

## Reinhold Hanisch

# I Was Hitler's Buddy

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*The New Republic presents herewith the first installment of a document that we believe has exceptional interest. It is the story of Adolf Hitler's days of desperate poverty in a municipal lodging-house in Vienna, told by his closest associate at that time, Reinhold Hanisch. Hanisch and Hitler worked together making and peddling picture postcards. In his memoir, Hanisch has given a vivid picture of Hitler as he knew him, and of the circumstances that had a share in the formation of Hitler's character.*

*Hanisch himself was a German-Bohemian, though of Austrian citizenship, and not a Jew. He was arrested in Vienna in 1936, after it had become known that he had written this memoir and that he was attempting to find a publisher. The charge, from Berlin, was that Hanisch had tampered with and falsified some watercolors done by Hitler at the time described here. Hanisch had discovered them in an art-dealer's files and they had been sold at a high price to a Berlin dealer.*

*Some time later the public was informed, as might be expected, that Hanisch had died in prison after a sudden illness. He had died of pleurisy, in three days, the official report said. — THE EDITORS*

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1909, after extensive wanderings through Germany and Austria, I arrived as a traveling artisan in Vienna. On the highway I had already heard about a lodging-house and I decided to go there, for I had very little money.

I soon found the Asylum for the Homeless, a large modern building behind the South Railway Station. The town's poor stood there in a long row waiting for admittance.

Finally the gates were thrown open and our line livened up. Everyone was given a ticket that entitled him to five nights' lodging, and it was punched by the supervisor. Inside, long rows of benches stood on both sides of the hall to accommodate the people. They went in couples to the showerbath. Those who were full of vermin had their clothing tied up in bundles and disinfected. This „burning-out“ of the clothes often damaged them severely. After that the people returned to the hall, the upper part of which was set with rows of tables. Bread was brought in, soup was served, and afterward everyone retired to the dormitories. Cots with wire springs stood along the walls, each covered with two brownish-colored sheets.

Here everyone made himself comfortable in his own way. A pillow was made from clothes. Even if the seat of a man's trousers was patched and soiled they were carefully folded so that they would have a crease the next day. Shoes were

shined and put under the bedstead so that no mistake could occur. Often there was a shoemaker or a tailor about who offered his services for a few pennies, or for cigarettes or the like. Trading boomed in the dormitory; clothing was bartered or sold, and rolled cigarettes, and tickets of admission to the Asylum. Those who had been in the Asylum for a long time and feared that their cards would not be renewed were glad to buy new ones.

Crowds formed around a cot if a man had an interesting story to tell. I soon found my pals. At that time I spoke the Berlin dialect and all of them took me for a Prussian, so I was soon surrounded by many Saxons, Bavarians and Rhinelanders. There are no mopers among tramps. Wit and humor are the privilege of youth. Common worry bound us together; new traveling plans were forged; new companions found.

The neighbor on my right looked sad, and so we asked him questions. For several days he had been living on benches in the parks where his sleep was often disturbed by policemen. He had landed here dead tired, hungry, with sore feet. His blue-checked suit had turned lilac, and the rain and the „burning“ in the asylum bleached it.

We gave him our bread because he had nothing to eat. An old beggar standing near by advised him to go to the convent in the Gumpendorferstrasse; there every morning between nine and ten soup

was given to the poor. We said this was „calling on Kathie“, probably because the name of the Mother Superior was Katherine.

My neighbor's name was Adolf Hitler.

He was awkward. The Asylum meant to him an entirely new world where he could not find his way, but we all advised him as best we could, and our good humor raised his spirits a little. I was also „calling on Kathie“ daily, and we became close friends. He told us that he was a painter, an artist, and had read quite a lot, that his father was a small customs official in Braunau-on-Inn and that he had attended the Realschule in Linz. Now he had come to Vienna in the hope of earning a living here, since he had already devoted much time to painting in Linz, but had been bitterly disappointed in his hopes. His landlady had dispossessed him and he had found himself on the street without shelter.

After he was forced out of his room he had spent several evenings in a cheap coffeehouse in the Kaisertrasse, but now he was entirely without money. For days he hadn't eaten anything. One night in his great distress he begged a drunk gentleman for a few pennies, but the drunk man raised his cane and insulted him. Hitler was very bitter about this, but I made fun of him, saying, „Look here, don't you know you should never approach a drunk“. So I tried to console him.

He always wanted me to tell him stories about Germany, because he was quite enthusiastic about the Reich. We met every night, and kept up our spirits in spite of our troubles. We sang „Die Wacht am Rhein“, and what a sparkle came into Hitler's eyes when we sang the Bismarck song, with the refrain:

*Wir Deutschen fürchten Gott da droben  
Sonst aber nichts auf dieser Welt.*

(We Germans fear God above  
But nothing else on this earth.)

Hitler had never heard this song before.

During the day we tried to earn a little money at odd jobs, and in the evenings we had our gatherings. When the winter cold set in, conditions for the poor like ourselves were much harder. Hitler went daily „calling on Kathie“ to get his soup and afterward trolled to the Western Railway Station, where sometimes there was an opportunity to carry a passenger's bag for a few pennies. But often he got nothing at all, and we had to share our bread with him.

When the shelters were opened Hitler used to go with others to the one in Erdberg. This shelter had been endowed by the Jewish Baron Koenig-

swarter, and the Asylum where we lived was also a Jewish foundation. From Erdberg we went to Favoriten and then to Meidling, a two-and-a-half-hour walk, for soup and bread. Hitler had no winter overcoat; in his thin jacket he shivered with cold and was blue and frostbitten.

