors, replied by carrying out strategic disengagements. They were relying on a change in the fortunes of war or in the political situation which, experience had shown them, led to a corresponding alteration of the ministerial mind, and since each film required approximately one year from the time of completing its original green-commented plan to its final presentation as a finished work, they sometimes succeeded in making the Protector forget his initial requirements. Sometimes they didn't, and in that case it was not they but the film that was scrapped.

But the real heroes of the Irredenta, the glittering figures on whom was trained the full searchlight of fame, in a word the actors—they had a far from easy time. Fame is vulnerable, and nothing pleases the world more than to see the searchlight extinguished and the shining idol cast down in the dust. Here each man fought for himself, with only the pureness of his heart and his attachments to his art as his supports; and each tried for himself to avoid the destiny implicit in every contract and every part and which was liable to jump on him from out the undergrowth whenever the postman called or the telephone rang.

And then there were the little men, the unknown, nameless partisans of the film world, the script-writers who wandered, uprooted and starving (only in spirit, needless to say), through the forest, constantly engaged on repairing the barbed wire which the enemy as constantly cut. Their fate as individuals counted for nothing: there were so many of them and not one irreplaceable. And it was against them that the aggressor, pursuing the line of least resistance, exercised his greatest pressure. An iron law already prevailed in the film world, according to which, if a film was bad, the script-writer was to blame, whereas if it was good it could only be so despite the script-writer. And it was they, the pariahs without a *patria*, the eternal lance-corporals of the film world, who had to bear the brunt of the battle and who could yet earn no laurels by so doing. The minister had no dealings with them; he just dealt with them.

One of the characteristics of the fortunate land of magic was that it possessed its own code of morals, a code that was wide, cheerful and understanding and which only really came into action when the integrity of the art-form was endangered. Do what you will was the motto, but do not derive profit from doing it. Let it be said that no human frailty was despised by the profession. However, a film cannot be made by a single individual, but only by the combined labour of approximately two thousand people. So laws of comradeship had to prevail, and to break them endangered the very film which bound them all together. Thus it might happen that some pleasing young lady, on being politely asked to play the lead in a new movie, would curl up on her sofa and with lowered head, in tones of mystery, say:

“Oh, I don’t know . . . I’d like to, but do you really think it’s my sort of part? The minister told me that he intended to select my next vehicle himself!”

The winged word flew from office to office, from studio to studio. The lady did not get the leading part. She received no more offers. She might go, if she chose, to complain to her minister and he, for his part, might send out a circular letter demanding why this pleasing young lady, so beloved by the public, was no longer given starring roles. Ask where he would, the answer was always the same: there were no films being planned with a suitable part worthy of the special talents of this great German film actress. The minister might order that such a film be planned, he might set up a company to produce it, but all those people capable of making the movie would decline. Then a producer might be found who could not afford to say no. But this producer must needs find a staff of assistants who also dare not say no. With one accord all the script-writers would turn away, wringing their hands, and all the camera men, all the sound-track men, all the architects, all the set-designers, all the assistant directors, all the stage-managers. The script would be feeble, the production ill co-ordinated, the treatment silly, the dialogue contrived, the photography appalling, the sound-track harsh and cracked—in a word, a bad film. The film would be run off before the minister, who would cry:

“But it’s abominable!”

Then would the producer say:

“I don’t know what’s the matter with the young lady. She used to be so good. Maybe she’s getting old?”

The minister would thoughtfully scan the wrinkles on the great film-actress’s face which the make-up people and the lighting men had gone to such pains to bring into heavy relief. He would compare her with another great film-actress who now occupied the warmest refuge in his capacious heart, and at last the minister would say:

“Give her one more try. Maybe in a supporting part. . . .”

And thus the young lady was allowed to begin again from the



beginning. No more did she curl up on her sofa. She sat, upright and modest, in the outer office—and once again everybody loved her and everyone was kind to her. And a little guardian angel would fly through the room, humming the song so beloved by the film-folk:

“Everything passes, everything ends.”

That was how it was. “Life is strange and world is bad,” the great American writer, Thomas Wolfe, used to say. For him human beings were plainly a means for expressing the condition of life and of the world. I have been given this Fragebogen to complete for no other reason than this. But I must admit that its purpose can hardly be achieved by questioning me concerning my activities in the German film industry. After giving the matter careful consideration I have reached the conclusion that, in order to leave out nothing important, I would need the time and the paper to write some two thousand pages—which of course I am ready at any moment to do should I be so instructed. But perhaps it will suffice if this time I depart from the customary procedure of Allied Military Tribunals and hand back the responsibility of producing proof to those gentlemen of Military Government who, armed with the thunderbolts of a strictly examined conscience, tend to ask confidently:

“What did you do during the nine years from 1936 to 1945?”

Then, I think I may recall my old master, Rowohlt, and shift my torso from side to side like a polar bear, and reply calmly, with a beaming smile:

“Ho, ho . . . nothing can happen to me! I was in films!”

30. *Were you deferred from Military Service?*

Yes.

31. *If so, explain circumstances completely*

The moment war broke out Hauenstein volunteered for the army. In rather uncivil terms he was told to go home. This war seemed to have no use for volunteers. But a few days later Hauenstein was called up and assigned to a heavy artillery regiment, with the rank of sergeant. Since I had left the army in 1920 with the rank of Second Lieutenant (Retd.), I reckoned on being recalled as an officer at once, and since I was a few years younger than Hauenstein I imagined that I would receive my papers before he got his. But everything connected with this remarkable military machine seemed to be more or less beyond the bounds of normal calculations. Hauenstein's regiment was formed entirely of men who had taken part in the First World War, dug-outs in fact, and he told me with amusement that on the first day of his appointment, when his men were loading shells and he urged them to “get a move on,” he was indignantly informed that, “old men aren't express trains.”

When Hauenstein came home on leave after the Polish campaign, half his regiment had already been transferred to garrison duty in the metropolitan area and he himself complained a little about incipient rheumatism. He was expecting to be moved to the Western front. He expressed his surprise that I was still not in uniform; but no military establishment had shown as yet the slightest interest in my existence. After the French campaign Hauenstein once again came home on leave. In his regiment the only remaining veterans of the First World War were the regimental commander and himself. His rheumatism had disappeared beneath the hot suns of Champagne, and he painted, in glowing colours, the joys of military life. It was not until he and his battery were already moving into the great plains of Russia—he had had the foresight to arrange that a fur waistcoat be sent after him—that I finally received instructions telling me to report at the Charlottenburg recruiting station.

Ille laid out clean linen for me and began to pack my night things into a small bag, under the false impression that I would not be coming back. I explained to her that an order to report was not the same as mobilisation papers. I tried to show her that I would probably only be considered worthy of being made rail transport officer at Sosnowice, where I would spend my days speeding leave-trains on their way by blowing shrill blasts on a small whistle. This seemed to relieve Ille.

“In any case,” she said, “they’re sure to send you home after two weeks. No one could stand your frightful snoring for any longer than that.”

When I returned from the recruiting station Ille was already in the doorway, a glass of brandy ready in either hand to steady my nerves. She said:

“Now tell me all about it.”

This was a question which had to be answered according to a particular formula which dated from her childhood. Ille supplied the opening words of my answer, as her mother used to do for her:

“Well, when I got there they’d all arrived already. . . .”

“Yes,” I said, “there was already a crowd of gentlemen there, not just men, gentleman with horn-rimmed spectacles and brief-cases, substantial-looking elderly gentlemen. At first I thought I must have made a mistake and wandered into an important business conference, but soon a real, live sergeant-major appeared. He looked about him with apparent surprise, then laughed and said: ‘Ah ha! The class of 1902. The gentlemen who drive their own automobiles! Never you worry, gentlemen, we’ll soon get those waist-lines down!’ Of course we all laughed heartily at this and then the sergeant-major produced a piece of paper which he read aloud to us, extremely rapidly. It was hard to follow what it was all about, something to do with military law and how we were all under it now. I heard the words ‘sentence of death’ a

couple of times and one or two other little things of that sort to which the sergeant-major seemed to attach no importance. Then he led us into a large room where we were each given a chair and told to undress. At a long table were seated various gentlemen in uniform, and in the centre sat a grey-haired, self-satisfied-looking lieutenant-colonel. At another, smaller table sat the doctor. He was wearing a white coat, so I couldn't see his rank, but I made up my mind to address him as 'Chief Staff Doctor.' It was most unpleasant having to strip in such a crowd, so I hurried and was the first one ready. But then they began to call out names and I realised we were to be examined in alphabetical order and that I had a long wait ahead of me. I sat down on my chair, naked as a poodle, and watched the others.

"I was horrified: never had I seen so much infirmity gathered together in one place. The doctor was uncommonly amiable. He spoke to the gentlemen as though he were addressing small, sick children. 'Well, what's the trouble?' he would ask each one in turn and would listen with great patience to the long catalogue of complaints, the endless accounts of past ill-health. Then he would shake his head sadly and examine them at length and with great thoroughness.

"At last it was my turn. I stepped up and took my place before the doctor's table. He was getting tired. He glanced at the list and asked: 'Well, what's the matter?' I said: 'Nothing, Chief Staff Doctor.' He looked up at me with mild impatience: 'I mean what's wrong with you?' I said: 'I'm not sick, Chief Staff Doctor.' 'But,' he said, 'you must have been sick at some time or other.' 'No, Chief Staff Doctor,' said I: 'I've never had a day's sickness in my life.'

"The doctor rose to his feet and said: 'Do ten knee-bends.' I did ten knee-bends, and the doctor, applying a comical little hearing device to my chest and back, listened carefully. Then he said: 'Fifteen more knee-bends.' I did fifteen more knee-bends, feeling rather awkward since I was wearing no trousers. The doctor danced around me, listening through his hearing device and tapping me. His exhaustion seemed entirely evaporated. 'Fantastic!' he said and then he suddenly gave me the order: 'Turn around! Touch your toes!' He gazed long and earnestly at my anus, before crying: 'Not even haemorrhoids!'

"And now he set to work on me with feverish vigour, testing my knee reflexes, peering down my throat, twisting me this way and that, and from second to second his pleased astonishment seemed to grow. Finally he walked around me once again, smiled broadly, turned to the lieutenant-colonel, and cried in a voice loud with triumph:

**"FIT FOR ACTIVE SERVICE!"**

"'Very good news,' babbled the lieutenant-colonel, 'very good news. Now then, step this way, please. Been a soldier before, eh?' 'Yes, sir,' said I, straightening my elbows so that my thumbs lay along my thighs. 'Which arm of the service?' he asked. 'Machine-gunner, sir!'

said I. 'I see,' said the lieutenant-colonel. 'I imagine you'd like to go back there?' 'If I might, sir,' said I. The lieutenant-colonel beamed at me and dictated: 'Very well. Machine-gun battalion.'

"One of the other gentlemen leaned forward, whispered something to the lieutenant-colonel, and showed him a piece of paper. The lieutenant-colonel pushed it across to me and asked: 'Have you ever signed one of these declarations?' I read it and said that I had not. 'Well, in that case you'd better sign it now.'

"I read the declaration through again. It said that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I was neither a Jew nor had ever been sent to prison for a criminal conviction.

" 'I can't sign it sir,' said I.

"The lieutenant-colonel stared at me in amazement. Then, frowning suddenly, he looked at me sharply, leaned forward, and asked in a low voice: 'Are you . . . Jewish?' I replied stiffly: 'No, sir. But I have been convicted and sent to prison.' The lieutenant-colonel looked startled. There was utter silence in the room. The lieutenant-colonel cleared his throat and, making an effort to keep his voice low, asked: 'For what?'

"I said loudly:

" 'For murder.'

"The man seated next to the lieutenant-colonel shifted slightly in his chair. He presumably belonged to the most intelligent species of military, the adjutant's department. He leaned forward and whispered something into the lieutenant-colonel's ear. The latter's expression changed to one of relief. He said: 'I see!' Then, blinking at me, he asked: 'So you're the . . . I mean, you're, er . . . the writer . . .?' 'I am,' said I. 'In that case,' said the lieutenant-colonel with satisfaction, 'in that case everything's all right. Nothing for you to worry about. The crime was deleted from the record, wasn't it? So in that case . . .?' He dictated: 'Machine-gun battalion. General duties. Rank: private.' 'Officer,' said I. 'I beg your pardon?' asked the lieutenant-colonel. 'I was discharged from the army with the rank of second lieutenant retired,' I said in a friendly tone. 'I can't be called up as a private but only as an officer.' 'No, no,' said the lieutenant-colonel. 'That will never do. After all, you have served a prison sentence.' He stared at me. I stared back. Everyone else stared. The lieutenant-colonel glanced at the file of documents before him. He thumbed through them for a moment. Then he looked up and said: 'Do you know, for me you're just another document, a tricky one that a man leaves at the bottom of his in-tray and hopes his replacement will deal with when he's on leave.'

"I said nothing. The man seated next to the lieutenant-colonel whispered something in his ear. The latter looked at me and proposed, amiably: 'Perhaps quartermaster . . .?' I said, respectfully, but firmly: 'No, sir.' The lieutenant-colonel bowed his head. Then he said:

‘You’re a writer. So far as I’m concerned your Propaganda Ministry can sort out your case. Next, please.’”

“And that was that,” said I.

“And now?” asked Ille.

“Now,” I said, “I’d like another brandy.”

Three days later I received a *Wehrpass* in which was enclosed a red card. The *Wehrpass* said that I had been passed for general service, and the red card said that I was attached to the Bavaria Film Company at München-Geislagsteig for the duration of the war.

In Munich I met Hauenstein. He was wearing a captain’s uniform and fairly clanking with decorations. When I greeted him he had to lean quite a long way backwards before he could offer me his hand.

“What’s the matter with you?” I asked.

“Rheumatism,” he said.

It was a long story. In his regiment there was no longer a single veteran of the Great War. Hauenstein himself had cost the tax-payers a small fortune. Every sort of cure had been tried and all the best professors consulted, but nothing had done him any good. He was reclassified as medically unfit: however, he had volunteered for service of any sort in the home area. He was now assigned to the staff of General von Unruh. General von Unruh had won the *Pour-le-Mérite* in the first war, had later led a *Freikorps* and had been a general in the Reichswehr. Discharged for reasons of health, he had been recalled towards the end of the war and given the job of ‘combing out’ the appointments reserved for unfit men. He was nicknamed ‘the hero snatcher’ and there were many jokes current about his activities. Unruh had ordered Hauenstein to comb out the writing profession. He had first of all visited a National-Socialist art publisher. Hauenstein said:

“In this salubrious concern alone I discovered no less than two hundred and sixty men holding appointments intended for the medically unfit, two hundred and sixty strong young men. Two hundred and sixty!”

He rolled the figures off his tongue with obvious relish. Then, with narrowed eyes, he examined me from head to toe.

“You still look pretty spry yourself,” he said.

“Spry? Never felt fitter in my life,” cried I, banging my chest so that it re-echoed. “Solid as an ox,” I said. “Give Unruh my regards and tell him so from me.”

In fact, though, I found my position an extremely uncomfortable one. I had once written about the nature of war and warriors, and now I had lost the right to have done this or to do it again! Once I had valued war, positively, as an elemental event, and now I was taking no part, even as I had once valued national revolution, positively, and yet had taken no part. It was absurd to maintain that this was not ‘my’ war or

the other not 'my' national revolution, yet this absurdity was all that was left to me to say. Nor did it make sense for me to attempt to regard my past writing as romantic rubbish; I still thought I had been right, but I was no longer in a position to say so or to act accordingly. I learned to understand the atrocious, the only really tragic, situation of those many, many patriots who were compelled not to desire their country's victory. I wished for a German victory, despite everything, and I could do nothing towards achieving it.

Throughout the whole war I never succeeded in sorting out these matters to my own satisfaction. There was no point in attempting to talk about them, for in my position anything I might have said must inevitably have been misunderstood. But I looked up to every soldier as a better man than myself, and I was indifferent to the fact that this might or might not be true. Only once did I attempt to talk about it. We were walking along and we met a company of soldiers marching to the station to entrain for the front. I said:

"The sight of each one of those soldiers fills me with shame."

I could not go on, for Ille quickly interrupted me to say:

"That I can understand. Feel ashamed by all means. But please, only at the sight of every thirteenth! Statistics prove that the other twelve are all either supply troops or generals."

32. *Have you ever been a member of the General Staff Corps?*

No.

33. *When?*

Not applicable.

34. *Have you ever been a Nazi Military Leadership Officer?*

No.

35. *When and in what unit?*

Not applicable.

36. *Did you serve as part of the Military Government or Wehrkreis-administration in any country occupied by Germany including Austria and Sudetenland?*

No.

37. *If so, give particulars of offices held, duties performed, location and period of service*

Not applicable.

38. *Do you have any military orders or military honours?*

I don't know.

39. *If so, state what was awarded you, the date, reasons and occasions for its bestowal*

To the best of my recollection in Imperial Germany, before the First World War, a man who was imprisoned and who thus lost his honourable civil status was automatically, and fairly logically, deprived at the same time of his right to wear any orders or decorations that he might previously have received. I know not whether this regulation, or some other to the same effect, was carried forward into the Weimar Republic. The Weimar Republic did not bestow orders or decorations with the exception of one droll substitute, the so-called *Eagle's Shield*; and the fortunate recipient of this distinction was less likely to pin it to his chest than to stand it on the chest of drawers at home. The sentence promulgated by the State Court for the Defence of the Republic contained no reference to the question of orders and decorations; nor has this omission caused me, until now, any worries, for from that October of 1922 until the present moment I have never found myself in a position where I need grapple with the thorny problem of whether I may wear my orders and decorations or whether I may not.

Unless my memory plays me false I possessed, at one time, nine of these things. They were all decorations which I won in the German post-war, and thus the legitimacy of the awards is automatically open to question. I have a very clear memory of how I won the highest of these decorations. I got it for carrying a jug of cream for many days while on patrol behind the enemy lines in the Baltic states in 1919. I was carrying it for my company commander, who yearned for a chicken with a cream sauce, a *Poulet à l'Ancienne*: and the fact that I carried the jug during a strenuous and difficult march of several days' duration without spilling a single drop was the cause of my receiving so high a decoration—indeed, had the cream not, unfortunately, turned sour by the time the chicken was plucked it would doubtless have been even higher.

Now it would ill become me to mock those men who collect orders and decorations. I know of no army in the world that has up to now dispensed with bright ribbons and glittering stars and crosses and medals. They are the last relic of that martial spirit which in years long past sought to spread fear and panic among the foe by the very brilliance and loudness of its soldiers' uniforms. That spirit can only regret the unfortunate change in attitude which resulted from the invention of camouflage and its application to military clothing.

I must admit that whenever I met a man wearing the Knight's Cross I experienced a sharp emotional pang, a feeling of respect mingled with envy. An important ingredient of this emotion was the knowledge that I was here meeting a type of man who had progressed far beyond myself. In age I was closer to the men of the First World War, that generation which had achieved maturity in the battles of *matériel*. I

could easily understand when I was told how, during the advance through France in 1940, those men did not always manage to keep up. They would suddenly stop at the edge of a wood or by a farm-house and with amazement and confusion gaze after the regiments rolling easily on across the fields to disappear over the far horizon—for in these fields German soldiers had once been stuck for four long years without being able to advance a single yard. Each of these men was in a position to see how closely and necessarily the form of the *matériel* battles corresponded to the sense of the First World War. When I now met so outstanding a representative of the Second World War as a man with the Knight's Cross, I regarded him as someone who had clearly mastered the form of this new war and who must therefore be in a position to grasp its sense.

I had the great good fortune to be close to a man who, by his life and actions, represented a type that I hope and believe future generations will not be able to banish from their picture of the Second World War.

I first met him during that wonderful summer of 1939. I was living at Kampen, on Sylt, where I was working with Matthias Wieman on a film dealing with the life of Captain Berthold, an air ace of the First World War, a man whom I had known and whom I had seen die. Wieman was to play the lead—and we combined our work with a holiday at the seaside, for we thought that we had earned a rest. But it was not this that made our work progress so slowly; rather was it a feeling of the futility of what we were doing, a feeling that was strengthened whenever we switched on the radio. Our studies of the construction and appearance of the First War Fokker plane were frequently disturbed by Messerschmitt fighters engaged in gunnery practice over the island. The quick-turning, streamlined machines would pursue a red target trailed behind an aircraft that flew in easy circles, and the summer stillness would be torn by the roar of the engines and the sharp bursts of the machine-guns. They usually shot out towards the sea, but of course it happened from time to time that an occasional bullet would embed itself in the sandy beach, with a nasty thud. Then Ille would move away, for she always took these bullets to be aimed personally at her, saying lazily that she thought it high time an end was put to this "War against Ille."

One day when we were walking across Kampen Heath, between Braderup and Keitum, we met a young Luftwaffe officer who was coming from the direction of the airfield. He attracted Ille's attention because of his blond hair and his uncommonly bright blue eyes, and mine because of the foreign decoration he wore upon his chest. Ille in such circumstances is apt to make rapid decisions, and now she stopped and addressed the young officer:

"Are you one of those people who are always shooting at me and never, to your shame, hitting me?"



The officer, a lieutenant, gave a sort of half-bow, announced his name, Redlich, and said slowly, in a strong Hamburg accent:

“Yes . . . I suppose I am. . .”

Ille asked aggressively:

“And what can we do to put a stop to it?”

Redlich gazed at Ille for a moment with obvious amazement. Then he said:

“From what I know of our people there’s only one answer: bribery.”

“What’s the best sort of bribe to offer you?” Ille asked.

“A tremendous feast,” said he.

“What do you mean by that?”

“For every pilot in the squadron a rump steak with a poached egg on top and plenty of fried onions and fried potatoes.” He added hastily: “And two bottles of beer per man.”

My sympathy was now aroused, and I intervened to ask how many pilots there were.

“Eighteen,” he said. “Nineteen with the Group Commander. He’ll have to be bribed too, because he’s the one who gives the orders.”

Matthias Wieman, who had himself at one time trained as a pilot, was very taken with the idea and set about preparing the “tremendous feast.” When we entered the inn at Munkmarsch, which was close to the Wattenmeer airfield, the Group Commander, Captain Kaschka, was already there. He was a tall Austrian with dark hair and clean-cut features, and he introduced the pilots under his command. These were all very young boys, only a few of whom were officers. They looked at us expectantly, kissed the hand of the two ladies, Erika Wieman and Ille, greeted Wieman with a cheerful grin and obviously had no idea what to say to me.

On the long table stood huge plates, each with the biggest rump steak that I had ever seen, great platters of potatoes and vegetables, and two bottles of beer beside each place but no glasses. Ille, seated between Redlich and Kaschka, seemed to be in unusually good spirits: Erika had immediately acquired a young Austrian and was plainly revelling in his Viennese dialect: Wieman, surrounded by the youngest pilots of them all, was entertaining them with the stories of his own first flights: while I was the responsibility of the commander’s adjutant—adjutants are always saddled with the most thankless jobs. The adjutant informed me that flyers the whole world over have a curious way of drinking—allegedly an invention of English pilots during the First World War—which accounted for the absence of glasses. Apparently bottled beer can only be drunk after an elaborate ritual which involves banging on the table with the fingers of one hand, then of the other, then tapping the floor with one foot, then with the other, then nodding the head, then taking a swallow, then repeating the whole business but performing each movement twice, then doing it all over again three times—by

which time the bottles are supposed to be empty. Any man who makes an error in the performance of this elaborate ritual has to buy a round. Now I tripped up at the first head-nodding, Ille did better, Wieman got almost halfway through—apart from Kaschka and Erika no one did it all—and soon the table was covered with bottles.

It seemed to be a successful feast. Wieman, of course, had seen to it that there was more provided than the bare outlines suggested by Redlich. Ille smiled at me from time to time, and after a while Kaschka relieved the exhausted adjutant. Much later, when the festivities had become considerably more noisy, Kaschka suddenly asked me if I thought that there would be a war. This question was right up my street, and while silence gradually descended on the company I displayed the rich treasure-chest of my political knowledge. It was quite inconceivable, I said, that there could be war. I carefully enumerated the many deliberate utterances on the subject of the 'Polish Corridor' by British statesmen, from Lloyd George to Winston Churchill. I proved conclusively that no single responsible British body of opinion had ever regarded that idiotic invention as anything but preposterous. I explained in detail how the German Chancellor, in view of this state of affairs, could not possibly dream of solving by force a problem which all logic showed would solve itself with a little patience and a minimum of diplomatic adroitness.

I cannot think why on earth I should have imagined that these young soldiers would receive with joy and satisfaction my denial of the possibility of war. Be that as it may, I simply gave them my true opinion, which was received in respectful silence. Only Wieman raised his glass to me cheerfully. He always insisted that he understood nothing about politics.

Ille broke the silence. Unconcernedly she asked Redlich what was the "funny thing" he wore on his chest. Redlich blushed and said it was "a Spanish one." Kaschka explained to us that Redlich was the only pilot in the squadron who had already flown operationally; he had been in Spain and had shot down four enemy planes. When Ille insisted on hearing the story of Redlich's first air victory Kaschka ordered the lieutenant to tell it. Redlich said:

"There's nothing to tell. There I was, flying along, and then I saw this Boeing. So I went after it."

"And?" Ille asked.

"Well—then all of a sudden there were thousands of Ratas."

"And?" Ille asked.

"Then I landed."

"And the Boeing?" Ille asked.

"Shot down."

"And the Ratas?" Ille asked.

"There were only two of them."

Yes, it was really a successful feast. By the end it might even be described as tremendous. Towards dawn, when Kaschka wanted to send 'his men' to bed, a delegation was chosen which, in due and proper form, requested the commander that they be allowed another hour. "Just one more hour sir, and tomorrow we'll fly like aces!" Kaschka referred the delegation to Redlich, the squadron leader. And that was the end of the feast.

The next day Kaschka joined us on the beach. He lay on his back in the sand and watched the fast planes manoeuvring in the sky and attacking the red target.

"And that's what those kids call flying like aces!" he said grimly. "Well, we'll see."

When Kaschka did not come to our part of the beach it was Redlich. He and Ille would walk into the ocean hand in hand, and I decided I must get to know Redlich somewhat better. He had been born in Hamburg in 1914. His father had been killed, a captain, in the First World War. His mother had performed the remarkable feat of bringing up three sons on a captain's pension so well that the eldest became an architect, the youngest a lawyer and Wolf an officer. Wolf Redlich had joined the navy but while still a cadet had transferred to the newly formed Luftwaffe, and having satisfactorily completed his training was sent to Spain. I liked him and I liked his calm and utterly simple manners. His subordinates found him somewhat 'regimental.' Kaschka was stricter but broader-minded. Kaschka was said to be the best pilot in the Luftwaffe after Udet. Redlich, as a flyer, was simply 'correct.'

Then it was the turn of Redlich's squadron to give a tremendous feast. It was the night before their departure—German troops had moved into Poland. We drank our beer out of the bottle while banging on the table, stamping our feet, nodding our heads, and drinking to the health of the English pilots, who were generally believed to be doing exactly the same thing at the same time. Never have I felt so wretched. At one point, when all the pilots had left the room together, Wieman said:

"My God, I seem to see an aura about those young men's heads. Not one, not one of them will live through it. . . ."

Ille burst into tears and hurried out. Later she danced with each of the pilots in turn, to the music of the gramophone. Wieman drank *Bruderschaft* with all of them. Kaschka sat in a corner and got a kiss from Erika. It was not Erika but the landlord's wife, Frau Nann, who then wept. Erika talked to the adjutant, who said:

"We don't give a damn, we just want to fly, fly. . . ."

Later the party became tremendously noisy, and we had horse-races on chairs around the room.

Next morning the squadron circled the house where we lived, dipped their wings to us, and disappeared southwards into the haze.

The squadron flew operational missions from Wilhelmshaven, and took part in the first great air battle over the North Sea. Four pilots failed to return, among them the adjutant.

We maintained close contact with the squadron. Ille carried on a voluminous correspondence with its members. She collected presents among all her friends and acquaintances which she sent to 'Ille's Own Squadron.' Whenever Wolf Redlich had leave he came to see us. The squadron flew in France and then took part in the operations against England. Redlich said:

"Flights over England? Nothing to it. Just an hour and a half of acute terror."

He said:

"I'd like to survive this war because after it's over I'd like to read the reminiscences of the English Spitfire pilots. Those boys must be even more scared than we are—the way they go to it."

He explained to me that it took approximately twenty minutes for an air group to assemble in the sky before setting off for its target. During those twenty minutes the alarm would be given on the other side and the English pilots would climb up and hang in the clouds. As the group approached they would fall on it from all sides. If an English fighter pilot was shot down he would bale out by parachute, scramble into the nearest machine when he hit the ground, and take off again. To begin with, Redlich said, one wing of fighters had escorted each group of bombers—after three weeks one group of fighters accompanied each bomber wing. The casualties were appalling. His squadron lost half its pilots over England. When Ille asked him if anything had happened to him he replied, no: not a single bullet had hit his plane.

"Once," he said, "there I was, flying along, and I happened to look over my shoulder and there was one of them sitting on my tail with all his guns blazing. That was the first time I felt it was me that was meant. I really lost my temper."

"And?" Ille asked.

"I made it my business to get out of his way."

But he shot down eight enemy planes over England.

Once when he came back from Africa on duty he took the opportunity to visit us at Mittenwald, where I was working on a film. He and Ille went for a walk at the foot of the Karwendel, and she insisted on his telling her what an air battle was really like."

"How many birds are there flying up there?" he asked. Ille looked up and said:

"Five."

"You're dead already," he said. "You didn't see the sixth one up behind."

This was a joke current in the flying schools, but Ille was uncommonly impressed.

His squadron was sent to Yugoslavia, but by the time it arrived there the campaign was already over, and they went on to Africa, where they were the first German fighters to arrive. The pilots flew over singly, and when three had landed Redlich, who was a captain, went to see the commanding general, Rommel. Rommel said:

“Thank God you’re here at last. We’ve had almost no defence against the Hurricanes. How many of you are there?”

When Redlich said: “Three!” the general swore and walked out of his tent. But on the same day they shot down seven surprised Hurricanes. Then the rest of the squadron arrived, and soon the whole wing was in North Africa—and this constituted the entire German fighter strength on that front. I asked Redlich for his opinion of the general situation in Africa. He laughed and said:

“Four mornings ago I was sleeping in my tent, when the alarm went. I pulled my equipment on over my pyjamas and took off. I went after one, first-class pilot he was and I couldn’t get him. We were flying right over our landing ground and I reckoned he must be nearly out of fuel. At last I forced him to land. I landed myself and went right over to say hello to him. I wanted to apologise for being in pyjamas. He unzipped his flying suit and I saw he was wearing pyjamas too. He was a famous English fighter pilot, and I invited him to have breakfast with me and to have a shave in my tent. While we were lathering our faces I said, in English: ‘We hope to be in Cairo for Christmas.’ He said: ‘Oh, I see. We hope to be in Tripoli for Christmas.’ So much for the general situation!”

A few weeks later we got a field postcard, written in his usual laconic style. He simply said he was well except for a very bad sore throat. Ille was worried: in her next letter she recommended all sorts of gargles and nostrums. A few days later we heard on the radio that he’d been given the Knight’s Cross.\* He now came frequently to Munich, since his duties often took him to Schleissheim airfield. He used to complain about the journey: from Tobruk to Schleissheim was nothing, but to get from Schleissheim to Munich took for ever.

Of the pilots in his squadron with whom we had made merry at Munkmarsch only four were still alive. Kaschka, too, had fallen. Redlich’s elder brother, the architect, was also dead.

“He had no idea of soldiering,” said Redlich, “but I can understand that with him. He was much cleverer than me.”

In Munich we lived at the Hotel Königshof and were subjected to none of the petty inconveniences of wartime. We always had hot food, we could take a bath whenever we wished, and we never lacked for clean towels or bed-linen. Wolf Redlich appreciated that. When he was with us it was only reluctantly that he would leave the hotel. He enjoyed the company of film people and observed their actions and their curious manners with great pleasure.

\* Worn about the throat.—*Translator.*

Once Ille managed to get him to show us, seated on a chair, all the movements that he would make while engaged in aerial combat. He did this with a most unhappy expression on his face, but with the same precision which he applied to all his undertakings. The effect was extremely curious. All his movements were of an easy and sure dexterity: without exaggeration, they seemed as though filled with a monstrous logic, a fearful and simultaneously pitiful logic: they were less the movements of a man in control of a highly complicated machine than those of the machine itself. Never did I feel myself more remote from him than at this moment.

Since Wölfchen had won the Knight's Cross Ille attached extreme importance to being seen with him in public. She insisted on his wearing all his decorations. Redlich was almost completely ignorant of the good things of this world, its joys and its pleasures. He was dumb-founded by the array of bottles and jars on Ille's dressing-table, he had never eaten a lobster, he knew nothing of crabs, and the idea of oysters disgusted him. We taught him how to distinguish one red wine from another and managed to persuade him that for a man to have his hands manicured was not necessarily a sign of degeneracy. Ille wanted to compel him to admit that though the joys of life might well be transitory they were certainly not contemptible. He surprised us with the information that to kiss a lady was an indication of serious matrimonial intentions. Ille was deeply shocked.

"Haven't you," she asked, "ever slept with a girl, then?"

He blushed and said:

"How could I have? At the Naval Academy at Mürwik? In Spain we were flying operationally, and the Spanish women I saw were always with Spanish men. There are no women on airfields. The ones in Africa are pretty, it's true, but hardly marriageable."

"Have you never been in love with a woman?"

"Yes, I have."

"Who?"

But Wölfchen relapsed into a hurt silence. That was not the sort of question a gentleman answered.

"Here, have some snails," said Ille.

Redlich looked at the little blackish objects with disgust.

"What sort of muck is that?"

But at last she persuaded him to taste one and then he told the waiter to bring him a portion.

"You see?" said Ille. "And now I'm going to find you a nice girl, attractive and gay. . . ."

But he vehemently refused to countenance this idea. To Ille's boundless amusement he maintained that he intended to bring to his marriage the same purity that he would demand from the girl he chose to make his bride.

Ille told him a macabre riddle that was current at the time. The question was: "Which would be worse: that we should win the war and still have the Nazis, or lose the war and get rid of the Nazis?" The answer was: "That we should lose the war and still have the Nazis." Redlich didn't even smile. He looked at me and asked:

"What do you think?"

I said heavily that there was still a fourth possibility: we must win the war and then make it our duty to rid ourselves of National-Socialist rule. Redlich replied, simply, that that was also his opinion, and he asked Ille not to discuss such matters again.

The next time we saw him we were just hurrying out. We were going down the hotel steps when Ille suddenly cried:

"There's Wölfchen!"

He was standing at the reception desk and asking for us. We were on our way to the gala first night of a new film, and we decided not to go since he was here. But he was most anxious that we should, and that we should take him with us. Since we'd been invited to the party which customarily followed the première I rang the production chief and asked permission to bring Redlich. The party at the Artists' House consisted of a modest meal at an immodest price. The only drink available was an Italian red wine which tasted as though it had been transported over the Alps in refrigerator cars—it had no flavour or bouquet. I knew that there was a bar somewhere in the building and I set out to find it in the hopes of being able to discover something a little more palatable. But the bar on the top floor was already closed and in darkness. I was about to return to the others when an elderly man came out of the darkened bar. He asked me if I was trying to get a drink. I said that I was and expressed my predicament to him in terms that the years had taught me were the most effective when addressing head waiters or the owners of bars. The man said:

"Yes, I too wanted another drink. Wait in the bar. You'll find a lady already there. I know where the bartender lives. I'll see if I can get him to dig us out something."

I thanked him and asked if I might bring a lady and gentleman with me, a gentleman with the Knight's Cross, I added emphatically.

"But don't tell anyone else," said the man, "or they'll all come along."

And he disappeared. I managed to extricate Ille and Wolf Redlich from the company and we went up to the bar. There was a woman seated in the dark, whom I told of my conversation with the man. She laughed and said that if anyone could find us drinks it was the professor.

After a short time the professor returned, but he had not managed to rout out the bartender.

"So we'll just have to go to my place," he said, with a laugh. "My wife's quite used to it. You needn't feel embarrassed."

Wolf Redlich was all for it. We left the Artists' House and got into a large, closed car. In the entrance hall I had noticed that the woman was exceptionally pretty, the professor on the stout side and going grey. I wondered who he might be to possess such a car. We drove over the Isar bridge towards Bogenhausen and drew up before a villa surrounded by a small garden. As we passed through the garden gate Ille suddenly gripped my arm: immediately before us stood two men with an enormous dog. But the woman simply said:

"It's all right. You may go home."

The men disappeared into the darkness, and we entered the house. On account of the black-out the professor did not switch on the lights until the front door was closed. We were standing in a large room divided by a step, so that the two halves were on different levels. The first thing that caught my eye was a picture—it was a Breughel. I glanced about me and counted no less than fourteen Spitzwegs on the walls. While the professor was going around turning on lights I whispered to Ille and Wolf Redlich:

"I know where we are. Look at all the Spitzwegs! He's Heinrich Hoffmann!"

Ille understood at once and said breathlessly:

"Then the woman must be Eva Braun!"

"Who is Eva Braun?" I asked.

"Sh!" said Ille. "Later!"

The professor was soon pouring brandy from an enormous squat bottle into great balloon glasses. Eva Braun reappeared, accompanied by a lively, rather plump woman who had only slipped on a dressing gown and who greeted us loudly and heartily and without appearing in any way surprised by our presence. We drank and I expressed my admiration for the Spitzwegs. The professor took me from picture to picture, turning on a special light over each one, and then he asked me if I would care to see the Führer's water-colours and drawings. I most certainly did, and so did Wolf Redlich, but Ille was fully engaged in an attempt to pump Eva Braun. I urged her to be careful not to talk in her usual rash way, but she waved me irritably away.

Hitler's drawings were hung in a small side-room, somewhat casually arranged one above the other. Redlich and I examined them while the professor went down to the cellar in search of more drinks. They were typical drawings by a talented amateur. The perspective was correct but they contained altogether too much detail: the draughtsman had clearly never heard Max Liebermann's remark, that the art of drawing is the art of omission. The effect they produced was curiously flat. Houses, courtyards, picturesque nooks, all delicately modulated—I actually felt that they might have been done by a woman. Wölfchen made no comment. A still-life of a boot in a corner seemed to interest him particularly. When I went back to join the others he trotted along behind me.



We found the ladies in another room, a smaller one with a low, soft, red-leather armchair in front of the little stove. On this chair, needless to say, Ille had seated herself, and I came in just as the professor's wife, with friendly significance, was saying:

"That is the chair on which the Führer always sits when he visits us."

She clearly meant to imply that this item of furniture was thereby somehow sanctified and should not be used by anyone else. But Ille just bounced up and down on the springs once or twice, remarking:

"That I can well believe! It's really wonderfully pretty and very comfortable, too."

Eva Braun smiled, and I sat down beside her on a little, antique sofa. She told me about the various antique pieces which filled the room, and she displayed a pair of legs that Wölfchen might well gape at with wide eyes.

Then the professor came in with his arms full of bottles. But when he heard that Wölfchen had arrived straight from Tobruk that very evening he hurried off again in search of French champagne. Even now he was not allowed to relax. Redlich had meanwhile learned a little about the good things of life and since he was, by nature, sparing with the information he divulged, it was only when the bottle of champagne was empty that he announced his departure at six that morning—he would be flying straight back to Tobruk. And the professor hurried down to the cellar once again.

We went back to the big room, where Ille carried on an eager conversation with Eva Braun—whose identity was still unknown to me—while Wolf talked with the professor's wife. The latter seemed an uncommonly gay person; she and Wolf were laughing away together, and he had a smile on his face which caused me seriously to reconsider what his true intentions might be. I looked about the room, and the professor was very pleased when I expressed my admiration for his artistic taste. He said, perhaps a little thickly, that he did not yet know who I was, but stopped me when I began to tell him—he said it was quite unnecessary, he could see right away whether people were agreeable or not, and there was always room in his home for agreeable people. Then he hurried off to the cellar, and this time the two ladies went with him; they intended to prepare a hamper for Wölfchen to take on his journey. Now at last Ille told us who Eva Braun was. Wölfchen said: "In the days when we kept a little snow-white milch goat . . ." and I decided to have a good look at her when she came back. But I didn't really get an opportunity. It was time Wölfchen left, and the ladies presented him with a gigantic basket, from which the necks of bottles protruded and which, on closer examination, proved to contain things which I heartily begrudged him, such as sliced ham and goose breast and liver paté. He would have a hard time getting the great basket into his plane. He thanked them charmingly and said:

“In the evenings we sit in our tents and listen to *Lili Marlen* until the station closes down. The men can't go to sleep as early as that, and I have to tell them stories. But tonight I'll unpack the hamper and I'll say: 'I had no idea it was possible for big-shots to be so pleasant.'”

This remark caused universal merriment.

The professor's car took us to Schleissheim and then drove Ille and me to our hotel. On account of the chauffeur we could not, as was our usual custom, immediately discuss the night's events, but the moment we arrived at the hotel there was no holding Ille. I had to interrupt her several times to enquire whether she was sure she hadn't said anything foolish.

“Of course not—did you notice her dress? Superb! The neck-line was a bit fussy perhaps, but apart from that the cut was marvellously simple. Wonderful material and only one piece of jewellery—but what a thing! Did you see it, her bracelet?”

She said:

“Anyhow I'll know what to say the next time somebody in the train comments on my lipstick. I'll say: 'Who do you think you are? My Führer happens to like lipstick!'”

There was no calming her down. She said:

“I imagine she's frigid as an iceberg!”

But then Ille always said this about all women who impressed her. She said:

“She's certainly got brains—she only said one thing she shouldn't. I told her that the man who made out these clothes ration cards that only allow a woman six pairs of stockings a year must have a wife who knits her own . . .”

“Ille!” said I, but she went on:

“Then she said: 'Do you have trouble getting stockings? I have mine sent from Lisbon.' She shouldn't have said that.”

“Ille!” said I, but she just said:

“What's the matter? I asked her if it was possible to turn to her when one heard of any dirty business that the Führer could put right in a second . . .”

“Ille!” I cried, truly horrified. She went on:

“Imagine! She said no. She said she'd tried a couple of times but it made him so madly agitated that in these hard times she hadn't got the heart to worry him. As a woman I must see her point. . . .”

I had a hard time explaining to Ille why I thought it would be better if she did not attempt to establish further contact with the professor's household, and she agreed with me at last.

The next time Wolf Redlich came to see us the African campaign was over. He had contracted jaundice. It took him a long time to recover, and the doctors kept him in hospital until at last he faced the fact that his days of active service were over. I tried to show him that flying

was a profession which in the best of circumstances only lasted a very short time; even apart from his breakdown in health, within a couple of years he'd have had to resign himself to becoming a desk pilot. He remarked thoughtfully that he was afraid I was right: he had already been forced to realise that his reactions were approximately one-tenth of a second slower than those of his most junior officers—and in the fantastic speed of aerial combat a tenth of a second meant a very great deal. I advised him to apply for a transfer to the Luftwaffe General Staff. He did so, was promoted major and received a staff appointment.

But the letters he wrote betrayed great unhappiness. His younger brother had also now been killed. He was the sole survivor of the squadron we had known at Munkmarsch. Apart from this he knew that we had lost the war. There he sat, buried in paper, and was thoroughly wretched.

Shortly before Whitsun, 1944, when I was living on a farm at Siegsdorf in Upper Bavaria, I received a telegram from him. He was going by train to Vienna, and his train would stop for two minutes at Traunstein. Of course I was on the platform. He leaned far out of the window as the train pulled in, so I saw him at once. He looked splendid. I loved him as I saw him then, slender and with a face that was now mature. He was more sure of himself than he used to be. He said, without embarrassment, that I must not be cross with him, he'd volunteered for active service once again. The invasion was imminent, and when it happened every man who knew how to fly would have to be there. He was going to Vienna to be trained in handling a new type of plane. The train was already moving off as he jumped on to the steps. He leaned out and waved. I ran a dozen or so yards beside the train. For a few more seconds I could see him. He was leaning so far forward that his Knight's Cross swung from side to side with the motion of the train. He smiled and waved. I did not see him again.

He had hardly arrived in Vienna before the air raid sirens began to scream. He drove straight to the airfield. There was a heavy raid in progress on Vienna. He jumped into a machine of a type he did not know. The ground crews watched the unknown staff major's flight. He shot down two four-engined bombers. Then he came in to land. When he did not get out of his plane the men on the ground ran over to him. The plane had been hit by a single bullet, which had entered the pilot's cockpit and lodged in the centre of his heart. It is known that when a man is hit in the heart muscle he retains consciousness so long as his blood continues to flow through his veins. He had thus been able to land his plane.

His mother had now lost all three of her sons. The news of Wölfchen's death was brought her by a Party official who simultaneously informed her that since she would no longer be needing his room he proposed to requisition it.

I saw his picture once again, in a newsreel. It was a shot of an airforce conference at which a number of senior officers were present. He was seated in front, immediately before the camera. Yes, that was him; his slender face with the light eyes and the rather tousled blond hair must have appealed to the cameraman, for only reluctantly did he move away from that head, that straightforward, serious, decent boy's head. Over and over again he turned his camera back to it until at last, with a gesture of embarrassment, Wölfchen turned away. And with that movement came the cut.

## E. MEMBERSHIP IN ORGANISATIONS

40. Indicate on the following chart whether or not you were a member of and any offices you have held in the organisations listed below. Use lines 96 to 98 to specify any other associations, society, fraternity, union, syndicate, chamber, institute, group, corporation, club or other organisation of any kind, whether social, political, professional, educational, cultural, industrial, commercial or honorary, with which you have ever been connected or associated.

Column 1: Insert either 'yes' or 'no' on each line to indicate whether or not you have ever been a member of the organisation listed. If you were a candidate, disregard the columns and write in the word 'candidate' followed by the date of your application for membership. Column 2: Insert date on which you joined. Column 3: Insert date your membership ceased if you are no longer a member. Insert the word 'Date' if you are still a member. Column 4: Insert your membership number in the organisation. Column 5: Insert the highest office rank or other post of authority which you have held at any time. If you have never held an office, rank or post of authority, insert the word 'none' in Columns 5 and 6. Column 6: Insert date of your appointment to the office, rank or post of authority listed in Column 5.

	Yes or No	From	To	Number	Highest Office Rank Held	Date Appointed
41. National-Socialist Party		See below				
42. General SS			„ „			
43. Armed SS	No	Not applicable				
44. SS Security Service	„		„ „			
45. SA		See below				
46. Hitler Youth League German Maidens	No	Not applicable				
47. NSD St B				What is it, please?		
48. NS Do B			„ „ „			
49. NS Women's Org.	No	Not applicable				
50. NS Motor Corps	„		„ „			
51. NS Flying Corps	„		„ „			
52. Off. German officials	„		„ „			
53. D A F		See 71				

	Yes or No	From	To	Number	Highest Office Rank Held	Date Appointed
54. <i>Strength through Joy</i>		See 71				
55. <i>NS Welfare</i>	Yes	1944-1945?			None	
56. <i>NS Nurses' League</i>	No	Not applicable				
57. <i>NSKOV</i>	"	"	"			
58. <i>NS Tech. League</i>	"	"	"			
59. <i>NS Med. League</i>	"	"	"			
60. <i>NS Teach. League</i>	"	"	"			
61. <i>NS Leg. League</i>	"	"	"			
62. <i>Germ. Women's Union</i>	"	"	"			
63. <i>Germ. Family League</i>	"	"	"			
64. <i>NS Phys. Cult. L.</i>	"	"	"			
65. <i>NS Vet. League</i>	"	"	"			
66. <i>Germ. Stud. Org.</i>	"	"	"			
67. <i>Germ. Parish Org.</i>	"	"	"			
68. <i>NS War. Vet. League</i>	"	"	"			
69. <i>State Prof. Union</i>	"	"	"			
70. <i>State Culture Chamber</i>		See 51				
71. <i>Ch. Germ. Writing</i>	Yes	1935?	1945?		None	
72. <i>Ch. Germ. Press</i>		See 71				
73. <i>Ch. Germ. Radio</i>		"				
74. <i>Ch. Germ. Theatre</i>		"				
75. <i>Ch. Germ. Music</i>	No	Not applicable				
76. <i>Ch. Germ. Art</i>	"	"	"			
77. <i>Ch. Germ. Film</i>		See 71				
78. <i>America Inst.</i>	No	Not applicable				
79. <i>Germ. Acad. Munich</i>	"	"	"			
80. <i>Germ. Foreign Inst.</i>	"	"	"			
81. <i>Germ. Christ. Movement</i>	"	"	"			

	Yes or No	From	To	Number	Highest Office Rank Held	Date Appointed
82. <i>Germ. Faith Movement</i>	No	Not Applicable				
83. <i>Germ. Fichte League</i>	"	"	"			
84. <i>Germ. Hunters' League</i>	"	"	"			
85. <i>Germ. Red Cross</i>	"	"	"			
86. <i>Span-Amer. Inst.</i>	"	"	"			
87. <i>Inst. Jewish Question</i>	"	"	"			
88. <i>Comrades League USA</i>	"	"	"			
89. <i>East Eur. Inst.</i>	"	"	"			
90. <i>Nat. Lab. Serv.</i>	"	"	"			
91. <i>Nat. Col. League</i>	"	"	"			
92. <i>Nat. Air Def. League</i>	Yes	1944	1945?		None	?
93. <i>State Acad. Racial and Health Service</i>	No	Not applicable				
94. <i>Union Germans Abroad</i>	"	"	"			
95. <i>Advis. Off. Germ. Econ.</i>	"	"	"			
<i>Others (Specify):</i>						
96. <i>Vol. Fire Brig. Kampen/ Sylt</i>	Yes	1936 to date			None	(Inactive member)
97. ....						
98. ....						

That November evening of 1938 Ille and I had stayed rather late at the home of my friend Axel, playing dice. I was at the time very pre-occupied with my work; not only was I writing a script and a film treatment simultaneously, but I was also preparing a thick volume of endless material concerning the role of the public official in the German post-war, one of the most interesting subjects of our age and one of great importance. (This book has never been published.) I had arranged an interview with Minister of State Dr. Meissner for the purpose of discussing with him his activities during 1919, and I had already made a draft of the principal points I intended to raise.

Axel lived in the Sächsischer Strasse, in Wilmersdorf, and I some ten minutes' walk away in Charlottenburg. To reach our home by the

shortest route Ille and I had to cross the Olivaer Platz, a pretty little square just off the Kurfürstendamm, which contained the shops where we bought our daily groceries. At the corner of the square, where the Konstanzer Strasse joins the Kurfürstendamm, was a small wine shop; it was here that we occasionally bought a bottle or two when we had unexpected guests. As Ille and I passed this little shop I suddenly became aware of the crunch of broken glass beneath my feet, and looking about me saw that the plate-glass front of the shop was smashed and that the bottles were quite unprotected—anybody could have stolen them.

“Some drunk must have crashed into it,” I remarked to Ille, who had stopped and was gazing at the damage. She thought we should notify the proprietor, but we did not know whether he lived in the building.

At this moment we heard a loud crash followed at once by the tinkle of falling glass. We turned around. On the other side of the street a group of apparently young men, dressed in riding boots and civilian jackets, were standing outside a café. One of them was even then picking up a stone, which he put into a cloth that he used as a sling and which, with practised skill, he hurled at one of the café’s great mirrors. There was an echoing crash and again the tinkle of falling glass.

A taxi was parked at the corner of the Konstanzer Strasse and the Kurfürstendamm. I hurried towards it while Ille, clinging to my arm, ran along beside me.

“What’s going on here?” I asked the driver. He was an elderly man who wore a military badge in his hat in place of a cockade. He looked at me and said, in his Berlin accent:

“Go on home and don’t ask questions. I ain’t taking no more fares tonight. Me, I’m keeping out of trouble.”

He drove off and disappeared around the corner. Ille still clung tightly to my arm as we hurried along the short stretch of the Kurfürstendamm that separated us from the Clausewitz Strasse. I could feel that she was trembling and I said:

“Don’t get so upset. After all, what is it? A handful of hooligans smashing other people’s windows!”

Ille said nothing. We saw no one in the streets. Only now and then did we hear the distant crash of breaking glass.

We had a little two-room apartment at the back of the courtyard of 5, Clausewitz Strasse. Apart from Herr Cetteler, the porter, the proprietor of a little dairy next to the front door, and a retired Foreign Ministry official who lived on his pension in the front part of the building, all the other tenants were Jewish. I double-locked the front gate, and we hurried across the courtyard to our apartment. Ille, without even taking off her coat, ran through the kitchen, the hall and our two rooms, as though to make sure that nothing had been touched. She even



looked in the bathroom and the broom cupboard. Then she came up to me and asked, with trembling lips:

“What do we do now?”

I said, as surlily as I could:

“Nothing. Go to bed and get some sleep!”

But she shouted at me:

“Your name is on the door outside! If they start forcing their way into people’s houses do you think they’ll give you time to explain who you are?”

“You’re crazy,” I said. “Cetteler would have to let them in, and Cetteler would explain—he’s a decent man.”

“There aren’t any decent men!” shouted Ille.

“Don’t shout like that,” I told her, and she lowered her voice as she said:

“But we must do something! We can’t just . . .”

I said:

“I’ll call Axel and tell him what’s happening.”

I telephoned Axel and described to him what I had seen. He asked, at once:

“Have you informed the police?”

This was an idea which, I admitted, had not occurred to me. Axel said that in that case he would do it for me and would ring me back.

Meanwhile Ille had called Herr Cetteler. He was already on his way up, wearing his blue boiler-suit. He knew what was going on and he said:

“Don’t you worry, lady, they’ve got proper lists all drawn up. Nothing’s going to happen to you. I’ll be there and I’ll see to that.”

“Are they coming, then?” Ille asked. He said:

“They’re coming right enough. Maybe not today and maybe not tomorrow, but they’re coming.”

Ille cried:

“But then you must warn the other tenants!”

“I shall, I shall . . . But what can I do? On the other side there lives an old girl, for years now she hasn’t been quite herself. Then they took her companion away, because of the Nuremberg Laws, you understand, been with her for years she had too . . . and now the old girl’s got nobody to look after her and she’s just kind of rotting away. What can I do? You know what Jews are like, but now they’ve all got so many worries of their own they can’t bother about each other . . .”

He left. At the door he turned back and said:

“Boy, this is all we needed!”

Then he rang the bell next-door and I heard him say:

“It’s me, Cetteler, you needn’t be scared. . . .”

Axel rang. He said, with agitation:

“The police station wouldn’t even let me finish. The man who

answered the phone said they knew all about it but they couldn't do anything . . ." Axel added, emphatically: "And he didn't even sound ashamed!" Then, somewhat ceremoniously, he went on to say that he would willingly have walked round to see us but that he had friends at his place. "Friends. Do you understand me? Friends." They planned to stay the night.

"All right," I said, and I added: "Now say your little piece."

Axel was firmly convinced that all telephone wires were tapped, and it was therefore his habit to end all conversations with a political platitude. He thought that in case of trouble this would count in his favour. He now said, calmly enough:

"The Jews are our misfortune!"

Suddenly his voice became hysterical and he screamed:

"An unutterable misfortune! Our misfortune, *ours!* Do you understand me? *Ours!*"

"Yes, yes," I said. "I understand you. Now ring off. We'll phone each other tomorrow." And I rang off.

Ille had wrapped herself in a blanket and was sitting in an armchair. Her eyes followed all my movements. I walked over to the radiator and felt the pipes: they were still quite warm.

"Go to sleep," I said, "then you'll warm up."

She said:

"I can't sleep. Do you imagine I could even close my eyes here in Berlin?"

I hated to hear her say this. My desk was a mass of papers. I could not possibly go away at this time. I said:

"You'll have to wait a couple of days. As soon as I've got my affairs in order we'll go to Kampen."

Kampen on Sylt was always my refuge in time of trouble. I said:

"But first I must see Meissner, then deliver the script and get a contract for the new film—the rest I can do at Kampen."

Ille said nothing. I walked up and down for a while. Then I fetched a bottle of gin from the ice-box in the kitchen and two glasses from the cupboard in my room. Ille said:

"Don't drink now!" Suddenly she collapsed and said wretchedly: "Whose fault is it all?"

I stopped in the middle of filling the glasses, and looking up at Ille, said:

"Do you mean it's mine? Yes, it's my fault too. We're all to blame."

"I'm not," said Ille.

"You too," I said. "That's their trick, they make everybody guilty. All they've ever done is carry out the mandate of the people. The people means you, and me. But, God damn it all! I never gave them any mandate! When I thought a thing ought to be done I did it myself."

“Yes,” said Ille. “For example like the way you walked straight up to those guttersnipes smashing other people’s windows and punched them in the face!”

I looked at Ille. She said, at once:

“It’s stupid, I know. Forgive me.”

She knew it was foolish to talk about it, and so did I. We had discussed it all far too often already. But Ille, deeply outraged, wanted to hurt herself more, for such was her style, and to hurt me too and everyone else. She said:

“But tell me, tell me how it’s come to this? How is it all possible? You know, you must know, you were in it from the beginning. . . .”

I drank and said sullenly:

“I wasn’t in it, I just lived through it.”

But Ille was angry now.

“That’s just splitting hairs,” she said. “That’s all just talk.”

“I was not in it!” I shouted at Ille. “Will you get that into your head once and for all?”

Ille later told me that my face had gone quite grey when I shouted this at her. After a while I said:

“All right, you’re quite right, of course I was in it. And at this moment how many people do you imagine are sitting, like you and I, in their remotest room behind drawn curtains, talking as we are? And how many Party members do you imagine are doing and saying just this, just like you and I, honourable, decent Party members? Today is one of those days that is never over, that constantly recurs, that lays its claim on history over and over again, that carries with it the curse that it can never be forgotten. The day of the Reichstag fire was such a day, and the 30th of June, 1934—these are the days that are counted in the reckoning, not the days when something sensible is achieved, when a constructive beginning is attempted, when a positive act is performed. We are aware of sitting here, in the remotest room behind drawn curtains, this means something to us, and we will remember it when we have forgotten everything about the Olympiad except that it did once really take place. And mark this: the time will come when we will drive along the *Autobahnen* and will have completely forgotten that it was Adolf Hitler who built them! And so it is good, it is right, that there should be days when we sit in back rooms. Don’t imagine that there have not been days like this before! There have, and I was there right enough, and I sat in the back room, and I am glad that it is so!”

Ille said, with desperation:

“I don’t understand it at all, I’ve never understood it. I was too young at the time it all started. And when first I was entitled to vote I voted National-Socialist. There was such a nice SA man standing outside the polling booth. He pressed a leaflet into my hand and told me that was how I ought to vote. When I asked him how he knew, he laughed and

said I had only to look at the other men standing around the polling booth. I looked at them and then voted National-Socialist because the SA man was so nice!"

There Ille sat, huddled up like a child and, as always when the world was too much for her, seeking refuge in her childhood, a good, unworried, guarded childhood. I laughed and said:

"Yes, and then you read the papers, and there was nothing in them except parliamentary reports and accounts of some conference which was also the subject of the leading article, just a lot of news about good, positive things which meant nothing to you and which will long have been forgotten when people are still talking about the events of today. And the National-Socialists were such a funny little party that nobody took them seriously. And in years to come when a research historian settles down to study the newspapers of the time before writing the history of our age, the best we can hope for is that he will find in them items which only go to show that the 'twenties in Germany was the period of the decline of Social-Democracy and of the rise of National-Socialism. As though there was any sort of real correlation between those two events! But that's what our history will look like. It's a shocking thought, but that's what all history looks like."

I was, in fact, shocked, for the papers on the table before me were real documents of contemporary history, reports, pictures, clippings from the papers, personal reminiscences of the years of the German post-war on which I was working, and constantly accruing material for my projected history of that period which I assembled, sorted and subsequently handed over to the Army archives. Goethe once wrote: "There is no point of vantage within an epoch from which the history of that epoch can be observed." In truth there is only the personal standpoint, and only the sum of a great many reports from a great many personal standpoints can provide the material needed for the composition of such a history, for "a little of truth is hidden in everything." The history of the National-Socialist German Workers' Party would never be written. My interest in that party, though purely a historian's, was yet a burning one. Which was one more reason why I must needs define, precisely and consistently, my own standpoint towards that historical phenomenon.

Only for one solitary moment of my life had I consciously mortgaged the totality of my person to the history of my country, and this moment had cast its shadow over the whole of my subsequent existence. Insalutary though that moment might be, it yet had fulfilled the function of laying down my future course. It would be absurd to pretend that at the time, young as I was, I had acted from any but youthful impulses. But one of those impulses, of course, was that I 'got ideas'—ideas the youthful characteristic of which was their unconditional and uncompromising nature. When I made the remarkable discovery that

I had just blindly obeyed these impulses, without even taking alternative possibilities into consideration, I felt a compulsion to clarify for myself the causes of this exclusiveness of thought and feeling.

Up to the revolution of 1918 I had undoubtedly lived in a very clear-cut world. My family was one of officials and officers. I had been educated in the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, and I was to be commissioned. So I was brought up in an atmosphere, a valid one in the circumstances which had hitherto prevailed, in which the only interests in the state lay in the duty of serving it. I knew perfectly well that other sections of the public, the business community, the professions, the landowners, the workers, were bound to have quite other interests in respect of the state. And in this precisely consisted the privileged uniqueness of 'our' position. The state seemed to be something firmly founded. In this connection the state must ideally appear as the instrument that helps the king to do his will, which is to serve the general public's well-being by means of justice. The constitutional modifications which the state had undergone during the course of its development might not meet with unanimous approval, but, from the standpoint that was characteristic of the atmosphere in which I was raised, they were accepted as given and were never consciously disavowed.

Without a doubt I bitterly resented the abolition of my privileged position that resulted from the 1918 revolution. But I was too young to have struck deep roots, and young enough to risk my luck anywhere. The fact that I immediately, without a moment's hesitation, enlisted in a *Freikorps* did not mean that I was attempting simply to pursue my former, privileged career: nor was it just a search for adventure, though that is not an emotion I have ever held in contempt: no, it was very plainly caused by the disinterested desire now really to serve the state. The purpose of the *Freikorps* was to re-establish quiet and order within the Reich during a time of trouble: their further purpose was to guard and to solidify those frontiers that had become fluid. They were thus intended genuinely to serve the state, and at least in their leadership, and at least to begin with, they were explicitly accepted as such. Even the Kapp Putsch, the first real act of mutiny by the soldiers against the power of the state, was regarded by the soldiers who took part in it as an attempt to re-assert the conception of state supremacy as opposed to the claims to mastery of various vested interests. The programme of the short-lived Kapp Government contained no single idea showing any purpose or intention other than those which should serve to strengthen the structure of the state. The item in the programme which inspired Kapitän Ehrhardt, the military leader of the formation that carried out the putsch, was the demand for the setting up of specialist ministries and for the holding of elections to authorise these.

At that time, as a soldier among soldiers, I marched with the others, though my leader was not the Kapitän. The putsch was smashed by the

general strike of organised labour, by the middle class which was particularly involved with the bureaucracy of the new régime, and by the silliness of the Government—in fact by well-nigh everything that could smash it. It was, I think, typical of myself as I then was that I immediately threw in my lot with the one man who saw what good fortune it was that the putsch had failed, with Kapitän Ehrhardt. He was no revolutionary and never had been: he hated the revolution and he might well curse the day that he had let himself be persuaded into attempting to end the revolution by a revolutionary act, by a counter-revolution—for as a result of this *coup d'état* he was henceforth driven to work illegally, which was utterly contrary to his nature. He went to Bavaria, the one province in which the Kapp Putsch seemed to have left behind it a living heritage of planned change. The will to form a 'cell of order' within the framework of the Reich derived directly from the impulse towards the state, and its implementation was astounding in a province that had hitherto always regarded this impulse as foreign, as 'Prussian'—an action that was highly welcome to all who believed in the state, for here was a proof that, unlike in Prussia, the concept of the state derived from the positive will and nature of the people itself, that is to say that it was organic instead of being abstract. In those years, the years that followed the apparently successful revolution and the experience of confusion resulting from the attempt to take the revolution even further during the period of the so-called 'councils,' everything in Bavaria tended towards a coming together of all those forces that believed in the state.

Now it may seem surprising that a man, still comparatively young, whose sole claim to fame was being an unusually thorough and energetic officer, and whose first and only political decision had turned out to be a mistake, should achieve such great influence in Bavaria. But that was what happened. The Kapitän brought with him a sort of bodyguard, which soon enjoyed an almost mythical reputation. This was the OC, the 'Organisation Consul,' of which it was whispered that it was pursuing special aims and carrying out special undertakings. In fact as an organisation the OC could not really be said to have existed at all; it was just a loose body of officers and men from the former Marine Brigade who, with the dissolution of that unit, had become scattered all over Germany but who continued to preserve a feeling of comradeship among themselves and who maintained a purely personal loyalty to their old 'Chief.' They did this despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that since there was a warrant out for his arrest he was now compelled to act in secret, and they carried out such occasional tasks as were allotted to them from the Kapitän's 'central office' in Munich. These tasks were always voluntarily performed, and there was no case of a man ever refusing to carry one out. They always had to be done *sub rosa*, for, if not directly contrary to the legal code as laid down by the

Weimar Republic, they were at least never in accord with the principles of official policy or with the point of view with which that policy was publicly connected. But they were tasks the sense and purpose of which were obvious—such as the establishment of secret arms dumps or actions which would have a limited and calculated effect on the occupying forces in the Rhineland.

This atmosphere of working in secret was what gave the individual undertakings their especial flavour, but it also left the boundary very vague between what was really wanted and ordered and what was done on the individual's own initiative. It was a highly dangerous atmosphere; during my lifetime I shall never finally be free of its particular aroma.

After the assassination of Rathenau I hurried to Munich to see the Kapitän. It was not an easy matter to establish personal contact with him, and the only address we had was that of his adjutant. When I told the latter why I had come, he immediately informed me that the Kapitän was in a towering rage on our account.

We had no idea what the Kapitän was actually doing in Munich. He lived there, under a false name, and posed as a clerk in an optical goods firm. His adjutant informed me that it was the Kapitän's intention to unite everything that was on the side of bourgeois society: all the 'Patriotic Formations' and associations and groups, which sprang up like mushrooms after the defeat and which together constituted the 'National Movement,' from the Bavarian Monarchist League, through the *Freikorps* successor organisations and the para-military formations, the war veterans' leagues and the local defence force run by Forestry Commissioner Escherich, to the Oberland League which had sprung from the youth movement, all these groups and splinter groups were to be welded together into one great organisation, the so-called 'Fatherland Block.' And this block was in agreement with the Bavarian Minister-President of the time, Count Lerchenfeld, who came originally from the Bavarian People's Party, and with his ministry. Together they planned to create a Bavarian 'cell of order,' a neat and socially united state to act as a counter-weight to the other unstable provinces of a Germany torn asunder by party strife. And this was the moment we chose to commit our act of madness! The Kapitän would have to disown us, said the adjutant, if he were to avoid "sabotaging his own policy."

A meeting place had been arranged in the Marien Platz, at the corner of the Wein Strasse. I almost failed to recognise the Kapitän, for I had only seen pictures of him in uniform. Now he was wearing civilian clothes, with a straw hat, and he had shaved off his nautical beard. I endured a few frightful minutes.

He 'blew me up,' he really gave me a piece of his mind—and I could only keep stammering, "Yes, Herr Kapitän!" and suggesting that he

shoot me. Finally, standing there at the corner of the Marien Platz and the Wein Strasse, he roared at me in his rage:

“And don’t keep calling me ‘Herr Kapitän!’ Call me ‘Herr Konsul,’ or ‘Herr Professor!’”

I clicked my heels and said:

“Right, Herr Kapitän!”

He said, angrily:

“Oh, come along,” and almost collided with a cyclist.

“Quick, come on,” he cried and strode rapidly away, for the cyclist had dismounted and a policeman was approaching.

“That was all I needed,” growled the Kapitän, as he gave me a side-long look and added: “To get picked up just when I’m with you, of all people!”

He laughed briefly and led me through a door marked “The Bavarian Wood Company.”

“How did it happen?” he asked.

I told him. He shook his head. He said:

“First they shoot Gareis—thank God it wasn’t one of my people who did it!” Gareis was an independent Munich socialist who was found shot dead near his home one day in 1921. “And then Erzberger,” he went on, “a man who was in any case finished as a politician! Catholic too! And then I’m supposed to play politics in this Catholic country!”

“The man who shot him,” I said stubbornly, “was also a Catholic.”

“Exactly,” said the Kapitän. “It’s all beyond me. Are you a Catholic as well?”

“Yes, Herr Kapitän!”

He looked at me and shook his head.

“I’m only a Protestant,” he said. He used the word ‘only.’ “My father was a pastor in Basle.” The Kapitän was Swiss by origin; none the less he was later frequently described as a ‘filthy Prussian’ in Bavaria. “But damn it all, before I took a pot shot at someone I’d think three times, and then I wouldn’t do it.” He added: “At least not usually.”

Suddenly he glanced at me sharply. He asked:

“What part did Helfferich play in all this?”

Helfferich was a German-Nationalist deputy. In a celebrated political libel action he had virulently attacked Erzberger; a little later Erzberger was shot. Then he had made a long and violent speech in the Reichstag against Minister Rathenau, and Rathenau was murdered. In a tumultuous Reichstag session Helfferich was accused of complicity in both assassinations. I said:

“Helfferich had absolutely nothing whatever to do with it, Herr Kapitän.”

“Are you telling me the truth?”

“Certainly, Herr Kapitän. I saw what was said in the papers, about his having financed the deed, but it’s simply a lie. None of us knew him.”



“Good. I could hardly imagine it was true.” Then, suddenly: “Where did you get the money from?”

I blushed and said:

“I stole it.”

He was clearly dumbfounded.

“What?”

I said:

“I had a job in a *bureau de change* in Frankfurt-am-Main.” He said:

“And you speculated with your employer’s money?”

I replied stubbornly:

“No, I stole it. It was like this. The *bureau de change* was in the station, immediately between the platforms and the booking hall. There was an international football match at Frankfurt, Germany against Switzerland. The Swiss players and their supporters came by special train, and they all wanted to change francs into marks. There was a long queue of them at the *bureau de change*. I glanced at the exchange-rate and I must have confused the value of French and Swiss francs. But none of them complained. Naturally while I was changing their money I didn’t have the time to enter each transaction in the books, because they were all in such a hurry to get their money and go. Afterwards, when I came to add it up, I had a great deal of money over, because of my giving them the wrong exchange. My boss had told me that when changing a large sum I should not put it down in the books as a single entry, but should break it up: this was because these transactions were only liable to taxation at a certain level. So I wrote in a number of small entries and again there was a lot of money over, because of course I’d automatically added on the tax-rate for the larger sums. And . . . and that was it . . . I thought,” I hastened to add, “I thought the bank that owned the *bureau de change* was already so rich . . . and made so much money anyhow. . . .”

“Swindling and embezzlement,” said the Kapitän. I said, beseechingly:

“Herr Kapitän, they were themselves trying to swindle the tax-collector. They were cheats. . . .”

The Kapitän said thoughtfully:

“So it was my dear compatriots who quite unconsciously financed the murder of Rathenau . . . ! If that should ever come out,” he added, “you’ll never again be able to visit beautiful Switzerland!”

I swallowed and said miserably:

“I wish I was there now.”

The Kapitän looked at me:

“Now, now, this is no time for weakness. You really have got yourself into a fine mess!” He added, grimly: “Have you been watching the dollar rate, you bank clerk, you? The dollar is going up at a crazy rate. If I lose my little nest-egg now, I’ll have you to thank for it!”

(“The Kapitän,” I later remarked to his adjutant, “is middle-class. He’s worried about his nest-egg!”)

The Kapitän said:

“What are we going to do with you now?”

I didn’t know either. The Kapitän asked:

“How old are you?”

“Nineteen,” I said.

The Kapitän banged the table with the flat of his hand and roared:

“In the Imperial Navy I’d have had you keel-hauled three times!”

He relapsed into thought and I said to myself, with relief: ‘Now he’s imagining how he’d have had me climbing the rigging fifty times in a stiff nor’wester.’ He looked up and said:

“Of course I’ll look after you, you silly boy, although . . . well, I’ll have to go and kowtow to Lerchenfeld. The adjutant will find somewhere for you to stay till you can set off to find Kern and Fischer. If you get caught doing it, that’s your concern.” He looked at me again, shook his head, and asked: “Have you anything to do now? I mean, between now and noon?” I quickly said I hadn’t. He said: “I’ve got to work. Go and sit in the ante-room and let me know if anyone should come to see me. But first ask the caller for his name, his full name, and if he should look like a Prussian or a policeman, say I’m not here.”

I said:

“Right, Herr Kapitän!” And I went into the ante-room, which was as bleak and bare as the Kapitän’s own office.

The Kapitän sat alone in his office and I alone in the ante-room. After some time I heard steps mounting the stairs. I seated myself behind a table. A man entered, wearing a raincoat despite the fact that it was a blazing hot day outside, with a greenish-grey velours hat and a comically truncated moustache. He asked, throatily:

“Is the Kapitän in?”

He didn’t look like a Prussian but he did look like a minor police official. I said:

“No.”

The man said:

“I must see him at once. Don’t you know me? I’m Adolf Hitler.”

Of course I’d heard of him, though I had never seen him before. Kern used to think a great deal of him; he had said that apart from the Kapitän he was the only one with enough guts to strike a blow. I stood up and said:

“I’ll see.”

I walked across the little ante-room, knocked on the door, and entered the office as the Kapitän was crying:

“Come in!”

I straightened to attention, as I always did when talking to the Kapitän, and said:

"Herr Kapitän, Adolf Hitler is outside and wishes to speak to the Herr Kapitän."

The Kapitän banged the table with the flat of his hand and said:

"God in heaven, what does the idiot want this time?" Then he nodded. "All right, tell him to come in."

I went back to the ante-room, nodded, and said:

"You can go in."

Adolf Hitler went in and I sat down again behind my table. After a short time he reappeared, and the Kapitän with him. The Kapitän was wearing his straw hat, and he said to me:

"All right, you can go now."

I went, and they both followed me down the stairs. That was the first and only time I ever saw Adolf Hitler in person.

The adjutant warned me against taking a hotel room, since he said the police checked the new arrivals every night. I could make nothing of this Munich atmosphere, half legal and half illegal. I found the town utterly confusing and its politics completely obscure; there were so many different groups, alliances, enmities, all in an apparent state of flux.

But after being in Munich for a few weeks I started to understand what I had begun by dismissing contemptuously as 'Munich nonsense.' Whether the Kapitän felt a sort of inner responsibility for the jam in which I had landed myself, or whether he was simply moved by my awkward, puppy-like attempts to find my way about among the confusing secrets of this evil world, I do not know. He scarcely ever deigned to answer the snuffing questions I asked him. In an attempt to justify to him—to him above all others—the Rathenau assassination, I tried to express as best I could the ideas which had led us to carry it out.

"Got ideas, eh?" he asked me in his clipped, sarcastic, sea-dog manner. "Want to save Germany, too, eh? Neither more nor less, eh? Why not take out a patent for the idea?"

But he did show me, fairly enough, how far astray we had gone and did, briefly, unveil for me the true nature of the mythical OC.

The secret of the OC was astonishingly simple. By the terms of the Versailles Treaty the German army was limited to a hundred thousand men. It was simultaneously strictly forbidden to possess a general staff. This left the army with two alternatives: it could either accept the terms of the treaty and thus abandon those activities without which even the smallest army becomes simply a futile and pointless organisation: or it could attempt to get round them. The duties of the General Staff's Operations Departments could, in case of need, be carried out by a new office within the Army Supreme Command; organisation and supply could be usefully transferred to the Defence Ministry, which had replaced the old War Ministry. There remained the intelligence services and military security, for which there was no home, no niche into which they could be fitted. So the navy took over these jobs. The navy was

surprisingly well qualified to do just this. The officer corps of the old Imperial Navy had been unusually homogeneous; it had been primarily recruited from men who had travelled and who were now once again scattered all over the globe. These men were, so to speak, on call, and ready to answer any patriotic summons. It went without saying that they were prepared to work without remuneration. The more active elements of the former Imperial Navy remaining in Germany had already, on their own free choice, come together to form the Marine Brigades. They were ready to take on this new task. The OC was nothing more nor less than a part of the newly reformed intelligence service.

It was clear that the army's only duty was to serve the state. But it now had to do this within a system which, by its spirit, will and origin, if not actually hostile to the state concept was at least estranged from it. Apart from that, even the army's possibilities of rendering true service to the state were hemmed in by the enemy alliance and by those conditions of the peace treaty which severely limited its sovereignty. The difference between the state concept of the system and that which prevailed within the army could never be reconciled; at best it could only be bridged. The creator of the new Reichswehr forbade the army all political activity. He thus ensured an undisturbed reconstruction of the army and made it fully capable of undertaking the duties that were allotted it. In fact the army did remain aloof from all political struggle, with the exception of the army's own leaders. General von Seeckt undoubtedly played politics; he did this not so much from choice, but rather because in carrying out his task and preparing against the possibility of military operations, whether they should take the form of external or of civil war, he was bound to be involved in many fields other than his strictly professional one. The General's chances of realising his own policy depended on two things: first, his close contacts with those leaders at the head of the Government who were prepared in case of necessity to act in the interests of the state, and also with a portion of the ministerial bureaucracy; and secondly, his ability to use the apparatus of the intelligence service, which included the OC.

It was typical of the Kapitän's realistic and sensible way of thinking and acting that immediately the Kapp Putsch had failed he grasped where the mistake had been made and resolved at once to do all in his power to ensure that it was not repeated. On the occasion of this putsch General von Seeckt had immediately opposed the Kapitän with all the energy that he would use against any mutineer. And it was typical of the General's realism and good sense that, as soon as he saw that the Kapitän had grasped what the reality was, he was once again ready to make use of the man's services. The problem was simply how to fill constructively the power vacuum on the edges of which the Kapitän had been operating. The tasks which the Kapitän undertook in Bavaria served this purpose.

When the true situation was explained to me a bubble edifice of my own construction collapsed. I had naturally envisaged the Kapitän as a sort of saviour of his country, a heroic rebel; now it transpired that he was a man serving his country, and was nothing more than a participant in the struggle between the great powers. But by learning this I was simply exchanging one concept for another, and the new one was no less romantic than the old, though the force of circumstances made it inevitable that it be carried out in secret. This new concept, too, was one that immediately fired me with its constructive possibilities; the only misfortune, so far as I was concerned, was that I had already quite plainly acted against it and that by so doing I had forever sacrificed all my chances of taking part in its realisation. The General and the Kapitän could cover up a great deal that was done in the performance of necessary tasks, but what I had done—never.

In Munich the Kapitän kept well out of the limelight. The man all Munich was talking about was Adolf Hitler. I asked the Kapitän why he regarded this man as an idiot.

“The fellow’s mad,” he said. “He believes he’s a politician!”

It seemed to me that the Kapitän also believed this about himself. I did not think that Adolf Hitler was in any way an idiot. In fact already at that time he had established the concept’s only true contraposition.

This man had originally represented far and away the smallest group within that ‘Workers’ Union’ which the Kapitän had encouraged. It was only on the recommendation of his former military commander, Captain Roehm, that he was accepted even for this post of limited authority; Roehm had remarked that at least the man could speak. He could indeed. The Captain’s attention had been drawn to Corporal Hitler when he had made a few remarks at an old soldiers’ reunion in the barracks of Infantry Regiment 2. The tenor of these was exactly calculated to have the greatest effect on those soldiers who had grown uncertain of the world about them. Captain Roehm employed this fellow to make speeches to soldiers, because he felt, quite correctly, that they would more readily pay attention to the words of one of their own people than to the words of a man who could never truly master their own particular rough and hearty jargon. “The man can speak . . .” He also possessed the ability of convincing ‘simple people,’ workers and soldiers, by his oratory.

The Kapitän could not speak. His longest speech, he used to say not without a certain pride, had lasted six minutes. But he had respect for knowledge and ability of every sort. Hitler had come to interest him because he could speak, not because he represented a minute political party, a collection of worthy and intense people who had come together to form the National-Socialist German Workers’ Party. The ‘Workers’ Union’ financed a few meetings for the ‘leader’ of that party, but very soon his meetings were paying for themselves. And before long

the moment came when the Kapitän was no longer able to free himself of the genie that he had conjured up.

At that time—it was high summer of 1922 and the Oberammergau Passion Play was being acted—Munich was filled with foreigners. Even the natives had not the time to attend big political rallies. Thus I did not have a chance to hear Hitler—and now I shall go to my grave without ever having once attended a meeting where I could hear this most remarkable figure of the first half of the twentieth century speak in person.

“What does he actually say?” I asked the Kapitän’s adjutant.

“He says more or less this,” the adjutant began, and it was significant that he could not help mimicking the throaty voice with the vengeful undertones, “he says, quite calmly: ‘My enemies have sneered at me, saying that you can’t attack a tank with a walking stick. . . .’ Then his voice gets louder and he says: ‘But I tell you . . .’ And then he shouts with the utmost intensity: ‘. . . that a man who hasn’t the guts to attack a tank with a walking stick will achieve nothing!’ And then there’s tremendous, senseless applause.”

The Kapitän said:

“Tanks I know nothing about. But I do know that a man who tries to ram an iron-clad with a fishing smack isn’t a hero. He’s an idiot.”

I know not whether the Kapitän, lacking in powers of oratory as he was, found Hitler’s methods of influencing the masses as repugnant as I did, but I assumed this to be the case. I also obscurely felt that for the Kapitän, deeply involved in his political concept, to be carried forward on the tide of a mass movement must seem unclean. Policy could only be laid down from ‘above,’ not from ‘below.’ The state must always think for the people, never through the people. Again I obscurely felt that there could be no compromise here, that all compromise would mean falsification.

But it was precisely his effect on the masses that led to Hitler’s success in Munich. He employed new methods of propaganda, hitherto unthought of. The banners of his party were everywhere to be seen, as was the gesture of recognition, the raised right arm, used by his supporters; the deliberate effort involved in this gesture was in itself indicative of faith. And everywhere was to be heard the greeting, the slogan *Heil Hitler!* Never before had a man dared to include his essentially private name in an essentially public phrase. It implied among his followers a degree of self-alienation that was perhaps significant; no longer could the individual establish direct contact with his neighbour—this third party was needed as intermediary.

This frame of mind seemed to constitute the actual basis of the man’s success. His means of propaganda banished, with the utmost simplicity, all individual restraint. They were consciously used with the deliberate purpose of conquering the very existence of individuality with its web

of tradition, custom, respect, decency and taste. The recognition of external reality, which was the sign beneath which the Party was prepared to conquer, implied the surrender of the most personal reality. And therein precisely may have lain its enormous appeal—the appeal of offering oneself as a ‘sacrifice.’ That has invariably been the alternative to accepting responsibility and doing one’s duty.

All this might still have been acceptable to my uncertain sensibilities, to my somewhat uncritical youthful nature and my flexible standards, if the means and methods had at least served an acceptable end. But so far the ends were not recognisable. What Hitler demanded or promised was by no means new, it was just formulated in more radical terms. He directed his attacks against everything that the bourgeoisie had attacked before him, against ‘Marxism’ and the ‘Versailles Dictate’ and the ‘War Guilt Lie’ and the ‘Stab in the Back’—and simultaneously against everything against which the Social-Democrats had hitherto fought, ‘Capitalism’ and ‘Social Injustice,’ the ‘Betrayal by the Monarchy’ and the ‘Abuse of Religion.’ The only surprising element was the vehemence with which Hitler plunged into the ‘Racial Problem’ and its corollary, the fight against the Jews, which he made the centre point of all his speeches and all his views.

The Kapitän was no anti-Semite. I realised this from a number of remarks which he made expressing his immediate and instinctive opposition to the unfair handling of the admittedly extant Jewish question. He was irritated by the countless little ‘people’s groups’ within the nationalist parties; he described them as the “lunatic fringe of the national movement, rune maniacs and race wrestlers,” and he attempted, with success, to keep their influence within the Workers’ Union to a minimum. Their behaviour was distasteful to his soldierly nature, as it was to mine. But obviously this, too, prevented the Kapitän from grasping at once the significance of the Hitlerian manner.

Since I did not dare to take a room in a hotel or boarding-house, the Kapitän arranged that I stay with an acquaintance of his, a merchant who sold imported fruit, oranges and so on. I had brought with me a copy of *Viking*, a periodical of which, I think, only three numbers ever appeared and which was intended for the men of the Ehrhardt Brigade who had come to Munich without work, who were now living in the woods and swamps about the town, doing any odd jobs, poor, half-starved, former naval officers and students who could no longer pay the fees of the university, all waiting for the day the revolution would break out, ‘their’ revolution, the ‘national’ revolution—the Kapitän, they believed, would soon start it. My host appeared somewhat taken aback by the magazine’s title and asked me cautiously if it was an anti-Semitic publication. I quickly thumbed through it, there was a great deal of talk about a flag, which must somewhere or other be rammed into the ground according to the old Viking style

(though so far as I could recall the old Vikings had dispensed with flags), but there was no anti-Semitism. My host gave a sigh of relief and told me about his troubles. All of a sudden, he said, the Jews were responsible for everything that went wrong . . . and anti-Semitism had hitherto been unknown in Munich, that 'urbane' city. In fact there'd never been any Jews in Munich apart from a couple of art-dealers and a couple of lawyers and tradesmen and a couple of doctors . . . and they'd always been good, loyal citizens, like himself, liberals of course . . . what else could they be in this Catholic town except liberals and nationalists? . . . nobody had ever taken much notice of them, apart from one or two prominent men like Councillor Rosenthal with his fine collection of porcelain . . . and now all of a sudden this ferocious, unbounded anti-Semitism . . . Jew-baiting books in every bookshop and pamphlets like Councillor Wichtl's *World Freemasonry*, *World Jewry*, *World Revolution* . . . it was the best-seller after Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. . . .

Now I too had read these books and I cannot say that they had failed to impress me. But their general effect was one of confusion, and the size of the danger described seemed out of all proportion to the substance of the books, so that I ended, with youthful arrogance, by dismissing the problem contemptuously. I attempted now to console my host—who ostentatiously wore the ribbon of the Iron Cross in his buttonhole—by assuring him that this wave of anti-Semitism seemed to me to be nothing but a by-product of the birth-pangs of the national revolution—which was the Kapitän's phrase to describe this phenomenon and which I now involuntarily appropriated. But my fruit merchant asked, gloomily and naïvely, why the Kapitän did not simply forbid Hitler to incite the people against the Jews in his speeches.

As it happened I had been less puzzled by the Kapitän's attitude towards this problem than by Hitler's. It was common knowledge that this man, who had emerged so suddenly from the darkest obscurity, had devoted the sharpest of the many sharp words which came so easily to his tongue to castigating the false prophets, the cranks, the half-baked philosophers, the fanatics of the lunatic fringe, the sun-worshippers and water-worshippers who could never find a political resting place and who therefore hurried to embrace each novelty that arose—the false Teutons who believed that in our tough age it was still possible to fight with spear and shield. It was, as I said, common knowledge that Hitler almost never made a speech without attacking these people.

But my host remained troubled.

"Don't forget," he said, "that the man's an Austrian!"

In Germany, he felt, anti-Semitism had only ever appealed to a minority, while in Austria it was a national emotion. In Germany, he went on, the people had never been 'racially' threatened by other



nationalities, and in consequence the anti-Semites had attempted to base the idea of the Jews' 'foreignness' on the difference in religion. In Austria, on the other hand, the ideology of a Greater Germany had constantly been threatened by the foreign nations which formed part of the Hapsburg Monarchy, and particularly by the Slavs. Meanwhile the Jews, the only people apart from the Germans who regarded German as their native tongue, living as they did in the midst of all the various nations of the Hapsburg Monarchy, had been forced to avoid becoming involved in any such 'nationalist' policy. As a result the German Austrians had first of all regarded them as traitors and then, when the Jews were compelled to attempt a defence of their own customs and traditions, as the real, the secret enemy. Their attempts at self-defence must surely have some large-scale object, they must be carrying on some underground plot, a Jewish world conspiracy, a new international; and because there were Jews all over the world who were engaged in commerce and banking it must be a golden international . . .

"If this man," my orange merchant went on, looking at me significantly, "if this man can now appear here, here where circumstances are quite different, and can succeed in transplanting that error from Austria to Germany, do you realise what will happen? A logical boomerang! Here, where the German race has never been threatened, he'll have first of all to construct an artificial racial consciousness! Then he'll found a new religion, a racial religion, the religion of race, the most intolerant of all—for it ignores the possibility of conversion and accepts only the accident of birth, so that the freedom of the word has no sense any longer because words can do nothing to alter the situation."

He said:

"When I hear the word *Weltanschauung* I've heard enough—that is the great substitute for religion, a net with a usable new explanation hanging in each of its meshes, a substitute religion in which the Devil is no longer God's adversary inside men's conscience but a force visible to all who walk the streets. And when that happens what should be more logical than that God himself should also appear in person in human form, among the flags and the incense? What should be more logical?"

He gave me a cunning look and added:

"If I were a Christian I should know that he is the Antichrist—he comes like Christ, he talks like Christ, he performs miracles like Christ—and it is all falsehood!"

"Why don't you get up at a meeting and say just that?" I asked.

My orange merchant gave me a horrified look:

"They'd beat me up at once!"

I said:

"They beat up the Marxists at once, and still they keep getting to their feet and shouting against him."

“Yes,” he said mildly, “they do. And there’s also a Red International with no less than three million members. But we Jews?” He sighed and went on: “There’s no Jew who belongs to a Jewish world conspiracy. Because there’s no Jewish world conspiracy. If there were one, how easy it would be for us! All we can do is deny its existence, and that’s what each one of us does, and then they all just say: ‘You deny it? You’re a liar!’” He gazed in front of him and said: “And suppose it happens, the ‘racial’ state? Then we Jews will have to shoulder our bag and wander on, elsewhere. We’ve got used to it, after two thousand years. But it would be a very sad day for us, because we believe that we are Germans, we love Germany and the German people. And we would know then that the Germans had done themselves the greatest injury possible, because they would have begun to alter their fate by quite unnecessarily making race—the source of all our misery—the centre of their destiny. By so doing they would make the Jewish problem into the German problem.”

When I asked the Kapitän why he did not simply expel Hitler from the Workers’ Union of the Fatherland Block, he growled angrily:

“And loose what little control I still have over him?” And he added, with macabre humour: “I’m only glad he doesn’t kick me out of it!”

For a long time now Hitler had had the biggest say in the Workers’ Union too. Over and over again he acted independently. Despite explicit agreements to the contrary he dealt directly with the authorities and with important representatives of the state. He surprised the other organisations by his arbitrary deals, proclamations and decisions. He began to intrigue among the other parties’ para-military organisations in the interests of his own party. This led to continual heated quarrels between himself and the leaders of those parties, but his power could no longer be left out of consideration, for it was growing from day to day. The Kapitän said:

“The road of the national movement is paved with Herr Hitler’s broken promises.”

This was what was going on back-stage in Munich. It was disgusting and disappointing. It was better not to sniff about too much. But even at that time it was impossible to say what would have become of the Workers’ Union had it not been for this remarkable, strong-willed, unhesitating man. He was successful. His name re-echoed through the city. It seemed that within the breast of every citizen there was at least one foothold to which his voice could cling. At a time when his party counted a maximum of ten thousand members Munich was a city already marked by the phenomenon of this man’s existence.

I left Munich on the day that ‘national’ Munich, arming in protest against the announcement by the government of the Reich of the Law for the Defence of the Republic, was in fact protesting against that law itself. This new law was issued in consequence of the assassination of

Rathenau. Hitler addressed sixty thousand people; he praised the murderers as martyrs for Germany's future.

The Kapitän had sent me to visit various OC groups scattered throughout Germany with orders that they refrain from carrying out any actions that had been planned. He said, laconically:

“And mind you don't get picked up, you martyr, you. Because if you do, devil if there'll be anyone to raise a finger for you.”

I was picked up.

In prison Munich seemed to me just a crazy dream. The echoes of our deed which resounded throughout Germany were in no case pleasant music to our ears, but it was in Munich that their dissonance was harshest. Down there something from which I recoiled was methodically filling the vacuum. The empty husk of our deed seemed suddenly to have swollen like an inflated air-cushion; bang it where you would, it immediately filled out again. And I was horrified by the thought that I must needs spend the rest of my life seated on this cushion.

No prison is so solidly built that it can really seal off its inmates hermetically from what is going on outside. It was difficult to form any true picture of what was happening from the rumours and fragments of news which seeped through the prison walls, difficult but not impossible. What I heard led me to believe that I would be forced to serve my full sentence. Indeed the Kapitän had been himself arrested, and actually sent to prison in accordance with the sentence pronounced on him in connection with the Kapp Putsch; the Weimar System had lost none of its fatuous insensitivity, and this, at least, was comforting news. However, I knew that the OC would react quite differently to the Kapitän's case than to mine. Nothing, in fact, happened for over six months, but then he was rescued from Leipzig prison by a brilliant *coup* which appeared to reflect great credit on the intelligence and ability of the OC. Meanwhile the French army had marched into the Ruhr, and a newly formed government there, no longer a Social-Democrat one, had called for 'passive resistance.' This was soon activated by men whom I took to be tools of the OC. Schlageter was shot, the battle with the separatists had been joined, a Red Army had come into existence in Saxony, the mounting inflation was causing the whole nation to lose trust in its Government's ability, all Bavaria seemed to be arming for a 'march on Berlin'—it may be understandable that I was more or less indifferent to the political flag of the men who might unlock my prison door, provided they only came and did so.

On November 9th, 1923, the office clerk opened my door and slipped me a newspaper. He didn't, as usual, demand chewing tobacco in exchange, but simply whispered that I'd soon be 'out,' and that I shouldn't forget him, he too was only inside because of the Jews—he had been sentenced for perjury committed during a case against his

business partner. With trembling hands I opened the paper as soon as I had read the headlines. I was looking for the Kapitän's name, but could not find it. Kahr, Hitler, Ludendorff . . . no mention of Ehrhardt . . . Lossow, Seisser, so the army and the police were in it too. . . . I searched and searched, and at last I found a short reference, buried in the text: "Kapitän Ehrhardt was in Coburg and called out his brigade to act as auxiliary police." So everything was in order.

The news had spread throughout the building. Scarcely a prisoner passed my cell who did not tap on my door. Even my next-door neighbour, a communist sea-cook who was inside because of an attempt to blow-up a train carrying military supplies, offered me his congratulations by hammering wildly on the connecting wall. The official who doled out the food gave me a friendly grin and said: "Well?" With my tailor's scissors I scratched a swastika and the date on the wall of my cell.

