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Five Years of Hitler, 1938.

FIVE YEARS OF HITLER

What has happened to Germany, to the Jewish community of Germany, and to Europe since the advent of Hitler Five years ago?

By Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

> At The Temple

On Sunday morning, February 6, 1938 When the Nazis came into power, five years ago in Germany, they had a program of twenty-five points. They asked the German people for four years of absolute power during which time they would put that program into operation. That program of twenty-five points was partly Socialistic and partly Nationalistic. It was aimed to appeal first to the aroused and embittered nationalal sentiments, to capitalize on the national indignation and humiliation at having last the war, been disarmed, and saddled with all the penalties of a defeated nation, humiliation because the territory of the Germans was occupied by foreign troops long after the termination of the war. The program of the Nazis was an appeal to national patriotism, national a sense of chauvenism, national revenge, racial vigotry.

On its economic side, this program of twenty-five points was an appeal to the worker, to the small business man, to the small farmer of Germany. He promised to help them. It promised to curb big business monopolies, trusts. It promised to confiscate the vast estates of the Yunkers, subdivide them, aportion them among the land hungry peasantry of Germany. It promised to put an end to avenues of profiteering, avenues of interest and money lending. Big department stores, monopolies were to be taken over by the cities. But this was all a promise.

Professor Frederick Schuman, five years later, has this to say of the promises and the execution: "The party which began its career with anti-capitalistic and anti-feudalistic slogans ended its career as the docile slave of capitalism and feudalism in their most vicious forms. It is today serving the interest of Big Business and the aristocracy as against the workers, farmers, and the lower middle class."

These classes, the workers, the farmers and small business men were duped, as they are always duped. They were the easiest people to be duped by these incoherent and self-contradictory promises of the Nazi program, promises which, by the way, could not be fulfilled, promises which were nullified long before the party came into power, because it is on these promises that were nullified that the party did get into power. They promised Big Business not to be molested. Promises that relief was to be given to the small farmer in Eastern Prussia were gummed up by the Yunkers themselves. These promises were destroyed even before the party came into power.

One of the first acts of the party in power was to destroy the possibility of labor to make its class heard, its power felt in the economic life of the country. Labor unions were outlawed. Property was confiscated. The right to strike, the right to collective bargaining was outlawed. Even a request for higher wages on the part of an individual made him subject to feudal power of the state, subject to be a candidate for the concentration camp. The individual was reduced to a state of serfdom. And if any class has suffered in Germany in the last five years, it is the class of the middle man. The middle class, it is the consensus of opinion, has died out in Germany. One-third of all the retail merchants in Germany last year, made less than 135 marks a month. Big Business is growing, is swallowing up and absorbing the small capitalist. While the little fellow is languishing, Big Business is loaded with projects which feed Big Business in Germany. Thus, the German Dye Trust which in 1933 controlled one-third of the chemical production of the country, in 1937 controlled one-half of the chemical production of the country.

The large estates of the Yunkers have not been subdivided.

The Yunkers today are in as complete control of the Army as in the days of the Kaiser. Do not be misled by new surprises which Hitler has spring on Germany. When the smoke of the publicity is clear, you will probably find that the Army is in stronger control of the country than it was before Hitler came into power. The Yunkers are still masters.

A law has been passed to prohibit the workers on the farms from migrating into the city. Practically in the same way as the serfs were chained to the estates of the feudal lords in the periods of feudalism. And in spite of the subsidies and the numerous laws which have been enacted to built up agriculture in Germany, in order to make Germany more self-sufficient, actually production in 1937 was less than it was in 1933. This is what Five years of Hitler have done to the Twenty-Five point program of the party.

The cost of living has risen. Food is scarce and adulterated. Germany can't raise enough for her own needs. She cannot import enough raw materials and foodstuffs because of the foreign exchange. The gold reserves which were quite sizable have vanished or dwindled almost to a vanishing point. The national debt of Germany increased tenfold in the last five years and it only the financial jugglery of men of the kind of Schact who have staved off forman financial bankruptcy. Such is the economic record of five years of Hitler.

