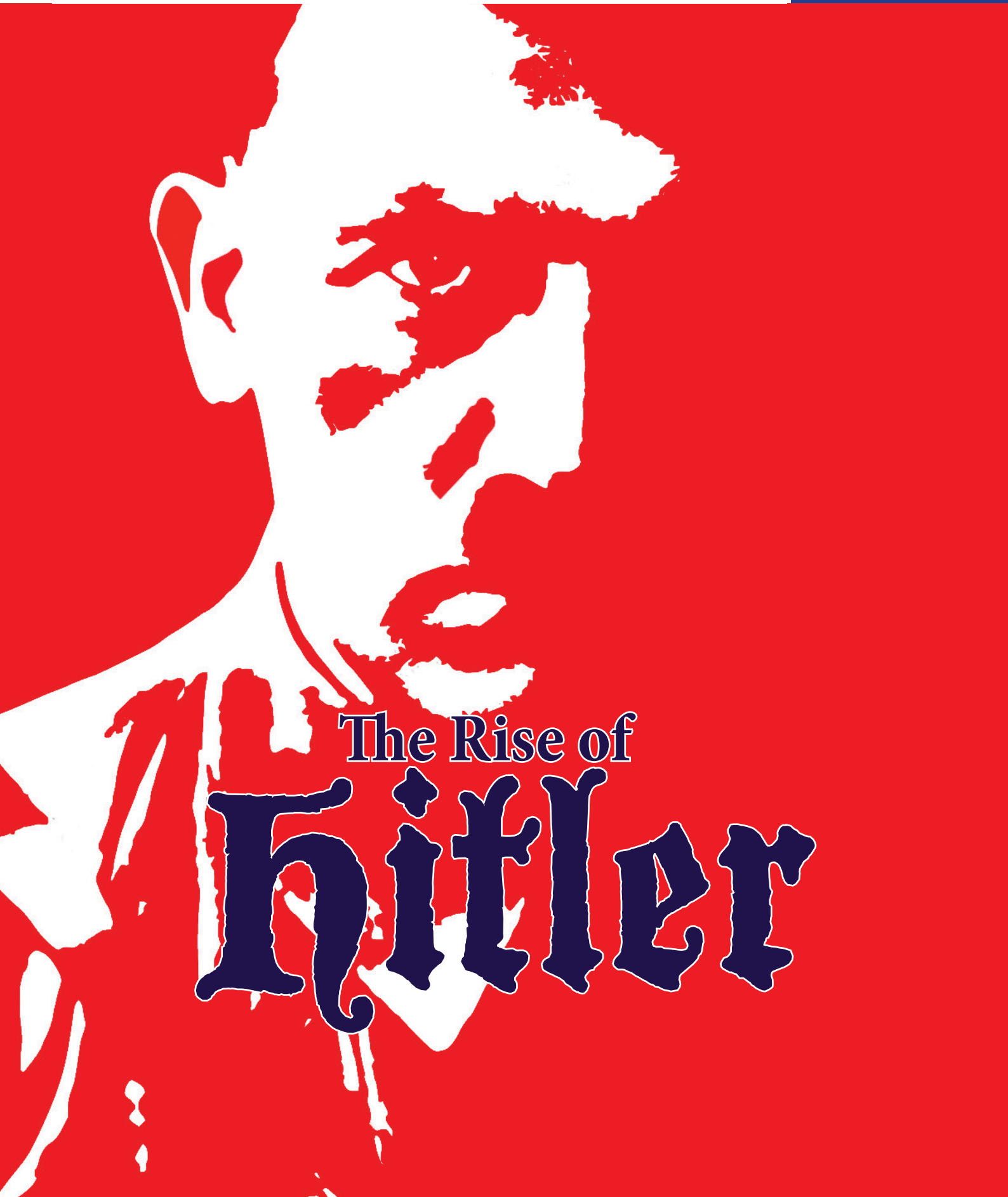


Retro Times

Yesterday's News Reimagined

Special
Supplement



The Rise of

Hitler

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Germany, 1932. Can German Democracy Survive?

Private political armies, often made up of unemployed and angry ex-army personnel, roam at will through our streets fighting pitched battles to promote what they see as the solution to the mess that is now Germany. Amongst the major private armies there are the Independent Socialists and the Reichsbanner (Red Front) on the left, and Hitler's SA on the right. After the armistice, the Imperial Army had 2.7 million men under arms ready to deal with any communist-inspired uprisings but failed to do so in Kiel, Munich and Berlin. Instead, the Imperial Army relied on volunteer 'Free Corps' troops, many of whom had divided loyalties, to do their job for them. Writer Peter Merkl has described the Free Corps as "young men with no political program, no convictions, trained only to march and fight endlessly, even senselessly, spoiled for such pedestrian, bourgeois pursuits as holding down a job and raising a family, the pathetic products of the war experience".¹ It is to such men that Germany entrusted its fledgling democracy. The failure of the Imperial Army to effectively deal with the rise of communist-inspired private armies led to the rise of extreme right opposition armies, principally the SA. To make matters worse, the Imperial Army is itself divided into pro-left and pro-right factions, and the democratic centre of German politics is rapidly disappearing. If the hyper-level of unemployment and the rioting of the unemployed being quelled by an over-zealous police force is added to the mix, it is hard to ignore the conclusion that Germany has descended into a largely lawless state, with ultra-violence being the only form of debate. The one unifying feature of both the extreme left and extreme right political factions is that they are both opposed to the democracy of the Weimar Republic. They seek parliamentary seats only to destroy the state

from within and bring about a German dictatorship based on their particular political ideology. If democracy in Germany survives in any recognisable form for another year it will be a miracle.² But the marauding private armies are not the root of the problem. There is the question of the reasons for Germany's democracy existing in the first place.

The Weimar Republic, the first attempt at a democracy in German, is thought by many to have come into being not through any desire for democracy, but as a counter to communist attempts to bring about a soviet-style government. Political commentator Kurt Sontheimer said, "Above all, the political parties no less than the bulk of the German people" lack "a positive attitude towards the values and virtues of liberal democracy."³ Could the Weimar experiment be doomed to failure because, although it may have seemed a good idea at the time of its creation nobody really wanted it? Journalist Konrad Heiden suggests that an intrinsic weakness of the Weimar Republic is that it relies on coalitions of small parties that are "predisposed ... towards selfish battles of interest" which are likely to "exaggerate the severity of any internal or external crisis facing the Republic".⁴ Now the German people wait for the inevitable, a dictatorship. A dictatorship that will hopefully bring an end to the fighting, end unemployment and bring some hope of peace and prosperity to a nation wracked by poverty, deprivation and despair. Under existing conditions, any discussion on democracy, freedom and rights seem irrelevant to those who have nothing, to those seeking to feed and give shelter to their families, and to whom anyone who can bring some normality to a powerless and broken system will be a blessing. The question is 'who the saviour of the German people will be'?⁵



Anton Drexler. Locksmith and leader of the German Workers Party



Adolf Hitler. Army Education Officer



Captain Franz Mayr. Hitler's Spymaster

Workers' Discussion Group Forms Political Party

Retro Times. January 5, 1919

Today a small, extreme right-wing debating society of seven members headed by railway company locksmith, Anton Drexler and journalist, Karl Harrier, has become a political party calling itself the German Workers Party



(DAP).¹ The DAP has a democratic constitution with members electing an executive committee and a nationalistic anti-capitalist, anti-semitic agenda adopted. It is planned to arrange public meetings in beer halls to publicize the DAP's extreme-right views and attract new members.

