

# WHAT ABOUT GERMANY?

*by*

LOUIS P. LOCHNER

Former Bureau Chief the Associated Press in Berlin

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
LIMITED LONDON

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THE TYPOGRAPHY AND BINDING OF  
THIS BOOK CONFORMS TO THE  
AUTHORISED ECONOMY STANDARD

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TO KENT COOPER

GENERAL MANAGER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
FOR WHOM I REMAINED IN GERMANY TO THE END

THIS BOOK IS  
APPRECIATIVELY DEDICATED



## FOREWORD

I LANDED in New York of June 1 after five months internment at Bad Nauheim. An Associated Press colleague slapped me on the back. "What about Germany?" he asked.

For the next thirty days that question, "What about Germany?" was repeated with increasing insistence. It was asked at luncheons, dinners, round-table conferences, and "bull session" huddles generously arranged by Kent Cooper of The Associated Press. More than that, Mr. Cooper himself suggested that I might take time off to write a book. It was his understanding, of course, that whatever I might write would be my own personal narrative, and that any opinions expressed would be mine, not to be construed as opinions of The Associated Press.

Still I hesitated. In the first place, the material which I was able to bring with me or had succeeded in smuggling out of Germany earlier was necessarily incomplete. By far the largest bulk of my collection of documents and revealing papers lies in a safe place in Germany where the Nazis will never get it. Secondly, I felt that I was still too close to events to write a dispassionate, objective story of my twenty-one years in Germany. In the third place, I had to assume that a copy of such a book would fall into Nazi hands—in fact, I hope it will. I know the methods of Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, but I can face, with considerable equanimity, his efforts to discredit it.

There was a further important inhibition which I had: all my life I had been a man who believes in the peaceful adjustment of international relations. I opposed American's entry into the last war because I believed a bloodless solution might be found. Could I go back on my philosophy of life and join in the chorus to fight Hitlerism to its bitter end? In Germany I had made up my mind that Hitler understands but one language—that of force. All my theories of an approach of reason, of appeasement, of conciliation proved impracticable in the face of the national socialist theory and practice of domination by brute might.

Week after week, month after month, it became clearer to me that there is no peaceful approach to international gangsterism, that there can be no peace and happiness neither in Germany itself nor in the world surrounding it until Adolf Hitler and his philosophy have been liquidated.

Since my return to America, conferences in Washington and New York, discussions with students of history and current events in various universities, reunions with fellow alumni from the University of Wisconsin, off-the-record talks before my fellow

craftsmen in press clubs, and, above all, contacts with the rank and file of my fellow citizens, have shown me that there is a tremendous interest in the answer to that question—"What about Germany?"

But how was I to answer it? The fact that I had been stationed in the Reich far longer than any of my repatriated colleagues and competitors merely complicated things for me. The longer I lived in Germany, the more I found that "Germany" is not a unified conception, in spite of Hitler's compulsory *Gleichschaltung*; that there existed as many currents and cross-currents as are discernible in any country or among any group of individuals.

I finally decided that the one contribution I can make to an understanding of the country which, because of the lust for power of one paranoiac and his paladins, is now our enemy, is that of narrating what I experienced or was in a position to observe during the course of twenty-one years, but more especially during the years of the Hitler regime.

I want the reader to feel as burning an anger as I do at the perversion of civilisation that Adolf Hitler is trying to foist on an unwilling world, including millions of his own countrymen. It is my hope that the reader will realise what I had to learn during nine years of Nazism, even at the sacrifice (for the duration) of treasured pacifistic principles, that there is no other slogan for me, there can be no other slogan for lovers of liberty anywhere, than that with which I have hitherto closed all my talks—Hitler **MUST** be beaten, Hitler **CAN** be beaten, Hitler **WILL** be beaten!



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## I: The Modern Genghis Khan

My informant seldom visited me, but when he came it was always on legitimate business which he was careful to announce in advance over our tapped telephone. Even to-day nobody in Germany suspects him. It was he who not only gave me the zero hour for the outbreak of World War II, but who later informed me of the exact day and minute for the attack on Crete. It was he, too, who, thirty days before Hitler started his offensive against Russia, revealed the day and hour—3 A.M. on June 22, 1941—when the Nazi wave would start to inundate the U.S.S.R.

