

AMERICA FACES THE WAR

. X .

*German
Geopolitics*

By H. W. Weigert

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GERMAN
GEOPOLITICS

By H. W. Weigert

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THIS SERIES of Pamphlets, published under the title 'America Faces the War', originates in the U.S.A. and has much the same object as the 'Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs' so widely read, not only in England, but all over the world.

Just as Americans have been interested in the English pamphlets, so will the rest of the world wish to see war problems through American eyes.

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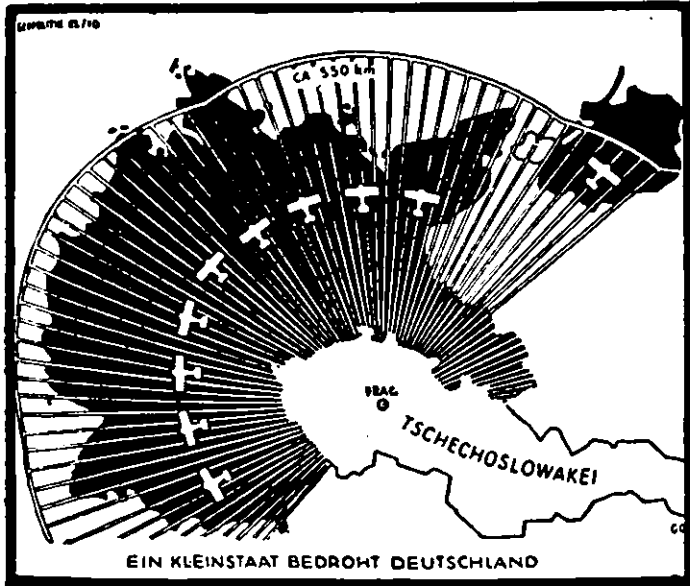
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Note



FROM what source does Hitler draw his inspiration for his strategy? The answer is to be found in Dr. Karl Haushofer and his Geopolitical Institute in Munich, who owes much to Sir Halford Mackinder's teaching. It is here that this cold, hard, dynamic science of war-geography, backed by propaganda and maps of terrifying suggestion, is hammered out. It is interesting to note that Haushofer was convinced that a German-Russian-Japanese alliance was in the destined order of things and that he was out of sympathy with the Nazi anti-Bolshevists. It is not known how Haushofer (who is a Major-General) has reacted to the German attack on Russia, but it would seem that Hitler, in forsaking his advice, for perhaps the first time, has made an error which will cost him the war.

The author of this pamphlet, which is of considerable interest and importance, argues that the U.S.A. (and by inference we) should have behind our General staff a *humanized* bureau of the same order as Dr. Haushofer's.



MAP PUBLISHED IN GERMANY IN 1934
TO CREATE FEAR OF CZECH BOMBING

German Geopolitics



IN THESE days, when we are facing the most decisive struggle world history has ever seen, it becomes more and more apparent that the question whether domination of the oceans or of the continents will prevail is the crucial question of the century. The events in Russia and in the Far East have finally opened the eyes of the public to an understanding of the tremendous goal of Hitler's armies: to develop a gigantic world pincers movement with the aim of outflanking the oceans, and, by the control of the continental spaces and their ports, to strangle sea power.

In exploring the theoretical sources of this tremendous action American journalists and authors have belatedly discovered the existence of the German Institute for Geopolitics and its founder and head, seventy-two-year-old Dr. Karl Haushofer, general of the First World War, professor of geography at the University of Munich, and president of the German Academy. As usual when writers discover the existence of a pertinent theory and rush to explain it, the American reading public has been treated to a brief but intensive course in geopolitics, in which facts, opinions, and speculations have been thoroughly aired and often garbled.

Typical is a recent article in *Current History* by Frederic Sondern, Jr., which was condensed by the *Reader's Digest* under the arresting title, '1,000 Scientists Behind Hitler'. Mr. Sondern, who stands in great awe of Haushofer's guiding genius, claims that the planning and timing of Hitler's campaigns are 'the work of one man'.

'Major-General Professor Dr. Karl Haushofer and his Geopolitical Institute in Munich with its 1,000 scientists, technicians and spies are almost unknown to the public, even in the Reich,' writes Mr. Sondern. 'But their ideas, their charts, maps, statistics, information, and plans have dictated Hitler's moves from the very beginning.... Haushofer's Institute is no mere instrument which Hitler uses. It is the other way round. Dr. Haushofer and his men dominate Hitler's thinking.'

According to Sondern, Haushofer virtually dictated parts of *Mein Kampf*; it is Haushofer who now tells the German General Staff whom to attack and when, as well as the exact strategical and psychological results of their action; he not only maintains an exhaustive strategic file of the world, with complete information about every country in the atlas, but also a sort of super-Gestapo, which corrupts and influences to the German way of thinking important politicians and manufacturers in countries which Germany plans to control in its drive for world domination.

As I shall try to explain later, Sondern's sensational claims are not warranted by the facts. Still it is beyond doubt that Haushofer exercised a strong influence on Hitler's political thinking and that Rudolf Hess, who shared Hitler's cell in Landsberg prison, can be classified as an outspoken disciple of Haushofer. Their hopes for German expansion both in Europe and in colonial possessions found a strong and convincing expression in the emphasis the geopoliticians laid on the idea of *Lebensraum* (living space). To think in terms of continents, to accept 'scientific' doctrines which had abandoned the strict determinism of political geography and were leading into the nebulous realm of dynamic

metaphysics—all this appealed strongly to the dreamer Adolf Hitler and to his inner circle.

Therefore an understanding of Haushofer's ideas is necessary if we want to understand Hitler's foreign policy. And it may be that an analysis of German geopolitics will help us to understand the reasons for Hitler's sudden violation of the German-Russian pact of 1939. Was it the last and logical act in the Russian drama, prepared and approved by Haushofer and his followers, or did it mean a decisive break between Hitler and Haushofer and their ideologies, a rupture which may lead to consequences of incalculable importance for the destiny of the world?