That evening the chief warder came to visit me. He saw the sign on the wall but did not comment. He smiled and remarked that I had only had on a summer suit when I was arrested; wouldn't I like to write for some warm clothes? I asked him to let me send a letter, though I was not entitled to do so. He agreed. The governor would turn a blind eye.

Two days later the governor came to see me. He was wearing, as always, his hard round hat and his black coat with the silk collar which was too tight for him. He was, as always, accompanied by the chief warder, who today did not smile at me. The governor said:

"Give me that newspaper."

The newspaper lay open on my table, for I had thought that there was no longer any need for me to hide it. I handed it to him and he put it in his coat pocket. He looked at me from his little pig-like eyes behind the steel-rimmed spectacles and said:

"If the office clerk loses his job he'll have you to thank! I punish you with three months' deprivation of tobacco. I'll make it my business to see you don't get any more newspapers." He nodded towards the sign scratched on the wall and said to the chief warder: "That thing will be painted over." Then he left.

"That thing" was painted over. No prisoner tapped on my door as he went past. No official said: "Well?" The chief warder had completely forgotten about my letter.

Curiously enough this loss of hope brought with it a loss of unrest. Everything subsided of its own accord. Resistance ceased in the Ruhr, the separatist movement in the Rhineland disappeared. The currency was stabilised, the operations in Saxony were successfully carried out, and in Bavaria the people who remembered Hitler at all thought of him as a spook of which they were well rid. Of the Kapitän I only heard that he had had the SA battalions, marching to Munich, disarmed. Seeckt remained.

I saw my sentence through to the end without 'getting ideas' again—

my whole sentence and then a bit, so that my old sins were now atoned for. But from the day I was freed I set about trying to discover what had actually happened. The Kapitän was now living on his estate, Klessen near Friesack, one hour by train from Berlin. He still had an office in Berlin where my old friend and fellow-assassin, Hartmut Plaas, now sat as his 'business controller,' though he would certainly have preferred to be called his adjutant. Plaas had the troublesome job of carefully loosening the many threads that the Kapitän had spun during his political entanglements (and doubtless, I imagined, spinning new ones meanwhile). He was also responsible for maintaining the organisation of the old Marine Brigade. The Kapitän had never had a following of more than four thousand, but also never less, for such was the strength of the Marine Brigade which was now scattered throughout all Germany. Most of these men had achieved positions of importance in civil life or in politics, positions that entitled them to a more weighty role than that of imitation soldiers, but the Kapitän kept them together, and perhaps it was thus that he maintained considerably more influence than one would have expected from a simple landed gentleman with a questionable political past. Also he had the reputation, in those official circles with which he continued to maintain close touch, of being a man who could be relied on to keep his promises. These circles were of course those that had been called into existence to master situations created by the peace treaty and other political arrangements, and which functioned in the shadow of official national policy.

"The Kapitän," Plaas remarked sarcastically, "is still one of the state's fourteen emergency assistants."

So he still had his fingers in numerous pies of the sort without which even the most progressive state cannot apparently get on; it was current gossip that the abandonment of a policy of secrecy on the part of the cabinet was only a joke, a smoke-screen, which made the work that was carried on behind it considerably more fruitful. All this was typical of the Kapitän; typical, too, was his refusal to let me stick my nose into any of his doings. I often visited him on his estate. I even let him persuade me to accompany him when he went shooting. But never would he give me a chance to overcome his reticence.

I had meanwhile read *Mein Kampf*, the book that Hitler wrote during his imprisonment in Landsberg fortress. What I remarked about it were the references, very indirect and never going into detail, which were only comprehensible to those people who had really understood the sequence of events leading up to the 1923 putsch. Almost all his obscure polemics, against reproaches made him because of his attitude towards the para-military organisation and the 'secret societies' as well as his policy in connection with Ruhr resistance, were directed exclusively at the Kapitän. When I asked the Kapitän about this he said:

"I'll never shake hands with the fellow again!"

And when I remarked that this seemed a punishment that would no doubt break Hitler's heart, the Kapitän said, good-naturedly:

"You're being impertinent!"

Now the respect I felt for the Kapitän was no longer unreserved, far from it. I pointed out to the Kapitän that in the part of Hitler's book dealing with the events of November 8th, 1923, the author had elegantly side-stepped the question with the remark that he could see no future profit in discussing those events now. The Kapitän said, grimly, that he could well believe that: either Hitler would have had to lie, and there had been too many people in the know at the time who could expose him: or he would have had to tell the truth and be completely discredited in consequence. I now said that this second alternative was something which it was clearly very much in the Kapitän's interest to see carried out. He looked at me and said:

"You don't understand. Why should I plough other men's furrows?"

And I knew that by 'other men' he meant the powers of the Weimar Republic. The Kapitän thought for a minute and then went on:

"And why the devil should I wash the army's dirty linen for it?"

And with that he proceeded to discuss, with great intensity, the stag that he intended to lay low that afternoon.

This was a point that seemed to me worth following up. Hitler's greatest opponent had been eliminated, but the army's politics continued. I had immediately begun to collect relevant documents, and was finally amassing quite a slice of history. As always, the newspaper reports were of least value. General von Seeckt refused to receive me, even though he was now retired. Herr von Kahr referred me to the report of the Hitler-Ludendorff trial. The documents connected with this case created the definite impression that all the men involved, prosecutors, judges, accused and witnesses, had been united in one common cause—to avoid touching on the 'reality' behind the events in question. But there was my old friend, Dr. Luetgebrune, who had defended Ludendorff at the trial: there were the reports of Captain Rickmer, who, fatally wounded before the Feldherrnhalle, had yet managed to dictate a few words in hospital: there were Schlageter's reports and letters—enough clues, in fact, to reconstruct the whole picture in its broader outlines. Having done this all that was needed was to persuade the Kapitän to say whether this picture was a true or a false one.

It had all happened quite logically. Conditions in Germany had reached the point where the only power that still retained real authority, the army, was bound to risk taking a hand. General von Seeckt would have behaved quite irresponsibly if he had not told the commander of Army Area Munich, General von Lossow, to establish contact with the representative of the one civil power in Germany which, despite the general collapse, still retained a certain degree of stability, that is to say

with the General State Commissioner of Bavaria. This man was Herr von Kahr, who incidentally was simply a product of the policy that the Kapitän had long been pursuing in Bavaria. The Kapitän said:

"Well, in any event my brigade in Coburg was not prepared to march on Berlin. I'd had enough of that sort of nonsense the first time."

The brigade's appearance as 'auxiliary police' was part of a carefully thought-out plan. In the event of an uprising the brigade could seal off Saxony by closing the neck of the sack. The more radical nationalist formations were eager to carry out a *coup d'état*, but Seeckt was set against this. Seeckt refused in all circumstances to act without the agreement of the constitutional authorities; but he might expect their agreement should matters continue to develop as they were doing and the collapse of the Reich appear imminent—he had every reason to believe that the country's leaders would not refuse to agree to the sole remaining course of action that could still save Germany.

Three years before, Seeckt, with great singleness of purpose, had discarded the cloak of the *Freikorps*, which had covered the Reichswehr but which the Reichswehr had now outgrown, in order to ensure that the Entente Powers had no excuse for further limiting the strength of the army allowed by the Versailles Treaty. Now, with equal singleness of purpose and despite the distrust of the Government, he was prepared to sacrifice the 'Black Reichswehr,' those illegal formations created for the defence of the eastern frontier; this 'Black Reichswehr,' militarily still significant, was of course a standing threat to the security of the state. For a quite legal higher objective, namely the conforming of the aims of army and Government, in order to be able in certain circumstances to save the Reich by authoritative action, Seeckt sacrificed the units that had taken part in the 'Küstrin Putsch' of October, 1923. These latter, believing the time to be ripe, had thought to present the general with a *fait accompli*. In Bavaria the true significance of these events was not immediately understood. The General State Commissioner thought that he must guard against similar surprises, and tried to have the Bavarian contingent of the Reichswehr, the Lossow Division, placed under command of the Bavarian state. Up to this point all the players had been holding their cards very close to their chests.

How far Hitler suspected what the game was all about is, of course, impossible to say. In any event no matter what it looked like to him, he saw one fact emerge plainly—he had been done out of his part. There was no place for him in this game and he held no trumps. Any semi-legal *coup d'état* of this sort must necessarily mean the end of him. The 'tub-thumper' had himself described frequently enough the moment at which he would become superfluous. If he had any ambitions other than those of a propagandist it was essential that he play a part, or rather that he seize the leadership in this new situation.

"I can well imagine his triumph," said the Kapitän, "when in the Bürgerbräu Cellar he thought he had overwhelmed Kahr and Lossow by interposing Ludendorff's authority. . . ." The Kapitän, suddenly carried away, shouted: "Why the devil did we fall in with his plans! Better to chance everything on the most forlorn hope than to make that experiment with him!"

"It all hung," I said, "on a single thread, which Hitler cut."

"Exactly," cried the Kapitän, and banged the table with the flat of his hand, "after he'd sworn an oath to each one of us that he would act honestly!"

Suddenly the Kapitän broke off.

"I've heard," he said, "that you've set yourself up as a writer."

I blushed, which annoyed me, and replied gruffly:

"Right, Herr Kapitän!"

The Kapitän said:

"In that case I must strongly advise you to make a neat bundle of anything you may have written about those events and to hide it in a really safe place."

The Kapitän's wife laughed and said:

"Do what my husband has done. He's hidden his diaries so carefully that even he can't find them now."

So that was it. The first major, serious attempt on the part of the national movement to alter Germany's condition through the initiative of the state had failed owing to the existence of one man, Hitler. It had not failed because of resistance from the official powers of the Weimar system; there was no evidence for, or reason to believe in, the likelihood of any such resistance. It had failed because General von Seeckt, representing a genuine attitude towards the state, had preferred that the Reich continue to be entrusted to the weak hands of a shadow state, the *ersatz* state of the political parties and the bureaucracy, rather than that it be surrendered to those sinister forces which the distracted masses had produced and which were now aiming at power.

"And what now?" I asked him. "What now?"

"We'll always be on the side of the soldiers," said the Kapitän.

I had no more success than anyone else in my attempts to see through Seeckt's secret, the general with the stony face and the sphinx-like manner. (He had been a friend of Rathenau's.) Many maintained that he kept silent because he had nothing to say. Hans Zehrer once told me that Seeckt was a man of a type very common both in German politics and in the army—men who, in the old phrase, having at last reached the Rubicon simply sit down on its bank and fish.

In fact it seemed that in their dutiful attempts to comprehend the true nature of the state the politicians of the nationalist right, including the generals who were the political leaders of the Reichswehr, created two quite artificial scarecrows, two bogeymen who haunted the dark



alleys of their political dreams. It appeared that there were two things that struck these men as weird and strange: things with which they had no idea how to deal, yet which they must admit not only existed but also posed very considerable problems that could in no way be ignored. Not one of these men understood even the rudiments of economics. They regarded it as a sort of secret science, a modern alchemy, which by means of economists' elixirs could transmute base metals into gold. "What," they would anxiously ask, "are we going to do about the economy?" Well-meaning economists might assure them that the national economy was quite capable of solving its own problems and that there was no such thing as an 'economic collapse' because the economy was indissolubly bound up with the daily needs of the individual; such assurances did not stop them from continuing to brood heavily over the subject. And it is significant of those men's sense of responsibility that they were reluctant to tackle subjects the nature of which was a mystery to them. The other thing the national movement completely failed to understand was culture. 'Money and mind' then, those two forces of supreme significance, the two great supporting pillars about which the edifice of a modern western state is built, struck them as weird and strange—which is not really so surprising when it is recalled that these shadowy forces were presented to them in the form of Councillor Hugenberg.

Problems of this sort certainly never bothered Hitler. He did not fear money or mind, he simply despised them. This undoubtedly gave him a great advantage over the national movement. Nor was he the sort of man who went fishing in the Rubicon.

I had been in gaol long enough to know that depriving a man of his freedom in no wise serves to shake his innermost convictions; it does, however, compel him henceforth to examine the world somewhat more soberly. Though nobody could pretend that the brief spell in Landsberg fortress had in any way changed Hitler, his tactics were altered by it. He was no longer the tub-thumper: he was the Führer. The movement had been replaced by the Party. The illegal struggle had given way to legality of method. Instead of allies he now had only enemies. And what had been slogans became a programme. Everything else remained unchanged: the ferocity of his attacks, the barrel-organ oratory, the almost superhuman industry, the policy of terror against opponents at his meetings, and all the old to-do of flags and standards and raised arms and Hitler-greetings and belts and boots and, now, the brown shirt.

The word 'democracy' is one that I have only very rarely, and with great reluctance, employed. I do not know what it is and I have never yet met anyone who could explain its meaning to me in terms that I am capable of understanding. But I fear that Hitler's assertion—that his ideological concept was the democratic concept—will prove a hard one

to refute. The enlightenment of the world from a single, central position, the winning of mass support through convincing arguments, the legitimate road to power by way of the ballot-box, the legitimisation by the people itself of power achieved—I fear it is hard to deny that these are democratic stigmata, revelatory perhaps of democracy in a decadent and feverish form, but democratic none the less. I further fear that the contrary assertion—that the totalitarian system as set up by Hitler was not democratic—will prove a hard one to justify. The totalitarian state is the exact opposite of the authoritarian state, which latter, of course, bears no democratic stigmata but hierarchal ones instead. Some people seem to believe that forms of government are estimable in accordance with their progressive development; since totalitarianism is certainly more modern than the authoritarian state system, they must logically give Hitler the advantage in the political field.

It must be admitted that at this time these problems within the general national movement were only discussed in a very limited circle. There was *Vormarsch* and Ernst Niekisch's *Widerstand* and Hans Zehrer's *Die Tat*, which attempted to analyse the two currents of opinion. There was also the *National-Socialist Monthly*, edited by Otto Strasser and Herbert Blanck. All these were published in Berlin, and the general public might well have learned from them. But the Press, both national and international, seemed to think that to discuss matters on the level of these magazines was in itself a sort of betrayal, an admission that the centre of gravity of political thought had shifted from the left to the right. And in the situation that then prevailed—as opposed to the one that can now be constructed with the knowledge of hindsight—this was a circumstance that worked to Hitler's direct advantage.

It was during the summer of 1930, when Berlin was first beginning to feel the effects of what happened on October 23rd, 1929, that I went for a few weeks to Calw, a small, South German town in Wurtemberg, to visit the painter Rudolf Schlichter. I had read thoroughly the works of Hermann Hesse, who was also born in Calw, and the exactness of his descriptions allowed me to recognise many details of the place with great delight. The most fortunate province of Germany, solid, hard-working, industrious, middle-class Wurtemberg, was reflected in the good city of Calw as in a convex glass. The little district capital, situated in the smiling valley of the Nagold, struck me as a very picture of comely arrangement. A little industry, a certain amount of wood trade, all happily mingled together and backed by an industrious farming community, a solid Catholic minority living side by side with a quantity of Protestant sects, good roads and railways to the most delightful parts of the Black Forest and the Swabian Alps, to Pforzheim in Baden and the provincial capital, Stuttgart, all this combined to give the district capital its own specific character. If anywhere, then surely here the

economic and social life drew its sustenance from a soil that would be fruitful to all save only that which aspired aggressively to drastic change. Here every man could, with energy and care, look after his own affairs. And when, in the evenings, the local dignitaries sat over a good, neighbourly bottle of wine, these worthies did not allow political differences of opinion to interfere with personal friendships, while their mutual interdependence in matters of trade and their frequent blood relationships both served as strong deterrents to fanaticism of any sort.

On the market place was a first-class delicatessen shop, which saw to it that the products of distant lands as well as those of an active home industry found their way into the kitchens of the Calw households. Its proprietor was to be seen at all times, enveloped in a spotlessly white coat, standing among his sacks of raisins and his prettily coloured boxes of dried fruit. In his spotlessly clean shop his ruddy, healthy face radiated confidence and politeness, while his pleasant smile promised all comers that here they could expect good, reliable service. I praised his shop heartily, and he said, in his strong Wurtemberg accent:

“You know, I worked like a black to get this business going . . .” and he said: “You know, I still need another ten thousand marks to get out of debt. . . .”

He had been born in the village of Altburg, at no great distance from Calw. After the war he had not immediately returned home, and I had run across him in many a post-war theatre of military operations. Finally he had become involved in the Küstrin Putsch, and after serving a prison sentence had gone home at last, determined to take up a civilian career.

Anyone who saw him in the market, buying and selling his lemons in their handsomely coloured boxes, must have realised that here was a man performing his proper job in life; indeed only those who have long been deprived of security can truly prize it. But curiously enough the more his business seemed to flourish, the less progress it actually made. He was very far from being well informed concerning the true nature of those events that had taken place in New York on October 23rd, 1929. As a result this harassed man, observing the inexplicable economic developments that deprived him of the fruit of his labours despite all his hard work and all the great industriousness that everyone admitted he displayed, began to ascribe his misfortune to some secret world-wide conspiracy which for many years had been at work with the deliberate intention of ruining the German Reich inclusive of the province of Wurtemberg, the district capital of Calw, and the delicatessen shop on the market place. The head of the privately owned trade school, a man much thought of in his own field and with whom our friend often drank a glass of beer, doubted, it is true, the existence of any such conspiracy, but then he was unfortunately incapable of producing any alternative satisfactory explanation for the unfortunate state of affairs—

as indeed was I, being far too conscientious to commit myself on so concrete a point. So every Saturday afternoon regularly, as soon as he had closed his shop, our friend would doff his white coat and don a freshly laundered brown shirt and a pair of highly polished boots; and soon this excellent man could be seen, his left hand correctly clasped about his belt buckle, marching with steady tread at the head of a similarly attired body of men through the streets of the town, all hoarsely singing their dully booming songs. The townsmen observed this new activity on the part of their respected fellow-citizen with a certain anxiety; this derived less from the novelty of his appearance than from an unjustified fear lest disorder result. There was no disorder. Even the head of the trade school greeted the platoon of marching men; he did not go so far as to extend his right arm at shoulder level, but he did wave his hat in a friendly gesture. For the head of the trade school was known as a solid supporter of the German-National party.

"You know," my good friend said of him, "you know what he thinks, the fine fellow? He thinks I should go right ahead and then when the time comes the German-Nationals will run the country and me and my men, we'll just do what the German-Nationals tell us to do! To hell with that! Pulling chestnuts out of the fire for that lot. . . ."

In September began the campaign for those elections which were later to be described as 'historic.' None of the old parties showed much enthusiasm in its canvassing. Only the National-Socialists held one meeting after another. Their meetings were packed. They also took place in a hitherto unusual atmosphere of calm. This was partly because there was no sort of discussion after the 'national speaker' had finished his speech, and partly because any heckler found himself immediately flanked by two scowling men in uniform who, by the deliberate assuredness of their demeanour, seemed to show their determination that no judge should later be in a position to find *them* guilty of starting a riot. The 'national speakers' were men of all ages who had passed through the National-Socialist school of public speaking; with the experience of a thousand such meetings behind them they knew exactly what they should say and they said it. They travelled from place to place, not omitting the smallest villages, and if they were to speak at a place where there was as yet no Party organisation, they would arrive accompanied by a platoon of SA men; so that their appearance in the sleepy, peaceful village was in itself the cause of a certain pleasurable excitement. On Sundays all the brown shirts sallied forth. Early in the morning they drove out of the little town in trucks, and when they returned, late at night, their marching songs re-echoed through the streets.

My friend the delicatessen man saw with disappointment that I was by no means as fiery a supporter of his cause as he had hoped. I expressed scepticism concerning the effect that these Sunday joy-rides might have

on the peasant population—I believed I knew the peasant mentality—and as a result he invited me to accompany him on one such outing. First, of course, we drove to Altburg, an extremely agreeable little peasants' village, and it seemed to me no surprise that the inhabitants should come out of their houses and cheer the passing truck; after all my good friend, now seated beside me at the wheel, was brought up in Altburg. But at the very next service station that we passed I had an opportunity of seeing how the people really felt. Two employees, spending their Sunday in hosing down the yard in front of the pumps, immediately raised their right arm. Of course the men in the truck sang at the top of their voices whenever we passed through a village or hamlet. They did not even stop on the highroad. They sang, a few bars at least, whenever we met a human being, whether it was a single bicyclist or a bus or a child or a solitary old woman—and all, all returned the Hitler greeting. When they passed the country policeman they sang with redoubled vehemence, and he greeted them by touching his cap.

"It's a dirty trick," I said. "You're gambling on the people's politeness."

"Oh, no," said my friends. "Besides, what do you want us to gamble on? Their wickedness?"

A halt was made at every inn, and what landlord is not delighted by the sudden arrival of forty thirsty guests?

We were not the only group on the roads. We met a truck with a Baden licence plate, also filled with SA men. This was the Pforzheim group. In Baden there was a law against the wearing of uniforms, and these men had to set out in civilian clothes, but as soon as they reached the Wurtemberg border they changed into uniforms that they had brought with them. The two group leaders fixed on the route that each would follow, and when this had been done the columns set off in different directions.

This was something I had never seen before: the countryside was, beyond any question of doubt, National-Socialist. No peasant failed to greet the SA men—the churchgoers greeted them and even the pastor raised his hat and said: "Good day!"—the men working on the railways greeted them, the police, the guards at the gate of the cotton mill and the blanket factory, now deserted on Sunday, the men at the saw-mill. The truck drove up and down the countryside, through villages and little towns and workers' settlements and spas, and nowhere was there any sign of hostility or any gesture of displeasure, but everywhere the same cheerful greetings.

That evening we again met the Pforzheim group. They looked considerably the worse for wear and their expressions were somewhat sheepish. Something had, indeed, gone wrong. The truckload of gaily singing men had driven casually through Butenhausen. But for many centuries the successive squires of Butenhausen had peopled their land

with Jewish settlers. Butenhausen had become a Jewish peasant village, the only one in Germany. In the valley of the quietly flowing Lauter the young peasants had seized their scythes and their pitchforks when they heard the battle songs of the SA, and they were muscular men who knew how to wield those weapons. I could not conceal my satisfaction when I heard this.

"You know," my good friend said, "next time *I'll* drive through Butenhausen."

I said:

"Brawling is the one thing you're good at, isn't it?"

"Oh, no," said he. "Nobody's ever started anything with me."

"You people can brawl all right," I said, "but why don't you allow any argument, any discussion? Whom do you actually want to convince—the fools and the cowards?"

"You know," said my unshakeable friend, "you're one of these intellectuals who know all the answers. Tell you what we'll do. Next time we have a meeting you can get up and yap, yap as much as ever you want. I'll fix it."

Before the next meeting I worked out what I should say. I planned to pounce on some silly, flowery remark by the principal speaker and thus, when the time came, all I should need to think up would be a few transitional remarks. My good friend led the meeting. He had never attended any school of public speaking, and he talked straight from the shoulder. He said that anyone reading the papers must see that they were full of their Frick, their first minister-president in Germany, Minister-President Dr. Frick of Thuringia. Everyone knew our Dr. Frick, but who had ever given Thuringia a thought before? Who even knew the name of his predecessor as Minister-President of Thuringia? Suddenly he turned and pointed at me:

"Here's a man says he knows all the answers. Now's your chance to talk! Do you know the name of the last Minister-President of Thuringia?"

I sat there and felt my ears go red. I had no idea who it had been. The whole of the hall cheered delightedly. I was discredited for the rest of the evening. Later I said to my good friend:

"Suppose I'd just said any name, Müller or Schneider or something, what would you have done then?"

"I'd have laughed," said my good friend heartily. "You imagine *I* had any idea what the clown's name was?"

"That's demagoguery," I said.

"That's propaganda," said he.

I was very curious to see what the results of the election would be. The head of the trade school explained to me:

"We Swabians, we're not radicals. It's just that the young men like to have their bit of fun. . . ."

The Swabians, in his opinion, were a sensible people, sensible and tolerant. The radical parties had never had any luck in Swabia. In Swabia the good, old, democratic traditions prevailed. The men of Baden were proud of their 'model province,' but the real model province was Wurtemberg with its balanced economy. Then he gave me encouraging figures concerning the happy proportion of industry to agriculture in Swabia, not omitting the healthily rising birth-rate. He spoke of the distribution of wealth, too, and the solid middle-class.

"With us," he said, "age and experience and authority are still in control."

As for the activities of our mutual friend, they were just a Punch-and-Judy show. How would it all end? Why, the old, experienced German-Nationals would give the orders and the National-Socialists would provide the troops to carry them out.

My good friend sent an SA man on a bicycle to inform me of the election results as they came in over the radio. Every half-hour the cyclist arrived with the latest figures. The success of the National-Socialists was beyond dispute. Beside the new figures my friend always noted down those of the last election. It seemed clear that the increased poll for the National-Socialists was drawn from those sectors of the electorate that had hitherto abstained from voting—this was particularly apparent in the case of Berlin. Then came Hamburg, then Leipzig, Cologne, Munich, Hanover, and each time he arrived the cyclist was slightly more intoxicated. To begin with I had just glanced at my good friend's notes and thrown them away, but now they lay spread out in front of Rudolf Schlichter and myself and we studied them. A 'political landslide' had taken place, to use the phrase that was to appear throughout the national and international Press on the following day. Not only had Swabia with its well-balanced economy swung that way, but also purely industrial areas, solidly Catholic provinces, Schleswig-Holstein was National-Socialist, East Prussia, Saxony—Thuringia no longer stood alone.

Once again my cyclist appeared. He was having a hard time riding his machine by now. Instead of a little note he carried a huge placard. On it was written: ALTBURG near CALW, 101 VOTES CAST, 100 NATIONAL-SOCIALIST. Beneath this my good friend had scribbled:

"The one for the Socialists was my father's. He only did it to annoy me."

When, in the first light of dawn, I walked through the market place I saw that there was a light still burning in the delicatessen. I went in. My good friend was seated on the counter, a glass in his hand. On the floor and on the sacks sat the SA men. When my good friend saw me, he raised his glass and said thickly:

"Hundred and ten deputies! One hundred and ten!"

I said:

“Well, good health!”

He stared into his glass. Then he raised his head, grinned so broadly that his eyes almost disappeared into his pink cheeks and gurgled happily:

“You know, I’m going to be district leader. District leader, that’s me!”

So he was back, this man Hitler, very much back. Never, for a single moment, could I describe myself as having been a follower of his, yet never was there a moment when the mere existence of the man had not, in some way or other, influenced my life. I did not understand him, neither his character nor his teaching; I did not simply regard the latter as false, because I could not grasp what it was that he actually wanted. What I could understand of his speeches, his methods and his thought processes seemed to me only comprehensible if compared with other methods and thought processes; then they appeared to be simply an enlarged and exaggerated version of the methods and thought processes employed by liberal-democrats, which were to me equally strange. I attempted to understand the man and his movement within the framework of the spiritual history of the period; seen from this point of view, he was the last sprig from the age of reason, that age which had begun so boldly by reaching for the stars, by emancipating men from God, and which had ended, in Egon Friedell’s words, as “one of the crudest, most primitive and most infantile epochs in the spiritual history of humanity . . . to the Orient’s soft laughter, which like a subtle, mocking secondary motif has accompanied all our progress.” It had seemed to me that, unless it were possible to recreate a constructive form of the state, Bolshevism must be the natural heir to the obvious and shameless dissolution of all organic strength by the ideological senselessness of the bourgeois-liberal and social-democrat wizards—and now, instead of this, a still more advanced form of disintegration lay ahead of us, entitled the National-Socialist movement.

Now if this was the true course of events, then it was an inescapable duty to recreate the nature and substance of the state, to replace the true statue on the pedestal from which men in their arrogance had pulled it down; then alone might the state, the human order, once again devolve on God. For the Christian the state was sinful if it did not serve to glorify God. I was no Christian, nor did I believe myself to be one. What seemed to me logically acceptable I could not accept in terms of faith. It was this conflict that almost broke me. All that remained was the hope that the eternal law by which mankind is constantly compelled to seek order might once again break through the crust—that by the posing of ever new questions the hard soil of the spirit might become loosened. This entailed the duty of attempting to speed up the process by asking ever more pointed questions.

When I decided to go abroad it was flight. There could be no doubt



that I had failed in all my attempts: my hectic participation in the efforts of the Schleswig-Holstein peasants to establish their own sort of order had ended in a bad joke: my endless activities in and about Ernst Jünger's circle had reduced me to despair. I decided, therefore, to make a sort of inventory of all the ideas that disturbed our epoch. I hoped that by these means, which were at least clean, I might achieve fruitful results.

I did not succeed.

In January, 1933, I returned from abroad firmly determined to give my civil career precedence over all political activity. My brother Bruno made a special trip to Berlin in order to tell me how much he despised this decision of mine. He was no longer living in Schleswig-Holstein. Acquitted at the great Altona Peasant Trial, he had looked about the province for a time and had found that there was no longer any sense in remaining faithful to the peasants there. But to the cause of the peasants he wished to stay true. Curiously, in these conditions, he found himself drawn ever closer to his old adversary, Bodo Uhse. Now he surprised me with the information that, drawing the consequences from their past actions, both he and Bodo Uhse had joined the Communist Party.

So some people did, after all, draw conclusions, and quite surprising ones at that, but the conclusions they drew all came out of the same sack and were conditioned by the same moment of time. It began with the disappearance of Seeckt. The great, mysterious sphinx had stumbled on a pebble. In an access of thoughtlessness he had permitted a prince of the house of Hohenzollern, in the uniform of an officer, to attend as a guest the Reichswehr manoeuvres at the troop-training area of Munsingen. The colossus tottered and fell. It now appeared that he had had feet of clay after all. The old, imperial field-marshal, himself, it seemed, a solid rock, let fall his general without raising a finger save to sign the order appointing Seeckt's successor. This latter was General Heye, a fine and upright soldier from whom no surprises were to be expected. And this good, well-meaning soldier was soon to be faced with the greatest of worries, caused by two of his most junior officers.

Lieutenants Scheringer and Ludin had a friend, a former officer of their own regiment named Lieutenant (Retd.) Wendt, who lived at Ulm, where they were stationed. With him they had discussed the hypothetical case of what they should do, should the army once again be employed to crush a fresh attempt at a national restoration. They found that they would not have the heart to shoot down such well-meaning friends and patriots. Horrified by the gulf that thus suddenly yawned between their emotional convictions and their oath of loyalty, they did not hurry to good old Papa Heye in order to confess their scruples of conscience; instead they established contact with various of their colleagues in order to persuade them too to 'get ideas' of the same sort. An older comrade, a senior lieutenant, had no hesitation in

reporting them. The Defence Minister was Groener, himself a retired general who had been in charge of rail transport during the Great War and who had succeeded Ludendorff as Chief of the General Staff; he was a Swabian, and thanks perhaps to his specialist training was not without a certain sympathy for the difficulties that confronted the Weimar Republic, though apparently quite devoid of understanding for young, patriotic officers who dared to 'get ideas.' He himself did not get ideas: he just slapped a law-suit on them. In vain did Papa Heye hasten to Ulm and attempt to make the young sinners repent. It was too late, nobody could now stop events pursuing their course—a course which was to nobody's advantage save Hitler's.

It was true that in an attempt to have their ideas clarified the young men had also turned to Munich; but the answer which they had received from that quarter was far from clear. Only now did they get an unambiguous reply. During the course of the 'Ulm Reichswehr Trial' before the National Court Hitler spoke as a witness under oath. Under oath he said, without mincing his words, that he intended to achieve power "by legal methods." He had never before said this so openly and so firmly; and this statement of his, made as a witness, was, with its results, a "milestone in the history of the movement." For Ludin, Scheringer and Wendt this declaration simply destroyed the psychological basis to their military misdemeanour.

The young officers were condemned to fortress arrest. Scheringer served his sentence in Gollnow fortress, Ludin in Rastatt. In Gollnow there were also communist prisoners, but not in Rastatt. When Ludin was set at liberty he drew the consequences of his past actions and accepted Hitler's offer that he should join the SA. He was soon appointed Group Leader in his home of Baden. Wendt drew his own conclusions, gave a sad smile to all and sundry, and followed his civil inclinations. He became, I believe, the director of a concern that put on revues in Paris. But Scheringer had not in vain passed whole nights arguing with the Communists in Gollnow. He went to see Goebbels and presented him with a list of clear and unambiguous questions, dealing with the problems that he and the Communists had discussed, and demanded an honest, exhaustive answer to each one of them. Goebbels' replies were half cynical, half joking. (Good God, how flattered so young a lieutenant must be to be treated with such familiarity by the great?) Scheringer promptly handed over the questions and answers to his Communist prison acquaintances and himself joined the German Communist Party. The Communists read Dr. Goebbels' interesting document aloud in the Reichstag. Who had ears to hear, let him hear. Scheringer was shortly after arrested once again, this time for high treason.

And now my brother Bruno had also "done a Scheringer," as he put it. The Communist Party sent him to agitate in the Rhön country,

where the poorest peasants of all Germany live. My brother Bruno informed me, blushing, that he was locally known as "the red czar of the Rhön." The newspapers followed his new activities with the same sort of disapproval that they had devoted to his former ones in Schleswig-Holstein, though now it was if anything slightly stronger; the National-Socialist journalists seemed positively to froth at the mouth with rage. The authorities were as eager to lay their hands on him as were the National-Socialist shock troops. He lived illegally, without a fixed address and under a false name. He had spent the whole of this winter high in the mountains, travelling from place to place by ski. On New Year's Eve he and a handful of peasants had attacked a National-Socialist Labour Service Camp; the Rhön peasants could not survive on the produce of their fields alone, and the men of the labour service had deprived them of their subsidiary income derived from breaking stones.

My brother and I had long ago agreed to be entirely frank with one another in all matters. I told him that I did not really find this sort of thing very funny. My brother fell silent, but Bodo Uhse said I must not imagine that it was our big-mouthed activities as former putschists that recommended us to the C.P. Nor was it the chance of continuing our putschist clownery that had enticed my brother and himself into joining it. I laughed and remarked that he was already entirely orthodox. But he didn't laugh: he was orthodox. I asked my brother if he had come to Communism by way of Karl Marx. My brother eagerly replied that that was indeed the case. I found the picture that immediately sprang to mind quite touching: the two old enemies in the peasant struggle, faced with the total bankruptcy of all their hopes, sitting snugly in a little room in Itzehoe and discussing Karl Marx by lamp-light. And that was exactly what had happened. That weird man, Karl Marx, could, after a hundred years, influence two very experienced men, who had passed through a thousand false ideas, so strongly as to change the whole course of their future lives.

Now the respect I felt for Karl Marx required that I stop treating my brother and his new friend to what might be described as a series of sly winks. They were serious, and they had every reason to be. There would be no convincing them, no persuading them to change: war would be declared against them. They had staked everything. And they were well aware of this, they knew exactly what to expect should the National-Socialists succeed in achieving power. They were the only people in the whole country who did know exactly what to expect. And the thought that they knew it through Karl Marx was inclined to increase my feeling of respect to one of amazement.

Needless to say I had read Karl Marx during my time in prison. Needless to say I had understood nothing at all of what he said, and needless to say I thought that I had understood everything. All I knew about it was that I thought I had grasped the fact that the working class

was here offered a doctrine that had every prospect of being realised politically. But I was not a member of the working class. I belonged to a class, or believed from the Marxist teaching that I belonged to a class, which, according to Karl Marx, had no prospects save to be liquidated, to disappear, and the quicker the better. I think that for me the one lasting consequence of my reading of Karl Marx was to make me regret that the class into which I had been so categorically pitchforked did not possess some similar concept of equal grandeur and hope, some similar doctrine of equally logical acuteness and exactitude. The thought that perhaps my class was unworthy of such a concept and such a doctrine, that it was perhaps by its very nature incapable of producing either the one or the other in equal or similar form, only began to assume significance for me when I saw that my class was being progressively and steadily dissolved and that from what had been its ranks was appearing a new class, that of the *déclassés*. The class of the *déclassés* might well be the only class that had a real interest in seeing the class war ended. The *déclassés* had neither property nor organisation. They seemed to me to be on the point of acquiring both.

In his book *Mein Kampf*, and in countless speeches, Hitler had left his audience in no doubt about his inalterable determination to annihilate 'Marxism.' He could really hardly hope that class-conscious workers would be drawn to his cause. Up to the end he never succeeded in smashing the cadres of the organised proletariat or in decimating the solid Marxist vote. The social-democrats, in so far as they were organised, kept their voters together until the end, and, despite the National-Socialists' guild cell organisation, the trades unions remained until the end the only real representatives of labour. Till the end the Communist Party continued to be the only real exponent of the class war, and even in the last election it polled over four million votes. In his dealings with the Communists Hitler renounced political means. With the sole exception of Dr. Goebbels' attempt and failure to co-operate with them during the Berlin street-car strike of 1932, Hitler resisted every temptation to collaborate tactically with the second biggest group which was irreconcilably hostile to the Weimar system. In the streets at night, in the smoky, noisy meeting halls, in dark gateways and in beer cellars, his people were constantly and bloodily at blows with the young class fighters. Nor did they ever desist from this struggle in order to combine against their common adversary, the administration of the hated system.

It is hard to say whether Hitler's attitude towards the Communists during his struggle for power was a clever one or not. In any case it was essential for him that his fight against the 'Commune' should remain popular not only with his supporters but also with the public authorities. The existence of the Communists served at all times to give his own behaviour an appearance of legality.

For the Communists, on the other hand, Fascism was bound to appear as the last and most dangerous manifestation of 'Monopoly-Capitalism,' as its last and most dangerous attempt to unite all its forces, to mobilise the inchoate mass of the *déclassés*, to corrupt the 'Social-Fascists,' the Second International, and with the support of the 'Feudal Reactionaries' to call a halt to the pending social dissolution caused by the assault of the class-conscious proletariat, and then to strike its last and most dangerous blow. It must be admitted that the lapidary manner of expression and the jargon were confusing; but in fact the Communists were quite right. This development was similarly part of 'the development.' It would be under-estimating Hitler to assume that he was not constantly aware of his position in history. He proposed himself as the exponent of a development—against Communist 'civil war.' And it would mean underestimating the Communist Party leadership if one were to assume that it had not made its preparations against this.

It had made its preparations against this. But it was not prepared for civil war. On the contrary, it made preparations to ensure that civil war should not break out. This was a state of affairs which must certainly have seemed confusing to Hitler. The Communists were the only ones who refused to fight him on his own terms, and they did so not from weakness but from an unusually complicated and, one might say, dialectical confidence. In comparison with the discipline that the National-Socialist cadres maintained among their ranks by means of the rigid 'leadership principle,' the discipline of the Communists seemed positively super-human. Here was no question of glory, no thanks, no rewards. It was for each individual not only a struggle for life or death, but for the life or death of his ideal. The central office, that anonymous force with unlimited command powers and which alone was of Hitler's stature, demanded that the Communists realise unquestionably that the particular drama being played out in any one national sector could not condition the nature of the whole world struggle. This meant that Communism could not allow its methods to be prescribed for it, neither by the enemy nor by the passions and impulses of its own members. Every German Communist must know what that implied for him personally. He must know that his personal fate was sealed.

The attitude of the Communists was fascinating, fascinating in its calmness, its firm resignation, its unconditional hardness towards themselves and towards all the hopes that had once led them to embrace their ideals. Consciously and deliberately they made ready for the illegal battle. They lived in an atmosphere reminiscent of the catacombs. Each individual was prepared to carry out his task in solitude. He surrendered not only his name and his life but also his will, and he became in actual fact part of an enormous organism that was inevitably prodigal with its living substance for the sake of the life of the organism as

a whole. It is beyond dispute that by so doing the organism acquired the right to be prodigal with substance not its own.

In those days, when everyone seemed to feel that General von Schleicher's epoch was nearing its end and that with it the last chance of a 'revolution from above,' a legal revolution by the state, was evaporating, political life as a whole seemed paralysed, though the streets were filled with a hectic, tumultuous, civil life. The brown invasion had begun. The cafés and restaurants of the Kurfürstendamm re-echoed to the tramp of boots, and everywhere were to be seen brand-new brown uniforms. At the Kaiserhof, the headquarters, a joyous confidence reigned which seemed to muffle any alternative political will that the city might have. In times of peril, when destiny approaches, the will to life always seems to flourish, life in its nakedest, greediest form, which must then break through the rigid crust of political categories that are now too narrow to contain it; this invariably seems an elementary readiness to endure everything that is coming; but it is, in fact, an eagerness to survive it all.

Despite my application to Karl Marx, I had failed to grasp the enormous significance of what I saw one February evening from the window of the suburban train that was carrying me into Berlin from Grünheide. The pale and flickering lights lay beneath a sky of red velvet which seemed to stretch over the whole city. The people in the train all stared towards the glow which, as we rounded a bend, deepened to a crystalline brilliance. The Reichstag was burning. No passenger moved. The Reichstag was burning, quite quietly, and looked like a great red and yellow wound from which the city's life was flowing. The train followed a wide arc, ever the same distance from that glittering, omnipotent centre, as though it were circling some primordial spectacle, a planet revolving about a wasting sun. And no one said a word.

The city was as quiet as the tomb, waiting, it seemed, for the catastrophe that was about to overwhelm it, having abdicated its will and made itself ready for destruction. The dull red glow had distorted its contours, so that the streets and squares seemed like Martian canals and craters, while the puffy clouds which themselves reflected the ruddy light hung so low that they appeared anxious to cover the scorched and agonised earth. Although the lights were on in the train, the red glow coloured the faces of the passengers, who all stared dumbly at the frightful spectacle, expressive of nothing save a single, paralysing horror.

I was on my way to an 'appointment,' one of those meetings that took place each day in a different place and where the Communists, now outlaws, received their instructions from the central office or from their district leaders. As I entered the room I said:

"The Reichstag is burning!"

I saw a row of white faces, all turned towards me. I knew these faces and suddenly they seemed appallingly changed. I said:

"It's true. The Reichstag is burning."

There was no movement within the room until at last a voice calmly remarked:

"This is the most monstrous act of provocation in the history of the world."

I now grasped what this news must mean to each of the men gathered here. They had played their game consistently, but at the moment when their victory seemed certain they were swindled out of their prize. They had not accepted the challenge to civil war, and now another trump card, drawn from their adversary's sleeve, was banged down on the table. There would be no civil war. There would be naked terror.

Never before had I felt so burning a shame that I was not one of them. I asked them what I could do on their behalf. I gave each one my address and telephone number, which they memorised before burning the scraps of paper. They shook hands with me and left.

The nationalist militant organisations had 'profited' by the National-Socialists' seizure of power. As the result of a compromise within the 'national government,' which included such non-National-Socialist ministers as Hugenberg, Seldte and Papen, they had been placed on an equal footing with the Party's organisations—which meant that they might do part of the latter's dirty work. The SA and they received a sort of authority to act as police.

"Wonderful, wonderful," I remarked to the Kapitän. "Just what we always wanted!"

The Kapitän said angrily:

"God knows, I don't wish to see you in a spot where you'll be glad I kept the Brigade together."

The Kapitän had appointed Walther Muthmann commandant of the Berlin division of the Brigade, a force of some fifty unemployed seamen whom the Kapitän had set up in a home and who wore the old, grey uniform of the navy with the imperial crown on their buttons and the Viking ship on their sleeve. They did nothing but sit about in the home and cost the Kapitän a considerable amount of money. But there they were, and Muthmann, also dressed in uniform and wearing the long loose officer's cape, the *spanier* of the old navy, appeared everywhere as though behind him reverberated the tramp of a hundred thousand marching feet.

"Have you got guns?" I asked him.

"Not many," he said. "A couple of pistols—but," he added emphatically, "we clean them every day."

At that time we were all living on the cheap fame of time passed, the Kapitän at our head. There was a splinter-group called, officially, the German National Youth League, and popularly the 'green boys' because they walked about in green shirts. This group had long been a

thorn in the eye of the SA, and one day the SA fell upon them, and among the men arrested and lugged off to the SA headquarters in the Pape Strasse was a member of the Brigade. Muthmann, in all the glory of his cloak, went there at once to demand the man's release. But the SA just locked up Muthmann too. He was put in the cellar with the other arrested men and, like them, he was beaten up. But in contrast to the others this was no novelty for Muthmann, and he managed to fight his way through the SA men until he got to Group Leader Ernst. Bloody and bruised, he shouted in Ernst's face:

"And you pretend to be soldiers!"

He had instinctively struck exactly the right note. These people had proclaimed the 'soldierly virtues' as the essence of education. If they were capable of feeling anything they felt the slur that it never occurred to anybody to mistake them for real soldiers. Muthmann, incidentally, had never been a soldier himself. The Group Leader set Muthmann free, together with the member of the Brigade. Muthmann immediately informed the Kapitän, who went at once to see Vice-Chancellor Papen. It was never quite clear what exactly Papen had said, but when the Kapitän came out his face was flushed with rage. He had a furious telephone conversation with the chief of the Berlin police, the former Admiral von Levetzow. The Kapitän could be uncommonly insulting when he chose, and he chose now. At last he banged down the receiver and shouted at Muthmann:

"Write a letter! Send copies to all units of my Brigade! To all offices of the Party, the police, the SA! And to the Government!" He strode up and down in a fury, dictating:

"Should armed and uniformed bodies of men approach the Brigade Home they must be, according to repeated assurances given me by the Government and by the police authorities, Communists in disguise. I am therefore ordering that, should this happen, fire will be opened upon them at once."

And indeed no armed and uniformed bodies of men approached the Brigade Home from then on—but it was situated in a quiet locality. One by one the militant organisations gave up. Seldte, now a minister, handed over his *Stahlhelm* for incorporation in Roehm's SA. The little *Werewolf*, a splinter group of the *Stahlhelm's* youth organisation, was swallowed piecemeal. Everyone believed that the Kapitän was ready to open fire, and he hesitated before making contact with Roehm: besides, there remained an old hostility from the days of the Hitler Putsch. But there was also an old enmity between the Kapitän and Hitler himself. Papen and Seldte did their best to create concord. One day during this period the Kapitän received an invitation to visit Seldte. Plaas described to me the awkward atmosphere that the Kapitän's entry into the reception hall created. Hitler saw him, pushed his way through the people grouped about him, walked up to the Kapitän smiling, and



held out his hand. The Kapitän was completely taken by surprise, since he had no idea that Hitler would be present. He was just about to take Hitler's hand when suddenly he stopped and withdrew his own. Hitler continued to smile as though nothing had happened. The Kapitän and Plaas left at once.

"Good God!" he said, "for a moment I'd actually forgotten that I'd sworn never to shake the fellow's hand again. Thank God I remembered in time!"

"That was the old Kapitän!" said Plaas, but in reality he was the old Kapitän no longer. Why did he not take a step back, he and his fossilised Brigade? Could the old bluffer no longer do so? Or did he think there were still trumps to be picked up? There was the Wehrmacht, still waiting, and everybody asked: "What is the Wehrmacht doing?" There was Papen with his mysterious Catholic Action. And there, not least of all, was the navy, with which the Kapitän preserved the most intimate relations. And an admiral was chief of the intelligence services. "Why doesn't the Kapitän take a step back?" I asked Plaas, and he replied, in a melancholy voice: "He can't. He's sworn to stand fast. It would seem to him desertion."

As every year on the anniversary of the death of Kern and Fischer, I wished to go to Saaleck to visit their grave. I telephoned Plaas to ask him if he wished to come too. He replied in rather a stilted voice that the Kapitän had invited me to drive out with him in his car. When I came round to Plaas's house he was in uniform. Soon the Kapitän arrived, likewise in uniform. He looked at me, with evident surprise, and asked:

"Why aren't you in uniform?"

I said I had none. Plaas said:

"He's still never been enrolled in the Brigade."

The Kapitän was furious.

"Good God!" he said, "you've always got to be something special, haven't you?"

I clicked my heels and boomed:

"Right, Herr Kapitän!"

In the car the Kapitän said:

"Doesn't he know what's going to happen then, Plaas?"

"No, Herr Kapitän!"

The Kapitän grinned and said:

"Well, it'll be a surprise for him."

It was a surprise. The Brigade was being incorporated. A reconciliation had taken place between the Kapitän and Hitler. During a steamer trip on the Starnberger Lake they had come to an agreement. Papen had acted as intermediary. The Kapitän had complained of the behaviour of the SA, and Hitler had recommended to him that he join the SS. The SA was supposed to be the army's dangerous competitor, while the

SS was envisaged as possibly taking over the functions of the police. The Kapitän had no wish to find himself in any sort of opposition to the army. Hitler told him that his Brigade would be incorporated as a unit into the SS and would remain under the Kapitän's command. The members of the Brigade were even to keep their grey uniforms and were to act as a sort of liaison unit between army and police. The Kapitän would be appointed to the rank of Brigade Leader, and his people would keep the ranks they already held.

"Plaas," the Kapitän asked, "what will your rank be?"

Plaas had not given the matter any thought. The Kapitän said:

"As my adjutant you have the rank of captain. So you can work it out for yourself."

Plaas worked it out and said:

"*Hauptsturmführer.*"

The Kapitän said:

"Is that what they call it? Devilish funny ranks they've thought up for themselves."

We sat in silence, but the Kapitän could not stop talking. He asked me:

"And you? What rank do you want?"

I said:

"None, Herr Kapitän!"

"The devil you don't," said he, "if I'm not too good to join this circus what makes you think you are?"

After a while he said, with a grin:

"I'll appoint you critical officer on my staff."

I did not know what that was. He said:

"I just invented it. The very thing for you, and a pleasant sort of job. Whenever I make a decision you'll criticise it. That's all."

I said:

"And then the Herr Kapitän will act as the Herr Kapitän had planned!"

He said:

"Plaas, I think he's too intelligent for the job after all."

The Kapitän was driving the car himself. I sat beside him. After a while he said:

"Ask your damn fool question if you want to."

I said:

"Herr Kapitän . . . was this inevitable?"

The Kapitän said:

"It was inevitable."

In Saaleck I left the Kapitän and Plaas. The Brigade was drawn up in a field, units from all parts of Germany amounting in all to some four hundred men. They stood in a solid square. SA and SS columns were marching along the road towards them. I went to the cemetery. But at

the gate there was posted an SS sentry, with steel helmet and rifle. I wished to enter the cemetery. He stopped me and asked to see my pass. I had no pass. I said I wanted to visit the grave of good friends, but he would not let me through. So I went back into the village. After a while I met Ernst-Werner Techow. He too was in civilian clothes. He too had been turned back by the sentry, but he had scaled the wall further on and had visited the grave. It was marked by a new, large, square block of stone which bore the names of Kern and Fischer and the inscription: "Do what you must, conquer or die, and leave the decision to God." This inscription had been chosen by the Kapitän.

Techow and I made our way to the garden of an inn whither it was our custom to go each year. Tillessen was already seated there, and he too was not in uniform. Then while a roll of drums reverberated from the field where the parade was taking place, Fischer's brother arrived, dressed as a naval captain, with Ditmar, the 'war criminal' whom we had once upon a time rescued from Naumburg prison and hidden in Saaleck castle. Ditmar wore the uniform of a lieutenant-commander. He was once again on the navy's active list. Then came Kurt Wende, Kern's brother-in-law, dressed as a leader of the National Labour Service. Cars drove past along the street, and we recognised Roehm, Himmler, Sauckel, each with his own big entourage. Groups of Hitler Youth and of the League of German Maidens came by.

Techow asked the old waiter for news of a master baker with whom he had always stayed in previous years when visiting the tomb.

"He's in a concentration camp," said the waiter.

Techow told us that the master baker was a fine, very patriotic man. The waiter said that he had spoken against the National-Socialists.

"I know you," said the waiter. "Do you remember the man, the union secretary, who called out the workers at the time the castle was surrounded . . .?" "What about him?" "There he is now," said the waiter. And there he came, wearing the uniform of a Party dignitary. Techow pointed out the man to the others. He said:

"It fits them all now. All those others."

Wende became uncomfortable. He said:

"Don't start bitching. I'm in uniform."

But Ditmar said good-naturedly:

"I'm in uniform too, and as far as I'm concerned you can bitch all you like. During the whole of the Weimar period I never had any trouble. But nowadays they grub about in my mail and they tap my telephone. They're a constant pest to me, this gang!"

Techow said a great deal that was on his mind. Ditmar listened with a worried expression on his face. He had only recently returned from Spain, where he had been in hiding. He said:

"It all looked so different from abroad!"

Then Plaas arrived.

“Here you are,” he said. “I might have guessed it. The Kapitän wants you to come on down.”

Techow was against this idea:

“Why do they want us? What have we got to do with this nautical amboree?” None of them wished to go. “What’s it got to do with us?”

Plaas turned to me:

“The Kapitän definitely wishes to have a word with you.”

I went with him. I’ve never been a spoilsport.

The Kapitän stood alone in front of the little green square which was his Brigade. To either side stood the deep columns of the SS and the SA, with banners, standards and brass bands. In front of the ranks of the SS stood high Party leaders in all their splendour. When the Kapitän saw us coming he walked across.

“You, Plaas,” he said, “will stand behind me and to my right.” He turned to me. “And you will be so good as to stand behind me and to my left. And pay attention, because I’m going to make a speech.”

Then he turned on his heel and with Plaas and myself following re-entered the hollow square. He took up his position in front of his Brigade.

I felt very uncomfortable. For so far as the eye could see I was the only civilian present. My only consolation was the thought that I should doubtless have felt even more uncomfortable had I been standing there in uniform. The group of distinguished guests stared at me. Now the Kapitän began to speak, in short, clipped sentences as was his custom. He said:

“Men of my Brigade—you know that it was only after a very long time—and after many and fierce struggles—that we felt ourselves ready—to join a formation—of the new Germany.—And I’m glad of that—because it’s only by fighting—that you come to know—your enemy—to respect him—or to despise him—as the case may be.—And in the future—we shall continue to behave—as we have done in the past.”

I looked at the group of Party leaders. The gentry stood motionless. There was an expression of bewilderment on Roehm’s face. I let my eyes travel back to the Kapitän’s neck. It was a very stiff neck indeed.

“We shall no longer engage—in politics.—We shall leave politics—to the new Chancellor—that’s what he’s for—but we shall keep our rifles ready—as we are accustomed to do—being soldiers—and we shall be prepared—in case of war—which even the new Chancellor cannot prevent—”

I glanced at Plaas, who gave me a side-long look in return.

“Men of my brigade—have asked me about—the so-called—German greeting.—I have arranged—that we shall greet one another—in the manner to which—as soldiers—we are accustomed—that is to say—by raising the right hand—to the headpiece—if we are wearing a head-

piece.—Should we be bare-headed—we shall give the German greeting.—I hereby order the men of my Brigade—whether on or off duty—at all times—to wear a headpiece—”

Now the banners rustled in the wind.

“That is all.—One other thing.—No hurrahs!—No ahoys!—Our cheer will no more be used.—Instead the cheer—is *Heil!*—To the chancellor—and to our fatherland—for which we are ready to undertake any duty—*Heil! Heil! Heil!*”

The Kapitän turned about. He walked up to me and took me by the sleeve. Plaas had stepped forward and was giving the words of command that would enable the Brigade to stand easy. The Kapitän said to me:

“You’re a writer. Damn it, you must know something about these things. Tell me honestly—did I kowtow to those fellows too much?”

I said laboriously that on this particular point the Herr Kapitän could set his mind completely at rest.

We were able to visit the grave after all the festivities were over. The Kapitän and Plaas still had a certain amount to discuss with the local SS leader concerning the handing over of the Brigade, and I saw to it that they were not interrupted by our comrades, to whom I repeated the Kapitän’s speech word for word. This speech was received with great approbation. I was frequently asked to repeat it and it became, indeed, my star turn. But I was not the only person present at the ceremony who had memorised it. Neither Roehm nor Himmler nor Sauckel had bidden the Kapitän good-bye.

When, two weeks later, the Kapitän and Plaas returned to Berlin from a voyage, they found both their office and the Brigade Home closed and sealed. Enquiries revealed that, despite the agreement made, the Brigade as a unified formation had been dissolved and its members had been summoned individually by their local SS units and asked whether or not they wished to remain in that organisation as ordinary SS men. The great majority had refused this offer. Those who turned it down were beaten and sent home; those who accepted were incorporated as individuals into the SS.

The Kapitän informed all former members of his Brigade that he was resigning his SS commission, nor did the circular letter which he sent out omit the phrase about the road of the national movement being paved with the Party’s broken promises. Only of Plaas did the Kapitän demand that he stay in the SS, for he wished to maintain at least one reliable listening post within that organisation of the Party. I asked the Kapitän what his plans now were. He said that he was contemplating, for the first time, making use of his wife’s family connections abroad. His wife had been born a Princess Hohenlohe-Oeringen. I was startled and I asked him whether he really planned to emigrate. But that was not his intention. He said he only envisaged one remaining

political task; by means of his wife's high social connections in England he intended to make it quite clear to the English politicians that whatever should happen in Germany would be the inevitable and direct consequence of the Versailles Treaty. He said:

"There'll be a war, that's certain. And we'll lose this war too, that's also certain. And I shall do everything in my power to make it plain to the English that after the next war they mustn't repeat the lunacy of Versailles."

The Brigade was smashed. Such was the last act in the history of the German national movement. Whenever I thought back over it all I was filled with wretchedness. What a wealth of spirit had been senselessly squandered! What eager devotion had been criminally wasted! I could not help recalling Gerhart Hauptmann's phrase in *Florian Geyer*: "The finest action, the noblest cause, the most sacred cause . . . a cause that God once placed in your hands, in your hands it was pearls before swine."

I had no idea what was going on in Munich. During the course of the night Muthmann telephoned me. Muthmann, an agricultural expert by profession, had not joined the SS. He worked for an agricultural corporation, but he remained in touch with his former comrades. He had set up a sort of private intelligence service, and he was always well informed. I was accustomed to these nocturnal calls of his; he would say what he had to say in a few brief words that would mean little, if anything, to anyone tapping the wire, and what he had to say was always of interest. Now he said: "It stinks in Munich." I replied that it stank everywhere. He said: "Chief's in danger." I told him that he could get me all next day at Rowohlt's in Grünheide. He hung up.

The next morning when I arrived at Rowohlt's I found him glued to his radio. With an agitated wave of the hand he signalled me to be quiet when I tried to wish him a good morning. The radio was announcing the news of the shooting of Roehm and the other senior SA leaders. Rowohlt was not alone. Also present were a man and his young wife who had shortly before come to see Rowohlt on Roehm's behalf. Roehm had suggested to Rowohlt that he publish his book, *The History of a Traitor*. Roehm had quarrelled with the official Party publishing house. Rowohlt had given me Roehm's book to read, and by the expression on his face I could see that he had got a whiff of something into which he would very much like to dig his teeth. To do the Eher-Verlag in the eye in this fashion was just the sort of prospect that appealed to the old Rowohlt. But the whiff was deceptive, the dish no good. I knew what sort of arguments made the strongest impression on Rowohlt. I flayed the book from the literary point of view, which was not difficult. I read him a few sentences aloud. Bad German was only tolerable to Rowohlt if something of factual importance emerged from

the inferior prose. There was nothing of factual importance in this book. Roehm's representative had now come to Grünheide to hear Rowohlt's decision. Meanwhile another had decided.

The man's young wife sat beside the radio with tears pouring down her cheeks. "Spreti too!" she sobbed. Count Spreti was a young SA officer and, I think, Roehm's adjutant. The young woman wept uncontrollably; Spreti had been such an enchanting person, she said. After the announcement Rowohlt wished to turn off the radio, but I stopped him. There was a brief pause and then the same announcement was repeated; at short intervals it was given over and over again. But I would not turn it off. Rowohlt cried: "Switch it off!" when once again the unbearable announcer's voice began the same unbearable announcement. I said to the young woman:

"You must listen to this, you must listen to it over and over again! Never in your lifetime must you be able to forget it. Now listen!"

Later Lucie Höfflich, the great German actress, came to Rowohlt's house. She sat with the others and listened to the news that every few minutes the appalling machine spouted forth into the room. She asked me what it all meant. I said:

"It is no concern of ours. Let them devour one another!"

But Frau Höfflich shook her head. In her trained, clear and uncommonly human voice she said:

"I think it's the concern of all of us. Here are men being murdered without trial or sentence, murdered by murderers who were their victims' friends and who hold the highest appointments at the head of our nation. I think it certainly concerns us all."

Then Muthmann telephoned. I drove into the city, and we met beside a car that belonged to my brother Horst. We were stopped three times by SS patrols. But the car was a small one and old, and our identity cards showed that we were not Party members. There were advantages, at times, in not belonging to the Party.

"What's actually the matter with you people?" Muthmann asked. The patrolman replied:

"There's nothing the matter with the SS! It's those SA swine that are getting it in the neck."

We were allowed to drive on. Outside Friesack we picked up Plaas. Informed by Muthmann, he had come here from Finkenkrug by motorcycle.

The Kapitän still knew nothing of what was going on. He never listened to the radio. "Roehm?" he said: "Never could stand the fellow!" In a few brief words Plaas and Muthmann told him what must have happened. The Kapitän said: "But all that's got nothing to do with us!" Plaas and Muthmann tried to make him see that this was very probably a nicely calculated excuse for a 'major house-cleaning.' The Kapitän pointed to his dog, a gigantic Newfoundland, which had

rested its chin on the table and was staring at us with pendulous dewlaps and blood-shot eyes. "Trained to go for men," he said: "Bought the creature especially for just such an occasion as this." He said: "I have absolutely no intention of budging from my own house." He said: "Let them come!" He said: "Devil take it, I've absolutely no connection with this sort of thing any more."

Suddenly the Kapitän's wife said:  
"The diary!"

We set about hunting for the diary. We searched the whole house, while the Kapitän remained sitting over his schnaps and laughing. But we were in no mood for laughter. We did not find the diary, but we did find some hard words to describe half-baked conspirators who keep diaries filled with treasonable remarks and then mislay them in their own homes. Finally we succeeded in persuading the Kapitän that he could at least go and hunt the wild boars which were plundering his potato fields near the forest's edge. We all accompanied him, with guns in our hands and pistols in our pockets. We felt no anxiety in leaving the Kapitän's wife in her home. We did not yet know about the murder of General von Schleicher's wife.

They arrived, fourteen of them, about an hour after we had left the house with the Kapitän. The Newfoundland gave the intruders his paw. After having searched the house they lolled about in the Kapitän's arm-chairs, smoking his cigars. The Kapitän's wife could be very much the princess when she chose. She said that she was accustomed to see her guests stand up when she, their hostess, entered the room—and the guests rose sheepishly to their feet. They asked:

"Why has the Kapitän fled?"

The princess was quite astonished. He had not fled, he was out boar hunting. Where did he do that? The princess showed them a map of the estate. The gentlemen would have to take the path along the edge of the lake until they reached the woods.

"Through that clearing there?" they asked.

"Through that clearing there," said the princess.

If he'd gone hunting, one of them said, then he must have taken a gun with him.

"Two," said the princess.

The men looked at one another.

"In that case we must first telephone."

"Please do."

They went into the next room and telephoned. Then they finished the Kapitän's bottle of schnaps and left. They had found the Kapitän's diary. He had used it to prop up a loose table leg in his smoking room.

The Kapitän would have to leave, there could be no question about it. At last he saw this himself. We set about the business in our usual fashion. He would have to travel separately from his wife but shadowed



by us and handed on from one of us to the next. We knew the border near Lorrach intimately. I did not go with the Kapitän, but I accompanied his wife to the train. Muthmann was already seated in the compartment, wearing an unusually fetching Scotch travelling cap and behaving in a very foreign sort of way.

I stood outside the window of the compartment so that I might say goodbye to the princess as the train pulled out. I felt insanely furious. I thought I should say something to the princess, some last remark that she could take with her on her travels. I could think of nothing. She had always been so very much the princess, and had a manner of raising her eyebrows if anything at all crude were said . . . we were all a little frightened of her. There she stood at the window of her compartment, her hands in their pearl grey gloves resting on the sill, gazing at me silently, a princess of the house of Hohenlohe-Oeringen, the wife of our Kapitän, of the man who had once been the great hope of German nationalism, the man who had been known in the Imperial Navy as "red Ehrhardt," the man who had led the torpedo attack at Jutland, the man who had marched at the head of his Brigade through the Brandenburg Gate, the man who had sat in prison. . . . I was in a frightful rage. Did such a man really have to flee in secret from his country, a country for which, during twenty years, he had lived and fought and made mistakes—did his wife need to . . . ? The train began to pull out, and still I had said nothing. The train gathered speed and I ran along beside it, and at last I banged my fist against her window and roared:

"Oh, shit—ahoy!"

The princess carefully took off her glove, banged with her bare fist on the sill and cried in her clear voice:

"Shit! Ahoy!"

I was extremely curious to hear what Hitler would have to say about the events of June 30th, 1934. Wilhelm Scheuermann invited me to listen to the broadcast with him. Scheuermann came from Alsace and was one of those German Alsatians who are as fanatically German as the French Alsatians are French. He was a journalist and had been one of the best known war correspondents during the World War; later he was a highly esteemed contributor to the national Press. Rowohlt had published his biography of Oberlin, entitled *A Man With God*. He was an old man, by this time a sort of eccentric. He had an ill-kempt beard, like a goat's, and his general appearance was so broken down and decayed that it required an effort of will to overcome one's reluctance to be seen with him in public. But he liked going out, and he loved good food. He had now invited some foreign correspondents to dine with him at a well-known restaurant in the centre of the city, a place famous for the excellence of its French cooking. It was very important, he felt, that we should listen to Hitler's speech in their company. He had

learned by experience that even the most hard-boiled among the foreign correspondents were liable, under the impact of Hitler's oratory, to misjudge the reception his speeches got from German listeners. There were Englishmen, Americans and Frenchmen at the restaurant. Scheuermann was a most charming host. The speech was monstrous. To begin with I tried to go on eating, but I could not. The foreign correspondents, too, laid down their knives and forks. The waiters stood by the sideboard, their faces pale and motionless. The harsh, throaty, heavy voice silenced all other noises in the room; it seemed to cover us like a thick blanket and to make even breathing difficult. Only once, when Hitler said that during the course of the 'action' the notes of one of the conspirators had been found and that when he read these notes he had been staggered . . . only then did I, with a great effort, manage to say I could well believe *that*. My voice sounded rusty and abrupt. The correspondents glanced at me for a moment and then their eyes returned to the radio, which was in a cupboard over the sideboard. The man had the nerve to maintain the fiction that Roehm had been shot because he was a homosexual; he had the nerve to allege that Roehm had established contact with foreign powers for the purpose of committing high treason; he had the nerve to repeat everything that had already, laboriously enough, been officially put out and which no single human being of normal intelligence had been able to believe. And through it all this voice emanated a dark and menacing power, it vibrated as dangerously as the buzzing of a hornet, it roared as sullenly as the roar of an irritated lion, displaying a latent brutality which made me hunch my shoulders.

Tremulously I tried to think what I should say to the foreigners when it was over, to these men who were far better informed than myself concerning many aspects of the business and who now listened without moving a muscle of their faces. The man with the voice succeeded in one thing: in my shame for my fatherland I was suddenly choking with the furious feeling that these men were my enemies, that so far as they were concerned I no longer had any choice, that despite everything, everything, I must still accept the fact that I belonged to my own country, to a country in which this could happen, this inexcusable, atrocious justification of an inexcusable, atrocious act of violence. I hated these men, these witnesses to our almost intolerable humiliation, and I wished that they too, sitting there, enveloped in their moral security, might one day get a man such as this in their country. Oh, they too should know the trembling of the knees, they too should be faced daily and hourly with the foul alternatives of behaving like a fool or like a coward. Should I tell the Englishman there something about the bloody history of his kings, about Ireland and the concentration camps of the Boer War? Should I remind that Frenchman of Robespierre and the murder of the Duc d'Enghien and Napoleon's note:

“André Hofer is to be court-martialled in Mantua, found guilty and shot.”? Should I recall to the American the extermination of the Indians, the treatment meted out to the negroes, the rule of the gangsters in Chicago?

But we were seated here, here in the centre of Berlin, a few minutes' walk from the man who was now roaring: “At that moment I was the supreme judge in my land,” whereas in fact all he had been was the supreme executioner. And I had once written of my faith in our nation, of its great, historic task which was to find, between East and West, the one true order; I had once spoken of our last dream, of that enormous, final ambition for the realisation of which we had fought; I had done that, and for that my comrades had died, for that we had heard the prison doors close behind us; I had once written that our final ambition, our most secret faith, was in the victory of the German way throughout the whole world!

Scheuermann sat there with closed eyes. The correspondents did not make notes. They no longer stared at the radio. They looked at us, Scheuermann and myself, the two Germans. The voice was thanking one man, General von Blomberg, for his outstandingly loyal behaviour. “I shall never forget him for this,” said the voice, almost breaking with emotion. So he too had been enticed into the abominable circle, he had suddenly become a chum, an accomplice, he a general and an aristocrat and the representative of the last power within the land in which we could place some hope, he too inveigled into the sinister clique, bought and won through self-interest.

Never have I so despised myself as when, the speech over, I got up and walked out. Scheuermann came with me. He settled the bill, we left the foreigners alone, we muttered a few words and we disappeared. In the street we did not speak. We had nothing to say to one another, we two who were both Germans by belief and not just through a biological accident.

I collected all the reports I could find concerning June 30th, 1934. One name, which I hunted for everywhere in vain, was that of my old defender, Dr. Luetgebrune. I had not seen him since the day he got me out of gaol on the occasion of my involvement with the Peasants' Movement. But I had seen a photograph of him in the paper, at some SA parade. He was wearing a uniform, that of an SA Group Leader, which became him extremely ill. One year after June 30th, 1934, I thought I saw him in a taxi that passed me in a Berlin street. But I could not be sure that it was he. I telephoned Muthmann, whom Luetgebrune had also at one time defended at the Neumünster trial. Muthmann promised to make enquiries. The very next day he called me back. The doctor really was in Berlin after months in prison. Muthmann gave me his address. I went to see him at once.

He got up as I came in. I was shocked. Before me there stood an old

man with watery eyes above deep pouches. He looked as though he had been put through a wringer. I held out my hand and cried:

“Doctor—don’t you recognise me?”

He stared at me and mumbled:

“Yes, yes.”

His hand was reaching for the light switch. I gripped it and it trembled badly. I turned on the light. The doctor opened the door to a big room, the floor was covered with books torn from their cases and shelves. In the centre stood an enormous round table, piled high with papers. In the corner was a prie-dieu on which stood an open Gutenberg bible. The doctor was a most devout Christian of the Reformed Church. He began shuffling about among the papers on the table. I said:

“Doctor, I heard you were about again. . . . Is there anything that I can do for you?”

He supported himself with both his hands on the table while he sank into a chair.

“I’m finished,” he said, “I’m completely finished. They finished me.”

I saw a pile of papers on the table, large sheets and small, completely blank save that each one was signed, and the signatures were either ‘Adolf Hitler’ or ‘Ernst Roehm.’

“What are these?” I asked.

The doctor took a sheet with a trembling hand. He said:

“They’re blank signatures. I always had to show my full authority for the cases I handled. So Hitler and Roehm gave me these blank sheets to fill in as need arose. I was legal adviser to the supreme command of SA. . . .” He repeated: “Legal adviser . . .”

I said:

“Please give them to me, doctor, I can find a use for them.”

He looked up:

“How?” he asked.

I said:

“Imagine, doctor, if Hitler got a letter every day saying: ‘Dear Adolf, here I am in hell. When are you coming to join me? Yours, Ernst Roehm.’”

The doctor laid his arm on the table and rested his head on his arm. I sat down beside him and said:

“Or what do you think of this? A letter indisputably signed by our great Führer and addressed to every Party office in the land: ‘Every word that I have uttered during the last shameful fourteen years has been a lie. But now I recognise the truth: I am the greatest traitor in the history of the world. I hereby dissolve the Party and place Germany’s destiny in the hands of . . .’ Of whom? Yes, whom . . .? Doctor?”

The doctor looked up. He said, as the tears trickled down over those great pouches beneath his eyes:

“And what has happened to justice . . .?”

What should I say? I said:

“I see you’re busy tidying up. Shall I help you?”

It was a long job. The doctor had not been in Munich. He had been attending some legal function in central Germany. He was arrested there though he could not discover why. Then he was moved to Berlin, where he arrived just one day after the last shots had re-echoed from the bloodstained walls of Lichterfelde. That fact saved his life. The interrogations to which he was subjected were as grotesque as were the accusations made against him. As an SA Group Leader he was automatically suspected of having participated in the ‘Roehm Putsch.’ The fiction that there had been such a putsch was rigidly maintained. But the doctor could prove that Roehm had given him—who had never even been a Party member—the rank and the right to wear the uniform simply in order that he might command the authority he needed in the offices of the supreme SA leadership to carry out his job there. The doctor could prove that he had only worn his uniform once: that apart from the one connected with his legal duties he had never held any other sort of appointment: that he was never called in when political matters were being discussed: and that indeed only occasionally did he have any personal dealings with the SA leaders, and then only to talk about some current law case. He was thereupon accused of having failed to do his duty as an SA Group Leader; had he done his duty he must have known of the intended act of high treason. This was the devil’s logic. His life hung by a thread—but meanwhile Rudolf Hess had already begun his journeys to apologise to the dependents of those men who had been murdered in error. Meanwhile the man who killed General von Schleicher and his wife had himself been shot. Meanwhile the Reichswehr had demanded a statement clearing the general’s honour, had demanded and got it. For months on end Luetgebrune had been moved from prison to prison, had been interrogated over and over again and finally, without any explanation, had been set free. He did not speak of his time in prison. No one spoke of his time in prison, except those who had come through it all right.

How about Roehm? The doctor thought highly of Roehm. Roehm had a soldierly toughness, like the mercenaries of old who wished to live and let live; he also possessed that remarkable form of tolerance which, while allowing respect for an adversary, does so simply to fight him all the more stubbornly. Of course Roehm was really homosexual; the doctor had undertaken several legal cases for him connected with this fact. The doctor knew that the danger to Roehm from these inclinations lay in the tendency to form a clique, to judge his colleagues less according to their actual qualifications than according to the degree of personal sympathy which they inspired. But Roehm was himself aware of this and was always prepared to listen to criticism on this score.

Roehm, the old trooper, hated the stupid and narrow-minded arrogance of the Party as represented by its heavily decorated leaders; he was, to a certain extent, defending his own cause when he spoke publicly against the false morality of the Party authorities in the matter of "decadent art" and of the use of lipstick by "the German women." He was the only one with the courage to contradict Hitler. When Hitler shouted, Roehm shouted back even louder. But he was loyal to Hitler. That was certain. Roehm might completely forget that Hitler had once been his protégé—Hitler never forgot.

Roehm was convinced of the rightness and necessity of the 'national revolution.' He was convinced that his SA were the assault troops of the revolution, not the Party, which provided the administrative organisation, and which, with its many-sided structure and its multiple offices, had the task of constructing a mould for the future state into which the state could, in due course, be poured. Roehm believed himself to be responsible for the continuation of the revolution even after the formation of the new state, and he referred to himself and to his SA as the "engine" of the movement. He took the Party programme seriously in so far as it affected his field. His field, and of this he had no doubt, lay in the formation of a "people's militia." This was a task that fully suited his temperament. The old trooper was proud to have an ever larger force at his command; he swallowed the *Stahlhelm*, and every increase in strength delighted him; he would have liked to swallow the Communist *Rotfrontkämpfer* and the Social-Democrat *Reichsbanner* too if he could. He harboured no distrust against former enemies; he was so convinced of the radiant charms of his proud SA, of its sense of comradeship, its organisation, its leaders, its uniforms, its "loyalty," its "keenness"—that he thought it impossible for anyone who learned to know it as it really was to resist its spirit.

Did Roehm wish to swallow the Reichswehr? The doctor said:

"Roehm was an old soldier. He'd been in the Reichswehr himself and he still had many friends and comrades there. Naturally he wished to see the Reichswehr expanded to be the armed forces, the Wehrmacht, of the new Germany; he did not insist on the re-introduction of compulsory military service so long as this was forbidden by the Versailles Treaty, but he did want the cadres to be filled by volunteer enlistment. He regarded it as his task to arrange this. But here he came up against the Reichswehr's opposition. He did not wish to swallow the Reichswehr, and the Reichswehr for its part did not wish to swallow him. He left the decision to Hitler. And Hitler did not make one."

The doctor said:

"Naturally we discussed all this frequently. When it was being commonly alleged that it was Roehm's ambition to be made War Minister, I asked him if this was true. Roehm replied that it was widely rumoured that my ambition was to become Minister of Justice, and he asked me

if that was true. I gave him my word of honour that I should never desire the Ministry of Justice and that even if it were offered to me I should decline the appointment. He said: 'In that case I can give you my word of honour that I should never desire the War Ministry and that even if it were offered me I should decline it.' And Roehm—well, I think Roehm was a man of his word."

I asked:

"Did he wish to make a putsch?"

The doctor glanced at the wall where hung a plaque with the heads of Hitler and Roehm in relief. He said heavily:

"I've thought a lot about the fatality of that day. You can imagine how many friends I had. I knew them all, and they all talked to me quite openly. When I was being interrogated I was asked if Roehm had wished to make a putsch—I was asked this over and over again, so they obviously didn't know themselves, though they behaved as though the putsch were proved—and I replied with a clear conscience: 'No.'"

Later my good old doctor became, once again, the counsel for the defence. He made enquiries and bit by bit he amassed the evidence. The reunion of the SA leaders had been ordered by Hitler, not by Roehm. Roehm was sick at the time, rheumatic, and felt far from the top of his form. The SA leaders were waiting for Hitler's decision concerning the future relationship between the SA and the army. Hitler had continually avoided making one. The SA knew that it no longer had the Führer's ear, while he was quite ready to listen to the Reichswehr generals. But these too he left in doubt as to what his decision would be. Hess had made a menacing speech in which he had threatened those elements anxious to continue the revolution. The SA had become unpopular with all the local branches of the Party, and the SA leaders believed that Hess was speaking for himself, as the Party representative within the Ministry, and not as Hitler's mouthpiece. The SA leaders hoped that at the Bad Wiessee reunion they would at last have an opportunity of laying their complaints before Hitler. They were in good heart because they interpreted Hitler's previous indecision to their advantage; in any event, no matter what he decided, they were determined to bow to his will. Roehm even let the Reichswehr know this.

One of the Reichswehr generals, the commander of the Munich area and an old comrade of Roehm's from the World War, went to see Roehm after he arrived in Bad Wiessee. He laid his hand on the hilt of Roehm's dagger. This was in allusion to the weapons of the SA. Roehm, the old "machine-gun king of Bavaria," had managed, despite everything that had happened over the years, to safeguard his secret arms dumps. Now he had broken up his arsenals and distributed the weapons among the various units of the SA. The Reichswehr knew this. The Reichswehr was of the opinion that these guns belonged by

rights to it. The Reichswehr jealously clung to its title as the 'nation's only armed force.' The general pointed out to Roehm with the utmost earnestness that he was making a fatal error if he thought that the Reichswehr would not open fire; the Reichswehr would open fire and in no uncertain fashion. The general was of the opinion that the possession of arms by the SA was one fact which made it more difficult for the Chancellor to make a decision, a decision which was awaited equally by the Reichswehr and by the SA. The general proposed to Roehm that the weapons in question be put in neutral hands and he suggested that they be entrusted to the local police forces; these forces were to be subordinated to Himmler in the near future, but meanwhile both they and Himmler were still under Minister Roehm. Roehm was very impressed by the extreme earnestness of the general, and he announced his readiness to accept this proposal. He gave the general his word of honour that he would not make a putsch, that he had no ambition to be War Minister, that he would order that the arms be deposited as suggested. The general, his anxieties now set at rest, departed. In fact Roehm gave his deputy in Munich, Group Leader Schneidhuber, the necessary instructions. Hitler was in Godesberg.

At dawn trucks drove up to the local depots of the SA and the weapons were loaded on board. The SS had not been informed of Roehm's agreement with the general, but they saw what was now happening. They informed Godesberg that the SA was arming.

A single question put to Schneidhuber would have explained everything. But Hitler went to find Schneidhuber, tore off his epaulets, and had him led into the next room and there shot.

So may it have happened; it is at least a credible picture. The only organisation that could confirm or deny it, the Reichswehr, kept silent. In such cases the Reichswehr always kept silent. The Seeckt tradition was bearing its fruit.

Dr. Luetgebrune described the events of June 30th as a fatality. But the doctor was the counsel for the defence, not the judge. The "supreme judge" had said: "Homosexuality." He had said: "Conspiracy with persons abroad." Whether the picture of the fatality as drawn by the doctor in his capacity of defending counsel be true or not, one thing is certain: for fourteen years Hitler had known that Roehm was homosexual. And there was not the single, slightest shred of evidence to support his allegation concerning conspiracy with persons abroad. Since when was homosexuality a capital offence? And was General von Schleicher a pederast? Was the leader of 'Catholic Action,' Ministerial Councillor Dr. Klausener, homosexual? Had the entire entourage of Vice-Chancellor von Papen, men like von Bohse and Edgar Jung, conspired with persons abroad? This was no question of a fatality. He spoke as a man who wished to hush up a crime.

It might well strike foreigners as inexplicable that the German nation



as a whole should patiently tolerate this appalling deed, that the Reichswehr should accept the shooting of its general. However, Schleicher's death constituted a trump card in the army's hand and one that could be played to its full value. Hitler paid the cost of this trump in many favours bestowed on the army. It might be a gift or it might be a deal—the army accepted the gifts and haggled over the deals, and profited accordingly. Once upon a time the army had been the nation's representative. Now the Wehrmacht was just a power among powers.

As for the broad masses of the people, were they not told that with this bloody act the revolution was ended? Might they not feel that the end of the revolution, of such a revolution, was not too expensively bought at the price of this appropriate deed? Did this not mean that the state was once again asserting its rights—by right?

If this was in fact the end of the revolution, then the next task of the "supreme judge" must be the creation of justice—as Napoleon had created the *Code Napoléon* when his particular revolution was over. Dr. Luetgebrune believed firmly that this would happen, and he made ready to co-operate in the drawing up of a new code of laws, a recreation of justice. When I visited him he was hard at work, trying desperately to work out what was implied in the official decision to scrap 'Roman Law.' He found nothing superior to Roman Law, that first, genial discovery of a genial state, a discovery that in its validity had outlived the state which begot it for more than a thousand years. Was not Roman Law precisely the one form of law which 'served the people' . . . ?

The doctor had lost everything. He had always lived well, with his camel-hair coats and the aroma of expensive cigars that he dispensed wherever he went. He had never saved money. Now he still owned a small house at Mittenwald, built in the peasant style of Upper Bavaria, and that was all he did possess. His big offices were not closed. They continued as before, but there was nothing being done in them. They started by consuming the remnants of the doctor's fortune and then they vegetated on credit. The doctor had no longer any cases to handle; his former clients avoided him like the plague.

He had to be rehabilitated. The revolution was over and a period of law was now to take its place. Hitler had discriminated against him, and I felt that Hitler must now rehabilitate him. What was the point of my having a cousin on Hess's staff? But the cousin became very agitated when I told him what I wanted him to do. He was not going to venture into the quagmire of June 30th, he cried. Anything else, but not that! Finally, however, he laid the case before Hess. Hess in due course told him that he had attempted to intervene with Hitler. But Hitler had said at once:

"Don't talk to me about Dr. Luetgebrune. For fourteen years that man concealed from me the fact that Roehm was homosexual!"

And at home in my trunk I had the blank signatures, the unused

authorisations which Hitler had signed for use in Luetgebrune's legal cases. It was no good. If the doctor did not wish to starve to death he would have to request that a disciplinary committee or court be set up to investigate his case. He did this with extreme reluctance, for he knew exactly how much his dear colleagues—the “fence-sitters,” he called them—had begrudged him his past triumphs, those colleagues who had joined the National-Socialist Legal League in March, 1933, at the earliest and who were now enjoying a golden age as the “guardians of the people's rights” in a manner suitable to “the healthy attitude of the nation.”

The case that was drawn up against him contained eight charges, and the doctor said that a glance at this document would show me how right he was to describe them as fence-sitters. Each individual charge was, in all its perfidy, easily refuted. None had the slightest bearing on the events of June 30th, which alone had made the setting-up of this committee necessary. The eighth charge was so grotesque that the doctor, in order not to bring the court and the dignity of the legal profession as a whole into disrepute, had decided to ignore it. This charge accused the doctor of having, as a “National-Socialist lawyer,” defended the Jew Krojanker. The doctor had never been a Party member. Long before 1933 he had been defending counsel in the case of the “Gambling House on the Heydt Strasse.” One among the many defendants had been Herr Dr. Krojanker of the shoe company, Konrad Tack & Co. The doctor had never even met Herr Dr. Krojanker.

Charge one against him was that he had demanded too much money from the leaders of the Peasants' Movement for his part in their defence. This charge affected me. The doctor had defended me often enough and he had always refused to accept a single penny for doing so. I knew many other men whom he had likewise defended for nothing. But this accusation also affected the responsible leaders of the Peasants' Movement, for it automatically implied that they had casually squandered the peasants' money. The answer was to send for the peasants.

And they came, those men who had at one time made the financial arrangements with the doctor, they came, led by Hamkens. As was their custom they wore their green coats, their heavy boots, with their flat caps on their heads and their sticks in their hands. The sight of the peasants appearing before this court delighted me. And I was even more delighted when the president of the committee adopted an extremely affable manner towards the peasants; these simple men of the soil must be completely confused by the pomp of this splendid court, and his friendly and patronising manner was designed to put them at their ease in such a way as to ensure that they say what the court was anxious to hear.

The president was Professor Noack, a lawyer, from Halle. And in front of him stood the peasant Hamkens, from Tetenbüll, in his heavy boots, twisting his cap between his fingers, with the same serious,

modest, somewhat distant expression on his face, indicative of an extreme effort to concentrate, that he had worn before so many courts where he had been the accused. But this the president did not know. Naturally the honest peasant spoke Low German, and the president was clearly making ready to drag the words from his mouth, one by one if need be. But it all went quite smoothly. Hamkens described carefully how he had asked that the doctor let him have an estimate of the costs of the defence. He went on to say, with furrowed brow, how shocked he was at the total figure.

“And then?” asked the president.

“Then,” said Hamkens, “the doctor offered to undertake the whole case for a round sum.”

“Which was?” asked the chairman.

“Which was about half the official fee,” said Hamkens.

And then the simple peasant produced the figures, very exact figures. He explained, apologetically as it were, that as a landlord he'd had to pick up the habit of keeping careful accounts, for without it his inn would soon have gone bankrupt. The president, somewhat taken aback, asked one or two other artful questions, which Hamkens answered simply but fully. Then the president dismissed Hamkens, who picked up his stick, which he had carefully laid along the edge of the witness box, and, with the heavy step of the marsh peasant who is accustomed to stride across very damp, very rich soil, prepared to leave the hall. But before he had reached the door the president called him back. The president said that it had been a great pleasure to the court to hear the testimony of so outstanding a witness, to make the acquaintance of so distinguished and patriotic a man—and here he turned his head from side to side as though demanding the approbation of his colleagues on the bench; he said that he was himself quite well aware that in its time the Peasants' Movement had been a highly patriotic, nationalistic, and excellent cause which had consciously fought for a new, a greater, a cleaner Germany; and it was quite obvious, wasn't it, that to defend their good, patriotic cause the peasants would only have called in a lawyer of whom they were convinced that he too was a firmly patriotic man? That was obvious, wasn't it?

Hamkens said:

“Of course.”

The president said:

“Of course, of course. And it's obvious, isn't it, that you'd never have taken on a lawyer who you knew also defended Jews?”

The doctor glanced up, horrified. Hamkens knew nothing about the eighth charge. Hamkens said slowly:

“Well, such a consideration would never occur to us about our Herr Doktor. We knew our Herr Doktor. We knew he didn't just defend his clients—we knew he defended justice itself.”

The doctor was formally told that he was rehabilitated. We spent the evening with Hamkens and the other peasant witnesses, and we all sang *Schleswig-Holstein, ocean-girt*.

This happened while the Olympic Games were taking place in Berlin. That was a good time, wasn't it? The city was decorated with unusual gaiety, the ladies wore pretty summer dresses, very agreeable young girls in simple white tunics handed the laurel or oakleaf crowns to the victors, and each time a German won a gold medal the proud new German flag was hoisted by sailors in white dress uniforms. The streets were filled with foreigners. The cases that contained the anti-Semitic paper, *Der Stürmer*, had disappeared from the walls, as had the notices on the park benches which forbade Jews to sit down. We all had occasion to feel more or less satisfied. The revolution was over, wasn't it? The Olympiad was a gateway between us and the outer world which had now been opened; we could not as yet step through it, but the world could and did come to us, which was after all a beginning. Germany, it was plain, presented herself as the land of order, tradition and justice. The law was once again in force, even the Nuremberg laws, those fatuous, infamous, wretched laws; but they were laws, after all, weren't they? And as such they placed a limit on the atrocities of despotism. And so great was the importance which Hitler attached to justice that he needed two Ministers of Justice: one was the national Minister of Justice, Dr. Gürtner, an old and experienced official; the other, in the full vigour of his prime, was Minister Frank, the President of the Academy of German Law, whose task it was at long last to codify the German legal system. And Frank set to work with a swing.

This valiant Munich lawyer had every reason to wish to get this job, than which none more suitable could have been found for him. Now he was confronted with the task of conjuring a basic concept of law from out of the National-Socialist *Weltanschauung*. He had long enough thundered against Roman Law; his qualification for his new job was that he had always held Roman Law to be a distortion of the substance of German justice. Now he was to show what he could do. It was a job to make the doughtiest man think twice, particularly if he stopped to examine this National-Socialist *Weltanschauung*—it was not the sort of task that I should have been eager to tackle and, in the American phrase, I was prepared to eat my hat if it were successfully done. To view the law, not as a series of eternal statutes, but as the variable norm of so variable a phenomenon as race—for does not every poultry breeder know that race is always the culmination and never the starting point of a development? And can its limits be fixed either chronologically or spatially?—but still, to work! Let it be said in Frank's honour that he was, according to the doctor, sweating with anxiety and worry. Hitler, it seems, regarded Frank's exertions with contempt; for him justice was just an institution designed to spin cobwebs across his path.

Himmler, too, despised Frank's efforts. His task was to guarantee peace and order, to safeguard the vitality of the National-Socialist revolution. He despised Frank, but this did not prevent him from casting an occasional side-long, though well-meaning, glance in his direction from behind his uncompromising spectacles: he recognised Frank's obvious inability to draw the actual consequences from the situation as given. Himmler did draw them, and there emerged from this something which Dr. Luetgebrune called the "sumptuary laws."

Himmler was indeed a very different type of man from Roehm, at whose side he had once stood outside the wire entanglements surrounding the Munich War Ministry on a November day in 1923. Himmler could be relied on not to indulge in explosive excesses, whether of a personal or of a political nature. According to the judgment of all who knew him he was an honest family man without worldly ambition, an exact worker, strict with himself and with others and strictest of all with his colleagues. He was not the man to mount a white horse and charge some hypothetical enemy. He sat in his unusually tidy office. He only reluctantly appeared in public. He never made speeches to the masses. At the most he would occasionally address the most intimate circle of his fellow-workers on some curious subject such as the "people's sovereignty" of some Heinrich or other. He was beyond dispute very far from being an unthinking soldier, and in this he was the exact opposite of Roehm. He was a moralist, though his morality had no connection with his solid Catholic upbringing at Landshut in Lower Bavaria. But one important card was missing from his hand—a legal basis from which to orientate himself. The law had not been scrapped, it had simply been temporarily suspended by the Enabling Act. Dr. Gürtner's penal code was still in force, though it only treated the individual in his quality as a private person, and according to the National-Socialist *Weltanschauung* the individual had been transmuted into a political creature, had been completely politicised. Meanwhile Frank was simply unable to lay the egg of his new 'German' justice. This was all of no immediate concern to Himmler, whose task was the safe-guarding of the National-Socialist state. But what does a good employee at the Chancellery do in such a situation? He looks for a precedent—and Himmler found one in those "sumptuary laws."

It was thus, with all the contempt of an old jurist, that Dr. Luetgebrune described the Military Penal Code. This code did not lay claim to any moral, any philosophical or any metaphysical basis for its laws. It simply asserted a state of crisis, the condition of war or of the preparation for war, and it declared unambiguously: "Such-and-such is allowed and ordered while such-and-such is forbidden, and to do it involves such-and-such punishment, and that's that." Furthermore, military law breaks every other law.

Himmler found in this 'precedent' the answer to his own position as

well as to that of the country. The country was engaged in liquidating the revolution, which is another way of saying that it was still in mid-revolution. It would remain in this condition until a 'German justice' had come into existence. Until that day Himmler would apply his sumptuary laws—and his logic, in the circumstances, is hardly open to question.

When man emancipated himself from God, might he not have guessed that one day, by an inevitable process, things would emancipate themselves from him? To whom should the blame be apportioned for all that had happened? How could it come about that everyone was guilty, which means of course that no one was guilty? That beneath the slogan of the triumph of will all will was rotted away?

There I sat, in the back room with the curtains drawn, while outside the glass smashed and tinkled, telling a trembling young woman of things that had been.

The telephone rang shrilly. It was Axel. He told me the synagogues were burning. From his balcony he could see the glow of the fires. I thought that Axel would now produce his political platitude, his insurance. Instead he said:

"Please make a careful note of this. Early tomorrow morning it will be announced on the radio that the German people, infuriated by the criminal action of the Jew Grünspan who shot the councillor attached to the German Embassy in Paris, rose spontaneously and set fire to the synagogues. I assert here and now in the most solemn terms that I have never risen spontaneously, that I have never committed arson. Since the Reichstag fire arson has been a capital offence, to be punished by hanging."

I said:

"Yes, yes. Good. I'm sitting here quite quietly with Ille, too, discussing this and that. I'll call you in the morning."

But Axel did not ring off. He said, pronouncing his words with icy clarity:

"It is extremely interesting. For years these people have announced officially that it was not their intention to attack the Jewish religion, that they were simply fighting against the danger of contamination by the Jewish race. They have even published laws to this effect. Are the synagogues places of worship or are they institutions for racial interbreeding?"

I said:

"Yes, I know all about that. But at least the burning synagogues cast a clear light on our situation." And I rang off.

I told Ille what Axel had said. I went on:

"Why are Axel and I not standing in front of the synagogues with outstretched arms protesting and accusing at the top of our voices?"

