

## What Eva Said to Adolf

I wanted my biography of Adolf Hitler to be read far into the coming century, in preference to all others; shorn of mid-twentieth century cant and triumphalist spite. I planned to stand back, as my mother would have as an illustrator, and view him as though through her reducing glass – perhaps even turning the portrait upside down to see where the perspective was wrong or the colour too garish. Over the years therefore I tracked down and interviewed as many of Hitler's private staff as I could. I took my time; I was not a journalist. I was passed from hand to hand within this inner circle, and I remained on friendly terms with all of them until they died.

In retrospect, there is little wonder that conformist historians were jealous of this privileged access to the fountainhead of Hitler's war. They liked to sneer that it was neo-Nazi circles that favoured me; but to my knowledge most of these people I interviewed thought very little of those whom the press called "neo-Nazis." My success, such as it was, was the product of hard work – developing and opening up each of these sources, and remaining in constant consultation with them, as work on my Hitler biography progressed.

Meeting them was perhaps the reason that I angled my perspective on him the way that I did. Not only were most of them quite normal citizens, I found, doing useful jobs now in society; they were well-qualified people who had gone through Staff College or gained postgraduate degrees. I am not referring here to the hangers-on, the Old Guard, men like the small-town apothecary Julius Schaub, whom Hitler had retained about him and given incongruously high rank, rather as men get accustomed to worn-out bits of furniture and are reluctant to let them go.

He had four female secretaries during the period with which I was concerned. Johanna Wolf and Christa Schroeder were the two oldest; Traudl Junge, about whose final years with him the film "The Downfall" (*Der Untergang*) was written; and Gerda Daranowski, generally agreed to have been the best looking of the four, who married one of his air force generals, and died in July 1997. In the Washington archives I found Gerda's family photos, looted by GIs, and sent her copies of them; that was one of the ways I gained their confidence.

Once I had coaxed them out of their shell – and many of them, like Christa Schroeder, were badly bruised by their post-war experiences in Allied hands – they readily spoke with me, and they often used surprisingly positive language about the Chief, as they called him. Christa sometimes referred to him as "A.H.," uttered after a coy pause, as though his name were a religious curse not to be spoken in full; the military officers still unconsciously called him "the Führer" – leader. Winifred Wagner, born Winifred Williams in Hastings, on the coast of southern England, once or twice lapsed more romantically into using the name by which he had announced himself to her during the Years of Struggle, "Wolf."

The men around Hitler were all beardless, and I do not recall any even with moustaches. Probably none would have risked emulating his famous black "toothbrush" anyway; they were clean-shaven, if one overlooks Heinrich Himmler's permanent five o'clock shadow and the dark jowls of Martin Bormann. There were other common features; as the war progressed, Hitler sent the able bodied to the front, and retained the disabled. There was a high proportion

of the aristocracy around him too – von Below, von Puttkamer, von Amsberg, and von Loringhoven, for example (the latter was the only one who – quite disagreeably – declined my request for an interview.)<sup>1</sup>

The women – his personal friends, private secretaries, and dieticians – were all of more bourgeois background. They were elegant and presentable and well-behaved, with the possible exception of Henriette Hoffmann, the daughter of the National Socialist Party's chief photographer. Henriette was a cheeky girl who had flirtatiously caught the young Hitler's eye in the 1920s, married the Hitler Youth leader Baldur von Schirach after that, and became the First Lady of Austria after Schirach's appointment there in 1940. Cast out of Hitler's circle in June 1943 after venturing some incautious remarks about the expulsions of Amsterdam's Jews, she went into decline; she divorced Baldur after he was awarded a twenty-year sentence at Nuremberg, and this completed her exclusion.<sup>2</sup> By the time I met her she was on the brink of becoming a bag-lady, and broken by alcohol; but she was still the custodian of a clutch of useful and intriguing mementoes and memories – Adolf Hitler playing the piano to her as a child, and most competently, was one.

When I last saw her she gave me several original issues of the Party newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*: one dated 1944 had the improbable headline, 284 FLYING FORTRESSES SHOT DOWN (••). The others headlined the funeral of General Erich Ludendorff in December 1937, the very instant at which the Blomberg–Fritsch crisis began, whereby Hitler slipped into absolute power over the armed forces, as readers of *The War Path* will know; the death from gunshot injuries of Counsellor Ernst vom Rath at the Paris embassy – the Jewish assassination which sparked Germany's Night of Broken Glass in 1938; and Hitler's well-known Reichstag speech of January 30, 1939: PROPHETIC WARNING TO THE WORLD'S JEWS. Buried deep in this speech, Hitler warned the world's Jews that if they started a new world war, it would end with their perdition, and not with the destruction of Germany.

The actual reference to Jews made less than one percent of the speech, but it was the editor's puzzling use of the word *prophetic* in

the headline which has bothered me ever since. One can normally use it after an event, but not before. My fear about a Channel ferry sinking can *now* be seen to have been prophetic; I could not have called it that at the time.

Each front-page headline marked a turning point in its way, and they hang on my study wall today.

Henriette also gave me a silver spoon, lifted from the table at Hitler's Berghof. It lives in our kitchen drawer, though I occasionally take it with me to show to history students, from Dulwich to Dublin and Denver. When she was two or three, my fifth daughter Jessica found it and insisted innocently, as children do, on using "the Birdie Spoon," for her cornflakes each morning – the Reich crest, an eagle, was embossed below (••) the initials A.H. on its handle. Publishers, editors, journalists, and other worthy guests who found the Birdie Spoon laid out on the table before them have been known to exclaim uneasily, "You never know where it's been." In and out of our dishwasher, and ten thousand times by now, I could reassure them.

The other Hitler memento that I received came from Christa Schroeder. It had taken me several years of gentle persuasion even to get through the front door of her one-room studio apartment in Munich's Belgrad Strasse. The room was tastefully furnished, if dark, with a heavy velvet curtain hanging on the wall just inside the front door.

By (••) November 1970 when I first interviewed her, she was a jolly, matronly woman with a merry laugh, more of a giggle which would come out without provocation as she told me her favorite A.H. stories – like the time when Heinrich Hoffmann, always a jester, told the Chief an anecdote over tea: "Mein Führer, you and the Reichsführer" – Himmler – "go for a walk on the Obersalzberg. He has his umbrella, but you do not. And yet you don't get wet. Why not?" Hitler pondered, fearing some fresh blasphemy on the Messiah (Dr. Goebbels had had to forbid newspapers to draw comparisons, so unctuously servile have German journalists always been); eventually he gave up. Hoffmann pealed with laughter. "Who said

it was raining, mein Führer!” *Zu dumm* – probably nobody likes to look stupid, and a growl began to form on Hitler’s lips.

Teacake halfway to his mouth, Hoffmann raised a finger, and exclaimed: “That’s not the half of it, mein Führer. The man who told this story is now in Dachau!”

The gusts of laughter died; throats were cleared. Dachau, the Munich suburb where Himmler had erected his first KZ, or concentration camp, was no laughing matter. The guests became closely interested in their teacakes, marveling that Hoffmann, court jester though he was, had ventured into the land of Taboo.

Hitler seized control of the situation: “People telling dumb jokes about the Reichsführer and me is one thing. But tossing them into a KZ – that’s another! It’s got to stop. Instantly.”

