

# "LETTERS TO MY DAUGHTER..."

by John Alldridge

... being a reprint of  
three articles appearing in  
the **Manchester Evening News**  
on January 23, 24, 25, 1960,  
dealing with

- The Myth of the Swastika
- Hitler and the terror he  
really stood for.
- The Nazis and the unpleasant  
truths young people should  
know.

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LETTERS TO MY DAUGHTER — I

# Let me tell you how it really happened

**M**Y dear Jane,  
I never expected to have to write this letter. I had hoped it would never be necessary. But evil forces are at work in the world again. Ugly things are crawling out from under the same old stones.

"Daddy, why do people persecute the Jews?" you asked me the other day. And I shivered. And made up my mind that you should know how it all began before it is too late.

You will be 16 next month. You were born when I was with the Army in North Africa.

\* \* \* \*

**Y**OU were just a year old when the War in Europe ended. So it must all seem as far away to you now as that war in the Crimea you've been swotting up for G.C.E.

In fact you probably know far more than I do about the Charge of the Light Brigade. And nothing at all about Arnhem.

You have never heard — thank God! — an air-raid warning. There are no bomb sites in Withington. No-one has ever told you about Warsaw, or Coventry, or Belsen, or Dachau. You would rather hear about

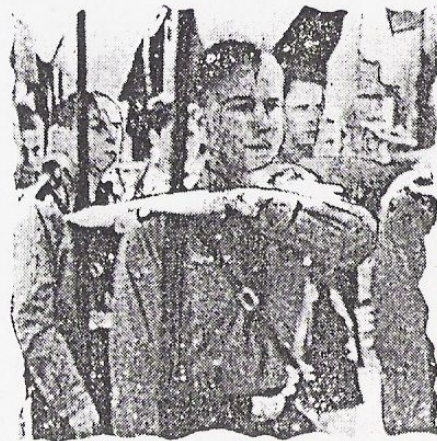
Elvis Presley anyway (and who can blame you?).

If you ever think of Hitler you see a comic little man with a Charlie Chaplin moustache who was always making speeches and behaving like one of the Three Stooges.

So it's time you knew...

\* \* \* \*

**L**ET'S begin with Hitler. He wasn't funny at all. He was a monstrous tyrant. A tyrant far



## HITLER YOUTH

A race of young fanatics ready to die for their leader.

worse than Napoleon or Attila or Genghis Khan. They were content to destroy men's lives.



Adolf Hitler set out deliberately and efficiently to destroy men's souls.

Of course, he was mad. But there was a horrible logic in his madness. He believed, quite simply, that there were only two kinds of men — ordinary men and Super-Men.

Years before in his book, "Mein Kampf" ("My Struggle") he had written:

*"A stronger race will drive out the weaker ones, for the vital urge in its ultimate form will break down the absurd barriers of the so-called humanity of individuals to make way for the humanity of Nature, which destroys the weak to give their place to the strong."*

That is the law of the jungle. It is the Law by which he ruled most of Europe for eight terrible years. He boasted that Law would last for a thousand years. If what remained of the free world had not revolted against him in time we might still be living under it.

And instead of being free to study Gladstone's Foreign Policy you, my child, might be in a forced labour camp in Poland.

Or worse — being prepared to become the mother of future Super-Men. For the greater glory of the German Reich.

\* \* \* \*

**F**OR in Hitler's ferocious crack-pot brain was born the idea that Germany had been chosen by destiny to provide the world with a Master Race of pure-blooded, blond, blue-eyed Super-Men. (He himself was dark, undersized, and Austrian, but apparently that didn't count.)

It was Germany's ultimate

destiny to rule the world in the way it deserved to be ruled. In such a world there was no room for liberals, Negroes, freethinkers of all kinds, or Jews.

*Especially Jews. Hitler had a pathological hatred of Jews. Probably because they represented everything he was not.*

You either accepted Hitler's lunatic beliefs or you worked for them as a slave. It was as simple as that.

The marvel is that so many intelligent, cultured, hard-working, God-fearing Germans were prepared to accept Hitler and follow him to the death. But they did.

