

THE AFRICAN STUDY CIRCLE

HITLER'S

MEIN ----- KAMPF.

INTRODUCTION:

"When the abilities of theorist and organiser and leader are united in the one person, then we have the rarest phenomenon on this earth. And it is that union which produces the great man".

These words, taken from Mein Kampf and written by Adolf Hitler himself, give us, I think, a good explanation of why the world regards him as it does. No qualificatives so pregnant with the extremes in invective have ever been employed to describe a public figure as have been used in Hitler's case, since the outbreak of the present war in September, 1939. He has been styled "THE MAD DOG OF EUROPE", "THE MADMAN OF EUROPE", "THE BLOODTHIRSTY HUN", and many other names of abuse that one fears to mention, by the Statesmen and spokesmen of what have come to be known as the Western Democracies.

It is not in the least my intention to justify Hitler and Hitlerism or to champion the cause of the Nazi in my paper this afternoon but rather to state that if Hitler had not been guilty of the one crime that many philosophers have always been incapable of committing or have consciously refrained from doing so, Mein Kampf would to day quite easily have been included in the list of books set for study in our Universities by students of Social and Political - and perhaps even moral - philosophy, for Mein Kampf is nothing but a philosophical treatise dealing with Social, Political and Moral questions..... Neither is Mein Kampf a prescribed book for philosophic study nor is Adolf Hitler's name as yet included in the roll of those men who have earned for themselves the coveted name of "Philosopher. The fault with Hitler is that he has tried and is still trying to be more than a philosopher. He is trying to be "the rarest phenomenon on this earth" by committing the crime of practising his philosophy and attempting to "unite the theorist, the organiser and the leader in his one person. This becomes evident when we recall that no vituperative adjectives are employed when mention is made of Frederick Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844 - 1900) in spite of the fact that Nietzsche lived the last eleven years of his life of struggle against sickness as a real madman. No hard words are thrown at him although it is a commonplace that Hitler's postulates of the aristocratic principle in nature and his belief in the superiority of the ARYAN over other racial types are by no means new ideas but were held by Nietzsche less than a hundred years before him. Nietzsche's philosophy can be expressed in a few words:-

"He regarded humanity as being composed of two types fundamentally different from each other; the weak and the strong, the slavish and the masterful, the mob and the aristocratic few. In the struggle between these two types each would naturally seek to impose its morality on the other and to depreciate those qualities in its opponent that are dangerous to it. Thus the weak commend the qualities of meekness and compassion, extol poverty and renunciation. Because Christianity extolled this slave morality, he was opposed to it and declared himself Antichrist. He would revalue all values in the light of the morality of the strong.

and for/.....

And for mankind he held up the idea of surpassing itself, the need for creating a higher, stronger and more dominant race, the SUPERMAN."

Charles Darwin fills a place of honour amongst world scientists and philosophers having won that distinction by his theory of evolution in which he states that the process of Natural Selection leads to the survival of the fittest, or to the preservation of favourable individual variations, and the corresponding destruction and extermination of the unfit.....Plato's Republic is recommended to University students as an excellent introduction to Moral philosophy or Ethics,; but in it Plato states in unmistakable terms that the just and ideal State is one in which full consideration is given to the fact that men are not equal, and acting on that understanding assigns duties to its citizens each according to his abilities.....In Mein Kampf Hitler simply reiterates ideas but loses his place of honour by trying to put them into practice as well.

My colleague in the review of Mein Kampf has given you a sketch of Hitler's life has also given you her impressions of the book as a whole from the literary standpoint. On me, therefore, devolves the onus of telling you the story of Mein Kampf. I must hasten to add, however, that Mein Kampf is a colossal work comprising two volumes and extending over 560 pages. In the very short time at my disposal I can, therefore, give you only a few points which struck me as being of special significance to people who are or are intending to become leaders of their people. The following will serve as the main headings:-

- a. Poverty and its effects on man.
- b. Parliamentary institutions as seen through Nazi Eyes.
- c. The Aristocratic Principle in Nature.
- d. Propaganda and its role in Leadership.
- e. National Health.
- f. Race and People.
- g. Citizens and Subjects of the State
- h. Propaganda - Organisation - Leadership.

