

Hitler Was an Optimist

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This first piece for the New Year lies in the shadow of all ill-fated prior New Year's resolutions.

True, history doesn't provide a record of Adolph Hitler's resolutions – *if he ever made any*. The non-blonde, non-blue-eyed Aryan was good at being evil, no doubt about it. For most of us, our hopes for the new year must pale in comparison to that man's intense, diabolical ambitions. Few of us have the nearly unstoppable drive to rally millions of countrymen behind our ideas. This is probably a good thing.

From what I know, the Austrian's resume only showed, "part-time watercolor artist and occasional house painter," previous to "potentially capable dictator." I can't help imagining his spotty workmanship, brush in hand, while his mind drifted in and out of world domination daydreams. *I'm better than this house painting shtick. And I could make good use of a bigger brush! More paint, gallons and gallons of it! I should own ten painting companies. Why, I could run the whole country, that's what I'll do...and, and, then, why not the whole world after that?*

Enter homeowner: "Ahh, Adolph, the trim around the living room windows needs a better going over. Also, my wife says you are painting too slow; need to speed it up—remember we have a dinner party tomorrow night."

Hitler: "Yah, yah! Paintin' be dun!"

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The new year lies before us with good, bad and plenty of in-between circumstances. For many, optimism is a rabid animal needing to be hunted down and shot. For others, optimism is something to step over and not get any on our feet. For millions, it is an exotic delicacy found only in fast paced, first-world, Western countries. For us, in such countries, optimism is said to be easily satiated by purchasing something, perhaps shown on the next television commercial.

At mankind's original and New Year's Eve, Adam and Eve were the first to play their OPTIMISM cards. The talking snake, (whom I hesitate to label as a salesman, reason being it wasn't human and it might've been a girl snake) played the first, "Guys! YOU'VE GOT POTENTIAL" card. In effect, the "Go on and eat the fruit!" amounted to a dirt cheap commercial promoting forbidden produce. Captivated by the first-ever sales pitch, Eve played the OPTIMISM card and took a chew. Whether a tag-along spouse, a slouch, or just had a lot on his mind, Adam quickly tossed in his card and took a bite. I do want to point out that though this might smack of impulse shopping in our minds, these two people didn't even know what shopping was. One moment the desirable fruit was unavailable, the next—on sale. What would you do?

Too, too soon, as Benjamin Franklin put it (thousands of years later), "the bitterness of poor quality remains long after the sweetness of low price is forgotten." The two naked gardeners found

themselves with a serious problem. They decided to play their only remaining OPTIMISM cards - hoping that strung together leaves and vines would not only sufficiently cover their nakedness, but the impromptu creativity of fashion impress the Creator.

He jovially arrived for a visit on New Year's Day. Ever since then, we descendants find ourselves rarely handling a squirming devious snake (let's avoid politics here) but rather, the squirming element of what "we" could be. Potential, relentlessly vies for position on the see-saw of self-esteem. Adam and Eve first birthed this awkward child which grows up on the playground of life. Now I wonder as another year is added to mankind, just when the long-awaited recess bell will ring and we can go out and play?

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Achtung! Back to Hitler. New Year's resolutions for Hitler most likely amounted to which country he'd invade and how many Jews to capture and annihilate. Perhaps he desired to be "more ruthless"? I think January 1st made an optimist out of the angry, belligerent, aggressive dictator. On New Year's Eve he toasted to victory on all fronts, faithful generals who didn't question him, and the countless ever-growing numbers of obedient underlings. With a smile on his miniature broom moustache face, I think he raised a cup of peppermint schnapps with cheer...not knowing the doom which awaited him. *Auf Wiedersehen!*