Hitler thought of all sorts of jobs, but he was much too weak for hard physical work. I never have seen him do any hard work, nor did I hear from him the story that he did a worker's job in the building industry. Builders employ only strong and husky men; a man as frail as Hitler would never be hired by the foreman. One day some ditchdiggers were needed, and Hitler asked me if he should apply for the work. I said, „Don't take up that work! If you begin such hard work it is very difficult to climb up.“ But I knew Hitler couldn't have done such work for an hour.

The early snow several times helped us to make money. We had to get up early and hurry in darkness and cold to the place of work, in order to be first. As Hitler was very weak and had sore feet he was usually late, but we made sure the supervisor gave him some work, too. So he shoveled snow a few times, but not often.

At this time he and I were already close friends. We knew everything about each other. Being a Bohemian German (Sudeten), I had strong German national convictions, and that was the reason Hitler attached himself to me. Also as a schoolboy I liked painting and my only desire was to become a painter. But life took a different course.

He told me a lot about his family. Hitler's father had distinguished himself a number of times by his work as a customs official. An example was the case of a certain man in Vienna who received parcels of cigars from Germany. Hitler's father was struck by the inferior quality of these cigars, and at the examination of one of the packages a cigar broke. A diamond fell out, and so a smuggler was discovered.

After his father's death Hitler's family received a pension of fifty kronen monthly, but his sister, who had just been married, received this pension and Hitler got nothing. He was not earning enough with his package-carrying for food, and in the evening in the Home we used to give him some horse-sausage or the like. It was a miserable life, and I once asked him what he was really waiting for. He answered, „I don't know myself“. I have never seen such helpless letting-down in distress.

When he told me of the fifty-kronen pension his sister was getting I asked him why he didn't

approach her. He said he could hardly do that, as his sister was just married and needed the money, but I advised him to do it, because he was worse off every day. He had a cough, and I was afraid he was going to be very ill. Finally Hitler said that he would like to write but he had no writing materials. So a salesman from Austrian Silesia and I took him to the Café Arthaber, opposite the Meidling Southern Station. In the coffee house he wrote a letter to his sister, asking, on our advice, for some money to be sent *Poste Restante*.

A Few days before Christmas Eve, 1909, the money arrived. That evening Hitler came again to the Asylum and, standing in the line, pulled out of his pocket a fifty-kronen note. I told him not to show it so, because if anyone saw it he might be robbed or someone might ask for a loan.

Now a transformation took place in Hitler. I advised him to buy a second-hand winter overcoat in the Jewish quarter, but he was afraid he would be cheated there. So we went together to the Dorotheum, the pawnshop operated by the government. There he purchased a dark winter overcoat for twelve kronen.

Then he moved from the Asylum into the Maennerheim (men's home) in the Meldemannstrasse in the XXth district. I suggested that he do some work like painting postcards. He said first he wanted to rest for a week. But I asked him if now that he had a little money he wanted to spend it at once. He answered that he couldn't spend it all in a week anyway.

I had already suggested painting postcards before he wrote his sister. He thought he wouldn't be able to sell them because he wasn't well enough dressed, and also he was afraid that without a license we both might get into trouble with the police. In the Asylum Hitler offered some of his postcards to the salesman from Silesia, so that he might sell them, but he refused. Soon after Christmas I also moved to the Men's Home and began to peddle Hitler's postcards. He was a very slow worker, and I often told him not to dawdle around with his cards so much, to daub on anything. I sold the cards in the taverns.

Then Hitler copied postcards, most of them of Viennese views in watercolors. He took them to art dealers, furniture stores and upholsterers, for in those days divans were made with pictures inserted in their backs. I had good luck, was incessantly on my feet and brought in orders. Hitler was busy. Misery was at an end. We were doing better and new hopes sprang up.

But unfortunately Hitler was never an ardent worker. I often was driven to despair by bringing in orders that he simply wouldn't carry out. At Easter, 1910, we earned forty kronen on a big order, and we divided it equally. The next morning, when I came downstairs and asked for Hitler, I was told that he had already left with Neumann, a Jew, also living at the Maennerheim. After that I couldn't find him for a week. He was sightseeing Vienna with Neumann and spent much of the time in the Museum. When I asked him what the matter was and whether we were going to keep on working, he answered that he must recuperate now, that he must have some leisure, that he was not a coolie. When the week was over he had no longer any money. What had he done with it? He could eat four or five pieces of pastry with whipped cream in a cheap coffeehouse, but he drank no wine and did not smoke.

I recollect that we went one day to the City Hall to see the stained-glass windows, and I felt faint on the stairway. Hitler scolded me, saying that it served me right and that it was because of my continual smoking. „One must have some self-control“, he said.

But unfortunately he never had enough self-control to force himself to work. Often I didn't know what to do with the orders because it was impossible to make Hitler work. In the morning he sat in the hall of the Home, and was supposed to be making drawings while I was busy canvassing the frame manufacturers and upholsterers. But then political discussion would start and generally Hitler would become the ringleader. When I came back in the evening I often had to take the T-square out of his hands, because he would be swinging it over his head, making a speech.

Like us, many of the inmates of the Home made a living by homework. One old man copied from the newspapers the addresses of betrothed couples and sold them to furniture stores and other firms. Another wrote musical excerpts. A Hungarian cut postcards out of cardboard, with emblems and initials, which he sold on Sundays in Prater taverns. A group of people made little signboards and pricebills from cardboard, and for these Neumann was the salesman. Once he brought Hitler an order for a drugstore poster, to advertise powder to prevent perspiration.