Because we know that what we might say would have no echo? That's not the reason. It is something far worse. We are in reality already dead. We can no longer live from within ourselves. Everything that is happening about us is not the product of the internal life of those who are doing it; it is the product of a collective. And a man who will not accept and believe in that collective is dead. The collective always acts unconditionally. It also demands our unconditional faith and acceptance. But this collective has not gathered us up into itself, it has atomised us. Atomised fragments cannot constitute a community, but only an explosive mass. Ernst Jünger said once that the saint on a pillar, the stylite, presented socialism in its most accomplished form. That is certainly true: the deliberate act of the individual for the sake of a solidarity solution must also, always and inevitably, be an act of solidarity. I have never recoiled from true solidarity, or from a collective society. But this collective is now destroying itself, it is a false collective. It offers the individual no chance to perform his deed of solidarity."

I said:

"This collective is a *reductio ad absurdum* and that is the greatest crime that it can commit. I know, of course, what is happening to the Jews. Were I not myself a witness I should still know, for it has been announced often enough what would happen. The burning synagogues simply show that it is happening now. The appalling thing is that nobody can help 'the Jews,' because any attempt to do so simply increases their peril. The appalling thing is that we cannot help ourselves, and far more is happening to us than to the Jews. And far more is happening to the collective than is even happening to us."

I said:

"Last winter I had occasion to come home by streetcar 176. I was standing on the front platform. Besides the driver there were also two SS people there. Then an elderly lady got on. Suddenly the two men began to talk filth. It began with one saying: 'Terrible stink of garlic here!' and you can imagine how it went on from there. The old lady tried to open the door leading to the interior of the car. It was only then that I realised the men's filth was directed at her. Now I am not accustomed to let old ladies be insulted in my presence, as you know. Maybe it's an old-fashioned atavism, but there you are. What should I do. Set upon the two oafs? That would have been just stupid. Do nothing, as though it were no concern of mine? That would have been cowardice. I was interested by the alternatives, and I tried hard to think of a third solution. Of course! The simplest! I helped the old lady in her attempt to open the door. It would not move. I called the conductor and he walked the length of the swaying car. I shouted through the little hole in the door that he should open it. He shouted back that in winter that door had to be kept closed. I bellowed through the hole that he must open it at once, an old lady was here in need of help. The

conductor cried that she would have to get down at the next stop and re-enter the car by way of the back platform. While I was still arguing with the conductor I suddenly saw the old lady's face, only a few inches from my own. She was looking at me with undisguised hatred, a hatred that came from her sensation of complete helplessness, the worst sort of hatred there is. And I understood: of course! This woman wanted, more than anything else in the world, to avoid attracting attention. To be conspicuous might mean anything, martyrdom, death. And I, it was I who was creating this danger. It was I, not the two SS oafs, who just stood there grinning spitefully though in silence. The car stopped, and the old lady hurriedly got off. It was not my stop but I followed her. I wanted to help the old lady, I wanted to try to explain why I had behaved as I had done, I don't really know what I wanted, I was acting 'spontaneously.' The old lady did not get back on to the other platform. She disappeared into the darkness. I walked home along the Kurfürstendamm and I thought as intensively as I could—there must, there must be a third solution. And if there is in fact none, which was preferable: to behave like a fool or to act like a coward?

"At the corner of the Clausewitz Strasse there stood a lamp-post. Near the lamp-post I saw, hanging on a tree, a piece of cardboard as big as a poster. I walked up to it and read: 'The seamstress Frieda Junge, who lives at Weiz Strasse 14, commits racial infamy with the Jew Victor Aaron.'

"There it was, written on the poster. Not far from the lamp-post stood an ordinary policeman. Now then, here was a chance. I decided to be a fool and not a coward. I ripped down the poster. Immediately the policeman came up to me. He asked:

" 'Are you authorised to remove the poster?'

"I said:

" 'No. But it's a piece of filth.'

"The policeman said:

" 'Quite agree. That's why I'm here, to nab the fellow who keeps hanging them up on this tree. There are special columns for posters at the street corners.' He went on: 'If you've nothing to do with it, go on home. And give me the poster, I'll stick it up again so as I can catch the fellow. If this goes on anybody will think he can just come here and stick posters to this tree.'"

I said to Ille:

"But if this is the truth: if the provocation of the Reichstag fire served to destroy Communism but also, and simultaneously, destroyed the actual legitimacy of the Party's road to power: if the events of June 30th ended the revolution but simultaneously created the police state instead of the people's society: if tonight the true central point of the Party, its racial doctrine, has been reduced to an absurdity and the Jewish problem has really been transformed into a German problem:



if at the same time we are all atomised, isolated, incompetent, sterile, without any direct connection with the now discredited collective—and that is perhaps the most monstrous aspect of the whole process; the hope of our age, the real objective of civilisation, the constructive element for the future, the collective discredited by its own most fanatical exponent—if this is the truth, then what remains?

“Now since in these circumstances all action is crime, all that remains is to do nothing. It is at any rate the only decent course. And it is also the most difficult thing in the world, a sort of Gandhi-ism without Gandhi. The individual solution has here a solidary constructive force. It is really the most difficult course of all, and it looks so easy, doesn't it? All honour to him who can follow it—as to myself I am not so sure whether I can or not. In any case I'm going to take a bath now, and shave, and put on clean clothes, and have breakfast—and then I'm going to see Meissner.”

Ille drew her self up:

“Surely,” she cried, “you're not now. . . .”

I said:

“I am. I have an appointment. And apart from that I'm curious, I want to know what's happening. For my health's sake. I want to know what's going on, so that I can talk about it. That's my psychotherapy; without it I can't rid myself of my complexes.”

Ille said a great deal more, but she laid out a clean shirt for me. She filled my pocket-book with documents proving my identity, all that I possessed. She complained, as I could well understand, that Grünspan had simply walked into the Paris Embassy and shot the councillor, and everybody had wondered how the man had succeeded so easily in entering the building; I was to be sure to show everyone I met in the New Chancellery my membership card of the Chamber of German Writing; if anybody asked me my name I was to mumble indistinctly, because if a sentry heard it he was certain to shoot me dead on the spot.

In the streets the sun was shining and it was a clear, cold day. To my surprise I suddenly felt in an excellent humour. There seemed to be something to the methods of the psychoanalysts after all. The first person I saw was my friend Kurt Heuser. He had gone to Africa as a young man, where he had been a farmer. In the solitude of the bush he began to write, short novels with an African setting. Back in Germany he had given up writing literature and had turned to film scripts. Now here he was, striding as fast as ever towards me, wrapped in his fantastically aged overcoat—tradition had it that he had worn it in the bush, and it always had one button missing.

“What do you know!” he cried, and went on at once. “Funniest thing just happened to me. Imagine, I had no idea what was up. I wanted to come into town”—he lived out by Lake Stölpchen—“and I

noticed there seemed to be great crowds in the Ku-Damm, you know, the sort of people you don't normally see there. Difference struck me right away. Then I saw the glass—and then all of a sudden the crowds moving! There's a man running towards me and other men running after him. The man—he's bleeding from the head, great drops of blood falling from his black hair—he's staggering but he keeps on running, straight towards me. There's hundreds of people about, but it's me he's running to. And I feel damn proud that I'm the only one he trusts. He runs up to me and he damn near kisses me, crying: 'Save me! I'm a Persian!' ”

Kurt Heuser said:

“I stopped a passing cab. To begin with the driver said he wouldn't take us. The gentleman was bleeding and who'd pay to have his taxi cleaned afterwards. I shouted at him: 'Go to the Persian Embassy.' At last he drove off, and just in time too. As for my Persian, do you know who he swore at? Me! He could only blubber, but he kept whining away at me as though it were all my fault. 'I, non-Aryan!' he suddenly shouted: 'What do they imagine? I'm a Persian! If I'm not Aryan who is? Where did the Aryans come from if not from Persia?' ”

I laughed and Kurt Heuser said:

“Now tell me, what do you make of it?”

I said:

“I don't know, I'm no expert on the subject, but I think he's right, your Persian. The Indo-Germanic tribes at least are supposed to have originated in Persia.”

Kurtchen said:

“That's not what I meant. Can you understand all this business? They've just got over one world crisis, they've just won everything they could possibly want at Munich by saying that they would abstain from all acts of violence—and now this! They're just slapping the world in the face once again. Can you understand it?”

I said that I could not. He cried, in desperation:

“It's so incredibly stupid!”

“Yes,” I said, “it is. But stupidity is the norm.”

He stared at me and then, with an expression of dread on his face, he said:

“You know, I think that he is an evil man.”

It was quite clear to whom he was referring. I had never before heard Kurtchen Heuser speak anything except good of any human being. If he now described a man as evil, then something unheard of must have taken place within him.

I hailed a cab.

“Where are you going?” asked Kurt.

I got into it and said to the driver:

“The New Chancellery!”

I looked back, for I did not intend to miss Kurtchen's completely bewildered expression.

An SA man of the Feldherrnhalle unit was standing outside the New Chancellery, his legs well apart. On his chest he wore an oval shield, suspended by a chain about his neck, which gave him a thoroughly martial appearance. As I approached the steps he stamped to attention and flung out his right arm in a salute. I raised my hat, thinking with satisfaction that he must have taken me for some important foreign diplomat. I said politely:

"I wish to see the Minister of State Dr. Meissner."

"This way, sir," he said, and directed me towards the main entrance. Hardly was I through it before an SA man sprang out of an alcove, stamped to attention, and flung out his right arm. I said, with somewhat more assurance:

"Herr Minister Dr. Meissner!"

"This way, sir," he said, and directed me towards a flight of stairs covered with a red carpet. I climbed the stairs. On the first landing an SA man sprang to attention, banged his heels together, and flung out his arm, straight in my face. I said, gruffly:

"Minister Meissner!"

"This way, sir," he said and directed me towards large double doors that were standing open. Through them I could see a long, well-lit corridor, carpeted in grey. I entered it and a grey little man in a simple, grey livery came up to me. In a soft and sympathetically attuned voice, he asked:

"May I take the gentleman's coat?"

I handed him my overcoat, in the pocket of which were all my identity papers, and my hat. He hung them on a peg in a small recess behind one wing of the double door. Then he said, bowing politely and in a mild tone:

"Whom shall I announce?"

This was the moment to stare destiny boldly in the face. I announced my name loudly and clearly. Destiny's expression did not alter.

"One moment, please!"

He disappeared through the first door that opened off the corridor. He returned at once, saying:

"The Herr Minister asks the gentleman to be so good as to come in."

It was just as easy as that. I entered a big room, filled with the light of day. The minister had already risen to his feet and was walking towards me, his hand outstretched. He wore a simple grey suit without any emblem in his button-hole. He said:

"I am very pleased to meet you in person."

So he had read my books. He went on at once:

"Is this your first visit to the New Chancellery?"

I said:

"I never set foot in the old one either, Herr Minister."

He laughed and I glanced about the room. Opposite the big, dark, flat-topped desk—on which lay no papers; so that I received the impression I was intended to receive, namely that for the time being the minister was prepared to devote his entire and undivided attention to me—there hung a large portrait of Hitler. He stared intensely at the desk, as though to watch carefully what Meissner was up to there. On another wall there was a large portrait of Hindenburg. The old gentleman's expression was rather tight. There was also one of Bismarck. But the fourth wall, the wall by the door, was blank. I glanced that way and said:

"You're a picture short."

The minister gave a hearty laugh. There was an expression of satisfaction on his ruddy, healthy face beneath the already whitening hair as he said:

"Yes, one short. This is my office; the portrait of President Ebert, for whom I have a very great respect, hangs in my home. There it occupies the place of honour."

He had an agreeable voice and spoke with a South German intonation.

He offered me a chair and sat down himself behind his desk. I said:

"Herr Minister, I am engaged in assembling material for a history of the German post-war."

He smiled courteously and said:

"I know. A fine and very necessary undertaking."

Now how did he know this?

I determined to go straight to the heart of the matter and said:

"Herr Minister, during the course of my researches I have come across a rumour—forgive me mentioning this, Herr Minister—a rumour that you were appointed head of the Presidential Chancellery because you once brought the late President Ebert a sack, a sack containing a million marks."

The minister laughed heartily. Then he leaned back in his chair and laughed again. At last he said:

"Yes, yes. You know, Dame Rumour always spreads stories which contain a proportion of truth. The proportion is usually small but it is invariably there. I'm only too pleased to tell you the real story."

During the Great War, he said, he was a lieutenant with the field railways, working on the staff of the Chief of Army Railway Services, General Groener. When, towards the end of the war, Groener succeeded Ludendorff as Chief of General Staff, he appointed as his successor in charge of the Eastern Front railways, with headquarters at Kiev, young Lieutenant Meissner. The task confronting Meissner was stupendous. There were still half a million German troops in the East, dispersed throughout the vast area from Reval to Rostov-on-Don: the task was

to get them home at the very time when revolution had broken out in Germany. Kiev was in a state of chaos. The military governor had already packed up and gone; Poles and Bolsheviks were fighting for control of the Ukraine, while the Cossack chieftain, Petljura, was struggling to secure the independence of his country. Everywhere guerrilla bands and partisan groups fought one another, while amongst them were scattered, often at great distances from one another, small German units whose one desire was to get home. All that remained intact and was still in working order was the German military rail network—and indeed, Meissner said not without pride, the repatriation of the German armies in the East was successfully completed almost without incident.

Meissner said:

“I reserved an armoured train to take out myself and my staff and the last of our security troops. The train had already got up steam, ready to leave, and all the jobs connected with my appointment had been completed. All that is, save one. I had to go and say good-bye to Petljura. I went alone. I was the last German in the town.

Meissner said he had worked well with Petljura. Petljura knew that he had to thank the presence of German troops in the town for a great deal, and he was very sorry to see us go. Indeed Petljura's position was highly dangerous. In three great columns Polish, Bolshevik and Allied forces were moving on the Ukraine. Petljura had only a few reliable troops at his disposal. They might have been enough to cope with any one of the approaching columns, but certainly not with two, let alone all three. So the farewell, though hearty, was tinged with sadness. Meissner finally said that they had nothing more to discuss—apart from the question of the compensation to be paid for German property left behind in the Ukraine. Petljura did not immediately understand. “What do you mean?” he asked. Meissner said, good naturedly, well, there were the railway installations, the tracks and sleepers and telegraph poles and bridges and stations . . . all German property. “But,” cried Petljura, “you can't take that stuff with you!” “No,” said Meissner, “we can't take it with us. But we can destroy it.”

Petljura was horrified. “If you do that I'm lost!” In fact without the one communications system still intact in a vast territory menaced by guerrilla bands he would have been lost. “Then pay for it,” said Meissner. “But I haven't got any money!” “Then write out a bill of sale!” said Meissner.

And Petljura did so. He signed bills of sale for tracks and sleepers and bridges and telegraph poles and stations and smashed trucks. Meissner had all the papers already drawn up, and Petljura signed the lot.

Meissner tucked the bills of sale into his sleeping bag and made his way to the station. But the armoured train had already left.

So Meissner procured himself a sleigh, packed his sleeping bag full of

bills of sale on board it, sat down on top of the bag, and in a journey of several weeks' duration drove straight through a country in the full ferment of revolution and civil war, over the snow-covered Carpathians, through a Czecho-Slovakia seething with its newly acquired independence, and so arrived in Germany. Once there he began to search for some authority to which he could hand over his accounts. But there was none. No such authority existed any more. The Demobilisation Commissioner was not competent to accept them, nor were the Soldiers' Councils. So Meissner went on to Berlin. He tried to reach the provisional head of the Republic, the President of the Executive Council, Ebert, the most important of the 'people's representatives.' But Ebert was unapproachable. Ebert hurried from one conference to another. When Meissner had tried for the eighth time to obtain an interview, Ebert's assistant, the Social-Democrat Wels, threatened to have him thrown out. "We're desperate," said Wels: "We don't know whether we're coming or going. The President is attending an important conference. With an Allied commission that wants to take possession of our property in the Ukraine. It's a matter of millions that we haven't got and need. And now you force your way in and ask for an interview with the President." "It's because of the Ukrainian property that I'm here," said Meissner, pointing to his sleeping bag. Wels sent him in at once to see Ebert. And Ebert presented the Allied commission, which regarded itself as the legal successor to the Ukrainian state and which wished to take possession of all German property there located in exchange for Ukrainian corn, with Petljura's bills of sale. These totalled slightly more than the actual value of the property. The commission left without entering into an argument about the small discrepancy involved. And Ebert asked Meissner what position so admirable an official would like to fill. Then Meissner told the president of his vain attempts to find an authority capable of handling so confusing, and yet politically so important, a contingency as that which had brought him to Berlin. He proposed to Ebert that such an office be created, and added that he felt it should function in the closest proximity to that supreme head of the country.

"And so," said Meissner, "by order of the late and highly respected President of the Reich I was installed in the Presidential Chancellery." He laughed heartily. "The sum in question was considerably in excess of a million, but it was all in the form of bills of sale."

I thanked the minister as best as I could for the information he had given me, and he got to his feet. But before wishing me good-bye he asked me if I should care to be shown over the New Chancellery. I did not move as I said:

"Thank you. Today I'm more interested in smashed windows."

Meissner stopped smiling but did not become in any way less friendly. He said calmly:

“There’s been more smashed than you know.”

I cried:

“But one day it’ll all have to be paid for! And who’s to pay . . .?”

Meissner looked at me calmly. The pupils of his eyes had shrunk to pin-points. He said:

“Well, in the first place there is the insurance.”

This was a thought which had not occurred to me. I said:

“But can you? Will you?”

Meissner said:

“Then there is the reinsurance. And the underwriters are abroad.”

I said bitterly:

“But is there nobody . . . to put a stop to this lunacy. . .”

He said:

“There are people who are trying, at least. It’s hard to do anything about a fatality. It just has to be paid for.”

I cried:

“This is no fatality, it’s a crime!”

Meissner said:

“Crimes are always fatalities. You, I think—must—grant—me—that.” He said: “But one can try to bring about a decent solution to the results of a fatality. One can try to ensure a decent solution, and that is the only thing one can do. And one must do that and meanwhile hope that others are doing likewise.”

When I reached home Ille was not, as I was accustomed, waiting for me at the door with a big glass of brandy in her hand. She was standing in a smoke-filled kitchen, with pieces of sooty ash floating about her head. She was streaked with grime and was blowing on a pile of red ash that glowed in the dustpan. She stared at me from red-rimmed, inflamed eyes.

“What’s up?” I cried.

She looked at me and sobbed:

“I’ve burned the papers!”

I was taken aback.

“What papers?”

Ille said, between her tears:

“The ones in the trunk. The blank signatures.”

I laughed and helped to wash the rest of the ashes down the sink. While she was cleaning her face and hands, she said:

“Now tell me all about it. Start: ‘Well, when I got there they’d all arrived already . . .’”

I told her about Kurtchen Heuser and his Persian. I told her about Meissner.

When I had finished I got my brandy and Ille said:

“What terrible times these are we live in.” She said, “I was born in 1912. I wish I’d died in 1912, at the age of seventy.” She sighed and went

on: "And the fashions of the 'eighties would have suited me so well!"

I laughed and contradicted her:

"Look, there's one thing you can't deny. The times we live in are interesting if nothing else. I think this is probably the most interesting period in the history of the world. Never has a generation undergone so many and so diverse experiences as ours."

He said:

"You're quite right. But, you know—don't be angry with me—but I'd rather just read about it."

99. *Have you ever sworn an oath of secrecy to any organisation?*

I don't know.

100. *If so, list the organisations and give particulars*

I have never sworn an oath of secrecy to any organisation, except possibly on the occasion of my being commissioned in the army. This is only assumption on my part, but I imagine that there must be a clause relevant to the subject somewhere buried in the articles of war.

Private individuals have of course frequently requested that I treat information divulged by themselves as confidential. On such occasions I have always requested with insistence that they refrain from recounting to me any information that is an embryonic anecdote. I have never felt that my discretion could really be relied on if I were offered the opportunity of telling a good story with a point to it.

101. *Have you any relatives who have held office, rank or post of authority in any of the organisations listed from 41 to 95 above?*

I refuse to answer this question.

102. *If so, give their names and addresses, their relationship to you and a description of the position and organisation*

It is only with difficulty that I can deny myself the pleasure of answering these two questions. I could, by so doing, reveal some extremely curious facts. But I shall not. I regard these two questions as perfidious.

I am aware that this omission constitutes an offence against the regulations of Military Government which renders me liable to prosecution and punishment. I can only hope that Military Government will, for its part, deny itself the pleasure of prosecuting and punishing the one person in all the world who has really taken its Fragebogen seriously.

103. *With the exception of minor contributions to the Winterhilfe and regular membership dues, list and give details of any contributions of money or property which you have made directly or indirectly to the NSDAP or any of the other organisations listed above, including any contributions made by any natural or juridical person or legal entity through your solicitation or influence*



I have always entrusted the administration of my financial affairs to members of my household belonging to the female sex. During the period 1936 to 1945 Ille had the pleasure of dealing with my income and outgoings. On May 6th, 1945, she informed me, with apparent satisfaction, that since 1942 she had consigned all communications from the NSV or any other branch of the NSDAP, requesting contributions for Winter Relief or similar causes, to the waste-paper basket, unanswered. Apart from normal taxes, she had since that date refused to contribute in any way to the state or to the Party organisations. In the most solemn terms I told Ille of my disapproval concerning her behaviour in these matters. Ille's financial activities, like my own, were never based on practical considerations. But whereas I valued money primarily as a means for enabling its possessor to avoid situations of a dramatic nature, Ille chose to regard it as the starting point, the trigger mechanism, of just such situations. Thus it was her custom on the days when money was being collected for the Winter Relief—and avarice was not the cause—to buy a single small 20-pfennig badge which she would then stick into a little fur cap, especially purchased for these occasions. She did this with a purpose. When a uniformed man stopped her on the street and rattled his collecting box at her she could, with a most significant gesture, quietly tap her forehead. As soon as I heard of this I naturally put an immediate stop to such goings-on. On another occasion, it was 'Police Day,' Ille appeared bedecked from head to foot with the emblems that were sold by the collectors. Her whole coat was covered in them. She jingled and clattered with every step she took. And she did this solely for the pleasure of seeing weighty and formidable police officials kneel down before her in the public street in order to affix yet one more emblem—the little, porcelain figure of a policeman—to the hem of her coat. I put a stop to this, too.

All the same, Ille once had the satisfaction of seeing me, who always made such an effort to behave so correctly, in the same sort of situation from the consequences of which I was forever, and so vainly, attempting to save her. I have a marked dislike of being disturbed while at table. So on those days when collections were being made I customarily urged Ille to prepare our meals in our home. If, however, I yet found myself compelled on such a day to eat in public, it was my habit to buy a complete set of emblems from the first collector who approached me and to construct a pile of them before my plate. I relied on this producing a sensation of shame in subsequent collectors who, I hoped, would in consequence allow me to eat on undisturbed. On one occasion we were sitting with numerous friends in the restaurant belonging to Max Schlichter, the late brother of my friend Rudolph Schlichter, the painter. This was a day on which emblems were being sold in aid of the Winter Relief, and each emblem was a little glass head of a 'great German.' Hitler's head sold at a higher price than did those of, say,

Bismarck or Frederick the Great or Luther or Kant. I had piled up the whole series in a heap of blue glass before me. Nevertheless a much-decorated SS man approached the table. I pointed at the emblems before me, remarking:

"I've enough already."

The SS man was not to be dismissed as easily as this. He said that he had a number of other glass emblems depicting the Führer. I said angrily:

"I've enough of the Führer, too."

It was only when I saw the SS man start that I realised what I had said. Nor was that the worst part. Henny Porten, the well-known German movie actress, who was seated with us, lent across the table in her naïve and impulsive fashion, took my hand, and said loudly:

"Oh, how right you are!"

But it was far from right. The SS man stopped collecting and immediately left the restaurant. From then on the atmosphere at our table was positively hectic. Only Ille had blanched somewhat, while I wondered whether the restaurant possessed an alternative exit. It did not. Since a number of total strangers took the opportunity to express their admiration of my courage, I had no alternative but to order a second helping of dessert in a somewhat cracked voice; and I never have cared for crêpes, either. But the SS man did not return, neither alone nor with companions armed to the teeth.

Of course I had no way of supervising how the money collected for Winter Relief was in fact spent. On the other hand I had no way of knowing how the money collected as taxes was spent either, but I paid mine just the same.

104. *Have you ever been the recipient of any titles, ranks, medals, testimonials or other honours from any of the above organisations?*

No.

105. *If so state the nature of the honour, the date conferred, and the reason and occasion for its bestowal*

Not applicable.

106. *Were you a member of a political party before 1933?*

No.

107. *If so, which one?*

Not applicable.

108. *For what political party did you vote in the election of November 1932?*

In November, 1932, the period of 'loss of civic rights' to which I had been condemned in 1922 had not yet expired. I was therefore not entitled to vote. Apart from that, I was abroad in November, 1932.

109. *In March 1933?*

Nor did I vote in March, 1933. As my answers to questions 1 to 131 of this Fragebogen have, or will have, shown, I have a strong bias, both moral and intellectual, against voting at all. I have never voted. In view of the fact that on the one hand the secrecy of the ballot box is supposed to be inviolable, while on the other an official Fragebogen such as this can ask questions like 108 and 109, I regard it as unlikely in the extreme that I ever shall vote.

110. *Have you ever been a member of any anti-Nazi underground party or groups since 1933?*

Yes.

111. *Which one?*

Master Group Imming.

112. *Since when?*

Since 1933.

113. *Have you ever been a member of any trade union or professional or business organisation which was dissolved or forbidden since 1933?*

Even memory has its limitations. I have always limited my recollections to such facts as interest me. I cannot answer Question 113. I have forgotten.

114. *Have you ever been dismissed from the civil service, the teaching profession or ecclesiastical positions or any other employment for active or passive resistance to the Nazis or their ideology?*

No.

115. *Have you ever been imprisoned, or have restrictions of movement, residence or freedom to practise your trade or profession been imposed on you for racial or religious reasons or because of active or passive resistance to the Nazis?*

Yes.

116. *If you answered yes to any of the questions from 110 to 115, give particulars and the names and addresses of two persons who can confirm the truth of your statements*

It is after a close scrutiny of my conscience, rather than of my memory, that I have reached the conclusion that since 1933 I did in fact belong to an illegal opposition group. I have called it a master group because from its fertile soil many another opposition group was to spring. I do not even think that I am exaggerating when I state that the

existence of this master group alone was responsible for the construction of the whole massive machinery of totalitarian terrorism. Since this master group could not obviously, in view of its extremely dangerous nature, flaunt an official name, I shall, for reasons of simplicity, just refer to it as 'Master Group Imming.'

In Paris stands the statue of Madelon. The French, who fought with such remarkable bravery in the First World War, erected this statue as a gesture of gratitude to the womanhood of France. At armistice celebrations Madelon's song is to be heard more often than the Marseillaise, a powerful paean of homage to the good genius of France, to the mother of victory. A graceful and yet strongly built girl is Madelon, with her pert little nose beneath a steel helmet worn at a rakish angle—every Frenchman knows her statue. Hardly a Frenchman, however, knows that other statue, to the father of victory, Clemenceau, *le Tigre*, battling his way forward into the teeth of the storm while the wind snatches at the folds of his voluminous bronze cloak. The enviably mature people of France know well the menaces and dangers inherent in victory. It is not Napoleon whom they revere but Jeanne d'Arc, not Clemenceau but Madelon.

We Germans are not without our own fondness for memorials of victory. But apart from the uncommonly solid and allegorical figure of Germania who, with sword and buckler, may perhaps awaken all the emotions save only affection, we have never thought to see the good and brave genius of our race in the form of the German woman. Yet it is German womanhood that may justly claim to be honoured as the true embodiment of our country's heroism during the Second World War.

It thus seems right that the great and otherwise nameless master group of the opposition should be called after a woman, an unknown woman, good, brave and honourable, loyal and true, and who always seemed to me the very personification of the resistance. Her name was Frau Imming.

Frau Imming was my charwoman. When, one day in the spring of 1939, I entered my kitchen and said: "Frau Imming, have you heard the news? German troops have entered Prague!" she replied in her Berlin accent, amidst the rattle of the pots and pans: "I don't want Prague. I want butter."

"You see," Frau Imming said to me on one occasion, "I'm a Social-Democrat. My old man was always a Social-Democrat too. Same for me. In my house we're all Social-Democrats and always have been. And we're going to stay that way."

Her house was a block of workers' flats in the Heidelberger Strasse, which lies in the extreme eastern suburb of Berlin, Treptow. She was the porter of this building, a great redstone barracks of a place, with many entrances and a passageway leading to the back courtyard, where

there was a factory. Three times a week Frau Imming came to us in western Berlin. It was a long way. Ille reckoned that the journey to our place and back must take her a good three hours, although Frau Imming never asked us to pay her fares. When Ille drove me to or from my post-war archives at Friedrichshagen she always tried to arrange the trip so that she could give Frau Imming a lift home. Frau Imming enjoyed these rides immensely. If the top of the car was down she would sit, not next to the driver, but in the centre of the back seat. There she would fold her arms over her unusually well-developed bosom and glance proudly from side to side. Ille had to drive up to the very centre of the apartment block and there play a regular tattoo on the horn. Frau Imming would never leave the car before all the inhabitants of the building were looking out of their windows.

"You see," she said, "you've got to do it. Else my people here won't believe what a fine lady and gentleman I work for."

"But, Frau Imming," said Ille, "have you told the people in your house that we're very far from being Social-Democrats?"

"Course," said Frau Imming. "They know all about that. But they don't mind about your husband. He was a cadet, and it's his education. He just don't know any better. But our own people what go over to the other side, them we don't fancy. And when the day comes we'll show them, every one of them."

On one occasion, when I had had to leave Berlin for a couple of days, the doorbell rang, and since both Frau Imming's strong, red arms were plunged in soapy water, Ille went to answer it herself. On the threshold stood a man with beetling brows who announced:

"Secret state police!"

Ille was terrified. With trembling knees she led him into her room. The official asked:

"Does a certain Frau Imming work for you?"

When Ille said that that was so, he asked her what sort of a woman Frau Imming was. Ille hurriedly described her character at great length and in the most glowing manner: loyal, industrious, conscientious. The official listened to all this, an expression of scepticism on his face, and finally said:

"Are you aware that this Frau Imming is a dangerous agent?"

Ille was not aware of this, and she hastened to speak of Frau Imming's mental qualities in the most derogatory terms: simple, stupid, says the first thing that comes into her head, totally incapable of understanding politics. The official said:

"Are you aware that in a hardware store Frau Imming said: 'I could hit myself over the head with that mallet there for having brought three sons into the Third Reich!'"

Ille, more or less in despair, said she could not imagine such a thing, but that she would herself ask Frau Imming at once. She called Frau

Imming in. Frau Imming came, drying her hands on her blue apron. Ille said, with careful emphasis:

“Frau Imming, this gentleman is from the secret state police.”

Frau Imming glanced at him and said:

“Well?”

Since the direct method did not seem particularly fruitful, Ille tried the indirect approach. She spoke of evil persons, gossips who repeat everything they hear, changing it slightly so as to give a sinister interpretation to completely innocent remarks. She presented Frau Imming with every possibility of explaining away the allegation. She practically put the words into her mouth. Then she said:

“Of course it’s quite impossible that you could have spoken in so ridiculous a way. But this gentleman has been informed that you said, in the hardware store, that you could hit yourself over the head. . . .”

“Could too,” said Frau Imming promptly. “Course I could. It’s my head, isn’t it? What I do with it is my own business.”

The man gazed at her without a flicker of expression. Ille hastily turned towards him and once again attempted to overwhelm him with a flood of words:

“You see what a simple, foolish person she is? Of course she didn’t mean what you think she meant. It was just a silly expression of hers.” She promised the official that she would speak seriously to Frau Imming. “You see, I can explain things to her. She listens to me.” And she offered to guarantee that in the future Frau Imming would abstain from such idiotic chatter. The official then left. Before going he said:

“For the time being I shall not order her arrest, but I’m warning you!” And he repeated, with unpleasant emphasis: “I’m warning you!”

Then Ille gave Frau Imming a thorough talking to, while Frau Imming stood solidly before her, twisting her apron between her fingers. After a half hour’s intensive explanation, Ille ended with the words:

“Now I hope you understand how you’ve got to behave in future.”

“That I do,” said Frau Imming. She wiped her nose with the back of her hand and said loudly: “In future we’ll find some place else to buy our soap.”

During this period I received a long series of anonymous letters. Rowohlt too, got such letters, and after he had read them he used to throw them into his waste-paper basket. But one day a man with beetling brows appeared at his publishing house and proceeded to interrogate Rowohlt. The police, it seems, knew that he was receiving such letters and he was emphatically told that he was failing in his duty if he did not hand over all correspondence of this sort to the police authorities immediately on receipt. I could only assume that the police must also be aware that such letters were being sent to me too. I therefore handed over these anti-National-Socialist leaflets, the contents

of which were generally foolish in the extreme, to the police. When Frau Imming heard of this, she said:

“Not the envelopes! It’s the envelopes they’re after, because of the postmarks. And I’ll give the letters a good dusting before you send them, in case of finger prints.”

I was informed by the police that I must hand over the envelopes too.

“What shall we do now?” I asked Frau Imming. Frau Imming knew. She said:

“You just tell them I open all your letters for you and I throw the envelopes away and then I burn them. That’s the way they do it in all high-class offices.”

Frau Imming was keenly interested in the contents of these letters. I remember one that contained shattering information to the effect that Hermann Goering had given his Emmy some valuable jewellery, while Goebbels and the famous film actress . . . Frau Imming said:

“We’ve got nothing against Hermann.”

“Because he was a cadet?”

“That’s right. It’s his education. But as for that Goebbels! We’ll know what to do with him. We’ll hang him up in a cage at the Brandenburg Gate, and everyone going by will have to spit on him!”

During the war my work compelled me to live in Munich. Only occasionally did Ille visit Berlin, for the purpose of paying our taxes and so on. Ille informed me that as soon as Frau Imming heard Ille was in Berlin she would come to see her, bearing on her back a sack of potatoes. In Berlin, for obvious reasons, the workers’ quarters in the east were better supplied with food than was the western sector of the city.

“But they can’t fool us that easy,” said Frau Imming. “In hard times we’ve all got to stick together.”

Her potatoes were noticeably larger and better than ours.

Ille experienced a number of the Berlin raids. Each morning after a raid Frau Imming would come to our apartment to make sure everything was in order. “You know, madam,” said Frau Imming, “you can’t help respecting the fine ladies. I’ve seen them carrying buckets of water into burning buildings. With rings on their fingers and painted nails and all, I’ve seen them do it! Down my way my people just sit in the cellar and leave it all to the air raid warden up on the roof.”

In her house Frau Imming was the air raid warden.

Ille laughed and said to me:

“Imagine, after the last raid Frau Imming came around, and she was in quite a state. She banged about with her pails and mops and at last she said: ‘That Churchill, he ought to be hung up in a cage by the Brandenburg Gate and everyone going by should be made to spit at him!’”

Frau Imming was a barometer.

When Ille returned from her last trip to Berlin she was extremely upset. We were living by that time at Siegsdorf, in Upper Bavaria. I met her at the station. She seemed to be at the end of her tether.

"Our beautiful Berlin!" she sobbed. "It seems like cowardice, like running away, for us to live here in complete safety. But I can't stand it any more, I can't go back, I'll never be able to go to Berlin again." She burst into tears. "There's nobody left."

I asked:

"Is our house still standing?"

Ille said:

"Our house is still standing. I think Frau Imming's dead."

"What do you mean?" I cried. "What . . .?"

Ille said:

"I'd told her she shouldn't come anymore. With the alarm sounding day and night you never can tell . . . but she kept on coming. The last time I sent her straight home. I'd noticed she seemed worried and was hurrying over her work. Less than a quarter of an hour after she'd left the alarm went. It was frightful, but the house was all right. Next day they telephoned me from the butcher's shop in the Heidelberger Strasse: Frau Imming hadn't come home. I went to the police and the security assistance people and the fire service. No one knew anything. And still no sign of her at her home. She must have gone into some air-raid shelter that got a direct hit. The people in her house tried to find her everywhere, to identify her corpse. I—I couldn't do it."

At home Ille had some consecrated candles. She was strongly inclined to Catholicism. I took one of the candles into my room and lit it. I did not want Ille to see its flame. I had no Catholic inclinations. But no heart is immune to the spirit of Upper Bavaria.

And that is how it came about that in a peasant house in Upper Bavaria a consecrated candle was burnt for Frau Emma Imming, char-woman, of Berlin-Treptow, Heidelberger Strasse 4, member of the Free Thinkers' Union and of the Society for Burial by Cremation.

Approximately eighty per cent of the German nation belonged to Master Group Imming.

Ille was so upset that only bit by bit could she tell me her news. She said:

"I telephoned Plaas too."

"How was he?" I asked.

Ille said:

"It was very queer. I called him at his office. The girl couldn't understand me to begin with, and I had to repeat his name three times. Then she said to hold on a moment, and connected me with a man. At first I thought it was Hartmut, but the man asked me who I was and why I



wanted to talk to Plaas. I told him I was only in Berlin for a short time and wished to see him. Then the man said Plaas didn't work there any more. I asked if I could still get him at his old home in Finkengrug. The man lowered his voice and advised me not to ring Plaas's home and said I should drop all attempts to get in touch with him." Ille said: "I suppose he's busy on one of his secret jobs again."

I too began by believing this to be the explanation. But then I thought that perhaps I had been involved for too long with sensational film scripts and that the true explanation might be much simpler. I tried to find out what had happened to Plaas. Everywhere I came up against a blank wall. I met nothing but a sort of cotton-woolly silence. Finally Hauenstein sent me, without comment, an obituary announcement which he had clipped from a newspaper and had stuck to a post-card.

Plaas was dead. He had died on July 19th, 1944, and Sonja had included all his titles and ranks in the announcement: "He died an upright death, believing firmly in Germany to the end."

It was extremely difficult to discover anything more precise about the circumstances of Plaas's death, and what I did find out during the course of the following years was scanty enough. The Air Research Institute in which Plaas had worked had had, as its principal task, research into the atmosphere of conspiracy. There can be no doubt that for months before the assassination attempt of July 20th, 1944, Himmler had known of the conspirators' activities. And he did not take any action against them. The reason for this was certainly connected with the policy he was pursuing, a policy that began with the proclamation concerning his ideas of a people's kingship and ended at the moment when Hitler announced that he was the greatest traitor of all time. Hartmut Plaas, in his capacity as senior governmental councillor to that institute, was in a position to follow this game of cat-and-mouse, to follow it and to be disgusted by it. He warned the conspirators through Walther Muthmann and Graf Fritz von der Schulenburg. One of them attempted to flee, was captured, and under torture admitted that it was Plaas who had given the warning. Plaas was arrested, sent to Ravensbrück, and there interrogated. I know the names of the police official and of the SS officer who tortured him. I do not know how exactly he died. When his brother applied for the corpse the application was summarily turned down.

That Plaas should have had to die for a deed aimed not at destroying men but at saving them is something that makes me very happy. His ways were not my ways, but whenever we met we both knew that we were going in the same direction. The first knot of that evil snare that was to kill him was drawn in those days when we began together our journey into a life, the shadows of which have never been dispelled. It was the violence we once conjured up that brought his existence to an

end; and it would be a wonder if violence were not to be at the end of my life too. He died an upright death, believing firmly in Germany to the end. He was always more courageous than I.

For Hartmut Plaas I lit no candle. I always think of him when it is dark.

About the year 1931 a man named Harro Schulze-Boysen founded a periodical which he entitled *Der Gegner* (*The Opponent*). He explained to me that the crust which "the old men" had laid over us, which the last century had imposed on ours, was ready to break. He described this crust as being lethal to all true intellectual and spiritual life. He said that it was formed of the ideologies of an age that had achieved power too late and too unexpectedly, too feebly and too undeservedly, so that it knew not how to use it except through the dusty network of bureaucracy. Finally, he said, a younger generation had grown up in the shadow of that power which, though hitherto employing its outworn jargon, was yet now capable of making itself understood in its own language. "They are beginning to poke their heads through the clouds and to call to one another," he said. He also said that his periodical was intended to give these youthful forces a chance to make themselves heard. It was to be a magazine for radicals, regardless of what particular platform they should speak from.

The man who told me all this was a slender, well-built, blond young man, with a rather stiff manner, carefully parted hair, and light, somewhat hard eyes. His words seemed unsuited both to his appearance and to his manner. When first I met him I had taken him for a junior naval officer, and as it happened his father was an admiral and he was a grandson of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz. He soon had many contributors to his magazine, young men of all political views, Catholics, Socialists, Communists—and, to represent the Nationalists, Ernst Jünger, Bogumil and myself.

When I returned from Austria *Der Gegner* was no more. The opponents, however, undoubtedly still existed. I ran into Schulze-Boysen in the street, towards the end of 1933, and failed to recognise him. He spoke to me. His features were very different from what they had been. He had lost half an ear and his face was covered with inflamed wounds that had scarcely yet healed. He had been arrested because well-known young Communists had contributed to his magazine. It was the SA who had treated him in the fashion to which his face bore witness.

"I have," he said, "put my revenge in cold storage."

He said that it was his intention, with the assistance of his relatives, to enter the army. He may have felt that I did not think much of this idea, for he told me that he knew exactly what he was doing. It was a long time before I heard from him again.

One day in 1936 Rowohlt asked me to see a young lady who had

offered him a noteworthy manuscript. This young lady had volunteered for the female branch of the Labour Service. She had done this from idealism, from enthusiasm for a cause that she regarded as the cause of youth, and after her term was completed she had written a very constructive, and at the same time very candid, book about her experiences. There could be no doubt that the National Labour Service would be highly displeased by this book, which for Rowohlt was all the more reason to publish it. But the young girl had no desire to do anything against the wishes of an organisation which she still, taken all in all, believed to be useful and animated by good intentions. She said that she would ask the heads of the National Labour Service for their opinion of her manuscript, and she would publish it or not according to what they said. I offered the young lady my help in seeing that the book reached the proper authorities, but she replied that her husband would arrange all that. Her husband was Harro Schulze-Boysen. (The book was never published.)

The young couple lived very near myself. They had rented an attic in the Waiz Strasse which they turned into a studio. They lived modestly but gaily, and were very hospitable. Their door was open to their friends at all hours, and in their home was to be seen what was still left of Berlin's dated and vanishing Bohemia. Harro owned an old automobile in which we drove out into the country. We would go canoeing beyond the Spreewald, Harro and Libs, Ille and I. Harro often took photographs of us on these outings.

He was with the Air Research Institute, where Harmut Plaas also worked. He knew Plaas well. When I asked him what he actually did there, he smiled and said:

"I stick flags into maps. All sorts of prettily coloured little flags into very ugly old maps."

This seemed to be the principal occupation of the Air Research Institute. The Air Research Institute struck me as an altogether rather sinister organisation, and the air into which they researched seemed to me none too sweet.

He invited Ille and myself to come with him to see a friend, a certain Herr Harnack, a close relative of the celebrated theologian, the late Adolf Harnack. I had met Herr Harnack and his wife at both the Russian and the American Embassies. She was an American by birth and called herself Harnack-Fish. The young couple had an assured place in diplomatic circles. The Harnacks lived near the Halle Gate, in a large, well-furnished apartment. Ille and I went there, stayed for an hour, and then left. It was a bad habit of Ille's and mine to discuss any gathering we had attended as soon as we had left, if possible the moment the door of our host's apartment had closed behind us, at the latest as soon as we reached the street. On this occasion Ille began as soon as we were out of the apartment.

"I like that!" she said. "There they stand, leaning against the mantelpiece, with a cup of tea in their hand, quite casually discussing things . . . things, well, any one of the things they discussed could cost them their heads."

I said nothing. She behaved in exactly this way in our home. Ille said:

"It looks all wrong to me. I feel there's something very, very wrong. And I can trust my feelings, I think." Then she said, with intensity: "Promise me this! Promise we'll never go there again! I don't want to have my head cut off just casually. I don't want it."

I said nothing and was glad Ille felt that way. If only she always thought so! She said:

"I like that! They stand about there, well-dressed, decent-looking people and they talk about 'cross-channels of communication'—do you know what that means?"

I did, but I said nothing. Ille said:

"They describe Hitler and Himmler and Rosenberg and Frick as utter fools, and they tell me, me who've never even met any of them before except the Harnacks and the Schulze-Boysens, they tell me . . ."

Ille broke off in the middle of her sentence. Then, stirring an imaginary cup of tea, she said:

"They say to me, 'Do you know, dear lady, I have heard from an absolutely sure source, because you see I have a direct link with Zurich . . . of course we exchange our information.' . . . And then," said Ille, "he suddenly catches sight of another man and says, 'Excuse me for a moment, dear lady,' and gives the other man a yellow envelope, saying: 'Strictly confidential' and winks . . . And there I sit on the sofa and can hardly breathe. So I ask who the decent-looking old man is and who is the one he spoke to, and they tell me that one's a ministerial councillor and the other's an adjutant, and that one over there is in the SS and this one here is a diplomat . . . now tell me, can you understand it all?"

I said:

"Yes, yes, that's the way it is. Now let's be getting home."

But Ille would not move. She said:

"And Harro, good old Harro, I heard him saying to another man—they were discussing somebody: 'He's another dull fellow we'll have to shoot.' Harro! Our old Harro talking about shooting people." Ille went on: "But I won't hear any more about shooting people! I won't! I don't want to have people shooting people here and people shooting people there, and who shoots who? I won't have it!"

I said:

"I won't either. Now come along."

But Ille said:

“Do you know what they’re up to, those people? They’re starting a revolution, the revolution of the adjutants. A tea-cup revolution. I don’t want a revolution. And I certainly don’t want one of that sort.”

She stopped in the middle of the sidewalk in the Friedrich Strasse, and shouted in the dark:

“I’ve had enough of revolutions!”

I promised her that there would be no more revolutions and I promised her that we should never visit those people again. The tea-cups seemed to embitter her particularly. I also promised her that we would not see Harro, but this promise I could not keep. I had at least to tell Harro my reasons for severing our relations.

I may say that I took just as serious, though a somewhat different, view of all this as did Ille. I myself had once balanced a tea-cup, and eaten horrible little pieces of bread covered with vegetables, and thus saved Germany. I too had once been convinced of the significance of my actions. I too had listened with satisfaction to men with opinions similar to mine while they discussed “spiritual bases.” I had been delighted to hear that they held appointments of remarkable influence, and that their bosses were fools. I had seen the winks exchanged, and the information passed and had been, in my time, impressed by the “important cross-channels” and the “direct link” to somewhere or other. And now Hans Dieter Salinger, who had once run his revolutionary salon, was an émigré in Holland, busily engaged with a cartel for the manufacture of enamel, tin and other household goods. Hans Zehrer was in Kampen reading the works of the Fathers of the Church. Ernst Samhaber was desperately trying to find a good Spanish word for *Volksgemeinschaft* in the articles that he wrote as Berlin correspondent for South American papers. Edwin Topf, an old tank driver of the World War, was running around dressed up as a new Panzer officer. Franz Josef Furtwängler was manager of a broken-down estate in Hungary. Bogumil, as a ‘private scholar,’ was cracking his wits over the problem of whether Wotan was blind in his right eye or his left. And I wrote film scripts, some good, some bad, but mostly bad. And it was quite right so. It all fitted in. It was good and right and beautifully normal, and we had all learned to distrust anomalies.

Yes, I had known it all. I had known the more or less inescapable destiny that awaited that class I once unkindly described as the “academic proletariat.” The lucky one would find his niche in an administrative apparatus that was already terribly over-crowded, in the bureaucracy or on some editorial staff, where he would be the right- or left-hand man of an unspeakably idiotic boss: the unlucky one was simply out of work, awaiting his chance. The chance came when a man said: “Give me four years,” and proposed to conquer unemployment. He succeeded, by building *autobahnen* and public works, by rearmament and a rapid circulation of money, by enlarging the bureaucracy,

by doubling the bureaucracy, trebling it. And suddenly there were places available, chance after chance for skilful, energetic, ambitious, alert young men with or without academic training. There were offices, newly created offices and boards, and jobs as adjutant or deputy or governmental councillor; and diplomas were handed out, nicely framed diplomas in which Hitler's own signature proclaimed that the man in question stood beneath his own special protection. And suddenly there was the army too, with its gates wide open. And before those gates queued all those who had not done so very well in civilian life, insurance agents and vacuum-cleaner salesmen. For them no more the long climb up and down the hard stairs of strangers, but instead a handsome uniform and a pompous office complete with ante-room and female secretary and maps to stick flags into and a service car and "my driver."

Still, they were no fools, those young men, far from it. They were not after sinecures, they did not wish to thresh dry straw, to waste time sticking flags in maps. They wanted to work, to do something useful. And then, automatically as it were, there it was, the easy offer, the frightful, musty, silence among the coal-dust of power, the fire-damp in the shafts and pits of politics.

A man can only really play politics if he is provided with the necessary information, with intelligence in concentrated form. And every one of them wished really to play politics. Over a hundred years ago Joseph Goerres, speaking of Metternich's political methods, said that he had constructed for himself a central position from which he might lift the world off its hinges but that all he had managed to do was to pull a cork out of a bottle. It was such a central position that they were now all anxious to create, and the way to do it was by the collection of information, the amassing of intelligence.

No office, no appointment, no branch was willing to deny itself the organisation of its own 'secret intelligence service.' Stool-pigeons and agents, informers and spies and counter-spies, these became, almost overnight, the most important people. Every man suddenly endeavoured to become his own policeman, and all at once the general behaviour was modelled on the methods of the police. From police documents a world was suddenly created, a world viewed in the perspective of police morality. But no morality is closer to that of criminals than is this one. Thus politics now moved into the sphere of the policeman and the gangster, and with politics went the component of power and the contrary component of revolution. In the long run it all came out of the same pot, impulse and counter-impulse, the poison and the antidote, all were boiled up together in one and the same saucepan, and its aroma did not smell sweet. Loyalty became a police loyalty and conspiracy a police conspiracy. It all followed quite logically. Once power moved away from the stream of social change, conspiracy must needs

follow. Politics had been modernised, had become a secret art, not unlike atonal music or abstract painting.

I seemed to myself to resemble some solid old papa, warning his son about women and debts and knowing that it was all in vain. Harro Schulze-Boysen listened to me more or less respectfully. He smiled when I said that he might well consider me a 'dull fellow' who would 'also have to be eliminated,' and he was polite enough to say this was not so. He said I was completely right and that he would give up the chatter. Only once did he grow serious. This was when I told him that I regarded what he was doing as a crime, a crime both against himself and against the cause for which he thought he was striving. Surely I must admit, he said, that inactivity was the greatest crime of all. I would not admit this. When I said that things must run their course to the end, he produced all the arguments which I, fifteen years ago now, had myself discussed with the same enthusiasm. He talked of 'forcing evolution on its way,' he spoke of 'lighting a beacon,' he said it all, and over and over again all I could reply was simply that it was untrue. But inactivity is fatalism, he cried, inactivity is anarchy—and I knew that I was in a false position with respect to him when I replied that inactivity is suffering, inactivity is maturity, inactivity is the only, the constructive responsibility. He said I had moved away from the spirit of action, and I replied that action had moved away from the spirit, and neither statement was true. It was senseless to argue, and perhaps we both felt this, and that is what I most regret today, the fact of having given up so easily. Nothing was in accordance with the hypotheses any more, and each man had to go his own way. He laid his hand on my shoulder and said: "One day we must go canoeing again."

I often met him after that. When he drove by in his car he would wave to me. I used to see Libs in the delicatessen, and I would say: "When are we going to go canoeing in the Spreewald again?" And Libs would say: "Yes, we must certainly arrange to go canoeing in the Spreewald again some day."

We never did.

By 1942 a climax was approaching. There were rumours of mass arrests, of mass secret trials, finally of mass executions. This was the first of those mass trials, the first of many. There were rumours that for these executions a new mechanism had been invented, a double gibbet on which the struggling victims slowly throttled one another to death. Names were whispered, a certain Schulze-Boysen and his wife, a certain Harnack and his wife, some eighty other young people, eighty young people of good family, with good appointments, ministerial councillors and SS officers, eighty young people who were collectively known as "the red choir." There were rumours of secret transmitters and of a direct link to Zurich and of espionage for Russia.

Many years later I heard that photographs had been discovered in

Harro's studio, photographs of a canoe. Harro and Libs and all the members of the "red choir" were cross-questioned in an attempt to discover who the man in the photograph might be, a somewhat stout man with a bald patch standing by the boat, and who was the young woman with dark hair seated beside Libs in the canoe. But nobody could be found who remembered their names.

Easter of 1933 found me living at Grünheide near Erkner, a suburb to the east of Berlin. The owner of a guest-house on Lake Peetz had furnished for me a small building some distance from his pension. It consisted of one room only, but it was big enough and comfortable enough for me to be able to sleep in it and work in it as well. Rowohlt lived a hundred yards away, in a small house with a narrow garden that led down to the lake shore. I could see from the light in his sleeping porch whether or not he was at home. He usually returned exhausted and then he would throw me out by noisily lowering the bed on his veranda. One evening I went over, thinking that I might be able to discuss something with him, but he pulled down his bed; I strolled back to my own place, feeling rather depressed, worked for a little, and then went to bed. It seemed to me that I had only just fallen asleep when I was awakened by noise and a tremendous banging on my door. I cried:

"All right, Rowohlt, what is it?"

But it wasn't Rowohlt. It was the police. I glanced at my watch and saw that it was precisely six a.m. I thought, with a certain satisfaction, that they were acting exactly according to form. I turned on the light and opened the door. Immediately the room was filled with powerfully built men, who brought with them the fresh morning air. They fell upon my bed and table, and rummaged through my trunk and my suits.

"Why didn't you open the door at once?" one of them asked me.

I replied that I had wished to check that it was really six o'clock. The man said:

"So you know all about it, eh?"

I assured him that I did know more or less all about this sort of thing. That was a mistake, for the man said at once:

"In that case I needn't waste a lot of words on you. You're under arrest."

I asked politely that I might be allowed to see his warrant. The man showed me his badge. I said patiently:

"And the warrant?"

The man said:

"Don't exist any more. Time's changed." Then, by way of improvement, he added: "You're my prisoner."

"That's something else again," I said, and he, giving me a look which he took to be penetrating, informed me:



“I’m Commissar Fendrich.”

So this was Commissar Fendrich. The whole city was filled with his name. Officials of the crime department have always been pretty good at publicity, but this man had made a positive art of it. The newspapers were forever printing stories concerning him and his genius, he was spoken about on the radio, he could even be seen on the newsreels, a brisk young man with a hat brim smartly turned down, wearing a leather coat with collar smartly turned up, engaged in the act of arresting a trembling old man in a caftan. Now the commissar turned to my table, picked up a book that lay open beside my typewriter, read the title, held it up so that his assistants might all see it, and cried triumphantly:

“Lenin!”

It was Lenin’s *Revolution and the State*, from which I had been making extracts the evening before. The commissar said:

“Can’t you find anything better to read? For instance Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*?”

“If you care to look,” I said, “you’ll find it on the other side of the typewriter.”

I had been making extracts from that book too. The commissar checked up on this, gave me a puzzled look, and said ungraciously:

“Get dressed!”

I dressed. The officials had by now created considerable chaos. They stuffed papers that were lying about into my brief-case, which they thrust into my hands. Outside in the mist stood a large car. I could see a light on Rowohlt’s sleeping porch. So they had been to him too, but he was not in the car. They had probably asked him about me. So he would know that I had been arrested. This was good news. We had often discussed this possibility at length and had arranged what he should do if the contingency were to arise. We drove into Berlin and I wondered where they were taking me. At the thought of the Pape Strasse I felt my mouth go dry. But the car did not head south-west, so we were going to the Alexander Platz. I breathed again. However, before we reached the Alexander Platz the car drew up in front of a house in the Bülow Platz. This was the Karl Liebknecht Building, though of course by now the inscriptions and emblems of what had once been Communist Party Headquarters had all been removed. It had been re-named the Horst Wessel Building.

I was taken through a small iron door beside an enormous iron gate which opened onto a little, triangular courtyard. I climbed a narrow, twisting staircase. On each landing there were corridors, and off the corridors many empty rooms from which the sounds of banging and hammering were audible. The building had only been taken over a couple of days before and was apparently being prepared as a new police headquarters. Right at the top I was led into a room where, around a

red-topped table consisting of many tables pushed together, were seated a number of officials. They were doing nothing, they were doing literally, absolutely nothing. The commissar pointed towards a chair in the corner and said:

“You wait there!”

I waited. The officials showed no interest in me. After some two hours one of them, who had spent this time fiddling with an empty folder, asked me if I had had any breakfast. I said I had not. The official produced a few sandwiches from his brief-case and offered me some of them. I was hungry and I ate.

Suddenly the commissar burst into the room.

“Terrific!” he cried. “Just seized a secret printing press!”

The officials congratulated him. They seemed genuinely pleased at his success.

As he went out he saw me seated in my corner and remarked:

“Your turn’s coming!”

Towards noon all the other officials disappeared and only the one with the folder was left. I asked him:

“Why actually have I been arrested?”

The official looked at me:

“The commissar will tell you quick enough.”

I waited and passed in review all the various possible explanations. There were quite a number. But I knew from experience that there was always one valid one which had been forgotten. So I tried to console myself by imagining that once I had thought of a reason for my arrest it was automatically eliminated as the real one.

I waited. I waited until five o’clock, I waited until six o’clock. At last one of the officials got up, went into the next room, came back at once, and said:

“The commissar has gone home already.”

The officials whispered together, and every now and then they would glance in my direction. Finally one of them left. He was gone for some time. When he came back he was carrying a piece of paper. He handed this to the one with the folder. The latter read it and announced firmly:

“I won’t do it!”

The officials looked first at him and then at me. One of them said: “In that case we’ll have to get one of the guards!”

He went out and soon returned with a stunted SA man. The SA man asked:

“What do you want me for this time?”

The man with the folder handed him the piece of paper. The SA man read it and asked:

“Who ordered this, then?”

The official said:

“Commissar’s instructions!”

The SA man stared at me. They all stared at me. The SA man said: “Me every time, every bloody time. I suppose the officials think they’re too good for this sort of job!”

Nobody said anything. The SA man pulled a pistol from his pocket, walked over to me and asked:

“Ever heard of what they call shot while ’tempting to escape?”

Yes, I’d heard quite a bit about that. I said nothing. The SA man said: “Come on!”

I went with him. Going down the stairs he walked behind me. My knees were stiff and my legs seemed half-paralysed. Downstairs we passed the guardroom, which was full of SA men sitting about. My SA man glanced in and said:

“Got a fine gent here wants to shoot our leader Adolf Hitler!”

The men all got up noisily and followed along behind. Now I was standing in the little three-cornered yard. The SA man said:

“Get up against that wall.”

I was already by the wall. In silence the SA men drew their pistols and began to snap cartridges into the chambers.

I heard the sounds from the streets, the horns of cars, the rattle of wagons, the footsteps of passers-by. So I understood what was happening. These gay fellows were having a game with me. The noise of shots must certainly be heard in the street, and that they would never risk. I said:

“Now put your cannons away like good boys. You’ll never frighten me with guns of that calibre.”

The SA men began to laugh, and they put their pistols back in their holsters. My SA man slapped me on the shoulder. He seemed pleased as he said:

“You’re a proper fellow, eh? But yesterday we had an old yid down here, you should have heard him holler.” My amiable SA man went on: “All right, come on.” And we went to the Alexander Platz.

The good old Alexander Platz police prison! It was all just as it had always been. Even the bugs were the same in the rags behind the W.C.’s. The soup was still cold, as it had always been, and indeed it was the same soup. Time passed as it had always done. There was no sense in keeping track of the days. On Sundays there were dumplings in the soup, otherwise there was no change. All that was different from the old days was that when I demanded I be brought before a judge I was told: “Aren’t any nowadays. That’s all changed.”

“But it’s the law,” I said.

“Daresay it is,” said the official. “But just you tell me this. Where are we going to find all the judges?”

One day the official opened my cell door and said:

“Bring everything. You’re getting out.”

I was led into a big hall, filled with tables. At each table sat a delinquent who was being interrogated. My escort led me to a table at which no delinquent was seated. The examining official fiddled with his typewriter until my escort had left the hall. Then he suddenly looked up and said:

“Ahoy!”

Wonderful. That was the greeting of the old Marine Brigade. I said:

“Ahoy!”

“First we must make a note of your personal data.”

He took a form and proceeded to do so. Then he asked me:

“Do you know what the accusation is against you?”

I said I had not been officially informed. The official said:

“Really not? And they call themselves policemen!”

He asked me:

“Do you know a certain Herr . . .” He looked through some papers.

“. . . Herr Fallada, Hans Fallada?”

I knew him well.

“Fine friends you’ve got!” said the official. I said at once that Fallada was a most highly respected person, a famous writer with a world-wide reputation.

“Oh,” said the official, “he’s a story-teller, is he? I might have guessed as much. Well, I’ll tell you a story. It seems Herr Fallada has a girl who works for him, and this girl is friendly with the daughter of Herr Fallada’s landlord. But Herr Fallada is on bad terms with the landlord, something to do with the rent. One day Herr Fallada told this girl who works for him that a most remarkable man was coming to lunch next day, an old assassin. And the girl told this to her friend and she told her daddy, and her daddy scratched his head and thought: ‘Assassin? Assassin? Who’s he going to assassinate?’ Well, the answer to that one was easy. There’s only one name springs to mind. And so off he trots to the authorities.”

I said:

“So that’s the way it goes.”

“Yes,” said the official, “that’s the way it goes in this wicked world. Incidentally, Herr Fallada is inside too, though not here. He’s in Fürstenwald.”

“And what now?” I asked.

“Now,” said he, “we write out the protocol.”

“Let me dictate it,” I said. And I began: “The accused, having been informed of the charge against him, denies it.”

He tapped at his machine . . . denies it. . . . He glanced up. He said:

“Indignantly?”

“Indignantly!”

He typed: denies it indignantly.

The door opened and a sea-breeze blew through the room. In walked my friend Walther Muthmann, his footsteps re-echoing, his sailor's cloak billowing out behind him. He certainly never muffed his entrances. He said to the official:

"Ahoy!" and sat down on the corner of his desk. Then, to me:

"The trouble you've caused me. You've no idea what a time Rowohlt and I had finding out where you were!"

"Well, everything's in order now, Herr Muthmann," said the official.

"The whole Brigade," said Muthmann, "was alerted and have polished their pistols."

"How many men have you got?"

"Eight," said Muthmann. "They're strategically located all around the Alexander Platz at this moment."

"Sign here," said the official. "And then you can go home."

"I can't," I said. "My brief-case is still missing."

"I'll find it for you," said the official, and walked out.

He was soon back with my brief-case. It had not even been opened.

"Call themselves policemen! Call themselves policemen!" said the official. "Well, ahoy!"

Fallada was released a week later. When he walked into Rowohlt's office and saw me there he said:

"You're the one I've to thank for all this!"

But since I had made exactly the same remark at the same moment, we each had to offer the other a wish. We produced identical wishes. It was in fact granted, twelve years later, but by then we didn't want it any more, for it was just wrong.

## F. PART TIME SERVICE WITH ORGANISATIONS

117. *With the exception of those you have specially mentioned in Sections D and E above, list: (a) Any part time, unpaid or honorary position of authority or trust you have held as a representative of any Reich Ministry or the Office of the Four Year Plan or similar central control agency; (b) Any office, rank or post of authority you have held with any economic self-administration organisation such as the Reich Food Estate, the Bauernschaften, the Central Marketing Associations, the Reichswirtschaftskammer, the Gauwirtschaftskammer, the Reichsgruppen, the Wirtschaftsgruppen, the Verkehrsgruppen, the Reichsvereinigungen, the Hauptausschüsse, the Industrieringe and similar organisations, as well as their subordinate or affiliated organisations and field offices; (c) Any service of any kind you have rendered in any military, paramilitary, police, law enforcement, protection, intelligence or civil defence organisations such as Organisation Todt, Technische Nothilfe, Stosstruppen, Werkscharen, Bahnschutz, Postschutz, Funkschutz, Werkschutz, Land-und-Stadtwacht, Abwehr, SD, Gestapo and similar organisations.*

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Name and Type of Organisation</i>	<i>Highest Office or Rank You Held</i>	<i>Date of Your Appointment</i>	<i>Duties</i>
Oct. '44	May '45	Volkssturm	Adjutant	Nov. '44	Adjutant

Curiously enough it was a very long time before I had to face the question of my standpoint in all its acuity; indeed it was not until the sun of National-Socialist power was rapidly sinking towards the horizon. I can give the exact date. It was October 18th, 1944, and I had just listened to a speech by Heinrich Himmler in which he had called out the *Volkssturm* in anticipation of the imminent Russian attack on East Prussia. Ille had been down to the village, and she returned with a piece of paper summoning me to appear the next day to swear an oath of allegiance as member of that *Volkssturm*.

Unlike so many of my compatriots, I had never before been ordered to swear an oath, neither concerning my veracity in a court of law nor as a proof of my loyalty. Because of my background and upbringing I had for a long time accepted implicitly the pledge of honour of those many men who had laid down their lives on the field of battle in fulfillment of their military oath. This seemed to me to be in accordance with an attitude based on solid and worthwhile concepts, which should certainly not be shaken so long as the hypotheses applied, so long as these hypotheses were not only apparent in terms of law and justice but were

also sanctified by a vital emotion. Thus the modification contained in the Weimar constitution by which the divinity was no longer invoked when an oath was sworn seemed to me a truly retrograde step in view of the facts of development; it seemed to me also to serve to discredit that intrinsic value which was originally bound up with the swearing of an oath, and thus to provide a precedent which might have incalculable results.

My attitude towards an oath was inevitably different from that of a religious person whose only well-being must lie in the salvation of his soul. For my categorical feelings the Catholic Christian might well be the only type of man to find an abode for his individualism in a genuine, a hierarchical community, namely in the Catholic Church. His conflicts with the state were not mine.

My attempts to lead an individualistic life—a life of my own creation without responsibility to any community, had been shattered. The attempt had been honourably made, but the circumstances were against me, both during my years of solitude and, later, those of more or less deliberate isolation. And never for a single day did my efforts succeed in persuading me that I was by nature and habit an individualist.

So it would have meant that I cherished a false idea of myself if I had not lived in the conviction that I was in truth a political being—or, to be more exact, a collectivist being. My real tragedy was that I never found a genuine collective. I had sought to find one in the nation, in that particular nation for which the shadows were even now lengthening. And what a nation it was! Despite its debased pretensions and its falsified concepts, the whole world had had to rise in arms against it in order to break its strength.

The question of the oath was the spark that set the whole complicated problem aflame. And only at this late date was I confronted with it. Others had made their decision before me, my friend Plaas, Harro Schulze-Boysen, the men of July 20th, 1944—and also every soldier, every one who had sealed his decision with his death no matter how he might have fallen. The oath was a dividing wall which separated 'Yes' from 'No' with all the visible consequences that that entailed—and to no single one of the dead could the circumstance be ascribed that this wall had become as thin as a sheet of tissue-paper.

When I got up from the table in the alcove of my Upper Bavarian peasant's house, and walked across to the door, I could see, down below in the valley, the little town of Siegsdorf, the needle-sharp church spire thrusting up over the humble roofs, the bridge across the Traun, the mountain range, the woods and the meadows, the cheerful farmhouses scattered here and there. I could observe this piece of the country without sentimentality, for I had only recently arrived here, and that fortuitously. But here below me lay an actual, concrete bit of the nation before which I must take my test.

The man who demanded that I swear an oath was simultaneously demanding that I defend my home. But I knew that this same man held the German people to be unworthy of surviving their defeat. I had heard this with my own ears. I had heard that unmistakable voice proclaim just this at that last historic Memorial Day on November 8th, when he addressed those men who had solemnly embraced his cause at the very beginning and who still did so now that its end approached. If there were here a contradiction it did not lie with me, nor with any other man who was determined truly to defend his home. For to do so could only mean to prevent its annihilation. This was an oath that I might swear. So much was plain.

True, considerations of this sort were of a purely theoretical nature. In practice any man might be shot for desertion, whether he had sworn an oath or not. The oath was nothing but an indecent, inhuman speculation on human decency. Not one of the thousands sent to the gallows was ever accused of having broken his oath; the net in which those brave men were caught was that insidious law passed at the psychological moment created by the provocation of the Reichstag fire. This was when the German nation had been swindled into tactical defeat. Every speech Hitler made was a tactical swindle, even as his *Blitzkrieg* was a tactical trick in the military field, a daring and astonishing opening up of the chess-game which destroyed pawns and castles, which gave the knights and bishops a clear run, and which left the opponent who did not surrender every chance of winning provided he were sure of his own skill.

Now the individual needed almost superhuman courage to be sure of his own skill. For this implied not only the decision to sit down to the game in the first place, but also the certain possession within his heart of the secret of victory and, more than that, of the plan which will fulfil victory once that has been achieved. He had to reckon that, should the decision go against him, his expenditure of spirit and his fulfilment of being would count for nothing and the fact of victory for everything. The simple act of swearing an oath confronted the individual with the alternatives of unconditional loyalty and obedience or of self-destruction. For should he be unwilling to disvalue a breach of his oath, even as the power that demanded it disvalued the oath itself, then—if he happened to survive—what was best in him, his consciousness of his own honour, would be automatically destroyed. And I was neither certain of my own skill, nor did I possess the secret and the plan of victory. This was an oath that I could not swear. So much was plain.

I think the psychoanalysts might describe as a deliberate accident the fact that I overslept the next morning. Breathless and dishevelled, I only entered the communal gymnasium down in the valley when the oath-swearing was already in full swing. On tiptoe I made my way through the men being enrolled in the *Volkssturm*, until I was standing modestly



in the rear rank. There they stood, the old peasants of the neighbourhood, prematurely aged by hard work, gnarled and weather-beaten figures. They had raised their right hand and in rough, hoarse voices they were repeating the words of the oath. And their left hand . . . this one and that one and that one there . . . yes, I could see along the whole rank now . . . every one of them held out his left hand too, with his crossed fingers pointed at the ground, in the immemorial gesture with which peasants exculpate themselves from the oath that they are swearing. It is an old and cunning peasant trick. It was just as easy as that.

At the end of the hall was a stage, used for theatrical purposes when some club or other held a celebration here. On the stage stood an army captain, in uniform, whom I knew to be the commander of our *Volkssturm*. I had seen him before and had heard that he had been discharged the army after the French campaign because of severe kidney trouble. He was a merchant by profession and had transferred his electric-appliances business from Munich to our village. Now, however, he stood slightly to one side. The most important person was the propaganda leader of the local Group, the shoemaker, who looked surprisingly imposing in his brown Party uniform. This worthy stepped down from his beflagged pulpit and told the *Volkssturm* members to enter their names on the attendance roster. Oh, they forgot nothing.

I went up to the captain and, assuming a military posture, asked him if I too should enter my name on the roster, since I had not actually been present when the oath was sworn. He smiled at me and seemed not at all surprised. He said amiably:

“Don’t worry, just you sign. And as for the oath, you can take that at some other convenient time.”

When I still hesitated he smiled again:

“There’s no hurry. After all, we’ll win the war even if you don’t.”

I saw the village doctor. I often spent an evening with him; he was the only person there with whom I attempted occasionally to preserve the fiction of a social life. I asked him:

“Doctor, what sort of a man is the captain?”

The doctor said:

“Would you like to meet him? He comes here frequently. I’ll invite you one evening when he’s here.”

The captain was a Bavarian and had the calm manners of the province. He knew that you can say anything to a Bavarian provided you say it easily and smile with your eyes while so doing—everything, that is, except possibly ‘you silly dog you.’ He wore his uniform when on duty. At other times he sat behind the wheel of the little delivery van in which he made the round of his customers, wearing a short jacket and a green hat. He knew everyone in the district, and when he took

command of the *Volkssturm* he did what any good tradesman would do and compiled his inventory.

Before the war the parish had counted some two thousand five hundred souls. The little town constituted the relatively small centre; a great number of smaller hamlets, each of some three to five farms, were scattered throughout the valleys and formed part of the parish. The area was thus great. At this time the population of the parish was well-nigh treble the normal. The houses of the little town and the peasants' farms were filled to the attics. First had come the evacuees, women, children and old people. Then there were the prisoners-of-war, almost all French. There were two or three to a farm, and they generally lived in the farmer's house and ate with his family. Only a few slept in the valley, in a house that had been commandeered for their use. They were given almost complete freedom, young, neatly dressed men, politely behaved and politely treated. Then there were the workers from the East, Poles and Ukrainians, who even outnumbered the Frenchmen. They too were scattered about the farms and were employed as agricultural labourers or men-servants or maids. Finding lodgings for them was not easy, for they were always fighting among themselves, usually on account of the Ukrainian girls. Then they would be once again locked up for the night, in isolated barns or in the few available barrack huts. The police kept a sharp eye on them, but usually, when they believed that they had uncovered a "centre of the underground movement," all that their raid on the dreary place disclosed was a secret love-nest. And only just over ten miles away was the great Polish punishment camp at Bernau, which contained thousands of Poles. From time to time whole groups of these prisoners would escape, and of course wherever they went throughout the countryside they could rely on help and shelter from the East workers. How could it be otherwise? Should they form themselves into partisan bands roaming the woods and the mountains, no peasant in his lonely farm could feel that his life was safe. The most urgent task of the *Volkssturm* must be to protect the isolated farmsteads from attacks of this sort. But for the time being this danger was not acute.

The parish had never been self-supporting, and even in the best years it could not feed itself.

"The moment communications to our valley are cut," said the captain, "hunger will set in. We must begin at once to lay in reserve stocks."

The area leader of Traunstein had already perceived this. The area leader of Traunstein was a thorough and far-seeing man, according to the captain. If one knew how to handle him he was extremely obliging. The captain, it seems, did know how to handle him. As for the local group leader, the captain said with a laugh, the local group leader. . . .

"For the last four weeks a train of fuel trucks has been standing on a siding of the station here. The station is in the middle of the town. The

round containers must show up on any air photograph. There's been no attempt made to camouflage them. I pointed out to the local group leader the consequent danger of a bombing attack. Do you know what he said? 'Don't matter, there ain't any petrol in them.'"

The captain spoke of the French campaign. At that time the whole French population was repeating an alleged prophecy of Nostradamus. This prophecy was a propaganda trick of Dr. Goebbels which had been infiltrated into France during the winter of 1939-40; in the ambiguous form characteristic of all such utterances, it contained the information that this war would end with the defeat of England and would be followed by a fruitful period of peace beneath the hegemony of the victor, a man who wore a cross upon his chest. The captain laughed and said that another prophecy of Nostradamus was now circulating in the town of Siegsdorf and was being whispered from door to door. According to this one the decisive battle of the war would take place near Traunstein, and the victors would be the "bearded ones." Some people clung to the belief that this was a reference to Hitler's little moustache, while others preferred the far more impressive one which Stalin wore.

But strategically there was quite a lot to be said for a decisive battle near Traunstein. Siegsdorf, five miles to the south-west of the district capital, was the gateway to the Berchtesgaden area, the eyrie and doubtless the final refuge of the German leader. In the Todt Organisation rumours were current concerning the creation of an 'Alpine Redoubt.' Should this be true Siegsdorf, as a glance at the map would show, was the exact place where the armies must clash.

"All the same," said the captain, "the Russians are in Hungary, and the Americans are advancing from Alsace . . . they're both about the same distance from Siegsdorf."

"What are you planning to do?" I asked him.

"First of all," he said, "I shall order the Siegsdorf *Volkssturm* to grow their beards."

I lived in Reiten, a little hamlet up above the town, in the most lovely house I had ever dreamed of. It was situated in one of the most beautiful parts of Germany, above Lake Chiem. It was an old, Bavarian farmhouse, of the prettiest and purest style, built in 1757. The date of its construction, burned into the timber-work, was still legible. It was a dream of a house, this old Huberhof in the little hamlet of Reiten. On this high ground were five similar farms, huddled in a fold of the hills which protected them from the elements. This fold was important: Reiten was not immediately visible from any side, crouched as it was in this dip in the land like a wild creature in its lair. There was only one way to Reiten, and it involved a steep climb from Siegsdorf.

And I was the Huber peasant, or, more briefly "the Huber"—for in this part of the world people were called after their homes. Down in the

town, a twenty minutes' descent, they knew what my name was, but nevertheless whenever I ordered anything to be delivered it arrived addressed to the Huber. In the barn were eleven cows, and when Nanni the milkmaid, who lived down beneath the little town, a mere two hours' climb away, milked them in the early morning the warm, rich scent of the fresh milk poured into the house through every chink and filled the air above the uneven floors laid over ancient beams. The house had six rooms and a kitchen and a cellar and a properly tiled bathroom, and an electric pump and finely built old Bavarian china stoves with handles glazed green and polished wooden benches set around them. The rooms overflowed with books, but each bedroom had running water laid on and the floors were of pink-grained stone tiles. And we lived there alone.

We lived there alone for three weeks. Then two beetle-browed men appeared who said: "Heil Hitler!" but did not remove their hats. They took tape-measures from their pockets and proceeded to measure the rooms. They tramped from room to room in their filthy boots; as they entered each one they would nod to one another and announce:

"Requisitioned!"

"But my books?" I said.

"Have to move them!"

"But my work?"

"You can write just as well in bed."

I offered them my last two cigarettes. They took one each, lit them, glanced into the kitchen, and announced:

"Requisitioned!"

They requisitioned the bathroom and the W.C. and Nanni's little cubbyhole in the barn and they said, "Heil Hitler!" and they left for the next farm, puffing my cigarettes. I said: "Very well, Heil Hitler!" and watched them go.

I wanted to leave, to go back to the Hotel Koenigshof in Munich. But Ille proved quietly obstinate. Her social background was considerably more elevated than mine, and she had a natural instinct for property. She even possessed a house of her own, a real house in Cassel, with fourteen rooms and a conservatory, built especially for her at the time of her birth in 1912. It was a really high-class building with all modern conveniences—the only trouble being that she couldn't live there. She possessed an instinct for houses, and her arrangements for the Huberhof bore good results.

A couple of days later my sister-in-law Hilde, the wife of my brother Günther, arrived with her son Michael, evacuated by a thoughtful magistrate on account of the increasing danger from air-raids. My friend Pablo came too. He was a merchant, a lawyer and now an anti-aircraft gunner; his home on the Bavaria-Ring had been bombed. We were five persons in six rooms, a tolerable state of affairs one would say.

But now there arrived a young woman with a baby boy, billeted on us by the mayor. She came from Munich, where her home and her sporting goods business had both been flattened by bombs. She was a quiet young woman whose husband was away on active service. Ille refused to accept any rent from her, and she was so quiet that nobody really noticed she was there. Ille had little hesitation in tuning in to the BBC or *Soldatensender Calais*, which was next to Munich on the dial, when Frau Söllner was in the house. She didn't do it when I was at home. I wouldn't allow it. I had listened to enemy broadcasts once or twice, and from then on I was determined not to be treated "in my own home" with the contempt that is inherent in all propaganda. This particular propaganda meant nothing to me; it completely failed to make any sort of appeal to me which I could begin to accept. And subsequently, up to and including today, I have never had any reason to regret practising this spiritual hygiene.

The situation of the house had originally attracted me because it would facilitate my work; films I was working on were being shot in Munich and in Salzburg. Both towns were within easy reach of the Huberhof. The dangers of bombing were at this time by no means immediate.

Later, to all its other advantages, the Huberhof could add that of safety, a safety that lay more in its isolated location than in the solidity of its walls. In our rural seclusion we began to construct a new geography, a geography of the memory rather than of the imagination. The town of my birth, Kiel, had already been mercilessly pulverised; never again, driving towards the Holsten Gate, would I receive that impression of rich, northern music which I had felt when first I glimpsed the outline of many-towered Lübeck; with Frankfurt-on-Main vanished my childhood, among the ruins of that narrow five-roomed apartment on the Rothschild Allee, of the road to school between the flowering front gardens, of the opera house and the theatre, of the Roman castle outlined in silver beneath the shimmering moon; the towns along the Rhine were burning, and with them burned our dream of a motor trip after the war, excitedly planned as we pored over the atlas. Ille attempted to give me a picture of her home town, Cassel, while the communiqué announced yet another raid on that city, not omitting the consoling news that no targets of military importance were hit. It was certainly a lack of imagination that enabled men to rain down fire on cities, and a lack of imagination that enabled other men to continue shooting while the piles of corpses assumed mountainous proportions. It was certainly the same lack of imagination that made it possible, day after day, to tolerate the news of what, day after day, was happening. I learned to know the shameful joy of the neutral, his relief that war in all his brutality has not touched him as yet, his despicable hope that he will himself survive, his frightful wish, still not

basically destroyed, that one day he will be able again to pursue the same, insipid happiness as before. "Life goes on," my brother Günther had said to his wife while putting his affairs in order before leaving for the Courland front on the following day: and he was fully conscious of the complete crudity and the complete truth of this remark. "Go to Bavaria!" a friend from the American Embassy had urged me when he came to say goodbye on the day after Pearl Harbour. And now here I sat in Bavaria while day after day the army communiqué announced that the war was feeling its way towards us, its long tentacles outstretched. At the beginning of one of my books I once quoted a remark of Hardenberg-Novalis: "The innermost capital of a country lies not behind earthen walls and cannot be taken by storm." A fine, consoling romantic phrase: an evil, exculpatory, criminal phrase: a phrase containing an obligation that nobody could now fulfil: a human phrase for inhuman beings, for human persons an inhumanity.

Some man with an extremely odd sense of humour had selected the notes of the cuckoo as the warning that was broadcast over Munich radio to announce an impending raid. With the collapse of the Italian front the danger to Munich came no longer from the west but from the south. One of the great octopus arms was now creeping over the Alps, over the huge, glittering, majestic range. But even before the cry of the cuckoo was to be heard, a trembling could be felt in the air; and when the soothing voice from 'the *Gauleiter's* command post' announced over Radio Laibach that strong enemy bomber formations were approaching the Kitzbühl Alps, the swarms of planes were already visible above the peaks, shining silver in the sunshine or emerging blackly from the clouds. It was usually only then that the Siegsdorf siren would start to wail, followed by the more distant one of Traunstein. Then the vibration would make the windows rattle and would slam the cowshed door, and my nephew Michael would be sent down to the cellar by his mother. He would hurry stumbling down the steep stairs; his little voice, praying the prayers he had been taught to say, would be lost in the roar of the engines, only to become audible again when the shattering violence had passed—and then, it must be admitted, his prayers would cease. It was said that the great streams of bombers used Lake Chiem as the assembly area from which they flew on to their targets, Munich or Landshut or Regensburg or Nuremberg. When the wind was in the right quarter we could hear the Nuremberg bombs. We could always hear the Munich bombs. We could stand on the hillock behind the house—oh God! how often did we stand there—and listen to the heavy rumblings. And at night we would stand on the hillock and watch the flashes from Munich and the dirty red reflection of the fires on the clouds. And when visibility was good—good, oh God! for shuddering curiosity—the tips of the mountains would be tinged as by the glow of the setting sun.

Then the bombers would return, no longer in a tight stream but scattered, and now came our time of peril. We would listen trembling to the strange, irregular roar, the droning noise that slowly rose and sank, we heard them splutter and rattle and sometimes emit a sort of screaming noise—and then were we in danger. The sick machines, wounded, were preparing here for the climb that would take them over the mountain wall, and they would jettison whatever load they still carried on to the countryside. The bombs would whistle aimlessly down, and like giant, staggering shadows the machines would suddenly rear up over our hillock and with the force of a blow the din of the engines would strike our house, would drive us to the door, down into the cellar.

The cellar was no protection. The house was no safeguard. For two hundred years these walls of clay and wood and plaster had served to guard against the forces of nature; against the forces of civilisation they were as brittle as eggshells. They had withstood storm and hail; now beneath the sinister hammering of aeroplane engines they groaned and shivered and cracked.

Ille packed everything, save the books, that we did not constantly need for the business of daily life in our trunks. She placed this luggage in the hall, imagining that we could, if need be, quickly throw our possessions out through the front door. But one day in November, when we had sat down to our midday meal and the first snowflakes were whirling past the windows—the cuckoo had not sounded, “there couldn’t be any flying on a day like this”—there were five, six quick, hard explosions like the cracks of a whip and then the noise of a coughing engine. I ran out on to the hillock. On the far side of the valley, on the snow-covered fields beside the *autobahn*, beside the proud and handsome viaduct and close to the farms of the little hamlet of Reichhausen, there were a number of dirty, irregular patches. A pale cloud still hung over the place. My neighbours were hurrying anxiously down the slope and then, like me, they stopped to look. There was nothing really to see, for nothing in Reichhausen seemed to move. The farms lay peaceful, one, two, three, four—the fifth farm, where was the fifth? We ran down and then up the other side. The fifth farm was no longer there. It had been stamped into the ground, blown into the air, and all that remained were a few stones, a fragment of a beam. They had been seated at their midday meal, three grown-ups and nine children, peasant children and the children of evacuees. Their fathers were all away at the front.

Curiously enough I lost nothing in the bombings except a couple of books and a light-brown flannel suit which I had sent to the cleaners; nor was I ever really threatened by the air war, and there were moments when this fact alone made me appear to myself as despicable as I did to others.

Ille, on the other hand, seemed to have as natural an affinity to bombs as did I to prisons. When my work necessitated attending a conference in Munich or Salzburg we went alternately. Ille saw me off without anxiety, for she knew by experience that my presence in the city meant days free from bombing. But I could rely with certainty on the cuckoo giving voice the moment Ille had left the Huberhof.

"I can't understand it," she said, "considering how extraordinarily fond of the Americans I am."

She loved Americans deeply. She had many American friends and she had relations over there. She was an expert on American films and literature, on American songs and cars and frigidaires. To my great relief she was not a disciple of the American cuisine. But not only did she love the Americans so, she seemed to have a positively magnetic effect upon them. When the cuckoo cuckooed I could reckon whether the attack would catch her still on her way to Munich or whether she would have already reached the town. Then I would stand on the hillock and listen to the heavy thumping and banging. She had made me a firm promise always to telephone immediately after a raid, and she never failed to keep it.

On the occasion of her last trip to Munich the first warning must have sounded when she was passing through Prien. The second must have held her up just before she reached Munich, and the third when she was in the city. It was witchcraft. I spent the whole day on the hillock, occasionally throwing myself to the ground when the thunderous, frightful roar of the bombers passing over in pitiless procession forced me to press my whole body against the soil beneath the spreading branches of the old oak-tree. I would get to my feet again and stare towards Munich. The first formations had not yet disappeared over the mountains before fresh swarms appeared. As soon as the sky was empty I ran into the house and attempted to call Munich on the telephone, but the lines were broken. They were cut throughout the day. Scarcely had night fallen when new streams of bombers began their thunderous approach. I saw the flashes and bursts above the town, the little ascending red flecks that were the anti-aircraft shells, and until late in the night I asked the young lady at the Siegsdorf exchange to see if she could connect me with Munich now. In vain. I learned that the train had already been damaged at Prien and that near Trudering the tracks were destroyed. The fire brigades of the whole province had been summoned, and next morning they had not yet returned. Nor were any trains getting through. On the fourth day I decided that despite new streams of bombers I would go to Munich by bicycle. The distance was sixty miles by *autobahn*, but I was not allowed to use that highway. I could not expect to cover more than some forty-five miles in a day, but I hoped that in one day I might reach Holzkirchen. Since I had had no news of Ille I wished at least to look for her corpse. Just as I was



pumping up the tyres the telephone rang. The young lady at the exchange said:

“Well, at last I’ve got through.”

At once I heard Ille’s voice, very small and very far away.

“Please come and fetch me,” she said.

I tried to explain that I couldn’t get there before the following day. When she didn’t understand I shouted at her why this was so. At last I grasped that she wasn’t in Munich at all but at Bergen station. She’d come back on the first freight train to get through. I bicycled at break-neck speed down to Bergen, three miles away. When I was still a long way off I could see her sitting on the bench outside the little station, staring out over the peaceful valley. Her fur coat was open and her dress filthy and torn. Her face was stained with soot and her eyes red. I jumped off my bicycle and asked excitedly:

“Where’s your case?”

She gazed at me and said nothing.

Back home Ille sat down without even taking off her coat. She had been stubbornly silent all the way, and I too did not know what to say. Now I sat down beside her and said:

“Tell me all about it.”

But she could not talk consecutively. Only bit by bit did I learn what she had been through. She said:

“Suddenly there was water in the cellar. It was a boiler room, and then there was a stream running through it.”

She said:

“The Stanner children kept tortoises up in their room. Nothing had happened yet, and I wanted to go upstairs to fetch some candles. Then I met a tortoise climbing downstairs. It let itself fall from step to step, landing on its shell, then it would right itself and crawl on to the next step. I picked it up and went back into the cellar. That’s how I knew this was it.”

I had always laughed at Ille because she used to say she couldn’t touch a tortoise. She said:

“When the main staircase collapsed I thought, ‘Above all no panic, for God’s sake no panic.’ The cellar was full of people and they were all quite calm except for a Polish girl, the maid from the third floor, that nice girl who always gets us ham without coupons. Suddenly she began to scream and bawl. I gave her a box on the ears and she shut up. She stuck beside me from then on, and when they dug us out it was she who pulled me through the hole.”

She said:

“You know the little Dutchman, the elevator man, you remember him, don’t you. He put on a steel helmet, far too big for him, and between the waves of bombers he kept running up on to the roof to see if there were any incendiaries. At last Herr Stanner told him not to.

When the bomb fell down the liftshaft he was hurt and we carried him into the cellar. I held his hand while Frau Stanner bandaged his wounds. Suddenly he sat up and said: 'You Germans can't say we Dutchmen aren't brave any more, can you?' And then he died."

Suddenly Ille began to cry. I put her to bed. I wouldn't let her go to Munich any more. Since the Koenigshof had been completely destroyed, when I went there I slept in one of the dressing-rooms of the Geiseltasteig studios. During all the times I went there I never once experienced a raid.

The last time I went to Munich it was to attend a conference of script-writers employed by the Bavaria Film Company summoned by the Reich Film Dramatist. This sharp young man laid down with coherent assurance the policy to be pursued in film production as soon as our final victory had been achieved. His plan took everything into consideration save reality. The sun was shining, the talk babbled on, the projects were discussed in detail, with pride the sharp young man spoke of the achievements made by the inventive German mind in the realms of colour film which would soon 'have a big part to play.' And the Russians were outside Berlin. I wished that the imminent danger warning might be sounded, a small, mild raid, perhaps a single medium bomb on the empty ground in front of the studio—but of course my presence in Munich made this impossible. I telephoned Ille from Geiseltasteig. She told me that she was sitting on the floor, with her back to the wall and the telephone in her lap, for a solitary fighter-bomber was attacking the house. "Here he is again!" said Ille, and she held up the earpiece to the window. I could hear the mounting roar of his engine followed by a sharp rattling noise. "Gone!" said Ille. She said: "That's the third time. He keeps flying around the hillock and coming back." With harsh words from my telephone booth in Geiseltasteig I ordered Ille to go down to the cellar at once. The fighters and fighter-bombers which accompanied the bombers apparently did not take part in the mass raids. They amused themselves, when their escort duties were over or while awaiting the return of the bombers, by making private attacks on funny little targets.

Thus did it begin. This was when the peacefully bucolic air began to quiver. The war was nearing its end, so much was obvious. Everywhere were indications of this, easily seen, easily recorded and quite unambiguous. The German radio stations now all broadcast the same programme, but one by one they went off the air.

Concerning the phenomenon of the approaching end to the war a better source of information even than the vanishing radio stations and the army communiqués, which though sometimes cryptic never actually told a lie, was my friend Taddäus. Taddäus was a young Pole, who for years now had been foreman at the Talham farm which lay in the dip of the land between Adelholzen and the *autobahn*. He was a friendly

man with broad features who often came to the Huberhof to lend us a helping hand. Taddäus enjoyed the confidence of the countless workers from the East. When one of the many unavoidable little quarrels broke out between the Poles and the peasants he would be called in to arbitrate, and never in vain; it was thanks to him that up to the very end there was never a single serious incident. I was accustomed to learn the truth from Taddäus, truth which not only anticipated the announcements of the army communiqués but also the information broadcast by the enemy radio; Taddäus was at all times extremely well informed, though his sources remained mysterious. It was said that the Poles received their news and their instructions through secret 'resistance transmitters,' but there was no point in attempting to verify this, there was more sense, as old police sergeant Rankl of Siegsdorf used to say, in trying to get on as well as possible with the workers from the East. The sergeant was a clever man; he relied on Taddäus, who for his part wanted nothing more than the preservation of good relations between the Poles and the native inhabitants. To begin with, when the Poles were still keeping quietly and inconspicuously to themselves, Taddäus' broad face would be happy when he came to the Huberhof and spoke of his activities in ensuring a better standard of life for the workers; his expression changed as the attitude of the Poles now began to alter. This happened quite slowly. They did not become impertinent, but familiar, patronising almost. When taken by surprise in somebody's orchard they no longer swore; they would smile gaily and, breaking off a twig of blossom from a cherry tree, would stick it between their teeth. Ille, guessing Taddäus' feelings from his thoughtful manner, tried to cheer him up, saying:

"The Russians won't get here. The Americans are coming."

But he said gloomily:

"First the SS will come." He added: "I think I shall die. I think all the Poles will die."

Ille told me this, and I knew precisely how hard it would be to keep my word, but nevertheless I promised Taddäus that so long as the *Volkssturm* was here no Pole would die at the hands of the SS. But Taddäus replied heavily:

"I'll die, that's certain. I'm not a lucky man."

The tasks of the *Volkssturm* were assigned automatically by the air raids. The captain had originally drawn up a programme for the *Volkssturm* which made the peasants fear that, despite all the assurances given to the contrary, the rumours concerning the possible future use of the *Volkssturm* as regular military units on the crumbling fronts might not be altogether without foundation. The captain did not bother about such rumours, he simply assigned duties. He made the training company prepare a relief model of the country around Siegsdorf, primarily for practice in observation. This handsome sand-table further

served to show the Traunstein area leader why the captain needed every single one of his men for the defence of Siegsdorf itself. He set up a first-class target range to encourage his men's interest, and in this he could be certain of his *Volkssturm* unit's lively approbation. They were all excellent marksmen and were all members of the Shooting Club and the Miniature Rifle Club. The head of the Ruhpolding *Volkssturm*, a senior game-keeper, observed somewhat sourly the excellent scores made on the range by the Siegsdorf men, for they already enjoyed a certain notoriety as poachers. Then the captain ordered the building of defensive positions; he had fox-holes dug at intervals along the *autobahn* and the other roads, and slit-trenches for protection against attack by low-flying aircraft. Soon the area leader accepted that the *Volkssturm* be used for all sorts of secondary emergency activities. The railways asked for the assistance of the *Volkssturm* in unloading trains, the highway authorities for help in mending cables. The *Volkssturm* was not subordinate to the army but to the Party, and its company commanders had to be Party members. The captain appointed me his adjutant, because adjutants did not have to be Party members. In the absence of the captain it was the adjutant who assumed command of the battalion.

