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ZS Bernhard Strasser
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With all best wishes!

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GREGOR & OTTO STRASSER

(A footnote to the History of Germany)

By Rev. Bernard Strassen, O.S.B.

In the summer of 1950, I visited my native Germany for the first time in fifteen years. During that visit, I received from all sides - from friends and antagonists alike, and also from the editors of the "Muenchner Illustrierte", requests that I give the true picture of the personalities and political aims of my brothers, Gregor and Otto. I am all the more pleased to take up this task in view of the erroneous and misleading stories regarding my brothers which were put out first by the Goebbels propaganda machine and since then taken over and elaborated upon by the Communists in both the German and foreign press.

Being a Catholic priest and Benedictine monk, I have never belonged to any political party, and as an American citizen, I stand far enough removed from German politics to be able to give an impartial judgement on the subject. I thus have the advantage of being in a position to state facts regarding politics - not opinions - and of being equipped with a thorough knowledge of the lives, the characters and, most important of all, the goals of my brothers. I seek to serve Truth in this article, by clearing the good name of my murdered brother, Gregor, of the lies that have been nurtured by hostile propaganda - and to set forth the facts regarding my much-maligned brother, Otto, to whom so much injustice has been done by the same hostile elements.

HOW MY BROTHERS ENTERED POLITICS

When I recall the atmosphere of our home, I do not wonder that my brothers later went into politics. Our family always took an unusually lively interest not only in cultural and spiritual subjects, but in current events. Perhaps this is why our father, aside from his duties as a treasurer in the courthouse in Windsheim and Deggendorf, found time for studies in National Economy and History. He wrote constantly on political subjects; at the turn of the century, he published a book entitled "The New Way", under the pseudonym of Paul Weger. This little book contained the core of the cultural and political aims which Gregor and Otto were to represent and champion later on: the curing of the ills brought about by international, liberal capitalism by the introduction of a form of socialism at the same time nationalist and Christian.

Our mother, the eldest daughter of the artistic owner of the famous "German House" in Dinkelsbuehl, was not only deeply religious, but intensely interested in the politics of the day. I believe no single day passed that she missed reading and commenting on the daily newspaper. We had, moreover, the advantage of belonging to a reading club in Windsheim, which subscribed to all the leading political and cultural publications; thus, our reading circle had not only such papers as "Die Woche", "Die Gartenlaube", "Der Tuermer", "Velhagen und Klassings Monatshefte", but also prominent art magazines and Maximilian Harden's "Zukunft" ("Future").

We were five children - Gregor, the eldest, was born on May 31st, 1892, in Geisenfeld, Upper Bavaria. After completing his humanistic studies, he chose the career of an apothecary, for which he studied at the Universities of Munich and Erlangen.

I was the second child and entered in 1907 the High school and College at Metten, for

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I had already decided to become a Priest. Otto, born on September 10,1897, received his elementary schooling in Deggendorf and later entered college in Munich. He then studied for his doctor's degree in National Economy and Law in Berlin, Munich and Wuerzburg.

Olga, our only sister and the family pet, took part, too, in the lively political discussions which were a daily event within the family circle. Anton, the Benjamin of the family, was too young to play much of a role in the pre-war period. Later, he became a lawyer in Berlin, and, since 1943, is missing in action in the war against Russia.

AT THE WESTERN FRONT - WORLD WAR I

As it happened in millions of other German homes, our peaceful family life was abruptly shattered on August 1,1914. Gregor and Otto entered the Army immediately as volunteers; Gregor joining the First Bavarian Foot Artillery Regiment and Otto the Fourth Bavatian Field Artillery Regiment. By the beginning of 1915, both fighting at the Western front. Since I had to wait until my graduation, before joining, it was not until March of 1915 that I too could serve, as had our grandfather in 1870 and now my brothers, in the Artillery. We all three fought at the West front until the end of the great conflict, working our way up from the rank of "private" to that of battery-commander. Otto was wounded twice and I once. In the History of the First Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment (to which Otto had been transferred) are recorded the feats for which Otto was singled out to receive both the Order of Max Joseph and the Order of the House of Hohenzollern - indicating clearly enough that he was already a real fighter whose qualifications as an officer are well described by the author of the regimental History, Col. Rolf von Xylander: ". . . . . Lt. Strasser champions that which he believes to be right with a passionate energy, utterly disregarding his personal safety and welfare. . ." (I want to refer here to the new book by Douglas Reed, The Prisoner of Ottawa: Otto Strasser (Jonathan Cape, London, 30 Bedford Square) which gives in the Appendix Otto's war record).

The tragic end of World War I resulted for us in the intensification of our interrupted studies - which helped us to resist falling prey to the widespread mood of hopelessness and resignation which was later to prove such an excellent breeding ground for the rise of totalitarianism. I exchanged the gray uniform of an officer for the black robe of a Benedictine monk, while Gregor and Otto returned to the University. Nevertheless, their studies were not uninterrupted. When the Red dictatorship threatened to engulf Munich and Bavaria, they both joined the Epp Free Corps and fought to free the country from this sinister tyranny. Otto, in fact, against the orders of his doctors, left his sick bed (where he was at that time confined in the garrison hospital, recovering from wounds received in the war) on two crutches in order to take part in the fight. It was around this time, too, that Otto had his first taste of politics. He had been sent to Bad Aibling for medical treatment. There one day, Minister President Kurt Eisner gave an inflammatory, revolutionary speech before a large gathering, defaming in the most shameful manner every Nationalist and Christian value that his hate-warped tongue could lay hold of. The convalescent Otto, in his indignation, challenged the Red to a verbal duel - an episode which is pricelessly described in Otto's book, "Hitler and I".

For Gregor, this contact with the Epp Free Corps meant a sobering realization of the necessity for all Christian and patriotic elements to be ever on the alert against

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a resurgence of the Communist peril. Having settled in Landshut, where he owned a drug store, he founded there, in cooperation with other patriots the "National Association of German Soldiers" and himself took over the leadership of the Lower Bavarian branch of the organization, which later became known as the "Storm Batallion of Lower Bavaria". In the course of this para-military activity, in which a certain ex-"Fahnenjunker", Heinrich Himmler, served as his adjutant, Gregor came automatically in contact with General Ludendorff, the Honorary Chief of all German patriotic organizations. It was also during this period that Gregor first met Adolf Hitler (who, by the way, had taken no part in the battle to rid Bavaria of the Reds). Hitler had, nevertheless, become acquainted with General von Epp's Chief of Staff, Captain Roehm and was later, as Roehm's political confidence man, to join the NSDAP, the party founded in 1917 by Drexler and Scharrer. The party was based on Gottfried Feder's 25-point programme which was at that time being propagandized in small gatherings all over Munich. In his eagerness for unity between all the nationalistic groups, Ludendorff sought not only to bring the various paramilitary organizations into contact with each other (such as the "Oberland", "Reichsflagge Schwarz-Weiss-Rot" and others), but also the different political groups with corresponding anti-Communist ideals. Thus it happened that one day in the autumn of 1920, General Ludendorff and Adolf Hitler paid a visit to Gregor's home. It occurred to the latter that Otto, who was home from Berlin on vacation, might be interested in meeting the two men, and he invited his younger brother to join him and his guests at luncheon. This was Otto's first contact with Hitler, and he describes his impressions of this meeting in the aforementioned book "Hitler And I".