German Workers' Party Recruits Star Performer

Retro Times, October 30, 1919

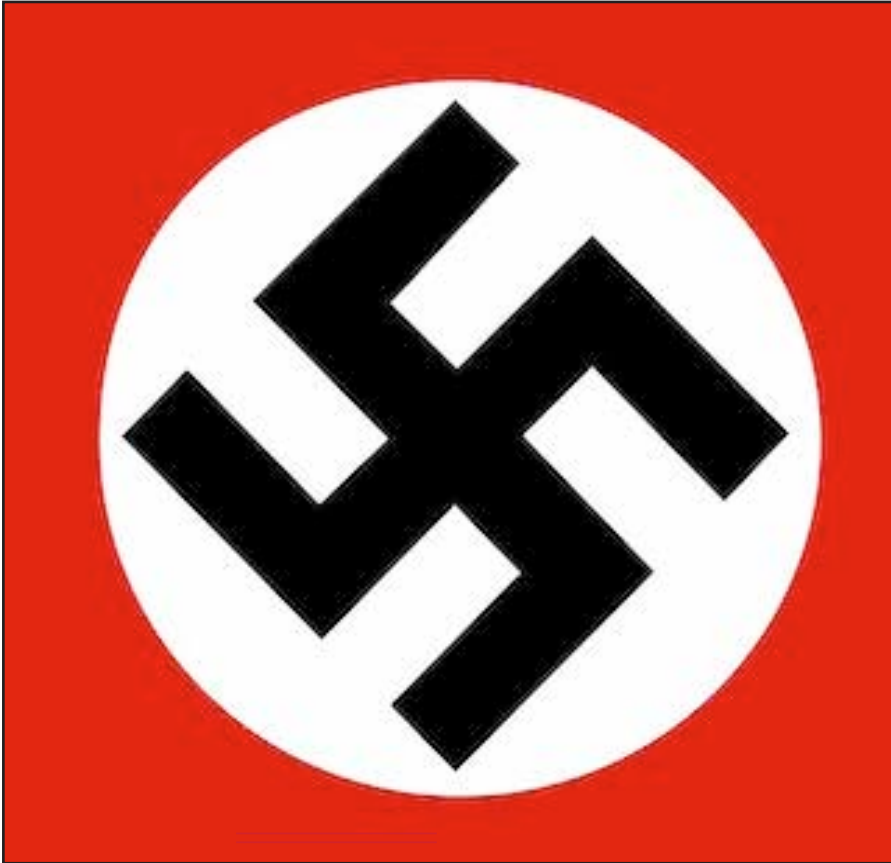
Army education officer Adolf Hitler was sent to spy on a public meeting of the German Workers' Party (DAP) held on September 12 and showed his oratory skills when he berated a guest speaker, (whom Hitler called 'Professor') Baumann. The first speaker, DAP crank economist Gottfried Feder, gave a lecture on 'interest slavery' after which Baumann questioned the soundness of Feder's arguments and proposed instead that Bavaria should "break away from Prussia and found a South German nation with Austria".¹ The power of Hitler's attack on Baumann resulted in Baumann leaving the meeting. Party chairman Anton Drexler spoke to Hitler after the meeting and later sent an invitation by mail requesting Hitler join the DAP. After obtaining permission from his superior, intelligence officer Captain Franz Mayr, Hitler joined the DAP whilst still serving in the German Army. Hitler has quickly become a star performer at DAP public meetings. Hitler has said he had been thinking of forming a political party along similar lines to the DAP and he joined to mould it into his own personal political party, but Frank McDonough² has said he (Hitler) was probably ordered to join by Captain Mayr (who had described Hitler as a tired stray dog looking for a master³) to promote the anti-socialist

agenda of the German Army. Stray dog he may be, but Mayr has recognised the value of Hitler and said, "Herr Hitler, for example, has become a motivating force, a popular speaker of the first rank."⁴ Observer Ian Kershaw commented that there was nothing new in Hitler's speeches: "It was less what he said than how he said it that counted,"⁵ adding: "Simple slogans, kindling the fires of anger, resentment and hatred were what worked" and these were a "vulgarized version of ideas that were in far wider circulation."⁶ Part of the appeal of Herr Hitler seems to be the eclectic nature of his rantings, moving from subject to subject with no clear focus except blaming Jews, 'perverts' and a multitude of other 'undesirables' for every ill existing within Germany. This 'something for everyone' approach in Hitler's speeches appeals to a wide range of diverse groups, giving them all someone to blame even if the groups in themselves have little in common. Hitler watcher Richard Morton suggests the National Socialist (Nazi) philosophy consists of "grafting all sorts of different fruits on the stem of a common crab-apple planted at the time of the first meetings in the beer house in Munich".⁷ Members of the audience may hear only part of Hitler's rantings, but it will be the part they want to hear.

HITLER Designs Flag

NAZI Party Born

Retro Times. February 1920



The German Workers' Party has changed its name to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) under the guidance of its chief of propaganda Adolf Hitler, who has also designed a new flag for the party. Hitler has been counselled by Dietrich Eckart to "not let anyone have a say in your propaganda ... you must have a perfectly free hand". Hitler understood this to mean "the person who conducted the propaganda would control the public attitude".¹ By creating the flag as "an emblem, a flag, a symbol" which would "appeal to the imagination of the masses" and provide a "striking banner to follow and fight under",² Hitler is creating a symbol of himself as being the party. The new Nazi flag is a black swastika on a white circle with a red background. The swastika is a hooked cross sacred to Buddhists and Hindus, and is a

Are Hitler's Oratory Skills Learned?

Retro Times. January 1920

Psychologist Walter Langer claims "Hitler took regular lessons in speaking and in mass psychology from a man named Hanussen," continuing that "he [Hanussen] was an extremely clever individual who taught Hitler a great deal concerning the importance of staging meetings to obtain the greatest dramatic effect."¹ This account seems possible because of the accounts of those who know Hitler as being far from the charismatic figure his oratory skills suggest. An American journalist, Dorothy Thompson, described Hitler as "formless, almost faceless, a man whose countenance is a caricature, a man whose framework seems cartilaginous, without bones. He is inconsequential and voluble, ill-poised, insecure. He is the very prototype of the 'Little Man'".² Whilst some find Hitler's gaze fatally hypnotising, others comment on his eyes as staring and dead. Another version

of Buddha's footprint for the Buddhist and, for Hindus, the sun and prosperity. The Hitler version of the swastika has also been rotated forty-five degrees from the Buddhist and Hindu versions and it is understood Herr Hitler used the swastika in the more general sense of good luck. A variation of the swastika, the sauvastika, is similar but with the hooks facing anti-clockwise instead of clockwise, and it has tantric meanings.³ Hitler said of his design: "In red we see the social ideas of the movement, in white the nationalistic idea, in the swastika the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man."⁴

of Hitler's dramatic rise in oratory skills is from commentator Konrad Heiden, who said Dietrich Eckart "undertook Adolf Hitler's spiritual guidance. From him Hitler learned to write and even speak, if by this he understood not merely spirited ranting but the forming of sentences and building up of a sequence of ideas".³ Somehow this strange little nothing man comes alive when he is standing behind a lectern.