He was neither a great statesman nor a military genius. He was cunning rather than clever. Yet he was one of the greatest tub-thumpers in history. His rough, rasping, ungrammatical speeches had the power to sway vast audiences and send a nation mad.

\* \* \* \*

**H**ITLER nearly succeeded because he accepted full



**THE S.S.**

Murdered 2M men, women and children.



responsibility for every crime committed in his name. When you joined the Nazi party you swore on oath:

"I pledge eternal allegiance to Adolf Hitler. I pledge unconditional obedience to him and to those appointed by him."

From that moment Hitler took the place of God. In his name you were prepared to commit any crime. You were not personally responsible. You were doing it for the Fuhrer and for Germany.

In this way — by a man-made religion of blind obedience — Hitler was able to gain control of Germany. Quickly free speech, free thought, freedom of belief, every sort of freedom was overthrown. By fear, torture, starvation, and death the Nazis stifled all opposition.

In this way, too, they gained the experience and training that later made them the scourge of Occupied Europe.

The enslavement of millions, the murder and ill-treatment of prisoners of war, the mass executions of civilians, the shooting of hostages, and the ruthless "liquidation" of 6 million Jews — it all began with that oath of eternal allegiance to Adolf Hitler.

\* \* \* \*

**B**UT a nation of 40M people cannot be held by blind obedience alone. Every tyrant must have his Secret Police. Hitler had his Gestapo — the dreaded "black coats" with Heinrich Himmler at their head.

The Gestapo was recruited originally from a handful of unemployed gangsters. By 1939 it numbered 240,000 highly trained, lavishly equipped criminals.

The deadly cutting edge of the Gestapo was the S.S. Officially

the mission of the S.S. was to protect Hitler and the internal security of Germany. But Reichsführer Himmler left no doubt how he intended to do it. He boasted:

"We shall take care that never again in Germany, the heart of Europe, will the Jewish-Bolshevistic revolution of sub-humans be kindled from the interior or through emissaries from outside. Without pity we shall be a merciless sword of



**HITLER**

Set out deliberately to destroy men's souls.

justice to all those forces of whose existence and activities we know, on the day the slightest attempt is made, be it to-day, after a decade, or a century hence."

"Without Pity." That would have made a good motto for the S.S. It was the most refined instrument of torture ever conceived by the mind of man.

It was the S.S., for instance, who invented the gas van by



which thousands of unfortunate Jews were "liquidated."

\* \* \* \*

**T**HESE were the men who sat at the edge of anti-tank ditches, cigarette in mouth, callously shooting their naked victims in the back of the neck with automatics. These were the men who, according to their own claims, murdered some two million men, women, and children.

It was the S.S. in Poland who ordered that in cases of sabotage or assassination not only was the culprit to be shot, but all his kinsmen executed and his female relatives above the age of 16 sent to concentration camps.

It was the S.S. who learned to make men — and women — talk by depriving them of sleep; by drilling them until they fainted; by flogging them across the kidneys with rubber truncheons; by pulling out their toenails; by crushing their fingers.

There was no crime against humanity in which the S.S. took no part.

They murdered thousands of women and children; they shot prisoners-of-war; they cleared and burned ghettos; they sent hundreds of thousands of foreign workers into labour camps from which they never returned; they executed commandos; they staffed and operated the concentration camps. They were at the bottom of every beastliness; behind every brutality.

**B**UT worse even than the Gestapo was the evil of the Hitler Youth. For his own wicked ends Hitler debauched a whole generation of German youth. "Give me a boy until he is 12 and I will make him my man for life," Hitler boasted. And so it was.

He brought into being a race of young fanatics who believed that it was their noble destiny to die for Hitler, "knowing that with their blood they will lead the way towards the freedom of their dreams."

One of Hitler's henchmen, Baldur von Shirach, was given the task of training them. By August, 1939, he was able to report proudly to Hitler that 30,000 Hitler Youth leaders were ready to go into action and that "a gun feels just as natural now in the hands of a German boy as a pen."

