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DER FUEHRER

DER FUEHRER

HITLER'S RISE TO POWER

By

KONRAD HEIDEN

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Translated by

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BOOK II

CHAPTERS XVI—XXVIII

AND INDEX

LONDON

VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD

1944

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY RICHARD CLAY AND COMPANY, LTD.,
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

BOOK II

CHAPTER XVI

'ADOLPHE LÉGALITÉ'

UP TO 1930 the massive success of Adolf Hitler could be understood only with a constant eye to an epoch hiding from its doom. After 1930 the epoch struggling with doom can no longer be understood except with a constant eye to Adolf Hitler.

The world crisis was driving towards the point where it awaited Hitler—or some other demon who was ready to trample beneath iron feet the generation awakening from its dream of money and abundance. Dictatorship had established itself firmly at many points on the globe; the Bolshevik and Fascist designs were completed; the souls were prepared. A meaning had to be given to a world that had grown meaningless; if this could be done in no other way, then by force. The poor people of the whole world were stirred to their very depth by a deeply symbolical news report from South America: the fire-boxes of locomotives were to be adapted for burning coffee instead of coal. Very well, then, have a pleasant journey with your coffee that we can no longer pay for; farewell, all you other foreign pleasures and comforts! Keep them. We can no longer buy them, for you no longer buy our coal, but use coffee for fuel; you don't even buy our locomotives any more! Said Hjalmar Schacht: 'We must do like Frederick the Great in the eighteenth century—base ourselves firmly upon the home economy and take from our home soil what can in any way be taken; and for a generation we must live frugally, save and work.' And by so doing, the youthful extremists added, we shall utterly smash this declining world.

An unknown young man by the name of Friedrich Zimmermann, who for two years mystified the German public with his pen-name of Ferdinand Fried, published a book in which he declared that what was actually declining was the 'West', as Oswald Spengler had predicted. Geographically speaking, the West was 'the territories bounding the North Atlantic and grouped around the three financial and commercial centres, New York, London, and Paris'. 'Here'—in the 'West'—'the daring of the capitalist, which is the true Viking spirit, begins to flag. The tribute of debts'—Fried meant the German reparations and at the same time the debts of the Allies to America—'can no longer be physically assimilated; the West is like an old man who can no longer take nourishment. But with the coldness and hardness of old age it insists on the collection of interest. It is in an attitude of defence against a world in

revolt. It can maintain itself only by chaining the rest of the world together in a complicated and subtle system—unfathomable to the average eye—which is called world economy; in reality the world is chained by world economy to the interest-exacting West. But this world can no longer be held together, it is crumbling apart, and as a result the West itself is beginning slowly to disintegrate. . . . Protective tariffs give rise to national autarchies; immense spaces—Fried had in mind Soviet Russia—are disengaging themselves entirely from world economy, perhaps to join with other spaces; State planning and State intervention become State capitalism or State socialism, in a word, State economy. . . .’

Ten years before, John Maynard Keynes in England, one of the keenest students of capitalism, had predicted the great twilight of the gods in his own way: ‘The bluff is discovered,’ he wrote; ‘the labouring classes may be no longer willing to forego so largely, and the capitalist classes, no longer confident of the future, may seek to enjoy more fully their liberties of consumption so long as they last, and thus precipitate the hour of their confiscation.’ Keynes had written a book with the title: *The End of Laissez-Faire*; Fried’s book was entitled *The End of Capitalism*, and was for years the greatest success among political books in Germany.

The young German intellectuals saw the capitalists of their own country failing in their tasks. The German employers made their aimless, unsuccessful, and heartless attack on the poor people; Brüning decreased wages by violent decrees, supposedly lowered prices too, but not enough—and despite all the efforts and sacrifices of those who were still employed, more and more workers were discharged. From 1930 to 1932, according to the official estimate, the number of unemployed rose from three millions to over six millions, actually to far more than seven millions; and since German industry had a tendency to keep its workers even in hard times, this unemployment figure showed a graver economic distress than would have been the case in other countries.

There stood the wonderful smelting furnaces of Fritz Thyssen and his like, capable of producing twice as much steel as England, now useless, cold and still. Kirdorf’s precious coal lay in great heaps around the mines and found no buyers; while the unemployed miners spent the winter in unheated rooms, at times banding together to break through the fence and seize as much fuel as they could carry. In the summer of 1930 gas broke through the walls of the Wenceslaus Mine near Waldenburg in Silesia, and three hundred miners were asphyxiated; rows of corpses were found with raised faces; they had died trying to snatch a last breath of air above the layer of gas. The mine had been a death-trap; it should have been closed long before, and now the authorities did officially close it. Three thousand miners were unemployed, and in the collapsing economy found no other work. They banded together and petitioned; for three years they sent memoranda to the Ministry, sent delegations to Berlin, addressed proclamations to the German

people; they wanted their death mine reopened; it was better to live in constant fear of death than to suffer the constant hunger of their families.

In the woods around Berlin tent colonies sprang up; here lived unemployed who could not pay their rent in town. Straight streets ran through the camps; the residents shared such tasks as removal of garbage; there were community kitchens. Discipline and order prevailed. But in the fields around Berlin the peasants posted guards with loaded rifles; for large troops of starving men came from the city, flung themselves on the potato fields, and carried the potatoes away in sacks—this in broad daylight, while the traffic rolled by on the roads. Often the guards with their rifles were powerless against the famished and desperate marauders. Young men, who had seen the last remnants of property dwindle away in their families and had never learned the meaning of work, wandered through the countryside in bands, literally singing with hunger; the residential sections were full of the terrible singing of poor people, who had never dreamed that they would some day be singing for bread. It was still good times for the unemployed when they could crowd in long, grey, shabby lines on the pavement outside the so-called employment offices; they presented a little booklet at a window, and a grumbling official pasted in a stamp certifying that they had presented themselves and had vainly asked for work. This entitled them to an unemployment benefit, which might amount to as much as seventy marks a month. When the grey, shabby army swelled beyond measure, they were allowed to come only twice a week; but after thirteen weeks of unemployment a person was transferred into another class, where the benefits were much smaller and actually were based on a kind of State charity. Originally what he received had been an insurance benefit; he had paid for it in good times by a compulsory deduction from his wages. Little by little, it became a gift from the State.

Everyone expected help from the State in his distress; when the economy collapsed, the State became the symbol of security, sustenance, productivity. Unable to collect their rents, landlords could no longer pay interest on their mortgages; a quarry-owner in the Rhineland took to living in his quarry, because no building was going on; barbers were starving because their customers could not afford to be shaved; a stationer lost his customers to a new one-price store; a dry-goods shop was crushed by a near-by department store. The State had to help, raise a subsidy fund, and was besieged with pleas to pass a law against department stores and one-price stores, which it finally did. As in 1923, millions of personal failures and collapses gave rise again to a feeling of the State's omnipotence and divinity. It was a feeling that fluctuated between confidence and fear; the optimist, according to a widespread joke, predicted: Next winter we'll go begging. The pessimist inquired: From whom?

The industrialists were afraid to produce, because production was

bound to bring loss at a time when the masses whom they did not employ had no money with which to purchase. The sight of this worthless wealth breathed a spectral life into men's doubts about the existing society. So the employer lost money if he put men to work; well, then, let him lose money. Production just had to be given a push; in this time of universal want there could be no lack of use for whatever was produced. This production might not be so carefully calculated as before; it might cost more; the State could stretch its credit, increase the circulation of money—this could be called inflation, but it would fill stomachs. German labour leaders seized on the new gospel of American employers: the capitalist economy, they said, would find markets and prosper if it paid higher wages to more workers, thus giving them purchasing power—though Karl Marx had taught that a capitalist economy thrived precisely by paying the workers as little as possible. The German Socialists who demanded the increase of mass purchasing power actually did admit their desertion from Marxism indirectly, by saying that at the moment they did not want to destroy capitalism, but to be the doctor at its sickbed; thus, far better than the founders of Marxism, they saw the true sense of the class struggle, which is waged to win a larger share in capitalism for the proletariat.

Brüning and his advisers, however, were stricken with panic by the spectre of a new inflation, and were prepared to accept any other, equally catastrophic, destruction of the economy, provided only that the Reichsmark remained the Reichsmark. Thus Germany was governed against the masses, who did not inwardly accept the crisis, who had 'discovered' the bluff. As Gregor Strasser expressed it in the Reichstag, they expected the State 'to be able to restore an honest living for work honestly performed'; they expected this State to exert a power it did not possess, and so the time was ripe for a new State.

This was the profoundest reason why the majority of the Reichstag no longer followed any Government. Brüning was conducting a business which presumably ran counter to his own nature. The solemn, embittered man, who let no one, least of all the people, see the thoughts hidden behind his spectacles, must sometimes have shuddered inwardly at his own attempts to preserve the economic age. He had started on this course half unawares, followed only by a small group of his closest co-workers, and by them with hesitation. He had to promulgate his laws in opposition to parliament, as presidential decrees. To be sure, the largest democratic party of the Reich, the Social Democratic Party, felt constrained not to overthrow him; for Brüning seemed the last defence against Hitler. But in this hopeless attempt Social Democracy used itself up, without in the end averting the catastrophe. While half Europe was already under the domination of dictatorship, Brüning called himself Germany's 'last parliamentarian Chancellor'.

The German collapse, which tore down the authority of the laws,

raised up the authority of violence in its stead. A new Reichswehr dictatorship seemed to be arising, similar to the one which, simply, inconspicuously, inexorably, had for a short time been exerted by Seeckt in 1923. People should not be so afraid of this hobgoblin of dictatorship, said the retired General, who had defeated Hitler. He had gone into politics, and had even permitted Stresemann's party to elect him to the Reichstag. No one was thinking of bloody tyranny, he insisted; dictatorship was only the 'natural reverse side of democracy and parliamentarianism in the event that the forces in this parliament cannot agree; but it must be limited to emergency'. What the Reichswehr really wanted was a functioning but obedient democracy. When the democracies had won the World War, the generals found it timely that Germany should have a try at this victorious State form. When Seeckt spoke of dictatorship, he meant that the Reichswehr must force the disintegrating parliament to perform its political function; and the foreign policy of Germany, said the General, who had learnt that even victorious war does not always pay, should be 'reconciliation, peace, co-operation'.

Against the Reichswehr, if things grew serious, there could be no resistance; on this friend and foe were agreed. It was all very well for the political parties, sensing the new conditions, to arm their private armies with pistols and infernal machines, and have them march and swagger; but once force began to speak, only the machine-guns and artillery of the army would be heard. To be sure, there was a second armed force that was not to be despised: the police of the various States, especially Prussia, which disposed of some fifty thousand men with military training; and this Prussian police was, according to the law, entirely, though in reality only partially, in the hands of that group of trade-union secretaries, Government officials, and parliamentarians which constituted the leadership of the Social Democrats and governed Prussia. But against a determined Reichswehr there could be no reliance on this troop.

But what was the Reichswehr determined to do, and to what lengths would it go—this was the question. 'Generals!' cried Hitler to the leaders of the Reichswehr in one of his speeches, 'with a hundred thousand men you cannot wage a foreign war, but you can give the State a new form. It lies partly in the hands of the army which tendency will be victorious in Germany; Marxism or ourselves.' The Reichswehr's answer was that National Socialism began 'to show Russian character', as one of its spokesmen put it.

As a matter of fact, the Nazis began to undermine and to destroy the State from inside; especially to destroy the loyalty of its servants, armed and unarmed. They had their helpers, most of them carefully concealed in the Ministries and other Government offices; they gathered information about the inner movements and decisions of the State and accumulated their treasure of State secrets in a party office which was headed by a

man at that time almost unknown to the outside world: Rudolf Hess, the 'private secretary'. A Minister wrote a decree that National Socialist meetings must be watched by the secret police; the National Socialist *gauleiter* in a provincial city knew this even before the police president, and informed the members of the secret police, for they, too, were secret National Socialists. One of the most popular Ministers, in private life rather a good, harmless soul, had a mistress—she actually was a National Socialist spy. To be sure, this Minister also had his spies among the National Socialists, but it can be said that the results were disappointing. A spying State against a spying political party—public opinion already took this feature of the silent civil war as a matter of course. Probably by far the most efficient spy system had been built up by Schleicher; he spied on his own superiors, on the Ministers of the Reich, on Brüning himself, and tapped their telephone wires. One day Brüning, sitting with a visitor in his studio in the Chancellery, suddenly sprang up, ran to the door, ran through the hall, ran up the stairs, and then came back, disappointed, saying: 'They escaped. . . . Over there, that part belongs to the Reichswehr.'

The S.A. strove persistently to penetrate the lower ranks of the Reichswehr. Tested members were formally discharged from the party, then volunteered for the small professional army. In the new military atmosphere they were sometimes lost to their old loyalties, but sometimes they proved excellent listening-posts and agitators. Their party made it its business to cement their loyalties by constant presents, tobacco and food. To be sure, the generals still remained sharply aloof from the Uprooted and Disinherited, despised them and threatened them. But the lieutenants and captains, in the grey dullness of their unpromising service, again, as in 1923, were attracted by the hope that Hitler would some day create a big army which would transform lieutenants into captains, the captains into majors, the majors into colonels and generals. For these officers were not only desperate patriots, but also poor devils in need of money. A large section of them came from the class that had lost its fortune in the inflation; they led somewhat threadbare private lives on monthly salaries of two hundred marks and upwards, and complained bitterly that the German officer was no longer the social lion he had been. It was a new society, plutocratic but bourgeois and unfeudal; it set new social types, famous artists and writers, for instance, higher than the members of that armed class which, after all, had lost the war. But all this was bound to change if there was a big army again, with high ranks and high salaries; and Hitler promised to create this army.

Thus it happened that National Socialist cells formed among the young officers. One of them, Lieutenant Wilhelm Scheringer, expressed the mood among these young armed intellectuals in September, 1930, in a newspaper article of great significance. 'The actual purpose of the Reichswehr,' he said, 'to be a citadel of the military idea and the basic

troop for the future war of liberation, pales. The need of earning bread becomes all-important. Soldiers turn into officials, officers become candidates for pensions. What remains is a police troop.' This, in the eyes of these desperate men, for whom the World War was not yet over, was the most terrible thing that could happen; the army was threatening to forget the war. It was absurd, said Scheringer, to regard the Reichswehr as a fire-spitting body of a hundred thousand chosen ruffians and warriors. 'People think the old staff corporal is an impassioned soldier. They don't bother to ask where he is to get passion after ten or twelve years' service in the barracks. . . . They know nothing of the tragedy of the four words: twelve years as subalterns. . . . Let the old men be silent. They have their lives behind them, ours are just beginning. A lost war, an impotent State, a hopeless system, an enslavement enduring fifty-nine years, a Reich at the brink of the abyss, that is our life. And they are to blame. . . . Consequently, we have the right to fight with all means for our freedom and that of our children. The world may be sure that we are determined to do so, and we shall be victorious just as surely as France is a dying nation.'

There it was again—the struggle of the lieutenants against the generals. Shortly before his electoral victory in September, 1930, Hitler delivered a speech full of strange extravagant hopes. A National Socialist, he said, would have to be entrusted with the Reichswehr Ministry. This was about the worst threat he could make to the Reichswehr: to be ruled by a political party, and the party of the former Reichswehr spy at that. But this was necessary, said Hitler, using an argument familiar to the generals; because 'we want to be in a position to guarantee that our people will assume a form of government which will make a second November, 1918, impossible in the foreseeable future'.

Röhm named the various 'standards', as the units (about the size of a regiment) of the S.A., the 'Brown People's Army', were called, after the regiments of the old German army stationed in the same localities. It was really a people's troop. In his service regulation, Röhm based the whole gigantic organization on a tiny unit, the so-called '*schar*' (squad); such a squad was formed when somewhere a leader arose of his own accord 'and set up the squad'. The squad, according to the regulations, should 'consist of comrades who join together from a common conviction and a common bond, based on childhood friendship, school camaraderie, or similar working conditions'—with a straight face Röhm forbade the admission of hard drinkers, dope addicts, and homosexuals. Once the squad was founded, the leader had to report his organization to a higher S.A. leader, and had to be confirmed by him—and thereupon the S.A. was stronger by four to twelve men. In honour of the founder, the squad bore his name for all time. Three to six squads formed a 'troop', two to three troops a 'storm'; the storm, embracing seventy to a hundred and twenty men, was and is the actual marching and fighting cell of the

Brown Army. Up to 1930 scant squads and troops had maintained themselves with difficulty in many places; in the crisis they rapidly grew to be storms, the storms grew into 'standards' (a thousand to three thousand men)—and so on up to the 'brigade' and the 'group' (later *Obergruppe* or 'superior group'), which counted up to a hundred thousand men. By January, 1931, the S.A. included approximately one hundred thousand men. Exactly a year later Hitler claimed over three hundred thousand, while the party membership stood at eight hundred thousand. Another year later, shortly before Hitler came to power, Röhm mustered some eight hundred thousand storm troopers in his eight *Obergruppen*.

Was this already the workers' army which the Reichswehr once had desired? The truth was that the Reichswehr—its leadership—had not always stuck to the original concept of Ludendorff, its lost supreme captain, or of Röhm, its own rebellious spirit, or of Hitler, its outgrown former tool. 'The era of mass armies is over', Seeckt had said; 'the future will bring small, highly efficient armies which are suited to carrying out quick and decisive operations'; it would be 'the aim of a modern strategy to bring about a decision with mobile, expert, and manœuvrable forces, before any masses can be set in motion'; this small army of the future would not 'let the numerically superior but qualitatively inferior mass deploy its forces, but above all will prevent it from forming solid material fronts'; and a mass army in the old sense 'is therefore cannon fodder in the worst sense, when confronted by a small number of trained technicians. . . . Therefore the modern small army must consist of long-term professional soldiers; as far as possible of volunteers.' The rest of the nation has to serve on the home front and constantly to produce the most modern equipment; for the secret of good armament was not to have large, probably obsolete stocks of arms at the time of the declaration of war, but to dispose of an industry which could quickly manufacture the most up-to-date arms in large quantities.

This conception of the small, superior élite army far above the rest of the nation was anathema to Hitler's military advisers. In the *Wehrpolitische Vereinigung* former Colonel Konstantin Hierl had delivered vehement diatribes against Seeckt, and one day Hitler himself, to the astonishment of all present, had given a lecture full of military wisdom; had denied that the next war would be decided by clouds of gas, armoured planes, or endless swarms of tanks; no, it would be decided finally by the single man 'who was prepared to die for his cause'. He had complained that the professional soldiers still did not realize what this meant; and just this was why they were unable to understand what the S.A. was for: 'to inspire the men with an idea for which they could die'; and this single man was nothing but 'the whole mass of our people'.

This was the double talk of propaganda adapted to circumstances; for when Hitler spoke to his inner circle he admonished them to consider

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themselves as the élite, high above the masses; but when he talked with the generals he himself spoke for the masses.

Without a doubt the fight for men sharpened more and more to a fight for the workers, for the mighty human mass which would have the final say about the destiny of the modern labour State. The Communists tried to build up a shock army in the big factories. On the day of the great revolutionary reckoning this shock army would take over the factories, halt work, and seize the machines, electric plants, and water-works as strategic pledges; from the conquered factories they would send the masses into the streets, and occupy first the suburbs of the big cities, then the centres of political power. That is how civil war is waged. The great factories are the heart of capitalist society, as Marx and Engels have taught, and this heart lies in the open hand of the workers, who, in the words of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847, have a world to gain, but nothing to lose but their chains. The workers—this is the central idea of this whole philosophy of the revolution—need only become conscious of their power. In this they were obstructed by only one force, of this the Communists were convinced, and this force was the Social Democratic Party with its unions. The Social Democrats—the Communists insisted in dead earnest even as the National Socialist wave was engulfing them—were the chief enemy of the workers. Therefore, the main attack of the Communists was directed, not against the National Socialists or, as they put it, the Fascists, but against the Social Democrats—the ‘Social Fascists’.

To be sure, the Social Democrats and the unions had no revolutionary aim and hence no plan for the civil war that was obviously approaching. And even if there had been a plan, up to 1932 they had no suitable organization. The unions were not organized by factories but by trades; hence a rapid mobilization of the masses was impossible. But the pusillanimity of the Social Democrats merely reflected the condition of the working masses themselves. The worker who still had a job did have something to lose, Marx and Engels notwithstanding. In this period of hopelessness his job meant all the world to him. The best way to safeguard it was to keep his nose to the grindstone, to say nothing and hear nothing. Six or eight millions were standing outside waiting for this job; and all that awaited the dismissed proletarian was a place in the endless grey lines at the employment offices. If one day the sirens announced a general strike, could he be expected to stand up and leave the little piece of world which he had so painstakingly defended with his silence and renunciation? Robbed more and more of the most elementary comforts, cut off more and more by increasing poverty from the culture to which he had been so attached, he exhausted himself morally in a merciless struggle for existence; unwittingly he himself was a fragment of the declining economic age which in Hitler's phrase ‘filled no one with enthusiasm to die’.

The National Socialists, on the other hand, preached death at every hour to their S.A. These desperate men were not all heroes either. 'When you are scared,' Röhm used to say, 'always remember that the others are just as scared as you are!' And Hitler taught them not to be soft, for the soldiers in the field had borne a thousand times greater hardships. But civil war is not won by heroes; it is lost by vacillating weaklings--and the secret is to frighten these cowards in any way possible. For this purpose the S.A. was the right tool. Precisely because the National Socialists for the present were unable to gain power over the factories and those workers who were still employed, the Brown Storm battalions were able to gather in that human type which was most usable, most supple, a type ready for all extremes: the bohemian of the proletariat, the unemployed. In normal times these would have been chaff, living at the edge of society; but now, if they were not the strongest, they were the most determined tenth of the nation. This tenth really had nothing to lose, often not even ideals. A part of these men believed neither in God nor in human rights nor in the classless society, and almost with pride Hitler declared: 'If this process of moral disintegration lasts much longer, the nation will fall apart and only egoism will be left. . . . That is why we have in our ranks hundreds of thousands whose life would have no sense and purpose if National Socialism had not given them a sense and purpose [several minutes of applause]. . . . You are nothing, your nation is everything!'

The sense and purpose of life for tens if not hundreds of thousands was to sit day after day in the 'storm centres' which the National Socialists had strewn all over the country. The storm centres were their headquarters, for the most part back rooms of beer halls. Both proprietor and customers had sworn loyalty to Adolf Hitler, for beer-hall proprietors have at all times been the faithful voice of the people. There sat the unemployed in their coarse brown breeches and discoloured yellow shirts for many hours of the day over their half-empty beer mugs; at meal-times they were fed for a few pfennigs from a great iron kettle that simmered in the laundry room; their uniform, often the only suit they possessed, had been sold to them by the 'field ordnance department' of the S.A. on credit. Every day--later twice a week--they spent several hours at their 'employment office' and with the money received from the State they paid the ordnance department for their uniforms and meals. Thus, Hitler's private army maintained itself as a sum of innumerable little groups defending themselves in common against cold and hunger, financed by the State they were planning to overthrow.

But when the whistle blew in the back room of the beer hall; when the squad leader cried, 'Attention!' then these men rotting in inactivity sprang up, formed ranks, and stood at attention while a man in high boots and armed with a horsewhip shouted: 'Everyone listen! . . . In the name of the Führer, the Chief of Staff has ordered . . .' And they

marched off. For wherever they might be marching, it could only be better. Suddenly one of them had a pistol in his hand, he hardly knew how it had got there; rushing through a house door with a dozen others, he found himself in a strange room, he didn't know where; the pistol went off, a man lay groaning on the floor, he didn't know who. This is no fiction, but an account of the notorious murder in the village of Potempa in 1932. One December night in Berlin boxes in which something seemed to be moving were pressed into the hands of a few dozen of these men; they were led into a movie house in the centre of the city; suddenly a whistle shrilled in the darkness, they stood up, shouted, opened their boxes, and hundreds of white mice ran through the theatre. Women jumped up on chairs and railings, a snake wound its way through one of the aisles. Outside, uproarious shouts answered the noise within; thousands who had been standing there in silence suddenly began to yell. Joseph Goebbels stood in an automobile, saluting and shouting. With a thousand raised hands the crowd shouted its reply. This went on for several nights, then the Government capitulated and did what Goebbels had been aiming at with his white mice and snakes: it distorted the laws to prohibit the picture that was running in the movie house. It was an American anti-war picture, written by a German and eagerly awaited by millions of other Germans, a picture revealing war in all its misery and horror: *All Quiet on the Western Front*, adapted from Remarque's best-selling novel.

Could these rowdies be expected to inspire the officers with confidence that the grey revolutionary horror of 1918 would not be repeated? On October 14, 1930, the hundred and seven National Socialists in parliament, at the behest of Strasser, Feder, and Frick, introduced a Bill to limit the interest rates to four per cent; furthermore, 'the entire property of the bank and stock exchange princes . . . must be expropriated without indemnification for the welfare of the German people as a whole'; the same should be done with the property of all eastern Jews, of all 'persons of foreign race' in general, and 'the large banks must be taken over by the State without delay'. Strasser, Feder, and Frick had for years put forward this suggestion at every new session of the Reichstag, and no one had paid much attention to the little group. But now a hundred and seven deputies, a sixth of parliament, were demanding the expropriation of the banks, and the bourgeois public, Hitler's financial backers among them, was shocked: that was Bolshevism!

So these were the aims of the mouse-and-snake heroes, the libertarian bands, the Brown People's Army! Goebbels had been speaking of it for years—'. . . certainly we fight with Marxist methods, only we will do it better than the Marxists'—but who had listened? For a long time it had been one of his favourite images to say that the National Socialists would one day 'mount the barricades'. He had been looking for a poet and musician to provide a revolutionary song, 'whose chords would ring out

on the barricades of freedom'. At length he found his poet of the barricades. It was the son of a Protestant military chaplain named Wessel, a student, National Socialist, and storm trooper. This young Horst Wessel was the exact mixture of ruffian and idealist that constitutes the armed bohemian. As a student, he suddenly broke with his family and student connections, to lead the life which in his opinion was suitable for a young saviour of the lost national soul; he lived in a slum section of Berlin with a girl who had formerly been a prostitute. It was an exaggeration to call this minister's son a pimp, but it is true that he lived, fought, and finally died surrounded by pimps. He was the leader of the S.A. in his neighbourhood, a militant and extremely successful leader. A gang, doubtless instigated by Communists and later hidden by Communists for a time, forced their way into his room in February, 1930, and killed him. After his death, Goebbels blew up this somewhat shady hero into a National Socialist legend; after all, he had died for the party. Horst Wessel had left behind him a marching song, three stanzas not unskillfully pieced together from the party's most familiar slogans; he had borrowed the melody from various existing tunes. The rather melancholy, unpretentious piece became the party's official song; later the 'Horst Wessel Song' became a second national anthem. Two of the lines in the last stanza ran: 'For the last time the rifle is loaded . . . Soon Hitler banners will wave over the barricades. . . .'

With horror the generals and their officers saw the day approaching when the army's machine-guns would be the last bulwark against the people—an army in ferment against a people in ferment! Hitler impressed it upon them as often as he could: 'Take away from the present State the machine-gun, take away the cannon, the hand-grenade, the police, take away the Reichswehr, and leave the present State to the love of its citizens—and you will see what remains of it!'

Many officers would doubtless have been ashamed to fire on their own people again—even if this people had marched under the Red banner. They had expected the republican State to save them at least from this. What Hitler wanted to say was: Not the republic, only I can save you. Therefore he took all possible pains to persuade the generals not to judge his party by the mice and snakes. The verses about rifles and barricades were removed from the 'Horst Wessel Song'—presumably by the author himself. The text now ran: '. . . For the last time the call to arms rings out . . . Soon the Hitler banners will fly over all the streets. . . .' And Hitler would do more than that to prove that he planned no attack on the discipline of the army. In one case, for example, the Reichswehr leaders proceeded sharply against their enemies and detractors among the lieutenants; Hitler utilized the occasion to disassociate himself from these enemies and detractors. Scheringer, the lieutenant and secret National Socialist, was arrested with two of his comrades on the drill-ground; from prison he wrote his memorable

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article. Asked if he were a National Socialist, he admitted that he was. Hence, the prosecution continued, he belonged to a treasonable party that wanted to overthrow the Government by violence. Scheringer was defended by Doctor Hans Frank of Munich, a personal friend of Hitler's and almost slavishly devoted to him; Frank was a young man of the post-war generation. At the trial he insisted that his party did not want to overthrow the Government by violence; to prove this, Hitler, who led the party as a dictator, was ready to take oath in court. Frank obtained permission for Hitler to appear as a witness, and Der Führer delivered his oath without hesitation: 'If we have two or three more elections, the National Socialist Movement will have the majority in the Reichstag and will then make the National Socialist revolution. . . . ' When the judge asked him: 'Only in a constitutional way?' he replied sharply: 'Absolutely!' The judge could not believe that he really thought he could achieve power without recourse to violence, but Hitler swore that he did think so. Then, the judge asked, once he had achieved power by 'strictly legal' means, would he not use force against those who had been defeated and weakened? On this point he would not express himself at first. Actually Hitler had made the most blood-curdling threats in his speeches; and if Seeckt had promised that the dictatorship of the army would not be a bloody tyranny, Hitler had promised that *his* dictatorship would be bloody. 'Either our heads or the heads of the others will roll,' he had predicted years before. The judge reminded him of this, and Hitler answered slowly and solemnly, savouring all the horror of his favourite fantasy, and calculating its effect on millions of men: 'When the National Socialist Movement is victorious in its struggle, there will be a National Socialist court of justice; November, 1918, will be expiated, and heads will roll too.' For the constitution, said Hitler to the judge, does not prescribe the goal, but only the road to it; it was the road of the Wise Men of Zion: via the strictest democracy to the most unbridled tyranny. 'We are travelling the road prescribed in the constitution,' said Hitler at a meeting, 'towards the goals prescribed by us'—towards beheadings, shootings, mutilations. One of Hitler's most gifted co-workers, the journalist Johann von Leers, described the scene in Leipzig a year later with enthusiasm: '. . . when Hitler uttered the wonderful words that sprang from the hearts of all of us, the lofty promise of expiation: then heads will roll!' Scarcely any other of his utterances ever so stirred up the mud that filled the souls of his men.

Just the same, he had sworn that he would not mount the barricades with guns, that he would not march, not shoot, not storm, the enemy positions; to his contemporaries it seemed as though Hitler had sworn that he was not Hitler. Actually he had with his oath shown himself to be what he was: a destroyer of democracy through democracy. To be sure, he did not really hope to obtain a majority of the German people and hence of parliament. It was enough for him to lead the strongest

minority, to perpetuate the paralysis of democracy, to destroy the democratic dream of the Reichswehr, to force the generals into dictatorship even against their will, and not out of embarrassment and as a temporary measure, but with joy and for good. But the generals should have no need to tremble at the thought of another collapse of the army as in 1918, of a 'Russian' programme, or of a 'Bolshevist' Third Reich. And his financial backers, too, his Kirdorfs and Thyssens, should be put at ease—although Hitler probably was more afraid of the generals. He coldly ordered his deputies to withdraw their Bill for expropriation of the bank and stock exchange princes. This they did in a silent rage. Thereupon the Communists indulged in the joke of reintroducing the Bill in the exact National Socialist wording. Hitler commanded his followers to vote against their own Bill, and they did so. Laughter in parliament and all over the country. Hitler saw that every time his party grew he had to conquer it afresh, break it and smooth the edges. These deputies, often unknown to him personally, still took the programme seriously; many honestly regarded themselves as a kind of socialist.

The whole National Socialist fraction was withdrawn from the Reichstag to keep them from committing any further mischief; publicly the National Socialists declared that they were boycotting parliament (February, 1931). In fact, Hitler once again broke and tamed his own party, and he did not intend to stop at his parliament members. Röhm, after his return from Bolivia at the end of 1930, called at the Reichswehr Ministry; declared that Hitler meant his legality seriously and would prove it; unreliable S.A. leaders who planned acts of violence would be removed. Röhm found a friend and supporter at the Reichswehr Ministry in the person of an old comrade from Bavaria, Lieutenant-Colonel Franz Halder, who, many years later, became Chief of the German General Staff. On his visits to the Ministry, Röhm had to become reconciled with many other officers whom for years he had reviled as cowards, weaklings, toadies, and slaves; his success in conciliating them speaks well for his self-control and diplomacy.

The chief of these despised officers was Kurt von Schleicher, then a major-general, a short time later a lieutenant-general. Schleicher most certainly was an army man, but he deserved to some extent the name the National Socialists gave him: 'office general'. To be sure, he was an officer by profession, but he was a politician if there ever was one. In 1900 he had entered the Third Foot Guards as lieutenant; in this regiment, one of the most exclusive of the old Prussian army, he had become the comrade and friend of another young lieutenant, Oskar von Hindenburg, son of the later marshal and president. At thirty-one he became captain and entered the General Staff; some years later, during the war, he became—still captain—one of Hindenburg's close collaborators; and as friend of the old man's son he became the old man's own younger

friend. A similar, even closer, friendship connected him with Groener, who spoke of him as his 'adopted son'. Through all these personal relations shines one of Schleicher's strongest talents—his ability to win the hearts of people. It almost seems as if the man's name (Schleicher: crawler, intrigant) had shaped his personality and career. Not that Schleicher was a timid or gentle nature; he loved life and power and showed it. But he pursued his lofty ambitions by means that seemed consciously adapted to his name, utilization of personal relations, extreme suppleness and amiability in conversation, persistent good humour. He was always ready with some affable assurance, but not always to back up his words. His bearing was self-reliant, but never seemed unpleasant; he was so amiable people forgot that he looked like a Caesar. But even his most congenial manners could not conceal his lack of scruples in the choice of his means.

During the war, in Hindenburg's headquarters it had been Schleicher's task to supervise German politics and at the same time to spy on Germany's allies; to some extent he had been the political brains of Ludendorff's short-lived war dictatorship. The career of Schleicher was one of those living threads which connected the political struggles of the old imperial army with the fate of the Weimar Republic; for years he had been the political brains of the Reichswehr Ministry as so-called 'Chief of the Minister's Office'—an all-powerful position which Schleicher in 1928 had secured for himself by an extremely skillful deal with the unsuspecting Reichstag. He had his share in the overthrow of Seeckt; the former chief's doctrine that the army ought to remain powerful and small was not necessarily his.

Röhm made a splendid impression on this powerful man, and won his confidence; to ingratiate himself, he even told Schleicher all sorts of amusing stories about Hitler's life and career; their general import was that Hitler, with all his eccentricities, was not really so bad. Schleicher, instructed by Röhm, was able to convince his chief Groener that Hitler was actually a rock amid the German chaos, a bulwark against the radical masses; even if, personally, he was perhaps unstable and none too strong, politically he was an anchor to the party of the Uprooted and Disinherited. The result of these conversations was a gentleman's agreement: in January, 1931, Röhm announced his inauguration as chief of the S.A. staff, and on January 2 Schleicher decreed that, since it was still by no means certain the National Socialists were really enemies of the constitution, National Socialist workers until further notice should no longer be dismissed from the arsenals and powder factories of the Reichswehr. In February, Hitler in turn issued a proclamation to the S.A. ordering them to refrain from street fights—'I understand your distress and your rage,' he said, 'but you must not bear arms.'

Mass discontent seethed among the extremists of Right and Left in the S.A. These men were by no means all noble warriors yearning to risk

their necks; no, for them legality or revolution was a question of existence. Without street fights they would one day be superfluous, and they would probably be superfluous if their Führer was serious in using democracy as his chief weapon. They knew that Röhm had promised the Reichswehr Ministry to dismiss the most dangerous among them. It is possible that someone in the Reichswehr Ministry had passed this on to them in order to create unrest among the Brown bands; anyhow, they knew that Röhm was selling them out. Hitler threw out these elements, after accusing them of planning an uprising. This was the Stennes crisis. 'I am your Führer, and not elected or hired by you, not sought out by you and appointed by majority vote,' cried Hitler to the discontented storm troopers. 'No, I am your Führer on the strength of my work! . . . And if all of you were to leave me, I should go on alone!'

Even before the court had sentenced Wilhelm Scheringer to imprisonment, the first doubts had come to him. He had visited Hitler in Munich; with enthusiasm Der Führer had dragged him around the new party palace and subjected him to one of his art speeches; when Scheringer wanted to speak of politics, Hitler had replied that the young lieutenant should believe and obey. Back in Berlin, Scheringer had complained to Goebbels of his experience with Hitler; he had asked the Berlin *gauleiter* whether the party still seriously intended to break down interest slavery? Goebbels replied: a breakdown could occur only to him who had to read 'Feder's nonsense', and when Scheringer argued that all this stood in the unalterable twenty-five-point programme, Goebbels cried in despair: 'I wish to God we had never heard of those miserable twenty-five points'.

That was the party's way with its most sacred principles! Even if the lieutenants were no more loyal to principle, many of them must have felt the same as the young officers of 1923, who had declared: 'It's all the same to us who marches; we'll march along!' (Meaning: and if Hitler doesn't, we march with somebody else.) But what if they had principles and believed in National Socialism? In both cases the practical result was perhaps the same. Scheringer sat in his prison cell and thought things over; the result of his thinking was that in March, 1931, Hans Kippenberger, a Communist deputy, stood up in the Reichstag and read a letter from Scheringer. In it the imprisoned lieutenant renounced Hitler and declared himself a Communist: 'Only by smashing capitalism in alliance with the Soviet Union can we be freed,' he wrote. Goebbels wired Scheringer asking if he had really made such a declaration. Scheringer wired back: 'Hitler betrayed revolution declaration authentic reprint Scheringer'.

A German lieutenant, nationalist, and warrior for freedom saw the sole remaining salvation in Communism; high S.A. leaders were stirring up rebellion against Hitler—was that the picture among the National Socialist masses? Groener went round preaching to his fellow Ministers

that the hour demands we support Hitler against the other National Socialist leaders; he is a prudent man who will obey the laws because he has every reason for doing so. Röhm had convinced Schleicher that Hitler desired nothing but freedom for propaganda; provided this were given him, he could easily be held in check, if for no other reason, because he lived in constant fear of being deported if he broke the laws. 'I have sworn legality', Hitler often said, 'and Herr Stennes will not make a perjurer of me', and the eternal fear of the Vienna vagabond trembled in his words.

And so the men in the Government let Röhm persuade them that Hitler was more harmless than he looked and not quite right in the head to boot. Brüning talked with Hitler, and afterwards each had the feeling that he could swallow up the other. The gloomy, silent Chancellor, a patriot as impassioned as Hitler, but shy and fearing his limitations, made a profound impression on the volatile Führer, and realized it; at times, perhaps, he thought he could lead Hitler. A formal understanding on the course to be taken was not possible, though Brüning himself had given Hitler the catchword that things could no longer go on as they were.

Thus Hitler wormed his way into the State system and the calculations and almost the confidence of those he intended to destroy—just by playing the good boy. Amazing how comparatively easy this was. He never won the confidence of the popular majority—never as long as there were free elections in Germany; but the men of the ruling caste, whether they secretly admired or only just tolerated or openly detested him, began to take him for granted as an indispensable and very big cog in the machine. It was not only cold reasoning that led Hitler on this promising and successful path; he followed some instinct of his nature that forbade him to take unnecessary risks. With this strategy he was already one step ahead of events. The world was in a state of revolutionary disintegration that had its repercussions from the vast spaces of the 'declining west' to the petty misery of bankrupt German communities. In the midst of this general decline there had to be the rainbow of a new order, based on force and firmness; a promise to the bewildered millions who did not—as Stennes imagined—long for more disorder, but for peace at home and abroad. To be sure, chaos was for Hitler a 'necessity of fate', or there would be no general longing for what he wanted to stand for; but certainly in his own private desire for personal safety he was a genuine interpreter of this longing. It was a desire for greatness and safety at the same time.

In Germany there were eighteen parliaments to be elected, not to speak of municipal bodies, and at every election the sworn enemies of democracy descended on public opinion in the name of democracy. These were the armed bohemians sent into the parliaments by the National Socialist voters. Goebbels called them P.o.F. and P.o.I.;

Possessors of Free Tickets—that is, of the right to use the railroads free of charge—and **Possessors of Immunity**—that is, of the right to lie with impunity. By now the National Socialists were winning an occasional Cabinet post in the smaller provinces. For more than a year Frick was a Minister in Thuringia (1930-31); and when Frick finally, by a parliament intrigue, was forced out of his post, Hitler considered this as the biggest defeat he had suffered since the Feldherrn Halle.

Frick had tried to render his leader a service which might have been more important than a victorious election. He wanted to make Hitler a German (to be exact, a Thuringian) citizen by appointing him as civil servant of his little administration, and so he appointed him constable in the small town of Hildburghausen.

Two years before becoming dictator, Hitler became what his father had been. With joyous solemnity, Frick gave him the certificate of appointment as a surprise, just before a big meeting in the city of Gera (July, 1930). At first Hitler did not know whether to be thankful or angry, but finally decided that the elevation to the rank of small-town constable was altogether too ridiculous to make up for the advantages of being a citizen now. Better think it over, said Frick with annoyance; after all, it's not so easy to smuggle yourself into German citizenship. Hitler thought it over for fifteen minutes, then spoke again with Frick and muttered vaguely: better give the certificate back. Frick's feelings were hurt. He told Hitler in no uncertain terms what he was throwing away. Changing his mind again, Hitler obediently put the certificate in his pocket. He made speeches to his Thuringian S.A. men, wearing the document over his heart; then he returned to Munich, a regularly appointed constable of Hildburghausen. When the story came out and aroused widespread laughter, Hitler maintained that he had quietly destroyed the certificate long since, and had never become what his father had been for forty years and had wished his son to become too: a policeman in a small town.

CHAPTER XVII

'NOW I HAVE THEM IN MY POCKET!'

HITLER WAS on his way to becoming the man of the hour. This did not necessarily mean that it would be the hour of this man. Decay and disintegration of society certainly created an atmosphere in which Hitler could thrive; however, a thorough process of adaptation was required. He had to pay the price for power, and this price always consists—among other things—of principles which have to be sacrificed.

Up to 1930, the coming man of destiny had appealed to an uprooted, disinherited, and small minority of desperate men, and had promised them the 'coming great divine judgment', the 'great hour for Empire and Nation'—war against France. Now he was appealing to the masses for whom the enemy was not France but poverty; who did not want war but jobs. And so war speeches had to stop. His article in January, which expressed the hope that world peace would 'go down in blood and fire', was about the last utterance of this style. From now on his slogan in his struggle for Germany was 'democracy'; in his struggle for Europe it was something even more surprising: peace.

Peace between armed intellectuals. For Hitler made his peace offer in an exchange of open letters with a French writer who had been a Socialist and now was a kind of Fascist, Gustave Hervé. It was Hervé who opened the conversation in October, 1930.

Hervé asked whether, if France should cancel the German reparations in case the United States should cancel the French War debts; if France should give Germany's colonies back, permit German rearmament and *Anschluss* of Austria, favour the restoration of the Polish Corridor, etc., would Hitler then be ready to come to an understanding with France and conclude a military alliance?

Hitler made this surprising answer: 'I think I can assure you that there is no one in Germany who will not with all his heart approve any honest attempt at an improvement of relations between Germany and France. My own feelings force me to take the same attitude. . . . The German people has the solemn intention of living in peace and friendship with all civilized nations and Powers. . . . And I regard the maintenance of peace in Europe as especially desirable and at the same time secured, if France and Germany, on the basis of an equal sharing of natural human rights, arrive at a real inner understanding. . . . The young Germany, that is led by me and that finds its expression in the National Socialist Movement, has only the most heartfelt desire for an understanding with other European nations.'

On October 26, 1930, the *Völkischer Beobachter* published this statement of its editor. The date is worth remembering. On this day Hitler began his peace propaganda, which continued uninterrupted for almost ten years. Inexplicable and incredible, it moved men by this very fact, but also by an undeniable breath of passion. With the same passion Hitler had said the exact opposite; had for ten years attacked the German Government for its willingness to conclude an understanding with France. 'The sword is our balance [he had cried] . . . the language of cannon is our language!' And now, when Hervé, in the style of the best *Realpolitik*, proposed that Germany should have equal military rights and as large an army as France, Hitler, the orator of blood and fire, crushed the Frenchman with the hyper-pacifistic answer: 'If this intention is really present in France, it strikes me as less important for Germany to arm than for France to disarm. France has it in her power to carry out at any time the disarmament that was solemnly promised Germany in the treaties, to free all Europe of a nightmare and set everyone's mind at rest.'

Half a year before this discussion with the Frenchman, Hitler had declared to the judge at a trial in Munich: 'In political life there are no principles of foreign policy. The programmatic principle of our party is its position on the racial problem, on pacifism and internationalism. Foreign policy is only a means to an end. In matters of foreign policy I shall not permit myself to be bound'—meaning, by programmes, oaths, or treaties.

Hervé's somewhat irritated reply was to the effect that there must be both a French army and a German army, and an alliance between them, because they had to defend Europe against Bolshevism—how could just Hitler forget that? This reminded Hitler that he was not debating with a Frenchman only, but with a kind of French National Socialist. He was speaking to the 'Aryans and anti-Semites' of France; and so he told them that National Socialism was not only a German movement, but a world movement as well; he lured them with a world plan: 'In my opinion the European Cabinets in their present make-up cannot think seriously even of a purely defensive war with Soviet Russia. The present-day States have equipped their armies and their soldiers for war with every conceivable weapon—grenades, machine-guns, flame-throwers, tanks, airplanes, gas—and they are also familiar with all the weapons of defence against these arms. But only a single State has armed and immunized its people spiritually against Bolshevism: Italy. The other European States possess neither political offensive arms nor political gas-masks against Soviet propaganda! The question of overcoming Bolshevism is a question of fascizing the European States. The present European States contaminated with Marxism cannot oppose any enduring resistance to the disruptive work of this world plague.'

Fascization of the European States! That was just what his new friend

Rothermere was aiming at when, in September, 1930, he prophesied that Germany 'would draw not only the three million Germans in Czechoslovakia along with the three million Hungarians in Czechoslovakia and Rumania, but perhaps also the Hungarian people into its sphere of influence. As a result of such a development, Czechoslovakia, which has so gravely offended against the peace treaty (by the repression of national minorities as well as by her total rejection of disarmament), could be put out of existence overnight. . . . This great national combination under German leadership, which I see forming step by step as the new face of Europe in the immediate future, would be a bulwark against Bolshevism. . . .' Hitler concluded his correspondence with Hervé by saying that 'to my deepest regret, I must reject any offer of German rearmament and a German-French military alliance'. His reason was that the German-French alliance would prevent the formation of a fascist world front and lead to new wars. He, Hitler, wanted peace—peace among Fascists.

The Central European bulwark which Rothermere foresaw was indeed on its way. On March 19, 1931, Germany concluded a customs union with the little republic of Austria, the 'brother land', which had been forbidden to join with Germany by the victors of 1919. Austria, a country without any appreciable resources, a country where even the peasants starved on their stony mountain-sides, was even more deeply shaken by the crisis than Germany; the political parties were even more radical, the contradictions more violent. Cut off from its economic resources by the disintegration of the Hapsburg monarchy in 1919, the country was living solely on its spiritual forces, which were bleeding it to death; solidly German in nationality and strongly conscious of it, it was torn ideologically into two main groups: the faithful Catholic population, for the most part peasants and middle class, and the strongly anti-clerical Socialist working class. The armed intellectuals and bohemians had also put in an appearance, and had mobilized many bourgeois and peasants; the workers had likewise mobilized. A starving Austria, bristling with arms, was on the brink of civil war.

The customs union was an emergency act. An exhausted Austria entered into an economic union with an exhausted Germany. An enlarged economic area was created, an even larger one was planned, for all the Danubian countries to the south-east of Austria (Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania) lived in large part from the sale of their agrarian products to Germany. Germany and Austria offered to take them into their new economic *grossraum*. It was Brüning's first attempt at a 'great policy of liberation'.

It is understandable that the leading men of Czechoslovakia became agitated. Was this the beginning of Lord Rothermere's new *Mitteleuropa*, built upon the ruins of the Czechoslovakian State? It is nevertheless tragic that in 1931 the small country could find no better answer to an

act arising from the right of self-determination than a sharp protest. France, fearing everything that made Germany stronger, likewise protested. Italy wavered for a moment, but then decided against Germany. All three Powers, France, Czechoslovakia, and Italy, issued their protest, for practical purposes a command: the customs union must be dissolved at once, for it was nothing other than a disguised *Anschluss* of Austria to Germany. The world was solemnly called to judge; the issue was put before the Hague World Court. Dino Grandi, Italian ambassador in London and the real director of Fascist diplomacy, said cynically to Doctor Julius Curtius, the German Foreign Minister, that, regardless of the World Court's decision, Italy would never permit the customs union.

Italy was right, said Hitler, and Brüning was wrong: for 'it is simply inconceivable to carry through a measure in foreign affairs if at home there are no forces to fight for it consistently and perseveringly or if they are left entirely unused. . . .' Brüning's failure confirmed his oft-expressed theory 'that it is not foreign policy which decides the course of a nation; it is first and foremost the nation itself, in its organization and education, that prescribes its own course within the surrounding world'. To the German public, smarting under this last of the great diplomatic humiliations at the hands of the victors of Versailles, Hitler said dryly: 'Not Versailles is the cause of the catastrophe. Your parties are the cause.'

The hardest blow against the customs union was financial pressure brought by France; short-term loans to Austria were called off, and this helped to bring the little country to her knees. The slow economic decline turned into a crash. The Oesterreichische Creditanstalt, Austria's largest bank, controlled by the Viennese branch of the Rothschild family, collapsed in May, 1931, and this crash may be considered the beginning of the second period of the European economic crisis; in its darkness and despair comparable to the German inflation. Collapse of German banks was imminent, and collapse in other countries was bound to follow. Europe (with the exception of conspicuously stable France, little touched by the events outside her borders) was threatened with a sudden standstill of even the most indispensable economic functions, and only a miracle could save it.

The miracle seemed to come from America. On June 20, 1931, President Hoover called on the European States to declare a one-year moratorium on *all* intergovernmental debts, and America for her part agreed to declare a moratorium on her own demands. This might have been called the fulfilment of Ferdinand Fried's prophecy: that the creditors had become unable to accept and digest their dues. It meant the almost certain end of German reparations, for few people believed that they would be resumed after a year's breathing spell, since it was equally improbable that America's splendid capital investments in Europe would be resumed on the same scale. France, by shattering Austria's economy, had helped to bring about a situation which forcibly put an

end to Germany's reparations. For two weeks the French Government resisted the American proposal, but on July 6 Hoover announced the acceptance of his moratorium by all the important creditor Governments. It seemed a miraculous last-minute rescue.

But for the German banks the miracle came too late. On July 13, 1931, the Darmstädter und Nationalbank, one of Germany's largest, stopped payments. The Government was forced to intervene. Ten years later, it seems like a legend of long-forgotten days that the insolvency of even a great bank should immediately have become a national catastrophe; since then we have seen the State master crises of this sort; we have seen the crises themselves pale before more serious problems. But the Brüning Government found no means of preventing bank crashes; it proclaimed a bank holiday, other houses followed the example of the Darmstädter und Nationalbank, several were put under State control for a long time to come, the flow of money halted, salaries and wages were not paid at all or only in dribblets. A domestic German moratorium helped temporarily, and German public opinion, overwrought and filled with a sense of doom, largely adopted the popular interpretation that this was the final downfall of capitalism.

But Hitler gave the following official explanation in his newspapers: 'Never in my life have I been as well disposed and inwardly contented as in these days'—the darkest for the German economy. 'For in these days hard reality has opened the eyes of millions of Germans to the unprecedented swindles, lies, and betrayals of the Marxist deceivers of the people. In these days', says Hitler, highly pleased to have won a bet through the misery of his people, 'great masses have seen, perhaps for the first time, who was right: the Young Plan swindlers, or the men of the Young Plan popular protest. In these days, therefore'—when once again hundreds of thousands thought they had lost their small savings, when millions failed to receive their wages and salaries—'I have rightly felt happy and content, while conversely fear and consternation have crawled up the necks of the party and newspaper swindlers of the Young Front.'

That is Hitler. The house must burn for the sake of this flame. When Hoover proclaimed his moratorium, it looked for a moment as though the doom would itself be doomed in the last minute, as in 1923. And now Fate sent him this bank crisis. The State declared itself incapable of mastering the financial catastrophe, which it could have mastered. Hjalmar Schacht demanded 'salvation from this system'. 'If the word democracy has any meaning at all,' said Schacht in the National Socialist jargon which he had opportunistically assumed, 'it means the subordination of the individual, employer as well as worker, to the great demands of the common welfare.'

In this summer of distress the anti-democratic forces rallied in a truly demoniac lust of destruction. To bring about the downfall of the power

that was still most dangerous to them, the Social Democratic Prussian Government with its police and administrative apparatus, the Rightist organizations again engineered one of their noisy and for the most part unsuccessful plebiscites. Their supposedly bitterest enemies, the Communists, marched with them. The disinherited of the Left called on their supporters to vote with the disinherited of the Right and thus overthrow the Prussian Government; in this they were faithful to their belief that not the National Socialists but the Social Democrats were the 'main enemy'.

In the Prussian plebiscite the Communists were privileged to join with the house of Hohenzollern. Prince August Wilhelm, a son of the former Kaiser, had become a member of the National Socialist Party and an S.A. man. When police dispersed a National Socialist crowd in the city of Königsberg, using their clubs, it happened that the Prince was in the crowd: proudly he wrote to his father about this absolutely new experience, and Wilhelm answered from his Dutch exile: 'You may be proud that you were permitted to become a martyr of this great people's movement'. But princes and Communists together were unable to arouse enough people against the Prussian Government; the plebiscite gave them only 9,800,000 votes, or 36 per cent (August 9, 1931).

This was certainly no time for princes. When Brüning cautiously sounded Hindenburg out on the subject of appointing a grandson of the former Emperor as regent in Germany, the man who had dethroned Wilhelm II balked, this time acting the all too loyal servant. The only legal Emperor, Hindenburg said, or rather the only legal King of Prussia, was the man in comfortable Dutch exile; to appoint one of his grandsons would be against tradition and legitimacy.

No king could give Germany bread, and it was bread that almost literally began to be lacking. Foreign markets were glutted and could no longer absorb the German exports to pay for raw materials. Even German capitalists had begun to withdraw funds from the collapsing economy. Brüning decreed stern laws forbidding the flight of capital, and raised the discount rate of the Reichsbank, for practical purposes the minimum rate for capital interest, to 15 per cent. Loan capital became as rare as butter in war-time. Again Germany sought the aid of foreign capital.

In this misery Germany had to decide between two possible foreign policies: either leaning on England—and this was advocated by Hitler—or looking for help in an understanding with France. France had a new Premier who had started a policy of buying or bribing a number of eastern and south-eastern States—Austria among them—with loans, to bind them more firmly to the French line. He was also willing to buy Germany with a loan, provided she would renounce for ten years any revision of her international treaties. This French Premier, who wanted to purchase a ten years' peace and French semi-hegemony over Europe

with cold cash, was Pierre Laval. He was the first French Premier to pay a visit to Berlin, a bold, unusual step; he came at the end of September with his Foreign Minister, the aged and declining Aristide Briand. Deep in thought, Briand stood at Stresemann's grave, his lion's head bowed and sad. But Brüning declined the French offer, stuck to his British policy; and under British leadership Germany's foreign short-loan creditors concluded in September a so-called standstill agreement—a veiled half-bankruptcy which for the time being kept the fleeing foreign capital in Germany.

Between England and France—between parliament and dictatorship—between the Left and the Right—between the workers' parties and the National Socialists, Brüning had a difficult path which his own followers made even more difficult. In the Prussian diet sat Franz von Papen, a representative almost unknown to the great public. He was the scion of an impoverished family of Catholic nobles from western Germany; despite the 'von' he was hardly a junker, for the Papens were in business. Papen was something different from a junker. He was a professional officer, and before entering political life, served for twenty-two years in the Prussian army with moderate success. Born in 1879, he entered the Fifth Regiment of Uhlans in 1896 as an ensign; in 1913 he became a captain on the General Staff. Lieutenant Kurt von Schleicher, three years younger than himself, was sent to the General Staff at the same time. Here the two men met, but soon their ways parted. In 1905 Papen had met Martha von Boch, daughter of a family of industrialists in the Saar. The von Bochs had intermarried with aristocratic families in Luxemburg, Belgium, and France—and in this connection aristocracy frequently meant heavy industry. Papen was advancing too slowly in the army; his fortune and connections directed him to the diplomatic field. At the outbreak of the World War he was military attaché in the German Embassy in Washington. In the midst of peace he organized acts of sabotage in the American armaments industry and was recalled at the insistence of Secretary of State Lansing. Exposed and hence useless as a diplomat, he returned to the army, and fought in subaltern posts in France and Palestine. When the English stormed Jerusalem, Major von Papen is said to have saved himself at the last moment, awakened from sleep by a subordinate, young Lieutenant Joachim Ribbentrop.

After the war, Papen attempted without success to return to the diplomatic service. His dream was to become ambassador to Luxemburg. From headquarters in the tiny neutral country, where the great international iron and steel cartels of Europe had their business offices, he meant to intervene in high European politics. He believed he had the talents and other requirements for bringing about a Franco-German understanding, based on the leading men of both countries; for he was convinced, as he later expressed it, 'that the man of good race and inner

qualities is more highly suited to bear responsibility than the average man. We must recover the habit of looking up to men who amount to something by their mind and character; who are masters because they can serve. . . .’ To lead Europe through such an international master-class was the aim of the German ‘Herrenklub’, which Papen had helped to found—the word ‘Herr’ meant gentleman with an overtone of ‘Master’. One of Papen’s French friends was Paul Reynaud, who later won tragic fame as Premier. In Luxemburg, Emil Mayrisch, one of the foremost iron magnates of the Continent, founded a committee for German–French understanding, to which Papen belonged. One of Papen’s publicist friends went so far as to maintain that his aims in foreign policy ‘were not really German but occidental’; Papen tried to do what hardly another German statesman dared: to reach an understanding with as bitter an enemy of Germany as Raymond Poincaré. For he believed in what French fascist doctrine called ‘le pays réel’: the all-importance of a superior leader class, beside which democracy was only a pretentious sham. He hoped to arrive at an agreement with this leading stratum of France on conditions such as Gustave Hervé later proposed to Hitler: revision of the Versailles Treaty, return of the Polish Corridor to Germany, German rearmament, German–French military alliance against Russia, the overthrow of Bolshevism.

Such an armed understanding between Germany and France was possible only if democracy were overthrown in both countries. For years Papen had believed that the Third Republic in France would be superseded by something like the future Pétain régime. He trusted that the Catholic Church would reconquer France spiritually and politically. In Germany the Catholic Church was less strong, but it did have a strong direct influence on parliamentary politics. And so the uhlan and saboteur joined the Centre Party. Under the pressure of the Catholic working masses the party had moved steadily towards democracy. A lonely voice, Papen had vainly tried to buck the current. His fellow parliamentarians found him irritating or absurd. Now in October, 1931, he raised his voice again; he told Brüning not to pretend that he was still governing democratically; he was already a dictator, and that was good; but why conceal it? ‘The concealed dictatorship of the Chancellor must strip off its parliamentary trimmings. The Chancellor should and must direct a national Cabinet, a Government, a dictatorship on a national foundation.’ With a sense of insult, Brüning replied that he had no intention of parting from his parliamentary base. But Papen went on preaching that the strength of Germany lay with the National Socialists, and that it was Brüning’s duty ‘to forge these glowing masses before they overflow with hostility; above all, this youth, still undisciplined, to be sure, but valuable material, must be fitted into the State, and by education won for the State’.

The man who had invented the Brüning Government thought along

not quite identical but similar lines. After a year and a half of disappointments, General von Schleicher had become convinced that the popular base of a strong Government could no longer be found where Brüning, half reluctantly, had so far found it: with the democratic parties of the Reichstag. Schleicher had studied the National Socialists through personal contacts and his private spies. By the autumn of 1931—this can be discerned from his policy—his decision was made. The German Government must detach itself from the Left parties; the strength of the National Socialists must no longer be wasted in mere opposition. Reichswehr wanted the people, here they were. The Chancellor himself confided to his visitor, Laval, that in one year the National Socialists would sit in the Government.

A few days after the German bank crash, Brüning had a conversation with Hermann Göring; he tried to persuade Göring to influence his party to moderate its attacks on the Government; otherwise Germany would be ruined. Formally Göring may have given a sharp answer; but events ran their course. Catholic bishops had excluded National Socialists from worship because Rosenberg's utterances compelled them to regard the party as anti-Christian; the whole Catholic Press carried on an impassioned fight against the party and its dubious 'positive Christianity'. But the Catholic Church, which had already reached an understanding with Italian Fascism (1929), could not ignore the fact that National Socialism officially combated Bolshevism and actually embodied strong anti-Bolshevist forces. In August, 1931, Göring went to Rome and was received by Cardinal Pacelli, the Pope's secretary of state (the future Pope Pius XII); he attempted to dispel the Vatican's poor opinion of National Socialism.

But these conversations and attempts at understanding were not aimed at a dictatorship such as Papen demanded; the aim was the creation of a new popular majority, and Hitler himself had pointed the way when he swore his oath to legality and the constitution. Here a cleavage arose between himself and the bourgeois-national groups; between the National Socialists and the German Nationalists under Alfred Hugenberg. Hugenberg, like Papen, desired the dictatorship of a leader-class independent of the people, of a group too small to be called even a minority. However, it was a half-dictatorial Government, but one based on a majority and confirmed by parliament, which the other great opportunist in this political game, General von Schleicher, desired. To this end he obtained for Hitler an interview with Hindenburg.

The two men were seeing one another for the first time. Hitler was agitated and embarrassed, and seems to have feared the meeting with the dull old man. He was afraid to go without someone who was sure of his nerves. Röhm would have been the right man; he, after all, was responsible for the close connection with the Reichswehr, thus indirectly for the invitation itself. But Hindenburg had a personal revulsion against

the homosexual adventurer, and Göring could not bear the idea that Hitler should appear before the Field-Marshal with anyone but him. Göring was in Sweden at the death-bed of his wife, whose long illness was drawing to an end. Hitler wired him impetuously; the meeting with Hindenburg seemed to both of them a turning-point in history. The dying woman herself is said to have urged her husband to go. Göring left her, met Hitler in Berlin, and went with him to Hindenburg.

What was said at the meeting is still unknown. Probably Hitler spent some time on his favourite theme, that only National Socialism could save the country—all Europe, in fact—from Bolshevism. It is certain that he complained of how patriots—that is, himself and his party—were being persecuted, and presumably in his agitation he threatened that under such circumstances no spirited resistance could be expected of the German people if tomorrow the Poles should overrun the eastern border. At all events, the meeting was a failure. Schleicher later related that the old gentleman had been disappointed and had said that he would not make this 'Bohemian corporal' Chancellor, but 'at most general postmaster'. Hindenburg seems to have had the impression that Hitler was no real German. As for Göring, he never again saw his wife alive.

It was a dismal time in Hitler's personal life. Geli Raubal, his beloved niece, had died three weeks before. Hitler does not seem to have been in full possession of his faculties at this time; he drifted along and let himself be pushed into decisions which he himself held to be mistaken, such as a new alliance with Hugenberg and the Stahlhelm. On October 11, one day after the talk with Hindenburg, a solemn foundation of a so-called 'national front' was laid in the little spa of Harzburg, with many brown and green uniforms. Hitler felt like a prisoner; he was so disgruntled and agitated that he could scarcely speak, and he refused to eat at the same table with Hugenberg and the Stahlhelm leaders, Franz Seldte and Theodor Duesterberg. In his speech he flung a few attacks at Brüning and demanded 'that the power and responsibility be put into the hands of the national Opposition'; but went no farther than to reject 'Governments which are formed without us or against us'. On the other hand, he did not shrink from saying that as long as Brüning governed against them, the National Socialists would not defend the national boundaries: 'From now on, a system which persecutes us cannot count on our help or protection in times of need, or even of mortal peril.'

But now Brüning himself let this system fall. He was making a sort of palace revolution against himself and his closest friends; he threw out of his Cabinet some Ministers who belonged to the Left, among them Doctor Joseph Wirth, the former Chancellor. Groener, the Reichswehr Minister, took over the Ministry of the Interior; this meant that Schleicher had his way. From now on, with planned inactivity, the Reich Government looked on as Hitler strengthened his private army and sent it swarming

into every town and village. The half-forgotten General Ludendorff, grown bitterly hostile both to Hitler and Hindenburg, wrote in an angry newspaper article that Germany 'had become a country occupied by the S.A.' To dissatisfied associates like Prussian State Secretary Abegg, Schleicher declared that it was utterly impossible to suppress the National Socialists or dissolve the S.A. The S.A., Abegg replied, was Hitler's private army, and where in the world was a private citizen allowed to maintain an army? Then Schleicher said: 'We simply cannot forbid the S.A., for we are no longer strong enough; if we attempt it, we shall be swept away!'

In November, 1931, a set of careful and bloodthirsty plans for an uprising were found in one of the South German National Socialist headquarters, on the Hessian estate of Boxheim. They had a suspiciously Communist air about them: the S.A. would assume State power, suspend all private enterprises, confiscate all revenues, take away the products of the peasants, feed the population in public kitchens; and anyone resisting, said nearly every paragraph, 'will be shot . . . will be punished by death . . . will be shot . . .' Hitler, without whose knowledge presumably nothing could be done in the party, declared indignantly that he had known nothing of these plans, but he did not question their authenticity. Yet in private conversation he was able to convince Schleicher that he did not favour such radicalism and that his person constituted a sort of dam against the revolutionary flood that was rising in the National Socialist Movement.

These conversations, which took place in November and December, 1931, must have made a strong impression on Schleicher; also on Groener, to whom Schleicher passed them on; even on Brüning himself. Groener began to reproach high Prussian police officials for spying on the National Socialist Party, and secretly or even openly supporting Hitler's personal enemies; for example, the renegade Stennes, who marched around certain quarters of Berlin with a kind of S.A. of his own. 'I hear you give Stennes money,' said Groener to Abegg, the Prussian State Secretary. Abegg replied that unfortunately he could not do that, as he had no money; but he felt that Stennes should be supported. Groener: 'That is absolutely wrong. Stennes is working against Hitler!' Abegg was speechless, but Groener continued: Hitler was the man of legality, he had sworn to respect the constitution. 'He must be supported against the others, who are all wild men.' The 'others' were Hitler's lieutenants, concerning whom Groener was prepared to believe all evil; only Hitler, he thought, was trustworthy. In consternation Abegg asked if the Minister believed a word of what Hitler said. Did he believe that Hitler would keep his oath? Groener repeated: 'He will definitely keep it. He is a man of legality. We must do nothing against him. We must support him!' Then he intimated that this was also Brüning's opinion.

These soldiers in government had an idea that only Hitler could realize: a democratic dictatorship. What he actually desired, said Brüning on October 13, 1931, in the Reichstag, was 'a Government of those parties which are responsible and prepared for responsibility', and to such an idea he himself would gladly cede his post; but an 'agreement between the parties which are necessary for such a Government is unfortunately out of the question in Germany'. In other words, democracy has destroyed itself. In leading a powerful unpopular Government, based solely on the authority of the Reichs President, Brüning thought perhaps that he was doing the will of Hindenburg and Schleicher; but he should have known what these two really wanted better than they knew it themselves: and that was a popular Government. But Brüning believed that he was making himself more respected by making himself 'more independent' of the Reichstag parties, his own Catholic Centre Party included. Now he felt in an even stronger position to carry on a sovereign foreign policy and to solve the problem of reparations, which had defied friendly negotiations, by a violent coup.

It was the right hour. The world—with the exception of France—was sick of reparations; Hoover's moratorium had actually ended them. The structure of international political debts was tottering; the world economy was beginning to dissolve into great separate blocks; gold, the international standard of value, the universal medium of exchange, was losing its dominant position. The world of 1924 was really collapsing, and in 1931 this was again recognized by one of the great world Powers: England.

In 1929 the Labour Party had returned to power. It was the second MacDonald Government, socialist in name. In 1931, under the pressure of the crisis, which also in England took the form of a financial stringency, James Ramsay MacDonald and a few of his comrades split away from the majority of the Labour Party. MacDonald founded a group of his own which he called the National Labour Party, and formed a coalition with his opponents, the Conservative Party (the Liberals had lost their former importance with the fall of Lloyd George in 1922). This coalition took the decisive step that had been an object of impassioned controversy for years: it detached the English pound from the gold standard. With far greater caution and incomparably firmer control, this was basically the same thing that brought chaos and ruin to Germany in 1920-23; a thing which the German Government frantically feared. A pound was now no longer a pound; its value fell from \$4.89 to \$3.49, thus giving a strong impetus to British exports. The stringent economy measures of the new Government temporarily plunged the country into unrest; but the Government stood firm, dissolved Parliament, and in the elections of October 27, 1931, the country approved the new policy by giving a majority of almost five hundred seats to the Government coalition, or, to all intents and purposes, the Conservative Party. Hitler,

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already dreaming of the day when, like Napoleon III, he would order elections and plebiscites in his country, said of MacDonald's electoral accomplishment: 'The MacDonald Government clearly demonstrated to the whole world the national urge for self-preservation. This was not only fair, but also logical from the standpoint of democracy'—of the democracy which, as Hitler hoped, would destroy itself.

After these elections the MacDonald Cabinet ruled for five years. It was actually a Conservative Government. The National Labour Party remained without importance, and Stanley Baldwin became once more the actual leader. From now on the English currency was a paper currency, the value of which did not depend on the free play of exchange, on the basis of gold, but on the will of the Government. The currencies of the Scandinavian countries followed the drop in the pound. In February, 1932, the MacDonald Government introduced a new tariff, which meant the end of British free trade; for a certain quantity of home-grown wheat the English farmer was guaranteed a price of one dollar a bushel. This new policy of the mother country, directed towards a closed economy, drew the whole Empire after it; the Empire Conference of Ottawa led in July and August, 1932, to a series of agreements by which the various parts of the Empire granted each other preferential tariffs.

The conference aimed at making the British world Empire really British. Hitherto England had carried on more trade with other countries than with her dominions and colonies. Now this was to cease in the main; in the following years trade between mother country and colonies assumed first place; a great 'Buy British' campaign was launched throughout the Empire. Thus a step had been taken towards British Empire autarchy; this autarchy was an answer to the new protective tariff policy of the United States, but it was also an answer to the commercial expansion of Japan, which, with the help of her wretched wages and the misery of her peasants and workers, flooded the world market with articles so cheap as to defy competition. The Ottawa decisions, which, in 1932, were ratified by the British Parliament, affected almost eight per cent of the United States export trade, about twenty per cent of the Argentine trade, and approximately sixty per cent of the Danish; they strongly affected Russia and Japan, and to a lesser degree Germany.

In the British developments Hitler and Rosenberg believed they detected the beginning of that spirit 'which is everywhere creating the same forms, though under different banners'. Hitler could not regard Ramsay MacDonald and Stanley Baldwin as the Aryans and anti-Semites with whom he wanted to ally himself; but in December, 1931, when Alfred Rosenberg went to London and became celebrated as 'one of the best dressed Germans', he spoke to English questioners almost as to friends. 'I admire the calm and assurance with which the English nation is combating its difficulties,' he said. 'This nation has no nerves

and in this it is setting the world an example.' Germany, he said, expected the support of England in her demands both for the cancellation of reparations and an international adjustment of armaments. England, he declared, has a strong sense of justice. Besides, he had distinctly perceived 'that England herself is beginning to feel the pressure of the present situation. . . . The economic and political pressure from Paris is becoming intolerable.' Unfortunately, Rosenberg went on, there were people in England who advised Germany to reach an understanding with France under any circumstances; but there was also another British opinion, 'which says that it is now time for England, as well as the rest of us, to offer resistance'.

It was on this section of British public opinion that Germany must rely, said Hitler in his speeches and in open letters to Brüning; she must direct her policies towards this England; and Italy, even America, would stand by Germany's side. In December, 1931, he received the visit of supporters from the Sudetenland, members of a minority grouplet of that German minority of which Hitler had said that Germany must constantly incite them to rebellion against the Czechoslovak State, not because they had a right to independence as Germans, but because Czechoslovakia was allied with France. He made them a speech telling them to be of good cheer: National Socialism would soon come to power in Germany and then it would take them under its powerful wing. The world situation, he said, already looked promising enough: 'In England at present a significant shift in public opinion is taking place. France with her military and financial policy is making herself responsible for all the world's wrongs'--he meant, because she would not cut her armaments or cancel German reparations. 'In America and Italy, as well,' Hitler continued, 'the anti-French tendency is growing from day to day, yes, we might even say from hour to hour. The untenable position of the world market literally forces the other States into a defensive front against the former beneficiary of the present state of affairs, and that is France.' But by this, he hastily added, he did not mean war. For, he declared, 'a war of European States among themselves would be as good as opening the door to Bolshevism'.

By October, 1931, a German observer, who, in his official capacity, saw much of foreign countries, felt justified in saying that 'Germany has become the great fashion; everywhere in the world everything German is the last word in *chic*'. But while Germany saw her territories freed from foreign troops, while reparations vanished and further diplomatic progress was in the offing, internal conditions deteriorated more and more, economic life destroyed itself, parliament fell a prey to its own disunity, and the misery of the people increased. At the end of 1930, while Germany still bore the burden of reparations, while there were three million unemployed and the German miner earned 562 marks in a quarter, Hitler sent a New Year's message to his followers, full of rather

questionable encouragement: 'After twelve months more the road to German freedom will be open!' Towards the close of 1931 reparations had been lifted from Germany's shoulders, but the number of unemployed had risen to almost eight million, the miner earned only 473 marks a quarter, and Hitler promised his followers that this would be the year of final decision: 'Let us march into this new year as fighters, in order that we may leave it as victors!'

It is profoundly characteristic of this segment of European history that it contained too many victories, too many concessions, and no real peace. As before 1914, they were wrested by one nation from another, or dearly sold by one nation to another. The fetters of Versailles binding Germany rotted and fell one by one; the German people correctly sensed that this did not mean more peace, but more power; concessions are not made to us because we have become more trustworthy, but because the world's ability to cling to Versailles is dwindling.

On September 18, 1931, a mysterious explosion occurred on the Manchurian railway near Mukden, which legally was still Chinese territory. The Kwantung Army advanced and 'avenged Japan's honour', occupied the Manchurian cities, and the Chinese central Government in Nanking, weakened by Communist disorders at home, could offer no military resistance, but had to content itself with a boycott which reduced Japanese imports to China to one sixth. Thereupon the Japanese landed in Shanghai at the end of January, 1932, drove out the Chinese army and destroyed the Chapei Quarter. On February 18, 1932, an 'independent' empire of Manchukuo, consisting of three raped Chinese provinces, was proclaimed in Manchuria. China protested to the League of Nations, of which Japan was still a member; the League sent a commission to Asia, led by an English statesman, the Earl of Lytton.

Was it for this that 'the war to end wars' had been fought? The Japanese assault on China profoundly stirred everyone who had previously believed in the peace of Geneva. At such a time it attracted little attention when Brüning declared in an interview (January 9, 1932) that 'Germany's position makes the continuation of political payments impossible'; and that these payments would inevitably lead the rest of the world 'to catastrophe'. In Asia a great nation had been cut to pieces because it was unarmed and torn by internal conflicts. This was exactly the situation in Germany, said Hitler, and he was not the only one to say so.

And let nobody believe, he went on, that this German weakness would be turned into strength by the Disarmament Conference, which, after endless preparations, finally was going to meet at Geneva, Switzerland, in February, 1932. No conference would make Germany strong again, but only the nation's own firm will. The official German line was that the aim of the Disarmament Conference must be to bring about the

disarmament of the great nations, as it was promised in the Versailles Treaty, which had explicitly stated that Germany's disarmament should only be a first step towards general disarmament. Hitler asked mockingly if anybody was so naïve as to hope that this promise would be kept; the answer was that to insist on her right was Germany's biggest asset in international politics.

Groener handed the Cabinet a memorandum stating that now, after thirteen years of unilateral disarmament, Germany must finally insist on equality of armaments. The world was spending seventy per cent more on armaments than in 1914; this at least was the estimate of President Hoover in a speech to the International Chamber of Commerce (May 4, 1931). Three days after Brüning had declared that he would pay no more reparations, Soviet Russia issued a public statement, placing herself on the side of Germany in the disarmament question: peace, she declared, depended on general disarmament, and disarmament 'requires the unqualified admission of the principle of complete equality of States to each participator in the conference [of disarmament], whether a great or a small Power'.

In all this clamouring for equality by disarmament a silent threat was hidden. If Germany could not reach equality by general disarmament, then there was only one way left: equality by German rearmament.

Amid the blackest domestic misery, Germany was struggling to become a respected Power in the crumbling council of nations. Brüning accepted Hitler's line, that foreign success must be based on unity and strength at home, and invited Hitler to reach an understanding with the Government. Groener wrote his memorandum on Germany's equality of armaments in the first days of January, shortly before Brüning announced the definite end of reparations. Germany took a deep breath, and tried to gather strength. Hitler paced the floor of the editorial offices of the *Völkischer Beobachter* in Munich; with him were Hess, Rosenberg, and Wilhelm Weiss, one of the editors. A telegram was brought to Hitler. It was signed Groener and requested his presence at a conference in Berlin. Hitler hastily read the wire, thrust the paper under the nose of all those present, and uttered a purr of triumph like a contented beast of prey. By turns, he brought his face close to Hess's, Rosenberg's, and Weiss's, stared in their eyes, with little cries of, 'Hey . . . hey . . . hey . . . '—as if he wanted to say: 'You see? You see? . . . Here we are, at last.' Then he brought down his fist on the telegram and cried: 'Now I have them in my pocket! They have recognized me as a partner in their negotiations.'

CHAPTER XVIII

DEFEAT

ON JANUARY 6 Hitler conferred with Groener, the following day with Brüning. Two years ago he had been an almost unknown figure. Now the future of the Reich was to be shaped by these conferences. The outward pretext for the meetings was that President von Hindenburg's seven-year term was due to elapse in May, 1932. A new President had to be elected. The most powerful political figure next to Hindenburg was already Hitler, but an electoral battle around the person of Hitler was bound to release violent inner conflicts, and inner conflicts could be fatal for Germany at the moment when she was fighting for recognition as a Great Power. Groener and Brüning had not been mistaken in thinking that Hitler would understand the situation. As always in such conferences, he was not quite sure of his own position. Both men hinted that he would doubtless come to power in the not too distant future; they hoped he would realize that until then Brüning could obtain more easily than he himself those foreign concessions without which Hitler could not hope to govern. What Brüning wanted of Hitler was his support in a kind of peaceful *coup d'état*. The presidential elections would simply be suppressed. The Reichstag could theoretically prolong the present President's term as long as it liked without elections; it could suspend the entire constitution, provided that two-thirds of its members were present, and that two-thirds of those present decided for the suspension. Hitler could give Brüning this majority, for the Chancellor thought he could count on most of the other parties. Hitler made counter-proposals: first elect a new Reichstag—for he calculated correctly that in the meantime the number of his followers had considerably increased; but then, why not simply re-elect Hindenburg by virtually unanimous popular vote, without an opponent except the inevitable Communist? 'Democracy', as he later put it in an open letter to Brüning, 'espouses the view that all State power issues from the people and hence all the representatives of the State power are only mandatories of the popular will. No domestic and foreign arguments against new elections can ever be a licence to infringe upon the constitution. . . .' Incited by Goebbels and Röhm, he wrote, over Brüning's head, a letter to Hindenburg, telling him that Brüning was planning to make the President infringe on the constitution; against this Hitler felt obliged to warn him; but he was willing to work with Hindenburg in the coming elections if Hindenburg previously stated that he disapproved Brüning's unconstitutional proposal. 'Then Brüning is done for,' said Hitler to Goebbels; and to Hindenburg's Secretary of State,

Doctor Otto Meissner, he said: yes, he, Hitler, would agree to nothing, unless Brüning were dismissed first.

From this moment on, Hindenburg entered Hitler's life, and Hitler entered the life of the old man. It was an encounter between two men made great by history and created for one another, and the encounter was not only political, but personal as well. When the two were face to face, the corners of their mouths seemed to show something like the grin of Titans who see through one another and contemptuously conceal the fact. Up to his last breath, Hindenburg treated the Bohemian corporal, the former Reichswehr spy, with ungrateful contempt; he gave him no credit for his really great achievements and regarded him neither as a personal nor political equal, but brushed him off like dust from his fingers. Hitler in turn saw through the fox-like, self-seeking old man behind the colossal legend, and in his intimate circle complained bitterly that Fate should have given him no more worthy adversary. The square head, the bushy moustache, the close-cropped hair, the lurking eyes—Hitler must have been terrified at the close resemblance between the old Marshal and Alois Hitler, the customs official. From some of the Bohemian corporal's words and gestures, we almost sense that in Hindenburg he hated, and at the same time feared, something like a father. His struggle against his own father ended almost murderously by death; a struggle at the same time against the State, tradition, law, and common sense seemed to revive in his relation to Hindenburg. And ultimately it had a similar end.

Now he informed this menacing, fatherly figure that he, Hitler, was ready to honour him as his marshal, his President (read: his father); but that Hindenburg must make him Chancellor. For that is what he meant by the dismissal of Brüning. We seem to hear old Alois Hitler: painter? — no, never as long as I live! Several times Hindenburg said almost the same words: Hitler — Chancellor? Never, as long as I live; and certainly not by these indelicate, blackmailing methods. Moreover, in a talk with Hugenberg, the questionable ally, who made up for his dwindling political importance by a provocative, overbearing attitude, Hitler in rage had claimed the Reichswehr Ministry for himself—they were already dividing the future power over Brüning's political corpse. Hugenberg had seen to it that this should come to Hindenburg's ears. The Reichswehr spy wanted to become Reichswehr Minister! Almost any concession might have been wrung from Hindenburg—but the Reichswehr never; to prevent that was almost a religious duty. Immediately (January 12) he sent word to Hitler that the dismissal of Brüning was out of the question.

For Hitler there followed nights more sleepless than usual, a time of covert watching and waiting. He listened to a thousand counsels and could not make up his mind to follow any of them. Goebbels reckoned that if Hitler should declare that he himself were running for President,

Hindenburg might retreat to avoid the clash. On January 19 Goebbels wrote in his diary: 'Discussed the question of the presidency with Der Führer. No decision has yet been reached. I am pleading strongly for his own candidacy. By now nothing else is seriously possible.' But two weeks later he was no farther advanced. 'Der Führer's decision', Goebbels noted on January 31, 'will be made on Wednesday. It can no longer remain in doubt.' On February 2 Goebbels wrote: 'Der Führer is deciding to run himself', but a week later, on February 9, he is obliged to admit: 'Der Führer is back in Berlin. New debate on the presidential elections. Everything is still in the air.' That was Hitler's force of decision, and in order to dispel unpleasant thoughts, he engaged in his favourite sport, pistol practice; Der Führer was 'an absolutely dead shot', wrote Goebbels admiringly in his diary.

Then again Hitler spent long hours in Munich at the house of Architect Troost, who had to draw plans 'for a grandiose alteration of the national capital'. 'Der Führer has his plans all finished', Goebbels reports; 'he speaks, acts and feels as if we already had power. This gives a magnificent self-assurance to everyone about him.' Only in the most immediate problem, the question of the presidential elections, none of his self-assurance was discernible. To be sure, on February 12, after 'computing all the figures again with Der Führer', Goebbels felt justified in saying: 'At last the decision has been made!' But he was very much mistaken; only on February 15 was any decision reached, and it was Hindenburg who reached it; although it was probably Groener who put this decision through. Hindenburg publicly announced his candidacy, remarking that no one should accuse him of leaving his post in critical times. Could Hitler dare to announce his candidacy in opposition to the old man? He did not dare. Again Goebbels found his Führer undecided. On February 18, after a conversation with him, he wrote half in despair and half in contempt: 'We must have the courage to live dangerously!' On the following day—for the how-manyeth time?—he was able to declare: 'The decision has been made', but two days later, on February 21, he was sitting with Hitler and some Italian Fascists in the Hotel Kaiserhof, discussing questions 'of plutocracy and anti-Semitism', and on the question which ostensibly had already been decided, Goebbels could only sigh despairingly: 'The eternal waiting is almost demoralizing'. Three weeks after the decision had been 'made' for the first time!