Schooling in Germany has been cut down by three years. High School and University enrollments dropped sharply. Standards of study have dropped. Education, as you well know, has been sharply regimented. All liberal teachers have been expelled. All liberal textbooks on the social sciences have been thrown out of school. Schools have

been brought into complete alignment with party dogmatics. On the subjects of race, state authority and international law and war and peace the scholar must not express any opinion. He must take his cue from the propaganda office of Mr. Goebbels.

The famous American historian, Beard, has this to say about education in Germany - five years after the rise of Hitler into power: "If the Hitler regime continues, the German people will be a people almost totally ignorant of the outside world and indifferent to all ideas and interests not contained in the Nazi creed. It is difficult to see how opposing ideas can make any headway in Germany against this system, unless there is an economic crash or a disrupting war. In fact the scheme of education coupled with other propaganda, is designed to prepare the German people for hunger and misery and to glorify privation in the interest of Hitler's State. The whole case is summed up in the formula: 'We can do without butter, but we cannot do without cannon.'"

It was Fichte, the great German philosopher who found himself living in a regime somewhat similar to that of the Hitler regime at the close of the Eighteenth Century in Germany who prayed for the coming of the enemies of Germany, who prayed for the French to come in order that freedom of thought might be restored to German Universities. And this is the record of five years of education in the Hitler regime.

The story of Religion in Germany is well known to you.

They have fought both Judaism and Christianity. They have attacked the Old Testament, naturally, because it was Jewish. They have attacked the New Testament, though not as viciously. They have

even attempted to rewrite it. It is a rather hopeless task. They are not, however, beyond even that. They have attempted to de-Judaize Jesus, either to bring him into a new incarnation as a Nordic, or to make out of him an anti-Semite. Even that was attempted. Those members of the Catholic Church who have not buckled under the terrorist regime, who were dynamically opposed to the pdicies of the Nazis in regard to their Religion, found themselves imprisoned in concentration camps and driven from their pulpits, harassed, persecuted. Men like Dr. Karl Barth, one of the foremost intellectual leaders of Protestahtism were expelled from Universities. Dr. Barth has this to say: "Nazi theory has no abiding place in the Church. If it prevails it will be the end of the Church. The fellowship of religion is not through blood and not through race. If the GermanEvangelical Church excludes the Jewish Scriptures or regards them as of secondary importance, it ceases to be the Church".

Many who hold this view in Germany today are imprisoned. A new Kulture camp has been set aflame in Germany by Hitler, and the Chaplains of his own army have recently warned him that a persecution of the religious traditions of the people will mean ultimately a revolution among the German people themselves. This is the result of five years of Hitler's regime in Germany. Spiritually, that regime has been a disaster for the people.

There is in Germany today, among some of the German people, particularly among the Prussian element, a certain primitive rudeness, a certain arrogance and brutality, let us say, a certain madness, which fortunately that people has succeeded through the years to suppress, to keep in check. Hitler has unleashed it. Hitler has not only hailed it again, he has actually exalted and idealized this brutality, this nationalistic furor, this primitive madness, which by the way, more than a hundred years

ago was unlike the madness of any other people on earth. Heine, not only a great poet but a prophet spoke of it and said: A French lunacy is far behind a German one, for in this latter madness, as Polonius said, there is no methld; and that German lunacy was carried out with a pedantry surpassing all belief, with a terrible conscientious scrupulousness, with a thoroness of which a superficial French madman cannot even form an idea.

A regime that stands by and sees a community of 600,000 souls in its midst broken, humiliated, pulled into the mire and trampled upon and hasn't the courage or the will or the decency to utter a word of tesentment or a word, even, of apology, is a nation which is having its spiritual thrust-back into the barbarism and savagery of the Jungle.

This is what five years of Hitlerism has done for the German people.

