

HITLER AS FRANKENSTEIN

JOHANNES STEEL

With a Preface by

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Nazis. Finance is Adolf Hitler's personal prerogative. Funds are centralised under his direction and he is virtually the only person who can authorise disbursements. It is no concern of the mass of the brown shirts, in the view of their leader, to know where the money comes from or how it is spent.

Many people in Germany look upon Hitler as a Messiah, he is not averse to being so considered, for he explains that he is guided by 'voices' in his mission of regeneration. But in this twentieth century the 'messiah' business is very much like any other business, in that it calls for working capital. And when, as in the case of the Nazis, the 'messiah' has a following of some fifteen millions, the working capital has to be calculated in millions of pounds.

The National Socialist organisation is divided into three parts. There is first the Party as a political organisation. Then there are the Storm Troops, numbering about four hundred thousand, composed of the bulk of the members of the Party capable of bearing arms: then there are the Storm Guards, being the bodyguard of local and central leaders constituting a sort of cheka, the 'strong arm' of the executive organs of the Movement.

The main troops and the bodyguards are uniformed and organised on military lines with staffs, headquarters and barracks, and practically every member of these troops receives a daily pay of fifty pfennings to two marks. During the last five years this pay has been constant and represents a sum of some forty million marks. In addition there is the outlay for equipment and its upkeep, together with expenditures for military training.

In January 1933, the Hitler organisation had a fleet of thirty-five military aeroplanes and four aviation schools under the personal supervision of Captain Goering, who during the War was the successor to the German ace, von Richthofen. There was a military academy with one hundred and eighty paid instructors, all ex-officers of the former Imperial Army. One million marks were spent in January 1930 upon the Brown House in Munich, which incidentally had been decorated after drawings by Hitler himself. About half of this money had been raised by a Hitler Loan from among the members of the Party. The usual rate of interest was paid for this loan.

Although the Party had in January 1932, seven hundred thousand inscribed members who were supposed to pay a monthly fee of

him to dabble in the arms traffic with material taken by the Nazis from German arsenals to which they had obtained access illegally.

Both Dr. Schacht and Alfred Rosenberg were quick to seize upon the favourable opportunities presented in 1931, which led to Ramsay Macdonald taking office as head of the National Government. Nationalism was the keynote in Britain. It was the daily theme of the Beaverbrook and Rothermere newspapers, who were calling upon Britain to awake, just as Hitler was screeching 'Rise up, Germany.' They were printing articles telling Britain of the fine moral qualities of the stern leaders of the Nationalist Movement among the youth of Germany, of the splendid work being done to prevent young people from being infected by Communist or Socialist propaganda. In this connection a sensational article by Viscount Rothermere himself may be recalled, in which he praised Hitler and held him up as a regenerator of Germany. This type of English newspaper told their public that the rise of Nationalism in Germany could only be interpreted as a precipitation of events also about to happen in Britain,¹ and as a world wide awaken-

¹ Other British connections particularly those between Hitler and Sir Henri Deterding are dealt with separately in Chapter 4.

ing of many nations to Nationalism and regeneration through it. Certain Swedish paper mills had in their accounts cash balances of mysterious origin in favour of Fr. Eher Nachf. Munich, publishers of the Hitler propaganda literature.

Contributions from Poland have not only come from German minorities in certain parts of Poland, but also from Polish interests. Here again it was the armament industry, which for very much the same reasons as the French armament industry, had particular interest in the growth of the Hitler Movement. The Polskie Zakłady Skoda which contributed being a subsidiary of the Skoda Company, which is controlled by Schneider-Creusot, through the Union Européene Banque, has an important shareholder in Count Henckel-Donnersmarck, the richest landowner in Silesia, on both the Polish and German side. Donnersmarck is openly Nazi, although he plays an important part in Polish politics and has, owing to his enormous interests in Polish Upper Silesia where he owns almost every industrial enterprise, a deciding influence on Polish economics.

'Selling Hitler' has not been confined to these countries. In Italy where Fascism is

CHAPTER IV

THE MURDER OF DR. GEORGE BELL AND HERR HERMANN SCHNEIDER AND OTHERS

'The Press is requested not to carry any news about individuals who are supposed to have disappeared, or met with death under unknown circumstances.'

—Hitler Government decree.

THE MURDER OF DR. GEORGE BELL

THE murder of Dr. George Bell, a Scotsman, naturalised in Germany, is one of those unsolved mysteries which are typical of the history of the Hitler Movement. It is not only that, but also one of the most blatant examples of the undue influence which is exercised by international capital and vested interests upon the conduct of international affairs, and upon the prospects of peace and war. It shows the determination of certain agencies to get where they want to, in disregard of all conceptions of honesty and fair play, and

their complete callousness as to the methods used.

The story of this murder, which took place in the middle of March 1933, is a very long one and as complicated as an Edgar Wallace novel. It has all the elements of a first class thriller and its origin dates back as far as 1926.

During the year 1926 there was formed in Paris a society of the so-called Ukrainian Patriots. This society held in the same year several congresses at Paris, at which a 'President Designate' was elected. The aim of this society, it was said, was that of freeing the Ukraine from the Soviet yoke. The 'President Designate' of the society established contact with Mr. Winston Churchill and Sir Henri Deterding.

