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partie de la solde de ses troupes et injecter 12 tonnes d'or. Dépenses couvertes en majeure partie par les spoliations complètes des juifs déportés de Salonique, de Crète, Rhodes et Kos. Si les deux tiers du budget de guerre allemand proviennent du pillage des autres pays, le Reich procède aussi à des emprunts massifs, notamment par la conversion de 40 millions de livrets d'épargne en bons du Trésor. En 1945 la dette s'élève à 222 milliards de RM. Charge fiscale néanmoins deux fois moindre que celle de la Grande-Bretagne. Toutefois ces méthodes de financement ne pouvaient réussir qu'avec la victoire du Reich.

De cette analyse riche en statistiques, l'auteur déduit que le consensus majoritaire ne reposait pas sur une conviction idéologique mais qu'il était acheté en permanence par une corruption systématique de bienfaits sociaux aux dépens des »étrangers« au peuple.

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Bernhard R. KROENER, »Der starke Mann im Heimatkriegsgebiet«. Generaloberst Friedrich Fromm. Eine Biographie, Paderborn (Ferdinand Schöningh) 2004, 1060 p., ISBN 3-506-71734-0, EUR 59,90.

Biography is again an approved medium of historiography, after intervening decades of a preference for social-history. But historians writing biographies today conscientiously incorporate social history, and this monumental work is an excellent example of the method. Kroener explores his subject's social origin, socialisation, education, professional social context, as well as the public perception of Fromm. This perception has been concentrated upon Fromm's role on 20 July 1944 as Commander-in-Chief Home Army during the uprising led by his Chief of Staff, Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg. Kroener seeks to understand the man within his entire social context, and as a human being with childhood experiences, sensitivities, emotions, ambitions, family ties, weaknesses and a touch of greatness. Kroener's book is a compendium of social conditions at the various stages of Fromm's career, and of many aspects of military developments in terms of doctrine, training, technology, and mentality. The dominant and untiringly repeated themes are the characterisation of the officer corps as a social elite with its own mentality and standards of behaviour, and the author's need to explain Fromm's actions in the days before and on the fateful 20 July 1944. In terms of biography, Kroener's goal is »to measure the space available to individual options for action« (p. 17). Reaching beyond that, Kroener seeks to explain the behaviour of German officers in general during the Second World War on the basis of their »hermetic education« and socialisation in the Wilhelmine Empire, and on the basis of their experiences during and after the First World War (p. 89, 97).

Kroener's plan for a biography of Fromm arose from his contributions to the German history of the Second World War, »Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg«, in which Kroener treated the structural issues of German Army personnel mobilisation. In his introduction he explains that the historian must decide whether to pursue the evidences of long-term social changes and their cultural expressions and perceptions, or to attempt to reconstruct an individual life within the historical process (p. 17). Kroener decided to do both. Modern biography, he says, treats an historical personage as an integral part of its historical environment and an actor within its social group. Conversely, he declares the frame of reference for his biography to be »the extent and influence of the Army's organisation in the changing history of the German military high-command structure« (p. 18). It is thus as much a history of the German armed forces as a biography of Fromm.

Friedrich Fromm was born in 1888. His father was an artillery officer of modest origins who had a very good career, reached general rank, and played a significant role in the development of the artillery and its growing technological refinement and importance in the accelerating arms race before 1914. Kroener invests a good deal of his vast erudition into

outlining this development, and into demonstrating the concurrent and growing interrelationship of the military administration with the armaments industry.

The child Fritz Fromm soon found it difficult to meet the expectations of his father and of his class-specific («hermetic») education. Kroener discerns the tensions between the demands of the authoritarian father figure, and the growing self-doubt in the young boy who reacted with the wish to fulfill his father's expectations and with «extreme insecurity» (p. 49). He seeks to understand and to explain, balancing empathy with critical scrutiny. Kroener acknowledges in the case of Fromm, that the «phenomenon of duplicity, the art of dissembling, perhaps also of perfidy, may occur when a person is subjected to an education whose demands, for whatever reasons, the person cannot meet» (p. 50); «an education to humanity and openness to the world was denied him» (p. 105); Fromm did not learn to perceive wrong and evil (p. 105). In the post-First-World-War environment of the Versailles-Treaty regime which German patriots saw as unjust, illegal behaviour in violation of the Treaty was internalised as a «national obligation» (p. 109). It was practised in the formation of extra-legal military and paramilitary organisations and clandestine re-armament efforts, and in denying confidence and support if not loyalty to the national government (p. 122, 127, 133, 150–157, 169ff.). It may be doubted, however, whether Army officers after 1918 believed the Stab-in-the-Back legend as generally as Kroener suggests. Those in officer training in the 1920s were not taught that German victory in the war had been sabotaged at home, but that the war had been lost militarily. Fromm in any case learned to hide his emotions, to repress and manage his emotions to the extent of displaying coldness (p. 52); he became introverted (p. 105), he had a «flexibility bordering on opportunism» (p. 106). Fromm came «to master the art of dissembling» (p. 99). He became increasingly ambitious, arrogant and condescending toward his simpler comrades (p. 66), and he displayed the behaviour of a member of the exclusive and superior social class of military officers (p. 70–82). And he tended to orient himself to the authoritarian «leader state» (Führerstaat) (p. 59).