In the interests of unity, Gregor shortly thereafter put his "Storm Batallion of Lower Bavaria" under the military command of Gen. Ludendorff and under the political leadership of Hitler, while he himself became party chief of the NSDAP for the district of Lower Bavaria.

OTTO BECOMES A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT

Following the quelling of the Red outbreak in Bavaria, Otto devoted himself to his studies at the Berlin University, financing his studies by working as a stenographer at the Reichstag. Aside from his work and studies, he found time to help relieve the plight of war-impoverished students by founding the "Academic Veterans' Association" and by giving, free of charge, evening classes in German, History and shorthand for veterans who had no other means of receiving an education. In this project, he worked in cooperation with the famous priest, Father Sonnenschein, Germany's "Pestalozzi of adolescent education", one of whose associates in this great cause was the young Dr. Heinrich Bruening. The "Academic Veterans' Association" became a strong influence not only in the University of Berlin, but in universities all over Germany through the Students' Parliament of which Otto was a member.

It was this deep social conscience which brought Otto into close contact with the leading political parties and publications - he was a regular contributor to the catholic "Germania" and the socialist "Vorwaerts". And it was the same intense feeling for social justice which caused his antagonism toward the reactionary tendencies which appeared on the German scene in the postwar period and led him to take part against the famous Kapp-Putsch, for which Hitler strongly reproached him during their very first meeting. With equal loyalty to his convictions, Otto attacked the Social Democrats' betrayal of socialism by the so-called "Bielefeld Agreement" before the

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Kapp - Putsch was scarcely over. Otto and his friends resisted this move with such stubborness that they preferred to part company with the Social Democrats rather than cooperate in the betrayal of their stated aims.

THE FUTURE WITH HITLER

When Otto met Ludendorff and Hitler in Gregor's home, he was not a member of any political party. He remained, however, the nationalist, Christian Socialist that he had always been in his war years and throughout his social work as a student. Hitler awakened in him an instinctive mistrust - and just as certainly as he knew that Gregor was a sincere German Socialist, the more suspicious he became of Hitler's lengthy speeches and inadequate political background. Therefore, despite Gregor's urging that he join the new party, Otto steadfastly declined to do so. During the years immediately following, his time was entirely taken up by his studies; in 1921 he received his Doctor's Degree and became employed as a lawyer in the Ministry of Food. When his former military commander, Freiherr von Hertling, offered him in 1923 a post in his industrial concern, Otto accepted and embarked upon the most prosperous period of his life - a period which was to last only until he heard the tempting call of politics once more - and from that hour on he was never again a prosperous man. (Douglas Reed in his book "The Prisoner of Ottawa: Otto Strasser", published June 1953 by Jonathan Cape, London, after quoting this sentence on page 64 continues: "Nor was he ever again, until the present day, to be secure, comfortable or carefree; only insecurity, struggle, flight, pursuit, exile, hardship and persecution awaited him.")

This came about as follows: Gregor, in his double position as Gauleiter of Lower Bavaria for the NSDAP and as chief of the Storm Batallion of Lower Bavaria, had played a leading role not only in the famed May march of 1923, but in the Hitler-Ludendorff Putsch of November 9, 1923. For these activities, he had been sentenced to serve a long term in the Landsberg Fortress; however, he was freed much sooner by his election in the Spring of 1924 to the Bavarian Diet and, soon afterwards, to the German Reichstag in Berlin. Since Hitler was still imprisoned in Landsberg and, to all intents and purposes, out of politics for some time to come, General Ludendorff and Gregor took over the leadership of the Party- broadening it by admitting to its ranks Reichstag-member von Graefe, leader of the German Peoples' Freedom Party. During this time, an altogether new spirit presided over the party - a spirit that was emphasized by the expulsion of such ill-omened elements as the demagogues Esser and Streicher. Neither of these men ever forgave my brother for this, and they later contributed in no small way to his tragic end.

STRASSERISM VS. HITLERISM

Under this new leadership in the NSDAP, it seemed possible at last to give the Nationalist Socialist movement's dynamic force a concrete foundation, a goal and a programme. The 25-point programme which had been used theretofore consisted of rather vague statements of principle, but no very clear and pratical reference to economic questions or to foreign and domestic policy. In order to overcome these

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inadequacies, Otto worked out his "Bamberg Programme" which became famous in the history of the NSDAP and which, at the same time constituted the principal cause of the bitter conflict between Strasserism and Hitlerism within the National Socialist movement. Gregor was, of course, completely in favor of the "Bamberg Programme" which he had helped to formulate - and he convinced General Ludendorff, too, of its acceptability. Under these conditions, Otto lent a more willing ear to Gregor's urging that he become an active party member. For the time being, however, his cooperation was to be of an independent, journalistic nature. Under the pseudonym of "Ulrich von Hutten" he wrote numerous articles for the "Voelkischer Beobachter", all of which interpreted the spirit of the Bamberg Programme as he and Gregor had it understood and formulated. The Hitler faction, lead during the absence of its master by Alfred Rosenberg, did not remain silent through all this - and so it was not unusual for the "Voelkischer Beobachter" e.g., to contain on one day a proclamation by a prominent Part leader supporting compensation for the German princes ruined by the war, and the next day, a statement denouncing this same policy.

How different might have been the history of the Party - and of Germany (Douglas Reed in his above mentioned book says plainly on page 71: "had the Strassers been able to guide the party, there would have been no Second War.") - had not the Bavarian Minister of Justice, Guertner (for reasons still unknown) seen fit to end Hitler's imprisonment by granting him a full pardon. This remarkable development, followed by Hitler's reinstatement as Party leader, brought about the immediate withdrawal from the Party by General Ludendorff who, because of the stand which Hitler had taken on November 9th, refused to be associated with him any longer. Gregor and Otto would undoubtedly have followed Ludendorff's example but for the fact that they saw an opportunity to carry on in North Germany which was altogether outside Hitler's sphere, as the Prussian Government had issued a ban not only on the Austrian's speeches, but on his entry into Prussia - limiting in this way his activities exclusively to South Germany. Thus, Gregor strove to "take up the fight for the soul of national socialism and of Germany" (Douglas Reed) and to guide the Party in North Germany and to make it independent of Munich's influence. In this task, he asked Otto's help, and together they founded in Elberfeld the semi-monthly publication "National Socialist Letters". In his book "Men of Germany's Destiny" (Oswald Arnold Publications, Berlin, 1949) Dr. Jacob Stoecker devotes a long chapter to Otto, and calls the Elberfeld periodical "undoubtedly the most valuable publication of National Socialism."

