

The Nizkor Project

Office of Strategic Services
Hitler Source Book
Interview With Dr. Eduard Bloch
March 5, 1943
(Part 2 of 2)

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...All friends of the family know how Frau Hitler encouraged his boyish efforts to become an artist; at what cost to herself one may guess. Despite her poverty, she permitted him to reject a job which was offered in the Post office, so that he could continue his painting. She admired his water colors and his sketches of the countryside. Whether this was honest admiration or whether it was merely an effort to encourage his talent I do not know.

She did her best to raise her boy well. She saw that he was neat, clean, and as well fed as her purse would permit. Whenever he came to my consultation room this strange boy would sit among the other patients, awaiting his turn.

There was never anything seriously wrong. Possibly his tonsils would be inflamed. He would stand obedient and unflinching while I depressed his tongue and swabbed the trouble spots. Or, possibly, he would be suffering with a cold. I would treat him and send him on his way. Like any well-bred boy of fourteen or fifteen he would bow and thank me courteously.

I, of course, know of the stomach trouble that beset him later in life largely as a result of bad diet while working as a common laborer in Vienna. I cannot understand the many references to his lung trouble as a youth. I was the only doctor treating him during the period in which he is supposed to have suffered from this. My records show nothing of the sort. To be sure, he didn't have the rosy cheeks and the robust good health of most of the other youngsters; but at the same time he was not sickly.

...At the Realschule young Adolf's work was anything but brilliant. Authority for this, I have the word of his former teacher, Dr. Karl Huemer an old acquaintance of mine. I was Frau Huemer's physician. In Mein Kampf, Hitler records that he was an indifferent student in most subjects, but that he loved history. This agrees with the recollections of Prof. Huemer.

Desiring additional training in painting, Hitler decided he would go to Vienna to study at the Academy. This was a momentous decision for a member of a poor family. His mother worried about how he would get along, I understand that she even suggested pinching the family budget a little tighter to enable her to send him a tiny allowance. Credit to the boy, he refused. He even went farther; he signed his minute inheritance over to his sisters. He was eighteen at the time.

I am not sure of the exact details of what happened on that trip to Vienna. Some contend that he was not admitted to the Academy because of his unsatisfactory art work. Others accept Hitler's statement that his rejection was due to his failure to graduate from the Realschule- .. In any case he was home again within a few weeks. It was later in this year - 1908 - that it became my duty to give Hitler what was perhaps the saddest news of his life.

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One day Frau Hitler came to visit me during my morning office hours. She complained of a pain in her chest. She spoke in a quiet, hushed voice; almost a whisper. The pain she said, had been great; enough to keep her awake nights on end. She had been busy with her household so had neglected to seek medical aid. Besides, she thought the pain would pass. away... An examination showed that Frau Hitler had an extensive tumor of the breast. I did not tell her of my diagnosis.

I summoned the children to my office next day and stated the case frankly. Their mother, I told them, was a gravely ill woman Without surgery, I explained, there was absolutely no hope of recovery. Even with surgery there was but the slightest chance that she would live. In family council they must decide what was to be done.

Adolf Hitler's reaction to this news was touching. His long, sallow face was contorted. Tears flowed from his eyes,. Did his mother, he asked, have no chance? Only then did I realize the magnitude of the attachment that existed between mother and son. I explained that she did have a chance; but a small one. Even this shred of hope gave him some comfort.

The children carried my message to their mother. She accepted the verdict as I was sure she would- with fortitude. Deeply religious, she assumed that her fate was God's will. It would never have occurred to her to complain. She would submit to the operation as soon as I could make preparations.

I explained the case to Dr. Karl Urban, the chief of the surgical staff at the Hospital of the Sisters of Mercy in Linz. Urban was one of the best-known surgeons in Upper Austria. He was - and is - a generous man, a credit to his profession. He willingly agreed to undertake the operation on any basis I suggested. After examination he concurred in my belief that Frau

Hitler had very little chance of surviving but that surgery offered the only hope.