Münchener Beobachter For Sale



Retro Times. December 10, 1920

The fight for control of bankrupt extreme right newspaper *Münchener Beobachter* (Munich Observer) has highlighted the different agendas of the Nazi Party. Nazi Party Chairman Anton Drexler proposes merging with the German Socialist Party (DSP) to acquire the *Beobachter*, and propaganda officer Adolf Hitler wants the Nazi Party as sole proprietor. Drexler has long been an advocate of cooperation with other right-wing political parties, whilst Hitler wants the Nazis to be the only right-wing political party. The planned (by Drexler) Nazi

merger with the DSP and acquisition of the *Beobachter* have been put on hold during the dispute between Drexler and Hitler. Yesterday Hitler threatened to withdraw as member of the party committee and as a member of the press committee. Although Hitler is not a member of the Nazi Party executive committee, he does have considerable influence as the charismatic principal speaker and 'front man' at Nazi Party rallies. The loss of their star orator and propaganda expert could result in considerable harm to the Nazi Party.¹

Nazis Buy Münchener Beobachter

Retro Times. December 17, 1920

The Nazi Party has purchased the *Münchener Beobachter* and renamed it the *Völkischer Beobachter* (*People's Observer*) to counter an offer for *Beobachter* by fringe economist Gottfried Feder. Feder is sympathetic to the Nazi cause and often speaks at Nazi meetings but is interested in the *Beobachter* only for its value in furthering the cause of secession of Bavaria from Germany. Ownership of *Völkischer Beobachter* gives the Nazi Party control over the information flow from all the many small right-wing political groups and the power to draw members from these groups into the Nazi fold.¹ The new *Beobachter* is to be published as a daily instead of the old twice-weekly format. There is speculation as to where the money to buy *Beobachter* came from, but credible sources suggest that it came from an army slush fund.²



Secessionist Gottfried Feder

First Issue of Völkischer Beobachter

Retro Times. December 25, 1920

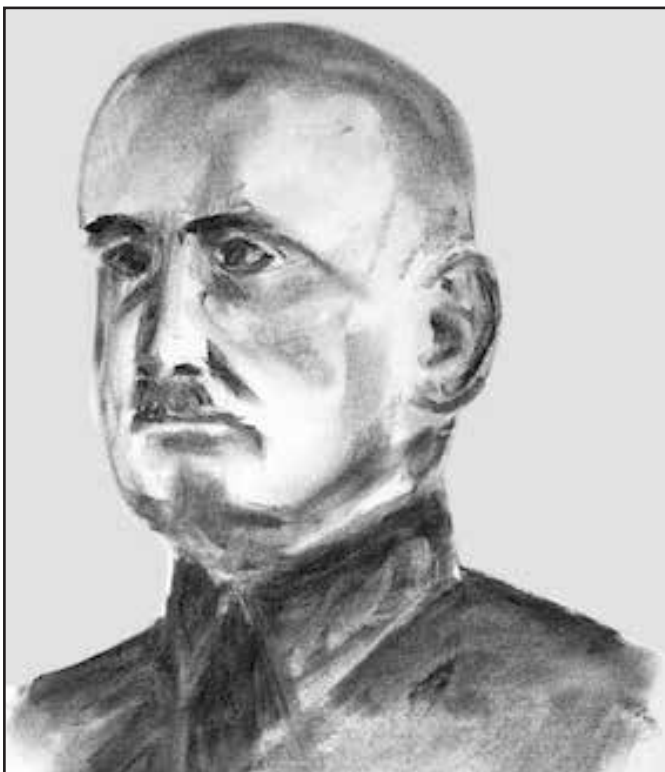
The first issue of the *Völkischer Beobachter* has the Christmas message on the front page: "Germans! Buy your Christmas gifts at German stores, but not from Jews or Jewish stores." As details of the financing of the Nazi takeover of the extreme right newspaper become known, there are questions being asked about the true nature of the Nazi Party and whether or not it was created and controlled by the German Army. These allegations have re-surfaced be-

cause a major financier of the Nazi acquisition is right-wing Bavarian Reichswehr army officer Colonel Franz Ritter von Epp. Colonel von Epp had access to a secret Reichswehr (army) slush fund that also funded the Nazi Party offices.¹ These allegations are made more plausible when it is remembered that prominent Nazi Adolf Hitler is said to have joined what was to become the Nazi Party when he was ordered to do so by Captain Franz Mayr when Hitler was still an education officer in the German Army.²



Retro Times. July 29, 1921

Adolf Hitler resigned from the Nazi Party because of internal fighting over a proposed merger of the Nazi Party with the larger German Socialist Party (DSP). His resignation has not been accepted. Hitler agreed to stay on the condition that he replaces Anton Drexler and the committee and is made party chairman with dictatorial powers, with the title of Führer. Professor Thomas Weber¹ said that Hitler had applied for membership of the DSP in 1919 but his membership had been rejected, and if the amalgamations had taken place Hitler would, at best, be reduced to having a minor role in the new organisation. The DSP was the creation of notorious Jew-baiter Julius Streicher, who was a rival and bitter enemy of Hitler.² Anton Drexler and his supporters have written and circulated a pamphlet that reads (in part): "His purpose is simply to use the National Socialist Party as a springboard for his own immoral purposes ... And how does he carry on this campaign? Like a Jew. He twists every fact ... Make no mistake. Hitler is a demagogue ... filling you up with all kinds of tales that are anything but the truth."³



Hitler's Rival Julius Streicher

Hitler Named Führer of Nazi Party

To weaken Hitler's position Drexler and the committee had attempted the amalgamation of the Nazi Party with the DSP whilst Hitler was on a fundraising trip to Berlin. Opposition to Hitler collapsed when it was realised that without their star performer the Nazi Party would not survive. The vote that made Hitler the Führer of the Nazi Party was passed with a vote of 543 for, and one against.

Nazis Re-organise Hall Protection Squad

Retro Times, August, 1921

The leader of the Nazi Party, Adolf Hitler, has renamed and reorganised the hall protection squad (Saalschutz), formed to suppress opponents at beer hall meetings, into the 'Gymnastics and Sports Division.'¹ The change in name has been prompted because of an Allied demand for a "more drastic and genuine disarmament of Freikorps",² or Freebooters (private armies). The name Gymnastics and Sports Section is designed to distance the organisation from any suggestion of 'protection'. The original hall protection squad was organised by ex-convict Emil Maurice.³ Opposition to Hitler's lectures in beer halls, with divisive titles such as Political Phenomena, Jews, and the Treaty of Versailles is guaranteed and actively provoke opposition, which is a major part of Nazi strategy. Hitler has modelled the Nazi Party on a small hardcore party membership of "inferior intellectual ability" chosen for their stupidity, who would blindly follow orders, and a large number of "adherents" useful for filling the halls.⁴ Nazi meetings are not dull and lifeless like bourgeois party meetings. Hitler says with pride that meetings are not peaceful, they are orchestrated; opponents are intimidated and disruption encouraged, and then the disruption is dealt with.⁵

Gymnastics and Sports Renamed Sturmabteilung (Storm Division or SA)

Retro Times. November 5, 1921

After yesterday's bloody battle with communists (Saalschlacht) the Nazi Party has renamed the Gymnastics and Sports Division the Sturmabteilung (Storm Division of SA). The 46 Nazis led by Rudolf Hess were outnumbered by the communists who would have won the fight if President Poehner's police had not assisted the Nazis. The Nazis claim that thousands of Marxists were thrown out of the Hofbräuhaus, but witness Alfred Vagts¹ says that there were probably less than 800 communists.²

Hitler Arrested after Nazis Attack on Political Rivals

Retro times. September 14, 1921

Adolf Hitler and Hermann Esser have been arrested after an attack by the Nazi SA on a meeting of the Bavarian League, political opponents of the Nazi Party.

