The House that Hitler Built

By the Same Author

HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN LAND SETTLEMENT POPULATION PROBLEMS OF THE PACIFIC HISTORY OF FRENCH COLONIAL POLICY THE SQUATTING AGE IN AUSTRALIA HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE, ETC.

The House that Hitler Built

by

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SECOND EDITION



Methuen Publishers London 36 Essex Street, W.C.2

First Published		October 21st 1937
Second Edition	•	1937

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

This book is written primarily for the man-in-the-street who wishes to have some idea of the German experiment. It may best be explained by a personal note. Most of my work for the last twenty years has been concerned with contemporary history, and I spent most of the study-leave which the University of Sydney granted me (November 1935 to March 1937) in Germany and neighbouring countries. My main aim was to sum up the New Germany without any prejudice (except that my general approach was that of a democratic individualist), and to contrast the state of affairs to-day with that which I knew in Germany at the end of the inflationary period, then at the height of the Weimar Republic's temporary success, and lastly immediately prior to Hitler's accession to power. I may have gained-or sufferedfrom the detachment of view which is natural to one living in a distant Dominion.

Owing to a fortunate conjunction of circumstances, I was afforded unusual facilities in Germany. The Nazi authorities did everything possible to aid my investigations, although they knew from the outset that my attitude was one of objective criticism. Indeed, they had even filed copies of all my articles and summaries of my wireless and other talks on Germany over a period of years. Despite this, no request of mine was too much for them, and the only refusal I encountered in the whole of Germany was in being denied access to their collection of banned literature.

I wish, then, to acknowledge my indebtedness to them, even in cases where they knew that they could never convert me. I should also like to point out that, in every case, the judgements are my own. None of the scores of officials who helped me must in any way be blamed for the conclusions I have drawn. To a man, they did their duty as officials of the Party and the State. I wish to be quite clear on this point.

Under the conditions I cannot mention individuals, but should like to thank the many officers of the Foreign Office, the Ribbentrop Bureau, the Labour Front, the Labour Service Headquarters, the Reichsbank, the Reichskreditgesellschaft, the Ministry of Finance, the department of Public Works, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Propaganda, the Finance Ministry, the Ministry of Labour, and many other departments. I am particularly indebted to scores of Party officials, especially to those who arranged that I should meet such persons as Hitler, Hess, and Schacht, and those who invited me to the Nuremberg Party Rally in September 1936. A special mention must be given to the officials who made available to me the resources of Party Headquarters in Munich. I also owe much to private industrialists and business leaders for their frank discussions, although naturally I can be no more specific than this under existing circumstances.

I must also pay tribute to the ordinary people of Germany who made my investigations such a great pleasure. Although we motored many thousands of miles through every German province but one, and although we showed what must often have been a disconcerting persistence in trying to find out what tinker and worker, professor and farmer thought, we met not the slightest discourtesy and found everywhere a striking eagerness for friendship with Great Britain.

Explanatory mention must be made of the use of S.A. and S.S. throughout this book. The term S.A. is used for *Sturmabteilung*, and is synonymous with Storm Troopers or Brownshirts or the Brown Army (the original private militia of Hitler); S.S., on the other hand, is an abbreviation of *Schutzstaffel*, the smaller body of praetorian guards, often referred to as Black Guards.

In writing this book, I have tried to give an account of Hitler's first four years of power and to throw light on this by mentioning my own experiences in Germany. Wherever necessary, I have gone back to the origins of certain movements, but in general have made no attempt to cover the period between 1921 and 1933, because many adequate surveys of

Preface

this formative period exist. The presentation has often been interpretative rather than factual, although in places (as when dealing with Party organization) I have gone into great detail because the facts are not easily accessible to the kind of people for whom this book is written. I claim no finality or completeness. I have merely tried to put on record one observer's idea of Hitlerite Germany as it existed after four years of power. The faults of omission in attempting to sum up most aspects of so vast a subject in a hundred thousand words are everywhere obvious; and I can but apologize for them in advance. It will be obvious, too, that many sections (especially those on economics and foreign policy) are not written for the expert, but, as I explained earlier, this book is directed towards a wider public. I put it forward hesitatingly as a general survey and interpretation.

A few dates are necessary. My last personal contact with Germany was in the early days of January 1937, and I have not seen this book since the manuscript left my hands on June 1st, 1937.

Lastly, I must express an especial obligation to the Senate and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney for granting me facilities to undertake this work.

S. H. ROBERTS

Sydney University,

June 1st, 1937.

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Printed in Great Britain by Wyman & Sons, Lid., London, Fakenbam and Reading.