The man who painted the signboards, Greiner, had previously been a lamp-lighter in the cabaret Hoelle in the Theater an der Wien. He had a vivid imagination, was a great talker and soon became a bad influence on Hitler. Greiner built all sorts of

castles in the air, and Hitler took his schemes very seriously. There was eager competition between them in devising plans, and Hitler would say sometimes that Greiner was a genius like Edison, with unheard-of ideas, but that he was too fickle and needed someone to carry out his ideas.

Hitler wanted to unite all these people into an organization following such ideas in cooperative work. Some of them should make drawings, design advertising, paint signboards, while the others should sell these products. But he had other projects as well. At that time there was a picture in all the newspapers of a woman named Anna Csillag, with long hair that reached the floor, and below her picture was an advertisement, starting with the words, „I, Anna Csillag...“ recommending an infallible hair-growing remedy. Hitler thought something of the kind ought to be invented. He admitted that the story of Anna Csillag was an obvious bluff, but he said one could earn plenty of money with it. He proposed to fill old tin cans with paste and sell them to shopkeepers, the paste to be smeared on window-panes to keep them from freezing in winter. It should be sold, he said, in the summer, when it couldn't be tried out. I told him it wouldn't work, because the merchants could just say, come back in the winter; we don't need it now. To this Hitler answered that one must possess a talent for oratory. But I thought oratory alone would be useless.

At another time he had quite an original idea about protecting banknotes from being worn out, by having them made smaller and kept in a case of celluloid.

So we were busy with high-flown plans, but we lived very simply. In the Home both Hitler and I did our cooking, one day corn pudding with margarine, the next day margarine with corn pudding. One day Hitler was showing off his culinary art; he was going to make a milk soup, but it turned into pot-cheese because it curdled. The next day I made some, and, though he said he didn't want to eat it, served it to him nevertheless. He asked me how I had made it and I told him that I had just done it the opposite of his way, and so it had turned out all right.

We also did our laundry, in the showerbath. Hitler had only one shirt, and there was a little Saxonian who used to say there would be fine weather the next day, because Hitler had washed his shirt.

At that time there was a great political agitation in Vienna. The mayor, Dr. Lueger [1844-1910],

leader of the Christian-Socialist Party, had just died. The Arbeiterzeitung, the Social-Democratic paper, printed long articles strongly denouncing the successor of Dr. Lueger. Hitler told us a lot about Dr. Lueger, who had been forced to fight hard for his position as mayor. Only after he had been elected the third time had the Emperor confirmed the election. Hitler said Dr. Lueger should be taken for an example and a new party created. The Christian Socialists had been destroyed and the Social Democrats were not a real workers' party. The new party should have a name that sounded well, and should take over the best slogans from other parties to win followers; it was also important that the whole thing be well organized. The aim justifies the means, was Hitler's saying.

Dr. Lueger had also founded a very interesting institution, the Knabenhorste (boys' hostels). The boys were children of Christian Socialists, and they wore uniforms, formed bands and made musical outings. Hitler was very much interested in these and talked a great deal about them and about it being good for youth to be politically trained. For some time he was absorbed night and day with the idea of forming a new party. At Easter we did well and had a little more money to spend, so Hitler went to the movies. I preferred to drink some wine, which Hitler despised. The next day I knew at once that he was planning a new project. He had seen „The Tunnel“, a picture made from a novel by Bernhard Kellermann, and he told me the story. An orator makes a speech in a tunnel and becomes a great popular tribune. Hitler was aflame with the idea that this was the way to found a new party. I laughed at him and didn't take him seriously.

I was sometimes annoyed with this chattering of Hitler's, for he went on talking politics instead of working for our customers. One day I told him to stop talking, he really didn't look the promoter of a political party, and he must do some serious work. He had more success with other people, however, for they were always ready for fun, and Hitler was a sort of amusement for them. There was continual debating; often the Home looked as if an election campaign were in progress.

Hitler wore a long coat that Neumann had given him because he couldn't dispose of it in the Jewish quarter, and he wore an incredibly greasy derby hat on the back of his head. His hair was long and tangled and he grew a beard on his chin such as we Christians seldom have, though one is not uncommon in Leopoldstadt or the Jewish

Ghetto. I used to address Hitler often as „Paul Kruger“ because the President of the Boers had just such a beard. Hitler had already at that time the lock on his forehead.

A joker would often tie Hitler's coat to the bench and then someone else would discuss politics with him. All of them then used to contradict him, a thing he could never stand. He'd leap to his feet, drag the bench after him with a great rumble, and then the supervisor would send his servant up

to this turmoil and order everyone to be quiet. These debates took place over almost anything, and meanwhile Hitler couldn't restrain himself. He screamed, and fidgeted with his hands. But when he was quiet it was quite different; he seemed then to have a fair amount of self-control and acted in quite a dignified manner. When speaking he was rigid, and showed his teeth.

(To be continued)

## I Was Hitler's Buddy: II

I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK of Hitler's youth, for the impressions of youth are the lasting ones. Government officials, especially those posted at the border, always saw the paradise beyond the border. So Hitler heard from his father only praise of Germany and all the faults of Austria. And so he was to some degree brought up to anti-Austrian feelings. Hitler was an enemy of the Hapsburgs[*sic!*]. He accused them of entertaining a hostile policy toward Germanism and frequently said that with the accession of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand the downfall of Germanism in Austria was to be expected. He also used to say that history is the teacher of the nations.

