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No. 1

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ADOLF HITLER

A SHORT SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

BY

PHILIPP BOUHLER



PUBLISHED BY TERRAMARE OFFICE, BERLIN



by *Philip Bouhler*

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PHILIPP BOUHLER

Head of the Führer's Personal Chancellery

1938

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ADOLF HITLER was born on April 20, 1889, at Braunau in Upper Austria, close to the Bavarian frontier. Because it is situated on the frontier that divided two branches of the German people, Hitler has spoken of Braunau as representing for him "The Symbol of a Great Task", namely that of uniting all Germans in one State. His father, who was the son of poor peasants from the forest district, had worked himself upwards through his own study and perseverance until he became a civil servant. At the time that Adolf was born his father was Customs Officer at Braunau. Being proud of his own achievement and the status he had reached, his dearest desire was that his son should also enter the civil service; but the son was entirely opposed to this idea. He would be an artist.

When he was thirteen years old Hitler lost his father and four years later his mother died. So that he found himself alone in the world at the age of seventeen. He had attended the primary school and subsequently the grammar school at Linz; but poverty forced him to give up his studies and earn his bread. He went to Vienna, with the intention of studying to be an architect but he had to work for his livelihood as manual labourer at the building trade, where he mixed the mortar and served the carpenters and bricklayers. Later on he earned a daily pittance as an architectural draughtsman. Having to depend entirely on himself, he experienced in his own person from his earliest years what poverty and hunger and privation meant. And so he shared the daily fate of the workers,

the "proletariat" in the building trade, and felt where the shoe pinched. Thus it came about that he began to think in terms of social reform during his early years.

He busied himself with the political questions of the day. In this study he was influenced by the personality of Schoenerer, the leader of the Pan-German Austrians, and Lueger, who was the Vienna Burgomaster and founder of the Christian-Social Party. Hitler conceived a great admiration for these two men. He made an exhaustive study of the teachings of Karl Marx and here came to the important conclusion that one had to know Judaism in order to have the key to an inner and real knowledge of what Social Democracy meant.

At the building site where he worked he came into contact with Social Democracy for the first time. He at once began to make a careful study of the literature dealing with it and thus acquired a detailed knowledge of the Marxist programme and the ways and means which were proposed to put it into practice. This led to controversies with his fellow workers. And he refused to join their organization. At that time he did not believe in the idea that the trade-unions were an appropriate means of protecting the interests of the working classes against the arbitrary importunities of the employers. He only saw that the political attitude of the trade-unions was Marxist and he considered the trade-unionist idea as definitely identical with that of Marxism, while he looked on Marxism as something that would destroy all civilization.

His fellow workers threatened to fling him down from the scaffolding. They succeeded in forcing him to give up his job. In his next job he had to go through much the same experience. But as he acquired a more thorough understanding of the character and tendencies of his opponents his influence on the other workmen increased and he soon realized how they reacted to his different view of things. He then saw clearly that the German worker was by no means a bad fellow in himself, that he was not anti-national and that he was only the victim of unscrupulous agitators.

Though the years spent in Vienna meant a hard and bitter struggle with life, the experience gained in this school was of inestimable value afterwards. Hitler was now yearning to live as a German in Germany itself, free from the oppression under which the German element had to suffer in that potpourri of nations which made up the Habsburg Empire. So he left Vienna and came to live in Munich. That was on April 24, 1912.



The Nameless Soldier

In those days Munich was the chief centre of artistic and cultural life in Germany. Still hoping to make a name for himself as an architect, Adolf Hitler now devoted as much time and energy as possible to the study of architecture, while at the same time he had to earn his daily bread by designing and colouring placards. Recently he had been doing a good deal of reading for purposes of self-education. He continued this during his artistic studies and work in Munich, making history his speciality, which had been his favourite subject at school. But he went further than this, for he literally denied himself food in order to save the money for visits to the theatre and hearing Grand Opera, especially the music dramas of Richard Wagner, whom he revered as a German artist and reformer in the grand style. It was especially during those years that Hitler laid the foundations of that allround knowledge which surprises everybody with whom he discusses general questions today.

August 2, 1914, arrived. A spirit of fervid but solemn enthusiasm ran through the whole nation. Wave after wave of German youth rushed enthusiastically to join the volunteer regiments and reserve battalions. Hitler, who had always felt that he was a German first and foremost, presented himself at the headquarters of one of the Bavarian regiments and volunteered for

the front. He regarded this act as a matter of course. Nor were there any technical difficulties in the way; for in the February of that year he had been definitely exempted from the obligation of military service in Austria. On October 10, 1914, he left for the front as a soldier in the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment.

Destiny seemed to have preordained that Hitler should serve in the old German Army, that organization which was a magnificent example of the folk community and which he had for a long time envisaged as the kind of social formation through which the German people would finally reach its destined goal.

Adolf Hitler threw himself body and soul into the work of his new calling as a soldier. He received his baptism of fire in Flanders, where he faced death in the ranks of that regiment which was made up of German youth who stormed the trenches and fought and fell while they sang *Deutschland über alles*. During the attack on the Bayernwald and in the subsequent engagements around Wytschaete Hitler showed remarkable bravery; so much so that already on December 2, 1914, less than two months after he had first entered the trenches, he was awarded the Iron Cross of the Second Class. Having shown himself resourceful and courageous, without being foolhardy, he was now given one of the most hazardous jobs in the regiment, namely that of dispatch-runner, for which only picked soldiers are used. In carrying out this task he won a good deal of admiration, especially because on more than one occasion he voluntarily stepped in and took on himself a piece of dangerous work which otherwise would have fallen to the lot of older men who had wives and families at home. On the whole it can be said without any fear of contradiction that Hitler's conduct as a soldier won the unstinted admiration of his superiors; while his companions in the trenches, no matter how opposed their political views were to his, admired his courage and his genuine spirit of comradeship.

