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Revisiting Karl Haushofer at 150: A Critical Look at the Most Recent Biography

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Abstract: *This (review) article deals with Holger H. Herwig's recent book,* The Demon of Geopolitics. How Karl Haushofer "educated" Hitler and Hess. *Despite the fact that research on Haushofer and his views goes back about 100 years, the book by Herwig is a retrograde step because it overlooks everything that has been published about Karl Haushofer and German geopolitics since the mid-1990s. Herwig's book often mixes true and false aspects and it is this type of writing that makes it particularly difficult to decipher the mistakes for those who do not already fully know the Haushofer story.*

Keywords: *geopolitics, Haushofer, Herwig, propaganda, demon, Japan, mistakes, essay, out-of-date*

About 150 years prior to the publication of this article, Karl Haushofer was born in Munich on August 27, 1869. Roughly 77 years later, on March 10, 1946, he committed a dramatic double suicide with his wife Martha. A look at various Wikipedia entries on the "father of German Geopolitics" shows that they are far from being reliable, with the English entry's superficially academic structure not being backed up by its content, which is still based on wartime and cold war literature (Spang, this issue, pp. 35-47). Claims for information being up-to-date, reliable and verifiable—not met in most Wikipedia entries (on Haushofer)—are far more legitimate if looking at academic books, even more so if they are written by established scholars and distributed by well-known publishers. How far a recent monograph about Karl Haushofer meets these requirements will be discussed below.

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Karl Haushofer as an Object of Propaganda and Historical Research

Many wartime publications saw Haushofer as a prompter of Nazi Germany's aggressive foreign policy. This exaggerated interpretation of Haushofer's influence was the basis for eulogies in the Axis countries and severe Haushofer-bashing by Anglo-Saxon authors such as Andreas Dorpalen (1942), Johannes Mattern (1942), Siegmund Neumann (1942/43), Frederic Sondern (1941), Robert Strausz-Hupé (1941/42), Edmund A. Walsh (1942, 1944, 1949), and Hans W. Weigert (1941/42, 1944), who frequently published in journals like *Current History*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Fortune*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Life*, or *Readers' Digest*.[1] Their critical view was taken up in the 1950s by some authors in the new Eastern Bloc, who saw many parallels between Haushofer's theories and Western geopolitics during and after World War II.[2] Authors like Günter Heyden (GDR) and Juri N. Semjonow (USSR) criti-

[1] Most of these authors either came from Germany or Austria or had family roots there. Different from other US authors, H. W. Weigert had realized the importance of Haushofer's Asian experience in 1908-10 and argued more cautiously. Murphy, 2014, p. 14, summarizes these views and their long-term influence as follows: "As has been noted, Haushofer's alleged dominance over Hitler's thought was sometimes cast in the most categorical terms, during the war, in its immediate aftermath, and for decades later."

[2] During the occupation period after WWII, the Allies created lists of works to be taken out of German libraries. The high number of Haushofer's works on the Soviet index-list reflects the above-mentioned critical view in the communist Eastern bloc. See http://www.polunbi.de/bibliothek/1946-nslit-h.html (Dec. 18, 2018) for details.

cized post-war "American Imperialism" as Haushoferism.[3] After this wartime and post-war hype died down, the impact of *Geopolitik* and thus Haushofer's influence has been interpreted as rather weak (if there was any discussion of geopolitics at all). In the late 1970s, Rainer Matern's 1978 dissertation examined Haushofer rather uncritically, trying to explain but not evaluate his activities and theories. One year later, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen published the most comprehensive (two-volume) description of Haushofer's life and work, but the whole endeavor was more of an annotated anthology and collection of documents than a critical biography. Jacobsen saw Haushofer's influence mostly in the field of "volkisch" politics dealing with Germans abroad. In the mid-1990s, two hotly debated German works about Haushofer by Frank Ebeling (1994[4]) and Bruno Hipler (1996[5]) refueled the debate. Ebeling and Hipler interpreted things differently from earlier works and from each other. Ebeling strictly differentiated between Haushofer's thinking and Nazi ideology and then used this claim to apologetically clear Haushofer from his (too-) close Nazi connections. Hipler argued that Haushofer intensely influenced Rudolf Hess and claimed (without offering enough evidence to prove his hypothesis) on this basis that Haushofer must have had an equally strong influence on Hitler. While the first part of the arguments made by Ebeling as well as Hipler can, to some extent, be backed up by primary sources, their conclusions contradict earlier and later research. Other publications of the same period, like those by Rainer Sprengel (1996), David T. Murphy (1997), Rudolf Gottschlich (1998), Heike Wolter (2003), to name just the related monographs, argued that Haushofer had some influence on Hess, Hitler, and Joachim von Ribbentrop but mostly from the 1920s to the early 1930s—much less so during the immediate pre-war and wartime years. Most recently, works by Christian W. Spang (2013, 2018) and Nicola Bassoni (2018, 2020) are based on the earlier research when it comes to the overall judgment of Haushofer's personality and work but focus on his connections with the two other Axis powers, i.e., Japan and Italy.