On the next day it really was made. At a meeting in the Berlin Sportpalast, Goebbels declared: 'Our Führer is going to be Reichs President!'—a propaganda confident of victory could not consider the possibility that he might not be elected. The audience cheered as a matter of course, and when Goebbels came home, Hitler called on the phone and asked if they had cheered. Goebbels was able to reassure him, and suddenly Hitler was in a good mood; he wanted to spend a merry evening and drove to Goebbels' house.

Goebbels, then newly married, lived in one of the outlying sections in the west of Berlin. His wife, née Magda Ritschel, was born in the city of Duisburg, not far from Goebbels' own birthplace in Rheydt. Her mother's husband had been a Herr Friedländer, so that the future Frau Goebbels had a Jewish foster-father. Magda Goebbels' first husband had been the industrialist, Günther Quandt, by whom she had a son; Goebbels, then an unknown young man, had been engaged by the family as a tutor, a divorce had followed, and Magda Quandt for some time had lived with Goebbels as his secretary. In 1931 they married, without the blessing of the Catholic Church to which they both belonged.

In this household Hitler had established a third family; beside his own Munich family, half destroyed by Geli's death; and that of the late Siegfried Wagner in Bayreuth. On his visits to Berlin he often appeared at the Goebbels', almost always accompanied by Wilhelm Brückner, that tall, broad-shouldered silent ruffian who had led his storm troops in 1923, had left the S.A. with Röhm, and in 1930 had returned with Röhm. Often Hitler also brought Otto Dietrich, his 'Press chief'; another often present was Ernst Hanfstaengl, the Harvard student, who had likewise reappeared in 1930, and, with his excellent English and effervescent manner, was used by Hitler as spokesman for the foreign Press. When Hanfstaengl wanted to cheer his leader, he sat down at the piano and played his so-called 'musical portraits', and Hitler nearly laughed himself to death when Hanfstaengl hammered out a portrait of the pompous and corpulent Göring, or played soft runs to portray Himmler moving noiselessly across the carpet.

And so Hitler appeared in his third family after Goebbels had sworn to him on the telephone that the masses had cheered. After four weeks of anxious hesitation, his own decision had finally carried him away like a gust of wind, and in this moment he probably believed again in his super-human force of decision. 'He is happy that the proclamation of his candidacy made such a good impression', wrote Goebbels in his diary. '... Der Führer told us long stories of his war days. Then he is very great and moving. When he left, there was an almost solemn mood among the few of us.'

They had a right to be solemn. Since the Feldherrn Halle in 1923 they had not gambled for such high stakes, and Hitler knew perfectly well why he had hesitated. Against his better judgment he suddenly found himself engaged in a bitter struggle with that Herr President without whose permission the revolution could not take place; or rather against the three or four officers in the Reichswehr Ministry who guided Hindenburg's will. But Schleicher could not so easily be diverted from his aim—as his friend Franz von Papen had formulated it—to 'forge these glowing masses', to 'put each man in his proper place and educate the valuable material'; at least not by the irritating accident of a passing election campaign. In tones overflowing with righteousness, Groener, at

Schleicher's behest, declared to the surprised Reichstag: 'The repeated declarations of the National Socialist leader and his profession of legality show that he is endeavouring to exclude illegal elements from his party. And the Reich Court has expressly established this fact. These facts have decided me no longer to deny the honourable right of national defence to the members of the N.S.D.A.P. . . .' (February 24, 1932). A magnanimous gesture! In spite of the bitter struggle, Schleicher, believing himself to be immensely shrewd, took all pretext for complaint away from Hitler. If anyone had made a mistake, it was, in his opinion, Brüning, who had dragged Hindenburg into this fight.

It was a three-cornered battle; not only a struggle between Hindenburg and Hitler. Both had to fight against a third party—the party which for decades had wielded the strongest political influence in Germany, especially in Prussia.

Hindenburg had fought heroically to make his own life as comfortable as possible; even before the World War he had demanded a higher pension on the ground that a head injury limited his ability to work. He had never striven for the unusual; but when at an advanced age it fell in his lap, he installed himself comfortably in his undeserved greatness. He enjoyed the advantages of a lofty position, and basked, none too appreciatively, in the blind love of an unsuspecting people. In 1925, when he was elected President for the first time, he haggled over his salary like a good business man, and secured almost double what the Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert had dared to accept. Thus a professional officer without personal means concluded his career most successfully. While he was serving as President in Berlin, Herr Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau, a junker in the province of East Prussia, discovered that an estate which had once belonged to the Beneckendorff and Hindenburg family was for sale. He made it clear to various other junkers what it would mean if the Chief of State were to become one of them. They collected money among themselves and a few industrialists, and for Hindenburg's eightieth birthday, on October 2, 1927, the Stahlhelm presented its honorary president with the estate and castle of Neudeck. As a precaution, Hindenburg's son Oskar was entered in the property register as owner; thus, if Hindenburg died in the near future, the State would receive no inheritance tax.

And so Hindenburg was a junker again, after a lifetime as a salaried professional soldier. He became a member of the class which was literally the most unproductive in Germany. For most of these Prussian junkers lived in a barren region, extending from the banks of the Elbe in Central Germany to the eastern borders of the Reich. The soil is full of gravel and clay, its chief products rye and potatoes. The land cannot support a population of small farmers; only large-scale farming, with large unpopulated areas planted to rye, potatoes, and beets, can hope to maintain itself. The farms are agricultural factories with poorly housed and

poorly fed personnel; at harvest time itinerant workers are brought in, either unemployed from the cities or impoverished country proletarians from near-by Poland. The holdings of the junkers are in the main no giant estates, but farms of seven to twelve hundred acres. Within his own petty realm such a landowner is really a lord. Down to the twentieth century he enjoyed a kind of jurisdiction over his 'subjects'. He decided who should marry whom, and when universal suffrage was introduced, he told his subjects whom to vote for. By 1930, to be sure, the power of the junkers was much weakened by the political progress of Germany; but the memory of it was not yet dead, the big estates were still there, and when the lord drove across the fields in his carriage, the workers still doffed their caps and cried: 'Good day, Herr Oberleutnant!'—for the junkers liked to be addressed by their former military titles.

When these landowners maintained that agriculture could thrive on their poor soil only in the form of large estates, the truth was that even in this form it could not thrive. The rye of eastern Germany could not compete on the world market with that of Canada or the Argentine; spirits, the most important product of their potatoes, was produced in such great quantity that it could not be sold. 'It's not a nice thing to say,' one of them declared, 'but if the German people would only drink more!' And things grew worse than ever when the landlords tried to improve their estates. Let your estates run down, Oldenburg-Januschau had been advising them since 1924, when Germany's period of post-war prosperity began. Instead of that, many borrowed large sums of money from the banks and burdened their poor holdings with costly farm buildings and stills. With a great expenditure, usually not of their own money, they tried to squeeze from the poor soil yields that it simply could not give. From the purely business point of view, it would have been sensible to turn large parts of the East German soil into pasture, or even better, forest, as was done in the Scottish Highlands at the end of the eighteenth century. The large Prussian landholdings were saved by the Prussian army, and not only because many officers came of junker families. The army was interested in maintaining the large East German estates, because it regarded them as necessary for war. Even if the rye and potatoes cost too much to produce, even if people did not like the taste of the black bread—these coarse and expensive foodstuffs were nevertheless a great food reserve in the event of a war in which Germany would be a besieged fortress. 'That nation is doomed to decay whose agriculture decays', said Field-Marshal Helmut von Moltke, the founder of the Prussian General Staff. The rye production of the East German junkers was protected and artificially kept alive by means of high tariffs on foreign grain. The junkers themselves thought the State was only doing its duty, and that inadequately. They threatened the German Kaiser that they would obstruct the building of the German fleet in parliament if their tariffs were not approved. Few classes have been so adept at manipulating

the State for their personal interests. Otto von Bismarck, who was one of them, frankly admitted: 'A State that takes my property is no longer my fatherland'. And half a century later, Alfred Rosenberg said with admiration: 'Those are the words of a *Herr*'.

How many of them were there actually? German statistics, usually so thorough, and well able to compute the amount of potatoes, beets, and needles produced in a year, never counted the German junkers; that is, the number of East German landowners and the extent of their property were never officially revealed. But in private researches Johannes Conrad, an economist writing in the eighteen-eighties, counted 11,015 large landowners; together they owned 16,433 estates; 113 of them owned from 12,000 to 25,000 acres; 46 over 25,000 acres; the largest landowner was doubtless the Hohenzollern family, with 415,000 acres.

Now this class entered Hitler's life, and his struggle for power in Germany was in no small measure a struggle with them and a victory over them. At first the junkers were full of distrust. National Socialist masses in the eastern plains often struggled bitterly with the landowning aristocracy; for it was the Uprooted and Disinherited, the day labourers and hired hands, who began to fill the ranks of the S.A. in the country. The National Socialists inspired them with a self-confidence they had never before known. Hitler solemnly promised the large landowners to protect property; but when R. W. Darré or Gregor Strasser spoke to the masses, they said pretty much the opposite. Gottfried Feder, the breaker of interest slavery, who still regarded himself as the spiritual founder of National Socialism, proclaimed that after its victory his party would create a belt of small peasants in the East, 'with farm beside farm'; in other words, that he would smash many of the large, heavily indebted and unprofitable estates.

Since 1929 the Reich had thrown large sums of money into the distressed agriculture of East Germany. Taxes had been remitted, there had been cash gifts; but above all, the State intervened when a landowner had overburdened his property with debt and could no longer pay the interest—in other words, when he went bankrupt. Then a financing establishment set up by the State assumed the debt, paid the creditors, and frequently became the creditor—which in practice often meant that the money was lost for good. In 1930-31 over two hundred and eighty million marks were given to Eastern agriculture and vanished like a drop of water in a giant sponge; in March, 1931, it was decided to pour in another nine hundred million marks in the course of the following years. And that was not all, for in the warehouses of the Reich there lay about a billion marks' worth of unsaleable potato spirits, which the State had purchased from the big potato producers with the taxpayers' money.

This was the *Osthilfe* (Eastern aid). It cannot be said that the small group of junkers received most of this money; it is even true that per acre the small owners received higher sums than the big ones. It was the

single cases of feudal favouritism that stirred up public opinion. Cases came to light such as that of Herr von Q., who had squandered his whole fortune in light company and then applied for *Osthilfe*; the official to whom he applied turned down his request, but his superior, himself a baron, decided that the debts which von Q. had incurred on gambling and women must be paid from the taxpayers' money in order to preserve his estate, 'since it has belonged to the family for several hundred years'. The family of the former Kaiser, one of the wealthiest men of Germany, took their share; old Oldenburg-Januschau used the sum with which he was supposed to bolster up his three insolvent estates, in order to buy a fourth; when the scandal came to light, he wrote indignantly in the German Press that everyone else had done the same, and his article began with the words:

"The aged pelican said: "Be fair,
You folks, now let me have my share".'

But the problem of the German East and its junkers was something bigger and more serious than this scandal. That such a group, with its petrified class consciousness, should still exist, tearing and tugging at the political body: this was the real problem. For it was actually the last remaining group in Germany with an exclusive class consciousness. For years it had been steadily losing political power; its economic straits were growing worse and worse, and now it was struggling desperately against extinction. At first Brüning had believed it unjust to let the big Eastern landowners suffer more than their share from the world crisis; for that reason he had let them have the *Osthilfe*. Gradually he became convinced that there was something fundamentally rotten. He and his Cabinet developed plans for a solution: those large estates which were overwhelmed with debt and economically untenable should be foreclosed by the State, divided and settled with peasants; it was hoped that the peasant, with his tenacity and frugality, would be able to maintain himself where the large landholder had failed. The big landowners spoke of 'agrarian Bolshevism' or 'Bolshevism' pure and simple, and began to put pressure on Hindenburg, the highest landowner of the Reich, to remove Brüning.

But in the presidential election Brüning and Hindenburg seemed inseparable. And so the junker class could not vote for the first junker of the Reich, in spite of Oldenburg-Januschau, in spite of the estate of Neudeck. The great virtue of loyalty turned strange somersaults in this election. The junkers left the Field-Marshal in the lurch, but did not go over to Hitler. Hitler's comrade of many pacts, Hugenberg, worried that his comrade might win, knifed him by setting up a candidate of his own. This was the former Lieutenant-Colonel Theodor Duestenberg, the second president of the Stahlhelm, of which Hindenburg was honorary president—comrade against comrade, president against

honorary president! Enraged, the National Socialists struck back at Duesterberg with a deadly weapon: they discovered that the unfortunate candidate's great-grandfather had been Abraham Selig Duesterberg, a Jew. Duesterberg answered that he was deeply shaken by this revelation. He swore on his honour that he had known nothing of his Jewish origin, but that he would let no revelations drive him out of the political struggle. The junkers also refused to be frightened by revelations. Incensed against Brüning, doubting Hindenburg, and thoroughly opposed to Hitler, they voted for Duesterberg; most of the princes of the House of Hohenzollern, for instance, were among his supporters.

Hitler's adversaries might well have fought back with the reply that only yesterday he himself had not been a German. To make his candidacy possible at all, the National Socialist-controlled Government of the little 'country' of Braunschweig, in all haste, had made him an attaché at the legation which the country, in accordance with antediluvian custom, maintained in Berlin. By becoming an official, Hitler automatically became a subject of Braunschweig, hence a citizen of the German Reich; a living symbol of Austria's 'Home to the Reich' sentiments; a foreign-born German fighting to become President. The new citizen travelled day and night and spoke to crowds of sometimes a hundred thousand. Many people were puzzled by the fact that millions followed him, although almost the whole big Press was grimly against him. Brüning carried on a similar campaign for Hindenburg; the old man himself spoke only a few sentences, of which a recording was made to be played over the radio. The record made a robust impression with its gruff words: 'Anyone who doesn't want to vote for me doesn't have to'.

A large part of German capital financed Hindenburg's election campaign, and thus refuted the legend that German capital, acting as a body, has brought Hitler to power. The three most important German industrialists—Carl Friedrich von Siemens, who controlled the electric power industry; Carl Duisberg and Carl Bosch, leaders of the chemical industry—belonged to the Hindenburg Committee, not to mention the bankers who came out almost unanimously for the Marshal-President.

The organizer of the Hindenburg Committee was a young politician, extremely talented and ambitious, but up to that time relatively unknown: this was Günther Gereke, Reichstag deputy, officer, jurist, and landowner. Gereke put aside a part of the money collected by the Committee, and later, when summoned into court, refused to say what had become of it. It is improbable that he used it for private purposes, but there is reason to believe that Oskar von Hindenburg used the money for purposes which, to put it mildly, had little to do with the political functions of the Hindenburg Committee.

Yet Hindenburg was not *the* candidate of German capital; a considerable part of Germany's political funds were at the disposal of Hugenberg and Duesterberg, and Hitler had his Kirdorfs and Thyssens, who

had not abandoned him. The powers of German finance created no united front in this campaign. But one group of citizens was solidly behind Hindenburg, and these were the partisans of democracy. Since the beginning of the year, these elements had formed a new organization with an unprecedented propagandist appeal. The old 'Black, Red, and Gold Reichshanner', the fighting organization of the Social Democrats and the trade unions, had been reorganized under a new leadership. The new organization was called the 'Iron Front'; it tried to emulate the Communist principle of organizing the workers in the larger factories into self-contained combat groups; and it began to make preparations for a serious civil war. The idea was to win a firm grip on some of the big, strategically important factories, and by threatening nation-wide sabotage to cut the nerves and sinews of any political *coupe* before it started.

This front bore the actual burden of Hindenburg's election campaign. But even if the democratic masses rallied to Hindenburg, the candidate himself was no democrat—as has often been the case with the leading figures of democracy, and not only in Germany. Since labour leaders and capitalists were both for Hindenburg, Hitler might well have cried out: There you have it, Isaac and Moses Cohn, the capitalist and the labour leader, arm in arm, a pair of brothers wanting the same thing. True, for some time he had been moderating this tone—association with big industrialists and bankers had doubtless taught him caution. But in the provinces his speakers made no bones about calling Hindenburg the candidate of the Jews. The Communists, in turn, required no great flight of the imagination to represent Social Democratic support of the Kaiser's Field-Marshal as a 'betrayal of the workers'. As seven years before, they chose Ernst Thaelmann, their party chairman, as their candidate.

Hitler set himself up as the candidate of the workers and the masses in opposition to Hindenburg. He described conditions in a sentence that was effective and not untrue: 'Things have come to such a pass that two working-men must feed one unemployed'. When asked by what right he set himself above all the authorities, specialists, Ministers, and excellencies, Hitler declared: 'With the right of a man who comes of the nameless mass that is the people', and Groener may again have scented Bolshevism. In an open letter to Hindenburg, Hitler complained about persecution by the police: 'Even you, Herr Reichs President, cannot set aside the article of the constitution which provides for free elections'. It was hard to uphold the strategic line that this was no fight against the venerable Field-Marshal, but against Brüning and his group. 'Old man,' said Hitler, embarrassed and not quite tactfully, 'we honour you too much to suffer that those whom we want to destroy should use you as a front. We are sorry, but you must step aside, for they want to fight, and so do we. . . .' Most of the upper class were at a loss in this election fight, and many decided for Duesterberg; but Fritz Thyssen, the heavy

industrialist, declared: 'I am voting for Adolf Hitler, because I know him well and am firmly convinced that he is the only man who can and will rescue Germany from ruin and disintegration'.

And all blows were permitted! Röhm put his S.A. and S.S. in readiness; he ordered them to gather in their private barracks; flying commandoes stood ready to seize the arsenals of the Reichswehr. A ring of National Socialist troops was thrown around Berlin; the families of the leading National Socialists left the capital. Then Röhm called on Schleicher like a good boy and informed him that he had taken a few precautionary measures; nothing of importance. But Reichswehr agents brought in different reports, and Groener began to quarrel with Schleicher, saying that this was beginning to look dangerous. The Minister no longer followed his adviser without question as before. When Schleicher refused to recognize the danger of an insurrection of the S.A., Groener wrote a letter to Carl Severing, Prussia's Social Democratic Minister of the Interior, calling on him to act; he wrote another open letter to Hitler, demanding that he publish his 'positive aims', and 'thus destroy the grave anxiety of millions of Germans . . . over the dangers of a Bolshevik development'. Severing's police raided National Socialist headquarters, and obtained a copy of Röhm's order. Severing also found strategic maps and complete revolutionary battle plans. And near the Polish border a very strange thing was found: orders of local S.A. leaders, stating that in case of a sudden Polish attack on Germany the S.A. should not take part in the defence. This was what Hitler had several times threatened in his speeches and afterwards represented as harmless. It was high treason.

But the German voters showed with determination that they would not tolerate Hitler's *coup*. Hindenburg's campaign office had announced that he would receive 18,000,000 votes. Goebbels had retorted that on the day after elections the 'I' would have to be crossed off this figure. Hitler, more cautious and worried, admitted in a speech that regardless of how the elections turned out, the fight would go on. As it happened, Hindenburg obtained 18,600,000 votes, Hitler only 11,300,000; the 2,500,000 of the upper class who supported the great-grandson of Abraham Selig Duesterberg found themselves hopelessly lost on the battlefield of democracy. The Communists garnered nearly five million votes for Thaelmann, two and a half times as many as seven years before.

The victor's name was Hindenburg, but it was democracy that had really been victorious. Hindenburg's support consisted of the solid Social Democratic block of eight to nine million voters; some six million Catholic voters, who followed Brüning; and the greater part of the moderate liberal bourgeoisie. The figures clearly showed that only a small fraction of the conservative, reactionary, military-minded population had followed the old magnetism of Hindenburg's name. Goebbels was beside himself; he dashed to the telephone and asked Hitler in Munich whether the useless election battle should not be abandoned.

It is possible, though not certain, that he asked whether the S.A. should not march and correct the election results by a *coup d'état*. Hitler rapidly countered the danger of unauthorized eruptions by the desperate announcement that he would continue the electoral struggle. This meant: I forbid violence; we remain legal.

For when all the figures were computed, it turned out that Hindenburg had not achieved an absolute majority. A second election was required by law, and in the very night of his defeat, Hitler dictated to Otto Dietrich, his Press agent, a proclamation to show his disappointed and frightened followers that they had really won a great victory. 'From seven men we have grown to almost eleven and a half million,' he said. In difficult circumstances he always found consolation in recollecting the party's meagre beginnings. Since 1930, he went on, they had gained five million votes. As Duestenberg's votes 'rightly' belonged to them, they really had 13,800,000, and needed only 'to snatch two and a half millions from the enemy's front'—with such juggling he tried to persuade his followers that a hard task was really easy.

He changed his methods fundamentally. In the first campaign he had attacked his enemies; in the second he spoke of himself. In the first he had painted the misery of Germany—'the whole people up to the ears in debt, trembling from month to month that their cheques will be protested, the municipalities ruined, whole cities facing collapse, the nation and the States without money. Small countries scoff at Germany and large ones despise us. Since the destruction of Carthage no important people has been treated like the German people'—now he described the brilliant, miraculous future that would be embodied in himself. He became the great apparition descending on Germany from Heaven—and that literally. He hired a large Junkers plane and flew from city to city. Three, four, sometimes five times a day Hitler spoke to crowds of ten thousand and over; millions saw him, and while sometimes he was so hoarse that he could scarcely emit a croak, he continued to depict a picture of boundless future happiness: 'In the Third Reich, every German girl will find a husband!'

In this second campaign Hitler was able to win over the class that really belonged to Hindenburg. The Kaiser's eldest son, former Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, who led a merry life on his estates in Silesia, in the theatres, bars and sport stadiums of the capital, had quietly voted for Duestenberg in the first election. In the second, in order to break publicly with Hindenburg, he said: 'Since I regard it as absolutely necessary for the national front to close its ranks, I shall vote for Adolf Hitler'.

One representative of this class, Hans Grimm, author of a widely read novel about Germany's 'Lebensraum', declared that he would vote rather for Hitler's cause than for the 'coarse and demagogic' Hitler himself, because Hitler's 'new national movement has become—and this is

the greatest thing that can happen to a man—more than he is'; therefore, and because there was no other choice, his, Grimm's, vote for Hitler was meant, 'not for the National Socialist Movement, not even for Hitler's person, but for a new Germany'.

Poor fatherland! You must entrust yourself to the wolves unless you want to go to the dogs. And it did not even help. At the second election, Hitler, though increasing his vote to 13,400,000, was again defeated by Hindenburg with 19,300,000. In the decisive hour Thaelmann was abandoned by many; his vote fell to approximately 3,500,000.

One thing was clear after these elections: the large majority of Germans were opposed to National Socialism. But nothing else was clear. It was plain what the country was against, but not what it was for. Nevertheless, the elections surely gave the Government a moral sanction to stamp out the smouldering flame of National Socialist civil war after so much hesitation. Groener was embittered; for many months he had believed firmly in Hitler's legality, he had even told him so publicly—and then suddenly the S.A. had drawn its ring around Berlin and armed for an attack on the arsenals of the Reichswehr.

But Schleicher had entirely different plans for the S.A., and not only for the S.A. In his conversations with Röhm a plan had matured by which both men had involved themselves in a treasonable plot, one against the State, the other against his party. The plan was to separate not only the S.A. but the other combat leagues from their parties by a sudden blow and put them under the jurisdiction of the State. At once Germany would have a 'militia' numbering millions, with Schleicher as their General. If the General suddenly felt that his chief, Groener, was in his way, Röhm had almost the same feeling towards Adolf Hitler. Röhm had become more and more open and confiding towards Schleicher; he had played Hitler into Schleicher's hands by telling him a number of unrepeatable stories about his Führer; in conversation with third parties, Schleicher boasted of knowing the most gruesome details.

Röhm was convinced that Germany was approaching a period of pure military rule; and not only Germany. In every country, he thought, there was a nucleus of soldierly men with an inner bond between them. It was immaterial under what party banners they had previously marched. For the parties were associations of shopkeepers; they had grown out of bourgeois interests and bourgeois experience; they pursued the aims of a peaceful world that seemed to be doomed, and consequently they were obsolete. This might be equally true of the National Socialist Party organization, to which Hitler had firmly welded the S.A. Now the party had again been defeated in an election, and perhaps Hitler's course would turn out to be wrong. Then it would be the hour of the S.A. Civil war was hanging over the country. If Röhm had known Nietzsche better, he might have recognized his own dreams in the philosopher's prophecy of rising European nihilism.

The unusual step which Röhm now took was probably taken with the knowledge, even the wish, of Schleicher. Röhm opened negotiations with the 'Iron Front'. Among its leaders there was a man who had once worked closely with Röhm, and who, like Röhm, might have called himself one of the inventors of Adolf Hitler. This was Karl Mayr, a former major in the Reichswehr. He had been a captain in that information section of the Munich Reichswehr which had sent out Hitler as its civilian employee, first to spy on the inner enemy, then to speak to the people in the streets and squares. Mayr, a true genius in the department that military men euphemistically call 'information service', had a few years later broken with the Reichswehr and all his political friends. He had gone over to Social Democracy, had helped to build up the Reichsbanner, perhaps in the conviction that this was the right way to create a people's army. When a new leadership transformed the Reichsbanner into the 'Iron Front', Mayr vanished from the central leadership, but continued in his own way to work in the ranks. Röhm now turned to this old comrade. Was there no way, he asked, of bringing the S.A. and the Iron Front together, of getting rid of the useless political windbags and 'making the soldier master of Germany'?

Röhm was shrewd enough not to keep the conversation secret from Hitler. The interview took place in Mayr's apartment, and with all the trappings of a spy movie; behind a curtain sat a lady taking shorthand notes. Mayr asked Röhm what grounds he had for thinking that he could detach the S.A. from the party. Röhm replied that he knew he had powerful and dangerous enemies in the party; Mayr's comment on this was: Would you like me to tell you the name of your future murderers? At that time Röhm's wild homosexual life had become fully public; there was great bitterness in the ranks against this leader who brought shame to the organization; Hitler had defiantly covered Röhm. 'Captain Röhm', he said, 'remains my Chief of Staff, now and after the elections, despite all slanders.' The underground hostility to him was all the bitterer. A few months later, a Munich court actually did sentence two obscure National Socialists, Horn and Danzeisen, to short jail terms for having talked of murdering the Chief of Staff; but the court believed them when they said that it had been mere talk.

The conversation between Röhm and Mayr seems likewise to have gone no farther than talk, because Mayr had lost his influence on the Iron Front.

But the fact remains that Röhm was willing to subordinate the S.A. to the State. Groener, however, wanted no part of this, and insisted that the army of civil war must be destroyed; Schleicher clung to his opinion that this was impossible, Groener threatened to resign, and put through a unanimous Cabinet resolution; Hindenburg gave his consent. Three days after his re-election, the S.A. and S.S. and their subsidiary organizations were dissolved. For, said the Government proclamation signed by

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Groener: 'No Reich Government can tolerate an attempt by any party to form a State within the State and create for itself an armed force. . . .' Hindenburg was not fully convinced until Groener told him about the treasonable orders to the S.A. in Pomerania.

Neither Hitler nor his followers dared to resist for so much as a moment. First they had been beaten by the voters, now they were crushed by the army. Was Adolphe Légalité on the right way? Would democracy really destroy itself? And if so, would National Socialism still live to see the day? The movement grew and grew, but it did not become more powerful, only more needful of power. 'You know, I am one of Germany's biggest business executives', Hitler used to say humorously, when he met with industrialists. For the S.A. in the form of its 'ordnance department' had become a great department store with large stocks of clothing, uniforms, boots. The annual turnover in these goods was estimated at seventy million marks in 1932. In addition, the party had its own insurance against homicide and disability, which paid out a few hundred marks to the survivors of S.A. men shot down in battle for Adolf Hitler. The funds for all this had to be raised among the party masses; no millionaire or any group of millionaires was rich enough to do more than cover an occasional deficit for such a giant enterprise. There was indeed a deficit which mounted dangerously; its source was the brown shirts and breeches which the S.A. men bought from the ordnance department and took a long time in paying for. The longer Hitler struggled for power, the more the burden of debt grew; he would not forever be able to find the money to feed his unemployed S.A. men. 'When you have power', wrote Goebbels-Machiavelli in his diary, 'you can get money enough. But then you no longer need it. If you haven't got power, you need money, but then you don't get it.' The fight for State power became a fight for the State treasury.

CHAPTER XIX

HINDENBURG'S STICK

THE SPIRITUAL founder of the modern Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIII, said in his encyclical, *Libertas Humana* (1888): 'It is quite unlawful to demand, to defend, or to grant unconditional freedom of thought, of speech, of writing, of worship'. Some years earlier he had dealt with certain philosophers who 'say that all power comes from the people . . . but from these, Catholics dissent, affirming that the right to rule is from God'.

The Church was not, as many radicals believed, the defender of present-day society, for in his most famous encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, Leo XIII sharply attacked the economic age: 'A small number of very rich people are in a position to subject the mass of the poor to a yoke that is little better than slavery . . .' Altogether: 'On the other hand, the socialists . . . are endeavouring to destroy private property. But private property is the natural right of every man.'

The spirit of the age is truly mirrored in these ecclesiastical documents. With the *Communist Manifesto* and, in their particular way, the *Protocols*, they are among the most potent documents of our times. What they reflected was not so much the imprint of existing things as the shadow of coming ones. Deeply human and Christian as they were, there was an overtone, inaudible at the time, which was to be re-echoed decades later in many phrases of Hitler.

That successor of Leo who made peace with fascism in 1929, Pope Pius XI, published in 1931 another encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (the title means that it came forty years after *Rerum Novarum*). Here the Church attacked sharply the system of monopoly capitalism, that 'immense concentration, not only of capital, but also of power and economic might in the hands of individuals'; it attacked also the 'imperialism of international finance capital', which feels at home 'wherever there is booty to be had'; and said, 'the just ordering of economic life cannot be entrusted to free competition'. To be sure, communism was 'godless and unjust', and even moderate 'socialism . . . remains incompatible with the doctrine of the Catholic Church'. Hitler would have said: 'Down with Marxism and the international dictatorship of the stock exchange!'

Quadragesimo Anno went on to say that the 'corporate State' created by Mussolini in Italy was an economic effort of quite a different sort. It subordinated economics to politics, but protected property by putting it in its place. 'A moment's reflection', said the Pope, 'permits us to recognize the advantages of this order: peaceful co-operation of the

classes, repression of socialist organizations and efforts, regulatory influence of a special administrative apparatus'. True, the Pope continued, some feared that the State was regulating too much, that an excessive bureaucracy would arise; to counter these dangers, Pope Pius XI asked the 'co-operation of all well-meaning people'.

In the age of parliamentary democracy the Church had tried, more out of necessity than of desire, to exert a direct influence on this system of power. Thus, the Centre Party in Germany had grown up. The Centre was a secular makeshift and concession to the era of parliaments; a democratic mobilization of the Church's voting millions against the hostile forces of Crown and army; a mustering of the Church's strength in a predominantly Protestant world. When labour became a great movement it had a sharply distinct Catholic sector; but nevertheless, 'We are workers, and all workers are our comrades', said Giesberts, one of the Catholic labour leaders, as though he had never heard of *Rerum Novarum*. But there were other forces too. All 'patriotic, Christian, popular, and truly social-thinking circles of all strata, especially the intellectuals', should band together, said Heinrich Brüning, then an unknown young Catholic politician, in 1920. 'In this point, especially, I set my hopes on the young intelligentsia, in whom I know that the spirit of 1914 is not yet extinguished.'

In the spring of 1932 a new archbishop had to be appointed in Freiburg im Breisgau, a city of southern Germany. For a hundred years this dignity had been chosen by the archdiocese of Freiburg and merely confirmed in Rome. But the Holy See suddenly broke with the old custom and appointed a man whom the Freiburg diocese did not want. This archbishop, Doctor Mathias Groeber, made a speech to the clergy of his diocese, in which he said that the Church must gradually assume a more conciliatory and more 'prudent' attitude towards National Socialism; it must, as the archbishop put it, 'put on the brakes'.

This was the changing, shifting ground on which Brüning desperately strove to keep his feet; eventually this man who, in 1918, as an army officer, had attempted to stop the German revolution, fought almost against himself. Adolf Hitler sensed a certain affinity between himself and the silent Chancellor and expressed his feelings by an unalterable attitude of deep personal respect.

Behind the scenes the Reichswehr also felt the shifting of the ground. To put it bluntly: the Brüning experiment had failed; parliament had not been conquered; the popular will was not captured. To Schleicher's surprisingly narrow reasoning, the problem presented itself in oversimplified form: Was there another man who, like Brüning, would have the confidence of the Centre, and, unlike Brüning, the confidence of the National Socialists, too? Who could deliver to the Reichswehr a 'functioning Reichstag'? Schleicher hit on his old pal, Franz von Papen, the major of Uhlans, the diplomatic spy, the son-in-law of heavy industry—

and the Catholic nobleman. For months he built up this new tool. In Schleicher's seemingly shrewd, actually superficial judgment, Papen, with his smiling worldliness, seemed a great leader and diplomat. 'In most things there must be a certain frivolity,' he said. 'People sometimes say that Herr von Papen is frivolous. But that is what we need.' Both men belonged to the Herrenklub, and Papen's political ideas can be regarded as a genuine product of this spiritual atmosphere; but it is only a legend that Heinrich von Gleichen, the secretary of the club, or Count Bodo von Alvensleben, its president, pulled the political wires in Germany in 1932 - much as they may have desired to do so.

To Schleicher this shrewd, wealthy, distinguished man, with the highest connections, apparently in good odour in Rome, was 'the Centre', just as Schleicher himself was 'the Reichswehr', or Hitler was 'National Socialism'—for it was one of the weaknesses of this intriguer that he consistently confused personalities with forces. Papen may have persuaded him that he really was the Centre, because he had bought one of the Centre's leading newspapers with his wife's money. Schleicher, on the other hand, had persuaded himself that he could win the National Socialists—and there it would be: the strong, 'authoritarian' Government, based on a majority in parliament. This new form of Government thought up by Schleicher was to be called 'the President's Government'. The President should appoint as Ministers men of his own—that is, Schleicher's—choice, and these men should make the laws; but the parliament would have to confirm, or at least tolerate, them. This strange type of Government hung legally by the fragile thread of a single article of the constitution intended only for emergency; actually it could govern only as long as parliament itself refused to govern. Former Captain von Schleicher had gone a long way since 1918, when he had conceived his master plan of the Free Corps; time had passed by, and the nature of things had driven him—as this type is inevitably driven—to the plan of the Wise Men of Zion: dictatorship through democracy.

On April 22 Schleicher had a conversation with Röhm and Count Helldorf, Röhm's friend, who led the S.A. in Berlin. Schleicher told the two National Socialists that he disapproved the dissolution of the S.A., but apparently the conversation had no result. Next day Goebbels wrote in his diary that Schleicher 'has his ideas about National Socialism. But of course he cannot understand us!'

That was on April 22. On April 24 the masses of the Uprooted and Disinherited of all Germany arose and helped Schleicher's understanding along. On this day elections were held for many State diets. It was still these eighteen separate States, grown out of the innumerable large and petty principalities, that controlled the body of the German administrative apparatus, and the police as well. Prussia, by far the most important State, for years governed firmly and reliably by democratic parties, among them Brüning's Catholic friends, had thus far, despite occasional

conflicts, been a reliable support of the 'last parliamentary Chancellor'.

The elections shattered this Prussian support. The National Socialists won a hundred and sixty-two seats in the Prussian diet, the Communists fifty-six; together, they had two hundred and eighteen seats, a clear majority. That decided it; the Prussian parliament was against the Prussian Government. In other words, the last parliamentary majority in Germany on which Brüning had been able to rely to a certain degree was no longer in existence.

From this moment on, personal intrigue dominated the political game. All the real forces had so enmeshed and paralyzed each other that a few accidental figures, enjoying irresponsible freedom in influential positions, seemed to make history. That was the outward appearance, but the truth behind it was that in two bitter, dark years the Brüning experiment had not brought the people to the Reichswehr, and therefore the Reichswehr began a new experiment.

On April 26 Röhm and Helldorf again called on Schleicher. This time the conversation was far more hopeful; the Berlin S.A. leader reported to his *gauleiter*, who wrote in his diary: 'Count Helldorf has been to see Schleicher. Schleicher wants to change his course.' Two days later, on April 28, Hitler himself spoke with Schleicher; Goebbels contents himself with saying: 'The conversation turned out well'.

In this conversation, as later events show, Hitler must have informed Schleicher that for the present he did not want to take power. He was satisfied if Brüning fell and the S.A. were again allowed to function. And so he would create no difficulties for a new Government picked by Schleicher.

Hindenburg in those weeks must have seen himself as a tragic figure. He had been triumphantly elected President by more or less the same people who in 1918 had created the republic! And when he looked out at his junker's estate in Neudeck, he must have been pained by the thought that most of his neighbours had rejected him, although they said their rejection was not directed towards his person, but towards Brüning.

On May 8, in Schleicher's home, Hitler met Oscar von Hindenburg, the President's son, and State Secretary Otto Meissner, his adviser. These figures, little known or entirely unknown to the general public, now concluded an agreement for the salvation of parliamentary democracy with the best-known, most-voiced and photographed demagogue of the day. In order that Hitler might help to provide a 'functioning Reichstag', the present Reichstag must be dissolved and new elections held—which lay within the sphere of the Reichs President's power. Then the National Socialists would return with twice their strength; but in order that they might fully develop their strength, the stirring tramp of the Brown S.A. must once more be heard in the streets. Hitler again had an opportunity to make it clear to doubting minds that the

S.A. was no army for civil war, but a propagandist organization for the election campaign. The salvation of parliamentary democracy demanded that the S.A. must again enjoy freedom—this was the gist of the pact of May 8. For Hitler promised at the same time to 'tolerate' the Cabinet which the President would appoint after Brüning's fall—this meant not to attack it, hence actually to support it.

Brüning seemed to have at least one strong personal support against this intrigue, and that was Wilhelm Groener, Minister of the Reichswehr and the Interior, the General who, with Hindenburg, had overthrown the Kaiser and approved the acceptance of the Peace of Versailles. But now Groener was rendered ridiculous and abhorrent to the old man. At the age of sixty-two, the Reichswehr Minister had married, and five months after his marriage a son was born; Schleicher told Hindenburg that in the Ministry the hasty baby was known as 'Nurmi', after the Finnish runner. Hindenburg replied that the affair was a scandal which in earlier days would not have been tolerated in a non-commissioned officer. Defiantly, Groener exhibited his pride and joy in a baby carriage; he let himself be photographed and permitted the picture to appear in the Press. Meanwhile, Schleicher telephoned the higher officers of the Reichswehr and asked them what they thought of it: he more or less put the answer into their mouths: they thought that Groener had become 'unsuitable' as their Minister.

On top of this, a political intrigue was heaped. The 'Iron Front' had elected Hindenburg. Material was collected to prove that the 'Iron Front' was arming for civil war just as much as the S.A., and this material was laid before Hindenburg with the implication that the prohibition of the S.A., upon which Groener had insisted so strongly, was at the very least one-sided and unjust. To top it all, the Chief Reich Attorney (*Oberreichsanwalt*) found that Hitler's orders to his Pomeranian S.A., juridically speaking, were not exactly high treason. Hindenburg had the feeling that Groener had deceived him, or at least advised him badly on this point; he wrote him a sharp, insulting letter and had it published.

Groener's distress affected him physically. When Göring reviled him in the Reichstag for his prohibition of the S.A., and Goebbels helped with poisonous cries, both intimating that they were well informed about certain confidential occurrences in the Government, Groener's voice failed him. In the midst of his speech he stood for a time open-mouthed, unable to utter a word. When at last he sank back exhausted, Schleicher, his 'adopted son', appeared beside him and said amiably that the army thought his resignation indicated. Groener still hoped that Hindenburg, whose legend he had in large part created and certainly done much to preserve, would keep him out of gratitude; but Groener's own prophecy was cruelly fulfilled: 'One thing you can rely on,' he had said, 'is the old gentleman's disloyalty.' Two days later, on May 12, he resigned.

Brüning, sensing that a heavy attack against himself was in progress,

still believed that great political forces would carry him through these apparently petty intrigues. President Hoover in America, the MacDonald Government in England, were pressing for an end to the German reparations that were disorganizing world economy. Brüning saw a great success close at hand. A day before Groener's resignation he cried out to the invisible intriguers in the Reichstag: 'Don't think you can stop me now, a hundred yards before the goal!' Then he went to Geneva to a meeting of the League of Nations Council, to obtain the consent of England and France for the end of reparations.

But Hitler was proved right: it was home affairs that decided. Domestic intrigue even managed to knife Brüning's foreign policy in the back. Schleicher was on terms of friendship with André François-Poncet, the French ambassador in Berlin. He told him that there was no sense in France continuing to negotiate with Brüning; for soon there would be another Government, more friendly to France. The consequence was that Brüning waited in vain for French Premier Tardieu in Geneva; Tardieu pretended illness, and the German Chancellor did not bring back the end of reparations, as he had hoped. This was a situation that could not last; but meanwhile the mass drama and intrigues rolled on at home.

The Prussian diet was preparing to overthrow the democratic Braun Government; the Communists gave the signal. On May 25 they entered a motion that the diet should give the Prussian Government a vote of no-confidence. If the Communists had wanted to put Hitler in power, they could have acted no differently. Actually they did want to put Hitler in power. They staunchly believed that they were the born heirs of fascism; that they would speedily overthrow fascism if it took power, but that it must first take power. Rosa Luxemburg had regarded military dictatorship as the necessary preliminary to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in 1923 Stalin had written in a letter to his comrades, Zinoviev and Bukharin: 'It is more advantageous for us that the Fascists [in Germany] should strike first: that will rally the whole working class to the Communists!' For that reason, Stalin thought, the German Communists must be 'restrained, not encouraged'. It was the firm conviction of all Communist leaders, including Leon Trotzky living as an exile on a Turkish island near Constantinople, that the united front of the working class would conquer Germany. But Trotzky demanded that the Communists create a united front through a pact with the Social Democrats, while the Communists under Stalin's leadership clung to the view that the Social Democrats must be smashed before fascism could effectively be combated, and for that reason fascism must come to power.

In the Reichstag on October 13, 1931, Brüning warned the German capitalists of the menacing united front of the workers, and urged them not to provoke the working class too far. The worker, he said, understood the need for sacrifices; but it was not possible to 'teach him this understanding if from the very start it is associated with conceptions and

slogans which must inevitably drive the German working class into a united front'. Brüning had warned capital not to go too far; the Communists understood: not to establish open fascism, for, in Stalin's words, 'fascism is a fighting organization of the bourgeoisie'. The following day the Communist speaker, Remmele, stood up in the Reichstag and put the following interpretation on Brüning's remark: 'Herr Brüning has spoken very clearly: if once the Fascists are in power, the united front of anti-fascism will come into being and will sweep everything before it [stormy applause from the Communist benches]. . . . Who will strike whom? This question is already decided [applause from the Communists]. The only remaining question is: At what time shall we overthrow the bourgeoisie? . . . The Fascists do not frighten us. They will be finished even quicker than any other Government [cries of "Right!" from the Communists].' So thought the party which led the Uprooted and Disinherited of the Left. Their leaders and many of their followers were convinced (as Trotzky reproachfully said) ' . . . that the task of struggle against fascism is a task of the second order; that it can wait; that it will solve itself; that fascism is essentially already in power; that Hitler will bring nothing new; that Hitler does not have to be feared; that Hitler will only break a path for the Communists'.

It did not disturb the Communists that this path was strewn with Communist corpses. When, in the Prussian diet, they entered the motion that was to overthrow the Prussian Government, their deputy, Wilhelm Pieck, made a violent speech against the National Socialists, whom he called a party of murderers. The National Socialists jumped up, flung themselves on the numerically inferior Communists, thrashed them out of the hall, and sang the Horst Wessel song on the scene of their victory. There were pools of blood on the floor, and Hitler danced with joy when Goebbels told him the story on the telephone. Der Führer could not hear details enough of the smashed skulls and knocked-out teeth. When the two met three days later, 'I had to tell him the whole story in epic length, and he rubbed his hands with pleasure'. But incapable of learning from blows, the Communists stuck to their motion, which was calculated only to bring their assailants to power.

This bloody scene in the Prussian diet took place on May 25. On the 26th Meissner called on Hindenburg in Neudeck and reported to him that if he wished he could have a Cabinet which the majority of the Reichstag would support; constitutional without any doubt or artifice. Yet no Cabinet of party politicians, but of men whom he could trust and with some of whom he was personally acquainted.

On the 28th Hindenburg was back in Berlin; on the 29th, a Sunday, Brüning was ordered to appear before him. The Chancellor knew that an intrigue against him was in progress; he did not know that it was already complete, that his fate had been decided. He wanted to demand that Hindenburg put a stop to the intrigues until he, Brüning, had forced

the cancellation of reparations. Instead, it was Hindenburg who did the demanding. The old man had written what he planned to say in inch-high letters on several slips of paper. He read them one after another through his spectacles. 'I am informed', he said to Brüning, 'that you have Ministers with Bolshevist plans in your Cabinet. That cannot go on!' Brüning tried to discuss and explain, but Hindenburg could not be distracted from his slips of paper. He said that he had to defend his name and his honour. And his last sentence was: 'I request you to give me no more emergency decrees to sign!'

In other words: If you can make laws with the Reichstag, good; you won't make any more in my name. This meant dismissal, though the word was not uttered. But Brüning wanted a clear statement. Next day he returned to see Hindenburg. Before the conversation was well started, a noise was heard in the courtyard of the palace, cries of command, clinking heels: the guard was being changed. Impelled by curiosity, the old soldier stepped to the window, turning his back on Brüning, whom he had seemingly forgotten. After a while he remembered his Chancellor and asked whether Brüning might want to stay on as Foreign Minister in a new Government. Brüning replied that he too had his name and honour to preserve, and left the room.

Meanwhile, Oskar von Hindenburg notified Göring that his father was expecting the 'Bohemian corporal' at four in the afternoon. Hitler had remained hidden in the country, to avoid arousing Brüning's suspicions by his presence in Berlin. In the afternoon he called on the Reichs President with Göring. Hindenburg informed him that he had appointed von Papen as Chancellor. Was it true that Hitler would support the Papan Cabinet? Hitler said yes.

And now Papen attempted to form his democratic parliamentary Government. It was the time to show whether he was able to bring his Catholic friends to join forces with the National Socialists. On the day after Brüning's fall, Hindenburg received Doctor Kaas, the leader of the Centre. The ground of German politics indeed had shifted. Kaas said: Yes, the National Socialists must now enter the Government; he demanded a 'total solution', the 'entry of the Opposition into the Government, with full responsibility, and, in particular, the National Socialists must take their share of responsibility fully and openly'. In the Government—this was the idea— the National Socialists would be tamed and exhausted; the dust of day-to-day work would settle on their glamour; it would be necessary to pass hard, exacting, unpopular laws, and the names of Hitler, Strasser, Goebbels, instead of Brüning and Stegerwald, would stand under these laws; Hitler had promised wonders; he should be forced to break his promises. These parliamentarians, in the past two years, had learned by hard blows what an ungrateful business power could be; they imagined that by power Hitler might, like Brüning, be broken.

But open power, connected with open responsibility, was not to be heaped on Hitler by the construction of the new Papen Government; the National Socialists were to have influence and power secretly, and Papen was to help keep it secret, only exposing himself and possibly his friends. In the eyes of these friends—the men of the Centre—Papen was an idiot and a betrayer at the same time. The next day, May 31, Papen debated and struggled all afternoon with Kaas, Brüning, and other leaders of his own party for their agreement and aid; it was refused with sharp words. Kaas intimidated Papen so much that he promised to abandon his attempt to constitute a Government. He had failed to win his own party and hence had no majority in parliament; by the afternoon of May 31 Schleicher's master plan had failed.

But when the weak-kneed Papen appeared before Hindenburg the next day, he again let himself be intimidated. For the sake of his own prestige, the old man could no longer retreat. He roughly commanded Papen as a soldier to form a Cabinet. In mad haste the Ministers were sought out, some by telegram; all of them former officers whom the Field-Marshal more or less ordered to their posts. Some, indeed, could not have been induced in any other way. There was Konstantin von Neurath, ambassador to London, who became Foreign Minister; Wilhelm Baron von Gayl, one of the economic leaders of the junkers in the province of East Prussia, a frequent guest in the Hindenburg household. Schleicher became Reichswehr Minister; for finances there was an outstanding specialist, Count von Schwerin-Krosigk, despite his name no junker, but an official. But it was hard to overlook that the seven leading men of the Cabinet were all nobles. For Justice, however, Schleicher had found a commoner from the Bavarian South; this new Minister of Justice was the same Franz Gürtner who had been unable to find the patriotic murderers; who had freed Hitler from prison long before the end of his term, who had made it possible for him to speak in public, and who finally had failed to throw full light on the death of Geli Raubal.

On June 2 Papen was Chancellor. On the 3rd the last remnant of parliamentary democracy voluntarily abdicated before the new *coup*: the Prussian diet, with two hundred and fifty-three votes, the National Socialists in the lead, adopted the Communist motion to give the Braun Government a vote of no-confidence.

Now Papen and Schleicher attempted to forge and educate the National Socialists. The Reichstag was dissolved; thus far Hitler had had his way. But when he expected the prohibition of the S.A. to be lifted, Papen demanded that Hitler first gave a clear, written promise to support him even after elections. Hitler wanted to put nothing in writing, but finally let himself be persuaded. On the estate of Severin in Mecklenburg, belonging to Goebbels' brother-in-law, Walter Granzow, Hitler dictated a memorandum. Meanwhile, Schleicher was waiting for him

on a near-by estate near the little city of Fürstenberg. Hitler dictated in haste and was not sure whether what he had written was the right thing. He gave the memorandum to Goebbels and Göring to look through and meanwhile went to see Schleicher. The memorandum, which apparently displeased Hitler's critical lieutenants, never reached Schleicher; but in the meantime Hitler had let himself be ensnared by the General, even without any exchange of documents. Schleicher promised that the S.A. would soon be permitted to function and that a National Socialist would become Premier of Prussia. According to the secret plan of the Papen Government, this meant 'tying Hitler to responsibility', without giving him any real power; Hitler did not notice the trap, but said, beaming, to Schleicher that a tablet should be erected on the wall of the house with the words: 'Here there took place that memorable conference between Adolf Hitler and General Kurt von Schleicher, by which . . .'. When he returned and reported, Goebbels was beside himself, and no doubt thought: he must never be allowed to attend conferences alone; it was the same way before the presidential elections—this can be read quite clearly between the lines of his diary. The Prussian deputies, Kube and Kerrl, were summoned, and Hitler was enlightened, no doubt as gently as possible; thereupon he hastily departed, and two days later his representatives, Göring and Kube, innocently told Papen and Schleicher that they could agree to nothing definite, for their Führer was absent and unfortunately ('Thank God', wrote Goebbels in his diary) could not be reached.

Papen grew distrustful and hesitated to lift the prohibition of the S.A.; both sides began to accuse each other of broken promises. Hitler thundered at Göring, Goebbels, and Strasser over the telephone, ordered them to see Schleicher and Minister of the Interior von Gayl, but the longed-for three-line notice in the newspapers did not appear—and two weeks had passed since Hitler's handshake with Hindenburg. One night Goebbels assembled fifty S.A. men in his office. They put on their brown shirts, their brown breeches, their high boots, and then the fifty of them marched straight through the city, went into the cafés. Not a policeman ventured to arrest them, and the fifty felt like bold law-breakers, great revolutionaries. It did not occur to these warriors that with their millions they could seize the right of the streets without any question; that they could flood the whole country with their brown columns regardless of prohibitions; no, first the President had to give his permission.

It finally came on June 15. Now this new type of democracy could run its course unrestrained. On July 31, six weeks hence, the people were to express their opinion at the polls. In giant swarms the S.A. appeared again in the streets, to hammer the right opinion into them. Hitler was drunk with enthusiasm for elections and the people; the former despiser of parliament and the masses was unrecognizable. 'I do not know', he said, 'whether these Reichstag elections will be the last.

I hope not. I hope that the time will never come when our leaders say to themselves: now we shall rest!’

On June 26 he gathered his S.A. leaders in the village of Schoenau, near Berchtesgaden, and gave them a severe lecture. They must not believe that they were at their goal. Power must be won every day anew; that was what the National Socialist Party had been built for; and that was what made it stronger than the ‘Government of the barons’, which felt secure in the possession of machine-guns and lacked the intelligence to see that seven noble Ministers are an insult to an impoverished people. Papen declared freely that he governed on the strength of authority and not by the will of the people. ‘A strong Government’, he said, ‘does not need to prescribe the convictions and inner life of the people’; at any rate, it pays no attention to these convictions.

Hitler told his S.A. leaders in Schoenau that these unpopular masters would soon come into conflict with the Reichswehr. For the Reichswehr wanted the people, and the S.A. was the military-minded German people. Conditions in Germany were not the same as in Italy, said Hitler. A dualism, such as existed between the Italian army and the Fascist militia, was fundamentally impossible in Germany, for one thing because in Italy the militia to a certain degree had to replace an obsolete officers’ corps, while in Germany the army had a first-class officers’ corps. The tasks of the S.A. would always lie in the field of domestic politics, not in military matters; for this the Reichswehr was thankful to the S.A., and the S.A. should in turn be thankful to the Reichswehr for leaving it a free hand in the shaping of German conditions. The S.A. leaders listened to Hitler with consternation; without enthusiasm Röhm thanked ‘Der Führer for his explanation and assured him of the loyalty that was a matter of course in view of the military training of the S.A.’

The Brown People’s Army had long ceased to be the élite of which Hitler had once dreamed and had become a loosely knit mass. More solid, more military, but numerically inferior, the Stahlhelm marched out on Sunday to secret manoeuvres. With these reserves in the rear, Germany now began to demand a stronger army at the Geneva Disarmament Conference which, since February, had been sitting in Geneva. Germany still concealed its demand beneath the ambiguous words ‘equal rights’, and cited the Versailles Treaty with its broken promise of general disarmament. In Papen’s earlier plans this projected German army had appeared as a western army against Bolshevism, in alliance with the French army. Papen had in mind a great conciliation with France, a total solution of all controversial questions; but once again home politics had spoken and destroyed these hopes—if they had ever been founded. In France the elections to the Chamber in May, 1932, returned the Left to the helm, and again Edouard Herriot, the democrat and freemason, was Premier. Herriot, who for years had been cultivating a *rapprochement* between France and the Soviet Government, offered

determined resistance to Germany's 'equal rights', and also refused to draw a line beneath the chapter of German reparations.

It was clear, to be sure, that Germany would pay no more reparations, and thus, on July 8, 1932, the peace beside the Swiss lakes was enriched by one more treaty. In the city of Lausanne, the victor Powers of Versailles concluded an agreement with Germany which for practical purposes put an end to reparations. But Papen in private complained that Herriot, the man of the Left, had not wished to give the 'Cabinet of barons' a full success; in this attitude, according to Papen, he had been reinforced by one of his advisers, the Socialist Grumbach; international Marxism had showed its hand. And that was why Herriot had not consented to revoke Article 231 of the Peace Treaty, which placed the war guilt on Germany; that was why the reparations had not been cancelled in principle. Meanwhile, however, they were reduced to three billion marks, a sum which, considerable as it was, seemed insignificant beside the previous astronomic figure; and even this sum was not payable at once, but only when circumstances should permit—and circumstances never did permit. This was Papen's 'failure of Lausanne', as Hitler called it, declaring the final payment of three billions to be 'intolerable'. In near-by Geneva the Disarmament Conference was dragging along almost without hope; there was no prospect that France would consent to 'equal rights' for Germany.

And this was no wonder, Hitler carped, for France knew that this Government did not have the people behind it any more than had previous Governments. To Hitler, Papen's contempt of the people was almost a personal insult; for the people, he felt, was himself. This was not even true. Certainly he was not the people of the big coal and iron districts in the west of Germany. Here the National Socialists encountered a passionate hostility and comforted themselves that this hostility was limited to the Communists. Actually it was shared by workers of all tendencies, by Social Democrats, and even the Centre. Goebbels describes a trip through these cities in July, 1932:

July 12. We force our way through the howling mob in Düsseldorf and Elberfeld. A wild trip. We had no idea that things would get so serious. In all our innocence we drive into Hagen in an open car and wearing our uniforms. The streets are black with people. All of them mob and Communist rabble. They close off the road, so that we can go neither forward nor back. . . . We cut our way through the middle of the pack. Each of us has his pistol in his hand and is determined, if the worst comes to the worst, to sell his life as dearly as possible. . . . The meeting place is on a hill, framed by a forest of beeches in the background. The Communists have ingeniously set fire to this forest, so that it is almost impossible to carry on the meeting. Nevertheless, we make our speeches. . . . On our departure we are followed

by a bombardment of stones. We manage to leave the city by detours. . . .

July 13. . . . The experience in Hagen has made us more circumspect. Now we travel in disguise. Constantly we pass lurking groups of Communists. We can hardly get into Dortmund. We have to take a side-street to keep from falling into the hands of the Communists who have occupied all the other entrances. . . .

July 14. . . . A trip to the Ruhr involves mortal peril. We take a strange car, because our own with its Berlin number is known and people have descriptions of it everywhere. In Elberfeld the Red Press has called the mob into the streets. The approaches to the stadium are blocked off completely. It is only because they take us for a harmless passenger car that we get through. . . . After a speech we change into a new car. Again the mob has occupied the streets. But it is dark and so we get through.

July 15. . . . I must leave my own native city like a criminal, pursued by curses, abuse, vilification, stoned, and spat upon. . . .

The National Socialists were a mighty mass, but a still mightier mass stood against them. Actually this mass was itself disintegrating, and had mortally wounded itself when the Communists overthrew the Prussian Government.

This Government, despite its downfall, was still governing, because the Prussian parliament could agree on no other Cabinet; for the Communists and National Socialists together could overthrow the State power, but together they could not establish any State power. Papen, who personally did not have even a tenth of the votes in the Reichstag behind him, now declared himself unwilling to tolerate a Prussian Government which still commanded over four-tenths of the votes. Braun, the Social Democratic Premier of Prussia, himself lost heart and wanted to resign; and when his Social Democratic comrades would not permit this, he took a vacation and sat at home sulking, letting his colleagues govern by themselves. These colleagues, led by Carl Severing, the white-haired Social Democratic Minister of the Interior, told themselves that, though they represented a minority, it was still the only minority capable of governing; and so their right to power was not much inferior to that of Hindenburg, who had been President for seven years after being elected by a minority.

When Hindenburg looked out of his window, he saw the broad dark grey façade of the building in which the overthrown Prussian Government was still calmly governing. Hostility now reigned between the two palaces. Half consciously, Hindenburg regarded himself as the deputy of his 'most gracious Kaiser', who had been head of State before him and was now sitting in Holland; but the Kaiser had at the same time been his 'most gracious king and lord'—that is, King of Prussia—and

this part of his heritage was now administered by the enemy in the grey palace. The conflict between Prussia and the Reich was intolerable to Hindenburg. In this he was entirely at one with Papen, but Schleicher's mind was not made up so quickly. What Papen wanted was to suspend the Prussian Government by force; and this was his first great disappointment to Schleicher. For the Reichswehr Minister had invented Papen in order to avoid the necessity of governing by force; his wish was that in Prussia the National Socialists and the Centre should form a majority Government in good democratic style. For the moment this had failed, but after the Reichstag elections of July 31 it would doubtless succeed; for the Centre would not continue forever to uphold the present Prussian Government.

To be sure, this Government would at once have ceased to be a minority Government if the Communists became reasonable; if they gave up the idea that Hitler must come to power. Wilhelm Abegg, the Prussian State secretary, attempted on his own responsibility to bring the Communists to their senses. He invited two Communist Reichstag deputies, Torgler and Kasper, to see him and tried to persuade them to give up their sabotage in Prussia. The Communists did not say yes and they did not say no.

But Abegg did not suspect how shaky the ground beneath his feet had already become. Since the fall of Brüning, an intangible but ubiquitous and corrosive conviction that Hitler would soon come to power had penetrated every pore of the public consciousness. The most convinced were to be found in the great silent army of men who are seldom openly convinced of anything, but who always adjust their business, their career, and, in this epoch of race war, even their love, to the forthcoming political events. Business connections were broken, friendships severed, men and women broke off their engagements to Jews. Many found it timely to wear the swastika in their buttonhole, for when the first booty was distributed, you had to be an 'old fighter'; long party membership would be rewarded with employment, advancement, and loans from public funds. And so now the opportunists stepped forward with loud cries. But the party disapproved their sudden loudness and preferred to use these shady characters in the shade. Occasionally such proclamations as this appeared in the National Socialist Press:

Halt! Before you leave your present party, convinced of the truth of the National Socialist idea, reflect if you cannot be more useful to the National Socialist Movement by remaining a member where you are and informing us about all the occurrences and intentions of your present party comrades! . . . Your work will be valued as highly as the sacrifices of every party comrade and S.A. man who does his duty!

One of those who did their duty thus silently was sitting at the table as Abegg conferred with Torgler and Kasper. This was Councillor

(*Regierungsrat*) Werner Diels; Abegg had unsuspectingly called him in as a witness, and he took down a protocol of the conversation. Treason could not have been performed more comfortably; Diels took his protocol to Papen and reported that the Prussian Government was allying itself with Bolshevism!

This forced Schleicher's hand; reluctantly he permitted the Reichswehr to march. On the morning of July 20, 1932, Papen asked the Prussian Cabinet Ministers to call at the Chancellery. He told them that a state of military emergency had been proclaimed in Prussia; General von Rundstedt, commander of the Berlin division, had been given full power. The Ministers, said Papen, should regard themselves as deposed. He, Papen, as 'Reich Commissioner', would assume power in Prussia and set other commissioners over the Ministries. It was a short conversation without much argument and counter-argument; on his way out, Severing said philosophically that in this hour world history was in the making. The Ministers returned to their offices; when Severing was back at his desk, he received a telephone call from a certain Bracht, mayor of Essen; Bracht declared that he was Severing's successor and would present himself at twelve o'clock.

This was the gravest political upheaval that Germany had experienced in thirteen years; superficially, it occurred as a sequence of depressingly tragicomic scenes without greatness. It was the leadership of the Social Democratic Party which determined the form and course of this upheaval. These men decided to accept the blow and offer no resistance.

The Communists thought differently. They proclaimed a general strike to support a Government which they themselves had overthrown two weeks before. Nowhere did anyone follow their call, and this historic fact contains the profoundest reason for the otherwise incomprehensible decision of the Social Democratic leaders. The condition of the German working class had changed since March, 1920, when in a similar situation they won their strike against the military *putsch*. Six to eight million unemployed were waiting outside the factory gates; the workers' leaders believed that they could not expect a general stoppage, a solid outpouring from the factories that would crush all opposition.

Rundstedt had orders to arrest the Social Democratic leaders at the first sign of resistance; later, Reichswehr officers boasted that they would not have shrunk back from mass shootings. But it is improbable that the Reichswehr would have risked a blood-bath; it would have been the opposite of what they had longed for since 1919. If there had been an uprising, its leadership could have been moved to the Rhineland, which, in accordance with the treaties of Versailles and Locarno, the Reichswehr could not enter. It is possible that the South German States and their Governments would have joined the Prussian Government; for these States, with their largely Catholic population, were embittered by the fall of Brüning, distrusted the Prussian junkers and military camarilla.

The south and west of the Reich were beginning to show resistance to the hegemony of the north and east; again there was talk of the frontier drawn by the river Main, which divided Germany, historically and temperamentally, into north and south, much as the Mason-Dixon line divides the United States.

But resistance along these lines required preparation, and there had been little preparation. The 'Iron Front' was still in the building, and it was not ready to strike. Side by side with the Reichswehr, the S.A. and the Stahlhelm would at once have marched out in great swarms and almost entirely dominated the great plains of northern and eastern Germany. Against them, the Prussian police presented no reliable force, particularly in the smaller towns. But in this struggle the Social Democratic leaders may have feared their friends, the Communists, even more than their enemies. It was the admitted and openly expressed aim of the Communists, not to save the German Republic, but to smash Social Democracy. The participation of the Communists in this struggle would have driven considerable neutral sections of the population to the side of the Reichswehr; particularly the Catholics, despite all their bitterness against Papen and Hindenburg.

And so there was no struggle. When Bracht appeared in Severing's office at noon, Severing declared that he was 'ceding only to force', meaning that he ceded. The two men had known each other well for years and had worked closely together. They entered into conversation and agreed that the exercise of 'force' should take place at eight that night. At eight o'clock Bracht returned, accompanied by Police President Melcher, whom he had brought with him from Essen, and two police officers. Melcher, a good-natured fellow, wanted to shake hands with Severing; Severing held his hand behind his back and Bracht again informed him that he was deposed. Severing repeated that he was ceding only to force, and passed through a door into his adjacent private home. Similar scenes occurred with other high officials of the Prussian Government. There was little seriousness about the form of this capitulation; but the objective grounds for it were serious; the expected result -- to prevent a fusion between the Reichswehr and the National Socialists -- was for a time achieved, but in the end was lost. Resistance might not have altered the outward course of history; but the fact that in this moment between life and death the Social Democratic movement showed only prudence and no strength was its undoing.

Thus ended the short-lived Weimar Republic. Because of its failures in power politics, it has generally been judged adversely. But this is not entirely fair. The reconstruction of defeated Germany after the war was a significant achievement. The period saw considerable accomplishments in literature, the arts, especially architecture, and these achievements were filled with the spirit of the republic. It is hard to decide whether to count it as a weakness or a virtue of this republic, that it

allowed a freedom of speech and of the Press which endangered its dignity and security and was often shamelessly abused. In any case, under the Weimar Republic the German masses developed a new sense of their own worth, a new self-reliance.

Papen's *coup* brought him no luck. From the first day of his Government, his own Centre Party, aside, perhaps, from a few Church dignitaries and Catholic nobles, was bitterly hostile to him. For the Catholic masses Papen was a renegade, the representative of a 'paper-thin upper crust' which 'looks at the people with a cold, domineering eye'. By his Prussian stroke he made enemies of both people and leadership in the South German States, and in Bavaria key men began to make speeches to the effect that if Papen should dare to send them a Reichs Commissioner, they would arrest him at the border. They should be made to realize in Berlin, said Councillor Schaeffer, one of the leaders of the Bavarian People's Party, 'that at the time when the Cathedral of Bamberg was being built in the south of Germany, the Prussians in the region of Berlin were still climbing around on trees'. The Bavarian Ministers, led by Prime Minister Heinrich Held, a Catholic, fighting with his unreliable parliament much as Braun and Severing had fought with theirs, declared that they would cede not even to force. Hitler cried that the unity of the Reich was menaced, and that not Papen, but 'the National Socialist Movement, has the great and responsible task of becoming the preserver of Reich unity'. Goebbels said that Papen was shattering the Reich by his clumsiness; therefore: 'Out with Papen and Gayl! Adolf Hitler to power!'

With the breaking of the Social Democrats in Prussia and the settlement of the reparations in Lausanne, Papen had already over-reached himself - and this was only the beginning! His ultimate goal was to put an end to the rule of sterile masses; the great day of the enlightened minority was dawning everywhere in the 'Abendland'! The collaboration with Soviet Russia was definitely dropped; the policy of secretly fabricating guns and ammunition, of building forbidden military planes and training pilots with the help of the Red Army, was abandoned; the so-called Berlin Treaty of Friendship (1926), modelled on the old Rapallo Treaty, was not renewed when it expired in 1931. But the democratic Herriot Government in France, firmly clinging to the idea of collective security against the German threat, and therefore eager for an understanding with Soviet Russia, was no partner to Papen's 'occidental' ideas, and therefore unable to admit the necessity for a stronger German army. The Disarmament Conference, assembled in Geneva since February, 1932, adjourned on July 23, without acceding to Germany's claim to 'equality'; the United States, England, and even Italy took the French side.

In a remarkably short time Papen had succeeded in making an enemy of the working class, weakening the unity of the Reich, and now this

diplomatic fiasco! Five days before elections, Schleicher stepped up to the microphone and apologized to the German people for the Government he had invented—this was the veiled meaning of his speech. 'I am no friend of military dictatorship,' he affirmed. 'I regard the dictatorial Government of the armed forces in Germany as absolutely impossible. . . . The Government', he said, audibly carping at Papen, 'must be supported by a strong popular sentiment. . . .' In between he announced that Germany, whatever Geneva might decide, would do what was necessary for her defence, 'revamping, not enlarging', the Reichswehr. What embittered him most, said he, was the talk about a 'plot of junkers and generals' in Germany, for 'the Reichswehr is not a force to protect any classes or interested persons, and no more does it want to protect any obsolete economic forms or untenable property relations'.

This challenge to capitalism and feudalism sounded strange in the mouth of the leader of the Reichswehr; it was widely quoted, debated, interpreted. But it hardly penetrated the ear of the masses, which was filled with the roaring noise of Hitler's grey Junkers plane. More than ever these masses regarded the flying voice of thunder as the secret ruling power. Papen seemed not more than a proxy; he sat half invisible in his chancellery; his weak, strained voice over the radio made people think of a little man standing on tiptoes. What they saw were the bands of the S.A. men, protected by the police, and the Junkers plane descending from the clouds.

And yet—these intimidated masses did not give Hitler a majority in the elections of July 31. The Social Democrats lost a little, but the Communists regained more, almost doubling their strength; and the Catholic Centre with its working masses remained unscathed. True, the old middle-of-the-road bourgeois parties which had formerly been so strong, among them the party of the late Gustav Stresemann, vanished almost entirely. Hugenberg's German Nationalists, who alone supported the Cabinet of the barons, had hardly a trickle of the people behind them—unless the two and a half million voters who sent forty German Nationalist deputies to the Reichstag could be called 'people'. The fragments of the shattered bourgeois parties now piled up like a mountain beneath Hitler's feet. But the mountain was neither firm nor high enough. Hitler occupied a large sector of parliament, with two hundred and thirty out of a total of six hundred and seven members; no one was stronger than he. But he was far from being stronger than all together. The elections had the same monotonous outcome that had been repeated for years: the majority was *against* Hitler, but it was *for* nothing at all.

'Der Führer is faced with grave decisions', wrote Goebbels in his diary two days after the apparently overwhelming victory. 'Should he proceed legally? With the Centre? . . .' For the Centre alone could give him the majority he lacked. By the Tegernsee, in a charming mountain region south of Munich, Hitler and his henchmen held anxious delibera-

tions on the consequences of their dangerously incomplete victory. 'Der Führer is deliberating with us', Goebbels reports, 'but'—and this is the way he is doing things—'he has come to no final conclusion. The situation must first ripen. At any rate, the party must not shrink back from grave decisions. Something must happen.'

Only one thing must happen: Hitler had to be definitely victorious. In the eyes of the German people he was committed to swift, complete success, otherwise it would be the end of him. 'In Berlin we have lost a little due to the Red campaign of lies', wrote Goebbels in his diary on the night of the elections. 'Inference: we must take power!' And if the National Socialists did not take power within a reasonable time, they could speak to the hearts of the enormous audiences and be allegedly a thousand times in the right against an allegedly unjust Government—there would be no further purpose in voting for them. Hitler had trained his electorate in cynicism; now came the cynical answer.

The S.A. men whetted their long knives—and this almost literally. Hitler and his sub-leaders had openly assured the Brown People's Army that on the day of their seizure of power they would 'clean the streets' (Strasser); that they would 'reckon with their enemies, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' (Röhm); a few thousand Marxists 'would meet their doom' (Frick). Many had again hoped for a decisive election victory, had expected election day to be the day of the knife. In Königsberg the S.A. threw bombs into a Social Democratic newspaper building on election day, and a raging Brown-shirted band shot down two Communists in the street. Goebbels wrote in his diary: 'This is the only means of bringing the Reds to reason; nothing else impresses them any more'.

To invent, to stir up and then to shoot down the 'red peril' was the simple secret of power for him who sets out to become dictator by democracy; as Louis Bonaparte, later Napoleon III, had shown eighty years before. After becoming President of the French Republic by 'outwardly legal means' (as Scheubner Richter later put it), he had secured the favour of the generals, telling them that they 'were the hope and salvation of menaced society'; he had placed his creatures in the key positions of power; accused his opponents of arming to occupy the police and administration buildings. When the Chamber rejected a law he had proposed, he declared it dissolved on December 2, 1851—and this was exactly Hitler's plan: 'If the Reichstag rejects an enabling law demanded by Der Führer, it will be sent home,' writes Goebbels. In order that he might prove that he was saving his country from a great danger, Louis Bonaparte had sent thirty thousand soldiers through the capital, had them fire on the people—and now local revolts did flare up in a few departments. The dictator proclaimed that this was 'Communist revolution', declared a state of emergency, had some twenty-seven thousand people arrested, ten thousand deported to Africa, a few hundred to Cayenne, and had others interned or banished. Then he

staged a plebiscite; of 8·12 million voters, 7·48 confirmed him as President—dictator—for ten years. The Wise Men of Zion had this *coup* in mind when they said that the people admires great acts of villainy.

On August 5, Hitler went to Berlin, talked with Schleicher, demanded to be made Chancellor and also Premier of Prussia. He boasted that he would be able to wrestle a majority from the Reichstag, 'like Mussolini in 1922'. This was exactly what Schleicher wanted, and he seems to have answered: If Hitler could gain a majority, nobody could and would prevent him from governing. Hitler, who, when excited, never was a good listener, believed that Schleicher had promised to 'make' him Chancellor; well satisfied, he returned to Munich, and Goebbels' diary, not for the first time, shows a suspicion that his Führer might again have been duped.

The party was in a fever of anticipation. Röhm ordered a state of alarm for the S.A., stationed strong troops in the headquarters so that hundreds of thousands could be mobilized within an hour. 'The whole party', Goebbels reports, 'has prepared itself to take power. The S.A. men are leaving their places of work in order to make themselves ready.' And the other great and small functionaries of the party 'are preparing for the great hour'—the great hour of mass murder. 'If things go well', sighed Goebbels in his diary, 'everything is in order. But if things go badly'—that is, if Hitler does not become Chancellor and there is no blood-bath—'there will be a terrible setback'.

The smell of revolution was in the air. Almost hourly news reached Berlin of new murders committed by National Socialists, particularly in the eastern parts of the Reich; and the opposing side, the 'Iron Front' and the Communists, also shed blood. The Reich Government declared martial law; providing summary justice and the death penalty even for lesser acts of violence. That was at noon of August 9. In the night of the same day, in the village of Potempa in Upper Silesia, five National Socialists armed with revolvers entered the house of a Communist miner by the name of Konrad Pietrzuch; the whole family—Pietrzuch, his mother, and his brother—were in bed; the five pulled Pietrzuch out of bed, threw him to the floor, and, before the eyes of his mother and brother, beat him and trampled him for half an hour; the heel of a boot fractured his larynx, and he died.

Hitler was back in his house a few hundred yards above Berchtesgaden; he was in good spirits and thought himself near his goal. Then—on August 9—Strasser and Frick came for a visit and dispelled his illusions. Schleicher had expected a parliamentary Government of or with Hitler; now he found himself faced with the spectre of a bloody *coup d'état*. Even good friends suddenly became wary. Industry did not want to put economic life at the mercy of such men as Gregor Strasser or Gottfried Feder, who, marching at the head of small property-owners incited to revolution, wanted to hurl a bomb at large-scale wealth.

Feder announced that the coming Hitler Government would create a new form of treasury bills, to be given as credit to innumerable small business men, enabling them to re-employ hundreds of thousands and millions of workers. Would this be inflation? Yes! said Walter Funk, one of the many experts who for the past year or two had advised Hitler; an experienced and well-known finance writer, collaborator of Hjalmar Schacht, and, in Hitler's own eyes, a guaranty that big business would treat him as an equal. Funk, too, arrived on the Obersalzberg with a message from Schacht: important people were so upset by Feder's plans that these threatened to become a serious obstacle on Hitler's road to power.

On August 11, Chaos, in the form of a long column of automobiles, again left Berchtesgaden for Berlin. On the shore of the Chiemsee, with a view of the Alps and a majestic castle that had belonged to the 'mad' King of Bavaria, the company paused at an inn for rest. Hitler sat with Strasser, Frick, Goebbels, and others, and for the last time they calculated the chances. Should they govern with the Centre? This seemed a good threat against Hindenburg if he was not ready to appoint Hitler dictator with full powers. But the truth was that seriously they could have done nothing with the Centre. This moderate party would not consent to the long adjournment of the Reichstag, and even less to the projected blood-bath. The blood-bath had gradually become the main point in Hitler's plans. Eating a big omelet, he declared to his men: 'If we are not given an opportunity to settle accounts with Marxism, it is perfectly useless for us to take power'.

Most of the sub-leaders then went on to Berlin by train. Hitler followed slowly by car. Announcing his Führer, Röhm, on August 12, went to see Schleicher and Papen. He spoke calmly, as man to man, inquiring as to their intentions. Had Hitler misunderstood? Who was going to be Chancellor? Perhaps Hitler had misunderstood: Röhm was reminded that his Führer had given his word of honour at least to 'tolerate' the Papen Government.

Late at night Hitler arrived; he lodged at Goebbels' summer villa near the village of Caputh, and conferred with Goebbels, Röhm, and Göring. A strategic plan followed for two years was slipping through their fingers. They were now the strongest party, but not strong enough for their own devious brand of democracy aiming at dictatorship. Now the question was: Could they resist the temptations of a brilliant defeat? Schleicher, eager to build up a synthetic popularity for Papen, who cared little for popularity, offered the National Socialists high offices, apparent key positions: the vice-chancellorship, the premiership of Prussia, provincial presidencies and mayoralities; this would take care of thousands of careerists with the swastika over or under their lapels. Did the party have the moral strength to continue an uncertain struggle for full victory? Was it not better to accept the bribe: a piece of power, a share

in the offices and State salaries, some access to the State treasury, some relief from the nightmare of an indebtedness running to twelve millions?

'All evening', Goebbels relates, 'Der Führer has been striding up and down the room and the terrace outside. A visible conflict is going on inside him. The decision which must be made tomorrow has immense implications. It is being pondered carefully from all sides. . . .' In situations of this sort, Hitler had demonstrated greatness of will - this should not be denied. He has often been mistaken in his appraisal of circumstances; he has ventured the falsest interpretations and the most frivolous prophecies; at times he has acted with astonishing lack of judgment; but in August, 1932, he knew exactly how much he could risk - and yet he risked more. The situation, he often repeated in those days, was not yet ripe; blows and failures had not yet sufficiently taught the opposing side---the State power, the Reichswehr, the President - that their edifice was bound to collapse without National Socialist aid. Nine years before, Hitler had proclaimed that the decisive struggle between Swastika and Soviet Star would bring him to power; this would be his great hour. It almost literally cost him his head that he was unwilling to waste this hour in bargaining for fragments of power; but in the end the risk brought him his great triumph.

On the morning of August 13, Hitler, Röhm, and Frick went to see Schleicher. A wild argument broke out, and was continued in the presence of Papen; insulted and enraged, scarcely letting the others say a word or listening when they did speak, Hitler loudly explained why he insisted on full power and a free hand. He had given the same reasons, almost in the same words, to the Munich court in 1924: 'The great thing for him was not to become Minister - so he said - but to break Marxism. In his long, deafening outburst he made ample use of such words as 'mow down', 'Saint Bartholomew's Night'; for three days 'the S.A. must have freedom of the streets'. He is reported to have declared that he counted on five thousand dead.

Hitler's outburst seems to have made a terrible impression on Papen and Schleicher; Schleicher said later that he doubted Hitler's sanity. Perhaps Hitler expected to set the minds of Papen and Schleicher at rest when he said that what he was proposing was far from a National Socialist dictatorship. He desired neither the Reichswehr nor the Foreign Ministry; he desired 'only as much power as Mussolini took in his *coup d'état* of 1922'. Mussolini had had non-Fascists in his Cabinet; but Papen and Schleicher, who had not studied the history of *coups d'état* as thoroughly as had Hitler, misunderstood; they believed that he wanted to govern alone and without them - and basically they were right.

It was the will of Hindenburg, and even more of Schleicher, to create a Government which would at least be tolerated by the Reichstag. Since Hitler had made no attempt to 'bring' them the Reichstag, they

could offer him no more than the post of Vice-Chancellor in the Papen Cabinet, the Prussian Ministry of the Interior and similar posts; nothing was asked in return except that he keep his promise and help to give the Papen Government a majority which would have to be completed with help from other sides.

Bursting with rage and disappointment, Hitler drove to Goebbels' Berlin home with Röhm and Frick, and there he gave his nerves free play. His failure to obtain power had not been a complete surprise to him; but that they should have lured him to a conference and humiliated him by such absurd offers—that was too much. And the cruel events of that day were not yet ended. Thoughtlessly Hitler, six weeks before, had given Hindenburg his word to support Papen. Now the old man insisted that Hitler appear before him. The telephone rang; Frick answered; Papen's aide, State Secretary Erwin Planck, asked him to tell Herr Hitler that the President expected him at four in the afternoon. Frick shouted back, what would be the use of it? The decision, he shouted in an accusing tone, had already been made—he meant, 'by your side'. Planck answered that no decision had been made—he probably meant that Hindenburg refused to accept officially Hitler's going back on his promise as long as he had not heard it from him himself, and in his own words. Hitler came, escorted by Röhm and Frick. Hindenburg had a horror of Röhm and little sympathy for Hitler; he received the three standing, leaning on his cane; a man of eighty-five, he forced himself to undergo this discomfort in order to make the quarter of an hour as painful as possible for his visitors under the coldly staring eyes of the on-lookers: Oskar von Hindenburg, Meissner, Papen, and Schleicher.

Hindenburg began the conversation abruptly: 'Herr Hitler, I have only one question to address to you: Are you prepared to offer me your collaboration in the Papen Cabinet?' Hitler was so humiliated that he could scarcely speak; he muttered that he had already named his terms to Papen and Schleicher. Hindenburg, rather pleased that things were as he had imagined: 'So you want the whole power?' Hitler, almost in a whisper: 'Only as much as Mussolini' . . . Hindenburg, too, misunderstood about Mussolini, but was right, nevertheless: That, he said triumphantly, meant the whole power. The official *communiqué* of the interview continues that Hindenburg 'definitely rejected Herr Hitler's demands, stating that his conscience and his duties to the fatherland could not permit him to give the entire governing power exclusively to the National Socialist Movement, which wished to make one-sided use of it'. If the fight must continue, Hindenburg went on, he would request Herr Hitler at least to conduct it chivalrously. Then the blow fell, the sharp blame for not keeping his word: Hindenburg, said the *communiqué*, 'regretted that Herr Hitler did not see himself in a position to support a national Government appointed with the confidence of the Herr Reichs President, as he had agreed to do, before the Reichstag elections'. Large

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parts of the German public had felt for months that Hindenburg himself had broken faith with Brüning; the exiled Kaiser in his Dutch exile likewise felt deceived and forsaken by his Field-Marshal. The Marshal himself had been convinced since August 13, 1932, that Hitler was not a man of his word.

The whole interview had taken less than ten minutes.

Hitler's almost unerring feeling for the significance of great events in his life was expressed in the emotion with which he received Hindenburg's rebuff. The defeat in the presidential elections did not break him; the ten minutes' talk with Hindenburg did. Before the eyes of the German people he had mounted the steps of the President's palace, the steps to power; before the eyes of the people he had slunk down them. He had thirteen million votes behind him, and he was helpless against an old man who had to lean on a stick and was no longer able to concentrate his thoughts for more than a few minutes. But these few minutes had been enough to stop a so-called national revolution which by its own definition was impossible without 'the permission of the President'.