A week before Hitler's assault on Poland, this man delivered to me a three-page typed manuscript. The document, written in German, is entitled, "Contents of Speech to the Supreme Commanders and Commanding Generals, Obersalzberg, August 22, 1939." It is one of the most sensational and, at the same time, most revealing papers I own.

That is what Adolf Hitler told the army heads and commanding generals whom he summoned to his summer capital near Berchtesgaden:

"My decision to attack Poland was arrived at last spring. Originally, I feared that the political constellation would compel me to strike simultaneously at England, Russia, France, and Poland. Even this risk would have had to be taken.

"Ever since the autumn of 1938, and because I realised that Japan would not join us unconditionally and that Mussolini is threatened by that nit-wit of a king and the treasonable scoundrel of a crown prince, I decided to go with Stalin.

"In the last analysis there are only three great statesmen in the world, Stalin, I, and Mussolini. Mussolini is the weakest, for he has been unable to break the power of either the crown or the church. Stalin and I are the only ones who envisage the future and nothing but the future. Accordingly, I shall in a few weeks stretch out my hand to Stalin at the common German-Russian frontier and undertake the redistribution of the world with him.

"Our strength consists in our speed and in our brutality. Genghis Khan led millions of women and children to slaughter—with premeditation and a happy heart. History sees in him solely the founder of a state. It's a matter of indifference to me what a weak western European civilisation will say about me.

"I have issued the command—and I'll have anybody who utters but one word of criticism executed by a firing squad—that our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the

physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly, I have placed my death-head formation\* in readiness—for the present only in the East—with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space (*Lebensraum*) which we need. Who, after all, speaks to-day of the annihilation of the Armenians?

"Colonel-General von Brauchitsch has promised me to finish the war in Poland in a few weeks. Had he reported that I need two years or even only one year to do it, I should not have issued the order to march but should have allied myself temporarily with England instead of with Russia. For we are not in a position to carry on a long war.

"One thing is true: a new situation has now been created.† I got to know those wretched worms, Daladier and Chamberlain, in Munich. They will be too cowardly to attack. They won't go beyond a blockade. We, on the other hand, have our *autarky* (self-sufficiency) and the Russian raw materials.

"Poland will be depopulated and then settled by Germans. My pact with Poland‡ was, after all, intended only to gain time. And as for the rest, gentlemen, the same thing will occur as regards Russia that I have tested out (*durchexerziert*) in the case of Poland. After Stalin's death—he is a very sick man—we shall demolish the Soviet Union. The dawn of German domination of the world will then break.

"The little states cannot scare me. Since Kemal's death Turkey is being governed by cretins and semi-idiots. Carol of Rumania is a thoroughly corrupt slave of his sexual desires. The King of Belgium and the Nordic kings are soft jumping jacks, dependent upon the good digestion of their gorged and tired peoples.

"We shall have to count on Japan's reneging. I have given Japan a full year's time. The emperor is a counterpart of the last czar. Weak, cowardly, undecided. May he fall a victim to the revolution! My co-operation with Japan never was popular, anyway.

"We shall continue to stir up unrest in the Far East and in Arabia. Let our mentality be that of lords of the creation (*Herren*) and let us see in these peoples, at best, lacquered semi-apes who crave to be flogged.

"The opportunity is favourable as never before. My only apprehension is that Chamberlain or some other such dirty cuss (*Saukerl*) may come at the last moment with proposals and appeasements. I'll throw such a fellow down the stairs, even if I have to kick him in the belly before all photographers.

"No, it's too late for that.§ The attack upon and the annihila-

\* Meaning the special S.S. military formations.

† Apparently Hitler refers to the non-aggression pact with Russia.

‡ January 26, 1934.

§ Evidently meaning compromise.

tion of Poland begins early on Saturday. I'll let a couple of companies, dressed in Polish uniforms, make an assault in Upper Silesia or in the Protectorate. It's a matter of utter indifference to me whether or not the world believes me. The world believes in success alone.