With such an array of related publications, anyone attempting to present a balanced view of Karl Haushofer's life, work and impact should be able to do so, even without unearthing new documents. To find out how far Holger H. Herwig was able to fulfill this task in an up-to-date, reliable and verifiable way will be the topic of the following scrutiny of his book *The Demon of Geopolitics* published in 2016 with Rowman & Littlefield.

The Demon of Geopolitics and the Question of Sources

Somehow, already the propagandistic title of Herwig's book hints at what can be expected from its contents. Most likely, using the term "demon" in connection with Karl Haushofer goes back to the sonnet "Vater [father]", posthumously published as sonnet no. 38 in Albrecht Haushofer's *Moabiter Sonette*: "But my father broke away the seal. He did not see the breath of evil. He let the demon soar into the world."[6]

Overall, Herwig's title looks like a mixture of 1940s wartime propaganda titles such as Andreas Dorpalen, *The World of General Haushofer: Geopolitics in Action* (1942), widely used in the reference section of the English Wikipedia-entry on Haushofer (Spang, this issue, pp. 35-47), the title of an MA thesis supervised by Herwig around 2001/02, *Setting the Demon Free: Karl Haushofer, Rudolf Hess, the Thule Society and Hitler in Munich, 1918-1920*, by Richard Lee McGaha[7] and the title of Bruno Hipler's book *Hitlers Lehrmeister:*

[3] See the reference section below for bibliographical details of their works.

[4] See Heske's 1995 well-balanced but very critical review of Ebeling's work. Heske describes Ebeling's Ph.D. thesis as apologetic and a step backward.

[5] For some criticism of Hipler, see Murphy, 2014, p. 15, who writes that Hipler's view "echo wartime accusations that Haushofer, not Hitler, really authored the programmatic passages of Mein Kampf" and continues that "there is just sufficient truth in this narrative to keep it on the safe side of parody".

[6] The German reads: „Mein Vater hat das Siegel aufgebrochen. Den Hauch des Bösen hat er nicht gesehn. Den Dämon liess er in die Welt entwehn." A complete reprint of all 80 sonnets can be found in Haiger, Ihering, Weizsäcker, 2002, pp. 127-150.

[7] It is noteworthy that the introduction of McGaha's thesis starts on p. 1 with Albrecht Haushofer's sonnet. See https://search.proquest.com/docview/304798549/fulltextPDF (Dec. 16, 2018).

Karl Haushofer als Vater der NS-Ideologie [Hitler's Teacher: Karl Haushofer as the Father of National-Socialist Ideology] (1996). The chapter titles of Herwig's book repeat this catchy style with phrases like "Key to the Mystery" (chapter 2), "The Demon Fledges" (6), "The Demon Soars" (7), "The Demon Crashes" (8) and "Prophet Risen?"

Knowing that Herwig had already published an article about Haushofer in 1999[8], one would expect that the German-born Canadian author has full command of all late twentieth and early 21st-century German publications in the field.[9] However, Herwig straightforwardly ignores most of the recent research in the field. Publishing about "the Father of German Geopolitics" without referring to the latest publications about Karl Haushofer, his wife and son as well as about German geopolitics in general, is incompatible with accepted academic standards. The fact that Herwig follows in the footsteps of Bruno Hipler, maintaining that Haushofer exerted a strong influence on Hitler since the 1920s, a claim that is out of tune with most of the more recent research in the field, shows that Herwig did use some German publications, in fact.