THE RACE WITH CATASTROPHE

'**G**REAT HOPELESSNESS reigns among the party comrades. The S.A. is desperate,' wrote Goebbels in his diary the next day. Hitler's failure struck the Uprooted and Disinherited personally, in their most private sensibilities. It meant no State power, no State treasury, no State jobs. For the numerous administrators of party homes, the S.A. kitchens, the uniform factories, it meant creditors in terror of losing their money, rude reminders, expired notes; for the party as a whole, with all its subsidiary organizations, it meant the menace of a bankruptcy to the amount of twelve millions; for thousands of employees it meant starvation sooner or later.

For some it meant the executioner's axe. A special court sentenced the five murderers of Potempa to death, in strict accordance with the law. Hitler sent the five who had trampled a man to death before the eyes of his own mother a telegram beginning with the words: 'My comrades! In the face of this most hideous blood sentence, I feel myself bound with you in unlimited loyalty . . .' The five murderers, he said, had his picture hanging in their cells; how then could he forsake them? 'In our movement comradeship does not cease when someone makes a mistake.' Moreover, the murdered man had been a Communist and a Pole, hence an enemy of Germany, and 'anyone who struggles, lives, fights, and, if need be, dies for Germany, has all the right on his side; and anyone who turns against Germany has no rights'.

Hitler had landed in one of those situations where every gun goes off backwards, where bombs explode in the hands of the thrower, and the trapper steps into his own traps. He got a sharp answer from Papen: Hitler, the Chancellor cried, did not have 'the right to regard the minority in Germany that follows his banner as alone representing the German nation, and to treat all other national comrades as free game'. He continued: 'I shall, if necessary, force recognition of the equal justice that is the right of all German citizens. I am firmly resolved to stamp out the smouldering flame of civil war.' Papen could say that because the flame began to lack fuel.

If it is true that prosperity and depression follow each other in a nine-year cycle, then the time for prosperity had come again. The bottom of the depression had been hit in the summer and early autumn of 1923; in late autumn the recovery had begun; in vain Hitler had tried at that time to save the chaos which he had helped to create. And now again, in the autumn of 1932, there were the first signs of recovery; reports that in some industries there were more orders and more work to do; and

these signs appeared exactly after the first signs of Hitler's forthcoming decline. The burden of international political debts had practically vanished; it had become clear that there would be no war or warlike attempts to save the tottering structure of the Versailles Treaty; Germany in particular was confident that the spectre of reparations was definitely gone.

Papen, with all his faults a man of courage, seized the first opportunity with a bold hand. Unafraid of unpopularity, he slapped the masses in the face because he firmly believed that this was the only means to help them. To clear the streets of the unemployed, hopeless, lawless, and classless youth, an allegedly 'voluntary' labour service was created, mostly with the help of the Stahlhelm, but neither S.A. nor 'Iron Front' were completely rejected. About 280,000 young men found work, although under hard conditions; for little more remuneration than military board and lodging, they built roads, drained swamps, straightened rivers. Then Papen did what Brüning had been afraid to do: he tried to encourage private enterprise by an artificial State credit, not intimidated by the whispering about 'inflation'. A State 'tax certificate' was devised, which could be used for the payment of future taxes; such certificates, to a total value of seven hundred million marks, were distributed—as a loan—to concerns that engaged new workers, and an additional eight hundred million marks were kept in reserve. For every worker hired, the employer received four hundred marks in the form of tax certificates, and in this way Papen hoped to employ a million and three-quarter workers. Finally Papen, with a light heart, dared to do something which no man in his place before or after him did, at least not in this harsh and one-sided way: he permitted every employer who hired unemployed workers, to reduce, as a reward, the wages stipulated in the union contracts and hitherto sanctioned by a State law.

This 'experiment Papen' was jubilantly hailed by the employers and their political representatives: Hugenberg's German Nationalists; it was grimly rejected by almost everybody else, by the trade unions and the political parties of the workers, Social Democrats and Communists; by the Centre with its big workers' following; by the National Socialists who would have condemned anything that came from Papen; and finally—and this was decisive—by the Reichswehr, which had struggled during twelve years for the working-man's sympathy. The result was an estrangement between Papen and Schleicher.

But there was one friend who stuck to Papen: old Hindenburg himself. In his eyes Papen was the first Chancellor who, for many years, in a difficult situation dared to act and did not lose precious time by thinking things over too thoroughly; this appealed to Hindenburg's soldierly mentality. In his way Papen was more of a soldier than Schleicher, the intriguer and diplomatist with his brilliant skill, who sometimes saw difficulties which did not exist at all, only because he found his pleasure

in overcoming them by ruse and scheming. His undeniable successes had taken Hindenburg in for a long time; he admired the way the younger man led and fooled the parliamentarians, and got from them what he wanted for the army without allowing them to stick their noses too deep into the Reichswehr business. But the soldier Schleicher had got caught in his own web of intrigues, and through the meshes he had slowly lost sight of the real world and of the whims and wishes of that still powerful old man whom, through many years, he had flattered, pleased and cajoled with seemingly unending success. The old man, firm in his few ideas but fickle in his personal likes and dislikes, slowly began to be annoyed with Schleicher and occasionally went so far as to say that it would not do him any harm if he were to take over again the command of a division in the province in order not to forget what a soldier had to look like.

Around this family tragedy between Germany's military men spun the wheel of the greater fate which in these days seemed to swing Hitler downward—perhaps definitely. Outwitted by the junkers, forsaken by heavy industry, not supported even by the Reichswehr in the decisive moment, Hitler had retained hope only in what, in his own judgment, was the most unreliable power of all: the people. 'I am writing an editorial with sharp attacks on the upper crust,' wrote Goebbels on September 4 in his diary. 'If we want to keep the party intact, we must again appeal to the primitive mass instincts—to the instincts of the 'stupid, lazy, cowardly'. And so Hitler's speeches during the next weeks and months were filled with remarks such as: 'Who is against us? Only a little group of old junkers.' And: 'We have long expected that when things were very bad with the Jews, they would find a few run-down aristocrats to help them.' But 'These old excellencies will not get us down!' Yes, he meant Hindenburg. 'My great adversary, Reichs President von Hindenburg,' he said at a meeting, 'is eighty-five years old today. I am forty-three and feel in the best of health. And nothing will happen to me, for I feel clearly what great tasks Providence has in store for me. By the time I am eighty-five years old, Hindenburg will have been dead a long while.' He meant Hindenburg again, when he said that the revolution of 1918 had come to success only because 'at the head of the nation there were only old men, impotent statesmen, overweening leaders, raised in class arrogance'. He said what most of his armed intellectuals thought; for Rohm, too, meant Hindenburg when he wrote in the *Völkischer Beobachter*: 'The system that was ingloriously overthrown on November 9, 1918, capitulated without manliness in a decisive hour. The soldier who was fighting at the fronts will not forget that this system was not worthy of his sacrifices. With this world, with this society, with this mentality, nothing binds us any longer. It is the object of our hatred and contempt.' And Hitler added: 'I can only say that if in November, 1918, I had had only one army corps under me, the revolution would not have succeeded.'

'If, in his few conferences with Hindenburg, he had been able to make this point clear to the old man, perhaps he would not be in the tight spot he was now. True, the Field-Marshal might have understood that National Socialism had the one great aim of making a second November, 1918, impossible; but it was beyond the old man's understanding why mass meetings were necessary for this purpose. And the 'Bohemian corporal' and old Reichswehr spy just was not the type from which Hindenburg would take a lecture. Now, Hitler had among his followers some other old generals and colonels who might perhaps be able to do what he was not. They were banded together in a committee for the sole purpose of influencing a dozen generals and colonels in the Reichswehr staff; their leader, Franz von Epp, the man who in bygone times had helped to 'invent' Hitler, was assigned to influence Hindenburg himself. This 'Military-Political Bureau' (*Wehrpolitisches Amt*) was going to make the old generals understand why there had to be a National Socialist Movement: to win 'spiritual domination over the people . . . ; to penetrate', as the programme of the new bureau put it, 'the soul of the proletariat'; as a matter of fact, 'only the National Socialist S.A. has succeeded in drawing valuable fighter material from these circles'.

Meanwhile, let nobody fool himself that this new army would be had just for the asking. What was the use that Schleicher clamoured in public: 'Germany will do what is necessary for her national defence, whatever happens'—and, 'We shall no longer stand for being treated as a second-class nation'? But it was, in Hitler's opinion, even worse that Papen still chased after his dream of a Franco-German occidental front, a Franco-German understanding that would give Germany her much-coveted army. No wonder that Mussolini became angry and shouted his anger in the face of Göring, who, at that time, was continuously shuttling between Berlin, Berchtesgaden, and Rome; no wonder that the Italian dictator publicly warned Germany not to demand her right to rearm. Hitler took up his cue. Had not Papen been so foolish even to demand more ships in Geneva—old-fashioned, half-obsolete battleships, good for nothing but to stir up bad feelings in England? Did Papen honestly not realize that the Disarmament Conference was bound to be a failure and that 'the sole concern of German diplomacy must be to make it plain that the blame for the failure of disarmament lay clearly and exclusively with France? . . . This would inevitably have isolated France. But under no circumstances should we have come before the world, or even this conference, with a rearmament programme of our own'. For, after all, Germany's rearmament is inevitable; but 'it will not take place in Lausanne or Geneva, but in Germany . . . and it will not lead to an international ratification unless it represents an accomplished fact'. With this sentence, published in an open letter to Papen on October 21, 1932, Hitler announced his policy of 'accomplished facts' which after-

wards was going to shatter definitely the peace from the lake shores of Switzerland.

But while Hitler reviled Papen because he gambled away Germany's best chances, many of his own faithful accused him of doing the same with the chances of the party. Losses were to be expected in the next elections. Hundreds of Uprooted and Disinherited, who, for a brief period, had been deputies, would again have to go out in search of an uncertain living; and the twelve-million-mark bankruptcy seemed almost inevitable.

As far as is known, the majority of the National Socialist functionaries held this view in the autumn of 1932, and doubted the wisdom of their Führer. Hitler was supported by Goebbels and Göring. Both were essentially his creatures, picked by him and elevated to leadership, not slowly risen from the ranks; consequently neither had any large personal following among the party masses. The sentiments of these party masses were best known to the man who, as business manager and organizer, had his hands on the sensitive levers of the party machine, who was responsible for it from its *gauleiters* down to its office-boys, who gave the orders and could see how they were obeyed—Gregor Strasser. He was joined by Wilhelm Frick, the former Munich police official. Frick had organized National Socialist cells in State and municipal offices; he had covered the State with a network of spies, who now began to doubt if they were serving the party which would soon be in power.

Strasser upheld the interests of the party against Hitler, and to a certain degree the party had its way. Negotiations were taken up with the Centre. Hitler was ready for the most humiliating coalition. 'I report to the leader by telephone; he agrees to everything,' Goebbels writes. Hitler met Brüning, who seems to have listened in courteous silence; Hitler felt that Brüning had been 'very compliant'. Perhaps Brüning felt the same. The leaders of the Centre, believing that this might be the time to tame the National Socialists and to 'burden' them with responsibility, agreed that they, as the strongest party, might appoint the President of the Reichstag, as custom decreed. Perhaps they expected Hitler to suggest Strasser, but he appointed Göring. For the first time the public attention was drawn to this man, who up till then had stood somewhat in the shade. On August 30 he was elected, over the opposition of the Social Democrats and Communists.

From now on Hitler had his Berlin headquarters in the gilded, red-plush palace opposite the Reichstag that Göring as President was entitled to occupy. Here he invited, ten days later, Kaas, Brüning, Stegerwald, and other leaders of the Centre and tried to talk them into a coalition Government, with himself as Chancellor, governing with the help of a far-reaching 'enabling law', free from the control of the parliament for at least one year. Goebbels claims: 'The gentlemen of the Centre, who had never seen him before, are, it is clear, quite overcome by his per-

sonality'. In reality they went away with the impression that, even if a National Socialist ever could be Chancellor, Hitler personally could not.

For the first time he had tried to find a majority, and he had failed, largely on account of his senseless demands and his terrifying behaviour. But one thing remained certain: there could be no majority against him—not in this Reichstag. But what if Hindenburg dissolved the Reichstag; and supposing the new one were also refractory, what if he dissolved it, too; and then again? Which would break first: the State or the National Socialist Party? Hitler and Papen threatened one another with endless overthrows and endless dissolutions of the Reichstag, and amid these mutual threats the Reichstag met on September 12. On the morning of this day Hindenburg gave his Chancellor a crumpled slip of paper, on which it was noted in Meissner's handwriting, invoking Article 25 of the constitution, 'I dissolve the Reichstag', because of the danger that the Reichstag would suspend Papen's economic decrees. Underneath stood Hindenburg's name; in his haste Meissner had written the wrong date, and then corrected it.

Goebbels had prepared and discussed with Hitler a long speech attacking Papen; Papen brought with him a statement of the Government which he planned to read; but things turned out differently. A Communist stood up and demanded an immediate vote of no-confidence in the Government. If there were no opposition, the vote would have to be taken immediately. The 230 well-salaried members in brown shirts were stunned. Fate ran faster than they had expected; they had been representatives now for six weeks—and this was probably the end! Frick, amidst laughter, rose, and obtained a half-hour adjournment. Meanwhile, Hitler—no representative himself—sat across the street in Göring's gilded palace. The National Socialists rushed across to their Leader and reported to him. Hitler had been undecided for weeks, but now the decision came to him in the shape of a dramatic picture. Here was an opportunity for a legal master stroke, at least a great scene which would make an impression on the entire country. Papen must fall, before he had a chance to speak and declare the Reichstag dissolved. Papen saw more or less what was in the offing; in haste he sent to the Chancellery for the crumpled slip of paper with Hindenburg's signature; meanwhile Hitler gave Göring—one of the few of his people he really trusted—his instructions. The house re-convened. The deputies had no sooner taken their places than Göring, as President of the chamber, announced a vote on the Communist motion of no-confidence. Papen, taken by surprise, rose to speak. Göring ignored him. The voting had begun, he said later, and as long as it lasted nobody could be allowed to speak. Papen advanced a few steps; pale and agitated, he set Hindenburg's note on the table in front of Göring; there was a shuffling of chairs, the other Ministers rose, and the whole Cabinet, with Papen at its head, left the hall. Göring did not so much as look; he proceeded calmly with his act,

and the entire Reichstag, stupefied, angry, or amused, obediently voted, not knowing that legally it no longer existed. Five hundred and thirteen votes of nearly all parties were cast against Papen, only thirty-two for him. Germany had gone on record against Hindenburg's Chancellor; but Hindenburg, by dissolving the parliament, demanded that Germany reconsider her vote.

'The Leader is beside himself with joy,' wrote Goebbels. 'Again he has made a clear, unmistakable decision.' The party did not share this joy; Strasser and Frick, angry and desperate, predicted a grave defeat. 'Money is very hard to raise at the moment,' Goebbels reported; no one would give money for an evidently lost cause. For a moment it seemed as though there might be no more Reichstag. Papen wanted to postpone the elections indefinitely; to force a new constitution on the country from above; to create a second parliament in the style of the English Upper House and eliminate equal suffrage by giving every head of a family two votes, and three to every family head who had served in the war—but this was prevented by Schleicher. Nevertheless, the elections were set for November 6, the latest date allowed by the constitution; by that time, Papen hoped, his economic laws would have poured forth their blessings on the German people.

On the day after the dissolution, Hitler assembled his deputies and gave out the election slogan: 'Against reaction!' His hope was that the people would rise up for him against the 'Barons'. He knew the people, he declared in his election speeches, and the people knew him; 'but five months ago nobody knew Herr von Papen. . . . I am a child of the people and shall remain one. . . . I am fully aware that especially the workers in the National Socialist Movement are blindly devoted to it. I shall never betray them and will never break with the people.'

The 'people' nailed him to his word. A few days before the elections, the Communists paralyzed traffic in Berlin by drawing the bus and subway employees into a strike; the Brown Shirts joined in the strike in order not to lose votes to the Communists, and Goebbels treated Berlin to a wild revolutionary drama. He dressed some S.A. men as workers and put them to work on street-car tracks; other sham workers stood near by, reviling them as 'scabs' and threatening them; the police appeared and drove the threateners away. The 'scabs' ripped up the rails under protection of the police, who were convinced that the work had been ordered by the transit company. The unions disapproved the hopeless strike; Goebbels cried that the Social Democrats were betraying the workers—just as the Communists had been saying for thirteen years. Bourgeois supporters of the party, especially in the country, took fright; in their election speeches the German Nationalists warned against 'Brown Bolshevism'. At a Cabinet session, Schleicher said that if these two radical streams should ever flow together in earnest and turn against the State, the Reichswehr would not be strong enough to resist them.

But the stream was falling. In the elections of July 30 the National Socialists and Communists together had won three hundred and nineteen mandates. When the votes were counted on November 6, they obtained only two hundred and ninety-seven. But of these two hundred and ninety-seven, the Communists alone had a hundred. Alarm spread through Germany. Communism had reached the level at which the National Socialists had first terrified the world in 1930.

But what moved the public even more profoundly was that in these elections Hitler for the first time had been defeated, as all the prophets had predicted. He alone had forced himself to be optimistic, predicted a 'great psychological success'. Now the defeat was at hand. More than two million votes had been lost, thirty-three deputies did not return to the Reichstag; the National Socialist fraction was reduced from 230 to 197.

'A sombre mood prevails in the *Gau* of Berlin,' was Goebbels' entry on November 6. 'There is widespread despair among the voters.' The old Strasser party rose up in every corner; Frick, Gottfried Feder, Deputies Kube, Kaufmann, Erich Koch, demanded a policy of concessions; Gregor Strasser publicly stated that Hitler must abandon any idea of the chancellorship.

This was now a foregone conclusion; the National Socialists could not expect more than a 'share' in a future Government, as Strasser stated. He bitterly pointed out to his Leader that before the elections the National Socialists in the Reichstag might have formed a majority with the Centre; now this possibility was ended, the two parties together were less than half of parliament; Hitler's unfortunate passion for overthrowing Governments was responsible. But with the Communists they still had a majority, Hitler replied; no one can govern against us. And that, said Strasser in despair, is what Hitler called 'saving Germany!' 'A growing willingness to compromise,' wrote Goebbels in his diary. 'True, in public Hitler went on threatening the 'enemy' with 'annihilation'; secretly he admitted that for the moment he had to give in and that one or several of his lieutenants would have to accept the second-rate posts which were offered: vice-chancellorship, Government in Prussia, etc. The only question was: Who should be the bearer of the white flag? The party wanted Strasser; just on account of this, Hitler wanted Göring. The rivalry between Strasser and Göring overshadowed for the next two months all other developments in the party; it was a natural rule of the game that the sultan preferred the weaker, therefore less dangerous figure.

But the opposite side, too, was divided. Schleicher demanded that, whatever happened, Papen must patch together a majority in the new Reichstag. But Papen was profoundly convinced that the days of majorities were over; in this view he was upheld by the only party that supported him in the Reichstag, Hugenberg's German Nationalists, who in the last elections had increased their microscopic strength to fifty

votes, and, in a different way, by the Social Democrats, who refused so much as to talk to him. The majority which he despised answered by boycott. When Papen tried to straighten out past differences by a conciliatory letter to Hitler, the 'son of the people' answered in a letter full of scorn in which he admitted between the lines that he actually had broken his word that he had given Hindenburg; an oral conversation with the Chancellor was, he wrote, useless.

Hitler hardly expected dramatic consequences from his letter. His lieutenants, all unsuspecting, were far from Berlin. Göring and Rosenberg had gone to Italy to attend a 'European Congress' of the Roman Academy of Sciences. At a banquet on November 17, Göring had the seat of honour beside Mussolini. He was still at table when word reached him that Papen had resigned.

Pushed by Schleicher, rebuffed by all parties, Papen had performed a master stroke to prove that there was no majority. In accordance with strictly parliamentary procedure, the Leader of the party that was still strongest was summoned to tell the President how he would go about forming a new Government. It is strange that every time Hitler was called to see Hindenburg, Göring was in foreign parts. On the morning of the 18th Göring saw Mussolini, and assured him that the Fascist century was about to begin in Germany. An Italian Government plane rushed him to Venice, where a German machine was awaiting him; in the record time of six hours he was in Berlin. The next morning he went to see Meissner, negotiated a worthy form of reception for his Leader, and when Hitler called on Hindenburg at noon he was given a chair and was permitted to speak for a whole hour. This time he succeeded in arousing the old man's interest, though he could not convince Hindenburg that the rearmament policy of Papen and Schleicher was false at this moment; the facts rather argued that it was correct, for four days after the Reichstag elections, on November 10, Sir John Simon, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, had declared in the House of Commons that England recognized in principle the German claim to equal military rights. Hindenburg was greatly pleased and told Hitler that whoever governed, he, Hindenburg, would choose his Reichswehr Minister and his Foreign Minister, and he himself would determine the policy of these departments.

Hitler requested that the actual negotiations should take place in writing. At a second conference on the 21st the two men sat face to face and read manuscripts. Hindenburg: 'You know that I favour the idea of a presidial Cabinet. By a presidial Cabinet I mean a Cabinet that is not led by a party leader, but by a man standing above parties, and that this man is a person enjoying my special confidence.' This sounded as if the man enjoying Hindenburg's special confidence should govern against parliament, but it was not so intended; the meaning was, as State Secretary Otto Meissner wrote to Hitler three days later,

that 'as a rule the presidial Cabinet would carry out the necessary governmental measures without previous consent of parliament'; this type of Cabinet 'in general needs parliament only to sanction or tolerate these measures'. Disparaging as this might sound, the presidial Cabinet also required parliament. A few paragraphs later Meissner admitted that 'Papen's pure presidial Cabinet' had resigned 'because it could not find a majority in parliament to tolerate its measures'. Meissner, Hindenburg's voice, continued: 'Consequently, a new presidial Cabinet would be an improvement only if it could eliminate this deficiency'. These half dictators still felt dependent on parliament.

The consent of parliament would have to be obtained, even if the Chancellor were a man enjoying Hindenburg's special confidence. Hitler did not even come up to these requirements: 'You have declared', said Hindenburg, 'that you can put your movement at the disposal only of a Cabinet headed by yourself as the leader of your party.' To grant this, Hindenburg continued, 'I must insist that such a Cabinet have a majority in the Reichstag'. Go and look for this majority, Hindenburg concluded, a 'secure working majority with a solid, coherent programme for work in the Reichstag', and if you find it, report to me in five days.

Hitler did not look for such a majority, for obviously he could not have found it. He spent several days in the fashionable Hotel Kaiserhof, debating and bickering with Göring, Strasser, Frick, Röhm, and Goebbels. Hindenburg demanded a majority, but tied his hands with conditions. One of two things was possible, wrote Hitler, in letters to Hindenburg and Meissner; if the Reichstag should confirm him as Chancellor in accordance with the constitution, the constitution demanded that he be free in the choice of his collaborators; on the other hand, if the President wished to prescribe his collaborators, he must also, basing himself on his questionable emergency rights, support him if necessary against the Reichstag. Meanwhile, Strasser, Göring, and Frick looked round to see whether a parliamentary majority might not be obtainable, after all; Kaas of the Centre said to Göring: Certainly, if Hitler governs constitutionally with parliament, the Centre will not refuse its participation. This seemed a great success, such as Papen had been unable to obtain. But the party of the junkers and heavy industrialists—for this is what the German Nationalists were at that time—consciously blocked the party of the Uprooted and Disinherited a step before their goal. Hugenberg declared that he would not participate in a Government with the Centre, that he would have no part whatsoever in this game of majorities—and without Hugenberg there could be no majority. These conservatives had a profound inner distrust of Hitler's method of combating masses with masses; it became one of their main tasks to prevent this newly rising mass from governing. Thus Hitler was unable to bring Hindenburg a majority; again, as in August, he demanded

special powers; again, with an overtone of triumph, Hindenburg answered, through the voice of Meissner: This was party dictatorship; and Hindenburg did not feel he could 'answer for this to the German people'. But, at the end, a more conciliatory note: Hindenburg, Meissner wrote, repeats 'that his door stands open to you at any time'; he would always be ready to give Hitler a hearing, and he does not abandon the hope that in time it will be possible 'to win you and your movement for collaboration with all other constructive forces of the nation'. Meaning to say: you will grow smaller.

Angry and embittered, Hitler retorted—against his own better knowledge—that he would not grow smaller. He drove to Schleicher, shouted at him as if he were his subordinate. He would, he cried, prevent anyone else from governing; and since Schleicher was thinking of making Hitler's friend, Hjalmar Schacht, Chancellor, Hitler produced a written declaration by Schacht saying that only one man could become Chancellor today, and that was Hitler, and he should not be obstructed in his great task by conditions. 'If Hitler does not become Chancellor today,' wrote Schacht, 'he will in four months. He can wait.' And Schleicher, Hitler went on, should nourish no hopes of becoming Chancellor himself; for whoever became Chancellor would be overthrown by himself, Hitler, with the help—as he several times repeated—of the Communists.

Next day he had a calm and friendly conversation with Kaas, the leader of the Centre. Both gentlemen agreed that the country must be governed by a parliamentary majority—'the establishment of a realistic basis for a possible majority Government is entirely in accord with my ideas', said Hitler for the record; both men agreed that Hugenberg, as the spokesman of the junkers and heavy industry, made such a majority Government impossible.

But confidence—the national catastrophe is with us! This was the comfort Hitler gave his followers and even more himself: 'In a few months the end [of the present Government] will be worse than the beginning is today. Then they will turn to us a third time.'

Provided we are still in existence—Gregor Strasser might have answered. He was now the loudest voice in the whispered panic that had seized upon the party, the proud prophet of calamity who had been proved right. The majority of the party shared his opinion that in a few months, whatever happened to the Government, something worse would have happened to the party.

In the course of 1932 Strasser's face had become imprinted on the consciousness of the German masses. He publicized himself as the socialist in the party, and no other party leaders equalled him in mass appeal. Within the party machine he had built up a sort of labour movement, known as the N.S.B.O. (National Socialist Organization of Shop Cells). It was a part of the 'State within the State', which Strasser had made of the party apparatus. His idea was that when the

National Socialists seized power, they would march into the Wilhelmstrasse, not as a single Minister or Chancellor, but with a whole ready-made Government; they would discard the old State completely and set an entirely new one in its place. This type of party had cost him a hard fight with Hitler. Hitler had feared Strasser's machine, which, to his mind, embodied too much planning and preparation; too little fighting and propaganda. The semi-socialist manifestoes and inflation plans of this machine had attracted many voters, but had aroused the business men among Hitler's friends; Schacht had warned Hitler to stop making economic promises. Hitler decided to dissolve the economic planning apparatus headed by Gottfried Feder. Now it was said that the Leader was against socialism, but that Strasser wanted to save the socialism of the party.

He wanted to save the party itself. If it did not get its share of power at once, it was headed for ruin. Then the proudest dream of the armed intellectuals would be at an end, and a horde of bohemians, no longer armed, would wander through Germany, literally begging.

This had already begun. 'Financial worries make all well-directed work impossible,' wrote Goebbels. He reported that the party was cutting the wages of its employees; that the National Socialist deputies could give the Reichstag porters no tips for Christmas. He sent the S.A. out on the street to beg for money. In their thin shirts, shivering with the cold, the storm troopers stood on the corners by twos and threes, rattling their tin collection boxes and crying lamentably: 'Give something for the wicked Nazis!'

The party's trusted backers were dropping away; many belonged to that type of rich men who were always on the brink of financial difficulties themselves. In November, Fritz Thyssen had definitely declared that his strength was at an end; he would buy one more carload of political pamphlets from the *Völkischer Beobachter*, but after that they should cease to count on him. Even Adolf Müller, the printer of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, threatened several times in the course of November and December to stop printing unless he got some money. Hitler trembled and courted Adolf Müller's favour scarcely less than that of Hindenburg; he often yelled at him, to be sure, but Müller was half deaf and hard to perturb. He calmly replied that the *Völkischer Beobachter* was ruining him, but luckily he was doing a good business in Catholic Church notices. This printing order he owed to Cardinal Michael Faulhaber, who more or less dominated Bavarian politics; Adolf Müller, who often held Hitler's financial fate in his hands, was no National Socialist, but a member of the Catholic Bavarian People's Party which ruled Bavaria.

Amid these dangers Strasser and Göring set out on their race to compromise. Schleicher reproached Papen for not seeing the most obvious thing of all: the venality of the National Socialists, their bank-

ruptcy, the crumbling of their power under the pressure of financial stringency. He reproached him for setting too much store on a minority grouplet like the German Nationalists, for stubbornly overlooking the will of all big parties to reach a parliamentary understanding with the Government. He asked Theodor Leipart, chairman of the Social Democratic trade unions, to call on him. Leipart, a tight-lipped, elderly man with a small pointed beard like many Socialist officials of the elder European generation, came with Wilhelm Eggert, a younger co-worker. Schleicher inquired into their grievances, and both spoke of Papen's attack on the wage contracts, of the recently introduced high tariffs on foodstuffs. Schleicher replied that he, too, disapproved of wage-cuts, regarded the rise in food prices as unfortunate, and held that too much money had been given away to the big landowners. He assured Rudolf Breitscheid, leader of the Social Democrats in the Reichstag, that he desired a functioning parliament. But if the Reichstag were not capable of functioning; if it must be dissolved; and if the Reich Government should put off elections indefinitely, then, Schleicher inquired amiably: 'Would the Social Democrats mount the barricades?' Breitscheid answered cautiously: He would not commit himself to the barricades, but the entire working class would act against such a breach of the constitution with all the legal means at their disposal. Schleicher saw nothing very formidable in legal means; from all these conversations he gained the impression that with friendly treatment the parties would listen to reason; even the Social Democrats, even the National Socialists. They would quietly permit individuals among their leaders to enter the Cabinet, and for the present would not overthrow the Government.

But since Papen definitely was not willing to look for a majority, but instead planned to force upon the country a new, half-feudal constitution, Schleicher, using his authority as leader of the Reichswehr, overthrew him by a palace revolution. At a Cabinet session on the morning of December 2 approximately half the Ministers declared that they would resign unless Papen himself resigned. Very reluctantly Hindenburg let his favourite go; asked him to remain his private adviser; both agreed that now Schleicher himself must take the responsibility of the chancellorship, since only he, in Papen's sceptically intended words, 'would relax the tension and avoid a conflict with the Reichstag'. Schleicher would have preferred to govern by a straw man, but Hindenburg and Papen forced him into the open and explicitly commissioned him to form a Government which would have the Reichstag's confidence. Schleicher was quite unaware of it, but by this act his fate was sealed.

Whom of the National Socialists would he ask to enter his Cabinet? For the policy he had in mind it could only be Strasser. Schleicher made him, in a confidential talk on December 3, the best offer which the National Socialists in their situation could expect. Strasser was to enter the Government as Vice-Chancellor. At the same time he was to become

Premier of Prussia, not appointed from above by force, but regularly elected by the votes of the National Socialists and the Centre in the Prussian diet. If Strasser wished, he could administer Schleicher's great re-employment project; the 'voluntary labour service' would be in his hands; he could put the S.A. in charge of the labour service and burden the State treasury with its expenses and debts. To be sure, he would have had to find a basis of understanding with the Social Democratic unions. Strasser thought well of Theodor Leipart, and the understanding was conceivable.

'We are agreed', wrote Theodor Leipart at the end of 1932 in a message to the trade-union functionaries, 'that the ultimate aim of the working class is the realization of socialism. But you know that the trade unions were established in order to improve the situation of the working class in the framework of the present economic order.' He told a French Press correspondent that Schleicher was really trying to relax the tension with the unions, in order to remove their resistance to his Government; hence Schleicher should not be reproached for his past. If his rearmament speeches had inflamed public opinion in France, said Leipart, the only possible reply was that Schleicher's demand for equality had only expressed the view of all Germans.

'Betrayer of the workers!' the Communists shouted back. In a party proclamation of their own, the Communists, in an effort to take the wind out of the sails of the Nazis, had declared that the 'fetters of Versailles' must fall. The official Social Democrats, in turn, condemned Leipart and forced him to make retractions. Schleicher's Government, said a party proclamation of December 5, was a 'one-sided Government representing that capitalist economic system the failure of which has become more apparent from day to day'. No statement could have been more ill-advised. But 'only on the basis of this line', said Breitscheid, 'can we attempt with any hope of success to revive the democratic will of the working masses that have succumbed to all the talk of dictatorship [on the part of Communists].' But the unions, representing a far larger, less political mass than the party, took no part in the opposition. Seventy years before, Ferdinand Lassalle, the founder of the German labour movement, had explained in a correspondence with Bismarck 'that the working class is instinctively inclined towards dictatorship if it can only be convinced that it is exercised in its interests'. Now nearly all the leaders of the trade unions believed, secretly or even openly, that Schleicher's 'dictatorship' would be exercised in the interests of the workers. Schleicher 'has turned successfully back to the people', said Jakob Kaiser, one of the leaders of the Catholic workers in the Rhineland; 'the assault of reaction has been defeated', and 'a wave of calm, conciliatory expectancy lies over the working class'. An article in the Social Democratic Press, inspired by the trade-union leadership, demanded: 'Allow Schleicher to work! Even an adjournment of the

Reichstag . . . no longer frightens us.' And Leipart, despite all the anger of the Social Democratic leaders, stuck to his opinion: 'The one and only thing that we need now is a productive policy, resolute action to improve the situation of the German workers'. 'Schleicher', he said, 'is attempting to fulfil a part of our demands. This Government will not bring us socialism, we are well aware of that. But can we, in this situation, reject the Government's call to help in the task of providing employment?'

Gregor Strasser believed that the hour for his great positive contribution to Germany had come. In case Hitler did not comply, Schleicher said he would see to it that the big industrialists gave Hitler no more money. In those days Strasser may well have had the feeling that he had unexpectedly become the Leader of Germany, for he seemed on the point of becoming the leader of the German working class.

On December 3, when Schleicher and Strasser agreed on their plan, new elections in Thuringia had taken place. The result had been a new National Socialist defeat. The party lost up to forty per cent of its votes; this was no longer a slip, it was a crash. To save the party, desperate measures were in order. Hitler sent Göring to Schleicher with instructions to discuss the possibilities of appointing a National Socialist Premier in Prussia; but this Premier, he insisted, must be Göring and not Strasser. Schleicher had an easy answer: the Centre declared that it would approve and vote for Strasser as Prussian Premier, but not Göring.

A sordid comedy—this mutual betrayal of the National Socialist leaders! Strasser conspired with Schleicher against Hitler, Hitler with Schleicher against Strasser. But more and more, the unexpressed sentiment of the party was gathering behind Strasser. In vain Hitler attempted at a meeting on December 5 to inspire his Reichstag deputies with courage. It was not true, he told them, that the party had suffered a defeat in Thuringia—all of them knew that it was only too true. Never, he said, had a great movement achieved victory by taking the road of compromise. The closer the show-down approached, the greater the sacrifices; 'only one thing is decisive: who in this struggle is capable of the last effort, who can put the last battalion in the field'. For the deputies who knew that they themselves would be the sacrifice at the next elections, this was no consolation. 'God save us from having to go through with the next election campaign,' Goebbels had recently written in his diary. On December 6 he noted: 'The situation in the Reich is catastrophic'.

On December 7 Hitler and Strasser met in the Kaiserhof; their conversation ended with mutual threats, reproaches, and accusations of betrayal. Hitler accused Strasser of trying to cheat him out of the chancellorship, and even the party leadership—of trying to split the party. Strasser replied that he had wanted to save the party, but Hitler

had disloyally stabbed him in the back. Perhaps he did not say everything he had in his heart; after the conference he sat down in his room in the Hotel Excelsior across from the Anhalt Station, and wrote Hitler a letter overflowing with the anger that had been gathering within him for years. The letter took up differences that went back to 1925, the beginning of Strasser's collaboration with Hitler; Goebbels was not spared, while Röhm was covered with vilification. Strange was the reproach that Hitler, in order to come to power, was consciously playing with the German catastrophe: for years Strasser had done nothing else. In conclusion, Strasser resigned from the party leadership. This letter reached Hitler the next day, December 8.

It was a 'bombshell', as Goebbels put it. In the Kaiserhof, Hitler met with Frick, Göring, Goebbels, Hess, Doctor Robert Ley, the *gauleiter* of Cologne; Wilhelm Kube, deputy in the Prussian diet. For weeks they had felt their party tottering; and now this blow! Many regarded Strasser as the man who might have saved the party, and thought Hitler had prevented him out of injured vanity. Frick openly said as much. Though no great thinker, he was a man of independent mind. Now he rebuked Hitler in the presence of his lieutenants. Strasser, he declared, might be right about many things, and though his letter was a calamity, it was one that could be repaired; Hitler must make his peace with Strasser. Hitler gave in, and permitted Frick to drive about Berlin looking for Strasser.

But that morning Strasser had left the Hotel Excelsior; he had checked his suitcase at the Anhalt Station and had vanished. With a friend by the name of Moritz, he sat in a wine room, drinking and cursing Hitler. In Italy the sun was shining, he cried out boisterously, and that was where he was going—with his wife and children. In unprintable terms he predicted that within a month Hitler would come to him crawling.

Meanwhile, Hitler, Göring, and Goebbels racked their brains. Where and with whom was Strasser intriguing now? Was he working out plans with Schleicher? It seemed a bad sign that his friend Frick should be unable to find him. Restless and unnerved, Hitler went to Goebbels' home; here, as Goebbels writes, everyone was 'very depressed, especially because there is now a danger that the whole party will fall apart and all our work will be in vain'.

By this time Strasser had called for his suitcase and had started for his home in Munich. But the bomb rolled on, and where it struck, it burst. While Hitler was sitting with Goebbels in irresolute gloom, an energetic man made vain attempt to save the party on his own responsibility. This was Doctor Robert Ley. He sat with other National Socialist deputies in the Kaiserhof and tried to convince them that Hitler was right while Strasser was in the wrong; he telephoned to the provinces and inquired about the mood. Finally he reached Hitler on the telephone and told him that 'the situation is becoming more acute from hour to hour'. He

implored him to come out of his hiding-place, since he alone could save something. Meanwhile, a letter arrived from Gottfried Feder resigning his offices and asking for a vacation; he boasted that by his propaganda he had won millions of supporters to the party, but that since Hitler obviously meant to break off this anti-capitalist propaganda and dissolve Feder's economic bureau, millions would drift away in addition to the millions who already had gone.

Hitler now awakened from his lethargy and decided to destroy the mutineers before they could strike. Late that night he went back to the Kaiserhof and dictated a decree, deposing the party leadership. Strasser's State within the State was smashed, the whole machine ready to take power was broken to pieces; it was of no use, anyway, said Hitler, for in the next months the party need concern itself only with one thing, with holding the vanishing voters; all the project-makers in the Brown House would do better to go out into the villages and speak to the people. Ley was set at the head of the organization; his title of 'staff leader' made it clear that he was merely supposed to be Hitler's helper. A 'Central Commission' was set over the party, with the function of supervising the policy of the movement in the provincial diets, to determine such matters as strike policy; the chairman of this mighty new party committee was a man almost unknown in the movement, the Leader's personal friend and private secretary, Rudolf Hess.

But the question remained: Should the party, at the risk of cracking, continue in its struggle against the Government? Should it continue to demand the chancellorship for Hitler? Did the mass of party functionaries possess the moral strength to persevere in desperate opposition, if going over to Strasser offered a prospect of becoming Ministers, provincial presidents, mayors, superintendents of welfare offices, sergeants in the labour service, or night-watchmen in some municipal gas works? Hitler knew that his loyal followers in the brown uniform were running by the dozen to Government offices and 'Jewish newspapers' to sell so-called party secrets for a few marks.

'The Leader', writes Goebbels, 'is taking long strides up and down the hotel room. You can see by his face that a great struggle is going on inside him. He is embittered and deeply wounded by this disloyalty. Once he stops still and says only: If the party falls apart, I'll put an end to it all in three minutes with a pistol.'

Finally Hitler reached a decision. By morning it was apparent that he would fight, and 'throw the whole party into the struggle'. Before the opposing side could gather strength for an ultimatum, it would be crushed by a previous ultimatum. A declaration was drawn up, sharply condemning Strasser, full of praise and declarations of loyalty to Hitler. On the following day the sub-leaders would have to sign this statement.

The great surprise of the next day, December 9, was Strasser's unexpected disappearance. Now it was the turn of Strasser's friends to be

dismayed ; they were abandoned and had no idea what to do. The statement condemning Strasser was submitted to them, and nearly all of them signed it. Gottfried Feder, one of Hitler's few remaining intimate friends, refused: 'Either you sign, or you'll be kicked out of the party,' cried Hitler. Feder signed. In the afternoon Hitler assembled his deputies and *gauleiters* in Göring's palace; he spoke with tears in his voice, related how Strasser had always rebelled against him and for years had contested his authority as Leader; but this last betrayal! 'Never would I have believed that of Strasser!' he cried, laid his head on the table and sobbed. Many of those present began to weep with him. The tears ran down Göring's cheeks, and Goebbels brandished a big white handkerchief; from a modest place in the background Julius Streicher, who for years had been humiliated by Strasser, cried: 'Maddening that Strasser could do this to our Leader!' On the evening after this success Hitler 'looked quite happy and exalted again'. The demonstration of faith, as Goebbels put it, had 'encouraged' and strengthened the indomitable man'.

It was decided that Hitler should travel round the country and have confidential talks with the functionaries and S.A. men. Göring, Ley, and Goebbels would do the same. They set out; their reception was not always friendly. 'A heavy depression prevails in the organization,' wrote Goebbels in his diary. 'The sentiment among the party membership is still divided,' he finds on December 10. 'It costs us no end of effort to keep the S.A. and the party administration on a clear course . . . [December 15].' Occasionally he reports that he has been successful in 'lifting up' the mood of a meeting; but this was not always the case. On December 17 Hitler addressed his functionaries in Halle. Only his will counted in the party, he shouted; then he bade each one of them give him his hand and swear loyalty. While those in the front rows were giving him their hands, fighting broke out in the back of the room; men were knocked down, rebellious S.A. and S.S. men shouted that the comedy should be stopped. In these speeches Hitler did not strike a very convincing tone: 'Perhaps our enemies did give us a numerical setback in the last Reichstag elections, but next year we shall pay them back with interest and compound interest. . . .' In three months the catastrophe would be at hand: 'I think that in March we shall again face these gentry in open battle. By then we shall have created the necessary conditions and the guaranty that our blade will be sharp.'

But at first this timorous hope in the misfortune of the fatherland was bitterly disappointed. Hitler's prophecies, that without him no German Government could accomplish anything in foreign affairs, again turned out to be false. After the MacDonald Cabinet in England had decided for Germany's right to equality in armaments, Paul-Boncour, now French Foreign Minister, made it plain that France would break with England under no circumstances and that no German-English front

must arise. The result was a great moral success for the Schleicher Government. On December 6 the Disarmament Conference re-convened in Geneva. Again Germany was represented. On December 11, Germany, Italy, France, England, and the United States agreed 'that one of the principles that should guide the conference on disarmament should be to grant Germany and the other Powers, disarmed by treaty, equality of rights in a system that would provide security for all nations, and that the principle should itself be embodied in a convention containing the conclusions of the Disarmament Conference'. True, this was only a declaration of principle; the statement also stipulated that France must receive some guaranties of security, to compensate her and relieve her fears. For Germany the declaration represented no material gain like the evacuation of the Rhineland in 1930, the cancellation of reparations in 1932; wherein the equality should consist, and how soon it should be realized, was not said. But for the world that takes principles seriously, this was the most brilliant satisfaction that Germany had received since 1919. The victors of Versailles had given the Reichswehr General what they had denied the democratic Ministers of the German Republic.

At home, too, Schleicher began his Government with an almost effortless success. Papen had been overthrown at once by his Reichstag; but no one dared or desired to overthrow Schleicher. The German Nationalists expected him to provide a powerful dictatorship; the Centre hoped that he would restore parliamentarianism; the Social Democrats did not wish to do anything that might halt the disintegration of the National Socialists; hence none of them wanted to overthrow Schleicher. Not even the National Socialists. 'Whatever happens, no elections—we need a breathing spell!' wrote Goebbels in his diary. The Reichstag made an important decision: Papen's wage-cutting decree must be suspended. Schleicher was delighted, and of his own accord withdrew all Papen's other attacks on the wage laws. Then the Reichstag adjourned without demanding a programme of the Government, without any expression of confidence or no-confidence. The parliament voluntarily gave Schleicher a free hand. Meanwhile, with cautiously chosen words, the leading representative of German industry declared that the depression was slowly vanishing; Doctor Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, chairman of the Reich Association of German Industry, said on December 14 at a session of the leading committee of the organization: '... The world economic situation, in the money market and above all the raw-material market, shows signs of an improvement; the low point seems definitely past'.

The chaos was lifting; slowly, but at many points. Desperately Hitler tried, in secret negotiations, to save what he could. Göring again and again had his talks with Schleicher about Prussia; no result. True, behind the curtain of these political conversations, the door to Hinden-

burg's private study had opened to Göring. The questions that the old Marshal wished to discuss with the former air force captain were not strictly political. He was curious to know how much benefit could be expected of the S.A. in case Germany should build up a large army; or rather, as Schleicher planned it, a 'militia' around the nucleus of the professional Reichswehr. Werner von Blomberg, a General little known to the public, worked out plans for this militia; served as an expert adviser to the German delegation at the Disarmament Conference in Geneva; personally kept Hindenburg informed of developments. In Berlin, Göring, Blomberg, Franz von Epp, in the presence or at least with the knowledge of Hindenburg, discussed the dividing lines between army and S.A., and later events indicate that an understanding was achieved. Röhm had no share in these talks.

But this was far from an understanding concerning the political leadership of the Reich. The nation had a deep desire for peace at home—and Schleicher seemed to bring the peace. This was the darkest Christmas Hitler had had in years. In Italy, Roberto Farinacci, former general secretary of the Fascist Party, leader of the radical, anti-Semitic tendency in the Fascist Movement, wrote in his newspaper, *Regime Fascista*, that Hitler was on the downgrade; that he had played his cards wrong, as was only understandable, for the National Socialists despite their claims were no revolutionaries, but peaceful citizens who had missed every favourable moment for striking.

The entries in Goebbels' diary at this time read like a confirmation of the Italian judgment. Goebbels, an outwardly excitable but inwardly cold temperament, dramatizes the feelings of the party masses at this period; he was doubtless a good observer and a good actor. From December 8 to December 23, he writes: 'All of us are in a very depressed mood. We are so sore inside that we desire nothing more fervently than to flee for a few weeks from the whole mess. . . . It is high time for us to come to power. If we succeed in keeping the movement together, we will also succeed in saving the situation. . . . We must muster all our strength to put the organization on its feet again. . . . There is a great deal of wrangling and dissension in the party. . . . We must cut salaries in the *Gau*, or else we won't get by financially. . . .' And one day before Christmas: 'The most terrible loneliness is descending on me like dark hopelessness'.

CHANCELLOR AT LAST

ON NEW year's day, Hindenburg received Schleicher and his Ministers and expressed his pleasure that 'the gravest hardships are overcome and the upward path is now open to us'.

The waters had stopped rising; they will fall, said the economists. We cannot wait, answered the politician. We must consider the mood of the masses, said Schleicher: to combat their distress, 'dykes must be built into economic life, even if they are not a hundred per cent in agreement with the laws of economic reason'. He said this in a kind of 'fireside chat' over the radio on December 15, 1932. 'My heretical view is that I am a supporter neither of capitalism nor of socialism. For me concepts like private economy or planned economy have lost their terrors.' He even had no respect for the holy property of the big landowners in the East; 'settlement of peasants', said he, 'must proceed more rapidly than before'; on about eight hundred thousand acres of land he wanted to build twenty-five thousand small and medium farms, and these figures 'could be increased considerably'.

The old 'isms' were no longer valid. Hindenburg's youthful friend, Guenther Gereke, as 'commissar for re-employment', started a big programme of public works with no less than one billion marks. Stop! cried Krupp grimly, that is inflation! 'No Government acting this way could escape the moral responsibility if the present beginnings of an improvement should be destroyed by a wave of distrust.' Industry finally forced Schleicher to abandon his programme for spending a billion, and for the present only half a billion was allotted for re-employment.

While the laws of economic reason were bringing about slow and hesitant upswinging, the elements played a strange trick on the German economy: a mild winter and an abundant harvest. The mild winter was a hard blow to coal-mining, a branch of industry which had long been struggling against a sick domestic market. Doctor Paul Silverberg, chairman of the Rhenish Board of Industry and Commerce, himself a coal man, spoke at the beginning of January with great confidence of the economic revival in the Rhineland: '... Indubitably a better mood and increased confidence have made their appearance. More and more voices in industry and economic life are speaking of increasing employment and a growing market. . . . The iron industry can register an improvement; the domestic market is reviving somewhat and the foreign market is also becoming steadier. The same is true of the machine and textile industries. . . .' There was only one dark spot in the picture: the

coal business, said Silverberg, 'in consequence of the mild winter, has not kept step'.

At the same time German agriculture groaned beneath the weight of a mammoth harvest such as Germany had not witnessed for decades. A mockery of Fate in this winter of starvation! A surplus of grain, of potatoes, even of meat, milk and butter—and on the other side, unemployed people without money, insufficient demand, crashing prices. For half a century Germany's military leaders had been insisting that the country must be in a position to feed itself like a 'besieged fortress', without imports. Now Germany's peasants and big landowners had achieved this historic feat for the first time, and they were pale with fear. 'After decades of bitter struggle,' said Baron von Braun, the Minister of Food Supply, 'German agriculture has succeeded in meeting its own breadstuff requirements, an idea which formerly would have been regarded as utterly Utopian. Likewise in meat production, increases have been achieved which would formerly have been considered impossible'. To a country with more than its share of starvation, the Minister spoke of this blessing as of some devastating enemy army that must be defeated by all possible means: grain production, he said, must be limited, in order to obtain 'healthy prices'; by the purchase of one hundred and ten thousand tons of potato flakes, by a law ordering the mixture of potato spirits with gasoline, and by similar measures, 'the assault of the record potato harvest may have been repelled at least in part'.

The coal-miners complained because Germany was not freezing, and nearly the whole farming population felt embittered and hopeless because there was too much to eat. Schleicher does not seem to have fathomed the full seriousness of this discontent. It came as a great surprise to him when a spark from abroad caused the whole rebellious mixture to explode.

The decisions of Ottawa were beginning to inflame Europe. The new Empire tariffs forced Danish butter out of England; desperate Danish producers now threw their butter on the German market at dumping prices, and in December, 1932, German butter prices quickly fell to a new and unexpected low level. In the last years German agriculture had stepped up its butter production; and so Germany now suffered from a surplus of butter in addition to grain and potatoes. This caused the profoundest hardship to German agriculture, for it largely affected small and medium farms. The Schleicher Government was unwilling to bar Danish butter, for fear of driving the Danes to counter-measures against German industrial exports. Instead, it thought up a remarkable way of relieving the distress of the butter producers. It persuaded margarine producers to mix fifteen thousand tons of the finest Danish butter with their product each year. The butter producers were not at all pleased with this secret improvement of margarine, for they feared that

margarine would become so good that consumers would cease to buy any butter at all. They loudly demanded that Schleicher should bar Danish butter from Germany as Papen had planned to do; and when Schleicher refused, the butter producers gave the danger signal to the whole of agriculture by declaring that Schleicher was hostile to farming interests. Towards the end of the year the League for the Defence of Peasant Interests (*Interessenverband der Bauern*) in Württemberg declared in 'boundless indignation' that agriculture, the most important occupational group, was being sacrificed to a 'more than senseless export fanaticism'; the league threatened that 'despair and hopelessness will drive the peasants to measures of self-help which run counter to the needs of people and State'. This incendiary cry did not come from big landowners, but from small peasants, and similar voices, proclaiming 'the sharpest struggle against the Reich Government', were heard from the dairy farmers in West and North Germany.

For a moment it looked as if Schleicher would be overthrown as a result of the butter controversy, magnified and exploited by the National Socialists. With the support of considerable numbers of middle and small peasants, they had won a share in the leadership of the *Reichslandbund*, the leading German farm organization. Two of the four leading officers were National Socialists, Vice-President Werner Willikens and Director von Sybel. Under their pressure, the *Reichslandbund* decided to present Hindenburg publicly with a demand for Schleicher's dismissal; against the will of the president, Count Eberhard Kalekreuth, a memorandum was drawn up, stating that the misery of agriculture, especially in the field of peasant processing (butter, cheese), had, 'with the toleration of the present Government', assumed dimensions 'which would not have been thought possible even under a purely Marxist régime', and that 'agriculture was being plundered for the benefit of the almighty money-bag interests of the international-minded export industry and its henchmen'. The memorandum demanded a foreign trade war and measures to relieve agriculture of its interest and debt payments. Foreclosures of bankrupt farms must be stopped—this demand was raised especially by the large East Prussian landowners. There already was an 'anti-foreclosure law', but the landowners wanted it strengthened and extended.

With this paper in hand, the four leaders of the *Landbund*, Sybel and Willikens in the lead, called on Hindenburg on January 11. Hindenburg was always accessible to complaints on the part of agriculture. He sent for Schleicher and instructed him to give the agricultural problem further study. Schleicher was prepared to look into the matter. Hindenburg left the room. Sybel gave Schleicher the paper with its violent attacks. Schleicher, who as a soldier did not take strong words very seriously, said comfortably: 'But, children, you can't say such things'; then he promised relief, better protection for the dairy-farmers and stronger measures against foreclosures.

He apparently thought that he had talked the farmers out of their political attack. But they had previously given their statement to the Press, and it was published. Now Schleicher answered sharply that the Government would do what was necessary for the protection of agriculture, but it would have no further dealings with the leaders of the *Reichslandbund*. Hindenburg also declared that if he had known in advance of the *Landbund*'s rude public attack, he would not have received its leaders. Schleicher informed the German public how the decisions of Ottawa had shaken the German butter market, and added that the small peasants were much harder hit than the big landowners. He satisfied Hindenburg by submitting to him an order for the strengthening of the anti-foreclosure laws; a few days later Hindenburg wrote the *Landbund* that he hoped 'my order extending and broadening the anti-foreclosure laws will serve to pacify agricultural interests'.

While Schleicher with cautious steps had to find his way between these sometimes petty snares of world economics and domestic politics, his most dangerous enemy seemed in swift decay. The National Socialist movement, seen from outside and probably even more from inside, was evidently in full physical and moral disintegration. In the city of Kassel the S.A. had mutinied because it had come to light that their leaders had embezzled and sold food donated by peasants for starving storm troopers; the S.A. men did not mutiny against the embezzlement, however, but because the leadership had been forced to discipline the culprit; for leaders and rank-and-file were both involved in the embezzlement. The guilty leader issued an indignant statement to the effect that S.A. men had informed 'party officials (meaning the *gauleiter* of the Kassel district) outside the S.A.' of the events; they should take note 'that the affairs of the S.A. are absolutely no concern of outsiders', and anyone who shot off his mouth again would be thrown out. They really did have something to keep secret, for the S.A. leader, in order to cover up the embezzlement, had arranged for subordinates to break into his office and stage a faked burglary.

In the Westphalian town of Volmarstein, the police discovered that the S.A. Home was the headquarters of a band of thieves who committed burglaries all over the region; on one occasion Adolf Hitler's storm troopers had arranged a hold-up with a store cashier. And in several other localities the police discovered that the S.A. barracks were positive robbers' dens, in which stolen goods were stored. In Regensburg in Bavaria, Mairhofer, the National Socialist *gauleiter*, was sentenced to a month in prison for defrauding the unemployment relief office; Hitler publicly thanked the convicted swindler 'for his self-sacrificing activity in the party'; he was forced to depose him, but promised to 'appoint him to another post in which he could be useful to the movement'. In Dresden, S.A. man Hentsch was murdered in the woods; a National Socialist deputy fled abroad; and it was whispered in the party

that other recent killings ascribed to the 'Marxists' could be explained in the same way. The top S.A. leadership maintained, in a secret order of December 8, that the troop was full of Communist stool-pigeons who aimed to provoke the S.A. to perpetrating blood-baths—in other words, whether provoked by Communists or not, blood-baths were in preparation. The German Nationalists were convinced more strongly than ever that this undisciplined, disintegrating troop was what they had always described as Bolshevism.

Were these the noblest and best of the nation, the cream of self-sacrifice and will-power? Challenged, Hitler sometimes answered: 'With us the criminals are better cared for than with the Communists'; it was absurd, he said, to expect force to be respectable; it was the mission of National Socialism to transform the dark passions of the masses into strength for the nation; if National Socialism were destroyed, this force would not be destroyed with it, but would turn against the nation in the form of sub-human criminals and Communists, which were the same thing.

Meanwhile, Strasser had returned from Italy. He sent word to Hitler through Mutschmann, *gauleiter* of Saxony, that he would enter into the Reich Government; that he was ready for a reconciliation, but only on condition that he become general secretary of the party with virtually unlimited powers. On January 3 he resumed his conversations with Schleicher; on the 4th he was received for the first time by Hindenburg, who listened to him patiently for several hours, though he himself did not say much and may not have been very convinced by the man and his plans.

'We shall not enter into any more negotiations until we have won', wrote Goebbels about this time in his diary. In the tiny State of Lippe-Detmold, in North-west Germany, a new diet was to be elected on January 15. Hitler decided to fight for Lippe as though it were Germany, at any price to squeeze a success out of this little State. Baron von Oeynhausen, a supporter, granted him the use of an isolated castle in the midst of a lake as headquarters. Hitler travelled round the few square miles of Lippe for ten days, spoke in villages to audiences of a few hundred peasants at most—he who for years had been addressing tens of thousands. This condescension on the part of the famous figure of the time greatly flattered the peasants of Lippe, though, of course, it was a questionable expenditure of Hitler's popularity, like cutting down a forest for the sake of a bird's nest. In this election the whole vanishing strength of the movement, its remnant of respect and terror, was staked on a fight for ninety thousand votes.

The ultimate aim of all these struggles was only to seem strong for a moment, in order to obtain a better peace. There was one member of Hitler's political family, little noticed then, who never wearied of describing to anyone willing to listen the quietness, gentleness, modera-

tion, legality of a future National Socialist Government. The radicalism ascribed to the movement had long been discarded, he maintained; the movement did not give free rein to its radical elements, but held them in check; he pointed out that the Leader had virtually stopped mentioning the Jewish question in his speeches; for practical purposes, the movement had outgrown the anti-Semitism of its early days. And a number of Jewish business-men were impressed to hear this from Hitler's associate and translator, Joachim Ribbentrop, by adoption von Ribbentrop.

Ribbentrop, former officer, since the war a good friend of Papen, since 1931 a supporter of Hitler, for whom he often translated English newspaper articles, was made by nature and conviction to be the messenger of peace between the two. Why Papen desired this peace is not the riddle which sensationalists have tried to solve by such explanations as envy of Schleicher, desire to avenge himself on the man who had overthrown him, uncontrollable lust for power. By the dark winter of 1932 the primitive delight in power of most German politicians had long since turned to terror. That is why the Social Democratic leaders, resigned and weary, had allowed themselves to be forced out of their positions of power in Prussia with an indifference which would have been unthinkable five years before; Groener had abandoned his post full of disgust; Brüning had tragically accepted the fact that one day he would have to cede his place to Hitler. The misery of the nation, the disintegration of society, destroyed the confidence and energy of most men; cynicism, herald of all world twilights, had a greater share in the political commissions and omissions of the day than any calculation or lust for power.

Unofficially, Papen, the dismissed Chancellor, remained Hindenburg's adviser. The old man requested him to remain near him; and so Papen, though a private citizen, still retained his former official residence in the Chancellery. It so happened that in the winter of 1932-33 alterations were being made in Hindenburg's adjacent palace; and so the old man moved into the Chancellery for a time. Hindenburg and Papen lived door by door; with Oskar von Hindenburg and Meissner they formed a sort of family. One of their chief topics of conversation must have been: What shall we do with the National Socialists? After all, we wanted to educate them, not destroy them. Aren't we missing our opportunity?

Over and over again the idea that National Socialism was rich in demonic force, but poor in brains, beguiled this upper-class type into the arrogant experiment of 'curbing' and 'sifting'. The question was only what should be sifted out and what retained. Formerly Groener had argued with Abegg whether Hitler or Stennes was better. Now that Schleicher wanted to draw Strasser's 'sensible' National Socialists to his side, the question arose whether they were really the 'sensible' ones? It had not yet been proved that Strasser could bring important parts of his party with him; but supposing he could, what kind of men were they?

In the National Socialist programme it was stated that the trusts must be socialized; Gottfried Feder wanted to abolish capital interest, or reduce it to a minimum, to flood Germany with inflation money; and it was Strasser and his immediate following, his 'economic department', just dissolved by Hitler, that had forced 'socialistic' economic projects on the party. And now these people came and offered Schleicher their collaboration!

'Thank God, we're rid of the radicals . . . the party has become more realistic.' With these words the party's secret propaganda had been trying for some weeks to make the best of the Strasser catastrophe. There was no more talk of revolution against the barons. Only a short time before, Hitler had rudely refused even to speak to Papen. Now Ribbentrop was able to tell Papen that Hitler was extremely eager for an exchange of opinions. False ideas about National Socialist aims must be dispelled. At this moment Papen may well have felt that he had succeeded, that his policy of education had been effective; Hitler was about to let himself be disciplined.

On January 4, 1933, the two men met in Cologne at the house of Baron Kurt von Schroeder, a National Socialist financier, part owner of a banking house with a large share of Jewish capital. Schroeder was one of the bankers of West German heavy industry, with a powerful influence in the distribution of its political slush funds. Göring, who had been on the outs with Papen since the clash in the Reichstag, was absent; tact forbade the presence of Goebbels, the mortal enemy of the barons. Ribbentrop did not seem important enough to attend. On such occasions Hitler chose his escort with extreme care, as though to say: These are the men with whom I shall rule when the time comes. This time he chose Rudolf Hess and Heinrich Himmler, silent men endowed with impressive self-control; but his most important companion was a man totally unknown to the public, the manufacturer Wilhelm Keppler. For some time Hitler had been consulting him in order to avoid the old economic boners in his speeches. Keppler could explain with authority and suitable technical phraseology that it was a gross error to identify the party with every line in the programme of the twenty-five points. After all, it was now not Feder, the author of the economic programme, who advised the Leader, but he, Keppler: along with Strasser's other planners, the breaker of interest slavery had been shelved. A year earlier Hitler had spent two hours in Düsseldorf vainly trying to convince the heavy industrialists of his harmlessness; now he found a simple formulation: as Chancellor he would take full charge of the political sphere, but as for economic affairs, gentlemen—with a glance at Schroeder—that is your province.

The conversation took place at a luncheon. No minutes were kept, and probably there will never be full agreement regarding its substance and results. Even when the talks ended, an hour and a half later, the

conclusions were hardly clear, especially as Hitler seldom remembered after such exchanges exactly what he himself, not to mention the others, had said. But one thing is certain: Papen did not—as has been claimed—promise that Hitler would now become Chancellor; he was in no position to do so, nor would he have wished to. The basis of the whole conversation was that Hitler was intensely eager for a compromise and was seeking a face-saving formula for the concessions he was willing to make. The pivotal question was whether Hitler, after all the bitter disappointments he had suffered, was now willing to support a Cabinet other than his own. Even earlier, Hitler had been prepared to let Göring accept the premiership of Prussia, or even the Reich vice-chancellorship. Though murders were still taking place in the party, Hitler had renounced the blood-bath which he had demanded in August. As late as November he had been unwilling to let Hindenburg reserve all decisions in foreign and military affairs. Now, in case there should be a chance for him to become Chancellor, he conceded even this point. In any event, the Government which he expected to support would probably carry through German rearmament, perhaps with that insane bluntness and lack of diplomacy which Hitler condemned. If this rearmament should bring about grave decisions regarding the fate of the private combat leagues, the supreme S.A. Leader would surely have his word. Therefore, let Hindenburg have his Reichswehr Minister, a general, a specialist, a good friend; if he were also a good friend of Hitler, all concerned could be satisfied. Hitler mentioned the dismissed general, Joachim von Stuelpnagel, until 1930 one of the Reichswehr's 'office generals', and a bitter enemy of Schleicher. As part owner and editor of the *Berliner Börsenzeitung*, Stuelpnagel was the friend and employer of Hitler's other economic adviser, Walther Funk, disciple of Schacht. The *Börsenzeitung*, founded to serve German stock-exchange interests, had become a mouthpiece of the Reichswehr; it had conducted the Press campaign which had overthrown first Groener and then Brüning. If Stuelpnagel became Reichswehr Minister, Hitler would not demand the chancellorship for the present; he would create no difficulties for a Papen Government.

Probably Hitler's most important move in Cologne was to come out for a hands-off-industry policy. For in those weeks the struggle between State leadership and private initiative was one of the great subjects of German politics. Hitler sat across the table from Papen and repeated what he had said in hundreds of speeches: that of course the creative personality must have free play in the economic sphere as elsewhere; that of course it had to serve the common welfare. A pathetic utterance—its substance, stated in simple terms, was approximately: Let them make plenty of money, then they'll do what we say.

If Hitler got no definite promises at this meeting, he did obtain an important piece of information. Papen told him that Schleicher possessed

no signed order for dissolution of the Reichstag, such as he had possessed. For the Schleicher Government had been appointed for the express purpose of bringing about a reconciliation with the Reichstag where Papen had failed. If it could save itself only by dissolving the parliament, it had failed in its aim. Hitler had not been quite clear about the parliamentary nature of the Schleicher Government; now he was informed.

The Cologne conversation probably saved Hitler from bankruptcy. A consortium of heavy industrialists was formed for the purpose of putting National Socialist finances in order. The most important member of this group was Otto Wölf, an industrial leader who up till then had been close to the moderate parties and whose shift made a strong impression on the business world; Fritz Thyssen was also a member. The sum raised to cover the most pressing obligations cannot have been small; 'finances have also improved very suddenly', noted Goebbels with satisfaction on January 17.

All the same, the Cologne meeting did not immediately halt the decline of the National Socialist Party; it did not bring the political compromise that was so sorely needed. Schleicher had got wind of the meeting and accused Papen of acting behind his back. Papen replied that, on the contrary, he had been trying to do him a service, that Hitler was now ready for an understanding. But when Papen came out with the suggestion of making Stuepnagel Reichswehr Minister, Schleicher flatly refused.

And so, from the purely political point of view, Hitler had merely gained the meagre knowledge that he could, if he pleased, overthrow Schleicher with the help of the Communists, though the result apparently would be a new Papen Government. Meanwhile, the undisciplined party was continuing to crumble away beneath his feet. In the Bavarian province of Franconia, nearly the whole S.A. mutinied, with its group leader Stegmann at its head. The mutineers accused *Gauleiter* Streicher of embezzling funds due to the S.A. leadership, and revealed interesting particulars of Streicher's private life, from his 'nude culture' to his friendships with ex-convicts. Röhm was obliged to return in haste from Capri, where he was spending platonic vacation days with his friend Count Wolf Helldorf. With the help of the new funds, the most dangerous breaches were hastily mended, a number of Stegmann's subordinates were bribed and bought back, and the golden rain that began to fall after the middle of January soon soothed rebellious spirits throughout the country. Whether the calm would last if the party did not soon come to power was uncertain. The speedy fall of Schleicher remained a question of life and death for Hitler.

It still looked as if the National Socialists would scarcely survive the blow of Strasser's entrance into the Cabinet. Hitler, Goebbels, and the National Socialist deputy Kerl were gathered in their castle in the

State of Lippe; on January 13 Göring arrived with the terrifying news that Strasser was soon to enter the Cabinet; 'only a great success in the Lippe campaign can save us from this dangerous situation', wrote Goebbels in his diary.

Suddenly another, almost equally dangerous enemy, attacked them in the rear: Hugenberg. The leader of the German Nationalist Party, owner of the largest German newspaper and film trust, was in financial difficulties and wanted to save himself by reaching an understanding with Schleicher and entering his Government. This would have strengthened Schleicher immeasurably. Hugenberg wished to become Minister of Economics and Agriculture: he had a plan, the main elements of which were the cessation of payments on Germany's private debts, reduction of interest on agricultural debts, drastic reduction of food imports, increased farm prices. On January 13 he was received by Schleicher, on the 14th, by Hindenburg himself. He informed both men that he was determined to enter the Cabinet, but that he must be guaranteed a period of years to carry out his plans; Schleicher must persuade the Reichstag to adjourn for at least six months; otherwise he must dissolve it, preferably without setting immediate elections.

On January 15 Schleicher received a visitor from Austria, Kurt von Schuschnigg, then Minister of Justice. As Schuschnigg later related, Schleicher was 'amazingly optimistic about the German situation'. Hitler was finished, said Schleicher to his guest. 'I remember the exact words he used in this connection', wrote Schuschnigg. 'He said he was engaged in building up a cross-connection through the trade-union movements and hoped in this way to find a new and practicable political platform which would provide a peaceful and healthy development; Hitler was no longer a problem, the question was solved, his movement presented no political danger, it was yesterday's concern. He added - I cannot vouch for the exact wording, but this is the sense - that an attempt at a possible collaboration (with Hitler) had come under discussion, but that the National Socialists had demanded the Reichswehr Ministry, apparently aware that he could not let them have it'. Schuschnigg was surprised; he had not thought political conditions in Germany so stable. But in the afternoon he spoke with Doctor Schreiber, a prelate and leader of the Centre Party. 'Here, too, I found surprising economic and political optimism, which made the strongest impression on me.'

But on the same January 15 the elections were held in Lippe, the forest was cut down, the bird's nest seized. Indeed, the National Socialists failed to reach their high-water mark of July, 1932, but they had apparently recovered from the November low, with a rise of approximately 17 per cent (38,000 as against 33,000). True, other parties without much effort had obtained even comparatively greater gains. Stresemann's former party gained 20 per cent and the small democratic party 60 per cent, the Social Democrats 15 per cent (29,700 as against

25,000). Moreover, this sample of 90,000 voters could not really be called a barometer for the rest of Germany. Yet for Hitler's state of mind it was vital. He had shown that he still knew how to win, and he was able to reckon that Strasser's departure had made no further inroads on the party's strength. 'There can no longer be any question of compromise', Goebbels suddenly blared forth, hinting at the extent of the concessions Hitler had still been prepared to make in his Cologne conversation with Papen. Strasser 'is sinking back into the nothingness from which he came', and 'there can be no more mercy. The Leader above all!' Hitler, looking back at the past, began to admit that perhaps he had not done everything correctly; and even so, things had turned out all right. 'I, too,' he said with modesty at a meeting of his functionaries in the Berlin Sportpalast after the elections in Lippe, 'can go wrong and make mistakes. But what counts is, who makes the most mistakes?' The opposing side, he declared, had made the greatest mistake by trying to smash the National Socialist Party.

When Hitler said this, he already knew that Schleicher's plans had been frustrated. The two days, from January 15 to January 17, had changed much. He had not been able to give his Government a broad base. 'Never with Hugenberg!' his most loyal followers—the Centre—had cried. This was the answer when Schleicher inquired of Prelate Kaas whether Adam Stegerwald, the Catholic labour leader, would not enter his Cabinet. Schleicher had expected too many miracles of his diplomacy. His eternal hesitations and conferences, his evasion of any definite decision, finally brought even Strasser to despair. He asked Hitler for a meeting, wanting to find his way back. Göring informed him that Hitler no longer wished to see him.

Slowly, almost invisibly, the weight shifted. Hitler had threatened that with the help of the Communists he would make it impossible for the Government to maintain parliamentary rule. Now he put his threat into effect. Schleicher had publicly and truthfully declared that Germany was freed from reparations. Thereupon Alfred Rosenberg drew up a statement, which was submitted on January 20 to the Reichstag's Committee on Foreign Affairs, where it was passed by the united majority of National Socialists and Communists. The Committee on Foreign Affairs declared that Germany was not free; that she was subjected to excessive interest payments; that the Lausanne accord had not been ratified by the foreign Powers; and 'for all these reasons the Committee on Foreign Affairs [that is, the National Socialist-Communist majority] is of the opinion that the Chancellor's above-mentioned remarks may give rise to false ideas at home and abroad, and have therefore not benefited German interests.'

The game which the National Socialists played with the Communists in the last months of their fight for power will always be remembered as a masterpiece of political strategy. They systematically shattered the

political order of Germany by fighting in the streets with the Communists and collaborating with them in parliament. In the Reichstag they destroyed the basis of all government, on the streets they destroyed the peace. After their electoral victory in Lippe, they did everything in their power to arouse and provoke the Communist menace. They sent the S.A. more systematically than before into the workers' neighbourhoods, the centres of Communist power; they provoked street brawls, ending the lull that had followed the murder of Potempa, and publicly mourned their dead as victims of 'Communist murder agitation'. And they did all this with a party machine which was constantly on the point of falling apart. Certainly they lacked neither courage nor resourcefulness.

Goebbels tried to prove that the decline of the National Socialist Party would be the greatest misfortune for middle-class Germany. 'We came', he said at the beginning of January, 'with twelve million people. If we lost these people, they would be lost to the nation; they would go over to Bolshevism.' Even Schleicher voiced these sentiments; through Hans Zehrer, one of his Press spokesmen, he declared that the National Socialist Party must not be allowed to disintegrate, for if it did, Germany would have ten million Communists the next day.

In order to convince these worried souls that there really was a Communist menace, which only National Socialism could avert, the Berlin S.A. was assembled in the heart of a Communist neighbourhood. A gathering of some ten thousand storm troopers in the Bülowplatz, facing the broad façade of the Karl Liebknecht House, Communist Party headquarters, was announced for Sunday, January 22. Near by lay the Luisenstadt Cemetery, where Horst Wessel was buried. The Communists ordered a countermarch at the same hour; the most violent street battle since 1923 seemed inevitable. A responsible Government could have done only one thing: forbid both demonstrations. Schleicher, as usual too clever for his own good, reckoned that an impartial measure, striking both sides equally, would put both into a common rage against the Government. Perhaps in the hope of manoeuvring the two apart, he prohibited only the Communist demonstration, and promised to protect the National Socialists with all possible police measures. It was Schleicher's last important act. Escorted and fenced round by police, the S.A. 'conquered' 'Red Berlin' as the workers so proudly called it. Goebbels, who organized this dress rehearsal for the 'revolution with the Herr President's permission', describes the scene:

. . . Everywhere armoured cars and machine-guns. The police have occupied the windows and roofs across the street and are waiting to see what will happen. Outside, in front of the Karl Liebknecht House, stands the S.A., and in the side streets the Commune is fuming in impotent rage. The S.A. is marching. It has victoriously conquered

this Red domain. The Bülowplatz is ours. The Communist Party has suffered a terrible defeat. . . . This day is a proud, heroic victory for the S.A.

Surrounded by a heavily armed police cordon, protected by armoured cars and machine-guns—that was their heroic victory. But when they became a Government party, such victories would really begin; armed with the State power, they would frighten the ‘Commune’ back into its dark streets and win over large masses of workers. With this almost effortless victory of the Bülowplatz, they must have made an impression on the Reichswehr leadership—whoever this leadership was.

Among Hitler’s fanatical adherents was Ludwig Müller, the Protestant chaplain of the East Prussian Reichswehr, assigned to the First Military Command in Königsberg. In 1930 Müller persuaded his commander to attend a mass meeting at which Hitler was to speak. It was the time of hysterical frontier tension with the Poles, when Hitler was hailed as a ‘German margrave’ and prayers were addressed to him. This faith seems to have touched General Werner von Blomberg. He was a gifted, cultivated officer, very soldierly in appearance, though nicknamed the ‘rubber lion’ because of his gentle manner. Blomberg was bowled over by Hitler at their first meeting, and frankly admitted it; he soon virtually became an instrument of the thundering voice. Shortly after this fateful meeting he was sent abroad to study military progress in the United States. The public seems to have taken little notice of his visit; some day perhaps it will be known how much of his American observation Blomberg worked into the German military machine. In 1932, at any rate, he was one of the directors of German army policy, the third after Schleicher and Hammerstein; and he was Germany’s military expert at the Geneva Disarmament Conference. German bourgeois Ministers were surprised when this Reichswehr leader advised them to read *Mein Kampf*, and even quoted passages. A colder nature was Blomberg’s chief of staff, Colonel Walter von Reichenau; perhaps less of an admirer of Hitler, but in his thinking and manner of life a true National Socialist officer, who broke with the Prussian tradition by making personal friends of the men under him. Blomberg and Reichenau were among those supporters of National Socialism who, like Ribbentrop, assured their Jewish friends that things would not be so bad; when they did get so bad, Reichenau said that Hitler had brought Germany so much good that a patriotic German Jew must regard himself as ‘fallen on the field of honour’.

This type of officer considered it the duty and right of National Socialism to bring the army ‘spiritual domination over the people’. It became the creed of Blomberg, Reichenau, and many others that the Reichswehr must withdraw again from politics. Schleicher, they believed, had led it on a false path. Schleicher ‘had ceased to be a soldier’,

Reichenau later declared; he was 'a born conspirator and a sad proof of the fact that in politics officers can so easily lose the qualities of their profession'.

History now played one of its bitterest jokes. It forced the Prussian general, Kurt von Schleicher, to decide whether to govern democratically—that is, with the National Socialists, the party of violence and mass murder—or whether to smash the party of violence and mass murder; but to do that, he would first have to smash, or at least paralyze, parliament. It was perhaps Hugenberg who was most determined to bar the National Socialists from real power; for he wanted to exclude the people itself from power. On January 21 Hugenberg accused Schleicher, the 'social General', of letting Germany slip into Bolshevist mass rule; above all in agriculture, the Chancellor was 'permitting conflicts between big and small to arise'. The colour of this rural Bolshevism which the big landowners were so fond of invoking was Brown, and its true name was National Socialism. The decisive accusation was that Schleicher wanted to govern with parliament; but Germany, said Hugenberg, could 'be saved only by a strong State leadership'. He meant by his own dictatorship; but he would have been satisfied if he himself, perhaps under the chancellorship of Papen, could be dictator over the economic life, including agriculture; for economic life, he believed, was the national destiny.

The Bolshevist uprising of the small against the great, which Hugenberg feared, was actually in progress; its scene was parliament; its mover, National Socialism. The budget committee of the Reichstag was investigating the use and misuse of the Eastern Aid funds; it aimed to discover which of the junkers had enriched themselves on the taxpayers' money. With National Socialist votes the budget committee resolved, on January 25, that the Reich court of accounts should conduct a thorough investigation of the Eastern Aid scandal and issue a detailed report on its findings; with National Socialist votes it was decided that the Government should also render a complete report showing which estates over two hundred and fifty acres in size had received State support. With National Socialist votes the committee demanded an investigation of whether the gentlemen, for the most part nobles, had really used their 'loans to relieve indebtedness'; and whether they could not have paid their debts from private resources: 'The name of the recipient, his private fortune, the amount of his indebtedness and assets at different times, his private income, the amount of the loan to relieve indebtedness, and the amount transferred by the recipient to his creditors shall all be itemized. . . .' The whole Reichstag raged against the big landowners, with the National Socialists in the lead, sure of having the people behind them; only the German Nationalists, a lost grouplet, voted against the resolution.

The big landowner of Neudeck, who filled the post of Reichs President,

very probably regarded these decisions of the budget committee as bitter proof that Schleicher had failed to curb the Reichstag. There had been no 'relaxation of tension'. The immediate issue was East Prussian landed property, for which Hindenburg surely had stronger feelings than for West German coal mines or the shipping interests of Hamburg and Bremen. But if Hindenburg was perturbed, because the big landowners were menaced, then he certainly was even more perturbed because his Government no longer had the Reichstag in hand.

Even Schleicher for a moment lost his light-hearted confidence and considered a desperate plan, which had been recommended to him by Hugenberg and Papen as well as to Hindenburg: to dissolve the Reichstag and then to declare a state of emergency precluding elections; meanwhile to form a strong and popular Cabinet. This would have been unconstitutional, a *coup d'état*; but Hindenburg's over-strained authority might still have sanctioned it. Now the very men, who up till then had been Schleicher's most faithful friends, stayed his hand; the day after the decisions of the budget committee, Kaas, the leader of the Centre, went to Schleicher and gave him a sharp warning. Schleicher replied that there was no cause for alarm; that he was contemplating no state of emergency; that it was only Hugenberg and Papen who were trying to force him to take the dangerous path of open dictatorship against the people. At the time he said this, it may have been true. On the same day Kaas wrote Schleicher a pathetic letter, probably prearranged by the two of them; he sent a copy to Hindenburg and then made the letter public. He threatened revolution in the streets if the Reichstag were forcibly dismissed: 'Illegality from above will unleash illegality below. . . .' When Kaas wrote this, he knew that the National Socialists would inevitably come to power by way of the Reichstag; but it seemed to him that the only salvation from 'illegality' and all the horrors inherent in the word was for the inevitable to come about through the Reichstag and the constitutionally expressed will of the people.

The crisis between the Cabinet and the Reichstag meant a crisis between the Chancellor and the President. In so far as personal feelings play a part, Hindenburg surely had held a silent grudge against the once-esteemed General ever since Schleicher had forced him to dismiss Papen; but since Schleicher had undertaken to bring the parliament round, to put an end to the eternal state of emergency, to relieve Hindenburg of responsibility for the constant emergency decrees, he had hopefully let him try. The success in the disarmament question and the upward trend of business conditions had even improved the old man's humour, and led him to shield Schleicher against the fury of the landowners. But the whole relationship presupposed that Schleicher would succeed in controlling parliament.

Up to the last days of January, 1933, Hindenburg was determined not to appoint Hitler Chancellor. In Goebbels' diary depression and

exaltation alternate with monotonous regularity. 'Schleicher is doing badly', he is 'tottering, but doesn't know it himself'; on the other hand, 'we must not be too optimistic', 'great difficulties still lie in our path', 'we must not cheer too soon'. Hugenberg's response to Hitler's plans for the chancellorship was still a determined 'No, no, never!'—and his assent was necessary for a majority. Papen contented himself with pointing to Hindenburg's insuperable resistance. On January 26 Göring and Frick had a conversation with Hugenberg and conceded that a solution might perhaps be found, with Papen as Chancellor. Hitler travelled back and forth between Berlin and the provinces, making speeches that were none too confident; as late as January 23 he said that if he went into the Government, there must be 'fair play, in which we give the others our strength and they give us the corresponding power in return', and if they were unwilling to do this, 'I would rather wait another three months'.

The party's downward course was by no means ended. This was apparent even among a section of the population where National Socialism was believed to be most firmly entrenched: the students. In the elections to the student committees of various universities, the National Socialists lost many votes and mandates; as late as January 25 they lost approximately a tenth of their votes at the South German university of Tübingen. Hindenburg remained unfriendly, and Hitler was apparently willing to do anything, provided only that Schleicher should fall. 'The Leader maintains an attitude of waiting,' wrote Goebbels on January 27. 'There is still a possibility that Papen will be reappointed.' He hastily added that this would be 'a hopeless, short-term affair'; but essentially, he says elsewhere, only one thing was important: the Reichstag must not be dissolved before the National Socialists had won power, because (he implied) that would bring a new defeat.

On the 27th the Reichstag's council of elders—a kind of rules committee—decided that parliament should convene on the last day of the month. No party was very eager for this meeting, but it was hard to avoid the decision. Only Schleicher could have asked for an adjournment, but he suddenly decided that this was the time to put the fear of God into parliament; to let them convene and then calmly tell them that they were dissolved if they did not do his bidding.