Dr. George Bell was present at several of these conferences as a delegate of Hitler and Deterding jointly. For Dr. Rosenberg, who at that time had been just two years naturalised in Germany, had become Hitler's expert in foreign affairs, and he had advised Deterding, through the medium of Dr. George Bell, who brought about the contact, as to the attitude the Hitlerites would take in regard to the question of the Polish Corridor and the Soviet Ukraine, where there are rich supplies of oil. Rosen-

berg suggested to Deterding, through Bell, that at an appropriate moment unrest should be fostered in the Ukraine, and an attempt be made with the aid of Germany to wrest the Soviet Ukraine away from the Soviet Union and give it back to Poland, to whom it had belonged at the time of the ancient Polish kingdom. Germany in return should receive the Corridor back, so satisfying the Hitlerites' nationalistic ambitions, and Sir Henri Deterding should be rewarded with mineral concessions for his efforts to persuade responsible British quarters to give tacit support to such an undertaking.

The idea was not so fantastic as it appears to be at the first glance, for Sir Henri Deterding, as the head of the Royal Dutch Shell Petroleum Company, has admittedly been an untiring advocate and organiser of foreign action against the U.S.S.R. Anyway, from the day of the Ukrainian Conference, Deterding has been supporting Hitler with considerable sums of money (which found their way into the Hitler exchequer through Dr. Bell), hoping that in case the Hitlerites should come into power, they would pursue at any rate an anti-Soviet policy. But during January and February 1933, it appeared to Deterding that he was

being cheated by Hitler and might not get his money's worth as far as Nazi anti-Soviet policies were concerned. The bad reaction and unfavourable Press comments in England during the first two months of the Hitler rule brought about a decided pro-Soviet orientation of the Nazi foreign policy, which tried to make use of the opportunity offered by the estrangement of Soviet-English relations due to the Moscow Trial. So Sir Henri was worried, and in the latter part of February, he went to Holland, where, too, he had asked Dr. Bell to meet him. Nobody can, of course, say what happened at this conference, but it is not so difficult to form the obvious conclusions, for Dr. Bell, when he returned to Germany began to pack up his things, and tried to leave Germany by way of Austria. When he crossed the border he was murdered by uniformed Bavarian Nazis and Nazi Police who had violated the frontier. No reports of the incident appeared in the German Press. When Bell returned from Holland he had first gone to Berlin before going to Bavaria. In Berlin he had a meeting with the Nationalist Deputy, Dr. Oberfohren, to whom he admitted that he had been instrumental in setting the Reichstag on fire, that he had directed this venture, and

that he was very anxious and worried about some unforeseen consequences this action had had. The 'unforeseen' consequences of this action were the facts that after the Reichstag fire the employees of the Derop (the Russian competitors of the Royal Dutch in Germany) had been arrested in a body, and that the head of the Hamburg office of the Derop had been driven to suicide by the Nazi OGPU. It was shortly after this that Bell was murdered. But Dr. Oberfohren did not escape his fate either, for in the first week in May, 1933, a short time after the Bell murder, a raid was carried out by the Nazi OGPU upon Oberfohren's flat in Kiel. The day after the raid Dr. Oberfohren, who was the Parliamentary leader of the Nationalist Party which formed the coalition with the Nazis in the present Government, and who had been a life-long friend of Hugenberg, the prominent member of the Hitler Cabinet, was found murdered. This episode illustrates the ruthlessness of the Nazis, who will not take chances on people who are in possession of political secrets.

These intrigues were the immediate cause of Dr. Bell's death, although another factor may have played an important role in the instigation

of this murder, for it should be remembered that the homosexual, Roehm, against whom Bell had given appalling evidence, was Nazi Cabinet Minister in Bavaria at the time the murder was committed, and that the murder was executed by men who were under Roehm's immediate command. Ever since the day Bell had given evidence against Roehm, he was a marked man, and only his importance to the Nazi Foreign Office prevented the Fehme from assassinating him before. It thus appears that when Bell's usefulness was at an end, the killers were let loose. Revolutions may cost victims, but this was not manslaughter: it was cold-blooded murder which had been premeditated—who knows—perhaps for years. And so, on the 5th May, 1933, Dr. Rosenberg, the then official plenipotentiary of Hitler, arrived in London accompanied by Count Bismarck instead of by Bell who had been with him on his previous visits. Before calling on the German Ambassador, Dr. Rosenberg went to Buckhurst Park, Ascot, which is the home of Sir Henri Deterding. Only after this visit did he request the German Embassy to arrange an interview with the Foreign Office.

It may be added that it was suggested by a part of the British Press that Rosenberg during

his trip to London served only as a smoke screen to cover the activities of other 'inquiry agents' who might have to be disowned in case their activities should become known to the British Government. However that may be, it would only have been a procedure completely in keeping with the usual Nazi methods and tactlessness, which the British public has had an opportunity of witnessing during Rosenberg's presence in London.

The German Ambassadors on various occasions have been made to look like fools by the Nazi Foreign Office. First when Minister Goering, over the heads of the German Ambassador, sent direct telegraphic protests to Swedish papers which had published some uncomplimentary comment; secondly, when he sent Herr Alexander Bogs on a mission to Scandinavia, which was just as little successful as Rosenberg's similar trip to London.

It is not likely that all the details of this episode in the Hitler backstairs diplomacy will ever be common knowledge, but I believe that this account will give the reader an opportunity to draw some interesting conclusions about the character and methods Hitler intends to employ in his foreign policy.