

# Physical Culture

THE PERSONAL PROBLEM MAGAZINE

August, 1937 \* p. 9

## Will Hitler's SEX COMPLEX Force New War?

Can Napoleonic Ambitions Growing Out of and Compensating for One Man's Emotional Frustrations Precipitate Another Armageddon?

by LAWRENCE GOULD

*Consulting Psychologist*



**A**DOLF HITLER is today the world's enigma. Ridiculed at first by everyone but his own followers, watched with amazement in his meteoric rise to power, and more deeply hated outside his own country than is any other man now living, he has been more discussed, both in writing and in conversation, than a dozen other well-known figures.

Historians argue about him, sociologists try to explain him, and plain people admire or condemn him until everything about him seems lost in a fog of controversy. His life story is one which no novelist could have invented, yet it is not fiction: it is fact, and possibly for many of us very hard fact.

Is there any explanation of that story? And—still more important—is there any way to look ahead and see the ending? For that ending may affect the happiness, if not the very life, of everyone who lives to see it. There is no use saying that what Hitler is or does is not our business, for he is quite likely to make it our business in ways which we shall find it impossible to avoid.

But first for the story itself. Here, to start with, is a man with none of the qualities or natural advantages which usually lead to greatness. The fact that he comes of a poor family is not surprising—almost the majority of great men have been educated in the school of hard knocks. But unlike most men who have achieved fame, he showed no signs in his early life of any wish to rise above his background.

[OldMagazineArticles.com](http://OldMagazineArticles.com)

## *Hitler's Frustrations*

At twenty-five, he had failed in everything he had attempted, and was earning a precarious living as odd-job man and house painter. He enlisted in the German army as a private soldier and came out a corporal—decorated, indeed, with the Iron Cross which no soldier who fought through the whole war could well have avoided earning, but in other ways no different from his millions of defeated and discouraged comrades. He had little education, no financial backing, and no personal attractiveness, to men or women. Indeed, his appearance was somewhat grotesque, and his intelligence, if anything, below the average.



Vague rumors of romance having developed between "Der Fuehrer" and the actress, Pola Negri, have never been verified and appear unfounded. Two Polish papers which published the report were summarily suppressed



At the above reception to a group of screen stars, "Der Fuehrer," perhaps through pure shyness or official dignity, keeps his hands circumspectly away from the very attractive company at either side of him

## Hitler's Frustrations



And yet within the short space of fifteen years he had become the undisputed and absolute ruler of a country which at first refused him citizenship, his will had become the law of sixty million people, and he had won for himself such an intensity of personal adoration as no white man has received since the Romans made gods of their emperors and crucified the Christians for not worshipping them. He has actually been referred to as divine by some of his more enthusiastic followers, and the movement which he founded and which calls him Leader has most of the qualities of a religion.

What had he done in those fifteen years, and how did he do it?

It is generally said that Hitler talked himself into his present high position, and undoubtedly his oratory played a very large part in his rise to power, yet those who have heard him tell us that he is not a good speaker. The well-known American journalist, John Gunther, says: "He screeches; his mannerisms are awkward; his voice breaks at every peroration; he never knows when to stop." He will talk for two hours or more to an audience which would not have listened to another man for half of that time, but the strange thing is, they (Continued on page 90)

listen. He has some power that not only holds them, but eventually sways them so that they will give him almost anything he asks for. What can be the secret of this power?

It is a peculiar quality for which the best name I can think of is *emotional drive*. All successful speakers have it, but in Hitler's case it goes beyond all ordinary limits. And its basis is this: the things he is saying *matter* to him so intensely—so much more intensely than anything matters to a better balanced person—that he makes them matter to his hearers also. As we might say, he develops in himself so high a voltage of fear, indignation, passion, hope, or triumph that he "charges" the emotions of his hearers, whether they will or no. And I think that when we have discovered where this "voltage" comes from, we shall know more about Adolf Hitler and the sources of his power than anything else could tell us.