In a November 2016 review of Herwig's book, published in the conservative quality paper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), Roman Töppel concludes that Herwig's failure to take into account the writings of various other early 20th century authors caused his exaggerated emphasis on Karl Haushofer as "educator" of Hitler:

> Herwig is so focused on Haushofer and his writings that he completely overlooks numerous publications of other contemporary authors, which were then read in Hitler's environment. This leads to partially absurd conclusions. Thus, Herwig traces back to Haushofer all of Hitler's utterances about lebensraum and population development in *Mein Kampf* and later on. Haushofer's thoughts on imperialism, the 'war as a school of the nation' and the struggle for space, however, had already been written by writers like Heinrich Claß or Friedrich von Bernhardi years before.[10]

Disregard of sources is among the reasons why Herwig's as well as Hipler's work are at best vague or ungrounded with many missing references to prove their hypotheses. Due to this lack of evidence, many arguments presented by both authors are at least questionable.[11] Their common argument that Haushofer had worked for more than two decades "undercover" for Hitler (Herwig, p. xv) is based on a single 1938 letter by Haushofer. The question why Haushofer would have needed to work for Hitler secretly before and during the Nazi era is neither asked nor answered. Besides Hipler, the only other more recent work used by Herwig is the harshly criticized monograph by Ebeling. The selection of Herwig's sources must therefore be called ambiguous and erratic.

Looking at Herwig's introduction, a footnote at the bottom of its first page (xi) catches the eye of the attentive reader because of its weird claim.[12] Herwig explains here that he uses "Hess" instead of the German "Heß" based on the "third version of German orthography" (*Rechtsschreibung*[13]) of 2006. To start with the obvious, there is no need to explain the usage of "Hess" because it is the accepted English spelling of the surname of the Nazi Party's deputy leader. Furthermore, Herwig's claim that this spelling (Hess) has anything to do with *Neue Rechtschreibung* is untenable, because changing German orthography does not interfere with proper nouns, of course. Otherwise, one of Germany's most famous authors should nowadays be spelled either as Göte or Göhte (the "h" after the "ö" indicating the long vowel) because "oe" as well as "th" are nearly extinct in modern German[14], while in fact, we are, of

[8] For some criticism of this article, see Spang, 2013, p. 51 (note 139) and p. 450 (note 113).

[9] In this sense, his monograph resembles the English Wikipedia-entry on Karl Haushofer (Spang, this issue, pp. 34-46). and is thus—at least in large part—a step behind what others have already written.

[10] Töppel, *FAZ*, November 7, 2016. Retrieved February 17, 2018, from https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/politische-buecher/haushofer-und-hitler-landsberger-erzaehlungen-14506547.html

[11] Töppel, 2016, argues along similar lines.

[12] Why the book features nearly 90 unnumbered footnotes along with its roughly 500 endnotes remains unclear. Mixing these two systems is confusing.

[13] Herwig's spelling (*Rechtsschreibung*) is wrong. There should not be a double "ss" in the middle of the word.

[14] See the title of the successful German movie trilogy *Fack ju Göhte 1-3* (intentionally wrong spelling for "Fuck you,

course, still talking about Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (with "oe" and "th").

For various reasons, Herwig's book must be called an extended essay rather than a thoroughly academic monograph. While such a judgment might sound harsh at first sight, Herwig himself admits in his introduction (p. xvi) that his "the approach [is] speculative at times." He goes on explaining this by claiming a lack of primary sources, which surprises anyone who ever worked with the Haushofer files at the Federal Archive (*Bundesarchiv*) in Koblenz, which holds seemingly endless boxes with diaries, official documents, galley proofs, letters, newspaper clippings to be found either in the Haushofer papers (*Nachlass* N 1122) or those of his biographer Hans-Adolf Jacobsen (N 1413), let alone further material in the University Archive of the Ludwig-Maximilians-University, the Bavarian State Archive (*Hauptstaatsarchiv, Abteilung IV Kriegsarchiv*) or the Institute of Contemporary History (IfZ), all in Munich. Moreover, there is the private archive of the Haushofer family. How anyone who claims to have visited most of these places (preface pp. ix-x) can honestly argue that there is a lack of sources, remains inconceivable. Herwig, however, even adds to this by spreading the "fake news" that "the personal diaries of both Karl and Albrecht Haushofer were destroyed or lost." While most—but not all—of Albrecht Haushofer's diaries disappeared, nearly all of Karl Haushofer's (very sketchy) diaries are accessible at the *Bundesarchiv* (N 1122, Vol. 127); only those covering 1926-30 are missing. Additionally, many of the far more elaborate diaries by Martha Haushofer are available in the same folder.[15] Finally, a very elaborate 150-page travel diary, written by Albrecht Haushofer during his trip to East Asia in 1937, has been saved by the family and is currently under preparation to be published with introductions, annotations and various appendices.[16]