Hoffmann held up his hand again, and launched his killer torpedo: “Who said KZ, mein Führer! The man is in Dachau, yes. He lives there.”

Frau Schroeder let out a shriek of girlish laughter as she related this, and she mimicked how Hitler, defeated, slapped his thigh.

He did that again, a characteristic gesture, in the dark summer of 1938, at the height of the Munich crisis. He asked his guests what the German people were making of it all. She put on her solemn face and said, “*Das Volk wird unruhig.*” The public was getting restive. Hitler asked why. “*Das Volk sagt,*” she explained, “*es gibt immer zwei Möglichkeiten* –” [The people say there’s always two possibilities.] At this point everybody else could see that she was gently pulling the Chief’s leg.

“Two possibilities,” she repeated. “You get called to the Colours, or you don’t. If you get conscripted, there’s two possibilities,” – and she ran through the whole gamut of two-possibilities, still keeping a straight face: sent to the front or not; the enemy bullets hit, or miss; you get killed, or just wounded.

“And then?” asked Hitler, as it still had not dawned on him. “*Wiederum zwei Möglichkeiten,*” she said. Those two possibilities again. “You get stuffed into a mass grave, or you get a grave all to yourself. And then there’s again two –” Hitler slapped his thigh and laughed out loud, followed now by the rest. Martin Bormann leaned

over and loudly congratulated her: “*Fräulein Schroeder, wenn Sie den Führer in diese gute Laune nur zweimal im Jahr versetzen können, haben Sie Ihr Gehalt verdient.*” [If you can out the Führer in a good mood like this just twice a year, you’ve earned your salary.]

I went for tea with her most times when I visited Munich, and took my friends to meet her too, the younger the better. I wanted them to tell their grandchildren about Hitler. It was the beginning of my counter-offensive. I took Elke Fröhlich more than once, and Susanne Seidl-Lichthardt, and even Rolf Hochhuth. Christa Schroeder had acted as private secretary to Bormann until 1933 and then transferred to Hitler, staying with him until the very end. She was never filmed, except once I believe for Texas millionaire Billy Price. She would not let me tape our conversations, or even take notes; once I jotted two words on the back of a tram ticket, and she clammed up for the rest of the interview. I had to rush around to a local café, gorged on tea and pastries though I was, and reconstruct the conversation from memory.

After a while I showed her some of what I was writing about the Chief. “I disagree with what you write about the *Judenfrage*,” she said. “A.H. could be very *cruel*, you know.” Being a good interviewer, I waited; I dared not breathe, I knew a major recollection was coming. “I was *with* him on The Night of the Long Knives, you know.” That was June 30, 1934, when he disposed of his dangerous rivals in the Brownshirt army, the *Sturmabteilung*, and quite a few more enemies besides. Eighty-four people in all were purged that night.

Christa Schroeder – Hitler’s private secretary, whom he had commanded to accompany him throughout this violent excursion to Bavaria – recalls sitting alone later that evening in the chancellery, eating her vegetarian meal, when Hitler unexpectedly joined her and exclaimed: ‘So! Now I have taken a bath, and feel clean as a new-born babe again.’<sup>3</sup>

“As clean as a new-born babe again.” She had carried that sentence around with her, walled up in her memory, for forty (••) years,

and now she had somebody she could safely pass it on to. I hurried out to the café, and wrote it down.<sup>4</sup>

[*Story already dictated? Schroeder and Hochhuth*].

She had daydreamed romantically about “her” Adolf, that was quite clear (and she was, incidentally, physically not unlike Winifred Wagner, who shared Hitler’s attentions). She wistfully recalled the day that the Chief had visited her sickbed in hospital, bringing her flowers.

“Oh mein Führer,” she said with a coquettish giggle, “the people outside will think you are visiting your mistress.”

She was known for her waspish tongue. In 1945, others told me, she was heard to say: “Mein Führer, we *have* lost the war – haven’t we?”<sup>5</sup>

She could get away with things no field marshal dared to say to him. She told me of their last dialogues, so improbable that no screenwriter would have risked writing them: Hitler had lamented loudly that there was nobody worthy to succeed him. Instead of perhaps tactfully agreeing that he was indeed unique, and there could never be another like him, she had ventured: “Mein Führer, the people do talk of Heinrich Himmler . . .”

This resulted in a loud snort. “The Reichsführer? The man is completely tone-deaf” – *amusisch* was that word Hitler used.

“In our present circumstances,” rejoined Christa tartly, “that would hardly seem to make much difference.”<sup>6</sup>

We had become very good friends by the time she died. Every session was punctuated with laughter, and I could see why Hitler retained her.

“You must find me a boring old nanny-goat sometimes, Mr Irving,” she once said.

“Not *boring*, Frau Schroeder,” I teased her.

Several years down the road of my inquiries, it turned out that she had written a shorthand note of the last day with Hitler. I also found her original shorthand pads, in the archives of a Pennsylvania university; they had been found in the ruins of the Berghof.

Then she turned up for me letters she had written to a lady friend, Johanna, in Switzerland, during the war; the letters were perhaps of some intimacy, as she eventually provided to me only photocopies from which she had literally cut out many of the paragraphs with scissors, like origami.

Their historical value was hard to exaggerate. Several were typed on Hitler's headed notepaper of *Der Führer*, and on his large-face typewriter. On June 25, 1940 she had written privately,

The Chief plans to speak to the Reichstag shortly. It will probably be his last appeal to Britain. If they don't come around even then, he will proceed without pity. I believe it still hurts him even now to have to tackle the British. It would obviously be far easier for him if they would see reason themselves. If only they knew that the Chief wants nothing more from them than the return of our own former colonies, perhaps they might be more approachable. . .

That was the voice of Hitler that his private staff heard – not the version delivered to us by our wartime government or Britain's later historians. In 1940 the British Empire was never threatened. We had squandered it in a useless war that served only the interest of others. It was not the first, and not the last, time that the British people had been lured into a war by their leaders with a lie; the tragedy was that this one cost us our Empire. [[It was small wonder that, as I turned up more documents in the German and British archives supporting this radical revision of our World War II history, I found myself at loggerheads with the Eton, Oxbridge, and All Souls power-elite which still ruled Britain's affairs.]]

None of this true story is evident from the books written about Christa since the war. The first, *Hitler privat*, was by a French interrogating officer, Anton Zoller; evidently there was bad blood between them – I did not inquire why – because she did not speak well of Zoller.<sup>7</sup>

When a New York magazine critic drew on *Hitler Privat* in 1977 to scoff at my published views on Hitler's role in the Holocaust, I wrote this letter, which is a useful summary:



Zoller's main source was Hitler's private secretary Christa Schroeder, who was forced while in captivity to write a memoir which Zoller then published under his own name, omitting hers. I am well aware of the sentences that your reviewer quotes against me; I remember well my delight at finding them as they at last seemed to provide some basis for Hitler's connivance in the atrocity.

However as Frau Schroeder is a good friend of mine I took the precaution of asking her to confirm the wording, as I tend to distrust all printed texts. With good reason, in this case! Frau Schroeder replied indignantly, "Monsieur Zoller published my writings without my permission, and interpolated extensive passages in them from his own imagination." She showed me her own copy of the book, where she has scored through the pages where this occurred.

