

MEIN KAMPF

Source:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mein_Kampf

The first volume, titled *Eine Abrechnung* ("An Account") was published on July 18, 1925; the second volume *Die Nationalsozialistische Bewegung* ("The National-Socialistic Movement") was published in 1926. The original title Hitler chose was "*Vierereinhalb Jahre [des Kampfes] gegen Lüge, Dummheit und Feigheit*" (*Four and a Half Years [of Struggle] against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice*). His Nazi publisher, Max Amann, decided this title was too complicated and had it shortened to *Mein Kampf* ("My Fight").

The connotative and contextual flexibility of the German word 'kampf' brings the possibility of multiple translations to the title. Similarly to the influence of its different connotations in the translation of 'jihad', 'kampf' is frequently translated into its ambiguously denotative meaning of 'struggle'. The contemporary connotations of 'kampf' at the time of the text's writing are equally ambiguous. When translated as 'fight', 'combat', or even 'war', as evidenced by examples such as the German names for a number of tanks ("Panzerkampfwagen", "armored war vehicle") and dive bombers ("Sturzkampfflugzeug", "falling war airplane"). "*My Fight*" might be considered a more accurate, but still conservative, translation. "My War" may be closer.

Many still feel "My Struggle" is the truest interpretation however, as throughout the text, Hitler describes the various trials and tribulations he and his movement experienced during their early years. Precedence for this translation can be found in the titles of other contemporary literary works such as Rudolf von Jhering's "Der Kampf ums Recht" (The struggle for justice).

Hitler began dictating the book to Emil Maurice while imprisoned in Landsberg, then after July 1924 to Rudolf Hess, who later, along with several others, edited it. The book has been said to be convoluted, repetitive, and hard to read, and partly as a result it was edited and re-edited over the next twenty years in a range of editions. It has been dedicated to Dietrich Eckart, member of the Thule Society.

Contents

The book outlines major ideas that would later culminate in World War II. It is heavily influenced by Gustave Le Bon's 1895 *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, which theorized propaganda as an adequate rational technique to control the seemingly irrational behavior of crowds. Particularly prominent is the violent anti-Semitism of Hitler and his associates, drawing among other things on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. For example, Hitler claimed that the international language Esperanto was part of a Jewish plot, and makes arguments toward the old German nationalist idea of *Drang nach Osten*: the necessity to gain *Lebensraum* ("living space") eastwards, especially in Russia.

Much of the material was distorted or fabricated by the author. Hitler used the main thesis of "*The Jewish peril*," [*The Protocols*, ed.] which speaks of an alleged Jewish conspiracy to gain world leadership. Overall, however, it does explain many details of Hitler's childhood and the process by which he became increasingly anti-Semitic and militaristic, especially during his years in Vienna, Austria.

In terms of political theories, Hitler announced his hatred in *Mein Kampf* toward what he believed to be the twin evils of the world: Communism and Judaism, and he stated that his aim was to eradicate both from the face of the earth. The new territory that Germany needed to obtain would properly nurture the "historic destiny" of the German people; this goal explains why Hitler invaded Europe, both East and West, before he launched his attack against Russia. Since Hitler blamed the parliamentary government then ruling Germany for much of the ills against which he raged, he announced that he wanted to completely destroy that type of government.

In regard to foreign policy, Hitler wished to go through several stages. In the first stage, Germany would, through a massive program of re-armament, overthrow the "shackles" of the Treaty of Versailles and form alliances with the British Empire and Fascist Italy. The second stage would feature wars against France and her allies in Eastern Europe by the combined forces of Germany, Britain and Italy. The third and final stage would be a war to destroy what Hitler saw as the "Judeo-Bolshevik" regime in the Soviet Union that would give Germany the necessary *Lebensraum*. The German historian Andreas Hillgruber labelled the plans contained in *Mein Kampf* as Hitler's *Stufenplan* (Stage-by-stage plan). The term *Stufenplan* has been widely used by historians, though it must be noted that the term was Hillgruber's, not Hitler's.

In 1928, Hitler went on to write a second book in which he expanded upon these ideas and suggested that around 1980, a final struggle would take place for world domination between the United States and the combined forces of Greater Germany and the British Empire.

Current availability

Today, the copyright of all editions of *Mein Kampf* except the English and the Dutch (Dutch government seized copyright in the same way as Bavaria) is owned by the state of Bavaria. The copyright will end on December 31, 2015. Historian Werner Maser, in an interview with Bild am Sonntag has stated that Peter Raubal, son of Hitler's nephew Leo Raubal, would have a strong legal case for winning the copyright from Bavaria if he pursued it. Raubal, an Austrian engineer, has stated he wants no part of the rights to the book, which could be worth millions of euros.