Hitler has re-armed Germany at a staggering/for re-armament. He has made it gain a great military nation. Those who take delight in such a fact, or seem to be proud of this remilitarization - overlook this little fact - that is, in 1914, Germany was the greatest and strongest military country on the continent of Europe. And what good did it do it? A nation's strength is not in its own military equipment. No nation today fights alone. A nation's strength today is in its allies, in its friends. German re-armament has not made friends for Germany. Rather has it set in motion a vast re-armament race among all the nations. Last year, twelve billion dollars were spent on re-armament. Germany's potential enemies are stronger today than in 1914. And Germany is weaker today than in 1914. For she is exhausted. Should Germany enter a war tomorrow, unlike the time she entered the war in 1914, her people have been living on food substitutes. Before entering the war she is financially

broke. Germany will need the vital raw materials even thought for years now she has tried to make herself independent. She will still have to import raw materials. So in spite of her great re-armament, Germany, in 1938, is not prepared to go to war and cannot go to war unless she does so as a blind to prevent internal revolution.

But if Germany can not go to war and will not be able to go to war next year or the year after, what becomes of the national economy of Germany which has been geared up to war? What becomes of the colossal re-armament preparations which Germany has been making?

Five years of Hitler have helped to bring into Europe an element of anarchy in international relations. This is the price which Europe has paid for Hitler and Mussolini. They have utter disregard for treaties. They make scraps of paper out of agreements volunatarily entered into. Never has international law sunk so low in the last one hundred years as in the last five years. Cynicism, opportunism - lying, deception, racketeering, piracy, blackmail - those are the characteristics and features which Fascist governments have brought forcible into international relationships in the last few years.

Five years of Hitler have tended to divide Europe into
two camps which in my humble judgment is perhaps the most nenacing situation
in Europe today. In the 17th century, Europe fought for almost one
hundred years over differences in religious idologies. Europe was turned into
two camps, Protestant and Catholic - and they divided Europe. Two-thirds
of the towns of Europe were simply left in ruins when this bloody internicine
war over idology came to an end. After the conflict an agreement was entered

into the effect that those who wanted to be Protestants, were to be allowed to worship as Protestants and that those who wanted to be Catholic were to be allowed to worship as Catholics. That was the upshot of the one hundred years of war. And at the end of the war, two-thirds of the towns of Europe were simply left in ruins when this blood war over ideologyy came to an end. Mitler is attempting to do the same thing for Western Europe in the twentieth century. He is trying to divide Europe again on the basis of ideology - this time it is capitalism and communism. He has organized an anti-communist front and is summoning the nations of the world to war upon communism. If that is allowed to go unchecked, if the trend toward dividing Europe ideologically on the basis of economic policy is allowed to group the nations of the world into two campts, then we can look forward to another hundred years of war of the sort that is going on in Spain today, when death will reign from the skies, when brother will kill brother and when nothing will end that war except complete physical and spiritual exhaustion. Then they will probably do what they did in the seventeenth century - allow those who want to be communists and socialists be communists and sociallists and allow those who want to be capitalists to be capitalists.

This is what five years of Hitlerism has done.

What he did to the Jews of Germany in five years, you know. In a book which I read recently by Stephen H. Roberts called "The House That Hitler Built", a concise summary is given of the status of the Jew today:

"At present, the German Jew has no civil rights. He is not a citizen; he cannot vote or attend any political meeting; he has no liberty of speech and cannot defend himself in print; he cannot become a civil servant

or a judge; he cannot be a writer or a publisher or a journalist: he cannot speak over the radio; he cannot become a screen actor or an actor before Aryan audiences; he cannot teach in any educational institution; he cannot enter the service of the railway, the Reichsbank, and many other banks; he cannot exhibit paintings or give concerts; he cannot work in any public hospital; he cannot enter the Labour Front or any of the professional organizations, although membership of many callings is restricted to members of these groups; he cannot even sell books or antiques. If he is starving he can receive no aid from the Winterhilfe organization, and if he dies in battle his name will be on no war memorial (for has he not seen the erasing of the names of his forebears from such memorials by order of Goebbels and Frick?). In addition to these, there are many other restrictions applying in certain localities. The upshot of them all is that the Jew is deprived of all opportunity for advancement and is lucky if he contrives to scrape a bare living unmolested by Black Guards or Gestapo. It is a campaign of annihilation - a pogrom of the crudest form, supported by every State instrument."