While Frau Schroeder did tell me many disturbing features about the Führer, which I disclose in the book, she emphasized: "Never once did he ever refer to, let alone show that he knew about, the extermination of the Jews."<sup>8</sup>

Her own private letters did cause some her misgiving. As I wrote to Sir John Martin, Churchill's private secretary, ten years later, who had the same concerns about my quoting from his private diary and letters:

Adolf Hitler's private secretary Frau Christa Schroeder, who died in June, faced me with exactly the same problem: she had entrusted to me all her private letters, written to a woman friend in 1941 – 1944, and I drew, as you will have found, heavily on these in *Hitler's War*. She was rather horrified upon seeing the draft chapters, as the letters were written in more glowing terms than seemed appropriate in 1974; but they were certainly part of the total truth about That Man as he was perceived in the 1940s by his staff.

The compromise which we reached, as you can see, is that throughout the book where these documents were quoted, she was referred to anonymously, as a "private secretary." This might be the solution in the present case too – that, either *partout* or wherever necessary, J. M. becomes just anonymously "a private secretary", and that any corresponding source reference becomes, e.g., "From a note by a private secretary,

May 13.”<sup>9</sup>

Five years after her death, Christa’s ghostwritten memoirs were published in an edition by Anton Joachimsthaler; he felt able to write things like: ... QUOTE.<sup>10</sup>

Suffice it to say that from the moment we first talked in 1968 (••) until the very end of her life we were on the best of terms. One day in 1980 when I spoke in the Hofbräuhaus, a Munich beerhall, I saw her in the audience. I went over for tea with her the next day. “She was full of compliments about last night’s speech, said it was the first time she had heard me speak, and added: ‘*Sie sind ein zweiter Hitler!*’” – meaning as an orator, no doubt. [You’re a second Hitler]

I observed in my diary: “I could have said that that was the same as a London cabbie told me fourteen months ago, when I *made* him take me a distance he considered too short.”<sup>11</sup>

After a few more years of my patient visiting, Christa finally lifted aside the velvet curtain by her front door – it was her private picture gallery; I would hesitate to call it a shrine. After her death in 1983, a collector in Seattle bought the collection from her ghost-writer – but I already had the best item.

It came about like this. Hitler had saved her life a week before he took his own, by ordering his two older secretaries, Johanna Wolf and her, out of Berlin on April 22, 1945, on one of the last planes before the Red Army seized the last airfields. “Go up to the Berghof,” he had commanded, “and destroy all my private papers.” She knew that he was really sending her out to safety; she pleaded to stay with the two younger girls, who had elected not to abandon him. “Braver than my generals,” he said of them.

“In his desk on the Obersalzberg,” she told me, “I found a stack of postcards on which he had sketched things, and I *took* them,” – she emphasized the verb as though she had still not shaken off a kind of schoolgirl guilt at her own disobedience.

Between the plates of cakes and cups of tea, that little stack of cards was now waiting for me to look at them: buildings, bridges, a

Charlie Chaplin figure, a Wandering Jew, furniture, classical Greek columns, and himself – drawn in a few deft lines, in profile, unmistakable as the young A.H., before it all began. On the back he had sketched a girl's head, perhaps his niece Geli Raubal who had shot herself to death in his Munich apartment, using his pistol, in 1931.

"I want you to have one," said Christa, patting my hand.

I courteously demurred, though not so strongly that she would put them away; and I protested that I could not, even as I sifted through the little stack again and halted, just perceptibly, at the self-portrait.

"Shall I sign it for you," she asked, laying it to one side, "to attest to who was the artist?"

"Please don't," I reply, carefully picking it up again by its edges like a camera negative. "No need. I shall never sell it. You know who drew it, and so do I. That's good enough for me."

I later heard that she was very ill, and I sent her a sum of money toward her medical expenses – through her friend, the young lady who had married Otto Strasser. I sent her the German edition of the Hitler biography [••which?] "*Lieber David Irving*," she replied from Ward 4, Room 413 of the hospital in which she died,

Today I received to my great joy the book. I find it better than everything else: the book, the print, the typography, etc. I laughed out loud about the *Wappel* of Reichs-Heini [Himmler]. That is your black humour? How can you get away with things like that? Isn't it a criminal offence to use things like that? I was very amused anyway. My very best thanks.

I am well housed here with a view from the balcony like it was from the Obersalzberg to the Untersberg. I am well looked after; unfortunately I am losing my appetite, which is also in consequence of the miserable meals they serve. But otherwise I am okay, except for the nasty *Föhn* [wind].

I do hope that we shall be able to have tea together again one day! I hope that you and your family are well! I

I greet you very warmly, your Christa Schroeder.<sup>12</sup>

I never saw her again, and the Hitler self-portrait vanished when all my papers were seized in 2002.<sup>13</sup>

Traudl Junge – actually Gertraud, another of the four secretaries – was twelve years younger than Schroeder.<sup>14</sup> Latterly she became more famous through interviews in English for the *World at War*, a television series, and then *Der Untergang* (The Downfall), Hitler's last days as seen through her eyes. She was every inch as feminine and good-looking as this film portrays her, and she was one of the last of his "family" to die, in 2002.

British writer Gitta Sereny also found her, years later, to be "slim, elegant, white-haired but smooth-skinned and quite beautiful."<sup>15</sup> Unlike Christa, Traudl had committed everything she remembered to paper two or three years after the war. She let me borrow the whole typescript and bring it back to London; I made two copies of this very proximate and affectionate portrait of the Chief, and I donated one to the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, which is where other less industrious researchers<sup>16</sup> have since found it.

There is a noticeable difference in the robust views that Frau Junge expressed in this, and the politically unexceptionable opinions she was heard to utter in later public appearances.

I know which I found the more convincing.

Born Gertraud Humps, she had married Hitler's dashing young SS valet Hans Junge in April 1943. He was sent, like Gerhard Engel and the other able-bodied headquarters staff, to the front as the war intensified, and killed by a strafing Spitfire in Normandy in June 1944. "*Ach mein Kind*," said Hitler, breaking the news to her, after it was confirmed, "I am so sorry; your husband had a fine character."

She recounted the whole episode to me as though it were yesterday; she had not remarried. Bormann's letters confirm that this episode upset Hitler. Hitler, I concluded, was one of those leaders who regarded humanity as a whole quite dispassionately, in fact like a colony of ants, as Walther Hewel remarked at the time of Stalingrad; but the deaths of individuals who were known to him affected him closely.

It was Traudl who had typed the last testaments. He had sent for her and asked: "How are you my child? Have you had some rest? I want to, eh, dictate something." As she began typing, she realized it was his last will and testament. He instructed her to "make three copies and then come in". She recalls: "I wrote as fast as I could. My fingers worked mechanically and I was surprised that I hardly made any typing mistakes." Later that night Bormann came in and told her to make four more copies for his own use.