Otto Ballerstedt, the leader of the league, has been severely injured. The SA and other Nazi supporters entered the Löwenbräukeller, where the meeting was being held, and demanded that Hitler speak instead of Otto Ballerstedt. When this was refused the Nazi attacked league supporters, dragged Ballerstedt off the stage and beat him, causing serious multiple injuries. After his arrest Hitler is reported to have said: "That's all right. We got what we wanted. Ballerstedt did not speak."¹

Nazis Continue to Violently Suppress Opposition

Retro Times. November 4, 1921

After serving only one month of a three-month sentence for his part in the attack on the Bavarian League in September this year, the Führer of the Nazi Party, Adolf Hitler, has once again used violence to suppress opposition to his political agenda. The SA silenced opposition to Hitler's speech at the Munich Hofbräuhaus after a brief but violent free-for-all. Violence as a political tool has become a dominant feature of the Nazi Party, which seems to be prepared to use any means to suppress opposition to its extreme nationalistic policies.¹

Birth of SA



Emil Maurice



Rudolf Hess

HITLER Coup Fails

German Army given Emergency Powers

Retro Times. September 26, 1923

Using the powers within the Constitution, the German President Friedrich Ebert has given executive powers to Minister of Defence Otto Gessler and army High Commander Hans von Seeckt to protect the Weimar Republic from threats of a coup d'état. Threats of a coup are coming from both the left and right of German politics, and it is feared one side might try to gain power by force before the other has a chance to do so. The result would be civil war and the destruction of a united Germany. It is seen by Ebert, Gessler and Seeckt as being essential



German High Commander Hans Von Seeckt

that the loyalty of the German Army, who have sections from both sides of politics, be firmly established as having one voice in protecting the democracy of the Weimar Republic.¹

Putsch (Coup) Fails to Overthrow German Government

Retro Times. November 10, 1923

The two-day long attempt by Nazi leader Adolf Hitler to overthrow the German Government by force has failed. When confronted by police gunfire in the streets of Munich, Hitler fled in a yellow motor car. The failed coup d'état began when Hitler brought 600 SA men and a machine gun to a large political meeting at the Munich Bürgerbräukeller where he (Hitler) jumped up onto a chair, fired a pistol into the air and shouted, "The National Revolution has begun" before ordering that nobody leave the hall. Hitler attempted to get the support of the local politicians at the meeting, but this was largely unsuccessful. Hitler had hoped that enlisting one of Germany's respected war heroes, General Erich Ludendorff, would sway the army into

supporting the coup, but the army remained loyal to High Commander Seeckt. Hitler attempted to end the coup peacefully by sending a Lieutenant Neunzert to the castle of Crown Prince Rupprecht, heir to the Bavarian throne, asking him to intercede. Neunzert was unable to find a car and had to travel to the castle by tram. He arrived too late to change the course of events. Attempting to march through the streets of Munich the Nazis were confronted by police, and in the fire fight that followed three police officers and 16 Nazis died.¹ There were many injured including prominent Nazi Hermann Göring, who received emergency treatment for severe groin injuries at the scene by a Jewish doctor before fleeing to Austria.²

Hitler Arrested

Retro Times. September 11, 1923

Hitler has been arrested on charges of treason at the home of Nazi supporter Putzi Hanfstaengl, where he was being treated for minor injuries by Hanfstaengl's wife.¹ When police arrived, Hitler is reported to have hysterically waved a pistol at police, saying he would

shoot himself rather than be arrested. Mrs Hanfstaengl tackled Hitler and took away his gun, with limited resistance from Hitler because of a dislocated shoulder sustained during the failed coup d'état.² Hitler then meekly submitted to the police.

Hitler Trial. Defeat into Victory

Retro Times. March 26, 1924

Before a large contingent of the world's press Adolf Hitler used his oratory skills and a sympathetic prosecution to turn his trial for treason from condemnation of his actions into a political propaganda triumph. His main line of defence was that he could not be a traitor against a government that was the product of the 1918 treachery. "If today," he said, "I stand here as a revolutionary, it is only as a revolution against the Revolution. There is no such thing as treason against the traitors of 1918."¹ Hitler maintained that it had been the prosecution witnesses, Bavarian government head Gustav Kahr, Bavarian Army General Otto von Lossow and Colonel Hans Ritter von Seisser, who had been the driving force behind planning the coup and he was just a naive patriot used by politicians, who were the real traitors for not supporting him (Hitler) once the failed coup had begun.² In his opening speech Hitler said, "One thing was certain, Lossow, Kahr and Seisser had the same goal that we had – to get rid of the Reich Government,

with its present international and parliamentary government. If our enterprise was actually high treason, then during this whole period Lossow, Kahr and Seisser must have been committing high treason along with us."³

Hitler's cause was undoubtedly aided by the lay assessors sitting with the judge who had the power to vote on the verdict as well as the sentence. Another factor is that the Bavarian Minister of Justice, Franz Gürtner, is an extreme right-wing sympathiser and what pressure was applied on Hitler's behalf behind the scene is unknown. One of his fellow accused, war hero General Erich Ludendorff, was acquitted and Hitler received an extraordinarily light sentence of five years' jail, to be served as a political prisoner rather than as a common criminal. Hitler's sentence was the lightest of the sentences handed out to the eight defendants who were found guilty. When the lay judges protested Hitler's sentence as too severe, they were told he soon would be paroled and pardoned.⁴

Arrest and Trial



Justice Minister Franz Gürtner



General Erich Ludendorff

Rebuilding Sturmabteilung

Retro Times. May, 1924

Since being released from prison on April 1 Ernst Röhm has been faced with the problem that the SA, along with other private armies involved in the Munich Putsch have been banned in Bavaria. The remaining paramilitary forces are now under the command of an organisation called the Notbann led by General von Epp.¹ To

Röhm Rebuilding SA

overcome the ban, Röhm has reorganised the remnants of the SA as the Frontbann and, although SA member Bennecke suggests Röhm was not popular because of his Reichswehr background, he is having success in rebuilding the SA and keeping it loyal to Hitler.²

Luxury Accommodation for Hitler in Prison

Retro Times. March 1924

Adolf Hitler is serving his prison sentence in a warm, sunny room on the first floor of the 'prison' at Landsberg Fortress with few restrictions to his movements in the prison or in the surrounding gardens. Typically, the day for the prisoners begins at 7.30am with a bath, followed by breakfast and a walk in the garden. During the morning there will be a talk by or a discussion led by Hitler. The afternoon is usually filled with physical training and games, and after dinner the prisoners are once again free to do what they like. Although officially banned, there is no restriction on alcohol. Hitler sees it as undignified for a leader to participate in games (and be beaten by lesser beings) and does not take part in the afternoon exercise and games. As a result of this lack of exercise, he has become noticeably fat. On his 35th birthday, which he spent in prison, Hitler received flowers and gifts from supporters that filled several rooms, and visitors came throughout the day. Hitler, along with some 40 National Socialists serving time with him are well fed, can have as many visitors (male and female) as they like at any time, and have no restrictions on newspapers, books or communications in or out of the prison. Hitler's Alsatian dog is regularly brought to him. Rudolf Hess has voluntarily returned from Austria to join Hitler in prison. Hess



Ernst Röhm

and Emil Maurice are said to be taking dictation from Hitler for his coming book 'Four and a Half Years of Struggle Against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice'. Life for Hitler and his fellow prisoners is easy and pleasant. The only problem Hitler seems to have is that whilst in prison he is unable to maintain control over the Nazi Party, which, although officially banned, continues to operate.¹

