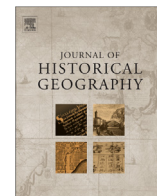




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Feature: European Geographers and World War II

Tangled complicities and moral struggles: the Haushofers, father and son, and the spaces of Nazi geopolitics

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Abstract

Drawing on a biographical approach, the paper explores the tangled complicities and morally fraught relationship between the German father and son political geographers, Karl and Albrecht Haushofer, and the Nazi leadership. From the 1920s both Haushofers were influential within Nazism, although at different periods and under different circumstances. Karl Haushofer's complicity began in 1919 with his friendship with Rudolf Hess, an undergraduate student he taught political geography at the University of Munich. Hess introduced Haushofer to Adolf Hitler the following year. In 1924 Karl provided jail-house instruction in German geopolitical theory to both men while they served an eight-and-a-half month prison term for treason following the 'beer-hall putsch' of November 1923. Karl's prison lectures were significant because during that same period Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*. In that tract, Hitler justifies German expansionism using *Lebensraum*, one of Haushofer's key ideas. It is here that there is a potential link between German geopolitics and the subsequent course of the Second World War. Albrecht Haushofer's complicity began in the 1930s when he started working as a diplomat for Joachim von Ribbentrop in a think-tank within the Nazi Foreign Ministry. He carried out several secret missions including negotiations with the Czech government over the Nazi annexation of Sudetenland. Karl's wife was Jewish, however, which according to Nazi Race Laws made Albrecht a *Mischling* [mixed-race]. Initially, Hess protected the family, but after he fled to Scotland in May 1941, circumstances became ever-more difficult for both Haushofers. Their tangled complicities and moral struggles were increasingly laboured and anguished, producing in the end tragic consequences.

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*'The tragedy of geopolitics became at the same time a tragedy of the Haushofer family.'*¹

*'From a moral standpoint much seems unsafe.'*²

Mephisto, the 1981 academy award winning film based on a 1936 novel of the same name by Klaus Mann (son of Thomas), explores the complicity of aspiring German stage actor Hendrik

Höfgen with the Nazis during the period leading up to the outbreak of the Second World War.³ Höfgen begins the film as a socialist. To advance his own career, one that sees him eventually playing the lead role of Mephistopheles in *Faust* at the State theatre in Berlin, Höfgen deliberately cultivates friendships among the Nazi high command. Especially important is 'the General' (a stand-in for Herman Göring). As Höfgen's star rises, he strives to be good: to protect his socialist and Jewish friends, as well as his black lover. But he becomes only ever more ensnared within Nazism. His ability

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E-mail addresses: tbarnes@geog.ubc.ca, abrahamsson28@gmail.com.¹ C. Troll, Geographic science in Germany during the period 1933–1945: a critique and justification, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 39 (1949) 99–137, 132 (emphasis in the original).² *Mephisto*, directed by István Szabó, Mafilm-Objektiv Studio (Budapest) (144 minutes) (1981). The quotation is taken from the English subtitles, minute 92. The film is available online at: <http://musicalsoldmovie.blogspot.com/2013/10/mephisto.html> (last accessed 7th September 2014).³ In 1981 *Mephisto* won the Best Screenplay Award at the Cannes Film Festival and Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards. Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto* was first published in the Netherlands in German in 1936. The central character of the novel, Höfgen, was based on Gustaf Gründgens (1899–1963), a well-known German actor and later general manager and artistic director of the Prussian State Theatre after the Nazis took power. Gründgens had been Klaus Mann's lover, brother-in-law and theatrical collaborator. Peter Gorski, a young boyfriend of Gründgens, and who for legacy reasons was adopted as Gründgens' son, sued the German publisher of *Mephisto* for libel after his 'father' died in 1963. Although the decision initially went against Gorski, it was overturned on appeal, and subsequently affirmed by the German Supreme Court, although publication of the novel continued; A. Weiss, *In the Shadow of the Magic Mountain: The Erika and Klaus Mann Story*, Chicago, 2010, 125–128, 259–260.

to realise his own ends and to act on his moral conscience are increasingly limited.⁴ Höfgen may play the role of Mephistopheles, but he becomes more like Dr Faustus selling his soul. Höfgen gains the limelight he craves but struggles to maintain a 'moral standpoint', something which in the world he now inhabits is in any case 'unsafe' to uphold.

This paper is about similar tangled complicities and moral struggles as they bear on two German geographers, Karl Haushofer (1869–1946) and his son Albrecht Haushofer (1903–1945). Both were political geographers and both were entangled with the Nazis. In 1919, after a distinguished 35-year career in the military, Karl Haushofer began teaching at the University of Munich. Through one of his early undergraduate students, Rudolf Hess, he met Adolf Hitler. When Hitler and Hess were arrested in 1923 for their attempted coup of the Bavarian state government and sent to prison, Haushofer senior provided the pair jail-house instruction in political geography over a period of four and a half months. This came at a formative period given that Hitler was writing *Mein Kampf* at exactly the same time. Albrecht Haushofer's complicity with the Nazis derived primarily from acting as an advisor to Reich Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop at the German Foreign Affairs Office and to Hitler at the 1938 Munich Conference when Czech Sudetenland was handed over to Germany.⁵ Haushofer senior called the latter event 'a happy day in the history of geopolitics'.⁶ It seemingly vindicated his own geopolitical theories, those in which he had tutored Hitler in prison, and couched in such terms as *Lebensraum*, *Autarkie* and German pan-regionalism.⁷ Later days, however, were not as happy as Nazism tightened its grip on the lives of both Haushofers. Like Höfgen, the Haushofers' complicity with Nazism was complicated, not straightforward, and their moral standpoints were constrained and increasingly anguished.

The Haushofers were not the only geographers who were in such a position. The Nazis enlisted the expertise of large numbers

of German geographers, as well as those in kindred fields like urban and rural planning, location theory, landscape architecture and agronomy.⁸ This was because the Nazi project was fundamentally spatial.⁹ Specialised geographical knowledge was necessary to facilitate the Nazi's political and ideological ends: conquering new space; occupying and rearranging the landscape; creating new spatial divisions; cordoning off particular sites through the deadly control of entry and exit; and moving large numbers of people from one location to another (and for millions the last move they made). National Socialism's objectives required deployment of geographers and similar experts to theorise, plan, organise and manage spatial processes and their forms of change.

Some of those involved with the Nazis, such as the geographer Walter Christaller, seemingly joined and participated willingly, working for Konrad Meyer on *Generalplan Ost*, and accepting, like Höfgen, blandishments that advanced his career.¹⁰ Others were like the location theorist August Lösch. He worked alongside Nazis, but neither became a Party member nor undertook Nazi work, keeping his moral conscience clear until the end.¹¹ Another location theorist, Andreas Predöhl, was much more complicit, joining the Nazi party in 1937, becoming *Rektor* of Kiel University in 1942, but nevertheless holding on to some kind of moral standpoint by protecting dissidents at his university, and especially at the *Institut für Weltwirtschaft* that he directed, and which included Lösch.¹² Or, yet another example, the location theorist Alfred Weber who had no truck with Nazism. In April 1933 he resigned his chair after a brief fight with the Nazis about the swastika that they raised over the institute he directed at the University of Heidelberg.¹³ In short, there was a spectrum of responses by German geographers to Nazism and its attempt to enrol them, illustrating both different degrees of complicity, and different forms of struggle to maintain a moral centre. Both issues

⁴ Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience*, Cambridge, MA, 2003, 1–3, 14–16, argues that under Nazi 'ethnic fundamentalism' moral conscience for Germans became defined only in relation to their membership of the *Volk*. It meant, as Carl Schmitt put it, 'not every being with a human face is human'. From *Mephisto*, however, it is clear that Höfgen's ethical struggles are universal, and not limited to the narrow *Volk* definition. If Höfgen's moral conscience were defined only by his membership of the *Volk*, he would have had no moral struggle. That he plainly did demonstrates his larger moral conscience. We will suggest this is also true for the Haushofers, the focus of our paper.