Many of Hitler's people lived in Bavaria, in or around Munich. I called on Herta Schneider, Eva Braun's closest friend since school, two or three times – once with Nerin Gun, and once by appointment with an American film team: she was neurotic, she had not much longer to live, and it took all day, while her daughter clucked nervously around, to persuade her to open Eva's personal album of photographs, and show us the ring that Eva had had flown out of Berlin to her on the last plane.<sup>17</sup> It was difficult to know what key to use to unlock the door but I finally persuaded her to allow a filmed interview. She said, "You're the only man I have ever done that with, and ever would." I said, "That's what Eva probably said to Adolf." It just [flopped] out, and I caught my breath, but there were chuckles all round. Diary: "Her daughter was silently furious, I think."<sup>18</sup>

Marion Schönmann, one of Eva's best friends, spoke to me but only through Christa Schroeder, telling of how Eva had tricked Hitler into inviting her to move into the Berghof by feigning a suicide attempt in 1935 and leaving a diary lying around, speaking of the need to end it all, just where Hitler could not fail to notice it; while Eva lay prostrate upstairs, her face powdered a deathly hue of white, the other females hid behind doors cackling as Adolf hurried in, aghast that another Geli-type scandal was about to engulf him; so Christa and Marion depicted the episode to me, and the diary is now in the National Archives in Washington, where many an historian has solemnly perused it and declared it genuine as, in a way, it is.

On Lake Constance, I found Walter Frentz, Hitler's staff cameraman.<sup>19</sup> He too was still powered by a barely concealed admiration

for the Chief. I must have spent twenty years altogether working on this fine cameraman and gently prising out his memories, and my approach was eventually rewarded.

Back in about 1970 (••) he told me that in 1942 after the death of Fritz Todt in a plane crash, he had shown a shattered Hitler a colour photograph that he had just taken of the munitions minister. The Agfa colour portrait was startlingly good. Hitler commissioned him to take photographs in this new colour film of everybody of importance, and of everything that made his Reich what it was, from peasants working in the corn fields of the Ukraine, to the fortifications along the channel coast, and the slave labourers working in the underground missile and engine factory at Nordhausen in the Harz. Revealing this astonishing secret to me, Frentz added that he had accumulated many thousands of colour transparencies during Hitler's twelve years in power. I asked the obvious question. He threw a quizzical look at his wife, a good-looking (••) and vivacious commercial artist, as if seeking her final permission. "I've got them all here," he said.

Over the next two decades Frentz made many of those extraordinary pictures available to me, but he never showed me all, nor did I guess the vast extent of this trove; I think he himself had long forgotten what photographs he had taken. He let me borrow original transparencies, both as an act of friendship, and because he believed in what I was doing.

I wanted to use them in the German edition of *Hitler's War* in 1975; my publisher Ullstein would not go along with that and it was 1991 before our own UK edition first used them. I was more than a little angered to see that when Ullstein published Joachim Fest's rival Hitler biography in 1973, just before mine, it was for his book that they used the Frentz photographs that I had discovered (in the *Stern* serialization). It had just never occurred to me to obtain guarantees from them against that.

Gitta Sereny used blunt-instrument tactics with Frentz. In 1986 she ruffled him by asking outright – "Did you *like* Hitler?" which was an obvious clue as to where she was going. She left empty-handed, and unaware of the photo archive. "What was strangely

absent,” she wrote, in her book on Speer, “was almost any photographic evidence of his years around Hitler. He claimed most of it was destroyed or lost after the war.” Later, she added with evident distaste, she saw some of his photographs reproduced “in a radical-right book.”<sup>20</sup> She could not bring herself to name it or the author.

The most unexpected revelation from Frentz was that he had witnessed the Nazi atrocities in the occupied Soviet Union, at Himmler’s side. He cracked open a bottle of his finest white wine one night, and we chatted until two a.m.<sup>21</sup> “You know Mr Irving,” he began, “Himmler once said to me: ‘Herr Frentz, it gets a bit boring here at headquarters. You want to come on a little excursion with me?’”

Off they went for three days, in a little column of six-wheel motorcars, driving around the Eastern Front and visiting police battalions. One evening, Himmler had said to him: “Herr Frentz, tomorrow morning we’re going to be having a mass shooting. D’ya want to come along? (I have here to interpolate that an Englishman’s mentality is perhaps different from the German. I would have said: ‘Herr Himmler, tomorrow morning is a bit awkward for me – any other day would be fine, but not tomorrow.’)” Frentz however said: “I’d love to come along” – and he described now what he witnessed the next morning outside Minsk, capital of White Russia, behind the Eastern Front.

It was seven in the morning, and this was the scene: a big field; SS officers standing at one end in their elegant uniforms; deep pits at the other, freshly excavated. Truckloads of civilians were being driven up; they were being lined up edge of the pit, and machine-gunned.

Himmler motioned to him to take photographs. Frentz reluctantly did so – in both colour and black and white, he told me. Eventually one of the gunners came running across to him – Frentz was wearing his airforce lieutenant’s uniform – wide-eyed and staring, and saying “I can’t do this anymore, can’t you get me posted to somewhere else?” He motioned the man to Himmler, standing not far off.

At this point in Frentz's narrative his wife interrupted: "Walter – I've never heard this story from you before!"

Walter put down his wine glass, visibly embarrassed: "I thought I told you." She went to the heart of the matter, in the way that wives do: "Walter, these people being shot . . . were there women and children, too?"

"I can't really remember."

Two or three years later he sent me a page from his album with photos from the trip, but these photos were missing. He also kept a pocket diary which fixed the date as August 17, 1941. Now that I had prised this uncomfortable memory out of him, he honestly repeated the description on camera for one or two television programmes, and I included it in the new edition of *Hitler's War*, published in 1991:

Hitler's surviving adjutants, secretaries, and staff stenographers have all testified that never once was any extermination of either the Russian or European Jews mentioned even confidentially at Hitler's Headquarters. Colonel Rudolf Schmundt appears to have suspected what was going on; for when Hitler's movie cameraman Walter Frentz accompanied Himmler to Minsk on an outing with stage designer Benno von Arent, he found himself the horrified witness of a mass open-air execution; Schmundt advised him to destroy the one color photograph he took, and not to poke his nose into matters that did not concern him.<sup>22</sup>

We remained friends until the end of his life. His wife sickened, and when I heard of these medical expenses I volunteered to pay him twice the fee we had agreed for the photos. When he himself went into a nursing home his son Hanns-Peter took over the whole carefully preserved collection (Walter had kept everything in light-tight metal boxes, in a controlled environment). Some of the images, poorly scanned, were published in volumes issued by Arndt Verlag in Kiel; they made little attempt to correct the dye-color balance, or the green and magenta casts that affect old transparencies over the years. Many negatives were stolen in a curious and well-targeted burglary of Hanns-Peter's premises in Berlin. His



politics were the very opposite of his father's and it is best to draw an opaque veil over the rest of this story.

My heart bled for Walter, he had been such a craftsman. After he died in 2004, the Deutscher Kunstverlag published three hundred of the pictures in a coffee-table art book in October 2006, justifying their product in a fashionable German fin-de-siècle jargon which Walter, had he lived, would never have permitted: "*Sie vermitteln eindrucksvoll die erschreckend banale Atmosphäre in Hitlers Hauptquartier. Namhafte Historiker, Filmwissenschaftler und Fotohistoriker betrachten kritisch das Werk eines unbekannten Propagandisten des Dritten Reiches und ordnen sein Schaffen in den Kontext eines verbrecherischen Regimes ein.*" [They convey impressively the horrifically banal atmosphere in Hitler's headquarters. Eminent historians, film experts, and photo historians critically examine the work of an unknown propagandist of the Third Reich and qualify [ordnen] his handiwork in the context of a criminal regime.]"<sup>23</sup>

No doubt this was Hanns-Peter's work. I was so glad the Lord gave me only daughters.