... Frau Hitler arrived at the hospital one evening in the early summer of 1908. I do not have the exact date, for my records of the case were placed in the archives of the Nazi party in Munich.

In any case, Frau Hitler spent the night in the hospital and was operated on the following morning. At the request of this gentle, harried soul I remained beside the operating table while Dr. Urban and his assistant performed the surgery.

Two hours later drove in my carriage across the Danube to the little house at No. 9 Bluetenstrasse, in the section of the city known as Urfahr. There the children awaited me.

The girls received the word I brought with calm and reserve. The face of the boy was streaked with tears, and his eyes were tired and red. He listened until I had finished speaking. He had but one question. In a choked voice he asked: "Does my mother suffer?"

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...As weeks and months passed after the operation Frau Hitler's strength began visibly to fail. At most she could be out of bed for an hour or two a day. During this period Adolf spent most of his time around the house, to which his mother had returned.

He slept in the tiny bedroom adjoining that of his mother so that he could be summoned at any time during the night. During the day he hovered about the large bed in which she lay.

An illness such as that suffered by Frau Hitler, there is usually a great amount of pain. She bore her burden well; unflinching and uncomplaining. But it seemed to torture her son. An anguished grimace would come over him when he saw pain contract her face. There was little that could be done. An injection of morphine from time to time would give temporary relief; but nothing lasting. Yet Adolf seemed enormously grateful even for these short periods of release.

I shall never forget Klara Hitler during those days. She was forty eight at the time; tall, slender and rather handsome, yet wasted by disease. She was soft-spoken, patient; more concerned about what would happen to her family than she was about her approaching death. She made no secret of these worries; or about the fact that most of her thoughts were for her son. "Adolf is still so young." she said repeatedly.

On the day of December 20, I made two calls. The end was approaching ...So the word that Angela Hitler brought me the following morning came as no surprise. Her mother had died quietly in the night. The children had decided not to disturb me, knowing that their mother was beyond all medical aid. But, she asked, could I come now? Someone in an official position

would have to sign the death certificate....

...The postmaster's widow, their closest friend, was with the children, having more or less taken charge of things. Adolf, his face showing the weariness of a sleepless night, sat beside his mother. In order to preserve a last impression, he had sketched her as she lay on her deathbed...

I sat with the family for a while, trying to ease their grief. I explained that in this case death had been a savior. They understood. In the practice of my profession it is natural that I should have witnessed many scenes such as this one, yet none of them left me with quite the same impression. In all my career I have never seen anyone so prostrate with grief as Adolf Hitler.

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I did not attend Klara Hitler's funeral, which was held on Christmas Eve. The body was taken from Urfahr to Leonding, only a few miles distant. Klara Hitler was buried beside her husband in the Catholic cemetery, behind the small yellow stucco church. After the others - the girls, and the postmaster's widow - had left, Adolf remained behind; unable to tear himself away from the freshly filled grave.

...A few days after the funeral the family came to my office. They wished to thank me for the help I had given them. There was Paula, fair and stocky; Angela, slender, pretty but rather anemic; Klara and Adolf. The girls spoke what was in their hearts while Adolf remained silent. I recall this particular scene as vividly as I might recall something that took place last week.

Adolf wore a dark suit and a loosely knotted cravat. Then, as now, a shock of hair tumbled over his forehead. His eyes were on the floor while his sisters were talking. Then came his turn. He stepped forward and took my hand. Looking into my eyes, he said: "I shall be grateful to you forever." That was all. Then he bowed. I wonder if today he recalls this scene. I am quite sure that he does, for in a sparing sense Adolf Hitler has kept to his promise of gratitude. Favors were granted me which I feel sure were accorded no other Jew in all Germany or Austria.

...During this period (first years in Vienna) he took time out to send me a penny post card. On the back was a message: "From Vienna I send you my greetings. Yours, always faithfully, Adolf Hitler."