If we attempt an analysis of these questions and of the real significance of German geopolitics, it is essential to approach the subject uninfluenced by the recent fashion of making Haushofer the mystery man behind the curtain, his Institute a nest of international spies, and geopolitics, a superman-science on Nazi soil. I propose to digest some of the most important publications on geopolitics, especially Haushofer's dignified monthly magazine, *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, to try to describe the real meaning and the *Weltanschauung* of German geopolitics, and also to apply it to the war strategy of the German General Staff.

II

Although discovered by the American public only in the recent months of this war, the theory of geopolitics itself is several decades old. Moreover, it is by no means the exclusive property of the Germans; two of its outstanding exponents, Rudolf Kjellen and Sir Halford Mackinder, are respectively Swedish and English.

The accepted founder of the school was the German Friedrich Ratzel, professor of geography at the University of Munich, who originated the idea of the importance of a space-conception. 'Every people', he maintained, has to be educated up from smaller to larger space conceptions; and the process has to be repeated again and again to prevent the people from sinking back into the old small space-conceptions. The decay of every state is the result of a declining space-conception.' A pioneer oceanographer, Ratzel thoroughly understood the importance of sea power, and he warned the German people that to fulfil their destiny they must either ally themselves with the British sea power or win it for themselves.

Ratzel's fundamental principles, which were essentially in the sphere of geography, were adopted and expanded by Kjellen, who saw the basic rivalry between England and Germany as founded on England's insistence on the mastery of the seas. Kjellen's application of geographical principles to world politics profoundly inspired Haushofer.

By far the most important and most prophetic of Haushofer's predecessors was Sir Halford Mackinder, who made the age-old geographical division of land and sea into an issue of paramount political importance. His book, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, which he wrote in 1919 as a warning to the statesmen of the peace conference, qualifies as prophecy, for in it he warned the representatives of the Allies that the danger to the peace of Europe lay in German domination of Russia and the East.

Laying what proved to be the foundations of Haushofer's theory, Mackinder united the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa into a single unit which he called the 'World-Island', around which the other continents are mere satellites. The key to the whole world-island

is the 'Heartland', a district extending roughly from the Volga to the Yangtze and from the Himalayas to the Arctic Ocean. This territory, invulnerable to sea-power from the surrounding oceans, he saw as commanding the whole of the 'World-Island'. 'When our statesmen are in conversation with the defeated enemy', he warned, 'some airy cherub should whisper to them from time to time this saying, "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the World."' The system of small 'buffer' states which was set up between Germany and Russia by the conference shows that Mackinder's warning did not go entirely unheeded.

Mackinder recognized that Germany, by virtue of its strategic location in the neck of the European peninsula, held the trump card in the struggle for the domination of the Heartland, just as the similar strategical locations of the Macedonians and the Romans enabled them to conquer and rule huge empires.

Eastward the course of empire takes its way.

The peacemakers of Versailles failed to make a German-Russian combination impossible. The German-Russian treaty of 1939, which was made possible by Chamberlain's inability to see the handwriting on the wall, seemed to be the last step in the fulfilment of the old dream of close co-operation between Germany and Russia, a dream which Haushofer inherited from Bismarck. As these lines are written, the question is still unanswered whether Hitler's attack on Russia will give the German Empire even more than a complete co-operation with the Russian colossus, leading to economic domination, could give—or whether by forgetting his teacher's instructions Hitler prepared his own doom.

III

Haushofer's books and his editorials in the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (hereafter referred to as the *ZfG*) are the bible of modern German geopolitics. All other articles in the *ZfG*, especially the editorials by Haushofer's half-Jewish son and spiritual heir, Albrecht Haushofer, are written in the spirit of the master and under his personal supervision. One is entitled, therefore, to concentrate the study of the war aims of the geopolitical school in a survey of the *ZfG*. There are many satellites, of course, but most of them are unimportant, since they have no part in the strong influence of the Munich group on Hitler, Hess, Ribbentrop, and the German General Staff. Often, too, they are irresponsible: typical is Professor Ewald Banse, whose book, *Raum und Volk im Weltkriege*,¹ has, because of the ruthless total-war methods which he too bluntly advocated, even caused embarrassment to the Nazis. Publications of this kind are illustrative of certain ways of thinking in Germany, but we should keep in mind that German geopolitics, which influences army and state in Germany, is represented by Haushofer and his Munich disciples, not by such satellites as Banse.

On the other hand, Haushofer succeeded in building up an enormous following of young historians, economists, and students who have made geopolitics their life work. The number of their publications is legion. Their findings supply the German war machine with invaluable material, such as the American General Staff certainly does not possess. If we strip Sondern's words of their glamour and mystery, he is right in speaking of the '1,000 scientists behind Hitler'.

¹ Space and People in the World War.

Every issue of the amazingly comprehensive *ZfG* is replete with factual articles and maps concerning all countries and regions of the world. Every issue also contains a long article by Albrecht Haushofer on the geopolitical status and significance of the Atlantic region,¹ and an editorial by Karl Haushofer which discusses the tremendous amount of political literature, published in all parts of the world, concerning the 'Indo-Pacific sphere', an area which includes about half of the world's population. Here Haushofer especially emphasizes the problems of Russia, Japan, China, and India. Since 1937, the *ZfG* has laid special emphasis on the geopolitical importance of the radio, with even regular special issues being dedicated to discussions of this significant factor in world politics.