The government of Bavaria, in agreement with the federal government of Germany, does not allow any copying or printing of the book in Germany, and opposes it also in other countries but with less success. Owning and buying the book is legal. Trading in old copies is legal as well, unless it is done in such a fashion as to promote hatred or war, which is, under anti-revisionist laws, generally illegal. Most German libraries carry heavily commented and excerpted versions of *Mein Kampf*.

When *Mein Kampf* was republished in Sweden in 1992, the government of Bavaria tried to put a ban on the book. The case went all the way to the Swedish Supreme Court. The court ruled in 1998 that, since Bavaria of today technically has nothing to do with the old state of Bavaria (all old states of the Reich were terminated after WWII) but the name, the copyright could not be owned by the modern state of Bavaria. Since the publishing house that published *Mein Kampf* in the thirties had long gone out of business, *Mein Kampf* should be considered as being in a state of limbo (or even in the public domain). The case was won by the modern publisher, an outspoken anti-Nazi.

In the Netherlands, selling the book, even in the case of an old copy, is illegal as promoting hatred, but possession and lending is not. In 1997 the government explained to the parliament that selling a scientifically annotated version might escape prosecution.

In France, selling of the book is forbidden, unless it is a historical version including commentaries from specialists and states the law allowing its special historical edition. Yahoo! was thus condemned to pay Euros 100 000 per day that *Mein Kampf*, *the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other revisionist items were available to French customers.

In 1999, the Simon Wiesenthal Center documented that major Internet booksellers like amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com sell *Mein Kampf* to Germany. After a public outcry, both companies agreed to stop those sales. The book is currently available through both companies.

Public-domain copies of *Mein Kampf* are available at various Internet sites with links to banned books; also, several Web sites provide copies of the book.

In Finland, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia the book is freely available.

Bestseller in Turkey

An Arabic edition of *Mein Kampf* has been published by Bisan publishers in Lebanon and a new Turkish edition was reported by <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4361733.stm> to be a bestseller in Turkey in 2005, selling 50.000 copies within a few months.

BBC News:

A cheap paperback version selling at the equivalent of \$4.50 (£2.30) is currently among Turkey's top bestsellers. Ogus Tektas, the owner of Mephisto, one of the publishers which re-issued the 500-page book, told AFP news agency *Mein Kampf* had always been "a sleeper, a secret bestseller". Some feel there is an international conspiracy led by what they call the crusaders - meaning the US and maybe the West in general and the Zionists.

Dogu Ergil, a political scientist at Ankara University, told the BBC he believed recent developments in Iraq and the Middle East might have fomented anti-Semitic and anti-American feelings among right-wing ultranationalists and extremist Islamists.

"There has been no objective reason for anti-Semitic feelings to crop up in Turkey," he said, adding that Hitler has always been considered "a criminal" and "a maniac" in his country.

"However, some feel there is an international conspiracy led by what they call the crusaders - meaning the US and maybe the West in general and the Zionists."

He said people from different backgrounds, such as left- and right-wingers and Islamists, had found common ground - "not on a common agenda for the future, but on their anxieties, fears and hate".

The Sequel

After the party's poor showing in the 1928 elections, Hitler believed the reason for loss was that the public did not fully understand his ideas. He retired to Munich to dictate a sequel to *Mein Kampf* which focused on foreign policy, expanding on the ideas of *Mein Kampf* and suggested that around 1980, a final struggle would take place for world domination between the United States and the combined forces of Greater Germany and the British Empire.

Only two copies of the 200 page manuscript were originally made, and only one of these has ever been made public. Kept strictly secret under Hitler's orders, the document was placed in a safe in an air raid shelter in 1935 where it remained until its discovery by an American officer in 1945. The authenticity of the book has been verified by Josef Berg (former employee of the Nazi publishing house Eher Verlag), and Telford Taylor (former Brigadier General U.S.A.R., and Chief Counsel at the Nuremberg war-crimes trials). The book was never edited nor published during the Nazi Germany era, and remains known as "*Zweites Buch*" (*Second Book*). The "*Zweites Buch*" was first discovered in the Nazi archives being held in the United States by the German-born American historian Gerhard Weinberg in 1958. Unable to find an American publisher, Weinberg turned to his mentor Hans Rothfels and his associate Martin Broszat at the Institute of Contemporary History in Munich, who published "*Zweites Buch*" in 1961. A pirated edition was published in English in New York, 1962. The first authoritative English edition was not published until 2003 (*Hitler's Second Book: The Unpublished Sequel to Mein Kampf*, ISBN 1929631162).