The secret of his "drive," as it seems to me, is the distortion and exaggeration of his normal feelings which is due at bottom to the fact that he is psychologically, if not physically sexless.

I do not mean to say that he was born without sexual desire, but something has kept that desire from finding satisfaction, and perhaps kept him from being conscious of it. As a result, all the psychic energy which in a normal person is directed toward love and marriage has, with him, been forced into unnatural and dangerous channels.

## *Hitler's Frustrations*

Let me try to explain.

Psychologically speaking, the power that keeps us all alive and going is the force of instinct and desire. This force is known sometimes as "the will to live," although more accurately it is the will to *enjoy life*. And whether we like to recognize it or not, the strongest of all our instincts is that which impels us, not just to preserve our individual existence, but to procreate our species.

You may say that Mother Nature is so much more interested in her task as a whole than in any single item of it that she gives each one of us a wish to *help her* which is stronger even than the wish to save our own lives. As far back as we know, men and women have been willing to risk almost any danger in order to satisfy this overwhelming impulse.

**T**HE impulse I speak of is, of course, the one we usually call the sex urge, but we cannot really understand it if we do not realize that it includes more than the word "sex" usually covers. For Nature endowed us, not merely with instinct, but with minds and feelings, and unless these too find satisfaction in our sex life, we remain frustrated and unhappy.

Man, in other words, requires not merely sexual pleasure, but love, loyalty, and comradeship, in order to fulfil the demands of his nature; and until he finds these, he can never know life at its fullest. That is why the sex urge in man would be better known as the love impulse, although in a normal person sex and love are only two different aspects of the same inborn need.

But unfortunately, here as elsewhere, man has managed to thwart Nature, and to misuse her gifts to his own hurt. For any of several reasons—all of them the result of our unnatural ways of living—the love impulse may be so blocked by obstacles in our own minds that it cannot find its natural satisfaction, and so turns to one which is unnatural, and therefore, unhealthy. When this happens, the psychologist would say that the person involved had made a neurotic adjustment to life rather than a normal one.

This is what seems almost beyond question to have taken place with Adolf Hitler, of whom one authoritative writer says, "He had never experienced love, nor was he ever to know the exaltation and peace that it brought to other men." When he first came into prominence, it was believed that he was what is technically called an "invert"—a person who loves the members of his own sex rather than those of the other.

There was a considerable basis for this idea on the old assumption that a man may be known by the company he keeps, for some of the early leaders of the Nazi party were notorious inverts, and this fact has been admitted even by their comrades. But John Gunther, whom I have already quoted, and who certainly is not a partisan of Hitler, says: "Several German journalists spent much time and energy, when such an investigation was possible, checking every lodging that Hitler, in Munich days, had slept in; they interviewed beer-hall proprietors, coffee-house waiters, landladies, porters. No evidence was discovered that Hitler had been intimate with anybody of any sex at any time. . . . Most of those German writers and observers best qualified to know think that Hitler is a virgin." ("Inside Europe," p. 8.)

But how about love without sex—or at any rate, without a conscious sexual factor? Hitler's life today, we are told, has no room for personal relationships. Except for his bodyguard, Lieutenant Bruckner, there are only two men who can see him without an appointment. Not a living German dares address him by his first name, or even to call him "Thou," as every German does the people with whom he is on terms of intimacy. The one man who was known to have been informal with him after he became Reich-Chancellor was his former colleague, Ernst Roehm, who shortly afterward was murdered.

## *Hitler's Frustrations*

Hitler is polite to women, and even at times attentive, and there have been women who have aspired to the power and prestige which marriage with him would bring them. It was rumored at one time that he was engaged to the grand-daughter of his idol, Richard Wagner, but there turned out to be no truth in the story. It is also said that the young widow who later became the wife of his Minister of Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels, first had designs on him herself, and then tried to marry him to one of her friends; but if this is true, all her efforts were a failure.