And so Schleicher had come to the point where Papen had left off; his policy of conciliation with parliament had failed. True, he did not admit this. His Government, he maintained, even if it did not at the moment have a majority in the Reichstag, enjoyed the confidence of large sections of the people, for he confused party and trade-union leaders with the people. And he would have regarded the return of Papen, especially with Hugenberg in his Cabinet, as a catastrophe more ruinous even than a Hitler Government, for Hitler at least represented

the masses, while Papen and Hugenberg would 'have only a tenth of the people behind them'. Kaas had just threatened him with 'illegality from below'. Schleicher and his friends vehemently refused to send out the Reichswehr to defend an unpopular Government against the people. On the 27th Schleicher met his associates in the Reichswehr Ministry and discussed the dangers of a new Papen Government. They appear to have speculated on means of breaking Papen's influence on Hindenburg. It has been claimed that a suggestion was put forward of taking Papen and Hugenberg into protective custody in order to separate them from Hindenburg. According to another rumour, they thought of sending troops into Berlin from Potsdam. If this suggestion was ever made, it can scarcely have been more than idle day-dreaming, but it is said that a young officer attending the conference was horrified and reported the remark to Oskar von Hindenburg.

On the next day, January 28, Schleicher called on Hindenburg as Brüning had done eight months before. The overthrower of Chancellors was himself falling. He told the President that the Reichstag was to meet in three days and demanded the power of dissolution. According to the official report, Schleicher said 'that the present Reich Government, in accordance with its character of presidential government, would be in a position to defend its programme and its opinions in the Reichstag only if the Herr Reichs President put an order of dissolution at its disposal'. Schleicher called his Government a presidential Government in order to make it clear to Hindenburg that this was his own Government. But this was untrue; from the beginning, Schleicher's Government was oriented towards parliament, and Hindenburg logically answered that 'in the situation prevailing at the present time, he could not accede to this proposal'.

The conversation could not be friendly. Schleicher told Hindenburg that if he could not dissolve the Reichstag he could not prevent a discussion of the Eastern Aid and the attendant scandals. Hindenburg is said to have replied: It is sad that you are not in a position, without such an order, to prevent a debate in which Prussia's oldest historical families would be covered with mud. This was the origin of the legend that Schleicher threatened Hindenburg with disclosure of the Eastern Aid scandal, and that Hindenburg hastily dropped his general and called Hitler to power, in order that Hitler should hush up the scandal (after his deputies had just voted for its exposure!). The truth is almost the exact opposite. Schleicher demanded dictatorial powers in order to repress the debate on the Eastern Aid, and Hindenburg demanded that he do this without dictatorship. The old man did not act in fear but in anger. Hitler did not force his hand; Hindenburg broke Schleicher's attempt to do just this. The true interpretation of the episode is simply that the fickle old man felt the weight of Schleicher's domination and shook it off when it became just a fraction of an ounce too much.

The old President seems to have referred in harsh terms to the conversation in the Reichswehr Ministry and the plans for arresting Papen and Hugenberg. According to Schleicher's own version, he answered fearlessly that most of the rumours were nonsense, but that he did indeed regard it as his duty to do his utmost to prevent a return of Papen to the Government. For such a Government meant civil war, and neither the Reichswehr nor the police was morally equal to a civil war. In a statement which he himself gave to the Press, he declared that 'not a single word is true' of all the assertions about a march of the Reichswehr on Berlin and the arrest of Hugenberg and Papen; these were 'absolutely senseless and malicious inventions and slanders'. However, 'Herr von Schleicher considered it his urgent duty as Chancellor still in office and as leader of the German armed forces, to describe to the President the dangers which, in his opinion, were inherent in the plan, still much discussed in public, of reappointing former Chancellor von Papen. Herr von Schleicher regarded such a Cabinet, based on a tenth of the German people, as a challenge to the other nine-tenths of the German people; in view of the complications and political struggles which, in his opinion, were inevitable, such a challenge would have led to demoralization in the Reichswehr and the police. In this situation, he declared it was the right and duty of the Chancellor and Reichswehr Minister in office to prevent such a development to the best of his ability.'

With a stubbornness bordering on mutiny, these Reichswehr officers were determined to prevent a new Papen Cabinet. Through misunderstandings, this, too, gave rise to a legend that Schleicher wanted, by a *coup d'état*, to prevent Hitler from taking power. According to his own account, which, perhaps with slight shifts of emphasis, is not unworthy of credence, he desired the exact opposite. The above-quoted statement continues: 'In the same connection Herr von Schleicher gave his opinion that collaboration with the National Socialist Party on the basis of a parliamentary majority would be the best solution'.

Parliament . . . majority . . . and therefore Hitler! It was Hitler's own plan, and for years it had also been Schleicher's plan. There was nothing improbable or surprising about it. For Hitler, the plan meant dictatorship by way of parliament, after the example of Napoleon III and the counsels of the Wise Men of Zion; for Schleicher, the curbing of the National Socialists by way of parliament, as, so often in the history of parliamentarianism, radical parties had been curbed by the necessity of forming a majority. When Hindenburg brusquely dismissed Schleicher, he, too, hoped that Hitler was now curbed; he had some reason to believe that this time Hitler would not refuse Chancellor von Papen his support, at least for the moment. It was Schleicher who, representing himself as the spokesman of the Reichswehr, opposed the Papen project and forced the old man reluctantly towards Hitler. There were three possibilities, he said, of solving the Government crisis. The third and

last was a presidial Cabinet with full powers to dissolve the Reichstag, and thereby bend the Reichstag to its will—this Hindenburg had just refused him. But after the unfortunate experience of the past, the Papen experiment must on no account be repeated. Therefore, Schleicher, according to his own story, considered these two possibilities: '1. A Government with a parliamentary majority which probably could be established only under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. 2. The formation of a minority Government based on a strong popular tendency; this likewise could be achieved only under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, but with the support of the Right groups. This would have a chance of success only if the President were to abandon his resistance to entrusting Adolf Hitler with the chancellorship.'

Hindenburg was still resisting the appointment of Hitler; Schleicher now urged him to consent. Schleicher was a man whose political acts always had an *arrière-pensée*; if Goebbels is to be believed, he had sent Hitler a warning, two days earlier, not to accept an appointment. Up to the last moment, perhaps, he played a double game; but whether knowingly or not, when he recommended to the President a majority Government under Hitler's leadership, he was recommending exactly what he had been preparing consciously, and sometimes unconsciously, for two years.

Hindenburg received the same advice from the most responsible and probably most influential of his advisers, State Secretary Otto Meissner. Meissner's chief aim was to free the old man from the oppressive burden of his own terrifying political position, to relieve him from the position of a dictator governing against the Reichstag. The Centre was willing to give a Hitler Government its vote, if this Government were prepared to rule by strictly parliamentary means. The German Nationalists, it is true, demanded that the Reichstag be sent home for a long period. Would it not be possible to adjourn the Reichstag for a limited time in strict accordance with the constitution and in this way satisfy both sides?

Oh yes, this was possible, said Hitler. In his person, in his movement, the principle of democracy and the principle of leadership fused into a unit; he was the man to satisfy both sides, to adjourn the Reichstag in accordance with the constitution.

Two days before Schleicher's fall, Hitler might have accepted a Papen Cabinet. Now, after his adversary had fallen, he was unbending. 'A compromise solution is now out of the question', writes Goebbels on January 28, after discussing the situation with Hitler; but 'we are all still very sceptical and are not cheering too soon'. Negotiations went on for two days. The German Nationalists put up the hardest struggle against Hitler's chancellorship; they fought for a Papen Government that would be tougher than Papen himself; in this the party of landed property and heavy industry doubtless did what the interests it represented desired. It fought against the Schleicher-Meissner formula of a majority Government under Hitler's leadership; it fought against a

participation of the Centre in the new Government. In their fight against the Centre, they also had Papen on their side; meanwhile, not only Meissner demanded participation of the Centre; Hitler also desired it, to avoid being entirely at the mercy of the German Nationalists. The Stahlhelm, under its leaders Franz Seldte and Theodor Duesterberg, also forced its way into these negotiations; the two asserted that they were present by the will of Hindenburg, for Hindenburg was honorary president of the Stahlhelm, and actually did want the Stahlhelm to have a share in the Government. But the Stahlhelm itself was not clear about its own desires, its leadership was not united; Duesterberg supported Hugenberg, Seldte supported Hitler; and it became apparent that these half-dozen dictators could no more find a common aim than the six hundred deputies in the Reichstag.

No power can be won without a sacrifice of principles; and Hitler, who looked to power as his salvation, abjured many things that had seemed to him absolutely indispensable a few months before. After he had reluctantly renounced massacres and rolling heads, and only too readily renounced inflation and socialization, he became Chancellor by declaring his readiness not only to be a strictly parliamentary Chancellor, but also to tolerate continuous interference on the part of Hindenburg and to submit to every conceivable restriction. Of ten Ministers only three were to be National Socialists. These three were himself as Chancellor, his friend Frick as Minister of the Interior, and Göring as head of a newly established Ministry of Aviation. There was no mention of Goebbels, much less of Röhm. At the same time the Prussian Government posts, which gave more practical State power than those of the Reich, were distributed. This was the 'commisariat' method of distributing posts that had prevailed in the largest State of the Reich since Papen's *coup d'état*. Göring became Prussian Minister of the Interior, and that could mean power, for the police is power. But Göring's superior, also appointed by the Reich, was Papen. In this Government Papen turned up wherever there was a key position to fill. He also became Vice-Chancellor in the Reich Cabinet, and Hindenburg exacted the condition that Hitler should never appear before him alone, but always accompanied by Papen; for the old man wished to speak only with him.

Konstantin von Neurath, Hindenburg's personal adviser, remained in charge of foreign policy. A general regarded by Hindenburg as trustworthy obtained the Reichswehr Ministry. This was a general who for some time had come forward as an opponent of Schleicher, having attacked him for forcing the Reichswehr into politics. Was no one aware of the relations between Werner von Blomberg, the new Minister, and Hitler? Was no one aware that Colonel von Reichenau, whom Blomberg brought with him as the new Chief of Ministry, was widely known to be a National Socialist? The German Press in those days took scarcely any interest in the person of the new Reichswehr Minister, but

used up much space and time in pointing out that Hugenberg was the real new dictator of Germany. For by stubborn negotiation the German Nationalist leader had attained his goal: he had become Minister for Economics and Agriculture. The Cabinet, he felt sure, would force the Reichstag to grant it one year in which to work undisturbed. He, Hugenberg, would remould the economy and save the country. Not even Labour was accorded to the National Socialists; Franz Seldte, the Stahlhelm leader, became Minister of Labour. Hitler was no dictator; he had sworn that he would not 'use his power one-sidedly'; and even if he wanted to break his oath, he was apparently in no position to do so.

Meissner and Papen probably thought they had accomplished a master stroke. As Chancellor, Hitler now bore the responsibility for German policy, and since he would achieve no greater miracles than anyone else, his supporters would be disillusioned in time and turn back to the old reliable parties; the heavy burden of responsibility would reduce Hitler as a public figure to normal proportions. For the present he brought the Government strong support in parliament; and yet this Cabinet was so cleverly constructed that Hitler could do no real damage and could no longer become a dangerous power; he would be a powerless Chancellor, and hence a broken party leader.

This was the Cabinet that had been recommended to Hindenburg by Papen and Meissner. Up to the last minute the old man seems to have resisted. At noon on January 30, when Hitler drove over to Hindenburg's palace with his new Ministers, his friends remained behind in the Kaiserhof, anxious and uncertain. 'Our hearts are torn back and forth between doubt, hope, joy, and discouragement,' writes Goebbels. 'We have been disappointed too often for us to believe wholeheartedly in the great miracle.'

To a large part of the public Hitler's appointment did indeed seem a miracle, and many believed that only another miracle, and a very unsavoury one, could account for it. One story was that Hitler had promised Hindenburg to restore the monarchy; if ever he made such a promise, he needed only seven weeks to retract it in an official statement. It was further maintained that Meissner and Oskar von Hindenburg had been blackmailed with threats to expose some shady stock speculations with a Jewish banker in which they had made improper use of their inside political information. It seems to be true that Oskar and Meissner, as the result of losses they had suffered in such a speculation, were indebted to the banker for about a million marks; it is said that the banker kept the account of this business, called 'sub-account B', not in his office, but in a safe in his house. The safe one night was broken into by unknown burglars, and 'sub-account B' disappeared; some days later the banker got the 'friendly advice' to leave Germany as soon as possible. So far the story seems true, but people who knew Schleicher well would rather believe that he himself engineered the burglary in order to get a

hold on his unreliable friends, Oskar and Meissner; then, too, he was probably much better informed about their shady deals than a National Socialist outsider.

But even if Hitler got 'sub-account B', Oskar and Meissner could hardly be in danger, for they knew at least as many unsavoury stories about Hitler, Göring, Goebbels, Röhm. It was also known to Hitler that when Neudeck was given to Hindenburg, the State had been cheated out of the inheritance tax; it was known to him that the Chief of State had received another four hundred and fifty thousand marks through private collections in order that he would require no Eastern Aid. Unpleasant as these facts were, they could not be used for blackmail, for they were known, not only to the National Socialists, but to the public as well; General Erich Ludendorff, for years a bitter enemy of Hindenburg, had told the whole story, including the tax swindle, in a widely read weekly. Later, when Hitler was in power, he did not hesitate to use one or other of these scandals to intimidate Oskar von Hindenburg; but an understanding of the National Socialist seizure of power is not advanced by these mystery stories. Hitler came to power because he seemed the only man who could restore to Germany a parliamentary Government, such as Hindenburg had demanded in August and even more in November.

Röhm stood at a window in the Kaiserhof and looked across at the Chancellery through binoculars; for when Hitler came out, his face would show how things had gone. Suddenly Hitler was in the room. 'He says nothing, and all of us say nothing. But his eyes are full of tears.' It was a day full of ceremonies and pageantry; at noon Hindenburg administered the oath of office; at night twenty-five thousand S.A. men marched past the Chancellery with torches, and the National Socialists of Berlin marched with them.

Hindenburg stood at the window, beating time with his crooked stick to the old military marches that resounded from below. A few yards away, Hitler stood at an open window, laughing, dancing, gesticulating with childish joy, now and then bowing to someone.

Hugenberg and Papen could not have organized any such torchlight parade in six hours. Here for the first time in many months the 'ruling powers' again saw a part of the 'people' before them, and perhaps they thought that 'public opinion' was marching down there in the glow of the torches. The torch-bearers in turn believed that their Leader had now become a ruling power and they with him; the Leader himself knew better. 'We shall still have to carry on a very intensive struggle,' writes Goebbels on February 1. 'The situation in the country is not yet clear enough for us to speak of an absolute consolidation of our position.' We have been called because we are the people—are we? The will of the people is still expressed in ballots and in parliament; the task set us by Hindenburg is still to relieve the tension between the executive and

parliament; to win over the block of votes we need for a majority. Practically speaking, this meant an understanding with the Centre, which, in secret, was exceedingly willing for an understanding.

For a moment Hitler was probably serious about this understanding. The Centre was even to be offered a Cabinet post; one Ministry had been left free for the purpose, and, strangely enough, it was Franz Gürtner, Hitler's old protector, whose portfolio was intended for a man of the Centre. Public and private assurances were meanwhile given that the National Socialists would commit no act of violence, no breach of the constitution; to the question whether the S.A. would not assume the powers of a State police force, Minister of the Interior Frick replied in a Press conference of January 30: '... The integration of the S.A. with the State played no part in the formation of the Cabinet, and there are no existing plans to integrate the S.A. with the Prussian police'. Hitler announced in his Press that the Reichstag would meet on February 7, when he would issue the Government's statement and demand the necessary powers.

In order to assure himself of these powers, he lectured Kaas for two hours on the morning of January 31. He told him that all he wanted was the Centre's consent to a law enabling the Government to work for one year 'without the vicissitudes of parliamentary obstruction', for this was the 'last and only constitutional possibility of meeting the danger of ruin to our people and our Reich'. Kaas wanted a clear promise from Hitler that he would hold strictly to the constitution, and, though Hitler spoke for two hours, he gave no clear answer. It was agreed that the Centre Party should repeat its question in writing. This was done on the same day; Kaas asked the new Government for 'guaranties . . . that its measures would remain within the limits of the constitution'; binding assurances that no unconstitutional measures would be taken 'on the basis of a so-called state of emergency'. An express promise was also demanded that the rights of the workers would not be impaired; this meant that Hugenberg would not be given the power to smash the trade unions. Every question meant: We don't trust you, but say something satisfactory and you shall have a satisfactory answer. It was Hugenberg who, up till then, had used all his power to prevent new elections; now it was primarily Hugenberg, with his great plan for the salvation of German economic life by his own economic dictatorship, whom the Centre wanted to stop. All Kaas's demands—renunciation of emergency laws, settlement of peasants in the East, increase of exports—were directed against Hugenberg's known plans, not against Hitler's unknown and actually unformulated and uncertain aims. Now Hitler could tell his Minister of Economics that there was only one way to shake off the yoke of the Centre: dissolution of the Reichstag and new elections.

For months Hitler had lost election after election—in spite of Lippe.

But if he dismissed the Reichstag now, he had everything in his favour that he had lacked since August: the magic of triumph, the irresistibility of power. 'Now it is easy to carry on the fight,' writes Goebbels. 'For we can call on all the State's means. The radio and the Press are at our disposal. We shall furnish a masterpiece of agitation. And this time of course [of course!] there is no lack of money.'

Hugenberg resisted stubbornly, for he had experience enough to suspect that Hitler alone would be the victor in this election, and that everyone else would be defeated. What he needed, he insisted, was a strong Government, no parliament! Send the Reichstag home—yes. Elect a new one—no! Hitler replied that this was in sharp contradiction to the injunction of strict constitutionalism which the Field-Marshal and President had given the new Government. If the National Socialists should gain an absolute majority—Hitler was asked—would they not form a Cabinet to suit themselves and throw out all the other Ministers? In reply, Hitler gave his word of honour 'that, regardless of the results of the coming elections, all the Ministers active in the present Cabinet would remain'. A tactician of uncanny adroitness, he forced his will on his startled Cabinet with arguments and words of honour. Hugenberg gave in. The following morning Hitler and Papen called on Hindenburg and bade him dissolve the Reichstag. The situation had changed since Schleicher; Schleicher had been unable to hope and promise that he would have a majority in a new Reichstag. Hitler could make such a promise, and hence the dissolution of the Reichstag was no longer an act of violence against parliament, but a hand outstretched to the people, a questioning of public opinion. Once again Hindenburg signed a paper in which he declared the Reichstag dissolved, 'since the formation of a working majority has proved impossible'. In an unctuous letter, Hitler explained to Kaas why he had preferred not to answer his questions: Such an answer, he wrote, would have served a purpose only if it had been clear on principle that the Centre was prepared to give the Government a year in which to work. A discussion of the questions put by Kaas would only 'lead to bitterness as sterile as it is to me undesirable'. And Hitler did not abandon hope of still reaching an understanding with the Centre: 'I venture to hope even today that, if not at once, then in a future that is perhaps not too far distant, it will be possible to broaden our front for the elimination of the menacing domestic dangers within our nation'. Kaas replied indignantly: It was not true that the formation of a majority in the Reichstag had proved impossible; if he had received a satisfactory answer 'only in essential questions . . . the Centre Party, in accordance with its political principles . . . in awareness of the gravity of the hour, in selfless objectivity, would have been prepared to help the Government with its work'.

Now Görtner became Minister of Justice after all. Elections were set for March 5, 1933. The final struggle for the people began.

THE REICHSTAG FIRE

ON JANUARY 31 Goebbels wrote in his diary :

In a conference with the Leader we establish the directives for the struggle against the Red terror. For the present we shall dispense with direct counter-measures. The Bolshevik attempt at revolution must first flare up. At the proper moment we shall then strike.

Thus began the quest for a Communist uprising, the great secret of every counter-revolution. Revolution always needs legal justification, it must claim to re-establish broken laws. To endure, an act of violence requires the consent of the victims. Hence revolution, in its formulated aims, is always directed against the illegal abuse of State authority by the Government, and even when it overthrows institutions that are decades or centuries old, it does so, at the very least, in the name of a 'natural' law, if it has no positive, written law at hand. But even in the most extreme cases, legitimacy is almost always preserved in some form, perhaps by invoking the authority of a parliament created for this purpose. Even the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia attacked the State in defence of a higher authority, conceived as legitimate, the authority of the councils of workers and soldiers. Conversely, the counter-revolution regularly attacks the menace to legitimate authority by the governed. In the classical case of European counter-revolution, Louis Bonaparte and the party of the 'Mountain' clashed under these conflicting battle-cries; an even more classical and venerable example is found in the sixteenth chapter of the Book of Numbers. When the sons of Korah rose up against the authority of Moses and Aaron, they accused them of arrogating to themselves a special holiness, while according to the law all Israel was equally holy: Moses, however, called the rebels—who desired nothing more than democratic worship—'godless', thus stigmatizing them in the public consciousness with a terrible name which even today has not lost its power. A mysterious fire broke out—allegedly falling from heaven. There followed ostracism and political murder, falsified by an unscrupulous propaganda on the part of the victors; Moses' government *communiqué* maintained, in the style of the time, that the earth had opened up and swallowed the rebels, and, by this wonder, 'ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do these works'.

It was not easy for the National Socialists to find a new Korah. As early as January 30, to be sure, the Communists called a general strike, but no one took the strike order seriously, not even the Com-

munists themselves, who wanted only to 'unmask' the cowardice and inactivity of their Social Democratic competitors.

There were other, more serious possibilities of resistance in the Reich. The leadership of the Social Democratic Party had gone to Munich, where the Bavarian Government, sharply hostile to the new National Socialist Government in the Reich, carried on its business and hurled threats at the national capital; other South German States showed a disquieting resistance to Berlin. The demarcation line of this zone of resistance ran from east to west, along the Main River, turned north near Frankfort and ran down the Rhine, dividing the West as well as the South from the rest of the Reich. In the West the population was Catholic, largely proletarian, and overwhelmingly opposed to National Socialism. These were the people who, by Goebbels' own account, had driven him with curses from his native city. And this was the district barred to the Reichswehr, by the Treaty of Locarno, where armed resistance of the Iron Front would not have been hopeless.

The National Socialist leadership waited eagerly for something to flare up somewhere. Papen and Hugenberg were worried enough to acquiesce to the first important limitation on the freedom of elections. Schleicher had had an emergency decree for such purposes in his drawer; now Hitler pulled it out and gave it the high-sounding title, 'For the protection of the German people'. Hindenburg signed it. The authorities obtained the right to forbid open-air meetings and the wearing of party uniforms. This meant opposition meetings and opposition uniforms. Newspapers could be suppressed for insulting leading State officials—an unfriendly word against Hitler sufficed. All this a few weeks before an election—when the Reich constitution still guaranteed freedom of speech and of the Press. 'I explicitly stress that, as a matter of principle, freedom of criticism will not be diminished,' said Hitler to a Press delegation that called on him at the Chancellery. 'I am opposed to any gagging of the Press.' Meanwhile, Göring suppressed the leading organ of Social Democracy twice in succession, and both times the Reich court nullified the suppression; the same was repeated with innumerable other papers in the States. The National Socialists made masterful use of the red, pink, or black (Catholic-clerical) danger to paralyze their partners in the Government. In their blind self-assurance these partners believed that they had the power firmly in hand and that they alone benefited from any increase in the power of the executive.

But the attempted revolution, whether Bolshevik, Social Democratic, reactionary, or separatist, did not flare up. In the middle of February a meeting of Social Democratic Party and trade-union leaders was held in Munich. One of the trade-union representatives reported that preparations had been made to sabotage the whole West German industrial region. Mines could be flooded, railroad traffic could be halted, and many factories incapacitated for a long time to come. But

it was clear that such desperate measures could serve only as a threat. Once carried out, they lost their terror and could be of little use in the actual fight. 'Comrades, I ask you,' said the trade-union leader, 'who among you will assume responsibility for these things?' Responsibility was not assumed. It was not necessary, said the leaders, for Hitler's Government would succumb to its own weakness. 'For everyone who understands the signs of the times, the contradictions in this Cabinet yawn fathoms deep,' said Peter Grassmann, after Leipart the most influential leader of the Social Democratic trade unions, in a speech on February 12. 'Messrs. Hugenberg and Papen have scarcely mentioned the name of their Leader in the Cabinet. Here there are gaping contradictions which promise victory for our struggle'—he meant the struggle by means of ballots. And he was not the only one to deceive himself. Adam Stegerwald, the leader of the Catholic workers, proclaimed in his newspaper: 'Hitler will be the prisoner of Hugenberg, Papen, and the big agricultural interests'. Ten days after Hitler had become Chancellor a widely read liberal publicist wrote:

We shall find that in important matters the practical influence of the three Hitlerians in this Cabinet ends exactly where their colleagues in the Cabinet want it to end. They have less than thirty per cent of the votes in this Cabinet. And as for independent action, the Ministry of the Interior is so hemmed in by its own character, the Chancellor so hemmed in by special regulations, that they, too, will hardly be in a position to do anything but what the feudal camp allows them. Even clearer is the distribution of posts in Prussia. There are no longer any independent Ministers there, the 'commissar Ministers' are employees of the commissar, whose will they have to carry out. The commissariat, however, has been taken away from the Chancellor [Hitler] and transferred to the Vice-Chancellor [Papen]. Minister of the Interior Göring and Minister of Education Rust are mere officials subordinate to Herr von Papen.

And so the first thing to be noted is that for the present the 'national union' means the least possible freedom of action for the new partners [National Socialists] and a maximum of influence for the old, entrenched interests.

It was neither the first nor the last time that the belief in the weakness of National Socialism fatally misled its adversaries.

The National Socialists, on the contrary, worked in the belief that their enemies were incredibly strong. The spectre of Rhenish secession enabled them to win their first position of power. Since the Reichswehr could not enter the Rhineland, a substitute army had to be created. Blomberg agreed and Papen could venture no opposition when Göring at one stroke deposed the police presidents, first throughout the Rhineland, then elsewhere, and replaced them by S.A. leaders, or, occasionally,

by former officers who were his personal friends. The police in the Rhineland was subjected to a military type of organization, under Police President Stieler von Heydkamp. Despite Frick's promises to the German public, the S.S. and S.A. were only waiting for the day on which they themselves would be the police. In order to prepare for this day, Göring had brought a helper with him into the Ministry, a man who bore the high-sounding title of *S.S. Obergruppenführer* (chief group leader), the same type of obscure ruffian who in 1925 had thrown the *gau* of Berlin into mutiny and confusion: Kurt Daluge.

Within a few days several hundred leading officials of the Prussian State changed their posts. Then the S.A. began to march. They were still a mere private army, and not yet police, but they were encouraged by the knowledge that their Leader was in the Chancellery and had given them 'freedom of the streets', sanctioned by the seal of State. They invaded the taverns where the Communists and Social Democrats held their meetings; even the official police reports showed that such clashes regularly took place in the vicinity of 'Marxist' headquarters—a clear indication of who attacked whom.

In their enthusiasm the S.A. men even went so far as to break up meetings of bourgeois parties; once they prevented Brüning from speaking, on another occasion they knocked down ex-Minister Stegerwald. Hitler was embarrassed. These, he said, were 'provocative elements', out to promote disorder 'under the cloak of the party'. In truth, it was his own party, which at some points was striking too soon and going too far. 'The enemy', cried Hitler in a plea to the S.A., 'which must be downed on March 5 is Marxism'—meaning that other enemies would come later. 'Our entire propaganda and this whole election campaign must be concentrated on Marxism.' Election campaign, as distinguished from propaganda, meant bloody street brawls; for the period from January 30 to March 5 the German papers report fifty-one murders of anti-Nazis, while the National Socialists set the number of their own victims at eighteen. This murderous swarming of the S.A. through Germany is comparable to the march of Louis Bonaparte's guards down the boulevards of Paris; and though the result was still no 'flaring up' of the Bolshevik revolution, Göring and Daluge made the most of the murders.

On February 17 Göring issued an order to all police authorities, stating 'that the police must under all circumstances avoid so much as an appearance of hostility towards the S.A. and the Stahlhelm'; on the contrary, the police must with all its strength support this private army of the Government 'in every activity for national aims'. This meant that the police should help the S.A. in its attacks on political opponents, give them the freedom of the streets, and come to their rescue if they were getting beaten. Göring also made it clear that the police 'must oppose with the sharpest means the activities of organiza-

tions hostile to the State'. The mass of police officers were not National Socialists; they were none too enthusiastic over this order. Göring intimidated his subordinates by dire threats and compelled them to commit acts of bloodshed to which many of them were surely opposed: 'Police officers who make use of fire-arms in the exercise of their duties will, regardless of the consequences of this use of firearms, benefit by my protection; those, however, who, through misplaced leniency, fail in their duty will face disciplinary consequences. . . . Every officer must always bear in mind that failure to take a measure is a graver offence than mistakes made in exercise of the measure.' This order for ruthless firing on the non-National Socialist people was the first unmistakable blow of the 'outwardly legal' counter-revolution. These blows were calculated with extreme skill; always hard enough that the enemy should feel them; never so hard that the weapon was in danger of breaking.

It is still unknown what decisions were reached in the conversations held in those days between Hitler, Göring, and von Blomberg, the new Reichswehr Minister. But it is here that Germany's future course must have been decided. The wish, formulated again and again by Seeckt, Groener, Schleicher, that the Reichswehr should not be drawn into bloody street battles, may have dispelled all other considerations in Blomberg's mind; the danger in the Rhineland surely made an impression on the Reichswehr Minister. In any event, he consented to the arming of the S.A.

This was the decisive revolutionary act of the National Socialists. The storm troops became police; they themselves became the Herr President, by whose permission the revolution would be made.

On February 22, Göring, as Prussian Minister of the Interior, shamelessly forgetting what Frick as Reich Minister of the Interior had promised two weeks before, issued the following decree, a model for the *coup d'état* cloaking itself in legality:

The demands made on the existing police force, which cannot be adequately increased at the present juncture, are often beyond its power; by the present necessity of utilizing them outside of their places of service, police officers are often removed from their proper field of activity at inopportune times. In consequence, the voluntary support of suitable helpers to be used as auxiliary police officers in case of emergency can no longer be dispensed with.

Some fifty thousand men were mobilized in this way in Prussia. A fifth of them belonged to the Stahlhelm; some twenty-five thousand came from the S.A., the remaining fifteen thousand from Himmler's black-shirted S.S. They served in their own uniforms and wore white arm-bands inscribed with 'auxiliary police'. This auxiliary police went round with rubber truncheons and pistols in their belts, travelled free

of charge on the street-cars and buses; with pistols in their belts, they marched into restaurants and cafés. Fingering their weapons, they sold the frightened guests photographs of Hitler, Göring, or Goebbels at exorbitant prices. At side tables terrified waiters served the auxiliary police their meals. From the police treasury each auxiliary policeman drew three marks daily. Thus, the first fifty thousand of the Uprooted and Disinherited were scantily provided for.

The army of the *coup d'état* stood ready, at least in Prussia. But in the south distrust and resistance grew. In Bavaria plans were forged to proclaim Prince Rupprecht regent, or even king. At the same time a similar group was active in Prussia; it is not clear whether Hitler, by ambiguous talk or significant silence, encouraged these people to hope that he was really their friend. He could point to Prince August Wilhelm, who called him 'my Leader'. But his profound, heartfelt hostility towards princes could escape only the most superficial observers. To the Bavarian king-makers he 'ried out that their plan 'would be broken and smashed by the Bavarians themselves', for the Bavarian people wanted nothing to do with these things of the past. Blomberg went to Munich and made a speech to the Munich Reichswehr garrison, 'which stands watch in the south of the Reich'. He assured them that the 'armed forces are stretched over the Reich like a steel claw', and it did not matter 'which tribe the individual soldier belongs to'; for when he entered the armed forces 'he has obligated himself without reservation, by oath and by will, to the entire German fatherland'. As for the National Socialists and their S.A., Blomberg stated without false caution 'that we [the Reichswehr] are and shall remain the armed might of Germany'. When he said this, he knew that the S.A. was armed; he also knew that Rohm had been working for months to make his private army the 'Brown People's Army' in the hands of the State. But Blomberg trusted in Hitler's word, and perhaps it sufficed him that the Brown auxiliary policemen were forbidden by law to take their pistols home with them. In any case, he called on the Reichswehr to regard the S.A. as their friends: 'Behind us and beside us stand many millions of determined men, disarmed, to be sure, but as determined as we are to live and to fight for the fatherland. Let us seal our alliance with them with the cry: Our beloved fatherland, the proud German Reich—Hurrah!'

With these words the Reichswehr put its stamp of approval on the acts of the S.A.—present and future. It was becoming clear that the Hitler régime was more than an experiment, that its power was considerably greater than the 'less than thirty per cent of voting power in the Cabinet'; for the will to power cannot be measured in percentages, and no will in Germany approached Hitler's, either for determination or breadth of aim. Next to his movement, it was the Communists who had the greatest historical ambition; but the Communists clung stub-

bornly to their strange, mysterious conception of history. On February 23, Max Brauer, Social Democratic mayor of Altona, met Ernst Torgler, chairman of the Communist Reichstag fraction, in Berlin. Pointing out that 'it is five minutes to twelve', he asked Torgler whether the Communists would not at least give up their fight against the Social Democrats and conclude a united front alliance. Torgler answered: 'It doesn't enter our heads. The Nazis must take power. Then in four weeks the whole working class will be united under the leadership of the Communist Party'. Brauer thought Torgler must be suffering from the strain. But a few days later he met Soviet Ambassador Chinchuk in Hamburg. Brauer asked the same question and received the same answer: 'No, they [the National Socialists] must come to power now, and then at last the old fight will come to an end. In four weeks the Communists will have the leadership of the whole working class.' No disappointment could destroy this faith. A German Communist leader by the name of Heckert, who fled to Russia a few weeks later, publicly declared before the executive committee of the Communist International that the German events had confirmed Comrade Stalin's predictions, and that Social Democracy and Fascism were twin brothers. In a resolution of April 1, 1933, the International stated that the open Fascist dictatorship in Germany had freed the masses from the influence of Social Democracy and thus 'accelerated the tempo of the evolution of Germany towards proletarian revolution'.

The Communists were prepared for illegal struggle; they had maintained an illegal machine for years under the parliamentary Governments. They were convinced that they would come through the brief period of Hitler's dictatorship relatively unharmed, while the Social Democrats, softened by democracy, would succumb to the unaccustomed climate. The calculations of the conservatives and the Bolsheviks were startlingly similar. Generals, junkers, big capital, and Communists were convinced alike that it was the generals, the junkers, and big capital who really had State power; all were agreed that Hitler as Chancellor would inevitably disappoint the masses and lose his supporters. The National Socialists were full of contempt for this unrealistic view; Hitler declared publicly that he had set elections because a Government cannot rule in the long run unless it has the people behind it; because 'there can be no resurrection of the nation without the might of the workers'; true, for these reasons, he wished the German people to decide for him—but 'not because I lack the determination to settle with the spoilers of the nation without an election. . . . On the contrary, their lordships'—he meant the generals, junkers, and capitalists—'can be convinced: on the 5th of March, so help me God, Germany will no longer be in the hands of her spoilers.' Meaning: regardless of how the elections turn out. For, as he said in another speech: 'It is now for the German people themselves to decide. If the German

people abandon us in this hour, that must not deter us. We shall go the way that is necessary if Germany is not to perish.'

The terror became more and more blatant, scornful to conceal itself; yet it did not lure the counter-terror from its hiding-places. The Social Democrats, demonstrably, intended no illegal action on a large scale; nor can any such plan be deduced from the acts of the Communists during this period. Hitler was alone in publicly claiming the right to make a *coup d'état*; he alone was supported in this claim by a section of public opinion; and this because he alone, amid the fury of this last impassioned struggle for freedom and power in Germany, believed himself able and willing to give society a new shape. In his first Government proclamation he promised to solve the economic crisis 'with two great four-year plans'. 'Within four years', he promised, 'the German peasant must be saved from pauperization; within four years unemployment must be ended once and for all.' Four years was the legal term of the new Reichstag, and by now he was determined to demand of the Reichstag four years of dictatorial powers instead of one: 'German people, give us four years' time, then pass judgment on us!'

The vastness of his plans, now that he was in possession of State power to carry them out, made a profound impression on the voters, though he did not reveal details and doubtless had not formulated any. Germany, he said, had 'become dismal and sad; our people have nearly forgotten happiness and laughter, as in Soviet Russia; and where people have laughed, it has been the laughter of despair'. Here he spoke the plain truth; and it was the official statistics that he summed up in the sentence: 'Of twenty-three million potential wage-earners, eight to nine millions are condemned to unemployment'. He would promise no one that things could be better in a few days, weeks, or months; no, he would need four years; it would mean hard work for all—'let no one believe that freedom, happiness, and life will suddenly come as a gift from Heaven', for nothing whatever comes as a gift: 'We never believe in outside help, never in help that lies outside of our own strength, outside of our own people'. Therefore, he would make no cheap promises, and the first point on his programme was: 'We shall not lie and deceive'. He saw no reason to explain the details of his plans to the disrupters; by their very questions about his programme, they had shown that they understood nothing: 'For all programmes are vain; the decisive thing is the human will, sound vision, manly courage, sincerity of faith, the inner will—these are the decisive things [uproarious applause]'.

A great will indubitably flowed through these speeches, a powerful magnetism gripped many who heard him. They promised no paradise—though some simple souls may have understood 'paradise'; what Hitler really promised was that he would attack great problems with the big

methods of a man who respects history. 'I have resolved to undertake the greatest task in German history; I am willing and determined to solve this task.' To this end he was prepared to shake the nation to its foundations, to break and remix souls; for this great task demanded great men, and 'therefore we shall break with all the products of a rotten democracy, for great things can come only from the power of the individual personality, and everything that is worth preserving must be entrusted once more to the power of the individual personality'.

What Hitler promised was not that the hard times would end, but that they would acquire a meaning; the German nation should learn to look on itself as a task that could be solved; it should learn once more that action can help, and that 'it is better to make a mistake than to do nothing'. This accounts for the attraction of his propaganda; even in the horrors and injustice, a dulled and demoralized public could sense the will to action. It is in the times of the greatest disappointments and fears that injustice is approved because it is a force, and (as the Wise Men of Zion said) the vilest deeds of statesmen are most admired.

Many a newspaper reader and radio listener was moved to tears when the Leader renounced his salary as Chancellor; a thing that meant little to the author of *Mein Kampf*, for since 1930 the sales of his book had mounted sharply. When he was informed that he could not legally give up his salary, he had it transferred to a fund for war invalids. But this was not yet the great symbolic deed that bathed his figure in the aura of irresistibility. The tempo should not be stepped up too much, wrote Goebbels in his diary on February 25, 'for up to the last day it must be possible to intensify it'.

The great act which would give content to Hitler's speeches had been considered for over a decade. The 'fight to the finish between Swastika and Soviet Star' must appear to the people in the garish light of an 'attempted Bolshevist revolution'. 'Then you will see that the Lord hath sent me to do these works.' When the revolution refused to flare up, Goring's police and auxiliary police set out in search of the flame. On February 24 they invaded the Karl Liebknecht House. The building had been quietly evacuated long before by the Communist Party leadership. But in the cellar lay piles of pamphlets; and the mere existence of a cellar led the S.A. to speak of 'catacombs'.

The German Press was full of stories about catacombs and underground passages. Otherwise there were no exciting revelations in the official reports. True, in the night of February 25 a trilling fire was discovered beneath the roof of the rambling 'Castle' in the centre of Berlin, the former residence of the Hohenzollerns, now used for Government offices. The blaze was extinguished at once; there were indications of incendiarism, but nothing was made public. Regardless who had set it, there was not enough fire to talk about.

Meanwhile, the material from the Karl Liebknecht House was care-

fully studied—though it seems to have consisted only of pamphlets. But three days later Göring made breath-taking disclosures, though he remained vague about the evidence. The Communists, it seemed, were planning to fire Government buildings, castles, museums, and vital factories all over Germany. A sensational fire was to be the 'signal for bloody revolution and civil war'. At four in the afternoon on the day after the fire general looting was to begin in Berlin. (Report of the official Prussian Press Service, February 28, 1933.) According to one of Göring's reports, hostages were to be arrested and food poisoned in restaurants. All this was discovered by Göring and Daluge in the papers they had found in the Karl Liebknecht House on February 24 -or so they said later.

In the first three days after February 24 the German public learned nothing of these terrors. But the Reich Government and the National Socialist leaders must have been waiting with feverish anxiety for the bloody revolution, the fire and the looting. It therefore seems strange that Goebbels' diary says nothing about all the tension. On the evening of February 24, when the horrible discoveries were made in the Karl Liebknecht House, he notes: 'Glorious weather, snow and sun. Leave the night train after a good sleep and return refreshed to work. In the evening I deliver my attack on the Social Democrats in the Sportpalast. . . .' Not a word about the Communists!

February 25: 'Everyone is concentrating on the election campaign' - not on defence against the Communist threats. 'If we win it, everything else will take care of itself.' That night there had been the fire in the Berlin Castle. Goebbels passes over this event as though no attempted Bolshevik revolution had been imminent.

February 26: 'Sunday. Vacation from my Ego. Reading, writing, and music at home. At night we hear *Götterdämmerung* in the Municipal Opera and are overcome by the eternal genius of Wagner. Now we have strength again for a whole week's work.' All this when he must have known from the evidence found in the Karl Liebknecht House that the Communists were about to launch their orgy of arson and murder.

Count Helldorf, leader of the Berlin-Brandenburg group of the S.A., was similarly unconcerned. Helldorf wielded the greatest National Socialist power in Berlin. He must have been thoroughly familiar with the disclosures about the imminent Communist revolution. That did not prevent him from making the rounds of the Berlin taverns on the night of February 27 with his friend and associate, Sixt von Arnim. In a wine-room near the Nollendorfsplatz they heard that the Reichstag was burning. Now this must be the expected 'signal' for a Bolshevik revolution.

Strange to say, Helldorf did not rush post-haste to the Reichstag. On the contrary, he, who was responsible for the safety of the Leader

and the Nazi Movement in Berlin, told his deputy, Sixt von Arnim, that he was tired and was going to bed—Helldorf himself related all this later as a witness in court. He instructed Sixt to go to the Reichstag and see what was going on, and report to him if there was anything serious.

At the same time, Hitler was eating dinner in Goebbels' house. Were they anxiously conferring about the Communist blow that hung over their heads? Oh, no—'we play music and tell stories. . . . Suddenly a phone call from Doctor Hanfstaengl: the Reichstag is burning. I think he is making wild jokes, and refuse to tell the Leader anything about it.'

It was no wild joke. The flames were rising over the Reichstag's cupola; the inside was completely gutted and the building a ruin. The police arrested a single suspect at the scene: Marinus van der Lubbe, twenty-four-year-old mason and vagabond, a Dutch subject who had previously belonged to the Communist organization in Holland, an asocial type of Left radical tendencies and definitely unbalanced. At once the official bureaus flooded the public with announcements that later had to be retracted: van der Lubbe had carried a Communist Party book on his person; he had confessed to relations with the Social Democrats. Hitler and Goebbels drove to the scene of the fire with a large escort; to an English newspaper correspondent Hitler said that this was the incendiary torch of Communism, and that the fist of National Socialism would now descend heavily upon it.

The next day Göring, through the official Prussian Press Service, reported the plans for a Communist uprising. To the assembled Cabinet he made a speech in which he claimed 'that Torgler, the Communist deputy, had conversed with van der Lubbe for several hours in the Reichstag building'. Of this, said Göring, 'we have unexceptionable proof'. The 'unexceptionable proof' was the observation of three National Socialists, later rejected as false by the court. Göring also spoke of men with torches, and, according to an official report, he said that these men had escaped through an underground passage which led from the Reichstag to the palace of the Reichstag president—that is, Göring's own palace, filled from top to bottom with S.A. men.

On the morning after the fire, Ernst Torgler, chairman of the Communist Reichstag fraction, went to the police; he declared that the accusations against the Communists, and especially against him personally, were ridiculous and that he would refute them. He stated that he did not know van der Lubbe, had never seen him, and consequently had not made incendiary arrangements with him. Torgler was immediately arrested. The police also arrested Georgi Dimitrov, a Bulgarian, of whom they knew only that he was a prominent Bulgarian Communist. Not until more than a year later did it come out that this

Dimitrov was the leader of the Central European section of the Communist International. Two other Bulgarian Communists, Popov and Tanev, were also arrested.

As days went on, Göring's stories about the terrible Communist plans became wilder and wilder. He said that he would publish the material 'in the very near future'. Former Chancellor Brüning replied in a speech that this was good, and he only hoped that the material would soon be published. To which Hitler replied in a public speech of March 3: 'Herr Brüning may set his mind at rest. We shall publish the material.'

It was never published. If the public had then known anything about Helldorf's strange behaviour on the night of the fire, further questions might have been asked. The leader of the armed might of the National Socialists in Berlin knew—if the statements about the documents from the Karl Liebknecht House are to be believed—that a Communist uprising was imminent. He knew that a fire was to be the 'signal'. He knew that two days previous an attempt at incendiarism had been discovered in the Berlin Castle. But when he heard that the Reichstag was burning, he did not go and look; he did not summon his S.A. to battle; he went to bed. His was the kind of implausible behaviour that occurs only when a man is building up an alibi. And scarcely less remarkable was it that Hitler and Goebbels should have been playing music with Communist incendiary murder staring them in the face.

Months later the world was still waiting for the documents that Göring had promised to 'submit to the public in the very near future'. His police had many months' time in which to search for proofs of the attempted Communist revolution, and there were no earthly limits set to its investigation. For many months the Reich Court investigated the fire and studied the evidence. Göring's documents were no part of it; they were not mentioned in court. In its verdict, to be sure, the Reich Court said that it believed the Reichstag to have been set on fire by Communists, but the court admitted that it had no proofs of this: 'This can'—*can!*—'have been an act only of Left radical elements, who probably'—*probably!*—'promised themselves an opportunity for overthrowing the Government and the constitution, and seizing power.' Then the court did a strange thing: it acquitted the two Communist leaders, Torgler and Dimitrov, and their Communist comrades, Popov and Tanev. Only the apathetic, evidently insane van der Lubbe, who admitted that he knew none of the four others, but stubbornly insisted on his guilt, was condemned to death, hastily executed, hastily cremated.

Today it is as good as proved that the Reichstag fire was not the Communist crime which the National Socialists made of it. It is not quite so clear who really did set the fire and how. For the work of a single individual, the preparations were too extensive. It may be assumed that the incendiaries were close to the National Socialists, but

their identity and methods have remained unknown. The world was duped with all sorts of 'documents', a number of them presumably manufactured by the National Socialists themselves, to create confusion. Supposed confessions of the incendiaries were offered for sale, and the forgeries were not always very competent. The irrefutable document in the case, however, is that which was not produced: Göring's material from the Karl Liebknecht House.

Whether a troop of S.A. men passed into the Reichstag through the underground passage from Göring's palace; or whether a band of National Socialist deputies went about sprinkling benches, cushions, and carpets with inflammable liquids, is still uncertain. At all events, the fire would be the signal for a Saint Bartholomew, for that 'night of the long knife' which Hitler had at first been obliged to renounce. Now the Cabinet, the Reichswehr, the President, would allow him to break his promise. He wanted—as Göring later publicly admitted—to hang van der Lubbe in front of the Reichstag immediately and without trial, in order that the people should see how sub-humans are exterminated; he wanted the same fate to strike five thousand bearers of the 'Asiatic plague' throughout the country in a single night. At the scene of the fire, Hitler issued the command, and auxiliary police (S.A. and Stahlhelm) swarmed out, occupied public buildings, railroad stations, district halls, gas works. For a whole day the Reich Cabinet wrangled over Hitler's projected blood-bath, and the National Socialists did not entirely have their own way. Hugenberg, and for a time Papen, wanted an immediate Reichswehr dictatorship; a state of military emergency, a régime of the commanding generals, mass arrests, suppression of political propaganda on all sides; and above all, indefinite postponement of the Reichstag elections. None of these proposals was approved by Reichswehr Minister von Blomberg. Was it not the purpose of Hitler's Cabinet to spare the Reichswehr the need for military dictatorship? Hadn't the Reichswehr formed its alliance with the 'millions of determined men' in order to extricate itself from politics? The aims of the conservatives and the generals were tragically at variance, and the ultimate result of this conflict was the Third Reich as we know it today.

The power was thrust at the Reichswehr, which thrust it back, and the armed bohemians seized it. Hitler and his people did have to accept certain restrictions: van der Lubbe would not be hanged outside the Reichstag; Germany's highest court was to investigate the mysterious fire; Göring must offer better proof for his allegations against the Communists; no mass blood-bath would be sanctioned. These were the obstacles which this Cabinet could place in the path of what the furious Chancellor called the salvation of Germany. Still thinking that they were the true masters of the Government and well pleased that they had checked the National Socialists to some extent, the Ministers decided to assume a dictatorship of their own until after the elections. Hinden-

burg signed an emergency decree, 'For the Protection of People and State'. It suspended the most important property rights and personal guarantees in the Reich constitution, and proclaimed: 'Therefore restrictions on personal freedom, on the right of free speech, including freedom of the Press, freedom of association and meeting; infringements on the secrecy of the mails, telegraphs, and telephones; orders of house search and confiscation; as well as restrictions on the rights of private property, even beyond the legal limits, are permissible.' And there follow threats of heavy penalties, with the death sentence for relatively light offences.

From now on the police was almost uncontested master over the German people. In Prussia, by far the largest State, this included the auxiliary police, the National Socialist private army. Göring, the Minister of Police, could issue any command he pleased, and could be sure that the S.A. would carry everything out; actually it carried out far more than its Minister could order. By truckloads the storm troopers thundered through cities and villages, broke into houses, arrested their enemies at dawn: dragged them out of bed into S.A. barracks, where hideous scenes were enacted in the ensuing weeks and months. If the victims were not beaten to death and concealed in the woods or thrown into ponds and rivers, they were usually found in a condition which an official, who has remained unknown, described in a report to the police Press bureau of the city of Bochum on April 6: 'A Communist who had fled was found and brought to the police. Since he was in no condition for being taken into custody, he was transported to a hospital. His body shows a number of wounds resulting from blows. He was found to be intermittently unconscious and without pulse. At present there is danger of death. The circumstances under which the injuries occurred have thus far been impossible to determine, as he is still in no condition to be questioned.'

At first one was lucky to be arrested on the strength of Göring's big blacklist. These men were sent to ordinary police prisons and as a rule were not beaten. But terrible was the fate of those whom the S.A. arrested for their own 'pleasure'. Göring made use of his power to destroy the leadership and propaganda of the two workers' parties. He imprisoned all the Communist deputies he could lay hands on and a few Social Democratic deputies. The whole Communist Press was suppressed indefinitely; and the several hundred Social Democratic papers suspended for two weeks. This was a week before the elections. From then on there were virtually no Social Democratic meetings, while Communist meetings were officially suppressed.

To destroy Communism, the Nazis had to smash democracy. Nevertheless, elections were to be held. A people which had been deprived of all liberties should voluntarily say yes to all this. Sefton Delmer, correspondent of the *'London Daily Express'*, asked Hitler whether the

present suspension of personal freedom in Germany would become permanent. Hitler replied: 'No! When the Communist danger is eliminated, the normal order of things will return. Our laws were too liberal to enable me to dispose of this underworld suitably and quickly enough. But I myself desire only too urgently that the normal situation shall be restored as soon as possible. But first we must put an end to Communism.'

There remained only one party of any size that was neither the declared enemy of the Government nor explicitly associated with it. This was the Centre. On the day after the Reichstag fire it met to consider a course of action. Crime was openly ruling Germany; none of these men believed that the Communists had set the fire. Kaas, however, put through a resolution that for the present the Centre should 'hold its peace', and not openly accuse the Government of incendiarism and falsehood. A few words of veiled though unmistakable doubt, publicly uttered by Brüning, were all that the Centre Party said about the Reichstag fire.

Before the ashes of the Reichstag building were cold, the air waves were alive with National Socialist voices blaring forth details about the murderous, incendiary plans of the Communists, that had been frustrated just in time; S.A. men rushed about in trucks, drunken with victory and roaring threats at the people; in the cellars of the S.A. barracks woollen blankets stifled the cries of victims. In a public speech Göring cried: 'My measures will not be weakened by juridical scruples or bureaucracy. My work is not to administer justice, but only to destroy and exterminate.' This was the mood governing the elections. Outside the polls, giant posters screamed: 'Your vote for Adolf Hitler!' or, 'Stamp out Communism! Crush Social Democracy!' Other placards, here and there, advocated a so-called 'Black, White, and Red Fighting Front'. This, for practical purposes, was the old German Nationalist Party, led by Hugenberg, Papen, and Franz Seldte of the Stahlhelm. Of other parties the voter saw and heard next to nothing; the Social Democrats made no speeches and issued no literature. In many smaller localities the polls were manned only by National Socialists; occasionally the secret ballot was discarded and voting took place publicly; and after the secrecy of the mails and of telephone conversations had been suspended, many people ceased to believe in the secret ballot even where it was still observed.

This was the political condition which the voter was called upon to judge. Confused by an overpowering propaganda; stifling beneath the crumbling ruins of a disintegrating State; grown distrustful of his own ability to shape a democratic world; moved by the will to greatness apparent in the speeches and acts of the new men; face to face with tangible injustice, yet hour after hour lectured by his Government on the necessity for hard measures to avert the Communist blood-bath;

and, on top of all this, intimidated by threats—the German voter gave his verdict on March 5, 1933. With 56·1 per cent of all the votes cast, he rejected National Socialism and its methods.

Under the normal conditions prevailing in earlier elections this would have been a great victory for Hitler. His party, which had been on a steep down-grade since November 6, 1932, had mightily recovered, obtaining 17,200,000 votes, four million more than at its previous peak; this was 43·9 per cent of all votes cast, and National Socialism showed itself by far the strongest united mass-power in Germany. But greater, nevertheless, remained the multi-coloured mass which, with all its contradictions, was absolutely united in one point, its opposition to National Socialism. It cast 20,400,000 votes against Hitler's 17,200,000.

Of this opposing mass, 7,100,000 belonged to the Social Democrats; 4,800,000 to the Communists, a fifth of whose former voters had been frightened away in these elections; 4,400,000 fell to the Catholic Centre, a million to the related Bavarian People's Party; and, decisively, 3,100,000 to the Red, White, and Black Fighting Front. The people who voted for this last group wanted a conservative counter-revolutionary Government, perhaps a dictatorship; in no event did they want Hitler and Göring, and some, without inner enthusiasm, voted for Hugenberg and Papen in the belief that these were the only men who might still be able to do something against Hitler and Göring.

With the votes of the Black, White, and Red Fighting Front, the Hitler Government had a bare majority of a little over 51 per cent in the Reichstag. In itself it was a feeble majority, lacking the constitutional power to undertake profound changes in the form of government. With Hugenberg and Papen, Hitler could just fulfil Hindenburg's order to bring him a democratic majority in the Reichstag; but this was no majority sufficient to sanction dictatorship—which meant change of the constitution.

If only the figures were taken into account, Hugenberg and Papen could have cheated Hitler of his success; but if the political conditions were considered, they could not. On the day after the elections, Papen expressed the thanks and admiration of the Cabinet to the Chancellor. There was already ample ground to distrust the assurances given by Hitler when the Government had been formed; but both partners would have been lost if they had separated. As Hitler had said during the election campaign, 'Against National Socialism there are only negative majorities in Germany'; this state of affairs, under which German politics had suffered for two years, had not changed: the majority did not want Hitler, but it wanted nothing else; there was no united will to confront the united will of the National Socialists.

Consequently, the S.A. met slight resistance when on March 6 it began to flood the main streets, to invade public buildings, even to occupy factories and business houses. Göring, Papen's 'subordinate',

wired his own subordinates in the provinces not to resist the encroachments of the S.A.; above all, they must do nothing to prevent the S.A. from raising the swastika flag on public buildings. The best that Papen could obtain from his 'subordinate' was that he also tolerated the hoisting of the old reactionary black, white, and red flag; the Stahlhelm, panting along wearily in the wake of the S.A., was permitted to go looking for empty flag-poles on which to raise its black, white, and red rags--'the typical battle-followers', wrote Goebbels, 'who are always to be found when the danger is past.' And so the revolution by permission of the Herr President fluttered from the flagpoles of Prussia. The 'best of the nation' lost all restraint; they broke into private homes, dragged political enemies away, shot them, beat them to death or unconsciousness; occasionally looted Jewish shops; 'borrowed' private cars, expropriated Jewish firms, to which they appointed so-called 'commissar managers'; for the most part this was done according to individual whim and no comprehensive plan. The regularity and uniformity of procedure arose from the lust for loot and pillage which for years had been nourished in these masses. Since the regular authorities had no legal basis for action against the arrested leaders of the Left parties, the S.A. established its own prisons, which it called 'concentration camps'; at first these were unoccupied factories or warehouses. The S.A. had learned the simplest rule of police repression: that the will of an imprisoned mass must first be broken by the most loathsome cruelty. Every arrest consequently began with a severe beating, and life in a concentration camp, particularly in times of overcrowding, was for most prisoners a monotonous series of kicks and blows; a coat improperly buttoned, a spot on one's clothing, a wrinkled bed-covering, inevitably meant a blow from the inspecting officer. Years of incitement from above had taught the S.A. a bestial lust for torture and murder; many who may have been good-natured human beings when they began their service in the concentration camps were gradually turned into torturers and murderers by the routine.

Trade-union leaders went to Papen and reported the excesses, submitting proofs and statements by witnesses. Papen threw up his arms and cried that he simply could not believe such things. But he need only have read the newspapers with a little care. Many of the murders could not be kept secret; the official reports of the Brown auxiliary police then stated with cynical regularity that the victim had been 'shot while trying to escape'. It became a favourite practice to hurl the victims from high windows, because this could easily be represented as suicide. An English newspaper wrote: 'The habit of jumping out of the window in an unguarded moment has cost many political prisoners in Germany their lives in the past weeks'.

Franz von Papen must have known these things. But after March 5 those forces gathered round the person and the legend of Hindenburg

could no longer part company with Hitler. For after the defeat of Communism, another danger, which had hovered over Germany for some time, assumed serious forms: South German separatism. If anyone could prevent the open rebellion of these States against the unity of the Reich, it was the S.A. For Hitler's Government had been created just to keep the Reichswehr out of politics, to avoid using the troops in civil strife.

Since 1871 it had been a truism of German politics that the Bavarian people at heart wanted nothing to do with the 'Lutheran' and 'Prussian' German Reich; the Bavarian royalist projects of 1933 were still based upon this belief. Like all historical truths, this, too, had died one day, and most observers were slow to notice the fact: after the World War a new generation had grown up in Bavaria, loyal at heart to the Reich, rejecting Bavarian separatism, and year after year obtaining stronger and stronger majorities in the elections. The three groups of National Socialists, Social Democrats, and Communists were agreed on nothing but this one point: that the great majority of the Bavarian people were absolutely devoted to the Reich. It was one of Hitler's greatest political achievements to have recognized this truth more clearly than his opponents, and to have acted on this knowledge.

Again the telegraph was put to work, this time by Frick, Reich Minister of the Interior. He wired to Baden, Württemberg, Saxony, appointed the *gau*leiters or S.A. leaders as Reich police commissars; these police commissars put the white arm-bands of the auxiliary police on their S.A. men; with strict legality they occupied Government buildings, herded the Ministers into their new concentration camps, often with the usual brutality. Separatism was not to be feared in these States, but Hitler could not leave their administrative apparatus to themselves. In Bavaria, on the other hand, an attempt was in progress that really might have endangered the edifice of the Reich. Circles supporting the Held régime considered placing Prince Rupprecht at the head of the State, not as king, but under the title of 'general State commissar', once borne by the ill-starred Gustav von Kahr. This was to occur on March 11.

The Held Government, like the Braun-Severing Government in Prussia before it, no longer had a majority in parliament; here again the opposing majority was incapable of forming a Government of its own; here, too, German democracy had slowly destroyed itself through the growth of the radical parties; and thus, if Hitler destroyed Bavarian separatism, he could invoke the democratic popular will with more right than ever before. Papen could not very well object to Hitler's intervening in Bavaria as he himself had intervened in Prussia; but, whereas on July 20, 1932, the Reichswehr had marched in Berlin, in Munich it was the S.A. that marched. Hitler had the good fortune to have a relatively popular man in Bavaria, Franz von Epp, the Catholic

General. On March 8 the Bavarian National Socialists demanded that the Government appoint Epp as general State commissar. The Government refused. On March 9 the storm columns of the S.A. marched through the streets by the tens of thousands; the swastika banner was raised on public buildings. Held indignantly wired Papen in Berlin, and Papen wired back that the Reich Government had no intention of interfering in Bavaria.

It is strange how little the old routine politicians on both sides understood the hour. The Bavarian Government was fully reassured by Papen's reply and was confident that after the S.A. men had marched round for a whole day they would get tired and disband. A few leading men of the Bavarian People's Party sat in a back room of a big beer hall and deliberated; a friendly journalist called one of them, Party Secretary Doctor Pfeiffer, on the telephone, and asked him if he knew what had happened. Frick, the Reich Minister of the Interior, had wired Epp, entrusting him with the supreme police power in Bavaria on the strength of the emergency decree 'For the Protection of People and State'. Epp, with a few S.A. men, had gone to the Government building on the Promenadenplatz. The building was empty and silent. He had brought along Ernst Röhm and Hermann Esser, who had suddenly risen out of oblivion; Deputy Wagner of the State diet, and Hitler's attorney, Doctor Hans Frank. On the evening of March 9, 1933, this group began to govern. This is what Doctor Pfeiffer was told by his journalist friend. Pfeiffer replied: 'Don't make silly jokes!' So unexpected and incomprehensible to most people were the series of events that subsequently became known as the 'National Socialist Revolution'.

But they were to become acquainted with it that same night. The S.A. dragged Minister of the Interior Stützel and Finance Minister Schaefler out of their beds and beat them to a pulp. Prince Rupprecht, who had nearly been proclaimed regent, rapidly set out for Greece. On March 10, Hitler in Berlin issued a joyous proclamation to his party comrades: 'A gigantic upheaval has taken place in Germany', he said. This was the 'national revolution'. From this day on, the National Socialists, throughout the country, called their enterprise a revolution.

The looting of Jewish shops, the theft of automobiles, the violent expropriation of businesses and houses, the torture and murder of political enemies had swollen to an orgy of mass terror; once again the melancholy lesson of history was confirmed, that nothing turns people so rapidly into beasts as a great cause. And yet, humanity rebelled against this hideous form of greatness; people who had voted National Socialist, even on March 5, grumbled; the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, a newspaper close to industry, had courage to protest. In his proclamation Hitler wrung his hands and asked for an end of the atrocities; delicately, he referred to the misdeeds of his men as 'molesta-

tion of individual persons, obstruction of autos, and interference with business life'; this, he said, must stop. On March 12 he flew victoriously to Munich, alighted from the plane and made a little speech: 'Years ago I here took up the struggle, the first part of which may now be considered as ended. A co-ordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of political life, such as we have never before experienced, has been completed.'

One people, one State, one machine, one stream—that is what Hitler meant by his engineer's term; society can be guided; we have discovered this, and that is why we have our hand on the controls. Only seven days before, the German people had examined its conscience in the solitude of the election booth, and its majority had rejected Hitler; but this solitude was at an end when the S.A. filled the streets and shouted up at the windows: 'Flags out!' The people were now drawn into the 'streets and squares' by the ruse of pageantry, but also by the violence of fists knocking on doors and voices speaking through the keyhole: 'Everyone out to hear the Leader's speech'.

The omnipresence of society, which embraces the individual in every State form, began to grow noisy. Hitler liked to maintain that his State was the best democracy; 'an ennobled form of democracy', as Goebbels some months later declared to newspapermen at the meeting of the League of Nations; only that we do not 'obscure the will of the people streaming upward or render it infertile by parliamentary intercalculations'. There was more truth in this lie than the speakers themselves believed. For it is not the force of armies, police, judges, but the so-called 'will of the people', that almost imperceptibly, but most effectively, tyrannizes the will of the individual; caught in the popular will or the social mood, the individual is carried upwards by the mounting flood or drawn down by the receding wave—this is human nature and cannot be entirely prevented by the most excellent State. But it was to the credit of the liberal State that it did make room for the individual conscience amid the maelstrom of the mass; that it did force upon him a freedom of choice, which he himself was far from always desiring.

The new democracy, ennobled by flags, drums, and concentration camps, now quickly put an end to this liberal freedom which elevates its citizens by education. Set in motion through no effort of their own, that section of the people which had hitherto resisted now began to forget its remnant of personal conscience; it no longer obeyed its own judgment, but the great super-mind which led the march columns and thought for all. The soul of the individual was broken apart by the disintegration of the popular will, and National Socialist propaganda skilfully exploited the lack of logic in human desires. Even those who were most violently opposed to National Socialism could not deny its reality; and this reality was a mighty attraction. The bitterest hatred against Hitler could not deny the grandeur of the mass drama that was

breaking over the nation—no political conviction could banish from the world the eternal march rhythm of the Horst Wessel song. The power of accomplished facts called forth reluctant admiration; the worship of bigness, even when it is hostile, degenerated, in the Germany of 1933, into an ugly fanaticism and servility. Napoleon, the century-old nightmare of foreign grandeur, had appeared among the Germans; now he belonged to them, as though created and achieved by their longing; Fate, which had denied them victory in 1918, now belatedly gave them, if not victory, a victory celebration.

'It is no victory, for the enemies were lacking,' Oswald Spengler grumbled. 'This seizure of power . . . it is with misgiving that I see it celebrated each day with so much noise. It would be better to save that for a day of real and definitive successes, that is, in the foreign field. There are no others.' A profound lack of comprehension for the truth that 'internal politics is decisive'. The masses knew better than the philosopher. Victors as well as vanquished felt that the great task was the moulding of their State, not a victory over the world. Whatever the secret intentions of the leading clique, the masses on both sides of the domestic fighting front felt that here was a new attempt to solve the problem of modern society, though some might call the new solution heroic, the others barbaric. Hence the abolition of party boundaries and State boundaries. The same people who regarded the victory of the National Socialists as a catastrophe, often a personal one, welcomed the firmer union of Bavaria with the Reich; the idea of co-ordination presented the twofold aspect of subjection and greatness. Even the groups that had been thrown into the discard felt their effacement to be an historic necessity. A few weeks later, when Prince Rupprecht returned from Greece, Epp called on him, introducing himself as the new 'Reich governor in Bavaria', and politely asking His Majesty for his commands. He wore the brown shirt of the S.A.; the Prince, who knew that the likelihood of his becoming king was past, muttered with ill humour: 'What kind of a shirt have you got on? Bavarian generals never used to wear such shirts.' There was wounded pride in these words of the dying era to the new age, but no protest.

Even Hindenburg admitted that National Socialism had saved Bavaria for the Reich and strengthened national unity. His violent but effective method of winning the resisting States for the new régime procured Hitler a kind of reluctant respect with the President; on March 12 the Field Marshal, the old Prussian and servant of the Kaiser, put his signature to a decree to the effect that 'from tomorrow until the final establishment of the Reich colours, the black, white, and red flag and the swastika flag are to be hoisted together'. The constitutional colours remained black, red, and gold, but the constitution was forgotten. The new flags, said the decree, signed by Hindenburg but written by Hitler, 'combine the glorious past of the German Reich and the mighty

rebirth of the German nation'. Hindenburg had consented to the use of the swastika flag throughout Germany—with one exception. On military buildings and naval ships the Reich battle-flag was retained without the swastika.

At this time men who had hitherto regarded themselves as powerful began to fear the new masters. Doctor Hans Luther, president of the Reichsbank, had boasted only a few days before that he would not relinquish his post; but on the 16th Hitler sent for him. Luther resigned on the spot and permitted himself to be sent as ambassador to Washington, where he served the new régime with enthusiasm. The Reichsbank was the key position and commanding post of the German economic system; to this highest post of the dying economic age Hitler appointed Doctor Hjalmar Schacht, who had resigned from it only three years before and since then had been Hitler's prophet among the financiers and industrialists.

Hugenberg was still in charge of economics and agriculture; von Neurath of foreign affairs, Blomberg of the Reichswehr; Papen remained Vice-Chancellor. Since January 30 nothing had changed in the Cabinet personnel; Hitler's 'thirty per cent of voting power' had not been increased by a single per cent; and yet the relations of power had been completely revolutionized. This was possible because Hitler and his henchmen understood the secret of the modern State, which Hugenberg or Blomberg did not even suspect: the secret that the power of this State does not rest on administration and dead machinery, but on the persuasion and education of people. Again and again various moments in history have produced this 'educational State', which, because it conceives man as a living unit and not merely as a bundle of independent interests, has also been called the total State. The new State machine, which in the first months of 1933 was built up in Germany under the cloak of the old constitutional State, arose, with all its cruelty towards individuals, far more through suggestion than violence; the S.A. did not defeat its adversaries, but took them prisoner without a struggle; and Hitler's great personal achievement was to persuade the masses that he was already master and that resistance would serve no purpose.

This State—which dominated men by fear and hope; which did not entrench itself in citadels of power, but permeated the whole people; which did not bind itself by laws, but commanded and altered its commands according to circumstance—had its models in history. Plutarch tells us that Lycurgus, the Spartan law-giver, purposely issued no written laws; 'for he believed that the most important and excellent decrees, aimed at the happiness and virtue of the State, persist firm and immutable only if they have been deeply imprinted upon the character of the citizens by education, because in the free will they have a bond which is stronger than any compulsion. . . . On the other hand, he

held it advisable not to restrict, by prescribed formulae and immutable customs, all the trifling concerns which relate to trade and commerce and which are continuously changed this way and that, but to leave them to the judgment of wise and prudent men. . . .' It was into such an 'educational State' that Hitler wished gradually to remould the old 'legislative State'. He took his first measure in this direction on March 14, when he created, through his Cabinet, a 'Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda', and entrusted it to the most willing and capable of his pupils, who until then had implemented his propagandist inspirations in the party: Doctor Joseph Goebbels.

Goebbels had been an unsuccessful novelist, an unsuccessful dramatist, and an unsuccessful film writer—all this side by side with his activity as an extremely successful political speaker. He was possessed by the idea that all success in these fields is merely a question of publicity; he was convinced, far more seriously than Hitler, that ideas, desires, standards, could be forced on a nation from above. The municipal theatres of Germany suddenly began to produce his plays; his novel *Michael* suddenly found a mass public, and only because he was the Minister. This was the beginning of an artificial intellectual tornado, in which the driest leaves flew highest. Writers whom no one had wanted to read marched, with the swastika in their buttonholes, up to terrified publishers and forced them to print large editions; incompetence loudly protested that it had been repressed only because of its patriotic opinions; at his crowded banquets Hitler suddenly found himself sitting beside actresses, no longer exactly in their prime, who whispered to him how they had been kept down by the old Jewish theatre clique; players of second- or third-rate rôles suddenly turned up at rehearsals and announced that in the name of the Leader they were assuming the direction of this theatre which from now on should serve the true German intellectual effort; and the drama critic of the National Socialist newspaper was on the spot with a play from the days of Frederick the Great, or, if he was a little more modern, with a so-called front-line drama from the World War; if he was a real genius, the product might be entitled *S.A. Man Kruse, a Life of Struggle for Nation and Leader*; Jewish publishers of big democratic newspapers began to ask a local reporter for his political advice, because he was reputed to be a member of an S.A. group in his free time.

If ever the bankrupts and intellectually under-privileged have had a period of greatness, it was in the spring of 1933, in the realms of literature, theatre, Press, and film in Germany; the wild determination of thousands of shipwrecked, untalented careerists to make something of themselves on this great occasion, merely by proclaiming their political faith, gave the so-called National Socialist Revolution a powerful impetus, absolutely genuine in the human sense, an impetus arising from the most primitive instincts of greed. With the skill of a

true general, Goebbels hurled this army of incompetent opportunists and job-hunters against the large and small key positions of German intellectual life, and took them by storm. The radio, which in principle had always been an instrument of the Government in Germany, but for reasons of objectivity had scarcely been used for political struggle by former Governments, was immediately taken in hand by Goebbels, and men of doubtful reputation even by National Socialist standards were appointed heads of the big stations; for these shady characters, owing to their lack of other accomplishments, were at least reliable.

These new lords and masters, suddenly raised to the light from obscurity and personal nonentity, looked important in their silver-braided uniforms and helped to spread a mood of sudden bliss. The unexpected had suddenly come to pass, nothing had become something; wonders were still possible. That the man whom his own party comrade Rosenberg had kicked through the doorway when he came begging for ten marks had suddenly become Minister of the Interior and omnipotent master in Bavaria seemed like the confirmation of some Messianic prophecy. For years millions had thought that everything must be changed; for thousands the change had now come to pass.

Under Goebbels' direction, the parvenus now staged a great victory celebration; the outward occasion was the convening of the newly elected Reichstag. As the scene, Goebbels had chosen the grave of Frederick the Great, that Prussian King whom the National Socialists rather unaccountably proclaimed as the first German socialist. The Garnisonkirche (garrison church) in Potsdam near Berlin, where the Prussian kings lie buried, is looked upon by a limited number of people in Germany as a national shrine, somewhat comparable to Independence Hall in Philadelphia, or, even more, to the Invalides in Paris. For the Prussian officers' corps, above all, this place is endowed with a sentimental aura; to the German public the city of Weimar, with its memories of the great German poets, is far dearer; it is with good reason that the German Republic was founded in Weimar. And now, as a calculated gesture, Weimar was to be replaced by Potsdam.

On March 21 the members of the Reichstag met in the Garnisonkirche, but the Left parties were not invited. Prior to the act of state, the members of the Government and the Reichstag had attended services at various churches. Hitler and Goebbels were conspicuous by their absence. 'In the morning I go to the Luisenstadt Cemetery with the Leader,' writes Goebbels. 'We do not attend the services, but stand at the graves of our fallen comrades.'

Then a glittering procession poured into the Garnisonkirche. Hindenburg read a short speech, in which he maintained that the people had 'with a clear majority shown its support of this Government appointed by my confidence'—meaning that everything is in the best democratic order, but this applies only to the present Government, mind you,

not to a purely National Socialist régime. 'Thereby,' Hindenburg continued, 'the people have given the Government a constitutional basis for its work.' Hitler, in one of his most bombastic speeches, promised that the new Government would 'restore the primacy of politics', which may have been intended to mean that politics was more important than the constitution. Then Hindenburg, for whose benefit the whole show was probably put on, arose with difficulty from his place and descended into the crypt; those assembled could peer through the open door and watch him as he stood deep in thought at the tomb of Frederick the Great. The ceremony was accompanied by the tramping, singing, and shouting of the S.A. and the Stahlhelm. After the scene at the tomb, the assemblage drove back to Berlin; at the Kroll Opera House, near the Reichstag, the new parliament met for its first business session, again chose Göring as president, and resolved to hear Hitler's Government statement two days later, on March 23. It was already a rump parliament. Of the Communists, most of whom were imprisoned, none, of course, had appeared; more than twenty Social Democrats were absent, most of them under arrest or in flight.

From this Reichstag the Government demanded dictatorial powers. The idea of one year had long since been shelved; the parliament was to go into retirement for four years, ceding the right of legislation to the Government. The sole restriction on the Government's power was that it could not modify or abolish the Reichstag or the Reichsrat—the semi-parliamentary body representing the individual German States. The President, now that there was again a legislative majority in the Reichstag, automatically receded into the background; this was expressly confirmed and underlined when he was deprived of his right—a mere formality under normal conditions—to sign laws. The Government itself fought bitterly over this dictatorship law; in the Cabinet session of March 20 it was not unanimously accepted. Later, this enabling law was several times extended, but historically the first draft has remained the foundation of the National Socialist Reich. Its most important provisions were:

Article 1. Laws can be passed, not only by the procedure provided in the constitution, but also by the Reich Government. . . . Article 2. The laws decreed by the Reich Government can deviate from the Reich constitution in so far as they do not apply to the institutions of the Reichstag and the Reichsrat. Article 3. The laws decreed by the Reich Government are drawn up by the Chancellor and reported in the Reichstag's law journal. . . . Article 4. Treaties of the Reich with foreign States, which relate to subjects of Reich legislation, do not, for the duration of the validity of this law, require the consent of the bodies participating in the legislation. . . . Article 5. The law . . . expires on April 1, 1937; it furthermore expires if the present Reich Government is replaced by another.

The present Reich Government was the one in which, according to Hitler's word of honour, all the Ministers appointed on January 30 should keep their places indefinitely; Hugenberg later maintained that if a Minister should resign for political reasons, those who remained would no longer be the 'present Reich Government'.

Passage of the law constitutionally required a two-thirds majority of the Reichstag, or, rather, two-thirds of the deputies must be present, two-thirds of those present must vote for the law. A sufficiently large group of deputies, who under the pressure of terror might not indeed have dared openly to oppose the law, could, by remaining absent, have reduced the attendance figure to less than the required two-thirds; since eighty-one Communists had been forcibly removed, the 120 Social Democrats and approximately fifteen members of the Centre would have sufficed—and there was assuredly enough secret rage among the Centre to activate fifteen men. The seventy-three men of the Centre and the associated nineteen of the Bavarian People's Party had it in their power to deny Hitler's Government the legal basis for dictatorship, either by an open vote or by remaining absent. Hitler believed it necessary to lure the Centre by threats and promises. He told Kaas that all parties which consented to the dictatorship law would be united in a working committee, and thus in a sense constitute a reduced and refined parliament, to which the Government would be responsible for its acts. He even promised to confirm his promise in writing. Kaas waited in vain for the letter. The Reichstag met on March 23. Kaas approached the Government bench and asked about the letter. Hitler answered amiably that it was written and in the hands of Minister of the Interior Frick, who had to countersign it. Kaas went to Frick and asked him about the letter. Frick replied that it was in his portfolio and that he would attend to it at the first possible opportunity. This was the last that Kaas heard of the letter. He may only have been pretending to believe that it existed at all.

False witness and simulated confidence ushered in the new era. Those who had expected the old times back again were quickly and bitterly disappointed. After the day at Potsdam many had thought that the national revolution was on its way back to the Prussian monarchy, to imperial Germany. In vain had Hitler repeated over and over again for ten years that the past would not return, that the wheel of history could not be set back, and that this was good, for the past had been bad and rotten—who had noted the exact content of his speeches? The rumour went about that he would soon make place for the Hohenzollerns; that he had even promised as much to Hindenburg. In his Government statement Hitler destroyed this fantasy: 'In view of the distress now prevailing among the people, the national Government regards the question of a monarchist restoration as undiscussible. It would view any attempt at an independent solution of this problem

in the individual "countries" as an attack on the unity of the Reich.' This was the first of many statements of similar nature by the Chancellor.

No, his dictatorship was the end itself; not the means to an end. But he promised to wield this dictatorship with moderation: 'The Government intends to make no more use of the powers given it than is necessary for the execution of vital measures . . . the existence of the States will not be abolished, the rights of the Church will not be narrowed, its relation to the State will not be changed.' The speech contained many another phrase smacking of moderation and conciliation: 'The national Government regards the two religious denominations as important factors for the preservation of our people'. It was the compliment of an atheist who admits the usefulness of Christianity. Even to the Jews he promised 'objective justice', a term ambiguous, to say the least. As it proceeded, the speech grew sharper—not in tone, which remained calm, but in content, which became monstrous. Hitler left no doubt in the minds of the Reichstag that the old legal State, with its equality of all before the law, was dead: 'Theoretical equality before the law cannot lead us to tolerate those who despise the law as a matter of principle; we cannot surrender the nation to these people'—if here, as so often, he cloaked a grim announcement in a phrase of artificial banality, in the next sentence he became quite frank: 'Equality before the law will be granted to all those who stand behind the nation and do not deny the Government their support.' But those who deny the Government their support have, as Hitler had stated earlier, 'no rights whatever'. Then came the conclusion, for the sake of which the whole speech was made: 'The Government offers the parties an opportunity for a peaceful German development and for the future conciliation that can grow out of it. But it is equally determined and ready to take up any challenge of rejection and resistance. Now, gentlemen, you yourselves may make your decision: will it be peace or war?'

War was Hitler's last word, his eternal war against the other half of the people. In the galleries, in the corridors between the deputies' benches, stood S.S. and S.A. men with pistols at their belts. Göring, in his president's chair, looked out over the hall through binoculars as though prepared at any moment to command: 'Fire!' Otto Wels, leader of the Social Democrats, explained why his party would vote against the dictatorship law; it was a clear speech of rejection, but between Göring's binoculars and the pistols of the S.A., Wels no longer dared to say what was happening in the country and how the masses really felt. The S.A. had ceased to limit their acts of violence to Communists and Socialists; already they were invading courthouses, dragging out Jewish lawyers and thrashing them through the streets. Protests had been raised abroad; refugees had reported some of the atrocities; Hitler roared at Wels that the Social Democratic International was helping to spread these lies—he actually called them lies. Kaas ex-

plained why the Centre, despite all its misgivings, would vote for the Government's dictatorial powers. He recalled Hitler's promises, and all the National Socialists applauded. A few small splinter parties made dejected speeches for the affirmative. And then the mutilated Reichstag submitted, avoiding war. The attitude of the Centre was decisive; with 441 against 94 Social Democrats the law was passed. The National Socialist fraction jumped up and sang the Horst Wessel song.

COUP D'ÉTAT BY INSTALMENTS

FROM THE afternoon of March 23, 1933, Hitler was dictator, created by democracy and appointed by parliament, although he was still bound to his Cabinet. But he could boast of being independent of Hindenburg now, and he allowed scarcely a minute to pass before showing it. As the deputies were leaving, two detectives went up to the Government bench and arrested Günther Gereke, who was still Reich Commissar for Re-Employment. Hitler arranged to have Hindenburg's favourite prosecuted in connection with the vanished funds of the Hindenburg Committee, most probably with the intention of showing publicly that these funds had remained in the hands of Oskar von Hindenburg. The case was tried before two courts: Gereke was sent to prison for years, but refused to say what had become of the money, darkly intimating that he was shielding high-placed persons; and that some day people would be grateful to him. So the terror penetrated to the very midst of the Cabinet. Hitler declared, with dignity: If we are radical towards the masses, we must be radical towards ourselves.

The movement was bursting bulwarks which even on January 30 seemed built for all eternity; the *coup d'état* of the Wise Men of Zion was assuming the traits of a real revolution. The armed intellectual no longer followed only the commands of his leaders, now in power; he drove them before him and forcibly seized the posts to which he thought himself entitled. The intellectual proletariat awoke from its hopelessness. Here was a class which could give impetus to a revolution. They streamed out of the overcrowded universities, took the jobs or created new ones for themselves. For years Germany had been suffering from a surplus of men with academic training. At the German universities there were some hundred and forty thousand students. It had been reliably calculated that there were roughly three hundred and thirty thousand positions in Germany for persons of academic training, and since the professional worker remained active for an average of thirty-three years, approximately ten thousand such positions became free each year. Setting the average duration of study at five years, this meant that of a hundred and forty thousand students only fifty thousand had a prospect of employment, while nearly twice that number, or ninety thousand, were without hope. At the end of 1932 some fifty thousand of those graduated from the universities actually were unable to find work. The great moment had now come for this intellectual mass. At the head of S.A. squads, young National Socialist lawyers thrashed their Jewish colleagues out of the court-rooms; at the head of brown-shirted student groups, young

National Socialist instructors drove Jewish professors out of the universities. Behind them pressed those hopeless masses of the so-called middle class, who thought that the great hour of vengeance against monopoly was at hand. They, too, were led by intellectuals. Only recently Doctor Theodor Adrian von Renteln, leader of the National Socialist students, had also been appointed leader of the National Socialist middle-class movement. This National Socialist middle class now began to storm the department stores, occasionally trying to close them by force, while National Socialist intellectuals appeared in the offices of the big Jewish newspapers, and declared on their own responsibility that they were now taking over the whole enterprise as commissars of the national revolution. Clever business-men were sometimes able to bribe these revolutionaries with a well-paid job, and carry on under their protection. But often things were not so peaceful; louder and louder grew the complaints that despite Hitler's 'objective justice' Jews had been mishandled and sometimes beaten to death.