On October 6, 1916, he was wounded in the thigh by a shrapnel splinter and had to be sent to one of the home hospitals for

treatment. Within a few months he was on his feet again. He left hospital in March 1917 and immediately volunteered once more for the front. During the great offensive of 1918, while carrying dispatches, he succeeded in ambushing a French officer and about fifteen men and brought them back prisoners. For this he was awarded the Iron Cross of the First Class.

On the night of October 13/14, 1918, the British launched an attack with phosgene gas in the sector south of Ypres. Hitler's regiment suffered severely and the casualties were extremely heavy. Hitler himself suddenly felt an excruciating pain in the eyes as he was returning with a dispatch to his own lines. He managed to struggle back however and deliver his dispatch. After that he was sent to hospital, totally blind.

While the German armies were still fighting desperately on all fronts for the very existence of their native land, defeatism was at work behind the lines and at home. Under the corroding influence of the propagandist poison spread by anti-national agencies at home, civilian morale was steadily crumbling. This process of disintegration gradually reached the soldiers at the front, where it took on a graver character day after day. The coming downfall cast its darkening shadow even across the fighting lines.

The revolt of the sailors at the naval base in Kiel was the signal for the revolution. On November 9, 1918, the day of the general collapse had come. It was not merely the monarchical constitution in Germany that was overthrown. No, but everything else with it — the Fatherland itself, faith in the Fatherland and in one's fellow man, order and discipline.

Hitler was in hospital at Pasewalk in Pomerania when he first heard the news. The pain in the eyes had gradually become less severe. His sight began to return and he now had hopes of regaining his normal powers of vision. The impression which the news then made was described by him some years later in the following words :—

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"So all had been in vain. In vain all the sacrifices and privations, in vain the hunger and thirst for endless months, in vain those hours that we stuck to our posts when the fear of death gripped our souls, and in vain the deaths of two millions who fell in the fulfilment of their duty. Think of those hundreds of thousands who set out with hearts full of faith in their Fatherland, and never returned; ought not their graves to open, so that the spirits of those heroes bespattered with mud and blood should come home and wreak their vengeance on those who had despicably betrayed the greatest sacrifice which a human being can make for his country. Was it for this that the soldiers gave their lives in August and September 1914, for this that the volunteer regiments followed the old comrades in the autumn of the same year? Was it for this that those boys of seventeen years of age were mingled with the soil of Flanders? Was this meant to be the fruits of the sacrifice which German mothers made for their Fatherland when, with heavy hearts, they said goodbye to their sons, who never returned? Was all this done in order to enable a gang of despicable criminals to lay hands on the Fatherland?"

Hitler now developed a burning hatred against the perpetrators of what he considered to be a most dastardly crime and at the same time it became apparent to him that Fate had destined him for a certain task. On that day he decided to take up political work.

GENESIS OF THE MOVEMENT

In the summer of 1919, at Munich, six men set about forming a new political party, which they called the German Workers' Party. They had before their minds a vague idea of organizing a national party which would oppose the Marxist Workers' Party. These six men certainly meant well but they had no resources whatsoever and above all there was nobody among them who could claim to have the necessary qualities for leadership. And so they were helpless in face of the task to which they



In the Beginning was the Word
Photograph of painting by Hermann Otto Hoyer

had set themselves. History would have known nothing of this little circle of six men had not destiny presented it with its seventh member. This was Adolf Hitler.

At the end of November 1918, he was back again in Munich and had rejoined the reserve battalion of his regiment; but this fell under the control of the Soldiers' Council, which was hateful to Hitler. So he went to Traunstein and remained there until the camp was demobilized. Then he returned to Munich, in March 1919. Shortly afterwards a Communist regime on Soviet lines was established there. On April 27, he was to have been arrested by order of the Central Council of the Reds, on the charge of having participated in anti-revolutionary activities. But the three bravos who came to carry out the order for arrest turned tail and departed when Hitler presented a bold face and showed them his rifle.

Early in May the 2nd Infantry Regiment set up a Committee of Enquiry to investigate the events that led to the revolution.

Lance-Corporal Hitler received instructions to participate in the work of that Committee. This was the practical start of Hitler's political career. Courses of instruction were established for the purpose of teaching the duties of citizenship to the soldiers in the army. It was during one of the debates which followed a lecture on this topic that Hitler was given the first opportunity of speaking in public. As a result of the impression which his speech made on that occasion he was appointed, a few days later, as a so-called instruction officer to one of the regiments stationed in Munich at that time. One day he received orders to make enquiries about the "German Workers' Party", an organization hitherto unknown. He attended a meeting of this party in the former Sternecker Bräu, at which about twenty persons were assembled. Towards the end of the meeting a representative of the Separatist Movement spoke and that brought Hitler to his feet. His speech in reply made a marked impression on the audience. It was thus that he became acquainted with the aims of this new workers' party. Subsequently he was requested to become a member. After turning the problem over in his mind for several days, Hitler agreed to join, one of the reasons for doing so being that he had already thought of founding a party of his own. Moreover, this little society, although it had no programme or fixed aims, had a sort of framework on which he could build a working plan for the realization of his own ideas. The chief difficulty which now presented itself was to get this little movement known. It was necessary to lift it out of obscurity and place it on a footing where it would attract and hold the attention of the general public.