⁵ E. A. Walsh (S.J.), *Total Power: A Footnote to History*, New York, 1948, chapter 6. Ribbentrop was the first of the convicted Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg to go to the scaffold. Herman Göring was supposed to be first, but he committed suicide, swallowing a smuggled cyanide pill two hours before he was scheduled to be hanged.

⁶ H. Herwig, *Geopolitik*, Haushofer, Hitler and *Lebensraum*, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22 (1999) 218–241, 223.

⁷ In this paper we do not provide a detailed account of Karl Haushofer's geopolitical theory, but instead focus on his life and that of his son Albrecht, and the relationship of both to the Nazis. There are numerous expositions and interpretations of Karl Haushofer's theory in English beginning with A. Dorpalen, *The World of General Haushofer: Geopolitics in Action*, New York, 1942 and D. Whittlesey (with the collaboration of C. C. Colby and R. Hartshorne), *German Strategy of World Conquest*, New York, 1942. More recent accounts include G. Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*, Minneapolis, 1996, chapter 4; D. T. Murphy, *The Heroic Earth: Geopolitical Thought in Weimar Germany, 1918–1933*, Kent, OH, 1997; B. W. Blouet, *Geopolitics and Globalization in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd revised edition, New York, 2004, 56–62; D. Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Studies on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 2006, chapter 2; and particularly useful, Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6), and H. Herwig, The daemon of geopolitics: Karl Haushofer, Rudolf Hess, and Adolf Hitler, <http://www.usafa.edu/df/dfh/docs/Harmon53.pdf>, 2010 (last accessed 7th September 2014).

⁸ The role of spatial experts within National Socialism has been extensively discussed by Mechthild Rössler: M. Rössler, Applied geography and area research in Nazi society: central place theory and planning, 1933–1945, *Environment and Planning. D: Society and Space* 7 (1989) 419–431; M. Rössler, 'Wissenschaft und Lebensraum'. *Geographische Ostforschung im Nationalsozialismus: Ein Beitrag zur Disziplingeschichte*, Hamburg, 1990; M. Rössler, Secret Nazi plans for Eastern Europe: geography and spatial planning in the Third Reich, *Treballs de la Societat Catalana de Geografia* 35 (1993) 202–210; M. Rössler, 'Area research' and 'Spatial planning' from the Weimar Republic to the German Federal Republic: creating a society with a spatial order under National Socialism, in: M. Renneberg, M. Walker (Eds), *Science, Technology and National Socialism*, Cambridge, 1994, 126–138; and M. Rössler, Geography and area planning under National Socialism, in: M. Szöllösi-Janze (Ed), *Science in the Third Reich*, Oxford and New York, 2001, 59–78. In addition, also see: H. Heske, Political geographers of the past III. German geographical research in the Nazi period: a content analysis of the major geography journals, 1925–1945, *Political Geography Quarterly* 5 (1986) 267–281; and G. Fehl, The Nazi garden city, in: S. V. Ward (Ed), *The Garden City: Past, Present, and Future*, London and New York, 1992, 88–105.

⁹ Aspects of the spatial character of the National Socialist project are discussed by: M. Bassin, Race contra space: the conflict between German *Geopolitik* and National Socialism, *Political Geography Quarterly* 6 (1987) 115–134; D. B. Clarke, M. A. Doel and F.X. McDonough, Holocaust topologies: singularity, politics and space, *Political Geography* 15 (1996) 457–489; and T. J. Barnes and C. Minca, Nazi spatial theory: the dark geographies of Carl Schmitt and Walter Christaller, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 103 (2013) 669–687.

¹⁰ Barnes and Minca, Nazi spatial theory (note 9); T. J. Barnes, 'Desk killers': Walter Christaller, central place theory, and the Nazis, in: D. Gregory, P. Meusbürger, E. Wunder (Eds), *Knowledge and Power. Knowledge and Space* 8, The Klaus Tschira Symposia, Dordrecht, forthcoming.

¹¹ R. H. Funck, J. S. Kowalski (Eds), *Space-Structure-Economy: A Tribute to August Lösch*, 2nd revised and extended edition, Baden, 2007.

¹² E. Klee, *Deutsche Medizin im Dritten Reich: Karrieren Vor und Nach 1945*, Frankfurt am Main, 2001; R. Riegger, Three decades of August Lösch days in Heidenheim, in: Funck, Kowalski (Eds), *Space-Structure-Economy* (note 11), 401–406.

¹³ D. Gregory, Alfred Weber and location theory, in: D. R. Stoddart (Ed), *Geography, Ideology and Social Concern*, Totowa, NJ, 165–185; C. Loader, *Alfred Weber and the Crisis of Culture 1890–1933*, New York, 2012, chapter 9.

are of concern in this paper as it examines the lives of Karl and Albrecht Haushofer.

To do so, and following the introduction to this special issue, this paper takes a biographical approach.¹⁴ It is not biography for biography's sake, however. Our purpose is to use biography to illustrate shifting forms of complicity, as well as the variable moral exertions of both Haushofers as they tried to cope with their recruitment into a deadly regime. In their case, the struggles were not only with themselves, and between themselves and the Nazis, but also with each other, as father and son.¹⁵ That this paper is concerned with only two individuals makes it about 'minor histories' as defined in the introduction to this special issue. That said, some have seen Karl Haushofer as a cause of 'major histories', an 'evil genius', a Svengali who put words into Hitler's mouth, and whose phantom hand wrote the *Führer's* memos and orders.¹⁶ Sidney Alderman, reporting in September 1945 to the Office of the US Chief of Council that considered which Nazis to prosecute for war crimes at Nuremberg, thought 'Hitler was largely only a symbol and a rabble-rousing mouthpiece. The intellectual content of which he was the symbol was the doctrine of [Karl] Haushofer'.¹⁷ We argue it was not that straightforward. Karl Haushofer's life and that of his son are instructive, we suggest, less because they were responsible for major histories than because they exemplified the complicated relationship between Nazism and its use of academic labour; in this case the academic labour of geographers. In discussing that relationship, we begin with Karl Haushofer, about whom much has already been written, and then turn to his son Albrecht where the literature is sparser.¹⁸ Our conclusion turns on a set of wider themes around complicity, moral struggle, biography and the Nazis.

Karl Haushofer

A long beginning

Karl Haushofer's exposure to political geography came early. Born in 1869 in Munich, Karl took hikes along the Isar River with his father, Max, a professor and director at Munich's School of Higher Technical Studies. They were sometimes joined by his father's friend and colleague from the Geography Department, Friedrich Ratzel, who as they walked would discuss and 'test his theories'.¹⁹ In 1886 Ratzel left to take up the Chair of Geography at Leipzig, and there literally wrote the book on political geography, *Politische Geographie* (1897). It laid the foundations for the geopolitics

Haushofer would later take up and promulgate. Ratzel proposed an organic, Darwinian view of the state rooted in the soil, coining the term that became so associated with Haushofer and partly through him with Hitler: *Lebensraum*, i.e., living space or living room.²⁰

At age 18 Karl enlisted in an artillery regiment with the imperial German army. He worked his way up the ranks becoming a member of the general staff in 1899, and, by 1903, a teacher at the Bavarian War Academy where he made Ratzel's *Politische Geographie* mandatory reading. In 1896 he had married Martha Mayer-Doss, the daughter of a Sephardic Jewish merchant from Mannheim, and with Martha had two sons, Albrecht (1903) and Heinz (1906). In 1908 Haushofer went to Japan for two years as a military attaché, writing more than a dozen reports about what he saw, and what the German army might learn.²¹ Acquiring Japanese along the way (it was one of seven languages he spoke), he admired enormously Meiji Japan's economic, military and political accomplishments. Returning to Germany in 1910 because of a pulmonary disorder, Haushofer took a three-year leave, turning his military reports into a doctoral dissertation at the University of Munich that documented and celebrated Japan's successes: *Dai Nihon, Betrachtungen über Groß-Japans Wehrkraft, Weltstellung und Zukunft [Reflections on Greater Japan's Military Strength, World Position, and Future]*.²² 'Meiji Japan for the rest of his life became the model', as Herwig writes.²³ With the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Haushofer was recalled for military duty. His wife said he looked 'ten years younger' after getting the news.²⁴

It was a good war for Karl. He rose to the rank of Major General, serving as a Brigade Commander on the Western Front. Germany's surrender in November 1918 left him gutted, however. And he felt humiliated and angry by the signing in June 1919 of the Treaty of Versailles. The geopolitical tradition from Ratzel onwards, and to which he subscribed, was a programme for action. To theorize geopolitics was an opportunity, as the Heidelberg geographer Alfred Hettner wrote in 1915, for the geographer to 'become a "warrior of science"... [and] to help the "warrior of arms"'.²⁵ That was Haushofer's intention as he transformed himself in the next phase of his life from *Generalmajor* to *Herr Professor Doktor*.