A. POVERTY.

Orphaned at 15 by the death of his mother two years after that of his father, young Adolf Hitler was thrown without a friend or guardian into a difficult world. Like many youths of his time he was attracted by the splendour of the large cities and the prospect of good employment that these seemed to offer. He chose Vienna, the Austrian capital, and it was well for him that he did for it was there that he received the hard lessons of human endurance under conditions of scandalous poverty. I say 'scandalous' because Vienna like many cities all over the world showed him the anomalous state of affairs where "dazzling riches and loathsome destitution intermingled in violent contrast." His sense of justice was outraged most ruthlessly by this spectacle and his anger - then impotent anger - aroused to the limit when he saw the half-hearted and worthless attempts made by several social welfare organisations to ameliorate the lot of the poor man, the chief cause of failure being the simple fact that they tried to tackle the problem from 'above', 'downwards', and hence were never fully aware of what it meant. They did not realise

"That the man who has never been in the clutches of that crushing viper can never know what its poison is. The attempt to study it in any other way will result only in superficial talk and sentimental delusions. 'I do not know', he says, 'which is the more nefarious; to ignore social distress, as do the majority of those who have been favoured by fortune and those who have risen in the social scale through their own routine labour, or the equally supercilious and often tactless but always genteel condescension displayed by those who make a fad of being charitable and who plume themselves on sympathising with the peopleFor in this question there is there is no question at all of distributing favours but essentially a matter of retributive justice"

Human beings living under such conditions of abject poverty were forced down to the lowest state of moral and physical degeneracy imaginable. These poor humans lived in conditions of squalor and filth, starvation and immorality such as cried up to heaven for redress and justice. The speedy amelioration and ultimate extirpation of such conditions should be the main aim of all social work; but with this warning that "the aim of social work must never be merely charitable relief, which is ridiculous and useless, but it must rather be a means to find a way of eliminating the fundamental deficiencies in our economic and cultural life - deficiencies which necessarily bring about the degradation of the individual or at least lead him towards such degradation".

B. PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS.

Unable to reason for themselves, these poor people fall an easy prey to egotists and self-seekers who, under the guise of friendship to the oppressed and with rash promises of utopian conditions for the poor man when they get into power, use these unfortunates as stepping stones across the river of Parliamentary elections to gain seats in Parliament an institution which, according to Hitler, is the worst ever devised by man to misgovern and misdirect the fortunes of any state. The longer he studied parliamentary procedure and in particular the decisions made by the deputies the more he came to hate parliament and the parliamentarian. Amongst others Parliamentary government failed to commend itself to Hitler for the following reasons:-

a. All the deputies were men elected by popular vote and were taken from every walk of life. To these men were given powers of legislation and administration in spite of the fact that many of them knew very little if anything about many questions upon which they were expected to pass decisions by vote. A good orator was therefore, always assured of an overwhelming majority in his favour irrespective of the nature of his bill.

b. Parliamentary decisions lacked the moderating factor of individual responsibility. Acts and decrees with the most devastating consequences to the State may be passed by a Government; yet nobody would be called to account for them. The worst that might happen to that Government is its dismissal and the succession of another which must try to extricate the State from the morass into which it had been landed by the last Government.

To quote Hitler himself: " The most important economic measures are submitted to a tribunal in which not more than one-tenth of the members have studied the elements of economics. This means that the final authority is vested in men who are utterly

devoid/.....

devoid of any preparatory training which might make them competent to decide on the questions at issue".

c. Men in parliament are often forced to modify or even to change their erstwhile firm convictions and accept a compromise mainly because of their concern over the results of the next elections. Honesty is, therefore, a rare quality in the characters of several of the Parliamentary deputies.

Instead of this Hitler sets a form of government in which one individual assumes responsibility for any decisions he may make on behalf of the State. The Leader may have a few Counselors, but he is not obliged to take their views. He makes his own decisions. Only experts on various matters are consulted but here too the leader is responsible for the ultimate decisions taken. This is only logical as it is widely known that

"whatever has happened in history above the level of the average of the broad public has mostly been due to the driving force of an individual personality."