The process of doing so went forward very slowly. The first meeting was composed only of the original seven members, with one or two onlookers. So meagre were the propaganda resources that the number of people who attended subsequent meetings increased only to 11, 13, 17, 23 and 34 respectively. At the meeting after that 111 persons were present. Hitler now spoke regularly at meetings and in that way became conscious of his oratorical gifts. He induced the committee to entrust the



"On January 28, 1923, the first National Socialist Party Congress was held on the Marsfeld in Munich . . ."

control of the propaganda department to him. On February 24, 1920, he was at last able to hold the first mass meeting, in the Hofbräu Haus. It was on that occasion that he promulgated and expounded the Programme of the German National Socialist Workers' Party. An attempt on the part of the communists to wreck the meeting was frustrated by a handful of Hitler's former war comrades, who had taken on themselves the responsibility for maintaining order. Hitler's contention that the Marxist terror should not only be smashed by mental weapons, but also by physical force, was proved for the first time at this meeting.

Henceforth almost week after week the Munich hoardings displayed large red placards calling on the public to attend the mass meetings of the German National Socialist Workers' Party at which Party Comrade Adolf Hitler would speak. These posters, which had a footnote stating: "Jews will not be admitted", were designed by Hitler himself. They also displayed statements dealing with the political questions of the day.

In December, 1920, the Party took over the *Völkischer Beobachter* and thus had a press organ of its own. At first this paper appeared twice weekly. But early in 1923 it was brought out as a daily newspaper. Towards the end of August in that year it first appeared in its present large size.

Hitler was not yet chairman of the party, though in reality he was its leader. Some members took part in an intrigue to get rid of him; but the consequence was that at a general meeting of all the members of the Party, held towards the end of July 1921, the whole direction was entrusted to Adolf Hitler and a new statute was enacted which invested him with special plenipotentiary powers.

He was now able to go ahead with the work of reorganizing the party, whose meetings and decisions had hitherto been conducted on parliamentary principles. In reorganizing the movement he proved that he was not only a convincing speaker and controversialist but that he was also an excellent organizer. The governing principle now adopted for the development of the movement was that it should first acquire for itself a position of power and influence in one centre before it started to spread out and form district branches. The party had to expand organically. For a long time, therefore, Hitler confined his activities exclusively to Munich, before taking in hand the task of forming local groups outside.

At the same time the foundations were laid on which the Storm Detachment was subsequently established. In the beginning this detachment was simply a body of men acting as hall guards for the maintenance of order at meetings; but it has been known as the Storm Detachment (*Sturm Abteilung*, hence S.A.) ever since November 4, 1921. On that day the Party held a meeting in the banquet hall of the Munich Hofbräu Haus. The Reds turned up in force for the purpose of crushing out the new movement once and for all. But they met with a bitter disappointment. As the meeting progressed the opposition raised an outcry and a furious fight ensued. Though the Marxist



The fifteen years through which we struggled for power, amidst continual persecution and oppression on the part of our adversaries, served to increase not only the inner moral strength of the Party but, above all, its capacity for external resistance.

Hitler, February 20, 1938.

disturbers were much superior in numbers, the National Socialist guards stormed the Red front again and again, beer mugs were flung from one side to the other and free hand-to-hand fights raged, until finally the Marxists were cleared from the hall and many of them sent home with bleeding skulls. The National Socialists remained masters of the hall. They had shown that they could fight and hold their ground.

Towards the end of the summer of 1922 a mass demonstration was held on the Königsplatz in Munich by all the patriotic societies. The National Socialists officially took part in the meeting. In the autumn of that year, October 14, a Congress was held at Coburg which was entitled "German Day". The National Socialists took part in it. Coburg had hitherto been a Red stronghold. At the head of 800 Storm Troopers from Munich Hitler entered Coburg and marched through its streets with flags flying and bands playing. Several fights took place; but the National Socialists succeeded in suppressing the Red terror once and for all in that city. This was a practical demonstration of Hitler's statement: "We have dealt with Marxism in a way which shows that henceforth the masters of the street are the National Socialists, as they will one day be the masters of the State."

On January 28, 1923, the first National Socialist Party Congress was held on the *Marsfeld* in Munich and it was on this occasion that the first S. A. standards were dedicated, which had been designed by Hitler himself. Soon afterwards, Flight Captain Hermann Göring became Chief of the S. A. It was he who expanded and perfected their organization.

An attempt was made to force the National Socialist Party into a "United Front from Right to Left", but Hitler's determined opposition shattered the attempt. He saw clearly that an understanding with the "November Criminals" of 1918 would not only be meaningless but also impossible.

There were temporary working coalitions with other associations but they lasted only for a short time. In these cases Hitler's



Procession in Munich, in Commemoration of November 9, 1923

idea was clearly proved to be right, namely that the strong is strongest when alone.

THE COUP D'ÉTAT

On September 2, 1923, the first great Congress of the German patriotic leagues was held in Nürnberg. On that day the National Socialist Party formed a coalition with the *Oberland* League and the *Reichsflagge* League, with the general title "The German Fighting League" and under the political leadership of Adolf Hitler. The first manifesto issued by this coalition stated: "Revolution and Versailles are inseparably bound together in the relation of cause and effect. We want to free our Fatherland from slavery and disgrace. But liberty can be achieved only by the people themselves, working together in a national union.

The new German State which was founded in Weimar cannot be the standard-bearer of the movement for German liberty.”

On September 26, 1923, the Government of Bavaria registered its reaction to the establishment of the German Fighting League. On that date Herr von Kahr was appointed General State Commissar. The conflict between Bavaria and the Reich became acute. The central figure in this conflict was General von Lossow, Commander of the Bavarian Army. The signs of a separatist movement in Bavaria became more and more pronounced. Currency inflation reached fantastic figures. Events of the day were heading for a catastrophic situation. Something had to be done.

As the result of discussions that lasted for several weeks Hitler gained the impression that those who then held power in Bavaria—Kahr, Lossow and von Seisser, who was Commander of the Bavarian Police—were ready to collaborate in the coup d'état.

