

Foreword

The Palace and the Bunker: Royal Resistance to Hitler is actually two books in one, each dependent on the other. *The Bunker: the Shadow Over Europe* relates to how and why Hitler was able to come to power in Germany and threaten the world, whereas *The Palace: Hitler's Royal Enemies* relates, as the title suggests, to certain princes who opposed the Nazis. *The Bunker* section represents a synthesis of information and ideas from many sources distilled into a single volume. It is an exploration of a difficult subject in the context of German history and aspiration. Each section provides context for the other. The first section is vital because without a knowledge of the political and powerful cultural influences on young Germans in the inter-war years, together with an understanding of the effects of war, revolution and the Versailles Treaty upon people, economics and politics, it would be impossible to understand the world in which our protagonists moved. This book includes four case histories of princely involvement in resistance against the Nazis. They were not the only princes who opposed Hitler; members of the Württemberg and Saxon royal families, for example, suffered for their stand against the National Socialist tyranny. These individuals all represented ancient and distinguished families, many with long histories of rule within Germany or Austria, with their own place within the history of the Germanic peoples going back into the early Middle Ages.

The princes are figures in a frightening landscape, consisting not only of National Socialism and its influences, but also the wider world with its own unsavoury influences on the Nazis that gave them some of their most dangerous ideas. These influences on Hitler, however, affected many others who did not themselves become evil, genocidal maniacs afterwards. So we must look to reception and interpretation as much as transmission in trying to understand how and why Nazism took hold, and why it existed in the first place. Nazism was an alternative to princely rule; they could never exist side by side as Hitler well knew. Where it was attempted in Italy Hitler poured scorn on it as unworkable and proclaimed that he would never have divided 'his' power in that way.

This book is full of heroes; not only royalty but also businessmen, diplomats, soldiers, politicians and ordinary citizens. Furthermore, not all German princes were opposed to Hitler from the start, some saw National Socialism as a possible useful bulwark against Bolshevik influence in Germany and even supported it by joining the SA or SS. These included the Princes of Hesse-Kassel and Prince Augustus Wilhelm of Prussia. Not only was Hitler never going to restore the monarchy as they hoped, but he was fundamentally opposed to the hereditary principle altogether and only courted the monarchists as he courted any group that might help him to power. Similarly his encouragement of 'positive' Christianity was far from Christian. Indeed, Hitler used many stepping stones on his way to power and in doing so crushed each one of them in turn.

I came to the subject of the lead up to the Second World War with little prior knowledge; my research has been a stimulating exploration into a world, which, though past, remains with us in many ways. I hope that this volume conveys something of what has been for me an often dark but always interesting journey with many surprises. There will, no doubt, be errors (all mine), but hopefully none of substance. I have included an analysis of the Allied perspective of Germany and used a lot of English and American sources because this book is aimed primarily at an English-speaking audience, but also because some of what we find distasteful

about Nazi Germany – social Darwinism, white supremacy, eugenics and aggressive secularism – were phenomena of the age and not confined within German borders. On the other hand, some modern virtues such as natural medicine, organic farming, environmentalism, animal welfare, anti-smoking legislation and additive-free foods were actively promoted by Nazi leaders.¹ The common thread in Germany, though, was the genetic health of the Aryan race.² Nazi ideology did not exist in isolation from the rest of the world; it just found its most extreme expression in pan-German nationalism, and particularly in racial theory. The Nazis applied sharp measures from blunt logic with ruthless and meticulous efficiency. There was madness both in Nazi ideas and in their obsessive demonic application, but that does not mean the rest of the Western world was sane. I humbly and respectfully offer this book to the reader and dedicate it to the subjects of my study, for whom I have the greatest respect, to my son Charles, my wife Katrina and to royal families everywhere.