A spectacular middle

1919 was also the year that Haushofer resigned from the army; that he completed his second dissertation, the *Habilitation (Basic*

¹⁴ In our specific case, a biographical method or approach means using a detailed account of the unfolding of the lives of Karl and Albrecht Haushofer to register the changing forms of their complicity with the Nazi state apparatus, and the constraints and tensions that ensued. There are other recent biographies within historical political geography that take a similar approach: N. Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*, Berkeley, 2005; G. Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder*, Oxford, 2009.

¹⁵ Although father and son relationships are a literary staple, there are few father-son biographies of scientists. A notable exception is Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain*, New Haven, 2012.

¹⁶ J. J. Thorndike, Geopolitics: the lurid career of a scientific system which a Briton invented, the Germans used and Americans need to study, *Life Magazine* 16th December 1939, 106–115, 109.

¹⁷ Jacobson, *Karl Haushofer*, Volume 2, 568–569.

¹⁸ Our paper pieces together information from various types of secondary literature to construct our biographical approach to the two Haushofers in a way which examines the variable collusions of both men with the Nazis and their ensuing ethical predicaments. Where appropriate we critically contextualise some of those secondary sources. Herwig, The daemon of geopolitics (note 7), draws upon primary sources relating to Karl Haushofer, and suggests that a larger English language biographical study is in preparation.

¹⁹ Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6), 220.

²⁰ On Friedrich Ratzel and his larger theory see: W. D. Smith, Friedrich Ratzel and the origins of *Lebensraum*, *German Studies Review* 3 (1980) 51–68; M. Bassin, Imperialism and the nation state in Friedrich Ratzel's political geography, *Progress in Human Geography* 11 (1987) 473–495; C. Abrahamson, On the genealogy of *Lebensraum*, *Geographica Helvetica* 68 (2013) 37–44; Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6).

²¹ On Haushofer and Japan see: C. W. Spang, *Karl Haushofer und Japan: Die Rezeption Seiner Geopolitischen Theorien in der Deutschen und Japanischen Politik*, Munich, 2013.

²² K. E. Haushofer, *Dai Nihon, Betrachtungen über Groß-Japans Wehrkraft, Weltstellung und Zukunft*, Berlin, 1913.

²³ Herwig, The daemon of geopolitics (note 7), 3.

²⁴ Herwig, The daemon of geopolitics (note 7), 5.

²⁵ Quoted in K. Klost, The conception of politics and political geography in geopolitics in Germany until 1945, *Political Geography Quarterly* 8 (1989) 369–385, 380.

Contours of the Geographical Development of the Japanese Empire 1854–1919, and which passed *summa cum laude*); that he became an unpaid adjunct lecturer in the Department of Geography at Munich University; and, perhaps most momentous of all, that on 4th April 1919 at a social gathering he met Rudolf Hess, and, through Hess, was later introduced to Adolf Hitler (probably in July 1921).²⁶

Hess had fought in the Great War, first as an infantryman, later as an aviator. After the initial meeting with Haushofer in spring 1919, Hess enrolled at the University of Munich for the start of the autumn term, taking geography classes among others. Hess became a close friend to Karl and his two sons, particularly Albrecht. The following year, May 1920, Hess heard Hitler speak in Munich, and was mesmerised. He joined the NSDAP and was assigned party membership number 16. Three years later, Nazi membership had burgeoned. The intent of the Party was to foment widespread social discord with the ultimate aim of overthrowing the Weimar republic. Between the 8th and 9th of November 1923, Hitler, along with other Nazi leaders including Hess, as well as 600 *Sturmabteilung* (SA) (Brownshirts), tried to depose the Bavarian State Commissioner as he was speaking to a crowd of three thousand people at a Munich city centre *Bierkeller*. The ‘beer-hall putsch’, as it was called, failed. Hitler was arrested. Hess initially went into hiding, including briefly at Haushofer’s Munich apartment, but he later gave himself up. Hitler and Hess were found guilty of treason, sentenced to five years at Landsberg Fortress prison outside Munich. In the end they each served only eight-and-a-half months.

Landsberg may have looked like a prison on the outside, but conditions inside were remarkably comfortable. It was there that Hitler had the time and resources to write *Mein Kampf*. He had a secretary, Rudolf Hess, to take dictation; and, to fill in the many gaps in his education, a university professor, Karl Haushofer.

Haushofer travelled the 100 km from Munich to Landsberg on Wednesdays between 24th June and 12th November 1924. In sessions both in the morning and the afternoon he instructed Hitler and Hess. This included readings in philosophy from Nietzsche and Marx, in military studies from Bismarck and von Clausewitz, and in political geography and geopolitics from Ratzel, Kjellén, and Haushofer’s own works, especially *Dai Nihon*, and essays from a newly founded journal edited by Haushofer and others, *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (the first issue of which was published in January 1924).²⁷

That Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* at Landsberg gives these jail-house readings and instruction great import, potentially making Haushofer the most influential geographer of World War II. That said, Haushofer was not ‘the inexhaustible Idea Man for Hitler’ as *Life Magazine* asserted in 1939.²⁸ Nor did he, as Frederic Sondern Jnr. suggested in a 1941 issue of *Current History*, supplant Hitler and write *Mein Kampf* himself.²⁹ Yet there was clearly complicity. Hitler himself, not someone who gave credit lightly, hinted at Haushofer’s influence. He said to Hans Frank, Governor General of Poland: ‘Landsberg was my university education at state expense’.³⁰ And, in the early 1940s, he wrote that ‘Without my imprisonment, *Mein Kampf* would never have been written, and if I may say so, during this time, after constant rethinking, many things that earlier had been stated simply from intuition for the first time attained full clarity’.³¹

The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg thought Haushofer might be guilty at some level. He was interviewed several times in the autumn of 1945 both at Hartschimmelhof, Karl Haushofer’s farmhouse in Bavaria, and at Nuremberg. The interviewer was Fr. Edmund Walsh, S.J.³² By happy coincidence Walsh was a Jesuit priest (Haushofer was a lapsed Catholic), US Army officer, fluent German speaker, and professor of political science at Georgetown University specializing in geopolitics, especially of the German kind, and Haushofer’s kind in particular.³³ Walsh said that his interviews with Haushofer were like a graduate seminar in political science at an American university. The big difference, of course, was that there were potentially mortal consequences for one of the participants if they said the wrong thing. Haushofer was very cautious, playing down any influence, suggesting that Hitler and even Hess lacked the intellectual wherewithal to understand his ideas.³⁴ He told Walsh that Hess’s ‘strong side was not intelligence, rather heart and character’. He described Hitler as a ‘half-educated’ man who ‘never understood the principles of geopolitics transmitted to him’. Hitler, Haushofer said, focused only upon ‘selected... catch words which he did not comprehend’.³⁵

With an indictment for war crimes hanging in the balance, this is perhaps what one would have expected Haushofer to say. In other parts of the interview with Walsh, Haushofer was caught lying, and whitewashing past prejudicial statements. When Walsh confronted him with evidence of backtracking and prevarication, Haushofer claimed ‘the poor memory belonging to an old man’.³⁶ At another juncture, faced with a blatant contradiction between his interview

²⁶ A. Fischer, Haushofer, Karl Ernst, in: D. Coetzee, L. W. Eysturli (Eds), *Philosophers of War: The Evolution of History’s Greatest Military Thinkers*, Volume 2, Santa Barbara, 2013, 46–49, 47.