On the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the 1918 revolution—November 8, 1923—a meeting was held in the Munich Bürgerbräu Haus at which Kahr was to have announced before the assembled patriotic associations what his future policy was to be.

At 8.45 p. m. Hitler appeared, at the head of his Storm Troops, and declared that the Government of the Reich was therewith deposed and substituted by a National Government. At first the meeting accepted this proclamation with reserve, regarding it as something directed against Kahr; but under the influence of Hitler's magnetic speech, the audience gave its enthusiastic consent. Kahr, Lossow and Seisser accepted the new Government and the portfolios allotted to them.

Towards morning it was repeatedly rumoured that Kahr, Lossow and Seisser had withdrawn from the new Government. As a matter of fact they were prisoners in the hands of the army generals who were deputizing for Lossow. Entirely on their own



THE LATE PRESIDENT VON HINDENBURG
AND ADOLF HITLER IN 1934

responsibility these generals had sounded the alarm among the army and police forces.

Hitler now decided to take an extreme step. There was no intention to oppose the machinery of power in the hands of the Government and the idea would have been nonsensical. But a final move had to be made which would impress the public and change their whole attitude. On the morning of the ninth of November Hitler and his comrades formed a procession which started from the Bürgerbräu Keller and marched into the centre of the town. Hitler himself marched at the head of it, with Ludendorff and other popular leaders. With flags flying, the procession wound its way through the Marienplatz and from there to the Odeonsplatz. The majority of the Munich inhabitants who were of the nationalist way of thinking came out to greet and applaud the procession.

Swastika flags were flying from the City Hall. In the Residenzstrasse the crowds were so great that the procession had literally to push its way through. At the *Feldherrnhalle* the police kept the street clear. The procession marched on.

And then the incredible happened. The soldiers opened fire on this column of men that was marching in the cause of German liberty, led by Hitler and the famous Quartermaster-General of the World War. Sixteen of the marchers were killed and two who were wounded died subsequently in the barracks of the local *Reichswehr*. A great number were wounded. Hitler himself suffered damage to his arm after being thrown on the road. The coup d'état had failed.

Some friends of Hitler took him to their home outside Munich, where he was arrested a few days later and imprisoned in the fortress of Landsberg. Several of his comrades and fellow members were arrested afterwards and imprisoned in the same fortress. All those who belonged to the Fighting League were ordered to surrender their arms.

On the same date, November 9, 1923, the General State Commissar issued an order dissolving the German National



Berlin, January 30, 1937

Socialist Workers' Party and stipulating heavy penalties for anyone attempting to carry on the work of the party any further. On the following day police cars appeared in front of the business headquarters of the Party in the Corneliusstrasse and confiscated everything they could lay hands on. But they did not find the most valuable of all documents, which was the roll containing the names of members.

Munich was like an armed camp. The people were furious. They joined in mass demonstrations which were scattered by mounted police using their truncheons freely. Kahr sat safely behind his barbed wire entrenchment in the Government buildings and "liquidated" the movement which had caused so much annoyance. The authorities confiscated all the property belonging to the party, which was now outlawed.

The attempt to change the disastrous fate under which Germany had been suffering for the past five years ended in failure, at least

for the time being. The system which had been initiated in November 1918 still held the mastery, to the detriment of the whole nation. And yet the efforts of Hitler and his friends were not in vain. "A manifest sign that the 8th of November was successful", said Hitler in Court afterwards, "can be seen in the fact that in response to it the youth rose like a flood-tide in storm and massed its forces together. The most important result of November 8 was that it did not cause any depression in the public spirit but helped to raise it considerably."

CRITICAL DAYS

On February 26, 1924, the trial of "Hitler and Companions" opened at Munich in the same building that was once the War Academy. The case was brought before what was called the *Volksgerecht* or People's Court. The result was that Hitler was sentenced to be imprisoned in a fortress for five years and he was given to understand that a term of probation would follow. Several of his companions were sentenced to longer or shorter terms of fortress imprisonment. But the leading counsel for the prosecution felt himself obliged to declare in his summing-up before the Court that "Hitler's honest effort to reawaken faith in Germany among a downtrodden and disarmed people" must certainly be regarded as an act of service. He called Hitler "a highly gifted man who through his own efforts had risen from a modest status in life to a foremost position in public estimation, a man who had sacrificed himself for his ideas and who had fulfilled his duties as a soldier in the most admirable manner." He also paid tribute to the sincerity of Hitler's meaning and intention.

Hitler took upon himself the full and sole responsibility for everything that had happened. Speaking in his own defence he stated in the course of a brilliant speech that the overthrow of Marxism was his aim but that this was considered essentially as a necessary pre-condition for the establishment of German



THE FÜHRER
AT THE WINDOW OF THE REICH CHANCELLERY, 1934

liberty. "It is not you, Gentlemen", concluded Hitler, "who pass judgment on us. We shall be judged before the eternal bar of history."