During the war that followed it was these blood-thirsty young ruffians who were responsible for some of the worst atrocities — like the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane, in which the population of a whole village was burned to death.

Thousands of them did die for their Führer. Thousands more survived the war, the vast majority, I hope, with their illusions shattered.

But they are the fathers of the young Germans of 1960 who, like you, say they know nothing about Hitler.

Your loving  
**FATHER**



# This is what the camps of death were like

**M**Y dear Jane,  
I want you to read this very carefully. It is the last page of a book called "The Scourge of the Swastika" by Lord Russell of Liverpool and published by Cassell:

'There was a concentration camp which in 1945 when it had been swept clean of its deathly garbage, could be visited by the general public. This was at Dachau, not far from Munich, and a visitor to it came away with a memory he could never forget.

The only prisoners he saw there were Germans accused of committing war crimes and awaiting trial or discharge. Each one of these lived in comfort in a light airy cell, had electric lighting, and in winter central heating, a bed, a table, a chair, and books. Well-fed and sleek they looked, and on their faces was a look of slight astonishment. They must indeed have wondered where they were.

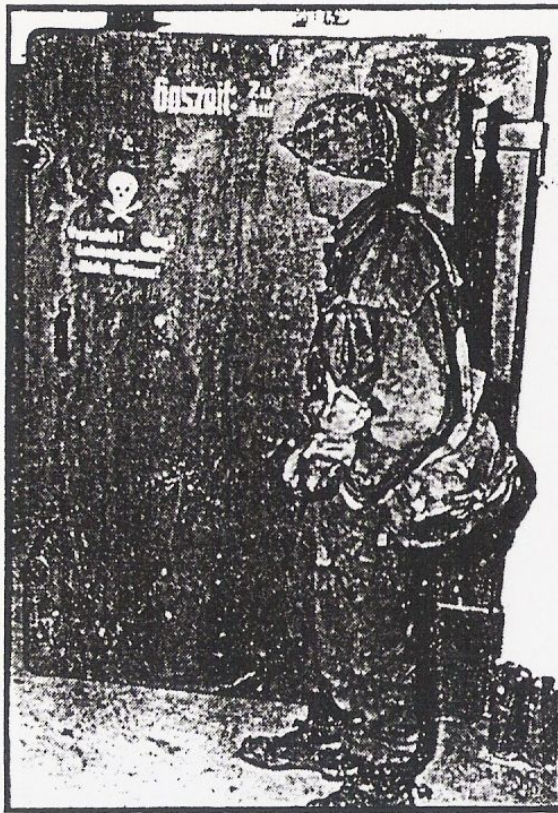
Leaving the living quarters, now so clean and tidy, the visitor crossed to the other side of the camp where the crematorium compound was situated. There, in good preservation, was the whole machinery of death which for so long had been used to get rid of those who dared to cross the Führer's path.

Gone were the corpses which once lay in the annexe waiting their turn to be burnt when the gas chamber killed more than the ovens could hold: gone too, were the queues of hapless humans waiting outside in the hanging room for their turn to enter the lethal chamber. Gone they were for ever; but their ghosts remained and their memories filled the air.

\* \* \* \*

But there, clean and swept, still for all to see, was the room where the victims undressed, the gas chamber itself with the peep-hole through which the operator watched for the last death agony so that he could





An American soldier examines the entrance to a Nazi camp gas chamber. It was "situated conveniently near to the crematorium."

switch on the electric fan to clear the air of its deathly fumes, the adjacent crematorium, and the iron-wheeled stretchers by which the corpses were brought to the oven's mouth, the little room where bodies lay piled up ceiling-high and, where the marks of their feet could still be seen on the plaster walls, the machine for grinding bones to make them into fertiliser for the adjoining farmlands, and the rooms where the ashes were stored.

As the visitor passed through these rooms and surveyed the scene of so much suffering and tragedy the stench of rotting bodies and the smell of burning flesh seemed to rise to his nostrils. As he came out into the clean, fresh air and raised

his eyes towards the heavens to clear away this haunting vision of evil, what did he see?