From the first evidences of Nazi power it has been an unproclaimed objective of the geopoliticians' journal to quiet the suspicion of the National Socialists that the science of geopolitics might differ from the ideology of Nazism and might even be inimical to it; from time to time it has been necessary to demonstrate that the 'theory of space' is not contradictory to the crude ideology of blood and soil and the racial doctrines of National Socialism, but on the contrary is based upon them. Whoever is able to read between the lines, however, understands that what Haushofer and his disciples are doing here is but Machiavellian strategy by which they plan to accomplish one aim—to make the excited race theorists in power serve their own purposes. For instance, in an editorial Haushofer advised his German readers, 'Do not be narrow-minded, but think in large terms of great

¹ However, since the outbreak of the war, Albrecht has been silent, and we may assume that his time is completely taken up with his activities in the Foreign Office.

spaces, in continents and oceans, and thereby direct your course with that of your Führer!' Here we see evidences of the attempt to mould National Socialism toward geopolitics without making the naïve Nazi conscious that his way of thinking was undergoing a subtle change. Very early was this beginning of a masterful, cautious attempt to raise National Socialist ideology out of the nebulous myth of blood and soil—a myth that appealed to the masses and, because of its crudeness and simplicity, paved the way for Hitler's power. Very seldom can remarks like the following be found, in which Haushofer openly criticizes National Socialist ideology: 'There are people who are never in any way able to observe objectively. They are the originators of all party programmes, including those of international socialism. To them this study is not addressed, nor to the race-fanatics who close their eyes to the facts, without which no keeper of bees or pigeons, no cattle or horse-breeder can exist or do business, to say nothing of the leader of a human state-organization.' Now that the power was achieved, Haushofer was trying to educate not only the German people but also the tyrant of Germany himself, and to direct Hitler's thinking from dreams toward realities and the possibilities of continents—constantly on the watch, however, never to let his pupil feel that he was being educated and guided.

This education meant primarily the understanding of geopolitics as a science in itself, reaching far beyond the limits of political geography. To appreciate how geopolitics has thus become a vital factor in Nazi ideology and in German official foreign policy, it is necessary to understand that geopolitics is in fact far different from mere political geography. As defined in the *ZfG*, 'Political geography concerns the description of state-space',

i.e. its location and extent. Geopolitics concerns the investigation of life-circumstances within a state and between states in their relationships of space. Or, in other words, 'The difference between geopolitics and political geography lies in the fact that, while political geography is only the investigation of conditions, geopolitics asks an outspoken *dynamic question*.'

From such definitions it is apparent that the Haushofer school has, to a certain degree, abandoned strict geographical determinism and has expanded into the realm of metaphysics. A good example of this broader aspect of geopolitics, which makes it an essential part of actual politics, is the following description by Karl Haushofer: 'Geopolitics is aimed not only to get everything ready for as wise as possible a realization of power in the realm of space for the art of politics; it has also to present its findings ready for immediate political use. This explains why geopolitics has to work on a much broader basis than that of mere political geography. State theory, economics, sociology, the "political science" of the United States, the lessons of history, of the law of nations, the public law, and the field of law in general, all have to contribute to the structure which is erected not only to shelter the past, but also to carry the fundamentals of the future. The scientific basis of geopolitics must be constructed for the requirements of the future, and with the courage to predict the future.'

It is important to note the dynamic character of geopolitics, a factor leading it naturally into speculation and the prediction of the future, as in the audacious formulations of Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*. In fact, a study of the *ZfG* reveals a close correlation between the long-range thinking of its writers and the later developments of world power politics. As early as

November 1934, the magazine was claiming: 'Austria is located in an extremely dangerous position from a military standpoint; its boundaries are defenceless to the attack of its neighbours, and it threatens, partly through its own fault, to become the battlefield of the next world war. The military weakness of the Austrian space is the reason for this danger, which can be averted only if a great power again takes over the protection of this Austrian territory.' On April 12th, 1938, Hitler completed this 'protection'.

And in 1935, when Charles de Gaulle, then a mere colonel in the French army, was practically unknown outside his own country, the *ZfG* said, unconsciously, these fateful words: 'France will defend its position in the Mediterranean as jealously as its position in middle Europe, as long as it thinks like Charles de Gaulle!' As long as it thinks like Charles de Gaulle!

Moreover, long before Munich, the magazine was dedicating whole issues to the problem of Czechoslovakia, and warning the Germans of their vulnerability to the 'might' of Czechoslovakia. 'A Czech national State', said Albrecht Haushofer in May 1938, 'within the boundaries of the Czechoslovakia of to-day, was thinkable only at a time when a German power did not exist.' On March 15th, 1939, this power invaded Czechoslovakia.

Italy's future is the subject of a rather far-sighted prediction. It has been claimed that Haushofer predicted a great Italian empire and advised a German-Italian alliance—an interpretation, which, if true, would seem to be further evidence of correlation between geopolitical theory and German foreign policy. However, the student of the official magazine of the Munich school, who bases his studies on these publications without, like others, claiming to possess 'inside information', cannot trace such

predictions or even an enthusiastic emphasis on a strong German-Italian co-operation. On the contrary, we find remarks like this, made in 1935: 'Sometimes the fear is expressed that Italy may have forgotten the extenuating circumstances of its existence as a great power. The restricted space and external vulnerability of Italy, the complete absence of important raw materials, and its dependence upon the good will of powerful neighbours for transportation, are such simple and evident facts that Italy can hardly forget that it possesses for itself alone little freedom of action.'

However, it is natural that sometimes the prophets were caught sleeping. The following quotation from the *ZfG* (March 1939) sounds like bitter irony: 'As the most important gift to the future, one might consider that small piece of paper that Neville Chamberlain held in his hand when he alighted from the plane in London. The German-English proclamation of peace, signed on the basis of personal confidence [*sic!*] between Hitler and Chamberlain, contains more than the text indicates—especially when one recalls that the Führer in his Berlin speech said distinctly that the Sudeten-German areas were the last territorial demands in Europe.'