The captain was laying in stocks. The mills and the dairies no longer surrendered their surplus production to the Bavarian co-operative society but to the *Volkssturm*. The *Volkssturm* provided the transport and stored these reserves in hidden dumps. The *Volkssturm* served as the 'Land Guard,' an organisation controlled by the police sergeant. The captain worked out an alarm system which he frequently tested. Every hamlet, every isolated farmhouse, was linked by line or by runner with the little town. The men of the *Volkssturm* began to grow uneasy when they saw their duties constantly multiplying in this fashion. The captain instituted a 'Comrades' Evening' and contributed to the cheerful atmosphere of these reunions by going from table to table, drinking 'his men's' health in near-beer, and saying, while smiling with his eyes:

"You rascals, can't you see that the more you have to do here the less available you are for service elsewhere?"

But *Reichsleiter* Bormann insisted that every unit of the *Volkssturm* surrender a few of its men for incorporation in battalions destined for the front. The captain studied carefully the ever-growing bundle of orders and directives; then he drew up his list of *Volkssturm* men who were to be 'surrendered' and had a long and fatherly talk with them. The selected men marched to Rosenheim where a draft for the front was being assembled—accompanied by the good wishes and sighs of relief of their neighbours who 'hadn't been caught.' But within a few days rumours began to circulate that the men sent to Rosenheim had deserted. According to the orders issued by *Reichsleiter* Bormann the

penalty for desertion from the *Volkssturm* was death. The captain went at once to see the area leader. He came back and announced:

"It's all in order." He said: "The men simply tried to come home."

On receipt of a message from Rosenheim the area leader had had the men arrested. The men said that they had gone to Rosenheim in order to serve at the front with the *Volkssturm*. But when they got there they had just sat about for days on end with nothing whatever to do, until at last they were taken off to be given uniforms. They were handed tunics with black collar-patches. So they decided there must be some mistake. They thought they had been enlisted in the *Volkssturm*, not the SS. Somebody had obviously blundered and they felt they had best go home and find out what was going on. They said they had nothing against the SS, but things should be done properly. They were all for the *Volkssturm* and they'd rather serve in the *Volkssturm*. The captain laughed. I asked:

"And then?"

The captain said:

"The area leader is a thoroughly sensible man. He talked to them a bit about 'the death penalty' and 'military executions' and he told them that according to instructions issued by *Reichsleiter* Bormann the black collar-patches were the insignia of the *Volkssturm*. Then he sent them home."

"And now?"

"And now they're to hold themselves in readiness for the next draft. But in Rosenheim they know nothing about any further draft."

The captain smiled and added:

"The area leader asked me why I had selected all the notorious n'er-do-wells. I asked him what he meant. Weren't they all good Party members? That silenced him."

For a long time no bomber fleets passed overhead. Then suddenly it all began. It started with twelve planes which appeared over the silvery chain of snow-covered peaks, roared above our house, and immediately dropped winking flares which left puffs of cotton-woolly, snow-white smoke behind them. This was the first time I had seen the 'Christmas trees.' At once the ground began to tremble. We stood out of doors and looked towards the north. It was Traunstein. Down there in the valley, where Traunstein lay between the forests and the slopes, a greenish-yellow cloud began to rise. Too late the sirens started to howl from all quarters. Then came the signal calling out the *Volkssturm*. The Siegsdorf detachment hurried through meadows and across the foothills that flanked the Traun towards Traunstein, which, to judge by the violence of the explosions, must be a heap of rubble when we got there. But the attack had been concentrated on the railway quarter, on the station, the post-office and a few houses immediately beside the station. The raid had lasted only a few seconds, yet here was an example

of what our captain called 'saturation bombing.' The railway installations no longer existed. Bomb crater seemed to touch bomb crater, yet between them were still more bomb craters.

The columns of the *Volkssturm* broke ranks, for here there was no possibility of marching in formation. It was chaos, a smashed expanse dotted with lumps of broken stone and twisted pieces of metal. There was nothing left intact or even recognisable for what it had once been, no post, no piece of track, no platform, no wagon. There was no point in trying to put it to rights, for there was nowhere to begin. The men of the *Volkssturm* stood about shivering; sleety snow had started falling. The area leader drove up in his car and shouted from the road:

"*Gauleiter's* orders. A track's got to be laid. This is the only link between Munich and Vienna."

But Vienna had already been occupied by the Russians. We set to in an attempt to dig out the corpses buried beneath the rubble. The girls from the station and from the post office were said to have taken refuge in a subway beneath the lines. We did not find the subway. We measured distances and began again to dig in the place where the underground passage should have been. We did not find it. One area of rubble was exactly like another. Where the depots of the Bavarian co-operative society had been the ground was exactly like the place where the sheds of the freight station had stood. The captain said, as he went by:

"You're not just making history here, you're making geography too."

From now on there was not a day that did not bring some fresh event. When the peasants returned home exhausted from hacking and pulling at the field of rubble, they were busy until late into the night with their spring sowing. And indeed in no more than six days a track was in fact laid through the ruined station and the first train had passed; it had gone slowly and shakily, but it went through. That evening my neighbours at Reiten were busy in their barns and stables, getting ready to go out even at that late hour with their horses and ploughs. My telephone rang, and it was the captain ordering the *Volkssturm* to report for duty immediately in the gymnasium. I found the captain on the gymnasium steps, smoking a cigarette. I said:

"The peasants were just getting ready for work in the fields."

The captain puffed nervously. Throwing away a half-smoked cigarette and immediately lighting another, he said:

"I know. The training company of the Traunstein Regiment has got a new commander." Drawing quickly at his cigarette, he went on: "A very fine man, knows his stuff, won the German Cross in Gold, used to be district group leader in Stuttgart." He said: "The area leader has appointed him battle commander." Then he turned about and walked up the steps and into the gymnasium.

The new commander had had an arm shot away and he wore a number of distinguished decorations. He spoke with a sharp Swabian accent—when a Swabian sets out to be regimental he is worse than a Prussian because he is totally devoid of humour. The commander was a first lieutenant and he spoke to us about the construction of anti-tank obstacles. There could be no doubt that he knew his stuff. He said, quite casually: “There’s no point in running away. The choice is simply whether you want to be shot by the enemy or by an execution squad.” The men of the *Volkssturm* sat silent and attentive on the chairs that so closely packed the hall.

The next morning the lieutenant, the captain and I walked over the area. The lieutenant pointed out the places where anti-tank obstacles were to be built. In fact the town was open on all sides, and from all directions roads and paths led down to the bridge over the Traun. I made a note of the places for the anti-tank obstacles. The captain smoked in silence. On the way back the captain asked:

“Do you think that there’s sense in attempting to defend Siegsdorf?”

“Of course,” said the lieutenant proudly: “We are the main line of defence of the Alpine Redoubt.”

The captain glanced at me. I cleared my throat and asked:

“Where is it? This Alpine Redoubt, I mean?”

The lieutenant gestured vaguely towards the range of mountains.

“Up there, naturally.”

“Naturally,” the captain said to me as he threw away his cigarette.

“What a stupid question,” he went on. “Where did you think it was? In the moon?”

The lieutenant said sharply:

“In any case I shall make it my business to see that every man here does his duty.”

I accompanied the captain to his office. He threw me a bundle of printed papers. They were instructions concerning the building of anti-tank obstacles. There were three models, one for large obstacles, one for medium and one for small. I compared the plans and asked:

“Which sort is it to be?”

The captain said:

“The smallest, naturally.” He walked towards the door, but just before he reached it he turned back for a moment. “Alpine Redoubt!” he said.

The men of the *Volkssturm* built anti-tank obstacles. The work was hard in view of the stony nature of the soil and its tendency to splinter. They worked in stubborn silence as soon as the lieutenant came in sight. The lieutenant had fox-holes dug at a certain distance from the obstacles. In these ‘picked men’ were to sit, armed with bazookas and anti-tank grenades, with the task of eliminating the hostile tanks when these stopped in front of the obstacles. We possessed neither bazookas nor

anti-tank grenades. Nobody said anything. The lieutenant selected the most nimble members of the *Volkssturm* for this cunning operation and gave them special training. The moment he was out of hearing the men of the *Volkssturm* would give free vent to their opinions. Must the obstacles be located between houses? Heavy tanks would simply knock down the wall of one of the houses and thus bypass the obstacle. The captain said nothing. One of them seemed to have grasped the truth of the situation when he said, in his thick Bavarian accent:

“If it weren’t for the captain’s sake we wouldn’t do nowt.”

On my way up to the Huberhof I met Taddäus. He stopped me and said that the Americans were in Cassel. Taddäus knew that Ille came from Cassel. I gave him a cigarette and went on up. Ille was standing in the doorway gazing at the snow-covered peaks. I said:

“The Americans are in Cassel.”

For a long time she said nothing. At last she sighed gently and remarked:

“Back home in America the magnolias are in bloom.”

But she switched on the radio and tried to find out what had happened in Cassel. She loved her home-town dearly, and it hurt her very much that she could never go there. However, all the German stations that still functioned were broadcasting a speech by Dr. Goebbels. It was an appeal for ‘pitiless’ defence. Men, women, old people, children were to dig into the soil of their homeland and refuse to surrender a square yard of German territory. . . . Ille switched off. She said:

“I’ll be a tank-destroyer. When the Americans come I’ll stand on the *autobahn* and go: Ksh! Ksh!”

At that time I spent half the night sitting up in bed, sleepless. Through my little window I could see a good stretch of the shiny *autobahn*. When the wind was right I could hear the rumble of the traffic, and I could watch the feeble glow of the dimmed headlights. During those nights it seemed to me that the flow of traffic eastward was diminishing. Almost all the cars and trucks had formerly headed east; those going west had seemed to be almost invariably ambulances with the red cross against the white ground. But now most of the traffic was travelling west, heavy, fully laden trucks. Many had their headlights full on, regardless. Through the whole night the grinding and rumble of the traffic was audible, now even when the wind was not in the right quarter. The petrol station on the *autobahn*, which was near the junction with the road that led up into the Alps, was always surrounded by a mass of waiting vehicles. And gradually the traffic increased. It was coming from all directions now, trucks from the north, cars and trucks from the south, then horse-drawn carts in ever-increasing quantities, like a great trek. Patrols of *Volkssturm* men were supposed to divert the horsedrawn traffic off the *autobahn* on to secondary roads. This was a



thankless task. The migrants, many of whom had brought their cattle with them, simply ignored the *Volkssturm* and went stubbornly on their way.

In the petrol station there was a telephone that was connected with other points along the *autobahn*. The station attendant was thus able to follow exactly the progress made by the Americans. To the west one telephone after another was falling silent. There was now very little petrol left in the station, and the attendant had to refuse it to the passing cars and trucks. A small body of *Volkssturm* men was assigned to protect him. The attendant stood in front of his locked pump. Bumper to bumper the cars streamed past. Many a truck was covered with people, not only sitting on top of mountains of luggage but also clinging to the mudguards. Cars stopped by the pump, but the attendant just shook his head wearily. No petrol? The attendant said that a police unit from Slovakia had installed itself behind the wood near Oed. They had come with a convoy of vehicles, and had brought many Slovak girls with them. Also they had had two big fuel trucks. Now the policemen were selling their petrol at a fantastic price to the infuriated car owners. Two policemen hung around the petrol station and approached any driver who looked wealthy enough to pay their price. The cars were filled with baggage, and almost invariably there were women in the back. The attendant said:

“I never knew there were so many staffs and so few fighting troops. No troops have come through, but staffs! Talk about staffs!”

A car drew up, and the attendant shook his head. A senior SS officer got out; he took no notice of the attendant and walked straight over to the telephone booth. I asked the attendant:

“Can anyone just come and telephone here?”

The attendant said:

“He’s not phoning, he’s changing.”

In the car was seated an extremely pretty young girl. The attendant said:

“I never knew that all the big shots had such pretty wives. But they’ve got no kids! Always just a pretty young girl like that one.”

After a while the SS officer emerged from the telephone booth. He was wearing civilian clothes with his uniform in a bundle beneath his arm. He asked the attendant for the address of a painter in the town and then, after a brief conversation with one of the policemen, drove off.

“Now he’s going to get his number plate re-painted,” said the attendant. He knew it all. He said you could find the handsomest uniforms hanging from branches in the woods on either side of the road.

Ever more pedestrians appeared among the traffic. When I stood on the hillock beneath the oak-tree I could see the long, winding columns of refugees, crossing one another, headed this way and that. Only Reiten, in its protective fold in the ground, remained unaffected. Once

I saw a car coming towards the hamlet from Osterham. I observed it with distrust. It stopped before one of the farms, and a senior officer got out and entered the house. Filled with disquiet and fearing some sort of unpleasantness, I strolled across. But it was only an acquaintance of the evacuated family billeted there. He was a colonel, an army corps artillery commander, the first man belonging to a fighting unit whom I had seen during these days. He came from the north. The artillery of his corps now consisted of two long-barrelled 170 mm. guns, which were in the little town down in the valley. One of the towing vehicles had broken down and, besides, the colonel had neither fuel nor ammunition. The colonel almost cried when he spoke of his guns; such beautiful guns they were; he could shoot fifteen miles with them; and now they were useless.

"I had the task," he said, "of laying down fire near Regensburg, to help prevent the Americans from crossing the Danube. But I had no guns. I got an order to collect all the guns that were to be found in the Regensburg area. I ran from command post to command post telling my sad story. There were no guns. In Regensburg there was a big officers' mess. Every day the officers of the whole sector used to go there. They all knew how much depended on my guns, and I was asked over and over again if it was possible to stop the Americans from crossing the Danube. It wasn't possible. I sent a message saying I couldn't carry out my task and I received orders to withdraw southwards. I hurried to the officers' mess and told them that Regensburg could not be defended. The troops began at once to withdraw in orderly fashion. I was just about to move off myself when a civilian official of the War Ministry came to see me. He wanted to know what he should do with his guns. 'What guns?' I asked. 'My seventy guns down in the freight yard,' he said. This unfortunate official was in charge of a train carrying seventy brand-new artillery pieces of all calibres, complete with ammunition. His instructions were to take them to Hungary. Hungary! And the Russians were in St. Pölten. The railways weren't working, and for weeks now these guns had been parked on a siding in the freight yard. These were the guns I'd been looking for, the guns that would have decisively held up the Americans. In the freight yard! And all the time this wretched official had known what I was trying to do and yet he hadn't said a word. He was supposed to hand his guns over to someone in Hungary, not to me!"

The colonel looked at me in despair. He said:

"Germany's lost the war because of a new epidemic, a nation-wide plague. It's called proper-channels fever."

The colonel believed in the existence of secret miracle-weapons.

"I know they're there," he said. "I've seen them myself. But no doubt they've been shunted onto a siding in some freight yard."

I asked him if he believed in the Führer's genius. He opened his

mouth and then closed it again. Doubtless he had suddenly remembered his oath of allegiance.

I switched on the radio to hear the news. Almost at once a dark and sonorous voice informed me that the German Führer and Chancellor had fallen outside the Chancellery. I ran out into the hall and shouted up the stairs:

“The Führer’s dead!”

Doors opened on to the landing, and Ille, Hilde and Michael appeared. I cried again:

“The Führer’s dead!”

Michael began to cry noisily. Ille looked down at my nephew and said:

“I think you must be just about the only person who’s upset by it!”

Hilde put her arms around her son:

“You cry if you want to! You can cry if you feel that way.”

Ille went into the kitchen, and after a while she called out:

“Come along, then, the lunch is getting cold.”

During the meal we did not discuss the event that we had once thought must surely shake the whole world to its foundations. In the afternoon I walked down to the town. By the bridge I found the utmost confusion. The sun had thawed the frozen ground, and now the heavy trucks had churned up the mud until it was ankle-deep. Three roads converged on the bridge, and each of them was blocked with columns of vehicles. Suddenly from the other side of the bridge I saw the local group leader dash across towards me, through the ominously roaring, swaying trucks. He was not in uniform, but was wearing civilian clothes and a green hat with a brush in the band, as is the Bavarian custom. Greeting him I said:

“Heil . . .” and then stopped. “What does one say now?”

With a quick gesture the local group leader pulled a pistol from beneath his cloak and held it towards me. At first I thought that he intended to shoot me, but then, glancing down, I saw that he was holding the thing by the barrel and that it was the butt that was pointed at me. Then I thought that he wanted me to shoot him, for presumably he had no wish to survive his Führer.

“No, no,” I said. “Better times will come.”

Making a definite effort to speak with an educated accent, he said:

“I surrender my weapon to the *Volkssturm*!”

Reluctantly I took the weapon, and asked, bewildered:

“But why?”

He said, relapsing into his native idiom and accent:

“Because it’s the end.”

“Oh, I see,” said I. “And now what?”

The local group leader gave me a confidential look and said:

“Nothing can happen to me. I only joined the Party recently.”

Something occurred to me:

“Then the local group office is empty?”

“That’s right,” said the local group leader. “The captain has already taken it over.”

The captain was standing by the desk in the local group office, which was in the parish building, examining the various rubber stamps. The pictures of Hitler and Goebbels had already disappeared, and only square patches on the wall, covered with cobwebs, showed where once they had hung. The local group leader said, politely:

“Good day!”

The captain, without looking up, said “Good-day!” and continued his examination of the stamps. Then he asked: “Who cut out the national emblem from these rubber stamps?”

The local group leader said:

“I did. Because it’s the end.”

The captain did not look at the local group leader. Replacing the stamps on the table, he said:

“With these stamps I could have produced all the necessary documents and back-dated them.” He said: “I could have supplied every Nazi in the place with evidence, with Party evidence, to prove what bad Nazis and what good citizens all our local Nazis were.”

He ran his hand over the stamps, jumbling them up together, and said to the local group leader:

“And that’s no longer possible, thanks to you . . . you idiot!”

“Does the captain need rubber stamps?” a hoarse voice asked.

In the door stood a warrant officer in the uniform of the Luftwaffe Signal Corps. He must have been standing there for quite some time. He straightened to attention and grinned, thus revealing a fine set of gold teeth. He said:

“I’ve been a soldier for eighteen years. Can the captain find a job for me here?”

The captain asked:

“What sort of stamps do you mean?”

The warrant officer pulled a stamp from his pocket and handed it to the captain.

“It’s my unit stamp. With it you can discharge any man from the armed forces. This place is full of men without proper orders.”

The captain looked at the stamp. He said:

“Discharge papers won’t be of much interest to the Americans.”

The warrant officer said:

“I don’t give a good goddam for the Amis, it’s the SS I’m thinking about. An SS unit has arrived, up by the fuel depot.”

The captain straightened up. He said:

“I don’t give a good goddam for the SS!” He lit a cigarette, turned

to me, and said: "The training company has moved off. The area leader has appointed me battle commander." He gazed at the stamp for a moment and then asked me: "What do you think of horseradish?"

I was somewhat taken aback. I said:

"Strong stuff."

The captain said:

"Write Horseradish and write it so that it looks like a signature."

I scribbled the signature on a piece of paper, a series of heavy strokes corresponding roughly to the number of letters. The captain gazed at the result and then said:

"Write discharge papers with this stamp and this signature. Every member of the armed forces without proper orders is to get one. Then he'll be enrolled in the *Volkssturm* and subordinated to the local battle commander."

He turned to the warrant officer.

"How about you? Are you without orders too?"

"Oh no," he said with a grin, "I've got a first-class set. Marching orders to rejoin my unit in central Italy. Only the unit don't exist any more."

The captain said:

"You will take charge of the command orderly room."

The warrant officer sat down behind the typewriter and was soon hammering away at the keys. The local group leader was standing there with his mouth open. The captain said:

"Why are you still here? You don't belong to the *Volkssturm*, do you?"

The local group leader said:

"Oh, no, I'm not in the *Volkssturm*."

"Then go home," said the captain. "We've no use whatever for people like you."

The local group leader left, and the little brush trembled in his hat.

The captain said:

"A police depot has installed itself up in the roadworks. Uniforms, coats, boots, underclothes, all stuff that our people here can make good use of. But we haven't got any use for the police. I don't want a lot of crazy policemen running around the town. Besides, they refuse to hand over their supplies. Probably they hope to get a bit of cheap popularity by surrendering their depot intact to the Americans. The clothing was destined for police units in Italy. In Italy! And this is the Alpine Redoubt." He turned to me and said: "Go to the road-works and requisition the depot. And tell the people there to go home."

I said:

"Right, sir," and turned on my heel.

This was the first assignment that I had been given. It seemed as though the captain had guessed how I felt about everything connected

with the police. I had reached the door when the warrant officer called after me:

“Take a gun!”

He handed me a machine-pistol, a short, clumsy weapon, with a heavy butt of yellow wood. He slapped the barrel saying:

“Brand new, though the model’s old. It’s loaded, forty-two rounds.”

He showed me how to use it and I slung it over my shoulder. He said:

“Take my cap!”

I stuffed my old beret in the pocket of my leather jacket and put on his Luftwaffe cap. It fitted.

“Look at that!” said the warrant officer, gazing at me in amazement. “You ever been a soldier?”

I said:

“Yes, twenty-five years ago.”

“Well, well,” said he. “It shows right away. What’s bred in the bone. . . .”

In the road-works three miserable police officers were seated among great mountains of clothing and boots. I had made up my mind to act as tough with them as the police had always been with me. I held the machine-pistol in the crook of my arm, pointed at the three men, and barked:

“This is all requisitioned. And you can go home.”

The senior officer, a police major, looked at me sadly.

“We can’t go home,” he said. “We’re from East Prussia.”

I felt terribly sorry for them. I said:

“In that case what are you planning to do?”

He said:

“Fifteen years ago I was a simple constable. We’re going to report to the police station and ask if we can’t be taken on as constables.”

“Yes, do that,” I said. “The police sergeant is a very decent fellow.”

I told the captain that I had carried out my orders. He had pinned a map of the district to the wall and was studying it. The warrant officer took charge of the depot. The captain said:

“Go to the Adelholzen hospital. According to the Geneva Convention every hospital must be surrounded by a security zone which has to be free of all military formations.”

I said:

“The Americans aren’t likely to take much notice of that.”

The captain said:

“I don’t give a good goddam.”

The warrant officer said:

“The SS aren’t likely to pay much attention to that.”

The captain said:

“I don’t give a good goddam. Those are my orders.”

I went to Adelholzen hospital. The senior doctor looked at the map and with a pair of compasses drew a circle. He said:

“The security zone must be of one mile radius.”

I was amazed to see how big an area such a circle covered. The zone reached to the outskirts of Siegsdorf and Eisenärzt. The Huberhof was in the middle of the zone, which was a considerable relief to me. The senior doctor said:

“Nobody will pay the slightest attention to it.”

The captain immediately had a local carpenter prepare off-limits signs, which *Volkssturm* men then set up on all the roads that entered the security zone.

Ille was uncommonly impressed by my military headdress. She sniffed at me and said:

“You already smell like a proper hero—sweat and leather. Watch out that all the girls don’t run after you.”

During the night I sat up in bed, staring at the *autobahn*. The stream of vehicles was uninterrupted. At the bottom of the long incline that led up to the viaduct the drivers would sound their horns. From the barn came the heavy noises of the cattle moving about. In Reiten the silence was absolute.

The next morning the confusion by the bridge was even worse than the day before. Honking wildly and driving furiously, a column was trying to force its way forwards. Immediately in front of me a car with an SS number plate drew up, blocked by a gigantic, motionless truck. An SS captain, a *Hauptsturmführer*, jumped out of the car. He bawled at me:

“What’s this dump called?”

I said:

“Siegsdorf.”

The *Hauptsturmführer* shouted:

“What the hell goes on here? Isn’t there any traffic control?”

I shrugged my shoulders. The *Hauptsturmführer*’s voice almost cracked as he bellowed:

“Then I’ll sort this mess out.”

He got someone in the car to hand him a HALT sign. He jumped on to the bridge and stopped the truck which was about to drive across. He ordered the driver to show him his papers. Meanwhile SS men had jumped out of their vehicles and cordoned off the bridge. The *Hauptsturmführer* ordered the truck to go back, and at once other SS men began siphoning the petrol out of its tank. The *Hauptsturmführer* ordered that all vehicles be examined and that any without a valid work ticket should have its fuel taken away. Thereupon some vehicles began carefully to reverse in an attempt to drive off in the opposite direction.

The command post was crowded with soldiers from all arms of the services. The warrant officer was using them as messengers. They were

soldiers of Captain Horseradish's unit, now incorporated in the forces under the battle commander. Fresh soldiers kept arriving at the command post, each with his own problem but most in search of a billet. The warrant officer was superb. He leaned back in his chair, rocking a little from side to side, and imposed order. The door was thrown open, brutally and carelessly, and three N.C.O.'s of the field police forced their way in, elbowing through the crowd. On their chest they wore the oval shield of their corps. They were armed with rifles and machine pistols. The one in front, a great bull of a fellow with a broad and prominent chin, said roughly:

"I require billets!"

Our warrant officer leaned back in his chair, rocking a little from side to side, and remarked:

"So do I."

"For thirty men," roared the military policeman.

"That all?" said the warrant officer.

The policeman changed his tone.

"Can't you find me something? We're dead tired."

The warrant officer said:

"Everything's taken."

The policeman raised his machine-pistol and said:

"We'll turn them out, they're just a bunch of deserters. Should be shot."

"No one is going to be shot around here," said the captain, entering the room. He looked the policeman up and down and said:

"Your orders?"

The policeman handed him a sheet of paper. The captain read it and said:

"Bad Tölz? The Americans are in Tölz." He asked: "Where are you trying to go?"

The policeman hesitated before replying:

"My orders are that in the event of my being unable to reach my unit, I am to act independently."

The captain smiled agreeably:

"And you've decided to stay here? Splendid! I can do with a few men of your sort, brave, experienced soldiers. I hereby place you under command of the battle commander. You will immediately man the anti-tank obstacle on the *autobahn*. It is the most important obstacle and also the most dangerous. You will hold it to the last man and the last round. Understand?"

The veins in the policeman's neck stood out, his broad cheeks flushed, but he said:

"Yes, sir."

The captain said:

"You will be billeted in 'The Trout.'"



The warrant officer wrote a chit, and the field policemen went away. I said uncertainly:

“Do you really want to keep them here?”

The captain laughed. The warrant officer grinned and said:

“By dawn tomorrow they’ll be gone. You won’t catch that sort manning anti-tank obstacles.”

I told the captain about the SS *Hauptsturmführer*’s activities down by the bridge. I said, with amazement:

“He’s actually sorting it out!”

The captain threw away his cigarette. He said angrily:

“And how about the people whose petrol he’s taking? They stay here, I suppose? This place is overcrowded already.”

I went down to the bridge. The *Hauptsturmführer* was waving his HALT sign and shouting at the drivers. I told him he should at least leave them enough petrol to get them out of the town; then they could camp in the woods on the hillsides. This overcrowding was greatly complicating our job of defending the place. The *Hauptsturmführer* asked:

“What’s this dump called?”

“Siegsdorf,” I said.

The *Hauptsturmführer* began to shout:

“I’ll sort this mess out if it’s the last thing I do. Our tanks can’t get at the enemy because they’re out of petrol, and here are these people joy-riding about the country! They’ll stop here! This dump will be defended! Give them guns! Make them man the anti-tank defences! All shirkers will be shot!”

Hardly had I returned to the office before a colonel burst into the room. He was purple in the face and he shouted:

“Where’s the captain? I’ll have him shot!”

The warrant officer leaned back in his chair and rocked from side to side. He said politely:

“Perhaps the colonel would care to tell me what the matter is? The captain isn’t here.”

The colonel shouted:

“What in the name of God is going on in this place? Field policemen have been trying to turn me out of my billets. The Trout Hotel was requisitioned by me for ‘Operation Bee.’”

The captain entered the room. He said:

“Might I suggest that the colonel take over the functions of battle commander?”

The colonel snorted:

“I’ve other things to do, more important things.”

The captain said:

“I would ask the colonel to remember that I am ready at all times to hand over my command to the colonel as the most senior officer in the town. Until then, however, it’s I who give the orders around here.”

The colonel turned about and left the room.

The captain sat down and laughed.

“Operation Bee!” he said. “They turn up here, a colonel, twelve civilian officials and sixty female auxiliaries. Sixty! Operation Bee! I asked one of the girls what they actually did. For three years now this splendid caravanserai has been travelling about Europe. They were in Paris, then in Brussels, then in Italy, always, of course, at the best hotels. During which time the girls have been doing absolutely nothing. They find it divine. They’ve certainly had nothing to complain about. What a job! It fairly reeks of honey.”

“And that’s the sort of man,” I said, bitterly, “who runs around and talks about having people shot!”

The captain said:

“I won’t have any more of this talk about shooting people.”

He blew out a cloud of smoke. Suddenly he said:

“Give me the *Volkssturm* documents.”

It was a thick bundle. The paper war had been a big one, even in the *Volkssturm*. The captain thumbed through the documents. Then he said:

“Here we are! Write this. Write at the top in very large letters; COURT MARTIAL. Underline it three times.”

I wrote. It was a most impressive document concerning the setting up of a court martial in the town. All resistance to the orders of the battle commander, all disobedience was punishable by death. All sentences passed by the court were to be carried out at once. The court was to consist of the battle commander, the commander of the local *Volkssturm* and one respected civilian.

“And I’m all three,” said the captain. “Nail it to the door. Anyone who comes here and talks about shooting people will be told that if there’s any shooting to be done it’s the battle commander who’ll do it.”

I found a quiet corner and settled down to several hours’ hard work making out the necessary papers for the many individuals who required them. Now peasant boys from the neighbourhood began to turn up, in their leather shorts with their jackets slung over their shoulders. As soon as their units approached the area and they heard the notes of the mountain horns sounding *Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz* they had deserted. They were enrolled in the *Volkssturm* and replaced those men who had been hanging about in the town and had not dared go further without papers. The Horseradish saga had travelled on the wings of the wind.

They also came to the Huberhof by night. To begin with I was somewhat nervous when I heard a knocking at the locked front door and hoarse voices asking for Horseradish.

I had hardly returned to the command post—the *Hauptsturmführer* was still standing on the bridge, swearing and waving his HALT sign;

he still did not know what this place was called—when the door opened quietly. A young, blond, pink-cheeked SS lieutenant, an *Obersturmführer*, looked in, smiled and asked:

“Have I come to the right place?”

I was so taken aback by his unexpectedly friendly manner that I cried cheerfully:

“Indeed you have! Come right in!”

The *Obersturmführer* walked in, followed by two SS N.C.O.’s, each as tall as a tree and each with a rifle in his hand. The *Obersturmführer* had a machine-pistol slung over his shoulder. He was certainly not yet twenty years old. He glanced smiling about the room; lines around his mouth deepened a little as he nodded towards the two cobwebby patches on the walls, and he said slyly:

“That’s where the Führer’s picture used to hang—with Goebbels’ over there.”

Our warrant officer glanced towards me, stood up, and pushed forward three chairs:

“Would the *Obersturmführer* care to take a seat?”

With girlish grace the *Obersturmführer* sat down; he cradled the machine-pistol on his knees as though it were a baby, smiled to reveal a glittering set of teeth, and remarked to his two men:

“I told you we’d come to the right place, didn’t I children?”

The children, who were both considerably older than their commander, said:

“Right, *Obersturmführer*!”

The *Obersturmführer* beamed at me and said:

“And with whom do I have the pleasure. . . .?”

I said:

“I am the battle commander’s adjutant.”

The *Obersturmführer* said heartily:

“My respects! My respects!”

He slapped his thigh and cried:

“Yes, we’ve certainly come to the proper place. You’re precisely the man to find a good billet for myself and my people. Thirty loyal supporters of our great Führer, who alas! died so much too soon.”

The warrant officer said:

“That’s quite impossible. The town’s overcrowded already.”

The *Obersturmführer* smiled:

“Oh no, I assure you not. The farms towards Adelholzen are all empty.”

I said:

“They can’t be used for billets. They’re in the hospital security zone.”

“Ah ha!” said he. “My congratulations! How rare it is these days to find a man who is truly correct.” He turned towards the map and asked: “And where is the boundary of the security zone?”

I hastened to show him, and only when I had done so did I notice the frown on the warrant officer's face. I said at once:

"I've been a fool, warrant officer. These men are bound to occupy the farmhouses now."

The warrant officer leaned back in his chair and rocked from side to side. He said:

"Presumably."

The *Obersturmführer* said nothing, glancing from one to the other of us and smiling with all his teeth. I said:

"We have here at our disposal thirty men of the field police. They have instructions to ensure that our orders are carried out."

The *Obersturmführer* smiled and said:

"Would those be the thirty policemen whom I observed this morning leaving the town for an unspecified destination?"

I looked at the warrant officer, who nodded sadly. I said:

"Would you be so good as to read the announcement posted on the door?"

One of the SS men walked across to the door and read it. He turned about and said:

"What the boys said are correct. They've even got a military court here."

"My respects! My respects!" said the *Obersturmführer*, rising to his feet. He offered me his hand, saying pleasantly:

"We'll find ourselves a billet; don't worry about us."

I said, and my manner was equally pleasant:

"You can stay at the Trout Hotel. You'll find Operation Bee there, with sixty female auxiliaries. Sixty pretty young girls! Two for each of you!"

"My respects! My respects!" said the *Obersturmführer*. "I knew we'd come to the right place!" And he left.

"Unusual sort of fellow," I said, but the warrant officer merely muttered something I could not catch, and began banging away at his typewriter.

Almost at once an elderly man wearing the olive-grey cloak of the Todt Organisation slung over his shoulders entered the room. He looked at me and cried:

"Herr Baron! Thank God you're here!"

This man was the manager of the Hotel Koenigshof's restaurant. He always addressed me as 'Herr Baron' and I had never succeeded in breaking him of this nasty habit. I asked:

"What are you doing here?"

The restaurant manager cried:

"You must help me, Herr Baron! They put me in the Todt Organisation. I'm in charge of their canteen. My truck's outside, filled with brandy and cigars. And on the bridge there's some sort of captain who

took all the petrol out of my tank. And I've got to go on!" He leaned forward and whispered: "I've got a bottle of armagnac for you too!"

I considered for a moment and then said:

"Take your bottles and a couple of empty cans to Oed. In a little wood there you'll find a police unit that's selling petrol. But mind you don't get caught!"

The restaurant manager rubbed his plump little hands together and cried:

"Right away, Herr Baron! Right away!"

And he scuttled out.

An hour later he was back, carrying a bottle of armagnac. He said: "It worked, Herr Baron! It's already in my tank!"

"Now, really!" I said, when he tried to give me the bottle. I would not take it, but the warrant officer said:

"Give it to me!"

The restaurant manager asked:

"But how am I going to get out of here? I've still got to cross the bridge!"

I led him to the map and showed him a detour. He'd have to get back on to the *autobahn*. He was about to leave when the warrant officer stopped him. Reaching into his pockets he pulled out first one and then another bottle. The restaurant manager's face became dejected, and he looked to me for help. The warrant officer said:

"There's no telling when this may come in useful."

I decided to do a bit more. I said:

"I'll walk along with you. While I'm talking to the *Hauptsturmführer* you see just how fast you can disappear."

The *Hauptsturmführer* seemed to be on his feet day and night. As soon as he saw me he shouted:

"In this shitty little dump . . . what's it called?"

I said:

"Siegendorf."

"In this shitty little dump there must be some secret fuel supply. I keep taking the swines' petrol away and still they go on! There! Look! There goes another one now!"

My restaurant manager was backing, trying to get out of the jam of vehicles. The *Hauptsturmführer* screamed:

"Halt! Halt!"

But the truck turned sharply, drove past the fishpond, and disappeared down a side-street. It was the wrong street, but no matter.

I asked quickly:

"What happens to the petrol you confiscate?"

The *Hauptsturmführer* said:

"It's put in a safe place. Up behind the wood there's a police unit with petrol trucks."

"In that case," I said, "everything's in order."

The street looked like a battlefield after a rout. Everywhere vehicles were parked, facing in all directions. I could barely squeeze through them. On the way to the Huberhof I met Taddäus driving his team. I asked him:

"Taddäus, what's up?"

He leaned down and said:

"The Americans are in Rosenheim."

I said wearily:

"In that case it'll all be over soon."

Taddäus said:

"Yes, all over."

He gazed at the back of his horses for a moment before moving on.

I slept badly that night, as I did every night at this period, half awake, conscious of the rumble of traffic from the *autobahn*. The next morning the warrant officer telephoned me. Two engineer officers from Zietzen, were asking urgently for the captain or his deputy. The captain wasn't there.

"Did you say anything about shooting anyone?" I asked.

"No," said the warrant officer, "they're army, not SS."

They were waiting in the mayor's bar parlour. This mayor, a tall, thin, placid man, was the owner of an inn. Now it was filled with men, sitting on the tables and benches, chattering in the heavy, smoky atmosphere. In one corner were two young lieutenants in well-pressed uniforms, blond, slender officers. I walked across to their table, and they got up at once and introduced themselves.

"We have orders to take over the anti-tank obstacles here."

I sighed with relief. They were welcome to them. I led them first of all to the obstacle on the Eisenärzt road.

"It's not yet finished," I said.

The lieutenants shook their heads:

"Who chose this site?"

I proudly informed them:

"An army lieutenant."

"But there's absolutely no sense in building an obstacle here," they said.

We walked up to it. There were *Volkssturm* men at work on it. They were at the moment engaged in removing tree-stumps that had previously been sunk into the ground.

"But they're pulling it down!" cried one of the lieutenants.

Indeed, the *Volkssturm* men were happily engaged in dismantling the obstacle. The lieutenant cried:

"What are you men doing? You're pulling it down!"

One of the *Volkssturm* nodded to me and said:

"Orders!"

The lieutenants looked at me. Since I could think of nothing better I just said:

“Orders are orders!”

“Did the captain order this?” they asked. I said I did not know. The senior lieutenant said:

“We must definitely see the captain at once.”

We walked back in silence. The captain was at his command post. They saluted him by raising their hand to their caps, not with the outstretched arm salute which had been the official one since July 20th, 1944. They enquired politely who had ordered the demolition of the anti-tank obstacles. The captain said calmly:

“I did.”

The lieutenants blushed and asked if they might be told his reasons for doing so. The captain lit a cigarette, blew out the match, and said:

“The obstacles are pointless. I haven’t the men to man them.”

The lieutenant said:

“The *Volkssturm*.”

The captain laughed aloud:

“I have five hundred men and eight rifles.”

The lieutenants said:

“There are plenty of troops in the neighbourhood, and plenty of guns too.”

The captain laughed louder:

“Staffs, but no troops. Plenty of staffs and not a single fighting man.”

The captain puffed nervously at his cigarette. He said:

“When the Americans come up against any resistance they immediately withdraw their leading troops, and five minutes later the bombers arrive. Should I have this town destroyed simply in order that the gentry of these staffs become prisoners of war two hours later than they would otherwise?” He went on, excitedly; “Besides, what are we supposed to be defending here?”

The lieutenants said:

“The Alpine Redoubt.”

The captain shouted:

“But it doesn’t exist, this damned Alpine Redoubt, there’s no such thing! You know that as well as I do.”

The lieutenants looked at one another. They said unhappily:

“We’re terribly sorry, captain, but we’ll have to send in a report about this.”

The captain said:

“Send it.” He walked out.

The lieutenants looked at me miserably. The senior one said hesitantly:

“We’ll have to report it.”

I swallowed and, speaking slowly, said:

"If you gentlemen could perhaps wait a little before writing your report? I am sure that I can persuade the captain to change his mind."

The lieutenants gave a sigh of relief. They said that they would wait until noon. I could find them in the Mayor's bar parlour. And they left.

Our warrant officer leaned back in his chair and rocked a little. He said:

"Your murderer was here."

"My what?"

"Your murderer, the *Obersturmführer*. He came and asked: 'Where is the captain? I'm going to shoot him.' I said: 'He's not here. He's looking for the adjutant.' He said: 'I'm going to shoot the adjutant too.' He wanted to know which of you was Horseradish."

I picked up my machine-pistol and slung it over my shoulder.

"I'm going to find the captain."

Our warrant officer said:

"If you should run across your murderer, shoot at once. He who shoots first is right."

"He who shoots first is wrong," I said. "You've been seeing too many American movies."

The warrant officer grinned and said:

"No, it's not that. I was attached to the *Waffen-SS* for a while."

No sooner had I stepped into the street than I saw my murderer coming towards me. Accompanied by his two gentlemen-at-arms he was hurrying in the direction of the command post. I slipped behind a truck and waited until he had passed. Then I met the doctor. He was wearing a Red Cross armband. I asked him if he had seen the captain. He thought that the captain was almost certainly on his way to *Eisenärzt*. The doctor said that a curious bit of nastiness had taken place in *Eisenärzt*. I had to drag the story out of him, bit by bit.

In one of the houses on the outskirts of *Eisenärzt* there lived an elderly gentleman, a retired officer. He had laid out a very pretty garden in which he grew roses. The recklessly driven columns of vehicles had knocked down a corner of his wall and wrecked a part of his garden. Behind his house stood one of the off-limits signs marking the edge of the hospital security zone. He dug up this sign and replanted it twenty yards further forward, so that it was now in front of his house. An SS commander, who had observed him doing this, arrested him. He asked the old gentleman on what authority he had set up the sign in its new position. The old gentleman had not understood and had thought he meant on what authority had the signs been erected in the first place. He said on that of the mayor. The SS commander had the mayor arrested at once and asked him if he had ordered the sign moved forward. The mayor, not knowing what had happened, denied this. The SS commander summoned two men, set up an impromptu court, condemned the old gentleman to death, and had him led away, and shot.



The doctor glanced at his fingers, stained yellow with nicotine, and remarked:

“That’s the sort of thing that’s going on these days.”

I heard a loud roar behind me and stepped hastily aside. My murderer dashed by on a motor-cycle. I set off to find the captain in Eisenärzt, but I had only just turned the corner of the street when I saw him coming down from the upper part of the town. I hurried towards him and began to tell him about the incident in Eisenärzt. But he knew all about it already, including the name of the SS commander. I told him about our murderer and his motor-cycle. The captain said:

“He must be on his way to see the area commander. No doubt he’ll be asking him all about Captain Horseradish.”

I begged the captain in no circumstances to sleep at home tonight. He smiled and I told him that from now on I would follow him wherever he went, with my machine-pistol at the ready. He said that wouldn’t do, since I must go at once to Landler, where there was a lorry filled with bazookas. The local Hitler Youth leader was already there, unloading them and handing them out to his boys. I was to send the Hitler Youth leader to see him; he would be at Hohlneichner’s house. Hohlneichner was a building contractor. The captain said the Hitler Youth leader was quite a lad; he had organised his troop very well, but he was dreaming about being a ‘werewolf.’ I was to tell him that his courage was above reproach, but that maintenance of discipline was even more important. I nodded and hurried off towards Landler. As I was leaving I turned back and called:

“Captain, don’t forget the Engineer officers from Ziethen!”

He was himself walking away and he shouted over his shoulder:

“That’s all taken care of.”

I found the Hitler Youth leader, whom I already knew by sight. He was standing with his boys around the truck that had been abandoned outside the Landler coal-merchant’s, and was handing out the bazookas. It was all a great lark. He stood there, his legs bare, occasionally tossing a lock of blond hair back from his flushed face. I went with him to Hohlneichner’s. He laughed as we walked down the hillside and said:

“Those things are like proper artillery. With them we’ll soon smash the American tanks.”

He was, indeed, quite a lad. Beside him I felt rather dreary, a spoilsport. I waited outside Hohlneichner’s house, for I had made up my mind not to let the captain out of my sight again. I stopped all the Horseradish men who went past and told them what was up, urging them to keep an eye on the captain’s safety. The Hitler Youth leader came out of the house, smiling as broadly as before, and said:

“The captain’s a brick. You can rely on the Hitler Youth! We’ll swing it for you right enough.”

I followed the captain about. This was not easy, since he was always on the move and there seemed to be a great many people whom he had to see. I managed quickly to slip into the mayor's bar parlour where I was able to shake hands with the lieutenants, who were eating their lunch, and tell them:

"It's all taken care of. I've had a word with the captain!"

I emanated satisfaction and confidence from every pore. The lieutenants said:

"Good, that's excellent news. Now we have to go on to Inzell. We'll be back tomorrow morning to inspect the anti-tank obstacles."

In the command post our warrant officer was seated behind his typewriter. He said:

"Your murderer was here again. He's passionately anxious to find you. Be careful, because I think he knows your names. At least he keeps talking about Horseradish and Garlic. Garlic is you."

The captain's name was Dolpp. The warrant officer said:

"He also seems to have found out about the anti-tank obstacles. He's with the area leader now, asking who issued the order."

I spent the whole afternoon running after the captain. Whenever I passed the window of the command post, the warrant officer would either wave to signify "All clear!" or would open the window and cry, with evident relish:

"Your murderer was here again. He's really keen to find you."

When I climbed up the hill towards the Huberhof I met a land girl coming down. She worked by day for neighbours of ours at Reiten, and I knew that she was the Hitler Youth leader's girl-friend, for I had often seen them together. Now she was striding merrily down the hillside, her long, springy legs bare, with a leonine mane of blond hair blowing out behind her. She was singing. Her voice was deep, mysterious, a little on the hoarse side, but uncommonly melodious. She overtook two French prisoners-of-war, who were elegantly dressed in well-brushed uniforms, and whose eyes followed her movements with evident interest. They gave me a polite greeting and I stopped. In my frightful French I said:

"*Alors, la guerre bientôt finie!*"

They smiled and said:

"*Ah, oui, monsieur!*"

I said:

"*Vous réjouissez-vous bien, hein?*"

One of them replied:

"*Sûrement!* Then he looked slightly embarrassed and added: "*Ce n'est pas très poli, peut-être, monsieur—mais vous comprenez—cinq ans prisonniers de guerre—ça—c'est trop. C'est trop!*"

I said wearily:

"*Je comprends très bien! Alors, bonne chance!*"

“*Merci, monsieur, bonne chance aussi!*”

One of them was a railway official, the other a chauffeur. For the past four years now they had been working on the land, at Felsel’s farm. Felsel’s son and son-in-law were both missing, one in France the other in Russia. *Quel monde*, I thought to myself, involuntarily using the French phrase, *quel monde!*

I had a very bad night. I scarcely slept an hour; the rest of the time I lay awake, listening for the footsteps of my murderer.

The next morning—the *Hauptsturmführer* was still on the bridge, waving his arms about and swearing—the two lieutenants came out of the inn just as I went by.

“There you are!” they cried. “How lucky! Now we can set off at once to inspect the anti-tank obstacles.”

I felt acutely uncomfortable, but I went with them. We walked up the Eisenärzt road.

By the anti-tank obstacle stood the captain. He was smoking and watching relaxedly while huge tree trunks were being unloaded from a gigantic truck. He gave the lieutenants a cheerful greeting and said:

“I always enjoy seeing lumberjacks work. Look how easily they handle these heavy trunks!”

Hohlneichner’s men were moving the great pieces of wood most skilfully, first of all driving a heavy iron staple into the trunks so that they could roll them about without loss of control.

“Yes, they are terrific logs,” said the senior lieutenant. The captain beamed:

“Aren’t they? We’re building the finest anti-tank obstacles you could hope to see, model number one. No tank will get through here!”

The lieutenants inspected the work most thoroughly. Huge posts were being set up in the ground. The *Volkssturm* men and Hohlneichner’s labourers were making a tremendous effort.

I said, with amazement:

“This is terrific!”

The captain said:

“Just wait until you see what it looks like when the barrier is across!”

I looked at the huge tree-trunks that lay alongside the road and that were supposed to be placed between the upright posts. I asked:

“How do you get them in position?”

“With block and tackle!” said the captain.

“Have we got enough blocks and tackles?”

The captain smiled with his eyes:

“You’re right. Ask Hohlneichner where they are.”

I walked across to Hohlneichner, who was supervising the setting up of the first post in the stony ground.

“How about the blocks and tackles?” I asked.

He glanced briefly towards the lieutenants, who were once again talking to the captain. He said:

“In all Siegsdorf there is only one. It belongs to me. Unfortunately I dropped it in the river early this morning.”

The lieutenants were charming. We drank a schnaps together—the mayor discreetly produced a bottle which he had kept carefully hidden—we shook hands, we assured each other how pleased we all were to have made one another’s acquaintance.

My murderer had already visited the command post early that morning and sniffed about for any trace of garlic. I did not stay in the orderly room long, for I was busy trotting around after the captain.

A unit came marching down in good order from the *autobahn*. In front were two lieutenants on motor-cycles, followed by the sergeant-major and a company of marching men, with a few trucks bringing up the rear. At the school-house the company turned off the road into the yard—but the school was packed to the roof. The captain observed all this in silence. A little later the sergeant-major appeared, his note-book tucked between the third and fourth buttons of his tunic in the good old way. He clicked his heels together, saluted the captain, announced in a broad Swabian accent the name of his unit, an engineer company, and requested that the captain assign them billets. The captain turned to me, saying:

“These are the first real soldiers we’ve seen here. Please make sure that they are found somewhere to sleep.”

I went with the sergeant-major from house to house and from farm to farm. I never thought that this would do any good, but in view of the constant, chaotic coming and going I hoped that we might discover some building which had just been vacated. None had, and in many a barn and shed units had casually installed themselves without any sort of authority from us. The sergeant-major smiled quietly when I ordered these ‘casuals’ to get out—the men, chewing their bread, looked at me as if I were so much air and chewed on. I went hither and thither with the sergeant-major and finally I thought it would be a good idea to billet his unit as far away as possible from the town. I prepared to set out for Eisenärzt, but the sergeant-major said:

“That won’t do. Got to stay here. Because of our job.”

I asked cautiously:

“What might that be?”

The sergeant-major said, indifferently:

“Blowing the bridge.”

I was horrified. I said:

“The bridge over the Traun? If you blow that how will the columns get through?”

The sergeant-major said, amiably:

“We don’t give a damn about that. Orders are orders. We’re to blow all the bridges.”

I cried:

“But there aren’t any others! And the Traun bridge is guarded by SS men.”

The sergeant-major said:

“No others? What about the viaduct?”

This took my breath away. The viaduct, the beautiful viaduct with its perfect proportions that fitted so ideally the contours of our hills! I cried:

“No, not the viaduct! Not the beautiful viaduct of the Führer’s *autobahn!*”

“That’s the one,” said the sergeant-major. “A fine bridge like that is just the sort I like to blow best. Makes a wonderful show. It’s a long time since I’ve had a chance to blow such fine bridges as the ones that will be going up tonight.”

I took the sergeant-major back to the school-house and asked him to wait there, assuring him that I would find him excellent billets. I hurried to the orderly room.

“Captain,” I cried, “the engineers have orders to blow the viaduct.”

The captain blanched.

“The viaduct?”

For a moment he glanced helplessly from me to the warrant officer and back again. Then, lighting a cigarette, he said:

“The explosive chambers! They must be cemented up at once.”

I said:

“The sergeant-major says it’s to be done tonight.”

The captain thought for a while, before saying:

“We can’t go on this way. I must empty the place, get all these people out of our town.” He said: “At five tomorrow morning I’ll give the alarm that the Americans have arrived. Then we’ll just see how quickly the town is emptied.”

He puffed at his cigarette and said:

“Put the engineers in the ‘Alte Post.’ Have *Volkssturm* sentries posted outside with orders to let us know the moment the demolition parties try to move off. Then we’ll sound the alarm at once.”

He turned to me, saying:

“You’ll take charge of the sergeant-major. You’ll see he doesn’t leave the town tonight.”

Our warrant officer leaned back in his chair and rocked a little. He said:

“Leave the sergeant-major to me. After all, I’m a sergeant-major too, and I’ll know how to handle him. Bring him here.”

The captain said:

“I’ll be up by the viaduct. And in any case, don’t forget: tomorrow morning early, we give the alarm.”

I led the engineers to the 'Alte Post' and left it to them to throw out the 'casuals,' drunken drivers of a disorderly column. I took the sergeant-major to our orderly room; he wished to have a map of the area, so as to see where were the bridges which he had to blow.

Our warrant officer leaned back in his chair and rocked a little.

"First of all," he said, "a little drink."

He took a bottle from his desk and remarked, with apparent surprise:

"Armagnac!"

"That's something I'll never refuse," said the sergeant-major. Our warrant officer smiled at me and said:

"You go on home and get some sleep. We don't need your sort around here now."

"Ah ha!" said I. "You're planning to finish the brandy on your own! You're a sly couple."

I left, with a cold feeling in the pit of my stomach. Our warrant officer called after me:

"Didn't I tell you the stuff might come in useful one day?"

On my way back I was joined by a Horseradish N.C.O. The *Hauptsturmführer* was standing on the bridge, waving his arms about and swearing. An officer came towards us fairly glittering with braid. To judge by his insignia he was a major, and on his collar he wore the crimson patches of the General Staff.

"What's all this about?" I asked the N.C.O.

He said:

"Army Personnel Office. Half the High Command has arrived at Traunstein."

The N.C.O. saluted and the major returned it. Suddenly the major shouted:

"Hey, you there!"

I turned about. The major said:

"What are you supposed to be? A soldier?"

"Sorry," I said, "I'm just a member of the *Volkssturm*."

The major said:

"I realised that—from your salute."

I said:

"I wasn't aware I had saluted you."

The major exploded. There was a bang and he burst. I could see the little pieces fly through the air in all directions. Then they came together again, and the major disappeared majestically into the evening mists.

The N.C.O. said:

"People are upset."

I thought: Germany, oh! Germany.

I told Ille that the alarm would go during the night but that it would

be a false one. We ate our evening meal in silence. I switched on the radio. No German station was still on the air. But yes, Salzburg was broadcasting. A warm and friendly voice was saying goodbye to Salzburg. "I know that my dear Salzburg friends will never forget . . ." the voice said, and I realised that this was the Salzburg *Gauleiter's* farewell message. It seemed to me problematic how well informed the *Gauleiter* might be concerning the true feelings of his dear friends. Then there was music. I knew that this was the last broadcast I should ever hear from the Greater German Broadcasting Corporation. I listened. A new record was put on. It was somewhat scratched, and it played a song: *Behind the stove there sits a mouse, it must out, it must out—can you hear its little squeak?* Such was the swan-song of the Greater German Broadcasting Corporation. I thought: Germany, oh! Germany.

I was exhausted and I went early to bed. But once again I could not sleep. I was waiting for the detonation that would mean the viaduct was gone. At last I dropped off.

I awoke with a start. Something must have awakened me, some noise. I listened. It was utterly quiet. That must have been what had woken me. The roar of traffic from the *autobahn* had ceased. Dawn was breaking. I listened. It was five o'clock. At any moment the alarm must sound. I opened the window, for I wished to hear the siren clearly. The snow on the mountain peaks glistened in the first light. I thought: it'll be fine today. The stars were fading. The silence was total.

Then—the sound of firing. What was it? That was a shell and that rattle must be a machine-gun. It came from the direction of the viaduct. And there—once again the sound of strange weapons firing. This was followed immediately by the noise of traffic from the *autobahn*. But it was a different sort of noise, metal against concrete. Tanks!

Suddenly I understood. The Americans were here.

The Americans were here! I jumped out of bed, I ran to the door, I flung it open. Through the sleeping house I shouted:

"The Americans are here! The Americans are here!"

## G. WRITINGS AND SPEECHES

118. *List on a separate sheet the titles and publishers of all publications from 1923 to the present which were written in whole or in part, or compiled or edited by you, and all public addresses made by you, giving subject, date, and circulation or audience. If they were sponsored by any organisation, give its name. If no speeches or publications, write 'none' in this space.*

See my answers to Questions 1-131 of this Fragebogen.



## H. INCOME AND ASSETS

119. Show the sources and amount of your annual income from January 1, 1931 to date. If records are not available, give approximate amounts.

Year	Source of Income	Amount
1931-1932 1933-1945	Royalties, etc. } Royalties, etc. } See below	See 125 From approx. 3,000 marks to approx. 60,000 marks per annum

The Americans were there! I dressed as quickly as I could, but before I had finished I heard Ille's door slam. I knew how eagerly she had awaited the Americans, and I ran down the stairs.

Ille was standing in the little hall, but she said nothing. Since the night she spent in the Koenigshof cellar she had changed. She was no longer so impulsive; she was tougher, harder. During the last few weeks I knew that she had been worrying about Pablo, who was a corporal in the anti-aircraft, stationed in the west. The last news of him had come from Schwerdte, in the Ruhr—and the last news of my brother from 'Fortress Courland.'

Ille was standing among the trunks and suitcases. Without a word she began to carry the cases upstairs. Whenever she did anything it always formed part of a secret ritual, and I realised that this action of carrying the cases upstairs had a symbolic meaning. From outside came the distant sound of an occasional shot. Ille had picked up my case, the only one that belonged to me, for all the others were hers. It was a large, handsome, yellow valise, with a snap lock and wide straps, made of pure pig-skin. I was deeply attached to it. It was as good as new.

Suddenly, at the foot of the stairs, Ille let my suitcase drop. Her eyes filled with tears, and she said:

"Come, let us dance the Bolle-children's dance."

The Bolle-children's dance was a highly ridiculous exhibition. On the occasion when Ille and I had first visited a cinema together, the big picture was preceded by an animated cartoon, an advertisement for the Bolle Dairy of Berlin. It was very well made. The big milk bottles were drawn to look like boys, the smaller ones like girls. They marched through the streets and at every opportunity danced a pretty, primitive, little dance, to the refrain: *We are the Bolle children, everybody loves us:*

*always very fresh and tasty, always there on time.* Ille was utterly enchanted by the dance of the Bolle children. Scarcely were we out of the cinema when she insisted that I dance the Bolle-children's dance with her—among the nocturnal crowds on the sidewalk of the Kurfürstendamm. I was very much in love with Ille, and I would have done anything for her, but this seemed almost too much. However, Ille insisted and we danced. Then Ille asked me to 'give' her that dance. At first I could not understand what she meant by this phrase, but she explained to me that if I gave it her it meant that I would never hesitate to dance it with her whenever and wherever she asked me to do so. I was very much in love with Ille and I promised. I never hesitated, though I had always had to overcome a slight sensation of discomfort whenever we danced it. Now, without any feeling of awkwardness, I took Ille's hand and we danced the Bolle-children's dance, three steps this way, three steps that, and turn about. I stumbled over my case and fell on to the bench by the stove.

And suddenly the tension was broken, the tension of these last days, these last weeks, these last months, these last years. I burst out laughing, shrill, hysterical laughter. Pointing at my case and shouting through my tears, I cried:

"That's how it began! And that's how it ends! The case there! I bought it in 1933! And where do you think I got it? From Bolle! From Bolle's leather shop at the corner of the Olivaer Platz and the Kurfürstendamm!" I shouted and laughed: "From Bolle! From Bolle!"

It began with this suitcase from Bolle's and my typewriter—my only possessions. It ended with this suitcase from Bolle's and my typewriter—once again all that I owned. It was the same typewriter that Fräulein Dr. Querfeldt had given me long ago, a small Erika-Königin made by the firm of Seydel & Naumann, the best typewriter in the world. Everything I had ever written had been typed on that machine. There it stood, on the table in my workroom.

The beginning and the end, the end and the beginning. Between lay the good life, and Ille. Between lay the good, somewhat hectic life, with its difficult starts, and its feverish joys, with Ille.

I had previously lived quite a different sort of life from hers. We had been together for three months when she noticed that for years, whenever I had received a letter which looked official, I had just thrown it unopened into my trunk. She discovered that never in my life had I paid my taxes. She said nothing. She simply went to the appropriate finance office and made me into an honest man. We had our first quarrel when I learned about this. But Ille was all in favour of an ordered, bourgeois existence. She knew no other. She wanted a good, bourgeois life with an appropriate degree of luxury and just enough Bohemianism to add spice to it. The people at the finance office were 'touching,' Ille said. She said:

“You and your trunk for letters from officials! I told them they could rely on me. I said you were not quite right in the head and that there was no sense in their trying to get in touch with you. They agreed right away. They’re not even asking for back payments, just that you pay your taxes properly from now on.”

In truth I had absolutely no idea even approximately how much money I earned. To begin with it can’t have been a particularly impressive figure. I surprised Ille with the maxim that, judging by past experience, new funds were only forthcoming when the old were exhausted. I acted accordingly until Ille insisted gently on my opening a bank account. And, as it happened, the moment I possessed a cheque book I could not help feeling that I was living considerably better than heretofore.

“Ille!” I now cried. “How much have we actually got in the bank?”

Ille cried back:

“Nothing. It’s all gone.”

This was very consoling. So I had nothing to lose. So the money I had earned had not sufficed for the amassing of a fortune.

I had never had any clear idea of what my standard of life should be, of the standard that was suited to my income, except perhaps by comparison with that maintained by my friend Axel. When I began to write for the films, I modelled my expenditure on that of Axel, who had the same sort of job as myself.

Axel, Ille and I adored good food. Apart from this passion Axel was also permanently in love. Every four weeks he would come to see us and would announce that at last he had found the one girl in the world. Ille made him promise always first to produce the lady and not to marry her until Ille had given her approval. One day he arrived and said:

“Now I’ve really met the right girl!”

She was a young Viennese actress. We all went to Schlichter’s together for dinner. The meal was superb and we thoroughly enjoyed it. But suddenly Axel’s choice leaned back in her chair and said:

“When I think of what it costs! For this amount of money one could buy a good book!”

Ille stopped gnawing her drum-stick for a moment, said calmly: “Not this one, Axel!” and ate on. The young lady married a publisher.

I often ate at Schlichter’s. The first time I went there was also the first time I ever had a considerable sum of money in my pocket; I had only recently been released from prison, and I felt that the time had come for me to do myself proud. The restaurant was not a large one, consisting as it did of four small rooms, but immediately beside the entrance stood the famous cold buffet, an eye-opener both for painters and for gourmets. I had scarcely seated myself when a stately gentleman with silvery hair approached my table and introduced himself. This

was the owner of the restaurant, Max Schlichter, the brother of Rudolph Schlichter the painter who subsequently became my friend, and a chef with an international reputation. I told him who I was and he knew my name; the papers had recently devoted considerable space to me, and not out of kindness either.

I said that I wanted something really good to eat for a change after the eternal 'muck' I had been given for so long. Herr Schlichter asked that he be allowed to advise me: immediately the head chef appeared, in his grey trousers, his white jacket and his high white hat. The chef contemptuously thrust the impressive and promising menu aside and we conferred. The head-waiter and four captains served me, and the chef told me the recipe of each dish as I ate it. Herr Schlichter prepared with his own hands the famous *salade à la Schlichter*, the principal ingredient of which was lobster. Herr Schlichter told me the story of his life: he had been in Khartoum and Tokyo, he had cooked at Shanghai and at Montevideo, the French had given him their Gold Medal at Brussels, and he had been chef to the brigade of guards at the Kaiser's court in Berlin. He had only spent a short time in the United States of North America: food there was not cooked, it was simply thrown together.

Herr Schlichter urged me to return frequently. I laughed and asked him how he suggested I do so: apart from that evening I normally had no money whatever. Herr Schlichter said that this problem was easily solved; I should simply sign the bills. He was confident that within a year I would have made enough money to pay him what I owed him. A year later I had not made sufficient money, but I had eaten at Schlichter's every day and had signed all my bills. I managed to squeeze an advance out of Rowohlt, went to Schlichter's, and with considerable anxiety asked for the total reckoning. The head-waiter hurried nervously away. Herr Schlichter soon came and sat down at my table. His expression was troubled. With every sign of acute embarrassment he told me that he was unable to give me the reckoning: he had burned all my bills.

I took my revenge by coming to his restaurant as often as I could—and never again did I sign the bill. It was there that I discharged all my social obligations. On one occasion, when good Dr. Luetgebrune had once again extricated me from a nasty scrape, I rang Schlichter's and ordered dinner. Max Schlichter was dead by then, and it was his nephew, Karl Wassmannsdorf, who now ran the restaurant. Otherwise nothing had changed. The food was superb, and when Wassmannsdorf produced the wine the doctor's eyes widened. It tasted faintly of turpentine to me. I examined the label and saw that it was a Johannisberger Schlossabzug, Trockenbeeren-Auslese 1921. I was startled, for I knew that at the Adlon this wine was listed at four hundred marks the bottle, and we were on our third bottle. Wassmannsdorf, noticing that I was

blinking, whispered in my ear that this wine was for all intents and purposes unsaleable and he therefore kept it to give to "his most valued guests as a small token of his esteem."

Horcher's was the most famous of the Berlin restaurants. It was immediately opposite Schlichter's, but we only went there two or three times. We were not well treated there. Only later did I discover why. My brother Horst ate there fairly regularly, and almost always with a different lady. When Ille and I went there, Herr Horcher conceived the idea that Ille was Horst's wife whom he had deserted and that I was her lover. Herr Horcher did not approve of this sort of thing. Herr Horcher had decided that we were an immoral family. Herr Horcher's own morals were exemplary.

But, so far as we were concerned, Herr Wunderlich was a real competitor of Schlichter's. Herr Wunderlich owned a tiny restaurant called the Schloss-Klaue, in the Breite Strasse, behind the old imperial stables. During the Great War Herr Wunderlich had served in the First Regiment of Foot Guards; it was former officers of this regiment who had enabled him to purchase the imperial wine-cellars. In the back room hung a stout volume, the menu-book of the imperial family. His Majesty had himself annotated this book. In His Majesty's own hand it was stated that lazy Friedrich would have no dessert, for lazy Friedrich had been naughty. The officers of the First Regiment of Foot Guards dined at Wunderlich's, Privy Councillor Planck ate there, and Wilhelm Scheuermann and the commandant of Berlin, General Schaumburg. Frau Wunderlich did the cooking and Herr Wunderlich advised the guests about wines. The food was what had been served at the Kaiser's table, in the days before his Majesty moved to Doorn.

And then there was Herr Mehlgarten. His place was in the Olivaer Platz, behind the terminus of the No. 12 bus. The bus drivers ate there; they ate largely, quickly and while the food was hot. Long before the National-Socialists passed the law under which only one dish might be served on certain days, the so-called *Eintopf*, Frau Mehlgarten was cooking *Eintopfs*, the best imaginable and in rich profusion. Herr and Frau Mehlgarten were from Bremen. Rowohlt too was a Bremen man, as was Anton Kippenberg, the owner of the publishing house *Insel-Verlag*. In his memoirs Kippenberg wrote about Bremen and about a certain local dish called *Plucktefinken*, a stew consisting of carrots and pork-belly and bullock's cheek. In a newspaper article Rowohlt gave Kippenberg a slight rap over the knuckles, maintaining that his recipe for this dish was all wrong. Kippenberg wrote an angry reply, and a fierce newspaper war broke out between Rowohlt and Kippenberg concerning the proper way to prepare *Plucktefinken*. The papers printed this correspondence on the same page as the publisher's announcements. Finally everybody who was interested repaired to Herr Mehlgarten's and

ate *Plucktefinken* in triple style—one made according to Kippenberg's recipe, one as Rowohlt thought it should be done, and one that was Herr Mehlgarten's. Mehlgarten won.

We often ate at Mehlgarten's, Rowohlt and Ledig and Axel and Kiaulehn and Scheuermann and Privy Councillor Planck and Dr. Luetgebrune, in fact everyone who enjoyed good, rich, solid food—which included the bus and taxi drivers.

Oh, we lived well. There could be no two opinions about that. It would be ungrateful not to admit it. We associated solely with people who enjoyed rich and plentiful food. And no one will succeed in proving to me that this is not a commendable yardstick by which to measure one's friends. That is why I was quite fond of Morell, Hitler's fat personal physician. At a film première he happened to be seated next to Ille and myself.

Ille had always had a weakness for fat men. She had no idea who the important-looking, ugly man next to her might be, but she entered into conversation with him. Morell became extraordinarily animated when he discovered that Ille lived at the Huberhof near Berchtesgaden.

One afternoon a car drove through Reiten and drew up outside our house, an enormous, black Mercedes with an SS man at the wheel. In the back sat a fat man with a face like a frog and gold-rimmed spectacles, behind which glittered a pair of very clever, sly and penetrating eyes. He wore a sort of comic-opera uniform, of field grey embellished wherever possible with gold braid; instead of insignia of rank, the collar was simply enlivened with the staff of Aesculapius. He sat down comfortably in our drawing room, smiled, and told us much about his past life, about his many travels as a ship's doctor; ship's doctors can tell a good story and do so willingly. But we did not really know what Morell wanted from us; we only found out when Ille asked, more as a social gesture, whether he was hungry. Morell almost burst into tears and said, with an embarrassed laugh, that he was absolutely starving; he said that another crowned head was visiting the Obersalzberg—in this case King Boris of Bulgaria—and that when this happened the whole of Hitler's entourage trembled, for it meant that the daily routine, already shaky enough, simply collapsed. Hitler only ate when he could spare the time, and now he had no time to spare. Sometimes no meal was served until four o'clock in the morning—and his entourage would have been standing about waiting since seven. They stood, said Morell, because it would naturally be quite impossible to struggle up out of armchairs whenever the Führer entered the room unexpectedly. Glancing down sadly at his paunch Morell said:

"And for me standing is very far from comfortable!"

This was why he had driven to the Huberhof—to eat his fill. The distance was some twenty-five miles. Ille dished up and Morell ate ham and eggs—he swallowed each lightly done egg at a single gulp—and

finally he devoured the entire piece of salt beef which Ille had thought to give us for our Sunday meal.

He came often. He had an excellent nose for what was good. We were having liver dumplings one day, and there he was, beaming.

“Liver dumplings!” he murmured respectfully.

He told us how Hitler, when travelling with his entourage through Lower Bavaria, had stopped at a small town to eat. Since his meal had to be specially prepared for him, the gentlemen were ushered into a side-room, where they waited—meanwhile behind them dish after dish of liver dumpling soup was being carried to the other customers. The gentlemen sat there, their mouths watering, sniffing the delicious aroma. Finally Hitler remarked that he had to admit that liver dumpling soup really did smell excellent. At once Group Leader Schaub said:

“Try it for once, my Führer! If it smells good to you, you should have some!”

But Hitler replied at once:

“No, no, my friend. It’s only a step from there to the belief that whatever pleases is permitted—and that is a step I shall never take.”

We did not associate with Hitler.

Ille had accepted various guides to conduct handed down by her father, among them the old saw that one-fifth of one’s income should be spent on one’s dwelling place. This was an illuminating maxim, though it implied that anyone buying a house must possess a fortune. I was prepared to embark on the troubled sea of mortgages, bank-loans and such when the war broke out, and then not only did the state of my income, but also the nature of my work, make hotel life a far simpler solution to our living problem.

I loved hotels, hotel people, the whole complex hotel atmosphere. My favourite book was Sinclair Lewis’s *Work of Art*, a novel about a hotel. Should I ever return to this world through some trick of metempsychosis, I hope that in my next incarnation I may be a hotel-keeper. Here life is offered in a form reduced to its essence, and here it is played out to the full; each day brings encounters with fresh people and destinies, each day contains everything that makes our life, eating and drinking and sleeping and loving and working. When first we stayed at the Hamburg Vier Jahreszeiten, it was also the first time that I firmly ordered a suite. I had work to do and Ille had brought all her stuff with her. The chief receptionist accompanied us upstairs. In silence but with discreet gestures he pointed out to us the beauties and convenience of our suite. He opened a cupboard and automatically a light went on inside it. Ille immediately walked across to the bed-side table and opened that. The interior of the bed-side table remained dark. Ille raised her eyebrows and said, loudly and clearly:

“What a crummy hotel!”

The chief receptionist was plainly horrified and I thought that this

was when we would be kicked out. Not a bit of it, we were exceptionally well looked after.

At the 'Koenigshof' in Munich we had neither a room nor a suite but chambers. In the bed in which I slept the last Queen of Naples had died not so very long ago. She was a brave lady from the royal house of Bavaria, who had lit the fuses of the cannons herself rather than surrender her sublime rights to the vulgar populace. I slept very well in that bed, which has now been burned to a cinder. Ashes and rubble were the 'Koenigshof,' ashes and rubble the 'Regina,' and ashes and rubble the 'Continental,' ashes were Munich, Lübeck, Hamburg, Würzburg and Berlin.

What remained? During those years I had had twelve suits made for me, though of course I had never possessed more than three at any one time—lounge suit or uniform not included. I had two overcoats and a beret. I had five pairs of shoes and a bath-robe, thirty shirts, thirty pairs of socks, eight pairs of shorts and a dressing-gown. My entire wardrobe fitted into one suitcase, the yellow one from Bolle's.

Ille, needless to say, owned considerably more clothes. But Ille was also strongly in favour of earning money.

"If we're not to have it, who is? After all, we're the only people who know how to spend it properly!"

All the same, what had happened to the money? It had simply gone. Freedom and comfort have always been the most expensive of luxuries. Oh, we had lived well, there could be no doubt about that! We had lived a bit crazily, but well. We had eaten and drunk like capitalists, but since we spent all our money on eating and drinking, like proletarians, it all came to the same in the long run. I admit that during those years I never once thought of my many contemporaries who were even then locked up in concentration camps: I thought of them as little as they had of me during the years when I was languishing in prison. Axel preserved his discharge paper from the concentration camp, just as I preserved my discharge from prison. One never knew when the time might come when the rapid production of these documents might not prove invaluable.

Where was Axel? Where were they all? Where was Rowohl? Where were Kiaulehn and old Scheuermann? But stop. I knew what had happened to Scheuermann. I had had news of him by the last post that was delivered. In 1940, as soon as Strasbourg was occupied, he had applied, as an Alsatian, for the job of safeguarding and arranging the documents connected with the history of Alsace. When the French returned, in late 1944, the old man was arrested and thrown into a dungeon. And there he was forgotten. When they found him he had starved to death. He lay on the ground, and in his hand he grasped a wooden spoon which he had himself made.

In my cellar there must be a little more pear spirit. I had sent the



entire pear crop to be distilled. Distilling was strictly illegal, but it was done in secret and very well done too. I went down into the cellar from which Michael's voice had so often come to us as he stammered his prayers. And there, indeed, stood one more bottle of pear spirit. I put it to my lips and drank. It was wonderful stuff, extremely strong, and suddenly the whole cellar was filled with the scent of pears. It was a little raw still. This bottle should have been allowed to mature for twenty years more, and then the pear spirit would have had a bouquet, a fine bouquet. . . .!

Twenty years!

I lifted the bottle and drank.

In the meantime the Americans had arrived.

120. *List any land or buildings owned by you or any immediate members of your family, giving locations, dates of acquisition, from whom acquired, nature and description of buildings, the number of hectares and the use to which the property is commonly put*

Not applicable.

121. *Have you or any immediate members of your family ever acquired property which had been seized from others for political, religious or racial reasons or expropriated from others in the course of occupation of foreign countries or in furtherance of the settling of Germans or Volksdeutsche in countries occupied by Germany?*

Not applicable.

122. *If so, give particulars, including dates and locations, and the names and whereabouts of the original title holders*

Not applicable.

123. *Have you ever acted as an administrator or trustee of Jewish property in furtherance of Aryanisation decrees or of ordinances?*

No.

124. *If so, give particulars*

Not applicable.

## I. TRAVEL OR RESIDENCE ABROAD

125. List all journeys or residence outside of Germany including military campaigns

THE AMERICANS were there!

I ran up to the hillock, to the old oak-tree. The ground about it was black with people, black and white, for there were also nuns from the Adelholzen convent, nuns of the order of St. Vincent with their great white coifs. There too were French prisoners-of-war, who were now wearing their medals and their decorations. Poles as well were there, and Ukrainians, and German soldiers from the Adelholzen hospital, and a scattering of foreign officers, Italians, Hungarians, Rumanians. All were staring at the *autobahn*, along which the Americans were rolling. "Germany wants to see you."

The traffic was heavy once again. Eastward, ever eastward the columns poured, tank after tank, fast driving trucks, and among them little, blunt, nimble, open, square-shaped cars.

There they were, the Americans. Slowly I looked away. From the top of the Siegsdorf church-spire fluttered a white flag. From somewhere or other came the scattered sound of an occasional shot.

Suddenly the Frenchmen began to yell. They shouted and screamed and danced and threw their caps in the air. They pointed towards the viaduct. Trucks were driving over it, trucks flying the tricolor, great blue-white-red flags fluttering in the wind.

Columns were rolling down every road, in every direction. Those headed south, into the mountains, must be Germans. Yes, they were the German columns, driving madly, overtaking one another recklessly, hurrying on—*la débâcle*, I thought.

I seated myself on the bench beneath the oak-tree and gazed down into the valley. One single road was utterly deserted. This was the road that led from Adelholzen by way of the Talham farm, passing close to the viaduct, to Bergen station. Between Talham and the viaduct was a single cart. I stared at it and saw that it was motionless.

A young Frenchman sat down beside me. He was wearing a beret identical to my own.

"*Qu'est-ce que cela?*" I asked, pointing at the cart in the valley.

He glanced at me and shrugged his shoulders regretfully.

"*C'est Taddäus!*" he said.

I did not understand. I asked:

"*Comment?*"

He explained it to me, with many animated gestures. It was Taddäus.

As on every other morning Taddäus had begun his day by harnessing his Haffingers and setting off to fetch the bread for the farm. He got it from Wachendorf, the village on the other side of the viaduct. Scarcely had Taddäus set off in his cart before a solitary tank appeared upon the viaduct. This tank shot at everything that moved in the valley. The only thing moving along the roads was Taddäus' cart. The cart was overturned, Taddäus was killed instantly.

Those must have been the shots that had awakened me. I was suddenly filled with senseless rage. "That's a fine way to behave!" I thought, as though the Americans had done something shocking, something that the police should know about. To such an extent had I, too, come to identify the Americans with peace and lawful order: and they started off by shooting our Taddäus, a Pole, the best Pole of them all.

The columns rolled on, and now it was safe to move about down in the valley. A group of children came up the hill to the old oak-tree. These were evacuee children from the Trout Hotel. Their teacher announced, with agitation:

"The Americans have thrown us out!"

"Impossible!" I cried. "The Americans! Children! What's happening down there?"

The teacher said:

"I don't know. It all happened so quickly. They were looking for an officer in the hotel. They said the children had to get out. They said they were going to set the hotel on fire."

I looked down but could see neither fire nor smoke. It all seemed utterly quiet below, the little town lay peacefully in its valley, the morning sky was cloudless, the sun shone on the Salzburg mountains over to the east. The teacher said:

"Nobody's allowed into the town. They'll let anyone out but nobody in."

I glanced across the valley. It was all as it had always been, save only for the tanks rolling along the *autobahn*.

"*C'est beau, le pays!*" remarked the Frenchman at my side.

"*Vous êtes Breton?*" I asked.

He was a small, stocky man with reddish hair. He had worked for Schmid, who was at this moment taking his team out into the fields. For, Americans or no Americans, the land has to be worked, hasn't it? Schmid had been a prisoner-of-war himself once upon a time, during the First World War, in France.

"*Non, monsieur,*" said the Frenchman. "*Je suis Basque!*"

"*Comment ça?*" I cried. "*Mais j'étais aussi au Pays Basque!*"

"*C'est mon pays!*" said the Frenchman proudly.

I snatched off my beret and showed him the label inside. It was threadbare and dark with the sweat of years, but the name of the firm was still legible, together with the town: St. Jean de Luz. . . .

"*Je suis d'Urrugne,*" he said.

Urrugne was on the St. Jean-Hendaye road. For years now I had been seeing this man, and we had never spoken to one another save to say *bon jour* or *bonne nuit*.

The Frenchman's comrades were calling to him. He got to his feet and said:

"*Au revoir, monsieur.*"

I said:

"*Au revoir, monsieur, et bonne chance.*"

"*Merci, monsieur, et bonne chance pour vous aussi!*" said he, and he walked away.

Ille came and sat down, with a little sigh, beside me. I quite forgot to tell her the news of Taddäus' death. I cried at once:

"Imagine—that Frenchman is a Basque!"

Ille said, yawning slightly:

"So you immediately told him the story of Majie!"

Ille did not particularly appreciate it when I told my story about Majie. I had once said that the time I spent in France was the only truly happy period of my life, and this Ille could not tolerate.

I said:

"But I've never told you about the meanest action of my life."

Ille said:

"Yes, you have."

I said:

"That's not what I meant. Call it the second meanest. Anyhow, I'd just as soon not classify them definitely. . . ."

Ille yawned slightly and said:

"Tell me."

I told her.

I had my passport and visa in my pocket, but I had promised Rowohlt not to let anyone know that I was leaving Germany. If the news got out the examining judge would have had to intervene, for I had been subpoenaed as a witness at the great Peasants' Trial. I did not even tell my closest friends where I was going, and I boarded the Paris express more or less secretly. I looked for the emptiest compartment, and at last I found one which contained nothing save a lady's overcoat. I wished to buy a newspaper and I stepped out into the corridor, but immediately drew back. Standing just below the open window of the corridor was an acquaintance of mine. He was a newspaper correspondent, and he had only recently written some extremely unpleasant things about me. He was talking to a young girl, to whom he gave a little badge, saying: "You must pin this to the lapel of your coat. I've telephoned Paris and the Ullstein bureau will be sending a gentleman to meet you at the station. He'll be wearing the Ullstein badge too, so

you'll be able to recognise one another. Do you understand?" The young girl said: "Yes, Papa." I returned cautiously to my seat. No sooner did the train begin to move off than the young girl entered my compartment and sat down opposite me. She was wearing the Ullstein badge, an owl, pinned to the lapel of her jacket. She was blonde and quite pretty.

We spoke not a word to one another, and we were alone together all night, until we reached Cologne. I was lost in dreams about France. My ignorance of France was for all intents and purposes total. I knew about Napoleon and the War of 1870 and the World War and Versailles and the occupation of the Rhineland and the shameful use of black soldiers as garrison troops. This was not much and not very attractive.

We stopped in Cologne for one hour. The young girl, who looked somewhat dishevelled in the grey light of dawn, suddenly asked me where one could get a good cup of coffee in Cologne. I did not know. I remained where I was while the young creature made her way to the station waiting-room. When she returned she had not even made an effort to tidy herself up. I thought: "A slut!" We travelled across Belgium, and the girl sat sulkily hunched in her corner. Apart from the few words exchanged in Cologne station we had still not spoken to one another. I had been slightly nervous of the German frontier control, but everything had gone quite smoothly. At the French frontier there were no difficulties either. I gazed out of the window. So this was France.

Suddenly the young girl began to do something about her appearance. "Ah ha!" thought I, "the secret magic of France!" She really made a good job of it, with soft little gestures, like a cat cleaning itself. I said: "If you would allow me, I'll accompany you to the restaurant car." Actually I wished to have nothing whatever to do with the young lady, but that secret magic . . . !

We went to the diner. The waiters had suddenly all become Frenchmen, and they were indeed more polite than their German predecessors, more polite and less in evidence. In the little metal ring beside the windows stood no longer bottles of beer but half-bottles of a good—one might even say of a very good—red wine. We drank and began to talk. I asked her if she was pleased to be going to France. She said: "Oh, I don't know. I could have a good time, but not this way. . . ."

Slowly she grew more animated. I credited this to the wine, which she did not drink but gulped down. She had been to school in Prague. Now she was being sent to Paris to learn French. She was to stay with a French family. "I don't even know the people!" she complained: "Papa arranged it all." She went on, bitterly: "*Au pair!* Everyone knows what that means! Papa still thinks of me as a child—and I'm eighteen!" I said that I regarded eighteen as a wonderful age to be. She smiled, for the first time. It improved her appearance no end.

We became better and better friends. By Le Cateau I knew her whole life story, though I took good care not to tell her mine. By St. Quentin we were flirting so busily that I quite forgot to notice the destruction caused in the Great War. By Compiègne we were back in our compartment, though no longer seated opposite one another. When the first houses of the Parisian suburbs appeared I cried excitedly: "Here is Paris!" She glanced out of the window and said, with evident disappointment: "The outskirts of Dresden are much prettier."

But now she did begin to show traces of excitement. Suddenly she unpinned her badge and put it away. "Why are you doing that?" I asked. She gave me a nasty frown and said: "I don't want it. I don't want anything to do with it." I said, anxiously: "We'll be in Paris any minute now!" She cried: "Paris, oh, Paris . . . it could be so marvelous!" She looked at me heavily and then said, loudly: "I won't go to those people. I want to be in Paris without people writing to Papa the moment I do anything." I said nothing. After all, her point of view was quite comprehensible.

She said: "I'll just go to some hotel. Which hotel are you going to?" I was considerably taken aback. I said: "I don't know yet." She said: "We'll soon find one." *We*, she said.

She was very pretty, she was charming, she was incredibly young. And this was Paris! Papa should never know. What had Papa written about my book? *And the whole thing is larded over with a distasteful grease of technical ability.* Well, Papa, just you wait.

I said: "Right!" and kissed her. She flung her arms around my neck and pressed herself to me. She did not yet know how to kiss. She'd learn. Funny to think that nothing of this sort had ever happened to me on a German train.

The train pulled into the Gare du Nord. I helped her on with her overcoat and handed out her bag. Then I reached down my own case and my typewriter. My typewriter! What actually was I planning to do in France? Write a book, a book for Rowohlt; the contract was already in my breast pocket. The contract! One day that book would be published with my name on the jacket. And Papa? Papa would write that my new book was "distasteful." But what was distasteful? In the Cadet Corps we had regarded as distasteful something we had called 'feeble revenge.' A feeble revenge was distasteful.

I got out of the train. The young girl was busy with her luggage. An elderly, reliable-looking gentleman was hurrying along the platform, looking for somebody. In his button-hole he wore the Ullstein badge, the owl. I went up to him and said: "The lady you are looking for is over there!" Then I walked off, without looking back.

"That really was very mean," said Ille.

"Yes," said I, "but there is a point to the story. I saw the girl again."

Five years later. I was only in Paris for a few days, but I saw a lot of the city and went out every night. Once I happened to go, long after midnight, to the Monocle Bar, a little *boîte*—just a single, narrow room but a crazy sort of place. A girl appeared, stark naked, and sang some sort of hula-hula song. Her breasts, incidentally, were most pretty and shook in a highly provocative fashion. She was literally wearing nothing but a chain of flowers. That was 'she.' ”

“Did you at least sleep with her on that occasion?” Ille asked.

I said:

“Quite out of the question. The Monocle Bar was a Lesbian place.”

Ille smiled. She said:

“Don't worry. The Americans are in Paris now. They'll soon knock that sort of nonsense out of her.”

I said:

“I don't think so. It was all so long ago. She's undoubtedly a dried-up old thing by this time.”

Ille got up, she stroked my cheek, and said:

“My dearest heart—she's exactly the same age as myself.”

I was taken aback but I remained seated. Ille walked away. “I'm just a Boche,” I thought to myself: “I'm a Boche and I always have been.” At that time in France I did everything that a Boche does, both those actions he performs deliberately, conscious and proud of his Bocheness, and those that he does when he is wellnigh falling over backwards in his attempts not to be taken for what he is. When I returned home I wished to write a little book for Rowohlt entitled: *The Adventures of a little Boche in France*. It never came to anything because quite quietly the little Boches had turned into big Boches, and from then on it was difficult for the little ones to prove that they weren't the big ones. Rowohlt used to send his authors, who were hanging about not knowing quite what to do, to France. When I told him that it was essential I go abroad, he got in touch with a certain Herr Seyerlen.

Herr Seyerlen was a remarkable man, gaunt and elegant, a man who was equally at home all over the world. In his early youth he had written a novel entitled *The Painful Shame*, on the subject of adolescence. It caused a considerable sensation, for it was the first of its type. But Seyerlen did not write another line. He disappeared from Germany, and only his closest friends had occasional news of him, from Australia or South America or Japan or Iceland—nobody knew what he actually did in these remote places. Now he happened to be in Berlin. He told me that he had rented a house at St. Jean de Luz but that he had had to leave in a hurry. The house was standing empty. I could move in whenever I wished. He had paid a year's rent in advance. He gave me a letter to Monsieur Douat, his landlord.

I went by train to St. Jean de Luz, and to Monsieur Douat's house by the tramway. Herr Seyerlen had told me that all I had to say to the

driver was the single word, "L'Affitenia," and he would put me down at the right place.

The tram was painted blue and was a rattling old contraption. The driver wore a large and emphatic beret, canvas shoes with rope soles and a blue scarf which kept shirt and trousers together.

We set off and were immediately travelling at a tremendous rate. The track was laid right beside the sea and led northwards, first of all following the curve of the extensive bay, then along the edge of a cliff that dropped down to the water. The cliff began less than a yard from the rails. Whenever the old rattle-trap began to plunge down an incline or to take a screaming curve the driver would let go of his steering wheel, seize a leathern wine-skin, throw back his head, and squirt a long, thin jet of red wine into his mouth. I clung tightly to the rail with both hands.

The tram thundered on to a wide beach and stopped. I hoped devoutly that this might be 'L'Affitenia,' but on the little cabin beside the line hung a shield with the word 'Erromardie.' This beach appealed to me, as did the great waves powerfully breaking on the white sand. I liked the white house with the brown woodwork that lay on the far side of the beach, where the land rose greenly. The tram screeched up the rise, climbing and climbing, and then once again ran along the edge of a cliff, where it stopped.

"*La plage l'Affitenia!*" said the driver, and I got out and looked about me.

There lay another bay. Immediately beneath where I was standing the cliff dropped two hundred feet, and its face was thickly overgrown with gorse. A narrow, winding path led through this prickly undergrowth to a deserted, sickle-shaped beach. Cliffs closed the bay at either end, and a line of rocks protected it from the violence of the open sea, rocks over which the breaking waves cast up towers of spray. The water of the bay was green and clear; its floor was partly long sandy stretches and partly deep submarine forests of seaweed, of every conceivable hue. Where had I seen this bay before? I had never seen it before. Yet I knew it. And then suddenly I remembered. Bismarck had described this bay in his letters to Johanna. He had swum here, alone, without a bathing suit, when he fled from the smart people and elegant society of Biarritz. And that, that must be Biarritz; far off to the north stood a cluster of houses and hotels on the seashore. The sea was blue there, and I could watch the spray that was leaping high above the 'Rocher de la Vierge.'

I turned around. There stood a house, on the shores of the whole bay just this one house. I walked across to it, some twenty yards, and knocked. The shutters over the windows were closed. It was a pretty house with a luxuriant pergola. So far as I could see it was uninhabited. But then the cellar door opened and an old man appeared, in shirt and



trousers, with a great beret on his head. He had white hair, a moustache, and small, dark, cunning eyes, mongoloid in shape. He looked like Clemenceau.

"*Monsieur Douat?*" I asked.

"*Oui, monsieur.*"

I gave him Seyerlen's letter. He read it, saying:

"*Excusez, monsieur.*"

Then he folded the sheet of paper, replaced it in its envelope, made an expansive and welcoming gesture with his right hand, and said ceremoniously:

"*Monsieur, la maison est à vous!*"

The house was mine. It was a marvellous house. One room, two rooms, three, four, five, all prettily furnished with heavy, old pieces—and there was the bed, a broad, French bed, as broad as it was long. And there was the pergola. The top of the pergola was made of old packing-case boards. Into the boards was burned the single word 'Cognac.' I pointed upwards:

"*Cognac?*" I asked.

Père Douat smiled:

"*Oui, monsieur!*" Then, suddenly gripping my hand, both my hands, and shaking them warmly he said: "*Nous autres, nous aimons les Allemands!*" His cunning little slit-eyes glanced upwards. He said: "*Vous comprenez! Les sous-marins!*"

And I understood at once. The German U-boats, of course. Once they had hunted the Bay of Biscay, and God had blessed the beaches. Cases had floated ashore from torpedoed steamers, heavy cases, filled with brandy. Jetsam, four long years of good, profitable jetsam. The brandy was drunk and with the cases the pergola was built. *Nous aimons les Allemands, nous autres.*

I collapsed on a chair with laughter, and all I could say was:

"*Cognac!*"

"*Tout de suite, monsieur,*" said Père Douat and opened a heavy side-board. There stood bottles, at least a hundred bottles, in serried ranks.

"*Ce sont les bouteilles à Monsieur Seyerlen,*" said Père Douat.

I had arrived in paradise.

Père Douat and his two sons lived down below. Etienne was broad-shouldered and small, Dominique tall and slight, and both were blond and both wore berets, a shirt and trousers held together by a blue scarf, and canvas shoes with rope soles. Everybody in this part of the world wore the same clothes. Etienne was a seaman, *marin*, out of work for the moment, *la crise, vous savez*; Dominique was a house-painter, out of work for the moment, *vous savez, la crise.*

Etienne asked me:

"*À la pêche?*"

I nodded eagerly. Etienne looked doubtfully at my shoes and then

tossed me a pair of rope-soles. "*Espadrilles!*" he remarked. Quickly I took off my shoes and socks and slipped into the *espadrilles*. They were quite new, and I saw that there were several pairs beside the cupboard. I rolled my trousers high, as did Etienne. He gave me a long bamboo stick to carry. He himself shouldered a staff with an iron hook at the end and a net on a long pole, and set off ahead of me.

We followed the winding path down to the beach. It was ebb-tide. The rocks nearest the cliff were out of water, brown and slippery with seaweed, and among them were many stones that had fallen from the cliff above, some sharp, some smooth. The water of the bay was calm and incredibly transparent. I threw off my clothes and went in. But Etienne remained standing on the beach and watched me with bewilderment. I slid into deeper water and began to swim. I called to Etienne:

"*Nagez!*"

He shook his head.

"*Je ne sais pas nager.*"

I thought that perhaps I had used the wrong word. He was a sailor and he must know how to swim. But he could not, he had never learned. Born and bred here, a sailor by profession, and he could not swim.

Etienne leaped sure-footedly from rock to rock, and I followed him. The *espadrilles* gave a wonderful grip, and I never slipped once. From the smooth stones countless little crabs slid into the water at our approach with a soft, scratching sound. Etienne seized a crab, bit through its shell, and swallowed it with evident relish. He offered me one, but I declined. I didn't know about crabs.