"THE "KAMPF-VERLAG"

Otto left his industrial post and put all his money into the founding of the "Kampf Verlag" (The Warring Press), owned exclusively by himself and Gregor. They began in March of 1926 with the publication of two weekly papers, "The Berlin Workers' Newspaper" and "The national Socialist". Like a storm signal warning of later developments, came Hitler's and Rosenberg's immediate and furious protest against the use of the title "The national Socialist" and their uncompromising demand that it be changed at once into "The National socialist". Needless to say, Gregor and Otto rejected this and refused all other demands by the Hitler faction - and as they were both materially and

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politically independent, they could well afford to do so.

Anyone who reads the old numbers of the aforementioned newspapers - as well as the books and other publications produced by the "Warring Press" between 1926 and 1930 will find ample proof of the intensity of the "historic fight" (as Dr. Stoecker expresses it) which my brothers waged against Hitlerism in their efforts to put the great ideas of Moeller van den Bruck, Naumann and Masaryk into practice within the NSDAP. In the realm of foreign policy, my brothers represented the theories contained in the "Bamberg Programme" (which all North German Gauleiters had accepted by 1925 with the exception of Ley, and which Hitler had uncompromisingly rejected in 1926) - the central theme of which was a European Federation, based on the recognition that Western culture could be saved only by the cooperation of all members of the Christian family of nations. In domestic policy, Gregor and Otto championed the idea of a federation of German states - for they never lost sight of the dangers inherent in all forms of centralization - dangers of dictatorship and the scarcely less formidable prospect of the bureaucratization of German life. Only through federation could each of the many German clans and states be assured of the opportunity and means of preserving and developing their individual heritages independently and to the fullest advantage.

HITLER AGAINST EUROPE

Adolf Hitler on the other hand was a determined centralist, and therefore a deadly and implacable enemy of the federalist idea which he fought with his plan of German mastery over all other European nations. The conflict on economic grounds was no less fundamental, no less bitter. While Gregor and Otto stood for a German socialism (whose individual features are most comprehensively expressed in Otto's book, "The Structure of German Socialism" which appeared in Berlin and Zurich in 1931 and 1935 respectively), Hitler chose to use capitalism as the tool to build his brand of ‚Statism' which led inevitably to an all-powerful, highly centralized State.

It was with special satisfaction that I found confirmation of this in Dr. Stoecker's aforementioned book, "Men of Germany's Destiny", wherein he states:

> "....For Gregor Strasser, the belief in the Party's socialism was a sincere thing, while German socialism had been Otto's goal from the very beginning, and the hope of serving it the magnet which had drawn him to the Party of his brother and Hitler..."

As fundamental as were the other differences between my brothers and Hitler, perhaps the widest point of the gulf that divided them was in the cultural and religious sphere. Gregor supported wholeheartedly the tenets of Christianity and represented staunchly the interests of the Church - whereas Hitler was prepared to tolerate religion only if the churches were willing to become obedient subjects of his dictatorship. Next to his irreligion, Hitler's inability to understand the meaning of Western culture was doubtless the most unfortunate aspect of his character. (Douglas Reed (page 78) sums up this "shape of the conflict" between "Strasserism and Hitlerism" with these words:

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"Federalization against the total State ruled from Berlin; Christian socialism against Nationalism without socialism; Christianity against paganism.")

It had become clear that only a spark was needed to set off the long-brewing conflict between "Strasserism and Hitlerism". Having foreseen the coming struggle, Hitler had built up the SA, an organization comprised of men owing their sole allegiance to him personally - not to the Party. Gregor sought in vain to persuade him that the SA should serve under the leadership and authority of their local NSDAP headquarters - and just as vainly did he argue that members of the SA should be required to join the Party. Hitler rejected both demands and, taking advantage of his favorable financial position, he was able to continue building up the SA until it was a power to reckon with - a tool for his own purposes, completely independent of the NSDAP and of the ideals of national Socialism. With this source of power at his disposal, Hitler was enabled to form a coalition with the Reichswehr which, in turn, forced the lifting of the ban on his speeches and travel in Prussia. Therewith the silent conflict between Strasserism and Hitlerism flared into open warfare - beginning with a furious. two-day verbal exchange between Otto and Hitler in May of 1930. A full account of this debate will be found in Otto's pamphlet "Minister's Portfolio or Revolution?" - and anyone who reads this report will readily understand why a final break between Hitler and Otto was now inevitable. Following this exchange, Hitler attempted to bribe Gregor and Otto with an offer of 80,000 Marks apiece if they would agree to sell their "Warring Press". He went even further with Otto, and tempted him with the post of Press Chief - plus a Reichstag mandate in exchange for his cooperation. Otto naturally refused, replying: "Herr Hitler, I am not for sale!"

On July 4, 1930 there appeared all over Germany the famous headline: "THE SOCIALISTS LEAVE THE NSDAP", thus serving notice that Strasserism had now entered the arena as a separate political power.

In retrospect, I find it difficult to understand how Gregor, who had taken part in the second day of the long and violent discussion between Hitler and Otto, could still have yielded to the hope that it was possible to change Hitler's outlook and to remain with him. However, for those who knew Gregor's great qualities of leadership, his superb rhetoric, his strength and confidence - and for those who remember that the majority of National Socialists, especially those in North Germany, were strongly idealistic and inspired by the determination to build a new and a better world, it will not be too difficult to comprehend Gregor's unflagging optimism in believing that, with the help of his many friends, he could still direct the Party - even after Otto had left it - in the spirit of the "Bamberg Programme". This belief was a regrettable mistake - and my brother Gregor paid for it with his life.

THE BLACK FRONT

For me, it is totally incomprehensible how any responsible person having even a minimum of respect for the truth, can state that Otto's political aims or his organization (earlier called "The Black Front" and now known as the "League for Germany's

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Renewal") bear the slightest resemblance to any form of totalitarianism. Anyone familiar with even a few of the writings cvoncerning his political beliefs - anyone having the barest knowledge of his long conflict with Hitler, must certainly realize that this conflict stemmed not from any mere personal rivalry - but from vital, fundamental differences in their entire outlook. But the story that Otto broke with Hitler only because he had failed to attain a high post by associating with him, is as deliberate a falsehood as it is vicious. It is perfectly true that Otto never held the smallest office in Hitler's Party, and that he never even wore the brown shirt or the badge "or accepted any proffered reward; he had refused alike the invitation to become the Party's Press Chief, a deputy's seat and the offer of money", but this rather proves his determination to retain his own free will and his unconditional independence of Hitler - for it was none other than Hitler who personally sought every means of winning Otto's support - who offered him the highest posts and tempted him with huge sums of money in exchange for his cooperation.