Herwig retells Haushofer's life from "modest stock" (p. 1) to World War II, a story that has already often been told. One might, by the way, ask whether "modest" is an appropriate description for a family that included various professors, a member of the Bavarian parliament and a university president, ennobled by the Bavarian Wittelsbach dynasty. Even though the book features around 500 endnotes, many of the points made lack proper referencing, adding to the overall essayistic style of the book; rather many minor mistakes are present in these notes as well.[17] Adding to this, an examination of all endnotes reveals that Herwig mentions a total of 28 works by Karl Haushofer. While this looks like a solid sample, knowing that Haushofer published around 600 or 700 works (including around three dozen books), makes one wonder if Herwig took Haushofer's publications seriously enough.[18]

Furthermore, there is no regular reference list at the end. Instead, the book features a six-page section called "A Note on Sources", in which Herwig describes his sources in prose, yet another reason to call the book an extended essay.[19] Among the works

Goethe") released between 2013 and 2017. Until the late 19th century, "th" was frequently used in terms like *Mittheilung* (message) but has virtually disappeared other than in a few exceptions like *Thal* (valley) or *Thron* (throne). The use of a diphthong (ae, oe, ue) instead an *Umlaut* (ä, ö, ü) is frequent in Switzerland, but is unusual in standard German, except for some (old) proper nouns.

[15] Herwig even mentions Martha Haushofer's diaries but he only used the copies made by Jacobsen, available in BA Koblenz, N 1413, vol. 2, without ever actually looking at the original diaries available in the same archive, N 1122, vol. 127.

[16] This book is currently under preparation by Christian W. Spang and Ernst Haiger.

[17] Throughout the book, there are many quotes that either lack any reference or feature a mistaken reference like chapter III, note 33 (29, not 21 January 1918), chapter V, note 40 (the reference does by no means prove what Herwig says), chapter V, note 50, refers to Ian Kershaw's Hitler biography, only that the book was published in 1998, not 1988, as Herwig states here, chapter VI, note 6 (Herwig says what Jacobsen referred to but not where Jacobsen does so), chapter VI, note 16 (Herwig refers to Jacobsen 1979/I: 1-2, while he means vol. II. There are no numbered pages 1-2 in vol. I of that book), chapter VII, note 59 (pages indicated by Herwig are wrong: not 367-368 but 368-369), conclusion, note 34 (Herwig refers to pp. 94-95, correct is 394-395). See reference 28 below for a short discussion of the confusing fact, that the book features around 90 footnotes besides its roughly 500 endnotes.

[18] A comprehensive list of Haushofer's publication is provided in Fochler-Hauke, n.d., pp. 276-285. Jacobsen, 1979/I, p. 160 (note 5) mentions a list of 525 works. Spang, 2013, offers an *Auswahlbibliographie* (selected bibliography, pp. 758-785) and a list of Japanese translations of Haushofer's works (pp. 786-789) of more than 500 titles in total.

[19] It is tempting to add here that this approach resembles what Haushofer had done in 1913 in *Dai Nihon*, where many

Herwig mentions, there are only three publications that appeared since 2000.[20] This seems to indicate that Herwig wrote (most parts of) his work in the 1990s, an assumption strengthened by the fact that he refers to Hipler's 1996 monograph as "recent" (p. xv) or "most recent" (p. xii) in his introduction.[21] Furthermore, Herwig seems strongly influenced by this book because his general argument, i.e., that Haushofer somehow educated Hitler, strongly resembles Hipler's main hypothesis.[22]

Without referring to them in his "Note on Sources", in the endnotes of each chapter, Herwig mentions an average of four to five works released since 2000. Applying academic standards, the printing date of the newest work mentioned, indicates the general cut-off line, which means that every relevant publication issued before should have been included. The fact that Herwig mentions one little-known (Hillmann, 2005[23]) and one new but flawed Haushofer-related article (Murphy, 2014[24]) strengthens the impression that excluding all other recent works on Haushofer (listed with an asterisk in the reference section below) was made on purpose, what purpose remains unclear, however.