Three days after visiting Frenzt in 1989 (••), I went to see Leni Riefenstahl. It was June 15, 1989. Like the later Frau Junge, she also effortlessly practiced a two-tier approach to Hitler's memory, depending on whom she was with. I make no criticism of this – I am well versed now in Germany's unique criminal law on history. We visited her in her hillside villa at Pöcking, south of Munich, where she lived with Horst ("Horstie") Kettner, her well-built and youthful protector.

I had Sally Cox with me, whom I had just accompanied up to the Obersalzberg for only my second "pilgrimage" – to quote the *Daily Mail's* unhelpful reference to the first, published thirty years earlier. Much had been quietly eradicated, but if you knew where to look into the hillside scrub you could find the basement windows of Hitler's ruined Berghof, and the shells of Göring's and other villas dotted around the wasted mountain slope. This time I took in the Eagle's Nest [*Adlerhorst*] as well, on the summit of the Kehlstein, the eyrie built for the Chief by his then estate manager Mar-

tin Bormann in 1937. We were not alone, as half a million tourists now visit the site every year.

Almost as soon as we stepped into her airy open-plan drawing room, Leni Riefenstahl sensed that she could switch off the public voice and slip into a higher gear, while Horstie listened in admiringly. Her eyes gleamed as she recalled those early years of Hitler's empire. She needed no coaxing to offer us a private showing of her 1934 epic, *Triumph of the Will* (at that time, she believed its 1933 predecessor, *Victory of Faith*, was lost for ever).

"Of course," she said disarmingly, momentarily slipping into safety-gear, "I made it at my own expense and not in any way for the Nazi Party." I had found in the East German (communist) archives the year before (•• ?) the Propaganda Ministry files documenting the substantial subsidy that Dr Goebbels had granted for the film, but I was too well-bred to say anything that might disturb the mood. Besides, the film itself was proof: as the loudspeaker crackled the Horst Wessel Anthem, the screen filled with the opening title sequence, hewn from blocks of MGM-style granite: IM AUFTRAG DES FÜHRERS, the blocks of giant stone thundered: "At the Command of the Führer."

Like a guide on a tourist bus, she had already launched into her running commentary, but it was vivid and excitable, and for a documentary film buff like myself it had a unique interest. "No, that opening sequence of the Junkers 52 flying over the rooftops of Nuremberg –" she said. ("– bringing The Messiah down from the Heavens –" I chimed in, irreverently.) "That was *not* my idea."

Dreary, ill-recorded music accompanied one of the most famous documentary opening shots ever made. She seemed curiously eager to disown it.

"My opening sequence is the shot that follows, the swastika banner fluttering outside the attic window."

She was like every professional creative artist or author: somewhere, some busybody had overruled her all those years ago, and fifty-five years later it still rankled.

The scene changed and the cheers of thousands who have doubtless long passed on and perhaps even later regretted their en-

thusiasm, filled her basement room. We were riding in Hitler's open six-wheeled Mercedes, right behind him, looking over his shoulder at the multitudes as he gave his funny little stiff-armed salute.

In those days, it occurred to me, world leaders could safely ride around in open cars. "For the next ten minutes," Leni was saying, "there is no commentary – just cheering." That was her idea too.

Another thought occurred to me. I had seen the other camera angles of that procession, and there was no woman in Hitler's car.

"Ach, nein," she laughed. "*Das hat der Frentz gemacht.*" [It was Frentz who filmed that.]

"Walter Frentz?" I exclaimed. "He was the cameraman in the car? He worked with you on *Triumph of the Will*? We were with him three days ago, and he never mentioned that."

"Mr Irving," said Leni Riefenstahl, with the voice of somebody explaining the painfully obvious: "I spent two years (••) in jail for making *Triumph*. People don't usually volunteer that they worked on that."

Among the others I repeatedly visited from 1967 onward was Hitler's Luftwaffe adjutant, thanks to introductions from Günsche and Field Marshal Milch as well. Exempted from frontline service because of a chronic stomach problem, Nicolaus von Below remained his most trusted aide from 1937 to the very last hours in the bunker; he performed as a witness at the wedding with Eva on April 29, 1945, and Hitler entrusted him with his personal will and political testament to carry out of the ruins of Berlin, sewn into the lining of his uniform, and farewell letters to Keitel and Grand Admiral Dönitz too.<sup>24</sup>

A tall, thin, frail-looking, fair-haired colonel, von Below warmed to my intention of writing about Hitler as he really was. He was one of the most indignant at Albert Speer's Judas Iscariot (••) betrayal of the Chief. He produced for me the typescript of his unpublished memoirs – perhaps one should say *necessarily* unpublished, because like Christa's letters they did not fit into the Speer mould at all. Below had typed these three hundred pages in the first years after the war, and I considered them to be of high evidentiary value. He left me alone all afternoon transcribe whatever passages I needed.

Of particular value was his description of the infamous 1938 Night of Broken Glass – he was in the Führer’s Munich residence that night, and was the first to receive word of the conflagrations and outrages in Munich.<sup>25</sup> “He ordered a call put through to the police chief von Eberstein immediate and ordered him to put an end to this madness, as he put it. . . . When further similar reports came from Berlin meantime he issued orders to Himmler and Goebbels too to put a stop to the destruction of the Jewish stores and synagogues.”

He described Hitler’s fury at Dr Goebbels, and his orders for the outrages to stop. He repeated this eyewitness account in later taped interviews, which Jutta transcribed (my original tapes were unfortunately seized in 2002 and destroyed).

DAVID IRVING: You were with Hitler in his home when the news of the Reichskristallnacht arrived. Can you depict that? Who else was there?

COLONEL VON BELOW: I remember only [Julius] Schaub, and a servant and a doctor certainly, and a personal adjutant, a military adjutant, an SS orderly, a doctor, a secretary . . . . The first thing that came to us was a phone call from the Four Seasons Hotel . . . on this day we were billeted in rooms that were quite high up. The staff phoned us, to say we ought to come right over and pack our bags, as in a neighboring building the synagogue was on fire and the sparks were flying right over the building. It was just a matter of security. [Dr Karl] Brandt always lived in that hotel too. He said, “Ought we to drive over or not?” Somebody said then, “Well one of us ought at least to go and take a look.” Whether anybody did drive over, I don’t know now . . . . Shortly after that it became known that the synagogue had not caught fire by itself, but had been set on fire and that there was a demonstration going on. Thereupon Schaub immediately passed that on to Hitler. Thereupon the Police President of Munich, [Baron Friedrich] von Eberstein, was immediately sent for. Herr von Eberstein then appeared soon after at the Führer’s residence, he was an SS *Obergruppenführer*. Hitler now interrogated him. Then there was a conversation between Hitler and Goebbels by phone about the situation.

IRVING: What was Hitler’s reaction to the first news reports?

BELOW: Well: “What’s going on, please find out, I have to know what

the game is.” It was my impression that we all, and even Hitler himself, were totally in the dark [*Muspott*], nobody knew anything about anything. I can only say, from my many years with Hitler and on his staff, if that had been organised by Hitler and with Hitler’s knowledge – a charade on that scale would have been impossible! I wouldn’t put it past Goebbels, absolutely not. Then Hitler became angry and raised his voice quite loudly to Eberstein and said, “I demand that order is restored at once!” That was however limited just to Munich. I overheard that, because the conversation took place as I was on the way out . . . I spoke once more with Eberstein about this business in Nuremberg prison in 1948, and I asked him, “Did you know anything about it before you came to Hitler’s?” He was every bit as surprised by the whole events when he came to Hitler, and he was horrified at the development in his own patch, Munich.

