



by Lutz Hachmeister
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Non-Fiction

Hitler's Interviews. The Dictator and the Journalists

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review

Hitler's Interviews: the Dictator and the Journalists by Lutz Hachmeister – the prolific journalist, author and filmmaker behind the 2005 film 'The Goebbels Experiment' – is the first work in either German or English to detail Adolf Hitler's media appearances in such depth and breadth. A collection of archive material from, and commentary on, Hitler's interview and media strategy in Germany and the international press, this is a timely exploration of the rise of populism and nationalism.

Interweaving excerpts from the interviews and other original sources, including diaries and letters, *Hitler's Interviews* is organised chronologically, and covers Hitler's media appearances from 1923 to 1941, with a particular focus on his interviews in the English-language press.

The first chapter offers a rich introduction, delineating the development of international interest in Hitler, outlining his self-professed propaganda expertise and sorting his press appearances into three distinct phases: before his 1923 arrest; 1930-33; and after his election as German chancellor.

The following chapter homes in on one single press appearance:

Hitler's 1923 interview with George Sylvester Viereck in *American Monthly*. It prints a number of excerpts in full, covering the choice of the name 'National Socialist', Hitler's views on the Jews and his ambitions for future expansion. The interview was reprinted in *Liberty* in 1932 with added characterisation ('Adolf Hitler drained his cup as if it contained not tea, but the lifeblood of Bolshevism'), and noticeably less antisemitic rhetoric.

Later chapters offer broader perspectives. One details the roles played by advisers such as 'Putzi' Hanfstaengel – a one-time close friend of Hitler who later defected to the US – and Karl Bömer, the head of the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda. Others focus on Hitler's relationship with the media in specific countries, with two chapters dedicated to his appearances in the US and British press.

The book ends with an epilogue reflecting on the contemporary relevance of the book's theme, drawing on more recent interviews with dictators, including Mao, Stalin and Putin.

While this work is of particular interest to an academic audience working in fields ranging from German Studies and History to Media Studies and Journalism, Hachmeister's wider reflections on the role of the press will also appeal to the non-specialist reader. *Hitler's Interviews* represents an outstanding follow-up to Professor Henk de Berg's 2024 book, *Trump and Hitler: A Comparative Study in Lying*. Given the current rise in far-right ideology not just in Germany but across Europe and the USA, *Hitler's Interviews* is a highly prescient read; Hachmeister draws explicit comparisons between his material and ongoing conversations about the role of social media, trolls and fake news in the political sphere.

about the author

Lutz Hachmeister (1959-2024) was media editor of the *Tagesspiegel* and director of the Grimme Institute as well as president of the International Film Festival Cologne and director of the Institute for Media and Communication Policy. He is the author of numerous films and books.

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