It scarcely needs to be mentioned that the strategy of war is one of the most important branches of the science of geopolitics. Kjellen had already called attention to the fact that the organic nature of imperiums is never more clearly recognizable than in wartime. War, he claimed, is in a way an experimental workshop for geopolitics, and general staffs should be scientific academies. Haushofer himself published in 1932 a book called *Wehrgeopolitik*, which might best be described as 'war-geopolitics'. This book deals with the influence on warfare of geology, the earth's flora, colonial politics,

the co-operation between land and sea forces, mountains, coastlines, and valleys, railroad lines, villages, towns, and cities; all this is aimed to show the soldier how warfare is vitally influenced by the earth's surface.

The geopoliticians' emphasis upon the importance of radio has already been mentioned, but they have also been pioneers in another field, which has as yet been only cursorily explored outside of Germany—that of political cartography, the use of maps as weapons. For many years the *ZfG* has published long articles emphasizing the enormous importance of the right and effectively drawn map in politics, and illustrating methods of making a map most efficient for a given purpose. Typical is the map of Czechoslovakia (see page 4), which, with its title, 'A minor power threatens Germany', aimed to frighten the German people and prepare them for the future. Haushofer's maps, with their centrifugal lines, their vertical and radical axes, and their subtle use of colour and mass for emphasis, have introduced a new element into the ancient science of cartography. Book titles like von Schumacher's *The Map as a Weapon* are characteristic of the close combination of science and propaganda. According to one of the many articles on the subject, 'The most important tool of geopolitics is the suggestive map.' One of the most striking examples of political propaganda by the use of maps (an example well known to the geopoliticians) is the famous stamp-controversy between Bolivia and Paraguay, which was started over Bolivian and Paraguayan stamps, both of which showed national maps, but each indicating a different border.

A few words should be added about the language and literary style of German geopolitics. A doctrine which so vehemently stresses its dynamic power must naturally be

aware of the power possessed by the word, a power which makes it a penetrating weapon. And everything which is a 'weapon'—space itself, as well as the tools of geopolitics like maps or the radio—awakes, as we have seen, the interest of Haushofer and his men. The old man himself is fully aware of the power of words, because he is not only a soldier and a geographer but also an artist, an almost poetical dreamer whose dreams revolve around the globe. His disciples, with more or less success, follow in his footsteps. Thus it is not too amazing that the geopolitical language has gradually developed a new German style. This development was accompanied by similar trends in the National Socialist style. Hitler's German is, alas, not Goethe's. I remember a conversation I had with one of the Nazi élite in 1933. When he turned on the radio and we heard a speaker shouting a few national phrases, the Nazi turned it off after we had heard only a few words. 'That wasn't one of our men,' he said with contempt, 'we speak differently.' He was right. In their efforts to make geopolitics acceptable to Hitler's ideology, the disciples of Haushofer, already prepared for not only thinking but also speaking and writing in new terms, gradually co-ordinated their style with the words of Hitler and his satellites. We cannot go into detail here, but attention may be called to the enormous importance which semantics achieve when a new civilization (or its reverse) is dawning. It would be worthy of a Thomas Mann to write about the German language of Goethe and Hitler. The reader who glances through the thousands of pages written between 1924 and 1941 in the *ZfG* cannot evade the impression that the style becomes, the more the Nazi revolution progresses, increasingly pompous or what may be called 'Goeringish'.

But the Haushofers who know how to write this language so eloquently know also when to be silent, always remembering that geopolitics is a deadly and double-edged weapon in actual politics. A good example of this is a somewhat mysterious editorial by Albrecht Haushofer, written in the shadow of the inevitably approaching war: 'The self-made rule, never to report anything untrue, but not necessarily to put down everything that is true, is valid only for times which can still be considered peacetimes; other times have other rules.' (Giving permission to twist the truth?)

IV

It goes without saying that the attitude of Haushofer toward Russia is of paramount importance to us in a time when the vital question is still unanswered whether Hitler's attack on Russia means the logical fulfilment of a super-Machiavellian plan or whether it means the sudden and abrupt break of a long-planned policy to build up a German-Russian friendship to prepare the ground for the peaceful penetration and economic domination of the Russian colossus.

To the student of German geopolitics, there can be no doubt about the question of which policy Haushofer advocated.

Haushofer has always seen in Sir Halford Mackinder one of the few great teachers to whom he is indebted, and when he led his division back from the war into a humiliated fatherland, he recalled Mackinder's teachings, quoting again and again Ovid's *Fas est ab hoste doceri* (It is one's duty to learn from the enemy). This is what the German Haushofer learned especially from his English contemporary and teacher, Mackinder—that Germany and Russia lost the war because they fought on

opposite sides. Thus he arrived at a conclusion which, if Hitler and his lieutenants were indoctrinated with the understanding of it, would become of gigantic import. 'It is of vital necessity that Russia and Germany unite their powers.' Or, as Haushofer puts it another time, 'Germans and Russians finally recognized that both of them had been the victims, and, by fighting each other to the death, had only pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for the sake of the imperialistic aims of the western neighbouring powers, whereby they had burned their flesh and crippled their souls.'

The next step taken by Haushofer was to advocate an alliance between Germany, Russia, and Japan, and the creation of a great transcontinental block consisting of these powers, which alone would be in a position to counter-balance the two great Anglo-Saxon powers.

Not for a moment did the geopoliticians forget the immensity of Russia and the decisive importance it possesses in forming the new order. To them, Russia has never lost its 'Asiatic face'. They were aware of the fact that a pact with this non-European Asiatic power was not a matter of sentiment but merely of cold, impersonal power politics. They knew that Stalin was able to wait, that he was the one being courted, that he had the final decision if, when, and under what terms he would participate in the European war.

When the final signatures to the German-Russian pact were affixed in August 1939, Haushofer and his school were able to express, almost jubilantly, such sentiments on German-Russian co-operation. It must have been an enormous task to free the Führer from the influence of the Rosenberg group, and we have at least one example in which Haushofer himself lifted the veil somewhat and let us see what the promoters of the German-Russian

pact had been up against: 'It needed the worst attacks from London before the conviction of the Führer of the indispensability of the British Empire for the world-culture and the Nordic race idea was pushed back far enough so that the inevitability of the co-operation of the Axis powers, the Russian Empire and East Asia as the saviours... stood distinctly before the German soul.'

