



# The psychology of dictatorship;: Based on an examination of the leaders of Nazi Germany

By G. M Gilbert

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DICTATORSHIP Based on an Examination of the Leaders of Nazi Germany. By G. M. GILBERT, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, Michigan State College, Formerly Prison Psychologist at the Nuremberg Trial of the Nazi War Criminals. The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1950. This study of leading personalities in the Nazi dictatorship is an attempt to achieve some insight into the relationship between psychodynamics and social conflict in the modern world. As prison psychologist at Nuremberg during the period of the trial, the writer had free access to the major German leaders who had survived the war. The study was conducted under conditions well suited for continuous close observation for a full year, from the time of indictment to the time of execution of sentence. Rapport was enhanced by the fact that the writer was the only prison officer to whom all of the prisoners could talk at will and in their own language. The method of study evolved was a combination of individual clinical examination and daily intimate observation of behavior in the group, the writer informally assuming the role of "participant observer" in this well-structured social situation. Although nothing approaching "depth analysis" was possible under these circumstances, the members of the group did speak rather freely about each other, themselves, and their Fuhrer, and reacted rather revealingly to the stimuli provided by their trial. It was thus possible to obtain a great deal of data on their character development and emotional conflicts, their interpersonal relationships, their motivating social values, and the nature of their group identifications, loyalties, and hostilities. These interviews and the reactions of the participants also supplied a substantial amount of information concerning Hitler and his career. 327 PAGES.

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