"For you, gentlemen, glory and honour are in the offing, such as have not beckoned for centuries. Be tough! Be without compassion! Act more quickly and more brutally than the others! The citizens of Western Europe must shudder in horror. That's the most humane method of conducting war, for that scares them off.

"The new method of conducting war corresponds to the new draft of the frontiers—one continuous rampart from Reval, Lublin, and Kosice to the mouth of the Danube. The rest will be awarded to the Russians. Ribbentrop has instructions to make every offer and to accept every demand.

"In the west I reserve to myself the fixing of the best strategic frontier. There one can operate with Protectorates, say, of Holland, Belgium, French Lorraine.

"And now: at the enemy! In Warsaw we shall meet again and celebrate!"

My informant confided to me that, after hearing this astounding speech, Goering, wild with enthusiasm, climbed on a table, rendered fervent thanks, and promised to carry out the blood-thirsty orders.

Fearing that the document might be discovered in my home, I took it to the American Embassy and asked for permission to deposit it there. I also suggested that its contents be communicated to the American Government.

"Why, my dear fellow, that's dynamite," the American official exclaimed, startled, when I began to read it. "I don't dare keep it in this Embassy for even an hour. Please take it with you at once."

There was nothing left for me to do except to take it to my home until such time as I could arrange to get it out of the country. As there was always the possibility of an unannounced search, I scrawled across the manuscript with red pencil, "*Ein Stück gemeiner anti-Hitler Propaganda*" (a piece of low-down anti-Hitler propaganda). This is a subterfuge that I have employed in a number of cases, expressing pretended moral indignation over a document whose unexplained possession might prove embarrassing to me. Had a search been made and the document been found, I would of course, have pleaded that the paper reached me anonymously by mail, and that my own attitude toward it was indicated by my red marginal note. I would also have pointed to other documents, displeasing to the Nazis, which I considered it my right and my journalistic duty to preserve in order to be aware of all sides of a question.

The speech may well have seemed to contain dynamite to the American Embassy official who declined to have anything to do with it, for when I visited him that Friday, August 25, Hitler was still going through the motions of negotiating with the British Government through Ambassador Nevile Henderson.

But at seven o'clock that night I experienced the worst moment of my eighteen years of Berlin reporting when suddenly, without a word of warning, all communication with the outside world was cut off by the military. I was speaking on the long distance telephone to London when the call was interrupted in the midst of a sentence. Our telewriter was grinding out our daily "night lead" to our relay point in Amsterdam. It stopped short. Our office ticker was moving a feature story to the main telegraph office, with instructions to file it to New York by wireless. It broke off abruptly.

"There is a temporary disturbance in communications," was the stock reply given by each governmental department whose aid we sought to reconnect us with our New York, London, and Amsterdam offices. We then tried frantically to reach Rome, Paris, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Budapest, even Danzig—anything to find a possible relay point from which our messages might be sent on to New York. In vain.

Stranger still, in the midst of a silence which appalled us—for nothing is more trying to a newspaper man than to have a "hot" story and not be able to file it—Warsaw was on the telephone! My Warsaw colleague was attempting, as he frequently did, to use Berlin as a relay point for his story for New York, and he was amazed when we told him we were unable to pass his cable on.

It was obvious to us that the German government was planning to go into Poland the next morning by surprise. There was no other way of explaining the continued acceptance of calls from and to Poland while all other telephone and telegraph traffic stopped. The Poles were being lulled into a false security, and the military intelligence service doubtless hoped to pick up bits of valuable information by listening in on the calls from Poland.

As it happened, however, there was a flaw in what seemed to be a perfect communications ban. Later that evening we discovered that the authorities had forgotten to disconnect a special wire operated by the French Havas news agency between Berlin and Paris, this being the only such wire in existence. Our Havas colleagues obligingly permitted us to relay our copy over that wire to our Paris office. So we were able, after all, to narrate the dramatic developments of the day to the American reading public.

I went to bed late that night, expecting to be advised at any moment that the war with Poland had begun. But I was mistaken, just as the military censors had been. For there was no war—as yet!