This was something stronger than system. Hardly anything could have been worse for the young National Socialist régime than a premature anti-Semitic economic revolution. But no more than Lenin in 1917 was able to forbid the Russian peasants to seize the land was Hitler able to curb a human type that demanded economic security and had learned that this was his right at the expense of an inferior and hostile race.

Was this a pogrom, an anti-Semitic blood-bath? In a conversation with a foreign journalist, Hitler maintained that fewer than twenty persons had lost their lives in the 'national awakening'. This was doubtless a conscious falsehood. A careful compilation from official reports in German newspapers shows that in the time from January 31 to August 23, 1933, at least a hundred and sixty opponents of the National Socialists were killed, either in street clashes, 'shot while trying to escape', 'jumping out of the window in an unguarded moment', or 'hanging themselves in prison'. The figure one hundred and sixty represents those admitted by the National Socialists; the true figure must be considerably higher, for it has been proved that many murders were not reported in the Press. These atrocities caused widespread indignation abroad. The foreign newspaper reader may well have imagined at times that Germany was swimming in a sea of blood. Spontaneous protests arose; most effectively in the United States, where in some sections an effective boycott against German goods was organized.

There was an attempt at a world protest against something which, it was felt, might become an attempted world pogrom; for the S.A. man who killed a Jew in Germany felt, vaguely at least, that he was killing a fragment of world Jewry. But the mass of National Socialist atrocities in the spring of 1933 was directed, not against Jews, but against political foes; most of the Jews murdered or tortured were Communists or Socialists. Social Democrats and Communists, it is true, had a worse

time of it if they were Jews; in the concentration camps they were segregated and treated with special harshness. But primarily the blow was directed against 'Marxism', the socialist and democratic Left; in the National Socialist formulation, the political weapon of Jewry must be broken, not yet Jewry itself. But though it was primarily the political foe and not the Jewish race which fell a victim to the bestial cruelty of the S.A., it was the persecution of the Jews that produced the strongest reaction abroad.

The National Socialists declared that here again the influence of Jewish world power was at work. The true reason lay deeper. Up till this time, foreign countries, as well as the German public, had been lulled by the National Socialists in the comfortable faith that 'things would not be so bad'; that the anti-Jewish agitation was not meant so seriously; that the breaking of interest slavery was not meant seriously; that the war speeches were not meant seriously. Now it turned out that this was a lie. The anti-Semitic agitation *was* meant seriously—perhaps the war speeches as well. The persecution of political enemies—bestial as it was—was still part of the political struggle; but the attack on the Jews was an assault on a peaceful group. The ambassadors of foreign Powers uttered polite warnings; Hugenberg and Papen apparently tried to restrain Hitler; Hjalmar Schacht spoke with his habitual bluntness; it was fortunate for Hitler that he had so devoted a personal admirer in Reichswehr Minister von Blomberg. Hitler had to find a way out, and what a way he found!

On March 26, Goebbels wrote in his diary:

In the night I go to Berchtesgaden, whither the Leader has summoned me. Up there in the mountain solitude he has pondered the whole matter fully and has come to a decision. We shall make headway against the foreign lie only if we get our hands on its originators or at least beneficiaries, those Jews living in Germany who have thus far remained unmolested. We must, therefore, proceed to a large-scale boycott of all Jewish business in Germany. Perhaps the foreign Jews will think better of the matter when their racial comrades in Germany begin to get it in the neck.

This was a sudden, unexpected attack on the Jewish world power, at first not foreseen by Hitler himself; at the same time a test of the existence of such a Jewish world power. Presumably Goebbels believed in it no more in 1933 than in 1925: this is implied by his carefully chosen words about 'originators or at least beneficiaries'. But Hitler, in the depth of his feeling, if not of his intelligence, was surely convinced of the Jewish world conspiracy; and if he annihilated the Jews in Germany, he would, in his opinion, not be harming innocent persons. By a mass mobilization of S.A. cordons, the party was in a position to stop the business of all Jewish shops, in this way destroying their owners economically without

the use of extreme violence. It was a senseless plan, and it was from Schacht that Hitler had to learn that the economic destruction of the Jews would create an economic vacuum which would inevitably suck in large numbers of Germans; Schacht even threatened to resign. If Goebbels is to be believed, the fear was even expressed in the Cabinet that the Jewish question might bring war. Unquestionably Hitler, in his mountain solitude, had thought out an impracticable scheme; for the first time since he had been Chancellor, he had gone out of his way to invite difficulties, to lose sympathies, to make unnecessary enemies.

What Hitler might have been if he had not alienated the Jews! This was more than the half-humorous sigh of lukewarm reactionaries, who would have liked to join him. Mussolini threatened Göring, who had come for a visit, that the anti-Jewish agitation might cost Germany the friendship of Italy, for Italy could not expose herself to a struggle either with the spook of world Jewry or with the reality of Jewish influence in international economic life. And, subsequently, Göring, more than any other National Socialist leader, soft-pedalled the Jewish question. The most vociferous anti-Semite was Julius Streicher of Nuremberg, *gauleiter* of Franconia, whose pornographic lunacy had strengthened many in the belief that the anti-Semitism of the Nazis could not be serious. To the consternation even of many National Socialists, it was now announced that Streicher would direct the boycott. There were few who still remembered Hitler's early speeches, in which he set forth how the Jew, consciously and for political motives, poisoned the Aryan peoples sexually, degraded their sense of honour and emotional life, and subjugated them morally by desecrating their women. But it was known that for Streicher the 'racial question' was nothing other than a struggle between Aryan and Jewish men for domination of the feminine sex; that he seldom spoke of anything else in his agitation; that his illustrated newspaper, *Der Stürmer*, was the soul of indecency; that he himself ecstasically wallowed in filth and made libertinism his religion. Now that he had come to power in Nuremberg, he went so far as to clip the hair of girls who had been friendly with Jews and publicly exhibit the couples in amusement parks; in his domain, Jewish prisoners were forced to eat grass which had previously been befouled; in a public speech, he boasted of having personally thrashed a defenceless prisoner. With all this, Streicher spoke and acted aloud what Hitler secretly thought and desired; his *Stürmer*, Streicher claimed, was the only newspaper which the Leader read from cover to cover, including the rather detailed drawings of Christian girls being raped by Hebrew voluptuaries; with his concentration on the pornographic aspects of racism, Streicher was the embodiment of Hitler's subconscious. This grimacing faun was now raised from his semi-obscurity and shown to the world as the face of National Socialism.

It was the true face, and herein lay the strength of this policy, for in

general no strong policy can be carried out secretly in the long run. This was the appearance of a world type which meant to carry on a world struggle, to unite the 'Aryans of all countries'. It was the premature beginning of a long-term propaganda: the Jews have attacked us, we are only defending ourselves; the Jews incite the world against Germany—Germany doesn't want to harm the world in any way; it is they who desire the struggle, not we; peaceful peoples are the tools and the victims—against our will. The various excuses were lies, but as to the great aim, there could be no deception: it was spiritual world conquest. Here and there an inept thrust might fail; but a powerful policy does not conquer by individual thrusts, but by persistent pursuit of its aim and constant—though not always successful—adaptation to circumstances. In fourteen years of political struggle, Hitler had made many mistakes and false steps, but through errors and failures he had nevertheless become a force attracting greater and greater successes. Prematurely driven by circumstance, he now initiated a new and powerful policy with a small failure. ■

To destroy the German Jews economically at one stroke soon proved impossible. The most benevolent supporters, the best foreign friends, gave warning. The United German Societies in New York cabled to Hitler, 'in conjunction with local German Jews of German and American citizenship', declaring that they themselves 'protested strongly against the anti-German agitation in America', but, with a view to warding off attacks, requested a 'statement on the future legal, political, and economic situation of the Jews in Germany'. At Hitler's behest an official in the Chancellery wired back: 'Chancellor Hitler thanks you for your co-operation in the struggle against Jewish agitation. German Jews, like all other subjects, will be treated according to their attitude towards the national Government. Defensive action of the National Socialist Party is necessitated by the challenging behaviour of German Jews abroad.' German Jews at home sent numerous messages abroad, requesting cessation of the boycott; Cyrus Adler, president of the Jewish Agency and the American Jewish Committee, cabled to Berlin that no responsible Jewish body in America had inspired the boycott, and that he and his friends were doing everything in their power to oppose the agitation.

This might already be called a result, even before the struggle had begun. The Jewish world power did not show itself very powerful; if Hitler was not yet strong enough to carry out his boycott, he was strong enough to intimidate and divide the enemy by a mere threat. Hastily this straw was seized. Hitler was able to maintain that the 'world Jew' had already capitulated; for the present, therefore, he could temporarily abandon a plan that was temporarily impracticable, and postpone the economic annihilation of the Jews. To be sure, a demonstration boycott was organized for April 1, as a kind of party holiday. S.A. men stood outside Jewish shops and barred admission, though occasion-

ally a rebellious public broke through. Hitler and his followers forcibly persuaded themselves that they had won a victory and silenced world Jewry; 'the foreign atrocity propaganda has abated perceptibly', wrote Goebbels in his diary. The events soon contradicted him; but he was fully aware that National Socialism was fighting for the world and not only for Germany; and that this struggle would last a long time. 'We are faced', he wrote on April 2, clearly quoting Hitler, 'with a spiritual campaign of conquest, which must be carried through in the whole world exactly as we have carried it through in Germany. In the end, the world will learn to understand us.' The Jews, he said, would do well to keep silent about their persecution in Germany. 'For the more they speak of it, the more acute becomes the Jewish question, and once the world begins to concern itself with this question, it will always be solved to the detriment of the Jews.'

Through these words shines the truth that National Socialism does not find the question of Jewish world domination ready-made, but creates it. National Socialist Germany suddenly cast this question upon the world, probably sooner than originally intended; but from then on systematically, not only by means of speeches, but by a conspicuous act: stringent anti-Semitic legislation. It was legally established that the Jews were not citizens with equal rights; in unofficial speeches it was stated that they were not human. Or, as Goebbels had said in a pamphlet, *The Nazi-Sozi*, in 1932, 'Certainly, the Jew is also a man, but the flea is also an animal', and the other animals do not harbour and cultivate the flea, but exterminate it; as Walter Buch, chairman of Hitler's highest party court, expressed it some years later: 'The Jew is not a human being, he is a manifestation of decay'. In most of the countries of central and western Europe, the Jews were profoundly fused with the rest of the population; in some places they were scarcely distinguishable. The Jews in the German city of Worms on the Rhine boasted that they had been living there longer than the Germanic population; their cemetery showed tombstones from the fourth century A.D. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Jews of Regensburg on the Danube were threatened with annihilation because their ancestors had crucified Christ, they replied: it could not have been the ancestors of the Regensburg Jews, for they had been living in Regensburg even before the Crucifixion. Not even the anti-Semites denied that the Jews played a large part in the economic rise of Germany in the nineteenth century; Richard Wagner regarded the creation of the economic age as the sin of the modern Jews. It was a Jew, Walter Rathenau, who at the beginning of the First World War created the essentials of German economic mobilization; it was the same Jew who, towards the end of the war, made a profound impression on the German youth with his prophecy that the economic age was drawing to an end.

The attack of the National Socialists was not directed against the Jews

in economic life. Here it became apparent that a new day really had dawned. The economic was no longer dominant, and the Jew in economic life no longer seemed dangerous; the new State, which subjected economic life, was able for many years to use the German Jews in its economy and to draw profit from them. How new the times were was to be learned with bitterness by the German middle class, which critics, still thinking in terms of the economic age, have declared to be the force behind National Socialism. This middle class might have had the most grounds for anti-Semitic feeling; for years the small independent shop had been carrying on a hard fight against department stores and one-price shops which in Germany belonged predominantly to Jewish capital. Point 16 of the party programme even declared that these department stores would be broken up and their space rented to small-business men; representatives of small business were already going round the department stores, looking over the places they thought of renting. Seldom has a party so bitterly disappointed its own supporters as National Socialism these small-business men; on July 7 Rudolf Hess stated that the party leadership regarded 'active measures with the aim of abolishing department stores and enterprises resembling department stores as not indicated for the present', and he therefore forbade 'any actions against department stores and enterprises resembling department stores'. The Jewish department stores continued to thrive for years.

It was not the Jewish business-man, but the Jewish intellectual, who was excluded from German society in 1933, first from Government administration and the practice of the law, later from other intellectual professions. Frick submitted statistics to the Reich Cabinet showing that the great majority of Berlin lawyers, and in some courts even the majority of the judges, were Jews; he cited Jewish utterances to the effect that the Jews themselves ought not to favour so high a proportion. There had been resistance to the destruction of the Jewish masses by the boycott, but reduction of the Jewish share in the State proved a plan of great popularity, against which good will and sense of justice availed nothing. Jewish officials had entered some branches predominantly through the influence of the Left parties; and in order to show that these Jews were party favourites of Marxism, bacilli of Jewish world revolution, and hence the born enemies of the ruling intellectual, the first anti-Semitic law issued by the Hitler Government, through Frick on April 7, 1933, was called the 'Law for the restoration of the professional civil service'. Its key sentence was: 'Officials of non-Aryan origin are to be retired'.

Similar laws followed in quick succession. Jews were no longer allowed to teach at universities; were not admitted to the judiciary; were not allowed to practise law or serve as physicians for insurance companies; their attendance at schools of all types was limited to 1.5 per cent. At Hindenburg's insistence, those who had served as soldiers during the war or had fought in the Free Corps of the counter-revolution—for there

were some—were exempted from these harsh measures. In later years even these Jews had no Hindenburg to protect them.

Some time later, other special laws drove the Jews out of journalism, literature, and theatre; they were forbidden to write for newspapers, books written by them might not be published; Jewish painters were forbidden to paint. In short, the Jews were rapidly excluded from all spheres of intellectual and artistic life; for these, after all, were the key positions of the 'educational State'. Wilhelm Furtwängler, the non-Jewish conductor, opposed Goebbels in an open letter, demanding 'that men like Bruno Walter, Otto Klemperer, Max Reinhardt, etc., must continue in the future to express themselves in Germany'; for 'in the last analysis I recognize but one dividing line: that between good and bad art'. Goebbels replied that Furtwängler was very much mistaken, 'Art in the absolute sense, as known under liberal democracy, must not be'; art and intellect—and this is his meaning—are only instruments of domination: he, Goebbels, for example, was also an artist, whose task it was 'to mould the firm and well-shapen image of the nation from the raw material of the mass'.

This moulding proceeded with great thoroughness, and the slightest and subtlest traces of the combated influences were burned out of the masses. For the first time the German public was made aware that one could be a Jew without wanting to be or perhaps even knowing it. For the first time the National Socialists succeeded in teaching the whole world what they meant by the concept of race. Hitherto, the couplet, 'What you believe is no disgrace, The swinishness is in the race,' had been a mere Nazi joke, understood by few. Now it became bitter earnest. On April 12 Frick handed down a definition in which 'non-Aryan' meant far more than Jewish: 'Anyone is considered non-Aryan who is descended from non-Aryan, and in particular Jewish parents or grandparents. It suffices for one parent or one grandparent to be non-Aryan.'

One 'Jewish grandmother' made the subject a 'non-Aryan', treated exactly like a Jew, at least with regard to employment in the civil service. The grandmother did not even have to be Jewish; she became a curse to her grandchildren even if she was a Christian, but non-Aryan; that is, descended from Jews. This was a blow to the Duesterberg type, particularly widespread among Germany's upper crust. And, indeed, the whole anti-Semitic legislation was a weapon in the struggle between different leader groups.

Hitler himself stated that the main thing was to drive the Jews out of the intellectual professions and to create an intellectual upper class free of Jews. On April 6, in an address to a delegation of physicians, he declared: 'Germany's claim to an intellectual leadership of her own race must be satisfied by a swift eradication of the majority of Jewish intellectuals from the cultural and intellectual life of Germany. The admis-

sion of too large a percentage of foreigners in proportion to the whole of the nation might be interpreted as recognition of the intellectual superiority of other races, and this must absolutely be rejected.' As an individual, the armed intellectual got rid of competition; as a class, he founded a new system of domination; competition was replaced by command.

Up till now the object of this command had been the seventeen millions who had voluntarily subordinated themselves to Hitler by giving him their vote. But the true goal was the twenty millions who were still opposed to him; for they included the working class. To gain control of this group, trained to handle the technical apparatus, seemed at this point more important to the National Socialist leadership than to occupy additional posts of command; for if you had the workers you had the State—provided only that you were a little more conscious of your aims than the weary and unenterprising trade-union leaders. In many localities the S.A. had already forced their way into trade-union headquarters; beatings had occurred. No trade-union leader called for determined resistance, and there is every reason to suppose that the leaders knew what could and what could not be expected of their followers. The education of the working masses in the ideals of the economic age was now making itself felt. The worker, taught for decades that the only thing he had to fight for was his material interests, was bound to ask himself whether these interests would be better served by resistance to the new order or by participation in it.

Just as the German generals discovered in 1918 that under certain circumstances democracy was the stronger State form for military purposes and hence could be a means of future victories, the German proletariat, trained to regard democracy as a means of achieving material aims, did not regard it as an ideal in itself; it was now willing to exchange the worn-out implement for a new one, as Ferdinand Lassalle had predicted. The founder of the National Socialist Shop Cell Organization (N.S.B.O.), a certain Reinhold Muchow, proclaimed that the workers would be the leading estate in the new Reich. Johannes Engel, another leader of the N.S.B.O., speaking in April at the Berlin Sportpalast, cried out to the employers: 'You are only servants. We do not recognize the employer as an employer. Without the people, you are a heap of dung [uproarious applause].' Göring was present at the meeting; he stepped forward and added: '... not only has German National Socialism been victorious, but German socialism as well'. Of course, it was well known that the National Socialists held words cheap, and Hitler's remarks about the low cultural level of the working masses could not be entirely forgotten. But this State needed the workers anyhow, and would be prepared to pay for them. The cold-blooded realism of the masses contributed at least as much as any surge of enthusiasm to the success of co-ordination (*Gleichschaltung*) in the spring of 1933. Even

the Communists, who had originally conceived things differently, began to give out the watchword: Go into the National Socialist organizations and bore from within; turn them into revolutionary cells. A national law of April 5 gave employers the power to discharge an employee 'on suspicion of hostility to the State'—in other words, to fire Social Democrats and Communists; the real decision rested with the National Socialist 'shop cell'. The workers began to join the shop cells in droves.

Under the Weimar Republic the German factories and mines were political battlefields, and the political life of the masses was reflected more strongly in them than in the unpopular apparatus of the public elections. In the revolution of 1918-19, factory councils had arisen, which later became permanent and official under the name of 'workshop councils'. Intended by their Socialist founders as a democratic instrument for the expropriation of the 'capitalists', for the removal or subjection of owners or managers, in practice these councils often became an instrument for leading the masses; shrewd and up-to-date employers were often able to use them as an instrument of control over their workers. Others, to be sure, complained that they were no longer 'master in their own house'; on the other hand, the trade unions sometimes found that the councils obstructed their own influence on the workers. In the big industries, the elections to these councils often represented important political decisions. On April 7 such a decision occurred in the mines of the Ruhr. The National Socialists had proclaimed that no Social Democrat elected to the industrial council would be permitted to hold office; the workers understood, and the National Socialist shop cells, with 30.8 per cent of the votes cast, for the first time overshadowed the Social Democratic unions.

The mass flight of the workers threw the trade unions into a crisis. The workers still belonged to them formally, but many stopped paying their dues, creating financial difficulties for the unions. The embarrassed leaders insisted that they really had nothing to do with politics; as early as March 21, Leipart and his colleagues published a statement that Social Democracy and the trade unions had different and separate functions; that the trade unions would not reject State control; and, apparently in the belief that capitalism had conquered with National Socialism, the statement added: 'The trade unions declare themselves ready to form a working organization with the employers'—the employers whom Engel, two weeks later, was to call a heap of dung.

For years no Social Democratic trade-unionist had said, 'We no longer recognize the employers as employers'; on the contrary, the recognition of the classes as classes, each in its place and struggling for this place, had become the philosophy of the trade-union movement. No such sharp words had been spoken at the May Day celebration which Hitler, exactly ten years before, had wanted to break up by force. It was a startling example of propaganda as an art of adaptation, when Goebbels, immedi-

ately after the acceptance of the enabling law by the Reichstag, put forward a motion in the Cabinet that May 1st should be declared a national holiday. In the Weimar Republic, which they themselves had established, the German workers had not been able to put through such a measure; now Hitler gave them their holiday, at which ten years before he had wanted to shoot them down 'like mad dogs'.

In these ten years the National Socialists had grown and learned. The 'anti-capitalist' intellectuals, appointed by Gregor Strasser, still led the shop cells. A group of them, with a certain Brucker at their head, met with Leipart and Grassman at the beginning of April, and summoned them to resign immediately from their posts of leadership of the trade unions and thus avert the collapse of the unions; for—according to the minutes of the conference—'we as National Socialists have no interest in that. On the contrary, we want to create a unified trade union.' Leipart insisted that he was speaking to them as a German, and as a German he must demand an end to the maltreatment of labour leaders and withdrawal of the S.A. from the trade-union headquarters: 'For you have the intention of smashing the trade unions!' All National Socialists in one voice: 'No, we do not. It is Hugenberg who wants that!' Leipart went on to say that if the National Socialists, especially Göring, had not committed so many acts of violence, 'the attitude of the trade unions towards this Government would be the same as towards any previous Government'. But he could not, said he, be a traitor.

Brucker repeated that the National Socialists had no desire to harm the trade unions themselves: 'Adolf Hitler himself has demanded that the trade unions must not be destroyed. . . . Every worker must be organized.' When Leipart asked Brucker if he had been commissioned by Hitler to negotiate, the National Socialist gave an answer characteristic of Hitler's reptile-like leadership: 'We have no direct commission, but the Leader expects us to handle everything in the sense of the new State idea.' Consequently, the negotiations could lead to no practical result, but they were historically significant in that they confronted the new type of intellectual fighting to win the workers with the old class-conscious labour leaders. Brucker said: 'We do not recognize that trade-union leaders must come from the unions and from the same trade as the workers. The chairman of a trade union can, for example, be a doctor. Wage negotiations with employers will not exist in future. Wage contracts: no! Wage schedules: yes! In future the State will regulate wages and prices.' Whereupon Leipart, struggling to make himself understood: 'Do you know how things looked fifty years ago? Do you know that the workers slaved for fourteen hours a day; that they had no vacation and hardly a Sunday off? Do you know that their wages were bad; that they lodged in miserable huts, and were totally excluded from cultural benefits? Then we came and raised the workers up to their present position.' Grassman spoke up: 'The working-class leader must

come of the same social class as the worker if he wants to be understood. We have the same upbringing and feel the same pressure. Even if the workers beef at their leader off and on, they know that he is their man. . . .' The National Socialist Fikenscher: 'In our shop cells all active persons have equal rights and equal obligations: the editor, the engineer, and the doctor, side by side with the worker. . . .' Eggert, a trade-unionist: 'In our trade unions we speak our own language which permits us to think and feel with the worker. If you try to approach the worker from outside, you'll never be able to get inside him. 'The stock of skilled workers will always stand behind us!'

This was a desperate self-deception. The skilled worker stood where his interests called him; for decades the trade-union leaders had been training him to do just that; but now his interests instructed him better than his leaders. Whether the employers would really be a 'heap of dung' may not yet have been decided; but it had been decided that the National Socialist shop cell could drive any resister from his place of work. Meanwhile, Hitler received reports that the trade unions were on the brink of financial collapse because so many members had ceased to pay their dues. The demoralized organization was scarcely in a position to withstand an act of violence, but perhaps only an act of violence could save the unions and force the members to go on paying their dues.

What Hitler decided was an act of violence against a section of his own party; he decided to crush the remnants of Strasser's once-powerful apparatus. Not the leaders of the N.S.B.O., the Bruckers and Muchows, should infiltrate and buy their way into the unions; representatives of the new party leadership created in 1932 should seize the trade unions and at the same time sweep aside the N.S.B.O. The leader of the undertaking was to be Robert Ley, who had always hated Strasser and idolized Hitler. One of Hitler's most faithful satraps, he was leader of the party's 'political organization', meaning its whole non-political apparatus. On April 17, Goebbels, too, received his directives from the Leader on the Obersalzberg: 'We shall mould May 1st into a grandiose demonstration of the German popular will. On May 2 the trade-union headquarters will be occupied. Co-ordination also in this field. There may be a fuss for a few days, but then they will belong to us. . . . Once the trade unions are in our hands, the other parties and organizations will be unable to survive. . . . It is too late to turn back. Now things must take their course. In a year all Germany will be in our hands.'

Hitler's optimism and self-confidence rose by leaps and bounds; in the Cabinet he demanded an end to voting; he as chairman would simply make all decisions; and how often decisions had been made before they were even presented to the Cabinet! The conservatives were still at their posts of command, but the ground was receding from under their feet; throughout the country the S.A. was in power, but when Papen crossed the Wilhelmstrasse from the Chancellery to the Prussian Ministry

of State, he was still ostensibly Vice-Chancellor, Premier of Prussia, the President's confidential adviser, the man without whom the Chancellor could not say a word to the old Chief of State. On these few square yards of asphalt, in these few offices, Papen still seemed a powerful man; Hitler was his ward and Göring his 'subordinate'. On April 7 a law was passed putting an end to this lie; by this law the *de facto* rule of the S.A. over Germany was given legal force. So-called Reich *statthalters* (governors) were appointed over the States. Hitler kept his promise to preserve the States intact, but his *statthalters* now appointed the Ministers and high officials and decreed the laws; moreover, all eighteen of them were National Socialists, mostly party *gauleiters*, wherever *gau* and provincial boundaries more or less coincided. In Prussia the governor was the Chancellor himself, and Hindenburg could not complain, for by this act the Reich and Prussia were 'indissolubly bound together', as he had always demanded. Papen, Göring's 'superior', had suddenly become Hitler's 'subordinate', and even this questionable glory lasted only four days. On April 11 Hitler appointed Göring Premier of Prussia in Papen's place, and also made over to him his prerogatives as governor of Prussia. Papen was now only Vice-Chancellor of the Reich, actually a figure without competency and hence without power; the only thing he could do - which seldom helped him - was to complain to Hindenburg.

What a metamorphosis in seventy days, from January 30 to April 11! Aside from the sudden exclusion of Gereke, no changes had occurred in the personnel of the Reich Cabinet; and yet it was no longer even true that the Cabinet contained only thirty per cent of National Socialists. The authors of this calculation had not realized that the magic of Hitler's propaganda would not halt before the members of his Cabinet. Increasingly impressed by the fabulous successes of his Chancellor, Franz Seldte, Stahlhelm leader and Reich Minister of Labour, became a National Socialist at heart; and the same process occurred in thousands and millions of people all over the country. The National Socialists were always victorious; therefore, it seemed to many, they were always right. After the dubious success of the Jewish boycott, May 1 gave promise of being an uncontested triumph; on April 19 even Leipart, after hesitation and evasions, called on all his trade-union members to 'participate everywhere in the celebration inspired by the Government'.

Events had gone beyond Hitler's own prophecies of three years before. The great masses were 'joining in with shouts of Hurrah'; at this moment, Hitler had predicted, National Socialism would be 'lost'. But the exact opposite proved to be true; by the pressure of the great masses, National Socialism, to cite another of Hitler's formulas, had won the compliance of the Reichswehr and of a section of industry; and now the hurrahs of the millions forced the Herr President's consent to the further progress of the revolution. 'The revolution in the country will be continued'—this was the content of a three-hour, confidential speech which Hitler

made to his S.A. leaders and *gauleiters* on April 22 in Munich. Röhm coined the slogan that there must be a 'second revolution', this time not against the Left, but against the Right; in his diary, Goebbels agreed with him. On April 18 he maintained that this second revolution was being discussed 'everywhere among the people'; in reality, he said, this only meant that the first one was not yet ended. 'Now we shall soon have to settle with the reaction. The revolution must nowhere call a halt.'

The 'reaction' was well aware of this. Theodor Duesterberg, second in command of the Stahlhelm, publicly complained that the fury of the S.A. against political opponents was destroying the 'national community'; he quietly permitted Social Democrats and members of the Iron Front to join the Stahlhelm, in order to build up a mass force for the day of the great reckoning under the protection of the black, white, and red flag, under the protection of Hindenburg, when Hitler should have 'shot his bolt'—in the autumn at latest, said these optimists, for Hitler was a 'madman'.

Meanwhile Franz Seldte, his brother-in-arms, with the childish joy of the novice, buried himself in his work as Minister of Labour, and in all innocence actually thought his post gave him the leadership of German labour, hence the key to all political power; just as the far shrewder Hugenberg did in his Ministry of Economics. Many Stahlhelm men began to regard Seldte as a traitor out of stupidity; and many thought that something more than stupidity played a part.

A human drama became intertwined with the political drama. Duesterberg, the former professional officer, considered his Stahlhelm the army of the new Germany which could only be ruined by the National Socialist bandits; while Seldte, bourgeois intellectual and World War captain, began to turn inwardly towards the movement of the armed intellectuals. Whether all too human motives played a part in this renegacy may later become clear; but there is no doubt that, like Blomberg, Seldte was a personal victim of Hitler, an admirer and convinced retainer. The German Nationalists, who had formerly regarded the Stahlhelm as their private army, no longer trusted it and tried to build up a small private army of their own, the 'German Nationalist Combat Ring (*Kampfring*)'. This group also accepted Social Democrats as members; but its leadership proclaimed that it was the 'duty and responsibility' of the new State to restore the monarchy—aimlessness and hopelessness all along the line. At the end of March, Göring began to arrest leaders of both the Stahlhelm and the Combat Ring and to disband entire groups; always on the ground that they had accepted 'Marxists' as members—at the very time when the National Socialist shop cells were taking in 'Marxists' by the hundreds of thousands.

For Seldte these 'Marxists' were the most effective bribe. National Socialism was in the process of capturing the working masses, and Seldte, as Minister of Labour, hoped to become the leader of these masses in the

National Socialist State. But for that his relation to the National Socialist Party must become clear. In these negotiations Röhm again demonstrated his diplomatic gifts. Röhm had in good part been responsible for the founding of National Socialism; a year before, he had engineered the understanding with Schleicher and the fall of Brüning; now he had brought about the party's first serious inroad into the conservative world. Since the beginning of April Röhm had been holding secret talks with Seldte; by about the 20th the two reached an accord. In Seldte this was a conspiracy against his followers; on April 26 he announced that he had dismissed his comrade and second-in-command, the great-grandson of Abraham Duesterberg (which the by-laws of the Stahlhelm gave him no right to do). On the next day Seldte joined the National Socialist Party and presented his astonished followers with the accomplished fact that their Stahlhelm was now taking orders from the Chancellor. 'Heil Hitler!' was the party greeting of the National Socialists; 'Front Heil!' that of the Stahlhelm. Seldte concluded his radio speech with 'Front Heil Hitler!' It was a political *coup* and a human betrayal.

To a frightening degree the masses themselves had lost their sense of loyalty; many showed a suicidal frenzy in breaking with their customary ideals, connections, parties, leaders. They looked on in silence as their political world fell into ruins, and tacitly acknowledged that a new, uncertain, but bold edifice was growing up. This was no sudden, general flocking to National Socialism, but a cynical lack of resistance—'they have won out, that makes them right'. A million people would not have participated voluntarily in the National Socialist May Day celebration at the Tempelhofer Feld in Berlin; but the workers in the large factories let themselves be coerced with little opposition. The directors and managers had to march first, and this was called 'German Socialism'. In every city in Germany the masses marched out to some meadow; in every city Hitler's voice, speaking to the million at the Tempelhofer Feld, thundered from loudspeakers.

For the first time Hitler spoke directly to the mass of the workers; to those whom he had only recently compared with a people at a low cultural level. Now he said that for him there could be no greater pride than 'to say at the end of my days: I have won the German worker for the German Reich'. If he had wished to tell the truth, he would have had to admit that what he wanted was power, and that for this reason he would take away their trade unions; it would have been a forceful, impressive lie if he had promised them a Socialist Germany, as the Engels and their comrades were doing throughout the country. But Hitler avoided the full truth and the downright lie. In the Reichstag he had already indicated that he expected German economic revival through a great effort on the part of employers; his Government, he had declared, was not planning 'an economic bureaucracy organized by the State, but

the strongest encouragement of private initiative with recognition of private property'. Even to the workers at the Tempelhofer Feld he declared, 'creative initiative must be liberated 'from the catastrophic effects of majority decisions, not only in parliament, no, but in economic life as well'.

Here Leipart might have cried out that Hitler was no Socialist! Hitler's own followers, his anti-capitalist and shop-cell leaders, his Bruckers and Engels, may have looked on very sourly when he praised, as the embodiment of 'creative initiative', what they themselves had called a 'heap of dung'. But Hitler knew the masses and their state of mind better than his critics. The masses wanted work, no State of the future; the crisis was a problem capable of solution; energy could solve it, and here was energy. Hitler's political gift did not express itself in drawing practical economic plans, which would have been hard for him, but in proclaiming that he would stand all concepts of social rank on their heads--by brute force if necessary. The old society, he said, had looked down on the manual worker; now that would cease; and in order to teach rich people respect for manual labour, it was 'our unbreakable determination to put every single German, whoever he may be, whether rich and well born, or poor, into contact with manual labour once in his life, to make him acquainted with it'. This was the meaning of May 1st, the new festival, to be observed 'down the centuries': to bring the Germans back together, 'and if they demur, to force them together'.

In the long run only those can be coerced who really want to be, and this was the secret of Hitler's whole policy of successful coercion. Hitler's task was to find work for masses who wanted work; desperately difficult as this had seemed at some moments, it would have been a thousand times more difficult to force masses to work who did not want to. If the people's determination to work were combined with an equal determination on the part of the Government, the question of programme, the method, was almost secondary. Actually, the Government had as yet no National Socialist plan for shaping economic life; its economic policy was not directed by National Socialists; as under Schleicher, the most pressing task was to relieve the crisis, 'in opposition to the laws of economic reason'. In Hitler's speech of May 1st he did not promise any key project to revive the whole economic machine; but he did have a private plan intended to put some scores of thousands to work for meagre pay: the construction of giant motor highways through the length and breadth of Germany. The country actually was deficient in highways, because it had comparatively few automobiles; it was Hitler's dream that a great increase of automobile construction would bring Germany the same blessings it had showered on the United States ten years before. Behind this was the idea which National Socialism now cast with force upon the modern world: that the mysterious primal force of political economy, demand, or need could be created and guided from above.

here discouraged and there driven forward. But the prerequisite for this was absolute authority, which seemed obtainable only from absolute power. And, therefore, on the morning after the great labour festival, the trucks filled with storm troopers were again rolling through the streets of Germany. This time they stopped in front of the trade-union headquarters; the Brown bands stormed in, arrested the leading functionaries, in Berlin as well as in the States. Leipart and Grassman were beaten, forced to run long distances and do knee-bends; the same occurred all over the Reich with such oppressive uniformity that for the first time the German public learned the full meaning of 'co-ordination'. In paralyzed wonder, the overpowered workers looked on at their own ruin. There was no fight. Robert Ley addressed a pathetic proclamation to the workers: 'Workers,' he assured them, 'your institutions are sacred and unassailable to us National Socialists. I myself am a poor son of peasants and have known poverty. Worker, I swear to you that we shall not only preserve everything you have; we shall extend the protective laws and the rights of the worker, in order that he may enter into the new National Socialist State as an equal and respected member of the nation.'

From these National Socialist acts of violence, a sense of power, well-nigh unaccountable to outsiders, spread to the German workers. Injustice, repression, and destruction were the order of the day; but the victims acquiesced and were contented. They approved the power, even when it made mistakes and did injustice; for it was through lack of power that conditions had grown so bad. In the spring of 1933 the ideal of the age, a functioning social machine, was reflected in the barbaric joy of the German masses at the violence and energy with which the State and economic life had been set running again. With a stroke of his pen, Ley put an end to the historic state of affairs in which trade unions, with different political views and different aims, had existed side by side; all were now fused into a single body, and the armed intellectual gave this body the military name of 'German Labour Front'. A worker was no longer asked if he wanted to belong to the Labour Front; he simply belonged; and within a short time twenty-three million German workers were enrolled in this section of the National Socialist machine. How it would function was still not clear; but in its founding congress of May 10, at Berlin, Hitler left no doubt that it would be merely one pillar, and by no means the only pillar, of National Socialist power: 'There must arise a State leadership representing a real authority, and not dependent on any one social group'.

With the creation of the German Labour Front co-ordination became an elemental force, drawing all Germany in its wake. With sudden changes of name, the organizations of economic and cultural life co-ordinated themselves, and a country which had always been rich in clubs and societies was suddenly bristling with 'fronts'. Those mill-

producers, who in Schleicher's time had risen against the domination of Danish butter, formed a 'German Milk Front' and proclaimed an 'offensive of German butter'; a German Honey Front called for an offensive of its own, not to mention the 'Shoe Front' and the 'Bowling Front'.

Some of these fronts thought they could merely change their names and yet remain exactly as they were. Leadership in all of them was assumed by a National Socialist who, as often as not, had been something else the day before; but the goals, the demands on the State, the 'selfish aims', were far from giving way to 'common aims'. To renounce freedom was not to renounce private egotism. All were ready to grant the State, which had shown itself powerful enough to destroy all, the right to command all and thereby help all. By adaptation and co-ordination many hoped to preserve their place and failed to notice that this very adaptation was their downfall. If their 'Heil Hitler' was a lie, it was themselves above all that they were deceiving; they did not believe in the storm because, themselves carried away by it, they could not feel the wind. There were the overly wise who, already on the downward path, persuaded themselves that they were riding the flood tide towards their great aims. Former Kaiser Wilhelm II, in his luxurious Dutch exile, said to an English journalist in the spring of 1933: 'Herr Hitler has done what no one else was in a position to do: he has inspired the whole German nation with a common spirit; he has sent a wave of national sentiment through Germany such as she has never experienced in all her history.' Taken literally, this was a resigned admission that the younger pupil of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the man of the people, had accomplished what had been denied to the philosopher's contemporary, friend, and sovereign. But the dethroned monarch intended no modesty and resignation; to Hindenburg he wrote, some months later, that the time would soon be at hand to restore happiness in Germany by bringing back the monarchy. Wilhelm praised the elemental event because he had no fear that it would last; these men of the past had no feeling for the forces of a present, that to them was far beyond future.

But the old historic forms had ceased to be Germany; they were at ^{most} ~~fixed~~ channels corroded by the flood of the new spirit. Heine had pre-^{dicted} that Thor would rise from his millennial sleep and smash the ^{cross} and the Gothic cathedrals with his hammer. There was no need ^{to disturb} Thor. Matthias Groeber, the Catholic archbishop appointed by Rome, who had concluded his shrewd compromise with National Socialism the year before, now carried his shrewdness one step ^{further}. He ordered his clergymen, who gave religious instruction in their ^{schools}, to use the Hitler salute—the gesture invented by Gabriele d'Annunzio, heathen and enemy of the Church. In reply the pupils were to raise ^{their hand} in the Hitler salute and say: 'Praised be Jesus Christ!' And a ^{the priest}, with his hand still raised: 'Forever and ever, amen!'

CONQUEST BY PEACE

AT THE beginning of the twentieth century Houston Stewart Chamberlain had summed up his idea of a future German foreign policy in a letter to his friend, Wilhelm II: 'A race-conscious Germany, knowing its aims and unified in organization from its centre to its extremities, despite the special character of its different tribes, would—even though less rich in population than the Anglo-Saxon and Russian worlds—by outward power and by inner spiritual superiority, dominate the world'.

Shortly after Hitler came to power, Alfred Rosenberg, the ambassador of the Wise Men of Zion and now the officially appointed 'spiritual teacher of the new Germany', proclaimed the late Anglo-German the 'seer of the Third Reich'. He prophesied in a speech, 'What Germany has experienced will befall other peoples'. And Goebbels, speaking to the Press in Hamburg, said: 'I am convinced that Germany has a world mission to fulfil. The present revolution in Germany will not be limited to two countries of Europe. Hitler's declaration of war on the democratic State is only the prelude. The end of the development will be a Europe organized along the National Socialist lines.' This meant that Germany would dominate Europe by 'inner superiority', to speak in Chamberlain's terms.

Inner superiority would, by a stronger magnetism than sheer force, raise Germany to the commanding position of the great land blocks, the United States and Russia, or of the rising Asiatic continental power to be dominated perhaps by China, perhaps by Japan. The new Fascist science of political organization would rise to its greatest heights if the old world 'culture territories', hitherto split up into nations, were welded into such a unit by superior leadership, and their old abilities, trained and stored for centuries, were opposed to the still incompletely organized forces of the half-empty American and Asiatic continents. The position of Germany, a land of industrial surplus, surrounded in a large arc by the Balkans and Russia, lands of agrarian surplus, seemed like the summons of history to organize this space politically as a 'productive unit' with a calculable demand and production potential—to use the terms of the economic age.

How economic part of the Versailles system had been buried by tariffs. On January 31, 1931, by the American and English protective France, since December 15, 1932, the French Chamber decided that cease payments on her war debts to the United States. In vain did Premier Edouard Herriot argue with the Chamber, pleading that the

most powerful friend France had in the world should not be offended; he resigned; his successor was Edouard Daladier. For the first time France was led by a man who had not been a politician at the time of the World War, but merely an officer at the front.

The system of Versailles was broken in body and spirit. After 1929 the great world question was no longer: defence of all against a German war of revenge, but the struggle of all, even of the defeated nations, against the common enemy, the crisis; though, to be sure, in the consciousness of certain groups, the common enemy was identified with the Communist menace.

For world economy to enjoy conditions of peace, armaments would have to be eliminated or at least reduced; for they were devouring the prosperity of nations, and their menacing presence deprived the business world of all confidence in a peaceable future. If, therefore, England granted Germany equality of armaments in principle, it was not intended that Germany should have more armaments, but that Italy and particularly France should have less. One thing was certain: only a Germany left at peace to work out her economic recovery could be a bulwark against Bolshevism—the French Maginot Line could be no such bulwark.

Now, however, an equalization of the military strength of France and Germany, to which France herself had formally consented in Geneva, would inevitably deprive the ring of French alliances surrounding Germany of much, if not all, of its force; for none of France's small allies—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania—could place absolute reliance in a France which was barely as strong as Germany. What made the danger to them all the more menacing was that these 'succession' States of the old Habsburg monarchy inherited its main evils. They had formerly been the oppressed nations of Austria-Hungary, and now they themselves contained foreign minorities, hostile or indifferent to the new States (Germans, Slovaks, and Hungarians in Czechoslovakia, Croats in Yugoslavia, Hungarians and Germans in Rumania).

The Czechoslovaks were led by men of democratic, liberal, 'western' character (Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, President, Eduard Beneš, Foreign Minister); the country was proud of its parliamentary form of government. Under these leaders, Czechoslovakia, despite the disquieting turn of events, held fast in letter and spirit to the French alliance. Poland, however, had been distrustful since Locarno. Under the leadership of her armed intellectuals embodied in Joseph Pilsudski, she began from 1932 on to renounce the French alliance inwardly, though not formally, and for practical purposes to emasculate it.

Pilsudski was one of the most remarkable historical figures to emerge after 1918; first a Socialist, then founder of a military dictatorship—a combination which, from Napoleon III to Leon Trotsky and Josef Stalin, has influenced European history again and again. A strange,

sombre figure, somewhat recalling Nietzsche with his immense moustache and deep-set eyes; in the last years of his life, troubled in spirit, living in mysterious solitude, almost unapproachable, nevertheless dominating a powerful political machine with uncontested authority. He violently combated the parliament of his country, which, like Mussolini, he had to tolerate in the first years of his rule. This armed intellectual bore a political responsibility which might well have given him cause for gloom. None of Europe's larger nations has, up to the most recent times, suffered so hard a fate as Poland. Through one hundred and thirty years she had not existed as a sovereign State, but as a mere victim, torn into three parts, owned and oppressed by Russia (which had the largest share), Austria, and Prussia. After her resurrection through the First World War she had looked for protection to a military alliance with France and to the League of Nations; but Polish confidence had been weakened by Locarno, and destroyed by the failure of the League to protect China against Japan in 1931. Half in despair, Poland began to help herself. First, in July, 1932, she concluded a 'non-aggression pact' with the Soviet Union. Then Pilsudski dismissed August Zaleski, Foreign Minister, who still favoured friendship with France, replacing him by a personal follower, Colonel Joseph Beck, who, in 1921, as a student at the French military academy, had been obliged to leave France because the French authorities regarded him as a spy. Wholehearted friendship for France was scarcely to be expected of Beck, and, indeed, immediately after his appointment in November, 1932, he made it known that Poland was prepared to conclude a pact of non-aggression with Germany as well as Russia. At the Geneva Disarmament Conference, Poland and France began to vote against each other. When the French consented to 'equal rights' for Germany, Poland again felt betrayed by France and exposed to the German menace; when finally France proposed the creation of a League of Nations army, the Polish delegation withdrew its support, for in Polish eyes the League was no more than a guaranty of unreliability, a pretext of the Great Powers to evade their own responsibility.

One of the few things that the League did do with a certain energy served only to make it more distasteful to the Poles: the League did take an interest in the welfare of national minorities. Poland, among her people of thirty-four millions, not only had millions of Ukrainians, White Russians, and Germans, but over three million Jews, the highest percentage of Jews in all Europe. This fact imbued many Poles with anti-Semitism and a mixture of race and class arrogance. It was the fear of a lurking danger, but also the arrogant contempt of her new leaders for French democracy and their secret admiration for National Socialist energy, which made Poland the weakest link in the ring of French alliances.

One of the first aims of German foreign policy was inevitably to shatter this ring; true, the attempt took time, but the final success was terrific

and seemed to confirm Hitler's conviction that in the end domestic politics decided the foreign policy of a country. This finally proved to be true in the case of Poland as well as in that of Italy.

In several points Fascist Italy already supported Germany; both were agreed that the Peace of Versailles would have to be revised. Both nations possessed large quantities of that international dynamite known as 'national minorities', and this gave their political strategy a certain similarity; moreover, both declared themselves to be have-nots, cheated by the plutocratic world. Italy's chief national dynamite was located in southern France, with roughly a million Italian-speaking people, and in the French protectorate of Tunisia; the German minorities extended from the Baltic and the mid-Volga region, through eastern and central Europe, down to northern Italy. Here a contradiction arose which seemed to cross the common interests of the two countries. To be sure, no German leader had sacrificed the quarter of a million Germans in the South Tyrol with such enthusiasm as Hitler; but at the same time, none had so emphatically claimed the right of self-determination for the seven million Germans in Austria.

Thus began a contest for Austria between Italy and Germany, and for a time it seemed uncertain whether the conflicting foreign interests of the two countries or the inner cohesion of fascism would gain the upper hand. When Hitler seized power in Germany, the two last parliamentary States of Central Europe, Austria and Czechoslovakia, found themselves surrounded by anti-democratic Powers: Poland, Hungary, Italy, and now Germany. Austrian democracy survived German democracy by only a few weeks; however, it was not German but Italian fascism which took control, and the methods were not those of the German model but of the Italian. Austrian fascism did not fight by means of elections and plebiscites; it had to govern against its parliament, first by trickery, finally by violence. Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, who had been legally chosen by the parliament, used a trifling breakdown of the parliamentary machine, in a dispute over house rules, as a pretext to send parliament home. This was on March 7, 1933, two days after Hitler's Reichstag elections. Czechoslovakia was left as the last democratic island in Central Europe, now utterly surrounded.

Dollfuss, a strict Catholic, based his rule increasingly and a little reluctantly on the Fascist *Heimwehren* (home guards). These *Heimwehren* were just what one would expect of a Fascist movement in the homeland of National Socialism; they were anti-democratic and anti-Semitic. Their leader, Prince Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, scion of a once wealthy and important family, is said to have bought his way into the leadership of the movement; otherwise he was a scatter-brained young man who had been a follower of Hitler some years before.

The Austrian *Heimwehr* can be said with far more truth than German National Socialism to have been a child raised by sections of industry,

who organized and armed it to break the Socialist control over a part of Austria. Its opponent, Austrian Social Democracy, could also be said, with far more truth than its German sister party, to be a Socialist movement that took its socialism seriously; consequently, the Communist movement was insignificant in Austria. Austrian Social Democracy organized the workers of the city of Vienna with a determination undreamed of by the American trade unions; and in the sphere of public health, housing, schools, its work was remarkable—in view of the poverty of the country, unique. While in Germany, Fascism could claim to be fighting for a socialism which the Marxists had betrayed, Austrian fascism had to attack a socialism in which the tenets of Marxism had been partially realized. Furthermore, Austrian fascism was no absolute defender and ally of the Church. The old 'away from Rome' attitude, the resistance to the 'foreign' papacy, also to the baptized Jews (the 'aroma of incense and garlic'), of which there were great numbers in Austria, was strong in the *Heimwehr* and made them an unreliable ally of the Catholic Dollfuss régime.

From 1918 to 1933 it had been taken for granted on both sides of the border that the Germans and the Austrians were 'one people in two countries'. In September, 1932, when Dollfuss invited his German co-religionaries to hold the next 'German Catholic Congress' in Vienna, he referred to the Austrian capital as the 'second German city'—the first being Berlin. At this Catholic Congress, Kurt Schuschnigg, then Minister of Justice, declared: '... German culture and German law must continue to set their clear imprint upon our country'. As Austrian Minister of Justice, Schuschnigg endeavoured to unify German and Austrian penal law—one of the innumerable inconspicuous preparations for a future union of the two countries. In March, 1933, he went to Germany in order to reach an understanding with Hitler. Before an assemblage of German and Austrian jurists in Weimar, he proclaimed, 'The middle of Europe was and is German space, and in it stands Austria'.

Now Hitler's Austrian followers demanded a share in the Austrian Government. This, they declared, would represent a way of carrying out the *Anschluss* almost noiselessly; the Austrian Government would simply be 'co-ordinated', though the borders would not be formally abolished. They showed that they were made of different stuff from the *Heimwehr* Fascists, by the demand that the parliament, mutilated by Dollfuss, must be re-elected, for after the contagious example of the German electoral success, the National Socialists justifiably expected Austrian successes. Thus they invoked the right of national self-determination, the fundamental idea of the Versailles Treaty. In the foreign struggle, even more forcefully than in internal German politics, the dictatorship wielded the weapon of democracy.

This was exactly the point where the split between Germany and

Italy threatened. But greater issues, stronger common interests, finally kept them together.

In March, 1933, James Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister of England, called on Mussolini in Rome with Sir John Simon, head of the Foreign Office. The purpose of the visit was to plan for peace and disarmament, without which the economic crisis could never be overcome. MacDonald brought with him for Mussolini's approval a plan for world disarmament, which he had submitted two days before to the Disarmament Conference in Geneva. In this plan Germany was again granted equal rights in principle, though they were to be realized only by stages. The plan was to give Germany an army of 200,000 instead of the previous 100,000 on the European continent; Poland, only half as large, would likewise have 200,000; Czechoslovakia, 100,000; Italy, 250,000, but 50,000 of these in the colonies, and France, 400,000, half of these likewise in the colonies; the distant Soviet Union, in spite of the Bolshevik peril, was granted no less than half a million. But: the Great Powers, like England and France, were granted heavy weapons; artillery, tanks, and five hundred airplanes each--no more and no less!—while Germany was not allowed a single one.

Nevertheless, England was ready to grant Hitler's Germany twice as many soldiers as the Treaty of Versailles had permitted the republic of Weimar. What a step forward! And now Mussolini, the friend, added another step which definitely seemed to demonstrate that Germany had become a Great Power again.

Was it possible for security and equality to exist side by side? Must not equal rights inevitably mean anarchy, whether all had cannon or all had only cudgels? With this question in mind, Mussolini answered his English visitors with a counter-proposal which would practically supersede the League of Nations as well as the system of Locarno: the four leading Powers of Europe should conclude a pact and agree to solve all the great problems of the continent in common and then force their solution on the rest of the world; Germany, whose right to military equality was no longer subject to doubt, should nevertheless promise to rearm only by stages. But the Versailles Treaty must be revised; even a new distribution of colonial possessions was cautiously hinted. The Englishmen were ready to accept the plan, but France opposed the clause on the revision of Versailles, thus dooming the whole four-Power pact to practical failure, and though it was formally concluded four months later, it was never ratified and soon forgotten. But all the same, the first Fascist Power of Europe had proposed a plan for a new form of continental domination by the four Great Powers which would have killed the League of Nations; none of the other Great Powers at once rejected the plan on principle; and one of the four Powers was to be Germany.

Hitler eagerly seized on the proposal of the great man south of the Alps. He was willing to give any promise regarding the harmless nature

and slow rate of German rearmament, especially as he had long since made up his mind that the question of German rearmament would not be decided at conference tables, but in Germany herself. The S.A., for which, as Hitler put it, 'the World War was not over', continued this World War in Germany; built up, during 1933, a force of about three million men; subjugated the other half of the people, conquered the parts of the country that resisted, and forced the defeated to admire their own defeat. 'The rickety bones of the world are shivering with fear of the great war', began the song of the S.A. 'But to us this fear means a great victory. Today Germany belongs to us, tomorrow the whole world.'

Europe at that time possessed a diplomatic organ which registered these wild songs most vividly: the Geneva Disarmament Conference. To the German delegates, struggling for 'equal rights', the answer could be given: 'You already have an immense army—by right you would have to disarm rather than rearm.' The immense army was no army at all, the German military experts replied; the Reichswehr people call it a 'lousy mob'. True, but the Reichswehr, with its twelve-year period of service, the best-trained army in the world, and hence far more important than the figures indicated, could quickly train these raw masses into serviceable soldiers. For this reason MacDonald's plan provided -- and France bitterly insisted -- that the increased German army should cease to be an élite army of professional soldiers and become a militia with eight months of service for the individual soldier. The German delegates, however, fought tenaciously for the small model army that the victors of Versailles had unwittingly given them; and made the counter-demand that the others should first do away with their heavy armament; otherwise Germany, like everyone else, must have her planes, tanks, and heavy guns.

What an irony of history! The victors of Versailles now wanted to do away with the army of Versailles; the defeated now fought to keep it. This small army had been unimportant only as long as there had been a common front of the victors; hence the desperate efforts of France to restore this front.

At the end of April, Edouard Herriot, former French Premier who had resigned for the sake of American friendship, went to Washington. He talked with Franklin D. Roosevelt, the new President, and in Geneva, Norman Davis, the American delegate, expressed himself against the German demand for heavy weapons. The French newspaper, *Echo de Paris*, wrote that France had never dealt with so understanding an American Chief of State as Roosevelt. Official America did not really take sides, only pointed out quite reasonably that disarmament could not begin with rearmament. But for a time France and England indulged in greater hopes: that the long period of American isolation would come to an end under the new President, and that America would throw

her whole prestige into the cause of disarmament, pledging her enormous material strength to guarantee the security of a disarmed world; actually to guarantee the security of a disarmed France against a (perhaps) secretly rearming Germany. In other fields as well a re-entrance of America into European affairs was expected, for Ramsay MacDonald had invited the whole world to London for an economic conference in June, and Roosevelt seemed to expect great things of this conference and of America's participation in it.

New Powers had appeared on the European scene. Soviet Russia, with her first Five-Year Plan nearing completion, was beginning to be recognized as a great nation. The Socialist fatherland had long had its ambassadors in Berlin, London, and Paris, distrusted and sometimes snubbed, to be sure; now, in 1933, the United States recognized the Soviet Government and exchanged ambassadors. Thus, within a short time, the United States, Russia, and Germany became important forces in European politics, and the whole picture was changed.

At the beginning of May, Hjalmar Schacht appeared in America. Hitler's Reichsbank president came primarily in order to prepare, as quietly and amicably as possible, the great blow which he intended soon to deal Germany's private creditors abroad: the curtailment, in a sense the cessation, of interest and capital payments. The new President of the United States had already taken the first New Deal measures; they put an end to the methods in use under President Hoover, very much as the Nazi economic policy put an end to the frugality and retrenchments of Brüning. It was the great epoch of State credits, of boosted prices and wages, of confidence induced by artificially created purchasing power. Though there were many extreme differences between the German and American methods--in Germany, for example, no limitation of agricultural production was attempted--the aims, successes, and failures of this policy were similar in most countries. Therefore Schacht, when he arrived in New York, proclaimed that he was bringing 'the heartiest greetings of Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler to President Roosevelt, whose courage and astute conception of the world's economic problems have aroused the greatest admiration on the part of the Reich Chancellor'. For Hitler 'admires the courageous and resolute American President; moreover, the situation of America is in many respects similar to that of Germany. The Reich Chancellor does not rule as a dictator, but obtained an immense majority in the elections, just as Roosevelt was elected by an immense majority and received extensive powers from Congress.' Schacht continued: 'This is the best kind of politics and democracy in its best form. You choose your Leader and follow him. In this way you make it possible for him to carry out his plans.' This, said Schacht, was the case in America as well as in Germany. He, Schacht, had been commissioned by Hitler and was prepared to listen attentively to Roosevelt's ideas and, whenever possible, to adopt them as his own.

Schacht was received by Roosevelt. If he really understood Hitler's ideas, he may have explained to the President that the new Chancellor must not be confused with the old German military party, which was forever raising an uproar in Geneva and disturbing the peace; that Hitler by no means demanded the world's consent to rearm. Notwithstanding, Roosevelt expressed himself to Schacht in extremely clear and unmistakable terms on the threat developing to peace through the new German nationalism.

Just as Schacht was conferring in Washington, news came of a relatively unimportant symbolic occurrence in Germany, in which no one was beaten or harmed, but which nevertheless provoked a wave of disgust across the world. Students and other young people invaded private and public libraries, dragged out books of Jewish, 'Marxist', 'Bolshevist', or otherwise 'disruptive' authors, and publicly burned them; they spared neither the living nor the dead, neither classics nor unknown moderns, and the finest writing was mingled with real filth. In Berlin works of Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Walter Rathenau, Erich Maria Remarque, and Heinrich Heine were burned in front of the State Opera House. Goebbels made a short speech and it could be noted that he was not entirely at his ease; if students, he said, took upon themselves the right to burn trash, they must also be conscious of the duty to create something better. But then he added, with a glance at the burning books: 'Never as today have young men had the right to cry out, Studies are thriving, spirits awakening; oh, century, it is a joy to live!'

While incomprehensible and hideous things kept happening in Germany, which foreboded nothing good for the future of the rest of the world, Hitler's policy towards foreign countries was of a suppleness, indeed a compliancy, which should have aroused amazement, except for the fact that most people see only what they expect and perceive the new only after it has become customary. On all sides, Hitler stretched forth friendly hands, as he had predicted in his letters to Hervé and explained in his correspondence with Papen. Sometimes he met hands that were stretched out with the same doubtful sincerity. This was the case with Pilsudski's Poland.

The most resolute and ruthless among his enemies--whom he never met personally---exerted a secret spell over Hitler which the latter always felt in the face of genuine authority. In the spring of 1933 Hitler liked to quote Machiavelli's phrase that one must either destroy or conciliate an enemy; and this same clear, cold wisdom--perhaps even consciously--determined the steps of the Polish dictator. When France entered on negotiations about Mussolini's Four-Power Pact, Pilsudski believed that the time had come for Poland to force a decision. For this pact was tacitly but indubitably directed against Soviet Russia, but Poland, which would be the chief sufferer in a conflict of all Europe against Bolshevism, had not been included. France, her alleged friend and protector, had

nevertheless declared herself ready to confer on a plan which barred Poland from the council of European Powers.

Pilsudski answered with a series of military demonstrations on the German border; with reinforcement of the little garrison Poland was allowed to maintain in Danzig; by commissioning his ambassador, Wysocki, to ask Hitler bluntly whether he desired peace or war; finally, by posing to France what might be called the 'question of Locarno'. When the S.A. and S.S. in the Rhineland appeared as 'auxiliary police' with revolvers, this could be interpreted as 'concentration of armed forces in the demilitarized zone'; Pilsudski informed the French Government that if France marched Poland would join her. To start war in order to save peace? This was in strict opposition to French public opinion; indeed, it was against the whole psychology of the French alliance system, which was made to prevent war, not to hasten it. France, under the leadership of Edouard Daladier, refused to march.

After the attack on Germany had failed, Pilsudski decided abruptly for peace. Feelers had been sent out long before, and the armed intellectual on one side could easily guess what the armed intellectual on the other side would be willing to do.

The ring round Germany began to break, because at the decisive moment France would not close it. Hitler received Polish Ambassador Wysocki, while German Ambassador von Moltke called on Beck: the result was a *communiqué* of May 4, published with a certain solemnity by both sides. Germany and Poland expressed the desire 'to examine and treat the common interest of the two countries dispassionately; in this, the existing treaties should serve as a firm basis'. Definitely peace! A week later, on May 12, the National Socialists stormed the headquarters of the Social Democratic trade unions in Danzig. The Polish Press, which under former circumstances would have raised a loud outcry, remained conspicuously indifferent.

True, this *rapprochement* was extremely unpopular in both countries. Nationalists in both Germany and Poland had for years regarded a final reckoning with the other as the great aim in foreign policy. Poland was the only one among the victors of Versailles that had taken German territories and people—for it was admitted that Alsace-Lorraine, taken by France, did not want to be German. All those nationalists in Germany who set their hopes for the future in force of arms, thought primarily of war against Poland—and now Hitler was making peace with this main enemy.

But Hitler was a political strategist far superior to any emotional nationalist. This was why, even in his Reichstag speech of March 23, he had said: the fight against Communism is 'our domestic affair in which we never shall tolerate any interference'; but 'towards the Soviet Government the Reich Government is willing to travel friendly ways beneficial to both parties'. Three days previous, Göring had declared:

'It is no business of ours what happens in Russia, and it is no business of Russia's what happens in Germany'; he was firmly convinced that 'German-Russian relations will remain as friendly as in the past years'. No, even more friendly, as it turned out. For Germany renewed the Berlin friendship pact with Russia—which had been forgotten, after its expiration in 1931, by the Brüning Government, the Papen Government, and the Schleicher Government. This took place on May 5, a day after the exchange of the friendly declarations with Poland. If Hitler could still say that German National Socialism was a bulwark against the spread of Bolshevism to westward, he nevertheless remained true to his words to Hervé: an armed western crusade against Soviet Russia under German leadership, as Papen had contemplated, was not in his plan.

Presumably with the intention of explaining to British leaders the peaceable, defensive nature of German anti-Bolshevism and German policy in general, Alfred Rosenberg went to London on May 1. Rosenberg then looked like the future Foreign Minister of Germany. The ambassador of the Wise Men of Zion had, on March 31, become head of the newly created 'Foreign Office of the N.S.D.A.P.' For those positions of State power which the National Socialists could not occupy with their own people, they created corresponding 'shadow offices in their own party organization, in this way setting up a second State beside the State—by no means always to the pleasure of Hitler, who, however, could not deny this consolation to those of his 'paladins' who had been neglected in the distribution of booty. For the moment Rosenberg in his 'foreign office' could do nothing but draw up projects and memorials criticizing the official conduct of diplomatic affairs by Neurath and his career diplomats. But the content of memorials might tomorrow be the official foreign policy. Rosenberg's trip to London was in a sense a test of his diplomatic gifts, and its outcome was deplorable. The sight of this morose figure, the living embodiment of National Socialist race hatred, did much to intensify English distrust of the new Germany. From right to left Rosenberg found a hostile Press; public incidents made his stay in England almost unbearable and he soon departed. England's response to Hitler's private envoy was broadly this: We can deal with Germany, but not with National Socialism.

This was a misunderstanding, and before the year was out British public opinion was to be better informed—for in reality it was the National Socialists who wanted to negotiate, not traditional Germany. The official and competent spokesmen of the traditional German foreign policy made no attempt whatever to court understanding and demonstrate Germany's peaceable intentions. At the Geneva Disarmament Conference the German delegate, Nadolny, a career diplomat and personal friend of Hindenburg, fought for German equality of armaments, at first impatiently insisting that the others disarm, then hinting and threatening that German patience was by no means inexhaustible. He

condemned MacDonald's plan and—instructed by his superior, von Neurath—replied with counter-proposals which, in the eyes of the whole conference, made Germany appear as a disturber of unity and peace. Neurath wrote a newspaper article in a similar undiplomatic tone, stating bluntly that if the Disarmament Conference should fail, Germany would in any case rearm. Great agitation in France! The words of Nadolny and Neurath were taken to mean that German rearmament had already been decided; if this rearmament were to be prevented by force, now was the time to do it. In England the liberal *Nees Chronicle* wrote that whatever steps France might undertake, England would stand behind her. On May 11, Lord Hailsham, the Secretary for War, declared in the House of Lords that an attempt at German rearmament would be a breach of the Treaty of Versailles and would be countered by the sanctions provided in that treaty, by which he meant invasion.

Things suddenly looked very grave for Germany despite the exchange of friendly assurances with Poland and Russia. Although the existence and the internal methods of the Hitler Government had aroused world resentment, it was the old-style German career diplomacy with its boastful speeches which really threatened an explosion. To fill the measure of folly, Papen, who at home and abroad was considered Hindenburg's spokesman, made a speech full of childish bloodthirstiness to his electorate in Munster, May 13. ('To the German man, the battlefield is what motherhood is to the woman.') The career diplomats apparently believed that this was the new tone which the new master expected of them. Hitler convoked the Reichstag for May 17 and intimated that he would inform the whole world in detail of his aims in foreign policy.

On the day before Hitler's speech a message from President Roosevelt suddenly reached the chiefs of State of forty-four nations; in it the President set down his position on the question of peace and disarmament. Such a declaration on the part of America had been expected since Herriot's conversations in Washington. President Roosevelt had made his opinions known before this: that equal rights for Germany must not mean German rearmament, but the disarmament of the others; he had implied that France must not be expected to sacrifice any part of her security. What optimists in England and France now hoped for was a further, more significant step. If a formula for disarmament should be accepted by a majority in Geneva, it must also be enforced; but this seemed possible only if the world banded together in a security pact to apply sanctions against any possible infringement. The spirit of 'collective security', which had been thought dead, now reappeared; America, under the leadership of Roosevelt, was expected to find a formula for participation in a security pact. But of this there was not a word in the President's note.

This note declared a solution of the world economic crisis to be the

indispensable basis for political pacification; the World Economic Conference must, therefore, convene in all haste; currencies, which had all been endangered by the fall of the British pound, must be stabilized; international action to restore prices was demanded. The President's disarmament proposals moved in two directions: no country must rearm beyond the limits established by treaty—this applied to Germany—and the obligation to limit armaments must be observed by all; but in expressing his approval of the MacDonald plan, the President indirectly approved the principle of equal rights for Germany. Almost more important, Roosevelt demanded the abolition of 'offensive weapons' by all nations; that is, abolition of bombing planes, tanks, and mobile heavy artillery. His explanation of this demand seems prophetic:

'Modern weapons of offence', he said, 'are vastly stronger than modern weapons of defence. Frontier forts, trenches, wire entanglements, coast defences—in a word, fixed fortifications—are no longer impregnable to the attack of war planes, heavy mobile artillery, land battleships called tanks, and poison gas. If all nations agree wholly to eliminate from their possession and use weapons which make possible successful attack, defences automatically will become impregnable and the frontiers and independence of every nation will be secure.'

With this impressive description of the battle of the future, Roosevelt gave the French to understand that they, a people more or less dependent on pure defence, would do well to agree to the elimination of all heavy offensive weapons. As long as these heavy offensive weapons existed, Germany could not be prevented from having them some day—and then, God help the Maginot Line! This proud achievement of the French defensive art was, after three and a half years, virtually on the point of completion; and the stronger the Maginot Line grew, the weaker became the inner meaning of the French alliance system, for the more obviously and definitely the French army entrenched itself behind its 'concrete Pyrenees', the less able and willing it inevitably became to help its allies in the east by a thrust into Germany. This incapacity of the French army to offer a military guaranty of the French alliances would have become final and irrevocable by acceptance of Roosevelt's proposal, and eastern Europe would have been drawn into the German orbit, and become one more object of conflict between a strengthened Germany and a strengthened Soviet Russia. But even if France withdrew her protection from her allies, and thus lost what protection the allies had to offer her, Roosevelt's plan accorded her no better protection in exchange; for in the President's message there was not a word of the hoped-for statement that after disarmament had taken place the United States would join in guaranteeing the new European state of peace.

Bitter feelings in London and Paris. The *Daily Telegraph* in London wrote that, aside from Hitler, all the statesmen who had received the President's message would view it with disappointment; the *Morning Post*

declared that if Roosevelt was not prepared for warlike intervention, he could not secure peace. In France the same *Echo de Paris*, which only a short time before had been so enthusiastic about Roosevelt, bluntly stated that America understood nothing and had learned nothing. But the reaction of Rome was that Italy accepted the American President's proposal 'unconditionally'.

The next day Hitler said almost the same thing to an astonished German Reichstag and an astonished world. The world, and the German public as well, had expected a speech full of violent threats, a speech in which Hitler would outdo Papen's battlefield bombast. Instead of this, Hitler said:

'The proposal of the American President, of which I learned only to-day'—and which, it had to be admitted, granted Germany no heavy arms—'obligates the German Government to warm thanks. Germany is ready to agree without further discussion to this method for relief of the international crisis. . . . Heavy offensive weapons are exactly what Germany does not possess. . . . The only nation which might justifiably suffer from fear of an invasion is Germany. . . . Germany is prepared at any time to renounce offensive weapons if the rest of the world renounces them. . . . Germany is prepared to participate in any solemn non-aggression pact, for Germany does not think of an attack, but of her security.'

This was a complete reversal of the German foreign policy initiated by Schleicher. But it was not, as most of his audience and readers thought, a reversal of the foreign policy formulated by Hitler more than two years before. It was the continuation of his tactics formulated in his correspondence with Hervé and Papen. Two years before, he had warned his Sudeten German supporters that a war would only carry Bolshevism into Europe, and now he repeated that the consequence of a war, however it turned out, would 'be a Europe sinking into Communist chaos'. In his speech Hitler again stressed that Germany must protect the rest of the world from Communism. Regardless of how this might infuriate the Strasser clique in his own party, one of his Government's chief aims, he said, 'was the prevention of the threatening Communist revolution and construction of a people's State, uniting the different interests of the classes and estates, based on the concept of property as the foundation of our culture'.

How much of this peace speech had been discussed by the Reich Cabinet is not known; but probably there was very little discussion or argument. Hitler's speech, in tone and attitude, was entirely his own, the continuation of a line he had been following for a long time; almost in every point it overruled his professional diplomatic advisers, just as he had formerly overruled his 'revolutionaries', his Otto Strassers and Walter Stenneses. It was Adolphe Légalité, reassuring an anxious world, swearing to uphold peace. Perhaps in his more intimate circle, when he

explained this policy, he varied his old formula about democracy and prophesied, 'Peace must be overcome with the weapons of peace'. If he discussed this policy with anyone, it was with Mussolini, for it was the wish of Mussolini as well as Hitler that Germany should under no circumstances arouse the world's distrust by premature demands for rearmament.

Hitler's reaction to MacDonald's proposal, that equal rights for Germany should be realized slowly, was quite different from that of Nadolny and Neurath. He called the English plan 'a possible basis for future agreement'. He himself proposed a transitional period of five years; only at the end of five years should the disarmament of the great military States be completed, and then—not until then—would Germany achieve her full equality. Meanwhile, he declared, no one need fear that Germany would secretly build up an army contrary to the treaties; for the S.A.—whatever might be thought of it abroad—was not such an army and never could be. Here Hitler was speaking the truth; the Reichswehr did not allow the S.A. to be an army. Hitler even offered to place the S.A. under foreign supervision if other countries (perhaps he meant Poland) would do the same with their own semi-military formations.

Still arguing almost explicitly against the German Nationalists—'do not confuse us with the bourgeois world!'—he explained why National Socialism wanted to, had to, and would, dispense with war. War, he implied, was a method of purely political State formations, belonging to an outlived dynastic era, while National Socialism was the philosophy of the great European national revolution, and therefore extended far beyond State limitations; a philosophy of democracy among nations which must make it possible to create a system of international justice and renounce force. His clumsy and uncertain choice of big words indicated that the speaker himself only half believed what he was saying, but at the moment wanted to believe it: 'Through many centuries', he said, 'the European States and their boundaries arose from conceptions which were restricted to exclusively State lines. But with the victorious emergence of the national idea and the principle of nationalities in the course of the past century, and in consequence of the failure of States arisen from other presuppositions to consider these new ideas and ideals, the seeds of numerous conflicts were planted'. The Treaty of Versailles might have changed this unhealthy state of affairs; but it neglected to do so, 'partly from ignorance, partly from passion and hatred'. The speaker enumerated all the sins which rightly or wrongly he had for fourteen years been holding up to the Peace of Versailles. The peace, he declared, had brought Germany such misery that since the day of its signing 224,900 persons had committed suicide, and 'Germany, contrary to the sacred conviction of the German people and their Government, was branded with the World War guilt'. Did Germany wish to wipe out the curse of this 'world peace' by a new war? Never! 'No new European

war would be able to replace the unsatisfactory conditions of today by any better ones. On the contrary. Neither politically nor economically could the use of force produce a more favourable situation in Europe than that which exists today. Even if a new European solution by violence brought a decisive success, the end result would be only to increase the disturbance of the European balance, thus planting the seeds of new future conflicts and entanglements. New wars, new victims, new insecurity, and new economic distress would be the consequence [lively applause]. . . . It is the deep and earnest wish of the national Government of the German Reich to prevent such an unpeaceful development by its sincere and active co-operation.'

What a change, what a reversal, since the days, not so far past, when Hitler had scoffed at General von Seeckt for his moderate pacilism, his faith in the limitation of armaments! Now it was the generals who did not want to believe in the limitation of armaments; now it was Hitler who corrected them from the platform of the Reichstag! And if one of them had argued back that the unlimited insistence on national claims by three dozen big and little nations in Europe was bound to cause war, he would have replied with an expression of almost Utopian confidence in the peace-promoting power of the right of national self-determination; a 'territorial reshaping of Europe in Versailles, taking consideration of the real national frontiers, would historically have been an ideal solution'. And even in the German East, he believed, though without revealing the secret of his ideal solution, 'a considered treatment of European problems would at that time have been able without difficulty to find a way which would have met the understandable claims of Poland as well as the natural claims of Germany'. The assignment of the Corridor to Poland—this he only intimated—was not such a way, for he regarded the Corridor—unrightly—as predominantly German. But 'no German Government will, on its own responsibility, carry out the breach of an agreement, which cannot be eliminated without being replaced by a better one'. For, according to his new and startling conception, the peace-promoting power of absolute nationalism was that it inwardly rebelled against the rape of any foreign people: 'No State can have greater understanding for the newly arisen young national States and their vital needs than the Germany of the national revolution which arose from similar urges. She wants nothing for herself which she is not willing to give others.'

A classic formulation of a truly exalted principle. As long as Hitler kept giving mere assurances that Germany needed and desired peace, doubt could still counter with the one word: 'Now!' But then he explained his longing for peace with an idea which he seemed to have gathered from the depths of his political being; with an argument combined of passionate faith and brilliant falsehood. And an extraordinary number of people were immediately convinced:

'National Socialism is a principle which as a philosophy gives a general and fundamental obligation. Because of the boundless love and loyalty we feel for our own nationality, we respect the national rights of other peoples, and from the bottom of our hearts we desire to live with them in peace and friendship. Therefore, we do not have the idea of "Germanization". The mentality of the past century, which led people to think that they could make Germans out of Poles and Frenchmen, is alien to us, and we passionately oppose any attempt at the reverse. We see the European nations around us as a given fact. Frenchmen, Poles, and so on are our neighbours, and we know that no event that is historically conceivable can change this reality.'

Hitler's unexpected message of peace, shedding sweetness and light on a world trembling in fear of war, the ingenuity with which he cloaked the incredible in a film of credibility, show Hitler as a master of expedient propaganda; as a political path-finder, discovering ways out of apparently inextricable situations; as the true armed intellectual, who unscrupulously masters the means for the solution of the task in hand. Yet, in this case, he can scarcely be accused of lying to the world. What he said was objectively the pure truth: that the world, and with it Germany, needed peace. This was all the more incontestable as in the moment when he said it he probably believed it himself; and for this reason millions inside and outside of Germany believed him. With disarming forthrightness he admitted that Germany would leave the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations if she were again denied equal rights; he also admitted that obviously Germany could not defend herself against an occupation of the Rhineland; only it was 'inconceivable and out of the question that such an act should obtain legal validity through our own signature'. Hitler stepped forward in the figure of an eccentric saint who apparently was slow to give his signature, but once he had given it, never broke his word. German refugees might attempt to prove the contrary with facts out of Hitler's past—facts were powerless against the tone of truth in Hitler's speeches.

For the first time since he had been making speeches, Hitler seemed to express the sentiment of the whole German people without distinction of parties; for the first time he found agreement without the slightest jarring note of opposition—if one overlooked the fact that one-sixth of the Reichstag, the Communist fraction, was forcibly excluded. However, it was the party which up till then had come out for peace with the greatest conviction, which now found it hardest to support this peace speech. No Social Democratic Party could honourably have given its support on any point to a Government of concentration camps and breach of the constitution, for any kind of support was bound to strengthen the tyranny. But Frick, shortly before the session opened, dryly said to the parties that they had better think carefully before voting, for in this hour of the fatherland's need, the life of the individual would be of no impor-

tance. This was intended to mean: anyone who votes against the Government will be beaten to death, and his comrades in the concentration camps with him. A part of the Social Democratic leaders had already fled abroad, and between the *émigrés* and those who had remained at home a bitter struggle, not free of personal irritation, was going on about the line to be taken. While the exiles, headed by the party chairman Wels, claimed to represent the party leadership and wished to organize an unlimited underground struggle against the régime, those who had remained behind, led by Paul Loebe, former president of the Reichstag, and Carl Severing, were for carrying on 'within the framework of legal possibilities', of course with great tactical caution. In line with this caution they decided after Hitler's speech to join in the Reichstag's declaration of approval; they comforted themselves with the thought that even if this were not exactly the bravest kind of resistance to the Government, it at least served the cause of peace. The Reichstag expressed unanimous support of Hitler's peace.

With his peace speech Hitler had immediately become the most powerful and most widely heard speaker in the world. He was now a moulder and disseminator of world views, to whom the whole earth listened, whether in agreement or hostility; he wielded an influence on public opinion such as history had seldom before seen.

And so began the campaign of spiritual conquest that Houston Chamberlain had demanded and Goebbels had announced; it was the first trumpet blast of the 'great world mission'. National Socialism, said Hitler, had arisen from the same roots as the nationalism of the Poles and Czechs. If you listened attentively, a faint cry of 'Aryans of all nations, unite', could be heard behind his words. Hitler might boast today that he was destroying democracy and tomorrow claim that he was bringing the 'true' or 'ennobled' democracy, as Goebbels put it; it was neither the first nor presumably the last time that despotism has called itself democracy. Since the dramas of Friedrich Schiller, the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, and the operas of Richard Wagner, there had been no such effective attempt at the spiritual conquest, or 'Germanization', of the world as in Hitler's peace speeches which were now to follow one another over a period of years. It is easy to see that the herald of peace literally followed the counsel of the Wise Men of Zion, 'always to appear outwardly honourable and conciliatory'; 'to accustom the peoples to take our IOU's for cash', and in this way lead them 'some day to regard us as the benefactors and saviours of the human race'. But the effect cannot be explained by mere oratorical sleight of hand. Hitler's speeches expressed a feeling shared by the post-war generation of all nations—and perhaps by the speaker himself at the moment—that the relations between nations must have a meaning which war could not have. For the world—H. S. Chamberlain had seen and expressed this—is a task capable of solution, and the great final solution is peace—for

Chamberlain a 'German peace'. The last war, at its outbreak welcomed as a gift from Heaven and cheered with astonishing uniformity by nearly all nations, had turned out to be the greatest of all deceptions, a world horror that benefited the people of no country. No less had been the disillusionment of the peace, which did not bring with it the world order for which men had hoped.

Hitler with all his political powers was not the prophetic figure that could promise and make credible this world future which had hitherto failed to materialize, though he occasionally had something of the sort in mind—as he occasionally had everything in mind. Nevertheless in his speech—which in places, to use Hans Grimm's words, 'was more than himself'—there was the distant sound of a more peaceful future, even though he himself envisaged it at best as a future in the style of H. S. Chamberlain, a scientific world order of German organizational skill, brought about by National Socialist violence. Though broader of horizon than Napoleon, he was subject to the curse of all Napoleonic figures. 'All these wielders of power', said Wagner, 'could not conceive of peace except under the protection of a good many cannon'. But when he stood before the Reichstag and the world on May 17, Fate, for a moment at least, put it in his power to say what the world felt. What makes his speech significant is not how he said it, but the fact that he had to say it, and despite its treacherous, dishonourable underlying purpose, it is a document of the political world sentiment of our epoch. Like Aristide Briand seven years before, he turned his back on cannon.

Actually Hitler, with his assurances of peace, spoke to the hearts of so many millions in the world, that at once a more peaceful mood permeated all relations. Most hesitant was the reaction of France, where the *Echo de Paris* sarcastically remarked that Stresemann must be applauding Hitler from his grave, meaning: Let us believe Hitler no more than we should have believed Stresemann. The Liberal Press of England was also reserved; but the *Daily Herald*, organ of the Labour Party, up till then full of the sharpest criticism of Germany's internal conditions, shifted its position abruptly and demanded that Hitler be taken at his word. The Conservative weekly *Spectator* wrote with enthusiasm that President Roosevelt had held out a hand to Germany in the name of the world, and that Hitler had taken it. An immense responsibility, *The Spectator* continued, lay on the shoulders of France, a scarcely smaller responsibility on those of England; but Roosevelt and Hitler were drawing at the same rope. Almost ecstatically, the writer concluded that in the unity of these two lay a new hope for the haunted world.

As for President Roosevelt, he had listened to the speech over the radio. The German Press reported that Hitler's words 'had been received with great applause in the White House'. The official Wolff Bureau quoted Roosevelt's secretary as saying: 'The President was enthusiastic at Hitler's acceptance of his proposals'.

HITLER VERSUS NATIONAL SOCIALISM

IN THE first book of his *Discorsi*, Machiavelli writes that a tyrant who wishes to establish absolute rule in a country not previously ruled by tyranny must change everything: officials, institutions, titles, even the location of the cities; yes, he must even move inhabitants from one province to another, 'as shepherds drive their flocks from place to place'. He, on the other hand, who wished to reform a State to the satisfaction of all, would do well to leave as many things as possible outwardly as they are, so that the changes are not even noticed. Measured by this rule, the National Socialists conducted themselves more like reformers than like tyrants in the first months, even years, of their régime; for although they thoroughly revamped the methods of government, they retained most of the traditional institutions from parliament, whose decisions they never failed to invoke, down to the subdivision into States.

Here Hitler appeared at the height of his fickle political technique. Power suddenly offered problems he had not expected and was by no means prepared to solve—a situation very different from H. S. Chamberlain's utopian scientific dreams. Yes, there were many problems to be left unsolved—for the moment, at least; issues to be left untouched, resistance unbroken.

The reason for this was no inclination or gentleness on Hitler's part; it was his appreciation of the inevitable. As long as he was fighting for power, his task, in his own words, was to incline the existing institutions to his purposes; now, after his seizure of power, he had to make them serve him. As long as they had a spark of power or utility in them, they must not be destroyed. Obeying this eternal law of political wisdom, the National Socialists again trampled one of their political ideals, embodied in Point 25 of their party programme. They abandoned the idea of giving Germany political unity. Hitler, who otherwise appreciated the power of existing institutions, struggled against this necessity; but it was a necessity, and it was stronger than ever. For the wheels and levers of the administrative apparatus were not in the Reich, but in the separate States; here were the central switches, here was the power over the public life of the nation. And for this reason nothing was smashed or altered; the apparatuses were taken over as they were; and Göring, as Premier of Prussia, attempted to make Prussia even stronger. In place of the provincial diet, which had lost all power, he gave his State a chamber of leaders; in the process he had, in the good National Socialist fashion, to crush a rival. Up till then a council consisting of higher officials and mayors, the so-called *Staatsrat*, had carried on a rather incon-

spicuous existence in the Prussian State administration; Ley had hit on the idea of 'co-ordinating' this body, of making himself its president, and from this vantage-point governing Prussia as Hitler's 'chief of staff'. This occurred at the end of April. Göring tolerated this state of affairs for two months, then he threw Ley out—it was Göring who made the laws in Prussia—and transformed the shadowy council of officials into an arcopagus of powerful and celebrated names.