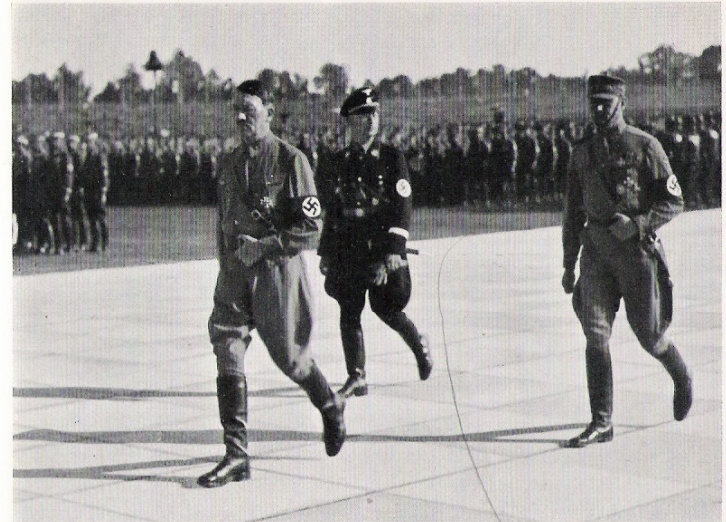
Through this trial Hitler's name became known far beyond the Bavarian frontier. He was rightly looked upon as the inspiring cause of the movement to abolish the system which had created so much damage through the mismanagement of public affairs in Germany during the past five years. His attitude in Court enhanced his reputation and won sympathy for him in circles where he was hitherto more or less unknown. They began to realize that this man was not a mere demagogue and that his associates were something better than a pack of rowdies.

On December 20, 1924, his sentence was suspended and he left the fortress in high spirits and full of energy. One of his first visits was paid to the Bavarian Prime Minister, where his sole request was that his comrades might be released for the Christmas festivities.

Hitler was convinced that there could be no question of ever using the existing patriotic organizations as a pillar of support for his future policy, and so he decided to re-establish his old German National Socialist Workers' Party. He assembled his faithful comrades and on February 27, 1925, in the Bürgerbräu Keller at Munich, that movement came to life again.

In the meeting at which the movement was re-established Hitler announced that it would be conducted on constitutional lines but that the fight against the existing order of government would be a severe one. The Bavarian Government answered by forbidding the Movement the right of public speech, a step which was followed soon afterwards by most of the other federal governments. This prohibition lasted for several years.

And now a difficult and trying period set in for the young movement. In the first place it had no business headquarters of its own and not even a typewriter, to say nothing of being



Reich Party Congress Nürnberg, 1936

penniless. Many became wavering in their faith in the Movement and in Hitler. Moreover it had to face government oppression and dishonest treatment on the part of the officials. Then came unbridled terror from the Left, on the streets and in the factories, together with boycotting in business life. Work on behalf of the National Socialist idea demanded courage and strong conviction and unusual powers of exposition on the part of the individual members. But this was also a benefit; for in this way the party was winnowed and sieved. The chaff was separated from the wheat.

Hitler's political line of conduct was clear from the beginning, just as it had always been. In the sphere of foreign politics he fought uncompromisingly against the Francophile attempt at an understanding and against the insane fulfilment policy of the regime, which met with one defeat after another at the various international conferences that were held in rapid succession. Against this Hitler championed a policy of alliances that would

be beneficial to Germany. He considered that England and Italy would be the most likely and useful allies.

In domestic politics the first important matter was the struggle for the destruction of Marxism and then the taking over of political power, as a condition necessary to carry through the fight for German freedom.

More and more the National Socialist Party became the "Prussia of the national movement in Germany".

The enforced silence consequent on prohibition of the right of public speech gave Hitler the opportunity of completing his book, *Mein Kampf*, for which his fortress imprisonment had afforded him the necessary time to prepare it and assemble the material. The first volume, which dealt principally with Hitler's own development, was published at Christmas 1925; while the second volume was completed the next year and dealt with the foundation of the organization.

THE MOVEMENT ADVANCES

Meanwhile Hitler promulgated his ideas among the masses. Always accompanied by his loyal private secretary and political adjutant, Rudolf Hess, who had also shared his company in the fortress, he held meetings in Thuringia, Württemberg, Mecklenburg and Brunswick—the federative states in which he still enjoyed the right of public speech. Hand in hand with this work of propaganda went the process of building up the organization. In several districts of North Germany the foundation for the establishment of sub-branches was first laid. A constantly growing staff of speakers went hither and thither throughout Germany, preaching Hitler's doctrines and bringing them home to the minds and hearts of the people. But still the Movement continued to be strongest in Bavaria, though in Saxony also it showed a rapid development. At the end of 1926 Dr. Josef Goebbels was appointed *Gauleiter* of Greater Berlin. With that



"National Socialist Germany wants peace because of its fundamental convictions. And it wants peace also owing to the realisation of the simple primitive fact that no war would be likely essentially to alter the distress in Europe."

Hitler, May 21, 1935.

the struggle in the Capital of the Reich showed an important stage in its advance.

Besides the S. A., the S. S. (*Schutz Staffel* — Defence Squadron) was now formed of men who had been specially selected. They wear black uniforms and are entrusted with the task of protecting the movement as well as with propaganda work and other special duties. Since 1928 this body of men has been under the control of its Reich Leader, Heinrich Himmler.

The Movement founded a Youth Organization known as the Hitler Youth, which spread rapidly especially among the children of the working classes. Students soon began to crowd into the Movement and were grouped under "The National Socialist German Students' League", the leadership of which is today in the hands of Baldur von Schirach. In 1932 Schirach was also placed in charge of the Hitler Youth and the National Socialist School Children's League.

Despite the manifest progress that had been made it must have seemed a daring step when Hitler summoned his followers to a Party Congress at Weimar in June, 1926. But this Congress turned out a complete success. Several thousand S. A. and S. S. men took part in the march-past and received a tumultuous reception from the general public. They wore the brown uniforms on this occasion, instead of the waterproof jackets they had worn in 1923.

To a wider sphere of outsiders it was now proved once again that the Movement was not dead but very much alive and steadily growing. And the Party members who attended this Congress gained new strength and new faith for the coming struggle. They felt that the Movement had now passed through its most difficult period and that the danger of stagnation was over. At the end of 1925 the number of members had reached 27,117. By December 1926 it had increased to 49,523, by December 1927 to 72,590, by December 1928 to 108,717. In December 1929 the Party had a membership of 176,426.