C. THE ARISTOCRATIC PRINCIPLE:

The world, according to Hitler, is there for the strong people and not for the weaklings. Nature has ordained that only the fit should live, this being a fact borne out irrefutably by the whole theory of evolution. Man's future on ~~this planet~~ this planet and the role that he will play in generations to come depend very greatly on whether or not he accepts and obeys this law of nature. Man's achievements - the results of centuries of research - tend to make him despise the simple teachings of nature. There is evidence everywhere of his attempts to outwit nature. For instance many States troubled by the problem of limited territorial possessions and, consequently, also faced with the limited amount of national resources that are necessary to ensure the upkeep of their populations, have resorted to restricting the increase by advocating the artificial regulation of the birthrate. When it is considered, Hitler goes on to say, that vast areas of the globe are as yet uncultivated and that if these were colonised and cultivated there would be enough living space for all mankind for several centuries to come, then this regulation of the increase of populations is not only unnecessary but is also an unpardonable sin against posterity.

Nature's methods are admittedly ruthless in their operation, but there can be no question as to their efficiency. Nature does not restrict the propagation of the species but decimates and weeds out all the unfit. She would subject man to the rigorous test of the insufficiency of the essentials and by so doing ensure that only those who are strong enough to grab what there is should live -- the rest must die!

Man's methods are wrong in that they restrict the procreative faculties and the strive to obstinately to keep alive what has been born. Man's weaklings are cared for under the illusion of humanitarian principles. It is said that it is more humane to regulate the increase and care, at whatever cost, for the few that are than to adopt Nature's methods which are merciless in their efficacy. Man is becoming weaker, says Hitler, and fears to engage in the struggle for life.

The fact remains, however, that every nation has the right to live; each nation has, therefore, a right to acquire the land and territory requisite for its existence. If it cannot get this by any other means besides the sword, then it must use the sword to cut a path for the ploughshare/.....

ploughshare or else perish.

"If a people be defeated in the struggle for its human rights this means that its weight has proved too light in the scale of Destiny to have the luck of being able to endure in this terrestrial world. 'The world is not there to be possessed by the faint-hearted!'"

N. NATIONAL HEALTH.

Under this same misapprehension of humanitarian principles, man allows great crimes to be committed by the present generation the results of which will be untold misery which must be suffered by future men.

"Marriage is not an end in itself but must serve the greater end of increasing and maintaining the human species and the race".

The governments of modern States, although aware of this great truth are nevertheless indifferent to the pernicious effects of diseases like tuberculosis and venereal disease to the future of the human race.

"It is doing things by halves if incurables are given the opportunity of infecting one healthy person after another. This would be the kind of humanitarianism which would ~~wik~~ allow hundreds to perish in order to save the suffering of one individual. The demand that it should be made impossible for defective people to continue to propagate defective offspring is a demand that is based on ~~the~~ most reasonable grounds, and its proper fulfilment is the most humane task that mankind has to face".

The question of national health is one of great importance and should be tackled with equal seriousness.

E. PROPAGANDA.

Propaganda is one of the strongest weapons that any leader can use to achieve his objective. Anyone who would be a leader of his people must first of all be quite clear himself what it is that he is aiming at. He must also have a clear concept of the social problem. If he is to be successful he must address himself to the ~~masses~~ and not to the bourgeoisie who have various interests to safeguard.

Secondly he must realise that it is useless to talk of his aims in assemblies such as Parliaments. For in such he can at most hope to talk to a few uninterested deputies who come to listen to him in order to be marked present and thus safeguard their pay. The public platform should be his front-line of attack and 'the spoken word' not the written one his chief medium of expression.

Thirdly he must organise his propaganda. He must not underestimate the value of an ideal. Many a hungry man will fight to the death for an ideal like LIBERTY OR HONOUR when he would not shed a drop of his blood to get a morsel of bread.

Fourthly he must find a scapegoat; some racial group or nation which will be the object of intense hatred of his followers. He must keep this hatred at burning point all the time by attributing to the foe all the injustices that they suffer.

"The aim of his propaganda should not be to try to pass judgment on conflicting rights, giving each its due, but exclusively to emphasise the right which he is asserting. Propaganda must not investigate the truth objectively and, in so far as it is

favourable to the other side, present it according to the theoretical rules of justice; but it must present only that aspect of the truth which is favourable to its own side".

F. RACE AND PEOPLE.

A very important consideration and one that must never be lost sight of is the importance of the racial factor. The ideal becomes more worthy of the supreme sacrifice if the people who sacrifice themselves are made to feel that world culture in general and their own existence in particular depends on the realisation of that ideal, and that they were especially chosen by God to be the leaders in the struggle. They must regard their race as something sacred and one to be preserved at the expense of everything else if necessary. Race miscegenation must be regarded as being degrading. Of course Hitler's race of Supermen is that of ARYANS. "The equality of races" is pure Marxist nonsense. It is a monstrosity to make half-human anthropoid apes like Negroes, Hottentots Zulus and Kaffirs feel themselves equal to the superior Aryan.