IRVING: When Hitler then learned that it had been done in conjunction with Goebbels, did he condone the thing?

BELOW: . . . I know that Göring was in a rage because this night had cost him so much hard currency. Quite apart from the fact that Göring had a totally different attitude toward the Jews than the Party gentry like Goebbels, Himmler, etc. . . The most radical of all the Nazi leaders was, from the very outset, Goebbels . . . Hitler was in some way a sucker for this whole kind of act [*Masche*], there’s no doubt about that.<sup>26</sup>

This tallied closely with what other members of Hitler’s staff saw that night, and with the teleprinter messages found in Nazi files, and indeed with what Himmler – who had gone on leave a few hours later – wrote a few days after the Goebbels outrages. This new version, which was there for all of them to see too, clearly annoyed all the conformist historians, who had willingly placed Hitler at the center of the night’s events.

Hitler’s culpability lay in his failure to discipline Goebbels in any way. Of course it did not help that Dr Goebbels himself, the real culprit of that night, carefully wrote a day or two later in his retrospective diary, which I was the first to use, that “the Führer thoroughly endorses my actions” (••). Hitler had not. I was the first to publish these entries, which I extracted from the Moscow archives twenty-five years after my meetings with Von Below.

He withheld no secrets from me. When I confided to him the secret of Field Marshal Milch's parentage [*not yet dealt with in this book*] he gasped and remarked how extraordinary that was, as the field marshal too was now living with his own niece. He did not enlarge on the verb he used, but his meaning was quite plain. His memoirs file was fascinating, and tantalizing, but scrappy. I urged Von Below to complete them now, because over twenty years had already passed since the war. He tapped his head: "I have it all up here." I smiled gently and said, "Herr von Below, you think you have it all up there, but fifty percent of your memories, perhaps even more, the fine detail that matters, has already gone."

"When I retire," he rejoined (he was director of a propane company at Bochum in Westphalia).

Maria von Below remains most pleasantly in my memory. A tall, healthy, maternal lady of noble bearing and generous manner, she fussed around her husband while we talked, her eyes brimming with happiness that at last she could talk openly with a historian about the greatness of their Chief, and the upsurge of national pride, and prosperity that his election had brought to Germany. It was as though she had been bursting to say all these things for years, but had been too frightened to say in the climate of hatred which followed the war.

Like Speer, Bormann's widow and Walter Frentz, the von Belows had difficulties with their own children, who were brought up and re-educated in the climate of hatred, encouraged and engendered by the Allied-licensed German press. All their sons became active left-wingers. After their parents' deaths, the sons all but disowned their parents. Below's son attacked me. He published his father's memoirs, now heavily reworked and ghostwritten, in 1980, three years before his father's death. He has his father write in the first endnote in the book:

It is inexplicable why the British historian David Irving should assert in the Foreword to his book *Hitler and his Generals* (1975) that my diaries are "probably in Moscow". Another statement by Irving astonishes me: I am supposed to have put at his disposal "unpublished contempo-

aneous manuscripts and letters” and “subsequently took the trouble – together with others – to read through many pages of the text based upon them.” I do remember several visits by Irving, when I answered some questions; but the rest is untrue.<sup>27</sup>

What is inexplicable, or at least puzzling, is why the book makes this charge, which the publishers made no attempt to verify. Among the wartime documents which the colonel gave me, besides his own typescript memoirs, there was for example a postcard he wrote to his uncle in December 1939, which established Hitler’s authorship of the victorious French campaign in 1940. The colonel corrected many of the typescript pages of *Hitler’s War* in his blue-ink handwriting and I donated these pages and his covering letters and commentary to the German archives; with the exception of a few like Ian Kershaw, current generations of indolent writers do not bother to look. The episode says more about the underlying climate in Germany since the 1980s than about Colonel von Below.

“Colonel,” I once asked him, “Don’t you think Hitler made a mistake in expelling the Jews, because if he had not done so then he would have got the atomic bomb first?”

It was 1982; German television had been obliged to show the Hollywood-schlock mini-series *Holocaust* twice running, and feelings were running high.

“You’re right,” said the colonel, an idea occurring to him.

“Not only that: we would have kept all the best film producers too. With our producers we could have made films about the American liquidation of the Indians – and with our atomic bomb we could have forced all the American cinemas to show them!”

I don’t think I saw him again after that.

Most of Hitler’s staff refused to meet other writers, like Gitta Sereny for example, as they could see where she was heading with her questions. Christa Schroeder told me this on the phone one day in 1977 (but even she wrote a postcard to Sereny (•• ... QUOTE.) Thus Sereny wrote in her book on Speer, “Below, writing in 1980, explicitly refutes claims by the British writer David Irving that Be-

low had supported his thesis that Hitler was neither responsible for nor until 1943 even aware of the genocide of the Jews.”<sup>28</sup>

I did perform one other service to history. On December 3, 1985 a Chicago collector, Stanley Hubbard, President of Hubbard Broadcasting, Inc., showed me photographs taken by Von Below during his service with Hitler. A friend, he said, had found the colonel's Agfa negative album, containing 2,200 photographs on 35-millimeter film among the Berghof ruins. They included photographs of Maria suckling her infant son with Hitler at her side, and a series of photographs actually showed the Führer's famous secret August 22, 1939 meeting on the Obersalzberg (“Now I have Poland where I want her”). Hitler had ordered all his admirals and generals, including Bock, Manstein, Keitel, Brauchitsch, Milch, Göring, to attend in plain clothes, as I wrote in *Hitler's War*:

When he appeared in the Great Hall at noon on August 22 Hitler found about fifty officers arrayed in four or five rows of chairs – army-group and army commanders, their chiefs of staff and their navy and air force equivalents. Prominently to the fore was Field Marshal Hermann Göring, who had interpreted the words “plain clothes” less literally than the others. He was wearing a sleeveless green leather jerkin with thick yellow buttons over a white silk blouse, while his ample lower extremities were sheathed in grey knickerbockers and long grey stockings. A gold dagger dangled nonchalantly from an exotic sword belt.<sup>29</sup>

At my suggestion, Hubbard gave the negative collection to the Imperial War Museum in London, after he heard that I had donated microfilm of my entire Hitler Document Book to the museum's archives. It was just as well, because von Below's son now allows no access to his father's other albums.

I often called on the naval adjutant Karl-Jesco von Puttkamer (“Puma”) at his villa just outside Munich. [•• *that is the correct spelling, not Jesko*]. Most of these interviews I again tape-recorded. The gangling, tall, fair-haired rear-admiral had been Hitler's naval adjutant from 1934, and like Colonel von Below he stayed to the end.



It was not hard to see that he still warmly admired his former chief. "Suppose your doorbell rang," I asked him once, "and you found a rather contrite Adolf Hitler standing outside now. Would you turn him in – or offer him shelter for a few weeks?" Puttkamer did not hesitate. "Shelter," he said.