When today the Bonn regime unexpectedly classifies the "Black Front" with the Communists, or sneeringly lumps its former members with the Hitlerites, it does so in defiance of the truth, in open contempt of proven facts. The extent of the differences between "Strasserism and Hitlerism" is perhaps most forcefully brought out in Otto's book "The Structure of German Socialism" (publisher: Wolfgang Lindner, Leipzig, 1930) which he published immediately after his break with Hitler, and which contains a broadened concept of the Bamberg Programme. Hitler himself was well aware of the wide gulf that existed between his philosophy and that of my brothers, and for this reason he lashed out in blind fury against Otto and his friends. It was he who vilified them with the name "National Bolsheviks" - it was he who spoke jeeringly in the "Voelkischer Beobachter" of "ambition-crazed intellectuals". He it was who ordered both the SA and the SS to proceed against Otto and his associates with every possible means of terror and brutality - and he who gave Goebbels the green light to use every method of propaganda to defame and discredit this most dangerous of all his foes.

As the first unavoidable result of his break with Hitler, Otto lost all of his daily newspapers and most of the weeklies published by the "Kampf Verlag". He managed to save one of these, which under the title of "The Black Front", he published uninterruptedly from Berlin and later, in Prague (under the title "Die Deutsche Revolution").

The fact that Gregor remained (unfortunately!) in the Party caused the majority of the North German Socialists to remain loyal to Hitler - that is, until two years later when another eruption between "Hitlerism and Strasserism" flared up. Meanwhile, other anti-Hitler factions were grouping themselves around Otto; among them, the "Buendische Jugend", "Landvolk", "Tatkreis" and others. Their entry swelled the resistance movement, then known as the "Warring Legion of Revolutionary National Socialists" and later named "The Black Front". This name and the form of their organization indicate how correctly Otto and his friends foresaw coming developments and how they planned their operations accordingly. They called their organization "black", meaning "invisible", "working in the dark" - for they knew from the very beginnging that they had to reckon at all times with onslaughts of Hitler's massed might, and therefore they developed their movement on the "iceberg theory"- allow-

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ing only a small portion to show above water and keeping the greater part hidden from view. Thus, invisibly and secretely, they managed to penetrate the different political organizations - not the least of which was the NSDAP itself. (Douglas Reed says on page 110 of "The Prisoner of Ottawa" :"It was, in essence, a struggle for the Christian West, not only for Germany, that Otto Strasser fought in Germany during these years and he appeared in scenes that are living pages from the story of this tormented century.")

THE STENNES REVOLT

The first important fruit of this work was the so-called Stennes Revolt, which took place in 1931. The supreme SA Fuehrer for North Germany was Captain Stennes, an old friend of Otto's. Captain Stennes, together with many of his lieutenants and numerous SA members, had always been a'Strasserman"- a term which was usually understood to mean a follower of Gregor rather than of Otto. Between the maneuverings of the "Black Front" agents within the organization, and the dictatorial orders from above, confusion reigned in the ranks of the SA - followed by rumblings of resentment against Hitler's "Bonzokratie", and this finally developed into a full-scale revolt during Easter of 1931. The North German SA was successful in occupying the Party offices - not only in Berlin, but in nearly all the Gau-cities, not to mention the newspaper offices - and everywhere they had the pro-Hitler factions at bay. Even "Judas" Goebbels flirted with the idea of cooperating with the Stennes Revolt and, in fact, waited until the very last minute before deciding on which side of the fence he wanted to be. He finally fled to the flesh pots of Egypt, and cast his lot with Munich. Concerned over this mutiny, Hitler set about wooing the SA leadership with promises of higher salaries andswifter promotion. After a few weeks' hesitation, the majority of the rebellious SA returned to Hitler's fold. Nevertheless, Captain Stennes and his group, plus a large faction led by the Danzig SA Fuehrer, Bruno Fricke, associated themselves more or less directly with Otto's movement.

The Stennes Revolt resulted in sharpened retaliation by Hitler against the "Black Front". In numerous gatherings, Otto's followers came to blows with the SS - in Bremen, Otto himself was wounded in a bloody battle with Himmler's men. In Brandenburg, he was attacked by a band of assassins - in Halle, Rostock and in many other cities, he took part in wild frays with the SS, while everywhere, his friends were being hounded, bludgeoned and murdered.

Upon Hitler's seizure of power on January 30, 1933, these terroristic methods became "legalized". One of the new Chancellor's first acts was the formal outlawing of the "Black Front", as "communistic". The three newspapers which it had meanwhile managed to establish, were promptly confiscated, and all known leaders of the organization who could be rounded up, were arrested. Otto managed to operate underground for a time, until his secret address was discovered by the police and - with a price of one million marks on his head - he was finally forced to flee for his life. These suspense-filled days are eloquently described in Otto's two books "Hitler And I", and "Flight From Terror" - as well as in "Nemesis?" by the English author, Douglas Reed.

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OTTO IS WARNED

Otto owes his first escape to Dr. Frick, at that time Minister of the Interior - to whom Goering, on May 8,1933, boasted that he had just sent out a squad of his henchmen to trap Otto in his last hiding place on the Chiemsee. Dr. Frick immediately informed Gregor, who was able to warn Otto in time - and the assassins arrived only to find the nest empty.

Despite the deadly peril in which he lived from hour to hour, Otto would not leave Germany without seeing Gregor again. Thus it came about that, in the night of May 9-10,1933, my two brothers contrived to meet (Otto in disguise) at a private sanatorium owned by a trusted friend. It was their first meeting since Otto's break with Hitler - and it was to be their last in this life. Later, Gregor often described to me that night - so laden with tragedy, and, just as often, he lamented his own misguided optimism which in 1930 had blinded him to the truth that Hitler's high-sounding words had been, after all just words. For in December of 1932 had come for Gregor, too, that moment in which he recognized at last who and what Hitler was: the seducer of Germany who did not shrink from using the "anti-capitalistic longing" of the German people as the driving power for the attainment of his personal ambition, and for that which he actually wanted: War. To such a man my brother had given his valuable services and had lent his prestige. To such a man had my brother, in a weak hour of his life, sworn an oath "never to work against him even if he should no longer be able to work with him". Gregor felt himself bound to that oath even after he had broken finally with Hitler - and I well remember that many of his friends were deeply perplexed about this. In December, 1932, Gregor had resigned all of his posts in the Party, and even gave up his Reichstag mandate, making his parting with Hitler complete and final - a step which was to lead, 18 months later, on June 30,1934, to his own brutal murder.