²⁷ This account is derived from Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5); Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6); and W. Natter, Geopolitics in Germany, 1919–1945: Karl Haushofer and the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, in: J. Agnew, K. Mitchell, G. Toal (Eds), *The Companion to Political Geography*, Oxford, 2003, 187–203.

²⁸ Germany’s brain trust, *Life Magazine* 20th November 1939, 60–66, 60.

²⁹ F. Sondern Jnr., Hitler’s scientists, *Current History* June 1941, 10–12, 47.

³⁰ Quoted in I. Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris*, London, 1998, 240.

³¹ Quoted in Herwig, The daemon of geopolitics (note 7), 10.

³² E. A. Walsh (S.J.), The mystery of Haushofer, *Life Magazine* 16th September 1946, 107–120; Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5).

³³ On Walsh’s life see: L. J. Gallagher (S.J.), *Edmund A. Walsh S.J.: A Biography*, New York, 1962; G. Ó Tuathail, Spiritual geopolitics: Fr. Edmund Walsh and Jesuit anticommunism, in: K. Dodds, D. Atkinson (Eds), *Geopolitical Traditions: A Century of Geopolitical Thought*, London, 2000, 187–210; P. McNamara, *A Catholic Cold War: Edmond S. Walsh, S.J., and the Politics of American Anticommunism*, New York, 2005. Walsh was vehemently anti-communist. As an ‘Expert Consultant’ to the U.S. Chief of Counsel at the Nuremberg Trials it was alleged that Walsh strove to keep out of the public record any collusion between the Catholic church, especially the Jesuit order, and the Nazis. Consequently, Walsh’s own position should be taken into account in assessing his judgment of Haushofer. The evidence from Walsh’s papers, which have been thoroughly examined by McNamara, is that Haushofer was not given any special treatment. Walsh believed that Haushofer ‘was morally and legally guilty of participation in a premeditated cause of wanton aggression’, and that he was ‘as guilty as the better known criminals’ (Walsh quoted in McNamara, *A Catholic Cold War*, 126). Nonetheless, Walsh gave Haushofer a certificate exempting him from standing trial at Nuremberg. It was in exchange for Haushofer writing an essay ‘repudiating the Nazi application of his teachings’, which Walsh’s boss, Chief Counsel Robert H. Jackson, believed would be ‘far more profitable from an educational point of view than would result from putting Haushofer in the dock’ (quoted in McNamara, *A Catholic Cold War*, 125, 126).

³⁴ He thought none of the Nazi high command except von Neurath had the mental capacity to understand his theories (Walsh, The mystery of Haushofer (note 32), 117). He said of von Ribbentrop, the Foreign Minister: ‘I even had to teach him how to read a map’ (Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5), 15).

³⁵ Quotes from Walsh, The mystery of Haushofer (note 32), 110, 117; and Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5), 15.

³⁶ Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5), 18.

statements and his earlier published writing, Haushofer broke down sobbing. 'It was another shattering moment in a shattered world' commented Walsh.³⁷ Like so many German academics Haushofer had contributed to the Nazi project. Unlike a Wernher von Braun designing V-2 rockets, or a Walter Christaller re-planning the annexed Warthegau landscape according to central place theory, in Karl Haushofer's case it was perhaps more fundamental because his role extended beyond technical implementation.³⁸ Haushofer contributed to Hitler's 'university education', potentially enabling the future *Führer* to attain 'full clarity'. Haushofer therefore was not simply an engineer or bureaucrat, following instructions, but possibly someone who had a hand in shaping the instructions themselves.

In particular, Karl Haushofer provided a geographical sensibility. National Socialism was obsessed by space and spatial categories, and by spatial transformation. We are not claiming that the obsession originated with Haushofer, but given Haushofer's formative influence on Hess, and the instruction of Hitler at Landsberg, some of his geographical imaginary and vocabulary presumably struck a chord. In his 1940 Preface to a new edition of Ratzel's book, Haushofer 'proudly recounted how he had left a "well-read" copy of Ratzel's *Political Geography* behind him after a visit in 1924 to Landsberg prison, where from his cell Hitler was busy dictating the first draft of *Mein Kampf* to his assistant, Hess'.³⁹

Walsh recognised Haushofer's influence on *Mein Kampf*. He wrote that Haushofer provided *Mein Kampf* with 'a line of argument, a thesis, and a series of geographical facts weighted with geographical significance.... This graduation from rabble-rousing to the elementary stages of geopolitics is too striking and circumstantial to be mere coincidence'.⁴⁰ Specifically, Walsh says of *Mein Kampf*'s chapter 14 on German policy in Eastern Europe that one 'can almost feel the presence of Haushofer'.⁴¹ In that chapter Hitler wrote:

Germany must find the courage to gather our people and their strength for an advance along the road that will lead this people from its present restricted living space [*Lebensraum*] to new land and soil.... [I]t is not in colonial acquisitions that we must see the solution of this problem, but exclusively in the acquisition of a territory for settlement.⁴²

Here Hitler made *Lebensraum* the moving force. It demanded Germany's further possession of territory; it justified German expansionism. Hitler uses *Lebensraum* twice in *Mein Kampf*, and '11 times in his unpublished "Zweites Buch" of 1928'.⁴³ For Hitler it was a term with traction. Invented by Ratzel in *Politische Geographie*, *Lebensraum* was deployed and exemplified by Haushofer in *Dai Nihon*. The term then featured in the very first issue of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* (January 1924), the one that Haushofer took to Landsberg as an instructional text for teaching geopolitics to his two 'pupils'.⁴⁴

After Hitler gained power in 1933 the spatial elements found in *Mein Kampf* were worked out on the ground. That was one of the results of the Munich Conference. Haushofer thought it was such 'a happy day for geopolitics' because his theory became reality, and brought into being a new Nazi German geopolitical world. When Germany invaded Poland Haushofer was even more enthused. In a letter to Hess in October 1939, Haushofer wrote: 'How many times did we in our most academic dreams conjure up world-political visages of spaces as have now been realised. It is a shame to be 70 years old and to be able to serve only as a cultural-political umbrella from behind the scene'.⁴⁵

Of course, between the months of June and November 1924, when Haushofer tutored at Landsberg he did not know Hitler was going to become *Führer*; he did not know that *Mein Kampf* would sell over 12 million copies; he did not know that the book would be the template for National Socialism; and he did not know that *Lebensraum* would culminate in the Final Solution. But as those things came to pass, Haushofer rarely complained, nor did he slip into the background. Rather, he pushed himself forward, becoming a spokesperson for the regime, explicating and justifying its geopolitical strategies. Haushofer became 'a ubiquitous presence in the German media... spreading the message of Germany's shortage of living space "by a thousand channels"'.⁴⁶

His honours and achievements piled up as National Socialism became increasingly prominent. His role as a public intellectual began in 1924. That year he started making monthly radio broadcasts on the *Deutsche Welle* and *Bayerische Rundfunk* networks, teaching geopolitics and becoming an 'educator of the Volk'.⁴⁷ The same year he was one of the founding four editors of the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, becoming its sole editor in 1931. The journal was progressively influenced by the Nazis, with a separate working group forming in 1932, the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Geopolitik*, catering to National Socialist interests. Its monthly circulation rose from between 300,000 and 400,000 in the late 1920s to 750,000 at its height in 1933, and it was sold at newsstands across the Reich.⁴⁸ In 1933, the year the Nazis took power, Haushofer became President of the German Academy (serving 1933–1937); head of the *Volksdeutscher Rat* (1933) (a body charged with helping scientific associations in Germany and abroad); and a permanent, full-time paid Professor of Geography at the University of Munich (1933).⁴⁹ The next year he was invited on to the editorial board of the NSDAP-owned Ullstein publishing company that controlled six of Germany's largest circulation newspapers.⁵⁰ And in that same year Haushofer was also recruited to Deputy Führer Hess's *Reichsreform* commission, charged with changing the regional divisions (*Gaue*) within Germany, and which Haushofer saw as an opportunity to expand the country's borders by

³⁷ Walsh, The mystery of Haushofer (note 32), 114.