We waded through shallow water. Suddenly Etienne stopped. He pointed to a crack in the rock beneath the water and showed me a narrow trail of white sand that led into it.

"*Pieuvres!*" he whispered and gave me a meaning look.

He laid his net within easy reach on a rock, then took the bamboo in one hand and the stick with the iron hook in the other. Cautiously he placed the tip of the bamboo at the entrance of the crack. Immediately a long, red arm, covered with suckers, reached forward from out of the rock. *Pieuvre*, I now realised, meant octopus. I was very excited. Slowly and cautiously Etienne began to move his bamboo about. The arm grasped the stick, a second did likewise, a third was feeling for a grip. Carefully Etienne moved the bamboo from side to side, then suddenly he pulled it back. On the end hung an octopus with arms at least a yard long. But scarcely had he pulled it clear of the water than the beast let go and fell back into the pool. It gave out an impenetrable, stinking, black cloud, from which it emerged a moment or two later, making for the safety of its crack in the rock with all the speed at its disposal. But already Etienne had driven his metal hook into its repulsive body. Etienne pulled on the hooked stick, dropped the bamboo,

seized the net, and with a quick twist of the wrist had the creature out in the air. When Etienne thrust his hand into the net to seize it, it entwined its arms about his arm and neck. The thing changed colour. It turned green, red, green again, its skin became covered with an inky slime and with its arms it clung to Etienne's body. But Etienne drove his fist into the twisting mass, seized the creature's swim bladder and ripped it open. Its white entrails dripped out. Then Etienne easily loosened the animals' arms and threw the octopus back into the pool. It sank to the bottom and lay motionless.

*"Voilà, il ne sait plus nager, lui non plus!"*

Etienne caught ten or twelve of them in this way, and each time he would smile happily with his splendid white teeth. I was allowed to entice the creatures from their crevices with the bamboo. But I did not think I could tear out their swim bladders, and the idea of having them cling to my skin disgusted me. Never had I seen such terrible eyes as those of the beast when it was helpless.

Towards noon, happy and tired, I scrambled up the winding path, carrying our catch. Père Douat and Dominique were waiting for us. They seized the creatures, threw them into a tub and ran water over them. Then they took long knives and cut the arms from the body. They showed me a horny beak, like the bill of a parrot, "*la bouche*," they said. With wooden hammers they beat the arms flat. Etienne put a pan on the fire into which he poured oil, salt and pepper. He reached up and took some herbs from a bundle that hung above the hearth, chopped them finely and threw them in the pan. He added onions and garlic. Père Douat cut the flesh of the arms into small pieces which he tossed into the sizzling oil. At once they shrivelled up, becoming hard and white, and the oil in the pan hissed and spat. Dominique stirred and ladled them out. Etienne placed four plates on the table and on each one Dominique deposited a meal. A sharp, juicy, penetrating aroma filled the room.

*"Monsieur est servi!"*

I ate cautiously. It tasted of aromatic roots and oil, of seaweed and strong pork. It tasted very good indeed.

*"C'est l'habitude!"* remarked Père Douat, adding slyly: "*Nous mangeons des pieuvres chaque jour!*"

The three looked at me and smiled. Etienne laid a hand on my shoulder and said, his teeth glittering white:

*"Monsieur, on mange très bien chez Madame Luis! La maison prochaine, là-bas."*

I thanked them for their kind advice and walked back to the next bay. Behind the headland which separated the two bays stood the white house built in the Basque style which I had noticed on my way out. Here the cliff was less abrupt and the bay wider, with a big, sandy beach. This was 'Erromardie.'

Madame Luis was standing in her kitchen, a small, stout woman with grey hair and a round face. Her red apple cheeks made her eyes appear like little, gay slits. She was stirring a saucepan, and whatever it might be that she was cooking smelt uncommonly good. Beside the hearth sat an old, a very old woman, peeling vegetables.

"*C'est la grand'mère,*" remarked Madame Luis, leading me into a big, panelled room with a stove. Madame pushed aside a table which stood before the shuttered french windows. She gave me a significant glance before undoing the catch on the shutters. Then with a single gesture she threw them wide. She stood there, waiting for my comment, and said:

"*Voilà! Quel joli tableau!*"

The sun poured down. The sea glittered. It broke in a shimmering, snowy foam against the cliffs. The bay formed a wide arc. Behind the rounded curves of the grassy foothills there arose the sharp green peak of a steep and sudden mountain.

From the direction of the beach a young girl was hurrying towards the house. As she ran she took off her bathing cap and shook out her long, brown curls. The wet bathing-suit gleamed in the sunshine. The girl leaped up over the edge of the cliff, opened her wide, red mouth to show two pearly rows of teeth, saw me, waved her cap and called gaily in a clear voice:

"*Bonjour, monsieur!*"

"*C'est Majie,*" said Madame Luis, "*c'est ma petite nièce.*"

"*Quel joli tableau!*" I remarked ardently.

Almost at once she brought a tray into the room. She had only bothered to slip on a thin dress. Her hair still hung damp about her shoulders, and her arms and legs had the scent of the sea.

"*Voilà les hors d'oeuvres,*" she cried, setting down the tray. There were plates of artichoke and plates of sardines and all sorts of delicious little trifles, garnished with herbs. She produced a carafe of red wine, remarking:

"*C'est le vin de Jurançon, vous savez, le vin de notre bon Henri.*"

She straightened herself, she smiled, and said:

"*Et moi je suis la petite Majie.*"

I got up and said, formally:

"*Et moi je suis le grand Ernst.*"

We looked at one another and smiled. I thought of the courage my ancestors had always displayed, both the German and the French, and I asked:

"*Ce soir? Au cinéma de St. Jean de Luz?*"

Majie shook her head fiercely. She gave me a probing look. She said:

"*Ce soir, danser, à St. Jean de Luz.*"

It was May and I was in France. I was in the most beautiful place on earth. I was in paradise. And in this paradise there lived an Eve.

We danced in St. Jean de Luz, on the Place Louis Quatorze. We danced on the square until early next morning. Majie had bought me a beret, a *beret basque*, and I threw my hat into the sea. I wore *espadrilles* and a linen shirt and blue sailcloth trousers and a scarf in place of a belt. Majie had nothing on her body save a thin, light, dress that twirled when she did. We danced waltzes and Majie lay in my arms, we danced the Charleston and with every other step Majie threw herself against my chest, we danced the *midinettes'* dance with quick short steps, and Majie's little breasts jumped up and down in time to the music. And we danced the fandango.

When the musicians reached for their castanets the girls shouted for joy and the boys hitched their trousers higher. Majie cried: "The fandango!" and gave me a most meaning nod. She pulled me to her side, opposite another couple of dancers. We raised our arms, and when the castanets began we snapped our fingers. And then we danced. Majie danced and I copied her fast, brief steps which seemed to engage one's entire body, from side to side, back and forth, to an ever more powerful, ever increasing rhythm.

The fandango lasted for over half an hour, and we danced it. Never, during the course of the fandango, was Majie in my arms, and never was she out of my sight. When the fandango was over she had won a place in my heart forever.

We were intoxicated and we had not drunk a drop. We stood beneath the trees smiling at one another. Under every lamp-post a couple embraced. In front of the *estaminets* sat the foreigners from the Grand Hotel and watched.

It was an orgy of all that is often called vulgar. It was far finer than I had believed it could be. It was exactly as I had imagined it should be, but I had also imagined that such things did not really exist. It was like a painted sunset; it was like a real sunset, one of those sunsets of which people say that if it were painted nobody would ever believe it.

The last tram had left for *Erromardie* long before we set off home. We walked along the cliff's edge. Majie sang. In a light and unpretentious voice she sang all the little, unpretentious songs, *Jean de la Lune*, *Sur le Pont d'Avignon* and *Les sabots sont beaux*. Then I asked her to sing one of those pretty little songs, the songs that the French used to sing in the war against the Germans. And Majie became suitably solemn. She sang the beautiful, serious song about the *pauvre fille d'Alsace* who sits weeping on the steps of *Strasbourg Minster*, weeping for the sad fate of holy mother France. A German officer passes and throws her a gold coin. But the *pauvre fille d'Alsace* does not pick up the coin, she lets it roll down the steps of the *Minster* and she sobs: '*A un Allemand je ne donne pas la main!*' And Majie sobbed and gave me her hand.

And then it was my turn to sing, to sing one of those songs the Germans used to sing in the war against the French. I thought for a long

time before I could remember a suitable one. Finally I sang: *Victorious will we conquer France*. . . . What my voice lacked in beauty it made up in volume. Majie insisted that I translate the strange, incomprehensible text for her, and I did so. I translated our inalterable resolve to conquer France, and Majie laughed. She laughed so hard that she couldn't go on walking. She laughed so hysterically at our ridiculous song that she had to stop and pee. She did this behind a fig-tree, a real, genuine fig-tree. In summer one could just pluck a fig from this tree and eat it. I could not believe that such trees really existed. Figs, I thought, grew in little oval boxes, wrapped up in paper cut in fancy designs, with a picture of Africa on the lid. But in France figs grew wild, on trees beside the road. Straightening her dress Majie promised me that in the summer she would give me the sweetest figs from this very tree.

For one stretch the road ran parallel with the railway lines. As we reached this point two express trains passed one another, the *trains de luxe* Paris—Irun—Madrid and Madrid—Irun—Paris. Quickly Majie seized my hand, crying:

*"Il faut désirer quelque chose! Mais pas dire, pas dire!"*

I held her hand and wished. I wished it with all my heart; with every fibre of my body I wished it. But I said nothing.

Two hours later Majie said to me softly:

*"Maintenant je sais, ce que tu as désiré."*

*"Et toi?"*

Majie breathed:

*"La même chose!"*

From then on I did not go to Erromardie from l'Affitenia only for my meals. I did not lie on the beach of the small, enclosed bay of l'Affitenia, nor did I swim in its clear water, made calm by the protecting fringe of rocks, in the depths of which waved the multicoloured forests of seaweed. No, I lay on the broad beach of Erromardie that was lapped by the white spume of the waves. At low tide I clambered across the rocks to the Pile d'Assiettes, that solitary islet in the sea that resembled a heap of plates. At high tide I lay on the top of this curious prominence and felt the heavy thud of the waves crashing against its rocky base. And when the sea had retreated again I clambered back, exhausted, my blood half boiled by the rays of the sun. And I wrote not a word. Rowohl was far away.

Majie was invariably displeased when I bought a German paper in St. Jean de Luz. Usually the only one available was the *Berliner Tageblatt*, and reading it would put me in a bad temper for the rest of the day. Majie came to hate this newspaper with the unpronounceable name. Every morning she brought me *La Petite Gironde*, the great paper of the province, published in Bordeaux. Majie regarded this paper as being utterly safe, since Monsieur Claude Farrère was one of its contributors.

Monsieur Claude Farrère had his country seat above the Erromardie beach. It lay back somewhat, above the railway lines, on a little hillock with a wood behind. It was the only house here apart from auntie's.

A great number of the finest representatives of literary France had settled in the Pays Basque. Pierre Loti had lived there until his death. Francis Jammes lived not far away, a gentle old man with a silvery beard, and the younger Rostand, the son: I met none of them apart from Monsieur Claude Farrère. One day, in the *Petite Gironde*, I read an article from his pen concerning the 'Polish corridor.' In this he said that when the Germans speculated on what French reaction would be should someone attempt to separate the Pays Basque from the holy body of France by the creation of a Gascon corridor, the Germans forget that Gascons were Frenchmen whereas the inhabitants of the Polish corridor were Poles. Now on this same day I had just read Claude Farrère's *La Bataille*, a brilliantly vivid description of the Battle of Tsushima. In his foreword to this work the respected master had advanced with passion his belief that a writer should only write about such things as he has himself experienced and seen. So I tucked *La Petite Gironde* and *La Bataille* under my arm and set off to visit my distinguished colleague.

He was standing in his garden, gazing at the plants in the rock-garden on his terrace. He wore a gigantic Basque beret, and he had a long silvery beard, streaked with red. I approached respectfully and introduced myself as a "*confrère allemand, un grand admirateur des célèbres chefs-d'oeuvres de Claude Farrère.*" Making a considerable effort to get some sort of order into my appalling French, I told him how deeply impressed I was by the sublimity of his thought, and particularly by the strictness of his approach to writing as a profession. Then, modestly producing the article in *La Petite Gironde*, I asked him if he had ever visited the Polish corridor. At this point the master, who up to now had only grunted affably, opened his narrow lips and said:

"*Ah ça-c'est une question très, très, très, très intéressante. . . .*"

And he added that nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to discuss this interesting problem in detail, but unfortunately, most, most unfortunately, he was expecting guests at this very minute. . . .

His eyes followed me for a long time as I made my way back down the road which had been specially built for him. I could feel his gaze on my back, and I was determined to visit him once again, if only to assure him that I too had never yet set foot in the Polish corridor.

But I had considerably underestimated the great master. One day when I was returning from the beach I met auntie hurrying towards me. She informed me that two men were awaiting me. I do not care at all for surprises of this sort. Inevitably I thought at once in terms of the customs of my fatherland, and I asked immediately:

“*Ils sont de la police?*”

Auntie's eyes widened. With astonishment she said:

“*Ah ça—peût-etre!*”

Majie had already installed them in the dining-room and given them a carafe of wine. A single glance was enough to reinforce my disagreeable premonitions. They were a couple of beetle-browed individuals—the species must be the same throughout the world—dressed in dark clothes of so inconspicuous a cut that this alone made them immediately conspicuous. But their pleasant French manners at least deprived their demeanour of the barking harshness to which we are accustomed at home. So far as I could make out they wanted to know what I was up to, here in France. I assured them that I was simply trying to write a book. A book about this part of the world? Oh, no, a book about conditions in Germany. I was a writer and I hoped that I was permitted to pursue my chosen profession here. The gentlemen asked me politely about my work. Ah, I had so far only produced one volume? They evinced great interest and assured me that they would read it without fail. I did my best to discourage them from this project. Then they handed me a card which entitled me to a free entry into all the museums and libraries of the neighbourhood. The gentlemen were emissaries from a Bayonne literary society. Monsieur Claude Farrère in his friendly fashion had told them of my presence. They had hastened here with the purpose of telling me how heartily glad they were to welcome me to their beautiful country.

Writers, it seemed, counted for something in this land.

The ‘season’ began. Auntie's house began to fill with guests, French bourgeois families who spent their time by the seaside in the enjoyment of very lengthy meals and very short walks. They stood in groups on the beach, the gentlemen in flannel trousers and panama hats, the ladies with parasols, and discussed vivaciously my extraordinary behaviour as they observed my head bobbing about among the waves far from shore. On one occasion, when I attempted successfully to swim from Erromardie around the headland to l’Affitenia, I found the entire company assembled on the farther beach, having made the journey by road. They were debating excitedly whether or not the life-saving society should be summoned, and when I stepped ashore I was overwhelmed with reproaches concerning my foolhardiness. From then on I was accepted as being uncommonly *sportif*, an adjective which seemed to me a polite term with which to describe an addict of quite senseless, utterly unnecessary activities.

I had a bad conscience about auntie. She was indeed invariably friendly in manner towards me, she accepted my custom of drinking my wine unwatered, she said nothing when I appeared for meals in my bathing suit, she simply smiled contentedly when I praised her cooking—but I could not help noticing the regularity with which she found



some errand for Majie to run as soon as ever I set foot in the door. I asked Majie whether she thought auntie had noticed something. Majie said softly:

“*Écoute! C’est Tantine! Elle ronfle!*”

Auntie’s bedroom was immediately above Majie’s. At night we could always hear her uninterrupted snores. Thus it was not fear of auntie’s anger that occasionally agitated Majie so strongly. It began on Fridays.

“*Ce soir?*” I would ask, but Majie would shake her head fiercely until her hair flew.

“*J’ai peur!*” she would say.

On Saturday afternoons, no matter how great the pressure of work, Majie would always take two hours off.

“*Je m’en vais à confesser!*” she would announce. This obviously worried auntie, who looked actually relieved when I promised quietly that I would accompany Majie along her hard road.

The walk to the confessional was indeed a strain. Majie remained very quiet, scarcely venturing to smile. She only pressed my hand when I attempted to comfort her, advising her to lay all the blame on me.

“*J’ai peur,*” she whispered.

And she was quite pale when she entered the church. At the door she did not glance back, and she looked small, slight and nervous as she disappeared into the darkness of the nave. I felt it only right that I should abstain from all wordly distractions while she was unburdening her trembling heart, and while I waited I walked up and down the square before the church, engaged in serious thought. When she reappeared in the doorway, blinking for a moment, I went up to her and asked:

“*C’était facheux?*”

Then Majie seized my hand and dragged me quickly away, as though my very presence might be sacrilegious to the holy place.

“*Oh, il m’a grondé!*” she whispered, and proceeded to tell me everything that the *curé* had said.

All the same the *curé* was far from being a zealot. I had often seen him driving through the countryside in his little car, a cheerful young man, who smiled easily; and it was common gossip that if he passed a young girl walking alone down the road, he would frequently, out of Christian charity, give her a lift on her way.

“*Oh, il était furieux!*” said Majie.

And she told me that he insisted over and over again that she must avoid all meetings with her dangerous seducer. And in fact I had great difficulty in calming Majie’s heart, which, at her request, I could feel to be beating violently beneath the thin stuff of her dress; only with many mild words and soft promises did I manage to soothe its fierce flutters. But Saturdays were bad. Not a single kiss was I allowed. And I had to

promise most solemnly, and against all my convictions, that I would accompany her to mass on the following day, before I was vouchsafed a hearty *bonne nuit* to accompany me on the road back to my solitary l'Affitenia.

Thus it came about that Sunday after Sunday I went to church, to that wonderful church in which Louis XIV married the daughter of Philip IV. The men and women did not participate in the religious service together; the women, with their prettily embroidered hassocks, filled the nave in their uneven ranks, and offered the men—who took their place in the multiple, broad galleries—a fine and complicated picture of mantillas and veils and of the many-shaped, starched, white coifs which the Breton women who worked in the fish canneries wore. So there I sat, high up, leaning over the balustrade, twisting my beret in my hands—the Basque removes his beret only in the presence of God—and trying to pick out Majie from among the worshippers. There she was, kneeling on her little hassock, her head buried guiltily between her hands, and never once, never even once for one brief second, did she glance up towards me. At the moment of communion she would walk forward, a calm, small, contrite figure—and now I would rise quickly and slip down the stairs, making as little noise as possible, in order that I might be waiting outside when Majie emerged into the brilliant sunshine.

There she came, blinking at the brightness, turning her head eagerly and quickly like a little bird until she saw me pressing toward her through the crowded throng of women. Then her whole face would light up and her lips would break into a smile as she hurried towards me. I would take her in my arms, she would lean against my shoulder and sigh deeply, and giving me a blissful look would begin at once:

“*Figurez-vous. . . .*”

She would tell me all about it, about the great weight that had been lifted from her; she was freed of all sin now, all guilt was dissolved, the world was beautiful again, marvellously beautiful—we could scarcely wait until night fell.

Rowohlt sent no money. He answered not one of my letters. I now owed auntie for three weeks. Never would I be able to pay for my ticket home. Eventually, I thought, Rowohlt must show some sign of activity, eventually the money must arrive. But it was not the money which arrived, it was a letter. It was not from Rowohlt; it was from his manager, a mimeographed circular of considerable length. In it there was talk about a great deal, but not about a great deal of money. There were references to preferential creditors, among whom I apparently, for some devilish reason or other, was not included. The only thing which seemed plain to me from this document was that I had hope neither of seeing my advance nor of receiving any royalties that might accrue to me from my previous book.

Then came a letter from Rowohlt. It was only a few lines, but his sprawling signature looked as self-satisfied as ever. In his warm-hearted publisher's fashion he consoled me with the news that he couldn't in any case have sent me any more money owing to the new currency restrictions. He hoped I was well and trusted I was having a thoroughly enjoyable time in the fair land of France—he envied me being there, he said.

I thought up a little speech, beginning: '*Très chère Madame! Mon éditeur a fait faillite. Je ne peux pas payer, et je ne sais même pas quand je serai capable de payer mes dettes. . .*' But when I said my piece to auntie in her kitchen I got no further. She stopped stirring the soup with her wooden spoon, tasted it, and said:

"*Ah, ça . . . ça . . . ça n'a pas d'importance. Monsieur, vous pouvez rester tant que vous voulez.*"

I stayed for sixteen months.

On the previous evening I had promised Majie that I would take her to the cinema that Sunday. At lunchtime she was about to run off with her tray when I stopped her and whispered that I was sorry, but the cinema was off, I'd become a very, very poor man. Majie whispered back:

"*Ah, ça—ça n'a pas d'importance! Il faut gagner de sous!*"

"*Mais comment?*" I asked in despair.

Majie whispered:

"*Cet après-midi, nous irons à Béhobie. . .*"

Béhobie was a little village on the Bidassoa, the stream which was the frontier between France and Spain. On the far side the village was called Behobia. The French customs officials sat in the sun on a bench outside the customs house, their jackets unbuttoned, their feet encased in comfortable *espadrilles*, smoking cigarettes. The Spanish customs officials on the far side wore three-cornered patent-leather hats and high, polished boots and stared rigidly and uncompromisingly across the border. Numerous pretty young girls were walking up and down in front of the French customs house. Majie signalled me to wait a little and joined them.

Now buses arrived, big, elegant cross-country buses. From them descended masses of women, women of all ages, conversing in incomprehensibly rapid French. Immediately the young girls by the bridge sat down and took off shoes and stockings. Then they formed two ranks. The women from the buses walked along the ranks, examining the girls' feet. I saw Majie talking to a number of women. Then Majie nodded, threw me a smile of triumph, turned, and walked across the bridge.

One by one the other girls crossed the stream until at last only a solitary, strong, big-boned girl was left. She stared up the road, looking for more buses.

"*Pas de chance?*" I asked her, and she replied:

"*Ah, ça . . . j'attends les Anglaises.*"

She had remarkably large feet. Soon the other girls came back. Majie was one of the first. Now she was once again wearing shoes and stockings, shiny silk stockings and brand-new, high-heeled, elegant, Spanish shoes. Outside the customs house the girls sat down, took off shoes and stockings and handed them to the women who were clustered about the girls, jabbering away in their rapid French. And within a few seconds Majie had set off again, barefoot once more.

On the bridge the activity and the crowd was as great as in the Place Louis XIV. The French customs officials blinked in the sunshine, the Spaniards gazed seriously and ominously ahead. But apart from this nothing happened. Clearly what was going on was all quite legal.

In two hours Majie had earned a couple of hundred francs as well as a pretty pair of shoes.

"*Et maintenant?*" I asked. Majie said:

"*Maintenant danser à St. Jean de Luz!*"

We danced in St. Jean de Luz and Majie offered me an ice-cream. I knew the ice-cream man, who stood beside his cart over which there fluttered a red-and-white striped canvas awning, crying at the top of his voice: "*De glaces, de glaces!*" He was a friend of Dominique's. We were licking at our ices when the castanets began to sound and the red-capped band launched into the fandango.

"*Ah, le fandango . . .!*" shouted the ice-cream man, furious now. "*Et moi, il faut que je vende de glaces, oh nomdenomdenom!*"

He snatched the cap from his head, a handsome, tall, white cap, and crumpled it between his hands in an uncontrollable spasm of rage. I took the cap, placed it on my head, and said:

"*Allez danser le fandango . . .!*"

He stared at me for a moment, but Majie was already dragging him away. The fandango began and I bawled at the top of my voice: "*De glaces . . . de glaces . . .!*" The bystanders laughed. This was a good joke! *L'étranger* selling ice-cream. *Le monsieur, assez connu, avec sa pipe! L'écrivain allemand!* It was a real party. They all pressed about the cart. I slapped the slabs of ice-cream between the wafers, and in the upturned lid of the ice-cream bucket the pile of sous grew bigger. "*De glaces . . . de glaces . . .!*" The fandango lasted half an hour.

The fandango ended and the ice-cream man and Majie pushed their way back through the crowd around my cart. Majie was fanning herself and smiling up at me. The ice-cream man glanced into his bucket and was dumbfounded—the bottom was already visible. He looked at me and spoke slowly, wiping the sweat from his brow:

"*Écoutez, monsieur—j'en ai encore une voiture . . .!*"

Whenever there was dancing I sold ice-cream. My cart stood on one side of the Place Louis XIV, that of my colleague on the other. During

the fandango I looked after them both. We were in competition with one another and we shared our profits. *Il faut gagner de sous, qu'est-ce que vous voulez. . . .*

Majie brought me a basket of figs from the tree beside the road, as once she had promised to do. Summer was nearing its end. When I received a note, summoning me to appear before the commissioner of police at St. Jean de Luz, I thought it must be something to do with a *carte de travail*. I knew the commissioner; he had bought an ice-cream from me occasionally and had always given me a stern look while so doing. I had no labour permit, and my chances as a foreigner of obtaining one were absolutely non-existent. The commissioner's manner, when I entered his office, was one of extreme reserve. The *mairie* was on the Place Louis XIV, and from his desk the commissioner had a clear view of the exact spot where my cart stood on the days when there was dancing. I tried to look as apologetic as I could, but the commissioner had a far more formidable string to his bow.

"*Monsieur,*" he said formally, "*vous êtes un espion allemand!*"

So that was it. Well, it was bound to happen sooner or later. It was clear that I must attract the deepest suspicion. The problem now was how to preserve my composure. I said contritely:

"*Vous avez raison, monsieur. Vous m'avez convaincu! Mes félicitations!*"

He gave me a morose look and I expressed my readiness, in order to save my head, to tell him the whole sinister story of how the German secret service was planning to fall upon, conquer and destroy the peace-loving land of France. Since the German Reichswehr, I said, with its hundred thousand men had clearly no hope of defeating the brave French army, victor of a thousand battles, on the Rhine, General von Hindenburg had decided this time to try the Pyrenees. Once before, in Roncevaux valley, Roland had blown upon his martial horn and fought the fierce Basques. It was common knowledge that Hindenburg was also known as 'faithful Roland.' The strategic objective was the detaching of Gascony from the holy soil of France and the building of a corridor. It was a certain French writer whom we had bought, one Claude Farrère by name, who had suggested this to our staff officers.

The commissioner's expression did not change. He said:

"*Pas de blagues, monsieur!*"

He observed my face most carefully. He said that no matter what I might allege, I was not the man I pretended to be. He had proof.

I said I should like to see his proof.

The commissioner pulled a paper from beneath a pile of documents, banged it down on the table, and said:

"*Et voilà!!!*"

It was a catalogue issued by the Paris publishing house of Plon. In it was my photograph. Rowohlt had sent the French publishers this photograph for them to use in their advertisements. It was one taken

shortly after my release from gaol. A thin-lipped, ascetic face, bearing the marks of recent suffering, stared at me with fanatical eyes from the piece of paper on the commissioner's desk.

"*Alors?*" said the commissioner.

Nowadays I did look utterly, completely different, unrecognisable in fact. I said:

"*Monsieur, ça . . . ça, c'est la bonne cuisine française!*"

From that moment on our conversation was about cooking. He was delighted to learn that sauerkraut can be prepared so as to be actually enjoyable when served with partridge in place of rice. He was honestly astonished that to me aubergines had no taste whatever save a vague flavour of flannel and blotting-paper. Finally he even began to address me in German and was very disappointed when I failed to realise what language he was speaking. He had learned his German in a prisoner-of-war camp, a camp near Dresden. When I got up to go he shook me by both hands and remarked sadly:

"*Et, monsieur—si vous vendez de glaces sans la carte de travail—je vous en prie—pas justement devant la porte de la police!!*"

But the ice-cream problem solved itself, for the season was over. We danced upon the place Louise XIV once more, and I closed up my cart when the castanets began for the fandango. I danced with Majie and we bumped into another pair of dancers. I apologised and we danced on. Then I heard a voice say:

"*C'était le Boche!*"

It was the first time since being in France that I had heard this word used. I looked around. It was a sailor of the coastal defence, stationed in the bay of St. Jean de Luz, a young Basque who wore his white cap with the gay red pompon well over one ear. I asked Majie to wait for me a moment and tapped the sailor on the shoulder:

"*Monsieur, s'il vous plait, qu'est-ce que vous avez dit?*"

He understood at once. He gave me an embarrassed smile and said:

"*Ah, monsieur, pour nous ce n'est pas une insulte!*"

"*Pour moi non plus,*" I said, "*mais je n'aime pas ça.*"

The sailor looked utterly wretched. He said:

"*Monsieur, vous comprenez, chez nous on dit ça—c'est l'habitude, ma mère même m'a appris ce mot! Si vous voulez je ne le dirai jamais plus!*"

Why should I object if it was his mummy who was really responsible? I said:

"*Alors, il faut prendre quelque chose!*"

We ordered various drinks. First I bought a round, then he did and soon we were surrounded by innumerable friends. The place was seething with sailors, who all insisted on offering me a drink. My colleague of the Ice-cream company (*Société Anonyme*) must give me a Pernod. From near and far people hurried towards us, all anxious to celebrate this Franco-German understanding. With measured tread the

police commissioner approached, and it was he who introduced me to his companion, a powerfully built Basque with a brown, weather-beaten face and a nose hooked like an eagle's. My knuckles almost cracked when he gripped my hand in his, hardened by pelota. Immediately, to the tumultuous joy of the bystanders, he ordered drinks all round, a drink for everyone in the square.

"*C'est le roi des contrebandiers!*" the commissioner whispered to me with manifest respect, proud that he could thus describe his friend.

And I was proud of it too. Some days later, when I had delivered Majie to her father confessor and had gone to the Place Louis XIV to get myself a drink, I saw the *roi des contrebandiers* pass by the café in front of which I was seated in the sunshine, now no longer so brilliant. I waved to him and he came and sat with me. I asked him how business was. He sighed deeply—bad, bad beyond belief. In the old days it was different, saccharin and salvasan and such stuff, valuable, easy to carry, yes, those were days, but now. . . . Should he perhaps, he went on, gazing at me sadly, should he perhaps cart boxes of matches across the frontier? It was no sort of a life any more, he said, *la crise et la maudite politique*, those were what took all the fun out of existence. I asked him to let me go with him on one of his nocturnal excursions but he told me sadly that now he no longer crossed the frontier, because he had a girl on the far side, and he explained to me how dangerous it was to have anything to do with a girl over there. The girls over there, he said, were never to be seen alone in that priest-ridden, police-ridden country. They sat behind barred windows and never dared venture into the streets except when going to mass—and even then only with their mothers—*ah, ça . . .!* Small wonder that my friend nursed a violent hatred for Alphonso XIII. He said that he would like to strangle him with his own hands. They were extremely large and powerful hands.

"*Ah, vous êtes républicain!*" I said respectfully, but he shook his head, remarking contemptuously:

"*La république . . . ah, ça . . .*"

He explained to me that in the old days it was easy, he just had to bribe the *Chef des Carabineros* on the far side—for without that business couldn't go on, that was obvious, wasn't it? But now the Spanish Republic was trying to do away with corruption, and the *carabineros* were replaced every four weeks, so every four weeks he had to bribe a new *Chef*, and this ate up all his profits.

"*Ah,*" said I, "*alors vous êtes communiste!*"

My friend brooded heavily, letting his chin sink sadly onto his powerful chest. Communism, he remarked gloomily, had a great deal to be said for it, but as was well known the communists were very keen on closing frontiers, and in that case what would become of him? In fact it was hard for him to say what he was, but he pulled himself together, straightened up in his chair, and announced proudly:

“*Monsieur, je suis un Basque!*”

He explained to me who the Basques actually are, the finest, proudest, most free people in the world. As Titus once described them, so are they today; they still wear the same clothes, they still use the same knife—he showed me his—they still plough their fields in the same way. They are the best cattle-breeders in the world and the best sailors. The bravest gauchos over in South America are Basques, and so are the hardest whalers up in Greenland. And all come back home when they grow old, when they have made their fortune abroad.

“*Les Basques,*” said my friend, “*les Basques, monsieur, ne sont pas un peuple, ils ne sont pas une nation, ils ne sont pas une race, les Basques sont un honneur! Il y a des Basques français, il y a des Basques espagnols, et vous, monsieur, vous êtes un Basque allemand!*”

I bowed my acceptance of this most delicately turned compliment and ordered two more Pernods. The waiter filled the glasses to overflowing and laid the lumps of ice beside them, in the saucer. Majie disapproved of my drinking too much Pernod, and I too was frightened of certain consequences which according to popular rumour result from its consumption. But the bottles which Herr Seyerlen had left at l’Affitenia were all empty now, save for a single bottle of Fernet Branca. Though I was partial to this liqueur, which warmed my insides most agreeably, when drunk in any great quantity it really did need to be complimented by a Pernod. Thus it happened that I was soon not really able to follow the conversation which ensued on the appearance of Etienne at our table. He arrived at about the fifth round and gave both my friend and myself a most cordial greeting, though plainly somewhat surprised that we should know one another. *Le roi des contrebandiers* was astonished for his part to learn that I was “*le bon ami de Monsieur Seyerlen.*” But soon the two of them exchanged a rapid glance and proceeded to express their admiration for my discretion. From now on, Etienne remarked, there was no need for us to refrain from discussing matters that interested us all. And indeed this was all to the good, since the moment had arrived when we must decide what was to be done, for Etienne had good news. He had discovered a ship’s captain who was prepared to move the stuff from the garage—what did I think of that? I thought nothing, but I am polite by nature and I congratulated Etienne on his good news. *Le roi des contrebandiers* seemed particularly delighted about this. The stuff in the garage, he said, had always been a source of considerable anxiety to him and he felt it was high time it disappeared, what did I think? I said that whenever it was high time for something to disappear, the quicker it was gone the better. The waiter was summoned and we clinked glasses. Etienne said we couldn’t reckon on getting as high a price as we had hoped for to begin with, but the risks were really becoming too great. I said emphatically that when something had to disappear the risks involved must also be



taken into account. My two friends praised my insight into the true nature of the business.

"That's what we'll do, then," Etienne declared. "*D'accord!*"

We all shook hands and said solemnly:

"*D'accord!*"

Majie glanced briefly and angrily at my Pernod and categorically refused to join us in another round. She insisted on accompanying me home, though I should willingly have remained seated with my friends a little longer.

I loved Majie very much. Whenever I saw her my heart leapt. I found her prettier and more desirable than ever as she stood there before us, with nothing on her body save her thin summer dress—though it was now October—with the raincoat over her arm which she carried, not because there was any prospect of rain, but out of respect for the confessional. She did not scold me for being drunk in the early afternoon, even though it was on Pernod. She only insisted that we go home on foot, in order to clear my head.

*Monsieur le Curé* had been very cross. When did I plan to put an end to this protracted visit, he had asked, and since Majie could not answer this question he had described to her in detail all the torments of the damned. Now she walked beside me, her eyes on the ground, and I tried in vain to kiss her; she simply turned her head away.

Suddenly I felt an unbearable pity for her. I saw myself as bad, mean, shamefully lacking in conscience. There was the fig tree—when first we had stood beneath its branches *la petite Majie* was still untouched. She was so sweet, she loved me, and week after week I had driven her through the ante-rooms of hell. She certainly did not deserve this from me. There was the fig tree. I threw myself down in its shade, made Majie sit beside me, and told her I wanted to marry her.

Majie leaned against the trunk of the tree, took my head in her lap, ran the fingers of both her hands through my hair, and said:

"*Tu es saoul, mon vieux!*"

The result of this was to make my determination even greater. Rapidly I posed all the problems of my life and solved them with equal speed, quite without attempting to decide which voice was that of the *advocatus diaboli*. I wanted to stay here, for ever. Majie was exactly the right wife for me. I could earn my living as well here as anywhere else on the face of the globe. The longer I argued with myself the simpler it all seemed. I could certainly not have borne it if Majie had laughed at me. She did not laugh. She ran her hands through my hair and said, from time to time:

"*Mon pauvre petit chou!*"

When I saw her smiling, doubting face I loved her more than ever. I redoubled my efforts to convince her of my love and of the sincerity of my proposal. I spoke to her with ever growing intensity, and never

was I so eager to give her every proof of the love I bore her—but it was all without effect, save that next morning Majie could not go to communion after all.

The fact that during the days that followed my feelings in no wise changed seemed to me a proof of how right I was. I seriously proposed we should go to auntie, I holding a blushing Majie by the hand, and that we should ask her to bless our union. But scarcely had I begun to unfold this plan when Majie stamped her foot and said angrily:

“*Taisez-vous! Ne faites pas le paillasse!*”

So it came about that I had to resolve alone, without Majie's assistance, the problems connected with my future livelihood in this country. Germany was so very, very far away. From Rowohlt there came not a word, and in the damp sea air my typewriter was simply rusting. The ice-cream business had closed for the winter. But perhaps I could become a fisherman.

So I made my way to the fisherman's harbour at St. Jean de Luz. I knew that boats were preparing to go out and I knew that they were planning to fish Spanish territorial waters, by night, without lights, so that the Spanish cutters could not see them. The tuna fish had taken refuge in Spanish waters. The French crews worked for a share of the profits brought in by the catch. Since they fished illegally there was, of course, no question of labour permits.

The ship-owner to whom I spoke was encouraging. The work, he said, was hard and at times dangerous but not difficult for a beginner to learn, provided he was of good will—*de bonne volonté*. The tuna were caught on a hook and line. He would, he said, pass me the word through Etienne when the time was ripe.

And a few days later Etienne came to see me. He said things had reached the point where the captain wished to have a word with me. We went together to St. Jean de Luz and made our way towards the harbour. However, seated outside an *estaminet* opposite the *mairie* on the Place Louis XIV was the *roi des contrebandiers*, together with a man who wore a blue jacket with gold buttons. They both greeted me heartily, and Etienne and I sat down at their table. They spoke of trucks and garages and a ship which lay in Bayonne harbour—and only bit by bit did I realise that this was the business over which so much Pernod had been consumed. Finally my friends and the man whom I assumed, correctly, to be the captain of the ship at Bayonne and I all shook hands with one another and declared solemnly:

“*D'accord!*”

Then the captain produced a great wad of banknotes from his pocket which he divided into three piles, two small and one large. All three men were busily engaged in counting the money, while I sat there nervously, wondering what the time was and worrying lest I be too late for my appointment with the shipowner. But I've never been a

spoilsport, and my three friends seemed to attach considerable importance to my presence as a sort of neutral witness of their complicated transactions. At last all three were agreed that the sums of money were correct. *Le roi des contrebandiers* pushed the larger heap towards me, saying:

“*C'est pour vous, monsieur!*”

I stared in confusion at the money and mumbled:

“*Mais comment . . . ?*”

Immediately they all three began to talk at the same time. I missed most of what they said but I did understand that they were trying to explain to me about how the business had not been an unqualified success, how the stuff had to be unloaded at once, how they must close the deal immediately. Finally my friend, *le roi des contrebandiers*, said—and there was a slight but definite growl in his voice:

“*Monsieur, vous avez dit: D'Accord!*”

Indeed I had said it. No man might break his word in this country. The French were very scrupulous on this point. Not for nothing were most of the politicians lawyers. Poincaré, was a man after the Frenchmen's heart: what's agreed is agreed.

I took the money and stuffed it in my pocket. The relief of my companions was plain to see. Joyfully, one after the other, they shook my hand amid cries of:

“*Garçon!*”

At home I counted the money. It amounted to some sixty thousand francs. Never had I seen so much money at one time. I had absolutely no idea what sort of goods I had sold, to whom they had belonged, nor for whom they were destined. I did have a pretty good idea in what sort of business I was involved. Of course the whole story must in some way be connected with Monsieur Seyerlen. A glance at the newspaper showed me the various possibilities. In Morocco the Sheik Abd el Krim was in revolt: in Spain both monarchists and republicans were arming for civil war: something was undoubtedly going on in Mexico, or in Honduras: in China fighting seemed about to start: unless appearances lied it seemed probable that there would soon be trouble at the North Pole too.

All the same I had ample opportunity to speculate as to which paragraphs of the penal code I had quietly broken. But I came to no firm conclusion. I decided for the time being not to tell Majie of my good fortune before I had found out a little more about the whole business. I would not approach Etienne, with whom I had to keep up an appearance of knowledge, but Dominique. Dominique was not easy to catch. During the summer he had been taken on as croupier at the St. Jean de Luz casino. He had attempted to persuade me on more than one occasion to try my luck at the roulette table, but I had never yet done so, nor had I ever felt the slightest inclination to gamble. Now when

I met him he immediately launched into his usual argument. Now, he said, I had sufficient capital to afford a flutter. So he was in the know. And suddenly I was taken with the idea. Since this money had come to me in so unexpected a fashion why not increase it? Then if I should ever meet the man to whom it really belonged I could repay him in full and still have a little something over for myself.

I had often glanced into the casino's gaming room from the pergola outside. The casino contained the biggest cinema in the place. The programme was always a lavish one and there was an interval before the showing of the big picture, during which the audience usually walked up and down the pergola. The season was over, and in a few days the gaming room would be closed, so I had no time to lose. Dominique taught me the rules of the game and gave me some confusing advice. That evening I went to St. Jean de Luz.

I lost, so much was obvious. Dominique had quite frankly told me I would before I began. But he said that with so much capital behind me as was at my disposal it would be easy for me to wait for a *série* when I would be able to recoup my losses. So if I wished to regain my financial honour I must play again, since after the first evening the capital was no longer intact.

I was afraid that Majie might make all sorts of quite incorrect assumptions concerning the reasons for my unusual trips to St. Jean de Luz. But she said not a word. She only smiled at me when I slipped on my coat and glanced impatiently at the clock. When I ran out to the tram she called after me:

*"Bonne chance!"*

Apparently gambler's luck was not what she had in mind, for she insisted on spraying me with a little scent before she would let me go.

I found the game stupid, crude and not at all exciting. I won or lost without feeling the slightest nervous tremor. I simply wanted to increase, and if possible to double, my capital, and this I failed to do. I lost and lost. The more cautiously I played, the more certainly I lost. Finally when only a fairly slim wad of notes was left in my breast-pocket, I decided to bet everything on one throw.

I was beginning to place my stakes when a commotion broke out at the door leading to the pergola. I too turned around. I started. There in the door stood Majie. The porter did not wish to let her in. She was wearing her summer dress with a raincoat and a beret; it was plain that she was not a visitor, and natives were barred from the gaming room. It was all horribly painful for me; Majie must have seen me, for she began shouting at the porter even more loudly than before. He was a big, thick-set man, a Gascon. Now Majie tried to slip beneath his outstretched arm, but he caught her. She began to shout and scream. She was *furieuse*, she banged with her fists on his barrel chest, and her voice grew louder and louder so that every word was clearly audible through-

out the hall. I had never imagined that Majie knew such expressions. Over and over I caught the words: "*Ah, ça . . .!*" and a flood of insults which stimulated the cinema audience outside in the pergola to wild applause. She was a Frenchwoman, she screamed, and she wanted *nomdenomdenom* to see who was prepared to stop a Frenchwoman from going wherever she wished in her own country . . .! Then she gave the porter a tremendous kick on the shin, so that he recoiled for a moment and she sprang into the room, past the director of the casino, past the chief croupier who had jumped to his feet, past the gamblers and the visitors, the ladies in evening dresses and the gentlemen in dinner jackets who gazed after her open-mouthed—and came straight over to me. She came at me like a whirlwind, a bright flame of anger, her cheeks scarlet, her hair in wild disarray, her eyes flashing fire.

"*Ah, ça . . .!*" she cried, and grabbing me by the coat tails she shouted: "*Vous venez avec moi! Mais tout de suite! Tout de suite!*"

"*Toute de suite!*" bawled Majie and I turned, sinking blindly into a sea of shame. But Majie noticed the money in front of my place at the table.

"*C'est le vôtre!*" she decided at once, and stuffing it into the pocket of her raincoat dragged me out. She pushed roughly through the guests. The director, with raised hands, his eyebrows like circumflex accents and his mouth wide open so that it resembled a small, dark hole, tried to stop her. She simply shouted at him:

"*Ta gueule, bébé!*"

And then the guests all suddenly began to applaud, clapping their hands and breaking into loud cheers. They clapped and laughed and a single, thunderous, tumultuous laugh seemed to fill the room, to follow us onto the pergola, to accompany us until we had been swallowed up in the darkness. No sooner were we alone together than Majie began to sob uncontrollably.

I still had some six thousand francs left but I saw nothing more of them. Majie paid all my debts, and with what was left she bought herself a canary-yellow sweater on which she had long had her eye. While making this purchase her expression was remarkably stern. Then she led me to my typewriter. It had been cleaned and oiled: Majie had seen to this.

"*Vous êtes écrivain,*" said Majie. "*Alors: écrivez!*"

This was a thought which had occurred to me periodically. It had troubled my equanimity as the lump of ice destroys the clarity of the Pernod. But there was no sense in trying to explain to Majie how pointless it was to begin a book when I had no idea what was to be its subject, a book about which all I knew was that the only publisher who could and would have published it could now no longer do so. Solely for reasons of self-esteem, or rather to regain Majie's esteem, I sat down at my typewriter, inserted a fine, white sheet of paper, put a

— 1 — at the top, and typed: *The west coast of Schleswig-Holstein from Niebuill to Glückstadt conceals behind its dykes a green and level land.* This was a fine sentence, telling in a few brief words everything that it could reasonably be expected to tell. I was very proud of this sentence. It stood there like a solitary rock. And so did it remain. The only trouble was that the paper had turned yellow before it was joined by a second sentence.

If I had thought that winter would bring me the leisure time in which to write—and this idea had not infrequently occurred to me during the summer—I had made a mistake. It was a frightful winter. Once it even snowed. There was some five inches of snow, measured in length, not depth. The people appeared at their doors and observed with agitation the occasional, scattered flakes.

“*Quel temps terrible!*” cried auntie, and shook her head. Never within living memory had there been so cruel and hard a winter. I did not see it with my own eyes, but reliable persons assured me that on one occasion the thermometer actually dropped to freezing point.

Winter began on armistice day. For days Majie had been busy with her dress in order that she might appear as festively garbed as possible for the occasion. She brushed my suit and moved the buttons, for recently this suit had become a little tight. The whole family set off for St. Jean de Luz to take part in the impressive and elevating festivities, and even *grand'mère* in her best, black dress tottered along on my arm—I had never before seen *grand'mère* elsewhere than seated in the kitchen, plucking fowls, shelling peas or peeling potatoes—and I never heard her utter a word which I could understand, for she spoke only Basque. Now, however, I accompanied *grand'mère* to the festival, and a very splendid festival it was too. The mayor, a blue-white-and-red scarf knotted about his portly person, made a speech from the foot of the war memorial, wonderful, rolling, French periods, and the rain poured down. Driven by the wind the rain beat across the crowd. On my left Majie trembled and shivered with patriotism; while on my right *grand'mère* stood bolt upright, like Jeanne d'Arc before her judges, and, like her, understood not one word of what was being said. Gradually my shoes filled with water and still the mayor perorated; yet nobody stole away. Now the band played the *Marseillaise* and we all joined in. Then the band played *Madelon* and we all joined in. Then the band played the national anthems of all those countries which had helped holy, noble France in her frightful war against the barbarians; the French are a grateful and a polite people. There were twenty-eight anthems. The rain fell on *God Save the King*, the rain fell in honour of Belgium and Brazil, for the order was alphabetical, and I waited patiently for the Japanese national anthem which I expected would be well worth hearing. So polite are the French that it came not under J (Japan) but under N (Nippon) and its effect was uncommonly queer—

and the French stood in wind and rain and sang. Majie sang and my friend the police commissioner and our friend *le roi des contrebandiers* and Etienne and Dominique and Jean-Pierre and the waiter and Père Douat sang, and even *grand'mère* produced a quavering *la la la* as did all those who could follow the rousing martial tunes but not the foreign words. Père Douat only fell silent once, which was when *Giovinazza* was being played. We stood for hour after hour and sang in the pelting rain and I felt a longing for Germany. We had, it is true, no reason to celebrate the armistice with pomp and ceremony, but had we had any reason to do so it would not have struck us as impolite to limit the singing to a single anthem.

Père Douat, however, as soon as the festivities were over, grabbed me by the hand and announced ceremoniously:

*“Monsieur! Vous êtes Allemand! Moi, je suis Français! La prochaine guerre, monsieur, vous et nous . . . et contre les Italiens! Et alors . . . !”*

Majie had caught a chill and must be put to bed. Her parents had written that now the season was over it was time for her to return home. Auntie wrote back that as Majie was sick and, furthermore, there was still one guest in the house, Majie must stay. But after her next confession she returned from church pale and unhappy. *Monsieur le Curé* had *tellement grondé* and had prescribed, as penance for Majie's frightful sins, a pilgrimage to Lourdes—and Majie, who seemed crumpled and, as it were, deflated, announced with calm determination that she was prepared to suffer an additional penance by putting peas in her shoes.

In vain did I knock on her window at night, in vain did I fire off the squibs of my feeble wit (cooked peas, Majie, cooked peas)—pale and silent she packed her little case; she shook her head wildly when I tried to kiss her; she pressed my hand in silence before climbing up into the train; she appeared for a moment at the window when the train began to move off and there were tears in her eyes as she gave me one last, tragic look.

I took the next train. I had to spend the night in Pau. The idea of visiting this town attracted me, the castle of *notre bon Henri* and the Boulevard des Pyrénées—but a longing for my poor, penitential Majie overwhelmed me, and all I did in Pau was to buy a bag of peas and take the next train to Lourdes.

It was raining, it was blowing, it was cold. The mountains were hidden in fog and the windows of the houses were shuttered. The place was deserted. The booths which a few weeks ago had been packed with devotional objects were locked and bolted. It all gave the impression of some abandoned gold-rush town in Alaska as shown in the American films.

Lourdes was staggering in its ugliness. What might perhaps have appeared picturesque among swarming pilgrims now looked simply decayed and repulsive—and everywhere, clattering in the wind, hung

signs warning against pickpockets. The halo and head of the *Sainte Vierge* resembled nothing so much as an advertising stunt from which the electric light bulbs had been removed; the grotto lay behind the draughty galleries like a smoke-blackened hole in the rock on which hung crutches, steel corsets, rupture belts, and all the other aids to human infirmity; they hung there, befouled by the weather, in a ghastly aura of misery. In the grotto, protected by a cast-iron railing of unusually hideous design, stood the little statue, chalky white and faded blue—and only the river Gave, which despite the weather was an icy, foaming green, gave an impression of freshness and life.

I strode through it all, bitterly cold and wringing wet. I looked in the basilica and the crypt and in the streets of the place itself, but I could find no trace of Majie. I went to the various guest-houses, most of which were closed. I sat on a windy veranda among dirty table-cloths spotted by the last pilgrimage, and for the first time since my arrival in France I ate a memorably bad meal. Then I set out again in search of Majie, the damp paper bag full of peas tucked beneath my arm.

I found her on the Calvary with the stations of the cross, larger than lifesize groups in massive bronze. I was admiring the power and grandeur of the Catholic Church which dared to offer this, these collections of shapeless, garish, provocative monstrosities, and yet could succeed with such horrors in arousing the genuine fervour of millions—and there I saw Majie. I was turning to take the path that twisted upwards when I saw a small, slender, black figure kneeling humbly before a gigantic group in coarse bronze which dwarfed her in her contrition. There she kneeled, her head bowed almost to the ground, the rosary between her fingers.

I stood where I was. I even took a step back since I did not wish her to know that I was watching her. She saw me. She got up from her knees and stared at me. She began to run towards me. The path was steep and pitted with pot-holes now filled with rainwater. Majie ran so fast that I was afraid she would fall, and I hurried towards her. She hurled herself at me, so that we almost tumbled over, she rubbed her cold little nose against my cheeks, and she stammered, softly, gently:

*“Je l’ai su . . . je l’ai su—et tu es venu . . . !”*

She pressed herself to me with all her strength so that the paper bag split and the peas fell all over the path. Majie saw the peas and she seized my ears. With her eyes very close to mine, her tears mingling with the raindrops, she said:

*“Ah, salaud! Sale cochon!”*

We stayed in Lourdes for three days and the rain poured down. Majie had taken a room at the smallest guest-house. It could not be heated and it contained only one bed. I asked the landlady where I might sleep. She was cross-eyed, with an enormous wart upon one cheek. She looked at me doubtfully and then at the bed. She said:



"*Ah, monsieur, le lit est assez large!*" She rubbed her hands together and whined: "*Il fait froid! Vaut mieux se coucher!*" She winked at me slyly and said: "*Alors, ça chauffe!*"

We stayed in bed for three days and three nights, and kept one another warm. I only got up to fetch the newspapers and to discuss with Madame in the kitchen what we should eat. Majie's yellow sweater and black jacket and my things were drying before the hearth, and Madame was in no hurry to iron them. Madame promised to teach me Basque. *Maitenia*, she said, means *I love you*. She winked at me and told me I should say: "*Na-ussu etore nerekin,*" to Majie if I wished to delight her heart. But she did not tell me what that actually meant. I said to Majie: "*Maitenia!*" and she kissed me passionately. I said: "*Na-ussu etore nerekin!*" and she boxed my ear and blushed.

"*C'est honteux!*" she said, but she would not tell me what it meant. I never shall know now, for whenever I have asked Basques they have simply laughed, but have never told me.

The paper-man at the station had no German newspapers, but he handed me a number of publications which I had never thought to see on sale here. They were German magazines of a particular sort. I bought them.

Majie and I glanced at them together.

"*Mais, c'est honteux!*" said Majie, observing the pictures of people in their birthday suits. There were a great many photographs depicting young girls with a silver chain or a garland in their blond hair dancing on beaches or in flowery meadows, striking attitudes which recalled nothing so much as the old Teutonic lust cry: *Tandaradei!* I tried to explain to Majie what was meant by *Nacktkultur*. She had already heard sceptically of *nudisme*, but she remained firm in her conviction that it was *honteux*. Now I am ready at all times to spring to the defence of German culture, even when it takes the form of *Nacktkultur*. I did my best to explain to Majie that these pictures and the descriptions given in the accompanying text were very far from being erotic in intent: the purpose of *Nacktkultur*, I went on, was to provide eroticism with a natural and harmless basis and to free the relationship between the sexes from the trammels of morality. Majie listened to me, frowning slightly, and when I had finished she said thoughtfully:

"*Alors, maintenant je comprends—en Allemagne on dit: Habille-toi, chérie, nous voulons faire l'amour.*"

Then quickly she sat up, jumped out of bed and slipped on her petticoat.

On our last day there the sun broke through the clouds and the town shone as though it had been freshly scrubbed. This did not make it any the less hideous, and only the green curves of the surrounding mountains rendered its aspect tolerable. I tried to explain to Majie that further acts of penance were now senseless, but she insisted on visiting the crypt.

I was not to go in with her but I watched through the gate and saw Majie kneeling before a saint's statue. Later, when Majie was packing her little case, I hurried to the crypt and found the statue. It was of St. Anthony. I asked the squinting Madame what were the particular qualities of this saint and what boons he could bestow on his worshippers. Madame smacked her lips and gave me a heavy wink with her boss eye. He was the saint, she said, to whom young women prayed for the blessing of a child.

That evening we went once again for a walk along the Gave. I told Majie that if ever I had a son I should like him to be called Gatien. I explained that this was the name of my French grandfather. Majie found it a very beautiful name and added that a daughter could be called Gatiene. I beseeched Majie to marry me should she find she was to have a *bébé*, for Gatien would surely be very unhappy if he had no one whom he could call Papa. But Majie shook her head so wildly that her hair fell across her face. Yet through the strands I could see that she was searching the expression of my face. Finally we began to argue about Gatien's character as we imagined it would be and we were as foolish as any other young couple about to be married.

But auntie was evidently not so convinced of the effectiveness of Majie's pilgrimage to Lourdes. She must have written to Majie's parents, for one day Pierre turned up, Majie's brother, a strong and powerfully built young man who kissed Majie with evident affection and shook my hand firmly while giving me a critical look. It seemed clear to me that Pierre had been sent out to reconnoitre the ground, as it were, and to make a report on the wicked enemy's positions. But Majie assured me that during the whole three days of his visit he never once referred to our relationship. He spent the entire time with Majie and I too was there. We ate together, went walking together, and in the evenings we sat around the stove which the young carpenter tended most efficiently. Now it seemed that he had come in order to tell his sister that he proposed to get married; as soon as he had completed his military service—he was with the armoured troops at Tarbes—he planned to marry the *sage-femme* of his village. He told me with a smile that in France midwives were not stout old persons with powerful red arms, starched white aprons and an unassuageable thirst for coffee, but fresh, delectable young girls who, after passing an examination, worked as assistants to country doctors where they performed extensive and respected duties which included far more than just helping at childbirth. Before beginning his military service Pierre had built himself a house with his own hands. Now he would add a workshop and open a small carpentry business. His life was carefully worked out, his future arranged. And he invited me to the wedding.

I anticipated very nervously the moment when I must meet Majie's parents, but it turned out quite simply. As soon as Majie entered the

peasants' house which was her parents' home she immediately slipped on an apron and went to work. Monsieur and Madame laughed cheerfully when I, feeling embarrassed, was introduced. Majie's mother showed me over the house and farm, the kitchen and the stables. Pierre took me to the vineyard and the press. Pierre's future bride, the *sage-femme*, a charming young girl with a grace of manner and an assurance which made me eager to entrust young Gatien to her skilled hands as soon as possible, showed me the house which Pierre had built for his *ménage*; there was a piece of ground set aside for future enlargements (*pour les enfants, vous savez!*).

I did not see much of Majie during these days. She had a great deal to do and many friends, both young and old, to visit. *La petite Majie* seemed to be deeply loved by all in the village. And none, not one of them, showed the slightest surprise at my presence. I was *le bon ami de la petite Majie*, and that was that. Not that I was treated with any particular discretion or circumspection. Later, when the wedding had taken place and the wine was flowing very freely indeed, Majie's friends, men and girls, began to tease her about Biolet. This, I thought, must be a special sort of violet that grows only in certain remote and secret places; I had never heard of Biolet before.

"*Ah, je m'en fiche de Biolet!*" cried Majie with a laugh and without a trace of embarrassment. I waited for Majie to tell me what this Biolet business was all about, but she said nothing.

The whole village was invited. On long trestle tables in the barn were piled enormous cakes and pies of every sort. In the chimney hung countless sausages and hams and Majie informed me with pride that *quarante-cinq barriques* of wine stood ready, and this was true. There were indeed forty-five casks of wine, which were all drunk within the week, not to mention the many bottles of *eau de vie*.

It was not until I was back home that I began to worry: in the general confusion I had not exchanged a word with Maman and Papa concerning my and Majie's future. It was becoming apparent that I was not by nature capable of floating for ever in this atmosphere of well-being which the country offered and in which it carried out its affairs. When I spoke to Majie hesitantly about the negligence of my behaviour in the matter, she said:

"*Mon pauvre petit chou, ça ne fait rien. Tu sais, notre petit Gatien, il ne viendra pas!*"

I was startled, for I thought I understood. What a decision that must have been for Majie to take! My heart overflowed with pity for her, and a few drops were transformed into words. But when Majie grasped what I was saying she beat with her fists upon my chest, as furious with me as she had once been with the porter of the St. Jean de Luz casino.

"*Ah, ça . . .*" she cried. "*Oh, salaud!*"

I needed no explanation. Her disgust was sufficient to make me realise how much my Boche assumptions had insulted her. I simply could not accustom myself so easily to natural occurrences.

*The west coast of Schleswig-Holstein from Niebiüll to Glückstadt conceals behind its dykes a green and level land.* The sentence was quite good, though perhaps I should somewhere bring in the word 'flat?' I did so, and thus the first sentence of my manuscript already contained an untidy correction. This decreased my desire to write another one.

Nothing from Rowohlt.

On May 7th I went to St. Jean de Luz to buy a newspaper. According to the last information Chancellor Brüning had seemed to be tottering. But there were no papers there, they were all sold out, even the French ones. The paper-woman looked at me with astonishment, when it became apparent that I did not know what had happened. She told me. It was like a blow on the head. I returned to Erromardie at once. I was living entirely at auntie's since the lease of l'Affitenia had run out; auntie had put me in the room next to Majie's. How much longer could I stay, after what had happened, after this frightful, senseless appalling crime? France must rise up like one man, the wild, patriotic, revolutionary *élan* of 1790 must stalk the land again—and France can be terrible when her most holy feelings are insulted. *Aux armes, citoyens!* Surely no foreigner would be allowed henceforth to sully the sacred soil of France—and I was a foreigner! Would I be sucked under in the maelstrom of fury that must now ensue?

I passed the farm. Jean-Pierre and three of his friends were seated in the barn, drinking red wine and talking. No doubt they were discussing the stars of the latest pelota games that they had seen. I hurried past, but then I stopped and turned back. It occurred to me that these men had probably not heard of the unspeakable disaster that had struck France. I cried:

*“Avez-vous déjà entendu? Le Président de la République est assassiné!”*

Jean-Pierre glanced up. He said:

*“Ah, ça . . . ! Il est mort?”*

I shouted:

*“Mais oui!! Il est mort!!!”*

*“Ah,”* said Jean-Pierre, *“tant mieux!”*

Then he finished his wine and poured himself another glass.

I understood the world no longer. The torch of good sense neither spluttered nor blazed up, but continued to burn with the same steady flame as before.

A Russian immigrant, Paul Gorguloff, had shot the unsuspecting president, Paul Doumer, while the latter was inspecting an exhibition of books by French war-writers. And nothing happened! A few newspapers wrote that there were foreigners evidently unworthy of the blessings of French hospitality. But it seemed that the satisfaction was

general that it was in fact no Frenchman but a foreigner who had fired the bullet into the heart of France. Nothing happened.

All the same, everyone knew what I was. Once I had been guilty of the same crime that this Paul Gorguloff had now committed—and the book in which I described this was being sold and read in France. Something must, inevitably, happen. I considered whether I should not perhaps go at once to see my friend, the commissioner of police. My friend the police commissioner held me in considerable esteem. He apparently thought of me as a sort of unofficial German consul, and he had developed the habit of sending any Germans, who happened to be passing through, to see me. Because of the currency restrictions there was now no normal travel between France and Germany. But almost daily Germans came to call, mostly pleasant young people on foot or with bicycles. They would play the guitar and sing German songs to the peasants, who fed them in exchange for the music, and they also sold postcards on which was written, in English: *Round the world without money!* They were strong, blond young persons with an agreeably relaxed manner, unemployed who no longer felt any inclination to stand in queues and who travelled instead: travelling at that time was a sport for the very rich and for the very poor. I gave them food and drink and sent them on their way after they had told me who they were and where they wished to go. And this was all they wanted.

I wished to go on living in France. This idea took possession of me more and more surely. That it was a crazy one I well knew, but it was the only one which appealed to me. Truly I wished to have my part of this easy atmosphere in which the torch of good sense neither spluttered nor blazed up.

The president of the book exhibition, at the opening of which the President of the Republic had been murdered, had been wounded in the arm while attempting to save Paul Doumer's life. He was the hero of the hour and his name on everybody's lips: It was Claude Farrère!

I put on my suit and set off to the house of the *maître*. I wished to offer him my congratulations, but he had not yet returned home. I was received by Madame. *Madame la maîtresse* was in every way as majestic as Monsieur. I stammered the few sentences which I had prepared and I prayed *le bon Dieu de France* that he would infuse into my words the requisite warmth and feeling. Madame had certainly been at one time very beautiful. Madame listened to me and her eyes, which were like a pair of scissors, did not leave my face while I spoke. When I had finished Madame asked:

“*Vous jouez le bridge?*”

I said I did, though I never had played bridge in my life. I hurried to St. Jean de Luz in search of someone who knew the game. At last I found an old lady who in secret instructed me in its rudiments. I arrived on the date that Madame had ordained and was led at once to the

bridge-table. Apart from Madame there were two other elderly ladies present who without a doubt were blessing the day that had presented them with a fourth. We played bridge and, except for our bids, exchanged not a word. But I would have died a thousand deaths if the looks my partner gave me from time to time had had the power to kill. Only Madame seemed to cherish a sort of maternal feeling for me. She won. She ordered me to appear for their next bridge evening.

In truth France's revenge upon the foreigner was very great. Every Thursday I played bridge at Madame's house. Only once did I attempt to create an opportunity for discussing something not connected with our game—and the three ladies stared at me in silence as though I were a small dog which in careful French had suddenly presumed to ask for their valued opinion. Nor did the return of the *maître* alter this. One day he suddenly appeared in the room, his arm in a black silk sling. I rose politely to my feet and said my little piece, congratulating him. The great man gazed at me majestically. When I had finished he remarked: "*N'en parlons plus!*"

And indeed I was never invited again.

I do not know how it happened. It was surely an accident that I passed by my typewriter and read the sentence: *The west coast of Schleswig-Holstein from Niebiill to Glückstadt conceals behind its dykes a green, flat and level land.* I decided that the adjective 'flat' was redundant, that my meaning was already quite clear without it. I sat down and crossed out 'flat.' Majie had to summon me to lunch three times before I came, and when at last I appeared I took my place at table with an expression on my face which no doubt showed that my thoughts were elsewhere. Majie asked me anxiously if I was perhaps feeling unwell, but my reply was gruff and absent-minded. I hardly touched my wine and as soon as the meal was over I sat down at my typewriter and wrote for the rest of the day and for half the night. For six weeks I wrote without pause, all day and half the night. At last Rowohlts's letter arrived. He informed me that his publishing house had been turned into a limited liability company. He wanted to know when I proposed to deliver my long-awaited manuscript. He said that the currency restrictions made any further payment of advances impossible, and in any case I had already received more than my contract warranted. By then I had already reached page 292. I was no longer in France, although I sat in the *salle-à-manger*, and in the evening, my thoughts far away, I would reply: "*Bonne nuit, bonne nuit,*" to Majie's: "*Alors, bonne nuit, mon petit chou*"—what had little cabbages to do with me? I was living in reality, not in the dream any more. I was struggling with truth, why should I worry about fairy-tales? Fairy-tales can be lived, in France for example, but not written, as in Germany—and I wrote.

I only saw Majie at meals now, but I noticed that she had begun to go to confession again, and I thought to myself, with satisfaction:

“What can she have to confess, poor creature?”

When I posted off the last pages of my manuscript I wandered about for a few days, feeling flabby and empty, drained. I simply had no idea what was to happen now, nor did I wish to know. Majie brought me a letter. Apart from Rowohlt's I had had no post at all during these months. Majie looked at the foreign stamps and thought it must be a letter from Holland. It was from Vienna, from Professor Spann, proposing that I go there and work with him. I did not wish to answer, since the project was pointless. It was simply out of politeness that I replied, saying that for external reasons I had only very limited freedom of movement.

But I realised that it was essential I talk to Majie. In the night I went to her room. Conversation was impossible. Auntie was not snoring. Her bed creaked as she moved restlessly from side to side. I held Majie very tight and I tried to whisper to her, but she begged me:

“*Je t'en prie, tais-toi!*”

Nor in the next few days did I have any real opportunity to talk to Majie. I was pleased about this. I knew that whatever I could say to her was bound to hurt her, and I also knew that she realised this.

She brought me a second letter from Vienna. It contained a money-order for ten thousand francs. The moment Majie saw this she took my head in both her hands, and with her face very close to mine she said:

“*Il faut que tu pars!*”

She said it not with sorrow, but calmly. She was stating a fact, and it was as though by so doing she simply wished to reinforce a decision I had already taken. Auntie called her and Majie hurried away. I looked for her all that morning in vain. She did not appear until lunch, when I had no chance of talking to her, and after the meal was over she vanished again. At last I went to my room. Majie was not there, but she had laid out my clothes, all newly washed and ironed and neatly folded. My case lay open on the luggage-stand. It had been dusted and in the bottom lay two sheets of *La Petite Gironde*. Majie was in her room, mending the loop in the back of my overcoat which had broken. I began to speak, but she interrupted me at once:

“*Il faut que tu pars!*”

She smiled as she said this. She was making it easy for me.

In fact it all went off much more smoothly than I had imagined it could. There was no explanation necessary. I attempted to dismiss everything from my mind that concerned myself alone and to think only of Majie. I sat there and I thought how Majie must be feeling. Meanwhile Majie paid auntie's bill, made up a hamper which she put in my case, and was in fact so busy that there was no time for sentimentality. Only once did she put her head around the door of the big room, to tell me the time my train left next morning and to say that she would naturally go with me to the station.

Nor did auntie snore that night either.

We set off very early. I kissed auntie and *grand'mère*. Auntie sobbed and *grand'mère* said: "*Maitenia!*" The two women had made ready great white dish-cloths. These they intended to wave when the train, from which for a moment the house could be seen, went by.

We did not get to the station too early. We had a very few minutes, but the train was not yet there. The platform was bare and draughty. Only a luggage-barrow stood there, loaded with parcels. Majie smiled at me, and I thought: 'If she starts to cry I shall stay here.' She stood straight in front of me and looked at me and I looked at her. If I went on this train I should never see her again, never again, and she must know this. We looked at each other in silence until I heard the train coming.

At this moment Majie turned away. Now, I thought, she can't stand it any longer, and neither can I. But Majie was not crying, she was waving to a young man who had suddenly appeared from behind the barrow loaded with parcels. He wore a beret and a handsome blue suit and was blond; he approached very shyly.

Majie took the young man by the hand and turned to me. She was smiling as she said:

"*Et ça . . . ! Ça, c'est Biolet!*"

Then she flung her arms about my neck and kissed me. She pushed me towards the train and I climbed aboard. Immediately it began to move off. I leaned out of the window. Majie, who seemed very small, ran along beside the train, her face upturned to mine. She smiled and said:

"*Bonne chance, mon petit chou, je t'aime!*"

I leaned far out of the window and watched her for as long as she remained in sight. Then I could see her no more. But her picture has remained burned into my heart, and there it will stay until the day I die.

I could see little white objects fluttering before the house on the Plage Erromardie.

Three weeks later I received the following letter:

*Saint Jean de Luz le 29 —  
No. — 32*

*Mon cher petit chou,*

*Nous avons beaucoup parlé de vous à Erromardie avec Biolet, Pierre, Hortense, la tante et vraiment ça me rendait bien triste. Je voudrais vous revoir, même je veux et le plutôt que vous pourrez, même si je suis mariée; je dois vous dire que j'ai fait encore une connaissance, qui est devenue un bon ami, un dessinateur et qui va venir sous peu à la poste de Bayonne, alors vous savez Biolet (le pauvre)—je ne peux pas les aimer je n'en aime qu'un (c'est toi) et je n'en aimerai un autre même je ne veux pas l'aimer.*



Que faites-vous dans votre grande ville de Vienne? Travaillez-vous beaucoup? Vous amusez-vous? Pensez-vous encore à celle qui vous aime j'espère que oui un peu encore. Nous parlons beaucoup de vous, mais c'est tout ce que je peux faire y penser—. Tantine a fait deux tricots, pour elle et pour Biolet et maintenant c'est le mien qu'elle commence, orange et vert, voyez comme je serai mignonne, mais pour qui! J'ai fait faire mon costume et ma robe chez moi (*ultra chic!*), j'ai fait aussi raccourcir les robes que m'ont données Mlle. Isa et ses amies mais à part ça je ne les ai pas changées du tout. Je vous demande bien pardon si je mélange tout dans ma lettre mais je suis très triste et puis ça ne vous semblerait plus une lettre de Majie si elle n'était pas barbouillée. J'espère que vous n'avez pas oublié le français et vous m'écrivez vite pour me raconter beaucoup de choses et pour me montrer que vous nous aimez encore malgré la grande distance qui nous sépare, mais on peut y penser, n'est-ce pas, petit chou mignon? Demain dimanche je vais aller à la messe et peut-être l'après-midi au cinéma et toute seule naturellement.

Mon cher grand ami je vais vous laisser pour aller dormir je ne sais pas trop ce que j'écris mais ce que je sais c'est que je pense beaucoup à mon petit chou, écrivez moi vite et je veux une lettre à part pour moi seule avec des mots si aimables que vous me disiez souvent. Je vous embrasse beaucoup beaucoup.

Votre petite Majie.

No, I never answered Majie's letter. It was not to be. But when I think of Majie, then I think of France, and when I think of France, then it is of Majie I think. Oh sweet Majie, oh blessed France! You gave me the dreams of my life, *les grandes vacances de ma vie*.

I will preserve this dream in my heart. I dream it again and again, for twenty years now, twenty chaotic, crazy, foolishly wasted years—

And now the Americans had arrived.

126. *Was the journey made at your expense?*

More or less.

127. *If not at whose expense was the journey made?*

See answer to Question 125.

128. *Persons or organisations visited*

See answer to Question 125.

129. *Did you ever serve in any capacity as part of the civil administration of any territory annexed to or occupied by the Reich?*

God preserve me, no.

130. *If so, give particulars of office held, duties performed, location and period of service*

Not applicable.

131. *List foreign languages you speak indicating degree of fluency*

All French people, hearing me speak French, begin to smile. I talk with the accent of the *Midi* and so my French is comparable to the German of my old friend, the police commissioner at St. Jean de Luz, who had spent four years in a prisoner-of-war camp near Dresden. I swear my knowledge of the French language will never be misused for the purpose of crushing the blessed land of France beneath the hob-nails of my jackboots.

I learned English in prison, by the Toussaint-Langenscheidt method. I can read English as easily as I can read French, and I can write English as well as I can write French. I cannot understand a single word of English when Englishmen or Americans address me in that tongue, nor am I prepared to talk English to Englishmen or Americans. I regard it as essential to speak German when I have to talk with Englishmen or Americans, particularly for so long as 'the English language will prevail if discrepancies exist.'

## REMARKS

**T**HE AMERICANS were there. On Siegsdorf's church spire the white flag waved, and the tanks rolled over the bridge across the Traun. It was the first fine day for a long time. The sun had quite driven away the slight mist that had hung over the little town, and the distant rumble of the tanks was evocative of the humming of bees in a hot field at noontide.

The teacher came across and said that the children were complaining of hunger; they had had nothing to eat that morning. I went with the teacher to the neighbours' houses, but their farms were all packed with people from Siegsdorf who had fled for safety to higher ground and who were now also clamouring for something to eat. I decided to see if I could not manage to lead the children back to the little town, for all sounds of firing had ceased. There were some sixty of them, aged between ten and twelve, evacuees from the Ludwigshafen area. I went in front, while the teacher brought up the rear.

In Osterham, Bichler and his Pole were struggling to push a huge truck, with an SS number-plate, out of his farmyard. SS men had arrived at Osterham late the previous night in trucks and had billeted themselves there. When the first shots rang out they had leaped aboard their vehicles and set off downhill with all speed, hoping to reach the road to the south before the Americans cut it. One of the trucks had a damaged engine, so they divided its load among the others and abandoned it. Bichler did not wish it to remain in his yard, and he rolled it down an incline. It went some little way and then came to rest in a hollow. Bichler stared at it, not knowing what to do.

"Nobody will see it there," I remarked, realising his train of thought. He said:

"Don't matter much if they do. That's Mayer's ground."

Mayer was Bichler's next-door neighbour.

From Osterham we could see that the columns of huge tanks were making a small detour, following the Vogeltenn road which skirted Siegsdorf. The principal street through the town seemed jammed with vehicles. We went boldly forward. By the Vogeltenn road sat an American soldier, the first I had seen. He was wearing his helmet, a round, smooth helmet shaped like a cooking-pot, and he had a tommy-gun across his knees. He was gazing with evident boredom at the tanks, powerful monsters, which were edging cautiously forward along the narrow path. I tried to explain what we were doing by gestures. I pointed at the children. Lazily he signalled me to go on. So we went on, I piloting the children through the tank column. Nobody stopped us as we climbed the steep path that led to the main street. In front of the

Trout Hotel stood tanks and trucks, and countless officers and soldiers pushed past each other as they entered the inn. The children automatically ran into what had been their home. No one interfered. With a certain hesitancy the teacher followed.

I went on towards the bridge. Beside the road lay the abandoned German vehicles in chaotic confusion. Some had been overturned. At last I saw a face I knew. It was Mader, who lived above the Trout. He remarked, laconically:

“There he lies!”

“Who!” I asked.

Mader said:

“The *Hauptsturmführer* what was on the bridge.”

I went closer. There indeed he lay, on the grassy bank, crumpled together, and his face had assumed a greenish hue. Mader told me what had happened. The *Hauptsturmführer* had been standing on the bridge when the Americans arrived. When an American light tank and infantry regiment appeared in the street the *Hauptsturmführer* ran to the Trout Hotel and hid in the cellar, where the hotel's inhabitants were already all assembled. But the Americans must have recognised the fugitive as a member of the SS. They surrounded the Trout Hotel and announced that they would set fire to it unless this officer surrendered. They were busy evicting the children when the *Hauptsturmführer* suddenly appeared. But he did not wish to surrender. He made a dash, towards the bridge. He would have had a good chance of getting away had he not been held up by the many vehicles immobilised at his orders and now abandoned there. The Americans caught him on the bank and shot him at once.

I took off my beret. A Basque removes his beret only in the presence of God. There lay the *Hauptsturmführer*. He would be buried now in this place, the name of which he had never managed to remember.

At the crossroads I met the doctor. He was wearing a Red Cross armband and smoking nervously. He said he had been ejected from his home. He nodded in the direction of his house. Above the roof floated the tricolor.

“Yes,” he said, “Frenchmen. This is the Seventh American Army. It's got a Gaullist division.”

The general had taken up residence in the doctor's house.

“Thank God it's Frenchmen,” said the doctor. “They know something about art, and they'll treat my pictures with respect.”

He gazed at his fingers, stained with nicotine, and said:

“The Americans have taken away my car.”

I said maliciously:

“They know something about technics.”

The doctor went on smoking. He closed the conversation by remarking:

“That’s the way it goes.”

I offered him and his family shelter at the Huberhof, but he had already found asylum in the Adelholzen hospital.

By the bridge stood the police major from the road-works. He was unarmed and wore no badges of rank. He was sunk in contemplation of a German truck which had crashed through the balustrade of the bridge and now lay on the sandy bed of the Traun. Heavy tanks were crossing the bridge, which groaned and shook. I said:

“Well, what do you think of those things, Major?”

Glancing nervously about him, he said:

“Please don’t call me major. I’m just a sergeant again now.” Then, looking at the tanks, he said: “But still, our Tigers were a lot better in the old days.”

I knew that from now on he would always talk about the old days.

Suddenly a heavy tank stopped right in front of us. A tremendous uproar broke out; the driver was standing up, half his body visible above the turret-hatch; he was yelling at another tank-driver. There was a traffic jam, with more and more tanks and trucks piling up behind. A fast jeep twisted its way through the now stationary traffic. An American officer jumped out and began to sort out the muddle. He shouted and bawled and waved on the vehicles. The activity on the road was exactly as it had been twenty-four hours ago, the same soldiers, driving with the same casual recklessness. Only the uniforms and vehicles were slightly different. Our Tigers might well have been better ‘in the old days,’ but then I’d never seen any.

In front of the parish building lay a pile of broken weapons, guns with bent barrels and shattered butts. I pushed the pile aside with my foot and there indeed was my machine-pistol, smashed. It was still almost brand-new, and for a second I experienced a quite ridiculous pang of regret that never a single round had been fired from it. It lay there so sadly, the very epitome of waste.

The corridors and rooms of the parish building were so crowded with people that I had a hard time pushing through them. The captain, now of course in civilian clothes, and the mayor were seated behind a barrier in the main office, dealing with this throng. When the captain saw me he did not bother to greet me, and as though nothing had happened since last we met he simply said:

“Sit down and get to work. We’ve got to write billeting slips for all the people evicted by the Americans.”

I filled in billeting slips according to the captain’s and the mayor’s instructions. This, too, was precisely what I had been doing twenty-four hours ago.

Lodging had to be found for sixty female auxiliaries, the ladies of Operation Bee, who had now been thrown out of the Trout Hotel. The colonel, who talked so glibly about having people shot, had fled,

in civilian clothes, the evening before the Americans arrived. I asked the girls what the 'operation' had been all about; they could tell us now, with a clear conscience. But the three young ladies who represented the rest just smiled in an embarrassed sort of way and said they really had no idea themselves. What sort of a man was the colonel, I asked.

"Oh, he let us do what we liked!"

"A mobile brothel?" I suggested, but the girls had already gone, their billeting slips in their hands. The captain said:

"That's what I thought too at first. But the girls are a decent lot. Our warrant officer carried out some research into the matter. They did nothing, not even that."

"What's happened to our warrant officer?"

The captain laughed:

"The Americans have nobbled him."

Our warrant officer had been completely drunk; when they entered the room he had simply raised his glass and said: "*Prost!*" One of them had knocked the glass from his lips and swallowed what was left in the bottle. Then they took him away. The sergeant-major of the engineer unit had managed to escape. Now our warrant officer was seated in the school yard, which had been turned into a temporary prison camp. I decided to visit him later, but I never got around to it.

We remained in the parish building until evening. Fresh people kept arriving who had been evicted from their homes. They complained that they were allowed to take nothing with them and that even tiny babies and invalids had to go. This behaviour on the part of the Americans was utterly unexpected and everyone was amazed. When complaints were made to the Americans they simply replied that they were acting in exactly the same way as German officers had done in France, but the people refused to believe this.

"You were in France, Captain," one of them said. "You should know."

The captain said cautiously:

"Certainly nothing of the sort happened in my unit."

He wished to come to some arrangement with the American town commandant, but apparently there was none.

There had been a number of people killed during the occupation of the town—fourteen, the local inhabitants said. An engineer mortar company had attempted to resist, and one mortar bomb had landed in the police sergeant's vegetable garden, destroying his tidy beetroot beds. The men of this company managed to get away, but from then on the Americans shot at sight. Americans, too, had been killed, though how many and in what circumstances it was not possible to discover. The fourteen dead included not only Taddäus but also a Ukrainian; none of the town's inhabitants had come to any harm.

I wrote and wrote. A voice said:

"I want some horseradish, Mr. Garlic!"

My murderer was standing in front of me on the far side of the barrier, a friendly grin on his face. He was wearing a white shirt, open at the neck to reveal his girlish throat, and a pair of short trousers, also white, which I assumed were his underpants. He bowed slightly, remarking:

"Have I come to the right place?"

I said:

"My advice to you is to disappear as fast as ever you can."

He grinned and said:

"That I shall, that I shall, ducky, but first I need a little piece of paper. You know, Mr. Garlic, one of those pieces of paper saying I've just been discharged from the army. The army, mark you, not the SS. From the unit commanded by the celebrated Captain Horseradish."

The captain glanced up now, looked at me, and said:

"Give it to him. Then he'll take his people somewhere else."

My murderer smiled politely and, turning to the captain, remarked:

"I knew I'd come to the right place."

I wrote and handed him the sheet of paper.

"*Auf Wiedersehen*, ducky," he said.

I said:

"I sincerely hope not."

"Oh yes," he said. "You wait and see. We'll meet again. I can feel it like a pain in the arse."

He nodded cheerfully towards me and walked out.

That evening the office was suddenly empty. Our last visitors had been a crowd of peasants. They had complained that the foreign labourers appeared for their meals but refused to do any more work. The captain's nerves by this time were thoroughly on edge. At last the peasants had gone, still puzzled about what they should do. The captain leaned back in his chair and said with a sigh:

"What a day . . .!"

In the doorway stood a young man wearing an open-necked white shirt and white shorts, his underpants I assumed. He was holding the hand of a young, blond, pretty girl with a mane of leonine hair, a flowered summer dress and no stockings.

"What do you want then?" the captain cried irritably.

"To get married," said the young man and smiled.

The captain banged the table with the flat of his hand. Then, leaning back in his chair, he began to laugh loudly.

"That," he said, "is the first sensible request I've heard today."

The young man was a lieutenant attached to some army staff, the girl a German from abroad and a female auxiliary.

"Of course you must get married," cried the captain. "When is the wedding to be?"

"If possible, right away," said the young man. "So that we can start living together at once. I have a room at the 'Alte Post.'"

"The Americans are in there," said the captain, bewildered.

The enterprising young man produced a sign on which was written the words OFF LIMITS. He said:

"I hang this outside my door and everybody leaves me alone. I got it off an Ami staff-car."

His name was Diewald. He was from Vienna, and a lawyer by profession.

The mayor had doubts.

"It can't be done that quickly," he said. "There's the banns to be called. . . ."

The captain laughed.

"Of course! And the medical certificate of health and heaven knows what-all. And how about the proof of Aryan descent?"

The mayor had to laugh now himself.

"All right," he said. "Well . . . since I'm still mayor here . . ."

We congratulated the young couple. Diewald spoke good English. The captain had suddenly recovered his good spirits. He proposed to Diewald that he should become the community's interpreter. His appointment was the last act that the mayor carried out in his official capacity. He was fed up.

"Enough's enough," he said, when he heard on his way home that evacuees, under American protection, had begun to cart off the crockery from his inn.

I climbed up to the Huberhof. In front of me went the blond land-girl and the Hitler Youth leader of Siegsdorf. They were holding hands and singing, as they did so often in the evening. Then they fell silent and began to talk to one another. In the stillness I could catch what they were saying. The boy said:

"I had a good look at them. Puny little men, they are, nothing to touch our SS! And these are their front-line troops. The one's they'll leave behind are bound to be even feebler. I've been thinking. How many will they leave here, afterwards? Sixty thousand, at the most? Well, we can always produce sixty thousand Hitler Youth. That's only one each. And then, in one night . . . it's all done."

Now I hurried, and when I had caught up with the couple I said: "Those are charming words. Do you young lovers always talk about such things?"

The boy looked at me with amazement:

"Naturally. We're all Werewolves, aren't we?"

I said:

"I'm not."

The boy said:

"I dare say, but it's not the same for you. You're old!"



And indeed at that moment I suddenly felt far too old to try to teach the young. 'That's the captain's job,' I thought, and I walked on.

In Reiten all was quiet. There were lights in every window. The black-out was over. This was the first sign—and, God, how we had longed for it!—that the war was over. Ille had even lit the lantern that hung outside the door of the Huberhof; this was the first time that I had seen it burning. It cast a wide circle of light. I took a few steps back in order to admire the effect. Then I saw a shadowy figure behind the barn, evidently attempting to climb the wire fence which enclosed our vegetable garden. I ran towards him, crying:

"Hi! Where do you think you're going?"

The man stood still and then came hesitantly towards me. He was wearing a miscellaneous collection of civilian garments, and on his head he had a peasant's hat, completely bashed in. He said:

"To Heilbronn."

It was the sergeant-major of the Swabian engineer company.

"It's you!" I said. "Come along with me. I'll show you the shortest way to Heilbronn!"

I walked up the hillock and he trotted along obediently at my side. The Americans' cars were rolling along the *autobahn*, their headlights blazing, and the viaduct was easily recognisable.

"You see the viaduct?" I asked him, "the one you wanted to blow up last night? Just the sort of job you really enjoy. You must go under the viaduct and keep on until you reach the railway line. Then follow the railway. That's the quickest way to Heilbronn. Now scam and don't show your face in Siegsdorf again."

The man disappeared into the darkness without another word.

Ille was in her room. She said:

"We've two guests, two evacuee children. The teacher told them to tear up all their pictures of men with the Knight's Cross and sent them off to find lodging with the peasants. The Americans threw them out of their billets after all. Well," she added, "no doubt our people behaved much the same abroad."

I said nothing. Ille suddenly got up and dragged the trunks out of the cupboard, the trunks which she had unpacked only that morning. This was a symbolic gesture, and Ille's symbolism had to be treated with the greatest respect.

"Do you want to dance the Bolle-children's dance?" I asked.

But Ille began silently to re-pack.

Although very tired, it was only with difficulty that I managed to get to sleep. I was awakened towards dawn by the cold. I glanced through the window and saw the snow-capped peaks glittering in the moonlight. Suddenly I started. I opened the window and listened. I could hear footsteps, many footsteps, the clear sound of hobnailed boots on gravel.

There was nothing to be seen, but that particular noise was unmistakable. The ground must have frozen hard, and there must be a great many pairs of boots moving along the stony path. There—they were emerging from the shadows of the wood now, coming out into the moonlight, heading up the hill towards the house.

I pulled on my clothes at once, glancing from time to time through the window as I did so. It was a column of soldiers coming up the path, German soldiers without a doubt, wearing camouflaged uniforms. They tramped on in silence, in double file, and they were carrying rifles and machine guns. But they went straight past the house. The noise of their boots died away.

I did not want to awaken Ille, from whose window I could have seen which way the column was headed. With my shoes in my hand I walked across the little landing—the boards squeaked—but before I reached the head of the stairs there was a knock at the front door. I went down and opened it. The peasant Schmid was standing there. Despite the cold he was wearing only shirt and trousers and was barefoot. He stood on the threshold and whispered that an officer wished to speak to me, a German officer. I hurried with him to his house. We saw no one on the way. At Schmid's farm the windows, from which yesterday so much light had poured, were now shuttered once again.

"Careful!" said Schmid, as I entered the house: the floor was covered with soldiers, lying down, packed side by side. They scarcely bothered to move aside as I made my way through them. They must have been exhausted. Only in the corner could I see a glowing cigarette. Two candles burned in the living room. This room, too, was crowded with soldiers. None spoke. They lay on the floor, they sat on the few chairs, they leaned against the wall, one close beside the other. At the table facing one another sat two officers, two very young officers, lieutenants with brand-new epaulets and very old service uniforms—they had undoubtedly both been very recently commissioned. One said politely:

"I'm sorry we had to send for you, but this peasant here wouldn't give us any information."

I said:

"The peasant did right. I've told the people of this village always to fetch me if anything unusual should happen."

The officer said:

"Do you know what the Americans' positions are?"

"They've posted men at every crossroads just as you'd do if you were them."

The lieutenant smiled and said:

"We never had so many men. Listen, I don't want to force you in any way—but if you'll give us the information we need you'll save my men, who are utterly worn out, a lot of difficult and dangerous reconnaissance patrols."

I said, ashamed:

“Ask me what you want to know.”

The lieutenant said:

“We were overrun by the Americans in the Blaue Wand. Our orders are to make for the Max-Hütte.”

“Your orders are out of date. The Americans have been in the Max-Hütte since yesterday morning.”

“I know that. But those are my orders, and they remain valid until I get new ones countermanding them.”

The soldiers listened in silence. Raising my voice, I said:

“Lieutenant, your orders are crazy. The Max-Hütte is a solitary smelting-forge by the bottom of the track that leads up into the mountains. It's scarcely a quarter of a mile from Bergen. Bergen is full of American armour. The SS tried to defend the Max-Hütte, and the Americans took it within half an hour. The SS fled into the mountains. All the mountain tracks are blocked by American forces.”

“We're not trying to get into the mountains. We want to know the way to the Max-Hütte.”

I said, with despair:

“All the roads to the Max-Hütte are crawling with American transport. If you'd care to step outside with me you can hear them everywhere.”

“We move in the usual military fashion, with patrols out and so on. That's the way we've done and that's how we intend to go on. We've been fighting our way through the woods for three days now.”

“But it's not woods,” I cried, “it's the Bergen moor! It's dead flat, with no cover at all. If you try to cross the heath by day you'll be shot down like rabbits. If you try by night you'll sink into the bog.”

The lieutenants exchanged glances. None of the soldiers said a word. One of the lieutenants asked, in a different tone of voice:

“What's it like in Siegsdorf? Was there any fighting?”

“There was no serious resistance. All the same we had fourteen dead.”

“How are the Americans behaving?”

I said with a sigh:

“Taken all in all, quite correctly. The prisoners are collected into temporary camps, where they are looked after by the populace until they are moved away.”

“And the German inhabitants? They're pleased the Americans have arrived?”

“They're pleased that this war, which has become senseless, is over at last. They have no contact with the Americans. The Americans expel our people from their houses when they want to move in.”

The lieutenant said:

“I won't suggest that you lead us to the Max-Hütte. But it's light

now. Can you take us to a point from which we can see the terrain we shall have to cross?"

I said bitterly:

"Lieutenant, I'll do that so that you can see for yourself how crazy your project is. And may I tell you now, in front of your soldiers, that you are heading for a pointless death?"

The lieutenant said calmly:

"Please do."

I felt I was losing my self-control. Pulling myself together, I said loudly:

"You're quite alone, without any contact, without heavy weapons. Your staffs have fled, I saw them myself drive through here in their cars, heading for the mountains. All the roads and tracks are occupied by the enemy. They have two motorised divisions here and all day long reconnaissance aircraft patrol the woods. There is no longer any organised resistance. The local inhabitants won't help you. We surrendered the place of our own choice, in order to avoid any unnecessary bloodshed, in order to save the houses from being destroyed. If you will leave your weapons here I'll go down to the town with you and lead you to the camp where your comrades are. You can see it from here. I promise you that no harm whatever will come to a single one of you. All day I've seen columns coming in from the woods and surrendering."

"Have you finished?" the lieutenant asked.

"Yes."

The lieutenant said:

"Well, you've all heard what this gentleman has to say!"

A calm voice said:

"Lieutenant, would you like me to knock the stinking bastard's teeth down his throat for him?"

The lieutenant got to his feet and put on his cap. Without raising his voice, he said:

"All right, men, let's get moving."

The soldiers stood up at once. For a moment the living-room and hall were filled with the clatter of men adjusting their weapons. Cigarettes were thrown to the ground and carefully stamped out. Not a word was spoken. I stepped outside with the two officers. It was quite light now. The mountain peaks shone in the first rays of the sun, a single, brilliant chain. The snow on which those rays fell was almost dazzling in its brightness. The valleys still lay shrouded and dark.

Without a single word of command the column formed up. I led them as far as Graf Roedern's estate, as far as the house of the writer, Rudolf Alexander Schroeder. From there the way to Bergen and to the Max-Hütte was plainly visible. Immediately beneath us, in a field that belonged to the Bergen Hitler Youth Hostel, the tanks were parked,

many tanks, both large and small, and immediately beside this field ran the path that led to the Max-Hütte. Around the Max-Hütte itself there was already evidence of considerable activity. Motorised columns were setting off into the mountains, American columns.

The lieutenant, who had come forward with me to view the countryside from this vantage-point while his men remained out of sight on the reverse slope, surveyed the whole prospect for some time through his field-glasses. I said nothing. What he saw must surely speak for itself.

When at last he lowered his field-glasses I saw that he was smiling. He said:

“Many thanks. You may go home now. You have spared us a great deal of trouble. As for the ‘stinking bastard,’ please don’t take that to heart. We realise perfectly clearly that you meant well, but . . . we’re German infantrymen.”