Gregor knew on that May night in 1933 the kind of fate that awaited him. Yet, while he begged Otto to get out of Germany and carry on the fight from the outside, he himself refused to leave his family, his profession and his home. Like Danton in the same dilemma, he could not tear himself from his native earth. "Hitler will not rest until you and I are both dead", he told Otto - whereupon the other replied, quite typically, that nobody is hanged until he is caught.

My brothers agreed that night that Hitler's fatal course would inevitably bring disaster and agony upon Germany - and that in the wake of the epoch of destruction would follow an era of reconstruction that would demand the devotion and energies of Germany's best elements.

IN EXILE

Gregor supplied Otto with some money and saw him off in a car which was to take him to a trusted mountain guide who, as dawn broke on May 10, lead him over the Austrian frontier at Kufstein. Otto's exile from Germany has lasted ever since that May morning in 1933. ("Otto Strasser carried on his war against Hitler. . . . . He fought all through those years, at the daily risk of his life... In the judgement of this writer he is rare, if not unique among political exiles in that he fights and has always fought. The politi-

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cal exile often deserves sympathy, but seldom do his deeds command that respect which is due to Otto Strasser's ..... Otto Strasser was the only one of them all who fought!"
Douglas Reed, "The Prisoner of Ottawa", page 136-137)

Otto's "Odyssey" - the ceaseless fight which he and his friends carried on against the Hitler system in the hope of warding off the threatening war (which Otto's prophetic leaflet of 1937 "The Danger of Germany's Partition", warned of with all too great an accuracy) - all this is so fully elaborated upon in the books which my brother has written during his exile, that I need not go into any further detail here on the subject. I was pleased to see recently in Dr. Kurt Hiller's book, "Koepfe und Troepfe" (Publisher: Rowohlt, Hamburg 1950) a testimony of the true nature of Otto's political struggle - a testimony which is all the more weighty since it comes from the pen of a man who is a Jew and anything but rightist. He states from his own knowledge that the rift between Otto and Hitler was the result of Otto's indignation at Hitler's deceit in pretending to serve the Socialist ideal while accepting large sums of money from millionaires with which to build up his own power. For the vicious untruth that Otto has any "national bolshevistic" tendencies, Dr. Hiller has these scornful words:

> "....The lie that Strasser would seize any chance to make common cause with the East is a lie that the East itself has put abroad in the world for the sole purpose of discrediting in the eyes of the West this man whom the Communists hate and fear so much...."

I take it as a hopeful sign that such clarity is still to be found amid all the twisted and confused writings of our times - and that, in all the immorality of today's political strife, there are still a few people who love the truth enough to proclaim it, as Dr. Hiller has done.

GREGOR'S MURDER

The deeds of the Hitler regime surpassed all the worst expectations of Otto and Gregor. Politically, it became evident that war was Hitler's and Goering's sole alternative to the peaceful developement of German Socialism, and it followed inevitably that the war of extermination against all opposing elements within Germany was intensified, especially against the leading personalities of the anti-war faction. High on the list were Gregor and his friends who, a few days before the fateful 30th of January, 1933, had resisted Hitler's coalition with Papen, Thyssen and their cohorts - thereby nearly wrecking the plans of the war party. At that time, General Schleicher, as Reichs Chancellor, had sought to bring together Gregor's National Socialists, Dr. Bruenings Center Party, and Leipart's Union having similar leanings, in order to form a united front against the war coalition of Hitler-Papen-Hugenberg-Schacht. As early as 1932, Gregor told me that it was partly Hitler's dependence on heavy industry and partly his definite will to war that had decided him to work with General Schleicher - for, in Gregor's own words:

> "Hitler, by his close association with the war industries, and by his acceptance of their terms and money, has betrayed the programme of the NSDAP and has shown unmistakably that he intends to make war - and that, in my eyes, would be the greatest crime in history. Germany needs peace for at least a hundred years...."

It does not require much imagination to realize why, on that same June day in 1934 when Gregor fell under the bullets of Himmler's thugs, General Schleicher and his

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closest collaborator, General von Bredow - along with many others, were also slain.

THE "SECOND REVOLUTION"

The first half of 1934 saw the development of the "second revolution" which the changeable Goebbels at that time favored, but which Papen, in his famous Marburg speech, repudiated. Hindenburg's attitude was, of course, vital to the outcome - and Hitler, in order to show the Old Gentleman where his "duty" lay, did not hesitate to play upon the Prussian Field Marshall's revulsion toward Roehm and his clique in the SA who, measured by soldierly as well as aesthetic standards, were highly distasteful to him. The intentions and attitudes of Hitler, Goebbels, Goering, etc. were then exceedingly vague, whereas Roehm was very exact about where he stood: he believed that the seizure of power of Jan. 30th could only be consolidated if the Reichswehr leadership and its close allies, heavy industry and big business, were made powerless. Roehm would have accomplished this by taking over from Hitler the leadership of the SA and incorporating the Prussian Reichswehr therein - thus developing the National Socialist Revolutionary Army which he favored. Hitler decided, true to the course he had followed heretofore, to side with the Reichswehr and reject these demands of the SA and the leftist wing of the Party.

Otto's book, "The German St. Bartholomew's Night" (which appeared in Zurich in 1935) is not without errors - for there were announcements both outside and within Germany , reporting the murders of individuals who later proved to be alive - but taken as a whole, his portrayal of the background and prologue to the Hitlerian mass murders of June 30, 1934, is a vivid illustration of what is undoubtedly one of the most ignominious chapters in all Germany history.

I have often wondered why neither the Allies nor the postwar German regime ever bothered to attempt to bring these murderers to justice. I have good reason to believe that the slayers of my brother are still at large - and it is surely the duty of the authorities to bring these assassins to justice - not only for the sake of the principles involved, but in order to help destroy the inhumane concept of "collective guilt" by punishing the individual criminals for their misdeeds.

HUMAN TRAGEDIES

During my visit to Germany in 1950, I had the opportunity of talking with some of Gregor's closest friends, who had visited him during the last days of his life. Their accounts of those days only confirmed the comprehensivness of Otto's book on the 1934 mass murders - however more horrifying the details of the tragedy had been in reality. One of Gregor's associates, who had been to see him only eight days before his death, told me that my brother had been fully aware of the peril in which he stood. Because they throw so much light on the real nature of the Hitler regime and on Gregor's own attitude as a politician and as a man, I quote herewith his words of farewell to this particular friend:

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"My dear Doctor, do not come to my home again - for I am surrounded by murderers and spies. But I beg and charge you and all our friends to hold fast to that interpretation of German Socialism which we have represented all these years, and which Hitler and his associates have never understood at all. Indeed, they had neither ideas nor ideals - they wanted nothing but power. The greatest tragedy of these people is that they are without principle, without reverence, and without humility..."