Herwig offers a glossary on page 249, which would be helpful for those readers of the book who do not understand German if not several of the translations were at least unusual.[25] Herwig's usage of *Blutverwandschaft* (instead of *Blutsverwandschaft* with an "s" in the middle) is as disturbing as his constant translation of the suffix *-denken* as "orientation", while it would usually be translated as "thinking". The term *rassenbildende*, which Herwig lists in his glossary, does not exist.[26] The translation offered for *Volksboden*, namely "regions where Germans were still living" is far too ambiguous. Multiple additions are necessary to clarify the term's actual contemporary meaning: "regions [beyond German borders] where [ethnic] Germans were still living [after WWI]". Any shorter version would be unclear.

This kind of ambiguity continues in the notes. Without any explanation of his system, Herwig abbreviates some book titles even at their first appearance. A look at the first endnote of the book (p. xii/221) is a case in point. How any reader who is not already an expert on Haushofer should be able to decipher the following note remains an enigma: "1. Cited in Karl Haushofer, 2: 568-69." This cryptic reference denotes Hans-Adolf Jacobsen's already mentioned book *Karl Haushofer – Leben und Werk*. 1979, Vol. 2, pp. 568-569.

Debatable Interpretations

In Herwig's book, even some simple facts, like family relations, are wrong . While the real Karl Haushofer had one sister (Marie Amalie, 1871-1940) and one brother (Alfred, 1872-1943), Herwig (p. 2) invents a third brother named Albert. Herwig's claim that Martha Haushofer had agreed to stay behind in Bavaria with her father also demanding this, while Karl Haushofer would go to Japan alone, contradicts long established facts: Martha was the driving force to leave Bavaria temporarily. Not only did she actively support Karl's last-minute application for the post of military observer in Japan, but she also convinced her father to partly finance their sojourn in Asia.[27] On page 20, Herwig suggests that both Haushofers employed eight people in Japan, while in fact, they hired and paid just half as

books are mentioned without indicating place and year of publication and in case of articles, exact dates or page numbers are often missing.

[20] These recent titles either deal with the *Ludwig-Maximilians-University* in Munich or with the obscure *Thule Gesellschaft* (society), but not with Haushofer himself.

[21] Another hint in this direction is that Herwig refers to the *Nachlass* Jacobsen at the Federal Archive Koblenz as "N 413" while it is listed nowadays as "N 1413". Haushofer's *Nachlass* is correctly labeled by Herwig as "N 1122".

[22] Töppel, 2016, argues along similar lines.

[23] In this case, Herwig knew the article because he published a chapter in the same volume.

[24] For a criticism of Murphy's article, see Spang, this issue, notes 23 and 43.

[25] For authoritative translations of historical terms refer to Winfried Baumgart's trilingual (German-English-French) dictionary of historical and political terms of the 19th and 20th century, published in 2010.

[26] The term is the present participle of the predicate *Rasse bilden*, which means "to form a race". The final "e" is a grammatical ending. The most authoritative dictionary of the German language, the *Duden* (est. 1880, https://www.duden.de/), does not have any such entry.

[27] See Jacobsen, 1979/I, pp. 95-97.

many: a cook (1) and his wife (2), a house boy (3) and a stable boy (4). The fact that the cook paid for a kitchen helper (5) out of his own pocket and the Japanese Imperial Army provided a soldier (6) to help Haushofer does not make Herwig's claim of eight servants any more accurate. Again, Herwig states these "fake news" without any reference.