³⁸ See respectively: W. Biddle, *Dark Side of the Moon: Wernher von Braun, the Third Reich, and the Space Race*, New York, 2012; and T. J. Barnes, Notes from the underground: why the history of economic geography matters: the case of Central Place Theory, *Economic Geography* 88 (2012) 1–26.

³⁹ Bassin, Race contra space (note 9), 127.

⁴⁰ Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5), 41.

⁴¹ Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5), 42.

⁴² A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Volume 2, chapter 14, Eastern orientations or Eastern policy, originally published in German in 1926. An English translation of the two volumes is available on-line at http://www.hitler.org/writings/Mein_Kampf/ and from which the quote is taken; last accessed 7th September 2014.

⁴³ Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6), 226.

⁴⁴ Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1936* (note 30), 248 suggests that while Hitler would likely have been familiar with *Lebensraum* before Landsberg, 'it seems highly likely that Haushofer's [writings and teachings] were one significant source of his notion of *Lebensraum*'.

⁴⁵ Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6), 234.

⁴⁶ Murphy, *The Heroic Earth* (note 7), 106.

⁴⁷ Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6), 232.

⁴⁸ Natter, Geopolitics in Germany (note 27).

⁴⁹ D. H. Norton, Karl Haushofer and the German Academy, *Central European History* 1 (1968) 80–99; H. Hesse, Karl Haushofer: his role in German geopolitics and in Nazi politics, *Political Geography Quarterly* 6 (1987) 135–144; 141.

⁵⁰ Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6), 231–232.

annexing adjoining territories (as later happened in Czech Sude-tenland, Austria and Poland).⁵¹

A bad end

Even in Haushofer's salad days of power and influence life was precarious. That was clear as early as the 'night of the long knives' (30th June/1st July 1934), when even the seemingly most loyal Nazis, SA members including its leader Ernst Röhm, were murdered in a purge. While Haushofer wrote to Hess to congratulate him on his role in that night's work, Haushofer was not always loyal to Hitler. He declined to review *Mein Kampf* in the *Zeitschrift*, saying it had little to do with geopolitics.⁵² He also never became a Nazi party member. It is not entirely clear why. In December 1938 he was asked by his Dean at Munich University to explain his non-membership, and he replied enigmatically that it was for 'the purpose of camouflage'.⁵³ Was it camouflage to allow him to finger critics of Hitler who would think him a potential ally, or was it camouflage for himself, enabling him to believe that his own role and complicity within the regime was limited?

But Hitler was not always so keen on Haushofer either. After Landsberg they met only a dozen times, the last in November 1938. One of the issues was Haushofer's Jewish wife, Martha, and through her his *Mischling* ('cross-breed') sons, Albrecht and Heinz. Under Nazi race laws anyone who had at least one Jewish grandparent was a *Mischling*. From 1933 Hess functioned as the family minder, providing on three separate occasions a *Schutzbrief* (a writ of protection) to make them 'honorary Aryans'.⁵⁴ That worked until only 10th May 1941, when Hess, unknown to the Nazi leadership, flew to Scotland ostensibly to see the Duke of Hamilton to discuss the possibility of negotiating peace between Germany and the UK. Hess was arrested and put into prison, first in the UK and then, following a conviction for war crimes at Nuremberg, for the rest of his life at Spandau, East Berlin. Hess's absence left the Haushofer family vulnerable. There was a suspicion that because of the close family friendship the Haushofers, especially Albrecht, had known in advance about Hess's flight, and may well have had a hand in it.⁵⁵ Both Haushofers were questioned by the Gestapo, their houses searched, and ominously Hitler began referring to Karl as the 'Jewish professor'. Haushofer told Walsh that, once Hess left, he 'lived under the sword of Damocles', fearing his wife would be

'whisked away to Theresienstadt [concentration camp] or Auschwitz'.⁵⁶

Haushofer was increasingly marginalized. It only got worse after his son, Albrecht, was identified as one of the plotters in the failed von Stauffenberg attempt to blow-up Hitler at the Wolfsschanze command complex in Poland on 20th July 1944. While Albrecht was on the run, several members of the Haushofer family including Karl, his other son Heinz, and even a grandchild, were held at Dachau concentration camp. Albrecht was finally caught in December 1944, and incarcerated in a special wing at the Gestapo's Moabit prison in Berlin.⁵⁷

Albrecht Haushofer

During the four months Albrecht was at Moabit he wrote 80 sonnets. Sonnet 38 is called 'My Father', and it is about Karl's complicity with the Nazis. It drew on the imagery of an Asian legend about an evil spirit sealed in the body of a fish. If the fish was caught, but not immediately put back into the sea, evil would escape into the world. Albrecht suggested in his poem that is what his father allowed to happen:

It once lay within the strength of his [Karl Haushofer's] will
to plunge the daemon back into its durance....

But my father broke away the seal.

He did not see the rising breath of evil.

He let the daemon soar into the world.⁵⁸

The 'daemon' is Hitler; the evil is Nazism. Albrecht is pointing to that moment back in Landsberg Prison, or possibly even before, when Karl first met Hitler in Munich, or maybe even before that when he first met Hess. Karl could have done something. Instead he 'broke away the seal'; he encouraged the daemon; he allowed evil to soar.

His father's son

Born in 1903, Albrecht came of age during the tumultuous years of the newly founded Weimar republic.⁵⁹ At 14, one of Albrecht's friends from the *Theresienwiese Gymnasium* in Munich that he

⁵¹ In spite of these many accomplishments, and contrary to claims made by *Reader's Digest*, *Life Magazine* and *Current History*, Haushofer never established an Institute of Geopolitics. On 20th November 1939 *Life Magazine* reported his Institute employed a staff of 1000, and 'remade... the world... everyday between breakfast and dinner' (60). But no such institute existed. When American troops went to the University of Munich to locate it, they found only an old man, Karl Haushofer, sitting by himself in a university office (Natter, *Geopolitics in Germany* (note 27), 189). Norton, *Karl Haushofer and the German Academy* (note 49), 97–98, contends that the rumour of the institute was a result of the Anglophone press confusing Haushofer's Presidency of the German Academy with his position as Professor of Geography at Munich University. Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics* (note 7), chapter 4, further suggests that the American media spread the belief about the existence of the institute for propaganda reasons, ironically inflating Haushofer's influence when his actual status within Nazism had waned.

⁵² Herwig, *Geopolitik* (note 6), 225.

⁵³ Letter to the Dean, 24th December 1938, quoted in Norton, *Karl Haushofer and the German Academy* (note 49), 88.

⁵⁴ Bassin, *Race contra space* (note 9), 126.

⁵⁵ Albrecht indeed knew of Hess's flight (although Karl claimed at least to Walsh that he didn't know). Albrecht corresponded with the Duke of Hamilton to facilitate the meeting using a fake Lisbon address as cover. When Hess arrived in Scotland he had in his pocket calling cards from both Albrecht and Karl Haushofer, see Heske, *Karl Haushofer* (note 49), 139.

⁵⁶ Walsh, *The mystery of Haushofer* (note 32), 110–112.

⁵⁷ A. Brodersen, *Albrecht Haushofer 1903–1945*, in: A. Haushofer, *Moabit Sonnets*, trans. M. D. Herter Norton, New York, 1978 [first published in German in 1946], 165–179, 165.

⁵⁸ Haushofer, *Moabit Sonnets* (note 57), Sonnet 38: My Father, 77–78.