From now on party functionaries formed the core of the *Staatsrat*: the top leaders of the S.A. and the S.S., their group leaders and chief group leaders; and the Prussian *gauleiters* of the party. Up till then the party *gaus* in Prussia had more or less coincided with the provinces, the comparatively large administrative districts of which the Prussian State was composed. One of the shrewdest tricks employed by the National Socialists in their seizure of power was now to appoint many of the *gauleiters* presidents of these provinces; where this could not be done, the *gauleiters* became at least State councillors (*Staatsräte*), and the provincial presidents were required by law, before taking important decisions, to obtain the consent of the State councillors, especially in filling offices. In the smaller States the *gauleiters* had everywhere become Reich *statthalters*; so that now, though the system was not entirely unified, a net of National Socialist provincial tyrants covered the whole Reich.

But the *Staatsrat* was also intended to be something else: an assemblage of the famous, calculated to enhance Göring's fame. It included Church dignitaries, leading men of science and art; among its members were Wilhelm Furtwängler, the conductor, and Fritz Thyssen, the steel magnate. In addition, Göring used his *Staatsrat* as a means of feeding a number of hungry ravens in his political family. The members received a monthly fee of a thousand marks for doing next to nothing.

Thus, National Socialism made its way into every corner and pigeon-hole of the administrative apparatus. Pleased with his new power, Göring cried triumphantly that Prussia would continue, as in the past century, 'to constitute the fundament of the German Reich', that she would never surrender so much as the smallest strip of territory to other German States; that anyone who made any such proposal would be sent to a concentration camp. Hitler replied morosely that the task of National Socialism was 'not to preserve the provinces, but to liquidate them'. Although Göring loyally maintained that he ruled 'above all and primarily as the true paladin of my Leader', from whom he had learned for over a decade, it was plain that he had not fully learned the lesson of obedience. When Göring solemnly opened his *Staatsrat* in the Berlin Castle, Hitler remained absent; the faithful paladin had taken an important decision of State in open defiance of his Leader's will. But he had the force of necessity in his favour, for the task was the conquest, not the destruction, of power.

The dividing line between conquest and destruction was often hard to

find; at times it seemed impossible to snatch a valuable institution from hostile hands without damaging it. If it was not always easy for the supreme Leader to make the proper distinction, much less was it easy for his egotistic and disunited followers, with their eternal thirst for booty. This egotism was an indispensable force in the party, but it could not be left unchecked. A decision and reckoning were due some day. It was more than ten years since Hess, in his portrait of Hitler, had foreseen this decision and had calmly prophesied that to attain his goal the Leader would 'trample his closest friends'. For years Hitler had seen this type of crisis approaching; he had several times fought his way through similar crises. He had surrounded himself more and more with the type of supporter he would need in trampling his friends; in exactly such a crisis, he had drawn Hess out of almost total obscurity and raised him to the party leadership. Now, in the spring of 1933, he put Hess in charge of the whole party apparatus—once again demonstrating by his choice that the party was his property. After Hess had tacitly held this position for some time, Hitler appointed him, on April 27, 'my deputy, with the power to take decisions in my name in all questions relating to the conduct of the party'. In so far as ruling meant work, Hitler transferred his power and his worries to his industrious helper, a man conscious of his own limitations, almost enjoying them.

Thus there arose a new apparatus of leadership with the task of curbing, and if necessary breaking, National Socialism as a mass movement in conflict with the Hitlerian system of authority and obedience; both ostensibly one and the same thing, in reality two opposed principles. For while Hitler's policy was directed towards conquering and dominating the existing political conditions, within the National Socialist movement forces were still working which were out to destroy and break them; for some time they had their way because Hitler as yet did not see his own way clearly enough.

These were concerned with more than power; many were out for more than advantages. They wanted their life to have a new meaning, their existence in society a purpose; their value for their own people was the one thing that gave their careers on earth any value. To many, and not always the worst among them, only faith in their fatherland had retained any meaning, their own nation had become God; if they hesitated openly to declare themselves religious unbelievers, Hitler had provided them with a suitable formula: 'We know two Gods: one in heaven and another on earth; the second is Germany'. But 'we' are Germany, Hitler had said on another occasion, and 'we' meant 'I'. And so there were people who prayed to Hitler, perhaps without realizing that this was prayer.

But now there arose voices among the National Socialists, openly declaring that the new movement must renew the German belief in God—making it clear that God was embodied in the German people.

Many insisted that German religion must free itself from the Jewish Biblical tradition—from 'Satan's Bible', as Hitler eleven years before, in a conversation with Dietrich Eckart, had called the Old Testament. The New Testament was no better, said others, perhaps fewer in number. General Ludendorff, head of a politico-religious sect numbering several tens of thousands, which he called the 'Tannenberg League', after his most famous military victory, rejected both the teachings and the person of Jesus, whom even Gobineau and Wagner had declared to be 'white', that is non-Semitic. Hitler himself in his youth, as he told his friend Hanisch, had been convinced that the historical Jesus had been no Jew, but the son of one Pantherus, a Greek soldier in the Roman army. In Ludendorff's eyes, however, the Saviour was the embodiment of Asiatic magic, a force destructive to the Germanic peoples. And, it must be added, to him one of the most dangerous agents of the Roman priesthood was Hitler himself.

For it could not be denied that Hitler still belonged to the Catholic Church. In March, 1933, it is true, he had demonstratively remained absent from the services of his Church; there was the story that in his youth he had spat out the Host. But he was on terms of intimate friendship with several Catholic clergymen, such as Abbot Alban Schachleitner, former head of the Emmaus Cloister in Prague, who after 1918 had been driven out by the Czechoslovakian revolution. In his whole being Schachleitner was a fragment of that German national dynamite scattered through the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. It is possible that his faith in his people overshadowed his faith in his Saviour. Hitler, who in 1918 certainly still went to confession and communion, is even said later to have received the sacrament from the hands of this National Socialist abbot. At all events, on July 1 he let it be officially proclaimed: 'Reich Chancellor Hitler still belongs to the Catholic Church and has no intention of leaving it.'

Certainly, he had stated that '... the priest in politics we shall eliminate ... we shall give him back to the pulpit and the altar'. And to satisfy him the party of the Catholic Church itself took care to eliminate the priest from politics; Kaas, the prelate, on May 6, retired from the leadership of the Centre Party, went to Rome, and found a position in the Vatican. But Brüning, his successor, carried on, and had conferences with Hitler, who had not as yet revoked his bid for collaboration. Actually, the party of the Church did, for a few months, share the Government with the National Socialists; in Bavaria Count Quadlshy, the new leader of the Bavarian People's Party, served as Minister of Economics.

Step by step, the Catholic Church abandoned political resistance to National Socialism. The same German bishops, who three years before had warned against the un-Christian movement, declared in a conference at Fulda, March 28, 1933, that after Hitler's Reichstag speech of

March 23, with its conciliatory words for the Church, they felt justified in 'hoping that the above-mentioned general prohibitions and warnings need no longer be regarded as necessary', and recommended obedience to the legal authorities. The prohibitions and warnings had been issued while the National Socialists were merely marching through the streets and issuing threats; they were withdrawn when thousands were murdered or beaten to a pulp in concentration camps.

By retreating on the political field the Church hoped to keep its spiritual power intact. But was this possible?

For centuries it had been true that the cleavage into two sects of approximately equal strength—if Austria was included—had helped to tear Germany apart. But now: 'As soon as a man puts on the brown shirt', said Rosenberg, 'he ceases to be a Catholic or a Protestant; he is only a National Socialist'—and what else could this mean except that the National Socialist had ceased to be a Christian? At all events, this is exactly what Rosenberg had meant by his words. In a society where the individual was nothing and the nation everything, God could be nothing unless he was the nation; this was no philosophical hair-splitting, but a state of mind prevailing among large masses. The Church-weariness and faithlessness of considerable sections of the Protestant Church membership, especially in the big cities, was clear from the emptiness of the churches. But the beer halls and sport stadiums could no longer hold all the people who thronged to political meetings.

Yet in the spring of 1933 the Catholic Church was able to demonstrate its appeal to great masses in Germany. In the city of Trier, for the first time in many decades, a remarkable relic, contested even in Church circles, was put on exhibition: the so-called 'holy mantle', which Jesus supposedly wore on the cross; for days throngs of Catholics streamed into the moderate-sized city and followed their priests to the cathedral, where they passed six or eight abreast before the holy relic. The National Socialists could not have staged a more impressive mass spectacle; perhaps this demonstration of Catholic strength helped to make Hitler more receptive to a concordat with the Holy See, negotiations for which had been in progress for some time.

The aim of the Vatican in these 'concordats' was to lend the Church the protection of an international treaty. Up till then the Catholic Church had concluded its treaties with the German States, consciously exploiting the political division of Germany; obviously, it could obtain more favourable conditions from predominantly Catholic Bavaria than from Protestant Prussia. Now, under Hitler, new negotiations were begun. One thing that was definitely expected from a treaty between the Third Reich and the Pope was to prevent the Vatican—that is, a foreign Power—from concluding a treaty with a separate German State; even if the existing concordats with the States could not immediately be eliminated. Kaas in Rome was urging conclusion of the Reich Con-

cordat, with the idea that in this case Hitler would be forced to give one of his promises in writing—and not in an unsent letter, as in the case of his promise to collaborate with the Centre Party. Papen, the Catholic nobleman, went to Rome as chief negotiator.

Hitler's idea was that the Reich Concordat would mean the definite disappearance of the Church from German political life. The Church was no doubt ready to adjust itself to a non-parliamentary state. Hitler had once contemptuously predicted: 'I see the time coming when the Pope will be glad if the Church is taken under the protection of National Socialism against the parties of the Centre'. Perhaps in reality it was not too hard a blow for the Pope, or at least for his Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, that by the Concordat they would have to forbid the German clergy to engage in political activity; the Reich Government promised in a codicil that it would also prevent the Protestant clergy from engaging in political activity. The treaty obligated the Holy See, before appointment of any archbishop or bishop, to inquire if the provincial *statthalter* had any objection to the candidate; also, the bishop had to swear loyalty to the German Reich and promise to respect the Government.

In return, the Government agreed that many of the Church's religious and social organizations, including the Catholic workers' clubs, would be tolerated. While this was being discussed, the Munich S.A. assaulted members of these clubs who had gathered for a national congress (June 11-12, 1933), and beat them severely, not far from the place where, fourteen years before, twenty-one Catholic workers had fallen beneath the bullets and rifle-butts of the murderers' army. But the conferences on the Concordat went on.

In renewing the Berlin treaty of friendship, the 'godless Jews of the Krenlin' had been the first world Power to hold out a hand to Hitler; the Vicar of Christ on earth became the second. Many German Catholics felt more humiliated than protected by this treaty. The majority of the bishops and the Holy See saw things differently. Not a few sons of the Catholic Church vacillated when confronted by the choice between obedience to their clergy and obedience to their secular leaders; the Church now was compromising to save spiritual values in the modern man, values which lay outside of all social relations. On the other hand, such profoundly earthly considerations as concern for Church property—cloisters, schools, hospitals—and for the livelihood of the clergy must also have influenced the Holy See in its dealings with the Antichrist.

At the same time the National Socialists tried to sever the Catholic Church from the active life of the nation, they made a serious and promising attempt to take possession of the Protestant Church which was a German Church to begin with. Here the task was entirely different: not to tear or lure believers away from their Church, but to lead unbelievers back. In June, 1932, some National Socialist clergymen had

founded an organization calling itself the 'Faith Movement of German Christians'; at its head stood a minister named Hossenfelder. It was a minority group in the Protestant clergy; and the 'German Christians' could not even claim to represent the 'living Church'—*i.e.*, the mass of believing men and women—against 'alien' priests. For those leaders of the Protestant Church who resisted National Socialism were supported by the majority of the church-goers. The National Socialist ministers replied that they alone could bring back the non-churchgoers, and that these lost sheep were what mattered.

These were the masses of 'involuntary' Church members; those numerous laymen who, according to the State Church laws prevailing in Germany, were counted as belonging to the official Church and had to pay Church taxes, although they had not seen the inside of a church for years. Only this 'State Church' system makes all the German Church struggles comprehensible. Up to the fall of the German Empire in 1918, practically everyone had to belong to a religious community, either the Catholic Church or the Protestant State Church. In Prussia the King was supreme head of the Protestant Church. After the founding of the German Republic this state of affairs had ceased in principle, but only in principle. In practice the State continued to collect Church taxes, and anyone who did not expressly leave the Church had to go on paying them; but as a rule even those who had lost their faith did not expressly resign. It was principally these faithless Church members who had now suddenly flocked to the 'German Christians'.

With the authority of National Socialism, the German Christian ministers were able to enlist considerable masses of the unbelieving or half-believing Church membership. Among their leaders was Ludwig Müller, the army chaplain who had brought Hitler and General von Blomberg together; Hitler believed that he was performing a masterly stroke when he summarily dismissed Hossenfelder and made the friend of his Reichswehr Minister head of the German Christians. Müller did not fulfil expectations; in the middle of May the leaders of the Protestant Church drew from him an admission that the Church must be 'free of State guardianship'. But he did make it clear that the Protestant Church must be run in accordance with the 'leader principle'. The very titles of the new leadership had for German Protestant ears an ugly ring of Papism: there would be a 'Reich Bishop' with a number of other bishops under him. Taking Müller by surprise, the majority of the Church body elected as their bishop a man of their ranks. Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, a widely respected Churchman and by no means a National Socialist. His election was an open insult to Hitler, because Bodelschwingh was the director of a famous home for the feeble-minded, caring for those people who, in Hitler's opinion, should have been exterminated for the good of the race.

At this point open warfare broke out between the Church and the

party. Almost anything might have provoked it, for these were two faiths which could not live at peace with one another. The most obvious cause for conflict was the racial question, for the German Christians demanded that only Aryans be admitted to the Church, and especially to the clergy. The number of German non-Aryans who had ceased to be Jews was later set by National Socialist statistics at one million; over this relatively small number the German Churches of both denominations waged an intense struggle. The Church as such could not renounce these people, for Christ had said: 'Ye shall teach all the nations'. The Catholic Church went even farther, and refused to admit that non-Aryans had ceased to be Germans; in a pastoral letter of June 10, 1933—the last of its kind for many years to come—the Catholic bishops declared 'that national unity can be achieved, not only by like blood, but also by like mentality, and that exclusive consideration of race and blood in judging State membership leads to injustice'. In the Protestant Church the German Christians, with their insistence on the introduction of the 'Aryan clause' into the articles of faith, stood two thousand years of Church history on its head. For the history of the Christian Church had begun with the principle that all Christians must be circumcised Jews, and only when this principle was discarded did Christianity begin to grow and to 'teach all nations'; now, in 1933, it was no longer permissible for a Christian to have been a circumcised Jew. When Bodelschwingh and his clergymen resisted this idea, Göring ordered his subordinate, Bernhard Rust, the Prussian Minister of Education, to use force; hesitantly and reluctantly, Rust set a taskmaster over the Protestant Church, a civil servant by the name of Jaeger. High and low clergymen were thrown out. Müller was made head of the Protestant Churches, and Bodelschwingh was forced to resign. On July 2, 1933, the swastika flags were raised over the Evangelical churches of Germany.

It was the flood tide of the Nazi revolution. In this moment it still seemed uncertain how far National Socialism would go in the breaking of resistance; whether it would submit to the limitations which Machiavelli advises the reformer to accept. Hitler himself was not clear how far he could go and how far he wanted to go. At first he had counted on a slow but persistent overcoming of resistance; but then there had been great and unexpected successes, and his confidence rose above all difficulties. On June 15 he assembled the National Socialist leaders in Berlin and commanded them to intensify their struggle against those adversaries who were still present. The last months, he said, had strengthened him in the conviction that the National Socialist Government would master foreign and economic difficulties with the same success that it mastered domestic difficulties. It was his conviction, firm as a rock, that the mighty movement of National Socialism would outlive the centuries and that nothing could end it. But the watchword for the present was: 'The law of the National Socialist Revolution has not yet

expired. Its dynamics still dominate the development of Germany.' He had learned much from Leon Trotsky, whose slogan of the permanent revolution he now adopted: 'The German Revolution will not be concluded until the whole German nation is given a new form, a new organization, and a new structure'.

He never called this new Germany by the name which had been made popular by Goebbels: the 'third Reich'—meaning that it came after the (first) Holy Roman Empire (962–1806) and the (second) Bismarckian Empire (A.D. 1871–1918). This perhaps was due to his desire to make a clean break with the past. It was a time when he thought of himself as leading a revolution against everything reactionary, whether it was the Church, the economic age, or the bourgeois parties. It was a wave which would carry away all these motley remnants of the past, and he was riding the wave. He knew that even when he struck at the Communists he was hitting Hugenberg and his crowd at the same time, for both still belonged to that past: to the Weimar Republic, the 'interim Empire'.

The German Nationalists, who really had profound contempt for every outward sign of democracy, still gave the Hitler Government the few votes in parliament which it needed for a majority, but by this very fact they prevented it from becoming a full and unlimited dictatorship. However, there were signs that this forced support would soon become superfluous. In the 'Free City' of Danzig, elections to the *Volksstag* (parliament) were held on May 28; and the National Socialists achieved what had previously been denied them in the Reich: an absolute, though scant, majority of the votes: exactly 50.03 per cent; but a safe majority of seats: 38 out of 72. As in Bavaria and in some of the Prussian provinces, the Nazis set at the head of the Danzig Government a man who had been in the party only a short time. Hermann Rauschning was one of Hitler's so-called 'latelings', a type mostly hated by the 'old fighters', but absolutely needed to cover that unsavoury crowd and their crimes with a respectable name.

What had remained in the end of Hugenberg's following was essentially a group of inadequately armed intellectuals, connected with Germany's large economic holdings more as business managers and administrators than as owners. With Hugenberg in the Ministries of Economics and Food Supply, this group thought that it held its hand on the most powerful levers. In reality they had chosen the weakest of all positions of power, for it was precisely in the economic field that the most perilous conflict developed. And it was not the National Socialist workers who were demanding revolution in the economic sphere; it was those who had passed as the defenders and beneficiaries of the existing economic order. The middle class, threatened with ruin by overwhelming competition, was enraged at big capital; the peasant proprietors, incited by the National Socialists, demanded no less than the destruction of the German credit system.

In the first months of the régime the 'anti-capitalist longing' of National Socialism had not been very vociferous; it had been drowned out by the fight against Communism. The stock exchange had received Hitler's first successes with good cheer: after the elections of March 5 stocks had risen sharply. Then, by his Jewish boycott, Hitler had suddenly scotched this hope, and confidence and stocks had crashed; they remained low when one staggering law on racial purity and co-ordination followed another. The conquest of the trade unions did not relieve the fear of the capital. For after the radicalism of the workers seemed to be crushed for the moment, capital was faced with the possibly more dangerous radicalism of the armed bohemians.

This radical spirit took possession of the party when increasing political success failed to benefit the mass of the membership. It was impossible to satisfy immediately the avid masses who had harnessed their future to this party; and at the head of these disappointed masses stood some of the first men. Röhm, whom Hindenburg had refused once and for all to tolerate in the Government, had been put off with the beggarly post of a Minister without Portfolio in Bavaria. Gottfried Feder, as though there were no National Socialist Government, had to go on fighting bitterly and hopelessly for the main point in the party programme he had helped to frame, the breaking of interest slavery; he had received no post at all. He had indeed a strong support in R. W. Darré, Hitler's prophet among the peasantry; but Darré himself had no position in the Government. True, thousands were already provided for, but this aroused the envy of tens of thousands who had been left out in the cold, who felt that in view of their great services to the movement they had been kept waiting too long.

The chief dispenser of lucrative posts in the Government was Göring, the Prussian Premier, who also headed the still mysterious Ministry of Aviation. In both capacities he provided for a swarm of personal friends, who for the most part were quite unknown to the party. There was Göring's friend Körner, who became Secretary of State in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, hence the most powerful dispenser of patronage in the Reich. There was Erhard Milch, director of the *Luft-hansa*, whom Göring appointed Secretary of State in his new Aviation Ministry, partly because Milch had supported Göring in the old days when he had been short of funds. No one had ever heard that Milch was a National Socialist, while it could not be doubted that he bore a Jewish name; and when Erhard Milch, pursuing a custom which was beginning to gain wide popularity, claimed to be the fruit of his 'Aryan' mother's infidelity, his detractors found out that the maiden name of this supposedly Aryan mother allegedly had been Rosenau.

The thousand-headed swarm of job-hunters was the human reservoir from which the current of radicalism in the party was fed. But it claimed to speak in the name of the farmers and the shopkeepers.

Large sections of the rural population, stifling under a mountain of 500.

mortgages, were passionately awaiting the breaking of interest slavery. Darré wanted to reduce all agricultural credits to 2 per cent. Hugenberg, as Minister of Food Supply, thought he was infringing sufficiently on the sanctity of contracts when he reduced agricultural interest from its really insane level to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and even cancelled some farm debts by decree (June 1, 1933). Schacht, as president of the Reichsbank, violently opposed this reduction of interest, which seemed to Darré absurdly slight. Hugenberg clung to his plan; in addition, he threw Danish butter, which had done so much political damage in Germany, out of the country by means of high customs duties, thereby driving up milk and butter prices. Then Hitler justified this by saying that the peasantry was so important that for their salvation even unpopular measures, such as the raising of prices, must be taken.

Thus began the short-lived era of 'German Socialism'.

The different sections of the German economy were linked by a broad and varied network of organizations. There were the *Normenverbände* (associations for the maintenance of industrial standards); there were organizations for common purchase of raw materials, for distributing orders, for advising producers, for the rational organization of production, and for maintaining relations between complementary plants. This highly developed and efficient system of organizations culminated in the powerful cartels aimed at maintaining high prices. These associations not only did not disappear, but they seemed to the National Socialist planners like a ready-made framework for a future National Socialist economic order. Among younger men it was almost a matter of course to call this future economic order 'socialism'. The twenty-six-year-old Baldur von Schirach, leader of the Hitler youth, who could boast of standing close to Hitler, declared bluntly in those revolutionary June weeks: 'A socialist and anti-capitalist attitude is the most salient characteristic of the Young National Socialist Germany'.

Despite the rhetoric, these words did express the sound sentiment that socialism, like every great political idea, demanded above all a mental attitude on the part of the people, and that objective conditions were only secondary. But if this socialism were to be described in economic terms, it was clear that it could not mean an egalitarian elimination of private property. On the contrary, private property was not to be eliminated, but restored; for in this view, capitalism was the real enemy of private property, while socialism meant that one man's property would be equal—in importance and dignity—to another's.

For private property—in Hitler's view—belonged, along with superior strength, superior intelligence, and higher discipline, to the characteristics by which the higher race is distinguished. The uneven distribution of wealth came from the same causes as the organization of nations; from the interaction between races of different 'value'; from the superiority of the stronger race over the weaker. As soon as these two racial types

came together, or, in Hitler's words, 'as soon as this process of nation and State formation was initiated, the Communist age of society was past. The primitive faculty of one race creates different values from the more highly developed or divergent faculty of another. And consequently, the fruits of labour will be distributed with a view to achievement'—and with this ponderous and tiresome racial argument Hitler comes to the same result as the most common old-fashioned Liberals: 'The idea of private property is, therefore, inseparably bound up with the conviction that the production of men varies in essence and in value'.

This means: the 'better race', because the more creative one, deserves more property. But only because it is the more creative one; property is justified by nothing else. For 'common good' always dominates private interest; this is 'socialism', and property could not continue to exist without this socialism.

The intellectuals who led the National Socialist 'Combat League of the Middle-Class Tradespeople' now wanted to put this socialism into serious practice. Out of the existing economic organizations they wanted to create an apparatus which would give small capital the same advantages as big capital: lower operating costs, easier access to raw materials, wider information on the marketing situation, etc.; but would not destroy the independence of small business. At the same time, the monopolies were to be investigated, and where they could not prove their necessity for the 'common good', they were gradually to be dissolved. In this brand of socialism, property would be retained and even protected, but only in so far as it could be shown that it served the 'common good'.

These economic control organizations, strengthening small business for competition with big business and controlling the operation of monopolies, have been termed 'estates', or, in Italy, 'corporations': the 'corporate State', a favourite project of Catholic social politicians of the 'Quadragesimo anno' school, seemed to many the ideal economic form for the Third Reich.

The man who pressed these projects was Otto Wagener. He had been a major in the German Army, then leader of a Free Corps, which after the German collapse had fought independently against the Red Army in the Baltic; he now headed the economic section in the Brown House, which Hitler had wanted to dissolve at the time of Gregor Strasser's fall. It still existed, to the great distress of Wilhelm Keppler, who, in Hitler's presence, had given Papan and Baron von Schroeder his word that National Socialism would engage in no foolish economic experiments.

Hitler personally had little understanding of the controversy. What attention he did give economic matters was directed towards great State projects such as motor highways; mass undertakings which would put masses of men back to work overnight. He personally hardly wasted a thought on the corporate State. His great goal for the future was the creation of a new man.

The idea that material conditions could mould the spirit of a generation was profoundly alien to him; on the contrary, he saw in material circumstances the product of a spiritual condition, of a '*weltanschauung*' as he called it. This urge to create a new *weltanschauung* gave the movement its religious streak, and in Hitler was a true religious passion. In his eyes, political activity was tantamount to educating people in a new faith; he did not seek to change the institutions of society, but its state of mind, following Machiavelli's counsel to leave outward conditions essentially in their old form, but to work on people from within. Although he claimed that he would protect and restore the institution of the family that had been damaged by the general social disintegration, he aimed really to uproot the youth and tear them away from their families; '... and so we shall take the children away from you and educate them to be what is necessary for the German people', he cried on June 17, to the 'isolated persons who think that they can no longer adapt themselves to circumstances'. Yes, perhaps they could no longer adapt themselves, but 'you will pass away, and after you will come the youth which knows nothing else'.

This attempt to dissolve the family found and moulded the suitable human implements. On June 18 Hitler conferred on the leader of his 'Hitler Youth', his friend, Baldur von Schirach, the title 'Youth Leader of the German Reich'. Schirach, like many others in the movement, was a renegade from Germany's former ruling class, in this respect comparable to Prince August Wilhelm. He was the son of a theatre director in Weimar; his mother, the American-born Emma Middleton Lynah Tillon, claimed two signers of the Declaration of Independence among her ancestry. As a student, he had been obliged to resign, under unpleasant circumstances, from an exclusive fraternity, and from that time on he had hated the upper crust of his own generation. Although strikingly handsome, his face had the banal and inexpressive quality that characterized his verses; for he wrote verses in which he called Hitler 'Germany's greatest son', and expressed amazement that this 'genius grazing the stars' had remained a man like you and me. He was violently opposed to the old Christian God and carried his devotion to Hitler so far as to marry his Leader's extremely youthful protégée, Henny Hoffmann, the daughter of the truncated and jocose photographer.

Schirach, like most of the National Socialist 'co-ordinators', had the good fortune to find a people which had already been thoroughly organized into clubs and great centralized organizations. It has been estimated that towards the end of 1932 no fewer than twelve million young Germans out of a population of sixty-six millions were organized into youth associations, for the most part sport groups; these associations, in turn, were bound together in a 'Reich Committee of German Youth Associations', a bureau with innumerable desks and card indexes. The co-ordination of the youth began, true to form, with the occupation of this

office by some uniformed young men (April 5, 1933). 'A year ago', even the *Völkischer Beobachter* lamented ironically, 'the Reich leadership had only two rooms, and not very large ones, in the Brown House in Munich. Today it is a whole four-storey building, and even now it is too small for the apparatus, which is growing and growing. . . .' Cheered by the growth of this apparatus, Hitler now began to make speeches in which he promised that National Socialism would endure for centuries, because it was more than a political movement. In a speech of March, 1934, he described what had really happened in the great revolution of the preceding spring. Not the conquest of power, not the creation of new political conditions, not the economic measures had been the decisive factor—no, 'decisive, in the last analysis, is that in this year we created the basis for a German rebirth, which will perhaps be realized in a hundred, two hundred, or three hundred years'.

It is such certainty of a blessed future that can give a man the strength for shameless deeds in the present. The National Socialists overran their 'friends' to whom, five months earlier, they had bound themselves by oaths and words of honour; on June 21, the S.A., pistol in hand, stormed the meeting-places and offices of the German National Combat Ring throughout Germany; there were shooting and casualties; Göring had the leaders arrested by his police chiefs. Hugenberg sent a courier to Hindenburg in distant Neudeck for help, but Hindenburg did nothing to save any of the old parties, Left or Right.

Next day, Frick, the Minister of the Interior, suppressed the Social Democratic Party. From their exile in Czechoslovakia the party's committee built an underground organization, which at times attained considerable size, but lacked experience and suffered grave setbacks; yet, in spite of all weaknesses, the organization (at least up to 1938) was able to furnish the world with the most extensive and reliable information on occurrences in the factories and occasionally even in high Government circles. The greater experience of the Communists in illegal work now made itself felt, but also led to actions of excessive rashness. It is likely that there was considerable treachery in the ranks, and even now Social Democracy was regarded as the main enemy. Ernst Thaelmann, the Communist Party chairman, arrested on the day after the Reichstag fire, had been buried alive ever since, sharing this fate with many of his party comrades. The Social Democratic leader, Paul Loebe, disappeared into prison for a long term; others were sent to concentration camps for an unlimited period. Johannes Stelling, a member of the Social Democratic Party Committee, was murdered; several of the party leaders committed suicide.

On June 21, the S.A. had fired on Hugenberg's youth organization; the day after, it struck in Munich against the Bavarian People's Party, with whom the National Socialists shared the Government. The Bavarian People's Party in Munich maintained connections with the Clerical Party

leaders in Austria; the National Socialists spoke of treason, occupied the party offices of the Bavarian People's Party, arrested members and confiscated property. This was a token of what Brüning's Centre Party might expect. It had been stipulated in Rome that Catholic priests might no longer belong to a political party; the National Socialists saw to it that there was no party to which they could belong.

The parties now quickly collapsed. Forsaken by Hindenburg, Hugenberg resigned from his two economic Ministries on June 27; next day the German Nationalist Party declared itself dissolved. The Centre under Brüning tried to carry on negotiations for another week; then Brüning resigned from the leadership, and on July 5 what was left of the party committee announced that the party had voluntarily dissolved itself. Hitler promised that several of its deputies might enter the National Socialist Reichstag fraction as guests. But then he immediately had prominent members of the Centre arrested and tried for alleged embezzlements. They were dragged through the streets, forced to draw carts and wear humiliating signs around their necks. Some of them were sent to concentration camps, as though they had been Social Democrats or Jews. Those arrested included priests.

The great event, the 'second revolution' for which Röhm and his followers had been clamouring for months, seemed imminent. Churches, economics, political parties—nothing and nobody had been able to resist. The 'reaction' seemed beaten on the whole front. Again the goal appeared to be reached at last; eleven months after Hitler had missed it first, stopped by Hindenburg. These times were definitely gone; Hindenburg could no longer threaten him with the big stick.

But he did. On June 29 the President summoned Hitler to Neudeck, and made serious representations to him regarding the initiated destruction of the Protestant Church. As he had done on some previous occasions, for example before the fall of Groener, he put his verbal reproaches in writing and published them. He spoke of 'anxiety for the freedom of the Church'. If the attacks were continued, let alone intensified, they 'cannot fail to cause grave damage to the nation and the fatherland, and national unity will inevitably suffer'; Göring's dictatorship over the Church must cease. This was the first public remonstrance Hitler had received from Hindenburg since he had become Chancellor.

Now would have been the moment for Hitler to stick desperately to his policy and his plans—if he had had a policy and a plan. But he had only a tactical method. He had only tried to find out how far he could go without resistance. Now, here was resistance, and this resistance did not lie only in Hindenburg's limited insight or stubborn will. The old man was fundamentally right. The revolution had reached the point where it could become a danger to its leader himself.

Therefore Hitler obeyed Hindenburg at once. Church questions were taken out of Göring's hands and transferred to the more moderate Frick.

Hossenfelder vanished completely from the scene. The German Christians gave up their insistence that only Aryans could be Christians; they also abandoned their plan to fuse the two main branches of German Protestantism, Calvinists and Lutherans, into a uniform German Protestantism. It was, however, conceded to the Lutherans that one of their number would become 'Reich Bishop'. To the pious Christians it seemed a victory that the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the reformers would remain the foundation of the Protestant faith. But it was conceded to the German Christians that new elections be held for the democratic 'Church parliament', the highest legislative body of the Church - the old method of conquering democracy through democracy. The 'German Christians' were successful and elected Müller 'Reich Bishop'.

On July 13 Hitler announced to his Reichs President that the 'German Christians' had reached an agreement with the Church and that peace had been restored. As a born politician, he had recognized the decisive instant between stubborn persistence and inevitable retreat more clearly than had his co-workers. Having withdrawn a step in the Church question, he now realized that in economic matters National Socialism had at various points passed the limits of the possible. He adopted Keppler's policy and hastily commanded the waves to stand still.

True to an old custom, he assembled his S.A. leaders for this purpose in Bad Reichenhall, a spa near his mountain home (July 2, 1933). Here he declared, as though he had never so much as mentioned a continuation of the revolution: 'I shall proceed ruthlessly against a so-called second revolution, for such a revolution could have chaotic consequences. . . .' And hinting that he feared opposition in his own ranks, he added: 'Anyone who rebels against the National Socialist State power will be seized with an iron fist, regardless what camp he is in'.

Here Hitler was speaking to the egotistic and faint-hearted band which in constant panic had urged him to retreat all through the year 1932, in order that the party should obtain a few comfortable jobs. Now it was he who demanded retreat; but again his meaning was: no jobs. For 'no second revolution' meant exactly this.

The mass of the armed bohemians had grounds for bitterness. With giant steps the Leader was passing over his most loyal followers, those Uprooted and Disinherited, whose sole remaining hope in life had been the party. 'True, R. W. Darré became Minister of Food Supply in place of Hugenberg; though not exactly an 'old fighter' (and for this reason blindly devoted to Hitler personally), he was a man with National Socialist ideas; but he was forced to forget all about his two per cent interest. Gottfried Feder, who had promised that rapacious capital would be brought to its knees, was lucky to get the post of under-secretary in the Reich Ministry of Economics— a humiliating position, for here Feder became the subordinate of another of National Socialism's un-

knowns. His new superior was almost a stranger to the party, but familiar to the stock exchange and the financial sections of the 'Jewish business Press': he was Doctor Karl Schmitt, general director of the largest German insurance company. A more pronounced representative of rapacious capital would have been hard to find; Schmitt had spent his life lending money and collecting interest; he had literally bought his way into the National Socialist Movement by giving the party generous aid in hard times. In his new post he was really a substitute for a man whose name was a battle-cry against any kind of socialism and who even now refused to join the party: Doctor Hjalmar Schacht, president of the Reichsbank.

The new policy of July, 1933, was a counter-revolution, as far-reaching as the erstwhile revolution supposedly had been. The armed bohemians had been rebuffed; now the middle class was openly betrayed; both, because only in this way did it seem possible to satisfy the proletarian masses. As Hindenburg had said, the 'most urgent task was to solve the unemployment problem'. What Schleicher had desperately attempted 'in opposition to the laws of economic reason', National Socialism had to deliver, if necessary in opposition to its own ideals and programmes. The shortest road to this solution--as the Social Democratic unions had realized for years--was to set capitalism, or rather the capitalists, in motion again. The employers had to be persuaded to provide work; masses of jobs had to be improvised and available jobs broadly distributed. Life or death of National Socialism depended on making the workers workers again. And so, as it developed, the uprooted proletariat was the greatest obstacle in the path of a middle-class corporate State.

With all the strength of his changeable nature, Hitler led the campaign for the protection of the economic age he had so despised. Four days after his condemnation of the second revolution, he gathered his *stall-holders* in the Chancellery. He roared at them that in future he desired no so-called economic revolutions; that the eternal 'co-ordinating' must cease; that there would be no corporate development, although he himself had promised it; and above all, that the job-hunters who had not yet obtained their piece of pie should not get the idea of taking it by force--if for no other reason, because many of them were know-nothings. It was a startling turn, comparable to the 'New Economic Policy' of the Bolsheviks in 1921. 'A business-man', cried Hitler, 'must not be deposed if he is a good business-man but not yet a National Socialist; and especially not if the National Socialist who is put in his place understands nothing of economic affairs. By theoretical co-ordinations we don't get bread for one worker. We shall not eliminate unemployment by economic commissions, organizations, constructions, and theories. . . .' One would not have believed him to be the same Hitler who had cried out that economic affairs were 'something secondary' and must 'serve the nation'. 'We must not reject practical experience', he cried, 'because it

is opposed to some preconceived idea'—and it would have been hard to find any more annihilating criticism of the National Socialist idea. 'If we come before the nation with reforms, we must also prove that we understand things and can master them'—a reflection which would not have been irrelevant even before January 30, 1933. The prophet who had promised fourteen years before to die for his immutable programme now abjured it with the banal justification: 'The important thing is not programmes and ideas, but daily bread for seventy million people'. Two weeks earlier he had proclaimed the permanent revolution; now he said: 'The revolution is no permanent condition'; and the art was to halt a revolution 'at the proper moment'. 'People should not look around to see if there is something left to revolutionize'; they should conquer and secure the positions and 'gradually occupy them with the best talents'. This was an admission that his élite was anything but the best; in reality, the whole National Socialist method of forming an élite consisted, not in seeking out the best, but in the training of average—and often less than average—men to a certain political usefulness.

Up till then the National Socialists had 'behaved like fools, over-throwing everything'—and stolen and blackmailed in the process, he might have added. This must stop; and such methods were no longer needed, because the party had already won uncontested power: 'The party has now become the State'. And so 'we can enforce our will everywhere'. But not—this was what he meant—in the asinine way we have been doing. For 'history will not judge us by whether we have arrested as large a number of business leaders as possible, but by whether we have created work'. Nothing was gained by destroying intellects and talents that resisted; the important thing was to make them stop resisting. The stream of the revolution, said Hitler, must be brought into the safe channel of evolution, and 'the main point in this respect is the education of the individual'; 'the people who embody the present state of affairs must be educated in the National Socialist State conception'. It is characteristic that this brand of education, seemingly so self-reliant but actually so supple and ready to compromise, began with a retreat.

This halt in the revolution was exactly what Machiavelli demanded of the State reformer who did not want to be a tyrant. The interruption of 'co-ordination' was soon expressed in action. Hess issued an order to cease molesting the department stores; Ley gave up the idea of forcing the employers' associations into the Labour Front. Wagener and his whole following were removed overnight from the party leadership, and Wilhelm Keppler, who was primarily responsible for the halt in co-ordination, officially entered the Brown House as well as the Chancellery as Hitler's personal 'deputy for economic questions' (July 13). Robert Ley, availing himself of his powers as organizational leader of the party, summarily dissolved the Combat League of Middle-Class Tradespeople early in August. Schmitt, the Minister of Economics, made it known on

August 13 that the corporate development must be abandoned; Hess ordered an end to all talk of corporations, which he branded as high treason. This was bitter earnest. Wagener and several of his following were sent to concentration camps. This was not only because they had been too idealistic; it was also a case of the successful bandits locking up those who had been less successful.

After stormy weeks that shook its very foundations, the Third Reich decided for peace and order. Intentionally, though not always very methodically, the revolution had been steered to a certain point and then held back. In any case, Hitler dominated the storm and made it clear that what he called revolution would not be an upheaval.

After his peace speech of May 17, critics abroad admitted for the first time that he had spoken like a statesman. Now, after a halt had been called in the revolution, voices arose in Europe saying that he really was a statesman. The first important treaty of the Third Reich with a foreign Government matured in this mood. On July 8 the draft of a Reich Concordat was signed in Rome; twelve days later the two parties exchanged letters of ratification. On the same day *The Times* of London, hitherto critical towards the Third Reich and even now less benevolent than the Rothermere Press, devoted a thoughtful and friendly discussion to Hitler's speech against revolution and co-ordination. The article did, it is true, deplore the atrocities; but then it went on to say:

Herr Hitler is certainly not devoid of ideals. . . . He undoubtedly desires to re-inculcate the old German virtues of loyalty, self-discipline, and service to the State. Some of the grosser forms of post-war demoralization have been checked under the new régime; and Herr Hitler will win support which may be very valuable to him if he will genuinely devote himself to the moral and economic resurrection of his country.

Moral aims were ascribed to the régime of concentration camps; and English support of all sorts—obviously economic and diplomatic—was promised if Hitler adhered to his policy of pacification and really put an end to the revolutionizing and co-ordination. He was even assured that there would be no objection to the secret German rearmament of which everyone was aware. 'Even the passion for "defence sports", which is bringing striplings and learned professors together at practice on the rifle range, will not altogether be condemned if the training be really confined to the art of defending their country—even although no other country is in the least likely to attack it.'

As though in answer to these remarks, Hitler on the following day made it clear to a gathering of S.A. men in the city of Dortmund that he meant to devote himself above all to the moral resurrection of Germany; the thing, he said, was to educate people, not to stand institutions on their heads. And education, he declared, faithful to his old theory of propaganda, meant a spiritual driving of the masses, until they knew no will

other than that of the leadership: 'The German people must put itself a hundred per cent in the service of our idea. . . . We must educate millions of men to fit into our State. . . .'

On July 14 the Cabinet, which since March 23 had been making all the laws without bothering the Parliament or the President, issued a decree 'against the formation of new parties'. The first paragraph ran: 'In Germany the National Socialist German Workers' Party is the sole existing political party'.

The one-party system, which had been in power for years in Russia, Italy, China, and Turkey, had come to Germany. This system has been called dictatorship, meaning despotism, but this does not express its essential character. A despotism ignores the will of the people; but these new States of the armed intellectuals take the will of the people so seriously that they create it and shape it themselves—or so they think; Hitler called this 'education'. For this they use the methods which they have preserved from the democratic surroundings of their origins. Although all other parties have been destroyed, the concept of the party has remained; elections, parliaments, messages to the people, consent of the legislative body, plebiscites—continue to be the salient features of public life, and have even acquired a higher solemnity. The outward forms seem scarcely changed, and Machiavelli might well be pleased; for his disciples, by using the methods of democracy more adroitly and cynically than the democrats themselves, have fathomed the banal secret that one can do what one wants with men, as soon as one brings them to want it themselves.

But the course of history reveals a higher secret. At the height of his victory, the victor retreated in many places, seemingly of his own free will, changed his plans, disappointed his own followers, adapted himself to necessity. And the true secret of political victory is contained in this Hegelian necessity: to know what one wants, and to want what the people want, but do not yet know.

OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY

IN THE summer of 1933, Vernon Bartlett, the British journalist, took a trip through National Socialist Germany, and on his return he published a book of impressions. 'I do not believe—and most emphatically do not believe—' he wrote, 'that Germany wants war. Not yet! And it will not be her fault alone if she ever does.'

Hitler—this was Bartlett's conviction—was far too concerned with the internal, and especially economic, reconstruction of his country to think of war. The Englishman had astonishing ideas regarding the shape of this reconstruction: 'Hitler, like Gandhi, wants a return to the spinning-wheel, not only because he is an economic nationalist, but because he believes in simplicity. The most important feature of the German Revolution is that it is, in essence, a reaction against excessive materialism.'

This was Bartlett's way of saying what many Germans, notably Schacht, had been preaching for years: that Germany must base herself on the home soil, save, live frugally, and work twelve hours a day, and this should continue for a generation, as Frederick the Great had demanded in his time. Schacht continued his sermon under the Third Reich: 'Economic self-abnegation and readiness to content ourselves with reduced luxury expenditures'—this, he declared on July 31 in a radio speech addressed to the United States, was the essence of the new Germany; today many were working voluntarily for the community at reduced wages. Writers like Oswald Spengler held up frugality and hard labour to the German people as the supreme blessing. In his campaign speeches of February and March, Hitler had appealed to the pride of his audience by promising them the greatness of a hard life. The fight for work, he said some months later, was Germany's war, and here victory was in the offing; Germany needed no other wars and victories.

Through want to greatness, through hunger to power—this was the interpretation put on the first economic measures of the National Socialists by several foreign observers; this was the only connection they could see between German economic policy and National Socialist power politics. At the end of August, John F. Thelwall, commercial attaché at the British Embassy in Berlin, reported to his Government with scarcely concealed admiration that in many spheres the supporters of the new German Government were willing, for the sake of their principles, to renounce economic and political advantage. The standards of a democratic, individualistic, and capitalist State like Great Britain, he said, did not apply; and what surely seemed most startling of all to a

foreigner was that, where party ideals and economic necessities came into conflict, it was always the ideals that won out.

The persecution of the Jews seemed an outstanding example of Nazi indifference to economic expediency, and it is probable that Thelwall had this particularly in mind. In reality, the treatment of the Jews exemplified the extreme concern of the Third Reich with economic matters after the first revolutionary holiday. True, the Jews were expelled from some intellectual professions at the very start, and beyond a doubt German economic life and technology lost valuable workers without any pressing necessity, as for example in the field of chemical research, where Jews were especially prominent. But these Jews were not driven out for reasons of political idealism; it was merely that unemployed National Socialist intellectuals wanted jobs. In the main, the régime distinguished for a long time between useful and non-useful Jews. Jewish lawyers and civil servants were mercilessly removed, but Jewish doctors received much better treatment; despite all the fury against the 'Jewish mind', indispensable Jewish economic journalists long retained their positions on the business Press; Jewish technicians kept their places in industry for an astonishingly long time; after the first boycott mood had cleared, Jewish business-men were graciously assured that they had nothing further to fear, and some were prevented by the authorities from emigrating or liquidating their businesses—for suddenly they had ceased to be Jews and become employers, and employment was what mattered most to the régime. Consequently there was a tendency to persecute and dismiss Jewish employees and white-collar workers.

In the middle of 1933 the first Jewish refugees appeared in foreign capitals with *exposés* of conditions in Germany. But from within Germany, from the Jewish masses who had remained behind, the reports became more and more reassuring: things were not really so bad. In some cities, it was true, as in Julius Streicher's Nuremberg, the restaurants and cafés were closed to Jews and in general it was made hard for them to leave their houses; these cities achieved world fame by their brutalities. But in most towns the treatment of the Jews became more moderate; and their businesses, like all businesses in Germany, were flourishing again in the economic revival.

This was the end of the talk about hunger and frugality, saving and simplicity, not to mention spinning wheels. The people should have grounds for economic satisfaction with the new régime. Addressing German captains of industry in August, Hitler sharply attacked 'primitivism and frugality' as the expression of an 'envious attitude'. In November he boasted to Ferdinand de Brinon, the French newspaperman: 'I have restored to the German people the concept of their honour'—by means of National Socialist victory celebrations. 'I will also give back to them the joy of living.'

He knew the sources of this joy of living. He had once promised the

unmarried women that under the Third Reich they would get husbands; and he kept this promise. The story that National Socialism favoured free love and illegitimate births is a childish fantasy. Since 1933 the Reich has given young couples applying for it a loan of a thousand marks on marriage, all or a part of which did not have to be returned if a number of children were produced within a specified time; during the first five years of the régime approximately 880,000 marriages were promoted by this financial aid, at times as much as 30 per cent of all marriages, and actually the greater part of this money was not repaid. Families were founded, the birth rate increased; and these new families entering the life of the nation gave whole branches of industry, from the building trades to furniture manufacture to textiles, increased employment, not to mention the jobs which the young wives vacated or never required.

Much has been said about National Socialist hostility towards female labour. In reality, women did not have to relinquish their jobs in industry to any appreciable degree; although of the new jobs that were being made and distributed, they did receive fewer than the men. Between 1933 and 1936 women's share in industrial employment sank from 29.3 to 24.7 per cent. But the number of industrial workers rose in the same period from 4,100,000 to 6,100,000; in other words, the percentage of women among the employed fell, but their absolute number rose by one quarter—all this at a time when there was as yet no question of a total mobilization of the German people for war production, rather an artificial mobilization of production for the unemployed.

Adolf Hitler, the architect and builder, erected palatial buildings for his party in Munich, and everywhere in Germany his lieutenants began to beautify their cities, to tear down old buildings and erect splendid new façades. A few years later, in faithful imitation of Napoleon III, the régime levelled whole sections of Berlin to make room for mighty temples of the new deified State; the religion of greatness put bread into the mouths of the wrecking crews.

This battle of labour was not yet the battle of rearmament, as many believed. In 1933 there was no sign of stripping off peace-time luxury, of renouncing superfluous comforts for the sake of military necessities, of saving materials and labour power for weapons and war supplies—despite the scarcity of raw materials. Instead of this, a public demand for luxuries was almost forcibly encouraged; theatres, museums, monuments were erected, merely to find employment for jobless hands.

Almost half of the potential of Germany's industry lay unused when Hitler came to power. The Reich Bureau of Statistics, using 1928 as a norm, estimated that in 1932 average production had fallen to 58.7 (and for a time lower). And even in 1928 German productive power had not been exploited to capacity, for in this year there had been an average of 1,400,000 unemployed. In the same period, from 1928 to 1932, while the index of German industrial production fell from 100 to

58·7, that of the 'world'—that is, those industrial countries of which statistics were available (exclusive of Soviet Russia)—fell only to 65·1, or, if the United States, especially hard hit by the crisis, were disregarded, only 73·4. Of all the large countries, Germany and the United States had, at the depth of the crisis, suffered the greatest loss in production; that is, they disposed of the greatest reserves in unused economic power. Both countries put a part of this unused power to work by great Government projects.

In these efforts National Socialist Germany possessed one resource of Government orders which the United States lacked: she planned to build a new army. But to revive 41 per cent of Germany's productive power, to re-employ 6,000,000 people, the planned army of 300,000 with all its needs was far from enough. In Seeckt's view, the army should in peacetime not make full use of industry's power of armament production; for a premature mass armament was in danger of soon becoming obsolete; and by keeping industry too busy, it discouraged experiments with newer and better weapons. It may be assumed that Seeckt's view, despite possible modifications, had remained that of the High Command. Consequently, no 'war economy' was built up in Germany in 1933, as has been maintained abroad: what happened was merely that an economy capable of war was better utilized and to some extent speeded up; for the economy of the modern industrial State is in itself the strongest war machine, as soon as it comes into warlike hands, the hands of the armed intellectual.

In Germany this was the case, and the German army that was now being built with the help of German industry was the army of Seeckt, not of Röhm; no monster army with which the world could be conquered, but a weapon easy to handle, mobile and sharp enough to protect Germany effectively against all possible military threats. Germany's situation in the heart of the continent, in itself a weakness for the defensive on all fronts, became, through the presence of a relatively small army, an incomparable strength for the offensive on one front. Of the four great armies which had surrounded Germany in 1914—the French, Italian, Austrian, and Russian—only the French still existed as a threat. But even France had in 1928 reduced her term of military service to one year; on paper she disposed of 428,000 soldiers at the end of 1933, but of these only 256,000 were in Europe; some 40,000 of these were no real soldiers, but only police—*garde mobile* and *gendarmes*; the rest, some 172,000, were in the Asiatic and African colonies, and more than half of these, or 87,000, were coloured, native troops. Against this divided French army a concentrated and fully equipped German force of 300,000 would have been a more than adequate counterweight, particularly as they would have been subordinated to a resolute and ruthless command, hampered by no political restrictions at home.

Aside from Germany and France, the sole military Power on the

Continent was Italy. But Italy, in the long run, was the military equal of neither France nor Germany, and in any case represented more of a threat to France than to Germany. The armies of the other countries, even of Poland, did not count by themselves—and Hitler's task, which he had already begun to solve, was to make sure that they always remained by themselves. An unknown quantity was the Soviet Union. But in 1933 Russia was shaken by an economic crisis in which hundreds of thousands died of hunger, and the ruling group, under the leadership of Stalin, had to contend with serious resistance, if not worse, in their own party. Up to 1931 Hitler had publicly expressed his doubts of Russian strength, his contempt for the inefficiency of Bolshevism, his conviction that the whole régime was crumbling; it seems that up till 1933 he did not consider Russia seriously as a military adversary.

It was for an explicitly limited task—to make Germany superior to an isolated foe—that the German army was first planned and created; then, with changing political situations, this army several times changed its form, size, and aims. To provide weapons, uniforms, and lodging for this army in its first moderate form was a great economic task, but none which could have set all German industry in motion. Although expansion and rearmament of the German armed forces had been under way for more than a year, since Papen's régime, the German troops still used wooden cannon and sham tanks in the autumn manoeuvres of 1933. Göring and Milch displayed tremendous energy in building an air fleet, but even their work was limited for the present to the building or re-modelling of factories.

The German *Luftwaffe* was long a menacing legend before it became serious reality. Reports on feverish German plane construction spread abroad, and were presumably inspired by the German Government in order to spread fear at a time when reality was none too impressive. From the start the strongest element in German aviation was its human material, a young generation filled with enthusiasm for flying, which had learned a primitive flying technique in great 'air-sport associations'. Already, before 1933, these air-sport associations, in some ways resembling the combat leagues, had been a part of the German political picture. Even the Social Democratic movement and the trade unions had had their flying associations with membership numbering tens of thousands. In the western countries there were no comparable organizations; they existed only in the Soviet Union, and it seems that Göring, the aviator, took Russia seriously as a military Power long before Hitler. A special skill, widespread among the younger German fliers, was that of gliding. Gliders made use of the rising columns of air which the science of aerodynamics had discovered in the vicinity of mountains, cloud formations, and even cities, with their steep walls. Springing from column to column, these fliers could drift and glide for hundreds of miles. The art of gliding was perfected in Germany when the restrictions of Versailles

made it impossible for the air-minded youth to fly motored planes—one more example of how obstacles produce great accomplishments; in this way large numbers of young men had achieved a knowledge of winds, clouds, and weather which later proved of immense benefit to motorized aviation.

To create an adequate air fleet for these young men was an undertaking that took time; German industry, though highly efficient in most fields, was backward in motor production; plane construction on a large scale would require a great improvement in quality as well as quantity. The most ambitious effort of German aviation up to that time, the construction in 1929-30 of a plane capable of crossing the ocean by the firm of Dornier (the so-called DoX), had failed as a result of weakness in motor construction; and in the end Dornier had recourse to American motors.

Production of internal-combustion engines, primarily in fulfilment of State orders, was from the start a central point in Hitler's economic programme. There are no statistics covering airplane construction, but the related field of automobiles shows an increase far above that of general production: in 1932 approximately 43,000 private automobiles were built; in 1933 more than twice as many, approximately 93,000, or nearly as many as in 1929; in 1934 the figure had risen to 147,000—still none too impressive compared to the 4,500,000 in the United States in 1929, the 2,100,000 in 1934, or even the modest 256,000 in England in 1934.

The acceleration of machine construction points to an early and systematic motorization of the army. It could not be denied that German industry was working for this army; but it was only a fraction of its work, and the main problem remained unemployment. Konstantin Hierl, the National Socialist proponent of the mass army, was consoled with the leadership of the 'Labour Service'—seemingly a mass army for putting men back to work. Under Papen and Schleicher it had still been voluntary in form, but now—at the beginning of 1934—it became formally compulsory, though in practice compulsory only for a section of the gradually diminishing unemployed. Formally, every young German of nineteen was to enter the Labour Service for half a year; since every year 540,000 young men became eligible, the service should have embraced 270,000 men. They led a military life, lived in camps, were commanded by officers, learned to stand, march, run, jump, climb, crawl, like soldiers. Their chief implement was the shovel, and in addition to its normal functions, they learned to handle it like a rifle: above all, they learned obedience and the fear of their superiors.

But the High Command kept insisting that all this was useless from a military standpoint: when the time came for the army itself to take over the young people, they would have to be taught everything from the beginning. For what few weapons were produced went almost entirely

to the Reichswehr. With his stern belief in specialization, Hitler insisted that professional officers understood nothing of politics, but that the purely technical handling of arms could be put into no better hands. Therefore, the Labour Service was to labour; it performed those gigantic works which no one else performed because they held out no promise of profit. Woods were cleared and levelled for farm land, dykes built, marshes drained, dry land irrigated. When, with the passing years, normal economic life demanded more and more labour, the Labour service lost its importance as a haven for the unemployed; and in time it was overshadowed by the troop organized by Doctor Karl Todt, which first built the new motor highways and later the 'West Wall'. The construction of highways began in September, 1933, with some thirty thousand workers, increasing in the next years to an average of seventy thousand; of a projected network of approximately seventy-three hundred miles of four-lane highway, about one quarter was opened to traffic by the end of 1938.

On May 31 (while Hugenberg was still Minister of Economics), the Reich Government had decided to issue a billion in so-called 'work drafts' (*Arbeits-Schatzanweisungen*); these were negotiable certificates paid out to employers who undertook projects of 'replacement', or 'maintenance projects'. Anyone who equipped a factory with new machines or who merely had his house repainted could finance his operations with these work drafts, and his taxes were even remitted; Fritz Thyssen declared his intention of opening two new shafts in his coal mines—while the coal still lay unsaleable on the sidings. All in all, the public treasury poured out approximately three billion marks from various sources (railways, postal service, unemployment insurance) for projects which, according to the view hitherto prevailing in those times of crisis, were senseless or at least unnecessary— at any rate, gave promise of no yield; the expenditures of the Reichswehr are not included in this sum. The ideal of rational operation, through which the German economic machine had been raised to such high efficiency between 1924 and 1929, was abandoned; in many industries—though this was never made official—the Government limited the working week to forty hours, in order to distribute the available work among more hands; in some industries, as in cigar or bottle manufacture, a law prohibited the use of machines in order to provide work for more manual workers. The employers' associations in the province of West Prussia declared that their members would, in disregard of petty misgivings, 'undertake new installations beyond what was economically necessary at the time'.

There is no doubt that greater emphasis was laid on production goods than on consumers' goods; greater emphasis on machines, farm tools, industrial semi-manufactures, than on articles going directly into consumption, such as clothing, furniture, etc. The index of employment for the production goods industries rose in 1932-34—on the basis of the

level of 1936 as evaluated at 100—from 48·8 to 78·2, or approximately 60 per cent; that for the consumers' goods industry only from 78·5 to 94·2, or exactly 20 per cent; and this more rapid tempo in production goods continued in the succeeding years. Before Hitler came to power, relatively more had been produced for direct consumption, while now greater stress was laid on increased production of capital plant, machines, factories, and farm tools.

Nevertheless, in Germany the greatest, most concentrated effort at re-employment, that embracing the largest single group of workers, was made by an industry chiefly satisfying private needs. In the first years of National Socialism no industry so increased its employment figures as construction and the related building material industry. Between 1932 and 1935 the index of employment in the construction industry rose from 19·2 to 70; in the building material industry, from 41 to 83·1; in the former an increase of over 350 per cent, in the latter of more than 200 per cent. Roughly 2,600,000 workers were involved (building trades, 1933—2,020,000, building material industry, 615,000). The construction of motor highways, with its employment of 30,000 to 70,000 workers, did not have a major effect on these figures. The main factor was that in 1932, 141,265 new dwellings were built, and in 1934, 283,995, or more than twice as many. Larger dwelling complexes than before were constructed, big buildings with more individual apartments; the statistical expression of this is that the number of buildings rises more slowly than the number of dwellings. At the same time the number of the new 'non-dwelling' constructions decreased, from 54,200 in 1932 to 52,600 in 1934.

Not by building of air fleets, but by building new housing, did National Socialism begin to revive German economic life and obtain a solid and lasting popularity. Foreign observers, it can well be understood, were more impressed by the millions of S.A. men in new uniforms. Scarcely anyone was willing to believe that the S.A. was not the coming German army, though it happened to be true. When Röhm, in an interview at the beginning of October, gave assurance that the S.A. was not an army but a new religion—'as the early Christians were bearers and warriors of their new view of life, Christianity'—to most people it sounded absurd, though actually the thought behind his words was more ominous than any warlike threat. Hitler was grieved at foreign suspicions; with righteous indignation he asked visitors what in the world led foreigners to think he wanted war. 'I have a long domestic task before me,' he said to Ferdinand de Brinon, his French visitor, in the beginning of November. 'I shall need years to reach my goal. Do you think that I want to destroy my work by a new war?' Brinon published this and similar utterances in the *Paris Matin*, which Hitler had formerly called a hotbed of Jewish lies and which actually was in a sense the organ of the Jewish bourgeoisie of France. Hitler had also said that if he wanted

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peace, all Germany wanted peace, for 'I alone decide on German policy, and if I give my word, I am accustomed to keep it'. De Brinon remarked that Ward Price, Lord Rothermere's correspondent in Germany and his unofficial ambassador to Hitler, had called Hitler sincere, and, he added, Ward Price was right.

Strange how these foreign observers, themselves half-Fascist at heart, loved to speculate about Hitler's 'sincerity'. As though he could have been lying when he maintained that he needed many years more time for his internal reconstruction! The German people needed time to adapt themselves to a far-reaching social upheaval. The National Socialist economic policy meant a return to work for millions; for even more millions it meant the final liberation from the fear of losing tomorrow the little employment they still retained. The State now seemed able to protect its people from starvation; mankind seemed to have risen one step—that is the feeling which the National Socialist revolution gave to many people. This progress had been bought with the loss of free suffrage, the renunciation of free speech, with a Press dominated by lies, with concentration camps for a minority and atrocities that could not be concealed.

Did this price have to be paid? In 1933 unemployment began to decrease all over the world. In the United States, according to an estimate of the American Federation of Labour, unemployment fell from thirteen millions to ten millions. The official German Institute for Business Research (*Konjunkturforschung*) noted in July, 1933, that in Latvia unemployment had decreased by 31 per cent from the second quarter of 1932 to the second quarter of 1933; in Rumania by 23 per cent; in Germany by only 9 per cent—for the figure of two millions, apparently a third, or 33 per cent of the total unemployed, was misleading, since it could be ascribed mainly to a regular summer rise in employment. In Great Britain the labour market had registered an improvement of 6 per cent in the course of a year. According to the index of the International Labour Office in Geneva, the level of employment for nineteen large countries had fallen from 100 in 1929 to 75 in 1932; in 1933 it rose to 78; in 1934 to 84; in 1935 to 88, or an increase of 17·3 per cent in three years; during the same period the German level of employment, according to German figures, rose from 12,500,000 to 15,900,000, an increase of 27 per cent. In a word: the 'National Socialist miracle' was neither entirely National Socialist nor entirely a miracle, but largely a part of a world recovery; though in Germany, it must be admitted, this recovery was experienced with a passion equalled nowhere else. The German Institute for Business Research also found that of the two millions who had returned to work in Germany by the end of August, some 1,400,000 would have done so without the intervention of the State, in consequence of the usual summer revival; and roughly 300,000 to 700,000 in Germany owed their re-employment to the

general world prosperity. The measures of the Hitler Government, strictly speaking—still according to the estimate of the Institute for Business Research—would only have sent 300,000 back to work.

But what was world prosperity? No longer a product of economic, but of political, forces; in most countries it had been accelerated, if not induced, by State intervention. The great world revival from which Hitler profited did indeed result from a general political exertion, from State intervention in economic life. And that conservative country in which the State hesitated to intervene suffered the consequences. In France employment had fallen more slowly during the great crisis than in Germany, from 100 in 1930 to 80.9 in 1932; but while in Germany, England, America, and the world in general employment then began to rise, the French index continued to fall to 73.5 in 1935.

All over the world attempts to create separate national spheres of prosperity were in progress. The German developments were merely a part of this picture, though indeed the Germans were more methodical than anyone else in their international efforts. No other country was so adept at co-ordinating economic policy, diplomacy, and propaganda. The outside world, doubting more and more the wisdom of its past policy, was more receptive than before to German complaints. Already Schleicher had blamed—not entirely without justification—the decisions of Ottawa for the special distress of German agriculture; now Hjalmar Schacht began to complain of the foreign tariffs which forced Germany—so he said—to defend herself with the harshest and indeed most unscrupulous means.

From time to time in former years the condition of German foreign trade had been disquieting; often imports had been billions in excess of exports; or, to speak in the language of private business, more had been bought than could actually be paid for. But in those days the whole world had been glad to lend Germany money, and had not pressed for repayment. In 1928 German imports had amounted to 14,000,000,000 marks, while exports had been only 12,300,000,000; but the difference had been almost made good by foreign long-term loans to the amount of 1,460,000,000 marks, not to mention short and medium-term loans and stock flotations. But after 1930 no further long-term loans were offered, and where possible the short-term loans were called in; the mass of international trade decreased throughout the world, and prices kept falling. In 1932 Germany exported goods valued at only 5,700,000,000 marks, but imported only 4,700,000,000—a complete upset of the trade balance; borrowed imports had ceased to exist, and every pound of imported goods was honestly covered by exports. There is a small source of error in these figures; up to June, 1932, they included the so-called 'payments in kind' with which Germany defrayed a part of her reparations; but the figures nevertheless reflect the general picture with

fair accuracy. In 1933, the year of recovery, German exports continued falling to 4,800,000,000 marks; imports sank to 4,200,000,000.

Germany's exports and imports had fallen off by almost two-thirds; the patient seemed to be scarcely breathing. And yet the figures are misleading; for the seemingly fatal blood-letting conceals a remarkable gain which became evident only beginning in 1932; a gain which was most helpful to National Socialist trade and decisively influenced the economic structure of the Third Reich. The diminishing trade figures of Germany and the other European countries did in one way present an exaggerated picture. For while the bulk of goods exchanged on the world market was dwindling, prices crashed at an even faster rate; consequently, if in one year exports were valued at 12,000,000,000 marks and in a later year only at 4,000,000,000, this does not mean that the bulk of goods had fallen to one third. Possibly it had not even been halved; the greater part of the decline in value must be ascribed to the fall in prices. In 1927 German imports had a value of 14,200,000,000 marks and a weight of 82,200,000 tons; when in 1933 their value fell to 4,200,000,000 marks, or considerably less than one third, their weight was still 45,800,000 tons, or more than half.

This discrepancy between value and weight gives only the roughest outline of the process. Using a subtler and more accurate method, the official German statistics revealed what an advantage Germany derived from the difference between bulk and prices. This method measured the value of exports and imports, not by their actual prices, but by the prices prevailing in 1928. The figures obtained in this way do not tell how much Germany actually had to pay for her imports in a given year or how much she obtained for her exports, but how much she would have paid or received if the prices of 1928 had still prevailed in this given year. These figures alone give a true picture of the quantities exported and imported. They provide a faulty picture of the sums paid, received, or owed; but this they are intended to do; their aim is to penetrate the 'veil of money' and reveal the true quantity of goods turned over.

And here a remarkable fact comes to light. In 1932, when everyone stopped lending Germany money, Germany had been obliged to curb her imports drastically, for otherwise she would have been unable to pay for them by her reduced exports, blocked by new customs barriers. In this year the financial yield of German exports had crashed to 5,700,000,000 marks from 9,600,000,000 in the previous year; and the value of imports fell accordingly to 4,700,000,000. These were the uncorrected figures for German foreign trade. But if these sums were transposed in terms of the standard price of 1928, so that they clearly represented the real quantities, it turned out that German exports in 1932 amounted to 8,100,000,000 marks—that is, the quantity of goods exported would have brought in 8,100,000,000 marks if the prices of 1928 had still prevailed; by the same scale, the imports of 1932 amounted to

9,500,000,000 marks instead of only 4,700,000,000. In other words, according to the prices actually prevailing, exports exceeded imports; according to the prices prevailing in 1928, imports would have been higher. This meant that the goods that Germany imported or purchased since 1928 had decreased in price more than the goods that she exported or sold. This disparity in prices was Germany's gain from an apparently desperate situation. German exports consisted largely of finished manufactures; her imports largely of raw materials. The variation in the decline of export and import prices can be seen by comparing the two pairs of figures: 8,100,000,000 and 5,700,000,000 for export; 9,500,000,000 and 4,700,000,000 for import; the prices of the goods sold by Germany had fallen by 29.9 per cent, or less than a third; while the prices of the goods purchased by Germany, largely raw materials, had fallen by more than half, or 50.5 per cent.

This was the unexpected advantage which the crisis brought to a country like Germany, operating with foreign raw materials: despite greater difficulties and reduced profits in selling her own products, she obtained easier and cheaper access to raw materials. This happy accident pointed the way to German trade policy. In 1933, the first year of National Socialism, the helpful discrepancy between import and export prices remained almost as great as in the previous year, although in this year German foreign trade continued to shrink; exports reckoned at current prices fell to 4,900,000,000 marks, imports to 4,200,000,000. But, according to the prices of 1928, the relation between exports and imports remained the opposite—exports, 7,600,000,000, imports, 9,300,000,000—and this meant that, though the prices of the goods exported from Germany had continued to fall and were now 35.5 per cent below those of 1928, the prices of imports had fallen even more and stood at more than half, or 54.8 per cent below the level of 1928—so cheap had become the treasures of the world, rotting behind the customs barriers.

It was the great moment for Germany to supply herself cheaply with raw materials despite the relatively small sums which her exports provided for the purpose. Every mark was precious—and how many precious marks were still flowing uselessly out of Germany, bringing in nothing! These 'useless' sums were the money spent by Germany in servicing foreign loans; in the eyes of Hjalmar Schacht a real outrage.

When the German banking crisis broke out in July, 1931, Germany had had 23,800,000,000 marks in foreign debts, of which 10,700,000,000 were in long-term credits. Of the 13,100,000,000 in short-term credits, 6,300,000,000 had been frozen by the moratorium of September, 1931, but smaller sums had seeped away in the course of time. In February, 1933, the total German non-political indebtedness to foreign countries (including loans taken up by German States and municipalities) was exactly 19,000,000,000 marks, 10,300,000,000 of which was on a long-term basis; 4,100,000,000 in short-term credits fell under the moratorium;

the rest consisted of other short-term credits, subject to no limitation except the usual foreign currency control introduced in 1931. Altogether, Germany had, during the year 1932, paid on this debt in interest, dividends, and amortization a sum of 1,100,000,000 marks—which, if expressed in terms of raw material prices of 1928, meant more than 2,200,000,000. And the men who directed German economic life in 1933 thought only in terms of raw materials.

It was the first great accomplishment of Hjalmar Schacht to save this billion—or two billions—for Germany's raw material programme and to take advantage of the low raw material prices while they lasted. He pointed to the continued decline in German export figures, and declared that if foreign countries would not buy German manufactures, they could not expect Germany to pay her debts. At first the continued difficulties of the German export trade greatly embarrassed National Socialist propagandists; they did not know whether to attack the 'Jewish boycott' abroad or to conceal its successes from the home population. Actually the boycott had little to do with the decline in German exports; at the end of June, 1933, the Congress of German Commerce and Industry noted a sharp falling off of anti-German propaganda abroad, and thirteen months later, in July, 1934, the German Ministry of Economics published a statement to the effect that an investigation by the competent authorities had shown that the political boycott was not the decisive factor in the decline of German exports.

Shortly after Hitler came to power, Germany's foreign creditors had been forced to accept a reduction of interest on capital lent to Germany from an average of 7 to 8 per cent to an average of 5 to 6 per cent. At the end of May, 1933, Hjalmar Schacht invited representatives of the foreign creditor banks to Berlin and asked them virtually to renounce interest payments on their long-term credits. This the foreign bankers refused to do, but pointed out that in a few days the great World Economic Conference was to open in London and would solve the problem of German foreign indebtedness, like so many other problems.

The London Economic Conference of June and July, 1933, solved no problems. Conceived and summoned by Ramsay MacDonald, originally welcomed and approved by Franklin D. Roosevelt, it concentrated its efforts, after beginnings in various directions, on the question of stabilizing international currencies, on attempts to restore the lost sanctity of money. After the majesty of money had been shattered in Russia and in Germany, and had suffered grave damage in France as well, the most respected of all international currencies had begun to totter; England had taken the pound off the gold standard and reduced its value. Just as the Economic Conference was beginning its work, the United States, under the new leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt, followed the example of England; the Gold Repeal Joint Resolution of June 5, 1933, took the American currency off the gold standard. The

dollar began to slip and was later officially devaluated. It was Germany, where so much wealth had been destroyed, which now clung desperately to her currency, stabilized only a few years before. For the sake of the currency, if for no other reason, said Schacht, Germany could no longer pay her debts to foreign countries who no longer purchased her goods.

Schacht insisted that the cessation of payments was a hard blow to him, and this may be believed; he knew the importance of international credit, and he would surely have been overjoyed if foreign finance had voluntarily declared a moratorium. But certainly the rule of finance capital was crumbling, and anyone who did not want to crash with it had to help in its fall. For this he found ingenious methods. First, all interest on foreign loans was reduced from 5 per cent to a maximum of 4 per cent; even of this amount only half could be paid to foreign creditors; the other half of the interest, as well as all sums destined for amortization, had to remain in Germany; not in possession of the debtor himself, but in a 'conversion bank' to which the individual debtor made payments. The conversion bank then tendered the foreign creditor a paper called 'scrip' which for practical purposes he could spend only in Germany; moreover, the scrip was subject to an immediate discount of 40 per cent. These measures were put in the form of a law, proclaimed on June 3, 1933; on July 1 they became valid. The foreign creditors had to submit.

It was a masterpiece of official bankruptcy; a systematic robbery of foreign finance; a brilliant victory of the new State over money. The limited utility of the scrip, the constant danger that Schacht might one day devalue it to the vanishing point, made this paper a doubtful asset on the international stock exchanges. In time other sorts of paper appeared, all based on the conception that foreigners possessing wealth—claims, shares in businesses, bank deposits—should be prevented from disposing of it freely; special victims of similar regulations were the German Jews, who were also prevented from freely disposing of their funds within Germany; especially the liquidation of their bank deposits was made virtually impossible. In time there came to be a varied assortment of foreign claims on the different kinds of half or wholly 'blocked' deposits in Germany; these claims were traded abroad, bought and sold; they had their prices and rates, which were almost always considerably below their nominal value. For it was almost always doubtful whether such a claim could ever be collected; at best, the money could only be used in Germany; and expense, loss of time, and irritation were certain. For all these claims against blocked German accounts the expression 'blocked mark' came into use, and the different kinds of blocked mark became a currency devaluated by the State, side by side with the pound, the dollar, later—for the second time within ten years—the French franc, etc. The blocked mark repeated, though in a much-

attenuated form, the downward course of the German mark after 1919.

But only the blocked mark. The German domestic mark was in no way affected by this devaluation; the domestic mark was not devaluated, wages and prices were subjected to an iron control, and even in the following years of prosperity they rose only slightly. And equally successful was the State control over the real German mark in its foreign relations. For not only were foreign assets in Germany blocked and controlled, property or claims held by Germans abroad were likewise blocked. Restrictions on such property had been imposed by Brüning's law governing the flight of capital; at one time or another such restrictions had—even in peace—been imposed by almost all countries; but Schacht's legislation and its mode of operation held a place by themselves. Germans receiving payments from abroad had to deliver their foreign notes to the Reichsbank, which gave them marks in exchange; if they wished to make a purchase abroad, they had to obtain the necessary sum in foreign credits from the Reichsbank, or rather its *Devisenstelle* (foreign draft office); and only if the foreign draft office regarded the transaction as useful to the German economy did it provide the precious foreign cheques. It gave them more readily if the foreign goods were to be purchased in a country with which Germany had a favourable trade balance—that is, which bought large quantities of goods in Germany. A German importer might be advised to buy silk in Italy rather than in France, or to purchase wool in the Argentine instead of in Australia; vacationers who wanted to travel abroad—unless they had good reasons to the contrary, or, what amounted to the same thing, high recommendations—were definitely restricted to Italy, or, possibly, Switzerland. In this way the funds flowing back and forth between Germany and foreign countries were closely regulated, and care was taken that they should remain in exact proportion to the stream of goods actually traded. Hideous penalties were proclaimed for taking cash out of Germany. Not a mark was to go abroad for any purpose that was not covered by German sales to the country in question, and which had not been approved in advance by the foreign draft office. The German mark vanished from foreign markets as an object of trade and speculation, but remained active in the international exchange of *bona-fide* goods and services. Like the currency of most countries, it dispensed without bad consequences with the gold coverage that had formerly been regarded as indispensable, and, like the currency of most countries, it had ceased to be real money—that is, a measure of value honoured for its intrinsic value. It was merely a token of credit, strictly limited in its use, and worthless outside its assigned sphere. This process went so far that German bills, except in connection with transactions approved by the Reich, ceased to have any real value outside Germany. And so the mark, having ceased to be an independent measure of value, lost in

part the two other functions usually ascribed to money: the functions of transferring and of storing value.

It remained questionable whether Germany had saved or destroyed her currency. In any case, she removed it from the international stock exchange and, far more drastically than England, subjected it to the State. By this step Germany definitely broke with the system of international free trade which the Economic Conference in London was trying to restore. But the German delegation was not needed to paralyze this conference. For on July 3 the conference was stunned to receive a message from President Roosevelt, which called things by their proper name and announced America's withdrawal from the plans for international stabilization of currencies. Three days after Germany had stopped payments in order to rebuild her industry by her own strength, though not without stolen money, the President of the United States told the assembled financial experts of the world that a nation's internal economy was more vital to that nation's prosperity than the state of its currency; moreover, stabilization of currencies would not solve the problem of world trade; and it was more important to break down trade barriers; America the message implied—would help herself and recommended the same to all countries. This was the end of the World Economic Conference, and after a few days it 'adjourned'. Hjalmar Schacht, always at great pains to discover a similarity between the American New Deal and the economic policy of the Third Reich, gave an interview in London, on July 12, in which he said that the failure of the conference had been a good thing; that all these conferences were going the same downward path as parliamentarianism; that in world economy as elsewhere the general watchword was: no more prattling. And the world should be grateful to President Roosevelt for his withdrawal: 'For Roosevelt has in principle the same idea that Hitler and Mussolini have put into action: take your economic fate into your own hands and you will be helping not only yourselves but the whole world!'

'FRANCE IS TO BLAME'

WHEN SCHACHT lamented his own bitter fate, which compelled him to destroy Germany's credit as the only way of saving Germany, it was no mere hypocrisy. These pleas of Schacht designate the point at which Germany for the last time had the choice between two ways to win the place in the world that was due to her: the hard and slow way of using her growing power for peace and agreement, or the more showy way of taking it by force; which must inevitably lead to taking more than her due. She chose the second way. This way, no doubt, had long ago been outlined in the plans of the new rulers; but it will always be a grave question whether a happier destiny in the preceding years would have preserved her from these rulers and their dismally skillful methods.

True, in the beginning, as in all politics, a thousand principles had to be sacrificed in order that one opportunity might be seized. In the conflict between Hitler's Germany and her neighbours, of which Schacht's trade policy formed a part, Germany tried again and again to keep the peace and transform hostilities into friendships, because only in this way could her position in the heart of Europe cease to be a weakness and become a strength. For instance, National Socialist diplomacy exerted great self-discipline in abstaining from setting off the 'national dynamite' scattered through eastern Europe. Germany might, by invoking the right of national self-determination (the justice of which was incontestable), have raised claims on nearly all her frontiers. There were the German inhabitants of Danzig and those in Poland; there were the three and a quarter million Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia, forming a ring round the rest of that country; a few Germans living under a mild Danish rule in the border district of Slesvig; the Germans in the small area of Eupen and Malmédy, given to Belgium in 1919; the Germans in the Italian South Tyrol. But nowhere did National Socialism, in its first years, make any attempt to bring these Germans 'home to the Reich'. Two years before, Hitler had proclaimed that the Czechoslovakian State would have to be smashed with the help of the Sudeten Germans. Now not a word of this. The relatively small National Socialist Party of the Sudeten Germans was dissolved by the Czechoslovakian Government in October, 1933, its leaders fled to Germany, and thus perished the oldest of all National Socialist parties, the mother movement, twenty years older than the N.S.D.A.P. Many Sudeten German National Socialists were tried and imprisoned—but Germany took no notice and kept silent. From Poland came complaints about the

persecution of German minorities—official Germany, in public at least, was silent. No loud word or unfriendly act towards any of the countries in the French ring of alliances; with iron self-control the Third Reich waited for its day, which had not yet come.

For in these countries the German minorities lived on the soil of proud and jealous national States. But Austria, in her mutilated post-war form, was solely and purely a product of that Versailles world which it was the main business of German policy to rend thread by thread. Sudeten Germany, the Vistula Corridor, and German-speaking South Tyrol were territories which Czechs, Poles, and Italians could regard as their own—no one except the Austrians themselves could regard Austria as his own. No diplomacy in the world could overlook the fact that large parts, even the majority, of these Austrians, wanted, or had at one time wanted, to be united with Germany. In the disputes between the German minorities and the national Governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia, people were struggling against people; in Austria the people struggled mainly against bureaucracy and diplomacy. And so it was the internal condition of Austria which influenced German foreign policy—and not the other way round. Even those opposed to *Anschluss* admitted, in spite of themselves, how hard, indeed how impossible, it was for the little country to break inwardly with Germany. Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, for example, declared the aim of his Government to be the establishment of a 'Catholic German State'.

In March, 1933, Hans Frank, Hitler's friend, now a Bavarian Minister, took a trip round Austria making speeches against Dollfuss and the Government as though he had been home in Germany attacking Brüning or Severing; the Austrian Government deported him, and the battle was on. The Austrian National Socialists, led by Theo Habicht, a German, and an Austrian named Frauenfeld, began to hurl bombs, mostly harmless, to be sure, at Government officials and public buildings. The Government answered with arrests and established a mild sort of concentration camp. Hitler countered with a serious blow: at the end of May, Germany exacted a payment of a thousand marks from travellers desiring to visit Austria. This virtually closed the frontier; Austria's Alpine provinces had largely lived on the German tourist trade. In answer, Dollfuss suppressed the National Socialist Party and arrested its leaders; Habicht, Frauenfeld, and thousands of their supporters fled to Germany.

These National Socialists were organized into an 'Austrian Legion'; equipped with arms, even cannon, they lived in camps, ready to march at any moment; planes regularly crossed the Austrian frontier and threw down proclamations. It was an international civil war, and the National Socialists conducted it with an efficiency that might have been the envy of the Communist International. But the German Foreign Office insisted that it was all an internal affair of Austria; the Austrian National

Socialists had chosen Hitler as their Leader; this was their right and their own affair.

Dollfuss turned to the Great Powers for help. But the days were past when Germany could be frightened by frowns in London or Paris. As long as the world could come to no decisions on disarmament, it would not go out of its way for Austria, and more than a protest in words was not to be expected. On July 5, in the House of Commons, Sir Austen Chamberlain described the international menace of National Socialism with epigrammatic sharpness: 'The spirit shown within Germany to Germans is a menace to every nation beyond her borders. . . .' But Sir John Simon, the Foreign Minister, had nothing to offer Austria but 'the whole sympathy of this country'; and the Four-Power Pact, just concluded between England, France, Italy, and Germany, 'which I hope will be used to assist that country. . . .' England did not promise embattled Austria her own aid, but only that of all Europe—little more than an empty word.