Hitler Released

after Nine Months



Retro Times, December 20, 1924

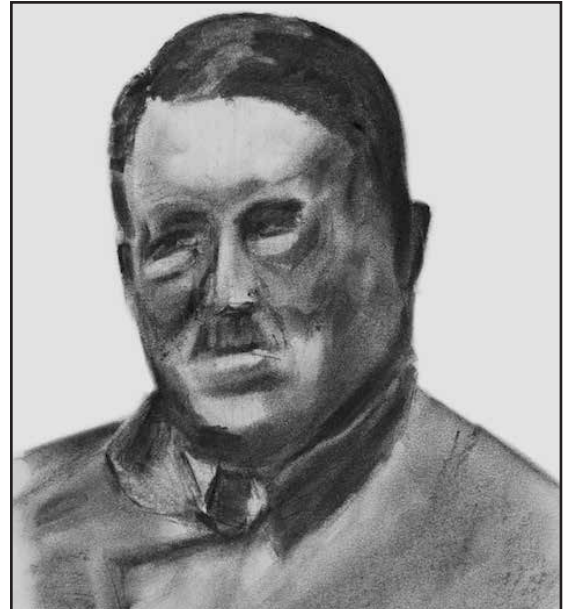
Adolf Hitler has been released from prison in time for Christmas after serving nine months of a five-year prison sentence for treason.¹ Whilst in prison Hitler has changed his thinking on the path to power in Germany. The idea of taking power by force has been shown to be a dead end and Hitler now sees the path to power as using the parliamentary process for his own purposes. With this change in direction, Hitler now sees the need for a political force rather

than a private army, and Ernst Röhm feels that Hitler has lost interest in the SA.² As commentator John Wheeler-Bennett said: "Never again must he [Hitler] and his followers confront the rifles of the Reichswehr. For Hitler the Way of Armed Revolt was no longer open."³ Hitler also feels that the activities of Röhm and his successes in rebuilding the SA were the reason why his release from prison was delayed from the expected October 1 date until today.⁴

Hitler Forms Bodyguard Unit

Retro Times. April, 1925

A small number of men who Hitler could depend on have been "enlisted without conditions, even to march against their own brothers"¹ to act as Hitler's bodyguards. The special unit to be known as the Schutzstaffel (SS) has been formed from members of the SA who have proven pure Aryan background and unquestioning loyalty to Hitler. The new unit is planned to have 20 members to a city, and the first unit, formed in Munich, has been recruited by the new leaders of the SS Julius Schreck and Erhard Heiden.²



Julius Schreck

Röhm Resigns as head of SA

Retro Times. May 1, 1925

Today it was announced in *Völkischer Beobachter* that Hitler has accepted Ernst Röhm's resignation as head of the SA. The rift between Hitler and Röhm is Röhm's insistence that the SA becomes an increasingly stronger military force, whilst Hitler insists the SA is to be a political organisation. The likely cause for Hitler wanting to suppress the military side of the SA is the fear of antagonising the Reichswehr. Hitler has issued the order that the SA must not carry weapons.¹ One plus for Röhm's leadership of the SA was the acquisition of a large number of army surplus brown shirts manufactured during the war for the German Army's forces in Africa and issuing these shirts to the SA as a uniform, creating the 'brownshirts' as a highly visible political statement on the streets of Germany.² No replacement for Röhm has been announced.



Erhard Heiden

Economy

Economy Recovering

Editorial Retro Times, July 1925

With recovery in the German economy progressing, the influence of the radical elements of politics such as the Communist Party and Hitler's Nazi Party is declining rapidly. The German currency has stabilised and is sound, industry has recovered and is expanding, and the wounds of 1918 are healing. The daily lives of the population are becoming easier. Wages are increasing, unemployment is falling and social welfare has improved markedly. There are even suggestions a peaceful re-negotiation of the Treaty of Versailles may be possible. The need for radical solutions has ended, and this has made the communists and Nazis less appealing to people seek-

ing a way to end their desperate and degrading lives.¹

For the Nazi Party, the jailing of Adolf Hitler and the official ban on the Nazi Party has caused a splintering of the party, and Hitler seems to have lost interest in the party as he continues to work on his book 'Four and a Half Years of Struggle Against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice'.²

The influence of the extreme left and right of politics may be diminishing, but they still remain as 'spoilers' to good government in what is an inherent weakness in the politics of the Weimar Republic, the multitude of 'centre' political parties each unable to obtain the clear majority in their own right, or in stable coalitions. Germany

appears to be on the path of economic and social recovery in spite of, rather than because of, the parliamentary democratic system. The willingness of the centre of politics to move left or right according to short-term political expediency has created an atmosphere of distrust and a lack of faith in whatever factions are able to form government. A general attitude that it doesn't matter who is in government because it will change soon anyway permeates through the German people, who are tending to ignore politics as they go about their daily lives. The attitude of ignoring the problem of lack of political leadership rather than fix the problem could be the biggest problem facing Germany.³



Pfeffer von Salomon

Pfeffer von Salomon New Supreme Leader of SA

Retro Times. November, 1926

After a period of 19 months without an official leader Pfeffer von Salomon has been appointed to the position of Supreme Leader, which may be an overstatement of the position as von Salomon will not have a free hand in the running of the SA. Hitler has decided that his personal direction is needed to ensure the SA functions as a political organisation, not as a paramilitary force. The new organisational arrangements seem to be that von Salomon will have authority to organise and run the SA within the limits set by Hitler.¹

Extreme Right Fight Young Plan

Retro Times. July 1929

A coalition of the extreme right with Franz Seldte, co-founder of Der Stahlhelm, Bund der Frontsoldaten, (Steel Helmet, League of Front Soldiers) paramilitary organisation, has been formed to fight the adoption of the Young Plan, which they see as the fulfilment of the demands of victors of the World War designed to enslave the German peoples into the future. Besides Seldte, the committee consists of four members – Alfred Hugenberg, the owner of a number of newspapers, Theodor Duesterberg, a leader from the extreme anti-Semitic section of the Stahlhelm and Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi Party.¹ Seldte said in a speech in the *Berlin Sportpalast*, “We consider this initiative campaign a device for creating a popular nationalist movement,”² making it clear that opposing the Young Plan was a stepping stone to a much broader agenda.

‘Against Enslavement’ Referendum Fails

Retro Times December 23, 1929

In spite of an overwhelming result of 94.5 per cent in favour of the ‘Law against the enslavement of the German People’, which would have repudiated the Treaty of Versailles, the low voter turnout of 14.9 per cent failed to reach the required 50 per cent required for the referendum to pass. The proposed constitutional change was a right-wing initiative opposing the proposed ‘Young Plan’ which is to modify the Treaty of Versailles to the advantage of the German people. Much of the opposition to the Young Plan stems from the inclusion of a ‘war guilt clause’, a carry-over from the Treaty of Versailles, in the law.

The right-wing parties opposing the Young Plan have been organised into a coalition by Franz Seldte. The inclusion of the Nazi Party in the coalition has resulted in its largely unknown leader, Adolf Hitler, becoming a household name because of his association with fellow coalition committee member and well-known industrialist and newspaper owner Alfred Hugenberg.¹



Theodor Duesterberg



Alfred Hugenberg

NAZI Revival

Economic Crisis Creates Nazi Revival

Retro Times. August 30, 1930

After a period of declining membership, unemployed workers have been flocking to the Nazi Party in the wake of the deepening worldwide depression and the optimism of recent times being replaced by deepening pessimism about the future. During the last decade, with its steadily increasing prosperity, the Nazi Party lost much of its working-class base and has relied on the nationalistic ideology of many artisans, lower-middle classes and small traders for support. The nationalistic and anti-Semitic (very limited) policies of the Nazis do not appeal to workers who are interested in jobs rather than politics, but now that jobs are disappearing the simplistic 'Germany first' slogans are attracting the desperate unemployed. Particularly appealing to the young unemployed is joining the SA (Stormtroopers) because of the free accommodation and meals. The young unemployed of the SA are invaluable to the Nazi Party in the increasingly violent clashes between the Nazis and the communists, who seem to be losing the battle for the minds of workers.¹

Hitler Assumes Leadership of SA

Retro Times. September 9, 1930

Völkischer Beobachter has announced that Adolf Hitler has assumed the position of Supreme Leader of the SA¹ replacing Pfeffer von Salomon, who has shown himself to be an able administrator and has followed Hitler's dictate that the SA be a political organisation.