...Official Nazi publications also record that I received one of Hitler's paintings - a small landscape. If I did I am not aware of it. But it is quite possible that he sent me one and that I have forgotten the matter. In Austria patients frequently send paintings or other gifts to their physicians as a mark of gratitude...

...I did, however, preserve one piece of Hitler's art work. This came during the period in Vienna when he was painting post cards, posters, etc., making enough money to support himself Hitler sent me one of these cards. It showed a hooded Capuchin monk hoisting a glass of bubbling champagne. Under the picture was a caption: "Prosit NeuJahr." On the reverse side he had written a message: "The Hitler family sends you the best wishes for a Happy New Year. In everlasting thankfulness, Adolf Hitler. " (reports about confiscation of these souvenirs by Gestapo who issued receipt for them)

When he left for Vienna, Adolf Hitler was destined to disappear from our lives for a great many years Not until the beginning of his political career in 1920 were we again to get news of this quiet, polite boy who grew up among us.

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... in 1937, a number of local Nazis attended the party conference at Nirnber [sic]. After the conference Hitler invited several of these people to come with him to his mountain villa at Berchtesgaden. The Fuehrer asked for news of Linz. How was the town ? Were people there supporting him? He asked for news of me. Was I still alive, still practicing? Then he made a statement irritating to local Nzis [sic]. "Dr. Bloch," said Hitler, "is an Edaljude - a noble Jew. If all Jews were like him, there would be no Jewish question."...

Dr. E. Bloch- My Patient Hitler - Colliers, March 1941

About Hitler's return to Linz:

.. It was a moment of tense excitement. For years Hitler had been denied the right to visit the country of his birth. Now that country belonged to him. The elation that he felt was written on his features. He smiled, waved, gave the Nazi salute to the people that crowded the street. Then for a moment he glanced up at my window. I doubt that he saw me but he must have had a moment of reflection. Here was the home of the Edeljude who had diagnosed his mother's fatal cancer; here was the consulting room of the man who had treated his sisters; here was the place he had gone as a boy to have his minor ailments attended....

It was a brief moment, then the procession was gone....

.. Hitler established himself in the Weinzinger Hotel, particularly requesting an apartment with a view of the Bestling Mountain. This scene had been visible from the windows of his modest apartment where he had spent his boyhood....

The following day he called in a few old acquaintances: Oberhammer, a loyal party functionary; Kubitschek, the musician. Liedel the watchmaker; Dr. Huemer, his former history teacher. It was understandable that he couldn't ask me, a Jew, to such a meeting; yet he did inquire after

me....

... Hitler arrived Saturday evening. Sunday he visited his mother's grave, and reviewed local Nazis as they marched before him... On Monday, Hitler departed for Vienna. ...

Reports about special treatment by Gestapo. Yellow star removed from home and office of Dr. Bloch. He also was allowed to remain in his apartment - did not have to vacate Linz - Mitter [sic] apparently handled "by Berlin"

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about trying to get favor to take life savings with them:

... I knew that I could not see Adolf Hitler. Yet I felt that if I could get a message to him to would perhaps give us some help.

If Hitler himself was inaccessible perhaps one of his sisters would aid us. Klara was the nearest: she lived in Vienna. Her husband had died and she lived alone in a modest apartment in a quiet residential district. Plans were made for my daughter, Gertrude, to make the trip to Vienna to see her. She went to the apartment, knocked, but got no answer. Yet she was sure that there was someone at home.

She sought the aid of a neighbor. Frau Wolf - Klara Hitler - received no one, the neighbor said, except a few intimate friends. But this kind woman agreed to carry a message and report Frau Wolf's reply. My daughter waited. Soon the answer came back. Frau Wolf sent greetings and would do whatever she could. By good fortune Hitler was in Vienna that night for one of his frequent but unheralded visits to the opera. Frau Wold saw him and , I feel sure, gave him the message. But no exception was made in our case....

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