Still history teaches us that we in Austria always had to rely on our own strength when German civilization was in danger. Where were the North Germans when the Turks menaced Vienna? A Pole, King John Sobieski, came to Vienna's rescue. The jealousy between Germany's rulers brought about the partition of Germany under Napoleon. Frederick the Great was base enough to appeal to Germany's arch-enemy France against fellow Germans and Bismarck did not hesitate to seek an alliance with Italy in his fratricidal war. The instances of treason and guile which were committed against the German people in Austria are innumerable. In the World War our troops were always compelled to hold positions until the Germans got a breathing spell. Germans requisitioned all the food available in the occupied areas, whereas we were forced into starvation. In our country, in German Bohemia, the misery had its climax. We could obtain nothing from the Czech districts, and many housewives were shot dead when they went to Germany to hunt for food. We would hardly have been able to get the Prussians out of our country if we had won the World War. If Austria were to be governed by the National

Socialists, as the Prussians wish, our country would become a Prussian colony. Prussians would be appointed to all the offices. We would have nothing to say in our own country. I don't wish to mention the events of the last few years. The sins against us committed by the great German nation, related to us by blood ties, will remain forever a blot on its honor.

But one can't condemn the great German nation for the actions of its leaders, nor is it possible to lay the whole responsibility on Hitler. He calls himself the leader, but I think he is the one being led. He employed for the service of his party unscrupulous elements, but even he is now unable to check them. The reputation of the German nation is destroyed. Hitler can't get rid of the evil spirits he invoked.

We talked also about the policies adopted against the minorities in different countries. At the same time the forcible denationalization of the German minority in Hungary was mentioned. I took exception to the Prussian policy against the Poles and condemned the attempt of the Prussians to turn the Poles into Germans by violence. Hitler said this was unavoidable; a state must try to create a uniform nationality within its borders. I was very angry that Hitler always took the government's part. Whether the ruthless policy of Magyarization was discussed, or the policy in Posen, or Upper Silesia, Hitler invariably approved of all such violent methods as necessary for the state's sake. In such debates I always sided with his opponents, but opposition was useless because of his shouting.

He talked often about his youth. He said with pride that the people of the Innviertel (the district in which he was born) had the reputation of brawlers, and he told about watching their fights as a lad, and even enjoying them. It was a holiday for

him when a friend took him and his father to the district court in Ried to see the deadly weapons exhibited there that had been collected during peasant fights. What others abhorred appealed to him. I don't know whether such instincts disappear in later life. I simply am telling my personal experiences with Hitler, without comment or adornments.

Hitler also told me that when he got into fights as a boy his father wouldn't let him complain but made him fend for himself.

He had read considerably about the Revolution of 1848 and lectured about it a great deal. Richard Wagner was then his favorite subject, first Wagner as a revolutionist in 1848 and afterward his struggles, until he found a patron in King Ludwig. We often went to the scenic railway in the Prater, where we could hear the organ play „Tannhäuser“*[sic!]*. Hitler listened quietly and explained the action to us. Once he grabbed my hand excitedly and said, „That's the passage! Do you hear? That's the passage!“

On our way home he tried to explain the opera to us and sang some passages. In his excited way he could only hum a few tones and fidget with his arms. But he could describe the scenes very well, and what the music meant. I don't think that it was a real understanding of music, though; he had more of a sense for what was going on on the stage and what had to be performed. For Wagner he had a great enthusiasm, and said sometimes that opera is really the best divine service. Everything about him was somewhat exaggerated.

In the scenic railway there was always a great deal of Mozart played, first of all from „The Magic Flute“. Hitler would try to hurry us and get us to leave. Once I remarked that Mozart was greater than Wagner, but Hitler denied it vehemently. He said Mozart fitted the old sentimental times more, but that today he had been outlived. But Wagner was a fighter, there was more greatness and power in Wagner. Besides there were more people kept busy, especially the orchestra.

He also liked to talk about Gottfried Semper, the architect of the Hofburg, the Museums and the Burgtheater. And one day we spoke of Karl May, for there were rumors that he had been jailed for serious offenses. Hitler said it was mean to bring up his past against such a man, that they who did it were hyenas and scoundrels, and that he himself had read Karl May, who was really a great writer.

Ideas and novelties were his hobby. He thought men of the future would nourish themselves more and more with substitutes, a pill perhaps sufficing

as a whole day's ration. I told him I'd stick to my cakes and wine, and leave the pill-food to others. Another time Hitler explained the force of gravity to us, and assumed that the next great scientific advance would be the elimination of gravity from objects, so that iron blocks could be moved from place to place without difficulty.

We talked of the necessity of religion, as there had been published in the *Arbeiterzeitung* an article mocking a Corpus Domini procession. Hitler condemned it strongly on the ground that the religion of the common people was being destroyed without a substitute being offered to them. He often said religion was necessary, and that if there were none it should be created. He spoke of Voltaire's having gone to church, because he had been robbed by peasants. The peasants said that if there were no God, as Voltaire claimed, then there was no sin either, so Voltaire went to church to prove to them that he believed in God.

Hitler often received benefits from convents. I have already spoken of his having been fed with convent soup, but also for medical advice he went to the Merciful Brothers (Barmherzige Brüder). But he charged Catholicism with Germanophobia, because the Popes were mostly Italians. He said the Catholic Church had reached her present power and greatness by good organization, and pointed to the past when the Church won her way with fire and sword. He also said the Catholic Church had spilt more blood than any other religion. He believed that the Western nations gained a great deal from the oriental civilizations during the crusades, and so our art rose to new heights.