In fact, this is the only thing in which Hitler has been successful. It is the only thing on which he ever had a clear opinion — determination to destroy the Jews. Germany introduced a new note in Jewish extermination. They did not resort to expulsion, except for those who were tortured or sent to concentration camps. There were no staged pogroms, no formal expulsion. Rather, they adopted a gradual policy of social and economic disability. They make it impossible for the Jews living in Germany to make a living. They have given him absolutely no status as a citizen. Even in the Middle Ages, when in the ghetto, the Jew had status. He was protected by certain ghetto laws. The Jew in Germany has absolutely no status today.

As a result, one hundred these thousand Jews left the country.

Young people are being evacuated. Those who have left Germany have in some countries been welcomed. In other countries they have created a serious problem for themselves and for those living there.

At present, in Germany there does not seem to be a ray of hope for the Jewish community. Yet, I for one, see that it is a part of indecent haste to write an obituary for German Jewry. There are still over four hundred thousand Jews in Germany, living Jews. We should not be too eager to recite the Kaddish over them.

If there is no transformation of policy, if world events which can arise from any quarter of the globe, do not appear and give the course of history a new jolt, a new direction, then, of course, the situation of the Jews in Germany is hopeless. Who are we to assume, to dogmatize? Who has the right to prophesy what will happen in Europe next year, next month, or the next day? Are things so secure, prosperous, stable, that nothing can happen there? Is the upheaval of yesterday an index of tranquility in the country, or a smouldering fire within than might break out? Anyone who banks on Hitler's triumph ultimately and Israel's defeat ultimately, is a fool.

We must remember that all Central and Eastern Europe moves in one constellation. What happens in one country will reflect in all countries. It is inevitable that infamous lies in Poland will spread to other countries. Germany is desirous of winning Rumania and Poland away from its potential enemies, from France and Czechoslovakia. She has spent millions upon millions of dollars in fostering Nazi movements, subsidizing the press. So that you must take the picture as a unit

As anti-Semitism spreads from Germany, it will also recede as its main

source in Berlin is destroyed. The whole filthy complex of barbarism has been re-introduced by the Nazis in Germany - blood and soil, hatred of freedom of the individual, the whole Judaeo-Christian tradition - this whole filthy complex of ideas will have to be destroyed in Europe either on the there battlefield or through some internal revolution before/ix will be respite for the Jews in Germany, in Eastern Europe and for humanity.

Let me remind you that great issues are never settled in a straight-forward way. The Jews have a x right to live in Germany. The issues will not be fought out in the future per se. On that particular issue the Nazis will come in the wake of mightier decisions which will have to be made and which will involve the whole continent of Europe.

Sooner or later the question of minority rights will have to be solved. The abuse of/minority led to the World War. One of the first things was to establish a principle of minority rights to avoid future wars. This is again in the discard. Minority groups, the Jewish minority group is again being victimized. In this suppression of minorities, racial or religious, lies the situation of future European wars. Similarly the people of Europe will have to decide whether these principles of democracy, equality and freedom will have any chance to live. When that decision is made, the question of Jewish rights, of equality, liberty will also be established.

Five years of Hitler, my friends, in conclusion, have been a series of coups, surprises and purges. But the whole pack of surprises is about ended. If there are any more, it must be in the direction of a thrust, an outward thrust - a military venture, an attempt to absorbe Austria, an attempt to break up Czechoslovakia in war. If there will be no war, this program of re-armament, of economic self-sufficiency which is draining the life-blood

of the German worker, must sooner or later lead to internal combustion.

The status of the Jews in Eastern and Central Europe in the next years will be determined by the events of Europe. As long as the shadows of Hitler and Mussolini are over Europe, there will be no peace and tranquility, no orderliness anywhere in the world.

The future is in the hands of God.



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THE HOUSE THAT HITLER BUILT

By Stephen H. Roberts

"The party which began its career with anti-capitalistic and anti-feudalistic slogans ended its career as the docile slave of capitalism and feudalism in their most vicious forms. It is today serving the interest of Big Business and the aristocracy as against the workers, farmers, and the lower middle class."

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