G. CITIZEN AND SUBJECT OF THE STATE.

In the second volume of Mein Kampf Hitler goes into great pains to explain the programme and working of the Nazi Party. He follows on his views on race in the first volume by saying that just as it is true that the racial groups of the world are not equal and that the Aryans are the Superiors so also it is logical to accept the fact that in any one race the individuals composing it are not equal. With this fact in view the Nazi State will have three classes into which the people in it are classified. These are THE CITIZEN, THE SUBJECT OF THE STATE and THE ALIEN.

The Alien is the man who is a citizen of another State and who, therefore, can never hope to enjoy the privileges allowed the citizens of the German State. The Subject of the State is the German who is not qualified as a result of failing in the rigorous test that he must undergo before he can be made a citizen. German Citizenship will be the highest honour that all Germans must aspire to get. It is a class from which alone German leaders can be chosen. So great is the honour of being a German Citizen that a street-sweeper who is a German Citizen shall be regarded by all ~~Germans~~ Germans as being greater than a Foreign King.

H. PROPAGANDA - ORGANISATION - LEADERSHIP.

This idea is of necessity also found in the administration of the Nazi Party. The Party comprises Leaders, Members and Followers. By followers is meant those people who as a result of strong and ~~ex~~ conscientious propaganda have accepted the Nazi ideals, but who for some reason or other are not considered fit for membership. The membership of the Party comprises men who have not only accepted the ideals of the movement but also so determined to see them spread that they are prepared to fight to the death for them. The Nazi Party needs a militant membership. A Nazi once convinced of the rightness of an ideal will not accept compromise of whatever description. He must get all he wants, and in order to bring in his NEW ORDER he must first and foremost remove every trace of the OLD. This can never be achieved by soft-soap mendacity, but by the mailed fist of a man who knows what he wants and must get it.

The Leaders/.....

The Leaders are the chosen few - they are men who have, by careful selection, been found to possess that courage to make decisions, to organise the respective departments and who above all also have the honesty and general devotion to duty that will ensure the success of the Party Programme. Leadership amongst the Nazis brooks no cowardice - be it physical or moral - and any man who undertakes it does so with a full knowledge of what is expected of him and also of the great responsibility he voluntarily undertakes.

CONCLUSION: WHAT IS THERE IN NAZISM THAT CAN HELP OTHERS WHO WOULD BE LEADERS OF THEIR PEOPLE: IN PARTICULAR THE AFRICAN?

In answering this question I feel I should state from the onset that there is at present no comparison between the Germany which Hitler is leading and the African masses which an African Leader would lead. It would, therefore be the principle rather than the method of Nazi Leadership that one would suggest.

SINCERITY.

The most striking point about Hitler's Leadership of the Germans is his absolute conviction of the rightness of his cause. It would seem that he received that conviction from autosuggestion. His hatred of anything savouring of compromise forced him to see nothing right in what his enemy does. He has in fact fallen victim to his own propaganda. He has said the same thing so many times and with such earnestness that he has been himself convinced of its justice.

ABHORRENCE OF HALF-MEASURES.

If a thing is right then nothing but that will satisfy Nazi ambitions. His opponent must take his views 100% or fight to resist them and he to enforce them. No truce but complete capitulation of one side will be the only means of settling the matter. The path of African endeavour ~~is~~ has compromise as its milestones. Our ~~own~~ leaders believe too much in the philosophy of HALF-A-LOAF IS BETTER THAN NO LOAF.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF NAZI LEADERS:

Once a man has been chosen head of a department in Nazi Germany he is given full powers to act. There are no All-Knowing Committees which keep prying into his activities and suggesting so much nonsense and wasting valuable time by much talk and no work.

The effect of this is to remove from the picture those who go hunting for positions of honour and letting others do the work for them or let their departments fail. "How ~~axsily~~ quickly they would evanesce if they were put to some real work instead of talking, especially if each member were made personally responsible for the work assigned to him", says Hitler.

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Collection Number: AD843

XUMA, A.B., Papers

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- **Historical Papers Research Archive**

Location:- **Johannesburg**

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