All the years before, which, from the geopolitical point of view, were overshadowed by the anti-Comintern pact of November 25th, 1936, and during which ideological sentiment had gained dominance over geopolitical planning, we find Haushofer's men almost silent on this policy, trying to avoid, as much as they found it possible in a world where Dr. Goebbels ruled the realm of literature, the task of praising this creation of Alfred Rosenberg. Thus the unwillingness of the magazine to discuss anti-Comintern problems frequently and in detail speaks for itself, especially if we remember what Albrecht Haushofer told his readers—that in peace-time one should never report anything untrue, but should not necessarily put down everything that is true.

After Hitler and Stalin had become bedfellows, and the anti-Comintern pact had consequently lost its meaning, Haushofer indicated freely what he had really felt about this policy. 'The audacious construction of the anti-Comintern pact was perhaps the borderline which such an insight [i.e. that Russia and Germany had lost the war because they had fought each other] had to cross in order to teach the most vital great powers of the old world that they should not again endanger, by ideological differences, the geopolitical foundations of their adjustable space-existence.'

Did this man, to whom collaboration between Germany and Asiatic Russia meant almost a fulfilment of his high-

est dreams, approve Hitler's ruthless violation of this policy in his war against Stalin? We cannot be sure. This chapter of the inside story of the most vital decision this war has seen has still to be written. We may assume, however, without overstepping the bounds of speculation too far, that the war on Russia must have been a tremendous shock not only to Haushofer the geographer, but also to Haushofer the soldier. His school never forgot the geopolitical truths of greatest importance: that 'the one who attacks a country of broad spaces has to win a victory, a victory which does not consist of driving the enemy farther and farther back until one has occupied the piece of land which he desires.' In this case, an article by the title of 'Space as a Weapon' points out, one gives the enemy time and opportunity to reorganize himself in the vast unoccupied parts of his country and to mobilize all the resources of these vast spaces for the continuation of a long war. Therefore, 'the war against such an imperium can be won only by the swiftest possible destruction of the enemy's armies'. This was written in regard to the Sino-Japanese war, with the conclusion that 'space allows China to survive, and, therefore, it would be best [for the Japanese] to make peace'. These same principles were applied to Russia. In an article published in 1934, it is pointed out that the reason for Napoleon's defeat and for the failure of General von Falkenhayn's operations in 1915 will be found in their allowing the Russians to make use of the extent of space by continuing retreat, with the result that the aggressors had to put more and more space between themselves and the sources of their power, while the defenders moved closer to theirs. The conclusion drawn by this article is that in a war against Russia, the aim from the beginning must be the encirclement and complete destruction of the

Russian forces before they can retreat successfully. Here we see, almost seven years before war was waged against Russia, the anticipation of the present German pincer and encirclement movements of 1941.

The same conceptions of the basic fundamentals for a war to be waged against Russia can be found in Oswald Spengler's book, *Jahre der Entscheidung*,¹ where, in words which cannot yet be classified as prophetic or merely poetical, he said: 'The population of this most powerful inland territory of the earth [Russia] is invulnerable from without. Distance is a force politically and militarily, which is as yet unconquered. Napoleon himself had to learn this lesson. What advantage is it to the enemy to occupy territory no matter how immense? To make even an attempt impossible the Bolsheviks have shifted the centre of gravity of their system farther to the east. All the great industrial areas which are important to power politics have been constructed east of Moscow, for the most part east of the Urals as far as the Altai and in the south down to the Caucasus. The entire region west of Moscow—White Russia, the Ukraine, which was once the most vital part of the Tsar's empire—forms to-day a fantastic glacis against "Europe". It could be sacrificed without a crash of the whole system. But by the same token any idea of an offensive from the West has become senseless. It would be a thrust into empty space.'

There cannot be the slightest doubt that the German General Staff has always been aware of the alternative either of achieving the complete destruction of the Russian war machine, or, despite a string of victories, of eventually losing the war.

¹ Years of Decision, 1933.

V

The discussion of the Far East, or rather, to use a term coined by Haushofer, the 'Indo-Pacific sphere', in which live half of the world's inhabitants, includes such a multitude of subjects and problems that it is necessary to limit our analysis to a few remarks dealing with the basic tendencies of the Haushofer school toward these areas, especially Japan. One observation is striking—the overwhelming interest of Haushofer, and through him his disciples, in the areas of the Far East and especially in the imperialistic ambitions of the Japanese. The reason can easily be found in Haushofer's sentimental attachment to Japan, where, as a military aide, he underwent his first practical training as a geopolitician. It is thus only natural that he returns again and again to his first love. Japan is indeed the country on which Haushofer can be most considered an expert. Yet, in spite of his attempts to judge the problems of the Far East and the role of Japan objectively, he cannot avoid being definitely influenced by his pro-Japanese sentiments. This is important to remember if we assume the influence of Haushofer's writing and thinking on certain actual trends in German politics. An example is an article by a pro-Chinese author, published in the *ZfG* with the avowed intention of demonstrating its impartiality. However, the article is interspersed and annotated with editorial comments which are only too definitely pro-Japanese. One thing is clearly discernible—that the German geopolitical school considers Japan's power and its potential spiritual and material resources of great importance (and it is free from the contemptuous attitude toward the Japanese which is so often found in American public opinion). 'The World War [I] was fought on the soil of Europe to the advantage of the Far

East,' wrote the chairman of Germany's greatest shipping line in October 1934. The *ZfG* points out also that today every fourth human being belongs to the yellow race, and that in a few decades the proportion will be one out of three. 'If then this race should be under the strong leadership of Japan; the strong powers which believed that Versailles would be able to create a new world order should be watchful that their world does not decline to an insignificant side-show where the domination of the world will be decided in the Far East.'