HITLER HAS A FREE HAND

With the removal of the last obstacles to the fulfilment of his will, the way was open for Hitler, both symbolically and in fact, to continue his fateful project. It is significant that only after June 30, 1934 was open and full-scale rearmament begun - and the aggressive policy against Germany's neighbors accelerated, beginning with the overrunning of Austria and finally, with the attack on Poland, resulting in the outbreak of World War II.

It was historically logical and thoroughly just, that the very reactionary elements which had supported and encouraged Hitler on June 30, 1934, became themselves victims of the Frankenstein they had raised up: Thyssen was forced to flee; Hugenberg, Papen and Schacht fell into disfavor and the Reichswehr leaders were finally ingloriously set aside and their advice ignored and trampled upon - while the flames of war grew apace, destroying and devouring....

The Christian Churches, too, felt the Himmler terror in ever increasing measure. The Jews were by no means the only ones to suffer under it. Concentration camps and prisons filled to overflowing - but in those days, the inmates of these death houses were nearly without exceptions Germans, and the timid "West" felt no special indignation about the lot of these sufferers. There was remarkably little notice taken then of the "shame of the 20th Century". I believe that if the history of these horrors is viewed objectively, part of the blame for them must be laid to the outside word which, knowing full well that such brutality was countenanced under the Hitler regime, not only stood by complacently, but in fact made it possible for this criminal regime to enjoy success after success. While all Germany was still frozen with horror at the June 30th massacre, England blithely concluded a Naval treaty with Hitler, thus making his rearmament "legal" and "respectable" - while the statesmen of all the world rushed to Berchtesgaden to shake the hand of the dictator, or to go hunting with Herr Goering. And none of these turned a hair at the groans of the martyred and the imprisoned; nor were they disturbed one whit by the fresh bloodstains on the hands of their gracious host...

MY FLIGHT FROM GERMANY

I am not sure whether it was my relationship to Gregor and Otto or my own status as a Catholic priest which caused the Gestapo to show an increased interest in me. I was leading a group of German youths home from an Easter pilgrimage to Rome in 1935

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when we were all seized at Constance. The boys were robbed of practically all their possessions, some of them were even beaten, while the names of the accompanying priests were put on the Gestapo's special list. In July of the same year, I was advised to flee.x) I made my way through Austria, Switzerland and France to a Benedictine monastery in Luxembourg from whence, at the outbreak of war, I pushed on further to Belgium and finally, under the most harrowing circumstances (some of these experiences I shared with Otto in Paris) I made a hairbreadth escape from the Gestapo to the haven of a Benedictine monastery in Portugal. In the autumn of 1940, I entered the U.S. as a professor, to teach in a large Benedictine college in Minnesota.

x) A party member delivered to my abbot an urgent warning, that the Gestapo intended to arrest or to murder me.

And so, events took their terrible course - made inevitable by the comfortable complacency with which Hitler's mounting crimes had been so long tolerated. If ever a people paid the price for its' leaders' defiance of the moral law:"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" - then it was the hapless German people. It is my daily prayer that the terrific punishment which has been visited upon my people will not have been in vain - and that they will never forget that, only by honoring God's laws and faithfully living up to Christian code can they be true to themselves and rebuild a healthy society. May other lands, too, and their leaders heed and profit by the awful lesson contained in Germany's tragedy!

GERMANY'S RENEWAL

Those who know my brother Otto are aware that his many near-miraculous escapes from Himmler's bloodhounds only served to convince him that it was his duty to fight harder than ever for his beliefs - and indeed, when I consider all he has been through, I am forced to the conclusion that so many "lucky" escapes must have a reason. No one who lived through even a part of the "cat-and-mouse" game between Otto and the Gestapo could have any doubt about this.

A report on Otto's activities in Austria and Czechoslovakia may be found in the already mentioned work by Douglas Reed, "Nemesis?" which was written after Mr. Reed made Otto's acquaintance in Paris in 1940. (The same author has written another book about Otto entitled "The Prisoner of Ottawa", publisher: Jonathan Cape, London, 1953, which brings this astounding story up to date).

Otto's flight in 1939, from Switzerland (where, following the fall of Prague, he had found refuge with his family), was the result of the Buergerbraeukeller bombing of November 8, which Hitler's regime promptly blamed on Otto. On the grounds of this accusation, Hitler's government demanded his immediate extradition from Switzerland. Shortly before this, Hitler had made a last attempt to bribe him, offering him, through a Swiss Socialist Cantonal Deputy 400,000 Francs if he would give up his fight against the Hitler system. It is interesting to note that Himmler, who handled the offer through the Swiss Councillor, was rightly skeptical about the success of the idea, for he remarked to Hitler:"Otto will never fall for that!" Hitler replied:"Perhaps not- but his wife will soon bring him around. Think how she would love to have a villa on Lake Geneva..." - which only goes to show how little Hitler knew Otto and his wife. (The spirit in Otto's family may best be shown by a proverb which his then

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seventeen-year-old daughter sent him, painted on parchment paper in Gothic letters:"Those who change their loyalties overnight and let themselves be swayed by every passing wind, are the practical people of the world. Another word for them might be 'contemptible'!" This proverb hangs over Otto's desk in his humble room in Nova Scotia)
Otto's answer was to inform the Swiss Government of the whole plot - including the name of the Swiss Deputy involved.

OTTO MARKED FOR GREGOR's FATE

Following this, the attempts on Otto's life became intensified - for now there was no longer the slightest doubt that his activities against Hitler could be halted only by killing him. In order to avoid embarrassing Bern, he slipped quietly out of Switzerland and crossed still another frontier into France. But now it appeared that the work of Himmler's jackals would be simplified by military events: As the German troops neared Paris, Otto, along with all other Germans still residing in France, was thrown into an internment camp where the inmates could only wait helplessly, listening to the cannons of the attacking army thunder nearer with every day. Otto's book, "History In My Time" gives a full account of those unforgettable weeks.

When I had to flee Paris, Otto was still interned - and the uncertainty as to his fate only added to the hardships of my escape to Portugal. That I was arrested in Le Havre and nearly shot as a German "spy" after I had just missed being lynched by an excited mob, is only mentioned in passing.