If the Germans had remained faithful to their old mythology, they would today be a united nation, and would have reached a higher standard of civilization. He meant that the Germanic faith, if retained, would have become more ideal with the changing times, and in this connection pointed to the Greeks, in whose faith he said ideals were revered as gods. He was a particular admirer of the structure of the Greek state, where scholars and philosophers exerted a strong influence, a thing we should have emulated. That had been the epoch of philosophy, but in our technical age philosophy was badly neglected. He asserted that it would be easier to combat misery if there were more philosophy. And moreover, he said, there should be more business men in the government, that is should not be, as it was, full of jurists and bureaucrats.

Once Hitler remarked that the Protestant Church was Germany's true religion. I asked him why his father had not been converted to Protestantism. Hitler retorted that since his father was a government official it would have made difficulties. Hitler admired Luther as the greatest German genius.

Now I want to make some remarks about Hitler's opinion of the Jew. In those days Hitler was by no means a Jew hater. He became one afterward. He used to say even then that the end sanctions the means, and so he incorporated anti-Semitism into his program as a powerful slogan.

In the Home, Hitler had helpful advisers who were Jews. There was a one-eyed locksmith called Robinsohn who often assisted him, since he was a beneficiary of an accident-insurance annuity and was able to spare a few pennies. And in the Maennerheim Hitler often found Jews who listened to his political debates. The salesman Neumann became a real friend. Neumann was a business man by profession and didn't shrink from any work. At first he was with two signboard painters, one a very industrious man and the other the former lamplighter, Greiner. Later on Neumann worked with another Jew who was buying old clothes and peddling them in the streets; at this time he often gave Hitler old clothes. He was a good-hearted man who liked Hitler very much and whom Hitler of course highly esteemed. Hitler told me once that Neumann was a very decent man, because if any of us had small debts Neumann paid them, though he himself was very much in want.

At that time Theodor Herzl and the Zionist question were very much discussed. Hitler and Neumann had long debates about Zionism. Neumann said that if the Jews should leave Austria it would be a great misfortune for the country, for they would carry with them all the Austrian capital. Hitler said no, that the money would obviously be confiscated, as it was not Jewish but Austrian. Then Neumann always made a joke; it would nevertheless be a misfortune for Austria, because when the Jews crossed the Red Sea all the coffee-houses in Leopoldstadt were deserted.

Neumann went to Germany in 1910. He tried to persuade Hitler to join him, speaking with great enthusiasm of Germany, but Hitler wasn't able to make up his mind. Since then I have never heard of Neumann.

Hitler was able to sell his watercolors almost solely to Jewish dealers. He sold to Jacob Alten-

berg of the Wiednar Hauptstrasse, who also had a branch in the Favoritenstrasse. There was another Jewish shop in the Favoritenstrasse, owned by Landsberger, who also bought from Hitler, and there was Morgenstern in the Liechtensteinstrasse, who often bought from him and sometimes recommended him to the private customers.

The Christian dealers, like the frame manufacturer Schiefer in the Schönbrunnerstrasse, didn't pay any better than the Jews. Besides, they only bought again when they had disposed of the first lot, while the Jewish dealers continued to buy whether they had sold anything or not. Hitler often said that it was only with the Jews that one could do business, because only they were willing to take chances. They are really the most efficient business men. He also appreciated the charitable spirit of the Jews, and mentioned the statesman Sonnenfels during Maria Theresa's reign. He went even further. For instance, when the people in the Home expressed resentment at Queen Elisabeth's erecting a monument to Heine on her estate at Corfu, Hitler argued that it was sad that Heine's fatherland did not similarly recognize his merit. Hitler himself didn't agree with Heine's views but his poetry deserved respect. When it was argued that there were few artists among the Jews, Hitler replied that there might be few, but there were some, and he mentioned Mendelssohn and Offenbach.

But he admired the Jews most for their resistance to all persecutions. He remarked of Rothschild that he might have had the right of admission to court but refused it because it would have meant changing his religion. Hitler thought that was decent, and that all Jews should behave likewise. During our evening walk we discussed Moses and the Ten Commandments. Hitler thought it possible that Moses had taken over the commandments from other nations, but if they were the Jews' own they had produced as a nation one of the most marvelous things in history, since our whole civilization was based on the Ten Commandments. About Christ he said that he must surely have been in India, as he adopted points of Buddhism, and after all he was the son of a Greek who served as a Roman army captain. During these walks a Bavarian foreman from a dairy often accompanied us. He wondered why Jews always had remained strangers in the nation, and Hitler answered that it was because they were a different race. Also, he said that the Jews had a different smell.

Nevertheless Hitler at that time looked very Jewish, so that I often joked with him that he must

be of Jewish blood, since such a large beard rarely grows on a Christian's chin. Also he had big feet, as a desert wanderer must have. Hitler himself often remarked that descendants of Jews are very radical and have terroristic inclinations. He said that for a Jew to take advantage, to a certain extent, of a non-Jew, was not punishable according to the Talmud. On the other hand he often dismissed the charge of ritual murder with the remark that it was absolute nonsense, a groundless slander. He used to quote from „Nathan der Weise“ by Lessing and could well recite the parable of the three rings. He believed every religion to be good, and expressed the opinion that the Jews were the first civilized nation because they were the first to abandon polytheism for the belief in one God. The fact that they made no images indicated, he said, that they worshipped God more as Nature itself. So he didn't care much about anti-Semitism.

