Setting the Historical Record Straight on . . .

Hitler's Bravery & Courage

By Cassian D'Ornellas

Though it is understandable that Hitler's detractors have never once mentioned his bravery, Hitler was an extraordinarily courageous man. There is no doubt, whatever, that Hitler was an ardent German nationalist ever since he was a mere schoolboy growing up in Linz in the Germanic part of Austria-Hungary. In the Realschule, his favorite subject was history, which was taught by an exceptional teacher, Dr. Leopold Poetsch, for whom he had a great deal of admiration.1 Says Hitler:

When I look back over so many years and try to judge the results of that experience, I find two very significant facts standing out clearly before my mind. First, I became a nationalist. Second, I learned to understand and grasp the meaning of history.2

Therefore, when the war broke out in 1914 Hitler was one of the first to enlist in the German army to serve in the Bavarian regiment on the western front with great enthusiasm, imbued with a spirit of German nationalist fervor.3 In spite of his willing enthusiasm and bravery, serving at the front was a terrifying and fearsome experience as death stalked him at every turn. Most of the time the fighting was a living hell, which he describes as follows:

We marched in silence throughout the night, and as the morning Sun came through the mist, an iron greeting suddenly burst above our heads. Shrapnel exploded in our midst and spluttered in the damp ground.

But before the smoke of the explosion disappeared, a wild "hurrah" was shouted from 200 throats, in response to this first greeting of death. Then began the whistling of bullets and the booming of cannons, the shouting and singing of the combatants.

Eyes straining feverishly, we pressed forward, quicker and quicker, until we finally came to close-quarter fighting, there beyond the beet fields and the meadows. Soon the strains of a song reached us from afar. Nearer and nearer, from company to company, it came. And while death began to unleash havoc in our ranks, we passed the song on to those beside us: "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt."

After four days in the trenches, we came back. . . Boys of 17 looked now like grown men. The rank and file of the List regiment had not been properly trained in the art of warfare, but they knew how to die like old soldiers. That was the beginning. And thus we carried on from year to year. A feeling of horror replaced the romantic fighting spirit. Enthusiasm cooled down gradually, and exuberant spirits were quelled by the fear of the ever-present death.

A time came when there arose within each one of
Above, Adolf Hitler during World War I with his infantry regiment, the 16th Bavarian Reserve Regiment, which served in Belgium and France. Hitler can be seen sitting in the first row on the far left. He was wounded twice and received the Iron Cross First Class. Hitler achieved the rank of corporal during World War I, and was left temporarily blinded from a gas attack at about the time Germany surrendered in 1918, one of the reasons he was so adamantly against using poison gas against enemy troops during World War II. Mainstream historians, bent on distorting Hitler's true war record, prefer to characterize Hitler's service in the German military as uneventful and Hitler as some kind of a coward. The truth, however, is just the opposite. He was a dedicated soldier who showed courage on many occasions and was acknowledged for his exemplary service. For more, TBR recommends the film Hitler: The Unknown Soldier: 1914-1918 (80 minutes, #416DVD or #416VHS) $30 from TBR BOOK CLUB, P.O. Box 15877, Washington, D.C. 20003. See page 64 of this issue for a handy order form.

us a conflict between the urge to self-preservation and the call of duty. And I had to go through that conflict too. As death sought its prey everywhere and unrelentingly, a nameless something rebelled within the weak body and tried to introduce itself under the name of common sense; but in reality it was fear, which had taken on this cloak in order to impose itself on the individual. But the more the voice that advised prudence increased its efforts and the more clear and persuasive became its appeal, resistance became all the stronger; until finally the internal strife was over, and the call of duty was triumphant.

Already in the winter of 1915-16 I had come through that inner struggle. The will had asserted its incontestable mastery. Whereas in the early days I went into the fight with a cheer and a laugh, I was now habitually calm and resolute. And that frame of mind endured. Fate might now put me through the final test without my nerves or reason giving way. The young volunteer had now become an old soldier. The same transformation took place throughout the whole army. Constant fighting had aged and toughened it, and hardened it, so that it stood firm and dauntless against every assault... and as long as Germans live they will be proud to remember that these men were the sons of their forefathers."

In these words, we can clearly see the poetic artistry of a cultured mind. On Dec. 2, 1914, the 25-year-old volunteer was awarded the Iron Cross, 2nd
class. In recognition of his bravery in the attack on the Bayernwald and in 10 other engagements near Wytschaete, he was ordered to take on the duty as a dispatch-carrier, which demanded great courage and reliability, for reports had often to be carried across open ground under heavy fire. This quickly made his name known throughout the regiment beyond the narrow circle of his comrades. On Oct. 7, 1916, he was wounded by a shell splinter. In March 1917, he returned to his regiment. He received several other distinctions, including a Regimental Diplom for special bravery in the fights near Fontaines and finally the Iron Cross, Class 1.

On October 14, 1918 he was severely injured along with many comrades in his regiment by mustard gas, which the British were then using, and he was temporarily blinded. While he was in the hospital a revolution broke out, the Communist revolution in Bavaria, instigated and led by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Kurt Eisner, all Jewish.

ENDNOTES:
1. Mein Kampf, 19.
2. Ibid., 17.
3. Ibid., 110.
4. Ibid., 111.
5. Ibid., 4.

CASSIAN D’ORNELLAS is a retired biology teacher who has always had an interest in the causes and effects of the two great world wars. This led him to do a study on the life of Adolf Hitler. TBR is serializing these writings as a factual biography of Hitler in this and subsequent issues of The Barnes Review.

A FACTUAL BIOGRAPHY OF ADOLF HITLER: CHAPTER FOUR

HITLER’S ARTISTIC ROOTS

By Cassian D’Ornellas

Hitler was introduced to the theater and the opera as a young boy of just 12 years old. How many adults have ever been to a play as artistic as William Tell or have visited the opera? If we are honest we would dare say very few, indeed, when compared to the entire population. Yet Hitler did so as a mere boy, because of which he was able to develop his appreciation for art as an adult later on. Hitler was clearly artistically inclined. This can be seen in his love for artistic painting, in his study of architecture and in his love for the theater and opera. This he expresses as follows:

A precocious revolutionary in politics, I was no less a precocious revolutionary in art. At that time the provincial capital of Upper Austria had a theater that, relatively speaking, was not bad. Almost everything was played there. When I was 12, I saw William Tell performed. That was my first experience in the theater. Some months later I attended a performance of Lohengrin, the first opera I had ever heard. Again and again I was drawn to hear operas; and today I consider it a great piece of luck that these modest productions in the little provincial city prepared the way and made it possible for us to appreciate the better productions later on. But all this helped to intensify my profound aversion for the career that my father had chosen for me.

That Hitler was a self-educated man there can be no doubt, and this can clearly be seen in his writing and the complex topics with which he has dealt. And when this is combined with his appreciation and knowledge of art, which is well above average, to imply that he is an ignoramus, a semi-literate and an uncultured buffoon, as most biographers have done, is blatantly absurd.

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