With the passing of time and the development of the Sino-Japanese war, two significant changes in the attitude of the *ZfG* are traceable. One can be seen in increasing scepticism regarding the possibility of a Japanese victory in China, which, during the first years of the war, was apparently expected by Haushofer. Now even he admitted his doubts when speaking of two gigantic tigers which fight each other tooth and claw in a battle to the death. 'Which one,' he asked, 'will perish?' Haushofer compared Japanese nationalism with the reborn Chinese nationalism, as one tiger riding upon another.

The second and rather important change in the geopolitical attitude toward Japan is illustrated by the fact that before Russia assumed the role of a German ally, especially as long as the anti-Comintern pact ruled German foreign policy, the Haushofer school stressed Germany's indifference to the problems of the Far East. 'The German attitude toward the problems of the Far East', wrote Haushofer's chief aide on that area, in March 1935, 'must be free from sentimentality. In the light of power politics we have there nothing either to gain or to lose.' However, when the German-Russian pact was finally concluded and Haushofer's policy seemed

to have won a decisive victory over the fanatical anti-Bolshevists among Hitler's lieutenants, then the way toward greater goals in India and toward the heart of the British Empire was laid open. These tremendous goals could, in Haushofer's eyes, be achieved by Hitler only if Japan and Russia would reach a common understanding. Without such an understanding, and with the possibility of new bloody clashes between the Russian and Japanese armies, Haushofer felt that the decisive steps toward the defeat of Great Britain could not possibly be undertaken. Therefore, he could no longer deny that Germany's destiny was inseparably connected with Japan's, and it became a vital subject in his editorials, even more so in what can be read between the lines—that he requested and almost begged Japan to come to peaceful terms with Russia. 'If it were possible', he exclaimed, in June 1940, 'that the flags of the rising sun and of the hammer and sickle could destroy their mutual distrust, then they would be invincible in their domestic seas.'

When these requests went unheeded by Japan as well as by Russia, the gigantic plan for the peaceful penetration and domination of Russia was doomed to fail, and the foundations were laid for the war which rages now in Russia and which spelled doom for the decade-old plans of Haushofer and his disciples.

VI

From a study of the elaborate work of the Haushofer school through the years, it is apparent that the Western Hemisphere, and especially the United States, does not at all receive the same attention as Europe, Asia, and the Indo-Pacific sphere. The explanation may be found in the personal interests and prejudices of Haushofer himself; he and his closest collaborators seem so entirely

obsessed with their idea of thinking in continents, an idea which leads them directly from Munich to Russia, India, China, and Japan, that not enough time is left for a comprehensive study of the Western Hemisphere, although Haushofer does not underestimate the importance of the role the United States is to play in the great decisions to come. Numerous remarks in his monthly reviews and a great number of careful studies on specific American problems, especially in the Pacific, give testimony that the neglect of the United States is not owing to an underestimation of its significance. The articles dealing with the specific problems of the Western Hemisphere are often amazingly accurate. Widely divergent fields are covered, as for instance Japanese immigration into Brazil, the Negro problem in the United States, the annexation of the islands in the Pacific by the United States, and reports of fleet manœuvres in the Pacific. But it remains an unsystematic and more or less casual treatment of the whole subject.

Another reason for the inadequate consideration of the Western Hemisphere in the studies of the Munich school may be that Haushofer has evidently allowed one of his chief disciples, Colin Ross, whom he regards as the outstanding expert on questions of the West, to take over almost full responsibility for this region. It would be going too far to try to describe here in detail Ross's ideas on the United States. Much more attracted by National Socialist ideology than Haushofer (an interesting example is the enthusiastic introduction written by Ross in 1936 to an article by Sir Oswald Mosley), Ross's articles and books on America reflect a thorough misunderstanding of the strong and young forces and ideas growing in this country. Sometimes, reluctantly, he admits their existence, but his real reaction seems to be

more truly reflected in the words he wrote on a visit to the United States in 1935: 'The America of to-day is tired and old, amazingly old. When one comes to this side of the Atlantic from a Europe throbbing with new ideas and burning with beliefs for the future, he no longer finds himself in the "new world" which was so evident before and even after the war.'

It would be going too far to state that Haushofer's magazine shares in the fatal mistake of official Germany in underestimating America and its potentialities; but by informing its readers insufficiently and by leaving the field of analysis to writers of the type of Colin Ross, Haushofer has helped to let the misconceptions of America rise again which led Germany to doom in the First World War. However, the contempt for America of men like Ribbentrop and Goebbels should not be mistaken for public opinion in Germany. The man on the street, who remembers the role the American armies played in 1918, knows better. Respect for America is still deeply rooted in Germany, and America's role in the war of nerves is therefore a decisive factor in German morale.

The failure of the Munich school to give its readers and students a clear and comprehensive picture of America's role in the world is important enough and might be responsible for nourishing in Hitler the dreams of a world domination including the Western Hemisphere. But whoever expects to find in the pages of Haushofer's magazines or books plans for a military invasion or domination of the United States or the Western Hemisphere will be sadly disappointed.

VII

If we attempt to analyse some of the basic reactions

aroused by the study of German geopolitics, we may begin with this general observation: German geopolitics has, under the undisputed guidance and leadership of Karl Haushofer, developed forms and insights which make this dynamic child of political geography distinctly a German product with which no other geopolitical school can be compared. There is, at first, the amazing fact that in a Germany disunited and torn by internal struggles and economic difficulties which made the youth of the country despair of their future, an officer returning from a lost war succeeded in gathering together a group of men who enthusiastically worked on building the new German geopolitics. It was not hate and nationalism which led these men together, as it was the ones who, around the corner from the University of Munich, were at the same time organizing the National Socialist movement. It was not a party nor was it a group which tended only toward pan-Germanistic aims. These men were bound together by a fanatical interest in the great problems of the earth, and it did not weaken their scientific skill that, in their geopolitical work, they did not forget the tragic role which Germany, bleeding from the wounds of the Treaty of Versailles, was forced to play in the concert of powers.