At two o'clock that morning Hitler, true to his speech before the army leaders and commanding generals, gave the order for a general attack at four-thirty. (Dawn is the hour usually chosen by him.) During those early hours, however, Colonel-General Walther von Brauchitsch, Commander-in-Chief of the army, warned Hitler that the entire world would turn against Germany if she were to make war on Poland. It was true, he admitted, that the Polish campaign could be won in a few weeks, but it would only be the beginning of a far more serious general war. He was reported to me as having made the following points :

1. The King of Italy declined to rally to Germany's aid.
2. Japan protested against the invasion of Poland.
3. France was mobilising fast.
4. Great Britain signed the pact guaranteeing the integrity of Poland.
5. The British fleet was ready at Scapa Flow to block the Baltic, and off Scotland to block the North Sea.

Hitler, according to an informant whom I considered absolutely reliable, "turned livid." He was determined to have his war. To assure doubters like Brauchitsch of his sincerity in desiring peace, however, he prevailed upon Henderson to fly to London with new proposals.

Six exciting days followed, during which it was apparent that, despite the Henderson mission, preparations for war were continuing unchecked.

On August 26 Professor Karl Bomer, then head of the Propaganda Ministry's foreign press department, said during the daily conference that in the event of war the Foreign Press Section of the Propaganda Ministry would be in charge of the foreign correspondents as usual. Many workers in industrial plants were suddenly called for in official vehicles and even taxis, to be mobilised. The annual party convention at Nürnberg, scheduled for early September, was officially called off. Ration cards for eggs, textiles, shoes, and soap were given out. Private airplane flying was forbidden. Various annual conventions, such as that of the German pharmacists, were indefinitely postponed.

On August 17 I saw many soldiers on the streets, accompanied by their wives and children to the railway stations. Their faces were serious and there was no cheering.

Our young lady neighbour's trim car was requisitioned like so many others.

On August 28 my informant B. brought me the new zero hour for the attack on Poland—dawn during the night of August 31 to September 1. At the British Embassy everybody was busy packing. There were no more trains to France. Long queues were forming before textile and food shops. There was a panicky feeling among the German people.

That day my Japanese colleague K. called to tell me his govern-



ment would re-evaluate its relations to Germany. Japan felt let down by Hitler, as Ribbentrop told the Japanese ambassador about the pact with Russia only thirty minutes before he started for Moscow to sign it.

On August 29 one could hear on every side, "Another Munich is about to materialise. The British Government will yield." The British Embassy itself seemed to think a peaceful settlement was in the offing.

On August 30 general mobilisation was ordered in Poland. A Propaganda Ministry spokesman stated that Germany welcomed Queen Wilhelmina's offer of mediation, and added that Britain must now take the initiative and get the Poles to come to Berlin. Colonel Jozef Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, ought to be on his way now.

On August 31 the optimism displayed in the Wilhelmstrasse only two days before in regard to "another Munich" had given place to pessimism. The Polish delegation had not come and apparently was not coming.

That day I learned confidentially that during the early hours of the morning, Henderson was given Hitler's Sixteen Points for the settlement of the Polish issue by Ribbentrop who merely read them aloud without handing Henderson a copy. The Sixteen Points were released to the press late that afternoon.

Summarised, these points were that Danzig was to be returned at once to the Reich ; Gdynia was to remain Polish ; a Plebiscite, under international supervision, would decide the fate of the Polish Corridor within twelve months ; only those who resided in the region before January 1, 1918, were to vote ; both Germany and Poland would have free access, under the plebiscite, to certain roads in the Corridor ; if the Corridor voted for Poland, Germany was to obtain a corridor across it to East Prussia, while if it fell to Germany, there was to be an exchange of population ; complaints in regard to the treatment of minorities were to be submitted to an international commission.

The great news of that day, August 31, however, was the publication of the fact that Great Britain was mobilising.

That ended all hope of a peaceful solution of the conflict, and yet few people in Germany knew the zero hour was at hand. I saw that the same evening when, as usual on Thursday nights, a group of us met with a number of German colleagues in the Auslandsklub of the Propaganda Ministry. One of the Germans, a young chap who was usually more outspoken than his older and more conservative fellow craftsmen, still believed that the Sixteen Points were meant as a serious proposal and would be accepted by Poland and her Allies.

"We can't understand the Führer," he said. "Why didn't he strike the moment von Ribbentrop returned from Moscow with the