Hitler shies away from any serious entanglement with all the symptoms of neurotic terror. When, not long ago, his name was coupled by the gossips with that of the famous motion picture actress, Pola Negri, the news of the fact reduced him to one of the fits of hysterical weeping to which he has long been subject; and so great was his resentment that pressure was brought to bear upon the Polish government until it suppressed publication of two Polish papers which had dared to print the story.

**P**OSSIBLY because they were afraid of the conclusions which might have been drawn from such extreme behavior, his followers tried to pretend that the reason for his anger was that Madame Negri is a Jewess, but it has been proved that this is untrue. What *Der Fuehrer* revealed a little more clearly than he meant to is a psychopathic fear of sex and marriage; and in this fear lies the explanation of his personality and career.

But how is such fear—amounting in this instance to a “phobia”—acquired?

Modern psychological research has shown that everyone's attitude toward sex, love, and marriage grows out of the experience of his childhood, and expresses the conclusions—conscious or unconscious—which he gained from those experiences. The amount of fear of sex that any person has, for instance, depends on the extent to which he was led to conclude from his early punishments that sex is a dangerous and forbidden interest.

Or again, a man's (or woman's) belief in his chance of winning love from others, and particularly love he can rely on, is the result of his love relations with his parents. If they do not love him, or if, after having seemed to love him for a while, they cast him off and treat him with indignity or hatred, he may come to feel that it is not safe to trust anyone to love him, and therefore become himself incapable of loving or trusting anybody. The result is that his natural impulse to seek love becomes blocked or “inhibited” from seeking normal satisfactions, and is forced to look for consolation in some more or less unnatural direction.

This is evidently what took place—to an exceptional degree, in fact—with Adolf Hitler. Certainly there was no love lost, ever, between Adolf and his father. The latter, Alois Hitler, was already fifty-two when his third wife bore him her first child. He was a petty official of the Austrian customs, and by all accounts a typical domestic tyrant of the old school. It is said that he regarded Adolf as half-witted, and bullied and beat him. Adolf in turn must have hated the old man as hysterically as he feared him; and seems to have resolved—with all the intensity of an emotionally unbalanced nature—to prove some day that he was the bigger man of the two.

How much of a love relation there existed between Adolf and his mother, is a question on which there are differences of opinion. One biographer says he “loved her passionately,” while another tells us that he cared but little more for her than for his father. The truth may well lie between these extremes.

**K**LARA HITLER was, as has been said, a third wife, and twenty-three years her husband's junior. More than that, she was a “poor relation” of the family, and had actually been a servant

## *Hitler's Frustrations*

in the household while Alois's first wife was alive. We may well assume that she stood too much in awe of her husband to dare show much love for a child he disapproved of, and we know she backed him in opposing Adolf's youthful desire to become an artist.

Her son now says that he loved her dearly, but the chances are, he never dared to show his feelings in his father's presence, and his fear of old Alois must always have come between them. Indeed, it is doubtless the persistence of this old fear in the depths of his unconscious mind which is the basis of his present inhibitions; for every boy's first love is his mother, and the more he fears the father on whose rights his love for her appears to trespass, the more likely he is to remain afraid of love forever after.

But no matter how much we may fear love, none of us can live without it. I mean this quite literally. Love is just as necessary to our spirits as food to our bodies, and in one way or another we must and will find it. If we cannot get love from another actual person, we may satisfy ourselves with an ideal; or even, as many have done, in the unseen Object of religious worship.

But if, as a result of the tragedies of childhood, our faith in ourselves and in the world has been so badly shattered that we do not dare try to get love from anyone else, seen or unseen, we fall back on the one source of love that remains—*ourselves*. That is, we become what the psychologist would call a Narcissist, or a self-lover.