⁵⁹ Surprisingly little has been written on Albrecht Haushofer. The major work is U. Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer und der Nationalsozialismus. Ein Beitrag zur Zeitgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1974; a more recent work is the slim volume E. Haiger, A. Ihering and C. F. Von Weizsäcker, *Albrecht Haushofer*, Ebenhausen, 2008; and in 2011 Die Gesellschaft für Erdkunde Berlin organized a large exhibition on Albrecht Haushofer, <http://www.gfe-berlin.de/Veranstaltungen/Haushofer/haushofer.html> (last accessed 7th September 2014).

attended asked what he wanted to be. Without hesitation, he said 'Germany's foreign minister'.⁶⁰ While his reply reflected his precociousness, it also indicated his class membership in the Bavarian elite, and the absorption of his father's theory of geopolitics.⁶¹

That inculcation continued as Albrecht completed a degree in geography and history at the University of Munich, graduating in 1924. The next year he completed his Ph.D. thesis, *Pass-Staaten in den Alpen* [Mountain pass countries in the Alps], supervised by the geographer and polar explorer Erich von Drygalski. Although Albrecht did not use the term geopolitics in the dissertation, it was clearly influenced by his father's work, and was published in 1928 in the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* book series.

In the summer of 1924 Albrecht left Munich for Berlin to take up a position as assistant to the acclaimed physical geographer Albrecht Penck. He was to work with Penck on his *Habilitation* on the loess fields of Hungary, but that work was never completed.⁶² Albrecht's true interest was always in geopolitics, and he also began receiving other more appealing offers. In 1927 he was elected secretary of the *Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin* [The Berlin Geographical Society], one of the most prestigious geographical societies in Germany. The following year he was appointed editor (serving 1928–1938) of that society's journal, *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde*. Travelling the world in the late 1920s and early 1930s on Society business, he managed also to turn out scholarly papers, mainly in political geography, including for his father's own *Zeitschrift*.

Éminence Grise

On 26th October 1929, a young and ambitious Albrecht wrote to his father about his desire to be more involved in German politics, albeit as an *éminence grise*:

It is my intention to acquire a decisive influence, though not too much in the limelight. I am still too young for that and the situation isn't yet tense enough... On another matter do you know anything about Hess that isn't confidential but nevertheless is of interest and that can be redirected? Please don't mention to anyone that I asked.⁶³

Like many German intellectuals and scholars, Albrecht was becoming entangled in the future Third Reich. But he was by no means convinced by either its rhetoric or ideology. He wrote to his father on 8th June 1932 that 'Rudi Hess and his peers are beyond salvation'.⁶⁴

Spring 1933 was a watershed given that Hitler came to power during the winter of that year. German intellectuals who previously remained undecided needed either to leave or to stay. Klaus Mann and his father Thomas left. Other intellectuals like Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt stayed, both joining the NSDAP in May 1933. For the Haushofer family the situation was complicated. Albrecht

and his brother Heinz were *Mischlinge*. This became particularly pressing with the introduction on 11th April 1933 of *Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums* [The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service]. It aimed to Aryanise the civil service, excluding those with Jewish ancestry from serving as judges, professors, or in other government positions. For Albrecht this would have meant losing his secretaryship of the Geographical Society and editorship of its journal. He seriously considered emigrating.⁶⁵ He held back because his mother would not leave the country. His relationship with his father was also put under severe pressure. On 7th May 1933, Albrecht wrote an embittered letter to his mother about his father's passive acceptance of the new racial policies:

I am happy for father's and Heinz's optimism, though I cannot understand it... I can honestly not say much regarding father's political letters. I am happy that he can see opportunities to work – in the same state that proclaims his sons as unfit for civil service (I have carefully read the new protocol on the *Berufsbeamtengesetz* and I find little reassurance therein)... One cannot plane wood without shavings is a nice proverb; but when some of the shavings are one's friends and acquaintances things look rather different. I don't know whether or not I should envy or admire the blindness that cannot see how close to us the plane irons already are.⁶⁶

Rudolf Hess interceded, issuing two *Deutschblütigkeitserklärungen* [German Blood Certificates] that made Albrecht and Heinz officially Aryans (at least for a period). Although certification allowed Albrecht to continue working for the Society, he felt strongly that the new regime was flawed. He increasingly saw that he did not fit within the new German world, questioning even his father's geopolitics.⁶⁷ On 22nd June 1933, Albrecht wrote to his parents: 'Concerning geopolitics I am afraid that it is too close to political power. In the longer perspective this will mean that I cannot accept it. During the past 6 months every commentary [in the *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*] has been a pain to me, I ponder it for days to be able to come to the necessary compromise between truth, inner conviction and what is permissible'.⁶⁸ This was Albrecht's version of tangled complicity. But in pain or not, he nonetheless accepted a lectureship in political geography at the *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* [German Academy for Politics] in Berlin that Hess arranged for him that same year.⁶⁹ He later became Professor in 1940, transferring to the University of Berlin.⁷⁰

With these acts of assistance, Rudolf Hess repaid the debt he owed Karl Haushofer for sheltering him after the failed beer-hall putsch in 1923. Albrecht now felt in debt to Hess. In a letter to Hess dated 7th September 1933, Albrecht wrote: 'I could not have accepted this extraordinary privilege [the job at the *Deutsche Hochschule*] – not even for my father's sake – had I not felt that, should the occasion arise, I would be prepared to make a personal

⁶⁰ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 17.

⁶¹ Albrecht's home life was swaddled in the 'rich intellectual and artistic culture... of the German high-bourgeois'. Apart from becoming a professor of geography, Albrecht was a serious playwright, a poet, musician and composer. Brodersen, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 57), 166; R. S. Wistrich, *Who's Who in Nazi Germany*, 3rd edition, London and New York, 2013, 100.

⁶² Heske, *Karl Haushofer* (note 49), 138.

⁶³ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 290.

⁶⁴ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 300.

⁶⁵ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 308.

⁶⁶ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 306.

⁶⁷ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 311.

⁶⁸ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 311.

⁶⁹ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 116.

⁷⁰ Heske, *Karl Haushofer* (note 49), 138.

contribution for you as a man.⁷¹ This began Albrecht's moral high-wire act that lasted for the next eight years. He tried to balance his moral convictions against an obligation to practice his geographical intelligence for a regime he knew to be corrupt.

That balancing act became acute from the summer of 1934. Hess appointed Albrecht as his personal advisor in the *Dienststelle Ribbentrop* [the Ribbentrop Department], an international policy think-tank that ran parallel to Foreign Affairs. For the rest of the decade Albrecht's work was divided between the university and the *Dienststelle*. In the latter role, Albrecht took on a number of secret diplomatic missions in Great Britain, Japan and Eastern Europe. A particularly important one was in mid November 1937, when he and Count von Trauttmansdorf clandestinely met the Czech President Edvard Beneš and Foreign Minister Kamil Krofta to discuss Sudetenland. The region had been ceded to Czechoslovakia in the Treaty of Versailles, but Hitler wanted it back.⁷² The program that Albrecht and others agreed at their secret meeting contained five points: 1) a non-aggression pact between Germany and Czechoslovakia; 2) concurrence about cultural independence of the Sudetenland; 3) a policy of increasing trade between the two countries; 4) a 'newspaper peace' between the two countries, that is, no negative press against Germans living in Czechoslovakia; and 5) a stipulation that the Hapsburg family would not regain power in Austria.⁷³

Albrecht reported the meeting and subsequent diplomatic negotiations to his father using Japanese words as a code to refer to particular individuals. *Tomodachi*, which means friend, was for Hess; *Fukon*, meaning 'I will not bend', was Ribbentrop; and *O'Daijin*, meaning the leader or Great Spirit, was Hitler. In a letter sent to his father on 19th January 1937, Albrecht wrote:

My own presentation for *O'Daijin* was, this time, more a lecture. He listened and asked intelligent questions. Personally he was charming, in his attitude more peaceful, more superior than before Christmas. What I keep noticing with him – at least at those times when he relates to the individual and not the masses – is the powerful application of 'common sense' in the English meaning of the words.⁷⁴