However, von Salomon has continued to train members of the SA in all forms of fighting and although maintaining the ban on fire arms, and has failed to quell the 'free corps' mentality of the SA, and incidents of lawlessness, corruption and murders are increasing. Commentator Richard Morton says the "leadership and the troops of the SA" are "too thoroughly imbued with military attitudes to take orders from Nazi politicians".² Incidents like the revolt of SA members against the Gauleiter (political officials) being suppressed by the SS, itself a division of the SA, sealed the fate of von Salomon.³

SS Gains Partial Independence from SA

Retro Times, November 7, 1930.

The SS, formed within the SA as Hitler's personal bodyguards, has achieved partial independence from the SA. This is seen as a reward for the actions of the SS in putting down the SA revolt in Berlin.¹

Rhöm Back at SA

Retro Times, January, 1931

Ernst Röhm has resigned his position of lieutenant colonel in the Bolivian Army to return to Germany as chief of staff of the SA, a lesser position than when he originally left the SA. Hitler remains the supreme commander. Röhm has begun re-organising the structure of the SA along increasingly militaristic lines, including a general staff and a training college based in Munich. Röhm replaces Walther Stennes after several disputes between the SA and Hitler's bodyguards, the SS, (and others), with one incident resulting in a SS 'spy' calling the police to rescue him from the SA.¹

Another commentator, William Shirer, gives an alternative version of events. In the Shirer version, Röhm had broken with Hitler in 1925 and had joined the Bolivian Army as a lieutenant colonel and Hitler had invited Röhm back to return to the position of head of the SA to get the SA under control.² The SA has been reorganised with Adolf Hitler as supreme head and Ernst Röhm as chief of staff

Hitler Fails Presidential Bid



Retro Times. April 15, 1932

Adolf Hitler stood in the presidential election, where he came second behind the incumbent Paul von Hindenburg after a second, run-off election held on April 10, after becoming a German citizen by accepting the post of government advisor in the Nazi-controlled land of Brunswick.¹ The dramatic increase in the vote for the Nazi candidate resulted in Chancellor Heinrich Brüning banning the Nazi paramilitary organisations, the SA and the SS, in a bid to quell growing political mass violence on the streets of Germany.²

Reparation Scrapped

Retro times. December 1931

The Lausanne Conference between Germany and the Bank of International Settlement agreed with German Chancellor Heinrich Brüning that the reparation requirements imposed on Germany by the Treaty of Versailles and the Young Plan would be removed as a follow-up to the one-year Hoover Moratorium of Germany's debts that had been agreed to in July. There seems to be an awakening that Germany was never going to be in a position to meet these obligations, and the dire position of the German people was driving them to the extremes of politics: to the communists and the Nazis. The polarisation of the German people



Heinrich Brüning

and the frequent violent clashes between communist-armed militia and the Nazi SA, and an increasingly fragmented and unstable Brüning government, could lead to civil war unless there was economic relief for Germany.¹

Röhm and Schleicher: SA part of the Reichswehr

Retro Times. April, 1932

Ernst Röhm and Hitler's political rival Kurt von Schleicher have agreed that in the event of war the SA would become part of the Reichswehr. The SA are not armed and are forbidden to be armed or allowed to take part in military-style exercises, and the

agreement that would involve arming the SA seems to have been made without Hitler's knowledge.¹ Hitler had made it known since he wrote in *Mein Kampf* "the SA must not be either a military defence force or a secret society ... Its training must not be organised from

the military standpoint" that the SA was not a substitute for the Reichswehr.² The latest agreement between Röhm and Schleicher can only widen the deepening rift between Hitler and Röhm.

Brüning Resigns

Brüning Resigns as German Chancellor

Retro Times. May 28 1932

Heinrich Brüning and his government have been forced to resign after President Paul von Hindenburg refused to sign several programs of social reform and public works that would have led to the re-inflation of the German economy and the beginning of recovery from the Depression. Instrumental in Brüning's downfall was Kurt von Schleicher who, after gaining support from Adolf Hitler by agreeing to new elections and the lifting of the ban on the SA and SS, had persuaded Hindenburg that Brüning was an "agrarian Bolshevik" intent on socialising agriculture. Hindenburg wanted 'right-wing' government to counter the drift to the political left.¹

Franz von Papen New Chancellor

Retro Times. June 1, 1932

The new chancellor of the Weimar Republic Franz von Papen, generally seen to be a rich aristocrat totally out of touch with ordinary people, does not have the support of any of the major political groups. Von Papen's government is made up of supporters of the business sector and that of landowners, and has been dubbed the 'Cabinet of Barons'. The left of politics is unhappy that the policies of Brüning have been cut short just as German economic and social conditions looked about to improve. The right politics is unhappy that the business sector and landowners are concentrating on self-interest. The centre of politics is unhappy that their pick for chancellor, Alfred Hugenberg, has been bypassed. Amongst the political upheaval and intrigue, Adolf Hitler has relentlessly attacked von Papen with the same relentless venom he had used on Brüning. At best, this is a powerless 'caretaker' government in place only until the new elections promised to Hitler can be arranged.¹



Franz von Papen



Kurt von Schleicher

No NAZI Majority Two Elections in one year

Retro Times, November 30, 1932

In spite of election campaigns marred by violence and terror, the Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler, still has not achieved a clear majority in the German Parliament after two elections in one year. The first of the German 1932 elections took place on July 31, called prematurely because of the instability in the leadership of the minority Centre Party that governed only by emergency powers granted by President Hindenburg. The result of the election made the Nazi Party the largest party in the parliament with 230 seats out of 608 seats, still well short of a majority. Chancellor Franz von Papen continued to govern by the legislative decree of President Hindenburg.¹

In the November 6, 1932 election, called by Hindenburg to prevent a no-confidence motion against von Papen tabled by the Communist Party, the Nazi vote went backwards, with a corresponding rise in votes for the Communist and National Conservative parties. The Nazis emerged as still the largest single party, but the number of seats they held dropped to 196. It seems likely the Nazis are past their peak and their extreme ideologies are losing ground with the German people.²

Kurt von Schleicher Becomes Chancellor

Retro Times. December 2, 1932

President Hindenburg has appointed Kurt von Schleicher as chancellor, replacing von Papen, following a protracted period of intrigue and double-dealing within the German Parliament. Schleicher is said to have told Hindenburg that von Papen's policies would lead to civil war, a general strike and a probable invasion from Poland.¹

**NAZI Fail
in Elections**

Germany allowed 'Equality of Armament'

Retro Times. December 1932

The negotiations which began at the Geneva Conference in June have resulted in the agreement that Germany would be allowed to re-arm to the level equal to the level of armaments of other European countries. France had blocked moves to allow Germany to re-arm but was unable to resist any longer against the unanimous agreement of all the other countries involved.¹ The re-armament negotiations, and the scrapping of reparation clauses in the Treaty of Versailles and the Young Plan, resulted from the work of Heinrich Brüning, who was forced to resign before the results of his policies could take effect.²



President Hindenburg

HITLER Succeeds

Retro Times. January 30, 1933

Amidst total parliamentary chaos is an unlikely coalition between the German National People's Party centre and the Nazi Party. Franz von Papen, leader of the People's Party, obtained the support of German President Hindenburg to form government with Adolf Hitler. Hitler's success comes largely from von Papen mobilising his power base of financiers, industrialists and rich landowners behind Hitler in return for von Papen becoming vice-chancellor. This arrangement is seen by many commentators as being motivated by the desire of von Papen for revenge over being deposed as chancellor by

Hitler appointed Chancellor

Kurt von Schleicher. Von Schleicher had also been largely responsible (with help from Adolf Hitler) for von Papen becoming chancellor because of his role in deposing von Papen's predecessor, Heinrich Brüning.