"I started the National Socialist Revolution by bringing the movement into being, and since then I have directed the Revolution into the path of action. I know that none of us will live to see more than the very beginning of this great revolutionary development. What then could I wish more than peace and tranquillity?"

Hitler, May 21, 1935.

In 1927 the right of public speech was restored to Hitler in Bavaria. Prussia restored it in 1928. The federative governments and the parties supporting them found it no longer possible to maintain a policy which denied the right of public speech. Moreover they had to recognize the fact that this policy of throttling the Movement, assisted by acts of terror on the part of the Marxists, did not hinder the movement but rather hastened its development.

With the election of von Hindenburg on April 26, 1925, as President of the Reich, certain people thought that this would bring a change in the method of government and put an end to the stupid policy which favoured a Francophile understanding. But these people were bitterly disillusioned. While the governments sought by every means to prevent any movement of national revival from raising its head in Germany their own feckless attitude towards all decisions in foreign politics was encouraged and all those factors were lacking which might put some backbone into the conduct of public affairs. Despite his constantly repeated failures Stresemann saw "the silver lining on the political horizon", while unemployment and economic distress steadily increased. The consequences of the Dawes Plan, of the year 1924, became apparent in all their bitter reality, although a little earlier that Plan was hailed as the salvation of the nation, a Plan that would reinvigorate the national economic system and therewith furnish the conditions necessary for a political resurgence. Against all this Hitler always maintained a determined stand, claiming that no economic revival would be possible until political power had been won back. His innumerable addresses to industrial and economic leaders succeeded in spreading his ideas more and more widely among those circles. There was a constantly growing number of people who believed that Hitler's movement was not only the well-spring from which the national idea was being revived but that it was also the sole means of saving the nation from economic collapse. The National Socialist Party Congresses at Nürnberg in 1927 and 1929 gave striking proof of the development of the organization and the growing influence which Hitler was exercising among the people



New Year Reception of Foreign Ambassadors

of Germany. On the occasion of the Party Congress in 1929 well over 100,000 persons made a pilgrimage to the old imperial city. Twenty-four new standards were presented to the S. A. following a solemn commemoration service for the dead at the War Monument in the Luitpoldhain. The march-past of the S. A. at the close of the ceremony, when Hitler took the salute, lasted close on four hours and formed an imposing demonstration.

In the realm of higher politics Hitler was now no longer looked upon merely as a beater of the big drum, but an allround respect began to be shown for his statesmanlike qualities. His "Open Answer to Hervé", in which he replied to the French politician and stated his own opinions on disarmament and on how relations between France and Germany should best be established, brought Hitler before the eyes of the public also in foreign countries. The fight against the Young Plan led to the plebiscite of 1929, though the 6½ million votes registered on that occasion

were not sufficient to prevent the Plan from being carried through. From that time onwards Hitler was accepted as the leading person who represented in the most energetic fashion the fight against the policy of German enslavement.

FROM VICTORY TO VICTORY

On their first appearance as a Party at the General Election of May 20, 1928, the National Socialists secured 810,000 votes and sent 12 deputies to the Reichstag. On September 14, 1930, the number of votes which they received increased to 6,400,000. The Brown Shirt deputies now numbered 107, which made them the second strongest group in the Reichstag. Only the Social Democrats were numerically stronger, having 154 deputies.

It was now out of the question for anybody not to take the National Socialists seriously. On the one hand this fact became evident by the rapid increase in membership and, on the other hand, it was demonstrated by the extraordinary bitter opposition now put up by all sides against the Movement.

The number of registered members of the Party at the end of 1930 totalled 389,000. In December 1931 this had increased to 806,294. On May 31, 1932, it was 1,118,270 and on March 1, 1933, 1,471,114. On the other hand the Marxist system of terrorization increased at such an enormous rate that one was right in speaking of a civil war instigated by the Reds. Up to the time that National Socialism took over supreme political power 206 members had been murdered and 25,000 wounded in attacks on them by their opponents. These martyrs furnished an incontestable proof of the faith and spirit of sacrifice given to the service of the National Socialist teaching and its Führer.

As the President's regular period of office was nearing its end a step was taken which brought Hitler into the foreground in negotiations with certain persons in the Reich Government. Chancellor Brüning endeavoured to get Hitler to consent to



Hitler speaks with a Delegation of British Ex-Service Men

the passing of a special measure in the Reichstag for the purpose of prolonging Hindenburg's term of office as President. But the Brüning attempt failed. Therefore a new election became unavoidable. On February 26, 1932, Hitler was made a member of the civil service, with the rank of counsellor (*Regierungsrat*), in the federative state of Brunswick, by the Government of that state. This act conferred on him, ipso facto, the rights of German citizenship; so that he now became eligible as candidate for the Presidency of the Reich.

Thus a sorry chapter was closed in the story of German political party bureaucracy. Hitler had been born of German parents on the German frontier. He had fought through the War in the ranks of the German Army. His life had been one long struggle on Germany's behalf. And yet the right of German citizenship was withheld from him up to now.

Hitler took part in the presidential election of March 13, 1932, as a candidate against von Hindenburg. He received 11,3 million

votes, whereas Hindenburg received 18,6 million. The result was by no means a defeat for Hitler but rather a significant success. For this result practically showed that during the previous eighteen months—since the last Reichstag election—the number of votes cast for him had nearly doubled.

The regime now used all possible means to hinder the National Socialist propaganda, which was already seriously handicapped by a one-sided control of the national broadcasting system. By proclaiming the “Easter Truce” the preparatory period for the second election was restricted to six days. But Hitler launched what may be called a propaganda campaign of gigantic proportions such as had never been experienced before. At the second election, on April 10, he not only retained his votes but increased them by 2,1 million, to 13,4 million. This tremendous success was mainly due to the wholehearted way in which Hitler threw himself into the fight.