And this, though he may not realize it, is what evidently took place in the case of Adolf Hitler. Cut off by the barriers of childish fear and distrust from all other sources of affection, Hitler actually fell in love with himself, and has given himself the same unswerving adoration and devotion that a normal lover gives his sweetheart. If this seems extravagant, remember that the man today, when anyone salutes him in the prescribed manner, himself responds with, "*Heil Hitler!*"

Narcissism or self-love is not by any means uncommon. Do we not all tend to console ourselves for the world's failure to love and appreciate us as we feel it ought to, either by being luxuriously sorry for ourselves, or by proving to ourselves that we are far more noble and important people than anyone else knows?

But with most of us, self-pity and self-exaltation—the two chief expressions of compensatory self-love—are kept within reasonable limits. A sense of reality and perhaps a sense of humor help us to see that we really are not as much abused, or as much superior to other people as we are inclined to feel in our more childish moments. And then again, most of us do find at least some satisfaction for our natural love-impulse, so the need to compensate for its starvation is comparatively little.

**B**UT when, as with Hitler, the starvation is complete, self-pity and self-exaltation tend to take on pathological dimensions. Not only is Hitler subject to fits of hysterical weeping, as has been already stated, but he has always been inclined to think of himself as a martyr, as the very title of his book, "*My Struggle*," shows us.

His self-exaltation is still more extreme—in fact, it is of the type which either leads to an insane asylum or becomes a social menace, as the circumstances dictate. For this man has not found even the comparatively harmless outlet for his self-love which most Narcissists, especially of the male sex, achieved through sexual conquests. He has neither been able to prove himself a great man (to his own satisfaction, at least) by becoming a "great lover," nor won, even from a mistress, the appreciation and solicitude for which his heart is hungry. And so there is nothing left for his love impulse but to feed itself on his own greatness, and to prove himself, in his own mind, superior to all the world that will not love him.

This type of self-exaltation, as I said, most often leads to madness. There are fairly many people who, like Hitler, are

## *Hitler's Frustrations*

incapable of loving anyone but themselves, and who carry self-love to the point of worship. But most of these people are so utterly unable to adjust themselves to a world which will not recognize their greatness that they turn away from it completely. Except for occasional outbursts of hatred, they withdraw from life completely, and dwell in what Phyllis Bottome has so well called "Private Worlds" of their own making. Many of them will not even pay as much attention to the real world as is necessary for their own existence: they have to be fed by force, and otherwise tended like babies.

But suppose a person of this type is able, by some strange stroke of good fortune, to gratify *in the real world* the same wishes which most people can fulfil only in the world of illusion. Suppose that instead of merely imagining himself to be a Napoleon or a demigod, he has actually a chance to become one. In that case, the man would not "go crazy" in the technical sense, for the simple reason that he would not have to. He would have turned what would be another man's delusions into cold facts—or near enough to facts for all ordinary purposes.

But before a man could do this, he would have to have two things: more or less uniquely favorable circumstances, and an equally unusual power to "rationalize" his ideas so that neither he nor others would see how far they were from all ordinary sanity and reason.

Hitler had "the breaks" in both these respects. At the time when he appeared on the political horizon, the people of Germany were in an emotional state when they were ready to seize almost anything that promised them a chance to regain their national power and prestige. The reasons for this are a whole story in themselves; but the result was that Germany clutched at her self-appointed savior like a drowning man at a straw.

Yet even in the emergency this could not have happened had not Hitler possessed a remarkable ability to make insane ideas sound sane. His powers of rationalization were doubtless developed in the first place in his boyhood—at the time when only some sort of a basis for believing that he was superior to other people could have made his loveless life endurable. But these powers—as abnormally developed as a blind man's sense of hearing—were sufficient later so that he was able to take theories which an honest-minded ten-year-old could "see through," and turn them into a philosophy which most of Germany would swallow.

But what were these theories, and where did they come from?