It may be said that such a description attaches an unwarranted emotionalism to an objective analysis. But it seems to me that without the readiness to see the Haushofer school against the dark background of post-war Germany, we would fail to see it in its entirety and full importance. Whether or not we agree with the *Weltanschauung* which gradually developed in the Munich school, and with which we intend to deal later, it cannot be denied that the multitude of surveys of geopolitical and geographical subjects all over the world

and the quality of these studies in general have made, in not much more than fifteen years, the Munich school a geopolitical centre which has no competition. And it is not so much the scientific centralization of certain studies to which attention should be called; it is much more the fact that the enthusiasm in the field of geopolitics which Haushofer kindled has had an enormous educational result. Hundreds of students, of whom many had learned something of the world's problems on battlefields instead of from books, and dozens of young officers of the Munich garrison formed the ranks of Haushofer's followers to become educated and trained in careful, industrious geopolitical work. It cannot be emphasized too strongly how great was the educational achievement of this man at a time when the average youth, disillusioned, turned to political phrases and slogans. If to-day the question about the reason for German military superiority is being asked so often, one should not be satisfied with an answer in general terms, but should remember that the German war machine could never have been perfected without men who were trained in all fields of the science of war. Among these, we might well consider the men who had gone through the training of geopolitics a highly important group. There is a quotation from Disraeli which Haushofer quotes dozens of times in his editorials, 'The best-informed one wins the final victory.' This simple truth led Haushofer and his disciples to an unflagging search for new facts. It should be a lesson, too, to the educational institutions of this country. The lack of centres where the American student and soldier can, like the German youth in Munich, be trained to understand the facts and to think in terms of political geography and geopolitics seems to me a regrettable flaw in the

endeavour to organize democracies against the totalitarian onslaught. In view of the vast scientific resources possessed by this country it would be inexcusable if the American General Staff cannot be supplied with as many enthusiastic experts on geopolitics as Haushofer was able to offer to the German General Staff.

However, to learn technical lessons from the Haushofer school and to accept its methods and scientific tools does not mean that one would accept its underlying *Weltanschauung* of geographic materialism. Indeed, the importance of Haushofer's geopolitics goes far beyond its significance as an educational institution furnishing the state with spiritual war equipment. This particular group of German geopoliticians has laid the groundwork for a new *Weltanschauung* which might prove strong enough to replace Nazi ideology as a mass religion. In this sense, we might see in Haushofer not Sondern's 'man behind Hitler', but rather the 'man after Hitler', if only we see in Haushofer the typical personification of a certain ideology and not the individual leader.

These are strong words, and in order to explain them we should extend our analysis beyond the limits of geopolitics. To understand the relation of Nazi doctrine and the ideology of geopolitics, it is necessary to see the natural development of revolutionary movements which, like National Socialism, have arisen on the waves of mass emotion and psychosis.

That the loudspeakers of propaganda have never become silent during the years of revolution, and that the Nazi leadership could not afford to let them become silent—this has proved a double-edged weapon. All reliable reports from Germany seem to concur in the observation that as a result of the constant overfeeding of the masses with propaganda, a general resignation has

become evident, a resignation which may, in the long run, become the decisive weapon against Hitlerism. Such a process is not at all unique or typical only of the Nazi revolution. When Hitler's internal victories were at their greatest, Oswald Spengler wrote, in July 1933: 'The world revolution, however strong it starts out, ends neither in victory nor defeat, but in *resignation* of the forward-driven masses. Its ideals are not refuted; they become *boring*.' Goethe expressed the same thought in his epigram: 'Enthusiasm's not a pickled fish, to salt away as long as one may wish.' This resignation is silently spreading now in Germany, unless all signs are false. We might turn to Spengler again in our attempt to foresee the next step in this downfall of revolutions. In his analysis of the development of modern armies and the psychology of their soldiers, he pointed out that 'before 1914, the decline of authority, the substitution of the party for the state, in a word the progressive anarchy, had stopped short of the army.' He describes the ethical values of military honour, fidelity, and silent obedience; the spirit of Frederick the Great, Napoleon, and Wellington; that which he calls 'the spirit of the eighteenth century, of the knightly way of life'. In our day, a drafted soldier has different ideas from what such men had before the First World War. The result is that he has lost the consciousness of being a mere object of the commanding forces. Spengler adds, in 1933, the almost prophetic question, whether, in view of such developments, a general mobilization in France against a dangerous enemy could be carried out at all.

The revolutionary change which Spengler saw in the typical features of the armies of to-day led him to the conclusion that '*armies will in the future take the place of*

parties', 'that armies, not parties, are the future form of power'.

It would be beyond the limits of our study to elaborate this thesis, but the transition between such Spenglerian thought and Haushofer's theory is evident. In the first place, it is not at all mere coincidence that both men lived and thought as contemporaries in Munich. They both write a similar literary style, which is inseparable from the thoughts which they express: a dynamic, heroic style, which becomes often pompous and showy. They are both Bavarians, and, in spite of that, typical representatives of Prussianism as a *Weltanschauung*. Or should we rather say that they are representatives of Prussianism *because* they are not Prussians, remembering the fact that some of the most important fighters for Prussianism, like Houston Chamberlain, Nietzsche, Treitschke, and, last but not least, Richard Wagner, were not Prussians either? It is not a coincidence, either, that the German geopolitical school of the last decade was built up by a soldier. We have pointed out before that *Wehrgeopolitik*, which is nothing else than war-geopolitics, plays an important part in the general system of German geopolitics. This and the dynamic nature of German geopolitics has laid the groundwork for exactly the army spirit which Spengler pictures as the heir to the party spirit of the revolutions.