Nailed to a pole on the crematorium roof a little rustic nesting-box for wild birds, placed there by some schizophrenic S.S. man.'

\* \* \* \*

THAT dreadful camp at Dachau still stands. It's not easy to find because it is off the main road and there are no sign-posts, and the local people won't help you because they are ashamed of the place and all it stands for.

Inside there is a small parking-lot and some trees and bright flower-pots. But walk a few yards from the parking-lot and you find yourself under the twisted branches of a leafless



tree.

Look down at the foot of the tree and you will see a sign that says simply:

*"The Hanging Tree."*

Walk another few yards and you come to a small trench covered by wooden slats near a concrete wall. A notice reads:

*"Revolver Range and Blood Ditch."*

Then you begin to realise the real horror of the place.

Those pretty flower-pots, many of them in the form of the Star of David, cover mass graves containing the remains of thousands of unknown political prisoners. Men and women who dared to defy Hitler by thought, word, and deed.

\* \* \* \*

**Y**OU move on and enter the old crematorium. It has four ovens. But even so it wasn't big enough to cope with the ever-growing number of bodies, so a bigger one was built nearby.

A big stone cross now covers the remains of the 20,000 people who were cremated here. (The Nazis had their own word for cremation: they called it "going up the chimney.")

From the crematorium you cross the old exercise yard to the gas chambers; four cell-like compartments with steel doors and little pipes running into them; the pipes that carried the poison gas.

Outside are the changing-rooms fitted with benches and coat-hooks. The prisoners were told they were going to have a bath and be disinfected and to remember where they had hung their clothes.

*Women often hid their children under their clothes as they hung them up on the pegs. So the SS men used to search the clothing afterwards and any children found hidden there were put into the gas-chamber.*

In the new improved gas ovens it was all over in half an hour.

Tattered clothes which were taken from prisoners at the notorious Dachau Camp. They were forced to strip before they were killed.







This Jewish prisoner was one of the few who were able to walk when this Nazi camp was liberated. Inmates told of prisoners dying at the rate of 150 a day.

Then the bodies were taken up to the cremating ovens by lift. The cremation of approximately 2,000 corpses in five ovens took 12 hours.

\* \* \* \*

NOW the walls of the gas chambers are scrawled with messages left behind by visitors who have passed through since the camp was closed. Tourists usually scribble on walls. But not messages like these.

A Frenchman has written: *"I have just visited my family. all six of them died in Dachau."* Another reads: *"Forgive them not, for they knew what they did."*

A Jewish name is signed under it...

It is all very quiet and peaceful now. But you don't need much imagination to hear screams and groans and the hiss of steam...

A quarter of a million prisoners of all races and creeds entered



Dachau. About 70,000 died there.

And Dachau was only one of 12 concentration camps set up by the Nazis during their eight-year reign of terror under the Shadow of the Swastika.

During the war at least 12M men, women, and children of Europe were done to death by the Nazis. Probably eight million of them died in these dreadful camps.

\* \* \* \*

**FANTASTIC?** I know; it's hard to believe. But listen to the voice of Sir Hartley Shawcross. He is making his closing speech at the Nuremburg War Crimes Trial:

"Twelve million murders! Two-thirds of the Jews of Europe exterminated, more than six million of them on the killers' own figures. Murder conducted like some mass-production industry in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Dachau, Treblinka, Buchenwald, Majdanek, Maidanek, and Oranienberg!

Mass-produced murder...

\* \* \* \*

**OUTSIDE** the camp at Dachau there is a big sign over the entrance to the new crematorium in German, French, and English. It says:

*"Remember That."*

It is not easy to remember what you have never known. You were still a baby when these dreadful things ended.

Perhaps, for that reason, they can seem no more to you than the executioner's block and the torture chamber I showed you at the Tower of London.

Sometimes it is not easy even for those of us who can remember.

Fifteen years is a long time — almost a lifetime, in your case.