During the years leading up to the war, Albrecht went on several other similar missions. His usual objectives were to gather intelligence, and to establish diplomatic relations. Throughout this period, Albrecht's aim was to keep Germany out of a new war. He wrote to his mother on 20th April 1937: 'Wishes for the future? We are lucky if nothing happens. I don't want the next European catastrophe to affect you during your lifetime; nor do I want it for father'.⁷⁵

Hess's flight to Scotland

By the end of 1937, though, it was all too clear to Albrecht that Germany was heading for war. His work at the *Dienststelle*, in the Foreign Office, and the confidential intelligence he read, inescapably pointed to that conclusion. In particular, he knew well a

number of British diplomats, a consequence of initially meeting them at the Berlin Olympiad in 1936 and then seeing them again when, as Hess's envoy, he visited von Ribbentrop in London, who had been appointed German Ambassador to the UK. He wrote in a 1937 commentary for *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*: 'If one had visited England in the spring of 1937 it would be impossible not to draw the conclusion that neither Italy nor Japan (not even the Soviet Union!) are considered public enemy number one. They (the English) are again looking across the North sea.'⁷⁶

Among the British diplomats, the Marquis of Douglas and Clydesdale, later the Duke of Hamilton, became a close personal friend. Clydesdale visited the Haushofer family at Hartschimmelhof, and Albrecht stayed more than once at Clydesdale's home, Dungavel. These connections allowed Albrecht to anticipate the British reaction to German claims to Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria. In May and June of 1938 Albrecht wrote perhaps his most important report to von Ribbentrop outlining the expected British response to any German territorial expansion. A German military attack on Bohemia, Albrecht suggested, would provide Britain and France *casus belli* to intervene militarily.⁷⁷

His influence on von Ribbentrop, appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in February 1938, waned as the prospect of war became more likely. Albrecht wrote to his father on 22nd August 1938: 'Of course I am aware that the chance exists that London will find a way to make Berlin realise the gravity of the situation – but our prospects of reaching the winter without a war appears to me at best as one to four. Once one views things in this light one cannot help but prepare oneself internally and externally'.⁷⁸ After the Munich Conference, Albrecht left the *Dienststelle*. He was increasingly regarded as Hess's spy, and his Jewish ancestry was also used against him. He further feared that the war the Nazis were planning against Czechoslovakia would not be contained, spiralling into global conflict.

In the end it was not the Nazi take-over of Czechoslovakia that provoked global conflict, but the German invasion of Poland on 1st September 1939. Albrecht was recalled to work for Ribbentrop, this time within the intelligence division of Foreign Affairs.⁷⁹ From the letters that Albrecht wrote to his parents during the autumn of 1939, the high-wire act he had performed from 1933 was more and more difficult. It was no longer even safe to send letters. In a 13th December 1939 letter to his mother, which his father carried from Berlin to Munich, Albrecht expressed deep despair: 'I loathe the forms of human irrationality and violence, in all their gestations. And the constant coercion to serve that this war places on each and everyone that works for the government, even on those that do not have to fight, it creates so terrible effects within me, that I am in need of a spiritual anaesthetic so that I can avoid doing something explosive'.⁸⁰ Albrecht also began to learn more about the men for whom he worked. He continued in the same letter: 'One example: I am seated at a table with a man [Odilo Globocnik] whose duty it will be to starve and freeze to death a large part of the German Jews that have been deported to the Jewish ghetto of Lublin, everything according to the programme'.⁸¹

⁷¹ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 315–316.

⁷² K. von Klemperer, *German Resistance Against Hitler: The Search for Allies Abroad, 1938–1945*, Oxford, 1994.

⁷³ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 145.

⁷⁴ Jacobson, *Karl Haushofer* (note 17), Volume 2, 311.

⁷⁵ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 328.

⁷⁶ Quoted in J. Douglas-Hamilton, *Motive for a Mission: The Story Behind Rudolf Hess's Flight to Britain*, Edinburgh, 1979, 79.

⁷⁷ J. Douglas-Hamilton, Ribbentrop and war, *Journal of Contemporary History* 5 (1970) 45–63.

⁷⁸ Jacobson, *Karl Haushofer* (note 17), Volume 2, 358–359.

⁷⁹ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 201.

⁸⁰ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 346.

⁸¹ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 374. The historian Michael Allen called Globocnik 'the vilest man in the vilest organization ever known', quoted in J. Kranjc and G. Joseph, *To Walk with the Devil*, Toronto, 2013, 124.

There was a growing realisation by Albrecht of the consequences of his earlier complicity. The keen geographical intelligence he had deployed at the *Dienststelle* and Foreign Affairs was coming home to roost.⁸² Guilt about that complicity led him in 1940 to consider joining the emerging resistance movement against Hitler, such as the Red Orchestra and the Kreisau Circle (see also Heffernan's paper, this issue).⁸³ A friend, Karl Langbehn, introduced Albrecht to Johannes Popitz, a Prussian finance minister and a member of the *Mittwochsgesellschaft* (the Wednesday Society). Its cover was as a meeting club to discuss scientific questions, but its real purpose was to stimulate and organise resistance against the Nazis.⁸⁴ Throughout 1940, though, Albrecht still worked for the government and Ribbentrop. All that changed on the evening of 10th May 1941, when Rudolf Hess flew to Scotland.

News of Hess's flight produced shock waves through the upper hierarchy of the Nazi leadership. Members of Hess's staff were arrested, Karl Haushofer's home was searched, and Hess's correspondence with both Albrecht and Karl was seized by the Gestapo. The Nazis's explanation of Hess's action was that he suffered temporary insanity, causing delusions of pacifism.⁸⁵ Hitler thought Hess's friendship with Albrecht might be the cause, and ordered Albrecht to be brought to Berchtesgaden on the 12th of May. Given pen and paper he was told to list all his British contacts under the heading of 'English Connections and the Possibility of Utilizing Them'.⁸⁶ Afterwards he was sent to the Gestapo prison on Prinz Albrechtstrasse in Berlin and interrogated by both the head of the Gestapo, Heinrich Müller, and by an SS-general, Reinhart Heydrich. He was released after only eight weeks.⁸⁷ He left prison as a man still under great suspicion, however. Furthermore, he and his family had lost their minder.

Moabit

After the Gestapo and SS interrogation, Albrecht left Foreign Affairs. Nonetheless, some in Nazi high command thought that his pre-war contacts with British diplomats might still be useful should Germany ever negotiate for peace. It was too early to kill him, or even to lock him up in a concentration camp. Albrecht was allowed to continue working at Berlin University as a professor. The trauma around Hess's flight to Scotland, though, hardened his resolve to contribute to the resistance movement. Through the Wednesday Society he met members of the Kreisau Circle, and in particular Count von Stauffenberg. With him as well as others, Albrecht participated in hatching the 20th July 1944 plot to blow-up Hitler.⁸⁸

That attempt failed. Hitler survived the bomb in part because of a sturdy table leg that absorbed the blast. Albrecht was not part of the inner circle of plotters, but as soon as news of the failed attempt was out he fled Berlin. On 25th July he went into hiding in Bavaria, avoiding capture until 7th December 1944, when he was brought back to Berlin and imprisoned at Moabit. Even then his fate was not fully determined. Himmler believed Albrecht's pre-war relations with the British Foreign Service might benefit the Party if peace negotiations occurred.

Albrecht spent the last four months of his life at Moabit composing his sonnets. In them we hear a man struck by the full force of his complicity and guilt from earlier collaborations with the Nazis. One of the Moabit sonnets (number 39) is called simply 'Guilt'. Its second stanza is:

Yet I am guilty otherwise than you think.