To what kind of wrong assertion the over interpretation of one older source (Heske, 1987, p. 39) in connection with completely ignoring a newer source (Spang 2013, pp. 321-325) can lead, may be shown by referring to Herwig's claim that Haushofer "throughout the 1920s had supplied the [German] army with secret foreign policy reports" (p. 147). While Heske said that Haushofer provided these reports for "several years" (not the whole decade of the 1920s), recent research (by Spang)—published two years before Herwig's book—has shown that Haushofer wrote these reports most likely for less than 12 months starting around the turn of the year 1921/22 before nascent hyperinflation made the necessary Asian newspapers and journals too expensive for the *Reichswehr* to buy.

Another example of a mistake that could have been avoided easily can be found in a footnote on page 122,[28] where Herwig mentions "Haushofer's insistence" that only "previously published articles" were reprinted in the anthology *Bausteine der [recte: zur] Geopolitik*.[29] Not only does Herwig fail to offer any proof for Haushofer's alleged resolve, but it is just wrong. The fact that this false claim somehow contradicts Herwig's call that *Bausteine* where Haushofer's "most ambitious effort" to define Geopolitik shall be mentioned here in passing. A look at the last page of *Bausteine zur Geopolitik* (p. 349) is enough to clarify that Herwig's argument is wrong because the editors of the volume explain there that the book contains new as well as extensively revised articles.

In the section of his book in which Herwig discusses Haushofer's anti-democratic leanings, he mentions (on p. 138) Haushofer's severe criticism of "a *Reichstag* consisting of thirty-seven self-serving parties." As in other cases, the overall direction of Herwig's criticism of Haushofer is correct, but the details are problematic. Here, it remains entirely unclear what Herwig had in mind when talking about 37 political parties in the *Reichstag*. A look at the election results of the Weimar years (i. e., between June 1920 and March 1933) shows that on average little more than a dozen parties were represented in the *Reichstag*.[30]

At various times, Herwig also contradicts himself. Haushofer got 250 RM per semester for his lectures and seminars at Munich's Ludwig-Maximilians-University from 1919 to 1939. He lived on his military pension (around 9.500 RM per year) as a retired major general. According to Herwig (p. 139), Haus-hofer got these "250 RM per semester for books" only after gaining the title of full professor in 1933, which is wrong. Herwig finally confuses his readers on page 165, where he refers to "forty semesters [obviously 1919-39] of unpaid teaching at the university". While this is close to the truth, because Haushofer made his small remuneration available to the department to buy books (for it would have been deducted from his state pension[31]) obviously, Herwig's argument on page 139 somehow contradicts his statement on page 165.

Even concerning Hitler's anti-Semitism, Herwig's narrative is misleading. On page 154, Herwig states that Hitler began "to drop his guard" only after the Berlin Olympics in 1936. That sounds apologetic considering the sacking of most Jewish state officials as early as mid-1933 and the proclamation of the Nuremberg Race Laws in September 1935.

Another example of Herwig's statements being close but not close enough to the truth can be found in chapter seven, where Herwig refers to the last direct encounter between Haushofer and Hitler in Rudolf Hess' Munich home in November 1938. According to Herwig, Haushofer "referred to that day

[28] Why the book features nearly 90 unnumbered footnotes along with its roughly 500 endnotes remains unclear. Mixing these two systems is confusing. One potential explanation would be that Herwig added the footnotes when he revised his nearly finished late twentieth century draft of the book.

[29] While Herwig mixes up "der" and "zur" on page 122, on page 235 (note 25), he uses the correct title.

[30] A closer look at the last free elections during the Weimar Republic, in November 1932, shows that the five biggest parties gained 538 (92%) of the 584 parliamentary seats. The next three parties got 36 seats, leaving a mere eight seats for the smallest six parties. That means that 14 out of over 50 parties that entered the election were represented in the *Reichstag*, with the most significant five parties exercising political power.