Hitler often even denied that Jewish capitalists practice usury, and pointed out that most capital is in the hands of Christians. He accused the nobility of practicing usury, using Jews as agents. However, he called the nobility a sort of noble race that would forever remain preëminent. But Emperor Wilhelm II he called a conceited chatterer who posed for monuments.

Perhaps many people will doubt the truth of these statements, and point to the German Reich today. But I have often noticed myself that anti-Semitism took cruder forms in Germany than in our country. This is due to the character of the Germans, especially the Prussians. I am convinced that Hitler himself doesn't agree with many of these insanities, but he is the prisoner of his circle.

*(To be concluded)*

### I Was Hitler's Buddy: III

*This is the last installment of a memoir by Reinhold Hanisch, an Austrian painter who knew Hitler when both men were living on charity in Vienna. — THE EDITORS*

HITLER WAS CONSCIOUS OF being a government official's son. He repeatedly said of the workers that they were an indolent mass that cared about nothing but eating, drinking and women. He thought a revolution could only be the work of a student class, as in 1848. I answered that he should get acquainted with workers when they came home from work, tinkering, making odd inventions and improving their education. I said that he didn't know the real workers at all, but merely the bachelors. Actually he was unable to form an opinion of workers because he had no opportunity to meet them. All this time he lived in the Home, and such a place has great disadvantages. The mass of people there are largely an assembly of rabble and a real workingman doesn't stay there long. He looks for board in a private house to enjoy family life. Only loafers, drunkards and the like stay for a long time in such a home. And workers paid little attention to Hitler because they found his debates quite foolish. Besides, the reading room there was seldom used by workers. I wanted to prove to Hitler that workers were not so indolent, and pointed to Halske and Krupp, who rose from the bottom. Hitler said that they were exceptions, and that there were surely superior and inferior people. But I said that was not so. The

workingman doesn't rise easily even if he has great abilities; there are highly gifted workers who have never been successful in life. Again Hitler mentioned the nobility, maintaining that they were the superior race, so I became angry and said that there were also idiots among the noblemen.

Hitler was even then an enemy of the Social Democrats. On May 1, 1910, a worker from the Kremenzky factory came into the reading room with a red carnation in his buttonhole, and told about the parade in the Prater he had been in. Hitler leaped to his feet, waving his hands wildly, and screamed in his regular way, „You should be thrown out; you should get a lesson!“

Everyone laughed at his excitement. If I had told him at that time that he himself would celebrate the First of May he would probably have killed me. Yes, but the end sanctions the means. Moreover, Hitler was then an enemy of any kind of terror. He condemned any kind of compulsion, and also strikes. He was also opposed to the contributions collected by the Social Democrats for their party organization, because he said these contributions enabled a lot of parasites to live comfortably at the expense of the masses of the people. He declared that the state probably had no means to stop this, but that this unjustified greed



for profit on the part of some people represented a great danger for the state. He also considered stock companies an evil, and thought that if an industry was getting too large it should be turned over to the state and the state should get the profits.

That he often talked nonsense is shown by a little episode. He was talking about Schopenhauer, and the old gentleman we called the professor asked Hitler if he had ever read Schopenhauer. Hitler turned crimson, and said that he had read some. The old gentleman said that he should speak about things that he understood. After that Hitler was careful not to talk where he would suffer a fresh rebuke.

I was often asked about Hitler's attitude toward women, and there were, even then, suspicions about it. But these were absolutely without foundation. Hitler had very little respect for the female sex, but very austere ideas about relations between men and women. He often said that, if men only wanted to, they could adopt a strictly moral way of living.

While he was still going to the technical high school in Linz he used often to call on a close friend, the son of a government official. And this friend's sister was Hitler's first love. She never knew it, because he never told her; he was the son of a minor official and she the daughter of a much higher one. Hitler was even astonished that the son of such a high official would be his friend. It was, incidentally, under this friend's influence that he became and admirer of Wagner.

But Hitler's high opinion of love and marriage, and his strong condemnation of men's disloyalty, didn't prevent him from having very small regard for women. He used to lecture us about this, saying every woman can be had. All you have to do, he said, is to wear your hat on the back of your head, so your face will be as visible as possible. And he himself did wear his derby on the back of his head. He often said that it was the woman's fault if a man went astray. A decent man can never improve a bad woman, but a woman can improve a man. The he used to relate an experience he had had when he was very young, to prove his self-control. During one of his vacations from high school, in the country, he met a milkmaid who appealed to him, and who liked him, too. Once, as she was milking the cow and he was alone with her, she behaved rather foolishly. But Hitler suddenly thought of the eventual consequences and ran away, like the chaste Joseph, knocking over a big pot of fresh milk.

All during this time, of course, Hitler was living in the deepest misery in Vienna. He was so poor and so ill fed that he was hardly conscious of his needs, and his poverty prevented him from having anything to do with women. Besides, his queer idealism about love would have kept him from any frivolous adventures. If there is any gossip about this, it is just slander. Hitler certainly wasn't the kind of man at that time for any girl to fall in love with. His poor clothes, the tangled hair falling down over his dirty collar, these are the reasons that he probably never knew any more than a yearning.