He was a cigar smoker, so life at Hitler's headquarters cannot have been easy. He had particularly intense memories of those years. He had the task of putting court-martial decisions to Hitler for signature as Supreme Commander, stacked with other papers on his breakfast tray outside his door for the valet Linge to carry in. One decision, he told me, he spared Hitler, as the honor of the German navy was involved. A submarine commander, at the grimdest hour of Britain's anti-submarine war, had taken his command out to sea, then lain doggo on the ocean seabed for a time before returning to Germany. The facts were plain. It was cowardice in face of the enemy.

"I visited him in the guard room," said Puttkamer, "and placed a loaded pistol in front of him." He chewed on his cigar, took it out, and looked reflectively at the lighted end. "I told him that he was an officer, and he knew what he had to do."

I was unable to reveal to the admiral – because it was still top secret in the 1960s – that we British had been deciphering the U-boat radio signals giving their daily positions, as required by Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, their commander. He probably would not have believed it anyway. In Washington, reading the naval staff's war diaries, I found that in September 1941 the German Navy had begun to suspect the Enigma secret, and planned to mount a dummy operation to see if the British reacted to it; at the last moment they dropped this deadly plan, as they considered their codes unbreakable – there had to be some other reason for the British successes.<sup>30</sup> They came as close to reversing the odds as that.

Puttkamer knew so much about Hitler and his war, but published only a thin and informative monograph, *Die unheimliche See* – The Eerie Sea – the title referring to Hitler's instinctive dislike of maritime adventures.

He was standing tactfully in the background when Grand Ad-

miral Erich Raeder, the navy's commander-in-chief, visited Hitler on June 20, 1940 and asserted as a foregone conclusion that they would of course now take over the French fleet – which was a formidable force, divided between two or three naval bases in France and the French Empire and included several magnificent battle-ships. This was precisely what Churchill feared, and why he ordered the remaining French fleet attacked in July.

Hitler wanted none of it; he intended to offer a soft peace to France. “Herr Grossadmiral,” he rasped in Puma’s hearing, “You have not defeated the French navy. Under the Armistice, it will remain in French hands, and we will merely supervise its disarmament for the interim.”<sup>31</sup> And that was how the final Armistice document read: the French fleet would remain ‘*unter deutscher Kontrolle*’ – under German supervision. Historically, Mr Churchill mistranslated that as ‘under German control’ and ordered the destruction of the French fleet, with the loss of two thousand young French lives or more.

Puttkamer was also there when Admiral Raeder reported importantly at the Berghof in May 1941 that the battleship *Bismarck* had at last sallied forth on her first major Atlantic raid. Hitler was uneasy, and asked the admiral whether *Bismarck* could not, even at this late stage, be recalled. Raeder was shocked, and referred to the effect on navy morale. Despite Hitler’s misgivings, the operation went ahead; it ended with the dramatic sea battle with the British Home Fleet commanded by Admiral Sir John Tovey, and the loss of Germany’s mightiest battleship at that time.

A few doors away from Puttkamer in their leafy Munich suburb, lived Anneliese Schmundt, and Puma took me round there one evening – once again, I was the Englishman who wrote about Dresden. She was the elegant (••) widow of Hitler’s treasured chief Wehrmacht adjutant, killed by the July 20, 1944 traitors’ bomb.

He promoted the stricken chief adjutant, a major general at the time of the blast, to three-star rank, Generaloberst, on his death-bed to ensure a better widow’s pension. (This was typical Hitler: he had also guiltily ordered proper pensions paid to all the widows of

those executed for the plot, to Himmler's evident surprise).<sup>32</sup>

Schmundt died a slow death on October 1. Richard Schulze, Hitler's SS adjutant, with whom I often stayed in Düsseldorf, found him that day sitting, visibly dejected, on the edge of his bed in black trousers, collarless shirt, and braces. It was Schulze's thirtieth birthday. Hitler handed him the obligatory Glashütte gold watch. "I don't suppose I'll be presenting any more of these!" he said – though whether he regarded the war as lost, or it was just that stocks of these much-prized timepieces were running low, Schulze often puzzled over afterwards.

Anneliese pulled out her diary and read out the entries. She had visited Hitler a few days later. "With Puttkamer this afternoon in the Wolf's Lair. Führer bedridden [*he had jaundice*]. Said he had lost his finest man."

"Schmundt," I volunteered, chivalry getting the better of my instincts as an historian, "was considered one of the brainiest of Hitler's staff,"

"Oh, no," she corrected me with a sad smile, "nobody would have called Rudi bright. He was very plain and straightforward."

Controlling the tears in her eyes she indicated the framed black-and-white portrait of her husband, the general with jug-handle ears, on the mantelpiece, and handed me her diary to take away.

I riffled through it that evening in my hotel room. It fixed precisely the date in 1940 when Hitler sent Rudi with Fritz Todt, his chief engineer, the genius behind the autobahns, to reconnoiter a site in faraway East Prussia for the Wolf's Lair, his headquarters for the coming attack on the Soviet Union.

It was August 27, 1940 – one more powerful proof that he had never seriously intended to invade Britain (a point he later explicitly confirmed when pressed by the chief of naval operations).<sup>33</sup>

One June afternoon in 1971 I found myself chatting with Himmler's brother Gebhard. He lived in Munich's Bernhard-Borst Strasse. He was retired on a civil service pension. Around his modest sitting room hung carefully executed water colour landscapes – he had made a living as boy selling them to the Munich galleries. He puffed

away at his pipe, bald, round-faced and quiet spoken, and the likeness to Nicky struck me; as I asked him about his wayward brother Heinrich, I had the odd sensation that I was interviewing Nicky about myself. They had only rarely seen him during the war, once with Martin Bormann at Heini's birthday, October 7, the wife recalled. They both spoke with overt family affection for Heini. He had researched their ancestry at Reich expense, and gave them a copy of the family tree. "It was destroyed," said Gebhard wistfully, adding in an almost apologetic afterthought, "in an air raid. If you could get us a copy of something similar . . ."

Without seeming to press too hard, I raised the issue of Hitler's role in the destruction of the Jews (the word Holocaust had in 1971 yet to enter the *lingua franca*). In my note I recorded: "Both said they believed the initiative for the order had come from Hitler, and that Heinrich had carried it out faithfully to the end. They could not believe that Heinrich had done this on his own initiative." While the evidentiary value of their belief is limited – they had never discussed it with Heinrich – the note shows which way my own suspicions were drifting in 1971. Gebhard, I seem to recall, even said, "Heini was too much of a coward for that."

Heinrich had once remarked to him, as he did in a letter to his mistress in January 1943, that as Reichsführer SS and chief of police he had to take upon himself all the darker aspects of human life, but he hoped he had done so conscientiously. "Conscientious," the word occurred several times in Gebhard's remarks about his brother – conscientious and slaving away at his work. Gebhard had forwarded several pleas on behalf of friends languishing in the camps, and he believed that Heini had looked closely at each one.

His brother had known how to keep secrets. Living in Dresden, Gebhard had noticed the munitions trains rolling eastwards early in 1941, but Hitler's attack on Russia that June had still come as a surprise. (The diary kept by Heinrich Himmler's wife shows that he left her equally in the dark).