[31] See Jacobsen, 1979/I, p. 167.

as the final and irreparable break with Hitler", which is not wrong, but Herwig's statement that Haushofer did so "for the rest of his life" seems to indicate the years 1938 to 1946.[32] Thought through, this would mean a well-known person married to a "half-Jewish" wife would walk around in Nazi-Germany talking about his own "final and irreparable break with Hitler." Obviously, that was not what Haushofer did. To the contrary, he never mentioned this episode until it became clear that Nazi-Germany would lose the war. That means that Haushofer kept silent as long as a "final and irreparable break with Hitler" would have hurt him and his family but started to mention it at a time when such a relationship with the Nazi leadership seemed to offer a way off the hook.[33]

Haushofer, Russia and East Asia

When Herwig analyzes Haushofer's view of other nations, he does not take into account the contemporary political situation of Germany after World War I. How could Haushofer have continued to praise the USSR (p. 156) with the Nazi government declaring Communism the No. 1 (or No. 2 – after the Jews) enemy of the Third Reich? This lack of consideration of the circumstances is one of the general flaws of Herwig's book. It is also unclear what Herwig means when he referred to the "Russian-Japanese treaty of friendship" of 1929 that according to him was "at least momentarily ending the tripartite dispute over the Manchurian Chinese Eastern Railway" (p. 156). In 1925, Japanese-Soviet diplomatic relations were (re-)established, and in 1928 a fisheries agreement was concluded. In 1929, a brief armed conflict between China and the USSR ended with a peace treaty that more or less restored the status quo. Judging from the contents of what Herwig says about the "treaty of friendship", this treaty comes closest, meaning that Herwig might have mixed up China and Japan here.

Some mistakes indicates that the World War I expert Herwig moves on thin ice when analyzing events of the interwar era and even more so when it comes to East Asian affairs in general and Haushofer's relation with Japan in particular. This even applies to his introduction of some of the most famous leaders of Japan during the Meiji Era (1868-1912). Different from what Herwig claims, Yamagata Aritomo was no "member of the powerful Chōshū daimyo house."[34] Unlike Yamagata, Itō Hirobumi, another famous leader of Meiji Japan, did not have any military background although Herwig describes him as "general" on page 170.

Deciphering Japanese codenames used within the Haushofer family for various Nazi leaders such as Adolf Hitler (*O-Daijin*) or Ribbentrop (*Taish[i]kan*) is, of course, difficult without knowing Japanese, but this only explains—not excuses—the mistakes Herwig makes on page 157. The usual translation of *daijin* is "government minister". The prefix *O* can either have a purely honorific meaning or it could stand for "big" or "great".[35] According to Herwig, *daijin* means "a rich man who uses money generously". If that were correct, one might ask why Haushofer would use this term for Hitler.
Taishi means ambassador and would have been an appropriate codename for Ribbentrop, who was Ambassador-Plenipotentiary at Large since June 1935. Nevertheless, the Haushofer family used the less appropriate term *Taish[i]kan* [embassy].[36]
Herwig mistranslates the term as "court official", which might look appropriate at first glance because of the "von" in Ribbentrop's surname. However, Ribbentrop's nobility was not hereditary.[37]

On page 157-158, Herwig's description of Haushofer's "pro-Japanese" activities is exaggerated.[38] In June 1935, Haushofer co-organized a visit

[32] Herwig, 2016, pp. 162-163.
[33] Spang, 2013, describes and analyzes the whole episode in some detail on pp. 444-446, and also mentions it on p. 372.
[34] Herwig, 2016, p. xv. In fact, Yamagata came from the Chōshū feudal domain (located at the southwestern tip of the Japanese main island of Honshū) but was—like most Meiji-leaders—initially a lower-ranked samurai without any direct connection with the Mori clan, the local dynasty.
[35] Without knowing which kanji (written character) the Haushofer family had in mind, it is impossible to decide either way.
[36] Generally, the suffix "kan" stands either for "building" or any bureaucrat or official. See, for example, "shidōkyō-kan" [academic advisor].
[37] Ribbentrop "earned" his "von" when his aunt, Gertrud von Ribbentrop, adopted him. The actual adoption contract of May 15, 1925, is available at the BA Koblenz, Nachlass N 1163, Vol. 13.

by Ambassador Mushakōji Kintomo and other Japanese diplomats to Munich (including a trip to the German Alps) but not "a tour of Germany" as Herwig claims. While Haushofer most likely did play some behind-the-scenes role regarding the early stages of the Anti-Comintern Pact negotiations, he did not "set up secret talks between Ribbentrop and Military Attaché Ōshima Hiroshi." Haushofer knew Ōshima and Ribbentrop, but the only known secret meeting that happened at Haushofer's home (on 7 April 1934) brought together Rudolf Hess (not Ribbentrop) and the Japanese Navy (not Army) Attaché, Yendō Yoshikazu.[39]