During this time Hitler was more engaged in debate than in painting. He was often ridiculed, and when I returned from peddling his cards all day I used to have to listen to his complaints. Of course I always advised him to do more work and less debating; I wanted to rent a small private room, in the hope that his will to work would improve if he got out of the Asylum. Too, Hitler's work, done under these conditions, was of very poor quality and made selling very difficult. I could never sell a picture in the better shops. In the suburbs I was paid three to five kronen a picture, and even so I was glad to find a buyer.

Hitler often promised to become more diligent, but as soon as I went out in the morning he went back to his old practices. In the morning he wouldn't begin work until he'd read several newspapers, and if anyone should come in with another newspaper he'd read that too. Meanwhile the orders I brought in weren't carried out. But if I reproached him he only said that an artist needed inspiration. Once I told him, to his great dismay, that he was no artist. The sort of work he did wasn't the work of artists but of daubers.

He could never stand any criticism of his paintings. Once he painted a picture of sea surf, with some rocks, and handed it to me telling me to take it to Ebedeser on the Opernring. Mr. Ebedeser only said, „That's nothing, absolutely nothing“. Then I often went with him to the City Hall Museum and showed him watercolors that he might use as models. He picked out those of lesser quality and remarked that they were no better than his. So I told him that he must not take the worst examples, but look at something by Richard Moser, or two interiors by Rudolf von Alt, the home of the painter Amerling and an altar painting, that hang there together. I pointed out the easy manner of this painting and compared the heavy way his turned out. He wouldn't listen to that, so later I told him that I had just been trying to help

him progress and make money, and at last he realized this.

The Viennese views that Hitler painted in the Asylum were mostly patterned after postcards, using just a few patterns and always the same motifs. Once I had an order for him to paint the Church in the Gumpendorferstrasse, and, since a postcard wasn't to be found, I urged him to draw it from nature. We went down early one morning, but Hitler couldn't make the drawing. He used all sorts of excuses: it was too cold, his fingers were too stiff. Today, knowing that he had had no academic background, I can explain his clumsiness. It is also characteristic of his watercolors that there are few figures in them.

On my rounds one day I went to a small manufacturer of frames in the Grosse Schiffgasse, a little street in the Jewish Ghetto. There I met a dealer in antiques called Siegfried Tausky, who showed me a silhouette on gilt glass and asked if I could do work like that. When I said I could he gave me a piece of the glass and I worked out a silhouette of a lady on it. Thereupon Tausky gave me a larger piece of glass and asked me to make a „Schubert evening concert“ with a number of figures. As I didn't know at that time who Schubert was I turned this over to Hitler. He produced a postcard when I asked him how he was going to draw Schubert, and accepted the job. The next day I met Tausky again and he gave me another plate to work on. I worked on it all that day and the next day and finally finished it, and then went to get the other plate from Hitler. He hadn't finished, so I watched him work all the next day until it was done. When at last he gave it to me I asked him how much to charge for it, and he said a hundred kronen. I made him realize how impossible it was to get such an enormous sum; finally he told me to get as much as I could.

I reached an agreement with Tausky about the price, and he paid me, but I was amazed to find out that he liked my work better than Hitler's. He gave me steady work and offered me a fixed price. Though I was very glad that he was satisfied with the work, this whole episode upset me very much. Hitler fell very much in my esteem, since I had had so much confidence in his artistic abilities. I still lacked self-confidence and kept wondering if I could continue to do work good enough to satisfy Tausky, and I knew that I lacked the academic training Hitler said he had had. But in spite of all my doubts I had great hopes of freeing myself from these miserable surroundings and from the

burden of a lazy man. For days I walked the streets restlessly.

Afterward I worked for years with Tausky.

Hitler wanted to know Tausky's address, because while working on the Schubert plate he had another new idea. He thought that by etching on gilded glass a new method might be found for the prevention of counterfeiting banknotes. In this case I think Hitler was right.

He noticed, no doubt, that there was something wrong with me, and asked me to give him a list of all my customers. But I refused, making excuses and putting him off on the pretext that I had urgent errands to run. Just then he had finished a watercolor of the Parliament in Vienna on which he had worked more attentively than usual, and hoped to sell in a better shop. As I was better dressed I was supposed to call on the shops; this time he went with me. But again all attempts were unsuccessful; I wasn't even asked the price. People shrugged their shoulders when I offered it to them, and one said that it was just too poor a piece of work. Hitler had expected a lot of it, so of course he was disconsolate, yet I couldn't find the words to console him.

And so he told me to go and sell the picture by myself. For days I walked around, getting very small offers, but still thinking I could get more for the picture. I felt sorry for Hitler; he had daubed for more than eight days at this. Finally he had no more money left and he urged me to sell it, so I got twelve kronen from the frame-maker Reiner. He gave me six kronen at once, and this I gave to Hitler, taking the six to come later as my share.

The next day I wanted to deliver something that had been ordered a fortnight before, a birthplace in Bohemia drawn from a photograph. The woman who was buying it was going to take it home as a gift and I had promised faithfully to deliver it on time, since Hitler has assured me that he would have it ready. When I asked him about it he told me a story about a political debate. Again he had not finished the work. This put me in the position of facing the woman as a liar, so I was very excited. At such laziness I was very angry and resentful.

Hitler said he needed to be in the mood for artistic work. I called him a hunger artist, and he called me a house servant, because I had once told him that I worked as a servant in Berlin. I replied that I was not ashamed of any kind of work; I had tried many different kinds and never shirked anything. After these quarrels I moved from the

Asylum, looked for a private lodging and decided to work independently.