It was the English Left which in those weeks made a real attempt to injure National Socialist Germany. On July 25 the Congress of British Trades Unions and the Labour Party issued a call to their members to boycott German goods. But on the Conservative side the most influential makers of public opinion opposed the boycott. In the first days of July, Lord Rothermere published another of his enthusiastic articles on the new Germany in the *Daily Mail*; in Germany, wrote the founder of the 'Empire Party', youth had seized the power of command, there had been a national awakening, an example to all the world. With the same methods Mussolini had made his country the best governed on earth, and he, Rothermere, confidently expected Hitler, who had come to power at the age of forty-three, to achieve equal successes in Germany. The simple, unadorned patriotism of Hitler and his followers was, according to Rothermere, a source of great agitation among British parlour Bolsheviks and 'culture Communists'. The most hateful detractors of Nazis, he went on, were to be found in those very sections of the British public and Press which were most enthusiastic about Soviet rule in Russia. These people had undertaken a loud campaign of slander against what they called 'Nazi atrocities', which, as everyone who visited Germany quickly discovered, consisted only of a few isolated acts, which propagandists had generalized, multiplied, and exaggerated in order to give the impression that Nazi rule was a bloodthirsty tyranny. Rothermere did not refrain from remarking that under the Weimar Republic there had been twenty times as many Jewish officials as before the war; and, as though to prove that he really knew nothing about conditions in Germany, he concluded with the remark that Hindenburg and the Crown Prince, along with Herr Hitler, constituted the centre of the edifice. These three men would go down in history as the founders of a new Germany; Hitler was a leader who had gathered

together all the valuable elements of his country for the public welfare. . . .

The growth and consolidation of National Socialist power in Germany, the broad, confused, and vain efforts at understanding on the part of public opinion in the western countries, were the real historical content of this period. But through it all the diplomats kept up their dwarfish activities: notes, memoranda, official visits, the meaninglessness of which was suspected even by the participants. This became evident when finally an attempt was made to do something for menaced Austria. The Daladier Government in France, though none too hopefully, attempted to take Sir John Simon at his word with his invocation of the Four-Power Pact and to frighten Berlin with an impressive protest. The Four-Power Pact broke down at once; Italy declared that she could participate in no common measures, since this would constitute an act of unfriendliness to Germany. On August 5 the Italian ambassador rushed to the German Foreign Office and 'in a friendly way called the attention of the Reich Government to . . .' and so on. In an equally friendly way, Neurath replied that the Reich Government was willing to suppress Habicht's radio speeches; there would be no more planes throwing down leaflets; he hoped that there would be no explosions of paper bombs, but for this Germany could assume no responsibility. Rome, highly pleased, transmitted the German promises to Paris and London, and requested these Governments to take no steps of their own.

But France insisted in London that at least France and England should take steps in common. England, indifferent to Austria and Central Europe in general, was, after the desertion of Italy, unprepared for joint action. On the morning of August 7 the French ambassador appeared alone in the German Foreign Office with his note of protest; not until the afternoon did the British chargé d'affaires put in an appearance. Both received a sharp answer such as a disunited Europe could not but expect. An official German *communiqué* on the incident approached the limits of diplomatic discourtesy:

The French ambassador stated this morning, with reference to the Four-Power Pact, that, in the opinion of the French Government, German propaganda with regard to Austria was not compatible in certain recent instances with existing contractual obligations. The ambassador was informed that the Reich Government did not consider appropriate the application of the Four-Power Pact in this form; that no contractual infringements of any kind had taken place on the part of Germany; Germany, therefore, did not regard this interference in German-Austrian affairs as permissible. The English chargé d'affaires, who appeared in the same matter in the afternoon, received the same answer.

This was possibly the most unfriendly diplomatic *communiqué* which

Germany had permitted herself since 1919 in her dealings with the victor Powers. The western Powers accepted the diplomatic defeat and did not repeat their step; they consoled themselves by stating in their Press that, after all, Hitler had promised the Italians to respect the independence of Austria. Thereupon a new statement from Berlin (August 19), semi-official and even ruder: nothing-whatever had been promised to France and England; certainly Germany had carried on friendly conversations with Italy, but these conversations were no concern of France and England; their protest had been and remained rejected.

On the day when the Italian ambassador had so amiably discussed Austria with Neurath, the Free City of Danzig and the Republic of Poland signed a treaty regarding their future relations. Negotiated by Joseph Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, and Hermann Rauschning, President of the Danzig Senate, it was the first formal peace pact between Poland and National Socialism. Up till then Danzig, within striking distance of Polish military power, had been guaranteed by the League of Nations against any possible Polish attack, and for this purpose a High Commissioner of the League lived in the Free City. Now the Danzig National Socialists renounced the protection of Geneva; Danzig and Poland agreed to settle all disputes among themselves and to cease presenting them to the League.

This was the new German line. Peace with individual neighbours—yes; peace with the whole world, as represented by the League—no!

Actually this great peace of all with all was an impossible figment of the brain, unrealizable in the world of reality. To be true and possible, it should have penetrated far deeper than the outer edges where the peoples touched one another; it presupposed a certain intimacy in the social relations between the nations; the London Economic Conference had tried to achieve such an intimacy, but with inadequate means. What was needed was a new form of life among the nations; what was offered was at best diplomatic agreements in which no two diplomats meant the same thing. To most of its English proponents, for example, collective security meant a system in which England would not have to give much help, since her responsibility was shared with so many others. But for France collective security was a condition in which everyone would have to help her with all his forces.

In French internal politics, rearmament and collective security became opposed, hostile concepts. Collective security meant: no necessity to rearm; no necessity for a larger army; hence no necessity for going back to the system of two years' service.

Without doubt, the military spirit had an even harder time in France than in the Germany of the twenties, combating the opposition of the masses; the struggle of the armed intellectuals for the working class seemed utterly hopeless. In *Au fil de l'épée*, a book dedicated to Marshal

Pétain, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles de Gaulle had written in 1932: 'Could we, indeed, conceive of life without force? . . . It is the medium of thought, the instrument of action, the prerequisite for movement, the midwife of progress. . . . Cradle of cities, sceptre of empires, grave-digger of decadence, force gives law to peoples and controls their destiny. . . .' It was a summons to the national élite to understand, not the inevitability, but the creative necessity, of violence and war; 'this abnegation of individuals for the benefit of the whole, this glorified suffering—of which troops are made—correspond most perfectly to our aesthetic and moral concepts: the highest philosophical and religious doctrines have chosen no other ideal. . . . It is time for the military élite to regain consciousness of its pre-eminent rôle, for it to concentrate on its objective, which is, quite simply, war. . . .'

Collective security or rearmament: this seemed to be the choice that was left to France. Actually, there was not even a choice. When, on September 20, the British Cabinet decided to cease pressing France to disarm, it seemed like a gesture of friendship and aid, but actually it meant that France would be left to her fate and her own strength; she must not count on England's help.

France tried to remain strong. She submitted a plan which would make German equality impossible for eight years: first, Germany would have four years in which to transform her professional army with its twelve-year period of service into a short-term militia; after another four years in which to manifest her good intentions, she would be allowed to increase her armaments somewhat, while the other Powers would have to decrease their armaments accordingly—this eight-year armaments moratorium was to be substituted for the five years proposed by MacDonald and accepted by Hitler. Whatever might be said of this plan, it could in any case be expected to halt German rearmament and save the world from a general armament race; for this reason it met with the approval of the United States. This made such an impression on Italy that she supported the plan; Hitler was shamefully forsaken by the 'great man in the south'. On September 24, the French plan, bearing the signatures of America, England, and Italy, was presented to Germany.

So this was the success of Hitler's great policy which was to split the world: the whole world formed a front against Germany! Göring flew to Rome, but Italy did not change her position, not outwardly at least. And yet, in this apparently united front there was no real unity. It was at best an agreement on a plan, no common will to carry it through, to stick together. Even if the British Cabinet had had such a will—which it decidedly had not—large sections of public opinion would not have followed it.

When in September the trial of the alleged Reichstag incendiaries began in Leipzig, a few Englishmen of the political Left, working in collaboration with German refugees, staged a 'counter-trial' in London.

All sorts of persons, some with and some without authority, appeared as witnesses and testified why, in their opinion, not the accused, but the National Socialists, and particularly Göring, had set fire to the Reichstag. The Communists had staged the affair behind a screen of supposed non-Communists; Willy Muenzenberg, a German Communist leader, had organized the whole undertaking. The results were what was to be expected. Even Sir Austen Chamberlain called the 'counter-trial' a shameless abuse of hospitality. Lloyd George, England's leader in the World War, co-author of Versailles, who had long deeply regretted his own work, said, on September 22, in a meeting at Bournemouth, that if the Powers succeeded in overthrowing National Socialism in Germany, Communism would succeed it; and that the Communists in the whole world, from Russia to America, were praying that the western nations would drive Germany into a Communist revolution.

Against this world mood, shifting between rancour and hope, tormented by the fear of irrevocable decision, National Socialist propaganda now undertook a great offensive. When the plenary assembly of the League of Nations met at the end of September, Goebbels was the German delegate. Neurath refused to let the Propaganda Minister appear as the spokesman of Germany in the assembly; but outside Goebbels found a wide audience. It was wrong, he told fellow journalists at a Press conference, to believe 'that the peoples wanted to govern themselves. They cannot and they have no desire to; they only want to be well governed.' This was what National Socialism did, said he; consequently, the Third Reich was 'an ennobled form of democracy'. It seemed as though Goebbels had been sent to Geneva to abjure all National Socialist principles, for he firmly denied that National Socialism had a 'world mission' to fulfil and that it planned the fascistization of Europe; no, National Socialism was 'a typically German phenomenon which can be explained only on the basis of German environment, German character, and German distress'; in a conversation he said that National Socialism was something so good that Germany wanted to keep it entirely for herself.

A few days later, simpler, more forceful words were addressed—not to the world, but to France alone—by Göring; as one of the military leaders of National Socialism, he invited the military leaders of France to a conference. In an interview with Jules Sauerwein, the French journalist, he made a peace proposal couched in very general terms; it was published by *Paris Soir* on October 5, and caused a great sensation. The gist of the conversation was that it would be easy to bring about peace if France were not hampered by inner strife and parliament. It was impossible, said Göring, that France and Germany should want to annihilate one another; neither of the two had ever been able to do so, and never would. France had long taken offence at the line, 'Victoriously we'll defeat the French', in a song sung by the German combat leagues.

Now Göring said: I have given orders to stop singing it. He called on the French to send him a soldier, and with him he would arrive at an agreement on certain needs of a German *Luftwaffe*. In Germany, said Göring in conclusion, the Leader desired peace, and if the Leader desired peace, the whole nation would follow him—but have you such a man in France, despite your party conflicts and your parliamentary compromises?"

Daladier replied in a speech delivered at Vichy. He asked, not without sharpness, why Germany wanted armaments when she spoke so much of peace; why she 'trained her youth for war?' But he also said: 'No one contests Germany's right to existence as a great nation. No one intends to humiliate Germany.' Despite all the brevity and coolness of these words, they were more than a French statesman had ever publicly conceded Germany since Versailles; and even when Daladier asked: 'What does Germany want? Why all these masses marching and drilling . . .?' it sounded like a question demanding a reply in a personal conference, a discussion between one chief of State and another—which was just what Hitler wanted.

But French foreign policy was still dominated by the party of collective security; on September 24 the Great Powers had agreed on the plan for an eight-year quarantine, and when the Disarmament Conference met in October, it would have this plan to deal with. On October 13 Hitler sent Hans Luther, his ambassador to Washington, to call on Secretary of State Cordell Hull, and, according to the official German news bureau, Luther learned that the American Government was determined that no pressure should be put on Germany and that no decisions should be made contrary to justified German wishes. In fact, the American State Department 'expressly denied that any reports on German armament were at hand'. Perhaps the sanguine German ambassador had heard too much. On the 14th the bureau of the conference met in Geneva, and Sir John Simon, as spokesman of the British delegation, declared that he still adhered to the plan for an eight-year transitional period. Germany's protests were rejected.

In his great peace speech of May 17 Hitler had declared that if the other Powers meant to 'do violence' to Germany by outvoting her, their sole purpose could be 'to remove us from the conferences'. But: 'The German nation has character enough not to force its collaboration on other nations in such a case; though with a heavy heart, it will draw the necessary consequences. As a people constantly defamed, it would be hard for us to continue membership in the League of Nations.'

Now Germany had been 'outvoted'. Here was a splendid opportunity to teach the world once and for all that the Leader's words must be taken seriously and to carry the fight over European foreign policy to the peoples themselves with an issue which, in England and in France as well, might stir up one political party against another; and with which

he hoped to unleash within his own people a surge of popular enthusiasm even greater than in the spring. And it was a unique opportunity to show that the apparent unity of the world against Germany would not withstand a test.

On the night of October 14 Germany announced her withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations.

It was one of those political blows in which Hitler has always been a master; a combination *blitz* which he hurled in three or four directions at once, almost always choosing the right moment, as a rule uncannily sure of success. In the same hour he dissolved the Reichstag; new elections were to be held on November 12; only one list of deputies, the National Socialist list, with a few 'Hospitants', as for example Hugenberg, was to be put before the voters; they only could say 'Yes' or 'No'—and the most were convinced that practically they could not say No. At the same time they had, by way of plebiscite, to state whether or not they approved Hitler's foreign policy—which on the bulletin of vote was explained as a policy to save peace. The great plebiscite, the irresistible instrument of Napoleonic propaganda technique, the use of which Hitler had been announcing for ten years, but for which in the spring of 1933 his hands had not been sufficiently free, now descended on the German people like a natural cataclysm. A question of overpowering simplicity was put to the voters: Do you want peace? And the rest of the world was asked, more emphatically than before: Do you want Bolshevism?

Once again it was the events and circumstances that had shaped this propaganda and forced its cutting edge. For some weeks the Reichstag fire trial, which in the spring Hitler had been unable to prevent, had been in progress in Leipzig. The secret preparations for this trial are not yet known, but their results are a matter of record. In the presence of National Socialist power, German justice did not have the courage to look for the officially unknown incendiaries; it took refuge in a procedure of formal correctness, merely seeking to ascertain whether the accused Van der Lubbe, Dimitrov, Torgler, Popov, and Tanev had set the fire; the preliminary investigation left little doubt of the result. Unexpectedly, Georgi Dimitrov proved one of the most courageous and adroit agitators of the Communist International—though his captors remained unaware of his identity. In endless disputes with Buenger, the chairman of the court, with National Socialist witnesses such as Goebbels, Heines, and particularly Göring, Dimitrov effectively destroyed the National Socialist propaganda fable of the Reichstag fire. He asked Göring if he were afraid of his questions; and Göring roared back in uncontrolled rage, 'You'll be afraid of me when you get out of here, you scoundrel!'—thus admitting that he did not regard Dimitrov as guilty, but meant to have him killed regardless. Large parts of the German public were carried away by the speeches of the Bulgarian, despite his poor command of the language; he made

the trial one of the most effective performances of Communist world propaganda.

But Communist propaganda it was; and it was Communist propaganda that had staged the so-called counter-trial in London; it was Communist propaganda, said Hitler, that cast world suspicion upon Germany and ascribed warlike intentions to his country; German refugees, in particular, had been highly active in this: 'These ruinous and inferior characters have succeeded in arousing a world psychosis,' he said in a radio speech on the night of October 15, a day after his withdrawal from the League of Nations. He called on the world to witness, by the example of the London counter-trial, what National Socialism had saved the world from: 'By saving the world from this menacing catastrophe'—the Red incendiary torch—'the National Socialist Movement has not only saved the German people, it has also rendered an historic service to the rest of Europe.'

And now incendiary Communism was busy stirring up a warlike mood in Europe; but Adolf Hitler— or so he himself said—opposed it and offered Europe peace. He had, according to his speech, left the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference in order that Germany might seek understanding with her former adversaries, between nation and nation, in a way far better than had been possible beside the Swiss lakes. Daladier had spoken his cautious, reassuring words. 'I take it as a sign of a noble sense of justice', said Hitler, 'that the French Premier in his last speech has found words in the spirit of conciliatory understanding, and for this innumerable millions of Germans are grateful to him.' Hitler made more of Daladier's words than the speaker presumably intended; he spoke to the French with a mixture of pride and warmth of which Stresemann had not been capable:

With hopeful emotion we take notice of the assurance that the French Government, under its new leader, does not intend to trample and humiliate the German people. We are moved by the reference to the unfortunate sad truth that these two great nations have so often in history sacrificed the blood of their best youth on the battlefields. I speak in the name of the whole German people when I assure you that we are all filled with the sincere desire to do away with a hostility the victims of which are out of all proportion to its possible gain. The German people is convinced that its military honour has remained untarnished through a thousand battles and contests of arms, just as in the French soldier we see only our old but glorious adversary. . . .

Only a few years earlier, Hitler had publicly said that Germany must forcibly retake Alsace-Lorraine from France. This he now solemnly contradicted. There was only one relatively unimportant frontier question outstanding: that of the Saar Basin and its eight hundred thousand inhabitants. Legally—as not even the peace treaties denied—

it was German territory ; but the Treaty of Versailles provided that it was to be governed for fifteen years by a League of Nations Commission with headquarters in Saarbrücken; economically, it was included in the French customs zone ; the currency was French, French goods dominated the markets ; the coal mines, which constituted the chief industry, were administered by a French Government consortium and French officials. The totally German territory was strangely permeated by the French language and French customs, and the French Tricolours waved over the coal shafts. The ultimate fate of the territory was to be decided by a plebiscite to be held in 1935 at the earliest. The Saarlanders were unquestionably Germans and wanted to be Germans ; the majority of the population of Alsace-Lorraine probably did not ; now Hitler said :

As a National Socialist, I, along with all my supporters, decline, on the basis of our national principles, to acquire people of a strange nation, who cannot be made to love us, with the blood and life of those who are dear and precious to us. It would be a gigantic event for all mankind if both nations, once and for all, should banish force from their mutual relations. The German nation is willing ! Just as I freely invoke the rights which are given us in the treaties themselves [he meant Versailles and Locarno] I will just as freely declare that, as far as Germany is concerned, there are no further territorial conflicts between the two countries. After the return of the Saar to Germany only a madman could conceive the possibility of war between the two countries ; from our point of view there can be no morally or reasonably justifiable ground for one. For no one could demand that, to achieve a correction, dubious in value as well as scope, of the present frontiers, a million human lives should be sacrificed.

These declarations of peace were now submitted to the German voter, and it was to them that the question referred which he was to answer at the polls : Do you, German man, do you, German woman, approve this policy of your Government ? Again Hitler drove and flew up and down Germany, and everywhere his word to the masses was : Peace, peace ! 'When I say peace, that is what the whole German people is thinking,' he cried. 'Hence the plebiscite !' It was not true, he declared, that a spiritual preparation for war was being carried on in Germany, and the enemies of Germany ought to think up something better. Whenever he, Hitler, spoke of peace, the answer was : only he and his intimate staff speak like that, but in the people a wild warlike spirit is raging ; and in the next breath he was accused of repressing the will of the people. Indeed, the stormy applause of millions at Hitler's peace speeches could not be ignored ; in England, Lord Robert Cecil, president of the British League of Nations Union, said that German statesmen could not continuously speak of peace if they were not convinced that the German

people, at the bottom of its heart, desired peace as much as every other people on earth; moreover, he, Lord Cecil, would not maintain that Germany had no reason for complaint.

It was from England that the most encouraging voices came. While a large part of the French Press warned that Hitler wanted only to separate France and England, in England the opinion was widespread that France only wanted to incite England and Germany against each other. True, not every Englishman was as enthusiastic as Lord Rothermere, who, on October 18, sent his correspondent, Ward Price, to Hitler. 'There are signs', said Ward Price, 'that since last Saturday'—day of the German withdrawal from the League of Nations—'your popularity with the British public has risen amazingly. Lord Rothermere, with whom I spoke on the telephone last night, told me that when your picture was shown in the news reels on Monday night it was greeted with lively applause.' Even the Conservative *Morning Post* wrote on October 16 that France should not reject Hitler's outstretched hand; Neville Chamberlain, Sir Austen's brother, demanded what more or less amounted to the same thing: that people reserve judgment in condemning Germany. Lord Beaverbrook wanted England to denounce the Treaty of Locarno, because France (not Germany) by rearming had morally broken it.

Vernon Bartlett said over the radio that he was convinced of the 'almost foolish' sincerity of the Germans. Lloyd George, in many articles and speeches, prophesied the victory of Communism in Germany if Hitler fell; Germany, he said, had fulfilled her disarmament obligations; the other nations' failure to disarm was an 'infamy', the 'most flagrant example of breach of faith in history'. Passionate accusations against Germany were also heard, for instance, from Duff Cooper, a member of the Cabinet, and from Wickham Steed, former editor-in-chief of the *Times*. But the editors of the *Times* probably expressed the mood of the average Englishman in an article, published on October 18, which violently attacked the military spirit of the new Germany, yet added, referring to Hitler's speeches: 'In the German case thus set out there is much that is undeniably true, and some of the grievances are well understood'.

The absence of a world coalition for the defence of collective security became overwhelmingly evident within a very short time. In the United States, Hitler's step was defended by the Hearst Press, which sounded a warning against America's becoming entangled in European affairs; in Geneva, Norman Davis, the American delegate, declared on October 16, upon instructions from Washington, that the United States was 'in no way aligned with any European Power', and that such unity of purpose as existed had been entirely on world disarmament matters. The Washington correspondent of the London *Times* stated that the Roosevelt administration clearly wished 'to withdraw firmly and at once

from any position even of seeming solidarity with Great Britain and France'—except in their opposition to rearmament.

The world, even Europe alone, would certainly have been stronger than Germany, but there was no Europe. On November 7 Winston Churchill said in the House of Commons: 'We should not try to weaken Great Powers [he meant France] which are or which feel themselves to be in great danger. . . .' But this was only in order to prevent England from becoming involved in a European war; we should not, he went on, 'thereby expose ourselves to a demand that we come to their aid. . . . We should forthwith recognize that our rôle in Europe is more limited than hitherto. Isolation is utterly impossible [cheers], but we ought to practise a certain degree of sober detachment from the European scene. . . . We should be able in any case to maintain our neutrality—a neutrality from which we should never be drawn except by the will and conscience of the overwhelming mass of our people.'

Two days later Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald replied that this meant war sooner or later. On November 9, in a speech at the Guild Hall in London, he said he knew that a point might be reached where the policy of disarmament could no longer be continued: 'But let none of us imagine that by so doing we are establishing peace. . . . Those precautions [he meant: rearming] may postpone the day of war'—that was all he hoped for.

Actually, the policy of disarmament had come to an end. England decided to rearm in the air. But when, on November 29, the Marquess of Londonderry, chief of the Air Ministry, made a pessimistic speech in the House of Lords about the danger to which England was exposed in the air, he did not mention Germany in the first place; in fact, he did not name her at all. But France, he said, had 1650 military planes and was the strongest air Power in the world; Great Britain had only 750 and occupied fifth place.

Ten days after Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, Daladier's Cabinet fell in France, because it tried to cut salaries of the civil servants; Albert Sarraut became Premier in one of those innumerable Cabinet changes behind which the petrification of French political life was hidden. At the same time Hitler's plebiscite was being prepared throughout Germany. National Socialist officials—the so-called 'block wardens' of the party—visited every family; and the slogans, 'Your vote for the Führer!' . . . 'Germany says Yes!' . . . 'To vote is a duty!' etc., were plastered in huge letters all over the walls, blared all day long over the radio, spread across the front pages of the newspapers, so that the idea of resistance could find no room in anyone's mind. On voting day, November 12, in many places, particularly in the small communities, the vote was public. Even voters who seemed to be alone in the booths often did not believe in their solitude, but imagined that they were being spied upon in some mysterious way. An idea of the way the plebiscite

was conducted can be gleaned from the fact that ballots were cast in the concentration camps, and that more than 90 per cent of the inmates voted allegedly for Hitler. Yet all these details about the freedom and secrecy of the ballot do not explain what took place. Actually it was the same situation that occurred in France in 1851, when Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, after having dissolved Parliament, shed blood in the streets, organized mass executions and deportations, nevertheless obtained 90 per cent of the votes for the maintenance of his rule: the voters realized that they had no choice, that a protest could only harm them personally and in no case help their cause; if they did not give their vote to the established power, they would give it only to impotence. The attraction of established power has always been great even in 'secret' plebiscites; in 1933 the German voter who voted Yes gave his vote not only to power, but allegedly to peace.

In fact, Germany was now the country which repeated the word 'peace' most consistently and most loudly; she even made the most definite and tangible peace proposals to her neighbours; and in her various pronouncements a general peace plan gradually began to take shape. The peace plans of the other countries had not withstood the storm of German opposition; America had retreated; thus the front which had imposed an eight-year waiting period on Germany, in order to stop the race for armaments, collapsed. On November 7 Göring again visited Mussolini and handed him a letter from Hitler; one day before the German plebiscite, Count Serravallo, the Italian delegate in Geneva, declared that henceforth Italy would limit herself to the rôle of observer at the Disarmament Conference. How completely Germany and Italy had brought their methods into harmony was evident from Serravallo's remark that continued consultations would only bar the way to future diplomatic negotiations between individual Powers. Italy's withdrawal from the dying Disarmament Conference gave it the *coup de grâce*; this was so obvious to everyone that Arthur Henderson, its British chairman, declared that he would resign, although in the end he did not.

Thus, Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations had strengthened her position after a few weeks; and the German voter felt this, too. In the plebiscite of November 12 the German people supported their Chancellor and what he called his peace plans; more than 90 per cent of them or—depending on the methods of calculation—almost 90 per cent voted Yes. Ninety per cent must be taken for the whole of the people, whether their motives were genuine agreement, fatalism, or partly even fear. Of the 45,178,000 people who had the right to vote, 43,053,000 votes were cast; 39,655,000 of these were for the National Socialist list of Reichstag candidates; 3,398,000 were against them, or, to express it in National Socialist electoral terms, their ballots were 'invalid'.

Within three days this peace plebiscite was crowned by a deed by which Hitler once again showed what he meant by peace. He received Mr. Lipski, the Polish ambassador recently named to Berlin, and a *communiqué* published by both parties stated that the conversation revealed 'the complete unanimity of both Governments in their intention to deal with the questions touching both countries by means of direct negotiations and to renounce all application of force in their relations with each other for the consolidation of European peace'. Here was a pact from which the League of Nations and the principle of collective security were openly excluded—for this was the meaning of the carefully chosen words, 'direct negotiations' and 'relations with each other'. Thus crumbled France's political system in Europe—but was it still France's system?

Among the Frenchmen who no longer believed in the great hope of collective security was Edouard Daladier, the Premier who had just been overthrown. He served as Minister of War in Sarraut's Cabinet and was closer to what was sometimes called in public debates 'militaristic thinking' or 'the policy of the generals' than other French politicians. Frivolous or half-serious private diplomats were travelling back and forth between France and Germany; the novelty of the German Reich attracted many French observers, and those among them who in their own country were of any importance or were thought to wield any influence could be sure of an attentive, even flattering, reception by leading National Socialists. The close cartel connections between German and French steel industry made such meetings unceremonious, natural. Thus, soon after the German plebiscite, Ferdinand de Brinon, a French journalist representing *Le Matin* and *L'Information*, came to Berlin to write a few stimulating articles; actually he had been sent by Daladier. Hitler received him and told him that Germany would not return to the League of Nations; but war?—that would be madness! 'It would mean the end of our races, which are both élites; Asia would establish itself on our continent and Bolshevism would triumph.' France, he warned, should cease 'building her security on Germany's inability to defend herself. . . . The days when this was possible are over.' In other words: We are already so strong that the French system of alliance is dead; you can no longer pass over us to stretch out your hand to the Poles or the Czechs. But: 'If France wants to find her security in an agreement, I am ready to listen to everything, to understand everything. . . .' And for the first time Hitler told de Brinon quite clearly: 'Alsace-Lorraine is not a controversial issue'.

Agreement . . . understanding . . . ? This was the question which now was put in full earnest before the military men of France: General Maxime Weygand, the Chief of Staff; Gustave Gamelin, his designated successor; Gamelin's associate, General Georges—and above all, Marshal Philippe Pétain, the most revered military figure of the country, who had

always been an admirer of German military achievement. These men, dependent on the goodwill of a not too benevolent parliament, must have been filled with envy at the ease with which Hitler could command the strength of his country.

Friedrich Sieburg, a German journalist, described the curiously tortuous policy of the French military in their struggle for their army as follows:

Daladier looks at the German military policy with the same technical eyes as the French General Staff, which also holds the view that the moment is opportune for participating in the limitation of a German armaments programme before it is too late, and for preventing the complete demobilization of the French army by this means. It is known that plans are being prepared in the War Ministry and the General Staff which are supposed to take the realization of the German armaments programme and the consequent strengthening of Germany's military position into account. For some time the military even nursed the hope of being able to increase the service-period to two years. . . .

Two countries, two General Staffs; one country the terror of the other, one General Staff the pretext for the other! It would surely be an exaggeration to say that the French military rejoiced over German rearmament; but they obviously were of the opinion that France should attempt to reach an understanding about the purpose and limits of this rearmament directly with Germany, without the intermediary of the cumbersome Disarmament Conference. In November and December there were negotiations between Hitler and François-Poncet, the French ambassador to Germany. Hitler proposed a solemn Franco-German agreement which would proclaim the reconciliation of the two nations for all time to come, after the model of the agreement which he tried, about the same period, to reach with Poland. This proposal to France was formulated in terms that went far beyond the cool peace declarations which Pilsudski finally agreed to make. Hitler suggested that he was even willing to renounce Italian friendship in return; he expected that France, as a sign of her conciliatory attitude, would renounce the Saar without a plebiscite. And since France intended to maintain her strong armaments, she surely could not object to a modest German army of three hundred thousand men.

From France came a curiously encouraging reply in the form of an obviously inspired article in *Le Temps* of December 17, which said: Either the German proposals will be rejected, which would mean sanctions and war, but England was against this; or 'It will be granted that Herr Hitler's proposals, although unacceptable on many points, offer a possible basis for discussion on many other points'. What was 'un-

acceptable' was doubtless the demand of a three-hundred-thousand-man army; but is it not the purpose of all diplomatic negotiations to try to reach an agreement on 'unacceptable points'?

However, the party which believed in the League of Nations and collective security gained the upper hand in France. Foreign Minister Joseph Paul-Boncour, one of the chief spokesmen of this party, announced this in the League Council on January 20, 1934, when he rejected in resounding terms Hitler's demand for the Saar. The League's interest in the Saar, he said, was more important for France than her own interest in it; to be sure, France could reach a direct understanding with Germany, but it was her duty to enable the inhabitants of the Saar to make a free decision. This was more than a noble attitude; actually France could not expect any advantage from a free decision of the Saarlanders, while a passionate plebiscite meant useless vexations and dangers to her.

On January 21, 1933, however, German and foreign fascism moved a little closer to each other in another quarter. Marshal Pilsudski approved the project of a treaty of reconciliation between Germany and Poland, which had been under consideration for months. The treaty did not imply that Germany recognized the Polish-German frontier, but she promised not to change that frontier by force. The real meaning of the agreement lay in the fact that both parties renounced the help of the League in settling their mutual affairs. 'Both Governments', ran the Polish-German declaration published on January 26, 'desire to settle by direct negotiations all questions of whatever nature which concern them. In the case of disputes which cannot be solved by direct negotiations, a solution shall be sought by other peaceful means, without prejudice to other methods such as are laid down in existing agreements. In no case shall there be an appeal to force.' The treaty also declared that no problems shall be discussed 'which, in accordance with international law, should be regarded exclusively as internal affairs of either State'—in these ambiguous terms Germany perhaps renounced the protection of her minority in Poland; Poland certainly wished to place that interpretation on the phrase. The treaty was to remain in force for ten years, and to be automatically extended unless denounced. That it was designed to end the hostility between the two countries and thereby detach Poland from the French system of alliances, for all practical purposes, was confirmed a few days later by a so-called 'propaganda agreement', in which Germany and Poland pledged themselves 'to co-operate on all questions concerning public opinion in their respective countries to the end that mutual understanding may be increasingly awakened and that a friendly atmosphere may thereby be assured'.

On the same day on which Poland made peace with National Socialist Germany, she ceased formally to be a democracy. This was the result of a parliamentary procedure which was curiously similar to the suicide of the Austrian democracy on March 7, 1933. A new constitution which

abrogated equal and universal suffrage was proposed by the Government and stood under debate in a parliamentary committee; the Opposition parties left the session in protest; at that moment the chairman hastily put the proposal to a vote, and it was adopted within a few minutes. The deputies of the Government bloc, for the most part former members of Pilsudski's Legion in the World War, jumped from their seats and sang their battle song, the 'First Brigade'.

But the dream of collective security was not yet dead despite all these blows. While France insisted on a security plan because she was threatened from one side, another country now began to advocate such a plan, because it considered itself encircled from all sides. For fifteen years the Soviet Union had taken it for granted that Western European capitalism was her mortal enemy, especially as represented by France and England; hence her defensive alliance with German militarism. Then her relations with Germany cooled; her eternal fear of a capitalist attack had never seemed so justified as at the time of Papen's accession to power. The French Left temporarily removed this threat: Herriot rejected an alliance with the German reactionaries. In August, 1932, Russia concluded a non-aggression pact with Poland, although she regarded the Polish eastern provinces as a region stolen from her. At the end of November, 1932, she signed a similar agreement with France. Then Hitler took power in Germany; and although he sincerely wanted to improve his relations with Russia, his good intentions were doubted. Just as in May, 1933, at the height of the war danger, Nadolny and Papen poured oil onto the fire by their noisy speeches, Hitler was unmasked in the eyes of the Bolsheviks by that cumbersome and despised appendage, Hugenberg. Hugenberg used his last weeks of ministerial power to submit, in his capacity of German delegate to the London Economic Conference, a memorandum in which he demanded no less than the Russian Ukraine for Germany. Hitler hastened to disavow him, and soon after that, Hugenberg was out of office. But the Bolsheviks took Hugenberg's threat almost more seriously than they would have taken a threat from Hitler himself; in their eyes Hugenberg represented the big capitalists whom they believed to rule Germany, and Hitler was only their servant.

Among the Bolshevik leaders the conflict between the principle of world revolution and the desire for national security still remained undecided. The Executive Committee of the Third International sitting in Moscow seriously proclaimed in its 'Theses' of December, 1933, that in all the countries with which Russia had recently concluded treaties and alliances revolution was imminent; this revolution, as the 'Theses' stated explicitly, would be led and inspired by Soviet Russia. In the Fascist countries--this was said in full earnest--the chief enemy was not fascism, but still Social Democracy. This remarkable document declared that 'the revolutionary crisis and the indignation of large masses against the domination of capital is growing . . . that as a result, the

capitalists are compelled to pass to open terrorist dictatorship and to unrestrained chauvinism in their foreign policy, which is a direct preparation for imperialist wars. In fascism, which has grown out of the womb of bourgeois democracy, the capitalists see a means of saving their system from collapse. Social Democracy continues to play the part of the chief social support of the bourgeoisie, even in countries under open Fascist dictatorship, by fighting against the revolutionary unity of the proletariat and the Soviet Union. . . .’ For that reason, the struggle against Social Democracy remained the chief task of the Communists even under the rule of fascism: ‘How soon the rule of bankrupt capitalism will be overthrown by the proletariat depends on the success of the Communist parties in undermining the influence of the Social Democracy upon the masses.’ Everywhere the Committee discovered the handwriting on the wall: ‘In China—war, intervention, and revolution. In Japan—growth of the revolutionary forces and mobilization of the military-Fascist forces preliminary to great class conflicts. In Spain—the struggle between the revolution and the counter-revolution. In the United States—a wave of mass strikes and a revolt of farmers against the bourgeois programme for solving the crisis. In present-day Germany the revolutionary sentiment of the proletariat is assuming less open forms; there an immense revolutionary energy is accumulating in the masses, and the new revolutionary upsurge is already beginning. . . .’ And so on. The Committee found ‘an uncommon sharpening of class relations in Czechoslovakia, Austria, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland’; it found ‘mass strikes of workers accompanied by great revolutionary actions’ in Poland; it found railroad strikes and barricade battles in Rumania; it found the Bulgarian working class closing its ranks behind the Communist Party; and ‘the principal fortress of the world proletariat, the mighty land of the Soviets, the land of the triumphant working class . . . by its immense socialist conquests inspires the toilers of all countries in their revolutionary struggles. . . .’ The international proletariat is confronted with the great task of transforming the crisis of the capitalist world into the triumph of the proletariat revolution.’

Shortly before this, Russia had concluded a special kind of peace treaty with her smaller neighbours. In February, 1933, Maxim Litvinov, People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs, had proposed that the Disarmament Conference in Geneva define the term ‘aggression’, which was so frequently mentioned in diplomatic notes. The Disarmament Conference did not come to a definition; but in July, Russia concluded treaties with ten of her neighbours, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Turkey, for the sole purpose of establishing what was meant by the term ‘aggression’. What was significant in these treaties was that henceforth a State would be guilty of aggression if it maintained on its territory armed bands which might penetrate into a foreign country;

and, conversely, it was agreed that the domestic conditions within a neighbouring country could never be considered an excuse for an attack. Thus, the existence of the German S.A. formations and the Polish Legions in Poland might constitute an aggression, but the Communist constitution of Soviet Russia could not serve as a pretext for aggression. But what if one State supported armed bands on another's territory? In many countries the Communist parties or sections of them were just that; but the treaties did not refer to them.

True, the Soviet Union, engaged in a gigantic economic and social reconstruction, certainly wanted peace with her large neighbours—whether she also wanted peace with her small neighbours was doubted, at least by them. While the Japanese conquest of Manchuria created suspicion and hostility at Russia's eastern border, her relations with the other Great Powers became more conciliatory. On September 2, 1933, she concluded a non-aggression treaty with Fascist Italy; on November 16 she was recognized by the United States through an exchange of notes. Literally the same men who in their 'Theses' threatened these countries with the destruction of their social institutions, vowed peace and friendship for them in their diplomatic notes.

Sometimes they did this in one and the same document, in one and the same speech. In January, 1934, in his report to the Seventeenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, Stalin said that world capitalism was in a crisis from which it would never recover. The bourgeoisie saw no other way out but war: 'Conditions are obviously tending towards another war'. The triumph of fascism in Germany, he explained, was only a sign of bourgeois weakness, but 'if the bourgeoisie chooses the path of war, the working classes of the capitalist countries, driven to despair by four years of crisis and unemployment, will choose the path of revolution. The revolutionary crisis is maturing and will go on maturing.'

But then Stalin suddenly changed his tone and now spoke as a bourgeois politician to other bourgeois politicians. There were, he said, 'common-sense countries', which for one reason or another were not interested in disturbing peace and wished to develop their trade relations with a customer who paid as well as the Soviet Union. Stalin here broached a subject which gradually began to interest the Russian leaders more than world revolution: that of Russian exports, or the sale of Russian goods partly produced at very low cost and partly kept cheap on capitalist markets by artificial means. Of certain goods, like timber products, it was not unjustly said abroad that they were produced by 'slave labour', cut and transported by labour gangs of political prisoners. Russia's exports had suffered as a result of the collapse of world trade, and between 1930 and 1932 they had dropped in value from \$910,000,000 to \$570,000,000 (the drop was less considerable in volume). The Russians held the capitalist boycott responsible for this situation, at least in

part. National Socialist Germany, too, held the political boycott responsible for her export troubles; if this contention was true at all, German imports were throttled by Russia's Government-directed trade more than by anything else. But now Stalin denied that Russia nursed unfriendly feelings towards Germany only because fascism ruled there: 'Certain German politicians say that the Soviet Union has changed from an opponent into a supporter of the Versailles Treaty, and that this change is due to the establishment of a Fascist régime in Germany. That is not true. Certainly we are far from being enthusiasts of the Fascist régime in Germany. But fascism is not the issue, as is proved by the fact that Italian fascism, for example, has not prevented Italy from establishing the best of relations with this country. Nor is the issue the alleged change in our attitude towards the Versailles Treaty. Certainly it is not for us,' Stalin said with bitterness and scorn, reminding militaristic Germany of her own sins, 'who have suffered the humiliation of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, to sing the praises of the Treaty of Versailles. But'—and with the statement that followed Russia broke with her former policy defined as 'with militarism against capitalism, with Germany against Versailles'—'we do not admit that because of this treaty the world must be precipitated into the abyss of another war!'

Stalin accused Germany of having changed her foreign policy; he declared that a party had come into power which, like the former German Kaiser, wanted to seize the Ukraine and the Baltic States. True, he left the door open for an understanding by urging Germany to renounce her new anti-Russian policy and to return to the treaties of Rapallo and Berlin. But deafening applause greeted his words: 'Should anyone attempt to attack our country, we shall reply with a crushing blow that will teach him not to stick his snout into our Soviet garden'.

Why had Germany and Poland come to an understanding? What had become of the hearty handclasp between Germany and Russia through which Poland would be reduced to a little sweat produced by the contact of the two great hands? Hitler hastened to answer that he still desired good relations with Russia and that all his treaties were designed to further peace. On January 30, 1934, in his report to the Reichstag at the end of his first year of rule, he said that he wanted to take 'a conciliatory attitude towards all other countries', and that he was ready to come to an understanding with them 'even in cases where great—yes, unbridgeable—differences exist between their concept of government and ours'. This applied to democratic and anti-democratic States, while with regard to Russia, Hitler even used the word 'friendship': 'Only thus was it understandable and possible for Germany to continue cultivating friendly relations with Russia despite the great difference between their ruling ideologies.' He admitted that the results were meagre; that 'Mr. Stalin in his last great speech had expressed fear that forces hostile to the Soviets might be active in Germany'—but he, Hitler,

would correct that impression: after all, Russia did not tolerate German National Socialism within her borders—and so Germany tolerated no 'Communist tendencies, let alone propaganda. The more clearly and unequivocally both sides respect this state of affairs, the more naturally can the interests common to both countries be cultivated.' He went so far as to welcome the stabilization of conditions in Eastern Europe 'by a system of alliances' if these alliances were truly intended to strengthen peace.

At any rate, Hitler declared, he himself had brought true peace to a region where for years a war had secretly been smouldering, threatening the peace of all Europe: the Polish-German border. Before he came to power an unsatisfactory state of affairs had prevailed between Germany and Poland, a constant irritation, and even something like hereditary enmity. In fact, Hitler might have added, he himself had fanned this enmity to its most intense heat when in many speeches he loudly demanded the return of the Polish Corridor. With great candour, as though he himself had never said anything about Germany's need for 'living space' in the East, the Führer proceeded to explain that there was no reason for such an hereditary enmity in either nation and that there never would be any reason for it: 'Germans and Poles will have to face the fact of each other's existence and make the best of it. Therefore, it is expedient to accept a circumstance which could not be removed during the past thousand years and which will not be removed after us, and to give it such a form that both nations will derive as much profit from it as possible.' Hitler did not deny 'the differences that doubtless exist' and indicated his regret that Pilsudski had so far avoided an interview with him; yet he was 'happy to find that the leader of the present Polish State, Marshal Pilsudski, had the same broad-minded approach that he [Hitler] had himself'. If anything remained to be desired, it was the settlement of commercial and customs questions, of the competition between Polish and German coal and the importation of Polish agricultural products opposed by German farmers. But Hitler did not say a word about the fate of the German minorities in Poland.

However, he did say a great deal about the fate of the people from whom he himself had sprung, the Austrians. 'The assertion that the German Reich intends to take over the Austrian State by force', he said, 'is absurd and cannot be proved'. The emphasis was on the words 'Reich' and 'State'. Hitler frankly acknowledged that National Socialism involved an international revolution and that Austria was a most logical place to start it. 'Of course, an idea that has taken hold of the entire German nation and stirred it to its depths is not going to halt at the frontier posts of a country that is German by race.' Whether National Socialism was German or not, it reached across borders: 'But even apart from that, this case is not an isolated one if we consider that practically all intellectual and revolutionary movements in Europe have

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spread beyond the borders of their countries of origin. Thus, the ideas of the French Revolution filled the imagination of people all over the Continent regardless of frontiers. It was, therefore, quite natural for the Austrian Germans to take up the National Socialist idea in complete unity of spirit with the whole German people.' Germany, he went on, would gladly offer the Austrian Government an opportunity for a full agreement; but, being an Austrian himself, he knew the temper of his countrymen, and in his opinion the best thing the Austrian Government could do was to take a vote among its German people in order to prove to the whole world how well it was carrying out their wishes. In other words, Dollfuss should call an election and he would get the surprise of his life. 'I believe that I may say this much: no Government that is kept in power by force alone can last forever.' In his excitement Hitler went so far as to threaten Dollfuss with murder in no uncertain terms if he did not give in: 'Should the present Austrian Government consider it necessary to suppress this movement [National Socialism] by taking extreme measures and applying force, that is, of course, its own business. But then it must assume *personal* responsibility for the consequences of its own policy and take what comes.'

Towards France his tone again was cordial, almost imploring; and since the question of the Saar 'is the only territorial issue between the two countries that is still unsettled', Germany would be ready to make extraordinary concessions once this stumbling-block were removed. In the Locarno Treaty, Germany had not only given up all her claims to Alsace-Lorraine, but had even renounced the right to fortify her own frontiers along the Rhine—and even with these conditions Hitler cheerfully promised to be satisfied; once the Saar was returned, 'the German Government is ready and determined to accept the spirit of the Locarno Treaty as well as its terms'. With these words he promised something unbelievable: not to fortify Germany's western frontier.

It is true that when he made this statement he apparently had failed in his attempt to come to an understanding with France by negotiating directly with her; no interview had taken place between the leaders of the two countries—partly because no one could tell who was the real leader of France; the Premiers who were in power for only a few months at a time seldom measured up to such a task and never had enough authority for it. But if France did not come to an agreement with Germany, the other Powers did. When it became clear that Hitler had no intention of making an army out of his three million S.A. men, but that he would be satisfied with three hundred thousand, many people thought that a great and unexpected step forward had been taken.

The French Government insisted that it could not treat with Germany directly, but only through the League of Nations, and demanded that Germany should therefore return to that body. The English and Italian Governments then indicated, at the end of January, 1934, that they con-

sidered Germany's return to the League desirable. However, this was no longer the main issue. The main thing was that in the meantime England, as well as Italy, had quietly accepted Germany's rearmament. An Italian memorandum approved an army of three hundred thousand men for Germany; one of the reasons given for this was that with the National Socialist revolution Germany had embarked upon such far-reaching changes in her whole social structure that she would not be able to undertake important military projects—apparently Mussolini drew this conclusion from his experience in reorganizing his own country. Even England was willing to concede Hitler his three hundred thousand soldiers—'two or three hundred thousand soldiers', said a memorandum of the Foreign Office published at the end of January.

However, the truly important events of the period took place, not between the countries, but within the countries; the struggle was no longer among the nations, but among forces and parties that were present in every nation. The beginning of 1934 witnessed significant uprisings and successes of the 'armed intellectuals' in at least three different places. In Poland, dictatorship suddenly had overrun Parliament on January 26. Eleven days later, democratic France was the scene of a bloody, not quite unsuccessful, assault against parliament; within another week, Austrian fascism smashed the organizations of the working class.

French democracy was the outcome of a century-old resistance of the people against the privileged classes. Born of class struggles, this democracy always has or had a marked class character. However deeply it influenced the history of France, French democracy was not so much a national institution, but rather a powerful party, which always had to defend itself against a hostile opposition. During the first decades of the Third Republic this hostile opposition was actually in power several times. After the democratic tendency definitely gained the upper hand (about the turn of the century), the anti-democratic forces formed an opposition especially among the intellectuals; after the World War it found its most noisy and colourful expression in the *Action Française*, which was composed mostly of students and young academicians. It was led by two unusual intellectuals, Charles Maurras, a master of prose style, and Léon Daudet, a master of vituperative polemics. This movement was unequivocally anti-parliamentarian and anti-Semitic. The *Croix de Feu*, a movement born after the World War, which was comparable to the German Steel Helmets, gained a larger mass following. The *Croix de Feu* was originally a union of French veterans; after 1930, under the leadership of former Colonel Casimir de la Rocque, it began to intervene in politics. In their struggle against democracy and parliamentarianism, these groups found abundant occasions for mockery and accusations in a country where the term 'incorruptible' has always been regarded as the highest praise for a statesman.

France began to feel the first symptoms of the economic depression which reached her later than the other countries; her social backwardness was indisputable; the fact that she, who had once led Europe's technical progress, was now far behind was clearly realized by discerning minds. The nation also felt that its foreign policy must have been faulty if fourteen years after 'the war to end all wars' the German danger had risen again. Behind all this was the obscure realization among the people that the existing State was no longer equal to the tasks confronting modern society; that a more decisive, more efficient and more powerful Government was required. The example of foreign fascism was contagious; Mussolini enjoyed great popularity in high French society, his *Scritti e Discorsi* were read with almost religious devotion. Many pamphlets and posters of the French Fascists clearly followed the pattern set by the undermining, disparaging, slandering agitation of German National Socialism, particularly in their attacks against the Jews, Negroes, and foreigners.

Public irritation was finally brought to the point of explosion by a shady foreigner, a certain Alexander Stavisky, born in Russian Odessa. Stavisky's connections with French politicians; the public funds which they had put at his disposal and which he had embezzled; his suicide at the last minute before his impending arrest, regarded by many as a murder engineered by the police agents sent to seize him; the violent and never-explained death of the judge who had directed the investigation of the case—all this was the immediate cause of the bloody riots of February 6, which had no visible leader, but were obviously organized by the chiefs of the *Action Française* and the *Croix de Feu*. The avowed object of the attack was Daladier, who had again become Premier a few days before. The rioters massed on the Place de la Concorde and tried to cross a bridge over the Seine in order to storm the parliament building. Everything depended upon whether a determined leader of the defending troops, the *Garde Mobile*, would dare to give the order to open fire. Such a leader was found in the person of the Minister of the Interior, Eugène Frot, a fairly young man, who obtained Daladier's permission.

The attack was repelled, but the political crisis was not liquidated. A few days later big demonstrations of the trade-unions and working-class parties, sharpened by a short general strike, tried to quell the Fascist upsurge. The Fascist thrust ended with a half-success: Daladier was forced to resign and was branded as a murderer by the Rightists; Frot, a lawyer by profession, barely ventured to appear in the Palais de Justice; his colleagues publicly burned the gown of the man whose courage had perhaps saved the Republic. Both sides agreed that overnight the country had fallen into a severe crisis and that extraordinary measures were necessary. Former President Gaston Doumergue was made Premier. The General Staff and probably de la Rocque supported him, and his

Cabinet included prominent statesmen both of the Left and the Right, from Tardieu to Herriot; his Minister of War was Marshal Pétain. It was a Cabinet before which Parliament would tremble—at least, such was the idea behind it. Now began the popular period of French fascism—although it never reached the size and influence of German National Socialism. The following of the *Croix de Feu* and the number of their public demonstrations grew rapidly in spite of Léon Daudet's envious jeering ('a herd of lions led by an ass'). The most popular weekly in France, read particularly among the well-to-do classes, incited hatred of the Jews, Freemasons, foreigners, British and Americans, and, of course, Parliament; this was done with more wit, but with almost the same unscrupulousness as by Streicher's *Stürmer* in Germany. The atmosphere prevailing in France during those days recalled that of Munich in 1923: it was a time of feverish preparation for a brutal decision.

In little Austria this period of preparation was over, and the brutal decision fell a few days after the bloody riots in Paris.

On February 12 the police and the *Heimwehr* stormed the headquarters of the Social-Democratic Party. In a fierce struggle the inadequately armed Social-Democratic organizations resisted at various places throughout the country, particularly in the large apartment houses erected in the suburbs of Vienna, which sheltered several thousand people (Goethe Hof, Karl Marx Hof). The attack of the *Heimwehr* failed. The regular army had to come to the rescue and fire upon the apartment houses with cannon. The battle lasted three days; those sections of the workers who were determined to resist fought much more vigorously than, for instance, the National Socialists in Munich in 1923. But only a small part of them resisted. In contrast to what happened in Germany in 1920, the historic weapon of the working class, the general strike, this time failed: the wheels did not stand still, the trains ran on schedule, and the electric lights burned as before. A few prominent leaders fled to Czechoslovakia; others, like Seitz, the Mayor of Vienna, remained defiantly in the city; several of the real leaders of the battle were hanged by the Government, which had neither human feeling nor respect for their magnificent courage. This blood-bath seemingly broke the political power of the Social Democracy; but the movement was not destroyed, it continued as a brilliantly organized 'underground', which even managed to hold Communist competition down. It may be doubted whether Dollfuss wanted all these horrors; but it is a fact that he did not oppose them. Amidst the life-and-death struggle the Austrian Government was waging against National Socialism, the destruction and alienation of the strongest anti-Nazi force in the country was a model of political short-sightedness.

Dictatorship continued to make headway in Europe. Its semi-circle, extending from Moscow to Rome, was solidly filled during that year;

first Germany, then Austria, were added to the ring; in Poland, terrorism, which hitherto had been only an instrument of the Fascist rulers, had been raised to the dignity of a constitution. The Hungarian semi-dictatorship came closer to fascism when Julius Goemboes, an avowed Fascist and anti-Semite, became Prime Minister—this actually took place four months before Hitler's accession to power. The western end of the semi-circle, formed by the Spanish dictatorship, had at first been broken off by the resignation of Primo de Rivera in 1929 and the deposition of King Alfonso in 1931; but within a few years Spanish fascism, bloodier than ever, was to return to power. And the *Europa Fascista*, prophesied by Mussolini, had even raised its head in Paris. In England, too, Lord Rothermere supported Sir Oswald Mosley's movement, which openly called itself 'Fascist'.

With half of Europe won for fascism, how could international politics remain democratic? The new system of bilateral agreements gradually dissolved the system of collective security which was more symbolized than realized in the League of Nations. Cardinal Hlond, Archbishop of Gniezno, head of the Polish Church and with Pilsudski the most powerful man in this almost completely Catholic country, praised the German-Polish pact in an interview with a French journalist; he expressed his belief in a slow but sure improvement of Polish-German relations and said—exactly as Hitler had before him—that this pact was a 'prelude to a future Franco-German pact', which would complete the work of pacification in Europe.

In less mild and hopeful words spoke the chief of government of another small nation the existence of which for a century had depended on the effectiveness of a system of European security, although this system had not been able to spare the country a terrible ordeal during the First World War. On March 6, 1934, Count de Brocqueville made a speech in the Belgian Senate which resounded throughout Europe like a cry of alarm. The Versailles Treaty, he complained, was an illusion which disregarded all historic lessons. The men of Versailles, de Brocqueville said, had believed that it was possible to keep a great nation like Germany in a state of permanent disarmament. But how could anyone imagine—and remarks full of the most elementary wisdom now followed—that the twenty-seven nations, which were allied when the treaty was signed, would preserve their harmony in the future and impose upon Germany what Napoleon I, the autocrat of almost all Europe, had been unable to impose upon Prussia alone? Who had ever seen such treaties survive the circumstances out of which they were born? The Germany of today was no longer that of November 11, 1918; and what had become of the common will of the twenty-seven nations which were supposed to defend the Treaty of 1919? An unchanging law of history decrees that the defeated shall rise again sooner or later. Germany's rearmament, de Brocqueville went on, could no longer be prevented, for the only way

to accomplish this would be by immediate war; 'but I refuse to drive my country into such an adventure'. What could and should be prevented was a general race for armaments. It is true that here de Brocqueville found comfort in the thought that neither Germany nor the other Powers could 'take upon themselves the incredible burden which an armament race would bring in its train amidst the present crisis'.

Yes, according to the laws of economic reason a world armament race was impossible; and even Germany seemed to admit this. On March 22, 1934, the German Government quite candidly published its budget. It appeared that Germany's armaments expenditures were being increased by 352,000,000 marks, or about 50 per cent; and those who still believed in the authority of the Versailles Treaty which forbade these armaments were horrified. In fact, what these figures announced was rearmament in a moderate degree approved long ago by England's and Italy's diplomatic notes; and Germany could still point out that of all the Great Powers she was still the only one which was spending less on defence than before 1914. About that time the French Government asked its Parliament for extraordinary armaments credits to the amount of three billion francs (in addition to the current expenses); the United States and Great Britain decided to bring their navies up to the strength allowed in the Washington Agreement; the British air fleet was increased; the gigantic Russian armaments, never denied by Russia herself, yet not believed in by many at that time, were a miraculous effort of which the efficacy was later confirmed by events. Thus, the armaments race de Brocqueville feared was under way, although still slow and hesitating. The immediate cause of this race was, in at least some measure, the indisputable armaments of the National Socialist Government in Germany, which, for its part, complained bitterly that the armaments of the rest of the world forced it to arm against its will. While publishing its own armaments budget with seeming honesty, it suggested that these figures expressed a thrifty effort, consistent with the laws of economic reason; the figures might still increase somewhat when the three-hundred-thousand-man army was ready and began to train; but the whole German armaments experiment seemed to be remaining within tolerable limits.

And this was no small comfort to the leaders of British foreign policy when they tried, through their bilateral conversations, to find out the real situation on the European Continent. Anthony Eden, in his official capacity of British Minister at the League of Nations, in fact even then a second Foreign Minister slowly built up at the side of Sir John Simon, undertook such a tour of investigation in February, 1934, a strikingly young envoy of the conservative British ruling class. In a marked gesture of courtesy towards National Socialist Germany, the British Minister first visited Hitler in Berlin (February 21), and the courtesy was well received. Once again Hitler was on the whole satisfied

with the British proposals; he was satisfied with the three hundred thousand soldiers which were to be allowed him. He insisted on planes, which the British had not foreseen, but he did not want bombers, only fighters for the purpose of repelling attacks; and even this German air force, intended purely for defence, would be only half as strong as the French air force. To be sure, if Germany agreed to such marked military inferiority, it was not for all time to come, but only for five years, and full equality must be achieved within ten years.

It seemed that Hitler's meeting with Eden was just such a success as the Führer desired. Perhaps for the first time he managed to convince a foreign statesman that the much-discussed and feared S.A. were not an army and that he did not want them to be an army. He seems to have promised Eden that he would do away with certain aspects of National Socialist Germany which were considered particularly offensive abroad, such as the terrorist rule of the S.A. At any rate, Eden left with favourable impressions, and these were perhaps strengthened when a few days later Mussolini joyfully told him that if Hitler made such acceptable proposals, the best thing to do was to take him quickly at his word. Three hundred thousand soldiers for Germany seemed to Mussolini a reasonable figure; and if Hitler renounced bombing planes for ten years, the Italian dictator - as he told Eden - hoped that by the end of that period bombing planes would have disappeared from the world completely.

Thus, negotiations and exchanges of notes went on between the Powers. That there was still a high council of nations in Geneva was half-forgotten; no one any longer took the Disarmament Conference seriously; collective security was almost a fantasy, a chimera, something like perpetual peace or the elimination of poverty. Eventually, when the Powers did take a common step, its feebleness revealed their profound disunion. This came about when Dollfuss, shortly after the blood-bath of the Vienna workers, again appealed for help against the National Socialists, and this time (February 17) succeeded in getting out of England, France, and Italy a common declaration stressing 'the necessity of maintaining the independence and territorial integrity of Austria in accordance with the existing treaties'. This was a phrase without punch, without teeth, and above all without meaning, because the National Socialist method of conquest from within seemingly did not violate independence and territorial integrity.

The truth is that there was no agreement among these Powers concerning the protection of Austria, and this fact became clear within a month. In March, three Fascist statesmen, Mussolini, Dollfuss, and Goemboes, met in Rome and signed a common declaration of war against the French system of alliances in central and eastern Europe. The so-called Rome Protocols of March 18, 1934, provided for political and economic collaboration among Italy, Austria, and Hungary. By

implication they were directed against Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, the States of the Little Entente; and if any stern words against Germany could be found in them, they were masked behind cryptic phrases like 'respect for the independence and rights of all countries'.

Actually Fascist Italy had made her choice: she neither could nor would stand in the way of a Fascist Europe, embodied in Fascist Germany. Confusing temporary circumstances might for a short time veil this decision; nevertheless, it was founded on the facts and vital forces of the times. When Mussolini opened his heart to his people, he frankly expressed this view. On the night following the signing of the Rome Protocols, he made a speech before three thousand Fascists in the Rome Opera House. He gave only passing mention to the Protocols; but he loudly defended Germany, the system of bilateral pacts and German rearmament; and with great sincerity he explained why he did this and had to do it. That the Disarmament Conference had failed, he said, was now completely clear; it was the only completely clear fact. It was simply impossible to forbid defensive armament to a nation like the Germans. 'Perhaps', said Mussolini with a smile, and his three thousand listeners laughed happily and approvingly, 'this has already been outstripped by the facts'. Italy, too, must be strong militarily, for Italy had a great mission dictated by her geography and her history. 'Until the year 2000, Italy's historic objectives are Asia and Africa' and this was followed by the significant words: 'In the North there is little or nothing to be gained'. Hitler had said the same things years before. But in the South, Mussolini continued, 'the political and economic expansion of Italy must not be stopped by the satiated and the satisfied'.

Among these satiated and satisfied Powers at whose expense Italy wanted to expand in Asia and Africa, the first place was occupied by France. And Germany's 'great hour' of revenge against the French hereditary enemy, which Hitler in his earlier prophecies had expected from an alliance with Mussolini, now seemed to strike at the very moment when Hitler was seemingly changing his course and seeking a reconciliation with France. The British Government urged France to reconcile herself with him. Even those British friends of France, who advised her not to disarm but to arm, nevertheless intimated that in the last analysis France must rely only upon herself, not upon English protection. It was Winston Churchill who again expressed this view on March 8, 1934. 'To be sure, England was then, in Churchill's opinion, threatened only by Germany's rearmament; but no one 'proposes a preventive war to stop her from breaking the Treaty of Versailles'. It was clear that 'this very gifted people are capable of developing with great rapidity the most powerful air force for all purposes, offensive and defensive, in a very short period'. The day when Germany would be in a position to threaten the heart of the British Empire by air was perhaps only eighteen months, perhaps even only one year, distant. And this

meant, said Churchill, that England would lose her freedom of action and be dependent upon the help and good will of her friends on the Continent. That meant France—and France's policies. But this was the very thing England should prevent at any cost, above all by creating her own strong air force. 'The next great object we must have in view is to secure our freedom of choice to remain outside a European war if one should break out. . . . We must have the effective right and power to choose our own path in accordance with the wishes and resolves of the nation in any emergency that may arise on the Continent of Europe. For this purpose we must be safe from undue foreign pressure. These are not the times when we can afford to confide the safety of our country to the passions or the panic of any foreign nation, which might be facing some grim and desperate crisis. We must be independent and free; we must preserve our full latitude and choice. We have never lived at anybody's mercy. . . . We have never entrusted the home defence of this country to any foreign Power, never asked for any help from anyone. . . . We ought not to be dependent upon the French air force for the safety of our island home. The fact that we cannot defend ourselves and that our friends across the Channel have additional power makes an implication and a whole series of implications which very nearly approach the establishment of the condition of British dependence on overseas protection.'

With these words Churchill, who was certainly a friend of France, said almost the same thing that a less good friend, Lord Lothian, former secretary to Lloyd George and co-author of the Treaty of Versailles, expressed in a letter to the *Times* written at the beginning of May: 'The proposal that we should try to stabilize Europe by joining a defensive coalition against Germany, as in 1904, involves the liability to war whenever a European Power is forced or blunders into war.' Instead, Lord Lothian warned Europe—and in fact he meant France: 'Europe itself should gradually find its own way to an internal equilibrium and a limitation of armaments by political appeasement. . . .' One of the most portentous slogans of the period was coined here. But England, Lothian insisted, must not interfere in this appeasement: 'We shall not assist that process [of appeasement] by taking sides. Indeed, by doing so we should be likely to delay it. . . .'

Did this presage a triumph for Hitler? Were England and France drifting apart while Germany and Italy slowly came close together? Would France, which had partially lost her Polish ally, one day be abandoned by England as well?

The Doumergue Cabinet had given up Daladier's plan to attempt a separate understanding with Germany. Germany's rearmament had progressed too rapidly; and who could seriously hope to stop this process by conversations? A conversation, let alone an agreement, would have meant that France was openly abandoning the treaties, whatever these

were worth. But this was the very thing which England now urged her 'friend across the Channel' to do.

The direction of France's foreign policy was in the hands of Louis Barthou, who may be considered the last classic statesman of the Third Republic. A white-bearded old man of seventy-two, an adroit opportunist in the domestic field, not exactly a creative mind in the field of foreign politics, he was a remarkable mixture of talent and energy and was inspired by a great guiding principle. This principle was his lifelong fear of the German danger. He also had a strong will to break this danger. He spoke German and was a highly educated man who had achieved the rare distinction of being elected to France's literary society, the French Academy of the 'Forty Immortals'. He had written a book about Richard Wagner, and liked to quote Heine's gloomy prophecy that Germany would become a great danger to the world once Thor awoke from his thousand-year-long sleep and began to break the churches and the Cross. Barthou thought that this historic day had come; he said that only two or three years were left in which the danger could be eliminated.

England, however, demanded that France negotiate with Germany; this meant that Hitler was to have a three-hundred-thousand-man army if he renounced bombing planes and accepted a transitional period of five to ten years. It might be possible to accept this plan; but who would vouch that Hitler would abide by it? Barthou asked England for *garanties d'exécution* (guaranties that the plan would be carried out)—which was only a different form of France's eternal demand that England support her if Germany violated the treaties. Embarrassed, England countered by asking what such *garanties d'exécution* meant concretely; and it was again France's turn to reply.

What England's idea amounted to was: We will grant Hitler his army, and the four of us—England, France, Germany, and Italy—will sit down around a table. We will determine the future armaments of Europe; and neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia, France's old allies, nor Russia, her possible future ally, will be invited.

Russia had openly and deliberately come forward as a possible ally of France since her friendship with Germany had grown cold. By way of the League of Nations, which Soviet diplomacy had formerly regarded as an instrument of the bourgeoisie in its class struggle against the Socialist fatherland, Russia indicated her desire to form part of France's system of collective security. The decision in the struggle for and against the continuation of this security policy again depended on the domestic political constellation in France.

Barthou, a man of the Right, wanted to accept England's proposal and negotiate with Hitler if England promised adequate *garanties d'exécution*; this, at the risk not only of alienating Russia, but also of weakening the French ties with Poland. But Edouard Herriot, who for

years had favoured a Russian alliance and wished to incorporate it into the system of general security, once more opposed negotiations with Germany. He was still the leader of France's strongest party, a kind of incarnation of French democracy; and Premier Doumergue yielded to his demands. Thereupon Barthou threatened to resign; Doumergue replied with the same threat, and he proved the stronger. The British plan for negotiations with Germany was rejected.

On April 17 Barthou received R. H. Campbell, the British chargé d'affaires, at the Quai d'Orsay and handed him a note complaining of Germany's rearming. The German military budget was cited: Germany, the note said, was openly showing that she now no longer intended to abide by the Treaty of Versailles. Henceforward France must think of her own security, on which depended that of other nations too; further negotiations were futile until Germany returned to the League of Nations. Therefore, 'France regrets that the action of a third party [Germany] should abruptly have rendered' vain the negotiations undertaken by the two countries [France and Great Britain] with equal good faith and good will'.

This note was of historic importance: it put an end to the dream of a Franco-German agreement. No doubt German armaments had made such an agreement a very difficult task; but France undertook to say in hard and unfriendly words that it was impossible—while Hitler was still speaking of peace and reconciliation. The decision to negotiate or not to negotiate with Germany involved for France the choice between England and Russia as her ally. Now she had chosen, and rejected England; yet in the end she was unable to retain her allies in the East.

A year and a half before, Hitler had demanded that if the disarmament negotiations collapsed again, France should be considered guilty of their failure in the eyes of the world—that is to say, of England and America. This was the case now. Germany was rearming, but France was considered responsible for it. The estrangement between France and England had begun before that 17th day of April, 1934; but now it was to be final for years to come.

At the beginning of June, 1934, Doctor Cosmo Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, in an address to the Convocation of Canterbury, made a number of political remarks. Among other things he said that 'he could not but deplore the attitude taken by M. Barthou', and rebuked France for having 'almost contemptuously rejected the most reasonable proposals put forward by Germany'. As for Germany herself, Doctor Lang, while expressing his concern over the growth of 'paganism' under the influence of the National Socialist Movement, said that nevertheless 'he had the very greatest sympathy with the immense, undoubted, and, on the whole, beneficent awakening which had come to Germany and German life in every aspect, in the remarkable revolution associated with the name of Herr Hitler'.

About the same time Schacht began to set up so-called 'control posts' for raw materials throughout Germany. Questionnaires were sent out to business-men, who were invited to state before the middle of May, 1934, the amount of aluminium, lead, chromium, copper, magnesium, manganese, quicksilver, wolfram, zinc, and tin they had in stock. Also the stocks of wool, cotton, skins, and hides were to be listed. Germany began to take a census of her raw materials, to test her economic strength, and everyone knew that henceforward aluminium, quicksilver, cotton, and skins were no longer merchandise, but weapons. This was the first step towards rearmament 'beyond the limits of economic reason'.

On May 29, at one of those belated and hopeless meetings of the Disarmament Conference—it was the 'General Commission', to be exact—Norman Davis, in the name of the United States Government, declared that his country was prepared to co-operate in efforts to secure a general disarmament—but: 'The United States will not, however, take part in European political negotiations and settlements, and will not make any attempt whatever to use its armed forces for the settlement of any dispute anywhere. . . . The policy of the United States is to keep out of war. . . .'

THE BLOOD PURGE

THE DREAM of world domination is in the last analysis a dream of the subjects, not of the masters. Innumerable people think this world would be perfect if it were wisely governed by an all-powerful central brain; but who wants to be this central brain? At most, men who are aware that for them this can be no more than an irresponsible dream; in practice, the slightest contact with real power usually destroys the dream, quickly and thoroughly. Few continue the climb to the colder regions where there is no longer any tangible enjoyment, but where only the pride of the heights can recompense them for the icy burden of responsibility and the constant fear of downfall. Moreover, the real summits of world power are but thinly distributed in the landscape of world history, and demonstrably, none of the great world rulers has been happy.

All the armed intellectuals had heard that happiness was ignoble; perhaps from Nietzsche, for whom only the 'dangerous life' was worthy; from Goethe, who wrote that man cannot 'rule and enjoy at once', for 'enjoyment makes common'; or more recently from Oswald Spengler with his 'joy in the heaviness of human destiny'. But this book-learning stood up poorly under the test of reality; as soon as the warriors became Ministers, they wanted to live like bank directors and enjoyed themselves with a splendour and publicity unknown to any of the leaders of the Weimar Republic in their modest cottages. Hitler, who indulged himself in everything, was fortunate enough not to be plagued with conspicuous desires. His inclination to conceal his private life helped him to enhance the legend of his monastic frugality, giving it a quality of the pitiful, saintly, and awe-inspiring.

Restless, insatiable, and longing for greatness as a public figure, in private life he found his well-being in a mild uneventfulness, and the inevitable apparatus of luxury that grew up about him was calculated only to protect him from noise, disturbance, and compulsion. Even his crowded banquets were a kind of menagerie which he attended as a spectator. Rudolf Hess, Heinrich Himmler, Wilhelm Frick, resembled him in this; they were silent, fishlike natures, with a taste for quiet and littleness. But the party leadership was also full of beasts of prey, the type which rends more than it can consume, and which likes to take its pleasures beneath the public eye. Goring and Goebbels were typical; Hitler was obliged to attack them publicly, but could not improve them. They were at all times ready, was their reply, to die for their Leader; but you could not expect a man, who gave his life without stint, to stint himself in the pleasures of life. It seemed to afford these men a perverse

pleasure to insult public opinion by a shameless exhibition of their magnificence. There was a kind of sporting rivalry between them in their experiments on the public patience: how long would people continue to find mockery wonderful?

The band of armed intellectuals had at last come into money. They flung themselves into lives of wild, indecent sybaritism, forever pursued by the secret anxiety that they might be dead tomorrow or sooner. Hitler tried to teach them that it was better to 'find bliss in commanding' rather than in stolen motor-cars, expropriated castles and villas, wild eating and drinking bouts, and obscene distractions which sometimes occurred before the eyes of an indignant public.

This conflict between the Leader and his lieutenants involved more than dignified behaviour. It was an attempt to remould the character of the leaders, to cleanse them of the incalculability and wildness of the years of struggle and give them the hardness and sobriety which are needed in a ruling class. Ruthlessness in battle and pleasure had given the armed bohemians force for the attack; but to preserve and to mould, they would need the self-discipline which makes the bohemian into an armed intellectual. The 'chosen order of leadership'—and that is what Hitler wanted his party to be—must learn to discipline itself if it wanted to discipline the people; for 'what the people demand of the State, this order of sworn leadership will demand of itself and realize through absolute subordination to its own laws'. The National Socialist Party, said Hitler, was far more than a political movement, and anyone who believed that its aim was mere domination of the State 'has neither learned anything from the past nor understood the task of the future'.

The task of the future consisted in creating, by artificial cultivation, the nation of which Houston Stewart Chamberlain had dreamed, and 'scientifically drilling' it. The higher race, indeterminate in origin, but in its essence clearly definable as 'Aryan', should create and lead this nation; for this very reason, Heaven protect the German nation from the curse of so-called racial purity! Chamberlain had called racial purity a scientific monstrosity; Hitler thought that racial purity—though luckily it was an impossibility—would be a political misfortune. He first expressed these thoughts in all their breadth at a Party Day in Nuremberg in September, 1933. 'A glance at nature', he declared, 'shows us that the creatures of a pure race are more or less equal, not only physically, but also in their nature and abilities. This equality is the greatest obstacle in the formation of higher communities . . . a multiplicity of individuals must sacrifice their individual freedom and subordinate themselves to the will of an individual. But much as reason would counsel this, it would in reality be very difficult to explain to men who were entirely equal why, nevertheless, one man must ultimately raise his will above that of the others'. Strange! It would be hard to make noble equals understand why they must obey? Yes, up till then he had publicly

preached obedience as a virtue; but in the circle of his intimates he had said the opposite; and now, 'after victory', he admitted that the movement possessed a secret doctrine of which he had never spoken in public. Now he would do so for the first time; and so the masses of the movement learned that the opposite was true of what they had been hearing from their Leader up till then. It is the better man who commands, the inferior who obeys. 'The two concepts of commanding and obeying', Hitler declared in 1933, 'assume an entirely different and compelling meaning as soon as men of different value clash or mingle and a common purposive bond is created by the stronger part. The higher race—higher primarily in the sense of organizing ability—subjects a lower race, and thus enters into a relation which henceforth comprehends unequal races. From this results the subordination of a multiplicity of men to the will of a few, deriving simply from the right of the stronger, a right which is seen in nature and which can be regarded as the sole conceivable, because solely rational, right.'

This is the rational, expedient, organized nation: the domination of a minority of good race over a majority of inferior race. According to this doctrine, the Germans are not a master race, but a people to be led by a master race; as foreseen by Houston Stewart Chamberlain: 'Only the few', said the creator of the Nationalist Socialist racial theory, 'can conceive great politics and execute them with iron logic; it is absurd to think that a whole nation can carry on "politics" and particularly that politics of which only Germany is capable and which alone belits it. Today there is much talk of "people" and in the last analysis it is always by certain circles who want to seize power and use it in their selfish interests. Germany must not become an industrial, financial, or agrarian State; she must be ruled by circles standing outside all parties and special interests; only under this condition is a truly scientific policy possible'.

The independence of the new leader class from special economic interests is what Hitler calls 'socialism'; and it is this economic independence which safeguards for the 'State-forming master race' its domination over the 'born slaves'. In a speech which Hitler delivered in February, 1934, at Berlin he made no bones about his social concepts:

The primitive man will have no understanding for the needs of the spirit, but he begrudges them to no one. All the millions of small and hard-working citizens of a nation do not demand that the wise man should adapt himself to their knowledge or that the man blessed with artistic gifts should prefer their culture. They always grant him what is his, but they also demand, and rightly so, that in return for their co-operation in the community they be given that which is compatible with their nature. And therefore a truly superior leadership of a political nation must be filled with a high social understanding . . . [social understanding means to give the lowly his pleasures, but not

to desire them for oneself;] the political leadership of a nation must seek their essential distinction from the rest of the people, not in any low pleasures, but in a harder self-discipline. They must understand that only what removes them from the primitive man raises them above him. And they must know that only those whom a man rightly feels to be above him will in the long run be recognized as above him. And those who are slaves of the most primitive physical needs can, in the long run, be no masters over the born slaves.

On August 6, 1933, Hitler gathered together the civilian functionaries of the party at his residence in Obersalzberg. He led his guests in goose-step along a narrow mountain path to one of the surrounding summits, and there addressed them in a short but violent speech, of which the gist was more or less as follows: Below them they saw Germany, and Germany was now theirs; but they must not imagine that they could do with it what they pleased; giving orders implied a terrible responsibility. Once more he tried to prove that no second revolution was necessary.

Röhm was not among the guests. On that same August 6—it was a Sunday—he had ordered 82,000 S.A. men to march before him on Tempelhof Field near Berlin and made an inflammatory speech against the 'reactionaries' who had suggested that the time had come for the S.A. to disappear. He could have quoted many of these reactionaries by name, and the best known of all would have been Göring. Not that Göring wanted to dissolve the Storm Troops. S.A. leaders, however, had become police chiefs, and as such they were under the orders of the Prime Minister of Prussia. But Röhm insisted that they were and must remain S.A. leaders first and foremost, and that his orders had precedence over any others. For a man like Edmund Heines, an *Obergruppenführer* of the S.A. who had become chief of police of the city of Breslau in Silesia and established a reign of terror there, Göring's orders meant nothing at all. The war between these National Socialist Government leaders had now almost come out into the open. As early as May, 1933, Göring had flatly forbidden his police officials to belong to the S.A. or the S.S. (or even the Steel Helmets); in the beginning of August he took an unusual step and sent the whole S.A. and S.S. auxiliary police home. This was the treatment accorded the 'old fighters' who had conquered power for Hitler and Göring. In helpless rage Röhm exclaimed on Tempelhof field: 'Those who think that the task of the S.A. has been accomplished will have to accept the fact that we are here and intend to stay here'. They were here 'to suppress the defeated enemy and, if need be, exterminate him'. And he would not let anyone gainsay him in this matter.

This—among other things—was a conflict between the State and the party over the right to practise terrorism. The Third Reich could not endure without using force against a part of its citizens, without at least

frightening the others and threatening all of them. This State was always hovering on a wave of inflamed emotion, whether of enthusiasm or of fear. The S.A. considered terrorism its monopoly; but on May 3 Göring had created a Government agency for the purpose of exerting terrorism, and given it the name of Secret State Police (Geheime Staats-Polizei, abbreviated Gestapo). This police was explicitly charged with those tasks which only a few months before had been considered unlawful arbitrary acts strictly forbidden by the constitution, and which, for that reason, seemed reserved to the S.A. Henceforward the Gestapo, without any individual orders from above, had the right to exercise the exceptional powers against people's lives, freedom, and property which the Third Reich had granted itself on the night of the Reichstag fire. Moreover, it was not a National Socialist to whom Göring had given these extraordinary powers, at least not an 'old fighter' known to the party—it was the same Councillor Werner Diels who had once betrayed his State Secretary Abegg to von Papen. At first the Gestapo had authority only in Prussia. It must be said that throughout Germany there had always been a 'political police'—an institution as old as history itself; in the French Republic it was more powerful than Parliament; in Tsarist Russia it had forged *The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*, in Bolshevik Russia it was one of the pillars of the State. In the Weimar Republic it had not been quite as powerful. Had not a saboteur like Frick been for years the head of the political police in Bavaria? Had not Hess, with the support of this Bavarian police, been able to spy upon his own party? That is why in Bavaria the party and the State merged more rapidly and more intimately than in Göring's domain. One of Röhm's subordinates assumed the direction of the entire Bavarian police apparatus—this was Heinrich Himmler, who in his capacity of Reichsführer of the S.S. was subject to the orders of the Chief of Staff of the S.A.

Here was an extraordinary confusion. The National Socialists had 'conquered power', but the struggle between the State and the party continued. Hitler's way of describing this was that 'things were left to grow organically'; the stronger, he implied, would win, and this was how it should be. Nevertheless, some thought the Führer had clearly said that the party commanded the State! No, Goebbels contradicted them publicly; the Führer had not said 'the party' but 'we'; and 'we' were something different—only the party comrades whom the Führer had appointed to commanding posts. But how many were they? And who were they? Almost all of them were Hitler's tools or the tools of his tools; but people like Röhm, Feder, Rosenberg, and Streicher held no important Government posts.

Among the most bitterly disappointed of the National Socialists was Hitler's personal favourite, the lawyer, Hans Frank, who had hoped to become Minister of Justice over the whole Reich. There was a stain on the escutcheon of this Frank, whose unsatisfied ambition was written in

his face all his life. His father, who had also been a lawyer, had been sentenced to prison for embezzlement several years before; he had been disbarred, but still practised law, taking care of his son's juridical business while pretending to be his book-keeper. No sooner had Hitler come to power than Frank Senior was readmitted to the Munich Bar with full honours. There were National Socialist dignitaries with worse blots on their names, but they did not demand to be made Ministers of Justice, of all things. It is true that in Bavaria, where the party's Old Guard flaunted themselves more impudently than in the capital of the Reich, Frank and his friends disregarded all delicate scruples, and the young man became Minister of Justice of that small country. Even spatially this was limited authority, and Hitler's personal friend was forced to look on bitterly while in great Prussia a commonplace official without any academic background, one Hans Kerrl, was put at the head of the Ministry of Justice because he was Göring's bosom friend; while a lawyer from Kassel, a certain Roland Freisler, actually managed the Ministry's affairs as Kerrl's State Secretary; while later Freisler succeeded Kerrl; when Kerrl had proved too obvious a failure. But he, Frank, could not achieve the goal which for the leader of the National Socialist jurists was the highest, the only one worth desiring: the Reich Ministry of Justice, the office where the laws were really made.

Through their own experience these men slowly learned that the State and power were not necessarily one and the same thing. They had been brought up on the idea that all political executive power was concentrated in the State. Since the creation of the Spanish monarchy in the sixteenth century, this view had become dominant in continental Europe. Since Napoleon I, it had no longer been disputed. When financiers and industrialists exercised their power, they did it by influencing the Government authorities; only the Church had its own sphere of influence in society. This State monopoly of political power was not shaken until after the First World War, and then in the very countries where one would have least expected it: the so-called dictatorships. In these countries the party—or, more accurately, the numerous organizations between the party and the State—competed with or surpassed the power of the Government administration; and in a thousand concrete cases it was impossible to predict which of the two would be stronger and emerge victorious. It was an excess of power that burst all controls and for a limited time spilled over into a chaos of cross-currents.

Thus, for instance, Frank, who had not become Minister of Justice, instead was appointed 'Reich Commissioner for the Co-ordination of Justice in the German States and for the Renovation of the Administration of Law'. This opaque title meant that he was to enlist all the officials entrusted with the administration of justice, including the judges, into the National Socialist organizations; for this purpose he rebaptized the 'League of National Socialist Jurists', which he had founded and of

which he had been the head for several years, as the 'German Juridical Front'. Respectable old legal societies, such as the Prussian Judges' Union and the German Lawyers' Union, had to join this 'Juridical Front' in a body. It can be said for the German judges that, at least for a time, they tried to oppose the rape of the law by the National Socialists; the largest of their organizations, the 'German Judges' Union', declared on March 19 that the German judge 'has always ordained justice in accordance with the law and his conscience. This must continue to be so!' Later these same judges declared that their mission was 'to protect the weak'. This was not at all the National Socialist idea, and Frank replied contemptuously: yes, previous justice did 'protect the weak and created a morality for slaves'. Now equal rights no longer existed for all, but only for those who, in Hitler's words, 'did not refuse their support to the Government'. According to Kerl the idea that 'objectivity must be the idol of jurisprudence' was a superstition; no, justice must not 'practise dead objectivity worship'; and Frank said: 'Law should not protect the weakling, but make the strong even stronger'.