Such comparisons of Spengler and Haushofer should not, however, lead us to the misunderstanding that Spenglerian philosophy itself can be connected with geopolitical thought. What connects the two men is, in a Spenglerian sense, the fact that both belong to the same 'race', that there is an often unconscious identity of their conceptions of state and nation. It is not an identity of philosophy and geopolitics. Among hundreds of articles

written in the *ZfG*, we find only a single and rather critical reference to Spengler, and there is, so far as I can see, in all of Spengler's work only one passage which can be considered a truly geopolitical fundamental: 'The history of mankind liberates itself in such great travail from the history of the soil [*Landschaft*] and remains so deeply connected with it by thousands of roots, that without it we cannot understand life and soul and thinking itself.'

If we see, with Spengler, an inevitable cycle which no revolution can escape, leading from the *Weltanschauung* of the revolution and its leaders, to its replacement in actual force and ideology by the army, then Haushofer's doctrines gain vital importance. In what we have tried to describe above as the typical features of German geopolitics might be seen the spiritual equipment for an army ideology which is on its way to overcome the primitive doctrines of Hitlerism. We do not claim that the geopolitical way of thinking as developed by Haushofer and his disciples represents the only pillar for such an ideology, born in war and resulting from the decadence of revolution; but it contributes perhaps the most important fundamentals.

So much for the positive features of 'Haushoferism', especially its efforts to free German politics from the nebulous conceptions of Nazism and to replace them by a knowledge of the facts of the earth. We may now attempt an analysis of the vital dangers of German geopolitics as a *Weltanschauung* as it is seen from the standpoint of a culture which has not yet gone through the tragic experiences of the European continent. In fact, these dangers are vital to us if our assumption is right, or only partly right, that the army is on its way to replace the party in Germany, and the geopolitical doctrine, in this

process, is offering basic fundamentals for a new way of thinking.

The German concept of *Lebensraum*, the *Drang nach dem Osten* ideas, the power-political thinking in continents—these are only some of the decisive characteristics of geopolitics as a possible German post-Nazi *Weltanschauung*. Most of these questions are to be answered on the battlefields of Russia and the Atlantic, not in the souls of men. If German geopolitics, however, succeeds in becoming an important part of the way of life of the army, first of its leaders and then of the rank and file, then we would truly be confronted with a strong spiritual power. Such a possibility exists. A. Whitney Griswold has very accurately pointed out that the *Volk ohne Raum*¹ conception has become deeply imbedded in the German people by means of books like Hans Grimm's, books which were sold in the hundreds of thousands. This longing for broader living-spaces has become an inseparable part of the German soul. But this is not the work of Hitler. It has become a vital part of his power politics and doctrine, but what was added by him, the 'blood and soil' religion of Hitlerism, might sound to a steadily increasing number of Germans like a ruthless deprivation of their old desires for more space.

From the standpoint of the American way of life, of the 'democracies', would such a *Weltanschauung*, represented by the army, be more acceptable than Hitlerism? It would mean, perhaps, an end to what the world found most shocking in Hitlerism—the persecution of men because of their faith and the oppression of freedom of thought and worship. It would end, perhaps, the rule of the jungle and create a new ruling class of 'gentlemen'

¹ People without Space.

recruited from the army. The old sense of duty and service of Prussianism would perhaps be restored. Ways to adjust problems of over-population might perhaps be discovered by international co-operation. Would then such a new spirit be a hope for the world, and would it be possible to make with its representatives the peace which cannot be made with Hitler?

We should not be fooled by the indisputable fact that Haushoferism would be, at any rate, a minor evil compared with Hitlerism. The fact remains that at the moment we see in German geopolitics more than mere political geography but the groundwork for a military *Weltanschauung*, we discover elements which allow no compromise with the *Weltanschauung* of a democratic 'open society'.

Factors such as territory and soil do not alone explain social changes. No one can deny the important part played by the land in 'making history'. But the decisive factor which forms the course of history is man and his social and economic development. If one neglects the human being and his role or allows him to be overshadowed by the giant earth, the *Weltanschauung* which arises from such a conception will never know the word 'peace' but will supply again and again reasons and justifications for imperialistic wars.

Indeed, this is the decisive objection to German geopolitics. The human being and consideration for the value of the individual human life do not exist in this way of thinking. Any consideration of the laws of humanity would, in German geopolitical thinking, be considered weakness and decadence.

The most important conclusion resulting from a study of German geopolitics is that, in the many thousands of pages written with all the skill of geopolitical training,

reverence for the dignity of human life never appears—not even between the lines. We cannot emphasize enough the significance of such a statement, which lets us see this second *Weltanschauung* of Munich in all its inhumanity. The good earth has been degraded to the mere subject of power-aims, in which human life has no value. German geopolitics has thus become mainly war-geopolitics, and its essentials appeal therefore to the way of living of a power-group which will be represented by the army élite, when the curtain drops after the final act of the revolution.

The French, closer than we are to the arising dangers from without, have, to a certain extent, seen how this *Weltanschauung* took shape. Their geopoliticians have for years criticized the way of German geopolitical thinking by the accusation that, to it, space and earth meant everything; the human being, almost nothing. They tried to fight against the fatalistic conception which makes man more or less an object of geographic factors. They warned the Germans that 'the frame means nothing; what counts is the heart. That has to be respected.' With a tragic note which can be fully appreciated only after France's downfall, they tried to lead the German geopoliticians back to a respect for the human soul by reminding them of the German poet's words: 'A people is dead whose gods are dead.'

The *Weltanschauung* of geographic materialism is but a dynamic nihilism which can flourish only in a nation which has buried its gods and which instead is worshipping Mars. What a few Frenchmen saw, too late, we *must* see in time; else our fate might be, too, what is predicted in Milton's dark words:

'Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
Soon feel, whose God is stronger, thine or mine.

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