Although Hindenburg was finally elected the Reich Government had not counted on Hitler being able to obtain the large number of votes he actually obtained. They then took a desperate step. On April 13 the Government issued an Emergency Order immediately dissolving the S. A. and S. S., the Hitler Youth, the National Socialist Motor Corps and the Flying Corps.

The measure prohibiting the S. A. was a failure. It brought about the downfall of Groener, the Reich Minister of the Interior, who resigned from the Cabinet. Brüning’s own resignation from the Chancellorship, together with that of the rest of his Cabinet, followed. Von Papen now formed a Cabinet and declared a new General Election for July 31.

In his third electoral campaign, in which he used an aeroplane for purposes of rapid travel, Hitler was the central figure of the battle and went through the length and breadth of the country as a triumphant hero. Within a fortnight he spoke at 49 mass meetings. The electorate gave 13,700,000 votes for the National Socialist candidates, with the result that the latter now acquired



A HEARTY HANDSHAKE WITH THE WORKMEN

230 seats in the Reichstag. Thus the appeal which the Government had made to the country turned out a failure.

But the Government of the Reich did not act on the logical consequences of this expression of the popular will. They still attempted to exclude what was now by far the largest political party from the responsible government of the country. The derogatory offer of a Vice-Chancellorship received a direct negative reply from Hitler. He had not organized and developed his movement for the purpose of lending his name to the emergency decrees of a reactionary government.

When Hitler received the news of the Beuthner verdict, whereby five Silesian S. A. men were sentenced to death, he issued a stirring appeal on behalf of his comrades. He scoffed at the boasted impartiality of a Government which could make no distinction between men who represented the national spirit of the people and a canaille of scoundrels who were traitors to the country. He now announced that he would fight to the very bitter end to save the lives of these five men.

HITLER IN POWER

A fresh election was held on November 6. This time the result showed a reduction from 13,400,000 to 11,800,000 of the votes cast in his favour. There was a corresponding reduction in the number of National Socialist deputies, from 230 to 196. Hitler's opponents were jubilant over the result. Hitler obstinately refused to be satisfied with the Vice-Chancellorship and the Government adopted a dictatorial attitude on the other side. The situation which thus resulted created among many people the impression that Hitler had missed his opportunity and that his movement was weakening. But the jubilant cries of his opponents were short-lived. Hitler had the courage and firmness of mind to wait. At the end of January, 1933, the then Chancellor, General Schleicher, stood completely isolated. On January 28 his entire Cabinet resigned and on January 30 the



THE BERGHOF
Hitler's House on the Obersalzberg

President of the Reich entrusted Hitler with the task of forming a new Cabinet.

The formation of a new Reich Government and the abolition of the dualism between the Reich and Prussia created for the first time a basis for conducting politics on unified national lines in Germany, as well as the possibility of exterminating all elements of an anti-national character. Therewith the National Socialist Movement entered upon the second phase of its gigantic struggle; that is to say, responsible and constructive statesmanship after twelve years of opposition. In an address to the German people the Chancellor appealed for national discipline and asked that the National Government be granted four years in which to build up the new Reich from the ruins of fourteen years of irresponsible government and also be given authority to deal with the unemployment question and the urgent problem of saving the farming classes from total ruin.

The assumption of power at last enabled Hitler to throw off those shackles which had hitherto fettered his endeavours. He was now able to address the outlying districts through the radio. The speeches he held at gigantic mass meetings and broadcasted to the whole nation expressed his determined intention to restore German liberty and received an enthusiastic response from the public. This wave of enthusiasm reached its height on the eve of the new Reichstag election—the Day of National Awakening—when the Chancellor spoke from East Prussia to the whole nation. The announcement of the firm will to victory, the determination to restore German freedom and the appeal for loyalty to the fatherland raised new hopes in the hearts of millions of Germans at home and abroad. Church bells pealed joyously. Liberty bonfires burned on the hilltops. The streets in the towns and villages were gaily decorated with flags.

The magnitude of the victory won on March 5 was unparalleled in German history. And it was as unexpected as it was unparalleled. 17,300,000 people cast their votes for Hitler,



Some young Autograph Hunters

whose name headed the list of candidates in every district throughout the country. 288 Reichstag seats were won by the National Socialist Party and this gave the Government a 52% majority in parliament. Although if the result had been different the Government were determined to follow the one and only road which would lead to the restoration of German liberty; yet the actual result made it possible to carry out the new policy on a strictly parliamentary basis. Marxism and its supporters had received a severe blow. The Communists lost twenty seats and the Centre Party was deprived of its key position.

THE THIRD REICH

The heritage which Adolf Hitler took over on January 30, 1933, has been picturesquely described as a heap of ruins. Fourteen years of party strife and mismanagement of national affairs had reduced the once great and proud German nation to a state of chaos. In relation to the outside world it was a nation without arms and without rights, respected by no one

and oppressed under a series of humiliating treaties which could not possibly be fulfilled. It was a nation that had sunk to the level of a vassal to foreign states. Marxist usurpers had bartered away the honour and property of the Reich. The economic structure had totally collapsed and Germany was now bleeding herself to death in an effort to make reparation payments.

Party strife and class-hatred ran riot. The separatist movement became acute and threatened the dismemberment of Germany. The Governments of the federative states appropriated ruling functions to such a degree as to impair seriously the authority of the Reich. In the Reichstag the representatives of the innumerable parties frittered away time and energy with interminable controversies and bartering for ministerial posts. Meanwhile one industrial factory after another had to close down. Concern after concern went into bankruptcy. Farmers had to forfeit their cattle and crops because they were unable to pay the arrears of taxes and interests on mortgages. The ominous spectre of seven millions unemployed stalked the roads and streets. The criminal class increased at an alarming rate.

