

announcement “pasted” beside it), the house where he was born, his parents, his school and army days, and his rise as an orator and politician. In documenting his contemporary life, Hoffmann included an assortment of photographs that mostly appeared to be candid shots of Hitler engaged in activities either of a private nature or at the peripheries of his political duties—for example, stopping for a quick picnic lunch on the way to giving a speech or chatting with a worker who approached his car. Relatively few of the images revealed an urban landscape; instead, Hitler’s so-called private life played out mostly on a pastoral stage. A number of the images of Hitler at leisure focused on the Obersalzberg, although Haus Wachenfeld, while described, was not visually depicted. Hitler was shown in the mountains with his dogs, reading outdoors, walking, talking with a neighbor’s child, and dressed in casual clothes, including Lederhosen. Here, the caption text stated, away from the “noise and restlessness” of the cities, Hitler could relax and recover from the “stress-es and strains” of his political struggle. Yet despite the pretext of being personal, these images of a relaxed and often smiling Hitler were by no means apolitical. Thus, a photograph of Hitler sitting in the grass reading the newspaper and grinning broadly was accompanied by a caption indicating that he was amused by the “fables” printed about him by a hostile press: “champagne feasts, Jewish girlfriends, a luxury villa, French money . . .”⁶ The viewer, at whom Hitler gazes, is invited to share in this intimate moment and laugh along with him.

Similarly, Hitler’s fondness of children, which would also become an iconic theme in Hoffmann’s hands, conveyed the Führer’s goodness both in his apparent affection and concern for them, as well as in their trust of him. “The young love him,” read the title to an image of Hitler surrounded by young boys. “Everywhere children crowd around him to bring him flowers.” Below a photograph of Hitler talking with two members of the Hitler Youth, one of whom was a small boy from the “Pimpf” (cub) division, Schirach’s caption claimed that “even the youngest are his fighters.”¹⁷ The loyalty of Hitler youth members, in their innocence as children, suggested that they, like the animals, were drawn instinctively to a trustworthy man. While Hitler was not the first politician to tug on voters’ heartstrings by posing with children, together with Hoffmann he would raise this public relations ploy to a new level of exploitation. Being seen in the company of adoring children was especially useful for a bachelor politician needing to appeal to female voters and to soften the aggressive masculine image of his party.

On April 4, 1932, the first official day of campaigning for the run-off election, Joseph Goebbels published an article in the National Socialist newspaper *Der Angriff* that exemplified the new campaign tactics promoting the private Hitler as a good man. The major points of his argument repeated and reinforced the themes introduced in Hoffmann’s illustrated book. The real Hitler, he claimed, was artistically gifted, but had renounced architecture and painting to lead the German people out of their misery. “Adolf Hitler is by nature a good man. It is known that he has a particular fondness for children, to whom he is always a best friend and

fatherly comrade.” Indeed, Goebbels claimed that the welfare of German children had spurred Hitler to political action in his desire to give them a better life than that of their parents. Goebbels also lauded Hitler’s comradely bond with and understanding for his colleagues, his intellectual taste, artistic sensitivity, simple lifestyle, modesty, and enormous dedication to work. “This is Adolf Hitler as he really looks. A man who enjoys the highest love and devotion from all those who know him not only as a politician, but also as a person.”¹⁸ In Goebbels’s testimonial account, then, Hitler’s goodness was not only proven by his character, but also by the love of those near him, who knew the “authentic” man.

The left-leaning press countered the personal and sentimental appeal of the National Socialist’s campaign with the distancing power of sarcasm. On March 19, 1932, *Vorwärts*, the central organ of the Social Democratic Party, republished in full the advertisement for Hoffmann’s book that had appeared in *Der Angriff* the previous day. As in the book’s dust jacket text, the advertisement promised to satisfy the yearnings of “Hitler’s countless millions of followers” for a glimpse of his personal life, drawing on the “many thousands of pictures” taken by Hoffmann in the past ten years at Hitler’s side. Beneath the original advertisement, *Vorwärts*

Despite such criticisms, *The Hitler Nobody Knows* sold and sold: over 400,000 copies in multiple printings by 1942. Its success, combined with Hitler’s need to solidify his support among the German population in the early years of his rule, ensured that Hoffmann would return to this popular format. After Hitler’s rise to power, he published three more books that focused on the Führer’s private Quatures tempos doluptas el is ea cus eosae cus endae latemperchil mi, ipsapicae-pro blam vitaspere consedipsae num laboritiam, te disintios estius, que restium-quam quibus venihil maiorende cum ducipsa perferc hiliqui aliqui conem ereicime laut verum reptam id milit verum quatiore at landi il moluptur aborit ant.

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