By the summer of 1927 Fromm, now a major, worked in an important position in the Defence Office (Wehramt), and by February 1928 in the Ministry of Defence (Reichswehrministerium) (p. 176). In 1933 he was a colonel and Chief of the Defence Office, and on 3 February 1933 he was among those listening to Hitler outlining his plans for re-armament and a war of expansion in the East (p. 193, 199). Fromm became one of the chief architects of German re-armament, competing for control of re-armament with the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, General Ludwig Beck (p. 217–219), and until 1934 also with the SA, and afterwards with the SS (p. 225–232). In 1939, now at the rank of general (General der Artillerie), he became Commander-in-Chief Home Army and Chief of Army Armaments. In 1936, 1941, and 1942 Fromm warned that Hitler's policies were stretching the capacities of the armed forces beyond their limits and would lead to disaster (p. 254–261). Fromm's August 1936 memorandum coincided with Hitler's memorandum on the Second Four Year Plan, which took a position diametrically opposed to Fromm's. Kroener, without any doubt the leading expert on German land-army armaments, found no causal nexus between the two memoranda (p. 259).

In the course of his researches, Kroener has turned up some rather surprising and by no means minor details. Fromm's vigorous protests against the continuation of the war in 1941 are not widely known. His pessimistic forecasts of 1936, 1941 and 1942 raise the question of whether Fromm acted upon his knowledge and insight: what professional ethos kept him loyal to Hitler although he knew of the dictator's crimes, and although he knew that Hitler was leading Germany into catastrophe with ever-increasing speed? How well suited were Fromm and his fellow-officers to making the choice between moral integrity and professional loyalty? Here Kroener allows the flaws in Fromm's character to unfold. Fromm's half-hearted attempt on 20 July 1944 to balance moral integrity and professional loyalty collapsed. Fromm had been aware of what Stauffenberg and his friends were planning, he

had agreed with their aim, but a number of considerations made the risks seem to him too great. For one, his authority had become eroded perhaps not so much in consequence of his unwelcome warnings, and in consequence of cabals within Hitler's inner circle, as because of the realities against which he had warned: mobilisation and armaments could not compensate the losses suffered by the German armies, most recently as a result of the Soviet offensive against Army Group Centre in June 1944. Even before 20 July 1944, SS Leader Heinrich Himmler was given powers and authority that rightfully belonged to Fromm for the raising and training of stop-gap replacements for the eastern front (»blocking divisions«). Fromm sympathised with the aims of Stauffenberg's insurgency group, and he had observed but not hindered their preparations (p. 711), only he did not support their method. But he had half-silently become a part of Stauffenberg's plans, and he knew it. On 20 July 1944, he could not bring himself to take one or the other side in the coup. Kroener writes that Fromm did not wish to become a martyr. Confronted by determined insurgents who held a pistol to his stomach, Fromm accepted the humiliation of being detained by junior officers, and for a time he failed to resume control when he might have done so. He let the conspirators try to take control of the Home Army, and to seize control of the government, although he knew that Hitler had survived Stauffenberg's assassination attack. Only when it was clear that Stauffenberg's coup was collapsing, Fromm regained command long enough to have four of the coup leaders summarily shot, before he was himself taken into custody by the regime. He was convinced that a change of course was urgent but he did not want to support the conspirators' violent approach, hoping to find another way, perhaps together with Armaments Minister Albert Speer.

In dramatic post-coup machinations and in a farcical trial, Fromm was condemned to death. Kroener analyses the reasons, as well as this can be done on the basis of the available sources, why the authorities went into bizarre contortions to convict Fromm. A strong strain of reluctance and hesitation is to be detected here. Fromm, after all, was the only high-ranking and prominent general to be given a trial without incontrovertible evidence of his involvement in the coup being available. Fieldmarshal Günther von Kluge and Brigadier Henning von Tresckow committed suicide, General Carl-Heinrich von Stülpnagel was overwhelmed by evidence against him and admitted guilt by attempting suicide (he blinded himself and was hanged afterward), Fieldmarshal Erwin Rommel was forced by threats against his family to commit suicide. Fromm's suspected treachery was clearly an embarrassment to the regime.

In the end, Fromm's flexibility and »art of dissembling« did not save him. Kroener (p. 731): »What separated Fromm from the protagonists of the Resistance until shortly before his death was the complete lack of any consideration that the uprising must aim to re-establish the majesty of justice and human dignity«.

Fromm was, until Kroener wrote his biography, the only major actor in the events of 20 July 1944 whose role in them had not been clarified. Now the reader can follow the events of the July days in fascinating detail, based on many new or untapped sources, and above all from the perspective of Fromm and many of his staff officers who were not initiators or supporters of Stauffenberg's insurrection. The reviewer hesitates to add minor critical comments upon such a massive accomplishment. Lacking a chronological table of Fromm's career, the reader must search for these data where they are tucked away in the narrative, not always in chronological sequence (p. 193, 195, 199). There are remarkably few typographical errors, but why the name of Colonel Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim is consistently rendered »Merz« remains a mystery. At times the mass of the evidence, and long and convoluted sentences threaten to sink the narrative. But Kroener has produced a monumental work of erudition full of fascinating information, detail and insight.

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