The number of votes cast for the Communist Party increased to a portentous degree from one general election to another. Indeed it seemed only a question of months before Bolshevism would set up its rule of terror in Germany, unless the National Socialists succeeded in taking over supreme control of the State. When they did succeed however and when at the last moment the venerable President of the Reich entrusted Hitler with the formation of a new Government—after all the other cabinets had failed—the most decisive turning point in German history had been taken.

On March 23, 1933, the Führer asked for four years in which he could put into practice his measures for the restoration of the German nation. The law which gave him unlimited powers for this purpose was constitutionally passed by Parliament. After the expiry of this period, when he had given a public



In Hitler's Studio at Obersalzberg

account of what had been done and called for a plebiscite, the nation applauded his efforts unanimously and sanctioned his stewardship by giving 99% of the total electoral vote in his favour. No democracy throughout the world or through the course of history has ever given a statesman a similar vote of confidence. This overwhelming unanimity in giving judgment on the policy of the Führer was the deserved fruit of the tireless and successful efforts which he had made on behalf of the country and the people. Here, if ever, the voice of the people could indeed be called the voice of God.

One of the first measures which the Führer enacted was that which established legislative and administrative unity throughout the Reich, replacing the governments of the various federative states and their legislatures by a strong central Government in Berlin. At the same time parliamentary parties were dissolved and the National Socialist Party remained the sole trustee of the political will of the people. For the first time in German

history the division between political interests and government interests was abolished. The problem of unemployment was then tackled in a vigorous manner. As a result of large-scale measures, trade and industry were revived and thrived so well that today there is no longer any unemployment in Germany. The Führer enacted laws against racial degeneration which definitively prevent the further propagation of the unfit and mentally deficient or unhealthy, who were costing the country 200,000,000 marks annually for support and attendance. A law was also passed to prevent the further mongrelizing of the German people through intermixture with the Jews, who are of a totally different racial stock.

A further series of laws, especially those laying down price regulations for agricultural products and the law establishing hereditary farms, improved the position of the agricultural classes and prepared the way for more prosperous times. Trade-unions, with their class-war and policy of class-hatred, were dissolved and replaced by the German Labour Front, an organization which embraces every worker in Germany under the aegis of the ideal of work as a factor that raises the dignity of human nature rather than lowers it. The National Socialist Welfare Organization, already founded by the National Socialist Party before it had acquired supreme political power, has been greatly enlarged. In conjunction with the Winter Help, it has become an eloquent expression of the spirit of ready sacrifice which inspires the whole nation in dealing with problems relating to the poor and those who need help of one kind or another.

The organization of the youth, the Reich Labour Service and "Strength through Joy" are now standing institutions which have been established in response to the creative will of the Führer.

A cultural policy has been adopted whereby a cleansing process has not only abolished every distorted and degenerative kind of Bolshevist art but has at the same time brought about a



revival of genuine German art and fostered its development in every direction. German artists have again come into their rightful place. The Führer, himself an enthusiast for architecture, has not only planned various gigantic building projects but has also largely designed and supervised their erection personally.

Those acquainted with the intentions which Adolf Hitler had in mind knew that he would not rest content with merely restoring order in the German domestic situation. He regarded it as one of his paramount tasks to re-establish German prestige abroad. Having personally experienced to the full the horrors of modern warfare, he has lost no opportunity of emphasizing his absolute love for peace and his desire for an understanding with Germany's former enemies. But at the same time he has come forward as the unflinching champion of German honour and freedom. For Adolf Hitler therefore there could be no question of rest or contentment until the shackles of dishonourable treaties were shattered and until Germany once again resumed her rightful position of equality among the nations, supported by a powerful army; not only that but also as a strong factor in maintaining peace and in readiness to defend European culture against the destructive forces of Bolshevism.

When we consider the changes which have taken place in Germany since January 30, 1933, and review the problems that are still being resolutely attacked and solved for the benefit of the whole country, it is no exaggeration to say that we are confronted with a veritable miracle, which is the product of a great and indestructible faith. For it is this faith in Germany's future which has inspired the soul of Adolf Hitler—the unknown soldier of the Great War—and it is this same faith which has given life and shape and purpose to the National Socialist Party. An unknown individual founded a party and from this small band of men, enduring many trials and tribulations, there sprang a people's movement and finally a new German Reich.

To understand all this one must understand and appreciate the character and personality of Adolf Hitler himself. Broad-



Adolf Hitler and Philipp Bouhler,
the author of this biography

minded and big-hearted and just, capable of bringing iron logic to the support of his arguments, judicious and courageous in making decisions, and yet at the same time always prepared to share the sorrows and joys which fall to the lot of his co-workers—these are the qualities that link men inseparably to him.

He has the magnetic appeal of the genuine orator and has the power of making his audience feel that he is voicing their thought and speaking for them. That probably is because he himself has come from the people and is able to think and feel with them. And it is for this reason that the German youth has gathered so enthusiastically around him. In his personal



Hitler on his way to Vienna, March 12, 1938

requirements Hitler is extremely modest. He does not eat meat or take any alcoholic drinks; nor does he smoke. This is simply because he feels it suits his health better to be abstemious in regard to these things.

His movement has restored the nation to its old position of honour. Because of this achievement and because he himself has the qualities of the born leader, he has become the idol of the whole nation. They thank him for their national renaissance, the restoration of their honour and their prestige, for their freedom and their bread. And so they have willingly placed their future in his hands, trusting unconditionally to the wisdom of his leadership.