My concern over Otto was scarcely lessened when some weeks later in a Portuguese monastery, I received a mysterious telegram from Toulouse, from which I was able to gather that he had gotten from Occupied France into the unoccupied part of the country. But there a new danger reared its head: the threat of his being delivered into the hands of the Hitler government by the Vichy regime. I was thus overjoyed to be able to aid him in his especially difficult flight through Spain and into Portugal - and even there he was not safe. Through Gestapo agents (one of them disguised as a Benedictine priest), Hitler discovered Otto's refuge again and forthwith demanded that the Portuguese Government hand him over. By a combination of feverish personal effort, of Portuguese tact and English help, Otto managed to get out of Lisbon, on an American ship - just a few hours before the last postponement of his extradition was up. Only shortly before leaving Lisbon, he had thwarted an especially clever attempt on his life by the two Gestapo agents who were living in the same tiny and remote hotel in which he resided.

WORK IN EXILE

As long as the Allies' war aims were directed against the Hitler system and not against the German people ,on the basis of "collective guilt", the work of Otto and his friends in exile was relatively simple. It was only a matter of keeping the world reminded that Goebbels was lying when he said that Hitler and Germany were one and the same; that the German people and the Hitler regime were identical - for

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the people of Germany were being held, exactly as their outraged neighbors, in the twin grip of terror and deceit. Today, when the ghastly tragedy is being repeated in the Kremlin's enslavement of the Russian people and of the pitiable Satellite countries, the outside world is able to better understand the hopelessness and the terrible thralldom in which the German people, too, found themselves trapped.

But with the entry of Russia into the war alliance of the Wester powers, the situation for Otto changed abruptly and completely. Otto's uncompromising anti-communism and that of his friends, was labelled as a "weakening of the Democratic Front" and, under varying degrees of pressure, they and all enemies of Communism were condemned to silence. Hand in hand with this "strengthening of the Democratic Front", prospered the harsh policy toward Germany contained in the Morgenthau Plan - and this led, from 1942 onward, to Otto's complete withdrawal from politics, since he could not, of course, be associated with a war effort directed now no longer against just the Hitler system, but against the entire German nation. Reluctantly, he withdrew to a lonely farm in Nova Scotia, where he used the time of enforced inactivity to work out a new reconstruction programme for Germany.

It is a widely held, but absolutely false idea that Otto was merely "against Hitler". He was "against Hitler" in the first place because he was and remains "for Germany and Europe" - for new forms of the political, economic and cultural order to replace the defunct forms which grew out of the French Revolution. According to this view, the first World War, the rise of Hitler and the second world conflagration were all brought on by the disintegration of old political, economic and cultural forms of Western vivilization - and the tensions and ills which resulted in that disintegration cannot be cured as long as the origin of those ills remains. Seen in this light, the mission of the Hitler Epoch was one of destruction, and, because it lacked both a moral foundation and a definite goal, it could never have fulfilled a constructive mission. Thus, Otto's policy is in direct and forceful contrast to negative Hitlerism - because it represents a goal that is at once positive and constructive.

FOR THE UNITY OF EUROPE

In addition to Otto's "Bamberg Programme" and "The Structure Of German Socialism", I should like to mention his "European Federation", published in Zuerich in 1935 and his "Europe Of Tomorrow" which appeared in the same city. In all these works is to be found a clear and positive reconstruction plan which, (regardless of the differences of opinion which may arise over the proposals for carrying it out) is contained in an imaginative and inspiring economic, political and cultural programme. During his Canadian exile, Otto has written "Germany's Renewal", a book explaining this programme, its form and its requirements - and giving full consideration to the conditions resulting from the second World War. (That section of the book dealing with foreign policy appeared in London under the title "Germany In A Disunited World"). Anyone who reads "Germany's Renewal" must admit - as Reverend Reichenberger emphasizes in his excellent review of the book - that it harmonizes in every respect with the fundamental teachings of Christianity - and especially in its proposal of an economic order based on Solidarism, it corresponds to a very great degree with the principles contained in the best known so-

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cial Encyclicals of the greatest Popes.

The 25-year-old motto of my brother Otto:"National Freedom, Social Justice, European Cooperation" undoubtedly contains the solution on which the Renaissance of Germany and of Europe depends.

He who reads my murdered brother Gregor's book "The Battle For Germany" and Otto's "Germany's Renewal", will understand that for which Gregor died and Otto fights. And he who is convinced as we Catholic Christians are convinced, of the Reason behind all happenings in life, and who trusts in the Divine Will which is the guiding force of all History - will recognize, too, the deep wisdom of the words:"Whom God loves, He punishes". Whoever understands this can believe with absolute certainty that, out of Germany's and Europe's dreadful sufferings will emerge soon a promising future to match a glorious past.

(Translated from the original German by Miss Cecile von Goetz)

Postscript (October 1953)

I wrote this article about my brothers in German in the fall of 1950. In 1953 Douglas Reed published his second book about my brother Otto:"The Prisoner of Ottawa, Otto Strasser"Jonathan Cape, 30 Bedford Square, London.) which I mentioned and referred to several times in this english translation. May I ask all those interested in the "Case of Otto Strasser" to read this book. It "tells, for the first time, the full story of the astonishing sequel: since the war ended Strasser, the only leading German politician who actively fought Hitler, has been arbitrarily banned from his homeland by the American, British, Canadian, French and West German Governments, acting in concert. While the first leaders of the Gestapo and the Brownshirts are both active and important again in West Germany. Hitler's foremost adversary has been in effect out-lawed in a remote Nova Scotia hamlet, condemned to struggle with penury.
Douglas Reed suggests that Strasser was detained, in fact, under concentration-camp law, and thinks that his treatment, apart from its moral aspects, presages worse errors of Western policy towards Germany than those which caused the debacle of 1918--39; and he writes as the author of a famous book about that period. The story he tells is one of adventure and escape as dramatic as any that has come out of the last two eventful decades."---

"Otto Strasser's life thus far is exceptional even in this age in its range of adventures and perils survived, in its extremes of perseverance and adversity, in its colors of courage and good humour. It is the story of a German, of Germany, of Europe, and ultimately of the entire West, either on the edge of oblivion or on the threshold of revival; that is to say, it is the story of us all, in the Western world, as we stand at this mid-century." (page 18-19)

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P a x !

6.Juli 1971

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Sehr geehrter Herr Dr. Kissenkoetter !

Erst heute Abend ist es mir moeglich Ihren Brief vom 18.Juni, der aber erst ziemlich spaeter bei mir ankam, zu beantworten. Mit Dr.Lang vom Midland Lutheran College in Fremont,Nebraska, arbeite ich an der Uebersetzung des Buches "Mein Kampf" von meinem Bruder. Und das ist eine schwierige Arbeit,da wir viel chronologisch ordnen muessen usw.