\* \* \* \*

**IF** you doubt it — as sometimes I doubt it myself — go to my bureau and open the second drawer on the left. Inside you will find a match-box. Just an ordinary match box charred at the edges. Open it and you will see a few flakes of fine grey ash.

Look at it closely. That is human bone-ash. Sixteen years ago I scooped it up, still warm, from the cremating-oven in a concentration-camp.

It is proof that such monstrous things **did** happen. And could happen again to any nation which allows itself to be ruled by fear of Man rather than by love of God.

Remember that, will you?

Your loving

**FATHER**



# Next time you see a swastika remember this . . .

**M**Y dear Jane,  
On my way into town the other morning I passed a school playground. Someone had been scratching swastikas in the snow.

Whoever had done it didn't know much about the swastika. These had been scribbled the wrong way round. Instead of looking like this



they looked like this.



*The swastika is one of the most ancient of all religious symbols. It is associated with the worship of the Sun. You find it carved on the ruins of the Aztecs, on Greek vases and on burial mounds in Egypt and Tibet.*

When Hitler came to power he chose the swastika as the emblem of Nazi Germany, because, in his crazy mind, it recalled the blond, blue-eyed savages who defied the Roman Legions and worshipped

their own pagan gods.

But those early Germans would have shuddered if they could have seen what Hitler had done to their sacred swastika. For he had reversed the arms of the crooked cross so that now they pointed away from the daily course of the sun.

And to them that was a form of blasphemy that could only mean terribly bad luck.

\* \* \* \*

**T**HE first time I saw a swastika was in Berlin in 1933. It had been splashed in whitewash across the windows of a baker's shop. Underneath was scrawled the one word "Jude" (Jew).

Outside the shop, their backs against the wall, stood the baker and his wife and their two teenage daughters. Round their necks hung cardboard placards carrying that one word, "Jude".

They were ringed in by a crowd of young louts in smart brown uniforms who spat on them as they chanted that same horrible cat-call which we have seen so often lately, "Juden Raus" (Jews get out!).



I have never been able to forget the expressions on the faces of those louts. Or on the faces of the respectable Berliners who stood by watching and doing nothing.

\* \* \* \*

**H**ATRED of Jews is a form of madness, like hydrophobia, caused by the bite of a mad dog. Hitler was a mad dog.

But in his case it was only history repeating itself. Many times in the last thousand years Germany has been infected by this same terrible madness.

*At his trial at Nuremberg Hans Frank, governor of Poland during the German occupation explained it with dreadful simplicity:*

"We have fought Jewry for years and have indulged in the most horrible utterances — my own diary bears witness against me — a thousand years will pass and still this guilt of Germany will not be erased."

*Hitler put it another way:*

"Only a member of the race can be a citizen. A member of the race can only be one who is of German blood, without consideration of creed. Consequently no Jew can be a member of the race."

That was the death-warrant of the Jews in Germany under Hitler. As later it was to send to their deaths a million Jews in Occupied Europe.

\* \* \* \*

**A**RCH EXECUTIONER in this campaign of mass-extinction was Julius Streicher, who had been the editor of an obscene magazine before Hitler took him up. Streicher proudly called himself "Jew-baiter No. 1".

This monster died as he deserved on the gallows at Nuremberg. According to the figures brought against him at his trial he was responsible, directly or in part, for the murder of 5M Jews.

But Streicher was only one of many. For it became the duty of every Nazi in authority to fan the Germans' dislike of Jews into a burning hatred; and to incite them to the persecution and extermination of the whole Jewish race.

*In "The Scourge of the Swastika" (Cassell) you can read what happened to the Jews in Poland during the reign of terror of that same Hans Frank:*

"One of the largest ghettos was in Warsaw. It was inhabited by 400,000 Jews. An idea of the conditions in which these Jews lived can be gathered from the fact that at least six lived in every room.

In April, 1943, the liquidation of this ghetto was begun and S.S. Major-General Stroop was able to report to his superiors on May 16 that the Warsaw ghetto was no more.

"On the title page of his report of this 'Grossaktion', or major operation, was inscribed in decorative Gothic lettering the words 'There are no more Jewish dwellings in Warsaw'."