President Hindenburg has been a long-time opponent of Hitler, but the unworkability of the German Parliament left no other option. The new Hitler/von Papen coalition is to be known as the Reich Cabinet of National Salvation, with Hitler as chancellor and von Papen as vice-chancellor.¹

NAZI's March in Circles

Retro Times. February 1, 1933

On the evening of January 30, the day Hitler became chancellor, the Nazis celebrated with a mass march through Berlin that lasted until the early hours of the morning (yesterday). The pro-Hitler newspaper *Deutsche Zeitung*¹ reported 700,000 marchers, but another, less optimistic newspaper reported a march of 18,000 Brownshirts and SS, 3000 Steel Helmets and 40,000 civilians. A young bystander, Hans-Joachim Heldenbrand, noticed that marchers stopping for new torches appeared again and again. His father told him, "There, you see the con trick. They're constantly marching round in circles as if there were a hundred thousand of them".² Since the march was organised by the master of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, there seems no need to doubt the observations of Hans-Joachim Heldenbrand and accept that the total number of marchers was about 61,000 in total.³



Josef Goebbels

Reichstag Destroyed

Retro Times. February 28, 1933

In the early hours of yesterday morning the German Reichstag building was completely gutted in an arson attack by Marinus van der Lubbe, who has a history of acts of arson against what he considers to be symbols of bourgeois oppression of the unemployed. These previous attacks against a welfare office, the Neukölln Town Hall and the former royal palace resulted in only minor damage. Hitler's friend, Ernst 'Putzi' Hanfstaengl, who has been staying at Hermann Göring's official residence, was awoken by the housekeeper and, having seen the flames from his bedroom, telephoned Goebbels who alerted Hitler. Goebbels, Göring and Hitler met at the Reichstag, where Hitler stood staring silently at the flames until Göring said to Rudolf Diels, head of the Prussian Political Police: "This is the beginning of the communist

uprising! Now they'll strike out! There is not a minute to waste!"¹ Hitler turned and shouted: "There will be no more mercy now; anyone who stands in our way will be butchered. The German people won't have any understanding for leniency. Every Communist functionary will be shot where he is found. The Communist deputies must be hanged this very night. Everyone in league with the Communists is to be arrested. Against Social Democrats and Reichsbanner too there will be no Mercy!"²

The arrests began within a few hours after Hitler's rant, resulting in some 4000 communists and suspected communists being detained. The Prussian Political Police have quietly ignored orders from Göring that the arrested were to be shot.³



Herman Göring



Reichstag in Ruins

Communists Attacked

Retro Times. March 1, 1933

Following the Reichstag fire Hitler's Brownshirts have unleashed extreme violence and terror on all communists. As well as violence to the person, the Brownshirts have smashed and looted the offices and premises of the communist parties as well as the homes of individual communists. Communists have been caught unawares by the events including the arrest of communist members of the German Parliament.¹ One Brownshirt leader has said: "We were prepared: we knew the intentions of our enemies. I had put together a small 'mobile squad' of my stormtroopers from the most daring of the daring. We lay in wait night after night. Who was going to strike the first blow? And then

Brownshirts Target Communists

it came. The beacon in Berlin, sign of fire all over the country. Finally the relief of the order: 'Go to it!' And we went to it! It was not just about the purely human 'you or me', 'you or us', it was about wiping the lecherous grin off the hideous, murderous faces of the Bolsheviks for all time, and protecting Germany from the bloody terror of unrestrained hordes."²

The terror heaped on communists and Marxists is not only being unleashed on Communist Party members but anyone even remotely suspected of being a communist sympathiser. Homes as well as offices are being looted for cash and valuables.³

Election Farce

Retro Times. Editorial. April 1933

After a 'saturation' campaign, the disembowelment of opposition (mostly communist) parties and the mass arrest and imprisonment of opposition leaders, the Nazi-Nationalist coalition was only able to capture 51.9 per cent of the vote in yesterday's elections. There are reports coming in of social democrats and communists being raided and being accused of preparing for a 'bloodbath' on honest citizens. Police and armed Brownshirts were stationed at key locations on the pretext of these locations being vulnerable to terrorist attacks. At least one man was arrested for trying to distribute National Socialist election material. Election day was marked by Brownshirts and SS marching through the streets and Steel Helmets taking voters to polling places by motor vehicles. Opposition propaganda was nowhere to be seen.¹ With the coalition achieving only a narrow majority after a relentless campaign of terror, it seems likely that their representation in a free and honest election would have been small.

Germany a One Party State

Retro Times. Editorial. April 1933

With a vote of 441 to 94 the Nazi Party has forced through the *Enabling Act* that confers general powers on the government to take whatever actions it deems necessary. Because the *Enabling Act* is a constitutional amendment, it required a two-thirds majority vote to pass, and the way the majority vote was obtained could not be considered democratic. The Communist Party was excluded from voting (81 votes), with most of the parliamentary Communist Party under arrest. One-hundred-and-twenty socialists, and 20 other members stayed away from parliament so that a majority could not be obtained. To counter this, the Nazi Party decreed that members of the Reichstag shall be deemed to be present unless excused by the parliament. The absent members were not excused and their votes were added to the 'yes' vote by default. Germany is now a de facto one-party state.¹

Radical Lutherism Welcomes Hitler

Retro Times. Editorial. April 1933

At the recent celebrations of Martin Luther's birth at Königsberg, Landesbischof (State Bishop) Friedrich Kessel linked the celebrations with the seizing of power by the Nazis, suggesting that it was "an act of divine will".¹ This and other comments by members of a section of the Lutheran Church promoting what has become known as 'liberal Protestantism' within the Nazi Party implies that there is a religious aspect to the rise of the Nazi Party, with theologian Franklin Littell saying that churches were contributing to the anti-Semitism agenda of the Nazi Party.²

Whilst the long battle for power between communists and the Nazis, with the Jews stuck in the middle, has seemed to be primarily secular for many, it has been a religious battle for the uniquely German view of the Lutheran Church versus the atheist Marxists and the 'Christ-denier' Jews. Lutheran endorsement of the Nazis came from (amongst others) theologian Paul Althaus, who said: "Our Protestant [Lutheran] churches have greeted the turning point of 1933 as a gift and miracle of God."³ Althaus was also a signatory to Werner Elert's statement that "as believing Christians thank God our father that he has given us our Volk in its time of need the Führer as a pious and faithful sovereign and he wants to prepare us for the National Socialist system of government good rule, a government with discipline and honour. Accordingly we know we are responsible before God to assist the work of the Führer in our calling and in our station in life".⁴

The involvement of the Lutheran Church in the right-wing struggle for power against the communist goes back to the Treaty of Versailles, but the drift towards Nationalism by sectors of the Lutheran Church began in the mid- 19th century when Martin Luther became increasingly seen as a German national hero, and proof of Germany's special place in God's scheme. Hitler has always maintained a religious element to his struggle for power, stating in *Mein Kampf*: "Hence I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."⁵ The question needs to be asked: Does Hitler believe he is on a mission from God? Hitler is quoted as saying that Jesus is "our greatest Aryan leader".⁶

Well-known academic Martin Rade has described 'liberal Protestantism' (radical Lutherism?) as beliefs that progressed from religion into rationalist attitudes, and finally into secular theory.⁷ This religious/secular theory seems to support the ideals of the new Nazi government.