Remember that, in order to make up to himself for the fact that his parents did not love him, Hitler had to love himself; and that before he could feel that he deserved his own love more than anybody else did, he had to prove to himself that he was immeasurably superior to all other human beings. He was living in a district in which there were people of several different races, and his own family was of German origin—or at least, so he thought.

From a schoolboy's reading of the biased history books that were provided for him, he began by developing the belief that Germans *as such* were superior to all other peoples, and were the predestined rulers of the world. Of course this idea of "Nordic supremacy" was not original with him—it was widely taught in Germany and Austria at that time—but it served his purpose, which as yet was more or less unconscious. For all of us find self-exaltation easier if we can begin by thinking of ourselves as belonging to a superior *type*—our own individual superiority comes later.

**T**HEN the World War broke out, and seemed at first to promise the ultimate proof of German greatness. Adolf went to Germany and "joined up," although he was not at that time a German citizen, and had to wait fourteen years before he became one. Then, after four long years of terrific struggle, Ger-

## *Hitler's Frustrations*

many was beaten! It was all but too much. Did this mean that he had been mistaken, and that other nations were as great as his own?

He could not—*would* not—believe it. If that were true, he would have to give up the chief basis of his self-love; for after all, except as a "German," he was as yet nothing at all out of the ordinary. Once more his ability to rationalize found a way out.

Even as a boy, Hitler had learned to bolster up his sense of the superiority of his own race by comparing it with one which had for ages been despised and oppressed in most Central European countries. In fact, as he tells us in "My Struggle," the idea of Nordic supremacy had always gone more or less along with hatred of "non-Aryans," and Jews particularly.

He had noted with approval that the one newspaper in Vienna (where he was then living) which exalted Germans above all other peoples was also the one that was most thoroughly anti-Semitic. He tells us specifically of how he came to make this idea his own: "Once when I was walking through the inner city (in Vienna), I suddenly came across a being in a long caftan, with black sidelocks. My first thought was: Is that a Jew? In Linz (the village where he had been brought up) they did look like that. I watched the man stealthily and curiously, but the longer I stared at the strange countenance, and studied it feature by feature, the more the question in a different form turned in my brain: Is this a German?"

**W**HETHER or not this is the whole story, we do not know, and may never find out. It seems probable that there is some more personal explanation—for example, his mother spent ten years of her girlhood in Vienna, and she may have had experiences about which she told him but which no one else knows. But at all events, the hatred for the Jews came back into the man's mind as it trembled on the brink of madness after his hopes of a German victory had been shattered.

We may suppose that his thoughts ran something like this: "Germany has been defeated, and how can a beaten nation be superior to all others? But Germany *is*—*must* be—superior to all other nations; therefore it cannot be really true that she was beaten. She must have been betrayed, and of course—it was the Jews who did it!" The mere fact that there were but half a million Jews among Germany's sixty million people did not keep him from accepting this solution, which he was so desperately in need of. He adopted it, proclaimed it, and—amazingly enough—persuaded the majority of Germans (who were more or less in the same mental state as he was) to accept it. Once more a neurotic and unreal adjustment to the painful facts was able to go undetected because it appeared to work out.

But the trouble with this, as with all unreal solutions of men's inner problems, is that it is not, and never can be, complete. Consciously, no doubt, Hitler is satisfied with greatness, and regards love—except self-love—as a thing of no importance. But unconsciously, even *Der Fuehrer* is a human being, with the same essential needs as other human beings. His nature needs love, and sexual satisfaction, even though his mind rejects them. Therefore he is like a man who tries to fill his stomach with food which contains no nourishment—he must go on eating, and yet will always be hungry.

Indeed, he is doomed to ever-increasing hunger by the fact that he does not know what food he needs, still less how to get it. This is what makes him a never-ceasing menace to the world's peace as long as he stays in power. Remember how Alexander—another supreme neurotic lover of himself—went for more worlds to conquer. Remember that Cæsar and Napoleon were never content, no matter how great their power.