\* \* \* \*

**A**ND that was only one Jewish community in one city. Of the 3M Jews known to be living in Poland in September, 1939, barely 50,000 could be traced in 1946.

No-one was spared. Men, women, and children — they were



all hustled into the gas-chambers. Until at times there were so many Jews awaiting "liquidation" that the S.S. could not kill them fast enough.

When harassed officials asked Hans Frank what they were to do with all these Jews they got this reply:

*"Why all this prattle? Don't bother me. Liquidate them by your own means. Poland must be as free of Jews as Germany."*

So the dreadful business was speeded up.

In Lithuania and Latvia during 1941 130,000 Jews were murdered. The Jews of Hungary suffered a similar fate. In 1944 more than 200,000 were rounded up and sent to extermination camps.

In Russia, between September, 1941, and February, 1943, a young fiend — he was only 33 — called Otto Ohlendorf was personally responsible for "liquidating" many thousands of Jews by shooting, hanging, and drowning.

\* \* \* \*

**E**VEN the sick were not safe. One of the worst of these "extermination camps" was at Treblinka in Poland. There was a building there on which flew a Red Cross flag. But no sick were ever tended there.

The hut led into a waiting-room with plush-covered sofas, and here the unsuspecting

victims waited.

Beyond this was a pit, at the edge of which an S.S. man shot each victim as he was ushered in from the waiting-room through the back of the neck with a revolver.

In this way were killed invalids, old people and small children who were too weak or too young to walk into the gas-chambers.

But to me the most terrible of all these terrible things is the fate of 20 French and Russian Jewish children, all between the ages of five and 12. They were treated as human "guinea-pigs" by the monstrous Dr. Heissmeyer, of Berlin, who injected these poor young things with T.B. bacteria.

\* \* \* \*

**W**HEN the Allies began to approach the camp they were hurried away to be executed so that the foul evidence could be destroyed. We know how they died. For the man who killed them has left it on record.

They were undressed and injected with morphia so that they would be unconscious when they were hanged. Their executioners then put ropes round their necks, and, in his own words:

"Like pictures, they were hanged on hooks around the walls."

Think of that, will you, next time you see a swastika.

Your loving  
**FATHER**



## POSTSCRIPT

**M**Y dear Jane,

It is now more than three years since I wrote those letters to you. You are now very much a woman and will soon be off to your teachers' training college. And I'm sure you don't need to be told that the problem which I could do no more than outline in those Letters is still very much with us.

There is no planned harvest for this thing. It sprouts anywhere and everywhere, like an evil, choking weed.

It is only a few weeks since I came across that swastika again, chalked defiantly on a wall not fifty yards from the White-chapel Road. Last November in Manchester a wreath placed there by Jewish ex-Servicemen was stolen from the city's Cenotaph.

I find these things more frightening than the clownish antics of self-styled 'Führers' like Colin Jordan and Lincoln Rockwell or the senile fanaticism of an Oswald Mosley.

For this was the work of youngsters. No doubt at this stage it could be written off as

no more than a childish prank. But Hitler was a child once. And wasn't it Hitler who boasted 'Give me a child when he is eight and I'll make him my man for life?'

A child is born — thank God! — without prejudice. It has to be carefully taught.

Soon you will have charge of a class of six-year-olds.

Don't let them grow up afraid 'of people whose eyes are oddly made, and people whose skin is a different shade'.

It is a tremendous responsibility and a tremendous challenge. I know you will be equal to it.

Your loving  
**FATHER**



"I don't know anything about the swastika or Hitler," said one boy found daubing the sign at the place where he works. Other teenage daubers have shown that the terms "Hitler," "concentration camp," "gas chamber," "purge" mean nothing to them. They belong to a new age to whom World War II seems as unreal as a film epic of Errol Flynn. Here JOHN ALLDRIDGE, in a brilliant piece of documentary writing, takes over where so many of the school history books have fallen short, and writes for his own teenage daughter and other youngsters of her generation the facts about the Master Race, its leaders and their beliefs . . .



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