The German judges' backbone was broken when the Government broke down the security of their existence. As in England, the judges in Germany had held tenure for life and could not be removed from office. This privilege, designed to insure the independence of the courts, was eliminated by the National Socialists. For many months the German judges tried to preserve the principle of equality at least in the wording of the laws, and the old officials of the Reich Ministry of Justice insisted that murder must remain murder, and homicide, homicide, no matter who was the criminal and who the victim. The S.A. leaders were particularly bitter about this. As it was, the police and public prosecutors often did not dare to bring National Socialist murderers to justice; but the S.A. men demanded that their impunity be confirmed by law. For this reason, as early as March 21, the Government of the Reich decreed an 'amnesty' covering crimes under the previous régime 'which were committed out of the best will for the good of the Reich'. At once the five murderers of Potempa were released from prison.

The National Socialist financial backers now also came forward with their claims; the rich people who had supported the party during hard times and had helped the party leaders in many a financial strait, often enough by methods which involved cheating the State of taxes. Several big firms were threatened with proceedings for tax frauds; but now it turned out that the little favours done for Göring had been a good investment. The business-men came to him complaining: of course, they had defrauded the State, but only in order to save their enterprises and give their workers a livelihood. Göring listened to them without wincing and wrote to Kerl, his Minister of Justice, that in former times in business actions were committed 'which, although they violated penal law, were not inspired by selfish motives. The Bolshevistic taxes of the

democratic State often compelled people, in the interest of preserving their enterprises, to enter upon paths which were not permissible from a legal point of view, but which are comprehensible in the light of the conditions prevailing at that time, especially as the rigorous economic conceptions of National Socialism had not yet become the common possession of all circles of our nation. The indiscriminate prosecution of such offences might often affect persons who, imbued with the spirit of the National Socialist revolution, are now willing to collaborate in the development of our economy.'

In thus breaking the law and saving millions for the big business-men at the expense of the State, Göring again collected his share of the booty in the form of tens and hundreds of thousands of marks. From a large department store with a Jewish name he bought old furniture and precious rugs without ever paying for them; a Jewish super-market enjoyed the dubious privilege of delivering wines and delicacies to him gratis for years. In 1935, when he married, he said in an affable way to one of the best-known German industrialists that the Prussian State manufacture of porcelain had a valuable table service worth sixty thousand marks for sale, and that it would really be a nice gesture if this industrialist presented it to him as a wedding gift. The man thus called upon to make a princely gift was not particularly surprised; two years earlier, during a conversation about the new Minister, Göring, he had heard a business acquaintance whisper rapturously. 'He accepts gifts!' The sixty thousand marks' worth of porcelain was bought and given.

As for Hitler, he bought his house and estate at Berchtesgaden with his own funds, so to speak, acquired from the sale of *Mein Kampf*—even though the largest part of his income as an author originated in the fact that the German people had to buy *Mein Kampf* whether they liked it or not. But Göring, who wished to have his own estate in close proximity to his Führer, got the Cabinet of the Bavarian State to give him a piece of land ten thousand metres square, about a hundred yards above Hitler's residence; as a matter of principle, he did not spend any money for this piece of German soil. In Prussia, which he ruled personally, he appropriated for his own use the State hunting grounds of Schorfheide near Berlin; and where a modest hunting lodge of the German Kaiser had formerly stood he erected a sumptuous villa. He imported the body of his dead wife from Sweden and named the whole estate in her honour, 'Karinhall'. However, he was considerate enough not to declare all this magnificence his formal property. Year after year, the Prussian budget contained an item showing that the State hunting grounds of Schorfheide, the private residence and hunting domain of Prime Minister Göring, were maintained at a cost of a million marks out of the taxpayers' pockets.

The corruption of the Third Reich is connected with the worship of 'great men', which is a sort of religious principle of the new State.

According to this principle, the people owe it to its great men to give them rich gifts. German industry had presented Hindenburg, or, more accurately, his son, with the estate of Neudeck and helped him to pocket the inheritance tax. Later, it had given him an additional gift of almost half a million marks in order that he might lack nothing on the estate. But Göring gave the old gentleman a much more magnificent gift by presenting him—or again, more accurately, his son—with the Government-owned neighbouring estate of Langenau along with the State forest of Reussenwald. Fittingly enough, this was done on August 27, the anniversary of the Battle of Tannenberg (1914), which had actually been won by Generals Hoffmann, von François, and Ludendorff; the gift was made 'in fulfilment of the duty of national gratitude'. Four days later the German people learned that Hindenburg, 'in recognition of his [Captain Göring's] distinguished services in war and peace, had granted him the status of infantry general with the right to wear the army uniform'.

Thus they handed each other public property or plundered great private properties. This armed Bohemia managed to make itself both agreeable and frightful to organized wealth and justified Machiavelli's saying that soldiers are stronger than money, for soldiers can always find money, but money does not always find soldiers. The mass of rank-and-file National Socialists, however, who had no share in this cool plunder, boasted of their revolutionary purity and called Göring and his clique 'reactionaries', more out of envy than political conviction. The kernel of the 'old fighters' among the three million S.A. men still fared as they had in 1923, when Wilhelm Brückner described their desperate gamble: they had staked their poverty and their lives on the great political undertaking in order to find jobs as paid soldiers or officers in the future German army; and they had been waiting too long according to their lights. When Hitler wrangled with England and France over the size of the future army, he was, in the eyes of the 'old fighters', fighting for their most important personal interests. For the time being, despite all the Führer's warning speeches, they still stuck to the belief that within a short time they would be that army—from the plain S.A. man up to the *Obergruppenführer* who had the rank of a commanding general and who, according to an order issued by Blomberg, was tactfully to be saluted like a general by the Reichswehr soldiers.

On June 2, when Hitler gathered the S.A. leaders in Reichenhall and once more forbade them in sharp terms to continue the revolution, he also hammered into them the idea that 'only the army of the Reich is the weapon-bearer of the nation'. Several of the brown chieftains comforted themselves with the thought that their Führer spoke thus only because he was afraid of Hindenburg and Blomberg; but Röhm certainly knew that Hitler had never spoken or thought otherwise. His promise that the S.A. would 'form a Guard and be the unshakable

bearers of our ideological values' meant little; the term 'ideological values' had to be translated for these veteran mercenaries before they could understand it. With their 'ideological values', Hitler said, they would 'penetrate the entire nation', and as their reward 'the German revolution would mould the face of the future for centuries'. These were big words; but the S.A. leaders wanted big remunerations. In the beginning of October, Röhm had complained to a Dutch newspaperman that nearly two million S.A. men were forced 'to continue in their professions'; they were barely reimbursed for the expenses of their trip to the Party Day in Nuremberg. In his public speeches Hitler repeatedly explained that the S.A. should not demand anything at all; the great privilege of these embittered men was, on the contrary, to be a model of self-sacrifice and renunciation, for 'the people has a right to expect that its leaders will be just as heroic as they demand that the people be'. He knew that he was addressing men who had rarely gone far in their civilian careers; men 'who in their social and economic origin mostly occupied a subordinate, and frequently low, rank'. In compensation he tried to convince them that 'at some future day they would represent the leadership of the nation'.

But this was precisely their trouble—they represented something which they were not; what they had perhaps been for a short time, but what they had now ceased to be. They were completely unfit to lead the nation, and Hitler, who at the bottom of his heart was well aware of this unfitness, only hesitatingly found euphemisms like 'ideological values' and 'future leadership of the nation' to tell them so.

These veterans of the civil war, these armed men who for ten years had been and still were bohemians, were not even any longer the seasoned and useful soldiers they believed themselves to be. The older men among their leaders had left the army with the ranks of lieutenant, captain, or sometimes even major; several of them had for a time served in the police force; one or another might have calculated that with luck he would have been a colonel or perhaps major-general if he had been able to remain in the service. In reality these people frequently could not be used even as the lieutenants and captains they had been before. In their demonstration marches and meeting brawls, these political soldiers had lost contact with the genuine modern soldiers who were developing new military ideas. For the most part they were simply unfit for the posts to which they aspired.

More generally they were unfit to occupy any responsible position—and their supreme leader knew this. When Hitler was still engaged in his struggle against the State, he had appealed to the 'Uprooted and Disinherited' and praised them as his best troops. Later, in his speech of justification for the events that were to follow, he contemptuously told these S.A. leaders, now for the most part dead, that they were people 'who in 1918 had been shaken in their former relation to the State and

uprooted, and had thereby lost all inner contact with a human social order'. They were people 'who, without realizing it, had found their profession of faith in nihilism. Incapable of any real co-operation, ready to oppose any order, filled with hatred for any kind of authority, their excited and restless minds were appeased only by constant intellectual and conspiratory preoccupation with the destruction of existing institutions'. These were Hitler's own words about his faithful, to whom he had to be unfaithful, because power cannot be established without a breach of faith—a breach of faith both to people and to ideas.

For a few months these men had been admired by the nation as the sinister embodiments of a mysterious but indisputably impressive political force; as a Viking army which had suddenly emerged into the present from legendary times; as the host of freedom seeking the light, which they themselves thought they were. But gradually the character of these heroes became better known, and what scoundrels many of them were was demonstrated in a thousand individual cases to be. Frightening reports also trickled through from the concentration camps, and the public began obscurely to realize that the Führer's picked troops had organized artificial hells in Dachau near Munich, in Oranienburg near Berlin, in Duerrgoy near Breslau, and in Boergermoor in north-western Germany; hells which surpassed in horror the former slave camps in Belgian Congo or Bolshevik Russia. It became known that in Oranienburg cement cells were built in which camp inmates were kept standing for many hours, sometimes days, in the darkness—upright standing stone coffins. It became known that in all the concentration camps flogging had been officially introduced as a punishment for light offences; that for relatively innocuous violations of rules the penalty was execution by hanging—officially this was designated, not as a penalty, but as a disciplinary measure. It happened that prisoners employed in road-building were 'for fun' thrown into the rotating barrel of a concrete-mixing machine and kept there until their bones were crushed. It happened that one torturer with a sense of humour burned, with a cigarette, holes in the bare chest of his victim to make them look like uniform buttons. To throw prisoners into sewers or drains 'by oversight' was also considered a permissible pastime. The most gruesome tortures were often those in which outwardly nothing seemed to happen. Prisoners were compelled to stand erect for many hours under a torrid sun; they were forbidden to make the slightest motion, not even a quiver of a limb. Cases were reported of this torture being inflicted on hundreds of people for as long as eighteen hours. It happened that people were locked up in boxlike wooden closets, fed with salted herrings, and left without water or any other drink; of course death was the result.

These atrocities revealed the depravity of the 'old fighters', and gave the more cool-headed National Socialist leaders food for thought. Frick and Epp occasionally tried to stop the horrors or call their per-

petrators to account. Now and then even Göring intervened, and Hitler himself doubtless realized the injury caused to his own popularity by these crimes. After the initial noisy enthusiasm over the magnificence and energy of the new Government had somewhat subsided, the cries of the martyred were heard more distinctly. Röhm admitted publicly that these things seemed unbearable to many people, but said that he saw no reason for stopping them. 'Many complaints are being lodged concerning the alleged excesses of S.A. men', he declared in a statement which probably seemed witty to him; but 'if the supreme leadership of the S.A. investigated each individual complaint, its staff would have to be increased tenfold and a skyscraper erected over the Brown House' (August, 1933).

A curious thing happened: the S.A. began to feel afraid in the Germany they dominated. The brown figures in the streets still seemed to behave like conquerors and masters who could say, strike, shoot, and, in general, act as they pleased; but the limit had been reached where pride turned into doubt and brutality into cowardice. Röhm sent out memoranda to the other National Socialist leaders, pointing out that the S.A. were practically 'defenceless' in the hands of the 'commune of murderers', since they had been sent home and forced to turn in their revolvers. In July, 1933, in order to reassure the trembling heroes, Hess warned: 'We are far from intending to treat the enemy with mildness'; and as Hess was a specialist in handling hostages and had often said that in political struggles ten innocent people had to suffer for one guilty one, he proclaimed now: 'that every murder of a National Socialist committed by a Communist or Marxist would be expiated tenfold by Communist or Marxist leaders'.

The widening gulf between the S.A. and the people became particularly apparent during the elections, when the National Socialist propaganda tried to blur the differences between the party and the masses as much as possible. Hess denied in moving tones that 'Germans who did not belong to the National Socialist Party must be considered second-class Germans'. Then, as though frightened by his own daring, he immediately corrected this statement, admitting that a category of Germans existed 'which deserved particular recognition: the category of old fighters'. These old fighters, he said, had risked death for their Führer year after year and 'played the same part in the domestic struggle as the front-line soldiers in the World War'. The other National Socialists must not imagine that they are as valuable, must not demand 'to be put on the same level as the old fighters and raised above their fellow countrymen'. Hess went so far as to grant that people who had not joined the party after the seizure of power because they did not want to seem to be jumping on the band-wagon 'were not among the worst'. But then he was again frightened of having perhaps said too much, and added hastily: 'I do not mean at all to accuse all those who joined the National

Socialist Party after January 30, 1933, of lack of character and foolish opportunism'.

Because these men of 'after January 30', men of normal usefulness and efficiency, to some extent had again taken the reins into their hands, the S.A. grumbled about a second revolution, although Hitler had forbidden his partisans even to use the term 'revolution'. On November 5, 1933, before fifteen thousand National Socialist officials gathered in the Sportpalast in Berlin, Röhm attacked the renewed insolence of the reactionaries: 'One often hears voices from the bourgeois camp to the effect that the S.A. have lost their reason for being'. But this is what he wanted to say to these gentlemen: the bureaucratic spirit, which had barely changed after January 30, 1933, 'must still be changed in a gentle, or if need be, in an ungentle manner'. By no means could the National Socialist revolution be regarded as completed. At this there was thunderous applause. Then Himmler appeared before the footlights and exclaimed that 'revolutions are triumphant only if every man who is sent to a post considers himself, not an official of the State, but of the revolution. And so must it be today in the National Socialist revolution'. Again there was thunderous applause. However, when Goebbels came forward and cautiously tried to contradict the two previous speakers, saying that the revolution had only one slogan: Germany; that the period of domestic political activity was over and that the time had come to settle matters with the world, but that 'we could do this only if the people are behind us', the applause was much weaker.

Important elements in the party leadership had here taken a stand against stopping the revolution; and the wrath of these now forgotten men was stronger than Hitler's will. Great concessions were made to the 'old fighters'. By a law promulgated in the middle of December and entitled 'On the Unity of the Party and the State', the Chief of Staff of the S.A. was made a member of the Reich Cabinet with the rank of Minister; thus the burning grievance of the S.A., the disdainful treatment of Röhm, was at least outwardly removed. At the same time, the Führer's deputy, Rudolf Hess, was given the rank of Minister.

This late and hasty honour was conferred upon Röhm at a moment when the S.A. was suddenly and unexpectedly needed again. The 'reactionaries' had indeed gained ground. This became apparent when former Kaiser Wilhelm wrote, from his exile in Holland to President Hindenburg, that the time had come for crowning the reconstruction of Germany by the restoration of the monarchy. The personal relations between Wilhelm II and Hindenburg were tense; the former Kaiser believed that his Field-Marshal had been the real cause of his overthrow; but Hindenburg doubtless had a vague idea that the National Socialist period would not last forever in Germany. The National Socialists got wind of the contents of this letter and replied with a cry of fury, 'We will not tolerate the interference of the High Gentleman of Doorn', as Goer-

litzer, Goebbels' closest collaborator, put it. When a group of ladies and gentlemen belonging to Berlin high society organized a public celebration of the ex-Kaiser's birthday (January 27, 1934), Göring's police broke into the hall and dispersed these faithful followers of Wilhelm II. Earlier than this, Hitler had made it plain that he did not intend to restore the monarchy. 'What is past does not come again. . . . The wheels of history cannot be turned backwards. . . . This would not be desirable at all. . . . The dynasties of German princes, he had said, had often 'given only mediocrities to the throne'; or, 'Republic versus monarchy-- a serious issue? Millions laugh at it.' He had promised a great deal to credulous princes; foreign observers had regarded Hitler as the herald of a future monarchy and did not realize how serious he was when--as early as 1923--he had declared that 'today the German no longer dies for the monarchy, but only for Germany's freedom'.

When the Reichstag assembled on the anniversary of the 'seizure of power', Hitler took the opportunity to declare that the achievement of the German princes had been 'almost exclusively the selfish operation of a ruthless power politics in favour of their own dynasties', and if these policies of the German princes 'did not definitely destroy Germany as a nation, this was not the merit of the authors of these policies. . . . Therefore, I should like to register my protest against the recently reaffirmed thesis that Germany could be happy again only under her hereditary princes.' The future head of Germany, whoever he may be, 'will be called to that office by the German people and will be obligated to it alone and exclusively'.

This meant that the future form of the German Government would be determined by the National Socialists, by the dictatorship based on the plebiscite; and to remove the last doubts about this, a law was proposed at the same Reichstag session which gave the Reich Government the important right--and thereby deprived parliament of it--'to promulgate new constitutional legislation', that is to say, to give the country a new constitution. This 'is perhaps the most important law for Germany's future', said Göring, the President of the Reichstag; and so it was. After the National Socialist deputies had passed this revolutionary law in less than three minutes, there was, according to the official record, 'a movement of cheerful satisfaction with this quick work throughout all the rows'.

On the same day Hitler wrote Rohm a letter full of strikingly cordial phrases intended to honour and pacify the man he had so often disdained. Expressing his desire 'to thank you, my dear Ernst Röhm, for your unforgettable services', he assured the homosexual murderer that he was extremely 'grateful to destiny for having given me the right to call a man like you my friend and comrade-in-arms. In cordial friendship and grateful respect, your Adolf Hitler.'

And on February 2 Frick once more sent a telegram to the States, this

time ordering his officials immediately to dissolve all the organizations working for the monarchy. The Weimar Republic had left a few quaint privileges of the former princes undisturbed. Thus, the birth, marriage, and death records of the Hohenzollern family were not kept in the public registrar's offices, but in a private office which was called the 'Ministry of the Royal House'; Frick gave orders that this practice be stopped, and that the Hohenzollern family records be transferred to the public offices, like those of any other Prussian citizen.

Urged on by Röhm and Hess, the all-powerful Government now saw to it that the Uprooted and Disinherited were treated by all public agencies, and particularly by the Treasury, on an equal footing with World War veterans. In February, 1934, it adopted a law with the clear, unadorned title: 'Concerning provisions for the fighters of the national movement'. These fighters—that is, members of the National Socialist Party and the Steel Helmets—upon request, were to be granted damages to the same amounts as victims of the World War for sickness or injuries 'which they had suffered before November 15, 1933, in connection with the political struggle for the national movement'; thus, a National Socialist office clerk could say that he had got stomach trouble as a result of excessive work for the party. In the past, Hitler had often publicly declared to his S.A. men that they should not think too much about the hardships of their struggle, for every minute at the front in the World War had been a thousand times worse. Now, Hess's law proclaimed: The German people 'owe the old fighters the same gratitude and recognition for their heroic achievements as they owe their fellow countrymen who sacrificed their health and lives for the fatherland'.

In the struggle against the reactionary conservatives and the monarchists, the S.A. was once again given a task. Goebbels, who, as late as November, had tried with anxious words to talk the revolutionaries out of their impatience, suddenly became bold and radical, and this was surely not without Hitler's explicit approval. The S.A. with their greedy grumblings were right; he had often heard it said, he declared in an address to the *S.A. Standarte VIII* in Berlin, 'that old party comrades and S.A. men could not be used in Government offices and departments because they had not taken any examinations. If so, I must say that while the stay-at-homes passed their examinations, we saved the Reich'—that is to say, marched through the country as armed bohemians. 'We consider it intolerable', he continued, 'that the Old Guard should silently give way after having conquered the Reich. . . . It won't do to put our old vanguard fighters in a lower category than the home-birds or to place the home-birds above them'. 'The National Socialist struggle', he said in another speech, 'has been a socialist revolution; it has been the revolution of a workers' movement, and those who have made it must today also be its spokesmen'. The workers—he explicitly addressed them—should trust the leaders of the revolution, because 'if

these leaders are now looking on and are not taking any steps against the reactionary machinations throughout the country, it is only in order better to know the reactionaries'. Then Goebbels drew a truly Oriental picture of whimsical government: 'If one wants to catch mice,' he said, 'one does not strike at them constantly, but only from time to time, for otherwise they would creep into their holes. One strikes once, then one waits for a while till the mice become insolent again, and when they feel safe, one strikes them for the second time.' Fortunately, he thought, the people refused to have anything to do with these mice, rats, stay-at-homes, and reactionaries.

This was objectively false. The people were beginning to find the achievements of the régime which they had admired at first quite normal, and even to see its drawbacks. True, the number of unemployed continued to decrease; in March, Hitler was able to announce that 2,700,000 out of 7,000,000 jobless had found employment. But once the miracle of decreasing unemployment had been recognized and accepted, the people felt even more bitter about the still wretchedly low wages. Hitler, who a year and a half ago had reproached von Papen for expecting the workers to live on wages of a hundred marks a month, was now forced to admit that the wages of too many workers were still around that figure. Robert Ley, always open-hearted, called some of the German wages 'starvation wages'; but, he added, for the moment it could not be otherwise.

At this point Hitler and Goebbels had the unfortunate idea that more abuse, ridicule, and persecution of the dissatisfied might improve the popular mood and at the same time give a new goal and line to the party which had become purposeless. A campaign against the so-called 'bleaters, alarmists, and professional critics' was opened in May. Hitler shouted: 'Only those have a right to criticize who can solve a problem better. But we have attacked the solution of the German problem better than our opponents of the past and our critics of today.' Goebbels echoed him: 'As we National Socialists are convinced that we are right, we cannot tolerate anyone beside us who declares that he, too, is right. . . .' On May 2, Röhm, before his assembled sub-leaders, promised in his customary tart tone that the S.A., because they were disciplined, would 'fulfil every task given them by their Führer, Adolf Hitler, in thorough and exemplary fashion'.

The dissatisfied classes of the population were to be reminded of their insignificance and the S.A. of their importance and superiority. If anyone dared to say a deprecatory word about the new order on a street corner, life was made hard for him, to say the least. In a village near Mainz a housewife said to her milkman that actually nothing had as yet improved in Germany; as a punishment she was forced, for many months, to appear every morning at party headquarters and say in a loud voice: 'Much has been improved and even more will be improved in Germany'.

This campaign against the alarmists was an enterprise of exceptional shortsightedness on Hitler's part. The masses of the people grew so embittered that in the middle of June even Göring, in an address to his Prussian Council of State, admitted that 'the mood was deteriorating and dissatisfaction had broken out here and there'. Nor were the S.A. chieftains happier now that they were once again being called on to stand by and help while the 'philistines' were admonished, just as they had done for years. Everyone felt that the final decision concerning the leadership and the form of the new State was still pending.

If Hitler really had been the conscious framer of political plans that he seemed in his own and the world's eyes—'the great strategist of the revolution', as Hess once called him, who 'acts after ice-cold reflection'—he would have begun his preparations for the inevitable struggle for power at that very moment. It lies in the nature of things human that unused power passes imperceptibly from idle hands into more active ones; it was in the nature of this State that various ambitious absolute powers should struggle over its only half-used power; it was characteristic of Hitler to watch the ebb and flow of power and the struggle for it until a sudden danger cleared the situation like a flash of lightning and precipitated a decision. Thus groups arose in the National Socialist Party which prepared themselves for the bloody break-through to full, unrestricted domination, and all of them counted on carrying Hitler with them. Outwardly, the greatest force among these planners and makers of preparations was Röhm; he gathered around him a staff of people who were particularly devoted to him, not all of them among the oldest party members, but certainly all old Free Corps fighters, especially from the Rossbach unit. This group had personal points of support scattered throughout Germany: there was Count Wolf Helldorf, the leader of the Berlin-Brandenburg *Obergruppe* (that is, an organization of about a hundred thousand men) and, at that time, chief of police of Potsdam; there was Karl Ernst, Helldorf's friend and immediate subordinate, the Group Leader of Berlin, who came from the dregs of the lower classes just as Helldorf came from the dregs of the upper classes; there was the murderer, Edmund Heines, in Breslau; there was Fritz Krausser, a friend of Röhm's, who had been ennobled by the King of Bavaria for outstanding bravery in the World War. Other members of the group were Manfred von Killinger, Prime Minister of Saxony; ex-Colonel August Schneidhuber, chief of police in Munich, and Reiner and Count Spreti, Röhm's aides-de-camp.

It was a group which fully deserved the epithet of Uprooted and Disinherited. Helldorf was perpetually bankrupt and had borrowed money from a certain Steinschneider who wanted his favour. This man was probably of Jewish origin and earned a great deal of money in theatres as a 'clairvoyant' under the pseudonym of Hanussen. In April, 1933, by order of Helldorf, he was kidnapped from a theatre entrance and murdered

in a wood near Berlin. Georg Bell, a former intimate friend of Röhm's who had broken with him, fled to Austria and from there threatened to make revelations concerning the Reichstag fire. By order of Röhm he was pursued by a group of assassins, who discovered him in a border village and murdered him in his hotel room. The ideas and aims of these men can hardly be better described than by the words which Plato in his *Banquet* put into the mouth of one of their ilk: 'If it were possible to form a State or an army exclusively of homosexuals, these men would direct all their emulations towards honours, and going into battle with such a spirit would, even if their numbers were small, conquer the entire world'.

A curious appendage to this group was Goebbels, who, from an old habit, was always on the side of the dissatisfied S.A. so long as he believed that in the end Hitler would do what they wanted. With Helldorf he formed a kind of political leadership of the bloc around Röhm; he gave Röhm publicity; he gave him opportunities to speak before foreign diplomats; he put the S.A. leaders' complaints into words more eloquent than Röhm himself could have done; he praised him in speeches and writings. In the April edition of his so-called diary he still gave Röhm credit for the chief contribution to the 'seizure of power'.

Should it ever come to a revolutionary settlement, such a clique would need troops ready to strike at a moment's notice. In order to move quickly, this force must not be numerous, nor did it have to be numerous; for the party which, within a short time, could lay its hands on the geographical key points of Government authority (Government office buildings, centres of communication), would thereby enjoy the benefits of securing legality and power and draw the masses to its side. For that reason the National Socialist leaders had so-called 'staff-guards' around them. Hitler had his 'bodyguard'; Göring kept a particularly formidable group near Berlin half-concealed in a building where he had been trained as an officer in his youth: this was a police group of several thousand men, formed 'for special services', and called the *Landes-Polizeigruppe General Göring*. They were commanded by a certain Major Wecke who was quartered in the former Cadet School at Lichterfelde.

All these groups were silently supervised by a kind of armed 'black Cabinet' which constantly kept the entire movement under control; it was composed of the most unostentatious high party officials and was completely in Hitler's hands. The leading personalities in this group were Rudolf Hess, Heinrich Himmler, and former Major Walter Buch, chairman of the Party's Control Committee.

Since 1920, when Hess joined Hitler, his job had been to spy on the party and keep it in order. For the supervision of the S.A. he had a particularly suitable human instrument, a certain Martin Bormann, an 'old fighter', who was endowed with all the qualities and experience of the armed bohemians, including a year spent in prison for participation in a

political murder. Bormann had been Captain von Pfeffer's right hand when the latter was the supreme leader of the S.A. When, in 1930, Pfeffer was crowded out by Röhm's clique, Bormann left the leadership of the S.A., but remained director of the 'Relief Fund', an institution which could also be called the bribe fund. At its headquarters the lamentations and grievances of the malcontents which the leadership would not listen to were loudly reiterated; and Bormann, full of bitter resentment against the 'gang of fairies' around Röhm, collected heaps of material. Its content was communicated to Hess; and Hess began to din into Hitler's ears that the conditions created by Röhm's male harem within the S.A. were gradually becoming unbearable. A similar complaint was brought by Walter Buch: he claimed that Röhm had built up around himself a peculiar staff, completely devoted to him personally, but dubious, to say the least, from the point of view of the party and its Führer. What seemed particularly objectionable was that Röhm's collaborators were in part men unknown in the movement; that their patron had chosen them for personal reasons, and that therefore they placed their personal loyalty to him above everything else. Actually Göring and Goebbels had always done the same thing—it would have been inconceivable if they had done otherwise; even Hitler himself had done it—thus, in April, 1934, he had got Hindenburg to appoint his translator, Joachim von Ribbentrop, 'deputy in disarmament problems', thus making him, over Rosenberg's head, the first National Socialist expert on foreign politics.

At first, as he himself admitted, Hitler ignored all these accusations. But the S.A. themselves suffered from the widening wedge which Hitler had deliberately driven into them from the beginning—and now this was to prove one of his shrewdest and most far-reaching measures. Outwardly, the Black S.S. was still subjected to Röhm's supreme command; among the S.S. leaders Himmler still appeared as one of the S.A. leaders; and when the old fighters grumbled and threatened publicly, Himmler was among the loudest of them. This situation continued seemingly undisturbed until well into May; it was as though the old fighters had triumphed—and perhaps they had when, at the beginning of April, Göring was forced to dismiss Werner Diels, his chief of the secret State police, and once a very useful traitor, and replace him by Heinrich Himmler. Himmler was already chief of the 'political police' in all the German States while remaining Reich leader of the S.S.; now he was given the strongest police machine in the Reich and he merged it, with the help of his collaborator, Reinhard Heydrich, with the police organizations of the other German States. Staffed by selected S.S. men, permeated with their silent arrogance and cold indifference towards humanity, this police body gradually became the most frightful organization of its kind in modern history.

The meaning of such shifts of power as Himmler's promotion to the

post of chief of the Gestapo is rarely as clear at the moment to the persons most closely involved as it is later to outside observers. This is because those who act rarely know exactly what they want. Only three months later it looked as though Himmler had been bought by Göring in April and thus detached from Röhm; but Röhm himself may have believed at that time that the growing power of Himmler, whom he had first elevated and who was his subordinate, would be his own power, too. Moreover, he knew that his own humiliation and dissatisfaction were the humiliation and dissatisfaction of the party; when he grumbled and made demands, he did it at bottom for Hitler; even if he was troublesome, it was only—as he saw it—because of excessive zeal and excessive loyalty. Even if Hitler sometimes liked to scold him, there was nothing to show that he would eventually ‘trample him’, as Hess had prophesied.

But in May it became clear that Hindenburg would not live much longer. Increasing senility had even earlier gradually removed the eighty-seven-year-old man from the actual business of government. This left the National Socialists more freedom than they would have obtained from the President in his better days. But his imminent death put them in the greatest embarrassment: the problem of his succession had to be solved.

Strangely enough, it did not occur to many well-informed people that his successor could be Hitler. This idea was farthest removed from the President himself. At the beginning of May he wrote a political testament which later, after its publication, bore the date of May 10; in it he cast a retrospective glance over his life; he declared that the Empire had to be restored; referring to the immediate present, he gave ‘my Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, and his movement’ high praise for their achievement, but explicitly avoided designating the Führer as his successor. More than that, the whole tenor of the document clearly gave the impression that Hindenburg did not wish Hitler to be the future President of the Reich—nor did Hitler later call himself President. The writer of this testament may have been even more explicit about this in passages which were suppressed before its publication.

Soon rumours began to circulate that Hindenburg wanted a ‘Reich Regency’ after his death, a régime with a leader of greater authority than Hitler had. It was said that the Regent should be a Hohenzollern prince, and the most benevolently disposed towards the National Socialists thought of August Wilhelm, who addressed Hitler with reverence as ‘My Führer’. Others mentioned the half-English Prince von Cumberland, former Duke of Brunswick and the ex-Kaiser’s son-in-law. Still others—who had become accustomed to an old Marshal—staked their bets on Field-Marshal August von Mackensen, an illegitimate offspring of the Hohenzollerns, who, during the World War, had been built up as Hindenburg’s rival by the jealous Kaiser. At bottom all these were fantasies, without any serious basis; but they showed that, in the circles

which secretly manufactured a good part of the nation's public opinion, Hitler was not envisaged as Hindenburg's successor.

Within a short time Hitler would thus be confronted with the task of overcoming the resistance of his dead predecessor and a very much alive public opinion, especially the resistance of the small upper crust whose influence had always been excessive in moments of uncertainty, and of making himself head of the State by force. But where was this force? Röhm could point at his S.A. and say: Here it is; the same could be said by Himmler of his S.S., and even Göring of his 'police groups'; but Hitler knew better: only the Reichswehr wielded real power. 'If the Reichswehr had not been on our side in the days of the revolution', he used to say, 'we would not be here.' But the Reichswehr—more accurately, Blomberg and Reichenau—had supported him because they believed that the majority of the people supported him or, at any rate, would support him within a short time. Could he still count on this support when trying to become head of the German Reich? In this matter a majority of 51 per cent of the votes, which Hitler knew he certainly would get, especially by forbidding any other candidates to run, would not be satisfactory; 99 per cent were required in order to enable his régime to represent what it claimed to represent: the unity of the German people. This could be achieved only if all resistance were silenced or put out of the way; and for this Hitler needed the collaboration of the 'only armed force in the State'.

At that very moment Röhm began a dispute with Blomberg and Reichenau; more accurately, he resumed the old dispute as a result of which he had been driven out of the Reichswehr ten years before, and which, since that time, had stood like a black cloud between the S.A. and the Reichswehr and kept even the relations between Röhm and Hitler in a state of constant although silent tension; the dispute over the question of whether the S.A. should form the bulk of the future army. Von Schleicher, as Minister of the Reichswehr and Chancellor, had envisaged such a plan when he wanted to surround the small professional army with a mass 'militia' and use the S.A. and Steel Helmets for this purpose. As a private citizen, he had continued to regard the Reichswehr as his own affair and his own creature; the plan for a mass militia obviously seemed to him an ideal solution at the moment when the negotiations with the Western Powers about the increase of the Reichswehr came to a deadlock. Whether it is true—as Hitler maintained—that he intended to appoint Röhm Minister of the Reichswehr and himself Vice-Chancellor, and then brilliantly solve the problem of German rearmament by introducing his militia, is still impossible to verify; but he doubtless played with many projects, possibly with this one, too.

Röhm, as a member of the Reich Cabinet, now raised his voice and demanded that the S.A. be made a part of the Reichswehr. Even if only

a fraction of the three million S.A. men, most of whom were engaged in civilian activities, could become soldiers, as many S.A. leaders as possible were obviously to become officers, and this with a rank more or less corresponding to their S.A. rank. Thus, one fine morning these armed poultry farmers or department store porters would wake up with the rank of general or at least colonel, just because they had won the titles of S.A. group or brigade leaders as a result of various scuffles in beer-cellars or back alleys. Blomberg sharply rejected Röhm's demands.

By his aggressive move, Röhm gave the 'enemies of the S.A.' their long-desired occasion to blame and deride what almost everyone in Germany knew about the S.A. and their degenerate leaders; they particularly attacked Röhm's newly organized Berlin headquarters as the scene of extravagant and obscene orgies. At the beginning of June, Hitler, according to his own account, had a five-hour conversation with Röhm, from the afternoon until past midnight, in which he submitted to him the complaints gathered by Hess and Buch, demanded the liquidation of his male harem, and, more generally, a complete change in his system of leadership. From Hitler's subsequent explanations, it appears that Röhm refused to be intimidated, that he contradicted him stubbornly, and that his attitude was not respectful. Probably the conversation went far beyond the points Hitler mentions; Hitler must have demanded that Röhm show greater complaisance with regard to the Reichswehr and discussed with him the grave dangers created by Hindenburg's imminent death. Röhm may have replied that this very fact offered the historical opportunity for which the S.A. had been built through long years of work; but Hitler's conviction that he could achieve supreme power only with the help of the Reichswehr was unshakable.

From that moment on the fate of the S.A. and their leaders was sealed from an historical point of view; Hitler had to separate himself from them, 'trample them to dust', if he were to become supreme chief of the Reich. Röhm was suddenly isolated, his *entourage* of followers, advocates, and companions quickly disintegrated; Goebbels and Himmler, who only recently had called for a new revolution or the continuation of the old one, grew silent. On June 7, Röhm took a furlough which was certainly a real sick-leave; he went for treatment to Wiessee in Upper Bavaria, where he lived in the 'Hanslbauer' sanatorium; Heines, too, went there, to restore his apparently failing health. Röhm could prove that he had really put himself in the hands of physicians; but obviously Hitler had insisted that he disappear from Berlin for some time. Before leaving, Röhm wrote a farewell message to the S.A. announcing that his S.A. men should take a four weeks' furlough on July 1; as for the 'enemies of the S.A.', who circulated the rumour that this meant the disbandment of the brown army, 'they would be given a suitable answer in due time and in whatever form is necessary'. This warning was followed by an equally threatening concluding sentence: 'The S.A. is and remains

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Germany's destiny'. There was no 'Heil Hitler'; the Führer was not mentioned at all.

Hitler was in a difficult position, made even more difficult by Röhm. His Austrian policy was being criticized with increasing sharpness from many sides; without doubt, National Socialism had stupidly driven Germany's sister-country, Austria, once so close and friendly to the Reich, into the arms of the Italians. Among the critics of Hitler's Austrian policy was Röhm; in fact, he went beyond criticism and made it known in Vienna that he disapproved of Hitler's attacks on Austria. From this point on, Hitler evidently began to feel that Röhm was betraying him.

Amidst all the plans, conspiracies, and armed preparations carried on in various places and more and more clearly orientated towards the expected great event, the death of the old man of Neudeck, there were opportunities for dubious actions, actions that were treasonable or at least bordered on treason. Von Schleicher, a good friend of François-Poncet, the French ambassador, had already under Brüning used his good offices to prepare Paris for the coming change in Germany, and Hitler was certainly acquainted with these questionable activities because he himself had drawn the greatest advantage from them. Now it became known that during a session of the League Council in Geneva, Louis Barthou, the French Foreign Minister, had said in a private conversation that it was futile to negotiate with the present German Government because it would soon be replaced by another. It was easy to draw conclusions from such a report, although difficult to check, let alone prove them—and Hitler never gave a single piece of evidence for the accusations he made in connection with the events that were to follow. True, some people involved in the affair admitted that during the month of May, François-Poncet met a varied group of German politicians in the home of a Dutch financier; but subsequent events showed that this meeting was harmless.

One of the German politicians present had been von Schleicher, who did not need any Dutchman to introduce him to François-Poncet; another was Gregor Strasser, who had been out of politics for a year and a half and was active as an adviser on labour relations for a chemical company and—a point which was not immaterial to him—earning much more in this capacity than ever before in his life. The third politician present had been Röhm. The meeting seems to have been imposed on all these three men rather than desired by them. Strasser had been compelled to promise his employers that he would no longer dabble in politics, and his salary was generous enough to make him keep this promise; he had a wife and two sons and did not carry much life insurance. Von Schleicher had asked his host to see to it that nothing leaked out about this meeting which he had not desired; he seemed deliberately to have spoken about unimportant matters—at least that is what

François-Poncet later told the Foreign Office. After the events we are studying, Hitler kept the French ambassador in Berlin for many years and treated him with conspicuous kindness, which would not have been the case if this Frenchman, forgetting his diplomatic duties, had been involved in a conspiracy against the Government to which he was accredited. A commission of German officers later investigated the matter and established that von Schleicher had acted honourably and had not committed treason. But Hitler later summed up his motives as follows: when three traitors meet with an ambassador of a foreign Power and conceal the fact from him, Hitler, 'then I give orders to have these men shot, even should it be true that at such a meeting, hidden from me, only the weather, ancient coins, and similar subjects were discussed'.

Hitler made this declaration in cutting tones on July 13 when he spoke in the Reichstag; but in the same speech he said that he had not thought of the shootings until late in the night of June 30—that is to say, at a time when he must have known of the meeting with François-Poncet for a long time. This was one of many cases in which his intelligence service got wind of part of a perhaps important incident, but failed to get hold of the decisive element in it which was later falsely added by inference. What is characteristic of Hitler's methods in this affair is that such pieces of half-information completed by inference were not used as a basis for justifiable preventive measures, but for the most far-reaching decisions concerning the life and death of hundreds of people and the morale of the entire nation. On June 30, says Hitler, he resolved to take extreme measures only at the last minute, under the pressure of extreme danger—after having said that he took these measures because the meeting with François-Poncet had aroused his suspicions. These two declarations are inconsistent—but actually Hitler's entire explanation of the events described below is inconsistent; it is contradictory on essential points, is based on thoroughly implausible assertions, and even the plausible ones remain unproved.

If a net of dangers was really being woven around Hitler, he obviously failed to discover it until the end of June. On June 14 he felt secure enough to leave Germany and visit Mussolini; this trip to Italy had been prepared by Ribbentrop, who had gone to Rome towards the end of May. For the first time the 'great man of the south' and his northern admirer met: the herald of *Europa Fascista* beheld the prophet who called upon Aryans of all nations to unite. The ostensible purpose of the meeting was to settle the question of Austria, over which National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy had been wrangling. The real purpose, at least as far as Hitler was concerned, was to explore the possibilities of a close understanding between the two countries. Hitler landed from his plane in Venice, dressed as a civilian in an unpretentious raincoat; Mussolini received him in his gold-braided uniform, with a dagger at his side. As Hitler walked towards him, the Italian dictator is alleged to have said: '*Non mi piace*'. The visit lasted two days. Important matters were

discussed in *tête-à-tête* conversations, and Mussolini politely made use of his fairly fluent German.

Despite Hitler's zealous wooing of the Italian dictator, his visit failed to create a cordial personal relationship between the two men. However, they had an extremely frank exchange of views; the premises of their ideas were so similar that they could not conceal much from each other. No concrete results were achieved, nor had Hitler expected any; Mussolini, who wanted to receive reassuring promises about Austria, got what he wanted. It would have been surprising if Hitler had refused to give a promise so earnestly desired by his respected host, especially as he knew at bottom that a statesman can always find an adequate cause for breaking his word under compelling circumstances.

Mussolini frankly told his guest that the persecution of the Jews made it difficult even for him to be completely friendly towards Germany and tried to prove to Hitler that his anti-Jewish paranoia was unjustified. A leading Jewish-Italian rabbi, Mussolini said, had asked him not to rebuff Hitler, but on the contrary to cultivate the best possible relations with him, because Italy might thus have an opportunity to ease the sufferings of the German Jews. There is no doubt that Mussolini, older, successful for a longer time, and outwardly still more powerful than Hitler, told him what he disliked in the new Germany. The maxim that a great usurper must trample even upon his friends was probably invoked. In his autobiography, the Italian dictator had written that 'normally, a revolutionary movement can be channelled into legality only by means of forceful measures, directed, if necessary, against the personnel of the movement. . . . At certain historical hours the sacrifice of those who were the deserving lieutenants of yesterday might become indispensable for the supreme interest of tomorrow'.

Hitler left Italy with the feeling that he had seen his rival at the climax of his power, but that his rival had seen him as a beginner entangled in the most inextricable difficulties, whose enemies were still too strong and whose own friends were disloyal to him. As though to confirm this impression, upon his return from Italy, on June 17, he was given the text of a speech in which von Papen, on the same day, had unsparingly attacked the National Socialist régime before an audience of professors and students at the University of Marburg; von Papen made only slight efforts to present his speech as a friendly criticism. The campaign against the 'bleaters' had taken on repulsive forms and filled many people with indignation; at times it degenerated into murderous propaganda against the two Christian churches. The man largely responsible for this was Alfred Rosenberg, whom Hitler had commissioned (on January 31) 'to supervise all the spiritual and philosophic training and education of the party', in order to compensate him for his political disappointments. Now National Socialist philosophy was being forcibly hammered into the minds of the young generation. At the universities

young S.A. or S.S. men gave so-called lectures on philosophy (*Weltanschauung*) which the students were compelled to attend. Doors were locked, nobody could leave the room; then the youthful teachers, who were often completely uneducated, demanded that the students memorize bloody gibberish such as the following verses:

Wetzt die langen Messer an dem Buergersteig,
dass sie besser flutschen in der Pfaffen Leib! . . .
Und kommt die Stunde der Vergeltung,
Stehn wir zu jedem Massenmord bereit! ¹

Before the students of Marburg, von Papen declared threateningly that the question whether the German Reich would be a Christian State or not was still to be fought out. The everlasting lecturing of the people must stop, he said. The situation was serious, the laws were defective, the people were suffering from economic distress, they were tired of hearing everything painted in glowing colours! Propaganda, he went on, does not create great men, nor is propaganda alone sufficient to maintain the confidence of the people; the absolute rule of one party could only be a transitional state of affairs.

Von Papen's speech aroused Germany as no other speech had aroused her for a long time; it expressed what millions were feeling and what even Hitler himself had to recognize at the bottom of his heart. True, on the same day, in a speech before his followers in the city of Gera, he abused von Papen (although without mentioning his name) as a worm and ridiculous dwarf whom the Führer 'would crush with the fist of the entire German nation' if he engaged in serious sabotage; but there was nothing serious in these grumblers who believed that they could slow up the gigantic renaissance movement of the people with a few figures of speech; 'this State is in its first youth, and you may be sure that in a thousand years it will still stand unbroken'. But it could not be denied that von Papen had spoken the truth and that, once more, he had proclaimed publicly what Hitler himself knew was true. And von Papen had received a congratulatory telegram from Hindenburg.

It would have been more than a miracle if after von Papen's speech, Röhm and his friends had not begun preparing for the great settling of accounts or at least for a decision in the near future. When Hitler spoke in Gera he still believed that the decision, which in fact had been made, would not look like a decision; he thought that his cheated followers would accept the fraud and that the politically killed, just to please him, would pretend they were still alive. But they did not. After the Gera speech, the higher S.A. leaders seem to have discussed at great length Hitler's irresolution and lack of insight. Doubtless Röhm and his comrades

¹ Sharpen the long knives on the sidewalks, so that they can cut the clergy-men's bodies better. . . . When the hour of retribution strikes, we will be ready for mass murder.

thought about ways of compelling their Leader to make a decision ; as Röhm put it, this time they would not be satisfied with 'Adolf's tears'.

The strife between the armed gangs not only separated the S.A. from the rest of the National Socialist party, it also divided the S.A. themselves into a group gathered under Röhm's peculiar leadership and other slighted and dissatisfied groups which were by no means always morally better. Among these latter elements was the *Obergruppenführer* of Hanover, a certain Viktor Lutze, an ex-officer severely wounded in the World War and one-eyed. Lutze was an intimate friend of Goebbels' who had brought Hitler himself to his home. Another malcontent was Count Helldorf, that former intimate friend of Röhm's, who had since quarrelled with him because Röhm had not sufficiently protected him from the unfavourable publicity which followed the murder of Hanussen. Whether the reports brought to Hitler by Lutze and Helldorf were of major or only of secondary importance will perhaps be established at some future date; at any rate, among Röhm's intimates, Helldorf was the only one to have survived him and to have even been given an honourable promotion.

When these groups got ready for the fight, this meant—among other things—that they had drawn up lists of persons to be 'liquidated' the moment action began. During the long-drawn-out years of struggle before 1933 there had been time to prepare such lists. The various fractions of the party had noted the names and addresses of their enemies, and the enemies of one group were not necessarily the enemies of another; the enemies of the supreme S.A. leadership were not necessarily those whom Reinhard Heydrich had singled out in the name of the S.S. Reich leadership; Hess's 'liaison staff' and Göring had quite different lists of their own. In some places bloodthirsty fanatics had compiled endless lists of proscripts; in others, following orders from above, only a few inevitable victims had been designated. Personal feuds often proved fatal. There were lists of various kinds, of persons to be eliminated under any circumstances and of persons to be eliminated only under certain circumstances; also purges of different degrees had been provided for: some in which the victims were to be killed at once, some in which arrest would be sufficient. This criss-cross system of lists and purges of various types seemed to work out on paper; but in reality bloody confusion was almost inevitable, especially when former executioners were suddenly to be designated as victims.

This mass of stored-up murder considerably added to the bloody confusion of the subsequent events; persons fell who had absolutely nothing in common with Röhm and his circle, and against whom there existed no tangible suspicion, let alone an accusation calling for the death penalty. Furthermore, the whole idea of a Schleicher-Strasser-Röhm conspiracy was little more than an invention, and the empty and

embarrassed words which Hitler later used to describe this alleged plot suffice to prove this. True, the dissatisfaction of the S.A. and their readiness to go into action were much more serious; but all the facts later revealed by the victors or made known against their will show that on June 30 no immediate danger threatened. The brutal repression which inevitably caused the death of many innocent people was thus unnecessary and unjustified.

On July 1 the S.A. were supposed to take a furlough; the supreme leadership issued orders to this effect and even transmitted them to the Press. During this furlough they were forbidden to wear uniforms and to organize meetings, even private meetings; so-called 'celebrations' were also forbidden, and lower officials were advised to avoid, as far as possible, sending written reports to their superiors during that period. Whether this very thoroughness aroused the suspicions of the opposing groups or whether they had better reasons to be suspicious, on June 25 Blomberg proclaimed a so-called 'little' state of alarm to the Reichswehr, which meant that every soldier had to be at the army's disposal, even if he were on leave. The same kind of state of alarm was proclaimed by Himmler for the S.S. troops. Karl Ernst, group leader of Berlin, twice telephoned Göring inquiring whether this state of alarm meant anything. Twice received 'No' for an answer.

It is certain that on June 25, when the state of alarm began, Hitler already envisaged the deposition of Röhm; but it is unlikely that this perpetually wavering will had already taken the final decision on that day. On June 26, through Hess, he made an offer to forgive Röhm his indiscipline, abuse of power, evil intentions and scandalous behaviour—provided he renounced the 'second revolution'. Such revolutions, Hess said in a speech at Cologne, could not be made in Germany 'after the model of the annual little revolutions in small exotic republics', referring to Röhm's career in the Bolivian army. But no bad feelings! 'An old National Socialist', said Hess, 'must be generous towards human peculiarities and weaknesses in National Socialist leaders if these go hand in hand with great achievements. And because of the great achievements he will forgive the little weaknesses'.

Röhm was still with Heines, Count Spreti, and a few other friends in the Hanslbauer at Wiessee; not in a fortified headquarters building, but in a wing of a hotel accessible to anyone and supervised by physicians. For the most part the guests were people not involved in politics. Röhm was even without his usual staff guard, which was quartered in Munich. He had invited a number of S.A. leaders from various parts of the Reich to Wiessee on Saturday, June 30, for a so-called 'leaders' conference', and had also ordered the staff guard to come on this occasion. Hitler was not expected to come, although Röhm desired his presence. He had ordered a Hungarian artist in Munich to prepare a bookplate which he intended to present to Hitler on the next appropriate occasion; it

showed the book *Mein Kampf* with a sword on it, and two clasped hands above the book and the sword.

This conference at first does not seem to have aroused Hitler's suspicions. Far worse was the fact that Röhm had left Hess's peace offer unanswered. In Hitler's eyes Röhm's principal crime was perhaps that during these feverish days when Hitler expected a satisfying explanation, Röhm just did nothing, said nothing. From the vague partisan utterances of his victorious adversaries it cannot be reliably established whether or not, at the last moment, he made a desperate attempt to strike back; but it is certain that until this last moment all the first steps had been taken by his enemies.

Towards the end of June, Hitler said later, he decided 'to put an end to an intolerable situation', that is to say, to depose Röhm, whom, according to these words, he still could not reproach with anything definite. Even if this step was exaggerated, it would be fully justifiable as a preventive measure; the only thing that can be said against it is that it was not carried out. If during these days of June 26 to 28 Hitler had performed the normal duties of a statesman, if he had openly intervened and deposed, arrested and legally prosecuted the real or alleged rebels, the whole affair would probably have been significant historically, but not dramatic or even repulsive. He did the exact opposite: he buried himself in an inspection tour of the labour camps in north-western Germany, 'in order to lull the rebels into security', as he later boasted.

The rebels were those who even as late as June 26 were accused only of 'little weaknesses and peculiarities'! It is almost certain that a few hours before the catastrophe the most serious element in the alleged state of danger was the rulers' fear of their own following. 'Working had become almost impossible,' Göring later said in the Reichstag, 'because at almost every moment we had to fear that we might be kidnapped by a gang of rebels.' Hitler's restless trips from one end of Germany to another—on June 25 he was in Bavaria, near the southern German border, inspecting a new Alpine road; two days later he was almost in the extreme north-west—represent his attempt to conceal from himself the decision which events had already taken for him.

Up to the last minute he was not clear in his mind about his purpose nor the means of achieving it. According to one of his own statements he had ordered Göring, who was in Berlin, to proceed with 'analogous' measures at his, Hitler's, 'cue'. This 'cue', as can be inferred from another of his utterances, was simply the report made to Göring that he, Hitler, was now striking out. The strength and extent of the blows to be delivered were not yet determined even after blood had been shed. On June 28 Göring and Himmler made preparations as for a civil war; they ordered their police commandos and their S.S. special troops to hold themselves in readiness. On June 29, Karl Ernst, the S.A. group leader in Berlin, seems to have got wind of these preparations; from a private

report of one of Röhm's followers it appears that he interpreted them as a sign that the 'reactionaries' were making ready for the long-expected decisive blow against National Socialism; obviously it did not occur to him that Hitler himself desired this blow; on the contrary, he believed that his Führer would be the first victim. For that reason, on the afternoon of June 29 he proclaimed a state of alarm for the Berlin S.A.

While this went on—towards the evening of June 29—Hitler stopped at Godesberg on the Rhine. He sat on the terrace of an hotel which belonged to a personal friend of his, a former war comrade named Dreesen. On the lawn in front of the hotel men of the labour service organized a torch procession in his honour. Some thousand of them stood there, forming a gigantic blazing swastika.

By that time Goebbels had arrived from Berlin bringing disquieting reports about the S.A.'s activities; probably he had heard the latest ones from Helldorf. The following day the S.A. were supposed to go on furlough; allegedly Goebbels and Hitler thought it 'alarming' that for the time being they were still at their posts. Lutze was summoned from Hanover by wire; the momentous decision was made during consultations with him, Goebbels, and Otto Dietrich, the 'Press chief'. Hitler finally made up his mind to go personally to Wiessee on the following day and arrest Röhm and his staff at noon, but for the time being not to inflict any punishment upon him. He wired Röhm that he was on his way, and Röhm seems to have felt glad and honoured; simultaneously Hitler ordered most of the high party officials to be in Munich the next day; obviously he was planning a kind of party trial of Röhm and his followers.

This was the political decision that had become inevitable, the choice Hitler was compelled to make between the S.A. and the Reichswehr, which he had for long tried to avoid and which he now made. It was also the end of a friendship, which had really foundered because one of the two friends refused to recognize the elevation of the other to a godlike status, because he wanted to remain on an equal footing with him, made him feel his weaknesses, and repeatedly displayed his own self-confident strength in the most offensive manner. Whether Röhm still believed that at bottom he was loyal to Hitler, perhaps even more loyal than Hitler himself, was beside the point; he certainly was disobedient in refusing to be the victim of Hitler's Reichswehr policy; it is true that he had been disobedient in this sense again and again in the course of the last fifteen years.

But Hitler's decision implied more than this personal settling of accounts. He put an end to the weakness in himself, the weakness of having a friend who considered himself the Führer's equal; by a deed which went beyond normal human standards he definitively raised himself above normal human beings. His belief that he was a sort of Providence given to his people in human form was no trifling matter; his sincerest admirers took this belief in deadly earnest. Baldur von Schirach, the

leader of the 'Hitler-Youth', declared that his altar was not the church, but the steps of the *Feldherrnhalle* drenched in blood in 1923, and he indicated that in his opinion this was the altar where Hitler had made his divine appearance. Only a few days before, Hess had once again proclaimed: 'We believe that the Führer follows a higher call to shape the destiny of Germany. . . . He has always been right, he always will be right.' A man as mundane as Göring, speaking on Hesselberg mountain in Franconia, an old pagan place of worship, before thousands of people, shouted contemptuously in the face of the churches: 'When was there ever deeper and more passionate faith in Germany than there is today? What faith was ever aroused more strongly than our faith in the Führer? Never has a greater miracle happened than in our time. The Almighty made this miracle through Adolf Hitler!' At the beginning of 1934, when Hess swore in the entire party to Hitler in a mass spectacle which brought millions of people in thousands of German towns and villages to the microphones, he said to them, before administering the oath: 'By this oath we again bind our lives to a man, through whom—this is our belief—superior forces act in fulfilment of Destiny. Do not seek Adolf Hitler with your brains; all of you will find him with the strength of your hearts. Adolf Hitler is Germany and Germany is Adolf Hitler.'—And, in Hitler's own words, 'Germany is our God on this earth'.

Twelve years earlier, when he had to serve a month in prison, he had said that he went to his place of punishment like Christ to Golgotha. Now he had gone farther than Golgotha, farther than Christ. In his own lifetime he had become a faith and comfort for millions; they demanded greatness, and he was this greatness. This was not just a fantasy of his: the forest of raised hands, the endless sea of ecstatic faces, had confirmed its reality a hundred times.

This piece of divine will staring at the blazing swastika from the terrace at Godesberg was now doomed to do something horrible because he had for months neglected to do what was necessary. Accustomed to considering himself extraordinary, Hitler interpreted contradiction, let alone resistance, as a sign of depravity which had only itself to blame if it was destroyed on the spot; and everything he did was right, because the faith of millions could not be mistaken. Once a foreign diplomat asked Göring for a favour to which Hitler might have objected, and the great man hesitated. The foreigner asked: 'Are you really afraid of him?' Göring thought for a while and said: 'Yes I think so. . . . You don't know him!'

Soon after midnight new reports arrived from Berlin about the disquieting state of alarm in the S.A. A similar report came in from Munich; Hitler should have been struck by the fact that the states of alarm in the two cities were separated by several hours and that no reports of this kind had come from other cities. Had he seen at this moment what was going on in Wiessee, he would have been forced to

doubt that Röhm had planned and prepared a centrally directed rebellion of the S.A. Röhm was still in his sanatorium, without troops, almost without arms; he expected Hitler's visit the following day. A banquet had been ordered in the Munich hotel, the Four Seasons, and a vegetarian menu for Hitler had not been forgotten; on this occasion Röhm intended to present Hitler with his bookplate. To an industrialist whom he consulted on economic questions and who came to see him that day—Friday—he said good-naturedly: 'Why don't you stay until tomorrow? the chief is coming, too'. The industrialist did not stay, which was perhaps lucky for him.

For the day after the leaders' conference, a Sunday, Heines had reserved a steamship for an excursion on the Ammersee, a lake between Munich and Wiessee; Hitler was to spend a few pleasant hours there amidst his faithful. It was possible that during this trip, which, despite the small distance involved, would have cut the company off from the world for a few hours, something might have happened in the rest of Germany. It is very likely that Hitler had given this interpretation to the plan; the excursion looked extremely like a temporary arrest. It has never become known whether the suspicion was justified; for all Hitler's dislike of exact facts, it is hardly credible that he would have concealed such a picturesque and convincing detail, when he later attempted to describe the 'plot' in a public speech. Actually he did not go beyond vague, even though hair-raising, insinuations. But it is conceivable that the report of the planned steamship trip clinched the matter in his mind: he was in personal danger; they wanted to capture Germany, perhaps even kill the great faith of our time.

By one o'clock Hitler was finally convinced, as he put it later, that 'only ruthless and bloody blows might still succeed in throttling the extension of the rebellion'. At that moment, he said, he had no need 'to investigate if all or some of these conspirators, inciters, wreckers, and well-poisoners of public opinion might suffer too hard a fate', for 'at all times rebellious divisions have been brought back to order by decimation'. Decimation meant, as Rudolf Hess explained in a speech made about the same time, 'that every tenth man, without any investigation, whether innocent or guilty, was struck by a bullet'.

With this bloody decision in his heart, at two past midnight Hitler flew from the Hangelar airdrome near Bonn to Munich in order personally to direct the decimation. He had made up his mind that 'only one man could and had to confront the Chief of Staff. He had broken faith with me, and I alone had to call him to account for it'. But the great secret of Hitler's political method, which he had only occasionally hinted at in words—the fact that the vaster the politician's field of action, the more he can expect one difficulty to be superseded and thus solved by another—was now to prove hideously true.

For even before Hitler appeared on the scene, the opposing forces had

clashed. In Munich, Walter Buch and Minister of the Interior Adolf Wagner had formed an action group, to which belonged Christian Weber and Emil Maurice as well as Joseph Berchtold, Hitler's old friend and shock-troop leader. But Franz von Epp, general and governor, Röhm's old superior, did not suspect anything. From Hitler's account it can be inferred that local groups such as these in Munich acted on their own initiative; had so to act. Göring received at least a hint that he now should do what he pleased and proceed to put his death lists into effect. As for Wagner in Munich, even before he had received an order from Hitler, he summoned Schneidhuber, the *Obengruppenführer* of the S.A. and chief of police, along with his assistant, Wilhelm Schmidt, to the Ministry of the Interior, that old building abounding in staircases and corners, situated on the Odensplatz; there they were suddenly surrounded by a bunch of gunmen, among them Christian Weber and Emil Maurice; Wagner informed his prisoners that they were under arrest. At first they thought it was a joke, and later, a mistake. Schneidhuber had just attended a vaudeville show; the question remains to what extent the whole report about the Munich S.A. was true at all.

At four o'clock Hitler landed at the Oberwiesenfeld airdrome near Munich. He was accompanied by Goebbels, Viktor Lutze, and Otto Dietrich.

Hysterical scenes followed. Hitler wept on the bosom of his old friend, Joseph Berchtold, and bewailed Röhm's breach of faith, as he called it, and the end of their fifteen years of comradeship. Then he rushed upon Schneidhuber and Schmidt and tore off their epaulets. Schneidhuber cried excitedly that Hitler could shoot him if he liked, but that he should keep his dirty fingers off his person. The flyer Ernst Udet, chief of the S.A. air force, was among those arrested; he ran up to Hitler and asked him in a fierce bellow whether he was not enough of a soldier to know the meaning of discipline. How could he punish soldiers for obeying the orders of their superiors?—and until now Röhm was still their superior. Udet was spared.

At seven in the morning Hitler and his party sped southwards in a long column of automobiles, in the direction of Wiessee. Goebbels, Lutze, Dietrich, and Buch were with him; Christian Weber, the fat brawler and murderer, in his black S.S. uniform with its sinister skull and cross-bones, was there, too, as well as Emil Maurice with his black hair and lurking black underworld look. According to Goebbels' account, Hitler was silent; but, according to the same account, if during the trip from Bonn to Munich the feeling of a real danger had allegedly weighed upon the little group of airplane travellers, now, after Hitler had stared into the faces of the first arrested victims, this feeling apparently yielded to one of omnipotence. 'In those hours, the supreme tribunal of the German nation—myself . . .—thus Hitler later described his rôle and feelings. If this *coup* succeeded—actually it had already succeeded—the silent

man even now wielded more power than the old man of Neudeck, whose imminent demise had been the cause of this whole undertaking. The man who now made this death-dealing pilgrimage had travelled a long and sinister road since the day, only eighteen months before, when he was forced to look on impotently while Gregor Strasser almost destroyed the party. He had grown so big now that he had an antidote for every difficulty, even if the name of this antidote was murder. An armoured Reichswehr car was in the column; nor had Hitler forgotten to bring his Press agent, Dietrich, who was to describe the planned blood-bath.

Against a background of dark green mountains shone the placid surface of the Tegernsee, illumined by a gold-blue morning sky. In the wing of the Hanslbauer, Röhm lay wrapped in deep sleep. Hitler and suite entered, deliberately silent, almost on tiptoes.

Count Spreti was the first prisoner to be brought in. He made a gesture which Hitler interpreted as an attempt to reach for his gun. The Führer hit him on the head with the iron end of his heavy whip, and kept hitting the young man's face and skull until he collapsed. Then he hammered at Röhm's door with his fists, shouting to him to open up. Röhm's sleepy voice was heard: 'What, you here already?' According to Dietrich's account, Hitler entered the room alone; Röhm submitted to his arrest and listened to Hitler's furious abuse without uttering a single word. Other accounts tell of a great scene between the two and of Röhm's rage; according to them, Hitler personally pressed a gun into Röhm's hand and invited him to commit suicide—at the obvious risk that Röhm would shoot him. This is scarcely credible.

'Heines's room, directly adjoining Röhm's,' says Dietrich's account, 'presented a disgraceful picture. Heines lay in bed with a homosexual boy. The disgusting scene which took place during the arrest of Heines and his friend defies description.' Hitler ordered Major Buch 'ruthlessly to exterminate this pestilential tumour'. Heines and his companion were dragged out and shot in a car by Maurice and Weber: they were the first dead.

They were literally buried in mud. A storm of public defamation descended upon these dead men, which described their unnatural tendencies with the most loathsome details; Goebbels' propaganda made it almost their principal crime that they had defiled the Führer's pure movement with their dirty practices—which only four days earlier Hess had termed 'little weaknesses'. Hitler hastily went back to Munich, ordering Röhm's staff guard to precede him. This guard had appeared shortly after the arrest of their leader, and did not make any attempt to free him—another sign that at least the troops were not prepared for a rebellion against Hitler. On his way back, Hitler intercepted car after car full of S.A. leaders on their way to the conference at Wiessee; he ordered some of them to follow him and signified to others that they were arrested—and no attempt to resist was reported. Followed by a long file

of dismayed prisoners and frightened henchmen, Hitler returned to Munich.

As Hess later suggested, these arrests were fairly arbitrary, made chiefly on the basis of feeling—and Hitler's feeling seems frequently to have been based on a suspicion that the person concerned had homosexual tendencies. This suspicion, Hess admitted, was not always justified, and some of the arrests were the result of 'tragic entanglements', that is to say, the victims were innocent. In the speech which Hitler made before the non-arrested party leaders at noon on June 30, he chiefly accused Röhm and his men for their loose or depraved conduct and declared that for this alone they deserved to die. To Lutze, whom he had appointed Röhm's successor, he sent an order comprising twelve points, which dealt almost exclusively with parties, drinking bouts, automobile trips, squandering and unnatural lewdness indulged in by Röhm and his gang—and stressed the necessity of putting an end to all that.

For the space of ten years he had known and tolerated these things, publicly branded them as lies, admitted them among his intimates, excused and justified them:—and the fact that Röhm had compelled him to do this was probably his most heinous crime in Hitler's innermost thoughts. He, the 'miracle', the 'instrument of higher powers', was dishonoured by his own instrument—this was probably the treason which Hitler could not forgive his Chief of Staff.

Dishonoured by his instrument? Actually he was dishonoured by himself. True, Hitler had not shared Röhm's particular depravity in a physical sense, but he had been the chosen leader of these depraved men; to them he owed his greatness. Yes, he was the product and the creature of decay and degeneration, a flame kindled from foul gases. These had been his 'élite'. And it was the painful memory of his own weakness, now doomed in the person of Röhm and his arrested clique, that he ordered sent to the Stadelheim prison near Munich.

On the morning of the same June 30, Göring and Himmler struck in Berlin. The police commandos for special services, led by Wecke, thundered on motor-cycles and trucks—making a detour to mislead the adversary—from Lichterfelde via Tempelhof into Berlin, surrounded the S.A. headquarters and penetrated inside without encountering resistance. A few minutes later, when Göring arrived, he found the S.A. leader standing with arms upraised in front of Wecke's riflemen; he ran through the rooms on every floor, pointing at individuals and shouting: 'Arrest him . . . arrest him . . . arrest him . . .' Those whom he did not point out were free and returned to life. The arrested men were taken to Lichterfelde in Wecke's trucks. In the course of the morning approximately one hundred and fifty prisoners were herded there.

Within the walls of Lichterfelde and Stadelheim, and to a lesser extent at several other places, there now began a massacre which surpassed in horror the May, 1919, executions in Munich, which Hitler had helped

to organize; it was probably the most hideous incident in modern German history. In Munich, Walter Buch directed the executions. He shouted: 'The Führer wills it. Heil Hitler! Fire!' A fourfold salvo thundered, and against the wall fell: August Schneidhuber, ex-Colonel, now *Obergruppenführer* and chief of police in Munich; Fritz von Krausser, whom the King of Bavaria had ennobled for bravery; Hans Hayn, old Free Corps fighter from the Rossbach unit, one of Röhm's most intimate friends; Peter von Heydebreck, who had lost an arm in the World War, later fought against the Poles in Upper Silesia and in honour of whom a Silesian city had been named Heydebreck; Group Leader Wilhelm Schmidt; Staff Adjutant Reiner; Group Leader Koch; Group Leader Lasch, Brigade Leader Kopp, *Standarte* Leader Uhl . . . and many, many others.

The endless salvos under which his friends fell dead were probably the last thing of which Röhm was conscious in this world. For the second time in eleven years he was locked up in a cell in Stadelheim prison. He had spent a short time there in 1923-24, because he had planned and led a military mutiny and street fight which caused many fatal casualties; but his life had not been at stake then, he was sure of that. To dispel the boredom which was the worst feature of that imprisonment he had written poems in hexameters; one of these was dedicated to Ernst Haug, Hitler's chauffeur, whose sister, Jenny, had been deserted by the Führer after a long-drawn and tender affair. Possibly because Haug had been upset about this, Röhm exhorted him:

Always be faithful to Adolf Hitler, our friend and great leader!
Let the cowards trample you; our triumph will be the brighter.

Now he was reaping the fruits of his loyalty: he was again in Stadelheim, and his prospects were much more terrifying than the first time. The death which Röhm now faced with certainty was undeniably his own work, on which he had spent a life marked by daring, cunning, energy, blood-thirstiness, and faith. So this was the purpose for which he had originated the armed political party, given it his soldiers and weapons, won the favours of the powers that be for its leader, pushed him into a decisive position shortly before the *putsch*! This was the purpose for which, after the first collapse and the long years of painful failures, he had rebuilt his 'Brown Popular Army', without which Hitler would never have triumphed—to be murdered in an obscure cell! Adolf Hitler, his creature, had given orders to leave a gun on the table of his creator, for him to commit suicide with—he had been given ten minutes to do this. Röhm declared that 'Adolf himself should do the dirty work', and let the ten minutes pass. Then the door opened, and from outside bullets were pumped into the cell until Röhm was dead. He was buried in the prison yard; the exact spot is unknown.

While this went on, about one hundred and fifty top S.A. leaders

awaited their death at Lichterfelde. They had been locked up in a coal cellar at the Cadet School; one of them who escaped by accident has provided us with an account of the events, from which the following details are drawn.

At intervals of about fifteen minutes, four names were called out; this meant death within a few minutes for the four men named. The mood of the prisoners was not really dejected. Most of them realized that these were definitely their last hours of life. The whole thing lasted twenty-four hours, and there was a night's pause. It took all that time to slay the hundred and fifty men, except for five or six who were pardoned at the last minute. Many of them tried to be gay, and sometimes succeeded; at certain moments the whole group was in a solemn frame of mind; but with one exception there were no nervous breakdowns.

The prisoners had a completely false idea of the general situation and the reasons for which they were being murdered. It did not occur to them that they were to be shot by Hitler's orders; on the contrary, they believed that their supreme Leader was imprisoned like themselves, perhaps already dead, a victim of the 'reactionaries', among whom they counted Göring and Goebbels.

These doomed men in their coal cellar had a curious instinct for destiny. Whose name would be called out next, whose turn was it to be slaughtered? They tried to guess; in three of four cases they guessed right. From a window in the cellar those who still remained behind saw their comrades being led to a wall across the yard. Those who were being marched away kept their eyes on the window. The men in the cellar looked into the eyes of their departing comrade; this was a last charitable service which they rendered each other by silent agreement, a comforting exchange of glances during the last two minutes that separated life from death.

The victims were stood in a row against the wall. An S.S. man opened their shirts over their chests and drew a black circle round the left nipple with a piece of charcoal: this was the target. Five to six yards from the wall stood eight S.S. men with rifles. Four of the rifles were allegedly loaded with blank cartridges, so that no one knew whether his bullet was the deadly one.

Then the order to fire rang out. Here, too, it was: "The Führer wills it. Heil Hitler! Fire!"

Among the men stood against the wall at Lichterfelde was Karl Ernst. When he left the cellar he was still firmly convinced, just as his comrades were, that Hitler himself was a prisoner. Whether he heard, understood, and believed the order to fire, no one will ever be able to say. At any rate, he threw up his arm and shouted 'Heil Hitler!' He died with his Führer's name on his lips.

The shots, from a distance of five to six yards, tore out the flesh of the victims. Especially the spot where the bullet left the body under the left

shoulder was transformed into a gaping hole, and the bullets dragged out parts of the body. The observers in the cellar could see bloody pieces of flesh stuck to the wall after the victims had dropped, and the darker heart fragments were clearly discernible. The wall was not cleaned in the intervals between the executions; hence, after a short time it was completely covered with blood and human flesh.

Among the men in the cellar was *Standartenführer* Gehrt—'little Gehrt', as our account calls him. In the World War he had been a captain in the air force, he had been decorated with the highest Prussian order, 'Pour le Mérite'; during the last years of the war he had belonged to the Richthofen squadron commanded by Göring.

Gehrt's name was called out and he left the cellar, but apparently was not taken to be executed. Had Destiny intervened at the last moment? Those remaining inside assumed that Göring's personal friendship had saved him. But two hours later Gehrt returned to the cellar, completely broken, and told the following story:

An S.S. officer told him: 'Go home, wash and shave, put on your gala uniform with all your medals, and report to Prime Minister Göring!' Gehrt left the barracks. He was free. Overwhelmed by this apparent last-minute escape, he went home, did as he had been told, washed, shaved, put on his gala uniform with all his medals, and reported to Göring's headquarters in Prinz Albrecht Street. It took some effort on his part to get through all the guards, but he was stubborn and finally reached his old comrade-in-arms, whom he wanted to thank warmly for his release.

Göring received him surrounded by his staff. He approached Gehrt, tore off his 'Pour le Mérite' decoration, tore off his other medals, and said to the people around him: 'I gave orders that this filthy pig be brought here because he once belonged to my squadron. Take him away!'

Gehrt was taken back to the coal cellar. After that, our informant tells us, he collapsed, allegedly the only man who did not keep up his nerve. He had to be pushed to the wall.

Most of those who fell during this slaughter were little known to the world. Very few people outside the S.A. had ever heard of Group Leader Georg von Detten or his life; but whatever could be said of him, good or bad, during his lifetime, in the hour of his death he made an extraordinary impression on his comrades in the cellar. He delivered a farewell speech which opened—as our report puts it—a gate into a world they had never known. The path that they had taken, he said, was false. What must and would come about had a significance far greater than Germany's fate alone; a league of the thousand best men of all nations, classes, and creeds, who would take the fate of the world into their hands and give peace to the earth. To our informant his words seemed great, but so new and strange that it occurred to him that Detten must have

secretly been a Freemason. Actually his words contained a faint reminiscence of 'Aryans of all nations, unite!' But Hitler had no room in Detten's last thoughts; he referred to the Führer as a disappointment and spoke of him 'with contempt'. This did not prevent his listeners from being thrilled by his speech. The account tells of a solemn mood, which descended upon the men and made death easier to bear for many.

Our informant insists that almost all the victims went to their death calm and dignified. Goebbels maintained the opposite: in a confidential communication to the S.A. he said that the 'rebels' were led to the wall pale and trembling. Our account indignantly attacks this assertion. But, according to it, the nerves of the S.S. firing squads could not stand the strain very long; they had to be frequently changed; and after each change, the shooting was accurate the first time, but at the second or third execution many shots went wide of the mark. The victims lay on the ground, but were still alive; the commanding S.S. officer had to finish them off with a revolver shot in the head.

From time to time a horse-drawn tin-lined truck, which obviously belonged to a butcher and served for transporting meat, entered the yard. The corpses were thrown into this truck and carted away.

How many such corpses had been carried away by July 1 was never known. In his Reichstag speech Hitler mentioned a figure which means nothing: he said that there were more than seventy-seven. There were certainly many hundreds. Executions like those at Stadelheim and Lichterfelde also took place in Stettin, Dresden, Breslau, and other cities. But not everywhere were such masses dragged to the slaughter-house. Many victims were hunted down individually, and more than one man in those gruesome days took advantage of the general freedom to shoot in order to satisfy his private hatred, lust for revenge, and sometimes the most hideous murderous instincts. There is no doubt that Göring himself sent the six assassins in mufti who on the morning of June 30 appeared at von Schleicher's villa, rang the bell, quickly broke in, and shot the former Chancellor in front of his wife and niece. Von Schleicher died on the spot. He had reached for his gun, and the six assassins had killed him in self-defence-- this was the version Göring at first tried to circulate; but later Hitler in his Reichstag speech made no attempt to maintain it. One bullet, allegedly by mistake, hit Frau Elisabeth von Schleicher, who died half an hour later; the six murderers drove away in their car one minute after they had carried out their mission.

Göring took advantage of the vagueness of Hitler's orders and the confused state of the death lists to slaughter a number of enemies other than the rebellious S.A. leaders, but he certainly did not go against Hitler's intentions in doing this. For in Munich, too, where Hitler gave direct orders, people were murdered who had nothing in common with Röhm. To justify these crimes, the story of a 'reactionary' plot was put into circulation, a plot which was even more incredible than the alleged

revolt of Röhm. General von Bredow, a friend of von Schleicher's, was dragged out of his apartment at night and apparently shot in his abductors' car; Gregor Strasser, arrested at noon on June 30, fell like Röhm under bullets fired through the window of a prison cell. The reason for these murders was not only a reason of State, but probably also a personal one; Göring bitterly hated von Schleicher and Strasser. He would have gladly dispatched a third enemy, von Papen; but von Papen was not only 'Vice-Chancellor', he was also a personal friend of Hindenburg's, who at least in the flesh was still alive. So, Göring summoned von Papen on the morning of June 30 and told him to stay at home and above all not to show himself in his office, for decisions concerning the fate of the nation and the Reich would be carried out on that day. Von Papen remained at home; whether he could not or would not warn his assistants is uncertain. At any rate, three S.S. men appeared at the Vice-Chancellery, where von Bose, von Papen's unsuspecting aide, was engaged in a conversation with two industrialists from the Rhineland. Von Bose was politely asked to step into the adjoining room. The visitors heard shots. The three S.S. men departed. Von Bose was dead.

Towards noon two S.S. men broke into the office of Erich Klausener of the Ministry of Communications and declared him under arrest. Klausener, a leader of the 'Catholic Action', founded by Pope Pius XI, willingly followed them, certain that the obvious misunderstanding would presently be dispelled. No sooner had he walked two steps than two bullets hit him in the nape of the neck. The heavy-set man fell on his face and lay there with his hat on until he bled to death.

In Munich, seventy-three-year-old Gustav von Kahr, who eleven years earlier had crushed Hitler's *putsch* and had lived in retirement since then, was dragged out of his home; a few days later his horribly disfigured corpse was found in a swamp near the Dachau concentration camp. Kahr was not shot; he was hacked to death with pick-axes.

Fritz Beck, director of the Munich Students' Welfare Fund, a Catholic like Klausener and von Bose, was taken out of his apartment by two S.S. men, on June 30; two days later his naked corpse was found in a woods near the town of Pasing. He was identified by a papal medal he wore round his neck; his face was a formless mass.

Father Bernhard Stempfle lay with a broken neck and three bullets in his heart in a woods near Harlaching, a suburb of Munich. Willy Schmidt, the music critic, died only because his name was Willy Schmidt; the murderers confused him with Colonel Schnidhuber's assistant, Wilhelm Schmidt. The fiancée of Doctor Voss, a Berlin attorney who was Gregor Strasser's counsel, anxiously asked the police to find her vanished lover; they replied, 'Do you really think he is still alive?'

People were murdered whose only crime was that they had had a quarrel over a copyright with Max Amann, Hitler's publisher. People

were murdered to whom Hitler had promised his personal protection. Among those who were saved by Hitler in the last minute was Manfred von Killinger.

These murders extending beyond the S.A. circles would have been impossible if Hitler had not been absolutely sure of Blomberg's and Reichenau's personal devotion. With von Schleicher fell their sharpest critic and opponent; and Reichenau's joy at his death was proved a few days later, when he declared that von Schleicher had long ago ceased to be a soldier, that he was a born conspirator who had sunk so low that he even had relations with the S.A. Blomberg would have approved anything that Hitler did; the General blindly admired the Führer. And so it was not surprising that on July 3, when Hitler reported to the Cabinet on the blood-bath, Franz Gürtner, his eternal silent guardian angel, who fourteen years earlier had been unable to discover the political murderers of that day, stated now that there had been no murders at all, and introduced a law, immediately adopted by the Cabinet, which proclaimed that the deeds of June 30 were 'justified as a measure of State defence'. A congratulatory telegram arrived from Hindenburg.

The following story was told about one of Gregor Strasser's boys. A Frenchman living in the neighbourhood, who was superficially acquainted with the family, met him a few days after the murder of his father and could not resist asking him what he now thought of Hitler—who, by the way, was the boy's godfather. The boy swallowed, and staring ahead of him said: 'He is still our Führer!'

Thus the prophets' words had at last come true. The Führer had 'trampled on the bodies' of his best friends; along with his enemies he murdered these friends in the most criminal and the most frivolous fashion; and for that very reason he was admired by the people—including those of his victims who escaped death. Once again greatness had come cheaply as soon as he could bring himself to be great; and the mass character of the horrors silenced the question of good and evil, justice and injustice, in men's souls, leaving them only with the feeling that a hideous necessity had worked itself out. By his gruesome deed of June 30, 1934, Hitler, in the eyes of the German people, definitely assumed the dimensions of an historical, superhuman being, whose rights and reasons could no longer be questioned. 'There won't be another revolution in Germany for the next thousand years', he proclaimed.

The belief in the necessity of evil, which slumbers in the lowest depths of the human soul, had been awakened by Hitler as by no other man in the history of Europe; the fact that he could do what he had done seemed like a confirmation of Hess's fanatical words: that through Hitler higher powers were fulfilling man's destiny. Hitler now began to do frightful things easily, and the more frightful they were, the more easily he did them. He discovered the secret law of history which has made all bloody figures like himself bigger than life-size when the times were

favourable: the law by which the most horrible deeds become less heavy to bear, the more monstrous and numerous they are, because in the end each horror wipes out its predecessor in the minds of the people.

Hitler had known this for a long time; his own career, the deeds that had raised him to leadership, had proved it to him many years before. The piles of corpses on June 30, 1934, must have given him the final proof that since 1919 his path of murder and violence had been the right path to greatness.

A few days after June 30, at midnight, Hitler, exhausted and dishevelled, appeared at the Reich Chancellery in Berlin and shouted: 'I must work until tomorrow at noon, and I must not be disturbed!' He locked himself up in his room. A quarter of an hour later his voice was heard again: he wanted a plane. At almost the same hour as a few days before in Bonn, he left for Munich. At daybreak his car took him from the Oberwiesenfeld airport to the Brown House in Brienner Street. Impetuously he leaped up the steps to the Hall of Honour, hung with banners and flags, including the 'bloody banner' of November 9, 1923. Silently he stared at the banners for a while, then ran down the steps, entered his car, and hurried back to the airport.

POSTSCRIPT

This book has related from its beginnings a story which has not yet come to an end.

In it I have shown—or tried to show—the roots of Hitlerism and the growth of that sinister philosophy of force which seemed, at one time, almost destined to overshadow the earth.

There is a double question this book has tried to answer: What sort of people were they who were capable of committing the crimes here described; and (even more urgently) what sort of people were capable of submitting to them?

The question cannot be answered with a definition or a formula. Great events can be understood only when they have been experienced or suffered, at least in spirit; and to know something deeply is to experience it. This book has attempted to let the reader share the experience of a generation; its story is the reader's own.

The ending I have given it— the days when the blood purge gave Hitler absolute mastery of his party and of Germany—is less arbitrary than may, perhaps, appear. For by that time the pattern was set and the weapon forged. Having enslaved his own people, Hitler was ready to use the techniques he had learned— which I have here analyzed—to enslave the Continent. The shots in the Stadelheim Prison were the first shots of the Second World War.

Hitler was able to enslave his own people because he seemed to give them something that even the traditional religions could no longer provide: the belief in a meaning to existence beyond the narrowest self-interest. The real degradation began when people realized that they were in league with the Devil, but felt that even the Devil was preferable to the emptiness of an existence which lacked a larger significance.

The problem today is to give that larger significance and dignity to a life that has been dwarfed by the world of material things. Until that problem is solved, the annihilation of Nazism will be no more than the removal of one symptom of the world's unrest.

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