By the very nature of the inner hungers of which he knows nothing,



## Hitler's Frustrations

Hitler is compelled to go on trying to add to the "greatness" of the German people, with whom he has come to identify himself completely in his own mind. Being what he is, he cannot help but feel that Germany is superior to all treaties and all laws but her (his) own. He cannot help seeking her immediate and unlimited expansion, and no thought of God or man can stop him.

True, here also he requires some sort of plausible moral justification, but again his power to rationalize has come to his rescue. To the east of Germany; and having almost unlimited natural resources, lies a country which not only has a form of government that is widely feared and disapproved of, but which—he is able to persuade himself—is ruled by the people he hates so insanely. Of course Stalin is not Jewish, nor are the majority of Soviet leaders, but that fact makes no impression on a mind as little interested in facts as is Adolf Hitler's.

The most casual reading of "My Struggle" (which ought to be read by every thinking person) will show that what Hitler really wants is neither colonies nor foreign trade, but *Russian territory*, and that he intends to get it, preferably by war, just as soon as he feels he is strong enough to do so. As he puts it himself: "By fighting against the Jews, I am doing the Lord's work."

I have said a good deal about how a man whose need of sex and love has been frustrated will try to make up to himself for his inner hungers by self-exaltation. But in every such man there is also an even more dangerous quality—cruelty or sadism. For no matter how hard he may try to persuade himself that he does not want or need love, he cannot help cherishing the hatred which he felt for those who first refused it to him. He cannot help finding *someone* on whom he may vent that hatred, caring little who the someone is, so long as he cannot hit back.

Indeed, there is no hatred so intense as is the pathological venom which is automatically distilled by complete emotional frustration. "For our liberation" (we read in "My Struggle") "we need more than economic policy and industry: what we need is pride, spite, hatred, hatred, and once more hatred."

SO we find today that even in his own land, as fewer and fewer Jews are left to torture, Hitler's sadism is turning toward other objects—just now in particular the Catholics, whom he cannot forgive because they recognize a higher power, at least in the realm of conscience, than his.

So we ask, what will the end be? And of course, no one can say with certainty, in this case or in any other.

But—

As has been said already, Hitler is not now quite insane in the technical sense. He is an acute neurotic, of the paranoid type, of which both delusions of persecution and delusions of grandeur are characteristic. But Hitler is also forty-eight years old, and is coming to the time of life which, in men just as definitely as in women, is apt to involve a serious psychological crisis. For years, if we are right in our interpretation of him, he has been telling his instincts that they must do without satisfaction, because (as he feels) this is a world in which we must not try to obtain love from anybody. So far, it would seem, his instincts have accepted their frustration and have tried to feed themselves on the neurotic satisfactions which were all that he would give them.

But soon there will come a time when these same instincts will be forced to realize that it is "now or never." The sex satisfaction which is their most fundamental need will have to be won while there is still the physical ability to get it, for manhood is waning, and will soon be gone entirely. And when this time comes—well, prophesy is always dangerous, but I believe it is far from improbable that what remains of Adolf Hitler's sanity will crack wide open, and that the great German President and Chancellor will end his days in some retreat where his condition can be kept a secret from the public.

### *Hitler's Frustrations*

Perhaps it is in this possibility that the world's hope of lasting peace lies. For while some of those who are Hitler's lieutenants are but little farther from insanity than he is, we may hope that none of them have his peculiar power to sway the feelings of his people. If Hitler goes crazy, Germany may once more grow sane.

If this does not happen, and if the world's supreme Narcissist remains in power, then however hateful the task may be, there seems to be nothing for the rest of us to do but to rearm, and to keep on rearming. For with things as they are, we can never be sure when this one man's sexual and emotional frustrations may furnish the spark which shall once more set the whole world on fire.

*Physical Culture for August, 1937*

OldMagazineArticles.com