



Erik Jan Hanussen: Hitler's Jewish Clairvoyant

By Mel Gordon

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The first victim of the Holocaust also supported the Third Reich.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Erik Jan Hanussen psychic, hypnotist, astrologer, amateur detective and publisher of tabloids was born Herschmann-Chaim Steinschneider in 1889 in a Viennese jail cell and murdered in Berlin in 1933 on the orders of SA officers who owed him money. His remarkable life is the subject of Berkeley professor Mel Gordon's *Erik Jan Hanussen: Hitler's Jewish Clairvoyant*, a fascinating account of Hanussen's many activities, many names and many lovers, supplemented by excerpts from Hanussen's writings and scores of illustrations (publicity posters, Hitler's astrological chart and advertisements for Hanussen's Sex Creme, for example). Hanussen's association with Hitler, which began when he predicted the future fehrer would rule Germany, was very brief, but Gordon does a good job of exploring this baffling alliance.

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From Library Journal

Gordon (theater arts, Berkeley) provides a detailed reconstruction of the career of the shadowy figure Erik Jan Hanussen. An Austrian Jew who went through several stage names during his adult life, Hanussen is chiefly remembered as the clairvoyant who held s ances for Hitler and who was murdered by the Nazis in 1933. Gordon has assembled an impressive amount of material reconstructing not only the details of Hanussen's life but also how he marketed himself as a magician, psychic, and occultist. In the process, the reader learns a great deal about the underworld of central European carnivals, magic stage shows, and in particular the spiritualism that gained prominence after the Great War. Although his reconstruction of Hanussen's life is impressive, Gordon is on less firm ground historically, making several small errors (e.g., he refers to the Hapsburgs as the "Duo-Monarchy"). In addition, his thesis that Hitler was unelectable in 1932 until Hanussen's involvement changed the course of history is one few historians are likely to back. Recommended with reservations for public and specialized libraries. Frederic Krome, Jacob Rader Marcus Ctr. of the American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati

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From [Booklist](#)

Will readers ever know enough about Hitler and the Nazis, who fomented a world war and made genocide a household word? Not without perusing Gordon's generously illustrated study, they won't. Hitler's obsession with the occult and hatred for the Jews are well-known and documented, so it is ambivalently surprising that his favorite clairvoyant was Jewish. Hanussen, the "Prophet of the Third Reich," got his start working carnivals and the Middle European equivalent of vaudeville. He built up his reputation by consulting the police, arguably successfully, in some notorious cases. Like the far more celebrated Aleister Crowley, he propounded an odd mixture of radical politics and belief in the paranormal. Apprised of his Jewish lineage, the Nazis assassinated Hanussen in 1933, but not before he had enjoyed a run at the top of the Fuhrer's regime. An intriguing schemer, Hanussen seems a character who could have come to prominence only when and where he did. Consider his story a footnote to history but essential for those who never stop wondering what motivated the Nazis. *Mike Tribby*

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