I should have recognized my duty sooner, more sharply
named disaster as disaster –

I withheld my judgment much too long.⁸⁹

By then it was too late for him to cross to safety on the moral high wire on which he had previously precariously balanced. By the evening of 22nd April 1945 the Russian army was in the suburbs of Berlin. Defeat was looming. Albrecht and fifteen of his fellow prisoners were told that they would be set free. The group consisted of several high-ranking military officers, professors and industrialists. When they were escorted after midnight to the prison gates they were met by a squad of SS-*Sonderkommando*. They were told they were now being transferred to another facility for their own safety. Instead they were taken to nearby vacant land off *Invalidenstrasse* and summarily executed. One of the group miraculously survived, Herbert Kosney. It was he who told Heinz Haushofer where he could find the body of his brother. When Heinz found Albrecht three weeks after he had died, clutched in his hand under his coat were five folded sheets of paper, his sonnets.

Conclusion

Like *Mephisto's* Hendrik Höfgen, both Karl and Albrecht Haushofer were at different times seduced by Nazism – by the heady sense of power and status that the regime afforded them. Albrecht was always the more cautious, better able to resist Nazism's temptations. Likely that was because he experienced its dark side early on, having been defined as a *Mischling* and requiring special dispensation to continue working. That said, Albrecht was hardly innocent given that he was employed by Nazi high command until May 1941. He contributed to Nazi geopolitical decision-making and negotiation, certainly more directly than his father. At one point Albrecht even judged that Hitler had common sense. And until almost the end, he was considered potentially useful by the Nazi regime. But Albrecht was wracked by guilt from his earlier complicity, and also by the role that his own father played in letting the 'daemon soar into the world'. From at least 1940, and here he is unlike Höfgen, he tried to assert an independent moral standpoint, joining the German resistance, helping and maybe influencing Hess in his plan to negotiate peace with the British, and becoming one of the plotters to kill Hitler. His story, however, was never straightforward, and like other geographers enrolled by the Nazis his complicity was tangled, torn by moral struggle.

Karl was always less critical of the Nazis than his son. He was much more ready to change his own views, even his geopolitical theory, so that it complied with Nazi orthodoxy whatever that

⁸² Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 349.

⁸³ P. Hoffman, *The History of the German Resistance, 1939–1945*, 3rd edition, Montreal-Kingston, 1996; A. Nelson, *Red Orchestra, The Story of the Berlin Underground and the Circle of Friends Who Resisted Hitler*, New York, 2009.

⁸⁴ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 231.

⁸⁵ R. Schmid, *Der Heß-flug und das kabinett Churchill. Hitler's stellvertreter im kalkül der britischen kriegsdiplomatie Mai-Juni 1941*, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 42 (1994) 1–38.

⁸⁶ Brodersen, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 57), 175.

⁸⁷ Laack-Michel, *Albrecht Haushofer* (note 59), 239–241.

⁸⁸ J. Theil, *Der Lehrkörper der Friedrich-Wilhelm-Universität im Nationalsozialismus*, in: M. Grüttner, H. E. Tenhort (Eds), *Geschichte der Universität unter den Linden: Band 2: Die Berliner Universität zwischen den Weltkriegen 1918–1945*, Berlin, 2012, 465–538.

⁸⁹ Haushofer, *Moabit Sonnets* (note 57), 80.

might be. Karl's heyday was during the second half of the 1930s when he was multiply honoured, and when Nazi geopolitical strategy more or less accorded with his theory. After Hess flew to Scotland in May 1941, and, the next month, Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Karl was doubly challenged. According to Haushofer's geopolitical theory, Germany should never have launched Operation Barbarossa.⁹⁰ The heartland needed to stick together. One part of it should not invade another. Nonetheless, Karl Haushofer modified his theory so that under its new formulation the Soviet invasion was not so bad. Roughly at the same time he also bowed to more racist interpretations of geopolitics offered by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Geopolitik*, emphasizing biology over environment.⁹¹ In both cases his complicity became more entrenched, his independent moral standpoint even more difficult to achieve.

Karl Haushofer's complicity with Nazism of course began much earlier, as implied by Albrecht's sonnet, 'My Father'. The exact influence of Karl Haushofer on Hitler is difficult to assess, given that the notes Hess kept of Haushofer's prison teachings were destroyed in 1945. But there remains the surviving textual evidence of *Mein Kampf*, as well as the historical record of Nazi invasion. The geographical character of the Nazi project may well have been in Hitler's head before Haushofer's lectures to him in Landsberg. Our suggestion was that afterwards it became more formalized, took on a definite shape, and had its own vocabulary providing it further momentum. Hitler brought unimaginable horror on to the world. But the terrible things he precipitated unfolded partly through the complicity of others, and that included the ideas and actions of Karl Haushofer.

It is impossible to pinpoint exactly all the effects of Karl Haushofer's complicity. One close to home was the unravelling of his relationship with his son. Albrecht believed his father had been corrupted by Nazi power and status. His father, in contrast, after the 20th July bombing of Wolfsschanze thought that his son was disloyal and treacherous. A former student of Albrecht's at Berlin University, Imegard Schnuhr, whose husband held high rank in the SS, thought she could arrange Albrecht's release from Moabit prison provided Karl helped. But Karl said: 'Why should I do that? He has betrayed his country and his people and deserves no help from me'.⁹²

Karl Haushofer's fate was as tragic as his son's. A little less than a year after Albrecht's murder, Karl Haushofer and his wife of nearly fifty years crept out late at night from their large farm house in Hartschimmelhof, Southern Bavaria. They went down a 'dirt road'

to a 'secluded hollow' on their estate. Around 11 pm they drank a cordial laced with arsenic, with Martha finishing the job by hanging herself from a tree branch. Karl was too enfeebled to do the same, dying 'sprawled, face down'.⁹³ Heinz found the corpses the next day.⁹⁴ He had gone to the house looking for them, and in their bedroom he discovered 'letters of farewell... on the pillow, together with a neatly drawn diagram showing where the bodies would be found'.⁹⁵ Karl's suicide note ended: 'I want to be forgotten and forgotten'.⁹⁶

Against his wishes, the purpose of this paper has been to remember Karl Haushofer, as well as his son, Albrecht. Both may have been, as Troll suggests, tragic figures, but neither was blameless.⁹⁷ Like other German geographers, and other academic labourers, and like Höfgen, in different ways and in different degrees they colluded with the Nazis even though they were at times distressed and tormented by the consequences. There is catharsis from knowing about such tragic tangled complicity and moral struggle, however. It can deepen, enrich and complicate understanding of the historical experience, without making the motives of the complicity appear either simply lurid or base. For this reason, the history of geographical thought should not only critically interrogate the connivance of geographers and their geographical imagination with the tragedies of the past and present. It should also explore the complicated complicities and moral struggles involved and which form part of the connivance. The biographies of the two Haushofer geographers demonstrate that the line between perpetrators and victims is not always easily drawn.

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⁹⁰ Blouet, *Geopolitics and Globalization* (note 7), 59–61.

⁹¹ Heske, Karl Haushofer (note 49); Natter, Geopolitics in Germany (note 27).

⁹² Quoted from 'Spartacus Educational: Albrecht Haushofer', 11, www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/GERhaushoferA.htm (last accessed 7th September 2014).

⁹³ Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5), 33, 34.

⁹⁴ M. Allen, *The Hitler/Hess Deception: British Intelligence's Best Kept Secret of the Second World War*, London, 2003, suggests that Karl and Martha Haushofer were murdered at Hartschimmelhof by British secret agents on Churchill's orders. According to Allen, it was done to keep secret that Hitler had tried to negotiate peace with the British using Hess, and to which both Haushofers were party. Allen's theory is persuasively debunked by Ernst Haiger, Fiction, facts, and forgeries: The 'revelations' of Peter and Martin Allen about the history of the Second World War, *Journal of Intelligence History* 6 (2006) 105–118.

⁹⁵ Walsh, *Total Power* (note 5), 33.

⁹⁶ Jacobson, *Karl Haushofer* (note 17), Volume 2, 389, footnote 1.

⁹⁷ Troll, *Geographic science* (note 1), 132.