Gebhard had drawn only [penalties] for being the Reichsführer's brother. The Americans interned him and seized his property. For a while, they billeted his wife with General Walter Warlimont's

wife at Tegernsee; Warlimont was at Nuremberg, helping the Nuremberg prosecutors stitch together their case against his superiors, Keitel and Jodl. Anxious to preserve their own reputation, Frau Warlimont soon turned this Himmler wife out; when the Americans in turn evicted her, Frau Warlimont found every door in Tegernsee closed against her, as Gebhard's wife related with a sniff and an air of long-enjoyed satisfaction.

For her husband, I was again the Englishman who had written about Dresden. For years after, I received a watercolour signed Gebhard Himmler, to go on the Christmas shelf where previously had gone those painted by my father and the unfortunate H. W. Wicks.

- 1 Baron Bernd Freytag von Loringhoven lived until February 2007. He was born January 24, 1914 in Arensburg in what is today Estonia.
- 2 I describe the episode in *Hitler's War* (Millennium Edition, London 2002), page 595.
- 3 *Hitler's War* (2001 edition), page 31.
- 4 It has been often quoted since. On Apr 30, 1995 – the fiftieth anniversary of Hitler's suicide, I found that *The New Yorker* "has published a nice item by [Ron] Rosenbaum about Hitler, with a pleasing reference to what I told him about Christa Schroeder and the Night of the Long Knives. Every little helps" (Diary).
- 5 *Ibid.*, page 772.
- 6 See *ibid.*, page 798.
- 7 Anton Zoller, *Hitler Privat* (Düsseldorf, 1949).
- 8 Letter to *The New Leader*, New York, May 2, 1977.
- 9 Letter to Sir John Martin, Dec 25, 1984.
- 10 Anton Joachimsthaler (ed.), *Er war mein Chef. Aus dem Nachlaß der Sekretärin von Adolf Hitler* (Langen-Müller Verlag, Munich, 1989). Joachimsthaler, born 1930, was a railway official who turned historian late in life.
- 11 Diary, May 19–20, 1980. "She also remarked that she had noticed that I close my left eye when reading (in the bad light) from documents, and I should either have glasses – or a large-script typewriter!"
- 12 Christa Schroeder to the author, Apr 14, received Apr 21, 1984 (Lipstadt trial, Plaintiff's Discovery 982); she died July 10, 1984 (obituary, *ibid.*, 1011).

- 13 In 2004 my lawyers learned that Deborah Lipstadt's expert assessor Tobias Jersak had been caught filching items from my impounded archives in southern England, which he was inspecting, and walking out with them. It is not known which items he pilfered, or what happened to them. A conformist historian, he is the author of papers like "A Matter of Foreign Policy: 'Final Solution' and 'Final Victory' in Nazi Germany" in *German History*, 2003, vol. 21, pages 369-391.
- 14 Frau Junge, born Mar 16, 1920; died of cancer on the night of Feb 10-11, 2002, aged 81. The Berlin film festival had just presented her most contrite 90 minute film interview, *Im toten Winkel: Für ihr Versagen, Hitler gedient zu haben, gebe es keine Entschuldigung*: "Hitler war ein echter Verbrecher, ich habe es nur nicht gemerkt. Und außer mir haben es Millionen nicht gesehen." At the time she died, she had also just published her book *Until the Final Hour: Hitler's Last Secretary*, ghostwritten for her from the original typescript which I used..
- 15 Gitta Sereny, "Hitler's Two Faces," *The Sunday Times*, Sep 25, 2000.
- 16 Ian Kershaw for one.
- 17 Diary, Jul 10, 1989: "Sally and I released Michael [*Tabori, a film producer*], then drove on to Garmisch Partenkirchen to see Herta Schneider, the only friend Eva Braun ever had, now 85. I saw her twice in about 1969. ... Found her in dressing gown and rather grumpy about our unpunctuality. She was in a very fragile state, on some kind of nerve drugs, suffering badly from emphysema. Gradually thawed and became very coherent and communicative as the conversation went on. Sally hugely in awe of how these elderly folk can be won round."
- 18 Diary, Jul 13, 1989.
- 19 Walter Frentz born Aug. 21, 1907, died Jul 6, 2004 in Überlingen. Besides *Triumph of the Will* (1934) he worked with Riefenstahl on *Victory of the Faith* (1933), and again in 1936 on *Olympia*, her artistic film record of the Berlin Olympics. He joined the air force and from 1938 to 1940 he filmed Hitler's entry into Vienna, Warsaw, and Paris.
- 20 Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer. His Battle with Truth* (London, ... ), pages 114 and 127. From 1991, editions of my Hitler biography reproduce about fifty of Frentz's colour photographs.
- 21 See my account of this to students at Washington State University, Pullman, on April 13, 1998. <http://www.fpp.co.uk/speeches/Pullman130498.html>.
- 22 *Hitler's War*, 1991 edition, page 424.
- 23 [•• Order from Vertrieb@deutscherkunstverlag.de]
- 24 Nicolaus von Below (Sept 20, 1907 – Jul 24, 1983) was Hitler's Luftwaffe adjutant from 1937 to 1945.

- 25 Here is what Below actually wrote on page 83 of his typescript memoirs: “Betrifft Reichskristallnacht: Hitler war in seiner Privatwohnung in München. Es kam ein Anruf vom Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Hitlers Wohnung, daß die Synagoge brannte; ein weiterer Anruf von privater Seite berichtete von eingeschlagenen Schaufenstern in einem jüdischen Warenhaus. Diese Nachrichten wurden Hitler gemeldet. „Er ließ sofort den Polizeipräsident von Eberstein anrufen und befehlen, daß dieser Wahnsinn unterbliebe, wie er sich ausdrückte.“ . . . Als inzwischen aus Berlin gleiche Berichte kamen, gab Hitler auch noch an Himmler und Goebbels Befehl, die Zerstörung jüdischer Geschäfte und Synagogen sofort zu unterbinden.”
- 26 For a fuller transcript, see Tape Recorded interview of von Below, May 18, 1968. See <http://www.fpp.co.uk/Hitler/docs/Kristallnacht/Below180568.html>.
- 27 Nicolaus von Below, *Als Hitlers Adjutant 1937–1945* (Hase & Koehler Verlag, Mainz, 1980), page 243. The English edition, *At Hitler's Side. The Memoirs of Hitler's Luftwaffe adjutant 1937-1945* (Greenhill Books, Lionel Leventhal Ltd., London and Stackpole Books, Pennsylvania, 2001) heaps further contumely on me. Note 23 on page 245 quotes Mr Justice Gray as stating in London: “The true death toll [at Dresden] was within the bracket of 25–30,000.” Von Below had been dead fifteen years(•) by 2000, the year of the Lipstadt Judgment. General Karl Bodenschatz, Göring's liaison officer to Hitler, visited Dresden after the Allied raid and put the figure at 150,000.
- 28 Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer. His Battle with Truth* (London, ... ) page 262n.
- 29 *Hitler's War*, page 200.
- 30 Kriegstagebuch der Seekriegsleitung, Ia, (••) DATE Sept 1941, in the Classified Archives of US Navy.
- 31 *Hitler's War*, page 307, and cf. page 297.
- 32 Himmler to Breithaupt(?•• or Heissmeyer?), Aug 1944 (microfilm T175, roll ••, page ••).
- 33 Diary of Frau Anneliese Schmundt, Aug 27–29, 1940. Halder's diary shows the German army was already looking on Aug 14, 1940. – See my *Hitler's War*, pages 326 *et seq.*, and 874.