Positive
Christianity?



Martin Luther



Paul Althaus

Continued Page 20

Army vs Sturmabteilung

Tension over the Role of the S.A.

Retro Times. December 10, 1933

Tensions between the SA (Stormtroopers) of Ernst Röhm and the German Army threaten to escalate into violence over who is to be the 'new' army in Hitler's Germany. The army has retained allegiance to the German Republic and Röhm sees his position as head of the 'new' army (the SA) as a fitting reward for his unswerving support for Hitler. As a condition of Hitler's acceptance as chancellor by President Hindenburg, the army will remain non-political, and Hitler is intent on honouring this agreement. A major problem is that the SA is many times larger than the army and since the rise to power of Hitler no longer has a role for a private army to suppress opposition. The usefulness of the SA to Hitler is at an end, and in many ways has become an embarrassment. The aimless position of the SA is highlighted by the habit of its members roaming the streets at night, fighting with anyone they meet and generally causing pointless conflict. The SA has become an army with nobody to fight, since the opposition (Hitler) they were fighting for has become the establishment.

Many high officials within the Nazi hierarchy are promoting the idea to Hitler that Röhm is preparing for a coup that would establish him as controller of the army and second to Hitler. The dislike and even loathing of Röhm by many senior Nazis is compounded by his homosexual lifestyle, which Hitler referred to as Röhm's "special disposition".¹ Commentator Heinz Höhne referred to the "bad behaviour, drunken excesses, the molestation of peaceful decent folk" of the SA being "unworthy of a leader".² In spite of the dangerous position Röhm has placed himself in, he still retains the support of Hitler, who has been Röhm's friend since the beginnings of the Nazi Party.³

Radical Lutherism

An uneasy aspect of the liberal Protestant alliance with the Nazis is that the liberal Protestants see the 'culturally inferior' Catholics as having allegiance to Rome, and as such they are not part of the new German nationalism. This is a difficult position in that Hitler is a Catholic, as are several of the senior members of the Nazi hierarchy including Joseph Goebbels, who recently wrote of the fight against Judaism by God, with Hitler as "an instrument of divine will shaped by history ... Nothing exists outside of God".⁸

Richard Steigmann-Gall has said that "by no means did all adherents of the ecclesiastical and educational views of liberal Protestantism end up supporting the German Christians or Nazi Party. Nevertheless, German Christian views on church and school had identifiable origins in liberal Protestant theology; and the closeness of German Christian ecclesiology with that of the Nazis' positive Christianity was striking".⁹ Whilst on the surface the Nazi Party maintains the appearance of being entirely secular, there does seem to be a willingness to at least use, if not embrace, 'positive Christianity' (liberal Protestantism) when it suits their needs.



Martin Rade

Operation Hummingbird

SA Smashed

Retro times. July 1, 1934

In a ruthless purge codenamed 'Operation Hummingbird' that has taken place over the last three days, Hitler ordered the assassination of anyone in the SA (Stormtroopers) who might be a threat to his authority, or to the authority of the army. The head of the SA, Ernst Röhm, is believed to be in custody. Hitler and Joseph Goebbels flew from Hangelar Airport to Munich to personally arrest Röhm. In his rise to the position of chancellor, Hitler had agreed that the army would remain loyal to the Republic and the possibility of the SA usurping the army had been real until the purge that has (officially) resulted in the deaths of 81 individuals was thought to be a threat to the Nazis. Hitler flew to Neudek on June 21 to meet President Hindenburg and was met by General von Blomberg, who told Hitler that if the tension between the SA and the Reichswehr was not resolved the President would declare martial law and the army would be in control of the country. This would have been the end of the Nazi government. It is said that several of the deaths resulted from the personal vendettas of Hermann Göring, Heinrich Himmler and other senior Nazis rather than being threats to Hitler's or the army's authority. Amongst the dead is former chancellor Kurt von Schleicher, who was killed by mistake: he was supposed to have been taken into custody. Franz von Papen was also marked by some for execution but was saved by his office of vice-chancellor and being under the protection of President Hindenburg. He was arrested instead and his two assistants shot as substitutes. Outside of the SA, several prominent Catholics were executed, including Erich Klausener, leader of Catholic action. What seems to have started as a concern about the growing unruliness of the SA became an excuse to settle old scores, and is already being called by some as the 'night of the long knives', a general term for revenge coming from a Nazi marching song.¹

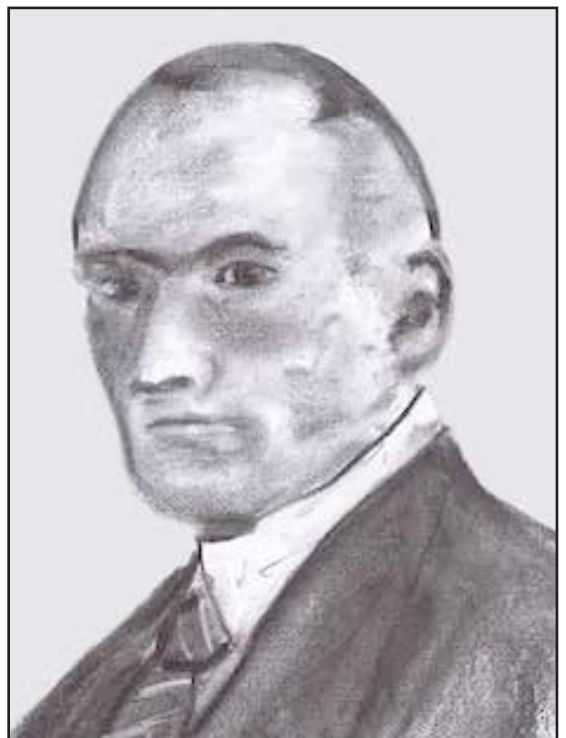
Röhm Executed

Ernst Röhm has been executed in his cell at Stadelheim Prison by two of Heinrich Himmler's SS officers who stripped Röhm to the waist before emptying their revolvers into him. Röhm was given the option of committing suicide by revolver but refused, reportedly saying, "If I am to be killed, let Adolf do it himself."¹ According to Otto Dietrich, Röhm had been arrested by Hitler at the Hanslbauer Hotel, where he was asleep next to a young male companion, who was dragged outside and shot. Hitler ordered that Röhm be taken to Stadelheim Prison, where he was executed.² Röhm is to be succeeded as head of the SA by Viktor Lutze.

Night of The Long Knives



Heinrich Himmler



Erich Klausener

Hitler Grabs Total Power



Retro Times. August 2, 1934

President Hindenburg has died, and within the hour Hitler announced, by way of a decree from his office, that the office of president would be merged with that of chancellor and that Adolf Hitler was now Head of State and Supreme Com-

mander in Chief of the armed forces. The armed forces have taken an oath of allegiance to their new Commander in Chief with the words: "I swear by God this holy oath: I will render unconditional obedience to the Führer of the German

Reich and People, Adolf Hitler, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and will be ready, as a brave soldier, to stake my life at any time for this oath."¹



German Referendum accepts Hitler as Führer.

Retro Times, August 19, 1934

In today's referendum asking to confirm Adolf Hitler merging the office of president and chancellor, in which 95.7 per cent of Germany voted, more than 89 per cent voted 'yes'.¹ This vote confirms Adolf Hitler as German Dictator.

