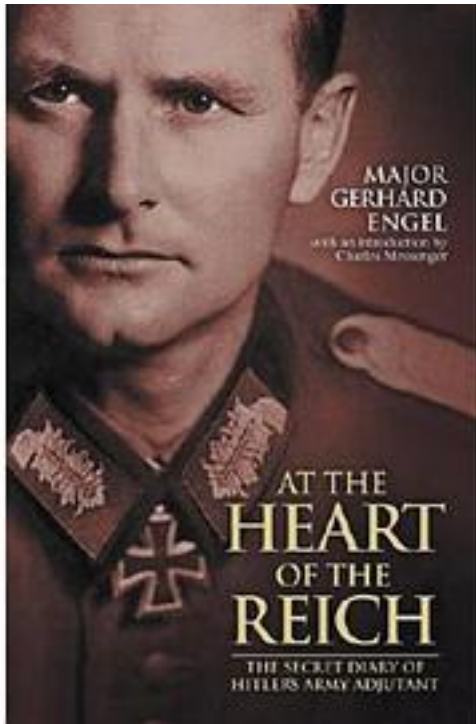


At The Heart Of The Reich



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Major Gerhard Engel was Hitler's Army Adjutant from March 1938 to March 1943. Remarkably, this atmospheric account from a member of Hitler's closest circle has never been published in English before. During his years with Hitler, Engel kept the diary in the form of six notebooks. After the war, he added material to shed further light on certain events, military and political decisions and Hitler's attitude to particular problems. His diary covers the decision-making process behind crucial military actions, including the annexation of Austria, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the war against Russia. He also addresses the intrigue within Hitler's inner circle and his casual conversations with Halder, Guderian and Brauchitsch, among others. Engel was

responsible for certain racial issues and his conversations with Hitler shed important light on the Fnhrer's core beliefs. The diary includes the statement made by Hitler in 1941, 'I am now as before a Catholic.' Engel also details his views on German Jews and, in particular, he dwells on the extent to which they served in the Wehrmacht. He also addresses the deportation of Jews from Salonika and Hitler's order to Himmler to select a destination, the details of which Hitler was apparently unconcerned with. The final part of the diary is mostly devoted with the war against Russia. Engel's reports confirm that the master plan was to take Leningrad and Rostov in 1941, then close pincers behind Moscow in 1942. The plan was frustrated by senior army commanders' lack of enthusiasm and Hitler's failure to exert firm leadership in the first two months of the offensive. Engel depicts Hitler as a vacillating, contrary man. It is not unlikely that this betrayed itself to his generals and gave them the encouragement they needed to argue their plan to rush Moscow, which ultimately contributed to the defeat of the Third Reich.

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