When I went to Reiner to collect the six kronen owing to me I found a gentleman in the shop asking Reiner who I was. Reiner told him that I had painted the parliament, and the gentleman asked me to call on him at his home in Doebling. He was a bank director, and gave me a large order. Within a few days I delivered to him three watercolors that he approved, and he gave me an order for seventy watercolors of Austrian folk costumes. On my way home I was very happy, figuring out that the income of this work would mean quite a bit of money. I was in my best humor.

It was in the late afternoon, and everything seemed to me brighter and more beautiful. I was looking joyfully into the future. Then, on the Favoritenplatz, I met a postcard salesman named Loeffler, a Jew who also stayed in the Asylum and was one of Hitler's circle of acquaintances. I asked him what news there was from the Asylum, and he reproached me for having misappropriated a picture by Hitler. In astonishment I asked which picture he meant. Hitler, he told me, had said I defrauded him of the watercolor of the Parliament. When I denied it he doubted my word and we had a violent argument. In the middle of it a policeman walked up and Loeffler told the policeman what the argument was about, so he had us come with him to the Commissariat of Police. Since I had no identification papers I was held.

As I have said, Hitler had noticed that I was trying to get rid of him, because of his laziness, and had asked for the list of customers. I knew that Hitler was an irascible person, and I had been afraid that he would find me anywhere I went. If he lost his shelter in the Night Asylum because of his laziness I was afraid he would descend on me and be a burden to me. So for these reasons I had been living for several weeks under an assumed name. But at the police station, of course, they immediately discovered this, to my disaster. For at that time living under a false name in Vienna was a criminal offense.

But I still hoped that Hitler would clear up this error and that then the whole affair would turn out satisfactorily. I was taken to the Brigittenau Police Commissariat and confronted with Hitler. How great was my disappointment! Hitler, of whom I had thought so highly, whom I had helped so often, whose errands I had done, declared that I had misappropriated a watercolor of his worth fifty kronen. When I objected that I had given him his

share of the twelve kronen paid for it he denied this. He denied, too, that he had told me to sell the picture as best I could. I testified that I had sold the picture to a dealer in the IXth district, but I didn't tell the dealer's name because I thought that if the bank director found out that it had not been I who had painted the Parliament he might withdraw the order he had given me.

At the trial two days later I had regained better spirits. I was asked again where I had sold the picture, and I withheld the name of the dealer as before. My prison mates had already told me that I would certainly be sentenced for living under a false name, so I didn't take much pains with my defense. Perhaps I could have pointed out that Hitler couldn't possibly paint a picture worth fifty kronen. I don't know whether this would have shattered Hitler's testimony immediately. The only desire I had was to get out of it as soon as possible, and I hadn't much confidence in the justice of my case. After all, I was a poor devil and I had lived under a false name. Appearances were against me. I was sure I'd be sentenced, so it all made no difference to me. Hitler persisted in his false accusation, and as the payment and the other things had had all been arranged orally, I couldn't furnish any proof of my denials. I was sentenced to a short term. After the sentence had been passed I called to Hitler, „When and where will we see each other again to make a settlement?“

But I was reprimanded by the judge for this, and threatened with further punishment.

A few days later I was at liberty, so of course my first errand was to the picture-maker Reiner. The bank director had already been inquiring for the watercolors. So then I worked from early morning until late at night, with neither Sundays nor holidays.

One day I was in a coffeehouse in the Wallensteinstrasse and met an Italian who also lived in the Asylum. He recognized me as soon as he saw me and told me that Hitler was very much blamed on my account in the Asylum. He was in great need and was probably longing for another partner to help him. Here and there he was getting a little money. This, I thought, must be from the government pension I have already mentioned.

The Italian asked me why I hadn't called him as a witness. He had been sitting beside us, he said, and had heard Hitler urge me to sell the watercolor so that he could pay the rent. And he had met me the next day and been present when I gave Hitler the six kronen. He insisted that I must denounce Hitler for giving false witness. But I

didn't follow his advice. Several years passed since then, and I have discarded this dishonesty of Hitler from my mind. I have been ashamed to let the people I know now learn about this affair. Desire for revenge didn't dissipate my fear of gossip.

The painting of Parliament still exists and is one of Hitler's better works. Most of them are shoddy trash, done with very little love for work. I could prove today what I was paid at that time, for the widow of the bank director could still tell about how much her husband would have paid for that picture.

The last time I met Hitler was in August, 1913, on the Wiedner Hauptstrasse. He had just sold some things to the art shop of Jacob Altenberg. Soon afterwards I left to go to Gablonz, in Bohemia, where I had some relatives, and I didn't come back to Vienna until 1918. But I often used to talk with my friends and acquaintances about the painter I had known called Hitler. It was a name like any other; no one recognized it.

One day I read in a newspaper that an Adolf Hitler was founding a political party in Munich. I went to see Mr. Altenberg, the dealer to whom he had sold things, and later I recognized Hitler's picture in the papers. But as I wasn't interested in politics it made no impression on me at all to discover that this was the same Adolf Hitler I had known.

There are a great many rumors about Hitler's past, stories that he was a paperhanger, stories that he was an architect. They are all untrue. This is the true story of Hitler's youth and the true story of the experiences he and I had together. I should emphasize that there are living people who can confirm everything I say.

Hitler discovered his love for the workers when he needed the votes of the masses. Whether this is a genuine love, or a deep love, I cannot say. It hasn't been the purpose of this story to attempt criticism of that kind.

REINHOLD HANISCH