

HITLER'S WAR POETS

Jay W. Baird comes to grips with a theme that has been generally avoided by more than two generations of scholars and literary critics. He argues that German literature did not end with the advent of Hitler in 1933 only to be reborn after the fall of the Third Reich in 1945. Baird demonstrates how poets and writers responded enthusiastically to Hitler's summons to artists to create a cultural revolution commensurate with the political radicalism of the new state, thereby affirming the centrality of renewed German culture.

Hitler's War Poets focuses on the lives and the works of six leading conservative, anticommunist, yet revolutionary authors who articulated the dream of World War I veterans to form a socially just national community. Tradition was redrawn by Rudolf G. Binding, whereas Josef Magnus Wehner dramatized the link from Flanders Fields and Verdun to the Third Reich. Hans Zöberlein exalted anti-Semitism, the Free Corps, and Nazi violence, providing the counterpoint to Edwin Erich Dwinger, who launched an unrelenting assault against "Jewish-Bolshevism." The torch was passed to Eberhard Wolfgang Möller, the leading bard of the revolutionary young generation. But it was Kurt Eggers, a tank commander in the Fifth SS Panzer Division "Viking," who delighted Hitler as he appeared as a prophet bearing the testament of Nietzsche's Zarathustra. Taken together, these authors offered the regime significant support. More important, theirs was a tragic legacy because they provided aesthetic accompaniment to Nazi barbarism and ultimately to the Holocaust.

Jay W. Baird is Professor of History Emeritus at Miami University in Ohio. He has also taught at Stanford University and Pomona College and was a visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge in 1997 and 2004. His previous books include *To Die for Germany* (1990), *The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda, 1939–1945* (1977), and the edited volume *From Nuremberg to My Lai* (1974). He served as president of the German Studies Association from 1993 to 1995 and was recognized by the Holocaust Educational Foundation for distinguished contributions to Holocaust education in 2006.

Hitler's War Poets

Literature and Politics in the Third Reich

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*To the memory of my beloved sister, Nancy Baird Rudolph
(1933–2001), and for my brother, Jeffrey Ross Baird, one of
the world's most generous men*

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Abbreviations

BAB	Bundesarchiv Berlin
BHSA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv
BDM	Bund deutscher Mädel
DLAM	Deutsches Literaturarchiv (Marbach)
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische deutsche Arbeiterpartei
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht
RKK	Reichskulturkammer
SD	Sicherheitsdienst