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Nun gleich zu Ihren Fragen:

1. Ich habe - aber nicht mehr hier,sondern bei meiner Schwester Olga, mehrere Briefe von Dr.Bruening; aber keinen, in dem er mir Naeheres ueber Gregor berichtet haette.x) Ich war ja ca. 6 Stunden bei ihm selber in Cambridge; und da hat er mir viel von sich und von meinem Bruder und dem 30. Juni erzaehlt. Das Wichtigste war, dass er zwei Tage vor dem 30.Juni 1934 zwei seiner treuesten Freunde zu meinem Bruder schickte und ihm sagen liess, er solle fortgehen,da er auch ermordet werden sollte. Dr.Bruening hatte einen Teil der "Mordlisten", auf deren einer er ja selbst genannt war. Und er sagte woertlich:"Ich bin traurig, dass ihr Bruder mir nicht glaubte." Worauf ich sagte: "Es war nicht eine Sache des Glaubens; Gregor konnte nicht mehr weg." Monate vorher,als er im Auftrag von Schering- wo er doch als Direktor taetig war- nach Paris zu einer Beratung der verschiedenen pharmazeutischen u.a. Konzerne gehen sollte, liess Goering ihm sagen,er werde an der Grenze verhaftet...

2. Am Ostermittwoch 1935 hatte ich eine Karte zu einer Privat-Audienz bei dem damaligen Staatssekretaer Pacelli. Er kannte Gregor,der mehrmals bei ihm war in Muenchen zu Vorbesprechungen fuer ein neues Konkordat - Gregor sagte mir damals,dass er etwas erstaunt war, als Rom auf einem nicht-Katholischen Unterhaendler bestand, weshalb ein Dr.Buhlmann (ich weiss den Namen nicht mehr genau; er war bayr.Landtagsabgeordneter der NSDAP damals) damit beauftragt wurde. Die Nazis (Streicher ?) schrieben damals,dass mein Bruder immer wieder als "Befehlsempfaenger" beim Nuntius "antreten" muesse,sein Bruder (ich) sei Jesuit, und so werde die "natinoalsozialistische Bewggung jesuitisch" verseucht."... Gregor schrieb darauf einen Artikel in den NS-Briefen oder Monatsheften: "Kaftan und Kutte." Ich erinnere mich des sehr lebhaft. Nun: Kardinal Pacelli war an jenem Morgen an das Sterbebett seines Bruders gerufen worden (der den Latern-Vertrag mit Mussolini machte); er starb an jenem Tag. Fuer ihn kam Monsignore Montini, der heutige Papst Paul VI. und ich erzaehlte ihm,(meist in Franzoesisch), von der Ermordung Gregors,da er mir sagte, der Kardinal sei daran sehr interessiert und er muesse ihm darueber berichten. Wir sprachen ca. ½ Stunde.

3. Da ich zuerst im Noviziat im Kloster Metten war und dann an der Uni-

x) Meist handelte es sich um die Visa-Sache für Otto nach USA, wofür er mir – leider ohne Erfolg – half.

P.S. Lege noch einen Brief bei, den ich hier von einem Neffen meines verstorbenen Bruders erhalten habe – sehr interessant. Ueberaus tapfer!

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versitaet Muenchen und dann in Wuerzburg, weiss ich nicht allzuviel von der politischen Taetigkeit meiner Brueder; ich habe mich ja nie um Politik gekuemmert, da ich auch heute noch der Ansicht bin, dass Priester etwas anderes zu tun haben. Ausserdem war ich von Anfang an Gegner Hitlers und der Partei und war ungluecklich, dass meine Brueder da mitgemacht haben. Auch habe ich leider keine Briefe von Gregor aufgehoben. Gewiss, er hat mir so manches erzaehlt, besonders unmittelbar vor seiner Trennung von Hitler und bald darnach. Einiges davon habe ich in meinem Artikel "Gregor und Otto Strasser" berichtet. Andere Dinge, besonders ueber seine Verhandlungen mit Schleicher, die er "im Auftrag Hitlers" fuehrte, wie er mir ganz ausdruecklich versicherte, seine zwei Audienzen bei Hindenburg usw. und mehr vertrauliche Mitteilungen Dr.Bruenings gerade ueber seine Entlassung durch Hindenburg habe ich noch nicht niedergeschrieben aus persoenlichen Gruenden. Will erst mal die "Memoiren" Dr.Bruenings sehen und was er darueber geoffenbart hat. Ich weiss noch gut, wie er mir sagte: "Wenn meine Memoiren veroeffentlicht werden nach meinem Tode, wird die ganze Welt aufschauen.."

Diese ca. 6 Stunden bei Dr.Bruening, wo ich mit seinem Freunde Dr.Brettauer war, sind mit von den ergreifendsten, wehmuetigsten und doch schoensten Stunden meines langen Lebens. Und ich weiss, warum Dr.Bruening damals im Reichstag sagte: ..." 100 Meter vor dem Ziel hat man mich - ich glaube, er sagte zu mir woertlich - abgeschossen." Ein paar Stunden nach seiner Absetzung kam sein Unterhaendler aus London zurueck mit der Meldung, dass England bereit sei eine oder zwei deutsche Kolonien an Deutschland zurueck zu geben (was Bruening versucht hatte zu erreichen). Dr.Bruening sagte nur: "Seit drei Stunden bin ich nicht mehr Reichskanzler." Worauf der Herr sagte; "Dann ist mein Auftrag erledigt." Und ging.

Was fuer Fehler, welch schaurige Intriguen, Wortbrueche und Treuebrueche, welch entsetzliche Mordtaten wurden damals doch begangen !! Und wie teuer muss Deutschland und die ganze Welt dafuer bezahlen !! Es ist eine der ganz grossen Tragiken der Weltgeschichte !! Und die Konsequenzen sind noch nicht vorueber ! Moege der Herrgott uns vor noch groesserem Unheil bewahren !

Mit diesem Wunsch und Gebet verbinde ich ganz ergebene Gruesse.

Ihr P. Bernhard Strasser, O.S.B.

Eine Sache will ich noch erwaehnen, da ich glaube, fast niemand weiss davon:

Einer der Freunde Gregors - leider weiss ich seinen Namen nicht mehr - sagte mir, dass im Januar 1934 Hitler sich mit den Generaldirektoren der deutschen Industrie, um sie fuer seine Plaene vorzubereiten usw. Beim Kaffee nach der Sitzung erzaehlte der Generaldirektor von Schering, wie viel Gregor in der relativ kurzen Zeit durch sein Organisationstalent dem Konzern schon genuetzt habe. Worauf Hitler woertlich sagte: "Ja es ist Zeit, dass ich meinen Strasser wieder hole." - Für Goering, Goebbels etc. war es Zeit, dass dieser Strasser verschwinde...

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