The lieutenant shook me by the hand and left. I remained where I was and followed him with my eyes. He said a few words to his men and then turned away, his rifle in his hand, towards Bergen Valley. The troops moved off after the lieutenant. The infantrymen marched past me, without hesitation or uncertainty, with that same rhythmical and measured tread that had re-echoed down how many of the roads of Europe. They marched in column of two, their rifles slung, machine guns on their shoulders. Not one of them glanced at me.

That morning I did not go down to the little town until late. In Osterham Bichler was standing before his front-door, swearing and grumbling and staring at the road. His Poles were enjoying themselves. They had taken his horses from the stable and were riding up and down with loud cries of “Hullo!” and “Huzzah!” Bichler was muttering to himself: “You wait, you lazy good-for-nothings. Soup you’ll get today, just soup and no dumplings!” and with this fearful threat on his lips he disappeared into his house. Bichler had always been on particularly good terms with his Poles.

Outside Vogelteinn I met Frau Sachse coming towards me. She was a young woman who had sought refuge from the bombs in her country cottage. She was leading her four-year-old daughter by the hand, a child called Pützchen.

“Were you down in the town?” I asked. “I call that real courage!”

Frau Sachse said breathlessly:

“Something nearly happened. Imagine, Pützchen and I were passing by the Trout Hotel. An American officer was standing outside, calling his dog. ‘Come here, Hitler!’ he said. Pützchen stopped and asked with amazement: ‘Is your dog called Hitler?’ The American said: ‘All dogs are called Hitler.’ Pützchen waved her hand and said: ‘My dog’s called Ami!’ You can imagine how fast I dragged her away from there!”

I laughed. I asked how things looked down there. Frau Sachse said:

“Well, I’m not going down any more. It’s too dangerous for me. They say lots and lots of girls were raped last night. One old woman died.”

I found the doctor. He told me what had happened during the night. The military police had behaved particularly badly.

“Six cases of rape in one night,” he said. “Genuine cases too, I’ve seen them.”

He said that after seven o’clock the military police methodically hunted down and rounded up all women and girls who were out of doors. An order had been issued imposing a seven-o’clock curfew, but this order had not reached all the outlying hamlets of the scattered community. I enquired about the old woman. The doctor was not quite sure what the story was. He thought the Americans had merely wished to take this seventy-year-old woman’s watch. For days there had been a great deal of chatter in the place about the raping that went on in enemy-occupied territory. The people had even made bad jokes about it, the doctor remarked, shaking his head at the thought of such human wickedness. The old woman had apparently feared an assault upon her honour and had begun to yell and scream. The American, confused and angry, as was only to be expected, had struck her and had broken her arm.

“A bad business at her age,” said the doctor. By the time he got there she was already dead. I asked, with astonishment:

“But why did the American want her watch?”

The doctor said:

“Yes, it is extraordinary. In America it seems there aren’t any watches. When they meet people in the streets they always take their wrist watches, good ones and bad, old ones and new. They took mine too.”

He held out his hand and showed me his bare wrist. He told me that the peasants were already joking about this passion of the Americans. I remarked that I still had my watch and the doctor advised me to hide it. He smoked nervously and stared at his nicotine-stained fingers.

“That’s the way it goes,” he said.

Ever since I had known him he had always ended all his conversations with this pessimistic utterance.

I was determined to get to the bottom of the watch business. The raping might be genuine or not, and once over it was hard to produce any proof one way or the other. But missing watches were obvious evidence. As I went by the Trout Hotel I saw a sentry standing outside, a steel helmet on his head. Beside him hung the sign of the formation billeted there, together with the divisional emblem, a cactus. I turned back and addressed the sentry. In German I asked:

“Would it be possible, please, for me to see your commanding officer for a moment?”

The sentry replied in good German, though with a strong American accent:

“What do you want to see him about?”

I explained that there were rumours circulating, according to which the Americans were taking watches away from peaceful civilians. I hoped that his commanding officer might make a statement which would enable me to contradict such rumours. The sentry smiled and nodded towards the hallway:

“Here comes the officer now.”

An officer appeared in the doorway. He was wearing a cap in which was a silver bar, his badge of rank. I was about to begin my explanation when I noticed that hanging from the button of the officer's left breast-pocket were no less than five wristwatches. I swallowed, but still I repeated what I had already said to the sentry. I made an effort to talk in simple, clear German and underlined my words by staring fixedly at his breast-pocket. I emphasised the word *rumours* and pointed to my own wristwatch as evidence that no such incredible misadventure had happened to me. I said that of course it was quite out of the question, quite impossible that American soldiers—let alone officers—who had announced solemnly and repeatedly that they had come to Germany only in order to teach the Germans the proper, decent way to behave, should engage in activities which were regarded throughout the whole world as being nothing better than robbery and theft. It was in the interest of the Americans, as of the Germans, that such stories be scotched at once.

The officer smiled, exactly as the sentry had already done. Then he said, in the purest German and without any trace of an accent:

“If you give me the name of an American soldier who has stolen a watch, and proof that he did so, the man will be punished.”

I expressed my appreciation for this exhaustive piece of information and asked him whom it was I had to thank. Still smiling, the officer said:

“Get this. We're asking the questions around here, not you!”

I thanked him for telling me this too, and wishing him all good luck with the answers that he would obtain by such methods I left.

That young and, as it seemed, unusually happy married man, Diewald, laughed heartily when I told him the story of the wristwatches. He said he knew the officer, a Pole and a very intelligent one too. He too had approached him at the captain's request, since many of the local inhabitants had complained. This officer, a lieutenant, seemed to be spokesman for the highest military authority in the place. But all that Diewald had achieved was that the lieutenant added his watch to his collection. I stared at Diewald's wrist. He was wearing a watch. Diewald laughed and said:

“This is another watch. I got it from a sentry in exchange for three eggs. It's much better than my old one.”

Diewald explained to me that this American acted at all times in full consciousness of his rights. Of course stealing watches was forbidden, but the individual is in all such cases protected by the law, which categorically states that any man is innocent until he is proved guilty before a court of law—innocent even so far as his own conscience is concerned. Only on such a basis, said my energetic lawyer friend, is the phenomenon of American gangsterism comprehensible. I thanked him for his most enlightening disquisition but decided all the same that it would be prudent to keep my wristwatch in my trouser pocket.

Ille was reluctant to believe the wristwatch stories. She maintained that according to the catalogues published by the great American mail-order houses, wristwatches were sold in the United States at such low prices that even the most miserable tramp had no need to steal one. When I told her that the troops down in the town came from Texas she said that perhaps their behaviour might be accounted for as an example of atavism, but she was convinced that a stop would be put to it the moment the story reached the ears of the American Watch-makers' Society.

She had always listened to my stories of the dramatic *Volkssturm* period with a certain ironic nonchalance. Now, however, she insisted that I describe in the minutest detail what life was like in the town since the Americans were in control. I saw clearly that in her mind I represented Noah's dove—but I had no olive-branch to bring her. That she suffered from this was beyond dispute; she would so willingly have heard enthusiastic reports concerning evidence of planned progress within the framework of the great American ideals. She made me copy down word for word the extremely detailed notices and proclamations of the Military Government which were posted up on the parish board. This took up a great deal of my time, but Ille went through them all most eagerly, until at last she cried out with manifest joy:

"Listen, it says here that in future no one will be subject to arbitrary arrest and that any person accused of an offence will be taken before a judge at once. At last—" she cried, "—at last we've got a sensible legal system again!" And she insisted that we dance the Bolle-children's dance.

From then on whenever I told her of events down in the valley she always found the Germans largely to blame for anything that went wrong. I told her how the evacuees had complained to the Americans that the *Volkssturm* had hidden large stocks of food, and how the Americans had immediately distributed these stocks 'to the populace.' Ille thought that this was a splendid action on the part of the Americans. But I went on to say that the captain had attempted to keep the stocks for the German prisoners-of-war, and had pointed out to the Americans that famine was now unavoidable in the whole valley until the railways were working again; the only result had been that the Americans



amused themselves by placing bags of flour in the streets and watching the inhabitants fight for it, covering themselves with flour in the process. Ille's sole reaction to this was to say:

"How stupid of the evacuees . . . I've nothing in the house either, except a bowl of eggs."

I said:

"Imagine, the Americans who were here yesterday fed women and children from their field kitchens. They were airborne troops. Today they had whole cauldrons of food over. In front of a crowd of hungry refugees they shovelled it all into a ditch, poured petrol over it and set fire to it."

"Texas!" said Ille. "They don't know any better. They probably do that at home to stop the coyotes getting too fat."

Ille said:

"Imagine, our two Ludwigshafen children came back from Siegsdorf covered from head to foot in cocoa-powder. Imagine! They told me a negro had given them a big packet of cocoa and they were terribly excited about bringing it home to us. On the way they met a woman from Reiten, from our own village of Reiten, and she wanted to take the cocoa away from them. Our children hung on to it, there was a scuffle and the packet split. The woman ran off with what was left. I told the children they should show me which house the woman went to. They did. It was that evacuee from Gelsenkirchen, the shoemaker's wife, the neat one, you know, the one who always helps us with the spring cleaning. I remember saying to you what a decent, tidy woman Frau Dibbert was. It was she. Can you understand that?"

"I can understand it very well," I said. "Liberation always results in an immediate freeing of the more primitive instincts from all control. . . ."

"Nonsense," said Ille. "Texas isn't the only place where there are coyotes."

But still Ille did not venture down into the town, and the first American she saw was a bare-headed soldier with dishevelled hair who suddenly appeared striding quickly and forcefully towards the house, a tommy-gun tucked under his arm. Ille saw him coming and called to me. I was standing on the stairs when he reached the door. Ille asked him something in English, but he only stared at her wildly and then, without another glance at us, flung open the door of my workroom. When he saw the many books he stopped and turned around. "They shook him," was Ille's subsequent comment. Then, tommy-gun pointed (that most evil instrument of power for little men) he pushed past us through the hall and opened the next door. This was the larder. He took the bowl of eggs that stood on the shelf, threw down a banknote in its place together with a pack of American cigarettes, turned about, and without even looking at us walked away, the bowl of eggs under one

arm, the tommy-gun under the other. He walked out of the house, bare-headed and with dishevelled hair, as quickly and forcefully as he had come.

The banknote turned out to be for one hundred marks. Never had Ille received so much money for twenty eggs.

"There you are," she said. "That's Texas for you."

But her last eggs were gone.

A little later I saw four soldiers emerge from the wood to the east, on the far side of the slope. They were wearing khaki shirts and were armed, but without the light helmets that the Americans always wore. Tensely I watched them from my window. They walked across towards the great hay barn which the Poles and the Ukrainians had always used as a nocturnal love-nest. Suddenly they opened fire on the barn. I jumped. Were German soldiers perhaps hiding there? But after a little while the four men walked on, without bothering to investigate the effects of their fire. They came down the slope, ignoring the twisting path. A moment later their heads emerged from a fold in the ground and they were climbing towards Reiten, straight towards our house.

They were Frenchmen, with blue-white-red bands about their caps. All four were very young, and I assumed that they were marauding ex-prisoners. I greeted them politely. Frenchmen were my concern, not Ille's.

"*Vous désirez quelque-chose?*"

The effort that they made to appear intimidating was plain to see.

"*Vous avez des armes?*" one of them shouted at me. He did his best to assume a ferocious scowl.

"*Mais oui, monsieur!*"

I reached into the corner where my nephew Michael always kept his little air-gun. It was not there. This took me aback somewhat, and I did my best to explain to the Frenchmen that I had been referring to an air-gun, but my French let me down. I kept up a constant stream of talk while hunting for this damned toy, which was normally in that corner and had chosen this of all moments to hide elsewhere.

"*C'est un fusil d'air,*" I repeated desperately. The Frenchmen did not understand me, but they would not have been French had not their whole interest been concentrated in the desire to discover what I meant. Suddenly one of them, the youngest I guessed, cried:

"*Ah, maintenant je comprends! Fusil pneumatique!*"

Of course, *fusil pneumatique!* How stupid of me not to have thought of it! Now we all laughed together, freed from the irritations of incomprehensibility, and if there had ever been an icy crust to Franco-German relations it was broken now. Then Ille appeared, carrying the air-gun which Michael had hidden in his cupboard. The 'weapon' was passed from hand to hand and each of them insisted of having at least one shot with it. Outside the fat, white tom-cat which belonged to our

neighbour Schneider went past. The four boys crowded excitedly about the window. Puff! The cat jumped a yard in the air and streaked away at an incredible speed. The four were having a high old time.

One of them, the most energetic, soon handed me back the air-gun and, resuming his former scowl, announced that they must search the house. I replaced the *pneumatique* in its corner, and while so doing I noticed an expression of such longing on the face of the youngest Frenchman that for a moment I was tempted to give it him as a present. But the energetic one had already strode across to the door of my work-room, which he flung open. The sight of my books apparently 'shook' the Frenchmen too. They, however, did not recoil, but went up to them with curiosity and examined the titles. They stared at the pictures, my typewriter, the plates on the walls and the books, with unmistakable respect. Ille was quite ready to show the gentlemen her larder—it was indeed pathetically bare—but even repeated references to the *garde-manger* failed to entice the Frenchmen. They discovered the 'French section,' where were also the translations of my own books. I drew their attention to these. With surprise they read the titles.

"*Librairie Plon!*" remarked the youngest respectfully. And even the energetic one said politely:

"*Vous êtes écrivain, monsieur?*"

They stood about for a little while, and then the energetic one said:

"*Alors nous nous en allons!*"

They turned to go. Only the youngest still stood by the bookcase. He was holding the Propyläen edition of *Michelangelo* in his hand, and was looking at the pictures. Suddenly he closed the book with a bang and gave me an uncertain look. Then with an attempt to put a note of firmness into his voice, he said stiffly:

"*Je le prends!*"

I said politely:

"*Monsieur, s'il vous plaît, prenez-le comme souvenir!*"

He blushed. He clutched the book beneath his arm. He held out his hand, bowed slightly, and said:

"*Je vous remercie beaucoup, monsieur, beaucoup!*"

Then he hurried away after his *copains*.

Ille watched him go with a smile.

"Those were Frenchmen," I said to Ille. "They've never even heard of Texas but they do know about Michelangelo."

"Quite," said Ille. "All the same, Texas paid and France did not."

Almost at once the Frenchman from Felsel's farm appeared in the doorway. He asked me if a compatriot of his had stolen one of my books. I told him that I had given it to the sympathetic young man as a present. The Frenchman gave a sigh of relief and said:

"*Autrement, monsieur, autrement. . . .*"

And he proceeded to explain in very fast French indeed that *autrement*

he would have dropped all his other activities in order to get me back my stolen property.

The next day as I was passing the 'Alte Post' and was about to greet Diewald, who was standing in the doorway, there was the sudden sound of explosions, of what sounded like heavy artillery.

"That's the maroons," Diewald remarked. He went on: "It was the first request the new Parish Council made to the Americans. They asked for permission to bury the victims of the occupation with military honours. A proper funeral, music, old soldiers' association, marksmen's club, flags, maroons, the lot."

"And they agreed to it?" I asked with astonishment.

He said:

"The Americans asked the clergyman whom he proposed as mayor. He said the pre-1933 mayor, Landler, had done a decent job. So he sent for Landler and asked him if he'd care to take it on again. 'Don't mind,' said Landler, but he added that he too had been a Party member since 1936. The Americans said they weren't worrying about that and they told him to choose seven respected local citizens to form the Parish Council. Landler said he'd try but he pointed out that it would be hard to find seven decent citizens who had never joined the Party. The Americans said that was all the same to them, provided they were respectable people. So now we've a Parish Council which contains more Party members than the one we had in Nazi days."

Diewald added proudly:

"And the second act of the Parish Council was to appoint an interpreter. The American commandant approved that too."

"What?" I cried. "We've got a commandant now?"

I determined to tell Ille immediately that I too felt reassured at last. The Americans knew what they wanted after all, and what they wanted seemed to be fairly sensible. Diewald laughed:

"Yes, a Chincse. There he is, over there."

And there he was, a small, slender officer of yellowish hue with almond eyes and a great many white teeth. Diewald laughed and said:

"When I reported to him he inspected me from top to toe, all six foot of me, which took a considerable time. Then he said in English: 'You were in the SS?' He pronounced it As-As. I said: 'No, Sir!' He said: 'I like the As-As. The As-As are good fighting troops and I am a good fighting man, and if I'd been a German I'd have been in the As-As.' I looked at the little chap and said in German: 'They'd never have accepted you.' The little devil grinned at that and said, also in German: 'I beg your pardon?' He speaks German, perfect German. He's a student, a language student, and my job as interpreter is entirely superfluous. Most of the American front-line officers are students and can speak German. When officers of Polish or Italian origin talk together they speak in German, not English. The émigrés of course speak better

German than they do English, and they've brought masses of German-Americans with them."

We went to the doctor's. We found him alone, staring in most melancholy fashion at his nicotine-stained finger-ends. There were noticeable blank patches on the walls. The doctor nodded sadly.

"Gone!" he said.

"The French know something about art," I remarked in an effort to cheer him up.

"Yes," said he. "I saw them in his car. All taken out of their frames and neatly rolled up in bundles. He took the best."

"Who?" I asked.

"The general!" said the doctor.

"And?" I asked.

The doctor said:

"I told him those were my pictures."

"And?" I asked.

The doctor said:

"He answered: '*Vous avez beaucoup de goût, monsieur!*' Then he drove off."

"What is it like down there?" Ille asked.

I said peevishly, throwing down my beret on the table:

"I don't know. I'm not going down any more. I can't go down any more. An American sentry took my *Wehrpass* and tore it up."

"But why?" Ille asked.

"I'll tell you why," I said. "He knows of course that for the Americans a man of my age without a *Wehrpass* is automatically a soldier or an SS man who for some reason or other doesn't want to produce his pay-book."

"Is that very bad?" Ille asked.

"I don't know, and I don't feel any particular inclination to find out. The only thing I do know for certain is that the prisoners-of-war are dying of hunger and that the field in which they have to sleep is hellish damp. You won't be allowed to bring me food or to rub my arm with the anti-rheumatics lotion."

Ille fell silent for a while; then she said, with evident admiration:

"The Americans know everything about us!"

I said:

"They know as much as the National-Socialists knew, and that is far too little."

In fact my anger with the Americans increased daily. I was well aware that this anger was emotional in origin, not intellectual. It was a true German anger at missed opportunities, at the discrepancy between their proclamations and their actual behaviour. I said to Ille:

"What makes one's words stick in one's throat whenever one

attempts to have a conversation with an American is their monumental self-righteousness. They prove with every sentence, every action, that they know absolutely nothing, yet they pretend that they are the only people who know anything. When confronted with several alternatives they do not hesitate: with energy and assurance they immediately choose the worst. And what is particularly bad is the way they continually act contrary to their own true interests.”

“Just like the Nazis,” remarked Ille, without any sign of emotion. I said:

“Yes. And with the Nazis you noticed every little symptom at once. Why don’t you do the same with the Americans?”

Ille said sharply:

“You talk as though you’d swallowed all the Nazis’ anti-American propaganda.”

I said:

“Maybe. But one thing is certain. The Americans have swallowed all their own anti-German propaganda.”

Ille fell silent. After a little while she said:

“You forget that there’s a difference between injustice on the part of the state elevated to the status of a principle and injustice on the part of individuals. . . . If you’re unable to go down any more, then I’ll have to go instead. We can’t simply sit up here and starve to death.”

I said:

“There’s no point in going down. There’s nothing there. The shops are empty and the stocks have all been looted.”

Indeed there was nothing left. The two children from Ludwigshafen, who ran about the little town all day long, fed us. They hung around the negroes’ field kitchens and in the evenings they would bring us a little sack of white beans or a packet of very white biscuits with rather a dusty taste. Our cows still gave milk, but not enough, for the hay was finished and it was too early to cut the new grass; still the dairy was more insistent than ever that we deliver our quota. The hens, getting no corn, refused to lay and the potatoes had all been eaten. The Poles and the Ukrainians ceased working for the peasants, because the food the latter could give them was now inadequate. They were well fed by the Americans in camps and occasionally, with a sardonic expression on their faces, they would pass on a share of their sumptuous rations to the peasants. Naturally they were in no hurry to join the convoys which were intended to transport them back to their homes. In noisy groups they wandered about the streets of the little town, while the Germans only left their homes when absolutely necessary and then they walked quickly and nervously. “Just like the Berlin Jews between four and five,” Ille remarked sharply.

But it was astonishing how many possibilities still remained when it seemed to be the end of everything. Ille remembered that she owned

several cases of a nutritional powder from which 'cutlets' could be made, hamburger-like objects which, because of their strong flavour, the guests at the Hotel 'Koenigshof' had refused during even the leanest periods of the war. This powder was a *tour de force* of the German inventive genius. Ille ate her concoctions bravely and even had the perfidy to maintain that they tasted very good. But neither the cat nor the dog would touch these 'cutlets.'

From time to time Diewald arrived, like a raven, and fed us. Sometimes he would bring a bag full of beets, and sometimes food from his American negro friends. I asked him what the Americans were planning to do about feeding the populace. He said:

"They want to let us stew in our own juice for a bit—only there's no juice left."

He said he had asked the little Chinese about this, and for reply the latter had simply shown him a couple of photographs. . . . Diewald looked at me as he said this; he seemed to assume that I would know about the photographs to which he was referring. But Ille and I were entirely in the dark.

"What sort of photographs?" we asked.

Diewald said:

"Oh, haven't you seen them yet? Next time I come up I'll bring them with me."

When he returned he had them. He said:

"Have you ever heard of Mauthausen?"

"Mauthausen? No. Why?"

"Near Linz, just over fifty miles from here."

"Never heard of it," I said.

"There was a concentration camp there. You've heard of concentration camps?"

"Of course," I said. "Everybody has."

"In your opinion," said Diewald, "how many of them would you guess there were?"

"Well, there was Oranienburg and Dachau and Papenburg and . . . and . . ."

"And Theresienstadt," said Ille, "and the one where they put Axel, what was that one called? . . . in Saxony. . . ."

"That's right," said I, "Hohenstein. . . ."

"Yes," said Diewald. "But have you ever heard of Auschwitz? Or Belsen? I only know three or four of the names . . . the Americans count them by the hundred!"

"Oh well," I said disdainfully, "what difference does the number make? As long ago as 1934 they knew such places existed in Germany, they knew it better than we did. Does moral indignation increase in numerical proportion?"

"Wait a minute," said Diewald, glancing at Ille and myself.

He produced a bundle of pictures, photographs clipped on to a big sheet of folded paper. He spread it out, asking:

"I hope you have strong nerves, madame."

Ille thought that after her experiences in the air raids she could rely on the strength of the nerves. Diewald handed us the pictures.

I could not sleep that night. I walked about outside. The air still retained the heat of the day, the stars glittered in a cloudless sky. Lights were burning down in Siegsdorf. The German prisoners-of-war encamped in the field outside the town had lit fires, but it was certain that they had no food to cook on them. Diewald and the captain had tried in every way to persuade the peasants to deliver food—but the peasants, too, had nothing left, and, besides, only half of what was collected ever reached the valley. Every day more people poured into the little town. Lately fugitives had been arriving from Czecho-Slovakia, Sudeten Germans who had lost everything. Only reluctantly would they tell what had happened to them: when they did speak they must have soon realised from the silence of the listeners that nobody believed them. It was hard to believe them. I did. And in any case the Americans must know the truth.

A light came on in Ille's window. So she could not sleep either, and had switched on her lamp in order to read a little. I went upstairs and knocked on her door—it was a long time since last I had been to see her for a nocturnal conversation. She was not reading. She was lying with her hands behind her head, staring at the ceiling. On her night-table stood a photograph of Pablo. I knew that during the last few months she had thought a great deal about Pablo. The last news of him had come from Schwerdte in the Ruhr; so he had been in Model's army which had been surrounded in the Ruhr and had had to surrender. One day at table Ille had suddenly begun to speak of her anxiety on Pablo's account. Hilde, who was normally so silent, said angrily:

"What do you expect me to say? At least your Pablo is in Germany. My Günther is in Russia!"

Never once, during all these years, had Hilde and Ille quarrelled. Ille fell silent.

Now I sat down on the edge of Ille's bed and said:

"I can't sleep."

Ille said:

"Neither can I."

I said:

"Don't worry about Pablo. One day he'll be standing outside the door, sun-burned and sweaty and rather hungry and a bit dirty—and if I know you the first thing you'll make him do is take a bath."

Ille said:

"Oh that's not what I've been thinking about. What I'm frightened of is that everything won't be the way it used to be."



"Nothing will be the way it used to be," I said, "and it's right that it shouldn't be."

"You can say that," Ille replied, "but will we be able to stand it? Won't we become strangers to one another—I mean you and me. We've become such strangers in the last few months already."

There was no answer that I could give to this. It was true.

"And if everything is going to be different," Ille said, "you must promise me that between us everything will remain just as it has been during all these years. Promise me!"

How often had I had to make these impossible promises to Ille! She had a childish faith in my prophetic powers, though what I prophesied never came true. "Promise me there won't be a war!" And I promised it. "Promise me nothing will happen to me!" And I promised it. Promise me this and promise me that, and I had always done so. And always it had consoled her.

"But you're talking rubbish!" I now cried.

Ille said:

"When I saw those pictures today I knew: everything will have to be paid for!"

I shouted:

"But not in the same coin! That's madness! That would mean there'd never be an end to it!"

"Look!" said Ille, almost with a note of triumph: "You want to get off! And me, I want to get off too."

I said:

"I wasn't thinking about you or me. I was thinking about the Americans. If they're such stupid conquerors as we were—what's the point of their victory?"

"But it's so understandable," Ille said.

"Stupidity," I said, "is the most understandable thing in the world. What depresses me is not our defeat but the fact that our conquerors are making that defeat pointless."

"But that's not true!" cried Ille. "What have they done? Every day you come and say they did this and they're doing that. And the way you say it you seem actually pleased that that's what is happening. Because it justifies you. And that's unfair. What in fact have they done so far? Give them time!"

"Oh," said I, "give them time! That's fair, is it? That's the same fairness we showed the National-Socialists. And now? Do you think one stupidity, one crime, just cancels out another? That way we won't take a single step forward. The problem is one of establishing a valid order of society. We threw our chances away—and now they're doing the same with theirs. It's madness!"

Ille cried:

"Your valid orders of society mean nothing to me. The Germans

mean nothing to me, and if what you say is true the Americans don't either. All I care about is that it makes me suffer!"

"Well," I said, and I was losing my temper, "I don't see what you've got to complain about. You came through it all pretty well. You've far less reason to complain than anybody you know, let alone the millions you don't know. And that goes for me too. We've had it lucky, Ille, and we've no cause to be resentful. We belong to the small minority which has no right to squawk. And for just that reason it is our duty from now on to further the cause of commonsense, and nothing but commonsense!"

For a time Ille was silent. Then she said:

"I must tell you something awful. I haven't had it lucky. I know you thought the whole time that what counted was that we should survive. But I haven't survived. I'm not the same person whom you used to know. What is best and most valuable in me is dead. They killed it. The last twelve years have been frightful for me. I always tried not to let you see. We lived well, if that's what you mean, we lived well from day to day. And at night you snored and your snores could be heard three rooms away. Was I ever sentimental? I was not sentimental, I was always rather tough. It's a question of nerves and a question of imagination. Naturally I knew as well as you did what was being done to the Jews, to the Polish intellectuals, to the Russian commissars, to the Czech students, to the German communists, to all the people who suddenly vanished. It was far away, it was as far away as you were when you were in gaol. And in any case I had nothing for which I must take a stand except myself and you and our handful of friends. Death is not as bad for the person who dies as for the persons who survive. We lost nobody who was really close to us, so close that we would have had to exact revenge or something of the sort—those other dead, in Munich and Berlin. I saw with my own eyes, and my memory is stronger than my imagination. Which is why I think it right that the Americans should show us those photographs, and they should also show the other ones, the ones of Cologne and Nuremberg and Dresden. We should never forget; memory must do for us what imagination cannot. Those pictures—yes, they affected me, they showed me what was happening while I lived so merrily from day to day, while I suspected what was going on but could not imagine it. I suspected it, but it was not that which kept me awake at night, which lay like a perpetual shadow across my path; it was not a sensation of my own guilt, it was simply fear."

She gripped my hand, crying:

"Oh, I've always enjoyed living so much. I've always been terribly scared when I think about death. But when it was close to me, in the Königshof cellar, I wasn't scared. I just sat there with my arms in front of my face and thought: better to die than to go on living so unhappily, disfigured maybe, without a face, without legs or arms. I love life so

that I want to have it all or none of it. And part of life is dignity! Not just a face and legs and arms, but dignity too! And for twelve years they've been trying to deprive me of my dignity. What is the meaning of life without love? I wanted to love each day, and the country, and the Germans among whom I lived, and you and me. But I wasn't allowed to. I had to learn to despise everything, the day and the country and the Germans and you and me. How could I love and respect when I was neither loved nor respected? Where there is no dignity there is hatred; I didn't want to hate but I had to learn. I got to know hatred, chiefly hatred of myself—it was myself I hated most. I knew that in the eyes of all other people I had become exactly what all others were all the time in mine.”

I said huskily:

“Nothing happened to you!”

Ille said:

“Nothing happened to me. But every day something might have happened. I could never forget that silly joke about us that was current abroad—about the Swiss businessman who said that when there was a knock on his door at six in the morning he knew it was just the milkman.”

Ille said:

“Since the arrival of the Americans the shadows have lifted. I know I shall get back by dignity. I know I shall be able to love again. I know I shall again feel respect, and be loved and respected myself. Nobody will come and compel me to sleep on straw. Don't laugh! That was always my most awful thought, that somebody would have the power to compel me, me a woman, me Ille, who loves life so much that I want to have it all or none of it, that somebody could come and compel me to sleep on straw! For there should be no straw so long as beds exist. Straw is tyranny and contempt, straw is the surrender of dignity, animals sleep on straw in their own filth. And that, that is something I no longer need to fear—and that is why I'm happy the Americans are here. They know about dignity! They have preached it! They have promised something which nobody has promised before! Whatever may happen, whatever excesses individuals may commit—there are swine everywhere—the principle is still there! The will, the respect! And behind the principle is the power, and that is why I am so happy the Americans are here! They may let us go hungry—the job they have undertaken in trying to feed a whole nation is enormous—they may change our way of life—that is the right of the conquerors if they really believe that their way is better than ours—they may do a great deal more to us, but I'll forgive them, simply and solely because one thing is no longer possible, simply and solely because if there's a knock at the door at six tomorrow morning it cannot now be anyone except the milkman.”

"Go to sleep," I said. "Go to sleep. It will be the milkman, only he won't be delivering milk, he'll be coming to take it away."

She kissed me and I left her.

Next morning there was a knock at the door. I awoke with a smile, thinking: 'It's the milkman,' and turned over on to my other side. After a while Ille looked into my room. She was wearing a dressing-gown, and she said:

"There are two Americans downstairs. They want to see you."

"What for?"

"I don't know. They came in a car. They're officers."

I put on my dressing-gown and bedroom slippers.

They were seated at the table in the dining-room. One was small, rather stout, with coarse features: the other was tall, with gloomy eyes. Both wore helmets and pistols, and from their holsters there hung long leather thongs. They got up as I came in. The smaller one introduced himself as Sullivan and his colleague as Murphy. I asked them to resume their seats. Ille sat down on the bench beside the stove.

After a short pause Sullivan said: "*I am sorry but you are arrested.*"\*

Ille jumped up. She said:

"There must be some mistake. He said you're under arrest."

"I understood. Ask him why. . . ."

Ille asked him. The American answered clearly and plainly:

"*Oh, he is a big Nazi.*"

Ille had a lively conversation with Sullivan. She smiled, but I could not understand a word of what she was saying. I waited impatiently for Sullivan's reply, but when it came I could not understand that either.

Ille was standing up and she looked at me with an expression of terror. She said:

"I can't understand it. He says he's from Kitzbühel and you're to be taken there for interrogation. He says it's possible that the whole thing might be a mistake but he's not in a position to make a decision about that."

I said:

"Well, that's obvious. His sort never are. So tell him I'm going upstairs to get dressed."

Ille said quickly:

"Stay! Stay down here. There must be some explanation. Please—let me tell him. If I tell him about us he can't possibly arrest you."

I said irritably:

"Oh, stop it. You're only making it all more complicated."

Ille said:

"No, please! Let me tell him. I must, I know I must. It's so good to think I can help you for once, I know it's right I should tell him."

\* Phrases in English in the original are henceforth in italics.—*Translator.*

"No," I said. "I've been mixed up in this sort of game before. You'll only confuse everything."

"I must tell him. I couldn't sleep at night if I knew I'd had a chance to help you and hadn't taken it." Quickly she turned to Sullivan and said: "Sir—I am Jewish!"

Now they all three began talking. At last Ille said:

"I can't understand at all. I told him and he asked me if I could prove it. I said of course I could, and then . . . and then he said—I'd have to come too."

"That's done it!" I remarked grimly.

Ille spoke to Sullivan again. When she had finished, the little man nodded his head slowly and said finally:

"Yes!"

Ille said quickly:

"Imagine, I asked him if this meant that I was under arrest too and he says I am."

"Well, well," I said. "This is a fine business! Now go upstairs and pack your things."

Murphy followed Ille. I called to her to bring my yellow suitcase from Bolle's to my room. I thought that it would be best at this time for her to be kept constantly on the move and I shouted that she should inform Hilde and hand over the house to her. I was about to tell her not to do this after all, for I was afraid that in that case they might arrest Hilde as well, but Sullivan signalled me to be quiet. I was now about to go upstairs myself, but Sullivan began to search the room. It was soon done and he took nothing. I opened the door into the kitchen and he glanced about it. He went into my workroom and examined the books.

I went upstairs without bothering to wait for him and began to get dressed. A moment or two later Sullivan appeared, carrying a book. It was a copy of the English edition of my book *Die Stadt*. Ille had put the case from Bolle's in my room and I packed it, deciding carefully what I would need. Then I went across to Ille's room. Murphy was standing outside Ille's door, and Sullivan seemed to be reproaching him for not having gone in with her. I preferred Murphy to Sullivan. Ille had dressed and was packing.

Sullivan showed Ille the book. In it lay a card from the American Embassy, a note that Martha Dodd had written, thanking me for the dedication. Ille explained to Sullivan about the card, not without a trace of triumph. Sullivan took Murphy aside, and they proceeded to have an animated conversation together.

Ille said, in despair:

"Can you understand all this?"

I was brutal enough to say:

"They do indeed look exactly like a couple of milkmen."

When we left the room Hilde was standing in the hall, pale but calm. As I went past her I said quickly:

“Tell Diewald and the captain. We’re going to Kitzbühel.”

Ille said harshly:

“Look after the house. See what sort of a job you can make of it.”

Hilde said nothing.

On the way out Sullivan tossed the book through the open door, on to the table in my workroom. We got into the car. It was an Opel with a German number-plate. I sat beside Sullivan, who drove, Ille in the back with Murphy. We went up into the mountains.

On the steep bend in the road near Lofer the car broke down. Sullivan had obviously been driving too fast. The car came to a halt and refused to start. Sullivan stopped a jeep and we drove on in that. We arrived in Lofer at an inn which served as the headquarters for the unit stationed there. Sullivan waved us into a corner, while he had a whispered conversation with the officers who were sitting about. Then he began to telephone.

The Opel drove up again. We had to get in, and suddenly Sullivan said in excellent German:

“We won the war because we have the best mechanics!”

I said: “So that’s why!” and fell silent.

In Kitzbühel we drove along the main street for a little and then turned sharply into an alleyway, where we stopped. We got out and were standing in front of a narrow, tall house. Murphy rang the bell; the door was opened by a man in shirtsleeves. Ille had been gazing about the alley. Now she walked through the door with me. She found herself facing a grill and she took a step back, gripping my arm. She said:

“But . . . this is a prison!”

The man in shirtsleeves said:

“Well? What did you expect?”

Ille cried:

“But, we’re supposed to be interrogated.”

She looked about her, horrified. Murphy and Sullivan had already disappeared. The man in shirtsleeves was closing the door. I felt angry with Ille.

“Don’t be so naïve,” I said.

She did everything wrong. It seemed quite in vain that I had told her so much about my prison experiences. She was really upset. When the warder, a short-legged, elderly man, searched me, as is customary, and placed what I had in my pockets on the table before him, Ille pressed her hands to her breast and said:

“You won’t touch me!”

The warder said:

“Don’t make a fuss! Please!”

I said:

“Sit down and shut up!”

An American officer, very blond and very young with a red-and-white band about his cap, entered the room through a rear door and said:

“Were you in the Party?”

I said:

“No!”

Suddenly the officer began to yell:

“Nazi swine! Despicable creature! Haven’t you even the courage to admit it? Look at Bacherl there! He’s got guts! He was in the Party and he admitted it at once!”

The warder, Bacherl, smiled and said, without a trace of embarrassment:

“I was in the Party all right, but only because I was forced to join.”

Ille said:

“*Sir—I am Jewish!*”

The officer shouted:

“That makes it all the worse! Well, you’ll see, you swine! I’ll interrogate you myself!”

And he disappeared into the back room. At once we heard loud noises, the sound of someone falling heavily, the voice of the officer shouting and a high, penetrating whimper:

“There you are!” said Herr Bacherl. “You don’t want to make a fuss. It ain’t appreciated here. That gentleman’s a Pole.”

Herr Bacherl noted down our particulars. It was the first time for many years that Ille had given her real name. Then Herr Bacherl threw our belongings into two bags and pushed a receipt towards us, saying:

“Here, sign!”

We signed. I did not dare look at Ille. I behaved as though I were interested in my surroundings. We had to climb a flight of stairs, uneven, worn stairs, past locked doors. Ille clung to my arm and I could feel how she was trembling, but I said nothing. Herr Bacherl unlocked the first door at the top of the stairs and pushed Ille in. Ille realised that this was her cell and she cried pitifully:

“But we must stay together!”

“What next!” remarked Herr Bacherl.

“Ille, nothing will happen to you, I promise. Go on in, think of what I always told you about prison—one of the few possible places to be. That’s what I said, didn’t I? And look? Straw sacks on the bed. We were talking about that only yesterday!”

I managed to make Ille smile. I said:

“And at twelve sharp dinner will be on the table. That’s right, Herr Bacherl, isn’t it? With us punctuality counts!”

Herr Bacherl smiled too and said:

“That’s right, that’s right.”

Then he locked Ille’s door. He led me to another cell off the same corridor.

There was an inmate already in my cell, a shabby-looking little man lying on one of the beds.

“Company for you!” said Herr Bacherl.

The cell was quite large for one person and quite small for two. On either side stood wire beds on which were laid very repulsive, lumpy and incredibly filthy sacks of straw. But at least there was no latrine-bucket. My cellmate was a native of Kitzbühel, a tailor by trade, and he immediately offered to turn the worn collar of my summer coat when I was ‘outside.’ He had to serve a ten days’ stretch for having broken the curfew. He had been drunk at the time. Herr Bacherl was a friend of his. Herr Bacherl had been a prison official even before the First World War. On the door hung a notice so faded as to be almost illegible, but the Imperial and Royal seal was still visible. Herr Bacherl seemed to be a persevering and at the same time adaptable character.

From downstairs horrible noises were again audible, coming from the interrogation room. My tailor knew all about it.

“It’s the other fellow now,” he said.

Apparently it was two parachute soldiers who were being ‘interrogated’ by the Polish-American officer. They had been arrested on a charge of using the syringes with which SS men could remove the ‘blood group’ tattoo-mark. It was the first time I heard about such things. The two parachute soldiers, who had been left here in Kitzbühel, were sent for alternately and beaten to a jelly.

Midday dinner was excellently cooked but there was very little of it. I requested Herr Bacherl that he convey my congratulations to his wife and my thanks for her excellent cooking. Should she need anyone to help her peel the potatoes, the young lady who had arrived with me had considerable experience of such work. Herr Bacherl seemed impressed and thoughtful.

I was very worried about Ille. I was shocked at how wrong her reactions had been. The first night in the Kitzbühel lock-up I slept extremely badly, and solely on account of Ille. The whole afternoon I had spent walking anxiously up and down, waiting to be interrogated, though I kept telling myself that this was most unlikely. The gentlemen were certainly in no hurry: such gentlemen never are.

My tailor was not particularly communicative. He had already been inside for a couple of days and hoped to be ‘remitted’ after five more. He said, secretly:

“Here in Austria you can fix anything.”

Herr Bacherl had an assistant, Walter by name, and he was an honest-to-God ‘resistance fighter.’ At first I imagined that he had been given his present job in order that he might keep an eye on that ‘forced



Nazi' Bacherl—but later it transpired that Bacherl was his father-in-law. I had frequently attempted to explain to Ille that most trouble inside prisons resulted from the way unaccustomed prisoners allowed the warders to treat them. This was the reason why criminals were usually quite happy in gaol, while intellectuals later wrote books about how they had been insulted. It was a great relief to me to find that Ille, after recovering from her initial shock, had regained her self-control. Even on the second day she had reached such a point with little Walter that she persuaded him to fetch me to her door. Through the old-fashioned key-hole I could see her seated on her bed, her arms clutched about her knees. She came to the door as soon as she heard my voice. Herr Bacherl had already proposed to her that she help his wife with the potatoes, and Ille had immediately agreed. Now, however, she was already angling for another job, one that would give her an opportunity of coming in contact with the Americans. She whispered that I need not be anxious on her account. Apart from this, Walter would serve as a link between us. Ille was all right.

My tailor was indeed 'remitted,' but I was not alone for long in my cell. Suddenly a wave of arrests was upon us. Every half-hour or so the door would open and Herr Bacherl would bring in a somewhat bewildered contemporary. We had to get rid of our beds and lay straw sacks on the floor. That evening we were nine: a colonel of armoured troops, a lieutenant from Wehrmacht supreme headquarters, a Slovak ministerial councillor, a Kitzbühel governmental councillor, a police captain, two unspecified men who conversed in some east European tongue, and a man who announced that he was a doctor-in-chief. The military men knew at once how to settle down. The civilians, and particularly the foreigners, stood leaning dejectedly against the wall, and at night had finally to be urged to lie down on the floor with the others. 'like spoons in a silver-chest' as the Colonel put it. No one knew why he had been arrested: the foreigners understood nothing, having, as they said, 'placed themselves under the protection of the Americans': the officers approved neither of the place nor of the system, maintaining that as prisoners-of-war they were entitled to be treated according to the terms of the Geneva Convention—a statement which produced, on the part of the police captain, a short but impressive laugh: the Slovak gentleman attempted at once to bribe Herr Bacherl, and indeed he was the first to be taken for interrogation, nor did he ever reappear. Herr Bacherl told us not to worry; he said nobody had ever been kept long in this prison.

The W.C. was half-way down the stairs. For reasons of simplicity Walter took us there in a body. Ille was engaged in cleaning the modest installation. This was her job, and she told me that only thus could she come into contact with Americans entering or leaving the prison. She had already given two of them a brief résumé of her 'case,' and both

had promised to do something for her. They were, said Ille, from the CIC, but neither she nor I had the slightest idea what sort of a thing this was. Walter wanted to lock Ille into her cell again, but she stuck her foot in the door and asked me quickly what she should say when she was interrogated. I replied:

“The truth, of course, it’s the only way we can be sure not to contradict each other’s statements.”

This was Saturday, however, and there was no prospect of being interrogated before Monday. But Monday too passed and nothing happened.

The inmates of my cell were changed and I alone remained. The military men believed that after interrogation they would be sent at once to a prisoner-of-war camp; the foreigners were quite certain they would be set free, though when Herr Bacherl came to fetch them he informed them that they were simply to be transported ‘elsewhere’; the German civilians who had been interrogated were always returned to another cell.

For a few hours I was alone, and I enjoyed my solitude. Taken all in all we had been a most communicative lot, and bit by bit we had each told more or less his whole life story (including of course myself). It had not been very interesting. They were all educated men—the doctor-in-chief we took to be a professional confidence trickster—and like myself they all simply accepted the collapse in the same dumbfounded way that they had accepted the phenomenon of National-Socialism. They were all heartily glad the war was over and they were all horrified that we had lost it despite everything. When the soldiers spoke of the war they gave the impression that it had all been great fun, except in Russia. And the civilians seemed to think that National-Socialism had contained a great deal that was good, apart from its essential nature. All, including myself, regarded what had happened to the Jews and in the concentration camps as very filthy; all, including myself, swore that though we had had our suspicions we had not known, and that there was nothing we could have done about it. (Only the ‘doctor-in-chief’ hinted that he had actually seen the inside of a concentration camp, but this we felt to be a confidence trick.) None of them had the slightest idea what would happen now, and nor had I. Each of them had a thousand explanations for what had happened, as had I, but none of us produced one reason that was sufficiently enlightening, neither they nor myself. It was not very interesting.

Now I was alone, and I paced up and down my cell thinking of Ille, who was sitting twenty feet away, her arms about her knees. Herr Bacherl flung open the door and pushed two men into the cell. Did I say men? They were a couple of giants, great strapping fellows, mountains of bulging flesh and pulsing blood, in a word two Tyrolean peasants. They wore hob-nailed boots and green stockings and short, leather

trousers with broad, embroidered belts and green jackets. One giant had a great aquiline nose and was in general the arch type of pure Nordic German. Spitting, he strode across to the window and seizing the bars rattled them, breathing heavily. The other giant, who ran to breadth rather than height, with swelling biceps that threatened to split the sleeves of his jacket, lowered himself on to a bed, and glancing about him said shyly:

“The shame of it! Oh, the shame, the shame!!”

The tall one turned about. Suddenly he buried his face in his hands. I thought that now he would begin to cry. But when he let fall his hands I saw that he had forced back his tears like a man. Then he sat down on the bed beside the broad one. They gave each other a meaningful nod, then they glanced at me and gave me a meaningful nod, then the tall one nodded again and said:

“The shame of it!”

There they sat, the two giants, their work-worn hands hanging between their knees, their shoulders slumped, lines of misery about nose and mouth. They both wore a little moustache, a Hitler-moustache.

The door opened and a man walked in—‘Ah ha!’ thought I, ‘the third of the trio.’ He looked exactly like the other two, except that he had no moustache and that in his hand he carried a key, the key to the cell. Behind him stood a respectful Herr Bacherl.

The newcomer favoured me with only a rapid glance and then looked at the other two, who had risen expectantly and now approached him, their shoulders slumped. The man gave them both a meaningful nod, and said in the same, rough, hoarse, Tyrolean voice:

“It’s you! You’re the ones! You!”

The tall one, bending forward and staring curiously, asked:

“What’s up?”

The man said:

“Are you the mayor?”

“Yes, that’s me.”

The man said:

“I know nothing about you. But that one—that’s the baker!”

The broad one leaned forward, still staring intently, while the tall one gripped his heart and sighed deeply. The broad one said:

“Me?”

“You,” said the man. “Everyone knows about you. You lout! You’ll get a bashing! A proper bashing! And you deserve it!”

“Me . . . ?”

The man raised the key in a menacing gesture and cried:

“You insulted God Almighty!”

The broad one shrank into himself, his head buried between his shoulders, and protested:

"It's not true! It's not . . .! That's not what happened . . . it wasn't me . . . it was somebody else . . .!"

The man nodded, a thoughtful nod, pregnant with meaning:

"You'll get a bashing, the pair of you. A bashing! Don't you know who I am?"

"H'm . . .!" said the other two.

The man nodded:

"I'm the inspector here. In 'thirty-eight you fired me. You fired me! Nazi louts! But now, now I'm back . . .! A bashing is what you'll get, a bashing!"

He nodded and was gone.

The tall one sank on to the bed with a heavy sigh. He buried his face in his hands and groaned:

"It's the end! It's the end!"

The broad one stared at me and then began to talk to me in his rough, harsh, Tyrolean accent. I understood enough of what he said to grasp that he was the baker and had been the district group leader of the town where the tall one had been mayor. One day when he was drunk, quite unusually drunk, something must have happened, something he could no longer quite recall. Anyhow he had 'removed' God Almighty—in the form of a Crucifix—from the parish hall, had smashed it, and thrown the pieces on the fire, in brief, well, that's what must have happened. . . .

From downstairs came the sound of blows and screams. I had already grown used to this—for there were interrogations held each day save only Saturdays and Sundays. But my two Tyroleans pricked up their ears. I nodded at them and said, in a heavy, meaningful voice:

"Somebody's getting a bashing!"

"Beaten up?" they asked breathlessly.

I nodded, and they too nodded like mandarins. Then they swallowed, the way men swallow, unusually strong and bashful men, who will forcibly hide their weakness. This amused me, but at the same time I found my amusement distressing; it was cheap, for I knew that I should never be beaten up. I felt really sorry for the two of them, they were at the end of their tether. I began to talk to them. They answered all my questions at once and eagerly in their rough, hoarse, Tyrolean accent, of which I only understood every other sentence. But this half was interesting enough, considerably more interesting than what my former 'educated' companions had had to say. They were both National-Socialists at the time when the Party was illegal in Austria. They had both sat in Schuschnigg's concentration camp at Wöllersdorf in 1938 (and both knew my book *Die Geächteten*, which had circulated 'illegally' in that camp). When they discovered who I was they showed such genuine delight that I felt ashamed. Yes, they were old Nazis.

"I'm an old Nazi," said the baker, "and that's what I'll go on being!"

Then he gave me a meaningful look. They were proud to be Nazis, and even now they were firmly convinced that everything they had done had been right—except perhaps the business with God Almighty, but then the baker had been drunk at the time. They regarded the end of National-Socialist régime as an unspeakable tragedy, not only for themselves but for the whole of their parish, for the Tyrol, for Austria, for Greater Germany; a misfortune so unutterable that nothing could ever put it right. They knew that the hope and meaning of their lives were now over, that this was the end, period, finished. I tried to persuade them that it was not so. (“Life goes on.”—“Change is surprisingly rapid.”—“In five years, mark my words, it will all seem quite different.”) They shook their heads and murmured about ‘the Blacks’ and muttered about ‘the Reds.’ The Blacks and the Reds, these were the crux of their ideas. Austria had two enemies who fought for possession of the country, both equally strong, equally perfidious, equally irreconcilable—their mutual struggle had poisoned Austria, had destroyed Austria. To end this had been the National-Socialists’ wish, and everything that the National-Socialists had done in Austria had been better than the struggle between Blacks and Reds. Now, they said, now it was beginning again, the fighting, the struggle which must destroy their country. And they said this not sneeringly but with a deep regret. Such was their theory, a simple theory, far too simple to argue against. For them this theory applied to the whole world—and they were right, they were damnably right! Nor did they have any doubts, nor were they smug that they knew the truth.

The door opened and a man came in, a great lump of a man who looked exactly like the other two. He also wore mountain boots and green socks and leather trousers, and he also had a little moustache. But the moustache was not quite the same; it was a bloody scar. The man’s face, a broad, fleshy face on a bull-neck, was puffed and swollen, his ears torn. He stood there and nodded heavily to the others.

“They beat you?” the two men asked together, jumping to their feet.

The man nodded, infinite bewilderment in his swollen eyes, and pointed towards the floor. He had been mayor of another town. Now he sat beside me, on my bed, and told me his story in his rough, hoarse, Tyrolean accent.

The Americans had arrested him at work, at work in the fields. They had taken him to a Polish camp, where he had had to run the gauntlet. Then the Americans had made him shave off his moustache with a penknife. Then they had brought him to the prison where a young, blond officer with a red-and-white band around his cap had beaten him about the head again—we had heard the noise. He imagined that this officer with the red-and-white band must be an Austrian émigré, but I told him he was an American Pole.

The other two stared at him, fascinated. The baker flexed his powerful arms and cried in his rough, hoarse, Tyrolean voice that he wouldn't let them beat him, anything else except that. He asked in his loud voice why the mayor had not defended himself—but the latter simply let his heavy, wounded head fall on to his chest, and then, in that position, shook it slowly in a gesture of denial. In this painfully impressive way he showed us there was no sense in resistance, no sense and no possibility—and the silent gesture was extraordinarily convincing.

I now said loudly:

“But God damn it, to see you people, tough as oaks, arms like hammers, chests like bronze, legs like steel—and you behave as though a few blows meant the end of the world! Don't you ever fight at home? At a dance, or when you're drunk or when you have a bit of an upset about a girl?”

The new arrival stared at me. Then, blowing out his chest, he said: “Oh, that's not it! The beating . . . it's not that that hurts, not that. . . .” Then, striking a tremendous blow on his chest which reverberated like a bronze gong, he said, “It's what it does to your soul! Your soul!”

And the other two looked at him, and at me, and at one another, and nodded heavily.

On the tenth day of our arrest at Kitzbühel, when Walter was taking us to the W.C., I went to Ille's door. She came as soon as I knocked and whispered that Murphy had been here. He had asked her if she had brought the book, the book with the letter from the American Embassy. She said she had not and Murphy had groaned, remarking that this meant he must drive all the way to Siegsdorf again. Ille was feeling very confident. Murphy had assured her that we would be interrogated soon.

“Everything is going to be all right,” she whispered. “I have a feeling tomorrow we'll be home!”

A little later Walter told me that the border between Austria and Germany had been closed—a fact which seemed to please him. My three Tyrolean peasants gave heavy, meaningful nods when I informed them of this. In the late afternoon Ille and I were fetched for interrogation. A jeep took us to the headquarters of the CIC, which I now discovered to be an American Gestapo-type organisation, or at least something of the sort. The headquarters was a few hundred yards from the prison, in what had formerly been Party offices. In the bare and narrow hall Murphy met us; so he had not been to Siegsdorf after all. In good German he said it was not his fault that we were still here, and disappeared the moment a door opened. Ille and I were separated. Ille was taken into a room where sat a very big, very fat man wearing an army shirt, with an unusually large amount of dark and greasy hair. I was led into another room, a few doors further on, in which I found a very young, blond man, also wearing a khaki shirt and without any

badges of rank. At first I started, for he had a superficial resemblance to the Pole at the prison. He got up with a smile and said in pure German—with a slight Saxon intonation—that the first thing I must do was to fill in a questionnaire. He pushed a sheet of paper towards me and told me to take my time.

I filled in my name, place and date of birth. Then came a whole series of questions concerning identification marks, colour of hair, eyes, height. . . . I skipped those. The next question was my profession and with a certain hesitancy I put down: 'Writer'—I had never felt this to be a proper profession. Suddenly the young man took the form away from me and pointing at the questions which I had not yet answered asked:

"Why haven't you filled in these?"

I said:

"It states at the top that I must answer all questions exactly, and I'm not quite sure what I look like."

The young man gave me a puzzled glance and then his eyes returned to the form.

"Writer? Were you a member of the Chamber of German Writing?"

"Yes."

"Party member?"

"No."

He smiled and said:

"You needn't be frightened of telling me the truth. I know all about it. My father is a painter in Dresden and my mother a sculptress, and I know all about those Chambers. My parents joined the Party too in order to be admitted."

I said:

"I didn't."

He was smiling no longer. With a heavy frown he asked slowly:

"How did you reconcile your conscience to living and working in Germany?"

I was completely taken aback. I gazed thoughtfully at this young man with the narrow, blond head whom apparently even the subtlest questions did not deprive of his night's sleep. I said slowly:

"That is a problem I have not yet solved. But I'm quite ready to promise that in future I shall think very carefully before deciding where I shall live and for whom I shall work."

The young man returned to the questionnaire and asked in a business-like tone:

"What have you written?"

I told him. He asked who had published my books, and I told him: whether they had been translated and into which languages, and I told him. He wrote down my replies. He asked if I had acquaintances in America and what their names were; I told him and he wrote it all

down. Then he said I should give him a very brief outline of my life. I replied, feeling troubled, that I couldn't do so very briefly. He said:

"Just a few key phrases."

I thought: 'Well and good, it was bound to come to this sooner or later.' I said simply:

"Rathenau murder."

He began to smile again and said:

"Lucky for you you didn't try to conceal it!"

I said impatiently:

"My dear sir, I've written books about it *this* thick!"

At this moment an older man entered the room. He had a maple-leaf on his shoulder, and this was a major or something of the sort; so much I had picked up concerning their insignia. He picked up the questionnaire and glanced through it. The little blond man said softly, in German:

"He admitted it at once."

So the two normally conversed in German. The major brushed this aside with a wave of the hand. Then he spoke to me gruffly, with an American accent such as a German actor might assume when playing an American part:

"You were with Rowohlt?"

"Yes."

"What else have you written?"

"Films."

"Ah ha! Heil-Hitler films?"

"I imagine you can see them if you like. You seized all our films and will doubtless be making a lot of money out of them."

"Answer me yes or no."

"No."

Quickly his eyes raked me from head to foot. He said:

"Did you also write for the *Stürmer*?"

I was astonished. I tried to work out what the significance of this question might be. Suddenly he bawled at me:

"Answer yes or no!"

At the same time he crashed his fist down on the table. I looked up and said slowly:

"Before I answer this question, I would ask you never to tell anyone that you put it to me."

"Why?"

"For the sake of the CIC. If it ever became known that you had put this question to me everyone would realise immediately that you have not the faintest idea of what has been happening in Germany."

He stared at me with his piercing eyes. The blond youth gave his superior a resigned look. The latter said:

"What do you mean? It's quite possible."



I said quietly:

“It is impossible.”

The major threw the questionnaire down on the table, saying:

“Where have you put the blank signatures of Hitler and Roehm?”

Now what was up? I said, with astonishment:

“I burned them.”

The major said sharply:

“You?”

I said:

“Excuse me, that is wrong—the woman next door.”

He said:

“Why?”

I shrugged my shoulders:

“Presumably because she was frightened.”

Suddenly the major began to bawl again:

“I shall have your house searched—and woe on you if they are found!”

I said:

“Woe on me!”

The major turned on his heel and left the room. The little blond youth clipped my questionnaire to some other papers, smiling as he did so. I said:

“Should I not complete it?”

He threw the papers into the waste-paper basket and said:

“No.” Then, looking at me, he asked: “You took that woman to live with you because she is Jewish?”

“No.”

He hesitated and said:

“I thought—”

I interrupted him angrily:

“You thought! I lived with that woman because I loved her! What extraordinary notions you people have! Has the whole world gone insane?”

He looked at me and smiled. He blushed and his ears turned pink. He said nothing and neither did I. Then the major re-entered the room, saying:

“Come this way.”

I went with him. In the hall stood Ille; with a beaming smile she pressed my hand and said:

“It’s all all right!”

The major said:

“*Shut up!*”

The major took us back to the prison. On the way Ille remarked to me, casually:

“The questions were really too stupid!”

I said:

“Be quiet!”

The major stared straight ahead, apparently ignoring us. Ille said:  
“He doesn’t understand a word of German.”

I said:

“He understands every word.”

The major continued to stare straight ahead, ignoring us. Nor did his ears even go pink. At the prison gate I said:

“I’m sorry, Ille, that you should be mixed up in all this on my account.”

The major had the effrontery to ask Ille in English what I had said. She told him—in English.

I slept very badly that night. The baker, with whom I shared a bed, groaned and thrashed about. No doubt his soul was worrying him.

The next morning at five Herr Bacherl unlocked the cell door. I was to come with him and take all my stuff. Ille stood in the corridor, smiling happily:

“You see? We’re going home.”

I said dubiously:

“At five in the morning?”

“That’s what Brunswick led me to believe yesterday.”

“Who is Brunswick?”

“The one who brought us back last night, the major.”

Herr Bacherl handed us the bags containing our possessions, together with a receipt for us to sign. He said:

“Two persons, ten days, twenty marks. I’ve already taken the money.”

Ille cried:

“What! We have to pay as well?”

Herr Bacherl relapsed into a hurt silence. I said:

“Obviously. For so famous a resort as Kitzbühel it’s cheap at the price.”

I looked at our things. My watch was missing.

“Herr Bacherl, my watch!”

Herr Bacherl said:

“The two gentlemen took that.”

“What gentlemen?”

“The two what brought you here.”

I stared at Herr Bacherl. It might be true or it might not. I said:

“Herr Bacherl, the two gentlemen are called Sullivan and Murphy and are from the CIC. How would it be, Herr Bacherl, if you went there and fetched me my watch?”

Herr Bacherl turned away:

“I can’t go to the Americans . . .”

I said:

“Don’t forget, Herr Bacherl, that you will only have worked for the Americans, too, because you were ‘forced’!”

Furiously Herr Bacherl produced a twenty-mark note which he laid on the table, saying:

“Get out of here! Get out of here!”

Ille picked up the banknote in silence and turned to go.

Herr Bacherl unlocked the front door. Major Brunswick was standing outside and handed Ille and myself each a sheet of paper. A truck was parked before the door as well as a jeep containing two military policemen. Inside the truck, on benches that ran lengthwise, sat a double row of civilians who stared at us curiously. Ille understood at once. She turned furiously towards Brunswick and began to talk to him in English. He shrugged his shoulders and gave her some sort of an answer, also in English. One of the MP’s suddenly shouted at us: “*Mak snell! Mak snell!*” and raised his gun in a threatening gesture. I took Ille by the arm and pulled her towards the truck. She had become deadly pale. Without further ado I lifted her up into the truck where helping hands dragged her aboard. The MP put up the tail-board. The truck moved off.

I looked at the piece of paper Major Brunswick had pressed into my hand. It was headed *Arrest Report*. By Reason was written: *Security threat*. Ille explained to me breathlessly what this meant. She sat close beside me and clung to me each time the truck went over a bump. On her *Arrest Report* was written: *Witness in the Rathenau murder case*. Ille said:

“So I’m to be a witness. But do the Americans arrest witnesses?”

I did not reply. Suddenly Ille burst out:

“What a swine, that Brunswick! Only yesterday he was asking me if I knew anyone in Kitzbühel who could put me up. I thought it was all settled. And now! The swine! He told me just now that we are being taken for interrogation at a higher level.”

“I can imagine that. The level we’ve just come from was certainly damned low!”

“Can you make it out? To begin with there was a sort of fat man who told me he’d been a lawyer in Berlin. The first words he said to me were ‘What? A pretty Jewess living with a war criminal?’ He seemed terribly excited.”

“And?” I asked.

“I told him you weren’t a war criminal. I told him you hadn’t even been in the war, but they kept on referring to you as ‘the war criminal.’ And then this Brunswick appeared and asked me what you had written about. . . .”

“Me too,” I said.

“And imagine,” said Ille. “When I’d told him everything he suddenly asked me if you’d also written for the *Stürmer*. I thought I was going

crazy. After I'd just told him who your publishers were and everything!"

"And?"

"And nothing. I said: '*Oh heavens, no!*' and the other, the lawyer, wrote that down too. And imagine, they know all about the blank signatures. How do you suppose they heard about that?"

"I can imagine. I've always told my stories all over the place. But what is there suspect about that one?"

"He wasn't interested in why we had wanted the things in the first place. All he wished to know was why we had not kept them. He went on and on about it. He said he was going to have the house searched. Suddenly an idea occurred to me. I said that if I'd imagined that ten years later an American would find them so enormously valuable, I'd certainly have kept them for him, because I could well see that he might now get a hundred dollars apiece for them."

"Oh," said I, stretching almost comfortably. "That's good—very good . . . and . . .?"

Ille said:

"Then he stopped. And . . . yes, then he disappeared. After a little while he came back and suddenly began to shout: 'You've worked out your answers together!' I said: 'Yes.' Then in a fury he tore up my questionnaire and cried: 'What did the war criminal tell you to say?' And I said: 'He told me to tell the truth. He said it was the only way we could be sure of not contradicting one another.'"

"And?"

"That was all. Then he asked me if I had friends in Kitzbühel . . . and now—can you understand it? Witness in the Rathenau case! And they never asked me a single thing about Rathenau!"

"Nor me either," I said.

Ille was so absorbed in the events of the moment that she quite forgot her grief. I knew this quality of hers. She sat beside me and talked as though her situation were not a peculiar one. She plainly did not realise that we were now just numbers in a prison transport. We sat somewhat uncomfortably and squashed together, but then all our journeys of the past few years had been made in similar conditions. She smiled at me and was delighted as she told me the clever answers she had given to the stupid questions, and gripped my arm and said:

"Admit that I behaved magnificently! Admit it!"

I said:

"Yes."

She said proudly:

"I really behaved magnificently and there's absolutely no need for you to bother about me. When we get home I'll have an awful lot of funny stories to tell Hilde."

I said nothing, and this seemed to disquiet her. She said:

"It can't be more than a couple of days at most. Can it? Don't you think so?"

"I don't know, Ille."

"How lucky that that Brunswick should have passed us on. The higher the people who have to decide, the more intelligent they always are. Everyone knows that."

Ille seemed actually to be enjoying the prospect of a mild flirtation with some stately general: she was well aware of her ability to deal with elderly gentlemen of the better sort.

It was very hot, the white road very dusty. We drove through the valley of Elmau, towards Kufstein. Ille was the only woman in the truck. I already knew some of the inmates from Kitzbühel. Among them was the parachute soldier, Hartwig, whom I had seen when on my way to the W.C. His face was still very puffy and his left eye was encircled by a great bruise which had once been blue but was now turning a greenish-yellow.

At Kufstein the truck drew up before a prison. An MP came up and told Ille to get out of the truck. I was horribly frightened when I tried to follow Ille and was pushed back with a rifle butt. But Ille, who was looking back anxiously towards me, was not led into the prison. She was given a place in the jeep. A number of prisoners came out of the gaol and climbed aboard the truck. We moved off again at once.

Ille's place was taken by a very tall, very thin man of some sixty-five years. He introduced himself politely; Alinn was his name. On his *Arrest Report* was written '*Big Nazi, says that Poland began the war.*' He was a Westphalian and a cement specialist, who had been moved to Kufstein where he had been put in charge of a cement factory; and he was 'a Party member of course like all other decent people.' He had been seated with an acquaintance outside a café in Kufstein, and this acquaintance had remarked that Hitler ought never to have started the war. Herr Alinn had thereupon said that with his own ears he had heard a broadcast in German from Radio Warsaw in which the speaker, foaming with rage, had announced his pity for the poor, blinded German nation which would now be pitilessly crushed by the armed might of the entire world—and, Herr Alinn had maintained, this broadcast was made before the German armies invaded (or, as he put it, counter-attacked) Poland. At this point an American officer had got up from a neighbouring table and had arrested him.

We drove along the valley of the Inn to Rosenheim. Ille and I could only exchange looks. We smiled at one another when, near Kiefersfelden, we crossed the old—or rather the new—frontier. When we reached the *autobahn* she was plainly as tense as myself to see whether we would turn towards Munich or towards Siegsdorf, our home. We headed for Munich, and Ille nodded at me sadly. I felt happy to think

how close to one another Ille and I were, after ten years; the sum of our common memories was the firmest bond of all, a bond that must remain unbreakable.

As we drove across Munich all the inmates of the truck were silent. We passed through the horribly smashed city, through ruins. I looked at Ille. She sat in the back of the jeep, and the dust had covered her face with a grey film. She had removed her hat. Now she stared to left and right—I knew how much she loved Munich. Here as a young girl she had studied under Professor Kutscher; at one of the professor's famous summer parties she and two friends had started the little student cabaret, *Die Drei von der Uni*, and from this beginning had come her modest fame. She had played with the *Nachrichtern*, with Hellmut Käutner and Bobby Todd. In 1934 her little, gay, youthful dreams were over, but by then she was in Berlin and I had taken her under my wing. Now she was crying, and her tears made little channels through the dust on her face. We drove through Munich, heading north.

On the far side of Landshut the truck stopped on the open road. The MP's let us dismount to fulfil the calls of nature. I was able to exchange a few words with Ille. She had tried in vain to find out from the MP's where we were being taken and what was going to happen to us. Suddenly she gripped my hand and said:

"I don't know, I have a feeling there's something behind it all. What do you think?"

I said I had just come to the conclusion that with the Americans there was never anything behind it all except a string of platitudes. But she shook her head doubtfully. She assumed a motherly manner and told me one had to know how to speak to the Americans; I should always address every one of them as 'Sir'; they all adored that, since they had a curious ambition to be treated as though they were gentlemen.

We drove on. We saw a sign marking a road fork that led to Plattling. So we must be nearing the Danube valley. One of the two teachers amused himself by peeping through a slit in the canvas that separated us from the driver and announcing the names of the villages through which we passed. We sat, tired, sweaty and silent, in the truck and he announced:

"Natternberg!"

At once the truck left the main road and drove along a farm track. Suddenly I saw an American soldier seated behind a machine-gun. Then we passed a high, barbed-wire fence, with behind it squat, grey-green barrack huts. The track turned sharply and we stopped. The jeep had drawn up immediately behind the truck, and I could look straight down at Ille. She raised her eyes to mine and smiled. All at once there seemed to be a great many American soldiers milling about the two vehicles. One went up to the jeep and grinned at the driver, saying with a nod of his head towards Ille:

"Your girl-friend?"

The MP said:

"No—*internee*."

The expression on the soldier's face changed instantly. Grabbing Ille brutally by the arm he pulled her to her feet, shouting:

"*You dirty ————— . . . mak snell! Mak snell!*"

Then he pushed her out of the jeep. She stumbled and fell. Her little case landed on top of her. She looked anxiously up towards me; her eyes were filled with a helpless astonishment.

I jumped up. At the same moment we were surrounded by a horde of yelling, screaming American soldiers. I was hit on the leg with a rifle butt. A hand grabbed my ankle and pulled me from the truck, so that I fell full length on to the ground. Behind me the others in complete confusion were jumping down. I clambered to my feet and picked up my bag. Somebody kicked me among cries of: '*Mak snell!*' I ran towards Ille. With her case in one hand and her now filthy hat in the other she hurried past me, pursued by a screaming, swearing soldier who was attempting to tread on her heels.

With extreme haste we were pushed into single rank. We stood, Ille and I side by side, with our backs to the barbed wire and facing a barrack hut. We were breathing heavily, utterly confused and deafened by the yells of the soldiers who surrounded us with their rifles and pushed us into line. I dared not look at Ille. In front of me stood a very young soldier with black hair and unnaturally blue eyes who screamed at me, though I could not understand a word. Ille whispered:

"Keep still! Quite still!"

Now the soldier screamed at Ille. She did not reply. She whispered to me:

"Keep calm! Keep absolutely calm!"

For a while nothing happened except that the soldiers continued to mill about us, yelling. Once an officer walked past, but he did not glance our way. He entered one of the huts. Then a non-commissioned officer came out of the hut. He had four stripes on his sleeve, and he read out our names from a sheet of paper. Then he too disappeared. The vehicles in which we had come drove off and I felt a pang, as though something irrecoverable had vanished. The sergeant or whatever he was reappeared and summoned the first of us into the hut. This was Hartwig, the parachute soldier. He marched at the normal rate towards the hut, his little bundle tucked under his arm. At once the screaming began again: '*Mak snell! Mak snell!*' Suddenly the sergeant seized him and pushed him across the threshold; he stumbled into the hut, and the door closed behind him. A couple of soldiers hurried across to the hut windows and peered in. They were joined by others. All at once they began to yell and jeer in the most horrible way, jumping up and down for pleasure and pushing their fellows away from the

window so that they might get a better view. We heard the sound of dull thuds and screams coming from the room.

We stood there as though paralysed. My throat was dry. Ille was close beside me and I could feel her arm tremble. I dared not glance at her now. She was staring straight ahead, her lips tightly closed, the muscles in her cheeks flickering.

Then Hartwig came out, sprawling as though kicked. He stumbled, and in his arms he held a few pieces of underclothes. He was barefoot, his face crimson, and blood trickled from his mouth. He ran blindly—*Mak snell! Mak snell!*—and with their rifle butts they drove him to a spot on our right. The Americans shouted for joy when he dropped one of the pieces of clothing he was carrying. He bent down to pick it up, but a kick in the backside sent him on. The door opened again, and a pair of boots was flung out which landed at Hartwig's feet. Then the sergeant stepped outside. He held the list and was smiling. With a friendly expression he read the next name.

The scene was repeated, exactly as before. I whispered to Ille: "They won't strike us!" but I did not believe this.

Feverishly I considered what I should do. It was not with my head that I thought—my head seemed emptied. It was within my breast that my thoughts struggled with one another. In my heart I knew that we would be beaten, but Ille would not be beaten, Ille, a woman, Americans don't beat women, and yet Ille would be beaten, and I must fight back if I went in before her, and I dare not fight back if I should go in before her, no one might fight back who went in before us because then they would only beat the others all the harder, so only the last one might fight back, oh, how was it possible to know what was the right thing to do? And suddenly I was furiously angry with Ille, with the fact that she was here, that she just complicated everything—and at the same time I knew that she complicated nothing, since in any case there was nothing I could do. That was what was so frightful, I could do nothing, nothing more than what I did, which was to tremble uncontrollably at the thought that they would beat Ille as they beat Herr Alinn, the old man who now came out of the hut with crimson face, his trousers falling down, barefoot.

Now my name was called out. I picked up the leather case from Bolle's—with which 'it' had all begun—and made an effort to walk normally. Then I heard Ille scream:

"Run!"

I ran and only received half the force of the blow with the rifle butt aimed at my crutch. The sergeant seized my arm, as he had seized the arm of all the others, and hurled me through the door. At the same time he stuck his foot out so that I would trip. Then he kicked me hard in the backside. But I managed to maintain control. I stumbled but I succeeded in entering the room without falling over.



In the hut the officer, who had walked past us earlier, sat on a bench, his legs thrust out wide apart before him. He was a man with a pale pimply face and reddish hair. Another, younger officer stood before me, small and thin with a tuft of black hair. On the floor lay scattered various objects, suitcases, shoes, coats, overcoats, underclothes. A soldier was seated at a typewriter. I could not tell how many soldiers there were in the room, but at least one stood in each corner.

The officer shouted at me:

*"You are a Nazi!"*

I said:

*"No!"*

At the same moment I was struck on the right side of the face and I remember thinking: 'He's left-handed.' While he struck me I noticed that the gesture made his hair fly and that the other officer, seated on the bench and looking at me attentively, did not cease from chewing his gum. Now the small, dark officer shouted:

*"Hands up!"*

I understood and raised my arms, feeling at the same time utterly furious with myself that I should have obeyed him so promptly. The officer shouted in German:

*"Take your shoes off!"*

I leaned down to do so, and of course lowered my arms. At this moment they all fell upon me.

*Life is strange and world is bad!*

True enough, Thomas Wolfe had once described how he had been beaten up in prison when under arrest for drunkenness. He had been beaten because he resisted, but it was not the beating that he had resisted. He had been beaten because he had resisted being put in the same cell with negroes. He had written nothing about the pain. And, curiously, it did not hurt at all. It really was most odd the way I felt no pain, nothing save dull thuds, as though my body had become deaf to sensation. I thought how I must tell Ille this before she came in here, how the blows don't hurt at all. Now I felt teeth in my mouth. They had come out quite easily, floating in blood, and the blood had a viscous taste to it, like honey from which the wax of the comb has not been purified. Parts of me had come away from my living body. I had to work out how it was that I felt no pain. It must be my anger. Yes, of course, that was it, anger had so stretched my skin that my whole body was a drum, which accounted for the way the blows reverberated dully and nothing more. This meant neither more nor less than that for the moment I was in a state of hysteria. But that was untrue. I was not angry at all. I had to a certain extent a feeling of wild triumph, in the first place because it didn't hurt, strike me as they would it didn't hurt, so what was the point, what was the effect? No. I had this feeling of triumph because it was not I who was doing evil, naturally, that must

be it, it was this officer who was so angry, not I. His hair flew, his eyeballs were bulging and bloodshot, and he really and truly was foaming at the mouth. I had always held that to be a figure of speech, but here I saw it, this poor, silly swine actually had foam on his lips, so obviously he was in a far worse state than was I. No pain and no anger. A feeling of triumph at the foam on his lips. Now they were pulling my trousers off. That's far worse. Why, though? Why? There's no reason why this should be much worse, what could it be that made me feel it to be so? The soul! Ah, yes, the soul, for the soul's reasons it is much worse. The Tyrolean peasants, they knew about such things, they were nearer to them than I. It is anguish of the soul that deadens the pain of the body, it is not anger but grief. Stop, stop, in that case the sensation of triumph, is the sensation of suffering triumphant . . . dare I go so far as that, I, I of all people? Suffering is certainly not creative, or is it? It exalts, sooner or later these wretched youths will get tired. Are they beating me much longer than the others, or does it just seem so to me? So suffering exalts? It's lucky these Americans wear rubber-soled boots. With hob-nailed ones that kick on my elbow would really have hurt, right on the funny-bone like that. Hob-nailed boots have always been the symbol of German brutality, how about rubber-soled boots for America? Someone must have had a half-cooked egg in his bag, the whole floor's smeared with yolk of egg, my hands too, and blood, red and yellow, the national colours of Baden. Eggs, too, are sensitive. Look at that, the whole time, quite instinctively, I've been covering the lower part of my body with my arms. Ah ha, that's the explanation, the simple explanation why no man tries to defend himself when he's being beaten up. His most primitive instincts force him simply to protect his most vulnerable part. In the Königshof cellar Ille covered her head with her arms. Why the most vulnerable spot, it's not true, be honest, the most cherished part is what he protects, the head is equally vulnerable—ah ha! so you covered the lower part of your body, not your head. Be honest! Don't worry, some time they must stop, they're panting, the soul is hell. Dostoevski was beaten too, in the condemned cell, and never mentioned it, why not? It can be read between the lines of his *Memoirs* but he never said so. Could a blow, could the simplest use of force violate a tabu? A manly tabu? A human tabu? Is human dignity the tabu? Is my dignity perhaps now damaged because I am being struck? Not mine, Ille's perhaps—oh, God! will they beat Ille too? Of course not, Americans don't beat women, don't believe it, of course they'll beat up Ille, with lust, that's obviously part of it—their dignity, what, their dignity!—their dignity can no more be damaged than mine—but mine is killed, befouled, defiled if they beat Ille—mine, mine, mine, not Ille's—oh, God! will they never stop?

I was pulled to my feet. I lay there and they even pulled me to my feet, I staggered, I stood, they even supported me most kindly, one on

my left and one on my right. The officer held an amulet in front of my face, a little child's bracelet which had been Ille's and which she had once given me. She was always so superstitious. She had sewn up the poor, thin little silver chain, from which hung a putto in the style of Raphael, into a silk bag. I was to wear it always.

"What's this?" the officer asked and his mouth was still flecked with foam.

I said with difficulty:

"An amulet."

He said:

"What does that mean?"

I said:

"It's supposed to bring me luck."

I wiped the blood from my mouth. I had spat out my teeth. With my tongue I felt the holes in my gums. The officer dropped the chain to the floor. Slowly and with evident relish he placed his heel on it and tried to grind it to pieces. But he was wearing rubber-soled boots. He took a rifle and banged at the chain with the butt. He took a great deal of trouble over this, going over the whole chain until it was flattened. Then he kicked it aside with his toe. While he was doing this they all stared at me and sneered.

The officer on the bench had not moved the whole time. He sat there, his legs wide apart, his hands in his pockets, chewing his gum. He was clearly the senior-ranking soldier in the room. I said slowly, clearly, and in English:

"*You are no gentleman!*"

The officer burst out laughing. He slapped his thighs with amusement and cried:

"*No, no, no! We are Mississippi boys!*"

The man at the typewriter pushed a sheet of paper towards me and said:

"Sign!"

I was engaged in pulling up my trousers. I took a step forward and was immediately struck. I was determined to sign nothing I had not read. It was a statement to the effect that I had eighty marks in my possession. I was not sure whether I had Ille's money on me, otherwise I thought I had none. I could not remember properly. Then one of them hit me on the head again and at once the hateful, hideous screaming began: "*Mak snell! Mak snell!*" This was the refrain with which these youths worked up their excitement—and I signed. I was outside at once. I wished to reach back for my Bolle suitcase, but I couldn't. The sergeant shoved a pile of odd clothes and objects into my arms and gave me a kick. I stumbled out, followed by yells and screams. I must have presented an extraordinary spectacle as I hurried across to join the others. And Ille was now alone. I threw her a look which I intended to

be encouraging. I don't know if I succeeded. The sergeant shouted Ille's name. She picked up her case and walked quickly on her high heels to the hut. The sergeant seized her arm and pushed her roughly into the room. So far as I could see he did not kick her.

For a moment I felt utterly empty. Ille once told me that she had had the same sensation when she heard the first whistle of a falling bomb. I closed my eyes, trying to give the maximum keenness to my sense of hearing. When I heard nothing I compelled myself to open my eyes. The soldiers at the window were not yelling and screaming but were pressing about the glass even more eagerly than before. More soldiers joined them and either pushed the others aside or stood on tiptoe to peer over their heads into the room.

What was happening to Ille in there? What was happening to Ille in there? The soldiers giggled and pushed about the window, leaning forward and greedily peering in. What was happening to Ille in there? There were at least six men in the room. Seriously I calculated how long it would take six men to rape Ille and whether this was indeed possible, until everything went red before my eyes. Why was I standing here? Why did I not attack them, indifferent as to what might happen to me? What was I imagining? That they wouldn't dare? What? Yes, of course, in this very moment I lost my dignity, man's most priceless possession, and lost it for ever. Since Adam it is the law that the man protects the woman, therein lies his dignity. I had been able to protect Ille, for ten years I had. Now I could protect her no longer. At this moment I was morally castrated. According to the healthy concept of Eastern peoples, the conquered lose both their freedom and their women. The Abyssinians emasculated their Italian prisoners in the first Abyssinian war. At this moment, from a moral point of view, my testicles were being crushed. I did nothing, I was a coward for reasons of commonsense. It was the same alternative, the appalling alternative of the last twelve years, to behave like a fool or to behave like a coward. Nothing had changed. They were worth the same. Their victory was valueless, as was our defeat. I myself was worthless. Ille at least had been able to go on respecting me, up to today. Never again, never more could Ille's and my relationship be as it had been. She might be able to forget, I never could.

Ille came out through the door, without her case. She held in her arms a bundle of clothes, only a small bundle, and she walked straight across to me and stood beside me. Her face was scarlet. None of the Americans was screaming or yelling now, but their eyes all followed her. She stood beside me and said, loudly and carelessly:

"Imagine, one of them even handed me back my little scent bottle!"

I stared at her and she gave me a quick smile. Her belt was missing. Her dress was buttoned up askew. Her stockings hung down. But the little silver chain about her ankle, her amulet, was still there.

The sergeant came out and shouted something. Immediately a big, blond man appeared, wearing short white trousers and a loud, check civilian jacket. He walked up to us and said:

"I am the interpreter. Left turn—march!"

I saw the camp before me. A gate protected by barbed wire opened and we walked through. Immediately beside the gate stood a blond young man in white shorts and black shirt open at the neck. It was my murderer.

He smiled at me. He said:

"I knew we'd meet again, Garlic! You've come to the right place here!"

He laid his arm about my shoulder in comradely fashion. His dimples seemed more marked than ever. He said:

"In the camp itself there is no beating, here you're back among decent human beings!" He looked at Ille and at me, then he went on: "Your lady wife? Am I right? My respects! My respects! No doubt an Onion by birth?"

When I awoke it was still dark. I had slept well, as I had for the past three months, but I was awakened, as every morning, by Graf Plettenberg, a tall man who had the second-storey bunk near mine, getting up to do his physical exercises outside. Somewhere or other he had procured two heavy pieces of iron which he used as dumb-bells on the strip of ground behind our barracks—carrying out a series of circular gestures always performed in identical order. To start with he had done this by day and in front of the barracks, but he was shouted and cursed at in consequence. The camp was starving, every day the camp leader complained in vain—and Graf Plettenberg did gymnastics! The Americans, it was commonly feared, might produce the argument that we were plainly not hungry enough. Not that Graf Plettenberg was not hungry himself. He was the hungriest man in the whole barracks; he weighed his piece of bread as soon as it was issued to him on a letter-scales which he had himself specially constructed for this purpose, and he was the first to complain if it was a fraction of an ounce under weight.

The bed above Graf Plettenberg was occupied by Herr Wegener, who, as an expert constructional engineer, had been made responsible by the Americans for all building within the camp. Herr Wegener was one of the few genuine Berliners in the camp. He was there because, in the course of his military duties, he had had occasion to kick an Italian's backside. "I thought he was an ally," he explained, "and so I thought it was all right." Apart from this incident he seemed to be a placid and simple man who applied himself to his work with steady, pedantic energy. The whole camp followed with anxiety his labours as he built a new camp kitchen, since it was commonly believed that the

nature of the kitchen would show what the Americans' intentions were concerning the duration of the camp. "Foundations like a railway station!" said Herr Wegener on his return from a conference with the American engineer, thus spreading noisy despair among us all.

Beneath Graf Plettenberg slept Dr. Schreiner, an old, white-haired doctor from Simbach, the little Bavarian town on the Inn opposite Braunau. In his youth Dr. Schreiner had been a Bavarian cadet, and in a burst of fatal, atavistic patriotism, he had felt moved, during a period of national elation, to accept an honorary commission in the SS, though his appointment carried with it no duties of any sort. He was the best educated man in the barracks, a cavalier of the old school. I was particularly fond of him. He bore his utterly unexpected imprisonment with a handsome resignation, though his attitude towards the fact that he had been thus snatched from his home and his old-world way of life might be described as one of childish astonishment.

Beneath me slept Dr. Rotfuchs. We had struck up a friendship the first night I was in the camp, and it had endured without a cloud, which was saying something in that place. In civilian life he was a corporation lawyer, and in the army he had held the rank of captain in a mountain regiment. I asked him once why he was in the camp, and he replied: "It's all Ulrike's fault!" Ulrike was his little girl. At the time of her birth the proud father had inserted an announcement in every newspaper he could think of, among others in the *Schwarze Korps*, the SS journal—when a student he with his whole students' society had been incorporated into the *Allgemeine SS*. In the prisoner-of-war camp the Americans had asked him in what unit he had served, and he replied quite truthfully, with the *Gebirgsjäger*. Then the Americans had thumbed through an enormous black-bound volume, had found his name among those who had made announcements in the *Schwarze Korps*, and instead of releasing him with his comrades had sent him to an internment camp. When I sat up and looked down I could see the top of his head emerging from his sleeping-bag. He really did still have a sleeping-bag: the Americans had not taken it away.

In such matters they were entirely unpredictable, without method or system, stealing one man's shoes, giving another a spare pair that did not belong to him. A district group leader from Lower Bavaria, whom I had never clapped eyes on before, was running around in my pyjama trousers, a peasant who could surely have known only of pyjamas by hearsay. My pyjama top they had let me keep. Purely by chance I saw the camp saddler, a former concentration camp guard, cutting up my beautiful suitcase from Bolle's in order to make a pistol-holster for Lieutenant Baybee, the camp commandant, the smart 'Mississippi boy.' They had taken everything away from Dr. Rotfuchs except his sleeping bag, in which he had once slept on the peaks of the Elbruz mountains.

Beneath Dr. Rotfuchs there was a senior finance official, but now his

bed was empty. A few days before he had been removed to the camp hospital, suffering from diphtheria. It was said he was extremely ill.

There I lay and stared at the woodwork which supported the roof of the barrack. If I sat up too quickly I would bang my head against a beam. I had chosen a top bunk, under the impression that the higher one was the less dusty it would be; but in place of the dust I was forced to enjoy a surplus of smells. The barracks had been originally built for the National Labour Service, and the room in which I slept was intended to house sixteen men. Now forty-two internees lived here. The three-decker bunks were so closely packed that only one person at a time could pass between them. We had iron bedsteads with wire netting and were in consequence the envy of the rest of the barracks, for they only had simple wooden bunks. Between the beds and the door there was room only for a long table of rough wood and two benches. There was no other furniture in the room.

It stank, it stank abominably. I gave considerable thought to what was worst in this camp, after the hunger and the loss of dignity. It was, of course, this crowded communal life with all that that entailed. It was quite impossible to be really alone even for a single second. There was no corner, nowhere, from which other human beings were not visible, in which one was not immediately joined by other prisoners; two prisoners who had separated in order to be alone would meet one another again immediately.

The average age of the interned men was fifty-one. I would be forty-three in a few days, and so I could consider myself a whippersnapper, practically an adolescent. In our barracks only Rotfuchs, Plettenberg and the teacher Krüger were younger than I. The oldest was Herr Anker, a prison official from Straubing prison; he was the only one in the room who had a fixed job, for he was permanent room orderly. He could be relied upon to spare no efforts in ensuring that the room was kept clean, as clean as his prisoners had kept their cells in days gone by. I did not in any way begrudge Herr Anker his opportunity of experiencing for himself what it is like to be a prisoner; but he seemed to find very little fundamental difference between his former way of life and his present one. He looked like a stone gargoyle off some mediaeval cathedral; his must be a persistent type to endure thus throughout the centuries. I should not at all have minded being Herr Anker's prisoner.

Almost as old as he, was Herr Alinn, though if he were a gargoyle he was a wooden one. There was no flesh between his bones and his skin, and his legs and arms stuck out stiffly with knobbly joints, as though attached to his trunk as an afterthought by a not very skilful workman. The skin on his body hung in loose folds, and his ribs resembled nothing so much as a dishrack on which laundry had been hung to dry. "I won't go under," Herr Alinn said: "I can stand a lot, I'm from Westphalia." But his chances were poor.

Hartwig, the parachute soldier, was no longer there. He had escaped. One day he was not present at roll-call, and since then there had been no news of him. The last person to see him said that while engaged on building a watch-tower he had been observing with interest the line of bushes which flanked a stream at some distance from the camp. It was not hard to escape; on the contrary, it was easy and with a little skill any one of us could have done so. But there was little point to it, particularly for elderly men who had a family and a home and who were convinced that their arrest was the result of an error which must soon be rectified, just as soon as the persons responsible took the slightest trouble to ask a few relevant questions. Hartwig, however, was young, without dependents, from Danzig, and had already been interrogated. The Americans made no particular effort to recapture him. They instituted instead a type of roll-call by numbers which meant that the interned people had to stand in line for some six hours, and no doubt expected that a certain percentage should collapse on each occasion. Curiously enough it was not the old men who collapsed, nor the women, but men in the prime of life.

In our room only Herr Volta collapsed, the area leader from Brno. It seemed clear that Herr Volta would be handed over to the Czechs, which meant that he was as good as dead. We knew this and so did he. But he could not be persuaded to contemplate another way out. A badly fixed strand of wire brought no gleam to his dull eye. He spent most of his time seated cross-legged on his third-storey bunk, the very picture of oriental resignation.

The majority of our room-mates consisted of 'the Passauers.' Passau, that pretty little town between the Inn and the Danube, must at this time have been considerably depopulated. The reason for this state of affairs was that the area leader and mayor of Passau, one Herr Moosbauer, was an unusually energetic, progressive and industrious man. A master baker by profession, it had been his ambition to infuse into the 'Pearl of the Inn Valley' those same qualities that he himself possessed. He had been like a blast of fresh air blowing through the alleys of the admittedly somewhat old-fashioned town, and he had presumably stirred up quite a lot of dust; in brief he had divided the town into two camps, his fanatical supporters and his fanatical opponents. The rift even split the local Party. The head of the *Sicherheitsdienst*, the Party security organisation, had made himself leader of the opposition faction, and had devoted most of his energy to collecting material damaging to Herr Moosbauer, an undertaking in which he had had the enthusiastic support of numerous fellow-citizens. Needless to say Herr Moosbauer had also been busy collecting such material. When the Americans arrived they found here, as elsewhere, that most of their work had already been done for them. They arrested Herr Moosbauer and his supporters; they arrested the SD man and his 'agents.' Now both camps were in one.



Herr Moosbauer's Passauers had established themselves in our barrack-room, the SD Passauers in the one next door. Herr Moosbauer himself, however, was seldom with us, since he was mostly to be found in the camp hospital: Herr Moosbauer was repeatedly interrogated by the Americans. He was one of the relatively few internees in the camp who had so far been interrogated, and the camp followed with bated breath the developments in the case of Herr Moosbauer, from which perhaps certain conclusions might be drawn.

The Passauers created the barrack atmosphere, an impenetrable fog of Lower Bavarian pigheadedness, pinochle, and a total absence of restraint in the functions of the body. The stuff the Americans called food inevitably produced certain organic manifestations that were simply unavoidable, but the room leader at least arranged by authoritative ukase that these natural occurrences should not be accompanied by unnatural witticisms. The room leader was Dr. Friedrich Weber, at one time head of the *Oberland* group and later chief of the National Veterinary Services, a tall, lanky man with cold, green eyes, and a soft voice. He was beyond a doubt the only truly convinced National-Socialist in the room. It was said that he possessed many fine qualities besides the personal cleanliness of the fanatic; his total absence of sense of humour was of positive value here. Unanimously elected room leader, he carried out his job with an iron hand, and even the more independent and less disciplined spirits obeyed his orders; it was the only way that constant shortages and perpetual proximity could be made bearable.

Soon the deputy camp leader, Schröder, a former Labour Service leader, would come through the camp blowing his whistle for reveille. He was the only inmate of the camp who possessed a watch. Needless to say it was not his. A large, round, heavy pocket-watch, it had belonged to a local group leader, a peasant, from whom the Americans had taken it. They had placed it at the disposal of the camp leader, since it was hardly the sort of object to excite admiration among the *jeunesse dorée* of Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Shrill blasts on the deputy camp leader's whistle divided our day.

I had a chance of being the first up that morning, so I dressed slowly and carefully. I pulled out my trousers, which were my pillow by night, and kicked away my blanket. I felt as though I had been beaten. I possessed only a thin layer of straw, which I had wrapped up in my second blanket. The straw was old and short, and when I turned on my improvised paille pieces would fall onto the face of the man beneath me. Rotfuchs could protect himself by burying his whole head inside his sleeping-bag, but I lost too much straw, and so even when half asleep I did my best to avoid moving too much; this made sleep a strain. I had placed my shoes on a beam above my head. They were tattered and they stank. Since I had no socks any more, I had to stick my bare feet into my shoes. Nor did I own a second shirt. The only articles of

clothing issued by the Americans were Italian black shirts, which were so short that they did not even cover one's navel, and white shorts, likewise of Italian origin. The material of which these garments were made was uncommonly durable, but they had the curious characteristic that when washed the contact with water made them as stiff as boards and thus almost impossible to put on. In such shirts and trousers the Italian army had lived and fought, a circumstance that made us think more charitably and amiably of our former allies. Now that the days were cooler the Americans allowed the internees to wear their own long trousers; they insisted, however, that we should wear the short Italian ones over the top, so that we should be instantly recognisable for what we were. With grown-up men the effect was extremely undignified, and I preferred to freeze.