Without any reference, it also remains doubtful if one can say that Haushofer "orchestrated formal government meetings at Tokyo's embassy in Berlin" (p. 158) three times in 1935. Concerning Japan as well as the *Sudetenland* (Western Czechoslovakia), Herwig twice used the same term, calling Haushofer's involvement "more than simply the role of 'honest broker'" (p. 158). Regardless of the level of Haushofer's involvement, the term is misleading because an "honest broker" is someone who has no personal interest in the outcome of negotiations. Haushofer conversely had been calling for close German-Japanese relations since 1913 and engaged himself heavily in favor of Germans living abroad. If Haushofer's role was as crucial as Herwig indicates, one wonders why Herwig does not elaborate on this topic in more detail.

Conclusion

Even though Herwig's book appeared only after David T. Murphy's recent article about the myth of Karl Haushofer, Murphy's description of the long-lasting influence of allied propaganda hits the nail on the head concerning *The Demon of Geopolitics*. Murphy concluded that "hysterical wartime popularizers […] presented Haushofer as the eminence grise behind Hitler's foreign-policy maneuvers […]. And this wartime narrative inspired the interpretational paradigm which endures, in admittedly less sensational hues, to the present" (2014, p. 14).[40]

In terms of basic academic requirements, *The Demon of Geopolitics* fails to provide a systematically structured reference section, which makes it at times difficult to understand the notes as well. To make matters more confusing, Herwig uses foot- and endnotes, without any explanation of this very unusual approach. The book contains various avoidable simple mistakes such as claiming that Karl Haushofer had two brothers, while in fact he had only one, or saying that Haushofer cooperated with the *Reichswehr* for years, while the (hyper-) inflation in Germany ended this cooperation after about 12 months. Some of Herwig's hypotheses lack the necessary historical basis and often contradict the latest findings of other scholars in the field, which is not surprising given the fact that Herwig not only ignored most recent Haushofer-related research but also overlooked some important sources (such as the Haushofer diaries) as well as early 20th century writings. The glossary of German words and the translation of the Japanese cover terms reveal some language problems as well.

The type of mistakes in Herwig's book makes them difficult to decipher for those who do not already fully know the Haushofer story. An otherwise balanced review of Herwig's book written by Professor Dr. Catherine A. Epstein of Amherst College is an excellent case in point because Epstein concludes her review as follows: "Although Herwig occasionally refers to works published in the 1960s and 1970s as 'recent', this is a solid biography, carefully researched and free of major errors or omissions." While the implicit criticism of the first part of this quote seems appropriate, the judgment of Herwig's work as "solid", "carefully researched" and most of all "free of major errors or omissions" looks out of tune with the findings of the detailed scrutiny of *The Demon of Geopolitics* above. This kind of review makes Herwig's book so distressing. If even history professors do not see the problems, how can "normal" readers be expected to find them?

Herwig's book is in many ways a retrograde step compared with the latest Haushofer-related research, which Herwig has chosen to ignore. In

[38] Herwig, 2016, p. 157, claims the following: "Beginning with […] April 1934, a steady stream of Japanese ambassadors, attachés, admirals and generals arrived in Munich." While Japanese representatives sporadically visited Haushofer, their number and frequency does by no means warrant the description "a steady stream". By using this far exaggerated description, Herwig is misleading his readers.

[39] See Jacobsen, 1979/I, pp. 341, 364, 474. In German, Endō usually wrote his surname as "Yendo".

[40] Murphy, 2014, p. 14.

fact, Herwig's narration gets more trustworthy and conclusive the further the story gets away from Haushofer (and Japan). For a book that claims to inform the reader "how Karl Haushofer 'educated' Hitler and Hess", this is an indictment.

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[41] An asterisk after the author's surname indicates those works of recent scholarship (published before the release of *The Demon of Geopolitics*) that are not mentioned by Herwig. For a comprehensive reference list of works until 2012/13 see Spang, 2013, pp. 752-937.

[42] Although the manuscript was ready for publication, it was never printed. A Xerox copy of the galley proofs is available at the library of Hokkaidō University, Sapporo. The author is indebted to Dr. Wolfgang Bauer (then of Sapporo), who provided a complete copy of the book.

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