

ADOLF HITLER, MILLIONAIRE



The financial wizardry of Max Amann made it possible

Der Fuehrer boasts of his impecuniosity, but the fact is that royalties from his book *Mein Kampf* and investments in German real estate and industrial firms make him one of Germany's wealthiest men. This money is deposited throughout Europe in 15 bank accounts under three names.

THREE years ago I listened to Adolf Hitler score the greatest oratorical success of his life as he dramatically confessed to a deliriously cheering and heiling crowd overflowing Berlin's Sportpalast:

"I have remained a man of the people, a modest and poor fellow . . . I am, as a matter of fact, the only statesman in the world who has no bank account!"

And again, a few weeks ago, at the opening of his millennial edifice in the Wilhelmstrasse, he repeated part of that earlier speech, and said: "As a German comrade I am today exactly what I have always been—and I do not want to be any more!"

The Third Reich's Fuehrer is, indeed, a magnificent orator who does not hesitate to use *Ersatz for truth* whenever he needs another trick to hypnotize his audience. In three years of research I have ascertained that the "modest and poor fellow" is, in fact, one of the wealthiest men in Germany, whose money is kept in fifteen bank accounts both inside and outside the Reich.

All of his fortune, one of Germany's largest, has been accumulated during his years as a politician. The bulk of it, however, has been garnered since, immediately after his assumption of power, he magnanimously relin-

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quished the only legitimate salary of his life: the 48,000 marks the Reich pays its Chancellors annually. The bulk of his income comes from the royalties paid to him from *Mein Kampf* which is today the best selling book in the world.

This book has its own story. During his first year in power there was still a regrettable lack of reader-interest in the Nazi Bible and Hitler was dissatisfied. Max Amann, Hitler's personal fiscal agent since 1921 and business manager of the Nazi party since 1922, found ways and means to increase the book's sale. He suggested that the Fuehrer order it to be presented as a gift to every newly wed couple in Germany. The copies are now bought for cash, by the German State, with taxpayers' money and even without the usual trade discount for bulk purchase. Simultaneously he induced the Minister of Education to distribute the book free to children at the end of school terms; and to purchase a great number of copies for every school library.

In spite of its tremendous sale, the original price of 8.50 marks (\$3.40, a high price for Germany) was never reduced. Herr Hitler's royalty on each copy is 68c. In 1934 his income from royalties on copies distributed among newlyweds amounted to \$503,200, and during 1937 it reached the fabulous sum of \$700,000. Though figures for the total annual sale are lacking, his annual royalty can safely be estimated at \$850,000.

By 1936 there was so much cash on hand that Max Amann decided to manipulate Hitler's vast fortune, and to invest his Fuehrer's accumulated wealth in sound securities. He purchased real estate in Munich, Berlin and Cologne, and enlarged the Franz Eher Verlag (the official publishing house of the Reich since the seizure of power) by "acquiring" other printing and publishing firms. First he bought Bavaria's largest printing house, M. Mueller & Sons, and several paper factories. Then he bought out the huge publishing house of Knorr & Hirth, and the Ullstein en-

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terprises in Berlin. He secured a controlling interest in Haasenstein & Vogler, Germany's largest advertising agency. With the Ullstein concern, for which Amann paid a reputed five million marks of Hitler's money, he acquired several complete blocks of plants and tenement houses in almost every district of the German capital. In Munich he owns the greater part of the Thiersch Strasse, and has large plots in the exclusive Maximilian Strasse as well. In 1937 Amann invested a considerable sum of Hitler's money in Field Marshal Goering's industrial enterprises, the Hermann Goering Works.

Today any one banking house is considered inadequate to hold all the earnings of Herr Hitler. Therefore Amann has distributed his Fuehrer's savings among several banks. The largest sum in Hitler's own name is at the Bayerische Gemeindebank, Girozentrale, Munich, almost next door to the Brown House. There are large deposits with the Bayerische Gemeinde und Wechselbank; the Munich Branch of the Deutsche Bank & Disconto Gesellschaft; and in both the Berlin and Munich offices of the Bank of German Workers, a former Socialist Party institution seized by Nazis.

Herr Amann does not feel quite satisfied with the safety and security of these German institutions. Therefore a substantial part of Hitler's fortune is placed in several foreign countries. The largest sum was invested in Swiss francs and kept at the Swiss Bank Corporation in Switzerland, until 1937, when the franc was devalued. To avoid the possibility of a further loss, Herr Amann instructed the Bank to transfer the money to the West End Branch of the Swiss Bank Corporation, 11c Regent Street, London, on whose books it now appears as a pound sterling deposit in the name of the Franz Eher Verlag, represented by Max Amann of Munich.

According to the records kept in Amann's auditing office, there are other deposits as well, scattered in

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nine European countries under three different names. These accounts are as follows:

At Bern, Switzerland, at the Bundes Postscheckamt, account number 111-7,205, in the name of Max Amann;

At Paris, France, at the Bureau Central des Cheques Postaux, rue des Favorites, account number 190,066, in the name of Amann;

At The Hague, Holland, at the Postcheque en Girodienst, Specineplein, account number 211,846, in the name of Amann;

At Brussels, Belgium, at the office des Cheque Postaux, account number 350,797, in the name of Amann;

At Prague, Czecho-Slovakia, at Postovni Sporitelna, account number 77,303, in the name of Franz Eher Verlag;

At Warsaw, Poland, at Pocztaowa Kasa Oszczednosci, Jasna, account number 194,121, in the name of Franz Eher Verlag;

At Budapest, Hungary, at the Magyar Kiralyi Postatakarok-Penztar, account number 13,532, in the name of Philip Bouhler;

At Belgrade, Jugoslavia, at Cekodni Ured, account number 68,237, in the name of Philip Bouhler;

At Bucharest, Rumania, at Casa National de Economie ci Cecuri, account number 24,968, in the name of Bouhler, who is the trusted chief of Hitler's Personal Office.

The strict German exchange regulations decree that no private individual or business enterprise may keep bank accounts outside Germany without the specific permission of the Reichsbank. Moreover, all payments made into such accounts must be reported to the Reichsbank immediately in order that the sums abroad may be utilized in the complicated German "clearing system." Hitler's accounts, however, are un-touchable, and contain funds which are not registered with the Reichsbank. Arnold Bernstein, president of a German-American steamship company, was sentenced to ten years imprisonment last year for a similar "crime."

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This clever scattering of funds in practically every European country has another, not so financial, significance. Although the Nazis insist that their regime will last for at least a thousand years, Herr Amann wants to make sure that in case it should end before its first millennium and he and his Fuehrer be compelled to emigrate in a hurry, they would find money wherever they land. This explains why it is necessary to keep funds in places like Budapest, Bucharest and Belgrade, where local currency regulations make it impossible to withdraw sums except for domestic use.

Looking at Herr Hitler's financial policy from this political angle, one discovers a rather interesting fact; Herr Hitler keeps no money in Italy, which fact, in itself, rules out the possibility of his ever fleeing to the protective hospitality of Signor Mussolini, junior partner in the Rome-Berlin Axis. It seems that Herr Amann, the Fuehrer's omniscient business-brain, considers the Axis less secure than Herr Hitler wants the world to believe it is. ●