It was extremely difficult to dress while lying on the bed. I was very feeble. Hunger did not hurt. It had caused pain to start with, but that had soon been replaced by this curious lassitude, the effect of which was not to dull one's mind but to clarify it, to force it into more spiritual channels—or at least to give the impression that this was what was happening. However, the body in its agility remained far behind the will. I rolled carefully towards the edge of my bed; then I reached across and took hold of Herr Wegener's bed-frame; then with one foot I felt for the Graf's bed-frame—an action which the latter strongly disliked; after this I simply let the rest of my body fall. Thus I reached the floor intact and with a minimum of effort.

The whistle blew for reveille. I clambered quickly over the bench, squeezed my way between bench and table to the door, and so was the first outside of the whole barrack. This was very important, since it meant one could reach the urinal before the crowd.

But I was not the first there, far from it; a long queue was already waiting. There was a trench, there was a pole, and above the pole, luxurious afterthought, there was a crooked roof. On the pole, packed tightly side by side, squatted the grey-haired and sullen internees like so many broody hens. Beside the ditch stood an inclined gutter, made of thin planks joined with tin, the recipient for less important excretory produce; in order that there be no possible misapprehension concerning the nature of this installation, a sign had been erected next to it with the single word: *Pissrinne*. Four men could use this urinal at once, constantly under pressure from those awaiting their turn behind; should the man who was there be unable to keep his place and be forced to take a step to the right—while performing his salubrious natural functions, it splashed more but at least it gave the impression that the queue was moving more rapidly—a triumph of the German genius for organisation.

Most of them were bare from the waist up with a filthy cloth in one hand, ready as soon as they had secured the most urgent relief to join in

the struggle for the washing facilities. They stood in serried ranks, advancing step by step, their bodies, still warm from sleep, packed close together; the smell of humanity is not always a delight to the human nose. Shortly before reaching the urinal I would expel all the air from my lungs and with averted head would draw a deep breath which I would attempt to hold until I had finished—for the stench of the urinal was worse than the smell of bodies. The urinal and the ditch were a shimmering white, covered with corroding bleach, an endless quantity of bleach. There was plenty of bleach; indeed bleach was the only thing of which there was enough, since the Americans were crazy about hygiene. They did not provide toilet paper.

The washing facilities consisted of three long tables in the open air, each with eight taps. When all of them were turned on at once there was only a feeble trickle of water. Here, as every morning, there was a great crush. Most men contented themselves with filling an old tin can and taking it off on one side in order to perform their ablutions there—very few had soap. For a time Rotfuchs had had the job of carting coal into the American's kitchen. He had managed to steal a cake of soap and a razor from the cook, which he shared with me. We shared everything—I had a little piece of looking glass.

The whistle blew, the whistle for roll-call. Slowly the camp began to move, very slowly, the prison camp slow-march that had evolved from exhaustion and a need to conserve energy, a time-killing pace that must have struck the alert young Americans as thoroughly comical.

The alert young Americans did not strike us as comical. I had yet to see someone in the camp laugh when the abnormally fat American cook appeared at the door of his cook-house and bawled: "*Come and get it!*" and from all the doors of the Ami barracks there poured GI's screaming, yelling, pushing each other, tripping one another up, laughing and punching, as though Santa-Claus had tipped out a sackful of naughty boys. Apparently they found everything terrific fun; the internees stood by the fence, their faces wooden, watching them and wondering why they were constantly in such uproariously high spirits. Evidently one had to have a well-developed appreciation for jokes in order to understand the American sense of humour—humour that seemed to consist chiefly in yelling, shouting and punching. Knocking a fellow down, what a capital joke! And what a joke, too, for the one on the ground! He would roll about and laugh and then join enthusiastically with five of his fellows in knocking down a sixth, ha, ha, what a joke! I could see very well that there, too, some code of honour must be in existence, a code according to which being hit no more implied a loss of dignity than it does among children. Perhaps they would really have found it fun if one of us had attempted self-defence. Perhaps they despised us all the more because of their perpetual inability to realise that

in us some remote, strange discernment was at work giving us a sensation almost of bliss at the realisation that at last, at last and for once, injustice was not on our side.

On one occasion Rotfuchs called me over to the wire in a state of high excitement. He had a tendency to stammer when excited. "Th-th-that c-could never happen with us, b-b-by G-g-g-god!" he cried and pointed to the American camp commandant who was quite calmly boxing a sentry's ears, first one ear and then the other in the standard way, the huge, beefy lieutenant striking a small, thin, Italian GI. It was incomprehensible to old Rotfuchs: yet when I asked him what he had done when that other lieutenant had knocked out his teeth, he told me that he had just stared at him with all the hatred of which he was capable. I did not believe Rotfuchs capable of unusually violent hatred, although it was he who had gone to considerable trouble in order to find out the names of the men who had beaten him—they were the same who had beaten me.

Almost without exception everybody entering the camp was beaten up; the Americans called that '*a workover*.' Even those internees were beaten who were simply transferred to Natternberg from some other internment camp (where they had already been through it). Even the generals were beaten who came here from prisoner-of-war camps. The Americans slit the tops of their high boots—just like that, for no apparent reason. Though there probably was some explanation why the commandant's dog ran about all day with a Knight's Cross tied around its neck; yet if there was an explanation it was unlikely to be particularly commendable to soldiers in any part of the world.

The man who did the beating, when the commandant was not in the mood to do it himself, was an American sergeant of Polish extraction, a short, thickset individual who would swagger through the camp like a bulldog and would take any man 'up front' whom he found for any reason unsympathetic.

I had most cause to fear this sergeant. I did not trail along with the others to roll-call. I took my place by the corner of the barracks and waited for the column of women to emerge from their cage; the women came to roll-call last and left first. From his bedroom window the sergeant always watched the column of women. I knew which spots were out of his range of vision, but sometimes he would creep up behind the barracks in order to catch those husbands who were hoping to exchange a few words with their wives. There were some five or six husbands in the camp, and we were careful not to choose the same places.

The moment when the column of women appeared around the corner of the barracks was for me the most exciting of the day. Ille was firmly convinced—or at least she pretended to be firmly convinced—that despite everything it was all for the best that she had intervened

at the time of my arrest. Whenever she saw me she would urge me to admit it was a good thing that she was there, that we were together. Since I knew how much this meant to her I did so, reluctantly. But it was an added burden. What might have been for me one of life's little traffic accidents had for her undoubtedly all the weight of a decisive and fatal decree. So every day and every hour of each day I was conscious of her proximity, and I constantly had occasion to think what a swine I was that I could survive the continual insults to which she was subjected; this realisation, strangely enough, I had no other way of sublimating than by treating Ille gruffly, even rudely. It also shocked me that, to judge by her appearance at least, Ille should be able to endure it all so well.

Among the first women to appear in the marching column would be one in white shorts, with a piece of material tied about her chest, but with a smart coat over her shoulders, Frau Dr. Flocken, the camp's principal doctor. As soon as she entered the camp Ille had turned to the first woman she saw. This was a tall, thin woman with horn-rimmed spectacles which made her grey eyes appear very big and very penetrating, and whose whitish-blond hair gave her an appearance of unusual self-assurance despite her extremely ragged clothes. She had been standing by the gate as we came in, and Ille had turned to her and asked:

"Where are we actually?"

The woman had replied, sharply and briefly:

"Camp Natternberg near Deggendorf." Then, looking at me, she had gone on: "Teeth? You'll find dentists in the hospital barrack." Whereupon she had marched off on her high heels.

In the hospital barrack there were two dentists at work, both first-class at their profession, ex-members of the 'SS National Dentists' Platoon,' a highly mobile organisation into which, one may be sure, Himmler had arranged that none but the best dentists be drafted. They promptly put my teeth in order, so far as this was possible. They complained that though the Americans had left them their tools they had provided no materials for making replacements; so that they had to make do with what they could, save when American officers came to them as private patients. The dentists were shocked that a woman, and particularly Frau Dr. Flocken, should be the camp's principal doctor, but they admitted she spoke excellent English and took a very firm line with the Americans, and they said it was really thanks to her that at least the most essential medicaments were supplied.

Frau Dr. Flocken was a 'war criminal.' I went to see her to be treated for my rheumatism and also to request her that she keep an eye on Ille. But Frau Dr. Flocken had little time for women, nor did the women like her, for she treated them in a most contemptuous fashion. She only paid any attention to my request when I told her that Ille was not a 'woman's

woman' either. There were some eighty doctors in the camp and a hundred women. So Frau Dr. Flocken had a minimum of a hundred and eighty certain, bitter enemies. Still, she kept her position.

She massaged my arm, though perhaps a little casually, I asked her, straight out:

"What are you accused of?"

She went on with the massage for a while. Then she said:

"I'll tell you. My case is simple. My husband and I both studied medicine at Heidelberg. At the beginning of the war my husband was called up into the Todt Organisation, and I took over his practice as well as my own. But we were very attached to one another, and my husband arranged that I too be called up into the Todt Organisation as a camp doctor. We worked together. Then my husband was killed in an air crash. I was moved to another camp. One day the camp officials asked that they be supplied with concentration-camp labour for the digging of very large and very dangerous subterranean installations. Fifteen hundred people arrived, men and women, whom I had to examine in order to report on their physical condition. It was awful. I sent them all back and also wrote a report on the administration of the concentration camp in question, in which I pointed out that this undertaking involved work of an exceptionally heavy nature which only absolutely healthy, strong people were capable of performing. A few days later a senior SS official came to see me. He thanked me for my outspoken report; he explained that this concentration camp had been only recently set up and that its administration lacked experience concerning the use of prisoner's labour. He asked me to examine persons sent to us with especial thoroughness and only to accept those whom I felt to be really suitable for the work in hand. The others I was to return without hesitation. I asked what happened to those who went back, and he said they were transferred to an invalids' camp. Henceforth I only accepted those people who seemed to me absolutely fitted for the work, and my standard was a high one, for the work was really very heavy; I even sent back people who were in perfectly good health but who did not seem to me strong enough to perform the work without suffering physical detriment in consequence. I did this for some six months before being transferred elsewhere. About a year later I learned, purely by chance, that the people I had sent back had probably been gassed. All that I could do was from then on to avoid working in any Todt Organisation camp where concentration-camp labour was employed. And that I did."

"And?" I asked.

Frau Dr. Flocken said:

"And? Either the Americans will believe my story, in which case I shall be set free, or else they won't believe it, in which case I shall be hanged."

(Later, in Dachau, she was condemned to death. Whether or not she was hanged I do not know.)

She asked politely:

“Would you like me to mark you down as sick? The hospital barrack is immediately adjoining the women’s barrack. I can do that with a clear conscience, for in this camp almost everybody should be in hospital.”

I said I’d rather she didn’t. She had so many enemies in the camp who would pounce on the slightest irregularity on her part.

Now Ille saw me and cried: “That sergeant is up ahead!”

I nodded my thanks. The women marched by in two files. Ille was among the last, walking arm in arm with Frau Brass, a tall, thin, rather tough woman from the Sudetenland, of whom Ille and I were both very fond. Her husband had owned a textile factory at Reichenberg before he was called up into the army. On his last leave he had advised her to flee to the West with their five-months-old baby when the Russians approached—she should get lifts on army trucks. Frau Brass did so, and the last truck on which she rode belonged to the SS. They dropped her in a peasants’ village somewhere in the Bavarian forest. When the Americans arrived the local inhabitants, anxious to be rid of unwanted refugees, pointed her out as having come with the SS. When she was arrested she wished to take her baby with her, but the Americans would not allow this; they said that the child would be better cared for elsewhere than in the camp. So she had had to leave the baby behind, ‘under a pear tree’ as she used to say. She did not know where her child was, she did not know where her husband was, and certainly her husband was equally in ignorance as to where she or the baby might be. *Arrest Report: SS Agent.*

Ille had become very attached to Frau Brass. Ille wore her blue silk dress, for she did not adopt the somewhat slovenly shorts-and-top style that was current. The dress was still in quite good condition. In the women’s cage she wore her thin dressing-gown, which the Americans had allowed her to keep. But of course she had no more stockings, and her shoes were coming apart. She had, as always, drawn back her lips so as to smile when she saw me. She always smiled when she saw me. She had become appallingly thin. She had always worried about her figure; much to her annoyance, when she gave in to her fondness for good food, fat would appear ‘in the wrong place,’ about her hips. Now her hips were as denuded of fat as was the rest of her body.

At two yards’ distance I accompanied her to the place where the roll-call was held. I said morosely:

“How are you?”

Those, I thought, were the first words I had spoken today. Ille said:

“All right, thank you. I get a food ticket today. Come to lunch at the fence!”

"I won't do that. You should eat your stuff yourself."

"You know I can't stand that dish-water soup. Besides, I've darned your socks. You can pick them up at the same time."

"Can you make me a face-cloth?"

Frau Brass said:

"I've still got one piece of soft material which would do."

Ille said:

"There's a plank needs fixing on my bed."

I said:

"I'll see what I can get from the carpenter."

Ille said:

"How are things with you?"

"Foul is an understatement."

Frau Brass said sharply:

"It's foul for all of us. Flocken has examined Ille and taken a slide."

I was horrified:

"Diphtheria?"

Ille said:

"Oh, I don't think so. Just run down."

She pressed Frau Brass's arm and frowned at her. I said:

"Go to bed at once!"

"No. If I do that I won't get my food ticket."

"This afternoon, then," I said.

We had reached the place where the roll-call was held. The men were already there, some four thousand drawn up in squares. The women's place was to the right of the long formation. Going behind the men, I made my way to my barrack group. The camp was spatially not large, some four hundred yards each way. The barracks stood close together, and the only open space was where the roll-call was held, apart from a small square by the gate, which was reserved for the women and then only at specified times; the women were in this respect considerably worse off than the men. The camp contained fourteen barracks: eleven large and three small. I was in Barrack 5, one of the small ones, consisting of only three barrack-rooms, forty-two men per room, plus two rooms belonging to the camp leaders, one workroom and one sleeping hut. The little hospital barrack and the women's barracks were purposely separated from the rest of the camp; they were divided by the eastern fence which cut off our camp from the living quarters of the American guard personnel, who incidentally lived in as cramped a manner as did we. There were watch-towers at each corner, and the sentries could supervise the whole of the women's cage with the exception of one small corner. It was here that I always stood when I talked to Ille 'through the wire.'

This camp had formerly been used by a battalion of the National Labour Service which was engaged on controlling the flow of water



from the Isar into the Danube. The ground on which the camp was built was heavy clay, the clay of the Isar plain; in dry weather it was hard as iron, cracked and dusty; in wet it became a deep and gluey morass. The district group leaders from Lower Bavaria (automatic arrest), who formed a considerable percentage of the internees and who were mostly of peasant origin, swore by the goodness of this soil. They often lined the wire fence gazing at the flourishing crops that surrounded the camp. They became wildly embittered when they saw the Americans take a short cut, as they loved to do, by recklessly driving through the standing corn. They could not grasp the fact that the Americans were accustomed to fields so huge that the loss of crops from one corner or another meant nothing; after all there was plenty of food—in America.

The village of Natternberg was visible from the place where the roll-call was held, a double line of lowly houses flanking the road from Michaelsbug to Deggendorf. The western corner of our open space reached to within thirty yards of this road, which curved gently towards the village. There were always people standing on the road, a stone's throw away, staring into the camp. They were mostly dependents of the Lower Bavarians who had at last discovered where their husbands or fathers were; we were allowed neither to write nor to receive letters. The Lower Bavarians were annoyed by the mass of internees forever milling about on this open space, since in the crowd it was hard for them to make themselves conspicuous so that their dependents might recognise them. One, a teacher, when he thought to see his dependents on the road, would do repeated handstands. He told me with a sad smile that he used to stand on his hands to amuse his children and he hoped that they would recognise him from this and also that it would show them he was in good health. New arrivals told us that, among the population outside, this camp was rumoured to be a "Starvation and Beating Camp." So the story had got out, which gave us a certain satisfaction.

"This is the right place," said my murderer. "Afterwards no one' will be able to say that he did not know what went on in the American internment camps."

When the sentry on the watch-tower took a dislike to the crowd on the road he would open fire. He would shoot in front of the people's feet with his automatic rifle and thus make them run away—we could see the clouds of dust kicked up by the bullets close behind the women frantically pushing their baby-carriages over the uneven ground. Sometimes, too, MP's arrived in their fast jeeps and took the people, mostly women, away with them. In the camp it was said that these people were sent to prison for ten days in Deggendorf.

Roll-call was a long business. The camp-leader, a solidly built, elderly man, an Austrian named Heiss who had been a major in the

artillery, strode along the ranks, his powerful calves bare, a pair of mountain boots on his feet. The barrack leaders would report to him the number of men present, and if the figure was correct his deputy would go 'up front' and inform the camp commandant. The commandant was never in any hurry. From time to time someone would faint. When the camp commandant was not present this was not appreciated, since two men would lug off the unconscious one to the hospital barrack, confusion in the counting would result, and the roll-call would last longer than ever. When the commandant was present it made no difference; the men who had fainted were counted where they lay and that was that.

I would try to amuse the men of my barrack during roll-call by telling them stories to pass the time. This required a considerable effort on my part, since I had to talk very loudly, particularly on windy days.

"Right at the beginning," I said, "in 1933, after Gauleiter Wagner had paid his first official call on Cardinal Faulhaber, he decided to make the Cardinal's return call as ceremonious an event as possible. In the outer hall of his official residence he had an SS unit drawn up, full-dress uniform, steel helmets, shields on their chests, fully armed, as well as a military band. He issued specific orders that as soon as the Cardinal entered the hall the military band was to break into a stirring march, while the SS men were to be told to present arms with the most shattering parade-ground words of command. In the hall that must have made a din like thunder. And right enough, no sooner had the Cardinal crossed the threshold than he was greeted with an appalling, a tremendous rolling of drums and clashing of cymbals. But the Cardinal, moving his soutane slightly to reveal the Iron Cross First Class which he had won as an army chaplain in the Great War, held out his hand in greeting, smiled in friendly fashion, and remarked as the rumpus died down: 'This is indeed a spectacle to delight an old soldier's heart!'"

Weber, of the *Oberland* organisation, who had been shifting from one foot to the other all the time I was telling my story, cried out as soon as I had finished:

"Absolutely untrue! I was there myself at the time. It wasn't a military band at all, it was just fifes and drums!"

There was no point in attempting to explain to Herr Dr. Weber that reality is to truth as lies are to fairy-tales. He would never have understood.

Cardinal Faulhaber had indeed on one occasion attempted to visit the camp. But the American commandant forbade the distinguished prince of the church to enter it. So the Cardinal had to content himself with walking around the outside of the barbed-wire fence, blessing the Lower Bavarian district group leaders who knelt within. A little later we were visited by the Bishop of Regensburg, a little, fat man round as a cannonball. He did not have to bless his sheep from outside; he

blessed the American sentry at the gate and simply walked past the dumbfounded soldier. He found himself at once surrounded by the camp's entire population. It was a total victory for the Catholic Church—even the SS admitted that there was 'something to' Catholicism. The first Protestant cleric to visit the camp had been an evangelical pastor from Deggendorf. He did almost everything wrong, and began by telling us of the enormous weight of guilt that lay upon our shoulders. Not one of us wished to hear this sort of talk. The great majority had absolutely no comprehension of what this distorted 'guilt' idea was all about. We asked that we might be sent some other gentleman, but none came.

The first Catholic priest to visit us was far more skilful. He had with him a waggon and a harmonium; a nun with a great, white head-dress began by delighting us with music—an apple-cheeked body she was, with a motherly smile, and she did not hesitate to insinuate a few tunes of a gayer type into her repertoire. The priest read the mass and announced when he would listen to confessions; he then declared that he would confine himself at first to seeing those men who had dependents to whom he could take a message. But he came only a few times. He had, they said, let himself be persuaded into taking letters for delivery outside. One day when leaving the camp he was stopped, searched and immediately arrested. His nun fluttered down in extreme agitation from the waggon, and she too was taken away to be searched.

In his place came a young priest from Michaelsbug, the nearest village beyond Natternberg. The Michaelsbug priest did not carry out any letters, but he had a first-class memory: when we saw him walk through the camp, murmuring to himself, we knew that he was not reading his breviary but was learning messages by heart. He had once been a parachute soldier and had himself been a prisoner-of-war, and he was indeed really the only friend the internees had. He came almost daily on his bicycle, sweating heavily in his black clothes, and he did what he could to help us, which was a great deal. Even the SS found the Michaelsbug priest a 'good sort.' The Protestants looked after themselves. An interned clergyman from Siebenbürgen took religious service, helped out by a number of lay readers from among the higher officials and the generals.

There was never any sign of the Red Cross; indeed from all we saw of it this costly organisation might as well not have existed. We were called 'internees,' but even internees were supposed to be treated in accordance with the Geneva and Hague Conventions. We wondered whether we perhaps counted as prisoners held pending investigation, but they too have certain more or less specified rights. And there was no question of our having any rights whatever. According to the Americans we were most definitely not prisoners-of-war, though among us were crowds of generals, general staff officers and even officers and

men from field units of the armed forces; the men of the Waffen-SS insisted stubbornly that they too should simply be counted as prisoners-of-war and nothing more. Through the camp-leader we asked politely if we were perhaps in a concentration camp; the commandant promptly had the camp-leader thrown out of his office, but indeed there were a number of ex-inmates from concentration camps among us. Finally, fully resigned to the fact that we could not hope to find out what our official status might be, we were compelled to recognise that only one thing could be said of us with any degree of certainty: we were the victims of a ripe hypocrisy carried to fantastic lengths.

The inmates provided a true cross-section, and every sort of German was represented. To a certain extent we created a collective society. This camp had been organised by trusties from the old concentration camps. When the latter were dissolved the Americans had not released the trusties, professional criminals who were suspected of having committed crimes against humanity since they had enjoyed considerable authority in those camps. Most of them had spent eleven or twelve years in concentration camps and had acquired a great deal of experience concerning the subtleties of camp life. They were able at once and skilfully to get hold of all the lucrative jobs. They worked in the kitchen, in the stores, in the wash-house and in the shops that made things for the Americans. It was they who were chosen by the Americans to be servants and so on. They stuck closely together and looked after one another's interests—and thus they controlled the camp and gave it its form. Every day they met for secret conferences, over which presided their recognised leader, to whom they gave unquestioning obedience. This was an energetic, lively man who had once held an important position in the internal hierarchy of Mauthausen and Dachau concentration camps. He called himself von Steuben, maintaining that he was a descendant of this distinguished family whose most famous son had gone to America; in the camp list, it is true, he was known by another and far less imposing name. He saw to it jealously that all new arrivals should be made to fit into the organisation run by his concentration-camp pals. This happened more or less without opposition, since each new arrival found himself alone and confronted by an already existing machine. The concentration-camp men knew everything and they shared their intelligence among themselves each day. They had numerous channels to the ears of the Americans. They had established themselves in all the barrack rooms, which they controlled by means of fearful threats and small presents, objects acquired in the course of their jobs 'up front.' Any man who had the courage to quarrel with one of them found that the whole pack was his enemy. Their power rested on an intangible basis, but it was power; their terrorism only came into play at decisive moments, but it was nevertheless constantly latent.

One night there was an unusual disturbance in that camp. Figures suddenly appeared from all the barracks. Shortly after we heard noises coming from one of the huts at the back, followed by the sound of the camp-leader's hob-nailed mountain boots as he made his way 'up front.' Then the Americans appeared and took a man away with them. Next morning we learned that on the previous evening a concentration-camp convict from Mauthausen had arrived at the camp. The other ex-inmates had forced their way into his barrack room, and the camp-leader had had to fetch the Americans since no one was prepared to protect the threatened man. Evil rumours circulated concerning this man's past activities at Mauthausen. The Americans locked him up in their guardroom. Next morning he was dead. He had hanged himself.

The district group leaders provided the dough-like bulk of the camp's population. There were no intellectuals to be found among them, with the exception of the schoolteachers from the village schools. As is easily understood, men of this sort were simply flabbergasted; in passive, blank astonishment they suddenly found themselves guilty of all that had happened, while from their point of view their activities had been just a series of dull and difficult duties laboriously performed. They were stolid, respectable men, mostly genuine and convinced Catholics, the steadfast and conservative element, entirely preoccupied with their personal fate and that of their dependents, their farms or their professions; yet they well knew—how could it be otherwise?—that by carrying out the tasks which the Party had assigned them they had made many enemies in their villages. Constant new arrivals kept them well informed of what was happening 'back home,' and each such item of news led to considerable wailing and gnashing of teeth. It seemed that the families of internees had been driven from their farms and homes, that the officials among them had lost their means of livelihood for ever. It was they too who suffered most from hunger, for they had always attached the greatest importance to food.

There was bitter enmity between these low-level Party officials and the Waffen-SS. The SS men were mostly officers or NCO's of the Waffen-SS, almost all young and almost none from Bavaria. The district group leaders referred to them collectively as 'Prussian pigs,' though they came from all parts of Germany and of the German diaspora. Most of them had no contact with their dependents and, if they came from eastern Germany, did not even know if their families were still alive. If the opinions of the Americans meant anything, they were the worst of the internees. But they provided the actual backbone of the camp. Their comradeship could be relied on at all times. They behaved properly, they kept the mass of the internees in as good spirits as was compatible with the conditions, and they did not hate the Americans—they despised them.

I was well aware that for myself I was quite quietly losing my ability

to pass generalised judgments, but all the same the distinctions were obvious. What was most striking about the SD people and the Gestapo officials was their extremely subordinate nature. Among them were men whom it was known the Americans accused of major crimes. On closer examination, on nearer contact, it was hard to imagine them capable of a measure of brutality beyond that of the most subordinate level in the delirium of power. Here was clearly no flowering of perverse originality, but rather a boundless surrender to the idols of card-indexes and due procedure. One day I pointed out to Rotfuchs a man who was alleged to have been Kaltenbrunner's right hand. He was a haggard, bony individual with a sharp, red nose from which a drop was always on the point of falling; he wore steel-rimmed spectacles and his Adam's apple was for ever bobbing up and down in his giraffe-like neck; on his bald head was an old stocking in place of a cap, and he had obediently put on his dirty, white internee's shorts over his long trousers; he was shod with a pair of filthy, shapeless, felt slippers. Rotfuchs looked at him and said:

"In th-th-that c-c-case I c-c-can't say I'd c-c-care to see K-k-k-kaltenbrunner's left hand!"

Yet among the Gestapo men were a number of old, hard-working police officials, who had simply been transferred willy-nilly into this new branch. A former official of my father's was one of them. I willingly believed him when he said that he had done all in his power to carry out his new duties—which he himself found revolting—as decently and as correctly, in the old sense, as possible. It must be admitted that the thought of resisting an order issued by a superior simply threw him into a ferment of agitated despair. With an expression of extreme anguish in his eyes he said:

"Your respected father would not have understood that either!"

Another old acquaintance of mine turned up in the camp. This was a Saxon police official who had been my warder during the Rathenau trial. He made an effort to excuse himself retrospectively for having performed this duty—"it was orders, you see." He assured me that at the time he had felt great sympathy for me. He joined the Gestapo for the same reason—"orders, you see."

Plainly the ideas that the Americans had concerning the distinguished position of professional civil servants were extremely remote from those held by the Germans. Undoubtedly the Americans regarded governmental councillors as being a set of evil men who had whispered devilish counsel into the ear of Adolf Hitler. These senior civil servants, with the rank of governmental councillor or above, formed the third largest group among the internees. The whole of the National Finance Court had been incarcerated here in a body; I observed these gentlemen with a feeling of distrust, until the old, first-rate President of the Senate, Herr Veiel, the author of numerous commentaries, assured me that the

findings of that court had been ninety per cent in favour of the taxpayer and against the state. The camp was teeming with presidents of all sorts, ministerial and provincial court councillors, public prosecutors and attorney generals, senior burgermasters and chiefs of production boards. These senior bureaucrats provided the congregation at the evangelical services. They were the camp's intellectual elite. Though quite hopeless at coping with the problems of day-to-day existence, they were constantly engaged in discussing the causes and effects of the German collapse in the most minute detail; each had his own opinion on the matter, though none agreed.

It must be reckoned a manifestation of humanity's progress that as respect for soldiers vanished, so the warrior's privileges disappeared as well. If it is machines that win wars, factories, plans, organisation, if the country that disposes of the most raw materials automatically regards itself as therefore the most noble nation of them all, there seems no reason why the manners of the battlefield should not change in accordance with its nature. If it is objects and not human beings that conquer, then there seems no reason why the conquered should not also be considered as objects, and generals are just men like other men. Simple private soldiers, high-spirited youths, GI's who knew that behind them they had the biggest number of tanks and the richest supply of raw-materials, found it a capital joke to slap the faces of generals. It is only to be hoped that they took this charming habit back to their own blessed country, and that their own generals experienced themselves what they had allowed to be done to defeated enemies of their own rank. What passively exists must actively appear; when honour dies respect dies with it; once fear has gone awe soon follows. Thus do all temples tumble.

The generals, at their own request, lived in one barrack, and were thus apart from the rest of us, at least so far as sleeping went. But their humiliation was the same as ours, and it was hard to pick them out from among the rest of the grey mass of individuals standing there for roll-call. This was disappointing in a way. Just as it was not easy to recognise in this local group leader the former terror of his village, in that Gestapo official a blood-stained torturer, it was equally difficult to envisage that tattered figure stooping eagerly for a cigarette-butt in the role of a man who had proved his ability to inscribe his name in the annals of history with a bloody fist. Nothing was easier here than to learn contempt for *homo sapiens*. Give him no food to eat and no soap to wash himself with, and you will find that any man would soon look exactly as our chivalrous opponent, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, would have looked in these circumstances.

The little group of foreigners was scarcely noticeable in the crowd. The greater number of them were Ukrainians, who revolved about the Greek-Orthodox Archimandrite of Cracow, a product of Rosenberg's

genial policy in the eastern territories. He held regular services for his co-religionaries, extremely impressive services they were too, with wonderful singing by powerful, soft, bass voices. The Ukrainians hung on his words, professors and students from Lwow and Cracow who certainly did not love the Germans but who hated the Poles from the bottom of their hearts, highly educated and most estimable men who kept sadly and forlornly to themselves. Dutchmen, Danes and Belgians who had served in the *Waffen-SS*—and also a few Poles—were swallowed up among the *Volksdeutsche* of that service, as were also a few Red Spaniards who had come here from concentration camps. There was an occasional Frenchman too, former delegates of Darlan's Government sent to Germany to supervise the employment of French labour, polite, educated, helpful men who were universally popular and whose sole desire was to stay in this camp for as long as possible, or at least until the unpredictable and easily inflammable passions which were raging in their homeland had died down and had been replaced by that commonsense which has usually been the glory of holy France.

Among all these were the 'also-rans,' unfortunate beings forming part of no special group. There were quite a few of these people, whom the Americans had just 'happened' to arrest and whom, for lack of anything better, they listed under the heading of *security threat*. I belonged in this category myself, and I did my best to show my fellows that since we did not constitute any specific group we must reckon on being the last of all to be dealt with. It was plainly far harder to prove that we had never nursed any intention of striking down the proud American army than to deny that we had committed war-crimes. I broke out into a cold sweat when I thought that I, already a threat to the American army's security, had no prospect of ever in my life being able to declare that to get to know the U.S. army better was to learn to love it more.

And then there was, of course, the group of National-Socialists. This was a very small group, roughly proportionate in size to the percentage of National-Socialists that there had been in all Germany. The National-Socialists kept very much to themselves, more or less convinced that their testimony was not needed and that history would automatically prove them to have been in the right. They faced facts in a becoming manner, they never complained and indeed they were not expected to do so; for, as Ille remarked, they were National-Socialists and their reactions were different!

I was just about to start on another story when Dr. Weber cried out: "Quiet! The Commandant!"

However it was not the commandant who now appeared around the corner of the barracks with the Polish sergeant but a second lieutenant, a tall, thin, dark man, very young and handsome, and not particularly feared, though he had, of course, a bee in his bonnet. We had gradually learned that the much-vaunted individualism of the Americans boiled



down to the fact that almost every one of them had some sort of bee in his bonnet; nor did he keep it there, but preferred to let it buzz about unchecked. American officers gave free rein to their individualism by immediately cancelling all orders issued by their predecessors and then introducing a whole set of new and contradictory ones. One would insist that the American flag be raised and lowered, morning and evening, with a maximum amount of military flim-flam; it was compulsory for all internees who found themselves out of doors when this performance took place to assume a rigid posture and to remove their headdress—the punishment for failing to do so consisted of standing still, all through the scorching day, beneath the flag-pole. The result of this was that no sooner did the bugler raise his instrument to his lips than all the internees made a dash for their barracks.

The bee in the second lieutenant's bonnet was cleanliness. At almost every roll-call he would give the camp-leader a piece of his mind concerning the dirtiness of the Germans. He seemed in no wise put out by the latrine trench, full to overflowing, nor by the deep mud into which the heavy clay was turned after every shower, nor did he worry about the piles of sweepings and heaps of kitchen refuse that the Americans left to stagnate. No, all he cared about was thread. He would almost have a fit whenever he saw a piece of thread on the ground; excitedly he would point at it with outraged forefinger; sharply he would order all the men out of the nearest barracks, who would then have to hurl themselves in a body on the object of his displeasure. He succeeded in making us all constantly on the alert for threads that might be lying about. And indeed it was quite astonishing how much thread there was if one only looked for it attentively enough—heaven only knows where it all came from. But there was one thing in his favour. He was not a beater, and he had never been known to be present when a beating-up took place. He enjoyed a certain measure of respect in consequence. Now he took the tally from the Polish sergeant, compared it with the figures in the camp-leader's report, announced his displeasure at the Germans' passion for leaving 'filth' wherever they went, and walked away. The women were marched off; as soon as their column had disappeared around the corner of the buildings the camp-leader dismissed the men. They broke ranks and trailed slowly back towards their barracks. It was my custom to hurry away from roll-call in the hope that I might yet catch up with the women—but on this occasion the Polish sergeant was bringing up the rear. So I remained on the place where the roll-call had been held, while the others awaited their breakfast.

At this hour of the day I always stayed away from the barrack room. It was, for me, a sort of spiritual hygiene. The sharing out of the bread—there was one loaf for every twelve men—generally took place in circumstances which could not but leave a deep impression on the

characters of those who participated. For some time we had no longer been given the usual, firm, dark German army loaves from captured stocks, but white American bread instead. On the occasion of their first appearance these white loaves had been greeted with delight. But the ones we now got looked as though they had had a hard war, as though they had perhaps been sent to the bottom more than once by U-boat torpedoes. The bread was either stale and hard as rock, or spongily soft, or else green with mildew, and it was very difficult to cut into fair shares. I had asked Rotfuchs to collect and keep my bit for me as well as my little ladleful of oatmeal soup—and this system was all the more sensible in that Rotfuchs and I possessed but one mess-tin between us.

I was not the only internee to practise spiritual hygiene in this fashion, and we were soon suspected of wishing to form some sort of exclusive club. At the time of the distribution of bread almost everyone was in the barracks, so that those few men who preferred to await the outcome of that dubious ceremony while walking up and down in the open soon got to know one another. This group constituted an arrogant and indeed somewhat snobbish aristocracy with a strongly established moral code; there was no difficulty in making a great virtue out of what had in fact been the simple mastery of a minor discomfort. And this automatically entailed the practice of other virtues. Thus we felt ourselves obliged to shave daily, not to wear the white shorts over our long trousers, never to pick up cigarette-butts, and only to address one another in the second person singular when we were really on terms of comparatively intimate friendship. Indeed from the very beginning the atmosphere in the camp had been one that could not appeal to persons of breeding. The sort of compulsory democracy which derives from equal misery, and the peculiar effects of which I knew already from my prison days, was bound to lead to a society of the very basest sort, and one that did not attract us at all. 'Here we're all alike'—this motto, egoism at its lowest, did not convince us. We were all very different from one another, indeed we were, though conditions might try to make us alike. But it was precisely against these conditions that we had to fight with all the weapons at our disposal.

It must be admitted that the splendid isolation of our 'club' was only made possible by the helpfulness of others. We were undoubtedly the intellectual giants, but we had to rely on men who were so practical in everyday affairs that they could spare some of their talents for those who were less gifted in mundane activities. I had the great good fortune to know that reliable old Rotfuchs was at my side. When I struggled ineffectually to clean the mess-tin or to make my bed he would watch me for some time, shaking his head, until at last he could bear it no longer. Then, with gentle determination, he would push me aside and complete the job himself; had he not done so it would never have been finished to his satisfaction. I never understood what led Rotfuchs, in

this cruel world, to look after me in this most friendly way. Doubtless such unexpected helpfulness gave him a quiet and silent satisfaction, which I certainly never begrudged him. Be that as it may, I accepted his gift of selfless comradeship most willingly, and I was extremely fond of my Rotfuchs.

Wolf Ackva's friendly helper, on the other hand, was no such simple case. Wolf Ackva was not a distrustful man by nature, but in the camp he had become one. He had cigarettes, good American cigarettes; he also had the best job in the camp, for he played the piano in the Americans' mess when their cook bawled "*Come and get it!*" Part of Ackva's spiritual hygiene consisted in never smoking in the barracks. Scarcely anyone had cigarettes, and it was impossible to take one puff without being surrounded by a crowd of greedy men all eagerly awaiting the opportunity to pounce on the butt. The friend who helped and looked after Ackva was a short-legged, broad-shouldered man, with a low and puckered brow and a thick red neck in the folds of which lived whole colonies of fat parasites. To begin with Ackva assumed that this individual's eagerness to be of assistance could be easily accounted for; but it soon transpired that he was a non-smoker, and not only did he not smoke but he also seemed to have no other vices whatsoever. He looked after Ackva in silence, his eyes filled with a dog-like devotion; he did the duties of room orderly when it was Ackva's turn; and he was prepared to sit utterly still while Ackva drew his portrait. He was the Prague executioner.

Ackva was fascinated by him. He drew him from all angles, over and over again, as though with a skilful pencil stroke he might penetrate the secret of that low and puckered brow and of all that heavy devotion; perhaps he would even get behind those dark, dull eyes and discover the whole appalling helplessness of brutality's damnation. It was from this model that Ackva learned how to draw. He was already a man of many talents, at home in every art form, an actor by profession, bilingual in English, a musician who could play anything after hearing it once, and the author, both words and lyrics, of a song that became the camp's anthem. This was the song of *Die Bunte Kuh* (*The Spotted Cow*), a pirate song, of course, and it enjoyed considerable popularity.

Wolf Ackva was the only internee who had succeeded in talking to the Americans; they asked him what his name meant, and he told them as a joke that it meant the same as Kodak in America. From then on they always called him Kodak. He wore his hair long and carefully brushed, and he had a small blond imperial beard that the Americans laughed at. The first commandant, indeed, gave a direct order that Kodak shave it off—but this Kodak did not do. He protested vehemently instead. One day an American told him to make a drawing of the camp from one of the watch-towers. While doing so he read a notice posted in the tower.

This said that the GI's were to have no pity for the camp inmates and were to remember at all times that they were guarding a collection of murderers. Kodak complained to the American officer about this, saying that he was certainly no murderer. The Americans laughed heartily at this and replied that he most definitely was. Only after a rather angry argument did he discover their reasons for being so sure that he was a murderer. He wore a beard. Therefore he wished to make himself unrecognisable. Therefore he was a murderer. This solved the problem of why the men with beards, who were in most cases elderly civil servants of the better class, were beaten up with particular savagery and frequency. They were murderers in disguise, obviously. And Kodak of course wasn't really called Ackva, his real name was quite different. Kodak said to them furiously:

"I tell you I'm *Reichsleiter* Bormann! You did a good job when you caught me!"

"And?" I asked him.

"And," said Kodak bitterly, "since then I've no idea whether they really believe I'm Bormann or not!"

"To begin with," said Kodak, "I was impressed by them. They were so extraordinarily secretive. Every intelligence officer who ever interrogated American prisoners made the same discovery—you couldn't get anything out of them. The Americans got everything out of German prisoners. But then I found that they took this secrecy of theirs too far. They have an extraordinary trick of making a mystery out of everything. They won't tell us why we can't have toilet paper, when we'll be allowed to write letters, what they actually want with us . . . They laugh and give me silly answers, such as why should I want to be outside, I'm far better off in the camp, and so on. Then at last I got the answer to the riddle: they won't tell because they don't know! And it's worse even than that: they're not interested! This marvellous secrecy of theirs is simply caused by the fact that they don't care. They're not interested in anything except ———, perhaps, which is really the only thing they ever talk about. I have a bigger English vocabulary than theirs. I estimate that they use some sixty words with ——— in the place of some sixty more."

Kodak was one of the few who had so far been questioned. All the internees had been informed that they were being taken to this camp for interrogation, and it was indicative of the state of affairs that none dared admit his appalling fear that the Americans had not really meant this at all. The internees were amazingly ready to put up with all the miseries and horrors of camp life in the anxious hope that they would at last face interrogation; and each seemed quite certain that the moment he had an opportunity to present his case all would be changed. Now a CIC unit had for some time been established in this 'High Level Interrogation Camp,' but not even the most fertile brain could work

out the system or order according to which the examinations were carried out. Each man who was summoned—up front—was, as soon as he had been released from the hospital barrack, immediately surrounded by eager questioners. They all told the same story and the picture they painted was incapable of logical explanation. The internees sent for were men of all different categories. The alert young gentlemen of the CIC would begin by showing them a concentration camp photograph and then would ask, say, a National Labour Service official who had never had anything to do with concentration camps, how many lethal injections he had given. After the third question, at the latest, the beating would begin.

When old Herr Alinn came back he told us that he had been interrogated by 'Ivan the Terrible,' a Yugoslavian CIC officer, who had read his arrest report, had glanced up, and had asked:

"So you know Poland began the war? What do you know about concentration camps?"

Herr Alinn, recalling the stiff-necked traditions of his Westphalian forbears, replied politely that he could give an exact answer to this question: he remembered very well when and where concentration camps had been invented; it was during his youth that the British had first set them up, at the time of the Boer War. When Herr Alinn was discharged from the hospital barrack he was put in the punishment cell for two weeks and lost his job. And the old gentleman had had a lovely job; he got up at four each morning to heat the coffee pots in the kitchen, in exchange for which he was given food tickets.

Ivan the Terrible maintained that he had been in a German concentration camp and that nine German bullets had passed through his body. We were in consequence astounded by his powerful physique which enabled him, despite this, to deal with his delinquents single-handed. He was a small, dark and solidly built man with a shock of black hair above his uncommonly low forehead. We never managed to discover his real name.

By the wire fence Kodak and I met Otto Dunckelberg, the organist from Passau cathedral, which contained the greatest organ in the world. He stared at the sky above the barbed wire. I said:

"Courage! Better times will come!"

He turned around and said:

"What do you mean? Oh, I see. No, I was only trying to make a melody of it."

He pointed at the telegraph poles with their five wires on which were seated a number of birds. He whistled a short and not particularly pretty tune. He said:

"It's senseless."

The birds on the wire did really look like the notes of a score. Dunckelberg was a Passauer—of the anti-Moosbauer faction. Now he

gazed hungrily at Kodak's cigarette, but it was not customary for gentlemen of the 'Club' to ask one another for a puff. Kodak gave him a cigarette. Dunckelberg smoked quickly and greedily. Yet he could easily have acquired as many cigarettes as he wanted, for Kodak had offered to share his job with him; Dunckelberg was far the better pianist of the two. But Dunckelberg only attempted once to entertain the Americans at the piano. He returned to the camp with a perplexed countenance. The Americans had crowded around him and had broken out in noisy enthusiasm—at his manual dexterity. He had to perform runs and trills and cadences; as soon as he began to play music they moved away, bored.

I had given up smoking. It was not easy. Since my fifteenth year I had been a passionate smoker and had imagined that I could not possibly get on without tobacco, particularly when working. Even during my most difficult periods, even when I was in prison, I had always found a way of procuring it. There was extremely little tobacco in the camp, and most of the inmates came from a war in which tobacco had seemed more important than bread. I had never imagined that I could manage to give up smoking, but then I had never had occasion to want to do so. But one day in the carpenter's shop I had laid aside a length of fine, soft, reddish wood out of which I planned to make a picture-frame for Kodak. That evening, when walking once again around the perimeter wire, I saw two internees fighting for a piece of wood. It was mine. One, a secretary of state, had driven a nail through one end of the wood and with his improvised tool was attempting to fish for a cigarette butt which an American sentry had thrown from his watch-tower onto the far side of the wire. The sentry watched, grinning. The other, a police general, protested that the cigarette end belonged to him since it was he who had fetched the piece of wood and who had also first seen the butt. I said:

"To begin with it's my piece of wood. In the second place aren't you ashamed to fish for cigarette ends with Amis watching?"

The secretary of state took advantage of this diversion to hook the butt and put it between his lips with an expression of triumph. The police general, somewhat embarrassed, said:

"I'm a heavy smoker. It's easy for you to talk, you don't smoke!"

I assured him that I too was a heavy smoker, but added that I would rather give it up than so demean myself for the sake of tobacco.

"It's impossible to give it up!" stated the police general.

I cried:

"I'll show you it's not impossible!"

It was quite easy. I still had a packet of tobacco, a present from Frau Dr. Flocken, and I posted a notice on our board saying that I would give it to any man who caught me smoking from then on. The whole camp watched me. Indeed the consciousness of my own heroism carried me

through the first four hours, which all assured me were the most difficult, and by the third day cigarette ends on the ground meant nothing to me whatever. Thenceforth I got on everybody's nerves with my moralistic preachings. I even tried to proselytise the 'Club' concerning the virtues of abstention from tobacco, but I only succeeded in convincing Ludin, the last German ambassador to Slovakia.

Almost as soon as I arrived in the camp Ludin came to see me. We had never met before, but we had always heard a great deal concerning one another, for eighteen years now. Ludin was one of those Reichswehr officers who had been the cause of the Ulm Reichswehr Trial, and the only accused at that trial who had subsequently entered the Party; he had become a senior SA leader. We had many old friends and old prisons in common. I grew very fond of him. Now he took advantage of the comparative desertion, when almost all the internees were in their barrack rooms quarrelling about the distribution of bread, to wash himself thoroughly and at his leisure. He was the envied owner of a large sponge. He stood naked beneath the stream of water, which he squeezed out of his great sponge, and nodded to me. This was his form of 'splendid isolation' and we respected it.

Each man had his own methods. Dr. Jeserich, former president of the German Parochial Diet, ran quickly round and round alone inside the wire. Such was his hygiene, while with closed face he grimly thought how the new order 'outside' must be assuming the forms he had laid down according to his theories based on the feudal concept of *communes*. At this time of day he was not to be spoken to. No more was Dr. Blessing, a colleague of Schacht's, who had adopted the same system as Jeserich, though he ran the other way. He was plainly determined not to reveal the mysteries of the only practicable measures for currency reform until the transitory powers-that-be came to him on bended knees and begged for the secret.

A neat phrase was current in the camp: "Excuse me, but could you spare me four or five hours? I'd like to tell you briefly about my case." Every man had his case. When the questionnaires were first issued—and this was the first sign that something sensible might be done with us—they were greeted with a hum of excitement. At the sight of the one hundred and thirty-one questions, however, this became stilled and a heavy brooding took its place. No one yet knew the purpose of all these questions—but the effect they produced was one of malice, particularly those which seemed not designed to produce factual information. Questions such as No. 21: *Have you ever severed your connections with any church, officially or unofficially?* or No. 108: *For what political party did you vote in the election of November 1932?* caused us to shudder with dread when we were not trembling with disgust. They left no man his former certainty of innocence, not even old and upright Social-Democrats. Soon the camp began to hum again, but now the note was

different, recalling that of a disturbed hive: "What shall I answer to this question? Let me tell you briefly about my case."

Rotfuchs, for example, said:

"I have the Iron C-c-cross, First C-c-class. Must I say th-th-that all the same I c-c-c-consider myself quite a d-d-decent person?"

"That," I said, "is absolutely imperative. You must all make careful drafts and make sure they agree. Otherwise the Americans are bound to get the wrong idea."

"Write as little as possible," said Kodak, "and be sure to keep a copy. I wouldn't be surprised if the Americans didn't issue a second questionnaire in a little while. And woe to him whose answers don't tally with his first!"

(This prognostication proved correct.)

"It's easy enough for you to talk," some of them said. "You weren't in the Party! All you have to write is *not applicable*."

But I wished to prove to them that it wasn't so simple, even in my case. I vowed that I would give complete answers to the limited number of questions which directly applied to myself. It became quite a joke. Evening after evening I would go from one barrack room to another and would give a verbal answer to any question they cared to put. On many an evening I spoke for fully three hours. The questions that were most popular were Nos. 24, 29, 41 and 125. My malicious little murderer ostentatiously asked for my answer to Question 19. Question 116 and 'Remarks' interested nobody. It was no great mental effort to fulfil my promise: I simply said whatever came into my head in connection with the question that was put to me, fair or not, simply letting myself ramble on. But physically it was a considerable strain. For a few days I had been suffering from pains in my throat, and when I endeavoured to raise my voice often nothing would come from my mouth but a gush of warm air. After answering one of the more important questions I would return to my barrack room incredibly exhausted. My whole body would be covered with a disagreeable cold sweat, and I would throw myself on to my bed with a gasp.

This was the first time that I had really attempted to speak in public. I had no idea that it was so easy to arouse the enthusiasm of a crowd. I admit that from among the ranks of my audience I would select one face, and that would be the person to whom I spoke. As it happened, this was usually Judge-General Dr. Lehmann, at one time the supreme military judge of the Wehrmacht. This old gentleman, with the head of a scholar which was agreeably relieved by a bottle nose, was usually a member of my audience; he would gaze at me with a sceptical and friendly smile playing about his lips, so that I really had the illusion that I was standing before the president of a court of law, an illusion that was most fruitful. Now I met him and I took the opportunity to ask him a question.



“You’ve heard almost all my answers to the questions in the questionnaire, General,” I began. “If you were the president of an American court, how long would you give me?”

“Seven years!” Judge-General Dr. Lehmann replied promptly. (But it was precisely seven years that he later got at Nuremberg.)

Lieutenant-General Dr. Brandt, now a very elderly gentleman indeed, always walked alone. He had been responsible for military museums and arsenals. He always kept to himself, leaning on his cane, a long, empty cigarette-holder between his teeth, gazing thoughtfully at the ground as though Germany’s future preoccupied him above all else. I liked him and I liked his quiet and unexpected sense of humour. I spoke to him now:

“Well, General, are you thinking about your next victory?”

He stopped:

“And you? About your next book?”

I said:

“I’m afraid we’ve both plenty of time for thought.”

He pointed his cigarette-holder at my chest and said:

“Such a good job I had, so easy, so quiet. But the theorem has been proved: it was still too dangerous. Can you think of a better post for the next war?”

I suggested:

“How about a railway signal box?”

“Signalman!” he said: “Yes, that would be a good position. But please, if possible not on any strategically important stretch of line!”

The general staff colonel, Sauerbruch, walked in company with the victor of Crailsheim. Sauerbruch, unusually young for a man of his rank, was the son of the famous surgeon. He had no reason to complain that he was in this camp, nor did he do so. He had been involved in the affair of July 20th, 1944, and had been arrested by the Hitlerite régime in consequence, but he refused to exploit this fact in his dealings with the Americans. His really incredible determination not to make any capital out of an action which revealed his innermost convictions seemed simply to irritate the Americans.

The victor of Crailsheim was the most outstanding figure among the generals, though far from being the most senior. The Americans had not beaten him up. He was an enormous man, the last commander of the unfortunate Sixth Army, a typical old campaigner. His adjutant once summed him up in a phrase: “He never minded how much metal there was flying about!”

“What, you don’t know about the Battle of Crailsheim?” the general asked me with astonishment. “Well, well, such is fame. In German army circles it is regarded as the last German victory.”

“Tell me about it,” I said.

He grinned. During the last, confused fighting he had become

separated from his troops. He was in his armoured command vehicle and at last, in the darkness, he found a column of tanks and trucks which he joined. He had been travelling with them for some time when he suddenly realised that it was an American column. His final chance to escape was a cross-roads, and he turned off there, but his tank was immediately recognised as a German one. The only thing to do was to open fire with everything he had and to get out as fast as possible. When at last he rejoined one of his corps it transpired that the Americans, who had already occupied Crailsheim, were plainly disturbed by this shooting behind their front and had evacuated the little town with all speed. Of course the Germans reoccupied the place, not for long, but all the same. . . .

“So there you have proof,” said the victor of Crailsheim loudly, “that a general without an army can be every bit as useful as a lance-corporal!”

(The victor of Crailsheim’s chivalrous opponent, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, saw the incident as follows: *On April 7th the 10th Armoured Division was advancing towards Crailsheim, but the Germans reacted so quickly and violently that the division had to be hastily withdrawn from its exposed positions.*)

The generals did not associate with the group and brigade leaders of the Waffen-SS. The old antipathy still endured, even in the camp. The SS leaders for their part stayed ‘with their men’ and did not occupy a special room as did the generals. The generals kept very much to themselves, only occasionally seeking the company of the rare and amazingly young general staff officers also interned here. For the rest they were busy with two endless discussions, one concerning relative seniority and the other the events of July 20th, 1944. This latter subject did not result in any sort of split in their ranks, nor did it result in anything else; reluctantly they decided that this was a case that could not be judged according to general principles, but concerning which each man must make up his own mind and decide for himself. That is to say it was insoluble. The SS leaders never discussed anything. In many a conversation their unexpected tolerance was most surprising; they were the first to admit that the German leaders had made mistakes; as for the ‘guilt’ question, they seemed to be simply bored by it and did not take it personally.

Of the SS leaders two were particularly outstanding, both by reason of their appearance and of their behaviour. They acted as camp police. One of them, a *Standartenführer*, had been finally sent to Hungary by Himmler to ‘solve the Jewish question.’ He solved it in the most drastic fashion, which proves that with a certain amount of skill even tasks of that sort can be mastered in a way that will make the morally self-assured and presumptuous Americans themselves express their profound admiration. They interrogated him at length, but they did not beat him

up. On the contrary, they drove him in a jeep to lunch at their officers' mess, at Deggendorf, and when they brought him back to the camp they saluted him most punctiliously. The other, an *Obersturmbannführer*, was the last commander of the first regiment of the SS Panzer Division *Leibstandarte*. There could be no doubt that it was thanks to these two SS officers that the attitude of the Americans towards the Waffen-SS, at least in this camp, underwent the most startling change. They both strode through the camp, wearing nothing but their white shorts, both slender, tall and blond, both exercising an unquestioned authority, looking, as Ille remarked: "like two Teutonic dukes whose mantels, stained crimson with the foe's blood, still flutter invisibly from their shoulders." Even in the generals' critical eyes they represented a fine type—clever, practical, self-confident figures without a flaw, without a trace of physical or intellectual fat.

As soon as the deputy camp-leader blew his whistle to announce the beginning of work I made my way to my barrack. At its usual lethargic pace the camp began to move. Rotfuchs had broken my piece of white bread into the mess tin we shared and mixed it up with the oatmeal soup. It amounted in all to a couple of spoonfuls. Needless to say there had been a row. Graf Plettenberg had accused the room-leader, first, of letting him have less than his share and, secondly, of giving him the worst piece of bread. Apart from that, after each man had had his half pint of soup there was some left over. This was divided with scrupulous care, but there must have been an error in the calculations, for when the Graf came for his second helping there was only a quarter of a pint left. So the eternally hungry artist announced that he intended to get an extra portion of the mid-day meal—which he was noisily told was impossible. My throat was extremely painful and I had a hard time getting the food down, but nevertheless I did swallow it as fast as I could and Rotfuchs ran off to clean the mess-tin.

The men who had no job now lay down on their beds again. There was not much work in the camp—only what was absolutely essential for the camp's own needs and what was of use to the Americans of the guard company or of the CIC. The best jobs all belonged to the concentration-camp trusties; they worked in the kitchen in the Americans' barracks and in the various workshops where things were made or repaired for the Americans in exchange for a few cigarettes—nobody could accuse the Americans of overpaying. It was not possible to find work for more than some eight hundred of the camp's four thousand inmates. And each time the commandant was changed the camp-leader had to argue bitterly about the number of food tickets—for only he who worked was entitled to mid-day soup.

The castle on top of the Natternberg had been badly damaged by artillery fire during the battle for the Danube crossings. Whenever a new commandant arrived the camp requested, through the camp-leader,

that they be used to restore it. We reckoned that to do this no fresh materials were needed and no labour other than our own. Four thousand men lay about at the foot of the hill, doing nothing, and the castle, if repaired, would provide shelter for at least fifty homeless families. The camp-leader even forced himself to say, with a certain tremor in his voice, that the camp wished in this way to do amends for part of the 'guilt' which allegedly lay upon it. Even this appeal was in vain. One commandant maintained he had not enough guards to supervise the work; a second coolly replied that the internees merely desired a pretext for requesting a larger issue of food tickets; a third simply explained his refusal by remarking that the castle looked very romantic as it was and that if it were restored some senior American staff was bound to move into it—and he did not care for the thought of having a senior American staff so close to his camp.

Indeed the inactivity was what was most oppressive in the camp—apart from anxiety about one's home and one's own future. The unemployed district group leaders lay about near the fence while the harvest was being brought in and stared bitterly at the fields, now worked by women, old men and children. In the carpenter's shop it was regarded as poor form to work too hard; each job had to last as long as possible so that it would produce the maximum number of food tickets. There was only a little wood available, and this was used for repairing bed-frames, tables, stools and benches—and for making picture-frames and packing-cases for the Americans. Every officer wanted cases in which to ship his stuff to America, large cases too. Most of the cases were used to ship porcelain.

The joiners, bricklayers and navvies formed the largest contingent among the camp's workers. Herr Wegener as foreman supervised the building of a cook-house and of a new latrine ('foundations like a railway station!'). Plots of ground were marked out for the construction of new barracks too, so it did not look as though the camp would be wound up in the near future. The generals had an exceptionally hard time finding suitable work. But they drew up lists among themselves and set about the problem in true military fashion. A great deal of staff work was needed before an agreeable job could be discovered which answered the rather lofty requirements of the generals. Finally, after uncommonly exciting preparations and reconnaissance, followed by a vigorous offensive against the camp-leader and intrigue on a massive scale, the generals succeeded in gaining control of a position from which they could dispose of a number of jobs. The camp followed tensely the struggle between the generals and the man who had up till then held this coveted position—he was a Lower Bavarian snuff manufacturer who fought back stubbornly and with all the weapons he could command. But at last the point was reached at which the generals could detonate all their carefully planted mines, and finally the exhausted

snuff manufacturer surrendered. At the end of a lengthy and heated conference, presided over by the camp-leader, his nerves snapped and he shouted at the generals:

“All right, gentlemen, I give in . . . the shit is all yours!”

The generals were very proud of their victory. The shithouse command required only two hours' work a day, but counted for a full food ticket. From then on the latrines were cleaned with real military thoroughness.

In the carpenter's shop Ludin, Rotfuchs and I worked together. The shop was run by Herr Badigruber, a responsible carpenter from Lower Austria who ran his concern with an iron hand and with a positively Prussian foulness of mouth. Despite our protracted arguments he continued to declare that he would rather piss himself than let us get our hands on his wood. I assured him that I had worked for many years as a carpenter, and he didn't believe me. (It was true enough; I had been trained in prison, from 1922 to 1927.) Rotfuchs assured him that he could do anything, and Badigruber did not believe him. (It was not true; Rotfuchs could do a great many things, but not carpentry.) Ludin said frankly that he knew nothing about carpentry, and Herr Badigruber believed him. (But Ludin was far and away the best carpenter of us three.) Finally we were taken on because, as the strict Herr Badigruber declared, at least one of us had told the truth.

On the tool chest sat a Croat general. He was even more foul-mouthed than Herr Badigruber, but at least we could not understand him since he swore in Croatian. He was indeed a general, though only a Ustachi one. A gaunt old man with a hooked nose, a brown skin and a grey moustache which fluttered in the breeze, he had spent nineteen years of his life in prison. He had an outspoken contempt for those German National-Socialists who did not realise that a life behind dungeon walls or barbed wire, with occasional periods of recuperation outside spent lurking behind boulders in the Karst with a flint-lock in one's hand, must surely be the normal existence for true nationalists.

Only when Herr Badigruber had called out the names and allotted the tasks would the iron general open his tool-chest. For the next quarter of an hour there was nothing to be heard save his rough, coarse, croaking voice accompanying each hatchet, each saw, each chisel with a flood of German and Croatian oaths. It was obvious that the tools disappeared one by one into the barrack rooms, and the general knew no other way of memorising faces than by swearing at them. When his chest was empty he had nothing further to do except to keep an eye on the wood and to make sure that none of it was being misused, to make wooden trousers for instance. He sat on his chest and tried, amidst a stream of oaths, to make these self-pitying German milksops realise that this camp was a positive rest-home compared to the Serbian, Italian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Roumanian, Hungarian and Greek prisons. He

held us for a weakling race of drawing-room patriots, and believed that the best thing that could happen to us would be for us to be hanged at the first opportunity so that we might at last find out what life was all about. (He was hanged.)

Ludin made boxes. He began by making himself a chess-board, followed by a box in which to keep the pieces, which he also carved himself. Then he made wooden boxes for his more optimistic friends who reckoned that they would soon be set free. Since on arrival the Americans systematically burned all suitcases which they did not confiscate for their own purposes, a great many men were eager to acquire a wooden box. Badigruber, worried about his limited stock of wood, had strictly forbidden the making of such boxes, but he closed his eyes to Ludin's doing so. Ludin was far and away the most popular man in the camp, and, besides, he made the boxes so extremely well. Rotfuchs built tables, stools and benches for the barrack-rooms. We three had requested Badigruber not to give us any work to do for the Americans. I helped Rotfuchs and it must have been my fault that our tables and stools and benches all wobbled. Occasionally Badigruber would watch me at work for a short time before turning away, an expression of distress upon his face. I noticed that he would far rather I watched him at work than vice versa. So I began to tell him stories. Finally, when a great many carpenters lost their jobs because there was insufficient work, he gave me a direct order to remain in his shop. I was to go from place to place telling stories to his assistants. He had discovered that I slowed the work down—thus once again did mind conquer matter.

Rotfuchs and I exchanged glances, then each of us quietly put a board under one arm, I picked up hammer and nails, Rotfuchs took a plane from his neighbour's bench, and we slipped out. Amid a crowd of admiring spectators Herr Badigruber was artistically assembling a complicated picture frame. Only the iron general sprung with an oath from off his chest, and with a volley of the foulest Croatian imprecations watched us and his tools disappear.

Before the women's cage stood the two men of the camp police. Ille was seated outside her barrack, on a very wobbly bench of my construction, making a face-cloth. We walked through the gate.

Ille smiled.

Ille always smiled. Frau Brass had told me that the Americans called Ille '*Miss Smiling.*' The American patrols came into the women's barracks every night, for 'inspection.' They never visited the men's barracks. Ille told me that to begin with the women were very frightened of the Americans, particularly when, as frequently happened, the GI's were drunk. But they satisfied themselves with the most remarkable sorts of entertainment. There was one who never failed suddenly to thrust his hand under Ille's blanket. He would grab her foot, shake it in most friendly fashion, and say: "*Goodnight, Miss*

*Smiling!*" Ille quite rightly assumed this to be a delicate mark of affection, American style.

But now Ille looked very pale. I asked:

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing, only I don't feel awfully well."

"You go and lie down at once!"

Ille said:

"After lunch!" Then, with sudden misery, she said: "But I have behaved well! Please admit I've behaved well!"

She always had to have acclaim. I said:

"Yes, yes," I said. "You've behaved better than I."

This was indeed true. The behaviour of the women was magnificent. The men swore at one another in the foulest terms, even when standing by the fence of the women's cage. The men were dirty, unshaven, their clothes filthy. They made no attempt to keep up appearances. They would piss against the barrack walls, regardless of whether the women could see them. They fought for the cigarette butts the Americans threw away.

"Will you ever be able to respect men again?" I had once asked the women. Frau Brass replied:

"Oh, we don't even see it!"

We went into Ille's barrack. The women were on the average considerably younger than the men. The elder women were from the Party, the wives of *Gauleiters*, leaders of the Women's Organisation, a few from the Passau SD. But most of them were young girls, secretaries from senior governmental or Party offices, leaders of the League of German Maidens, SS nursing sisters, SS female auxiliaries and concentration-camp guards.

On the evening before Ille's birthday—she was born on July 12th, 1912—I had walked along the wire fence and seen her talking to a young girl of delicate, though rather vulgar, beauty. I said sadly to Ille:

"Tomorrow's your birthday and I can't give you a squab and new peas!"

Squab and new peas had been Ille's birthday dinner since childhood and I had always respected her remarkable devotion to ritual; even during the war, when such delicacies were not always easily obtained, I had seen to it that she ate the traditional meal on her birthday. Ille gave me a consoling smile. Next morning, when I came to the wire to wish her many happy returns, I found her in tears.

"Imagine," she said, "the young girl who was with me last night heard what you said. She was a concentration-camp guard and is now a 'war criminal.' She'll probably be hanged!"

"What?" I cried. "That delicate, soft, little creature?"

Ille said:

"You should see how she behaves to the Americans! They're all

crazy about her and she treats them like dirt. Every night the commandant makes her come to the kitchen.”

It was First Lieutenant Baybee’s custom to have certain complacent interned women brought to him in the camp kitchen at night where he would treat them to food, drink, cigarettes and so on. The kitchen orderlies, who slept next door, told very funny stories about these goings-on.

“Imagine,” said Ille, “last night when she came back from the kitchen she threw a tin of new peas on my bed, and a tin of pigeon. ‘Happy Birthday!’ she said.”

Ille, crying harder than ever, said between her sobs:

“And imagine, I ate them. I was so hungry! Is that very wicked?”

I had done my best to cheer Ille up, assuring her that it wasn’t wicked at all. The young concentration-camp guard and war criminal henceforth did Ille’s work for her when it was her turn to be room-orderly. She explained her motives with the classic phrase:

“You Jews should realise that we don’t mean you any harm.”

There was another occasion on which I saw Ille cry. She had had to fetch hot water from the kitchen for the women in the hospital barrack, and when she came back there were tears in her eyes. I met her on the way.

“Imagine,” she said, “I went into the kitchen and there sat the orderlies and they’d made themselves a bean salad, with broad beans!” Ille sobbed: “I was so hungry, but that wasn’t it! I couldn’t go on, I had to cry! Bean salad! It’s really nothing special, but I do love it so, and it wasn’t for me. I didn’t get any, it was all for those great, fat, overfed kitchen orderlies!”

Ever since there have been kitchen orderlies, in the opinion of the world they have been both fat and overfed; in the camp kitchen they were neither the one nor the other, very far from it. But I understood Ille. With their bean salad the orderlies also ate a portion of Ille’s pride.

Ille led us to her bed and showed us where the planks should go. She had a lower bunk and she lay down at once. I sat beside her. The bed was very hard. Ille said with a little smile:

“You know, even now I can’t sleep on straw!”

Ille had thrown out her straw, which was old, broken and dusty. She preferred to lie on the hard boards, covered only with a folded blanket. Frau Brass slept next to her. The women were accustomed to my visits by this time, and they nodded to me. Only the blond girl, in the top bed opposite, showed any signs of agitation; the moment she saw me she sat up and stripped off her clothes with lightning speed. This was Yvonne. When first Rotfuchs and I had entered the barrack the same thing had happened. Ille said:

“Don’t take it as a compliment. She does it whenever any man enters the room, any German that is. She doesn’t like the Americans.”



Yvonne was a French girl, from Paris. She had been taken from some *Maison des Nations* by German soldiers. She said she loved Germans, and when she loved she stripped. Yvonne was famous throughout the camp. Even the women liked her, even the dried up old women of the Women's League. Yvonne was superb. In Ille's room there also lived 'the Grater,' the uncommonly quarrelsome and highly hysterical wife of a former Nazi minister. The Grater made communal life hell for the other women with her eternal scolding voice, her noisy complaints, her gossip and her ill manners. The first time that she said something about Yvonne that pretty little creature went for her like a ferocious cannon-ball and scratched her face. Since then Yvonne only stripped on her bed, and the Grater, momentarily silenced, would crawl under her blankets, Yvonne was a blessing.

Now she was begging, leaning forward so that half her naked rosy body was over the edge of the bed:

"Plank for me too?"

Rotfuchs said:

"You'll g-g-get your plank," and Yvonne lay back with a little sigh.

The women's barracks were both internally and externally exactly like those of the men, but they seemed much lighter. They were certainly cleaner and they smelt far pleasanter. The good ladies of the Women's League were for ever busy beautifying their home; here lay a carpet and there was a gay little curtain, small pictures hung cosily on the walls, the bulbs were covered with shades made from pressed grasses and the beds had scalloped borders; at meal-times the mess-tins were placed on paper napkins with mats beneath them decorated with silhouettes.

I always remained as long as I could in the women's barracks. Every three minutes Rotfuchs would lazily strike the plank with his hammer, but try as he might he could never stop it from wobbling; he'd have to come back to fix that wobble some other day. From time to time Sister Eugenie, a woman past her first youth and somewhat faded but with a great soul, would put her nose around the door and tell us that the Polish sergeant was still 'up front'—so there was no immediate danger. But today she informed us that a truck was outside the gate and demanding admission. This was an important occurrence! Rotfuchs went at once to see what it was. When he returned he was overwhelmed with questions: was it the ration truck, what was there on board? It was not the ration truck, but a load of clothing. Rotfuchs felt extremely uneasy, and we left.

Rotfuchs disappeared at once; he had to be present when the clothes were unloaded. The whole camp discussed the matter. Was it winter clothing? Did this mean that we would be here until spring?

It was time to return to the carpenter's shop if I did not wish to miss the roll-call at which food tickets were handed out. Dr. Weber was no

free and easy room-leader, believing as he did in National-Socialist justice. An element of this justice was that the recipient of a worker's food ticket had to surrender part of his ration for distribution among his less fortunate room-mates, who would otherwise simply have died of starvation. In accordance with a definite roster each 'worker' had to share his mid-day meal with a non-worker; the sharing was done in this way—the non-worker divided the food in two parts, but the worker had first choice. Dr. Weber made enormous efforts to ensure that as many men in his room as possible got food tickets, and indeed it did contain a far higher proportion of workers than did any of the other barrack-rooms. One result of this was that, in strict rotation, a number of workers were enabled on some days to eat the whole of their mid-day meal without having to share out any part of it.

It was a bad day for Rotfuchs and me, that is to say we had to share our soup. And furthermore it was 'Wehrmacht Soup,' which did not taste at all bad, a sort of gruel made from German army groats captured by the Americans. The only trouble was that it was made too thin and carelessly cooked, and each worker got only a pint. And this time I could not practise my spiritual hygiene, since I had to draw Rotfuch's soup as well as my own, he having disappeared. And of course it would be Graf Plettenberg who was to share my portion! Rotfuchs had to divide his with Dr. Schreiner. I asked Dr. Schreiner to share it out, and though it was wellnigh impossible to quarrel with that distinguished old gentleman, Graf Plettenberg managed to do so. I had immediately clambered up on to my bunk and lain down. I felt exhausted beyond measure, and Dr. Schreiner had advised me to lie down as much as possible, since that saved 'calories.' Calories was a word I did not care to hear; the Americans had divided up the world into calories, and it had not grown any more beautiful in consequence.

At last Dr. Schreiner handed me up my meal. I complained of pains in my throat, and the old gentleman climbed up and gazed anxiously for some time into my open mouth. But all he said was: "Furry tongue." Despite my sore throat I ate all my portion, down to the line which marked Rotfuchs' half. I was about to lie down again when Rotfuchs' appeared, staggering beneath a mountain of clothing. He had been the first at the unloading and had picked out all the best bits for our barrack-room. Dr. Weber immediately commandeered the lot and drew up a roster so that the trousers and jackets could be shared out fairly. The room, meanwhile, was filled with feverish discussion. What did this all mean? There was both summer and winter clothing in the pile, all old Wehrmacht stuff. Finally, I got a pair of thick, padded, camouflaged army trousers and a light, denim summer-tunic. Almost at once the deputy camp-leader entered the room and informed us that by order of the commandant we were to put on these clothes at once.

Rotfuchs ate his soup and scraped the tin with his spoon, a sound that

infuriated me. I was about to say something when I saw him looking at me with hurt eyes. I understood and laboriously I got up. I put on my new old clothes and clambered over the benches; Rotfuchs and I would go to the fence around the women's cage. But Dr. Weber stopped me. Pointing at my chest, he said:

"You must get rid of that!"

I glanced down. Still sewn above my left breast-pocket was the national military emblem, the *Hoheitszeichen*, a stylised eagle grasping a swastika between its claws. Rotfuchs grinned and said that this was what he called poetic justice; it was only right that some time I should wear the thing, but the only trouble was that I was wearing it a little too late.

"It's a direct order!" insisted Dr. Weber, correct even at the foot of the gallows.

It was indeed a direct order. Nobody in the camp was allowed to wear any former insignia or anything that contained a swastika. But it was hard for me to unstitch the piece of cloth, which was very thoroughly sewn on to the tunic; and besides, I thought, no one would notice it except an eagle-eyed disciplinarian like Dr. Weber. But everyone whom I met remarked on it at once.

My murderer tapped me on the chest, remarking:

"My respects! My respects!"

Kodak said:

"You're out of your mind. They'll make mincemeat of you if they see that."

Ludin said:

"Leave it there! It's part of the American spoils of war. You can't go damaging Truman's property."

The victor of Crailsheim screwed up his eyes and said:

"Looks splendid. There was something to it despite everything."

I dragged myself along to the fence. Ille was standing on the far side of the barbed wire with Frau Brass. They were waiting for me, but when I reached the wire I saw that Ille's eyes were filled with tears. This was the third time since being in the camp that I had seen Ille cry. She said:

"Imagine, I was just saying to Bertl how funny it was—that man coming towards us, if he wasn't so wretchedly broken-down, might almost look like Ernst twenty years from now. And then Bertl gave me a shocked glance, and . . . and . . ." Ille sobbed, "and then I saw it was really you!"

She could hardly calm down. I said the explanation was the funny new clothes I was wearing. Rotfuchs drew Ille's attention to the *Hoheitszeichen*. She said:

"Leave it on. I'd like to think it was you and not someone else who was the last to wear it."

She handed me a mess-tin through the wire. I didn't want to take it. Every day it was the same shameful farce, and I knew that I would end by taking it, and Ille knew this too. As every day Ille said:

"The women made a collection for you. I promise you it's not just my share. You know we can't eat this awful muck. Please take it. If you don't take it I'll pour it on the ground."

I took it and gulped it down and Rotfuchs stood there with hungry eyes. He blushed and said with embarrassment:

"I know I'm a swine, but hunger . . . I had never thought that hunger could turn human beings into such swine."

Then Yvonne shot out of the barrack door, also carrying a mess-tin, and said:

"And will I get my plank?"

She was clearly ready to strip at once, and Rotfuchs had to fight Odysseus' battle with the nymph Calypso—Penelope was waiting at home—and Rotfuchs gulped down the food.

Suddenly Dr. Flocken appeared around the corner. The moment she saw Ille she cried:

"Go back to bed at once! At once!" She turned to me and hissed: "Ille has diphtheria! Without a doubt! And you, open your mouth!"

Obediently I did so and Frau Dr. Flocken looked down my throat. She said:

"Turn towards the light! Breathe deeply!"

I pressed my head against the barbed wire, faced the sun and breathed deeply. Frau Dr. Flocken said:

"Ah ha, naturally! Furry tongue, smells putrid! You've got diphtheria too. Go to bed at once!"

I begged her:

"Flocken, there's absolutely no point, and anyhow if I did I wouldn't be able to see Ille any more."

Dr. Flocken was almost weeping with rage.

"The hospital barrack is overfull already, and I've no medicines. You should be in hospital and so should Ille. You should be isolated immediately and I've no isolation ward. Go and lie down on your bed and don't talk to anyone. Immediately!"

Frau Brass appeared, crying:

"Look out!"

The guards had tumbled out of their barracks, cars drew up—feverish activity up front! Rotfuchs was the first to grasp what was going on.

"That explains the clothing issue! Inspection!"

Senior officers were dismounting from the cars, the commandant shouting orders as he hurried towards the newcomers. Rotfuchs stuttered excitedly:

"Th-th-this is it! G-g-g-give the alarm!"

Frau Dr. Flocken hurried away. I ran across to our two camp police-

men and gave them the warning. They set off at once. They knew exactly what to do. The whole camp had long made all the necessary preparations for this moment.

Rotfuchs and I walked slowly to our barrack. Rotfuchs took off his jacket and shirt and stared glumly at his torso.

"In actual fact," he remarked drearily, "I s-s-still look q-q-quite strong!"

He had been a celebrated athlete and he still did look very good, even attractive—Yvonne had noticed as much.

"Get in the rear rank," I advised him.

I too took off my tunic and black shirt. It was a very different story with me. I had lost at least forty pounds and my skin hung in loose grey folds.

Out of all the barracks poured the internees, stripped to the waist. From Barrack 5 came the camp's Benjamin, a boy of twelve, the little son of Mauthausen's last commandant. The father had committed suicide and the concentration-camp inmates had forced the lad to sign a paper saying that on his birthday he had asked his father to let him shoot forty-three prisoners with his home-made carbine. I had tried in vain to discover whether he had really shot the men or not, for half the ex-concentration camp maintained that it was true and half that it wasn't. He slept beneath the Prague executioner.

Now came the blind men, their torsos bare, each with a yellow band about the upper arm: the one-legged men, hopping, for the Americans had burned their crutches and wooden legs: the man with no feet, carried as he had always to be carried when he wished to use the latrine: the men with ruptures whose rupture belts the Americans had taken away: the men with twisted spines whose supports the Americans had confiscated. It was suddenly apparent how many invalids were compelled to live in this camp. And there was Herr Alinn. Herr Alinn looked terrific. The old gentleman had literally no flesh left between his skin and his bones. He was a walking skeleton. I cried to him that he must stand beside the pictures of Mauthausen that the commandant had nailed to one of the barrack walls. Herr Alinn had long maintained proudly that in the art of starving he had no need to fear comparison with the victims of Mauthausen concentration camp.

There came the archimandrite with his long beard and his flowing robe, a petition clutched in his hand. And the Americans were already coming through the gate. The commandant accompanied his distinguished visitor. Our disappointment was great. It was not a general but only a colonel, with the typical, frozen, American old man's face, rimless spectacles, a mouth as thin as a knife and very white false teeth. With many bows the archimandrite approached and handed him his petition. The colonel did not so much as glance at him. The commandant took the petition, which he gave to his adjutant, who passed it

casually to another officer, who quickly thrust it into the hands of someone else.

Only the generals had not undressed. They had put on their complete uniforms, and dark patches showed where the many orders and decorations had once been sewn. Their boots, slit, hung down like those of mediaeval soldiers. But the stately group of warriors made no impression on the colonel. He walked quickly past all the groups, looking neither to right nor to left, hurrying along.

Dr. Flocken went up to him. She slipped through the group of officers accompanying him. She stopped dead in front of the colonel and immediately she began to talk. She talked loudly and forcefully, her blond hair flying in the wind, her spectacles flashing. She spoke English and the colonel remained standing where he was. At once the camp-leader came up. At once the generals marched forward. At once the medical faculty crowded about. At once a whole stream of the debased and insulted pressed in a great circle around the colonel. Only Herr Alinn remained standing, stiff as a ramrod, beside the pictures of Mauthausen. He had no need to speak, his appearance spoke for him. I could not understand what Dr. Flocken was saying, but Kodak did. He did not care for her at all, but now he said, delightedly:

“She’s telling him everything! What a woman!”

The colonel had placed one hand behind his ear and with his head tilted sharply to one side he listened, while his icy grey eyes gazed into the distance and a frozen smile played about his lips. He said not a word. The commandant stood beside him like a sulky schoolboy. He wished to speak, but the colonel gestured him to be silent, so he stuck his hands into his trouser pockets and chewed his gum harder than ever.

“What’s she saying now?” I asked excitedly, for the colonel really seemed to be interested.

“She’s talking about the diphtheria and about the absence of medicines, she’s saying. . . .” Kodak went on enthusiastically, “. . . she’s really very clever, she’s saying she must have more bandages for the people who’ve been ‘interrogated,’ since otherwise she can’t get them in shape in time for their next ‘interrogation.’ ”

The colonel said nothing. When Dr. Flocken had finished he set off like a steam-engine and hurried away. Respectfully the internees fell back. The colonel paid no attention to anyone. He stepped inside one of the barracks and came out again at once. He walked along the road through the camp like a machine. By the latrine he suddenly stopped and turned, and the whole camp stopped and turned with him. He entered the hospital barrack and reappeared at once. He went into the women’s barrack where Ille lay, and came out again immediately. Then he left.

A little later the deputy camp-leader appeared at his door, blowing his whistle. He went from barrack to barrack, announcing between whistles:

“All out for special roll-call!”

I had been about to look for Ille once again, but now I set off, at the camp pace, for the square where the roll-call was held. Dr. Flocken came from the direction of the gate, and as she passed me she turned and said sharply:

“You go to bed at once! At once!”

Her face was scarlet. I said:

“But I want to know what’s up!”

Frau Dr. Flocken said furiously:

“Nothing’s up. I’m no longer chief doctor in the camp, that is what’s up.”

Then she strode on, her expression determined.

I went back to my room, climbed up into my bunk, and lay down. I felt extremely wretched.

I was not left alone for long. Dr. Zechner came blustering into the room. Dr. Zechner was an SS doctor from Mauthausen, an Austrian and servilely ambitious, a man I did not care for. He was carrying a little medicine case and he glanced about him. When he saw me he asked sharply:

“Who gave you permission to lie down?”

I said:

“Dr. Flocken.”

He said:

“Dr. Flocken has no authority. She has been dismissed. I’m the camp doctor now. Get down! Outside! Roll-call!”

I said heavily:

“Dr. Zechner, would you be so good as to adopt a different tone when speaking to me?”

He started back:

“Ho, ho! So you’re another of Dr. Flocken’s pets, are you? And you pretend you’re sick? We’ll soon see about that. Open your mouth, I’m going to take a slide.”

From his case he produced a piece of wire with a bit of cotton-wool on the end. He thrust this down my throat and scraped hard. I realised perfectly well that he wished to hurt me, but I said nothing. It was an appalling pain. He placed the wire in a test tube and said:

“Now get down! Outside!”

I said:

“Dr. Zechner, if you’re so insistent you’d better fetch your friend the Polish sergeant.”

He said nothing. He snapped his case shut and left.

My throat was burning. I retched and spat. Dr. Flocken entered the room.

“Was Zechner here?”

I nodded. She walked over to my bunk, and I opened my mouth.

She glanced down my throat without comment. Removing her spectacles, she gazed silently in front of her. At last she said:

"I've got you a bed in the isolation barrack. Ille is already next door. Tonight just pack up your things and come over. Don't worry about anything, just come. And if Zechner should say anything to you whatever, simply punch his nose for him." Suddenly she smiled and said: "No, tell Rotfuchs to punch his nose for him!"

With difficulty I said:

"Rotfuchs is very happy that you like him."

Dr. Flocken replaced her spectacles on her nose and said:

"Now I must go to roll-call. The commandant is beating."

Startled I croaked:

"What?"

Dr. Flocken said:

"Yes, he's lost his job. The new guard unit arrives tomorrow. Now he's getting his revenge for what I said to the colonel." She was about to leave when she stopped in the doorway and said quietly:

"Can anyone understand the Americans?"

Can anyone understand the Americans? Can anyone understand the Germans? Can anyone understand the world?

It went alphabetically. The first to return were Herr Alinn and Herr Anker. They were gasping. They said the Americans had formed two ranks. They all held rubber truncheons and when they called out a man's name he had to run the gauntlet between them—'*mak snell, mak snell!*'; the faster he ran the fewer blows he received, a poor look-out for the more elderly men.

"The women too?" I asked.

"The women are all still standing there. Apparently they must wait till last."

One by one they came back, the old men in very poor shape. The Polish sergeant was in the middle of one rank, and he pursued the victims, striking eagerly with his truncheon. At the end of the double rank stood the thread lieutenant. He did not strike the internees.

Suddenly there was a crowd of returning men. Roll-call had been broken off, after the letter 'L.' Ludin had been called out. Ludin did not run. He walked at the slow camp pace. They rained down blows upon him. Ludin walked calmly, slowly. When he reached the Polish sergeant he lost one of his wooden shoes. He turned about and with his bare foot fished for the shoe he had lost. The sergeant ran after him, striking him. He dropped his rubber truncheon. Ludin leaned down, picked it up, and handed it back to the sergeant. The Pole let it fall again. Now he was only hitting Ludin with a rolled up sheet of paper, the archimandrite's petition. Ludin walked very slowly on. The lieutenant took the petition from the sergeant, who by this time was almost out of his mind. The camp laughed, the whole camp from L to Z



laughed as though liberated. The commandant dismissed the camp, turned on his heel, and walked away.

Ludin, good, old Ludin! Can anyone understand the world? Ludin could.

Violent discussion raged in our barrack-room. My murderer came especially to tell me about his martyrdom at the roll-call. He had had bad luck, since his name—a false one, incidentally—began with K.

“There’s a story for you!” he said.

Since he had discovered who I was he had treated me with great circumspection, as though the regrettable occasion when he had tried and failed to kill me had somehow placed us in the relationship of author to patron, he, of course, being the patron. I was very fond of him. His slick and deliberate cynicism amused me. Now he said:

“The Germans aren’t the men they were. Lost the drive they used to have. The mortality rate in this camp is far too low. We should have had a good high mound of corpses ready for the colonel. That always does the trick. Those jokers can’t stand the sight of blood.”

Rotfuchs packed all my possessions, including my straw, in one blanket, which he carried to the hospital barrack for me. I was really appallingly feeble, and Rotfuchs tried to encourage me.

“Imagine you’re being set free! Why, you’d c-c-crawl to the g-g-gate on your elbows!”

Dr. Flocken led me to my bed while Rotfuchs, a grim expression on his face, kept watch for Dr. Zechner. I struggled from bed to bed, introducing myself to the other sick men as was the custom among members of the ‘Club.’ Most of them already knew me from my answers to the questionnaire but I knew scarcely any of them. Only the president of the senate, old Dr. Veiel of the State Finance Court, got up from his bed to greet me. Dr. Flocken said:

“I cannot help you, gentlemen, since I have nothing with which to treat you. On the other hand tomorrow morning you will be inoculated against diphtheria.”

I said that in that case Dr. Flocken’s protest had produced its effect. But Dr. Flocken was not gratified. She said angrily:

“Yes, the serum is simply being commandeered from the district hospital at Deggendorf. Heaven help the children if the epidemic spreads.”

Dr. Veiel said:

“You mustn’t be unjust, doctor.”

But Flocken spat:

“It’s monstrous—typically American! They try to do something about the symptoms—too late, at that—instead of removing the causes!”

She sighed, turned around, and came across to me.

“Go to bed at once! From your bed you can see Ille. She’s by the window opposite, in the women’s ward.”

Then she walked out.

Ille waved and smiled from the window. She was in her old room from which the women who were not sick had been moved. That evening she got Sister Kathrin to bring me half her bread; she insisted that the sister tell me she could not eat the stale crust in any case, on account of her sore throat. Needless to say there was no special diet for the sick—one loaf for every twelve men and that was all. I too had a bad throat but I ate. The others talked from bed to bed, a long, laborious discussion about the concept of 'guilt.' It finally transpired that each one refused to accept himself as having any 'guilt.' Only Dr. Veiel suddenly remarked, in his usual, placid voice:

"I feel guilt. I know exactly why I am here, and I accept the fact."

"You?" I asked with astonishment. "You of all people?"

The old gentleman, one of the few humanists in the camp, who often conversed with Judge-General Dr. Lehmann in Latin or Greek, a man who enjoyed great respect for his fine learning and uprightness, said:

"Yes! I joined the Party and I now know that I had no need to do so."

On September the Fifteenth, 1946, I walked along the valley from Adelholzen and Talham, past the viaduct, up the slope to Reiten, towards the Huberhof. By the spot where Taddäus had died, I left the road and took the steep path skirting the wood. It was hot, and I took off my coat, which was now far too big for me. The dust came through my shoes, which were utterly tattered, and I had no socks. In the old days I had had no difficulty climbing this slope, but now I panted with every step. I met no one. Only on the bench beneath the old oak-tree, in the shade of its spreading branches, were seated two nuns, their heads covered with enormous, white coifs.

The last and steepest stretch, which I had always gone up at a run, I now took slowly, for this time I was not expected. A few more steps, and there before me lay the roofs of Reiten in its fold in the ground. And there was the Huberhof with its red roof and, on the far side of the road, the little garden in which Ille had planted her herbs. The pears had already been picked, far too early, and next to the herb garden was a small patch of maize which had not been there in the old days. A man was working among the maize, bending down so that I could not see his face. I reached the top of the hillock. He raised his head, and it was my brother; the corn was almost as tall as he. I walked across to him and said:

"You picked the pears too early!"

My brother broke off an ear of corn, and without looking at me said:

"Yes, on account of the thieves."

Then he straightened up and stared at me. Suddenly he cried: "Ille! Ille!" and ran towards the house.

Immediately Ille came running out of the door. She had grown a little fatter, but her features had remained hard. She was wearing a dress I had not seen before. She threw her arms about my neck, and I, feeling somewhat embarrassed, looked over her shoulder at Pablo, who was standing behind Ille in the doorway. So Pablo was there too, and Hilde, and my nephew Michael, and the Nanny, and the chickens were still there and in the cow-shed the cows moo-ed. All were there. Only I was not there. I was still far away. And I enjoyed this. I enjoyed the sentimentality of the home-coming, the spiritual independence, the voluptuous abandonment and the obscure sensation of pride I felt towards those whom I loved. I revelled in the injustice of what had happened to me while they were all here.

"Why have you already picked the pears?" I asked.

"We had to, because of the thieves," said Ille. "Come in!"

She said:

"You can't imagine what it's like nowadays in our peaceful little Siegsdorf! They'd cut your throat as soon as look at you!"

She said:

"Imagine, Herr Wolff over there was shot by the Poles on his own farm! One night they attacked the farm, shut up the women and children in the cellar, shot him, and looted the whole house. They took everything and loaded it into trucks. They'd come by truck."

"Poles?" I asked.

"Poles," said Ille. "The Americans let the Poles do anything they like."

"But," said I, "surely not our Poles! Our Poles wouldn't hurt anyone."

"You've no idea," said Ille. "They do whatever they like, when they're allowed to."

"It seems they're men like all the rest," said Hilde.

I sat down and asked:

"How about the house?"

Hilde said:

"Well, you know, it was no joke for me when Ille said to me so coldly: 'Look after the house. See what sort of a job you can make of it!' I ran straight down to the town and told the captain and Diewald what had happened. They were both marvellous and did everything they could. First they went to the Americans, but none of them ever knows what the others are doing. Then they both set off to see the new sub-prefect at Traunstein. He just said you'd soon be back. He said the Americans never arrested anyone without a cause."

"He was an ex-concentration-camp man?" I asked.

"Not at all," said Hilde. "He'd been in some sort of silly 'resistance' movement. Incidentally," Hilde went on eagerly, "you can't imagine

how many people suddenly turned out to have been in the 'resistance.' Even in Siegsdorf there were all of a sudden a whole lot who maintained they'd resisted like mad and nobody had ever even noticed it! People like the captain, who really took risks, they're right out now. But the ones who shirked their duty with the *Volkssturm* when their turn came, they're right on top!"

Hilde was truly embittered. She said:

"Why didn't you just tell us you weren't married?"

I said:

"We never told a soul, except Pablo of course. You must understand. . . ."

"Yes," said Hilde, "of course. Only when we sent an enquiry to Kitzbühel the Americans replied that they had no record of any couple of your name. And when Pablo arrived and told us the true story about you two. . . ."

"Stop!" I said: "Pablo?"

Pablo said:

"Yes. I was taken prisoner at Schwerdte and put in a camp in the Eifel. We were there for weeks, sleeping on the bare ground . . ."

"Did they beat you too?" I asked.

"Of course!" said Pablo. "They're very methodical people. But at least I was soon set free when I was able to prove that I had never joined the Party. I jumped the first coal train to come through, and that's how I arrived here."

"Suddenly there he was, outside the door," said Hilde. "He gave me the most awful shock. I'd always hoped that Ille would come home before Pablo. What was I to tell him? He was so cheerful. He even had his rucksack still, and he was sunburned and sweaty and I wanted to tell him to take a bath at once, because I knew that's what Ille would have done. He walked into the house and looked around and it was a few minutes before he asked me: 'And Ille?' Then I had to tell him."

Pablo said:

"Naturally I did everything I could to find out where Ille actually was. I really thought the chief difficulty was caused by my not knowing which name for Ille was in the records. It was quite a long time before I realised that it was nothing to do with the various names, but just that no records at all were kept!"

"Yes," cried Hilde. "By the end he was known to the Americans simply as '*the man who's searching for his wife*'!"

"Yes," said Pablo. "I went to Heidelberg and Frankfurt to see the highest American authorities. No one knew anything. And curiously enough after a while it was I who was regarded as a comical figure—not these men who have people arrested and then cannot say what has happened to them."

"Typically American!" said my brother with disgust. This surprised

me; when last I had seen him he had been uncommonly well-disposed towards the Americans.

“What about you?” I asked.

He said eagerly:

“The Russians caught me when I was in hospital in Mecklenburg. To begin with we were harried from place to place in the most senseless fashion, and then our medical orderly gave me a tip. I had sores on my legs, and he said I should wrap copper wire around them. It made them much worse. Look!”

He rolled up his trousers. His legs were covered with hideous blue and brown patches. He grinned and said:

“Most extraordinary sight, they were. The Russians only valued us according to our ability to work. As soon as they saw my legs, they released me.”

“I knew,” said I, “that you’d make an old soldier yet.”

“You damned fool,” said my brother, “why didn’t you give me the tip when I was drafted into the Traunstein Regiment? Don’t talk to me about old soldiers’ tricks! When I was in Courland, in the deep snow, with the Ivans everywhere—it was outside Libau. . . .”

“Stop!” I said. “It will be time to start telling soldiers’ stories five years hence.”

My brother fell silent and seemed hurt. He was a living product of Germany’s spiritual condition. Everyone had so much to tell and none could understand, since no one was willing to listen to others.

“But admit,” said Ille, “admit I behaved magnificently!”

“I admit it,” I said, “you behaved magnificently. Pablo, you can be proud of your wife.”

“We are married,” said Ille. “We got married just as soon as I arrived home.”

“Really?” said I. “My congratulations!”

“Thank you,” said Ille. “You told me yourself that I was to remember your words if ever I got out: you said if Pablo was home, I should marry him at once. You said it was about time somebody else was responsible for me.”

“Yes,” I said.

Ille said:

“And another thing you must admit: it was a very good thing I was here when Murphy and Sullivan arrived and that I told them right away what was what. Admit it was a good thing!”

“It was the God-damnedest piece of idiocy I’ve ever come across in all my life,” I said.

Ille said:

“For me it was a good thing. It hasn’t done me any harm despite everything I’ve been through. In the first place, I got to know a few Nazis personally at last. In the second place, I kept saying to myself:

this is just a long-delayed payment for the twelve good years which I didn't deserve and which had to be paid for somehow or other. In the third place, I'd have hated myself for the rest of my life if I hadn't done everything in my power—"

"All right, all right!" I interrupted her. Ille said:

"And, you know, I can now see quite clearly where it went wrong. When we were in Kitzbühel, that Major Brunswick, you remember, I had a definite feeling he was perfectly well aware he'd made a fool of himself. And that's where I made my mistake! He certainly wanted to set me free. That's why he asked me whether I had friends in Kitzbühel with whom I could stay. But I was impertinent, I was too impertinent. I thought: 'Since they've dragged me all the way here they'd better take me back home.' When I let him see this, it was simply too much trouble for him. He thought he'd rather just let other people worry about my case. Which was why he shipped me off to Natternberg."

"Obviously," said my brother. "The man was a soldier. That's the military way of doing things."

"That's the American way," said I.

"You're being unfair," said Ille, and she went on comfortably: "But we're not cross with you. You've still got a camp psychosis, that's all."

I growled:

"I'd never have had it if the Americans had behaved decently."

"Now you're really being unfair," said Ille. "You can't make a whole nation responsible for the foul behaviour of a few guttersnipes—there are guttersnipes everywhere."

"That's just it," I cried stubbornly. "They say we're responsible for our guttersnipes—and what do they send over here? Their guttersnipes!"

"And Patton?" cried Ille. "You must admit that Patton was a decent fellow."

"Yes—Patton . . .!!" I said.

"You can't imagine," Ille said to the others, "how quickly everything changed once Patton found out what was going on in the camps and lost his temper!" She said: "Do you remember the day you came into the camp hospital with diphtheria? The afternoon the colonel from Patton's headquarters was there and Flocken told him about the camp? The change was fantastic! The very next morning I thought the whole world had gone topsy-turvy when Sister Kathrin brought us scrambled eggs for breakfast! Scrambled eggs! Made of egg-powder, of course, but all the same!"

"And hash for dinner," I said with a grin.

"And right away," said Ille, "the people began to grumble if we had hash three days running. You complained yourself, admit it! You said there was too much potato in the hash. And the quarrels there were

when we had C-rations. You remember? Those little tins which just had to be heated in the kitchen. Everyone wanted the ones with chicken and rice, and anyone who got lima beans and bacon would walk about the camp wringing his hands and cursing his fate! And the K-rations! The little cartons with ham and eggs and cookies and chocolate and candy and figs and toilet-paper and cigarettes! Cigarettes!"

"Yes," I said, "Patton really was an exception. At first we were a bit sceptical when we heard that Patton was the most popular American general, something like Rommel with us. But in the camp Patton's popularity was soon far greater than Rommel's."

"And," cried Ille, "how about the way he sacked the commandant, was that nothing? And the way the beatings suddenly stopped, was that nothing? And we were inoculated against diphtheria and then against typhus too, and we got scales and had to weigh ourselves and the changes in weight were all noted down!"

"You're forgetting the discharges!" I said quietly.

"Yes, the discharges!" cried Ille. "You can't imagine how the camp suddenly began to hum when it was announced that the district group leaders were to be released!"

"The district group leaders, I admit . . ." I began.

"Well," said Ille, "according to everything one heard Patton was after all a man with a simple, sensible, soldierly attitude." She turned to my brother and said: "Excuse me, but such people do exist." She went on eagerly: "And the fact that his first order was precisely to release the district group leaders shows that he thought it right to start with the little people."

"Yes," said I. "The Nazis thought so too."

Ille said angrily:

"And Schlick. How about Captain Schlick, the new commandant? What had you against him?"

"Nothing," I said. "Nothing whatever. He was a thoroughly decent man, a professional soldier." I turned to my brother and said: "Excuse me, but there are such people."

Ille laughed. There was no holding her now as she launched into reminiscence. She enjoyed the fact that we had experiences in common of which the others as yet knew nothing. She spread an aura of sympathy about me. She said:

"And the thread lieutenant! He was the only one of the old guard who stayed on. And suddenly, no more mention of thread! If he walked past and somebody was about to get up he'd gesture them to stay seated. That was the way it suddenly became. All Schlick's doing! You must admit Schlick was a decent chap, and Patton too, admit it!"

I said:

"All right. And what happened to Patton? The Americans accused our generals of having collaborated with the Hitlerite lunacy. What

happened to the one American general who refused to collaborate with the Morgenthau lunacy? Patton was kicked out, fired because of his humane, decent and politically sensible attitude towards the internees—and for no other reason. We read all about it in *Stars and Stripes*. Patton had been nearly sacked once before, during the war in Italy, when he slapped a GI whom he thought a malingerer. Now he was really out, because he would not stand for prisoners being beaten. Who can understand the Americans? And a little later, when he was killed in a car smash, there were very few people in the camp who were not firmly convinced that he had been murdered by Jews. Naturally that's all nonsense, but popular logic often manages to grasp the essential reality. And in fact no sooner was Patton dead and out of the way than the whole business began all over again. The district group leaders were re-arrested, the beatings started once more, and the starvation. Captain Schlick was removed as quickly as his predecessor had been. That all happened on the same day the women left the camp, exactly a year ago today. Do you remember?"

Ille said sadly:

"Yes."

I said:

"For me, Pablo, that was the worst day of my whole imprisonment!"

Ille said:

"It was the worst day of mine too. Suddenly the order was given: 'All women to pack up their stuff, they're being moved!' We did not know what was going to be done with us, and we feared the worst. We were simply packed into trucks and sent off like a parcel—but at least a parcel has an address on it. I had diphtheria and had to be isolated—my tests were still positive. I couldn't believe it. The worst thing was that I must be separated from Ernst. But admit I behaved magnificently!"

I said:

"Pablo, never before had I seen Ille so pale and desperate. It was worse for her and for me than the day she had stood outside the commandant's barrack hut and had not known what would happen to her. Because then she had had no real idea what the Americans were capable of. Now she knew."

"It was awful," said Ille. "It was worse than the day I stood outside the commandant's hut and knew that in there they were beating up Ernst."

I said:

"Pablo—the trucks were already outside, the fast little trucks with the canvas tops which were to take the women away, no one knew where or why. The Americans were standing by the fence, watching; the whole camp was standing by the fence, watching. I had no idea what to say to Ille. I was frightened to death lest she ask me to cheer her up,



to say something encouraging. Then Ille came up to me and said: 'Now we'll dance the Bolle-children's dance once more.' And we danced the Bolle-children's dance. The whole camp watched, the Americans watched. And we danced the Bolle-children's dance until the MP's screamed: '*Mak snell, mak snell!*' Ille, when you were seated in the truck, in your little blue dress with your cardboard box on your lap, and when the truck drove off and I stood by the fence beneath the watch-tower and stared after you till I could see nothing except a little blue patch—then I thought: 'It's all over now. It's all finished. I'll never see Ille again.' ”

“When the truck drove off,” said Ille, “and I looked along the wire and recognised you standing under the watch-tower, because I saw your grey tunic with the *Hoheitszeichen*, and then I thought this is the end—I'll never see you again.”

I said:

“Did you hear the shot? The GI on the watch-tower yelled at me to stand back from the fence. I was so angry that I just screamed: 'You can kiss my arse, you foul creature!' He shot at me. Rotfuchs grabbed my arm and dragged me away behind the barracks.”

“I heard the shot,” said Ille. “I did not know what it meant, but I thought, oh, if only it had killed me!”

Ille said:

“As we sat in the trucks and drove along the road as we had so often imagined ourselves doing, I thought I must be dreaming. How many hours had we stood under the watch-tower together, by the barbed wire, and talked about going away down this road! How gay and happy we had thought to be when this nightmare was over, when we were 'free' at last! Secretly I'd often dreaded the possibility that I might be released before you. I had imagined standing all alone on some Lower Bavarian highway with my curious attitude towards geography, without any idea which way I should go or how I could ever get back to the Huberhof. I'd seen myself, with no identity papers, simply thrown out to face the perils of life, weakened by imprisonment and sickness. Now this had happened. I was not walking, I was being driven, but I did not know where I was going.

“We drove for about half an hour and then drew up in front of a big building just outside the little town of Straubing. Far quicker than we'd got in we were kicked out of the trucks, in the usual fashion, and to my unutterable horror I saw a plaque over the great gate of the building which said: *Straubing Prison*, and a smaller one which said: *Straubing Detention Camp*. I had no time to work out all the miseries of the word 'prison,' for we were pushed through the great, bare, dark gateway into a sun-lit courtyard.

“As so often before we had to form three ranks, and when we did this I felt, as always, that all this was unworthy of me and that I had

nothing to hope for here. The officers began to read out names, and as each woman heard her own she had to walk across to another part of the courtyard. Once again I had a sensation of crazy, secret hope. I imagined that since my name was not called out, I must be one of the chosen women who would be allowed to go home. But to my horror I found it was the 'harmless cases' whose names were called out. Finally there were only four of us left. One was a war criminal who had allegedly sent several thousand Jews to the gas-chambers—'far too few,' my American warder, Johnny, remarked three days later, that *sonny boy*. (During my whole time in camp and prison the only antisemitic remarks I heard were all made by Americans.) Then there were two concentration-camp guards and me. I was filled with panic again. I decided that at some time in my life I must have committed a fearful crime. I did not know what it was, but then neither did most of the others understand what their crimes had been. And now I would be locked up with these three women for the rest of my life.

"Nothing happened, except that I had lost a little more of my nervous strength. For hours we stood about in the courtyard. From time to time some disagreeable order would be shouted at us, which would be immediately and equally noisily cancelled. It was almost evening before we were led into the prison itself. We were pushed into a corridor on the ground floor, and a steel gate was locked behind us. Never, even at Natternberg, had I felt so strongly that I was now really behind bars, a feeling calculated to make me spiritually ready for the 'inauguration ceremony.' I already had my first inauguration behind me, at Natternberg, when they had beaten you so atrociously and had made me strip stark naked and searched in the most unlikely places for anything I might have hidden. Now I would certainly have to go through the same sort of thing again.

"We were sent for once again, in alphabetical order and two at a time. I had quickly worked out that I would be with Sister Eugenie and this seemed to me a wonderful piece of luck, because in front of Eugenie was the Grater and behind her the Luxembourg woman, and the thought of having to share a cell with either of those two was appalling. Our merry protectress, Yvonne, was far down the list. Yvonne had just seen a man prisoner on the far side of the bars; she was smiling at him and seemed ready to undress at any moment. I still had an American '*workover*' ahead of me, and I tried feverishly to think how best I could get through it. I decided to talk to the Americans as much as possible, since this might distract them from too close an examination of my person. There was one consoling thought; the months I'd spent under arrest had certainly not made me any prettier, and as a result of starvation and diphtheria I was now very, very thin. But who can tell what the tastes of foreigners may be?

"Scarcely had timid little Sister Eugenie and I been pushed into the

over-lit room when a fat American got up, subjected us to a connoisseur's scrutiny, and remarked thoughtfully: 'I'll have that one . . .' pointing at me. How many times in the past few months had my heart stood still? Anyhow it did so now, and I began to talk at once. I talked like a waterfall: this was the first time I had ever been in a prison, it was very funny, ha ha ha, wasn't it, the way one could be so frightened, and I was so glad that I had this chance of talking to an educated man . . . I spoke my best English and I punctuated all my remarks with 'Sirs' like Pandora scattering the presents from her magic box. The fat man really let himself be distracted. Thanks to my stream of talk he let me keep all my possessions except the little windmill. You remember the windmill you made for me out of a plank and gave me for my birthday in Natternberg? You made it, and Ludin carved such a pretty little picture of the Natternberg ruins on one side, and on the other side a heart behind barbed wire. The fat American said it was 'junk' and threw it away.

"I only saw the fat man once more, three days later. He appeared in my cell, at night, to have a chat with me, he said. I told him that I still felt far too sad about being in prison to be able to have a chat with a man. Then he remarked significantly: 'In my arms you will forget about prison!' But I had once again what you always used to call 'Ille's shameless luck,' for the next day he was moved elsewhere. I had managed to stave him off that night, but he had promised me in most friendly fashion that he would be visiting me again the following evening.

"Much to my relief the German warder next thrust a pile of blue-and-white checked bedding into our arms, so I didn't have to sleep on straw any more, though by then I was almost past caring. I also got a wooden spoon, which in the next few days made my mouth terribly sore. I undertook a lengthy business transaction which culminated in my acquiring a completely rusty steel fork. In the course of the weeks that followed I ate it clean, and when I handed it in before being discharged it shone like new—well, I've spent months of my life, with less to show for them at the end! In addition I received a thick earthenware basin and a pail. Now the German warder—who was not at all friendly, and who was in general just such another as his Austrian colleague, Bacherl—ordered us to follow him. He wouldn't answer any of my questions, for he was on duty and knew his regulations. He unlocked the door of cell No. 199 and I, after glancing inside, cried, 'No!' and tried to run away down the corridor; he seized me by the arm and pushed me inside.

"Then I lost all self-control, everything that had enabled me to preserve my dignity. I simply collapsed. My whole life long there had always been somebody to look after me, first my father, then all of you, willing to kill spiders for me and to persuade me that I would be all

right when there were thunderstorms or wars. Now, for the first time, I found out what it is like to be utterly alone, and I knew that I must face all the horrors of prison life entirely on my own. In the camp, despite our reception and the hunger and all the beastliness, it all seemed far more harmless, temporary, not really serious. There were so many people to look at, and the landscape with a highway on the far side of the barbed wire and even 'real' people cycling past freely outside. But here I was entirely alone, without you, and this was awful.

"I cried and sobbed uncontrollably, I could hardly breathe for fear and despair, and it was only when Sister Eugenie, who was also completely terrified, began to cry too that I slowly regained my self-control. I kept repeating what you had so frequently told me—that survival in prison depends not on physical stamina but on intelligence. To start with I took your statement that prison is a world of its own, with its own laws and its own order which can only be mastered when the prisoner has managed to forget all comparisons with life 'outside.'

"You said once that the most important thing about life in a prison cell is to realise as quickly as possible that one is living in one's own W.C. It was true. But all that was no help. If I was not to go rotten inside I had to remember at every moment of the day that I was in prison and not for a second might I forget that I had to overcome this fact, that I had to sublimate it, to dissolve it as in some chemical process. In the camp the women had tried to beautify and decorate their surroundings, and thus by means of little 'improvements' to disguise the fact that they were living in a prison. Now, in the gaol, this tendency became much worse. It was almost incredible the speed with which the women tried to make things 'cosy'—the ladies of the Women's Organisation with little curtains hung up in all conceivable places, the leaders of the German Maidens' League with significant mottoes on the walls and lampshades made of dried grasses, the whores with pink lighting. . . . Sister Eugenie begged and prayed that she be allowed to make tablemats and a pelmet. I was adamant. 'No,' I said: 'If we should fool ourselves into forgetting that we're in prison, then they've done for us!'

"At noon we were fetched from our cells for exercise. We would go down the iron stairs into a small and unspeakably gloomy courtyard, where for half an hour we would walk about. We had to walk along a special, winding path and in every corner there stood an American, armed to the teeth, whose tommy-gun followed us as we walked. Talking was strictly prohibited, but we all talked. It was a point of pride with us to talk unceasingly, without moving our lips, a trick that was easy to learn.

"One day it was announced that we all had to fill in a great questionnaire, with over a hundred questions, and all eight hundred of us had to do it on the same day. Big tables were set up in an open place, and we were all taken down there. There were pencils and paper and the

questionnaires. The first thing I did was to steal a very small pencil and a sheet of paper. Then an American officer appeared, quite young, small and blond, a lieutenant. He began by announcing that the theft of pencils or paper was strictly prohibited and that if he caught anyone doing so he would sentence the culprit to fifteen years in prison. I had already stuffed my pencil-end into my stocking and I had the sensation that the lieutenant was staring particularly sharply at me. So I had no choice but to stare back, wide-eyed and astonished, the very picture of innocence. Then the lieutenant said, with uncommon emphasis, that we were here to answer the questions truthfully and that if he caught anyone lying he would personally sentence the culprit to fifteen years in prison. . . . But the more often he repeated his idiotic threat about fifteen years in prison, the more clearly I saw that he did not take it seriously, that he was exaggerating with deliberate irony. This pleased me.

“Quietly and quickly I filled in my questionnaire, since all I had to write down was *Not Applicable* over and over again. And I was enjoying the change. The little lieutenant, proud as a cock on a dungheap, strutted down the ranks: I couldn't help feeling that his eyes rested on me more frequently than the others. Finally he came across to me and said: ‘Well? Don't you know what to write?’ I said: ‘I've already finished!’ I said it rather proudly, but it must have sounded wrong, for I was immediately sent back to my cell, and that was the end of the enjoyable change.

“That evening I suddenly heard the bolt pulled back and the key turning in the great lock. In the cell door stood an American guard. He asked me my name, compared it with something written on a piece of paper, and said: ‘Come!’ I thought to myself: ‘The pencil, the tiny little pencil!’ And I felt that it was exaggerated of the Lord God to punish me so very promptly for such a very small misdemeanour. To my surprise, standing entirely alone at the end of the deserted corridor, leaning on a balustrade, was the lieutenant. The guard delivered me with due military punctilio. The lieutenant gazed at me calmly and then asked: ‘How do you happen to be here?’ I drew a deep breath and said: ‘Do you really want to know? If you do I'll tell you, but it's a long story and this will be the first time I've told it!’ The lieutenant rested his elbows on the balustrade and said: ‘Talk for as long as you like. I've plenty of time. But please tell me no lies, or I'll. . . .’ I interrupted him, saying quickly: ‘Or you'll lock me up for fifteen years!’ He laughed, gave me a curious glance, and said: ‘Go ahead!’

“I too leaned on the balustrade, and I told him everything truthfully. Sometimes I had to pause for a considerable period—when I felt my voice beginning to tremble. But he just went on gazing straight ahead, and so I was able to regain control of it. When I had finished we stood for a little while, side by side. At last he said: ‘I believe you. But I shall

have to check up exactly on everything you've told me. If every little detail is proved absolutely true, then I promise you I'll do everything in my power to have you set free!' He said: 'Meanwhile what can I do for you now?' I asked him that he take me out of my cell during the day and give me some work. He laughed heartily when, answering his question as to what I had been trained to do, I replied in friendly fashion: 'Nothing!' We agreed that he would have me brought to his office next morning, where I would arrange the files and also type a short report on his typewriter. What particularly pleased me was that he did not offer me cigarettes.

"I had, of course, also told him about conditions in Natternberg camp, and he had said: '*Forget about it, oh forget it!*' But he must have thought about it later on. The next morning he announced publicly that, though we were in prison, we were not convicts but internees; he ordered that the cell doors be unlocked throughout the day; he gave permission for us to talk when walking in the courtyard; he encouraged us to organise educational courses and to form a small orchestra; he said we were allowed to visit those internees who occupied cells off the same corridor as ourselves. In fact the whole atmosphere was changed.

"Every day I worked in the office of the CIC, with a young man called Rosenthal who was the lieutenant's deputy. I could talk to Rosenthal and I did so. I told him about Natternberg and he said: '*Forget about it, oh forget it!*' This phrase seemed to be a magic formula among the Americans. I told him how many decent people I had met both in the camp and here in prison. I really tried to interest him in the fate of all those people who, I knew, had only got into trouble through an unlucky accident or through the stupidity of American methods. Rosenthal listened to me with exemplary patience, but one day he let me read the records. Since then I've known that I was too small a person for the size of the age, and that I shall presumably always be so. From then on I simply did not dare to talk to Rosenthal about decent people. It was appalling, worst in the case of those for whose innocence I would have put my hand in the flames—whereas the Grater's records were as white as the driven snow; this repulsive individual was simply rude and quarrelsome and nothing more. But how many were there into whose eyes I no longer dared to look! When I met them in the corridors or the cells I began to doubt all my standards, all the standards that are accepted throughout the world. When I lay down on my bed at night I often wished that I might simply never wake up, that I might just not have to go on living—and in the morning, when I awoke, I prayed that in any case I might never be appointed a judge.

"When the interrogations began I was among the first to be questioned. A strange CIC commission arrived, and the interrogation was not at all pleasant. I told them that I had come to Trèves with the Romans and that in 1933 I had discovered to my horror that my dearly

beloved father had been a God-damned filthy Jew and that I was just about the most repulsive sort of creature that lives on this planet. I told them how you had said that the Jewish problem could only be solved on a national basis, and how this could be done not by classification through biological accident but through a spiritual and emotional act of avowal. If I avowed myself to be a German, then I was a German and as such must accept the Germans' fate; to accept the jargon of the National-Socialists involved putting oneself on the same footing as themselves. I told them how everything had just developed automatically, how we had simply ignored the whole new legal code, and how easy it was to do this provided one only behaved logically. Then they asked me about you and I said that at the time of the Rathenau murder you'd been nothing but a silly boy—forgive me, but that's really what I think—that you had thought to be acting in the interest of a great development, but that to your despair you found that the development had assumed quite a different course. They kept on slipping in dangerous and tricky questions, such as that you must have been very pleased when I intervened at the time of your arrest. I said you were absolutely livid, because I'd always insisted, hadn't I, that I was German—and true enough, the moment I said I was Jewish everything had begun to go wrong for me, as you knew it would. And then, then I could see that the really decisive question was coming, I could see them getting ready. The one with the sharpest tongue of all, he was head of the lot, suddenly leaned forward and asked: 'And you, were you not delighted when you heard that Rathenau had been shot?' I was so worried, this was such a typical CIC question, that I simply said: 'Yes!'

"You'd have thought someone had tossed a bomb into the room. The gentlemen all jumped to their feet and stared at me with bewilderment. The chief's voice was actually hoarse as he cried: 'Ah ha! Why?' And I replied softly and modestly: 'Because I had a holiday from school!' Then they all sat down again, and for the first time Rosenthal opened his mouth. He asked: 'How old were you then?' I said: 'Ten.' Then they laughed and said I might go.

"Later the lieutenant came to see me, and he was really, honestly in despair. He said he had done everything in his power to help me but now he could do no more, he was being transferred. He urged me to go on hoping, and he strongly recommended me to his successor, Rosenthal. And I waited. I waited for three months. And nothing happened. Finally things had reached a point where all the people who had been interrogated, and who were not considered guilty of any crimes, were allowed to submit a paper requesting that they be discharged. Five times a day I asked Rosenthal when I would finally be set free. Then he went on a journey. He came back, very depressed, and said he had visited the highest American authorities. He was furious himself at the slowness of the administrative machinery. And then at last, on March

13th, a real, live colonel from McNearney's headquarters appeared, and Rosenthal shouted at him as only an American sergeant can shout at a colonel. He banged his fist on the file of papers dealing with me and shouted that only in the U.S. Army was such a thing possible. The colonel was thoroughly crushed, and all he could say was 'Sorry!' over and over again. Finally the colonel said I might be released. An hour later I was outside the prison. I looked at my release paper. It said, under 'Reason for Release': *Witness in the Rathenau murder case.*"

Ille said:

"I'm glad it all happened that way. I've paid my debt. And what makes me particularly happy is the knowledge that I've paid it all, *in toto*. Admit there's no more reason to despair! Admit that in view of the nature of the catastrophe the Americans could not have behaved otherwise! Admit that it's not just the swine who run everything and that there are men of good will too! I'm glad that there was a man like Patton, and a man like Schlick. I'm glad I got to know the lieutenant and that nice boy Rosenthal. . . ."

I said morosely:

"I don't know. When I hear the word 'America' it's the face of Lieutenant Hollingworth that I see in front of me. . . ."

Ille said gently:

"*Forget about it, oh forget it!*"

And her expression was truly one of supplication as she said this. It was as though it were a request really close to her heart. But I did not have even a similar reaction. The Americans meant more or less nothing to me. To be objective about them implied inevitably defending them, and I felt that they were quite men enough to do this job for themselves.

I was far more interested in the National-Socialists. It was true—and it became apparent at the moment of the collapse—that despite the 99 per cent plebiscites and the pompous façade of national unity, there had really been two distinct worlds face to face in our country, worlds that knew nothing of each other save, in the one case, what was to be read in the police files and, in the other, what was gossiped in back rooms. The few National-Socialists whom I had known personally could almost be counted on the fingers of two hands, and their company had never interested me, for they talked in their official jargon. In the camp I had got to know them intimately, and luckily for me they no longer spoke in any jargon.

True enough, the choice had been extremely difficult. When the Americans decided to pass the contents of the pot—in which everything had been stewed up together—through the sieve, they found in their sieve as many categories of man as there had been in that other pot, the Jewish one. It was the second greatest crime of the *terribles simplificateurs* that they had not attempted to pass the contents of the Jewish



pot through the sieve, their greatest being that they had simply destroyed the whole brew.

There was the large, fairly homogeneous group of district leaders, but everyone must admit that to occupy oneself with this group for the purpose of producing any fruitful results would have been a fairly hopeless undertaking. There was the group, almost as large and even more homogeneous, that had been the Waffen-SS; to occupy oneself with it would be an extremely fruitful undertaking but one I dared not tackle. These men grew increasingly hardened beneath the constantly growing pressure of a monstrous slander, until at last they had nothing left on which they could fall back save their honour as soldiers. I might have told them that military honour was no longer so easily defined, since women and girls had stood on rooftops throwing incendiaries and tins of burning phosphorus into courtyards between the waves of bombers—but I could not say this, for I had never seen an incendiary. However, I could tell them that this hardening process was in danger of producing nothing more than the metamorphosis of the ‘front-line spirit’ as it existed in the First World War into the *Stahlhelm* attitude—a change that was not necessarily fruitful. The large and by no means homogeneous group of senior civil servants—well, that was not likely to intimidate anyone. There could be no doubt that unless some new concept of the state were to crystallise, these skilful, sensible men must certainly, by reason of their solid, expert, professional knowledge, very soon once again become the cadre of the bureaucracy—a fact of which well nigh all of them were quietly and confidently aware—for a bureaucracy has always provided the ideal substitute for a state. And then there was the small group of early Party members who had later risen to high positions within the Party hierarchy. They had had personal, direct contact with their leader, and with his death their lives had lost their meaning.

But among all these groups there were individuals—not many, considerably less than a hundred—who never for a moment attempted to deny that they were really and truly National-Socialists. These were both old men and young, whose lives were conditioned by the phenomenon of National-Socialism, and who had consciously tried to live accordingly. These too were the people who always refrained from joining in the endless discussions that took place in the camp and which almost invariably revolved about the idea of guilt, a guilt that each man searched for—and quite quickly found—in his neighbour. It is not surprising that a very high proportion of this guilt was ascribed to those men who had remained convinced National-Socialists. They seemed to accept it quite calmly, which might have meant nothing but callous insensitivity on their part had they not been specifically intelligent and highly educated men, astonishingly open-minded towards all the problems of life, whose genuine patriotism was not open to dispute and

whose behaviour in all matters was in general above reproach. If anyone could give the information wanted, then it must be they: information about the burning questions of the time, questions of recent history, questions of responsibility towards one's own standards, and, last but not least, questions concerning the nature and reality of that force which had proved capable of changing the order of the world and which in some form or other must continue to exert its influence if—and this too remained to be discovered—if this were a force of a spiritual nature.

I felt fully entitled to ask these questions, since they countered other questions that were put to me. On the evening of the day when the women were moved from the camp, Ludin had asked me to address a small and interested circle concerning Question 41 of this questionnaire. It seemed to me easy to explain lucidly why I had never been deeply preoccupied by the question of my attitude towards National-Socialism. From the very beginning I had always regarded the sole object of the great nationalist movement that grew out of the collapse of 1918 as being the renewal of the concept of the state, a re-birth that had to be revolutionary in its methods but conservative in its nature. So logically—and even before the turning-point marked by the emergence of Adolf Hitler within the nationalist movement—I was bound to regard any attempt to switch the nationalist accent from the state to the people, from authoritarianism to totalitarianism, as a disgraceful and absurd betrayal of our true aims. From every historical point of view there could be no compromise between the people's ideal of the nature of a nation and the state's. This fact was hidden, with disastrous results, by the confusing circumstance that the adherents of the people's ideal used an identical terminology and even set themselves up as the proponents of a new concept of the state.

This was all old stuff to me. How often in the past years had I explained to my astonished fellow-citizens, in exactly these words, why it was impossible for me, personally, to adhere to National-Socialism. It is only possible to betray one's own ideals. Hitler's betrayal began when he attempted to appropriate the ideal of the leadership principle, the *Führerprinzip*, from the façade of the authoritarian structure, and to imbue it with a totalitarian legitimacy. He let himself be summoned by the people before he called upon God: he proclaimed the popular ideal by means of which he would create the reality of the state. Instead of *vice versa*.

And so it seemed to me also easy to pose the counter-question. When the Party was prey to internal discord the recurring problem was this: 'Which is binding, the ideas or the Führer's will?' On each occasion the order from above and the willingness to obey from below had produced the same answer, it was the Führer's will that was decisive. It might be fruitless to attempt now to discover whether this decision was right or wrong. But now the Führer was dead, and the question of

loyalty could no longer count. The only problem that remained was to find out what portion of the ideas might still be valid.

This question was of course a sly one. Nor had the authoritarian state reached fulfillment; its first attempt to achieve power, Schleicher's, had led to its rout. But it was not so hopelessly discredited and loathed for its idealistic content as was National-Socialism. If this new collapse were to contain the germ of rebirth, as had that of 1918, then all that mattered was that it be encouraged with the compost of willingness.

But I failed to hit the target. In this wretched barrack-room it soon became apparent that the great measure of willingness that these very men had once so noticeably displayed had been called forth, not by an idea, but precisely by that absence of ideas that was the hall-mark of National-Socialism—by that lack of a thoroughly sifted legality of method and of plan. It was apparent that it was the very refusal of National-Socialism to base its actions on a theory, on a spiritually unified meaning, which had provided its chief attraction and which had enabled it to fill the vacuum automatically created. It was apparent that what had filled the empty spaces of National-Socialism and spread throughout its limbs was the desire of creative spirits to fulfil those personal tasks they set themselves.

According to Ludin the Führer had once told him that it was the Führer's task not to instruct but to constrain emotions. This surprising statement may be typical of Hitler's mental processes, but in one point, the central point of his thought, he had departed from it—that is to say in the passage of his book *Mein Kampf* where he develops his views concerning the 'idea of the people.' Whatever feelings he may have been attempting to constrain, there can be no doubt that he was also issuing instructions, instructions to the effect that his doctrine of race was the actual, basic, controlling principle about which Hitlerian National-Socialism revolved. Any man who from then on accepted National-Socialism must know henceforth that, whatever else might still be open to discussion, this subject was closed, closed very prematurely indeed, and at the very beginning of the discussion elevated to the status of a dogma—and one that was ruthlessly enforced right up to its negative completion.

In this camp I never heard a single cynical remark concerning the atrocious fact of the physical extermination of the Jews—apart from those made by the Americans. At Nuremberg the prosecution was marshalling its documents. They crushed me as much as they did the Nuremberg accused and every inmate of our camp. I had naturally to assume that the accusations would be personally directed at many of my fellow inmates, and it seemed to me logical that they should undergo the same arbitrary fate that they might once have imposed on others; justice, after all, can no more be crystallised from the rapid trials held before the National-Socialist 'People's Courts' than from the hundreds

of thousands of printed pages produced at Nuremberg. The important thing was not the mass of guilt, the quantity, but the place at which it first came into existence.

But this was precisely the point at which the problem collided with individual conscience. This was every individual's experience. No matter what route he might have followed to join the movement he was fully informed in advance concerning the Jewish question. But in almost no case did this question impinge on the realms of his own problems. Only gradually, but steadily, did the Jewish question seep into the individual's own field of activity. And each man was at a given moment faced with this decision—how far did the measures periodically ordered almost always recognised for what they were, but not as steps in a culminating process affect the carrying out of what he regarded as his own task and duties. I must assume this: that the decision was honestly faced. But even that meant nothing more than the insinuation, into each man's own sphere, of the foulest sort of corruption of which the conscience can conceive, the corruption that compels the individual to choose the lesser of two evils.

When Ludin, as ambassador in Slovakia, received a message that the Slovak Jews, instead of being planted elsewhere as the Tiso government had requested, were to be moved to extermination camps, he cried out: "This is an unspeakably foul blunder!" I knew Ludin well enough to believe him when he told me how horrified he had been, yet I was nevertheless surprised. I had casually assumed him to belong to that group of men who, as a logical result of their acceptance of National-Socialist ideology, had with deliberation, temerity and in cold blood willingly carried out the tasks assigned them that would realise the ideas they had already accepted. Apparently the mistake was mine, and was shared by all those who assumed that, without a doubt, such compelling ideas really existed. But Ludin referred to 'life, not ideology.'

It is hard to ascribe any one distinguishing characteristic to National-Socialism. Perhaps all that can be done is to describe it as a phenomenon, as a by-product of life, and like life to be immeasurable by any standard and equally shapeless. The possibility of falling victim to a phenomenon must be sought in the first origins from which that phenomenon arose. I had the great good fortune to live, in full consciousness of what was going on, through the period when the phenomenon first began to make itself felt. Almost all explanations dwelt on the negative aspects that led to its emergence, on the results of the collapse, on the needs of youth and the resultant urges, on the failure of the classes that held the positions of leadership, and on the exhaustion of those ideologies that had achieved power. But these explanations all failed to take one thing into account—the will to improvement that arose from this slag-heap of negatives. I was very anxious to learn from somebody like Ludin how this genuine will had manifested itself. Ludin was the best man in

the camp; he was also the best National-Socialist I had met, and it seemed to me not illogical to assume that for this purpose the best was good enough.

What most surprised me in Ludin was his spontaneous reaction against anything that seemed in any way mental or spiritual. By birth I had not belonged to the most highly educated class in Germany; he had. Ludin came from a family in which humanism, liberalism and education were an unshakeable tradition—such families were to be found particularly in Southern Germany and, most solidly, in the province of Baden. At first I assumed that Ludin had fallen victim to the same sort of internal turmoil that makes so many clergymen's sons turn atheist, apparently because they have seen their daddies in their underpants too often. It was axiomatic with Ludin that the spiritual, educated, upper classes had failed the nation they were supposed to lead—a remark he frequently repeated. But from this he drew a conclusion other than what I expected. In 1918 it was precisely his traditions that had made him feel most strongly the attack against spiritual stability. He was a year younger than myself, and in 1918 he had very deliberately joined the Reichswehr—an action utterly opposed to the traditions of his family—because he felt that the Reichswehr offered the best possibilities for the defence of the traditional virtues. His early attraction towards National-Socialism, his involvement in the Ulm Reichswehr Trial, were not basically political; so the cause must have lain in the general political and moral situation. He simply regarded the liberal bourgeoisie, the former guardian of the standard virtues, as having become biologically too enfeebled to complete its task at the very moment when those virtues were most dangerously threatened; he saw other, fresh, younger forces emerging, ready to relieve the old social classes of their duty—and it seemed to him that his task was to carry over into the new what remained of permanent value in the old. To put it cynically, he was moved by a sort of radical liberalism, which had been powerful enough to purify the concept of Social-Democracy and now saw a legitimate successor to that movement in National-Socialism. When he had completed his prison sentence he was offered a high position in the SA and the chance to put his ideas into practice. He accepted the offer immediately. All his subsequent internal conflicts took place on this same level, and only on this level was a solution possible.

I asked him at once why he had remained a senior SA leader after the events of June 30th, 1934. He replied, aggressively, for exactly the same reasons that had led him to join the SA in the first place: he was seeking an opportunity to produce an educative effect of the largest scope, to encourage by example and precept the manly virtues of comradeship, loyalty and decency. The Sicilian Vespers of June 30th, 1934, had done nothing to alter the nature of his task; on the contrary, they had rendered it all the more imperative. I remarked that these undoubtedly

praiseworthy virtues were an automatic prerequisite for any sort of community (and I was also irritated by the arrogant assumption that a man who had not joined the SA was deficient in decency). He replied, citing my own life as an argument, that for decades now morality had no longer been automatically comprehensible. I asked, and this was the question that seemed to me most vital of all, what purpose would have been served by the education of the SA along Ludin's lines. Ludin astonished me by answering, quite simply: "The purpose of socialism!"

Ludin meant this entirely seriously. Clearly loyalty, comradeship and decency were the prerequisites to any form of fruitful solidarity. But the fact that so huge and thoroughly organised a mass-movement as the SA should be limited in its aims to the production of these prerequisites posed two alternative doubts: in the first place were there available any clear ideas concerning the actual, economic realisation of socialism?: or, secondly, was there just a sublime confidence that the task of working out 'socialism,' of putting its material system into practice, belonged to some other group of men, some other portion of authority, never clearly defined, it's true—but the Führer will see to all that sort of thing, or if he didn't see to it, well, it was the press of other events that was to blame . . . and then of course, the war. . . .

I had to grant that, of the many ways by which a man might deliberately and consciously have plunged into the stream of the National-Socialist movement, Ludin's was a thoroughly honourable one. I only doubted if the task he had set himself could suffice a man. Up to the end Ludin was particularly proud that he had been an SA leader. (It was significant that in the eyes of the broad, inactive masses the SA, from being the assault troops of the revolution, had become the most harmless and popular formation of the ruling powers: by the end even the Welfare Services and the Fire Service had many more real jobs to do than had the SA.) I noticed with satisfaction how Ludin's eyelids would tremble when a cheerful junior SS leader announced proudly that in the opinion of the Americans the humblest SS officer was equivalent to a very senior SA commander.

I did not know for what crimes Ludin was held responsible. The remark on his *Arrest Report* was brief and simple: *Nazi leader*. During the Western Campaign he had commanded an artillery battery, and after that he was sent to Slovakia as ambassador. I thought to praise his activities by quoting a remark current in my circle: '*Slovakia is the homicidal maniac's pet canary!*' Ludin went pale and then turned on me most violently. He would never allow me to make any derogatory remarks about Hitler, and when I did so it was his custom simply to walk away. But now I must really have touched him to the quick. He kept on returning to this epigram of mine. He told me that he had taken his duties in Slovakia very seriously. His had been a very difficult job indeed, but he had always been attracted by the Slav race—far more so than

by the 'decadent West'—and he was proud that he had, as he believed, succeeded in sparing the Slovak people so many of the inevitable consequences of occupation and war. He always spoke most respectfully of the prelate Tiso, the president of the Slovak state, and it almost seemed as though he now suffered more deeply from Slovakia's fate than he did from Germany's. "You know," he said, "there's so much I've got to work out for myself first!"

Perhaps this was really what made all discussion of the fortune and fate of National-Socialism sterile after a certain point: there was so much that each man had to work out for himself. And I would surely never have come so close to Ludin either, if he had not repeatedly intervened most decisively in what was now my sphere of existence. Whenever I saw him trailing, at the camp pace, towards my barrack-room, dressed in the flannel suit which was now far too big for him—and which had doubtless been made by the best tailor in Bratislava—I knew that he was bringing me some new proposal of an official nature concerning the life of the camp. When the women were moved away, and the camp entered what might be described as its second period, our spirits sank to the nadir. The camp had plainly fallen into a state of apathy; a true concentration-camp psychosis reigned, for a frame of mind was spreading in which the duty to endure had been replaced all too easily by the wish to survive. Dr. Flocken was not removed from her position because she had told the truth to the colonel from Patton's headquarters, but because the commandant had been able to produce material damaging to her reputation which the doctors in the camp had collected and which they had given to the Americans. The organisation of the camp as laid down by the Americans had never offered the inmates any moral support. Ludin proposed to found what he called an 'arbitration committee' that 'by reason of its own authority,' which would be divorced from the actual internal hierarchy of the camp, would tackle problems that had to be solved if a 'decent' atmosphere were to prevail. I doubted whether enough potential material still existed within the camp to oppose successfully the will of the Americans and the naked urge to survival of the inmates. Nor did I think it possible to organise that material so that the measures might be taken that would be needed to set up such an authority. But Ludin said: "Listen, here almost everyone has something to hide, but there's one thing he can't hide—which is whether he's a decent sort of fellow or not. That comes out at once."

It came out in the hearings before our 'arbitration committee.'

In the case of Dr. Flocken accusers and plaintiffs appeared in answer to a simple request and launched at once into a bitter wrangle concerning 'the professional honour of the medical profession'; much lengthy, elaborate and mutually contradictory testimony was needed to elucidate the full and complex meaning of this phrase. Finally it was pointed

out to the doctors, in mild terms, that they might well devote more attention to general, as opposed to specialised, concepts of honour, and it was demanded both of the prosecution and of the defence that they work for one month in the camp hospital without food tickets.

Our second case appeared insoluble. One Lower Bavarian had addressed another Lower Bavarian as: "You silly dog, you . . ." and had been immediately struck to the ground in consequence. Both men maintained that they were entirely in the right. Enquiries among all the Lower Bavarians revealed that, in the first place, 'you silly dog, you' was a thoroughly traditional method of address in the province, and, in the second place, that it was an insult that could only be washed out in blood. Ludin finally decided that local traditions must be respected at all costs, and that therefore all Lower Bavarians were henceforth to be addressed as 'you silly dog, you . . .' I feared that murder and pillage must stalk the camp, but I was wrong. 'You silly dog, you' actually became an expression of esteem.

One case produced more far-reaching results. An internee named Schmith was accused of having robbed a comrade. Schmith was a young SS man from the *Hitler Jugend* division, and was actually very popular in the camp. He would amuse the inmates by his life-like imitations of Hitler's and Goebbels' speeches, which he parodied most wittily, and he kept his barrack-room in good humour for hours on end with impersonations of this sort. When facing the arbitration committee he admitted at once that he had stolen some electric light bulbs. He seemed to have fallen into a paroxysm of confession, for he went on to admit more and more thefts: from out of the Croat general's customary seat he had purloined nails, hammers, files, saws and planes, from the carpenter's shop whole boards, beams and blocks of wood, from the Americans an entire truckload of building equipment; and finally, and with a certain quiet triumph, he informed us of his masterpiece—he had calmly got away with an entire barrack-hut. In brief, this nineteen-year-old boy with the honest blue eyes and the brown crew-cut had, during the period in question, been busy with his gang—Hitler Youth leaders and SS men—in building a theatre.

The committee solemnly pointed out to the delinquent, Schmith, the evil of his ways. Since the theatre to be built of the stolen materials was intended for the camp as a whole, it limited its summing-up to the injunction that admission must be free.

Kodak and I were deeply ashamed that we had not taken the initiative in starting a theatre ourselves, since we were the only two camp inmates who had a professional connection with that art-form, he as an actor and I as a literary man and script-writer. But as it happened our days were fully occupied. Evening after evening I gave lectures, on other matters now besides the contents of the questionnaire, on American literature, on contemporary painting, on subjects such as 'How to



write a film-script.' Kodak, on the other hand, recited. He knew Rilke's *Cornet* by heart. When I passed his barrack-room, crowded with senior civil servants, on my way to the one where I was to lecture that evening, I could hear Kodak's sonorous and powerful voice: *Reiten, reiten, reiten. . . .* I would hurry on, for I could not bear to listen to it again. No more could my particular public, the Waffen-SS, which was more interested in tanks than in horses and preferred the coarser joys of the picture-palace.

Soon, every evening, in at least one room of each barrack, there was something going on. Ludin organised a chess tournament; there was a shorthand course and lessons in foreign languages too. Indeed it was apparent that in this camp there were to be found experts in almost every field; even a course in international law attracted two students, who were henceforth universally regarded as weird and fantastic eccentrics. And night after night the theatre was packed. The Schmith Cabaret was a tremendous success; it was succeeded by a peasant theatre group which put on *Three Hours behind Dingolfing*; next came a tremendous revue, with singing and dancing, put on by the talented coryphees of the Gestapo. Musical instruments, in the form of a few violins and an accordion, were cunningly acquired through the inexhaustible resources of the Michaelsbug clergyman, and thus a small orchestra could be formed. Kodak won immense esteem by cleverly arranging, while the guard companies were being changed, for the transfer of the piano from the Ami mess-hall to the camp, a deed that could not be too highly praised, particularly since by so doing he lost his own nourishing job. Otto Dunckelberg had been as busy as Kodak and myself. Evening after evening he had lectured on Beethoven, Wagner, Verdi, Offenbach, Gregorian and twelve-tone music. Now he set about forming a male-voice choir. There were a great many anxious to join, and the audiences were large and enthusiastic when the men of the SS and of the Party, tenors and basses, with rapt expressions paid their homage to the immortal genius of German song, Mendelssohn.

The Americans, it must be said, did nothing to encourage these developments within the camp. The new commandant exploited the great popularity of our theatre by incorporating it into his disciplinary system. If he were displeased, for some reason entirely unconnected with the theatre, he would promptly forbid performances. When the camp-leader protested, he announced that, in accordance with instructions he had received concerning free speech and the right to complain of the internees, he would hold a meeting in the theatre. He sat down upon the stage and told the internees to say whatever might be on their minds. The first speaker, struggling with his shocking English, begged that internees be at last allowed to use the postal facilities for communication with their dependents. The commandant gave a friendly smile, cleared his throat, and replied briefly:

“You know, I was in Lidice!”

The internees sat for some time in puzzled silence until the interpreter, who had doubtless often heard the Americans pronounce this mysterious word, explained what it meant. The assembled company listened to his explanation and was duly depressed, but after a while somebody asked the interpreter what the connection was between Lidice and our use of the mails. The interpreter shrugged his shoulders. The commandant insisted that we ask him further questions. This was done, and after each one he would smile, clear his throat and say:

“You know, I was in Lidice!”

Finally the assembly got up and left the theatre.

Meanwhile the CIC personnel had been changed, and I was interrogated by a sergeant, a friendly young man. He leaned back in his chair and asked:

“Why didn’t you join the Party?”

I replied, somewhat taken aback, that the National-Socialists had always asked me exactly the same question. My answer was then, as now:

“I just didn’t join.”

“We want to know your exact reasons. Why didn’t you join the Party?”

I thought for a moment. I knew that this was my chance and, calculating rapidly, I reckoned that I would need some five hours to avail myself of it. I drew a deep breath and said, in a style that was of course utterly different from my normal manner of speech:

“If I had joined the Party, I would, in your opinion, have been at least a *Gauleiter*, wouldn’t I?”

The sergeant said quickly:

“Yeah.”

I said:

“Well, I became a script-writer instead. As such I earned approximately three times a *Gauleiter*’s salary.”

This seemed to make everything quite clear to the sergeant. He said with admiration:

“Oh, that’s okay!”

I gave him a friendly nod and was about to launch into my explanation, but he had already got to his feet. Now he said:

“Good enough. That’s what we wanted to know. You can go now.”

He spoke without a trace of irony. My explanation had, indeed, fully satisfied him. But I was almost in despair at the impossibility of ever explaining anything to these people. So instead of turning and walking out I said quickly, almost beseechingly:

“So you admit that I’m here because of the Rathenau case!”

He replied at once:

“Oh, no! In America we stick to the principle: *ne bis in idem!*”

I said:

“In that case why are you keeping me here?”

He laid a hand on my shoulder and said in an encouraging voice:

“Oh, we’ll find something!”

That was all. I might go and I went. I had simply been caught up in the machinery and there I still was. Mine was not the only case of this sort. One day trucks drove up and out of them came internees, some two hundred men. When we asked them we found they all came from Landshut and the country about. They said they did not know why they had been arrested. We asked them if they had been Party members. They said they had not. We asked each one in turn what his profession was and whether he had been in the army. They had, one as a doctor, another as a chemist, a third as a paymaster, while one had been nothing, nothing at all, he had been a staff private. It was Kodak who found the answer to the riddle. The answer was very simple, almost too simple for the German mind to grasp. At Nuremberg the case was being tried to decide whether or not the German General Staff was a criminal organisation. Thereupon the Landshut *district officer* had gone through the questionnaires and had ordered the immediate arrest of every man whose military rank contained the word ‘staff’: staff doctors, staff chemists, staff paymasters, staff commissaries, staff privates. This was the true explanation, this was why they were now in the camp. Five days later the little mistake was cleared up, but they were here by then. And here they stayed.

Ludin was not interrogated for a long time. In the camp was Sandro Mach, the Slovak Minister of the Interior. Mach had been a journalist, and the more I saw of him the less I liked him. He struck me as a sly and intriguing creeper. Nor was he a good comrade inside the camp, and his standard of behaviour was low. Ludin took a great deal of trouble on his behalf and invariably did all he could to help him in the minor difficulties inevitable in camp life, but Mach’s attitude towards Ludin was almost insultingly distant. Once Mach cried angrily:

“Well, what’s the matter? Any man who plays politics must know that when things go well, he lives well, when things go badly, he’s hanged. What’s the matter? I lived well when the going was good, now it’s not so good, and I’ll be hanged. So what?”

Sandro Mach, like the Croat general, was a living example of the Balkan attitude towards high-level statecraft. He had not yet been interrogated when Ludin was summoned ‘up front.’

Ludin had been an ‘automatic arrest’ as a *Nazi leader*: there were no accusations against him personally. We had often talked of his activities in Slovakia, a subject he discussed willingly and cheerfully. He had a great number of Slovak friends, most of whom were, like Mach, Slovak National-Socialists. Once, when he seemed depressed, we had discussed the Slovak uprising that took place when the Russians crossed

the Carpathians. He told me of his sadness at the desertion and treachery of the Slovak War Minister, in whom he had complete confidence, and who had worked closely with Ludin and had even spoken against the uprising on the radio at the very time when he was actually, secretly leading it. This was what depressed Ludin, this failure on his part to judge human character; he had no other failure with which to reproach himself. He once told me how he had been arrested: he had simply given himself up. When he found that his Slovak friends were already under arrest, he made up his mind, went to a camp in Austria, and demanded that he be admitted. The American sentry told him to go away. Even when Ludin tried to make the man understand by pointing at his chest and saying loudly: "Nazi minister!", the sentry still would not let him in. Finally Ludin approached an American officer, who let him pass with a shrug of his shoulders.

Ludin returned from his interrogation with several sheets of paper beneath his arm and a pencil in his hand. He said he had been ordered to write the history of his life as well as his testimony for the 'Mach case' and for the 'Tiso case.' The Slovak president, Tiso, had been arrested in a Bavarian monastery, but had later been moved to another camp, or so we had read, in Kodak's *Stars and Stripes*. Mach, as I have said, was here with us.

"These crafty Americans!" I said with a laugh. "What's to stop you and Mach preparing your answers together?"

Ludin looked at me thoughtfully. At last he said:

"Yes, I could do that."

During the next three days I did not talk to him. He sat in his barrack-room, in the corner where he usually played chess, and wrote. Whenever I passed by his window I would glance in. There he sat and wrote, and if he occasionally raised his eyes he did not see me. I knew his story. For a man who had worn a uniform most of his life, the impression he gave was extraordinarily civilian. In all his opinions, as in his manners, he was far more conservative than myself. Once he said to me:

"I see why you have all these theories all the time. You're nothing but a Prussian!"

Ludin was prepared at once to admit that a man who has accepted totalitarianism must be prepared to accept responsibility for everything that happens under that totalitarianism. But he denied that a man needed a theory, a compelling idea, before he could commit himself fully.

"With your concept of the state," he once said to me, "you'd never even entice a dog out from behind a stove!"

The men who joined the SA had done so because they loved their country and because they felt the will to pull it out of the morass into which it was sinking.

“The world is will without idea,” I once said maliciously. He was annoyed.

“The idea was there right enough, the idea of the vastness of the job that had to be done! There was no question of an easy solution, a patent formula. There was a great deal that had to be taken into account, although. . . .”

“Although?” I asked.

“Although . . . there is the damnable phrase, the phrase about how you can’t make an omelet without breaking eggs.”

I knew. I too had once attempted to make an omelet, and eggs had been broken.

I was eating when I saw Ludin walk towards the gate, and I ran after him.

“What have you written?” I asked.

With a smile he said:

“You can lie better with the truth than with anything else.”

This was a favourite remark of mine, which I had picked up from my old defence counsel, Dr. Luetgebrune (who, I had heard, was now also sitting in a camp in Ludwigsburg). I asked Ludin if he had talked to Mach. Ludin said:

“He refused to talk to me.”

I knew that Ludin had been annoyed by Mach’s markedly distant manner towards him.

“What a fool!” I said with conviction.

Ludin said:

“Let him be. He’s furious with the whole world, but chiefly with himself.”

I could not help a malicious remark:

“And those are the people you worked for!”

But Ludin said calmly:

“We didn’t look for them, they found us.”

The sentry was signalling Ludin to pass through the gate.

That evening, when the good-night whistle blew, Ludin had not yet returned. I was most disturbed. During the afternoon I had repeatedly walked to the gate and looked through. Once or twice jeeps had driven away or arrived—and that night there were lights still burning in the CIC office. I lay down on my bunk and tried to work out what could have happened to Ludin. His reputation in the SA was high, not only with his men, whom I knew to be devoted to him; his name had never been in any way connected with the evil occurrences of June 30th, 1934, or with the various Jewish pogroms. My attitude towards the SA as an institution differed fundamentally from his own; even if I had accepted his, it seemed to me that once the National-Socialists had seized power those formations had been given jobs which, in other lands, would have devolved on organisations such as the Pioneers. And

I felt that grown-up men who occupied themselves with such matters must expect their contemporaries to regard them as faintly comical figures. I did not visualise a German ambassador to a satellite state as doing much more than a postman's job, a postman in a particularly splendid uniform. I had once asked the morose Mach for his opinion of Ludin. He had growled: "A good man, but in politics there's no such thing as a good man!" This remark seemed to me far more revelatory of Mach's character than of Ludin's. Though I had myself often been angry with Ludin—after the affair of the gauntlet running I had nicknamed him 'the camp Christ'—he was close to me, and I was worried about him.

It was late—almost midnight—when I noticed movement about the interrogation barracks. I slipped outside and waited in the shade of a tree. It was Ludin coming; the light by the gate caught his features. He was accompanied by two American officers whom I did not know and who must have arrived during the afternoon. The two officers suddenly saluted Ludin and then held out their hands—an unheard-of occurrence. They watched him as he walked through the gate. I could not go to meet him without leaving the shade of the tree. The two officers spoke to the sentry at the gate, and then one of them came into the camp and made his way towards the barrack-room in which the camp-leaders slept. I called to Ludin, asking anxiously:

"What's going on?"

Ludin came across and joined me in the shadows. He waited until the officer had disappeared into the camp-leader's barrack-room, then he turned to face me. He said, quite calmly:

"I'm a *war criminal* now."

I could not reply. The officer had left the barrack-room and passed close by us as he hurried back towards the gate. Immediately the camp-leader appeared, heading towards Ludin's barrack-room.

"He's looking for me," said Ludin. "I must go to my room."

But I held him back and called to the camp-leader. He hesitated but then came across to where we were standing. When he saw Ludin he said:

"Here you are! I was going to look for you. What's up? A strange officer just came and told me that you were not to be given any more work to do outside the camp perimeter. There are strict orders that you are never to pass the gate."

Ludin said again:

"I'm a *war criminal* now."

I said, with evident agitation:

"But you were only interrogated as a witness!"

Ludin looked first at me and then at the camp-leader. Without raising his voice he said:

"I was ambassador of the Reich in Slovakia. The Slovaks trusted the

Germans. I have accepted personal responsibility for everything that happened in Slovakia.”

I cried, in despair:

“But that’s insane! The Reich doesn’t even exist any more!”

Ludin said, in a matter-of-fact tone:

“I gave them my statement and they read it at once, the first officer passing each sheet to the second one as he finished it. When they had reached the end the lieutenant said: ‘You realise that this is your death-warrant?’ What could I reply? I said nothing. Then I had to wait in another room. They brought me coffee and cigarettes, but of course I did not touch them. Then two other officers came, no doubt from some central CIC place. They interrogated me in accordance with my statement. But I had nothing to add to or subtract from what I had written. Then they brought me to the gate.”

“Why didn’t you discuss it with me beforehand?”

“You couldn’t have changed anything. I had to do it alone. But I think that my statement will be of great help to Tiso and Tuka and Mach, and I owe them that.”

“And you?” I asked with a shiver. “You’re the scapegoat?”

“I? Yes, I’ll certainly be hanged,” he replied calmly.

I took a step back. I was suddenly, furiously angry. I cried:

“This is utterly insane! Stop play-acting!”

He smiled quickly and said:

“Yes—I’m play-acting. Tomorrow I’ll come to rehearsal. The part is really too silly, but I’ll do it.”

He nodded to me and walked to his barrack-room.

The play which I was putting on was indeed a downright farce. Ludin played an absent-minded professor, and the comedy revolved about the fact that at home this world-famous scholar was completely under his wife’s thumb—an hysterical lady of exaggerated morals who was played by Lieutenant-Colonel Sauerbruch of the General Staff. I was very pleased with Ludin’s acting; he combined perfectly the weightiness of the scholar with the gentle petulance of the hen-pecked husband, and was completely convincing in the part. When he was not rehearsing he sat in the corridor learning his lines. I went up to him on one occasion and said:

“I’ve been thinking. There can be no question of your being handed over. You were a diplomatist, and they dare not risk it. After all, everywhere in the world diplomats are protected by special rights.”

He nodded and said:

“Yes, it was a beautiful world, wasn’t it?”

Then his lips began to move as he learned his part.

Not far from Natternberg camp was another camp, for prisoners of war, at Plattling. It was far bigger than ours, and at night we could see the long line of lights flickering in the wind. We knew that there were

SS men in this camp, as well as Hungarians and Volksdeutsche and a very large number of Vlassov Russians. One evening we saw rockets being fired over Plattling camp, and almost at once the sound of shooting. That night our guard company was alerted, a tank unit and the tanks rattled off. They did not return until next morning. All we heard was that the Russians in Plattling camp had mutinied.

A few days later when I was taking a rehearsal in the theatre I heard the noise of tank engines and tracks, coming closer. That morning the tanks of the guard company had moved off again, and now they were presumably returning. But they went straight past the camp. I walked to the wire with Ludin. Tanks were rolling along the road outside, and between each pair of tanks was a truck into which were packed prisoners, standing or sitting, men in grey uniforms. We waved and shouted, but they did not respond. Not one of them even turned his head to look at us.

"They're Russians," said a man standing close beside me.

The man who had spoken was a Ukrainian. He had been a student in Lwow and he spoke good German. Now he said, and his voice was unutterably bitter:

"The Germans have no reason to complain about Hitler. He gave the Germans what he had promised. But we, we Ukrainians and Hungarians and Slovaks, we were betrayed by him!"

I was horrified, for Ludin must have heard every word. I did not dare glance at him. He said nothing, staring through the barbed wire. I remembered how we had once before stood in almost exactly this spot, staring through the fence at the road. Along it had passed not only the local peasants with their carts, the dependents of the internees and the jeeps of the Americans, but also the wretched fragments of the German collapse, solitary individuals making their way home, exhausted figures plodding along, and columns of miserable, despairing refugees. On that occasion I had not been able to control the sharpness of my tongue and I had remarked to Ludin:

"It seems to me you people did almost too much good!"

Ludin had replied:

"You're wrong, my friend, we did too little."

A few days after we had seen the Russians, the whole of Natternberg camp was transferred to Plattling. The guard company was changed, and the new commandant, an American of Italian origin, arranged to move with the minimum of trouble to himself. He sent for the camp-leader, told him how many trucks there would be at his disposal, and said that in four hours the camp would be moved. Anything that was not loaded on to the trucks by then would simply have to be left behind.

This was exactly the right way to treat Germans. The eagerness we felt now that we at last had an opportunity to show what we could do went a long way to counteract the misery we automatically felt at so



painful a change to our life—a misery that had already been apparent whenever an internee had had to move to a new bunk, let alone to another barrack-room. I left all arrangements for the transfer of my personal effects to my trusted Rotfuchs and hastened over at once to find Ludin, for I wished him to organise moving the theatre. But Ludin was already at work, packing what he could into cases and dismantling the benches, which could be moved more easily when taken apart. I ran from truck to truck, begging space for our theatre equipment, but in vain. Four minutes before the time given had elapsed the whole of Camp Natternberg was in Camp Plattling with only one truck missing. Two minutes later this truck, too, came through the gate of Plattling, and on top of a mountain of theatrical gear sat Ludin in solitary state. He had forgotten nothing, not even the stuff which I had decided would have to be left behind—the only thing he had failed to bring with him was an American sentry. He had bumped across the countryside entirely alone. When I realised this I at once asked him why he had not availed himself of this opportunity to escape. He looked at me with astonishment and then said:

“Yes, I never thought of that. My mind was fully occupied with the theatrical gear.”

The new camp had room for forty thousand men. There were ten big, self-contained barrack blocks on either side of the street that ran through the camp. After us the Hersbruck internment camp arrived, followed by the ‘Nuremberg Witness Camp’ and, later, the SS men from Dachau. Each block housed one former camp which remained under control of its camp-leader, though all were controlled by the Plattling camp-leader, an SS *Sturmbannführer* by the name of Neumann (a former leader of the Socialist Labour Youth who had left the Social-Democrats in disgust in 1932, when they failed actively to resist the National-Socialists.) I knew him from his activities of 1933 and he also knew about me. Neumann had built up Plattling camp. When he heard that I was anxious to find out about theatrical facilities he took me proudly to see his theatre. It had seats for six hundred, occupied its own theatre block, had a sunken orchestra pit, a vestibule, spot lights, scene-shifting machinery, rehearsal stages, cloakrooms with running water, a green room, dressing rooms, and special living quarters for the director as well as a grand piano, a harpsichord, a harmonium and a set of percussion instruments. I managed not to tremble and merely remarked it was a pity that the stage neither revolved nor could be raised or lowered. Neumann turned pale, and still anxious for commendation showed me over the rest of the theatre block with more becoming modesty; it would have done quite well to house a regular university. He was impressed by my suggestions that the vestibule be used for exhibitions of paintings, and that one of the barrack-rooms be turned into a sculptors’ studio. When we left the theatre block I said:

“Quite nice!”

Breathlessly he replied:

“You really like it?”

I said:

“Not at all bad for a start.”

Then, with an imperial wave of the hand, he said:

“Please do me the great pleasure of accepting the whole thing as a present!”

There were few times in my life when I was so happy. Two days later we were able to hold our first performance, and thenceforth there was never an evening that we did not put something on. Every Saturday we had a first night, quite apart from the shows done by the individual blocks. I had boasted to Neumann about our activities, and I was chagrined when I discovered that every camp had its own theatre group and they were all at least as keen and successful as ourselves. I called the various theatrical groups together, and Dunckelberg amalgamated the various orchestras. He now had at his disposal a collection of musical talent which, at that time, could hardly have been equalled anywhere else in Germany.

The commandant, a lieutenant of Irish origin, was interested solely in asbestos roofing. Repeatedly and anxiously he enquired if there were enough of this material and was always ready to order more. There was plenty, indeed too much. The commandant was the benefactor of the local building trade.

We were guarded by Poles. They enjoyed the reputation of being particularly fearsome. In fact they were not frightening at all. The Nuremberg Trials made them anxious to obtain statements, signed by the internees, declaring that they had treated us well. Roll-call was gradually abolished, which saved us a lot of time, and within the camp we organised our activities on an even greater scale. The university was formed, a trade academy, and every hour a man would strike a huge iron rail; at once the whole camp would be in motion for five minutes as the inmates made their way from one course to the next, after which all would be quiet again until he struck his rail once more. The district group leaders did not take part in all this. To begin with they had simply wandered gloomily about the new camp; then they took to staring pensively at the ground, the good clay of the Isar-Danube basin; soon they began to dig and hoe; and before long there were lines of beets and cabbages and potatoes and tomatoes growing between the barracks. . . .

Then the first releases took place, in the most unpredictable way. Names were announced and groups were assembled by the gate, and nobody could make out why those particular men were chosen—each group contained men of all the different categories, while others of the same categories remained in the camp. All day long the camp hummed with excitement. Then, as quickly as they had begun, the releases

stopped, were resumed, stopped again—with no recognisable method. This complicated our theatrical activities considerably. It was no longer possible to plan ahead, since our star actors and our best technicians would suddenly vanish; occasionally I had to change the show only an hour before the curtain was due to rise. Finally I began to choose only 'reliable' people for my theatre, until I had a company of war criminals and a staff of major offenders.

On one occasion the camp-leader showed me a registration form and asked me if I had any use for it. It was a genuine registration form, the only sort of identity document that at that time was valid 'outside.' I seized it with both hands and hurried off in search of Ludin. I gave it him and we walked along the fence together, examining every yard of the wire for a possible escape route. The camp, together with its Nuremberg Barracks, was guarded in most ridiculous fashion and no determined man would have had any trouble escaping. But only very few did so, and then only those men whose homes were in the Eastern Zone. It was as though nobody believed the Americans and their threats to punish all 'war criminals,' as though no one seriously thought that he could be found guilty or that, being innocent, he could yet be condemned. But I knew that Ludin cherished no illusions and that he was quite sure of what lay in store for him. His family lived in the Hohenzollern territory, and I was well aware how deeply attached he was to his wife and six children. I was therefore happy that he now had the registration form that would enable him to escape. He listened to me seriously, and seriously we examined the wire together. He said that the idea attracted him greatly and that he was longing to see his family again.

"Then off you go!" I cried. "This very night!"

He told me he was afraid that when once he had seen his family he might lack the courage needed to return to camp.

"Are you mad?" I shouted. "What do you mean—return to camp?"

He said:

"Of course I must. I have to give my evidence in the trial of the Slovaks." He added: "And, besides, I should not like it if my children were ever to feel that their father had not stood up for his cause."

I left him there and hurried back to the theatre. That night he acted in the play as usual.

I told Ludin the story of what had happened to the Russians in this camp. I pointed out to him the block in which they had been housed and the spot from which the camp-leader had observed what was done to them. The Russians had lived in a block isolated from the rest of the camp, and their block-leader had been the last Latvian Minister of War, a general. One day a Soviet commission had appeared in the camp and had demanded that the files pertaining to the Russians be handed over. They were in the possession of the Russian block-leader, and the

Latvian general refused to surrender them. He would not even allow the Soviet commission to enter his block. A few days later the Soviet officers returned and demanded that the Americans hand over a great number of Russians, listed by name, who were regarded as deserters from the Red Army—among whom was the Latvian general, though he had never served in the Red Army. The Americans' attempt to comply with this request failed: the Russians barricaded themselves inside their quarters, 'mutinied,' and powerless as they were yet resisted their gaolers and announced that they would die where they were sooner than let themselves be handed over. This had happened on the night when, from Natternberg, we had seen the rockets rising over Camp Plattling. Then a senior American officer appeared. He promised the Russians that they would not be handed over but would be settled somewhere in southern Europe. The Russians rejoiced greatly. They were given freedom of movement and some were even allowed to leave the camp without supervision in order to make purchases for their comrades in the little town of Plattling. They thought that they were now completely safe.

"One night," said the camp-leader, "I was awakened by a noise that I knew only too well from my days in Russia. It was the clatter of tank-tracks. I left my barrack-room and saw American tanks turning off the main road and deploying to surround the camp. Anxiously I walked across to the gate, where I found a pile of rubber truncheons being issued to American soldiers. These latter were wearing their rubber-soled 'invasion shoes,' and when each had received his truncheon they moved off in silence down the camp road. Since I could not use this road I ran behind the barracks and crawled through the wire fence that separates one block from the next. The Americans were occupying the Russian block. They slipped silently into the barracks, and took up position, as I later heard, two men to a bed. When a whistle was blown they all began to strike the sleeping men, yelling and screaming, chasing the utterly surprised Russians down into the road with their horrible cries of '*mak snell, mak snell,*' hitting those men over and over again who did not get out of bed fast enough. Then they drove them along the road to the gate and made them climb up into the waiting trucks. A tank took up position behind each truck—and that is how they were moved away at dawn."

The camp-leader said:

"The Americans who returned from this excursion seemed unusually downcast. Our SS men made a point of cross-questioning them. Normally the Americans never said anything, but now they did let drop a few hints. The Russian prisoners had been handed over to the Soviets beyond Zwiesel, in the Bavarian Forest, near to the Czech border. Certain American frontier guards said that Vlassov-Russian corpses were visible, hanging in trees, even from their side of the boundary.

The SS men lined the wire fence and as soon as they saw an American they shouted at the top of their voices: 'Do with us what you like—but what you did to the Russians is the most despicable piece of vileness in the history of the world!'

I ran into the theatre and from the room which the camp-leader had allotted me—I did not use it, preferring to sleep as before in my barrack-room—I fetched the truncheon that the camp-leader had found in the Russian block and which he had kept. It was a long club, hard as iron and handsomely grooved. I could not discover whether it were made out of a special wood or out of some sort of reinforced rubber. I showed Ludin the truncheon. I said:

"It was with a thing like this that the Polish sergeant beat you! Do you recognise it?" I shouted: "They saw the Russians hanging in the trees and it was as though nothing had happened. For the Americans the Vlassov Russians were not patriots who had wished to free their country, they were nothing but cowardly deserters and criminals. For that sergeant you weren't Germany's ambassador but a common crook! Germany's ambassador! I won't let Germany's ambassador be hanged in Slovakia as a common crook and then for it to be as though nothing had happened!"

Ludin was very pale. He said with difficulty:

"It is not that I won't fight for my life. I shall do everything in my power to prove that our policy in Slovakia was not a criminal policy. And if they hang me, before I die I must testify on behalf of the Reich and of the men who believed in it."

I was in despair. I could feel that these fatal ideas were taking ever firmer root in the man's mind. Since our move to Plattling he had lived in an increasing state of isolation, as though he feared lest friends should weaken his resolve. He appeared at the theatre punctually each morning for rehearsal and each evening to act; nor did he avoid his other work. But as soon as it was done he would return to his barrack-room, to the men among whom chance had thrown him, Gestapo officials who scarcely glanced up from their interminable games of skat. There he would sit, carving his chess-men or just lying on his bunk with his hands behind his head. He was not particularly sentimental. Only once did he show me photographs of his home, of his wife and his six children. He loved his eldest son, Tille, with a particularly deep affection, which was perhaps connected with the crazy new regulations concerning the loss of inheritance which must affect the elder son more than the others. But whatever hopes he may still have cherished, it was plain to see that day by day the bonds which attached him to the world were becoming loosened. Since the Nuremberg Barracks had been moved to this camp the constant discussions had assumed a more lively form. They were now entering their ultimate stage, the preparations for the counter-attack. Ludin no longer took part in these discussions; it was as though

he feared that they too might weaken his resolve, as though the realisation that injustice was being punished by further injustice might free him from the decision he had taken.

The driving force of these discussions was provided by the man who was now senior inmate in the camp, Graf Schwerin-Krosigk. This valiant old gentleman was collecting all the documents he could lay his hands on, as well as personal reports concerning everything that had taken place since May, 1945. I always sent him any man who had something of particular interest to relate. I knew that to make a reckoning of injustice versus injustice was wrong, and that all that could be proved was that wherever there is a will to alter the world there too will injustice be found—but this had also to be made plain. The Graf gave lectures and was the most eager of all to explain exactly what had happened. He spoke like a professor of history, in a calm, agreeable, careful, highly educated voice, each sentence well-rounded and deliberate. He covered the whole wretched story, from the day he entered Brüning's cabinet as a minister to the atrocious end. There he sat in the dull light cast by the electric bulbs, immaculately dressed, with collar and tie, and only when he turned could the great white P be seen which the Americans had painted on the back of his jacket when they moved him here from Hersbruck, the P for prisoner, the letter that brands the marked man. There he sat and told us, without ever raising his voice, of the ships he had seen in Flensburg Bay, ships packed with the rotting flesh of concentration-camp victims. Without raising his voice he told of the last days of the German government, of the negotiations about the surrender, of the events in Flensburg. It was like a scholar reporting on the methods and results of his learned research.

I repeated to Ludin what I had heard: standing by the fence, the rubber truncheon in my hand, the light of the perimeter lamps shining on our faces, I repeated what Schwerin-Krosigk had told us. The Government of the Reich, Dönitz, Schwerin-Krosigk, the last ministers and secretaries of state, generals and admirals, knowing well that all was over, had fought one last struggle with the Western Allies for the life of the millions of refugees fleeing from the East towards the American and English lines. Then a diabolical game had begun, with life and human agony as the stakes, to postpone the moment when unconditional surrender should fall like a barrier across the fleeing mass of people.

I told him how the last government of the Reich, struggling desperately to carry out the terms of surrender which it had accepted, was suddenly fallen upon by a screaming, yelling pack of savages, overexcited to a point of hysteria; how these people forced their way into the governmental offices, and struck and pummelled ministers and secretaries of state, generals and admirals, and in spite of what had always hitherto been accepted as normal behaviour had beaten these men,

had driven them down into the courtyard where the photographers were already waiting: how the trousers of ministers and secretaries of state, generals and admirals had been pulled down, their genitals fingered, their naked backsides photographed. I told Ludin how the dignity and majesty of humanity's ultimate substance had been senselessly and unconditionally stamped into the filth, until of the Reich government nothing which had once carried this honoured name remained save a collection of naked, trembling, agonised and humiliated old men, the mockery of a whole, hysterical, screaming world. Every attitude was now grotesque, even honour a farce, every act of heroism a nameless, helpless, befouled and hollow symbol of this last, senseless manifestation of absolute nothingness.

"I refuse," I shouted at Ludin, "I refuse to see Germany's ambassador to Slovakia go down in that same filth!" I cried: "The game is over, the others have abolished the rules. A man who still tries to play according to them is no hero, he's a fool!"

I shook Ludin. I raved and shouted. And Ludin said:

"But Germany lives on. So long as one person believes this, the Reich still exists."

I fought with him as did Jacob with the angel, but to no avail.

American policy towards the internee problem seemed to be to keep the whole body of men continually on the move, perhaps in the hope that some natural law such as centrifugal force would break it up into its component parts. Scarcely had Plattling been elevated to the status of an internment camp before the entire concern was moved by freight train to Camp Langwasser, near Nuremberg. The Polish guards did not close the doors of the American freight cars. At first they refused us permission to transport our theatre and its equipment in a special truck, sets, stage, lights and musical instruments; but finally Ludin, Kodak and I persuaded them to change their minds by informing them mysteriously: "Well, you'll see. . . ." The SS men who had worked as scene shifters and lighting technicians travelled with us in another wagon. They amused themselves by counting the opportunities to escape. Whenever the train slowed down for a curve, and this happened frequently, they discussed, with the interest of specialists, the chances of making a dash for it. They were excellent, dead certain in fact. When I asked them why they did not jump instead of just talking about it, one replied:

"We're sooooo curious to see what's going to happen!"

Ludin smiled at me.

The train stopped for the night in Langwasser station. An American guard company, wearing dress uniform for some inscrutable reason, surrounded the train and locked the doors of the cars. It was extraordinary the equipment that the internees had brought with them, not only everything that they had 'acquired' during their internment, but

also all those objects they had made for themselves such as brooms, shovels, cooking-pots and frying-pans. My principle had been to remain as light and mobile as possible, and all I had collected was blankets, nothing but blankets; with a sufficiency of them the dreariest hole in the ground could be made habitable. I had eight blankets, together with my few wretched articles of clothing, all wrapped up in a ninth. Ludin, as was his custom whenever he left the camp, wore his grey flannel suit and carried one of his home-made wooden trunks. I spread some of my blankets on the floor of the car, covering the cracks; we lay down on these and pulled the other blankets up over us.

During this trip we had passed through a number of small towns, and in Regensburg station the train had stopped for half an hour. For many of the prisoners standing by the open doors this was their first glimpse of freedom in over a year, and for many more, who had previously been soldiers, this was the first time for years that they had seen their German homeland. We did not see much of the destruction caused by the war, though its presence could everywhere be felt—charred walls, railway installations that had been smashed and partially rebuilt, bridges over which the train drove very slowly for they shook a great deal. But more important than that we saw the people. To begin with the men of the Waffen-SS had amused themselves by showing off their cook, a gigantic, heavily built man with huge muscles, and by shouting at every railway employee who walked past with pick or lantern: “Were you in the Party too, Dad?” They had, in fact, produced all those jokes by which German soldiers—and indeed soldiers the whole world over—like to show that there is still life in them, that they’re not finished yet. But after a little while they fell silent. Their witticisms were rewarded with neither laughter nor shouts, nor even with hatred. Nobody so much as waved. All they saw were heavy, tired expressions, pale faces, the crowds standing silently and with endless patience on the platforms, sick-looking people waiting glumly in their tattered clothes, poor, wretched, speechless. The sun was shining, yet it seemed as though a steady drizzle of rain were falling. Such were the people who had once risen to conquer all Europe, who had marched down all the roads, deep into Asia, in Africa, certain of victory, conscious of their power and their force.

During the night Ludin suddenly said:

“I often thought of what you said about Hitler”—he corrected himself at once—“about the Führer. I didn’t want to listen, I was determined not to let anyone talk to me about him as you did. I didn’t want it, because I didn’t wish to create the impression that I was looking for an easy way out by heaping all the guilt on him in order that I might then hide behind him.”

Ludin went on:

“The other day Kodak read us that passage in Heine where Heine



describes how, as a very young man, he saw the Emperor Napoleon in Dusseldorf for the first and only time—a small, fat, pale man cantering down an avenue. And I was forced to think that France never recovered from him, that a true French patriot could never regard Napoleon as a great figure of French history. I couldn't help thinking that then too a man had arisen with the intention of fusing Europe into one, and that he had failed, that Europe had failed, that France and the great revolution had failed, simply because his genius was autonomous, unique, too big, too shapeless. I had to see that his great men, his marshals, his diplomats were little men who derived their greatness solely from him, that his concept was Napoleon's concept, not the concept of France."

Ludin continued:

"When I try to clarify in my own mind what it was that I saw in the Führer I cannot believe that he was my Napoleon. Granted that my greatness came from him, that I should never have been in a position on my own to undertake the tasks which he imposed upon me. Perhaps those tasks were beyond my strength. I have often wondered about this, but what man knows his own limitations? All that I could do was to use my last ounce of strength to perform the duties assigned me, and no man is capable of more. But that is not why I followed him to the end. The reason is that up to the end I believed that what I was doing was something that really had to be done, not for the sake of the Führer's greatness but for the sake of the German people. That is the truth, which no one can dispute for no one else can know how I think. But it is so."

Ludin said:

"I only met the Führer very rarely. On those few occasions I was able to talk to him as I can to anyone whom I know I can bring round to my point of view—and every time it was he who convinced me. I gave in to him, not because I was overawed by his power, but because I truly believed that he was right, and because in those matters where I knew I was right I had to submit for the sake of greater events and greater results, the scope of which I was in no position to judge. I believed he wished me well and I also believed that he understood me. When he spoke to me he always made me feel that he understood me, and when to a greater or lesser extent he brushed my objections aside he did so as though he already knew them, as though he had already surmounted them for himself and thus had the right to demand of me that I too brush them aside."

Ludin went on:

"On one single occasion I met him in tragic circumstances, in a situation when my life was at stake and more than my life, my belief in what I held to be right. It was June 30th, 1934. As a senior SA leader I had been ordered to Bad Wiessee. Shortly before, at a big parade of my group, I had made a public speech in which I had spoken of the

great faith of the SA in its Chief of Staff, Roehm, and in his determination that the SA should pursue its chosen objectives despite all those currents of opinion which were contrary. I had expected that at Bad Wiessee the Führer would dissolve with a phrase the differences that had arisen between us and the army, for which I still felt a loyal comradeship. I, together with a quantity of other senior SA leaders, was seized on the open road by the Führer's column coming towards us. We were utterly dumbfounded when we learned what had happened. We had to form up in a single rank, and the Führer went from man to man, giving each one a look which now for the first time seemed to me as I had so often heard it described—magical. Hitler said not a word. Only when he reached me did he pronounce the single word, 'Ludin,' without any particular emphasis, sunk in his thoughts—and I did not know whether with this word he had condemned me to die or to live. I was the most senior of the SA leaders there. I was condemned to live."

Ludin fell silent. Had he gone on I knew what he would have had to say. He had immediately jumped into his car and gone to find his comrade Scheringer, whom he had driven off to a place of safety. Scheringer had been beside him in the dock during the Ulm Reichswehr Trial and had later joined the Communists; his life was now obviously in extreme peril—as was Ludin's life, should it have been known that he had used his reprieve to save another. Ludin did not tell me this story.

After a silence, Ludin began again:

"I never succeeded in taking his measure. Perhaps I never shall, perhaps history never will either. Sometimes I thought he was a genius, at others I wondered whether it was a madman who was leading us. Sometimes I believed he was daemonic, at other times deranged. But all that is incorrect, as is your expressive 'lemur-like.' When I try to find the proper word for him, it is 'remote,' a man who could not stand the light, a man of the shadows, emerging from shadow, speaking from shadow, and forcing back into the shadows everything that strove towards the light. . . ."

I said:

"And all the same. . . ."

Ludin said:

"And all the same I could not get away from him. If I felt one thing with certainty it was this: that he was a man with a fate, a man of fate, and that fate I could never grasp since for me it was always a great shadow. But apart from him I have never met a man who had such a fate, who was so fateful; and since his fate was also that of the German people, to whom I wished to devote my life, I had to indentify him with my nation. I could not ignore him, he was there. I could not ignore the nation to which I belonged; it was there with all its failings and its weaknesses, and I had to love it with its failings and weaknesses. If I was guilty, if we were all guilty, then our guilt was based on love."

Ludin fell silent. After a very long pause he began to talk again, and he now relapsed into his native dialect of Baden:

“You know a man can break his oath once. I did it, when I was a Reichswehr officer, and that was hard enough to bear. But to break one’s oath twice, that is too much to ask of any man.”

I said heavily:

“But a man must be able to—he must!”

Ludin said calmly:

“Go on! You committed one murder, but you couldn’t commit a second!”

The next morning we had to fall in beside the train, each man carrying his pack. Ludin and I tried to get into the wagon with the theatrical gear, but it was locked and the sentries ordered us back to join the others. We marched off, flanked by Americans. At the entrance to a broad, concrete road, which led towards the camp, there stood a large notice announcing that here began the area controlled by the 1st Battalion of the 1st Regiment of the 1st Division of the U.S. Army, an honour of which each man should be aware. We had already learned that this illustrious battalion was a punishment unit, which was why they wore dress uniform at all times. As soon as we had passed the notice the Americans began to drive us forward in their customary fashion, screaming and yelling at us, kicking us in the back, striking us with their truncheons. I hoisted my bundle of blankets onto my head; it was heavy and it made me feel as though I were a perambulating mushroom, since I could see nothing save my feet and a small circle of concrete road. But at least the blankets protected me from the blows, which only thudded dully. In this fashion I lurched and tottered on. In front of me an old man fell, his cap was snatched from his head, and I recognised the elderly, white-haired conductor of the Bayreuth orchestra, Professor Reinhardt. The Americans were beating him, but two other American soldiers sprang forward and helped him to his feet. ‘So there are decent individuals among them,’ I thought to myself. Then I saw the two warm-hearted GI’s cut the string with which the professor had tied his violin to the top of his pack. The road was several miles long.

Langwasser Camp was on the ground where the National-Socialist *Reichsparteitag* used to be held. We could see the towers and the enormous, half-completed buildings rising from the Field of Mars. The block in which I lived was congested, the barracks close together with between them latrines which dated from the period of the great parades. The barracks themselves were quite new and for all intents and purposes unfurnished. I was grateful for my blankets. The only place we could go outside was a strip of ground immediately next to the wire, and I walked round and round it. We were strictly forbidden to leave our barracks by night. This was hard on the more elderly gentlemen

with unreliable bladders. If they attempted to visit the latrines at night the sentries opened fire. Breathing heavily, the old men would remain crouched on the lavatories, often for hours on end, until at last dawn broke and they dared to leave. When the block-leader lodged a protest, the commandant gave a humorous reply. He announced that the sentries were strictly forbidden to shoot into the camp and that every inmate had the right to report a breach of this order provided that he could give, first, the exact hour at which the shot had been fired, secondly, the name of the sentry and, thirdly, could produce the bullet which he had found within the camp perimeter. As it happened the sentries ceased shooting from then on; they threw stones instead.

Camp Langwasser near Nuremberg finished me. I walked round and round inside the wire fence and with shame I realised that I had reached the end of my strength. We began to be starved once more. In Plattling we had been given what remained of the food destined for the prisoners-of-war, but now our rations were reduced to the minimum again, as in the early days at Natternberg. All thought reverted to the subject of food. There was no longer any discussion. The internees lay about in their barracks, or in the sunshine that had now grown weaker, and stared across at the Third Army's main food depot, which was just beyond the wire. Covered by huge rubber tarpaulins were mountains of supplies, and when the wind was in the right quarter we could enjoy the delicate aroma of dried fruit. This supply depot was looked after by negro soldiers, good-natured boys with whom the SS men got on very well. "You second-class, me second-class," the negroes would say, and they would give us food whenever they dared. But they were frightened, since they were badly treated if they were caught. The inexhaustible SS had formed a drainpipe patrol, which slipped under the road through the drains and brought back cases of food stolen from beneath the rubber tarpaulins by the same route. When the cases turned out to be full of potato chips the disappointment in the camp was great, and at one time we had an abominable glut of pepper. These raids ceased, too, when after a thunderstorm the pipes filled with water and some members of the patrol were drowned.

This camp finished me. I had nothing to do. I was utterly apathetic and uninterested when I was summoned to the main block for a 'final interrogation.' There were about a hundred internees waiting outside a barrack-room, of whom the only one known to me was Herr Alinn. He was interrogated ahead of me. The American officer thumbed through Alinn's file and then asked:

"Are you still of the opinion that Poland began the war?"

I was very curious to see what answer the stubborn old Westphalian would give. Herr Alinn swallowed heavily. Then he said:

"I must admit that I did once express such an opinion. But since then I've been frequently informed that I was wrong."

The officer said:

“You silly fool! Roosevelt started the war! Back in 1933! You can go!”

I should never be so presumptuous as to doubt the word of an American officer.

I was asked:

“Why didn’t you join the Party?”

I replied:

“I didn’t know enough about it.”

I was told:

“Worse luck for you. If you had we’d have set you free a year ago. You can go.”

But I could not go yet. Once again the sieve was shaken. Only the Waffen-SS men were left in Langwasser. We were paraded once more on the camp street. I met Ludin again and Rotfuchs and Graf Schwerin-Krosigk. Kodak was remaining in Langwasser. He fetched the ‘Golden Book’ of the Langwasser Theatre, a handsome parchment volume bound in leather, and asked me to write an inscription. I thumbed through it. There everything which had once been good and valuable was represented. Graf Schwerin-Krosigk, as an old humanist, had put down some words in Greek or Latin. Manstein had written: *For us the Reich must yet endure. . . . Brauchitsch: Keep the sunshine in your heart, whether it snow or hail. . . .* All had said something. There were countless signatures of field-m Marshals and ministers, Ludin had written a long and astonishingly good poem, and beneath it, in giant letters, someone had inscribed the single word: THROUGH! I looked at the signature. It was: Steiner, SS Panzer-General. I wrote: THROUGH POWER TO NOTHINGNESS! and signed as *Royal Prussian Ensign, Retd.*

We were beaten and chivvied on our way back to the station exactly as we had been on our way up. In the train the doors were locked. We were guarded by Americans now, and we almost died of heat and suffocation. When the train halted high-spirited GI’s amused themselves by filling empty cans with urine which they poured into the crowded cars through cracks in the roof. On our way to Regensburg Camp we were struck and kicked just as we had been from Langwasser Camp to the station. Those who collapsed were carried by pitying inhabitants of the suburbs into their houses. Then a truck appeared, and they were quickly carted away. We were as hungry at Regensburg as we had been at Natternberg, but we had more room in which to move about.

One day I saw jeeps drive up to the camp, full of Czechs. I ran to find Ludin, but he had already been informed. Slowly a few men, carrying their possessions, made their way towards the gate. They were district administrators who had served in Czech territory. Their names were read out. Ludin’s was not among them. Ludin watched them go. He said:

“Next time. . . .”

I did nothing. I no longer even walked around the wire. Then the people who ran the Regensburg theatre asked me to help them. They were SS men who had heard of my activities in Natternberg and Plattling. The theatre was in a stone building, a former factory, which was wider than it was long, and the stage was partially hidden by concrete pillars. But the SS men were very proud of their theatre. In the days when this had been a prisoner-of-war camp the company from the Regensburg National Theatre had even acted here. Now these good men had thought up a fine job for me. I was to put on a big show for the camp—something that would really be a surprise, *Faust* was what they had in mind. I said there was no point, since I would shortly be released. The SS men laughed and said: “That’s what everyone thinks!” I felt ashamed of myself and agreed to do as they suggested.

The next morning I was ordered to the gate with all my possessions. “*Mak snell, mak snell!*”

I left everything behind. It was a point of pride with me not to take anything that had belonged to the Americans. I divided my blankets. I put on the clothes I had been wearing when I was arrested, the grey flannel suit now grotesquely large for me, my utterly torn and tattered shoes.

By the gate were assembled about a hundred men, the same who had been summoned for the ‘final interrogation’ at Nuremberg. It went alphabetically. The last arrangements took about ten minutes per man. When Herr Alinn returned with his papers in his hands I asked him to show me his release. It was a single, mimeographed sheet on which were about a hundred names. At the head of the sheet was nothing save the information that the following internees were to be released. *Subject: Release of erroneous arrestees.*

So I was to be released as an erroneous arrestee.

It was bound to be hours before my turn came. I ran back into the camp. I hurried to Ludin’s barrack. He had constructed a sort of tent with the blankets, inside which he lay on his bed out of sight of his room-mates. I pulled back the blankets and cried quickly:

“Get up! Get dressed! The Czechs are here!”

Ludin got up at once. He was very pale. He dressed carefully, and I helped him by handing him his clothes. We spoke not a word. Only, when he walked across to the little, cracked mirror and ran his hand over his chin, as though wondering whether he should shave, did I say hastily:

“Don’t bother about that, come along!”

We walked towards the gate. I said:

“Listen! It’s all quite simple. When they call out my name you cry, ‘Here!’ go up, and get my release. Nobody will know. We’re wearing almost identical suits, and the Amis certainly won’t be able to tell us

apart. There is no one of our people who'll betray you. Take the money too, it's about eighty marks. You can get a long way with that. Then just walk out through the gate. Do you understand?"

Ludin stopped walking. He held out his hand and said:

"You're a good fellow. . . .!"

I said quickly:

"Don't worry about me. I'll stay here another week, which will give me time to produce the *Faust* play. Then I'll just go up front and ask why exactly I haven't yet been released. By then you'll have disappeared long ago."

Ludin was still grasping my hand. He said:

"So now it's time to say goodbye!"

I said:

"Yes. Look after yourself."

He said:

"I'll do that. Never you worry. . . ."

He took my arm and we walked on together. He said:

"When you've passed through that gate . . ." I stopped, but he pushed me gently forwards and said: "Don't forget me! Don't forget what I'm telling you now. I have acted at all times in accordance with my conscience. It hasn't always been easy, but that is how I intend to go on. Whatever accusations they may bring against me, it will be nothing for which I was truly responsible. If I must die, it will not be for my guilt but because I represent the Reich. I am happy that I am able to go through with it. Don't forget that!"

It was taking less time than I had expected. My name was called. When I went through the gate Ludin was no longer standing where I had left him. I walked along the road outside the wire. There were thousands of men standing inside the wire, gazing after me. Among them was Ludin, a single face among all those thousands.

A few days later Hanns Ludin was handed over to Czechoslovakia. The accusations against him were based on the allegation that the separation of Slovakia from the Czech land was an act contrary to recognised international law. The prosecution ignored the fact that after this separation Tiso's Slovakia was accorded diplomatic recognition by a number of great states, and that the Soviet Union, until the outbreak of the Russo-German War, was represented by an ambassador even as was Germany. The prosecution denied Germany's ambassador diplomatic status, accusing him of having represented a hostile power and of being accredited to a Government guilty of high treason. Hanns Ludin was condemned to death.

He was sentenced to die by the rope on January 20th, 1948. In Czechoslovakia this sentence was carried out not by hanging but by strangling.

Hanns Ludin, horribly emaciated in the grey flannel suit that was far

too big for him, suffered the cord to be put about his throat. The executioner slowly tightened it. Hanns Ludin was dying for twenty minutes. His last words were a message to his wife and his son, Tille, and the cry:

*Long Live Germany!*

*The statements on this form are true and I understand that any omissions or false or incomplete statements are offences against Military Government and will subject me to prosecution and punishment.*

Ernst von Salomon  
*Signed*

September 1945–September 1950  
*Date*

#### CERTIFICATION OF IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR

*(Verify that the above is the true name and signature of the individual concerned and that, with the exceptions noted below, the answers made on the questionnaire are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and the information available to me. Exceptions—if no exceptions, write ‘none’)*

Unfortunately I am not in a position to write ‘none’ here. The man who answered this questionnaire has in several of his replies left room for doubt whether or not he is truly a writer. I believe him to be a writer, and even a good one, and this is what has led me to feel entitled to publish Ernst von Salomon’s completed questionnaire in book form.

Furthermore, contrary to the opinion of the man who answered this questionnaire, I would maintain that I have in fact read all his books, though this is not my unvarying habit so far as my authors are concerned. I have also read his answers to this questionnaire, and I am forced to admit that, while perusing those passages relating to Ernst von Salomon’s publisher, pearls of sweat appeared on my forehead. Not so do I see myself. My only possible consolation is that I envisage the man who answered this questionnaire in quite a different light from that in which he sees himself.

Needless to say I am incapable of verifying that the answers made on the questionnaire are true to the best of my knowledge and belief and the information available to me. But I can verify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief and the information available to me, the answers here given are honest. They are honest—and that alone is sufficient to raise simple statements of fact to the level of literature. And, in my capacity of publisher, that alone can interest me.

Ernst Rowohlt  
*Signed*

Publisher  
*Official Position*

15th January, 1951  
*Date*





